



FROM THE DESK OF THE  
ICRF PRESIDENT DAN FEFFERMAN  
August 12, 2013



**International Conferences.** Our Japanese colleague Shunsuke Uotani and I both presented papers at the Center for Studies on NewReligions (CESNUR) conference in Sweden in late June. My paper was entitled “The Death of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon and What It Portends for the Unification Movement.” Mr. Uotani’s paper was entitled “An Update of Religious Freedom Issues in Japan with Special Focus on the Goto Case.” Both papers were well-received and will be published soon.



I then went to the International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA) conference in Trieste, Italy from July 4-6. ICSA was originally an “anti-cult” group but has become more open to new religious movements over the last several years. My paper was similar to the one given in Sweden, with an additional section about religious freedom issues, specially focusing on deprogramming in Japan. An unexpected opportunity presented itself when I was interviewed at length by a documentary film crew that is preparing a program on the history of deprogramming. The crew had been unaware of deprogramming happening in Japanese and thought the issue was a thing of the past. Next year the ICSA Conference will come to Washington, D.C. and focus on human rights – which to them means how “cults” abuse members’ human rights as well as the question of respecting religious freedom. It should be a very interesting conference, and close to home for me as well!

**Goto Case Update.** The civil court case against the people who held Toru Goto prisoner for 12 years in Japan in order to break his faith has reached its final stages. You can find a summary at the ICRF web site: [t.ymlp331.net/jqyaxausjbuapausyalajhqq/click.php](http://t.ymlp331.net/jqyaxausjbuapausyalajhqq/click.php) A more detailed report can be found here: [t.ymlp331.net/jysakausjbuaoausyaoajhqq/click.php](http://t.ymlp331.net/jysakausjbuaoausyaoajhqq/click.php)

**Takako Fujita Anniversary.** On May 13 we commemorated the anniversary of the death of Takako Fujita, our sister who took her own life while in captivity several years ago. Tragically, she could have lived if the Japanese police had not refused to help her Korean husband locate and rescue her. My song honoring her can be found here: [t.ymlp331.net/jyuarausjbuanausyazajhqq/click.php](http://t.ymlp331.net/jyuarausjbuanausyazajhqq/click.php)



**Great News from Kazakhstan.** In 2008, UC members in Kazakhstan were forced to go underground after our sister Elizabeta Drenicheva was imprisoned merely for teaching the Divine Principle. Although ICRF successfully mounted an international campaign to free her after two months, her conviction was never overturned and our members were rightly afraid to share their faith with others. To make matters worse, the UC, along with many other religious groups, was officially “de-registered” as a result of a repressive new religion law which took effect in 2011. Its application to re-register was initially denied on June 5, 2013. This meant that not only could members face possible jail sentences for teaching the DP, but the church itself could no longer retain its corporate existence. Once again, internal pressure came into play. On July 20 we received news that the government reversed its decision, granting the UC official registration as a religious association. Now it is possible for our members to exercise their right to share their faith with less concern about serious persecution.

#### **URGENT CALL FOR HELP**

Due to the call to focus on evangelism, the UC of Japan has cut its support for the international religious freedom effort. The departure of Hyung Jin Nim, Kook Jin Nim, and In Jin Nim from positions of authority has further diminished our resources in terms of manpower, spiritual support and energy from the American movement. We are determined to keep going, but we can only do so with your help. Please consider making a commitment at this time to support ICRF with a regular monthly donation. To do this online, please fill out the form at this web address: [t.ymlp331.net/jyeavausjbuadausyalajhqq/click.php](http://t.ymlp331.net/jyeavausjbuadausyalajhqq/click.php) or visit [religiousfreedom.com](http://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

Your donations are greatly appreciated!