

What is wrong with the occult?

Tuesday 3rd May 2011, 7.30 p.m. Langford Evangelical Church. (Names removed for privacy.)

The events of the last few days raise questions. Were we right to protest against the "Chill out" zone at the May Fayre? Are we imagining evil where it was really harmless fun? Should we just hide away in our "bunker" and not speak out? Does God expect His people to get involved? That is why we are looking at this subject tonight. (I am grateful to an internet article by Dr. John Piper for some of the information and to P__ who is here tonight for her research.)

Definition: Occult (OED) Kept secret, esoteric (*meant only for the initiated*), supernatural, mysterious, magical, etc. I understand that to include: Dealings with the world of spirits or of supra-normal forces which (dealings) are not oriented on Jesus as He is revealed in the Bible. Everything from the most blatant Satan worship to the most commonly accepted use of horoscopes, *e.g.* seances, necromancy (*predicting by **alleged*** communication with the dead*), and all other forms of communicating with the dead, ESP, and all forms of supra-natural psychic phenomena, real magic (as opposed to simple sleight-of-hand tricks), fortune telling, the casting of spells, wearing of charms, the use of ouija boards, astrology, and the so-called "New Age" practices, such as Reiki, Shiatsu, etc. ***N.B. I contend that it is evil spirits, not really the dead, who are communicated with.**

First: Is there a Devil and do evil spiritual forces exist? *The Bible says Yes!* [Ephesians 6: 10-13](#):

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the **wiles of the devil**. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against **spiritual hosts of wickedness** in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Also, *Jesus spoke of a personal Devil*; He healed people of *demon possession* and He warned of the danger of *evil spirits* entering a person who had a spiritual vacuum: [Matthew 12:43](#): "When an **unclean spirit** goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. 44 "Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. 45 "Then he goes and takes with him seven **other spirits more wicked** than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

I once worked with someone involved in seances. M__ said to me one day, "You don't believe these powers exist, do you?" My reply was, "On the contrary, I do! It is where they come from that troubles me."

Secondly: Does it matter? Yes, because God is the One who is transcendent and has the right and power to control everything that happens to us (that's omnipotence); He is the Possessor of all knowledge (omniscience) and He is everywhere as a Person, not an influence, (omnipresence). He is insulted when we turn to spirits instead of Him for guidance and help. In doing that we are saying that those attributes are not true of Him (unbelief). It is a symptom of our rebellion against God (disobedience).

Thirdly: Does God condemn involvement in the occult? *Yes!* Examples: [Leviticus 19:31](#) **Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them**, to be **defiled** by them: I am the LORD your God.

[Deuteronomy 18: 9](#) "When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, **you shall not** learn to follow the **abominations** of those nations. 10 "**There shall not** be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, 11 "or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. 12 "For all who do these things are an **abomination** to the LORD, and because of these **abominations** the LORD your God drives them out from before you. 13 "You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. 14 "For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, **the LORD your God has not appointed such for you.**

[Isaiah 8:19](#) And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," **should not a people seek their God?** Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? 20 To the law and to the testimony! **If they do not speak according to this word**, it is because there is **no light** in them. (*Q. What have you got where there is no light?*)

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Fourthly: Did the early Christians oppose the occult? Yes! Acts 19: 13 Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had **evil spirits**, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." 14 Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. 15 And the **evil spirit** answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" 16 Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18 **And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds.** 19 **Also, many of those who had practised magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all.** And they counted up the value of them, and it totalled fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

(On Sunday, a lady who had become a Christian, came to us and supported our protest, saying she had been a fortune-teller before her conversion. She had no doubt that the occult and faith in Christ were incompatible.)

Sorcery is listed in Galatians 5:19-21 Now the **works of the flesh** are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, **sorcery**, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that **those who practise such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

The Apostle John warns Christians against gullibility in his first letter, Chapter 4:1 **Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God;** because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, 3 and **every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God.** And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. (Occultists deny that Jesus is God incarnate; there are examples of this in modern times. One quoted.)

Fifthly: Is it dangerous? Yes! Children and other vulnerable persons are particularly at risk, though anyone can be deceived by **apparently** innocent practices: Bereaved persons look for comfort; those with learning difficulties are easily persuaded to become involved (*anonymous example stated*). What happens if you put yourself under the power of someone else? This is done when someone consults a medium or engages in occultic practices, for example: **Reiki** – one of their own manuals says that this “involves **control by forces beyond** the Reiki Master” – **their words, not mine**. A **Shiatsu** practitioner states that “the vital **life force** known as Qi (Ch'i) is involved. She recommends “**clearing the mind**”. (Surely that leaves you open to whatever may come in? Remember Jesus' teaching about the “empty house”?) But what about something that *looks* really innocent like **Reflexology**? Isn't that just for healing? Problem is that its teachers also believe that the “**life energy**” (ch'i) flows through zones to the feet and claim it can bring about **psychoemotional changes** – in effect that means **mind-altering**. There are other practices which share features in common with the above systems – my contention is that dabbling with the less-obviously Satanic easily leads someone to move on to even darker things. Fascination with Astrology and Ouija may encourage experimenting further. It is significant that the “Chill out” zone at the May Fayre involved all these things and more – each person involved in an activity there was clearly content to be associated with the Clairvoyant – I concentrated on that one when objecting to this “zone” because most people would understand it being obviously offensive to a Christian Minister.

Conclusion: As Christians we cannot be involved in or appear to approve of anything to do with the occult. Its source is evil; it is evil; it will do evil. Nor can we remain silent; while the Church's main mission is to preach the gospel of Christ that will entail pointing out sin in all its forms. Maybe it is because the Church in this country has failed to speak out that the nation is sliding into darkness.

Questions were invited at this point.

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