



From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded

Andrew S. Park

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Look around at any gathering--whether it be a sporting event, a civic meeting, or a worship service--and you will likely see representatives of two groups of people. On one hand there will be someone who has caused grievous harm to another person by physical mistreatment, emotional abuse, sexual victimization, violence, or any number of other ways. On the other hand will be those who have been harmed by just these same evils.

While the two groups are inextricably linked, and while it is far too often the case that an individual can be both abused and abuser, nonetheless the two groups stand before God with very different sets of needs. In Christian theology, however, we have approached these very different sets of personal situations with one vocabulary and one solution. Traditionally, we have had only the language of sin to describe these very different human predicaments. What's more, we have offered but one solution to the problem, the two-way transaction of God's forgiveness of sinners. Yet when one person harms another, that action not only violates God's will, but also unleashes anguish and misery in the victim, scarring his or her soul. We are right to speak of the sinner's need of forgiveness, but we have forgotten to take the next step: to seek healing for the victims. Having drawn the map of salvation for sinners, we have left it to those who have been sinned against to find their own way to wholeness and peace.

Andrew Sung Park argues that it is time for the church and its theology to face this issue and work toward its remedy. It is time to give a name to the suffering of those who have been sinned against and to seek their healing. He proposes that the Korean religious term *han* can serve as an instrument in this endeavor. While it is an intricate concept, in short *han* can be defined as the psychic and spiritual hurt caused by unjust oppression and suffering. As the church seeks to play its distinctive role in healing the wounds of abuse and violence, the idea of *han* can be a powerful tool. It can allow pastors and other caregivers to explore the depths of anguish that victims experience. It can illustrate the fact that, having sinned against their victims as well as against God, the perpetrators of violence and abuse must seek salvation not only by asking for God's forgiveness, but also by working for the healing of those they have wronged.

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