

Arming God:
Demons, Myth and Text in Spiritual Warfare
Christianity

by

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0. Demons in the World

In January of 2010, as the tremors in Haiti subsided, Pat Robertson went on record with the following:

“Something happened a long time ago in Haiti, and people might not want to talk about it. They were under the heel of the French, y’know, Napoleon the Third and whatever, and they got together and swore a pact to the devil. They said we will serve you if you will get us free from the French. True story. And so the devil said okay it’s a deal, they kicked the French out, the Haitians revolted and got themselves free, but ever since they’ve been cursed by one thing after the other, desperately poor. That island of Hispaniola is one island, it’s cut down the middle, on the one side is Haiti on the other side is the Dominican Republic. The Dominican is prosperous, healthy, full of resorts, etcetera. Haiti is in desperate poverty, same island! They need to have and we need to pray for them a great turning to God, and out of this tragedy I’m optimistic something good might come, but right now we’re helping the suffering people, and the suffering is unimaginable.”¹

On national television, Robertson asserted that the apocryphal story of vodoun’s pact with spirits constituted both a covenant with Satan and an action provoking God’s wrath. This statement, uttered by a man famous for politically contentious views², would be inexplicable, dismissible as fundamentalist lunacy, if it were not part of a larger pattern of demonic resurgence in American culture.

¹ "Pat Robertson - Haiti's Pact w/ Devil Created Earthquake," YouTube, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59NCduEhkBM> (accessed April 11, 2010).

² As on the days after 9/11, when Jerry Falwell’s assertion of homosexual responsibility for the attacks on New York was accompanied by Robertson nodding his head.

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In June 2009, a Bridgeport, CT church made headlines with a YouTube video portraying a Christian pastor exorcising homosexual demon spirits. In the ceremony, recorded by Manifested Glories Ministries, a boy thrashes about as the congregation looks on and a minister exhorts the demon spirit out of his flailing body in the name of Jesus. The video continues for nine minutes, the boy slipping between a semi-comatose state and wild motion while the shouting preacher, aided by parishioners, calls down divine power to rid the boy of his homosexual demons. The original video was quickly removed, but whole and fragmented copies of it rapidly multiplied on YouTube. As of April 9 2010, there are 253 copies, and the more popular videos have hundreds of thousands of views.³

On March 16 2010, Texas Republican Louis Gohmert declared that demons had taken over the Capitol, exerting their influence on Democratic politicians to make them lie about healthcare reforms. Demons were linked to anti-healthcare sentiment, because according to Gohmert, "it would take a demon to be this dishonest about a bill."⁴

Drawn from YouTube and the Huffington Post, these examples are situated in a medium suited to constant replication, and it is not surprising that their presence elicits a great deal of attention. They seem to be an object situated outside of the world, one whose relegation to the domain of imagination and

³ "Manifested Glory Ministries Exorcism Video (FULL) - Manifested Glory Gay Exorcism," YouTube, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhedHERfcXk> (accessed April 11, 2010).

⁴ Sam Stein, "Texas Republican Gohmert: Demons Have Invaded The Capital," The Huffington Post, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/03/16/texas-republican-gohmert_n_500805.html (accessed April 11, 2010).

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storytelling took place hundreds of years ago. The explicit tone of the commentary appearing around these cultural objects is either derisive or defensive, but always exhibiting an awareness of the fractious power these sorts of objects possess. The comment section under the YouTube video, for instance, abounds with Christians calling for more deliverance, mocking barbs aimed at Christians, religious and secular critiques of deliverance ministry, and racist epithets linking deliverance ministry to “cults” coded as primitive mind control.⁵ A similar type of response is found in response to Gohmert and Robertson’s remarks. In these objects, demons make their presence known and are immediately subject to divisive invective aiming to reaffirm multiple positions relative to demonic existence. Situated in this fashion, demons’ presence in the world is always multiply signified, representing a site of discursive struggle for the ontological structure of existence.

Demons do not, however, rest only in mass cultural forms of communication, nor is their presence capable of relegation to a far-distant sphere of human activity, something “those kooks over there” might do and displaying their primitiveness. I knew this when I started this thesis, as my university is less than an hour away from Bridgeport, but in late March of 2010, a trip I took to the Rite-Aid on Main Street in Middletown for allergy medication found more demons, conveniently situated next to the pharmacy counter. The objects I found were a book by Derek Prince, one of the authors I work with in

⁵ Manifested Glory Ministries, at least as represented in this video, is an African-American congregation, and the commentary reinscribes notions of black Otherness opposed to normal white evangelical Christianity.

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this study, entitled *Secrets of a Prayer Warrior*, another book by Dennis McCallum, *Satan and His Kingdom*, and a Bible bound with a camouflage cover.⁶ Taken together, these objects represent the work of an author whose books I have studied, an author outside of my assemblage of texts speaking on the same subjects, and a copy of Christianity's holy text wrapped in a militaristic imagery. These books are an everyday parallel to Robertson, Gohmert and Manifested Glory Ministries: demons, and the fight against demons, seem to be present in American culture, not as figments of pop cultural imagination but as real, ontologically stable actors working at all levels of the world as interpreted by Christians, but contested in broader discursive usage.

Drawing on this observation, that demons continue to retain a vital presence in the world even as their ontology is disputed, this thesis is concerned with spiritual warfare in contemporary Protestant/neo-Pentecostal Christianity. Spiritual warfare, as an orienting term for this thesis, represents a particular strand of Christian practice essentially reliant on a binary opposition between God and Satan construed as the preeminent conflict recorded in world history. The two words comprising the term, "spiritual" and "warfare," reflect the different facets of conducting a war against Satan. This is a spiritual practice, participating in religious meaning-making oriented towards Christian mythology and reflecting social concerns, and it is a real war, incorporating conflict, enemy

⁶ There were multiple copies of each text. Perhaps interestingly, neither the CVS or the Walgreen's I subsequently visited had any more books on spiritual warfare. Dennis McCallum does not appear again in this work, and here serves only to show the incompleteness of my sample of warfare texts.

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combatants, casualties, loss and victory.⁷ Spiritual warfare, like modern armed combat, has multiplied into a variegated set of interrelated technologies and tactics; There are different ways to fight the devil, such as spiritual mapping (broad territorial-level warfare aimed at rebuking spirits ruling over geographic regions),⁸ intercessory prayer invoking protection for a distant ally, or deliverance ministry, “exorcism” purifying the human bodies of demonic spirits.

I focus on spiritual warfare read on an interpersonal level as a way of ordering the world, a process of religious meaning-making whose practice reflects ordinary human concerns for personal health, economic security and global injustice. I have structured this thesis as an inquiry into world-formation seeking to explain the way that spiritual warfare, as a practice, reorders the world for its participants, calling demons to life and setting them in opposition to Christ. Therefore, my work focuses mostly on deliverance ministry and direct combat against demons, while also addressing the cosmological implications of individual human action against demons. My intent is to examine the ties between the immensity of God’s conflict with Satan and the brutal immediacy of demonic attack, the way that myth, hermeneutic and texts work together to transpose human action into a cosmic frame. In performing this work, spiritual warfare authors tie human agency into universal systems of opposition. Spiritual warfare discourse seeks to reveal the machinations of demons at work in personal trauma, global conflict and cosmic evil, and thus offers demonic

⁷ Myth is used in its technical sense. See chapter 3.

⁸ As in the examples of Gohmert and Robertson.

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existence as a rationale for human suffering, misery and discontent. My goal, in this thesis, is to articulate the structure and logic of this rationale as it comes to form a world for spiritual warfare Christians. Spiritual warfare is a practice, but the mythic structure undergirding this practice makes belief in warfare's efficacy a marker of a specific Christian identity, produced in the past half century of Protestant history.

Spiritual warfare is a movement with its theological roots placed firmly in Pentecostalism, a branch of modern Christian practice originating in the 1901 Azusa Street Revival and typically categorized with "charismatic" Christianity. "Charismatic," in this sense, is used to indicate a broad cross-section of modern Christianity characterized by Simon Coleman as displaying Pentecostal tropes (glossolalia, faith healing) but increasingly able to move beyond denominational boundaries. It is possible, for instance, "to talk of charismatic Lutherans, charismatic Presbyterians and so on, implying the ability of such a 'genre' of worship to attach itself to a multitude of theological orientations and, increasingly, to the middle classes."⁹ Following on this fluid adaptivity, Lamin Sanneh, in *Disciples of All Nations*, argues that "charismatic Christianity has been the driving engine of the Third Awakening, and is largely responsible for the dramatic shift in [Christianity]'s center of gravity." He cites the massive surge in charismatic/Pentecostal Christianity in the Global South over the past thirty years to suggest that, in the future, "Pentecostal Christianity may become the

⁹ Simon Coleman, *The Globalisation of Charismatic Christianity: Spreading the Gospel of Prosperity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 22.

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most widespread form of the religion, with as yet unquantifiable effects on mainline churches and on global politics.” His claim is supported by statistics indicating explosive growth in Pentecostal Christianity; seventy-two million charismatics in 1970 has grown to 590 million today, and is projected to hit 800 million by 2025.¹⁰ Charismatic Christianity, more specifically its Pentecostal branch, is the field in which spiritual warfare takes root.

According to Donald Dayton’s *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, Pentecostal Christianity frames its theology around a four or fivefold pattern of theological emphasis, which Dayton deploys as a frame for a historical analysis of Pentecostal traces pre-Azusa.¹¹ In historicizing the movement, Dayton argues that Pentecostalism has always stressed salvation in Jesus through conversion, healing through faith, baptism in the Holy Spirit and the Second Coming of Christ. Holiness, a fifth term as the “entire sanctification” of human moral and spiritual life after conversion,¹² has had a conflicted status in Pentecostal history, and serves as a marker between the Holiness churches and the Assemblies of God, which represent the main denominational branches of modern Pentecostalism.¹³

Although this theological framework (with or without holiness) is applicable to spiritual warfare, spiritual warfare practitioners are not constrained by denominational boundaries. In the last half century,

¹⁰ Lamin Sanneh, *Disciples of All Nations: Pillars of World Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 275.

¹¹ Donald W. Dayton, *The Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1987), 21.

¹² Ibid. 18

¹³ Ibid., 20-21

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Pentecostalism has seen the rise of the New Apostolic Reformation, a neo-Pentecostal movement espousing traditional Pentecostal theology, but lacking an institutionalized denominational social structure and focused on spiritual warfare, deliverance and demonic possession.¹⁴ Neo-Pentecostalism, as a historical occurrence of the past fifty years, replicates Pentecostal theology without adhering to Pentecostal institutions, substituting ministry for denomination as the foundation of Christian group belonging. Ministry multiply signifies the spiritual work of Christian pastors, the power structure supporting that work, the associated teachings and doctrines of a given pastor and the enabling field of Christian discourse in which the participant can locate their own identity as Christian human beings. Ministries are often identified with their pastors, and parishioners participate in both the act and group life of ministry; warfare ministry presents a decentralized religious power structure without explicit lines of institutional control and authority over theological doctrine. Warfare ministers demonstrate spiritual wisdom through their avowed belief in Pentecostal theology, but the power they accumulate rests outside of the bounds of systems of denominational control.

Ministry in neo-Pentecostal Christianity is a multifaceted, shifting object representing both a spiritual calling and an economic enterprise for the Christians involved in it. This thesis focuses on the work of four Pentecostal and

¹⁴ Anthea Butler, "Prosperity, Spiritual Warfare, and the "On-Demand" God," *Religion Dispatches*, July 15, 2009, 3, <http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/religionandtheology/1678/> (accessed April 11, 2010).

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neo-Pentecostal ministers whose texts are involved in the war against demons: Derek Prince (1915-2003), Frank Hammond (1922-2005), C. Peter Wagner (b. 1930)¹⁵ and Cindy Jacobs¹⁶. Ministry and text are distinct but interpenetrative objects; texts written on spiritual warfare are incorporated into warfare ministry, assuming its language and style of argumentation. As texts, however, they are also removed from direct contact and conversation. Spiritual warfare is conducted in everyday life, on the level of normal human interactions with the world, but this practice is not directly accessible on the wider, remoter scale of circulating texts. In warfare text, the fluidity and responsivity of personal interaction is stilled so as to create a space in which warfare theology can be inscribed in the text and in the reader.

The texts discussed in this work are inherently linked to each another, as they participate in the continued growth and formulation of warfare discourse. Warfare authors constantly reference each other's ideas, build on each other's authority and repurpose theories in their own setting, establishing and building connections with each another as warfare discourse advances its body of theory. They constitute an assemblage, multiplicitous texts linked through citation and invoked authority which stabilize around concrete ministries by establishing

¹⁵ Technically, only one of the books I attribute to Wagner was written by Wagner himself. *Warfare Prayer* is his work, but the other two represent works published under his authorizing sign. One, by his wife, constantly references her husband's work and aligns perfectly with Wagner's theology, while the other, by a collection of warfare authors including Wagner, is edited by Wagner, and therefore is included in the total accumulation of C. Peter Wagner's approach to demonology.

¹⁶ I could not find Jacobs's date of birth in my books or through Google, but she is the youngest of my authors, having recently been designated Wagner's successor at the head of the New Apostolic Reformation.

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links between the world, the author and the text. These links are so close as to be inseparable; author, text, reader and context constantly interpenetrate each other, to constitute teachings, narratives and mythic imaginations, and they are always directly relevant to the world. Warfare texts link human existence to Biblical truth, encoding a positioned perspective on the demonic embedded in a war with Satan. As articulated through this textual transposition, spiritual warfare is rhizomatic, seeking its growth through the bloom of warfare worldviews in evangelical soil, and winding through the linkages between warfare theory, evangelical Christians, American politics, global religion and pop culture. As a rhizomatic worldview, warfare's transmission in texts takes different forms in different places while remaining bound to a system reproducing demons in the world. Authors communicating warfare theology in books write the mythic structures of their world into a document presenting a claim on the structure of the world subsumed into a mythic war with Satan.¹⁷

¹⁷ This language, of assemblage and rhizome, is drawn from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, "Introduction: Rhizome," introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1987), 7, 10, 11, 21.

I am not, however, arguing that spiritual warfare authors write rhizomatic texts; spiritual warfare is not rhizomatic. It operates according to binary logic, positing fixed structures, modes of interpretation and necessary preconditions for Christian life. Warfare ministry, however, is bulbous, rhizomatic. It expands outward, seeking to inter the fixed systems of a spiritual warfare perspective within the recipient. Spiritual warfare is not a system of thought that permits rhizomaticity, but its mode of growth is extremely rhizomatic. Decentered, dehierarchized, and radically open, these Christian texts can be collected around their concern with demonic influence and spiritual war, but the multiplicity there created, the continuous (in/re)fractions of demonic presences around biblical text, does not at all expend its energies strictly enforcing the actions of evangelists by a certain set of growth schemas. Instead, the freewheeling publication and circulation of these texts represents expansion and growth through and in the reproduction of crystallized, fragile worlds.

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This claim is not, perhaps, particularly remarkable; most published works, including this one, seek to demonstrate the reliability of their claims. What is remarkable about spiritual warfare texts, however, is the polemical response engendered by the ideas in their text. The existence of demons is a marker of division, and reading their presence in texts provokes either rejection or adherence. Because demons are so central to the way that warfare Christians see the world, I am here concerned with the politics of academic engagement with religious belief. Like anybody with a copy of *Pigs in the Parlor*, I am a reader of these texts, but my rejection of their principles for my own life, inscribed in a document written at the early stages of scholarship on spiritual warfare, cannot serve as a universal dismissal.

In this thesis, I want to critique warfare without rejecting the emotional and spiritual resonances it possesses for a vast number of Christians. I am not outside of the discursive audience for spiritual warfare, but as an interlocutor, I have tried to determine the structure of spiritual warfare's world without negating the ontological validity of that worldview. This is perhaps slightly ironic, as in spiritual warfare theology my refusal to see demons is itself a marker of the demons possessing me,¹⁸ but I cannot hold myself outside of this set of texts as an objective observer. Warfare texts are addressed to me, and they are motivated by a concern that human souls, including mine, might escape Armageddon through Christ. My participation in that discourse, while retaining

¹⁸ This is in fact the main point of C. Peter Wagner's *Freedom from the Religious Spirit*, that demons will actively work to impede the progress of spiritual warfare as Christian doctrine.

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its critical stance and general refusal, is not at all a dismissal or negation of warfare belief. If I did that, I would be reinforcing the division demonic presence defines in the world, supporting the polar opposition expressed in the cultural discourse reacting to Robertson, Gohmert and Manifested Glory Ministries.

Because another reader might react more positively to these works, the problem for spiritual warfare transmission is a problem of grappling with context, the different readers and readings that threaten absolute textual authority. A contextual reading of handbooks for spiritual warfare animates my whole project. I read them as a student of religion interested in demonology, spiritual warfare and world construction, and not in order to learn techniques for fighting demons, or as a means of drawing closer to God. I want to understand the ways in which the exertion of theological influence can produce specific effects that alter the structure of reality. Because I am reading these books at my desk in Olin library in Middletown, Connecticut¹⁹ in order to write about them for an academic thesis, my reading of spiritual warfare texts does not carry the promise of freedom from demonic affliction. That interpretation lies dormant in the texts on my desk, ready to be understood correctly by a better reader, and thus marking the discursive effect of context: because the individual circumstances of approach differ greatly, the worldview evoked by these texts cannot be assured of its instantiation in the reader. This mode of transmission

¹⁹ I have also read them in other parts of Olin, the coldest room of my childhood house, on a bus to Pennsylvania, and at a large conference table in Wesleyan's Religion department, a warm and soporific couch on Warren Street and a table covered in coffee cups at Klekolo in town. In all of these situations, I read these texts differently, for different purposes and with different results.

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cannot guarantee the success of warfare evangelism; it can only pose the possibility, and wait nervously for the reader's response.

Methodology and Structure

This thesis is concerned , a massively circumscribed portion of spiritual warfare discourse focusing on thirteen books dealing with demons and the personal possibility of warfare. I chose these books in order to make this project manageable, but even with such a limited sample, I found articulating a coherent perspective on the totality of spiritual warfare to be nearly impossible. They are so densely signified, so packed with biblical specificity and, to my eyes, so far beyond my own modes of standard interpretation that I found it necessary to create two tools in order to represent warfare discourse within the bounds of self-descriptions deployed by warfare authors. The first tool is a collation of biblical references in warfare texts designed to demonstrate the points of exegetical concordance in warfare discourse. In this thesis, I attempt to properly and critically represent spiritual warfare as a logically consistent worldview, and I could not neglect the specificity of warfare hermeneutic in assessing this stability. To understand the structure of this hermeneutic, I collected every biblical reference cited in these texts in order to note the clusters of citations representing dominant texts for my sample of spiritual warfare Christianity.

My second tool is a collection of quotations drawn from warfare texts. By virtue of its subject matter, my topic is already fairly sensationalistic, and my work could be read as an exhibition of Christian lunacy lurking in American

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society. I have tried, therefore, to include as many quotations from warfare texts as possible, so that what I write can avoid slipping into denial. This is, perhaps, a little naïve; my affective response to the texts and necessary implication in their work automatically distorts any pretension to dispassionate observation, and my process of selecting important citations is evident through this work, but it is nevertheless significantly better to represent warfare authors in their own words.

The structure of my thesis can be roughly broken down into form, content and conversion, expressing the process of reading warfare texts, interpreting their significance and transmitting their contents to a broader audience. In chapter one, I consider the hermeneutics and biblical authority of spiritual warfare discourse as a way of understanding the necessary structure of spiritual warfare. Within the Bible text, warfare authors read about demons, Satan and God, and their attempts to identify and relate those figures to modern life is my focus in chapter two, where I reconstruct the alterity of demons as it confirms Christian identity according to warfare hermeneutic. Chapter three discusses myth, war and the Kingdom of God in warfare discourse, addressing the narratives whose signification in warfare speech frames and shapes the reconstruction of the world expressed in that speech. Finally, in chapter four, I consider apocalypse, evangelism and textuality to identify the urgency and grammar of warfare evangelism, as the whole structure of spiritual warfare is brought to bear on other human worldviews.

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This approach attempts to unfold the densely signified world of warfare Christianity, using its extant textual discourse to demonstrate the internal logic of this emergent, growing form of contemporary Christian identity. As spiritual warfare spreads, encompassing ever-wider spheres of human life, this discourse constantly affirms its solidity and authority to redescribe the world in the process of uncovering, confronting and defeating the demonic actors at work in human society. Constantly mediated by the Bible as a mythically authoritative narrative, warfare Christianity rephrases existence as a call to constant struggle against Satan, whose origin and doom are narrated in the Bible. The double invocation of the Bible, as evidence authorizing itself, demands a reconstruction of the specific hermeneutic of spiritual warfare Christianity.

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“Jesus did not play games with words. He who is Truth never agrees with error.”²⁰

In Acts 19, the apostle Paul finds himself in Ephesus, testifying about the Kingdom of God, performing miracles and healings, anointing twelve disciples in the name of Jesus and casting down the power of the evil spirits causing disease in the population. Mimicking these feats, seven Jewish exorcists try to invoke the power of Jesus used by Paul, but the demons do not respond. Their host overwhelms and humiliates the exorcists, and the townsfolk, overwhelmed at the sight of this event, confess their sins, praise Jesus and burn their books of magic. “So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed” (Acts 19:20) by defeating demons.²¹

Later in the New Testament canon, a letter attributed to Paul is addressed to the inhabitants of Ephesus. Written in the style of the Letters to the Corinthians and Romans, the writer posits a moral code, a social order and a cosmology of heaven as ideals for the now-clean community in Ephesus, as well

²⁰ Frank Hammond and Ida Mae Hammond, *Manual for Children's Deliverance* (Kirkwood, MO: Impact Christian Books, 1996), 11.

²¹ Susan Garrett, a scholar of Luke-Acts, identifies precisely this mechanism as the index of Pauline victory in Acts. See Susan R. Garrett, *The Demise of the Devil: Magic and the Demonic in Luke's Writing* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989).

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as something else entirely: demons, Satan's kingdoms and spiritual war placed at the heart of Christian life.

"For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

Eph. 6:12 NSRV

The Letter to the Ephesians is probably not Paul's writing. This text is incorporated into the Christian canon, despite a scholarly consensus that its anonymous author was imitating the more famous writer of Romans.²² As a canonical document, Ephesians occupies a liminal space in the New Testament, both inside and outside authoritative Christian discourse. If it rests within the safety of biblical truth, the Letter to the Ephesians is inviolate, God's word, unequivocal. Without that surety of interpretation, Ephesians is a minor fictive effort within the larger world building pursued by early followers of Jesus. Depending on the positionality of its reader, Ephesians gains or loses the status of absolute truth without changing the content of its text. Within that text, and in the rest of the Bible, we can discern a repositioning of human subjectivity in the act of reading, interpreting and using scripture as an interpretive frame reconstructing reality.

I draw attention to the text of Ephesians because spiritual warfare authors obsess over it. The liminality of Ephesians, particularly Ephesians 6:12, contains in miniature the central problematic for warfare discourse, and it therefore serves as an index for my attempt to unravel warfare hermeneutics in

²² Burton L. Mack, *Who Wrote the New Testament?* (New York: HarperOne, 1995), 184.

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this chapter. The Letter contains embodied invisible enemies, divided planes of existence, shades of a dark army working its will through sites of institutional power, and a call to war, to reclaim heaven and the world from the forces of evil. This text, an anonymous writing given theological supremacy in warfare discourse, was my first and primary indicator that warfare Christians inhabit a world whose contours are very different from mine. Biblical ideas, and the way in they are constructed through a certain hermeneutics, are formative for a spiritual warfare worldview. Derek Prince says it best:

“The place that God’s Word has in our lives is the place that God himself has...your attitude towards the Word is your attitude towards God.”²³

Two terms are central to this discussion: positionality and hermeneutic, the second term determining, deferring to and indicating the first. Positionality represents being in the world, and, in particular, the mode of locating the self relative to the rest of existence in space. It demands a viewpoint and an understanding of the relationship between a conscious individual, the institutions that order society, the entities that inhabit the natural and spiritual world and the relative positions of other human beings. Hermeneutic, the act of reading, is enabled by positionality. As reading is not a singular action, there is always more than one way to read a given text, and texts, particularly those invested with religious significance, can profoundly shape human interactions with the world. Therefore, a mode of reading represents a mode of being and

²³ Derek Prince, *War in Heaven* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2003), 98-99.

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experience conditioned by a particular response to a particular text. Determined in language, hermeneutic difference reflects differences in positionality, identity and worldview. Easy examples abound: *The New York Times* is either a bastion of the newspaper industry, a decrepit organ for liberal propaganda, a leading institution of a dying art form, or a mouthpiece for a particularly affected upper-middle class lifestyle. Given the equality of different readings, none of these interpretations dominates the others, and without power structures privileging one (or a few) interpretation(s), none can claim absolute authority. Texts encode multiplicities, and their readers are not unified in their response. Hermeneutic, which by definition suggests multiple and different ways of reading, allows positionality to emerge out of reading a text by determining the position of the reader relative to the words on the page as well as other human beings reading the same words in other contexts.

Thus, the problem with Ephesians: for some scholars, the letter is false, and for warfare authors, it is unequivocally true. The Bible is a world-shaping text whose strictures are no longer assumed to be automatically universal; God's Word is contested as an epistemologically stable document possessing absolute interpretations, and therefore the absolute relationship of humanity to God's Word comes into doubt. The Bible is a text formative to Western thought whose characters are entrenched in Western culture, but its veracity, and its legitimacy as an authority in the modern period, is never totally assured. For certain Western evangelical Christians, the sacral iteration of biblical hermeneutic in Christian discourse lends it absolute interpretive authority, and the existence of

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different hermeneutics denying that essential sacredness takes that authority away. Bible truth, as a frame of reference, is subject to the cyclical assumption and negation of authority emerging out of different readings by different readers. My goal is to take that hermeneutic difference seriously by positioning the Bible in relation to its role in authorizing a spiritual warfare worldview.

In this chapter, I do not spend much time on Ephesians. Warfare authors quote it extensively, and its meaning is relatively clear: we are in a war with evil powers whose presence we cannot identify through human perception. I explore the mechanics and structure of this war in a later in chapter but here, I have in mind a slightly bigger target. I am attempting to construct a provisional outline of the neo-Pentecostal spiritual warfare hermeneutic as it structures the warfare worldview. Towards this end, I have pursued a reconstruction of warfare hermeneutic by comparing selected quotations from my collection of texts with the scriptural citations embedded therein. In this collection, scripture and warfare texts are exegetically transparent; it is possible to make a *direct* link between a biblical verse and its exegesis throughout warfare texts. The construction of the Bible as the authoritative text paramount in spiritual warfare discourse is inherently important to the formation of a warfare worldview. The text has a world within its covers, contained, constrained and created in the act of reading the Bible. We have to demonstrate the principles through which that world becomes possible before we can see the world mediated by spiritual war.

Because warfare ministry appeals primarily to a particular Pentecostal audience, there is a need to justify this particular perspective on demons and

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deliverance to an audience generally familiar with its biblical framework. Spiritual warfare practitioners are not the only Christians talking about demons and Satan. However, adherents *do* hold to an interpretation of the world suffused with demonology in a way that is not necessarily understandable for other Christians, who might read the Bible in a way that does not prioritize the passages involving demonic entities or proceed from a different set of assumptions about the text that reinterprets or completely occludes the demonic. Working against these and similar barriers, spiritual warfare writers need not only to cite Scripture but to cite it in such a way that the truth of the warfare viewpoint becomes evident through the invocation of biblical authority. Spiritual warfare relies on a biblical exegesis in turn based on a specific hermeneutical interpretation of the Bible to extend the reaches of its ministry.

There is a circularity to this approach. The Bible can confirm the truth of warfare discourse, but spiritual warfare needs to be the correct interpretation of the Bible in order for that to take effect. The Bible is therefore read both to confirm spiritual warfare demonology and to demonstrate demonology's place within Jesus' ministry. Spiritual warfare authors need to both obtain and confirm their ideas through their biblical exegesis. The Bible, according to David Seeley, is "a complex structure of meaning codified into the almost shockingly promiscuously available form of a book [which] permits interpretations shocking to orthodox minds." The overabundance of biblical content, and the openness of that material to a recombinative process of reinterpretation allows for a great deal of writing on the subject to disagree about what it is, exactly, that

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the Bible says. "Scripture, as a written text, is simply *there*,"²⁴ and in its presence it does not immediately privilege a specific interpretation. Access to the Bible does not condition a specific reading of the Bible, and to establish the difference of spiritual warfare's mode of access, we need a comparison.

Interpretive Difference

We cannot separate warfare practitioners from their dependence on the biblical exegesis sustaining the authority of their cosmological work. In order to understand the ways in which they demonstrate the reliability of that viewpoint, we need to know more about the ways in which they read the Bible. Acceptance of demonological thought hinges on the legitimacy of a reading, but reading the Bible is preceded and conditioned by certain assumptions about the ways in which the Bible was written. Because it seeks to explain and understand the structure and narrative of the Bible, spiritual warfare exegesis is particularly marked by its hermeneutic assumptions. In performing that exegetical work, warfare authors redescribe the text that they call on for authority. Warfare authors citing biblical verse to understand biblical verse necessarily modifies the citation according to the criteria of their hermeneutic approach to the Bible. Because warfare practitioners appropriate scriptural authority in order to propagate their viewpoint, and because Hammond et al so rarely spell out the assumptions that make their appropriation possible, it is necessary to locate them within the text in order to perform the critical work of identifying the ways that the Bible is read by spiritual warfare theorists. To work towards that end, I

²⁴ David Seeley, *Deconstructing the New Testament* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1994), 9.

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am comparing spiritual warfare texts with academic studies of the New Testament, specifically the work of Michael Humphries on the Beelzebul story in Matthew 12.

Jonathan Z. Smith offers a theory of comparison defined as “a disciplined exaggeration in the service of knowledge.” He posits his definition as “the means by which *we* (writers on religion) ‘re-vision’ phenomena as *our* data in order to solve *our* theoretical problems.” Smith also calls attention to the political implications of “re-visioning” and comparison, which, from the vantage of an active, playful application of deconstruction and reconstruction, “kaleidoscope-like, gives the scholar a shifting set of characteristics with which to negotiate the relations between his or her theoretical interests and data stipulated as exemplary.” Comparison, through juxtaposition, allows us to critically engage with data that does not immediately offer itself up for comparative work.²⁵ For spiritual warfare, it offers a glimpse of the specificity and rigorously defended authority inherent in warfare discourse without negating the political problem of critiquing religious beliefs held to be world-affirming.

My comparison is as follows²⁶: with respect to their assumptions about the construction of the text, the biblical passages cited by Michael Humphries in analyzing the Beelzebub incident in Matthew 12 resemble those used by spiritual warfare authors more than the subsequent *interpretations* of Humphries resemble those of Jacobs et al. Warfare theorists and Humphries

²⁵ Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 52-53.

²⁶ The formula I am using is drawn from Smith, *Drudgery Divine* 51.

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speak to and cite the same biblical texts before immediately proceeding along perpendicular axes of interpretation that lead them to put those texts to completely different uses. The profligate interpretations that lead to those uses are distinguished by their latent assumptions, the way that the words of the text are recognized to hold meanings particular to warfare discourse.

However, a comparative analysis of Matthew 12 alone is not enough to understand the hermeneutic assumption of biblical authority in spiritual warfare text. Therefore, I am first going to collect and analyze some instances of biblical citation in spiritual warfare texts in order to extrapolate certain features of their hermeneutic, upon which we can build the comparison with Humphries. In doing so, we can locate the particulars of spiritual warfare hermeneutic relative to a completely different reading of an identical text.

Because acceptance of a warfare worldview is necessary for locating demonic presences in the world, the efficacy of that argument is critical for its acceptance and proliferation. In writing his demonologies, C. Peter Wagner describes demons and spiritual warfare, but he has to demonstrate that his descriptions have merit, that he speaks in a discursive mode that can bear the burden of proof. The effective legitimacy of his writing depends on his use of authority; Wagner must turn to a recognized source of authority exterior to the speech he seeks to prove, whose recognition by the reader both substantiates that imaginative work and limits it to what can be found in the cited text. The

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substantiation of Wagner's claims by a source outside his text proves its viability²⁷.

In warfare discourse, this citation of biblical authority provides much of the material for articulating a redescription of the world, and that material is assuredly, inevitably and self-evidently authoritative. Warfare speech depends on stable authority, and so warfare theorists, working from a position of scriptural clarity, cannot allow for other modes of exegetical interpretation if they wish to demonstrate the utility of spiritual warfare. A need for a concrete authority undergirding spiritual warfare discourse precedes the avowal of citational solidity and biblical basis by warfare authors. By marking the enormous number of biblical passages cited by spiritual warfare texts, we can compare them to an alternate disciplinary approach to those passages, thereby obtaining a glimpse of the way that warfare theorists read the Bible. As a mediating third term, the Bible serves as a point of reference laying over and embedded within the frame of the spiritual warfare worldview.

Hermeneutic

When they invoke the Bible's authority, warfare authors tend to cite wildly different sections sotto voce, quietly and unobtrusively pairing citations narratively distinct from each other. On page 138 of Warfare Prayer, Wagner cites 1 and 2 Kings, Joshua, Judges, Luke, Acts and Revelation to substantiate the

²⁷ Jason Harris has pointed out that Wagner's use of the Bible is considerably less rigorous than is acceptable for many Pentecostals, even those who believe in demons and spiritual warfare. Among my authors, the most rigorously biblical writers are Hammond and Prince, who are also most closely aligned with classical Pentecostalism.

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claim that demons have individual names. He selects these discontinuous passages because they make reference to demonic names, but this citation abstracts their narrative situation, placing them upon the same plane of interpretation as biblical citations demonstrating Wagner's authority. This methodological approach fractures the Bible, privileging specific pieces at various instances to support specific claims that the citations, in their biblical chapters and verses, do not necessarily privilege. This is not intended to indicate that deliberate falsehood is being pursued, or that this abstraction is absolute. Biblical narratives always elicit multiple interpretations, and the discursive production of a spiritual warfare worldview demands some amount of exegetical work. Wagner selects biblical passages according to the text's applicability to his argument, the substantiation of the claim that demons have names, and in doing so momentarily ignores their biblical setting in favor of their use as evidence.

The hermeneutic assumptions that allow for this move are as follows:

1) The Bible, as a text, can speak to and for itself in a clear fashion. A quotation from Chronicles followed by a passage from Mark produces no dissonance. By creating a biblical collage in this fashion, warfare speech can be authorized.

1a) The words and language of the Bible are clear and do not strictly require any context for their interpretation. The abstraction of a specific text and its deployment in a different instance poses no epistemological or structural difficulties. Texts can frequently be paired, given resonances of subject matter.

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1b) It follows that context is not irrelevant, but it does not need to be readily apparent in order to use a text in a given situation.

This trend, the pairing of decontextualized verses, is particularly pronounced when citing the Synoptic Gospels²⁸. Citations and quotes from Luke tend to be accompanied by similar ones from Mark and Matthew, thereby conflating different passages into a set of citations orbiting around a single point.²⁹ Hammond's *Demons and Deliverance in the Ministry of Jesus*, for instance, portrays itself as a complete account of the presence of demons in the Synoptic Gospels.³⁰ Drawing on a book of gospel parallels for reference, he proceeds to go through the entirety of the Synoptics verse by verse, selecting critical moments in Jesus' ministry that highlight the necessity of Christ's war against demons. Because he can see the parallel strands of similar text in the Bible, he places the given parallels at the beginning of each chapter, giving chapter and verse for each and placing the one he prefers in bold font. This method drastically reduces the difference in and between the Gospels, fusing them into one narrative by redefining their differences as multiple positioned perspectives on a stable set of events. Where a verse has no parallels according to his textbook, he simply prints it, and represents it as a historical instance in the life of Jesus.³¹ The

²⁸ Mark, Matthew and Luke. "Synoptic Gospels" is used to indicate those gospels whose compositions demonstrate mutual influence and coconstruction. The general consensus is that Matthew and Luke copied the ministry-death-resurrection narrative from Mark, and combined with other material. See Burton Mack, *Who Wrote the New Testament?*.

²⁹ See, for instance, page 193 of *They Shall Expel Demons* for a number of citations from all three Synoptics.

³⁰ Noting Hammond's latent assertion that he is talking about the actual ministry of Jesus. Biblical literalism is universally invoked in the texts that I have read.

³¹ For instance at Mark 3:8-15, Hammond, *Demons and Deliverance* 35.

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authenticity and usefulness of individual passages is inherently confirmed by any Gospel that mentions the instance, regardless of the passage's narrative situation within that Gospel. Drawing on the assertion of the commensurable clarity in and between biblical verses, this modality of citation asserts another foundational principle for spiritual warfare hermeneutic.

2) While subject to infinite fractures, the Bible is also one text, and accordingly expresses a single narrative. The plenary of voices whose books make up the text can coherently be expressed in conjunction with each other. They speak to specific instances in the history of Jesus and the church, but they belong to a document whose unity is preserved despite its multiplicity.

2a) Therefore, each separated book is a valid source of authority.

They are all God's Word, even if some are more useful than others.

If the unity of this narrative is presumed, the Bible becomes curiously flat, capable of relevance and mythic authority but lacking deep complications in its composition. A unified Bible smoothes out points of specificity, contention and differentiation within the gospels which New Testament scholars have pored over for centuries in order to understand some knowledge of their composition. The exegetical work warfare authors perform tends to be applying it to lived experience; no less intensive than New Testament scholarship, warfare authors use the Bible as a stable frame of reference containing teachings directed out onto the world, where New Testament scholars tend to delve into the way those teachings are constructed without considering their personal relevance.

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When spiritual warfare authors read these texts in order to describe demonic characteristics within a warfare worldview, they are not looking, at all instances, at whole Gospels or even whole chapters, which might suggest certain incongruities to this principle. This particularizing move, coupled with the assumed unity of the Bible as a document, can be explained by the Bible's status as God's inviolate word. As difference necessarily collapses into a stable framework, warfare authors do not need to puzzle over the textual peculiarities and problems of translation invaluable to biblical criticism. Instead, they look at specific incidents in order to discern historical truths about their demonic enemies; no depth is necessary to their interpretation. "Depth" indicates a focus on deep contradictions stirring within the text whose motion reveals the textual and social concerns of the biblical author. A lack of depth therefore reflects a focus on the immediate prospects for biblical utility which proceeds, in part, from another critical assumption.

3) The narratives relayed in the Bible are history, a *literal* record of Jesus and his immediate followers. Everything that happens in the Gospels happened to Jesus, and can be used as evidence for a real fact within Jesus' life. Everything the Bible says is Bible truth.

3a) Therefore, Matthew, Mark and Luke display textual similarities not because they copied from one another, but because they are directly relating the same incidents.

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3b) It follows that the reader is within the same historical frame as Jesus and his biographers, and therefore is a participant in their narrative.

Working from an assumption of literal biblical historicity, spiritual warfare practitioners expend a great deal of time and effort perfecting the links between the historical ministry of Jesus and their own call to resume that practice. Demons are articulated in, through and around the main text of Christianity, and, as such, the authority derived from those texts speaks through the words Christians take to be central in their interpretations of the world. Inscribing the biblical narrative as literal history removes it from the realm of fantasy and places it in the realm of positive fact; Gospel, story and narrative become world-ordering myths. The proof required of the Bible as it exerts its clear authority can be found in the narrative taken as true, clear and self-coherent. As a record of history, the Bible can confirm demonology. Producing biblical literality through the citation of self-evident unity, spiritual warfare discourse can draw on the cultural weight of the Bible for its interpretive authority.

The biblical hermeneutic that informs spiritual warfare discourse can be distinguished by three characteristics: 1) the clarity and applicability of specific biblical verses, 2) the unity of the biblical narrative, and 3) the historicity of that narrative, its literal description of a time and place wherein Jesus walked and healed the sick. I do not have a huge sample of spiritual warfare discourse, so in all likelihood these principles are neither clearly articulated nor universally

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applicable in all warfare discourse³²; instead, they here represent a standard mode of interpretation through which we can understand the citation of the biblical text as total authority. We can therefore use it as a model in order to understand theological differences within the bounds of spiritual warfare hermeneutic. To see precisely how this hermeneutic radically affects the interpretation of select passages, and thus constitutes a specific understanding of the world as opposed to a general hermeneutical practice, the aforementioned comparison with New Testament scholarship is needed.

Comparison is not the only means of understanding the implications of a certain set of assumptions for the application of the Bible as an authority. However, spiritual warfare texts constantly exert their authority without acknowledging that exertion. They do not mention the specific reading that enables their authority. Comparison works to draw out differences between objects, and in this case, the comparison between an authoritative invocation of the whole Bible and an academic analysis of discrete biblical passages can help to unsettle the absolute authority claims of both parties by elucidating the specificity of the approach spiritual warfare discourse takes to the subject. Neither camp has a fully secure claim to the correctness of their interpretation; the words of the Bible are always multiply signified, and a comparison reveals their provisional, partial, contextual claims.

³² Spiritual warfare discourse tends to prefer homiletic and instruction in warfare over theology and philosophy. While they use those modes of thought on occasion, warfare texts are not primarily intended for an academic audience. Theology is always in the service of more effective ministry, and logical argumentation is used to prove the validity of conclusions, not to challenge the hermeneutic bases for those conclusions.

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The tension between these approaches unsettles the strictness and surety of their modes of interpretation. The Bible, as a document and as a cultural artifact, is more complex, variegated and dissonant than my authors allow, and a comparison with an academic treatment of the subject reveals some of that complexity. The textual construction of spiritual warfare cannot and does not take place in an intellectual vacuum, and for the purposes of situating this discourse within a broader context, comparison offers a way to expand the domain in which spiritual warfare discourse exerts its influence. Warfare authors seek to negate the fluidity of interpretation necessary to publication by solidifying their texts into crystallized structures. A comparison with Michael Humphries' work on the Beelzebul story in Matt. 12 can reveal another, different interpretation on a passage held in common with warfare authors, in the process undoing a little of that solidification. We can complicate the claim to absolute authority and exactitude in warfare discourse by revealing some of its structural fragility, the non-absoluteness of spiritual warfare's authority claims. Like New Testament scholarship, spiritual warfare exegesis is only one possible mode of interpretation; their totalized claims to truth do not reflect the epistemological certainty of their mode of knowing.

For an investigation of hermeneutic formulations, there are two biblical texts in which a comparison with spiritual warfare might discern the interpretive ramifications of hermeneutic assumptions: the Matthean account of

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the Beelzebul incident³³, and the ministry of Paul in Ephesus (Acts 19, Eph. 6).

Both of these incidents are heavily cited in the spiritual warfare texts I am using. Hammond cites Matthew 12 most frequently (twenty-six citations), but the passage is well represented in Prince (nine), Wagner (eleven) and Jacobs (four). The Lukan parallel to Matthew 12 has five citations from Wagner, six from Hammond, three from Jacobs and one from Prince. Acts 19 is cited four times by Jacobs, three times by Prince, seven times by Hammond and ten times by Wagner. Ephesians 6, in turn, is cited on no less than eighty occasions: twelve by Jacobs, twenty-two times by Wagner, thirty-two times by Hammond and fourteen times by Prince. Ephesians is particularly notable because it provides the hierarchical vision of demonic combat whose edifice envelops deliverance ministry as it participates in a titanic war between God and Satan, the Church and the World. This warfare metaphor, its textual basis and its ramifications for the discourse of spiritual warfare will be covered extensively in subsequent chapters, and a comparative analysis of Matthew 12 here serves to elucidate the distinctly different ways in which that text can be put to use.

Matthew 12

The basic narrative of Matthew 12 concerns Jesus' conflict with the Pharisaic authorities. In the Matthean version, Jesus cures "a demoniac who was blind and mute, so that the one who had been mute could speak and see." (Matt.

³³Matthew 12:22-45=Mark 3:19b-30=Luke 6:43-45, 11:14-23, 12:10. The "=" between these chapters indicates biblical parallels. Note, for now, the disparity in size between these chapters, as well as the multiple locations within Luke where parallels to the story in Matthew can be found. Spiritual warfare authors, lacking an assumption that these texts were drawn from other sources and edited extensively, would not understand these differences to be indicative of their author's temporal or spatial distance from Jesus.

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12:22 NRSV) When the Pharisees hear of this, they accuse Jesus of casting out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of demons. Jesus responds by declaring:

Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your own exorcists cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you. Or how can one enter a strong man's house, without first tying up the strong man? Then indeed the house can be plundered. Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. Therefore I tell you, people will be forgiven for every sin and blasphemy, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

Matt. 12:24-32 NRSV

The “Beelzebul controversy” is the accusation of demonic magic leveled at Jesus by a Jewish authority. Jesus proclaims that this blasphemy is both illogical and highly sacrilegious, and proceeds to rail against the sins of the generation that sees evidence of the Holy Spirit's beneficence and cannot understand its divinity.

Matthew 12 is also interesting because it is found in Matthew, Luke, Mark and Q.³⁴ In New Testament scholarship, Q, short for German “Quelle” or source, is a reconstructed text posited to explain certain similarities between Matthew and Luke not derived from Mark.³⁵ Mark is commonly posited as the earliest of the Gospels, and its basic narrative structures that of Matthew and Luke, who use large chunks of Mark to write their Gospels. Because the writer of Mark does not usually contain Q material, this story represents a remarkable point of

³⁴ Matthew 12, Mark 3, Luke 11, QS 28 in Burton Mack's notation.

³⁵ See Burton Mack, *The Lost Gospel*, for an analysis of the social features informing Q's composition.

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confluence in the earliest available stories about Jesus, eliciting a great deal of interest among academics. Burton Mack argues that Mark probably borrowed this story from Q,³⁶ which is debatable, but at the very least this story represents a significant moment for early Christianity, in which we find language about the Holy Spirit, forgiveness of sins and demonic oppression in the kingdom of God.

Academics and warfare authors read this text quite differently. New Testament scholars tend to approach it as a problem of textual construction in a social context, while spiritual warfare authors work to plant the lessons of this story in modern Christian life. Where Mack and Humphries read it as an ancient narrative related to social formation, Prince, Hammond, Jacobs and Wagner read it for the modern truths it can reveal. The same passage, read by different eyes, results in vastly different interpretations.

Michael Humphries reads the Beelzebul controversy to indicate a social claim being made by Mark and the Q people.³⁷ Humphries pursues an “analysis of the kingdom language at a point of juxtaposition between two distinct textual traditions”³⁸ in order to address difference between parallel accounts of similar historical instances. He recognizes the multiplicity of meanings carried by the word “Beelzebul” in contemporary usage, indicating the instability of the

³⁶ Burton Mack, *A Myth of Innocence* (1988; repr., Minneapolis, MI: Fortress Press, 2006), 197.

³⁷ Because Q is derived from a comparison of difference within the Synoptic Gospels, we have no direct access to the community that initially produced the document. Although we can be reasonably sure it exists, we can only produce a skeleton of the community to whom the text is directed. John Kloppenborg has suggested that it was probably rural, Jewish and poor, given the prevalence of concerns historically aligned with disenfranchised groups. See *Q, The Earliest Gospel*.

³⁸ Michael L. Humphries, *Christian Origins and the Language of the Kingdom of God* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999), page 12.

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customary identification of that name with Satan.³⁹ Following Beelzebul's translational variants in Ugaritic, Greek and Hebrew, he argues that the resultant association with a foreign, threatening power indicates that the name "has little to do with the actual demonic collusion but rather with social positioning and the demarcation of boundaries."⁴⁰ In Q, Humphries reads Beelzebul as rationalizing and legitimating a particular ethos in a Judaic context in order to demonstrate that the Q people perfect the Kingdom of God over and against Israel.⁴¹ In Mark, the false accusation of demonic power is used to police the boundaries of the evangelist's community, to demonstrate that "conflict and victory in the cosmic sphere manifest themselves concurrently as conflict and victory in the social sphere" of Mark's group.⁴² In both cases, the invocation of Beelzebul dramatizes the constitution of social boundaries by indicating the place of Jesus and his kingdom relative to the rest of his immediate surroundings. Humphries would not be able to produce this reading without the following set of assumptions:

H1. Differences in compared texts indicate an instability in the authorship; Mark and Q are not the same. (Indicated by both his use of Q, which was discovered through an analysis of difference, and by his focus on Mark as the originary use of Beelzebul in the gospels.)

³⁹ Ibid., 22.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 44.

⁴² Ibid., 60.

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H1.1 The Gospels are subject to editorial controls. (See footnote 28.)

H2. The text is not sufficient to explain itself. (Hence his dependence on ancient languages to redescribe Beelzebul.)

H3. We can describe the social world of the writer of the Markan and Q gospels by following contextual clues in the text and in contemporary literature.

H4. The historicity of the narrative actors cannot be assessed, and thus the fact of their existence is irrelevant and unobtainable.

Accordingly, while we cannot look to them for reliable biography, we can look to them as appearing in response to specific social concerns that result in their textual deployment.

The use of Beelzebul in spiritual warfare discourse is aligned perpendicularly to this interpretation, writing about the same text but exhibiting explosive interpretive growth in a radically different direction. Humphries, who took this passage to be indicative of a certain social positioning, might be astounded by the fecundity of warfare interpretations concerning Matthew 12.

The narrative of Matt. 12:22-43 traces an arc in which Jesus heals, is accused of invoking Beelzebul by the Pharisees and rebukes those critics in Matt. 12:28 (NRSV): “If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you.” In the citation of these verses by spiritual warfare authors, a great host of descriptive interpretations are derived from specific points in the text. In Matthew 12:29 (NRSV), “Or how can one enter a strong man’s house and

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plunder his property, without first tying up the strong man?”, warfare authors perform the following interpretations:

1. Interpretive work on “bind” (an older translation for “tying up”) justifies a synonymy between bind, overcome and conquer as an interpretive trope with respect to demon spirits, authorizing “binding” as a weapon for spiritual warfare.⁴³
2. Interpretive work on “strong man” produces:
 - 2.1. The strong man as the head demon in a given possession, whose binding authority must be severed in order to expel the rest of the spirits.⁴⁴
 - 2.1.1. The strong man as a composite demonic entity expressing a certain connection to the demonic kingdom.⁴⁵
 - 2.2. A synonymy between the “strong men” and demonic principalities holding whole populations captive.⁴⁶
 - 2.3. The “strong man” as Satan bound by Jesus at the moment of his martyrdom.⁴⁷

Matthew 12:22-24 is read as a description of demonic ontology,⁴⁸ a historical record of ministry⁴⁹ or an account of Jesus’ response to his critics.⁵⁰ 12:28

⁴³ Prince, *War in Heaven*, 184.

C. Peter Wagner, ed. *Freedom From The Religious Spirit* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2005), 58, 231, 271.

⁴⁴ Frank Hammond and Ida Mae Hammond, *Pigs in the Parlor* (Kirkwood, MO: Impact Books, 1973), page 107.

⁴⁵ Frank Hammond, *Demons and Deliverance: In the Ministry of Jesus* (Kirkwood, MO: Impact Christian Books, 1991), page 19.

⁴⁶ C. Peter Wagner, *Warfare Prayer* (1992; repr., Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 2009), 209.

⁴⁷ Hammond, *Pigs in the Parlor*, 72.

⁴⁸ Cindy Jacobs, *Deliver Us From Evil* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2001), page 185.

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provokes nuanced interpretations of the working of the Holy Spirit⁵¹ as it reveals the existence of two opposed kingdoms operative in deliverance ministry while demonstrating the victory of the Kingdom of God.⁵² 12:43-45 is particularly ripe for interpretation by spiritual warfare authors. It is used to articulate the human space which demons inhabit, to demonstrate the necessity of filling the soul with the Holy Spirit after deliverance, to indicate the extreme sinfulness of unbelief, to assess demonic agency, and to ground demonic power in the human realm, as opposed to a divine sphere.⁵³ This expands our understanding of spiritual warfare hermeneutic:

3c) When the Bible speaks of a narrative figure, it indicates that that figure existed at one point, and can be accessed through the text.

3d) Since these figures were real people, and since the Holy Spirit is still active in the modern world, those same demonological techniques remain valid.

3e) Therefore, just as we write manuals for spiritual warfare, we can look to the Bible as a manual to extend and improve our own techniques.

⁴⁹ Hammond, *Demons and Deliverance*, 57, 63.

⁵⁰ Derek Prince, *They Shall Expel Demons* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 1998), page 193.

⁵¹ C. P. Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 52, 163.

⁵² Prince, *Expel Demons*, 10 speaks about the two kingdoms revealed in this invocation. Hammond, *Demons and Deliverance*, 60 particularly emphasizes the active participation of these kingdoms in deliverance ministry.

⁵³ Jacobs, *Deliver Us*, 186, 198.; Cindy Jacobs, *Possessing the Gates of the Enemy* (1991; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2009), 239.; Hammond, *Pigs*, 2, 39, 138, 141.; Hammond, *Demons and Deliverance*, 63, 64, 75.; Prince, *Expel Demons*, 90, 94, 111, 194 .

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A distinct advantage of the warfare hermeneutic is that the mode of reading, in assuming the internal unity, clarity and coherence of the narrative, uses the Bible as a stable text capable of redeployment and reinterpretation, based on biblical teaching but capable of different conclusions. We should envision the citation of scriptural passages across the texts of warfare discourse as pursuing an elliptical orbit around the biblical text of those passages. Warfare authors hold the interpretive center to be the specific Word of the text, and always interpret relative to those words.

The above citations of Matthew by spiritual warfare authors draw on the Bible as a source of authority in order to articulate truths about the texture of the demonic presence in the fabric of reality and to agitate for the adoption of those truths. This is authoritative speech espousing the strict concordance of biblical text with demonological theory, pronouncing the applicability of that text for warfare ideology and arguing for the proclamation and propagation of spiritual warfare ministry. In spiritual warfare, biblical citation constantly seeks to still the Bible's multiplicity, to subject its discontinuity, variation and contradiction in content to a hermeneutic that tends to reduce the complexity of biblical construction to its function as a dependable authority suitable for use in demonstration. Threatened by other readings, this crystallization is imperfect and subject to fracture, and thus authority to convince is invoked both at the level of biblical authority and in the broader application of a spiritual warfare schema. These dynamics act to structure the construction and evangelization of spiritual warfare discourse at multiple levels, bringing those texts in line with a

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Christian program for the redescription of the world. Warfare texts offer privileged insight into malevolence in order to call humanity closer to God. In seeking to uncover Satan's minions in the world, they continually invoke linguistic forces to arm their readers and push them into full-blown war.

Morality

"The world may change its morals, but God does not change His Word."⁵⁴

The Bible contains within it the beginning and end of time, the long history of Israel and the first steps of the new Church, the creation of life on earth and the physical intervention of a powerful spiritual agent. It contains laws of human social life and divine power, ethical principles, personal salvation and collective damnation and harsh judgments on specifically delineated immoralities. Possessing direct relevance to modern Christian life, we can say that the Bible is an authority because it is *read* as if it was an authority. Its situational deployment makes it a prime tool for assuring the utility of a text in a situation where it might be challenged. Bruce Lincoln has noted that the effect of authoritative speech implies an unequal relationality of power which permits the speaker "to command not just the attention but the confidence, respect and trust of their audience or to make audiences act *as if* this were so." Invoking the Bible means invoking a world-altering, definitional power in the pursuit of total coherence. Therefore, we can add to warfare hermeneutic by noting that warfare authors mediate every facet of existence through their biblical hermeneutic,

⁵⁴ Frank Hammond and Ida Mae Hammond, *Kingdom Living for the Family* (1985; repr., Kirkwood, MO: Impact Christian Books, 2007), 50.

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closing the interpretive loop between the Bible that engenders and the Bible that confirms.

The expansion, then, is as follows.

4) The Bible codes the world. It encodes the world with religious meaning, offers a key to deciphering existence and literally constitutes the ontological reality of the world. It is the creation, history, death and resurrection of existence bound up in a holy book.

4a) Therefore, in shaping the world, the Bible's authority extends itself everywhere. Its manifold verses are always directly relevant, to all situations, at all times.

The Bible is the enveloping frame through which spiritual warfare discourse creates the contours of its lived reality. It stands outside of history as God's Word, but within history as the authoritative document for all human life. Its inviolability is a direct result of this dual status. Both fundamental and divine, its principles are beyond reproach, and for spiritual warfare authors, they are akin to physical laws; just as gravity functions everywhere on everything, so does God's Word in the Bible. Bruce Lincoln, again, provides a helpful definition of the a/historicity, loose temporality and dual spatiality of religious claims, interior, exterior and authoritatively relevant for human life:

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“Religious claims are the means by which certain objects, places, speakers and speech-acts are invested with an authority, the source of which lies *outside the human*. That is, these claims create the appearance that their authorization comes from a realm beyond history, society, and politics, beyond the terrain in which interested and situated actors struggle over scarce resources.”⁵⁵

The Bible is the spine of the world, the backbone of human society and the eternal story of the origin, present and future of life on Earth. As a text coding the world in this way, the Bible is a source of authorizing power, but another move, towards moral condemnation and societal rebuke, is also identifiable in its pages. Within warfare hermeneutic, the Bible’s necessary, stable authority lends its moral injunctions a certain capacity for absolute judgment. For warfare authors, the Bible states very clearly what is and is not allowed within the bounds of holy Christian living, and examples abound of warfare authors using the Bible’s authority to both explain and condemn the sins of people, groups and nations. As Jacobs puts it, “We need to teach the world. We need to make it clear from our pulpits what God considers sinful in His world.”⁵⁶

“Sin” as a category is encoded with biblical authority, derived from biblical text and applicable in biblical polemics. The Bible, as the ideal authority whose words are univocal, is necessarily the most prominent example of the ideal social order determined by God and Jesus, and the proximity of ancient

⁵⁵ Bruce Lincoln, *Authority: Construction and Corrosion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 112.

⁵⁶ Cindy Jacobs, *The Reformatin Manifesto* (Bloomington, MI: Bethany House, 2008), 99.

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humans to Bible stories indicates a greater reverence for biblical laws.

Therefore,

“We need to remember that the moral and ethical code of Jewish people in Jesus’ time was based on the Ten Commandments and the Law of Moses. This meant that most of them were probably living better lives than the majority of people in our contemporary Western society.”⁵⁷

Prince here invokes Old Testament biblical morality as the dominant ethical system of the New Testament social order to rebuke the conduct of modern Western humans. The Bible provides the rebuke, legitimates it and licenses it for deployment against other humans, and it does it in strong, clear absolute words.

“One thing that involvement in deliverance ministry does for a person is to remove the gray areas of sin so that everything becomes black or white.”⁵⁸ The binary opposition of sin and salvation produces no room for situational ethics, moral relativism or complex interpersonal relationships. For spiritual warfare, that kind of morality is simply a symbol of the unchristian social order whose dominance reflects Satan’s grip on the world. “Absolutes are biblical, but society today wants relativism.”⁵⁹ Since the bible encodes the world, a final expansion to warfare hermeneutic can be performed:

4b) As humans embedded in the world, we are subject to the laws
laid out in the Bible. Morality should therefore be governed

⁵⁷ Prince, *Expel Demons*, 21.

⁵⁸ Hammond, *Kingdom Living*, 53. Like most calls to biblical morality, spiritual warfare does not seek to invoke every law in the Bible against the modern world. Some things are troubling, like capital punishment for homosexuality, but as a whole, “biblical morality” serves as a cipher for a particular conservative social doctrine invested with absolute truth.

⁵⁹ Doris M. Wagner, *How To Cast Out Demons* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2000), 23.

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according to the system of the world laid down in the Bible, and Scripture is clear in its moral dictums.

According to the expanded hermeneutic, the biblical grounds for world existence are directly tied to human morality. God has laid down unequivocal laws, which directly prohibit certain actions. Therefore, idolatry is a sin, as is abortion, as are bestiality and homosexuality.⁶⁰ Witchcraft and disobedience to God's law carry with them the promise of absolute divine retribution, as God said in Deuteronomy. As God's law-giving Word, the Bible has can judge human action from a place of divine power, and its definition of evil and immorality is centered on the laws laid down in the text.

As an interpretive frame for spiritual warfare, this adherence to "biblical morality" is selective, with certain laws unenforced but always potentially relevant. The Bible is full of potential condemnations, given the proper stimuli. This principle, and its concomitant censure of unbiblical action, allows sin to be an index for demonic presence; where witchcraft has occurred, a demon feeding off that sin probably lurks. This linkage is critical to spiritual warfare; with it, spiritual warfare can fill the world with the demons it finds in the perceptible fabric of the world, and from that moment, the whole of the Bible can become a reference point for the ongoing struggle against Satan's Kingdom. Having identified the world-shaping authority claimed by warfare hermeneutic, we can

⁶⁰ D. Wagner, *How to Cast Out Demons*, 29. "A whole nation can come under a curse because of the widespread sins of incest, adultery, homosexuality and bestiality. When we reflect upon the mushrooming of such sins throughout our own nation, we can begin to understand why an Elijah ministry which calls the nation to repentance will be the only thing sparing us from the wrath of God."

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turn to the construction of demonic and human identity in the location of demonic presence. As a source of doctrine and technique, the Bible permits, encodes and shapes the evoked contours of demonic presence through textual citations verifying the literal applicability of its words, This relationship to the Bible, to paraphrase Prince, is a relationship to the world continually mediated by God's word in its encapsulating text.

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According to spiritual warfare authors, demons are by nature hidden, obscured from human vision. The process of locating demons in space is complicated, demanding a great deal of intellectual work to determine the particulars of the figure created therein, partially because demons are not universally accepted as real, identifiable beings. They are polemical, marking a divisive line between acceptance of and orientation towards demonic combat and a complete rejection of the constitutive possibility of evil spirits. The ontological possibility of demons' existence, which precedes and informs the articulation of their characteristics, is not simply a matter of disagreement between participants in an equal, stable dialogue. The (non)existence of demons has been and remains a marker of cultural affiliation, as has the particular way in which authors construct demons in adjudicating their (non)existence. On a cultural level, they abound in the literature, religious iconography, myth and ritual of countries involved in Christianity. Satan and his demons are part of our imagined world, and the way that they are understood to exist (or not) can mark the positionality of an individual relative to the rest of his society by staking out

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the boundaries of a worldview.⁶¹ If their audience perceives a world without demons, the proclamation of demonic reality in warfare discourse, lacking its enabling hermeneutic, places the utterance outside the bounds of legitimate, rational speech.

This poses a methodological problem for me, as I do not believe in real, malicious demonic spirits inhabiting the fabric of reality. Thus, I am always tempted to read warfare demonologies as social attempts to understand human pain, or as discourses attempting to heal brutalized people of their hurts by redescribing the ontology of things that make them unhappy. To pursue this kind of analysis, however, would be to fail to properly acknowledge that the worldview I am attempting to reconstruct does not think in my terms. I am seeking to place spiritual warfare in its native context. If I challenged the veracity of one of its primary claims (“demons exist”), I would not be able to properly account for the fissure that erupts when a biblical, charismatic Christian worldview suffused with spiritual warfare meets with other, different worldviews. Because my work is located relative to crucial structures for spiritual warfare, I hold open the possibility of both demonic existence and

⁶¹ See W. Scott Poole’s Satan in America, particularly his discussion of contrasting deployments of evil, Satan and the demonic by Christian thinkers after World War II in chapter 4. Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich’s explorations of Satan, as “the misuse of our freedom”, and demons, as amorphous “dark energies” orienting humans towards absolutism, contrast strongly with the literal Satan of Billy Graham and C.S. Lewis. Both types of understanding grew out of a social confrontation with the problem of evil in the post-war period, but Graham and Lewis inject their answers with supernatural description, literal biblical hermeneutic and concurrent evangelical concerns. In an opposite move, Tillich and Niebuhr deny transcendent Christian structures in favor of understanding of radical social evil in history that cannot any longer be rendered in a strict moral binary. All four use the same words, with different meanings, in similar (Christian) contexts to arrive at diametrically opposed conclusions.

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absence, not to privilege either term but to try to account for the chasm between them, and the way in which dialogue emerges out of that space. As warfare authors grapple with the existence of people who react to demons with hostility, their opposites come to embody Satanic opposition to the Holy Word of God. It is this divide and the possibilities for crossing that concerns me here; the gap between social groups in the spiritual warfare worldview is the rationale for apocalyptic violence, the impetus to evangelism and the marker of holy separation from the world's doomed masses.

I discuss spiritual warfare's growth through apocalyptic evangelism in chapter four, and violence in the kingdom in chapter three. For now, the question is the feasibility of bracketing the ontological status of demons if that ontological status is both a primary claim for spiritual warfare authors and the primary object of my analysis. Demonic ontology, if adopted, provides the binary foundation for dividing the world into demons and Christians, by which non-Christians disappear as an authentic, valid category of identity. Further, given that charismatic Christianity arises out of documented demonological traditions and exists in a particular discursive moment for American Christianity, the possibility of deciding that the ontological status of demons is contingent on participation in a warfare worldview, and therefore outside of the jurisdiction of a "secular" student of religion, remains open.

It is not my place to decide the universal ontological (ir)reality of demons. They do not inhabit my world in the same way that they live for Cindy Jacobs, but this study attempts to address the gap in understanding between my way of

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approaching the world and spiritual warfare. Refusing to answer that question would entail the impossibility of understanding and identifying the structure of the demonic worldview espoused in my textual assemblage. My focus on this division is based in my discomfort in proclaiming that warfare Christians structure their lives by misconceptions, and I refuse to categorically declare that demons do not exist for anybody anywhere, for two reasons: First, it is not strictly true. Demons do exist, they are at the very least present as actors in social usage, and their form is mutable. If warfare authors make a claim on demonic reality, and make that reality part of their life in the world, then demons have an effect on me, whether or not I believe in them as warfare authors do. Second, rejecting demonic existence is not good to think with in analyzing warfare discourse. In order to move forward in this study, I focus on the construction of demons in warfare texts, without negating that reality *as experienced by warfare practitioners*.

Generally, saying that something was constructed means that a given agent was involved in the object's creation. For instance, houses can be constructed out of bricks, built from raw materials until they fill out the borders of their builder's intentions or plans. "Constructed" implies ordered growth by accumulation of parts, but it can also imply artificiality or impermanence, as in "gender is a construct," used to disturb and upset naturalized categories. That is not at all how I wish to discuss the construction of demons, although this

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naturalizing move is critical for spiritual warfare myth.⁶² By constructed, I do not mean to indicate that demons are artificial edifices, golems and bogeymen assembled out of Christianity's cultural heritage to scare Christians into tithing. To "construct", as I use it, means to group together, to fill out, to compile data subject to a given schema. It does not imply fabrication from nothing, nor does it imply that the constructing agent possesses deceptive intentions. Spiritual warfare authors observe the patterns of their own lives, mediated through a biblical hermeneutic focused on demons and the Holy Spirit, and posit new ideas based on their understanding of those texts. Demons are constructed because the biblical and experiential material in which they are located is presented in a conglomeration of attributes whose totality expresses an understanding of demonic essence.

Here, I reconstruct spiritual warfare demonology by hewing closely to its argumentation in spiritual warfare texts. By sticking closely to what warfare authors say about demons, the danger of imposing an understanding of demons foreign to warfare discourse can be moderated. The sentences and phrases warfare authors write represent the matter through which the demon can come in to view. By letting the figure of the demon emerge in warfare discourse, its particular qualities can be noted without necessarily denying the common matter out of which these demons can form. In turn, the emerging discernible figure of the demonic in spiritual warfare participates in a construction of the

⁶² See chapter 3.

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human being that subdivides and constrains the individual within a theological frame.

In spiritual warfare discourse, demons are not constructed on their own terms. They are constructed in terms of the humans in whom they dwell. For charismatic Christians, demons have no life and existence apart from a desire to harm humans and defile God's creation. Satan and his demons are absolute Others when they are identified in social life. When that identification of presence is translated and inscribed in conducting spiritual warfare, the devil and the demonic kingdom comes to oppose Christian humans aligned with God. Biblical, charismatically-inclined evangelical worldviews serve as the referent against which the truth claims of all other worldviews are measured. Since the Bible is univocally clear and necessarily true, everything else is susceptible to demonic falsehood actively demonstrating malicious subjectivity. Full of demons, the spiritual warfare worldview is founded by declaiming the sin of the world in contrast to its own righteousness. The ontological reality of that sin manifests in the demonic oppression under which non-Christian humanity languishes.

Demonic Others

"From heresy to deviation to degeneration to syncretism, the notion of the different which claims to be the same, or, projected internally, the disguised difference within, has produced a rich vocabulary of denial and estrangement. For in each case, a theory of difference, when applied to the proximate other, is but another way of phrasing a theory of self."⁶³

⁶³ Jonathan Z. Smith, "Differential Equations: On Constructing the Other," in *Relating Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 246.

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Sometimes, identity is defined by its negative relationship to its Other. This proposition recurs across social theory, and properly situated in context it is enormously illuminating. Enrique Dussel's *Invention of the Americas* sees the invasion of Mexico by Hernando Cortés, the initial conquest of the New World by Europeans, as a covering-over, a consistent misconstrual and redescription of indigenous society by European explorers to the point of affirming the right to Christian dominance over and against an Other construed as savage, primitive, "material in the rough" outside the realm of civilization without the light of Christ which animates the European. "The Other is a rustic mass dis-covered in order to be civilized by the European being of Occidental culture. But this Other is in fact covered over in its alterity."⁶⁴ The Other serves as a mirror, a space on which powerful cultures can project questions of identity in order to resolve internal quandaries. Another example, W. Scott Poole's *Satan in America*, traces the invocation of Satan and spiritual warfare throughout American history to give voice to American political concerns and Christian religious polemics. Poole argues that "the devil is the negation and hatred of the Other, a sinister force working its will in our social order and then disappearing into the shadows,"⁶⁵ and his book traces the way that this transcendent figure figures enemies in binary terms, legitimating war and atrocity by naming Others "Satan."

⁶⁴ Enrique Dussel, *The Invention of the Americas: Eclipse of "the Other" and the Myth of Modernity*, trans. Michael D. Barber (n.p.: n.p., n.d.), 36.

⁶⁵ W. Scott Poole, *Satan in America: The Devil We Know* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 216.

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The relationship between the Self and the Other is a process that encodes further processes. Othering is a preliminary move of division which recognizes that the entity faced is the antithesis of the entity facing. In this move, the Other is negated, defined as absolutely Not-Same. This vilification subjugates the Other within a binary frame enabling violence directed against their threat. Dussel's Cortés is a militant Christian working at the meeting of two distinct human worlds, an imperial conqueror shattering Aztec civilization in the name of Christ and exhorting his troops to violence against a dehumanized population. However, Cortés cannot perform his Othering without an object. Like a sentence, a process of Othering requires a relationship between subject and object, in which the object is subjugated and defined by the subjective will instigating the process. Before interacting with the Aztecs, Cortés had no object to make his enemy, in the concrete sense in which "the Spanish subjugated the Other through an erotic, pedagogical, cultural, political, and economic praxis.⁶⁶" As a first stirring of power, the recognition and demonization of the Other permits the subject to subjugate, exploit and destroy the enemy created by the action of division.

By noting that Others are constructed out of meetings between humans, the outlines of a problem for describing spiritual warfare as a process of Othering begin to come to light. The examples of Dussel and Poole describe human occasions for Othering, situations in which the opposition between two human groups demands an articulation and explanation of the difference

⁶⁶ Dussel, *Invention of the Americas*, 45.

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between them. However, as will shortly be seen, the process of determining the location of demons demands the recognition of an object fundamentally unknowable through human senses. This is not a situation in which Christian humans reconstruct non-Christian humans as antonym, as in Poole's account of Satan's usage in American history. Because he is fundamentally concerned with the problematic ways that Americans have historically articulated beliefs about evil, Poole does not give evil its full ontological weight. Demons and Satan instead represent objects for discursive analysis, whose identity brings its weight to bear on social life mediated through either the transcendence or the immediacy of Satanic evil, depending on who describes the demons.⁶⁷ In either case, Poole examines Satan in terms of his social history, his deployment and his continued use in a process of Othering between the American or Christian invoking the name and the other *human* rendered Satanic.

The problem emerges: warfare theorists' use of the demonic seems to resemble other ways of understanding the demonic, a "discourse of evil and monstrosity and of their *annihilation*."⁶⁸ If the demon is an Other, it serves to express something about the human defined as intrinsically separate from real demons. In spiritual warfare, this position is demonstrably true. The spiritual warfare worldview revolves around confronting the demonic, as all of my

⁶⁷ See footnote 60.

⁶⁸ David Frankfurter, *Evil Incarnate* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 224.

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authors state.⁶⁹ However, if we take demons to be an Other for charismatic Christianity, demons necessarily coexist in a social realm with the Christians that see them. Unlike Cortés's Aztecs, these are not visible or tangible creatures. The Christian who confronts the demonic and names it his enemy transforms blank space in reality into a present and immediate evil. By granting demons ontological strength in order to cast them in opposition to Christians, the Others a morass, a space of indeterminate matter whose particulars cannot be properly determined from its visibility. While Cortés can see the Aztec, and Billy Graham can identify hippies in his community, demons must be uncovered, constructed and pulled out of invisibility to display their awful characteristics.

The barest clues for detecting demons can be found in the exegeses that expand upon warfare hermeneutics. Warfare theorists see Satan and his demons' importance in the New Testament, as a cause of affliction in Jesus' ministry to the sick, or as enemies of Christian evangelism in Acts' account of Paul's work in Ephesus, and always as fundamentally weaker than Christ and his followers. Because they adhere to biblical literalism, warfare theorists know that demons exist, and the record of their existence in the New Testament structures that knowledge. However, the Bible does not contain a clear, precise demonology. While fighting demons is part of the way that Jesus is recognized as

⁶⁹ An example: "The final conflict between the forces of Satan and the army of God is ALREADY under way. When it becomes apparent that Satan has already gained a foothold in our home and through oneself, it is a call to spiritual warfare." Hammond, *Pigs*, 152.

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a powerful new authority,⁷⁰ the Gospels are not perfect manuals. What can be read within the Bible can be applied to demonology, but this requires a great deal of elaboration on the skeletal structure present in the text. A large part of the work of bringing the demonic Other into view is the continued articulation of bodily, social and cosmic space, the shaping of matter, human behavior and moral ontology into demonic forms on every level of existence.

Warfare texts construct a particular biblical hermeneutic to see that demons exist and to determine their particulars. However, a rapt focus on the work of the Holy Spirit characterizes Pentecostal/charismatic theology, and therefore influences warfare hermeneutic⁷¹. A sustained theme in Wagner and Jacobs' writings is the "pouring out of new wine" into new vessels, the adaptive ability of the Holy Spirit to speak to modern concerns. Moreover, the Holy Spirit offers weapons to warfare practitioners: gifts of prophecy and special anointings for spiritual warfare are said to stem from the Spirit so that Christians might fight demons. Although a defined biblical hermeneutic structures the identification of demons and verifies their existence, spiritual warfare practitioners have access to another source of divine revelation for defining the nature of demons. Because the Holy Spirit speaks to Christians, warfare practitioners have a flexible ability to redescribe and refine their demonologies according to new bodies of data. The hermeneutic discussed in chapter 1 can be

⁷⁰ Frank Hammond's *Demons and Deliverance in the Ministry of Jesus* takes careful pains to note every instance in which demons are mentioned in the Gospels. He uses a hermeneutic that conflates all of the Gospel into one overarching narrative. Within that narrative, he repeatedly demonstrates the insuperable connection between demons and Jesus's ministry.

⁷¹ See Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*.

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expanded in the face of an exegesis that examines demons, sees their looming menace and comes away lacking tools and methodology to fight them. Biblical identification is always accompanied by a need for more knowledge. In seeking to explain the primary importance of demons in the New Testament, warfare theorists are not restrained by words that cannot change and remain literal. As demons come more clearly into view, the Holy Spirit permits the unfolding of demonology out of its situated biblical framework.

Demons emerge out of Scripture, coming into view as indeterminate blank matter demanding its shape. The demon becomes an Other for the Christian, figuring his essential characteristics in counterpoint to demonic ontology. What demons are, good Christians necessarily abhor. Demons are the enemy, and, in the rest of this chapter, the task is to note precisely how that enemy is constructed in text. As the demon is fully enfolded, it is defined as the dark, evil Other who the Christian seeks to conquer. In this respect, demons are constructed as subjectivities emerging out of Christians confronting evil and seeking its explanation. Demons are ontologically real actors, with body, emotion, and will, whose service to Satan is a self-evident part of the world. This narrative arc, the identification of presence, objectification of entity and exhortation to spiritual combat, is the process of Othering constitutive of demonic ontology. When this process intersects with moral codes, religious tropes, and a mythic apocalypse, it produces a totalized, gloom-ridden world. The war there created, and its particular brand of spiritual violence, will be discussed in chapter three. For now, the task is to observe as demons tear their

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forms out of my author's texts and install themselves in the spiritual warfare worldview.

What Demons Do⁷²

Demonic origin is contested. Either demons are dark angels, or they are the spirits of pre-Adamic man, or they are unexplained. The originating narrative which precedes the biblical text and its antecedent engagement by Christians is not clear. Derek Prince defers the question, enforcing a distinction between dark angels and demons. He relegates dark angels to the spiritual plane and demons to the physical, although he maintains their invisibility and incorporeal (ethe)reality. Prince refuses to directly engage with demonic origins, as he thinks that it is outside of the domain of Christian knowledge. Moreover, it is irrelevant. Demons are to be destroyed. While Hammond hews fairly close to Prince's understanding of demons, Wagner and Jacobs have no trouble asserting that demons fell with Satan from heaven, and are now engaged as invisible foot soldiers in the war against their former home. In all cases, the link between Satan and demons is hierarchical, constituting dominance, servitude and control,

⁷² Citation- Citing these points is somewhat difficult, as they are attempting to encapsulate 120 pages of notes on thirteen different books. Because the quantity of footnotes would be prohibitively large if I were to cite them in a standard format, each paragraph ends in a footnote formatted to demonstrate individual authorial voices, and the citations present in that footnote are meant to demonstrate the claims in the paragraph. In addition, my voice in these paragraphs is the polyphonic representation of collected warfare claims. I am writing the structure of warfare theology, but this should not in any way be construed as a dominating claim on the words of warfare authors.

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and the importance of demonic origin fades in light of the present reality of the devil's army.⁷³

Demons have to be seen to be believed. Christians must detect their presence before their evil can be addressed. The problem, for spiritual warfare authors, is the unanimous consensus that demons are invisible, occupying a different plane of existence. Spiritual warfare divides the world into what can be seen and perceived with human eyes, and what occurs beyond the realm of human senses. These two planes, the physical and the spiritual, intersect and overlap with each other, their totality expressing the fullness of reality whose planar structure is invisible to normal sight. Demons and the Holy Spirit can emerge into the physical world, and human prayer can impact the shape of the war in the spiritual realm. Warfare texts frequently refer to heaven or "the heavenlies" as a realm inhabited by certain forces, with a distinct geography, population, set of rules and spatialization. Derek Prince even divides heaven into the sky, a broad spiritual realm where Satan's kingdom lies and the heaven of heavenlies, where God lives. In all cases, the demonstrable links between a spiritual plane and the physical world are assumed. Demons are located outside of and intrinsic to the fabric of perceptible reality, and more importantly, the

⁷³ C. P. Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 238. "Many Bible scholars believe that about a third of all the angels whom God created have fallen and are now demons."

Prince, *Expel Demons*, 91. "It seems clear to me that even fallen angels still maintain their dwelling place somewhere in the "heavenly places." It is not scriptural, therefore, to represent angels as operating continually on the plane of earth. Demons, on the other hand, appear to be earthbound creatures."

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plane on which they dwell is complete, representing the frontier of total engagement with the true structure of the world.⁷⁴

The spiritual plane serves as the battlegrounds in which humans need to recognize their involvement. According to the warfare worldview, those who cannot see demonic presence are blind, and therefore subject to Satanic/demonic violence. The ways of seeing are broken into discernment and detection. Discernment is a spiritual gift from God that functions like radar, an automatic demon alarm compared to the more investigative work of detection. Within these options, demons are detected either through gut reaction or through extensive analysis influenced by hermeneutic and prior exposure to the demonic. As not all Christians possess the ability to literally see demons, the ability to identify them according to a preexistent schema is of paramount importance. This schema comes from a recontextualized description of phenomena within the course of daily human life as mediated by a spiritual warfare worldview, which emerges in turn out of warfare hermeneutic.⁷⁵

Demons influence the physical realm in their attacks on humans. They act out of malice, bent on destroying man as a proxy for destroying God. Their

⁷⁴ Prince, *War in Heaven*, 111. "When we pray, heaven moves."

Jacobs, *Reformation Manifesto*, 182. "The skies reflected what was going on in the spiritual, invisible realm, with angelic hosts fighting the powers of darkness over the city. There was a war going on in the heavenlies!"

Prince, *Expel Demons*, 165. "Demons are normally invisible. They cannot be perceived by human eyes."

⁷⁵ Prince, *Expel Demons*, 193. "With our limited understanding, we may find it difficult to envisage how a spiritual entity such as a demon can occupy a physical space, such as an area of the human body. But it happens and it happens frequently in Scripture."

Hammond, *Pigs*, 27. "The presence and nature of evil spirits can be known by two principle methods: (1) discernment, and (2) detection."

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malicious attacks on humans, when they come, typically manifest by increasing misfortune in order to prevent the maintenance of a Christian, godly life. This evil work is usually noticed by the deliverance minister who determines the presence of turbulence and recognizes it as a demonic assault. This act of recognition draws the demon up out of the hidden realm where, in a warfare worldview, its lack of visibility was precisely the precondition for its ability to wreak havoc. On an interpersonal level, The war that demons wage takes the form of corruption, scandal, addiction, medical catastrophe and mental illness. Without possessing any physical form, they tear at the borders of their human habitats, seeking to drive that human away from God and towards Satan. There is an understanding that, should Satan manage to demonize a sufficient number of people, his power in the world will increase to the point that he can drag a vast number of humans into damnation with him.⁷⁶

When living in the body, demons can manifest differing degrees of physicality. They can speak, and their vocality permits them to express their subjectivity. They can feel pain, and they feel it most often when Christ is invoked against them. They can thrash their victim's limbs around with immense strength. They can contort the face, control the body, defile their host, cause

⁷⁶ Prince, *War in Heaven*, 10. "These evil powers have only one objective – wickedness. They may appear as angels of light and by their deceptiveness draw many into their nets of destruction."

Jacobs, *Deliver Us*, 132. "Demons are real beings that can and do try to attack Christians."

Hammond, *Pigs*, 47. "These evil spirits are creatures of darkness. They cannot bear to be brought into the light. When their presence and tactics are exposed they may become excited and frenzied."

Ibid., 9 -10. "Satan is still seeking to rule the world and we must agree that he has made considerable progress...Demon powers are set in array and given authority by Satan to control the entire world and plague it with pernicious evil."

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physical pain, and their presence or entry can be marked by nasal drippings, loud exhalations or any of a number of expectorations from the body. Demons are said to prefer the human habitat, as the “dry spaces” of the world mentioned in Matt. 12:43 are apparently unpleasant.⁷⁷

Demons watch, wait and learn about the individual in order to assess his weak spots. They are embedded in their victims’ culture and attuned to their specific vices. Demons, for instance, use television, toys and heavy metal as conduits for entry into human forms. They are aware that children enjoy cartoons, but those cartoons change over time, so demons adapt accordingly. Long lists of toys are found in warfare texts dealing with the occult, and each toy contains some indication of malevolence marking cultural properties as demonic corruption. When demons are cast out, they sometimes plead not to be sent far across the globe, as their attunement is useless if they are too far from their native habitats. Demons make their homes in human bodies by encouraging sinful habits, bending and breaking their hosts’ will through attrition, temptation, despair and corruption. Sin, or a predilection for sin, opens the door for demons to attempt entry into human bodies. The objective at all times is to

⁷⁷ Hammond, *Pigs*, 54. “When those nearby started to pray for her the demons began to scream through her.”

Ibid, 80. “In cases where the spirits are speaking through the person who’s having hands laid on, it occasionally happens that the spirit will cry and whine “your hand is hot.” Demons can feel the anointing of the ministering hand and are tortured by it.”

Ibid, 52. “When evil spirits depart we normally expect some sort of manifestation through the mouth or nose.”

Jacobs, *Deliver Us*, 187. “To me, the dry place is anywhere outside of the human body, because our bodies are made up of such a large percentage of water.”

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advance the kingdom of Satan by planting evil seed in the hearts of men, and thereby gain ground for evil in its global war with God.⁷⁸

Demons take pleasure in wreaking evil, and if forced, they will say so. In their emotional life, demons express fear, sloth, pride, cunning, candor and groveling obeisance when engaged in conversation. They employ tricks of language to escape from the Christian warrior, claiming to be their host and protesting their treatment, or they crow with pleasure at lasting the longest of all the demons in the host's body. They are subjective beings, who know the personal history of their hosts, the biblical history of the world and the relationships between Christ, Satan, Christianity and themselves. Demons hold a privileged position over the sleeping masses of Christianity and humankind. They can see human weakness and feed off it, exploiting vulnerability as a means of making human bodies home. Humans without knowledge of demons do and say things that can open their bodies to demonic invasion. Demons cannot simply enter; they enter because of human sins, actions, words or relations.

⁷⁸ Prince, *Expel Demons*, 166. "Demons study you, follow your movements, observe your weak moments, detect your weak places. Then they engineer situations that will open the way for them to slip in."

Jacobs, *Deliver Us*, 145. "While Satan is not omnipresent or all-knowing, he does see past wrongdoings and he knows a person's weaknesses."

Hammonds, *Children's Deliverance*, 33. (w/r/t throwing demons far away from their hosts) "The Holy Spirit revealed that it would place the spirits under a different demonic principality within Satan's kingdom; a place of which they were not knowledgeable. They would not be experienced in the culture, and would not be able to perpetuate the generation curses with which they were familiar."

Jacobs, *Deliver Us*, 9. Dutch Sheets, a pastor allied with Wagner and Jacobs, is speaking in this citation) "The demonic infiltration of our culture goes far beyond pocket monsters and teenage spells. Inoculated by the gradual, systemic infiltration of these icons of darkness, we have become the proverbial frog in the kettle, who does not know he is being cooked. We are being programmed to accept evil and do not realize it."

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Looking at pornography or dreaming about sex, for instance, invites the spirit of adultery into the life of the sinner, who has licensed the spirit to ruin its host by being lax in his speech, vision and thought. Generations, too, can pass down sin. A familial association with vodoun, or Freemasonry, or alcoholism opens everyone in the family to the related demonic entity.⁷⁹

Demonic subjectivity is constrained by the nature of the demon. Demons each only have one purpose. A spirit of death causes death. A demon of alcoholism makes the bottle look attractive. A demon of heart disease eats at the heart, as does a demon of asthma in the lungs. In addition to bodily aches, demons can cause schizophrenia, depression, an obsession with witchcraft, or religious problems, such as over-intellectualism, hostility to the new word of God, overt non-Christian activity or involvement with magic and totemism.⁸⁰ Demons proliferate according to the problems with which they are identified, and there are always enough demons to fill the world. They are discovered according to their symptoms of their presence, and the tautological structure of this location-by-location precludes their doing anything other than their

⁷⁹ Hammond, *Pigs*, 23. "Demons are evil personalities. They are spirit beings. They are the enemies of God and man. Their objectives in human beings are to tempt, deceive, accuse, condemn, pressure, defile, resist, oppose, control, steal, afflict, kill and destroy. C. P. Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 241. "Demons communicate. We may not know exactly how they talk among themselves or what language they use, but in order to communicate they need to know each other's names. Numerous cases have been recorded and verified of demons speaking to humans in the human's own vernacular."

Hammond, *Pigs*, 24. "Evil spirits have no sense of fairness. They never hesitate to take full advantage of time of weakness in a person's life."

Hammond, *Demons and Deliverance*, 23. "Demons are best able to do their work when they can conceal their presence and identity. They work under a cover of darkness."

Jacobs, *Deliver Us*, 191. "Very few people go through life without some kind of wounding, trauma or other experience that sets them up for a demonic influence of some kind."

⁸⁰ This is a partial list. A full one would take twenty pages.

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dominant, defining function. Demons are named according to the symptoms of their presence, and their names dictate their actions.⁸¹

The world is filled with demons. Depending on who performs the calculation, there are either an immense, uncountable number of demons in existence, or the third of the angels that fell with Satan (Lk. 10:18) corresponds to the two hundred million present in Revelation 9. In both cases, demons occupy the world in vast numbers. They prefer to inhabit the body to attack humans, but they can also inhabit objects drawn from “pagan” contexts, easily dominated animals, unbiblical social organizations, irreligious regions of the world, secular or non-Christian nations and non-warfare worldviews which deride the presence of demons as archaic and stupid. Residing in these structures, the masses of demons are largely invisible to the global populace, and Christians wage war for the fate of the world against a numerically stronger foe. Further, demons can inhabit the body in great numbers, in colonies headed by

⁸¹ Hammond, *Children's Deliverance*, 70. “Demons convey or betray their basic natures by their types of manifestations.”

Hammond, *Demons and Deliverance*, 86. “One person can be indwelt by thousands of spirits.”

Demonology books contain incredibly long lists of potential demons, not reproducible here, but an example is helpful: “she had been opened to the spirit of lesbianism through the practice of oral sex with her husband.” (Hammond, *Kingdom Living*, 62.) Note the identification of the demon spirit with a sex act generally incompatible with its nature. “Lesbianism” serves as a signifier for “aberrant sexuality,” regardless of the attribution’s illogic.

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stronger spirits enmeshed in a chain of command whose links reach Satan, whose orders can direct his forces against innocent humanity.⁸²

Demons occupy a kingdom of Satan, that kingdom has an army, and that army does Satan's will. Satan is warring with God, and he works by spreading lies like "diversity", "moral and cultural relativism," "religious equivalency," "liberalism" and so on. The list of Satan's devices, like the demonic army, can be expanded with further redescription; everything can be demonic, if it fits the biblical criteria. Demons enact Satan's will across the globe and throughout the planes of existence, forcing the spread of sinful, anti-biblical behavior as the byproduct of their warfare. Ensconced in their hierarchy, demons are the multiple faces of the devil's horde whose machinations seek to bring about the doom of humankind. Their ontological reality, their enmity towards Christian value systems and their practice of degrading devout Christian believers means that demons cannot coexist peacefully with Christians brought to full recognition of their presence. Warfare Christians must necessarily war against hypertension, depression and pride, because to fail to perform warfare is to leave the world to

⁸² Hammond, *Demons and Deliverance*, 132. "Demon spirits seek bodies, preferably the bodies of humans, to inhabit in order to carry out their evil purposes."

C. P. Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 96. "When pagan statues are brought into a person's home, demonic spirits may come along with them and cause strange and unidentifiable problems within the person's four walls."

Ibid., 75. "Real demons do attach themselves to animals, idols, brass rings, trees, mountains, and buildings as well as to any number and variety of manufactured and natural objects."

Ibid., 92. "Social structures themselves can properly be seen as demonized. But to my way of thinking they are simply the visible entities, which the invisible demonic forces are using for their own ends much as demonic forces will use an idol, although the idol itself is simply a piece of wood or stone."

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Satan's devices. Literally, seeing demons and failing to act condones violence against the self, the family, the Church, the nation, the species, the planet and God. Demons are the total enemy, whose irruption threatens the foundations of everything, and whose actions are always performed in the service of the infernal Other of God.⁸³

Human Bodies

Moving through a hazy world of sleeping, ignorant humans, demons in warfare discourse appear first as a shimmer in space on the horizon of human consciousness before crawling fully into view, screaming and slaving and contorting the human form into a rictal posture of pain, affliction and demonic oppression. The presence of demons inhibits humans from becoming fully Christian, because the dehumanizing experience of spiritual attrition acclimates the oppressed human to sinful things that do not lead to proper Christian holiness. Prevented from fully developing his Christian faith, the perfect fruition of which is the natural destiny of humans for spiritual warfare, the human filled

⁸³ C. P. Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 238. "There are so many demons that they cannot all report to Satan personally. In order to maintain the communication system in the realm of darkness, more than likely, there is a hierarchy through which lesser demons receive their orders and file their reports to greater demons who eventually can get their message to their commander-in-chief, Satan."

Jacobs, *Reformation Manifesto*, 85. "Ironically, most of us do not even know that our thinking and worldview have been polluted, or at least influenced, by secularism, naturalism and humanistic rationalism through our educational system, media, and culture."

Hammond, *Pigs*, 10. "Demon powers are set in array and given authority by Satan to control the entire world and plague it with pernicious evil."

Ibid, 97 "The devil will try any trick to keep God's people out of spiritual warfare ... he has everything to gain by it."

Prince, *Expel Demons*, 147. "Wherever we encounter demons, the scriptural response is to expel them, exercising the authority Christ has given us."

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with demons founders, falling away from a state of grace towards a lifetime of servitude and pain in Satan's kingdom. As demons inhibit the fullness of Christian life, their construction as perfect Other to warfare Christians necessarily carries with it a reconstruction of Christian identity. Demons inhabit and inform warfare Christianity's self-identity, and the articulation of what it means to be fully Christian and fully holy entails both a separation from the demonic and a reification of the vast difference between the demon and the human being. Promulgating warfare Christianity is a process of becoming, but that process never occurs without the negation of the Other whose construction and expulsion opens the possibility of becoming fully human.⁸⁴

Deliverance ministry, spiritual warfare fought through the individual, rests on the expulsion of demons from the body. The body in spiritual warfare discourse is the initial frontier of the war against Satan. Purifying the body of demonic taint renders the human inhabiting that body fit for Christian duty. Within warfare Christianity, humans are not synonymous with their bodies.

⁸⁴ Prince, *Expel Demons*, 147. "We have no scriptural basis for assuming that this freedom comes about automatically. Wherever we encounter demons, the scriptural response is to expel them, exercising the authority Christ has given us."

Jacobs, *Possessing the Gates*, 77 "As we allow God to polish us and our armor, we will grow to become vessels of honor in the hose of the Lord."

C. P. Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 291. "When we have the gifts and the fruit and the power of the holy spirit in our lives, we are prepared to battle, not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers. We have the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. My prayer is that all who read this book will be activated with this divine power that God wishes us to have. When they are, we can move out together to win multitudes of lost people to Jesus Christ, thereby spreading the wonderful message of the Kingdom of God to our communities and to our world."

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Instead, drawing on 1 Thessalonians 5:23, spiritual warfare authors construct a human bodily topography divided into body, spirit and soul.⁸⁵

In this schema, humans are not the only entities inhabiting the body, and therefore do not own or control their frame. This tripartite division secludes human consciousness within its meaty frame, distancing and enforcing a separation between bodily control and human will. The spatial distribution of normal bodily functions places things like movement or vibrating vocal cords within the domain of the body or the flesh, while will, emotions, intellect, and memory are parts of the soul. The body is just a shell imbued with the spirit and the soul, wherein demons lurk and attack and war on the other entities inhabiting the human frame. The body is both a battleground and a home for the human soul. The division of body from soul reduces humanity to its mental processes, placed within the body and proximate to the demonic strongholds inhabiting that communal space. Demons build their homes within the same bodily space that humans dwell, so the war over humans is a bodily war expanding out into limbs and toes and internal spaces. Not only demons of illness and affliction reside inside of humans. All demons make the body their home, their playground, their site of control and the battlefield for warring with

⁸⁵ Hammond, *Pigs*, 2. "Demons consider the body of the person indwelt to be their 'house.'" Jacobs, *Deliver Us*, 127. "A spirit can live in the flesh without total possession of the person. We are a three-part being: spirit, soul and body. A spirit would have to take over all three parts to completely possess a person. This cannot happen to a believer, because our spirit dwells with the Holy Spirit. However, it is possible and common for a Christian to be oppressed by a spirit that controls or influences the soul or mind, the will or the emotions."

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the soul, and therefore casting out demons enforces the purity of the human body against demonic insurgents.

The third space of the human body in warfare schematic is the spirit, representing the spark of the divine giving life to human bodies through God in the Holy Spirit. In spiritual warfare discourse, the Holy Spirit's identifiable presence in the body represents the necessary precondition for the total elimination of demons from the body. The Holy Spirit guards and protects the human soul from demonic machinations at work within it, simultaneously encircling the tender spirit and casting out the demonic presence. As this represents the first intrusion of God's literal presence into a chapter this far concerned with the construction of God's enemies, it is best to pause at this moment to examine the construction of the divine within warfare discourse. This divinity arrives in the moment of total deliverance and victory over demonic presences to accomplish the primary work of spiritual warfare: orienting the human soul towards Christ and a Christian worldview.⁸⁶

God, Jesus and the Spirit Called Down

The three parts of God serve different narrative functions within spiritual warfare discourse. The Holy Spirit indwells the human frame and guards against

⁸⁶ Prince, *Expel Demons*, 160. "The Holy Spirit does not withhold His help if He discerns that there are demons within us."

Hammond, *Demons and Deliverance*, 11. "The spirit of Man is delivered from death by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, and the body and personality made whole through his healing touch and/or by deliverance from unclean spirits."

C. P. Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 95. "God carefully wrote out the Ten Commandments. This is history. The ten commandments are given for our good so that we might live in peace and happiness."

Jacobs, *Reformation Manifesto*, 33. "Our worldview should come through Scripture – it should be biblical."

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future demonic intrusions by speaking and comforting the soul, filling the body to force out demons. It works to fill in areas of unknown knowledge in spiritual warfare by opening the Christian's ears to Its words. Jesus' biblical narrative provides the impetus for identifying demons, as his ministry in the Bible can be read as directly arguing for the necessity of engaging with demonic presences. However, as his ministry is full of holes where precise articulations of the proper methodology for fighting demons might be, the Holy Spirit is critical for working out the problems of calling down the power of God against demons. In ancient times, God fixed the moral code through which demons can serve as the ontologically real marker for the absolute dictums located by warfare hermeneutic in the Bible. This code was narratively enacted through the ideal example of Jesus, and subsequently reiterated by Paul. Because so much of demonic nature is constructed contrapuntally to the morality located by warfare authors in the Bible, this rigid, absolute code gives the Holy Spirit targets against which its power can be exerted.⁸⁷ God fixes, Jesus enacts and the Holy Spirit articulates and performs the principles by which the war against Satan might finally come to a close.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ The intersection of this hermeneutic, construction of demons with other structures in warfare thought will be explored in much greater detail in the next chapter. This triune construct of the divine becomes critically important in the overlapping narratives which structure the spiritual warfare worldview. The three parts of God are actors in a mythic drama, carriers of spiritual might, and the primary weapons in the war against Satan.

⁸⁸ C. P. Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 259. "While God is sovereign, I do not like to think of Him as static. I believe that God likes to pour out new wine and when He does, the new wine should go into new wineskins." (Wine signifies teaching.)

Prince, *Expel Demons*, 175. "Demonic deception, however, goes beyond distortions or aberrations of the Christian faith. It includes all religions, cults or philosophies that set aside any of the great central truths of the Bible, especially anything that concerns

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The Holy Spirit, as an entity, brings the new Word and might of God to Christians in the present day, working within human beings to purge the body of demons. In the demonic Other, the Holy Spirit finds a mirror of its own power whose presence defines the Spirit's absence in the human body. Demons tempt the Christian/human in order to gain a purchase on their body and perpetuate the sin that resonated with the nature of the demonic aggressor, which first drew the demon to its victim. They attack when the human will is weak, prone to sin and deviation from Christ's standard, as "any kind of unhealthiness or emotional weakness makes a person vulnerable to demonic attack."⁸⁹ The spirit drives the demon out, and thus when the power of God manifests in spiritual warfare, the human body is cleansed.⁹⁰

"The spirit of Man is delivered from death by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, and the body and personality made whole through his healing touch and/or by deliverance from unclean spirits."⁹¹

This process of purification eliminates the demon, the tendency to perpetuate the sin which initially allowed the demon to enter, and the integrality of the

Jesus Christ. We need to remember that demons are always trying to conceal or distort who Jesus is."

Ibid., 25. "Apparently he spoke directly to them and commanded them in the name of Jesus to come out of their victims. In other words, Paul followed the pattern of Jesus Himself."

Jacobs, *Reformation Manifesto*, 188. "We need to pray that God's kingdom authority will be established over our nations. Of course, regions will not be free once and for all from Satan's attacks until Jesus returns."

Derek Prince, *Lucifer Exposed* (1975; repr., New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2006), 35. "Satan has already been defeated. You and I do not have to defeat Satan. But we must apply the victory that Jesus has already won and walk in that victory. (Col. 1:12) Our inheritance is in the light, and there is no darkness whatsoever in it. It is totally in the light."

⁸⁹ Prince, *Expel Demons*, 99.

⁹⁰ Hammond, *Demons and Deliverance*, 11 "...the body and personality made whole through his healing touch and/or by deliverance from unclean spirits."

⁹¹ Ibid., 11

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given sin for the construction of the individual. The process of eliminating the demonic Other constructed through its identification in turn reconstructs the Christian by construing the enemy as responsible for the intrinsic faults of humanity.

This sin does not have to be personal; Peter Wagner once remitted the sins of Japan and the United States for their actions during World War II. Sins can scale, from human adultery to genocide, and there are no restrictions of scope or focus: everything can be absolved by the Holy Spirit. This scaling absolution, by making the spiritual warfare worldview a relevant referent at any level, extends to encompass any and all things within the bounds of Creation. God speaks everywhere, in and throughout all beings in the World and at all points that the mind might consider. The initial moment of deliverance is critical for expansion beyond individual humans, because blindness to God's word in one instance enables ignorance and death in others. Deliverance ministry, the initial application of the Word of Jesus to the demons indwelling an individual, is the opening salvo engaging the delivered subject in combat against Satan and his minions.⁹²

Demons enter through doors opened by sin, and they are cast out through humans acknowledging their sin through confession, inverting its strength and asserting the power of the Holy Spirit over their lives. This can be performed by

⁹²C. P. Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 123 "Demons are like rats that feed on garbage. Remove the garbage and the rats are relatively easy to kick out. Nations as a whole can harbor garbage that needs to be cleaned up before principalities and powers can be weakened."

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the afflicted subject in processes of self-deliverance, or within a ritual setting structured through specific principles of action and force. Warfare theory that directly addresses the methodology for casting out demons always provides formulas, useful prayers, diagnostic tools, Bible citations and principles for teambuilding in the service of furthering deliverance ministry, intercessory prayer, strategic spiritual warfare and the work of God.

The processes of deliverance and other forms of warfare literally involve the application of biblical principles at all moments. Within warfare hermeneutic, the Bible is true, clear and literal. Therefore, the force carried by words that accord with Bible principles is the primary weapon against demons, the “sword of the spirit” and part of the “whole armor of God.”⁹³ This spiritual armory is offered to Christians as part of clothing them in the Spirit, putting on the armor and sealing all vulnerable points against the enemy. The vocalization of the authority of God, who makes this armor strong, takes shape as an invocation of Jesus’ name. Deliverance ministers and spiritual warriors are constantly called to take authority over demons in Jesus’ name, which makes the Christian strong enough to ask God to eliminate the demon from the human it indwells. The literal formation is often similar to “You demon, I cast you out in the name of Jesus Christ.” In the Bible, Jesus incarnates God and demonstrates deliverance, serving as the focal point for warfare discourse’s conception of biblical history⁹⁴ and the spine upholding moral Christian values. Jesus is the

⁹³ Images drawn from Eph. 6:10-18.

⁹⁴ See chapter 1 for hermeneutic significance and chapter 3 for narrative situation.

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closest possible proxy for the ideal form of the Christian warrior. He has the authority due to God, he has the clarity to see demons, his ministry was undeniably effective, and his blood provided the protective covering for all future generations of Christians threatened with destruction by Satan.⁹⁵

Militant, Christian

Having found demonic presence, identified their characteristics, felt their rotting, corrupting touch and eradicated them through God's power, the Christian emerges as a holy Christian, body and voice engaged in spiritual warfare, with eyes open to the threat of demonic power and soul reshaped by the Spirit in the body. Demons have been identified as entities causing moral failings, their nature correlating to actions performed by the individual. These actions are recognized as demonic and anti-Christian through processes of identification mediated by warfare authors pursuing a biblical hermeneutic that understands the Bible to be clear in its moral dictums. Homosexuality, for instance, is a demon, as are witchcraft, adultery, fornication, licentiousness, drunkenness and idolatry. Each usage of these terms is subject to extensive redefinition and redeployment, but their importance is that they represent facets

⁹⁵ Prince, *Lucifer Exposed*, 62. "This citation in Ephesians 6 tells us that the sword of the spirit is the rhema of God. In other words, it is not the Bible on your bedside table; it is the Word of God operating when we speak it with our mouth. That is a sword. That's what drives Satan back."

C. P. Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 117. "The whole armor of God is a prerequisite to taking the Kingdom of God by force."

Hammonds, *Children's Deliverance*, 45. "The blood of Jesus is atoning, redeeming, cleansing, remitting, justifying, incorruptible, precious blood."

C. P. Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 249. "There is power in the name of Jesus, the blood of Jesus and other weapons of spiritual warfare. But none of them will be everything that it is supposed to be unless it is accompanied by powerful prayer."

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of human identity as open to the possibility of demons inhering in its structure. The invocation of the divine power to eradicate demons has a restructuring effect on human identity. Everything described as a sin in the Bible has an associated demon, and the Holy Spirit can speak to further describe new ones.

Therefore, because demonic oppression is caused by, identified with and engenders further sin, and because that sin is biblically mediated, the identity constructed through deliverance ministry is a winnowing of human difference according to biblical principles. Christians are called to continually ingest a moral orientation towards a biblical injunction to be born-again in the body of Christianity, immune to demonic entry and able to move in the world without being subject to the wiles of Satan. Christians are not supposed to be completely identical, but the absoluteness of the principles which shape the engagement and nullification of their demonic Other means that there are specific points at which they make totalized, militant claims on the absolute and necessary rightness of their worldview. Because demons are totally evil, Christians have to be totally good, and instability in their conceptions of moral good need to be biblically defended. The worldview can shift, but it cannot shift away its biblical basis. The ideal outcome of deliverance ministry is spiritual militancy.

Spiritual warfare Christianity calls all other human beings to incorporate God and Satan into a world distilled into their opposition. As this binary pair signifies a great number of other oppositions, whose terms are linked according to narrative presuppositions within a warfare schema, this call collapses human difference in the act of recognizing demons. Power flows through and around

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these binary terms, linking, opposing, subjugating and differentiating them in the same motion in which they are constituted:

God/Satan
Jesus/Satan
Jesus/Demons
Paul/Demons
Christians/Demons
Christian/world
Christian/ (Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist,
Unitarian, New Ager, gay rights
advocate, ad infinitum)
God's Army/ Satan's hordes
God's Kingdom/ Satan's kingdom
God's Word/Satan's lies
The Bible/the world
Morality/error

Receiving and maintaining deliverance indicates membership in God's kingdom and a total rejection of Satan's wiles, across the breadth of human existence.

Within the narrative of the Christian apocalypse, Satan and his demons will be destroyed and non-Christians will be rendered subject to awful judgment at the moment of Christ's return, while Christians will be called up to reign with Christ forever. The polarity of the multiply signified God (Church, good, Christian) and Satan (evil, demons, immorality, destruction) places the human at the crux of a choice which is no choice at all, between absolute realignment towards Christ or doom and fiery death within the kingdom of Satan.

From the point at which Christians are called to make this choice, entering God's kingdom is almost predetermined. Within the warfare worldview, there is no possibility of salvation without the eradication of demons. The human body and the body of the Church must be purged of seductive, corrupting influences if humans are to have any hope of salvation. And demons are

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everywhere, infecting objects, pets, nations, causes and people. They are well organized, working together in a hierarchy enforcing Satan's will without necessitating his presence. There are either an immense number of them, or there are one hundred million of them, and the continued slumber of ignorant Christians imperils the future of the Word and the world.

This is the logic of the Christian and the demon in spiritual warfare: to bring the word of Christ to humanity, the world that is infected with demons must apply the scalpel of biblical morality to the rotten parts of its character leading it away from Christ. In the moment of its construction, the demonic Other is construed as absolutely unsalvageable, and the potentials in its destruction make it the focal point for intersecting ideas about the human in the world. In the next chapter, strains of thought within spiritual warfare Christianity about warring Kingdoms and apocalyptic come together to formulate a mythic world steeped in a fundamentalist ethic of world history culminating in the events of Revelation. By locating demons, spiritual warfare authors further the cause of God in the world. This is a war that rages around us, and it calls its followers forward to engage in political and social action countering Satan in the world. The logic of the spiritual war, its militarization of social life and its teleology must be examined.

3. The Kingdom at War

Just as deliverance ministry is the opening salvo of a much larger war effort, the human, as a battleground in the war against Satan, is part of a much grander struggle. Within that struggle, we have identified the hermeneutic framework enabling spiritual warfare and the preliminary construction of demonic alterity that enables the formation of group identity. My concern, however, is the way that this oppositional framework is fleshed out into a worldview. Contraposing the demon and the human does not constitute a worldview; the process of Othering enabled by warfare hermeneutic does not itself ensure the wholesale adoption of the warfare worldview. As noted previously, the hermeneutic by which spiritual warfare authors allow for the presence of demons in the world is specific, and their exegeses necessitate univocal understandings of specific passages.

Noting that reading Christ's engagement with demons as historical fact throughout the Gospels demands the immediate question of demonic presence in our own time, it is then possible to turn this formulation back upon the biblical text and ask another question: If demons are present because they are found in the Bible, and if they are found at specific instances within the Bible, what tissue connects those instances together? How do we move from selected

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moments and oppositional binaries to an organic whole encompassing the world? In this chapter, I argue that this transformation, expressed as a warfare worldview, expands the initial moment of confrontation and identification by resignifying human life until it is fully immersed in the spiritual war against Satan. This move structures and enables the construction of spiritual warfare's Christian identity through formative myths arguing for the cosmological authority and direct relevance of spiritual warfare Christianity.

In rendering warfare hermeneutic somewhat visible in chapter one, I argued that warfare authors treat the Bible as if citing a passage turned it into an object substantiating the author's authority claim without any need for narrative situation. In citation, this claim is true; by suggesting a need for constant contextualization, extended narrative exegesis would belie the Bible's status as a document outside of world history handed down from God, and thus wholly self-contained and impervious to redescription. This instantiated literality, however, is grounded in a reading of the *entire* Bible as literally true. Everything can be cited as proof because the overarching narrative of Scripture is necessarily, self-evidently relevant. Thus, in comparing Humphries's and warfare author's hermeneutic in Matthew, the difference between the two was entirely contextual. Humphries placed Matthew 12 within a cultural and linguistic history of Near Eastern scribal activity, while the bulk of interpretive work by warfare scholars centered on situating the verse within an understanding of the constitution of the demonic army. This army has no relevance and no urgency outside of the war that constitutes its members as Others attacking Christian

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souls, a conflict which is itself subsumed within a grander, broader war narrative. Christians do not fight demons in the same way as exterminators fight cockroaches; their struggle is against armed representatives of Satan's invading kingdom, the "principalities and powers" (Eph. 6:12) set in place to shape and rule the world. Christians must fight demons because the destiny of the world is predicated on a conflict between God and Satan, revealed and always interpreted through the same biblical hermeneutic which demands that demons be fought. This is narrative history, a narrative world inhering in absolute Christian duties.

The wealth of stories told in the Bible shapes the Christian world. This connection, between story and world, places spiritual warfare discourse directly under the auspices of an analysis as myth. If we look at the myths inherent in spiritual warfare discourse, we can begin to understand the mythic imagination of those spiritual warfare theorists seeking to comprehend their vision of the world. Myth links the warfare worldview to warfare practice, continually signifying a world filled with terror, destruction and the continuous holy war against a demonic enemy.

Myth

A constant problem with using myth as an analytical category is myth's popular usage, which runs exactly contrary to the way I want to use it.⁹⁶ Russell

⁹⁶ Again, there is a politics of ontology in my use of myth. The term works really well for explicating the interactions between narrative and reality, but it always carries with it the significant baggage of its status as falsehood. In this chapter, I make no ontologically deterministic claims; I am manifestly not trying to say that spiritual warfare Christians are ignorant, primitive Christians easily spooked by ghost stories. I am saying that Bible stories

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McCutcheon has identified two ways in which “the word carries with it a strong judgment about ourselves and others: either we labor under falsehood (as with stereotypes), or, despite our best efforts, we do not understand the way the world works, and so we use stories to come to the rescue where knowledge fails us.”⁹⁷ In both cases, using “myth” is dismissive, reducing and disempowering the story/object it describes. Neither mode of explanation suits my purposes. Myths survive to reproduction because they resonate with the groups which first tell them. As McCutcheon points out, both of these modes of understanding myth are “based on the premise that one can distinguish between *reality as it really is*, and *reality as it happens to be (mis)represented*, on the other.”⁹⁸ The self-confident essentialism of “myth” as falsehood falters when we notice that our deciding what is and is not myth “betrays some generally undetected logic inherent in our own social world.” If demons are portrayed as a “myth” in the usual sense, the implicit assumption is that demons do not exist. We have already noted that assumption’s fundamental misconception: simply because something is not an ontologically tangible component of my world does not mean that it has no affect on me. Other people act relative to things I do not believe in, and they act in relation to me. Therefore, demons have to exist in some sense. Myth reflects and refracts human reality as a mediating third term; denying the reality of a given myth does not make it disappear. Detecting the essentialist logic implicit in

shape spiritual warfare’s interaction with the world in a mode redolent with myth, and that this interaction is an ordinary human way of interacting with the world.

⁹⁷ Russell T. McCutcheon, “Myth,” in *Guide to the Study of Religion*, ed. Will Braun and Russell T. McCutcheon (New York: Cassell, 2000), 190.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

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“myth” permits us to analyze warfare discourse in the temporal, contingent terms in which it emerges and takes root, without limiting its plausibility.

Redefining “myth” permits a destabilization of the pervasive authority with which a myth invests itself by seeking its own status as a world-altering story.

Noticing the concern the inherent concern with social worlds, McCutcheon redefines the word, as “a master signifier that authorizes and reproduces a specific world-view”⁹⁹ and “the vehicle whereby any of a variety of possible social charters is rendered exemplary, authoritative, singular unique, as something that cannot be imagined differently.”¹⁰⁰ Myth is an ordinary rhetorical device intrinsic to constructing, maintaining and authorizing a particular social world presented as absolute and stable. It is the precondition for a social world, the parameter by which group belonging is established and adjudicated, and it binds the group together, offering narratives as grounds for social identity. Examples abound, even when restricted to warfare Christianity; no one who denies the existence of demons can possibly experience deliverance ministry as it presents itself, and demonic existence is determined according to its resonance with Bible myth.

We should notice that the imagined world emerging in the articulation of social identities through everyday speech contains within it two separate epistemological moves: the mythic imagining underpinning identity formation and the language which mobilizes those myths on an individual level. We have

⁹⁹ McCutcheon, “Myth”, 192.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 200.

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two scales of import: a sociocultural world ordering and the personal relevance of that world to its participants. Two books, Roland Barthes's Mythologies and Burton Mack's *Myth and the Christian Nation*, proceed from precisely these concerns. By combining the efforts of these scholars, we can come towards a definition for myth capable of addressing the disjunction between the imagined world of warfare Christianity and its constant deployment in language intended to move and affect its citizens.

Burton Mack

Myth and the Christian Nation is an attempt to create a systematically coherent theory of religion and use it to redescribe Christian history. Mack notes that "myth and rituals have come into view as the two primary human preoccupations that we have thought of as religious."¹⁰¹ Mack argues that the reproduction and repetition of the stories and actions that become myths and rituals represents a working-out of *social interests* for the group in which the myth-ritual complex is evoked. "Myths and rituals are not only generated by social interests, they are the ways in which social interests continue to be shaped, criticized, thought about, and argued over in the ongoing maintenance of a society."¹⁰² People transpose their normal concerns into a mythic realm in order to articulate a social response within the established bounds of their culture. Mack defines social interest as "the collective interest that needs to be named, and that is so taken for granted by a people as to be something of which

¹⁰¹ Burton L. Mack, *Myth and the Christian Nation* (London: Equinox Publishing, 2008), 48.

¹⁰² *ibid.*, 81

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they are hardly conscious,”¹⁰³ which defines a mentality capable of explaining “the social function of religion as important for life in the everyday world.” Social interests discussed in a collective setting can use myths to shape an understanding of the world responsive to pressing concerns. Mack examines questions about food production, territorial boundaries, kinship systems and group origin as moments in which we can see myths as “a language created by and for intellectual activity that focuses upon social situations from the perspective of the imagined world.”¹⁰⁴ It is this relationship, between myth and the imagined world, which interests me in the context of spiritual warfare discourse.

Mack’s concept of the “imagined world” speaks to the double consciousness implicit in revealing the war with Satan to Christians, discussed in the previous chapter. Because demons are spiritual beings affecting a physical plane, spiritual warfare always takes place at a point of intersection between physically experienced and spiritually recognized planes of existence. Speech in the human realm is heard in the supernatural,¹⁰⁵ and demonic affliction originates in the spiritual realm to ruin human lives. The focus is always on the intersecting planes that make up the totality of the world, and in which Christians find their call to war clearly stated by an opposition to emergent

¹⁰³ Mack, *Myth and the Christian Nation*, 75

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*, 123

¹⁰⁵ This term is drawn from warfare parlance. Jacobs has a book called “The Supernatural Life,” Also, Derek Prince states “There are only two sources of the supernatural available to men: God or Satan. Any supernatural power that does not come from God does, in fact, come from Satan.” (Prince, *Lucifer Exposed*, 97), the expanded version of which is cited below.

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demonic figures. As Mack conceives it, the imagined world is “a mythic imagination of two environments, social world and natural world: the world as perceived and imagined within which a people finds itself at home...the imagined world of a people provides the framework for its sense of identity and self-understanding.”¹⁰⁶ The imagined world is based on interactions with the social and natural worlds that surround a group, and the mythic imagination applied to those environments reshapes the order of the world understood to be authoritative. The imagined world is a *naturalized* world in which a group can find itself at home, even if home, in the case of spiritual warfare, is not a place of rest.

“The imagined world is the location and vehicle for precedents that continue to influence thinking, authorizations that sometimes require recognition and affirmation, symbols that mark social values for observation and reflection, and in general the images that provide reasons for the fact that the social structures at hand are already there for every new generation.”¹⁰⁷

Myths and stories populate the imagined world, as the narrative figures represented in culturally resonant stories adopt a position within the frame of mythic problem solving. If we superimpose the imagined world of spiritual warfare Christianity onto the physical plane, then that mythic landscape revolving around geographic, hermeneutic and theological principles constantly mediates Christian life as lived on Earth.¹⁰⁸ As long as we understand that a mythic landscape is an ordinary feature of human life, and that being socially

¹⁰⁶ Mack, *Myth and the Christian Nation*, 120, 121

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*, 121

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*

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constructed does not preclude ontological reality, we can make a great deal of progress towards understanding the role of reading Bible stories in imagining the militarized world of spiritual warfare Christianity.

For Mack, imagination does not mean fiction. Myths are constantly set apart from those who participate in them, and the landscape mediated by myth is not coterminous with the real geography in which everyday life occurs.¹⁰⁹ Mythic life is emptier, populated with figures of enormous import but limited agency and fixed identity. If we speak of George Washington, we are not (usually) talking about an old man in a wig with false teeth made from hippopotamus bone. We are talking about The Father Of Our Country, whose actions, predilections and attitudes are demonstrably authoritative. George Washington, Chopper Of Cherry Trees, can legitimate ideological positions within American political discourse as an example understood by the culture at large. Myths establish a *relationship* between narrative actors and those individuals who understand their stories to convey cosmological truth. Imagination, in this case, means the intellectual work required to project the individual into a mythic relationship with an actor not immediately present.

¹⁰⁹ "The mythic world allows for recognizable features of the social world to be exaggerated, concentrated in odd configurations, parceled out and distributed among several agents, set in situations of conflict, and observed in moments of narrative transformation." Mack, *Myth and the Christian Nation*, 79.

"The imaginary world does not reflect the faces one actually sees in the everyday social world, nor is the imaginary world as lovely, sensual, detailed and inviting as the natural environment of a group and its polished artifacts." Ibid., 121.

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Without careful bracketing, calling spiritual warfare “imaginary” is incredibly derogatory. I am not saying that imagination indicates that Cindy Jacobs experiences prophecy from the Holy Spirit as a flight of loony fancy. Imagination means that when Frank Hammond judges deliverance to be a victory in the war against Satan, the fact that he does not directly fight Satan and mediates the experience through his understanding of biblical truth means that he is projecting his actions through a mythic framework which *incorporates* Satan, whether or not that figure exists. This relationship is important; Wagner et al constantly redescribe their actions through reference to a determinant frame to which they do not have constant access, and thus the mythic category of the imagined world serves to represent their redescription without negating the lived reality of that world as they experience it. Christians can fight Satan and follow Christ without ever engaging in the tactile, bodily encounters implicit in “fight” and “follow.” Jesus and Satan do not need to be tangibly present to be important.

Mack wants “the imagined world” to rectify the problems he sees in “worldview,” which he defines as “a picture of the world as a people sees it.” He dismisses view, because the collection of discrete pictures he understands that word to indicate “is stretched by the complexity of the fabric it is supposed to depict, and it is made unworkable by the resulting layers of intellectual systems required to comprehend it.”¹¹⁰ Mack judges view to indicate a static image, which cannot encompass the shifts and reworkings intrinsic to a language

¹¹⁰ Mack, *Myth and the Christian Nation*, 120

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capable of mythic imaginings. I agree, in principle, with this assertion: a static image would not, for instance, allow Derek Prince, Frank Hammond and Peter Wagner to use the same mythic grammar to disagree on the interpretation of “strong man” in Matthew 12.

View, however, does not indicate stasis. View can mean a single ocular experience of an image, as in viewing a painting, an ideological position (“views on a subject”), a vantage point for prolonged exposure to the sights of the surrounding environment, or a three-dimensional experience of a single object over time, as in a demon newly coming into view. A viewing person can move, the sights can change, and view, therefore, expresses positionality. *Worldview*, then, indicates an individual’s positionality within their total experience of the world. In conjunction with imagined world, worldview can represent individual understandings of place in the world as mediated by their mythic framework. Only if we radically restrict the definition of view to a given act of oriented sight does worldview become problematic.

Mack is working on a larger scale than I am, and so for him the imagined world and its articulations represent the sum total of “a motley conglomerate of disparate images that vary in intensity and clarity of profile.”¹¹¹ These images can be deployed or dismissed without violating the agreed-upon bounds of mythic discourse, but their individual logic, their mythic grammar, is always bound to the imagined world. Myths enable a language establishing the speaker’s words within a realm they call into being, and as a language, the work

¹¹¹ Mack, *Myth and the Christian Nation*, 79

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of Roland Barthes is particularly useful for analyzing the function of myth scaled to the individual utterance, rather than the broad sociocultural swathes Mack uses to describe mythic grammar. If myths, in the imagined world, are a domain for cultural imagination, how are myths worked out in the language which forms them in their everyday usage?

Roland Barthes

If a myth is the vehicle for thinking with a sustained social interest, myths necessarily establish communication between two actors, the one who cites the myth and the one who hears the resulting speech. This mythic speech, moreover, constantly references an imagined world in which social interests can be articulated and authorized in narrative terms. Therefore, Roland Barthes argues, “myth cannot possibly be an object, a concept, or an idea; it is a mode of signification, a form.”¹¹² Myth is a way of speaking about social concerns that turns normal speech into a tool for world shaping. It is not an object, concept or idea because a mythic imagination can authorize any number of modes of speech. The words that can be spoken are not automatically mythic by virtue of their utterance; they become mythic when the words that we speak are resignified to indicate something outside of their immediate meaning. Myth makes speech reference something outside of itself without directly invoking the complex imaginary world which legitimizes a myth within the bounds of a given culture.

¹¹² Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (1957; repr., n.p.: Hill and Wang, 1972), 109.

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Barthes's argument relies on the signifier/signified distinction in semiology first posited by Saussure, who used the word "tree" to analyze the system of signs we use to map our understanding of the world. When we use "tree" to describe an experienced object containing leaves, branches, a trunk and roots, there is no self-evident connection between the sound or word "tree" and the object we find outside of ourselves. A given tree is not all trees, and any tree that might seem exemplary does not automatically deny less-perfect trees their tree-ness. "Tree", rather, is a socially constructed signifier which makes reference to a signified concept whose connection to the word is not absolute, but rather emergent out of a collective agreement to call a tree a tree in English. The word "Tree" is a form whose connection to the concept "woody growing thing over there" occurs within a sign, the unity of form and concept in a word, and the connection between form and concept is not absolute. Tree can also signify "the Amazon" or "spotted owls" or "paper mills" without affecting the function of the sign at all. Any sign, anywhere, can have multiple signifieds at any moment, as long as the signified remains within culturally recognizable boundaries.¹¹³

Another sign, "demon", multiply signifies an ontologically real presence, a scientifically disprovable fact and an icon of popular culture. But we should notice that within a warfare frame, "demon" also calls to mind Satan, and God, and Christ's victorious return to Earth. When Cindy Jacobs asserts in *The Reformation Manifesto* that it is time "to release sectors of society from the

¹¹³ Barthes, *Mythologies*, 113-114.

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kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of light,"¹¹⁴ "release" invokes a particular imagined world not coextensive with the signifier. Occurring in a book aimed at the broader conservative-evangelical Christian complex encompassing but not identical with spiritual warfare Christianity, Jacobs does not mention fighting demons as a precondition for establishing the Kingdom of light. In *Possessing the Gates of the Enemy*, reprinted a year after *The Reformation Manifesto* was published in 2008, Jacobs explicitly links the establishment of the Kingdom of God to the eradication of demons within a given territory.¹¹⁵ Myth is present and active in this snippet of warfare discourse, but it is not directly mentioned, only inferred by readers familiar with warfare language. Jacobs activates a semiological code to reference the spiritual warfare discourse in which she works without using the word "demons", which would open her to rebuke. By calling on her imagined world without speaking its constitutive terms directly, Jacobs can perform spiritual warfare without drawing fire for its controversial status in modern charismatic Christianity

Myth is thus a *second-order semiological system*, one in which the speech that is uttered says more than is possible for normal speech to say.¹¹⁶ For Barthes, in myth, "there are two semiological systems, one of which is staggered in relation to the other: a linguistic system, the language (or the modes of representation which are assimilated to it), which myth gets hold of in order to

¹¹⁴ Jacobs, *Reformation Manifesto*, 253.

¹¹⁵ Jacobs, *Possessing the Gates*, 218.

¹¹⁶ Barthes, *Mythologies*, 114.

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build its own system, and myth itself, *in which* one speaks about the first.”¹¹⁷

Myth *uses* language, such that a sign is emptied of its signifier and replaced with a mythic truth. Barthes uses the example of a black soldier on the cover of *Paris-Match*. The soldier salutes smartly, dressed in the uniform of the French Army. But, in the context of political strife in Africa, the myth of French imperialism reasserts itself through this image, which loses its status as a direct representation of reality and instead serves to substantiate a myth in which French colonials are happy and proud to participate in French patrimony. Myths are not tied to the signs which serve as their signifiers; the total signification of the myth can be worked out in any form linked by associative relations. “The concept appears in global fashion, it is a kind of nebula, the condensation, more or less hazy, of a certain knowledge.”¹¹⁸ Therefore, any speech at all is subject to reappropriation by myth, “which presents alternately the meaning of the signifier and its form, a purely signifying and a purely imagining consciousness.”¹¹⁹

Myth thus evokes the imagined world without necessarily invoking its constitutive narrative elements. A mythic frame supersedes the meaning of words used in warfare discourse without eradicating the original meaning of the words. Warfare authors can speak doubly, espousing their worldview without subjecting their implicit claims (“demons exist”) to anything like critical evaluation. Myth transforms history into nature to solve the problem of myth’s

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 115.

¹¹⁸ Barthes, *Mythologies*, 122.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 123.

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apparent intentionality; “driven to having either to unveil or liquidate the concept, it will *naturalize* it.”¹²⁰ Myth allows us to change our mode of speech from argument to description without altering our syntax or vocabulary. “What cause mythical speech to be uttered is perfectly explicit, but it is immediately frozen into something natural; it is not read as a motive, but as a reason.”¹²¹ Through myth, warfare authors present their opinions as natural, as obvious fact.

Latent, mythic speech creates and shapes the world around it without seeming to be anything but a natural description of the world surrounding us, the *world as it really is*. A worldview, then, represents the mythic framework in which speech invoking an imagined world comes to be seen as a natural, accurate description of events, objects, attitudes and conditions based on the mode of its presentation. The imagined world contains the constitutive myths whose authorizing stories, once told, resonate as truths which bound, shape and define the world, binding the act of speaking to the stories in which speaking gains its mythic meaning.

To reconstruct a spiritual warfare worldview, we need to tell spiritual warfare stories, and examine how they gain their status as myth. This is a myth of world history, an imagining which can explain the beginning and end of time, and human agency within world history.

The Bible Myth

¹²⁰ Ibid., 129.

¹²¹ Barthes, *Mythologies*, 129.

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“What the world supplies to myth is an historical reality, defined by the way in which men have produced or used it; and what myth gives in return is a natural image of this reality. Myth is constituted by the loss of the historical quality of things: in it, things lose the memory that they were once made. The world enters language as a dialectical relation between human actions; it comes out of myth as a harmonious display of essences.”¹²²
As I understand it within the bounds of the texts I have read, this is the

myth recurrent throughout warfare speech¹²³:

At the beginning of time, God created the universe (Genesis 1:1) before Satan’s desire for God’s throne caused Satan to fall like lightning with his rebel angels (Luke 10:18) in the vast time before the solidification of the Earth (Genesis 1:2). The day and the night, the fixtures of heaven, the stilled waters and the dry land, the flowers and the animals were called forth through the Word of God at the beginning. (Genesis 1:3-24) Building Creation, God made life,

¹²² Ibid.

A political note. Describing these stories as myth is a direct challenge to the biblical literalism inherent in warfare hermeneutic. Literalism belies myth, and describing the Bible as a mythic document notes its social origins against literalism’s assertion of universal truth. The Bible is a world-ordering document for spiritual warfare Christians, and by mythologizing Jesus Christ, I could be seen to be directly attacking their claims. However, “biblical literalism”, as a doctrine, is not unequivocal. Other evangelical Christians read the Bible literally without focusing on demons and demonology. In the example cited above, Cindy Jacobs has to make her conservative Christian claim without saying “demon” to avoid alienating those branches of Christianity that accept the Bible as a source of univocal proof without noting the presence of demons in the Bible. Peter Wagner writes an entire book devoted to exposing the demon that stands in the way of advancing spiritual warfare theology within the Church.¹²² Hammond and Prince, too, argue for the adoption of their specific ideology within a Church context that presumably shares their understanding of the Bible as authority. Because myth expresses a relationship between language and an imagined world, what I am challenging here is the specific mythography of spiritual warfare relative to its claim of biblical literalism. A broader challenge to the structure of conservative Christianity might be mounted through myth, but that is not what I wish to do. My project is reading Bible history mythically, to examine how this myth intersects with the everyday practice of spiritual warfare.

¹²³ I have cited Bible passages where the truth is inferred from the text and warfare texts where that truth seems to demand more extrapolation.

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then a man in his image called Adam, (Genesis 1:26-28, 2:7) and set Adam above the earth as its master (Gen. 1:26). Satan hated God for that, but Satan was too weak to touch God directly. He vented his anger on God's proximate image in Adam,¹²⁴ causing Eve to eat the apple, and the first human couple was expelled from the Garden (Gen. 3). Satan entered the world, triumphed in death and ruled over it as a kingdom of darkness, his dreadful army pulling humanity away from God.¹²⁵ Jesus came to Earth preaching his Gospel (Mark, Matthew, Luke, John, Paul) and defeated Satan's power of sin through his sacrifice on the cross (Mark, Matthew, Luke, John) enabling his followers to cast out and defeat the demons of the world by imitating Christ's sacrificial authority. Satan's defeat, however, is not final, but ongoing; his army abounds, his influence is strong and his hatred has not ceased¹²⁶. All Christians, as Christians, are involved in the war against the Kingdom of Darkness waged by the ancient enemy of the One True God. They are called to fight the powers of darkness (Ephesians 6:12) until Christ's return to end the world (Daniel, Ezekiel, Mark, Matthew, Luke, John, Paul, Revelation), whereupon Satan will be bound with his demons, the final victory of Christ's Kingdom resulting in Satan's obliteration and the close of time (Revelation). The

¹²⁴ Explicitly cited: Prince, *War in Heaven*, 84, 121; Jacobs, *Possessing the Gates*, 47. See also Jacobs, *Deliver Us*, 22; C. P. Wagner *Religious Spirit* 90; Hammond, *Pigs*, 9. Satan's desire to be God is a rationale for his war against Christians.

¹²⁵ Explicitly cited: Jacobs, *Possessing the Gates*, 48, 218; Hammond, *Kingdom Living* 23, 147; Prince, *Lucifer Exposed*, 36, 41; Hammond, *Pigs*, 8; C. P. Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 63, 68.

¹²⁶ Prince, *Expel Demons*, 94. "Theoi, daimons and daimonions are united in a ceaseless war against the human race. Under Satan's domination they work together to inflict on humanity every possible form of harm, deception and torment." The Greek terms are categories of demons specific to Prince.

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war, then, is already concluded in the future history of the Kingdom of God present on Earth in the bodies of the Church.

Three features stand out in this narrative as particularly formative for spiritual warfare mythologizing. First, God's opposition to Satan gives cosmological weight to the antagonism between Christians and demons. As God hates Satan, the prideful usurper, so must Christians hate his demonic followers, who invade and corrupt human bodies in the service of Satan's kingdom of darkness. Satan is the absolute, biblical Other that fixes demonic alterity. Second, following the construction of demons as absolute others, the biblical mode of engaging with the Kingdom of Darkness is war. The war metaphor portrays the long history of the relationship between God and Satan as a struggle for control of the world. Christ's victory is not in doubt; spiritual warfare accelerates the war's end, and the victory requires Christians to practice spiritual militancy and vigilance. Finally, the victory of Christ over Satan is always imagined corporately, as an action undertaken by the leader of a Kingdom against another kingdom. Christians are part of God's army, within the mythic parameters of God's ideal nation, and this army is called to expand and defend the borders of the Kingdom of light.

Epistemologically, the opposition between Satan and God is responsible for making spiritual warfare and kingdom language necessary for the construction of a stable group identity. The biblical confrontation between Satan and God, replicated in the interactions between Christians and demons, leads to the recognition of spiritual war as a means of furthering God's plans for the

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world. Warfare practitioners understand these plans to be tied to the instantiation of the Kingdom of God on earth and in heaven. This interaction must be understood in terms of its impact on the imagined world of spiritual warfare Christianity. This myth, as I have argued, is directly invoked at multiple moments within spiritual warfare Christianity. The construction of Satan as God's enemy demanding offensive action for the sake of God's Kingdom shapes the construction of a social identity. Christians, as a group, are called to war for the sake of the Kingdom, and in the process, their identity as Christians becomes polarized, locked into an eternal war against the devil.

War and Warriors

"You are in a battle against an invisible enemy in their invisible kingdom that will use witchcraft in an attempt to destroy mankind – the image of God."¹²⁷

"The One who has called us to warfare will equip us for warfare."¹²⁸

"It is not our job to win the war; Jesus did that on the Cross. Our job is the mop-up operation. But Jesus still expects us to overcome."¹²⁹

We are in a holy war for the souls of men and women. We are wrestling in heavenly places against an enemy who is ruthless in his desire to steal, kill and destroy.¹³⁰

Conflict defines spiritual warfare. Specifically, conflict with demonic representatives of Satan takes place on multiple fronts, different scales of interaction and through new and emerging social constructs. Bruce Lincoln

¹²⁷ Prince, *Lucifer Exposed*, 151.

¹²⁸ Hammond, *Demons and Deliverance*, 21.

¹²⁹ C. P. Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 57.

¹³⁰ Jacobs *Possessing the Gates*, 217.

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defines conflict as “the situation that arises when rival interests can no longer be denied, deflected, negotiated or contained by the structures and process ordinarily competent to do so. As a result, after an indeterminate period of confusion and crisis, normal competition moves into phases that are more open, bitter, confrontational, costly and violent.”¹³¹ However, in spiritual warfare, this period of confusion is long since past, and the war has been fully present at least since the death of Christ told in warfare mythology. Conflict is permanent, present and eternally violent, attaining the status of a full-blown war.

War is a constant part of life within a spiritual warfare worldview. Spiritual warfare is the practice of war by Christian warriors, an armed conflict between two groups bent on the others eradication. On a mythic level, spiritual warfare sweeps across the landscape, following demons as they invade and attack the Kingdom of God from all angles. Spiritual warfare discourse places its interpretive emphasis on the need to defend Christianity from Satan’s attack, to follow the Lord Jesus, the “great soldier of the cross,”¹³² in pursuing and seeking out struggle with the demonic army. War shapes the ideological tenor of warfare speech by calling Christians to participate in a conflict whose brutality and real consequences demand tactical offensives against a completely evil enemy.

“Warfare is warfare, and all warfare runs the risk of casualties,”¹³³ writes Wagner, and thus the war in warfare is a very real war, in which participating

¹³¹ Bruce Lincoln, "Conflict," in *Critical Terms in Religious Studies*, Mark C. Taylor ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), page #s.

¹³² Jacobs, *Possessing the Gates*, 2.

¹³³ C. P. Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 283.

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Christians constantly risk their lives and their health in pursuit of Satan's horde. The power ascribed to demonic forces is infectious, corrupting Christian souls as a means to advance the kingdom of Satan.

I would like to suggest that "war," as an orienting term, has particular significance for a spiritual warfare worldview. War is a loaded term signifying a complex set of emotions, actions, events and objects. It can be read as the heroic defense of national values, the brutal murder of innocents by uniformed thugs, the market for a military-industrial complex threatening to civilization, a necessary police action in the name of human rights, or the field in which one comes to possess strength of character. In general parlance, war signifies all of these things. Spiritual warfare adds God, Satan and cosmology, privileging Christian conflict and vilifying demonic action within a mythic narrative of cosmic total war. If we understand this war is fully as brutal as warfare authors understand it to be, while also recognizing that the bulk of the conflict occurs on a plane removed from the perceptible experience of everyday Christian life, we can analyze the role spiritual war plays in shaping the imagined world of spiritual warfare Christianity.

Bruce Lincoln defines war as "organized and coherent violence conducted between established and internally cohesive rival groups." For Lincoln, war is systemic, "neither individual, spontaneous, random, nor irrational, however much it involves destructive action."¹³⁴ War is *legitimated* violence, dependent

¹³⁴ Bruce Lincoln, *Death, War and Sacrifice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 138.

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on its actors to give it the proper authority and structure. It takes place within a reciprocal system of social interaction; wars, by definition, have multiple factions, and those factions go to war to defend economic, social and ideological interests, which spiritual warfare authors transpose into a cosmological power struggle. Invoking a mythic war against Satan can, as a result of the invocation, reproduce and promulgate warfare Christianity. Lincoln argues that religion, as an ideological construct,

“supplies the means necessary to persuade individuals to join in combat, providing them with motivation sufficiently great that they are willing to risk their lives, even in situations wherein they stand to reap quite little in the way of personal gain from even the greatest of military successes.”¹³⁵

To situate war in the religious discourse of warfare Christianity, we have to turn this formulation around: a preexistent war emergent out of biblical hermeneutic demands soldiers to fight the threat of Satanic dominion. To properly and thoroughly incorporate Christians into God’s Army, they have to be convinced to conduct war in a biblical manner. Religion’s role in promoting war is the subvention of personal interests in the name of a collective call to violence in the name of social interests.

Lincoln identifies two social conditions necessary for war, both of which speak directly to the concern for social boundaries:

1. “A given group of individuals must understand themselves as a group; that is, they must be bound together in some abiding fashion by sentiments, traditions, kinship ties, institutions, residence patterns, language and the like.”

¹³⁵ Ibid., 140.

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2. The aforementioned group “must understand members of some other group (‘the enemy’) as radically alien to them, outsiders to whom they are not connected and with reference to whom they need not refrain from violence.”¹³⁶

These conditions demand that the newly minted enemy come to see the aggressor in the same fashion. War therefore springs from friction between established, bounded social groups possessing coherent collective identities. Further, the violence unleashed in war is ethically suspended and “the otherness of the enemy is radically accentuated.”¹³⁷ War makes the enemy more Other, less like the group, even less than human, “a ‘monster,’ a ‘beast,’ a ‘vegetable.’”¹³⁸ This dehumanization is regularly expanded to encompass whole regions, entire societies and cultures “relegated to the category of nonhumans – nonhumans who may, moreover, be freely killed as the occasion arises.”¹³⁹ Violence in war is permissible, encouraged, and intrinsic to maintaining the group boundaries necessary for war to take place in the first place.

“War is, in truth, that situation in which the killing of other people on a grand (or even total) scale is rendered not only licit but requisite, even glorious, by virtue of the fact that those others belong to a rival group to whom ethical norms do not extend, they having been effectively defined as subhuman or even nonhuman.”¹⁴⁰

Social boundaries and group formation are intrinsic to the practice of war. The violence exerted in battle actively shapes the contours of the groups left standing afterwards.

¹³⁶ Lincoln, *Death*, 141.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 142

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 143

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Within spiritual warfare, we can clearly identify the dynamic Othering that occurs in a moment of deliverance, intercession or spiritual conflict. Christians cast out and fight demons to bring humans closer to Christ, expanding the boundaries of the group by imperceptible degrees. They regularly license torture, force, coercion, dominance and any type of spiritual weapon in combating demons. For Christians, the weapons used in war are primarily emotional and spiritual, but their incorporeal status does not make them any less devastating. The sharp “sword of the Spirit,” literally the Word of God in the Bible, is said to cause demons great pain, and deliverance burns the demon in its spiritual flesh. Any and all forms of violence are licensed against demons.¹⁴¹ They are representatives of the absolute evil controlling the world beyond the Kingdom of light, and their actions within the world are directly antagonistic to the growth and sustained life of the Church. If demons can eradicate the Church, the entire world will fall into darkness and be lost.

Because demons are everywhere, active in everything outside the Kingdom, spiritual warfare quickly turns to total war. The demons of heart disease, asthma, schizophrenia and illness bring war into the body. Demons of Ouija boards, video games and vodoun make cultural life part of spiritual war. Demons of ACLU, political corruption, and population-level sin turn nations into actors within a cosmic power struggle. At every point, at every scale, the Othering through which spiritual warfare practitioners come to recognize

¹⁴¹ Hammond, *Pigs*, 80. “In cases where the spirits are speaking through the person who’s having hands laid on, it occasionally happens that the spirit will cry and whine ‘your hand is hot.’ Demons can feel the anointing of the ministering hand and are tortured by it.”

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demons in the world extends the war against Satan into every locus where demons live. The imagined world of spiritual warfare practitioners thus contains distinctly separated groups, demons and Christians, defined as absolute others and pitted against each other through the biblical text giving rise to the mythic war between God and Satan. These two figures, and their eternal opposition, give spiritual warfare its mythic frame of interpretation, and that frame informs the articulation of demonic presence at all points within the lived experience of charismatic Christianity.

Lincoln understands war in human terms, and he pays particularly close attention to the dehumanization of the aggressor necessary for exerting violent force against an enemy. "As a corollary to the pattern we have observed whereby one must dehumanize one's enemies in order to employ force against them, it appears that a warrior must also dehumanize himself before he can become an instrument of slaughter, effectively eradicating such human tendencies as guilt, fear and compassion."¹⁴² In destroying a member of his own species, a warrior has to sacrifice the part of himself that recognizes the similarity between his body and the form of the object against which he exerts violence. A spiritual warfare practitioner, oriented towards an enemy whose ontology marks it as *intrinsically* evil and radically distinct from humanity, sharing no similarities, common cause, or peaceful mode of interaction, is freely licensed to exert violence against that enemy without repercussions. Demons are not human; they do not demand human rights. Within warfare theology, this action, undertaken against biblically

¹⁴² Lincoln, *Death*, 145

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immoral actors, is part of the modification of the self that brings it into close concordance with the desires of the Holy Spirit. Warfare Christians are reshaped by the violence exerted against their demonic oppressors. Because there is no human enemy to be destroyed, the dehumanizing of the warrior is a morally uplifting Christian duty. The Christian engaged in spiritual warfare becomes more and more identical with the righteous Kingdom of God, licensed to commit any act of war against his demonic adversaries.

Kingdoms of Light and Darkness

“We are not fighting persons with bodies. We are in a wrestling match with a very powerful and highly organized kingdom, which has rulers, sub-rulers, and sub-sub-rulers. Each ruler is responsible to Satan for a certain area under his authority. Satan has the whole world divided up into areas that he seeks to dominate through these rulers.”¹⁴³

“In the Christian imagination informed by the gospel story some sequel is required to answer the unbelievable expectations raised at the beginning about the kingdom of God. That kingdom should obviously have been established when God’s Son entered with power to transform the world. Because the world refused to be transformed, a judgment must fall upon it as fallen.”¹⁴⁴

Jesus’ death and resurrection sits at the crux of spiritual warfare’s world narrative. As the median point between God’s conflict with Satan at the beginning of time in Genesis, and His victory at the end in Revelation, the entrance of Jesus into world history marks the moment at which Satan’s kingdom was defeated in the spiritual realm. The Kingdom of God, which Jesus inaugurated with his ministry, is present in the world, but it cannot attain its full,

¹⁴³ Prince, *War in Heaven*, 41.

¹⁴⁴ Burton Mack, *A Myth of Innocence* (1988; repr., Minneapolis, MI: Fortress Press, 2006), 365.

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realized presence for believers until Jesus returns to fully defeat Satan. Kingdom language defines the ideal social structure of spiritual warfare, reshaping the imagined world around the Gospel narrative whose culmination results in the installation of God's government as the victorious nation exalting its dominance over the world.

As a mythic construct, the Kingdom grows out of the Gospel narrative first formulated by Mark, the earliest of the Gospel writers. Writing shortly after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, Mark created a Gospel whose Jesus constantly demonstrates his own power and authority. Burton Mack, in *A Myth of Innocence*, has shown that the passion narrative combines a martyr's death and apocalyptic power in an amalgamation whose content is precisely the authority and power of Mark's group over any other. "The Christ event generates a new kind of time, inaugurates a new human community, and transforms people who enter this community, making them fit for heaven itself." With his entrance into history, Christ splits time in two, a move "so grand that history was broken open by intersection with the eternal purposes of God and the entrance of his Son from the heavenly realm," yet always incomplete. Mark's community was faced with the singular problem of a man of power who came, preached and died without converting the whole world. The birth of the kingdom stalled, its king murdered.

"When Jesus came announcing the Kingdom of God, the dark kingdom of Satan was doomed."¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ C. P. Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 68.

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Mark's innovation was to defer the birth of that kingdom, moving it from a past failure to a present success and future triumph. "His (Jesus') vindication by resurrection envisages the radical transformation of human society intended, and guarantees the eventual actualization of the perfectly just and reasonable kingdom." Under the onus of representing a perfect kingdom to come in the future, Mark's community was called to represent itself as the last and only hope for the world that killed its savior. "Under mandate and destiny to expand until the whole world has been transformed, the church calls upon the world to receive its redemption."¹⁴⁶ This narrative, copied by Matthew, Luke and John, is codified as mythic truth by warfare authors, who identify their movement with the Kingdom of God against any dissidence, disagreement or difference not rooted in a biblical worldview. The Kingdom, mediated by biblical hermeneutic, is the paradigmatic group identity in spiritual warfare discourse. Its presence and defense demand loyalty and adherence, quickly gaining nation status as it emerges into physical existence.

Following Lincoln, we noted that war demands an Other whose social formations quickly come to mirror those of its opponent. This interaction maintains the absolute distance between the warring parties at the precise moment at which awful violence becomes licensed. War thus serves to solidify the boundaries of a group, keeping the Other out and policing the members within. As we have already seen, the Other of warfare Christianity is a diffuse Other imperceptible to human senses but nevertheless real and undoubtedly

¹⁴⁶ Mack, *Myth of Innocence*, 365

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evil. Demons, in Satan's army, are ontologically real, and the mythic frame in which they exist determines the morality of their actions. Demons, as alien invaders, represent pure, unadulterated evil, and thus any action in which their presence is detected automatically becomes a threat to upstanding Christian discourse. However, again following Lincoln, war and religion converge in moments where ideological and theological constructs are used to incite people to action in defense of the group. In spiritual warfare discourse, these constructs are primarily understood in terms of the Kingdom of God, whose deployment as a group identity exists in opposition to the looming kingdom of Satan.

Used as a mythic marker of the need for Christian holiness, the Kingdom of God offers an apocalyptic reading of world events, drawing warfare discourse into an apocalypse whose present and future fulfillment represent the inexorable culmination of history. Spiritual warfare offers an apocalyptic Kingdom critique of the imperfect world ruled by Satan as a means of supporting the authority, power and unique destiny of spiritual warfare Christianity. Using "kingdom" as the fundamental social group divides the world in two, identifying warfare Christian religious practice with the Kingdom of God and everything contradicting that practice as part of the kingdom of Satan.

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"The Kingdom of God is here, and we are a part of it, but it will not arrive in its fullness until Jesus' second coming. Then, and only then, will Satan be cast into a bottomless pit and finally into the lake of fire. Until then he is the prince of the power of the air, although a defeated prince who is constantly being pushed back as the Gospel spreads throughout the world."¹⁴⁷

The devil rules his domain with an iron fist, inspiring fear in his followers and bringing humanity to moral ruin. Within Satan's kingdom, demons are arranged into a hierarchy bent on the subversion of Christian codes of ethics as part of the war against God and his followers. The devil's armies are distributed geographically, each demon reporting to a regional commander in a chain of command linked to Satan at the top. Demons work their way into cultures in order to call the most un-biblical instincts into existence. As a direct result of this cultural insurrection, Satan's kingdom, extant in the spiritual plane (and sometimes in heaven), exerts a great deal of control over the physical plane of human beings. "Satan wants to fill the earth with terror and terrorists and we must close the breeches that give him any legal right to advance his kingdom."¹⁴⁸ Jacobs's terror analogy is apt; Satan's kingdom is a polymorphous, tightly coordinated threat operating against Christians throughout the world.

Satan's kingdom is the mirror image of God's Kingdom. For warfare Christians, the evil of Satan's kingdom reveals the light of Christ's government. The Kingdom of God is salvific, moral, and good, existing on earth through the work of believers but susceptible to corruption by Satanic infiltration. Though destined for final victory, Jesus does not win every battle His soldiers engage in.

¹⁴⁷ C. P. Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 120.

¹⁴⁸ Jacobs, *Possessing the Gates*, 221.

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Rather, the boundaries must be constantly defended. For warfare Christians, Satanic forces moving through seemingly innocuous objects, thoughts and actions pose a threat to a largely ignorant world. Therefore, those who are aware of the danger have a Christian duty to fight for the Kingdom, its Lord and its fulfillment in the future. Outnumbered, beleaguered, and facing a malicious and powerful foe, warfare Christians are at the vanguard of a movement working to defend the borders and boundary of a Kingdom whose spiritual reality is under attack from another, evil kingdom founded by the eternal foe of their King. Christians, as the population of the Kingdom, oppose Satan's army to solidify the border of their own group. Therefore, Christian engagement with mythic kingdom language recasts spiritual warfare as a duty constituting the Kingdom it is supposed to defend. Everything hangs on the defense of Christianity against evil enemies; without that defense, humanity itself will not be saved when Christ returns to end the world.

The kingdoms of God and Satan are imagined on the model of a nation both present and absent from the world. They possess an institutional hierarchy, a populace, and an army. They are involved in a border dispute encompassing the entire human world but founded on control over the cosmos. Because they exist on a spiritual plane largely defined through the moral ontology of its Christian and demonic inhabitants, these nations are decentralized, located in cities, families and peoples without geographically coterminous boundaries in the physical world. A local bookstore, for instance, might be part of the kingdom of Satan even if the town has been consecrated by warfare practitioners.

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Kingdoms are not defined by economic or geographic similarities; group interiority indicating Kingdom membership is based on moral and theological dogmatics revealing the sin inhering in non-Christian worldviews. There are demons of homosexuality, abortion, ACLU, vegetarianism and intellectualism, whose actions create a particular strain of demonic oppression present in the heart of human societies.

The world of warfare Christianity, mediated by its imagined parameters, is founded on absolute dualism. God is opposed to Satan, Christ is opposed to Satan, and Satan hates man, the image of God. Therefore, in opposing Satan, the Church is against the world (imperfect according to biblical standards), Christians are against demons working through non-Christians, bad Christians are the targets of those good Christians who recognize that the evil others do is the fault of the demons who need to be cast out for the kingdom to advance. “Everything outside of God’s Kingdom is darkness and death. Dedicate yourselves to God and commit yourselves to Kingdom living for yourself and your children,”¹⁴⁹ for “casting out demons is essential to gaining one’s position in the Kingdom.”¹⁵⁰ Obedience and adherence to the Kingdom as a Christian group identity is determined by the ability to fight for intrinsically good beliefs in the face of an overwhelming evil force occupying the vast majority of the world.

Membership in the Kingdom of God is therefore imagined in terms of a Kingdom whose spiritual reality is always being brought into the world through

¹⁴⁹ Hammond, *Kingdom Living*, 163.

¹⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 89

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the work of Christian warriors. As the mythic imagination of the Kingdom becomes naturalized, Christian engagement with that myth becomes localized. The Kingdom is where Christians are, and Christians who belong to the Kingdom are always working to advance its cause. Mack has argued that, in the modern period, “the Christian mythic grammar imagines the social world on the model of medieval Christendom,”¹⁵¹ with clearly delineated chains of authority stretching from the cosmically powerful leaders warring in Heaven down to the individual partisans engaged in ground-level warfare.

“The concept is that of a kingdom ruled by sovereign powers within which everyone is supposed to be a Christian. The cosmic dimension of the kingdom is ruled by Christ the king; the earthly kingdom is ruled by a Christian king; the spiritual kingdom on earth is ruled by the Church; and the ultimate establishment of righteous rule will be the kingdom of God at the end of history.”¹⁵²

Understanding Christian positionality as a component element of the Kingdom redefines the world according to the rigid hermeneutical codes used to structure spiritual warfare’s presence in the functional order of nature and society. Because the Bible defines both the group in which Christians place themselves and the constitutive moral principles of that group, the installation of authoritative speech at the heart of the Kingdom of God makes membership a precondition for salvation, while affirming the moral superiority of such a position. As we have seen, this superiority licenses any and all spiritual warfare in the defense of the Kingdom without necessarily forcing warfare Christians into dehumanization.

¹⁵¹ Mack, *Myth and the Christian Nation*, 241.

¹⁵² Ibid.

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As members of the only good force capable of rebuking absolute evil, warfare Christians constantly affirm the demonic reality of all spirits moving contrary to the Holy Spirit. The construction of the Christian, relative to both the construction of the demonic and the concomitant entry into the Kingdom, enables a decisive redescription of the imagined world opposed to the real world ruled by Satan. The imagined world, always a mediating third term according to Mack, takes precedence in shaping the events of the experienced world; everything is sublimated by a God whose return at the end of history is the culmination of a war enduring since the beginning of time. Therefore, the Kingdom is always an apocalyptic move, calling the world to submission to a social order not yet present in the physical plane, but eternally and mythically present in the spiritual plane on which warfare is conducted.

War in the Kingdom

For spiritual warfare practitioners, the Kingdom is both real and present in everyday life and eternally enmeshed in its potentiality. Its everyday existence confirms and shapes its inauguration at a future date, but the Kingdom's existence threatened the demonic kingdom whose presence preceded the creation, and the demonic forces who populate Satan's kingdom are working to repel the threat of Christian evangelism. Spiritual warfare Christians locate their lives in the interminable gap between Satan's defeat on Jesus' cross and Jesus' return to complete His victory at the end of time, and it is in the intersection of

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warfare lives and warfare myths that it becomes possible to locate a concern for the social world.

In both kingdom language and calls to warfare, we find a mythic concern for group boundaries that reconstitutes Christian life on an absolute, stable fundament. The spiritual warfare worldview exerts violence on an absolutely evil enemy without a human form. The enemy, constituted by its recognition, shaped by warring against it and imprisoned within Satan's kingdom, is both entirely Other and totally nonhuman. By licensing their warfare in this fashion, spiritual warfare has found a way to pursue Christian evangelism without harming other humans. Spiritual warfare offers as its rationale a view of the world polarized into a simple binary opposition. After all,

“There are only two sources of supernatural power in this world: that which comes from God and His kingdom and that which comes from Satan's kingdom. When we give credence to what is simply an irrational belief, then it gives an opportunity for demonic powers to go into operation through that belief.”¹⁵³

Everything in existence is either demonic or Godly. There is no dissonance, there is no complexity, there are no gray areas, and the only viable source of authority is derived from the supernatural power of God.

As a mediating third term, the imagined world of spiritual warfare Christianity enmeshes itself into the fabric of existence. There is literally no world outside of spiritual warfare. Spiritual warfare theorists have closed ranks against the personal and sociopolitical problems indicating enemy activity, and they reserve the right to adjudicate the sanctity or infernal provenance of any

¹⁵³ Jacobs, *Deliver Us*, 25.

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given social event. Therefore, they can safely and unequivocally name demons in the world. All challengers are demonic, all supporters holy, and everything progresses towards a definite end. Salvation is assured in the Kingdom at the end of time, and as long as one engages earnestly in warfare against the demonic threat, a place in the Kingdom is assured. Spiritual warfare, in shaping its imagined world, makes a home for modern Christians removed from critique.

In the process of militarizing the spaces that surround them, spiritual warfare Christians deploy a uniquely stable frame capable of authorizing a great deal of symbolic violence against demonic forces. Spiritual warfare is a closed loop which makes its interior a space within which the negligible institutional worth of most individuals is superseded by the overwhelming importance of warfare ministry to the fate of the entire world. The social concerns that shape the imagined world of warfare Christianity allow Christians who live within that world to expound their worldview without harming other humans. Objectors are simply blind, critiques are demonic and challenges to the stable framework of spiritual warfare Christianity fall into an imagined world whose parameters are defined by their surety, self-sufficiency and authorizing stability. The salvific potential of warfare Christianity takes place in the corporate invocation of the divine power of God to reshape and reformulate personal and social identities around a moral code derived from warfare Christian hermeneutic

As we turn, in the next chapter, to apocalypse, evangelism and the mechanics of conversion to spiritual warfare, a definition of the worldview might be helpful: The Bible narrative gives rise to an imagined mythic world focused

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on Satan, war and the kingdoms. This imagined world constantly calls the believer to war against demonic powers as a precondition for entrance into true salvation, the sanctified fulfillment of being “born-again”, by presenting behavior outside of the bounds of Christian holiness as demonic evil. We can therefore define the spiritual warfare worldview as an understanding of one's position within a world recognized to be full of demons, corruption and despair while also always destined for eternal glory upon Christ's return. Enmeshed in both the immediate call to war and the eternally emergent Kingdom, the believer's task is to fight to expand the boundaries of Christ's kingdom in order to ensure His return, and to validate the believer's membership in the army called to face the grossest evil. The warfare worldview is always opposed to all things of Satan, and always seeks to amass more soldiers to destroy his kingdom. Warfare seeks its own growth as an indicator of success or failure in the war against Satan. By opening new fronts, warfare Christianity literally grows in stature, bringing the imagined future world of Christ's Kingdom closer to its return.

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“The Kingdom of God is here, and we are a part of it, but it will not arrive in its fullness until Jesus’ second coming. Then, and only then, will Satan be cast into a bottomless pit and finally into the lake of fire. Until then he is the prince of the power of the air, although a defeated prince who is constantly being pushed back as the Gospel spreads throughout the world.”¹⁵⁴

For warfare authors, the Kingdom of God exists in history; the question is where and when. The Kingdom of God is invoked as a critique of the world directed against humanity in order to call human beings into relationship with God. Spiritual warfare authors identify the Kingdom both within and against the nations in which they live, holding people and governments accountable for actions whose morality is determined by literal biblical hermeneutic. By holding the righteousness determined by this frame beyond human accountability, warfare authors create an *emergent* Kingdom, whose stalks are just beginning to push up through the earth. This process, of growth, expansion and conversion, works through evangelistic speech conducted in an apocalyptic mode. As evangelism works to exert authoritative power in reproducing the warfare worldview, spiritual warfare can open its war onto territories, people and social structures newly placed in relation to God.

¹⁵⁴ C. P. Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 120.

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This opening, though, is always accompanied by a lingering, destabilizing tremor in the reproducible authority of warfare speech in its textual forms of transmission. Warfare speech is not stable and assured its invocations of power; it must always demonstrate its authority. In this chapter, the tension between apocalypse and evangelism collapses into warfare speech as warfare authors pose a nervous question to potential believers. The entire structure of warfare theology rests on the power to describe and convince in this moment of transmission, in which rejection spells the doom of humankind.

Kingdom Come

The Kingdom coming into the world will, in the process of its establishment, literally accomplish the defeat of Satan foretold in Revelation. After tribulations, trials and growing injustices, Jesus is going to return “with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand.” (Rev. 14:14 NRSV) The angel will descend to bind Satan and cast him into the pit, ushering in a golden age for a thousand years. Satan will be let out to ravage the nations of the world again, before being finally cast into the lake of fire to burn without dying forever and ever. God will come and live among mortals in a new Jerusalem come down from heaven. Everything everywhere unclean will pass away. The demonic threat, finally, will be overcome, and Satan’s demons will no longer infest the world with the sin they embody. The Kingdom will emerge with a new Heaven and a new earth replacing the old, where God will reign until the end of time.

Invoking the Kingdom is an apocalyptic move. Its announcement and its expansion take place in a warfare narrative culminating in events leading to

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Satan's defeat, and the elimination of God's cosmic challenger paves the way for an eternal kingdom. The Kingdom coming to earth is perfect in time, space and social structure. Perfection will endure forever, without cessation or disturbance from a demonic foe.

“Warfare prayer is not an end in itself, but a means of opening the way for the Kingdom of God to come, not only in evangelism, but also in social justice and material sufficiency.”¹⁵⁵

God's perfect rule applies everywhere, and His spiritual power and agents are present and visible in the world. His direct presence collapses the distinction between the spiritual and physical plane by making manifest the tangible reality of divine power. Finally, God's emergence into the world indelibly establishes His law as the self-evident basis for all social relations. God will be on earth, and thus the social order has to be founded on his power; biblical morality attains the direct cosmic authority literalists have always ascribed to it.

The apocalypse, found throughout the Bible but most enthralling and fantastic in Revelation, posits a monolithic future kingdom enduring past the end of time as we know it. The Kingdom, in its full strength and glory, endures forever with God, absent of any sin and all evil. Satan's imprisonment in the lake of fire removes his power to cause sin from the world, in the process eliminating God's main adversary. Victory is total and eternal in carrying God's power. This combination eradicates even the *possibility* of demonic oppression forever.

“Nothing Accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

¹⁵⁵ C. P. Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 154.

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And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever." (Rev. 22:3-5 NRSV)

Time and space collapse into static cycles at the end of Revelation; life is still possible, but constrained by the end of the biblical narrative. As different moments in time decay into similarity, its gradual deceleration results in a simulacrum of contemporary life on earth in a new and perfected world. Literally, as Revelation closes, nothing more is possible outside of worshipping and honoring God. The Kingdom stretches out across the breadth of the world, and nothing progresses, because there is literally nowhere to go.¹⁵⁶ After the violence and upheaval of the war with Satan's kingdom, all sources for evil contrary to God now in the world will have been eliminated. A better, more perfect future is inconceivable. Within the biblical hermeneutic of modern warfare Christians, the question of the Kingdom's arrival is potent index of the promised Golden Age and the final unceasing perfection of the world. If, as I have argued, the imagined world of warfare Christianity is narratively constituted by absolutized binary oppositions (God/Satan, Christ/the world) which drive warfare's Bible myth forward, Revelation serves to illuminate the telos of warfare Christianity by presenting a fantastic portrait of the world to come, and the violence necessary to birth it.

¹⁵⁶ C. P. Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 32 "When we realize that the eternal destiny of people may turn on whether we decide to obey Jesus and engage the enemy on all levels, we begin to realize that we'd better turn from debate to decision. This is what Jesus taught His disciples, and His disciples obeyed their master."

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Christians are also present in Revelation, their ranks cleansed of the sinners cast into the lake of fire with Satan and his demons. Those whose names are not found in the book of life are subject to the same punishment as the worst foe of Christianity.¹⁵⁷ To be able to survive in the immanent perfection, one must stay on the side of God by remaining faithful to Jesus. The letters to the churches in Asia, Revelation 2-3, promise life to anyone obeying the Holy Spirit. In these letters, the author assumes Jesus' voice to critique the churches and call them closer to God, finding fault with some practitioners and promising power and eternal life to the true faithful. Belonging to that category, and living within its constitutive boundaries, allows Christians to directly participate in Christ's victory.

The warfare apocalypse is situated within a set of binary oppositions, God/Satan, faithful/faithless, our world/new world to come. These oppositions always privilege the term aligned with God, and therefore identifying with God's Kingdom allows Christians to ensure their survival past death in the new world. Nothing more will be possible outside of worship, there will be nowhere to go that is not God's kingdom, and there will be nothing left to do, for the text has

¹⁵⁷ Hammond, *Pigs*, 73 "There is a certain doom awaiting demons, and that time has been determined by God."

"And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, the book of life. And the dead were judged according to their works, as recorded in the books. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and all were judged according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire; and anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire." (Rev. 20:12-15, NRSV)

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run out. That, however, is in the future, and in the present day that Kingdom is just now emerging. Even weakened and destined to lose, demons remain free to wreak havoc.¹⁵⁸ In the future encoded in the recognition of present demons, evangelism, deliverance and identity reformulation are the tools by which the kingdom of Satan will be repelled, dramatizing the work of opposition intrinsic to forming the boundaries of the Kingdom of God victorious at the end of time. Evangelism, defined as speech and actions espousing Christian ideology, explicitly seeks to inculcate a new way of viewing the world in another human. The result, representing a shift in the mythic structure of an individual world-perception, is the expansion of a worldview onto new and fertile ground now devoted to the purposes of the group.

“This is New Testament evangelism: The Gospel is preached and the multitudes hear; they see the miracles and casting out of demons and they believe; they are baptized and the Church is established.”¹⁵⁹

Evangelism and Apocalypse

“Wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign who must be defended; they are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone; entire populations are mobilized for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity: massacres have become vital...the power to expose a whole population to death is the underside of the power to guarantee an individual’s continued existence.”¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Jacobs, *The Reformation Manifesto*, 188. “We need to pray that God’s kingdom authority will be established over our nations. Of course, regions will not be free once and for all from Satan’s attacks until Jesus returns. Each generation needs to watch and pray over their own generation.”

¹⁵⁹ Prince, *Expel Demons*, 24.

¹⁶⁰ Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality Volume I: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 37.

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Foucault definitely did not mean demons when he wrote about state power undergirding and guaranteeing life's existence through control over the technology of mass death. However, if we transpose Lincoln's understanding of war into a spiritual plane, killings and deliverance both become negations of an absolutized Other by an authoritative figure supporting the right to life of a given population. Spiritual warfare evangelism wages war on two main fronts, against immorality in the social world and demons on the spiritual plane. Demons, the cause of immoral behavior, are targets; a pastor defying demons is an episode in a grander narrative culminating in the Kingdom exerting licensed violence against a demonic enemy. In delegation, authority begets authority; warfare Christians command the bodies and minds of their demonic enemies in expelling them from the Body of Christ, exerting God's delegated power against a defeated foe. In the process, warfare Christians use a regulatory schema based on biblical hermeneutic morals to police the actions of their group. Errant forms of social life, challenges to authority or a preoccupation with evil objects indicates new demons, demanding new deliverance, and this police action scales to a cosmological level. Large, impersonal entities, like the economy or "American morals", are subject to the same sort of regulation.¹⁶¹

Spiritual warfare, conceived on a population-wide level but conducted, in part, by policing individual behavior, constitutes a biopolitical struggle for

¹⁶¹ Jacobs, *Reformation Manifesto*, 177. "What do I mean by *kingdom banking*? Literally, the international development of a system of finance by and for the followers of Jesus Christ, committed to seeing God's kingdom come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

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control and authority over human life transposed onto the spiritual plane, ordained by God as Christian duty. One might argue that belonging to the Kingdom of God indicates that warfare theorists are more attached to ideas of the sovereign authority than the state, but God's sovereign power in spiritual warfare is never in doubt, and therefore needs no defense. God will always triumph, the narrative is preordained, and the task of spiritual warfare is to expel the demons and bring more people to battle. Within the bounds of that spiritual mission, biopower represents the need to amass bodies, to control human action and to inoculate the culture with a worldview predicated on realizing the demonic power coursing through the human institutions divorced from God's Kingdom.

“Social structures themselves can properly be seen as demonized. But to my way of thinking they are simply the visible entities, which the invisible demonic forces are using for their own ends much as demonic forces will use an idol, although the idol itself is simply a piece of wood or stone.”¹⁶²

The body, as the first and primary battleground, is inserted into a social conflict between the opposing kingdoms, and therefore control of the body is implicitly, immediately necessary before social evil can be addressed. Without bodies performing warfare in the real world, spiritual warfare literally has no capacity for forward motion.

Biblical morality regulates conduct, marks boundaries, legitimates violence against embodied sin and signifies ontological righteousness, righteousness as a quality of being. Derived by reading biblical moral injunctions

¹⁶² C. P. Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 92.

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as espousing morality, the incompatibility between this moral code and the modern world gives spiritual warfare theorists limitless avenue for critiques against the world. When what the Bible structures as sin occurs, demons can enter human bodies and at the end of the world, says Revelation, those hosts who refused to rid themselves of their indwelling demons will be dragged down to burn, not forever but in a time outside of time without any end at all. Expelling demons literally reconstitutes the destiny of any human being. Against the humans that refuse this expulsion, the spiritual Kingdom is licensed to exert mass violence in the “second death.” (Rev. 20:14) The ensuing cataclysmic obliteration of human spiritual essence, though not literally atomic, represents a threat to unrighteous souls on the scale of nuclear obliteration. However, bombs can only drop once, and their radiation eventually dissipates. If the Kingdom comes, and time *stalls*, then there is no possible suffering greater than the eternal fire. The threat to human life constituted by divine apocalyptic judgment necessitates human action in spiritual warfare. Satan’s looming presence, and God’s decisive response, is deeply felt by warfare Christians,¹⁶³ but that threat is constantly mediated by the future reality of his downfall. Because humans are dragged down with him, warfare theorists have a moral responsibility to push forward the boundaries of the Kingdom of God, saving as many souls as possible by bringing them into God’s army.

¹⁶³ Hammond, *Demons and Deliverance*, 67 “Many Christians live defeated, discontent, depressed and discouraged lives simply because their minds are filled with garbage fed to them by the devil.”

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Because salvation is coded with moral action identifiable at all scales of its deployment, spiritual warfare is a biopolitical act measuring social progress through group membership and in turn influencing the constitution of society. Growth is essential to social reformation; spiritual warfare seeks to cover the land, to penetrate the cracks in human identities and to curl protectively around vulnerable human souls. Warfare discourse seeks growth as the condition of expanding its borders, bringing ever-larger populations into the regulated identity of warfare adherents. These are both physical and spiritual boundaries, articulated in and around the bounds of the state and social group but determined by biblical principles. Spiritual warfare can grow through rhizomatic cells, starting with individuals, then the family, the church, the city the nation and the population. In an ideal bloom, the first tendrils of warfare adherence open out into a canopy.

“Conversion is an inner transformation which quickens the supernatural imagination as it places new believers within the central storied sequence of the Christian Bible and enables them to approach the Bible as a living reality.”¹⁶⁴

For warfare authors, particularly Jacobs, Wagner and Hammond, the biblical moral code ontologically primary for obedient warfare Christians would soon emerge on a societal level if only warfare Christians could work their way into power. Enlarging and authenticating the perceived reality of demons and the demonic kingdom permits warfare Christians to exert their influence beyond the traditional boundaries of Christian religious life; they seek to hasten the

¹⁶⁴ Susan Friend Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 34.

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reconstruction of the world according to its biblical frame. This is an ideal, not a conspiracy, but the exertion of power protecting Christian morality, construed as the immutable fundament for social life, is the attendant, inevitable outcome of the emergence of the Kingdom of God. The violence exerted in that manifestation is totally licensed in the name of protecting humanity, as a species in relation with God, from Satan's depredations.

Evangelism is therefore both an act of spiritual warfare and the motion by which spiritual warfare sustains its growth. Christians have to engage with other human worlds in order to expand their own, and they *immediately* have to engage with other discourses avowing their own authority, which thereby contest spiritual warfare's claim to ontological primacy. Evangelism, and the hoped-for conversion, is a contested space of intersecting imagined worlds, and those worlds can sometimes crumble. Apocalyptic Kingdom language, as evangelism, enacts certain social interests, and the mode of enacting those interests is a means of articulating the narrative potential of human action within the world placed in relation to the absolute authority of the divine.

Warfare Christians participate in apocalypse and the Kingdom, the form of which expresses the ways in which warfare Christians understand their role in the coming apocalypse. The apocalypse, because it indicates the end of a world or a group, conditions a social response in warfare Christianity. Tied into evangelism, warfare Christians come to reengage with the social order as a precursor and enabling condition for the return of the Kingdom of God.

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Evangelism, in this context, reshapes warfare Christians into vessels accreting power to the Kingdom in the act of expanding the Kingdom's boundaries.

Millennial Christianity

At least since Mark wrote his gospel, the Kingdom has always been coming into the world, but Christians have historically disagreed over the timing and precedents by which it might fully emerge. Two major strands of thought, pre- and post-millennialism, have preoccupied Americans imagining Christ's return, and both are concerned with the political and social engagement appropriate to Christian life in the shadow of that concern. According to James Marsden's *Fundamentalism in American Culture*, postmillennialism "saw human history as reflecting an ongoing struggle between cosmic forces of God and Satan, each well represented by various earthly powers, but with the victory of righteousness ensured."¹⁶⁵ This victory was marked by general cultural progress and the success of evangelical missions. The Christian abolitionist movement before the American Civil War, for instance, displayed a postmillennial approach to societal reformation aiming to defeat the anti-Christ in the current era, paving the way for a human Golden Age necessary for Christ and the Kingdom's return. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Kingdom became internal, oriented towards moral action, distanced from the supernatural and redefined as "an internal ethical and religious force based on the ideals of Jesus."¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism in American Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 49.

¹⁶⁶ Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 50.

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Premillennialism largely agreed with postmillennialism on its initial major points: history as cosmic struggle, literal biblical prophecy ensuring victory, and the fulfillment of prophecy in current events. The primary disagreement was the placement of Christ's return relative to the millennium; Christ's return was resituated as an apocalyptic victory over global tribulation. Premillennialists were more inclined to a rigidly literal Scriptural hermeneutic and more pessimistic about the chances for Christian civilization under human control. "Christ's kingdom, far from being realized in this age or in the natural development of humanity, lay wholly in the future, was totally supernatural in origin, and discontinuous with the history of this era."¹⁶⁷ A further refinement, dispensational premillennialism, placed the current church age in a narrative gap lacking prophetic precedent set within the New Testament text and its end in Revelation. Christ's kingdom, referring wholly to the future, negates the viability of the contemporary Church and concrete political action. Progress was futile, the world was inevitably going to grow worse and nothing redeeming could be discerned within the current age.¹⁶⁸

Faced with a decline in American evangelicalism in the decades leading up to the Scopes Trial, premillennial fundamentalists took to asserting rigid doctrinal principles as a means of holding on in light of cultural rejection. "Certain key beliefs – inerrancy, anti-evolution, often premillennialism – gained special importance as touchstones to ascertain whether a person belonged to the

¹⁶⁷ Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 51.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 66.

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movement. Exactly correct belief then became proportionately more important to the movement as its social basis for cohesiveness decreased.”¹⁶⁹

Fundamentalists, losing broad cultural support, were forced to use doctrine to exert control over the unstable boundaries of their shrinking groups, thus turning those ideological points into a framework. With weakened ties to a social group, this frame could then be repositioned; it could incorporate new and old believers, regardless of geographic orientation, as long as they accepted certain key principles in shaping their worldview.

Different approaches to the millennium reflect different modes of interacting with the social order. Susan Harding has defined dispensationalism as “a kind of narrative politics that contests hegemonic secular (‘modern’) voices for control over the definition and meaning ...of ‘history.’”¹⁷⁰ This definition works to encapsulate the millennial approach pursued by spiritual warfare authors, who constantly and loudly declare their adherence towards the true history of the world told in the Bible abandoned by secular society. They tend to deny the world as a category by considering the parts lying outside the spiritual Kingdom on Earth as corrupt and populated by the forces of Satan, and yet their theology demands an engagement with the most awful, malicious parts of human life. As a “discourse that constitutes reality,” warfare Christianity opens a “postmillennial window” wide enough to permit Christian engagement with the

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 205.

¹⁷⁰ Susan Harding, “Imagining the Last Days: The Politics of Apocalyptic Language,” in *Accounting for Fundamentalisms: The Dynamic Character of Movements*, ed. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 60.

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world without denying the reality of its end as foretold in Scripture.¹⁷¹ Warfare Christians, writing under the sign of the apocalypse, conduct their war against demons as part of a cosmic narrative struggle discursively constructing the bounded history of the world. This struggle, and the central call to political and social engagement against demons at its heart, constitutes spiritual warfare's approach to world history and interpersonal engagement: demons act through calamity, and things are continuously growing worse, but Christians can fight, we can spread our truths to the world, and we can rescue part of the world from the eternal holocaust that awaits it at the end of time.

If postmillennialism sees the Kingdom as a call to improve the world to bring about Jesus' return, and premillennialism places the Kingdom as a coming eruption within world history negating the damage and turmoil characteristic of a fallen world, spiritual warfare defers the premillennial Kingdom without relinquishing the possibility and potential of political and social engagement emblematic of postmillennial Christianity. Christians can improve the world without relinquishing its absolute evil by calling the spiritual Kingdom into existence in warring against demons. Spiritual warfare evangelism is an active mode of engagement with the world predicated on supernatural authority and cosmic struggle; political reformation, struggle and looming apocalypse are present in the structuring myths of warfare in Christianity's imagined world. The hermeneutic grounds for this struggle allows warfare Christians to see anybody outside of their particular interpretive framework as a candidate for conversion.

¹⁷¹ *ibid* 61

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Christian images are repurposed according to a warfare worldview, and the rhetorical deployment of authoritative biblical power demonstrates warfare's viability within the boundaries of Christianity.

We can therefore identify three separate tonalities in warfare speech. There is a threatening implication of personal obliteration ensconced in a coming apocalypse. There is a concern for those outside of the group whose reformation is necessary to save them from this apocalypse. And there is the authority claimed by the speaker to act against Satan within the world in reformulating human identity and thereby setting the opposition between humans and demons. Evangelism therefore draws its motivation, audience and authority from the combination of tones present in its apocalyptic thinking. Coexisting in warfare discourse, these tonalities reinforce each other's effects on the listener. An example is helpful:

"Satan is bound and determined to keep unbelievers from hearing and responding to the Gospel. And he has considerable supernatural power to accomplish his purpose. But greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world. Satan's supernatural power cannot match the power of the sovereign God."¹⁷²

Wagner implies that God is powerful, God is coming, and God is assured victory. He implies that Satan is keeping humans separate from Gospel truth, that his power is strong, but that he will ultimately be cast down at the end of time. And, most critically, he accretes spiritual power to his own actions, claims the side of God for his companions, and calls those outside of the group to belong, at risk of death. Wagner explicitly

¹⁷² C. P. Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 272.

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and concretely engages with the blind orders of society as a form of warfare against demonic principalities, and in the process produces speech claiming biblical authority designated for the reformulation of human life. Conversion, as the growth of Gospel truth as told by Prince, Hammond, Jacobs and Wagner, necessarily encodes all of these things.

By definition, evangelism and conversion widen the scope of spiritual warfare. New situations demand new deliverance, and warfare authors are constantly looking for new ways to expand deliverance ministry, which often means finding new media with which to work. My focus in this thesis has been warfare books, but spiritual warfare is also conducted through television, the Internet, church gatherings, Christian conferences and everyday interactions as points at which Satan can be repelled. Books, however, as bound, stable paper objects, allow for the technological reproduction of warfare views across vast geographic distance and persisting through time. They represent the widest, most reproducible form of engaging in evangelism, and this fractured mode of growth through text is a key site for the growth of spiritual warfare Christianity.

Because their involved mode of production necessitates an industry, books are embedded in an institutional power structure directing their circulation and exposure to audiences. Often, they come to rest in Christian bookstores or public libraries, and they can be recommended, transmitted and consumed by different people at different

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points in time. As they circulate, books and texts enter discursive usage as spaces in which new ideas can be articulated, promoted and refuted. They allow for the development of a corpus of warfare theory consistent in its methodology without direct contact between, for instance, Frank Hammond and myself. Most importantly, a book can be studied; its permanence allows it to influence, argue and persuade long after any of its authors are dead. Warfare Christianity, in particular, constantly seeks its reinception in new human minds, and as a result, a vast and continually proliferating body of warfare texts exists in bookstores, warehouses and homes.

Conversion through text allows spiritual warfare to act on a far larger scale than is possible through direct ministry. By negating the need for direct confrontation, warfare authors can identify and deliver demons through proxies armed with texts. As we have seen, spiritual warfare discourse constantly invokes its own power and demonstrates its authority to use it. The use of textual power, as opposed to direct verbal ministry, allows warfare theorists to enlarge their evangelical scope in exchange for an inability to debate the constitutive terms of that discourse. Reading spiritual warfare texts reveals a constant attempt to establish a relationship between teaching author and willing pupil, but that relationship is decidedly one-sided. Spiritual warfare authors develop their discourse to display their spiritual power against their demonic aggressors, but that discourse carries with it a concomitant

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fragility. There is power to reshape the foundations of the world in warfare texts, but it is an unstable power, never sure of its success in the mind of its readers.

Warfare books serve to explicate and evangelize the mythic world of spiritual warfare. However, in actual practice, using books in their intended function as guides for ministers and parishioners does not create the actual intended effects stated in the texts. Derek Prince's *They Shall Expel Demons* does not expel demons by itself. These texts are intended as handbooks for spiritual warfare and deliverance, and as such, they serve a very interesting function in the promulgation of spiritual warfare as an authoritative Christian worldview. The spiritual warfare texts with which I am concerned can best be seen as an extension of ministry, holding the practical engagement with demons central but straining to reproduce that engagement in locales divorced from the immediate presence of the author of the text. These books, the evangelism they perform, and the power invoke to authorize that performance, can free humans from God's apocalyptic vengeance, but only if they succeed in affecting their readers.

Books: Iteration

All books are "iterable," always identifiable as self-same but continually embedded in the contexts of their readers. Insofar as reading books is a repeatable action, every reading of the text produces new forms of meaning within the text. Because they are published books, iterability structures spiritual warfare texts. The mode of their argumentation therefore comes to be an important way of facilitating conversion, and that mode is continually upset by

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the division of warfare author from audience. Jacques Derrida uses “iterability” to explore the absences, presences, gaps, and mistakes inherent in the act of communication.

“Iterability supposes a minimal remainder (as well as a minimum of idealization) in order that the identity of the *selfsame* be repeatable and identifiable *in, through* and even *in view of* its alteration. For the structure of iteration implies *both* identity *and* difference. The iterability of an element divides its own identity *a priori*, even without taking into account the fact that this identity can only *determine* or delimit itself through differential relations to other elements and that it hence bears the mark of this difference. It is because this iterability is differential, within each individual “element” as well as between the “elements,” because it splits each element while constituting it, because it marks it with an articulatory break, that the remainder, although indispensable, is never that of a full or fulfilling presence: it is a differential structure escaping the logic of presence or the opposition of presence and absence, upon which opposition the idea of permanence depends.”¹⁷³

The dialectical opposition of presence and absence, which suggests that an observed element is either immediately and clearly present or else absent of all content, is never totally stable. The presence of an identifiable similarity (like speech about demons) in the remainder sustains the reader’s identification of a given element, but that remainder is continually divided in the same moment that it is constituted. Every element contains in itself both the gaps that divide it and the connecting tissue that marks the element as itself.¹⁷⁴ The meaning accessible in one

¹⁷³ Jacques Derrida, “Limited Inc a b c...” in *Glyph #2: Johns Hopkins*

Textual Studies (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 190.

¹⁷⁴ By elements, Derrida means words, grammatical marks and images, which he sometimes calls graphemes, but he repeatedly asserts that what he says is narrowly accurate for

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iteration of a text is not identical to the semantic significance of the same words in the next moment. Even the repetition of a paragraph can hold different meanings upon additional exposures. Words, when written in order, are not subject to singular modes of interpretation at any moment of their reading. They necessarily contain multiplicity, becoming solid in singular moments but resisting the codification of their fluidity.

Books spreading spiritual warfare discourse make a claim on their descriptive authority in two different ways within the text, through the speech that structures demonic presence and, then, the arguments for the reality of that speech. Proceeding from the initial reading of the text understood in terms of the text's iterability, the context of any reading influences the reader's adoption of the author's worldview. The textual efficacy of spiritual warfare ministries fundamentally relies on the way its authors ground their sentences and citations in established sources of authority. This motion builds warfare discourse into authoritative speech through the integration of iteration and context in reading warfare texts, as it approaches the critical moment of rejection or, hopefully, conversion which awakens the reader to the surrounding demonic war. Addressing the epistemological frontier between knowledgeable Christian soldier and ignorant victim, warfare texts describe demons and attempt to convince their readers that their descriptions are valid, expanding spiritual warfare ministry into new frontiers of Christian engagement with Satan.

written language can be broadened to spoken language and again to places upon which language has an influence.

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We can extend this descriptive work to the ontological presence of demons crafted through warfare texts. Demons always have a dual status, depending on the reader, and their ontological reality is adjudicated according to the reader's response to the text. Everything in warfare Christian discourse is proffered to the reader, but only those features of the imagined world demanding radical recodification are problematic for warfare evangelism interacting with potential converts. Unfortunately, the warfare worldview is subject to fracture precisely where it discusses demons, Satan, war and the Holy Spirit, the supernatural elements most deeply embedded in the discourse.

Regulating this fluidity occurs in the initial contact between a reader and a book, which holds a meaning at that moment before receding back into ink on a page. Texts are not read by empty automatons, and therefore the reader's context, the circumstances of reading a text, profoundly affects how ze reads and uses a book. Because a book immediately enters circulation upon publication, the text immediately opens itself to a multiplicity of uses. It can be reproduced, annotated, cited as authority, criticized, rejected and burned as fuel; all fates indicate that the use of a book continually escapes the control of its author. Instead, textual meaning is subject to the circumstances of its iteration, its location in the reader's context.

Speech Acts of War

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Warfare speech, however, wishes to enact conversion, deliverance and spiritual warfare through the deployment of its sentences. As a speech act, spiritual warfare discourse uses utterances to effect evangelism, accomplishing through speech what it seeks to install in reality. The bright promise of this tactic is the ability to seed the collective world of literate humanity with warfare ideology, and to understand the forces warfare authors deploy in bringing about this end, we now turn to J.L. Austin's theory of speech acts, and more precisely the linguistic forces at work in making speech *do* what it says it does.

Both reading and using a warfare book depend heavily on context for their coherence. By the context of the iteration, I mean the specifics of a particular reading in a particular place at a particular moment, subject to interpretive preconceptions determined by worldview and imagined world on a limited scale. Austin initially situates speech acts in what he calls a "total speech situation,"¹⁷⁵ by which he seeks to redress a myopic focus on the linguistic utterance to the exclusion of the context involved. "Total speech situation" calls attention to things like station, position, mode of dress, weather, and bearing indicating the silent forms comprising a speaker's authority. It surrounds and informs language without affecting the grammar of an utterance. However, Judith Butler has called attention to the impossibility of accessing the totality of any given speech situation. " [The moment of an illocutionary utterance] exceeds

¹⁷⁵ J.L. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 52.

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itself in past and future directions, an effect of prior and future invocations that constitute and escape the instance of utterance.”¹⁷⁶ An iteration of a book is a reading whose meaning is suffused with context, but whose total meaning can never be grasped in a single iteration. For iterability, context holds two effects: through it, an iteration of a book is recognizable in itself, but because no context is self-identical with another context, the meaning derived from reading is always fragmented, never recognizable as the fullness of the text. Therefore, any author’s original intention dissipates in reiteration and cannot be the sole determinant of their text’s meaning. Constantly engaged in transmitting the truth of their world to readers, spiritual warfare books are always being reread and recontextualized. *Pigs in the Parlor*, after all, claims a million copies on its jacket, and both Wagner’s *Warfare Prayer* and Jacob’s *Possessing the Gates of the Enemy* saw a reprint in 2009. These texts are being consumed and recontextualized, but Wagner’s intentionality is not present in his text.

Allowing, for the moment, that the author’s intention was perfectly expressed for his readers in a text’s first iteration, we cannot then consider that intention as perfectly accessible in all future iterations for all readers. The number of books that can be printed far outstrips the ability of individual authors to administer deliverance, and warfare theory’s evolution does not change the words in the already published text. The totality of original, stable

¹⁷⁶ Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1997), 3.

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meaning is never fully accessible. The iterated remainder of an original text instead opens onto a multiplicity of disjointed interpretations.

In warfare discourse, this multiplicity forces spiritual warfare authors to repeatedly and authoritatively demonstrate the authenticity of their worldview. Because the rhetorical deployment of warfare techniques in book format creates the conditions for warfare's growth in the world, the iterability of texts delimits the capacity for elaborate argumentation. Warfare must grow, and its texts must succeed or fail in the moment of initial exposure. Faced with the prospect of outright rejection which might actively aid Satan's kingdom, warfare theorists try to convince their readers remotely, substituting text-based ministry as a proxy for direct interpersonal contact.

As spiritual warfare is rhizomatic, all of its roots must remain identical. Its texts participate in a discourse rooted to hermeneutic and exegesis while sprouting upwards into the wilds of modern Christian life. Writing within certain boundaries of interpretation, warfare authors can articulate an immense and complex variety of ideas. They can range from subdividing human ontology to make room for the Spirit to the proper way of combating demonic affliction to the pervasive necessity of Christian apocalyptic, but they are arranged around a concern for the spiritual salvation of the world through Satan's final defeat by Christ. Iterability is important to these concerns because a text that can be read two different ways is not univocal, and if a text is not sufficiently univocal, the call to war against Satan can seem ridiculous, antiquated, or mentally unhinged. If this happens, Satan has blinded another soul, and warfare has failed.

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Rhizomatic in its modes of transmission but monolithic in its mythic epistemology, spiritual warfare discourse constantly avows its solidity and its status as fact. The task facing spiritual warfare authors is to project a coherent, self-identical warfare schema through a medium whose structure belies the possibility of total self-identity.

Reading: Illocution/Perlocution

Before we can accept that demons move in specific ways, we have to accept that they move, and, more fundamentally, that demons exist in the world. Spiritual warfare practitioners therefore have to justify two general arguments for the reconstruction of reality: that demons exist, and that they exist according to a warfare schema. The result of this argumentation is the expansion of the imagined world of warfare Christianity to incorporate a new soldier. My concern here is for their persuasive strength and the means by which that strength is constructed as persuasive.

The books I am studying are iterable, different from my first reading, deferred from an original writing. The reader receives them as seeking rhizomatic identity, but fractured and distinct from actual practice. Seeking to instill the presence of demons through warfare texts presumes an ability to replicate a specific Christian worldview which a textual mode of transmission does not necessarily possess. Because warfare texts depend on their context for the possible meanings in their iteration, we must examine the grammar of the claims that their authors make in order to support their arguments, through which they seek to demonstrate demonic presences to the blind of the world.

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This grammar is an implicit logic of the language warfare authors deploy that allows them to express the existence of demons through certain modes of their speech in writing.¹⁷⁷ As such, it mythically enacts the reconstruction of human identity and the accretion of power to the imagined world of warfare Christianity.

I argue that the demonological ideas these texts express invoke both illocutionary and perlocutionary forces in order to effect the production of a spiritual warfare worldview in the practitioner as part of a process of evangelism directed against the Kingdom of Satan. The coherence of the mythic world is difficult to articulate without an extensive layering of claims demanding acceptance, and authors achieve this by adhering to certain conventions of modern Christianity through invoked authority claims, as discussed in the first chapter. If they work, describing demons in warfare speech constructs demons within the structure of reality, and argues for the further identification and destruction of those demonic presences. If warfare texts fail to persuade, the emergent Kingdom of God stands to lose ground against its aggressive, evil enemy. The conditional success of installing a demon-filled worldview in the reader undergirds all the subsequent articulations of demonic character.

¹⁷⁷ I realize that that is a slightly weird way of representing the self-presentation of warfare authors in texts. It is somewhat justified by the fact that warfare texts focus on the connection between the reader and the author's representation in the texts. Calls to prayer, targeted warfare, and personal stories are all aimed at demonstrating the author's common cause with the reader. Having set up this relationship and seemingly established their worth as a likeable person makes reading the text akin to an extremely friendly conversation in which one party is totally silent. The focus is on everyday forms of speech that might be familiar to the reader, and "speech in writing", although an ugly phrase, works well to represent the establishment of bonds between the authors and their imagined readers. They intend to communicate the orality of their discourse in a literate form.

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The failure of the individual to understand the call to war reproduces the binary divisions foundational to the warfare worldview, representing a defeat for spiritual warfare Christianity. Gaining entrance to the Kingdom and approaching the possibility of divine violence is useless if it is rejected, and relegating nonbelievers to the Kingdom's exterior licenses them for absolute destruction. Attaining this comprehension, which begins deliverance and spiritual warfare, permits all of the mythologization of warfare Christianity. This double divide, first between creation and argumentation and subsequently between kingdoms at war for control over the earth, can best be addressed through the language of illocutionary and perlocutionary force drawn from J.L. Austin and Judith Butler. Again, as in recognizing demonic presence, these forces work through social speech to create reality anew for the reader of any warfare text.

A statement has illocutionary force if it produces an effect by and through the iteration of the statement. Austin uses the christening of a boat as a standard example. Once properly christened, a boat has a name, and that name is accurate and binding if it was named by an individual with the proper authority to name. When demonstrably authoritative, a Christian practicing deliverance who declares that a demon dwells in the body of the believer effects a change in the world through language invested with illocutionary force. Speech must have illocutionary force in order to create tangible effects through its utterance.¹⁷⁸

Language in various texts is the only available point of access for warfare

¹⁷⁸ Austin, *Things with Words*, 100.

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ministry growing beyond the ability of individual ministerial administration. Therefore, linguistic instances of illocutionary force are critical for instantiating demonic presence within the text. Peter Berger situates naming and recognition as a moment of human activity integral to the stability of epistemological systems: “Language nomizes by imposing differentiation and structure upon the ongoing flux of experience. As an item of experience is named, it is *ipso facto*, taken out of this flux and given stability *as* the entity so named.”¹⁷⁹

In spiritual warfare discourse, when an author writes of the existence of demonic causes for illness and misfortune, ze is not describing phenomena as a dissociated observer. Prince, Jacobs, Hammond and Wagner are all implicated in the war against demons, deeply embedded in its social structure and writing against cosmically ordained enemies. This writing locates a demon in the fabric of reality, revealing demonic oppression in previously empty space. Illocutionary force restructures the object against which it is directed, whether boat or Beelzebub. When it is deployed in warfare speech, the moment of an invocation of illocutionary force is precisely that moment in which the demon comes to exist in the social world.

For warfare texts to be legitimate for their readers, the opening of the warfare worldview must instill belief and produce adherence. There are as many disconnected contexts for reading as there are readings, and context permeates the reception of the text. Texts are continually reconstructed in specific

¹⁷⁹ Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Anchor Books, 1967), 20.

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moments, and their authors are not present to persuade through direct teaching. As the only available means of persuasion, the written text itself must be able to effect the inception of a warfare worldview. An invocation of illocutionary force by definition effects changes in the world, but it does not do so through persuasion. Statements with illocutionary force state, declare, name, identify, argue and describe, reshaping the world through their iteration, but they do not persuade in the sense of using specific words in specific ways to effect a change as a causal result of their iteration.

Perlocutionary force convinces, thereby effecting a change in social reality for its audience. Like the illocutionary, perlocutionary force does not exist apart from the words in which it is identifiable, and the iterations of the text are not identical for all readers. Therefore, what might be convincing in one context is not valid in another.

Illocutionary or perlocutionary forces, in the moment of their invocation in speech, produce certain effects as a result of their utterance. Both creation and persuasion exhibit specific effects stemming from the use of language identifying them as actions undertaken through speech. However, these modes are not synonymous. Where an illocutionary expression causes something to happen in the same instance as its utterance, perlocutionary speech produces its effect as a result of the utterance, deferred from the moment of speaking. This makes it interesting for questions of argument and persuasion; it suggests that language with perlocutionary force can alter external realities without changing the speaker. Butler phrases the difference between these types of force nicely: "The

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illocutionary speech act is itself the deed that it effects; the perlocutionary *merely* leads to certain effects that are not the same as the speech act itself.”¹⁸⁰

Drawing attention to this distinction in the context of a book on interpellated hate speech and naming leads Butler to give priority to illocutionary force, as perlocutionary force does not constitute anything in the moment of its utterance but instead “merely leads to certain effects.” This diminution of the perlocutionary force is somewhat unfortunate. Perlocutionary force for Austin represents “what we bring about *by* saying something, such as convincing, persuading, deterring.”¹⁸¹ It does not depend specifically on convention for meaning in the sense that “demons can attack you if you say the wrong thing” depends on a body of agreed-upon conventions in order to be intelligible. Without an understanding of the nature of demons and the possibility of infection, that statement seems nonsensical. While its effects do not directly depend on convention for its comprehensibility, a statement with perlocutionary force can, as a result of its utterance, cause the audience to accept those conventions. Perlocutionary force does the primary work of evangelizing spiritual warfare by investing its arguments with power, while illocutionary force articulates and redescribes that which perlocutionary force works to support.

In mythic terms, we can read illocutionary force as directly effecting transformations in a worldview, and perlocutionary force as the enabling

¹⁸⁰ Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 3.

¹⁸¹ Austin, *Things with Words*, 109.

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condition by which those changes are allowed to come to potential life. If illocutionary speech creates new forms within the imagined world without tearing at its boundaries, perlocutionary force can cause a shift in the foundational terms of those boundaries. As a result of the utterance “you have a demon of bone marrow cancer,” the demon is named and made real. It then possesses a name and, in spiritual warfare mythologizing, a malicious subjectivity.¹⁸² This illocutionary effect is identical for all participants in the speech act, as long as they accept the initial premise of the validity of the act. This applies both for naming (in general) and for deliverance, which functions through declaration reliant on initial premises that are not necessarily cognizable to all listeners.

When the shared conventions that permit the demon to be named are not accepted, the perlocutionary force of the statement acts to reaffirm them.¹⁸³ In contrast to illocution, the effects of perlocutionary acts are not immediately actualized for all participants. Unlike the illocutionary act, which succeeds or fails based on the speaker’s identity and authority to perform statements, perlocutions can fail even if they are performed by the proper authority figure.

¹⁸² Butler discusses the constitution of the subject in the illocutionary speech act at length in Excitable Speech, drawing on a distinction between Austinian and Althusserian situations of the subject with respect to language. Austin bases his whole project on the necessary existence of a subject that speech acts influence, while Althusser places the speech act antecedent to the formation of the subject. For my purposes, Althusser’s notion, as expressed by Butler, here works much better. “The act of recognition becomes an act of constitution: the address animates the subject into existence.” Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 25.

¹⁸³ Prince, for example, speaks constantly about the errors of liberal mainstream theologians who ignore the self-evident presence of demons in the world. In doing so, he reaffirms the premises of his understanding of Christian life in a way that would not necessarily make sense for a non-warfare Christian. He acknowledges the implicit possibility of disagreement over these crucial terms, even as he affirms his correct opinion.

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Perlocutionary speech requires a speaker who argues for a change and a recipient in whom the change is effected, but the effects of the speech are not strictly delimited by the intention of the speaker. We can fail to be convinced that demons dwell in our bodies. The acceptance of fundamental premises by which illocutionary force can effect constitutive changes is not necessarily available for the author invoking perlocutionary force, who depends on a didactic power to convince. However, like an illocution, the success of a speech act with perlocutionary force depends on the authority and gravitas of the utterer, as arguments grow in effectiveness under the mantle of authority. The success of a speech act is the achievement of the author's desired effects, and is therefore the precondition for participation in the imagined world of spiritual warfare.

In the moment of utterance, the sentences that comprise evangelistic spiritual warfare discourse declare, describe and defend their claims, simultaneously exhibiting both illocutionary and perlocutionary forces. When I read "evangelism that does not include the casting out of demons is not New Testament evangelism",¹⁸⁴ I read a text from Derek Prince based on certain premises that attempt to demonstrate the necessity of warfare evangelism. If I read this sentence at another moment, I might read it instead as a statement about the historicity of demonic combat, an ontological privileging of warfare discourse or a jab aimed at non-warfare Christians. It can therefore represent both illocutionary and perlocutionary claims. In rereading this sentence,

¹⁸⁴ Derek Prince, *Expel Demons*, 11

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multiple iterations of possible meaning produce a variety of potential effects on the reader. Structurally, the difference between utterances with illocutionary force and those with perlocutionary force lies in the effects of the statements, not in the form of the words that comprise the locution. Claiming that demons exist is both illocutionary (there are demons, they are recognizable) and perlocutionary (you, the reader, have to see them). The claim creates and manipulates a certain presence in the same breath that it seeks to affirm the validity of that presence's existence, invoking illocutionary force to describe and declare and perlocutionary force to admonish, advise and convince.

Another example, "demon spirits can invade and indwell human bodies,¹⁸⁵" also has both illocutionary and perlocutionary force. The illocutionary effects of the statement are relatively clear: demon spirits are real, their relation to humanity is malicious, and certain properties can be ascribed to them. However, this sentence is the very first one in *Pigs in the Parlor*, Frank Hammond's first and most influential book on deliverance ministry. As the first sentence in a handbook on spiritual warfare, assuming a certain illocutionary force (demon spirits can do something) acts as a component piece of an argument possessing perlocutionary force that presents itself as a declarative statement. This statement instantiates a certain presence and argues for the redescription of the world affirmed through the reiteration and recognition of the newly constructed demons. Once this kind of grammar is adopted and

¹⁸⁵ Hammond, *Pigs*, 1.

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affirmed, the reader can open onto a very different perception of the structure of reality.

If the locution succeeds, the reader is altered and rendered subject to the auspices of deliverance ministry. A way to understand the work these texts perform in order to further spiritual warfare ministry is the inculcation of a specific worldview in a context conducive to its growth and deployment. The force of these statements cannot be understood exterior to the language of warfare speech. It moves in words to create arguments, and those arguments are effective precisely because their speakers have the authority to use those claims.

Questions

“The process starts when an unsaved listener begins to appropriate in his or her inner speech the saved speaker’s language and its attendant view of the world. The speaker’s language, now in the listener’s voice, converts the listener’s mind into a contested terrain, a divided self. At the moment of salvation, which may come quickly and easily, or much later after great inward turmoil, the listener becomes a speaker. The Christian tongue locks into some kind of central, controlling, dominant place; it has gone beyond the point of inhabiting the listener’s mind to occupy the listener’s identity”¹⁸⁶

This moment, of coming to speak or falling back from warfare Christianity, is the point at which my data runs out. Spiritual warfare conducting evangelism through text sums up its mythic world in words, lines and paragraphs bound in books and placed in circulation. Warfare authors position their texts within other worldviews and try to expand outward from that point. Spiritual warfare discourse posits its own borders, without the possibility of

¹⁸⁶ Harding, *Book of Jerry Falwell*, 34.

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response. The underlying impetus to warfare evangelism is an imperative: you should see demons everywhere, you should live your life through fighting them, and in this fashion, by listening to me, you will escape destruction at the end of time. Therefore you, the reader of this text, should listen to me, for my authority extends to interpreting the word of God.

“Our worldview is critical to how we live our lives...our worldview should come through Scripture – it should be biblical.”¹⁸⁷

“We should be continually pushing back the kingdom of darkness by being obedient to these orders.”¹⁸⁸

Fundamentally, warfare evangelism poses a question contingent on a personal response. The proper response to these commands, which implicitly invoke apocalyptic violence, cannot be judged by anybody but the reader against whom the power of warfare texts is exerted. The establishment of this power and its effective use depends in large part on an individual's receptivity to the text as it is constituted. These texts, moreover, are centered on the question of evil and suffering embodied by Satan and the demonic construed as ontological actors destined for absolute prophesied destruction. The command to practice spiritual warfare is therefore not really a command as long as some notion of apocalypse, evil and end times is present in the mind of believer. It is more of a call, a pleading note or a bitter rebuke directed against some Other outside of the sanctified boundaries of the Kingdom of Heaven, and therefore subject to divine violence at the very end of the world. This speech, and they mythic world it

¹⁸⁷ Jacobs, *Reformation Manifesto*, 33.

¹⁸⁸ D. Wagner, *How To Cast Out Demons*, 31.

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encodes, centers itself on the cosmic struggle between God and Satan. A war for existence rages on a spiritual plane, invisible but directly formative to human life, and humans are necessarily implicated in the struggle.

“The devil has Christians on the sideline defending their own doctrines and traditions, little realizing that they have been deceived by the devil. We must realize that as Christians we must get onto the field and defeat Satan and his hosts.”¹⁸⁹

Evangelism, by which the mythic world is spread, is an attempt to bring more people into concerted warfare against Satan. The Church, against which demons were defined and outside of which is only suffering, grows, because to do otherwise is to negate the possibility of improvement and protection in human life. Spiritual warfare cannot function without an ethos of world improvement and a teleological narrative soothing human misery by offering tools to eradicate it. The imagined world, as it is constituted by spiritual warfare, is an awful place. Bringing the truth of spiritual warfare to humanity is a compassionate effort to protect, promote and undergird the structures that keep spiritual warfare in place in the first place; evangelism, in constituting the broad polity of the Kingdom of God, in bringing more people into the light, in turn constitutes warfare itself. As demons recede, and individuals blossom within the Kingdom, evangelism offers a way in for those trapped outside. The response to this offer or command is entirely predicated on how effectively spiritual warfare authors can make themselves understood.

¹⁸⁹ Hammond, *Pigs*, 148.

5. Conclusion: Warfare Worlds

“The World begins to shake in the very instant that its sustaining conversation begins to falter....every socially defined reality remains threatened by lurking ‘irrealities.’”¹⁹⁰

Robertson’s speech is not particularly interesting as an example of Charismatic Demonology; the worldview that enables the articulation of Haiti’s literal subjugation by the devil possesses its own logic, emergent out of hermeneutic and mythologized as the history and structure of the world. We can describe spiritual warfare as a religious orientation negating the possibility of other ways of seeing; the world it encodes does not allow for anything other than God’s singular authority and Satan’s singular evil. Everything is subsumed into the war effort; nothing is not demonic, nothing cannot be influenced by the demonic and the reality of Satan’s army demands both the continuation of God’s war. This effort carries with it a concomitant structural fragility. The iterations of warfare evangelism do not always exert enough force to persuade their audiences, and a failure to convince is both a failure to grow and a defeat for spiritual warfare; to belabor the plant metaphor slightly further, the rhizome can die just as it seemed it might push up into the sun. As I have attempted to demonstrate, however, spiritual warfare is concerned with the very real

¹⁹⁰ Berger, *Sacred Canopy*, 22-23.

problem of personal human evil, and its explanation serves to give affliction a face, an ontology and a destructive capacity demanding confrontation.

In one sense, this thesis has been an effort to trace the logical circles spiritual warfare discourse deploys to redescribe the world. These ever-expanding circles encode a human space, imbued with divinity and demonic alterity, in which the tension and war at the heart of the world's structure is a constant stimulus to further growth. At once stable and seeking stability, biblical hermeneutic endlessly confirms its legitimacy by demonstrating its authority for its use as authority. Growing out of that move, the basis for biblical citation as self-evident proof, warfare thought locates demons in the process of their identification, constructing demons by locating their particular symptoms in the core of the bodies in which they are found. Demons are shaped, called out of indeterminate matter and set into narrative position as ontologically evil actors whose wrath is absolutely determined in biblical citation, ensconcing demonic alterity in the specificity of warfare hermeneutic. The myths that emerge from that hermeneutic in turn reshape the world by integrating it with the imagined world of spiritual warfare Christianity to form a totality expressed in warfare text. Capable of redescribing and redeploying Bible stories and coded language to advance the Kingdom of God, warfare authors work to draw souls into salvation and participate in the final defeat of Satan at the end of time.

Warfare practitioners creating Christian space bounded by this circular logic seeks to expand, to fight demons, and to combat Satan in establishing the Kingdom. At all times, this effort depends on the human agency of warfare

Christians to participate in cosmological power struggles relevant at every scale of consideration. Christians participating in the Kingdom of God are directly responsible for its maintenance, its growth, its defense and its stability even as their imagined world reorients itself to cover new threats. Evil and affliction, both systemic and personal, are placed relative to the Kingdom, and its eradication is a sign of God's power, a signal of personal blessedness and a promise of Christ's return. Placed within a narrative gap before Revelation, evil and Satan are a necessary part of warfare worldview, and the Christian's agency in that gap is mythically imagined as participation in the transformative events of Revelation at the end of time and space.

That end, however, is always deferred. Spiritual warfare constantly places its mythic emphasis on the end of time implicit in nearly all warfare speech, even as, per Barthes and Mack, that narrative is invoked as a motivation for renewed Christian engagement with demons; human agency is constructed coextensively with mythic destiny. In conducting spiritual warfare, Christians engage with the world, but their mode of engagement never addresses itself to the perceptible world as the sum of available human action. The outer limits of the spiritual plane touch the world as it is perceived by spiritual warfare, and attention is drawn away from the human roots of systemic injustice towards spiritual actors in a mythic frame. The end is paramount, present in warfare speech and partially negating human agency. If the awful parts of human life can be traced to demons and the war with Satan, then what use is there in examining the causes of genocide, deforestation, racism or electoral manipulation? Why should we

bother, if the causes of cancer can be linked to an influence from the spiritual plane? By enabling humanity to fight demons on a spiritual plane, our human ability to combat problems in our immediate environment is negated. The spiritual plane that touches the material draws urgency away from real, socially pressing problems. If pollution and climate change are enmeshed in a mythic narrative assuring us of their future solution, we then have no impetus to restrict our consumption, to seek to improve the world or to look critically at the systems of power in place in the world to try and improve human life on our rapidly degrading planet.

In fighting demons, spiritual warfare creates an identity embedded in the practice of fighting demons, articulated through that act and given agency as a participant in the Kingdom. As we have seen, demonic alterity in the warfare worldview produces polarized Christian and demonic identities whose ability to act and act effectively in the world is curtailed by the mythic narrative in which those acts are inscribed. Warfare demands human agency, the ontological capacity for decisive human action against demonic opponents, and that agency helps to construct a Christian identity in turn defined by adherence to theological precepts embedded in the imagined world of spiritual warfare Christianity. However, in formulating spiritual warfare as a world to be lived in, warfare authors curtail human agency on earth: We have divine power, and we can use it to solve our social problems, but the solutions we can come to are constantly premised on the apocalyptic return of Jesus.

The problem is not that warfare authors do not act in the world; their entire theology is based in an active mode of engaging. Rather, warfare authors call us to action whose effects, if they are felt, only indirectly aid the alleviation of human suffering in the world. Spiritual warfare, in engaging Satan's army, is premised on the ontological and epistemological idea that humans are both weak and strong, personally unimportant but vital as part of the populations through and in which Satan and God war. Ontologically, this means that our personal worth is validated by our membership in the group chosen to survive the end of the world, defined in contrast to our opponent's formidable power as part of Satan's army. As the only two possible affiliations in the world, we are called to fight for God's forces, but that warfare is conducted on a spiritual plane, drawing human life out of the perceptible world. Warfare discourse, in turn, draws this ontological premise into an episteme, formulating processes of inquiry, evaluation, redescription and diagnosis as part of the war we are all called to perform. Christians must work to fight Satan because that work constitutes both an advance for the Kingdom and an assurance of the collective salvation of human souls. But, as this war occurs outside the physical plane, the Christian identity emerging out of spiritual warfare discourse displaces its fears for the world onto a demonic war whose end is mythically ordained, and human action, therefore, is made both irrelevant and vital without addressing itself to the human causes of systemic evil on the planet.

Throughout this thesis, I have tried to critique spiritual warfare without negating the importance of warfare belief systems. A strong critique of the

imagined parameters of warfare discourse does not *need* to be conducted with disrespect or an assertion of the epistemological validity of academia, and I have tried to demonstrate spiritual warfare's intellectual coherence. I refused to negate the validity of warfare hermeneutic, the possibility of ontologically real demonic actors, the dislocation between the real world and the fanciful imagination of socially powerless groups, and the resonance between warfare speech and its reception in spiritual warfare's apocalyptic evangelism. I am not sure I succeeded; after all, this thesis takes as its opening consideration the inherent instability and carefully constructed boundaries of warfare hermeneutic, so I cannot unequivocally avow my own impartial perspective on this topic. My critique is instead an opening move in analyzing warfare Christianity in general. Things are being said, published and contested that do not receive much academic scrutiny, and warfare discourse, in calling people to political and social reformation, articulates a worldview whose mythic features are particularly striking.

Warfare discourse remains largely hidden from view, lacking recognition as an increasingly powerful form of Christianity, and I hope that this thesis opens spiritual warfare to further, more complete critiques in the future. I chose to focus on the Kingdom of God as the most basic object of analysis I could locate in examining spiritual warfare. Therefore, my thesis has notably failed to engage with problems of race, class, gender and politics, because a properly complete reconstruction of spiritual warfare as a worldview was not available. That is hardly an excuse, however, and I hope that others might bring that perspective

to bear in a way that I failed to do. I deferred the question of the concrete social and political effects of spiritual warfare Christianity in order to posit an initial structure for warfare discourse. Having completed a portion of that work, future projects might be able to take up the political and intellectual questions I have left fallow. Here are three, all of which need more time, space or ethnographic data than I possess:

1. Frank Hammond focuses on family politics, sexuality and gender as zones of demonic contestation. Homosexuality, sex addiction and women's liberation are caused by demons trying to upset the family as the most stable, most basic unit of deliverance. Marital strife, the domestic sphere and familial power relations in spiritual warfare need to be examined, because Hammond legitimates and promotes patriarchy and "family values" as ontologically moral actions necessitated by demonic assault, with the always accompanying threat of the Apocalypse.

2. In the texts I have read, frequent mention is made of the inherent evil of Hinduism, Buddhism, Satanism and vodoun as a pretext for casting out the spirits dwelling within those movements. Indigenous religion and non-Christian difference is reinterpreted as Christian evil, and the spiritual warfare worldview clashes in direct confrontation of that difference. Warfare authors thus replicate the rejection of non-Christian religion in early missionizing, but they do so by inverting the religions they encounter, recasting them in the role of vessels of divine evil. Simultaneously, they resignify other belief systems without denying their ontological weight. There is an Orientalist critique to be made of a

worldview whose structure encodes the subjugation and negation of other people's imagined worlds.

3. Demons encode a program of political action, and positioning that program relative to the contemporary American politics action could produce a valuable link between the charismatic evangelicalism erupting in the Global South and renewed Christian engagement in politics in America by examining the structural implications of spiritual warfare for interacting with other people in American political discourse. If we follow Bercovitch's suggestion that early American Christians "discovered America in the Bible," initiating a "ritual process by which the text comes to life, logos becomes logocracy,"¹⁹¹ an analysis of the intersection of American politics as Biblical text, the current modes of conducting war and war as it influences national identity in warfare hermeneutic might be interesting.

These works are yet to be written, and it is too early to say whether this analysis will be a false start or something valuable. Subject to further scrutiny, my work here could be discarded, my conclusions revealed to be demonstrably wrong, but I hope that my initial efforts might aid future analyses of a growing strain of Christian engagement with the world.

Were the Rapture to occur tomorrow, my authors would be vindicated, but in preparing and waiting for Revelation, the image of humanity ensconced at the heart of the warfare world adamantly refuses to engage with the complex

¹⁹¹ Sacvan Bercovitch, "The Biblical Basis of the American Myth," in *The Bible and American Arts and Letters*, ed. Giles Gunn (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 224

problems facing the modern world. Spiritual warfare prepares and prepares for the moment of Jesus' victory over Satan, and as that moment continually neglects to arrive, the continued survival of our species and our civilization is continually deferred from warfare consciousness in favor of eternal salvation in the fully immanent Kingdom. Demons, in a very real sense, drag us down as a species, and not because of their inherent ontological malice. Demons retard our ability to grapple with systemic injustice on a global scale by understanding those problems as part of a war with victors and vanquished evil, black and white rather than the nebulous gray we live in. The apocalyptic fulfillment of this binary inheres in every action undertaken to further the warfare worldview. As these ministries conduct their evangelism, the recursion of spiritual war negates the human origins and consequences of global warming, systemic terror, political strife and economic chaos.

Whether or not these actions have demonic causes, refusing to grapple with those sorts of problems as human problems creates a mood of hopelessness and defeat by deferring their solution onto Jesus' return. If we want an honest chance of surviving and flourishing on Earth, humans cannot ignore our pressing crises. Spiritual warfare authors see this as a biblical question, and spiritual warfare discourse is a result of working towards some resolution, but inherent apocalypticism negates any ability to work towards a world possessed of the capabilities necessary for its continued existence. Spiritual warfare presumes triumphant human life in Revelation, and the destructive tendencies of modern humans only serves to authorize those presumptions. Should the spiritual

warfare worldview supplant a sufficient portion of humanity's imagined world, humanity might stop thinking of human solutions to problems, and in that potentiality, spiritual warfare reveals itself as inherently self-eradicating. By fighting the demons populating our bodies and souls, the deferral of concern and attention onto the spiritual negates, deflects and denies our human agency, so strongly present in the war against Satan but stilled on the human plane. We can certainly continue to wait for Christ's return, to engage with the demons in our culture, but constantly representing human problems as spiritual problems does nothing more than destroy even the possibility of challenging or denaturalizing the world in which we have to live.

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