

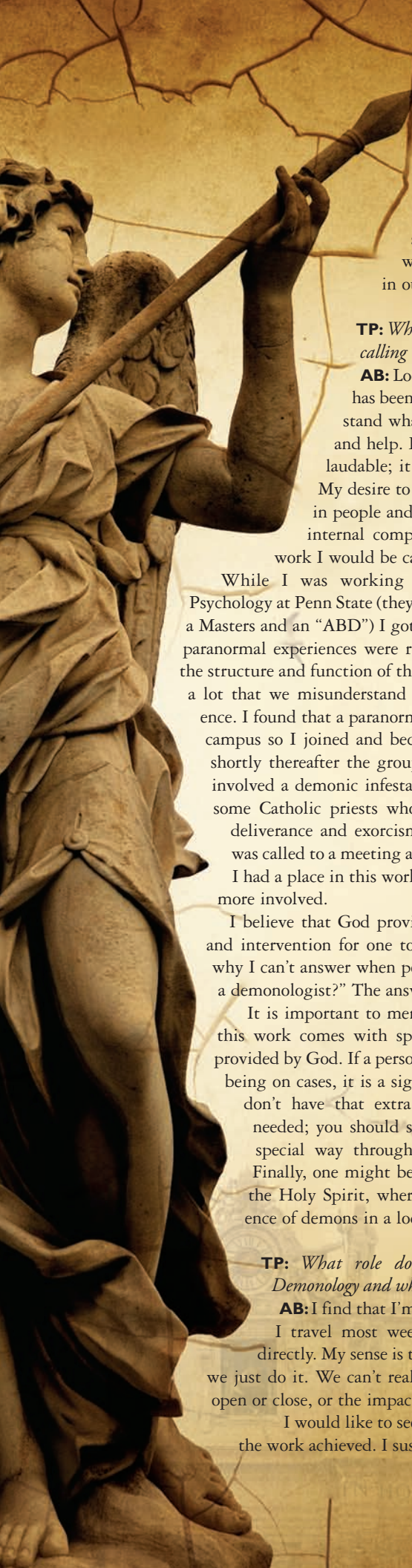
{PART 3}

DEMONOLOGY

IN DEPTH

[By April Slaughter]

*an interview with
Adam Christian Blai*



Editor's note, We continue our look at demonology by holding a Q & A with Adam Christian Blai, who works with the Catholic Church on possessions, as well as John Zaffis, who was featured prominently in our previous pieces.

TP: *What did you feel was your initial calling to this work?*

AB: Looking back I see that my life has been a series of attempts to understand what is hurting, and then to try and help. I don't think this is special or laudable; it just seems to be my nature. My desire to find the brokenness and pain in people and the world was probably that internal compass that pointed toward the work I would be called to do later.

While I was working on my Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at Penn State (they never signed it, so I just have a Masters and an "ABD") I got curious about whether these paranormal experiences were real or not. I was researching the structure and function of the brain and so I knew there is a lot that we misunderstand about our subjective experience. I found that a paranormal research group was on my campus so I joined and became their staff advisor. Very shortly thereafter the group was called into a case that involved a demonic infestation. During that case I met some Catholic priests who had a lot of experience in deliverance and exorcism. After the case was over, I was called to a meeting at a monastery where they said I had a place in this work and asked if I wanted to get more involved.

I believe that God provides the mentors, protection, and intervention for one to grow in this work. That is why I can't answer when people ask, "How do I become a demonologist?" The answer is, I don't know.

It is important to mention here that a calling into this work comes with special protection and efficacy provided by God. If a person is being badly affected after being on cases, it is a sign they are not called, as they don't have that extra protection. Efficacy is also needed; you should see that God is working in a special way through your activity in the cases. Finally, one might be given discernment, a gift of the Holy Spirit, whereby one can detect the presence of demons in a location or person.

TP: *What role do you play in the field of Demonology and what do you hope to see achieved?*

AB: I find that I'm consulting on cases a lot and I travel most weekends to work with people directly. My sense is that God sets up the work and we just do it. We can't really know what doors He will open or close, or the impact of our efforts.

I would like to see whatever God's plans are for the work achieved. I suspect God wants many people

wandering into the paranormal field to be warned about some of the realities here.

The other important aspect of this question is that of humility. It is vital that we remain as humble and unimportant as possible in this work. To take on an attitude of "I know it all" or "I am powerful!" or "gifted" leads to hubris. The devil's first sin was pride, and he is more than happy to lead us down that road to our ruin. I struggle with this issue, as people perceive me as gifted or special in some way because of what we do, but that's not the case. God is doing all of the work; the only thing I contribute is obedience.

TP: *How often do you encounter individuals who are experiencing a psychological problem rather than a spiritual one?*

AB: It is common to encounter people experiencing both psychological problems and spiritual problems. If you were being tormented by invisible creatures and voices for weeks on end, you would feel depressed and paranoid, too! I would say in maybe one out of five cases I don't see any signs of the paranormal and see mental illness. Most cases show clear signs of demonic activity and respond to religious intervention. This has to be taken in the context that I usually only get cases from various diocese or exorcists, so the psychological cases have usually already been referred out for appropriate help.

Since I worked for three years in an outpatient clinic and two and a half as a prison psychologist, I've seen a wide range of pathology. That background helps me to make better guesses about what is going on in cases. I get concerned for groups who get involved with helping people who don't have any background in psychology to help them.

TP: *Is it possible for anyone to recover fully once they have been a victim of possession?*

AB: Sure. Possession is allowed by God to serve a number of purposes. A (usually) brief period of distress is followed by a much deeper spiritual life, fueled by the knowledge that the spiritual world is real and that God is merciful and cares enough about the person to have helped them. My sense is that people do not ever forget, and they must be vigilant because the demons will try to re-enter their lives. As strange as it sounds, the person is often much better off spiritually after the possession is over than before. Don't interpret that to mean I think possession is a good thing – it isn't. It is just that God can turn it around and help a person benefit from the experience.

TP: *What is your view of the occult?*

AB: The word occult simply means "hidden." I think most occult activities are simply self-suggestion and imagination. There have probably been cases where spirits (not Holy angels) have interacted with people because they are engaging in occult practices. In the end I don't see any real fruits coming from these pursuits.

At its worst, the occult is a vague exploration into mystery without any real understanding of where you are going or what is out there. We see case after case that started with spirit communication, divination, or practicing "magic." These pursuits can sometimes be taken advantage of by demons, who pose as spirit guides or angels until the person resists their influence, forcing them to show their true nature. Not every exploration of occult practices is going to lead to trouble, or to demons. Sometimes the spirit world simply isn't interested in a person and so no response comes.

TP: *What should investigators be aware of in responding to requests for investigation involving demonic or negative influences in their homes? What specific signs should they look for?*

AB: It's important to be aware that the demonic is an organized system of spirits, like a military, that takes it very seriously when you try to interfere with it. If you represent no threat, they will probably simply stand aside until you finish your investigation and leave with no evidence. If you are a threat (have some knowledge of how the spiritual world works, or a calling to spiritual warfare), you will likely be personally attacked there and later at home.

If you are not sure if a case is demonic and then discover clear evidence that it is, back off and consult with the religious leader of the client. Unless you are trained and called to spiritual warfare, you should not try to expel a demon from a house, and never from a person.

These signs of infestation or oppression can be used as a guide, but don't assume that the presence of these means it is demonic, nor that the list is exhaustive.

-Demons are generally much more physically strong than ghosts are. People can be pinned to a wall or floor, wounded to bleeding, raped, thrown down stairs, etc. Ghosts generally seem capable of a touch or moving a light object.

- Demons tend to mess with religious items, such as Bibles, crosses, holy pictures, etc. Ghosts might also, but demons will usually destroy or defile them.

- Demons tend to have a very strong horrible odor (unless they are pretending to be a good spirit). Examples include feces, rotting bodies, urine, etc.

-Demons tend to have a very strong psychological and emotional effect on people entering the house. These can include homicidal and suicidal tendencies (when no signs of these or mental illness was present in the person). Stabbing pains in the stomach and lower back are also common complaints.

Signs of possession can't really be covered here; dealing with the possessed is a VERY dangerous task. Writing any information about it might encourage people to think they are qualified to do this. Working with the possessed must be done under the guidance of experienced clergy; any other circumstance will just lead to the demon playing games with you and then entering your life next.

TP: *How do family members, friends, and investigators identify and separate possible possession or a psychological problem?*

AB: Unless they are trained in diagnosing psychological problems, they cannot. Further, they would have to have some experience and training in how to discern, and then test for, the presence of a demon. There is great liability in getting involved in these cases:

What if you tell a family you think someone is possessed and later it is found the person had a brain tumor, but now it's too late to operate? What if you made a bad call and the person was mentally ill and later committed suicide because they didn't get appropriate psychiatric care? It is a very serious matter when dealing with possible possession because the range of potential violence is wide and loss of life is possible.

TP: *What is the most effective way of spiritually protecting yourself from demons or negative entities?*

AB: Learn what the rules of the spiritual world are from your religious leader (assuming you are in a "good" religion). Most faiths have an understanding of demons and have guidelines about what you should and should not do. These guidelines are usually based on a long history of people learning through trial and error. Not to follow this advice is foolish. Would you ignore what others have learned about scuba diving and just jump in and wing it?

For me, this means learning the Catholic Church's teachings, methods, and verbal tradition from specialist clergy. I don't presume my faith is the only answer; it is simply the faith I was raised in. Through personal experience I've seen that the Catholic faith works when people need help with demons; therefore, I apply what I've learned. I don't presume the mercy of God is not extended to people who act with good will to help those from other religious perspectives.

For more information on this subject, please visit www.religiousdemonology.com

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