

Shincheonji Church of Jesus Responds to Misrepresentation in Le Parisien

Shincheonji Church of Jesus condemned Le Parisien for misrepresentation and urged fair, accurate, and respectful media coverage.



Sydney, New South Wales Apr 21, 2025 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - On April 9, the French Branch of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus issued an official statement expressing deep concern over a report published by *Le Parisien* on April 7, which the church claims severely misrepresented its beliefs and practices, causing significant harm to its members and reputation.

The article, titled *"They Treated Us Like Animals,"* portrays the Shincheonji Church as one of France's so-called "problematic evangelical groups," relying heavily on the testimony of an anonymous former member. The report alleged issues such as social isolation, financial demands, and coercive practices, while offering only two sentences to reflect the church's official response.

"We submitted a comprehensive written response—several thousand characters long—addressing the 12 questions sent by the reporter in advance," said a church representative. "Only two sentences were included in the article. This accounts for less than 1% of our full response and failed to provide readers with a balanced understanding."

The representative further questioned the timing of the article's release, published just four hours after the church's reply, suggesting the piece may have been pre-written with little intention of reflecting both sides.

“If further clarification was needed, the reporter could have visited our church, met members directly, and observed our community firsthand. We are always open to constructive dialogue with the media.”

Testimonies from Active Members

To offer a more accurate portrayal of life within the church, Shincheonji shared testimonials from current members:

- **Teresa (29)**, a member of six years, stated: *“Faith is a personal choice. Through this church, I’ve come to truly understand God and learned how to live as a light in the world.”*
- **Axel (30)** said: *“Before joining Shincheonji, I was searching for life’s meaning. Here, I found purpose and even met my wife. I live a fulfilling life grounded in faith and personal freedom.”*

Addressing Misleading Claims

The church categorically denied several claims made in the article, including:

- **Headline Sensationalism:** *“No member has ever been treated in the manner implied by the headline. It was a provocative expression aimed at drawing attention rather than reflecting truth.”*
- **Alleged Relationship Interference:** *“The breakup mentioned was a personal decision between two members, unrelated to any church directive.”*
- **Misuse of Images:** A photo used in the article to suggest “punishment” was unrelated and taken in a casual setting before the individual pictured had even joined the church. The person, still an active member, plans to file a complaint regarding the unauthorized use of his image.
- **"Training Camp" Mischaracterization:** The church clarified that the referenced program was a short-term, voluntary retreat focused on prayer and Scripture. There was no coercion, and the program has since been discontinued to avoid misinterpretation.
- **Privacy and Internet Use:** The church strongly denied collecting personal information beyond minimal faith counseling details, or restricting internet access or family relationships. *“On the contrary, we encourage members to be exemplary citizens and maintain strong family ties,”* the representative said.
- **Use of “ECA Academy”:** The name referred to a 2019 Bible education course. Participation was voluntary, and attendees were informed of the church affiliation from the outset.

A Call for Responsible Journalism

In light of these events, the Shincheonji Church of Jesus urges the media to uphold the following principles:

- Ensure balanced coverage by reflecting diverse perspectives.

- Accurately represent official responses from religious communities;
- Avoid sensational headlines and emotionally charged language;
- Respect the dignity and religious freedoms of individuals;
- Promote dialogue over division.

“Biased reporting fosters stigma and infringes on the rights of genuine believers,” said the representative. “We call on *Le Parisien* and all media outlets to practice responsible journalism that honors facts, fosters mutual respect, and protects religious freedom.”

The Shincheonji Church of Jesus remains committed to open dialogue, transparency, and the accurate dissemination of information, both within France and globally.

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