A Theological Approach to Creating a Multicultural Society in South Korea: Lessons from Post-Apartheid South Africa.

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Abstract: South Korea has consistently experienced a large influx of migrants from Asia and other parts of the world, and this has led to a large workforce in manufacturing sectors and an increase in international marriages. On the one end of the spectrum, migrant workers face constant discrimination, and on the other mixed-race children face their own hardships in schools and community. The lessons learned by South Africans regarding multiculturalism and a theological understanding could aid South Korea to develop a functioning multicultural society founded on human rights and dignity of human beings, while still maintaining a healthy Korean identity.

I. Introduction

Like many East Asian countries, South Korea is facing a low birth rate, while the aging population is on the increase. According to the official statistics, 56.5 percent of males born in 2015 are expected to reach the age of eighty (Kostats, 2016: 1). The live birth rate recorded in October 2016 declined by almost thirteen percent (-13%), however, the death rate increased by two-point-two percent (+2.2%) from the previous year (Kostats, 2016: 1-2). The marriage rate, also, dropped by five-point-two percent (-5.2%) from the previous year. The decrease in the birth rate and the constant increase in the aging population is a great concern to the South Korean government as it has a great potential to affect the working class,

especially in the manufacturing sectors. For this reason, in the past ten years, the government embarked on a campaign to encourage Koreans to have more children and promised limited financial assistance to families with more than three children. In addition, the government has increased programs to aid spouses of multicultural families to assimilate into the Korean society. This is done through providing free language and cultural classes and lower interest rates to alleviate some financial difficulties. There has been great progress to make South Korea a more global and multicultural society. However, I am cautiously skeptical of the reality of this vision. My reservation rests on the reality that there is no society that has managed to fully get it right. Countries with a long history of multiculturalism still face issues of inequality and racial prejudice. This project will be even more difficult in a homogenous society, like South Korea and Japan, with a limited history of multiculturalism. South Africa is a young democratic country that had to deal with its own issues of racial prejudice and segregation. There are three primary issues that South Africa had to deal with, and for South Korea to seriously consider, in order for the initial steps of creating a functioning multicultural society could be taken.

II. Redefining the South Korean identity

Cultural identities are one of the primary causes of racial prejudice. South African apartheid system sought to classify people in specific racial and cultural identities that determined where one could live and what type of occupation one is allowed to have (Kimmie and Jenkins, 2014: 100-1). The challenge in creating a truly democratic society was to break the divisive mindset and create cultural identities within the broader national identity. The term Rainbow Nation that is attributed to Bishop Desmond Tutu is often used in reference to the

diverse cultural makeup of the country (Schiff and Abels, 2016). This means each person can have a cultural identity that is accepted within the national identity. Schools are encouraged to teach more than one language, and different cultures are incorporated in national media such as news and television shows. The acceptance of different cultures within the identity of a nation is a crucial step towards creating a functioning multicultural society. Unfortunately, this is not as easy as it seems. It is easier to accept the cultures that have a relatively long history in the country, like the English and Dutch settlers who came to South Africa in the 1600s, than the cultures with a short history.

III. The special Korean identity

South Korea is largely a homogeneous country with a long history. Even during the ancient kingdom periods, the people of the Korean peninsula were connected by their ancestral claim to the kingdom of Tangun, the first recorded king in Korea. This claim of kinship still exists today and is used in defining the Korean identity; as those with the pure Korean blood. The phrases of *uri-nara* and *uri-minjuk*, meaning 'our land' and 'our people', have a connotation that focuses on ethnic purity and native inheritance. In addition, those with pure blooded inheritance are deemed to have a special divine identity in a land that is divinely given to them.

There is a myth surrounding Tangun that enforces this claim. Kim (2005: 14-5) and Timothy S. Lee (2009: 74-5) adequately present the myth of Tan’gun recorded by the Buddhist monk Iryön in 1280. According to the myth, the great god Hwanin's son, Hwanung, wished to descend and live among men. Hwanin surveyed the three highest mountains and found Mount

T'aebaek the most suitable place for his son to settle among humans. Therefore, he gave Hwanung three heavenly seals and dispatched him to rule over the people. The myth states that Hwanung descended with three thousand followers to a spot under a tree by the Holy Altar atop Mount T'aebaek, and he called this place the City of God. According to the myth, during the time of Hwanung, a bear and a tiger living in the same cave prayed to Holy Hwanung to transform them into human beings. It is believed that Hwanung gave them a bundle of sacred mugworts and twenty cloves of garlic. If they eat the spices in a cave for one hundred days, they will attain their humanity. Both animals ate the spices, but after twenty-one days the bear was transformed into a woman, while the tiger, unable to complete the task, remained the tiger. Hwanung laid with the bear-woman and gave birth to a son called Tangun Wanggöm. During the time of Emperor Yao (2333 B.C.E.), Tangun Wanggöm founded the kingdom of Chosön at Asadal (Lee, 2009: 74-5). Ironically, this divine claim is adopted by the North Koreans in contrast to what is perceived as the contaminated blood of the South Koreans by the West.

The idea of a group with a special identity is not unique to South Korean, but to some people groups in South Africa as well. The Afrikaner, Dutch settlers, identity carries this meaning. The term volk, meaning people, is connected with the Afrikaners who have a special covenant with God like the people of Israel. The Blood River covenant is the primary foundation of this thought. Sandra Joireman places the South African Afrikaner people group in the same category. Joireman believes this identity derives from the Afrikaners' conflict with the English in the 19th and early 20th century, more so after the Boer War that increased the English dominance in South Africa. Joireman (2003: 60-1) states, 'The Afrikaners used the chosen people myth to justify their own manifest destiny- their claim over the vast

territories and peoples inland South Africa. Believing that your group is chosen by God over other groups to fulfill a particular destiny is a power self-definition and has implications for members of the other groups that come into conflict with the chosen.' This thought still exists today. In the South African province of the Northern Cape, there is an Afrikaner community called Orania. This was established by Afrikaners to be self-sufficient. The basic requirements to be part of the community is to be a white Afrikaner with a Reformed background and adhere to the Blood River Covenant that establishes the Afrikaners as a special people of God (Frankental and Sichone, 2005: 216-8).

The inability to establish a national identity that recognizes the value of other cultures would negatively affect any efforts to create a functioning multicultural society. The South African situation clearly indicates that there will always be a group that sees itself to be higher and better than other racial or cultural groups. What is essential is for the idea of multiculturalism to be accepted and practiced in mainstream culture. When one travels throughout South Africa, it is difficult to see racial divisions. This is because the idea of a Rainbow Nation is in the minds of the people. It is easier to accept the notion of unity than of division, due to the national experience of how hatred and segregation could negatively affect the country. South Koreans, also, suffered greatly during the colonization by Japan (Dudden 2005 and Moon, 2013). Although generations have passed since the defeat of Japan in the Second World War, the suffering of the Korean people is still fresh in their minds and is one of the decisive factors in their policies regarding Japan. It is essential for South Koreans to use the lessons about discrimination in creating a functional multicultural society.

IV. A Biblical view of race and multiculturalism

During the Apartheid South African era, there were different views on multiculturalism within the Christian community. The strong nationalist view was supported by the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in South Africa and led to the drafting of a biblical and theological defense of racial segregation in the document in 1975 called, *Ras, volk en nasie en volkereverhoudinge in die lig van die skrif*, and the English translation that was published in 1976 titled, 'Human relations and the South African scene in the light of the scripture'. I will use this document and the views expressed within as an example of what a typical nationalist view could be, and examine the biblical views expressed in the scriptures on the topic of multiculturalism.

1. The Old Testament view on multiculturalism

When examining the Old Testament, it is essential to note that there are numerous references to multiculturalism. The most notable scripture is the Tower of Babel with reference to the different languages that is believed to be the cause of the development of various cultures. A nationalist view would interpret this scripture as a defense that segregation is God-ordained. John P. Jackson (2005: 127) accurately points out that Genesis 11 has been used in defense of segregation, especially in the American South against racial integration policies in the North. Mark Newman (2001: 54-5) refers to the Summerton Baptist Church in South Carolina that was held in 1957 where a resolution for racial segregation was adopted. In the resolution, three points were presented; God creates human beings into different races, the races were in accordance with God's divine plan and mission, God meant for the races to maintain their purity and identity. The resolution used Genesis 11 as a support for their views on racial segregation. It is essential to note that many Christian churches that once held these views,

like the Dutch Reformed Church and many American Southern churches have since reversed their views, however, it is not surprising that many nationalist Christian movements may still hold on to this interpretation of Genesis 11.

There has not been outwards spoken interpretation for racial segregation in South Korea as there has been in the America, South Africa, and Europe. In my observation, the reason is that South Korea has not really had many problems with people of other races and cultures. South Korea was a closed country until the 1990s when the South Korean government opened their doors to migrant workers on special working visas (Seol, 2015: 65-70). The integration of races in South Korea has been a new experience since the independence from the Japanese colonization at the end of the Second World War, thus South Korean churches have not yet had the opportunity to establish a theological position on race and multiculturalism.

What is essential is that there are numerous scriptural references on the inclusion of people of other racial and cultural backgrounds into the community of God. There is the reference to God's promise to Abraham that many nations will be blessed through his descendants (Gen 12: 1-3) and that he will be a father or many nations (Gen 17:4-5 c.f. Rom 4:17). There is the international marriage of Joseph with his Egyptian wife, Asenath, and the descendants of their mixed race children, Manasseh and Ephraim, form parts of the tribes of Israel (Gen 41:45-52; Num 13:8; Josh 1:12; 21:20). Additionally, there is the defense of Moses when he was criticized by Miriam and Aaron for marrying a Cushite (Black) woman that resulted in God punishing Miriam with leprosy (NUM 12:1-10). There are, also, references to God bringing the nations to himself and restoring the nations (Ps 22:28; Is 49:6; Ez 29:13; Zech 14:16). It is essential to note that the Great Commission is the call for Gentiles to be included

in the people of God (Matthew 28:16-18). Consequently, the theme of the New Testament focuses on the inclusion of Gentiles into the Kingdom of God, and the expansion of the Gospel to the nations.

2. The New Testament view on multiculturalism

The DRC document begins by presenting definitions of ἔθνος (e*thnos*) and λαὸς (*laos*). The argument of the document is that the meaning of these terms is close to the modern meaning of 'peoples' as a 'conjoined by a common language and culture' (DRC, 1975: 28). The documents move on to defending the Afrikaans biblical translation of *ethnos* as 'nations', meaning associated with heathen nations, and *laos* as 'people' as it is associated with the concept of people of God. The DRC (1975: 28) document states, 'In the Afrikaans translation of the Bible *laos* is usually rendered as "people" and *ethnos* as "nation", but does not intend to make a ethnological distinction. (The possible explanation is to be found in the fact that *laos* is usually for the people of God while *ethnos* signifies the heathen nations.)'

The DRC uses the terms in their document to support the notion that segregation is God-ordained and should be maintained, and argues that the scriptures that use these terms should not. However, it is essential to examine the meaning of *ethnos* and *laos*. *Ethnos* is generally defined as a race, people, nation; the nations, heathen world, Gentiles. This term used in the classification of groups of common species living in a common place, or a group of people exercising common customs and traditions. This use of this term is not limited in Anthropological studies, but in Biological disciplines also. The New Testament also uses *ethnos* in relation to Gentiles (Sterlin, 1981: 69-70). Paul in his epistles refers to his calling to

the Gentiles. In the opening of his epistle to the church in Rome, Paul states, ‘By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name’ (Rom 1: 5 KJV).

Vincent (2004: 5) observes that Paul's use of the term in the given verse does not concentrate on Gentiles living in the Palestine, the contrast of the Jewish population in Israel, but on Gentiles everywhere. This is plausible as the letter is addressed to the church that is composed dominantly by Gentiles. The use of this term in Paul's epistles is consistent, but nothing compared to his epistle to the Romans (Vincent, 2004: 5). Throughout the epistle Paul makes a distinction between two groups, Jews, and Gentiles, with *ethnos* in a generic form, thus referring to non-Jews all over (Vincent, 2004: 5).

This is different to *laos* that appears 25 times in the NT (Wright, 2003: 131). *Laos* is denoted as ‘a people, a crowd’, but the connotation is in reference to a special group of people, ‘the people of God’, specifically Israel (Matthew 4:23;Matthew 13:15; Mark 7:6; Luke 2:10; John 11:50), and Christians (Hebrews 4:9; Revelation 18:4; Acts 15:14; Romans 9:25; 1 Peter 2:10; Wright, 2003: 131). Although the truth of the Gospel incorporates Gentiles into God's family along with the Jews, it is a fact that people still retain their cultural and national identities. The event recorded in Acts 15 recognizes this fact and makes an allowance of expressions of worship in any given cultures, not necessary adhering to the Jewish forms and laws, with conditions that the true nature of God's revealed truth is not compromised (Wright, 2003: 131). However, a certain caution is advised when dealing with this issue. The DRC (1975: 32) document states,

> From the fact that existence of a diversity of people is accepted as relative, but nonetheless, real premises, one may infer that the New Testament allows for the possibility that a given country may decide to regulate its inter-people on the basis of separate development- considering its own peculiar circumstances, with due respect for the basic norms which the Bible prescribes for the regulation of social relations (cf. proposition 3.2.8) and after careful consideration of all possible solutions offered.

The DRC believes that although one may be in the new covenant in Christ, it is a reality that one still attains one's cultural identity and nationality.Thus to maintain love and respect for all different cultures separate development is acceptable. This belief could be taken further that the notion, according to the document, is biblical and true. Wright (2003: 131) argues that the concept of 'people of God' was God creating a new race of people. This identity transcends all earthly identities that each individual, or a group of people, may hold. Wright begins by acknowledging that many people may associate Christianity (Christian community) with different references such as family, or community, but not race. His departure is I Peter 2: 9, 'You are a chosen race (γένος/ *genos*), a royal priesthood, a holy nation (ἔθνος/ *ethnos*), a person (λαὸς/ *laos*) for God's own possession'

In this scripture, Peter refers to the Christian community as a chosen race, a holy nation, and God's people. *Genos* was consciously chosen to communicate a new identity that transcends both Jews and Gentile classifications of the day. Wright's observation is plausible as he states that each of these four designations, although rich with the suggestiveness of its own, all express the important early Christian conviction that Christians belonged to a people, the

people of God, which constituted a new corporate presence (Wright, 2003: 131). This instilled a strong confidence in the believers of the first century.

Therefore, if a new identity is given through the acceptance of God's revealed truth, it is a Christian mandate to sustain this unity; thus the opposing notion of separate development. Paul in the epistle to the Ephesians refers the church as a family that derives its identity from God as the father (Eph 3: 14-15). This is essential as in the previous chapters his focus was on the inclusion of Gentiles in the community of faith in Christ Jesus thus his reference was a family of God that consists of both Jews and Gentiles. Wright (2003: 131-2) continues by stating that baptism is the leveler as it identifies each individual with Christ and with each other. His reference is Gal 3: 27-29 that states, 'All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise'

Wright explains that the promise of Abraham is the inclusion of Gentiles in the family and the promise is the promise of blessing for all the families of the earth. He cross-references with the Col 3: 11 that states there is no distinction between Jews and Gentiles, Barbarian, Scythian, slaves and free, as all are in Christ. This same scripture is used by the DRC in the document and reject the notion of new identity. Keener (2009: 75), although in agreement with Wright (2003), approaches this issue from a different angle. Keener's focus is on the Temple of God, both the temple in Jerusalem and the New Testament presentation of the body of believers as the temple of the Holy Spirit. Regarding the role of 'missions', Keener (2009: 75) states,

> The biblical goal of such cross-cultural ministry, however, was never meant to yield a long-range distinction between “sending” and “receiving” churches. The partnership between churches, with reciprocal gifts and responsibilities, is a much closer idea (cf Rom 15:27; 2 Cor 8—9), though the defined roles and differentiation often attached to notions of a partnership must be adaptable, pragmatic tools, not inflexible boundaries. The eschatological reality and present ideal in this passage point to a more ultimate principle, proclaiming an equal citizenship in God's kingdom, a unity in worship that welcomes all contributions without ignoring the diversity of the contributing cultures.’

Keener argues against notions that put boundaries between different churches and their cultural expressions. It is imperative to note that the argument is not against independent local churches with their own specific cultural expressions of worship, but against policies that limit who can join in membership or participate in church activities based on one's nationality or cultural background. Keener presents this argument well as it acknowledges the role of missions, but highlights the great misunderstanding regarding missions and church plant that the DRC practiced during the era of apartheid and prior.

Keener's statement is in relation to Ephesians 2 that speaks of God's removal of the division between Jews and Gentiles in the Temple. Keener states that with Solomon's temple there was no division between Jews and Gentiles, only priests, and laity. When Herod rebuilt the temple was then segregated by race and gender. Thus the wall of division between the races and genders was destroyed by Christ and united all people as one (Keener, 2009: 76-7).

Keener (2009: 84) also takes aim at one of the common racial policies practiced by churches in America and South Africa, separate eating counters. He states that, although focusing on the American practice, the practice of separation of race was condemned by Paul in his account written to the church in Galatia (Gal 2: 11-14). In this account Paul publicly rebukes Peter for his hierocracy; that when he is with the Gentiles he associates with them, but when Jewish believers from Jerusalem comes he distances himself from the Gentiles instead of living out the truth of what Christ's people look like.

John P. Meier (2004) states that Paul and Peter's discourse in Antioch was a result of an issue, not properly dealt with at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15). What were dealt with, according to Meier, were the issue of circumcision and other issues regarding the adherence of the Jewish Law. The issue that should have been presented at the table is what should be taken into consideration when the two communities meet together. The lack of foresight prevented the issue from being raised and dealt with properly. Meier (2004: 28-44) correctly observes that this issue was a problem in Jerusalem but not in Antioch. Meier states that from the beginning of the Antiochene church, all Christians ate together. This was a contrast between the church in Jerusalem as admitting Gentiles without the requirement of circumcision was a huge step for the Antiochene church.

Meier correctly points out that the church in Antioch was a true presentation of what a true people of God looked like. The acceptance and adherence of truth were so transformational that Jewish Christians recognized and accepted the new identity with Gentiles believers and lived out the unity in Christ. This pragmatic approach to truth was not really understood by

the Jerusalem church that had its own racial discourse. This was clearly evident in the dispute between Paul and Peter.

Both Wright (2003) and Keener (2009) argue for the biblical notion of a new identity that transcends any earthly loyalties, and it’s a notion that is acceptable and plausible when dealing with divine Truth in a multicultural South African context, and possibly South Korea as well. It is my deduction that if this new identity, or race, in Christ Jesus is formulated with people from all different backgrounds and national identities, Jews and Gentiles, then the argument for separate development can never be biblically warranted. I believe that even in a potential multicultural South Korean context, the call for unity and divine truth that transcends all cultural barriers is great. Biblical invocation of scriptures for racial separation is it irresponsible and, according to some, heretic (see Kemp, 2009, and Plaatjies and Vosloo, 2013).

God chose Israel as his people to reveal to the world the new identity based on his revealed truth. In the New Testament, this revealed truth is revealed through the person and teachings of Christ, through whom a new people is formed. These people represent all the peoples of the earth in God's kingdom, as his truth is presented throughout the earth. The Great Commission (Matt 28: 18, Mark 16: 15-28) was given for God's truth to be proclaimed in all nations, and to transform individuals and communities into the image of Christ; to adhere to God’s moral law and mercy in Christ. It took a church outside Palestine to understand this truth and model it. This model is essential for all Christian communities to imitate.

It is undeniable that the biblical view places the spiritual identity of a new race over the earthly identity. The main question is whether or not the South Korea Church could have this worldview. It would be extremely challenging due to the general nationalist view of what it means to be South Korean. Although there are numerous churches with outreach programs to foreigners, the foreigners are often not included in the general church life, except during special events. In contrast to multicultural churches in South Africa, where songs are sung in different languages during a church service, the foreigners who come to South Korean churches do not have the freedom to sing songs in their own languages. It would take a dynamic shift for things to change. However, if things were to change, what practical steps need to be taken?

V. Multicultural identity: a practical approach

Creating a national identity that embraces different cultural expressions is possible, but it depends on the method used. South Korea already spends much money on learning different languages. An average family spends almost one thousand dollars a month per child for extra English classes. Students from elementary schools go to language institutes called *hagwons* from late afternoon until late evenings. It is estimated that South Korea spends close to 15 billion dollars a year on English education (Lee, 2015: 510). Chinese and Japanese language lessons are equally popular and South Korean parents spend as much money as the English education as well. Additionally, there are numerous English and Chinese television shows on cable networks. However, with much money spent on additional language and cultural lessons, language proficiencies in all three languages are much lower than expected. Although many popular newspapers have online websites in one of these languages, they are

absent in major media outlets. The few foreigners in television shows are those who have assimilated into the Korean culture. There isn’t freedom to use other languages other than Korean on national television.

There are various ways of creating a multicultural society. Within the Christian community, it would mean to introduce the various languages in the life of the community. This would mean to introduce songs of different languages in worship services, especially songs that have been translated into Korean. There are many people who have never heard the original songs in their original languages, and in my personal experience, some individuals are surprised to hear that some songs are translated from English to Korean. Currently, many churches with international ministries have English services, and other foreign services, separately, as it is more convenient. Although many foreigners may like the idea of worshiping in their own languages, this method creates a gulf between the international and the Korean communities. They are viewed as different churches in the same building, and this does not create the unity expressed in the bible. Accommodation of foreigners with sufficient Korean proficiency coming to join the Korea services is essential. In the South African context, it is not unusual to hear songs of different languages sung during the services, and this creates unity and a sense of family in the community. With so much money spent on language learning, it is logical to include these languages into the life of the Church.

The second point worth consideration is the drafting of a binding theological document on race relations. There are various documents drafted during the Apartheid-era South Africa on race relations and racial prejudice, however, these documents were reactive rather than proactive. South Korea is in a unique position to take proactive measures to ensure that the

Christian community maintains a biblical view on race relations. It would be naïve to think that there will not be any racial tensions in the future, and it is essential to establish a theological position on this issue for this and the future generation to ensure that many mistakes made in many countries, such as South Africa and the United States, are not repeated in the South Korean. South Korean evangelical churches could either temporarily adopt one of the existing documents, such the South African Belhar Confession that has been adopted by many Reformed churches around the world, and later replace it with a new South Korean document, or draft a new document the is unique to the South Korean situation.

The need for such a document is to create a unifying position, and, hopefully, influence the broader South Korea society on the proper view on race relations and proper conduct towards people of other cultures and racial groups. It is easier to begin from a position of influencing the society towards a certain direction during the period of peace than to bring sanity during the time of crisis. Churches have the opportunity to deal with people at the grassroots level and directly speak to political leaders on proper legislations to create a society of racial and cultural tolerance. However, in every society, lasting changes come from the grassroots, rather than the laws.

VI. The movements for multiculturalism has to come from the grassroots and not from the government projects

Lee (2015: 508) correctly observes that the past two presidential administrations spent as much as 1 billion dollars in support of multicultural families as they saw multiculturalism as the future of Korea. Much of the promotion of multiculturalism has been initiated by

government campaigns and not from the general public. This has proven to have limited success as many people do not trust the government and intend to be more critical of government-sponsored programs and initiatives. There is historical evidence of grassroots movements that have shaped the course of the nations and lasted longer than expected. The anti-apartheid movements are some of the examples of such movements. The African National Congress (ANC) was established in 1912 in protest against land laws that were discriminatory. Many more movements were established between the 1912 and 1985 that are still active in South African political and social environments (Lodge, 2013: 273-8).

Although the situation between the Apartheid South Africa and the present South Korea differs in that the South Korean government understands the necessity of multiculturalism in South Korea, the need for grassroots awakening is similar. Change cannot be seen as government-driven, but through the use of media and open dialogue, the South Korean citizens need to show concern for the migrants living in South Korea and to voice their support for multiculturalism in the national identity. Through the implementation of *junctional assimilation* of multiculturalism in mainstream media, seeing multiculturalism in South Korea would make it natural to South Korean natives. Although skepticism against the government is high due to perceived government corruption and scandals plaguing former presidents, media has always been a primary source of social transformation. Once multiculturalism is a natural part of the Korean society, people would readily be opened to a more serious discussion of creating a functional multicultural South Korea.

VII. The final analysis

From a personal note, it is difficult to be optimistic that South Korea will be able to create a multicultural society where various cultures are accepted within the national identity. Being married to a Korean wife and having three mixed-race children has not been easy. As a South African who grew up in Apartheid South Africa, I would like to believe that South Korea would be able to achieve its goal of creating a multicultural society. However, there is yet a homogeneous country with a long history, like South Korea, to have created a functioning multicultural society. The current situations in Europe indicate the difficulty in creating a multicultural society. With an influx of refugees from the Middle East flooding into Europe, there has been an enormous nationalistic movement that has plagued countries like Denmark, Italy, and Great Britain. In *The Rise of the Far Right in Europe: Populist Shifts and 'Othering'*, Gabriella Lazaridis (2016) and other Social Science scholars notes the rise of nationalistic movements in various European countries, as they see the refugees as a threat to their security and economy. More so, they do not believe the refugees would be able to assimilate into the European culture. Although it can be argued that the prejudiced attitude is due to the negative image that radical Islamists have painted over Islam as a whole, I would argue that this is a reflection of general prejudice that has always existed in the European cultures. Thus, looking at the reality of what is happening in the all over the world, it is difficult to be optimistic that a homogeneous country could get it right. It is more realistic to create a society where its citizens accept the idea of multiculturalism at the grassroots level than formal policies that are pushed by the government onto the people. The latter has a greater chance of creating far-right nationalist movements against the foreigners, and this is where the current course may lead. The South Korean Church should decide whether it will take the proactive or reactive role on this issue.

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