Transnational Asia
an online interdisciplinary journal

Transnational Politics and Korean Evangelicalism: Affective Infrastructure and History

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Abstract

This article examines the political resonance of contemporary Korean evangelicalism through the case of Rev. Jun Kwang-hun, whose rallies in the last decade, including the COVID-19 pandemic period, exemplify how religion functions as an affective infrastructure in South Korea's public sphere. Jun's spectacles, marked by the display of US and Korean flags, anticommunist rhetoric, and charismatic bodily performance, condense Cold War memory, nationalist sentiment, and transnational evangelical alliances into a visceral present. These events mobilize publics not simply through doctrine but by organizing sensation, conviction, and action into durable attachments. Jun's sermons and YouTube broadcasts extend this affective infrastructure digitally, blurring the boundaries between religious authenticity and political emergency, weaving an alternative political narrative. The analysis situates Jun's activism within a longer genealogy of Korean evangelicalism, which diverges from US models by emerging directly in the crucible of authoritarian nation-building rather than from conflicts with fundamentalism. Its selective reception of the 1974 Lausanne Covenant, delayed by censorship and refracted through democratization struggles, further embedded conservative political alignments. Korean evangelicalism's conservative formation is not reducible to American influence but reflects a transnational resonance machine shaped by US–Korea ties, Cold War geopolitics, and local nationalist configurations. Through the frameworks of William E. Connolly's "resonance machine" and Lauren Berlant's "affective infrastructure," this article argues that some strands of Korean evangelicalism operate as a political religion: one that continually repurposes history for the present, weaponizing belief through embodied affect and transnational networks. By tracing both synchronic spectacle and long-accumulated history, the study illuminates how a religious minority exerts outsized influence in South Korea's contested political landscape.

Keywords

Korean Evangelicalism ,Political Religion, Affective Infrastructure, Cold War Memory, Transnational Religious Networks, Anti-Communism

In February 2020, as South Korea began implementing unprecedented measures to contain COVID-19, the center of Seoul became the stage for a different kind of public gathering. Universities delayed the semester, large corporations shifted to remote work, and major Catholic and Buddhist events were canceled. By then the state had already urged citizens to avoid mass gatherings. Yet on February 22 and 23, thousands assembled in front of the Seoul city hall for rallies led by the ultra-conservative evangelical pastor Rev. Jun Kwang-hun. Each rally drew an estimated 5,000 participants, closely packed and largely unmasked. On February 23, with confirmed national cases at 608, Jun declared from the podium, "God will cure us from the virus. You should come out here more often."[1] The next day he was arrested for violating election law after openly endorsing a conservative candidate ahead of the official campaign period. The rallies ended, but Jun's political and theological messaging did not. From his jail cell and through online broadcasts, he repeated a consistent narrative: South Korea was under siege from leftist politicians and North Korean infiltration, and only by reaffirming the US–Korea alliance and electing right-wing leaders could the nation be rescued from communism, which in his rhetoric was interchangeable with atheism.

At these rallies and in Jun's livestreamed sermons, US flags were displayed alongside South Korean flags. This pairing was not incidental. It condensed a long-standing transnational arrangement in which Korean evangelicalism is deeply entangled with US conservative political power, Cold War memory, and a shared moral imaginary. The display of both flags operated as an affective shorthand, a spectacle in Marwan Kraidy's sense: a visual and sonic event that collapses history and politics into a present-tense emergency, bypassing deliberation in favor of embodied conviction.[2] These events drew both committed evangelicals and non-church conservatives, because the register of anticommunism, free-market moralism, and nationalist piety resonated with a broader conservative historiography of modern Korea.

Understanding these rallies requires moving beyond surface similarities to US evangelicalism. Korean Protestantism is often slotted into Anglophone evangelical typologies, but its genealogy is distinct. It did not emerge out of the 1940s US neo-evangelical break by figures such as Billy Graham, which separated from fundamentalism that had been losing popular relevance since the Scopes Trial of 1925. Instead, it developed in the crucible of military dictatorship, in opposition to ecumenical Christianity, social-justice-oriented Minjung theology, and the democratization movements of the 1980s. The commitment to "Christian social responsibility" expressed in the 1974 Lausanne Covenant—a foundational document for evangelicals outside of Korea—entered belatedly and was refracted through local political divides. This history shaped an

[1] *Hankyoreh*, "Chŏn Kwanghun 'K'orona19 nŭn kongsanjuŭiwa chonggyo pakhae wihan sinario,'" February 25, 2020, accessed August 15, 2025, https://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/society_general/929620.html.
[2] Marwan M. Kraidy, "The Projectilic Image: Islamic State's Digital Visual Warfare and Global Networked Affect," *Media, Culture & Society* 39, no. 8 (2017): 1194–1209, especially 1198 and 1206, https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443717725575.

evangelicalism that is decisively Korean in its nationalist commitments yet transnational in its alliances, media repertoires, and theological references (Figure 1).

Figure 1. "The Citizen's Alliance Supporting the US Embassy," near the US embassy in Seoul, South Korea. August 2021. (Source: Photograph by Minjung Noh.)

I describe this formation as a US-Korea evangelical resonance machine, adapting William E. Connolly's concept of the evangelical-capitalist resonance machine.[3] Resonance here arises from doctrine and affective infrastructure. This infrastructure does not follow a linear causal chain; rather, US evangelical conservatives, Republican politics, South Korean anticommunist conservatism, Korean evangelicals, and conservative media outlets, circulating through messengers and social media platforms, "infiltrate into the others, metabolizing into a moving complex."[4] These circuits, both visceral and symbolic, link bodies, images, and narratives across transnational contexts. In Lauren Berlant's sense,

[3] William E. Connolly, "The Evangelical–Capitalist Resonance Machine," in *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 39–68, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11smr1p.6.
[4] Connolly, "The Evangelical–Capitalist," 40.

affective infrastructure is not simply the material substrate of life but the sediment of many proximate socialities of pasts, presents, and imagined futures, all that co-exist and express themselves in the present. It is "the consistency-making and resource-distributing work, both material and conceptual, that binds worlds together while generating ideas of what those worlds might be."[5] Religion functions as an affective infrastructure: a system that moves sensations into durable attachments, political commitments, and organized action, while continually reproducing the conditions of its own world. Jun's rallies exemplify this process. They were meticulously staged to amplify sound, image, and bodily presence, then redistributed through YouTube channels with English translations and US-facing messaging. These spectacles did not merely recall the Cold War; they actively reactivated its moral binaries, portraying left politics, North Korea, and "political correctness" as imminent threats to the survival of the nation.

Such transnational media circulation facilitates the production of a politics of embodiment. As Joshua Brahinsky's work on US charismatic evangelicals suggests, such events turn the body into the site where the divine crosses into the human sphere.[6] Physical reactions such as weeping, trembling, and shouting in prayer function as public evidence of authenticity. In contexts where distrust of mainstream media is high and right-wing Christians claim a mandate to demonstrate the authentic urgency of their cause, bodily rupture becomes proof that cannot easily be discredited. This dynamic intersects with what Brahinsky calls "ontological anxiety," the need to affirm the reality of God in a social world that insists on a strong boundary between the real and the unreal. In Jun's rallies, that anxiety extends beyond the divine to encompass the "truth" of the world: in his rhetoric, so-called fake news from leftist communists spreads falsehood, and the truth, identified with God's truth, must be actively defended. The same bodily signs that authenticate religious presence are mobilized to authenticate a political emergency.

This article's argument proceeds in two parts. First, I analyze the transnational affective spectacles that Jun and his network produce, focusing on their visual, sonic, and bodily dimensions, and on how these circulate digitally to mobilize both domestic and diasporic publics. I treat these spectacles not as propaganda to be fact-checked but as affective operations whose power lies in their capacity to organize sentiment, embodiment, and political action. Second, I trace the historical alignments that have bound Korean evangelicalism to secular conservative politics and to US hegemony, with particular attention to how nationalist emotion has been embedded in religious infrastructure since the Korean War. The aim is to provide a critical vocabulary for understanding a conservative branch of Korean evangelicalism on its own terms, to examine how a religious

[5] Lauren Berlant, *On the Inconvenience of Other People* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022), 21, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2rr3g94.
[6] Joshua Brahinsky, "Crossing the Buffer: Ontological Anxiety Among US Evangelicals and an Anthropological Theory of Mind," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 26, no. 1 (2020): 45–60, https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9655.13240.

minority can project outsized political influence, and to show how belief is staged, circulated, and weaponized in transnational religious and political networks.

The US-Korea Evangelical Resonance Machine

In August 2021, eighteen months after Rev. Jun led his political rallies amid the COVID-19 pandemic, I visited my parents' residence in Seoul, South Korea. After clearing multiple hurdles for entering the country, including a mountain of paperwork and strict quarantine measures, I finally sat down on a couch in my parents' living room to watch TV with them. My father, who had recently discovered the joy of YouTube, introduced me to one of his favorite channels. He played a clip criticizing the South Korean government for its strict COVID-19 prevention measures, claiming that "harmful" and "communist" ideology was behind the government's control of people's freedom. I have long known my father's conservative and libertarian political leanings, which are the exact opposite of my own. It was not the content of the video that took me by surprise, but the producer. The clip was produced by Rev. Jun, and my father was an ardent subscriber to his evangelical YouTube channel.

My father has never attended church in his life and is by no means a Christian. He is rather a Confucian man who espouses Korean nationalistic ideologies and spirituality that trace our family's ancestry to Manchuria (Dongyi), since my grandfather migrated from North Korea to South Korea before the Korean War. An upper-middle-class Korean born in the early 1960s, he has been fixated on what is properly Korean and how Korean ethnicity relates to other ethnicities, leading him to adopt a host of ethnocentric ideas. He had previously maintained a consistent antipathy toward Christianity as a foreign religion. Given this background, his interest in Rev. Jun's YouTube channel seemed anomalous, until I sat with him and watched some of the clips.

Rev. Jun's YouTube channel at that time (August 2021), You Know? TV (너알아 TV), had 402,000 subscribers, and provided mostly Korean-language videos,[7] although Rev. Jun's daughter-in-law, Mary Yang, also sometimes simultaneously translated his sermons into English during livestreamed videos.[8] The channel's header displayed Korean and American national flags, photographs of Syngman Rhee (the first president of South Korea), and the Christian cross. Below these images are the slogans (translated from Korean language) liberal democracy, free-market economy, Korea-US alliance, and

[7] "You Know? TV (너알아 TV)" was suspended and replaced by two channels, which launched in 2023 and were subsequently suspended again. However, Rev. Jun still actively runs "Pastor Jun TV" (YouTube channel, accessed May 15, 2026, https://www.youtube.com/@pastorjuntv/featured).
[8] Yang, herself also a YouTuber with 126,000 subscribers as of August 2025, was born and raised in the United States, graduated from Emory University in 2021, and moved to South Korea to become a conservative Christian activist. See "Hey Mary Mary," YouTube channel, accessed August 15, 2025, https://www.youtube.com/@heymarymary.

Christian National Establishment Theory. The header concluded with the phrase "Hail the Republic of Korea!" (Figure 2). The Christian element of the channel is less prominent than the other political symbols. Greater emphasis is placed on Syngman Rhee (1875–1965), who in the early twentieth century viewed Christianity as Korea's salvation, and on his idea of Christian National Establishment Theory (*Kidokkyo ipkuknon*). The videos are recorded in a studio designed to resemble a newsroom. Most videos are livestreamed first, then uploaded. The livestreams are performed without a script, with Rev. Jun and his panelists discussing current affairs and taking calls from viewers. The topics are primarily political. Recurring themes include US and Korean elections, opposition to the liberal South Korean government of President Moon Jae-in (2017–2022), the presence of US military bases in South Korea, the threat of "communists" (broadly construed to include the South Korean left), North Korea, China, and resistance to a Korean version of the Equal Rights Amendment. All topics are woven together into a single message: for God's glory, Rev. Jun and his followers will save South Korea from ungodly forces.

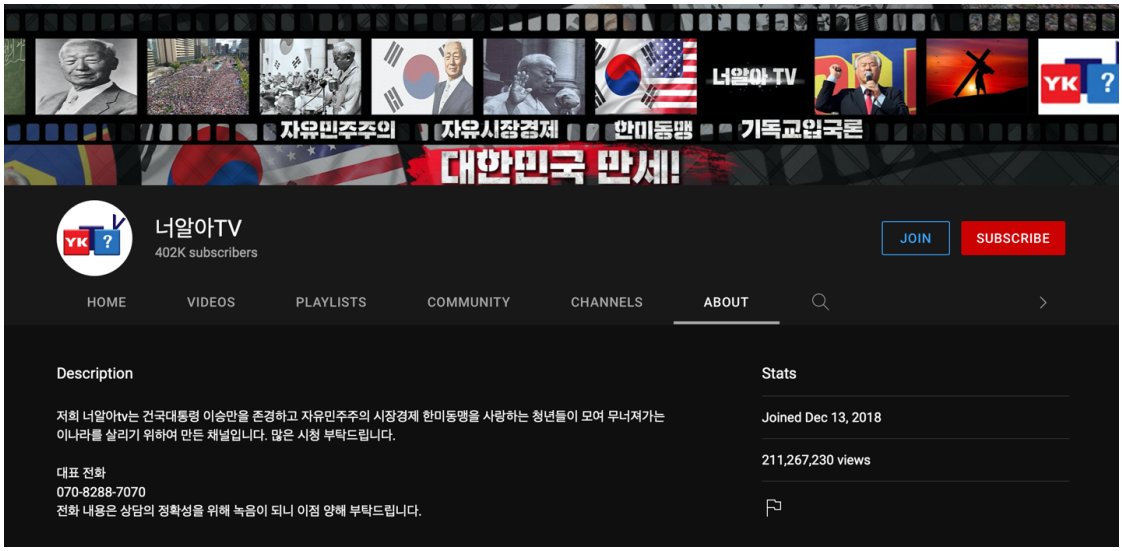

Figure 2. Introduction page screenshot of Rev. Jun's YouTube channel. (Source: Minjung Noh.)

The inclusion of political slogans and images of the former South Korean presidents Syngman Rhee and Park Chung-hee (1917–1979) allows non-Christians like my father to connect with this Christian channel, as they can identify more with its focus on Korean history and national identity than with its explicitly religious content. In addition, Rev. Jun repeatedly states in his videos that, along with the Bible, Syngman Rhee's words are a guide for all Koreans. For Rev. Jun, it is urgent to liberate as many Koreans as possible from leftist ideology, which he sees as a betrayal of Syngman Rhee's spirit at the birth of the South Korean nation-state. The ultra-conservative political theology of Rev. Jun exemplifies a Korean variant of Christian nationalism.

It is not only the ideologically loaded content of the messages but also their delivery that is key. Video titles are filled with exclamation marks, and thumbnails often feature words like "Urgent" (*kingŭp*) or "Emergency" (*pisang*) in bold red letters, creating a sense of crisis and a call to action to radicalize and mobilize viewers. In the same vein, other frequently appearing phrases include "Judgment" (*simp'an*), "Last Chance to Save the Country" (*kugugŭi majimak kihwe*), "We Expose" (*p'ongnohanda*)," "Punish Them!" (*simp'an hara*!), "We Are Patriotic Troops!" (*urinen aeguk chŏnsa*!), and "Let's Take Them Down" (*kkŭrŏ naerij*!). This bellicose and sensationalistic language continues in the videos during panel discussions, which can last up to three hours. The panelists shout, yell, and deliver impassioned speeches. The content is repetitive, and I often found it tedious after the first thirty minutes, as mostly middle-aged men and women keep talking without other visual elements. Occasionally, they issue direct calls for viewers to join, act, and spread the word to others to save the country. Besides saving the country, they also have a mandate to punish those they hold responsible for South Korea's downfall. The live chat surges whenever such appeals are made, and bank account numbers—one in South Korea and the other in the United States—scroll along the bottom of the screen for donations. The channel has also begun producing home-shopping videos to generate additional revenue. Activism here is inseparable from capital, and the affective spectacle is sustained through resentment and a media-driven affective infrastructure that permeates everyday life.

The affect, emotions, and ethos of Rev. Jun's YouTube channel resemble what Connolly called "an ethos of existential revenge":

> By an ethos of existential revenge, I mean one in which underground resentments against the human condition or your place in it circulate through life. An ethos of this sort is seldom articulated explicitly. Rather, it finds expression in punitive orientations toward others outside the fold: in a bellicose orientation to other faiths, states, and civilizations, in patterns of scandal and gossip, in an extreme sense of entitlement for your constituency, and in a tendency to devalue the claims and needs of other constituencies.[9]

In explaining the affective resonances between evangelical Christianity and the late capitalist economy in the United States, Connolly draws on the "ethos of existential revenge," which is shared across religious and secular boundaries. He eloquently argues that "the transcendental resentment of those visualizing the righteous violence of Christ" imagines the day of judgment for nonbelievers and orients toward the punitive measures to the enemies.[10]

The ethos of existential revenge is shared across doctrinal boundaries. The corporate capitalists "consumed by economic greed" share an affinity with the hostile economic

[9] Connolly, "Introduction: The Spirit of Capitalism," in *Capitalism and Christianity*, 4.
[10] Connolly, "The Evangelical–Capitalist," 48.

competition and prosperity gospel espoused by some conservative evangelicals, together with the winner-takes-all libertarian sentiment and the extreme sense of entitlement it fosters. The "cowboy and evangelicals," Connolly argues, share similar sentiments and blueprints for the future that exclude alternative visions. The alliance between two distinctive groups cannot be explained through clear logics of cause and effect. Rather, Connolly argues that the contemporary reverberations of the "evangelical–capitalist resonance machine" should be grasped through a model of the messy assemblage of "unconnected or loosely associated elements fold, bend, blend, emulsify, and resolve incompletely into each other."[11]

Connolly's observations during the 2000s included "the endless scandal campaigns by Fox News against the Clintons and any actor, activist, or academic on the left."[12] His analysis stays relevant today, with the Trump administrations and current political climate in the United States where ultra-conservative ideology has resurfaced, reproductive rights are being rolled back, Critical Race Theory has become a symbolic target of broad conservative and evangelical attacks, and, after Donald Trump's reelection, the "banned words" list,[13] and so forth. What about South Korea, then? It is not my contention that the South Korean conservative evangelical Rev. Jun is equivalent to American evangelicals, or that the secular Korean conservative public (including my father) resonates with Jun's aggressive media productions in exactly the same way as in Connolly's model. Still, there are resemblances. Connolly's work helps illuminate the affective charge that operates before conscious reasoning, a register where politics is felt in the body before it is thought in the mind. Berlant's notion of affective infrastructure further clarifies how this works. She uses the term to describe the systems (material, social, and conceptual) that make a particular way of living feel stable and continuous over time. Unlike an unspoken "structure of feeling" tied to class or momentary atmosphere, affective infrastructure is about the ongoing maintenance of a world: the routines, symbols, and channels that hold it together and give it the sense of being the natural order of things.[14]

Jun's network is exactly this kind of infrastructure; in addition, it is oriented toward reinforcing nationalist–religious conservatism rather than opening space for alternative futures. His livestreams, donation apparatus, merchandise sales, and newly added home-shopping segments are not just methods for raising money; they are part of the machinery that keeps his political world in motion. The broadcasts' repetitive cadences, the shared vocabulary of crisis and salvation, and the interweaving of Korean history with evangelical claims all combine to create a shared environment in which belonging is sustained through the constant circulation of feeling. This is a world that feels natural and safe precisely because one is always already inside it. If Connolly has mapped the affective infrastructure

[11] Connolly, "The Evangelical–Capitalist," 40.
[12] Connolly, "The Evangelical–Capitalist," 49.
[13] Joseph J. Amon, "Trump's Banned Words and Disastrous Health Policies," *Health and Human Rights* 27, no. 1 (2025): 83–86.
[14] Berlant, *On the Inconvenience*, 20–21.

of US evangelicals, what I am tracing here is a Korean formation shaped by Cold War history, postwar nationalism, and ongoing anticommunist sentiment, which functions to preserve the status quo rather than disrupt it.

The affective infrastructure is shaped by clichés. In the aforementioned digital media environment, the repertoire of Rev. Jun and Korean conservatives contains sets of repetitive narratives describing their version of authentic Korean history and nostalgia for the fathers of the modern Korean progress. Both involve transnational ties with the United States, the legacy of the Cold War, and the exponential economic progress that South Korea enjoyed. These elements are already installed in the "the soft tissues of affect, emotion, habit" of the media respondents; "these sensibilities trigger preliminary responses to new events, even before the respondents think consciously about the events."[15] In this chain of responses, the fact that one does not thoroughly subscribe to a particular religious doctrine (say, evangelical Christianity) comes later than watching and subscribing to the aggressive tones, exclusionary attitudes toward liberals, and endless scandalmongering of Rev. Jun's YouTube channel. Such spectacles engage the senses before thought, grabbing attention, heightening affect, and forming dopamine-driven habits of engagement. They are a potent spectacle, difficult to resist.

Rev. Jun's spectacles of digital images and media space, chiefly his YouTube channel, deploy multiple layers of sensation beyond audiovisual imagery. As media scholar Mark B. N. Hansen notes, this includes "the entire process by which information is made perceivable through embodied experience."[16] Digital media in this form generates gut feelings, instantaneous reactions, and pre-rational impulses that outweigh concerns over factual accuracy or "the lack of their correspondence with reality." The perceived reality of the opposition's claims, or the lived pain and suffering of marginalized groups, including youth, LGBTQIA+ communities, those with low income, and others who might support left-leaning policies, what Connolly calls "other constituencies," is eclipsed by the spectacle of saviors, heroes, and the righteousness of a nationalist evangelical historical narrative.[17] When this spectacle dominates, verifying the truth of the images becomes secondary; what matters is "how images fit in broader circuits of sentiment and power."[18] In addition, Kraidy's analysis of affect in media representations of Islam sharpens this point. He shows how media logics privilege an emotionally charged spectacle over deliberative debate, binding audiences through shared affective intensities rather than reasoned agreement.[19] Jun's productions operate in precisely this way, mobilizing nationalistic fervor not through rational persuasion but by saturating the media environment with affective cues that fuse

[15] Connolly, "The Evangelical–Capitalist," 44.
[16] Mark B. N. Hansen, *New Philosophy for New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 10.
[17] Connolly, "Introduction," 4.
[18] W. J. Thomas Mitchell, *Cloning Terror: The War of Images, 9/11 to the Present* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), xviii.
[19] Kraidy, "The Projectilic Image."

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https://doi.org/10.25615/ta.v8i1.131

political allegiance with embodied feeling. These cues do not just flash and fade. They sediment into an affective infrastructure, a set of mediated attachments and everyday rhythms that sustain the ongoing life of a political project long after the spectacle itself has passed.

For example, Rev. Jun's affective infrastructure laid a foundation for the South Korean political crisis from then-President Yoon Suk Yeol's declaration of martial law on December 3, 2024, which he justified on national television as an effort to "eradicate" supposed North Korea-sympathizing "anti-state forces," to Yoon's removal from office in April 2025.[20] Yoon's attempt to use the military to block the National Assembly from overturning his martial law decree, and his alleged orders to forcibly remove lawmakers, triggered impeachment proceedings, detention, and a constitutional court ruling that permanently ousted him. In the weeks between Yoon's arrest and the court's decision, Rev. Jun's media spectacle intensified, urging supporters to defend Yoon against what was framed as a leftist hoax. On January 19, 2025, this culminated in a riot at the Seoul Western District Court after the court approved Yoon's arrest warrant. Incited by Jun's rhetoric of "civil disobedience" and his livestreamed calls to action, protesters stormed the court building, broke windows, assaulted police officers, and attempted arson, in an event reminiscent of the January 6, 2021, US Capitol attack.[21] Forty-nine people were later convicted, with sentences ranging from fines to five years in prison.[22]

These events show what Jun's media affect does to religiously and politically aligned audiences: it animates bodies, and fuses emotion with speech and physical action. Although Brahinsky's project centers on theory of mind and the ontological anxiety of US evangelical Christians when they cross the boundary between the supernatural realness of God and the common-sense secular mind, his methodological attention to how charismatic practice and technics blur those boundaries is instructive here.[23] In this case, the boundary crossing occurs between Truth and Untruth as defined by nationalist evangelicalism. The enemy is framed not as spiritual unbelief but as communism, leftist ideology, or satanic influence: forces cast as existential threats to the nation. This dynamic is sustained by an affective infrastructure that not only breaks down buffers between mind and others or the supernatural but also creates a directionality of action. Here, the boundary is drawn between Truth and Untruth, with Untruth defined as leftist or satanic: enemies to be destroyed. The experience is not primarily ontological but epistemological, framed as an

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[20] Associated Press, "Timeline of South Korean President Yoon's Fall: From Martial Law Declaration to Impeachment," *AP News*, April 4, 2025, https://apnews.com/article/south-korea-yoon-timeline-impeached-constitutional-court-april-4-8fc9458e913e5e30dc1d4044dc99cac6.
[21] Raphael Rashid, "Has South Korea Just Witnessed Its Own January 6 Moment?," *The Guardian*, January 20, 2025, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jan/20/has-south-korea-just-witnessed-its-own-january-6-moment.
[22] *Korea Herald*, "49 January courthouse rioters found guilty," August 1, 2025, https://www.koreaherald.com/article/10545250; Jun Yool, "Sarang Jeil Church Raided over Suspected Involvement in Courthouse Riot," *Korea JoongAng Daily*, August 5, 2025, https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/2025-08-05/national/socialAffairs/Sarang-Jeil-Church-raided-over-suspected-involvement-in-courthouse-riot/2369207.
[23] Brahinsky, "Crossing the Buffer," 49–54.

ethical call to correct wrongfulness according to God's mandate of Truth. In the politicized charismatic context, such technics of religious experience cultivate a mission-driven politico-religious orientation. This infrastructure organizes and amplifies affect into coordinated, high-risk action, making political defense of the nation inseparable from spiritual warfare.

The circuits of affect and power are transnational, hence the US–Korea resonance machine. Allies in the United States, particularly Republican politicians and American evangelicals who played a role in the founding of South Korea, are invoked in Rev. Jun's media narrative and also make appearances in his spectacles. In September 2020, when Rev. Jun was arrested and jailed for the third time for violating COVID-19 prevention measures to hold in-person church services, he sent a letter to President Trump alleging violation of religious freedom by South Korea's government.[24] In fall 2021, Rev. Jun and his daughter-in-law and translator, Mary Yang, made a trip to the United States, visiting New York City, New Jersey, and Los Angeles. Rev. Jun held a rally that resembled his signature Gwanghwamun rally in Koreatown in Los Angeles and met two New Jersey Republican state representatives to sign a resolution urging the unification of the Korean peninsula (Figure 3).[25]

Figure 3. (From left) Rev. Jun, an unidentified woman, Mary Yang, DeAnne C. DeFuccio, and Robert Auth. Screenshot from YouTube, 김경재 TV (Kim Kyŏngchae TV, "Mi hyŏnjang chunggye"). (Source: Minjung Noh.)

[24] Hyŏn-mi Cho, "Sarangjeil-gyohoe 'Kungmin sosong sijak . . . T'ŭrŏmp'ŭ ŭl Chŏn Kwanghun moksa chiwŏn yoch'ŏng'" [Sarang-Jeil Church begins the lawsuit . . . Asking Trump to support Rev. Jun], *Aju News*, September 8, 2020, accessed August 15, 2025, https://www.ajunews.com/view/20200908135437194.

[25] In 2021, several videos of the event were posted with the following titles but all were deleted later: You Know? TV, "Chŏn Kwanghun moksa sang·ha ŭiwŏn kyŏruian susang" [Rev. Jun awarded with the resolution by senate and house], posted October 20, 2021; You Know? TV, "Chŏn Kwanghun moksa Chocheong Nyujeoji chidoja p'orŏm" [Rev. Jun's New Jersey Leadership Forum], posted October 28, 2021. The first video falsely claims that Rev. Jun was "awarded" a House and Senate resolution in the United States. The second video shows what actually occurred: New Jersey State General Assemblyman Robert Auth and Assemblywoman DeAnne C. DeFuccio greeted their constituents, including some Korean Americans, in Legislative District 39. The resolution was submitted to the New Jersey General Assembly, not to the US House or Senate. Fortunately, another version of the second video is still posted online on other channels. For example, Kim Kyŏngchae TV, "Mi hyŏnjang chunggye, Chŏn Kwanghun moksa Nyujŏji chidoja p'orŏm!—2021.10.20," YouTube video, 3:45:00, posted October 21, 2021, https://youtu.be/mD40ISM-Rgk?si=mbXZkmoiNh_IQeVx.

After Yoon Suk Yeol's December 2024 martial law declaration and his impeachment in April 2025, South Korea was plunged into a political crisis that carried strong echoes of Cold War authoritarianism and, more recently, US election denialism. South Koreans remain acutely sensitive to the specter of military rule, given the country's history of coups beginning with Park Chung-hee's 1961 martial law and extending to Chun Doo-hwan's 1980 martial law that culminated in the Gwangju massacre. Against this backdrop, Yoon's use of soldiers to blockade the National Assembly was especially incendiary. Notwithstanding the majority of the public sentiment, supporters rallied with "Stop the Steal" signs written in English, explicitly borrowing from Trump's 2020 playbook, framing Yoon's impeachment as illegitimate and aligning their struggle with US right-wing populism.[26] Wealthy Korean American evangelicals also lent their voices to this narrative.[27] Figures like Morse Tan, a conservative evangelical law faculty at Liberty University, and former US ambassador-at-large for the Office of Global Criminal Justice under Trump, further legitimized these claims on the ground in Seoul, defending Yoon's actions and attempting to meet him in detention.[28] These overlapping controversies reveal how nationalist evangelical movements reframed the crisis as not only a domestic constitutional dispute but also a transnational spiritual and political struggle, in which communism, leftist ideology, China, and even South Korea's own judiciary were cast as existential enemies of divine Truth. This framing frequently overlapped with Christian networks and narratives: for instance, Jun and other leaders portrayed North Korea and China as satanic, while churches mobilized around political rallies and fundraising efforts. Such examples show how "stop the steal" rhetoric aligned with Christian nationalism, reinforcing the interpenetration of religion and politics in the resonance machine.[29]

Rev. Jun's YouTube channel, his home church (Sarang Jeil Church), and his followers do not represent the majority of Korean Protestant churches nor a major political group. They

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[26] Hyunsu, Yim, Eduardo Baptista, and Minwoo Park, "Supporters of South Korea's Yoon Adopt 'Stop the Steal,' Hope Trump Will Help," *Reuters*, January 3, 2025, https://www.reuters.com/world/supporters-south-koreas-yoon-adopt-stop-steal-hope-trump-will-help-2025-01-03/. More recently, during a diplomatic meeting at the White House on January 26, 2026, between US Vice President JD Vance and South Korean Prime Minister Kim Min-seok, Vance raised concerns about the detention of Pastor Son Hyun-bo of Busan Segero Presbyterian Church, citing worries in "some US circles" about the suppression of religious freedom. Son, an avid supporter of Yoon and a representative of the Protestant group Save Korea, which organized rallies opposing Yoon's impeachment, was detained in September 2025 on allegations of pre-election campaigning. Prime Minister Kim responded that the investigation pertains strictly to violations of election law, not religious activity. Kim Kyeong-pil, "U.S. Vice President Vance Voices Concerns on Pastor Son, Coupang Probe," *Chosun Ilbo*, January 26, 2026, https://www.chosun.com/english/national-en/2026/01/26/NEYDXXQ7BRGLVD7V62Q4RFHZMI/.

[27] According to *Korea Herald*, Annie Chan, an evangelical millionaire in Hawai'i, founded the Korea Conservative Political Action Committee in 2019 and has spent years cultivating the conspiracy that Korean elections were stolen. Chan opposed Moon Jae-in's peace initiatives, built networks with Trump supporters in the United States, and provided resources for election-fraud activists in Korea, making her a key broker of this transnational disinformation. The conspiracy remained marginal until Trump's own claims in 2020 gave it new momentum. By 2024, it ensnared Yoon himself, who invoked the fraud narrative to justify martial law. See Wang Son-taek, "Shameful Story on Election Fraud Conspiracy," *Korea Herald*, February 13, 2025, https://www.koreaherald.com/article/10418592; In addition, see Eli Clifton, "The Unknown Oligarch Fighting for an Endless Korean War," *The Nation*, March 8, 2022, https://www.thenation.com/article/world/korean-war-annie-chan/.

[28] Lee Hyo-jin, "Former US Diplomat Stirs Controversy in Seoul with Election Fraud Claims," *Korea Times*, July 16, 2025, https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/foreignaffairs/20250716/former-us-diplomat-stirs-controversy-in-seoul-with-election-fraud-claims.

[29] For US cases, see Anja Stopfer, "Crusading for a Christian Nation: How Christian Nationalist Pastors Have Disseminated Donald Trump's Myth of the Stolen Election," *ForAP: Forschungsergebnisse von Absolventen und Promovierenden der Fakultät für Sprach-, Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaften* 6, no. 6 (2023), https://forap.uni-regensburg.de/index.php/slk/article/view/83.

tend to be overrepresented in the media coverage because of their sensationalistic and unconventional activism. That said, they are neither a cult (Korean: *saibi*, literally a group considered spiritually fraudulent) nor an anomaly. Compared with the social marginalization of a new religious group, Shincheonji, in South Korea, Rev. Jun and his activism faced a relatively lighter degree of stigmatization.[30] In addition, the General Assembly of Presbyterian Church in Korea, one of the largest conservative assemblies of the Protestant churches of South Korea, suspended its decision on the alleged heresy of Rev. Jun's political theology and his statement in its 106th official meeting held in September 2021.[31] It seems that South Korean evangelicals, at least among conservative groups, decided to keep Rev. Jun and his nationalistic political theology within their boundaries.

Transnational History: Neo-Evangelicals of Korean Genus

To understand Rev. Jun's inclusion in the conservative Korean evangelical circle, it is essential to identify the political configuration of Korean evangelical Christianity in relation to its American counterpart, including the similarities and differences of their historical and conceptual developments. As for evangelicalism in American religious history and its global outreach, there has been a copious amount of scholarship that has (re)defined, deconstructed, and challenged the category. Some recent scholarship has argued that evangelicalism in America is a "second-order term for organizing the difference" and "not a native term," "far from having a stable, fixed meaning." It has also disputed the usefulness of "evangelicalism" as a concept, contending that it has become amorphous.[32] Admittedly, the convoluted history of evangelicalism testifies to the complexity of the term. It spans several hundred years of Western Christian history, including sixteenth-century Reformation, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British and American revivalism movements and overseas missions, early twentieth-century fundamentalist separation (the Scopes Trial is one of the emblematic examples), and the postwar emergence of 'neo-evangelicalism' headed by Harold John Ockenga, Billy Graham,

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[30] Kin Cheung and Minjung Noh, "COVID-19, Shincheonji, and the Limits of South Korean Secularism: The Devil in Patient 31," *Religion, State and Society* 50, no. 3 (2022): 316–337, https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2022.2096996.

[31] Sujin Na, "Int'ŏk'op idan sŏng 1 nyŏn tŏ yŏngu . . . Chŏn Kwanghun idan chijŏng parŏn nawassjiman nonŭi an hae" [Intercom's heresy to be investigated for one more year . . . Rev. Jun's heresy questioned but not debated], *News&Joy*, September 28, 2021, accessed November 12, 2021, https://www.newsnjoy.or.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=303428. Rev. Jun made controversial remarks in his politico-religious rallies, declaring: "If you mess with me, I am going to kill you, God!" and "God will trash President Moon!" These statements led pastors in the HapDong assembly to file an official request to judge Rev. Jun's heresy. In the same meeting, the assembly declared Queer Theology a heresy. CBS Kris Ch'ŏnno K'ŏt Nyusŭ [CBS Christian No Cut News], "Coverage of Assembly Decision Criticism," YouTube video, posted 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1d_BPI6FKzg&ab_channel=CBS%ED%81%AC%EB%A6%AC%EC%8A%A4%EC%B2%9C%EB%85%B8%EC%BB%B7%EB%89%B4%EC%8A%A4. This coverage video criticizes the assembly's decision.

[32] Michael J. Altman, "'Religion, Religions, Religious' in America: Toward a Smithian Account of 'Evangelicalism,'" *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 31, no. 1 (2019): 71–82; Linford D. Fisher, "Evangelicals and Unevangelicals: The Contested History of a Word, 1500–1950," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 26, no. 2 (2016): 184–226, https://doi.org/10.1525/rac.2016.26.2.184.

the National Association of Evangelicals, and later the Moral Majority.[33] That said, scholars such as George M. Marsden, Mark Noll, Roger E. Olson, Nathan Hatch, and Randall Balmer have argued that evangelicalism is a valid and useful category for analysis in American religious history and have upheld this category with their robust scholarship. These scholars of evangelicalism generally endorse the fourfold (a.k.a. quadrilateral) definition of evangelicalism formulated by British historian David W. Bebbington: (1) conversionism, (2) biblicism, (3) activism and mission, and (4) crucicentrism.[34] Most recently, Matthew Avery Sutton has argued that the consensus historians' adoption of the quadrilateral allowed them to decouple evangelicalism from its political, racial, and gendered contexts, constructing a multi-century "evangelical throughline" that obscured the movement's fundamentally political character.[35]

This widely influential definition of Anglo-American evangelicalism, not surprisingly, has also been widely referenced by scholars of Korean and Korean American Protestant Christianity. Some scholars boldly and justly argue that Korean and Korean American Protestant Christianity is mostly evangelical.[36] The majority of scholars tend to rely on the aforementioned quadrilateral definition.[37] Although Timothy Lee and Sunggu Yang show distinctive and effective attempts to characterize how Korean evangelicalism is different from American evangelicalism, they do not extensively revise the Euro-American quadrilateral definition, as this is not their primary concern. The historian Sung-Deuk Oak is another constructive voice who does not revolve around the quadrilateral in his account of Korean Protestant Christianity, as he is more interested in historicization of the early North American missionary roots and how Korean Protestant Christianity formulated its identity from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century.[38] What, then, do the parallels between Korean and American scholarship on evangelicalism mean? Does it mean that Korean evangelicalism is a facsimile of its American counterpart? Instead of being a facsimile, I suggest that the similarity of scholarship on US and South Korean evangelicalism reflects the transnational American academic hegemony that parallels the political connections between the two nation-states. As Sutton has argued, the quadrilateral's abstraction of evangelicalism from its political context, in both the US and Korean cases, has had the ironic effect of rendering conservative politicization invisible

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[33] Melani McAlister, *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders: A Global History of American Evangelicals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), https://books.google.com/books?id=lgJfDwAAQBAJ; Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); John Wolffe and Mark Hutchinson, *A Short History of Global Evangelicalism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
[34] David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 2015).
[35] Matthew Avery Sutton, "Redefining the History and Historiography on American Evangelicalism in the Era of the Religious Right," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 92 (2024): 37–60, https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfae063.
[36] Rebecca Y. Kim, *The Spirit Moves West: Korean Missionaries in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
[37] Rebecca Y. Kim, *God's New Whiz Kids? Korean American Evangelicals on Campus* (New York: New York University Press, 2006); Pyong-Gap Min, *Preserving Ethnicity Through Religion in America: Korean Protestants and Indian Hindus Across Generations* (New York: New York University Press, 2010); Timothy S. Lee, *Born Again: Evangelicalism in Korea* (Mānoa: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010); Sunggu Yang, *Evangelical Pilgrims from the East: Faith Fundamentals of Korean American Protestant Diasporas* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).
[38] Sung-Deuk Oak, *The Making of Korean Christianity: Protestant Encounters with Korean Religions, 1876–1915* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013).

rather than preventing it. To better explain the ultra-conservative rallies of Rev. Jun, their convocation of American hegemonic power, and the Korean evangelical acquiescence of Rev. Jun's political ideology, it is necessary to use a different, Korea-specific perspective in addition to Bebbington's global definition of evangelicalism.

I suggest two decisive historical differences of Korean evangelicalism from its Anglo-American counterpart: first, its ambiguous relationship with fundamentalism; and second, the delayed introduction of the Lausanne Covenant (1974), and the evangelical response to it in the latter half of the 1980s, to South Korea. I do not argue that this is an exhaustive list of differences; rather, these points are the ones that help explain Korean evangelicalism's conservative leanings, which contributes to the Christian nationalistic narrative subscribed by figures such as Rev. Jun. The dominant narrative of Korean evangelicalism goes like this: the beginning of Korean Protestant Christianity, or its foundation mythology, involves North American Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries who brought modern civilization and religion to the Korean peninsula. South Korea's first president, Syngman Rhee, was a Methodist deacon who converted in prison where he was visited by American missionaries, on whom he relied during his independence movement against Japanese colonialism. Syngman Rhee represents the timely importation of American Protestant Christianity to Korea, where the United States, democracy, economic prosperity, modern progress, and evangelical Christianity were bundled up as a set of powerful associations in the incipient years of South Korea. This transnational Christian savior narrative is often juxtaposed with a notion of Koreans as the Chosen People, and their indigenization of Christianity in accordance with their Confucian or Shamanistic cultural background. This syncretic or dialectic aspect of Korean Christianity is a recurring scholarly and theological narrative. The usefulness of this narrative has been proved in the scholarly discourses that strive to offer what makes Korean Christianity Korean. While acknowledging the existing narrative, I am interested in telling a different story.

Neo-evangelicalism Without Fundamentalist Context

In his insightful account of evangelicalism, theologian Roger E. Olson recalls a room full of evangelical theologians who gathered to discuss evangelicalism in the evangelical theology session in the American Academy of Religion in the 1990s. When they failed to reach an agreement on what evangelicalism is, a mainline theologian, an outsider, suggested love for Billy Graham as a common denominator of a group called evangelicals, and the room loudly agreed with an applause.[39] Billy Graham, one of the founders of the neo-evangelical movement, is a significant link between South Korea and US-brand evangelicalism. It is the

[39] Candy Gunther Brown and Mark Silk, eds, *The Future of Evangelicalism in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 92.

well-known image of a million Koreans who gathered to hear and see Graham at an airstrip in Seoul in the 1960s that put South Korea on the map of global evangelicalism. In addition, the Yoido Full Gospel Church, which claims to be the world's largest megachurch, has built and maintained a transnational alliance with Billy Graham's church for multiple decades, solidifying South Korea's status as an evangelical powerhouse. Certainly, it seems that South Korea faithfully received American evangelicalism.

That said, the context that Billy Graham and Harold John Okenga's neo-evangelical movement emerged in 1940s United States has been omitted in discussions on the particularity of Korean evangelicalism. The term neo-evangelicalism, or the New Evangelicalism, is now rarely used since the movement dominated the religious discourse. Currently, "evangelicalism" in popular parlance usually refers to neo-evangelicalism and its subsequent variations.[40] This movement was an attempt to break out from separatist fundamentalists, who lost the public debate during the Scopes Trial and failed to renew relevance in American society during World War II. The neo-evangelicals sought to be the post-fundamentalist movement, which embraced a wide range of denominations as a kind of "affinity group."[41] Their core organization, The National Association of Evangelicals, was boycotted by fundamentalist groups due to its "liberal" participation in secular politics. Still, neo-evangelicals remain politically conservative, and the theology also revolves around the conservative orientation, generally endorsing the inerrancy of the Bible.

In the case of South Korea, a version of neo-evangelicalism was imported and blended in the context of modern nation-building. By the time Syngman Rhee became the president of the Republic of Korea in 1948, North American missionaries in Korea had already spread a conservative evangelical–revivalist Protestant Christianity since the late nineteenth century.[42] There was no need for a movement against fundamentalist separatists because South Korean Protestantism had been a part of political discourse from the outset: it was an alternative source of power against Japanese colonial occupation, and later it was the symbol of modern progress, particularly since the US occupation government (1945–1948), the Korean War (1950–1953), and the First Republic (1948–1960). Rather, its growth was propelled by political power, as Syngman Rhee's government provided a massive advantage to then-minority Christians, who constituted an absolute minority of the population, including tax exemptions and redistribution of land previously owned by the Japanese colonial government to Christian denominations.[43]

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[40] Timothy J. Demy and Paul R. Shockley, eds, *Evangelical America: An Encyclopedia of Contemporary American Religious Culture* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2017), 171–173.
[41] Brown and Silk, *Future of Evangelicalism*, 96–97.
[42] Dae Young Ryu, "The Origin and Characteristics of Evangelical Protestantism in Korea at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," *Church History* 77, no. 2 (2008): 371–398.
[43] David P. Fields, *Foreign Friends: Syngman Rhee, American Exceptionalism, and the Division of Korea* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2019); Kirsteen Kim and Sebastian C. H. Kim, "The Christian Impact on the Shaping of the First Republic of Korea, 1945–48: Anti-Communism or Vision for a New Nation?" *Religion, State and Society* 46, no. 4 (2018): 402–417, https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2018.1480211.

Delayed Response to Lausanne Covenant During Democratization Movements

Although Korean evangelicals enjoyed political power and benefit in the early years of the South Korean nation, they engaged political activism selectively, only when aligned with pro-government agendas. A series of authoritarian regimes sharply limited the possibilities for dissent: Syngman Rhee's eleven-year presidency, maintained by election fraud, was followed by two military coups initiated by martial law decrees, bringing Park Chung-hee (1961–1979) and Chun Doo-hwan (1980–1988) to power. Censorship and repression curtailed political activism, and one consequence of this climate was the delayed introduction of the 1974 Lausanne Covenant to South Korea. At the same time, South Korea maintained active evangelical ties with the United States. Billy Graham's 1973 Seoul Crusade, the Explo '74 gathering, and other US–Korea evangelical exchanges received special treatment from the state and demonstrated Korea's importance in US evangelical globalism, as Helen Jin Kim has shown.[44] These moments reveal how South Korean evangelicalism was embedded in Cold War networks of transnational power, benefiting from state patronage while avoiding engagement with democratization movements.

In this backdrop of transnational US–Korea evangelical network, the Lausanne Conference occupies a peculiar or uncomfortable place. The most prominent global evangelical conference of the twentieth century, the Lausanne Conference was an attempt to reorient the global evangelical movement by distinguishing evangelical identity from liberal Christianity and ecumenical movement. Its document, the Lausanne Covenant, contains renewed enthusiasm for missions, evangelical theology, and a Christian's social responsibility. Written under the strong influence of Latin American evangelicals, the Lausanne Covenant remains popular among global evangelicals. This 1974 religious document, however, could not be translated and distributed to South Korea until 1985 owing to its contents on social movements. Particularly item five, "Christian social responsibility," was considered too radical and dangerous for Korean evangelicals under the authoritarian regime of Park Chung-hee, which censored all political and social movements.[45] Korean evangelicals, including Korean delegates who participated in the Lausanne Conference, minimized the "social responsibility" aspect of evangelicalism, and continued to cooperate with the authoritative regime to maintain the status quo.

Twelve years later, even when the Lausanne Covenant began to be widely read and discussed among Korean evangelicals in the latter half of the 1980s, they found themselves at an impasse. The most dynamic social forces connected to religion in Korea at the time were Minjung theology and the student and labor movements that drove democratization

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[44] Helen Jin Kim, *Race for Revival: How Cold War South Korea Shaped the American Evangelical Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022).
[45] Min-ah Kim, "A Study of the Influences of Social Participatory Evangelical Movement on the Formation of Korean Civil Movement: Focusing on the Period of Democracy Movement in 1987," Master's Thesis, Seoul National University, 2013, chapter 2; Myung-Sahm Suh, "Glocalization of Christian Social Responsibility: The Contested Legacy of the Lausanne Movement Among Neo-Evangelicals in South Korea," *Religions* 6, no. 4 (2015): 1391–1410, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel6041391.

by 1988, yet these were explicitly left-leaning. For Korean evangelicals, already deeply shaped by anticommunism, the tangible threat of North Korea and the searing memory of the Korean War made any alliance with leftist activism politically and theologically challenging.[46] Rather than cultivating their own form of progressive social engagement, evangelicals increasingly turned toward conservative, US-oriented positions that framed anticommunism as both patriotic duty and Christian conviction. In defining their identity against democratization movements, they consolidated a right-wing orientation that would shape their political role well beyond the 1980s.

Lausanne 2024 in Seoul reprises this pattern. Conceived as the fourth global congress of the Lausanne Movement, it brought together evangelical leaders from around the world to affirm global mission in an age of crisis. Yet for Korean evangelicals, hosting the event again reinforced a masculinist top-down infrastructure that privileges doctrinal control over structural critique.[47] Taken together, these historical and contemporary dynamics help explain how South Korean evangelicalism provides the conditions for Jun and other populist evangelicals' ultra-conservative political radicalism, which continues to endure in South Korea's public sphere. What emerges is a layered continuity between past and present: the Cold War infrastructures that once delayed the Lausanne Covenant's reception in South Korea under an anticommunist authoritarian regime now condition how evangelicals respond to a contemporary politico-religious sphere. To trace these dynamics is to see how evangelical history and evangelical affective infrastructure are not separate registers but mutually constitutive.

Conclusion

I have traced the affective and historical dimensions of contemporary Korean evangelicalism, from Jun's sensationalist spectacles to the sedimented histories that shape their resonance. The analysis shows how digital media, nationalist emotion, and Cold War memory converge in an affective infrastructure that binds the United States and South Korea in a shared conservative imaginary. This infrastructure channels sensations into political attachments and turns historical memory into embodied conviction. The case of Rev. Jun illustrates how South Korean evangelicalism's conservative formation is a product not only of domestic authoritarian regimes but also of transnational alliances, theological currents, and the selective uptake of global evangelical movements like Lausanne. What

[46] For a minority of Korean evangelicals who did attempt to engage the left-leaning democratization movements from within evangelical frameworks during this period, see Dongjun Seo, "Redefining Evangelicalism from the Margins: South Korean Student Evangelical Experiments, 1986–89," *Studies in Church History* 61 (2025): 586–608, https://doi.org/10.1017/stc.2024.51.
[47] Minjung Noh, "Evangelical Inheritance and the Infrastructure of Crisis: Korean Women Missionaries Reconsidered," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 60, no. 4 (2025): 499–517, https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/ecu.2025.a977897.

emerges is a political religion that continually repurposes history for the present, mobilizing affect as both evidence and force.

Speaking with my father in 2025 underscored the limits of this mobilization. As a lifelong conservative, he remains attentive to politics, yet after Yoon's impeachment he expressed fatigue and diminished confidence, finding the liberal government's pursuit of accountability for Yoon's martial law exhausting and dispiriting. Since 2021, the transnational network has only deepened, and the contours of what I have called the US-Korea evangelical-capitalist resonance machine have become sharper. In August 2025, President Trump, just before his summit with newly elected South Korean president Lee Jae Myung, referenced the raid of Rev. Jun's church and spoke of a Korean "revolution" or "purge," echoing conservative evangelical framings.[48] Yet, the summit concluded with successful economic deals, a reminder that capitalism prevailed while evangelical voices seemed, for the moment, overshadowed or suspended. To trace these dynamics is to see how evangelical infrastructures of affect endure and recalibrate, sometimes receding behind geopolitical and economic alignments only to resurface when political conditions make them newly effectual.

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[48] Steve Holland, Trevor Hunnicutt, David Brujnnstrom, Josh Smith, Park Ju-min, and Jin Hyun Joo, "Trump Says He Is Concerned About Investigation Targeting Korean Churches," *Reuters*, August 25, 2025, https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/trump-says-he-is-concerned-about-investigation-targeting-korean-churches-2025-08-25/.

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