



**FROM THE DESK OF THE
ICRF PRESIDENT DAN FEFFERMAN
November 3rd, 2013**

Goto Case. Mr. Toru Goto's civil case is now complete. In the Japanese legal system, the court will now review all the testimony, evidence and arguments. It is scheduled to give its verdict in December. Please pray for a successful outcome. The main thing the court must decide is whether there is enough evidence to prove that Mr. Goto was held against his will. The defendants admit that he stayed in the small apartment for 12 years, but they claim that he did so in order to convert his family to the UC as part of his "tribal messiahship" mission. They also admit that there were internal locks on the doors to which Mr. Goto did not have a key, but they claim they were put there to keep UC members from coming to take Mr. Goto away, not to keep him there against his will. If the court considers these arguments at all credible, it could rule that there is not enough evidence to convict. That would not only be a horrible miscarriage of justice, but would be a tremendous victory for the deprogrammers in Japan, who have operated with almost complete impunity until now. However, if the court acknowledges the fact that Mr. Goto was confined against his will and issues a guilty verdict against the deprogrammers with appropriate penalties, it will be a great victory for religious freedom!



DC Activities. Despite severe budget cutbacks, we continue to inform Congress, official agencies such as the State Department and U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and various NGOs about current religious freedom issues affecting the worldwide Unificationist community. I am working on a major paper on deprogramming in Japan to be presented to the USCIRF for their next annual report. Congressmen have been approaching our office to request updates, and there is continued strong interest in this issue among the numerous religious freedom groups and denominational offices headquartered here.

International Conference Opportunity. Next year's International Cultic Studies Association meeting will be held in the DC area with the theme "Governments, Human Rights and the Cult Phenomenon." I will propose to present a paper comparing European, American and Japanese models of dealing with so-called "cults." As I've written previously, the "anti-cult" community is divided about how governments should treat groups like the UC, so this is a good opportunity for us to contribute to the discussion. If the UC of Japan sends a representative, I may also propose to present an update on religious freedom in Japan. (The anti-UC Japanese lawyers association consistently sends a delegation to these conferences, and it's important to answer some of their charges.)

URGENT CALL FOR HELP

As I wrote last time, the UC of Japan has curtailed its support for the international religious freedom effort. Thus far no help has come from other institutional sources in the UC community. We've had to cut our staff and are now working on a part-time basis. We are determined to keep ICRF going, but frankly, to keep the doors open we are going to need more help from our community. Please consider making a special contribution this holiday season. We also need people to commit to making regular donations as part of their tithing strategy. Please consider this prayerfully. To contribute, go to

www.religiousfreedom.com/index.php?option=com_jdonation

or visit religiousfreedom.com and click on the "Paypal" logo near the bottom of our home page.

If you prefer to donate by mail, please send your donation to:

International Coalition for Religious Freedom
3600 New York Ave., NE – Third Floor
Washington, DC 20002

Contributions are tax-deductible & your donations are greatly appreciated!

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