

Exorcisms Performed on TV

Bob Larson, known for dramatically delivering the demon-possessed, launched his own reality TV show on the Sci-Fi Channel.



[] A controversial Christian exorcist, who has written more than 30 books and for 20 years hosted a national radio broadcast, stars in his own reality TV show that debuted Thursday.

The Real Exorcist premiered on the Sci-Fi Channel this Halloween Eve in a four-hour marathon featuring deliverance minister Bob Larson, who was to confront demonic spirits in front of millions of viewers.

"I'm going to be in the bars and hotel rooms and bedrooms of America, where I could never get otherwise, with the people who need it the most," Larson said in a recent interview with *The Toledo Blade*.

"Who do you tell about these strange things that are happening?" he asked, referring to people who live in demonic torment, but are afraid to talk about it.

Larson claims to have performed more than 6,000 exorcisms in 90 nations, and said he has been kicked, choked and spat on during his 25 years of deliverance ministry, according to *The Blade*.

Though his activities have been reported by many media, including MSNBC, *The Los Angeles Times* and CNN, a prominent Pentecostal leader with a long history of deliverance ministry told *Charisma* Thursday that Larson's methodologies can be interpreted as extreme and frightening to some.

"There are kinder, gentler ways of doing deliverance that are far less theatrical and embarrassing to the victim," said the leader, who asked not to be identified. "This is not to say

that [his methodologies] are not effective.”

A pastor of a mainline denomination told *The Blade* that even though the Bible is clear about the existence of evil spirits and deliverance, Larson’s exorcisms are not the kind of spiritual activity that should be televised.

“I just wouldn’t see it as a show; I would see it as personal counseling and prayer time,” said Roger Miller, pastor of St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran Church in Maumee, Ohio.

Larson, however, told *Charisma* that televising exorcisms is biblical, since Jesus always performed deliverances in public settings.

He acknowledged that it is sometimes appropriate to conduct private exorcisms, but defended the new show as an educational tool for the masses, not unlike the televised altar calls of Billy Graham’s crusades.

“Seeing an exorcism on TV alerts people to the possibility of getting deliverance,” he said. “[Deliverance] is done publically in churches in South America, Africa, Asia and many parts of the world without hesitation.

“Keeping exorcism quietly in the back room is largely an American phenomenon. As a result, many tormented souls don’t know this help is available or where to seek assistance. Taking it public makes it more accessible and removes the shame and stigma attached to seeking prayers of deliverance.”