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The Influence of Shamanism in the Korean Adventist Church

In spite of the effort by the military government between 1961 and 1980 to eradicate shamanism because it considered it to be mere superstition, shamanism continues to be practiced in Korean Society. Recently, the newspapers have reported the resurrection of shamanism under titles such as “Shamanism Enjoys Revival in Techno-Savvy South Korea” (Choe 2007) and “Korean Shamanism Finds New Life in Modern Era” (Park 2012). In reality, there has never been a time when shamanism ceased to be practiced in Korea.

The longevity of shamanism in Korea has been attributed to a worldview which mainly promises material blessings in this world. The President, Park Junghee tried to banish shamanistic rituals and practices in local villages, believing the practices were psychologically unhealthy superstitions. There were times when the government prohibited Gut, or shamanistic ritual, and destroyed the holy places and trees and where shamanistic holy tools (swords, bells, fans, et cetera) were confiscated and shamans were imprisoned. Ironically, whereas the military regime wanted to exterminate shamanism in their modernization movement (Anti-Superstition Movement), the foundational philosophy of shamanism which guarantees this-worldly prosperity, seemed to fit perfectly with the Korean people’s deepest need and primary goal to achieve economic success. Thus, in the midst of rapid modernization which emerged in connection with the rapid growth of Christianity, shamanism survived as an underground value system that easily blended in with the other Korean religions of Confucianism, Buddhism, and yes, even the newly introduced Christianity (Kim 2006:324; Kim 2000a:116). With its eclectic characteristics, shamanism has been the most predominant religious worldview value throughout the history of Korea.

Christianity in Korea has been able to grow rapidly. However, in some instances it is a syncretistic blend with a mix of other traditional religious worldviews, particularly shamanism (Chung 2001:173-176). For instance, some scholars argue that the explosive growth of the Yoido Full Gospel Church, the world's largest congregation in Seoul, enjoys its popularity because of its strong emphasis on a shamanistic worldview (Kim 2006:324; Kim 2000a:117) that stresses health, prosperity, and salvation—values that reflect typical shamanistic worldview values. Although such accusations are somewhat embarrassing for Christians who allegedly live in tune with the teachings of the Bible, it is a fact that too many Christians in Korea remain under the influence of religious syncretism.

With the pervasive influence of shamanism among other Christian groups in South Korea, one wonders if the Adventist Church is an exception. Adventist scholars recognize the fact that Adventism is not immune from this form of religious syncretism (Baumgartner 2006:206). Heidi Guttschuss suggests that “there are no Christian denominations that are in perfect harmony with the biblical worldview; all have syncretistic worldviews to some extent” (2011:318). Jon Paulien asserts that “any time you present the gospel, a certain amount of syncretism takes place. . . . So in the process of conversion, syncretism will always occur for a time. What matters is a steady movement toward a more healthy contextualization” (2005:218, 219). In other words syncretism seems to be an unavoidable challenge for all Christians. This premise bothers some Adventists who believe they have a pure and perfect doctrinal faith. However, Ellen White has referred to the influence of syncretism in the Adventist Church.

The line of distinction between professed Christians and the ungodly is now hardly distinguishable. Church members love what the world loves and are ready to join with them, and Satan determines to unite them in one body and thus strengthen his cause by sweeping all into the ranks of spiritualism. (1911:588)

Although White did not use the term syncretism, she clearly acknowledged the syncretistic blending of biblical truth and spiritualism. As Scott Moreau suggests, “Syncretism of some form has been seen everywhere the church has existed. We are naïve to think that eliminating the negatives of syncretism is easily accomplished” (Moreau 2000:924). If syncretism is pervasive throughout the Christian world, the task for Christians is to define exactly what that syncretism looks like in different cultural and religious contexts in order to replace it with a biblically shaped worldview and value system. This article will address the following questions: What is shamanism as a worldview in the Korean context and how does

the shamanistic worldview impact the Adventist Church in Korea? What kinds of missiological endeavors will be needed to deal with that shamanistic worldview? The purpose of this paper is to define the extent of the influence of shamanism in the Korean Adventist Church and to list some missiological implications of a shamanistic worldview.

The Worldview of Korean Shamanism

There can be various definitions of shamanism from a phenomenological perspective. Scholars, after observing people in an ecstatic trance, on a celestial voyage, or while invoking magic or sorcery, present differing opinions regarding the state and nature of spirit possession (see Berman 2007). Regardless of the actual reality of various phenomena, shamans generally can be defined as “part-time religious specialists who serve as intermediaries between humans and the supernatural, and who seek spiritual remedies to individual problems” (McKinney 2000:869).

Korean shamanism has mostly full-time practitioners that can be categorized under five headings: (1) the *mutang*, a female shaman whose main functions include curing and exorcism; (2) the *paksoo*, the male equivalent of a *mutang*; (3) the *pansoo*, who practices both exorcism and divination; (4) the *chikwan*, whose work usually involves only geomancy; and (5) the *ilkwan*, who is concerned exclusively with divination (Owens 1975:117, 252). Korean shamans conduct three main functions: *jeom* (divination or fortune telling), *kosa* (ritual offerings to the household gods and other gods or ancestor), and *kut* (rituals performed for a specific purpose). “*Jeom* is one of the important functions of a *mudang*. It is different from *kosa* or *kut* because no music is performed; it is more like a personal conference for advising” (Yang 1988:29).

Shamans deal with the issues of the “excluded middle” (see Heibert 2009:411, 412; Love 2000:70-87) in every culture. Shamans are purported to give specific answers for “the uncertainty of the future, the crises of the present, and the unknown of the past” (Hiebert 2009:412). Although shamanism has no systematic system of beliefs, it continues to thrive because it answers people’s deepest questions about life and the cause of misfortune and sickness.

Defining a worldview in a specific culture or religion, however, is not a simple task because worldview as an underlying assumption works beneath the observable aspects of culture. Unlike the philosophical or theological definition of worldview (McElhanon 2000:1032, 1033), missiologists generally understand cultures as multi-layered entities like an onion or artichoke with the core being the worldview at the deepest level of culture (Conn 2000:254; Shenk 2000:401-402; Hiebert 1985:42). The function

of worldview is to integrate each respective culture by organizing ideas, feelings, and values into a single unified design (Hiebert 1985:48). Paul Hiebert defines worldview as the “fundamental cognitive, affective, and evaluative presuppositions a group of people make about the nature of things, and which they use to order their lives” (2008:15, 25). This definition highlights the fact that worldview encompasses three dimensions of a culture. I will also use these three dimensions—cognitive, affective, and evaluative assumptions—to explore the shamanistic worldview of Korea.

It seems that there has been no comprehensive attempt on the part of scholars to decipher Korean shamanism. Paul Hiebert, Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tiénou offer a lot of information about folk religions. However, their definition of folk religion refers mainly to animism and they recognize that animistic beliefs can be found in folk Hinduism, folk Islam, folk Buddhism, in African Traditional Religions, and that there are even folk Christians. Shamanism is included in their category of the folk religion (1999:10, 13, 77). However, there seems to be no comprehensive approach to decipher the meaning and values of a shamanistic worldview in scholarly researches.

It is also difficult to identify shamanism in Korea because its existence has been sustained through its syncretic accommodation with other religions. Furthermore, there is no well-arranged belief system. Instead, Korean shamanism has adopted many different kinds of methodologies from other religions. In spite of these difficulties, there are a few common assumptions can be found in Korean shamanism. I will list these characteristics of Korean shamanism under the headings of an anthropological definition of worldview.

The Cognitive Aspects of Korean Shamanism

First, Korean shamanism basically projects a monotheistic belief in spite of its acceptance of other spiritual realities like ancestors, spirits, and souls. Korean shamanism classifies gods into two types: natural gods and human gods. The former have their origin in nature worship, while the latter in ancestor and hero worship (Owens 1975:62). Although the *mudangs* (Korean female shamans) adopted beliefs from three differing pantheons (Taoist, Buddhist, and Confucian), they have also preserved a concept of a “Heavenly God” or “*Hanunim*.” David Chung argues that this monotheistic *Hanunim* concept may have supplied the first point of contact with Christianity for the Korean (2001:173-176; see Owens 1975:68-71; Oak 2010:109).

Second, regarding cosmology, a central premise in Korean shamanism is the existence of supernatural powers in the cosmos. Korean shamanism

does not need to prove the reality of these supernatural beings and powers because it readily accepted that concept based on its views of the natural world, heavenly bodies, and the forces of nature (Owens 1975:51). Some shamans explain that the universe is divided into three worlds: an upper world (heaven), the middle world (the earth), and the lower world (the underworld). Korean shamanism is largely concerned about the middle world of every-day life (51, 54).

Third, Korean shamanism reflects Platonic dualism in terms of its view of human beings. People are believed to consist of a spiritual essence (soul or spirit) which is immortal and the physical body which is temporal. It is believed that the spirit of the deceased may continue to have an influence on the living. One of the important functions of the Korean shaman is to contact and appease these spirits through Gut (rituals) (Owens 1975:57, 58).

Fourth, Korean shamans believe that the relationship between the world of humans and spirits is so closely tied together that their connection results in a cause and effect framework. All natural objects such as mountains, rivers, trees, and stones possess indwelling spirits who can have either a good or evil influence on human society. The sun and other celestial bodies are worshiped because they bring productivity and happiness. Korean shamanism believes in both beneficial spirits and evil spirits who disturb the harmony of the human world. Shamans placate or divert the mischievous intentions of such spirits through magical incantation and exorcism (Owens 1975:240).

Fifth, the harmonious relationship between humans and spirits is secured by shamans who can control or manipulate spirits to allow for human prosperity and health. In Korean shamanism, rituals are instrumental and function to provide for individual needs such as cures from illness, barrenness, or spirit possession, and to provide for the needs of the community such as preventing plagues or providing and controlling rain (Owens 1975:171, 251, 252). Thus, the prime emphasis of Korean shamanism is on this present life with a philosophy that reflects pragmatism and a focus on the here and now (Hiebert, Shaw, and Titenou 1999:83, 84).

The Affective Aspects of Shamanism

In the affective dimension Korean shamanism first of all manifests itself through supernatural experiences. Although spirit-possession is not always required in every ritual, those who attend such rituals purportedly believe that their expectations will be better realized through magical rituals. For Korean shamanism, magic and religion represent a continuum and the boundary between magic and religion is blurred. According to

Owens, “rituals may be said to be goal-oriented; that is, the participant is making a more or less intense effort to realize or actualize some conceived benefit through supernatural means” (1975:172).

Second, Korean shamanism utilizes a full range of emotions from visual dancing, colorful costumes, magical glossolalia, all types of sounds, and music. Although shamans are able to perform many services for devotees such as divination and healings, the trance or ecstatic experience is an integral part of a typical experience (131, 132). Participants also believe they are involved in a spiritual journey coupled with intense emotion; therefore, it is impossible to think of shamanism without the accompanying sentimentalism.

Third, a basic affective ingredient in shamanism is fear. When Christianity arrived in Korea, missionaries found Korean people living in fear of constant affliction by the spirits. Koreans believed that all afflictions such as disease, disaster, and misfortune were caused by evil spirits. This fear of demons caused frequent and intense mental suffering (Oak 2010:96, 111) that people believed could only be relieved through shamanistic rituals. They also believed shamans could alleviate sickness and other difficulties causing many to seek the help of shamans for security and protection (Owens 1975:135).

The Evaluative Aspects of Shamanism

Shamanism is not very concerned with moral or ethical issues. In the syncretistic religious blend of shamanism with Confucianism and Buddhism, Confucianism took charge of morality while shamanism led out in the area of personal spirituality. The main concern of shamanism was “to deal with the pressing concerns of health, material security, childbirth, and matters pertaining to personal guidance rather than metaphysical issues” (Owens, 1975:272; Oak 2010:105). Moreover, Korean shamanism believes in and promotes the idea of luck as a prime value. Thus, people attribute luck to all good events happening in one’s ordinary life. Early Protestant missionaries regarded “the ubiquitous idea of luck among the people as a serious obstacle to Christianity (Oak 2010:108).

Second, the notion of good and evil was attributed to the manifestations of spiritual power. Korean shamans generally divide all supernatural power into two classes: good power coming from benevolent spirits that results in good fortune and evil power from malignant spirits which harass and trouble people (Owens 1975:64-65). Because Korean shamanism is characterized by pathogenetic concepts of illness, shamans resort to supernatural powers and seek to drive out the malignant spirits through the aid of helpful supernatural beings (213). Owens argues that

“the spirits of Korean shamanism and the Korean people share many of the same interests and concerns.” He argues that “one might suggest that the supernatural powers of Korean shamanism almost mirror the nature and outlook of the Korean people themselves” (117). In other words, if someone has benefited from a healing or a sense of security through the influence of the spirits, then that person believes he or she is morally sound, but if a person is suffering and sick then the person believes they have done something evil or dishonorable. Korean shamanism considers a well-balanced life as the ultimate indication of morality and therefore, the effort to balance life through interaction with supernatural powers is believed to produce the best moral behavior. Consequently, it is considered that all good or bad things that happen in life are the result of the way one treats ancestors, tombs, and spirits.

Third, this basic concept of cause and effect in Korean shamanism has resulted in a whole set of systematic rituals. Shamans as mediators conduct rituals giving offerings, sometimes threatening the spirits, and manipulating the more powerful spirits. These ritual ceremonies may be conducted for individuals in times of crisis or on behalf of entire communities on a calendric basis (Owens 1975:259). With dramatic dancing, drumming, and chanting, shamans convey the messages to the living from the spirit world. The message is regarded as an absolute way to resolve challenging issues. Thus, the rituals of shamans and their instruction are considered as the final solution to all crises.

In summary, the worldview of Korean shamanism epitomizes a human-centric or ego-centric value system. In the cognitive dimension Korean shamanism even allows people to manipulate the spirit world for their own benefits. In the affective dimension the freedom from fear and the attainment of security depend on the achievement of personal desires. In the evaluative dimension human behavior and attitudes are determined under a materialistic and anthropocentric value system. The deep assumptions of shamanism are full of self-centeredness with no concept of submission to an all-powerful God.

Influence of Shamanism in the Korean Adventist Church

While little research has been conducted on the relationship between shamanism and the Protestant church in Korea, one doctoral dissertation deals with this issue in the Korean Adventist Church (Lee 2004). This section examines the attitude of the Korean Adventist Church concerning shamanism from three perspectives: (1) encountering shamanism, (2) rejecting shamanism, and (3) the results of such an approach in mission.

Encountering Shamanism

Early Korean Adventists without hesitation accepted the shamanistic term *Hananim*, which had also been adopted by Protestant missionaries to express the idea of the biblical God when they translated the Bible (Oak 2010:107). It means the Adventist missionaries understood the origin and value of this term which would influence their missional effort. Andrew E. Kim argues that the term *Hananim* “referred to the highest deity in the religious culture of Korea from primitive times, and that its use as the supreme deity in Protestantism [helped] . . . prepare Koreans to accept the imported faith with ease” (2000b:123). However, whereas *Hananim* was a supreme “god of Heaven” in Korean shamanism, missionaries adopted *Hananim* as the “One Great One” whose etymology came from *hana* (one), and not from *Hanal* (heaven) (Oak 2010:107). Nevertheless, “Koreans long understood *Hananim* as the supreme God presiding over the affairs of heavens and earth, and controlling the fate of human beings” (Kim 2000b:123). Thus, early Korean Adventists followed the lead of Protestant missionaries is using the traditional word for God (*Hananim*) to connect with the Korean people.

Another major contact point with shamanism involved a series of power encounters and exorcisms, including the burning of fetishes (Oak 2010:96). On the one hand, Protestant churches adopted the term *Hananim* to build a bridge between the old and the new, but on the other hand, they confronted shamanistic customs and spirits. Early Protestant missionaries who had arrived in Korea with a modernist worldview that struggled with the idea of spirits and supernatural powers not only had to come to grips with the reality of evil spirits manifesting themselves in similar ways as found in the New Testament but they also were forced to immediately develop and engage in a ministry of exorcism. Those American missionaries fortunately were able to learn how to deal with demonization and Christian exorcism from John L. Nevius who is famous for developing the so called “three-selves principles” (Oak 2010:112). Missionaries involved in ministries to set people free from evil spirits used the singing of hymns and prayer as suggested by Nevius. These confrontations with supernatural powers were some of the underlying factors that produced an interest in Christianity and led to the revival movements in the Korean Protestant churches (113-115).

Exorcism was also one of the remarkable ministries in the Korean Adventist Church from the very beginning. Setting people free from evil spirits frequently occurred in local Adventist churches (Lee 2004:127) and I have also heard numerous testimonies by people who were freed from demonization. In 1998 when I was a youth pastor, my church members

under the leadership of the senior pastor visited an old lady's house on Kanghwha Island, an area famous for shamanistic practices in South Korea. They went in order to expel spirits that had been harassing her. While the church members praised God by singing hymns—the method recommended by Nevius, I collected all kinds of fetishes and amulets from the closets and the attic and took them out to be burned. One of fetishes was a traditional hat made from several people's hairs. As we sang and burned the spirit paraphilia, the victim was screaming and finally fainted but later on found peace. It was an awe-inspiring experience that illustrated how common it was for the Korean Adventist Church to deal with shamanism and evil spirits by allowing Jesus Christ to demonstrate that he was more powerful than the spirits that caused fear in so many people. The superior power of Jesus Christ and the spiritual connection of pastors and church members with Jesus have demonstrated again and again that Christianity has the power to set captives free.

Shamanism had another positive impact for it had already conditioned people to believe that a high level of spirituality was required to handle the supernatural realities found in Korean society. Therefore, in some ways Koreans were set up to more readily accept Christianity because the spirituality in shamanism prepared them for it (Chang 1988:73). The Korean tradition of holding early morning (4:30 a.m.) prayer meetings, which have characterized the modern Korean Church, can also be better understood because of similar shamanistic spiritual practices in Korea.

Rejecting Shamanism

Although the Korean Adventist Church grew out of the soil of shamanism, the Church with its prophetic identity was also vigilant to protect itself from the pervasive influence of syncretism in the Korean society. Most of the history of the Korean Adventist Church reflects this type of careful, separatist vigilance, an attitude that has contributed to keeping the Church from syncretism. But separation from society has also resulted in the Church feeling smug and content about its uncontaminated status, and such separation has hindered its missional efforts. To define the characteristics of the Church's defensive attitudes toward society and shamanism, I will examine three tenets of shamanism: (1) materialism, (2) sentimentalism, and (3) anthropocentrism.

Rejection of Materialism

An undeniable fact of shamanism is its strong expectation of material blessing in this world. Many Koreans accepted Christianity believing that it could give more blessings than their former religion. The reason

Christians emphasize the life of prayer might be related to the effectiveness of prayer as a means of achieving personal desires (Chang 1988:67). Also, how offering calls are made can be perverted and offered as a means of blessing (“give and God will bless”). Thus, the prosperity gospel was one of the most powerful methods used to induce people from a shamanistic worldview to consider becoming a Christian. In contrast to the health and wealth preaching of some Protestant churches, the Adventist message focused much more on an eschatological hope. The Adventist message stressed that the things of this world would soon pass away, so Christians need to be alert in order to be kept from becoming materialistic. The focus of Adventism was not on this world, but on eternal life and heaven—eschatological beliefs that functioned to guard people from the great shamanistic emphasis on material things.

Korean Adventists have never ignored the value of material things and money, but they have been encouraged to follow the biblical injunction to use their means to bless others in missional enterprises. Lee Cheol Jae in a recent survey demonstrated that the motivation for giving offerings by Korean Adventists is not to receive more material blessings, but to obey the teaching of the Bible. Throughout his extensive survey, Lee found that the majority of Korean Adventists do not have shamanistic beliefs in this area (Lee 2004:118, 119). The biblical offering system was established to extirpate selfishness from the human mind and to support God’s global mission. However, the peril of materialism is always lurking behind even godly enterprises and there is always the danger of materialism encroaching into the Adventist Church.

Rejection of Sentimentalism

Another area of concern is emotionalism and sentimentalism in worship. Whereas most Protestant churches in Korea have developed worship styles that tend towards celebration and a heavy emotional pull, the Korean Adventist Church has fostered a moderate and somewhat cold worship style. While most churches have accepted clapping, the speaking in tongues, and the use of drums, Korean Adventist churches have rejected and strongly opposed any excessive emotional expression during worship. Adventist churches have strongly rejected the emotional sentimentalism which characterizes shamanistic rituals. Perhaps this is because Adventists have emphasized the Bible and Bible study. Biblical truths such as the state of the dead and the concept of heaven certainly have helped keep people from the shamanistic tendencies. Lee argues that the belief in the pre-advent judgment with its stress on the need for people to live morally in this world and other doctrinal characteristics of the Adventist Church have contributed to keep people from the influences of shamanism (Lee 2004:114-116, 137, 138).

This emphasis on biblical truth and Bible teaching has been present in Korean Adventism from the very beginning. For instance, the first missionary, William R. Smith, initiated a training school to equip laypersons as evangelists on December 9, 1907. The school was to teach “young people to labor with their hands as well as be instructed in the principles of truth for this time” (Ludowici 1974:5, 6). Smith gave the students practical instruction as to how to conduct a series of meetings, what subjects to present, and how to present them (13). It seems that Korean church members mirrored and exemplified their American missionaries’ way of faith and followed their style of worship. This has resulted in the Korean Adventist Church taking a significantly different way of expressing faith by emphasizing biblical truths and thereby avoiding the sentimentalism which has characterized most other Protestant churches. The down side of this approach is a tendency to be indifferent to the cultural context of Korea and to emphasize a passive response to worship and evangelism with participants sitting quietly in the pews.

Rejection of Anthropocentrism

Another characteristic of a shamanistic worldview is an anthropocentric approach to religion where people work to control and manipulate the spirits or even the supreme God. This belief was originated by Satan himself who wanted to exalt himself above God (Isa 14:13; 2 Thess 2:4). The shamanistic worldview reflects fallen humanity’s perverted desires. In shamanism, shamans can readily placate and appease the spirit. In a sense, shamans and humans seize the initiative and force the spirits to be subservient to their desires and wishes. Theoretically, shamanism suggests that human beings can always win over the spirits, and the dangerous thing is that this philosophy can permeate any religious system, even Christianity. Although Korean Protestant missionaries strongly rejected the custom of worshipping spirits and honoring ancestral spirits, most Korean churches failed to deal biblically with the desire for materialistic prosperity that was so important in the minds of the people (Oak 2010:121, 122).

Results of the Adventist Approach

Despite successfully defending the Korean Adventist Church from shamanism at the front door, the Church has not been totally free from the influence of shamanism for it has crept into the church through the back door and touched the achilles’ heel of missional efforts. In this section I will note a few problems in this area.

First, many of the Korean Adventists who avoided shamanistic materialism have been caught by neo-shamanistic materialism (“neo shamanism” denoting a new resurgence of shamanism in modern societies). During the recent rapid modernization of Korean society, Adventists also experienced the sweetness of materialistic convenience. The pull of materialism was too much for most ordinary people to resist. A tremendous amount of material gadgets and technological innovations, which were never imagined even few decades ago, are now quite easily within the reach of most people. Adventists have not been immune to materialistic tendencies.

While Adventists openly opposed shamanism, neo-shamanism has been garbed in modernistic forms that have successfully gotten through the defenses of some Adventists. During the past decades as most Koreans pursued material success whether by legal or illegal means, Adventists also joined the rush to accumulate material things. As a result, the religious passion that characterized early Adventism in Korea has cooled and the growth of church has stagnated. Recently Byungho Jang found in his research that “actual church attendance is one-third of the number recorded in church membership registration, whereas the nominal number of church members is increasing. . . . Churches under 50 members comprise more than 50% of the entire Seventh-day Adventist Church in Korea, and the marked increase in the number of pastors hardly indicates church growth” (2012:171). This is an ironic situation for a people who allegedly are content with a simple lifestyle as they look forward to the coming of God’s Kingdom.

A second way shamanism has affected Adventism is that in the process of defending itself from emotionalism the worship and the life of the church has become dry and formal. Korean Adventists, because of their fear of emotional sensationalism, went to the opposite extreme. The Adventist doctrinal emphasis appears to have only satisfied the cognitive dimension of its members while largely failing to satisfy their emotional needs.

Adventists have been known in Korea for their medical work, which emphasizes the scientific treatment of sickness and disease. This secular, scientific approach to health seems to have undermined the typical Korean emphasis on prayer and its accompanying absolute dependence on God’s providence. Consequently, a doctrinal approach to truth and a scientific and cold approach to sickness seems unable to supply the emotional satisfaction Koreans long for and found in shamanism. In some ways Korean Adventists have been guilty of promoting a type of secular dualism in which science deals with the empirical world and religion handles the supernatural world (see Hiebert 2009:411). I believe that this separation

of God's power from the everyday life of Korean Adventists is one of the great challenges facing the Church today.

A third result of the Adventist approach to shamanism is that the Church taught rules concerning shamanism but largely forgot to teach the members the biblical principles that would protect them from shamanistic values. For example, I have not heard of instances where Korean Adventists visit diviners or shamans. I believe that this kind of blatant syncretism would not easily happen in the Adventist Church. However, the worldview values of shamanism—materialism, sentimentalism, and anthropocentrism often enters the Adventist church under various guises. If the Church fails to teach its members how to resist these values that are so wide-spread in society, then syncretism can enter the Church through the back door.

Missiological Implications

The Korean society is saturated with shamanistic worldview values. The modernization process has created neo-shamanism in which many people have sought prosperity and security through modern technological innovations while at the same time frequently visiting shamans to seek advice for the future of their children, a marital partner, or how to make good investments. In this type of situation, what is the responsibility of the Adventist Church? I suggest the following missiological principles in response to the contemporary needs of Korean society.

First, as prophetic people we must share the principles of the Bible in understandable ways with the people of Korea. Hiebert argues that in the course of conversion a person's worldview has to be transformed (2008:315) for religious allegiance involves a clash of worldviews. I believe the Great Controversy framework can supply sufficient answers to help people develop a biblically-shaped worldview. The Great Controversy metanarrative looks at the entire sweep of human history as connected with the spiritual conflict between God and Satan. This is not simply a narrative but a grand metanarrative in which Satan initiates a cosmic war and attempts to usurp Christ's authority (Isa 14:12-14; Ezek 28:14-17; Rev 12:7-9) and where God vindicates his character and sovereignty by ruling in love and justice (Ps 89:14; 97:2). The spiritual battle is conducted at the worldview level in which both God and Satan try to win the people of the earth to their side. To see the Great Controversy as a worldview paradigm has great value for it helps Adventists to clearly see the importance of mission.

Many Adventist scholars have been suggesting the Great Controversy motif as a basis for a biblically-shaped worldview. However, most of them have made their proposals based on a philosophical or religious

approach. As a result, their largely cognitive understanding has a hard time responding to other aspects of culture such as the affective and evaluative aspects. Therefore, the Great Controversy motif needs to be worked on to also satisfy the cultural needs in mission fields like Korea. The main reason for developing a biblically-shaped worldview is to prepare Christians so they can engage in spiritual battles in every aspect of life. I believe that the Great Controversy metanarrative sufficiently provides answers in the cognitive, affective, and evaluative aspects of life. Therefore, the effort to define the Great Controversy motif in the affective and evaluative areas of life will go a long way towards successfully dealing with the Korean worldview that has been impacted by shamanism. Once a sound understanding of the principles and values of the Bible are understood, then the Christian witness can successfully be involved in the work of transforming the Korean Shamanistic worldview.

Second, the Adventist Church in Korea could benefit from using the critical contextualization process to deal with Korean cultural elements. The Korean Adventist Church has often erred on the side of under-contextualization by adopting foreign (American) cultural expressions of the gospel rather than doing the hard work of contextualizing the gospel for themselves (Bauer 2007:253). The Korean Adventists have too often ignored the cultural context where they are living and connecting with others. It seems that too much energy is being consumed in maintaining a separatist identity rather than engaging secular people. Although many people have responded to the Adventist message over the decades, their responses were mostly cognitive transitions in the area of doctrines such as whether a soul is immortal or mortal or whether one should worship on Sunday or Sabbath.

The gospel has to be packaged and delivered in culturally understandable ways before it can develop roots in the soil of a country. Just as various kinds of plants in the garden grow in different types of soil, need a variety of climates, grow at different altitudes and in different environments, so too does the Adventist message needs to be contextualized to each cultural situation. The shamanistic soil of Korea has to be considered when planting churches in the Korean context. The critical contextualization process is neither easy nor simple. However, one successful example could encourage other congregations to also undertake the challenge of presenting the gospel in understandable ways. Through this procedure the Korean Adventist Church could become a culturally indigenous church that is true to biblical teaching yet culturally relevant. All this must be done to prevent the twin dangers of syncretism and secularization.

Third, a recovery of holistic spirituality is necessary if the Church is to successfully engage powerful shamanistic cultures. The world of the

spirits is real and it is powerful to the point that it often induces people to live in fear. As mentioned above, the Korean Adventist Church has paid little attention to shamanism and has developed a largely cognitive approach to faith. However, Satan is working in people's evaluative and affective dimensions to steal their heart.

According to the Bible, a faith that is not holistic is not true biblical faith. Moreover, "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph 6:12, NIV). In order to take our stand against the devil's schemes, the Apostle Paul urges us to put on the full armor of God which implies a holistic spirituality—including cognitive elements (the belt of truth, Eph 6:14), affective elements (with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace, Eph 6:15), and evaluative elements (take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one, Eph 6:16). Then Paul commands God's people to "take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit [emphasis added], which is the word of God" (Eph 6:17). However, the last request is "to pray in the Spirit" (Eph 6:18) for all the saints. This shows that prayer is more important than the quality or quantity of a church's programs, and that prayer should be focused on people and relationships. While shamanistic sentimentalism is not biblical, Christians are to be people who live their spirituality in three dimensions—the cognitive, the affective, and the evaluative. If this is realized, they will impact their cultures holistically.

Conclusion

Shamanism is an enemy that the Church can never cease to fight because it has been present on earth from the very beginning (Rev 12:9). Because of this long-standing battle between shamanism (Satan and his angels) and Christianity, some Christians have lowered their guard and become confused as to whether or not shamanism is an enemy or a friend. One thing is certain—people who are affected by shamanism are to be our friends and they need Christ. If Adventists are going to be successful in reaching out to the general population in Korea they must study and consider their belief system—their worldview—to find points of contact. This is an area where Korean Adventists have often ignored their country's history and culture. They have preached the Three Angels' Messages in the same way those messages are preached in North America. While recognizing that Christians must remain separate in their identity from the world and the influences of a shamanistic worldview, I believe Adventists have failed to find the cultural contact points and have too often

lived isolated from society. It is my hope that the Seventh-day Adventist Church can overcome the challenges of a shamanistic worldview and can present the principles of a biblically shaped worldview in ways that are easily understood by Korean people.

Notes

Norman M. Gulley is the one who sees the Great Controversy as having a worldview dimension. He depicts the Great Controversy in terms of the centrality of Christ and he recognizes that all fundamental beliefs are not merely placed in Scripture to give knowledge, but to provide practical help in discerning the contours of the principles that shape the biblical worldviews. He suggests that all the fundamental beliefs should be rearranged by the order of the Great Controversy (1996:89). Richard M. Davidson also sees the Great Controversy and the Sanctuary as “the dual foci of the grand metanarrative of Scripture” which has relevance in presenting the gospel to postmodern and non-literate societies (2000:102, 103, 105, 119). Humberto M. Rasi also presents the Great Controversy as a metanarrative which explains all the issues of God’s salvation history (1999:68). Larry L. Lichtenwalter reads the book of Revelation from the perspective of a worldview conflict drawing his ideas from David K. Naugle’s book, *Worldview: The History of a Concept*. However, he mentions that his argument concerning worldview conflict is based on a moral spiritual frame rather than on an anthropological definition of worldview (2010:220).

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