

## Shadowy church is at center of coronavirus outbreak in South Korea

At meetings of the secretive Shincheonji Church of Jesus, **worshippers** sit packed together on the floor, forbidden to wear glasses — or face masks. They come to church even when sick, former members say. After services, they split up into groups for Bible study, or to go out into the streets and proselytize.

worshipper 崇拜者

After the first coronavirus infection was reported among its members, they were told to lie about being followers, though the church later said that was not its policy.

Now, health officials are zeroing in on the church's practices as they seek to contain South Korea's alarming coronavirus outbreak, in which members of Shincheonji along with their relatives and others who got the virus from them, account for more than half of the confirmed infections. On Saturday, the number of cases in the country soared to 346.

As of Saturday, more than 700 members of Shincheonji, which mainstream South Korean churches consider a **cult**, still could not be reached, according to health officials, who were **frantically** hoping to screen them for signs of infection.

cult 狂热; 宗教

frantic 狂乱的; 疯狂的

"Shincheonji members know of their bad image and they usually hide their affiliation from nonchurch members, even from their parents," said Hwang Eui-jong, a **pastor** who has researched the church. "No wonder many of them are unreachable. They must be **huddled** together somewhere, praying that this will eventually go away."

pastor 牧师

huddle 挤在一起; 蜷缩

The **snowballing** outbreak among the church's followers is testing South Korea's health care system, which successfully **tamed** a deadly outbreak of Middle East respiratory syndrome in 2015.

sSnowballing 滚雪球; 快速增长

tame 驯服