# Missional Hospitality Towards Healing

## A Narrative Approach in Missiology[1]

Bokyoung Park

Bokyoung Park has been teaching missiology at Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary since 2002. She currently serves as the Vice-President of IAMS (International Association of Mission Studies) and an active member of AMRI (Alliance of Mission Researchers and Institutions). She founded Korea IAMS Fellowship to mentor Korean young scholars to enhance their international scholarly activities.
Contact: parkbokyoung718@gmail.com

**Abstract**

The entire world is suffering through the COVID-19 pandemic. In this age of anguish, churches must work on the ministry of

1. This article was originally published in Korean as "*Ch'iyurŭl chihyanghanŭn hwandaeŭi sŏn'gyohakŭl wihan shironr iyagishing chŏpkŭnŭl chungshimŭro*. 치유를 지향하는 환대'의 선교학을 위한 시론: 이야기식 접근을 중심으로 [Essay on the Missiology of 'Hospitality towards Healing': Focusing on Narrative Approach]" *Sŏn'gyoshinhak* [*Mission Theology*] 61 (2021) 114–43. The author wants to recognize special gratitude to Dr. Rebekah Lee, who translated this article. Following translation, it was revised and peer reviewed for publication in *Ecclesial Futures*.

hospitality that leads to healing as part of God's mission. This article employs a narrative approach in articulating a missional hospitality. It draws on two stories of the writer's personal experience to describe how pain was healed through an experience of hospitality. The sharing of personal stories demonstrates how experiences of hospitality can be converted into missional practice for others which becomes a locus of healing. As the conclusion, the study provides three implications. First, churches need to provide the space of hospitality for others experiencing pain and grief. Second, theology plays a role in providing a community-based collective interpretation of the pain. Third, the role of mission is to replicate the missional dimension of healing hospitality to the wounded.

## Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic is afflicting countless people over the world. As social distancing continued for months on end in South Korea, a "pandemic fatigue" settled among the general public (Badre, 2021). There were no safe havens, and face-to-face meetings with friends and family were to be avoided if at all possible. While Korea has conducted efficient testing, tracing, and treatment regimens and consistent information was provided to the public, the experience resulted in targeted blame toward certain individuals and groups. There is a persistent fear that anyone may unwittingly brush by an asymptomatic patient and become targeted for ostracization from our communities and workplaces. Those identified as positive cases tend to feel both guilt and resentment toward those who avoid them over something that was beyond their control. Beneath the daily reporting of the number of dead by the pandemic are stories of our neighbors who have had to accept sudden and heart-wrenching loss. For some this loss manifests in grief over losing a loved one, and for others despair over financial ruin. Others have been stigmatized as super-spreaders in contagion clusters and suffered irrevocable communal ostracization. Many continue to suffer from exhaustion and depression resulting from the prolonged strict social distancing regime (S. Y.

Yun 2020). Indeed, the entire world is suffering through the COVID-19 pandemic.

In these circumstances of suffering, the Church has the responsibility to practice the missional hospitality that leads to healing. The world is in need of the people of God to participate in such a mission today. This ministry must be taken up by the entire faith community, and at the same time must be manifest in individual Christians as they encounter other broken individuals in daily life. Such is the mission of the Church for today's broken world.

## Missional Hospitality in a Wounded World: Personal Stories

The following stories are personal stories of my own. They show how I became the wounded one, then grew to accept woundedness as an existential experience of death and resurrection in Christ. With this experience of acceptance and healing, I was then able to extend missional hospitality that facilitated healing for others.

### First Story

November 25, 2016, is the day I want to erase from memory. That was the day my husband was diagnosed with late-stage liver cancer. At age fifty-three my husband became terminally ill. My personal spirituality and ministry entered an entirely new stage from that point on. For three months, until the day of my husband's death on February 12, 2017, my family despaired together, wept together, raged together, and pleaded with God together. As the moment of encounter with death approached, its shadow completely engulfed our entire family. My husband was facing the end of his life, something unimaginably fearsome and threatening. Our children and I trembled at the fearful prospect of being left alone with our grief and our task of accepting this sudden parting.

Death shattered our existence to pieces. Devasted, we had no choice but to wait for Christ's healing and restoration. After my husband's death, I could not wade out of deep despair. I was racked with guilt. I was angry and bitter against God, asking if this was the paltry reward I got for following my calling. How could God let this happen? But precisely in that darkest moment, the seed of healing, restoration, and hope blossomed. I learned that as finite humans I cannot hold back death, the most painful reality. Slowly I started on the journey of discovering the true meaning of death and what it means for us as Christians to encounter death.

Healing and restoration started in an unexpected place. Our family was attending a small, ten-member church of Korean immigrants which my husband was pastoring in the United States. Many of them had been rejected by their family and community and were physically or emotionally unwell. This community was wrestling with the shock and grief of losing their pastor, but they also embraced our family into their space of hospitality. This small community of ten, marginalized and ignored by the society, brought our family into its fold and we were able to start on the path of healing.

The hospitality was mutual. The church members were living through their dismal reality of having depended on their pastor as their rock. His death was a traumatic loss. So our family also extended hospitality by providing meals after services each Sunday. This mutual hospitality led to mutual healing. Death made us all despair yet healing slowly progressed.

On the first Easter Sunday after the death of my husband, I shared a message at this church. It was the first time I had stood behind the pulpit since his death. As one still in the process of passing through the tunnel of mourning, I proclaimed Christ's death and resurrection, and now our own experience of death and the hope of resurrection. As I preached with trembling voice, the congregation wept. After the sermon, an elderly woman leader of the church personally approached me and gave me words of divine encouragement. These comforted me on an entirely new and mystical level. This was for me the clearest experience of healing in the

midst of deepest grief which occurred within this hospitable faith community. Thanks to this experience I rediscovered the truth that the essence of Christian faith is to give an answer to the existential question of death. The experience allowed me to see how Christian healing and restoration are possible even in the depths of brokenness and despair as one is embraced by a hospitable community.

## Second Story

Exactly three years passed from the first story until the time when a new strand of COVID-19 hit Daegu, a city in South Korea. In February 2020, I was present, concerned about the health of my elderly mother in her nineties. A day after I arrived in my hometown of Daegu, massive transmission clusters were identified. Each day we were flooded with news of positive cases and building closures. I saw the city shutting down before my eyes. It was so sudden that the medical system was in ruins. Countless patients had to wait in their homes and were admitted to the hospital only when their symptoms got worse.

Then I heard that my older sister, who had been suffering from the flu for a few days, was feeling worse. She took the COVID-19 test just to be sure, and the result came back positive. Because hospitals were overwhelmed by the sudden outbreak, she had to wait at home until a space was available. We called the pandemic response authorities countless times each day to check if there was a bed, but they could only tell us to wait. The symptoms of pneumonia grew worse. She was unable to consume a meal for a week as she wavered in and out of consciousness. We called an ambulance, but they had to return my sister back home because the hospital had no space. After calling several more times an ambulance came again, and they decided to try and look for any available space. The emergency workers connected my sister to the respirator in the ambulance and waited in front of a hospital until a bed was ready.

A bed finally did open up and she was admitted. But the hospital called not long after. The doctor told us that the illness

was too advanced. There was nothing they could do and the family needed to decide on end-of-life care. My family was devastated. Less than a week after hearing that our sister was sick with the flu we were hit with this shocking news. My older sister's family had no idea what to do at such a sudden turn of events. My brother-in-law in his eighties was in a state of shock. As the moment of death approached, I had to help my family face death. We bought a phone for a nurse to take into the isolation room and hold up to my sister, whose consciousness was slipping, and we said our goodbyes.

My sister's surviving family had to face shock and grief at such an absurd end. For my brother-in-law, who lost his lifelong partner, this was shock he could not easily process. The suddenness of it, along with his powerlessness to do anything to save his wife, left him feeling guilty and with a deep sense of futility. This was exactly the moment when he needed God's healing through someone's hospitality.

At this point own experience of loss could be converted in a new way to become a missional act. Based on my own experience of despair, I was able to extend hospitality. The small church community in the US had stayed with me at my moments of grief. Now I was passing on the same hospitality at another place of mourning. Practically, such hospitality meant simply to stand by the ones in pain, to grieve together, and to share little acts of kindness. Because of my own experience of losing a spouse, I could extend kindness and comfort to my brother-in-law. As I also recalled the existential lesson and the true meaning of Christian faith I myself had learned, I was able to provide hospitality in the hope of resurrection. In the spring of 2020, my experience of grief and restoration three years ago became a source of empathy and comfort for my other family members in their moment of grief. As a "wounded healer" (Nouwen 1972) in this new place of grief, I could practice hospitality that leads to the path of healing.

## A Narrative Approach in Missiological Studies

In this section, I turn my attention to the power of stories in theological discussion. In the 1970s the narrative approach began to receive more attention as a theological methodology. Narrative theology is a creative approach, using stories to communicate about God—how God intervenes in humanity, the events that are shaped by human agents, and how the humans in those events transition and grow from despair to hope (Fackre 1983, 343). According to Fackre (1983, 347), "the quest for spontaneity and self-expression leads to a search for the immediacies and intimacies of experience." Advocacy theologians pay great attention to narratives, seeing their potential to give "voice to the voiceless, or affirming the plural and the protean" (Fackre 1983, 347). The desire for self-expression and the need to heed the voices of the voiceless are even greater today.

In missiology the significance of stories has long been acknowledged through missionary biographies. More recently, narrative theology has been employed to provide deeper missiological reflections. Nancy Thomas asserts that narratives play an important role in missiological reflections, and that stories are the "footprints of God" in which are found the mission of God. To follow in the footsteps of God means to enter into the stories, write the stories, tell the stories, learn the stories, and live the stories. For Thomas (1999, 226–27), narratives are what motivate us to participate in the mission of God.

Frances Adeney also emphasizes the significance of biographies, a form of narrative, in missiology. She asserts that studying the narratives of real individuals in their social and historical context contributes to missiology by giving a more accurate understanding of how Christian mission occurs in a certain time and place (Adeney 2009, 157). It is true that participation in the mission of God is not a practice of academic reflection through metaphysical propositions. Instead it is something that occurs in relationship with actual people and within specific sociopolitical

and historical conditions. Because theology has traditionally overlooked real-life contexts of actual persons involved in the mission of God, the narrative approach is all the more significant for missiology today.

The narrative approach has the potential to overcome the limits of traditionally abstract and propositional approaches to communicating about God, the world, and human destiny. Traditional theology with propositional declarations and abstract concepts is too removed from actual daily lives. Yet, narrative breathes "life, joy, and vitality to the process of thinking theologically in mission" and "connects missiology to the real-world context it belongs to" (Thomas 1999, 233). Narratives are by nature holistic and integrated with daily life; they can be communicated in ways familiar to the lives and contexts of the listeners. Narratives allow us to "translate the grace and forgiveness and transforming work of God" in exactly these real-life contexts. In that sense, the narrative approach does not express the mission of God propositionally but rather as "mission on the way" and in process (Thomas 1999, 230).

Stories are even better able to communicate in times of suffering and pain in the Church's missionary practice. In theology, pain and suffering are something humans as holistic and finite beings must embrace and accept rather than logically understand and explain away. Such theology must be able to hold all of one's whole self, including emotions of joy and grief, despair and hope. Especially for those in deep suffering, the emotional dimension is front and center. Logical explanations lack persuasion. The logical explanations of Job's suffering expounded by Job's friends—though they may have been the noblest pieces of wisdom in their age—were of little consolation to Job. Instead they provoked intense anger and despair. Yet stories have the power to empathize in moments of pain and suffering, and thus are especially appropriate as a missionary practice in contexts of suffering.

Moreover, narratives invite the listeners to share in the experience of the storyteller. A shared story resonates with yet another story in a listener. This process creates an interconnected space of empathy and communication. Stories have transformative

power, but the power is manifest in much less direct ways than propositional statements. Stories do not invade into the thoughts of others. Rather, they invite others to see from new perspectives, thereby generating change in more roundabout ways.

Stories, especially Biblical stories, are especially useful for motivating us to participate in the mission of God. The great stories of God's mission resonate with and give meaning to our own smaller stories. We learn that our suffering, struggles, and griefs are materials for the mission of God (Thomas 1999, 227). Our own stories also motivate us toward mission. In every individual's unique stories, and in the stories of communities to which we belong, we discover the call to mission (Thomas 1999, 228). The stories of the world also stir us toward mission. As we see pain, grief, suffering, and despair, as well as hope in the stories of people around the world, we see their need for Christ's salvation and are moved to enter into mission (Thomas 1999, 229).

In sum, the narrative approach to missiology overcomes the limitations of traditional propositional approach, enables missiology to make connections with real people, makes possible holistic communication of the gospel in the midst of suffering, and is invitational rather than coercive in the communication process. The narrative approach also consistently motivates participation in mission. It enables deeper missiological reflections in today's context of suffering.

## The Meaning of Hospitality towards Healing

How might hospitality lead to healing? Hospitality is an act of providing physical comfort and safety to facilitate restoration. Hospitality is related to a certain space or refuge for emotional and psychological recovery. The term is often accompanied by descriptors such as "generous," "kind," or "gracious" (Koenig 1985, 17–18). Joshua Jipp defines hospitality as "the act or process whereby the identity of the stranger is transformed into that of guest" (2017, 2). Hospitality provides a "safe and welcoming place where a stranger can be converted into a friend" (Jipp 2017, 2).

Among those who developed the concept of hospitality in the field of theology is feminist theologian Letty Russell. Russell (2009, 82) defines hospitality as "a form of partnership with the ones we call 'others'" and asserts the need to reframe hospitality.

Hospitality is an act of recognizing the stranger's common humanity (Pohl 1999, 6). Hospitality triggers a small but significant change in the recipients. The experience of being recognized and received enhances one's self-esteem. Hospitality enables a socially invisible person to become visible (Pohl 1999, 62). True hospitality is only possible when there is a relationship of respect. Respect and recognition are expressed by paying one's full attention to the other, thereby proving their worth (Pohl 1999, 70–71). Because people share common humanity as individuals made in the image of God, it is possible to offer hospitality through respect and recognition. For Pohl, hospitality is more than a simple act of service; it involves the sharing of life. Hospitality takes place where there is sharing of life and resources resulting in mutual blessing. At the site of hospitality, respect and communication are shared by the guest and the host; it is a "two-way street" (Pohl 1999, 72). In this sense, true hospitality is impossible without friendship, and such hospitable friendship is best expressed in table fellowship. Pohl beautifully explains that the moment of gathering for a meal is an egalitarian experience for all participants. This is the moment when one can truly recognize one another—a moment one can be *with* others instead of *for* others. In hospitality, "respect and appreciation, presence and friendship are indispensable parts of the affirmation of human personhood" (Pohl 1999, 84).

Healing is one dimension of hospitality. Healing happens in the "unexpected divine presence" within the space of hospitality (Russell 2009, 82–84). Henry Nouwen emphasized that hospitality has the power to heal. Healing requires providing a space of rest as well as concentration and community for the welcomed guest (Nouwen 1972, 96). In the space of hospitality, the stranger who needs healing requires a full and concentrated gaze. Such concentration requires the host to set aside one's needs, concerns, and anxieties and to humbly open up their space. The one practicing

hospitality must be able to keep a distance from one's own problems. True hospitality is expressed by giving one's attention to the stranger (Nouwen 1972, 97). The host, as healer, must be able to listen and acknowledge the guest's stories of joy and sadness, hope and grief, successes and failures. Such attentive listening through being fully present is the highest form of hospitality (Nouwen 1972, 95).

Hospitality can lead to healing when the host can dwell in their own wounded-ness. By remembering the vulnerability and dependency we ourselves experienced at that place of pain, we can enable healing in others (Pohl 1999, 65). However, the fact that there is healing in the hospitable space does not mean that the pain is diminished. It only means that the wound is redefined as an opportunity toward a new vision of hope in Christ. So when members of the community profess their wounds and share their weaknesses, healing takes place and their hope grows stronger (Nouwen 1972, 100).

Jesus showed God's hospitality through his actions, but he also received hospitality from others (Yong 2008, 101). Jesus' life was full of such stories. At the table fellowship with the disciples on the road to Emmaus the resurrected Jesus was both the guest and the host. The table was an expression of communal hospitality in which healing occurred. Leslie Hay points out that the presence of the resurrected Christ was revealed at this table of hospitality. In this sense, the meal was the "sacrament of hospitality" (Hay 2006, 46). The parable of the Good Samaritan shows God's hospitality to the one who is deeply wounded. Hospitality is a key message in the story of the woman who broke an alabaster jar of perfume for Jesus. The nameless and uninvited woman was the one who was truly hospitable to Jesus, who came as a guest (Hay 2006, 45). From the moment Jesus was born of Mary, through to his burial in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, Jesus depended on others' hospitality. By being on the receiving end of hospitality, by being a guest, Jesus showed God's saving hospitality (Yong 2008, 102).

Furthermore, hospitality has a missional dimension. The one who has experienced hospitality can in turn be hospitable to

others. Hospitality can be a missional calling, given that hospitality is above all an act of God before it is a human act. To extend hospitality is to participate in God's own hospitality. Just has humans participate in the mission of God, we participate in the hospitality of God. As ones who have first experienced God's hospitality, Christians have a missional calling to extend hospitality to others (Kim 2017, 165–66) For Nouwen (1975, 93), all Christians are called to be healers. This means that hospitality that facilitates healing is the missional calling for all Christians. Jipp (2017, 92) states that "the mission of the Church is to participate in God's hospitality, whereby Jesus extends life and redemption to humans who are alienated from God and each other." Jean Vanier (1995, 9) writes that hospitality is a way of life that resists today's competitive and hierarchical social order that marginalizes the weak. Therefore, hospitality is the essence of the church's identity and calling, and an indispensable element of Christian faith (Vanier 1995, 2).

In sum, hospitality is more than simply an act of generosity or helping a stranger with material needs. It is an act of true recognition and respect for the other. True hospitality is impossible without friendship. Such hospitality has a dimension of healing. Healing is made possible when we provide a space for others to enter and as we dwell with them in their place of pain. Hospitality that leads to healing, therefore, also has a missional dimension. When one experiences healing by being received by a hospitable host, the guest can recognize one's own missional calling, and in turn practice hospitality to yet more others.

## Missional Hospitality That Leads to Healing: Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Healing hospitality is based on the ministry of Jesus Christ. Christ incarnate entered the world as a weak and vulnerable human being, and personally practiced the mission of the wounded healer by way of the cross. The mission of the Church is to continue in this mission of Jesus Christ. In a world full of brokenness and grief,

the Church must make the ministry of hospitality a priority. Such hospitality by the Church should not be practiced as an act of charity from the center to the margins or from a position of power to the powerless, but by the Church itself becoming the weak and the marginalized, following in the steps of Jesus Christ. Only then can healing occur and become missional. In this section I will reflect on implications for church, theology, and missional hospitality.

## The Role of the Church: Providing a Space of Hospitality

The Church must prioritize providing a space of hospitality to the grieving in today's broken world. The Church has a role in offering an emotional and physical space to hold the stories of pain. This is a hospitable space where people can share their grief. Above, I described how my experience of grief was held within the space of hospitality provided by a small immigrant church community. For me this community was a space in which I was physically and emotionally welcomed to share my story of pain and to cry and laugh together with others. It was a space of empathy. The community had already experienced brokenness and alienation and were on the margins of the margins. As broken people, they were generous in welcoming me and my family. My family also reciprocated that hospitality by inviting them to table fellowship. In this practice of mutual hospitality, we could share our grief.

As mentioned later, narratives are especially powerful in moments of profound grief. They help us understand that the depths of human suffering, the enormity of life and death, and surviving through chronic pain without losing one's humanity are all possible within a space of empathetic hospitality. By sharing stories in this hospitable space, we invite others' stories of pain and make possible the experience of true community. The community is then able to bear the weight of suffering together.

The COVID-19 pandemic hit us unaware and has changed our lives to the core. The pandemic has revealed the degree of human vulnerability. It is affecting our society's psychological, economic, and political dimensions. As our close friends and family

passed away, the cruel situation that barred us from being present at their moment of death nor able to gather freely at their funerals to share in grief threw us all into deeper anguish. In Korea, when the death of an individual is relegated to the private realm, it becomes difficult to care for people mourning their dead. The number of deaths each day remain mere numbers; there is a loss of empathy amid the fear and loneliness of the dying (M. S. Ahn 2020, 232). Across all societies, we seem to be losing our humanity during this time of pandemic. Ahn Myung-Sook (2020, 227–30) listed some of the social psychological phenomena that have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. These include heightened guardedness, an aggression based on fear, loneliness, and increased isolation due to the lack of human contact. As isolation, loneliness, and fear cause people to raise their defenses and react in violence, churches' mission is to provide space for the world to share their grief. For neighbors faced with sudden grief, churches must open up a space of hospitality and provide a ministry of comfort for them to experience divine healing.

## The Role of Theology: Interpreting Stories of Pain

A process of community-based Scripture interpretation is necessary in order for the stories shared in the space of hospitality to result in healing. This is the role of theology. The stories shared are reframed through the community's interpretation of the Scripture. Kim (2007, 163–64) demonstrates how Hans Frei identifies community-based Scripture interpretation as its key characteristic. The revisiting of pain within a hospitable community enables the sharing of grief and the making of meaning from suffering. The painful stories are reframed through community-based interpretation. A whole new terrain of understanding opens up on the Trinitarian ministry of love and helps people see an even wider kingdom of God. Moreover, this space offers an experience of divine healing through the presence of *Compassio Dei*, the God who is with us in our brokenness (Sauer 2010, 60–65; Hyun 2019, 444).

Hence theology allows us to enter to the new horizon of healing hospitality.

By the time I was asked to preach the Easter sermon in April of 2017, two months after my husband's death, I could finally emerge out of despair. Preparing for the message required theological reflection on life and death. It was then that I could freshly interpret how the core Christian tenet of the cross and the resurrection gives hope to mortal humans doomed to finite existence. In the sermon I gave to the church community, I professed my human weakness, the vanity of human existence and the sudden approach of life and death. Then I shared the hope of resurrection to experience new connection and solidarity. This was a moment when my surface-level knowledge of life and death, encounter and farewell, pain and suffering were deepened through community-based Scripture interpretation.

In the time of pandemic, for churches to offer healing to the world, scriptural interpretation within a hospitable community is necessary. Churches in anguish must offer theological reflection on the anguish experienced by the rest of the world. Only then can a new space of hospitality for healing be offered. Churches must be reminded that they are essentially missional communities, and therefore exist on behalf of the world. Just as Jesus Christ came to save the world, the Church must also exist on behalf of the salvation of the world.

But today the Church is so broken that it does not have eyes to see the suffering of others. The sudden circumstances of the pandemic which made gatherings impossible left the local churches in Korea feeling robbed of their communal identity. While churches have reluctantly accepted government limits on gatherings, sustaining this state of affairs has been painful. Yet, rather than regarding these virus prevention measures as oppression, the Korean church must shift their perspective to accept the situation as an act of sharing in society's burden. They must recover their missional identity as healer of the nations. This shift in perspective is possible through theology that prepares the Church to listen to the suffering of the world. Therefore, through theological

reflection on today's situation, churches can consistently provide answers to questions of life and death and the relationship between humanity and the natural world. The world may seem unwilling to listen, but they are actually searching desperately for answers to these existential questions.

## The Role of Mission: Practicing Hospitality That Leads to Healing

Once our own wound is healed in the space of hospitality, this experience makes possible the ministry of hospitality. Here the role of mission emerges. Once a wound is healed by experiencing hospitality, it does not stay a wound. Instead, the experience becomes a divine resource for mission. Of course, this is only possible through the "unexpected divine presence" of God within the hospitable community (Russell 2009, 82; Langmead 2014, 46). We realize that our pain can be a resource to be used for others' healing. We become wounded healers as we practice hospitality for the healing of others. Here, hospitality moves beyond a missional calling to a missional act.

In the spring of 2020, when my sister suddenly passed away, I was able to extend the hospitality that I also had earlier received. The hospitality and healing I had experienced in the immigrant church community was now rebirthed into a missional hospitality at this new site of grief. However, the healing hospitality my family and I first experienced blessed that church as well. Since 2017 my relationship with the church and its members has developed in new ways. All the church members matured in new ways to become healers in their own places of life, just as I in Korea in 2020 could offer healing hospitality for my extended family. The community that had experienced healing went on to offer healing hospitality to wider spheres of their network.

But we must remember a point of caution. True missional hospitality carries the scars of pain and loss. If hospitality is offered from the center to the margins, it may be a momentary act of kindness, but it cannot facilitate healing. An act of generosity from

the center of power to the marginalized powerless may at worst become an imposition and at best an act of charity. When mission objectifies the other, it can become another act of violence. But for hospitality to facilitate true divine healing, the host must have the experience of becoming marginal and broken. Missional hospitality must be based on the experience of the margins, which then enables the welcoming of yet another person on the margins. This process is beautifully illustrated in Jesus Christ's own hospitality. Jesus was the model of hospitality for the wounded. The cross of Jesus Christ is above all a divine act of hospitality. At the center of the cross is the God who welcomes all through the act of creation, including the fallen and estranged. The hospitality of the cross is not only the essential vocation of Christ but also the essential vocation of Christians (Boersma 2006, 18; Kim 2020, 72).

Therefore, as the Church recognizes itself as wounded, it is able to encounter the wounded world. The Church should conduct theological reflections to provide missional hospitality based on self-understanding as being on the margins. According to Susan Hope, what we need is not mission of the powerful but mission through weakness, vulnerability, and ordinariness. We therefore need not regret our powerlessness in mission but rather celebrate it (Hope 2010, 91–92). Enduring grief and powerlessness is an important part of missionary spirituality that enables us to draw near and deeply embrace the broken and lost world.

The Korean Protestant church today is despised by the rest of society as an antisocial group. The negative image of the Korean Protestant church has been building in recent years, but in the pandemic, this perception has increased dramatically, perhaps to the point of no recovery. Every day the media is reporting on churches identified as transmission clusters and super-spreading events because they pushed on with on-site gatherings, against government directives. This wound that the Church is now sustaining has become entangled in a complex web of preexisting church corruption, social anxiety, and the harsh critique of the media. The result is that Christians are regarded by some as a hate group. Yet this very experience of pain and suffering now offered

to churches means they may experience pain that might enable them to finally empathize with others. This will facilitate healing by offering hospitality to those who had been similarly wounded. This is the very moment that the Korean church is truly ready to practice healing and missional hospitality.

## Conclusion

As COVID-19 sweeps through the world, people are suffering not only physical but social and economic wounds. Missiology today must be able to empathize with those in pain and fully resonate with their grief. Dry propositional approaches are limited in their ability to offer empathetic and appropriate responses to those in pain. The narrative approach is the way to approach today's context.

In today's world, the Church as the body of Christ is called to become a healing community to participate in the mission of the God who empathizes with those in pain. To participate in this mission of God, churches must become spaces in which stories of pain and grief can be openly shared. Theology must provide fresh interpretations of the stories of pains through community-based collective interpretations. The role of mission is to recognize the missional dimension of healing hospitality, that is, for the Church to provide another hospitable space for others to heal. May the hospitable God who treats and heals our wounds continue to heal our church and the world!

## Bibliography

Adeney, Frances S. "Why Biography? Contributions of Narrative Studies to Mission Theology and Mission Theory." *Mission Studies* 26.2 (2009) 153–72.

Ahn, Myung-Sook. "*Chaenan shidae wigi sogesŏŭi in'gansŏng sangshilgwa kyohoeŭi wirosayŏk* 재난 시대 위기 속에서의 인간성 상실과 교회의 위로사역 [Loss of humanity in the crisis of disaster and the church's ministry of comfort]." In *Chaenanshidaerŭl kŭkpok'anŭn han'gukkyohoe*

재난시대를 극복하는 한국교회 [*Korean Church Overcoming Disaster*], edited by The Presbyterian Church of Korea. Seoul: K'ingdŏmbuksŭ, 2020.

Badre, David. "How We Can Deal with Pandemic Fatigue." *Scientific American*. 2021. https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-we-can-deal-with-pandemic-fatigue/.

Boersma, Hans. *Violence, Hospitality, and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006.

Fackre, Gabriel. 1983. "Narrative Theology: An Overview." *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 37 (4) 340–52.

Hay, Leslie A. *Hospitality: The Heart of Spiritual Direction*. New York: Morehouse, 2006.

Hope, Susan. 2010. *Mission-Shaped Spirituality: The Transforming Power of Mission*. New York: Seabury, 2010.

Hyun, Hanna. "'*Ijuwa nanmin shinhak' kiban seugi: kŭrudi(ganiel g. groody) ŭi shinhakkwa met'ap'orosŏ 'hwandaejŏk' sŏn'gyo* 이주와 난민 신학' 기반 세우기: 그루디(Daniel G. Groody)의 신학과 메타포로서 '환대적' 선교 [Making a place for the theological foundation of 'migration & refugee'-Review of Daniel G. Groody's perspective and hospitality as a metaphor of mission]." *Sŏn'gyoshinhak* [*Mission Theology*] 55 (2019) 428–58.

Jipp, Joshua W. *Saved by Faith and Hospitality*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017.

Kim, Ah-Young. "*Shipchagaŭi hwandaeŭi kwanjŏmesŏ pon kungnae musŭllim nanmin sayŏk* 십자가의 환대의 관점에서 본 국내 무슬림 난민 사역 [Muslim refugee ministry in Korea from the perspective of the hospitality of the cross]." *Sŏn'gyoshinhak* 58 (2020) 42–78.

Kim, Dong Kun. "*Hansŭ p'ŭrai shinhagŭi t'ŭkching: sŏsawa ŏnŏ* 한스 프라이 신학의 특징: 서사와 언어 [Several features of Hans Frei's theology: Narrative and language]." *Shinhakkwa mok'oe* [*Theology and Ministry*] 28 (2007) 155–86.

Kim, Eui-Huck. "*Puk'anijujuminŭl hyanghan hwandaeŭi sŏn'gyo* 북한이주주민을 향한 환대의 선교 [Toward a mission of hospitality for North Korean migrants]." *Sŏn'gyoshinhak* [*Mission Theology*] 47 (2017) 146–73.

Koenig, John. *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1985.

Langmead, Ross. 2014. "Refugees as Guests and Hosts: Towards a Theology of Mission among Refugees and Asylum Seekers." *Exchange* 43.1 (2014) 29–47.

Nouwen, Henri. *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society*. New York: Doubleday, 1972.

_____. *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*. New York: Doubleday, 1975.

Pohl, Christine D. *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999.

Russell, Letty M. *Just Hospitality: God's Welcome in a World of Difference*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2009.

Sauer, Christof. "*Missio Dei* and *Compassio Dei*: Minority Christians Experiencing God's Acts in the Face of Hostility." *Scriptura: International Journal of Bible, Religion, and Theology in Southern Africa* 103.1 (2010) 60–65.

Thomas, Nancy. "Following the Footprints of God: The Contribution of Narrative to Mission Theology." In *Footprints of God: A Narrative Theology of Mission*, edited by Charles Van Engen, Nancy Thomas, and Robert Gallagher. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1999.

Vanier, Jean. *The Heart of L'Arche: A Spirituality for Every Day*. New York: Crossroad, 1995.

Yong, Amos. 2008. *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices and the Neighbor*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2008.

Yun, Sin-Yeong, "*K'orona19 sat'ae 8kaewŏl . . . chŏkshinho k'yŏjin 'shilloesahoe,' ssain 'p'iro*' 코로나19 사태 8개월 . . . 적신호 켜진 '신뢰사회,' 쌓인 '피로' [Eight months into COVID-19 . . . warning signs in 'trust society,' accumulated 'fatigue']." *Donga Science*. 2020. http://dongascience.donga.com/news.php?idx=39630.