

Setting Your Church Free

Why should we want to set our church free?

Most congregations have—as part of their mission—the goal of evangelism, of fulfilling the great commission (*Mat. 28:19, Mark 16:15*). In addition, most congregations have been less than successful in this effort. The reason for these meager results may be spiritual rather than physical: “*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*” (Eph 6:12). Even so, “... ***the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds***” (2 Cor. 10:4).

Consider the following true illustrations:

1. In Adroque, Brazil, a Baptist Church had only 70 members after 70 years of evangelism effort; it was a graveyard of church planters. Also, none of the 70 members were residents of Adroque. Then, in 1974, Eduardo Lorenzo became pastor. By 1987 there were 250 members; by 1990 there were 600; by 1991, 1000; by 1993, 2000. When asked what happened in 1987, Pastor Lorenzo simply replied that he began using **spiritual warfare prayer**.
2. A man by the name of Carlos Annacondia (owner of a nuts and bolts factory in a small town on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, Brazil) had a spiritual experience and left his business to become an evangelist. Carlos began to learn and apply **the principles of spiritual warfare prayer** as used by Pastor Lorenzo (and others), who’s evangelistic work includes an emphasis on spiritual warfare (the challenging of the principalities and powers) and the proclamation of the gospel—not only to the people but to the spiritual jailers who hold the people captive. He begins by praying over cities before proclaiming the gospel there. Only after he senses that the spiritual powers over the area have been bound will he begin to preach.
3. Pastor Albarto's Los Olivus Baptist Church in Argentina had (for many years) been stalled at 50 members. After attending an Annacondia crusade, Pastor Alberto and his lay leaders held a crusade themselves. After the first service, he gave the invitation to come forward. No one responded. While inwardly agonizing over the apparent lack of power and response, he seemed to hear an inner voice say to him, "Try it the way Annacondia does it." In semi-desperation, he decided to try it. He prayed a strong warfare prayer and directly rebuked the spirits, as he had previously seen Carlos Annacondia do. **When he had bound the spirits with the authority Jesus Christ had given him**, he gave the invitation to come forward once again. This time, more than 15 people sprang out of their seats and actually came running to the front of the church to receive Christ as their Savior. In the next short while, the church grew to 900 members and started satellite congregations of 2,100 members. His goal is 20,000 members.
4. Pastor Steve Nicholson preached the gospel in Evanston, Illinois, for six years with virtually no fruit. He and members of his church prayed for the sick and few got well. His Vineyard Christian Fellowship was not growing. Nicholson began some **serious prayer and fasting**. A grotesque, unnatural being appeared to him. It growled, “Why are you bothering me?” It identified itself as a demon of witchcraft

which had dominion over the geographical area. In the heat of warfare, Nicholson named the city streets in the surrounding area. The spirit retorted, “I don’t want to give you that much.” In the name of Jesus, Nicholson commanded the spirit to give up the territory. During the next three months, the church doubled in size from 70 to 150, mostly from new converts coming out of witchcraft. Nearly all of the new believers needed to be delivered from demons.

5. Kathie Walters (author of the book *The Spirit of False Judgment*) reports on page 32: “... when we were living in one place, God revealed to us **a spirit of false light and poverty** over the area. The businesses failed and most people were really struggling financially and spiritually. It was very hard to get people saved. They didn’t see the goodness of God (which leads to repentance). **We bound the thing and threw it out** under the anointing. Within three years the area became very prosperous. Businesses moved in, nice subdivisions were built, and people prospered and got saved. Several decent churches arose there also.”
6. Consider the story of Almolonga, Guatemala where there is no crime, no bars, and prosperity is abundant. 90% of the 18,000 citizens are Christian. For the full story, read one of the following. (Christian Broadcasting Network Inc 2007, Rebecca Greenwood, *Destined to Rule*, 2007) ISBN 10:0-8007-9433-8, page 75-77)

Three observations can be made from the above examples (as well as from many others not here included):

- All the evangelistic technology and effort in the world will have only minimal effect **unless the spiritual battle is won first**.
- We need to **focus on the spiritual dimension of church growth**, not on the programs and techniques.
- Many people who have not received Christ as their Lord and Savior have not done so because they cannot—they simply cannot because Satan has blinded them and holds them captive (2 Cor. 4:4).

As early as 1976, evangelist and internationally known minister, Derek Prince, reported, “For several years I have believed that **over every major city in the nation, Satan has set a ‘strong man’**—an unseen spiritual power responsible for resisting God’s purposes and God’s people in that particular area” (Fall, 1976 newsletter).

While churches in Latin and South America seem to be leading the way in the spiritual dimension of church growth, similar growth is happening in the U.S. as well. C. Peter Wagner calls attention to the increase in membership of churches which have embraced these and other "charismatic" approaches to evangelism and ministry, as noted below:

	Charismatic Church Growth	Assembly of God Growth
1965	50 million	1.6 million
1985	247 million	13.2 million
1991	391 million	Largest in the world (2400 churches in Sao Paulo, Brazil, alone)

From these examples, a most fundamental observation is that these churches have a more advanced understanding that **the real battle for evangelism is spiritual**. Signs and wonders, deliverance from demonic powers, miraculous healings, sustained and enthusiastic worship, prophecies, and warfare prayer are seen by many of these ministries as the normal outworking of Christianity.

Unless **biblical warfare** is understood, there will be frustration, anger, confusion, and ineffective ministry within the congregation. Whether attempting to coordinate Christian concerts, plant a church, or perform outreach, the principle is still the same: **we need to bind the “strongman” and gain a place of authority over Satan before we will see the full fruit of our labors**.

Setting churches free from the influences of darkness that restrain them requires **two primary beliefs**: (1) a belief that the spirits of darkness inhabit people and places (ground level spiritual warfare) and (2) the sins of people cause a curse on the land, giving certain spirits of darkness a spiritual legal right to inhabit the place or land, **until** they are expelled (territorial or strategic level spiritual warfare).

The spiritual oppression involved in the above examples takes many forms. Consider two other illustrations below:

1. A few years ago, in Guadalajara, Mexico (a city of 6 million people), there were only 160 evangelical churches, which was less than .5% of the population—while Latin American countries had 10-20%. Just across the border from Guatemala, 30% of the population attended evangelical churches. Why the inconsistency? It was discovered that the spiritual restriction resulted from a plaza called Devil’s Corner, where a beautiful inlaid marble compass pointed north, south, east and west; Satan had symbolically claimed the whole city with a blanket of spiritual oppression.
2. Victor Lorenzo discovered that La Plata, Argentina, had been founded a little over 100 year ago by a high-ranking Mason, who designed the city according to the dictates of Masonic symbolism and numerology. Several mummies were buried under strategic places to help insure that the city would remain under the demonic control he was calculating to manipulate. The huge Plaza Moreno in front of the central cathedral contained four bronze statues of beautiful women, each representing a curse over the city.

How is this dark influence possible (principalities and powers in the form of territorial spirits)?

Consider the example of a church in Mallakka, Malaysia, that did not grow along with all the other churches within the city. Then, a prophet from England came to the city; he read the previous history of Francis Xavier—a Catholic missionary’s experience in Mallakka, 400 years earlier. The prophet found that the people refused to listen to Xavier, so Xavier went up to the mountain and literally **shook the dust from his feet**—in effect creating a curse. (See Mark 6:11) The prophet then took a group of pastors up to the same mountain and repented for Mallakka’s rejection of God’s servant over 400 years earlier. The curse was broken, and from that day churches in Mallakka began to grow.

Territorial Spirits

Anyone who has paid more than a casual visit to places such as India, Navajoland, Cameroon, Haiti, Japan, Morocco, Peru, Nepal, New Guinea, and China will attest to seeing elaborate hierarchies of deities and spirits, regarded as commonplace in these locations. These incorporeal beings are perceived to rule over homes, villages, cities, valleys, providences, and nations, and **they exercise extraordinary power over the behavior of local people.**

Jacob Loewen, an anthropologist and a Bible translation consultant, sees the Old Testament as clearly assuming the territoriality (territorial status) of demonic spirits, frequently called "deities." He reports that in Central and South America, spirits are considered to be the "owners" of geographical or topographical phenomena. Nomadic Indians never travel from one territory to another without first securing the permission of the territorial spirit dominating the area that they are about to enter.

Vernon Sterk, a field missionary in Mexico for over 20 years for the Reformed Church of America, says that every one of the Tzotzil tribes can identify specific deities by name. He discovered that both evil spirits and guardian spirits have territorial designations and assignments. All of the spirits have geographical limits for their power, even though the reach of the evil spirits seems to be more extensive than that of the guardian or ancestral spirits.

The above information raises several questions. (1) Is the existence of territorial spirits scriptural? (2) If principalities and powers—in the form of territorial spirits—have such a negative effect on the work of churches, how do they come about? (3) How can they be identified? (4) How can they be expelled or removed?

Other scriptures suggesting a hierarchy for demonic spirits follows, along with facts regarding their nature, etc.

1. Satan is the ruler of this world (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11, 2 Cor. 4:4).
2. Christ, when tempted by Satan, did not dispute Satan's power to give him "*all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them*" (Mat. 4:8-9).
3. Satan delegates his power to principalities, powers, and rulers of darkness (Eph. 6:12). There may be millions of dark spirits of various kinds. Mark 5:9 suggests the name of the spirit was "*Legion,*" which is up to 6,000.
4. While some evil spirits (or demons) inhabit persons, others called **guardian or ancestral spirits inhabit geographical locations or areas.**
5. Other scriptures speaking of the hierarchy of Satan include the following:

Deut. 12:2-3 and 32:17	1 Ki. 20:23	1 Cor. 15:32
Judg. 3:7	2 Ki. 17:16, 29-31	Rev. 12:6-10
1 Sam. 7:3-4	Dan. 10:13	Rev. 20:8, 10
6. Satan has demons, dark angels, principalities, powers, and rulers of the darkness (Eph. 6) assigned to each of the following levels, each level more powerful than the ones below it: Nations, Regions, Cities, Neighborhoods, Places of idol worship, Places of work, Churches, Homes, Individuals

7. Some spirits (such as demons) seem to have much more flexibility. Other spirits (such as ancestral or guardian spirits) have geographical restrictions to their power capabilities.
8. In some cases, the spirit seems to be so fixed in a particular house, stream, or geographic location, that everyone living in the immediate area is affected by sickness, mental illness, or serious attack.
9. The higher the rank of the evil spirit, the more spiritual power is needed to bind it.
10. **Never invade the devil's turf without clear orders from the Lord.** An old saying truthfully acknowledges, "There is no safer place than in the center of God's will; there is no more dangerous place than outside of it." When not spiritually protected, the darkness can overcome not only the situation but also the individuals involved in the situation.
11. Move out of the enemy's territory when the battle is beyond you.
12. Most of the limited knowledge and experience in this area comes from those ministering within evangelistic efforts. They experience success in evangelistic efforts only after **breaking the power of the enemy** over a church, neighborhood, or city.
13. The unseen world of dark spirits, as depicted in Frank Peretti's novels (*This Present Darkness* and *Piercing the Darkness*), may be very close to reality.

Is the existence of territorial spirits scriptural?

Below are scriptures which mention territorial gods:

1. Genesis 11:9: At the Tower of Babel, a typical ziggurat—a well-known ancient structure designed for occult purposes (God destroyed it by confounding the languages).
2. 1 Kings 11:5: Solomon goes after Ashtoreth—the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom—the abomination of the Ammonites.
3. 1 Kings 20:23: The Israelites fear their opponents are "*gods of the hills,*" whom they think are stronger than they are.
4. 2 Kings 17:9-18 and 29-31: Israel made gods of their own and worshiped idols.
5. 2 Kings 21:3: Manasseh built idols and served them and worshiped all the host of heaven.
6. Judges 8:33: As soon as Gideon was dead, the children of Israel turned again and went a-whoring after Baalim and made Baalberith their god.
7. Jeremiah 50:2-3: Jeremiah prophesies; "*Bel is confounded and Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces.*"
8. Daniel 10:13-20: speaks of the Prince of Persia.
9. Acts 19:23-41: the people in Ephesus worshipped the goddess Diana.
10. Revelation 9:11: Abaddon is identified as the angel (also a "king") over the bottomless pit.

Defiled or polluted land is mentioned over fifteen times in the Bible (Ps. 106:38, Is. 24:5, Jer. 2:7 and 3:1).

Scriptures commanding the children of Israel to “*destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places*” (such as in Num. 33:52) are too numerous to mention. The order given to the Israelites for the Ten Commandments was of no accident (first, to **have no other god's before me**, and second, to **make no graven images**); throughout their history Israel had problems with both of these commandments.

Why do territorial spirits appear?

Land and places can be blessed or cursed by the actions of the people upon them. (Note Gen. 4:10-11, where God is talking to Cain, stating “*What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand,*” and when, upon Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, Jesus said, “*I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out*” (Luke 19:40).

These scriptures and others which follow suggest **the earth has a spirit**. How do powers of darkness establish territorial strongholds? They do so through land defilement, through the sins of the people, through the worship of other gods and idols, and through occult practices. As carcasses attract the vultures of the air, likewise defiled land attracts spiritual wickedness. **Where the land has been defiled, demons cluster**.

What sustains the **demons**? They are perpetuated as the traditions and beliefs and the same evil sins, attitudes, and cultures of the past continue. Just as with people, demons remain as generational curses **until** they are ejected by the blood of Jesus.

Ruling spirits, however, have no authority to move into an area without permission. Certain conditions have given them authority to set up the base of their kingdom, from which they rule over the people in that area. These conditions are frequently referred to as “**strongholds**.” When a territory has been inhabited by persons who have sinned, the land becomes contaminated, and those territorial spirits have obtained a spiritual right to remain there, thereby keeping the inhabitants captive.

Many scriptures point to the pollution of the land and curses that came upon it from the sins of the people who lived there. Leviticus 18:25 states, “*the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants.*” Also, Ezra 9:11 states, “*The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is **an unclean land with the filthiness of the people** ... which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness.*”

Let us not be deceived into thinking that only violations of the first and second commandments contaminate the land. Corporate (group) sins, such as the following, have been known to do likewise.

Judgmentalism	Immorality
Criticalness	Unforgiveness
Sectarianism	False teaching
Strife	Luke-warmness
Divisions	Self-righteousness

Narrow-mindedness	Arrogance
Strongholds of tradition	Apathy or complacency
Legalism	Pride
Religious apathy	Control
Financial stinginess	Poor stewardship
Self-centered spirituality	Believing gossip and rumor
Unwillingness to evangelize	Unwillingness to confront sin

Well-recognized sins of America include:

- Sins against the American Indians (over 350 treaties were broken)
- Slavery
- The oppression of the Jews through anti-Semitism
- The internment of Japanese Americans during World War II
- The arrogance of the American people
- Materialism

How can territorial spirits be identified?

How do you minister freedom within a corporate church body? ... in the same way you minister freedom to an individual: **find the entrance that allowed the demon(s) to infiltrate and close it through repentance.**

How do you discover the things which God wants to heal in your church or your land? You do so through a form of **spiritual investigation** or spiritual espionage, which gives information from which to pray intelligently against the strongholds which corporate sin has allowed to enter. Some term this process, **spiritual mapping**—or seeing with our spiritual eyes the spiritual forces and strongholds which hold us back from God's purposes, giving somewhat of a "spiritual x-ray of the situation in the heavens" and over the church. Refer to Ezekiel 4:1-2 as an example of spiritual mapping, where God instructs Ezekiel to make a map of the city of Jerusalem on a clay tablet, then "*lay siege against it.*" This obviously refers to spiritual (and not conventional) warfare.

It is to our advantage to **know who the strongman is in order to properly bind him and divide his spoils** (Mat. 12:29, Mark 3:27, Luke 11:21-22). **Spiritual mapping helps us identify the strongman.** In some cases, this process will give us a **series of characteristics** that will guide us directly to the territorial prince or power. In other cases, we find ourselves facing a flesh-and-blood person whom Satan is using. And in still other cases, we find ourselves face-to-face with a corrupt social structure.

This mapping process is accomplished through several relevant steps, as identified below:

1. Study and research the history and heritage of the land on which the church is located (and the area nearby). At some point in time the church lot was probably a subdivided part of a much larger tract of land. Research in libraries and through court-

- house records and old newspapers. **Look specifically for points of defilement**, such as bloodshed, broken contracts, broken covenants, and racial prejudices.
2. Within your religious movement, learn the history of your particular congregation. What were their trials and how did they come about? Are there any clues as to individual or corporate sins that may cause present-day oppression?
 3. **Gather a group of congregational leaders together for a time of prayer and discernment.** Utilize an outside facilitator to help the group discuss together the redemptive gifts (strengths) of the congregation as well as the areas of dark strongholds (weaknesses) that may exist (in the past and in the present) over the congregation. Expect the Holy Spirit to give insight. Be aware that **God is more interested in your church being set free than you are.** (The book “*Setting Your Church Free*” is very helpful in addressing this step.)
 4. Ask individuals with the gift of intercession and discernment to pray for your congregation to help identify any oppression that exists. These persons may or may not be members of your congregation. If not, invite them to your meetings when undertaking this process.
 5. If you discern that there are spirits over the church land or congregation, it is helpful to know their proper names (such as, Kali, Iara, Pele) and/or functional names—emphasizing what they do (for example, **a spirit of division causes division**, etc.). Those who pray to deliver people from demonic oppression have long-since learned, generally speaking, that results are much greater when the evil spirits are identified and specifically commanded to leave in the name of Jesus, rather than ministering with a vague prayer, as in “Lord, if there are any spirits here, we command them all to leave in your name.”

Guidelines in the Identification Effort

1. Locate the geographical area over which you have spiritual authority—the church lot, or no larger than the block on which it is located (see **warnings** discussed below under item 11, “Summary”).
2. **Pray to know God's plan of attack and timing.**
3. Secure the unity of church or congregational leaders.
4. Project a clear image, identifying that this claim is for the whole body and not just for the leaders.
5. Insure the spiritual preparation of the leaders through repentance, humility, and holiness (refer to item 1, “Personal Repentance,” identified below).
6. Do the historical background research.
7. Work with intercessors specifically gifted for this kind of ministry.
8. Identify:
 - Redemptive gifts of the church
 - Satan's strongholds in the immediate area
 - Territorial spirits assigned to the church body or land
 - Corporate sin—past and present
 - Spiritual insight (which should confirm what you already know through research)

God will enlighten the group of **an honest appraisal of their weaknesses before they inherit the promises**. God subtracts before He multiplies. Something must die before it can be resurrected.

How to Remove Oppressive Spiritual Influences

Spiritual warfare begins at a personal level and escalates through layers of increasing difficulty, from personal and family to church life and beyond, into the city and country. The process of removal must begin with **personal confession and repentance** and should precede the “Guidelines in the Identification Effort” above.

1. **Personal Repentance:** Evil spirits seek to control a personality or character. They find their entrance into a person's life through past generational curses and sins, current sins and iniquities, idolatry, victimization, trauma, occult objects or practices, trauma at an early age, unforgiveness, and forms of personal defilement, such as immorality. When these occur, a door is opened in our spiritual hedge of protection (refer to Job 1:6-12) that allows the dark influences to seek control of that part of our spirit or personality. Almost always the person is not aware a door is open or that they are influenced, because **Satan blinds us to our own sin and dwells and works in darkness**. Our spirits then experience the same “spiritual pollution” spoken of previously for churches and lands. **We must be clean ourselves first before we can expect to successfully clean our church and church land.**

The process is the same for personal sins as it is for corporate sins:

- We identify the sin(s).
- We confess and repent of these sins to God and to our brethren (1 John 1:9).
- We pray the doors of our hedge be closed.

This process is foreign to most church members and will require assistance from a knowledgeable and experienced facilitator in order for this to be accomplished satisfactorily. A 3-5 hour workshop for this purpose is strongly recommended before any attempt is made to identify corporate strongholds—or else we will be blinded to Satan’s activities and we will not be able to hear the Lord’s voice (there is too much other “garbage” in the way).

Our own sins seriously restrict our spiritual hearing and seeing. (A good resource with regard to this matter is within Part I of *Setting Your Church Free*, by Neil Anderson; however, he does not deal directly with **the expelling of evil spirits that may inhabit persons**, which is a major oversight.) At this point, **be prepared for resistance**.

In addition, most Christians do not believe they can be influenced or inhabited by evil spirits. Our experience in over 400 prayer counseling sessions, however, indicates that over 90% of those who come to us have dark influences from within oppressing them. **Leaders should go first**, in humbling themselves through the confession of their faults. Usually spontaneous outbursts of worship follow this time of repentance.

Success will not come until **the principle of agreement** (based on harmonious relationships) is employed. *"If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand"* (Mark 3:24). Be aware that **spiritual authority is present in direct proportion to the harmony of relationships among the believers** as they move together toward a common goal.

2. **Pray to Bind the Strongman:** This step is best accomplished within a corporate meeting and can be greatly mediated through the leadership of an experienced facilitator (helpful suggestions are noted in Part II of *Setting Your Church Free*). Begin by praying and claiming the protection of Psalms 91. (This may be done by persons in turn, or in a Korean style prayer where all are praying out loud at the same time, sometimes quite loudly. Refer also to Mat. 12:28-29, Mark 3:27, Luke 11:21-22.)
3. **Identificational Repentance:** Once the personal cleansing has taken place, and the strongholds identified and bound, the group is ready to proceed with the step of identificational repentance. This process occurs **when a person identifies the corporate sins of current or previous generations and is willing to stand in their stead to repent for them** (remit the sins). Remember, *"Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained"* (John 20:23).

Sin can be recognized as having two parts: the sin itself and the iniquity or consequences of the sin. (For example, if a drunk driver has an accident and injures someone, the sin is on the head of the drunk driver but the consequences of the sin accrue to those injured or killed.)

Exodus 20:5 informs us, *"... visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."* Within this scripture, the children did not sin—but **the consequences of their father's sin** follows them through a generational curse **until** the original sin(s) are repented of and covered by the blood of Jesus. This does not mean that each person is not personally responsible before God for his or her own individual sins? Jesus took upon himself our sins and died on the cross for us that we might be made free. We, likewise, are able to stand in the stead of another (person or group, living or dead) and **pray for their repentance, asking that the consequences of the original sin be removed**. See examples of this practice are given below:

- a. 2 Samuel 21:1, 3: *"Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year; and David enquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.... Wherefore David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you? and **wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the LORD?**"*
- b. Daniel 9:5-7: Daniel repented on behalf of his ancestors and prayed for corporate sin.
- c. Nehemiah 1:6-7: Nehemiah confessed the sins of Israel. Also, *"... **the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers"*** (Neh. 9:2).
- d. Refer to other scriptures characterizing identificational repentance (Ezra 9:5-15 and Jer. 3:25, 14:7 and 20).

4. **Confess Corporate Sins:** One or more persons (in turn) can stand and confess the corporate sins. If a representative of an offended group is available, it is beneficial to confess directly to that person and ask for forgiveness publicly, such as in the case of segregation, discrimination, or sins against the American Indians. If unforgiveness exists against current members, it is most beneficial to publicly ask for forgiveness.

When remitting the sins, Nehemiah and Daniel confessed their personal sins as well as the corporate sins of their people. Those who **remit the sins of others** must not fail to identify personally with the sins that were or are being committed, even though they might not personally be as guilty of them as they are of other sins.

5. **Pray the Sins Be Remitted:** As the leader directs, the group may pray individually that the sins be remitted or they may pray all together at the same time. Any strongholds or corporate sins need to be identified and prayed for.

When we have discerned the activity of a **principality with a particular characteristic**, we need to **cultivate the opposite characteristic**—not only through resisting temptation but by demonstrating positive action. Is the enemy tempting us to be fearful and stingy? We would come against this greed with hilarious generosity. We'd overcome pride with humility and lust with purity; we'd overcome fear with faith and lethargy with diligence.

Along with resisting temptation and taking positive action, we also are responsible for releasing God's power when we declare His Word aloud. Within **our right of dominion** is the privilege of **speaking into existence the purposes of God** as He reveals His mind to us. We speak *in* the name of Jesus, *through* the power of the Holy Spirit, *because* of the shed blood of Jesus, *with* the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

6. **Staking the Property:** Literally using Isaiah 33:20-23, some congregations have found it helpful to physically stake the corners of their property. Obtain stakes (2" x 2") for each corner of the property and write scriptures upon them, such as, "*Resist the devil, and he will flee from you*" (Jas. 4:7). Then take a group to each corner of the property and **pray prayers of protection**; pray the power of the blood of Jesus and dedication of the grounds. Drive the stakes into the ground to symbolically secure a "spiritual canopy" and to define the boundaries of the land dedicated to God. **Give notice to the adversary** that everything on the land and the people are committed to God.

In Summary

1. Satan's kingdom is a limited hierarchy of evil spirits, with order, authority, and a chain of command.

2. High-ranking, supernatural principalities and powers (Eph. 6) seek to dominate geographic areas, cities, peoples, and subcultures.
3. While God's Word tells believers to treat such beings with respect, it also commands us to take them captive, to **bind the strongman**, to plunder his goods, and to tear down the rule and authority of the evil one within our own area of influence and authority (see **warnings** discussed below under item 11).
4. We, as believers, are given authority to **overcome the enemy** as a result of Jesus' victory.
5. We must **strategically apply God's Word and power** based on discernment of the unseen realm.
6. We need to **overcome the enemy** before we employ methods of ministry among the people.
7. **Our efforts should be covered with a great deal of praise and worship.** In the days of King Jehoshaphat (2 Chr. 20), God defeated Judah's enemies through the singing of praise instead of through direct military action: "... *he appointed singers unto the LORD, ... to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever. And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten*" (2 Chr. 20:21-22). **A sure way to get rid of darkness is to turn on the light.** Establish the Lord's presence in the midst of His people through praise (Ps. 22:3).
8. **Travail until birth.** The success of a spiritual victory for your church is directly affected by **two spiritual conditions**: the intensity of your desire and the size of your faith. **That which is conceived of God will eventually come to birth.** Maintain a **holy stubbornness** when praying for breakthrough. Seasons of harvest will come. New ministries will be birthed. However, these things will not occur instantly. **God's plan is always longer than our plan.**
9. Remember, spiritual warfare is not a goal in itself but a tool for more effective evangelism and ministry. Our goal is not exclusively to expose satanic strongholds and bind principalities and powers; **our goal is to restore God's glory to every detail of His creation and purpose.** The real battle for effective evangelism and ministry is a **spiritual battle.**
10. **Plan for the future.** Your church has a corporate past, present, and future. Your part of God's family has a gift, a promise, and a territory to take. It is essential for you to **understand what God has called your congregation to be and to do**, if you are to successfully complete the word God has given for your people and your church.
11. Two major **warnings** apply:
 - a. **Don't venture beyond your own area of spiritual influence and authority without specific direction from God.** Doing so removes you from the protective spiritual canopy and exposes you to the enemy's weapons. Doing so also encounters a **sin of presumption**—of making an attempt to extend God's

Kingdom without His specific direction. **You have authority to pray for your church but not the city or strongholds of the city (such as porno shops) unless God so directs** (read *Needless Casualties of War* by John Paul Jackson).

- b. **Don't focus on the darkness more than you focus on the light.** While some consideration must be given to the powers of darkness in this process, the more attention they receive, the more they will collect.

Praying Against Territorial Spirits

1. **Read ten books on this subject before doing anything.** The first one should be *Engaging the Enemy* (by C. Peter Wagoner, Editor; read the section on page 145 by Vernon Sterk).
2. The level of spiritual victory depends upon (1) the intensity of your desire and (2) the size of your faith.
3. **Do not (individually) try to pray against territorial spirits;** normally it requires a whole church (or a group of churches in a specific area) to provide sufficient spiritual power to overcome the darkness.
4. Getting the exact name(s) of the spirits at any level is not crucial but it is important to **be aware of the specific nature or type of oppression.**
5. The higher the rank of the spirit, the more spiritual power is needed to bind it.
6. **We must initiate the action.** Every verse in the Bible dealing with warfare prayer indicates that the action begins on earth.
7. Warfare prayer is best done by groups of highly motivated, spiritual intercessors.
8. Ask the Lord for the names or nature of the oppressive spirits.
9. Repent for and confess the sins of those who lived and died before in that particular location.

Resources

Most Helpful:

1. Rebecca Greenwood, *Authority to Tread*, (Chosen Books, 2005) ISBN 0-8007-9387-0
2. Bob Beckett, *Commitment to Conquer: Redeeming Your City by Strategic Intercession* (Chosen Books, 1997). ISBN 0800792521.
3. C. Peter Wagner, *Breaking Strongholds in Your City* (Regal Books, 1993). ISBN 0-8307-1638-6.

Somewhat Helpful:

4. C. Peter Wagner, *Warfare Prayer* (Regal Books, 1992). ISBN 0-8307-1513-4.
5. C. Peter Wagner, *Engaging the Enemy* (Gospel Light Publications, 1995). ISBN 0830717692
6. John Dawson, *Taking Our Cities for God* (Creation House, 1989). ISBN 0-88419-241-5.
7. Cindy Jacobs, *The Voice of God* (Regal Books, 1995): 229-51. ISBN 0-8307-1773-0.
8. Cindy Jacobs, *Possessing the Gates of the Enemy* (1991): 222-47. ISBN 0-8007-9223-8.
- 9.. Kathie Walters, *The Spirit of False Judgement* (Good News Fellowship Ministries, 1995). ISBN 0926955957.
10. John Paul Jackson, *Needless Casualties of War* (Streams Publications, 1999). ISBN 158483-000X.
11. Neil F. Anderson and Charles M. Mylander, *Setting Your Church Free*, (Regal Books, 1994). ISBN 0830716556. This book includes two sections—one for bringing freedom to members of the congregation and the other for bringing freedom to the church through 7 steps: (1) Our Church's Strengths, (2) Our Weaknesses, (3) Memories, (4) Identifying and Repenting of Corporate Sins, (5) Identifying Spiritual Attacks of the Enemy Because of What the Church Is Doing Right, (6) Prayer Action Plan and (7) Leadership Strategy. The book does not, however, discuss principalities and powers or spiritual warfare, which is a serious omission.).