



SOUTH KOREA'S MAJOR HERETIC & PSEUDO- RELIGIOUS GROUPS

RightMedia

www.bami.kr

Author_ Cho Mit Eum / Translate_ David Lee

RightMedia

www.bami.kr

SOUTH
KOREA'S
MAJOR
HERETIC
&
PSEUDO-
RELIGIOUS
GROUPS

Preface

.....

*South Korean cults and
pseudo-religions are
making their way overseas with ease*

Shincheonji, which boasts the largest membership and influence out of any heretic and pseudo-religious group inside the country, has branches in 40 countries: 16 in Asia, 9 in Europe, 2 Oceania, 5 in Africa, 2 in North America and 6 in South America.

Good News Mission ^{Park Ock-soo, Salvation Sect} has successfully expanded beyond Asia and has established 202 churches around the world in places like the United States, Oceania and Africa. Life Word Mission ^{Rhee Yo-han, Salvation Sect} expanded in 81 different countries to create 338 centers.

Unification Church has officially sent out its missionaries to 195 countries. Furthermore, there are foreigners who are seduced into joining the group JMS, whose religious sect leader is a convicted sexual offender.

For Korean missionaries who are sent abroad, issues arising with these heretic and pseudo-religious groups are more problematic than any other issues with language or cultural differences. The fact that people overseas are limited in the awareness of these groups also becomes a big obstacle.

Bareunmedia ^{bami.kr, publisher Jo Mit-eum} is a media company dealing with theology and heretic and pseudo-religious groups. It started out by distributing general information about Shincheonji, Church of God, the Salvation Sect, Unification Church and JMS. Now, it plans to start distributing diverse content that can inform about these five groups overseas.

Also, it will inform public institutions abroad about the damages that these Korean heretic and pseudo-religious groups have caused in the past. Bareunmedia will also reach out to private organizations that have been doing business with these groups without any foreknowledge about their true identities to prevent any foreign victims from heresy and pseudo-religion.

The translating work this time around was made possible through the volunteering from several people who know about the importance of this ministry. Therefore, I would like to deeply thank David Lee ^{English}, Jin Meiying and Yao Yaxin ^{Chinese}, Koh Byung-uk, Won Min-hye and Lee Hyo-sook ^{Japanese} for their generous contributions.

2019 June 24

Bareunmedia Cho Mit-Eum Publisher

Shincheonji church of Jesus
the Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony

Shincheonji



Shincheonji has the most members out of any pseudo-religious group in South Korea. Religious sect leader Lee Man-hee was born in 1931 in Gyeongbuk Chungdo. Having formerly attended traditional churches, he later wandered from one pseudo-religious group in the country to the next, only to establish Shincheonji in 1980. Today, there are approximately 200 thousand members in the group, and an average of 10 thousand are added every year.

What do they believe?

The doctrine of Shincheonji is far off from the biblical and theological principles of traditional churches. South Korea's main religious body has called Shincheonji "an organization that doesn't deserve a theological criticism."

Followers of Shincheonji believe that Jesus came in the name of God 2,000 years ago, and that Lee Man-hee, who is the Counselor who comes in the name of Jesus, is the Spirit of Truth and will teach what Jesus proclaimed. The group proclaims to be the only place to have mastered the figurative language of the Bible, and they match the symbols and figurative speech in Revelations to the group's history. For example, a certain passage in Revelations corresponds to a specific year in Shincheonji's

history. They call this the truth doctrine. Shincheonji followers believe John wrote Revelations during an illusion and Lee saw this truth and is witness to it. Lee is unraveling 6,000 years of secrets according to his followers. In recent years, Shincheonji made the cringeworthy assertion that they would unite all religions in the world under Shincheonji.

Propagation methods

Regardless of Shincheonji's absurd doctrine, the group has approximately 200 thousand followers with about 10 thousand joining every year. Propagation through disguise is their most effective way to gain followers. They even pretend to be a traditional church and tell people to "be watchful of groups like Shincheonji" to propagate to Christians and the public. Recently, they have propagated while revealing their identities, but this is known to merely be a way to lessen the weariness of followers who have become tired of disguising their identities in order to propagate. With negative social perceptions towards Shincheonji growing, it has become quite difficult for the group to effectively propagate while revealing their true identities.

Shincheonji's propagation through disguise can be split into propagation within and outside the church. Both instances put importance on building a relationship of trust. Since Shincheonji followers justify lies that are for the purpose of propagation, many lies come out of the propagation stages. They disguise themselves as mission school administrators, employees at Christian organizations, missionaries, pastors, disguised churches with imitation seals, cultural centers, part-time job websites, lecturers, mentoring classes and other ways to meet people in a personal manner. So, it's useless to ask whether Shincheonji followers use a certain type of a propagation method-they use every type of method.

Because Shincheonji uses diverse methods in propagating people, it is very difficult to stop their efforts altogether. At the same time, one cannot assume that every approach by a stranger is from a Shincheonji member. So, what is one to do? The prevention procedure is quite simple, actually.

First, you should have the consciousness to check and verify. As mentioned before, there are many instances when the group disguises as teachers, missionaries, pastors and other professions that have

the public's confidence. Even if a person presents their card, you should check with the concerned organization or church. When taking a survey, it's important not to write down your personal information.

Secondly, Shincheonji's propagation ends with a Bible study session. Since no one automatically believes that Lee Man-hee is their savior, the group needs the chance to insert their doctrine to people. All types of misrepresentations and lies are used in this process. Bible study sessions in Shincheonji begins with 2-3 months of 1-on-1 or small group sessions, followed by 6-7 months of Bible study sessions with 20-40 students per class. They profess that the devil tries to distract members during Bible study sessions, so students are told not to inform their parents or their church leaders. They even tell students to be weary of pseudo-religious groups like Shincheonji. If a student in a Bible study group meets with people outside of the sessions, they have to quit the study sessions immediately.

Incidences

There are too many incidences involving Shincheonji to make a comprehensive list. It's especially concerning that too many families have been destroyed due to the group. Many students have quit their studies at school and have runaway from their homes. Lee Man-hee has publically preached to divorce from one's family if they don't believe in Shincheonji's doctrine, and many married couples have filed for divorce because their husband or wife wasn't a follower. There are also many criminal acts committed by the group such as kidnapping deserters of the group, organizing violence and surveillance through GPS devices.

Shincheonji, expansion overseas by establishing peace organizations

According to information from within Shincheonji, the group has expanded in 40 foreign countries with 22,478 overseas members as of January 13, 2019. The propagation methods overseas are the same as in South Korea. Forming relationships through diverse methods eventually lead to Bible study sessions.

In recent years, Shincheonji has successfully introduced itself as a peace organization to foreign countries. Domestically, the group puts on a massive festival under the theme of peace every year.

Shincheonji's most famous disguised festivals are HWPL^{Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light}, IWPG^{International Women's Peace Group} and IPYG^{International Peace Youth Group}.

The main reasons to organize these events is to clear their negative image, unite their followers and raise funds for the organization. Their doctrine takes a fair share. Many foreigners are invited to these festivals. The participation of foreigners have an important meaning to the group's followers. Shincheonji suggests a new motto every January 1 and decides on the year's goal. The motto of 2014 was the "creation of the white body." They refer to the "great multitude with white clothes that no one could count" in Revelations 7:9 as the "white body." When the number of followers become 144 thousand, they believe they will be united with the pure souls in heaven and become godly. This is Shincheonji's central doctrine of godly unity. When godly unity happens, the masses who repent will become the "white body."

Shincheonji's administrators have taught followers that the foreigners attending their peace festivals are the "white body." So, followers are under the false impression that the "white body" is descending upon them. Whether the foreigners in attendance are past presidents or acting ministers, they are mere tools for the altered doctrines of Shincheonji. One youth organization from the Netherlands that was invited to South Korea by Shincheonji went back to their country and confessed that they were used by Shincheonji's disguised religion.

Meanwhile, Shincheonji has stated it will attend international conferences in order to enact international laws in their favor. An international law's official definition is "a law that is based on a stated or indicated agreement within the country." There are two types of pacts within international laws: two-party pacts and multiparty pacts. Two-party pacts are between two countries while multiparty pacts happen among three countries or more. It's common for these laws to be enacted through the UN or another international organization's meeting. In a limited scope, some international bodies have the power to enact on international laws.

In response to Shincheonji's intention to enact international laws, Korean governmental representatives stated, "the principal agent in the enactment of international laws is the country. It is impossible to enact on international law without the involvement of the country. If individuals who have officially been recognized as representatives of the country are not in attendance, it is impossible to enact on an international law."

World Mission Society Church of God

Church of God



World Mission Society Church of God, or Church of God, believes Ahn Sahng-hong, who died in 1985, to be God and Jang Gil-ja to be Mother God. A past member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ahn Sahng-hong established the Church of God Jesus witness council in 1964 and moved its headquarters from Busan to Seoul. After the death of Ahn Sahng-hong, the organization was disbanded into several different churches, and the church with the most followers has become the Church of God that praises Jang Gil-ja as Mother God.

An interesting fact is that Ahn Sahng-hong doesn't recognize the existence of a Mother God. When Ahn was alive, a woman by the name of Um Su-in asserted the Mother God theory, but Ahn criticized the theory as the teaching of the devil. After the death of Ahn, Kim Joo-cheol became the executive and declared Jang Gil-ja as Mother God. Church of God, which declares Jang Gil-ja as Mother God, can be seen as an imitation of Ahn's church that didn't continue his teachings.

What do they believe?

Church of God believes that they are the sole church that God sent to save humankind. The Father God from the Old Testament coming as the Son in the New Testament is Jesus, and Ahn Sahng-hong is believed to be the second coming of Jesus. Misinterpreting the bride in Revelations 22:17 as Mother God, they profess that the Bible says the Mother God will save mankind. They teach to keep

the Passover and the Sabbath holy in order to be saved, and they claim cross replicas in churches to be idol worship. Also, in 1988, 1999, and 2012, they became controversial with claims of the world ending.

The extortion of money through claims of the world's end

The biggest consequences of heretic and pseudo-religious groups' claims of the world's end is the taking away of money. Church of God used the world's end to instill fear into its followers while offering refuge. The refuge they profess is the Church of God, or "Zion." Followers are educated to escape towards Zion when devastation starts to arrive from the north. According to deserters from the church, the north signifies North Korea. The threats of nuclear weapons from North Korea start the world's end, and the only way of survival is inside the building of the Church of God.

Therefore, the construction of the building was an effective method in taking away money from followers. Followers were made to think, "since the world is about to end, better to have my inheritance in heaven rather than on earth, and the best way to please God is to build his temple." They repeatedly heard sermons that preached this message. Beginning with cancellations of savings and insurance, followers even sold their homes. Funds for the construction of their buildings constitute the biggest portion of finance for the church. Donations for construction was sometimes 10 thousand times bigger than general offerings in some of the regional churches.

While it's not easy to assess the number of followers in Church of God, the increase of their building sites has given reason to assume their increase in followers. However, deserters from the church claim the number of followers are, in fact, decreasing.

Victims and deserters of Church of God have been protesting in front of the church for several years now. They estimate the number of followers in the church by taking into account on-site observations and testimonies from deserters. It has been agreed that the number of followers has dwindled significantly since the mid-2000s. Such estimates put the number of Church of God followers at 20 thousand.

One deserter of the group said, "Looking at the construction of new church buildings may instill the impression that Church of God's numbers are increasing. However, new buildings are appearing as the church is selling off their rental buildings in order to build new buildings."

Propagation methods

The Church of God's propagation methods are split into three major categories. First, they use surveys that bring out the curiosity of people. 1)What do you think about the existence of God? 2)Which day of the week was Passover in the Bible? 3)What type of book is the Bible? 4)Which religion fits most well with the customs of Koreans? 5)Where did Christmas come from? 6)Which circumstance is most heretical? 7)What do you think about the end days?

Secondly, they approach pedestrians by showing video clips on their smartphones or PC tablets. They show promotional clips of Mother God or Church of God. They also try to instill fear by showing clips of natural disasters and the end days.

Thirdly, they specifically target mothers. Church of God likes to target mothers who have children. These followers form close relationships with mothers by cleaning the house and babysitting for mothers. At a time when mothers with young children miss their own mothers, Church of God attempts to create a motherly image in order to attract mothers to become new followers.

Warning on volunteering services

Since Church of God has caused numerous social issues including money extortion and claims of the end days, the church has used volunteering services to make up for their negative image. The International We Love U Foundation and ASEZ are their major volunteering bodies. They expose their volunteering activities in the press on purpose in order to create this image.

Salvation Sect



In April 16, 2014, the ferry Sewol departed from Incheon and sank near Jeonnam Jindo on its way to Jeju Island. 295 out of the 476 passengers drowned, and most of these passengers were students from Ansan Danwon High School going on a field trip. In the aftermath of the tragedy, the Salvation Sect began to appear in the media. The press would occasionally use the term “pseudo-religion” in the past, but terms such as “heresy” and “Salvation Sect” that had religious undertones would be avoided. Yet, after the Sewol incident, the two words would be occasionally used publicly. Reports on Yoo Byung-eun’s Salvation Sect would headline newspapers for a month.

Official title

There is a need to go over the official title of the Salvation Sect. The title “Salvation Sect” was given by traditional churches as these groups professed false notions towards the topic of salvation. Therefore, Salvation Sect is not an official title of a group, and it neither identifies one group. There are three groups that can be seen as the origins of the so-called Salvation Sect: the Evangelical Baptist Church of Korea ^{Kwon Shin-chang and Yoo Byung-eun, both dead}, Rhee Yo-han’s Life Word Mission□which seceded from the Evangelical Baptist Church of Korea due to disagreements with Yoo Byung-eun’s focus on the growth of his enterprise, and Park Ock-soo’s Good News Mission□which became a powerhouse on its own accords. All three groups are known under the title Salvation Sect, but the groups are separate from each other and distinction is needed in understanding each of the groups.

Wrongful concept of sin

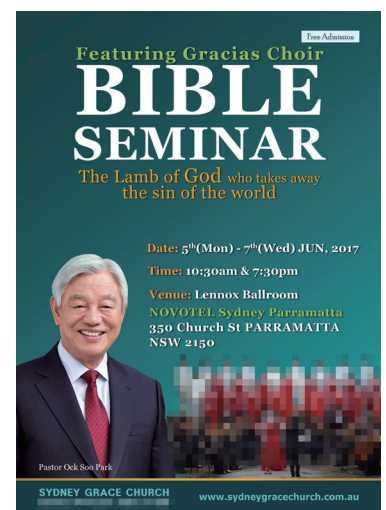
The concept of salvation in the Salvation Sect is different from the understanding of salvation in

traditional churches. Traditional churches profess that believing in Jesus Christ will bring one's salvation. However, the Salvation Sect believes that one gets a "revelation" that they have received salvation. Their understanding of sin is also different; the Salvation Sect sees sin as an ontological concept. It means that a person will be free from sin after receiving salvation. According to the Salvation Sect, a person who confesses he is a sinner after receiving salvation is not truly saved. But sin is not an existence by itself; rather, it should be understood in a relational concept.

Sin is the act of disobeying God. One must understand sin under the relationship between God and humans. Also, the Bible talks about salvation in the past, present and future. One receives salvation once they believe in Jesus Christ ^{past}, but one lives for the completion of salvation ^{present} and the salvation is completed once Jesus Christ comes again to the world ^{future}. Paul says, "continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling." ^{Phil 2:12}. People who have accepted Jesus Christ as their savior have already received salvation, but it is not complete. We cannot ignore the tension that exists between the terms "already" and "not yet."

End-time theory of Rhee Yo-han's Salvation Sect

There is a serious problem with Rhee Yo-han's Salvation Sect's end-time theory. The exact date of the "end-time" has not been specified, but they have a general idea of when it will happen. The 80-year-old Rhee Yo-han has preached that Jesus' second coming will happen while he is still alive. This is the result of interpreting Revelation's symbols and incidents to the modern day. An incident in a specific verse of a specific chapter in Revelation is translated into an event that happened in today's time. This is an extreme dispensationalism approach to the end-time theory.



Advertising poster of Park Ock-soo's Salvation Sect's conference in Australia

The diverse cultural and propagation activities of Park Ock-soo's Salvation Sect

Park Ock-soo leads the pack in propagating through culture. The International Youth Fellowship ^{IYF} is active in many university campuses. The group organizes events such as IYF World Culture Camp, Minister of Youth World Forum, World Education Leaders Forum, World Cultural Dance Festival, World Culture Exhibition, Good News Corps Overseas Volunteer, English Camp, English Speech Contest and other events that grab the interest of the youth. Children and youth from all over the world attend events sponsored by IYF, and high-positioned officials, parliamentarians,



Advertising poster for Australia's IYF World Camp

university presidents and famous sports stars speak in these events.

Not all of these attendees are part of Park Ock-soo's Salvation Sect; they accept their invitations from a supposedly religious organization to talk and give out inspiration to youth who are struggling. Many other heretic and pseudo-religious groups organize similar disguised festivals, but IYF festivals usually are called by their official titles. So, the best way to stay away from Park Ock-soo's Salvation Sect is to notice the above-mentioned events.

In recent years, Park Ock-soo's Salvation Sect has propagated by using lectures from the Training Institute for Mind. Schools and universities across the country, as well as in public offices and all around the world, mind and personality education is being taught. According to the Training Institute for Mind, there have been about 4,800 lectures with 3.86 million attendees since 2013 to November 2015. This type of mind education is ideal to conceal religious intentions when propagating. Mind education in the Salvation Sect started with Park, but he has stated that the focus in these lectures is to "not trust one's self, but to trust God." Good News Mission is gaining public confidence through these mind education lectures and has even been successful in making its way abroad.

Park's Salvation Sect has established the Christian Leaders Fellowship ^{CLF} and the Korea Christian Association ^{KCA} as propagation tools. These acronyms have caused quite a stir. CLF has the same acronyms as the Christian Lawyer's Fellowship. KCA, on the other hand, has the same title but differing acronyms as Korea Christian Association ^{KACC}.

By making an infant care community, Park's Salvation Sect has also propagated to families with infants. The group created the popular infant care community called "Mamkium" in Seoul's Seocho-gu district. This community has even been selected by the Seocho-gu gender equality business and Yangjae Social Welfare Center in 2016. Their activities have been introduced on EBS and KBS1 radio, and the group has been selected by the Seocho-gu Naegok-dong community initiative. Having offices in Seoul, Daejeon and Gangneung, the group also keeps close contact with local politicians. Good News Mission keeps Mamkium as its head while operating Suwon's Mamoni, Daejeon's Mamsoul, Daegu's Mamdream and other communities in other regions. These groups carry out recreational events for moms and kids, and they invite lecturers from the National Training Institute for Mind to incorporate mind education to these programs. Most of these lecturers are affiliates of Good News Mission. They also organize big performances by groups such as the Gracias Choir and publish the magazine "Tomorrow" to be distributed to cafes nation-wide.



A brochure of the CLF Conference organized by Park Ock-soo's Salvation Sect in Australia

Family Federation for World Peace and Unification

the Unification Church



The Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, or the Unification Church, was established by Moon Sun-myung Born 1920 under name Moon Yong-myung. Moon proclaims to have met Jesus in 1935, where he was called to complete the salvation of mankind. Having spent six months at Kim Baek-mun's monastery in Israel, he established the Foundation for the Support of HAS-UWC on May 1, 1954.

What do they believe?

Korean Adventists believe in substantially similar doctrines. The Unification Church holds a wrongful understanding of Jesus Christ. They deny Jesus' holiness and his physical resurrection. They, however, believe Jesus was born through the sexual relations between High Priest Zachariah and Mary, while denying Jesus' birth through the Virgin Mary. They even state that it wasn't God's plan for Jesus to be crucified on the cross. The death of Jesus Christ on the cross signifies the failure of his ministry, and Moon is believed to complete the ministry by being the second coming of Jesus who came down on the eastern nation of South Korea.

Eve is believed to have had sexual relations with the devil when she ate from the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Afterwards, when Eve had sexual relations with Adam, the blood of the devil is believed to have gone into the descendants of Adam. The return of humans under the depravity and control of the devil to God's original purpose is known to the followers as the cancellation return. Moon Sun-myung is the true father and his wife Han Hak-ja is the true mother in the Unification Church, who are sent to revive the corrupted mankind. Han Hak-ja started to deify Moon Sun-myung once he died. She claims she is the only-begotten daughter of God who is born every 6,000 years, sinless.

The significance of mass weddings

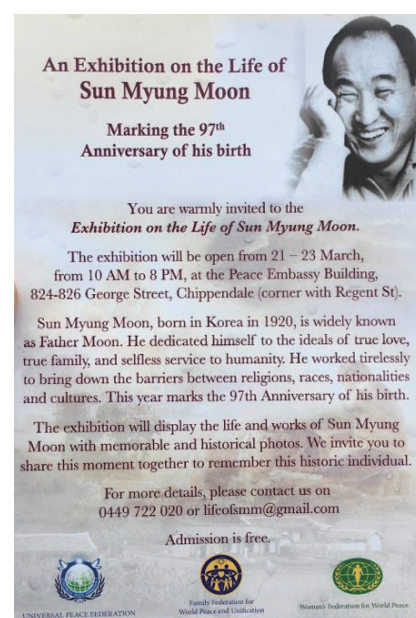
The mass wedding ceremonies of the Unification Church are quite well-known. These ceremonies are

another part of the Unification Church's understanding of salvation. Humans who are corrupted by the blood of the devil can cleanse their bloodline, or descendants, by marrying the person chosen by their true parents-Moon Sun-myung and Han Hak-ja. Mass wedding ceremonies consist of three important rituals: communion with the true mother, marrying couples hitting each other in acceptance of each other's sins, and the third day festival. The communion is meant to get rid of the blood of the devil. Then, the marrying couple moderately hit each other three times. Signifying a strike on the sexual immortality of the couple, it imitates how the angel struck Jacob's hip bone. 40 days after this striking ceremony, the couples have sexual relations for three days and become a blessed family that has sworn a sacred oath.

True or fake families?

Did Moon Sun-myung and Han Hak-ja, who professed to be the true parents, convey an image of a true family? In 1998, Moon's daughter-in-law, Hong Nan-sook, revealed secrets of Moon's family in her book *In the Shadow of the Moons*. She later went on to appear on a US television show to expose Moon's unethical and illogical nature. The Moon's family is having a hegemonic warfare over authority.

Moon Hyung-jin, Moon Sun-myung's seventh son, has been mentioned quite often as the possible religious successor. However, after Moon Sun-myung's death, Han Hak-ja deified herself and took charge of power. Moon Hyung-jin called Han Hak-ja a descendant of the devil, and she cursed Moon Hyung-jin as an immoral being.



Pamphlets distributed by the Unification Church in Australia

The Unification Church and Japan

The Unification Church has had tremendous success in Japan. It's not an overstatement to say that money from Japan is what is keeping the church afloat. Japanese followers think of South Korea as the country of Moon Sun-myung, the second-coming of Jesus Christ. They have also been brainwashed into the doctrine that they have to ask for the forgiveness of their ancestors who conquered Korea in the past. The Unification Church has tricked followers by saying that spirits live within objects such as stamps and ceramics and has, consequently, caused great financial damages to its followers. In Japan, Christian organizations and lawyers alike have come together to counsel and offer legal support to victims of the Unification Church. As compensation for damages requests have been accepted for past followers of the Unification Church, it looks as if the church's activities in Japan will be affected.

Christian Gospel Mission

JMS



They are known as JMS. Religious sect leader Jung Myung-seok was born in Cheongnam Geumsan Wolmyung-dong on March 16, 1945 as the middle child in a family of six boys and one girl. He claims to have heard callings from above since he was 11. After his dischargement from the military, he says he went from heaven to hell, and then to the spiritual world. Having entered a local Unification Church in Geumsan, he served as an anticommunist assistant administrator. In 1975, he felt called and officially left his hometown in 1978 to start his plans. He established Ehchun Church in Seoul in 1980, and this establishment eventually became today's JMS. The group's official title is CGM, and JMS are the initials for the name Jung Myung-seok. Yet, CGM says JMS stands for Jesus Morning Star.

The notorious sexual criminal

Jung Myung-seok is remembered as a notorious sexual criminal. Many people were shocked when it was revealed that women followers were offered to Jung Myung-seok as wives and servants, while their nude videos were sent to him. Afterwards, Jung Myung-seok was under investigation starting in 1999 for sexual assault charges. During this time, he fled the country, only to be captured in China and sent to South Korea in 2007.

He was sentenced to 10 years in prison for moderate rape, rape and indecent assault charges among others. In February 18, 2018, he was released from prison with an electric ankle bracelet. His grotesque sexual offenses also happened in Japan, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and other countries. Many newspapers around the world wrote features on him.



Look at interview with a JMS
deserter from Australia

Main Doctrine

JMS believes Jung Myung-seok to be this generation's messiah. Jung and followers he has acknowledged are known to have experienced spiritual rapture. March 16, Jung's birthday, is known to be the day when the son of God ascended to heaven and gave everything to Jung beforehand.

Active even with Jung Myung-seok locked up

Since the imprisonment of Jung Myung-seok, countermeasure efforts against JMS has not been as stressed as for other heretic and pseudo-religious groups. The rise in influence and damages by Shincheonji, Church of God, Salvation Sect and others was a major reason for this inattentiveness to JMS. Yet, JMS has continued to be active around college campuses and abroad even with Jung's arrest.

The most representative method of propagation by JMS is using cultural events that have a religious color to them. But the fundamental purpose of these events is propagation. These are measures to attract followers to their Bible study groups. The group organizes events for modeling, cheerleading, soccer, music clubs and other cultural events that form close relationships.

Simple prevention methods towards heretic and pseudo-religious groups



There are a lot of heretic and pseudo-religious groups in South Korea, and every year tens of thousands are deceived by these groups. Their overseas expansion is also significant. The methods of propagation in South Korea and abroad are quite similar. It is, however, surprisingly simple to avoid these heretic and pseudo-religious groups.

First, you must know the exact official names of these heretic and pseudo-religious groups. These groups are known to hide their identity while using their official names. If the main protestant denominations in South Korea know the official names of the heretic and pseudo-religious groups and enact on the prohibition of these groups and closely observe for any followers of these groups, it will be very helpful in countering these groups.

Secondly, we should pay attention to the various disguise and impersonation tactics. The age of judging by outer appearance is gone. Heretic and pseudo-religious groups operate as disguised churches, disguised clubs and so on. From impersonating the main protestant denomination of South Korea, they make signs for their churches by stealing the logo of traditional denominations. Consequently, a person should not enter a church by only looking at the signs outside. It doesn't take too much effort to confirm the denomination of the church and reaffirm that the church belongs to the denomination. The disguised clubs and events in universities are the main methods of

propagation by heretic and pseudo-religious groups. Bible study, soccer, dancing, musical clubs and other clubs are for the reason of propagation. A student who is a follower of a heretic and pseudo-religious group will hold an event in a college lecture room and organize a seminar taught by one of their fellow followers who will lecture on various topics that college students might be interested in. One should not let their guard down because the event is going on in school. One must find out if the school recognizes the event, who the organizer is, and what the event's history is like.

Thirdly, one should not leave any personal information in any surveys. Surveys are the most classical propagation method used by these groups. The purpose of the survey is to collect various personal information such as religion, telephone number, school, etc. More than a survey, it is a tactic to gain access to personal information. After the survey, they thank you the people for their participation and try to get them to talk deeper about their answers to the survey.

Fourthly, we should not attend Bible study sessions outside of the church that are not verified by a church administrator. The end goal of the various disguises, impersonations, and meetings is Bible study. They announce at the beginning of study sessions to keep the meeting a secret to their family and church leaders as the devil will attempt to distract each of them from the study sessions. Shincheonji Bible study sessions start with the warning, "Be careful of heretic groups like Shincheonji." No one believes the religious sect leader as their savior from the beginning. The Bible study sessions are meant to delve into the sect leaders rather than Jesus. Just by avoiding these unverified Bible study sessions, you will not be deceived by heretic and pseudo-religious groups.

Unfortunately, 10,000 people fall under the propagation methods of these heretic and pseudo-religious groups every year-just for newcomers to Shincheonji. This is largely the result of joining unverified Bible study groups. Whether it was a coincidental meeting or a meeting planned by a close companion, one must stop now. These heretic and pseudo-religious groups use any method that can bring people together. It is useless to wonder if heretic and pseudo-religious groups use a certain method, because they most likely will use that certain method for propagation. There is a need to be weary of the ever-evolving status of these groups. Ultimately, it is more important to be aware that Bible study sessions come after their approaches rather than how they approach people.

Pseudo-religious mechanisms seen through brainwashing and religious addiction



The definition of pseudo is, “seems similar on the outside, but fundamentally different.” However, individuals who have been greatly affected by pseudo-religious groups most likely refuse to identify these groups with a limited scope. By setting an exact date as the end day and deifying a particular person, pseudo-religious groups have caused great damages in many ways.

Many people don’t understand why others fall for the ungrounded doctrines of heretic and pseudo-religious groups. Believing a sexual offender or criminal as one’s savior and donating one’s whole savings doesn’t sound logical at first. But these groups should not be overlooked. The reason for falling into heresy and pseudo-religion is not only due to the fictitious doctrines.

Today, heretic and pseudo-religious groups are efficient in using people's psychology, situations and environment. For people who are vulnerable in front of relationships, these groups offer a hand, and for those who have problems in the family, groups offer answers to familial problems. Not many fall into heresy and pseudo-religion by initially believing in their doctrines; their doctrines are a secondary problem. It's the relationships and the psychological factors that can make doctrines seem plausible; this is the problem. For those who have not been cared for and loved by their families or their communities, they can be attracted by followers from pseudo-religious groups who come around as kind and religious people.

An interesting fact when meeting many past members of heretic and pseudo-religious groups is that a follower of JMS ^{Jung Myung-seok} cannot understand why people follow the Church of God, and people in Shincheonji don't know why people become followers of JMS. There is a specific characteristic for each heretic and pseudo-religious group, and people who fall for these groups is proof that they responded to a group's uniqueness. Whether it is about relationships, family affairs, or falling for someone with a lot of authority, there are many reasons other than the groups' doctrine that people make people fall for heresy and pseudo-religion.

The problem arises when, in addition to the doctrines, followers respond to these various reasons and gradually become addicted to heresy and pseudo-religion. As there are Christians who are devout and less devout within traditional churches, there are followers of heretic and pseudo-religious groups who have strong and weak faith. There are those who trust in the doctrine and the pseudo-doctrine as well as those who are dubious. Administrators in heretic and pseudo-religious groups use various methods to change the dubious believers. Brainwashing is the method they choose to use to make these followers become addicted.

Introduction to the scarcity model, continued by brainwashing and addiction

How does brainwashing become addiction? One needs to understand about religious addiction in order to answer this question. Religious addiction is a type of addiction that has been researched by scholars since the 1990s. Addiction is generally split into substance abuse such as narcotics and drugs, and behavioral addiction that includes work and other activities. Behavioral addiction, then, is split into addiction that is visible such as reading and fishing while there are invisible types of addiction like relationships. Religious addiction is a classic example of an invisible behavioral addiction.

Religious addiction means "obsession with religious elements other than God". It means that the motive of a faithful life to the church are not because of God, but due to relationships, one's duty, or the pastor. Heretic and the pseudo-religious groups make their leaders as a fake God, and these individuals become the source of attending these fringe churches. Therefore, heresy and pseudo-religion are 100% religious addiction.

The degree of addiction is also different. There is mild and severe addiction. Religious addiction is the same. Religious sect leaders and their administrators try to make followers serious religion addicts. They use brainwashing to accomplish this feat.

The process of brainwashing begins with a "scarcity model" (or a zero-sum model). The scarcity model is one of the twenty addictive characteristics listed by Anne Wilson Schaef in *When Society Becomes an Addict*. The scarcity model starts from the premise that matter (or anything) is scarce and not everyone can share the benefits of it. Therefore, scarcity leads to obsession, and obsession leads to addiction.

Pseudo-religion uses a scarcity model for salvation. For example, the symbolic number of 144,000 in the book of Revelations is the number of people who will be saved. Followers devote their lives to be included in the 144,000. Devotees aiming to fall into the 144,000 enter a tunnel vision where they cannot see anything. This tunnel vision is like driving inside a dark tunnel where only the tunnel's exit is shining and all else is dark. In psychology, tunnel vision only lets people focus solely on the situation at hand so that everything else happening around them is blocked from view.

Mechanism completion through low dependability and exclusive rewards

The greatest reason why pious religious people cannot leave from these groups is because of fear. Those who are brainwashed are afraid they will be deprived of salvation if they leave the organization. Indeed, religious sect leaders teach that followers will be cursed if they leave the group. The followers, therefore, are surrounded by fear. A follower who left the Church of God confessed that he was afraid to even enter the chapel of a traditional church for a wedding ceremony. This was due to the teaching that a person will be cut off from salvation when they set foot inside a traditional church. His body left the Church of God, but fear was still present inside him.

Fear bring dependency. Followers cling onto pseudo-religion that can solve their respective fears. Dependency that derives from fear brings on an exclusive reward structure. This means that a reward is solely for the taking by a specific group of people. Religious sect leaders tell followers that every

need is fulfilled through their pseudo-religion. Therefore, followers should not look beyond their organization. They teach that the internet is the fruit of the tree of knowledge to block information to enter the minds of followers. They try to satisfy what followers like and need inside of the group. This explains why followers turn their backs to their families. Followers say they became brainwashed and addicted to the fact that there was a better community other than the family.

Japanese medical doctor and dependency psychologist Isomura Takeshi has described the monopoly of reward and dependency that derives from pseudo-religion in his book *Duplicated Brainwashing*.

“In order to completely control a person, every reward needs to be invested with the religious sect leader...their job is to cut all ties outside of the pseudo-religious group. The thought that ‘no one other than the religious sect leader can be trusted’ needs to be instilled in their minds. Therefore, followers need to be separated from their families and other human relationships to build an exclusive relationship. Pseudo-religion’s exclusive reward structure is very similar to the effect of dependency. This is because dependency behaviors such as tobacco, alcohol, drugs, sex, gambling, and games are forcibly releasing dopamine to lower one’s sensitivity, thereby making it difficult to feel happiness in everyday life. One cannot enjoy the full 100% of any action. Whether it's a meal or a break. ... Even if you are met with the treat of divorce, you cannot escape from dependency. To the person, the wife and the child are already not reasons for happiness. Outside of the person he depends on, there is no one else to rely on or feel happiness from. ”

Isomura Takeshi, "Lee In Ae in *Duplicated Brainwashing* (The Forest Publication, 2010), 75-79.

For a follower, pseudo-religion is something that has fulfilled the hunger inside that even their own family could not satisfy; it is a sort of reward. In summary, a follower who has been brainwashing into the doctrine falls into tunnel vision, and the scarcity model of salvation instills fear from within. Pseudo-religion provides a solution to this fear by introducing the exclusive reward structure and, eventually, controls the follower. This is the mechanism of pseudo-religions.



South Korea's major heretic and pseudo-religious groups

RightMedia

www.bami.kr

