Communicating Christ Among Folk Religionists

Kingdom Ministry In Satan's Nest

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Chapter 1
The Meaning of Animism and Its Place Its Place in the World Today

Topics in Chapter

Illustrations of Animism

Kipsigis Tribe, Kenya--1984: The day that Jonathan died was the saddest of days. Jonathan had been a pillar of the church. He had even taken the gospel back home and taught his mother and father to know Jesus Christ. As an effective arbitrator of disputes, he was deeply respected by the village. His sudden death had been a shock to the community. As the casket, made from rough-hewn boards, was lowered into the ground, even the stoic old men of the village wept.

In Jonathan's mind his illness could be traced to an incident when one of his neighbors borrowed a cow from another neighbor to provide milk for his family. When the owner came to get the cow, the neighbor concealed that the cow had given 1 birth to a calf and that the calf had been sold. When the owner eventually heard that his cow had calved, he angrily returned to demand possession of the calf. He was told that the calf had been sold but that another would be purchased and given to him instead. While these negotiations were going on, the wife of the man who had borrowed the cow became sick and died. Many in the community began to whisper that witchcraft had killed the woman; others concluded that her death was in retribution for the sins of the family for selling the calf.

Jonathan became involved when he talked with the daughter-in-law of the man who had borrowed the cow. Her husband, Richard, became very angry when he heard that Jonathan, an outsider, was interfering. Richard rushed to Jonathan's house and cursed him.

Soon Jonathan became very ill. At the hospital he was described as having diabetes complicated by malaria and a severe infection. But Jonathan's worldview could not describe disease merely in terms of physical causes. As pain and fear increased, Jonathan screamed "Richard! Richard!" in his delirium. His mind could only think "Richard! Richard! Why have you cursed me?"

Jonathan's dying screams came out of the deep recesses of the Kipsigis worldview. Kipsigis believe that there are spiritual causations to all sudden and severe illnesses.

Kipsigis Christians who were at the hospital caring for Jonathan heard his dying screams. They understood that Jonathan had believed in the curse and did not have adequate faith in the power of Christ to counter it. "Why didn't

he have the faith to counter the power of a curse?" they asked. "Is our faith adequate to withstand the power of Satan?" They questioned Jonathan's faith and at the same time wondered about their own.

Abilene, Texas--1988: An insightful Brazilian woman living in the United States and dating a future Brazilian missionary has aptly challenged the naiveté of future American missionaries going to her country. While critiquing one of my papers on Brazilian Spiritism, she wrote a series of reflective questions concerning the typical missionary's lack of preparation in dealing with animistic religion.

a. How can we expect missionaries to be effective if no realistic preparation about Spiritism is offered prior to going to my country?

b. Considering that Americans do not understand the concept of spirits existing in our world today, how can they understand the Brazilian mind and culture and succeed in spreading the genuine message of God?

c. How cynical are untrained missionaries toward beliefs in Spiritism? (Da Silva, 1988).

***White House, Washington D.C.--1988*:** Who decided the exact time when President Reagan and Premier Gorbachev would sign the intermediate-range nuclear forces treaty? According to Time's cover story "Astrology in the White House," the astonishing answer seems to be the astrologer Joan Quigley, a sixty-year-old Vassar graduate who has written three books on astrology (Seaman 1988, 25). Donald Regan, the disgruntled former White House Chief of Staff, has written:

Virtually every major move or decision the Reagans made during my time as White House chief of staff was cleared in advance with a woman in San Francisco who drew up horoscopes to make certain that the planets were in a favorable alignment for the enterprise. (1988a, 26)

First Lady Nancy Reagan dabbled in astrology as far back as 1967. Her trust in astrology, however, was bolstered in 1981 when Quigley showed her that the astrologer's chart predicted extreme danger for the President around March 30. On that date John Hinckley had severely wounded the President with a handgun. From that time on Mrs. Reagan consistently consulted her astrologer to determine "propitious" times for her husband to travel, to make public appearances, and even to sign treaties (Seaman 1988, 25). She later wrote, "Astrology was simply one of the ways I coped with the fear I felt after my husband almost died in the assassination attempt (Reagan 1989, 56).

Nancy Reagan's use of astrology is only one of many examples of animistic practices in the United States. Shirley MacLaine's five books on the New Age movement have sold more than 8 million copies. Out On a Limb, her third volume, describes her personal walk as she discovered the spirit world. In 1987 this book was made into a five-hour TV extravaganza promoting New Age thinking. Numerous Hollywood movies depict the dead in some way coming back to guide or help the living.

Personal spiritual beings are channeled by New Age practitioners. The much heralded J. Z. Knight professes to be the medium channeling the messages of Ramtha, a 35,000-year-old warrior who reports that he once lived on Atlantis. Jo Ann Karl believes she channels the spirits of the archangel Gabriel and a spirit named Ashtar. Neville Rowe, a New Zealander who now lives in California, claims to channel the spirit of the astral being Soli (Friedrich 1987, 66).

Belief in impersonal spiritual forces is becoming more widespread. An estimated 50 million Americans "casually or in dead earnest look to the alignment of the stars for guidance" (Seaman 1988, 25)! Dr. Delores Krieger in her nursing classes at New York University teaches the art of therapeutic touch to transfer mystical healing power (Friedrich 1987, 65). Despite opposition by conservative Christians, Edward Winchester has formed a Pentagon Meditation Club to link "individual `peace shields' to protect humanity" ("Peace Shield," 1988) by the unified force of global meditation. Although Animism remains only a substream in American culture, animistic practices are beginning to proliferate in the post-Christian age.

Although these rites are classified under "New Age," they are not new; they are merely reformulations of old beliefs practiced in various ways in animistic contexts throughout the world. A subheading of Time rightly comments that "a strange mix of spirituality and superstition is sweeping across the country" (Friedrich 1987, 62). From Nancy Reagan to Shirley MacLaine to J. Z. Knight, animistic customs of New Age thinking are being promoted and practiced in the United States of America.

These three glimpses of Animism--one from Kenya, another relating to the inadequacy of missionary training for animistic cultures, and the third from the United States--provoke many questions. Are animistic worldviews "logical"? Should these perceptions be taken seriously? How are Christian missionaries to learn about animistic beliefs of a given people when they are hidden from outsiders? How does Christianity deal with the issues posed by animistic religion? What does the Bible have to say about animistic practices? What biblical model must be presented in communicating God's eternal message to animistic people?

Early Definitions of "Animism"

The term "Animism" originated with Edward B. Tylor in early anthropological writings. In 1873 he defined Animism in *Religion in Primitive Culture* as "the doctrine of Spiritual Beings" (1970b, 9) and said that "Animism, in its full development, includes the belief in souls and in a future state, in controlling deities and subordinate spirits, . . . resulting in some kind of active worship" (1970b, 11). These spirits include both those of living ancestors who are "capable of continued existence" after death and "other spirits, upward to the rank of powerful deities" (Tylor 1970b, 10). These writings set the precedent for defining Animism as "the belief in personalized supernatural power" (Smalley 1971, 24).

A concept of impersonal spiritual force, not connected with any "being," was discovered by the Melanesian missionary R.H. Codrington in 1891. This impersonal force, called mana, was described in his book *The Melanesians* (1891). R. R. Marett picked up this concept, introduced it into anthropology, and developed theories about it (1909). From these early formulations anthropologists have frequently differentiated between personal spiritual beings and impersonal spiritual forces. They have called beliefs in personal spiritual beings "Animism" and beliefs in impersonal spiritual forces "Animatism."

However, in animistic societies there is no clear differentiation between personal spiritual beings and impersonal forces. These powers are thought to exist side by side and interact with each other. For example, in Folk Islam it is often impossible to distinguish between misfortunes attributed to jinn (personal spiritual beings) and to those attributed to the evil eye (an impersonal spiritual force). The jinn are frequently thought to make use of the evil eye for their own purposes (Westermarck 1933, 19). In many cultures magic, an impersonal spiritual power, is used to force spirits to act. Frequently practitioners of animistic beliefs are possessed by spirits or receive information from spirits to determine what personal or impersonal spiritual powers are causing sickness or catastrophe. In animistic society there is an interplay between personal and impersonal powers.

Because personal spiritual beings exist side by side with impersonal spiritual forces in most world cultures and interact with each other, a broader definition of Animism is necessary. This definition acknowledges that impersonal and personal spiritual powers cannot be easily segmented.

Definition of "Animism"

In this text Animism is defined as ***the belief that personal spiritual beings and impersonal spiritual forces have power over human affairs and that humans, consequently, must discover what beings and forces are impacting them in order to determine future action and, frequently, to manipulate their power.*** What are the cultural ramifications of this definition? What are the implications of it for the Western missionary evangelizing in animistic contexts?

Animism: A "Belief" System

Animism is a belief system through which reality is perceived. This belief system assumes that the seen world is related to the unseen: An interaction exists between the divine and the human, the sacred and the profane, the holy and the secular. Personal spiritual beings and impersonal spiritual forces are everywhere thought to be shaping what happens in the animists' world. Animists live in continual fear of these powers.

A Western secularist would likely look at these beliefs with amazement and ridicule. "How can these unseen powers be real?" he reasons. "How can anyone really believe that spirits and forces should be feared, manipulated, or worshipped?" To him, belief in spiritual beings and forces does not seem "logical." However, the animist begins with different presuppositions. He assumes that spirits and forces shape reality and interprets daily events to fit this model of reality. While a Westerner generally interprets reality through a secular worldview believing no spiritual powers impact the living, the animist presupposes that all of life is being controlled by spiritual beings and forces. The animistic model is as logical as the secular model, if one accepts the basic assumptions of spirits and forces shaping reality.

Animism: A Belief in "Beings and Forces"

"Beings" and "forces" are typically interacting phenomena in animistic contexts. "Beings" are personal spirits which include God, gods, ancestors, ghosts, totemic spirits, nature spirits, angels, demons, and Satan. These personal spiritual powers will be discussed in Chapter 9. "Forces" are impersonal powers. They include the power behind the use of magic, astrology, witchcraft, evil eye, and other related phenomena. Some cultures have broad, descriptive terms for this power, like mana in Melanesia, toh in parts of Indonesia, and baraka in the Muslim world. These impersonal spiritual powers will be discussed in Chapter 10. Since personal spiritual beings and impersonal spiritual forces interact in animistic cultures, they must be studied in relation to one another.

Animism: "Power to Control Human Affairs"

The essence of Animism is power--power of the ancestor to control those of his lineage, power of an evil eye to kill a newborn or ruin a harvest, power of planets to affect earthly destiny, power of the demonic to possess a spiritist, power of magic to control human events, power of impersonal forces to heal a child or make a person wealthy. Animism's "foundation is based in power and in power personalities" (Kamps 1986, 5).

The secret use of spiritual power by an individual is almost always malevolent--meant to cause suffering. When used publicly by recognized leaders of a society, spiritual power is often benevolent, discovering who has brought evil upon the society. Whether spiritual power is used negatively or positively, its existence is never questioned by the animist.

Animism: "Discovering What Beings and Forces are Impacting Life"

The animist lives in fear of the spiritual powers. He may appease the spirits before and after harvest, seek the spirit world to insure success before the marriage of his daughter, determine how the planets and stars will be arranged on the day of an important election, or dress up his male child like a girl so that he might not be injured by the evil eye of a jealous neighbor. The animist is overwhelmed by the many powers that might bring evil upon his life. He believes that only by use of the powers can he be successful. He desperately searches for information to ward off evil and manipulate the powers to do his bidding.

He is never completely confident that all powers are lined up on his side. When confronted with unexpected evil, he typically asks questions like "Who has caused this affliction to come upon me? Why has it happened to my family at this particular time? What power is troubling me? Has this been caused by an ancestor? By some spirit? By witchcraft? By the evil eye? By the stars? Who can help me discover the cause and source of this evil?"

Benevolent animistic specialists are consulted to determine the cause of the affliction and prescribe remedies. It might be determined that malevolent practitioners have brought the evil upon those afflicted. Sometimes malevolent practitioners, despised and feared in every animistic society, are consulted to defeat enemies. A taxonomy of both benevolent and malevolent animistic practitoners is given in Chapter 7.

Each animistic society uses numerous methods to determine which powers are impacting their lives. These methodologies of divination--omens, astrology, technique, ordeals, relying on the dead, dreams, and possession--will be discussed in Chapter 8.

Animism: "Determining Future Action and Manipulating Power"

Animists seek to discover what beings and forces are impacting them in order to determine future action and, if necessary, manipulate powers that stand in the way of health, wealth, and security. They believe that they can only determine future courses of action by discovering what is happening in the spiritual realms. They may determine that the time is favorable to invest in the stock market, sign a treaty, plant crops in the fields, or marry a wife. Ominous signs might lead them to postpone action or to attempt to manipulate the powers.

Much of Animism is based on manipulation. The animist does not seek a personal relationship with the powers. He rather seeks to manipulate spiritual beings and forces to do his will. He might manipulate spiritual powers in order to determine the source of calamity, to predict the future, to curse those who are in opposition, or to determine a fortuitous time to invest in the stock market.

People of God, in contrast to animists, believe that humans should neither divine spiritual causation nor attempt to manipulate the divine. They must rely on God and pay homage to him. The prophets exhorted Judah to "wait on the Lord" and "put trust in him" (Isa. 8:17). But instead of "waiting on the Lord," they desired immediate knowledge and power and consequently began to consult the mediums and the wizards. Isaiah rightly asked Israel: "Should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?" (Isa. 8:19). They should have relied on the "law and testimony" in order to receive the true "light of dawn" (Isa. 8:20). Instead of relying on God, they attempted to manipulate their destiny by animistic rites.

The Judeo-Christian way is based upon personally relating to sovereign God giving to him glory and honor. Conversely, the animistic way is based on manipulating the divine to serve human needs. To guide the Christian evangelist to communicate God's eternal message in an animistic context, Chapters 5, 6, and 11 give theological integration and orientation to the study of spiritual powers. Chapter 5 presents a basic biblical theology of spiritual beings and forces. Christian proclamation in animistic contexts based on a biblical theology of the kingdom is described in Chapter 6. Chapter 11 contrasts animistic and Christian perspectives of sin and salvation and gives guidelines for teaching Christian conceptions in animistic contexts.

Are Animistic Beliefs Disappearing?

At one time missiologists believed that Animism would fade away. They presumed that participants of animistic rites would forsake these rites to become participants of world religions. In 1973 Tippett gave Animism "ten years, at the very utmost twenty" to disappear (Tippett 1973, 9). Phil Elkins in the 1960s wrote of the urgency of missions to receptive animistic areas. He said:

Within the present century the progress of the world will bring all primitive or animistic people into some advanced religion. They will become Christians, Roman Catholics, Muslems [sic], Hindus, Buddhists, or Communists. . . . If pure animists, who can be won today, are spurned by Christians in favor of trying to win irresponsive Muslems [sic], Buddhists, Hindus, then in the next forty years these animists will become Muslems [sic], Buddhists, Communists or something else. (Elkins 1964, 10)

However, Animism has not died; in many cases it has extended itself. In writing about missiological trends, David Hesselgrave says, "Cults and the occult, Satanism and witchcraft, are not only surviving on the mission fields of the world, they are also thriving there and simultaneously invading the Western world!" (1988, 205). Just as Israel was tempted to forget the sovereignty of God to follow animistic Baalism, so are many nominal Christians forsaking God to serve present-day Baals. In some areas of the world (Brazil, for example) folk Catholicism in the rural areas has reformulated itself into organized, vibrant spiritist cults in the urban centers. Hoornaert writes that Spiritism is "the expression of the religion lived by the majority of Brazilians" (1982, 72). Twenty-five percent of the Brazilian people are overt spiritists with numerous Catholics being active spiritist participants when confronted with extreme

illness, catastrophe, or problems of interpersonal relationships. In fact, it is estimated that more Brazilians routinely engage in spiritistic rituals than go to Catholic mass (Nielson 1988, 94).

Despite the growth of Christianity and Islam in Africa, traditional religion is very much alive. The African theologian Bolaji Idowu writes:

It is well known that in strictly personal matters relating to the passages of life and the crises of life, African Traditional Religion is regarded as the final succor by most Africans. . . . In matters concerning providence, healing, and general well-being, therefore, most Africans still look to "their own religion" as "the way." (1973, 206)

In areas where secularism has predominated (North America and Europe), animistic streams of culture are on the rise. In the North America some cults overtly worship Satan, channel ancestral and astral spirits, attempt to access universal life energy, and revere cultic personalities making them gods. In Europe Animism continues both under the guise of Catholicism and as a cultic phenomena. Some studies have shown that the number of witches in France exceeds the Protestant population (Itioka 1990, 9). A missionary to France writes:

The other day, in the supermarket parking lot, a woman offered to read my palm and tell me a "secret." I refused, almost wanting to accept out of curiosity. Quite often here in Toulouse, I receive announcements in my mail box from mediums or seers claiming they have the power to find lost loved ones, to help with love matches, or to look into the future. The desire to know what is around the corner of our lives is a powerful one, especially if our only hope is in this life. (Bennett 1990, 1)

Itioka, in writing about mission trends of the 1990s, comments: "What we are seeing is a reversal of worldviews. While the northern hemisphere is becoming more pagan, the southern hemisphere is being evangelized, . . ." (1990, 10).

Generally Animism is not dying but reshaping itself into new contemporary forms. In some areas animists are becoming Christians, orthodox Muslims, and high religious Buddhists and Hindus. However, in other societies people are rejecting beliefs in high God and various secular beliefs and embracing Animism. As long as Satan maintains his grip on the world, Animism as a belief system will not die but simply change with changing times.

How Animistic Is Today's World?

Stephen C. Neill has estimated that 40 percent of the world's population base their lives on animistic thinking (1970, 125). Because Animism frequently hides behind the facade of other world religions, Neill's already high percentage is probably a low estimate. According to Kamps' interpretation of the data of Winter and Graham (1982), most of the world's "unreached peoples" are animistic: "Among the 88 percent of those classified as unreached peoples, it is estimated that 135 million are tribal animists and 1.9 billion are involved in a world religion based in animism" (Kamps 1986, 6). Thus Warner is correct when he says, "The unreached world as a whole is animistic at its base" (1988a).

The sheer number of animistic peoples indicates the need for missionaries to learn to communicate God's message in animistic contexts. Hesselgrave has insightfully said:

It may seem incongruous to the missionary heading for Sao Paulo or Santiago to study tribal religion, but it is doubtful that he will ever really understand Catholicism as it is actually practiced by Brazilians and Chileans--to say nothing of widespread spiritism--until he does. And understanding must precede effective communication. (1978, 193)

The persistence and revival of animistic beliefs in the twentieth century demonstrate the need for qualified missionaries who understand the logic of animistic worldviews and who are prepared to powerfully proclaim God's victory over all powers and forces as demonstrated by the life, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus Christ.

Distinctive Formulations of Animism in the World

Animistic motifs of personal and impersonal spiritual powers are combined to create a multitude of distinctive worldviews. Spiritism, which stresses gods and spirits possessing mediums to divine for the living, is flourishing in Brazil. Japanese Shintoism and Chinese Confucianism put great emphasis on filial respect for ancestors. The Cargo Cult of Melanesia uses rituals to induce gods and spirits to give material benefits to the living. Voodoo of Haiti highlights spiritual metamorphosis: Spirits are thought to change form. Humans might take animal shapes and mingle with zombies and spirits. African traditional religionists believe that ancestors, spirits, and gods actively affect the living, and magical rituals must be used to manipulate them. Folk Muslims attempt to harness the impersonal, yet benevolent spiritual power of baraka. Christo-pagan Catholics appeal to saints as intercessors with God. Roman Catholics frequently consider relics of saints as objects of veneration; Eastern Orthodox Christians assess the power of saints through their icons. This brief sampling of animistic perspectives demonstrates that animistic customs are widespread and that different animistic motifs are emphasized in different areas.

Although broad generalizations can be made about animistic beliefs, practices vary widely from society to society. Even people living in close proximity may exhibit remarkable differences in worldview. The Kipsigis, Kisii, and Luo are adjoining tribes in western Kenya. The Kipsigis believe all spirits to be ancestors. The Kisii and Luo, however, perceive the presence of ancestral spirits as well as other spirits who have never been human. While witchcraft and sorcery are prevalent among the Kisii and Luo, these practices are less pronounced in Kipsigis. On the other hand, ancestral blessings, which are not critical to Luo culture, play a significant role in Kipsigis, especially during marriage ceremonies and rites of passage into adulthood. Animism in Kenya, therefore, is not a consistent worldview but a multiplicity of worldviews with similar characteristics.

Such differences in worldviews are also apparent among spiritist groups in Brazil. Kardecism, or high spiritism, advocates that spirits are people without bodies. Condomble, or low spiritism, does not call upon the dead but seeks the guidance of certain African spirit guides.

Unlike Christianity, orthodox Islam, or traditional Hinduism, Animism does not present a consistent cosmology of viewing life.

Animistic Perspectives in World Religions

Although formative to the worldviews of some cultures, Animism is a stratum in *every* culture. Smalley has written that "Animism is a nearly universal ingredient in all religions, and is not a religious system in itself" (1971, 24). For example, an American baseball player may feel he will win by wearing a special pair of shoes; or a tennis player may believe that he does better if one ball is in his pocket rather than lying on the ground by the net; or he might be one of the 50 million Americans who read the astrological charts to determine how the alignment of the sun, moon, and stars will affect their day. According to Parshall, 70 percent of all Islamic people are Folk Muslims and only 30 percent orthodox (1983, 16). Animism and Islam are frequently "strangely mingled" with "theism and paganism" existing "side by side. The prayer is made to the Almighty, the chapters read are from the Qur'an, but the whole character of the rite is pagan" (Zwemer 1920, 206). "Islam and Animism live, in very neighborly fashion, on the same street and in the same mind" (1920, 207).

Similar statements could be made about Catholicism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Catholics reverently worship God yet venerate saints and believe in the power of relics to heal. They frequently syncretize the Christian and the animistic. Dan Coker speaks of an overt encounter with a wealthy, educated Brazilian who said, "My religion is Catholicism but my philosophy of life is Spiritism" (1990). The Buddhist of Burma believes that desires of the human body must be subdued in order for him to enter nirvana, while manipulating numerous spirits, called nats, consumes his energies (Nida and Smalley 1959, 7-8). The typical Hindu believes in the high religious concepts of karma, reincarnation, and samsara yet believes that rakasas ("evil spirits") and ancestors imminently impact life and, therefore, must be manipulated and controlled.

Thus many participants of world religions hold to high religious concepts yet continue to act and think animistically. Hindus, who presume that human destiny is determined by karma, also believe in the powerful alignment of

buildings. A "wall casts a `look' up to 30 feet away and can crack adjacent walls if it looks at them at a weak point" (Hiebert 1978). Chinese, who conceive of the world as an interplay between the forces of yin and yang, also use divination to determine why a family member has become gravely ill. A Muslim, even though he prays to Allah five times a day bowing toward Mecca, might also be a sorcerer who derives power from possessing the names of five evil spirits written in Arabic script on individual papers (Entz 1986, 46).

Animism thus is a system of beliefs prevalent to some extent in all world cultures. Frequently high religious perspectives and Animism coexist in the same heart. Animists might even "worship the Lord but also serve their own gods" (2 Kgs. 17:33)!

Receptivity of Animistic Peoples

Historically the great growth of the Christian movement has been at the expense of animistic religions. John Stott writes,

The great mass movements into the church have, generally speaking, involved people of broadly "animistic" background. By comparison very few of those who have inherited one of the major "culture-religions"--Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, Moslems and Marxists--have been won to Christ. (Stott and Coote 1980, viii)

For example, when Adoniram Judson died after 37 years of labor in Burma, he left only 100 converts from Buddhism but 7,000 converts from the animistic Karens (Stott and Coote 1980, viii).

Most early converts into the Christian church in Gentile contexts were also animistic. Michael Green asks what attracted the ordinary Gentiles to Christianity in the early church and concludes that "perhaps the greatest single factor which appealed to the man in the street was deliverance from demons, from Fate, from magic" (1970, 123). He gives many examples from the early Christian church. Tatian spoke of his "rescue . . . from a multiplicity of rulers and 10,000 tyrants" (*Address to the Greeks* 29). Justin said, "We who formerly used magic arts, dedicate ourselves to the good and unbegotten God, . . ." (*First Apology* 14). He knew of "wicked and deceitful spirits . . . which are hostile to God and whom we of old time served" (*Dialogue* 30). The belief that arrangement of the stars governs events on the earth "accounts for the courageous resignation of the Stoics," but "Jesus was preached as Lord, Master of the scroll of destiny, the one who breaks the dominance of the astral powers on man" (Green 1970, 124). Ignatius records how "all magic was dissolved and every band of wickedness vanished away, ignorance was removed and the old kingdom was destroyed" (*Ephesians* 19). Belief in magic was so prevalent in Irenaeus' day that he was forced to contrast Christian miracles to magic (*Against Heresies* 2.32.3). These early Christians, like the Thessalonians, "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (1 Thess. 1:9).

Much of Northern Europe was also animistic before Christian evangelists proclaimed the Way to deliver the inhabitants "from the domain of darkness." Northern Europeans were involved in spirit worship and magic when Boniface first went to Germany. He bravely confronted animistic practices by cutting down the sacred oak of the Thundergod and, by doing so, demonstrated the power of God over both the taboo of the tree as well as the spirit which stood behind the tree (Tucker 1983, 47). The Irish in Patrick's day "worshiped the sun, moon, wind, water, fire, and rocks, and believed in good and evil spirits of all kinds inhabiting the trees and hills" (Tucker 1983, 39). Although Patrick experienced opposition from the Druids, who upheld the Irish folk religious system, he accepted the Druid social order and proved "himself a mightier druid than the pagan druids." He planted two hundred churches and baptized an estimated 100,000 converts. Most likely a residue of animistic belief "continued for centuries in Celtic Christianity" (Tucker 1983, 39-40) because of Patrick's mixing of the Christian and the animistic. Thus European Christians can look back in history to their animistic heritage.

For a variety of reasons animists remain the most reachable of all the peoples of the world. First, animistic peoples live with an all-pervasive fear of ancestors, spirits, magic, and witchcraft. However, the Christian message provides an ideology in which "perfect love drives out fear" (1 John 4:18). Christ has triumphed over the principalities and powers which undergird animistic systems and put them to open shame (Col. 2:15). Second, while animists fear disharmony, which tears society apart, the Christian message shows how people can truly live in harmony with both God and man. This harmony is not based on humans manipulating the divine; rather, the Christian learns to place his

life dependently in the hands of the sovereign God, who is worshipped as Lord of lords and King of kings. Third, tribal animists have been especially receptive because their worldviews are inadequate to explain technologies which seek to control nature. Tribal animists, who believe that trees and rocks contain powerful nature spirits, are shocked when bulldozers and tractors destroy sacred trees and push aside rocks while constructing a new road. Christianity, however, presents God as the creator of all things, who has put humans in charge of his creation (Gen. 1:26). Fourth, the animistic system is typically amoral. The spirits and forces appeased and propitiated in Animism are morally ambivalent. However, moral and righteous Creator God calls the animist into relationship with him. In these ways the Christian system is appealing to the animist.

Because of the receptivity of animistic people, who comprise at least 40 percent of the world's population, the church of Christ needs effective evangelists trained to communicate the Gospel in ways that the animist will understand.

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Chapter 2
Tools for Learning Animistic Worldviews

Topics in Chapter

Perceiving Cultural Diversity

A missionary may live in the midst of an animistic culture without knowing that it is animistic. He conceives "reality" through the grid of his own background and experience. He assumes that people think as he thinks, feel as he feels, and communicate as he communicates. Because he uses Western language and cultural frameworks, indigenous cultural conceptions escape recognition.

For example, short-term apprentices from the United States to East Africa almost invariably express the sentiment that "people all over the world are basically alike." They superficially see the wide use of Western dress and Western technology and assume that similar externals manifest similar internals. Or a campaign leader tells prospective Americans going to a Third World country, "People are people are people! You will not have to learn a new language or a new way of thinking to teach people in this country."

One two-year missionary to Africa wrote: "People are people the world over. Not only are people basically alike in make-up, but they are minutely identical in needs. All need the gospel, and all can be approached in principally the same manner." Nothing could be farther from the truth! In this case, nationals were identifying with the missionary by speaking his language and communicating in his cultural framework. Communication was being westernized in transmission. However, the missionary wrongly assumed that the commonality was based upon the universal similarity of humans rather than upon years of Western education and cross-cultural communication on the part of nationals. The nationals were identifying with the missionary rather than the missionary identifying with the nationals.

The average person in an animistic society may wear Western clothes, desire education, listen to the radio, and travel long distances in automobiles, buses, taxis, and trams. He might live in a plush suite in a multistoried apartment building. These material benefits make him appear Western. However, when he is sick or his wife is barren, he consults the medium or diviner. He believes in God yet fears his ancestors. He appreciates Christianity but is frightened of witchcraft. He worships Allah yet places portions of the Qur'an around his house to magically ward off the spirits. While affirming the power of God, he believes that hatred in and of itself has power to kill or inflict disease. A man who kills another's pregnant cow would expect his next baby to be dead at birth if restitution is not made. No rash generalizations that "people all over the world are basically alike" can be made. Only when the cross-cultural evangelist realizes the diversity of culture and how to perceive distinctive thought patterns can he begin to understand animistic beliefs and behaviors.

Learning at the Worldview Level

The missionary must become a culture learner in order to perceive cultural diversity. He must learn to look beyond superficial similarities to perceive the distinctive ways people pattern their cultural reality. These distinctive patterns

of reality are worldviews--models of reality which shape cultural allegiances and provide interpretations of the world. Animistic perspectives become comprehensible to the missionary only when he understands the worldviews which validate and integrate cultural values and behaviors.

Effective missionaries must accept two presuppositions of learning worldviews. First, worldviews are so natural to insiders that they feel that all others perceive reality their way. They are like the monocultural Americans previously described who feel everyone thinks and acts their way. Worldviews are like the air we breathe--very important but taken for granted. They are like eyeglasses. One does not consider their importance until they are lost. Since worldviews are largely implicit, the missionary must search for forums where the implicit is made explicit and develop methodologies for uncovering worldview meanings. Second, worldviews can be perceived by outsiders at some times more easily than at other times. This chapter describes the times when worldviews are made explicit, laid bare for the perceptive to grasp.

How are animistic worldviews learned? How can a missionary understand new belief systems? Animistic worldviews can be effectively learned during times of crises; during rites of transition; through proverbs and myths; by contrasting "our" perceptions with "their" perceptions; and by analyzing how words and sounds are organized and classified.

Learning Animistic Worldviews in Times of Crisis

Worldview differences become more apparent during times of crisis, especially at times of death and illness. Each society has developed its own distinctive rituals for grappling with crises. When the meanings of these rituals are studied, they reveal significant insights into a people's worldview because "basic beliefs and assumptions are. . .laid bare" (Hiebert 1978, 37). Some rites are distinctively Christian; others are animistic. The Christian and the animistic are practiced by people living side by side and sometimes by the same person.

Observing Death

Missionaries can learn much about animistic worldviews by observing death. For example, the Kipsigis of Kenya believe that the spirits of the dead will eventually be called back to live in the bodies of another generation. This is not obvious unless the missionary sees and hears what occurs at traditional burial ceremonies. When a father dies, his eldest son throws crabgrass into the grave as a parting blessing and verbally bids his father farewell. "Go safely," he says. "We will soon call you to come back to us." This calling back of the dead into life is done when a new child is born. Such an explicit statement of a cyclical worldview is seldom heard except at times of death and birth. The traditional Kipsigis hope is this-worldly--to be reborn into the present world.

In Christian funerals, on the other hand, evangelists stand before a believer's grave and proclaim:

Our hope is beyond this world. God placed his spirit in man when he breathed into him the breath of life (Gen. 2:7). The Bible says that at death the body "returns to the ground from which it came, and the spirit returns to God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7). We believe that our brother has gone to be with God who created him.

Hope is redirected in a Christian funeral. Hope is no longer in reincarnated life in the present world but in resurrected life in new spiritual bodies at home with God (1 Cor. 15:35-50).

Certain cultural motifs become apparent to the identificational missionary during death and funeral rites. Without understanding these motifs, the missionary lives in a cultural void. Finding answers to the following questions while participating in death and funeral rites helps the missionary understand his context.

What is the meaning of life? It becomes apparent from observing traditional Kipsigis burial rites that the meaning of life is found in maintaining harmony with the ancestors. The message of Christian funerals, however, shows that the ultimate purpose of life is to live so that we might be united with God.

Is the cultural view of time cyclical or linear? Traditional Kipsigis funeral rites show a cyclical view of time. The dead are thought to return later in another body. Christian evangelists struggle to linearize the traditional Kipsigis view of time.

What do morality and sin have to do with death? Traditional Kipsigis believe that sin against other Kipsigis causes societal disharmony and that sin will eventually "eat up" and "kill" the sinner. Thus Ezek. 18:20--"The soul that sins, he will die"--is interpreted literally. Christians, on the other hand, recognize that ultimately sin is against God and that only the cleansing blood of Jesus can make one righteous.

What is the relationship between the "living dead" (those who have just died) and their family? Traditional Kipsigis consider the "living dead" as that part of the family who have passed from the realm of the living. Because they are the spiritual beings closest to the earthly realm, they are appeased and propitiated by the living. Faithful Christians believe that such appeasement and propitiation denies the all-sufficiency of God. Weak Christians, however, are tempted to appease and/or manipulate ancestors when they are told that illness or other misfortune has been caused by disgruntled ancestors.

Thus both animistic and Christian perspectives of life and death are vividly seen by witnessing what happens at death.

Observing Sickness

Worldviews also become comprehensible during times of illness. To many Africans, both Christians and non-Christians, extended illness is thought to be caused by sin. When I was severely sick with hepatitis in 1979, Christians prayed that God would forgive my sins so that I might be healed. I replied that I knew of no major sin in my life; Satan was rather tempting me as he tempted Job in the Old Testament; and I needed prayers to overcome Satan. Unlike Job's friends who refused his proclamations of innocence and declared Job guilty of sin, the Kipsigis Christians were open to discussing other causes of illness. During these discussions, I discovered much about Kipsigis conceptions of suffering and evil. The Kipsigis Christians, in turn, learned biblical perspectives which broadened their understanding of human suffering.

From a Kipsigis perspective sin is not the only cause of illness: Ancestors might also produce illness because they are dissatisfied with the activities of the living. I learned about this cause for illness when Stephen Mibei, an older Kipsigis Christian, became ill. Instead of praying to the Lord for healing and waiting on him to act, he went to a diviner to find out what was causing his sickness. The diviner sacrificed a sheep, which Stephen provided, and analyzed the entrails to determine the cause of the ailment. It was determined that Stephen's failure to pay the brideprice for his wife had angered his deceased father-in-law. Healing would occur only if part of the brideprice was paid immediately and a libation poured out at the ancestral shrine to appease the deceased. I felt his emotions as he struggled with his desire to follow conflicting allegiances, either that of Creator God or that of the ancestors. Although Stephen realized that making sacrifices and libations to ancestral spirits was a denial of his allegiance to God, he followed the advice of the diviner. In the midst of Stephen's struggles I was not only a cultural learner but a Christian teacher. While learning that Kipsigis believe that ancestors may cause illness, I taught that a believer must trust in God, wait patiently for him, and never call upon the dead on behalf of the living (Isa. 8:19).

By empathetically listening to those who are sick and analyzing rituals of healing, the missionary learns much about the indigenous worldview. Since animistic religion is greatly concerned about causes of illness, it is imperative for the missionary to learn why people become sick. In addition to sin and ancestral dissatisfaction, soul-loss, spirit intrusion, object intrusion, the breaking of a taboo, and sorcery are also thought to be causes of illness (Burnett 1988, 179-182). Through empathic sharing the missionary learns indigenous perceptions of illness, spiritual beings which must be appeased or propitiated for healing to occur, types of magic employed to manipulate spiritual power, and traditional and contemporary medicines used locally for curative and religious purposes.

How Christians and non-Christians conceptualize such significant problems as death and illness tells the cross-cultural evangelist much about his adopted people.

Learning Animistic Worldviews Through Rites of Transition

All societies have rites of passage from one status in life to another. Marriage ceremonies are an almost universal rite of transition from unmarried to married life. Baptism is a rite of transition into the Lord's body. Many societies have rites of transition from childhood to adulthood. Some have rites from a warrior class to an elder class or from one elder class to another. Funerals, already discussed under learning during times of crises, are understood by some as rituals which symbolically transfer the spirit into the world of the spirits or free the spirit to make this journey. The Masai of East Africa have not only birth, marriage, and death rites, but also transitional rites between stages of life. The rites of passage separating childhood and adulthood are of special importance: After initiation the male becomes a warrior, and the girl becomes a woman and is allowed to marry. Usually these rites of transition are times of cultural indoctrination when cultural values and worldview perspectives are especially explicit. In animistic societies rites of transition intimately tie the living to the spirit world. Unlike some secular ceremonies in the West, all animistic rituals carry significant religious meaning.

Among American Indian tribes, such as the Crow, Comanche, and Shoshoni, a young man achieved power to become great in life only after receiving a special vision. In this vision some spirit would come to the young man to give him phenomenal strength, extraordinary wealth, or the power to lead. Achieving this vision became a rite of passage into successful life. Frequently the spirit came in the form of an animal or bird who then became the young man's personal totem. Although a few received their visions in their sleep or without much effort, most achieved them only after much effort through an planned vision quest. At the approximate age of eleven a boy began training for his vision quest. He observed taboos, underwent rigorous physical training, and supplicated the Sun. During the vision quest itself, he "mortified his flesh" to induce a vision. It was common to fast for four days, cut off one finger at the joint as a sacrifice to the Sun, and pray for horses (Lowie 1948, 3-5).

The nature of a man's vision determined his role in life. If his totem appeared invulnerable, he would become an invincible warrior with a reputation of reckless daring. Or, if his empowering totem demonstrated the use of herbal medicine, he would become a wealthy healer/diviner. A man without a vision was destined for poverty and ill-repute (Lowie, 1948, 6-9).

Once the centrality of the vision quest becomes apparent, other basic cultural motifs also become evident. (1) Endurance is required in a life of struggle. As a man could not obtain a vision without struggle, so the Indian could not survive without struggle. (2) Power, prestige, and fame come from visions and dreams. (3) A totem spirit guards the strong man. (4) An ideal man, although strong and self-sufficient, is helped by spirits (Hiebert 1983). Without understanding the role of the vision in Indian society, the missionary could not understand the culture.

Among the Kipsigis of Kenya circumcision is the rite of transition into adulthood. During these month-long rites each December, Kipsigis youths are circumcised and taught what it means to be a Kipsigis. From the time that they emerge from these rites, they are expected to act as adults. These rites are extremely valuable for social and cultural identity. In a short time Kipsigis youth go through an identity change that American young people uncertainly accomplish with much anguish over a longer period of time.

Since these rites conflict with the teachings of Christ, Christians cannot participate in them and remain faithful to God. Even non-Christians realize this. Circumcision is the time when the young are indoctrinated in the traditional animistic way of life. Ancestral blessings are frequently used. Sexual promiscuity is expected. Initiates are taught how to curse those who wrong them. When an outsider studies what is taught to traditional circumcision initiates, he sees distinctive features of traditional Kipsigis culture.

Strong local churches in Kipsigis have created viable Christian alternatives to the traditional rites. Christian blessings are used. The purity of a Christian lifestyle is taught. How a Christian Kipsigis functions in an animistic world is communicated. Where local churches have not creatively devised a cultural substitute, reversion to paganism is extremely high. Where churches are strong, a cultural equivalent is devised and frequently accepted by the village.

By studying rites of transition, a missionary overtly sees cultural motifs otherwise hidden. Christian alternatives to these rites show how the teachings of Christ have been contextualized in the new culture.

Learning Animistic Worldviews through Indigenous Proverbs and Myths

Every society has a verbal cultural heritage--"an inventory of lore"--which has been handed down from one generation to another (Loewen 1969b, 150). Because Animism is not typically codified into written documents but transmitted intergenerationally by verbal means, a study of the culture's verbal heritage helps the new missionary understand animistic beliefs. Two types of cultural lore, proverbs and myths, are significantly helpful in deciphering animistic worldviews.

Indigenous Proverbs

Oral cultures, which are prevalent in Third World societies, are proverb-oriented. Some of these proverbs are riddles which hide meaning from outsiders but vividly portray it to insiders. Other proverbs are simply concise, overt descriptions of cultural concepts. Understanding such proverbs is an effective tool in culture learning. A new missionary must develop the linguistic fluency to catch succinct statements of cultural reality; otherwise, he will hear them as simply incoherent sentences.

Certain proverbs reveal distinctive cultural motifs. The Kipsigis say, "Manamegei oikyuk ak cheguk," literally meaning "My ancestral spirits are not tied to yours." Thus my ancestral spirits cannot harm you, and your ancestral spirits cannot harm me. Every person is under the control of his own ancestral spirits. This statement counters another's threat of invoking his ancestral spirits to cause harm to those who are not of his lineage.

Some proverbs are cultural statements of universal truths. Jesus' statement "No man can serve two masters" (Matt. 6:24) is interpreted by the animist to mean that one cannot follow two incongruous roads simultaneously. One cannot follow the way of God and the way of ancestors; one cannot offer his body as a living sacrifice to God while continuing to pour libations on the ancestral shrine. Different cultures express this idea in their own distinctive ways. For example, the Kipsigis say, "Magibeeljindos kirokwek oeng'" ("Two walking sticks cannot be burned together"); the Bukusu of Kenya, "He who wants to start a new home must destroy the old"; and certain Zaireans, "Can a woman marry two husbands?" Each of these proverbs conveys the same truth by using different analogies.

The meaning of proverbs is frequently reinterpreted as cultural perspectives change. A Kipsigis proverb says, "Mautien moset katwalet": "A baboon does not forget how to jump." Traditional religious practitioners use this proverb to explain that a Kipsigis cannot forget to do those things that are natural to him, that is, practice traditional rites. Christian leaders employ this proverb to explain that Christians cannot forget to do those things that are natural to Christians.

Indigenous Myths

All religious people have sacred narratives, called myths, which explain how things got the way they are. While proverbs and legends describe wisdom and phenomenal exploits "in ordinary, profane time," myths portray the work of spiritual power(s) in arranging the existing order "in primordial, sacred time" (Loewen 1969b, 150). Creation myths depict the origin and destiny of the world and of humankind. National myths describe how tribes and nations came into being. Deity myths recount relationships between humanity and divinity: Why has God become distant? How do people relate to deity? How have higher gods come into existence? Spirit myths depict the origin and functions of lower spiritual beings. Sickness myths reveal ancient sources and causes of illness. Cosmic myths describe the origin and cause of catastrophic events, such as earthquakes, lightning, thunder, drought, rain, and eclipses. Eliade's description of the functions of myths show that they are intimately related to animistic conceptions of reality:

Myth, . . .(1) constitutes the History of the acts of the Supernaturals; (2) that this History is considered to be absolutely *true* (because it is concerned with realities) and *sacred* (because it is the work of the Supernaturals); (3)

that myth is always related to a "creation," it tells how something came into existence or how a pattern of behavior, an institution, a manner of working were established; this is why myths constitute the paradigms for all significant human acts; (4) that by knowing the myth one knows the "origin" of things and hence can control and manipulate them at will; this is not an "external," "abstract" knowledge but a knowledge that one "experiences" ritually, either by ceremonially recounting the myth or by performing the ritual for which it is the justification; (5) that in one way or another one "lives" the myth, in the sense that one is seized by the sacred, exalting power of the events recollected or re-enacted." (1963, 8-9)

Because myths describe spiritual powers which stand behind the world, the study of myth is especially important in deciphering animistic beliefs. Tabor rightly comments, "Understanding the mythology of a people is one of the most important keys available to open the door into their view of the nature of reality, the meaning of life, the foundations of value judgments which underlie their whole outlook" (1969, 146). For example, a myth among one South American Indian tribe explains why many Christian words had become interpreted as "hard words"-- power sounds used to inflict either healing or harm on the people against whom they were used:

One day while god and the people were walking through the forest, a poisonous snake suddenly bit god in the hand. It was a very poisonous snake, so all the people expected him to swell up at once and die. However god told them: "Don't be afraid. I will not die. This happened so that I could teach you how to cure illness when you get sick once I am gone." Then he spoke some "hard" words and blew *taleng* `magic' on his hand, and at once he was completely restored. Then he taught "hard" words to the people so that they also would be able to cure. (Loewen 1969c, 148)

Other myths describe the origin of various spiritual powers and therefore depict their character and functions. According to a myth of the Waunana of Columbia, Ewandama (god) lived with his son near the ocean before the creation of the people. When his son begged him for playmates, Ewandama sent him to make dolls. Later Ewandama gave these various dolls life. Dolls made out of black palm wood became progenitors of black magic spirits; dolls carved from white balsa wood became the ancestors of white magic spirits; and mud dolls became the forebears of the Waunana (Loewen 1969b, 155-156; 1969c, 175).

African creation myths explain why God, who once lived close to humankind, has removed himself from their world. Most of these myths describe a golden age when there was no separation between humans and their creator. However, something occurred to alienate God. The Mende say that God withdrew into the heavens because humans continually begged benefits from him. Ashanti mythology tells of God's retreat into the heavens after a woman hit him with her pestle while pounding traditional food. Myths from the upper White Nile area speak of the relationship between God and man being severed when a rope between heaven and earth was accidentally cut (Mbiti 1969, 97; Mitchell 1977, 25).

Myths are intimately related to a culture's worldview explaining, integrating, validating, and sanctioning its belief system (Loewen 1969c, 159-167). For example, myths concerning the transmigration of souls undergird the Indian caste system so that the numerically greater untouchables willingly submit to the ruling castes. Myths among Australian aborigines describe how each tribe must live off the "life root" of its own land thus eliminating aboriginal war to conquer neighboring lands (Loewen 1969c, 164, 166). The Nazis promoted an Aryan myth to validate their conviction that the German people were racially and culturally superior. In each case myths explain, integrate, validate, and sanction cultural beliefs and practices.

Too often myths have been ridiculed by Westerners, especially missionaries, as frivolous nonsense. As a result, national Christians have hidden their myths from outsiders who might be able to understand them. Such hidden myths are more insidious because they cannot be overtly discussed and analyzed in the light of the will of God:

Mission history is replete with attempts to eradicate myths along with other forms of "pagan" superstition. But myths are not easily destroyed or changed by external pressure.... In fact, overt prohibition usually tends to greatly increase the overall value of myth. (Loewen 1969d, 171)

Throughout Latin America the drive to forcibly baptize the native without any regard for his mythology has resulted in syncretism, the blending of traditional animistic beliefs with Catholic beliefs and rituals. While peripheral

mythological motifs have been lost in this reintegration, core motifs of animistic myths have reemerged in Christo-pagan Catholicism and Spiritism. Frequently mythological characteristics are given to Christian characters, and pagan gods are equated with Christ, Mary, and Catholic saints.

Although the historicity of most myths need not be accepted by the missionary, myths presently being told in animistic contexts reveal cultural motifs currently held by the people. In many cases, even when the historical content of a myth changes, the cultural motifs communicated remain the same (Loewen 1969b, 152). By studying the mythological content of comic books, anthropologists learn much about American conceptions of bravery and heroism and the victory of good over evil (Eliade 1963, 184-185). Although the plots change, many of the cultural motifs remain the same.

Thus myths serve a number of missiological functions. First, the missionary develops insight into how the people conceptualize their reality by researching and documenting traditional myths. Basic cultural motifs surface as they are communicated in mythological form. Second, the sharing of myths creates an "atmosphere of confidence and reciprocity" conducive to the sharing of the gospel. After listening to traditional myths the missionary is frequently asked about what he believes. Myths, therefore, become a contact point between the missionary and his host culture (Loewen 1969e, 185-186). Third, recognizing the significance of myth will help the missionary communicate the gospel in such a way so as it avoid syncretism. In many cases the missionary will work with national leaders to consciously compare traditional mythology with the scripture. Where traditional mythology is found to be false, it must be replaced with biblical stories reflecting biblical motifs. Fourth, the use of myth gives insight concerning how the biblical message must be relevantly communicated. Western sermons, which segment thought, employ deductive reasoning, and use few metaphors, have little impact in Third World contexts. However, parables, stories, and myths--formulated to communicate concrete Christian motifs--forcefully relate God's eternal message. For example, many lives have been changed among the Kipsigis of Kenya by "the parable of the nail" first presented by Joseph Lang'at:

One day a man sold the best house in all the village. However, as the sale was being concluded, he declared that he could not sell one nail in a wall. That nail was to be eternally his. After a week the previous owner returned to hang his coat on the nail. The new owners were puzzled but determined that since the nail was his and the coat was his, there was nothing that they could do. However, in the second week the previous owner returned again. This time he took his coat off the nail but replaced it with a piece of raw meat. Again the new owners deduced that since both the coat and meat belonged to the previous owner, they could do nothing. The smell in the house got worse and worse as the days transpired. Finally, the previous owner returned again to reclaim his now rancid piece of meat. This time, with a knowing nod of his head and twinkle in his eye, he left a long, dead, slimy snake on the nail. With shock the new owners moved out and soon the previous owner moved back in.

The power of this story is in the mystery of the message. What does the nail represent? Who is the first owner? And who are the second owners? In this particular story the nail symbolized the unrepentant remnant of the former life used by Satan to repossess people who once belonged to him. Even though people accept Christ, they do not allow the Lord to possess all of their lives. As Loewen rightly says, "Those who disregard mythology are excluding themselves from valuable material that will make their message both applicable and desirable" (1969e, 187). Hopefully, this description of the use of myth will aid the Christian communicating in animistic contexts.

Since all cultures have some kind of an oral history, a new cross-cultural worker must learn the oral forms of his adopted people. He learns much of the new culture by perceiving the proverbs and myths of this culture.

Learning Animistic Worldviews by Contrast

As new missionaries begin learning languages and cultures, they hear and see things that do not fit their conceptions of reality. When there is such confusion, the new missionary should ask questions and seek answers in culturally appropriate ways.

He might privately ask a national friend, "In America, when we see men holding hands with men, it means that they are homosexuals. Is that the meaning here in Africa?" An East African would laughingly respond, "No, to us it

means friendship with people to whom we are close. There are few homosexuals here." When a missionary explains what a cultural act means to him, typically the national reciprocally responds explaining what the act means to him. Such reciprocity opens up numerous doors of understanding.

When I was first learning the Kipsigis language, I heard an old lady greet a young boy and call him "Grandfather." I asked the Christian with whom I was evangelizing, "Did I hear right? Did the old lady call the young boy `Grandfather'?" "Yes," he responded, "but she just does not understand." At this point I was perplexed not only by the old lady's greeting but also by the Christian's response.

The next day I was visiting a Christian who wanted me to know Kipsigis customs thoroughly. I explained the greeting of the old lady and the Christian's response. He laughed and said, "Let me tell you about the Kipsigis kurenet rite."

This rite takes place immediately after a child is born to ascertain which ancestral spirit has embodied the new child. An old woman will ask, "Are you Arap Tonui?" The women gathered for this rite will wait for some time for the child to sneeze, thus signifying the affirmative. If the child does not sneeze, another name is proposed until the child responds by sneezing. Later I read of this rite in Orchardson's ethnography of the Kipsigis:

So firmly is it believed that the child really has the spirit of the Kurenet, and is in fact the same person, that his or her mother, when using terms of endearment, will address the child for many years by the Kurenet's name, . . . (Orchardson 1961, 45)

I learned that the old lady called the boy "Grandfather" because she felt the spirit of her grandfather had come to live in the body of the young child. The Christian whom I asked the question was embarrassed that I heard traditional conceptions typically hidden from outsiders.

When unexpected events happen that new missionaries do not understand, they must seek answers in culturally appropriate ways.

Learning Animistic Worldviews by How Words and Sounds are Organized and Classified

As missionaries begin their first crucial step of learning the language of another culture, the relationship between language and culture soon becomes apparent. For example, one sixteen-year missionary to Germany who is also fluent in French and Greek, frequently comments, "Germans *think* like . . . because they say . . . ." Such a statement rightfully recognizes that linguistic categories are related to conceptual categories.

Ethnolinguistics, the study of the relationship between language and culture, has shown that languages provide categories through which people think. Languages mirror culture at every point. They emphasize and systematize what is important to the culture and filter out what is not important. For example, Eskimo tribes have as many as seven distinct labels to distinguish between types of snow ("falling snow, snow on the ground, fluffy snow, wet snow, and so forth"), while English has one all-inclusive word for the concept. Equatorial African languages have no term at all for snow (Brown 1987, 138) but typically expand the word "hail" to include the idea of snow. The Kipsigis of Kenya have hundreds of words defining different aspects of circumcision and the circumcision ceremony. The emphasis upon this rite of passage into adulthood is reflected in the language. However, the Kipsigis learning English has difficulty understanding the Western pattern of becoming adults as reflected in the terms "adolescents," "teenagers," and "young adults." They typically grasp the denotated meanings without understanding the underlying connotated meanings of these terms. They understand that teenagers are people aged 13-19 (denotated meaning) without understanding that teenagers are young people struggling with their identities of selfhood who desire to prove themselves as adults (connotated meaning).

Many languages have more precise verb forms than English. Hopi forms indicate not only the action occurring but also the knowledge of the speaker about the action and the validity of the statement. The English statement "he is running" could be translated "I know that he is running at this very moment," "I know that is running at this moment

even though I cannot see him," "I remember that I saw him running and I presume he is still running," or "I am told that he is running." While European languages specifically delineate time limitations of any action, the Hopi view time not in terms of length but "in terms of events, sequences, and development" (Brown 1987, 139). The length of time from planting to harvesting is not as significant as the development of events through stages of "planting, germination, growth, blossoming, and bearing fruit" (Brown 1987, 139). The Kipsigis have three specific past tenses--today's past, yesterday's past, and the distant past. The Japanese and Chinese infix respect relationships into their verb forms.

The cultural categorization of colors is the most discussed illustration in the study of ethnolinguistics. Americans see six colors in the rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, violet, and blue. Some cultures see eight, others four, others three. Kipsigis classify blue and black together and consider the sky tue, the word that I initially translated literally as "black." Tue, however, has a broader color range than simply black. The Malagasy speaker of Madagascar distinguishes over 100 basic categories of color (Nida 1952). The Shona of Zimbabwe and Bassa of Liberia both have fewer color categories than English speakers, and they break up the spectrum at different points (Gleason 1961, 4). The following color scheme compares the color categories of these three cultures.

Fig. 1: Color Categories in Three Cultures (Brown 1980, 142)

A creative missionary can develop a methodology for learning the linguistic categories reflected by his host culture. He can write out a series of nouns and ask people to categorize the words that belong together. For example, how would Americans compartmentalize the following nouns: God, rocks, virus, man, bushes, fish, deer, rabbit, woman, demons, angels, cow, lion, whale, grass, germs, sand, and trees? A typical American might group (1) God, angels, and demons in a single category as "supernatural beings", (2) man and woman as "human beings", (3) cow, deer, lion, and rabbit as "animals", (4) fish and whale as "living beings dwelling in water", (5) bushes, grass, and trees as "plants", (6) rocks and sand as "inanimate things", and (7) viruses and germs as "organisms that cause sickness." These categories come from Western differentiations of natural and supernatural, human and animal life, animate beings and inanimate things, and plants and animals. Comprehending these implicit categories facilitates understanding Western culture (Hiebert 1985a, 146, 148).

Participants of an East African hunting and gathering society would classify the same nouns in vastly different categories. One such participant classified (1) God, angels, demons, viruses, and germs together as "things that can kill," (2) man, lion, and whale as "things that rule their environments," (3) women and cows as "things that are ruled and are convertible for bride price," (4) rocks, bushes, fish, trees, grass, rabbit, deer, and sand as "things of the habitat free for the getting" (Hiebert 1983). A Haitian student classified tree and woman together as "fruit bearers," rocks and angels as "message bearers," and man and lion as "creatures of bravery and strength."

In similar creative ways missionaries must determine how animistic beliefs are categorized within their host cultures. "Culture-specific world views are reflected in the language" (Brown 1987, 138). These animistic categories are seldom similar to Western categories. The Mazateco Indians of Oaxaca, Mexico, traditionally felt that God's word was transmitted to them when they were under the influence of a hallucinogenic drug derived from a mushroom. They therefore classified both the hallucinogenic mushroom and the scriptures in one category known as "God's word" (Pike and Cowen 1959, 145-150). One missionary to East Africa classified the Swahili terms mganga ("a shaman or witchdoctor") and mchawi ("a witch") in the same category, calling these practitioners "peas out of the same pod." From a Christian perspective this was justified since both of these animistic practitioners use magical powers which a follower of God would classify in the realm of Satan. Yet this analysis overlooks the differentiation

that the language makes by using two terms for these practitioners. The mganga uses spiritual power for benevolent purposes, and the mchawi uses the same power for malevolent purposes. From the perspective of the African traditionalist the two types of practitioners belong in different categories.

As missionaries evangelize in animistic contexts, they must realize that they are outsiders to the cultures who must learn the categories of animistic thought as formulated by cultural insiders. They must learn how insiders classify animistic practitioners, how these practitioners determine the will of spiritual powers, what personal and impersonal spiritual powers are thought to impact the animist, and what conceptions of sin and salvation already exit in the animistic context. Missionaries enter cultures which have already existing animistic categories. These categories must not only be understood by the missionary but he must also learn to communicate God's eternal message within the contexts where animistic worldviews are present.

Conclusion

Each of the methodologies of culture learning designated in this chapter is *identificational*. The new missionary is learning culture as he begins to actively evangelize on the field, interrelating with the people in their environment and in their language. A missionary cannot learn a culture from a book or from meeting people in a Western institution.

When I first arrived on the field, I did not know how to learn culture in an organized way. I struggled for years and picked up cultural views piece by piece. Newer missionaries using methodologies similar to those in this chapter have been much quicker to perceive culture and thus preach the word more effectively.

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Chapter 3
The Cosmic and the Earthly

Topics in Chapter

Two Missionary Mistakes in Animistic Contexts

Because many missionaries do not begin as learners, as described in Chapter 2, they typically make two fundamental mistakes in animistic contexts. First, they assume that their own cultural categories are universal. Second, they communicate on the level of high religion rather than on the popular level of low religion. This chapter will discuss these two fundamental mistakes of missionaries, call for a learning mentality, and suggest that causes of syncretism frequently stem from failing to deal with issues of low religion.

I am forced to deal with these two mistakes with much humility because they reflect some of my inadequacies while initially ministering among the Kipsigis people of Kenya. One evening Samuel Lang'at, a new Christian, arrived at our home. He was accompanying his hyperactive mother, whom I immediately diagnosed as "mentally deranged." Samuel informed me that he was taking his mother to visit a "doctor" and asked if I would take them to where he lived. I mentally translated the Kipsigis word for "doctor" into the secular category of "physical healer" and readily agreed to transport them. Instead of seeking to understand Samuel's dilemma through his cultural lenses, my immediate concern was where Samuel and his mother would spend the night. Because of the unpredictability of Samuel's mother and the security of my children, I concluded that they could not stay in my home. I went into the town and found a hotel where they could stay that night. Upon returning, I studied and prayed with Samuel as my wife prepared the evening meal. Our studies that evening did not pertain to Samuel's situation. I did not yet realize that God's message had anything to do with the problems of Samuel's mother. I diagnosed them as this-worldly psychological problems rather than cosmic problems related to spiritual warfare. Only later did I learn that Samuel's "doctor" was a traditional practitioner who divined the animistic causes of the spirit possession. I was forced to ask if such possession is real, what the biblical message is in such cases, and the role of those who believe that Christ is sovereign.

In a similar vein, Tippett tells of teaching a class of Fijian theological students about classical Hinduism. This class was to prepare them to evangelize the Indians who were moving onto the island. Tippett described the class as a dismal failure both because the Fijians could not conceive of the metaphysical categories of classical Hinduism and because the common Hindu moving to Fiji did not conceptualize reality in those classical categories. Tippett vividly described the content of his course as being power of the wrong voltage:

I had procured a generator of 240 voltage, although my functioning apparatus was only 110; and it was impossible to tap the power of the former and to achieve the functioning of the latter. A missionary geared to a metaphysical level of evangelism in his generator cannot drive a motor of shamanistic voltage. It is a tragic experience to find oneself with the right kind of power but of the wrong voltage. (1960, 412-413)

Cognitive Domains

Cognitive domains are the broad categories into which a culture divides reality. These domains are used by people of a culture, either consciously or unconsciously, to compartmentalize reality. These broad classifications of reality vary from culture to culture.

Too many missionaries never learn to differentiate Western domains of culture from the domains of the culture in which they now minister. Alan Tippett rightly says, "Far too many missionaries by name never achieve their missionary identity because, though sent to a foreign land, they have never learned to leave the West behind them" (Tippett 1960, 414). These missionaries assume that Western domains are universal categories.

It is apparent that the missionary who has not sorted out the domains of his own culture will not be able to comprehend the domains of a host culture. Implicit domains must be made explicit. The missionary must learn Western categories of thought and contrast them to animistic categories of thought.

Cognitive Domains of Western Cultures

Western culture tends to cut reality into two big slices: the natural and the supernatural--the secular and spiritual. These two domains are the large categories into which Western people divide reality. In *Escape from Reason* Schaeffer traces this division back to Thomas Aquinas (1215-1274) with its roots in Aristotelian thought. Aquinas differentiated "nature" and "grace." "Nature" was the lower realm of the created, the earthly, and the visible. "Grace" was the higher realm of God, heaven, and the unseen. Over a period of time the realm of nature became autonomous from the higher realm and began to consume it. Schaeffer writes, "It is destructive when nature is made autonomous. As soon as one accepts the concept of an autonomous realm, one finds that the lower element begins to eat up the higher" (1968, 209-214).

Contemporary Western cultures continue to reflect a two-tiered view of reality which segments the natural and supernatural. Spiritual beings are relegated to the realm of the supernatural where they can only be perceived by miracles and visions. Humans are thought to dwell in the natural realm where they have little contact with spiritual beings or forces. Few, if any, spiritual beings and impersonal forces are thought to exist in the world. This mental differentiation between the natural and the supernatural is diagramed as follows:

SUPERNATURAL REALM	Angels Demons God	Perceived by miracles Visions People act by faith.
NATURAL REALM	Man The Church Science The World	Perceived by sight and Experience People act by knowledge.

Figure 2: A Western Cultural Domain
(Adapted from Hiebert 1983)

Hiebert, in a insightful article entitled "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle" (1982, 35-47), suggests that Western culture has neglected the realm of this-worldly spiritual beings and forces which exists between the natural and the supernatural. Belief in this middle realm began to wane during the Age of Enlightenment with "the secularization of science and the mystification of religion" (Hiebert 1982, 43). Reflecting their Western heritage, almost all missionaries exclude this middle realm and, consequently, are ill-prepared to communicate the gospel in animistic contexts where this realm is emphasized. Hiebert testifies, "As a scientist I had been trained to deal with the empirical world in naturalistic terms. As a theologian, I was taught to answer ultimate questions in theistic terms. For me the middle zone did not really exist" (1982, 43). When Hiebert entered an Indian context where rakasas ("evil spirits") and ancestors were known to impact life and had to be manipulated and controlled, he had no answers to questions of the middle realm (1982, 43). Likewise, O'Brien, who taught at a theological seminary in Asia, began to rethink the nature of principalities and powers when his students considered the Pauline perception of the powers

"perfectly intelligible in their own cultural contexts" and critically objected to the Western commentaries which failed "to take seriously the accounts about demons, exorcism, and Christ's defeat of them" (O'Brien 1984, 130). Thus while those of an animistic heritage emphasize the excluded middle, missionaries sent to teach them have little conception of this realm.

Those borrowing from Western culture frequently do not distinguish between the natural and the supernatural but mix the two. This blending of categories both shocks and amuses Westerners. For example, the motifs of a Christmas pageant among the Telugu of South India are mostly drawn from Western mythology. The Telugu, however, enact the drama depicting the nativity in an entirely new way. At the end of the play Santa Claus jumps out with song and dance to present gifts to Jesus, his earthly parents, and the shepherds. He becomes the hero of the saga! Hiebert, who once witnessed the drama, was stunned because in Western cultures Jesus and Santa Claus are of entirely different cognitive domains. Jesus belongs to the supernatural domain and Santa Claus to the natural. Missionaries who introduced Christmas to India assumed that the hearers would be able to distinguish between the Christian celebration, expressing the significance of the incarnation of Jesus, and the secular celebration, depicting a fictional myth of gift-giving when youngsters live up to social expectations (1985a, 13, 15).

Animists do not make the typical Western dichotomy between the natural and the supernatural. This is true even in North American animistic contexts. For example, a foundational concept of the New Age movement is that the physical world and the spiritual world are "interrelated, interdependent, and interpenetrating" (Groothuis 1986, 18-20). Tina Lucia, a New Age therapist living in Stone Mountain, Georgia, uses crystals for healing purposes because "physical problems are manifestations of spiritual problems" (Friedrich 1987, 64). John Taylor, writing about an African context, says, "No distinction can be made between sacred and secular, between natural and supernatural, for Nature, Man and the Unseen are inseparably involved in one another in a total community" (1963, 64). In animistic contexts no distinction can be made between the natural and the supernatural. "Whatever happens in the physical world has its spiritual coordinates . . . . Everything man is, does, handles, projects, and interacts with is interpenetrated with the spiritual" (Steyne 1989, 39).

Cognitive Domains of Animistic Cultures

While not segmenting the natural and the supernatural, animists have their own cognitive domains. These domains typically distinguish between the body and the spirit. An analogy of a pitcher full of water helps Westerners understand these domains. Animists believe that spirits are fluid like water, which can be poured into or out of a pitcher. The pitcher is like the body and the spirit(s) like the water. The Nuer of Sudan use these domains when they distinguish between kwoth ("spirit") and pwony ("creature"). When Nuer pray to and make sacrifices to their totems, they distinguish between the kwoth and the pwony of the totems. The Nuer do not pray and sacrifice to the pwony but to the kwoth of these totems. The missionary should never compare Western domains with these animistic domains. Evans-Pritchard says, "There is no abstract duality of natural and supernatural, but there is such a duality between kwoth, Spirit, which is immaterial rather than supernatural, and cak, creation, the material world known to the senses" (1956, 77).

Although a spirit may leave a body at various times while a person is living, this differentiation is especially apparent at death when the spirit permanently leaves the body. Kipsigis of Kenya differentiate between tamirmiriet ("spirit") and borto ("body"). Kipsigis Christians use scripture to prove this dichotomy: Matt. 27:50 says that Jesus "yielded up his spirit" at death, inferring that the body and spirit were separated, and Jas. 2:26 equates faith without works with a body without a spirit. As we were leaving Kenya, numerous Christians told our family, "Although we will be apart in body, we will be together in spirit."

Animists believe that life is poured out not only at death but also at different times while one is living. Dreaming is one such time. The spirit journeys while the body sleeps. Many animistic peoples believe that a sleeping person should not be awakened too quickly. If he is dreaming, his body might be caught without the spirit and be killed. Both death and dreaming prove that life is fluid. At times the spirit lives in the body but at other times departs from the body.

If one accepts that bodies and souls can be separated at death and while one is dreaming, an obvious conclusion is that spirits can exist apart from bodies. Spirits of the dead exist in a disembodied form. There are therefore ancestors and ghosts, spirits of the dead who are in a disembodied state. In some societies these spirits are thought to go directly to heaven or to hell. In other societies, they stay around for a period of time until they are satisfied and then depart. Some are benevolent, some malevolent.

As missionaries communicate God's eternal message in the contemporary contexts of the world's people, they cannot assume that other people accept their cognitive domains and, as a consequence, communicate the Christian message through those domains. They must learn the domains of their recipient culture and judge whether Christianity can be communicated through those categories or whether other categories of reality must be introduced.

High and Low Religions

When religions emphasize high gods and cosmic ideologies but have little to say about animistic beliefs and customs, they are called high religions. Low religions, on the other hand, are animistic. They emphasize how to manipulate and control spiritual powers in everyday life and de-emphasize reliance on high gods, like Yahweh or Allah. Missiologists Allison (1984, 167-170) and Hiebert (1985a, 222-224) have taken anthropological writings about low and high religion (Horton 1962, 197-220; Wilson 1970) and applied them to understanding animistic beliefs. Differentiating these categories helps the missionary understand how Christianity might be accepted on one level but Animism continued on another level.

The major religions of the world--Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism--are high religions. These high religions have similar characteristics which set them apart from low religions. First, they are concerned with the cosmic questions of life. They answer questions concerning origins (From where have we come? How have we become what we are?), destiny (Where are we heading?), and ultimate meaning of life (What is the ultimate purpose of human existence?). Second, they have written texts, like the Bible, Qur'an, and Rig Veda. These texts serve to freeze thought at the times in which the texts were written. While the culture continues to change, the authoritative body of beliefs remains the same. Commentaries, however, make these writings meaningful and applicable to contemporary times and cultures. Third, high religions are institutionalized. They have their own specialized leadership roles, bureaucratic organizations, and credal formulations which set them apart from other institutions. Temples, church buildings, and schools for training leaders provide locations for institutional activity. Fourth, high religions provide ethical and moral directives for religious participants. A moral god(s) is in conflict with the forces of evil. Howells describes high religions with the following words:

The great faiths are messianic, being founded on historical figures of great personal force, like Jesus or Mohammed. Secondly, they are strongly ethical. Thirdly, they might be called world religions, because they have a missionary character allied to their messianic one. They see no boundaries, each considering itself the one true creed; they are imperialistic, going out to bring into the fold others than those people among whom they grew up, so that Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism now have the vast majority of their adherents beyond the borders of the nation where their messiahs first preached. . . . They have . . . a great exclusiveness in belief; a jealousy of their own doctrines and an intolerance of others, which they relentlessly seek to blot out. Each is basically a sufficient philosophy, propounded by the messiah and worked upon by his followers in the endeavor to make the whole thing into a single logical and ethical structure. (Howells 1962, 5)

The characteristics of low religions contrast with those of high religions. First, low religions are concerned with immediate issues of everyday life. They deal with crises of disease, death, and drought. Solutions are sought when a wife is barren, when determining the success of a new business venture, or when planning an auspicious time for a daughter's wedding. Second, low religions have few authoritative texts. Beliefs are conveyed from person to person--and from generation to generation--by oral traditions, duplicated rituals, and reenacted dramas. Because these beliefs are not frozen in writing, they change imperceptibly--without people being aware of the modification. Conceptions are reinterpreted for changing occasions and to reflect solutions to new problems. Animism therefore is dynamic, always reformulating as interpretative models of reality change. Third, low religions are informally organized. Leaders are charismatic personalities who are able to creatively deal with new circumstances rather than specialists who deal in areas of expertise and who depend upon the wishes of the bureaucracy. Buildings are not

significantly important. Fourth, low religious systems are amoral. While the Christian God is moral and provides a model of morality for all believers, animistic powers are amoral. Personal spiritual beings of animistic religions might be either good or bad, benevolent or malevolent. Because their qualities are analogous to human qualities, they provide no ethical standard of morality beyond that which exists in human cultures.

Applications to Missionary Ministry in Animistic Contexts

When considering cognitive domains and the distinctions made between high and low religions, the missiologist is led to ask some penetrating questions: Why do many missionaries not visualize low religious customs? Why must missionaries communicate the nature and reality of cosmic warfare in animistic contexts? How can syncretism be avoided?

Perceiving Low Religious Customs

Frequently low religions and high religions exist side by side and even within the same person. Missionaries immediately see the high religion of their area and have categories to understand its nature. Low religious beliefs and customs, however, are less overt and harder for the missionary to perceive because of his Western presuppositions and lack of training to understand animistic beliefs.

For example, all orthodox Muslims follow the same Five Pillars of Islam. The functions of these pillars are so parallel to Christian rites that their high religious meanings are apparent. The Muslim confession of faith (the shahadah), "There is no God but one God, and Muhammad is his prophet," is expressed numerous times daily. The haunting and beautiful summons to ritual prayer (salat) is heard five times each day. Muslims give alms (zakat) to the poor very much like Christians. During the lunar month of Ramadan, the entire Muslim culture observes a fast (sawm) from daybreak to sundown. Much publicity is given to those who are going on their pilgrimage (haji) to the Kaaba in Mecca. These pillars of Islam are universal public rituals wherever Islam has become rooted.

However, when these same pillars are used animistically, they are much harder for the missionary to understand. The confession of faith is used to counter the forces of evil eye and to magically ward off jinn which usurp people's loyalty to Allah. The words become power words rather than a confession of belief. When used in this way, the confession becomes paradoxically a denial of its very content. The motivation for saying prayers, giving alms, fasting during Ramadan, and going on the pilgrimage to Mecca is to gain baraka, an impersonal spiritual power which, when stored up, helps a person obtain power for life. Understood animistically, baraka is disconnected from Allah, its source in orthodox Islam, and is used to manipulate reality. Other animistic customs, like veneration of pirs, power personalities who stand between the living and Allah, and Zar ceremonies, in which spirits are called into practitioners for the purpose of divination, are more difficult to understand than Muslim high religion.

Similarly, African missionaries have walked past various designs of ancestral shrines and perceived them to be unique chicken coops. Missionaries without anthropological and theological training in Animism frequently overlook or misunderstand low religious customs.

Even when these missionaries begin to grasp the extent of Animism in a culture, they frequently deny the validity of these beliefs and customs and call the people superstitious. Jinn are not considered real spirits, and belief in baraka is understood as myth. The people's animistic beliefs become another rationale for missionaries' latent ethnocentrism.

Communicating the Nature and Reality of Spiritual Warfare

Missionaries trained in Western universities and seminaries typically see evangelism as dealing with the cosmic issues of high religion, not the immediate problems of everyday life. The common people of the world, on the other hand, are more deeply concerned about low religion than high religion. While the people are asking low religious questions, the missionary is preaching on the level of high religion. Norman Allison testifies that, when he first began ministering in Jordan, he taught the abstract theological propositions formulated in Western institutions of

learning. The people who gathered in his living room for religious discussion, however, were deliberating on things that to him were unrelated to the study of the Bible:

Killing a lamb and placing its blood on the front of a new car to keep away the "evil eye" seemed to be a significant spiritual experience for them. In the case of a sick person, placing a book of Psalms under the pillow to speed recovery was very important.

Only when Allison began to teach concerning the sovereignty of God over the spirit world did the group, with great interest and response, begin to discuss the concepts of the Bible (1984, 165-166).

In an animistic context the message must center on the cosmic conflict between God and the gods, between Christ and the demons, between the church and the principalities and powers. Christ's kingdom confronts the kingdom of Satan, and in the cross Christ has already become victorious over the domain of Satan. Christ came to the earth so that he might "destroy the works of devil" (1 John 3:8). In this great confrontation with the forces of Satan, Christians will overcome because Christ, who dwells in them, is greater "than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). With these theological presuppositions, the issues of high religion have a direct relationship to the issues of low religion.

Burnett concisely describes a holistic theological approach to animistic peoples (1988, 218-220). On the level of high religion, there must be "truth encounter." All peoples must understand the nature of God. He is "compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in loving kindness and truth" (Exod. 34:6). As Creator, he expects all of his creation to worship him and relate to him. When they serve other gods instead of him, he becomes jealous and punishes his creation in love in order to lead them back to himself (Exod. 34:7; Prov. 3:11-12; Heb. 12:5-11). God's love is manifested in what he has done in Jesus Christ. His son died to break the power of Satan and to redeem his alienated creation back to himself. True meaning and fulfillment can be found only by living in a relationship with eternal God in Jesus Christ. All must declare their allegiance to the God of the universe. There can be no other gods. These eternal, universal truths must confront every culture.

On the level of low religion, there must be "power encounter." The issues of everyday life are dealt with in relation to the reality of the sovereignty of God and our allegiance to him. The idols of pagan gods must be torn down. Ungodly magic must be shown to be ineffective before the mighty power of God. Those oppressed and possessed by animistic powers must be freed by God's mighty hand. The inroads of Satan into our institutions and customs must be confronted and the ethics, morality, and purity of God reestablished. These confrontations with the forces of Satan require visible demonstrations of the power of God in animistic contexts.

On the level of the technological or natural, there must be "empirical encounter." In secular societies the God who stands behind all natural order must be affirmed. Christ, as the creating force of God, is the one who holds all things together (Col. 1:17). The world is not a "closed universe," existing independent of its creator. God must be brought back into science.

So the Christian message in animistic contexts is holistic. It entails proclamation on all levels of culture.

Avoiding Syncretism by Presenting a Holistic Message

When the Christian message is proclaimed in a non-Christian context, there is always some type of synthesis between the message and the culture. If eternal Christian meanings are internalized in contemporary Christian forms, the result is healthy indigenization. If, on the other hand, Christian forms are given non-Christian meanings, the result is syncretism. In such syncretism the essential meanings of Christianity are lost (Hiebert 1981, 378).

When Christianity does not answer the problems of low religion, new converts will respond in one of two ways. Each of these responses reflects a type of syncretism. The first response is *reversion* to the traditional practices of low religion. This reversion might be total. For example, a Kipsigis Christian of Kenya who goes to a shaman to determine the cause of an illness concludes that he is not faithful to the Lord and that it would be hypocritical to attend church meetings. Kipsigis firmly feel that Christians cannot follow two contradictory ways, as implied in

their proverb "Two walking sticks cannot be burned together." In other contexts, the reversion might be partial. Converts might look to high religion to answer cosmic questions concerning origins, destiny, and ultimate meaning in life but revert to the old low religion to deal with immediate problems of life, such as illness, death, and drought. As Steyne says, "Many . . . converts [hold] the Bible in one hand and their traditional religion in the other" (1989, 16). Among the Luo, an ethnic group adjacent to the Kipsigis, it is not unusual for a Christian to worship God on Sunday while consulting the shaman during the week. While a Kipsigis might totally revert during such times, the Luo would allow his shamanism to coexist with his Christianity.

The second response is *surface accommodation*. Converts in animistic contexts take the symbols from high religion and attribute animistic meanings to them. Among Folk Muslims the confession of faith and names for Allah become power words, rather than words of adoration and praise. The Qur'an is used as a book of magic rather than a divine revelation with a message. In Christo-paganism a cross, the symbol of a suffering savior, is put on a house as a protective symbol to ward off evil spirits. The Bible is used as a magical fetish, not as a book of eternal knowledge. Among Brazilian spiritists names for old Yoruban gods were brought over by slaves from West Africa and equated with names of Christian personalities and Catholic saints. Yemanja was equated with the Virgin Mary, Oxala with Jesus, Xango with both John the Baptist and St. Jerome, and Ogum with St. George (St. Clair 1971, 62-64). Although the high religion appears Christian on the surface, the content is animistic.

This tendency for syncretism is amplified by missionaries who turn to religion for ultimate meaning in life and to science for issues of everyday life, like the healing of disease. The answers to the problems of low religion have become secularized. When missionaries unconsciously project this philosophy as a part of Christianity, they become a secularizing force. Because missionaries have frequently separated religion and science, they have become secularizing rather than Christianizing forces (Miller 1973, 99-107; Newbigin 1966).

To counter such syncretistic tendencies, the Christian message must be presented holistically. The message of a sovereign God who desires his people's trust and allegiance-- beliefs on the level of high religion--is reflected by his power in defeating the principalities and powers on the level of low religion. Belief that God hears when we pray and that he is with us in his spirit enables the animist to trust in God when confronted with evils of the immediate life rather than seeking to manipulate spiritual powers to do his bidding.

Holistic Preaching: Integrating Low and High Religious Themes

When I first preached about prayer using the story of Hannah, the barren wife of Elkanah, the Kipsigis were enthralled. The story of two wives, one blessed with many children and the other blessed with the love of her husband, reflected African sentiments. The heartrending tears of Hannah touched them as they empathized with the dilemma of a woman without a son. They knew the lack of respect, the ridicule, that Kipsigis women without sons feel. At this point I asked, "What did Hannah do because she did not have a son?" All was silent for a long moment. Finally someone spoke, "Hannah prayed, and God gave her a son." Hannah's joy and triumph were felt by the Kipsigis listeners as they heard of this woman who prayed and was given a son. This son eventually became God's prophet and priest in Israel. The Kipsigis realized that if they were in Hannah's situation they would also praise God and say, "There is no one holy like the Lord. Indeed, there is no one besides you, neither is there any rock like our God" (1 Sam. 2:2). God eventually opened the womb of Hannah so that she gave birth to three sons and two daughters (1 Sam. 2:21). "Is it not true," I asked, "that God is the one who gives children?" (Ps. 113:9; 127:3).

I then began to apply the story to the Kipsigis context. "What would a Kipsigis woman do if she did not have a son?", I asked. Once again silence filled the room. The men grinned; the women hid their eyes because such a traditional question was voiced in public. Hearing about Hannah praying to God was enjoyable; the story expressed ideal Christian beliefs. But this question was startlingly unpredictable. Finally, one brave Christian woman voiced what all knew to be true: "Typically when a woman is barren, she goes to the Chepsogeiyot," the female diviner who determines why the woman is barren."

We then compared the faith of Hannah to the faith of a traditional Kipsigis woman who had gone to the Chepsogeiyot. While Hannah relied on God and waited faithfully for him to act, the Kipsigis woman, following the dictates of the diviner, sought to overcome the curse of a recently deceased aunt. She sought to appease through a

propitiatory sacrifice. Hannah related to sovereign God, the one who is the source of all power. Hannah's relationship to God was one of praise (1 Sam. 2:1-10); the traditionalist had an allegiance which blocked her relationship with God (Isa. 8:19).

At the conclusion of the lesson, the unusual happened. A lady stood up and said, "Would you tell this story again?" That day I realized that stories with contextualized applications holistically communicate biblical theology. Issues of high religion and low religion do not have to be segmented but can be brought together. Sovereign God was shown as actively working in his world and must be proclaimed as the God who acts.

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Chapter 4
Change in Animistic Societies

Topics in Chapter

Illustrations of Conversion

A vibrant, thirty-year-old Kenyan lady, a faithful Christian, responded to the gospel invitation by walking to the front of the meeting with a girl at her side. The Christian lady explained her prayer request:

Today I do not respond out of my own need for forgiveness and cleansing but rather the need of this young lady. Remember how I once was possessed by ancestral spirits. At that time I was just as this young lady--bothered, frightened, and bewildered. After hearing of the greatness and majesty of God and his sovereignty over the world, I responded to him in faith, and you prayed for me. Because of those prayers, I have been delivered. After baptism I continued to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. I praise Jehovah who is the source of my salvation. This young lady is now possessed by ancestral spirits just as I was. I have taught her of the greatness and majesty of God just as you have taught me. She believes in Christ and has repented of her sins and desires to come under the sovereignty of God. She desires your prayers and desires to fully come to Christ in baptism.

The young lady was then asked to confess her belief in Jesus as God's Son and her Lord and was exhorted to give total allegiance to Creator God. After her confession a number of Christian leaders gathered around her and prayed to God that she might be delivered. Later that day, after still more exhortations, she was taken to the river and united with Christ through baptism.

A non-Christian family living in the Kabtele village of the Kipsigis tribe of Kenya returned home to find nettles from a thorn tree sprinkled across the doorway of their home. They believed these thorns signified that a curse had been put on their house. If they entered it or tried to remove the thorns, they would die. They asked leaders from a denominational church to help, but these men referred them to the police, saying, "We do not know how to deal with this."

Soon Christians in the adjoining village of Arokiet heard of the family's predicament. With faith in a powerful God who breaks down every false idol, they came to the non-Christian's house. They sang and prayed before the house. Then, with belief in the protecting power of Creator God, they brushed the thorn nettles away and entered the house. This family, freed from fear of the curse, became the first members of the church in this village. Within three years this church grew to more than seventy and the church at Arokiet to more than 170.

In a similar way, the conversion of the Thessalonians is a "model" not only to "all believers in Macedonia and Achaia" (1 Thess. 1:7) but also to contemporary Christians coming to Christ out of animistic backgrounds. These early Christians made a definite break with their animistic traditions. They "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven" (1 Thess. 1:7, 9). Such a definite break from traditional power sources is characteristic of change as animists come to Christ.

How does such change to Christ take place in animistic societies? In this chapter three perspectives toward change from the fields of anthropology, history of science, and missiology are given. Change is understood as a process occurring during revitalization movements (the view of the anthropologist Anthony Wallace), when new worldview paradigms displace old paradigms (the perspective of the science historian Thomas Kuhn), and through power encounter (the viewpoint of missiologist Alan Tippett). Change from Animism to Christianity will be discussed under

each of these models.

Change through Revitalization Movements: The Perspective of Anthony F. C. Wallace

The Concept of Revitalization

Anthony Wallace writes as a religious anthropologist of a functional orientation. This school of anthropology conceives that the role of culture is to meet the physical and psychological needs of society. From his perspective Wallace defines "revitalization movements" as "deliberate, conscious, organized efforts by members of a society to create a more satisfying culture" (1956, 279; 1966, 30). Leaders of societies deliberately and consciously seek some type of revitalization when their basic needs are not being met. A more satisfying culture is created out of this organized effort to revitalize disintegrating culture. These revitalization movements occur under two related conditions (1956, 179).

First, revitalization movements occur during times of stress for individual members of the society. In animistic societies fear of spirits and ancestors or witchcraft and sorcery during times of catastrophe creates fear which is unfathomable to either a Christian or secularist. Stress is especially apparent during times of persistent illness. "Who has caused this sickness?" the animist typically asks. Thus Umbanda spiritists of Brazil commonly say, "Umbanistas come to Umbanda through the door of suffering" (Brown 1979, 280). The animist might seek to defeat the forces of both personal and impersonal spiritual power by coming to Christ. In this way Christian conversion frequently leads to what Wallace calls a revitalization of culture.

Second, revitalization movements occur when there is widespread disillusionment with existing cultural beliefs. Such disillusionment is created when government bulldozers in Melanesia uproot trees that are thought to be taboo or when Christopagan Catholics among the Chontal Indians perform the traditional rituals to protect their animals from illness and death, but the animals die anyway (Turner 1984, 116). In each of these cases, animists seek both a functional power that works and a belief system that explains how to induce the power. When traditional rites appear not to be working, other integrative cultural Gestalts are sought. Cultural innovators then seek ways of reducing stress by developing new models around which to organize cultural patterns.

Wallace researched the Iroquois Indians in developing his revitalization model. Two movements are described in some detail.

The first movement, around 1450, focused on the recluse Hiawatha. While living in the forests because of depression due to the death of his wife and family, he was visited by the god Dekanawidah. Meeting this god face-to-face became for him a "moment of moral regeneration." From that time Hiawatha took upon himself Dekanawidah's mission: to persuade the five tribes of the Iroquois to unite into a confederacy and prohibit blood feuds among themselves. Iroquois culture was revitalized by this prophetic message, which enabled the tribe to develop military and economic power during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Wallace 1966, 33-34).

The second movement occurred toward the end of the eighteenth century when the Iroquois were living in poverty and humiliation. They were demoralized by whiskey, dispossessed from their traditional lands, and scattered among tiny reservations between rapidly developing white settlements. They were unable to compete with white technology because of illiteracy and lack of training. Were they, as many other aboriginal peoples, to disappear as a distinct cultural group? Would they become a marginal people on the fringes of white society? At this time of cultural demoralization, a past chief named Handsome Lake, who reflected his culture's demoralization, had the first of a number of visions from representatives of Creator God. He was given a glimpse of heaven and hell and told that the Iroquois must become new men or be sent to hell. Handsome Lake began to exhort the Iroquois to stop quarrelling, cease drinking, renounce witchcraft, and follow his new code of conduct Gaiwiio, "good word." He advised rejection of the old maternal lineage responsibilities and encouraged respect for the nuclear family. He challenged the men to work the fields as the white man, a job traditionally assigned to women. He exhorted them to follow advantageous white practices without losing their cultural identity. Handsome Lake's code revitalized the Iroquois. They became sober, diligent farmers. Today his religion continues to be "followed by hundreds of Iroquois on reservations in New

York and Canada" (Wallace 1966, 31-33; Ember 1977, 305).

Stages in a Revitalization Movement

Wallace uses his research of the Iroquois to formulate his model of revitalization movements. Despite cultural variations, he perceives that "such movements follow a remarkably uniform program" throughout the world (1966, 158). He sees five stages of a revitalization cycle: the steady state, the period of increased individual stress, the period of cultural distortion, the period of revitalization, and the new steady stage.

During the initial steady stage, the needs of society are generally met so that stress in the system "varies within tolerable limits" (1956, 266). Conceptions of birth, life, and death are comprehensible and believable. The stage is characterized by a "moving equilibrium," with change due to gradual drift rather than deliberate intent by members of the society (1966, 158). Since the society is basically satisfied with the status quo, it tends to be resistant to Christian conversion. During this stage, the Chontal Indian would not question the fact that, if he keeps the rituals, his animals will live. If one animal at a time dies, he would likely attribute it to his neglect in meticulously keeping very complicated rituals.

Tension rises during the period of increased individual stress. Members of society have difficulty coping with their problems. Tension may arise due to population explosion, information explosion, transitions from a face-to-face to an impersonal society, warfare, drought, disease, the encroachment of Westernism, or the death of more than one animal in one's herd. The Chontal Indian would ask, "Why have the rituals not protected my animals?" A Brazilian woman asks, "Why can I not find someone to marry?" and in frustration turns to the spirit medium for guidance (St. Clair 1971, 181). When a culture does not have answers to societal dilemmas, it becomes ripe for change. In order to relieve the tension created by such dilemmas, cultural innovators begin to look for internal cultural solutions. Or an outsider, like a missionary, may suggest new options not previously considered by the culture. At this point anyone considering a new way is regarded as a deviant; his options are revolutionary.

During the period of cultural distortion, new options confront old ways as people seek resolutions to the tensions of society. Society is in a state of flux. Old conceptions are seen as increasingly incomprehensible and are continually called into question. Cultural needs are not being met. Within such a society there is an increasing imbalance and instability. What Wallace calls "the regressive response" exhibits itself in

alcoholism, extreme passivity and indolence, the development of highly ambivalent dependency relationships, intragroup violence, disregard of kinship and sexual mores, irresponsibility in public officials, states of depression and self-reproach, and probably a variety of psychosomatic and neurotic disorders. (1956, 269)

The culture is "internally distorted" because "the elements are not harmoniously related but are mutually inconsistent and interfering" (1956, 269). As a result, the society is extremely receptive to Christian change as people search for alternatives around which to revitalize society. Change is anticipated and even demanded for the revitalization of society. The new way, which was considered deviant, is now an alternative. The Chontal Indian who has seen much of his flock die no longer believes in the old Christopagan rituals and is extremely receptive to a message about a caring, sovereign Creator God.

However, if revitalization does not take place, anomie will continue to increase and the process of cultural deterioration can lead to cultural disintegration. The populations of disintegrating societies can die off, splinter into autonomous groups, or be absorbed into a larger, better integrated society. Wallace says, "This process of deterioration can, if not checked, lead to the death of the society" (1956, 270). For example, the Yir Yoront of Australia have failed to survive as a distinct cultural entity because the symbol of paternal authority, the stone axe, was undermined by the premature introduction of steel axes into the culture (Sharp 1952). Likewise, the proud Masai, the largest, most feared tribe in Kenya before colonial encroachments, have dwindled to a fringe tribe. No significant revitalization movements have taken place in recent Masai history. One Masai Christian, living in an urban center away from his people, personally told me that he believes that in twenty years most Masai will lose their identities in the cities or live in Tanzania, where there is more space for a nomadic lifestyle. The hope of the Masai probably lies with the few emerging Christian leaders, especially those of the Churches of Christ, who are seeking to contextualize

God's eternal message in terms of Masai realities.

Hopefully, the period of cultural distortion will lead to revitalization. Wallace outlines six "functional stages" leading to cultural revitalization (1956, 270-275). First, an individual in the culture has a mazeway reformulation: He begins to picture his society in a new and different way. His mazeway--his personal perspective on his culture's worldview--no longer correlates with mainstream interpretations. Second, this cultural innovator becomes a prophet, communicating his new interpretation of reality to his people. Third, the prophet establishes an organization which will give continuity to his cultural perspectives. The power of the prophet must be transferred to others, or the movement is apt to die with the prophet who gave it birth. Fourth, the organization must adapt to the resistance that it is bound to encounter. Fifth, a cultural transformation occurs when a significant part of the population embraces the new religion. Sixth, revitalization movements affect "various economic, social, and political institutions and customs" in a process that Weber calls "routinization" (1956, 275). A revitalization movement will only develop indigenous roots when these six stages are completed.

Umbanda spiritism is an illustration of such a revitalization movement. Umbanda's founder, Zelio de Moraes, experienced significant mazeway reformulation. Building upon spiritistic orientations prevalent in Christopagan Catholicism, he divined solutions to people's problems while possessed by a spirit claiming to be Caboclo of the Seven Crossroads. Caboclo was said to be half-Indian and half-African. As such, he reflected the miscegenation of the nation of Brazil. Because of his mixed breeding, he communicated directly with both the local Indian spirits who once inhabited the land and the African spirits of Condomble, who guided the millions of African slaves from Africa to Brazil. Brazilians understood such mixing of blood. As a "half-breed spirit," Caboclo was Brazilian! He was one of them! He could understand their nation and their problems (St. Clair 1971, 136). Today Umbanda is growing faster than any other religious group in Brazil because it is an overt contextualization of latent animistic beliefs long held by the majority of Catholics. Since its beginning around 1930, Umbanda has effectively achieved Wallace's stages of cultural revitalization: mazeway reformulation; communication of new ideology; establishing informal, effective organizations appropriate to the Brazilian scene; adapting to resistance; cultural transformation by making latent beliefs overt; and routinization. In 1988 Umbanda, with an estimated "20 million active adherents," is considered "the leading religious group in Brazil if one measures beliefs in terms of actual behavior and practice. It is estimated that more people routinely engage in Umbandan rituals than regularly go to Mass" (Nielsen 1988, 94).

The final stage of the revitalization process is a new steady state. The cultural transformation has been accomplished and the new system has proven itself viable.

Critique of Wallace's "Revitalization Movements"

For the Christian missionary Wallace's concept of revitalization movements has both strengths and limitations. Its basic asset is that it provides a model through which change can be perceived from the animistic to the Christian as well as from one animistic system to another. Yet the missionary must understand the conceptual framework out of which Wallace is writing. Wallace, as a functional anthropologist, views revitalization as a social process set in force when the needs of society are not being met.

Three major negative critiques can be made of his model from a missiological perspective. First, his model is this-worldly emphasizing the human dynamic in the world without perceiving the divine. In any such humanistic model there is no conception of God convicting people of sin through the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11). There is no conception of an active God working in us to defeat the powers of Satan that radiate out of animistic systems. Second, but relating to the first point, Wallace conceives of all religious systems as neutral. They are neither good nor bad, ethical nor unethical, true nor false. All religious systems are conceived functionally as conceptual and organizational frameworks needed by humans for the revitalization of society. Such a secular position we reject! Our God is not a distant, inactive deity but an active participant in the change occurring in our world! Third, Wallace's model concentrates on the cultural process while largely excluding the content of the worldview that integrates a culture. Such naivete about functional change within cultures without perceiving the integrating role of worldview is the major fallacy of the functionalist perspective of culture.

Thus a more adequate model would both bring the divine into human interactions and emphasize the content of

worldview beliefs.

Change through Reinterpretation of Data and Establishing New Paradigms: The Perspective of Thomas Kuhn

The Concepts of Paradigm and Paradigm Shift

Thomas Kuhn, writing as a philosopher and historian of science, believes change does not take place because of new information or because of accumulation of facts. Rather, new paradigms are developed to interpret old and newly perceived information. These paradigms are defined as "accepted models or patterns" out of which practitioners of a society view reality (1970, 23). These models are learned and serve to focus the research and orientations of scientific communities (1970, 44). Reality cannot be sought without these models, "since nature is too complex and varied to be explored at random" (1970, 109). Paradigms are essential in that they serve to focus observation and experimentation. Science, therefore, cannot exist without paradigms because they serve as integrative models for viewing reality (1970, 77).

According to Kuhn, change does not take place cumulatively--slowly, bit by bit over a long period of time--as commonly perceived. Change takes place instead in paradigm shifts. These paradigm shifts are considered "revolutions" in which "an older paradigm is replaced in whole or in part by an incompatible new one" (1970, 92). For example, Copernicus brought about a significant paradigm shift in astronomy. Before his time the earth was conceived of as the center of the universe and was not thought to be in motion. Copernicus created a new paradigm by posing that the earth itself was hurdling through space. Humans do not feel the motion because they are traveling with the earth. Kuhn says that "the very ease and rapidity with which astronomers saw new things when looking at old objects with old instruments may make us wish to say that, after Copernicus, astronomers lived in a different world" (1970, 116-117). New facts had not been added, but a new paradigm had developed through which old facts were understood and integrated.

According to Kuhn, change takes place during times when anomaly creates crisis. Anomaly occurs when paradigm-induced expectations that govern science are not verified in research (1970, 52-53). For example, Copernicus complained that in his day astronomers were so "inconsistent in these [astronomical] investigations . . . that they cannot even explain or observe the constant length of the seasonal year" (1970, 83). Scientists were in a dilemma. Why was the old paradigm not working? Why were the projections not consistent? Because of the inconsistencies, Copernicus began to study the anomaly. This study eventually led to a new paradigm which could more adequately explain the data.

The period of crisis, when paradigms do not adequately depict reality, is a time when "the world is out of joint" (1970, 79). For example, Wolfgang Pauli, in the months before Heisenberg's paper on matrix mechanics pointed the way to a new quantum theory, wrote to a friend, "At the moment physics is again terribly confused. In any case, it is too difficult for me, and I wish I had been a movie comedian or something of the sort and had never heard of physics." After the development of Heisenberg's theory, Pauli wrote, "Heisenberg's type of mechanics has again given me hope and joy in life. To be sure it does not supply the solution to the riddle, but I believe it is again possible to march forward" (1970, 83-84). During such a period of crisis, any such disoriented discipline is receptive to paradigm revision.

Like the enculturation of a child into his society, paradigm conceptions are tacitly imposed upon the student entering a discipline. Basic assumptions are communicated, both in the classroom and in the literature, as if they are true. The legitimacy of a paradigm is assumed without the student's overt critique of its underlying presuppositions. The choice of a paradigm, then, is not determined by logic or experiment. Change of paradigms typically occurs only when a sense of "malfunction" leads to a crisis which in turn leads to a paradigm shift.

Within this framework a scientist's "transfer of allegiance from paradigm to paradigm" can be compared to a conversion experience (1970, 151). The scientist must take a leap of faith to accept the new paradigm because no paradigm answers all the questions. Kuhn says that a paradigm "cannot be made logically or even probabilistically

compelling for those who refuse to step into the circle" (1970, 94).

As the next section will show, Kuhn's concepts of paradigm and paradigm shift have greatly affected the field of missiology. The use of these concepts will pose many questions regarding their missiological applications. To what degree can Christian missionaries use Kuhn's concept of paradigm and paradigm shift? What are the strengths and weaknesses, the applications and limitations of these constructs? To what degree can the concepts of Kuhn be applied to change to God from Animism?

The Use of Kuhn's Concept of Paradigm in Missiology

Paradigms and Worldview. Thomas Kuhn's conception of paradigm has been formative to the concept of worldview in missiology. For example, Charles Kraft in *Christianity and Culture* begins with Kuhn's concept of paradigm in developing the principle that there are central organizing themes in culture through which people order their perceptions of the world (1980, 24-31). These conceptions are integrated into a worldview, defined as "the central assumptions, concepts, and premises more or less widely shared by members of a culture or a subculture" (Kraft 1976). Cultures, therefore, are not a conglomeration of functional traits. Cultural traits rather flow out of a worldview, which serves to explain, evaluate, psychologically reinforce, and integrate a culture (Kraft 1980, 54-57). In this school of anthropology, sometimes called ethnoscience but more often cognitive anthropology, "each culture is seen as an autonomous paradigm with a worldview of its own" (Hiebert 1987, 108). Every animistic system has underlying assumptions which are integrated into its worldview. The spiritist of Brazil intuitively assumes that spirits actively control the living. The Kipsigis of Kenya perceive that death occurs when body is separated from spirit. The disembodied spirit will eventually come back into life in another body. Ancestors are believed to exist and have power over the living. Those of a cargo cult mentality in New Guinea intuitively believe that wealth comes from spiritual sources and can be induced by ritual. The traditional Sawi of Irian Jaya idealize treachery. Voodooist of Haiti assume that spirits are transferable so that the spirits of people are metamorphosed into dogs or other animals. These assumptions are implicitly validated by their cultures.

There are also worldview assumptions inherent to Judeo-Christian cultures and fundamental to biblical Christianity. A central assumption is that "God created a universe that exists outside of but dependent upon himself" (Hiebert 1985a, 113). People, in turn, are rational beings who can know and understand God and his message as revealed in the Bible. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob can be known and understood in history. He is not far away from any one of us. This Judeo-Christian worldview stands in vivid contrast to certain Asiatic perspectives which view the outside world as an illusion of the mind. Such an Eastern worldview perceives that true reality cannot be found in the external world but by looking within oneself by meditation. Obviously the Christian "appeal to history" to verify the gospel has little meaning to Asians who "see all history as merely a figment of their imaginations" (Hiebert 1985a, 45, 113).

Although missiologists generally agree that worldviews are instrumental in understanding cultures, most today will not directly correlate Kuhn's paradigm with worldview. Rather, paradigms grow out of worldviews (Marshall 1980, 4). They are the secondary deductions made by society based on their implicit worldviews. Thus worldviews "are more total views of reality than paradigms and models and employ many paradigms and models" (Kraft 1980, 29).

Paul Hiebert gives three "levels of mental construction": (1) the worldview, which integrates paradigm beliefs into an integrative whole; (2) belief systems or paradigms, which determine the questions society is asking, provide methods of investigation, and "mediate between empirical realities and world view," and (3) theories, which provide practical answers raised by belief systems (Hiebert 1985c, 13).

WORLD INSIDE

(Culture)

WORLD VIEW

-- provides ontological affective and normative assumptions upon which the culture builds its world.

-- integrates belief systems into a single cultural whole.

BELIEF SYSTEMS

(RESEARCH TRADITIONS/PARADIGMS)

-- determines domain of examination.

-- defines questions to be asked.

-- provides methods for investigation.

-- integrates theories into a comprehensive belief system.

-- mediates between empirical realities and world view.

THEORIES

(MAPS, MODELS)

-- provides answers to questions raised by belief system.

-- reduces experimental data to concepts for theoretical manipulation.

EXPERIENTIAL DATA

WORLD OUTSIDE

Fig. 3: Levels of Mental Construction

These cognitive levels might be illustrated by the Brazilian spiritist whose worldview assumes the reality and activity of spirits. On the belief systems or paradigm level, he believes that certain rituals are effective in forcing spirits to do what he wants them to do. On the level of theories or models, he believes that he can induce a girl to love him by spiritistic rituals. A Kipsigis of Kenya assumes, on the worldview level, that ancestors have power over the living. On the belief systems or paradigm level, he believes that extended and severe illnesses are likely due to ancestral intervention into life. On this level the dead also are thought to disturb the living so that they will not be forgotten and, consequently, be called at some future time to live in the body of a newborn. On the level of theory, libations or sacrifices are made to ancestors as dictated by the diviner. The Sawi of New Guinea traditionally assumed treachery

on the worldview level, devised "peace child" paradigms on the belief system level to prevent genocide, and symbolically ended intertribal feuding with ceremonies on the theoretical level.

Paradigm Shifts and Cultural Change. Kuhn concurs with Anthony Wallace on the concept that change occurs during times of tension, stress, and anomaly. However, unlike Wallace, who is chiefly concerned with the process of change, Kuhn stresses that the tension or anomaly arises out of the inadequacy of paradigms to depict reality. From the standpoint of missiology, this is one of Kuhn's strongest contributions. Significant cultural change takes place not when the paradigms of culture adequately express a worldview but when old paradigms are being called into question. Animistic societies become receptive when basic assumptions appear inadequate to explain reality. For example, when the Brazilian spiritist questions the control of the spirits, when the Kipsigis of Kenya questions the power of ancestral spirits over life, and when Sawi of New Guinea treasures peace over treachery, they become ripe for change. Until basic assumptions are questioned, there is resistance to change.

This section has considered two major contributions of paradigms and paradigm shifts to missiology. First, cultural data is not flat with each item being of equal significance. Rather cognitive assumptions and beliefs provide the organizing models through which reality is perceived. Second, significant cultural change takes place during times of crises when old paradigms no longer adequately express current conceptions of reality. Yet Kuhn's perspective on paradigms is based on some secular presuppositions and cannot be totally accepted as a model of change from Animism to Christianity. These secular orientations will now be critiqued.

Critique of Kuhn's Concept of Change through Reinterpretation of Data and Establishing New Paradigms

The Limitations of Subjectivism. From Kuhn's perspective, knowledge is subjective. Although paradigms are only models for depicting reality, they can never totally do so. Since one paradigm will displace another when the first paradigm does not adequately depict reality, there are no absolutes. People are thought to be unable to stand above their paradigms and effectively dialogue with other competing or partially complementary paradigms.

Within Kuhn's framework the search for reality is based on a pragmatism which Hiebert calls "instrumentalism" (Hiebert 1987, 108). Any paradigm is adequate as long as it solves the problems humans face. When a paradigm becomes inadequate, it is discarded for a new one. Instrumentalists see different religious traditions as different paradigms having their own subjective perspectives toward truth. From such a perspective "interpersonal relationships and open dialogue are more important than personal convictions" because humans are not able to ferret out the truth (Hiebert 1985c, 17).

Hiebert has written extensively about Christian epistemological positions. He stands between the "idealist," who sees a one-to-one relationship between his perception of reality and reality itself, and the "instrumentalist," who believes that the external world is real but cannot know whether his knowledge of it is real. Hiebert, as a critical realist, stands between these two positions. He believes that although the "eternal world is real," our "knowledge of it is partial but can be true." Successive paradigms carry the researcher "to closer approximations of reality and truth" (Hiebert 1985c, 17). Thus the critical realist "affirms the uniqueness of a Christianity that is faithful to biblical revelation" but recognizes that "conversions take place within cultural and historical settings" (Hiebert 1985c, 17). Hiebert's critical realism is a Christian epistemological alternative to Kuhn's relativism.

The Limitations of a Purely Emic Approach. There are two vantage points from which culture can be perceived: the emic and the etic. The emic perspective views culture from the inside. The etic, on the other hand, is the outsider's view of culture. Kuhn's model of paradigms is solely concerned with emic perspectives as he assumes that all paradigms are derived from within the culture. There are no supracultural sources of meaning beyond one's own culture. This approach leaves little room for a God who is transcendent to culture, the biblical message which was given outside of the culture, and the cross-cultural communicator who is an external source of paradigms.

Hiebert gives three steps of "critical contextualization" involving both emic and etic elements. First, the effective missionary or local church leader must work with the people in making an exegesis of the culture. They uncritically gather information about traditional beliefs and customs. "The purpose here is to understand the old ways, not to judge them." If traditional beliefs are condemned, they will likely be driven underground. During this step, the culture

begins to pose many questions as to the desires of Creator God. In the second step the missionary or church leaders direct the people in relating the scripture to the questions at hand. These questions form a "hermeneutical bridge" between the culture and the scripture. Finally, the people, as a corporate body, "evaluate critically their own past customs in the light of their new biblical understandings" (Hiebert 1987, 110-111).

In each of these steps there is an interaction between the emic and the etic. The missionary, as an outsider, critically dialogues with his host people. He brings to them horizons and experiences beyond their cultural perspective. The word of God is studied as it is related to their problems and dilemmas. Through such dialogue the missionary develops a metacultural perspective. He is able to stand above his own and his host culture and to compare and analyze their cultural paradigms (Hiebert 1985a, 95). Thus change does not stem merely from emic sources. The impetus for change may come from without the system.

While Wallace's concept of revitalization movements has provided a model showing the process of change, Kuhn's concept of paradigm and paradigm shift point to the function of belief systems in cultural change. If the belief systems are coherent and logical and adequately mediate "between empirical realities and world view," the culture is steady--in little need of revitalization. If, on the other hand, the belief systems are fuzzy and illogical, not adequately depicting reality, innovators in society are logically looking for alternatives.

Change through Power Encounter: The Perspective of A. R. Tippett

A. R. Tippett, the missiologist who fathered the term "power encounter," wrote about buying a 240 volt generator with which he hoped to run a 110 volt machine in order to make a symbolic application to the conversion of the animist. He said,

A missionary geared to a metaphysical level of evangelism in his generator cannot drive a motor of shamanistic voltage. It is a tragic experience to find oneself with the right kind of power but of the wrong voltage. (1960, 413)

As discussed in Chapter 3, many Western missionaries are using the wrong voltage in relating to animists. They are communicating about the questions of high religion: Where have we come from? Where are we heading? What is the ultimate meaning of life? And conversion of the animist is taking place on this cognitive, cosmic level.

However, the animist is not greatly concerned with these issues. He is concerned with the immediate problems of everyday life: Why am I sick? What has caused me to be sick? Why did my daughter die? Who caused it? How can I get him to love me? Who or what has caused this extended drought? In animistic settings power is at the very center of a people's worldview and cannot be neglected. Conversion must be more than an assent to high religious perspectives. It must be a rejection of traditional powers within such contexts and the acceptance of the sovereignty of God. A cognitive, metaphysical message must be coupled with a living belief in the mighty workings of God. The purely metaphysical message is of the wrong voltage in animistic contexts.

Definition of Power Encounter

The term "power encounter" was first used in Tippett's *People Movements in Southern Polynesia*. Tippett relates the example of Pomare II, a ruler of Tahiti, who in 1809 ate a sacred turtle without its first being blessed in the temple and part of the meat offered to idols of the ancestors. The servants of Pomare's household waited expectantly for their king to die because he has broken a taboo. Tippett comments on these events by saying, "This is the first of a series of power-encounter episodes we are to meet in this study of the dynamic configurations of church-growth" (1971, 16).

Since Tippett first demonstrated the significance of power encounter, numerous missiologists have expanded on this concept. At the Willowbank Conference of 1978, sponsored by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, Donald Jacobs posed the position that the concept of power "is at the very center of a culture's existence" (Jacobs 1980, 136). Thus "most people in the non-Western world convert to another faith because of seeking more power"

(Jacobs 1976, 334). The Willowbank Report itself affirms the following about power encounter:

Conversion involves a power encounter. People give their allegiance to Christ when they see that his power is superior to magic and voodoo, the curses and blessings of witch doctors, and the malevolence of evil spirits, and that his salvation is a real liberation from the power of evil and death. (Stott and Coote 1980, 327)

Timothy Kamps has given one of the most comprehensive definitions of power encounter integrating the themes of many different writers:

A power encounter is a spiritual encounter that exposes and calls to account the powers of darkness in their varied forms by the power of God for the purpose of revealing the identity of the one True God resulting in an acknowledgement of and/or allegiance to His lordship by those present. (1986, 10)

This definition assumes a biblical paradigm of the forces of Jesus in competition with the forces of Satan. Jesus came "to destroy the devil's work" (1 John 3:8). Jesus in his death "disarmed the powers and authorities" and "made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross" (Col. 2:15). Yet paradoxically the works of Jesus and the works of Satan coexist in this world like wheat and tares in a field waiting for harvest (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43). The battle in this world "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). "We know that we are children of God, and the whole world is under the control of the evil one" (1 John 5:19). These verses depict a struggle greater than the five senses can perceive. Because most Western people cannot adequately perceive such realities, the Willowbank Report challenges "the mechanistic myth on which the typical western world-view rests" and assumes "the reality of demonic intelligences which are concerned by all means, overt and covert, to discredit Jesus Christ and keep people from coming to him" (Stott and Coote 1980, 327). For example, while John in Revelation records the cosmic conflict between the forces of God and the forces of Satan at the birth of Jesus (Rev. 12), Luke in his Gospel records the activities of the historical personalities through whom Satan worked in attempting to kill the newborn Messiah (Luke 2). Humans see the world overtly as Luke records it. Since Christians follow a biblical paradigm, they see the cosmic struggle between God and Satan for the control of this world. From the perspective of power encounter, conversion is a turning "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God" (Acts 26:18).

Illustrations of Power Encounter

The Bible is replete with illustrations of power encounter. During the time of Ahab, Jezebel aggressively championed Baalism in Israel with all of its fertility rites to induce rain. But God withheld the rain. During this time the prophets of God were being killed. But Elijah personally stood before Ahab to initiate an ordeal with 450 prophets of Baal. In the person of Elijah, the popularly accepted source of power was being confronted by the power of God. Elijah challenged Israel to choose between two powers, two paradigms of viewing the world. "How long will you waver between two opinions?" he asked. "If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him" (1 Kgs. 18:21). After the defeat of the prophets, the people could cognitively and experientially perceive and verbally say, "The Lord--he is God! The Lord--he is God!" (18:39). Once the people turned to God with this confession, God supplied rain (18:41-46). Kamps uses this biblical example to illustrate the meaning of each part of his definition of power encounter. He documents how Baalism was confronted, called into account, and exposed. God's power defeated the power of Baal so that God was recognized as the one true God (Kamps 1986, 15-29).

Other biblical sources also illustrate power encounters. The plagues in Egypt were direct power encounters between the God of Israel and the gods of Egypt because "each plague systematically attacked one or more of the gods of Egypt" (Kamps 1986, 33). Thus "for Israel, the Exodus meant spiritual freedom from the rule and reign of the powers of darkness" (Kamps 1986, 36). Gideon pulled down the altar of Baal and resurrected the altar of God before God could use him to save Israel from Midianite hegemony (Judg. 6:25-40). The Philistine challenge for one to fight Goliath was more than a military challenge. It was thought of by both sides as a spiritual encounter (Kamps 1986, 37-42). Thus David could verbally boast before the contest, "This day the Lord will hand you over to me, . . . and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel" (1 Sam. 17:46). Likewise, the Assyrian challenge to Jerusalem during the time of Hezekiah was a confrontation between the God of Israel and the gods of the Assyrians. The Assyrian commander could boast that the gods of many lands had fallen before Assyria: "How then can the Lord

deliver Jerusalem from my hand?" (2 Kgs. 18:35). This arrogance stemmed from the concept that "the gods of strong nations were superior gods" (Kamps 1986, 43). Yet the true God vindicated his name by defeating the Assyrians (2 Kgs. 19:35-36).

In New Testament times Jews wondered if Jesus was the Messiah because he cast out demons. The Pharisees jealously retorted that Jesus cast out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of demons. Jesus conversely defined what happened as a power encounter. Jesus attributed the demons to Satan and said that Satan could never cast out Satan. Rather two kingdoms were in conflict. The spirits of Satan were being driven out by the Spirit of God (Matt. 12:22-28). Thus Satan was like a strong man who was bound when his house was entered. Jesus was the Stronger Man, who was able to bind the strong man (Matt. 12:29). In healing the spirit-possessed, Jesus entered the house of Satan, where he dwelt, and bound him in order to take possession of his property (Beasley-Murray 1986, 108-111). This was the nature of Jesus' ministry. He broke down the sovereignties of Satan so that His rule could break into the world. The defeat of Satan in his ministry was only a foretaste of what Jesus did when he broke the chains of death and rose from the dead. His death and resurrection were power encounters with the forces of Satan.

In the early church Christians continued to directly encounter animistic forces and their powers. Elymas, the sorcerer, was struck blind (Acts 13:6-13). Paul cast the spirit of divination out of an Philippian slave girl (Acts 16:16-18). Books of magic were burned (Acts 19:19).

Tippett writes that "Western missions might do well to face up to the statistical evidence that animists are being won today by a Bible of power encounter, not a demythologized edition" (1967, 101). His most widely quoted illustration is of the Christian leaders in the Solomon Islands who cut down the taboo banyan tree. A tension-filled crowd of non-Christians gathered to see the spectacle believing that the mana in the tree would kill those who dared break such a taboo. When the taboo had no effect on the Christians, they proclaimed victory in Christ asserting that they possessed a Christian mana stronger than traditional mana (1967, 100-102). One question, which will be critiqued in a later section, must be asked: Is it correct theologizing to interpret Christian power as Christian mana?

Numerous other examples of power encounter could be taken from mission history. Kefa Kweyu, a self-supporting Abaluyia preacher of western Kenya, returned home to find an egg with medicine on it in the doorway of his house. His reaction was not to call the village elders to counsel, seek a diviner, or search for an alternative lodging place. But with faith he proclaimed to any hidden audience, "An egg! Praise God! I'm exhausted and I'm famished. It appears to have `medicine' on it. But that's nothing. Jesus is Lord!" With these words of faith he boiled the egg and ate it! (Kenya Mission Team 1980, 45-46). Christians among the Chontal Indians did the unthinkable. They built a house without performing animistic rites (Turner 1984, 117). The illustrations at the beginning of this chapter describe Christians with faith encountering ancestral power and the curse.

The Role of Power Encounter in Conversion

True power encounter performs two very important functions in facilitating change in animistic societies.

First, true power encounter glorifies God who is sovereign over all (Warner 1988c). It leads to conversion when those who perceive of the majesty and power of God are taught to come under his sovereignty--to accept him as God of gods and Lord of lords. Humans frequently misuse the power of God and contort it for their own selfish, egocentric purposes. The Willowbank Report says,

Power in human hands is always dangerous. We have called to mind the recurring theme of Paul's two letters to the Corinthians--that God's power, which is clearly seen in the cross of Christ, operates through human weakness (e.g., 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5; 2 Cor. 4:7; 12:9, 10). Worldly people worship power; Christians who have it know its perils. (Stott and Coote 1980, 327)

The power of God must never be used to give glory to human personalities or human institutions. Power is of God, and its use in defeating Satan only gives glory to God.

Secondly, power encounter confronts non-Christian elements in society rather than allowing these powers and

sometimes these superstitions to go unchecked. For example, Dal Congdon has found that the nominally Christian Zulu of South Africa are still largely animistic at heart. Fully 69.6 percent of all professing Christians continue to believe that ancestral spirits "protect" them and "bring them good fortune." Congdon's study found that "fewer professing Christians affirmed the deity of Christ than expressed dependence upon the ancestral spirits for problems connected with daily living" (Congdon 1985, 297). The only effective answer to such syncretism is continual power encounters between the God of the Bible and the superstitions and powers of animistic culture coupled with effective communication of Christian paradigms of thought. Congdon rightly concluded his study with the following words:

Christopagan peoples come to a vital faith only when Christ is encountered as Lord at the core of their worldview. The promotion of this encounter by relating Christ effectually to the respondents' worldview must be a controlling objective of missionary work, if it aims to establish a truly Christian church (1985, 299).

As already mentioned, there are various false perspectives toward power. Frequently people become Christians as an access to power rather than as a response, in faith, to the living God. Thus the animist may merely exchange one system of power for another and establish his own Christopagan system. For instance, a lady among the Kipsigis people of Kenya who was sick for some months was continually told by relatives that if she was baptized in some church, she might be healed. If this lady had been baptized, she would have looked upon it as a magical rite of healing rather than as a "pledge of a good conscience toward God" (1 Pet. 3:21). Likewise, Gerald Otis recounts that Muslims in southern Philippines challenged Christians by saying, "If you can cast out the devil from the woman, we will truly believe and embrace immediately the faith in Jesus Christ" (1980, 217). Such words should not necessarily be taken at face value. A demonstration of power does not lead to faith without a sincere desire to know the living and true God. Many Muslims are cynical about the mighty power of God in Jesus Christ, and many folk religionists are searching for power rather than for God.

Christian conversion is the enthroning of Christ at the center of a person's life and allowing him to control every aspect. As such, it involves not only power encounter but also the laying of theological foundations of a Christian worldview. An East African missionary tells of meeting a woman who was believed by the people to have been cursed. Most of her neighbors feared her and claimed every house that she entered was later consumed by flames. They reported that this had happened to 15 different houses. She had consulted a shaman to discover the cause and cure, but the healing rites she was directed to perform failed. The missionary along with other evangelists told her of the power of God available to those who obey and trust Him and related how God's power had personally helped them. Approximately 40 people gathered to hear this interaction. The village was obviously troubled over the matter. That day, four, including this woman, put on Christ in baptism. This woman had come to Christ because of the personal need for power rather than because she wanted to come into a relationship with sovereign God. Would she likely continue in her walk with God if effects of the curse continued? Or was her conversion merely an outward, functional change in order to cure an immediate problem? Two possible mistakes were made in this case. First, the account does not indicate that the curse was directly addressed with prayer to God. Second, more teaching on the worldview level was needed so that the lady might know more vividly how the cosmic confrontation between God and Satan affects her.

"Christian conversion" without worldview change in reality is syncretism. There is a danger in too closely aligning the content of the new Christian message with the content of the traditional animistic message. For example, can the power of God be compared to Christian mana among Solomon Islanders? Are there not important distinctions between the two? While our response to God is relational, the traditional use of mana is manipulative. Instead of comparing the power of God to mana, there should be a continuous contrast between the meaning of the two sources of power. Relational analogies, rather than animistic paradigms, must be used to describe our power source.

Tippett has not typically oversimplified the process of change from Animism to Christianity, attributing the whole change to power encounter. For example, he records many intertwining factors that led the Polynesians to come to Christ. He acknowledges that there has been much "superficial appraisal of the conversion of Pomare II--over-simplification, as if one single factor were responsible for the whole dramatic change" (1972, 13). He shows how Pomare II was experiencing anomaly--living under tremendous tension. He had been militarily defeated even though he had listened to the oracles of Meetia, his prophet. Pomare II and his chiefs were distressed that their gods had allowed a person high in his family to die. The parents, in turn, "drowned their sorrows in unbridled drinking" and also died. At this point Pomare II first announced his desire to turn from traditional Tahitian gods to the God of the

missionaries (1972, 15). Thus Tippett has typically given a broad perspective as to the nature of change from Animism to Christianity.

As this section has shown, power encounter is a central feature in the change of an animist from his belief in idols to serve the true and living God.

Conclusions

In this chapter three different models of change were studied and critiqued in terms of how change occurs in animistic societies. Tentative conclusions will now be given concerning the nature of change from Animism to Christianity based on Wallace's concept of revitalization movements, Kuhn's perspective on paradigms and paradigm shifts, and Tippett's view of power encounter.

First, change in animistic societies takes place during a time of tension leading to cultural disequilibrium. Old cultural conceptions are no longer adequate to explain present perceptions of reality during such times of tension. Thus cultures are more receptive at periods of extreme personal tension and societal distortion.

Second, change is complex and takes place on different levels. Permanent change typically begins on the paradigm or worldview level before affecting the theoretical level. Kuhn's perspectives on paradigms and paradigm shifts have been extremely helpful in this area, especially as used by Kraft in his development of the concept of worldview and by Hiebert in his conceptions concerning the levels of mental construction. Christianization of animistic people, thus, involves more than the burning of fetishes or the acceptance of a God who heals. Becoming a Christian necessitates the reordering of all reality around God and his desires for human life. Change begins from the inside out rather than the outside in.

Third, the issue of sovereignty and allegiance is at the core of cultural change. Power encounters confront cultures on the point of allegiance and call people to come under the sovereignty of God. God's power must never be reformulated, either consciously or unconsciously, into some type of human power. The encounter must conversely be focused on the core issue of allegiance to God.

Fourth, change is a process which is continuous. Cultures experience tension and distortion and must go through times of revitalization. The ultimate revitalization occurs when cultures stand in awe under the sovereignty of Creator God, being reconciled to him by the blood of Jesus Christ. Yet even Christian cultures experience tension and distortion when the focus shifts from Creator God or becomes otherwise distorted. Further revitalizations call the unfaithful back to their relationship with God.

Fifth, Christian missionaries minister most effectively when they are able to perceive cultures from a metacultural perspective. They empathically stand above both their own culture and their host culture but operate within the paradigms of both cultures. Yet truth is not relative, based on subjectively searching for truth within human cultural systems. Truth is of God, who has communicated to us in his Son. The missionary communicates the Christian worldview in culture paradigms understandable to each culture. Thus the effective missionary emically participates in human cultures but etically perceives of reality beyond the confines of any cultural system.

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Chapter 5
Christianity and Animism: Contrasting Worldviews

Topics in Chapter

Syncretism and Cultural Conceptions

When people come to Christ, they interpret the scriptures through the filter of their own worldviews. Timothy Warner rightly draws a continuum bounded by Animism on the one extreme and secularism on the other. He comments that all peoples tend to be syncretistic, that is, they blend beliefs and practices from different systems into new religious configurations. While Westerners are syncretistic on the secular side of the continuum, third-world peoples are frequently syncretistic on the animistic side. Both extremes are dangerous, and truth is found somewhere between these extremes (Warner 1988a).

Fig. 4: The Secular-Animistic Axis

Syncretism on the Secular Extreme

Secularists disavow any powers which cannot be perceived, studied, and analyzed by the five senses. God is relegated to the spiritual realm, where he is allowed little authority over the world he created. Only "natural" powers which can be empirically analyzed are thought to operate in the "natural" world. Paradoxically, people view themselves as self-sufficient, not in need of God in the world that he created. Their world is a "closed universe" because natural powers are thought to operate with no interference from the spiritual realm. Even Christians within secular societies reflect this thinking when they compartmentalize the secular and spiritual. Jeremiah's words call the secular person to dependence on Creator God: "I know, O Lord, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).

Western theologians, in particular, have reflected a secular perspective toward spiritual powers. They reflect this secular orientation in different ways.

First, Western theologians have ignored the concept of spiritual powers in biblical writings. In writing about the Pauline perspective toward angels and demons, Otto Everling remarked, "The utterly subordinate significance of this segment of Paul's thought world seems to have become too generally axiomatic for one to give serious attention to it" (1888, 4). Western theologians have therefore neglected such studies "precisely because they were not easily reducible to modern themes" (Wink 1984, 102).

Second, some Western theologians have determined that although personal spiritual powers once existed, they no longer exist. The dispensation of their activity came to an end with the death of Christ. Teachers of this perspective say that they see no evidence of the spirit world. The lack of any present-day activity of spiritual powers confirms that the demonic powers were destroyed and no longer exist.

Third, Western theologians have found various secular models of reality to explain why the powers are not personal spiritual beings. Harnack distinguished between core elements of religion, which are both timeless and eternal, and the temporary garb in which Christianity was clothed in New Testament times. He considered spiritual powers as part of the temporary garb, which was to be discarded (O'Brien 1984). Bultmann perceived personal spiritual powers as

representing mythological and, therefore, uncritical thinking. These perspectives had to be "demythologized" and interpreted existentially (MacGregor 1954, 26-27). Wesley Carr attempted to prove that all powers in the Bible were angels and that spiritual beings opposed to God did not exist (1987, 72). Hendrik Berkhof and Walter Wink sought to prove that spiritual powers do not have a separate spiritual existence but are seen only in the structures of society (Berkhof 1977; Wink 1986). After reviewing these perspectives, one wonders why these Western theologians were forced to find a new paradigm for interpreting spiritual powers in the Bible. Why could they not have interpreted the passages literally as personal spiritual beings? Is it possible that their interpretations were determined more by a secular mind-set than by biblical exegesis?

Some Western theologians have effectively critiqued these secular interpretations of scripture. J. S. Stewart in a perceptive article in the *Scottish Journal of Theology* called the study of spiritual powers "a neglected emphasis in New Testament theology" because these elements "are integral and basic components to the gospel" (1951, 291, 294). P. T. O'Brien critiqued various interpretations of the principalities and powers and then analyzed New Testament teachings on the subject without demythologizing them (1984).

Western missionaries, having mind-sets conditioned by Western theology, are consistently surprised to hear that their host peoples interpret literally passages that they have either ignored or in some way demythologized. P. T. O'Brien, who taught in an Indian theological school, relates the dissatisfaction of Asian students with Western commentaries because they fail to "take seriously the accounts about demons, exorcism, or Christ's defeat of them" (1984, 130). In the African context the existence of spiritual powers is never doubted, except by those indoctrinated by secular education. Any biblical commentary which did not accept the reality of spiritual beings would be incomprehensible. In such animistic contexts the church is impotent--without power--if she does not develop a perspective of spiritual powers and actively confront these powers.

Syncretism on the Animistic Extreme

Syncretism on the animistic extreme is equally dangerous. The world is perceived as so pervaded by spirits and forces that humans have little free will. Fears pervade life where freedom in Christ should reign. Christians believe in Christ but continue to believe in the power of spirits and impersonal forces over their lives. For example, Congdon's study of the Zulu demonstrated that 69.6 per cent of all professing Christians believed that ancestral spirits accompany and protect them (Congdon 1985, 297). Although the Colossian Christians had received Christ, they were tempted to follow the elementary principles of the powers along with Christ. Paul wrote that Christ was to have all "fullness of Deity"; that is, all things were to be brought under his authority (Col. 1:19; 2:6-8, 20). Like the Israelites of the Old Testament, some contemporary Christians worship God while paying homage and making sacrifices to propitiate other gods and spirits (2 Kgs. 17:9-18).

Handling Syncretism

The church must take two concurrent actions in handling this problem of syncretism. First, the church of God must recognize how syncretistic she has become. She must recognize that she has blended Christianity with both secularism and Animism. The secular Western church must be called to open her "closed universe" without swinging to the animistic side of the continuum (Burnett 1988, 247). The church which is syncretistic on the animistic side must realize that "all fullness of Deity" dwells in Jesus Christ so that he becomes all in all (Col. 2:9-10). God, our Creator, becomes jealous when allegiance is given to other spiritual beings who in comparison to Him are "no gods" (Deut. 32:21). Nevertheless, the God who created us, has given us the free will to choose whom we will follow. Syncretism toward either extreme can be avoided by respect for God's word and by doing proper biblical exegesis. C. S. Lewis has aptly said that demons themselves "hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight" (1961, 9).

Second, the church must let the Bible determine her understanding of the nature of spiritual beings and their work in the world. While the secular view questions the existence of personal spiritual beings, the animistic view believes that these powers control every aspect of life. The Bible calls the church to a middle ground in which God is sovereign over his world but allows his people the freedom to choose their allegiance. This perspective, called theism, acknowledges a cosmic struggle in the world between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan (Burnett 1988, 245-247). While the extremes of secularism and Animism are amoral, the theistic position poses a moral God in

charge of his universe. This chapter gives a theological undergirding to a theistic worldview based upon biblical perspectives of the powers.

Biblical Views and Animistic Beliefs

Much of the Bible portrays the struggle of the people of God with animistic powers. In the Old Testament the Israelites had to continually choose between the God of Israel and the gods of the nations. The gospels describe a struggle between Jesus and the demonic world. In the Pauline epistles the Christian battle is against principalities and powers (Eph. 6:12) and the elementary principles of the world (Col. 2:8, 20). The student of the Bible is forced to develop some rationale for explaining these various terminologies of the powers in the scripture. There are four possible explanatory views.

First, the *evolutionary view* conceives that spiritual powers are not real powers in and of themselves. Rather, the human need for an explanatory system led to the belief in such powers. People have created "a negative parent" because they have a need for one (Wink 1986, 26-30). Originally all evil was ascribed to God. But since a benevolent God could not logically do evil, Satan was created to explain the source of evil. After the development of the concept of Satan, demons evolved to be his servants. The evolutionary view is ultimately a denial of all spiritual power. Man has created beings because he needed them.

Second, the *terminal view* states that demonic activity occurred only during New Testament times in order to counter the coming of Christ. When Christ died, he defeated these powers, and they no longer exist. However, two verses in the Old Testament (Ps. 106:37; Deut. 32:17) show the existence of demonic activity prior to the coming of Christ. Demonic activity also existed after the cross of Christ. Those with unclean spirits were healed (Acts 5:16; 8:7). A magician was confronted and struck blind (Acts 13:6-12). A slave girl with a spirit of divination was cured (Acts 16:16-18). Paul wrote, "In the later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons" (1 Tim. 4:1).

The evolutionary and terminal views are both secular attempts to explain that spiritual powers do not currently exist as real beings. The evolutionary view does this by attempting to prove that people created the powers because of their need to explain the source of evil and suffering. The terminal view provides a model for those whose secular perspectives cannot accept the present existence of spiritual powers although they desire to interpret the Bible literally. This view is usually held by those with a conservative perspective toward biblical authority.

Third, the *functional view* states that demonic powers operate in different ways at different times depending on the beliefs of the people. In C. S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters* Screwtape writes this to Wormwood:

Our policy, for the moment, is to conceal ourselves. Of course this has not always been so. We are really faced with a cruel dilemma. When the humans disbelieve in our existence, we lose all the pleasing results of direct terrorism, and we make no magicians. On the other hand, when they believe in us, we cannot make them materialists and skeptics. At least, not yet. I have great hopes that we shall learn in due time how to emotionalise and mythologize their science to such an extent that what is, in effect, a belief in us (though not under that name) will creep in while the human mind remains closed to belief in the Enemy. The `Life Force,' the worship of sex, and some aspects of Psychoanalysis may here prove useful. If once we can produce our perfect work--the Materialist Magician, the man, not using, but veritably worshiping, what he vaguely calls `Forces' while denying the existence of `spirits'--then the end of the war will be in sight. (1942, 32-33)

The principalities and powers opposed to God work in various ways to alienate people from God. They use gods who are no-gods so people will believe in them and worship them.

Fourth, the *systemic view* sees the powers as personal spiritual beings who are actively impacting the socio-economic and political structures of societies. These powers have established their own rules and regulations which pull cultures away from God. The "elementary principles" (stoicheia) of Pauline writings (Gal. 4:3; Col. 2:8, 20) are an example of this. Stoicheia are literally the rudimentary principles, the ABCs of culture. These are the directives through which the powers have established legalistic control of society. Thus in Colossians and Galatians the stoicheia are illustrated by

legalistic observances of the law, worship of angels, and returning to pre-Christian animistic practices. Stoicheia within these contexts are the demonic contortions of human society. The powers, although personal spiritual beings, have invaded the very fabric of society. Thus even Christian institutions reflect these demonic influences when the powers invade human institutions.

My contention is that the essence of these powers, although taking different forms and manifesting themselves in different cultural ways, is the same in all ages. They are not merely socio-economic systems which have rebelled against God, but personal spiritual powers opposed to the very being of God. Although the names of powers who oppose God vary in different biblical contexts, their origin and essence are one.

When the Bible student conceives of this power struggle in the scriptures, he is forced to answer some penetrating questions: Who are these powers? Are they personal beings or institutional forces? What is their origin? What is the relationship between the God of Israel and the various "gods of the nations" in the Old Testament? How did Jesus treat demons in the gospels? What effect has the death and resurrection of Christ had upon these powers? Who are the principalities and powers described in the Pauline epistles? Are these powers one or many different manifestations? How does the church relate to these powers? The answers to these questions, addressed in this chapter, help to prepare the missionary theologically to minister in animistic contexts.

The Powers and their Status

Their Origin and Fall

The book of Colossians describes the powers as created beings. They were created by Christ to be under his sovereignty: "For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Col. 1:16-17). The purpose of the passage is to show that all powers were created to be in a dependent relationship with Christ. As things created "by him and for him," they were to be Christ's servants--instruments of his sovereignty. "Fullness, completeness" dwells in Christ alone (Col. 1:19; 2:9). The passage implies that fullness does not dwell in powers that desire to be independent of their Creator. The supremacy of Christ is therefore declared in relation to the creation of the powers.

These powers did not originate as foes of God but were created to live under the sovereignty of Christ. In Colossians Paul infers that at some point there was a cosmic rebellion against Christ and his sovereignty. The powers forsook their allegiance to Christ and became independent. They broke with God's sovereignty to establish their own sovereignty. The motivation for this seems to come from Satan, under whose dominion they had fallen. The man of lawlessness, who came according to the will of Satan (2 Thess. 2:9), desired to exalt himself over God--to take "his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God" (2 Thess. 2:4). Instead of pointing to God, Satan and his powers accepted the idolatrous worship of humans, "which exalted them to a divine and absolute status" (Caird 1967, 48). When humans worshipped idols, they were exalting what was "secondary and derivative into a position of absolute worth" (Caird 1967, 9). Origen wrote,

According to our belief, it is true of all demons that they were not demons originally, but they became so in departing from the true way; so that the name `demons' is given to those beings who have fallen away from God. Accordingly those who worship God must not serve demons. (*Against Celsus VII.* 69)

The issue at stake was one of glory. The created saw the glory of God and desired to usurp that glory (Warner 1988a, 3-7).

Paul in Colossians assumed that the reader understood that the powers have rebelled against God and therefore must be reconciled to Christ. He emphasized that "all things," implying all powers, were "held together" in a system with Christ as their head (1:16-17). But the rebellion of the powers led God to send Christ in order to reconcile "all things to himself" (1:20), as in the beginning, so that all "fullness" dwells in him alone (1:19). God reconciled "all things" to himself through Jesus on the cross. In this event Christ disarmed the powers, made a public display of them, and triumphed over them (Col. 2:15). By defeat of the powers in his death and acceptance of his headship by those who

believe, Jesus became "head over all rule and authority."

Their Present Status

The powers are now alienated from God and oppose him. They now desire to estrange believers from the love of God (Rom. 8:38). They hold the non-believer in bondage (Gal. 4:3). They bind people to their rules (Col. 2:20). They control the lives of the ungodly (Eph. 2:2).

These powers, who oppose God, have become part of the dominion of the kingdom of Satan. O'Brien writes, "Despite the variety in nomenclature, the overall picture is the same: a variety of evil forces under a unified head" (1984, 137; Green 1981, 82). When demons were cast out, Jesus could say, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Luke 10:17-18). The "devil's schemes" are connected to the Christian's struggle against the powers (Eph. 6:11-12). Jesus was accused of casting out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of demons (Matt. 12:22-28). Satan has become the god of this world (1 John 4:4; 5:19) working in the sons of disobedience (Eph. 2:2) with legions of spiritual powers in league with him.

The Nature of the Powers

The Bible assumes that the powers are personal spiritual entities. They are not merely non-personal, alienated structures of society. Many biblical names for the powers--lords, gods, princes, demons, devils, unclean spirits, evil spirits--have personal connotations. Names for Satan--the evil one, the accuser, the destroyer, the adversary, the enemy--also infer a personality.

The personal nature of spiritual beings is illustrated by Christ's delivering those possessed by demons. When Jesus healed the demon-possessed man who was blind and dumb, he was confronting personal spiritual power (Matt. 12:22-29). The first miracle of Jesus recorded in Luke's gospel was the cleansing of an unclean man in Capernaum (Luke 4:31-37). This spirit was also personal. First, the spirit cried out to Jesus, and he responded. This was not an institutional manifestation of the evils of the world, but a personal spirit speaking to Jesus. Second, the demon differentiated himself from the one he had possessed by using the first person plural pronoun "us" when he cried out, "What do you want with *us*, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy *us*?" The terminologies in this account suggest that the demons are evil spiritual beings. According to Ferguson,

[Their] spiritual nature . . . permits them to enter a human person. Once more we notice that the demon had his own distinct personality. He was different from the person in whom he dwelled and was able to control the person he possessed to the extent of throwing him down. (1984, 6)

Schlier defines personal spiritual beings as "beings of intellect and will, which can speak and be spoken to" and are "capable of purposeful activity" (1964, 18). This definition reflects the qualities of personal spiritual beings in the scriptures as seen in the preceding paragraphs.

Nevertheless, these personal powers diffuse into human cultures. They have the power to invade human beliefs, institutions, and structures and to obscure their origin. Consequently, people of God will fall away not only because of the overt working of "deceitful spirits" but also because of obscure "doctrines of demons" that radiate from their work and become a part of human strictures (1 Tim. 4:1). For example, when Jesus confronted the traditions of the Pharisees, he was confronting the power of Satan ingrained in Jewish tradition (Matt. 15:1-20). A most apparent example of this is the great dragon, who is called the devil and Satan (Rev. 12:9). He gives authority to the beast, representing the persecuting world dominion of Domitian's Rome (Rev. 13:2), to execute his will. Even today the great dragon has his beasts who perform his work in the world.

The stoicheia were the regulations of the powers which bound those not in Christ (Gal. 4:3; Col. 2:8, 20). Schlier writes that the powers "conceal themselves in the world and in the everyday life of mankind. They withdraw from sight into the men, elements, and institutions through which they make their power felt" (1964, 29). This is the meaning of Paul's statement "We . . . were held in bondage under the elementary things of the world" (Gal. 4:3). These rules which bound the non-believer might be those of the Jewish law or pagan beliefs prevalent in their various

localities. The Colossian heresy was similar to that in Galatia. The Colossians were allowing the "elementary principles of the world" to displace Christ as the mediator between God and man (MacGregor 1954, 22). The Colossians should have escaped their control. Paul inquired, "If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why do you submit" to their decrees? (Col. 2:8, 20). The Colossians were still tied to the old demonic system although they considered themselves to be in Christ. Personal spiritual powers had become systemic.

Apocryphal literature speaks of the powers as angels who have fallen away from God (2 Enoch 29:4; Jubilees 10). Jude likely builds on this tradition when he speaks of angels leaving their "proper abode" (vs. 6), alluding to their proper "domain" under the sovereignty of God. These angels fell away from God when they sinned, and some have already been cast into hell (2 Pet. 2:4). Thus Jesus could speak of the place "prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41).

Caird does not differentiate between angels and the gods of the nations, which are spoken of throughout the Old Testament. He believes that they are angelic beings "to whom God had delegated some measure of his own authority" (Caird 1967, 48). Their worship became the source of idolatry in the Old Testament when the nations and even God's elect people chose to serve such powers rather than Yahweh. A variant reading of Deuteronomy 32:8b-9 says that God "set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the *sons of God* for the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance." According to this interpretation, angels were placed over all the nations, but Israel was God's special inheritance over which he ruled without any intermediary. These angels were never to be worshipped but only to serve as messengers of God. The cosmic rebellion against God occurred when these "angels of the nations" desired to be worshipped rather than allow all praises to be directed to God. This cosmic rebellion is depicted in Daniel. The angel of God was delayed from coming to Daniel because he was fighting with the angelic prince of Persia and must return to continue the fight and also fight the prince of Greece (Dan.10:20-21). They are referred to as the "princes of the nations" in Isaiah 41-46 and 48 (Wink 1984, 26-35). The worship of these beings became the source of idolatry in the Old Testament when the nations and God's own people chose to serve such powers rather than Creator God. The powers therefore are powers who forsook the sovereignty of God and accepted the worship of those whom they were sent to serve. Despite their original state, they have now aligned themselves with Satan and must be resisted by faithful Christians (Eph. 6:12).

Powers that were originally beneficent have become malevolent. Once they sang the praises of Creator God and existed under his sovereignty; they now desire control and power apart from God without giving him recognition as their Creator. They once were ministering servants of the people of God; they now desire to be their gods. Because they forsook the sovereignty of God, they have become participants of the kingdom of Satan.

God and the Gods

The most overlooked theological issue of the Old Testament among Western theologians is the relationship of Israel to Yahweh and the gods of the nations. The Decalogue expressed God's jealousy when Israel paid allegiance to other gods and bowed down before their idols (Exod. 20:2-6). Rhetorical questions declaring God's distinctiveness, like "What god is great like our God?" (Ps. 77:13), occur repeatedly throughout scripture. The Israelites, from the youngest to the oldest, were to live according to the reality of the Shema: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deut. 6:4). The oneness of God negated any allegiances to spiritual beings below the status of Creator God. Yahweh was unique among the gods; no other spiritual being could be compared to him. The significant issue was that of allegiance: Who would Israel follow--Yahweh or the gods of the nations?

The history of Israel shows her temptation to forsake Yahweh and depend on the gods of the nations. Ps. 106:34-39 summarized this tendency:

They did not destroy the peoples as the Lord had commanded them, but they mingled with the nations and adopted their customs. They worshiped their idols, which became a snare to them. They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons. They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was desecrated by their blood. They defiled themselves by what they did; by their deeds they prostituted themselves.

The kingdom of David was divided between North Israel and Judah because of the issue of allegiance. Solomon's many wives "turned his heart after other gods" so that "his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God" (1 Kgs. 11:4). The resulting punishment was the division of the kingdom (1 Kgs. 11:11-13). Later both Israel and Judah were sent into captivity because they continued to follow the gods of the nations. Israel sinned because she "feared other gods" (2 Kgs. 17:7). God sent prophets to declare repentance, but Israel refused to listen (2 Kgs. 17:13-14). So God "removed them from his sight" (2 Kgs. 17:18). The people of Judah were also taken into captivity for following the gods of the nations rather than Yahweh. When asked about their captivity, the Jews were to explain that they had been forsaken by their God because they had served other gods (Jer. 5:19).

These passages demonstrate that the great issue of the Old Testament was allegiance. Israel was asked to decide which god she would serve: the gods of her forefathers (Josh. 24:2), the gods of Canaan, the gods of Egypt, or Yahweh (Josh. 24:14-15). The prophets declared that the people must trust only in Yahweh, an allegiance ultimately rejected by an idolatrous and rebellious people. Old Testament history shows that Israel chose to follow the gods of the nations and reject Yahweh.

This tension between God and the gods is reflected in all cultures with an animistic heritage. Since many animistic cultures have much in common with these Old Testament struggles, an in-depth study of God and the gods will help to theologically equip the missionary going into animistic contexts. The great issue is the nature of Creator God and his jealously for our allegiance.

God and the Gods in a Polytheistic Environment

Numerous ancient peoples organized their gods into pantheons. The most powerful god, such as El or Baal in Canaan or Marduk in Babylon, was the supreme god of the pantheon. Lesser gods having their own levels of divinity were under the supreme god. In this type of polytheistic environment it was easy for worshippers of Yahweh to consider him as the chief God with other gods under him. Yahweh's heavenly entourage might wrongly be considered as this type of pantheon with Yahweh equivalent to Baal or Marduk. These beliefs were especially prevalent during the reign of Manassah (Labuschagne 1966, 83) when Judah worshipped "the host of heaven" (2 Kgs. 21:3). These practices were condemned by the prophets during the Josian reform (Zeph. 1:5; Jer. 19:13). A number of Psalms, likely written during the Josian reform after the death of Manassah, refute this type of syncretism.

Psalm 89 describes the relationship of God to the heavenly host. Verse 6 asks the rhetorical questions "For who in the skies can be on a level with Yahweh? Who among the heavenly beings is (or looks) like Yahweh?" The psalm explicitly proclaims that Yahweh is incomparable! No one in the heavenly host can compare to him! These rhetorical questions of God's incomparability are asked in the context of verse 5 in which the heavenly entourage praise him: "Let the heavens praise your wonders, O Yahweh; your truth in the assembly of the holy ones." The passage assumes that "the heavenly beings should not regard themselves as being on the same level as Yahweh, basking in the praises due to Him, but should join in the act of praising Him, for the simple reason that Yahweh is exalted above them as well" (Labuschagne 1966, 81). The psalmist was saying that these beings must not be elevated to the level of gods because God is the one "feared in the council of the holy one, great and terrible above all around him" (vs. 7). The question "Yahweh, God of hosts, who is like you?" (vs. 8) proclaims that God is incomparable; no one is like him. The heavens and earth and all they contain belong to him alone (vs. 11). The entourage of God should never be considered gods but as the servants of God. All praise must therefore be directed to Yahweh and Yahweh alone.

Psalm 82 pictures God standing in the heavenly assembly judging the gods. The word elohim, which is frequently translated "ruler," can be translated "gods." These gods were likely "the deified attendant beings and the foreign gods, constituting the divine assembly presided over by Yahweh" (Labuchagne 1966, 84). The gods were asked to prove that they had the qualities of Yahweh. Unlike Yahweh, these "gods" were judging unjustly, showing partiality to the wicked, and failing to show compassion to the weak, fatherless, destitute, and needy (vss. 2-4). Since these "gods" were unable to counter God's indictment, the foundations of the earth were shaken (vs. 5). Labuschagne interprets verse 6 as the confessional words of the psalmist. The psalmist admitted that he had once considered the heavenly beings to be "gods, sons of the Most High." He later realized that they were no-gods and that God would pronounce judgment on them: "Surely, you shall die like men, and like one of the princes you shall fall" (vs. 7). Finally, the psalmist urged Yahweh, the one "who possesses the nations," to stand up and judge the gods (vs. 8). The issue of this psalm was syncretism. The psalmist was "a man who freed himself from the prevailing syncretistic view of his time,

who openly confessed his guilt, admitting that he too had held a false notion about the exclusiveness of Yahweh" (Labuschagne 1966, 83-85).

In a polytheistic environment the follower of Yahweh must realize that there is none like his God. Because God is "merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth" (Ps. 86:15, 5), all nations will come and worship Yahweh (Ps. 86:9) and say, "Among the gods there is none like you, O Lord; no deeds can compare with yours" (Ps. 86:8)!

God and the Gods in the Egyptian Context

Israel, a polytheistic people in Egypt (Josh. 24:15; Exod. 3:13), learned that Yahweh was the Incomparable One based on God's activity in delivering them from Egyptian captivity. Israel's faith, which allowed her to believe the words of Moses (Exod. 4:31) and to prepare for the Passover (Exod. 12), grew to the point of recognizing Yahweh as the Incomparable One after God's destruction of the army of Egypt: "Who is like you among the gods, O Yahweh? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders?" (Exod. 15:11). These mighty acts of Yahweh were to be remembered by Israel in a confessional statement throughout the generations:

My father . . . went down to Egypt . . . few in number; but there he became a great, mighty and populous nation. . . . And the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with great terror and with signs and wonders. (Deut. 26:5-8)

But it was also important that Yahweh's incomparability be demonstrated before Pharoah and the Egyptians. Yahweh was the lord of the whole earth and all powers were to be subject to him. The Pharoah was considered to be the son of Ra, the sun-god of the Egyptians and god over all gods of the Egyptian pantheon (Labuschagne 1966, 58-62). The Egyptian's boast of the incomparability of both Ra and their god-king was an affront to the sovereignty of Yahweh. The mighty acts of God were performed not merely before Israel but also before Pharoah and the people of Egypt.

The Exodus account indicates that the deliverance was a contest between Yahweh, the God of Israel, and the god-king of the Egyptians (and the sun-god who stood behind him). God sent the plagues to force Pharoah to acknowledge that "no one is like Yahweh" (Exod. 8:10; 9:14). The Egyptian magicians recognized the plagues to be the "finger of God" (Exod. 8:19), an admission of Yahweh's superiority. Even Pharoah confessed Yahweh's superiority: "I have sinned this time; the Lord is the righteous one and I and my people are the wicked ones" (Exod. 9:27). God wanted Pharoah to acknowledge "that the earth is the Lord's" (Exod. 9:29).

The deliverance was also a defeat of all the lesser gods of Egypt. In the plague of the death of the firstborn, God said that he was executing judgment "against all the gods of Egypt" (Exod. 12:12). Since Egyptian gods stood behind every facet of nature, the plagues demonstrated "that the power of God defeated each god where its locus of power was concentrated" (Kamps 1986, 33). For example, the plague of darkness demonstrated the defeat of Ra, the sun-god; Tem, the god of sunset; and Shu, the god of light (Kamps 1986, 34). Yahweh's deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian captivity clearly demonstrated that no gods can stand up against Yahweh, the Incomparable One.

God and the Gods in the Song of Moses

The song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32 acknowledges Yahweh to be the only true God. Yahweh is described as Israel's "Rock," who is perfect, just, faithful, and righteous (vs. 4). This Rock guarded and blessed Israel (vss. 10-14). The writer explicitly indicates that during this time of blessing "the Lord alone guided Israel and there was no foreign god with her" (vs. 12). But when Israel "grew fat" with Yahweh's blessings, she "scorned the Rock of her salvation" (vs. 15). Yahweh became jealous and angry with this betrayal (vs. 16). The following parallelism (vs. 18) denotes God's pangs of remorse over Israel's betrayal:

You neglected the Rock who begot you, And forgot the God who gave you birth.

So Yahweh grew jealous (vss. 16, 21) and punished Israel (vss. 23-33). Instead of Yahweh being the Rock of her

salvation (vs. 15; 1 Sam. 2:2), Yahweh became the Rock of her punishment: "How could one chase a thousand (Israelites), and two put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had given them up?" (vs. 30). In the midst of this punishment, even the nations realized that "their rock is not like our Rock" (vs. 31). In this song Yahweh's judgment of Israel cannot be separated from his judgment of the gods that they followed. Yahweh with passion asked, "Where are their gods, the rock in which they sought refuge?" (vs. 37). The emotions of this song build to a culminating point showing the incomparability of Yahweh: "See now that I, even I am He--there is no god besides me." Yahweh's incomparability is expressed in the midst of the struggle with the gods of the nations (Labuschagne 1966, 71).

One final comment must be made about the essence of the gods. The song of Moses affirms that demons stand behind these gods. Note the parallelism in verse 17:

They sacrificed to demons who were not God, To gods whom they have not known.

Gods have become the fronts for demons. In a sense idols are no-gods because they were carved by human hands. These gods have power only because they are used by demons. Paul affirms this: "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons" (1 Cor. 10:20). Weiss writes, "Though Paul denied the existence of idols (1 Cor. 8:4), declaring them dead (1 Thess. 1:9) and no gods by nature (Gal. 4:8), he expressly stated that the sacrifices offered to pagan deities were really given to devils" (1953, 401). The same word for demons (shedhim) is used in Ps. 106:37, which reveals that in sacrificing their sons and daughters to idols, the Israelites were, in reality, sacrificing them to demons. Gods and demons, and by inference polytheism and Animism, cannot not be theologically separated because they are based on the same power source. The demonic did not evolve from the gods; the demonic has simply appeared in different guises at different times.

God's Incomparability Contrasted to the Nature of the Gods

Israel could know that her religion was distinctive only if her God was distinctive. What characteristics of Yahweh made him different from the gods of the nations?

First, Yahweh was incomparable because he was creator. On the basis of being creator, Yahweh could say, "I am the Lord, and there is none else" (Isa. 45:18). Unlike material idols, Yahweh was not the result of human creativity (Isa. 44:9-17; 45:20; 46:1-7). As creator, he was unlike the heavenly beings of his entourage (Pss.89:5-10; 82:1-8). Other powers claiming incomparability are impostors--rebellious creations of God--rather than God himself.

Second, Yahweh was an intervening, redeeming God who wished to bear people on "eagle's wings and bring them to himself" (Exod. 19:4). He first worked to redeem Israel. Only Yahweh of all the "gods" took a people for himself from the midst of another nation (Deut.4:34). He took Abraham, a man with a polytheistic heritage (Josh. 24:2) and made him into His chosen people. As a universal God, Yahweh wished to redeem all nations to himself and to bless them through Israel (Gen. 12:3). Thus Israel was to be a light to the nations (Isa.42:6; 49:6). Yahweh was "ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations" (2 Chr. 20:6)--praised as "the God who works wonders; [who] made known [his] strength among the people" (Ps.77:14).

Third, the attributes of Yahweh made him distinctive. Micah's concluding confession declares Yahweh's distinctiveness: "Who is a God like you? One who pardons iniquity and passes over transgressions for the remnant of his inheritance!" (7:18a). Yahweh presented himself at Sinai as "compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin . . ." (Exod. 34:6-7; cf. Pss. 86:15; 103:6-8). Although Yahweh is holy (1 Sam. 2:2), just (Ps. 35:10; Jer. 31:11), and powerful (Ps. 77:14), his overriding attribute is hesed--steadfast, covenant love. Yahweh's hesed is the motivation for his redeeming activity. While in other religions there was an element of uncertainty about the intention of the gods, Israel's God was motivated by steadfast love (Eichrodt 1961, 235).

The uniqueness of Israel's God set him apart from all other gods. Note Labuschagne's stirring description:

The intervention of Yahweh in history as the redeeming God, the fighting God, who revealed Himself as the Living,

Great, Mighty, Holy and Terrible God, the God of justice, who on the one hand renders help to the oppressed, the wronged and the weak, and who on the other hand judges the self-sufficient and the haughty, the God of the Covenant, the Ruler and the wise Conductor of history, was utterly new and unique in the religious world at that time (1966, 136).

Christ and the Demons

Just as the gods of the nations occupied a central place in the Old Testament, so the devil and demons played a prominent role in the gospels. Jesus' ministry began with his being tempted in the wilderness by the devil and concluded with Satan entering into Judas leading to Christ's death. Mark summarized Christ's ministry with the statement: "And he went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out the demons" (Mark 1:39; cf Matt. 4:23-24; Acts 10:38). Casting out demons was central to the ministry of Christ. The term daimonion, referring to demon possession, is used sixty times in the New Testament, fifty-two times in the gospels. The word daimonidzomai, with the approximate meaning of "to be possessed by a demon," occurs thirteen times, exclusively in the gospels. Daimon, referring to "demon, evil spirit," is only used in the gospels in speaking of the Geresene demoniac (Lawrence 1960, 50-53). These terms all refer to Christ's encounters with the demons. The frequency of these encounters demonstrates the fundamental role of the demons in gospel writings. These beings cannot be dispensed with or demythologized without significantly changing the content.

Historical Background

Beliefs in demons were prevalent in both Greek and Hebrew cultures. Ferguson documents seven different meanings attached to demons in Greek thinking (1984, 36-59). The words for demons (1) were used interchangeably for gods (theos), especially when the identity of a specific god was unknown; (2) alluded to fate, fortune, and chance; (3) were synonymous with spirits of the deceased; (4) defined individual guardian spirits; (5) designated intermediaries between the gods and humans; (6) referred to malevolent spiritual beings; and (7) indicated evil beings who could possess a person. These ideas were fluid, "often overlapping," not showing a consistent progression (Ferguson 1984, 36). Despite their various interpretations, the Greeks were extremely conscious of demons and never denied their existence.

Jewish literature was concerned with the source of demons (Ferguson 1984, 69-104). The book of 1 Enoch equated demons with the nephilim, or "the fallen ones," of Gen. 6:1-4 (1 Enoch 6:1ff; 15:7-16:1). These fallen ones originated when the "sons of God" had intercourse with the "daughters of men." These beings were cast out by God and began to tempt people to do evil. By the time the Septuagint was translated, these "sons of God" were accepted as the "angels of God." The book of Jubilees tells that God commanded all evil spirits to be bound in answer to the

prayer of Noah. However, Mastema, the chief of all spirits who probably was Satan himself, pleaded that some of the spirits be left to him so that he could execute his power upon the will of men. God decided that one-tenth of all demons would be allowed to serve Satan on the earth while the rest would be bound (Jubilees 10). Without any reference to Gen. 6, 2 Enoch describes the rebellion of angels against God, motivated by the desire to be equal in rank with God (29:4ff). The apocryphal Life of Adam associated the angelic fall with man's creation. The devil was jealous that man was created in the image of God and therefore rebelled against God (chs. 12-17; cf. Wisdom of Solomon 2:24; Josephus *Antiquities* I. 41ff). These origins defined the nature of demons as personal spiritual beings who were once under the sovereignty of God. For some reason they rebelled against his sovereignty and now work against his purposes. Jewish writers expected this demonic activity to continue until the messianic age, when the power of the demonic would finally be broken (1 Enoch 55:4; 10:20-27; Testament of Zebulun 9:8; Testament of Simeon 6:6; Testament of Levi 18:10-12).

The Nature of Demons in the Gospels

The gospel writings assume demons to be personal spiritual beings, created by God and standing in opposition to him. Eight common characteristics can be deduced.

First, these demons were considered "spiritual beings." Their spiritual nature is reflected by the fact that the words for

demons and spirits were used interchangeably. Luke quoted a father who described his son as one seized by a "spirit" (Luke 9:39) and then called this spirit a "demon" (Luke 9:42). When the seventy returned rejoicing that the "demons" were subject to them, Jesus referred to these demons as "spirits" (Luke 10:18, 20).

Second, these beings were described as unclean or evil spirits (Luke 4:33; 11:24), frequently bringing illness upon those whom they possessed. When the demon-possessed man of Matt. 12:22, who was both blind and mute, was delivered, he could both see and talk. However, not all the demon-possessed were ill, and not all of the sick were demon-possessed. For example, Mark comments that the people were "bringing to him all who were ill and those who were demon-possessed" (Mark 1:32). Luke says that many came to him "to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were being cured" (Luke 6:17-18). At times the one possessed was driven away from contact with his family and community. The Geresene demoniac was driven by the demon into the deserts (Luke 8:29) and lived in the tombs (Matt. 8:28). Unlike Greek traditions in which demons might be considered both good and evil, the stance of Christ was that demons were of the competing realm of Satan (Matt. 12:24-26).

Third, demons were described as disembodied spirits who desired to possess bodies and were pictured as wandering about seeking a body. If a spirit did not find a body, he might return to the body out of which he had come (Luke 11:24-26). The unclean spirits possessing the Geresene demoniac requested, "If you are going to cast us out, send us into the herd of swine" (Matt. 8:31; cf. Luke 8:26-37). They feared being cast out into a disembodied state. The shocking part of the narrative is that the swine ran into the sea and perished rather than becoming the home of the demons. The gospels portray possession as a common phenomenon.

Fourth, demons were shown to have power and knowledge beyond that of humans. Their physical power was demonstrated by the Geresene demoniac, who was able to break the fetters and chains that bound him (Luke 8:29). As beings of exceptional knowledge, they instantly identified Christ as "the son of God" (Luke 4:41; 8:28). This recognition of Jesus was a regular occurrence: "And whenever the unclean spirits beheld him, they would fall down before him and cry out, saying, `You are the Son of God!'" (Mark 3:12). Jesus consistently rejected their testimony. He rebuked them and "would not allow them to speak" (Luke 4:41; cf. Mark 3:12). He did not need demonic testimony before humankind. Most likely, the demons were using such "power-charged" words as "You are the son of God" (Luke 4:41) in an effort to bring Christ under their power by magic (Ferguson 1984, 7-8).

Fifth, demons operate as part of the kingdom of Satan, as described in an earlier section. After rejecting God as their sovereign, they have come under the powers of Satan. Jesus therefore affirmed that Satan's kingdom was not divided. The casting out of demons demonstrated a clash of kingdoms rather than the interworking within one kingdom (Matt. 22:24-26). Jesus interpreted demons' being cast out as a defeat of Satan: "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning" (Luke 10:18). The defeat of the demons was an indication of the fall and defeat of Satan himself.

Sixth, human beings became the arena for the struggle between Jesus and the demons. Satan and his angels were defeated in heaven and cast down to the earth where they work to deceive the whole world (Rev. 12:9). Those without the power of Christ were frequently demon-possessed. But even followers of God were not immune to the powers of Satan and his angels. Peter was told by Christ that Satan desired permission "to sift" him as wheat (Luke 22:31). Early Christians were told that their battle was not against flesh and blood but "against the rulers, against the powers, against the world-forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness" (Eph. 6:12). Since Satan and those in allegiance with him were great tempters, they frequently caused illness (2 Cor. 12:7; Job 1-2), contorted eternal doctrines of Christ leading to heresy (1 Tim. 4:1), and tempted people of God to sin (Luke 22:3; John 13:2). Followers of God were therefore enjoined to "resist the devil" so that he might "flee" (Jas. 4:7).

Seventh, demons were overcome by the power of God. The reality of the power of God was not a secret to them. The Geresene demoniac declared to Jesus, "What do we have to do with you, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before our time?" (Matt. 8:29; cf. Luke 8:28). The Capernaum demoniac said, "What do we have to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?" (Mark 1:24). They recognized the power of God and shuddered (Jas. 2:19), realizing that their defeat was certain.

Christ's power over demons was absolute. The demons' obedience to his commands to come out was unwilling but unavoidable. They were cast out by the "Spirit of God" (Matt. 12:28), or "the finger of God" (Luke 11:20), not by the

power of magical adjuration. When Jesus healed a demon-possessed man, he described the event as a Stronger Man--Jesus Christ himself-- entering the strong man's house and plundering his goods (Matt. 12:29). Since Christ was sovereign over all of God's creation, the demons were forced to obey his commands.

Eighth, followers of God were given the authority to overcome demons. This authority was given especially to the apostles. Christ appointed the twelve in order to send them out to preach and cast out demons (Mark 3:14-15). However, not only the twelve (Luke 9:1-6) but also the seventy were given authority to cast out demons. These seventy reported to Jesus: "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name" (Luke 10:17). In the Great Commission disciples of Christ were sent out into all the world with the authority of Christ (Matt. 28:18-20). The fact that this authority was delegated is evidenced by the book of Acts, where demons continued to be cast out by Christ's power (Acts 5:16; 8:7).

Those with power to cast out demons should never become proud. They are mere earthen vessels of God who must recognize "that the surpassing greatness of the power" is of God, not of man (2 Cor. 4:7). Although God had given the seventy authority over the forces of evil, the "authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions" (Luke 10:19), they were told not to rejoice in this power. Rather they were to rejoice that their names were "recorded in heaven" (Luke 10:20).

There was a distinct contrast between the way Jesus and his disciples cast out demons and the methodologies of pagan exorcists. The pagans used magical paraphernalia and formulas in the context of elaborate ceremonies (Kittel 1964, 19). Jesus' method, by contrast, was simple, straightforward, and unfailingly successful. He cast out spirits "with a word" (Matt. 8:16). He verbally rebuked the Capernaum demon and commanded him to come out (Mark 1:25). He eliminated all physical materials which had been traditionally used in magic (Ferguson 1984, 11). Typically the disciples used the "name of Jesus" to cast out demons (Luke 10:17; Mark 16:17). There was one instance in which the disciples of Jesus were unsuccessful in casting out a demon (Mark 9:17-29). When the disciples asked why they were not successful, Jesus told them that certain types of spirits come out only by means of prayer and fasting (Mark 9:29). In every case Christians displaced the magical adjuration of traditional exorcism with prayer and reliance on the Lord.

A major theme of the ministry of Jesus was the defeat of Satan and his demonic realm. The purpose of his coming was "that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). The defeat of these powers during the ministry of Christ was only a preview of their ultimate defeat when they were disarmed at the cross (Col. 2:15). Christ was the triumphant Messiah who defeated the powers and reconciled the creation to himself (Col. 1:20). In animistic contexts the metaphor of "the triumphant Messiah" is strongly appealing.

The Church and the Principalities and Powers

Although the term for demons is used only twice in Pauline literature (1 Cor. 10:20; 1 Tim. 4:1) and the term for gods is employed infrequently, the concept of the powers of Satan is not absent. Although many terms describe these powers, they are generally categorized as "principalities and powers."

For example, Paul's writings to the Ephesians assume that the people understand these powers but have not been completely freed from their control. Paul writes this message about the powers to a center of cultic activity where animistic practices and beliefs were flourishing. The city was known for the *Ephesia Grammata*, the "Ephesian letters" thought to be laden with magical power to ward off demons and employed "either as written amulets or spoken charms" (Arnold 1989, 15-16). Artemis was worshipped as a supreme deity of unsurpassed power--a god who descended directly from heaven (Acts 19:35). She was called upon to protect followers from malevolent powers and "to raise the dead, heal the sick, and protect the city" (Arnold 1989, 20-22, 39). Magic was frequently used in the cult of Artemis: "In many instances there seems to be little or no difference between calling upon Artemis to accomplish a certain task and utilizing a `magical' formula" (Arnold 1989, 24). Astrology was also intertwined with the worship of Artemis. In New Testament times the angels were typically associated with the planets and the stars, which were thought to control earthly fate. However, Artemis was pictured as the master of these astral forces because "the signs of the zodiac were prominently displayed around the neck of the cultic image" (Arnold 1989, 28). Demons were everywhere thought to exist and were immensely feared. The book of Ephesians, therefore, describes how Paul responds to converts who have questions and continuing fears about malevolent spiritual forces (Arnold 1989).

The Nature of the Principalities and Powers

In the Pauline epistles the principalities and powers are described by names which are heaped one upon another in a series: "Our struggle is . . . against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness" (Eph. 6:12; cf. Eph. 1:21; Col. 1:16; Rom. 8:38). These lists should not be regarded as precise descriptions of a hierarchy of spiritual beings but as interchangeable synonyms (Schlier 1964, 14-16). The series indicates that spiritual powers cannot be described by only one name. The powers of Satan have become too diffused, appearing in various manifestations, and can no longer be described by concrete terms (Wink 1984, 13-34).

Wink's comprehensive study of the various terms shows that "75 per cent of the time terms such as arche and archon (organizational power), exousia (authority), dynamis (power), and thronos (thrones) refer to human institutions" (Hiebert 1987, 109). Such terms as arche and archon are used exclusively for power in human structures while dynamis is used most frequently in relation to personal spiritual powers. The powers are further described thus:

> divine but human, not only personified but structural, not only demons and kings but the world atmosphere and power invested in institutions, laws, traditions and rituals was well, for it is the cumulative, totalizing effect of all these taken together that creates the sense of bondage to a "dominion of darkness." (Wink 1984, 85)

The purpose of these lists therefore is to be comprehensive. These terminologies are broader than "demons" or "gods" because they include the structural, institutional inroads made by personal spiritual powers as well as personal spiritual beings themselves.

In the letters of Paul, as in the gospels, the powers are pictured as functioning under the authority of Satan. The struggle is against the powers, "against the schemes of the devil" (Eph. 6:11) and "the flaming missiles of the evil one" (Eph. 6:16). Satan is described as the "prince of the power of the air, the prince that is now working in the sons of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). Their purpose is to use the desires of the flesh and mind to alienate man from God (Eph. 2:1-3). These powers are under Satan and serve him in his realm.

In the Heavenlies

The phrase "in the heavenlies" (ta epourania) occurs five times in the book of Ephesians (Eph. 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12). A. T. Lincoln shows it to be a unique formula in the book and to have the same meaning throughout (1973, 469). While other books of the New Testament mention the heavenly father, the heavenly son, heavenly men and women, the heavenly Jerusalem, and the heavenly kingdom, the distinctive phrase ta epourania ("heavenly places") appears only in Ephesians (Barth 1974, 78).

Blessings in the Heavenlies. The Christians at Ephesus were told that they had been blessed "in the heavenlies with every spiritual blessing in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). This first use of the phrase "in the heavenlies" (ta epourania) signifies a spiritual realm. Believers now have all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies while still living on earth. The heavenlies have invaded the earthlies in such a way that "the riches of his grace" have been "lavished upon" those who believe while they are still in the earthly realm (Eph. 1:7-8).

Christ Exalted into the Heavenlies. The second use of the phrase "in the heavenlies" refers to Christ's exaltation and enthronement: God has raised Christ "from the dead, and seated him at his right hand in the heavenlies" (Eph. 1:20). This exaltation of Christ is a central theme of Ephesians. Christ is shown to be "not only a risen, living Savior, but an exalted, reigning Lord who is sovereign over all" (Penner 1983, 18). During the life of Christ, the principalities and powers opposed him, even plotting his death (1 Cor. 2:8). Christ put himself under their power in order to break their power (Powell 1963, 168; MacGregor 194, 23). Christ became human in order to break the power of death, which Satan had used to hold humanity in his grasp. He rendered "powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14).

Christ's death exalted him to a place of sovereignty in the heavenlies seated at the right hand of God "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named" (Eph. 1:20-21). "Far above" (Eph. 1:21) refers to the authority of Christ over the principalities and powers. The powers have no authority over him. Christ is

sovereign!

The Believers' Exaltation into the Heavenlies. The third use of the phrase "in the heavenlies" refers to the believer's exaltation and enthronement (Eph. 2:1-6). Believers, who had been subject to the powers (Eph. 2:1-3), have been raised by God and seated "with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:4-6). Christ's own exaltation and enthronement in the heavenlies (Eph. 1:20) is compared to the believer's exaltation and enthronement (Eph. 2:6). Ps. 110:1, referred to in Eph. 1:20 in regard to Christ's exaltation to the right hand of God, is used in Eph. 2:6 in relation to the believer's exaltation. The verbs of this verse are in the past tense showing that believers now dwell in the heavenlies because of Christ's exaltation. Allen says, "What God, who is the principal actor in both passages, has accomplished in Christ, he has accomplished for believers" (1986, 104). Christians, who are raised with him, share in his authority. From this position of authority they cannot be overwhelmed by the principalities and powers.

God's Wisdom Made Known in the Heavenlies. The fourth use refers to making known the manifold wisdom of God "in the heavenlies" (Eph. 3:10). The context of this verse (Eph. 3:10) is concerned with the unity of the church (Eph. 3:4-13). When the powers saw the unified church, that both Jews and Gentiles were worshipping together, they realized that their dominion had been broken. The unified church, by being an "example to all creation," by letting "God's light shine" (Barth 1974, 365), makes known the wisdom of God to spiritual powers, who are looking on. The unity of the body of Christ is a "proclamation, a sign, a token to the Powers that their unbroken dominion has come to an end" (Berkhof 1977, 51). The church actively "preaches" (euangelisasthai) to "the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8) but the wisdom of God is only passively "made known" (gnoristhei) to the principalities and powers (Eph. 3:10). The principalities and powers, as created beings, do not have total understanding. With amazement they peer at the church to see the outworking of God's cosmic design.

Cosmic Warfare in the Heavenlies. The church's task is seen from the perspective of cosmic warfare. Satan and his forces are at war with the church. She is to "put on the full armor of God" to resist the principalities and powers (Eph. 6:10-18). Wild shows that the words of 6:12, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood. . . ," are central to the meaning of 6:10-18 and cannot be extracted from the text (or demythologized) without significantly changing the meaning. This passage is also important as the conclusion of the ethics section (Eph. 4:1-6:20) of Ephesians (Wild 1984, 284-288) because the powers are seen as contorting the church's ethics and leading Christians away from God. The significance of Eph. 6:12 to the early church is demonstrated by the fact that the verse is referred to 545 times by almost a hundred different authors in the Letter to the Ephesians in the Veus Latina (Wild 1984, 284). Because of opposition from the principalities and powers, the church is told to arm herself with weapons from God.

These weapons should not be thought of as defensive. "Stand" in verses 11 and 14 has "the sense of drawing up a military formation for combat" (Wink 1984, 87). What most commentators call defensive armor is in reality offensive. What good are the weapons, Wink asks, unless they are effective in defeating evil?

> What good is truth--unless it is the way the Powers are finally unmasked? What use righteousness--unless it reveals God's true will for the world? What value salvation--unless the certainty of it is needed for reassurance in the moments of despair or darkness when the gathered might of the Powers makes doubt seem only sensible? What can the shield of faith do--unless we have learned to discern when flaming darts are aimed at our hearts, with their insinuations of inadequacy and guilt or their appeals to egotism and the worship of the golden calf? What good is a sword made only of words, in the face of such monolithic evil--unless evil is not nearly so much a physical phenomenon as a spiritual construct, itself born of words and capable of destruction by the word of God? And why pray--unless that is the only way we can consolidate, by continual affirmation, the divine counterreality which alone is real, and freight it into being. (1984, 88)

In this offensive battle against the principalities and powers Christians are advised to stand "shoulder to shoulder" with "shields overlapping." Because the whole church is being called to take up arms, the plural is used throughout the paragraph (Wink 1984, 88). The church, as a body, is being called to take up arms against spiritual powers aligned with Satan.

The task of the church is to displace the principalities and powers. Christ must be declared sovereign. He is "head over all things to the church, . . . the fulness of Him who fills all in all" (Eph. 1:22-23). Markus Barth rightly equates "all

things" (ta panta) in this passage to mean the enemies of God (1974, 179). Christians, then, are called to come under the sovereignty of God and to give homage to him. They must no longer seek to manipulate spirits by magic and ritual. They have been exalted with Christ to sit with him "in the heavenlies" in a position above the principalities and powers!

The Eschaton and the Powers

Christians live in the age between the coming of the kingdom of God and its consummation. In the ministry, resurrection, and exaltation of Christ, the kingdom has come--the victory has been won. The outcome is assured; however, the age has not yet been consummated. Although Christ's kingdom has broken into the world, Satan's kingdom continues to exist and to compete with the kingdom of God. Paul refers to this when he speaks of believers dwelling in the heavenlies far above the principalities and powers "not only in this age, but also in the one to come" (Eph. 1:20-21). "The Powers are still present; but wherever Christ is preached and believed in, a limit has been set to their working" (Berkhof 1977, 43). Using military metaphors MacGregor writes, "The tide has turned at `D-Day,' even though the final `V-Day' may still lie far ahead" (1954, 24). Thus there is tension between what has "already" occurred in Christ and what is yet to happen at the end. The "`already' and `not yet' are the poles of the tension which dominates the entire New Testament proclamation" (Berkhof 1977, 43).

The consummation of the age will occur at Christ's second coming, when he will deliver up the kingdom to God after "he has abolished all rule and all authority and power" (1 Cor. 15:24). At this point the devil will be "thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone" along with his human emissaries, the beast, representing Satan's political oppressors, and the prophet, representing Satan's message manipulators (Rev. 20:10). Only then will tares be separated from the wheat. The tares will be "cast into the furnace of fire where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father. He who has ears, let him hear" (Matt. 13:42-43).

The Mission of the Evangelist

The Christian evangelist in animistic contexts ministers on both a personal and a cosmic level. On the personal level evangelists are being used as earthen vessels by God to break the yoke of Satan and convert specific people, clans, tribes, and cities and to bring them under God's sovereignty. Like Paul, they have been sent "to open [peoples'] eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God" (Acts 26:17-18). From this perspective evangelism is claiming for God what has been Satan's. Christianization is the breaking down of the powers of Satan and making his territory God's territory. On the cosmic level the battle is of one of ideology. False models of reality are being contrasted to a Christian worldview. Allegiance to sovereign God is being contrasted to allegiance to gods who claim incomparability but who are no-gods in comparison to Yahweh. World cultures are choosing from three broad perspectives: a secular orientation that man can live without God, an animistic perspective that man is controlled by spirits and forces which pervade life, and a theistic belief that sovereign God is in charge of his universe although he allows people the free will to decide who they wish to follow. On the cosmic level the evangelist must present a Christian worldview in a culturally appropriate way. As Wink says, "At one level, Christian evangelists sought only to convert people, but at another, they sought to claim an epoch, to take captive an entire culture, to mediate a new way of seeing the world" (1986, 5-6).

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Chapter 6
Kingdom Theology: Introducing Animists to Christian Perspectives

Topics in Chapter

Their tenseness was apparent as they sipped tea at my house. They were wondering, "Will this missionary understand what we have come to explain?" After circling the problem for some minutes, they exclaimed, "Two of our children are possessed by spirits. They have been sick for almost two years now. What shall we do! What does Christ say about this?" These questions were asked by Kipsigis Christians of Kenya who greatly feared the anger of an irritable ancestor. Like most Kipsigis, they believed that all spirits are ancestors and that ancestors frequently possess the living and inflict harm. Ancestors, who at death are separated from physical bodies, become impatient when they are not called back into the realm of the living within a reasonable period of time. The anger of an impatient spirit is greatly feared.

These beliefs were so foreign that I had no ready answers. I lacked the theological framework to understand spiritual beings. The biblical message I preached had little to do with God's cosmic work in defeating spiritual powers. I could respond only by saying, "Let us pray God Almighty to free the children of the spirits." My inadequacy led me to search for theological models, rooted in biblical theology, which would speak to those coming to Christ from animistic backgrounds. It was evident that my Western theological framework, which had little to do with spiritual powers, was inadequate for teaching in animistic contexts.

The Individualistic Nature of Conversion Theology

Western missionaries have grown up in a culture where the autonomy and dignity of the individual are stressed. The individual is considered more important than the group. Their mythical heroes are the strutting cowboy and private detective who boldly confront societal injustice yet as loners stand apart from the group. For example, while admired and respected by the masses, the Lone Ranger "never settles down and marries the local schoolteacher. . . . It is as if the myth says you can be a truly good person, worthy of admiration and love, only if you resist fully joining the group" (Bellah 1985, 145). Heroes are individuals who, while respected and loved, never become participants of the group.

Individualism is stressed in every facet of life. At an early age children learn to distinguish between "my things" and "your things." As adults, they differentiate "my rights" and "your rights." Independent nuclear families mirror the culture as a whole: Each nuclear family does "its own thing" independent of the control of the extended family. Elective democracy stands as the cultural ideal; each individual has an equal voice in government regardless of his understanding of the issues involved. Praise and honor are given to the individual who achieves above his peers; certificates of achievement decorating the walls testify to his success. Team sports are individualized with detailed statistics kept on each player. The accomplishments of star players--the number of strikeouts, home runs, and stolen bases--are frequently more important than the team who wins.

Such intense individualism is foreign to most animistic peoples. The Hopi Indians consider all things as "ours" and seek what is right for the group. Teachers in such a society cannot praise the outstanding accomplishments of an individual student or give individual awards without causing severe cultural disruption. The Kipsigis of Kenya, although more individualistic than the Hopi, are also group-oriented. They live in a face-to-face society in which relations are worked out within the extended family. The dead are understood as the extension of the family in the world of the spirits. Within this context a missionary was justly rebuked for creating jealousy by publicly praising individual evangelists. Severe cultural disruptions frequently occur when Western individualistic perspectives are

projected upon group-oriented peoples.

Individualism is based on the belief that a person has within himself the power to succeed. He needs no other powers or spirits, magic or wizardry to direct his life. His success or failure depends on his own individual achievement. If he succeeds, it is due to his human capabilities. If he fails, it is due to his inadequacies. An individual must make his way without reliance on social or spiritual resources.

Western individualism has become so intense that it has frequently undermined biblical Christianity. *"My* rights" and "*my* needs" become more important than God's sovereignty and his wishes. Bellah rightly comments that "modern individualism seems to be producing a way of life that is neither individually nor socially viable," and he wonders if "older civic and biblical traditions have the capacity to reformulate themselves while simultaneously remaining faithful to their own deepest insights" (1985, 144).

For the purpose of this study it is extremely important to note that individualism has critically impacted the message communicated in evangelism. Emphasis is placed upon a person's *individual conversion*. Prospective converts are led to consider individualized questions such as "What must *I* do to be saved?" "Are *you* saved?" "Have *you* received Jesus?" The emphasis upon the individual is shown by the stress placed on the personal pronouns "I" and "you" when asking these questions. The human response to God is emphasized rather than the sovereign working of God in the world.

This individualized formulation of the gospel, called "conversion theology," presents some biblical truths but does not portray a holistic picture of God's working in the world. The nature of God and his mighty acts, God's saving work through Jesus Christ, and the degenerative character of sin, which has severed the human/divine relationship, are communicated as pieces of a cosmic picture, not as an integrated worldview. These core theologies often become tangents rather than integral and indispensable parts of the core message.

Although Western Christians typically begin teaching non-Christians about personal salvation, they realize that other teachings are also required. Consequently, they attach other teachings to their conversional message. Since they realize that those converted must be organized into a group, they attach the concept of church. Frequently, one study brochure is developed to convert the individual and another to integrate him into the church. Even this appended teaching about the church is understood individualistically: The church is an aggregate of individual Christians brought together to minister to one another and worship God.

When Christian teachers see the newly converted struggle with sin, they belatedly tack on teachings about overcoming problems. These sins might be marital fidelity, sexual purity, disciplining and training of children, ethics in the workplace, or achieving success in a stressful world. Only when the Western Christian gets down to the level of "overcoming problems" might the message deal with the sovereignty of Creator God. Even on this level, God might be looked upon as a functional being, a "help-me god" formulated by culture so that "believers" might solve their human dilemmas. This god is a product of culture rather than the God of the Bible. Such functional Christianity is rootless because it does not begin with the nature and working of God. Too often secular answers are given to these problems because theology is more rooted in human response than in an awe-inspiring belief in God's sovereignty.

Individualistic thought forms are diametrically opposed to animistic perspectives. While individualists believe they can chart their own courses, animists believe that they are living in an interconnected world. They are intimately connected to their *families*, some of whom are living and some of whom have already passed on to a spiritual realm. Animists are also connected to the *spiritual world*. Gods, spirits, ancestors, and ghosts pervade the world, and their ambivalent yearnings impact the living. Animists frequently feel a connectedness with *nature*. The stars, planets, and moon are thought to impact earthly events. Events of the natural realm are so related to the human realm that practitioners divine current and future events by analyzing what animals are doing or by sacrificing animals and analyzing their livers, entrails, or stomachs. Animists also believe that they are connected with *other human beings*. They access the thoughts of other human beings through ESP or another type of thought transfer. Thus the animist believes that no person can live as an individual separate and apart from his extended family, spiritual powers, nature, or thoughts of other human beings. Animists live in an interconnected universe.

Conversion theology is an inadequate model for converting animists for two reasons. First, conversion in animistic contexts frequently is not individualistic. Decisions to come to Christ might be made by a group of people interacting with each other and with God. For example, societies like the Hopi and Kipsigis make consensus decisions. A lengthy discussion precedes any response to the gospel message. The group significantly influences each other to accept or reject the Christian message. Second, and more significant, the content of the biblical message encompasses more than conversion. The message to the animist must present a God who sent his son not only to bring salvation from sin (Luke 19:10) but also to destroy the works of Satan (1 John 3:8).

The Cosmic Nature of Kingdom Theology

As I studied biblical theology within the Kipsigis context, I grew to believe that the focus must be upon God rather than upon the response of the individual. I began to study a kingdom perspective--that God in Christ has broken into the world to establish his own sovereignty and defeat the powers of Satan. As a consequence, my preaching began to center on the nature and work of God. This message had cosmic dimensions far beyond the conversion of individuals. People were called to conversion on the basis of the mighty working of God in the world and discipled to reflect the nature of holy God. This section will show that a kingdom perspective is the "scarlet thread that runs through the biblical testimonies" (Moltmann 1981, 95).

The Meaning of "Kingdom"

The term "kingdom" means "a rule or reign, an exercise of authority." When applied to the reign of God in the world, the term means "the rule or sovereignty of Creator God." Beasley-Murray thus equates the terms "kingdom" and "sovereignty" throughout his detailed text on the kingdom of God (1986, 74). Ladd defines "kingdom" in the following way:

The *primary* meaning of both the Hebrew word malkuth in the Old Testament and of the Greek word basileia in the New Testament is the rank, authority and sovereignty exercised by a king. . . . A kingdom is the authority to rule, the sovereignty of the king. (1959, 19)

The kingdom of God was established when Christ, the king, initiated his rule.

The synonymous parallelisms of Ps. 145:11-13 define the nature of the kingdom of God:

They will tell of the glory of your kingdom
And speak of your might,
So that all men may know of your mighty acts
And the glorious splendor of your kingdom.
Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
And your dominion endures through all generations.

God's kingdom is one of glory and splendor. The synonymous parallelisms equate the kingdom with *power, mighty acts, and dominion*. Thus God "does not merely sit on a throne, but he reigns by performing mighty deeds. His rule is not static but is expressed in acts of power" (Ferguson 1989, 7).

Although the church reflects the rule of God in the world, the "kingdom" cannot be precisely paralleled with the "church." Old Testament kingdom passages confirm that the rule of God existed before the coming of Christ, the ultimate king, and the establishment of the church. Neither can the kingdom be strictly equated with some cosmic event to take place when Christ returns. Although the consummation of the kingdom will occur at the end of time, the kingdom of God is an continuing historical reality.

The Roots of Kingdom Theology in the Old Testament

Although the word "kingdom" is seldom mentioned in the Old Testament, the meaning of the term has its roots there

(Bright 1953). The term "king" is applied to Yahweh forty-one times. The theme of "God, the ruling Lord" is a thread running throughout the Old Testament (Beasley-Murray 1986, 17). This ruling Lord elected a people to become his "kingdom" although all the world was his (Deut. 7:6-8). This people was chosen to be a kingdom "of priests and a holy nation." As the Levites were priests of Israel, so Israel was to be a kingdom of priests for the world (Exod. 19:5-6).

During this early period God was considered the king of Israel. When Israel wanted an earthly king, both Gideon (Judg. 8:22-23) and Samuel (1 Sam. 8:1-8) told the Israelites that God was their king. Saul was anointed the first king over Israel with the words "Has not the Lord anointed you a ruler over his inheritance?" (1 Sam. 10:1). The rule of God was sovereign over the rule of the king. When these earthly kings followed the reign of God, they were blessed, but they were driven out of their promised land when they forsook Yahweh as their exclusive sovereign and acknowledged the sovereignty of other gods (2 Kgs. 17:13-18).

Although Israel was God's special kingdom of priests, God ruled over all nations. Not only Israel but all nations were accountable to God for their sins (Amos 1-2; Ezek. 25-32). God, who freed the Israelites from Egyptian captivity, also delivered the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir (Amos 9:7). God not only gave Canaan to the Jews but also allotted the Moabites and Ammonites their lands (Deut. 2:16-19). God sent the Jewish prophet Jonah to save the great Assyrian city of Ninevah. The theme of Daniel is "The most high God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men" (Dan. 5:21). "The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over *all*" (Ps. 103:19).

Israel was elected to become a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" to represent God before the world (Exod. 19:5-6; Deut. 7:6-8) and to be a light to the nations (Isa. 42:6; 49:6). However, Israel abandoned her priestly role and followed the gods of the nations around her. By so doing, the Israelites forsook the kingdom of God. Old Testament history portrays the failure of a chosen people to fully accept the rule of God because they were seduced by animistic practices (2 Kgs. 17:7-23).

The expectation that God's reign would break more fully into the world in the person of the Messiah is also reflected in Old Testament prophetic writings. One would come announcing "peace" and proclaiming "Your God reigns" (Isa. 52:7). Ezekiel raised the expectation that Israel and Judah would be reunited and that God's "servant David" would be king over them (Ezek. 37:24; cf. Ezek. 34:23, 30-31). The great kingdom chapters of Daniel compare the kingdoms of the earth to the coming kingdom of God (Dan. 2, 7, 8). God's kingdom, which will "never be destroyed," will crush all earthly kingdoms (Dan. 2:44; 7:13-14, 17-18). The Messiah, who brought the kingdom, was given "dominion, glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve him" (Dan. 7:14).

These passages give only a brief sampling of the developing kingdom concept in the Old Testament. The concept continued to develop during the intertestamental period until the Jews of Jesus' day were reported as asking themselves if Jesus could be the Messiah who would bring in the expected kingdom (John 7:40-43).

The Breaking in of the Kingdom in the Ministry of Jesus

With the coming of Jesus Christ the word "kingdom" began to designate God's distinctive reign in his son. In Christ God established a sovereign rule which would never be destroyed.

Jesus was born during a time of great messianic expectation. The Jews believed that God was about to fulfill the messianic prophecies by sending the Messiah to sweep away the wicked kingdoms of human sovereignty and fill the earth with righteousness. But Jesus did not come to destroy the wicked kingdoms of this world but the kingdom of Satan. Ladd says, "The kingdom of God is here; but instead of destroying human sovereignty, it has attacked the sovereignty of Satan" (1981, 56). Although the coming kingdom could not fulfill earthly Jewish expectations because Christ's kingdom was not "of this world" (John 18:36), messianic anticipations served to draw thousands to hear John and Jesus proclaim the imminence of the kingdom. These expectations were part of God's timing in preparing the world to receive his message (Gal. 4:4).

The kingdom began to break into the world with John the Baptist. He was the first to proclaim "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:1-2). Luke 16:16 signifies that John is a dividing line between two periods: "The Law and

the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached." The term "until" (mechri) is used in an inclusive sense meaning "up to and including" John (Beasley-Murray 1986, 94). John is the "man who formed the watershed of the ages, who bridged the gap between the period of promise and the period of fulfillment, and who by his proclamation opened a way for the kingdom of God" (Beasley-Murray 1986, 96). When John was put in prison, concluding his ministry of introducing the kingdom, Jesus began his ministry (Mark 1:14).

Jesus' message is summarized in each of the synoptic gospels by the statement "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand" (Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:15; Luke 4:43). The phrase "at hand" has connotations of both the present and the future. It means "`drawing near,' `breaking in,' `in process of becoming'" (Ferguson 1989, 24). The synthetic parallelism of Mark 1:15 helps to clarify the meaning of "at hand": "The time is fulfilled" is synonymous to "the kingdom of God is at hand." The first phrase "looks backward, while the second looks to the present and future; the first announces the end of the old era, the second proclaims the beginning of the new" (Ambrozic 1972, 21-22). Beasley-Murray thus interprets this passage to mean, "If the time before the kingdom is finished, the time of the kingdom has begun" (1986, 73). In Jesus Christ, God has broken into the world to initiate a rule that will never be destroyed. In a sense the kingdom was "coming" yet "in their midst" in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. When Christ the king came, the kingdom began to break in to the world.

Because it addresses a Jewish audience with messianic expectations, Matthew's Gospel emphasizes the kingdom. The book begins with a genealogy designating that Jesus is "the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matt. 1:1). The messianic title "son of David" is used nine times to describe Jesus (Ferguson 1989, 20-21). He was born as "king of the Jews" (Matt. 2:2). He told parables of the kingdom (Matt. 13), used kingdom power to cast out demons (Matt. 12:28), and taught principles of righteousness inherent in the kingdom (Matt. 5:20). His triumphal entry was pictured as the coming of the Messiah in fulfillment of Zech. 9:9. Jesus died as "the king of the Jews" (Matt. 27:11-42). The concept of the kingdom is so dominant in Matthew that the word "kingdom" is used 51 times in this Gospel while only 18 times in the Gospel of Mark (Senior 1984, 237). Kingsbury says:

The single most comprehensive concept in the first Gospel is without doubt that of the Kingdom of Heaven. It touches on every major facet of the Gospel, whether it is theological, christological, or ecclesiological in nature. (1975b, 128).

Although dominant in Matthew, the kingdom motif is significant in all the Gospels. This teaching "pervades the entire proclamation of Jesus recorded in the gospels and appears to have determined the course of his ministry" (Beasley-Murray 1986, x).

Matthew comments that Jesus "went throughout Galilee, . . . preaching the good news of the kingdom" (Matt. 4:23). Proclamation was accompanied by the deeds which defeated the powers of Satan: Demons were cast out by the power of God and the sick were healed (Matt. 4:23-24). According to Mark's account, those who heard the kingdom proclamation of Jesus were told to "repent and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). The good news of the kingdom of God was now operative among them; it was now time to respond to the mighty acts of God in history! With such expectations it is no wonder that thousands flocked to hear the proclamation of the kingdom from Jesus of Nazareth, who was acclaimed as the long-awaited Messiah of God.

Two Kingdoms in Opposition

The Gospels picture two kingdoms standing in opposition to one another. The kingdom of God came with power to defeat the dominions of Satan. When a demon-possessed man was healed by Jesus, multitudes of Jews began to wonder if Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of David. The Pharisees, becoming jealous, retorted that Jesus was casting out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of demons. Jesus replied by describing two opposing kingdoms. The demons were not cast out by Beelzebub because Satan would not fight against himself (Matt. 12:22-27). Then Jesus said, "But if I cast out demons by the spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come upon you" (Matt. 12:28). Deliverance from demon-possession demonstrated the emancipating power of God, which had entered the world to defeat the power of Satan.

In Matt. 12:29 Jesus gives the analogy of the binding of the strong man in order to carry off his property. Satan in this

context is the strong man; however, Jesus, the implied stronger man, is able to bind him. When healing the spirit-possessed, Jesus entered the house of Satan, bound him, and took possession of his property. This defeat of Satan was characteristic of Christ's ministry. He was breaking down the authority of Satan by entering his domain, a world controlled by his power (1 John 5:19).

It must be noted that the stronger man "first binds the strong man" before he "plunders his house" (Matt. 12:29). The satanic in a person must be defeated before God can take possession of him. "The plundering of the Strong Man's house takes place only after he had been defeated" (Beasley-Murray, l986, 109).

The defeat of Satan during Jesus' ministry was a foretaste of what Jesus did in breaking the chains of death and being raised from the dead (Col. 2:15). The entire ministry of Jesus was characterized by triumph over Satan. This has become a testimony to later generations that "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

Thus the kingdom was not only proclaimed by word but also by deed. Jesus proclaimed the message of the kingdom while at the same time casting out demons and helping the blind to see and the lame to walk (Matt. 11:5). The kingdom in the New Testament is seen as the "dynamic activity of God, operative in, with, and through" Jesus Christ (Beasley-Murray 1986, 74).

Kingdom Perspectives in Early Christian Proclamation

The kingdom was also proclaimed in the ministry of the early church. When Philip went to Samaria and "proclaimed Christ there" (Acts 8:5), his message was "the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 8:12). Paul was said to have gone "about preaching the kingdom" (Acts 20:25). His ministry was reflected in his conversional experience. Christ called him on the road to Damascus to proclaim the gospel to Gentiles--"to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God" (Acts 26:18). Paul in Rome declared to the Jews the "kingdom of God" (Acts 28:23). Pauline epistles proclaim deliverance "from the dominion of darkness . . . into the kingdom of the Son" (Col. 1:13). Apostolic preaching might be summarized as kingdom proclamation.

This proclamation of the kingdom is especially apropos in animistic contexts. Simon of Samaria was a sorcerer considered so powerful that he was acclaimed as "the great power" (Acts 8:9-11). Philip powerfully preached the mighty acts of God in defeating the powers of Satan--the message of "the good news of the kingdom and the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 8:12). Simon, perhaps drawn by the demonstration of power that accompanied Philip's message, believed and was baptized (Acts 8:13). Even Simon as a Christian could not resist seeking power. He thought that Peter and John, apostles sent from Jerusalem to impart spiritual gifts to the new Samaritan Christians, were power brokers like the animistic practitioners of his tradition. Simon, therefore, approached them about buying the power of the "laying on of the apostles' hands" (Acts 8:18). Although he probably had received apostolic gifts through the laying on the hands of Peter and John, he now wanted the power to dispense these gifts. He was equating the power of God with the powers of his animistic heritage.

Inaugurated Eschatology

In biblical writings about the kingdom there is an evident "tension between the `already' and the `not yet.' The kingdom has been inaugurated but has not yet been completed" (Osborne 1987). Christians, who have been "strengthened with all power according to his glorious might" in the present age, anticipate "the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light" (Col. 1:11). They have "tasted of the powers of the age to come!" (Heb. 6:5). The concept that the kingdom has already broken into the world but has not yet been consummated is termed *inaugurated eschatology*. The rule that God has initiated in Jesus Christ actively continues through those who believe in him and will be consummated at the end of the age (Beasley-Murray 1986, 80).

The parables of the kingdom make clear the nature of the rule of God in a world where the powers of Satan continue to exist. In the parable of Matt. 13:24-30 the tares and the wheat exist side by side. The tares represent "the sons of the evil one" and the wheat "the sons of the kingdom" (vs. 38). Since the roots of the tares have mingled with those of the wheat, removing the tares would endanger the harvest. The focus of the parable is on the command "Let them grow together until the harvest" (vs. 30). Jesus teaches that the good and bad are not separated in the present age. This is the

final work of God when he consummates his kingdom with judgment: The tares will be separated from the wheat and "righteousness will shine forth . . . in the kingdom of their father" (Matt. 13:43). This parable thus gives a reason for the continuance of Satan's kingdom even though God's kingdom in Christ has broken in to the world.

Although the kingdom of God has come, the kingdom of Satan continues to exist. Contrary to Jewish expectations, the arrival of the kingdom of God did not eradicate of the kingdom of Satan.

This concept of inaugurated eschatology compels the animist overwhelmed by evil forces to wait on the Lord to act. He knows that evil forces coexist in this world with forces of God. He must not "consult the mediums and wizards" (Isa. 8:19) but "wait for the Lord" (Isa. 8:17) and turn to "the law and to the testimony" (Isa. 8:20). He must not "consult the dead on behalf of the living" (Isa. 8:19). Knowing that both the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan coexist in this present world, the Christian of an animist heritage is able to differentiate the two.

Kingdom Proclamation in Animistic Contexts

Kingdom theology is appropriate for Christian proclamation in animistic contexts for a number of reasons. First, kingdom theology provides an interpretive model based on the Word of God for explaining the world. Spirit propitiation and appeasement of both malevolent and ambivalent spirits and gods are of the realm of Satan; the worship of the awesome, majestic Creator is of the realm of God. Spirit possession, black magic, and witchcraft are of the reign of Satan; God protects the Christian from the malevolent use of all such powers in his kingdom. In the kingdom of Satan morality is relative, defined by society and by relations with ambivalent spiritual beings. In the kingdom of God morality is defined by a holy God who expects his people to reflect his nature. Kingdom theology, therefore, provides a holistic philosophy to help the animist understand the reality of God in the world.

Second, kingdom theology introduces the reign of God, which equips believers to attack and defeat the powers of Satan. By the power of Christ fetishes and altars are destroyed, satanic laws overturned, and the spirit-possessed healed. God in his spirit protects his children so that there is no fear of magic or witchcraft. A Christian's relationship to God casts out all fear (1 John 4:18). Above all, in Jesus Christ there is forgiveness of sins; so harmony with God and with his world is reestablished. The church, like Jesus, actively confronts Satan's powers in all their manifestations in order to bring people under the sovereignty of God. Christians have the assurance that they will overcome because they have a greater power than that which is in the world (1 John 4:4).

Third, kingdom theology makes no dichotomy between the natural and the supernatural. It acknowledges that the encounter between God and Satan is actively taking place in this world. God heals the sick, blesses and protects his children, and casts out spirits as manifestations of the kingdom. God controls all facets of his world, both physical and spiritual. No dichotomy should be made between these two realms. The missionary working in an animistic society must believe in the reign of God over all domains of life.

Fourth, while conversion theology is individualistic, kingdom theology is systemic. It aims to Christianize the entire cultural system. Not only must the individual give allegiance to Creator God in Jesus Christ, but the customs, mores, and laws which have been contorted by the influence of Satan must also be Christianized. Ethics and morality thus become part of the proclamation of the kingdom of God. For example, rites of passages from different stages of life must be made Christian. When a child is born, he is blessed before God rather than having an ancestor called into him. The coming-of-age rite will initiate children into Christian adulthood. Prayers for God's blessing upon marriage rites will mirror faith in God rather than having beer spit upon a traditional wedding band asking for ancestral blessings. Birth, marriage, and coming-of-age rites must all demonstrate the nature of Christ. During times of drought and famine, God, the giver of rain, is beseeched in prayer. The reign of Christ must be seen in every facet of life.

In kingdom theology the encounter between God and Satan is overtly declared.

A Suggested Metaphor in Animistic Contexts

There are many different metaphors of the atonement. Like colors of a prism produced by one ray of light, different

metaphors of the atonement are used to explain the mystery of God's saving work of bringing people to himself (Steeves 1990, 15). Humphreys has given three biblical metaphors of the atonement. Peter's metaphor in his sermons in Acts conceives the atonement as the dawning of a new age in Jesus Christ in an eschatological setting. Paul's metaphor in Romans and Galatians pictures atonement as justification in Christ within a legal setting. The writer of Hebrews describes atonement as sacrificial expiation in a legal setting (Humphreys 1978, 19-29). While these metaphors would be understandable to an animist and would shed additional light on the radiance of God's atonement once he becomes a Christian, they would not create an urgency in his heart to hear the Christian message.

The metaphor which stirs the heart of the animist is that of Christ, the triumphant one who defeats the principalities and powers. In his death Christ "disarmed the rulers and authorities" and "made a public display of them" (Col. 2:15). Conversion, therefore, is not simply personal salvation but also "cosmic redemption" from the powers (Bruce 1984, 113). This metaphor is the classical doctrine of the atonement reintroduced to Western theology by Gustaf Aulen in Christus Victor (Aulen 1931) proclaimed by the church whenever animists forsake their paganism to worship their emancipating, sovereign Creator (Driver 1986, 71-86).

Throughout the generations people have come to God from animistic contexts and have needed to view Christ as the one who is victorious over the powers. While Westerners have tended to feel uncomfortable with Aulen's perspective and have de-emphasized it, the animist gladly responds to the Good News that the powers of Satan have been defeated in Jesus Christ. Paradoxically, an overemphasis on this metaphor creates "triumphalism," an emphasis on power, which Christ, who had all power, gave up. However, without the power of God the animist can never free himself of the power of Satan. Only the message of the Triumphant One who defeats the powers will free the animist from his bondage. May the news of the Triumphant One be mightily proclaimed!

Western formulations of theology are inadequate to affect animistic peoples like the Kipsigis. If Kipsigis Christians had been presented a coherent kingdom theology from the beginning, they would not have needed to ask the author how to deal with spirit-possession. From her inception the church would have been actively confronting the powers of Satan. The response "Let us pray God Almighty to free the children of the spirits" was right. Nevertheless, the fact that the question was asked shows how movements growing out of an Western secular heritage seldom deal with any theology beyond conversion. Those converted have no theology with which to confront Satan. Western missiologists must become better theologians, doing biblical theology, in order to formulate a theology of the kingdom, showing God in Jesus breaking in to the world to defeat the powers of Satan.

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Chapter 7
Animistic Practitioners

Topics in Chapter:

Etic Versus Emic Taxonomies	Types of Animistic Practitioners

It is easy for missionaries entering an animistic context to disparagingly ridicule animistic practitioners and describe them as "crazy lunatics." Early ethnographers, like Levy-Bruhl (1910, 1922) and Radin (1937), amplified these unfortunate perceptions by calling them "pre-logical," "neurotic," and even "psychotic." Howells, an early writer about Animism, reflected the ethnocentrism of his day when he said, "It is easier for most people, primitive or civilized, to believe in witches, which are imaginary, than in the facts of psychiatry, which are real" (1962, 113). Missiologists, like Nida and Smalley, adopted similar ethnocentric terminologies when they called shamans, sorcerers, and mediums "the `lunatic fringe' of society." These practitioners were described as "psychotic, mentally deranged, emotionally unstable" although frequently very "clever" (1959, 58). The use of pejorative terms led missionaries to conceive of animistic practitioners as fakes rather than representatives of real power. And since they could be understood as quacks, they could easily be dismissed as insignificant--like magicians in our own society. Few missionaries understood that, although some were opportunists, many practitioners carried true power based on ungodly allegiances.

Field research by later ethnographers showed these animistic practitioners typically to be respected leaders who divined misfortune and maintained the authority system of their culture. Shweder, in his formative study of the Zinacanteco Indians of Chiapas, Mexico, describes shamans as practitioners who refuse to say, "I don't know," when confronted by events and ideas that baffle the common man. They creatively devise answers concurrent with their worldviews. Shweder says that they have learned to order "the chaos set before their eyes" by imposing "form on unstructured stimuli." He describes their role in society as both "interpretive and constructive" (1972, 408-412).

Animistic leaders are "practitioners" in the sense that they are noted for what they can do. An animist who has become seriously ill frequently travels from one practitioner to the next until he finds one who is able to help him. When healed, he advocates the powers of the practitioner who gave him the means to be healed. Animistic leaders are "practitioners" rather than "instructors" or "disseminators of information" (Hesselgrave 1978, 157).

When a missionary enters an animistic context, he is not confronted by an animistic system as such but by people who believe in personal and impersonal spiritual power and practitioners of this power. It is, therefore, important to determine how insiders of the culture conceive of these practitioners. In some societies they are tolerated yet feared because of their power. In other societies they are greatly respected because of their ability to manipulate, divine, and communicate with animistic powers.

Animistic societies differ in their emphases. Some emphasize spirit possession, others divination of the causes of illness, others witchcraft and sorcery. Because of these different perspectives, animistic practitioners vary from culture to culture. Even in the same culture various types of animistic leaders perform different functions. The Marakwet of Kenya say, "Motiren ko kobol," i.e., "There are innumerable religious specialists" (Kipkorir 1973, 19). This chapter gives a taxonomy of animistic practitioners for the purpose of aiding the missionary in understanding his animistic context.

Etic Versus Emic Taxonomies

Kenneth Pike says that culture can be viewed from two vantage points: the etic and the emic. An etic perspective sees culture from an outsider's vantage point. An emic perspective, on the other hand, looks at culture from a participant's viewpoint (Pike 1971, 37-38).

Etic Perspectives

In religious anthropology broad classifications have been developed to categorize spiritual phenomena. These units of cultural understanding are "etic," available to the missionary before he arrives on the field. After he arrives on the field, these categories provide him with frameworks to decipher the new culture and compare phenomena in this culture to other world cultures. Without such categories a new missionary would be at a loss to decipher a new culture. He would likely see animistic customs without recognizing them.

An experiment within Western culture might help us understand the need for etic categories. Bruner and Postman conducted a card-playing experiment in which subjects were asked to identify a series of playing cards. Many of the cards were normal although a few were irregular. For example, one irregular card was a red six of spades, and another was a black four of hearts. Because participants were not prepared for new types of cards, they immediately fit the anomalous cards into "conceptual categories prepared by prior experience" (Kuhn 1970, 62-63). "They saw only the types of cards for which previous experience had equipped them" (Kuhn 1970, 113). Likewise, many missionaries in animistic cultures can neither distinguish between types of animistic practitioners nor understand their practices and belief systems. Since most missionaries have grown up in cultures where Animism has been only a substream of a highly secular culture, studying etic classifications of Animism helps the missionary become aware of his "blind spots."

The new missionary must realize at least two dangers in making etic classifications. First, since etic classifications are general, specific differences are easily overlooked. There is a danger in saying, "Spiritism of Brazil is like . . . ," because there are many types of Spiritism. Brazilian Spiritism prevalent among the upper classes, called Kardecism, which emphasizes talking with ancestral spirits and social work among the poor, is vastly different from the type of Spiritism prevalent among the lower classes in Bahia, called Condomble, which emphasizes sacrifices made to non-ancestral spirits.

Second, the Christian field worker must not hold so rigidly to etic classification systems that all data is forced to fit his schemes. Sometimes etic systems do not reflect any indigenous reality. New categories must be devised to define the distinctive orientations of that society. For example, shamans all over the world are classified in one category. However, an African shaman is vastly different from a Tungus shaman of Siberia or the Iglulik Eskimo shaman. The African shaman typically divines through analyzing sticks thrown onto the ground or the texture and content of stomachs, intestines, and the liver of sacrificial sheep, goats, or chickens. The Tungus shaman of Siberia divines by means of possession while the Eskimo shaman divines by leading the sick person to confess his sins and thus gain release. While the roles of shamans are similar throughout the world, their methods of divination are vastly different. While the shaman is similar to a medium in Brazil, among Sufi Muslims he might play the role of a mystic. There is a temptation to treat taxonomical categories as if they are "real" rather than general classifications which enable the cross-cultural worker to discover indigenous cultural meanings.

Emic Perspectives

When a missionary enters a new culture, he is not entering a cultural vacuum. The people of that culture already have existing beliefs of God, man, spirits, and magic. They already know how humans relate to the powers and have a culturally formulated sense of sin and salvation. In order to effectively communicate the gospel to people of another culture, the missionary must learn how the people view their world. Malinowski, the father of participant-observation, wrote that the ethnographer must "grasp the native's point of view, his relationship to life, and realize his vision of his world" (Malinowski 1922, 25; Spradley 1979, 3). The missionary, like the ethnographer, must develop an insider's perspective--an emic understanding of how a people mentally order their world.

This necessitates that the missionary begin as a learner when he arrives on the field. Hopefully, he has already studied etic classifications of spiritual powers like those given in the remainder of this book. These classifications prepare him to perceive what he would never see through his monocultural lens. His task, as a new missionary, is to develop an emic understanding of a culture using the etic tools provided in his training.

As the missionary attempts to study culture from an insider's perspective, he must be able to project himself above the culture and objectively study the culture in which he is participating. In this "insider-outsider" relationship the

missionary is, to some degree, a biased participant, who, nevertheless, is trained to project himself out of his situation and study what is happening (Spradley 1980, 56-57).

But the missionary is more than an ethnographer whose purpose is to understand cultural meanings and to communicate these meanings to readers who are unfamiliar with the culture. The missionary seeks to understand a cultural context in order to communicate the message of God within that context. He seeks reciprocal dialogue with indigenous cultural leaders on the ramifications of the Christian message upon their culture, a process which integrates the teaching of the Christian message and learning of the culture. The doing of theology within a culture becomes part of emically understanding the culture.

Types of Animistic Practitioners

In the comparative analysis of religious practitioners one of the most useful analytical frameworks is the distinction made between spontaneous religious leaders who challenge traditional religious beliefs and those who represent some religious institution or bureaucracy. Max Weber, who originally formulated this distinction, called the spontaneous religious leader a "prophet" and contrasted him with a "priest" (Weber 1922, 46-59). To him the prophet was either a renewer of a religion or a founder of a new religion. In either role, he was "a force for dynamic social change." The priest, on the other hand, upheld the status quo and served as the "reinforcement of the stability of societies" (Parsons 1963). Weber made this distinction between prophet and priest because of his concern for the genesis and change of religions, especially as societies move from simple to more complex. He noted that as societies become more intricate, they tend to move from emphasizing prophets to emphasizing priests. A rural, face-to-face society tends to have many prophets but few priests; an urban, pluralistic society tends to have many priests but few prophets.

The missionary anthropologist is not so concerned with the origins and development of religions as he is with the statuses and roles of religious practitioners within specific cultures. It will, therefore, be more helpful for him to contrast the priest with the shaman than with the prophet (Turner 1989, 86; Lessa and Vogt 1965, 451-486). Shamans are the informal healers and diviners within world societies while prophets are the individualistic and innovative change makers. Because both the prophet and shaman are informal religious leaders, they are contrasted to the priest in this section. Their roles represent polar opposites: the priest is an institutional religious leader while the prophet and shaman are informal leaders.

Formal, institutional religious leaders are first described in this section followed by informal religious leaders. Finally, the statuses and roles of missionaries

will be analyzed.

Priest

The priest is a religious practitioner who receives his authority from a religious organization. He is selected by the organization through election, rituals, or heredity and serves as the institution's ritual leader and spokesman. As a representative of an institution, he attempts to maintain the status quo. Since the priest is "part of a carefully scripted drama, he cannot be an innovator" (Allison 1987). He serves the function of a mediator by speaking to the gods and spirits on behalf of the people. He is commonly a community leader rather than a family or individual leader.

In many societies the priest exists side-by-side with other religious practitioners. The priest, as the official religious leader recognized by the community, acts when all is well to insure continuity and stability as people relate to spiritual powers. But when misfortune interrupts the normal flow of life, the shaman or medium is called upon to restore disturbed relations with spiritual beings and forces.

Sometimes the functions of priest and shaman are combined. For example, among the Saora of India the priest's special function is to maintain the local shrines while the shaman or medium ordains new priests (Von Furer-Haimendorf, 1989, 95). At other times, the functions of priest and prophet may be combined. Among the Maoris of

New Zealand the priests interpret the message of the prophets and communicate it to the people (Howells 1962, 139).

Among the Kipsigis of Kenya there is a great contrast between a Catholic priest and a tisindet, a traditional practitioner whose title was typically translated "priest" in English. While the Catholic priest represents an institutionalized religious group, the tisindet was the intercessor between the people and Creator God during times of drought and famine. Unlike the Catholic priest, the tisindet represented no institution but was asked by the people to intercede with God on their behalf during a time of crisis. Forgiveness of sins was sought so that Asis, the traditional name for Creator God among the Kipsigis, would once again send rain. Because of increasing secularization and the spread of Christian beliefs, traditional prayer rites for rain are no longer conducted in Kipsigis. The last such prayer rite that I have personally heard about was in 1965. Except for the tisindet, no traditional religious leader in Kipsigis would be called a priest, and this tisindet did not represent a formalized religious institution.

When high religions, like Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism, move into an area where low religion predominates, the high religions almost always introduce a more formalized type of religious leadership than existed in the traditional society. Thus the first "priests" in Kipsigis who represented a religious bureaucracy were those who were selected, trained, and ordained by Christian religious groups. The church must reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of this significant change in the nature of religious leaders. To what degree should Christian religious leaders in their context represent a bureaucracy? To what degree should informal, lay leadership be emphasized in areas where religion has not been highly institutionalized? To what degree does increasing institutionalization in the church reflect a similar trend in the political and economic structures of society?

The priest is a ritual functionary within an institutional religious setting. This is in contrast to the prophet, shaman, and medium who are informal leaders who

personally deal with people's everyday problems.

Prophet

The prophet is a religious practitioner who receives his authority by some prophetic call and proclaims revitalization and change of society without being accountable to any religious bureaucracy. His authenticity is derived from his personal charisma which on one level reflects his ability to inspire and motivate and on another level reflects his capacity to achieve ecstatic states required by one who speaks for God, gods, spirits, and ancestors. As a charismatic innovator, he rejects many tradition-bound rituals and improvises his own or advocates those of his god or spirit. He upsets the status quo by advocating change. Thus the prophet appears to the priest to be a heretic. The prophet is especially active during times of deep cultural stress and anxiety. During this time of anomie, he receives a divine call and speaks the message of his god or spirit to a people overwhelmed by problems and stresses. The prophet communicates with the people on the cosmological as well as the this-worldly level (Turner 1989, 88) and is consequently likely to bring about worldview change. While "in the priest man speaks to God, in the prophet . . . God speaks to man" (Evans-Pritchard 1956, 304).

The roles of Amaziah and Amos in the book of Amos illustrate the contrast between priest and prophet. Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, represented the status quo--the entrenched bureaucracy which had rejected the worship of the one true God. After hearing the seditious message of Amos, he immediately informed King Jereboam II and confronted Amos. Amos came from Judah to North Israel to proclaim the need for change--for revival of the worship of God with the resulting punishment of exile if Israel did not repent. When Amaziah ordered Amos to refrain from prophesying in Bethel and return to Judah, Amos refused because his message was from God and he could not refrain from preaching the words of God (Amos 7:10-17). In such contexts there is an obvious tension between priest and prophet. The priest seeks to maintain the status quo; the prophet advocates change.

The prophet William Harris of Liberia was such a change agent in West Africa during the years 1913-15. Harris attended mission schools in Liberia and was a teacher in the Protestant Episcopal schools from 1892 to 1909. In 1909 he traitorously raised the British flag in a land that considered itself free from colonial control and was immediately imprisoned. After getting out of prison, he began a missionary journey down the coast from Liberia

through Ivory Coast and into Ghana. On his trip he admonished all who would listen to burn their fetishes, be baptized, worship on the Sabbath, and wait for the White Men who would explain the message of the Bible. Over 100,000 Ivorians and Ghanaians turned from paganism, burned their fetishes, and were baptized. Despite persecution, including the deportation of Harris from French-speaking West Africa and the burning by the French of church buildings built by the new Christians, the movement persisted and thrived. Various independent Methodist churches date their origin back to this early missionary journey of the Prophet Harris (Wold 1968, 117-122). Some prophets, like Harris, are initiators of new religious movements. Others, like Amos, seek to revitalize an existing religion which has regressed into Animism, become institutionalized and less sensitive to the needs of the common person, or been broken apart by political in-fighting.

Movements may be either initiated or revitalized by prophets. They are given continuity by priests. Muhammad, Jesus, and the prophet Harris were all initiators of new religious movements. Amos, on the other hand, sought to revitalize Israelite religion by urging the people to return to their old faith. These prophets could not be quieted by the priests of their day because they believed that their message originated with God.

The need for continuity forces prophetic movements to become priestly. Elijah was at first a lonely prophet standing by himself before the prophets of Baal. The movement pointed toward institutionalization when Elisha was chosen as his successor. When Elisha set up a school of the prophets, this "prophetic" movement became even more priestly. As time passed, kings surrounded themselves with prophets who spoke the words that the kings wanted to hear (1 Kgs. 22:6-8). By the time of Amos the prophetic movement had become so institutionalized that Amos refused to call himself a prophet, saying that he was neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet (Amos 7:14). As prophets become priests, new prophets are raised up to revitalize, reform, and re-direct the old system. Prophetic movements may become priestly in one generation. Both Billy Graham and Oral Roberts initiated prophetic ministries. Their movements became highly institutionalized with the development of the Billy Graham Crusades and Oral Roberts University. Prophetism is sometimes built into the movement. Some Pentecostal churches of Latin America require a young preacher to start a new church (be a "prophet") before he is ordained (to be a "priest" within the hierarchy) (Wagner 1973, 89-100).

Both the prophet and priest are needed in an on-going movement. The prophet initiates and revitalizes a movement, while the priest provides continuity. Reforms become institutionalized as charismatic, prophetic leaders are forced into a priestly mold. Like the shaman, the prophet is a non-institutional, informal religious leader but, unlike the shaman, is typically not a healer. The prophet, although speaking for a spirit or god, is not possessed by the spiritual being, like the medium, but maintains his own personality.

Shaman

The shaman is a diviner who seeks to discern what spiritual being or impersonal force is causing sickness, discord, or catastrophe in order to prescribe some remedy. In contrast to community leaders, like the priest and prophet, the shaman is an individual or family practitioner. He is a "personal diviner" called upon to solve urgent personal problems. He "deals in a personal and specific way with spirits and lesser deities" but seldom, if ever, dialogues about Creator God, the source of evil in the world, or cosmological issues (Turner 1989, 88). Since he holistically treats the symptoms of disease and dispenses herbal medicines, he is sometimes called a "medicine man." In addition to medical treatment, he gives spiritual prognoses discerning what god, spirit, spiritual force, sin, or black magic has caused the illness or catastrophe. Since he frequently divines and cures problems created by witches, he is called a "witchdoctor." The shaman uses spiritual power for beneficent purposes to help people counter magic, evil spirits, and the results of sin in their lives. He champions the cause of the people as they confront the evil powers always present in the animist's world.

In many rural, face-to-face cultures every extended family has its own shaman. He contacts the ancestors and spirits on behalf of his own people and discerns what powers are being used against them. In urban centers, where specialties develop, divining the powers becomes a trade. Shamanistic specialists may join together and form spiritist centers where people come for spiritual and physical prognoses.

The term shaman originated with the Tungus people of Siberia. These nomadic reindeer herders and fishermen believe in three realms of existence: a higher sphere where good spirits and light exist, a middle realm where people live along with the spirits of the world, and a lower domain where evil spirits dwell in darkness. The shaman is understood as the beneficent practitioner who is able to go to the realm above or the realm below on behalf of the living. He divines various causes of illness. A person may have a disease spirit inside him which has to be exorcised. Or, a person may have lost his soul and the shaman may have to confront demonic powers of the lower realms to retrieve it. The shaman uses his spiritual power to help people and is given public recognition and respect by them (Howells 1962, 125-127). Although taken from the Siberian context, the term "shaman" is used for the general practitioner who helps people deal with the problem of evil in their lives and unlock the secrets of the unknown.

The shaman is the most frequently used type of religious leader in animistic contexts. When a Brazilian lady wonders how she might induce a man to pay her special attention, a diviner is used. When a Chinese family wants to find out whether an ancestor is comfortable, a shaman reveals the world of the dead. When an African child becomes seriously ill, a shaman determines the cause and cure. When a Korean family is deciding on a date for a wedding or a funeral, the shaman determines the auspicious day. When a Hong Kong businessman wants inside information about the stock market, he seeks a diviner to discern the market. When a Zinacanteco Indian of Mexico moves into a new house, the shaman first purifies it.

A shaman's universal function is healing those broken in body or soul. He first divines the cause of sickness and then prescribes some type of cure. If sin is thought to be the cause of illness, the shaman will likely lead the patient to confess so that he can be healed. For example, Rasmussen records how an Eskimo woman was led by a shaman to confess her sins. Her sins included eating taboo food, touching a dead body, concealing a miscarriage to avoid certain taboos, and having intercourse with men while unclean. As her sins were confessed, listeners pleaded for release from sickness. The shaman encouraged her to confess all, saying, "She grows cleaner with every confession, but there is more to come" (Rasmussen 1965, 410-414).

Among the Kipsigis of Kenya sickness is also frequently connected with sin. Kipsigis believe that sin disrupts society and brings disharmony. The phrase they use to speak of this is "amech tengech," literally meaning, "ours sins are eating us up." Harmony can only be re-established by forgiveness of sins and restitution. Other causes of sickness include spirit possession, witchcraft, and sorcery. In other societies, soul-loss and object intrusion, which occurs when spirits or sorcerers magically project foreign substances into their foe's body, are other plausible causes of sickness among animistic people (Burnett 1988, 179-182). In animistic societies nothing is left to chance or to the forces of nature. There is a spiritual cause for every extended illness. The shaman divines the cause of the illness and suggests a remedy.

One becomes a shaman in various ways. Among the Zulu of South Africa the outward symptoms of becoming an inyanga are abstaining from different kinds of food, complaining of pain in different parts of the body, dissipating one's wealth in order to seek a cure, becoming very sick for a long period of time, dreaming dreams, and weeping and singing loudly at night. Finally, an experienced inyanga will divine that he is being possessed and is not sick as other people are sick. A person with these symptoms disturbs the community because he is in a state of transition. He is no longer just a man but not yet a diviner. When the people perceive his being torn between two worlds, they encourage him to go to an established inyanga so that induction into shamanhood might be facilitated. After these initiatory rites he comes back a new man with the facilities to divine the unknown (Radin 1937, 123-126).

Among the Zinacanteco Indians the call to be a shaman comes by seeing into the realms of gods and ancestors through dreams and visions (Shweder 1972, 408). In much of West Africa the shaman receives his call when he is possessed by some spirit. This belief was imported by slaves into Brazil so that almost all shamanistic practitioners can only divine when they are possessed by various orixas or lesser gods. A shaman's helper can become a diviner only when an orixa possesses him in the orunko ceremony. Among Koreans sinbyong ("possession sickness") is prerequisite to becoming a shaman (Harvey 1989, 42-43).

These illustrations from throughout the world demonstrate that joining with the spiritual beings in some type of ecstatic experience, especially through possessions and dreams, is prerequisite to becoming a shaman. While Westerners might consider these people as "crazy," their transformations into sane practitioners who divine the

unknown reveal to animistic peoples some sort of union between the human and the spiritual worlds. "Shamans are separated from the rest of society by the intensity of their religious experience" (Von Furer-Haimendorf 1989, 96).

How should the Christian community in animistic contexts treat the shaman? Rarely would they ridicule or question that he has the power to know the unknown. They would recognize that his power comes from a union with powers that are not of Creator God, even if the power is used for benevolent purposes. One cannot be tied to these powers and give allegiance to God. The slave girl having the spirit of divination in Acts 16:16-18 was a shaman. Using her power, she was able to accurately divine who Paul and his co-workers were. In this case Paul did not strike her blind like he had done with the sorcerer of Acts 13:8, but he healed her to show the power of God over all the non-godly powers.

In summary, the shaman does not necessarily advocate change like a prophet nor does he conduct ceremonial rituals like the priest. He is a diviner who prescribes cures for those who are sick or have other personal problems. He holds special powers because of his relationship with the spirit world and sometimes serves as a medium as well as a diviner. As a beneficent practitioner, he stands out against malevolent forces of the witch and sorcerer. Although benevolent, Christians cannot use this practitioner because his power is not of God.

One of my most effective sermons in Kipsigis contrasted the prayer of Hannah asking God for a son to a childless Kipsigis woman who seeks animistic power through a traditional shaman, called a Chepsogeiyot. While Hannah relied on God and waited faithfully for him to act, the Kipsigis lady, following the dictates of the shaman, sought to overcome the curse of a recently deceased aunt. She sought to appease through a propitiatory sacrifice. Hannah related to sovereign God, the one who gives children (Ps. 113:9; 127:3). The traditionalist related to the ancestor because she had no higher power. Hannah's relationship to God was one of praise (1 Sam. 2:1-10); the traditionalist had an allegiance which blocked her relationship with God (Isa. 8:19). Such preaching contrasts the way of God and the traditions of Animism. Chapter 3.

Medium

A medium is a human oracle through whom an ancestor or spirit communicates directly with the living. The medium is totally possessed by the spiritual being. Unlike a prophet, a medium does "not recount a revelation" after he hears it. Neither does he briefly participate in the spiritual world during periods of ecstasy and then return to himself in order to communicate with the living, like a shaman. Rather, a medium speaks "publicly with the very voice of the god himself" (Howells 1962, 78). The god or spirit enters the medium, suppresses the spirit of that person, and uses his organs to communicate to others.

Ancient examples of mediums are numerous. Greek and Roman gods frequently spoke to the people through mediums. As early as 1100 B.C. Delphi in Greece was considered sacred to the god Apollo. A medium, uttering weird sounds while in a frenzy, was believed to speak the words of Apollo. These words were recorded and interpreted by the priest of the oracle. The kaula in Hawaii was also possessed by a god usually at the time of some feast. The medium spoke in the shrill, squeaking voice of the god. As at Delphi, the priests communicated the message of the god as he spoke through the medium (Howells 1962, 78-79).

A study of mediums is very important to those ministering in certain contemporary, urban societies. In these contexts there has been a great upsurge in the belief that ancestors, spirits, and astral beings speak to the living through mediums. This has been a shock to those who believe we have entered an "age of demystification," a term coined by Weber to chart man's evolutionary growth from Animism to polytheism to monotheism to demystification. But the urbanite frequently begins to question his secularity and seek meaning beyond material existence.

Spiritist Mediums of Brazil. Within the last fifty years, a new mediumistic movement has developed in Brazil. Folk Catholicism has met with other animistic influences in the city and has reformulated itself into a new animistic religion, called Spiritism (Cook 1982). The core belief of Spiritism is that mediums are possessed by saints, gods, and ancestors, and while possessed divine the problems of believers and provide solutions.

In a typical spiritist center there are three tiers of animistic practitioners. The highest position in a given center is occupied by the chefe, the chief medium of the center (Brown 1979, 278). He has the right "to create and enforce his own rules" (Maggie 1987, 103) and plays a central role in all sessions whether or not he is possessed. The chefe might be called the mae de santo ("mother of saint") or iyalorixa if she is a woman and pai de santo ("father of saint") or babalorixa if he is a man (Shipp 1982, 23-24). As the chief medium of a spiritist center, the chefe is frequently called the father or mother of a god or saint.

The second tier is the corps of mediums, called cavalos ("horses") because they are ridden by the gods during possession (Souza Lima 1970, 122). Because of their place within the institution, they are called sons/daughters of the saints/orixas (McGregor 1967, 162). In some spiritist centers one medium is chosen as an assistant to the chefe and becomes his successor when he dies (Souza Lima 1970, 122). When mediums feel stifled by the controls of the chefe, they tend to leave and start their own spiritist centers.

On the lowest tier there are various helpers, called cambonos, who assist the chefe and mediums at the ceremonies but who are not ritually possessed (Shipp 1982, 65). These attendants assist the mediums with their ritual garments once the mediums become possessed (Maggie 1987, 104). Many of these attendants will become initiates in the orunko ceremony to receive their orixas and begin to serve as cavalos.

Being a medium is a prerequisite to developing as a leader in a spiritist center. They go through a lengthy initiation rite after a period of training as an initiate. Once a person has become a cavalos for the orixas, he cannot quit without being overpowered by the orixa who has begun to control his life (O'Gorman 1977, 66).

There are many reasons why Brazilians seek help from mediums. First, Brazilians go to mediums to find solutions to romantic problems. According to one spirit medium, 80 percent of the women who come to spiritist centers are seeking answers to love problems (St. Clair 1971, 181). One medium, while possessed, told one seeking love to:

. . . pour "cachaca" (cane brandy) around the base of a tree and place three candles in a row. Then take a small photograph of himself and write the name of the person who has scorned his love on the back of the photograph. Then burn the photograph with the flame of the middle candle. The smoke will unite his face and the person's name. They will be married soon after (Lachler l982, 4).

Second, Brazilians go to mediums for healing. A common statement in Brazil is that "Umbandistas," participants in the fastest growing spiritist cult, "come to Umbanda through the door of suffering" (Brown 1979, 280). The poor of Brazil, who frequently cannot afford hospitals and doctors, have learned to rely upon mediums. Third, others go to mediums for resolution of financial difficulties. David St.Clair, a Western journalist stationed for years in Brazil, concluded his walk from cynicism to faith in spiritism when he believed the spiritists who told him that his "paths were crossed." St. Clair went to a medium of Exu, the god of evil, to have his paths straightened. When St. Clair had his way straightened, his financial problems were immediately remedied (St. Clair 1971, 271-302).

These reasons for the use of mediums are immediate and this-worldly. A spiritist seeks the powers of the spirit world to solve the immediate problems of life. Spiritism is a very practical religion. If one medium does not help, another is tried; if one spirit does not help, another is sought.

New Age Channelers. In the New Age Movement mediums are called "channels." Their function is described as "channeling," "the communication of information to or through a physically embodied human being from a source that is said to exist on some other level or dimension of reality than the physical as we know it, and that is not from the normal mind (or self) of the channel" (Klimo 1987, 33).

New Age channelers are well-known on the American scene. Jane Roberts initially started receiving messages from someone called "Frank Withers" while experimenting with the Ouija board. "Frank Withers" soon identified himself as part of a greater entity called "Seth." After four Ouija board sessions with "Seth," Jane began to receive him clairaudiently, then in a light trance, and finally in a full trance. Based on these experiences, Jane Roberts has written a book on ESP, two books about how she began to channel "Seth," and five books said to be dictated by "Seth". Helen Cohn Schucman, a once-secular psychologist employed by New York's Columbia University College

of Physicians and Surgeons, began hearing voices within saying, "This is a course in miracles." After initial struggles to reject this inward call, she became the channel for a three-volume, 1200-page work entitled A Course in Miracles. Kevin Ryerson, an articulate channel who has appeared on numerous talk shows, entered channeling through experimenting with Eastern type meditation in order to alter his "state of consciousness" (Klimo 1987, 35-38). These illustrations demonstrate how New Agers were induced to enter the mediumistic movement through the Ouija board, hearing an inner voice, and Eastern type meditation.

Channeling is based on the presupposition that all reality is composed of one spirit. Man is considered an individuation merely for the sake of his own self-expression. Both he and his world are thought to be illusions, part of God rather than creations of God. By his beliefs and desires, humankind has created an illusion that appears to be reality. He is a part of one reality, which might be called God. Within this conceptual system channeling is "the growing awareness of any part of the one Being that it can access any of the rest of itself" (Klimo 1987, 35-38). Contrary to Christian belief, New Age thinkers do not conceive of man as being separate and apart from God yet created by him. The world of the New Ager is an illusion rather than an awesome demonstration of the invisible attributes of God (Rom. 1:18).

How should the people of God view the medium? In the scriptures, turning to mediums was considered a denial that Yahweh was God, the sovereign Lord of the Israelites. The Levitical writer said, "Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God" (Lev. 19:31). Isaiah told the people of Judah, "When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?" (Isa. 8:19). The writer of the Chronicles documented the reason why King Saul died. He was killed not only because "he did not keep the word of the Lord" but also because he "consulted a medium for guidance and did not inquire of the Lord" (1 Chr. 10:13-14). Therefore, the follower of God must realize that although the medium might be able to reveal the cause of a problem and provide a solution, turning to a medium is a denial of faith in God.

Witch and Sorcerer

Many world societies make no distinction between sorcery and witchcraft. For example, in Europe and North America the terms "witch" and "sorcerer" have been lumped together and are used interchangeably. Evans-Pritchard, in his study of African peoples, first made the distinction between witch and sorcerer. Differentiating between types of malevolent religious practitioners is especially helpful in Africa, where the distinction between witchcraft and sorcery is necessary for clarity of cultural understanding.

Witches and sorcerers both use spiritual power to inflict harm on others. A witch, whose power is internal, may not be aware that he is a witch until he is accused. He unknowingly energizes spiritual power to hurt someone. Josep Lang'at, a Christian among the Kipsigis of Kenya, has said,"Anger takes upon itself a power of its own and can kill. Hitting with a stick only hurts the body but hitting with anger hurts both spirit and body." Josep was acknowledging that anger and jealousy, major sins in most animistic contexts, can become forces to bewitch. When a man encounters some catastrophe, a neighbor who has been angry with him may be accused of witchcraft. He probably will not deny the charge, believing that his feelings of animosity may have activated the power of witchcraft. Evans-Pritchard writes that among the Azande of Sudan "a witch performs no rite, utters no spell, and possesses no medicines. An act of witchcraft is a psychic act. . . ." (1937, 21).

Unlike a witch, whose power is internal and may be used unconsciously, a sorcerer uses the external power of magical rites and paraphernalia to consciously inflict harm on others. Because of his hostile intent, the sorcerer is the most feared person in animistic society. He has a repertoire of techniques for accomplishing his evil purposes. Stevens describes sorcery as "evil magic, involving the learned use of objects or words . . ." (Stevens 1989, 214). While a witch may be allowed to undo the harm he has done by reversing the magic and making restitution for the suffering of the victim, the sorcerer is so feared and hated that he may be killed upon detection. Both of these practitioners injure people, one consciously and the other unconsciously.

Witchcraft and sorcery are believed to cause untimely deaths. In 1985 Horace Owiti, a Luo member of Kenya's Parliament running for re-election, was brutally slain and his chief rival, Aggrey Ambala, charged with the murder.

On the day that Owiti was buried, Ambala died suddenly in prison. Speculation was rampant concerning the cause of his death. This type of speculation is very typical at Luo funerals when a person dies unexpectedly. The postmortem examination showed that Ambala had died of a heart attack and hypertension. Yet most Kenyans felt that behind the natural causes was some spiritual causation. Numerous Kenyans believed that sorcery was the cause (Weekly Review 1985, 3-5). Some Kipsigis felt that Ambala's sin had returned to punish him.

Sorcerers are also believed to manipulate sports events in many parts of the world. A columnist for Kenya's major newspaper wrote, "It cannot be denied that nearly all soccer teams in Africa hire witchdoctors [sorcerers] in the hope that they will help them win matches" (Daily Nation, January 5, 1986, 3). For example, the Simba Sports Club of Tanzania was playing Kampala City Council for the East and Central Africa Club Championship in Uganda in 1978. Players of the Kampala City Council charged that a Simba goalkeeper had a magic cap which prevented them from scoring. When officials took the cap away, magical particles were found in it. After the magic was removed, Kampala City Council scored an equalizer to make the score end at 1-1 and outscored Simba 4-2 in the shoot-out to win the game. It was noted that the Simba goalie missed his kick in the overtime shootout because he did not have his magic (Daily Nation, January 5, 1986, 3).

In 1985 I took a survey trip among the Sukuma of Tanzania to show a future missionary a largely unchurched area where people would likely turn from Animism to some form of Christianity or Islam in the present generation. While driving into Sukuma for the first time, we saw numerous dancers marching in formation up the major road wearing feather headdresses and skins and armed with bows and arrows. Such traditional garb is seldom seen in present-day Africa. I immediately stopped the car and asked a man on a bicycle who this large group was and what they were doing. With some hesitation he replied that they were the Sungusungu, a society set up to find thieves. After getting to know some people and learning how to ask questions within the context, we learned that Sungusungu was a traditional institution which had originated among the Nyamwezi tribe to the south. Wherever livestock were stolen or wherever witchcraft or sorcery was thought to exist, the Sungusungu came into the area to determine by means of divining and ordeals who was guilty. The prevalence of these customs was indicated by the fact that the government police allowed this traditional society to usurp much of their authority; and Sokoine, the highly respected, former Vice President of Tanzania, was reputed to have stood behind their activities.

Witchcraft and sorcery exist among the Kipsigis people of Kenya but are not as prevalent as in surrounding tribes. Kipsigis say that while they fear the ancestors, the Kisii, an adjoining tribe, greatly fear witchcraft and sorcery. The Kipsigis realize that there are many more types of sorcerers in Kisii than there are in Kipsigis. Nevertheless, fear of malevolent spiritual power continues to exist. One day the local judge was taking bribes to influence his decisions. A wronged party decided to take justice into his own hands and curse the judge. Late one night the judge heard a sound at the door and opened it to find thorns from the lelwet tree, frequently used in curses. He died instantly from a heart attack. For days the Kipsigis talked about the causes and reasons for the use of sorcery. Who had performed the sorcery? Was the person a Kipsigis? How could a Kipsigis do such a thing?

In Kipsigis there are various kinds of sorcerers and witches. The most powerful is the orgoiyot, who is powerful enough to perform sorcery against the whole tribe or even to stop rain. This personality is so powerful that he has his own prophets ("maotik") who are sent to speak to the people. Unlike sorcerers in other contexts, the orgoiyot does not camouflage his identity because he has power over all the land. During times of drought, traditionalists give money to the orgoiyot to encourage him to use his powers to induce rain. Although feared for his power to work black magic, the orgoiyot at one time gave tribal blessings. In pre-colonial times the orgoiyot decided when and if the warriors should go to war, but in recent years most of these traditional leadership functions have been lost. One or more of his children will likely inherit the father's powers.

A common witch in Kipsigis is called a bonindet. Kipsigis say that one may be a bonindet whether or not he knows it. When accused, he typically does not refute the charge. A person goes to the chepsogeiyot, the Kipsigis female shaman, in order to determine who is the bonindet.

Witchcraft and sorcery not only exist in Africa but are also present in most world societies. These malevolent powers continue in societies that are predominately Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu. Howells comments that "Christianity fought the old cult tooth and nail for centuries before it won the battle" (Howells 1962, 105). As the Christian movement declines in the West, Satanic cults, using malevolent powers, are on the increase. Anton

LaVey's Church of Satan has institutionalized part of this movement. Satanic symbols, like the upside-down cross, pentagram, seal of Solomon, and swastika, are frequently found today in such prominent places as record album covers. A police officer who speaks frequently on the occult and investigates occult phenomena estimates that 10 percent of all high school students in Abilene, Texas, have dabbled in the occult (Reed 1989). An ancient guidebook for European practitioners of witchcraft and sorcery, called The Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses, continues to be used in various European contexts (Koch 1971, 131-141).

In the West the tradition developed that sorcerers and witches held their powers because they had made a "deliberate pact with the Devil" (Thomas 1978, 521). In 1484 Pope Innocent VIII issued a decree against witchcraft. This decree influenced two Dominican friars, Heinrich Kraemer and Johann Sprenger, to write an encyclopedia of demonology called Malleus Maleficarum, "The Witches' Hammer." This book accused witches of being worshippers of the devil, the worst of all sins, rather than merely maleficent practitioners. In the ensuing inquisition, an estimated 9 million people were accused of witchcraft and killed over a period of about a hundred years. This belief that malevolent practitioners had made a pact with the devil became a part of English law. Thomas writes that this early legal definition originated with Sir Edward Coke who defined a witch as "a person that hath conference with the Devil to consult with him or to do some act" (1978, 523-524).

How do people of God relate to the sorcerer? The Old Testament directive was, "Do not allow a sorceress to live" (Exod. 22:18) and "Do not practice divination or sorcery" (Lev. 19:26). Sorcerers are always ardent enemies of the people of God. Confrontation between them and Christian evangelists frequently occurs in animistic contexts. Elymas, a Jewish sorcerer, opposed Paul, who had been teaching the proconsul, Sergius Paulus of Cyprus, and was struck blind (Acts 13:6-12). When sorcerers become Christians, as in the case of Simon of Samaria, the temptation is to look on Christian power as a manipulating force. The context of Acts 8 infers that Simon desired to be a Christian power broker in an animistic sense, and this led him to desire the gift of the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 8:19-24). Typically the sign of a sorcerer's conversion is the burning of magical paraphernalia used in his evil endeavors.

Christians are called to be holy as their father in heaven is holy (1 Pet. 1:15-16). A people of holiness cannot touch anything as wicked as sorcery. Attitudes of jealousy and hatred which breed witchcraft are uprooted by Christian love. Where Christianity takes root, sorcery and witchcraft wane. Paulo Koech, a long-time Kipsigis friend and helper, testified that "we have not been affected by witchcraft since the days of my father because we have been Christians." The holiness of God abhors all contact with sorcery and displaces all attitudes which breed witchcraft.

Missionary

A missionary's status and accompanying roles must be worked out in relationship to categories already existing in the host culture. Many animistic peoples have no status called "missionary" for understanding the foreigner who comes into their context for the purpose of communicating the gospel. As much as his new culture allows, the missionary must define his statuses and roles according to categories already present in the host culture. He must avoid negative statuses like colonialist, landlord, policeman and reformer, spiritual father, administrator or technician (Hiebert 1985a, 261-273; Loewen 1975, 434-440) while seeking positive statuses concurrent with being God's emissary in the new culture.

What are positive missionary statuses within the context of animistic cultures? Almost all societies have some category called "learner." For example, while making a dialect survey among the Choco of Panama, Loewen assumed the role of a "young man getting to know the world" (Loewen 1975, 439). Accepting some status defined by the English word "learner" helps the missionary comprehend how the people think, how their animistic world is ordered, and the way to communicate the message of God's work in Jesus Christ within the new context. During this time, the missionary is developing warm, personal relationships with the people of the culture. Frequently, these relationships result in bringing people to Christ. The first church among the Kipsigis, for instance, was established as a result of working with those who taught us the Kipsigis language. However, the status of learner can only be limited to the initial period that the missionary is on the field. The people expect the learner to develop other statuses within their society.

In determining statuses beyond that of "learner," the missionary might do well to study the nature of prophets within society. Prophets are the religious leaders who bring change and revitalization to existing culture. Because both are change agents, the missionary's role is similar to that of a prophet. However, the prophet is an innovator within culture, while a missionary advocates change as an outsider. We might call this status "God's advocate" with the function of "proclaiming God's sovereignty." As God's advocate, he teaches people how to come into a relationship with Creator God through Jesus Christ. He announces that all principalities and powers lay naked and defeated before His power. He defines magic as a force of the realm of Satan which cannot be employed by people of God. He empathizes with people who follow animistic practitioners, yet encounters and challenges allegiances which conflict with God's sovereignty. He becomes God's advocate for change.

As the church becomes better established, the missionary is tempted to become a priest, the authoritative representative of an established religion. There is, however, a danger in an outsider becoming an institutional religious leader. Problems of discipline are handled by the outsider. He defines God's morality and ethics for the host people. Christian alternatives to traditional marriage and coming of age ceremonies are determined by those born and enculturated in another context. Such a priestly role for a missionary appears paternalistic and leads the national church to desire self-government. An alternative status of "catalyst" of cultural options is therefore suggested. The missionary frequently has a broad vision of the world, which enables him to bring to developing national leaders options of how to handle problems within their context. The missionary's role becomes a "mirror, source of alternative, friend of the court . . ." (Loewen 1980, 128). As a catalyst, he works with the national church as a brother rather than as a father.

These three types of statuses and roles--a learner, an advocate of God's sovereignty, and a catalyst of a maturing church--are suggested for missionaries in animistic contexts. As a learner, the missionary realizes that he has a lot to comprehend about his new environment. As an advocate of God's sovereignty, he proclaims the supremacy of God over the principalities and powers. As a catalyst of a maturing church, the missionary expresses the confidence that the people can order their lives according to the word of God and, therefore, can work with them as a brother and not a father.

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Chapter 8
The Animistic Practice of Divination

Topics in Chapter:

Nature of Divination	Methods of Divination
Uses of Divination	Biblical Perspectives toward Divination

Marta, a Bolivian Christian living in La Paz, was frightened. She was feeling sick and steadily losing weight. Soon after doctors indicated that nothing was wrong, a friend half-jokingly commented, "Somebody must have put a spell on you." Marta casually mentioned this to her mother, a Sunday school superintendent and faithful church member, never imagining that her mother would take the comment seriously. Her mother approached a curandero, a shaman who divines the source of problems, prescribes solutions, and sometimes casts spells. The curandero divined Marta's problem by casting coca leaves and analyzing their pattern. Her illness, the curandero said, was caused by the jealously of her husband's former girlfriend, who had cast a spell on her. The curandero prescribed that a live guinea pig be rubbed over Marta's body to absorb the spell. This pig would then be taken to the girlfriend's town and burned. This rite would both free Marta from the spell and kill the other woman (Koop 1987, 6).

Even faithful Christians in animistic contexts turn to divination during times of crises. Christians have not been taught to give to God the everyday problems of evil and suffering and to wait on him to act. Christianity has dealt with cosmic issues of life without touching this-worldly issues (note Chapter 3).

Nature of Divination

Divining the will of the spirits and the working of impersonal spiritual powers is imperative for the animist. According to his worldview, nothing is attributed to coincidence, luck, or chance. Spiritual powers so pervade the world that there are spiritual causes for every earthly action. One Kipsigis Christian of Kenya asked why the axe head of the son of the prophets fell into the water (2 Kgs. 6:5). His rationale for asking the question was based on his belief that "nothing falls into the river by itself." All catastrophes--whether unexpected disease, severe drought, untimely death, or an axe head falling into the water--have spiritual causations. Animists therefore seek spiritual reasons for all earthly problems.

Divination, as illustrated in the story of Marta, is the decision-making process by which animists determine the impact of personal and impersonal powers upon themselves. Divination is a method for "bringing into the open what is hidden or unknown" to make everyday decisions of life (Turner 1981, 29). This discovery of the unknown is a twofold process. First, the animist seeks to discover the source of an immediate, everyday problem. In the case of Marta the casting and reading of coca leaves was the methodology for discovering the cause of her illness. Second, the animist seeks to determine an appropriate human response based on the knowledge gained in the initial stage of divination. In the case of Marta the rubbing of a live guinea pig over her body and burning it in the place where the enemy lived inverted the power, turning it around to kill the one who initiated it.

Divination has been practiced from ancient times. Divination, although predating the development of writing, was a major topic of the early literature of Assyria, Syria, and Babylon. While the Assyrians and Syrians emphasized certain types of omens, the Babylonians emphasized divining by technique and astrology. Over a period of time the study of divination was made into a science with detailed descriptions of methodologies and a history of usage and success (Oppenheim 1964, 217).

Divination is practiced by both specialists and non-specialists. A specialist is called a diviner, which shows his chief function, or a shaman. He typically begins by divining for himself and his family and neighbors. When he is found to have an inclination for divination, he is frequently apprenticed to an established shaman for training (Steyne 1989, 140). In other cases the specialist becomes initially interested in shamanism by being cured and then deciding to take

up the trade, by receiving communication from spiritual beings in dreams and visions (Shweder 1972, 408), or through possession by some spirit who desired to relate to human beings (Harvey 1989, 42-43).

Much divination is also done by nonspecialists. The average cattle-herder among the Sebei of Uganda divines by throwing his sandals up in the air. The way each throw lands determines the answer to some specific query (Goldschmidt 1986, 71). Americans who make decisions by flipping coins do not need a specialist. Among the Giriama of Kenya a traveller who sees either a snake cross his path or a bird called a kachelele will likely return home because these are considered bad omens. However, hearing only the cry of a kachelele is a good omen (Talley 1988). Such popular divination is practiced by the common person without the aid of a specialist.

Uses of Divination

Hiebert (1978, 29-30) and Burnett (1988, 108-111) have outlined various uses of divination. The following discussion integrates, amplifies, and illustrates these uses. Divination is used to chart a course of action, ascertain the cause of misfortune, determine how to avoid danger, select leaders for office, and discover a guilty party.

Charting a Course of Action

Life is uncertain especially in many third-world societies. Divination is used to help the animist determine some future action to avert problems. A father uses divination to determine the most auspicious time for the wedding of his daughter. Another seeks magic to protect his weakened wife and newborn child because they are still fragile. The farmer searches for ways to protect his crops from the power of the evil eye or witchcraft. Since rains are uncertain, he employs divination to determine at what point he should plant crops. The businessman seeks to determine when he should take his money out of the stock market or invest additional capital. In rural contexts omens and ritual techniques are most frequently used to determine a course of action, whereas in urban areas astrology and medium possession are increasingly becoming methods of divination.

Ascertaining the Cause of Misfortune

After catastrophe occurs animists seek not only spiritual causations but also ways to rectify the problem. A mother seeks the reason that her child has become gravely sick and what she must do to effect a cure. A soccer coach tries to determine why his team is losing, even though he has the best team in the division, and seeks magic that will counter the sorcery of an opposing team. A wife or girlfriend seeks to know why she is being rejected and how to reestablish love. The animist seeks to decipher covert powers impacting his life to reestablish harmony.

Animists look to diviners to determine the cause of sickness more than any other misfortune. They believe that illnesses frequently have personal causation. Animists ask, "Who caused the illness?" The sick person may have caused his own illness by breaking a taboo or by sinning against an ancestor, spirit, or god. In other cases, the jealousy of a neighbor, friend, or workmate might have led to the use of witchcraft or sorcery.

In addition to the cause of illness, animists seek personal motivations, asking, "Why did he do it?" If the sin was against ancestors, the living will seek to understand their wishes and perform any required appeasement in order to reestablish harmony. If witchcraft or sorcery is the cause, the power in some way will be directed back to those invoking it.

Because missionaries from a Western context seek the natural cause of disease, it is difficult for them to understand divination. They ask, "What caused the illness?" instead of "Who caused it?" and "Why did he do it?" Western missionaries naturalize what animists spiritualize. Animists would not object to these naturalistic explanations. They would merely assume that there is some spiritual power behind the secular explanation. For example, Burnett records a discussion between an African tribesman and a missionary:

TRIBESMAN: "This man is sick because someone worked sorcery against him."
WHITE DOCTOR: "This man is sick from malaria because he was bitten by an infected mosquito."
TRIBESMAN: "Yes, he was bitten by a mosquito, but who sent the mosquito?" (Burnett 1988, 109)

Determining Ways to Avoid Danger

Another use of divination is to gain information about possible disaster before performing dangerous acts. When Saul received no answer from the Lord by traditional means, he sought out a medium to call up the spirit of the prophet Samuel to divine the results of the impending battle (1 Sam. 28:5-25). In precolonial times the powerful Kipsigis orgoiyot divined whether men of the warrior age-set should attempt cattle raids against enemy tribes. Kipsigis today attribute the defeat and almost total decimation of their warrior class at Migori by the Kisii tribe to the warriors' refusal to heed the advice of the orgoiyot.

Such protection is also sought by some illegal drug organizations. A drug lord of Matamoros, Mexico, engaged Adolfo de Jesus Constanzo, a Cuban occult practitioner, to use magic to protect his organization from legal authorities, rival drug lords, and those running drugs from Mexico into the United States. Constanzo integrated various elements of Santeria, an Afro-Caribbean religion which relies on animal sacrifices to achieve power and punish enemies; Palo Mayombe, a cult similar to Santeria which employs human parts dug up at graves; and various aspects of Haitian voodoo. To these borrowed rites he added human sacrifices to the Palo Mayombe gods.

These sacrifices, totaling at least thirteen, were thought to give the cult invincibility in the midst of a dangerous trade. The executioner of the human sacrifices believed so much in their validity that he challenged the police commandant to shoot him, saying, "Go ahead. Your bullets will just bounce off." The cult was uncovered when a member ran through a roadblock believing himself invisible and bulletproof. When Mexican police first uncovered the crude temple of the cult, they postponed the investigation until a curandero could cleanse the area. After all investigations were completed, Mexican officials recalled the curandero to do a proper purification ceremony. He sprinkled salt on the floor, pronounced incantations, and made the sign of the cross. Finally, gasoline was sprinkled over the crude citadel of black magic, a match was lit, and the place burnt to the ground. "In the world of the [leaders of the drug ring], the best protection was magic. Witches and curanderos were as much a part of their daily lives as lawyers and doctors were to [secular Americans]" (Cartwright 1989, 78-83, 152-156, 163).

In 1989 Alice Lakwena, a Catholic of the Langi tribe of Northern Uganda, organized the Holy Spirit Movement to fight against the armies of the new president of Uganda, Joseph Musevani. Under the previous president, Dr. Milton Obote, the Langi controlled the Uganda government, but a successful guerilla movement organized by Musevani defeated Obote's organized military forces and sent his forces either fleeing into northern Uganda or across the border into Kenya. In the midst of this defeat, Lakwena, claiming to be led by the Holy Spirit, gave her believers oil which was to repel bullets. Stones were also given to the soldiers which would become grenades in their hands when thrown at the forces of Musevani. The belief in their powers was so great that Lakwena's soldiers swarmed from northern Uganda to Jinja in the far south before masses of her followers were killed by the bullets which were not supposed to harm them (Guma 1989). In each of these illustrations animistic diviners or practitioners sought ways to avoid harm or danger before going on raids and dangerous missions.

Selecting Leaders for Office

Western cultures assume that the best way to select leaders is by democratic election. This methodology assumes that each individual should have an equal role in the selection of leaders and that no spiritual powers desire to impact leadership selection. However, in many third-world contexts decisions are made by group consensus. For example, Christians among the Church of Christ in Kipsigis discuss who should be local church elders, deacons, and evangelists for hours and hours until all in the local congregation agree. The discussions are coupled with prayer for God's guidance and reading of scriptures concerning the qualifications of leaders. In such deliberations it is assumed that older men with more maturity will contribute more to the decision-making process than those with less maturity. Westerners, who are not experienced in such decision-making, usually become impatient and say, "Let us get on about our business and vote."

When churches in group-oriented societies adopt the Western individualistic model, the result is considerable confusion and damage to the church. The African Gospel Unity Church, an independent church among the Kipsigis of Kenya, split when the first bishop of the church refused to call an election. The African Gospel Liberty Church, which developed from a split with the Unity Church, still experiences considerable internal struggles holding periodic elections. Brothers in Christ vie for the allegiance of the church. In societies where cooperation is the culturally accepted method of decision-making, elections merely introduce competition and create division.

While the democratic model assumes that humans can validly select leaders, numerous peoples of the world believe that spiritual powers aid in the selection of leaders. Some leaders are thought to be possessed by spirits who force them to act as mediums. Dr. Francois Duvalier, president of Haiti from 1957 to 1971 and known as "Papa Doc," was popularly understood to be the embodiment of "Baron Samedi," a voodoo spirit of death. He actively played the part by wearing black clothes, speaking with a whispery voice, and exaggerating the slow-motion movements of someone thought to be close to the dead (Young 1986, 27). Others are accepted as religious and political leaders because they have dreams or interpret the dreams of others. Sometimes God spoke to men through such dreams and visions (Num. 12:6-8; Acts 18:9), as in the cases of Joseph and Daniel in the scriptures; sometimes this medium is used by the false gods who desire to be gods (Deut. 13:1-5). In some cases leaders are chosen by ritual techniques which are guided by spiritual powers. In selecting the apostle to replace Judas the early church first looked for those qualified to be apostles and chose two such men, Joseph Barsabbas and Matthias. With prayer they then cast lots (Acts 1:26) believing that the decision was of the Lord (Prov. 16:33). Thus spiritual power is frequently employed in the selection of political and religious leaders.

From a Christian perspective leaders should never be selected magically in such a way that humans force deity to act. The way of God is consistently opposed to such a magical view of reality. However, such syncretism has entered Christian religious movements. In one large evangelical church in Africa a newly elected bishop testified that a candidate who opposed him in the election had procured medicine from an witchdoctor to improve his chances of being elected bishop (Hesselgrave 1987, 216-217). The Christian must ascertain that the power employed is of God and not of the demonic realm.

Discovering a Guilty Party

The curse is used among many animistic peoples against those who commit undetected crimes. When a person becomes sick or dies after such a curse, it is deduced that he is the guilty party and that his illness or death was the result of the curse. Such curses are socially acceptable because they

Divination stems from the need to answer the immediate, everyday problems of life. Each of the uses of divination described in this section points toward solving these everyday issues.

Methods of Divination

Diviners use innumerable and varied types of methods to determine the will of spiritual powers. They check omens, use astrology, divine by technique, employ ordeals, rely on guidance from the dead, interpret dreams and visions, and divine under possession. These types of divination are based on the conception that the universe functions harmoniously as an organism. The stars of the heavens, the signs of nature, the dreams of the night, and the wishes of spiritual beings are all interrelated and connected to events which occur in the world. What happens to one part of the organism is reflected in its other parts. The astrologist reads signs of the heavens to determine the workings of the world. He believes that these elements work together harmoniously in an interconnected world.

Interpretation of Omens

Omens are natural signs which presuppose a cause-effect relationship between humans and nature. These omens warn of impending danger or inform of future blessings. Such omen-seekers analyze the flight of birds, the activity of animals, and the ways sacrificial animals fall. Belief in omens is present in all cultures of the world. In American culture walking under a ladder, a black cat crossing one's path, and breaking a mirror are considered by some to be omens of bad luck. Ancient people in a crescent from Asia Minor through Assyria and Syria to Palestine practiced

augury, divination based on the behavior of birds. In Babylon the birth of deformed animals and children was considered so ominous that it affected the reign of kings and the stability of governments (Oppenheim 1964, 209, 217).

Kipsigis of Kenya avidly analyze omens. When going to the koito, the giving of the first part of the bride price, the groom's family looks for omens of success or disaster. A hawk facing them, with white breast in full view, is a good omen. However, seeing only the hawk's back is a bad omen. These preliminary marriage rites will be terminated if omens are not favorable. A Kipsigis traveller who sees a snake or a small antelope cross his path must turn back or meet with unfortunate consequences. Traditionally omens were carefully analyzed before battle. A hawk facing the opposite direction was thought to spell sure defeat.

Among the Nuer of Sudan a bird perching on the top of a house is a bad omen. They say "e kwoth" ("It is spirit"), meaning that the spirit world is about to bring them catastrophe (Evans-Pritchard 1956, 125-126). To the Nuer the way in which sacrifices fall is an omen. If a sacrificial animal falls over cleanly on its side, especially its right side, it is a good omen and shows that the ghost to whom it is offered is content. If it falls on its head or totters about before falling, it is a bad omen (Evans-Pritchard 1956, 147).

Astrology

Astrology, the belief that the placement and influence of heavenly bodies affect human destinies, assumes a cause-effect relationship between the celestial and terrestrial. While omen-seekers interpret signs in nature, astrologers interpret signs in the sky. Generally omens are widely used in rural areas, where people are closely related to nature, while astrology flourishes in urban, more literate contexts, where written horoscopes provide guidance for the present and future.

From antiquity astrology has been a widespread method of divination. Astrological records date from Sumerian times in ancient Mesopotamia where astrology was considered the "queen of the sciences" (Oppenheim 1964, 224). Ancient astrological beliefs spread from Babylon to Greece, Rome, and Egypt, and finally throughout Asia. In Babylon the movement of heavenly bodies was thought to express the will of the gods. Since the gods governed the universe and stars and planets were considered their writings, diviners interpreted signs of the sky to determine the will of the gods. Each god was identified with one of the planets. Jupiter was coupled with Marduk, Venus with the goddess Ishtar, Saturn with Ninib, Mercury with Nebo, and Mars with Nergal. During this early period, astrological forecasts were almost exclusively concerned with the welfare of the entire society, especially with the king and his royal family. The concept of individual horoscopes used to divine personal problems developed at a much later period in Babylon (Crim 1981a, 71-72).

The Greeks and Romans borrowed many astrological concepts from the Babylonians and recast them in Greco-Roman molds. Personal horoscopes were first devised in Babylon, but the Greeks emphasized and refined personal horoscopy. They developed horoscopic methods of charting an individual's destiny based "on the position of the stars, the times of their heliacal risings and settings, and their relations with each other" (Crim 1981a, 73). Astrology was made to appear rational by eclectically integrating ideas from every science and pseudo-science. The Greeks also fully developed the "zodiac, marked by its twelve `stations' or `mansions' of 30 degrees each and a particular animal linked with each of the twelve zones" (Crim 1981a, 73). These philosophical adaptations made astrology extremely palatable to the Hellenistic mind.

When Hellenists began to lose faith in traditional gods who had given cohesion to their society, many looked to astrology, a cosmic impersonal force, as the principle around which to order their world. From the third century B.C. astrology became the "scientific theology of waning heathenism." Soon, however, the personal gods of the Greeks and Romans reappeared as astral deities. "The seven planets are enthroned as kosmokratores or `potentates of the world' and arbiters of human fate" (MacGregor 1954, 20). Man's disposition and destiny were thought dependent on one's time of birth. Magic and secret rituals were used to overcome such fate. Christians proclaimed within this context that Christ determines fate since the world is in his hands (MacGregor 1954, 20). God is "the Maker of the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the constellations of the south" (Job 9:9; 38:31-33).

Despite secular beliefs, astrology continues to be a frequent method of divination in contemporary Western cultures. In the late 1940's only 100 American newspapers carried horoscopes. By the late 1960's horoscopes were in 1200 of the 1750 major newspapers, and today no major American newspaper can compete without including horoscopes. In 1969, 68 percent of all occult literature in the United States was concerned with astrology (Truzzi 1989, 405). In Britain thousands of people buy Old Moore's Almanac, which publishes horoscopes to guide one in the coming year. Hundreds of farmers and gardeners in the United States buy the Farmer's Almanac to know the best astrological times to plant various crops. My wife's grandfather always consulted the Almanac when he planted his garden.

In Western society today many who rely on astrology are the elite and highly educated. For example, Mason Sexton, a graduate of Harvard Business School and a broker on Wall Street, uses astrology to determine what will occur on the stock market. He claims that "our sense of time depends on the relationship of the earth to the sun and moon." In his biweekly newsletter, having 1,500 subscribers, he predicted the 1987 stock market crash, popularly called Black Monday (Friedrich 1987, 69). Joan Quigley, a San Franciscan socialite who divined for Nancy Reagan, in her book Astrology for Adults describes President Ronald Reagan as an Aquarius who was born with the moon of Taurus. He would therefore "tend to accept only ideas that conform to . . . preconceived standards. And these are usually conservative." Since Reagan was born with Mercury in Capricorn, his "memory is excellent. Like the elephant, you never forget" (Zuckerman 1988, 41). In contemporary urban societies astrology has flourished and is espoused by numerous entertainers, intellectuals, and businessmen.

As belief in God and gods wane in secular societies, people realize that they are powerless to handle their own destinies. Like the Hellenists, they are tempted to perceive that life is controlled by astral forces. God's perception toward astrology is expressed in Isaiah's satirical diatribe,

> "Let now the astrologers,
> Those who prophesy by the stars,
> Those who predict by the new moons,
> Stand up and save you from what will come upon you."
> (Isa. 47:13 NASB)

Ritual Techniques

Divination by technique is the use of fixed rituals to discover the identity and will of spiritual forces and beings operative in human affairs. In ancient Babylon when a king wished to know the will of the gods, he consulted a baru, or diviner, who first prayed to the oracle gods, Samas and Adad, requesting that their messages be written upon the parts of the sacrifice. He then slaughtered a sacrificial animal and read its entrails in a prescribed order, beginning at the liver and ending at the small intestine. Any deviation from the normal shape and coloring indicated earthly disharmonies and ominous consequences (Ezek. 21:21; Oppenheim 1964, 212; Goetze 1957, 94). An oil technique was also performed by Babylonian diviners. Oil was poured into a bowl of water which the baru held on his lap. The way the oil moved in the water indicated "for the king peace and prosperity or war and rebellion; for the private citizen it might portend progeny, success in business, the recovery of health, and the right girl when he was about to marry--or the opposite." Other techniques included casting of lots and analyzing the smoke arising from incense (Oppenheim 1964, 208-212).

The Tarot is a deck of seventy-two cards used for divining in many European countries and from which our present-day playing cards evolved. These cards were popularized by the crusaders returning from Palestine and by the gypsies who were migrating into Europe during the Middle Ages. Like modern playing cards, Tarot cards are arranged in four suits of fourteen cards each illustrating natural elements, called the "Minor Arcana." In addition to these four suits, Tarot cards have twenty-two trumps showing the signs of the zodiac and planets, called the "Major Arcana." Hoy tempts the unwary with the injunction: "The Tarot can search into the soul of every man and provide him with an answer to his problems." Only the "enlightened few" use this "`mirror' that reflects everything taking place in the universe." Hoy proclaims it to be the "most ancient and valuable of the instruments of divination" (1971, 4). Although initially the meaning of the cards was quite arbitrary, over the course of generations diviners have come to a consensus concerning the meaning of individual cards. The sequence in which they are laid out is also considered important in divination (Hoy 1971, 22-32; Waite 1973). The diviner uses the spread of the cards, coupled

with his own intuition, to divine what will happen in the lives of those coming for divination. This divination, appearing to the secular Westerner as a game, has served to draw many curious and insecure people into occult activities.

The Azande of Sudan divine through numerous ritual techniques. For example, two pieces of wood, each ascribed a different meaning, are placed on a termite mound. Ritual participants determine a course of action by whether one or both pieces are eaten and by the degree to which they are consumed (Evans-Pritchard 1937). For more important decisions the Azande employ a divination technique using the poison benge, a red paste similar to strychnine. Evans-Pritchard calls it the "poison oracle." When given to chickens in a divination ritual, benge has the amazing quality of killing approximately half the chickens and sparing, for no apparent reason, the other half (Lessa and Vogt 1965, 344). While each chicken is under the influence of benge--before it expires or recovers--a questioner addresses the poison inside the chicken. The questions are reiterated time and time again in different formats but always ending with the refrain "If such is the case, poison oracle, kill the fowl." If fowl dies, the party is considered guilty; if the chicken lives, the party is thought innocent (Evans-Pritchard 1965, 345-352).

Ritual techniques were also used by Israel to determine the will of God. The urim and thummim, sometimes simply called the ephod, were used by the priest to determine God's will (Num. 27:21; Deut. 33:8). The ephod was a form of casting lots with the urim and thummim tossed from the breastplate of the priest or ceremonially drawn out by the priest (Douglas 1962d, 1306). When Abiathar the priest fled to David with the ephod, David, with prayer, asked simple binary questions requiring affirmative or negative answers concerning Saul's plans to pursue him. He received an answer from the ephod; and, although pursued by Saul, "God did not deliver him into his hand" (1 Sam. 23:6-14). Casting of lots was also employed. It was used as God's instrument to allocate the territory of Israel (Josh. 18-19), to choose a sacrifice for the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16), to detect a guilty person (Josh. 7:14), to designate temple duties (1 Chr. 24:5), and to choose an apostle in the place of Judas (Acts 1:26). These methods of determining the will of God were based on belief that God worked through them (Prov. 16:33).

Throughout the world multitudinous techniques for divining are employed. The Sebei of Uganda divine by using small stones in a wooden bowl. Holding the bowl almost vertical and shaking it, they ask it yes/no questions. If no stones fall out, a positive answer is indicated (Goldschmidt 1986, 62). Among the Banyoro of Uganda a diviner interprets how nine prepared cowrie shells fall when thrown onto a mat (Beattie 1960, 71-73). When Clodius was attacking Carthage in the First Punic War, chicken feeding was used for divination. When the chickens refused to eat, Clodius was advised not to attack Carthage. Clodius, however, lost patience with the chicken oracle and cried, "If they won't eat, let them drink" and threw the chickens into the sea. In speaking about this oracle in relation to the great defeat of the Romans at Carthage, Cicero said, "This joke, when the fleet was defeated, brought many a tear to him, and mighty carnage to the Roman people" (Howells 1962, 71).

Employment of Ordeals

An ordeal is "a ritual method [of seeking spiritual help to] determine guilt or innocence by subjecting the accused to a physical test" (Lehmann and Myers 1989, 422). Ordeals are employed to detect or punish the guilty on two different types of occasions: when someone is suspected of doing evil but no evidence is available and when criminals continue to operate in a community undetected. In such cases ordeals are used as divinations of the last resort.

An ordeal is frequently used when the accused denies his guilt. An illustration of such an ordeal is described in the Mosaic law. If a husband became jealous because he believed that his wife was unfaithful, he was to take her to the priest in the temple. The priest was to give the woman holy water mixed with dust from the floor of the tabernacle. She was to agree to the oath by saying, "Amen, Amen," and to drink the water. If she was guilty, this holy water would make "her abdomen swell and her thigh waste away, and the woman would become a curse among her people." If innocent, she would be free of the curse and able to conceive children (Num. 5:11-31). In a case among the Marakwet of Kenya a certain man's wife accused another man of raping her while they were both drunk. The man denied the charge. Since there were no witnesses, the elders were forced to subject both accused and accuser to an ordeal, called a muma. Both urinated on the same tuft of grass while taking oaths. These oaths were statements designating what would happen to them if they were lying. The mixture of urines would cause the one lying to "suffer some misfortune connected to sex or birth," the most grievous of punishments among the Marakwet

(Kipkorir 1973, 15-16). Among the Bangala of Congo antagonists in ordeals are given a prescribed dose of an intoxicating drug which blurs vision and causes dizziness. Both the accuser and accused are asked to jump over a stick or to catch it when thrown to them. The one who collapses first is declared guilty (Howells 1962, 82). These ordeals presuppose that spiritual forces of the world punish the guilty.

Ordeals are used as spiritual rituals to detect and punish witches and thieves. In a government meeting elders of the Kuria people of Kenya were given two days to administer ordeals, called saiga, in eight locations of the division to flush out all bandits (Daily Nation 1985, 24). The Sungusungu, a society especially prevalent among the Sukuma and Nyamwezi in Tanzania, was organized to use ordeals to reveal witches and thieves in society. All adults in a Marakwet village in Kenya took an ordeal to uncover a thief who had upset the harmony of the village. They washed their hands and faces and poured the dirty water into a common pot. This water was then used to cook a meal. As each person of the village ate his share of the meal, an elder administered an oath:

> May you crawl along the road eating ants if you were responsible
> for this atrocious deed.
> May you lose your wits and forever become a fool,
> if . . .
> May *ilat* (lightening) strike your house and stock,
> if . . .

The Marakwet believe that the power of Asis, "Creator God," lies behind the ordeal. When people cannot determine the solution to a dispute or find a thief, the problem is given to God, who is the ultimate arbitrator of the social order. The Marakwet give innumerable examples of the guilty participating in an ordeal in order to avoid detection and punishment but experiencing "only greater suffering instead--the loss of huts and stock by lightning, personal illness and death" (Kipkorir 1973, 16).

Reliance on the Dead

In some cases the dead are called upon to divine for the living. This type of divination, called necromancy, presupposes that the dead are part of the family who have gone beyond death into the spiritual realm. With knowledge of spiritual realities, they become the eyes of the living to guide those who have not yet reached the other side.

When God refused to communicate with King Saul by dreams, prophets, and urim (1 Sam. 28:6), he turned in desperation to the medium of Endor. He asked her to call up the spirit of the prophet Samuel. When Samuel's spirit appeared to Saul, he disclosed that God would allow the Philistines to defeat the army of Israel, and both he and his sons would be killed (1 Sam. 28:3-25). This story creates a number of very difficult questions. Why did the medium recognize Saul only after Samuel's spirit appeared? Why was she so amazed when Samuel appeared? Was she amazed because God's prophet actually appeared when normally no one appeared? Does this story verify that the dead actually communicate with the living? In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man was not allowed to return to warn his brothers of impending doom (Luke 16:27-30). However one interprets the case of the medium of Endor, the scripture consistently condemns those who call upon the dead (Deut. 18:11; Isa. 8:19-20). Scripture testifies that Saul lost his throne not only because he disobeyed God (1 Sam. 15:23) but also because he consulted the dead (1 Chr. 10:13-14).

The Banyoro of Uganda seek assistance from their dead fathers while placing offerings of millet and sesame on their graves. When a girl is being forced into marriage by her brothers, she might appeal to her dead father to employ spiritual power to thwart these plans (Beattie 1967, 257).

Necromancy becomes possession when the dead possess the living and express their desires through them. In other situations necromancy employs dreams and visions, a common forum through which the dead communicate their wishes. Illustrations of such usages are given in the next two sections of this chapter.

At other times the wishes of the dead are apparent only after evil has occurred and when a diviner interprets the cause of the misfortune as dissatisfaction of the dead with the living. Among the Sisala of northern Ghana a man named Baton went to those of another lineage and pretended to represent his lineage in collecting bridewealth. He privately spent the money he had deceitfully acquired. When authorized representatives of his lineage were sent to collect the bridewealth, they were told that Baton had already taken the money. When confronted, Baton adamantly denied the charge and soon afterward he became very ill and died. A diviner was called to ascertain the cause of death. He determined that Baton had been killed by ancestors because of his deceitfulness. His father was therefore instructed to sacrifice a cow, goat, and sheep at the ancestral shrine (Mendonsa 1989, 282). In this case the dead spoke to the living indirectly though the punishment diagnosed by the diviner. At other times the communication of the dead is direct--through dreams or through mediums.

Interpretation of Dreams and Visions

Dreams, as a methodology of divination, are channels through which spiritual powers communicate with the living. In dreams the animist considers himself freed from the physical constraints of the body so that he can interact with the spirit world and travel where he could not otherwise go. Kipsigis of Kenya are typical when they say that in dreams the spirit travels while the body sleeps. A sleeping person should not be awakened quickly because his body might be caught without its spirit. In other cultures dreams are considered intrusions by spiritual beings who desire to communicate with the dreamer of dreams or the seer of visions. Beattie relates how a Banyoro Christian informant in Uganda literally interprets dreams:

I dreamed that a neighbor of mine, who I knew hated me, was approaching me with a horn (ihembe, used in sorcery) held in his outstretched hand and pointed at me. I knew that he was making sorcery against me, and I was very frightened. But at that moment my father appeared and stopped him, saying, "Leave off bewitching my son." I then woke up feeling very scared. The next morning when I went out into my compound I saw something sticking in the ground, and when I went to see what it was I found that it was a horn. So I knew that my enemy had really come to make sorcery against me in the night. . . . Two weeks later that man died; my father's ghost had killed him for having tried to make sorcery against me.

(Beattie 1967, 257)

In animistic cultures dreams are considered literal representations of reality although they may be encased in symbols that need to be divined.

In popular usage dreams are thought to take place when one is sleeping while visions are apparitions which occur when one is awake (Padwick 1939, 207). However, in much of the literature about divination dreams are closely related to visions with the two terms frequently used interchangeably (Douglas 1962a, 1313). This overlapping of meanings is illustrated by synonymous parallelisms in the scriptures: "If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord shall make myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream" (Num. 12:6). Because they are both projections of a person's spirit out of his body, they are considered together in this section.

Participants of the major world religions as well as animists ascribe validity to dreams. Musk writes about dreams in Islam: "Dreams are central to the cosmological outlook of ordinary Muslims. From founder to followers, dreams form part of the total paradigm within which Muslims live and move, touch and are touched, meet and are met. They are not optional; they are a meaningful component of life." (1988, 164) Muhammad became convinced of his vocation in a dream, and a vision confirmed his decision to reconquer Mecca. A dream inspired the Islamic call to prayer (Crim 1981c, 230). Much of the Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad in dreams (Shorter 1985, 155).

Padwick, in writing about dreams in Christianity, rightly relates that dreams are "so deeply woven into the narrative of the Gospels and the Acts" that Westerners with a Freudian perspective are made to feel uncomfortable (1939, 205). The Gospel of Matthew begins with the dream of Joseph explaining the virgin birth (Matt. 1:20-25) and concludes with the dream of Pilate's wife, used by Matthew to prove Jesus' innocence. Pilate was told by his wife, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, because I suffered greatly in a dream because of him last night" (Matt. 27:19). In contrast to Muhammad and Buddha, no dreams were accounted to Jesus. As the fullness of Deity, he was the incarnation of the word; so his message was never derived from dreams. In Acts visions were instrumental in

Paul's conversion (Acts 9:3-8), guidance as to where to preach (Acts 16:8-10), and encouragement in difficult situations to continue preaching (Acts 18:9-11). In the Old Testament Joseph and Daniel were great dreamers and interpreters of dreams. God used these dreams and visions to communicate with prophets. Although God communicated with Moses face to face, he communicated with other prophets in dreams and visions (Num. 12:6).

However, many dreams do not originate with God and are contrary to the will of God. False prophets of Jeremiah's day received visions of their "own imaginations" and prophesied without hearing the word of the Lord. While they prophesied that Judah would be at peace, God had already decided to send them into Babylonian captivity because of their sins (Jer. 23:16-22). False prophets may proclaim a message which is in opposition to God but predict wonders which come true (Deut. 13:1-3). The validity of dreamers is not in the signs that they work. Spiritual beings opposing God yet having immense power may use dreams to induce humans to give them glory. One's validity rather lies in whether one fears God and keeps his commandments (Deut. 13:4). Every dream must therefore be carefully tested upon the basis of the nature and being of God as revealed in the word of God.

Dreams have frequently led to new religious movements. A dream visit to heaven led Simon Ondeto to break with the Catholic Church and initiate Legio Maria, one of the largest independent churches in Kenya (Shorter 1985, 153). A night vision led Isaac Kwesi Prah to leave the Methodist Church in Ghana and found the Divine Healing and Miracle Church. Each new Christian of the movement is given a sheet of paper stamped with these words: "One night in a vision it seemed the windows of heaven opened and a shaft of heavenly sunlight touched his lips and flooded his soul. He saw the Lord Jesus Christ, who baptized him with the Holy Spirit and healing power" (Burnett 1988, 238).

Dreams are also used for divination within established religious groups. Within the Catholic Church in Zaire the Jamaa movement requires one to have a dream encounter with Christ before he can progress to the next stage of the movement. In the Bachwezi sect of the Catholic Church in Uganda the Virgin Mary, saints, and angels appear in dreams to divine ingredients used in medicines to treat believers (Shorter 1985, 153-154). Seforoza, an old Catholic woman of Mbarara, Uganda, dreamed that the Lord took her from her bed and led her to where there was water to heal disease. Thousands flocked to her to receive the healing power of the holy water. Even educated Ugandans went to her to cure physical ailments (Guma 1989).

Westerners who have pictured the world as closed to spiritual influences have sought to demythologize dreams and visions. Dreams in such a closed system are seen as coming from within the person. Some believe with Freud that dreams are intrusions of the inner self and a symptom of neurosis (1977). Others espouse Rycroft's view that dreams are people dialoguing with themselves (1979). Aylward Shorter 1985, 149-161, for a Christian presentation. Of course, dreams are sometimes induced by neurosis and prompted by the mind restlessly thinking during sleep. However, these perceptions, as the dominant causes of dreams, are of recent origin. They are based on the secular presuppositions that there are no spiritual powers who relate to man during sleep and that spirits can never journey out of bodies.

Missionaries living in Islamic contexts frequently comment on how dreams are instrumental in leading Muslims to Christ. Trotter, a missionary to Algeria deduced that "the guidance of dreams was granted chiefly, if not solely, in cases where other guidance was not available." Padwick, building on this thesis, compares the illustrations of types of dreams in the Bible to similar illustrations in the Islamic world. For example, as Saul was given moral warning that he was persecuting God's people, so a Muslim with no previous Christian teaching dreamed that he was at the gates of Heaven but was not allowed entry because of his sins (Padwick 1939, 205-206). Musk verifies Padwick's findings: "Dreams of guidance have frequently been part of the process of movement toward Christ for those from Muslim background. In such dreams, angels, or Jesus himself, have appeared, urging the person concerned to seek Christ" (Musk, 1988, 168).

Possession

Possession is the intrusion of a personal spiritual being into a human body. The person possessed, called a medium, provides the spirit with "a voice, a body, and a physical apparatus to express himself" (Hiebert 1983). The spirit of a person is overwhelmed by the invading spirit. While the outside body remains that of the person being possessed,

his personal spirit is suppressed to allow the invading spirit to use his physical apparatuses. The spiritual beings possessing the medium might be called gods, spirits, demons, or ancestors. In Condomble and Umbanda of Brazil the spirits are considered guides, not as powerful as their gods yet greater than ancestors. Kardec spiritists of the same country consider possessing spirits to be ghosts of the dead. Frequently one enters a trance when he is being possessed. A survey of 488 societies around the world revealed that 90 percent reported some form of trance possession (Tippett 1974, 513).

Hiebert draws a continuum contrasting possession on one end of the spectrum to inspiration on the other end (1978, 31-32). In possession a person is no longer in control of his life. The god, spirit, demon, or ancestor so possesses him that only by the power of Jesus can he be freed. The possessed person has lost his self-awareness and in his possessed state speaks only with the voice of the invading power. When the possessed communicates the desires of the spirit to human beings, he becomes a medium and performs divination. In inspiration, on the other hand, a person is guided by a spiritual being while maintaining his own personality and continuing to use his own voice. He accepts the leading of the spirit without losing his self-awareness. Such a personality is called a prophet, a religious functionary prevalent in both low and high religions (2 Pet. 1:21). The result of possession is bondage and control; the result of inspiration is freedom and praise of God (or some god) with whom the person freely relates.

Figure 5
Contrast between Inspiration and Possession

Possession	***Inspiration***
* Spirit-controlled	*Self-controlled
* Loses self-awareness	*Retains self-awareness
* Speaks with the voice (Medium)	* Speaks with own voice (Prophet)

*Adapted from Paul Hiebert, Phenomenology and Institutions of Animism, classroom notes, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif., 1978, 32. Used by permission.

While Christianity emphasizes inspiration, many animistic cults emphasize possession. In the New Testament both Christ and those with the authority of Christ cast out spirits, freeing those under the bondage of possession. While indwelt by the spirit of God, disciples of Christ were in charge of their mental faculties. They always had the option of leaving the way of God if they wished (John 6:66-68). Biblical revelation is described as coming by inspiration. The prophet was "moved," not controlled, by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21). This verse connotes the prophet being carried along like a ship in water. Since in inspiration the prophet was used as a mouthpiece of God while maintaining his own identity, the Bible student is compelled to distinguish what is of the spirit and what is of the individual, unless the prophet specifies (1 Cor. 7:10). God, therefore, does not seek to possess people but to indwell them with his spirit and allow them to use their own free will.

Many animistic cults use possession for the purpose of divination. This divination occurs when a person becomes a medium through whom spirits speak. The major purpose of Haitian Voodoo, Cuban Santeria, and Brazilian Spiritism is such spirit divination. Voodoo is the "African-based, Catholic influenced" religion originating on the sugar plantations of 18th century Haiti. Voodoo ceremonies, occurring in temples in the city or family ritual sites in the countryside, create an emotional environment in which spirit possession takes place. The practitioner enters a trance and serves as the chwal ("horse") of the spirit. The spirit is used to divine reasons for misfortunes of the past and guidance for the present and future. A reciprocal relationship is established between the mounted spirit and those needing aid and advice:

Using that person's body and voice, the spirit sings, dances, and eats with the people and offers them advice and chastisement. The people, in turn, offer the spirit a wide variety of gifts and acts of obeisance whose goal is to placate the spirit and ensure his or her continuing protection. (Brown 1989, 321-322)

Similar rites are also part of Santeria and Spiritism.

Frequently spirits are thought to possess mediums during times of intense emotions (Hiebert 1978, 32; Von Furer-Haimendorf 1989, 95-97). Emotional states might be mechanically induced by drugs, intense activities, depressing the body, rhythm, and ritualistic meditation. The Mazateco Indians of Mexico use a drug derived from mushrooms to induce a trance through which God was understood to speak (Pike and Cowan 1959, 145-150). St. Clair testifies that the intense activities, including drum beating and rhythmic dancing, of a Condomble Spiritist meeting in Brazil worked the crowd into such a frenzy that even an American tourist was possessed (1971, 27-34). Young men from the Crow, Shoshoni, and Cree Indian tribes underwent rigorous physical training before they began their vision quests in order to become adults. They fasted, ran four miles four times a day, and whipped themselves with nettles in order to induce a vision (Lowie 1948, 3-32). Muslim mystics of a Sufi tradition frequently meditate on certain words, praise statements, or attributes of God until a trance is induced and possession occurs.

Emotional states may also be socially induced by group activities. The Ephesian mob was stirred by the craftsmen to such frenzy that they shouted for two hours, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians" (Acts 19:23-34). Congregational singing among Christian groups and chanting among Islamic groups are milder forms of emotional inducement.

Thus one can be emotional without having truth. A dervish, stirred by the clapping of hands and beating of drums, experiences tremendous emotion but follows powers other than God. Truth is not in the emotion but stands above emotion. However, the truth that sovereign God has loved mankind to such a degree that his Son died for them should stir such emotion as to change lives. Emotion supplies vibrancy to truth but should never be equated with truth.

These various methodologies of divination--omens, astrology, techniques, relying on the dead, dreams and visions, and possession--are employed to varying degrees throughout the world. Some are even used by people of high religions, including Christianity, to determine the will of creator God. However, the motivations that lead an animist to divine the will of spiritual powers are frequently opposed to the mind of God. What, then, is the perspective of biblical revelation toward divination?

Biblical Perspectives toward Divination

The motivation which leads an animist to perform divination is opposed to the very nature of God. God is love, and this love leads him to relate to humanity. He demonstrates his desire to relate to his creation by sending deliverers to free his people, prophets to proclaim his message, and his Son as the incarnation of his nature. Since God is sovereign in the world which he created, his creation should give him glory, honor, and praise. He actively works in his world as he desires and cannot be manipulated or controlled. While prayerful supplication affects his working, divination implies a desire to force deity, an impatience to look behind the curtain of time, a disbelief in God's sovereignty. It is an attempt to manipulate the spiritual forces of God's world to find out its secrets and manipulate them for personal benefit. Such motivations, based on greedy self-benefit, are alien to the mind of God. While the Christian way is relational, the animistic way is manipulative.

The Bible stands against forms of manipulative divination. The Old Testament law provides a general condemnation of divination, "You shall not . . . practice divination or soothsaying" (Lev. 19:26). The follower of God is further enjoined to "turn away from mediums or spiritists" (Lev. 19:31). God caused "omens of boasters to fail" so that diviners were made to appear as fools (Isa. 44:25). Isaiah satirically suggested that those who look to the counsel of the stars should use their astrologers to save them from impending doom which God was bringing upon them:

> "Let now the astrologers,
> Those who prophesy by the stars,
> Those who predict by the new moons,
> Stand up and save you from what will come upon you."
> (Isa. 47:13 NASB)

Necromancers were condemned for consulting the dead instead of the law and the testimony (Isa. 8:19-20). Many false prophets were accused of speaking "lying divinations," because they followed "their own spirit" and had "false visions" (Ezek. 13:3-9). The prophet who presumptuously spoke in the name of God without receiving a message

from God or who spoke in the name of other gods was to be put to death (Deut. 18:20). The God who "makes the storm clouds" should be petitioned for rain rather than divining through the use of the teraphim and false dreams and lying visions (Zech. 10:1-2). Such attempts at divining reality were considered in opposition to God.

When methods of divination were used by the followers of God, they depended on God's sovereign will. The casting of lots was done by prayer with confidence that God was providing the answer (Prov. 16:33; Acts 1:26). The urim and thummim were thrown by the priest with belief that God would determine the outcome (Num. 27:21). Dreams and visions were used by God to reveal mysteries, which could not be interpreted by "wise men, conjurers, magicians, or diviners," but only by the special people God set aside for this purpose (Dan. 2:27-28). These methodologies were not to be manipulative but gifts of God during certain time periods for determining his will. The boundary between the biblical use of these methodologies and the use in animistic societies is reliance on God for direction rather than reliance on magic or spiritual beings. The scriptures must be used as the measuring standard for determining what is of God. God in Jesus Christ has also given a fuller revelation of himself (Heb. 1:1-2).

In communicating the gospel to animists God must be shown as the one who controls the future. He began time (Gen. 1:1) and will conclude time (Matt. 24:36). When the apostles asked concerning the time for the restoring of the kingdom to Israel, Christ replied that God is in control of time: "It is not for you to know the times and the epochs which the Father has fixed by his own authority." The apostles were rather to be witnesses from Jerusalem to the remotest parts of the world (Acts 1:6-8). Followers of God must wait upon the Lord, not seek to manipulate him through divination (Isa. 8:17-20).

Isa. 40-55, a passage addressed to the exilic Jewish community, contrasts Yahweh to the gods of the Babylonian pantheon (Isa. 46:1-3) and reflects a concern about the use of divination. The covenant lawsuit of Isa. 41:21-24 is a polemic directed to the gods asking them to divine the future. Since these gods could not predict the future, they should be considered as "nothingness." A further subpoena and interrogation of the nations, Isa. 45:20-25, announces that the gods have no power of prediction, but that the prophecy of God--that Babylon is about to fall and the exiles will return to Jerusalem--is at the point of fulfillment. In Isa. 44:24-25 the creative power of Yahweh is contrasted with the frustration of the diviners who make extensive use of omens. Revelation is shown to come from God alone; it cannot be extracted mechanistically. Isaiah 47 is an oracle condemning Babylon, who is about to fall disgracefully from power. The Babylonians are mockingly challenged to use their spells and sorceries to avoid catastrophe (Isa. 47:12). If these do not work, they are told satirically that they should resort to astrology (Isa. 47:13). However, these activities are described as useless because Babylonian diviners were like stubble about to be consumed by fire and unable to save themselves (Isa. 47:14). The Babylonians are condemned for following their own individual methodologies of divination and told that no diviner would be able to save them (Isa. 47:15). The punishment of God could not be turned aside by human practitioners.

These exilic prophets apparently were heard by the Jews. Before the exile the Israelites were continually tempted to follow the animistic practices of the nations around them. Stern, in reporting on preexilic archeological sites, says that it is "impossible to distinguish between Israelite areas and pagan areas on the basis of the presence or absence of cultic figurines." However, the exile served to purify the Jews of their animistic tendencies. After the exile not even one cultic figurine was found in areas occupied by Jews, although these figurines were continuing in use wherever non-Jews lived (Stern 1989, 53-53). God's punishment to purify Israel was successful.

Christians must conclude that any human attempts to manipulate God and determine his will are rebellions against him. While the creation declares the glory of God (Rom. 1:18), our God is so great--so unpredictable in his actions--that the stars, while reflecting his glory, say little about his workings in everyday life. What astrologer has ever predicted Israel's deliverance from Egyptian captivity, the news of the empty tomb, and God's use of finite humans to accomplish his task? Ultimately, divination is an attempt to define God, who is undefinable in human terms!

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Chapter 9
Impersonal Spiritual Forces

Topics in Chapter:

Some years ago Christians from the Sotit congregation among the Kipsigis tribe of Kenya enacted a drama about the use of magic. The drama depicted three young men who had studied together in secondary school and were later competing for the same job. Each, however, was using a different source of power to obtain this employment.

The first said in his heart, "I will go to the traditional practitioner. He will give me the power to get the job." After much divining, the practitioner gave him a pebble containing magical powers to hold in his mouth during the interview. He was confident that this magic would force the interviewers to grant him the job. However, to his amazement the pebble popped out of his mouth during the interview, and he was, with disgrace, ushered out of the conference room for trying to get a job by means of magic.

The second said to himself, "I am educated and self-sufficient. I need no power but my own to get this job." This man, although educationally qualified, did not receive the job.

The third went to the church and asked all to pray for God's guidance. The elders gave him instruction concerning how he was to speak and conduct himself. Then the whole church prayed for the success of the job interview. With confidence this qualified young man went to the interview and was granted the job.

This illustrates three options people employ in dealing with everyday problems of life: the magical, the secular, and the religious. Westerners, who have unquestionably accepted the second option, are shocked by the plot of this African drama. They believe that personal status can be changed only through human initiative. Through their own ingenuity they determine how to manipulate social relationships or laws of nature for their own benefit. Generally they reject reliance on spiritual powers. However, most third-world peoples realize that not all who are qualified for a job get it. They assume some superhuman power enables one to succeed while another fails. Magic is required to manipulate spiritual powers to do their will. Paradoxically while the secular and magical options are vastly different in their concept of spiritual power, they both are manipulative. Secularists manipulate nature; those using magic manipulate impersonal spiritual powers. Christianity by its very nature objects to all kinds of human manipulation and calls both the secularist and the magician into a relationship with sovereign God. The three options of this drama--the magical, the secular, and the religious--are in philosophical opposition to one another; yet sometimes they are concurrently held by the same person.

Impersonal Power: A Force, Not a Being

An impersonal spiritual force is a power which "does not have a will of its own" (Burnett 1988, 24). Such power operates impersonally like electricity or the law of gravity. Although it may originate with an personal spiritual being, it operates without his control and direction. Such spiritual power is thought by the animist to be manipulated by magic, not by supplication or propitiation of a spiritual being.

This chapter studies the nature of impersonal spiritual power in relation to Christian proclamation. Types of impersonal spiritual powers are discussed and the Christian perspective toward each analyzed. Magic--the manipulation of impersonal spiritual powers--is then described. Finally, missiological implications are given.

Types of Impersonal Spiritual Forces

Concepts of impersonal spiritual forces can be classified according to their supposed function in society. Some forces are helpful, used for the benefit of society; others are used for both good and evil; still others are always harmful, employed malevolently against enemies or competitors. Most societies have more than one concept of spiritual power. One type may be beneficial and another type harmful.

Benevolent Impersonal Forces

Numerous impersonal powers are thought to be beneficial: baraka in the Muslim world, berakah among those of a Judeo-Christian tradition, and concepts of universal life energy among contemporary New Age practitioners.

Animistic Baraka. Baraka, translated as "blessing" in English, is more than "divine favor" or "benediction" to the Muslim (Lenning 1980, 9). It is "a mysterious and wonderful power, a blessing from God," granted to certain people, places, and things (Parrinder 1973, 40). Muslims think of baraka as divine blessing, grace and mercy (as opposed to justice), protection from danger and trouble, charisma for leadership, and power to protect and heal (Lenning 1980, 22-24). Once this power is obtained it can be transferred to other people, places, and things.

Baraka is always seen as benevolent because its ultimate source is Allah (Lenning 1980, 39; Barth 1982, 10). Nevertheless, orthodox Muslims and folk Muslims view baraka differently. Orthodox Muslims believe blessings flow directly from Allah and cannot be manipulated and passed on to others. Folk Muslims consider baraka as a magical force which can be induced by ritual and manipulated for human benefit. Folk Muslims make what orthodox Muslims consider a personal spiritual power based on a relationship with Allah into an impersonal force.

For example, folk Muslims see Muhammad as a prophet to whom Allah gave much baraka. Although the Qur'an shows Muhammad to be a humble messenger, "a human being chosen by God to bring renewal of faith in the One True God," folk Muslims look on him as the prophet who has been given great baraka (Lenning 1980, 28). His conception and birth were permeated with baraka, which enabled him to perform miracles (Lenning 1980, 29). Those with access to the baraka of Muhammad have great power. Numerous Muslim religious leaders, from the founders of religious orders to the Sultan of Morocco, believe that their baraka is derived from their direct descent from Muhammad.

Ordinary people seek contact with religious leaders who have baraka in order to accrue this power for their own lives. Mystical religious leaders called pirs are especially venerated because they possess powerful baraka. Thousands of these mystical guides serve as mediators between God and man in the Sufi movement, which emphasizes mystical love for Allah. They frequently trace their ancestry back to Muhammad, who is thought to be the source of their baraka. Because of their ancestry and intimate contact with God, pirs become bearers of the baraka of God.

In one initiation into a Sufi order a pir breathed into a glass of lemonade in order to induce his baraka into the liquid. The pir then put his finger into the lemonade, touched his finger to his tongue, and dipped his finger into the lemonade again. This process was done three times with increased volumes of baraka thought to be induced into the liquid. Finally, assistants took the empowered liquid into the crowd to give each devotee a drink. In such a way the baraka of the pir was conveyed to his followers (Parshall 1983, 57).

The Qur'an is thought to be charged with powerful baraka. Every Muslim considers the Qur'an infallible and, therefore, endued with baraka. The orthodox Muslim believes that baraka is derived from following the Qur'anic message. The folk Muslim, on the other hand, believes that baraka comes from the ritual use of the words of the book or the magical use of the book itself. The mere reading of the Qur'an often sends the mystical Sufi Muslim into ecstasy (Parshall 1983, 66). Donaldson says, "Among the masses there is probably more faith in the magical uses of the book than there is understanding of its contents" (1937, 254).

"Cutting the Qur'an" is a methodology used by folk Muslims to make decisions. After much ritual an animistic practitioner who can read a few Arabic letters randomly opens the Qur'an. The first sentence he reads provides him with information about the source of an ailment, what should be done in a business enterprise, or who should marry the client's daughter (Donaldson 1937, 256-257). Some folk Muslims make use of "divine liquid" to cure the sick.

Holy words from the Qur'an are written on a wooden board. These words are washed off with water which is collected in a cup and given to a sick person to drink. This Qur'anic liquid, charged with baraka, is thought to heal the sick (Lenning 1980, 61). Such practices illustrate a conception that the Qur'an is a book containing magical baraka.

Taking a pilgrimage to Mecca, entering the Ka'ba, and touching the Black Stone of the central shrine of Islam are also thought to convey baraka (Woodberry 1988, 3).

These Muslim illustrations of baraka are all highly animistic. Qur'anic rituals are enacted to gain power to solve life's problems, with little devotion given to sovereign God. Yet devotion to Allah, the source of true baraka, is the major tenant of Islamic faith. Larry Lenning in Blessing in Mosque and Mission (1980) rightly says that animistic baraka must be differentiated from baraka which is seen as originating from God and under the control of God. For example, an orthodox Muslim would utter the first words of the Qur'an, the bismillah, "in the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful," with adoration and worship. The folk Muslim would frequently use the phrase as a charm against evil powers. These two uses of baraka must be differentiated: One is animistic; the other is close to the Judeo-Christian conception of blessing.

According to Lenning, evangelism to Muslims must be considered a ministry of imparting the baraka of God in Jesus Christ. He believes that because the orthodox concept of baraka is very similar to the Jewish concept of berakah, baraka could become a theological bridge--a redemptive analogy--through which Muslims might be drawn to the gospel (Lenning 1980, 13, 66, 115-132). There is indeed a similarity between baraka and berakah. However, for such a transformation to take place the Muslim concept of baraka would have to be divested of its animistic meanings. Baraka would have to be understood as "holistic spiritual blessing that comes from God" (1980, 14) rather than an impersonal power to be ritually employed to achieve human purposes (Lenning 1980, 113). The danger of this approach is that the process of conversion might lead the animist to become an orthodox Muslim, believing that baraka comes directly out of a relationship with Allah rather than as a disciple of God in Christ. Communicating baraka as the Judeo-Christian concept of berakah might revitalize Islam rather than bringing the Muslim to Christ.

Because of common Semitic heritage and the extent to which Muhammad borrowed from Judeo-Christian sources, the ancient Hebrew concept of berakah (sometimes rendered baruk) is similar to that of baraka but generally without its animistic trappings. The stem for both words is brk. This Hebrew concept of power will now be analyzed.

Animistic Berakah. Berakah in the scripture is a power-laden word designating a positive spiritual force radiating from God as he cares for his covenant people. The verb form barak means "to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, [and] longevity" (Harris 1980, 285). In a similar vein, Lenning says that berakah includes the power behind fertility and prosperity, shalom, holiness, and praise and thanksgiving (1980, 75-80). The term may refer to the power inherent in spoken words, to the words themselves, or to the effects they have on the hearers (Lenning 1980, 74). For the purposes of this study berakah, like baraka of Islam, is only an impersonal spiritual power when it is divorced from God, its true source, and understood animistically as a power to be manipulated. For example, Balak, king of Moab, thought that blessing was a magical formula or power (Num. 22:6). But as the story unfolded, blessing was shown to be a prerogative of God. Balaam did not possess a magical power to be used with no regard for God. Lenning concludes that "blessing is not magic, but it is power, power that is given to man by God" (1980, 75).

"True" berakah is a manifestation of God's steadfast love. It always flows from the person of God and operates in terms of his nature. God's nature is that of steadfast love (hesed). He defines himself as compassionate and gracious, "slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished. . . ." (Exod. 34:6-7). Because of his love, he chose Israel and brought her out of Egypt with a mighty hand (Deut. 4:37). God did not choose Israel because of her size or significance. He chose her rather because of his love for her (Deut. 7:7-9).

God's blessings are related to his love. Moses described this relationship to Israel before his death: "And He will love you and bless you and multiply you" (Deut. 7:13). Moses expressed his confidence in God's steadfast love in

his blessing given to the Israelites: "Indeed, He loves the people" (Deut. 33:1-3). Out of his steadfast love God blesses his people.

Berakah is also closely related to God's covenant. Covenant describes a relationship in which two parties belong to one another. Israel in this case belonged to God. He personally and intimately cared for Israel when Israel was faithful to him. Covenant can be pictured as a marriage relationship between God and his people (Mal. 2:13-14) or the relationship of a caring father to his son (Deut. 1:31; 32:6, 18). Because of God's steadfast love, he did not forget his covenant with Israel (Deut. 4:31), even though Israel rejected it (Lev. 26:40-45). He is the "faithful God, who keeps his covenant and his lovingkindness to a thousandth generation" (Deut. 7:9, also 7:13).

The Creator God, who brought Israel out of Egypt and loved her as a child, instituted a covenant of blessing with Israel. However, alongside the blessings, God instituted certain curses which would come upon Israel if she forsook him (Deut. 28). Because of God's special relationship with Israel, blessings were given for faithfulness and curses for unfaithfulness. Moses proclaimed to Israel:

See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you listen to the commandments of the Lord your God, which I am commanding you today; and the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I am commanding you today, by following other gods which you have not known. (Deut. 11:26-28)

God is shown to be behind both blessings and curses. His blessings show favor toward a chosen people. His curses demonstrate his discipline in bringing a covenant people back to himself. God's covenant with Israel can therefore be called a "relationship of blessing" (Tenney 1975, 625).

When Israel is faithful, God gives her blessings. These blessings are related to promises of the covenant. Kaiser writes that the covenant promise and the blessing "were so closely intertwined" that scholars should not try to "segregate their origins and concerns" (Kaiser, 1978, 57-58; Note Deut. 1:11). Israel receives blessings out of her relationship with Yahweh (Deut. 28:1-14). It is a covenant of blessing.

Between 1910 and 1930 Sigmund Mowinckel, J. Hempel, and Johs. Pedersen introduced the concept that blessings and curses originated in magical practices without recourse to God. As developmental theologians they believed that "highly developed God-concepts" had not yet developed in Israelite culture. God was even thought to "be strengthened by human blessing" (Mowinckel 1923, 225). Pederson, who perhaps provided the philosophical and theological constructs for Mowinckel and Hempel, wrote that "the soul is a whole saturated by power . . . called by the Israelites berakha, blessing" (1926, 182). "If the soul is strong, then it must leave its impress on all his undertakings" (1926, 40). King David was thought to be stronger than any of his contemporaries because of this soul power (1926, 184). Although this power originates in God, it serves as a magical "power of the soul" (1926, 194-195).

From a conservative biblical perspective the God of Israel was always at war with the magical view of life. Israel was not to go after foreign gods (Deut. 5:6-10; 6:12-15). If she did so, she would be cursed (Deut. 27:15). Israel was rather to believe that "the Lord is our God, the Lord is one! And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deut. 6:4-5). Animistic practitioners were also contrasted with the Prophet who was to come. Moses said, "Do not imitate the detestable ways of the nations. . . . The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him" (Deut. 18:9-18). Mowinckel, Hempel, and Pederson remake Creator God in the image of animistic religion rather than understanding God's confrontation with animistic religion.

Universal Life Energy among New Age Practitioners. According to a recent religious survey, 25 percent of all Americans believe in "nonpersonal . . . life energy but not in a personal God" (Padilla 1989, 149). New Age practitioners commonly call such power "universal life energy." Universal life energy is considered an "invisible, unmeasured, yet infinite energy which is the basis of all existence" (Reisser 1987, 33). It is unlike physical energy, whose power is derived from material sources like the sun, crude oil, or atoms.

Belief in universal life energy pervades New Age medicine. This belief is evident in Reisser's list of five basic concepts of New Age healing (1987, 35-40). First, New Age adherents hold that universal energy is the basis of all life. It is not merely a form of energy; it is the energy which flows from the universe into living creatures and circulates within them in an orderly manner. Second, New Age therapists assert that disease occurs when there is an imbalance or blockage in the flow of universal energy through the body. Removing the blockage or restoring balance brings renewed health to the ill. Third, a healer is said to activate and channel universal energy. Almost all New Age therapies involve the transfer of universal energy from healer to patient. This may be done by direct physical contact or by mystical transfer. Fourth, New Agers see miracles as caused by changes in universal energy. They believe that miracles will become commonplace when people use the energy available to them. Fifth, universal energy is equated with God by New Age practitioners. This is the fundamental undergirding of New Age thinking. One New Age adherent, Rosalyn Bruyere, has said, "For me, the terms God and energy are interchangeable. God is all there is, and energy is all there is, and I can't separate the two" (Reisser 1987, 39).

Therapeutic Touch, a favorite New Age cure for the misfortunes of the body, epitomizes therapies based on universal energy. Dolores Krieger, one of its chief promoters, describes Therapeutic Touch:

Conceive of the healer as an individual whose health gives him access to an overabundance of prana and whose strong sense of commitment and intention to help ill people gives him or her a certain control over the projection of this vital energy. The act of healing, then, would entail the channeling of this energy flow by the healer for the well-being of the sick individual. (Krieger 1979, 13)

The healer using Therapeutic Touch does not generate energy but directs it to where it is needed. He follows four steps in healing. Step one is called "centering," developing a state of inner equilibrium through meditating and becoming quiet and relaxed. In step two, "assessment," the healer places his hands two to three inches from the patient's body and scans his energy field. His purpose is to detect subtle sensations, such as temperature changes, tingling, pressure or pulsation, which are said to indicate variations in the energy field. "Assessment" is not to be equated with a medical diagnosis. Assessment is a supposed analysis of an energy force field, while diagnosis is a complex evaluation of numerous vital signs of the patient. If, while scanning the body, the healer perceives a sense of pressure, he is said to be bumping against stagnant energy. He must then perform step three, "unruffling the field," in which any resistance because of stagnant energy is swept away. "Transfer of energy," step four, moves energy from the healer to the patient or from one place to another in the patient's body. The sensations felt in step two guide the healer in treating the patient. An area which felt hot needs to be cooled or an area of tingling quieted. The healer accomplishes these changes by creating the desired feeling (cool in place of warm) in his mind and directing this image to the patient through his hands (Reisser 1987, 46).

Acupuncture as a medical treatment is not new; however, because of its association with internal energy forces, it has become accepted as one treatment in the holistic approach of the New Age movement. Acupuncture is based on the ancient Chinese belief that yin and yang are the "two fundamental forces which generate all the transformations in the universe" (Reisser 1987, 54-55). The interplay between yin and yang is thought to influence all of life. Acupuncture aims to correct imbalances in yin and yang by draining excesses of energy or restoring deficiencies. This is done by using needles or some other form of stimulation at specific points to cause energy to flow more smoothly. Americans hear mostly about how acupuncture is used to alleviate pain and thus believe that needles are used to stop messages of pain from travelling to the brain. They have little knowledge of the philosophical orientations that stand behind this practice. They view the end result and ignore the fact that acupuncture is based on the belief that all of life is controlled by energy flowing through the body.

New Age adherents also believe that meditation is a way of accessing, activating, and transferring life energies. They hold that when many people focus their minds on a particular subject, power is generated which affects the matter on which they are focusing. A few years ago several New Age groups in the Seattle area sponsored the "World Peace Event." The goal was to bring about world peace through collective meditation. They believed that if enough people from throughout the world would simultaneously harmonize their positive energy, they could bring tranquility to the entire planet (Groothuis 1988, 1-3). In Washington, D.C., a Pentagon Meditation Club has been set up "to link enough individual `peace shields' to protect humanity by their unified force" (Peace Shield 1988, 42). Edward Winchester, a Pentagon financial analyst and the originator of this club, says, "Millions of people the world over may be unconsciously generating coherent force fields when they enter deep prayer and mediation" (Peace

Shield 1988, 42). These perspectives on universal life energy have even invaded Christian universities. A sign posted on a bulletin board at Abilene Christian University read: "Starting now: Wherever you are, perform a silent meditation for world peace every day at 12:00 noon for one full minute."

These beliefs on life energy are pervading American society in subtle, seemly innocent ways. Ten years ago these beliefs were confined to American counterculture; today their effects are seen in almost every aspect of life. Robert J. L. Burrows, publication editor of the evangelical Spiritual Counterfeits Project in Berkeley, has said,

. . . you can see the rise of the New Age as a barometer of the disintegration of American culture. Dostoyevsky said anything is permissible if there is no God. But anything is also permissible if everything is God. There is no making any distinction between good and evil. (Friedrich 1987, 72)

While New Age adherents equate universal life energy with God, the Christian perspective drawn from the scriptures portrays God as separate yet sovereign over his creation. New Age adherents seek help "from within"; Christians seek help "from above" (Groothuis 1986, 168). Universal life energy does not receive its current from Creator God since it denies his separate being; it is an attempt to make gods of humans. If this energy is a reality, it is demonic, having its origin in spiritual beings who have rejected the sovereignty of God.

Impersonal Forces Used for Both Good and Evil

Some impersonal powers are thought to be used for both good and evil depending on the disposition of the person or group employing them. Like electricity, these impersonal forces are unseen yet powerful. If harnessed and channeled, they can be used for great human benefit. If these powers are unharnessed and unchanneled, however, they become like lightning--both unpredictable and destructive. Examples of impersonal spiritual powers used for both benevolent and malevolent purposes are mana in Melanesia and bugota among the Sukuma of Tanzania.

Mana. R. H. Codrington made the first in-depth study of impersonal spiritual powers when he described the Melanesian phenomena called mana in his comprehensive text The Melanesians (1891). He believed that without some conception of mana the outsider could not "understand the religious beliefs and practices of the Melanesians" (1891, 191). Codrington described mana as

a supernatural force which operates behind all human activity in the world, . . . a force altogether distinct from physical power which acts in all kinds of ways for good and evil and which is of the greatest advantage to possess and control. (Codrington 1891, 119)

Mana is considered the power behind success or failure. Insufficient mana is thought to be the cause of failure; great mana, the cause of success. A man is successful at fighting not merely because of powerful arms, quickness of eye, and innovative weapons. He is, rather, successful because of mana. This mana may have been received from an ancestor, from a warrior killed in battle, from an amulet which once was in contact with a mana-filled person or spirit, or from a distinctive tooth or rock which, when worn, placed in one's house, or planted in one's field, has power to bring success. Likewise, the speed of a well-made canoe does not depend upon its design but on the mana it possesses. A farmer's pigs multiply and his fields are productive, not because of his initiative in caring for them, but because of the mana he possesses. When a yam is planted it will naturally grow but will not become large and tasty unless it possesses mana. Without mana, an arrow cannot inflict a mortal wound nor can a net catch many fish (Codrington 1891, 118-20). Ahrens, in describing present-day Melanesia, comments, "The main religious question in Melanesia is how to gain access to power and how to control it in order to make life successful" (1977, 142). Mana provides the Melanesian with the power to be successful; the absence of such power explains failure.

Influential people hold their positions due to mana. Ancient Hawaiian kings were thought to be so charged with mana that the common man would die if he came into contact with what the king had touched. His touch automatically made things taboo to the commoner. Consequently, the king was carried to minimize his contact with the world of the commoner. Codrington writes that a son in Northern New Hebrides does not necessarily inherit his father's chieftainship since such a position is due to powerful mana. However, the father will attempt to pass on to his son the mana which has made him chief. Charms, magical songs, mana-laden stones, and secret knowledge are

passed from father to son in an attempt to transfer the mana (Codrington 1891, 56). Mana also serves as the power to enable Melanesian men to join and rise to levels of influence in the Suqe, a type of men's club in Melanesian societies. Rising from level to level in the Suqe necessitates feasts requiring the expenditure of great wealth for pigs, yams, and other products. No one could conceivably acquire such great wealth without mana. Therefore, mana helps a person get into the Suqe and also aids him to become a person of authority within the institution (Codrington 1891, 103). Those in authoritative positions in Melanesian society are considered people of powerful mana.

Sometimes objects are assumed to possess mana because of their distinctiveness. For example, a man may find a stone resembling some fruit of his garden. He says to himself, "This stone is so unusual that it must possess power to make my garden productive. Let me put it to the test." He lays it at the foot of a tree whose fruit it resembles. An abundant harvest proves that the stone possesses mana (Marett 1914, 109).

There are many presuppositions inherent in the concept of mana in the Melanesian context (Hiebert 1983). First, mana can be found in objects (rocks, bushes, and trees) and in personal beings (people, ancestors, and spirits). Second, mana is qualitative. A person can gain more of it or lose some of it. It can be stored until it is needed. The more mana a person accumulates, the more power he has. Third, mana is amoral. It is a power which in and of itself is neither good nor bad. It can, however, be used either to help or to harm depending on the motivation of the possessor. Typically mana is employed publicly as a positive social power. It is used to bring rain, to make fields fertile, or to help win a war. When used secretly by individuals, mana is almost always used for malevolent purposes--to maim or kill an enemy. Fourth, mana is controlled by ritual. Sometimes ceremonial invocations are thought to build up the reserves of mana (Tippett 1967, 353). When mana is used malevolently, ritual may be used to reverse the power of mana so that it works against the sender. Rituals must be enacted perfectly. If a ritual is wrongfully enacted, "the mana might rebound against the person seeking its help" (Tippett 1967, 7). Fifth, mana provides the power to produce wealth and gives rise to what are generally called "Cargo Cults." To the Melanesians there is no dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual realms; they deduce that all material goods originate in the spiritual realm. They have no traditional categories to fathom products which are manufactured by machines due to human ingenuity. Europeans, who have wealth, are frequently assumed to have hidden the rituals to induce wealth. This cargo mentality was amplified by airplanes unloading massive amounts of cargo among animistic people during the major world wars. They deduced that such massive amounts of cargo could come only from powerful mana-ladened rituals. Sixth, specialists instruct the people on how to handle mana. While these specialists are respected because of their knowledge of mana, they are feared because they might use this knowledge for personal advantage. This is especially true when there are problems, like drought and epidemics.

Within the Melanesian context "taboos" are culture's rules for using mana. Taboos are to mana what insulation is to electricity, a protection against its power. Taboos are thus prohibitions protecting the careful observer from wrongly using mana. For example, the Hawaiian king possessed so much mana that whatever he touched became taboo. Among the Kisii of Kenya it is taboo for a son to enter the house of his father or a father to enter the house of his married son. A comparable illustration is a non-Christian belief in the taboo of certain banyan trees in the Solomon Islands . These trees were thought to contain so much mana that anyone touching them would immediately be killed. When about thirty Christians cut down a banyan tree and erected a cross in its place, the non-Christians were forced to determine whether the tree had lost its mana because traditional rites had been neglected or because a greater mana had overcome the tree's mana (Tippett 1967, 100-102).

Communicating Christ within a mana-oriented culture poses significant problems. First, the people tend to look at the missionary as a possessor of mana rather than as one who carries a delegated message. From the perspective of the people, the missionary's immense wealth testifies to his possession of mana. Second, Christianity is frequently understood as a religion containing rituals used to induce mana. The Bible is frequently viewed as a manual on obtaining cargo if only the secret rituals of obtaining mana can be deciphered. This mentality makes the Melanesian especially susceptible to fringe cults which appear to give immediate formulas for success. Third, the mentality of "power" behind mana is in many ways opposed to the Christian view that all human power must be given up and our whole lives laid before God.

How is the Christian message to be communicated within this context? First, basic biblical presuppositions (the nature of God, the sinfulness of man, what God has done in Jesus Christ, and how man responds to God in Christ through faith and obedience) must be communicated. A Christian worldview must take the place of a pagan

worldview. Second, biblical conceptions of power must be described. Although God possesses all power, he does not use that power malevolently. In the incarnation of his son he became flesh, humbling himself to the point of death, in order that those bound by the power of death might live. Christians therefore must not seek power for selfish purposes but die to self that they might live (Gal. 2:20). Coming to Christ entails giving up personal desire for power and accepting the Lordship of Christ. Third, only when one gives up these human desires for power and comes under his Lordship does God begin to bless him. A radical discontinuity between the Christian conceptions of power and blessing and the Melanesian concept of mana must be taught. One should not come to Christ believing that by so doing he will receive the mana of God.

Emic Concepts Similar to Mana. After studying Codrington's ground-breaking analysis of mana, anthropologists soon found similar concepts in other world cultures. R. R. Marett found similar concepts among North American Indians. The Sioux speak about wakan or wakanda, and other North American Indians speak of orenda, qube, manitu, and oki, reflecting the belief in an impersonal power used "to bless or to curse." African pygmies recognize a similar power called oudah (1914, 108-113).

A similar but somewhat different type of impersonal power, called toh, is found in Indonesia. Toh is very much like mana, except that it is self-activating. For example, when a thief breaks into a compound, toh is automatically energized to thwart the thief. Although mana is passive like electricity, toh is like sensor lights, which automatically come on when there is movement in the yard (Hiebert 1978, 13; 1983).

Many emic types of impersonal spiritual powers tend to be classified under the general heading of mana because of Codrington's formative study. The term mana has therefore escaped its Melanesian moorings and become an etic term encompassing all of the above-mentioned terms. Frequently, mana is used as the generic term for impersonal spiritual power used for both benevolent and malevolent purposes.

Bugota. Bugota is a type of impersonal spiritual power used for both good and evil among the Sukuma of Tanzania. Its attributes are representative of impersonal spiritual power in Africa. This impersonal power is preferred to using personal spiritual powers like ancestors. While ancestral power can be used only when it is made available by the ancestors and is useful only for the problems about which ancestors themselves are concerned, bugota can be focused on a particular task and can be immediately employed to deal with one's everyday problems.

Although translated as "magical medicines," or simply "medicines," bugota is much broader than the Western conception of medicine (Hatfield 1968, 83). Hatfield says, "Headache powders, injections for bilharzia, protections against evil-doers, and medicines for revenge are all called bugota" (1968, 83). No distinction is made between medicine and magic. Bugota can be used assertively to gain success or popularity. For example, if a person wants to be popular, he may be instructed to carry a piece of alum "to clear the air." When a person seeks love, he may consume a concoction made with the dried and ground heart of an elephant (Cory 1949, 18). Sukuma also use bugota to increase fertility in humans, livestock, and fields (Cory 1949, 20). A barren woman might be treated with bugota made from the afterbirth of a goat which has borne twins. Monkeys multiply rapidly, and a splinter from a tree where they sleep can be used to increase fertility in livestock (Cory 1949, 20).

Bugota can also be used to harm or kill. This aggressive, antisocial subcategory of bugota is called bulogi. A person wishing to avenge a wrong prepares bulogi from ingredients connected to both the intended victim and the desired result (Tanner 1956, 438). Anything that has touched the intended victim is sufficient to provide magical contact. Fingernail clippings, pieces of hair, and dust from a footprint are frequently used. Sukuma wishing to kill an enemy might mix fingernail clippings with grass from a grave, place this mixture on a path where the victim is expected to step, and recite an incantation to activate the bulogi. When the victim steps on the mixture, his death is imminent. If he suspects that his enemies are planning his death, he can protect himself by using lukago, or protective medicine. For example, he might carry the scale of a pangolin, a very shy animal rarely seen by humans, which is thought to make one invisible and thus immune to bulogi (Cory 1949, 16).

Sukuma believe that although the cosmos is held together by a great power, "man's individual achievements and his adjustment to other men are dependent upon his acquisition and use of medicines" (Hatfield 1968, 86). This belief

leads the Sukuma to "engage in rituals involving impersonal supernatural powers and pay scant attention to Mungu [God] and the Great Ones [prominent ancestors]" (Hatfield 1968, 86).

Malevolent Impersonal Forces

Such impersonal powers as witchcraft and sorcery are used to bring harm upon enemies and their enterprises by spiritual and magical means. Because the practitioner of these arts is a cultural insider who has malevolently turned against his own neighbors and friends, witchcraft and sorcery are feared above all impersonal powers. The witch or sorcerer is "the hidden enemy within the gate" (Mayer 1954, 61). As the Lovedu of the Transvaal say, "You eat with him, yet it is he who eats you" (Krige and Krige 1943, 263). So prevalent are these malevolent forces that Stevens could write: "Those who profess not to be believe in witchcraft constitute a tiny minority of the world's peoples" (Stevens 1989, 213).

The motivations prompting people to use malevolent powers are jealousy, spite, and a desire for revenge. For example, when one farmer's crops produce abundantly while those around appear anemic, a jealous neighbor might bewitch the prosperous field. Or when some man fails to receive love and adoration from a woman he desires to marry, he might maliciously direct harmful spiritual power to disrupt all of her future romantic relationships. Negative spiritual power is also frequently used when a businessman feels that his partner has caused their business to fail. The angry partner might "close his path," as Brazilian Spiritists say, so that all endeavors of his ex-partner fail.

Definitions of Witchcraft and Sorcery. The writings of Evans-Pritchard (1937, 21) have been formative in defining witchcraft and sorcery. He viewed witchcraft as an internal, psychic power and sorcery as an external power using magical rites and paraphernalia. Witchcraft may be used either consciously or unconsciously by its practitioner; whereas sorcery is always a conscious endeavor. Witchcraft and sorcery are both carried out with malicious intent. However, sorcery is the evil use of magic, which might also be used for benevolent purposes. While sorcerers use magic for malevolent purposes, shamans use it benevolently. The power to perform witchcraft is almost always inherited; sorcery is consciously learned. Witchcraft is frequently considered a nonhuman power inherent in certain people. Sorcery, on the other hand, is not an intrinsic power, but a malicious use of magic. Witchcraft and sorcery, though contrasting phenomena, are classified together because both use spiritual power for malevolent purposes and are motivated by malicious intent.

Witchcraft, therefore, can be defined as an inherent psychic or mystical power used either consciously or unconsciously to harm other people. Sorcery is the use of magical paraphernalia and rituals to harness spiritual powers to maliciously and premeditatively harm other people.

Figure 6
Contrast between Witchcraft and Sorcery

Witchcraft	*Sorcery*
* Is an internal psychic act	* Is an external use of magic
* Used either consciously	* Used consciously or unconsciously
* Done with malicious intent	* Done with malicious intent
* Inherited	* Learned
* Uses superhuman power	* Uses magical power

A clear-cut distinction between witchcraft and sorcery cannot be made in all societies and is not made by all anthropologists (Turner 1964, 319-324). Many African languages use one word for both concepts since only a witch is evil enough to practice sorcery (Shorter 1985, 99). Marwick found that among the Cewa, sorcerers use rituals and medicines and consciously employ their trade and, like witches, are permanently evil (1965, 81-82). Russell defines witchcraft as encompassing all of magic (1989, 203). Even among the Azande, whom Evans-Pritchard studied, witchcraft was not always an inherent condition. Like the power of sorcery, it could be attained by a practitioner under certain circumstances (1937, 26; Macfarlane 1970, 42).

Early anthropologists saw sorcery as encompassing the whole realm of magic--magic used to harm as well as magic used to help (Frazer 1922, 22-23). However, because of the negative connotations associated with "sorcery" and "sorcerer," a distinction should be made between magic used harmfully and magic used helpfully. All practitioners of magic can be classified under the general term "magician." Diviners or shamans are those who use helpful magic for productive and protective purposes. "Sorcerers" are personalities who use magic for destructive purposes. Since the shaman and sorcerer use the same magic for different purposes and motivations, the shaman frequently is suspected of being a sorcerer and lives in a precarious position. The shaman possesses special knowledge that could be dangerous if used malevolently.

Cultural Stress and Manifestations of Malevolent Impersonal Power. Cultural stress creates an environment conducive to the use of malevolent impersonal power. For example, the use of witchcraft and sorcery increases among first generation migrants to cities who have not yet become fully integrated into the urban context. While traditional methodologies of resolving crises have been disrupted, new social mechanisms for problem resolution have not yet been adapted. The migrant resorts to using malevolent powers he would have seldom used in his original rural context (Stevens 1989, 213). "Tension and competition are sharpened, but traditional explanations go unchallenged" (Shorter 1985, 96). Stevens shows how these manifestations of negative spiritual power tend to remain covert because there is "little sympathy for such belief systems within `mainstream' [urban] institutions" and because practitioners fear "anti-witchcraft and curative mechanisms" which are operative in these contexts (1989, 214).

During the Middle Ages witchcraft and sorcery were always present. However, unparalleled change precipitated by the Renaissance and amplified by the Industrial Revolution and Reformation, created cultural tension so great that the use of witchcraft and sorcery reached epidemic proportions (Marwick 1970, 14-15). It is estimated that between 1450 and 1700 a hundred thousand were executed after being accused of witchcraft (Russell 1989, 208). Malevolent manifestations of spiritual power increase during times of cultural tension.

Human Response to Witchcraft and Sorcery. Most people are desperately frightened when they suspect that witchcraft or sorcery might have been used against them. An informant among the Kisii of Kenya testifies about fear of witchcraft during a cattle plague:

> Nearly all of my cattle die, but my neighbour loses only a couple of beasts. I wonder whether he has bewitched me; it was strange that I should lose so many, and he only a few. Now that neighbour has seen that I am still able to lead out my plough with a pair of strong oxen, but the plague has killed just those two animals of his that he always used for ploughing. He says to himself how strange it is that I can still plough and not he. Perhaps I am the one who has bewitched *him*. (Mayer 1970, 51)

Sorcery is feared as much as witchcraft. Shorter, a Catholic missiologist, relates this personal experience:

> Towards the end of August 1975, when I was teaching in Uganda, there was a knock at my office door. On the threshold was a religious brother in a white cassock who introduced a well-dressed Ugandan lady. She was a tutor in a Kampala College of Education and she owned a beautiful house and garden on a hill which I could see from my window.

> She told me that her husband had found "bad things" in the garden. "What bad things?" I asked. The lady was reluctant to say more, but after a little more conversation, it transpired that they were bundles of leaves and certain instruments of sorcery. Her request was that I should come to bless the garden and so neutralize the evil spell. . . . [Her garden] was enclosed by a stout wooden fence and was very much overgrown with weeds and rank grass. Nobody had ventured into the garden since the discovery of the "bad things" two months before. Such is the power of sorcery! (1985, 97-98)

Those fearing witchcraft and sorcery desperately search out a shaman who will divine the cause of their misfortune. If witchcraft is deduced as the cause, the witch is typically killed or banished, especially when the action is understood to be premeditated. If sorcery is understood as the cause, the animist typically chooses between two options. He may either seek "(1) to have it voluntarily withdrawn by the perpetrator, or (2) to nullify it, deflect it, or return it directly to its source" by counter-magic (Stevens 1989, 217). Stevens, a secular clinician working in a North American context, proposes a third way: to convince the client that the magic directed toward him is ineffectual (1989, 217).

Christians must propose still another alternative to the animist: Evil powers, whose source is Satan, must be encountered and defeated by the power of Jesus Christ. Christians should never "retaliate in kind" by attempting to use counter-magic or by reflecting magic used against them back on the perpetrator. This is contrary to the injunction of Jesus, "Do to others what you would have them do to you" (Matt. 7:12). Christians are called to stand before God in trusting faith in his care and protection and to seek good where evil has been activated.

Magic: The Manipulation of Spiritual Power

Animists believe that all impersonal power (whether used only benevolently, for both good and evil purposes, or malevolently) can be manipulated by magic. Magic is the use of rituals and paraphernalia to manipulate spiritual powers. By means of magic people attempt to project human control over spiritual forces.

Magic and Religion

Anthropological writings frequently contrast magic and religion (Malinowski 1954, 19; Frazer 1922, 56-69). While magic seeks to manipulatively control spiritual powers by human dictum, religion seeks to supplicate the powers. The religionist, realizing his own impotence, seeks through prayer and worship to gain blessings from spiritual beings. The magician uses impersonal spiritual power to control both impersonal forces and personal spiritual beings; the religionist supplicates and propitiates personal spiritual beings. While magic might be used for helpful or harmful purposes depending on the motivations of the practitioners, religion is almost always used benevolently. Figure 7 illustrates how David Burnett views magic and religion as opposite ends of a continuum.

Figure 7
Contrast Between Magic and Religion*

Magic	Religion
* Is manipulative	* Is supplicative
* Concerned with power	* Concerned with personal relationships
* Has specific goals	* Has general aims
* Employed by individuals	* Emphasizes groupness

* Is impersonal * Emphasizes worship of personal beings

* Used for both good and evil * Considered benevolent

* Adapted from David Burnett, *Unearthly Powers* (Eastbourne, England:MARC, 1988),20. Used by permission.

Uses of Magic

Raymond Firth describes three uses of magic according to its function in society (1956, 155-156). First, productive magic insures the fertility of fields, guarantees success in hunting, stimulates clouds to produce rain, secures profitable trade, and produces romantic love. Second, protective magic helps to guard property, assists in the collection of debts, averts misfortune, cures the sick, insures safety while travelling, and, most importantly, counters the power of destructive magic. These two types of magic are performed both privately and publicly for the common good and are therefore categorized together as "helpful magic" or somewhat ethnocentrically as "white magic." Helpful magic is socially acceptable and is a force of social control. Third, destructive magic is used to bring storms, destroy property, produce sickness, and cause death. This type of magic is consistently categorized by cultures as "harmful magic" or ethnocentrically as "black magic." Harmful magic is used privately for personal ends and is socially disruptive. In most societies concepts of helpful magic dominate. Magic is used to cure, protect, and profit rather than to hinder, harm, and destroy (Shorter 1985, 140). Only in tension-filled, disintegrating societies does harmful magic reign supreme over helpful magic.

In certain traditions harmful magic is understood as the inversion of the good. The Catholic Mass is thought to bestow blessings; to the animist the Mass said backward is considered harmful magic. To many animists the cross is perceived as a powerful, protective charm, but the inverted cross becomes a destructive fetish. To folk Muslims a saddle rightfully placed on a horse is a good omen; an upside down saddle at the door of the village mosque becomes a conditional curse called an *`ar* thrust upon the community to force the people to grant a request (Westermarck 1933, 69). The Mass of Saint Secaire is a classic example of harmful magic considered the inversion of the good:

> The priest comes at night to a ruined or deserted church, peopled by owls, bats, and toads. At the first stroke of eleven he begins to mutter the mass backward, finishing at the last stroke of midnight. The host he uses is black, with three points, and instead of wine he drinks water taken from a well into which an unbaptized infant has been thrown. He makes the sign of the cross, not in the air with his right hand but on the ground, with his left foot; and so on, through a whole series of precisely inverted devotions. At the end he pronounces the name of a victim who, under the onslaught of all this evil, withers and dies. (Howells 1962, 54)

Types of Magic

James Frazer in *The Golden Bough* first introduced terminologies which have been formative in the study of magic (1922, 12-14). According to Frazer, the principle of sympathy, the assumption that "things act on each other at a distance," undergirds the whole concept of magic. The affinity of objects to a person is used in transmitting either good or evil from one to another "by means of what we may conceive as a kind of invisible ether" (1922, 14). Objects are sympathetic (1) if they have at some point been in contact with each other or (2) if they are alike. Frazer defines the first characteristic of sympathy as the Law of Contact and the second as the Law of Similarity. Contagious magic is based upon Frazer's Law of Contact and imitative magic on his Law of Similarity.

Contagious Magic. Contagious magic is based on the belief that objects which have been in contact exert an influence on each other even after they have been disconnected (Frazer 1922, 12, 14). For example, if a Brazilian

spiritist desires the love of an estranged boyfriend, she might take his photograph and write her name on the back. She would then burn the picture so that his face and her name are ritualistically united in the smoke. Because of such contagious magic, they will soon be married (St. Clair 1971, 142). In contagious magic "things which have once been in contact with each other" (in this case the boyfriend and his photograph) "continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed" (Frazer 1922, 12).

Contagious magic most frequently employs things which were once a part of a person's body. For example, teeth ceremoniously extracted from Australian Aborigine initiates are carefully guarded lest they come into contact with magic substances and injure those from whom they have been extracted (Frazer 1922, 43-45). Among almost all African peoples the umbilical cord and placenta of a newborn baby are carefully disposed of so that they will not be used in sorcery. A person discovered collecting hair cut from another person is immediately accused of sorcery, especially if there is animosity between the two. Placing excrement of a hated family member at a joint in a tree will cause him severe pain when the tree limbs rub together. Finger and toe nails are frequently buried so that they cannot be used maliciously. Anything once connected to a person's body might be used in contagious magic.

In Sudan when a Nuer youth wounded another from an adjoining village, the spear which had inflicted the wound was sent to the injured person's compound to help effect a cure. The point of the spear was bent and placed point downward in a pot of cold water to cool the pain of the wound. The treatment of the spear was seen as instrumental in the healing of the injured (Evans-Pritchard 1956, 111). Similarly, among Melanesians if the friends of an injured person gain possession of an arrow which has wounded him, they treat the arrow as well as the wound. The enemies of the injured, on the other hand, might seek to aggravate the injury by strumming the bow which launched the arrow in a type of imitative magic (Frazer 1922, 47-48). Clothes and jewelry which have been worn, pots and utensils which have been used, and personal names possessed, all of which have been connected with a person, can be used in contagious magic.

Beliefs concerning contagion impact even Christians who have an animistic heritage. Among Churches of Christ in Kenya there has been much discussion concerning Christian wedding ceremonies. The African Inland Church and Roman Catholics imported Western ceremonies and labeled them "Christian." When the first couples desired to be married in the Church of Christ, they asked how they were to marry. We suggested that marriage rites be devised which would be appropriate for the Kipsigis context and not import a ceremony from the West. When asked how traditional Kipsigis conducted their ceremonies, they described extensive rituals, including the spitting of beer as an ancestral blessing and the tying of the segutiet, a grass band used much like the exchange of rings in a Western ceremony. After much discussion the church decided to adapt the traditional ceremony rather than to borrow the Western one. After the ceremony the question "What should be done with the segutiet?" troubled the participants. As Christians they could not dispose of it according to traditional pagan customs, yet they continued to fear what would happen if it fell into the hands of some enemy who would use it with malicious intent.

Imitative Magic. Imitative magic is based on the principle "like produces like": Imitating a desired outcome causes it to happen. When the Nuer of Sudan desire to cross a crocodile-infested river, they bend a metal bracelet until the two ends overlap, tie the ends together with grass, and press the ring into the mud by the riverside. Such imitative symbolism closes the mouths of the crocodiles, and the people are able to safely cross (Evans-Pritchard 1956, 67, 74). Egyptians wrote the names of their enemies on pottery and shattered the pots to symbolically destroy their enemies (Wright n.d., 79). Imitative magicians believe that they can produce any desired effect "merely by imitating it" (Frazer 1922, 12).

Imitative magic is used for many purposes. Hunters draw pictures of game with spears thrust into their hearts to imitate a feat they wish shortly to accomplish. Fishermen induce fish to come by putting an image of a fish into the water. Drought-stricken people imitate rain by spewing water into the air or by creating clouds of smoke to induce rain clouds. A barren woman carries a doll in order to become fertile. The ill paste spots on their body to mimic an illness and then wash them off to imitate healing (Parrinder 1976, 113-114). A rejected lover connives to punish his former sweetheart by drawing her figure in sand, ashes, or clay, or by carving an image of her body and then stabbing, kicking, or burning the effigy in order to bring about infertility, injury, or death.

Imitative magic was a crucial component of Palestinian Baalism (Wright n.d., 79-81). Agrarian Canaanites desperately needed the rains for the fertility of their crops, and the imitative magic of Baalism provided a ready and

sensual answer. Worshippers of Baal involved themselves with cult prostitutes believing that sperm entering these prostitutes would induce the heavens to give rain. Israelite daughters became prostitutes before the shrines of Baal, and the men "consorted with harlots and sacrificed with shrine prostitutes" (Hos. 4:14). The sin of cult prostitution became so insidious that Hosea wrote, "A spirit of prostitution has led them astray" (Hos. 4:12).

The Philistines, after being afflicted with tumors for capturing the Israelite ark of the covenant and putting it in the temple of Dagon their god, sought to appease the God of Israel by making imitations of the disease that afflicted them. They then sent the ark back to Israel with their imitation guilt offerings (1 Sam. 6:1-5).

Imitative magic continues to be part of contemporary cultures. Joseph Arap Lang'at, a Christian evangelist among the Kipsigis of Kenya, told the story of a woman who had lost her husband's love. She went to a traditional practitioner, who told her to make an image of her husband. Speaking warmly to the figure and giving it special food and care would insure her husband's love. Joseph concluded by saying, "We Christians have knowledge. We know exactly what the shaman is doing. She is getting the woman to practice loving her husband." He then began to speak powerfully about how Christians must overtly analyze their marriage relationships in light of the reality of God's love and begin to practice his love in their lives. They must never use imitative magic to induce love.

Not all magic falls neatly into the categories of contagious and imitative. A Malay charm uses qualities of both:

> Take parings of nails, hair, eyebrows, spittle, and so forth of your intended victim, enough to represent every part of his person, and then make them up into his likeness with wax from a deserted bees' comb. Scorch the figure slowly by holding it over a lamp every night for seven nights, and say: "It is not wax that I am scorching, it is the liver, heart, and spleen of So-and-so that I scorch." After the seventh time burn the figure and your victim will die. (Frazer 1922, 15; Zwemer 1920, 172)

The use in antiquity of divine names to coerce deities also cannot be neatly classified as either contagious or imitative; it partakes of both. It was believed that the magical use of divine names could coerce gods to do human bidding. Many therefore hid the names of their gods for fear of their misuse. This is likely the meaning of the Davidic statement made to Yahweh: "They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name" (Ps. 139:20). God gave express command that his name should not be used with malicious intent (Deut. 5:11). Because names were thought to hold sacred power, the Jews wrote the personal name of their God in such a way that it could not be pronounced. While the unpronounceable tetragrammaton YHWH was transcribed in the documents, at most times the word donay, "my Lord," was substituted in the readings. The personal name for God was considered too sacred to pronounce (Douglas 1962c, 478).

Both contagious and imitative magic are based on a common understanding of the use of symbols. Magic turns a "symbol into an objective power--something which exists and acts on its own" (Shorter 1985, 143). While religion says that forms have no power in and of themselves, magic makes these symbols into power objects.

Means of Magical Manipulation

Animistic people use many different means to manipulate spiritual power. The most used of these methods are curses, oaths, mantras, amulets and charms, and evil eye.

Curses. Curses are verbalizations calling upon spiritual forces to harm a person. Animistic people believe in the power of words. They would give a literal interpretation to Prov. 18:21: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." The curse, then, is the activation of the power of witchcraft and a spoken element in the use of sorcery.

Curses use the power of words to activate malevolent power. An old Kipsigis man became very angry when neighbors cut branches from his trees for posts to build their fences. Believing he had no power to stop his neighbors other than the curse, he yelled irately, "*Meok konyek*" ("May your eyes die") and "*Labok oik*" ("May the spirits touch you"). The neighbors smiled nervously. All believed that such hard words might bring severe illness. In other

situations Kipsigis might use the worst of all curses: *Mein mat* (literally, "May your fire die"), meaning "May your family die out" or "May your seed die." Continuity from generation to generation is of utmost importance. Therefore a curse which challenges this continuity causes great fear. Most curses are not planned or premeditated but spoken in anger with little forethought.

The curses of some people are considered stronger than those of others. Among the Moors of Morocco the most horrible of all curses is one hurled by parents at their children. A Moorish proverb says, "He who has been broken by his parents will not be repaired by the saints, [but] he who has been broken by the saints will be repaired by his parents" (Westermarck 1933, 60). The curse of a husband, however, is as powerful as that of a father. One proverb says, "The woman who is cursed by her husband is like her who is cursed by her father" (Westermarck 1933, 61). The curses of powerful personalities, like *pirs* or *shereefs*, are more dangerous than those of the average person. The curses of women are considered more potent than those of men because women are often ceremonially unclean. A proverb relates, "The curse of an unclean person is sharper than a knife" (Westermarck 1933, 62). One's guilt or innocence also influences the impact of the curse. An undeserved curse has no power according to the proverb: "A curse without cause does not pass through the door" (Westermarck 1933, 62). Even the Bible recognizes this generally held perspective: "An undeserved curse does not come to rest" (Prov. 26:2). In fact, an undeserved curse is likely to rebound upon the invoker's own family: "He who curses the parents of others is like him who curses his own parents" (Westermarck 1933, 63).

Some curses are conditional. Among the Muslims *`ar* is used to compel someone else to grant your request. A refugee, seeking help from the owner of a tent, might grasp the pole at the entrance of the tent and say to its owner, "I am in your *`ar*." The owner then is compelled to help him, or the power of *`ar* will harm him (Westermarck 1933, 68). Other examples of *`ar* include placing one's saddle upside down at a person's door or at the village mosque and slaughtering an animal at the entrance of one's tent or house (Westermarck 1933, 69-70). Because *`ar* forces one to do another's bidding, the frequency of *`ar* in a culture determines the extent to which social relationships are based on compulsion.

Oaths. While *`ar* is a conditional curse directed against someone else, an oath is a conditional curse directed toward oneself (Westermarck 1933, 68). An oath is taken voluntarily to prove innocence or loyalty to a cause. An oath, therefore, is a ritualistic declaration based on appeals made to spiritual powers which guarantees that secrets will be kept, compels one to act in a prescribed way, or affirms one's innocence. Whatever the purpose, the oath-taker swears by some power or power object in order to give efficacy to his sworn oath. Muslims swear by something which has *baraka*--by Allah, the Qur'an, holy books, a pilgrim who has recently returned from his pilgrimage to Mecca, some saint or *pir*, or some angel (Westermarck 1933, 64-65). Jews swore by heaven, God's throne, the earth, Jerusalem, or one's head (Matt. 5:34-35). While the Old Testament designated that all those who took oaths must speak the truth (Num 30:2; Deut. 23:21), followers of Christ are enjoined not to take oaths since all objects involved are related to God. As speakers of truth, they need not invoke oaths (Matt. 5:33-37; Jas. 5:12).

Oaths are frequently used to guarantee that secrets are kept. In the pre-independence resistance movement in Kenya, called the Mau Mau, fighters took various oaths of secrecy to protect the identity of leaders and secrets of the organization. While planning a coup in Kenya in 1982, military leaders from the Luo tribe administered oaths to participating soldiers. Soil from the Luo area of Nyanza and water from Lake Victoria bordering on the Luo tribal area were used in the oathing rituals. Each participant was forced to place his bare right foot on the soil, mix his blood with the water, and drink the mixture. While holding a copy of the Luo New Testament, he recited the following words in Luo: "With this blood and water from my land I take this oath. I swear I will not disclose this secret, and if I do so, may everything that belongs to me perish and misfortune follow me. May God help me" (Kuria 1984, 1, 2).

Oaths are also used to compel people to act in a prescribed way. When the first democratic elections were held in Kenya, numerous oathing ceremonies were used to compel people to vote for certain candidates and parties. Before a national election in 1983 a major headline in the Nairobi *Daily Nation* read "Thousands in Oath-Cleansing Ceremony." Twenty years earlier thousands of the Kamba tribe had been bound by an oath, called "the oath of seven walking sticks," to vote for a certain candidate and party. An estimated ten thousand Kambas participated in the cleansing, supervised by the local government administration. Government chiefs were the first to be cleansed in a

ritualistic ceremony involving stepping over seven walking sticks, spitting into a common container, and using the spittle to cleanse the walking sticks (*Daily Nation*, 21 September 1983, 1-2).

Oaths are also used to affirm innocence or guilt in ordeals. In Levitical law a jealous husband could bring his wife to a priest to force her to declare her innocence of immorality under oath. While the jealous wife stood "before the Lord," holy water was mixed with dust from the tabernacle floor and given to her to drink. The woman was to affirm that her abdomen would swell and her thigh waste away if she was guilty. Nothing would happen if she was innocent (Num. 5:11-31).

Both curses and oaths are related to the *mantras* because of the emphasis on the power of spoken words.

Mantras. *Mantra*, literally meaning "voice" or "sound" in the Hindustani language of India, is the attachment of spiritual power to certain types of sounds. It is believed that certain sounds and words have power and that the use of these in prescribed ways produces inevitable results. Loewen recounts how a South American Indian interpreted Christianity as a system of *mantras* to manipulate life:

> "It is wonderful to be a Christian," he said. "Now we have ever so many more `hard' words than before. You can heal your friends, or you can kill your enemies, whenever you want to. All you have to do is kneel behind them in a prayer meeting and while everyone else is praying out loud you just whisper the appropriate `hard' words, breathe on the person, and it happens just like that. For example, if you should say words like *tutechan*, *wikik*, *kisimasi* ("temptation," "wicked," "Christmas") or any of the other bad `hard' words, the person will die like a fly. If, however, you use words like *kang*, *epong*, *klaiki* ("God," "heaven," "Christ") or any of the other good `hard' words, the person will be well before you know it." (Stott and Coote 1980, 116)

Verbal symbols thus become instruments of imitative magic to manipulate reality.

The most frequently used *mantra* is the syllable o*m*. *Om*, the first and last letters of the Indian alphabet, is believed to be the condensation of all power. It was understood as the first sound that Brahma made when he came into the universe (Hiebert 1983). This syllable is so frequently used in the New Age that some call o*m* "the final word on the New Age" (Friedrich 1987, 72).

Paul Hiebert tells the story of an Indian *mantra* practitioner, called a *mantrakar*. One day a snake that bit a person was later found and killed. To heal the one bitten the *mantrakar* intoned a *mantra* seven times for each stripe on the snake's back. Hiebert questioned the practitioner: "What if the snake had not been found and killed?" The practitioner replied, "I would then use another *mantra* to call the snake out of its hole." This practitioner learned his art by living three years with an established *mantrakar* and then being initiated on a night when there was a lunar eclipse. While the moon was in eclipse, he was lowered into a well, dipped three times, and required to say the proper *mantra*. These rituals empowered him as a *mantrakar* (Hiebert 1983; 1982, 37).

In the scriptures, disciples healed the sick and cast out demons in the name of Jesus. The crippled man at the Beautiful Gate of the temple was healed in the name of Jesus (Acts 3:1-6). The seven sons of Sceva, non-Christian Jews of Ephesus, invoked the name of Jesus over the demon-possessed (Acts 19:13-17). Should such use of the name "Jesus" be considered a *mantra*? To what extent is there a relationship between the sound of the name and the power of Christ?

From a Christian perspective the name should not be understood as having any intrinsic power. Unlike the sound *om*, pronounced similarly in every language, the name of Jesus is an arbitrary symbol pronounced differently in various languages. The New Testament disciples understood that the name *Jesus* only symbolized the power of God; the name had no power within itself. Healing and casting out of demons was rather based on the reality of the nature and power of Jesus.

Amulets and Charms. Amulets and charms are visual symbols which carry spiritual power for protective purposes. Among the Kipsigis of Kenya an amulet made from goat's skin is placed around the waist of a newborn male child to protect him if older male siblings have died. Muslims of North Africa have long feared the evil eye and have designed amulets to protect themselves from it. The symbol of a hand, a charm frequently used to protect against evil eye, is inscribed on almost all houses and shops in Morocco. Pentagrams, the cross, a crescent, and a drawing of a pair of eyes are also used as amulets against the evil eye (Westermarck 1933, 29-55).

People of a Judeo-Christian heritage often use Christian symbols as magical amulets. Jews wear scripture amulets called phylacteries. These phylacteries, based on a literal interpretation of certain Old Testament passages (Exod. 13:9, 16; Deut. 6:8; 11:18), are worn both to protect from danger and to pridefully express religiosity (Matt. 23:5). Many Christians believe that when the cross is worn on the body, it will protect them from harm, and when drawn on the side of their house will guard it from danger. The Bible is treasured, not as a guidepost pointing to God but as a magical book having power to heal and bless.

Yantras is the Hindu name for powerful drawings, inscriptions, or decorations. For some Indians, *yantras* are "abstract geometrical designs intended as a `tool' for meditation and increased awareness" (Khanna 1979, 11). However, many *yantra* meditators begin to look upon the drawings as forms containing magical properties. Hiebert describes four magical *yantras* used for relieving headaches, assuring conception, curing malaria, and generating power and providing protection by the god Narasimha (Hiebert 1982, 38). Seldom are *yantras* used alone but are combined with symbolic rituals and *mantras* to bring about the desired result (Hiebert 1982, 37-38).

The use of amulets and charms is a negation of trust in God, who provides ultimate protection against evil forces. The household of Jacob was told to put away their household gods and "the rings in their ears" (Gen. 35:2-4). These earrings were most likely protective amulets associated with pagan gods (Douglas 1962b, 766-767). Flaunting their charms for protective or decorative purposes was rebuked (Isa. 3:18-23). God, rather than amulets and charms, must be relied upon for protection.

Evil Eye. Evil eye is projecting malevolent power upon a person or object by gazing at it. Such glances of evil are typically caused by envy. The envious eye is thought to cause a luscious crop to wither, a grade cow to go dry, a handsome newborn son to become severely ill, a groom to become impotent, or his bride to have a headache. Westermarck says, "[Evil eye is] rooted both in the expressiveness and the uncanniness of the look, which make the eye appear on the one hand as an instrument of transmitting evil wishes, and on the other hand as an original source of injurious energy emanating from it involuntarily" (1933, 24).The use of evil eye, especially prevalent in Muslim lands and India, also occurs in other world contexts.

Folk Muslims greatly fear the evil eye. Moorish proverbs say, "The evil eye empties the houses and fills the graves"; "One-half of mankind die from the evil eye"; "The evil eye owns two-thirds of the graveyard" (Westermarck 1933, 24). In Morocco people with an uncanny look, deep-set eyes, and eyebrows which come together over the bridge of the nose are suspected of evil eye. Suspicion of evil eye is amplified when these eye characteristics are accompanied by words of praise. While compliments in the United States are thought to encourage, among Muslims "admiration of something good readily recalls its opposite" (Westermarck 1933, 25). One is jealous of that which he compliments and is likely to use malevolent power against it. According to the Muslim Mishkat, the prophet Muhammad was a great believer in evil eye. He said, "If there were anything in the world which would overcome fate, it would be an evil eye" (Zwemer 1920, 170).

The power of evil eye is countered in various ways. The easiest way is to avoid exposure. For this reason many women in the Muslim world are veiled and secluded. The Moroccan bride is traditionally taken to her new home in a box or cage to avoid contact with evil eye (Westermarck 1933, 26-58). Evil eye is also countered by distraction. A beautiful gourd is placed in the middle of a luscious field to absorb the power of evil eye and save the field. If the gourd breaks, the owner recognizes it as the power of evil eye. Or a blemish is placed on the forehead of a handsome baby so that one with evil eye will not jealously harm it. The curse is also used against those with the power of evil eye. A folk Muslim points all fingers of his right hand toward the possessor of evil eye and says, "Five in your eye," thus reflecting the power of the evil eye back to the one emitting it (Westermarck 1933, 27-28). Amulets and charms are also used to protect people and objects from evil eye. Muslims use an image of hands and a drawing of a pair of

eyes as amulets to counter evil eye. The famous Hand of Fatima combines these symbols by placing an eye in the palm of an outstretched hand (Burnett 1988, 151-152).

Although prevalent in India, evil eye is most frequently considered a minor malady which affects only people who are in fragile states of existence. Little children, pregnant women, and brides and grooms are especially susceptible. If evil eye is thought to have harmed older children, a family might dress a boy in girl's clothes, give him an unattractive name, or do something to blemish him. Hiebert tells of being asked to photograph a friend and his son. He was surprised to hear that his friend had a son and equally astonished to learn that the boy had been dressed as a girl so that he would not be touched by the power of evil eye (Hiebert 1983). Food receiving glances of the evil eye cannot be digested. Believers in such powers of the evil eye eat alone. Visitors arriving at mealtime are told, "Wait a little. We are still eating" (Hiebert 1983).

Evil eye is also practiced in some Western contexts. Michael Buonanno describes two categories of victims of evil eye among Italian-Americans in and around Buffalo, New York (Buonanno 1989, 239-246). The first category is people in transitional states of life: the unbaptized child, the preadolescent, and the bride and groom. As shown by the following illustration, these beliefs, prevalent in various parts of Italy, were brought by immigrants from their home country.

> The finding of godparents proved a difficult problem to the Maturo family during the depression following 1929. Successive births made it increasingly difficult to find friends or relatives willing to take this responsibility in a large family, especially in one on relief. When the last baby was eight weeks old and no godparents had been found, the situation became the talk of the neighborhood. The unbaptized child was a direct invitation to the Evil Eye. It was therefore loaded with amulets, and its father borrowed a large set of cowhorns from a butcher cousin to nail over the door inside his home.
>
> The child developed a slight cold. Its parents in desperation let it be known that the baby was dying of pneumonia . . . a young brother of the father and the boy's fiancee came forward and permitted the baptism to take place in proper form. The baby rapidly grew better, and the parents announced that its recovery was due to the beneficial effects of the ceremony. (Williams 1969, 75)

Because the child had been "`separated' from his mother's womb, but not `incorporated' into the Christian community" (Buonanno 1989, 241), he was understood to be very susceptible to evil eye. The second category of victims is people making the transition from Italian to American society. However, there is a basic similarity between these two categories. Like the unbaptized child, the immigrant is between statuses. He has been separated from the womb of his motherland yet not acculturated into the new society. Buonanno thus attempts to prove that the ambiguity of the immigrant's condition provides an atmosphere conducive to evil eye.

Buonanno vividly describes how Lucia, an Italian Comare ("Godmother") divines and cures evil eye:

> Lucia traces a cross in olive oil on the foreheads of both her patient and herself. She again dips her finger into the tin of oil and carefully shakes three drops into a dishpan of water. For each drop she offers the cross. "*In nome del Padre e del Figlio e dello Spirito Santo*." If the oil beads the illness is of the mundane sort, but if it slicks the illness is the result of envy and a cure must be effected. Nine times Lucia recites the *Ave Maria*.
>
> Hail Mary full of grace
> the Lord is with thee
> Blessed art thou among women

and blessed is the fruit of thy womb,
Jesus.

Holy Mary
Mother of God
pray for us sinners
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

> With each recitation she shakes a drop of oil into the water. With her ninth recitation she adds an incantation, the purpose of which is to chase away the envy. (1989, 243)

These cultural depictions of evil eye demonstrate that evil eye is a widely held belief in the world, that the fear of evil eye forces many to find means to counter it, and that those most susceptible are people in transitions of life. Christians have no need to fear evil eye because they are confident that "the eye of the Lord is upon them" (Ps. 33:18). They rather proclaim deliverance from all fear because of the reality of God's sovereignty.

Missiological Implications

The Source of Impersonal Spiritual Power

The animist views impersonal forces as having a power of their own which can be controlled by ingenious rituals and religious paraphernalia. The Christian, on the other hand, might say there are no impersonal spiritual powers. All such powers--whether benevolent, used for both good and evil, or malevolent--have their origins in personal spiritual beings. Behind all these "impersonal" powers, he believes, stand personalized sources. Consequently, release from impersonal powers demands defeat of Satan, the source of evil powers, and his legion of angels. Fighting the forces of impersonal spiritual power is battling Satan himself.

Human Response When Magic Fails

The animist looks at his world functionally. He is always seeking the right magic to remedy his immediate problem. When magic fails, the animist does not automatically question the system. Rather, he may reason that the wrong paraphernalia or medicines were used while the magical rituals were being performed. Perhaps he might determine that the rituals themselves were wrongfully employed. A contemporary parallel is the Western view of medicine. Westerners do not question the validity of medicine just because one drug fails to effect a cure. They go back to the doctor to seek another medicine which might cure the illness. Likewise, the animist does not reject magic because one type fails; he seeks a new type of magic or a new implementation of ritual using his old magic.

The Christian evangelist must realize that at least two things will likely have to occur before an animist will reject his magic and consider an alternative way of looking at the world. First, he must conclude that his old system of looking at the world does not appear to be working or is not based on true presuppositions. Perhaps his magic continuously fails or he realizes that the continual use of the magic only leads to greater bondage. Secondly, the positive proclamation of an alternative worldview challenges his animistic perspectives, and he sees demonstration of this new worldview in his life. Turner describes how a Christo-pagan Chontal Indian of Mexico came to question and reject his magical worldview:

> I wondered about the ritual customs . . . and had them performed for my animals . . . Six months after we had performed the customs, I got up early one morning to look for my female burro. I couldn't find her anywhere. She had gotten loose by herself and had wandered off. Then I heard an animal down below making a sound like a hog. The animal was

running and I thought it must be one of my hogs. When I got down to where the animal was, I saw it was my burro, laid out with her stomach all swollen up. When my dad saw the burro, he said right away that someone caused her to get sick. . . . After she died, I did a lot of thinking. I had done everything I was supposed to do.

Then a friend of mine had gone to Mexico City and had found out about another religion. He gave me some hymns. But I didn't want to follow this new religion. I didn't know whether there was anything to it or not. I felt that I couldn't follow it because I still had animals and I was afraid that they might die . . . but after my burro died I began to have doubts. Maybe there wasn't anything to our customs.

Then about three days later I tied my little burro to a tree and when I got up early the next morning he was dead. He had choked himself on his lasso and when I saw him the rope was around his neck and passed over his stomach between his legs. I had tied this burro up before, so he knew what it was to be tied.

As soon as I saw how he had died, I realized that this had been done by the devil. The devil himself had choked my burro. Now both of my burros were dead.

As soon as that happened to me, I stopped doing the customs. I stopped going to church. I stopped burning candles. I stopped saying prayers. I saw that the whole thing was false. I had tried it. I did what you were supposed to do and it didn't work. To this day I haven't done any more customs. Instead, I follow this other religion. (1984, 116)

God and Impersonal Spiritual Power

God by his very nature is a personal God. He created humans to live in communion with him. He is the God who walks in the garden calling out to fallen humankind to come to him. His continual use of prophets testifies to his desire to relate personally with humans. God in the person of his Son became involved in human life through the incarnation of Christ. His indwelling Spirit testifies that God continues to live in this world and indwell his people. All use of impersonal power stands in opposition to God who is a personal being.

The Bible testifies that God in Christ is in charge of this world. All things were created to live in relation to Christ, and all fullness must dwell in him (Col. 1:15-23). However, when magic is employed, humans are forcing deity to act rather than allowing deity to act through them. Magic reduces God from an enthroned Lord to a human servant.

The Bible, therefore, continuously stands in opposition to the use of impersonal spiritual power. Magical practitioners in the Old Testament were not allowed to live (Exod. 22:18). In the New Testament Paul struck blind an opposing sorcerer (Acts 13:6-12), and Peter forcefully taught a converted sorcerer to seek a relationship with God instead of picturing the gifts of God as the source of some power which might be employed by human practitioners (Acts 8:9-25). The true God is one who cannot be manipulated, coerced, or forced for he is the source of all power. Therefore, the use of impersonal spiritual power is a negation of the ultimate power of God in Christ.

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Chapter 10
Personal Spiritual Beings

Topics in Chapter:

Undergirding Principles Concerning Personal Spiritual Beings Types of Personal Spiritual Beings	Perspectives of Relating to Spiritual Beings

His glassy eyes, torn ragged clothes, and matted hair were outward signs of inward demonic control. With demented voice he cried, "I'm going to kill this animal." Adrenalin surged through the veins of the missionary. He urgently desired to confront these demons. He thought of the words of Jesus, "I have given you authority . . . to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you" (Luke 10:19). However, he hesitated thinking, "What if nothing happens? All the people gathered would ridicule me." He stepped back into the crowd to watch from a distance. The demoniac, sensing his fear, threw off the stranglehold of those gripping him and rushed to confront the missionary face to face. The missionary later confessed, "There I was--a defeated missionary in the interior of Brazil, ready to pack up and go home. When face to face with the enemy I was afraid. Who had told me how to deal with demons?" (Lewis 1973, 203-204)

How inadequate Western missionaries are in dealing with personal spiritual powers! Because their heritage is conditioned by secularism and empiricism, Western missionaries frequently discount the existence of personal spiritual beings, ascribing them to the realm of fiction. The spiritually besieged are drugged, institutionalized, and kept out of sight. While some theologians discount the validity of the demonic by assigning demons to myth and demythologizing this aspect of the scriptures, others acknowledge that they once existed but for some reason have ceased to exist. Missionaries conditioned by secular culture are ill-prepared to impact animistic cultures where malevolent personal beings are prevalent.

This chapter seeks to help the missionary by providing understandings of personal spiritual beings. Animistic societies view unseen spiritual personalities as pervading the world. Some societies recognize few personal spiritual beings while others visualize multitudes. In some societies gods, spirits, and ancestors have definite stratified positions; in others the relationships between these powers is hazy and ill-defined. While in the previous chapter impersonal unseen powers were discussed, this chapter classifies and documents various types of personal spiritual powers who hold peoples' allegiance in animistic contexts.

Undergirding Principles Concerning Personal Spiritual Beings

Several presuppositions ascribed to animistic peoples underlie the animist's belief in personal spiritual beings (Hiebert 1978, 14). Understanding these concepts--animation, metamorphosis, possession--will aid the missionary in analyzing the nature of personal spiritual powers.

Animation

Animation is the general conception that personal spiritual beings can influence and possess parts of nature, animals, or humans. This perspective is fundamental to the animist, who conceives of the world as a living organism animated by spiritual powers.

Spirits are frequently thought to animate objects of nature, giving them a type of personhood. Such "nature spirits" animate physical features (mountains, rivers, sun, and moon) and physical manifestations (thunder and lightning). The Israelites adopted the pagan customs around them and delighted in sacred oaks (Isa. 2:29). They worshipped idols "on every high hill and on all the mountaintops, under every spreading tree and every leafy oak" (Ezek. 6:13). The deuteronomic literature designates that such places of nature worship must be destroyed (Deut. 12:2-3). Sacrifices to God must not be initiated at these places lest the sacrifices to God take upon themselves pagan

significance (Deut. 12:5-7, 11-14). Such beliefs are also present in various tribal societies. The Kimbu of Tanzania believe marshlands are inhabited by "water spirits" (Shorter 1985, 175-186). The Tanzanian Sukuma believe that spirits infuse distinctive rock formations. Shamans construct their houses nearby in order to use power emanating from the rocks. Traditional Kambas of Kenya believe that baobab trees are animated by spirits. Today such beliefs in the personhood of objects are disappearing in the face of technological advances. The bulldozer, which destroys sacred trees and displaces holy rocks in order to build a government road, provides a shock to the animistic belief of nature animation. When humans use technology to control nature, the animist's perspective toward nature spirits is frequently shattered.

Spirits are also understood to animate animals. In European folklore witches entered cats at night in order to accomplish their malevolent deeds. The fear of "a black cat crossing one's path" is a remnant of this animistic superstition. In Africa hyenas are frequently thought to possess spirits of the dead (since they eat dead bodies) or to be the incarnation of malevolent spiritual practitioners. Therefore these animals are greatly feared. In the gospels the evil spirits which were cast out of the Geresene demoniac asked to be allowed to go into a herd of swine rather than be thrown into the abyss (Luke 8:26-35). This belief that spirits animate animals is found in many areas of the world.

Humans are thought to be animated by spirits in varying degrees ranging from inspiration to possession. Christians believe that the Spirit of infinite God indwells finite humans. Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* describe heroes empowered by Greek gods. In the New Age Movement practitioners are thought to channel ancestral and astral spirits, who invade a human body and use it to communicate with the living. In Brazilian Spiritism mediums are possessed by spirits who ride them like horses (*cavalos*) as they divine solutions to human problems. Many animistic beliefs are based upon the presupposition that humans are in some way animated by personal spiritual beings, perhaps even to the extent of possession.

Metamorphosis

Metamorphosis is the transforming of life into other forms by magic or sorcery. As a cocoon changes its outward form and becomes a butterfly, so spirits are believed to change from one form to another. A certain *mutsai* (witch) among the Giriama of Kenya is known for his ability to escape capture from the police or from those wishing to kill him by changing into a baby, a dog, or whatever form might best facilitate his escape (Talley 1988, 13). Reflecting the Voodoo perceptions of his country, Dr. Francois Duvalier, President of Haiti from 1957 to 1971, ordered the wholesale slaughter of dogs after hearing that a traitorous guard of the famous Tonton Macontes had escaped prison by turning himself into a dog (*Newsweek* 1986, 54-55). The newspapers of Cote d'Ivoire in West Africa at various times vividly describe revenants, ancestral spirits who come back in the form of other people (Baggett 1988, 2). Among the Nuer of South Sudan, people struck by lightning are thought to be metamorphosed into powerful spirits, called *colwic*, who stand between the great spirit Kwoth and humans (Evans-Pritchard 1956, 52-62).

All societies seem to believe that human spirits are immortalized at death. This is the most prevalent metamorphic belief in the world. One study indicates that among Zulus of South Africa, 69.6 percent of all Christians and 88.6 percent of all non-Christians affirm that ancestral spirits "accompany a person to protect him and bring him good fortune" (Congdon 1985, 297). Confucian beliefs of filial respect lead many Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese to emphasize ancestral veneration. Christians in these contexts are frequently looked upon as those who do not respect elders since they do not venerate their recently deceased ancestors. Thus the phrase "Die without people mourning" has become a derogatory designation of Christians in Taiwan (Hung 1983, 39).

The animist's view that spirits can change into other forms makes his world both unpredictable and dangerous. He fearfully seeks to discover what types of spirits are at work around him. Are they benevolent or malevolent? Can some malevolent spirit be induced to become benevolent or is the spirit intrinsically malevolent? What various forms is the spirit taking? When does a spirit or practitioner change forms?

Possession

The animist who believes that the world is animated with personal beings and that these beings are metamorphosed into different forms will likely deduce that stronger spirits possess weaker spirits and that divining spirits possess mediums. Such possession is defined as the invasion of a being by foreign spirits for the purpose of coercion, healing, or divining. In this invasion the person's spirit is submerged and the foreign spirit is allowed to speak through him.

From a Christian perspective possession is the ultimate grip of the satanic on the human soul. While faithful Christians are harassed and tempted by Satan, those who overtly align themselves with Satanic forces come directly under their power. The anthropologist Noel King writes: "It is better not to believe in spirits than to dabble with them . . . or try to use them. Without proper precautions, supervision, and instruction, they are dangerous to humans" (1986, 65). Grayson Ensign and Edward Howe give an example of a Christian who naively dabbled in a satanic cult and became possessed while participating in rituals in which a blood sacrifice was made to Lucifer (1984, 22).

Creator God is never understood as possessing humans. God is above such manipulative acts. He desires the allegiance of those who are in charge of their own mental and physical faculties. God, as pictured in the scriptures, indwells rather than possesses. Prophets, under inspiration, seldom lost their own free will but communicated the inspired message in terms of their own language and culture. Christians, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, control their own faculties as demonstrated by the exhortation to flee from sexual immorality (1 Cor. 6:18-20). God does not manipulatively control his disciples but relates with them in a way that they maintain their own free will.

However, all other types of personal spiritual beings--high spirits (gods), low spirits, and ancestors--are understood to possess humans (King 1986, 61-63). The high spirits of West Africa, frequently organized into pantheons, possess their human representatives in order to divine the cause of evil (Mitchell 1977, 27). Among the Kimbu of Tanzania water spirits were understood both to cause illness and to possess mediums to help in divination (Shorter 1985, 175-186). Practitioners of the Egungun society among the Yoruba of Nigeria become possessed by spirits of ancestors during certain festivals (Mitchell 1977, 6). Dr. Francois Duvalier appeared to the Haitians to be a possessed man. He wore black, took on a whispery voice, and developed the slow-motion movements of one close to the spirit world. Many Haitians considered him the embodiment of the deceased Baron Samedi (Cooper 1986, 27). These illustrate how fundamental possession is to understanding the role of personal spiritual beings.

Types of Personal Spiritual Beings

Spiritual beings may be categorized either according to their power, greatness, and closeness to humankind or according to their moral intent in relation to people.

The first type of taxonomy distinguishes between great gods and lesser spirits (Sahlins 1968, 103). While great gods have no geographic boundaries, lesser spirits are limited to specific localities. The great gods are too powerful to be manipulated by human control; lesser spirits are controlled by magic and paraphernalia. While gods are worshipped, lesser spirits are manipulated and controlled by the animist. The worship of gods (or God) and belief in lesser spirits coexist in most animistic cultures. For example, the Kimbu of southwestern Tanzania believe in creator God but also acknowledge ancestors and nature spirits. While God is distant, ancestors and spirits are ever present. Water spirits are frequently thought to possess mediums to divine problems of the living. Unlike God, these water spirits may be manipulated and coerced (Shorter 1985, 175-178).

The second category classifies spiritual beings according to their moral intent. They can be either benevolent, some malevolent, depending on their disposition at any particular time. This section will be organized according to this taxonomy. While studying the moral intent of spiritual powers, distinctions between the great gods and the lesser spirits will also be described.

Religious terminologies describing spiritual beings are dynamic and changing. Within a given context there may be disagreement concerning the meaning of emic terms. For example, there has been much debate about the term *jok* among the Langi and Acholi people of Uganda. Some researchers claim that jok is a broad, inclusive term ranging from fate, to spiritual beings, to God. Others insist that the Langi and Acholi have no traditional name for God;

rather, *jok* is a spirit, possibly malevolent and frequently impersonal, which is present in natural phenomena and decides fate (P'Bitek 1971, 41-58; Russell 1966, 4-6).

While realizing widely differing conceptions of spiritual powers and differences of usages within given contexts, the missionary is greatly helped by studying a general taxonomy of personal spiritual powers. He learns how to recognize the types of spiritual beings in various contexts, how people manipulate or relate to these spiritual beings, and how to communicate the sovereignty of God in contexts where allegiances to other beings exist.

Benevolent Spiritual Beings

The disposition of many spiritual beings--God, angels, saints, and totemic spirits--is benevolent toward humans. These benevolent beings will be studied on a continuum from most powerful to least powerful.

God. Animists view God in different ways. He is understood to be (1) a distant, unapproachable Creator; (2) the Supreme Being who reflects his nature in lower spiritual beings; or (3) the impersonal power that permeates all of nature. In each case the biblical view of God, the Creator who desires a personal, intimate relationship with his creation, is lost. Determining the relationship between God and lower spiritual beings is vital to the missionary in understanding the animistic context.

The Creator who Is considered distant and unapproachable. Most frequently God is understood in animistic contexts as the all-powerful creator who is remote and withdrawn. God created the world and then left it to its own devices and is, therefore, "too exalted to be concerned with the affairs of men" (Burnett 1988, 36-37). Since God is considered distant, unapproachable, and exalted, spirits closer to the realm of the living are appealed to by animistic people. The Filipino, therefore, calls upon lower spiritual beings to handle the mundane affairs of life (Henry 1986, 21; Sitory 1969, 61). These may be saints, ancestors and ghosts, or other non-human spirits. In some African contexts non-human spirits and ancestors are frequently appealed to as the listening spirits since God is not concerned with everyday human affairs. Among the Kipsigis Asis, the Creator, is traditionally described as che bo kelyek sogol, "the one who has nine legs." The rays of the sun are thought to be the nine legs of God impacting the earth. However, the traditional Kipsigis are more concerned about ancestral spirits, called, oik, who are understood to be more intimately involved in their lives. These worldviews show a disconnectedness between God and the lower spirits: they operate autonomous of God's sovereignty and independent of his morals and ethics.

The Supreme Being whose nature is reflected through lower spiritual beings. Other animists believe that God's disposition and desires are reflected through lower spiritual beings. Idowu, the West African theologian, says that in every African context "ultimacy is . . . accorded to God" and calls this permeation of God's influence through intermediaries "diffused monotheism" (1973, 135-136). He vehemently rejects perceptions that the African God is distant and untouchable. Olodumare, the Supreme Being of the Yoruban pantheon, is pictured as a king who operates through subordinate gods, called *orishas*. These *orishas* derive their power from Olodumare as demonstrated by the saying: "Every festival is the king's festival" (Idowu 1973, 136). The Nuer of Sudan perceive the presence of the supreme spirit Kwoth everywhere: "He sees and hears all that happens, and he can be angry and can love" (Evans-Pritchard 1956, 7). Kwoth's closeness to humankind is shown by Nuer invocations. He is invoked as "God who is in this village," or "God who is in this home" and called "God of the shrine" (Evans-Pritchard 1956, 114). Although the Nuer do not have a pantheon of gods like the Yoruba, they do believe that certain spirits are instruments of God. God is thought of as "the father of the greater spirits of the air, and the lesser of them are said to be children of his sons, of his lineage" (Evans-Pritchard 1956, 119). These spirits are the "refractions" of God on the earth. Various kinds of spirits are considered distinct manifestations of Kwoth each having differing degrees of importance (Evans-Pritchard 1956, 116-117). In a similar way God is understood to operate through saints in Christo-pagan Catholicism. According to this cosmology, God works through lower spiritual beings who reflect his nature.

The Impersonal Power that permeates all of nature. Animistic conceptions which have been conditioned by Eastern mysticism project God as intuitive in every person and part of the entire cosmos. These pantheistic conceptions reject God as a transcendent, all-powerful personality. This is expressed with the New Age epithet "We are gods." If god can be within us, our purpose, according to New Age analyst Theodore Roszak, is "to awaken to the god who

sleeps at the root of the human being" (1977, 225; Groothuis 1986, 21). "Kneel to your own self. Honor and worship your own being," Swami Muktananda says. "God dwells within you as You!" (Hunt 1980, 106; Groothuis 1986, 21). And Shirley MacLaine--in the television extravaganza "Out on a Limb"--could cry with arms outstretched over the Pacific Ocean, "I am God." Groothuis summarizes these pantheistic perceptions when he writes, "Whether it comes from Eastern religions such as Hinduism--'Atman is Brahman' (the individual self is really the universal Self)--or from classical occultism--'as above, so below' (God and humanity are one)--or from the self-actualizing psychologies--all knowledge, power and truth are within and waiting to be unlocked--the New Age raises the placard of pantheism high: you are god!" (1986, 21-22)

The pantheistic perception of God is actually a rejection of God as a personal spiritual being. God is reduced to an impersonal "it." In fact, New Agers equate Universal Life Energies (discussed in Chapter 9) with God. He might also be called a force, consciousness, principle, essence, or ultimate reality. The result is a negation of God as a personal spiritual being. Supplicative prayer to a personal God is reduced to meditative monologue (not dialogue) with the god within (Groothuis 1988, 107-108). Morality is no longer absolute because there is no divine perfection with which to measure human imperfection.

In contrast to these animistic views of God, the God of the Bible is a personal God who desires the total allegiance of his people. From the very creation of the world he has personally interacted with his people by sending prophets, judges, and finally the Messiah to redeem and deliver his people. He is stirred to jealousy when his followers worship other gods. In the Song of Moses, God is described as the rock of our salvation who becomes jealous when other rocks are worshipped (Deut. 32:4, 15-18, 21, 31, 39). The kingdoms of North Israel and Judah were both carried away into captivity because they forsook their God and served gods who were no-gods (2 Kgs. 17:14-18; Jer. 17:1-4).

When communicating the gospel in animistic contexts, the Christian evangelist must establish God's sovereignty and describe his nature. Only then will the message of the work of God in Christ become comprehensible. After the people of Lystra wrongly understood Barnabas and Paul to be Zeus and Hermes, they proclaimed the living, creator God, who continues to testify to his nature by giving rain, crops, food, and joy (Acts 14:8-18). Paul's heart was provoked when he saw idols to pagan gods in Athens, where numerous personal spiritual powers were being worshipped. Paul began his sermon in this animistic context by defining the nature of the all-powerful, living, creator God (Acts 17:22-31). In contexts where numerous personal spiritual beings are known to exist, Christian communication must begin by proclaiming the sovereignty and eminence of Creator God.

Angels. Angels, found in religions of a Judeo-Christian tradition, are a second type of benevolent spiritual beings. They serve as both emissaries of God and ministers to human beings (Heb. 1:14). An angel provided Elijah with food and drink when he was fleeing from Jezebel (1 Kgs. 19:1-9). As God's emissaries, they mediate his presence on earth either as agents of revelation or as executors of God's will. The angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah (Luke 1:11-20) and to Mary (Luke 1:26-37) to tell of the impending births of John the Baptist and Jesus. Samson's mother also heard from an angel that she would soon bear a son (Judg. 13:3-5). Gideon was told by an angel that he was to save Israel from Midian. When Gideon asked for a sign that the Lord was speaking to him, the angel caused Gideon's offering of meat and bread to be consumed by a fire (Judg. 6:11-23). Gabriel visited Daniel to explain messages and visions (Dan. 8:16ff.). An angel delivered the apostles from jail (Acts 5:17-20). Angels are of the host of heaven whom God judges (Ps. 82). As servants and messengers of God, they are not to be worshipped (Rev. 19:10) but to reflect the nature of God, whom they serve. Their presence reflects God's activity in the human realm.

***Saints*.** Saints are understood to have been elevated at death into heavenly realms. Because of meritorious living or power-laden existence on earth, they have been given power to intercede for sinners, provide merit for successful endeavors, and heal the sick. Veneration of saints is especially prevalent among Christo-pagan Catholics and folk Muslims.

Veneration of saints in Christian churches had early origins. When Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, was martyred around 157 B.C., his followers decided to hold a yearly celebration of his martyrdom. As early as the end of the third century, saints were being appealed to as intercessors (Crim 1981g, 641). In the Eastern Orthodox church icons of saints were venerated. These images were understood as "vehicles of the presence of their subjects" (Crim 1981d,

336). Healing power was elicited by touching or praying to the image. In the Roman church relics of the saints were considered objects of veneration. The remains of saints or any object believed to have been in contact with them were considered items conveying their power. Frequently the eucharist was observed and churches built over the tombs of saints (Crim 1981e, 610). During the Middle Ages saint veneration was significant in European churches of Catholic and Eastern traditions.

Throughout the centuries the church has had differing perspectives toward saints. Some theologians sought to counter idolatrous practices by distinguishing between "worshipping" (latreia) God and "honoring" (douleia) saints. Saints were never to be "worshipped" but only "honored" (Thorne 1978, 872). To guard against false claims of sainthood the Roman Catholic church in 993 A.D. initiated a canonization process for determining who was a saint. However, the entire process of canonizing saints was loudly decried by early Protestant reformers. They vehemently objected to the sale of magical relics, equated the invocation of the saints with prayer, and believed that Catholics treated saints as gods (Ferguson, Wright, and Packer 1978, 609). Such veneration, they claimed, was a negation of Christ, the sole mediator between God and humans (1 Tim. 2:5).

Veneration of saints, although not as overt and prevalent as during the Middle Ages, is still widely practiced in Roman and Orthodox Catholic contexts. For example, thirty years ago Charlene Richard, a typical twelve-year-old girl in southern Louisiana, suffered courageously while dying of leukemia. According to Catholic priest Joseph Brenan, "She died in excruciating pain, but in perfect grace." From the time of her death those who believed in her sanctity began to pray to her for healing. When Paul Oliver's one-year-old daughter was diagnosed as having an incurable cancer of the larynx, he went to Charlene's grave and prayed for healing. His daughter is presently (in 1990) a nineteen-year-old junior at the University of Southeastern Louisiana. While Catholic priest Floyd Caliais was chaplain at a state hospital in Lafayette, he prayed to Charlene asking her "to inspire the bishop to assign him a parish." He was soon appointed pastor of the church where the girl was buried. Today there is a box beside her grave for petitions from those desiring healing. In August 1989, an estimated 4,000 attended an evening mass in her honor with many arriving as early as noon. Thousands of Louisiana Catholics would like to see her canonized as a saint (*Abilene Reporter-News*, August 13, 1989, 22A).

Recently I taught the gospel to Charles Guma, a 28-year-old Ugandan art major studying at Abilene Christian University. Raised as a Roman Catholic, Charles believed Catholic martyrs who had been canonized as saints served as intercessors between God and humans. He conceived that Kalori Lwanga, a Ugandan martyr killed when Kabaka Mwanga executed Christian converts in the late 19th century, was the saint through whom he had access to God. While we were studying the Bible together, he was shocked to hear the words of Christ, "No one comes to the father except through me" (John 14:6). After comparing his belief in the intercession of saints to the biblical conception of the sole mediumship of Jesus Christ, Charles with joy accepted Christ as his Lord and Savior and was baptized into Jesus Christ.

Folk Muslims, as well as Catholics, venerate saints. Sufi *pirs* are respected as men of great *baraka*, which is thought to increase at death. When a *pir* dies, he is thought to be mystically united with Allah and transformed into a saint *(wali)* with increased *baraka*. This mystical union called an *ur* ("marriage") is celebrated annually in order for disciples to obtain baraka from their departed saint. Shrines are established at the place of the pirs' burial, especially in North Africa. The faithful visit these shrines regularly to receive *baraka* from the saints. Although the saint has died and is buried, his devotees believe that he is able to hear their prayers, heal their illnesses by imparting *baraka*, and intercede on their behalf before God (Parshall 1983, 87-88).

Baraka may be obtained in two ways. First, a sympathetic relationship is established between the worshipper and his saint. The worshipper may leave a lock of hair or a piece of clothing attached to or near the saint's tomb. He may also kiss the tomb or buy a *baraka*-laden relic of the saint. Second, *baraka* may be obtained through ritual acts, such as sacrifices. Such rituals force the saint to bless his client. Prayers are offered directly to the saint because of his proximity to God. Thus, the saint in folk Islam is frequently considered "an intermediary of *baraka*, which has its source in God" (Barth 1982, 3).

There is a significant contrast between worship in the mosque and worship at the tombs. In the mosque worship is characterized by great dignity and respect for Allah. Worship is highly ritualized with no singing or talking. Worship

at the tomb is highly emotional. Disciples express their inner feelings of devotion for their saint with singing, dancing, sermonizing, and ritual recitation of the names and attributes of God (Parshall 1983, 87-88).

Totemic Spirits. In many tribal societies kinship groupings and individuals have totems which are thought to mystically provide them with benevolent aid. These totems are animals, plants, or physical features which are affinally linked with particular kinship groupings and individuals. Totemic spirits are typically not as powerful as other spirits. The Nuer call them "spirits of the below" as contrasted to more powerful "spirits of the above" (Evans-Pritchard 1956, 63-77). Rituals determine how people treat their totems; and the totems in turn empower, heal, or guide their human counterparts. Kipsigis traditionalists of the Kapkaon clan feel a mystic affinity with the lion. A member of this clan who is forced to fight believes that he takes upon himself the courage of the lion. His angry declaration "I am of my lion" (*A bo ng'etunnyon*) tells those around that he is ready to fight. Such totemic beliefs presuppose a worldview in which parts of the physical world are affinally linked together and are mutually beneficial. A corporate life, a mystical link, is thought to exist between totems and their human counterparts. Human souls are thought to merge with the world rather than to stand over the world controlling it.

Tribes, clans, and lineages, and individuals may have their distinctive totems. Many ethnic groups of West Africa have tribal totems: the duiker, a small antelope, is the totem of the Ga; the buffalo of the Akwamu; and the leopard of the Fon (Burnett 1988, 73). Among the Nuer of Sudan clans and lineages are distinguished by differing totems. Sacrifices are made to totems and cows dedicated to them (Evans-Pritchard 1956, 63-77). The crocodile is the totem of the Cany lineage. Sacrifices are made to these totemic spirits by pouring milk from cows dedicated to crocodile spirits into a crocodile-infested stream. Lineage members carry the name of this totem, calling themselves *nya nyanga*, "daughter of the crocodile." If one of this lineage kills a crocodile or eats its flesh, he may beget a deformed child with arms resembling crocodile legs. Those of this lineage are thought to be able to wade through crocodile-infested waters without fear (Evans-Pritchard 1956, 66-67). The gourd is the totem of the Gaatgankir, the largest clan of the Nuer. Members of this clan will neither step over the stems of gourds nor cut and prepare them for use as utensils (Evans-Pritchard 1956, 72). The Juak clan "respect" rivers and streams. Their ancestors are said to have come out of the lagoon. Before crossing a river, a clan member tosses a bead into the water as an offering and asks the river spirit to grant him a safe crossing (Evans-Pritchard 1956, 73). Thus animals, plants, and physical features all serve as totems to Nuer lineages and clans. Among the Loma of Liberia individuals have their own distinctive totems. Their emic word for totem is derived from a root word meaning "thing at the back of a man," demonstrating how it "accompanies a person to guide and help" (Burnett 1988, 74). Thus a swift runner is thought to have a leopard as his totem, a fertile woman having many children is thought to have a banana (plantain) totem, and a wealthy man having malevolent powers a snake totem (Burnett 1988, 74-75).

These beliefs in totemic spirits have developed in many ways (Evans-Pritchard 1956, 84-87). The most frequent explanation of totemic development among the Nuer is twin births: a person and an animal are born at the same time, and they in some way resemble each other. Sometimes a human and his totem are thought to have been conceived in the same stomach so that all of their descendants have an affinal relationship. At other times a person is saved by an animal or plant during a time of trouble and begins to look upon this savior as a totem. While people of the Gangni lineage were dying of thirst on a journey, they spotted a monitor lizard. They followed it intending to kill it. The lizard, however, led them to life-saving water. Since that time the Gangni lineage has respected the lizard as its totem (Evans-Pritchard 1956, 66). A person may also be thought to be seized by the totemic spirit of some animal and afterward respect it as his totem.

Among the Kipsigis belief in totemic linkage serves two cultural functions. First, exogamous customs require Kipsigis to marry outside their clan. Elders discussing the marriage of their children first ask, "What is the animal of your clan?" If they are found to be of the same totem, cultural taboos forbid their marriage. Thus a man of the Kapkaon clan cannot marry a woman whose totem is the lion, for such a relationship would be incestuous. When a Christian man and woman of the same clan eloped, the entire community condemned the relationship as incestuous. They vehemently declared that the marriage could not continue without spiritual repercussions. Second, clan members take collective responsibility when homicides occur. When a clan member is killed, restitution must be made to the clan or revenge will be taken. When a clan member commits murder, all clan members are expected to help pay restitution.

Belief in the mystical linkage between people and totems has significantly waned. Recently a Kipsigis whose totem was the elephant was travelling with friends through the Mau Forest, home of many elephants. Although his fellow-travellers acknowledged their deep fear of elephants, the man of the elephant totem confidently assured himself: "They cannot kill me. We are of one kind." When elephants appeared, his fellow-travellers climbed up trees to escape, but he was killed by the elephants. A Kipsigis interpretation was: "If he had faith like Kipsigis of olden times, he would not have been killed." In a world of increasing education and urbanization animistic belief in nature spirits has tended to decrease while other types of Animism, such as spirit-possession and astrology, have simultaneously tended to increase.

This section has discussed benevolent spiritual beings--God, angels, saints, and totemic spirits. However, most spiritual beings are not so hospitable toward humanity.

Ambivalent Spiritual Beings

The disposition of other spiritual beings, classified as gods and spirits on the one hand and ancestors and ghosts on the other, may be either malevolent or benevolent depending on the relationship of humans to the spiritual beings and the feelings of these beings to human activity. In most contexts the greatest number of personal spiritual beings fall into this category. Although ancestors are typically understood not to be as powerful as gods and spirits, they are closer to the living than any other spiritual being because they have just passed from life to death. Ancestor veneration is prevalent in areas where filial respect is given to elders (especially among Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese) and in rural contexts where myths transmit the heritage of the fathers to their children (especially in homogeneous tribal societies). As people migrate into urban centers, where there are fewer ties to ancestral lands and heritages, animistic beliefs are frequently reformulated to give more credence to spirits and gods and less to ancestors and ghosts.

Gods and Spirits. Gods and spirits, as contrasted to ghosts and ancestors, are transempirical beings who have always existed in spirit form and have never been humans. Gods are those higher spiritual beings who have been elevated into a hierarchical position under creator God. These deities may either partially project God's nature or reflect the ambivalent nature of human beings--doing good or evil depending on their dispositions and desires. Spirits, as contrasted to gods, are non-human beings diffused into the lower realms, who may have little more strength than ancestors. While gods may be worshipped as sovereign beings, spirits are almost always manipulated by magic.

Gods and Spirits of Africa. Many West African societies have pantheons of higher gods who rule over specific realms as well as lower, more diffused spirits. The higher gods frequently serve particular roles in a structured pantheon and are frequently associated with natural phenomena. For example, traditional Yoruba of Nigeria recognize a pantheon of gods under Olodumare, the supreme being who is viewed as a king with subordinates under him. His chief subordinate is Obatala, who gives riches or poverty, strength or deformity. Other subordinate gods are Shango, the god of thunder; Orisha-oko, the goddess of the farm; Ogun, the god of both war and iron; Shopona, the god of smallpox, boils, and other skin eruptions; and Eshu, the power of mischief (Mitchell 1977, 26). Idowu suggests that because these gods are understood to be emissaries of Olodumare and receive their power from him, the Yoruban religious system should be understood as a type of diffused monotheism rather than polytheism (1973, 148). Ray objects to this perspective perceiving the Yoruban god as a distant, inactive creator with lower gods considered active (1976, 52-55).

In contrast to these West African spirits and gods, spiritual beings in East Africa are generally more distant from God, are seldom organized into well-defined pantheons, and are not typically related to facets of nature. While many West African high gods are "worshipped" because of their elevation and nearness to God and lower spirits are coerced by magic, almost all spirits in East Africa are "manipulated and controlled" by the magic of human practitioners.

West African deities and East African spirits can be contrasted by other characteristics. Some West African gods are frequently worshipped by people of certain occupations. For example, traditional Yoruban blacksmiths naturally worship Ogun, the god of iron. Festivals to honor the gods and receive blessings from them occur on a regular basis. Worship is very overt and sacrifices to the gods apparent to outsiders. Frequently gods call people to worship them

by causing sickness. A diviner might attribute an illness to a specific god and designate the rites to perform in order to satisfy the divinity. Practitioners in West Africa are frequently possessed by the spirit of their god in order to divine for the common person (Mitchell 1977, 26). In East Africa, on the other hand, few spirits or gods are publicly worshipped. Only during times of catastrophe, especially during extreme illness, are spirits propitiated under the direction of diviners, who determine what spirit is bothering a person and what must be done to appease the spirit. Appeasement of spirits, therefore, is a private affair carried out by an individual or family under the direction of a diviner. Although in some cases divination is carried out while a person is under possession, East African shamans typically divine by technique. Thus the gods and spirits of Africa cannot be easily grouped into neat, etic classifications.

Gods and Spirits of India. In no geographic area are there more gods and spirits than in the subcontinent of India. A study of this subcontinent clearly reveals the difference between high gods and lesser spirits. The dominant gods of the Hindu pantheon are Brahma, the creator; Vishnu, the preserver; and Shiva, the destroyer. Vishnu, the god who preserves and maintains life, incarnates himself periodically as an *avatar* to reveal truth to the world. The most venerated of these *avatars* are Krishna and Rama (Kennedy 1984, 33, 86, 198). Although considered by pure Hindus as illusions in a transient world, these gods are popularly worshipped and venerated by the masses of India. The lesser spirits are frequently grouped under the broad term *bhut*. Although originally meaning "the spirit of the dead," the term *bhut* has developed into a broad classification referring to a wide range of lower spirits. Thus various types of lesser spirits are categorized as *bhut*. These include *pret*, the spirits of the dead between the time of death and the termination of burial ceremonies; *rakshasa*, a demon always hostile to humankind; *pari*, benevolent female spirits; *sayyid*, extremely malevolent martyr spirits; and *jogini*, malevolent nature spirits who inhabit mountaintops, waterfalls, and wooded areas. People fearfully protect themselves from malevolent lesser spirits and seek the help of benevolent ones while worshipping the greater gods (McClintock 1990, 38-46). While the religious Hindu will categorize all these gods and spirits as pure illusion, the masses of India fearfully worship, appease, and manipulate myriads of spiritual beings.

Gods and Spirits of Ancient Greece and Rome. The ancient Greeks deified nature and created a pantheon of gods with specific functions in nature. Greatest of these were Zeus, the god of the sky and considered the father of gods and men, and his wife, Hera, the patroness and guardian of marriages (Guthrie 1950, 66). Under Zeus and Hera were gods with particular roles and areas of control. Poseidon ruled the sea; Aphrodite held the power of love; Artemis was the goddess of wild nature; and Athene dispensed wisdom and skills. In addition to these, there were gods of rivers, springs, trees, fruit, and forests (Parrinder 1971, 147-149). Ancient Romans also had their pantheon of gods. Dominating the pantheon was Jupiter, the "Best and Greatest." His queen was Juno, the power of femininity. Gods controlled all aspects of Roman life. Mars was the god of war; Mercury was the god of merchants; Hercules insured success in practical affairs; Apollo was a god of healing; and Fortuna was a power of fertility (Parrinder 1971, 164-165). No area of life was left unprotected by some god. Over a period of time Greek and Roman gods became almost interchangeable: Zeus was identified with Jupiter, Hera with Juno, Neptune with Poseidon, and Artemis with Diana.

Gods and Spirits of Brazil. Although Brazil is officially a Catholic nation, it has been called "the land where spirits thrive" (Maust 1985, 48). In fact, more Brazilians participate in spiritistic rituals than go to mass (Nielson 1988, 94). Spiritism is a new religion derived both consciously and unconsciously from marriage among many different streams of Brazilian thought and culture. Early Portugese settlers, while nominally Catholic, were highly animistic. Their worship "centered on a cult of the saints, promises, communications with the dead . . . largely to the exclusion of doctrinal matters and the sacraments" (Bruneau 1982, 24). Religious reforms which touched other parts of the European continent had little influence upon Christo-pagan Catholicism of Portugal. African slaves added another element to Brazilian spiritism. Although the slaves were forced to outwardly embrace Catholicism, the gods that they brought from Africa were intertwined with this new religion. Their feeling was that if their African gods could not help in a certain situation, maybe the other deities could be induced to act. In time the West African gods became interchangeable with Catholic deities. Olodumare, the supreme Yoruban god, was transformed into Jehovah. The name of Obatala, Olodumare's chief subordinate also known as Orixala among the Yorubas, was shortened in Brazil to Oxala and became Jesus Christ. Shango, the Yoruban god of thunder, had the spelling of his name changed to Xango and became the personification of John the Baptist and St. Jerome. Other West African gods also experienced a name change and were merged into the same categories as Catholic deities (St. Clair 1971, 62). This African heritage is reflected in Condomble, the form of Spiritism most prevalent in the Brazilian state of Bahia.

Some animistic practices, which are disappearing on the African continent as people accept Islam and Christianity, have become institutionalized in Condomble. Condomble spiritism has become more African than Africa. Brazilian Spiritism was also influenced by the writings of Denizard Rivail, a French doctor who claimed to be the reincarnation of the Druid Allan Kardec. A high class Spiritism, called Kardecism and characterized by "reincarnation, seances, healings, and enough Christian terminology to confuse people" (Maust 1985, 49), developed from this French influence upon Brazil. Finally, Brazilian Spiritism was also influenced by the animistic beliefs of indigenous Indians.

This merging of Catholic, African, French, and Indian streams of Animism has led to distinctive contemporary forms of Spiritism in Brazil. For example, Umbanda, the largest of the Spiritist groups, has effectively syncretized animistic belief in spiritual beings to fit the Brazilian context. Zelio de Moraes, Umbanda's founder, divined solutions to people's problems while possessed by the spirit of a Brazilian half-breed named Caboclo of the Seven Crossroads. Caboclo was half-Indian and half-African. Because of his mixed breeding, he communicated directly with the local Indian spirits who once inhabited the land and the African spirits of Condomble. Brazilians understood this mixing of blood. Caboclo was one of them. As a half-breed, he could understand their nation and their problems. Caboclo told Zelio that neither Kardecism nor Condomble was right. Caboclo began to dictate a new set of rules incorporating parts of Kardecism, Condomble, and Catholicism with other distinctive elements into a new whole (St. Clair 1971, 136-137). Like Caboclo and the nation of Brazil, Umbanda seeks to unify a people of miscegenation.

Spiritism, whatever its distinctive form, is based on the belief that humans can contact spirits and influence them to act on their behalf. Hundreds of believers come to spiritist centers to seek guidance from spirit-gods. During an *orunko* ceremony, the spirit-gods come down and "ride" the mediums, who are considered the *cavalos* ("horses") of the spirit-gods. Through the mediums these gods divine solutions to all types of human problems: A woman estranged from her lover seeks the cause of the disrupted relationship and the course of action to bring reconciliation; the sick yearn to know what has caused the illness and how health can be restored; and the businessman seeks the reason his business has fallen apart and how it might be rejuvenated.

Condomble, Kardecism, and Umbanda are distinct contextualizations of animistic beliefs drawn from various cultural streams. Christians, however, classify these pagan gods as the demonic dressed up in contemporary garments.

Spirits of the Islamic World. Before the days of Muhammad and the formulation of orthodox Islam, belief in spiritual beings called *jinn* was prevalent in Arabic culture. *Jinn* were understood to be created beings who were lower than angels but higher than humans, and who were usually malevolent but occasionally benevolent. The Qur'an, which makes numerous statements about *jinn*, says that they were created of smokeless fire even before Adam's creation (Sura LV:14). Muhammad was sent to preach to them as well as to humans (Zwemer 1920, 125). With the spread of Islam belief in *jinn* permeated all cultures where Islam took root.

Muslims believe that *jinn* make their presence known by causing illness, especially convulsions, epileptic seizures, fits of madness, and epidemics like cholera and smallpox. Some people are more apt than others to be affected by *jinn*. Newborn babies and their mothers and the newly married are very susceptible. Because of their close association with blood, which is always "haunted," butchers are also in danger of being affected by jinn (Westermarck 1933, 6-7). A person who is angry or frightened is susceptible to the deeds of *jinn*. Therefore, to awaken a sleeping person suddenly is dangerous. He must be awakened gently by touching his little finger and saying, "God be praised" (Westermarck 1933, 7). Because they are especially fond of darkness, *jinn* are numerous at night. Most people stay at home after sunset to avoid coming into contact with roving *jinn* (Zwemer 1920, 144). If one stumbles in the dark, he is thought to have stepped on jinn (Westermarck 1933, 6). *Jinn* frequently disguise themselves as animals, especially cats, dogs, or snakes. Muslims would never hurt a cat at night because they cannot be sure that it is not actually a *jinn*. Since *jinn* also disguise themselves as dogs, it is considered dangerous to throw a rock at a dog (Westermarck 1933, 6).

Although most *jinn* are thought to be malevolent, some are summoned to help humans with specific problems. *Jinn* may help to discover the identity of a thief, look into the future and give advice concerning an upcoming event, gain news about absent friends, or aid in practicing witchcraft. These benevolent *jinn* are few and are largely ignored

because it is considered more important to appease the malevolent *jinn* than to honor the benevolent ones (Zwemer 1920, 143).

Men have learned to protect themselves somewhat from malevolent *jinn*. In Egypt and Morocco propitiation is made to *jinn* by leaving food for them at sunset. Oil and meal are thrown into a corner of a new house to appease the *jinn* who are already inhabiting it. Knives and daggers are placed under the pillows of the sick to guard against the *jinn* (Zwemer 1920, 130). Because *jinn* are terrified of light, candles are kept burning where there are newborn babies and their mothers. *Jinns*' fear of gunpowder has led to the custom of constantly firing guns at Moorish country weddings. The most powerful prophylactic against *jinn*, however, is holy words or passages from the Qur'an. Even those *jinn* who have no fear of light or gunpowder flee at the sound of sacred words (Westermarck 1933, 9).

Gods and Spirits in Biblical Perspective. From a biblical perspective God is supreme over all spiritual forces, and subordinate deities have no power or rule except as he grants. Christians, however, object to the worship of these lower gods because glory and honor, elements of praise given to these gods, should be reserved only for creator God. Since these gods are petitioned in times of trouble, true God, who rightfully deserves all praise, becomes jealous. False gods are usurping the position of sovereign God.

The Bible does not negate the reality of these gods and spirits. Throughout the Old Testament there is continual encounter between Yahweh, the God of Israel, and the gods of the nations, the Baals, and Astoreths. Although these spirits may appear benevolent by providing fertility of field and family, the source of their power is of another realm. A synonymous parallelism of the Song of Moses equates "demons which are not God" with "gods who have recently appeared" (Deut. 32:17). Although these gods are no-gods in that their essence is not of God, demons stand behind these symbols of alienation. Sacrifices offered to the idols of gods are in reality offered to demons (1 Cor. 10:20). The gods and spirits of this world are thus symbols camouflaging the sovereignty and control of the demonic realm. They, therefore, must be treated as enemies of the cross and encountered both by proclaiming the reality of the sovereignty of God in Christ (truth encounter) and by confronting their power with the awesome power of God (power encounter).

Ancestors and Ghosts. The terms *ancestors* and *ghosts* indicate spiritual beings who once lived in human form (Burnett 1988, 58). They may be contrasted to spirits or lesser gods who have never existed as humans. Because ancestors are considered partly human and partly spirit, they are described as "the living dead" by John Mbiti, an African theologian (1969, 83). They are feared, respected, and venerated because they are specifically remembered and are part of the extended family. Ghosts, on the other hand, are those spirits of the dead who are disappearing into the past and are no longer individually remembered by their families.

Almost all peoples of the world have concluded that there is some type of continuity between the living and the dead. This is evidenced by Filipinos, who in large numbers visit cemeteries on All Souls' Day to bring food to the grave sites of ancestors. They frequently spend the whole day and part of the night with departed family members. These ancestors are understood to be intermediaries between God and the living (Henry 1986, 13, 8). Ninety-eight percent of all Chinese on Taiwan zealously venerate ancestors. Hung reports that ancestor veneration is the great stumbling block hindering the Chinese from coming to Christ (1983, 32). From an African perspective ancestors are the closest links of people with the spirit world; Africans believe that ghosts pervade their world and cause various kinds of sickness. The African theologian Idowu contends that even the Westerner holds this view, "Modern sophisticated man may wish . . . to dismiss as puerile stories of experiences of ghosts and of haunted places; but deep down in the minds of thousands of men and women of every level of spiritual or intellectual attainment is the . . . persistent notion, that the deceased still have a part to play, for better or for worse, in the lives of the living" (1973, 178). Because of this propensity to believe in the continuity of the dead, animists are generally more concerned with ancestors and ghosts than with any other type of spiritual being.

A linkage is assumed between the living and the dead. Ancestors are understood to continue their existence as spirits after death and have power over the living. Alexis Kagame's epigram succinctly states the African perspective: "The living man is happier than the departed because he is alive. But the departed are more powerful" (Taylor 1963, 148). The Kipsigis of Kenya say "*Igimitu ng'atutietab chito ne kigome*" (The command of one who has died is strengthened.). For example, before one Kipsigis Christian died, he adopted the Western custom of making out a will. Many Christians questioned the wisdom of taking such an action. They reasoned that if the wife and sons were

not able to carry out the very difficult commands, many in the village would attribute any future illness in the family to the deceased's impatience with their disobedience. Kipsigis believe that it is easier to make amends with the living than with the dead.

Ancestors and ghosts may be either benevolent or malevolent toward the living. Ancestors, still part of the family but freed from the restrictions of the physical world, have greater power than the living and can influence the lives of their earthly descendants. The power of parents to bless or curse children for deeds or misdeeds is reflected by ancestors who continue to bless and curse their family from the other side of death (Idowu 1973, 148-150; Burnett 1988, 61). Ancestors are generally seen as the guardians of family affairs, traditions, ethics, and activities. Besides these benevolent manifestations, ancestors are also anxious to be remembered and work havoc on all those who either forget them or disobey their wishes. The living, therefore, are careful to show respect for ancestors. The Ga of Ghana pour a small portion of food or drink on the ground as an offering to the ancestors (Field 1961, 196). The Chinese show respect for ancestors by fastidiously caring for their graves. Problems in the family are thought to originate with the ancestor who feels he has not been given proper respect (Burnett 1988, 64). Ghosts are more generally considered to be malevolent since they are not intimately related to the living.

The ancestors who create the most fear in the hearts of people are those who pass away with a grievance in their heart, succumb unexpectedly, or die with great wealth. The Nuer believe that it is "a most serious matter if a man dies with a legitimate grievance in his heart" and believe that "injustice cries out from the grave" (Evans-Pritchard, 1956, 173-176). Ancestors are resentful of injustice and seek to avenge a wrong done to them while they were still living. Because of past problems, making peace with the dead is often impossible. Sometimes those who die suddenly do not realize that they have passed into the spiritual realm. St. Clair tells of Kardec spiritists of Brazil who helped inform a spirit of the dead that he had suddenly died and could now depart from the land of the living (St. Clair 1971, 107-110). Radin similarly describes a Winnebago warrior who died in battle but did not realize that he had died. When he entered his house and his wife and children did not see him or hear his voice, he realized that he had been killed. He then returned to the battlefield to see his body and verify his disembodied state (1957, 115). Filipinos believe that a person must be "at peace before he can go on to heaven." The spirit of one who died in a tragic accident or one who died very young must be appeased because a lingering spirit haunts the living. To appease an ancestor, masses (or movennas) are frequently held on the anniversary of his death (Henry 1986, 13). In India those who die abnormally, do not have children, or have much wealth might stay around longer than other ghosts (Hiebert 1983). These who have died are thus envious of the living. None of these people were ready to die and, therefore, are thought to leave the realm of the living only by coersion or appeasement.

Ancestors and ghosts communicate with the living overtly through dreams and possession and indirectly through illness. John Beattie tells of a Banyoro man in Uganda whose deceased father warned him in a dream that a neighbor was using sorcery against him. The next morning the man searched for and found the horn that had been used in the sorcery and burned it. The neighbor, whose sorcery had come back upon him by the burning of the fetish, died two days later (1967, 257). Among the Kipsigis of Kenya an ancestral spirit appeared to a diviner in a dream. He revealed that he was killing his brother's sheep and goats because the living brother continued to dislike him. The diviner was informed that the brother must sprinkle his animals with milk, sacrifice one to the displeased ancestor, and pray to Asis. When the living brother came to the diviner to determine the reason for his calamities, the diviner was prepared to relay the ancestor's demands (Orchardson 1961, 139-140). Sometimes a human is possessed by the spirit of ancestor who has been offended. In such a case, a diviner must determine which ancestor is making his power felt in this way, how he was offended, and how he can be appeased (Taylor 1963, 150). Often Africans view illness as caused by an ancestor who has been neglected or who is calling attention to a breach of social ethic on the part of the ill person (Taylor 1963, 150).

In contexts where ancestors are venerated, Christian theologians vary in their perception concerning communion with the dead. For example, the continuity of filial respect once one's father and mother have died is perhaps the greatest theological debate in Asia. Chinese Christians are typically expected to participate in Buddhist and Taoist burial rites which venerate the deceased. Despite the impact of Western ideas, increasing urbanity, industrial expansion, "emerging values and goals . . . remain consistent with traditional Chinese values" (Smith 1989, 28). One writer states, "One of the puzzles of Hong Kong is that it is so Westernized on the surface and so stubbornly Chinese underneath" (Agassi and Jarvie 1969, 156-157). Many of the incense and food offerings are understood to provide for the needs of the ancestors in the world beyond. Christians typically do not participate in these sacrifices. When

Daniel Hung became a Christian, his mother told him, "Fortunately, I have six other sons to offer food sacrifices to me after I die" (Hung 1983, 33). Christians who forsake these offerings are frequently accused of breaking the fifth commandment, "Honor your father and your mother." Thus on New Year's Day, 1971, Catholic Cardinal Yu Ping of Taiwan declared that ancestor worship was "not idolatry but in accordance with God's will, the fifth commandment" (Hung 1983, 34).

Henry Smith advocates a "contextualized" strategy wherein Chinese Christians accommodate these traditional practices, reinterpret them by presenting a Christian conception of the afterlife, and innovate new forms within the Chinese context (Smith 1989, 27-38). He superimposes over Chinese culture the distinction between the religious and the secular by looking at ancestral rites as social customs which have lost their religious underpinnings. Nowhere in his article does he deal with the core issue of the sovereignty of God in the context of other sovereignties. In the name of contextualization he provides a syncretized gospel where Christians venerate the ancestors while they worship God. Daniel Hung, a cultural insider, provides a more biblical model of contextualization while maintaining his sensitivity for his people's heritage. He believes that Christians can respect ancestors by sweeping their graves, holding memorial services on the anniversary of their deaths, displaying their pictures in the living room, and wailing while making such statements as "Lord, guide so-and-so to heaven safely and into [your] bosom" (1983, 35, 39). However, Christians must not participate in any ancestral rites of veneration: They must not offer incense, make sacrifices, or pray to the dead (Hung 1983, 36). Such idolatrous worship disrupts a Christian's relationship with Christ, "in whom all the fullness of deity lives in bodily form" (Col. 3:9).

The role of ancestors is also widely discussed among African theologians. The African innately believes that the dead are still present in spirit form. Thus forsaking the dead is understood to be equivalent to mistreating the living. Mbiti brings these traditional beliefs into contemporary Christianity. He believes that communion with the dead is not the worship of ancestors. His beliefs are capsulized by David Hesselgrave: "Mbiti . . . insists that the phenomenon which Westerners have called 'ancestor worship' is not really worship at all. The acts of giving food and drink to ancestral spirits are symbols of communion, fellowship and remembrance. To fail to remember the dead in this way is, in effect, to excommunicate them and deprive them of that which is needful for another existence. But to remember is not to deify them" (1978, 152).

Other African theologians, building on Mbiti's foundations, have elevated the ancestors to the position of mediators between God and humans, equivalent to the position of saints in certain Catholic theologies. Muzorewa writes, "The ancestor becomes a saint, charged by God with the responsibility of insuring the welfare of the people of his own tribe" (1983, 36-37). In this intercessory role the ancestor is considered the agent through whom God works to save the people; ancestors become "the way to the Father!" (Musorewa 1983, 36-37). Muzorewa arrives at this conclusion based on the understanding that the Christian faith and African beliefs must be "synchronized in a way that does not jeopardize African existence" (1983, 37-38). However, such theological formulations allow ancestors to usurp the intercessory role of Christ (1 Tim. 2:5) and displace him as the fullness of all deity (Col. 2:9).

Thus the attempt of African and Asian theologians to show continuity between the living and the dead reflects their cultural bias. These theologians must remember the biblical injunction against the living consulting the dead (Deut. 18:11; Isa. 8:19). The pervasive, all-sufficiency of God in scripture negates any mediating and divining roles that might be assigned to ancestors. The Christian, while respecting those who have gone before him, must never venerate or worship them; he must give total allegiance to sovereign God.

Malevolent Spiritual Beings

The disposition of other spiritual beings, especially Satan and demons, is malevolent toward humans. Satan is frequently considered king over a malevolent realm, the lord of forces hostile to Creator God. In such a hierarchical system demons are viewed as the malicious messengers of Satan. When there is no such hierarchy, demons are understood to serve their own malevolent purposes.

Satan. Christians and Muslims regard Satan as the sovereign lord of the demonic realm. The Bible shows Satan as a distinct, malevolent personality who has opposed the work of God "from the beginning" (1 John 3:8). The terms Satan ("the adversary") and Devil ("the slanderer") are used interchangeably as the malevolent being "who leads the

whole world astray" (Rev. 12:9). His control over the unbeliever is described by the title "the ruler of this world" (John 12:13; 14:30; 16:11). As the ruler of the world, he is "the god of this age" who blinds the unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the gospel (2 Cor. 4:4), "the prince of the kingdom of the air" who works in the disobedient (Eph. 2:2), and "the tempter" who causes new Christians to fall away from their relationship with God (1 Thess. 3:5). He is a "real" being, not a mere projection of evil upon a spiritual personality and thus a creation of the human mind (Wink 1986, 26-30).

Although the Old Testament references to Satan are few, they reflect his activities as a tempter desiring to bring about the fall of humankind: Satan enticed Eve to commit the first sin (Gen. 3:1-5), tempted Job to forsake God (Job 1:6-2:10), incited David to number the people (1 Chr. 21:1), and stood before the Lord accusing Joshua, Israel's high priest (Zech. 3:1-2). Although Satan's relationship with God may be dynamic and changing, the scriptures picture Satan throughout history as the arch-enemy of God.

The New Testament depicts Satan as the great tempter, hostile to God, and working to overthrow divine purposes. Satan severely tempted the incarnate Messiah to change the purpose and direction of his earthly ministry (Matt. 4:1-17; Luke 4:1-13). He entered the heart of Judas (John 13:2) and desired to have Peter so that he might sift him as wheat (Luke 22:31). Paul feared that the Thessalonians might fall from the way of God because of the enticements of the great tempter (1 Thess. 3:5). As "the deceiver of the whole world" (Rev. 12:9), Satan constantly lays snares to make people his captives (1 Tim. 3:7; 2 Tim. 2:26). The great deceiver frequently "masquerades as an angel of light" to entice the unwary to follow him. This deception is reflected in his followers who pretend to be "servants of righteousness (2 Cor. 11:14-15). His aggression against humanity is depicted by the imagery of a prowling lion seeking to devour all those who do not resist him (1 Pet. 5:8). Christians can only stand against such awesome power with the might of the Lord of Hosts. They must understand that the One in them "is greater than the one who is in the world" (1 John 4:4)! They must not glory in their own power and might but in the indwelling power of God who uses them as his earthen vessels.

In Islam Satan (Shaitan) is pictured as the fallen angel who tempted Adam and was subsequently thrown from heaven for his disobedience (Qur'an Sura 2:34-38). As the one estranged from God, he became the "personification of evil" (Crim 1981e, 657). The Qur'an says that he will preside over hell until judgment day (Sura 15:30-44) yet implies that he may one day be redeemed (Sura 14:38).

Umbanda, the flourishing spiritist religion of Brazil, has a hierarchical line of evil spirits with Exu as the supreme devil. Exu, a term derived from Eshu, the god of mischief among the Yoruba, is equated with the Catholic Lucifer. Spiritists petition Exu and his followers when they desire to "cross the path" of an enemy, that is, make everything go wrong. Quimbanda is the Brazilian term used for these Satanic rituals and beliefs to capriously bring harm upon others. Because Exu is thought to be too distant and constantly involved in fighting Oxala (Jesus Christ) he is seldom petitioned directly; his subordinates, however, are frequently called upon to grant requests (St. Clair 1971, 173).

Many tribal peoples of the world have no concept of Satan. Evil, rather than emanating from one malevolent being, is attributed to many spiritual beings, understood to be morally ambivalent. The concept of Satan has typically been introduced by Christian or Muslim influences. For example, Christian missionaries introduced the concept of Satan to the Kipsigis people of Kenya. When Western linguists worked with Kipsigis to first translate the Kipsigis Bible, the concept of "Satan" was erroneously translated as oindet, the singular of oik, meaning "ancestral spirits." To the Kipsigis consultants, who had not yet grasped a biblical cosmology, this translation was logical because they viewed ancestral spirits as always malevolent, and no other malevolent spirits were thought to exist. Today the Kipsigis typically substitute setaniot ("Satan") for oindent when orally reading the Bible.

Although Satan is the sovereign of the malevolent realm, under him are a host of demons seeking to carry out his will. Satan must always be studied in relation to his underlings.

Demons. Demons, the second type of malevolent spiritual beings, are pictured in the scriptures as the servants of Satan. They are graphically portrayed in John's Apocalypse as evil spirits looking like frogs which spew from the mouth of the satanic trinity--the great dragon representing Satan, the beast depicting the emperor who promotes

Satan's cause, and the false prophet delineating the priests of the emperor cult (Rev. 16:12-14; McDowell 1951, 160). Demons, when loosed by Satan, the star which has fallen from heaven to earth, are pictured as locusts which swarm in droves from the depths of the abyss to harass all those who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. Their king, the sovereign ruler of the demonic realm, is called "Destroyer" in both the Hebrew and Greek languages (Rev. 9:1-11). Demons, therefore, carry out the Devil's schemes (Eph. 6:11-12) and are part of the kingdom of Satan (Matt. 12:25-28).

Although the word for demon is seldom used in the Old Testament, demons are seen in different forms. Demons of the Old Testament dressed themselves up in the garb of gods. Perhaps they had been angels set up by God to care for the nations, but being desirous of their own praise, they rejected the sovereignty of God and set up their own kingdoms (Deut. 32:8; cf. Caird 1967, 48-49; Wink 1984, 26-35). However, these gods were in reality demons. The Song of Moses relates that the Israelites "sacrificed to demons, which are not God--gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your fathers did not fear" (Deut. 32:17). Child sacrifices made to pagan gods were in reality made to demons (Ps. 106:36). However, demons masquerading as gods are still demons.

Sometimes the false gods of one age become the demons of another. In Greek culture the word *daimon* at one point was used interchangeably with *theos* but over a period of time grew to mean malevolent beings (Ferguson 1984, 36-59). The *asuras* of India were gods in ancient Vedic Hinduism but became powerful malevolent beings ultimately defeated by the *avatars* of Vishnu in more recent Hindu mythology (Crim 1981b, 214). However, from a biblical perspective followers of God have always placed demons into one category: They are of the realm of Satan carrying out his wishes. It should not amaze the Christian that the gods eventually show their true colors and are seen to be what they really are--demons.

Although other world cultures give various names and attributes to demons, they are universally thought to cause misfortune. In India *raksasas* are considered malevolent beings who attack people in order to cause misery, drive them mad, and finally possess them. However, unlike the beliefs of Christians and Muslims, these evil spirits have no malevolent ruler (Crim 1981b, 214). Bolivian tin miners pay homage to Tio, the demon of the mines. Tio is thought to lead the miners to rich veins of ore and, when offended, cause the death of a miner. Miners seek to appease Tio in the *ch'alla* ceremony, when he is offered coca and alcohol and recognized as the true owner of the mine (Nash 1989, 258-263).

In Umbanda of Brazil a hierarchy of evil spirits exists under King Exu. One demonic spirit, named Exu of the Closed Paths, is called upon by devotees to "cross the paths" of enemies. Because of the evil designs of this powerful demonic spirit, businesses are made to fail, romantic endeavors go sour, marriages disintegrate, and sicknesses occur. Those fearing that these Quimbanda rites have been used against them will quite likely go to other Quimbanda practitioners to "uncross their paths" or acquiesce to the desires of those who have crossed their paths through the power of Exu. St. Clair tells of Helena, a widow who was being unjustly evicted from her home by her landlady. The landlady claimed that her son wanted to live in the house, but she actually wanted to rent the house to someone else for more money. Helena, having no legal recourse, invited St. Clair to go with her to perform Quimbanda rites to cross the path of the landowner. Helena petitioned Exu of the Closed Paths, gave to him the offerings that she felt he desired (the best sugar cane brew available and an expensive cigar!), lit candles in his honor, and laid a photocopy of the eviction notice in the midst of the burning candles. Within a few days the son of the landowner called Helena saying that she could stay in the house. Upon hearing the good news, St. Clair exclaimed, "Thank God!" to which Helena objected, "Thank God nothing! Thank Exu!" (1971, 159-163, 172-175). In a similar vein various Satanic cults in North America pray and offer sacrifices directly to Satan or other spirits in the Satanic hierarchy.

James Frazer describes the animist's pervasive fear of evil spirits:

They dog his footsteps, dazzle his senses, enter into him, harass and deceive and torment him in a thousand freakish and mischievous ways. The mishaps that befall him, the losses he sustains, the pains he has to endure, he commonly sets down, if not to the magic of his enemies, to the spite or anger or caprice of the spirits. Their constant presence wearies him, their sleepless malignity exasperates him; he longs with an unspeakable longing to be rid of them altogether, and from time to time, driven to bay, his patience utterly exhausted, he turns fiercely on his persecutors

and makes a desperate effort to chase the whole pack of them from the land, to clear the air of their swarming multitudes, that he may breathe more freely and go on his way unmolested, at least for a time. (1922, 633-634)

Such fear of demons and desire for deliverance create a readiness to hear the Christian proclamation of a loving and faithful Creator God who is not distant but the great I Am of all existence. Only benevolent Creator God can free those overwhelmed by demonic forces.

The Christian and the Diabolical Realm.

In Christ, God has invaded the domain of Satan to reclaim what has been alienated from him. God created the world to live in relationship with him. However, at some point created spiritual powers rebelled against God and began to draw people away from him. Perhaps they became jealous of the special relationship that the newly created beings on earth had with God. These powers invaded society to distort the laws, customs and traditions of people. Thus insidious sin infiltrated society, and dreaded death spread its tentacles everywhere. However, Christ came into the world for the express purpose of destroying the works of Satan (1 John 3:8), especially death, his ultimate tool (Heb. 2:14). He came to rescue the creation from the domain of darkness and bring them into his kingdom (Col. 1:13). This was accomplished on the cross when Christ disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public display of them (Col. 2:15).

However, the whole world continues to be in the hand of the evil one (1 John 4:4); only Christians have been freed from Satan's domain. They have been raised to sit with Christ in the heavenlies (Eph. 2:6) far above all the principalities and powers of Satan (Eph. 1:20-21). From this vantage point Christians can make effective war on Satanic forces. However, Christians must not underestimate their foe. They must rather put on the whole armor of God to fight effectively against the powers of Satan (Eph. 6:10-18). The ultimate victory of the kingdom of God is certain as depicted by the seventh angel who blew the final trumpet in the book of Revelation: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

This chapter has discussed various cultural concepts of spiritual beings according to their disposition toward human beings. Some spiritual beings--God, angels, saints, and totemic spirits--are considered benevolent. Some spiritual beings--lower gods and spirits on the one hand and ancestors and ghosts on the other--are considered either benevolent or malevolent depending on their current disposition. Other spiritual beings--Satan and demons--are always malevolent toward the living. Certain questions must now be asked about personal spiritual powers: How do humans relate to personal spiritual beings? Do these culturally defined beings reflect their actual nature? How does God perceive of these myriads of personal spiritual beings?

Perspectives of Relating to Spiritual Beings

Christians and animists relate to spiritual beings in different ways. Christians seek to relate personally to God giving all glory, honor, and praise to him. Animists, on the other hand, have little personal relationship with Creator God but seek rather to manipulate and coerce lower spiritual beings.

The Christian and Personal Spiritual Beings

According to the scriptures, God is unique among the spiritual beings of the world and therefore must be given undivided loyalty. The spiritual beings of the nations are considered as nothing before his incomparable being. Moses praises the distinctiveness of God in relation to the gods: "Who is like you among the gods, O Yahweh? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders? (Exod. 15:11). His attributes are unsurpassed by pagan gods: He is "the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin" (Exod. 34:6-7a). His holiness and greatness are a contrast to the moral ambivalence of lower gods (Ps. 77:13). His mighty acts in history show him to be the creator of the world, the deliverer of the oppressed, the righteous judge of the wicked, and the redeemer of humanity. He alone is deserving of glory, honor, and praise!

God is not distant; he desires an intimate, personal relationship with his followers. God is like a father who tenderly loves his son and does not want to give him up when he declares his allegiance to other gods (Hos. 11:1-11). He is like a faithful husband who devotedly loves his unfaithful wife even when she seeks other suitors (Hos. 1-14). He is like a husbandman who lovingly shapes and cultivates his vineyard (Isa. 5:1-7). He is like a physician who compassionately cares for his patient (Isa. 1:5-6; Matt. 9:12). Judeo-Christian religion involves a moment by moment, day by day, year by year personal relationship between God and his people--a communion of love between the eternal Creator and his living creation.

God has chosen to work through his son Jesus Christ. Christ came not only to carry the message of God as the incarnate Word of God (John 1:14) but also to become the message by dying on the cross (1 Cor. 15:1-4; Acts 2:22-24; Acts 17:2-3). The message taught by the early church was simply described as "preaching Jesus" (Acts 5:42; 8:8, 35; 11:20; 17:18). Because of reconciliation in his death, Christ became the only mediator between God and his people (1 Tim. 2:5). The only way to God is through Jesus Christ (John 14:6). Thus true Christians give full allegiance to Creator God and his son Jesus Christ. In the midst of a discussion of idol worship, Paul writes, "For us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live" (1 Cor. 8:6).

The great Christian response to Creator God is worship. He must be glorified as the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He must be praised as the deliverer and redeemer of his people. He must be acknowledged as the ever-working, ever-present "I Am." All praise should be given to Creator God, who delivers and saves, rather than to the undeserving gods of the nations:

> No one is like you, O Lord;
> you are great,
> and your name is mighty in power.
> Who should not revere you,
> O King of the nations?
> This is your due.
> Among all the wise men of the nations
> and all their kingdoms,
> there is no one like you (Jer. 10:6-7).

While God, the true king who wrathfully punishes the nations who follow other sovereignties, is everlasting, false gods will perish (Jer. 10:10-11). All followers of God must therefore "give thanks to the Lord, call on his name, [and] make known among the nations what he has done" (Isa. 12:4). The nature of God and his mighty acts call us to worship him.

While worship is the Christian response to Creator God, encounter is the Christian response to all spiritual beings who seek to usurp the place of God. Two types of encounter can be discerned.

The first type is the Christian encounter of the ideological system which stands behind the animist. This type of encounter provides the animist with a new paradigm through which he views reality. This encounter shockingly portrays to the animist that there is no such thing as a neutral spiritual power. Ambivalent spiritual powers who sometimes seem to act benevolently and at other times malevolently are in actuality messengers of Satan. Allegiance to any of these powers is ultimately an allegiance to a power other than God. God and Satan are confronting each other in a cosmic conflict. Myriads of demons are allied with the Prince of Darkness, and thousands of angels serve as helpers to the Prince of Peace. Such encounter assumes that God is not distant but mightily acts in his world; that other gods must never be worshipped or propitiated; that God in Christ has defeated the principalities and powers for all those who believe; and that followers of God must never appeal to lower spiritual beings to solve their immediate, everyday problems but must patiently wait on the Lord. This type of ideological encounter might be called *truth encounter*.

A second type of encounter calls the spiritual powers into account on the functional, everyday level of life. Overt confrontation takes place with the demonic and the demonic invasion of the laws, customs, and traditions of society. The altars of the gods are torn down to test their validity. Christians are exhorted to burn their fetishes and destroy their household gods. Personal spiritual beings are prayerfully confronted with the power of Jesus to heal those they have victimized. The laws, customs, and traditions which have been contorted by Satan are challenged and Christian alternatives given. This type of encounter is called *power encounter*.

Christians, then, are to live in awe of God giving to him glory, honor, and praise. They must at the same time encounter the demonic inroads of society whether personalized or institutionalized.

The Animist and Personal Spiritual Beings

Animists tend to follow whatever power, whether personal or impersonal, that works. Instead of patiently waiting for Creator God to work, animists impatiently seek whatever power might solve their immediate problems. They would never deny God but would seek other powers in addition to him. In Christian contexts such people are called Christo-pagans and in Muslim contexts folk Muslims. Such adherents simultaneously follow God and the gods of this world. They are like the people of Judah during the days of Jeremiah. They have turned their backs on God but not their faces; only when severe problems come which lower gods cannot resolve, do they return to God crying, "Come and save us!" (Jer. 2:27). Like the Samaritans, "they worshipped the Lord, but they also served their own gods in accordance with the customs of the nations" (2 Kgs. 17:33). Slowly these followers of God lost their relationship with Creator God as they went whoring after pagan gods.

Animists seldom seek to relate personally with Creator God. God is either understood to be distant, unconcerned about human events; to relate to humans through intermediaries; or to be pantheistically a part of nature. Animists, therefore, consider lower spiritual beings as closer to the living and more likely to hear human petitions. Since they lack the power and majesty of higher spirits, lower spirits are also manipulated and coerced by human ritual and magic. Thus while Christians have an intimate, personal relationship with God, animists impersonally relate to spiritual powers through coercion, ritual manipulation, and mystical union. While Christianity is relational, Animism is largely coercive and manipulative.

The words of the Martin Luther's song "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" depicts a Christian response to a world full of malevolent spiritual beings:

> And though this world, with demons filled,
> Should threaten to undo us,
> We will not fear, for God hath willed,
> His truth to triumph through us:
> The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
> His rage we can endure,
> For lo, his doom is sure;
> One little word shall fell him.

These words, although ancient, continue to have contemporary significance. By the power of God and the blood of Jesus Christ, the demonic hosts are being defeated.

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Conclusion
Sin and Salvation in Christianity and Animism

Topics in Chapter:

Concepts of Sin Concepts of Salvation	A Biblical Perception Toward Animistic Sin and Salvation Pointing the Animist to the Cross

I was preaching one of my first lessons in the Kipsigis language. "For *all* have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God," I proclaimed. To emphasize universal human sinfulness I asked, "How many of you have sinned?" All was quiet for a few moments. I could detect an uneasiness in the audience--a feeling of disagreement.

Finally the old man in whose house we were meeting responded, "I have not sinned!" (literally, "I have not done `*tengekto*'"). I was stunned! Adding insult to injury, all in the room, following the old man's lead, testified that they also had never sinned! I had preached this sermon in both English and Swahili in various East African contexts, and the audience had always responded, "We have all sinned."

Feeling confused and a little hurt that my lesson was not accepted, I asked, "What is sin (*tengekto*)?"

The old man, proud to assume the role of teacher, said, "*Tengekto* means four things. Stealing from a Kipsigis is *tengekto*."

"What about stealing from a Kisii or a Masai (other tribes in Kenya)?" I interjected.

He hesitated, knowing that I was not a Kipsigis and might not understand his logic. "We would not classify stealing from the Kisii or Masai as sin but as war," he sheepishly replied. I was puzzled. Did the Kipsigis believe that sin occurs only in their own cultural group?

"Killing a Kipsigis is also a *tengekto*," the old man continued.

"But killing a Kisii or a Masai is not *tengekto*?" I asked, testing my hypothesis.

He responded indignantly, "Of course not! That's also war! We sin against Kipsigis; we make war with the enemy." Pausing only briefly, he continued, "*Tengekto*" encompasses two other things: immorality and bewitching. Bewitching is the worst of sins because it is malevolently directed against the living."

"Sin is understood as an action in this context," I deduced. "And the same action may not be sin in a different situation."

New words! New categories! New definitions! What an eye-opener! I realized that all peoples have their own understanding of sin and corresponding beliefs of salvation from sin. Missionaries, as cultural outsiders, must emically understand the host culture's categories of sin and salvation before they can effectively communicate the Christian message.

I soon learned that the Kipsigis language has four distinct words for sin: (1) *lelutiet*, a broad, general category of faults which might easily be translated into English as "mistake"; (2) *kwekyenet*, willful, premeditated sin which one does even when he knows it is wrong (Heb. 10:26); (3) *sogornatet*, the most hideous types of sin, like incest and witchcraft (Used in 1 Cor. 5:13); and (4) *tengekto.*

Which of these was the church of Christ to use as the primary term for "sin" in Christian proclamation? *Lelutiet* was too general and lacked the strength to convict of guilt; to say that "people have made mistakes" would not lead to conversion. *Kwekyenet*, on the other hand, was too strong and *sogornatet* too specific. The only alternative was to use *tengekto* (or the synonymous term *chalwokto*) and broaden its meaning by re-definition and application. In recent years I have been able to use the above story as a starting point to broaden the indigenous meaning of "*tengekto*." This humorous story of an old pagan Kipsigis teaching a young American missionary enthralls the people because traditional meanings are clarified and contrasted to Christian meanings.

Concepts of Sin

As the story about sin in Kipsigis illustrates, concepts of sin are universal although the nature of offenses classified as sins varies from society to society. All people understand teachings about sin through the grid of their own religious categories. While in America it would be considered theft to pick fruit while passing through a neighbor's orchard, such a practice was permissible in ancient Israel. Allowing disinterested third parties to care for parents would be considered a grievous sin in Papua New Guinea, although such a practice is acceptable to Americans. To many Congolese a woman naked to the waist would not be considered immodest, but a missionary's wife with uncovered legs is judged to be seductive (Fortosis 1990, 165, 166). To some early Christians eating meats offered to idols was a sin because they could not eat such meat without giving allegiance to the gods who they believed stood behind the idols; others having greater knowledge of the sovereignty of God over all gods could rightly eat the meat without breaking their allegiance with God (1 Cor. 8:4-8). When the missionary enters a new context, he tends to project his own perspectives of sin onto his host culture assuming they conceptualize theft, filial respect, and modesty as he does. The recipient culture, in turn, interprets the missionary's teachings on sin through its distinctive cultural categories. The new missionary must humbly realize that neither his conception of sin nor that of the recipient culture perfectly reflects sin as God sees it.

Since conceptions of sin vary, the new missionary must enter his host culture as a learner. He must learn how people of his adopted culture understand sin and how they typically respond to it. As he is learning, he should compare these perceptions to his own cultural concepts and to those of the Bible. Hopefully, his sensitivity to the strengths and weaknesses of both his and the host culture's beliefs about sin will overcome any ethnocentric myopia which would distort his understandings. Only after learning emic conceptions of sin is the missionary able to adequately contextualize a relevant Christian message of sin and salvation (Dye 1976, 38).

Alan R. Tippett's ground-breaking work on Animism, *Solomon Islands Christianity*, first divided Melanesian conceptions of sin into three categories: (1) antisocial sins, (2) theological sins, and (3) extra-communal sins (1967, 16-19). Other missiologists have generalized this classificatory system of sin and applied it to all animistic contexts (Burnett 1988, 85-87). Paul Hiebert distinguished between social sins and theological sins, the organizational framework adopted in this section (1978, 23-24). All societies have sins which are socially and theologically derived. The relationship and overlapping of these categories determine how a culture understands sin and the strength of the concept within the culture.

Socially Defined Sins

Socially defined sins are violations of culturally defined norms and laws which destroy social harmony. These sins are offenses committed against individuals or groups within the culture rather than wrongs committed against gods and spirits. For example, among the Japanese the primary word for sin is *tsumi*, which conceptualizes a criminal caught in a net and is similar to the English "imprudent." The Japanese feel little moral guilt as a result of *tsumi*. They rather fear losing face when caught in some anti-social act, which creates social disharmony. Hesselgrave says that "this fear of being out of harmony with society and nature is very much a part of Japanese cultural understanding" (1978, 269). E. R. Dodds writes that such conceptions of sin were also prevalent among the ancient Greeks: "The strongest moral force which Homeric man knows is not the fear of God but respect for public opinion. . . . In such a society anything which exposes a man to the contempt or ridicule of his fellows, which causes him to `lose face', is felt as unbearable." (1951, 17-18)

John Taylor, in his ground-breaking work on African modes of thought, depicts the sin as "destruction"--"the attitude of heart and mind which destroys or spoils the life-force of another, and especially the life-force of the family group" (1963, 175). Africans believe that the wrongness of immorality is not in its sensuality but "in the fact that the dangerous intensity of the act is channelled against the proper structure of the family and becomes an attack against its members" (1963, 174). A husband's immorality thus endangers the fertility and well-being of his family, as David's escapade with Bethsheba led to disastrous social repercussions: The child born in iniquity died, and the sword did not leave his house (2 Sam. 12:10-14). The greatest social sin in animistic society is sorcery since someone in the community is covertly seeking to kill, maim, or destroy by ritual means. Socially defined sins can even become a part of Christianity when loyalty to church with an accompanying fear of social ostracism is emphasized over loyalty to God.

Socially defined sins are thus understood as anything which disrupts the cohesiveness of an ordered world causing disharmony. Such perspectives toward harmony and disharmony of an interrelated universe are prevalent in animistic contexts. Animists believe that humans must synchronize their actions with all forces controlling their world--whether it be the alignment of the stars, the actions of animals, other aspects of nature, or the flow of life energy defined as "god" by New Age practitioners. When disharmony occurs, rituals such as sacrifices and offerings must be performed to restore order in the universe.

Among many African and Asian peoples socially defined sins are infractions against not only those who are living but also those who have passed into the realm of the dead. Although dead, they are understood to be part of the extended family. Mbiti, the African theologian, writes: "What we call Sin has first and foremost to do with relationships in the community. In the African framework the community consists of the departed, the living and those yet to be born. Any breach which punctuates this communal relationship amounts to Sin, whatever words may be used for this concept." (Mbiti 1989, 4-5) Within this context sin is "a breach of the individual against the corporate community" (Mbiti 1989, 4-5). Chinese, with a Confucian heritage, are also likely to view ancestors as an intimate part of their social circle. Daniel Hung wrote, "To the Chinese, it is a great sin and an unforgivable breach of filial piety to fail to offer incense and food sacrifices periodically to the deceased ancestors" (1983, 32). Ancestors in such contexts are considered part of the social agenda (rather than the theological agenda). Thus when Baganda Christian leaders of Uganda were asked what a man could do to please God, an elder responded, "I have never heard a Christian here ask such a question. . . . [People's] fear is for this life, not the next" (Taylor 1963, 167).

Punishment for socially defined sins occurs in two ways. First, socio-religious leaders administer justice for the community and call for sacrifices if the infraction is against an ancestor. Among the Kipsigis the *kiptaiyat ab kokwet*, the village leader chosen by consensus, calls the men of the village together to discuss who has sinned and what restitution must be made to restore harmony in the community. The *kiptaiyat ab kokwet* has little official authority but works with the men of the community to mediate wrongs which have occurred. Shamans are contacted if the sin is thought to be related to the realm of the ancestors. Second, sins are understood to carry within themselves the seeds of destruction. The sinner is automatically destroyed by the sin which he has committed. A Kipsigis saying, "*Amech tengek*" ("Our sins are eating us"), succinctly communicates this conception. Some believers will go to great length to prove that this cultural conception is Christian. One evangelist used numerous Bible references (Obad. 1:15; Gal. 6:7-8; Rom. 6:23) to support his belief that sin itself has power to punish the transgressor. His maxim was, "If you do good, you do it to yourself; if you do bad, you do it to yourself." From this perspective the world is a self-contained system in which sins are autocratically punished.

When it is socially defined, sin is almost always morally relative and ambiguous, lacking the objective standards that accompany sin as defined by moral Creator God. This ambiguity is reflected by the same act (like stealing or murder among the Kipsigis) being considered sin in one context but not in another. Thus when the concept of sin was explained to a Zande youth of Zaire, he replied, "My heart has no eyes" (Blakeslee 1959, 28). If caught doing some antisocial act, he could feel shame but little guilt that the act was wrong in and of itself because a moral God sovereignly rules over the universe. A socially deduced sense of sin does not reflect heavenly ethics and morality.

Theologically Defined Sins

While socially defined sins are defined by culture, theologically defined sins are determined by spiritual beings. Theologically defined sins are offenses which disrupt human relationships with God, gods, and spirits. These

spiritual personalities, thought to be more powerful than humans, call their followers into accountability when sins disrupt the human/divine relationship. For example, when Yoruban blacksmiths of Nigeria forsake sacrifices to Ogun, the god of iron, they expect his retribution and punishment. Likewise, Creator God, who made a special covenant with Israel after delivering her from Egyptian captivity (Exod. 19), angrily decided to disown and destroy her when she rejected him by acknowledging a golden calf as the god who brought her out of Egypt (Exod. 32:1-8). Theologically defined sins thus create rifts in relationships between humanity and divinity.

The biblical concept of sin is primarily theological. Although David's sin with Bathsheba had significant social consequences, David recognized that his sin was primarily against God. In anguish he prayed to God, "Against you, only you, have I sinned" (Ps. 51:4). Paul was called by God to be an apostle in order to reconcile humanity to God (Acts 26:17-18).

Punishment for theological sins is not administered by human practitioners but by spiritual beings against whom the sins were committed. For example, when Achan kept for himself some of the plunder of Jericho, which was all to be dedicated to the Lord, God angrily allowed the small army of Ai to defeat her (Josh. 7:1-15). When Israel sinned by following other gods, Creator God gave his covenant people into the hands of the Assyrians (2 Kgs. 17:16-18) and Babylonians (Jer. 25:9).

In a discussion of theologically defined sins, a distinction must be made between sinning against lower gods and spirits and sinning against Creator God. Although a few higher gods are understood to reflect the nature of supreme God, most gods and spirits are almost always morally ambivalent; their benevolence or malevolence depends upon their current disposition, sins which humans have committed against them, and sacrifices which have been made or not made to appease them. Since lower gods and spirits have not been accorded absolute power, many animists seek to manipulate them by rituals of magic. These gods seldom reflect an objective ethical standard of right or wrong. Creator God, on the other hand, is typically thought of as morally pure and too majestic to be manipulated by human ritual. In many animistic contexts he is considered benevolent although distant. The Bible pictures him as holy and just--"too pure to look on evil" (Hab. 1:13) and as compassionate and gracious--full of steadfast love (Exod. 34:6-7). Only when allegiance to him has been violated does he seek to punish and only then out of love as a father disciplines his child so that he might return to him (Prov. 3:11-12; Heb. 12:5-11). When allegiance to him has been violated, he punishes, but lovingly as a father disciplines his child.

When the nature of God has been internalized by his followers, they feel guilt when they sin. This guilt is different from the shame a Japanese feels as a result of *tsumi*. While shame is "the response to disapproval of one's own peers," guilt is the "self-condemnation resulting from the violation of internalized convictions of right and wrong" (Loewen 1975, 315). Guilt, however, is not always based on true premises. People groups or individuals may be wrongly induced to believe that they are inferior or guilty. For example, illegitimate children have sometimes been shunned by their peers because they are "products of sin" and develop "an acute sense of guilt about their origin" (Loewen 1975, 314). While some psychologists would call all types of guilt inauthentic because they are products of one's cultural upbringing, Tournier rightly differentiates true guilt as "estrangement from God" and false guilt as "the feeling of condemnation that arises out of violation of cultural mores" (1962, 129; Loewen 1975, 314-315). Like the prophet Daniel who knew Jews were continuing in their sins despite seventy years of discipline in Babylonian captivity, sinners must admit their guilt before holy God and confess their sins pleading for forgiveness. Daniel prayed:

> O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands, we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. We have not listened to your servants and prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. . . . Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. . . . Give ear, O God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy. O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! (Dan. 9:4-6, 17-19)

Daniel's realization that Judah was truly guilty before a righteous and holy God led him to confess the sins of his nation and plead to God for forgiveness.

The Relationship between Socially Defined and Theologically Defined Sins

In every culture socially and theologically defined sins are intertwined and overlapping. Hiebert has clearly delineated the relationship between these two types of sin. His understandings serve as a model for deciphering the degree to which sin is relative or absolute, the strength of sin within culture, and how biblical principles are introduced into culture (1978, 24-25).

Contrasting Theological Absolutes and Social Relatives. While socially defined sins are relative to the social climate, always changing as the culture changes, theologically defined sins are absolute. In the mid-1950s my family's conservative religious fellowship in Iowa believed that wearing lipstick and earrings was wrong, the pool hall was a place of sin, and all movies and most television shows were worldly. The fact that each of these items is today accepted in Christian contexts reflects changing perceptions of sin. The social sins of yesteryear are accepted today.

The relativity of socially defined sins can be seen not only over time but also across cultures. Americans fall in love and get married; traditional Africans get married and build love. These are socially defined activities. In America singles date to find their mates; in traditional Africa asking a girl out for a date has sexual connotations. Although socially discouraged in the United States, elopement is not considered a sin. Since marriage in Africa is considered a family affair, elopement is a rejection of the family, a severe social sin.

These changes in Christian perceptions of sin and differences in marriage customs bring a smile to the face but little concern to the conscience. However, some modern-day teenagers tell adults, "Having premarital sex was a sin in your generation, but it is all right in our generation." The Christian responds, "God is a God of holiness! Purity cannot change just like the nature of God cannot change! We must be holy as our God in heaven is holy!" In many animistic cultures venerating ancestors is not considered sin. Venerating ancestors is showing respect to the elders of the family who have gone on to the realms of the dead. However, any "respect" given to ancestors which borders on worship or bestows sovereignty is a rejection of God. All glory and honor must be given to God and God alone. While culturally accepted, such devotion is an ultimate rejection of God--a theologically defined sin. Thus while social customs ebb and flow as the currents of culture shift, theologically defined sins are eternal, rooted in the very nature of God who is sovereign over all cultures.

Wayne Dye in a formative article on the concept of sin makes little differentiation between the social and the theological. He maintains that God accepts whatever conceptions of sin exist in a culture and judges people on the basis of their own perceptions and that the only transcultural conception of sin found in the scriptures is failing to measure up to God's standard of love. This standard is negatively defined in the ten commandments. With no other absolutes, the human conscience is left free to be shaped by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit (1976, 29-33). Dye writes: "Every person has an awareness of what is right, though that awareness is strongly affected by his culture. In the final judgment, God will judge him on the basis of his own culturally conditioned conscience. . . . In other words, God judges according to each one's own limited understanding." (1976, 31) This conception puts too much emphasis on the human conscience, ignoring the fact that it can be contorted by Satan as well as guided by the Holy Spirit. Those given "over to a depraved mind," having darkened hearts and thinking futilely, do not conceive of sin as God conceives of it (Rom. 1:28, 21). Throughout the scriptures God never judges humankind on the basis of their "own culturally conditioned conscience" but upon their allegiance to his sovereignty. Dye's conception of sin leads to syncretism because it assumes that the Holy Spirit alone works in a believer's life, slowly leading him to a mature knowledge of God. This conception ignores the demonic strongholds in both society and the individual conscience, which must be confronted and remolded into the image of God.

Upholding Social Mores with Theological Sanctions. Socially defined and theologically defined sins are also related in a second way. When theological sanctions are given to social norms, the religious provides legitimacy to the cultural. This overlapping of the social and the theological strengthens the cultural sense of sin. For example, in the United States homosexuality was once considered a social sin reinforced by theological sanctions. Today many

of the social prohibitions have fallen away and homosexuals have come out of the closet into the light. Religionists who believe homosexuality is a sin are confronted by culturalists who contend that homosexuality is merely an alternative lifestyle.

As Christianity takes root among the traditionally animistic Kipsigis of Kenya, the theological has also begun to reinforce the social. Traditionally the Kipsigis have had a strong social conception of sin. A young woman who became pregnant before marriage would never be allowed to marry. Only old men drank beer, usually in moderation. The extended family decided whom the young would marry. The encroachment of Western ideas has broken these mores creating cultural disorientation. Disrespect for elders, elopement, immorality, drunkenness of both young and old have created societal disequilibrium resulting in extreme cultural anomie. As Kipsigis become Christians and accept the will of God, their traditional mores are frequently reaffirmed but given a theological as well as a social rationale. The introduction of Christianity into animistic contexts provides legitimacy to purity, new directives toward marriage, and ethics for human relationships. In contexts where capricious gods and spirits operate without ethics and morality, animists are drawn to a holy and just God, who desires righteousness.

Sinners come to Christ when they acknowledge their sins before God and, as broken, repentant people, ask for forgiveness. For example, C.S. Lewis came to Christianity because he was forced to deal with the issues of morality (Hooper 1986, 395). However, when a culture's sense of sin is weakened, the culture becomes less receptive to the gospel. Edwin Orr, who has written extensively on religious revivals around the world, infers that this generation lacks the ingredients for revival because they have lost their sense of sin (1971, 229-234). Menninger speaks of the demise of the concept of theological sin in Western society. He rightly poses the questions: "Where did sin go? What became of it?" He writes that even the prophets who critique Western society have lost a sense of sin in their vocabulary: "In all of the laments and reproaches made by our seers and prophets, one misses any mention of "sin," a word which used to be a veritable watchword of prophets. It was a word once in everyone's mind, but now rarely if ever heard." (1973, 13) There is much hesitancy today to use the word "sin." People are "maladjusted," they make "errors" or "mistakes," but seldom are they declared to be sinners. God is no longer seen by the secular American or the pantheistic New Age follower as standing above human cultures and calling them into account. When a culture loses its sense of theological sin, it becomes less responsive to the proclamation of the Christian message.

Introducing the Theological in Terms of the Social. When the Christian messenger enters an animistic culture, he must work out theological principles concerning sin in terms of social categories. The difficulty of rooting God's eternal message in a contemporary cultural context is illustrated by such marital issues as levirate relationships, polygamy, and concubinage. For example, many Africans believe that marriage is a relationship between families which extends beyond the grave. Therefore, a widow who remarries would be considered an adulteress. Because a widow is still part of the family into which she has been married, the husband's brother, or other designated relative, ministers to her in order to raise up seed to the deceased. One Kipsigis Christian even asked if James 1:27 obligated him to minister to his deceased brother's wife! More mature Christian men frequently ask to be released from such conjugal responsibilities. While culturally accepted as moral, the church views such levirate relationships as sin. A missionary in such societies must struggle with how to reconcile the biblical--"`till death do us part" (1 Cor. 7:39)--with the African belief that marriage is unending. A new definition of marriage is needed for Africa. The difficulty of communicating the theological in terms of the social is apparent.

The biblical model of marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman under God. Christ designated that marriage occurs when a man leaves his father and mother and "the two become one flesh" (Matt. 19:5). "Each man (sing.) should have his own wife (sing.), and each woman her own husband" (1 Cor. 7:2). However, for a missionary to proclaim the message of monogamy as the marching orders of the kingdom negates the centrality of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The missionary must rather communicate the nature of the love of God in sending Jesus--the love that led Jesus to die for us--and proclaim this love in every human relationship (Eph. 5:25). The motivations for polygamy--economic advantage, social status, and physical fulfillment--can be displaced only by a theology of love. In a lesson at a large meeting in Kipsigis I asked my wife what she would do if I asked her to bring home a second wife. (In Kipsigis the first wife brings the second wife into the compound as a sign of acceptance.) My wife's response was, "I would think that you didn't love me." The impact on the audience was visible: They realized that Christian love in marriage is particularistic. If Christian husbands and wives love each other, there is no room for other relationships. If polygamy is merely mandated by the church, it is a socially defined sin; however, if

the roots of marriage are in God and the nature of his love, polygamy also becomes a theologically based sin. Only through a theology of love can the church make a strong case for monogamy in polygamous societies.

The theological has not always been effectively communicated in terms of social realities. When Christianity was introduced into Africa during the colonial period, European missionaries understood their task as both Christianizing and civilizing the pagans of the dark continent. Frequently they rejected indigenous names for God as too pagan. The Kipsigis *Asis* was changed to "Jehovah," and the Bantu *Ruhanga* of Southern Uganda was superimposed upon the non-Bantu Acholi of Northern Uganda. Rites of passage from childhood into adulthood were frequently rejected as pagan without understanding their functions within society and working with the people to develop alternative Christian rites. Traditional marriage was totally rejected; and Western marriage, complete with veils and rings, was introduced as "Christian" marriage. African believers were expected to learn an entire range of church dogma by completing a year-long catechism class and to show signs of living faithful Christian lives before baptism and full acceptance into church membership. The missionaries implied that the culture was too pagan to be redeemed and that Christians must acculturate to a Western way of life. For example, Livingstone Boiyon, the recognized leader of one African Inland village church, had neither been baptized nor ordained because he and his wife had not taken Christian wedding vows in the church. Their socially accepted marriage which had produced five children was not recognized as valid by the church. Conversion was not understood as accepting the Lordship of Christ but as accommodating to a Western way of life superimposed by a colonial church.

Today the pendulum has swung in the other direction. African theologians, such as Mbiti and Idowu, attempt to prove that African traditional religion is preparatory for Christianity. Christianity, they propose, fulfills the grand designs of African traditional religion. Although there is some truth in this perspective, it naively glamorizes the traditional, projects Christian beliefs about Creator God into the past, and de-emphasizes fears which permeated African Animism.

Steps in Learning a Cultural Conception of Sins

Steve Fortosis has outlined a five-step model for evaluating moral behaviors on the basis of biblical and development principles (1990, 165-168). An adapted version of this model will be presented here to aid the missionary in analyzing various conceptions of sin and how God reshapes these conceptions.

First, the missionary contrasts the moral behavior of his host culture with American standards. Likely he will find different definitions of theft, murder, sexual immorality, disrespect for parents, and bewitching. The missionary must not project the American system of morals upon the indigenous culture assuming that "sin is sin"; he must rather realize that definitions of moral attributes vary from culture to culture. Second, the missionary must seek to learn cultural rationale for moral behavior. Is the behavior based upon a social or theological rationale? What ideological presuppositions cause people to believe as they do about the nature of sin? Third, the missionary must relate the cultural rationale to biblical principles. He critiques the sins of the culture to see how they align with God's definition of sin. Fourth, according to Fortosis, the missionary and the local people must connect their moral behavior to a particular level of moral development. Fortosis cites Kohlberg's six stages of moral development, from individual response to family-group response to conscience-based response, and attempts to apply this humanistic, secular model to the missionary's understanding of developing morality. A more biblical model is necessary at this point: God, who is above culture, reveals his holiness, justice and ethics so that humans reflecting on God grasp a perspective of morality beyond themselves. As humans reflect on God, social categories regarding sin are redefined by theological perceptions. Fifth, the missionary must work with the developing national church to formulate how God's perception of sin must be understood in terms of the cultural.

Because many animistic societies define sin socially rather than theologically. Thus sin is determined by the culture rather than by God who stands above the culture. In these animistic contexts conversion requires a shift of reference from the cultural to the supercultural (Kraft 1980, 78). The animist begins to define sin as God sees it--redefining the social in terms of the theological.

Ultimately sin is not relative, defined differently from culture to culture, but determined by God, who stands above culture. Culturally defined sin and God's perception of sin seldom match up point by point. Christian

communicators, therefore, must begin with already existing perceptions of sin and salvation and redefine these indigenous terminologies to conform to biblical categories.

Concepts of Salvation

Sin and Salvation

Concepts of sin and salvation are interrelated. "`Salvation' presupposes a `lostness' or a crisis situation for which deliverance, liberation, or rescue is sought" (Adeyemo 1979, 51). Perspectives toward salvation vary according to how sin is defined.

When sin is viewed primarily from a theological perspective, salvation is the righting of relationships between humanity and divinity. The Old Testament Jews realized that sin had separated them from God (Isa. 59:2). Their God was too pure to look on evil (Hab. 1:13). Atonement for sins was necessary to reunite sinful man with holy God. Each year on the Day of Atonement the high priest, after confession of sins and calling upon the name of the Lord, sacrificed a bullock to atone for his own sins and a he-goat for the sins of the people. The high priest then took a second goat, laid his hands on its head, confessed the sins of the people, and drove it into the desert. This second goat, called the scapegoat, symbolically carried away the sins of the people (Lev. 16:3-10). These rites were never to become empty rituals but were always to be performed in the context of prayer and confession (Isa. 1:11-17). God granted forgiveness when sacrifices were made with a contrite, worshipful heart. From a theological perspective salvation is the mending of a broken relationship between humanity and divinity.

When sin is primarily understood as social, salvation is perceived as the resolution of cultural violations which have created social disharmony. Thus salvation reestablishes communal relationships. While socially defined sin excludes one from the social group, salvation reincorporates the estranged into the group. In contexts where the dead are understood as the invisible part of the family, salvation is also considered as reconciliation of the living with the dead. Kato describes salvation among the Jaba of Northern Nigeria:

> Acceptance is equated with salvation. . . . To be accepted is first of all in the community of the living, and then in the city of the dead. The way for the offended to be accepted by his fellow citizens is to pay the fine or take the punishment prescribed for him.
>
> For acceptance among the dead ancestors, the relatives of the deceased throw a big feast three months after the person has died. Every year some food is placed on his tomb to assure the dead that he is remembered in this life. This act keeps the deceased happy and accepted in the other side of life. (1974, 61)

In contexts where socially defined sin is prevalent, salvation represents resolution of social conflict.

Animistic cultures have both theological and social definitions of salvation, although the social is dominant. While theological salvation is present where beliefs in higher gods exist, Animism is principally concerned with social redemption. The social aspects of salvation are shown by the purposes of sacrificial rituals in animistic contexts: "to cure illness, increase fertility, defeat enemies, change people's social status, remove impurity, and reveal the future" (Ray 1976, 78). Adeyemo writes that "salvation in the thought of traditional African peoples . . . implies acceptance in the community of the living and the living-dead, deliverance from the power of the evil spirits, and a possession of life force" (1979, 94).

Salvation and Sacrifice

The Meaning of "Sacrifice." In most world cultures people seek salvation through sacrifice. Sacrifice is based on the presupposition that a costly gift to a spiritual being will elicit some reciprocal response. This premise is affirmed

by the ancient Roman epigram, "I give, so that you may give" (Brown 1986, 415). Sacrifices are ritual offerings of humans, animals, or plants performed to influence God, gods, spirits, or ancestors to change curses into blessings, evil into good, and defeat into victory. Sacrifices thus are mediating symbols which tie together the visible and invisible worlds (Ray 1976, 78-79).

Animal sacrifices are considered more powerful in effecting spirit response than libations of milk and beer and offerings of products of the field. These animal sacrifices are especially efficacious because blood, the vehicle of life, is being offered to change the mind of deity. According to Levitic law, "The life of a creature is in the blood," and this blood was to be offered on the altar to "make atonement for one's life" (Lev. 17:11). Thus "the blood of the sacrificial animal atones by means of and by power of the life contained in the sacrificial animal" (Daly 1978, 32). In these Old Testament sacrificial rites "there is no forgiveness of sins without the shedding of blood" (Heb. 9:22). This sacrificial motif is also expressed in the Lord's supper as Christians remember the "blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt. 26:28). Yerkes writes that the use of blood in sacrificial rites is so widespread that the only way it might be accounted for is by the fact that "blood, the vehicle of life, becomes the best prophylactic against unknown dangers which threaten men" (1953, 48). Throughout the world animal sacrifices are understood as more powerful than libations and offerings which do not entail the shedding of blood.

Westerners have difficulty understanding sacrifice used in a religious sense. In Western contexts the concept, like many religious metaphors, has become secularized. Sacrifice today is understood in terms of personal renunciation: "One may sacrifice duty for pleasure or pleasure for duty, or honesty for gain or gain for honesty" (Yerkes 1953, 2). This use of "sacrifice" has little to do with humanity's relationship with deity. In this sense sacrifice is "*by* somebody, *of* something, and *for* something, but never *to* anybody" (Yerkes 1953, 2). The Westerner's tendency to secularize the religious hinders his ability to understand and appreciate the animistic perspective of sacrifice. Thus missionaries going into animistic contexts would benefit from thoroughly studying the types of sacrifices performed, the spiritual beings to whom sacrifices are directed, and the sacrificial motifs employed.

Types of Sacrifices. Most animistic cultures offer more than one type of sacrifice. For example, Evans-Pritchard gives two broad classifications of Nuer sacrifice. First, personal sacrifices are made to ward off ever-present danger. These sacrifices are offered to appease angry spirits before they punish for sin or to curtail misfortune, especially sickness and plague. Personal sacrifices to ward off evil are the most prevalent among animistic peoples. Second, communal sacrifices are offered to invoke blessings upon social activities, especially rites of passage from one stage of life to another (like initiation, marriage, and death). The primary purpose of collective sacrifices is to confirm, establish, and strengthen "a change of social status--boy to man, maiden to wife, living man to ghost" (1956, 198-199). Evans-Pritchard's distinction between personal sacrifice to ward off danger and collective sacrifice accompanying rites of transition can aptly be applied to the study of sacrifice in many animistic contexts.

Sacrifices can also be categorized according the spiritual beings worshipped or appeased. For example, among the Kipsigis of Kenya sacrifices were traditionally made to both ancestral spirits and supreme God. Most sacrifices, in both traditional and contemporary culture, are directed to ancestral spirits, the beings with whom Kipsigis are most intimately involved. These sacrifices may be either personally used to ward off danger or communally employed during rites of transition. Traditionally, a sacrifice called *Kapkorosut* was also made to Asis, the Kipsigis' supreme God, who was considered the arbiter of all things. For generations this sacrifice was performed annually to offer Asis the firstfruits of harvest, to seek his forgiveness, and to beseech him for favors. Later this sacrifice ceased to be offered annually but was resurrected in times of despair when severe drought threatened the land. In other animistic contexts sacrifices might be directed to God, gods, spirits, and ancestors all in the same culture.

Religious Motifs Emphasized in Sacrifice. Hiebert has very effectively classified religious motifs emphasized in various types of sacrifice. Some reflect Christian perspectives of relating to God while others reflect the animistic orientation of using ritual to force deity to act. Various cultures picture sacrifice as homage to deity, as reciprocal gift-giving, as restitution, propitiation, or expiation, as communion with gods and spirits, and as rejuvenation (1978, 26-28).

Sacrifice as Homage to Deity. Some cultures view sacrifices as giving homage to deity, either God or some spiritual being considered worthy of human praise. This homage metaphor infers a vertical relationship between a spiritual

being and the humans making the sacrifice. The spiritual being is like a king, father, or master; the one making the sacrifice is like a vassal, son, or servant. For example, in the Judeo-Christian heritage God is understood as the Lord of lords and the King of kings. The tone of the sacrificial rites is one of worship, praise, and thanksgiving.

From this perspective sin is viewed as insubordination or rebellion against sovereign God. The sinner is like a vassal who refuses to pay homage to his master, a son who defies his father, or a servant who disobeys his master. When the Israelites forsook their God to serve the gods of the nations, God felt betrayed and punished the Israelites with captivity instead of blessing (2 Kgs. 17). Sacrifice is an atonement for sins which caused the human/divine relationship to be broken and an acknowledgement that the spiritual being is sovereign (Hiebert 1978, 27).

Sacrifice as Reciprocal Gift-Giving. Some also picture sacrifice as a mutual exchange of gifts in order to maintain a relationship. While giving homage presupposes a vertical relationship between humanity and divinity, gift-giving assumes a reciprocal, horizonal relationship of people with lower spiritual beings and ancestors. Numerous animistic people throw grain into the corners of houses as gifts to the ancestors. Libations of milk and beer are poured at the foot of ancestral shrines or at grave sites. In return the ancestors are satisfied, realizing that they have not been forgotten, and will not bring harm upon the family. Similarly, among Chinese in Taiwan the living and the dead have a reciprocal arrangement. The living provide food and incense offerings for the dead; the dead, in return, bless the living. Conversely, ancestors curse their living families when forgotten (Hung 1983, 32).

Frequently sacrifices are made to compel spiritual beings to reciprocate by giving appropriate gifts: "By making a gift to the gods, the gods are compelled to give back benefits to man" (Leach 1976, 83). Giving the firstfruits of harvest thus insures an abundant future harvest. Gifts given to Ogun, the god of iron and steel among the Yoruba of Nigeria, in his annual festival are thought to ward off sickness, unexpected accidents, and death. Sacrificial gifts are presented with this invocation:

> Ogun, here are the festival kolanuts for you from all of us.
> Ogun, here is your festival snail from all of us.
> Ogun, here is your festival pigeon from all of us.
> Ogun, here is your festival dog from all of us.
> Spare us so that we can do this again next year.
> Ward off death and sickness from us.
> Ward off accidents from us.
> Ward off untoward incidents from the young folk.
> Ward off untoward incidents from the elderly one.
> Ward off untoward incidents from the children.
> Ward off untoward incidents from all pregnant women.

These gifts are offered in order to receive benefits. Of course, the gifts given and the blessings expected are different: physical gifts of produce or dedicated animals are sacrificed in order to receive spiritual, not material blessings.

Within this context sin is understood as the breaking of a relationship. When Hung became a Christian and stopped participating in ancestral rites, his mother said, "Fortunately, I have six other sons to offer food sacrifices to me after I die." To her, refusing to offer incense and food sacrifices periodically to ancestors was "an unforgivable breach of filial piety" (1983, 32-33). Often Chinese Christians are charged with the most grievous sin in their Confucian-influenced society: breaking the filial relationship with elders--in this case, ancestors who have passed on into the next world. Salvation, then, is understood as either maintaining or restoring this relationship.

Sacrifice as Restitution, Expiation, or Propitiation. Many cultures assume that justice is demanded when there is sin. Sin violates another who must be paid if there is to be justice (Hiebert 1978, 27). Justice might be in the form of punishment, unless sacrifice is offered to amend what sin has distorted. Sacrifice is therefore seen as a type of payment for debt, a costly giving to make right what has been wrong.

Using the justice metaphor, sacrifice may be pictured as either restitution or propitiation/expiation. Restitution is payment to another to compensate for losses. When treachery caused war to break out between rival clans of the Sawi tribe of Irian Jaya, a peace child was offered as restitution for one who had been murdered (Richardson 1976). In another context an expensive sacrificial bull may be seen as restitution to spiritual beings for severe human infractions and libations and smaller offerings for less severe infractions. Sometimes restitution is in the form of self-abnegation: The sinner inflicts pain on himself, frequently by fasting or beating (or missionary work?), in order to make restitution for his sins.

Frequently people perceive that they cannot possibly repay the debt of sin. How can humans ever make adequate restitution to heal a broken relationship with deity? Deity must somehow be persuaded to accept sacrifices which do not entirely compensate for the sins of the people. Such acknowledgment of human finiteness under sovereign deity is the basis of the concepts of propitiation and expiation. Humans seek to make amends for wrongdoing or guilt by actions that are not commensurate with the sin. Thus deity accepts sacrifices which appease or satisfy without being understood as total restitution. Propitiatory sacrifices, which attempt to placate or pacify a deity, are common in animistic contexts. Expiatory sacrifice, which "obliterates sin from God's sight," thereby restoring a relationship between worshipper and deity, is the basis of Christian sacrifice (Buttrick 1962a, 200; 1962b, 920).

Sacrifice as Communion. Sacrifice may also be understood as communion with gods and spirits. Priests sometimes eat of the sacrifices to gods and spirits for the purpose of establishing solidarity with them. In some cases such sacrificial communion leads to possession. For example, a medium of Apollo sacrificed a lamb each month and tasted its blood so that she might become possessed by the god and speak his oracles (Yerkes 1953, 43). Among tribal peoples, totemic animals often are ritually sacrificed to gain strength from the totem and ritually reenact the solidarity of the totemic group (Hiebert 1983). However, killing and eating their totem would normally be considered taboo. Such literal interpretation of symbols has frequently led these tribalists to equate the Lord's supper to a sacrifice with the emblems representing the actual body and blood of Jesus.

Sacrifice as Rejuvenation. Sacrifice may also be conceived of as rejuvenation: A rival is killed in order to gain strength; an enfeebled king is sacrificed to facilitate rebirth (Hiebert 1978, 28). The Baganda of Uganda believed that the Kabaka was not only the traditional political leader of the people but also a sacred ruler who symbolized the health and prosperity of the tribe (Mbiti 1969, 184). When he grew old and feeble, the nation also became weak. The Kabaka's absence from his people also was thought to enfeeble the nation. When Kabaka Mutesa was deported by British colonialists in 1957 because he opposed the independence process of his country, many Baganda became sick, and some died. In the midst of an anti-British backlash, a massive reversion to traditional animistic religion occurred despite the fact that the Baganda had been "Christian" for over sixty years. The old Kabaka was traditionally sacrificed to rejuvenate the tribe through the life of his successor.

These motifs of sacrifice demonstrate how people view spiritual powers. Sacrifice is viewed as homage; gift-giving; restitution, propitiation, or expiation; communion; or rejuvenation. While views of homage and expiation are Christian perspectives, those of gift-giving, propitiation, communion, and rejuvenation reflect animistic conceptions.

Sacrifice in Animistic and Christian Perspective. Although animistic sacrifices have some similarity to Judeo-Christian sacrifices, there are significant differences. First, the purpose of animistic sacrifices is to find solutions for problems of everyday life. These sacrifices seek blessings for new beginnings, appease vengeful gods and spirits, induce spiritual beings to turn back evil, and honor ancestral spirits. Only infrequently does the animist appeal to God and make sacrifices to him. The major purpose of Judeo-Christian sacrifice, on the other hand, is to reunite alienated sinners to God. Second, the animist, guided by his diviner, creates his own sacrifice in order to appease deity. In Judeo-Christian contexts God, who created all, designated specific ways in which those who trust him seek atonement for sins. Under Mosaic law atonement was made through guilt (`asam) offerings (Lev. 5-7). However, God has now made his own son Jesus become a guilt (`asam) offering for our sins (Isa. 53:10). The Suffering Servant, Jesus Christ, assumed the role of the animal and became the ultimate sacrifice for sins (Brown 1986, 420). Therefore, Christians "have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:10). Unlike animistic sacrifices, God's sacrifice was not a creation of human initiative. Third, while animistic sacrifices seek to appease, manipulate, and coerce deity, Christian sacrifice is an accepting of the will of God and his sovereignty over life.

Salvation and Harmony

Sin in animistic contexts is understood to destroy the balance and harmony of life. When harmony is disrupted, people experience suffering and misfortune. The need for salvation becomes apparent to the animist when illness occurs, a wife remains barren, or catastrophe strikes one's business or herds. A diviner reveals the personal power or impersonal force which must be appeased or manipulated in order to restore balance. Salvation reestablishes, usually by means of sacrifice, "the "ontological balance . . . between God and man, the spirits and man, the departed and the living" (Mbiti 1969, 59).

For example, Kipsigis believe that the world is harmonious when there is no sin. Sin disrupts society and brings disharmony. Sacrifices are thought to restore harmony by appeasing the ancestral spirits, who bring personal misfortune. According to Kipkorir, who writes about the Marakwet, a brother tribe to the Kipsigis, sacrifices "not only make `sweet' (*anyiny*) but, more radically, `clean' (*tilil*)" the people who make them. The need to be made "sweet" or "clean" implies "disturbances in the social or natural orders which can be corrected only by ritual means" (Kipkorir 1973, 42). Such beliefs about sin destroying harmony, which is restored by sacrifice, are also evident in Brazil. Umbanda Spiritists perform special sacrifices called *despachos* to communicate with the gods. With these sacrifices they seek to restore harmony, turn back evil, or uncross paths (St. Clair 1971, 142).

While studying animistic conceptions of sin, the new missionary must concurrently learn animistic conceptions of salvation. To that end this section has aimed to provide etic categories to decipher emic perspectives of sacrifice.

A Biblical Perception Toward Animistic Sin and Salvation

Missionaries entering animistic contexts must not only learn emic conceptions of sin and salvation but also comprehend worldview reformulations desired by God. This section facilitates understanding these transformations by comparing and contrasting Christian and animistic conceptions of sin and salvation in terms of (1) the place and role of God, (2) the meanings given to the terms *sin* and *salvation*, (3) the motivation for seeking salvation, and (4) the nature of the human/divine relationship.

The Place and Role of God

Animists understand God in one of three distinct ways. First, many animists consider God to be too distant and unconcerned about them to hear their prayers or receive their sacrifices. Second, some animists believe that the nature of the supreme being is refracted in lower spiritual beings to whom prayers and sacrifices are made. Thus God hears through intermediaries who reflect his nature. Third, animists in mystical contexts understand God merely as an impersonal force which permeates all nature. Each of these perspectives, however, is a contrast to the true nature of Creator God, the great I Am, who is not very far from any one of us (Acts 17:27), whose relationship with us is motivated by steadfast love (Exod. 34:6-7).

Because animists perceive God to be distant and impersonal, most sacrifices are made to lower gods, spirits, and ancestors. In West Africa temples, altars, and shrines abound with multitudinous priests serving various gods and spirits. However, "Sacrifices offered directly to Supreme God are rare, and even where instances of this are found there are no priests who serve Him at a regular altar" (Sawyerr 1969, 63). Sawyerr lists six main classes of African sacrifices (1969, 64-65), and in all these categories "God is pushed to the background" (Adeyemo 1979, 38). In India greater gods, like Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, as well as lesser spirits, like *pret*, *rakshasa*, *sayyid*, and *jogini* are worshipped and appeased (McClintock 1990, 38-46), but Creator God, as a distinct spiritual being, is neither worshipped nor honored. Although the gods and spirits of Animism have proliferated, seldom is worship made to God, who initiated it all.

This rejection of God to serve the gods of the nations is reflected in the history of Israel. God's covenant with Israel made her "his treasured possession" (Exod. 19:5). Israel, as God's chosen people, was to have no other gods before him (Exod. 20:2). He frequently described himself as jealous when his people "bowed down and worshipped any other god" (Exod. 20:5; Deut. 32:16). However, the history of Israel is one of disobedience. Soon after accepting God's covenant at Sinai, the Israelites molded a golden calf which they claimed brought them out of Egypt (Exod.

34). The united kingdom of Israel was divided because Solomon's many wives "turned his heart after other gods" so that "his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God" (1 Kgs. 11:4, 11-13). North Israel sinned because she "feared other gods" and, consequently, was removed from the sight of God (2 Kgs. 17:7, 18). Judah, the southern kingdom, was likewise deported because she forsook her God and followed the gods of the nations (Jer. 5:19). Those in animistic contexts around the world who have come to know God understand this struggle for allegiance. Too many desire to "worship the Lord yet serve their own gods" (2 Kgs. 17:33), a classic description of syncretism. They realize that the real issue is allegiance and that the great sin of Animism is worshipping God while continuing to beseech the ancestors, spirits, and gods to settle problems of everyday life.

Reliance on other spiritual powers and their "elementary principles" was a central issue of Paul's correspondence to the church at Colosse. They had accepted the Lordship of Christ with thankfulness (Col. 2:6-7) but were tempted to fall away to follow the rules and regulations, the "elementary principles," of the principalities and powers (Col. 2:8). Paul reminds them that "all fullness of deity lives in Christ," who is the "head over every power and authority" (Col. 2:9-10; 1:19). Some had lost their "connection with the head" because of their participation in the "elementary principles" (Col. 2:19), but people of Christ should not be subject to such "rules" (Col. 2:20). God desires that "all his fullness dwell" in Christ and Christ alone (Col. 1:19).Col. 2:8 and 2:20.

The Meaning of "Sin" and "Salvation"

To the animist sin is typically understood as a breaching of social customs creating disharmony in society. Salvation reestablishes balance, restoring harmony to society.

From a biblical perspective, however, sin is a negation of God, a breaching of the human/divine relationship, a rejection of God's sovereignty and acceptance, either deliberately or unconsciously, of Satan's kingdom. Although defined in terms of God, sin is shown to have social dimensions. Unlike the ambivalent gods of the nations, Creator God is moral and just and expects humankind to reflect his nature. Ethics, justice, and morality are judged according to his standards! Followers of God must be holy because God is holy (1 Pet. 1:15)! Thus Old Testament prophets proclaimed a morality based on the nature of God:

> He has showed you, O man, what is good.
> And what does the Lord require of you?
> To act justly and to love mercy
> And to walk humbly with your God. (Mic. 6:8)

Our God, who is both sovereign and moral, stands above human cultures and judges them according to his nature.

From a biblical perspective salvation is the working of God to reestablish his relationship with an alienated creation. Salvation has been initiated by Creator God; humankind cannot devise a substitute. Paul concisely describes God's distinctive plan of salvation: "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21). God chose a perfect sacrifice, a divine offering without blemish, to be offered for the sins of humankind, an eternal expression of the love of God (John 3:16). People are saved by accepting this sacrifice of God, not by devising their own ways of propitiation and redemption.

As an animist internalizes the Christian message, his perceptions of sin and salvation change in two significant ways. First, his definitions of sin and salvation are expanded and reformulated. He no longer defines sin only in terms of the social. His definitions are expanded to reflect the ethical and moral nature of God and reformulated to view salvation as the reconciliation with God through the blood of Jesus Christ. In addition, salvation is understood in terms of a longer dimension of time: God's final redemption of his elect at the end of time. Through such reformulations the animist throws off the shackles of Animism and comes under the sovereignty of God. Second, the animist's source of salvation changes. He no longer relies on other personal spiritual beings or impersonal forces for his salvation. He learns to trust in Creator God and wait for him to act (Isa. 8:17-20). He accepts God's salvation, based on a sacrifice ordained by him, rather than on earthly formulations of salvation. Thus, if God is accepted as sovereign, the Christian will ultimately be guided by how God judges society, not by society's critique of itself.

Motivations for Seeking Deity

The motives leading the animist to seek salvation are different from Christian motivations for seeking God. Although the Christian prays for specific blessings in this world, he ultimately seeks God because he is God. He is incomparable, the sovereign Creator of the universe. No other spiritual being is like him--"majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders" (Exod. 15:11). The motives of an animist, on the other hand, are humanistic. He manipulatively employs magic and seeks help from spirits to help overcome physical ailments, determine the cause of death, become successful in business, cause crops to grow, or induce a beautiful girl to marry him. Rarely do his concerns extend beyond earthly needs. Adeyemo writes that animistic Africans "do not seek God for His own sake, but rather they venerate the ancestors, appease the spirits in order that they may receive favor in return" (1979, 93). Animistic salvation is utilitarian, selfish, human-directed, and this-worldly. An animist is chiefly concerned with self: He seeks power to fulfill his own earthly needs. Conversely, Christian salvation is a response to grace, altruistic and self-giving, God-focused, and includes the immediate as well as the eternal. A Christian, unlike the earthly focused animist, seeks to fulfill the purposes of God.

Such utilitarianism has also invaded the church. Prayer has frequently become a magical potion to extract human wants from God. When Christians order God to fulfill his promises, as "We claim the promises which you, God, have already granted us," they superimpose their own will upon God's sovereign will. Such prayers demand that God fulfill human desires. However, prayer should give homage and praise to God and plead with him to act while acknowledging his sovereignty. Christ, while praying about his impending death, qualified his desire by saying, "My father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. *Yet not as I will, but as you will*" (Matt. 26:39). Christian prayer, therefore, pleads, asks, begs, even questions but never demands.

The Nature of the Human/Divine Relationship

The animist's relationship with spiritual beings is conceived of in terms of power. Spiritual beings are propitiated, coerced, and placated because they have power. Magic ritual is employed because of its power to influence impersonal spiritual forces and personal spiritual beings. Shamans reveal to the living the source of powers which impact their lives. Various methodologies of divination are employed to determine what power is causing misfortune or illness and what other power(s) must be employed to counter such negative power. Animism is a power religion based upon manipulation and coercion of spiritual powers.

The follower of God must not conceive of God as a power being to be manipulated and coerced. He must relate to God out of love. The first great command is to love: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:37). Although God has all power, his relationship with humanity is a negation of that power. Because of his great compassion, he does not immediately punish his people for sin to powerfully demonstrate his displeasure. He is rather patient with man, "not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). In the death of Christ, God demonstrated his love, gave up his power to punish, and died for his creation. Therefore, the preaching of the triumphal savior who defeated the principalities and powers must be tempered with the preaching of the God who suffers, cries, and finally punishes when humanity sins and breaks her relationship with him. Christianity is a religion of love based on a relationship with sovereign God in Jesus Christ.

This contrast between Animism and Christianity is reflected in their differing beliefs of salvation. While animistic sacrifice is based upon propitiation, Christian sacrifice is based upon expiation. The animist devises rituals to propitiate displeased ancestors, spirits, and gods. Thus he seeks the causes of misfortune by divination and uses a spiritual power to restore harmony so that peace and prosperity return. Animism is based upon human initiative. In Christianity God, who is love, expiates the sins of the people. God atoned for human sins by sending his son "to be sin for us" (2 Cor. 5:21), by making us "holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:10), and by expiating our sins by Christ's atoning sacrifice (Rom. 3:25). Christianity is based upon the initiative of Creator God in reconciling a fallen world, which has been alienated by Satan. Driver summarizes this comparison: "In contrast to the concept of propitiation in which the action is understood as being directed to God by the creature in order to appease or placate God's anger, expiation is an action in which God alone is ultimately the subject or origin and the creatures are the objects of God's action." (1986, 133)

Pointing the Animist to the Cross

The role of the Christian minister is to point the animist to the cross--the symbol of God's great sacrifice of his son to cleanse of sin and deliver from Satan. The great message to the animist is that God has mightily broken into human history in the ministry and death of Christ to break the chains of Satan. Christ has "disarmed the powers and authorities!" (Col. 2:15). Thus to the Christian in an animistic society the cross signifies *liberation*--liberation from the demonic forces against which he is fighting, deliverance from the rules and regulations which these powers attempt to project upon society, and freedom from sin which has alienated his people from God and disharmonized society.

However, the message of the cross is more than the triumphal defeat of the principalities and powers. The cross also symbolizes suffering. The animist views his religion as an way to escape from suffering--to overcome evil in the world. However, the Christian realizes that although he is in Christ, suffering continues and frequently has increased because of Satan's attempts to turn him from Christ. God has called his people not only to defeat Satan but also to endure suffering in a world of the unredeemed controlled by Satan. Thus the cross offers a theology of suffering to explain why the Christian suffers even though he is in Christ. Christianity without the message of "the crucified Messiah at the center . . . becomes triumphalistic" (Padilla 1986, 9).

When considering the reality of spiritual powers in the world and their confrontation with the powers of God, the Christian missionary must acknowledge the centrality of spiritual warfare. He is in battle with the spiritual forces of darkness. He must proclaim the sovereignty of God in word and deed. As God's representative, he must have a passion for the purposes of God as he challenges the animist's passion for self. He must proclaim God to be all-sufficient, the focus of all creation, the one for whom we live, the initiator and terminator of time, and the one deserving of all human allegiance. By proclamation of the sovereignty of God and total human allegiance to him, the principalities and powers are being defeated.

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