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이승훈
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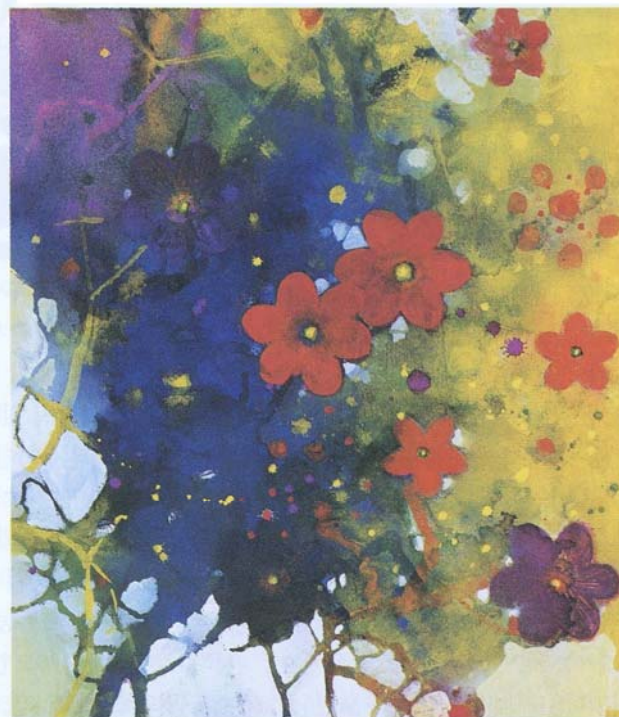
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Why is the Christian Gospel Mission back in the spotlight?

Recently, the media has been talking about the Christian Gospel Mission (hereafter CGM). A group called the 'JMS Damage Control Group' (hereafter DCG) actively opposes the CGM, and was started by those who alleged that they were harmed by President Jung Myung Seok. After a few months, the DCG formed a network all throughout the nation, and pushed forth with class action claims against President Jung and the CGM. The DCG has dug up old stories against JMS, re-produced various materials leaked from the CGM and made witnesses speak.

Reporter Kim Hyung-Gyu



Why is this old case back in the spotlight?

The story about JMS had been the focus of much public attention. It seemed like it was all over and forgotten once President Jung was imprisoned. However, recently, the DCG dug up old stories and demanded compensation from the CGM. Why?

In an interview for a certain newspaper, 'OO News', the representative of the DCG 'A', stated, 'President Jung continues to be revered as the Messiah by the organization. This has caused many to be hurt and sex crimes continue to be committed even now.' He added that he was ordained in an established Christian denomination. He also stated, 'I was part of the JMS executive and have verified that President Jung took sexual favors systematically.' However, I closely inspected his statements and detected problems. President Jung had been imprisoned for 4 years and 10 months since 2007 until now. Most of the materials 'A' relied on were from before his imprisonment. Furthermore, the reliability of that material is questionable, as they were not direct evidence. Also, OO News, which had published news based on the interview with 'A', later amended

its report on March 19, and apologized and expressed regret towards President Jung and the CGM for defamation.

There was another person, 'B'. In 2013, 'B' had assaulted someone who was anti-CGM, and he had been escaping from the offence for 9 years. In a recent interview, 'B' stated, 'I was abetted by Pastor 'C', who calls himself the first person in JMS, and was requested by 'D', a member of the bodyguard department to commit this offence.' In another interview, he even went on to say that he had received direct orders from President Jung himself. 'A' insisted that President Jung had commanded 'B' to commit crimes through sermons he wrote while in prison. An article was even released about how CGM made organized threats to people who had left the CGM.

However, the only evidence supporting these assertions was nothing more than their own words, absent of clear and thorough evidence. 'A' had referred to a sermon as a command to him for committing a crime. However, the contents of that sermon were simply about Heaven's judgment upon those who partake in evil, and did not point towards any specific person. Also, 'B' had claimed

that 'D', a member of the bodyguard department, had caused him to commit the offence. As it turned out 'D' was not part of the bodyguard department in 2003. Rather, he was preparing for an entrance exam to join the President of Korea's bodyguards and was dragged into the offence unwittingly. In 2006, 'D' was arrested. Anti-CGM people said to 'D' and his parents, 'If you agree to testify that you had committed the crime under President Jung's command, we will negotiate with you.' The anti-CGM people also tied this assault case to a separate assault case, and petitioned a court to investigate who was behind these crimes. However, 'D' confessed that he committed the crime on his own, being an unfortunate occurrence. Hence, he was sentenced to 2 years imprisonment.

The CGM stated that Pastor 'C', whom 'B' claimed to be the abettor, was not a representative of the CGM headquarters, but rather the head leader of a church. Pastor 'C' later left the CGM and had been active with the DCG after joining.

The claims made by the DCG were that people offered their life and everything to President Jung because they knew him to be the Messiah. They even did not feel any guilt when engaging in anti-social behavior. However, when they changed their mind, and thought that he was not the Messiah, they were greatly shocked and dejected. Hence, they deserved to be compensated. The question then is; is President Jung treated as the Messiah within CGM? A senior member in the CGM stated, 'we do not treat President Jung as the Messiah. He has been teaching that Jesus is the Messiah for over 30 years. There were

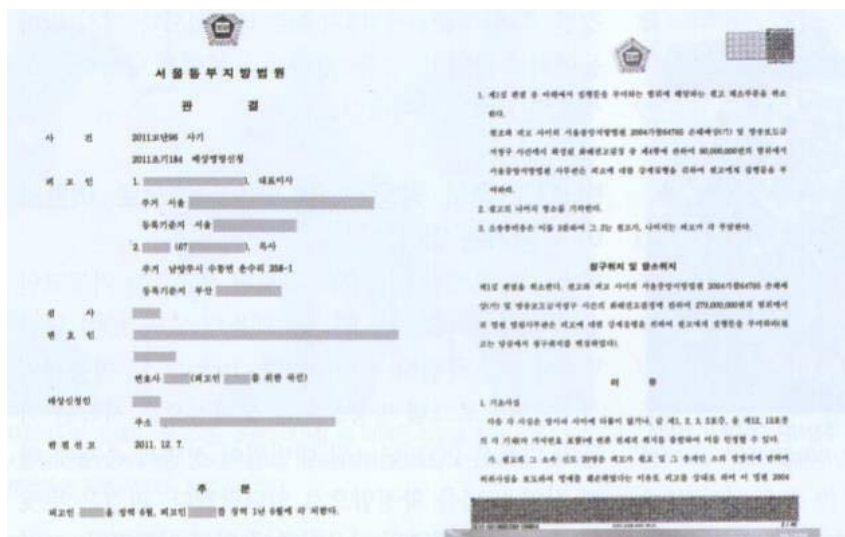
misunderstandings about this in the past. However, such is not the case.'

Then how could such misunderstandings have arisen? To this, the senior member in CGM stated, 'Such misunderstandings arose because people interpreted the word (doctrines) by their own perspectives. They failed to see the whole picture, but only interpreted a small portion of the word. Also, they interpreted what is meant to be spiritual in a physical way, hence, causing this misunderstanding.'

The next question would be – what kind of doctrines could have caused these misunderstandings? The senior member responded, 'we teach that salvation is achieved through loving God and Jesus. This love is not the same as the love of the body that the world generally considers love to be. President Jung was the first to realize about the love between God and man, and he took action to love God ahead of all others. This is why we call him 'teacher'. He teaches that everyone who believes in God, just as he does, should love Jesus as their priority in life and should live as a bride of Jesus and also the body of Jesus. The claim that President Jung is Jesus in the body is erroneous. Actually, President Jung's life is a life of putting to practice Jesus' will; he takes action as Jesus once did, and this is what it means to be Jesus' body, a being who no longer has a physical body.' To support this point, he showed corroborating evidence. He also added that, 'Many young people have been given the opportunity to exhibit their artistic talents on stage, such as through modelling, music and contemporary dance, as a way of expressing their heart towards God,



Since 2009, the CGM has been holding the Heaven's Holy Spirit Movements, which is an assembly for spiritual awakening and for reviving faith, to make 'only Jesus' the ultimate hallmark of their life.



The court's judgment against A, the representative of the DCG, and the court's judgment against the broadcasting company liable to pay compensation.

rather than to let their talents be used for the world. The free and youthful spirits of the young cannot be curbed by the holy and rigid traditions of the old generation. With this freedom to give glory to God using their talents, young people no longer need to live two separate lives of attending church on Sundays, while enjoying the rotten cultures of the world at nightclubs and karaoke on other days. This allows them to reconcile their way of life and their faith, with holiness and piety as the foundation. This makes for true devotion to God.'

The senior member went on to say, 'President Jung respects the freewill of young people. He embraces those who are defiant towards him and he guides them with love. It came to our attention that misunderstandings arose, both internally and externally, and so we have been making internal changes to resolve those misunderstandings. Please do not speak completely ill of us while only seeing things in part, like a blind man blindly feeling an elephant. Also, do not jump to incorrect conclusions, while clinging to incorrect perceptions based on past events.' He explained, 'Certain members were involved in wrongful behavior in the past, either by accident or their own volition. That wrong behavior attracted media attention, and caused the CGM to be depicted as a criminal organization. The DCG now seeks to justify their unethical acts and gain social standing by leveraging that negativity towards President Jung and the CGM'. He also added, 'there are some brothers who don't recognize their own wrongdoing, refuse to take the path of repentance and instead point their knives at President Jung. Such is the sad reality.'

"A" was ordained pastor by a payment of money. He initiated the proceedings for damages, while hiding the fact that he was billions of won in debt. What was his real intention?

According to the CGM, 'A' was a senior secretary of the CGM for 7 months, beginning from March 2009. He was not in any key executive position. He defrauded a CGM member and later left the CGM on his own volition.

Consequently, he was sentenced to prison for one and a half years, with three years' probation, as determined by a court on December 7, 2011. 'A' began his position of seniority within the CGM after President Jung was imprisoned. For that reason, his statements about President

Jung's past actions lack credibility. In a separate lawsuit, 'A' was sued by CGM members for fraud, involving 70 victims and causing him to be 3.4 billion won in debt. An agreement was reached on October 12, 2011, in which the members who were victims would be compensated for their loss, in exchange for charges to be dropped. Hence, he was not prosecuted.

One month later, 'A' kept secret the fact that members had withdrawn their lawsuits as per the agreement and that he was billions of won in debt. Instead, he claimed that he was unjustly sued and was found innocent. From last December, 'A' began to bring together potential pursuers of compensation from internet cafes. He announced, 'I warn President Jung that I am capable of bringing more than 100 or 1000 charges against him. I can make it so that he is under continuous investigation and will stay there [in prison] forever.' A's gathering of these potential claims was not the making of proper accusations. Rather, he was petitioning, reporting without evidence and manipulating the media. 'A' had used and spread various materials in violation of cyberspace laws and privacy rights, with the justification that *he was apologizing to those he had dragged to CGM and rescuing victims*.

Another issue was that 'A' was ordained pastor in an orthodox Christian church in October 2009. It was later exposed that his ordainment was illegal, as he was serving as a senior secretary at the CGM at the same time. In an interview with the *Monthly Minjung Magazine* (Volume 22), he gave the excuse that this was 'the system by which a pastor transferred from one religious sect to another', but this was illegal. A pastor of an unorthodox religion, deemed heretic, cannot be ordained in orthodox Christianity. The fact that he had



The CGM has placed more emphasis on virtuosity, holiness and purity for 30 years than any other organization. The organization has continually contributed to solving various social issues, such as suicides, gaming addictions, and provided education about sexuality and youth counselling.

purchased his qualification with a payment of three million won was exposed by a fellow pastor, whom 'A' forced to ordain him.

'A' leveraged his position as a pastor, obtained via payment, in order to work in the position of an assistant leader of a prayer temple run by orthodox Christianity for one year. Afterwards, he fired criticisms against the CGM and President Jung, as though he was a knight, standing for righteousness and fighting against heresy.

The CGM's response was, 'he took advantage of President Jung's circumstance of being in prison as a way to solve his financial problems. Solving his financial problems was his motive. 'A' threatened to continually bring charges against President Jung, lay accusations against him and put him under continuous investigation.' 'A' actually sought to negotiate with CGM members on the term that he would cease all efforts against the CGM, including all communications with the media, if the CGM would pay him 500 million won. After failing to reach agreement on such terms, he threatened the CGM in every way possible.

In the past, person 'E', the president of Exodus, had also used the media as a tool for threats, while demanding money from the CGM. On November 17, 2005, 'E' demanded 2 billion won from the CGM. After his demand was rejected, he organized several women to hold a press conference in April 2006, at which they accused President Jung of sexual assault in China. After the decision was made to extradite President Jung in 2008, 'E' lowered the amount of money demanded to 1.4 million won. This was also rejected and in the end, President Jung was imprisoned, as a result of the sexual assault accusations from these women.

He exploited anti-JMS sentiments and herded public opinion, by using the media and internet,... all without any evidence.

Christianity had labeled the CGM as heretical. The CGM had been fighting many legal battles against Exodus, another anti-CGM organization. Exodus members are mostly Christians. It all started in 1999 when a television broadcasting company aired a program about the CGM. The fighting paused after President Jung received his 10 year sentence by the Supreme Court's decision in April 2009. The judge assessed the evidence with tainted emotions and intuitions, rather than absolute rationality. The television news report was found to have been completely biased and distorted. In litigation, the court found that the broadcasting company had based its report solely on the claims of the Exodus leader. The CGM sued the broadcasting company for damages. The case was taken to the Supreme Court, and on September 9, 2010, the court found in favor of the CGM. The CGM was awarded 90 million won in compensation. Despite that outcome, Exodus continued, ever since 1995, to spread scathing reports about JMS and to brew negative public opinion. An injunction was granted forcing Exodus to cease operation of its website on June 29, 2005. However, Exodus changed its website's domain and reopened another site under the same name, and continued to operate that second site.

Recently, Exodus had been utilizing an online platform, which updates all DCG activities and unites JMS opposers with the DCG. On one hand, the website claims to be for public interest. However, contrary to public interest, the website is overflowing with personal attacks, condemnations, foul language and threats. The people running and using the website do not observe basic social etiquette. Hence, other people have been voicing the need for some self-reflection. The CGM commented, 'they are disseminating materials online that are stimulating and lewd, by exploiting the rights of Netizens to 'blend in' without detection, and the anonymity afforded online. Using that, they are able to skew public opinion'.

A Christian magazine was the first media outlet to report on 'A's claims. The magazine then began to publish whistle blowing articles about JMS. 'A' exploited the anti-JMS sentiments within Christianity and gathered forces with them. Then with the backing of the media, 'A' was able to expand his influence online dramatically. The steps taken by 'A' were remarkably similar to all other anti-JMS movements.

The CGM commented, 'In the past, the community of opposers had manipulated the media and caused us much grievance. The DCG is going through the same motions. Just as we were awarded compensation, consequent of the broadcasting company airing false information, we will actively pursue all wrongdoings.'



CGM members visiting people in the community who are in need and without support; the elderly, the handicapped, the starving children and orphans. This volunteer work is to convey the love of Christ through giving medical services, improving the urban environment, environmental rights campaigns as a way of honoring the nation's home land, giving blood drives, and smile campaigns.

Who are the real victims?

The CGM was established in 1982. The organization fundamentally upholds the teachings of the Bible. It upholds the mentality that faith must be accompanied by action, and thus make real the deeds of Jesus Christ. With that mentality, the organization held many faith movements for restoring people's faith. The organization had also made various contributions to society through running many activities. The CGM also successfully made changes and transformed itself internally, after President Jung was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. The organization's strength could have been daunted by the sentence, yet it has grown to an amazing degree.

Until now, the CGM has been actively and diligently engaging in activities of social responsibility, as a religious organization. It had contributed to the maintenance of multi-national peace through non-governmental diplomacy, initiated enlightenment campaigns, undertook volunteer work, enhanced the national image, campaigned for the youth and so forth. Unfortunately, these achievements were never well-known as they were overcast by the widespread gross misunderstandings and inaccurate perceptions. In 2007, a volunteer group within the CGM called, 'Put Love to Action', was nominated for the volunteer award for the city of Seoul. Unfortunately, that nomination was cancelled.

One cannot fathom how millions of CGM members in this nation, and in other countries, have been defamed and disadvantaged in society. In our society, a person with the stamp of JMS is living a life that can be likened to the story of the *Scarlet Letter*; they would endure all forms of condemnation and scorn.

The CGM asked this question: 'Because of the biased and distorted reports from the media, for over 10 years, the families of innocent members were torn apart, members were fired from work, they were bullied in school

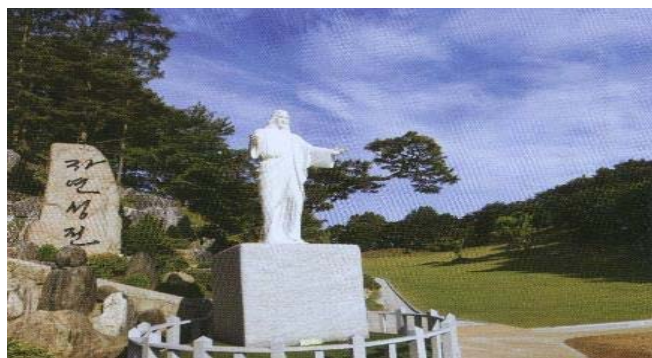
and some were kicked out of their own homes. They had to go through such humiliation. Who are the real victims?'

Witch-hunts and scapegoating should never have happened

President Jung received a 10 year sentence after 4 women accused him of sexual assault. However, if one were to properly evaluate the evidence, this judgment was not justice. One cannot exclude the possibility that the distorted media reports swayed the judgment against this religion. It is noteworthy that President Jung was arrested in China and then returned to Korea, after 10 months of investigation for rape charges. Under the Chinese legal system, all rapists strictly receive severe penalties regardless of nationality. In China, a person was even condemned to death in secret. Hence, the fact that President Jung was able to return to Korea raises doubt over the correctness of the charges. If the Supreme People's Court of China had found President Jung to be guilty of a crime, would they have allowed him to return to Korea without any penalty?

The evidence from the Chinese investigation could have played a crucial part in determining President Jung's case. However, the investigation was closed and the evidence from China could not be provided to the Korean court. Throughout history, the antagonism of cults by the Christians and its witch-hunting had caused many to suffer being scapegoats. In our society, it is not only one or two people who fell victim to the media and the internet. Therefore, prudent discernment is necessary, so that people would no longer suffer as a result of socially disseminated wrong information that is based on misunderstandings.

The CGM's public appeal was, 'we plead that people would discern rationally and with wisdom. Please break free from perceptions driven by stereotyping and prejudice, and carefully seek the truth.' **NM**



The Wolmyeongdong training center is located in Seokmakri. The place is named 'Seokmakri' as it is a place of many rocks. There is a Natural Temple, where services are held and people offer glory to God in the midst of nature. The Natural Temple contains the world's rarest masterpiece rock landscape. The Natural Temple holds national value. As a religious site, it is on par with European cathedrals, and as a natural park, it is on par with the great parks of the world.