FFWPU USA: Is South Korea's President Trying to Dissolve Our Church?

Demian Dunkley December 3, 2025



President's Corner

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Is Lee Jae-Myung Sliding Toward Japan-Style Church Dissolutions or Simply Rallying His Base?



By Rev. Demian Dunkley

On December 2, at a Cabinet meeting in the presidential office in Yongsan, President Lee Jae-myung instructed his ministers to examine whether South Korea should adopt legal mechanisms similar to Japan's dissolution of a religious corporation. He described the organized political intervention of certain religious foundations as a constitutional violation and ordered the Ministry of Government Legislation to review what institutional tools would be needed to make dissolution possible. He also called for an execution plan that would spell out which ministries should act and what legal changes would be required. He warned that if such activity is left unchecked, Korea could face social conflict at a level he compared to a religious war.

At almost the same time, Pastor Mark Burns was meeting with Dr. Hak Ja Han, the Mother of Peace, in the Seoul Detention Center. She asked him to tell the world what is happening in Korea, not only to her personally but to churches and people of faith across the nation. It is hard to ignore the symbolism. While an eighty-two-year-old religious leader in fragile health appealed for the truth about Korea to be known, the President was instructing his Cabinet to research how the government might acquire the power to dissolve churches.

These two moments, unfolding simultaneously on opposite sides of the capital, raise a serious question. Is South Korea's leader moving toward Japan-style measures against religious groups, or is he simply rallying his political base at a sensitive moment?

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