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Configuring the Context of Realistic Christian Hope:
A Multidisciplinary Inquiry into Practices of Pastoral Care
for Marginalized Persons

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Abstract

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What makes hope possible for those deemed “minorities” on the margins of society? The influences of marginalization fundamentally constitute a person’s experience of hope over time. This dissertation uses a phenomenological social constructivist approach to examine the complexity and ambiguity of human experience in context through multidisciplinary analyses of contemporary pastoral theologies of hope, life course perspectives on inequality, and a theological anthropological model by Edward Farley. This inquiry into everyday experience of marginalization and hope extends the ecclesial dimension of Christian practice of care. This research envisions a constructive practical theology of *realistic* hope for marginalized persons in terms of a faithful commitment to living in tragic and social vulnerability and the freedom of vitality. Hope can be forged by everyday actions and narratives. Christian hope for marginalized persons emerges from the ecclesial and redemptive practices of care: life-affirming relationships, participations, and dialogues.

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CONTENTS

Chapter

ONE	WHAT KIND OF HOPE FOR WHOM?	1
	Lived Hope in the Context of Marginalization	2
	How Do We Hope? : Hope for Marginalized Persons	
	Defining Key Terms	
	Toward a Construction of a Contextual Practical Theology of Hope	
	Limitations of Current Pastoral Theology of Hope	
	Marginalization as the context for theological reflection on	
	Christian hope	
	Multidisciplinary Inquiry	
	Frameworks of Inquiry	11
	Practical Theological Reflection	
	The Epistemology of Christian Hope	
	A Perspectival Approach	
	A Phenomenological Social Constructivist Framework	
	Why the Centrality of Lived Experiences?	
	Phenomenology: Being in Context as Lived Experiences	
	Social Constructionism: Making Meanings as Lived Experience	
	The Necessity of a Phenomenological Social Constructivist	
	Approach to Hope	
	Research Method of In-depth Interviewing	
	Overview of Research Design	
	Purposes and General Assumptions	
	Limits of Research Method	
	Organization of Dissertation	26
TWO	MAKING CASES OF CHRISTIAN HOPE ON THE MARGINS: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSES ON IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW.	28
	Introduction	28
	Presentation of Empirical Data.	30
	Illness and Hope for Mr. Kim	
	Focused Life History	
	A Wind of Change	
	The Emergence of Chronic Illness	
	A Spiritual Quest of Living in Faith	

The Details of Experience of Marginalization	
Being Uprooted	
Being Chronically Ill	
Challenge and Hope of Mr. Lee	
Focused Life History	
School as the World	
Jumping on Stepping Stones	
Eyes on the Prize: Self-Discipline as a Way of Life	
The Details of Experience of Marginalization	
The Parents	
College Applications	

Findings and Heuristic Insights into a Constructive Practical Theology of Hope	58
Weaving Together the Meanings of Marginalization and Hope in Context	
Being in Context	
Making Meaning	
The Characteristics of Christian Hope for Marginalized Persons	
Toward a Constructive Practical Theology of Hope for Marginalized Persons	

THREE HOPE: A HISTORY OF THE CONCEPT IN THE 20TH CENTURY. 66

Philosophical Reflections on Hope.	67
Gabriel Marcel	
Ernst Bloch	
The contributions of Philosophical Reflections on Hope to a Constructive Practical Theology of Hope for Marginalized Persons	
Theological Reflections on Hope	72
Jürgen Moltmann	
Rubem A. Alves	
William Lynch	
Margaret A. Farley	
The contributions of Theological Reflections on Hope to a Constructive Practical Theology of Hope for Marginalized Persons	

FOUR INTRAPSYCHIC AND HERMENEUTICAL APPROACHES TO HOPE IN CONTEMPORARY PASTORAL THEOLOGY 80

Introduction: Pastoral Theological Perspectives on Hope and Practices of Care	80
Donald Capps	81

Theoretical Orientations	
Pastoral Psychology in the Psychoanalytic Tradition	
Erik H. Erikson's Theory of Human Development	
Intrapsychic Inquiry into Hope and Practices of Care	
Wishing vs. Hoping	
Hoping and Hope	
Threats to Hope	
Allies of Hope	
Methods of Care	
Andrew Lester	96
Theoretical Orientation	
Existential Analyses of Human Temporality	
Narrative Theory	
Human Brokenness in Disrupted Future Stories	
Hermeneutical Inquiry into Hope and Practices of Care	
Hope, Hopelessness, and Despair	
Methods of Care	
Contextual Critiques of Pastoral Theologies of Lester and Capps	120
The Void of Contextual Reflections on Hope	
The Lack of a Caring Community as the Locus of Christian Hope	
FIVE A LIFE COURSE PERSPECTIVE ON HUMAN LIVES IN SOCIAL	
PROCESS	120
Introduction: Social Dimensions of Mr. Kim's Marginalization	120
Mapping the Conceptual Domain of the Life Course Perspective	122
Life Course and Life Cycle	
Transitions and Trajectories	
Turning Points	
Lived Marginalization in the Life Course Perspective	131
Marginalization as a Mechanism of Life Course Inequality	
Social Factors in Educational Attainment and Health	
Educational Attainment across the Life Course	
Health Inequalities across the Life Course	
Issues of Continuity and Change	147
The Structural Contexts of Stress and Support	
Neighborhood-Level Effects on Personal Agency in Choice	
And Constraint	
Change, Challenge, and Resilience across the Life Course	
Resilience	

Mechanism, Variability and Agency in Human Development

A Constructive Practical Theology of Hope through a Lens of the Life

Course Approach 162

A Practical Theology of Hope through a Lens of Life Course

Sociology

Hope as Countering a Mechanism of Life Course Inequality

SIX THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON HUMAN REALITY IN THE WORK OF EDWARD FARLEY 164

Introduction: Theological Dimensions of Mr. Lee's Marginalization . . 164

Key Concepts 166

Human Condition and Human Reality

The Triadic and Tragic Structures of Human Reality

The Interhuman Sphere

The Social Sphere

The Personal Sphere of Individual Agents

The Primacy of Interhuman Sphere

Tragic and Social Vulnerability

Lived Marginalization and a Possibility of Change in the Spheres of

Human Reality 178

The Irruption of Human Evil

The Emergence of Redemption

Freedom, Vitality and Its Relation to Hope 186

Being-Founded

The Freedom of Vitality for Life and Hope

A Constructive Practical Theology of Hope through a Lens of Theological

Anthropology of Human Reality 197

Marginalization as an Embodied Experience of Human Agents

Ecclesial and Redemptive Communities of Faith as the Locus of Hope

Hope as Bridging the Interhuman, Social, and Personal Sphere of

Human Reality

SEVEN PROPOSING A CONSTRUCTIVE PRACTICAL THEOLOGY OF REALISTIC HOPE AND PRACTICES OF CARE FOR MARGINALIZED PERSONS 202

Introduction	202
The Modes and Locus of Christian Hope for Marginalized Persons . . .	203
A Relational and Participatory Mode of Hope	
A Dialogic and Narrative Mode of Hope	
An Embodied and Action-Oriented Mode of Hope	
A Communal Mode of Hope: The Church as the Locus of Practicing Hope	
The Ecclesial Practices of Realistic Hope for Marginalized Persons . .	213
Realistic Hope for Marginalized Persons as a Faithful Commitment . .	215
Three Practices of Care for Exploring Christian Hope with Marginalized Persons	216
Envisioning: Assessing Contextual Factors of Human Experience	
Enabling: Building a Momentum of Constructive Narratives and Actions in Context	
Engaging: Revisiting and Learning from Personal and Communal Expressions of Christian Hope and Re-Envisioning Realistic Hope as a Faithful Commitment in Context	
Conclusion: From Marginalization to Hope.	219
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	221

Chapter 1

Introduction: What Kind of Hope for Whom?

When I was a chaplain resident at a children's hospital, I heard about a mother who kept challenging and even upsetting several hospital staff members. I found Lisa who was a 22-year-old mother of two small children in a dimly lit hospital room. The baby was crying and fussing in the bed while his big brother was playing around the bed. After exchanging our brief greetings, Lisa began to ask a lot of questions about who I was, where I came from, and what I do in the hospital. Answering her questions, I lifted the baby patient up, rubbed his back, washed some Lego pieces, and gave him a pacifier and Lego pieces. I also talked briefly with the boy on the floor who was five years old. When I looked at Lisa again, she began to share her life story with me.

Lisa had recently severed all of her family relationships and came to Atlanta to move in with her boyfriend. Three weeks ago, the boyfriend left her. Then her 7-month-old baby got seriously ill and was admitted to the hospital. At the hospital Lisa found out that she was in the early stage of her first trimester of pregnancy.

At age twelve Lisa was sent to live with a foster family. She kept running away from them until she turned 17. Getting a job had been difficult since she had dropped out in the 10th grade. For years she tried to get a Graduate Equivalency Degree (GED), usually carrying childcare responsibilities by herself. Her

biological parents, siblings, and relatives were unable to help her. Lisa kept saying that she neither wanted to contact her family nor move back to her hometown.

When I was about to leave them, Lisa asked her five-year-old boy to bring a juice box to her. The child promptly dropped his Lego pieces and acted upon her request. He then turned to me and pointed at the mattress on the floor where he slept at night. The boy chirped, “You can sit *here* and play with *me*.” I promised him I would come back. The next day, I found out that they had been discharged. After this encounter I wondered what hope might look like for the five-year-old boy. How can this child believe in possibilities and blessings of the future when the present is so overwhelming with scarce resources?

Lived Hope in the Context of Marginalization

Hope is a central tenet of Christian faith. The Apostle Paul cites hope as one of the three abiding gifts of God (1 Corinthians 13:13). The persistence and pervasiveness of hope seems to be one of the basic human capacities for fullness of life. The human capacity for hope emerges out of personal and communal resources based on various individual and institutional contexts.

The human experience of hope varies across socioeconomic status, education, and health of individuals. The ways persons respond to the disparity of resources are closely related to how they experience or cease being hopeful. The disparity of available resources is relevant to or even clearly decisive in experiencing hope. Adversities might thwart human capacity for hope. In this

dissertation research I argue that a practical theology of Christian hope must take into account the extensive impact of socio-cultural marginalization and minority status on people's ability to hope. The thesis of this research is that the lived experience of socio-cultural marginalization can shape and inform a constructive theological reflection on hope and its implications of pastoral care.

How Do We Hope? : Hope for Marginalized Persons

What makes hope possible for those deemed “minorities” on the margins of society? What might a contextual practical theology of Christian hope be for a minority who copes with personal and societal forces of inequality in everyday life? These are the central questions explored in my dissertation research. These research questions emerge from my own experience as a student in graduate school, as a counselor at a counseling center, a chaplain in a children's hospital, a Sunday school teacher in church, and a foreigner in the United States. From these various vantage points, I have discovered that the realization of hope is constrained for many people who live at the sociocultural margins of society. Through my relationships with these people, my view of hope has become context-oriented. A contextual view of Christian hope has brought commitment and creativity together with my discipline of practical theology, counseling, and ministry.

This research is a response to a need for a contextually relevant approach to hope for people whose lives are embedded in sheer social forces of inequality and adversity. This research is an effort to bridge lived hope and lived

marginalization as well as to bring together a contemporary pastoral theology of hope and the experience of marginalized persons. This dissertation focuses on the significance of studying human experience as a basis of a constructive pastoral theology and draws on the context of minorities and their striving to live in hope.

The purpose of this research is to propose a constructive practical theology of hope and its implications of pastoral care from a multidisciplinary perspective on the socio-cultural context of hope. I use a twofold approach to construe this constructive practical theological project of caring for marginalized persons. In the succeeding chapters, I propose a constructive theology of Christian hope in which a theological understanding of hope is grasped in, with, and through a lens of phenomenology and social constructionism in relation to a lived experience of marginalization.

The tasks of this dissertation research include (1) to identify, compare, and contrast the issues of Christian hope drawn from existential philosophy, Christian theology in the 20th century, and the literature of contemporary pastoral theology, (2) to view human lives from the perspective of their life course, linking individuals' experience of inequality to social forces of marginalization with the purpose of exploring social dimensions of hope and (3) to translate a study of a theological anthropology of human reality into a constructive practical theology of Christian hope. Further, I propose a model of pastoral care for marginalized persons, emerging from this contextual practical theology of hope.

Defining Key Terms

The specific form of marginalization I explore arises from the designation of a person as a member of a racial ethnic minority group in the United States society. Marginalization refers to *social status-based experience in which persons are “peripheralized,” bounded by extended durations of disadvantage and accumulative adversity.*¹ Socioeconomic stratum and disparity comprise a socio-culturally marginalized minority with differential education and occupational status, along with differential social characteristics.² I define a socially marginalized minority as: *a group of a social culturally disadvantaged people who are subject to differential resources and treatment based on their economic status and ethnicity.*

The lived experience of being a marginalized person is a locus of this multidisciplinary and practical theological research. Though the locus of investigation is fundamentally based on the interpretation of human experience, I consider theology as the overarching methodological framework in this practical theological project.³ I understand practical theology to be: *critical theological exploration that focuses on God’s action and presence for humanity and generates a constructive reflection on human experiences across cultures,*

¹ Joanne M. Hall, P. E. Steven, and A. I Meleis, “Marginalization: A Guiding Concept for Valuing Diversity in Nursing Knowledge Development,” *Advances in Nursing Science* 16 (1994): 23-41; Joanne M. Hall “Marginalization Revisited: Critical, Postmodern, and Liberation Perspectives” *Advances in Nursing Science* 22 no. 2 (December 1999): 88-102; Judy E. Boychuk Duchscher and Leanne S. Cowin, “The Experience of Marginalization in New Nursing Graduates,” *Nursing Outlook* 52, no. 6: 289-296.

² Arthur G. Neal and H. Theodore Groat, “Social Class Correlates of Stability and Change in Levels of Alienation: A Longitudinal Study,” *Sociological Quarterly* 15, no. 4 (Autumn 1974): 548-550.

³ John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM Press, 2006), 76.

*traditions, and practices of the Church in the world.*⁴ Seeking a contextually attuned sensibility and awareness of lived hope and marginalization, I pay considerable attention to the primacy of lived experience.

I define lived experience as *a meaningfully experienced phenomenon that can be grasped by using a contextually grounded and reflexive mode of human consciousness*. Lived experience begins and ends with a person's reflections, accumulating and integrating more informed and sophisticated knowledge of her experience. The study of lived experience stands out for its descriptive and interpretive quality through a process of reflections on its meaning.⁵ The historical and cultural context of lived experience shapes patterns of socially mediated, sometimes coalescing interactions and negotiations among persons and groups. The notion of context refers to *a person's specific interactions and relations with her personal and social history, resources, and identity*. The context of Christian hope is the foundation of meaning and a constructive practical theology for pastoral care.

Toward a Contextual Christian Theology of Hope

Why do we need to attend to the socio-cultural context of Christian hope to explore a constructive practical theology of hope? First, because human lives

⁴ Suggesting my definition of practical theology, I draw on the definition Gerben Heitink suggests in *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domain* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 6-9. I have interpreted the concept of "the mediation of Christian faith" as God's relationship with human beings in the world.

⁵ Max Van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy*, (Albany, N.Y., State University of New York Press, 1990), 37.

are interwoven in a diverse array of personal and social interactions that influence people's capacity for hope. Second, because Christian hope arises from faith in God who is transcendental beyond as well as immanent in the world, the understanding of Christian hope should be relevant to the context of human lives that includes social forces of inequality and marginalization. Finally, because I aim to develop a contextually configured model of pastoral care for socio-culturally disadvantaged people, the lived experience of marginalization as a minority person is the locus of this multidisciplinary inquiry into a constructive practical theology of hope.

Limitations of Current Pastoral Theological Approaches to Christian Hope

Pastoral care in the 20th century has explicitly emphasized various contexts of human experience at home and work in which the recipients of care engage. In the literature of pastoral theology, hope refers to a "primal mode of existence" for the person of faith based on trust in the promise of God.⁶ Pastoral theologians have proposed hope in a variety of ways, composed of transcendental and immanent qualities of hope.⁷

⁶ Robert L. Carrigan, "Where Has Hope Gone? Toward an Understanding of Hope in pastoral Care." *Pastoral Psychology* 25 (1976): 42-43.

⁷ I present the definitions of hope by: Donald Capps, *Agents of Hope: A Pastoral Psychology*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995); Andrew Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995); Paul Pruyser, "Phenomenology and Dynamics of Hoping," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 3 (1963): 86-96; Paul Pruyser, "Maintaining Hope in Adversity," *Pastoral Psychology* 35 (1986): 120-131; Paul Pruyser, "Hope and Despair," in *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, eds. Rodney J. Hunter and others, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990:532-533).

In the past thirty years most research on Christian hope in pastoral care has been based on psychodynamic and hermeneutical approaches. These approaches assumed that if a pastoral caregiver helps hopeless people work through a series of counseling sessions, hope re-emerges guided by a caregiver's efforts to redirect or shape intrapsychic dynamics of people's minds. These theoretical frameworks emphasize the imaginative and anticipatory features of hope as well as the transcendental and immanent qualities of hope, pointing out God in the world.

However, these approaches tended to confine the acts of pastoral care to a formula of linguistic exchange and articulation. In general, people are expected to respond uniformly to a counseling-oriented style of pastoral care. Intrapsychic and hermeneutical approaches to hope, indeed, are inadequate when these theoretical frameworks are used to respond to the needs of minority groups whose lives are bound by social forces of marginalization. Neither intrapsychic nor hermeneutical approaches fully explain the way in which people experience hope through their interactions with living environments such as workplaces or communities of faith. The social and communal aspects of pastoral care are less explored in contemporary pastoral theology of Christian hope and its implications of pastoral care. Without countering the severity of marginalization, the theory and practice of pastoral care are less sufficient to empower socio-culturally disadvantaged people. In this project, I use multidisciplinary resources of sociology of life course, theological anthropology, narrative theory, and cognitive

dissonance theory as well as contemporary pastoral theology. This project stands in a tradition of a constructive practical theology.

Marginalization as the Context for Theological Reflection on Christian Hope

A contextual critical analysis of adversity is needed to inform and shape the theory and practice of care to empower a minority who is subjected to differential treatments and resources with regard to socioeconomic status, culture, and ethnicity. A practical theology of hope for marginalized persons begins with privileging marginalized persons' experiences and views. There are some possible challenges to a theological research that emphasizes the contexts of caring. I will address two possibilities of objection.

First, one might make objection to the definition and use of marginalization because there is no concrete way to define one as a marginalized person. From the standpoint of psychological development, life experiences inevitably include some intrapsychic responses to loss and separation from significant others. In the midst of loss and separation, a person may feel isolated and marginalized regardless of the living environments. An understanding of "being on margins" must be considered with the dynamics of power in society. The issues of race, class, and gender are deeply embedded in the ways power dynamics play out in human relationships.

Second, there is a risk in focusing on the experience of marginalization exclusively in terms of a variety of psychological distress people experience. We need to thoroughly investigate our dominant values and culture of race, class, and

gender because the power arrangement of race, class, and gender are critical to reveal not only the severity of marginalization but also the sources of privileges. If we are not aware of the limits of individualistic psychological terms to explore the basis of suffering, the experience of marginalization can be overly generalized or even stereotyped as another kind of psychological symptom or existential void in isolation which remains inside a person.

Necessity for Multidisciplinary Inquiry in Constructing a Practical Theology of Hope

To what extent and how can this multidisciplinary research into social context of everyday life inform and advance a constructive theology of Christian hope? My attempt to conduct a multidisciplinary inquiry into hope for practices of care is to understand the interwoven relation of God and human experience through a mutually critical way. This multidisciplinary study delineates interpersonal and institutional features of marginalization and their relevance to the experience of hope.

After I present the empirical data of in-depth interviews in Chapter Two, the issues of socio-cultural marginalization and hope will be compared and contrasted with existing literature analyses: (1) philosophical and theological reflections on hope in the 20th century in Chapter Three, (2) contemporary pastoral theology of hope in Chapter Four, (2) sociology of life course in Chapter Five, and (3) theological anthropology in the work of Edward Farley in Chapter Six. The findings and themes in previous chapters are used to build the theoretical

frameworks for understanding a contextually configured understanding of hope for marginalized persons. In Chapter Seven, I propose its implications for practices of pastoral care of realistic hope with marginalized persons. I use narrative theory, practical theology of John Swinton, and commitment theory as created by Philip Brickman.

Method

Practical Theological Methodology

I refer to this research of Christian hope as a constructive practical theology. John Swinton asserts that doing practical theology involves a process of critical reflection on the practices of a community of faith, the Scripture, and the Christian tradition, engaging in critically correlating views of human experience from other disciplines such as the social sciences that help us grasp the scope and depth of various human experiences in the world.⁸ This statement privileges the particular criteria I bring to critical assessments of sources and procedures of this theological inquiry into Christian hope and its implications of pastoral care.

I use an inductive process of theory building from data based on in-depth interviews and multidisciplinary literature, to a theory of a contextually configured understanding of Christian hope, and to its

⁸ John Swinton, *Resurrecting the Person: Friendship and the Care of People with Mental Health Problems* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 11.

implications of pastoral care with socio-culturally marginalized persons. Considering the inductive logic of this research, I do not intend to clarify theoretically causal relations among various parts of empirical and theoretical data that may be linked to a contextually understood theory of Christian hope.⁹ Instead, this practical theological methodology aims at exploring multiple dimensions of hope that can inform a constructive practical theology of hope through the lived experience of being a minority person in society.

From a practical theological point of view, to do this research is to explore the way a minority person, who identifies her Christian faith in life, experiences the world in relation to God and seeks faithfully committed ways of living in hope. The nature of the subject matter requires us to approach the nature of knowledge from a very specific perspective – the perspective of socio-culturally marginalized persons. A practical constructive theology of hope for marginalized persons does take into consideration both critical and contextual reflection on the ways in which people are marginalized in society and what kind of hope might be known to these people.

The Epistemology of Christian Hope

My view of a constructive practical theology emphasizes an experiential character of knowledge that has to do with enabling people to live humanly and

⁹ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2003), 133.

faithfully. From the viewpoint of the epistemological stance of empiricism, all knowledge is based on experience. I argue that this practical theological inquiry into everyday experiences of marginalization and hope is necessary and even crucial to generate a particular kind of knowledge that can advance our use of knowledge. This view is equipped to acknowledge and observe the multiple and changing dimensions and factors of lived experience that relate to the experience of hope.¹⁰

Making use of experiential knowledge emphasizes the significance of human experience to its immediate surroundings – social reality. The knowledge of hope for marginalized persons needs to recognize everyday attributions of social reality to the understanding of Christian hope. Hope is not only transcendent but also immanent in and through interactions between persons and their social reality. The knowledge of hope for marginalized persons needs to be fundamentally congruent with social reality, responding to each individual's different needs and challenges.

Besides the nature of knowledge, its social context, and human capacity for making everyday attributions to the use of knowledge, my epistemological rationale highlights the ways knowledge is applied to the lives of people in need. It matters what it means for a person to find and live in hope in the very midst of

¹⁰ This experiential character of knowledge signifies both strength and limit. Keeping an empirical character of a constructive practical theology is necessary to take account of lived experience of socio-cultural marginalization as the threat to the experience of Christian hope. The limit of keeping an experiential character of a constructive practical theology is concerned with how normative truth-claims of the Christian tradition can receive balanced attention with emphasis on the context of lived experience.

inequality and differentially available socio-cultural resources. It matters to examine the ways we conceptualize hope with more or less contextual consideration of a minority because it affects the practices of a community of faith. I explore experiential and contextual knowledge of hope that enables us to be contextually responsive and attuned to the needs of marginalized persons.

A Perspectival Method

To underscore the multiplicity and ambiguity of human experience of Christian hope in context, I draw on Seward Hiltner's pastoral theological methodology and adapt his approach to the situation of care. By *a perspectival approach*, I refer to *an attuned and organized point of view which simultaneously engages in the complex dimensions of a given situation*. I use this perspectival approach to hope and practices of care to locate my research in the field of constructive practical theology. I use this approach to sources and procedures of this research to perceive the dynamics of Christian hope and lived experience of marginalization with regard to alternative theory and practice of evoking, enabling, and envisioning hope in pastoral care for minorities.

A perspectival approach is used when the caregiver identifies her purpose of care toward the people in need. When Hiltner proposes his "shepherding perspective" on experience and on the study of ministry of care, his implicit emphasis is on the notion of perspectivism and its relevance to a mode of "doing theology pastorally."¹¹ Hiltner notes a theological and experiential orientation of a

caregiver who considers the gravitas of multiple dimensions of a pastoral “event” with “tender solicitous concern.”¹²

A caregiver and people who seek help must embrace multiple and often conflicting standpoints of the concrete reality of crisis. The task of a pastoral care event is to accept and struggle with the complexity and ambiguity of their experience as both create new meanings of the event together.¹³ To address and respond to changing and emergent needs of people promptly, a caregiver invites, considers, and generates diverse values and meanings, emerging out of a pastoral event. Hiltner proposes this dual mode of doing caring ministry and exploring human nature as a disciplined theological reflection. His attempt to weigh both the urgent needs of people and multiplicity of their situation is relevant to my research.

My choice of implying a perspectival approach also indicates the heuristic and explorative rationale of this research and the use of specific research methods. Heuristic rationale arises from the study of the reciprocal and interwoven relations

¹¹ “Protestant Pastoral Theology,” in *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, eds. Rodney J. Hunter and others, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 872.

¹² Seward Hiltner, *Preface to Pastoral Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958), 222. His implicit use of process thinking emphasized a new vision of pastoral theology as one of fundamental theological endeavors to understand human experience with emphasis on the role and nature of caring ministry for people in need.

¹³ Hiltner argues that “ultimate and saving truth [the Gospel]” and other knowledge can be seen together with necessary collaboration. Each disciplinary boundary is respectfully kept without leading their “apparent merger.” See Hiltner 58-59. It should be noted that Hiltner did not fully explain in what sense the issues of race, gender, and class can shape the situations of pastoral events. He was less considerate to acknowledge the power and presence of lay people in the church. He was more concerned about acknowledging the biblical and historical heritage of pastoral care to respond to the existential crises of humans as he searched for integrating psychological insights and theological truth-claims together in the event of pastoral situation. Yet, his general approach to the needs of people and the purpose of care is still relevant to my use of multidisciplinary analyses.

among diverse elements of the selected subject in qualitative research.

Explorative rationale examines the specific yet diverse ways people respond to and take actions in their situations.¹⁴ I intend to generate heuristic insights of Christian hope with the dual purpose of expanding current theory of Christian hope and proposing workable practices of pastoral care for marginalized persons.

A Phenomenological Social Constructivist Framework

Why the Centrality of Lived Experiences?

How do socially marginalized people *come to know* Christian hope? I pay considerable attention to the primacy of lived experience to explore a constructive practical theology of Christian hope for marginalized persons. My focus on lived experience is derived from the significance of human consciousness in action and social phenomena of the meaning-making activities of persons and groups.

Human consciousness is a culturally instrumental and embodied vehicle to make us humans in the world.

The centrality of lived experience of a minority person guides the foci of this research: (1) being in context and (2) making meaning in context. In addition to the centrality of lived experience, these two themes highlight inevitable historical and socio-cultural dimensions of human interactions rather than semantic content or syntactical analysis of language to understand the world. The

¹⁴ Gerben Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domain* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 230-240.

centrality of lived experience highlights methodological and epistemological issues of my use of practical theological framework– a phenomenological social constructivist approach.

Phenomenology: Being in Context as Lived Experiences

In the rationale of phenomenology, the concept of lived experience refers to a particular mode of human awareness about being in the world. Human consciousness actively engages in the world, dealing with how the world becomes meaningful and how a person acts upon this experience. In turn, accumulated knowledge of everyday life is further elaborated and embedded in the way in which a person lives in society.

Being in context as lived experience comes forth from the moment when a person reflexively gathers and revisits what she thinks or feels at certain moments in her daily routines. Human involvement in context evokes and sustains a meaningfully coherent reflection on everyday attribution to a person's knowledge of being in the world. The temporal structure of lived experience poses the importance of being aware of time and space. Furthermore, a particular lived experience of a person reflects a broader social system, filled with contextually relevant experiences across different persons and groups.¹⁵

A phenomenological approach to hope for marginalized persons begins with the daily experience of being minority persons in society. It focuses on meaningfully constructed knowledge of being marginalized yet hopeful in society.

¹⁵ Max Van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy*, (Albany, N.Y., State University of New York Press, 1990), 37.

A phenomenological framework provides a useful lens to understand the interwoven relationship of humans and social reality. Its task is to grasp how we come to interpret our own and others' action as meaningful in our social reality.¹⁶ Phenomenology as a methodological perspective is used in this dissertation research to reveal the very essence of what we directly experience before we interpret the meanings of phenomena. In the practice of social science research, phenomenology has been adapted to explain how human awareness relates to actions and situations in social reality.

Social Constructionism: Making Meaning as Lived Experiences

In the rationale of social constructionism, we construct our understanding of social reality based on social practices in the past and present.¹⁷ Knowledge of what a person says and does always depends upon context of meanings, beliefs, or practices of others.¹⁸ Beside the significance of context, it should be noted that the study of lived experience not only focuses on a particular context of meaning but also traces the personal and social process of creating meaning.

¹⁶ Thomas A. Schwandt, "Three Epistemological Stances for Qualitative Inquiry: Interpretivism, Hermeneutics, and Social Constructionism," in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2000), 192.

¹⁷ Thomas A. Schwandt, *Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*, 2nd edition (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2001), 31. As one of strands of constructivism, social constructionism focuses more on social process and interaction to understand how a person recognize and come to share an intersubjective understanding of specific life circumstances.

¹⁸ Thomas A. Schwandt, "Three Epistemological Stances for Qualitative Inquiry: Interpretivism, Hermeneutics, and Social Constructionism," in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, Calif., Sage Publications, 2000), 201.

My version of social constructivist approach closely observes the empirical data of socio-cultural marginalization and a sense of hope rather than a linguistic and discursive construction of meanings of hope. Social constructivist approach helps me refigure the action-oriented nature of stories and discern behavioral and emotional patterns that people use to give meanings to their experience.

In using social constructionism, my approach to hope at social and cultural margins reflects a practical theological approach to multidisciplinary sources.¹⁹ John Swinton and Harriet Mowat propose a way of doing practical theology by undergoing a process of conversion. The notion of conversion refers to practical theological framework that moves from exploring the insights of intellectual inquiry outside theology to orienting the entire research endeavors with emphasis on “God’s redemptive intentions for the world.”²⁰

I also engage in a practical theological endeavor where reflexivity is in the service of “critical faithfulness” for God.²¹ Social constructivist approach enables me to take seriously that which is given within human experience and to dispute the exclusively linguistic and discursive nature of meanings. I intend to delineate

¹⁹ Using a social constructionist position, I espouse the approach of Christie Cozad Neuger that argues the pervasive presence of power dynamics across persons and groups to interpret human experience. Neuger disputes a tendency of seeking overall generalization that seem to be universal to a particular group without taking account of different cultural perspectives and categories. She suggests in celebrating the uniqueness and particularity of different positions, pastoral theologians seek to address “enough commonalities” that can enhance constructive works of theory-building and develop effective pastoral practices. Christie Cozad Neuger, “Power and Difference in Pastoral Theology,” in *Pastoral Care and Counseling: Redefining the Paradigms*, ed. Nancy J. Ramsey (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 2004), 70-71.

²⁰ John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM Press, 2006), 92.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 93.

the social origin of meaning of human experience as well as hope and marginalization. I use social constructivist methodology to interpret lived experience of making meaning of hope in the midst of socio-cultural marginalization and to include a broader contextual reference in this practical theological inquiry into Christian hope and its implications of practices of care.

The Necessity of a Phenomenological Social Constructivist Approach to Hope

My theoretical framework used in this work lies at the intersection of phenomenology and social constructionism. A phenomenological social constructionist approach to hope is necessary to achieve a comprehensive and vivid description and interpretation of the experience of a marginalized person identified as “other” by virtue of being part of a minority on the socio-cultural margins. As there are strong conceptual connections between phenomenology and social constructionism in terms of lived experience, a phenomenological social constructivist approach is particularly useful to explore the issues of context in human lives.

A phenomenological social constructivist approach considers human consciousness and its distinctive quality for involvement in social reality and for making sense through various interactions of persons and groups. Regarding the issue of human intentionality to create the meaning of life, a phenomenological social constructivist approach not only construes the content of understanding but also explicates the very process of gaining understanding. This methodology is derived from the stance that everyday life experience can be essential to

understand how humans give form and meaning to their personal and social worlds. A constructive practical theology of hope for marginalized persons emerges in, with, or out of the constellation of personal and social worlds. In this research, practical theological reflections on human experience and God are mediated by using a phenomenological social constructivist methodology.

Research Method of In-depth Interviewing

Overview of Research Design

To move toward developing a conceptual model of constructive practical theology of hope and a practical model of care, I begin with people's experiences of marginalization. The structure of the interviews is designed based on in-depth, phenomenologically based interviewing presented by Irving Seidman. The focus of the interview is on the experienced meanings of interview participants.²² In conducting this interviewing research, I make alternatives to the applicable structure and process of interviewing. I conduct a small face-to-face, individual, qualitative interview study with two Korean male participants who are recruited in one of two ways: through advertisements at a church and through referral.

It is necessary to identify particular characteristics of interview participants. My interview participants are minority persons whose socio-cultural resources, socioeconomic, and immigrant status have relevance to their view of

²² Irving Seidman, *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006), 17. I talked with two interview participants following his suggestions of the three-interview series in Chapter 2.

Christian hope.²³ I have chosen to use the last names of interview participants as the Korean researcher with a sense of culturally nuanced reverence and gratitude. Mr. Kim is a Korean man in his early 60s who lives on his own in an apartment. He earned his U. S. citizenship several years ago. Following his long struggle with chronic illness, Mr. Kim credits the ongoing spiritual support of his church for giving meaning in his everyday life.

Mr. Lee is a Korean man in his late teen years who thrives as a college student. He is discovering a new life of freedom and independence with a renewed sense of Christian faith. Mr. Lee considers the experience of his college application process as one of the biggest financial and emotional challenges he encountered in the States, which reminded him of many disadvantages of being an ethnic minority and non-U.S. citizen. His family applied for U.S. citizenship some time ago yet still waits to hear from the green card office. Except making an initial contact for scheduling, I met Mr. Kim and Mr. Lee two times for interviews following the 90-minute format.

The first interview focuses on the life history of each participant within 90 minutes. In asking them to share their early experience of life, I observe how they present and reconstruct the meaning of their past experience before and after immigration to the States. The second interview explores what they do daily

²³ I use pseudonyms for the persons interviewed to maintain confidentiality. To select the study participants, I first consider my role of being the director of religious education programming for children's ministry since January 1999. After I have considered a possibility of unforeseen conflicts of interests between the interviewing relationship and a church relationship, I avoid selecting interview participants among my current students, their parents, or Sunday school teachers whom I professionally supervise. My interview participants are people with whom I do not work professionally but with whom I have regular contact at church.

within their social and cultural environments. In asking them to describe the present lived experience in detail, I take notes on what they feel and experience bounded by insufficient socio-cultural resources to cope with their daily lives. I also invite them to talk about their interpersonal relationships with their family, friends, and others in context. Each interview participant is encouraged to share their feelings and thoughts of being hopeful in spite of their daily challenges.

In asking them to explain why and how they make sense out of past and present experience within the context of their lives, I encourage them to look at both their life experience and current living environments and reflect on how they relate past and present experience of marginalization to a sense of hope. I pay attention to whether they describe the experience of hope in either present or future tense. Findings and insights are analyzed, interpreted, and explored further with similarities and differences between personal accounts of marginalization and hope.

Purposes and General Assumptions

This in-depth interview research has a twofold purpose. First, this interview research is designed to understand the experience of Christian hope on the personal and social levels of marginalization in terms of personal accounts of each interview participant. Second, this interview research aims at producing a coherent and illuminating description of marginalization and perspective on hope that is consistent with detailed accounts of stories.

Regarding my general assumptions, first, I assume that marginalized persons are constantly exposed to a variety of social exclusion yet remain invisible. The in-depth, phenomenological interview research aims at making selected interview participants more visible and clearly heard. Exploring the lived experience is about how the embodied process of conversational knowledge is unfolding through interactions between interview participants and the researcher.

Second, I assume that applicable insights of pastoral care can be available from this study of a narrowly defined population of socio-culturally marginalized persons. It calls for the church to reclaim its prophetic practice of ministry that counters pervasive cultural emphasis on individualistically nuanced self-efficiency, autonomy, and independence. Studying this particular phenomenon of marginalization can tap into a broader perspective on human suffering because this kind of suffering includes the consequences of the dearth of contextual reflections on the social causes of suffering. Understanding what is actually going on in the lives of a minority can yield an informed judgment about the issue of Christian hope in context.

Limits of Research Methods

My choice of an in-depth, phenomenological interview method underlies the idea that this method is effective to illuminate and understand the depth of lived experience of marginalization and hope. This idea behind the research method does not necessarily suggest random sampling or selection of a large

number of interview participants, as typically found in quantitative research.²⁴

Because this is a qualitative research designed to enter and explore the life-world of a few people, I do not seek a representative sample. This interview method is effective to grasp a broader context of lived experience.

Limits of this research method include that my presence and interaction with the participants may influence responses of interview participants. Considering the selection of participants, I intentionally invite a few participants to join in the research. In other words, I limit my consideration to two particular participants for this research because of their perception that is essential for a phenomenological approach. The criteria of this selection delineate human capacity for taking initiative to reflexively and selectively focus on particular life experience and bringing out their own views of being a marginalized person and hope.

Strengths of this interview method include that my presence and interaction with the participants may facilitate responses of interview participants. The presentation of lived experience may have been different had someone other than I, the participant's fellow church member, conducted the interview. This means that there are greater effects of interpersonal history involved in both situations – church life and interview -- than there otherwise might be. My interactions affect the openness and reflexivity of interview participants. Data are

²⁴ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications, 2003), 185-186.

filtered and generated through the views of interview participants with detailed and particular illustrations and descriptions of marginalization and hope.

Organization of Dissertation

This dissertation research is a study in practical theology of hope. The primacy of lived experience serves as a guiding principle of selecting, analyzing, and interpreting primary sources in this dissertation. In Chapter Two, I present empirical data from in-depth, phenomenological interviewing to examine personal and social aspects of being a minority and hopeful in context. My task is to gather rich and detailed descriptions of their experience and responses to daily challenges that can provide meaningfully coherent themes of this dissertation research. An important device in this chapter is the use of stories. Stories of interviewees serve as concrete examples of insights that grasp and reveal how people experience Christian hope while the social and cultural forces of marginalization influence their experience of Christian hope.

In Chapter Three, I provide a brief history of the concept of hope from philosophical and theological considerations in the 20th century. After I juxtapose these theories of hope, I discuss how I use the insights of this literature for a constructive practical theology of hope. Beside the theoretical development of the concept of hope, I use the literature of pastoral theology of Christian hope to address the intrapsychic and hermeneutic approaches to hope in Chapter Four. I examine the work of contemporary pastoral theologians such as Donald Capps

and Andrew Lester. My task also includes investigating the way in which these theologians deal with contextual factors of hope.

In Chapter Five, life course sociology is selected to investigate the ways in which life events are organized and shaped in changing society. I bring in sociological studies of inequality to explain marginalization and its impact on a person's life. Specific attention is given to race and class factors. I also consider the issues of health and educational attainment and the impact of neighborhood on socially disadvantaged people. I link this analysis to a constructive theological inquiry into Christian hope for marginalized persons.

In Chapter Six, I use the theological anthropology of Edward Farley to explore a theological perspective on human reality. I focus on his analysis of multiple spheres of human reality to interpret the experience of marginalization and hope through engaging in the multiple spheres of human reality. I link the redemptive community of faith and Farley's view of human agents to explore an understanding of hope for marginalized persons.

In Chapter Seven, I propose a model of pastoral care for marginalized persons, emerging from this constructive practical theology of realistic hope in terms of the tragic structures of human reality. I present the modes of realistic hope for marginalized persons and the locus of hope in the life of redemptive communities of faith. I also elaborate the model of care, drawn upon narrative theory, practical theology, and commitment theory.

Chapter 2

Making Cases of Christian Hope on the Margin: Presentation and Analyses of In-depth Interviews

Introduction

Scholars of pastoral theology in the 20th century have explicitly explored various contexts of human experience (i.e. interpersonal relationships, work place, or family life) about which the practices of pastoral care engage. With regard to contemporary pastoral theologies of Christian hope, practices of pastoral care primarily aim at enabling people to experience healing, empowerment, and transformation by providing intrapsychic and metaphysical analyses of human life. These theoretical frameworks are based on psychodynamic and hermeneutical views of Christian hope. These views emphasize the imaginative and anticipatory features of hope as well as the transcendental and immanent qualities of hope, pointing out God in the world.

Yet, intrapsychic and hermeneutical approaches to hope do not effectively attend to the complexity of all interactions and needs of marginalized persons because these approaches to hope tend exclusively to focus on a person's private emotional afflictions and primary family relations. While these issues are clearly important in advocating hope in ministry, these theoretical frameworks can be mistaken if they overlook the social dimensions of hope that are constituted by issues of socioeconomic status, race, culture, or gender within colliding power dynamics in society. Pastoral theologies of Christian hope need to fully engage in

the multiple layers of individual and institutional factors in marginalization, which cause various types of adversity in people's daily lives. Some particular factors in marginalization include the impact of living within low socioeconomic status and with limited cultural competence such as a language barrier.

This chapter presents a multitude of views that interview participants present about marginalization and Christian hope, derived from in-depth interviews.²⁵ By focusing on the distinctive experience of marginalization, I intend to address the contextual complexity of the phenomenon I study, Christian hope. I use a phenomenological social constructivist approach.

In inductively analyzing the interview data, I focus on the interplay between hope and marginalization in the unfolding of a social and cultural context.²⁶ Personal accounts of lived marginalization and hope are re-visited and are central in the presentation of interview data. From the data analysis, I identify thematic connections relevant to personal and societal factors of marginalization – threats to Christian hope. I, then, explore some characteristics of hope that interview participants grasp in spite of their social location. Research themes include personally significant life events and transitions prior to the in-depth interview sessions as well as current life experiences. Identifying and explaining these thematic connections, I attempt to present the narratives and descriptions of marginalization and hope from the interview participants' points of view.

²⁵ Steinar Kvale, *InterView: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing* (Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage, 1996), 14.

²⁶ Max van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy* (New York: The State University of New York, 1990), 78-80.

Presentation of Empirical Data

Mr. Kim is in his late 60s, and his life is significantly affected by his chronic illness and loneliness. Mr. Lee is an energetic college student who came to the United States when he was an 11-year old. Although there are only two interviewees in this dissertation research, a multitude of views of understanding hope emerges because their stories are concerned with the experiential underpinning of knowledge. The participants reveal their experience through their stories – what they say.

Mr. Kim and Mr. Lee make the strong case of the meaning of being on the socio-cultural margin. Thoughtfulness and keen awareness of their surroundings characterize an embodied mode of contextual reflections on life in faith. Their contextual considerations enable them to selectively focus on a particular aspect or feature of their life experiences. Any moment of experiencing hope is fundamentally multidimensional in terms of individual and institutional features of being a minority person in society. A multitude of views of understanding hope arises beyond intrapsychic and hermeneutic frameworks of contemporary pastoral theologies of hope.

Illness and Hope for Mr. Kim

Mr. Kim, a quiet and thin Korean man with graying hair, is in his late 60s. He immigrated to the United States twenty years ago. In South Korea, Mr. Kim

was a supervisor of a television factory, a chemistry teacher at a middle school, an instructor of an educational institution, and a private math tutor for years. In the United States, Mr. Kim worked as a janitor, dry cleaner, and stay-at-home dad who primarily raised his only daughter who is now in her mid-20s. His wife lives in a Southern state to run her small business. Mr. Kim lives alone and his daughter regularly visits him. Going to church on Saturdays and Sundays has been the highlight of his week since he became a Christian in the mid-1990s.

Focused Life History

Mr. Kim was born in Seoul, the capital city of South Korea. Mr. Kim described his father as a “traditional Korean patriarch” who wanted to influence the lives and career choices of his children -- three sons and two daughters. His mother was a housewife whose style was less controlling and more respectful of the individual choices of her children. At college, Mr. Kim pondered whether he would study law but chose chemistry first and sociology later. He noted the social atmosphere in the 1960s that affected his career choice:

I thought that I got to have enthusiasm to making a better social condition to study sociology. I knew that I did not have that kind of passion. At that time, South Korea’s judicial system was notoriously corrupt and easy on white-collar crimes. I saw the labyrinthine of bribing, corruption, injustice across different social locations. But... it did not bother me. I became more and more indifferent (to social justice issues). I chose chemistry at college after I finished my military service.

Mr. Kim got his first job at a television factory located in Pusan, the second largest city of South Korea. Though he felt frustrated to be sent to Pusan,

he worked hard and supervised the factory workers and various projects. Eighteen months later, Mr. Kim decided to quit his job and return to Seoul to be with his family. In the mid-1970s, Mr. Kim became a middle-school teacher. He taught chemistry and science for two years. He was in his early 30s when he began to work at an academy. He enjoyed being an instructor there as his salary was quite “high” accompanied by a flexible teaching schedule. Assuming that his life would be financially secure, Mr. Kim was enjoying himself and “too busy to spend money for meeting friends and sports.”

In the early 1980s, a new president of South Korea banned all teachers who had national teaching certificates from working at private educational institutions. Mr. Kim lost his job overnight; yet, he continued to teach math as a private tutor. He was married in the early 1980s and had a daughter. He had to work “under the table” to put food on the table and support his family.

A Wind of Change

Mr. Kim explained his decision to leave Korea to mean that he wanted to find “something certain and concrete.” He wrote a letter to his older sister who worked at a Veterans Administration (VA) hospital in the States. The sister sent a letter of petition to Mr. Kim to help him seek the immigration applications. In the late 1980s, his family left Korea and arrived at Atlanta, Georgia where his older sister and younger brother lived with their families.

Mr. Kim’s sister and her husband had several dry cleaning shops in Atlanta. His younger brother J.P. worked for the sister for eight years before he

opened his own dry cleaning shop. Before Mr. Kim arrived in Atlanta, his sister told him to learn how to do alterations. As soon as his family came to Atlanta, she offered jobs to the couple at a coin laundry/dry cleaning shop. Month after month, the couple worked hard and believed that the sister had their best interests at heart. However, the family relationships suffered strain and resulted in ongoing conflicts. He said, "I began to wonder whether the sister assumed that we were totally dependent upon her and tried to take advantages." The couple decided to find a different way of earning money. Mr. and Mrs. Kim stopped working at the dry cleaning shop and began to do cleaning at night.

A car accident occurred in 1989. Mr. Kim passed out and awoke later in a hospital bed. After getting medical treatments, Mr. Kim was told that there were no immediate health concerns, although he felt that his body was "not the same." Believing the doctors' assessment and knowing their financial difficulties, Mr. Kim resumed his life and returned to work at a coin laundry/shoe repair shop. The sister allowed him to run one of her shops. Mrs. Kim did not want to go back to a dry cleaning shop. Mrs. Kim attended a hair design school during the day and did cleaning at night. After she became a bit familiar with living in the United States, she decided to put all her efforts to make the best of it.

The Emergence of Chronic Illness

At work, Mr. Kim was constantly exposed to a variety of strong chemicals that often made him feel nauseous. It also made him feel easily exhausted. In the

early 1990s, after coming home from work, Mr. Kim passed out. He did not remember either how he collapsed or where he was:

I felt my body became paralyzed. I felt very dizzy. I cannot remember where I fall down.... I was alone at home.... I went to three American hospitals and later visited Korea and stayed there for several months to find better treatments. Some American doctors said my inner systems had a genetic weakness. Others thought the car accident affected the outset of my failing conditions and ongoing exhaustion. No one understood why my whole body began to have difficulties to move freely.²⁷

Although he was ill and could not find effective treatment, Mr. Kim strived to keep his coin laundry shop open regardless of its meager profit. Gradually, he began to have difficulty moving freely. The illness damaged his legs, leaving him unable to keep up physically with the heavy workload. Then, the owner of the mall, where his shop was located, decided to sell the property. Mr. Kim was there, feeling “empty” when the people took apart and dismantled the entire building. He was troubled by the fact that he still did not find something “concrete and certain” in life.

Mrs. Kim became the sole breadwinner, working at a beauty parlor. A few years later, she opened her own beauty parlor with her friend. Mr. Kim agreed to stay at home and to raise their daughter. He took care of the girl and helped her with her school-work. While the daughter was attending the middle school, the spousal relationship became difficult. When the daughter went to high school, she

²⁷ Mr. Kim noted that he met a good American doctor and had been seeing the doctor to get a regular neurological check-up since this accident.

moved into Mrs. Kim's house. The couple chose to live separately because it was difficult to find a school for their daughter in the neighborhood of the assisted living facility. Mr. Kim lived alone in an assisted living unit for elderly people from the late 1990s to the early 2000s.

After Mr. Kim lived in the assistant living facility, Mrs. Kim visited him weekly. She soon became acquainted with the neighbors, mostly elderly Korean women. Mrs. Kim provided her service there as a skillful hairdresser. The neighbors were so poor that they assumed the couple was generous enough to take care of their hair with small fees. Mr. Kim recalled that "we met a lot of difficult women who loved to talk and did not listen to whatever we said." After their daughter went to college, Mrs. Kim moved to a different state and opened a small business. Mr. Kim did not move with her because he wanted to avoid being a "burden" and he wanted to live in the city where his daughter attended graduate school. He did not provide a more detailed explanation about the decision. Since Mr. Kim moved out of the assisted living facility, he has managed to live independently. He cannot walk or move around without his automatic wheelchair or walker. His capacity for driving his own car is "very important" to avoid being a "problem" or "burden."

A Spiritual Quest of Living in Faith

During the interviews, Mr. Kim repeated that he came to America to find something "concrete and certain" in life. Whenever he experienced relational conflicts, illness, or the consequence of financial difficulties, life seemed "unsettling" without any rock. His biggest challenge while living alone had been

loneliness. Mr. Kim noted that church life is the best solution to counter loneliness.

Regarding his religious life, Mr. Kim said that he was not interested in having a religion when he lived in Korea. He visited a Buddhist temple once and a church twice. He described that his life was in “disorder,” as he did not take time to think deeply about the meaning of life and lived for what he thought was right at any given moment. After he came to the United States in the late 1980s, he met some people who were Christians. There was Mr. Shin who talked a lot about church life and Christian faith. One of Mr. Shin’s acquaintances was the Rev. Kwon who was a pastor of a small Korean Church in a Southeastern region.

In the mid-1990s, Mr. Kim visited pastor Kwon’s church to find Mr. Shin who had hurt him so much. Mr. Kim did not explain what Mr. Shin did. He was so angry at his former friend. He wanted to set the record straight. At the same time, Mr. Kim began to feel that his body went through a gradual deterioration of its physical power. He was not able to find Mr. Shin who had stopped attending the church some time ago, which disappointed him greatly:

I was angry at him (Mr. Shin). I was frustrated at my situation. I also hoped that if I became a Christian, church people would help me out.... I was still able to walk without a walker. So I thought I am ill but I can still make a decision to go church. As time went by, I was more drawn to Christian faith. I did not know what to do with Christian faith. So I decided to attend early prayer service everyday at 5 am. Pastor Kwon took time to talk with me after prayer services. He patiently listened to my feelings and thoughts. I was just grateful. I wanted to continue.... But, I had to stop driving in early mornings because it became difficult. I now attend only Saturday services because there is less traffic.... I did not know the importance of having faith in God.... I feel that the sermons of my pastor often talk to me personally. I feel that reading the Bible helps me put more effort to cultivate my faith. I want to be a better Christian.

A typical day for Mr. Kim consisted of practicing certain routines such as praying, reading some books on spiritual life, or reading the Bible -- three chapters a day. He has read the Bible 70 or 80 times and added he could count a very close reading the Bible to at least 20 or 30 times. At night, he had a moment of reflection on his life and God as he “confessed everyday sins, worries, and concerns in front of God.” He usually felt reassured because God has been “loving, righteous, and listening to” his voice of repentance and gratitude.²⁸

Mr. Kim usually got up six or seven o'clock. He sat to read the Bible and was usually “surprised and delighted” to “learn new things differently” from the familiar verses he knew by heart. Then he had breakfast. He often practiced computer typing and checked news on the internet. He also watched Korean programs on television. During afternoon hours, he read some books or watched television. He also tried to exercise regularly, using some equipment at home because he did not want to live long but needed not to be a “burden” to people. He cleaned and organized his personal items twice a week. He cooked and had dinner before he prayed to God and went to bed. Mr. Kim used to be afraid of death after he began to lose his faculties of moving freely. He now believed that death is taking one more step to “meet” God.

²⁸ Mr. Kim explained his theology of the importance of repentance: “Praying to God is always encouraging because it helps me remember I can change my life little by little, becoming a different person who pleases God (smiling) though my resolution does not last long... So I repent everyday. There are so many sins I have committed before I met God. I feel that God listens to me when I share my pain with him.”

The Details of the Experience of Marginalization

Hall, Stevens, and Meleis define marginalization as the “peripheralization of individuals and groups from a dominant, central majority.”²⁹ Marginalization is conceptualized as a socio-political process, producing both vulnerabilities (risks) and strengths (resilience).³⁰ Hall and the others define attributes of marginalization in relation to associated issues such as intermediacy, differentiation, power, secrecy, reflectiveness, liminality, and voice.³¹ Mr. Kim’s life experience of marginalization demonstrates distinctive aspects of marginalization. I identify two elements of his marginalization with the themes of being uprooted and being chronically ill in accordance with the issues of marginalization.

²⁹ Joanne M. Hall, P. A. Stevens, and A. I. Meleis, “Marginalization: A guiding Concept for Valuing Diversity in Nursing Knowledge Development,” *Advanced Nursing Science* 1994: 16(4):24-41. Also refer to Joanne M. Hall, “Marginalization Revisited: Critical, Postmodern, and Liberation Perspectives,” *Advances in Nursing Science* 1999: 22(1): 88-102.

³⁰ Joanne M. Hall, “Marginalization Revisited: Critical, Postmodern, and Liberation Perspectives,” *Advances in Nursing Science* 1999: 22(1): 89.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 89.

- Intermediacy: referring to the risk of “personal and territorial invasion” and the dangers of living in “contested or border environments”
- Differentiation: referring to the risk of “becoming a scapegoat or being stigmatized”
- Power: referring to risks associated with “enforced conformity”
- Secrecy: referring to interpersonal risks, resulting from the dominating groups using “insider knowledge to their advantage”
- Reflectiveness: referring to risks involved in the “exhaustive processes of constant vigilance, and analysis of each new social encounter necessary for safety”
- Voice: referring to the risks of being silenced
- Liminality: having experiences not shared by dominating groups; referring to risks of alienation, altered perceptions, and heavy psychic strain

Being Uprooted

Being uprooted and its consequences constitute personal elements of Mr. Kim's marginalization. Mr. Kim recalled his conversations with J. P. his younger brother. J. P. and Mr. Kim had been very close to each other since they were young children. J. P. was a "gentle, sensitive, and good-natured" brother. When J. P. visited Mr. Kim and family members in Korea, he tried to explain the ways the sister and her husband treated him at work. Mr. Kim did not grasp the context of emotional strain between the couple and J. P. Therefore, Mr. Kim usually told his brother to be more patient and respectful in listening to what the sister had to say because she may have a long-term plan that would be good for J. P. Mr. Kim added, "I had no idea about how much stressful and challenging my being an immigrant could be before I came here."

In August 1988, Mr. Kim and his family finally left Korea and arrived in Atlanta, Georgia. As soon as he came to the United States, his older sister offered them jobs at one of her coin laundry shops. Mr. and Mrs. Kim worked long hours just like Mr. Kim's younger brother J. P. did. Mr. Kim gradually realized what J. P. had tried to explain about his experience of working for the sister. Mr. Kim later found himself caught in ongoing conflicts between his wife and sister. By putting himself in his brother's shoes, Mr. Kim understood what his younger brother went through to open his own shop and continued to share brotherly support and encouragement with J. P. Their relationship was abruptly ended in 2002 when J. P. died by car accident. The brother was a 49-years-old.

Mr. Kim's experience of being uprooted represents the attributes of intermediacy, power, voice, liminality that are associated with marginalization. In Korea, Mr. and Mrs. Kim had an emotional and physical boundary that enabled them to make meaningful decisions by their own choice. In the United States, their life was constantly overwhelmed by conflicts in relation to their experience of working for the sister's business. Because the sister was not only Mr. Kim's older sibling but also his employer, any sense of power and voice for Mr. and Mrs. Kim were significantly diminished by the necessity of conformity.

Being uprooted also carried risks of alienation, the negative aspect of liminality. Mr. and Mrs. Kim were unable to take time to understand the new culture as immigrants. Although the sister and her husband provided initial guidance to help Mr. and Mrs. Kim make necessary decisions, Mr. and Mrs. Kim constantly struggled with the unfamiliar environment and customs. In working long hours, the couple did not have time to settle in their new life and explore what it meant to live in the States. Heavy psychological strain was pervasive in this phase of their life.

Being Chronically Ill

Being chronically ill added to the personal elements of Mr. Kim's marginalization with regard to his deteriorating health and relationships. Mr. Kim explained his working environment at a coin laundry/shoe repair shop, which was distinguished by its air quality, which was always filled with "strong chemical smells." Without his awareness that the muscles of his body began to wear away,

Mr. Kim continued to work. In the midst of his growing pains, Mr. Kim felt “very frequently exhausted and irritated.”

Being chronically ill affected many of Mr. Kim’s relationships. At that time, Mrs. Kim went to hair design school in the daytime and did cleaning at night. When Mr. Kim came home from his work at a shoe repair shop, Mrs. Kim continued to practice various techniques on a wigged mannequin in a room, pointing out that the dinner was ready on the table. She would neither stop practicing nor have dinner with him. Mr. Kim remembered that the situation did not bother him. However, he acknowledged that when his tiredness became overwhelming, they had fights. Mr. Kim felt a growing distance from Mrs. Kim and vice versa. After Mr. Kim stopped working, Mrs. Kim opened a beauty parlor with her friend – someone Mr. Kim did not trust. “I believed that my wife was associated herself with bad friends.” His relationship with his wife became frigid.

Being chronically ill profoundly undermined the ways Mr. Kim experienced himself and others. Mr. Kim recalled how bad he felt about himself: “I came to the States to find something *concrete and certain*. I did not know what I was doing. Why did I come here? My life in illness kept unsettling my emotions of what I am and who I am.” He was afraid of being a “burden” on his wife, child, church people, and other acquaintances. Mr. Kim frequently referred to being a burden or problem in an exhaustive and intense way of self-reflection, showing the state of reflectiveness, a principle characteristic of marginalization. In addition to reflectiveness, Mr. Kim believed that having his own car was crucial to joining

church life because he “cannot expect” church people to give him a ride to church at his convenience. He constantly referred to risks of actual or imagined alienation.

Struggling with his chronic illness, Mr. Kim was overwhelmed by the facts that even doctors were unable to provide comprehensive medical assessments and treatment plans. Mr. Kim stopped personal correspondence with people who lived in Korea. Being chronically ill also affected his relationships with people whom Mr. Kim had met in Atlanta. He said: “After I became ill, I was hyper-sensitive and self-conscious. I was always worried about how others would think about me and my family. I had to defend myself without revealing my pains and struggles in public.”

Mr. Kim’s experience of being chronically ill represents the attributes of risks of being stigmatized. His illness drove him to go through the exhausting process of analyzing each new social encounter. Mr. Kim was stigmatized because his illness seemed incurable and incomprehensible. Mr. Kim experienced the risks of being alienated, which he could not share with others, even with his family. The fact that no one knew exactly why his muscles began to weaken and fail to move freely posed risks of liminality. The personal elements of Mr. Kim’s marginalization demonstrate not only his physical pain but also heavy psychic strain.

Challenge and Hope of Mr. Lee

Focused Life History

Mr. Lee is a college student who came to the United States at age 12. His younger brother was 10-years old. Before leaving Korea his father had a manufacturing factory with seven employees and his mother had been a housewife. Mr. Lee's father had been the first to become a Christian in his extended family, and he met his wife at church when they were young adults. The father's major at college was mechanical engineering and the mother's major was education. When the family arrived in the United States in 2000, the parents began to work at a dry cleaning shop where Mr. Lee's uncle and aunt worked together. Mr. Lee fondly recalled that his aunt, the father's sister, said "I have already prepared two beds for you and your brother" when they talked about going to the United States. Later, Mr. Lee's parents opened their own dry cleaning business. The family moved three times from the aunt's home, to an apartment, to a house, and to their current residence.

School as the World

As a 12-year old boy, the whole world meant family and school. Mr. Lee found some friends who lived in the same apartment complex where the family took up residence. The boys spent a lot of time playing together with their new American and Korean friends who went to the same school and lived in the same neighborhood.

Mr. Lee remembered that an American friend, Alex, invited him, “teaching about sleepover” at his home. Alex was a “white” boy who had two younger brothers and a sister. His mother and step-father were affectionate and frequently invited the two Korean boys to their apartment. While they were waiting for their parents, the boys played Yahtzee, football, or soccer together. They also spent time together in the backyard of the apartment complex, playing with the leaves and twigs as well as “living and dead bugs.” Looking back on his boyhood, Mr. Lee said he was “happy everyday,” although he was “of course stressed out” when he had to take exams at school. His first impression of the United States was going to his new school:

I was standing outside the classroom with the teacher. My heart was really pounding (placing his hand on chest)... bum, bum, bum... When I walked into the classroom, everyone was quietly walking around. It was amazing to see that the students did not even sit down when the teacher entered in the room. I saw a Korean boy who was born in the States. He helped me a lot. I couldn't speak English at all. So I just asked him questions in Korean. He understood Korean and talked me back in English. I had never seen him speaking in Korean... I remember in my ESOL class (English for speakers of other Languages), there were about ten students. Three were Koreans. The rest came from other countries... I had many chances to face English speakers by myself.

Mr. Lee and his younger brother “got to depend on” each other more than ever. While the parents were out working at a dry cleaning shop, the boys checked on each other and did homework together. His parents were “so busy” working. They couldn't really help with the children's homework. When Mr. Lee was asked if he had been the only child whether his experience of immigration would be different, Mr. Lee said yes, saying that as a sixth grader he learned a lot from

“helping” his brother. It was “helpful” to see what his younger brother did at school because Mr. Lee did not go to elementary school in the States.

He found “new stuffs” everyday in the homework of his fourth grade brother. He actually had to do “double” homework everyday. In fact, at that time, he was not sure he was “correct” in helping his younger brother but “pretended anyway” he knew the answers. The fourth grader had “no idea” and just believed in his big brother; whereas, a sixth grader had “some ideas.” He shyly smiled and emphasized that “it worked.” Until he went to a middle school, he did not feel pressured to study harder. In high school, he got more writing essay assignments which he found challenging.

Jumping on Stepping Stones

Mr. Lee noted that he was “very nervous” when he experienced a series of interviews to get into the Georgia Governor’s Honor Program. He spent a summer at a university in Southeastern region with other selected students when he was a tenth grader. In the Georgia Governor’s Honors Program, Mr. Lee chose to focus on Executive Management and Math. Mr. Lee met “very different looking” and “verbally articulating” peers. He was also surprised to see that some students could not be ready for breakfast or morning classes on time, noting, “It was my responsibility to be ready in time. Some students found it was difficult.”

After the summer in the GHP, Mr. Lee wanted to do something new again. Between the 11th and 12th grades, he kept “looking around” and found an opportunity to be a hospital volunteer. He “heard” that doing volunteer work at a

hospital could be helpful to present him in a “better way.” He was able to find a volunteer position in a coronary intensive care unit of an Atlanta hospital. He was assigned with a Korean-American male nurse. He “followed” the nurse and did “whatever he did.” He learned how to order medications, going back and forth between hospital pharmacy and his nursing unit. When all hospital staff members were busy, he was a “BIG” help. He also stocked supplies. He observed the nurses and doctors and found everything “required careful focus and attention in detail.”

Mr. Lee finally met a male nurse. It was impressive that he was always “willing to help” people. The nurse did not “feel bothered” when Mr. Lee had a question. On the top of his own job, the nurse was the only male nurse on the unit. He was frequently called to help patients be transferred to other floors, “always lifting heavy stuffs.” Mr. Lee saw the nurse was “happy to be a nurse” though his job was physically challenging.

Eyes on the Prize: Self-Discipline as a Way of Life

A typical day of Mr. Lee at college included classes, studying, and social life. He woke up at 6:30 and attended a prayer meeting. He added that the meeting is NOT an early morning prayer service because the meeting began at 7 am. He missed this prayer service twice during two semesters.³² He wondered why people

³² Mr. Lee did not want to say people “looked up” to him because he woke up everyday at 6 am to attend early morning prayer meeting. Because he met some friends whom he wanted to invite to Christian faith at college, he wanted his new friends to see “if they really believed in God, God helps us do what we want to do and be God’s instruments in the world.”

called it early morning prayer meeting. After the prayer meeting, he ate breakfast and went to classes. He read newspapers (New York Times and USA Today) between classes. His classes ended around 3:30 or 4:00 pm. Before dinner, he had “free time.” After dinner, he went to the library and studied for five or six hours. He came back to his dorm room and went to bed around midnight. This daily routine was based on his self-reflection on what can be possible if he got a high grade point average (GPA) in college:

At some points, I felt ALL responsibility were over my shoulders. That was why I changed myself. If I don't do it myself, no one is going to tell me (to do something). I wanted to play.... I wanted to watch TV all days.... If I did it, no one is going to say no to me. Here (at home) my parents could say it. At college, everything is up to you. I heard from a junior student, I need to get high GPA. Classes will be more difficult in my junior and senior years.... That is about college... creating your own schedule and doing what you want to do with a sense of responsibility.

Mr. Lee thought he was a “driven” person. Whenever he decided to do something, and if he knew someone else was there and had done the same thing, he would do his best to accomplish something meaningful. He believed that if someone else could achieve meaningful goals, he could do it too. His experience made him be “more responsible for my part on what I have to do.” When he was given a responsibility, he “had to do it well.”

Mr. Lee said he was “very satisfied with” his own family because he had learned a “very valuable lesson.” Going through his “hardships” he learned how to talk with people who may have helpful information and how to “get things done.” He knew how hard his parents worked for years. He did not want to do the

“same things” all his life. He wanted to “pursue something better than that.” He emphasized that he had learned to work harder in order to “get out of this situation.” He recalled a moment when he thought he could end up at a dry cleaning shop all his life:

I did once. When I realized studying turned out to be very, very difficult and hard to do well, I thought I can give it up and work at dry cleaners. After all struggles, it was a stupid thought. I was succeeding at school. I was pretty sure that I won't be a dry cleaner after graduating from high school or college.

From a religious perspective, Mr. Lee wanted to “relate” his life to a career that can serve God in the world. For example, if he became a doctor, he wanted to go to Africa to help people in need and to “spread the Word of God.” He would like to bring other people with him who could work at churches there. If Mr. Lee became a businessman, he could set up a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that would send trained missionaries all over the world. It was important for him to ask “what God wants” him to do in life. He regularly prayed that God would use him as his “tool” because God “can make me successful and, at the same time, use me.” He described that his God “forces” him to do something. People would look at him and see how God works through him, God’s “instrument,” and “what God is.”

Considering his relationship with God, Mr. Lee was not sure he was a “nice person” because he had “greed in heart” and because he also wanted to have “some stuff” only for himself. Sometimes he has to give up what he wants to “fit into” society. A week after classes had started, Mr. Lee, a freshman, was invited

to a party, which he believed was a “drinking party.” He knew that if he went to the party, he could have met new people and could have developed better relationships with his acquaintances. He “refused” to go to the party, knowing that he really wanted to go. When Mr. Lee was asked whether that experience was really about “being greedy in heart,” he paused and mentioned that maybe greed is all about “money or money-wired.”

The interwoven themes of greed, friendship, and faithful life as a Christian remain intriguing and baffling. Mr. Lee felt hesitant although he decided to spend “a lot of money” (40 or 50 dollars) on birthday gifts and to bring his new friends out for dinner. He felt he was “greedy,” catching himself in not wanting to spend “that much” money. He bought the gifts and went to a good restaurant with friends anyway because he wanted to be “nice” to his friends and to invite them to a community of Christian faith.

In addition to exploring new friendships, Mr. Lee joined a high-profile student organization, Investor Associations in which members spent time together analyzing investment companies; members usually got summer internships at prestigious investment banking firms like Goldman Sachs or Merrill Lynch. In this big club, he learned that some students were actually investing their money in the selected companies. Mr. Lee was impressed by these “very, very smart people” but puzzled by their attitude of being “very ambitious, very unfriendly, and cold.” He thought people just “have to be in that way to be successful business executives” in wondering again about the interplay between greed and friendship.

Mr. Lee's concern seemed to be reaffirmed when he joined the Red Cross Club in addition to Investor Associations. In the Red Cross Club, he found people who were like a "happy big family" and participated in a lot of fundraising, writing care notes, and running blood drive events. As Mr. Lee wanted to major in business in the future, he was concerned about how a person can be financially successful, ethical, and faithful in God all at the same time.

The Details of the Experience of Marginalization

Hall and others define attributes of marginalization in relation to associated issues such as intermediacy, differentiation, power, secrecy, reflectiveness, liminality, and voice.³³ Mr. Lee's life experience of marginalization shows distinctive attributes of vulnerabilities of marginalization as well as strengths of resilience. I identify two elements of his marginalization -- Mr. Lee's parents and college applications -- and discuss them vis-à-vis the issues of liminality, power, and voice.

The Parents

Mr. Lee's parents began to work at his uncle's dry cleaning business as soon as the family arrived in the United States. His father went to the shop before 6:30 in the morning – before the children were awake. After the boys went to school, their mother went to work and often did not return until dinner time.

³³ Joanne M. Hall, "Marginalization Revisited: Critical, Postmodern, and Liberation Perspectives," *Advances in Nursing Science* 1999: 22(1): 89.

Besides their work at the dry cleaning business, the parents, who were college educated in Korea, tried to learn English.

They went to an American church that offered free English classes. They were looking for educational institutions and were willing to spend money to learn English; they continually tried to learn English. They went to a library and rented educational videos. They watched the videos at night to study colloquial expressions. The parents “really tried hard.” At that time, according to Mr. Lee, it was “really difficult” for them to take care of the children, to work long hours, and to learn how to speak in English.

Mr. Lee repeated himself several times when he described how the parents tried to learn English and that speaking in English was “very hard” for them because they did not have enough opportunities to interact with Americans. They read Korean newspapers, worked with Koreans, and met Koreans. Mr. Lee observed that his parents could read and understand English well. He also noticed that “nothing was coming out of their mouth” when his parents wanted to say something in English.

His parents’ experience of learning English represents the attributes of liminality, voice, and power. In Korea the parents were part of the middle class and did not necessarily have to alter their perception of who they were. In the United States, they shared struggles similar to other Korean immigrants: long hours at work, little time to care for children, or learn English. It was a “very difficult situation” they “had to face” because the language barrier made their everyday experience in the United States unnerving. It created enforced

conformity to a limited understanding of American culture and prevented full participation in the educational development of their children. Heavy psychological strain was placed on both parents and children as the parents' voice was silenced in the world of speaking English.

Mr. Lee was still not fluent in spoken English. He was "not that good but still the best one in the family who could understand English." Consequently, whenever something went wrong in the family's residence, Mr. Lee was told that he needed to go to the office or call the manager. He was "a little bit scared first" to talk with "other adults." After three or four times, he found it was "not that hard."³⁴ The parents' struggles to learn English is a vivid snippet of the issues of liminality, power and voice in the family of Korean immigrants:

The No. 1 biggest challenge was learning English... I *had to* do being a big boy and being a big brother for my younger brother. I *had to* take care of all the bills. I did call the banks to open or close the accounts. I was in the middle school. I was a thirteen years old. If we had problems in paying bills, I *had to* call the companies to resolve the issues. Other than that, after I got a driver's license, I also *had to* drive a car by myself and my brother to the places where we needed to go without help from our parents because they *had to* work.³⁵

³⁴ When asked about his personality traits, Mr. Lee said he tries not to be pessimistic. He "looks at everything in a positive way." It is not "hard to be optimistic if you have done it many times."

³⁵ Mr. Lee's use of "I had to" drew my attention to an unspoken aspect of his own liminality and being voiceless as a young boy who faced unfamiliar situations without his parents at an early age.

Mr. Lee believed that he did not notice the life of hardship his parents experienced because he was not “at the stage of observing how mom and dad were changed.” Indeed, it was “very proper” that the parents took care of the boys, not vice versa. He never witnessed his parents openly complaining or voicing concerns in front of the children. Yet, as a seventh grader Mr. Lee gradually realized that “life was tough.”

His mother had a new schedule and left home before the children woke up. Mr. Lee’s new responsibility was to wake his brother up, to have breakfast their mother had put on the dining table, and to go school. When the boys returned from school, the parents were still working. The boys played with friends and did their homework before their parents came home. Mr. Lee said that he was “told to do so” what he did. His younger brother, then age 11 or 12, “always woke up in time” and “didn’t have a problem” when Mr. Lee checked on him.

Mr. Lee’s family had two vacations in the last seven years. They did not have time to spare for visiting Korea. In addition, the family could not leave the United States without their green cards – the official cards issued by the U. S. government to foreigners, permitting them to work anywhere in the United States. Although his family sent the required documents years ago, they have not heard from the U. S. government. Without a green card, Mr. Lee and his family continue to be aliens without having permanent resident status in the States. This legal status became problematic when Mr. Lee began to do college applications.

College Applications

His parents were concerned about Mr. Lee's SAT scores as he began to prepare his college application. They encouraged him to get help at a test prep institution that had after school programs. Test prep institutions offer college applications counseling and help high school students write essays. Mr. Lee "refused" their suggestion because he saw his friends going there to study SAT vocabulary, and because a test prep institution was "very expensive... very expensive" – it cost three or four thousand dollars per session. When he decided not to go there, he also considered his parents' situation. Eventually Mr. Lee "persuaded" his parents, bought four SAT books, studied the books at night, and took zero sessions of SAT exam preparation. His friends attended test prep institutions to work on SAT vocabulary words. Mr. Lee was determined to do what he could do by himself and to save money.

Mr. Lee did not feel "very, very satisfied" with his SAT scores. Yet, his scores were still higher than those of his acquaintances. He also talked with his high school counselor who was "very knowledgeable about college application processes." But she did not know much about the living situations of international students and how to help him get financial aid. Mr. Lee "had to contact colleges directly" and he was on his own. In comparison to his friends, he later felt proud of himself because he had done "everything" by himself. People who went to good colleges got help from "someone else." When they met their new peers at college, Mr. Lee explained, it was "harder for them to catch up with whom they were competing with." In his case, he chose "my college by myself" and had a "good college life."

What Mr. Lee “regretted” was that he did not get effective advice from instructors at a test prep institution. He did not even know that most schools had rolling admissions and that it would be better to submit his applications earlier. He realized later that he needed to get help regarding how he could answer the essay questions in a particular way to write better essays. He talked about not having had “these small tips” and said, “But that is okay *now*. I *am* okay now.”

Another hardship was college tuition. Not being a permanent resident or U. S. citizen was a big “setback” because most schools had restrictions about how many international students they would accept each year. He thought that if he had had legal permanent resident status, he could have gone to a better school and even gotten a scholarship. As soon as he mentioned this, Mr. Lee quickly added, “But I am always thinking in a positive way. My uncle had a permanent resident card and cosigned my application.” Therefore, he was able to get a student loan to pay tuition. After the storm of college applications was over, there was a startling revelation that left Mr. Lee stunned for a while, thinking about the “fairness” of society:

This is an example. One of my friends was not good at school, getting low grades. I was getting better [grades than him] and took many advanced classes. But he had a green card. I heard later that he got the full scholarship from a very good New York college. He got lower SAT scores than me. He did not take advanced classes.... But... it was a kind of unfair situation he got a full scholarship and I didn't. That made me feel ... bad about.... the unfair system of society. He had a green card so he was able to get full scholarship with lower SAT scores and low level, easy classes. It was my first experience of unfair society....

The friend came to the United States at age 12 and his father worked at a “sort of company.” Mr. Lee did not know why his friend got his green card. After a long pause, Mr. Lee continued to talk about how unfair society can be. He “knew society is unfair because he did read something from books.” After this situation, he “really” realized “life is unfair.” He also thought about some people who were in worse situations, such as the older sister of his friend who worked at a dry cleaning business to earn money to go college. The family was unable to afford college education for her. He said that his family is in the middle class, pondered, and added that he was not sure to which class his family “belongs” because his family “cannot go to vacations.” The college application experience evoked his imagination of being in unfair situations in the future:

For me, it is unfair (not getting a scholarship) now.... in the future, it is going to be still unfair. No one can change that. But there is always a chance you are going to get benefits out of the unfairness. I don't know how. My friend who got a full scholarship got benefits from the unfairness of the society. Maybe I can get a very good job in the future. There would be some people who are more qualified than me but would not get it for whatever reasons.... for some unknown reason. So it will be an unfair situation for them... How would I justify it? Maybe one tiny, very small thing I am better than them might put me on the top.

Mr. Lee felt that his college application experience made him be “realistic.” He noted that if “you are not realistic to do your responsibility now, you cannot follow your dream.” Being realistic is the “key of success.” When he was asked about a Korean idiom of the necessity of hardship for a young man, Mr. Lee observed that the “point of going through struggles” is about how a struggle can teach a person a lesson. However, he did not believe that we have to go

through “all the troubles” just to learn a lesson. He added that some people cannot learn a lesson from hardship because their life is very difficult.

Mr. Lee’s college application experience as the son of a Korean immigrant represents difficulties that are not shared by the majority. For example, his school counselor did not know how she could help “international students.” His parents were supportive and anxious to help Mr. Lee; however, they were not able to join his painstaking efforts of finding a college. Mr. Lee experienced the struggles of reflectiveness when he had to act on his limited resources. The exhaustive process of constant vigilance shaped his way of “getting things done no matter what happens in the future;” he felt “there was no one who can do for me now.” His college applications included the struggles of alienation that could not be shared by even his family.

Findings and Heuristic Insights into a Constructive Practical Theology of Hope

The quest for meaning has to do with the deep alienation people experience in society. Regardless of their socioeconomic status, gender, or race, people raise certain questions, especially in times of despair. Questions like, “Am I worthy to live here and now?” and, “What will give me hope?” overpass narrowly defined psychological concerns. These questions refer to the interplay between being in context and making meaning. The quest for meaning in life is based in what a person does and feels everyday. For marginalized persons, the

quest for meaning in life springs from the dimension that can be described as socio-cultural marginalization.

Weaving Together the Meanings of Marginalization and Hope in Context

Both Mr. Kim and Mr. Lee are aware that the impact of their socio-cultural environments is critically related to their faith in God and people. The Christian faith is not just about being able to *make meaning* but also being *receptive* to meaning. The quest for meaning in life refers to the presence of people and God.

When family life could not be sustained under the psychological and physical strains of being an immigrant living on the margins, Mr. Kim was still able to find that church life offered him a sense of belongingness. When Mr. Lee saw that his younger brother's friends had "no place" to go on Sundays, he volunteered to bring them to church as soon as he got a driver's license. Mr. Kim and Mr. Lee's emphasis on a community of faith to keep going in life needs to be further explored to counter individualistic interpretations of Christian hope for marginalized persons.

Being in Context

Facts about their limited resources were related to the interviewees' experiences of hope. Whether they could face and deal with daily challenges was dependent on whether or not they experienced hope. After Mr. Kim became chronically ill, he was self-conscious and worried about how others would think

about him. He once stopped keeping in touch with his friends in Korea for many years. He also gave up visiting his wife in a different state.

He was concerned about “likely negative reactions” of the wife’s new acquaintances “if they saw this invalid husband.” Will they “do gossiping” and “spread false rumors” to criticize his wife for making the difficult decision to leave her husband alone in order to keep her business open? Who would be sympathetic to understand that the reason for separation was financial difficulty? His physical symptoms of illness, Mr. Kim’s being in context, became more prominent in influencing his understanding of his relationships with people and God.

When Mr. Kim was still trying to absorb the impossibility of being fully “cured,” he was deeply troubled and vulnerable. His daughter was used to being “afraid” of him because Mr. Kim used to be critical when her answer was incorrect when they did homework together. Gradually, his relationships with his daughter and wife changed because he became “patient,” “began to ask them about their situations first,” and “listened to their concerns without criticizing.” At the same time, his illness continued to define his relationships. Mr. Kim was “always feeling guilty” because his daughter has “this invalid father” and his wife has “this weak husband.” His physical condition became instrumental in his acute awareness of time and space – whether he is “trapped” at home or “unsafe” to drive on weekday afternoons and evenings.

After Mr. Kim took his faith “seriously,” he noticed a wave of responses from his friends and relatives. They “seemed to be surprised and more respectful”

regardless of his physical and financial conditions. The Rev. Kwon also “seemed to recognize” the impact of faith on Mr. Kim. Every positive response pointed out that Christian faith “made” him a “different” person. Mr. Kim noted “if someone observes my daily life I would look like a prisoner at home.” Mr. Kim could imagine that his life “maybe looked meaningless and trapped” as he coped with everyday challenges such as simple walking or having high fever alone. Yet, “in a positive way” he may be still “looked like a good person regardless of illness and living situations or because of illness and living situation.” His body reminded Mr. Kim of the need to have a meaningful understanding of God. His daily practice of “thinking of God” was filled with contextually relevant experiences of his illness.

Making Meaning

Whether Mr. Kim and Mr. Lee could make meaning out of their lived experiences of marginalization was critical to determine whether or not they experienced hope. With the focus on how to overcome marginalization in faith and daily life, Mr. Lee related his experience of the college application process. His inspiration of being successful and believing in God followed his discussion of “unfair society.” Mr. Lee observed that an unfair society does not acknowledge individual efforts and gifts. An unfair society chooses to focus on something such as the green card or permanent resident card that is beyond the reach of an 18-year-old’s dedication and determination. He seemed to accept the reality of an

unfair society as “mainstream people set social norms because they have power over ordinary people.”

He emphasized that the college applications process taught him a new self-understanding: 90% of being realistic and 10% of being idealistic. He explained the concept of being realistic in terms of becoming president of the United States:

You try to do what you cannot do and which is very, very difficult to do. Becoming the president is based on being idealistic.... Being realistic makes you do your responsibility now rather than daydreaming or just planning.

Mr. Lee mentioned several times that two things could measure success: the capacity for supporting one’s own family and earning respect at church. Success is about being with God and being happy with what he does everyday even when he is “tired.” His understanding of success is also about “having good relationships with other church members” in addition to his relationship with God.

He especially emphasized that success is about being able to “give advice” to people because with people’s respect and trust, he can be “used as God’s tool.” If people do not understand how he makes money, they will not respect him. If Mr. Lee could be successful in the future, he wants to spend his life helping people “achieve their hopes faster with lesser struggles” and “give people hope.” Mr. Lee explained his rationale of helping people in need because those people are “better” than him somehow or other. The experience of the college application process made him believe that there are many people who are qualified but are not

acknowledged because society is unfair. Mr. Lee made meaning out of challenge in accordance with his Christian faith.

The Characteristics of Christian Hope for Marginalized Persons

The particular frame that Mr. Kim and Mr. Lee take to the problem of marginalization is constructed based upon their Christian faith in everyday experience. Both men discuss the significance of hope in terms of their relationship with others and God. At the same time, their relationships with others and God are significantly influenced by their present experience. For Mr. Kim, his old car and the capacity for driving to church sustain his “something concrete and certain”: living in faith. For Mr. Lee, his educational accomplishments, family, and his capacity for “working hard” sustain his inspiration: “becoming God’s instrument and being successful.” Their daily practices sustain faith in a loving God and nurture a sense of hope that life is meaningful in spite of their socio-cultural marginalization. I have named their description of being hopeful in relation to their meaning of a faithful life, based on everyday experience:

- Hope is about Having Affirmative Relationships.³⁶ Affirmative Relationships refers to an opportunity of practicing support, compassion, and patience to survive the realities of marginalization.

³⁶ Mr. Lee said, “I think I got everything I wanted to have. First I wanted a Xbox (a video game console). My grandmother brought it for my brother and me. I wanted a digital camera. My parents got it for me. Then I wanted to have a laptop. My parents got it for me... I did not want to have much things (looking shy).” His parents had “unconditional love for us.”

- Hope is about Joining a Community of Christian Faith.³⁷ The Church provides space and time for marginalized persons to have friendship, companionship, and trust as well as the Word of God to make meaning in everyday experiences of being voiceless and powerless.
- Hope is about Doing Something Everyday despite the Way Things Appear.³⁸ Hope includes setting goals and achieving them, although marginalized persons do not think achieving their goals is taken for granted.
- Hope is about Sharing Love and Respect.³⁹ Within the complex web of human relationships, a sense of hope for marginalized persons is sustained through embodied expressions of love and respect.
- Hope is about Faithfully Living in the Present.⁴⁰ Coping with the reality of marginalization included strenuous efforts of being fully

³⁷ Mr. Kim said, “How am I going to heal all the pains and hurts in heart without the Word of God? I feel reassured at church that I am not alone as long as I keep my faith.”

³⁸ Mr. Lee daily attends early morning service, and Mr. Kim reads the Bible everyday. He said, “I am afraid that because my body often prevents me to go church, I am not doing a good balancing act to keep faith alive. My hope is that someday I am going to meet God face to face. It is a real comfort to believe in Jesus and to listen to my pastor’s sermons. I have a great anticipation and joy about going to church.”

³⁹ Mr. Lee took seriously “giving advices” as a way of keeping hope in the lives of less fortunate people. Mr. Kim has been making donations to the Red Cross Organization and World Vision. He kept a photo of Cambodian girl whom he supported for last eight years in his wallet. The amount of money was from five to thirty dollars. His face was glowing with quiet confidence, although he said, “I felt embarrassed to let you know about this tiny donation.”

⁴⁰ Throughout his college application process, Mr. Lee continued to hold what he knew in his heart: “Just do your best with what you are facing NOW.” Mr. Kim’s hope is in what he can do to be a “better” Christian. He said, “I wish I could go to seminary because I want to learn more about God and the Bible.”

present in context. Although marginalized persons envision hope in terms of the future tense, their sense of hope is fundamentally shaped by the present experience of marginalization with regard to what they have, whom they meet, or where they live. Socio-cultural marginalization often leads people to focus exclusively on what they must achieve today to survive tomorrow. Christian faith helps marginalized persons continue to cope with their lives for an uncertain period of time.

Toward a Constructive Practical Theology of Hope for Marginalized Persons

This chapter illustrates personal accounts of experiences relevant to marginalization and hope. I observe the ways in which the interview participants present their life experience drawn from their cultural and social environments. They present a transcendental, participatory, embodied, and relational sense of Christian hope as they constantly refer to their daily surroundings and relationships with others and God. At the same time, they present their understanding of hope in terms of being bounded in the disparity of economic, social, and cultural resources.

Mr. Kim and Mr. Lee's stories suggest that we need to reframe the Church as the locus of hope for marginalized persons. The characteristics of hope clearly show the interconnection of the various individual practices of coping with daily difficulties and the ways that persons are involved with a religious community to keep hope alive. Although my focus has been primarily on the personal accounts

of two Korean immigrant Christians, it is clear that their individual practices of living in marginalization and hope contain the institutionally shared practices of hope in faith. Therefore, we need to explore ways the church could effectively carry out the mission of being faithful in and out of church life. The experience of marginalized persons provides the practical theology of hope with a critical lens of re-envisioning a call to care in the Church, understanding God who is transcendental and immanent.

Chapter 3

Hope: A History of the Concept in the 20th century

This chapter provides a historical review of hope as a philosophical and theological concept in the 20th century. Most of the significant contributions to the conceptual development of hope have been in the existential philosophy literature. Differences in understanding of hope have arisen largely in debates among various theological schools that draw upon social, political, psychological, and feminist insights on the human condition. Contemporary pastoral theologies of hope have been primarily concerned with generating implications of care in linking intrapsychic and hermeneutic views of human experience. Before proceeding to the most major developments in pastoral theologies of hope, it may be helpful to examine how the concept of hope has been explored and incorporated into the theological discourses.

I first present a critical review of existential philosophical reflections on hope based on the works of Gabriel Marcel and Ernst Bloch and identify insights that are relevant to construct a practical theology of hope for marginalized persons. Second, I review various theological perspectives on Christian hope in the works of Jürgen Moltmann, Rubem A. Alves, William Lynch, and Margaret Farley and discuss how their insights can be used in constructing a pastoral theology of hope. Finally, I conclude that, although these philosophical and theological considerations are helpful in understanding hope, I do not draw primarily upon

them, and I explain the reasons of my decision to create a constructive practical theology of hope for marginalized persons.

Philosophical Reflections on Hope in the 20th Century

Gabriel Marcel

How does human existence become subject to hope? Gabriel Marcel brings his experience as a prisoner in World War I to his understanding of the human condition. He defines the human condition in terms of captivity. We cannot rise above the human condition by just thoughts and ideas. As soon as we try to transcend the human condition, we expose ourselves to the loss of our integrity.⁴¹ Hope is transformed by the inner creative process of a person. Marcel refers to these inner workings as psychological activity – hoping. Hope is essentially defined as the “act” that especially engages to overcome despair.⁴² Hope refers to a “readiness” to act, “alertness” to act on what may come, or the act of “active and patient waiting.”⁴³

Facing the condition of being held captive or prisoner, the act of hope (hoping) relates a person with others who also participate in “many acts” of hoping. The act of hope is coupled with the “department of the *us*.”⁴⁴ A person

⁴¹ Gabriel Marcel, *Homo Viator: Introduction to a Metaphysics of Hope*, trans. Emma Crawford. (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co, 1951), 54.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 36.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 52-60.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 51.

develops hope in connection with events and relationships with others. Marcel

notes:

The truth is much rather that I am conscious that when I hope I strengthen, and when I despair, or simply doubt, I weaken or let go of, a certain bond which unites me to the matter in question. This bond shows every evidence of being religious in essence.⁴⁵

His phenomenological methodology emphasizes the action-oriented and participatory nature of hope, which reaches out to a possibility of freedom beyond yet within the human condition.⁴⁶ Communion, a bond of love, arises from hope and brings people together toward salvation. Marcel points out that wherever a fundamental relationship unites the human soul and reality, the presence of an “absolute Thou” is required to secure hope.

An “absolute Thou” would be a transcendent reality of “infinite plenitude” and yet a person intimately related to us.⁴⁷ An “absolute Thou” can answer the question “What am I worth?” beyond the limits of our experience. An “absolute Thou” would know and love us profoundly because it would never be external to us but deep within us. Relationship with such a being would be one of fundamentally existential participation, “participation in a reality which overflows and envelops” us.⁴⁸ Marcel’s reflection on interpersonal communion and its

⁴⁵ Ibid., 48.

⁴⁶ Paul W. Pruyser, “Hope and Despair,” in *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, ed. Rodney J. Hunter et al., (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 532-533.

⁴⁷ Gabriel Marcel, *Creative Fidelity*, trans. R. Rosthal (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 37.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 144.

relation to hope enables him to envision philosophically how God can be present to a person in hoping as a life-giving force.

Ernst Bloch

In *The Principle of Hope*, Ernst Bloch presents his vision of hope, influenced by Marxism, German Idealism, Jewish mysticism, utopianism, and other theoretical and rhetorical resources. Bloch proposes the concept of hope as the “utopian function” in an “anticipating way, existing materials into future possibilities of being, different and better.”⁴⁹ Utopia is an essential mode of human being whose capacities include imagination. Imagination, understood as the “utopian function,” is “fully attuned to real possibilities” and sustains human action, will, and power – the labor process.⁵⁰ Imagination can continue to carry the “existing facts” toward the praxis of “helping the world, this can be found.”⁵¹ Hope and action are the conditions of praxis moving through the process of “becoming” – the discovery of the fullness of humanity.⁵²

Human nature is identified with being open, incomplete, and unfinished.

Humans, understood as the “unfinished” in history, are called to take

⁴⁹ Ernst Bloch, *The Principles of Hope*, trans. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice, and Paul Knight, Vol. 1. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), 144.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 144-145.

⁵¹ Ernst Bloch, *The Principles of Hope*, Vol. 3, Hope emerges from human capacity for imagination. The “anticipatory consciousness” aims at improving the world. The “not-yet-conscious” is followed after the “anticipatory conscious.” Humans now look to the ways of relating the present with the future, essentially open and undecided. Hope refers to the “as-yet-unrealized” which awaits collective participation of persons in history.

⁵² Ernst Bloch, *The Principles of Hope*, Vol. 1. 219.

responsibility to overcome alienation and push against oppression and injustice. Bloch adequately points out the coercive nature of alienation in the human condition, and he also calls for collaboration and participation of persons and communities to overcome alienation. Hope and action are essential to be in tune with the process of becoming human.

Hope, the essence of human existence, is a striving, hunger, or “cosmic impulse” moving toward utopia. Bloch takes into account the centrality of human will and labor in the present experience of human lives. Ernst Bloch’s significant insight for a theological understanding of hope is that the imagination is stimulated to explore a new range of creative opportunity for change. Anyone who is aware of the utopia function of hope cannot be defeated or content with what is available or already established in the present. Human existence is deeply embedded in the ever-changing world, moving toward the vision of a better future.

The Contributions of Philosophical Reflections on Hope to a Constructive Practical Theology of Hope for Marginalized Persons

Gabriel Marcel and Ernst Bloch are correct to note that hope can be found in shared experiences with others. They emphasize the power of imagination in order to acknowledge the anticipatory quality of hope. Hope is not just a sum of ideas but fundamentally relational and participatory acts of people. Bloch recognizes the contextually grounded concept of hope from his view of socially structured threats to hope whereas Marcel tends to highlight a relational quality and possibility of persons in communion. To consider the basis of hope, Marcel

identifies God with the ground of hope. In contrast, Bloch situates hope in a Marxian understanding of atheism; although he also notes a possibility of self-transcendence by the imaginative character of hope pointing to and beyond human labor.

The philosophical view of hope that Marcel and Bloch propose together is relevant to develop a constructive practical theology of hope for marginalized people for two reasons. First, they both emphasize the significance of social and historical dimensions of hope. All hopeful experiences are not narrowly defined in terms of interpersonal relationships. Hope contextually grounded in collaboration. Second, they both conceptualize the experiential nature of hope as deeply embedded in human existence. Hope and action are essential to reclaim human dignity in society.

It should be noted that neither Marcel nor Bloch critically examines his cultural and social heritage and location or the ideological validity of human progress and evolution. For Bloch the Enlightenment ideal of progress is critical to define the process of hope. At the same time both Marcel and Bloch propose useful insights that are relevant to a constructive practical theology of hope in relation to the experiential, embodied, and participatory nature of Christian hope for marginalized people to experience empowerment and transformation. This stands in contrast to the work of Donald Capps and Andrew Lester, where the call for communal actions for hope remains subdued because their view of hope tends to be individualistic with emphasis on an individual's capacity and willingness to change.

Theological Reflections on Hope in the 20th Century

Time and history reflect the interrelated but uniquely distinctive qualities of God – transcendence and immanence. Theological reflections on God in the world have been focused on reconciling the transcendence and immanence of God with emphasis on adversity and tragedy against humanity. This twofold approach to the nature of God supports Christian theologies of hope in the 20th century. Many contemporary theologies of Christian hope have focused on eschatology because faith is “eschatologically motivated and future-oriented.”⁵³ Christian theologies of hope establish the presence of God in the social, political, cultural, and historical processes of human life because the sheer force of evil prevails against the most vulnerable and innocent despite the triumph of technological progress throughout the 20th century.

Jürgen Moltmann argues that humans come to understand their nature by drawing on the future dimension of time consciousness. Human history is “open to the future, open for new, promised possibilities of being.”⁵⁴ Human beings are “always on the way” toward the future. A rediscovery of the importance of future-oriented consciousness characterizes the ways Moltmann envisions hope as a reorientation towards the future as his view of hope is influenced by the work of Ernst Bloch. Christian faith is grounded in the human capacity for envisioning the

⁵³ Walter Capps, “Mapping the Hope Movement” in *The Future of Hope* ed. Walter H. Capps (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 12.

⁵⁴ Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1975), 286.

future coming of God. Human consciousness of the future in God is the ground of Christian hope.

Hope is viewed in the light of Christian eschatology and the memory of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ – the “Crucified God.”⁵⁵ Moltmann identifies hope with the core of Christian faith grounded in his use of the term, the “Crucified God.” Jesus Christ, the “Crucified God,” reveals the “Lordship” of God. When history appears to be ended by sin and death, God has already revealed the possibilities and dangers of history in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Trusting in God’s promise, humans of faith do not escape from the reality of suffering. Hope brings love to the world. By “bodily obedience” in the world, humans experience the present as the future of God.⁵⁶

Rubem A. Alves situates hope in historical experiences of alienation. Christian hope aims at human liberation based on political humanism.⁵⁷ By criticizing the “dehistoricized” theological discourse, Alves challenges contemporary theologies of Christian hope because of its lack of historical consideration of alienation and oppression. He argues that without a critical lens to view Western engagement in the world, Christian theology of hope often obscures a contextual dimension of suffering. Theology of hope must take seriously the oppressive reality of socioeconomic and political conditions needing

⁵⁵ Ibid., 133-138.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 224-229.

⁵⁷ Rubem A. Alves, *A Theology of Human Hope* (New York: Corpus Books 1969), 24-34.

human liberation. The major task of theologies of Christian hope is to provide a framework for participating in the praxis of human liberation.

Linking the theology of liberation to pastoral care, Alves notes that a pastor finds himself in the midst of the sociopolitical realities that permeate the relation between the institutional setting of pastoral care and the oppressive social system.⁵⁸ The institutional setting of pastoral care and needs of people are largely determined by the social, economic, and political location of the congregation. Insofar as pastoral care is equated with the pastor's practice to mediate grace, to provide interpretation, and to offer moral guidance, the pastor must acknowledge the interplay of power, privilege, and the status quo in the institutional setting of pastoral care. The pastor cannot uncritically accept the institutional setting of pastoral care. The pastor must examine the sociopolitical context of pastoral care. If the pastor is only concerned about one's inner life, the meaning of life is narrowly defined and reinforced by the means of "emotional and interpretative manipulation of one's subjectivity."⁵⁹

Alves distinguishes oppression by choice from imposed oppression. In the first case, people experience suffering because of their voluntary involvement in the struggle for gaining status and power. In the second case, people experience suffering from poverty and exploitation because they cannot secure the means of taking care of basic daily needs. If pastoral care fails to address the sociopolitical

⁵⁸ Rubem Alves, "Pastoral Wholeness and Political Creativity: The Theology of Liberation and Pastoral Care," *Pastoral Psychology* 26, no. 2 (Winter 1977): 124-136.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 133.

roots of suffering, it remains irrelevant to people who experience pain and suffering in severe forms of adversity.

From the perspective of liberation theology, pain and suffering “cannot and should not be healed” by means of any sort of emotional or interpretative manipulation of one’s subjective life. Alves critically argues that the practice of pastoral care must be politically understood to yield the “communal creative activity” of congregations that aims at the transfiguration of the world toward justice.⁶⁰ If pastoral care nurtures people to participate in a community of faith that struggles and suffers together to bring changes, pastoral care can be a vehicle of creating personal wholeness and political creativity in the world.

Despite ongoing struggles and challenges in reality, the experience of hope is not solely confined to conflict and contradiction. For William F. Lynch, hope depends on the ways humans imagine the future. Through imagination, people gain new insights that there is “a way out of difficulty that things can work out.”⁶¹ It does not mean that people can escape from their current situation but that they can respond to it differently with new awareness of possibilities.

Lynch presents an organic view of reality composed by independence and dependence.⁶² The rhythm of interdependence and dependence creates life as a whole. Lynch notes the imaginative and relational nature of hope as he

⁶⁰ Ibid., 136.

⁶¹ William F. Lynch, *Images of Hope: Imagination as Healer of the Hopeless* (Baltimore, MD: Helicon Press, 1965), 24.

⁶² William F. Lynch, *Images of Faith: An Exploration of the Ironic Imagination* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1973), 229-25.

emphasizes human agency and the freedom to choose hope. Thinking and imagining do not come from isolated intelligence but from “many acts of trust and faith.” The present gives us available time and space to let “increasingly public acts of thought and imagination freely arise from personal and social relationships.

Stressing the significance of relationality to be human, Margaret A. Farley considers the feminist critique of theologies of hope and proposes a feminist reconstruction of Christian hope.⁶³ For a feminist theory of Christian hope, the experiences of women and their social location are reexamined to be a basis of hope for women. Farley notes that traditional Christian theologies of hope are inadequate and “even harmful,” to women because it has obscured the pressing issues of gender-based discrimination, human responsibility, and ecological concerns.⁶⁴ If Christian theologies of hope do not demand the moral discernment to resist the causes of suffering and oppression against women and the most vulnerable in society, the feminist view of hope argues that belief in hope must yield the moral imperatives that can confront the suffering of women and the powerless.

Farley proposes three steps of living in Christian hope. First, the ground of Christian hope is the promise and action of God toward us. Although hope is found in our unseen future guided by God, hope is “not always and only of things

⁶³ Margaret Farley, “Feminism and Hope,” in *Full of Hope: Critical Social Perspective on Theology*, ed. Magdala Thomson (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2003), 20-40. Feminism refers to a theoretical framework and movement that challenges discriminatory structures and practices on the basis of gender in society.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 25. Farley notes that traditional Christian understandings of hope tend to romanticize suffering and death as a “holy way to reach a world beyond.”

completely unseen” because as humans we *experience* hope in a sense of continuity based on the love of God.⁶⁵ Second, the promise and action of God turn us to this present world not only to another world. Farley emphasizes a sense of continuity between what humans experience and what humans may fulfill in the future. Finally, in hope, a profound continuity exists between this present world and a “world beyond.”⁶⁶ We must stand together in solidarity to direct our actions and possibilities in the light of the promise and presence of God. What we do now and what we experience are constitutive of what will be.

Moltmann and Alves share a dialectical approach to reality constricted by contradiction and conflict. However, their different view of suffering results in a substantial divergence in the interplay between God and suffering. For Moltmann, suffering and death are inevitable; however, trusting in the promise of God, suffering becomes an act of love. In contrast, Alves does separate suffering from God and links it to the inherently ambiguous and destructive nature of society. Suffering does not lead up to the acts of love because God does not cause suffering -- socio-economically oppressive systems in society cause suffering. Their different understandings of suffering and its relevancy to hope appear to reflect a distinctively unique synthesis of lived experiences coming from multiple contexts.

Both Alves and Lynch emphasize imagination, although they seek the different kinds of actions to experience hope. Besides Alves and Lynch,

⁶⁵ Ibid., 34.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 37.

Moltmann primarily draws on the biblical tradition of Christian faith rather than human capacity for imagination. In considering the importance of relationship, Lynch and Farley argue that human beings are fundamentally relational beings. Farley proposes a constructive feminist theology of Christian hope from her critiques of “gendered” reality; whereas, Lynch appears to assume a generalized and value-neutral worldview, which does not explicitly show concern about gender and race issues.

The Contributions of Theological Reflections on Hope to a Constructive Practical Theology of Hope for Marginalized Persons

Moltmann and Alves emphasize the social and political dimensions of hope and present hope as a seed of liberation and emancipation. Humans are constantly pulled between the promise of God and the existential reality of sin and death. Hope undergirds humans faithfully to choose living in the contradictions between the present and the “radical newness” of the future. They provide the necessity of expanding social and political aspects of hope in society; whereas, Donald Capps and Andrew Lester focus on the interpersonal or individual situations of being hopeless.

For a contextually grounded understanding of hope for marginalized persons, existential anguish not only emerges from the intrapsychically unresolved issues from early childhood but also from the current social and political situations that determine the types of human suffering. The emancipatory and transformative qualities of Christian hope need to be emphasized in practices

of care with the socially alienated and disadvantaged persons. Although future consciousness is essential to experience hope, the ground of hope exists here and now.

In contrast to the dialectical approaches to reality of Moltmann and Alves, William F. Lynch and Margaret A. Farley propose a more relational framework of hope with special attention to the present. Lynch emphasizes the connection between hope and imagination. Both Donald Capps and Andrew Lester use the power of imagination to evoke the experience of hope. Future consciousness is essential for people to experience hope in the midst of crises rather than finding possible solutions of the present.

For a contextually grounded understanding of hope for marginalized persons, the relational quality of hope needs to be emphasized because marginalized persons are usually exposed to the danger of being invisible and voiceless. Farley suggests that Christian hope transforms human hope by grounding human hope in the present responsibilities and commitments in the world. To hope is to experience life-affirming change and support here and now for people who are concerned about grocery bills, transportation, or children's education for a better future.

Chapter 4

Intrapsychic and Hermeneutical Approaches to Hope in Contemporary Pastoral Theology

Introduction

Contemporary pastoral theologians have proposed hope in a variety of ways, composed of transcendental and immanent qualities of hope. Hope is understood as “reality-oriented” thought, eschatological “attitude,” our “felt sense of God who is within us,” “projecting oneself into the future,” “imagining the mystery of open-ended future and not yet,” “envisioning the realizable,” investing in sources that transcend the human condition, perceptions “fueled by desire,” “self-projection,” a response to felt deprivation, a solitary act, a “creative illusion” or the unexplainable.⁶⁷ Indeed, hope refers to a “primal mode of existence for the person of faith” based on trust in the promise of God.⁶⁸

Pastoral theologians are correct to point to the intrapsychic and imaginative qualities of hope and the inner and private spheres of human life, implying both the transcendental and immanent nature of God in the world. The concept of hope pertaining to practices of care for the marginalized, however, is still inadequate to engage in contexts of lived marginalization. Only critical and

⁶⁷ I here present the definitions of hope by: *Donald Capps, Agents of Hope: A Pastoral Psychology*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995); *Andrew Lester, Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995); Paul Pruyser, “Phenomenology and Dynamics of Hoping,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 3 (1963): 86-96; Paul Pruyser, “Maintaining Hope in Adversity,” *Pastoral Psychology* 35 (1986): 120-131; Paul Pruyser, “Hope and Despair,” in *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, eds. Rodney J. Hunter and others (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990): 532-533.

⁶⁸ Robert L. Carrigan, “Where Has Hope Gone? Toward an Understanding of Hope in pastoral Care.” *Pastoral Psychology* 25, no. 1(1976): 42-43.

contextual reappraisals of Christian hope can develop the strategies of care to enable socially disadvantaged people to enliven hope. I use relevant literature on hope in pastoral care proposed by Donald Capps and Andrew Lester to examine the intrapsychic and hermeneutic approach to hope and practices of care.

It should be noted that both Capps and Lester tend to focus on the necessity and importance of hope to cope with difficult life events, without acknowledging social, cultural, and economic aspects of life events. A question arises in pursuing further exploration of a constructive practical theology of hope for marginalized persons. How is this pastoral theology of hope that Capps and Lester propose relevant to the issues of human beings in context?

Donald Capps

In *Agents of Hope: A Pastoral Psychology*, Capps argues that hope is inherent in the language, uniquely elaborated by pastors who put to use a Christian understanding of the self. His perspective on hope is grounded in pastoral psychology. Pastors are the “agents of hope” who introduce and bring up hope at work. Exploring the necessity and experience of hope, Capps presents a valuable example of the discipline of pastoral psychology, linking Eriksonian and object-relations approaches to human development and exploring the threats and allies of Christian hope.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ His conversation partners include clinical psychologists such as Paul W. Pruyser, W. Clifford W. Scott, Frederick Towns Melges, Bert Kaplan, Gershen Kaufman, Ben Furman and Tapani Ahola as well as object-relations theorist such as Heinz Kohut and D. W. Winnicott. His

Capps emphasizes the psychological and spiritual aspects of hope and the roles of pastors to evoke hope in the lives of people. Three major threats to hope are despair, apathy, and shame. The allies of hope are trust, patience, and modesty. Methods of care focus on changing the perception of time by using psychotherapeutic techniques of reframing of meaning. I first discuss theoretical orientations of Capps' pastoral psychology in psychoanalytic traditions and Eriksonian theory of human development. Second, I focus on Capps' intrapsychic inquiry into the concepts of wishing, hoping, and practices of care.

Theoretical Orientations

Pastoral Psychology in the Psychoanalytic Tradition

In search of expanded meanings of pastoral ministry, Capps calls for a pastoral psychological approach to hope and its significance in ministry. The expertise of pastoral ministry primarily refers to unique and fundamental tasks of pastors who guide people to create and sustain meanings and values when in danger of losing hope. The ministry of pastors is fundamentally grounded in hopefulness. Capps combines pastoral ministry and the insights of psychoanalytic ego psychology and object-relations theory about human beliefs and behaviors.

The psychoanalytic orientation of his pastoral psychology in search of hope is clear as Capps applies one of the fundamental assumptions in the psychoanalytic tradition to the nature of hope. The primary focus is on the

view of hope as basic human strength or virtue is grounded in Erik H. Erikson's insights that basic human strengths or virtues sustain the consecutive process of human development.

developmental consequences of a person's early relationships with significant others.⁷⁰ Yet, by moving a traditional psychoanalytic emphasis on human development from the instinctual to the psychosocial dimension of human experience, Capps re-channels the clinical psychology of Paul W. Pruyser.⁷¹

Capps discusses the disclosive features of pastoral actions and conversations in terms of "what may be happening." These disclosive features of pastoral actions affirm the role of pastors as agents of hope who have the specialized capacity for using spiritual discernment to create new meanings of hope. By utilizing the insights of psychoanalytic pastoral psychology, Capps argues that pastors can more effectively identify threats to hope and support allies of hope. The formation of a hopeful attitude toward life can be found in the infancy and early childhood experience with significant others. Capps draws upon Erik H. Erikson's theory of human development to clarify the basis of hope.

Erik H. Erikson's Theory of Human Development

Erik H. Erickson suggests that human capacity to hope emerges during infancy and out of the antithesis of basic trust versus basic mistrust in his epigenetic theory of human development.⁷² The term "epigenetic" is drawn from

⁷⁰ His psychoanalytic orientation emphasizes the psychological dimensions of how the past experience affects the overall process of human development, beliefs and behaviors of the present.

⁷¹ Donald Capps, *Agents of Hope: A Pastoral Psychology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 3. In *The Minister as Diagnostician*, Pruyser advocates that ministers must reclaim the power of religious and pastoral dimension of theological language. He also emphasizes the ministers' use of theological themes in "diagnosing" patients' problems.

biology and means that the structure of an organism and its sequence of development are inherently laid down in that organism's genetic code.⁷³ Erikson refines the traditional psychoanalytic perspective on human development with emphasis not only on the genetic and instinctual but also the psychosocial basis for human development. The process of human development is governed not only by biologically designated potentials but also by environmental variables.

Erikson emphasizes the importance of the "coherent being" as *verifier* of hope and the unique role of the caregiver as the initial experience of hope. Through her early experiences of feeding environments, an infant first learns to trust or mistrust. Early experience of life is significant for the infant to develop the psychological and spiritual foundation for hope. A relationship of trust is developed through the interactions between the infant and the caregiver. Relationships continue to play a major role in further development and resilience of hopefulness and a coherent sense of self.

In terms of psychoanalytic ego psychology, hope is the foundation of all other ego strengths: will, purpose, competence, fidelity, love, care, and wisdom. Developmentally speaking, hope is the most important because the emergence of every other strength depends on it. Hope continues to influence the process of human development. The initial strength of hope is gradually replaced by a "more advanced" set of hopes as a person grows up and matures.⁷⁴

⁷² Erik H. Erikson, *Life Cycle Completed* (New York: Norton, 1982), 19.

⁷³ Christopher F. Monte, *Beneath the Mask: An Introduction to Theories of Personality*, 6th ed. (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Bruce College Publisher, 1999), 378.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 117.

Echoing Erikson's proposition, Capps refers hope to the "earliest and the most indispensable virtue inherent in the state of being alive."⁷⁵ Hopefulness is the basic strength or virtue of human beings. These inner strengths or virtues help us grasp the immediate future and get involved in meaningful commitments for ourselves and others.⁷⁶ Hope is essential for the life of the inner spirit because hope can energize, redirect, or restore human desires for the fullness of life. Hope is the human strength that has central importance of the life of the inner spirit.

Intrapsychical Inquiry into Hope and Practices of Care

Wishing vs. Hoping

Hoping and hope are integrative forces of human beliefs and behaviors. Capps draws upon and compares the concepts of hoping and wishing, intrapsychic phenomena in the mind, based on the works of W. Clifford M. Scott, Paul Pruyser, and Donald W. Winnicott. An object-relations perspective on human needs emphasizes requiring gratification and mastering the skills of adjustment influence the concepts of wishing and hoping.

In regard to an infant's experience shifting from wishing to hoping, W. Clifford M. Scott presents the consecutive process of psychological and

⁷⁵ Erik H. Erikson, "Human Strength and the Cycle of Generations," in *Insight and Responsibility* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1964), 115.

⁷⁶ Donald Capps, *Agents of Hope: A Pastoral Psychology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 113.

physiological phenomena in the absence of a “gratifying object.”⁷⁷ Waiting, anticipation, and pining indicate various phases of wishing. Waiting represents the initial state of diffused aggression and physiological restlessness. When waiting is prolonged over time, anticipation occurs in a form of a stronger psychological projection with mixed physiological and psychological sensations. Anticipation aims at holding an intrapsychic image of the desired and absent object. The next phase of pining focuses more on remembering the desired and absent object.⁷⁸ Waiting, anticipation, and pining constitute the state of wishing which is not grounded in reality.

Hoping, the next developmental sequence and accomplishment of an infant, emerges after waiting, anticipation, and pining come and go. Hoping is guided by a sense of intuitive “knowing,” which replaces intrapsychic and physiological sensations with subjectively acknowledged reality. Capps agrees with Scott who considers that hoping takes the *intrapsychically constructed reality* of the situation into account. Unlike wishing, hoping is based on this reality -- internal constructions of the presence of a gratifying object and a constellation of various beliefs of subjectively grasped certainty.⁷⁹ Hope is based on this reality of a person’s subjectively felt conviction. The desired and absent one will certainly come back and become the gratifying object.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 34-36.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 35.

⁷⁹ Italics are added by the author.

To emphasize the role of imagination in hoping, Capps uses the work of Paul Pruyser who makes a clearer distinction between wishing and hoping than Scott does with regard to the “controlled use” of imagination.⁸⁰ Imagination gives forth subjectively felt conviction and sustains hoping regardless of external environments. This subjectively felt conviction characterizes “the eschatological attitude and the essence of hoping.”⁸¹ Both Capps and Pruyser argue that hope is based on intrapsychically constructed reality, drawn from the earlier experiences of life.

Images of hope concern the transitional experiences of life. Pruyser relates the concept of “transitional objects” to hoping, echoing D. W. Winnicott’s concept of religion as a transitional phenomenon. Winnicott suggests that religion creates a similar intermediate experience of being in relationship and serves the function of bridging the internal and external objects. The transitional object, a term Winnicott invented for the blanket or stuffed animal that a child uses to comfort herself, helps the child keep relationally consistent contact with the world.⁸² Images of hope are transitional and supported by a caring environment that a devoted caregiver provides.

Capps concludes that images of hope become known, moving beyond the initial infant-caring person relationship as a child gradually comes to understand the reality of internal and external objects. Capps links the origins of hope and the

⁸⁰ Ibid., 38.

⁸¹ Ibid., 38.

⁸² Ibid., 40 - 41. Yet, Pruyser does not claim that transitional objects are interchangeable with Christian symbols of hope.

capacity to be alone and the need to move toward separateness, which is one of developmental accomplishments. As the child grows and learns a variety of different expressions of hope, hope is no longer limited to the presence of the caring person. The child's whole environment becomes a "venue" for hope.⁸³

Hoping and Hopes⁸⁴

Capps points out that the phenomenon of hope needs to be distinguished between hoping and hope. Hoping is a particular kind of what we perceive with a specific pattern of investment and focus of self. Hoping is primarily "a solitary act of perceiving oneself and the world based on intuitively known certainty."⁸⁵

Hoping is particular perception with a specific focus of self. Hoping entails the capacity of self to identify the desired object.

Considering this force of human desire, Capps discusses hope. Hope is more than identifying the desired object. Hope is about projection and implies a different view of the future. We invest ourselves to make real specific projections, even putting ourselves on the "verge of failure."⁸⁶ When we hope, we not only passively wait for the moment the desired object of hope will come to us, but we

⁸³ Ibid., 47 - 49.

⁸⁴ Capps uses "hope" and "hopes" synonymously, in distinction from "hoping."

⁸⁵ Ibid., 54 - 55. Capps notes that when we are challenged to prove the ground of hope, we cannot adequately defend it on "objective grounds" because our intuitive knowing is "unexplainable." Hoping is based on intrapsychically structured intuition in purely objective terms.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 75.

also work with available resources to make it happen.⁸⁷ The capacity to hope expresses our willingness to take risks.

Capps assumes that hope is based on intrapsychically conceived reality and inner conviction in the mind of people. At the same time, hope also entails a cultural and developmental processing of illusion. Hopes are illusory and self-involving projections. Hopes are not based on calculations of what is possible on the basis of prior or current experiences. Hopes evolve and envision realizable and desired objects.⁸⁸ These objects give us a necessary focus on anticipated outcomes.⁸⁹ Hopes help us move toward the projected images which are “almost within reach.”⁹⁰ In projecting desirable and realizable images of hopes, we may challenge known or presumed facts of life, based on the current state of affairs. As self-involved projectors of hope, we are becoming the agents of hope.

Threats to Hope: Despair, Apathy, and Shame

Identifying that despair, apathy, and shame are life-attitudes that become the threats of hope, Capps highlights how these chronic life-attitudes can undermine hope and distort the perception of time.⁹¹ He draws upon psychological implications of the perception of time. The despairing self, the

⁸⁷ Ibid., 60.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 52 - 68.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 64.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 66.

⁹¹ Donald Capps, *Agents of Hope: A Pastoral Psychology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 137.

apathetic self, and the shameful self all have problems projecting themselves into the future. People feel trapped either in the past or in the present. However, despair, apathy, and shame are not evil because these life-attitudes do “save” us from a life of “causal optimism.”⁹²

First, despair indicates the “closing” of the future.⁹³ Once despair sets in, it forecloses further consideration of alternative plans of action. Capps uses the work of Frederick Towne Melges who applies his understanding of time to a variety of emotional dysfunctions. Melges explains that one cause of depressive hopelessness is a very narrowly defined time perception.⁹⁴ When such downward spirals of hopelessness prevail, therapeutic work includes helping people adapt and re-focus on realizable goals in the near future rather than the distant future. People need to do “unfreezing the future” by restructuring goals and actions.⁹⁵

When such downward spirals of hopelessness prevail, therapeutic works include helping people adapt and re-focus on realizable goals in the near future rather than the distant future. People need to do “unfreezing the future” by restructuring goals and actions.⁹⁶ Pastors may help those who are hopeless by encouraging a sense of humor, helping them focus on the near future with realizable goals, and developing a wider range of supportive relationships.

⁹² Ibid., 100.

⁹³ Ibid., 101.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 104-105.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 104.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 104.

Second, apathy refers to the state of desirelessness whereas hope is prompted and sustained by desire. Apathy usually results from the fact that the future is already determined.⁹⁷ The concept of apathy originated from the writings of the Christian desert fathers of the fourth century, describing a state of acedia - physical and psychological fatigue. Acedia is attributable to the conditions of withdrawal and fasting. To counter apathy, pastors can focus on strengthening the inner spirit of troubled persons. Pastors can re-energize and redirect “inner sufferings” of these individuals in moving toward the cultivation of inner strengths.⁹⁸

Finally, shame occurs with misguided and failed hopes. Shame overwhelms people when they realize they have indulged self-illusion or self-misunderstanding.⁹⁹ Capps uses the work of Gershen Kaufman who suggests that people need to summon self-affirmation to counter shame. Self-affirmation comes from actively embracing all of the disparate aspects of one’s being. Capps relates the methods of care for the shameful self to the restorative aspect of ministry. The shameful self can be restored through confession. Pastors become the agents of hope as they engage in the role of confessor and assist the “distancing” process moving from the shameful self to the fully vital and living self.¹⁰⁰ The threats of

⁹⁷ Ibid., 135.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 117.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 124.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 134.

hope reflect the failure of inadequate life-attitudes. A person loses her capacity to hope if she can project the images of desirable and realizable objects.

Allies of Hope: Trust, Patience, and Modesty

Capps identifies trust, patience, and modesty as three allies of hope.¹⁰¹

First, trust provides the necessary psychological foundation of hope. Trust is a “firm conviction” and “deep, abiding belief in the trustworthiness” of the other or institution.¹⁰² Trust presumes the reliability of another human being *regardless* of what this person will do in the next moment. Capps implies the example of William James whose fear of self-disintegration helped him to examine the significance of entrusting oneself to God, supported by biblical assurances and scripture verses.¹⁰³

Second, patience helps us sustain hope. Patience is concerned with steadiness, endurance, or perseverance in keeping hope alive.¹⁰⁴ Patience is concerned with what we proactively keep engaging in challenges and tasks. Following a psychoanalytic view of Erikson and Winnicott, Capps thinks that frustration functions as a necessary stimulus to further developmental achievements.¹⁰⁵ Patience shapes an enduring and firm life-attitude that can manage and reshape frustrations to move toward realizable hopes.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 183.

¹⁰² Ibid., 141-142.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 144.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 148.

Third, modesty gives us an opportunity to put our hopes into perspective. Modesty is the necessary life-attitude of letting go of failed hope. A modest attitude fortifies us against shame to recognize and accept our limitations. In hoping, we understand we are subject to the operations of the world. In hoping, we try to avoid the self-deception which pulls us to a fantasy world.¹⁰⁶ A modest attitude protects us against shame and humiliation. Echoing Kohut's concept of the self, Capps argues that modesty is necessary to hope because both the grandiose and the idealized selves need to be chastened and corrected by failed hopes.

Methods of Care: Hope and the Reframing of Time

In considering methods of care, Capps is primarily concerned with the pastor's role in assisting *individuals* to hope; although Capps also acknowledges the importance of a community of Christian faith where the life-attitudes of hopefulness are recognized and valued.¹⁰⁷ In fact, despair, apathy, and shame are not to be overlooked but to be accepted as unavoidable facts of life. Through the renewal of life-attitudes of a hopeless person, pastors can nurture a community of Christian faith in which all human experiences are re-considered and accepted. Pastors can represent the life-attitudes of trust, patience, and modesty in ministry.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 151.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 156.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 163. Italics are added by the author.

To install the life-attitudes of hopefulness, pastors can use the methods of reframing.

Capps draws upon the works of Ben Furman and Tapani Ahola in his inquiry into methods of care. Furman and Ahola argue that the effect of our past and present experience depends on how we perceive the future. Rather than focusing on the initial causes of given problems, Furman and Ahola suggest the methods of reframing time perception. Reframing time is an important therapeutic tool. Reframing time involves placing difficult problems within a new perceptual framework and changing pertinent meanings of a given problem. The very meaning that a given problem has fundamentally depends upon our perceptual frame of reference. Changing the frame of reference influences and alters the beliefs and behaviors of the person who is losing hope. Pastors can make important contributions to life-attitudes of hope as they help people reframe their perception of time differently, as a sense of time plays a critical role in determining the experience of hope or hopelessness.¹⁰⁸ There are two ways of reframing of time as the methods of care for people who are in despair: (1) future visioning and (2) revising the past.

First, the method of future visioning takes a future perspective on the current state of problems in enabling people to “escape” the grip of a “controlling” present.¹⁰⁹ The reframing of time grounds hope in the realm of personal autonomy and revives a person’s capacity to perceive the future

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 164-165.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 166.

differently, fueled by desire. Second, the method of revising the past takes the past and places it within a new frame of reference. Considering the past, we are prone to see our past as the source of our current problems. This life-attitude can be changed by viewing our past as a resource of life experience and wisdom that enables us to envision our problem from a different viewpoint of hope. Revising the meaning of our past transforms the past from a basis for hopelessness into a resource for hopefulness.

Capps' proposal is grounded in psychoanalytic frameworks. The most accomplished task of human development is understood as the capacity to live as an intrapsychically independent person. A mature person can live as a solitary and engaging individual through mutual relationships and hope for a better future. The threats to and allies of hope are largely based on self-referential experiences of a person. Capps emphasizes that pastors have unique roles to interpret and deliver the meaning of hope with less concern about whether people would uniformly accept and live out the interpreted meanings of hope. In general, Capps does not critically assess the individualistic tendency of his proposal of Christian hope and methods of care; desirable and realizable hopes are neither contextually considered nor acknowledged. His presentations of the threats and allies of hope do not fully explore the impact of a variety of life events and significant relationships beyond the early childhood experience.

Andrew Lester

In *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling* Andrew Lester argues that thorough attention to theological anthropology and its relation to hope is theologically and clinically constructive to advance methods of care. Lester locates his pastoral theology of hope in three major resources: (1) existential analyses of human temporality, (2) narrative theory, and (3) human brokenness with future projections. His inquiry into a pastoral theology of hope provides therapeutic implications of pastoral care and counseling to overcome despair. The concept of temporality is used to explore human capacity to be aware of time and to create meanings in accordance with the past, present, and future tenses. Time-consciousness exerts its transformative power upon the meaning-making processes and behaviors of people. The future tense in narratives underlies therapeutic potentials of Christian hope. His general thesis is that human capacity to hope is deeply related to one's perception of possibilities in the future because human beings organize meanings and behaviors according to their perceived experience of past, present, and future.

Lester conceptualizes the relation of hope and despair in terms of dichotomous and existential tensions across conflicting perspectives on the future. Pastoral caregivers and theologians can help people remember and relate their lives to the sacred narratives about the presence and actions of God in the world. Pastoral caregivers and theologians can help people find a faithful orientation of life within God. When people can assess and invest in open-ended future-oriented stories of hope, people can overcome despair.

Theoretical Orientations

The pastoral theology of hope Lester proposes has four major theoretical components: (1) time-consciousness as a basic component of the existential context of human existence, (2) future tense as a primary dimension of this temporality, (3) human capacity for developing core narratives that organize a sense of self and identity, and (4) the significance of future stories in these core narratives and the impact of future stories on hope.¹¹⁰ I first address theoretical resources in Lester's pastoral theology of hope, summarizing his use of the concept of temporality, narrative theory, and human brokenness in disrupted future stories. Second, I focus on his hermeneutical inquiry into hope, hopelessness/despair, and methods of care based on a pastoral theology of Christian hope.

Existential Analyses of Human Temporality

Lester uses the works of existential philosophers to emphasize the crucial role of time awareness. The concept of temporality presents a paradoxical nature of human existence, which is bound by, yet potentially freed by, time. Existential philosophers emphasize the effect of future possibilities on human self-consciousness. Being conscious of future time allows humans to give a coherent system of meanings to existence. Lester links the works of Søren Kierkegaard, Ernst Bloch, and Gabriel Marcel to his inquiry into the importance of temporality of human existence and its relation to a constructive pastoral theology of hope.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 56-57.

Søren Kierkegaard defines the ontological nature of human existence with three essential components: necessity, freedom, and possibility.¹¹¹ Necessity refers to already existing limitations, which make up physical, social, and psychological realities. Possibility refers to the potential for change through a perceived experience of time frames of the past, present, and future. Humans are conditioned and limited by their past, yet free to explore possibilities in the future. Freedom, one of the existential components of each human being, exists in the present, which allows us to move beyond the existing limitations of self and to explore the possibilities in the future. Humans are not bound to the realm of necessity because human capacity to exercise freedom ushers in the potential for change. Kierkegaard conceptualizes the ontological nature of human existence in terms of temporality.

Lester observes that the nature of human temporality is about the future, relating Kierkegaard to Bloch. Ernst Bloch argues that human beings are “hoppers” whose existence is grounded in anticipatory consciousness toward the future.¹¹² Anticipatory consciousness is the distinctive capacity of human beings to understand reality and the meaning of human existence. Anticipatory consciousness grasps that the nature of reality is not already determined in a current form of “being,” but is unfolding toward an open-ended future -- what

¹¹¹ Andrew Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 13-15

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 18.

Bloch calls the “not-yet-being.”¹¹³ Drawing upon the concepts of the “not-yet-being” and hope, Bloch argues that “openness toward the future” exists both in the cosmos and in human consciousness.¹¹⁴

Lester continues to weigh the role of hope, exploring the very center of human condition. The future dimension of time-consciousness is phenomenologically assessed in the works of Gabriel Marcel. For Marcel, hope is a “driving force” behind the life journey of a person. Marcel depicts human existence in the world by using the metaphor of journey.¹¹⁵ Human existence means “being on the way (en route).”¹¹⁶ From his phenomenological stance, Marcel conceptualizes that hope exists in almost every action and behavior at any given moment initiated by a person.

Both mundane hopes of everyday existence and metaphysical hopes are interwoven in “being on the way.” The capacity for these small and tangible acts of hoping (mundane hopes) implies a more profoundly existential ground of hope (metaphysical hopes) that lies beyond the human condition.¹¹⁷ Lester pays attention to Marcel’s argument that human beings have the freedom to *choose* hope against despair. This very emphasis on an ontologically innate sense of

¹¹³ Ibid., 18-19.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 19. Lester takes notice of the biblical tradition that supports the future orientation of human beings. Jürgen Moltmann also notes that Bloch’s philosophy of hope helps him conceptualize the Christian doctrine of hope. See Lester, p. 60.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 61 – 64

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 61.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 61.

freedom becomes the major component of the pastoral theology of hope that Lester explores.

Narrative Theory

Lester argues that a pastoral theology of hope must be grounded in a theological anthropology that acknowledges the significance of the core narratives of a person. These core narratives communicate particular values and characteristics of a person to imagine his or her identity. Narrative theory emphasizes that selfhood is created and developed out of core narratives of past, present, and future.¹¹⁸ Narrative theory makes an important contribution to the pastoral theology of hope, as well as philosophical and theological anthropology to explore the relation between selfhood and time-consciousness. Lester uses narrative theory to demonstrate how human beings organize the meaning of their situations and their behaviors in accordance with their sense of time at any given moment.

Narrative theory provides a comprehensive lens to understand selfhood and personal identity emerging out of past, present, and future narratives of both persons and communities. Narrative theory has many connections to social construction theory. The main argument of constructivist theory is that we understand the world referring to our perception and interpretation of what we

¹¹⁸ Core narratives reflect the central interpretive themes of a person's life. They provide her with a general framework to work on her particular experiences. Lester believes core narratives also function to generate specific meanings of the human condition a person encounters.

experience at any given time. For a constructivist perspective, our narratives of what we experience in the world create and reaffirm our worldview of reality.

Social construction theory places major emphasis on the role of language to trace the way in which human beings construct their reality by using human consciousness of time and narratives.¹¹⁹ Following Paul Ricoeur, Lester brings his use of narrative theory to the discussion of the temporal character of human experience and its relevantly meaningful narratives. Human actions and relationships take place fundamentally embedded in a time frame. Narrative theory supports the significance of the future tense in human existence, which is foundational to a pastoral theology of hope. Lester argues that our consciousness is self-transcending. It gives form to our experiences in the past and integrates them in the present experience. Self-transcending consciousness allows us to project ourselves into the future by “developing scenarios about what is to come.”¹²⁰

Social construction theory also places major emphasis on the contribution of social interaction to an individual’s construction of reality.¹²¹ From a constructivist perspective, the core narratives of an individual are “socially constructed, communicated, and legitimated” within his or her social environment.¹²² Social institutions become the living environment of a person.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 32-36.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 35.

¹²¹ Ibid., 37-38.

¹²² Ibid., 37.

Social institutions communicate meanings and values in the life of persons. A person grasps and interprets her life events through the effects of social institutions as well as her interpersonal relationships. The larger cultural context and the effects of gender, politics, and ethnic heritage exert the power of “narrative structuring” over the process of creating meanings and values within a person.

To maintain theological integrity, we must acknowledge the ways in which people engage in religious experiences through stories of faith. The sacred story in Christian heritage will be more effective and meaningful while attending to a person’s future stories within Christian faith. A theological anthropology of hope must be grounded in theoretical frameworks that acknowledge all three dimensions of core narratives of any individual: past, present, and future as well as the social and cultural narratives.

Human Brokenness in Disrupted Future Stories

Human brokenness is closely linked to problems with future projections. Bringing human brokenness and its impact on disrupted future stories together, Lester uses case stories that demonstrate the impact of dysfunctional future stories on people in need. He argues that when life events overwhelm our future story capacity, our time-consciousness makes us more vulnerable to despair in the experiences of crisis, grief, and anxiety.

Crisis is an event that “threatens a person’s existing frame of reference or worldview.”¹²³ People in crisis are overwhelmed by the disrupted core narratives that shape their future stories. These disrupted future stories become “dysfunctional” future stories that contribute to despair.¹²⁴ When grieving and mourning, people struggle with their loss of future stories. When anxious, a person primarily focuses on possible threats to her self and identity.¹²⁵ Lester pays attention to the primacy of future tense in understanding the nature of anxiety.

The degree of anxiety would be determined by our split-second interpretation of how negatively the situation could affect our future. We perceive immediately that cancer or harm to our child could significantly alter our future stories. No anxiety occurs without this capacity to project ourselves into future suffering. Anxiety is produced by the capacity of our mind and heart immediately to imagine a future story marked by negative consequences.¹²⁶

To cope with crisis, grief, or anxiety, pastoral caregivers work with a person’s future story, which is the key to emotional, physical, and spiritual health.¹²⁷ The future dimension of time-consciousness is the staging area for hope in Lester’s pastoral theology of hope. If people’s core narratives about their future fail to enable people to respond to the challenges of life events, questions must be raised about the adequacy of their core narratives. Healing can occur only if one

¹²³ Ibid., 44.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 48.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 52.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 52.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 56.

can create and sustain a new frame of reference that has hopeful future narratives. It is essential for pastoral caregivers to assess one's inability to look for hope considering the contributions of all three dimensions of time, particularly the future tense.¹²⁸

Hermeneutical Inquiry into Hope and Practices of Care

When Lester identifies the major components of a pastoral theology of hope, he argues that the future consciousness is the primary tense for hope and its opposite, despair. The future dimension of human temporality shapes the experience of hope or despair. Human capacity to hope is ontologically given from the experience of early childhood in anticipating and trusting what is to come in the future.¹²⁹ Lester emphasizes the development of trust from early childhood experience similarly to Erik Erikson and Donald Capps.

Hope, Hopelessness, and Despair

Lester identifies hope with the "configuration of cognitive and affective responses to life" that believe in the possibilities and blessings of life in the future.¹³⁰ Hope is closely related to whether a person is able to imagine; imagining the unseen and open-ended future is crucial to experience hope. Yet, this creative imagining of hope is different from unrealistic illusion because hope

¹²⁸ Ibid., 58.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 59.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 62.

offers a new view of reality in a communal and relational form. In hope, people look for specific content of hope through engagement in concrete objects, events, and life-giving relationships with others. Lester emphasizes a more relational feature of hope than Capps.

To discuss these contents of hope, Lester uses two categories of hope: finite hope and transfinite hope.¹³¹ Finite hope relates to concrete and tangible objects and needs. Finite hope motivates people to take specific actions to accomplish specific tasks at any given moment. Transfinite hope is placed in values and processes that transcend physiological senses. Lester acknowledges a hierarchical order among various types of hopes. The deepest (or highest) level of hope, transfinite hope, is constituted by the human capacity to perceive a future horizon of human existence. Transfinite hope transcends the finite hopes and their particular objects and desires.¹³² Transfinite hope can be invested and characterized in a spiritual way. The concept of transfinite hope helps us understand the interplay of the future tense of human temporality and religious experience of imagining something new beyond our experience.

When we begin to hope, we take finite hope to realize transfinite hope.¹³³ In fact, transfinite hope validates finite hope. Hope considers the potentiality that

¹³¹ Ibid., 63-65.

¹³² Ibid., 65. The foundation of hope in the Judeo-Christian tradition is rooted in the character of God. One's trusting anticipation of the future focuses on the trustworthy God. By equating God with the ground of hope, God is ultimate reality.

¹³³ Ibid., 67-68.

accompanies the future tense.¹³⁴ Lester argues that people experience despair not because of the loss or failure of finite hope but because of the possible loss of transfinite hope. When people are in despair, their sense of reality becomes distorted because hopeless people tend to refuse seeing reality from a view of “what is yet to happen.”¹³⁵

Human reality is perceived by and constructed from individuals’ intrapsychic, interpersonal, and cultural experiences. When the future dimension of human temporality is diminished, hopelessness emerges in a form of “entrapment” in the past or present dimension of temporality.¹³⁶ In Lester’s discussion of hopelessness, change symbolizes a new possibility of hope, as hopeless people are frequently afraid of change.¹³⁷ When change only leads to disillusionment with life and heightens anxiety about future agendas, despairing people cannot cope with dreadful future stories and lose capacity for creating hopeful future stories.

Lester uses the concept of despair to describe disturbances of the hoping process in which the human capacity to hope is “lost, blocked, distorted, or impaired.”¹³⁸ Despair is related to a cognitive and affective response to philosophical and spiritual problems that lead to negative perceptions about the

¹³⁴ Ibid., 89.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 91.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 90.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 91.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 72.

future. Despair seems to be more relevant to a loss of meaning and disillusionment.¹³⁹ Despair occurs when people lose their cognitive and emotional resources to create compatible future stories. Despair occurs with changes in which people's worldviews have been challenged. Lester seems less attentive to the social force of injustice and inequality and its impact on the achievements of human development.

Methods of Care

The pastoral theology of hope Lester proposes highlights that the future is the primary dimension of time-consciousness in which a person experiences problems with his or her inability to envision hopeful future stories. He argues that a pastoral theology of hope ought not be limited to focusing on and solving specific problems coming out of the current situations with which people are struggling.¹⁴⁰ Lester notes that we often overemphasize the weight of the past and present and neglect the future dimension of time-consciousness that can project something new and creative. Instead of exploring the past and present, we must explore the overarching vision of a future that people do not realize yet. Hope is relevant to a larger reality, constructed "through the dynamic social processes of dialogue and conversation."¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Ibid., 73. Lester notes that people encounter despair because their worldview stops creating meanings in life. Lester assumes that people who can identify their experience with despair have "more philosophically nuanced ability" to describe a future void of meaning. He assumes particular social class and educational attainment help people explore various aspects of despair in context.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 71.

Lester's proposed methods of care are organized by the principle of narrative structuring with assumptions that language and communication fundamentally create and operate the social system or, ultimately, reality. I discuss Lester's proposed methods of care that lay great emphasis on their hermeneutical approach to human experience: (1) methods of care as practices of narrative structuring and (2) methods of care as practices of doing theological reflection.

Pastoral Care as Practices of Narrative Structuring

Lester critically appropriates the idea of future in time-consciousness to extract the narrative-based nature of hope. Hopeful narratives help people in despair re-shape their core narratives in accordance with the idea of an open-ended future. The key feature of this method of care is to help a person change fundamental core narratives that fail to produce hopeful narratives. Lester proposes a series of consecutive implications of creating new narratives as a principle method of pastoral care.

Initial pastoral assessment focuses on specific contents of future stories people have in current situations and assesses whether future stories are functional enough to envision hopeful narratives.¹⁴² Throughout a process of pastoral conversations pastoral caregivers can use a variety of particular strategies to explore future stories, such as doing a guided imagery in a meditative posture.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 104.

¹⁴² Ibid., 103-114.

People are invited to imagine specific future issues they are concerned about and elaborate their circumstantial elements, possible plots, and images.¹⁴³ Strategies include “let’s suppose” and “as if” conversations, examining dreams, and using free association techniques to help people conceptualize and visualize their future stories.

These strategies aim at addressing the unconscious dimension of psychological resistance, confronting dysfunctional future stories and reframing and constructing hopeful future stories. Resistance is grounded in psychological repression and suppression, illuminated by psychoanalytic views of resistance.¹⁴⁴ People in despair avoid exploring their future because they have dysfunctional future stories, filled with imagined threats and failures. Pastoral caregivers must remind people that these imagined future stories are not based on reality. They are preoccupied with magical thinking, a primary thought process to cope with actual, possible, or imagined threats.

Lester distinguishes functional future stories from dysfunctional future stories.¹⁴⁵ Functional future stories help us to project ourselves into the open-ended future whereas dysfunctional stories hamper our ability to realize fully the purposes of future stories.¹⁴⁶ Pastoral caregivers can facilitate positive changes by

¹⁴³ Ibid., 110-111.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 115.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 125-127.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 144. Functional future stories refer to stories that have positive endings and inspiring themes. Dysfunctional future stories are regressive and stable containing negative endings and stuck in dead end. Mary and Kenneth Gergen identify the most essential feature of the

challenging and revising the frames of reference people have. From a hermeneutical approach to reality, calling for a new frame of reference necessitates the deconstruction of dysfunctional future stories and creates a new hopeful reality.¹⁴⁷ In other words, reconstructing reality through hopeful narratives is a way of solving problems people have in life. The practice of narrative structuring is the major task of pastoral care. We must confront and challenge despairing contextual narratives and belief systems that are embedded in the larger cultural narratives and individuals' worldviews.

Pastoral Care as Doing Theological Reflections

Lester argues that the practices of pastoral care and counseling mean a theological endeavor to explore the meaning of being hopeful in faith. However, his proposal must be distinguished from simplistic uses and implications of religious metaphors and biblical narratives through pastoral conversations. His methods of care emphasize a variety of challenges to inadequate theological assumptions and dysfunctional future stories that diminish hope and reconstructing hopeful future stories. This deconstruction process of dysfunctional future stories produces theological reflections on the nature of God in the future.

Lester's pastoral theology of hope in the practice of pastoral care envisions a God who invites and pulls us toward the "horizon of promise and

narratory principle with a sense of movement or direction through time. Narrative directionality has three modes: progressive, regressive, and stable.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 127.

fulfillment.”¹⁴⁸ To overcome despair, methods of care must attend to this theological dimension of a hopeful future. Change and growth happen through the experience of creating hopeful narratives in pastoral conversations. Lester considers the practice of facilitating hopeful narratives as doing theological reflections because it evokes a pastoral theology of hope.

Facilitating hopeful narratives includes reframing or constructing hopeful future stories.¹⁴⁹ Spiritual re-visioning of hopeful future stories integrates the future stories of a person to the sacred stories of the Christian tradition. The Christian narratives posit a hopeful future that transcends not only the present experience but also the future possibility. Linking future stories of a person to sacred stories, shared by a community of faith, can enable the person to move out of the finite hopes and move into the transfinite hopes. Connecting people’s finite hopes to transfinite hopes is possible only if people are fully engaged in the sacred story in the Christian tradition.¹⁵⁰ Facilitating hopeful narratives helps people confront the dysfunctional future stories and overcome despair by expanding their frame of reference and being connected to the sacred stories of the Christian tradition.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 138.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 144-148. Developing hopeful future stories includes storytelling, guided imagery, “as if” conversations, deleting the problem, and imagining a miracle. The method of deleting the problem refers to envisioning a future without the problem worrying the individual. The method of imagining a miracle is to ask people to discuss what their life would be like without the problem. After elaborating such imagined plots, the counselor uses the answers to guide further intervention and revise future stories.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 150.

Lester argues that every pastoral counseling session has great potential for developing theological insights, linking a person's core narratives to the sacred story in Christianity and its impact on the individual's life. From his vision of a hermeneutically oriented pastoral theology of hope, the methods of care are explicitly instrumental for generating further theological reflections. He assumes that as we try to articulate and assess our future narratives, a pastoral theology of hope is essential for the development of our capacity for articulating faith matters.

The most optimal result of pastoral conversations is to help persons re-envision their hopeful future stories. Pastoral caregivers create an interpersonally interactive and hermeneutical mode of theological reflections on hope in the future. Methods of care must explicate and evaluate religious meanings and faith matters that evolve in human relationships. Lester carefully examines the systemic nature of pastoral conversation. He assumes that normative claims of human capacity for time consciousness can be applicable to all individuals in many situations that present problems of hope. He also assumes that the major problems against hopeful future stories are grounded in psychological issues of a person with less emphasis on circumstantial elements of such psychological resistance.

Reality is a cognitively construed canopy of meanings and values. If people can change their frame of reference to acknowledge reality, people can experience hope. This way of conceptualizing and visualizing a possibility of hope are not influenced by what people experience in context. As a result, this view offers a limited acknowledgement of the context of Christian hope and its

impact on the life of people. In addition, the role of communities of faith is less explored because the significance of the work of individuals is stressed in Lester's proposal.

In the last twenty years, broader cultural, theoretical, and theological developments have emerged in understanding the methods of care utilized in the field of pastoral theology.¹⁵¹ To critically reflect this theoretical and practical shift with emphasis on context and community, I conclude my review of Christian hope in contemporary pastoral theology by focusing on the issues of context and experience in a pastoral theology of hope and practices of care.

Contextual Critiques of Pastoral Theology of Hope and Practices of Care

Donald Capps and Andrew Lester present an analysis of the intrapsychic and hermeneutical construct of Christian hope as a psychological and spiritual strength, life-attitude, time-oriented perception of God's activity in the future and the Kingdom of God. Their proposals are most notable for their emphasis on constructing and internalizing a new set of meanings and values that can influence coping strategies to overcome hopelessness. In addition, hope may be critically protective and stabilizing for people in weathering the turbulence of negative and stressful life events.

¹⁵¹ Joretta L. Marshall, "Methods in Pastoral Theology, Care, and Counseling," in *Pastoral Care and Counseling: Redefining the Paradigms*, ed. Nancy J. Ramsey (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004): 133.

Both Capps and Lester argue that hope is important in pastoral conversation because hope has specific impact on human beliefs and behaviors in relation to the future dimension of time-consciousness. This assertion pertains to whether the human capacity to be aware of time functions as a moderator between negative life events and positive outcome or interpretation of those events. Specifically, the interaction between hope and stressful life events significantly shapes people's perspectives on the future and the outcomes of life events.

Different ideas of the future accordingly shape people's behaviors when confronted with adverse life events, and vice versa. Capps and Lester agree that pastoral caregivers must help individuals examine and re-construct their beliefs and values to cope with stressful life events. Pastoral caregivers and theologians encourage people to attend to the future dimension of time-consciousness differently. Individuals have better chances to cope with their problems if they can envision and undertake hopeful life-attitudes and narratives.

It should be noted that although both Capps and Lester first assert that hope is needed in times of difficult life events, they also emphasize the necessity of hope without acknowledging circumstantial challenges. The human experience of meaninglessness generally refers to the existential abyss of human souls. Despair occurs when people lose their cognitive and emotional resources to create compatible and hopeful meanings of life. Additional questions arise in pursuing further exploration of a pastoral theology of hope: (1) how is this pastoral theology of hope that Capps and Lester propose relevant to the issues of context

and human experience? (2) To what extent is hope personal *and* social in relation to engaging in oneself, others, and communities of faith?

What Kind of Hope for Whom?

How is a pastoral theology of hope relevant to various contexts? Overall, intrapsychic and hermeneutic approaches to Christian hope support the notion that hope serves as a psychological and spiritual strength, life-attitude, or perception in people when they are confronted with adverse life events. Enhancing this kind of hope is rooted in a self-referential meaning-making process. Pastoral caregivers may work on creating and revisiting a set of values, meanings, and narratives based on a Christian understanding of hope, theological anthropology, clinical psychology, and narrative theory.

However, this understanding of Christian hope and methods of care is limited. Both Capps and Lester acknowledge that to understand the specific problems of an individual one must include the larger narrative in which the problems are immersed. This position is called to account with regard to the impacts of ethnic, gender, socioeconomic, geographic, political, and cultural influences on the experience of an individual. However, neither Capps nor Lester explicitly note the impacts of the socioeconomic status, class, and ethnicity of troubled people in reframing and proposing methods of care. In their vivid illustrations of problems that people present, the cases Capps and Lester use are not culturally and ethnically inclusive enough to address the broader social

context of hope for socio-culturally disadvantaged people on the margins of society.

In addition, when Capps and Lester use pastoral conversation cases, the authors primarily focus on the psycho-spiritual dynamics in the mind of a troubled person rather than examining the contextual elements of strains, largely assigned by institutional settings of reality. Because their view of reality is primarily drawn from intrapsychic and hermeneutical composition of reality, their proposals do not reflect divergent processes and outcomes of hopeful life-attitudes and future narratives which are influenced by socio-cultural environment. Awareness of the impact of social location is important to construct a pastoral theology of hope for marginalized persons. Therefore, some cautions should be implied in generalizing this intrapsychic and hermeneutic approach to hope and methods of care as practices of care include taking actions to counter the social force of inequality that shape the lives of people in need.

A Contextual Void in Understanding Christian Hope in Practices of Care

Considering the relation between hope and social forces of marginalization, another question arises. To what extent is hope not only a personal but also a social issue in relation to oneself and to others? I will discuss hope as a personal and social issue in critically engaging the theological anthropology Capps and Lester use. Capps and Lester present a theological anthropology that implies that the future itself is open to ever new possibilities as

long as people can reframe and re-envision their perception of reality and focus on positive possibilities.

For Capps, the creation of the hopeful self is fundamentally influenced by how we understand ourselves in the light of Christian faith and in the future. Lester argues that when people refuse to accept change regarding their dysfunctional future narratives, despair occurs due to their limited view of the future. The creation of the hopeful self begins by constructing future stories about the possibilities, coming from God's relationship with humans and with the world. At the same time, we should be aware of human brokenness that leads to the disturbance or disappearance of hope.

Capps argues that awareness of human brokenness is helpful to acknowledge the falseness of our grandiosity. While human beings cope with the inevitability of human brokenness, God opens up new possibilities to bring changes in the world. With regard to both possibilities and limitations of being human, Lester indicates that knowing one's own finitude clears space for hope. Hope does not result from some assessments or calculations of given circumstances of adversity. Engaging one's adversity is conceptualized as a temporary stage that can prepare humans to transcend or leap beyond their living circumstances toward hope. A contextual void exists in the proposed methods of Donald Capps and Andrew Lester to understand Christian hope for marginalized persons in society.

This lack of attention to the contextual features of hope limits the effectiveness of methods of care because Christian hope is not only found in

solitary world of individuals but also found in solidarity with others. A model of living in Christian hope includes active engagement and commitment to all human relationships, equality, and mutuality that may reflect God's relationship with humans in the world. With regard to the fundamental relationality in the experience of hope, it is clear that a person's hope is not only a psychological and spiritual moderator but also takes account of all the personal and communal aspects of human experience.

The Absence of a Community of Faith as the Locus of Christian Hope

Most of us experience at least a few life-changing and threatening situations during the course of our life time. Most of us are confronted with disturbing and even acute distress with illness, unemployment, or problems in our relationships with significant others. Especially, socio-culturally marginalized persons suffer more intensely and longer because of the inadequate social, financial, and cultural resources. In the last twenty years, the assumptions of non-contextual views of human experience and methods of care have been critically assessed and challenged in the face of institutionalized and global versions of human suffering.

Both Capps and Lester emphasize the unique expertise of pastoral caregivers and theologians. This approach is useful for understanding the role of the ordained minister or specialized pastoral counselor. This clerical paradigm enables pastoral caregivers to draw upon the Christian tradition and clarify the

theological orientation of the art of pastoral care.¹⁵² Interactions between a pastoral caregiver and a person in need are the locus of exploring Christian faith, supported by interdisciplinary views of human experience. However, this narrowly defined pastoral theology of hope does not encompass all the expressions of caring within the life of the Church and other human communities.

Concerned with revealing the love of God in the world, a pastoral theology of hope should address the multiple dimensions of human brokenness by including the social dimension of hope and the human condition. By doing this, hope becomes a personal *and* communal issue that calls for actions of both persons and communities of faith. The act of caring can be embodied in practices of communities of Christian faith because the life of communities of faith integrate values with actions following the vision of God's love. A pastoral theology of hope engages in all the practices of caring in and out of communities of faith. To make a pastoral theology of hope more relevant and connected in our changing society, we need to challenge the individualistic tendency of current pastoral theologies of Christian hope. Further study of Christian hope in practices of care needs to be grounded in the context and communities of faith to enliven hope moving beyond individual matters.

¹⁵² Emmanuel Y. Lartey, *Pastoral Theology in an Intercultural World* (Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 2006), 26-27. As Lartey has shown the clerical paradigm narrows the pastoral activity with emphasis on the role of caregivers. A more comprehensive pastoral theology has been explored in the works of feminist, womanist, liberationist, postmodernist and post-colonialist theologians for the last twenty years.

Chapter 5

A Life Course Perspective on Human Lives in Social Process

Introduction

These women knew that I usually stayed at home. Where could I go to avoid phone calls? No where.... When they called me, they expected me to give them a ride regardless of my situations or physical conditions. Some of them, maybe seventy percent of these elderly women, treated me badly. They did nothing to help me fill the gas tank of my car.... They had been so isolated that they thought they were still living in Korea! I guess they often felt that they were entitled to take advantage of whoever is out there to make their life a bit easier because they were so poor and lonely.¹⁵³

In his story of Korean acquaintances, Mr. Kim determined the difference between “nice” and “resentful” Korean elderly women he met in an assistant living facility in terms of various degrees of cultural awareness. He said, “Some nice ladies knew that gasoline was expensive and my car needed to be fixed. I guess they were a bit *Americanized*. They understand American culture *somehow*.” On the other hand, women he called “resentful” were “selfish” because they were “clueless” about how to live in American culture.¹⁵⁴ Mr. Kim was particularly vulnerable to the risks of marginalization due to his restricted

¹⁵³ Mr. Kim had become acquainted with some elderly women in an assistant living facility. Many women did not have their vehicles for transportation. After a long hesitation out of politeness, he described these women who were “very selfish, greedy, impatient, and deeply frustrated.” He said at length this situation to explain why he felt relieved when he moved out of the facility.

¹⁵⁴ Mr. Kim said, “I felt that especially some women, who treated me very badly, did not understand the ways people interact with one another in America.”

access to healthcare, being exposed to environmental dangers, and unmet interpersonal needs.¹⁵⁵

This chapter discusses the nature of marginalization translated into one of the examples of social stratification. Social stratification, a central focus of sociology, is defined as the presence of differential and unequal status levels associated with different positions in society. Social status can be ascribed based on one's social characteristics related to one's family of origin or achieved through attainment of social positions.

I utilize the concept of marginalization as a social process following the status attainment tradition. I use the life course perspective as a theoretical paradigm for the study of socially disadvantaged people's lives. As a research paradigm, the life course refers to a "pattern of age-graded events and social roles that is embedded in social structures and subject to historical change."¹⁵⁶ How does marginalization occur or accumulate over the life course?

I discuss the origins and consequences of marginalization, coupled with social scientific literature to examine the impact of socioeconomic status and race/ethnicity on inequality over the life course. I also discuss socially organized opportunities and constraints. To explore the impact of the lived experience of marginalized persons, I argue that institutionalized and individualized life course structures in particular may undermine life chances through cumulative

¹⁵⁵ Joanne M. Hall, "Marginalization Revisited: Critical, Postmodern, and Liberation Perspectives," *Advances in Nursing Science* 22 no. 1 (1999): 89.

¹⁵⁶ Glen, H. Elder, "Life Course," in *The Encyclopedia of Sociology*, ed. Edgar F. Borgatta and Marie L. Borgatta (New York: Macmillan, 2001), 1614-1622.

psychosocial stress or limited social capital and networking. In this chapter, I also use the story of Mr. Kim to explore the possible usefulness of life course sociology for a practical constructive theology of hope for marginalized persons.

This chapter explores four theoretical points. First, I provide a brief overview of the life course perspective and its basic concepts. Secondly, I discuss the sociological characteristics of marginalization by utilizing the concept of cumulative adversity that reflects racial/ethnic disparities and socioeconomic status. I use a life course approach to understand a general mechanism of inequality, drawing on the studies of socioeconomic status and social factors in education and health. Thirdly, I explore the issues of continuity and change over the life course with an emphasis on the effects of one's neighborhood on developmental risk and human agency in constraints and choices. Finally, I summarize emerging insights from this life course approach to the social dimension of marginalization and its relevance to a practical constructive theology of Christian hope for marginalized persons.

Mapping the Conceptual Domain of the Life Course Perspective

In the 1920s and 1930s, researchers began sociological studies of problems -- the lives of immigrants, delinquency, and various forms of social pathology. Facing rapid social and demographic changes, they tried to find a conceptual framework to grasp the impact of social changes on human lives. Their research later became a theoretical basis of advanced studies of life course

sociology. Early studies of life course focused on individual cases of social problems rather than on the processes of human development and its relation to historical changes in society, although researchers continued to collect data doing longitudinal studies.

During the 1960s, the study of life course began to overcome the limitations of conventional approaches to human development. First, researchers began to formulate concepts of development and aging across the life span, reframing a child-based and growth-oriented paradigm of human development. Secondly, researchers began to conceptualize human lives as socially organized and evolving processes over social time. Thirdly, researchers began to relate human lives to a changing society with emphasis on the “linking processes and mechanisms and the developmental effects of changing circumstances.”¹⁵⁷

Over the past four decades, sociologists have continued to grapple with questions of the interplay between human lives and changing society. In general, a life course perspective assumes that social structures and social changes are powerful organizers of people’s developmental phases from birth to death. It should be noted that a life course approach has the potential to provide useful theoretical frameworks to examine individuals’ lives in a matrix of social institutions and historical change because of its emphasis on cultural and historical context.¹⁵⁸ Such emphasis on context allows researchers to examine

¹⁵⁷ Glen H. Elder, Jr., “Life Course,” in *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, eds. Edgar F. Borgatta and Rhonda J. V. Montgomery (New York: Macmillan, 2001), 1617.

¹⁵⁸ I have chosen current sociological literature that include the working definitions and key terms of life course perspectives written by: Glen Elder, “Life Course,” in *The Encyclopedia of Sociology*, ed. Edgar F. Borgatta and Marie L. Borgatta (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1120-

multiple dimensions of human lives. Social phenomena of the reciprocal relations among individual lives, social, and historical changes are the research subjects of life course studies.

Life Course and Life Cycle

Sociologists have directed attention to the intersection of social factors and personal history and family life. They have located the understanding of human lives in historical and socioeconomic structures of a changing society. The distinctive features of life course and life cycle have occasionally raised theoretical disputes and quests for advanced conceptual precision.¹⁵⁹ The life course is defined as:

Social processes extending over the individual life span or over significant portions of it, especially [with regard to] the family cycle, educational and training histories, and employment and occupational careers. The life course is shaped by, among other things, cultural beliefs about the individual biography, institutionalized sequences of roles and positions, legal age restrictions, and the decisions of individual actors.¹⁶⁰

1130; Gunhild O. Hagestad and Bernice L. Neugarten, "Age and the Life Course," in *Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences*, 2nd ed. Robert H. Binstock and Ethel Shanas (New York: Van Nostrand and Reinhold, 1990), 35-61; Elizabeth D. Hutchison, "The Life Course Perspective: A Promising Approach for Bridging for Micro and Macro Worlds for Social Workers," *Families in Society* 86. no. 1 (2005): 143-152.

¹⁵⁹ Ronald R. Rindfuss, C. Gray Spicewood, and Rachel A. Rosenfeld, "Disorder in the Life Course: How Common and Does it Matter?" *American Sociological Review* 52 (1987), 251.

¹⁶⁰ Karl Ulich. Mayer and Nancy B. Tuma, "Life course research and event history analysis: an overview," in *Event History Analysis in Life Course Research*, edited by Karl Ulich. Mayer and N. B. Tuma (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 3.

A life course perspective is defined as a “consequence of socially defined events and roles that the individual enacts over time.”¹⁶¹ The term life course also refers to the “age-graded life patterns embedded in social institutions and subject to historical change.”¹⁶² The life course perspective is used to observe a “progression” through *socially* defined time and “socially created, socially recognized, and shared” life transitions depending upon the particular historical period.¹⁶³

Strictly defined, life cycle refers to “maturational and generational processes in natural populations” driven by mechanisms of reproduction and closely linked to aging, which time and space are unlikely to change.¹⁶⁴ Stages, maturation, and generation are three elements of a strictly defined understanding of the life cycle. Across anthropology, economics, psychology, and sociology, the concepts of the life cycle are utilized to examine the socialization and development of individuals. These concepts have helped researchers to advance theoretical frameworks that focus on timing and variations of different life events over the life course.

¹⁶¹ Janet Z. Giele and Glen H. Elder, eds. *Methods of Life Course Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1998), 32.

¹⁶² Glen H. Elder, Jr., “Life Course,” in *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, eds. Edgar F. Borgatta and Rhonda J. V. Montgomery (New York: Macmillan, 2001), 1614.

¹⁶³ Gunhild O. Hagestad and Bernice L. Neugarten, “Age and the life course,” in *Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences*, eds. Robert H. Binstock and Ethel Shanas (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1985), 35.

¹⁶⁴ Angela M. O’Rand and Margaret Krecker, “Concepts of the Life Cycle: Their History, meanings, and Uses in the Social Sciences,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 16 (1990): 258.

O’Rand and Krecker summarize these theoretical advances considering the study of individual aging, family development, and social development.¹⁶⁵ First, the life cycle perspective challenges “inevitable and predetermined sequences of forms” over life stages or family development in a changing society. Secondly, the life cycle perspective shows that development is a process that “extends beyond the life spans of individuals” through generational family processes. Thirdly, the study of the life cycle reaffirms theoretical assumptions of the historical interplay between individuals and social changes.

Regarding the outset of change, Linda K. George notes that the life-cycle perspective or other developmental models of psychology primarily focus on the individual, especially on personality, cognition, and other intrapsychic phenomena.¹⁶⁶ In these developmental approaches, change results from within the individual, and this change is universal, fixed and based on consequential stages of individual and family development.

Typically, developmental changes are linked to chronological age, which stands as an individual property and functions to represent biological maturation, psychological development, membership in larger social categories, or life stage or phase.¹⁶⁷ George argues that the life-cycle approach or other developmental models of psychology are linked with little or no reference to the social context of

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 248.

¹⁶⁶ Linda K. George, “Models of Transitions in Middle and Later Life,” *Annals of the Academy of Political and Social Science* 464 (1982): 22-37.

¹⁶⁷ Richard A. Settersten, Jr. and Karl Ulrich Mayer, “The measurement of age, age structuring, and the life course,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 23 (1997): 233-61.

the socio-historical or individual-historical context. In contrast, the life course perspective focuses on transitions when the “social persona” undergoes change.¹⁶⁸ It emphasizes the importance of time, context, process, and meaning for human development. Its emphasis on context formulates the basic concepts of the life course as transitions, trajectories, life events, and turning points.

Transitions and Trajectories

Researchers of life course studies have explored differentiated and socially recognized sequences of life transitions and trajectories. Transitions refer to changes in roles that shape the form and meaning of socio-culturally defined statuses. Trajectories refer to the duration, long-term patterns, and consequences of life transitions. These two concepts are interrelated in life course research yet differentiated by short-term or long-term stability and change over the life course.

In early studies of life transitions, researchers concentrated on continuous and causative associations between social factors and the likelihood of mental disorder.¹⁶⁹ More recent studies on life transitions have integrated role theory, social stress theory, and life course perspectives.¹⁷⁰ Considering temporal

¹⁶⁸ Donald E. Stull, “Health and the Life Course,” in *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, eds., Edgar F. Borgatta and Rhonda J. V. Montgomery (New York: Macmillan, 2001), pp. 1136-1139; Hagestad and Bernice L. Neugarten, “Age and the Life Course,” in *Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences*, 2nd ed. Robert H. Binstock and Ethel Shanas (New York: Van Norstrand and Reinhold, 1990), 35-61.

¹⁶⁹ Carol S. Aneshensel, Carolyn M. Rutter, and Peter A. Lachenbruch, “Social Structure, Stress, and Mental Health: Competing Conceptual and Analytic Models,” *American Sociological Review* 56, (April 1991): 175; Carol S. Aneshensel, “Social Stress: Theory and Research,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 18 (1992): 16 -18.

¹⁷⁰ Carol S. Aneshensel, “Social Stress: Theory and Research.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 18 (1992): 16; Linda K. George, “Sociological Perspectives on Life Transitions,”

dimensions of family transitions, the meaning of transitions depends upon when each transition occurs within a trajectory in lives.

Life transitions are composed of “exits” and “entrances” of individuals with their changing roles in society. Major life transitions simultaneously involve multiple roles and changes (e.g. leaving school, getting a full-time job, leaving one’s home of origin, getting married, or becoming a parent for the first time). Transitions within the family also show the interwoven relation between individuals’ lives and social change. Transitions are not only individual matters but also social processes because studies show that processes of entry and exit vary among changing social roles over the life course.¹⁷¹

John Hagan and Blair Wheaton show whether a person is intentionally searching for adolescent role exits. They focus on the momentum that can bring early life transitions. The effect of searching for adolescent role exits is to “unleash a momentum or force” that increases the rate of movement toward

Annual Review of Sociology 19 (1993): 356-357; Scott J. South and Kyle D. Crowder, “Neighborhood Effects on Family Formation: Concentrated Poverty and Beyond,” *American Sociological Review* 64 (February 1999): 128-130; Jane D. McLeod and Michael J. Shanahan, “Trajectories of Poverty and Children’s Mental Health,” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 37, no. 3 (September 1996): 207-220; John Mirowsky and Catherine E. Ross, “Economic Hardship Across the Life Course,” *American Sociological Review* 64, no. 4 (1999): 548-569; R. Jay Turner and Donald A. Lloyd, “Lifetime Traumas and Mental Health: The Significance of Cumulative Adversity,” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 36, no. 4 (December 1995): 360-376; R. Jay Turner and Donald A. Lloyd, “The Stress Process and the Social Distribution of Depression,” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 40, no. 4 (December 1999): 400-404.

¹⁷¹ Glen H. Elder, Jr., “Family Transitions, Cycles, and Social Change,” in *Family Transitions: Advances in Family Research*, edited by Philip A. Cowan and Mavis Hetherington (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates), 42.

adulthood.¹⁷² Adolescents who intentionally increase their search activities share unfavorable experiences in childhood as well as adolescence.

Despite their unfavorable experiences with the family in childhood and adolescence, these individuals make, in fact, early choices to renew the family unit, with themselves as parents. Their choice of early parenthood also presents an intergenerational reproduction of problems in family life. Hagan and Wheaton discuss that the nature of the momentum -- the process of making transitions that can shape later life trajectories and conclude that this momentum is a product of constraint as well as choice due to individuals' socioeconomic status and cultural environment. The pattern of the causal process is observable, affecting the timing of transitions to adulthood.

The concepts of transitions and trajectories explain the continuous yet divergent nature of human lives in multiple contexts. However, a growing body of recent disputes has challenged the consequential and deterministic features of transitions and trajectories over the life course. The conventional presuppositions of irreversibility, predictability, or timing in making transitions are emphasized. To understand how human lives and social changes are reciprocally linked, researchers have also begun to note the issues of variability over the life course.

Turning Points

A turning point is a special life event that produces a lasting shift in the life course trajectory. Life course trajectories, indeed, involve many life events

¹⁷² John Hagan and Blair Wheaton, "The Search for Adolescent Role Exits and the Transition to Adulthood," *Social Forces* 71, no. 4 (June 1993): 958.

that represent discontinuity. Turning points add twists and turns or even reversals to the life course.¹⁷³ The concept of turning point links personal history of activities to a broader social context and development. As a concept, turning point emphasizes divergent potentiality and variability of life experiences in changing societies. Turning points refer to “relatively abrupt behavioral changes” that result in long-lasting effects over the life course.¹⁷⁴

From a traditional developmental perspective, the developmental trajectory of human life is more or less continuous, proceeding from one phase to another. Turning points become obvious only as time passes as individuals introspectively account for their experiences. Michael Rutter identifies three types of life events that can serve as turning points: (1) life events that either close or open opportunities, (2) life events that make a lasting change on the person’s environment, and (3) life events that change a person’s self-concept, beliefs, or expectations.¹⁷⁵

Some life events, such as migration to a new country, have significant impact on other life trajectories because they qualify as all three types of life event turning points. However, the significance of events as turning points

¹⁷³ For discussion, see Ian H. Gotlib and Blair Wheaton, *Stress and Adversity over the Life Course: Trajectories and Turning Points* Cambridge, U.K.; Cambridge University Press, 1997.

¹⁷⁴ Christopher Uggen, “Work as a Turning Point in the Life Course of Criminals: A Duration Model of Age, Employment, and Recidivism,” *American Sociological Review* 65, no. 4 (August 2000): 529.

¹⁷⁵ Michael Rutter, “Transitions and turning points in developmental psychopathology: As applied to the age span between childhood and mid-adulthood,” *International Journal of Behavioral Development* 19, no. 3 (1996): 603-636.

depends on the ways individuals and families interpret them. A certain type of life event may be a turning point for one individual or family but not as for another one.¹⁷⁶ Less dramatic transitions may also become turning points, depending on the individual's assessment of their importance and his or her social environment.

The current research of turning points also suggests that socially organized opportunities and constraints diversify the occurrence and consequence of life transition behaviors. This variability, "transition behaviors that do not reflect a challenging or disadvantaged experience of childhood or adolescence," is significant to understand the potential for change and resilience across the life course.¹⁷⁷ These findings call for more attention to change, occurrence, and consequences of early life experiences.

Lived Experience of Marginalization in the Life Course Perspective

Socioeconomic inequality is a prominent feature that characterizes the social dimension of marginalization. First, I present the concept of cumulative advantage/disadvantage, suggesting its use as a framework within which to interpret marginalization as a social process of inequality and to examine the impact of cumulative adversity over human lives. Secondly, I review the study of social factors in educational attainment, health, and psychological well-being,

¹⁷⁶ Linda K. George, "Missing Links: The Case for a social psychology of the life course." *The Gerontologist*, 26 (1996): 248-255.

¹⁷⁷ Michael J. Shanahan, "Pathways to Adulthood in Changing Societies: Variability and Mechanisms in Life Course Perspective," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 677; Juliana M. Sobolewski and Paul R. Amato, "Economic hardship in the Family of Origin and Children's Psychological Well-Being in Adulthood," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 67 (February 2005): 141-156.

supplemented by research on socioeconomic status and human capitals. I aim at integrating the life course approach to inequality with the life experience of marginalized persons such as Mr. Kim. I revisit his story later to show a vivid illustration of marginalization in context. I intend to conceptualize a practical constructive theology of hope in terms of countering the characteristics of socio-cultural marginalization.

Marginalization as a Mechanism of Life Course Inequality

The concept of marginality has been introduced since the 1920s to describe the experience of living between two cultures or living between two levels in a hierarchy.¹⁷⁸ In 1928, Robert Park, one of the pioneering members of the Chicago school of sociology, defined marginality as a state of limbo between at least two cultural life-worlds, as he examines the cultural consequences of urbanization and industrialization. His notion of a “marginal man” represents the person who is emancipated and strives to live in and between two diverse cultural groups.¹⁷⁹ Park argues that when migration and mobility leads to fundamental changes in a person, these processes of change produce a new type of personality, a “marginal man.” The marginal man is “living and sharing intimately in the cultural life and traditions of two distinct people, never quite willing to break, even if he were permitted to do so, with his past and his traditions, and not quite

¹⁷⁸ Judy E. Boychuk Duchscher and Leanne S. Cowin, “The Experience of Marginalization in New Nursing Graduates,” *Nursing Outlook* 52, (2004): 289-96.

¹⁷⁹ Robert E. Park, “Human Migration and the Marginal Man,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 33, no. 6 (1928): 881-93.

accepted, because of racial prejudice, in the new society in which he now seeks to find a place.”¹⁸⁰

In 1935, Everett V. Stonequist expands the notion of the marginal individuals who have “double consciousness” that Du Bois has analyzed as the group of minority people try to deal with the dominant group. Marginal individuals go through a life-cycle of introduction to the two cultures, crisis, and adjustment.¹⁸¹ Stonequist argues if assimilation is successfully facilitated, the minority may be incorporated into the dominant group, or become the dominant group, and the cycle ends.

In 1992, the concept of marginality is reconstructed by Adam Weisberger to understand the pattern of responses of marginal groups to the “host culture” in order to resolve or alleviate their double and complex ambivalence. A structure of double ambivalence refers to the state of being “unable either to leave or to return to the original group” because a marginal person has taken elements of the dominant culture. The marginal person responds to this full extent of ambivalence toward his or her native culture and the “host culture” in four ways: assimilation, poise, return, and transcendence.¹⁸²

Assimilation refers to the marginal person’s absorption of the host’s cultural standards sacrificing one’s own cultural practices and beliefs. Poise refers to abiding in the ambivalence, refusing to resolve it though the person experiences

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 892.

¹⁸¹ Everett V. Stonequist, “The Problem of the Marginal Man,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 41, no. 1 (1935): 1-12.

¹⁸² Adam Weisberger, “Marginality and Its Direction,” *Sociological Forum* 7, no. 3 (1992): 229-230.

anxiety and loneliness. Return means that the marginal person may “double back” to his or her native culture after confronting the host culture, interpreting the original culture in relation to his or her exposure to the host culture.

Transcendence constitutes the attempt to overcome the opposition of the two cultures through a creative “third way” to suppose or reconcile two cultures.

These concepts of marginality, however, fail to account adequately for the context in which the implications of marginality are formulated. The key advances in recent study of marginality direct attention to the social nature of marginality through the dynamics of social structures and human lives. Therefore, the concept of marginality is re-introduced into the literature of social sciences in relation to social forces – marginalization.

Marginalization is understood as “the process through which persons are peripherized on the basis of their identities, associations, experiences, and environments.”¹⁸³ To be marginalized is to be “placed” in the margins apart from the center or mainstream and from its privilege and power. To be marginalized is to be socially “distanced” from privilege and power that enable economic, political, and cultural powers and resources. Marginalization is often based on gender, culture, language, race, sexual orientation, religion, political affiliation, socioeconomic position or class, and geographic location.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ Shasa J. Cutter, “Using Marginalization Theory to Examine Pedestrian Injury,” *Advances in Nursing Science* 28, no. 3 (2005): 280.

¹⁸⁴ Mark Daniel and G. Fletcher Linder, “Marginal People,” in *Encyclopedia of Public Health*, ed. Lester Breslow (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2002), 713.

This history of the concept of marginalization provides a critical analysis of how individuals come to have different psychosocial and socioeconomic conditions of living. Instead of viewing these disparities of resources based on individuals' capacity and resourcefulness, marginalization as a social process helps us see such disparities as a result of a larger social force differentially imposed on people according to their gender, race or social class.

Examining the problem of a general mechanism of inequality, marginalization provides a useful theoretical framework because the concept of marginalization can be used to appraise larger social force of linking social processes and human lives. Evaluating the reality of marginalization from a life course perspective, I focus on the concept of cumulative advantage to explain a general mechanism of inequality that accentuates and accelerates the experience of marginalization over the life course.

Considering disparities of resources, cumulative advantage refers to “a favorable relative position becomes a resource that produces further relative gains.”¹⁸⁵ The general agenda in cumulative advantage research is that the advantage of a dominant group over another accumulates over the life course, which refers to a persistent mechanism of growing inequality in society.¹⁸⁶ When the concept of cumulative advantage is used to explain a direct causal pattern of existing inequality, it is necessary to identify the sources of cumulative

¹⁸⁵ Thomas A. DiPrete and Gregory M. Eirich, “Cumulative Advantage as a Mechanism for Inequality: A Review of Theoretical and Empirical Developments,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 32 (2006):121.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 121-127.

advantage/disadvantage which have a continuing effect on various life course domains. Life course research of inequality focuses on processes of cumulative adversity linking early life disadvantage to increased risks in adulthood.

Life circumstances shape individuals' lives in historical contexts. Stressful life circumstances may increase more risks for poor people who have already been living on the edge of society. The dynamic of cumulative advantage/disadvantage plays a potentially important role to grasp any temporal process involved over the human lives such as family generational transitions or career trajectories. Much of the recent literature about the impact of cumulative advantage/disadvantage is used to explain a general mechanism of inequality to explain the related life course processes.

From a life course perspective, the experience of marginalization is not a personal experience but a life-long and socially organized process, powerfully shaped by the social mechanism of inequality. The processes of cumulative adversity are compounded or amplified across the life course through a series of successive life course transitions and trajectories. As a process, cumulative adversity operates as a sequentially contingent process.

Cumulative adversity connotes the "layering, intensification, or enlargement" of the spheres of hardship over the life course.¹⁸⁷ Early disadvantages in life lead and amplify later disadvantages because the mechanism of socioeconomic disparities persists concerning long-term effects of adverse

¹⁸⁷ Steven H. Zarit and Leonard I. Pearlin, "Introduction to Special Issue on Health Inequalities across the Life Course," *The Journals of Gerontology* 60B (October 2005): 5.

experience. To underscore the importance and overall effects of contextual factors in the institutional process of marginalization, I will focus on two of the life course domains: educational attainment and health.

Social Factors in Educational Attainment and Health

The discussion of social factors in educational attainment and health aims at connecting the life course perspective and the literature on social mechanisms of inequality. Education is one of the important social institutions that give individuals social status that produces subsequent health outcomes throughout the life course. Research on the social factors in education and health has increasingly sought to understand the relative importance of long-term effects of cumulative adversity based on socioeconomic status. The linkage between education and health suggests a substantive explanation of the social nature of marginalization.

I begin by examining the concept of socioeconomic status (SES) associated with educational attainment. I then focus on health disparities patterned by socioeconomic circumstances, relating the concept of socioeconomic status with racial/ethnic disparities in health. I later summarize some recent research on social stress, personal agency in choice and constraint and the issues of change and continuity from the life course perspective.

Socioeconomic status (SES) remains one of the most widely researched concepts to understand the quality of human lives across the life course. The interest in socioeconomic status is linked to historic ideas about capital that refers resources and assets. Access to financial capital (material resources), human

capital (nonmaterial resources such as education), and social capital (resources achieved through social connections) are readily applicable to individual and institutional processes that directly affect the quality of human lives.¹⁸⁸

Most social scientists agree that a combination of income and occupational status provide the most approximation of financial capital. Research also shows a link between the type of occupations and educational attainments parents have and parenting practices. These findings suggest that occupational status is also translated into some of human capital.

Income, education, and occupation are together socioeconomic status indicators. Much of the ensuing debate has wavered between socioeconomic status and its implications of education and income factors in health concerning with the persistent inequalities. Disparities of health and educational attainments arise within the institutional structures of the society. Research leaves no doubt about the importance of the economic and educational statuses in this regard.

A broad range of research indicates that race and ethnicity have been associated with residence, employment, educational attainment, and quality health care. Considering the associations between race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status, both theory and empirical findings show that socioeconomic status indicators are likely to perform differently across ethnic and cultural groups. In other words, socioeconomic status does not have the same underlying meaning in

¹⁸⁸ Robert H. Bradley and Robert F. Corwyn, "Socioeconomic Status and Child Development," *Annual Review of Psychology* 53 (2002): 372.

all racial and ethnic groups. As social factors, race and ethnicity continue to yield long-term effects of cumulative adversity among socially disadvantaged people.

Educational Attainment across the Life Course

A high level of educational attainment is linked with occupations that are more satisfying and have higher wages and autonomy.¹⁸⁹ These occupational characteristics are associated with better psychological well-being. Education also increases people's sense of personal control. If occupation and income promote a sense of psychological well-being, educational attainment is another social mechanism through which parents' resources can shape and affect children's later social and psychological functioning as children move through social systems and institutions.

Measuring the degree of openness in social mobility traditionally indicates the degree to which the attainment of social position is associated with social origin such as the family of origin. The early status attainment literature demonstrated consistent associations between parents' socioeconomic resources and offspring's educational achievement. For example, disadvantaged parents often are forced to live in neighborhoods with inadequate schools, recreational facilities, and health-care services.

¹⁸⁹ Juliana M. Sobolewski and Paul R. Amato, "Economic Hardship in the Family of Origin and Children's Psychological Well-Being in Adulthood," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 67 (February 2005): 143-144; Michael J. Shanahan, Richard A. Miech, and Glen H. Elder Jr., "Changing Pathways to Attainment in Men's Lives: Historical Patterns of School, Work, and Social Class," *Social Forces* 77, no. 1 (Sep., 1998): 231-256.

While reviewing the literature on inequality of opportunity across countries, Richard Breen and Jan O. Jonsson analyze the studies on educational attainment, focusing on two areas: (1) the link between social origins and educational attainment, and (2) the overall association between social origins and occupational destinations. Research on inequality of opportunity has been traditionally concerned with an individual's chance to educational attainment and job and the characteristics of parental socioeconomic circumstances relevant to children's attainments of educational qualification and social positions such as occupation and class.¹⁹⁰

By the beginning of the 1990s, researchers agreed that the modeling of inequality of educational attainment could not be drawn upon the traditional linear regression of years of education based on social origin. Educational system is a prominent social institution because it is the driving force behind social mobility. In most countries, education largely mediates the association between social origins and occupational attainments.¹⁹¹ Much research shows various characteristics of the family of origin such as parental socioeconomic status and education, cultural assets, social networks, and parental supervision are positively associated with educational decision making especially at younger ages.

¹⁹⁰ Richard Breen and Jan O. Jonsson, "Inequality of Opportunity in Comparative Perspective: Recent Research on Educational Attainment and Social Mobility," *Annual Review of Sociology* 31 (2005): 223-243.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 228. It implies that early selection and division of young children into different ability-related streams amplifies inequality of educational opportunity. In Germany, early selection in education is reflected in substantial inequality of attainment. Germany's position as one of the least fluid societies had been established by earlier research.

However, parental resources for children's education are fundamentally based on its context. Educational choices are organized by institutional factors in terms of varying degree of inequality of opportunity. Breen and Jonsson conclude that educational attainments among immigrants or ethnic minorities and advantages which attached to social origin are not so easily transmitted for those who move to another country, leading to weaker inheritance effects.¹⁹² Studies on contextual effects on educational attainment support the view that there are additional effects of social context on educational attainment based on resource differences primarily by race, gender, and class.

The social distribution of differential rewards and living condition studies show the ways how parental socioeconomic circumstances are positively associated with educational and labor market outcomes of children. A low level of socioeconomic resources can trigger a series of events and processes in the family of origin. Family processes mediate intergenerational effects of socioeconomic status. A lack of socioeconomic consequences, therefore, can be viewed as a risk factor for children. Consistent with a great deal of prior research, socioeconomic resources are strongly associated with children's educational attainment.

Health Inequalities across the Life Course

I [Mr. Kim] had a car accident when I was making a left turn. It was not my fault. I was hospitalized for a while. The insurance company refused to pay my hospital bills. I did not have a good health insurance and left the

¹⁹² Mr. Kim mentioned that his daughter was once selected to attend a school for gifted children. She later withdrew from the school and came back to the public school because of the difficulty of affording such educational opportunity.

hospital as soon as the doctors allowed me to go home... I faced strong smells everyday at my dry cleaning shop. I felt sick all the time. It [chemical smell] was always there.¹⁹³

Over the late 1970s and early 1980s, researchers rediscovered the existence of persisting and increasing socioeconomic as well as racial-ethnic disparities in health.¹⁹⁴ When the Americans' Changing Lives (ACL) researchers first examined the influential factors that reflect the interplay between age and health in 1986, the ACL researchers also discovered that socioeconomic factors, especially education and income, were by far the strongest determinants of the degree to which health deteriorated or was maintained with increasing age.¹⁹⁵

In 2005, House and others examine the underlying causes of the differential in the follow-up research of the ACL from 1986. Major socioeconomic disparities by education and income in health exist in the way health changes with age over the adult life course. These disparities appear to be based on the thrust of socioeconomic positions that structures people's different exposure to and experience of psychosocial, environmental, and biomedical risk

¹⁹³ The insufficient health insurance later caused complicated and prolonged health care issues in the life of Mr. Kim.

¹⁹⁴ James S. House, Paula M. Lantz, and Pamela Herd, "Continuity and Change in Social Stratification of Aging and Health Over the Life Course: Evidence From a Nationally Representative Longitudinal Study from 1986 to 2001/2002 (Americans' Changing Lives Study)," *The Journals of Gerontology* 60B (October 2005): 15-26.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 16. Previously published and ongoing research from the American's Changing Lives (ACL) study, a longitudinal study of a nationally representative sample of 3,617 adults aged 25 years and older when first interviewed in 1986, focusing on socioeconomic disparities in the way health changes with age during middle and later life, especially in terms of compression of morbidity/functional limitations.

factors for health. The flow of causality is much greater from socioeconomic position to health than vice versa.

Education and income as the determinants of health socially organize the access to and use of medical care and insurance. Education and income factors shape health related behaviors, social support, stress, psychological dispositions, social roles, and productive activities. Education and income are the most interactive factors in health outcome and affect people's experience of, or exposure to environmental hazards (i.e. the lack of safety and security at work or private residence). Individual choices of behavior are in fact, regulated or restricted through social opportunities, organized by the socioeconomic status differential.

Although health disparities are minimal in young adulthood, health disparities become highly differentiated by middle and early old age and then diminishing in later old age. Risk factors for health have differential impact at different ages. The extension of the ACL study shows the persistent importance of socioeconomic status differential over the life course. House and others conclude that the study of socioeconomic and racial/ethnic disparities in health should explore further research agendas to reduce the social factors in health disparities because such understanding give us better opportunities to identify specific issues of population health over the life course.

Analyzing data from the ACL study, Paula M. Lantz and others concentrate on how low socioeconomic status is associated with both the

frequency of stressful life events and stress responses.¹⁹⁶ They examine the role of chronic stress and major negative life events as the predictors of health and the explanations for socioeconomic and ethnic/racial disparities in health issues. Prior research has established that most psychosocial risk factors are patterned by socioeconomic positions. Economic hardship in the family of origin can be used to predict later adult well-being through the parents' marital relationship, the parent-teen relationship, children's educational attainment, and adult children's earned income. Economic hardship is particularly problematic when it occurs and lasts long during adolescence.¹⁹⁷

Growing empirical evidence indicates life events and other types of stressors are clearly related to socioeconomic position. Negative lifetime events are positively associated with mortality in terms of intense life stress and a lack of social support. A higher score on a financial stress scale and a parental stress scale is predictive of severe/moderate functional limitations and fair/poor self-related health. Lantz and others conclude that differential exposure to stress and negative life events is one of many ways in which socioeconomic inequalities in health are produced in society.

¹⁹⁶ Paula M. Lantz, James S. House, Richard P. Mero, and David R. Williams, "Stress, Life Events, and Socioeconomic Disparities in Health: Results from the Americans' Changing Lives study," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 46 (September 2005): 274-288. As they investigate the relations between stressful life events and socioeconomic disparities in health, three research questions arise: (1) are measures of chronic stress and life events patterned by education and income? (2) Are chronic stress and/or life events predictive of physical health outcomes over a 7.5 year time period? And (3) to what extent does differential exposure to chronic stress and life events serve as a mediator between education and / or income and health status?

¹⁹⁷ Juliana M. Sobolewski and Paul R. Amato, "Economic Hardship in the Family of Origin and Children's Psychological Well-Being in Adulthood," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 67 (February 2005): 141-156.

Considering the combined influence of financial resources and individual lifestyles, Fred Pampel and Richard Rogers draw attention to the underlying causes of socioeconomic status differentials in health.¹⁹⁸ In general, socioeconomic status differences in health outcomes result from financial resources. Certain groups have greater access to health information, medical care, more job-related health benefits, and safe living conditions.¹⁹⁹

With emphasis on the links among socioeconomic status, the habit of smoking and its interactive effects on health, Pampel and Rogers discuss the general nature of cumulative advantage and disadvantage. When resources and lifestyle combine to influence health, they do so in ways such that one disadvantage increases the harm of another disadvantage. For some health outcomes, a form of “multiple jeopardy or synergism” operates across disadvantaged groups in society.²⁰⁰ Low socioeconomic status groups have to contend with more “assaults” on their health with their limited resources. When low socioeconomic status groups do smoke, their resources and lifestyles result in

¹⁹⁸ Fred C. Pampel and Richard G. Rogers, “Socioeconomic Status, Smoking, and Health: A Test of Competing Theories of Cumulative Advantage,” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 45 (September 2004): 306-321.

¹⁹⁹ High socioeconomic status provides the knowledge about potential health risks such as smoking. High socioeconomic status provides more sufficient ways to avoid unhealthy behaviors and the means of managing health conditions. Low socioeconomic status directly affects health through the lack of material and medical resources and indirectly influences health by potentially harmful lifestyles (i.e. poor diet, excess alcohol, or inactivity).

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 316. The authors note that intervention at the individual level risks the Prevention Paradox: Preventive measures including lifestyle change that result in great benefit to the population may contribute little to each individual. They remain cautious about translating findings at the general population level to policy recommendations at the individual level because intervention at the individual level may be unsuccessful to change their unhealthy behaviors due to low motivation and immediate concerns such as residential location, transportation limitations or limited access to public service. We must be careful when establishing policies and future research agendas to avoid blaming the most vulnerable populations.

combined effects and worsen health conditions. Pample and Rogers argue that researchers and policy makers should endeavor to simultaneously improve health behaviors and socioeconomic status to reduce health disparities.

Moving beyond the discussion of individual choices of healthy or unhealthy behaviors, K. A. S. Wickrama and others investigate the transmission of socioeconomic adversity from one generation to the next one through mental disorder and physical illness.²⁰¹ Wickrama and others define family adversity as stressful life circumstances and notes that adverse life circumstances are significantly linked to low socioeconomic status.

From a life course perspective, the family of origin adversity may increase risk for adolescent mental disorder and physical illness. During the transition to adulthood, adolescents of low socioeconomic status are exposed to higher risks of illness. These mental health problems exist because family adversity may directly contribute to an adolescent's diminished psychological resources (i.e. negative emotions of continuing entrapment, anger, hopelessness or frustration). Stressful daily experiences also have psychological consequences for not only adolescents but also for parents in terms of low commitment to parenting, rejecting and hostile behavior toward their children, and other ineffective parenting practices.

Early social disadvantage has long-term influence on both the physical and mental health of adolescents. The authors discuss that to help socially

²⁰¹ K. A. S. Wickrama, Rand D. Conger, and W. Todd Abraham, "Early Adversity and Later Health: the Intergenerational Transmission of Adversity through Mental Disorder and Physical Illness," *The Journals of Gerontology* 60B (October 2005): 125-129.

disadvantaged families we can focus on intervention programs for adolescents who are at greater risk of having disrupted transition to young adulthood. To reduce the impact of family disadvantage and associated stressful events, a multilevel approach to disadvantaged families can be effective with emphasis on developing resilient factors for coping with adolescent health risks at both the family and individual levels. Improved understanding of mutual interactions between mental and physical health of adolescents and early family adversity may lead to more effective health interventions.

In sum, research and empirical data on social factors in educational attainment and health suggest an important insight. There are differential exposures to and experiences of negative life events and other types of stressors/risks, shaped by socioeconomic position. To develop a practical constructive theology of hope, we need to develop a theoretical framework that can effectively choose the timing of practices of care even before an individual fails to cope with difficult life events and to identify the most vulnerable groups such as children and adolescents who are constantly exposed to prolonged and persistent impact of inequality.

Issues of Continuity and Change

Recent studies on stress reactions have consistently examined that stress accounts for much of the differential outcomes between low socioeconomic status families and high socioeconomic status families. American sociologists tend to regard low income as a defining feature of poverty-related social stress. European

sociologists, however, working from comparatively stronger welfare states, focus less exclusively on economic hardship and more on social exclusion as one of the major issues in the study of inequality.²⁰² First, I discuss and reframe sociological inquiry into stress with regard to the structural context of stress and support. Second, I highlight the significance of context of personal agency in relation to research on neighborhood effects and social exclusion.

The Structural Contexts of Stress and Support

At the outset of the 1980s, Jay R. Turner defines the concept of social support as the constellation of sociological considerations of social bonds, social integration, and primary group relations.²⁰³ Prior research suggests that social support might be an effective buffer or mediator of life stress. Turner examines the association between social support, which is assessed from a social-psychological perspective, and psychological well-being.²⁰⁴ He concludes that inadequate or disrupted social networks may be a central explanatory factor to determine apparent differences in the degree of vulnerability across different social groups of class and stress levels. Cumulative results in the research

²⁰² Katherine S. Newman and Rebekah Peeples Massengill, "The Texture of Hardship: Qualitative Sociology of Poverty, 1995-2005," *Annual Review of Sociology* 32 (2006): 1818.

²⁰³ R. Jay Turner, "Social Support as a Contingency in Psychological Well-Being," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 22 (December 1981): 361.

²⁰⁴ Turner's research question is whether social support has pervasive effects or whether it functions only, or primarily, as a buffer in the face of unusual difficulty. The evaluation of the effects of level of stress upon the support/well-being relationship indicated that social support has significant main effects on the domain of psychological well-being, especially in stressful circumstances.

literature show that positive quality of neighborhood stability enables stronger social networks.

In 1989 Leonard Pearlin argued that the studies of stressors should move away from their emphasis on particular events or chronic strains to the assessment of the “socially patterned distribution” of stress process components over time: stressors, mediators, and outcome.²⁰⁵ Although negative life events and chronic strains are the most common sources of stress at the level of individuals’ lives, stress processes are fundamentally social and need to be explored with social roles. Both chronic and acute experiences with stress and negative life events are the result of social stratification by class, gender, race, and age. Therefore, the study of perceived and experienced social support must include sociological study of human networks. Individuals’ experience of stress and support are associated with various social institutions and contexts. The encompassing strategy is to identify a variety of links that join forms of social institutions to individual stress and to differential social and economic arrangements.

Responding to Pearlin’s study on the structural context of stress, Mary Clare Lennon argues that it is misleading to relegate “social support” to a sole mediating role because both support and stressors often reside in the same sets of human interactions such as marriage, parenting, or employment.²⁰⁶ Power, dependency, and inequality are embodied in social interactions. Socio-cultural

²⁰⁵ Leonard I. Pearlin, “The Sociological Study of Stress,” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 30, no. 3 (September 1989): 241-256.

²⁰⁶ Mary Clare Lennon, “The Sociological Study of Stress: An Invited Response to Pearlin,” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 30, no. 3 (September 1989): 261-268.

differences may affect responses to stress channeled by class, ethnicity, historical conditions, and gender. To explore contextual structures of stress, Lennon emphasizes that sociologists should begin with a sociological approach to emotions, linking individuals' daily lives and the broader socio-cultural and historical contexts.

Much of the literature on stress notes that low-income families are disproportionately exposed to environmental hazards, violence, or destabilizing events such as family dissolution. The chronic strain associated with unstable employment and persistent economic hardship can lead to diminished self-esteem as well as a sense of less control over one's life, anger, and depression. Chronic strain increases the likelihood of partner and child abuse. In socio-culturally marginalized families, the context of stress of being a minority directly contributes to the state of the well-being of the entire family.

Considering race/ethnicity in health disparities, David T. Takeuchi and David R. Williams argue concerning the importance of considering how historical events and power differential shape the current wellbeing of people across different ethnic groups.²⁰⁷ Each racial and ethnic group has a different and unique history, with immigrants, refugees, and people indigenous to the United States having different historical circumstances that result in differential mental health

²⁰⁷ David T. Takeuchi and David R. Williams, "Race, Ethnicity, and Mental Health: Introduction to the Special Issue," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 44 (September 2003): 233-236. Considering the living environments of socially disadvantaged people, we need to examine how social factors linked to race/ethnicity may adversely affect even relatively advantaged racial and ethnic populations. This is an important issue for future research because upward mobility does not necessarily lead to social acceptance, and prejudice and discrimination in the middle class may be more normative than previously recognized. Token stress and social rejection can lead to mental health problems for the African American middle class.

outcomes. New theories and methods are needed to better understand how advantage and disadvantage accumulate over the life course and across generations of ethnic groups to affect mental health.

Researchers of social processes of stress and social status stratification continue to reaffirm the salience of social interactions and institutional mechanisms related to problem behaviors and health-related outcomes. To analyze the impact of physical and spatial environments of residence, a research agenda includes the relation of personal agency and neighborhood-level effects of residence.²⁰⁸ Research interest in neighborhood effects reflects collective efforts to measure and identify social mechanisms of inequality.

In the following section I review the “neighborhood effect” literature from the 1990s to 2006 and highlight the significance of social context of marginalization as a social process. I also discuss the function, effect, and limitation of social support among socially disadvantaged people, linking these with research on social exclusion in impoverished neighborhoods. I conclude with directions for further discussions that take spatial and temporal structures of marginalization seriously and introduce the issues of change and challenge over the life course.

Neighborhood-level Effects on Personal Agency in Choice and Constraint²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ Neighborhood-effect literature emphasizes that a variety of social factors and social distributions of stress circumscribe the state of well-being across the life course.

²⁰⁹ When Mr. Kim lived in an assistant living facility, his experience of marginalization was characterized by superficial social connection to his neighbors and a lack of social support.

In social science studies, neighborhood generally refers to “ecological units nested within successively larger communities” in relation to the logic of street patterns and the social networks of neighbor interactions.²¹⁰ Researchers have examined how neighborhood-level conditions influence pathways to poverty.²¹¹ Neighborhood-level conditions generally regulate the timing and consequence of life transitions and trajectories. Current research also calls for more detailed indicators of associations among the activities of neighbors, the achievements of younger residents, and their perceived sense of identity and well-being.

Research on neighborhood effects has advanced a multidisciplinary inquiry into lived experience in terms of personal agency, social structure, and especially mental health. Researchers on social stress and its effect on mental health take seriously institutionalized social environments. Neighborhood effects on the quality of life have accelerated the shifting of research emphasis from predicting the likelihood of mental disorder bounded by social conditions to explaining the complex social processes that cause mental health disparities. One

Given his limited options of choosing interpersonal relationships, his experience of conformity fostered a sense of alienation. His interpersonal behaviors were still in accord with prevailing cultural standards of respect and obedience toward Korean elderly women. A social element of his marginalization resulted from some Korean elderly women whose lack of cultural awareness.

²¹⁰ Robert J. Sampson, Jeffrey D. Morenoff, and Thomas Gannon-Rowley, “Assessing Neighborhood Effects: Social Processes and New Directions in Research,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 28 (2002): 445; J. S. House, D. Umberson, and K. R. Landis, “Structures and Processes of Social Support,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 14 (1988): 293-318.

²¹¹ Katherine S. Newman and Rebekah Peoples Massengill, “The Texture of Hardship: Qualitative Sociology of Poverty, 1995-2005,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 32 (2006): 1813.

pressing research question has been how, and what type, of social change may shape or prevent the general prevalence of mental health problems.²¹²

Neighborhood effects on life transitions are mediated by how a person perceives her social opportunities and constraints.²¹³ Recent studies of social isolation indicate that stability in poor neighborhoods can be associated with personal disadvantages.²¹⁴ Social ties in disadvantaged neighborhoods do not reduce a perceived sense of powerlessness, mistrust, and fear. Most studies on neighborhood effects identify socioeconomic disadvantages with social consequences of concentrated poverty or racial make-up. Considering the limit of personal agency of making social networks, Silvia Dominguez and Celeste Watkins's study shows that heavy reliance on personal networks often interferes with the development of networks that can produce social leverage or resources

²¹² Blair Wheaton, "The Role of Sociology in the Study of Mental Health and the Role of Mental Health in the Study of Sociology," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 42 (2001): 221-234.

²¹³ Jason Boardman, et al. "Neighborhood Disadvantage, Stress, and Drug Use Among Adults," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 42, no. 2 (June 2001): 151-165; Catherine E. Ross, John R. Reynolds, and Karlyn J. Geis, "The Contingent Meaning of Neighborhood Stability for Residents' Psychological Well-Being," *American Sociological Review* 65, no. 4 (August 2000): 581-597; Catherine E. Ross, John Mirowsky, and Shana Pribesh, "Powerlessness and the Amplification of Threat: Neighborhood Disadvantage, Disorder, and Mistrust," *American Sociological Review* 66, no. 4 (August 2001): 568-591; Sarah Rosenfield, Mary C. Lennon, and Helene R. White, "The Self and Mental Health: Self-Salience and the Emergence of Internalizing and Externalizing problems," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 46, no. 4 (December 2005): 323-340.

²¹⁴ James W. Ainsworth, "Why Does It Take a Village? The Mediation of Neighborhood Effects on Educational Achievement," *Social Forces* 81, no. 1 (2002): 143-145; Karen D. Lincoln, Linda M. Chatters, and Robert Joseph Taylor, "Psychological Distress among Black and White Americans: Differential Effects on Social Support, Negative Interaction and Personal Control," *Journal of Health & Social Behavior* 44, no. 3 (Sep. 2003): 390-407; Rachael Anne Woldoff, "The Effects of Local Stressors on Neighborhood Attachment," *Social Forces*, vol. 81, no. 1 (September, 2002): 87-116; Jason Schnittker and Jane D. McLeod, "The Social Psychology of Health Disparities," *Annual Review of Sociology* 31 (2005): 75-103; Robert J. Sampson, Jeffrey D. Morenoff, and Thomas Gannon-Rowley, "Assessing 'Neighborhood Effects': Social Processes and New Directions in Research," *Annual Review of Sociology* 28 (2002): 443-478.

(including institutional ties) that help African-American and Latin-American low-income mothers get ahead.²¹⁵

MacDonald and others draw upon qualitative and longitudinal research with young adults who live in impoverished neighborhoods (Teeside, Willowdence and East Kelby in the United Kingdom). The researchers examine the “class cultural inheritance” of neighborhood-based sociality and mutuality among interview participants. They especially observe the consequences of geographical social location in terms of getting a job within a limited social network.²¹⁶ They argue that an individual’s original location in society strongly influences life opportunities in transitions to adulthood.

MacDonald and others argue that the strong relevance of class and place determines widespread normalcy of social exclusion. The class-based values, identities, and social practices are crucial for individuals to go through life transitions. These class-based values, identities, and social practices do play a role in preventing necessary life changes of the young residents who are familiar with the normalcy of social exclusion and unable to reach out beyond their familiar social settings.

²¹⁵ Silvia Dominguez and Celeste Watkins, “Creating Networks for Survival and Mobility: Social Capital among African-American and Latin American Low-Income Mothers,” *Social Problem* 50 no. 1 (February 2003): 111-35.

²¹⁶ Robert MacDonald, Robert Tracy Shildrick, Colin Webster and Donald Simpson, “Growing Up in Poor Neighbourhoods: The Significance of Class and Place in the Extended Transitions of ‘Socially Excluded’ Young Adults.” *Sociology* 39 (2005): 885. While having local networks and strong bonds in neighborhoods, young adults who live in poor neighborhoods remain confined to work at the bottom of the labor market with little chance of personal progression. On the one hand, interviewees report the indispensable value of their local network that helps them cope with growing up in poor neighborhoods and allows them to experience inclusion. On the other hand, these kinds of social networks, indeed, preclude their possibilities of escaping the context and reality of social exclusion.

Do social locations inevitably determine the quality of life?²¹⁷ Do accumulated accelerating disadvantages in childhood and adolescence largely determine the quality of later life? From a life course perspective, current research on human development acknowledges variability and diversity in developmental processes and seeks to conceptualize the interplay of continuity and change over the life course.

Change, Challenge, and Resilience across the Life Course

A substantial body of research on human development continues to explore the issues of change because it is often inaccurate and misleading to measure the dynamic settings of human lives as static phenomena largely determined by socioeconomic strata. Current studies also discuss the ways change and constancy in social settings influence individuals' development. Research agendas include the links between early experiences in the family and the transition to adulthood. It presents a possibility of change across the life course.

Studying the issues of change over the life course has significant implications for an ecologically informed understanding of individuals and families. After all, life course perspectives on human lives note the importance of a socially experienced sense of well-being and personal and societal consequences

²¹⁷ When Mr. Kim lived in an assisted living facility, he used his automatic wheelchair confidently to venture grocery shopping at the Publix or to take the garbage out. The parking lot of his current residence is slightly tilted so that Mr. Kim cannot move freely around. He just sat at home all the time. However, although Mr. Kim was bounded to his home more than ever, he felt "relieved" to know that he was not totally subjected to the unpredictable demands of his former neighbors. Fewer people have called him to ask for a ride.

over life course.²¹⁸ As I discuss the issues of change, I first focus on the models of resilience as a theoretical framework to understand human development with risk exposure. Then, I turn to Michael J. Shanahan's research on variability and mechanism in developmental contexts from the life course perspective.

Resilience

Resilience refers to the “process of overcoming the negative effects of risk exposure, coping successfully within traumatic experiences, and avoiding the negative trajectories associated with risks.”²¹⁹ Resilience researchers focus on strengths and resources rather than deficits in spite of the presence of risk exposure. Resilience researchers emphasize that resilience is not a static trait of an individual. In other words, resilience is not defined by a quality of a person but by the context, population, and “promotive and risk factors” in social environments, and the outcome.²²⁰

The degree of resilience depends on context-specific factors because different strengths of a person are associated with different risk exposure and outcome pairing. Resilience researchers assume that bigger problems exist beyond individuals' control, self-efficiency, or agency. An individual's differential

²¹⁸ Linda K. George, “Missing Links: The Case for a Social Psychology of the Life Course,” *The Gerontologist* 36, no. 2 (1996): 253; Corey Lee M. Keyes, “Social Well-Being,” *Social Psychological Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (June 1998): 121-140.

²¹⁹ Stevenson Fergus and Marc A. Zimmerman, “Adolescent Resilience: A Framework for Understanding Healthy Development in the Face of Risk,” *Annual Review of Public Health* (2005): 399.

²²⁰ It is essential to distinguish resilience from a trait-based understanding because if resilience refers to a trait, it places blame on the individual for failing to avoid negative outcomes. The promotive factors help adolescents avoid or cope with the negative factors of risks because the individuals also have assets or strengths of self-efficiency or coping skills.

capacity for using the “promotive factors” is fundamentally organized by cumulative risks, assets, and resources over time. Current resilience studies analyze community-level resources and the ways positive factors counteract or moderate against risk factors rather than focusing on individual factors of resilience.

Stevenson Fergus and Marc A. Zimmerman discuss three models of resilience—the compensatory, protective, and challenge models of resilience.²²¹ Resilience refers to the process of “overcoming the negative effects of risk exposure, coping successfully with traumatic experiences, and avoiding the negative trajectories associated with risks.”²²² A key requirement of resilience is the presence of both risks and promotive factors that either help bring about a positive outcome or reduce a negative outcome. Adolescent resilience research differs from risk research by focusing on the strengths, assets, and resources that enable some adolescents to overcome the negative effects of risk exposure.²²³

²²¹ Stevenson Fergus and Marc A. Zimmerman, “Adolescent Resilience: A Framework for Understanding Healthy Development in the Face of Risk,” *Annual Review of Public Health* (2005): 401-404. The authors identify three models of resilience – compensatory, protective, and challenge models. A compensatory model refers a process when a promotive factor counteracts or operates in an opposite direction of a risk factor. In the protective factor model, assets or resources moderate or reduce the negative effects of a risk. Protective factors may operate in several ways to influence outcomes. The challenge model of resilience is based on the idea that adolescents exposed to moderate levels of risk are confronted with enough of the risk factor to learn how to overcome it. The risk exposure must be challenging enough to develop a coping response. A moderate amount of conflict may provide adolescents with enough exposure to learn through modeling or vicarious experience.

²²² *Ibid.*, 399. Resilience theory directs attention away from the concept of resilience as an individual trait and conceptualizes it as a process, using assets or resources to reduce a negative outcome in risks.

²²³ The term “resources” emphasizes the social environmental influences on adolescent health and development.

Fergus and Zimmerman suggest several implications of resilience-based interventions. Rather than focusing on risk amelioration, their approach to resilience emphasizes using assets or resources to overcome the negative outcomes and reframe resilience as a process. Although positive adjustment, coping, or competence are associated with resilience, resilience models in general stress the importance of ecological context and external factors that may help youth overcome the negative effects of risk exposure.²²⁴

Selected research findings on adolescent resilience suggest that resilience-based models of intervention and preventions are necessary to assist youth who are exposed to developmental risks. Policy makers and researchers may facilitate avoiding negative outcomes with emphasis on “predisposing, enabling, and reinforcing factors associated with the behavior targeted for change.”²²⁵ Applying intervention with the multidimensional and ecological approach to risk exposure is required because of the entire context of influences in youths’ lives.

Mechanism, Variability and Agency in Human Development

Most research shares an underlying assumption of a wide mechanism that connects negative outcomes with negative family circumstances and short- and

²²⁴ Resilience for urban and suburban adolescents may differ from resilience for rural adolescents. It is a critical issue because we need to be aware that findings from a particular context may not apply to another context. Further research on the transitional experiences of adolescents is required to understand the differentiation of transitions and trajectories based on race/ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status.

²²⁵ Stevenson Fergus and Marc A. Zimmerman, “Adolescent Resilience: A Framework for Understanding Healthy Development in the Face of Risk,” *Annual Review of Public Health* (2005): 411.

long-term developmental consequences. Mechanisms that cause negative outcomes of well-being of a person include:

a lack of stable role models, heightened family stresses, lowered levels of parental investment, weakened emotional bonds between parents and their children, lowered levels of social capital and social control, the inability to provide settings conducive to cognitive and psychosocial development, and a lack of hope in one's future.²²⁶

However, the variability of the reciprocal relations between individual life history and social organizations is also salient across many societies. It is often inaccurate to measure a person's household as a static phenomenon. In turn, household changes often "precipitate" changes in the transition to adulthood through interactions between persons and peer groups, educational institutions, and neighborhoods.²²⁷

The life course study on the transition to adulthood needs to emphasize sociological and structural factors that promote agency to pursue developmental goals in linking the experiences of childhood, adolescence, and the phases of adulthood. The general principle of human agency in the life course study asserts that persons "construct their own life course through the choices and actions that they have taken within the constraints and opportunities of history and social circumstances."²²⁸ Shanahan refers to "agency" as the "active process of choosing

²²⁶ Michael J. Shanahan, Frank J. Sulloway, and Scott M. Hofer, "Change and Constancy in Developmental Contexts," in *International Journal of Behavioral Development* 24, no. 4 (2000): 424.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 421-427.

of appropriate institutional involvements, organizational memberships, and interpersonal relationships.”²²⁹

To understand the contextual influence on the transition to adulthood, Shanahan calls for a dynamic view of human development. A framework for such research is the integration of contextually sensitive research with emphasis on the life course tradition. Development pathways to adulthood have greater diversity as research on human development aims to identify transition behaviors that do not directly reflect disadvantaged experiences of early life. This form of variability requires more research on resilience and the value of social connections (i.e. networks of parents, the availability of community resources, and positive relationships with peers, teachers, and other potentially significant adults) across culture.

Understanding people means to examine how their lives reflect the society, but also how society reflects the lived experience of people. More attention must be paid to intra-individual variability and variation in persons and social settings across the life course because change is an inevitable feature of all levels of social organization. To bridge people and society a lens of contextual diversity is necessary to acknowledge the importance of the timing of experiences in human development and to identify the effective plan of prevention and intervention to promote the well-being of socially disadvantaged individuals and families.

²²⁸ Michael J. Shanahan and Glen H. Elder Jr., “History, Agency, and the Life Course,” *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation* 48 (2002): 145-186.

²²⁹ Michael J. Shanahan, “Pathways to Adulthood in Changing Societies: Variability and Mechanisms in Life Course Perspective,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 675.

Toward A Constructive Practical Theology of Hope across the Life Course

The possibility that the transition to adulthood has become less predictable and more precarious requires further study at the level of both the society and the individual. When compared with whites, many racial and ethnic minorities—including some immigrant groups—are more likely to experience transition patterns that cast a long shadow over their adult lives, including diminished prospects for socioeconomic achievement and for a fulfilling family life. Yet these groups will constitute an even larger segment of the population in the future. Will they continue to have diminished prospects, and, if so, what are the implications for social order, productivity, and national identity?²³⁰

It is necessary to use a life course perspective to address the continuing importance of contextual factors in human lives. Life course perspectives have demonstrated the value for understanding temporal aspects of life patterns and events deeply involved in social changes. At the individual level, life course perspectives underline the ways that events and decisions that occur earlier in life can have persistent effects on the structure and quality of life at later points in time. At the macro, population-based level, life course perspectives have been useful to highlight the ways in which social change generates different patterns of social structure and personal history across groups. By joining these insights, I suggest sociological contributions to a constructive practical theology of hope for marginalized persons.

A Practical Theology of Hope through a Lens of Life Course Sociology

²³⁰ Michael J. Shanahan, "Pathways to Adulthood in Changing Societies: Variability and Mechanisms in Life Course Perspective," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 686.

Social structures and social changes are powerful organizers of human experience from birth to death. Theoretical and methodological emphasis on context allows us to examine multiple dimensions of human experience, including Christian hope. Contextually constructed meanings of hope are essential to correct an individualistic leaning toward a subjectively perceived view of hope. We can use a life course approach to understand the meaning of Christian hope for marginalized persons in our changing society. A constructive practical theology of hope can identify reciprocal relations among individual lives, social, and historical changes, as well as assess the needs of the most vulnerable populations in society.

Further research agendas of a theology of hope include the links between early experiences in the family and the transitions to later life in relation to a person's relationship with a community of Christian faith. What are the distinctive characteristics of transition behaviors that can occur in Christian faith? How can the practices of care structure and organize a pattern of human interactions that could facilitate individual agency for support? Studying the issues of change in terms of the life course has specific implications for the practice of empowerment that emphasizes promotive factors, assets, and resources unique and effective to the persons, families, and a community of faith.

Hope as Countering a Mechanism of Life Course Inequality

Research on a constructive practical theology of hope should pay attention not only to individuals' choices of hopeless beliefs and behaviors but also the

potentially significant role of impaired social support and stressful life events over the life course. Research agendas of hope for marginalized persons must explore methodological strategies to identify the interactive processes between one's marginalization and experience of hope through which social mechanisms of inequalities are created and reproduced in the lives of marginalized persons.

From a life course view of human life, hope for marginalized persons is to counter the social mechanisms of marginalization and to work on reducing the impact of family disadvantage and associated stressful events. A multidisciplinary approach to the lived experience of socially disadvantaged families can be effective to develop strategies of care. A contextually configured view of human interactions between risks and resources may lead to more effective pastoral care interventions. Progress of empowering marginalized persons can be possible with a sociologically informed approach to the context of Christian hope.

Chapter Six

Theological Anthropological Perspectives on Human Reality in the Work of Edward Farley

Introduction

I regret no one had told me that I could take a replacement class. I just did not know it. I could be placed in advanced level math class. I did not know so I went to a just regular math class. When I saw other people were taking higher level of math class, I wanted to be there. I studied harder. 8th grade math is very important. So I worked hard to get into advanced classes from 6th and 7th grade. In the eighth grade, I was placed in honor's class.... 8th, 9th, and 10th grade. In 11th grade, my math class was pre-calculus. After that class, I was placed in calculus B and C which the highest math class you can take in high school.²³¹

What actually occurred when this 12-year old boy felt perplexed sitting in his “way too easy” math class? His world was supported by the dedication and hard work of his parents at a dry cleaning shop and his relationships with his younger brother, his friends and neighbors. In spite of the presence of support and love, it was still difficult for the boy to find his way at school. What did his American teachers see or not see in the *face* of a new student that was filled with curiosity, eagerness and passion for learning? How was this Korean student able

²³¹ Mr. Lee noted that not having sufficient information brought occasional setbacks. He used the word “regret” to describe experiences that he could not overcome by his efforts.

to keep trying and studying hard in spite of not knowing whether or when he could attend the math class that truly matched his talent?

Mr. Lee's experience at school illustrates the complexity of lived marginalization of a minority person. The social force of marginalization constantly influenced his living environments. To understand hope for marginalized persons, it is not sufficient to regard Mr. Lee's view of hope solely from the individualistic psychological interpretation of Christian hope. How did his reality sustain or undercut the fullness of human flourishing? Where did his personal agency begin and end in his experience? What kind of social structures were at play in Mr. Lee's vulnerability as a minority student at school? To develop a constructive practical theology of hope for marginalized persons, such questions force us to explore both the social and theological reference of human experience. I intend to respond to these questions, drawing on Edward Farley's theological anthropology as set forth in *Good and Evil: Interpreting a Human Condition*.²³²

A theological inquiry into human reality is crucial to examine the ways humans shape and respond to their social context and vice versa. Farley acknowledges the commanding powers of both evil and good that prevail and penetrate in and through the multiple and overlapping dimensions of our daily lives – “the personal, interhuman, and social spheres of human reality.”²³³ As I

²³² Edward Farley, *Good and Evil: Interpreting a Human Condition* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 41-44. Farley explores the complexity of human reality where evil and good are interwoven. To develop a theology of hope for marginalized persons, I also need to pay attention to the possibility of redemption in spite of tragic vulnerability of human reality, distorted by sin.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 27-114.

use Farley's work, I intend to reframe his work as a theoretical basis of understanding hope with the presence of ecclesial communities of Christian faith. In this chapter on a theological anthropology of human reality, I explore four themes: (1) human reality that is "distorted by evil," (2) human reality that is "open to redemption," (3) freedom and its relation to Christian hope, and (4) the presence of ecclesial communities as the locus of practicing hope for marginalized persons.²³⁴

Key Concepts

Human Reality and Human Condition

Farley uses the themes and concepts of the philosophy of human reality and human condition.²³⁵ Farley identifies three interrelated and overlapping spheres of human reality: (1) the interhuman, (2) the social, and (3) the personal sphere of individual agents. The interhuman sphere is the sphere of interpersonal relations. The social sphere is a social environment that shapes the structures of interactions between individuals. The personal sphere is defined as the sphere of individual agency. Individual agents are "irreducible, complex, and multi-

²³⁴ Ibid., 2.

²³⁵ Ibid., 28.

dimensional.”²³⁶ Farley explores the sphere of human agency with its biological aspect and “elemental passions.”²³⁷

The human life-form or human reality is distributed over three interrelated and overlapping spheres, each of which is a necessary condition of the other two: the interhuman, the social and individual agents. Although each of these spheres is primary in its own order, the interhuman is primary to both agents and the social because it is the sphere that engenders the criterion, the face (Emmanuel Levinas), for the workings of human reality by evil and redemption.²³⁸

Farley explains the concept of human reality as a form of life that biological, psychological, and historical sciences describe. The concept of the human condition is a theological interpretation of human reality.²³⁹ The human condition is used to describe the experience of evil and good engaging in the traditions of Hebraic and Christian faith:

The term the human condition describes not so much a collection of features of human nature, as what we are up against in our environment, the situation that evokes our typical effort as living being.

²³⁶ Ibid., 29. Because human reality does not mean simply human individuals and their features, individuals are considered one of the three spheres of human reality.

²³⁷ Ibid., 97-106. Farley describes an individual agent who is a “desiring existence” and focuses on three passions: the passion of subjectivity, the passion of the interhuman, and the passion for reality.

²³⁸ Ibid., 29.

²³⁹ Ibid., 27. Farley notes that his theological reflection on the human condition is a discourse of “action, reason, work, values, labor, *via contemplative*, the tragic, historicity, beauty, and interest” in everyday human life rather than the implications of multidisciplinary approaches to the features of human nature.

The human condition is based in a “category” of human experience such as “suffering, other-relations, uncertainty about our future, and death.”²⁴⁰ Farley describes the most important feature of the human condition as being fundamentally tragic.²⁴¹ The tragic characteristic of the human condition illustrates an “abyss” between what we seek and what we get daily. Human beings are propelled to seek some fulfillments and take action in everyday life experience. Human beings yearn for security and meaning in life. But the human condition is used to remind us that our desire for understanding and finding meaning in life depends on such fragility and corruption in the world. The human condition is related to the question of God; whereas, the concept of human reality is used to analyze the complexity of human experiences in the world.

The Triadic and Tragic Structures of Human Reality

The Interhuman Sphere

Drawing mainly from Emmanuel Levinas and his theme of “face,” Farley considers the interhuman sphere, namely “the sphere of face-to-face relation or being-together relation.”²⁴² The theme of face is explained in relation to alterity, compassion, and obligation. Farley notes that because what is discerned is the

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 27

²⁴¹ Ibid., 29.

²⁴² Ibid., 33.

fragility in the face of the other, or what Levinas calls its “nakedness,” the other is experienced as the summons to compassion and obligation.²⁴³

I experience the other as not only centered and autonomous but as fragile before my interpretations and actions even as I experience my own autonomy as fragile to the interpretations and actions of the other. As faces we human beings experience being exposed to and subject to each other’s world. This is why this mutually discerned fragility refers not just to the other’s physical contour, the other’s body which can be injured, but to the other’s personal being which can be objectified, disapproved, assessed, insulted, violated in a variety of ways, and murdered.

Compassion refers to a “suffering with” and obligation refers to a “suffering-for.”²⁴⁴ Compassion and obligation require emotional discernment because the sphere of the interhuman is the “sphere of emotional empathy and emotional participation.”²⁴⁵ Farley distinguishes compassion from pity, as one is drawn toward the other’s fragility. Obligation is “felt” obligation when we are summoned by the face and “alerted to the objective predicament” of the other.²⁴⁶ In this interhuman sphere, one may respond with compassionate obligation or cruelty.

The interhuman sphere has three characteristics: alterity, intersubjectivity, and the interpersonal. The first feature of this interhuman sphere is alterity, which unfolds the radical otherness of individual particularity. Alterity discloses the

²⁴³ Ibid., 42.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 43. Obligation is a disposition that comes into being as one experiences a felt response to the summons of the face.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 42.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 42.

irreducible positions between the other and I.²⁴⁷ I experience everything in and through my interactions with the other; yet, the other cannot be reduced to what I experience.

Secondly, intersubjectivity refers to the “always already thereness of the interhuman.”²⁴⁸ The concept of intersubjectivity is needed to explain the ways we are aware of ourselves in the midst of numerous experiential interactions with “what is out there.”²⁴⁹ There is neither isolated consciousness nor a private “I” moment because a person simultaneously engages in self-conscious reflections on oneself and others.

Thirdly, the sphere of the interhuman is interpersonal with alterity and intersubjectivity. The interpersonal nature of the interhuman points out its existential aspect. Drawing on Gabriel Marcel, Farley argues that at the level of act or posture of recognition and dialogue, humans can overcome ego-centricity by utilizing a “reflective break, a kind of redemption.”²⁵⁰ Using Marcel’s view of emotion, Farley argues that human beings become “available” (using Marcel’s term) to each other through “participative emotions.”²⁵¹ In the interhuman sphere, such a face-to-face encounter discloses the distinctive elements of the tragic structure of human reality and its ethical implication of compassionate obligation for one another.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 35.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 36.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 32.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 38.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 39.

Alterity, intersubjectivity, and the interpersonal nature of the interhuman sphere preempt human responsibility in relation to interhuman vulnerability.²⁵² Two types of vulnerability distinguish the tragic structure of the interhuman sphere: interpersonal suffering and benign alienation. Interpersonal suffering occurs when interpersonal relationships are distorted. Benign alienation shows an intrinsic and tragic element of the interhuman, the limitation or finitude of the interhuman sphere's being-together.²⁵³ Farley concludes that the interhuman sphere is a foundation of reciprocity across all the other spheres of human reality.

The Social Sphere

The social sphere refers to the environment of human interactions that shape interpersonal relations of individual agents and the construction of meanings. Actual human interactions occur through shared social institutions such as norms, languages, customs, and rituals that endure through time. The social sphere is "irreducible" to individual agents and their interpersonal relationships because social realities take on a life of their own and operate the distinctive dynamics of survival among different social systems.²⁵⁴

Farley suggests that the social sphere has a societal version of vulnerability: social incompatibility and social suffering. Social incompatibility is

²⁵² Ibid., 43-46.

²⁵³ Malignant alienation is a corruption of the interhuman sphere that also related to the dynamics of evil in society. Farley explains that the terms, benign and malignant, come from Erich Fromm's use of benign and malignant aggressions. Ibid., 44-46.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 251.

inevitable among functioning social systems and individual agents that strive to secure different interests and agendas. Social suffering is caused by the socially organized practice of subjugation or oppression. However, Farley argues that social vulnerability should not be considered evil because he uses the concept of social vulnerability to explain that human reality is tragically structured. The social sphere is not evil in itself but is subjected to the appropriation and corruption of evil. Sin and evil are responses to the tragic nature of human reality through an interpretive lens of the human condition.

The Personal Sphere of Individual Agents

The personal sphere of individual agents is the sphere of “self-transcending, embodied, and impassioned individual agents.”²⁵⁵ The personal sphere has major characteristics that represent human subjectivity, physical embodiment, and elemental passions. These features of personal being illustrate a task of personal being of living between and taking shape through the interhuman and social spheres. The most distinctive feature of the personal sphere is that human existence depends upon its environments.

First, the concept of subjectivity is introduced to explore the personal dimension of individual agents in relation to time. Human subjectivity points out the uniqueness of self-knowledge that enables us to experience ourselves through interpersonal relationships and social environments as well as time

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 63.

consciousness.²⁵⁶ Self-awareness exists at the intersection of retaining the past experiences and anticipating the future. Considering his phenomenological approach to analyzing human subjectivity and time, Farley notes:

... For one aspect of the contents or meanings of what is recognized is how they are expected to continue in the future as things which wear out, break, continue as available for use, or available for admiration by others, and so forth... . Thus, to use Edmund Husserl's language, to mean things as this or that is also to engage in protentions of the future...the protentions or anticipations take place in the present. The present of personal being is, of course, a moving present.²⁵⁷

The existential state of personal being is being in motion. The ways we experience ourselves as personal beings also present a continuing task – deliberate and concrete acts of creating meanings across interrelated and interdependent spheres of human reality. To experience ourselves in fleeting time and space means to acknowledge the past and the future at the same time.

Secondly, the biological condition of human agents is the condition of a living organism.²⁵⁸ Human reality includes the biological dimension of individual agents. As a form of organic life, human beings have basic elements of biological conditions: maturation, reproduction, “biological unconscious,” flexibility, and kinship.²⁵⁹ Farley conceptualizes striving as unifying the human biological condition because all life forms strive and human beings are “no exception.”²⁶⁰

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 63-75.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 67.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 79.

Thirdly, Farley explores the impassioned dimension of individual agents, defining human agents as “embodied passions.”²⁶¹ Three elemental passions fuel human agency and direct tasks that move beyond the immediate satisfaction: (1) the passion of subjectivity, (2) the passion for the interhuman sphere, and (3) the passion for the reality.²⁶² The passion of subjectivity focuses on the survival and well-being of individual agents. It is corruptible when individual agents resist any challenge to autonomy or refuse tragic vulnerability and the threat of death. The passion for the interhuman sphere focuses on the sociality as an environment of reciprocal mutuality.²⁶³ The passion for reality is the passion that takes the challenges of the world and creates meanings together. However, these elemental passions can not be fully satisfied because individual agents tend to exert a natural egocentrism to reject or deny the tragic nature of human reality.

The Primacy of Interhuman Sphere

The three spheres of human reality are interrelated by institutional interdependence, reciprocal influence, and mutual irreducibility. Farley acknowledges the interhuman sphere as primary to the spheres of personal agency

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 85. Farley defines the concept of “biological unconscious” that refers to those “pre-aware physiological operations that constitute ongoing life processes, make possible all human acts and sensations” such as thinking, feeling, and behaviors.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 85.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 97.

²⁶² Ibid., 98.

²⁶³ The passion for the interhuman sphere is the passion for mutually caring relationships with compassion and obligation.

and social interactions. We are most aware of interpersonal aspects of the interhuman sphere. This includes cognition, empathic experience, and personal encounters.²⁶⁴ The primacy of the interpersonal sphere poses both a structure and a task in human lives because the intersubjective, embodied, and interpersonal aspects make themselves known in concrete human acts.

Our relationships prompt us to be responsive and compassionate beyond our self-preoccupation to the suffering of others; yet, on the other hand, we are even capable of rejecting the summons to compassion and obligation in our relationships. The primacy of the interhuman sphere offers an alternative explanation to connect different spheres of human reality. The interhuman, social, and personal spheres are not only intrinsically dependent on each other but are also open to each other's influence.²⁶⁵ Although Farley argues that primacy lies with the interhuman, there is no single center of causality in this flow of influences between the spheres. Influences refer to contextual considerations of motivating elements, correlations, determinacies. Each sphere experiences differential influences from one to another.

As Farley builds up his analysis of human reality based on the Jewish-Christian paradigms of human beings, it should also be noted that the force of other spheres in other cultures more frequently thwarts the agential sphere of the personal. The contextual implications of Farley's view on human agency must include the multicultural nuances and different perspectives on individual agents

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 37- 40.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 283.

of the personal sphere. In the context of an individualistic culture, the dynamics of the interhuman sphere is often mediated by the individual agents. In the context of a more hierarchical culture, the interhuman sphere is often defined by the dynamics of the social sphere rather than the individual agents. Farley attempts to build a more relational anthropology that can counter both the exclusively individualistic and a totalitarian view of human beings as he suggests the primacy of the interhuman sphere to understand human reality.

Tragic Vulnerability

The concept of tragic vulnerability poignantly underscores the gap between human desire and its fulfillment. What we actually experience is based on our acts and relations with others, the world and ourselves. Our experience of fulfillment depends on the ever-changing conditions of our relationships in the world. What we experience reveals fundamentally tragic vulnerability that pervades all the spheres of human reality. By the “tragic,” Farley means that human reality is vulnerable because it is always subject to victimization, “damaged, distorted, or even eliminated.”²⁶⁶ Victimization refers to being destructively affected and confined by some historical events or social conditions of life.

In the interhuman sphere, tragic vulnerability is evident in human relationships. A reciprocal and secure relationship needs to maintain mutuality and empathy without imposing one on another. Yet, what we actually experience

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 29.

is susceptible to misunderstanding, self-serving intentions, or incompatible agendas by conflicting interests. A perpetual discontent occurs any time human beings try to call forth some fulfillment by engaging in various and changing relationships. However, Farley argues, tragic vulnerability is not evil. It depicts a tone of anxiety and discontent that is the “negative and suffering side” of the elemental passions.²⁶⁷

In the social sphere, social forces shape what we experience. The social sphere reveals the society’s incapability to constrain social incompatibility between individuals and social institutions and to prevent social suffering. The social world and social systems present a variety of incompatible situations that result in the ongoing problem of “determinacy.”²⁶⁸ The problem of determinacy is always seen when individual agents have done evil things, such as excluding one particular group on behalf of certain ideologies of social institutions in a particular historic period. However, social incompatibility should not be confused with evil; Farley uses the concept of social incompatibility to reveal the “intrinsic finitude and tragic structure of the social [sphere].”²⁶⁹

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 110. Evil is blotted out by distinctive dynamics of tragic vulnerability but is not equated with it.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 158-159. Determinacy refers to a summary of terms that illustrates the loyalty of individual agents in relation to the “tribes, cultures, nations, causes, and symbol systems” through history.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 59.

Lived Marginalization and a Possibility of Change
in the Spheres of Human Reality

Farley proposes phenomenologically oriented reflections on redemption and sin in the spheres of human reality in terms of good and evil, although the dynamics of the three spheres remain hidden without showing a clear order between cause and effect of sin. How does evil arise in each of the tragically structured and interrelated spheres of human reality? How does each sphere experience the processes of redemption? Can we find a theological view of understanding human reality of lived marginalization and a possibility of change in Farley's theological anthropology?

I focus on the agential aspect of sin and the emergence of redemption to explore a theological anthropological approach to marginalization in context and personal and communal expressions of change in relation to the concept of redemption. I use the term human evil to emphasize the agential aspect of sin by individual agents. First, I discuss the irruption of human evil that arises from tragic vulnerability, and then focus on the emergence of redemption through the spheres of human reality. I aim at integrating Farley's theological anthropology and his view of human reality with the life experience of marginalized persons such as Mr. Lee. I revisit his story later to present a concrete example of living on the social margin and moving toward creativity. I intend to conceptualize a constructive practical theology of hope in terms of challenging and configuring the spheres of human reality.

The Irruption of Human Evil

Sin takes on a distinctive form in all three spheres of human reality. Each sphere experiences and responds to tragic vulnerability in distinctively different ways. Sin takes a variety of patterns in accordance of the characteristics of each sphere. Because all three spheres are interdependent, a distinctive form of sin in one sphere affects and influences the other two spheres.²⁷⁰

Sin or human evil is not equated with tragic vulnerability and suffering because it is a way of responding to tragic vulnerability in human reality. Human evil occurs with a concrete act of refusal to accept or live with tragic vulnerability. Human evil seeks absolute control and pursues immediate satisfactions. Human evil arises when individual agents seek something completely secure that will remove chaos. Human evil arises when individual agents try to put an end to tragic vulnerability.²⁷¹ I discuss the ways in which human evil arises and affects the multiple dimensions of personal being, the interhuman and the social sphere.²⁷²

In the personal sphere of individual agents, human evil is the consequence of corrupted elemental passions. Human agents are driven by elemental passions,

²⁷⁰ Sin, human involvement of doing evil things, does not occur as fleeting incidents. It pervades and transforms all the parts of human reality. Farley uses human evil or sin interchangeably. When he describes sin in the social sphere, social evil invades social institutions and power.

²⁷¹ Human evil is not reduced to tragic vulnerability and its consequential suffering. Tragic vulnerability and suffering are not punishing outcomes of human evil.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 118.

or *deep desires*, which guide and influence human actions.²⁷³ Elemental passions seek satisfactions and goods. However, human agents cannot completely fulfill deep desires because of their interconnectedness with other changing spheres of human reality. To deal with unfulfilled desires, human agents engage in idolatrous efforts to refuse tragic vulnerability and to take control over human destiny. Such an act of substituting a mundane good for tragic vulnerability drives human evil.²⁷⁴ Denying tragic vulnerability is idolatry.

The dynamic of human evil is equivalent to the dynamics of idolatry, fleeing from existential discontent and moving to secure its destiny. Agential freedom is diminished by the dynamic of idolatry.²⁷⁵ Individual agents experience the “diminishing” of freedom. Idolatry restricts the ways individual agents experience the world and invades the ways individual agents have “the capacity to make choices.”²⁷⁶ Farley calls the capacity to make choices “freedom” with regard to the psychological faculty of having freedom. He explains how idolatry diminishes freedom:

It [idolatry] narrows or restricts the way we experience the world... if the idol can defeat chaos, it cannot itself be subject to chaos. Thus, we cannot be related to it as something vulnerable, fallible, or historical. We cannot place it in relativizing contexts. We cannot treat it in attitudes of spontaneity, creativity, criticism, irony, or humor.... Idolatry also

²⁷³ Ibid., 99.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 133-134. When human agents consider the tragic nature of the human condition as something intolerable and removable, human evil arises in feeding the anxiety and fear.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 135.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 135.

constricts freedom because it reduces the powers and dimensions of human reality. It invades and restricts personal beings in its temporality and specificity, transforms biologically rooted aggressiveness into malice, and corrupts the elemental passions. With these corruptions of the human agent come radical reductions of the power to move toward ideality and well-being and to move beyond ideality into novelty.²⁷⁷

In the social sphere, social evil is compounded through the dynamics of “subjugation,” in which social entities modify the operations and structures of social systems to promote particular aims by victimizing targeted groups.²⁷⁸ Competition of different social systems occurs and introduces the distinctive form of social evil, which attempts to “nihilate” particular individual agents and groups in all its spheres of reality.²⁷⁹ This type of subjugation causes social evil.

The structural vulnerability of the social sphere manifests its inherent finitude and tragic nature. Human agents cannot avoid social suffering because society cannot constrain or remove incompatible and conflicting individual agendas and institutional functions. When human agents find a way of manipulating certain social entities, the social sphere seems to embody and serve the dynamics of idolatry by the corrupting influence of individual agents.²⁸⁰

In the social sphere evil arises in the institutional agendas, organizational patterns, and distributions of goods and tasks.²⁸¹ A corrupted social entity

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 136-137.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 259-260.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 60. Social suffering in the social sphere has its distinctive expressions through shared meanings and metaphors among social systems and participating individual agents.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 255-256.

²⁸¹ Ibid., 257-258.

perpetrates human evil by using its power and self-preserving functions through “self-absolutizing” meanings and metaphors.²⁸² A corrupted social entity elicits the commitments of individual agents and presses institutional agendas on its behalf against other social entities and results in victimization. Farley uses the term “social infection” to describe this dynamic of idolatry in society.²⁸³ Social evil is embodied in social institutions and sustained by a constant and mutual sharing of values, agendas, and emotions among participating individuals and these institutions.²⁸⁴

However, the social systems of shared meanings, metaphors, and institutions are not a fact or process of subjugation because the essential functions of social entities is not to oppress targeted groups.²⁸⁵ Human history attests that social evil is not mere fate. The social reality is not evil in itself but is always exposed to appropriations, manipulations, and corruptions due to its tragic vulnerability. Opposing the logic of social manicheanism, the view that the existence of social entities is itself evil, Farley argues that redemption is always within the social sphere. Individual agents are not merely victims of social evil but are also agents for redemption. As human evil alters individual agency, relationships, and society, a possibility of good is also distributed into the three

²⁸² Ibid. 258-259.

²⁸³ Ibid. 256-257.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 255.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 62.

spheres. Both evil and redemption are carried by the “unitary” actions of human beings in society.²⁸⁶

The Emergence of Redemption

Mr. Lee: I just wanted to learn difficult stuffs that I did not know before. I am not sure where it came from.

Interviewer: Did it come from your parents?

Mr. Lee: Maybe BEFORE we came to the States. But not AFTER. They were so busy to work everyday. They couldn't really help [me].²⁸⁷

Redemption emerges out of “streams of influence” from one sphere to the others.²⁸⁸ Farley begins with the significance of the interhuman sphere to identify the resources of “streams of influence” and requires us to pay attention to “transformed passions (freedoms)” such as courage, vitality, wonder, and “agapic passion” of individual agents.²⁸⁹ Farley again emphasizes the primacy of the interhuman sphere to understand redemption because it epitomizes the influence of the “face-to-face” relation or, in Martin Buber’s term, “a presence of a thou, a presence in relation.”²⁹⁰ Whether we experience the face-to-face relation fundamentally influences the ways we participate not only in interpersonal relationships but also in social institutions. Therefore, the sphere of the

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 281.

²⁸⁷ Mr. Lee was asked why he wanted to take an advanced math class when he was a sixth grader. It was clear that he “always” wanted to have some challenges with which he could learn something new about himself.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 285-286.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 286.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 250.

interhuman is the primary sphere of understanding the divine presence. The emergence of redemption is explored with emphasis on the significance of relationality of human existence.

Farley focuses on human relationality, which is both the background and thrust of the dynamics of sin and redemption. As long as human relationality is a founding factor of human experience, it is possible to overcome human evil in creating a new set of acts and relationships toward redemption through all the spheres of human reality. Farley proceeds apace with regard to the interspherical nature of human reality. When the dynamics of redemption affects one sphere, it simultaneously affects the elements and functions of other spheres. Therefore, human reality is redeemable and transformable toward good because evil has no decisive control over all three spheres of human reality. The goodness of being means that:

The total complex of reality with its self-initiating entities offers to its participants environments that constitute conditions of survival and well-being. Available in these environments are materials appropriate for the well-being of the occupants.... We experience it [the environment] as pleasurable when we perceive it in variety, beauty, familiarity, and novelty.... If this is what the goodness of being means, it should be clear that this principle does not exclude chaos, suffering, and tragic incompatibilities.... In fact, without chaos and randomness and therefore incompatibilities and suffering, there can be no self-initiating being, nothing available for use, and nothing that can give pleasure and meaning.²⁹¹

²⁹¹ Ibid., 149.

Human reality is characterized by its tragic nature yet still opens up redemption when it is empowered by agential freedom and courage. Redemption in each sphere influences and is influenced by the “redemptive transformations” of the other two spheres of human reality.²⁹² The interdependence of redemptive transformation is at work as well as the interspherical affects of sin. Farley argues that the possibility of redemption is not limited to individual agents because an individualistic version of redemption tends to be “cruel moralism” that is indifferent to the social evil of subjugation and overlooks the devastating impact of victimization on all the spheres of human reality.²⁹³

From a theological anthropological view of human experience, Mr. Lee’s experience at school reveals a case of living through the human condition and experiencing redemptive transformation at the social margins. As a new Korean immigrant, Mr. Lee constantly experienced the pressures of unfamiliar living environments: his younger brother who suddenly needed homework help every day, parents who always had to work long hours, his new American and Korean friends, the backyard of his apartment complex, a small Korean church, and school. He kept participating in all the areas of his world every day.

Mr. Lee said he does not know where his motivation of “working hard every day” came from. In other words, doing nothing was not an option; he had to cope with his living environment. This attitude seemed to reflect the urgent need of developing self-efficiency that Mr. Lee experienced as a

²⁹² Ibid., 285.

²⁹³ Ibid., 285.

young boy. His general attitude of working hard also reflects the state of marginalization and a particular mode of survival to overcome every day challenges rather than a mode of well-being. Eventually, his efforts at gaining a new freedom, a freedom of speaking in English, were finally realized and appropriated into and between the spheres of his reality.

In sum, Farley's view of human evil and redemption epitomizes the multiplicity of human reality and the possibility of change through all the spheres of human reality. To develop a constructive practical theology of hope for marginalized persons, we need to begin with the multiplicity of human reality by using a multidisciplinary approach to everyday experience. Countering marginalization means restoring and enhancing the mutual and life-affirming reciprocities of individuals and social institutions across the spheres of human reality. The possibility of change must be addressed in terms of both personal and communal expressions of hope as a way of influencing. What we experience includes dynamics of redemption.

Freedom, Vitality and Its Relation to Hope

From a theological perspective on the human condition, what we experience in reality is embodied, contextually bounded, and tragically structured. The wholeness the contradictory desires and commands that collide through the spheres of human reality. What we experience is opposed to solipsism, "the intrinsic ego-centricity" that is based on the passion of

subjectivity and escapism.²⁹⁴ With regard to the human condition, one of the theological interpretations of human reality, human reality often succumbs to the idolatrously driven efforts of individual agents and social institutions to deny tragic vulnerability by securing goods, seeking controls, or appropriating relations.

The Christian paradigm of the human condition is not entirely about a paradigm of human evil because the human condition is the “mixture of corruption and freedom” through God’s activity in history.²⁹⁵ Farley illustrates the conditions of individual agents and their relationship to God in terms of interpersonal, aesthetic, or creativity metaphors of God rather than implying the monarchical-judicial metaphor of God in traditional Christian theology.²⁹⁶

What we experience in our relation to God in history enables us to venture out toward the experience of redemption. Farley points out that this sense of yearning or passion deeply influences the ways we relate to the human condition and avoid idolatries. Using Farley’s view of freedom and vitality in spite of living in the human condition, I intend to explore a possibility of countering and configuring the context of Christian hope for marginalized persons.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 180.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 139.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 140-143.

This section of freedom, vitality, and its relation to hope consists of three parts. First, I focus on the themes of historical freedom and “being-founded” that occurs in the “presencing of the Sacred,” God who is the “creative ground of things.”²⁹⁷ I also discuss courage and faithfulness as the expressions of agential freedom. Second, I integrate Farley’s view of vitality that explains the nature of hope with regard to a theological inquiry into human experience. I aim at linking Farley’s view of freedom, vitality, and hope to identify some characteristics of Christian hope for marginalized persons in context.

Being-Founded

The concept of being-founded rebukes the monarchical and judicial interpretation of sin. In the monarchical metaphor, sin is the act of rebellion of human beings against the authority of God -- the king or ruler. Along with this monarchical metaphor of sin, the judicial metaphor emphasizes the rewards and punishments. God’s relation to the world carries with it the inevitability of punishment to claim justice.²⁹⁸ Farley argues that these traditional paradigms are inadequate to understand God’s being and attributions and to bridge God’s acts of justice, care, and compassion together. He uses the interpersonal and aesthetic metaphor of “being-

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 144.

²⁹⁸ The combination of monarchical and judicial metaphors of sin is the basis of the classical Christian theology of salvation.

founded” to illustrate the relation of human agents and God, reflecting the dynamics and creativity of human reality.²⁹⁹

In the midst of chaos, human beings are found through an “actual presence” of the sacred – the sacred “presencing” of God.³⁰⁰ The experience of being-founded generates the renewed power of acceptance. It enables humans to live with tragic vulnerability and to abide the ambiguity of human historicity. The experience of being-founded calibrates the openness and flexibility in human acts and wills to create and hold onto meaning and life.

Farley summarizes:

Being-founded is the primordial moment of agential freedom. Janus-like, it faces two directions and incorporates two transformations. In the one, our incapacity to live without anxious discontent, without idolatry is displaced by courage (relativizing, consent, the risk of being). In the other, our alienating violation of God is displaced by reconciliation and faithfulness (belief, trust, and obedience).

In the experience of being-founded, the freedom of individual agents is historically grounded. Agential freedom makes human agents alter and overcome the pervasiveness of human evil by influencing each sphere of human reality: the interhuman, the social, and the personal spheres of individual agents. Agential freedom takes form in actual historical embodiment and participation with the human condition -- what we

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 139-144.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 144.

experience every day. From agential freedom, courage flows from the human agents' encounter with God.³⁰¹

The experience of being-founded is in conjunction with being free and being exposed to the dynamics of idolatry at the same time. The experience of being-founded gives individual agents power to live in the human condition without the idolatrous and absolutizing efforts of securing mundane things and appropriating relations. Courage is an existential posture of human agents to modify the historical existence of human beings in context. Courage consists of three attitudes, marked by freedom: relativizing, consent, and the risk of being.

First, relativizing is an existential and paradoxical attitude of human agents toward available resources at hand.³⁰² Idolatry is characterized by human efforts of holding onto goods and relations for security and control. These idolatrous and absolutizing efforts refuse to acknowledge the inherent fragility, corruptibility, and limitations of mundane goods and relations. Courage enables human agents to maintain the attitude of relativizing to overcome corrupted efforts of idolatry.

Secondly, courage combines a relativizing attitude with an attitude of consent to live within the human condition.³⁰³ The attitude of consent

³⁰¹ Ibid., 150. Courage refers to an existential "posture" of human agents that combines "relativizing all mundane goods at hand, consenting to the essential goodness and tragic character of the world, and venturing one's being in the perilous environment of the world."

³⁰² Ibid., 146-147.

³⁰³ Ibid., 147-150.

displaces the denial of the finite and tragic quality of human experience. Consent to being reflects the acceptance of human agents of the world as it operates in human reality. The attitude of consent to being invites human agents to revisit self-initiating and relatively autonomous acts.³⁰⁴ Consent to being is the attitude that guides a way of acting on what is available in context. In particular, the attitude of consent to taking risks paves the way for a fundamental and existential acceptance and tolerance of individual agents to accept and live fully in the human condition.

Finally, the attitude of risk of being defines the courageous posture of human agents in the world. What human beings experience is always exposed to “randomness, accidents, and tragic disproportions” of the world.³⁰⁵ These facts of human reality promote or undermine the context of well-being of individual agents. When the attitude of risk of being is absent, human agents likely react to the world with the postures of self-protection, withdrawal, or avoidance. However, once God finds human agents, it becomes possible to appreciate fully the creativity and beauty of the world as it is at any given moment. Courage constitutes “agential redemption” and empowers a “venturing” of the self to create meaning, find identity, and maintain integrity and wholeness of tragic vulnerability.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 147-150. The meaning of “being” refers to whatever constitutes and is given to human agents – all the structures, events, and processes of human reality.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 149.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 146-150.

The interrelation of human evil and redemption offers a valuable insight of conceptualizing hope as a process of challenging and countering the context of marginalization. As any event of the interhuman sphere gives rise to changes in the personal and social spheres, Farley's relational view of human reality can be used to present not only personal but also communal characteristics of experiencing hope. What kinds of human experiences enable change for hope? To respond to this question, I turn to Farley's views of freedom, vitality, and hope in reference to the notions of false hope and existential despair. I revisit the story of Mr. Lee later with the themes of a quest for meaning and life.

The Freedom of Vitality for Life and Hope

The experience of being-founded creates a new relation of human beings to the future and to the passion of subjectivity. The experience of being-founded introduces the freedom of vitality to individual agents. It translates the elemental passions of human agents into a historically grounded freedom of vitality.³⁰⁷

Vitality refers to this historical freedom in which being-founded and courage work in the dimension of agential existence.³⁰⁸ Vitality shapes the ways courage affects the passion for life. The individual agents take this

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 210.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 179-180. Vitality sets human agents free to exist without getting trapped in securing mundane goods, appropriating relations, or rejecting the sacred.

existential posture of the freedom of vitality and participate in the world.³⁰⁹ I use the concept of the freedom of vitality to explore how hope enables individual agents to move beyond the corrupted passions of subjectivity that distort human reality.

The experience of being-founded creates a new relation of human beings to the future and to the passion of subjectivity. Farley describes the passion of subjectivity with emphasis on the characteristics of each sphere of human reality: the passion for survival and well-being, the passion for the interhuman sphere, and the passion for the social. The passion of subjectivity is the passion for a meaningful existence on behalf of the self and is defined as:

The passion of subjectivity is a passion for life and meaning. When courage and the venture of the self enter the life of this passion, the other is no longer a mere utility for the self. The passion for life is not just a co-option of the other for the sake of one's life, and the passion for meaning is not just a search for a framework for one's own meaning.... The passion for life itself is a passion to live in the midst of living things.³¹⁰

What role does the passion of subjectivity play in the experience of hope? Farley explains that the corrupted passion of subjectivity distorts the relation of human agents to the future. The "corruption of the historicity" of human agents is a corruption of human temporality that changes the way of "being determinate and transcendent" in history.³¹¹

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 183.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 181.

³¹¹ Ibid., 175.

The passion of subjectivity is vulnerable and corruptible to the dynamics of human evil. When individual agents exert their idolatrous efforts to control their relation to the future, their passions for the future become idolatrous. Once idolatrous efforts for security and control begin to overwhelm the passion of subjectivity, either false optimism (false hope) or ennui (existential weariness or despair) surfaces.³¹² When idolatrous efforts cannot bring satisfaction and meaning of life, the passion for the future turns to ennui.³¹³ The state of either false optimism (false hope) or ennui (existential despair) shows the corrupted relation of human agents to time -- human temporality.

False hope such as a self-deception or delusion influences the way we deal with our passions of subjectivity to relate to the nation, group, or ourselves.³¹⁴ False hope also determines the way we respond to frustration and often results in despair. Despair, in addition to false hope, is also a way of “existing into the future.” The experience of the “corruption of the securer or idol” brings about ennui -- existential weariness or despair.³¹⁵

Yet, the experience of being-founded transforms the passion of subjectivity. Human passions bring about a different type of a quest for life and meaning and of relating to the future in two ways: (1) overcoming the holding power of false hope and ennui, and (2) integrating the concept of vitality in the

³¹² Ibid., 172.

³¹³ Ibid., 175.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 174.

³¹⁵ Ibid., 174.

experience of hope.³¹⁶ The passion of subjectivity poses daily struggles against what undermines life and meaning. The living environment of individual agents is the human condition. A quest for life and meaning is fundamentally fragile and ambiguous. Human efforts to eliminate tragic vulnerability reflect the ongoing awareness of anxiety and discontentment in human experience.

False hope arises when the passion of subjectivity aims at controlling what we experience in history. False hope, an idolatrous projection into the future, is deceptive because our efforts cannot eliminate the tragic vulnerability of human experience. As another existential posture of individual agents, ennui is a way of responding to disappointment and defeat. Ennui is an existential projection to the unknown and perilous future. Ennui arises from the failure of false hope, an exaggerated and self-deceiving hope.³¹⁷

Breaking the hold of false hope or ennui over human existence requires courage, which is an agential and existential consent to the world just as it is. If humans encounter the experience of being-founded, a relativizing insight challenges individual agents to realize the limitations of goods and relations in the present. Courage motivates this turn from ennui to an existential consent of living fully and embracing the world as it is.

Hope depends on the degree of vitality that individual agents strive to maintain in creating meaning and sustaining a sense of well-being. The passion of subjectivity is deeply involved in the presence of hope because in hope human

³¹⁶ Ibid., 178.

³¹⁷ Ibid., 178.

beings passionately project themselves into the future.³¹⁸ Farley defines hope as a “projecting of one’s own historicity into an uncertain and perilous future.”³¹⁹

Hope pertains to the ways an individual agent relates to her existence with meaning, desire, and expectation about what the future will bring.

In the face of the tragic, the experience of hope is influenced by the concrete determinacies of evil and good. Hope determines an existential posture of human agents with regard to the future. Hope is about accepting and projecting one’s own historical existence into an uncertain future. Sustained by the freedom of vitality, hope as a passion of human agents to relate to the future helps humans acknowledge that in the background of human reality the experience of being-founded exists. Hope is simultaneously involved in both the human condition and God who cares for the world.

The story of Mr. Lee allows us to understand that the existential state of personal being is always being in motion. He continued to grow up and to keep working hard toward his dreams of being successful and faithful to God. The most distinctive feature of his story is that the existence of a marginalized person fundamentally depends upon his socio-cultural environments regardless of his capacity for being an individual agent. His freedom could be reduced, transformed, distorted, or enhanced through innumerable interactions and influences from the interhuman and social spheres of human reality.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 175. Hope is a passion for what “one does not yet have.”

³¹⁹ Ibid., 176.

How does hope determine Mr. Lee's personal being in the interhuman and social spheres or vice versa? What is the primary sphere for hope of a marginalized person among the social, interhuman, and personal? Is it possible to identify the primary sphere for hope among the spheres of human reality? I revisit these questions later as I conceptualize the locus of hope and hope as bridging the spheres of human reality.

A Constructive Practical Theology of Hope

through a Lens of Theological Anthropology

One day, my younger brother wanted to bring his friend Jay to our church. He did not have a ride. I was able to drive a car. I don't remember how other kids joined this riding together. I just continued to give them a ride on Sundays. I felt good about bringing them to church. Otherwise, they would go somewhere or sleep late, doing nothing. When I arrived at their houses, they were waiting for me and ready to go. Jay was always late. He made us to wait for at least, ten or fifteen minutes. That was okay with me.³²⁰

Why is Mr. Lee drawn to a situation where the well-being of other Korean children was interdependent with limitation, frustration, or challenge? He notices that being at home on Sundays alone and "doing nothing" could feed the experience of isolation and loneliness. Theologically speaking, these situations of being bored are not yet evil but tragic. Indeed, various kinds of limitation,

³²⁰ Mr. Lee remembered that the church was a "fun" place because he was encouraged to play and have good relationships with peers. He was fascinated by familiar Bible stories told in both Korean and English. His previous understanding of the Bible helped him relax and enjoy "just being at church." He recalled no adult asking him to give the Korean kids a ride every Sunday. He was empathetic to know that many of them usually stayed at home and got bored unless someone would invite them to do different things. Jay continued to attend the church and a few years later became a bass guitarist for the gospel band of the youth group.

frustration, challenge, or suffering do provide necessary conditions of good to experience creativity and beauty.

At the same time, the experience of “doing nothing and being alone” reveals something ominous that may cause “actual harm to our well-being” such as “deprivations that prevent development toward well-being.”³²¹ As a teenager, Mr. Lee was unable to change or transform the living conditions of Korean kids whose parents often had to work on Sundays. By committing himself to give them a ride on Sundays, he just touched a small corner of human reality and pulled it a little toward the life of shared faithfulness in relation to a community of Christian faith. Linking Mr. Lee’s story and Farley’s theological anthropology, I discuss three themes of hope for marginalized persons: (1) marginalization as an embodied experience of human agents, (2) ecclesial and redemptive communities of faith as the locus of hope, and (3) hope as bridging the interhuman, social, and personal spheres of human reality.

Marginalization as an Embodied Experience of Human Agents

Farley provides a useful lens to understand the biological conditions of human agents from a theological viewpoint. This biological and embodied dimension of individual agents presents the tragic vulnerability of human reality because it indicates a certain degree of dependency of individual agents to go

³²¹ Ibid., 121. The state of well-being is considered from the necessity of basic conditions of life to the possibility of transcending creativity. Farley notes that “well-being does not mean simply a static structure. The well-being of personal agents can concern everything from minimal conditions of life to what enables or promotes their world openness, their transcending creativity.”

through developmental achievements and challenges. This developmental nature of personal being causes individual agents especially to be vulnerable and helpless, determined by the disparity of societal resources available to them.

We need to pay attention to the facts that socially disadvantaged and marginalized people are more susceptible to distortions and exploitations that may be conveyed and determined through each of three spheres of human reality. The theme of determinacy further affirms the embodied nature of marginalization. Although Farley mentions that self-awareness is a combination of determinacy and transcendence, for marginalized persons, determinacy more likely shapes what they experience in context. A constructive practical theology of hope emphasizes the way our experience accumulates over time not just as experiences of suffering stored in the memory, but as the lives and living conditions of marginalized persons shaped in determinacy.

Ecclesial and Redemptive Communities of Faith as the Locus of Hope

How are the spheres of human reality experienced in the ecclesial communities of faith? What are the roles of the Church to participate in the reciprocal exercise of creating meaning of hope? How can we nurture and challenge the dynamics of the spheres among individual agents, their relations with each other, and their involvements with socio-cultural institutions to create and sustain hope? Such questions open up the practices of care to a renewed responsibility of ecclesial communities in context. If the experience of marginalization is the root of individual agents' problems, the practices of care in

ecclesial communities cannot be limited to providing intrapsychic and hermeneutic reductions of any and every problem of the marginalized persons to ease pain. As we are concerned about the locus of Christian hope for marginalized persons, the role of ecclesial communities of faith should be included in a vision of evil and redemption to do with practices of care.

Hope as bridging the interhuman, social and personal sphere of human reality

To understand hope for marginalized persons, we can begin with Farley's theological anthropological view of the realities in which all three spheres of human reality are tragically structured and interdependent. A contextually grounded theological view is needed because individual agents, interpersonal relations, and social institutions reach for and maintain their goods and fulfillment only in conjunction with all kinds of intrinsic limitations and suffering in context. Such consideration suggests that we need to examine both the social and community reference of hope and the contextual matrix of Christian faith to respond effectively to the needs of marginalized persons.

This analysis also directs attention to the human agency for change and emphasizes the potential of redemption that exists within all the spheres of human reality. We need to acknowledge the ways the three spheres of human reality are interwoven to understand the intensity and scope of marginalization -- the consequence of human evil at work. To promote hope as the fruit of the existential freedom of vitality, we also much delineate the ways redemption emerges together in altering specific characteristics of each sphere without giving

an exclusive focus on a single sphere. The isolation of any sphere of human reality is not effective to address the complexity of marginalization and embodied and existential ways of experiencing hope among marginalized persons. Hope is the existential freedom of individual agents to bridge the interhuman, social, and personal spheres of human reality in the acceptance of its fundamental tragic structures. Hope for marginalized person is realistic hope in context.

Chapter 7

Proposing a Constructive Practical Theology of Realistic Hope and Practices of Care for Marginalized Persons in Context

Introduction

At church I listen to my pastor's sermons. I have this great anticipation before his sermon begins. Where am I going to experience the healing of all the pains and hurts my heart has without the Word of God? I feel reassured when I am at church remembering I am not alone.... In the church, there are many young children. I am very fond of all of them. I cannot join the volunteering for Children's Ministry because of my physical limitations. I know I can't do it.... What I can do is to collect free stationary I get from charity organizations and give the cards and stickers to you [And you have given it to children]. It is a bit awkward to imagine I can do more for these children. I feel great to see others are willing to do volunteering. I wish I could do it too. I feel grateful that those volunteers join such an important ministry.... I feel quite comfortable at church. Seeing people opens my heart up to overcome my feelings of loneliness. Although I do not talk with everybody and my interactions with people are limited, I like them a lot.³²²

In previous chapters, I presented in-depth interviews and drew on contemporary pastoral theologies of hope, life course research, and Edward Farley's theological anthropology of human reality. By means of this multidisciplinary literature and analysis, I have sought to illuminate contextual

³²² Mr. Lee said that he had "waited and waited" for years to join a Bible study group. Although he "really wanted" to convince other church members to have the Bible study group meetings on Sunday, he felt hesitant to speak up because he was concerned that "people may misinterpret" his idea because he had "plenty of time" while others had long working hours. He felt "the prayers were finally answered" when the church leaders decided to have the adult Bible class. Mr. Lee's hesitance reflected that the reality of being on the edges of society often overrules a religious life of Christian faith.

aspects of Christian hope, which are relevant to the lived experience of marginalized persons. I have identified the locus of Christian hope for marginalized persons within communities of faith.

In the following discussions, I combine a constructive practical theology of hope with multidisciplinary resources and propose the implications of this understanding of hope in practices of care with marginalized persons. Multidisciplinary resources are selected from Christian practical theology, narrative theory, and Philip Brickman's social psychological theory of commitment. While I engage in critical analysis at different points in exploring the modes and the locus of Christian hope, my primary goal in this final chapter is constructive: to state the implications of a constructive practical theology of hope with regard to practices of care. I propose hope for marginalized persons as *realistic* hope. Realistic hope embraces the ambiguity and complexity of the tragic vulnerability in human experience. Realistic hope comes forth from the interpersonal and communal practices of pastoral care: envisioning, enabling, and engaging in expanding and exploring various dimensions of Christian narratives, values, and actions that reveal divine compassion in the world.

The Modes and Locus of Christian Hope for Marginalized Persons

My inquiry into a constructive practical theology of hope suggests further exploration of the modes of Christian hope for marginalized persons. I use the term mode (1) to emphasize a manner of acting or doing in hope, (2) to focus on responding to a problem of marginalization, and (3) to describe essential attributes

of hope as a theological value. By using the term mode, I intend to pay attention to the activities of meaning making that human persons and communities engage in context while experiencing hope. I also aim to emphasize how human persons and communities are influenced by, and influence, the experience of marginalization in pursuit of hope. The four modes of Christian hope I have found are:

1. A Relational and Participatory Mode of Hope
2. A Dialogic and Narrative Mode of Hope
3. A Dialectic and Action-Oriented Mode of Hope
4. A Community-Oriented Mode of Hope: The Church as the Locus of Practicing Hope

A Relational and Participatory Mode of Hope

Socio-culturally marginalized persons experience hope through relational and participatory activities. Hope comes to be known through a process of creating, maintaining, and restoring relationships with God, others, and self. The experience of hope requires ongoing participation in interpersonal and institutional relations, such as caring family, good friends, safe schools, or supportive communities of faith.

It would be problematic and superficial to reduce the experience of hope to the isolated moments of individualistic enlightenment apart from the experience of being accompanied by God and others. The stories of marginalized persons may reveal that imagining a newly perceived future is often impossible

because their everyday life lacks the resources necessary to adapt the method of time-consciousness reframing.³²³ Due to the disparity of socio-cultural resources, many marginalized persons may be pressured just to focus on what they have in the present and, indeed, are unable to afford the fee-for-service model of counseling to create hopeful future stories.

Marginalized persons tend to re-configure their view of the future, based on the quality of relationships and participation they experience in the present. Further exploring a relational character of hope, participatory activities that promote hope would have a lasting impact on the experience of hope for marginalized persons. Hope can be known through life-affirming relationships and life-long participation in the present by joining the broader and deeper meaning of hope in God in spite of marginalization.

It should be noted that it is important to connect the future dimension of a person's life to hope rather than despair. However, giving more attention to the social force of inequality and its impact on the lives of many marginalized persons leads to rethinking an understanding of hope in the world. Along with the significance of creating hopeful future stories, the lived experience of marginalization calls attention to the relational and participatory mode of Christian hope that can be fully actualized in the present.

³²³ Andrew D. Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 139-140. The therapeutic process of reframing often uses the metaphors of "rearranging the furniture" and "changing the decorations" to make up a "certain room" in the memory of people in despair. These metaphors do not effectively reflect the needs of marginalized persons because this reframing method focuses on how a person can use and draw on the intrapsychic reservoir of memory to experience hope.

Hope among marginalized persons can best be understood with regard to what people do, with whom people interact, and where people live every day.³²⁴ Echoing the premise of hope Gabriel Marcel and Ernst Bloch present, a constructive practical theology of hope demonstrates that hope is experiential, embodied, and participatory in the face of personal and communal collaboration to overcome alienation. Marginalized persons have likely experienced a prolonged period of developmental issues from early experiences in their immediate families to intergenerational impact on their later life. However, a constructive practical theology of hope challenges an individualistic interpretation of hope that is narrowly concerned about the individual or interpersonal situations of being hopeless. Taking the act of solidarity and collaboration here and now is critical to bring hope for marginalized persons. The experience of hope emerges any time there are personal and communal efforts to counter social mechanisms of inequality.

A Dialogic and Narrative Mode of Hope

Engaging in dialogues can be understood as creating and sustaining narratives of hope. Life-affirming relationships and participation make dialogues with God, others, and self faithful opportunities for developing new meanings that can give “legitimacy to alternative view of reality.”³²⁵ A central theme of social

³²⁴ Flora A. Keshgegian proposes more present-focused approaches to time. She emphasizes the significance of place where a vision of redemption is actualized through daily practices and habits. For discussion, see Flora A. Keshgegian, *Time for Hope: Practices for Living in Today's World* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 169-172.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

constructivism is that languages and social interactions constitute beliefs of hope; whereas, a phenomenological view of human experience emphasizes what actually happens in contextually configured stories of marginalization. The experience of hope is kept alive and passed along in the mixture of Christian narratives and the experience of marginalization that marginalized persons inhabit.

Socio-culturally marginalized persons experience hope through dialogical and narrative ways of sharing feelings and thoughts about the experience of marginalization.³²⁶ All stories make use of narrative structures and audiences who would respond to the stories. Marginalized persons use their awareness of contextual factors of and threats to hope to speak about hope. Marginalized persons may respond to the narratives of hope that they prefer around the particularities of their lives in relation to their socio-economic status, ethnic background, class, or gender because not all stories of hope are equal and value-neutral.

For marginalized persons, knowledge of the world arises within “communities of knowers” – the realities in which people dwell are those they negotiate with one another.³²⁷ Marginalized persons are the people who create meaning in spite of facts and rules in the midst of marginalization because their

³²⁶ I adapt the concept of dialogue drawn from the work of Alistair I. McFadyen. He defines dialogue as, “A relation of mutuality and reciprocity which involves the subjective engagement, and therefore autonomy, of two or more partners. In dialogue there is a sharing of the dialogue roles of I and Thou, so that all partners are given space and time for independent communication and are attended to by the others.” Alistair I. McFadyen, *The Call to Personhood: A Christian Theory of the Individual in Social Relationships* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 314.

³²⁷ Jill Freedman and Gene Combs, *Narrative Therapy: The Social Construction of Preferred Realities* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc, 1996), 20.

realities are organized and maintained through particular narratives and images -- Christian narratives and images. Through the mode of dialogical and relational hope, the outcome is likely the creation of an alternative reality that brings a marginalized person and Christian practices together into the experience of hope.³²⁸

The experience of hope may seem more like a monologue when the reality of marginalization is so constraining that a person cannot identify his or her dialogue partner in everyday experience. However, even in these darkest moments of loneliness and isolation, the Christian narratives or images can be used to allow one to have the subjective and emotional engagement of being connected and even to create an imagined response from an audience such as God or Jesus.³²⁹ This subjectively and emotionally perceived view of hope is not just “personal invention” because Christian hope for marginalized persons is historically grounded and witnessed generation to generation through the Christian narratives and images about God and God’s people.

A Dialectic and Action-Oriented Mode of Hope Commitment Theory

³²⁸ Mr. Lee said that when he was “awfully stressed out,” he usually played his guitar and sang praise songs for a while or took a nap. He acknowledged that it helped him move on with other tasks.

³²⁹ The practice of imagining an audience can be an important source of support and encouragement as a person develops new or more positive self-understanding. In narrative therapy, counselors may encourage a person to “be an audience” to his or her own thoughts and feelings or to imagine possible reactions of a loved one who is significant in the client’s life. In the proposals of Capps and Lester, the future dimension of self-consciousness is thoroughly explored but not in terms of the relational quality of the future. For further discussion, see Gerald Monk, “How Narrative Therapy Works,” in *Narrative Therapy in Practice: The Archeology of Hope*, ed. Gerald Monk, John Winslade, Kathie Crocket, and David Epston (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 20-21.

A dialectic approach to human experiences reflects that the personal experience of hope is deeply involved in ambiguity and challenge in society.

Jürgen Moltmann and Rubem A. Alves suggest a dialectical approach to human reality marred by conflicts and contradictions, and Edward Farley proposes the interplay of good and evil, existentially ingrained in all the spheres of human reality in the presence of suffering and oppression. I assert that marginalized persons understand hope through the conflicts between both positive and negative experiences of being in context.

The dialectical mode of hope for marginalized persons opposes the reduction of issues of hope to the interpretive domain of intrapsychically or existentially unfulfilled needs of people. The dialectical mode of hope is required to consider the issues of hope with regard to the contextual roots of the loss of hope. Close observation reveals the ways people try to keep hope alive in spite of their difficult situations; the dialectic mode of Christian hope helps people to hold often disparate and opposite elements of human experiences between the promise of God and lived marginalization.³³⁰ Marginalized persons struggle to meet their physical, psychological, and spiritual needs under the social force of marginalization and in the light of God's activity in the world. As one of the

³³⁰ I use Philip Brickman's social psychological theory of commitment to explain that, for marginalized persons, daily actions of being hopeful help them continue to act upon the experience of marginalization. Brickman argues that intrinsic values and conflicts are deeply embedded in commitment from a dialectic approach to the act and process of commitment. For the discussion of related definitions of commitment, Brickman quotes S. C. Kobassa's definition of commitment as "the ability to believe in the truth, importance, and interest value of what one is doing" with a "generalized sense of purpose that allows people to identify with and find meaningful the events, things, and persons of their environment." Philip Brickman, *Commitment, Conflict, and Caring*, ed. Camille B. Wortman and Richard Sorrentino (Englewood Cliffs, NJ.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1987), 2.

theological meanings of life in God, the experience of hope entails the process of making meaning.

A constructive practical theology of hope assumes the supremacy of faithful practices to create meaning of hope. Everyday actions and behaviors to be hopeful precede a meaning of hope because hope for marginalized persons is action-oriented. If a marginalized person can be committed enough to keep a particular kind of action to be hopeful, these particular acts and behaviors transform and sustain the continuation of creating meaning over time.³³¹

Attending to the action-oriented mode of Christian hope, one can observe an interwoven relation between creating meaning of hope and doing faithful practices of being hopeful through relationships, participation, and dialogue.

A constructive practical theology of hope for marginalized persons implies both personal and communal commitment of making meaning through Christian practices. The human body becomes an instrument of suffering and transformation, marginalization, and hope. Living out of Christian narratives, values, and images entails practical commitments. These commitments do not need to be added to Christian practices; they *dwell in* practices of Christian faith.

A Community-Oriented Mode of Hope: The Church as the Locus of Practicing Hope

At the heart of hope for marginalized persons lies a cluster of Christian practices and everyday struggles with marginalization. Christian practices add and

³³¹ Ibid., 96.

enhance a necessary set of meaning making in hope. By the term “Christian practices,” I refer to “meaning-filled actions that are informed by scripture and tradition, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and learned through participation within particular forms of community.”³³² Christian practices in the sense of “corporative and meaningful human endeavor” reflect personal and communal expressions of faith and influence the ways we participate in interpersonal relationships and social institutions.³³³

Marginalized persons struggle to meet their physical, psychological, and spiritual needs in response to the interpersonal and institutional process of marginalization and in the light of God’s love for people. The life course perspective on marginalization effectively addresses the issues of inequality and the risk factors in the social environment in relation to the threats to living in Christian hope. Furthermore, sociological insights into an individual’s differential capacity for using the promotive resources of resilience in relation to the features of hope also provide a useful lens. However, psychosocial wellbeing cannot be translated into hope without the presence of Christian practice.

Hope for marginalized persons is based on various forms of embodied, experiential, relational, and participatory theological reflections and practices that communicate important theological meanings of life in God. Christian practices of hope enable us to bond tragic vulnerability of human reality to the experience

³³² John Swinton, *Raging with Compassions: Pastoral Responses to the Problems of Evil* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2007), 80.

³³³ Miroslav Volf, “Theology for a Way of Life,” in *Practical Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life*, ed. Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2002), 248.

of courage and vitality that spring from the experience of “being-found” and “face-to-face” relations. Such a theological premise affirms that the experience of hope is grounded in historically shared and communal practices of communities of faith. The community-oriented mode of hope prompts marginalized persons to sustain the experience of hope over time. Therefore, we need to observe the ways Christian practices of hope occur in communities of faith.³³⁴

Central to the identity and mission of communities of faith is to embody the compassion of God in the world. Christians are those who see and confess the background and thrust of the dynamics of sin and redemption in everyday experience. As long as human relationality is essential in daily experience, it is possible to envision communal practices of hope that can create a new set of acts and relationships toward redemption through human reality. Thus, communities of faith are invited to join a call to care for marginalized persons in the practices of affirmative relationships, participation, and dialogue that may keep embracing and bringing all the personal, interpersonal, and social dimensions of human experiences to God.

The Ecclesial Practices of Realistic Hope for Marginalized Persons

What kind of ecclesial practices of hope could be central to the care of marginalized people to deal constructively with their living environments and to

³³⁴ Elaine Graham portrays the communities of faith in relation to the primary mode of inquiry for pastoral theology. In a community of faith, people may find support and healing and through its celebrations and acts of compassion, healing and redemption may decisively be experienced. Elaine L. Graham, *Transforming Practice: Pastoral Theology in an Age of Uncertainty* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1996), 209.

grasp the modes of hope?³³⁵ These ecclesial practices of hope are based on our understanding of the tragic structures of human reality in context. The stories of marginalized persons demonstrate that hope must be *realistic* in the face of the tragic vulnerability of human experience. In hope, they are realistic enough to encounter the experience of marginalization critically and to assess the meaning of being in the communities of Christian faith. The lived experience of marginalization is intertwined in creating meaning in relation to Christian narratives and values.

Everyday experience of marginalization reminds us of the power of personally constructed narratives and values that shape our actions and vice versa. Marginalized persons bring the personal narratives of marginalization and the communal practices of sharing Christian narratives and values together. The concrete practices of listening to preaching, joining the Bible study groups, and engaging in the youth group become crucial to sustain hope because these practices become the act of faithful remembrance and commitment to experience reciprocal solidarity between God and human persons.

As marginalized persons join these concrete practices of creating meaning within a community of Christian faith, they are sustained to experience hope in their lived experience of tragic vulnerability – marginalization. The existentially and fundamentally tragic nature of human experience allows us to envision hope as realistic hope to face and deal with marginalization. The practices of realistic

³³⁵ I suggest ecclesial practices of friendship, proposed by the work of John Swinton. For further discussion, see John Swinton, *Resurrecting the Person: Friendship and the Care of People with Mental Health Problems* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 133-165.

hope are ecclesial and redemptive with a broader view of society through expanding engagement with them in particular social settings.

Ecclesial practices of realistic hope exist within the dialectical tension between the suffering of marginalization and new possibilities of hope. The reality for many marginalized persons is that they do not get enough opportunity to meet people other than those with similar difficulties. To empower agential freedom and courage in marginalized persons, the development of meaningful friendships is needed in the ecclesial practices of realistic hope in terms of the act of encounter.

Ecclesial practices of realistic hope include concerted efforts of the congregation to increase regular contact with socio-culturally marginalized persons in cultivating friendship across various social classes. Ecclesial practices of friendship include preparing the congregation to be open and committed in coping with setbacks and difficult issues of forging friendship because the influences of marginalization are pervasive in all dimensions of friendship.

At the heart of this ecclesial practice of realistic hope in friendship lie the concerted efforts of overcoming the resistance of a congregation that often reflects the idolatrously driven motivations of appropriating relations and resources to deny tragic vulnerability in terms of extreme forms of consumerism, capitalism, and materialism in everyday experience. A community-oriented mode of hope reminds one that the task of engaging friendship is to embrace the tragic and ambiguous in realistic hope for marginalized persons.

Realistic Hope for Marginalized Persons as a Faithful Commitment

How does commitment enable us to cope more successfully with negative events? First, and perhaps most important, it provides meaning for stressful or unpleasant experiences. It seems obvious that any particular negative event will seem less negative if we can see it as necessary to some larger purpose, as unimportant in itself, or as symbolic of something positive.... Commitment provides meaning by enabling us to bind the negative elements of life to more positive ones.... Being able to find meaning in our suffering allows us to cope more successfully with that suffering... they perceive their pain as directly serving some larger goal or higher purpose. And this is precisely the type of meaning that commitment would be expected to produce.³³⁶

Philip Brickman presents two social psychological factors that underlie human behavior: control and commitment. Control as a psychological phenomenon is driven by the need for gratification and sustained by the efforts of manipulating relationships or goods. Commitment as a psychological phenomenon is guided by freedom and sustained by intrinsic meanings that do not often yield instant gratification.³³⁷ In the process of making and keeping a commitment, human actions generate meanings, not vice versa. Thus commitment is not based on external evidence or objective calculation about possible rewards. If one is committed to be hopeful, one also wants and affirms the relationship with God, others, and self despite contrary facts of socio-cultural marginalization.

³³⁶ Ibid., 233.

³³⁷ Philip Brickman defines commitment as “whatever it is that makes a person engages or continues in a course of action when difficulties or positive alternatives influence the person to abandon the action.” Philip Brickman, *Commitment, Conflict, and Caring* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1987), 150-158.

I define realistic hope of socio-culturally marginalized persons as a theological value -- a faithful commitment that is forged in the face of marginalization and fueled by Christian practices of life-affirming relationships, participation, and dialogue. Realistic hope for marginalized persons entails two distinctive qualities of commitment in general: (1) personal affirmation of hope as a life-affirming value despite challenging interpersonal and social conditions of life, and (2) persistent passion and engagement over time in making decisions and taking actions that promote the experience of Christian hope. In the following discussion, I propose three practices of care, based on my concept of realistic hope as a faithful commitment, which can help explicate the reality of marginalization and generate useful pastoral practices with marginalized persons. The three practices of care are: Envisioning, Enabling, and Engaging that emerge from a practical theology of realistic hope for marginalized persons.

Three Practices of Care for Exploring Christian Hope with Marginalized Persons

Envisioning: Assessing Contextual Factors of Human Experience

The practice of envisioning includes moving through the process of exploring the elements of hope and the threats to it. A task of envisioning is to gather the information of marginalization and hope as thoroughly as possible because it aims at creating the synthesis of both negative and positive experiences of being in context. Another task of envisioning is to identify a continuum of the

personal, interpersonal, and social dimensions of tragic vulnerability in human experience and to focus within a possibility of freedom in the present.

Enabling: Building a Momentum of Constructive Narratives and Actions in Context

In the practice of enabling, pastoral caregivers and marginalized persons join the process of building a momentum of hopeful narratives and actions. A task of enabling requires the practice of truth-telling to resist being silenced by social-cultural forces of marginalization.³³⁸ The practice of truth-telling aims at illuminating the consequence of losing one's voice and empowering marginalized persons to reclaim dignity and freedom as human beings.

Another task of enabling is to identify and organize the empowering material of hopeful narratives in the present everyday experience. As the dominant culture marginalizes socio-culturally disadvantaged people, it is critical to enable them to develop resources for living in realistic hope. The practice of enabling gains energy and force when new patterns of hopeful actions intersect with telling and sharing new narratives of hope. The practice of enabling intends to help marginalized persons choose to take concrete actions and behaviors and to

³³⁸ I adapt narrative theory in the practice of enabling. Christie Cozad Neuger presents several pathways of resistance to loss of voice and self in girls and women by using narrative theory in counseling. She argues that in practices of counseling, caregivers not only work for the empowerment of girls and women but also work against a women-denying patriarchal culture. Christie Cozad Neuger, *Counseling Women: A Narrative, Pastoral Approach* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 82-85.

find the significance of personal and individual narratives of hope that can promote the experience of resilience in the present.

Engaging: Revisiting and Learning from Personal and Communal Practices of Hope and Re-Envisioning Realistic Hope as a Faithful Commitment in Context

The practice of engaging considers the dynamics of corruption and redemption in human reality beyond individual narratives and actions of hope. A task of engaging is to keep examining the way the specific personal and communal features of marginalization are open or closed to a possible experience of Christian hope. Another task of engaging includes to pay attention to the social reality and local character of communities of faith because the institutional aspect of communities of faith causes resistance against the continuing act of engaging in friendship. Awareness of communities of faith as a distinctive social entity allows us to acknowledge the tragic vulnerability of human reality. The practices of engaging include interpersonal and communal practices of affirmative relationships, participation, and dialogue in relation to Christian practices and values.

Conclusion: From Marginalization to Hope

This dissertation has been organized around research that explores a constructive practical theology of hope for social culturally marginalized persons. I have used the pastoral theological methodology of perspectival approach to do multidisciplinary analysis of the experience of hope in the midst of marginalization. A multidisciplinary inquiry into marginalization has informed and expanded a constructive practical theology of hope with emphasis on the significance of lived experience and the way one creates meaning and acts upon meaning to experience hope. I use Edward Farley's way of understanding human reality to define hope for marginalized persons as *realistic* hope in context. The concept of realistic hope is one of the ways of acknowledging the tragic character and multiple dimensions of human reality with emphasis on the contextual elements of human experience of hope. Furthermore, realistic hope can be used to identify a possibility of change across various dimensions of socio-cultural marginalization.

From the analysis of in-depth interviews, it is clear that marginalized persons understand hope based on their relationships with significant others and participation in communities of faith. From life course approaches to socially disadvantaged persons and families, hope is envisioned in countering social mechanisms of inequality in society. From a theological anthropology of human reality, hope is envisioned as bridging the multiple dimensions of human reality and embracing both tragic vulnerability and a possibility of freedom. I also propose the modes of a Christian practical theology of hope that can expand the

communal aspect of pastoral care in terms of ecclesial practices of realistic hope. Through the practices of envisioning, enabling and engaging, Christian hope can be created and sustained as a faithful commitment to living in tragic and social vulnerability and the freedom of vitality.

This research project clarifies that problems arise in focusing on an individualistically guided view of the capacities and limits of a person apart from a broader context of how the person experiences living conditions and belongs to society. The influences of marginalization fundamentally constitute a person's experience of hope over time, although marginalization is also carried by the choices of individuals and groups in society. In this research, I have primarily discussed the emergence of hope through contextual reflections on human experience. As I defined hope for marginalized persons as a faithful commitment to living in tragic and social vulnerability and the freedom of vitality, further inquiry into hope include: (1) the development of hope over the course of human development, (2) the spiritual dimension of realistic hope, or (3) the role of realistic hope in the lives of social institutions and interpersonal relationships.

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