

Deliverance Movement 2: A Brief Historical Analysis

Deliverance Movement

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First of all, a quick word of welcome to all of you who have managed to come. I know a lot more people should be on the way, this being a Saturday, but also a word of welcome to our friends from South Africa. It would have done my ego a lot of good if I could have said you have come all the way to come and hear me present this sermon, but I know the truth so I won't try and cheat myself.

Okay, as you've already been told, we are dealing with the subject of a biblical exposure of the Deliverance Movement and my intention is to take us through three sessions. In the first session, all I am doing is giving an historical situation; just explaining how we find ourselves where we are today. Then in the second session, I hope to do a biblical analysis and basically what I will be doing there is raising the biblical concerns that come to us in the light of this movement. So in a way, I will be quite negative, after which we will go for lunch and when we come back from lunch, we will go into some discussion time in groups and I will, at the right time, tell you what you will be dealing with in those discussion groups. Then lastly, this afternoon, I will proceed to deal with a positive analysis of the Deliverance Movement and that will be now from the Bible. What really should we be doing biblically speaking when we are confronted with the kind of issues that the Deliverance Movement is often seeking to address so that we are not simply pointing fingers at what is wrong, but that we are also at the same time doing that which is right.

Okay, now, in case you're wondering what is this Deliverance Movement, I have brought out a definition which is not mine, it is from the famous Wikipedia and if you do not know what Wikipedia is, welcome to planet earth. You obviously have missed out quite a lot. And this is what it says,

"In Christianity, deliverance ministry refers to the activity of cleansing a person of demons and evil spirits in order to address problems manifesting in their life as a result of the presence of said entities," or assumed entities, "and the root causes of their authority to oppress the person. Adherents to this theological concept attribute physical, psychological, spiritual and emotional problems that people suffer to the activities of the oppressing

spirits following the example of Jesus Christ given in the gospel. The practices and many of the underlying beliefs of these ministries are not accepted by all Christians."

All right, that's a definition that I have borrowed and I'm generally agreed with it because you can't miss a number of features. First of all, it's often to do with removing evil spirits that are causing problems. Second, it's an effort to deal with the problems that are there in people's lives. The understanding is that whatever these problems are, are being caused by some spirits and consequently, following the example of Jesus and I would add the apostles in the book of Acts, what the perpetrators of the Deliverance Movement would be saying is that that's exactly what we are doing. They are simply replicating what was happening there. Then lastly, it is the fact that clearly we don't all agree with this.

Now, first of all, why am I concerned about this? I will quickly fly through because we will obviously deal with these things as we continue. First of all, my concern is that this is taking people away from salvation in Jesus Christ and notice the phrase "as taught in the Bible." And later on when we come to have the discussion, I'm hoping that we are going to see this. For now, simply take it as one reason for my own concern. I've met too many people who have gone through these hands who think they are Christians when in actual fact they are not.

The second reason of my concern is that it is a major movement inside the Evangelical movement on the continent of Africa. In other words, if it was something that was occurring, for instance, among Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons, what are called Latter Day Saints, or Roman Catholics, I'd be saying it's out there, what you expect anyway? But here we are dealing with a movement which is within evangelicalism, and I'll soon explain when we do the historical overview as to why this has happened, and because of that, the Evangelical movement is failing to address it because it's inside us so how do we deal with it.

One more reason is that its immoral pastors and extreme activities are giving a bad name to Evangelical Christianity. Almost every week it's in the newspapers about pastors being caught with immoral lifestyles and then also the drinking of petrol, eating grass, eating snakes, and mice, although mice tend to be a delicacy in some part of the country, but they are cooked or roasted or fried or whatever it is they do with them, rather than simply hanging and you can even see when you get close the poor animal and then it is being put in someone's mouth.

Then lastly, many lives are being destroyed by this error. Many, many lives, and that under my third bracket, you will notice I say it is a major movement. I am sure that all of us here can speak of some family members whose lives have been destroyed because of this. So clearly, I ought to be concerned and I hope you are as well.

I want to make a plea for maturity as we go through this and that's because most of us are thin-skinned. In other words, the moment anybody mentions something related to ourselves, we are already up in arms wanting to put up a gallant fight without really

listening to what is being said. So I said that in the historical section which is the first one I will handle, I will need to mention some names of churches and that has more to do with church denominations and individuals. Invariably, it's an historical account and you can't give history without mentioning names. So my plea is that if I misrepresent anything, please feel free, not only to send me privately because obviously we're concerned to correct the impression, but to correct me during the question and answer session which will be the very last session we'll have today. So if in the historical analysis I have misrepresented anyone, please feel free to do so. All I'm asking is that we approach this matter maturely. That's what I'm asking for.

Remember, we are handling a problem. Now, if you honestly don't think there is a problem, I also need to welcome you to planet earth today because even the government thinks there's a problem and consequently, have summoned what are called bodies across Zambia to a forum where they are saying, "Guys, if you don't solve this problem, you will force us to solve it for you. So can you please solve these problems?" And it's not a problem that is philosophical, hanging in the air, it's a problem that has names to it. It's happening on the ground.

Finally, a caveat there, when I do mention a movement or a nation, it doesn't mean everything about that movement or nation is bad. I'm simply giving the outworking of the narrative.

All right, with those aspects out of the way, an historical overview of the Deliverance Movement. An historical overview of the Deliverance Movement and I want to begin with a reading of Luke 1:1-4. Dr. Luke puts it this way,

1 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, 2 just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, 3 it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

Christianity is historical. Yes, it contains doctrine, theological statement, but it goes forward in actual human bodies. It is tied up to our umbilical cord, as it were. You can follow it through actual events that have occurred in history and so Dr. Luke felt it important in the midst of all the different accounts that were given concerning the coming of Jesus all the way into the first years of the New Testament church, he thought it important that he adds his own analysis, an analysis that he had taken time to compile, not only from the primary sources, those ones called the eyewitnesses who had now become ministers of the word, but including his own investigations as he counter checked the various pieces of information and finally put together an orderly account so that it adds to the augmenting of the doctrinal truths that they were being taught. That's what I'm doing in this first session. I am giving you a history that most of you may not be aware of. I'm still giving you the history, thankfully, because most of it took place during the

days that I have been around as a Christian and also as a Christian pastor, at least the latter part of it, and consequently to a large extent I am able to say that this is what has happened. I have lived through it.

Now, when we're talking about the Deliverance Movement, it's always important for us to realize that the early missionaries, the pioneer missionaries, those who brought Christianity to Africa actually festered this challenge. In that sense, it is nothing new and I have just a few examples here that most of you may not know about most of them but you will be aware of at least the last one. There is William Wade Harris of present-day Ghana and at that time it was called the Gold Coast. There is Garrick Sokari Braid of the Niger Delta. Some of you, I think, would have heard of Simon Kimbangu of the Congo; that is something, at least I learned about in history at secondary school. There is Isaiah Shembe of South Africa. And then there is our own Lenshina of Zambia. Etc. etc. These were individuals who arose within the early years of the church in Africa and they were individuals that seem to have a about themselves some extraordinary powers and consequently were drawing crowds to themselves. However, the early Christian missionaries ejected, not just rejected their attentions, but ejected them out of the church and the main reason why they rejected and ejected them was that they were syncretistic. In other words, they were combining Evangelical Christianity that they had been taught with traditional African religious practices. It was easier at that time for the missionaries to notice this because they had come from outside that culture, from outside that mental bracket, so it was easy for them to say, "Hey, hang on, this is not Christianity. It's not biblical Christianity." There is a lot which is African, cultural, and consequently they kicked these individuals out. And up to the present day, these people remain, well, they have all died but the point is their movements remain outside Evangelical Christianity. You won't find, for instance, the Lenshina Church listed in the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia. You won't find them there. They are outside and rightly so, that's where they belong. This was the situation until the middle of the 20th century. The Evangelical faith was still being preserved because this syncretistic Christianity was pushed on the outside. It did not make the pioneer missionaries popular, but they knew that if the compromised here, we would lose biblical Christianity before long.

Well, a few further details. In the middle of the 20th century, the pioneer missionaries began to hand over leadership to African church leaders. Part of it was their own initiative but most of it was forced and was forced because in the middle of the 20th century there was a wind blowing across Africa and it was the wind of independence. The Africans, some of whom were not educated, were raising the question, "Why should the white man lead us? Why? After all, we have been taught by them that we are all made in the image of God." And consequently, there was the Pan-African movement that was pushing colonialism off the coast of Africa. The churches felt the wind as well. Many individuals were beginning to ask why their denominations should still be led by the white man, as it were, when in actual fact we now have our own evangelists, we have our own pastors, and they are doing a good job. We have our own elders. Why shouldn't they actually lead the denominations? So the African leaders began to take over.

The first generation of African leaders were largely an echo of the missionaries. In other words, they were the disciples that had come from the missionaries themselves. Now, if you've read church history, you will know that that's a repetition of what happened in the first 100 years of the Christian faith. The early church fathers never really thought through the theology that consequently we have inherited after the first 300 to 400 years. The reason is because they were the ones who were being taught by Paul and by Peter and by John and so on. They were taught directly by them so all they were doing was simply passing on what they had been taught. But it was their children and their children's children who then began to raise questions, and not only raise questions, but begin to doubt a lot of what they had begun to take for granted. And hence, for instance, what we call the Trinitarian controversy did not take place in the fifth century after the apostles, it was later. The controversy related to then two natures of Christ, Christ being both God and man, it did not take place during the first 100 years, it took place later. So on and so forth. Those controversies that finally caused us to define the Christianity that has come all the way to the present stage, took place later.

Exactly the same thing happened here in Africa. The first generation of African Christian leaders, they were simply an echo. In fact, most of the time when they were teaching, their predecessors, the actual missionaries, were with them on the ground and consequently they remained Gospel centered. The same Gospel that the missionaries were preaching is the message they were also preaching and they continued to teach. Somewhere in the 1960s in terms of the general Africa and then in the 1970s here in Zambia, to be more specific, the Pentecostal Movement followed and it was accepted within evangelicalism. What did it come with? Basically it was the teaching of the second blessing, the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The New Testament passages, especially in the book of Acts where the Holy Spirit came down on the day of Pentecost and two or three other examples with the proof of speaking in tongues, was a major vanguard or the major defining moment for the Pentecostal Movement. However, everything else that was being taught in evangelicalism was maintained. It was just this extra and, of course, added to this extra would often be articles related to, if you were sick, come for you to be prayed for.

The main issue remained that you could go to any Pentecostal church, you could go into and have an actual Bible study; it would be a proper Bible study that you would have anywhere else. You would find them singing hymns that you also sung in any of your other churches. So generally speaking, apart from this extra which included obviously during worship a time when people would be praying at the same time with respect to speaking in tongues, everything else was what evangelicalism already had and consequently, it only makes sense that when the Pentecostal Movement came on the African continent, that the Evangelicals were the right family for them. It was seen as a return to Christianity as it was in the book of Acts, so why reject it? Why reject it?

Let's go further. We're now in the 1970s, we're crossing into the 1980s. The Charismatic Movement grew out of the Pentecostal Movement and it grew through two things and I put them here: the independent one man churches. I'll soon explain those two phrases. The independent one man churches. First of all, where as previously the Pentecostal

Movement was within Pentecostal denominations, you could speak about, for instance, the Pentecostal Assemblies of God; you could speak about the Full Gospel churches; you could speak about the Pentecostal Holiness Church, etc., etc. You could speak about all those and consequently there was some mutual accountability because they were a denomination. If a pastor misbehaved in one place, that denomination handled that situation. The churches had some structures, some constitutions, that were acceptable together, however, the Charismatic Movement grew out of that situation and now they had churches that were totally independent. They had no accountability to any other churches and most of them today are called ministries. I already told you, I'll be mentioning a few names. Ministries. But that's enough for you to know because it's always Something Something Ministries, Something Something ministries. And the thing that you notice about them is that they revolve around one person. It's one person, or at the most, the man and his wife.

Well, that's made life even more difficult because "the man of God syndrome" which is that same one man issue, has created "the touch not the Lord's anointed" phenomenon whereas previously in the conservative Pentecostal context, nobody was above the discipline of the church, nobody. A pastor misbehaved, they clamped down on him. Now, with this new movement, it's you who must leave. "This is my church. I started it." And therefore less and less accountability has come into the churches.

Now, it is in this Charismatic Movement that the Deliverance Movement has found a home. It has found a home. Let me quickly say something as an aside that needs to be said: often when I have spoken about this issue and I have spoken about it being among Charismatics, I've received a bit of a backlash from my Charismatic friends, and I emphasize the word "friends" because they are my friends and not my enemies. And often they say, "But why are you calling them Charismatics? Call them health-and-wealth preachers. Call them whatever, but don't call them Charismatics because you are lumping us into the same mold." My difficulty with yielding to that plea is that I am going to be forced to rewrite history and I've just given you the history. So the question I then ask myself is, "But why should we rewrite history?" For instance, if the Roman Catholics said to me that, "You Protestants are giving Christianity a bad name," should I say to them, "Why are you calling them Protestants? Why?" I mean, they are Protestants, they're not Catholics.

Within Protestantism, again, you have the further breakdown between liberals on one hand and Evangelicals on the other. Liberals are defined in Zambia by the Council of Churches in Zambia and the Evangelicals are defined under the Evangelical Church in Zambia. Now, if the CCZ, for instance, General Secretary Suzanne Matala was to say to me, "You Evangelicals are giving Christianity a bad name," who am I to say, "No, why are you calling these people Evangelicals?" Well, let's agree. Let's admit it, they are on the Evangelical side. You go and read the membership list of CCZ, you won't find them there. You go and read the FZ, all of them are there. All of them. They are there. But the major list of membership is Ministries, Ministries, Ministries, Ministries throughout, with some of them even having International at the end.

So when we come into evangelicalism, again we will have those of us who are secessionists and I will come to that in a moment, and then we have those who are non-secessionists. Again there, you can't doubt the fact or maybe let's use a more modern term, they are Charismatics and non-Charismatics, at least that way we all know that. Again, we submit that it only makes sense that those of us who are non-Charismatics should turn around and say, "You Charismatics are giving us a bad name." That's only right because if they were to bring the names of all these guys who bring about all these scandals and still hanging onto their churches and cannot be disciplined, I can fully well assure you 100% of them will not be non-Charismatics. They will be Charismatics. So it then remains to the Charismatic world to also now put up its own definitions. It's them in their own circle that should now say, "You whatever." I don't know what to call them but, "You, you one man ministries, you." But it's not us who are outside. Us who are outside are saying, it is in the Charismatic movement that the Deliverance Movement has found its home.

And I quickly go on. Whereas the Deliverance Movement has grown worldwide, the African one is unique. It has brought into evangelicalism the syncretism that was rejected by the early missionaries and that's why I call it a Trojan horse. That's a phrase we picture from Greek mythology and I think I have spoken about it here enough times for most of you to know what a Trojan horse is. If you still don't know, I will tell you what you should do and it's what my own children tell me what to do when I ask them a question: Google. And if you don't know what Google is, welcome to planet earth.

All right, but it's a Trojan horse so that now what a previous generation saw and immediately rejected, we have actually pulled it right inside and we are saying the gods are actually among us. What do I mean by that? The "man of God," and I'm putting that in quotation marks, has taken the place of the witchdoctor in our African psyche, in the way we live as Africans, but they are doing exactly the same work, and I will be pointing to that in a moment. The main difference, however, is the belief that one is using satanic power while the other is using divine power. That's the main difference. But otherwise, it's exactly the same. You go to the villages or rural areas and you will find that this one person who has some eerie mysteriousness around him, that you dare not talk against because the moment you talk against him, some leprosy comes all over you. So everybody is afraid of him, however, everybody goes to him when their fields are not producing enough; when they have an illness in the family that is not going away; when a relative dies and they want to know why he died, etc., etc. That's where they all go. There is a well beaten path to the witchdoctor's hut.

And when the witchdoctor says, which they often do, that, "It's your uncle. He doesn't like the way in which his sister's children have progressed. They are doing well whereas his own children are not doing well, so he has cast a spell on you. There is some spirit that has now gripped your family and therefore I can break the back of that spell." Friends, you don't need to be a genius to realize that that's exactly what's going on in Evangelical Christianity today under the name of the Deliverance Movement. People go there for answers. "Why is my marriage failing to progress? Why am I failing to get a job? Why am I not getting married? Why do I have this illness that's not going away?"

And almost invariably, the answer is, "There is a spirit that is causing this." But, 2. "Come to Such-and-such a place and there will be prayers and you will be delivered. The spell will be broken."

Now, this is in the African psyche. It's part of us. People in the West don't understand this. They don't understand how a church elder on his way to church can pass through a witchdoctor's been, pick up some herbs and then proceed to church and lead worship. It doesn't make sense to them, but you see, in the African psyche, we don't doubt God. In the worst we have to, first of all, convince people that God exists. To us it's like someone trying to convince you that your father or mother exists. It's obvious. But rather, our understanding is that there is a layer of other spirits between God and us and we need a power broker. We need somebody to break through that layer in order for God's blessings to come to us. That's the reason why one of the biggest words in the Deliverance Movement is the word "breakthrough," and I'm sure you hear it all the time. Go out and see the posters all over Lusaka and you'll find this word "breakthrough," tied up, of course, with the man of God, and consequently we need this breakthrough for deliverance in so many areas of our lives and I've listed just a few of them there.

Every so often, some of you know this, I tune into radio and I deliberately listen to Deliverance preachers and it causes me to boil inside because to each one of his problems, when people call in and so people call in and they say, "I'm now in my 40s and nobody wants to marry me and so on. What can I do?" Invariably the answer is, "There is a spirit over your life and I'm going to pray right now for a breakthrough." Then this man prays very quickly, usually it's about 15 second prayers but with a lot of energy, and then adds, "Come, we are meeting at Such-and-such a place on Friday evening and come for your deliverance. Amen. Thank you very much. Next." And someone says, "You know, I've been applying for jobs here, there and everywhere, and I'm just not getting employed. What is it?" "There is a spirit over your life that needs to be broken so just put your hand on the radio right now and I'm about to pray for you." Then a very quick, short prayer and when it's finished, "Come to Such-and-such a place and we'll have prayers for you." Another one says, "I've been having miscarriages one after the other and so on. What should I do?" Again, almost invariably, it's always the same, "There is a spirit over your life. Come and I will pray for you." "I've been divorced, this is my third marriage. I'm failing to make money in my business. My business is suffering. I've got a disease," or whatever. Or, "My husband seems to be just going from one woman to another. He's obviously a person who's caught up with lust." It doesn't matter what it is, it's, "There is a spirit that's doing this to you. Come for deliverance." In other words, come for a breakthrough and when we break through this hard crust layer, then the blessing of God will come down to you.

Now, friends, that's what African traditional religion is all about. That's what it's about. That's all that the witchdoctor does in the villages and earns his wealth from that. It's exactly the same mentality and the thing I want to say to you is that it's not biblical and I hope to show you by the end of today. It's not biblical. That's why I want to end with a positive statement. I warned you that I was going to speak about a few names. Nigeria has taken the lead in this. I don't know if you've ever been to Nigeria. Let me give you a

nice picture. If you come in from the airport here in Lusaka and travel all the way to Northmead, I have done the counting together using the interns here, there are 48 drilling companies. 48 of them between the airport and Northmead. Now, change that for a moment. If you were in Nigeria, that would be 48 Deliverance Movement churches along that route. I could not believe it. With poster after poster, different, of course, all of them had one thing that was obvious, that would be the prophet or the pastor or whatever with his wife. Okay, that you could almost definitely guarantee. Then there would be Something Something Ministries and it can be anything: Jesus saves Ministries; Jesus Anointed Ministries; Holy Ghost Something Ministries; Power Backed Ministries. You know, Jesus Loves You Ministries. Anything Ministries. And such a concentration that when I was been taken from the airport and I'm looking, I'm looking, I'm looking and I'm thinking, "Are you telling me this is what's coming to Zambia? This? This level of confusion?" And it is spreading and whether I like it or not, it's coming here in a big way. Not only in terms of rubberstamped with a Nigerian accent, but even Zambians have caught something of that culture and spirit and consequently are starting their own.

Now, very quickly, I need to end this session. I've got about five minutes. By giving some features of the movement. Just some features because it's not a sort of tightly packaged philosophy but there are definitely some features that you can't miss. The first is a preoccupation with Satan and demons. A preoccupation with Satan and demons. A few months ago, I went with some relatives to a funeral and as we were driving, they are all religious, by the way, and most of them are from this movement. So as we're driving, I was about to overtake a car in front of us and the car that was coming from behind almost hit into me. Thankfully, I saw the vehicle from the rearview mirror and quickly went back in. Now, a previous generation of believers would have said this, "Woo! Praise the Lord!" But here's what they all said as we went back in, they said, "The devil is a liar!" I thought, "Wow, what a change." My generation growing up, we would have said, "Praise the Lord! He saved us!" They are occupied with the fact that the devil missed us.

Now obviously, we'll come to deal with that in a moment. Again, the preoccupation with spirits and an obvious example is whenever you're about to have any form of evangelistic work, you are spending your time in binding and binding and binding the evil one and the evil spirits and if you're going to have an evangelistic crusade in an area, you first of all exercise the so-called territorial spirits and all the rest of it. That's part of it.

Another, which is a little more visible than the previous one, is declarations and decrees of blessings by the man or the woman of God. It's very popular on Facebook. "I decree that today your heart's desire will be met. Just say amen." Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Even while you are reading, the counter is counting, more amens are coming in genuinely wanting to receive the blessing. And you hear it constantly even in the messages, halfway through the message, "The Lord has just revealed to me and I'm making a declaration. One of you who has been waiting for a business to finally mature is having it this week. That business is coming through." Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. The man of God has declared it; he has decreed it's going to happen this week.

Another aspect that you can't miss from it, the Deliverance Sessions for all human problems. Now, that means when the Pentecostal Movement first came into this part of the world, they did have altar calls. Usually the altar calls at the end of the meetings were for salvation. Usually. They may at the end of it say, "If you have any other problem, come to be prayed for." They were rarely called Deliverance Sessions. Rarely. And they were brief. That has completely changed. That's now the main issue. It's the deliverance. It's the Deliverance Sessions. So the messages are fairly brief, in fact, they're usually just motivational messages and then comes the main issue where the man of God now usually with a towel, a small fist towel in his hands, is now doing the actual job for which he is distinguished and people are coming with all kinds of problems and they are being pushed down and they are writhing on the floors and the same thing that used to happen in the witchdoctors den. The only difference is one is a positive entity, the other one is clean power, but it's power nonetheless.

Another aspect that you can't miss is the blood of Jesus protecting things like a fetish. So we now have cars that are protected by the blood of Jesus. Houses that are protected by the blood of Jesus, the poster is on the gate so you can't miss it. All kinds of things being protected by the blood of Jesus which, I hope you will see when we come to the discussion time, that's not the way the Bible teaches the blood of Jesus.

Maybe one more, and for me this breaks my heart: destroyed lives. Destroyed lives. Women sexually abused. Sexually abused. I could read these messages from my phone because when these women come back and they have been slept with, they are actually broken and they send the message and they say, "Pastor, this has happened to me. I went to try and solve a marital problem. If I even now tell my husband, that marriage will be finished. What can I do?" Report him to the police. "No, if I report him to the police, the thing will become public. My husband will know and it will again go back to what? What I was trying to solve is what will be finished." And it's painful because these men are still imposters all over the place on tree trunks, they're still on TV, and they're still on radio, and these young people, especially women, are in pain.

Then lastly, the defrauding. The number of individuals who are putting in their money is incredible. One woman totally beaten with a husband with a condition that continues up to today, had put in all her equivalent of pension because of being promised of the change that would happen. She has had to nurse her husband up to today. They are reduced to poverty while these men are going around now in expensive cars, living in expensive houses, looking as if they are a sign of success. That's the reason why I can't keep quiet. I honestly can't. It's better to be ostracized by others and speak the truth.

All right, I think that's the end of this first one and later on after break we'll move to the second session. Thank you very much.