

Truth That Matters

"What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" - Jesus Christ

The International Youth Fellowship (IYF)



Ock Soo Park, founder of IYF and GNM

The International Youth Fellowship is a cult established by Ock Soo Park. Related organizations include Good News Mission (Gu-Won-Pa), and Mahanaim Bible College.

These organizations have the same teachings and the same leadership.

The Good News Mission (GNM) [claims to be a church](#). However, it is not a church in the Biblical sense of the term because GNM is a hierarchical structure whose apex is Mr. Ock Soo Park at Seoul, South Korea, whereas [Biblical churches are autonomous local units having plural, single tier leadership](#).

IYF, a sister organization of GNM does not claim to be a church - it is an NGO. **This article will show that the IYF and GNM are a dangerous cult.** Testimonials are shown in *italics*. All emphasis is added. Unless otherwise mentioned, testimonials are responses to [a blog entry titled "What Led Me Out of Good News Mission"](#)

History

Ock Soo Park was born in 1944 in Korea. According to him, he was born again in 1962 after which he studied in a "theology school" run by Dick York and other foreign missionaries. He founded Good News Mission in 1986 and International Youth Fellowship in 2001. Today both IYF and GNM have operations worldwide. What are some of the cult-like features of IYF?

Cult Feature 1: Fundamental errors in basic Bible doctrine

In essence, the theology of Ock Soo Park confuses [state and standing](#). He confuses **what the Bible says about our standing**:-

1. Our sin has been judged once and for all at Calvary ([Hebrews 10:14](#), [Romans 3:24](#), [1 Peter 2:24](#), [John 19:30](#), [Romans 6:7](#), etc)
2. We thus become justified, righteous and complete in God's sight, and God's children the moment we come to God in faith and repentance ([Romans 5:1](#), [Ephesians 1:3-7](#), [Colossians 2:10](#)). Nothing can be done to improve on this.
3. Nothing can rob us of this great position ([John 10:28](#), [Romans 8:39](#))

With **what the Bible says about our state**:-

1. There is a struggle with sin because we still have our sinful nature ([Romans 7:19](#), [1 John 1:8-9](#), [Galatians 6:1](#), etc)
2. We must be responsible in starving our fleshly nature and feeding our new nature so that we have victory over the flesh ([Romans 13:14](#), [Matthew 26:41](#))
3. The slightest sin can rob us of fellowship with God, usefulness in service, etc. unless it is confessed ([1 Peter 1:7](#), [1 John 2:1](#), [1 John 1:9](#), [1 Corinthians 11:27-30](#), [Matthew 5:23-24](#), [Psalm 51:12](#), [Psalm 32:3-5](#))

Ock Soo Park emphasizes the "standing" of the believer to the denial of the "state". The following are aspects of Ock Soo Park's teaching contrasted with the Bible:-

What Ock Soo Park teaches:-	What the Bible teaches:-
His main work is titled "The secret of forgiveness and being born again". Repeatedly he says, "I have searched the whole Bible to find out about repentance and the forgiveness of sins" - as if how to be born again is a big secret that can be unraveled only by reading his book and listening to hours of "Mind Lectures" and learning about "The world of the heart".	There is no secret, "mind lectures", etc. Rather, there is "great plainness of speech" (2 Corinthians 3:12). The way of salvation is simple (1 John 5:12 , John 3:16 , Acts 16:31 , etc)
"You may have stolen, lied and committed murder, but those are not sins, they are crimes." - Secret, p37	The Bible does not bring up this distinction. When David committed murder , he said, "I have sinned against the LORD" (2 Samuel 12:13)

	<p>"But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right..." - Ezekiel 18:21. Here "sins" are acts of violation of against God's law, crimes if you will - "Crimes" definitely are included in "sins".</p>
<p>What did Jesus say [to the woman of John 8], after writing on the ground with His finger? "...I do not condemn you. You have no sin." -p121</p>	<p>No. He said "Go and sin no more" (John 8:11). Jesus' actual words show that there was a real possibility that a repentant woman who acknowledged him as "Lord" could still commit acts of sin again. Ock Soo Park changes the words because they refute him.</p>
<p>You must have no blemishes, no sins and must be clean to be a saint. A person who has sin, is not a true saint. - p145</p>	<p>The Corinthians were "saints" (1 Corinthians 1:2). The rest of the book tells us how much sin many of these saints had. "...thy saints at Jerusalem..." (Acts 9:13) - these saints included Peter who would need to be rebuked by Paul (Galatians 2:11).</p>
<p>Confession should never refer to any act of sin, only to one's sinful nature: "These words (in 1 John 1:9) are not about confessing your acts of sin, saying "I committed theft." It means to confess your sin. Do you know how he [David] confessed after committing adultery? It was not about what sin he had committed. He confessed of his nature, the fact itself that he was a human who could only commit sin, saying that he was a mass of sin, completely enveloped in sin...</p>	<p>The "sins" in 1 John 1:9 is plural, and hence can only refer to acts of sin, not merely sinful nature, and the "we" in 1 John 1:9 means that believers are being referred to. David said, "I have sinned [an act]" (Psalm 51:4). Ock Soo Park selectively takes those verses in which David refers to his sin nature, and ignores those verses in which David refers to his act of sin. "And if any man sin [an act of sin]..." - 1 John 2:1</p>
<p>"You say that you believe Jesus washed away your sins, but when you are asked, "Do you have sin?" You answer, "Yes I have sin." That is not believing....You must believe that the Lord washed our sin perfectly clean. Then your heart can be freed from sin." - Secret, p235</p>	<p>Ock Soo Park is creating a false dilemma here. On the one hand:- "but ye [believers] are washed [aorist/past tense], but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus" (1 Corinthians 6:11). On the other hand: "If we say that we [believers] have [present tense] no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." - 1 John 1:8</p>
<p>There are many people who pray, saying, "God, forgive my sins." You are doing well, but let's think carefully about this. Folks, when Jesus was crucified, did he wash away your sins, or did He not? If your sins are washed away, do you have to ask to have them washed away again? - Secret, p124</p>	<p>Again, a false dilemma. It is true that our sins have been washed away once and for all when we came to the cross because of the finished work of the Lord Jesus. This is what we learn in Romans 3, 4, 5. But it is also true that we sin now, and that requires confession (1 John 1:9), and "and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth [present tense] us</p>

	[believers] from all sin." - 1 John 1:7 . In a judicial sense, our cleansing is past, once and for all. In a filial sense, our cleansing is continual.
But Jesus could not save her [the woman of John 8], nor could He save us with the law as it was. The Lord decided to change the law because through the law all people can receive only destruction. - Secret, p110	See Matthew 5:17 . The law was not meant for salvation so there is no question of Jesus "could not" save her with the law. Jesus is able to save us not because he changed the law but because he fulfilled the law and bore the punishment that the law rightly sentenced on us (Galatians 4:4 , Colossians 2:14)
"True repentance is not saying, "God, I lied. God, I stole. God, I had an abortion. God, I committed adultery. Forgive me..." But true repentance is saying, "God, I am a seed of sin, so that is why evil thoughts arise inside of me without end." (Repentance and Faith)	It is true that repentance includes acknowledging our sinful nature. But repentance can also be from deeds: "I gave her space to repent of her fornication " - Revelation 2:21 ; "...except they repent of their deeds. " - Revelation 2:22 . Nor is repentance confined to unbelievers. Repentance is also used for believers turning from their mistakes (Revelation 2:5). For unbelievers also, repentance does not merely mean acknowledging our sinful nature. It includes turning away from sinful acts. John the Baptist mentions acts that the repentant Jews should and should not do (Luke 3:8-14). Peter mentions the act of crucifying Christ (Acts 2:23, 36) before asking his audience to repent (Acts 2:38).

Cult Feature 2: Duplicity/Evasiveness

GNM and IYF do not tell you what they really are like - it is only when you look deep (often this means getting inside and getting victimized) that you see their true colors. Some examples:-

The [doctrinal statement of Good News Mission](#) (see # 6) includes the statement that New Testament churches are autonomous. A person who reads this will happily conclude that Good News Mission is consistent with the Bible. When he looks closer, he will see that Good News Mission is really a federation of churches, an empire, headquartered at Seoul, with Ock Soo Park being the equivalent of "Pope".

The [New York Times](#) in a January 2012 article titled "**TRAVELING TO TEACH ENGLISH; GETTING SERMONS INSTEAD**" reported on IYF's duplicity: IYF offers college students volunteer opportunities, but when the college students reach the venue, they're confined to a hotel and subjected to religious indoctrination.

IYF stresses the importance of an "open heart" in order to become a leader. That sounds reasonable, but as the testimonies below indicate, what IYF really means by "open heart" is a heart that does not think critically, but blindly accepts the dictates of the IYF leadership.

The [IYF Website](#) has next to nothing about religious beliefs. Even the theology section of [Ock Soo Park's website](#) is almost empty. If they put their beliefs up there, it would be easier for Biblical Christians to point out flaws.

Ock Soo Park [claims that Dick York ordained him as a Pastor](#) but Dick York has never made any such claim. Dick York's ministry was to train missionaries, not ordain people as pastors. Here are some responses to [a blog entry titled "What Led Me Out of Good News Mission"](#)

*"I am a college student from California who joined the KEP program (Korea Experience Program) along with 50+ students in the U.S., supported by the IYF. I just left a Good News Church in Busan, Korea, before World Camp started in Korea. I knew I wanted to leave at this time. I knew this was a cult, as I was warned many times after buying my airplane ticket to Korea...Like me, some have already left, many considered leaving but cannot because of financial reasons (cannot support themselves while they're here). **We were misled, misinformed.** Trust me, these 2 weeks have been very dramatic for many of us. **Please, if anyone could help.** We are high school/college students who have gone (still going) through the program/World Camp, and would want our voices to be heard so that people will know about this organization and what they're really up to. Many have sacrificed our own money, jobs, and time to "experience Korea" through this org. And while we cannot get a refund (\$300) by the IYF, we at least want many others to know the truth about a program like this and the IYF, because we have experienced it." - Daniel*

*"My son and a friend are at this moment at the Intercontinental Hotel in Dallas with The Good News Corps/English Camp. We are getting both of them on a flight back to NY ASAP. This organization **misrepresents itself** to College students as some kind of youth outreach volunteer program while neglecting to mention Ock Soo Park and his version of Christian self-lobotomy....All that would have been fine if they had simply been up front about this being a religious mission. They **obscured the true motive** of this operation. There are **lies of commission and omission.** This is the latter." - Father of an IYF victim, screen name: Deprogrammed.*

Cult Feature 3: Financial Misconduct

*"I have noticed that the management of the affairs of the TV stations is enshrined in **secrecy.** Most of their employees are semi-illiterate and they will never allow educated members to be part of the management, less they know their financial status and secrets..." - Former IYF member, screen name: Gospel High*

GNM has marketed "Ddobyol", a supposed remedy for cancer marketed by a company owned by a member. *"Supposedly those members of the church took that as if they should quit all cancer treatment and take ddobyol to treat their cancer and have faith in God. Well the outcome was about **8 deaths, and much anger!**" - John*

Cult Feature 4: Brainwashing, control over members

*"IYF posted Camp English flyers all over my campus at hunter college, NY...It wasn't until after the bus-ride to Dallas, Texas, that they gave us paperwork to sign absolving the organization of legal responsibility for us; and then told us **we couldn't leave the hotel premises,** told the hotel the shuttles were off limits to our group, **fed us small portions of non-nutritious food** (providing no veggie alternative) forcing me to eat pickled cabbage and rice for nearly every meal for three days before my father bought a plane ticket home for me. The Mind Lectures were hogwash: "one needs to drop one's ego, humble oneself to god, **open your heart and accept pastor park's interpretation** to the bible because **you cannot trust***

*yourself, Satan is corrupting your heart and mind". If this is not **brain washing** what is?" - [See the original post](#)*

The blogger linked to above ("What led me out of Good News Mission") says that GNM pastors were trying to control him - furious when his wife had enough and left. His pastor was also guilty of sexual misconduct.

*"It's been nearly 3 years since the last I posted a comment about the GNM church and I really wanted to stop posting about the church and get on with my life but I have no choice but to write about them because of the **harassment from the church** my family have been taking from them. We've been in this church for nearly 13 years and **my family finally decided to leave the church** and no longer become affiliated with them. But just this morning they came to my mother's store without her permission and try to **force their way inside it by pushing through the door**. My mother fell down the floor trying to prevent them from coming in and as a result she got a bruise on her face and arm....**My mother had to eventually call the police** to get them out, and write up a police report. I am very angry and **disturbed by this church**...After doing some more research I found that there actually was a person who **committed suicide** at the Gangnam church in Korea where pastor Park preaches. The GNM immediately said that she is a insecure, and somewhat crazy person. Instead of having any sorrow for a loss of a life, all they did was **blame the victim** who **killed herself due to pressures by the church** regarding offerings to the church. What's most disgusting is that, the pastors didn't let any of the other brothers and sisters to know about it." - John*

*"I attended the GNM and IYF for a while and I found that they have many characteristics that are associated with a **cult** like group. They are **very controlling** and **all decisions must go through the pastor**. Members are told they are 100% evil and they will quote [Genesis 6:5](#). They will also use phrases as "throw out your thoughts", because your thoughts are evil. When you disagree with a pastor, pastor's wife or leader in the group then you will hear these type of phrases....Nowhere in the Bible does it say to throw out your thoughts to a born again christian. The pastor will advise you to **what car to buy, school to attend, where to live, what job to pursue, how to raise your family and who to marry.**"*

*"When I requested to be allowed to go see my parents I was told that my family are those in the mission school. I asked to be allowed to go preach to my mum and they said my mum is God's business and I should not care. I made it clear I'm leaving. They told me the dangers of leaving the church. A guy "who followed his thoughts" and left the church and as a result broke his arm had a "spiritual discussion" with me. I made it clearer that I'm leaving come what may. **They insisted a brother or two must accompany me**. I made it clear no one was invited. **They put me under surveillance**. I sneaked. Of course [I had] no money for transport. Thank God, a missionary from UK gave me cash and I left Nairobi. **Good News pastors forbid people from reasoning while they use reasoning to show you why you should not reason.**"*

*"They say the **word of the pastor is the word of God**. Then pastors would have conflicting ideas and at times clash!!! The mission school even permits **divorce** where one's partner wont embrace the good news thing. "God will give you a spiritual mate in the church!"...At Mahanaim they say if you receive the true gospel God will be supplying your needs and you will effortlessly bare fruits of holiness. At mission school you are taught to **sell your property, give to church** and own nothing."*

*"I was born and raised in GNM until I was 20. Leaving the church was a huge~huge decision for us...I cant explain with words the **spiritual terrorism** I experienced because most of the pastors...After I left I was so afraid because what I [was taught] that all the blessings are **only** inside this church and **outside there's nothing good but failures and curses**...All my friends now they don't consider me friends anymore cuz I left the church, so **now I am their "enemy"**.....I am not going to mention everything I had to pass through in this church during*

the latest years...cuz it has been a **really inhumane, cruel, confusing, and dark time** that I don't even want to mention. It has just reminded me of the communism I have studied in one of the courses in the U several years back" - Cheers

"There is hierarchy in this cult, the more you give to the church the better position you will have. I've seen people getting indebted, trying to offer money for the gospel but it goes to the missionaries....they also say that **"YOU SHOULDN'T LIVE FOR OWN, YOU NEED TO RELY ON GOD"** which means **wait on the Pastor's decision, if you don't accept what he tells you then you are arrogant"** - Guesswhat

"Just wait until there is a life-changing event for you, like a new job or business opportunity and the pastor does not want you to pursue it and tells you, **"Your thoughts are from Satan."**" - Michael Novogradac

Cult Feature 5: Undue exaltation of the leader

IYF and GNM founder [Ock Soo Park praises himself copiously](#) (especially see the "About" section).

"most of the pastors, they don't live before the eyes of God but in front of the eyes of men, mostly **before the pastor Ock Soo Park**...Because if you want to be a pastor in a good position, **he gotta approve you**... " - Cheers

"Out of a 2 hour sermon, only about 10 minutes is actual words from the Bible, and the other 1 hr 50 minute sermon has nothing to do with the word of God. This is merely just a tactic they like to use to brainwash their follows so that they can keep paying **conferences, buildings, cars**, and just about every other things that the ambitious Pastor Park wants. Pressuring members of the church to constantly make unnecessary offerings to support **Pastor Parks empire** is not the will of God....As you know, our church **idolized pastor Park**. At first I also respected the man, and felt everything he said came directly from God. (Boy was I wrong). That's merely my thoughts, or the thoughts implanted by the GNM pastors who had me believe that **whatever Pastor Park says is the absolute truth**. Although they don't literally say this, they treat him as if **he's the second coming of Christ**." - John

"I, too, am thinking of **separating myself from GNM** at this point because I have felt that many new practices are introduced to the mission lately for last past few years. It seems to me that there are some sort of **middlemen between Pastor Park and we-ordinary members** thereof....There was this movement within the church that many 'missionaries' to overseas fields were summoned back to Korea, and many of them have now lost their title and downgraded into ordinary members, and somehow this new idea was introduced, that is to **deifying Pastor Park**. Some words like **"God has come to this in the shape of human, hence Pastor Park"**....people start giving their testimonies, **"We shall only have church and Pastor Park established in our heart"**...It is now **more recommended to listen to pastor park's sermon rather than reading Bible**. Other wise one will be subject to public rebuke."

Cult Feature 6: Failed attempt to establish Biblical roots

In his attempt to prove his authenticity, Ock Soo Park claims to be preaching the same message as well known preachers such as Charles Spurgeon, John Wesley, Martin Lloyd Jones, R A Torrey, Richard Baxter, D L Moody, etc. It probably hasn't occurred to him that Spurgeon or Wesley never referred to themselves as "Mind Education Expert, Orthodox Gospel Evangelist, Preacher of True Evangelism", etc. Also consider the following:- The [Nagaland Post](#) in an article titled "NBCC cautions on Good News Mission" reported how various groups of churches in North East India and Korea have cautioned the public against Good News Mission. Also:-

1. The Korea Evangelical Holiness Church has officially stated the organization as heretical at its 40th General Meeting in 1985.
2. The Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK: Kosin) has officially stated the organization as heretical at its 41st General Meeting in 1991.
3. The Presbyterian Church of Korea has officially stated the organization as heretical at its 77th General Meeting in 1992.
4. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Korea has officially stated the organization at its 93rd General Meeting in 2008.
5. The Korean Presbyterian Church (Hapsin) has also officially stated the organization as heretical.

If Ock Soo Park is preaching what Wesley and others preached, how is it that all these Christians have a major problem with him, but not with Wesley, etc?!

Ock Soo Park says he was trained by famous missionaries such as Dick York, Kays Glass (of WEC - founded by none other than C T Studd). So what does [Dick York](#) think of his old student? The following is part of an email that he sent me:-

Dear Brother Johnny, greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thank you for writing to me about this matter. I think many things are happening to expose the error of IYF and "The Good News Mission" its parent organization. It is true that at one time (1962) Ock Soo Park was in our training program in Korea. He was a young man at that time (18 or 19 years of age) and seemed to be truly converted and loved the Lord. After the training, he launched out in what appeared to be a fruitful evangelistic ministry, faithfully witnessing the gospel of the Lord Jesus. Over the next few years, several small churches emerged as a result of his ministry and I often ministered to some of them at his invitation, as well as at conferences that he sponsored.

Then things began to appear that were alarming, and seemed to be evidence that he had become more obsessed with his own organization, his own success, and his own agenda than the glory of the Lord whom he claimed to serve. He did not receive our rebuke, admonition or correction; nor that of other missionary brethren with whom we were in fellowship. All of us found it necessary to disassociate ourselves from him. We then, in his eyes, became enemies of the church (his church). Since then, many serious false doctrines and perverse interpretations of true doctrines have emerged, causing him to be viewed as an heretic.

Last August I spent two weeks in Korea and spent some time with many "pastors" who have left Good News Mission, and in November I will meet with others in Lagos, Nigeria who have been delivered from the cult. I am encouraged by the numbers that are seeing through the errors. Some of those errors include: the breaking up of families. If a man sees error in the group and resists it, he is deemed unfaithful. If he leaves, his wife is encouraged to be faithful to the group and divorce her husband. The members also are encouraged to go deeply in debt to finance the activities of the group. They are encouraged to max out their credit cards to give to the organization. Many of them are so deeply in debt that they cannot emerge, but the organization bears no responsibility. Their so called "pastors" exercise almost total control over the members, even to the point that the pastor's authority supercedes the authority of the husband in the lives of the wives.

So, yes, in my opinion, it is a cult. But don't write everybody off who has association with it. There are some believers who really need to hear the truth from other believers that they might find a refuge when they leave.

Thus, Ock Soo Park is debunked by the very people whose names he tries to use as part of his credentials.

Cult Feature 7: Racism

*"If you are Caucasian they would attempt to introduce you a Korean as wife. The funny thing is that you would never see any African" or other people of **dark skin** getting married with a "Korean". I wonder if the Bible talks about **discrimination**, because **they do that a lot**... You will see a Native Pastor from Mexico but his rank would change if he goes to "Korea" [; there] he becomes a missionary in training" - Guesswhat*

*"I too remember the same thing in the GNM when I was going I never saw any **black people or Africans nor Indians** married to Korean people; I always saw white people married to Korean or Chinese." - Gabriel A.*

*"In world camps they will never allow **Africans** to participate in anything from registration, to ushering, to performing and singing. Everything is done by Koreans and all their performances will be done by Gracious Choir. If African have to teach they they must be the uneducated ones to show how poorly Africans teach." - Gospel High*

Conclusion

IYF has all the standard features that identify it as a cult. If you are in or getting in, **drop it like a hot brick**. Join a [Local church](#) near your residence.