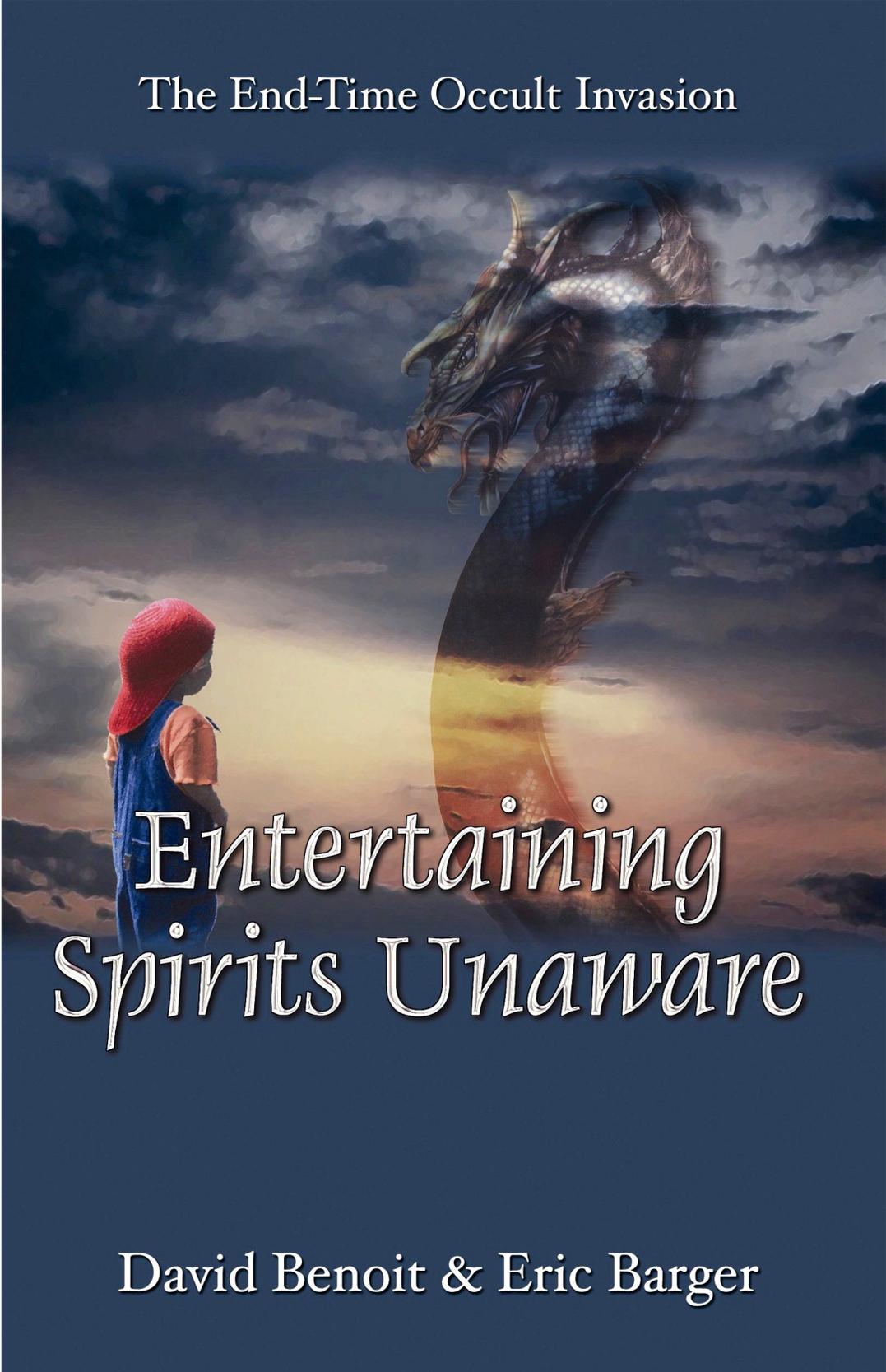


The End-Time Occult Invasion

The book cover features a dramatic, dark blue and black sky with swirling clouds. In the center, a large, multi-headed dragon with a scaly, blue and black body is depicted in a rearing position. To the left, a small figure of a child wearing a red knit hat and blue overalls stands looking towards the dragon. The background is a gradient of dark blue at the top to a lighter, hazy orange and yellow near the horizon, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The title 'Entertaining Spirits Unaware' is written in a large, white, serif font with a slight shadow effect, positioned in the lower middle of the cover.

Entertaining  
Spirits Unaware

David Benoit & Eric Barger

# Entertaining Spirits Unaware

*The End-Time Occult Invasion*

By Eric Barger & David Benoit

All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version of the Holy Bible.

Rear cover photo by Greg Olson, Plano, TX

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## Chapter 16

# The Weird World of Pokémon

While understanding the disturbing nature of Harry Potter may seem simple, quite the opposite is true with Pokémon. The Pokémon phenomenon, created several years ago in Japan, sprang from the popular Nintendo hand-held Game Boy video game and progressed to a 1998 TV cartoon series here in the United States. The marketing of Pokémon logo items includes just about any item of apparel imaginable, a vast set of trading game cards and toys, and now includes two hit movies and a traveling road show. Kellogg's, Kraft Foods, and Burger King are just a few of the outlets for Pokémon items. Hasbro paid \$325 million for the rights to market the toys, and in 2000 alone Pokémon receipts are expected to top a staggering **\$7 billion** worldwide. Toy industry analyst Sean McGowan told *Newsweek* magazine (November 15, 1999), "In the history of the toy industry, there has never been a hit so global, so multimedia, so rapid, so long-lasting as Pokémon." Attesting to its popularity, we found more information on the Internet concerning Pokémon than one could ever care to read. From our research, one thing is evident. The trading cards and associated games are indeed the Pokémon centerpiece and mainstay.

For those who don't know about the Pokémon craze, it has grown to fanatical proportions. One example of this happened just before the release of the first Pokémon movie in November 1999. A Los Angeles radio station announced a phone-in contest to win tickets for the premiere of the movie. Suddenly the Warner Brothers switchboard was jammed, receiving seventy thousand calls **a minute!** The casual observer may think this is just another cute plaything like "Furby" was, or something to interest collectors like "Beanie Babies." However, it is far from innocent. Pokémon actually means "pocket monster" in Japanese. This is the essence of the entire Pokémon genre. It is based on a series of monsters aimed at children (primarily boys) ages four and up, packaged in just about every media form.

So what is the attraction? Why are these movies and the TV cartoon so tremendously popular? The animation is second rate, the characters have no heroic stature, and the movies are dreadfully produced. Pokémon has definitely produced lots of money from not much product. The movies and cartoons blur the senses and thinking with an extremely violent message but no decipherable plot and very flat imagery. The movies and cartoons do one important thing—sell the products, in particular the trading cards and games. However, Pokémon is selling something else entirely.

The attraction to kids is the interaction they experience with the cards and games, but tragically, it is virtually all negative. The game teaches that Pokémon gives power to whoever carries them. The monsters use poison, electricity, fire, and psychic power to destroy other monsters. From the original Game Boys, to the trading cards, to the movies, the underlying

theme behind Pokémon is merciless, violent domination and manipulation of others via occult powers.

When the movie *Pokémon 2000* was released, children were given the “Ancient Mew Card” at theaters. This card is riddled with mystic Egyptian, superstitious, and occult signs, but this is only the surface of Pokémon. The two animated movies, released in 1999 and 2000, portrayed primarily violence as different Pokémon characters interact to overcome one another by hitting, slapping, throwing, kicking, or casting spells. *Preview Family Movie and TV Review* said:

. . . the constant violence and the associated violent games pose a serious concern about the Pokémon craze along with its apparent promotion of occultic-like phenomenon in associated games.

Film critic, Ann Hornaday, writing for *The Sun Spot* online service, November 10, 1999, said of the first movie release:

Pokémon comes straight from the Short Attention Span school of the cinema. . . . This movie seems chiefly to be an excuse to sell even more trading cards, those elusive billets that have turned a generation of youngsters into thieves, mercenaries, and compulsive gamblers.

She isn't kidding.

### **Pokémon to the Poky**

Numerous reports cite Pokémon as the culprit for what one writer described as a “kiddy crime wave.” Here are a few examples:

The November 22, 1999, issue of *Time* magazine reported that a six-year-old logged on to a Pokémon web site and printed counterfeit copies of the cards to trade with gullible schoolmates.

Many schools have banned the cards from classrooms and some others from the campus altogether. The November 22, 1999, *Time* also reported:

When children bring the Pokémon cards into the lunchroom, they often spend time looking at the cards instead of eating lunch. . . . Children overly anxious to please their peers are also at greater risk for addictive behavior.

Malcolm Jones wrote in *Newsweek* (November 15, 1999) that one reason for the ban on Pokémon cards was that kids were actually stealing the cards from each other. They would be so caught up in the trading, after recess it would continue in the classroom where teachers were having to referee.

The article quoted that “cards cause the fights and tears when a trade goes bad. Hard-to-find cards command anywhere from \$100 to \$400 on the Pokémon black market.”

According to an ABC News wire report (December 30, 1999) a couple of grandparents were upset with language used by a toy Pokémon character.

A Christmas gift one couple had given their grandchildren has them in an uproar. The couple says the **Pokémon** toy they purchased at a local K-Mart spews obscenities. The talking Pikachu has gone from saying his name to saying a profane phrase. K-Mart officials say they will bring the

matter to the attention of the Hasbro Corporation, the manufacturer of the toy. The couple plans to contact area merchants citing the foulmouthed Pikachu is inappropriate for kids.

But the damage Pokémon is inflicting on young lives goes far beyond simple childhood mischief or a toy incorrectly programmed by a smart-aleck factory employee. Again, the aforementioned issue of *Time* recorded that just a week previous to their publication date, a nine-year-old boy on New York's Long Island stabbed an older schoolmate in a dispute over cards.

The Associated Press carried an article entitled "Pokémon Creates Crime Wave" by Meki Cox on December 10, 1999. Cox reported that in the first week of December, four Philadelphia children from one middle school were arrested for attacking other students to steal Pokémon cards and that a fourteen-year-old student in Quebec was recently stabbed during a fight over the cards. Another incident reported that week was the arrest of a North Carolina man who was charged with assault for allegedly punching a Burger King cashier after he did not get a Pokémon toy with his meal! Associated Press continued that during that same week at Philadelphia's Wilson Middle School, two boys punched and threw a trash can at an eleven-year-old boy in a bathroom. The attackers ran off with two Pokémon cards and seventy-five cents. They were charged with robbery and suspended for five days.

Tony Ward's ten-year-old son and his friend were robbed of sixty dollars worth of cards one Sunday in Philadelphia. He said he wishes his son wouldn't trade cards anymore. "But he insists on having them," Ward said. "Hopefully he has learned his lesson and won't carry around as many cards anymore. I tell him when he goes out he has to be more street smart now."

These authors question just why a ten-year-old is allowed to make up the rules he lives by anyway. And more so, is it obvious why we are concerned with the Pokémon craze? It is violence and greed, begetting the same, let alone the mystic-occult connection.

### **Pokémon Is Not a Slow, Harmless Jamaican!**

Here are some things to consider before you write Pokémon off as just a "harmless fad."

The creator and distributor of the trading cards is a company called "Wizards of the Coast." These are the same people who brought you **Dungeons and Dragons**, **Advanced Dungeons and Dragons**, and **Magic: The Gathering**, just to name a few. **Magic: The Gathering**, for example, features spirits rising up from grave tops. Any child with access to the Internet who is looking for Pokémon cards can easily log on to the "Wizards of the Coast" web site and find information meant to entice Pokémon fans to explore more blatantly occult games. The "Wizards of the Coast" web site advertises its wares as follows:

*Dragon Magazine* is the ultimate resource for TSR role playing games, especially the **AD&D** game. Each issue is filled with information you can take straight to the gaming table, including resources like new character races, classes, kits, proficiencies, magical items, spells, monsters, and plenty more. *Dragon Magazine* is the authority on all things role-playing. Expand your knowledge of the games you play with the latest spells, magical items, kits and inside information found only in *Dragon Magazine*.

It is important to understand that Pokémon is a prime bait Satan is using to lure our children into the occult. **Dungeons and Dragons** was not a fad. It was only the first fantasy role-playing

(FRP) game that many of us became aware of. It has introduced perhaps millions of people to a dark, occult world.

Here, the “Wizards of the Coast” web site instructs Pokémon players about a part of the game called “Psychic Assault.”

There are a couple of things you will need to look out for when making and playing Psychic Assault. It might be hard to construct the deck if you have access to a very limited number of cards; there are a fair number of rare cards and holograms in the deck. When playing the deck, be careful against Psychic Pokémon, as all your Pokémon are weak against Psychic. The up side here is that you have Psychic Pokémon as well in the deck, so an opponent who uses a lot of Psychic Pokémon will face the same difficulties as you.

Some of the cards your children will need in order to win are:

*Mewtwo* (handed out to moviegoers entering the *Pokémon 2000* movie.)

*Abra*

*Kadabra*

*Alakazam*

After reading about these cards on the “Wizards of the Coast” web site, we went to web sites operated by bona fide witches to illustrate what these words meant. This is what we found.

*Abracadabra* is a mystical word used to magically invoke benevolent spirits for protection against disease. This magical formula may be related to the word *abraxas* (if this word sounds familiar to you, the group “Santana” had an album by that same name years ago). This was found inscribed on many amulets during the last years of the Roman Empire and is thought to have originated with the Gnostics. In any case, *abracadabra* is just as effective as *abraxas* or *hocus-pocus*. According to Pokémon play rules, Alakazam is the evolution of Abra and Kadabra. These words were used in occult rituals well before Disney thought they would be cute to use.

As we’ve mentioned, witches invoke the five forces of earth, wind, fire, water, and spirits. (Refer to the chapter on witches for more information). These same elements are part of Pokémon as well. If your child plays Pokémon, knowing that witchcraft and psychic power go against the Word of God, what will they believe in later in life? It is spiritually confusing to say on one hand that God’s Word is supreme and then allow our kids to possess occult playthings. Plus, it is spiritually damaging to allow these influences a place in our lives and homes. More than just damaging however, it is perilous as we open our lives up willingly to Satan’s attacks and activities. As Christians, we have the Holy Spirit. Shouldn’t our kids be versed in His workings, instead of Pokémon’s?

If the possibility of allowing your child to play with and become emotionally and spiritually attached to occult items isn’t convincing enough, think about this. Consider the friends your child could acquire from this game. This type of fantasy role-playing has the potential of attracting the worst friends imaginable for your kids. If your child goes to a public school, they now have a common denominator with those children that are not Christians. The neighbor’s child, who always thought your child was a good Christian, will want them to go to gaming rooms to trade these cards.

Besides all the associated problems of cheating, greed, and violence associated with Pokémon, it creates and nourishes an environment for addictive patterns in children. Compulsive behavior is blamed for every problem we have in our society. Both of us have had alcoholics in our families. Both David and Eric were drug addicts, Eric for fourteen years, and David was arrested for drugs and was sent to reform school. We understand addiction. These obsessive patterns are easily acquired. Years ago both of us started to collect baseball cards. That in itself is not bad. But David found himself looking for card shops in every town. He would spend hours at home sorting them instead of spending time with his family. It became an obsession to him so he stopped it. Pokémon has that same attraction. The idea that you can strike it rich by finding the rare cards is appealing in the natural. So children and adults are now spending their lunch money, allowances, and paychecks to seek the jackpot. Some of these cards are selling on shopping networks for hundreds of dollars. If you see your eight-year-old child begging, pleading, willing to do anything for Pokémon, don't be surprised when they will do anything for drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, or sex when they are sixteen. It can create an appetite for those things condemned in the Word of God.

All that needs to be said about Pokémon is that it is distributed by "Wizards of the Coast" and that the entire Pokémon power structure is based around psychic characters that represent divination and the case should be closed. Why do we need to give twenty-five reasons? With just the evidence we have presented, to play the games, let alone support the Pokémon phenomenon in general, one has to ignore biblical understanding.

We recognize we are dealing with issues of emotional attachment and financial addiction here. We know our words are not going to be popular with many young people and also with parents unwilling to admit they were wrong or uninformed by allowing Pokémon to gain a foothold in the homes. But this is an issue of obedience to the Lord—for us and for you, the reader. We realize that we are swimming against the tide of opinion ***even in Christian circles*** on this one, but that's not a new sensation for either of us.

### **Christian Confusion**

One would think that from what we have already stated concerning Pokémon, there would be no controversy about the subject within the Christian community. However, that is not the case. As with some other cultural issues, a blasé, *laissez faire* attitude is tragically emanating from parents concerning Pokémon. Trying to discuss the occult and violent nature of Pokémon with some gets little more than a roll of the eyes or a chuckle in response.

Similar to the poll we cited from the Ibelieve.com web site concerning Harry Potter, some of the entries in the Ibelieve.com discussion board concerning Pokémon disturbed us as well. We remind you that, although the entries and content of this web site appear to be decidedly conservative and biblical in orientation, concerning Pokémon and Harry Potter, however, some were exactly the opposite.

Here are a few sample responses from the Ibelieve.com discussion board on Pokémon.

My wife and I have treated the card game as a tool. My son (who has the interest) has through playing, improved his reading and his math skills, and using the card guides, has worked on his money handling and haggling skills. None of our children really care for the toys (BK or otherwise), though the gold-plated cards are kinda cool. Most of the schools have banned trading

during school hours, so most of the exchanges and games take place on the bus and at home. I sometimes play with him, using the deck to encourage critical thinking and strategy.

We question why in the world would a Christian parent see the need to use the violent and mystic nature of Pokémon to teach his child to read, reason, and “haggle,” to use the writer’s term? Why not use the Bible instead?

Another entry said:

. . . like any other FANTASY game, it is what you make of it. I played D&D for years, as did the Pastor of my Church. He was one of the best Gamemasters. “Chronicles of Narnia” is fantasy, yet no one seems to argue its benefit.

I don’t know much about the cartoon, my kids rarely watch it. From the few episodes I have seen, the team that treats their Pokémon with Love and Respect, is the team that wins, even if it isn’t always a victory in battle.

As far as the card game. It is a strategy game. The Pokémon provide the weapons and through critical thinking the players must decide the best way to protect themselves and their Pokémon. They don’t even use the term kill or destroy. They use remove from play, stun, knock out, etc. But this is just a FANTASY.

Eric wrote the writer of this entry the following response.

It would appear that you are caught in the trap of trying to define art with the framework of moral relativism. The church in our day is anemic and weak because we cannot seem to discern what is right from what is wrong. That is the crux of New Age thought.

It is not critical thinking to cite examples of history to make one’s point . . . not, if we wish to walk in God’s favor. It is intellectually liberalized thinking such as this that has slowly torn away at the authority of Scripture, turning it and God into what we want them to be . . . instead of us conforming to the Word and becoming what God wants us to be.

I believe your endearment to FRPs has blinded you to realize that occult involvement at any level is an open door for Satan’s work. Whoever your pastor is, he needs to repent of occult-based FRPs, and my friend, so do you. I sure wouldn’t want to sit under his teaching knowing that he’s been influenced by D&D, and is not regretful and repentant of it.

Eric Barger  
Take A Stand! Ministries  
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Then we read this response to the Pokémon question.

First all my kids are grown but I do have a grandson. I trust the Holy Spirit and also the Word of God and if it doesn’t lift up the name of God, don’t mess with it under any circumstances, no exceptions. Stand your ground as a parent and don’t give in to pressure, whether from kids or other adults. God is calling His children back to Holiness and Righteousness. I am not ashamed of God’s Word or His standards and I know he won’t be ashamed of me. It isn’t easy to do but the rewards are great. Try it.

Holiness? Righteousness? Is this lady old-fashioned? No, she's **God-fashioned!** We live in a world that cares only about self. That attitude is all too often prevalent within the church today as well. What a breath of fresh air—holy fresh air—to read that others still believe in God's Word as a standard, regardless of what society's lack of understanding and standards may be. This writer said, "It isn't easy to do, but the rewards are great." We say, "**Amen**"!

Perhaps the most telling entry of all was this:

I am confused. What is it about Pokémon that make them so bad? I am not being sarcastic. I really don't understand the big deal about a card stock with pictures of goofy animals.

These discussion board entries were some of the determining factors that led us to give the issue of Pokémon the prominence we have in this book. Pokémon is just the kind of inroad that Satan desires with our kids. One entry in the Ibelieve.com discussion board said that Pokémon is just a fad. While that may be true, if we allow this to go unchecked, undiscussed, and misunderstood, Satan is sure to elevate the stakes with his next advance into our children's lives. We appeal to children, teens, and parents to consider this. Pokémon did not become a phenomenon because of great animation or because it is so original. It is because of peer pressure to participate and because Pokémon offers opportunity to create personal power, which for centuries has led millions down hell's path to violence, crime, addictions, and the occult.

The Bible tells us that we are a different people, set apart for God, and we have a higher calling. God offers His people the power of the Holy Spirit and all of the self-worth we'll ever be in need of. Pokémon offers only the counterfeit and does nothing to enhance our children's spiritual walk with God. Rather, it only detracts from it. Instead of collecting Pokémon items, shouldn't we be collecting the knowledge of God and tapping into His unending power, strength, and blessings?

## What Christian Leaders Are Saying...

*"Entertaining Spirits Unaware will provide readers with the tools needed to effectively combat the encroachment of the occult and New Age into our lives and homes."*

~ **Marlin Maddoux**, host "Point of View" radio talk show

*"If ever there was a need for a clear expose on the subtle deceptions of the Evil One, it is now! This book will provide you with just such a tool. It will not gather dust in the possession of those who care."*

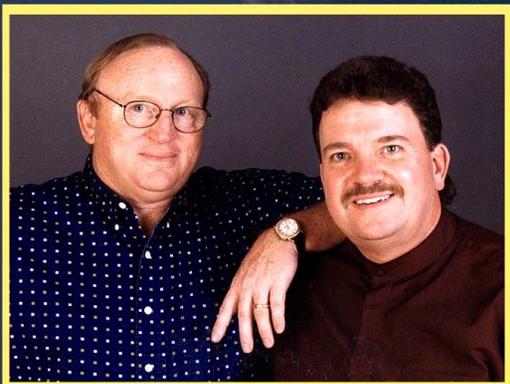
~ **Ed Decker**, author *The God Makers*

*"I always appreciate Eric Barger's godly insight into the tough issues surrounding false doctrine. This book on the occult invasion is timely and much needed in our culture."*

~ **Jim Spencer**, author *Hard Case Witnessing: Winning "Impossibles" for Christ*

*"David and Eric's years of experience in researching and ministering on the occult and related topics will make this book a valuable resource for every household."*

~ **Phil Phillips**, author *Turmoil in the Toybox*



**David Benoit** (left) is the founder and president of Glory Ministries.

**Eric Barger** (right) is the founder and president of Take A Stand! Ministries.

Both David and Eric have extensive experience in research and ministry of occult and related topics.

Eric Barger's  
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