

Shamanism

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People think of Shamanism as Korea's original religion, and all the world over we find various forms of shamanism in each country. Evolutionists assume that, because it is more primitive than Confucianism or Buddhism or any form of monotheism, it came first. But creationists know that the same law that applies to physics, saying that everything tends to go downhill, to cool off, to increase in disorder, also applies in the spiritual realm. Every nation originally knew about God, the creator. In Korea he was known as Hanunim, in China as Ch'on or Sang Jae, and in Israel as either Elohim or Jahveh.

The problem is that people also know that God is powerful, just, rules by law, is uncompromising, and will not hear the prayers of those who hate his laws. There is no country where this is not understood. But because people either did not want to or could not keep God's laws, they came to the conclusion that it was futile to try to work with him, so they looked around for lesser spiritual beings with less strenuous demands.

Such lesser spirits are never hard to find. They are waiting around to deceive people. They are fallen angels or demons. In Greek thought, as in Korean thought, the word "demon" is not necessarily used in a bad sense. It is just a minor God. It is the Christians who have recognized that these minor Gods are agents of Satan and have, therefore, given the word "demon" (*kwi shin*) a bad connotation. Shamanism is a broad term that includes any form of trying to use such spirits (supposed to live in mountains, lakes, springs, trees, etc. etc.) to answer prayers when it is assumed (usually correctly) that God is not accessible. The good news is that God has now become accessible and we don't need spirits. God is more powerful. And loving!

But how has God become accessible? It is through Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection (breaking all the powers of all the spirits by breaking the power of Satan) and Jesus' ascension into heaven to be at God's right hand and his sending, from heaven the Holy Spirit who comes into our hearts when we ask him to (in Jesus' name) and makes us desirous of doing God's will and thus able to communicate with God. We don't need mudangs. We can have personal contact with God.

Not all "Christians" really like this plan. Some still want to have their own way and want to find some technique for getting God to do what they want. This is the shamanistic mentality. People don't offer sacrifice to spirits just because they love those spirits. They offer sacrifice to spirits in order to get something from them. In the process, sometimes they get so enslaved by the spirits that, even though there is nothing they want from the spirit, they have to go on offering sacrifice as the price of not being tormented.

Love is the key to changing the shamanistic mentality. If we love God and let him send the Holy Spirit so that we can love our neighbors as ourselves, all our prayers will be that God's will be done and God will hear these prayers without any special tricks such as fasting, special masses, 40-days prayer, etc. If we do these things as spiritual disciplines to strengthen ourselves spiritually and to bring ourselves to more maturity, these things are good. But if we use them in the hopes of forcing God's hand, they are shamanistic. It is not the form, it is the mindset. The Christian mindset is eagerness to do God's will, to find out what it is and how we can do it. The shamanistic mindset is to want our own way and to try to trick God into doing things our way. Both mindsets can be found in the Church.

We can be quite sure that as people fail to get what they want from Marxism, in North Korea, many will turn to shamanism. If we want to bring our North Korean cousins the good news that God is the ruler of the universe and that he loves us and that he wants only the best for us, and that we can approach him, as sons, through Christ, we had better be sure we are thinking in those terms now. If we come to North Korea with a "gospel" that says "if you get baptized, and if you attend church regularly, if you tithe, if you fast and pray, you can get what you want," we will just be substituting one form of shamanism for another. Colossians 3:5 tells us that greed is idolatry. Shamanism is based on greed. Real Christianity is letting the Holy Spirit remove all greed from our hearts and fill us, instead, with love and a desire to serve both God and our fellows. This is God's good news for those who have been deceived and exploited and made miserable by Marxism.