Social Change and Christianity in Modern South Korean Society

SENRI ETHNOLOGICAL STUDIES 49 1998

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As is well known, South Korea's religious community includes a large Christian population. With the exception of the Philippines, which was colonized first by Spain and then by the United States, no Asian nation has more enthusiastically accepted the Christian faith than South Korea. In fact, South Korea's zealous acceptance of Christianity stands in sharp contrast to the religious practices of its neighbors, China and Japan—two countries that historically have shared much with Korea [Miyazaki 1993]. This paper examines how Christianity and Protestantism in particular have adapted to modern South Korean society.

Korea's religions can be grouped into two broad categories. The first classification consists of folk religions, mostly based on shamanism, while the second is made up of the "imported religions" or Great Traditions, principally Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity. Relations between these two groups of religions have been at times friendly, and at other times confrontational [Lancaster 1984a, 1984b]. Indeed, the religious situation has been syncretistic, as worshipers have struggled to reconcile, coexist with, and accommodate these differing beliefs.

The dual nature of Korea's religious climate was clearly delineated by Akiba [1954], who explained how shamanism and Confucianism were in opposition while attempting to coexist. While Akiba's dual model is still basically valid when describing South Korea's religious situation today, his description does not adequately take account of Christianity's position in the Confucianism-shamanism framework. More research is needed to delineate just how and why Christianity has been so passionately accepted in South Korea.

Though exact numbers are not available, South Korea's Christian population is estimated to be about 10 million [Han 1986]. About 80 percent of the Christians are Protestants, with Catholics making up most of the remainder.

This paper focuses on Protestants for the following reasons. First, the numbers of worshipers and churches located in South Korea are overwhelmingly Protestant. Second, Protestantism has profoundly influenced South Korean society, and has been a source of religious friction. Much of the data presented in this paper was collected through fieldwork conducted since 1988.

The History of Christianity in Korea

It is fair to say that Korea's first acceptance of Christianity[1] came not through the exhortations of foreign missionaries but as a result of the searchings of individual Koreans. Catholicism on the peninsula can be traced to 1784 when three Koreans were baptized in Beijing and then returned home. Members of Korea's intellectual classes were the first to embrace Catholicism, but, because they rejected Confucian ancestral rituals as idol worship, they were persecuted and oppressed by the Korean monarchy. Protestantism, on the other hand, got its first foothold on the peninsula in 1882 when four Koreans were baptized as Protestants in Manchuria. These baptisms, too, had been sought out by the individuals involved.

With the dawn of the twentieth century, however, the influence of American and Canadian mission groups became much more substantial and Korea's Christian population soared. After the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), Japan established a protectorate over Korea and continued to tighten its political grip on the country until 1910, when it finally made Korea one of its colonies.

Paradoxically, Japanese colonialism ultimately encouraged both the growth of Protestantism in Korea and the style the religion took there. The Great Revival Movement (*Taebuhŭnghoe*) of 1907 arose in response to Japanese domination. This movement, which emphasized prayer and belief in the Holy Spirit, came to set the basic character of Korea's Protestantism today [Yi 1984]. Both the daily early morning prayer meetings (*saebyŏk kidohoe*) and the way of praying, called *t'ongsŏng kido* (praying aloud), trace their beginnings to this movement. *T'ongsŏng kido*, in which all members of the congregation chant and, at times, fervently shout their prayers, is one of the distinctive features of Korean Christianity.

We may interpret the Great Revival Movement as an expression of both resentment against the Japanese and fear of encroaching Japanese power. The movement drew the attention of more citizens to Christianity in part because the churches provided a means of opposing Japanese colonization and of participating in the independence movement. Beginning on March 1, 1919, a wave of anti-Japanese demonstrations swept across the country. Many of the leaders in this March 1 Movement (*Samil Undong*) were members of Christian organizations, and some Koreans became Christians specifically to engage in anticolonial activities.

In a sense, Christianity appealed to Koreans precisely because Japan was overwhelmingly a non-Christian nation. Christianity proclaimed a universal message that went beyond nationalistic slogans, and it drew people together who were seeking the same goals. In 1900, there were only an estimated eighty thousand Korean Christians, but in 1910, after the Great Revival Movement, that number reached two hundred thousand, and it blossomed to three hundred and seventy thousand by 1930. In response to this growth, the colonial government attempted to suppress Christian groups, for example by forcing visits to Shinto shrines.

The downfall of Japan and the loss of its colonies were followed by the division

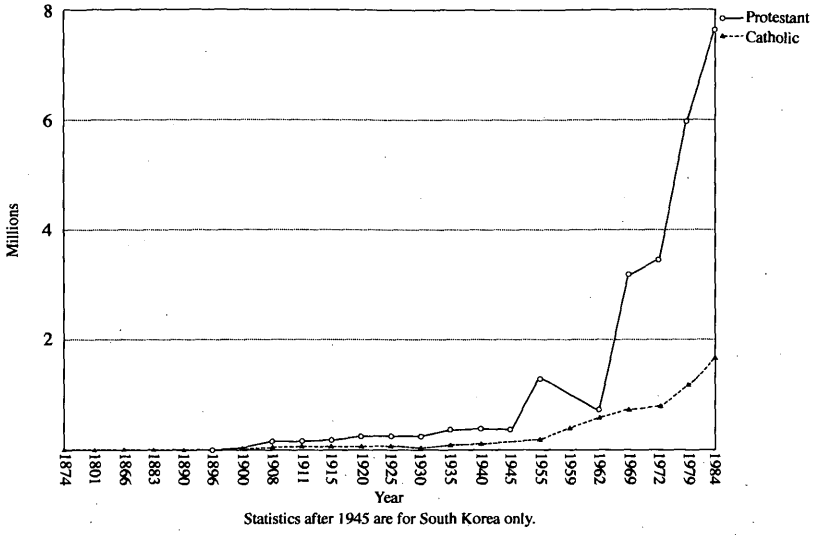

Fig. 1. Number of Christians in Korea

of the peninsula into North and South. Most of Korea's Christians lived in the North and found themselves enveloped by communism. Seeking religious freedom, many abandoned their homelands and families and fled south, particularly during the Korean War (1950–1953). The majority of these refugees became city dwellers rather than farmers. Thus South Korea's Christian population, with particular strength in cities, swelled to more than five hundred thousand by 1953.

South Korean industrial growth and urbanization reached full speed by the end of the 1960s. Sources of production shifted from the farms to the factories, and people emigrated from rural areas. This development proved to be a bonanza for recruitment to urban religious organizations (see Figure 1). Mammoth churches sprang up. Today, there are many churches with more than five thousand members each.

South Korean Protestant Churches

South Korean Christian organizations are both numerous and diverse. Both sectarian variations and regional differences are responsible for this diversity. In some areas, churches are composed mainly of highly educated, economically successful members, while in other regions the faithful may be less economically well-off laborers. Therefore, two churches in different regions may be similar in size but provide different services in response to the different expectations of their members [Kim Kwang-ok 1992]. Below, we shall describe one church organization. It is not meant to be a typical case, but we will try to emphasize specifically Korean features within it.[2)]

Church Y's History

Church Y is a medium-sized Presbyterian church located in Seoul. Presbyterians are the largest sect among Protestants in South Korea. South Korea's Presbyterian churches have many factions, however, and Church Y belongs to the most religiously conservative of these. The church is located in a residential neighborhood five kilometers west of the center of Seoul. Because Seoul has become so gigantic, this location is now considered to be fairly close to the center of the city. However, only in the late 1960s, when the capital expanded rapidly, did this formerly rural area become a residential neighborhood.

The church was started as a series of house meetings led by a housewife who had come from Inch'ŏn in 1946. At that time the area was located on the outskirts of Seoul and still rural. The first building of worship was constructed in 1948. Five years later the church hired its first full-time pastor. At first, no pastor managed to stay for very long, with six different individuals commanding the pulpit over the next thirteen years. Finally, fortunes changed with the appointment of a young pastor in 1966. Aided by a housing boom in the area, membership climbed rapidly from about 100 worshipers in 1966 to 650 in 1985. A new church building that could accommodate 600 individuals was built in 1971, and a church-affiliated school and day care center were later added.

Despite their church's steady growth, however, the pastor and other elders (*changno*) of the church came to disagree over clerical business matters, and the pastor broke away from the church in 1985, taking a large number of supporters with him. For a time, membership was down and the group had no full-time pastor. While searching for a new pastor, the elders heard about a highly qualified assistant pastor at another Presbyterian church. They went to hear his sermon,

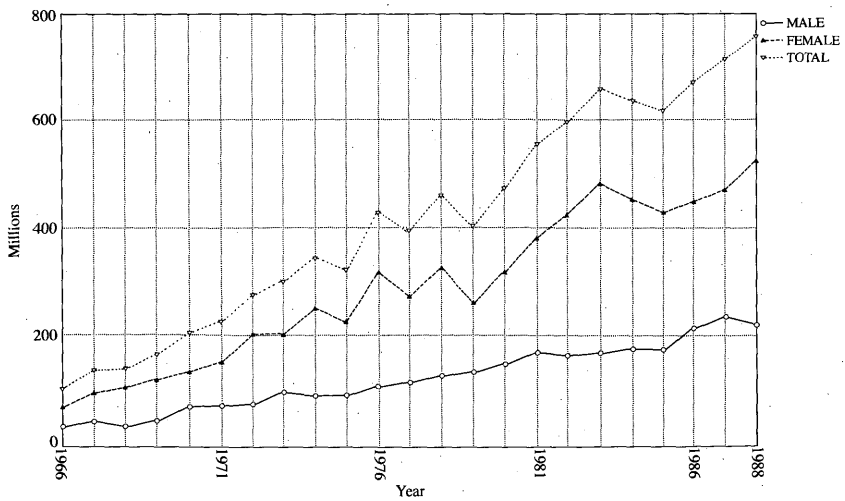

Fig. 2. Membership of Church Y

interviewed him, and decided to hire him. Word soon spread concerning the new pastor's stirring sermons, and membership rolls again grew larger (see Figure 2). By 1993 the church had about one thousand worshipers.

Church Organization, Religious Rites, and Believers

In April of 1988, Church Y had nine full-time staff: one head pastor, two assistant pastors, two female preachers, three office workers, and one grounds caretaker. Also, several part-time teachers and preachers were hired mainly to take charge of the Sunday church school. They were all young people who either had just received their clerical licenses or were still in theological seminary and clerical school.

The elders of the church (*changno*), of whom there are eleven, are responsible for the administration of the church. The elders and the head pastor form what is called *tanghoe*, the highest executive committee.[3] Ranking just below the elders are nine church deacons (*ansu chipsa*). These people are elected by the congregation and are likely to become future elders.

The elders and the deacons are all men, but there are also women of special status in the church, called *kwŏnsa*. These women take the role of "mothers" in the church. In daily activities, they often mediate between the church and female believers.

Church services are held three times every Sunday morning, once every Sunday evening, and once every Wednesday evening. Every Friday night there is an all-night prayer meeting (*ch'ŏlya kidohoe*). An early morning prayer meeting (*saebyŏk kidohoe*) is held at 5 a.m. daily. Bible study classes are available to the congregation. Each spring a major revival meeting (*puhŭnghoe*) is held, lasting several days and featuring guest preachers (*puhŭngsa*).

Most of the congregation lives within walking distance of the church. Nearly 50 percent of the members have been going to the church for five years or less, reflecting the high residential mobility in modern South Korean society. Approximately two-thirds of the worshipers are female. Many women come to the church either alone or with their children, as their husbands are mostly non-Christians. About one-fourth of all the churchgoers regularly bring their entire families with them.

Conflict with Ancestor Worship

The fact that the majority of Church Y's members are female, and that their husbands are not Christians, has had repercussions with respect to ancestral ceremonies. Traditional Korean ancestral rites (*kijesa*) involve worshiping direct patrilineal forbearers for four generations on the anniversaries of their deaths. During Confucian ceremonies descendants place offerings to their ancestors in front of memorial tablets. As mentioned above, Korean Catholics were persecuted for refusing to engage in these rites some two hundred years ago, but today, the Catholic church authorizes its members to partake in these Confucian rites on the

condition that they do not worship the ancestors as gods. Protestant churches, on the other hand, officially do not permit such Confucian ceremonies because they are a form of idol worship. Thus, since Confucian ancestral ceremonies are widely practiced throughout the country, they are a constant source of religious friction.

When a woman is a Christian but her husband and her husband's father are non-Christians, it is usual for Confucian ancestral ceremonies to be practiced in the family. Usually the woman will just help with the preparations for the ceremony and not participate in it herself. (Some women do not even help with preparations because they are Christians.) Her sons, on the other hand, even if they are still children, are obliged to worship the patrilineal ancestors. When a son, under the influence of a Christian mother, does not participate in ancestral ceremonies, the mother will be criticized by others.

Many Christians have adapted traditional ancestral ceremonies in an event called *ch'udo yebae* (memorial service). On the anniversary of a parent's death, the family gets together and prominently displays a picture of that parent. An invited pastor leads a prayer. Often, after the ceremony, everyone shares a meal, but the food generally has no connection with the foods of traditional ancestral offerings. The family usually receives the assistance of the pastor for two or three years after the parent's death; after that time, they manage the ceremony by themselves. It is rare for the memorial service to be conducted for grandparents or more remote ancestors.

The Organization of "Districts"

Churches will often organize worshipers into groups of ten households each, called "districts" (*kuyŏk*). Membership in a district depends upon where the family lives. Church Y had 46 districts in 1989. Each district has one leader (*kuyŏkchang*) who serves as an intermediary between the church and the members. All district leaders are women, selected by the congregation. Every Friday morning the *kuyŏkchang* leads a district worship service (*kuyŏk yebae*) in a member's house. Most activities within districts involve only women, most of whom are full-time housewives.

As mentioned above, Church Y is located in an area that was residentially developed only in the late 1960s, so most church members originally came from elsewhere. Many had migrated to Seoul while looking for work. Family life is the most important thing for traditional Korean women. While men can make friends in the workplace, women, whose lives are more restricted to the domestic realm, often face greater difficulties making friends soon after they move into a new neighborhood. Many Christian women, particularly young brides who may live far from their closest friends, find district organizations of the church to be ideal places to make friends. Here women can exchange advice for everyday living as if they were sisters. In fact, some women become Christians precisely because they are attracted by the prospect of forming intimate social ties with other church women [Hidemura 1992].

Sinbang

Sinbang is an important church-related activity whereby church leaders visit members in their homes or call on them in the hospital. When something important affects a church member, such as a family wedding, a move to a new residence, or an illness or other major personal problem, the district leader notifies a preacher. The church hierarchy then decides whether or not to visit the person. If a visit is deemed appropriate, the pastor, preacher, and district leader call on the member together. The church leaders listen to the person talk about his or her problem or situation, and then the pastor often cites a relevant Bible passage and offers a prayer.

As the above description makes clear, the church is very active in the daily lives of its members. The administrative office of the church constantly receives news from district leaders, and preachers spend a good deal of each working day on the phone with district leaders, inquiring about the well-being of church members. A good deal of responsibility rests on the shoulders of the preachers and the women who make the home and hospital visits. In addition, once a year at a special time called *taesinbang*, church leaders visit every church family over the course of a few days. These visits are particularly burdensome for the pastors, who often end up with no time in which to prepare their regular sermons. But few South Korean Protestant pastors can afford to ignore the extra work, because the visits help solidify the trust that members place in the church. The success of the visits plays a key role in whether church membership numbers go up or down.

Kido (Prayer)

It can be said that Church Y is among the least spiritualistic of Korean Protestant churches in terms of both Sunday services and other prayer meetings. Its members have good educational backgrounds, and the pastor gives intellectually stimulating sermons based on the Bible. Those in attendance praise the sermons for being insightful and logical rather than "hot," or frivolously emotional. Still, the emphasis on prayer in this church is as strong as in other churches.

For early morning prayer services, after the pastor gives a brief sermon on the Bible, everybody chants prayers aloud (*t'ongsŏng kido*). The prayers are repeated during the Friday all-night prayer meetings. Sunday sessions do not normally feature *t'ongsŏng kido* at Church Y, but they do occur even on that day in more ardently spiritualistic churches. Churchgoers, seemingly oblivious to each other's presence, chant these prayers with such fervor that their bodies sometimes shake. It is not uncommon for the mood of the church to become very boisterous. Most worshipers wish for personal good fortune in these prayers. Such wishes are called *kibok*.

South Korea's prayer practices are not unique among the world's religions; many faiths encourage their members to say prayers aloud. But prayer practices are the defining characteristics of South Korea's Protestant churches.

Prayer Houses

Prayer Houses (Kidowŏn) in South Korean Christianity

The word *kidowŏn* signifies special Protestant prayer facilities in South Korea, which can be used for a variety of purposes. It is estimated that over five hundred *kidowŏn* operate in South Korea, with about one-third of them located in the Seoul area. Prayer facilities were quite rare before 1945, when they began to flourish, and they became especially widespread after the Korean War. Behind the growth of prayer houses lies the emphasis on prayer imparted to Korean Christianity in the Great Revival Movement of 1907. Korean Christianity also took on a peculiarly mystic and eschatological tendency, another characteristic that contributes to the popularity of the prayer houses. We can detect a third undercurrent in traditional Korean folk religions, in which personal blessings are solicited through prayers.

We may classify South Korea's prayer houses into several types. First, with respect to administration, some prayer houses are operated by churches or religious sects, while others are run by individuals. With respect to the function of the prayer house, we notice three types. One type of prayer house is used for prayer meetings and meetings for deepening members' faith. A second type is used by worshipers for revival meetings (*puhŭnghoe*), featuring guest speakers. Finally, the third type of prayer house is used for medical treatment or healing. In reality, the functions of the three types overlap to some extent, but if we were to make generalizations, we could say that most prayer houses administered by church groups are used for prayer meetings and religious cultivation sessions, while most privately run places are used for revival meetings or healing.

Usually a prayer house is composed of a main building, a cafeteria, guest lodgings, and small booths in which people can engage in personal prayer. These booths are called *kidokul*, which literally means "caves for prayers." Most Korean prayer houses are located in the mountains, often with seats prepared in the nearby forests for private worship. Individuals who visit the prayer houses to attend meetings may also use these seats or booths for private prayer. At other times, individuals come to the prayer houses alone and use these seats to immerse themselves in religious thought and rid themselves of personal problems or pain.

Next, we present a case study of a bustling prayer house that is used as a medical treatment center.

Hallelujah Prayer House

South Korea has a large number of prayer houses that are used for medical treatment. Hallelujah Prayer House is exceptional in that it attracts up to seven thousand people every week.[4] Hallelujah Prayer House has seen phenomenal growth during the past ten years. It is operated by a woman named Kim Kye-hwa, who is addressed and referred to as *wŏnjangnim*. *Wŏnjang* means "director," and *nim* is an honorific form of address and reference.

The experiences that led Kim Kye-hwa to open the House were very similar to

those traditional shamans (*mudang*) have when they become shamans [Kim Kye-hwa 1989]. She was born into a non-Christian household in 1946, but converted when she married a Christian. At that time, however, her religious commitment was lukewarm at best. Within four years of the wedding she had a son, and her lifestyle had settled into that of a typical South Korean housewife. In Korea the problem of succession is settled once a son is born, so the mother's position in the household becomes more stable.

At the age of seven the boy was scalded to death by boiling water right before his mother's eyes. Kim Kye-hwa fell into a severe depression. Finally, she asked a shaman to perform a ritual in an attempt to comfort the spirit of her son. On her return home, she looked at a portrait of Jesus hanging on the wall and Jesus's eyes seemed to glare at her. She became scared and cancelled the shaman's ritual. Unable to rid herself of the grief over her son's death, she decided to swallow sleeping pills in an attempt to commit suicide. Just before she was about to take the pills, she thought she heard God's voice calling her to become a missionary.

At that time, Kim Kye-hwa did not fully understand what a good missionary did. She learned a little of the art of acupuncture and started treating patients. Through practice, she gradually developed the ability to tell which part of a patient's body caused a particular problem. In addition, she realized that just by covering the injured place with her hand (a procedure called *ansu*), she was able to miraculously cure the patient. She claimed that her ability to cure had been given to her by God, and the people who came to her in hopes of a cure believed what she said. She told everyone who came to her that he or she must attend a church as well.

In the beginning, Kim Kye-hwa gave daily medical treatment to people lined up on the side of the road, but in 1981 she rented a one-room apartment, founding Hallelujah Prayer House. In 1983, as the number of patients continued to increase, she moved out of the center of Seoul to a nearby mountainous area where she bought some land and a building. A year later she moved the facility to a wide tract of land in P'och'ŏn, 90 minutes east of Seoul. A well was dug on the property at Christmas the following year. It is said that the well contains God's "water of life" (*saengsu*), and anyone who drinks it or applies it to an injury will be cured.[5)]

Hallelujah Prayer House grew very quickly. Today, the center operates at seven different locations in South Korea, with additional facilities in Japan and the United States. Only Kim Kye-hwa is able to cure illnesses, so she goes to each South Korean Hallelujah Prayer House once a week, conducting fifteen treatment sessions every seven days. It is a very hectic schedule; she usually does her sleeping in the car on the way to her next location.

Patients and Healing

A prayer house is a destination of last resort for people who cannot be helped by orthodox medical technology. Users must be members of some Christian church, and must have exhausted every effort to be treated in a hospital. Such

people take up residence in the Hallelujah Prayer House, attend religious services several times a day, and receive Kim Kye-hwa's treatment while praying. Patients do not pay for food or lodging. Usually only the resident patients attend the prayer sessions unless Kim Kye-hwa is present.

When Kim Kye-hwa conducts a treatment session, people come from far and wide and join the resident patients in search of God's favor (*ŭnhye*) through her. At the P'och'ŏn center on Thursday afternoons, about seven thousand people from across the country fill the building to capacity. Hymns and gospel songs fill the air from thirty minutes before the service, and some people dance. Approximately three-fourths of all the worshipers are female. *T'ongsŏng kido* prayers are held, creating a tumultuous scene.

With the assembly at a feverish pitch, Kim Kye-hwa makes her appearance. She begins to sing praises and dance on the front stage. Worshipers break into a chorus, declaring "Amen!" and Hallelujah!" after each of her utterances. She heals the patients mostly by *ansu*, placing the palm of her hand face down over the injured part of the patient's body. She also conducts spiritual surgery (*sŏngnyŏng susul*), placing her hand on the patient, praying, and then sometimes making a cut and pulling the cause of the illness out of the body. She may remove a bloody clump which she claims is the source of a cancer. Patients who were unable to walk begin walking.

Members of the audience shout gospel songs and beat time with their hands while Kim Kye-hwa conducts the operations. From three to five patients receive such operations during a session. The audience witnesses the incurable being cured and believes that miracles have taken place.

Kim Kye-hwa has the charisma to attract people, and her forceful sermons captivate audiences. At times, she cries; at other times she is angry or laughs. She forcefully reiterates that if a person is a believer, he or she can be cured and can receive God's blessing. She makes almost no reference to Biblical passages, but what she says does not run against church dogma, either. In fact some twenty to thirty pastors who are sympathetic to Kim Kye-hwa and the prayer house, some of whom were cured in similar ceremonies, sit on stage during the service.

At the end of the service, the audience breaks into exulted prayer as Kim Kye-hwa speaks in tongues (glossolalia). The pastors in attendance give benediction. (Only pastors are allowed to give benediction, so Kim Kye-hwa never assists.) Before and after the main session, she blesses individuals by *ansu* on request.

Many church outsiders doubt that Kim Kye-hwa's spiritual surgery is truly medically effective, so both she and the prayer house receive a lot of criticism. Indeed, in a number of cases patients are not cured or even die. But it must be remembered that patients at the prayer house are grasping at their last hope, having been deemed incurable by modern science. The prayer house can be seen as a type of hospice. Their existence reflects both the inadequacies of the Korean medical insurance system and the prohibitive costs associated with hospital care.

Prayer Houses and Churches

The people who come to a prayer house looking for blessings are not organized members of that prayer house. They are members of other churches. They come to the prayer house for healing or for further religious satisfaction. As mentioned above, Kim Kye-hwa refuses to bless those who are not members of a church, and recommends that they join their own neighborhood church first. In other words, Hallelujah Prayer House and the churches complement each other.

While the pastors of conservative churches like Church Y never advise their members to go to prayer houses, they cannot object if their members do go. The Bible says that Jesus Christ himself performed such medical cures and miracles. All the pastors can do is to grimace. The church does not actively oppose Kim Kye-hwa because she neither professes to be Jesus reborn, nor claims to have miraculous powers. In fact, one of the powerful female members of Church Y went to a prayer house and was cured of cancer, and she spoke of her experiences at Church Y's prayer sessions. Thus, even though Church Y's pastors would like to to denounce the Hallelujah Prayer House, for practical reasons they cannot.

On the other hand, as mentioned above, some pastors actively support the efforts of Kim Kye-hwa and the prayer house. During the ceremonies, they sit on the stage near her and give blessings, thereby affirming the approval of the Christian church. The majority of these pastors run small churches (*kaech'ŏk kyohoe*). They often rent single rooms in buildings, and have not been pastors for long. Most of their church members are looking for mystical religious experiences. The pastors who have the closest ties to Hallelujah Prayer House often realize the largest membership increases in their churches.

In summary, prayer houses are places where believers can receive blessings and even have illnesses cured. The close association between prayer for blessings and medical cures at the prayer house echoes the quest for personal blessings emphasized in Protestant churches in South Korea.

The History of Christianity in Japan

Several contrasts between the histories of Christianity in Korea and Japan show how the fate of this religion in Northeast Asia has been contingent on local cultural and political circumstances. While an estimated twenty-five percent of the Korean population is Christian, only about one percent of Japanese call themselves either Protestant or Catholic.

Japan's encounter with Christianity began in 1549 when Reverend Francisco de Xavier of the Society of Jesus reached the islands' shores. At first, diligent missionary work won over many converts. It is estimated that over one million Japanese were baptized between 1549 and 1630. However, the military ruler Toyotomi Hideyoshi outlawed religious missionaries in 1587, sparking a wave of persecution against Christians. The law was strictly enforced, particularly starting

in the mid-seventeenth century, during the Edo Period. Christian groups that resisted the law—mostly in southwestern Japan—went into hiding, and so were known as *kakure kirishitan*. Since they were cut off from the Catholic church and had neither Bibles nor strong religious leaders, their practices and beliefs gradually took on a syncretistic character, incorporating elements of folk religions [Furuno 1973]. Religious freedom returned beginning with the Meji Period in the 1860s, and Catholic missionaries in particular worked hard to win back the believers who had been in hiding.

The country's first Protestant church was founded by American missionaries in the port city of Yokohama in 1872. Their first converts were mostly young intellectuals from the recently discredited warrior/samurai class. For them, Christianity provided a vehicle for grasping the essence of modern Western culture. Converts from the former warrior class influenced Japanese Christianity with their internalized samurai norms, including their high regard for abstinence [Caldarola 1979].

During the 1880s the number of Christians increased, but in the 1890s the spread of Christianity was beaten back by the rise of Japanese nationalism. Japanese churches did some proselytizing in Korea after the Russo-Japanese War, but had very little success. Christians in Japan, meanwhile, found themselves increasingly regulated by military authorities.

Not until Japan's defeat in World War II was Christianity on the islands revitalized. The American military occupation brought about swift changes in values, and interest in Christianity grew. Emperor worship was repudiated and democratic values were advocated. Younger people showed some interest in Christianity. With the support of Western religious organizations, churches tried to win more converts. Still, the number of worshippers has not risen much, and churchgoers are still largely limited to intellectuals.

Indeed, most of Japan's Christians, especially Protestants, have strong educational backgrounds. The sermons of pastors put emphasis on explaining Biblical passages, human sins, and atonement and redemption through Christ on the cross. Mysticism plays very little role in their sermons. Although religions in general have thrived in Japan since World War II, Christian churches have failed to win converts. During several postwar religious booms, new religions emphasizing mysticism have won the hearts of those craving religious satisfaction. The failure of Christian churches, consequently, may be due in part to their failure to accommodate mysticism.

Through its appeal to the intellectuals, Christianity has exerted considerable philosophical influence on modern Japanese society. Unlike Buddhism, which long ago adopted many elements of indigenous religions, or the thriving new religions, which skillfully integrate folk beliefs into their doctrines, the mainstream Christian churches have refused to adopt many Japanese elements. This may be another reason why Christianity has failed to attract the Japanese masses [Morioka 1970; Sumiya 1961 and 1983; Suzuki 1985].

While just one percent of Japan's total population is Christian, on the southern islands that comprise Okinawa prefecture some two percent of the inhabitants worship Christ. One reason for this is that the United States occupied the islands until as late as 1972. Furthermore, the relationship between Christianity and the traditional religions on the islands differs from that on Japan's main islands. Mystic spiritual experiences are appreciated in some gospel churches, even though religious observances such as ancestral rites and yearly festivals are rejected as idol worship. We see here shamanistic elements of the indigenous Okinawan religion preserved. It is noteworthy that this type of Okinawan church has seen considerable growth [Ikegami 1991].

Okinawa is historically and culturally quite different from the rest of Japan, and this difference is reflected in its approach to Christianity. When discussing the acceptance of Christianity in Korea compared to that of Japan, one cannot ignore Okinawa's special circumstances.

Christianity and Social Changes in South Korea

Finally, a few words must be said about the social and cultural context of South Korea's religious rejuvenation, in which Christianity—so alien to traditional values—has gained popularity since the 1960s.

Korea's traditional religions, as noted at the beginning of this paper, have been analyzed in terms of a dual model of Confucianism and shamanism. The basic units of social organization in Korea are families and patrilineal descent groups. Ancestral rites, which embody Confucian values, are held for four generations and serve to bind agnatic kinsmen to each other. Those women who feel alienated from male-oriented Confucianism often turn to shamanism and Buddhism for spiritual and personal satisfaction.

Since the 1960s Koreans have achieved extraordinary economic growth which has contributed to socioeconomic reform. Industrial technologies and business organizational structures underwent changes, the numbers of farmers and fishermen declined, mining and manufacturing industries boomed, and an influx of people enlarged the cities. Such demographic shifts led to an increase in the number of nuclear families in urban areas.

People who have moved to the cities no longer feel bound by traditional values, associated with patrilineal descent groups, that were dominant in rural areas. At the same time, they are cut off from the intimate social ties that characterize life in their home villages. Of course, this does not mean the demise of the family in South Korea. When some members of the family leave for the city, they remain part of that family. No matter where people live, agnatic bonds are tenacious. Many city residents come back to visit their home villages and pay respect to their ancestors, and many of those who remained in the villages later join their agnates in the cities.

Inevitably, however, it has been impossible to maintain the close ties that

existed in small villages. Since affiliation to agnatic kin groups has been so important and so strongly emphasized in Korea, affiliation to other organizations has tended to be weak. For new residents of cities, Christian churches offer substitute contexts in which to build new social networks. Particularly for women, who have a harder time meeting people, churches provide various ways to interact. Urban churches replace and cement the social and cultural ties cut off when families moved to cities.

One of the changes brought about by industrialization was the New Community Movement, known as the Seamaul Undong, which promoted the modernization of lifestyles and customs. Religious activities associated with shamans and their rituals were discouraged and regulated. Village festivals (*tongje)* and rites for village deities (*pyŏlsin kut*) were discontinued. As a result women, who used to appeal to shamanistic rituals for religious help, needed substitute means of solving the new problems that arose in modern social situations. While the patrilineal system offered women relatively low status, Christianity offered them more equality with men and a sense of importance that they were unlikely to find in the more exclusionist Confucian system. Accordingly, it comes as no surprise to learn that two-thirds of Korea's Christians are women. Women turn to the new values precisely because they feel alienated by male-oriented Confucianism.

We also need to pay attention to cultural factors that explain why the "blessings" offered by Korean Protestant churches have proved so appealing. These blessings attract people to the church with even more efficacy than the concepts of repenting sins or salvation by the cross. The blessings offered by the churches are similar to the personal benefits in the present life that are sought through prayer (*kibok*) in shamanism. In their quest for solutions to new problems, people turn to Christianity as a substitute for shamanism. While only a small portion of Christians have participated in the early morning prayer sessions since the Great Revival of 1907, people can seek help for their problems by swearing to attend these sessions for a hundred days. Also, it is not unusual for people to pray at the exciting all-night Friday services. People pray mostly for personal profit in the here and now.

The prayer houses epitomize these mystic prayers. Hallelujah Prayer House, in particular, satisfies the basic desires of the people by healing disease and by conferring blessings on those who witness miracles. Utilizing divine powers to heal, Kim Kye-hwa sings, dances, and speaks in front of the audience, practices not dissimilar from Korea's shamanism.

The resemblances between Korea's Christianity and shamanism are focal points for criticism from conservative religious factions. But even in those conservative churches, it is not rare for pastors and worshipers to be involved in mysticism. Mammoth churches such as Yŏŭido Full Gospel Church, which has more than five hundred thousand members, have gained adherents because they stress mysticism and include practices such as exorcism. The Korean case is comparable to the charismatic neo-Pentecostal movement, which is quite mystical

in orientation and has spread all over the world since the 1960s [Martin 1990].

During the last century the Korean peninsula has experienced Japanese colonization, division between north and south, the Korean War, postwar confusion, and rapid industrialization. People have been forced to cope with new problems and major changes in societal values. For many South Koreans, the response has been to accept Christianity as a way of reorganizing the traditional religious system.

Notes

1) For Korea's Christian history, see Yu [1982, 1987] and Min [1982].
2) Hidemura [1990] has a summary account of Church Y.
3) In Presbyterian churches, however, pastors must abide by the decisions of the elders. The turnover in pastors at Church Y resulted from disagreements between the elders and the pastors.
4) Concerning Hallelujah Prayer House, see Fuchigami [1992, 1993].
5) In Korea, it is widely believed that certain spring waters have medicinal powers. These waters are called *yaksu*. Thus, people are also interested in Hallelujah Prayer House's *saengsu*.

Romanizations

ansu (K)	안수 (按手)
ansu chipsa (K)	안수 집사 (按手執事)
chesa (K)	제사 (祭祀)
changno (K)	장로 (長老)
ch'ŏlya kidohoe (K)	철야 기도회 (徹夜祈禱會)
ch'udo yebae (K)	추도 예배 (追悼禮拜)
kaech'ŏk kyohoe (K)	개척교회 (開拓教會)
kakure kirishitan (J)	隠れ切支丹
kibok (K)	기복 (祈福)
kido (K)	기도 (祈禱)
kidokul (K)	기도굴 (祈禱窟)
kidowŏn (K)	기도원 (祈禱院)
kijesa (K)	기제사 (忌祭祀)
kuyŏk (K)	구역 (区域)
kuyŏkchang (K)	구역장 (区域長)
kuyŏk yebae (K)	구역 예배 (区域禮拜)
kwŏnsa (K)	권사 (勧師)
mudang (K)	무당 (巫堂)
pangŏn (K)	방언 (方言)
puhŭnghoe (K)	부흥회 (復興會)
puhŭngsa (K)	부흥사 (復興師)
pyŏlsin kut (K)	별신굿 (別神 굿)
saebyŏk kidohoe (K)	새벽기도회 (새벽祈禱會)
Saemaŭl Undong (K)	새마을 운동 (새마을運動)

saengsu (K)	생수 (生水)
Samil Undong (K)	삼일운동 (三一運動)
sinbang (K)	신방 (尋訪)
sŏngnyŏng susul (K)	성령수술 (聖靈手術)
tanghoe (K)	당회 (堂會)
Taebuhŭnghoe (K)	대부흥회 (大復興會)
taesinbang (K)	대신방 (大尋訪)
tongje (K)	동제 (洞祭)
t'ongsŏng kido (K)	통성기도 (通声祈禱)
ŭnhye (K)	은혜 (恩恵)
wŏnjangnim (K)	원장님 (院長님)
yaksu (K)	약수 (薬水)

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