



Intl Coalition for Religious Freedom 2012 End-of-Year APPEAL

Dan Fefferman

December 23, 2012

Dear Family and ICRF Supporters,

As we enter the 2012 Christmas season I am reminded that even Jesus Christ was not exempt from what he himself declared, quoting the prophet Micah: *a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law — a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.* Jesus then added: *Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.*

It sounds harsh. But according Chapter 3 of Mark's gospel, Jesus' own family tried to forcibly take him away from a house where he was preaching because *he is out of his mind*. It was this incident that prompted Jesus to ask: *Who are my mother and my brothers?* Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said: *Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother.* **How tragic that Jesus' family not only misunderstood him, but actually tried to remove him from his mission. Imagine if they had succeeded in breaking his faith.**

It is incredible that today our Unification Church brothers and sisters in Japan still face this kind of persecution, by their own families. Just this month another member was kidnapped. He is a 22-year-old student, a member who lived in the CARP center near his university. (To protect his privacy we can only use his initials.) "M.F." had been visiting his parents' home for a few days but did not come back; now he is out of contact. His cell phone is disconnected. His parents knew that he was a CARP member, and were opposed to his faith. Please keep M.F. in your prayers. Several other members have faced a similar ordeal this year; they can be held for months or even years. Worse, police refuse to accept missing persons' reports from non-relatives, saying "this is a family matter." Prosecutors refuse to indict the perpetrators when victims press charges. And courts have been extremely lenient in cases where victims bring civil suits against their tormentors.

I am writing this letter to appeal for your help to stop this outrage. Because the Japanese police are so unresponsive and the government refuses to protect our members' human rights, **the UC of Japan has appealed to our world membership to bring this outrageous matter to the attention of the international community.** This year we brought a U.S. Congressman to Japan to investigate the situation and he followed up with a briefing on Capitol Hill. Influence from ICRF pressed the U.S. State Department to mention the issue consistently in its annual International Religious Freedom Report.

Earlier this year, the respected European organization "Human Rights Without Frontiers" released a formal report on the issue after conducting a fact-finding tour and diligent research, confirming serious violations. And just this month, our coalition team brought the matter to the attention of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. Several nations formally complained to Japan about religious discrimination during its bi-annual Universal Periodic Review of human rights.

Despite all this, we still have more work to do in order to make Japan realize that it cannot ignore the problem. In the coming months, the important civil trial of the relatives and ‘deprogrammers’ of the 12-year confinement victim, Toru Goto, will continue in Tokyo. We are hopeful that powerful new evidence proving this crime will result in a just outcome. Kiyomi Miyama (see attached story) is one of the witnesses in that case. She herself was held for two years in the same building as Mr. Goto, and was required as part of her “rehabilitation” to witness Goto’s ordeal. Although she temporarily abandoned her faith during this period, she has since recovered it and is now testifying on Mr. Goto’s behalf. Kiyomi has also been helping us here in America with our work educating various U.S. agencies and the Congress about the issue.

My friend, we are appealing to you to join ICRF and help us to bring the persecution of our members in Japan to an end. With your financial gifts these last two years, we've made significant progress. The number of victims is down from about 200 a year when ICRF first started working on this issue, and is now under 10 per year today. We learned recently that 80 percent of the victims are women, and many of them are blessed; so their spouses and future children are also victims. The case of Mitsuko Antal (story attached), has a happy ending. Her heroic faith enabled her to persevere so that today she has five beautiful children and a wonderful husband. But in Kiyomi’s case her deprogrammers required her to divorce her husband before they would release her. They kept her locked in a small apartment for more than two years until the case became final. Can you imagine, being told you had to divorce your spouse in order to be released from captivity?

Let’s do all we can to help our sisters and brothers whose faith is being destroyed even as we speak. God gave the blessing of religious freedom first to America. And it was here that ‘deprogramming’ was first defeated. **Today, we need to transfer the blessing back to Japan.** Please consider a generous donation to ICRF this Christmas to help with our work. You can donate by credit card, PayPal or by personal check. To use PayPal or credit card, go to our website – www.religiousfreedom.com – and click on the ‘Donate’ button on the lower left side of the homepage. To donate by check, please send your contribution to:

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You have my earnest pledge that we will do our utmost to make it count.

Warmest Wishes for a Blessed New Year,

Dan Fefferman,
President
International Coalition for Religious Freedom