

Exposing The Occult Danger In Popular Media

by

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Introduction

The world we live in today is more interconnected now than ever. With access to television and the world wide web a person can have doors leading to information that the never thought possible, or doors leading to danger and the overwhelming presence of the occult. How has media changed our lives and how have old adversaries found new ways to intrude in our home? What can be done about the popularization of the occult while Christianity is on the decline? In this thesis we will see not only first hand the destructive nature of the occult in popular media but also solutions that can bring us back from the brink.

My name is Derrick Apple, and I have spent years living in a country that has already seen the ravaging effects of occult activity once accepted as an everyday norm in society. What's more frightening is that the same process is now taking place in America and the West using the same tricks of the trade that while failed to take permanent hold in the 1840's have now resurfaced and are gaining ground rapidly. We will explore these tactics used by the media and explore the reality that exists behind the glamorous facade. The world is changing at an ever increasing speed on a scale that we have never seen before. Since that 1840s we have seen a steady ramping up of the occult fueled by new means of communication that did not exist thirty years ago.

While the tower of Babel is gone physical, our level of intercommunication has once again reached an all time high and our responsibility to wield it morally will define us.

Background

I, like many others, have had past experiences in the occult that began in my college days. college is a time when young adults begin to explore their lives and new found freedoms. It is also a time when we are vulnerable and very susceptible many forms of new stimulus. My first real introduction came about when a paranormal investigator came to my university to talk to us about the field of paranormal investigation. It was the year 1999 and at the time paranormal investigation was still considered an abnormal activity and did not have the forward momentum that it does today. I remember walking out of the event thinking about how exciting it must be to have experiences that go beyond what we know to be true. The idea that there was knowledge that only few people had was just beyond my reach was enticing to say the least. The thought of knowing the unknowable struck a cord in me that I now understand to be a ruminant of the forbidden fruit once consumed by the first man and woman.

Oddly enough I never sought supernatural intervention from "spirits" or "spirit guides" but found myself interested on the psychological effects that the occult had on people. My first attempt at participating in the occult took the form of tarot card reading. I didn't really believe that the cards were magic or had any power what so

ever, but I did realize the influence that tarot card reading had on others. It's important to note that I had always considered myself a Christian and had attended church regularly and this did way into how much I was willing to present tarot cards as anything more than a simple trick. The activity in this form of occultism was brief and given up rather quickly mostly do to the fact that I was not a true believer in the power of tarot cards and while I didn't have the prospective on occultism and Christianity that I do today, I felt that it was somehow wrong to continue the use of tarot cards. They in my opinion then had the potential to cause harm. Now it is without a doubt in my mind that this is the case.

Breaking away from what I considered to be harmful occult practices, a few years went by before the fascination with human psychology and trickery came back to mind. It was at that time I decided to take up stage magic in the entertainment sense. Basic card tricks became easy to me and my understanding of the human mind gave me an advantage when performing a magic trick. It never felt like occultism or that I was doing anything wrong because I would always disclose to people that it wasn't really magic, it was simply a trick. I continued this line of thinking for ten years by which time I became an accomplished magician in ways that went beyond mere hobby and into performing on stage. My favorite form of stage magic is what I coined "Pseudo Science", performing a trick so that it seems like an advanced form of psychology. A good example of this is have a person select a card from the deck and

by asking them a series of questions, that they are not allowed to verbally answer, I could deduce the color, suit, and number of the card by simply observing their face for micro reactions. This of course was a lie as I already knew the identity of their card before they even selected it by what they considered "free will".

Though I gained great skill and was highly encouraged by popular culture to continue impressing people I could not find a balance with performing magic and following Christ once I had gained training from the seminary school I was compelled to join. I had been called to study the word of God for reasons that I did not fully understand, but when the calling came, I could not ignore it forever. While no one may know the full scope of their calling, there is a strong passion within me to expose what I understand as a lie, and others present as truth. While I also had a form of resistance to the occult, others fall very deeply into the occult head first. The leading cause of this? Popularization of the occult by media sensations such as witchcraft, vampires, spiritualism and communication with the dead. That is why I have chosen the topic of this thesis as "Exposing the Occult Danger in Popular Media".

Future Model of Occultism As Seen In Japan

Japan is an amazing country with an amazing potential and a seat among the strongest world powers, but it is also plagued by the occult. Fortune tellers, Tarot cards, Palm readers, and Astrologers are just a few of the problems that bind the Japanese. I have lived in Japan for six years and have seen spikes in occultism that have yet to take a strong seat in America. However, to understand the danger that America and the West faces, we must first understand the real problem and by using the current state of Japan as a model, we have a clearer understanding. So what does it mean when we say that a person is a slave to the occult? When we look at the power the occult has over people we get a clearer picture. In Japan, many people are willing to bank heavy life decisions based on information obtained from the occult, even on corporate levels. The most common form of this is through cycles or days in the month that have been deemed lucky or unlucky as well as numerology. Before the average Japanese couple decides a wedding date they must first consult a calender which has had its days of the week divined by Chinese Astrology known as Rokuyo. For example March 3rd might be considered "unlucky" while March 5th might be very lucky. Wedding companies capitalize on this and charge up to ten times more than the normal cost while blocking out cheaper "unlucky" days of the week.

The information pertaining to Rokuyo Calenders can be found at

www.seiyaku.com/customs/rokuyo.html

Case 1

This addiction to the occult becomes dangerous when it comes to medical treatment. Many Japanese favor occult medicine or advice from fortune tellers rather than established doctors. Sadly some doctors perpetuate the problem themselves and regurgitate superstition. Case in point. A woman is diagnosed with treatable cancer but instead of surgery turns to occult healing. In this particular case she was to drink water that was charmed, at the advice of persons in the occult, and it was to alleviate her cancer. Another practitioner she met with used silver bracelets and laying of hands that would supposedly heal her. After two years of this treatment she not only found out that her cancer had not diminished in size but was now in the final, terminal stages. This is but one case in which we find disastrous and often times lethal advice that comes from occult practices let alone those that seek out to do harm directly to others. There are other instances that can have a disastrous effect on the family unit as a whole and directly.

Case 2

Property in Japan is dealt with very differently than in the USA or other Western countries. One of the effects that occultism and superstition have on the culture of Japan is in housing and apartment rental. While in America it is true that many buildings early on did not have a 13th floor, the effects of superstition were relatively mild in comparison to the superstition found in some Asian countries. This is not to say that Japan and other Asian countries are foolish in some way. I am quite fond of Japan and when I see people living on the extreme side of occultism and superstition it pains me a great deal. In real estate it is particularly saddening as it is an area in which people are often exploited or treated unfairly. Geographical location is often subject to many superstitions such as a property placed at a fork in the road and a number of others such as the direction the property faces based on “Fusui”. “Fusui” originated from China but has a strong hold in Japan when choosing property and is thought to affect the occupants of that property positively or negatively. “Fusui” takes into account Chinese astrology and myths concerning geographical locations and the elements of nature. The practice of “Fusui” extremely limits a person's life in terms of places in which they may live and causes the property value of land to fluctuate high and low with no real rhyme or reason. In a sense your life and your finances in Japan may be bound by this system that is widely accepted as a scientific practice. The idea

that your new home may at some point in the future have bad “Fusui” and therefore be worthless is a frightening prospect that happens more than people like to admit. The usual mind set in Japan is “Well it's probably not true, but why risk it.” Women seem to be very susceptible to this particular idea in Japan more than men who have other forms of superstition and occult beliefs. This can make moving very complicated and expensive as the average businessmen in Japan is transferred and forced to move every 3-5 years. The formula for “Fusui” is quite complex and is the subject many books such as the Japanese book translated from Kanji as “Happy Life with Simple Fusui!!” in English.

- Happy life with Simple Fufui!! by Seibido Mook

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While medians and snake oil salesmen had their day in America and in the West years ago, now we see once again a spike in the occult and occult practices. The interest in witch craft has boomed and exploring the occult through scientific means such as paranormal research is at all all time high. The major source for these occult activities in the west have always been media either in print form or in more modern days television and on-line media. Every facet of the supernatural seems to be glorified in ever increasing ways from seductive vampires, powerful "good" witches to the scientific minded paranormal investigator simply looking for the truth. However, what the occult offers in media and the truth couldn't be further apart. Some

people might feel that it is impossible for the U.S. to turn to occultism in such an in depth way as seen in some Asian countries, but it is happening slowly but surely as these ideas become more and more popular. In many instances throughout the world average people view the spread of Christianity as corrosive to the natural culture and heritage of a region, yet allow occultism to spread without restraint of any kind.

Goal

Now that we can see the need for intervention in media to prevent others from falling into the occult, now we have to have a firm idea of what it would take to actually have a lasting and positive effect on the situation at hand. In order to do this we must first find the root of the problem and explain it in detail. Since the early years of the church we find that encounters with spirits were not a desirable thing. When Jesus returned and met his disciples again for the first time they were in fear because they thought that they had seen a spirit. Luke 24:37 When Saul Had the spirit of Samuel conjured up by a witch Saul had realized that he had committed a grievous travesty. (1 Samuel 28:8-19) The bible is full of mention of evil spirits but none of which were considered to be "good spirits" Eph. 6:10-12 ; 1 John 4:1 ; Matt 8:31, but the bible is not the only example of this. Looking to the first documented ghost story of the Roman Empire we see that in the 1st Century A.D. there were tales of a haunted bath house that was said to have the spirit of a man murdered there looming about. Rather than investigate and communicate with the spirits, the mostly pagan group at the time sealed up the bath house so that no harm would befall others. Its this inherent fear of spirits and the paranormal that people had, and an inherent understanding that spirits were not to be trifled with. But to simply describe it as a fear isn't enough. In fact this holds closer to the anthropological moral argument for the existence of God stating that within us all is a type of hardwired moral code in which God has granted

each and everyone of us. Therefore unrelated tribes or cultures maintain universal moral laws, such as the crime of murder, theft, or adultery, that are expressed evenly world wide. It is this same built in system that tells us that communicating with the dead, or necromancy, is wrong in the eyes of God. So at what point did this feeling of distancing ourselves from the dead become obsolete and trivial? When did the pendulum swing the other way round that it would be popular to take part in what God has spoken so adamantly against? The goal is to reverse the pendulum with truth that spoils the lie like salt in the wound. To educate people on how bad it has really gotten right under their nose. The goal is also to encourage Christians to join the front line of the media war by including their views in popular media.

The History of Spiritualism

The first appearance of poltergeist activity that shares a resemblance with modern paranormal phenomenon is cited by many to have come from a small farm house in Germany around the year 856 AD. In this particular case we are told about a small family living on a farm in Rhine River that was plague by what we now know as a poltergeist or as translated from Germany "Noisy spirit". In this case the family was victim to bumping noises at first which escalated to stone throwing, levitation, and even the out braking of fires which left the family paralyzed with fear. Eventually the local church became involved and attempted to exercise the spirits from the farm house. Unfortunately details about what happened next are few and far between. Some stories indicate that the priests were ineffective at remedying the problem while many other claim that their efforts were successful. In truth we may never know the exact outcome of the situation, but it became very famous and the stories about the incident spread like wild fire leaving a persistent image of what consists of poltergeist activity which remains to this day.

Writing on the topic of ghosts in the modern sense that came from the Rhine river poltergeist spread throughout the world. However, in 865 the topic of the paranormal was still taboo. Over time the taboo became stronger and more indulged in until one

day in the 1840s when three women would make history by bringing contact with the dead into popular culture. The methods of these three women would mimic and behave very similarly to the presence in Rhine River As they undoubtedly were impressed upon by the stories in circulation of their time. The story of the Rhine River Poltergeist was as long lasting as it was vague in its description. A combination a supernatural events and imagination with an echo that keeps on going.

“The Poltergeist” by William G. Roll 2004

The Fox Sisters

In the year 1840 the Fox sisters first made their debut from a small farm house in Hydesville where they claimed to communicate with a traveling salesman that had been murdered. The sisters claimed that by a series of knocks and sounds, that they could communicate with the former salesman and learn details of his life. Word quickly spread and people from all over the country flocked to the farmhouse to witness for themselves the ghostly sounds and to hear the stories that the Fox sisters had to tell. An interesting and important fact to note is that the Fox sisters encounter started much like the Rhine River poltergeist story in 1856. A series of strange noises consistently woke the family throughout the night and that family became victim to similar circumstances that the Rhine river family had. This similarity fortified the concept that there was a pattern to haunting and paranormal activity that has stayed with us for all of these years. While the Fox sisters gained popularity for their ability to communicate with the dead and later went on tour performing seances that proved profitable, it would all come to a head when one of the sisters Margaret went public with her deception and denounced the spiritualist movement. This was however, not the end of the spiritualist movement, but only the beginning.

“Nineteenth Century Miracles; Spirits and their work in every country of the Earth”

By Emma Hardinge Britten. Published by William Britten. 1884

“The Poltergeist” by William G. Roll 2004

“The History of Spiritualism Vol. I and II” by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle 1926

Beyond the Fox Sisters

During the time of the Fox sisters operating years from the 1840s - 1890s many followers gained interest in the paranormal and this led to other mediums coming forward with claims to being able to contact the dead. The prospect of contacting the dead was even more appealing now than ever since so many loved ones were lost in the World War and their families were giving hope of speaking to them even if just one more time. The idea was so strong that people accepted the new reality that souls were never really gone but lingered on after death. This idea was an idea that people couldn't let go of because in their mind they felt as if they were robbed of a loved one. People began to ignore the Bible's view on death. This new idea was found through heart ache and un-forgiveness as people could not shake the feeling of abandonment. While it is biblical to have a mourning period, it is not wise to allow yourself to suffer a curse brought on by un-forgiveness and extended mourning. This popularity raged like a wild fire and touched all of America and Europe involving some of the most prestigious people of the time in its wake. One of these famous individuals was Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the writer of "Sherlock Holmes", whom we can safely say was a man of great intelligence. Doyle gave great support to the cause of spiritualism and considered it a good step forward in our understanding of the world. Doyle even went on camera to talk about spiritualism and its merits. Many famous names came

from the spiritualist movement and a great many books were written on the topic that some claimed was the most important discover of our life time. But what was the outcome of such beliefs on society?

As mediums sought out contact with the dead they also sought out spirit guides to help them on their quest for better understanding. These spirit guides were describe as anything from a noble soul passed on simply offering a helping hand to Angles and gods. The advice taken from these supposed sources of information proved at times accurate when trickery was not involved and almost always a counterfeit. to the Christian world view. Emma Harding Britten wrote in her book " Nineteenth Century Miracles Or Spirits and Their Work in Every Country of the Earth" many statements that were "handed down" by her alleged spirit guide that she claims helped her to write her book. Within these statements we find that there is a diluted form of Christian beliefs that many time contradict teaching of the bible directly. Stories of afterlife encounters in which individuals are confronted with God are particularly subtle in their efforts to mislead by quoting the bible ninety percent of the way and then changing core concepts or wordings by a small enough percentage that they might go unnoticed and be taken in as fact. While the bible preaches saving grace through Jesus alone, Emma's book leans towards salvation through even a few good deeds. To make this overall concept of Spiritualism seem even more appealing and harmless in the eyes of God she writes her own motto "God Understands" in large

print on the last page of her book.

While Spiritualism did finally come to somewhat a close at the hands of well educated men and authors as well as in the eyes of popular media and print for its time period, the notion that contact with the dead as a strict taboo was long since gone. As they say, "The cat was out of the bag." Now that ample amounts of literature on the subject was available for the first time to the public, people began to take notice and even fascination with the idea that communication and knowing the unknowable was possible. It wouldn't be long after this point that it would finally come to pass that there was a new interest in the occult and that people's fascination with it could be lucrative and exciting.

“Nineteenth Century Miracles; Spirits and their work in every country of the Earth”

By Emma Hardinge Britten. Published by William Britten. 1884

“The History of Spiritualism Vol. I and II” by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle 1926

The Historical Occult vs. The Popular Media Occult

How is it that occult ideas and even monstrous topics have become such a fascinating and entrapping topic while the reality of occultism is dangerous and often times horrifying? Often times young people are lead to partake in witchcraft and the occult when they feel that there is something to gain and that previous ideas of right and wrong have been dis-proven. Take for example Vampires in popular media now compared to the myths that surrounded vampires a centuries ago. In the (17th and 18th) century vampires were viewed as bloated corpses that dug themselves out of their own grave in terrifying fashion to drink the blood of the living. Vampires of ancient lore were hideous to look upon and considered to be purely monstrous in both appearance and action. Further more they possessed no glamorous abilities at all nor did they have any kind of interaction with the living on any level other than violence. This began to change as time went on and from 1967 to 1971 television saw its first attractive vampire in a series entitled "Dark Shadows" where Jonathan Frid played a dark but hauntingly attractive vampire by the name of Barnabas Collins. Similarly this has also effected witchcraft and today we see a multitude of shows that revolve

around portraying these occult icons in a new, and positive light. Witchcraft is often portrayed as an art that is one with the natural order and spirits around us. Often times these witches use their powers to defend the weak or help their friends. They are cast as heroes and role models of good and intellect that put emphasis on the human ability to produce for itself. Of course nothing could be farther from the truth. Most of the people involved in witchcraft find themselves separated from friends and family leaving them with empty promises of a better life through the practice of magic which yields only short term benefits and a hefty price tag. Likewise, vampires are portrayed as "misunderstood" and as people searching for ways to use their condition for positive means. The lure of immortality and superhuman abilities, which did not exist in the (16th and 17th) century version of this monster, are often presented as a cause for great responsibility and heroic actions.

Once people wish to delve into this occult practice in real life they subject themselves to dark rituals performed by those who have turned their backs on God for demonic power which they believe will grant them abilities that emulate film or television. Many can not believe that these dark rituals of drinking human blood actually exist in modern times and that they are more than willing to acquire new followers. In Peter Underwood's book "Dictionary of the Supernatural" the author is quick to point out that these practices are more than myth and that throughout the centuries people who have partaken in these practices are described as "insidious",

“necrophiliacs”, and "sadistic".

Despite the reality that exists time and time again people are drawn into occultism by popular media and to safe guard our children, faith and family we have to be willing to find solutions to this problem before it is so engrained into the culture that it fully merges with Christianity as we see already happening with "Spiritualism" and "Christian Witchcraft". The bible says "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it." Matt. 7:13 NIV. Surely these deviations are a prime example of what Jesus spoke about. When people feel that occultism is an adequate substitution for Christianity we see a decline in Christians. When we see Christian partake in occultism, we see a decline in Christianity. Therefore the overall goal should be to education rather than ignoring the topic all together. There are many problems that follow suit with ignoring the occult. One such problem is that while you might be willing to ignore the practices that take place out side of the church, your children might not be. Since children seem to go against the grain and answer to the calling of curiosity, it is unlikely that we will be able to convince them that ignoring the occult all together is best. Another problem with ignoring the occult is that it bring tolerance and therefore acceptance of the occult rather then pushing it away through active means.

“A Magician Among the Spirits” by Harry Houdini 1924

“The History of Spiritualism Vol. I and II” by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle 1926

“Dictionary of the Supernatural” by Peter Underwood 1978

Related works.

Since the war on occultism and contacting the dead is an old conflict in new cloths, we should take into careful consideration of art events and authors that faced these trials. A large majority of work done against Spiritualism in the 1840's to 1940 was completed by notable figures of intellect surrounded by science and driven by faith and or a sense of justice in the face of charlatans. It is important to note, as we will discover in these books, that the ultimate downfall of Spiritualism was an inner working problem of greed for fame and money. While famous authors such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in his book "The History of Spiritualism" promoted Spiritualism, many other spoke out against it. One of these outspoken individuals was none other than Harry Houdini, master magician and coincidentally a friend of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Harry Houdini's most famous book on the subject was "A Magician Among the Spirit" in which he exposed the true nature of spiritualism as a fraud with in fact no real spirits involved. Houdini wrote this book in 1924 and by this time Spiritualism had already inspired an amazing following and people willing to deceive others by pretending to have communication with the dead.

It would seem that while in fact there were most likely people honestly attempting occult practices to gain access to secret knowledge, the field of

spiritualism had pushed itself into popular culture so much that it was now at a boiling point. Houdini in his book would investigate an alleged medium and debunk their methods through investigation and interview.

In Houdini's book "A magician among the Spirits" Houdini gave many examples of Spiritualism spreading through popular media themes that in his time took the form of shows or exhibitions with live people demonstrating their ability to contact the dead. So popular were these displays of spiritualism that a great deal of money and fame was simply there for the taking by people willing to exploit this new interest for their own means. In the case of the Davenport Brothers, Houdini explained how they mislead the public into believing that they had supernatural abilities to contact the dead and cause them to manifest openly. Houdini went on to explain that the actions of these brothers caused thousands to be converted to spiritualism through their pioneering use of magic tricks. The brothers knew how powerful story telling could be in print and in live performance and used that to their advantage knowing that all along they were altering peoples world view on religion. The Davenport Brothers did not seem to have any scruples about misleading people into a religious practice that is not conducive to their well being or salvation.

Houdini also knew about the power popular media has to influence the opinions of the masses as he was a well accomplished magician. Houdini's unique perspective

allowed him to see and and expose the dangers of letting individuals harness the power of media to alter their views on religion and common sense. Houdini felt so strongly about the negative effects that spiritualism had on people that it compelled him to write about many instances. In one such instance Houdini pointed out that many people in their average lives do not think of Spiritualism as anything beyond seances and mediums nor that they understand the negative and degrading effect that practices such as these have on a society or group of people. That the effects of participating in Spiritualism can bring about grave misfortune and personal anguish. Houdini said that his library was stockpiled with accounts that he had collecting proclaiming the destructive nature of Spiritualism on a first hand basis. Houdini felt the need to point out that theses sources were not simple rambling but many were from famous figures and intelligent men known all over the world. Houdini was very poetic when it came to his despise of Spiritualism. It is a side of Houdini that many have probably never considered in today's time, but through experience reading his book we see that he felt a great deal for the anguish that the victims of Spiritualism went through on no small scale. The feelings of animosity and disgust with Spiritualism that Houdini were profound and the author of this thesis encourages you to read them first hand so that you can better understand how deeply the topic of Spiritualism effected his life.

-*"A Magician Among the Spirits"* by Harry Houdini, 1924, Pg.# 180 Publishers HARPER & BROTHERS New York and London MCMXXIV

Houdini also stated that at one point public out cry over the suicide of a young woman involved in Spiritualism was so strong that it prompted the courts to get involved and that the New York Assembly had received a proposal that would have made the act of preforming a seance illegal. Unfortunately the law was not passed. The woman mention had fallen in love with a spirit and was driven to the point of suicide so that she might be united with the spirit that she had openly professed her love to.

- "A Magician Among the Spirits" by Harry Houdini, 1924, Pg.# 181 Publishers HARPER & BROTHERS New York and London MCMXXIV

Modern Literary Testimony on the Destructive Nature of Occultism.

During this literary study we will be looking at a more modern account of occults written by Kristine McGuire titled "Escaping the Cauldron". This book recounts the life of the author and her struggles within the practice of witchcraft and how it was made appealing for her even when confronted by her own Christian values. Kristine explains how witchcraft was presented in ways that would be compatible with her Christian life through popular views that meld the occult with Christianity in an attempt to dilute the true word of God. Kristine gave accounts of how the figures of the bible were corrupted by these popular occult views found easily by various forms of media she was exposed to.

Kristine recounts her involvement in the occult as a Christian and in retrospect feels that the notion of combining Christianity and Witchcraft is unbelievable in concept. Like many others fallen into this trap Kristine began to view the scripture as nothing more than a history book laced with wisdom. She no longer felt that the Bible was the direct word of God. She accepted some figures of the Bible, such as James and Jesus, but disregarded others such as Paul. Other ideas of the Bible she rewrote in her mind to represent the pagan goddess and other aspects of the Bible were melded into occult beliefs, all in secret.

“Escaping the Cauldron” Kristine McGuire Published: Charisma Media Sep. 2012

Kristine tells us how easy it was for her to find justifications of being a witch and a Christian. She tells us how through the internet she was able to find teachings about witchcraft that she had been exposed to by movies, television and popular media. Kristine says she grew up wanting to be a fortune-teller and that she graved knowledge that no one else had.

“Escaping the Cauldron” Kristine McGuire Published: Charisma Media Sep. 2012

A few other testimonies that bare weight are also an influential part of this research. For example ““Dancing with the Devil: An Honest Look Into the Occult From Former Followers” tells the stories of many individuals that have escaped witchcraft, satanism, vampirism and much more. Testimonies such as there have strong importance in research like this because they serve as a warning to other people who might be considering a life mixed with the occult and provide a way out for those already fallen into the occult. For the purpose of this thesis it is important to point out that these activities lead to a lifestyle that is despised by those who live it. The modern idea that it is impolite to evangelize to someone and change their religion is a self-defeating idea in the hands of a Christian. Furthermore, how can we withhold evangelizing when we know that another individual is in pain. The idea of “ We shouldn't evangelize because everyone is entitled to their own beliefs” falls apart in

the face of testimony such as these.

-"Dancing with the Devil: An Honest Look Into the Occult From Former Followers"
compiled by Jeff Harshbarger 2012 Charisma House Book Group, 600 Rinehart Road,
Lake Mary, Florida 32746

Another powerful testimony comes from the book "A Message of Hope: Confessions of an Ex-Satanist" by Deborah Lipsky that explains her journey in life and her dealings with the occult. Testimonies such as these seem to be growing in popularity among Christian circles which is very helpful in evangelism to individuals that have fallen into the occult.

In more modern times we see the merger of Spiritualism, Witchcraft, and Christianity. The boundaries are being blurred and the edges being smoothed over by the power of media and popular opinion. Kristine is not alone when she tells us her testimony of being attracted to the occult and the paranormal through television and media. Today we see that the popularity of paranormal themed television shows, movies and even books have boomed in the last ten years.

Method

The approach to combating the problem of popular medias influence on people, especially the young, to get involved with occult practice is a problem that has once been dealt with in the past. Similar methods used in the past must be fused with new ideas and religious belief to have a lasting impact on the spread of occult popularity day and in the future. The idea or method surrounding this solution is to expose the real deception and fraud that operate within the media and the occult. This deception of course is a type of "Mystic Lure" witch draws people in with false promises that when exposed all at once are spotted easily as the despicable acts they are. The occult thrives when members of seemingly harmless occult practices are slowly encouraged to seek out stronger and more dangerous powers.

The understanding of "Mystic Lure" is a concept that Harry Houdini understood very well as do many magicians that practice stage magic or up close table magic. The reason that the profession of the magician is uniquely aware of these tactics is due to the fact that beyond what people consider parlor tricks, there is the deep understanding of human psychological mental process that is studied, broken down into its various parts, and exploited for the purpose of entertainment or, if malicious intent, direct exploitation of the subjects life. Though it goes by many names, artful

deception, magic or trickery, its basic concept remains the same, people have a built in drive that compels them to explore or experience the unknown by direct involvement or proxy. The mystical nature of the occult is itself appealing because it offers knowledge that is out of reach by normal man or is forbidden. The first recorded instance of this is of course found in the Bible Genesis chapter three. I am referring of course to the fall of man. It was the snake in the garden that offer to Eva the forbidden fruit of knowledge that promised to bring her great knowledge equal to that of God, but also death. The choice of Eva to take to fruit and with her husband partake of it had lasting implications that expanded far beyond them also and became part of our sin nature. One might even say that this desire to experience the unknowable and to taste the knowledge that God alone holds is hard wired into us via this corruption through the original sin of mankind. While we often view curiosity as a positive influence in a persons life, we also know that curiosity in the wrong subject leads to unhappiness and strife. It is of course no surprise that the one subject that can lead us the furthest away from God and happiness is the occult. However the mystical lure effect in a magic trick is only as strong in fascination as it is unsolvable by the audience members watching the show. The same can be said about the appeal of the occult vs. the danger in its startling realities. Every magician knows the first rule of magic is to never expose how a trick is done. This rule is self serving as it preserves the mystical effect of a trick or an illusion in the eyes of the audience. With out this essence of the unknown, people would not be compelled to watch the magician

perform his tricks. Even in modern America where magicians are largely considered "tricksters" rather than men who possess true magical power, once a trick is exposed it loses its allure and appeal. It's that feeling of the mystic that holds the calliope aloft and once it is gone it can never be brought back. When the real intentions of the higher occult agenda are exposed, the effect is similar in that people will be aware of the true consequences ahead of time and thus wish to procure it no further.

What Houdini did was not simply debunk the science of the tricks performed during spiritual seance but more to the point debunked the fact that the spiritualists had anything to offer the people at all. Houdini exposed that the hope offered was a lie and that the mode of delivery was the elaborate tricks involved. Today the occult offers the same false hope and false salvation and while the mode of delivery has changed from magic tricks or gimmicks, it is still actively offering an alternative to Christianity. The new "Lure" that is being offered is the idea that we can have access to great power if only we take action to claim it for ourselves. In modern times we are led to believe that by taking action and joining in occult practices we can shape our fate and take control of our own destiny. The main reason the occult is succeeding on this is because the access to this occult power comes in any form desired by the individual wishing to change his or her own fate from a comfortable standing that makes them feel accomplished. These new senses of power and accomplishment take the form of "Spiritualism", "Witchcraft", and "Vampireism" as they are now

prominent and appealing ideas that are popular in media today. The new object of debunking must be that these ideas have nothing to offer at all. The mode has switched from "faith in a medium" to "faith in one's self". While in the former we had to debunk the medium, in the latter we must debunk ourselves. By showing that these alleged powers or abilities are not human but demonic, we show that in fact the idea that we can do these things on our own is a bold faced lie. When confronted with the facts that these practices are rooted in non-human activities, people must consider where in fact they are getting their information or power, and if that source is worthy of intrusting our lives or salvation.

When we talk about the occult in the church we generally say its "bad" and to stay away from it. However this is insufficient. Many people live thinking that if the supernatural is ignored, then it goes away and people will not seek it out. This is simply not true. Christianity is by nature a religion that believes in the supernatural not only in general terms but as a reality that we experience daily. While any pastor, priest or theologian will tell you that for every supernatural aspect there is of Christianity, there is a counterfeit which the occult employs. When the church neglects exposing these counterfeits, those with an agenda in the media are left to fill the vacuum with their own version of the truth. Currently in the church, there is no explanation or spoiling of the mystic lure that the occult has to offer. Many feel that the occult is simply too frightening or too unbelievable to be spoken about from the pulpit

but when this is not done it leaves room of those with few scruples to fulfill the work.
When we lose our saltiness and become afraid to speak the truth, we not only hide the truth but hide that light of the word of God.

Mat 5:13 "You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its flavor, with what will it be salted? It is then good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under the feet of men. - NEHB

Col 4:6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one. -NEHB

In order for us to accurately represent what it is that is really going on in the occult today, we first have to put our minds to it that we are no longer willing to ignore the fact that Christianity bases its believe in a supernatural God and that in fact there are supernatural forces that oppose us.

Actively Spoiling the Mystic of the Occult.

To spoil the mystic lure of the occult we must be willing to cross a line into what some might consider ghoulish or unpleasant territory in or explanations of what the occult is really up to. We must begin to put our squeamishness aside for the sake of preparing ourselves to deal with that reality of the occult that appeals to us as well as our children.

Spiritualism

While paranormal encounters have become immensely popular on television and even movies one must realize how this activity and even the idea of ghostly spirits fits into the Christian faith or even Deism which believes in a god of some capacity. Aside from the biblical and spiritual aspects, what are the social ramifications of partaking in spirit communication?

The Biblical View

The bible speaks a lot about an afterlife in heaven, but aside from popular believe says nothing about men walking about the earth in a ghostly state once they have passed away. While there are many verses in the bible that re-enforce this we will be looking at the two most popular verses dealing with this topic due to the familiarity most Christian have with them.

Heb 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.

KJV

This verse is very powerful for explaining how it is that men must die and then face

judgment rather than being allowed to roam in a spiritual state when we look at the context for why it was written. Paul wrote the letter to the Hebrews to reassure them that in fact Jesus was the Messiah and that there in fact was a plan for them when Jesus returned. Some of the major factors that are required for the plan of Jesus to be carried out is that men must be judged, that through Jesus we are saved, and that after death we await resurrection at the second coming of Jesus.

Spiritualism leans towards a popular concept of immortality after death that is not supported by the Christian faith as it contradicts the fact that we must be resurrected after our time of death once Jesus return in the second coming. However is this to say that we are not still conscious after death and simply await for our bodies to be brought back. Not at all. The bible makes it very clear that we in fact have no say in the mortal realm once we pass away. We are in fact dead throughout until fully resurrected.

Ecc 9:5-6 "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun." KJV

For the sake of context it is important to point out that this death is of the physical

nature which is reiterated in verse ten.

Ecc. 9:10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest. KJV

This is not an argument for or against the concept of "Soul Sleep", in which our spirits are relived to be dormant neither in Hades or Paradise, but clearly states that once we die and our work on earth is done and that we have nothing to offer anyone who is still alive under the sun. The connection sought by those alive to those that have died can not be establish as they are cut off from us. Likewise in the story of the Rich man and Lazarus we see that there is a fixed gulf in which we can not cross.

Luke 16:22-30 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that

would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. KJV

While the gulf mention refers to the gulf between Hades and Paradise, it however was quite clear that the rich man could do nothing on his own accord for he deeply and honestly wished to affect the living but could not.

The Deistic Argument for the Non-Existence of Ghosts.

While the Christian argument is sufficient for many of us that already believe, we must be aware that there are a great multitude of people who only have a vague belief in some form of god or who claim to be Christian but do not see the Bible as the full and truthful word of God. For those that fit into this category we must appeal to them on a different level. One who claims to have even a vague understanding of God must be willing to make cretin concessions. For example a just god would not be willing to

leave children behind on earth to roam about lost and separated from the light. Dave Schrader owner of "Darkness on the Edge of Town", an independent radio broadcast, has worked in the paranormal since he was a child and works closely with other famous investigators today. Dave Schrader in his interview with "Dangers of the Paranormal" gave an example that was very compelling.

Dave Schrader explained that people should be cautious when they investigate the appearance of children in spirit form. According to Dave's own belief structure, there is little room for the notion that God would leave innocent children behind after death. Dave bases these feelings off of scripture an especially when people talk about rapture and the taking up of innocents. Dave express caution to people who investigate spirits that claim to be children as they might be something more malevolent in nature.

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This argument carries a lot of weight and appeals even to non-christian fringing on the edge of belief.

What We Find in Reality

The reality of spirit communication can be very frightening in deed. There is a great difference from paranormal investigation and spirit communication. Some people can become obsessed with communication even in lighter forms such as EVP or electronic voice phenomenon. This obsession can lead them to spend an unhealthy amount of time devoted to spirit communication. On the darker side of spirit communication is that of Ouija boards, dowsing rods, pendulums, seance and automatic writing guided by spirits. In these activities a person is asking for a spirit to essentially take control of his or her body and allow the spirit to work through them. But what are the chances that spiritualism would lead to problems? Father Andrew Calder, a prominent and popular researcher in the field of paranormal investigations explains in his interview with DangersoftheParanormal.com that you might bring something home with you, a spirit, that could be with you for life, and it might even effect your children. While there are researchers that work in the media spotlight, a majority of them agree that there is a danger of gaining spirit attachments that can destroy your life and the life of those around you by participating in paranormal research without proper spiritual protection. Instead of seizing control of a situation, many people find themselves becoming lost in it.

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The Awkward Truth

There is of course however the believe that people might stay beyond life due to unfinished business. This idea has been made popular and ever so more in popular media. This idea seems to span many believes and so I will say only this. If it were true that unfinished business were due cause for lingering about, there why aren't there more Jehovah's Witnesses wondering the street door to door in a spirit form. Surely they would have the desire to evangelize there beliefs long after death and until they felt the end was nigh. All joking aside, if it were only mere desire that kept us from crossing over then why wouldn't we see more spirits enjoying life at their own leisure until they simple decided to move on due to lack of interest. The case for personal human spirits moving about seems to weaken under this logic, who wouldn't want a chance to evangelize to their loved ones, or force political agendas they died to early to see complete. After all, The singer Meatloaf said in his song, "heaven can wait". Perhaps its because spirits don't evangelize that we might be left some clue as to their real nature. All to often we hear the same story of a haunting. "We moved into a house were we met a little boy spirit and things seemed to be fun at first, until it all went wrong." But we never hear of a spirit of a loved one leading someone to Christ as he was when he came in the flesh and will one day return.

Witches in Popular Media

Witchcraft has been steadily gaining popularity in both the media and in real life practice. While there are many different forms of pagan worship witchcraft Wicca lead the way. There are many key differences between the philosophy of witchcraft and Christianity however some of those include, goddess worship, spell casting, curses, herbal medicines, spirit guides, physic phenomenon and communication with the dead. In popular media witches are now portrayed as defenders of nature and those with an enlightened oneness with the spirits on the world that can be describes as pantheism.

The Biblical View

The Bible is strongly opposed to witchcraft as it brakes several commandments and laws given to us by God. False idol worship, Polytheism, Necromancy, Fortune telling, and astrology are but a few of them. From these alone we see a multitude of passages that condemn such actions.

Idol Worship: Exo. 20:4; Deu. 5:8; Lev. 19:4; Lev. 26:1; First Kings 21:26

Polytheism: Exo. 20:3; Exo. 23:13; Exo. 34:14; Deu 5:7; Deu 6:14; Jos. 23:16

Necromancy: Lev. 19:31; Deu. 18:9-12; Deu. 18:11; 1 Tim. 4:1; 1 Sam. 28:7-14

Fortune Telling and Astrology: Lev. 20:6; Dev. 18:10-13; Lev. 19:31; Daniel 2:27;
Isa. 47:13-14

Knowing that the Bible is opposed is very important not only to warn that those that practice witchcraft are considered an "abomination" to the lord but that as Christians we are not to participate in these activities on any level. While this might seem like harmless activities to some, when we indulge in these things we are

consulting a power other than our own God and therefore suggest that other gods or sources are somehow capable of giving us what our God can not. Aside from this, the theological stance of witchcraft and Christianity are completely opposed. The largest stumbling block for many that try to fuse the two faiths together in synchronous is the fact that witchcraft is inherently polytheistic and that Christianity is monotheistic. One can not truly believe the Bible is word for word God's will, claim to follow it, and then worship any of the gods found in witchcraft in order to preform the rituals or spells that thrive in witchcraft. While this is an apparent contradiction however, this has not stopped people from trying.

The Christian Witch

While the Bible does forbid witchcraft and many in witchcraft say that logical you can not whole heartily believe both simultaneously, some do try. Kristine McGuire in her book "Escaping the Cauldron" gave her testimony as to how she was lulled into believing that this was possible by forging her own blend of Christianity and witchcraft with disastrous results. Kristine told us how this process and involvement in witchcraft almost brought her marriage to divorce. While mixing Christianity and witchcraft from the Christian prospective is difficult, it is much easier to find witches that are willing to accept the amalgamation. Tutorials on this subject can be found from prominent websites with amazing easy of access. <http://www.witches-tutorial.com> is one of such websites. However they to insist that you must be "liberal" view of Christianity. While the website does explain how the mix of Christianity does have its problems, such as using the Bible as a single source of information of the spiritual, and is extremely difficult to mix the two, it does explain how you can do it by warping interpretations of biblical verses. While Christianity is uncompromising on its position, witchcraft seems to morphs its principles to accommodate prospective recruits.

<http://www.witches-tutorial.com/paths/cw.html>

The Reality of Witchcraft

The reality of witchcraft is very different from the presented form that appears on television. In the popular television shows featured today, many witches have power that are flashy and extremely effective visually and openly in the real world as we see it. Shows like "Charmed" , "Sabrina, the Teenage Witch" and witches as portrayed by "The Vampire Diaries" all show witches casting magic through innate abilities granted by witchcraft simply for being a member of a coven, or group of witches. These powers grant the user anything he or she wants in an instant and in flashy manner. However the truth is far from the presented reality. In reality the gods worshiped by witches require a great deal of commitment and sacrifice of things that matter the most to you. Most TV shows don't tell you that you must invite spirits of potentially unknown origins to live with you and that you must appease these spirits or spirit guides lest they turn on you like they did on Kristine in her testimony and like the testimony of countless others. Furthermore instead of flashy spell casting and fire coming from your fingers, people find themselves spending hours sitting in a circle and inviting spirits into their life for gains that can not be seen or quantified. The darker side of witchcraft is that satanism is often times a large part of the practice either in direct worship or in symbolism. While some covens, groups of witches, denounce Satan worship, they can not tell you that demons are not a part of witchcraft

at all. In fact when witches invoke spirits of unknown origins to take complete control of their body and spirit through mediation. The amount of stories in which the spirits turn on their users are countless among former witches and practicing witches still in the craft. Kristine's story is such a common occurrence that witches with problem spirits are told to invoke other spirits to help them defeat the afflicting spirits they already have. With avoidance of spirits totally, there is no magic or worship in witchcraft. Basically this makes your chance of negative exposure at some point, and often many points, 100%. In fact, witches acknowledge that negative spirits will attack you and that they can haunt your life quite literally. Patti Wigington, a columnist, gives advice telling Wicca practitioners and other pagans that you will sometimes have unwanted guests that pretend to be something they are not. She goes on to say that these intruders will sometimes come along and cause havoc in a persons life until they are dealt with by will power and other occult methods which she describes. A quick glance or research on the topic will show a slew of such problems that befall people during spirit communication. witchcraft as a viable alternative to ones spirituality pales in comparison to the salvation that Christianity offers without having to deal with demons or possible spiritual attachments

Vampires

Vampirism, the idea of drinking blood from an individual, dates back further than almost any other form of occult being. Vampires date back as far as Ancient Egypt through the Greek and Roman rule as well as the Babylonians and Assyrians. While the level of believe ranged from superstition to died hard believe, the myth about vampires persists even into today. Most of these modern views on vampires came out of Eastern Europe and in 1897 the modern view was forever immortalized in Bram Stoker's "Dracula".

The Biblical View

While the Bible does not speak against vampirism directly it does speak against the practice of drinking blood that many physiologists say serves as a fetish and can be addictive.

Lev 7:26-27 Moreover ye shall eat no manner of blood, whether it be of fowl or of beast, in any of your dwellings. Whatsoever soul it be that eateth any manner of blood, even that soul shall be cut off from his people. KJV

In the laws laid out by Leviticus, blood consumption was considered such an offense that those who partook of it were cast out. This is echoed throughout the Bible. Gen. 9:3-4; Deu. 12:23; Proverbs 30:14. All of these attest to the foulness of those who drink blood and participate in the practice. While drinking blood is forbidden, this does not mean that the Bible supports modern views of vampirism as we see it today. It is important that the Bible address this topic on the basis that people were not to consume blood as opposed to warning against a supernatural being that lives on blood. The concepts behind the vampire draws on many un-holy aspects laid out by the Bible. The Bible would suggest that blood drinking is a sinful activity that might

be a sign of pagan or demonic practices. While Proverbs 30:14 paints a vivid picture, we don't find vampires in the Bible directly. However, it is clear that God forbids the actions described in vampire myth.

The Reality of Vampirism

Contrary to the popular image of Vampire painted by media that would portray them as heroes or creatures of grace and charm, the reality is quite different. The traditional view of vampires stated that they were bloated corpses of the dead which crept out of the grave at night to feed on the blood of the living. The traditional views remain, an undead being that can not age and must be killed while it sleeps being stake through the heart and often times beheaded then having the head burned to ash. These corpses were not envied as there condition were abominable. While this image is less appealing than the current adaptation, the real life vampire is much darker and much more abominable.

First hand accounts from a well know former Wicca, Satanist, and Vampire cult member Rev. William Schnoebelen show that this is a consuming world the misleads people onto a path away from true salvation. Rev. Schnoebelen describes his start into the occult as an interest in Wicca the lead to a hunger for more occult knowledge that lead him from on organized group of the occult to increasingly darker areas of the occult all along thinking that what he was doing lead to a more noble goal that would serve his friends and family. Modern vampire cults are directly tied to and rooted in Witchcraft, Satanism, Luciferianism and even Crowleyism as presented by Aleister

Crowley. Such practices in Vampire cults include excessive drug use, the calling on of demons with vile intent, the willing desecration of one's self and of Christ, The desecration of the Roman Catholic priest hood as many become priests in order to gain access to church materials for further desecration, blood consumption, blood magic, animal and human sacrifice, conjuring of spirits, communication with spirits of the dead, contracts to sell ones soul for seven years of life in satanism then death and hell, degradation of one's physical body witch destroys the digestive system and causes the skin to become translucent thin and weakened, the increases of blood lust over time and a growing desire to kill. All of these are harmful and the list provided is but a small sample of what exists in reality. Its important to note that Schnoeblen himself said that many action preformed in the occult are of pure deception and that some of the practices, such as astral projection, may contain elements that are imaginary. The idea of vampireism seems to follow suit in some degree as the practice of vampirism is based heavenly in the occult but actions and beliefs vary among groups. The truth is that vampirism combines the dangerous elements of witchcraft and further dark desires and fetishes.

“Interview with an Ex-Vampire” by Rev. William Schnoeblen - Mark 161718 Video
Productions May 2006

Results

What we find when we take all of the risk factors that follow along with participating in the occult into count is that there is a very poor risk vs gain ration. In affect what we see is that there is virtually no gain at all even on an earthly sphere. Looking back at some of the icons of the occult and how their lives ended, we see that there is real documentation on the fact that following the occult leads to strife. Looking at Alister Crowley's life we see that he started in a wealthy family but after his deep involvement in the occult that he died a very poor and broken man with a very heavy drug addiction and living in squalor. Those around him also suffered greatly, it was said that his first two wives died in mental institutions and that five of his other lovers committed suicide. While Alister Crowley today remains an occult icon, the great lie is that these practices can produce a life worth living. The various people mentioned quoted in this work have given their testimony as well that the occult promises the world, and leaves a person in ruin.

- "Dictionary of the Supernatural" by Peter Underwood 1978 George G. Harrap & Co.

LTD 182 High Holborn, London WC1V 7AZ

Results of Spiritualism

Kristine McGuire, author of "Escaping the Cauldron" was a former witch and medium when she discovered that there was true power in the name of Jesus. Aside from being a former witch, Kristine also speaks out about her involvement as a medium. Kristine Has been interviewed by CBN TV and has posted her personal account and story on her own private website where she now speaks about the dangers of the occult. Kristine spent five years a witch and spiritual medium when she decided to take up paranormal investigating when she watched investigations on TV. While Kristine was a Christian she desired to get involved in witch craft by ignoring certain verses of the bible that she know realizes that she should never have ignored. One night while investigating the paranormal, Kristine felt something was not quite right and that a demon happened to be involved so she once again turn to the Christian faith rather then witchcraft with surprising results. According to their testimony she commanded a spirit to leave in the name of Jesus which later was played back on an audio recording revealing an EVP, Electronic Voice Phenomenon, of a what seemed to be a terrifying screeching sound when the name of Jesus was mentioned. It was then that Kristine realized that her involvement in the activity was a mistake and renewed her faith in Christ. In many ways Kristine was lucky to have not befallen a worse condition due to her involvement with occult and says that the holy spirit was urging

her all along to return to the faith.

-“Escaping the Cauldron” Kristine McGuire Published: Charisma Media Sep. 2012

Other testimonies are coming forth everyday in larger and larger numbers as the ramping up of the occult takes place. Laura Maxwell, author of "From Spiritualism to Christ" which appeared in the book "Dancing with the Devil: An Honest Look Into the Occult From Former Followers", wrote about her encounter with spiritualism that left her life and the life of her mother in shambles. Laura tells the story of how her mother became involved in spiritualism and subsequently brought her daughter up in the New Age Movement. Laura explains her fascination with ESP, crystals, astral projection and of course spirit photography and spirit communication. While life went well for a while, when Laura entered her twenties she began to experience problems that were always rumored about in regards to paranormal problems other spiritualists were having. All manner of manifestations began to take place from haunting activity to poltergeist and harmful physical manifestations. Laura and her mother began to feel that the spirits of people whom they have communicated with over the years began to grow angry and violent. Even the spirits of family members became aggressive towards Laura and her mother causing great psychological harm and in one instance even possessed her mother to start a fire in her own kitchen against her will by means of a trance. Laura was so distraught by her experience and thankful for her delivery into Christ that she felt compelled to write about her time in spiritualism as a warning

to others and in memory of her mother.

- "From Spiritualism to Christ" by Laura Maxwell featured in the book "Dancing with the Devil: An Honest Look Into the Occult From Former Followers" compiled by Jeff Harshbarger 2012 Charisma House Book Group, 600 Rinehart Road, Lake Mary, Florida 32746

While the interest in spiritualistic practices are continuing to grow, so are the hordes of people willing to speak out about their negative experiences a revolving round spiritualism and the lies they have been told. Many people in the Christian faith feel awkward when talking about the paranormal, but it is in fact when we get involved and deliver people from these practices that we fill the gap in paranormal investigation that might otherwise be filled by those in the occult. When people have problems with spirits or the paranormal, they need people who are willing to listen and that will try to help. When Christians refuse to do so, the occult will step in and will only fuel the problem. This is one of the main reasons that some Christian Priests and Ministers continue to aid paranormal group as they are presented with a chance to help someone in dire straights and can potentially lead that person to Christ. Since paranormal investigation is so popular in the media now, the cat is again "out of the bag". While I would not encourage Christians to participate in spirit communication , I would encourage them the help people with paranormal or spiritual problems that may in many cases require an investigation of a persons home and life to determine

the true cause of the problems they are having. As Christians we must be aware that the dead do not come back, and that the devil is very good at playing with our emotions and our curiosity. We can not be fooled into believing that these spirits have a place in our life or the lives of our friends and families let alone communicate with them.

Results On Dealing With Witchcraft

When we are faced with books like “Escaping the Cauldron” we see that there is a demand for literature on topics that work against the occult rather than for it. While witchcraft is very popular on TV, we see a large stream of individuals speaking out against it. While popular media has worked hard to bring people into the occult they also introduce them into the idea of thought exchange on the topic via heavily traffic websites like YouTube and countless forums. The area we as Christians need to focus on are the testimonies that former witches give in which they describe their problems and actively responding positively to the problems people are currently experiencing while in witchcraft so that we might lead them out of it. In each case that a person has been plagued by spirits that have turned their backs on their medium or even turned violent towards them. People with these unique problems need guidance to get out from under spiritual oppression. What we find from the testimonies and research found in this thesis is that Christianity has offered the best answer with the longest lasting positive result. While many may not be Christians, in times of need many are more than willing to receive our help if we can understand their problems. The book titled "A Message of Hope: Confessions of an Ex-Satanist" by Deborah Lipsky tells the tale of a woman caught up in witchcraft and satanism only to find that Christianity held the answers that set her free. Deborah, like so many in America, was brought up

in a religious background but found herself drawn to the occult by the world around her. After a while she began to experiment with the occult and she began to realize that something was very wrong in her life when demons began to torment her nightly due to her involvement in black magic. She was driven to the point of suicide and even planned out the back until the night before she was to take her life she was called back to Christ. When it comes to problems that develop in witchcraft, there is no shortage of people that require help. By using the popularity of this topic to tell stories such as there that in their own right intrigue people, we can reach out and offer the time tested solution of Christianity.

-*"A Message of Hope: Confessions of an Ex-Satanist"* by Deborah Lipsky

Tau Publishing (September 18, 2012)

An interesting finding is that witchcraft does not require pure dedication like Christianity does in a monotheistic sense. Those that participate in witchcraft seem more than willing to allow syncretism and encourage it as a means of discovering ones self even though they acknowledge that the bible stands against it. Witchcraft is enticing not only for the powers that it promises, but also for the acceptance that people who participate in it feel. Witchcraft is even more open in these regards than spiritualism due to the fact that witchcraft allows for the single person to change his or her own fate and “go it alone” so to speak. Modern media often portrays witches as being secretive and self isolating which is another factor that draws people in.

Witchcraft seems to have the perfect paradox of “seclusion and belonging” which is ultimately destructive yet on the surface unparalleled in its appeal to people who declare themselves outcasts.

Results on Vampirism

The popular image of Vampires as presented in television and movies is more than simply good business for the movie industry but also a very powerful lure for teenagers to take part in activities to seek out real life vampire activities for a thrill. While some might think this is absurd that someone would actually seek out vampires in hopes to join them, a quick web search or search on YouTube will show that in fact there are those who are drawn in by the mystery. We already explained how the reality of Vampire cults are horrifying when compared to the media's presentation, but now we have to look at dismantling the effectiveness of these programs. It's not enough to simply approach these people once they realize their mistake of getting involved because the Vampire cult culture is so brutal that they may not survive because it does represent the darkest of the dark occult practices. Instead it is the determination of this thesis that the only feasible approach would be to directly expose the modern practices of Vampire cults as they are so radical in nature that the rational person would want nothing to do with them. Bill Schnoebelen told people of a life that many people would find completely unacceptable by most common sense standards such as the abuse of drugs, the longing to consume normal food and drink as a vampire, being a vampire that hasn't even died yet, and the desecration of Christ on a daily basis. All of these are contrary to the popular representation of vampires in popular

media. Given that these are constants in the vampire cult underworld, it is impossible to synchronize these practices with the Christian faith or even a healthy life style. An interesting part of this study has revealed that people who claim to be vampires hold to few core concepts that exist among other vampire groups. There seems to be almost no standard by which they practice their believes. The believes seem to incorporate wild ideas from many facets of the occult and imagination. The practice of being a vampire is one of the spiritual practices lest grounded in anything and often is controlled by whim and flights of fancy. Were as even witchcraft maintains some boundaries in the lower rungs of practice and includes the concepts of white magic, all be it this is a deception, vampireism on the other hand is without moral limits from the start. The idea that a person can do what ever they please is of course an attractive idea, but again this allure has another downside. If one was to speak publicly as a Christian about the practices of vampireism, the sheer insanity of their believes would simply sound like an impossible madness to onlookers. Ideas like being a “mental vampire” that drains mental energy, or vampires that astral project themselves to other planes of existence or other worlds they control as a god just sounds ludicrous.

These ludicrous ideas do however appeal to teenagers and young adults. People falling into these age ranges seem to be open to more flights of fancy than older groups of people. The fact that anyone could even believe that there is a chance they might become a vampire still sounds crazy to most adults. For an adult to think that

anyone would even seek this out, mostly from disbelief in vampires, is inconceivable for most and this further masks the efforts of those that recruit. When I was first introduced to the idea that young people were being targeted by these groups, I too found it hard to believe anyone would really seek out a vampire in order to become a vampire themselves, however there is strong evidence that people are actively seeking out young adults and teenagers as potential recruits.

This topic, the idea of vampires, is actually the hardest topic to deal with because there is this wall in our minds that tells us that these ideas are so absurd that it's foolish to bring them up. When we talk about it openly we feel the eyes of the congregation or audience on us as if to insinuate that we are losing our minds. When dealing with vampirism the best solution is to use that feeling against the vampire cult itself. Many vampires are satanists to the point that they seem to go hand in hand sharing the same ideology which opens the door for us to voice our opposition on the topic by presenting satanism as the true evil which leads to outlandish behavior such as believing that one's self is "actually a vampire". We might lead into the conversation under the pretense of denouncing satanism and then point out that most vampires who run around biting people and drinking blood are the products of satanism. The term "Vampire Cult" seems to be a term that expresses the danger of vampirism and the real presence of cult activity. This term also detracts from the magical sounding nature of the word vampire and in the eyes of an audience is much more convincing to the

ears. For example. “Bill is a vampire” sounds silly. “Bill fell into a vampire cult” sounds like Bill needs serious help.

One of the only reasons that vampires are so popular is that a person could be a vampire and live a normal life while keeping their secret safe. However the truth is that there is nothing normal about the practices of vampirism or about the life that people lead outside of being a vampire. Once a person crosses the line to the point that he or she has made it as a vampire, their life is already in shambles. It can not be stressed enough how real this problem actually is so we must rework our mode of thinking on the subject.

Conclusion

It is the conclusion of this thesis that practices portrayed as innocent dabbling or spiritually satisfying always lead to an unpleasant end in which the individual is guided down a path of spiritual ruin. While great reflection has been the product of this thesis, it is hard to say that there will be a definitive and lasting result unless people are willing to open up about occult practices and educate fellow Christians and their own children on the dangers of and beliefs of the occult. The one clear product of this research has shown that it is an inferior solution to ignore the occult and simply say “this or that” is bad. The once common idea that simply staying away from the occult has melted away in the face of media exposure as it is now at its all time high. With the availability of information that exists today we can no longer limit the exposure that our children have to the occult with any degree of certainty. This means that we must now be more proactive than even at a personal level rather than simply leaving it to the church. This means that we must closely guard what our children are exposed to and know the occult when we see it. In a sense, each one of us must ramp up our spiritual warfare as the ramping up of the supernatural takes place and one of the age old keys to warfare is “know thy enemy”. If this research has proven one thing it is that the western cultures have become blind to the true nature of the occult icons that they now view as a positive force in modern media. The lack of education

on spiritualism has lead to spiritual communication. The lack of education on witchcraft has lead to syncretism and the adoption of witchcraft into Christianity its self. The lack of education on cults and old practices such as vampirism has lead to teenagers having a real interest in seeking out groups that participate in such activities on various an potentially dangerous levels.

The major find of this thesis is more of an awaking than I expected. While I have considered myself very informed on the practices and infiltration of occultism in media due to my background as a magician, I still find myself taken back at the true practices and length that people will go to to practice in the occult. The idea of syncretism, the mixing of the occult and Christianity, was of particular concern as it is an attractive idea that is gaining momentum. The concept and practice of Christianity mixed with occultism is gaining momentum largely because the individual practices of the occult being incorporated into Christianity have not been studied and explained well enough that our children can identify them as false teachings.

One of the most dangerous concepts that I came across is that of spiritualism as it can many times closely mimic that written word of the Bible with just a slight change when required. Its a grave offense to change the word of God and when the word is twisted and given to others as good fruit, it is a wicked thing in deed. Some might feel that spiritualism is completely gone, but that would not be the case. Spiritualism has

changed form over the years and has dug into certain Christian circles even if its just “under the table” spirit communication done in small groups. Another way this has change to adapt to Christian circles is in the form of channeling Angels or biblical figures into a persons body. By masquerading as something holy people begin to feel that the practice is not only acceptable but communion with God.

The writing of this thesis has become a major steppingstone on the path to better understanding of spiritual warfare that is on going in the world around us. It is the hope of this author that by reading this thesis that the reader will be able to understand in some part that the true nature of popular icons, such as spiritualism, witchcraft, and vampires, is far darker than the average Christian can fathom. What we must do with the information contained within this thesis is to disregard the common ideas and preconceptions of spiritualism, witches, and vampires so that we can replace that image with the true image that is presented by testimonies we have seen here.

As a proactive step, it would best suit the church to invite people who have had these very negative experiences to speak more directly with thee youth of the church While Bible studies on the topic do help, the audience in Bible studies tend to be much older than the typical recruitment ages of the occult, 14-30 years of age. That’s 15 years the occult has free reign on our youth. Houdini showed the people have a genuine interest in the truth and spiritualism of the 1840s – 1940s shows that people

have an interest in the strange and unusual. By presenting the truth about these practices, we can combine the lure of the truth with the lure of the unknown. The youth will listen to the stories and the truth is a powerful shaking force. If we don't present our version of the truth, someone else will present theirs.

Future Work On This Topic

The future of this topic exists in the continued study and exposure of the occult on wider and wider scales. If the written works of Houdini tell us anything it is that people are willing to listen to a good story even if that story is speaking out against popular notions such as Spiritualism. The ultimate goal and idea of this thesis initially was to provide a step by step guide to debunking the occult. This has been accomplished in some ways as we now have a clearer picture of what the occult is really like when compared to the media version. Due to the research of this thesis we now see how simple involvement in even white magic via witchcraft can lead to hardcore Satanism and Crowleyism. The aspect that I feel would be best improved on in the future would be to improve my own skills in public relation, book development, and publication so that I can better reach readers on a larger and more public scale. This would require me to publish literature on the topic of occultism identification and dismantling of the occult in our world today. While there is a large amount of occult publications and media attention in the world today, few books or other forms of media express ideas that embolden Jesus or the Christian faith. While testimony books do exist to explain how people fell into the occult and found their way out of it into Jesus, it would seem that such books rarely fall into the hands of non-Christians and when they do, they are discounted largely because the events contained within the book are far more

outlandish than what exists in popular media. When the media controls the the preconception, then the truth will often be obscured. At some point in the future Christian must begin to enter the mainstream again in order to reach those who seek out knowledge from the media. The research that I have preformed has compelled me to write, and if we want to win the war that now exists in popular media, it is imperative that we enter popular media ourselves with a message that can reach the needs for spiritual development that people seek out.

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