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The Structure of Abuse in a Religious Group: The Case of the Holy God Central Church

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Abstract: Although sexual harassment by superiors in schools, offices, and molestation on streets and trains have been appearing in every morning paper in Japan, such news in religious institutions are rarely reported except for scandals by controversial new religions. In orthodox Christianity, sexual abuse has been a taboo. However, on April 25th, 2005 a pastor, 61 years of age, was arrested for allegedly raping seven junior high school girls and molesting other women in his church, “Seishin Tchio Kyokai (Sacred Central Church).” On February 21st, 2006, he received a sentence of 20 years imprisonment.

This pastor studied theology with Pentecostal church in Korea and founded his independent church in 1986, then expanded his mission to include 22 branch churches, 57 vice pastors, and approximately 1,300 believers. Since this incident, most of the embarrassed members have defected, yet a few branches still hold faith with him.

Japanese orthodox Christianity could not expand its missionary to the general public in Japan (less than 1%) and suffered from aging of church members and budget deficits. On the other hand, Pentecostal church movement has been popular among young and middle aged Japanese. Excessive enforced missionary work, donations and devotion to a religious superior are controversial issue among Japanese Christians.

This paper studies sexual harassment by pastors as a typical case of spiritual abuse in cultic churches, which has been argued by several Christian activists criticizing “cults.” They insist that the cult controversy should not be limited in new religions, but rather be extended to the imbalanced relation between all charismatic leaders and true believers in all religions. By adding more cases, I will illustrate Japanese spiritual landscape, where people seek antidote of meaninglessness and salvation from competitive society, but replaced their hope by delusive convictions, and as a result, suffered a tragic ending.

Keywords: Spiritual Abuse, sexual harassment, Japanese Religions, Pentecostal church movement, cult

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1 Cult Problems and Sexual Abuse

1-1 Theoretical Discussion and Case Study

Through recent research on the history of religious studies, it has been clarified that religious study started with a discussion on contemporary religious problems. In both Western Europe and Japan, scholars have made issues of the ideals of religious systems, religious groups, and religious faith from the viewpoint of enlightenment epistemology; questions such as “what is religion?” and “what should religion be?” have been asked. That being the case, studies that reexamine both the existing conditions of religion and social circumstances, under which religion is problematic, will offer a future outlook for religious study. (Fukazawa, 2006)

Similarly, cult studies should not merely center both on criticism of cult groups and their mind-control methods, and on studies of new religions that criticize the disproportionate composition of the psychology by anti-cult movements and legal problems; rather, research should focus more on the social circumstances under which cults are considered to be a social problem. To conduct such studies, the following two salient points need to be clarified.

First, whether criticizing cults or insisting on tolerance toward new religions, a cautious approach is desired; one should clearly show the basis of his argument and reserve any evaluation on issues about which that argument cannot apply. A cult dispute is not an academic dispute. In the court, former followers (the victim side) may accuse the religious group (the victimizing side) of illegal mission work and imposing religious beliefs. Conversely, current followers (the victim side) may accuse their families, religious personnel, and anti-cult counselors (the victimizing side) of subjecting them to deprogramming and forced defection, a violation of their freedom of religion. The result is an all-out battle utilizing researchers, lawyers and those who were involved. Consequently, political deal-making can further compound cult disputes. At academic conferences, cults have been the subject of a 20-year-plus dispute with no hint of resolution in sight.

Second, it is important to clarify one aspect of the religious issue through cult-related disputes, and then, conversely, enlighten people on religion in terms of its system, organization, and psychology. Since people involved in a cult case are often busy following social events and offering appropriate interpretations to the cult issue as a social problem, they fail to raise the issue to the level of a reexamination of religion through cult movements. Furthermore, one can even observe some conservative attitude among religious personnel and researchers to protect the interests of the religious sect and academic society; this attitude is the result of severing the issue from oneself (“a cult is not a religion”) or brain freeze. However, cults can be turned into an issue owing to raised political awareness that seeks a higher understanding of human rights and social justice. The problem is a repressive structure of dogma commonly seen not only in cult groups but also in socially accepted religious organizations against individual followers. To clarify this point is essential if cult studies are to contribute to religious studies. (Sakurai, 2006a)

1-2 The Cult Issue and Boundaries

The concept of boundaries was introduced in “Boundaries” by Henly Cloud and John Townsend (Cloud and Townsend, 1992). This concept has drawn attention in recent years when

dealing with the issue of psychological boundaries. The concept, based on relationships of independent-minded Americans, is often recommended for people who have trouble dealing with relationships with other people. The primary problem of cults is their intention to destroy these personal boundaries, thus having no boundaries between the self and others, by subjugating its members under the control of the group and certain individuals. Liberating oneself from a cult means the recovery of this broken "boundary." By having boundaries, people can obtain their identity and self-esteem. Each boundary has the three dimensions of body, spirit, and society.

Although physical boundaries should be respected, some cult groups do not consciously allow physical distance between the guru and followers. They occasionally demand of the followers a subservient devotion at a physical or spiritual level; they exploit the members' loyalty to the leaders and affectionate feelings of female and child members towards the male guru or priest.

To have spiritual boundaries means to acknowledge the differences and independence between self and others in terms of personality and spirituality. Cults, however, do not allow that spiritual independence of members and keep them in a subservient relationship to the guru; it incorporates the spirituality of followers into the identity of the guru or group.

To have social boundaries means to become conscious of differences between the organization to which one belongs and outside society. A delusive conviction that grants the organization absolute power and never allows the *raison d'être* of outside society can lead to indiscriminate attacks on the public.

Of the above, the invasion of the boundary between body and spirit is believed to cause various types of abuse by cults, particularly sexual abuse.

1-3 The Structure of Sexual Abuse

Janet Jacobs (Jacobs 1984: 155-171), in her paper "The Economy of Love (Exchange)," focuses on the exchange relationship through which the blessing of truth and true love, which are supposed to be bestowed by a cult guru upon his followers, can help bring out a sense of loyalty and dedicated attitudes. The followers are led to believe that they are so ignorant and their existence so trivial before the benefits they receive from the guru, it is impossible to pay them back. In this kind of absolute unbalanced relationship, a male guru occasionally coerces female followers into having a sexual relationship. And this is regarded as the supreme love and blessing only certain followers could receive from the guru. With a special relationship with the guru, they will eventually enjoy the privileged status among rank-and-file cult members; other followers often wish to be treated likewise. This delusion of female followers, however, will not last long since the guru, having grown tired of them, will try to distance himself from them. And top officials of the cult group forced those women, especially after giving birth to the guru's offspring, to remain in a subservient state.

Followers also express their wishes to the guru and worship him as an ideal self. Instead of looking at a guru in his actual life, they continue to see an ideal figure that has been constructed by the dogma of their cult group. Looking at this process in terms of psychoanalysis, the female follower may have developed attachment or affection for the male guru (transference), and if the guru responds to that feeling (counter transference), it may result in this type of sexual affair.

(Singer and Lalich, 1996)

A typical example of sexual control is seen among polygamists descended from sects of Mormonism in the United States. Similarly, the sexual abuse of female followers by cult groups occurs frequently. Male cult members become accomplices of polygamy while female members who have been given love by the guru are often subsumed into a quasi-family commune after being allocated to their spouses. Its scale may vary, but cults have always carried out sexual control by the guru citing a variety of different reasons.

In 1993 the religious cult of Branch Davidians, after a massive shoot-out with the FBI, committed mass suicide, resulting in the deaths of 80 followers in the compound. It was later revealed that its guru David Koresh had been “sacredly married” to his female followers. In 1995 Aum Shinrikyo members released sarin nerve gas on five private Tokyo subway trains, killing 12 people and seriously injuring over 5,500. Its guru, Shoko Asahara, also had engaged in sexual intercourse with a number of female followers in what was called “Tantric secret initiation” and produced several out-of-wedlock children.

Religious communities camouflaged with family values are in reality depriving followers of their right to sexual self-determination, controlling their reproductive function of life. And more important, they are also exploiting “love,” a religious ideal and a feeling of human intimacy. When one is not allowed to use the right to the discretion over his or her own body, physical violence tends to occur. This is because the upper echelon and guru of a cult group are invading the physical boundary of rank-and-file members as bodies vested to them. (Sakurai, 2006b)

2 The Case of the Holy God Central Church

2-1 Sexual Abuse by a Pastor

On April 6th, 2005 Kim Tamotsu, 61, called Paulo (Paul) Nagata, the church founder was arrested on the suspicion of sexually molesting a minor girl in his church. In addition to the 12 year-old girl, he was alleged to have inflicted sexual abuse on a number of other girls and female followers. He was said to have explained to the victims, “This is a blessing. If you refuse, it will incur divine punishment.” A female church executive was also arrested on the suspicion that she led girls to Kim who assaulted them. Kim and this woman were alleged to have forced girls to write a statement in which they denied any assault.

On February 21st 2006, as requested by the prosecutors, the Kyoto District Court sentenced Kim 20 years in prison for the rape of six girls. He did not appeal and a penalty was set on March 8th, 2006.

The Central Church was established by Kim who initiated his mission work in 1986 at home in Kyoto after studying at a theological seminary in Korea. He obtained certification of the religious corporation in 1987 and subsequently increased branches of the church. In 2000 Kim, who had 22 branch churches, 57 pastors, and 1300 nominal followers in 12 prefectures, set up the “Holy God World Missionary General Assembly”. (Sunday Mainichi, April 24, 2005)

Why did Kim, who was said to have received the Holy Spirit and who possessed charisma that comforted and healed sick persons, commit such despicable acts on juveniles? What happened behind this astonishingly successful church growth?

What I will present here is not a religious explanation, such as that the pastor became detached from the original beliefs of Christianity. Rather, a sociological inquiry is made into the factors in breaking the boundaries in consideration of the viewpoint of the pastor's personality, behavior, religious charisma, religious ideology and organizational structure as the relationship between the breach of the boundaries and the cult problem.

2-2 Analysis of the Discourse of Kim's Preaching

The Central Church held the 3rd seminar for students on August 15-17th, 2001, in which Kim lectured concerning "Satan." The outline of his dogma is as follows:

1) The Fall and Salvation of Man

The omniscient and almighty God must not have created man imperfect and destined to fall. The fall and salvation of man is the divine providence by which God will judge and punish all evils. The Archangel Lucifer forgot his position as a creature of God, and tried to usurp God's throne. Therefore, he was called Satan and was thrown out from heaven. God planned that Satan would use the snake (demon) to tempt Eve into breaking God's commandments, thus eating the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge. Their breaking God's commandments resulted in the original sin. God made them commit sin in order to punish Satan.

God sent his only Son Jesus to be crucified and raised from the dead, whereupon whoever believes in the miracle and His glory, might be saved from sin. On the Last Judgment Day, Jesus will lift the righteous alive and cast into the unrighteous with Satan and the demons into Hell. The providence of God is perfect and all is in his providence. The history of man exists to praise the glory of God.

2) War between God and Satan

In this world, the power of the Holy Spirit and the support of Angels from God enable man to do right conduct. All villainies are the deeds of the evil spirit and Satan, so man cannot resist without divine grace.

However, Satan, accompanied by the evil spirit, composes the devil's hall and aims at people who always work with them. Specifically, Christians are the target. God would not forgive people who betray him for evil after they've once heard the good news. Such people will go to a more awful hell than the one to which non-believers go.

3) The purpose of the existence of human life and society

All those that exist are absolutely for the glory of God. It would be most ignorant to forget it, and instead, led by pride, regard God's teaching as a religious and moral lesson from the viewpoint of humanism. Those who have known the meaning of the history and the truth cannot but praise the name of God and spread Christ's teachings.

4) Criticism of Other Religions

Other religions such as Buddhism are viewed as idolatry. A Christian in the world is a hypocrite and a humanist who does not stand on the truth of God. Kim condemns the

Presbyterian Church in Korea where he studied, because it did not possess the Holy Spirit, Grace of God, and Truth.

I cannot judge to what extent Kim's preaching coincides with the orthodox theology of Christianity, or whether it is evangelism. However, it is possible to read the dynamic world-view at first glance. In other words, the spiritual existence, an agent dispatched from the roots of the righteous and the unrighteous works on the human being and as a result, the proxy war of the righteous and the unrighteous is waged in human hearts. "The dirty spirits go in and out of the flesh of the person freely, impair the nervous system, and bring about illness. They employ all available means to have the person have thoughts of the flesh, which is the essence of Satan and corrupt belief," said Kim. Therefore, the person who can rule and exorcize dirty spirits stands on the side of God and leads followers. Kim seemed to acknowledge himself as having the role to cure illness by such power and to judge problems among followers.

How can we restate spiritual agents such as Angel, the Holy Spirit, and dirty spirits into Japanese or East Asian folkways? Japanese folk Buddhism and new religions have successively invented various rituals such as exorcism and incantations for driving and calming down devious and harmful spirits which were believed to bring disaster and illness. Shamanism in East Asia also developed spiritual cults in which shamans and female mediums operate ancestral spirits to cure ill persons. In Christianity, which has indigenized and changed in the Korean Peninsula since the late 19th century, those founders of Christianity in such areas developed teaching and rituals that include folk view of spirits, diseases, and calamity. When one reads Kim's lecture plan that originated from his study in Korean seminary and extended to the theological form about Satan, one can easily discern folk religious belief. Therefore, Kim could convince his Japanese followers who believe in the incurring of divine wrath. Kim's reference to dirty spirits' work frightened them time after time and developed their subordinate mindset to him.

2-3 Analysis of the Atmosphere of the Seminar for Pastors

This seminar was originally held as a consolation assembly for pastors in the Central Church. After several gatherings they invited Kim and listened to his casual preaching in which he demanded they be reborn and convert to engage in mission work after the role model of saints. His preaching elevated their passion and united them into communion for world mission by chanting hallelujah and amen after Kim. The contents are as follows.

- 1) If one church member engaged in mission work and recruited just one member in half a year, the church membership would double. Estimating church growth by this calculation, world missionary work would be successful.
- 2) People who accept the truth and are blessed by the Holy Spirit cannot help but engage in mission work. The body is automatically moved to mission and mission work becomes pleasure. Thereby, whether they are a pastor or not, they become enlightened.
- 3) Marriage is a necessary evil. Those who are busy praising God must remain single. However, those who cannot overcome concupiscence should become husband and wife.

The following three points summarize the way of preaching and atmosphere of assembly in the Central Church.

First, it is difficult to find elements having to do with mind control in Kim's preaching. (Cialdini, 1988) It seems that Kim attracts followers as he practices exorcism as his missionary work. It seems that the Central Church has not attained the excellence and solemn air of Yoido Full Gospel Church that has fervent crusaders, praying in tongues, a glorious chorus, and faith healing.

Second, in addition to pastors, the level of theological understanding of followers seems quite low, because followers being asked by Kim gave pointless responses to him during his talk-show-like preaching. They could not resist Kim's charisma, thus, it appeared as if it were Kim's personal religion.

Furthermore, they have nothing to do with other denominations, which were severely criticized by Kim as false Christianity. They seem not to have cultivated rational and critical thinking due to monotonous church service that simply insists on the battle between God and Satan and engagement in mission.

Third, one cannot simply conclude that Kim's deification led to the sexual abuse of female followers. In addition to his proclivity to select vulnerable girls for his sexual desire, followers' dependence upon Kim in terms of spiritual life as well as real life should be pointed out. Probably, the remaining followers have gradually adapted themselves into adherence to Kim for fear of Satan and malevolent spirits.

2-4 Between obedience and subordination

One of the church followers posted her diary on her website, which could be read until the end of April 2005. She had doubts about the severity of Kim's preaching and consulted with one of the executives of the church. Then, the executive answered as follows; "Sister, the Word of God spoken through him is painful because it stabs in your heart. The Word of God is repeated because it is important and necessary." She asked herself if she had the root of the problem in herself. The executive read one phrase from the Bible. "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. God establishes the existing authorities. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves." (Romans 13: 1-2)

The follower writes as follows. "Actually, I have never been good at following instructions. I though I should admit it. I then decided to repent for it. I prayed for the removal of my disobedient thoughts. Then, I found I was free from the burden. From now I do not have to judge by myself. What a happy and easy life I have!"

The roots of why Kim's words stabbed the followers' heart should have been concretely exposed. Without such exposure, but only viewing some of what she said, the way she had faith should not be commented upon lightly.

It can be pointed out that the executive's suggestion might intentionally change the context from what it should be. As for the chapters and phrases of the Bible, Paul admonished the church in Rome as to what stance it should take to the authority of the Roman Empire. To be

obedient to authority should not be generalized and expanded to the discussion between the state and the religion. The meaning of Paul's words should be understood in the context of the Roman Empire and the Church in Rome in those days. However, in their talk, the obedience to the authority of the church they belong to was suggested as the true belief. The innocent question the follower asked seems to have been politely removed. Moreover, she agreed to entrust herself to the church authority and stopped worrying about anything. Subjectively, it was belief confession itself but objectively, at the dimension of the social relationship and the organization, it was a moment of having been swallowed by power.

In fact, such change of context in religious instruction, whatever the sect or church of any religion, can be easily found. Yet, neither the executives of the religious group nor the followers often realize it. Although obedience is one of the virtues of a religious person, subordination in any case should be distinguished from religious virtue. However, in the Holy God Central Church, the special authority of the head senior pastor as beyond doubt and denial was given to Kim. It was reinforced by the epistemology of Kim. "The human mindset, i.e. the person who knows the Lord and thinks in the way of humanism, does not come from the Lord but from the Satan and devils." In other words, to think and judge independently becomes an evil and to follow a religious leader becomes goodness. Consequently, there are none who think. This is not discretion.

2-5 Child Abuse Influenced by Religious Discourse

On November 1st, 2005 a child of followers in the Yokohama Church filed a lawsuit against the deputy representative of the Central Church and former pastor of this branch church for 2,500,000 yen (\$ 21,237) in damages, as compensation for the abuse by the pastor. At that time, Kim was being detained for his rape trial and this pastor left the church to form his new home church. According to the court claim by the plaintiff, he, a fourth-grade elementary school child, was given a game machine and game software by a church follower on April 2nd, 2004, after which the pastor rebuked him for having such toys and meted out physical punishment.

The boy recalled the pastor's words, such as "Satan made games to tempt and separate disciples from their belief." "The fingers of Satan offer games." "Such a fellow is damned." "Donate money to the church and endure economic hardship if you have allowance to buy a game." The pastor slapped and hit the boy with a scrub brush, leaving heavy wounds requiring two months to heal. He ordered the boy and the mother, "don't go to the hospital; it is possible to cure by praying." The school did not notice this brutal punishment, because he concealed his bruises and wounds with his mother's cosmetics. Even after completely recovering from his wounds, he suffers night-terrors, sleep disorder, and adjustment disorder (official psychiatric diagnosis) from the trauma of this violent abuse. The boy and his mother defected from the Central Church after Kim's arrest and embarked on the action with the lawyer after consulting with Pastor Murakami who took on the relief of the followers in the Central Church in Kyoto in 2005.

At present, the trial is pending and the defendant pastor flatly denies any guilt. But during witness examination on August 28th, a 2006 recording was presented by the prosecution as evidence, in which the pastor yelled at a dozing follower during his preaching, and hit his head

with a Bible, causing him to fall from his chair. Kim as well as this pastor recorded all of their sermons and gave them to followers. They were told to listen to the tape over ten times and to contribute to them. As for the pastor's background, he indulged in school violence and stimulant abuse, but suddenly converted at the age of 21. He gained experience as a deacon and missionary, and was entrusted with the pioneering mission of the Yokohama church, which was 35 years old at the time of the case.

The proxy for the plaintiff claimed that the church headquarters was liable, because the instruction by Kim caused the pastor's reckless remarks to the follower and the physical punishment of the boy. The pastor often told followers, "I am Kim's copy." "Kim was mandated by God." The content of his preaching, the permanent battle between the righteous and the unrighteous, was an imitation of Kim, and his violent instruction seems to reflect Kim's forceful attitude and the background of the pastor.

3 Religious Groups, Hierarchy and Lifestyles

3-1 Holy God Central Church and its Social Foundation

Was the Yokohama Incident an unusual incident in the Holy God Central Church? To begin with, was the fact that Tamotsu Kim, the founder, had raped several girls inside the main church an irregular case? Was it really an anomaly for this religious group? Perhaps the biggest problem is the unfitness of the priests to serve as persons of the cloth, which may be attributed to their personalities.

Yet, how should we take the fact that people with such dispositions have run the church for so long? Evidently, they have invaded the physical and spiritual boundaries of young girls and boys, leaving indelible trauma on the victims. Since the parents of the children filed accusations, criminal charges will be limited to the rapes and assaults on those children, not a few adult female followers and other followers was supposed to be abused by those executive pastors. Why did the adult followers worship them as leaders? As a psychological problem, we have already discussed the religious rhetoric by which faith could be turned into subjugation.

However, it is still necessary to examine how the evangelical worldview of the Holy God Central Church initially won the hearts of would-be followers and how they began to join their trailblazing mission work. It is important to follow the stories of individual church members. In this paper, however, we will examine the foundation upon which followers had accepted the church's evangelicalism in relation to their social hierarchy.

The mother of the boy in the Yokohama Incident joined the church in Kita Kyushu; after joining the Takarazuka Church, she followed the mission work by the defendant. Divorced in 2002, she began to stay at the church with her two children. There were other followers at the main church who had been living under similar circumstances. The flyers distributed for their mission work read "heart disease and atopic allergy were cured through prayer" and touted "recovery from partial paralysis caused by brain disorder." Many, including this mother, decided to join the church because of the illness of their child or children. When they first came to Yokohama, instead of sending their children to school, they had them deliver missionary flyers on the street. Located near the church, farther beyond Sakuragi-cho in Yokohama, is a place

called Kotobuki-cho which includes “yoseba”: a day laborer district. The mother was on welfare, as was the female follower who had bought the boy a game machine.

In Japan, a fatherless household or a single-mother household unable to support itself due to lack of income is entitled to a monthly living allowance of approximately 100,000 yen (which can vary depending on the household breakdown and area) and a monthly child support payment of 41,720 yen (18-years old or younger; after the second child, 5,000 yen is added per child). In 2006, the number of welfare recipients exceeded 1 million and thus, that increase and the government policy to deter welfare seekers have become social issues. The mother mentioned above had donated all of her monthly welfare funds, some 160,000 yen, to the church; she testified that the church had totally supported her family. In the church organization, just as the female member who bought the game machine, she was appointed to the post of “steward” (an official selected from the assisting members to a priest). This lady has not clearly stated the amount of her donation to the church. There is no doubt, however, that the Yokohama church was taking care of at least one family of church members by taking in a middle-aged woman and a single-mother family.

In many traditional denominational churches such as the United Church of Christ in Japan, a middle-aged female member on welfare probably has very little chance of assuming the post of steward. This is not discrimination, but a matter of whether the person has any spiritual and economic capacity left to carry out detailed church work and ministry for the followers. In denominational churches where there are relatively many socially established hierarchies, the lack of missionary work and the consequent aging of church members have been made issues. In contrast, evangelical sects, which have expanded in the past, have more diversity in members' hierarchy. The Holy God Central Church grew dramatically. It was not only a result of the insatiable drive of Tamotsu Kim but also a consequence of having expanded the target of their mission work to middle- and lower classes.

Currently, on a worldwide scale, growing Protestant sects are evangelical. Evangelicalism that Holy God emphasized might be regarded as a grass-roots faith that stresses the dualistic worldview of good and evil, a sense of morality that fears divine justice, and healing by the Holy Ghost. How should we regard the circumstances in Japan, where evangelical mission work has grown successfully in recent years? It seems that, though not a religious interpretation, evangelicalism is gradually gaining ground in its missionary work in Japan where an inter-hierarchical gap has increasingly broadened.

3-2 Church Organizations As a Community

I have mentioned the problem of violence at the Holy God Central Church in “Questioning the ‘Cult’” which was published in 2006. At that time, I proposed the problem-solving measure of making churches become associations.

As traditional organizations and institutionalized social movements have weakened in modern times, increasingly, young people and even adults are not sufficiently equipped with the know-how of building autonomous organizations or not familiar with tactics of relationships inside organizations. What can lead to the making of a cult-like religious organization? There are several factors: a lack of understanding to inhibit the oppressive use of power, a lack of ideal

methods to nurture independent-minded members within an organization, and a lack of collective culture to ensure a “space for free discussion.” To change those proclivities, I have stated, we would need skills and human relationships to build a society-like religious community within which independent-minded individuals can collaborate.

This can be one policy recommendation on the management of the church. However, viewing the circumstances at the Holy God Central Church closely, followers were clearly selecting the lifestyle of a community. In the beginning of this paper, I explained the cult issue and the concept of boundary invasion and added that those were psychological and social models that reflected the independent-minded middle-class American culture. This is worth repeating here. The idea that stresses maintaining the boundary of body and spirit, clearly defines obligations and responsibilities in terms of societal relations, and compensates the dry, practical matters with love and affection — this is certainly a middle-class culture.

To attend the sunrise prayer service, Holy God church members stayed in the church (the girls were forced to stay in the founder’s room, thus falling victim). Officially, they were urged to attend sermons on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday, and prayer services on Monday, Tuesday, and Saturday. Since they went to the church everyday, it was almost equivalent to living in the church. It was a far cry from going to church on Sundays and special event days. This way, in those sense, collective relationships, the church leaders eventually began to verbally abuse their followers. Through the substitution between the “friendly guy” image in Kim’s sermon and the charismatic “God’s vicegerent,” and physical punishments by the defendant and other followers to the children, one can observe intimacy on one side and violent physical contact on the other, which would have been regarded with discomfort by the middle class family.

I previously thought that this communal culture of the church was a distant cause for the cult-cultivating nature of the church, but now feel I must revise this notion. Even if an association- or society-like organization had been promoted to prevent a cult, and the followers had been given the opportunity to see images of independent-minded members, the Holy God followers could not have been given a sense of salvation. At the risk of being misunderstood, they probably sought salvation in a community because their lifestyles naturally contained communal elements. It is perhaps impossible to manage a schedule like that of Holy God with the church culture preferred by the middle class. Those followers sought much more desperate, realistic problem-solving which they could or had no choice but to rely on. It is possible that the Holy God Central Church at least partially responded to that need of its followers.

4 Conclusions

The Holy God Central Church, in common with evangelical churches, has a clear theology of millennialism. Believers have been waiting for the Advent, when chosen ones will receive rapture and have been afraid of The Last Judgment in which unfaithful people will suffer damnation. Such belief is awful for haves, because they must lose their social status and accumulated assets in the face of the God. However, the same belief is redeemable for have-nots people who just own true belief. And this church has a ritual of divine healing and exorcism by which the relatively poor class who cannot cover all of their medical expenses are relieved. This

evangelical idea seems to be a radical criticism not only of current capitalist society, which widens the gap between haves and have-nots, but also of industrialized healthcare and the education system.

All through the ages radical religions are at first minority groups, however, they gradually extend their influence to the extent that they realize the social demands of a certain class and group and provide them with spiritual necessities. The growing trend of evangelical churches in the world might continue as the world strengthens social stratification. At the same time established churches such as the United Church of Christ in Japan suffer aging of believers and decreasing of new converts, because suffering people with compelling needs do not satisfy church's humanized and socialized Christian ethics. Although a large number of Japanese have been educated in missionary school and universities since the Meiji Era, Japanese Christianity could not extend their religious population to more than 1 percent. Ordinary Japanese have regarded Christianity as a kind of high-culture, but not a religion in which people seek a solution to their problems. At least one evangelical church tried to break through such tradition of Japanese Christianity.

However, we must never take lightly the problems of sexual abuse and physical punishment in the Holy God Central Church. At the same time, we cannot overlook the fact that there was social stratification where, if it wasn't for the Holy God Central Church, no one else would have lent a helping hand to those people. And thus, this Holy God Central Church case reflects the circumstances of modern Japan under which evangelical missionary strategies have been successful. But among the grows of evangelism there was the unacceptable dysfunction of a charismatic pastor and authoritarian church system.

On 1st December, 2006, the Kyoto District Court ordered Kim and his church to pay ¥58,300,000 (\$493,000) in compensation for sexual molestation of seven girls and their mental and physical suffering. The judge ruled that the Holy Central Church was liable for the damage by Kim's illegal activities. Needless to say, such compensation cannot cure girls' spiritual abuse; furthermore this church could not pay that money even if they sold the church's property. Therefore, in addition to Kim's punishment of 20 years imprisonment, this sentence just clarified who was responsible for sexual abuse. However, girls will go through their spiritual lives with an irremovable mistrust in a religion.

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