

INTRODUCTION

WHY DO WE NEED ANOTHER BOOK ON THE SUBJECT OF SIN?

A patient comes to see a doctor. The doctor diagnoses his or her symptoms and prescribes medicine. If the diagnosis is wrong, a medicine prescribed according to that diagnosis will not be effective and the patient's health can be in jeopardy. We cannot emphasize the importance of a proper diagnosis too much for the healing of a patient.

Every Sunday Christians come to church to worship and hear a minister proclaim the good news of salvation. Before preaching, the minister needs to know the needs of the people who should be helped. Without diagnosing their problems accurately, the good news of salvation would not be good news; perhaps it would even be wrong news. If the minister understands the problems of people well, she or he can deliver an appropriate and strong message.

In the pews, we find all kinds of people from various walks of life. There are sinners (liars, adulterers, molesters, abusers, rapists, and murderers), victims (the deceived, molested, abused, raped, and bereft), and victims' family members sitting and waiting for a healing message.

In Christian theology, there is only one category used to diagnose the wrong of the world: sin. Sin, its guilt, and death are the primary categories from which we can be saved. In this mode of thinking, freedom from sin will resolve all the problems of the world, since sin is the major culprit of wrongs in the world. But what about the healing of the sinned-against? Naming a problem is the beginning of its solution. It is necessary for us to specify the pain of the sinned-against.

The good news of Jesus Christ should be real good news to everybody. Demanding repentance of sin from the abused, the hungry, and the humiliated is not good news, but absurd news. To be reasonable to these wounded Christians, we need to present a more comprehensive picture of Christian analysis of wrongs than the simple formula of sin-repentance.

For the past two thousand years, we have inadequately treated the victims of sin by neglecting to formulate doctrines for them while they walked through the valley of the shadow of death. Based on the doctrine of sin, the church has developed a map of the salvific doctrines for sinners or offenders: the doctrines of regeneration, justification by faith, sanctification by faith, and glorification or Christian perfection. It is time for the church to think about a salvific path for the sinned-against. To do so, we need to understand the pain of the wounded, listening to their agonies and studying biblical, historical, and theological messages for their salvation. *The other side of sin* is our common endeavor to start a new journey of faith for the sinned-against.

THE OTHER SIDE OF SIN

Of course, to suggest that the category of victims of sin is underdeveloped in Christian thought is not to suggest that the *experience* of being victimized by sin is unknown. In reality, suffering from the sin of others is as old as evil and lamentation. The children of Israel cried out for liberation from oppression; the psalmist knew enemies who threatened his life and well-being; second Isaiah spoke of a suffering servant whose suffering was on account of others' sins; Jesus was asked whether the man born blind was bearing the price of his parents' sin; the cross resonates through history of the symbol of an innocent man crucified for the sins of others. Sin, suffering, and evil are as old as the hills.

To focus on the victims of sin is to push Christian theology to locate the doctrine of sin within the context of the experience of evil. Classical theology has placed evil within the context of sin. Human beings, created for freedom, have misused that freedom out of a desire to be like God. The result is fall, bondage to sin, inherited guilt, suffering, and death. The central problem in this classical theological paradigm is sin. Evil is the fruit of human sinfulness. But, when the situations of oppression, victimization, and radical suffering (suffering that is undeserved and that cannot be justified) are the theological starting points, the paradigm threatens to shift. What if there is undeserved suffering that cannot be redeemed? What if the suffering of victims calls forth revenge that is a central piece in the cycle of violation? What if sin is born of experiences of violation that cry out for justice when no justice is to be found? What if suffering and evil are the paradigmatic center of our theology, and sin is a *symptom* of human vulnerability and the extreme to which human beings are willing to go to protect ourselves from the threat of damage?

To focus on victims of sin, is to place the doctrine of sin in the context of evil from which it probably emerged. "It's not the way it's supposed to be," quickly migrates into "we're not the way we're supposed to be."¹ The question of theodicy that asks what kind of a world this is where such evil can happen and what kind of God would create and govern such a world, is classically answered by the doctrine of sin. God in God's goodness and power creates free creatures who have the possibility to know and worship God but who chose to use that freedom to make themselves the center of the world.

Sin is the cause of much of the world's suffering and evil. Theologians from "the other side of sin" do not dispute this reality. And so the classical theological paradigm has answered the question of evil with the answer of sin: actual and original. Actual sin refers to sin committed in deliberate violation of God's will; original sin (linked with original guilt) to the state of guilt and bondage to sin that human beings inherited from our ancestors. With original sin and guilt as the answer, evil still persists, but the problem of theodicy disappears. There is no innocent suffering. God's good providence remains unchallenged.

Although universal sinfulness was espoused by patristic theologians such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen, Augustine was the one who shaped universal sinfulness into the doctrine of original sin. In Adam's Fall, all humanity sinned. Adam's sin of *pride* results in death, guilt, and the inability not to sin for himself and his descendants. Eve is blamed with luring Adam to his Fall, and women have been branded "Eve, the devil's gateway."

But the Augustinian resolution has not enjoyed universal affirmation. Contemporaries argued with him that the death of infants cries out to God for vindication.² What kind of a God would punish a whole race for the sin of two people? Can people be justly held accountable for sin when they were born without the possibility to do otherwise? Theologians questioned how the plague of sin and guilt was passed on from generation to generation. Is it in the seed? In the act of conception? And wondered about the serpent, since Adam and Eve did not sin apart from temptation. Where did the serpent come from? Is the creator God ultimately responsible for the reality of temptation? Augustine found his answer in a cosmic dimension. Angels fell and lured humanity to their death. But the problem persisted; why, after all, did Lucifer fall?

But, is original sin really the best answer to Augustine's dilemma?³ Was Augustine accurate in seeing the root of evil in sinful pride? And, was Augustine correctly interpreting his own experience when he came to this conclusion of original sin and guilt?

THE CONTEXT OF SIN

One way to resolve the dilemma of original sin and guilt has been to reconsider the garden, the context of sin. Perhaps all really was not perfect in the garden (after all, the dis-ease of temptation preceded the primal couple's act of disobedience). Perhaps the human condition is more precarious than the story of the perfect garden would suggest.

The initial proponent of this shift in perspective was Søren Kierkegaard. While retaining the traditional insight that sin is the result of human failure to trust in God and that sin is universal to the human race, Kierkegaard argued that the human condition as created by God is itself the context of human sin, the crucible in which our sin is formed. Human beings, he said, are created finite and free. Caught in the tension between limit and possibility, the consciousness of that tension, the awareness of our finitude, death, and our possibility for failure, human consciousness is plagued by anxiety. Sin is born in that

anxiety. While optimally we could resolve this anxiety by trusting in God, human beings instead turn from God and find some other way to protect ourselves from the ravages of angst. This is idolatry.

Kierkegaard's insight, echoed and amplified in the writings of Reinhold Niebuhr, is a neat modern solution to the problem of original sin. Sin and Fall are original to each human being. We are no longer born without the possibility not to sin (as Augustine would have it). But, because the condition into which we are born is one of anxiety, and because the world is already contaminated by sin that amplifies evil, suffering, and anxiety, we inevitably do sin. Yet, because the choice to sin is our own, each of us is culpable for our own sin. The doctrine of sin becomes understandable.

But, in making the human condition the context for human sin, Kierkegaard subtly shifts the axes of suffering and evil. While evil is still understood as the result of human sin, sin is born of a prior condition of anxiety, and salvation lies not only in delivery from sin, but also from resolution of the anxiety in the possibility of trust and faith. If the core problem in the classical tradition is that of sin, Kierkegaard exposes a core within a core. Technically, because creation is good, and thus our anxiety is good (it is after all the ground of great creativity), it is not a problem from which we are to be saved. Trust in God is the possibility of living faithfully within the same human condition. Thus, it would seem, nothing is really changed after all. But, perhaps not.

SIN AND DAMAGE

Kierkegaard's insight has borne much fruit in the twentieth century. Niebuhr became his most stalwart interpreter, expanding the concept of sin to meet the tragic dimensions of evil in the mid-century. Feminist theologians cut their theological teeth on Niebuhr's centrality of the sin of pride and argued that sin could also be a choice to hide, the loss of self, echoing Kierkegaard's initial insight into the dilemma of despair over ever being a self. Paul Tillich turned the fall into estrangement as an inevitable fact of birth, expanded the tensions of the human condition to include sociality and pressures that follow being social creatures, and placed redemption in the "courage to be," the risk of non-being where one discovers "Being itself," a concept that echoed Kierkegaard's leap of faith. Most recently, Edward Farley has added the dimension of the interhuman (the realm of face-to-face relation) to the description of the human condition.⁴ The human tension between finitude and freedom still remains, but now it is found within three spheres: the agential, the social, and the interhuman. With this addition of the interhuman, the individualism of Kierkegaard's schema is transcended and the core context of human anxiety is revealed. The human condition is now not only anxiety laden, it is threatened with vulnerability. This was evident in Kierkegaard's schema in the inevitability of death and in the possibility of failure. But in a world where human beings are inherently relational, vulnerability is the possibility of ruptured relation and ruptured relation can become the context of human sin. There is no longer only the prob-

lem of sin from which human beings need redemption, there is also the damage that results from another's sin. (And, damage need not only be from sin, damage can result from the conflict that is inevitable in a free and diverse world.) In fact, for some, damage may have become the core problem, and, unhealed, it can fester into more damage: a cycle of violence and evil.⁵

In the light of the various form of "victim defense" that have been used in courts of law in the United States, sin and damage may seem to be diametrically opposed categories. If one is a victim, then the argument goes, the evil we do is understandable and we are not responsible. Perhaps it is just this either/or thinking that tempts theologians into arguing that sin is the universal problem for all humanity. Once we allow that humans may be vulnerable to damage, then it would seem that lines of clear accountability for sin are eroded.

But why think in either/or categories? Rita Nakashima Brock in *Journeys by Heart*⁶ argues persuasively that sin (by which she means both actual and original sin) is the *symptom* of our vulnerability. If Kierkegaard argued that sin is born of anxiety, Brock argues that sin—both our sense of being sinful and our proclivity to secure ourselves in damaging ways—reveals both our vulnerability to, and the actuality of, our damage. *Brokenheartedness*—to use her word for this damage that disrupts the "erotic power" of creation—is not an excuse for sin. It is at the core of our sin—and both call out for healing. Sin as symptom then changes our perception of the problem. Sin language is not just about guilt and responsibility, it is also a danger sign that calls for attention lest more damage be accomplished. If our wills are in bondage to sin, then our souls are also deeply wounded and, as long as they remained unhealed, in bondage to the evil that caused the damage—an evil that cries out for restitution and more damage. If the doctrine of original sin has traditionally meant that humanity is in bondage to evil, then brokenheartedness and the sin that grows out of it bear testimony to that truth.

SIN AND EVIL: THE QUESTION OF THEODICY

Why do bad things happen to good people?

Do bad things happen to good people?

Are there any good people?

The Fall of humanity has been a traditional answer to the problem of evil. Where does evil come from? It is the result of human sin. Is God responsible for evil? God is responsible only in creating humans with the possibility to sin. God risked evil; we are responsible for it. Created with the possibility not to sin, humanity chose to sin, and evil and the bondage to original sin are its fruits.

And for the most part, that is an adequate answer. Much of the misery in the world is the result of human action or failure to take action. Holocausts of every type point the finger at human perpetrators. We are hard-hearted; we do rationalize others' sufferings; we do fail to see the face of our neighbor (let alone our enemy). Evil is the fruit of human sin.

However, the category of sin can also be used to disguise and obfuscate human evil. In this postmodern world, we have learned that the power to name is the power to create—and the power to name “sin” is the power to name who is sinful and what is evil. The power to name sin can be used not only to strip perpetrators of their deceptions (the traditional prophetic role), but also to shackle and maim those who would resist those in power. It can turn those out of power against themselves, teaching them to shackle themselves in the name of righteousness. In the naming of sin, great evils can be done.

Yet when we listen to the voices of theologians of relation and of the tragic,⁷ we realize that the world is so interconnected that we are all implicated in evil. If Augustine said it is not possible for humans not to sin, then relational theologians echo, it is not possible for us not to be complicit in the suffering of the world. Innocence is not a possibility. In this sense, guilt and accountability are universal to the human condition and we are all implicated in the evil that results. Evil and sin do go together.

But, when we ask the question of evil—why it is, where is its source—from the perspective of the one violated, sinned-against, the question of evil shifts. The answer that evil is caused by sin feels skewed when the one who asks the question is one who has done nothing to deserve their suffering. In her book, *Tragic Vision and Divine Compassion*, Wendy Farley asks the question directly to those who would use a moral worldview (that evil is ultimately justified as the result of sin) to explain evil without responding compassionately to it. The fact of *radical suffering*—suffering that is not deserved and that is beyond the possibility of redemption—Farley says thrusts us into a world where “even the death of a savior cannot atone” for the suffering of such evil. If atonement heals sin—saves sinners, then what could possibly heal the evil of radical suffering? Evil may be caused by sin, but the fact that the innocent do suffer raises the question of the ultimate morality of the world and the goodness of God: “The evil I suffer is not caused by my sin. What kind of a world is it when the innocent suffer for the sin of others?” Our neat justification of a moral trajectory from sin to evil is disrupted. Sin and evil sit side-by-side as twin alienations crying out for redemption. And we ask, can the shadow of the cross fall in two directions at once?

ALIENATION, WOUNDEDNESS, AND THEOLOGIES OF SIN

Within and without the Christian theological tradition, there have been efforts to portray the effects of sin on sinners and victims. By examining some of these efforts, we will get some clues as to what should be done to develop doctrines that speak to the experience of woundedness caused by another’s sin. Sin causes suffering or pain on the part of victims. Using the notions of *alienation* and *woundedness*, we will seek in this section to describe the other side of sin as it has been embedded in Western tradition. In the history of the Western thought, we come across the evidence that people were aware of this situation—particularly as the addressed situations of evil. In this discussion, we will include Christian and non-Christian approaches to the subject.

In the history of Western Christian theology, no one has been as influential as Augustine (354–430 C.E.). He did discuss the other side of sin, as we shall see. But, he did not form any doctrinal insight out of that discussion. For example, in the *City of God*, Augustine discusses the noble Roman matron Lucretia. As a youth, she was subdued and raped by the son of King Tarquin. Later, she revealed the crime that had been perpetrated against her to her husband Collatinus and to her kinsman Brutus and bound them to take revenge. Overwhelmed by the pain of shame of her situation, she then committed suicide. Augustine's telling of this story reveals his awareness of situations of the other side of sin. But Augustine focused his treatment of the story on the question of virtue rather than on the violation of rape. Arguing that chastity was not a matter of bodily integrity but a virtue of the soul, he could term her *chaste* despite her rape (thus recognizing her virtue). But, if she had not lost her chastity, then there was no reason thus for her to kill herself. On the other hand, if she was not chaste but an adulteress (we would assume, inviting the rape), she would be full of shame unworthy of people's admiration. By extrapolating from the given fact of her death and the assumption that the rape would only have been shameful if she had actually been an adulteress, Augustine deemed her to be an adulteress who killed herself out of "her sense of shame."⁸ Thus, blaming the victim.

Preoccupied with the category of sin, Augustine apparently could not see the pain of the victim. Most rape victims undergo depression, isolation, despondence, and self-worthlessness. Augustine understood little of Lucretia in terms of her victimhood, perhaps confusing the shame of the victim (and the victim's tendency to blame herself) with the guilt of a willing participant. Lucretia suffered not from the guilt of sin, but from the intense shame of the other side of sin. Unable to suffer its pain any longer, she ended her life. Augustine, focusing on the idea of sin, particularly pride and concupiscence as original sin, missed seeing the woundedness of the victim. Augustine could talk about the wounds of sinners quite often, but showed little awareness of the wounds of victims.⁹

St. Thomas (1227–1274) appears to have been more aware of the other side of sin than Augustine was. For Thomas the contagion of original sin is actually a wound: our first parents' sin inflicts *the wound of ignorance*, *the wound of malice*, *the wound of concupiscence*, and *the wound of weakness* on their descendants. These wounds, he stressed, were the *wounds* resulting from others' sins.¹⁰

The wounds of original sin afflict human nature, and our actual sins aggravate them. This wounding of our nature, Thomas thought, makes a person sick and unable to perform at the level he or she is expected to perform. This sick person must be healed by God's grace first in order to do good.¹¹ This wound caused by sin could, however, be perfectly healed by the satisfaction achieved by the cross. In Christ, human beings could be made whole. Thomas thus acknowledged the effects of sin as wounding and rightly envisaged the healing of the wounds as a necessary step to the solution of human predicament.

In a similar fashion, John Calvin (1509–1564) understood that sin distorts the whole person. Because of this distortion (depravity) everything a

human being does is sinful.¹² To him, sin is more than moral actions. It is the deranged structure of our existence. Sin is not human nature, but abides in it as a resident and ruins it. Calvin called this a “deadly wound” that clings to human nature.¹³ Sin results in wounds and afflicts us. But we are so caught in our wounded nature, that the true sinfulness of human nature distorted by the Fall is only exposed through the life of Christ.¹⁴

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) in his *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* discusses the problem of human sinfulness as *radical evil*. Kant struggled between the two views of human nature that prevailed: the optimistic view of the Enlightenment that espoused human freedom from any evil bondage or proclivity and the more pessimistic view of the total corruption of human nature. Kant rejected both views as well as the view of the inheritance of the proclivity for evil, and located the source of our sin in human free will (*willkür*). Human nature is essentially good, but perversion came into human nature with its finitude: “but with us sin is represented as resulting from an already innate wickedness in our nature.”¹⁵ Against the spirit of the Enlightenment, then, he asserted that something radically wrong with humanity preceded our actions. Thus, our maxim or principle of action by which we act is warped. Yet, despite his belief that radical evil is rooted in the structure of human existence, Kant believed that the moral evil in us has no conceivable ground in origin.¹⁶ Although he was not specific regarding a victim’s perspective, he pointed out the tragic character of human finitude in the cosmic drama of sin and evil.

To Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), evil is a structural dimension of the universe. Since human nature is characterized by a tension between finitude and the potential to become spirit (through the exercise of human freedom), Hegel thought the Fall (our original sin is to affirm the particular, including the self, as different from the universal) was unavoidable. It is the source of evil, leading humanity to the knowledge of good and evil. Evil, thus, takes an ontological seat in history (it is inevitable due to human finitude); the world proceeds from the reaction to it; and humans are tangled in evil by growing to be something other than the union of self and God. This *otherness* gives birth to self-consciousness which, though to be valued, educes alienation. Alienation is not evil itself, but gives rise both to evil and to the need for reconciliation. “It is in this disunion that independent Being or Being-for-self originates, and it is in it that evil has its seat; here is the source of the evil, but here also the point which is the ultimate source of reconciliation.”¹⁷ Hegel saw this alienation appear in the unhappiness of Greco-Roman culture and in the anguish of Jewish religion. His category of unhappiness and anguish is the other side of sin.

Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834) distinguished social/moral evil from natural evil: social/moral evil is due to human action, natural evil is independent of human action.¹⁸ Within the category of social evil, one person’s sin becomes another’s evil: “It is true that social evils too presuppose sin; what in one person issues from sin becomes an evil for another, and probably for himself as well.”¹⁹

Schleiermacher rejected the traditional belief of original sin. While sin and evil are interrelated to each other as cause and effect, he proposed the following: First, if there were no sin, there would be nothing in the world that could properly be considered evil. Second, the human race is the proper sphere of sin and sin the corporate act of the race, and the whole world in its relation to humans is the proper sphere of evil, and evil is the corporate suffering of the race. Third, without such evil, there can be no other consequence of sin that bears upon the relationship of the world to humans, and that our religious consciousness makes no claim to substantiate the magical effect of original sin.²⁰

He denied that evil was the origin and sin the derivative. For all evil is the punishment of sin: social evil is direct punishment, and natural evil indirect punishment. When we reverse the order of the connection between sin and evil, then we might fall into heathenism.²¹ Schleiermacher's concept of evil as the effect of sin reflects an awareness of the other side of sin. However, because he sees all evil as punishment for sin and views the human race collectively, there is no room in his system for the undeserved suffering of victims of sin.

For Karl Marx (1818–1883), alienation (which is his major category and not sin) arises from the miserable structure of bourgeois society. It results in dehumanization. Thus, while theologians talked about original sin, Marx addressed people in their actual situation of alienation.²² Alienation in society has at least three dimensions. First, alienation from self is laborers' separation from the products of their labor: "The worker puts his life into the object and his life then belongs no longer to himself but to the object. The greater his activity, therefore, the less he possesses."²³ Second, alienation from the process of production points to imposed and forced labor for the workers: "The worker therefore feels himself at home only during his leisure time, whereas at work he feels homeless. His work is not voluntary but imposed, forced labor."²⁴ The workers become ever cheaper commodities as they produce more goods. Third, alienation from fellow human beings means that we exploit others and are exploited by them. This is dehumanization. The naming of all three types of alienation complements the missing points of the Christian doctrine of sin by focusing on the situations of victims—those who are dehumanized by the sins of others.

In line with the social visions of his predecessors, a prominent leader of the Social Gospel movement, Walter Rauschenbusch (1861–1918), highlighted the social dimension of sin. To him, the significance of the doctrine of original sin lies in its focus on the solidary nature of the sin of the human race, which has been entrenched in social customs and institutions: "These hereditary social evils are forced on the individual embedded in the womb of society and drawing his ideas; moral standards, and spiritual ideals from the general life of the social body."²⁵ The idea of the biological transmission of evil does harm to the religious mind by diverting its energy from the power of social transmission to the nonessential.

Rauschenbusch discovered the solidaristic vision of the Old Testament. The prophets treated the nation as a gigantic personality in the matters of sin,

suffering, and repentance. He was convinced that individualistic thinking is insufficient in our vision for the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. The church, he felt, had trained its people in the individualistic concept of sin and salvation. Thus they do not recognize the super-personal structure of reality or composite personalities. Because Rauschenbusch recognized that the super-personal forces of evil systematically corrupt and exhaust human resources, he called the church to organize itself to redeem the world as well as the individual. Christianizing social institutions along with individuals was required for the arrival of the kingdom of God on earth. Behind alcoholism, militarism, and capitalism, he discerned the power of the super-personal evil forces driven by the profitableness of the evil.²⁶ These structures of super-personal forces are transmittable through the channel of social tradition. Without understanding the reality of the social idealizations of evil, the concepts of individualistic sin, salvation, and ethics are not only fragmentary but also distorted.²⁷ Through “the kingdom of evil”—the “solidarity and organic concept of the power of evil in the world”²⁸—the evil of one generation is harvested in the following one and thus increases its strength as evil keeps reproducing itself. The kingdom of evil is the universal radical sin of humanity and each generation is wounded by the evil it inherits.

In the twentieth century, Reinhold Niebuhr (1892–1971) focused on the human being as sinner. Like Kierkegaard, Niebuhr recognized that human beings are free. But freedom creates anxiety because in it we have to choose “either/or.” Before the insecurity of freedom, human beings vacillate, deny the anxious state of our finitude, and fall into the sin of pride. Or, we give up on exercising our cumbersome freedom by forgetting ourselves in intoxication or bodily pleasures and fall into the sin of sensuality. For Niebuhr, this is what is meant by original (universal) sin. Sin is thus inevitable; but it is not necessary.

As a Protestant theologian, Niebuhr focused on the universality of sin: everyone is a sinner. But Niebuhr was aware of the issue of the sinned-against. If sinners and the sinned-against are equally sinful, would there be any difference between their sinfulness? His answer was that the oppressor and the oppressed are all sinners before God (sin is universal), but the oppressor suffers from deeper guilt (there is an equality of sin, but inequality of guilt). Niebuhr stopped short of any further theological reflection on this inequality. However, he did realize the problem. Mover, we could argue that the fact that in Niebuhr’s system pride and sensuality are inevitable, human beings are depicted as victims in the universal tragedy of history.

Affirming Niebuhr’s tragic nature of sin, Paul Ricoeur held that sin has three dimensions. First, sin is the human being’s true situation before God, apart from human consciousness of it.²⁹ Second, from the outset, the sinful condition has a communal dimension. The transbiological and transhistorical solidarity of sin constitutes the metaphysical unity of the human race. Third, sin is not only a state, a situation in which humans are caught, but also a power that binds them captive. It is the gap between “I want” and “I can.” It is “misery.”

Ricoeur articulated the inevitability of sin for humans before the Fall and Fall as the symbol of evil. (The doctrine of original sin is a theological reflection on the symbol of evil.) According to Ricoeur, human experience of the fault in the world (it's not the way it's supposed to be) initially leads to an awareness of the reality of evil. Human beings then seek an explanation of the existence of evil through using a confessional language such as symbols and myths, not a rational language.³⁰ The result is the story of the fall. Human will is servile to evil. But human beings are paradoxically responsible for the inevitable fault of original sin despite its unavoidability. In this scheme, humans are victims of evil as well as its perpetrators.

Feminist theology, along with black theology and liberation theology has awakened a whole new consciousness in the slumbering church and in its theologians. Valerie Saiving's essay, "The Human Situation: A Feminine View" (1960), set a milestone for the new consciousness of women's theological perspectives on the concept of sin. In this pivotal article, Saiving lifted up the one-sidedness of Reinhold Niebuhr's and Anders Nygren's theologies of sin and love respectively. She rejected the universalization of their own definitions of sin and love by suggesting that women's experience of those notions is different from men's. Men's sin might be pride and men's love is selfishness, but women's sin is lack of pride and women's love is the inclusion of self in the circle of love: "[the feminine forms of sin] are better suggested by such items as triviality, distractibility, and diffuseness; lack of an organizing center or focus; dependence on others for one's own self-definition; tolerance at the expense of standards of excellence; inability to respect to the boundaries of privacy; sentimentality, gossipy sociability, and mistrust of reason—in short, underdevelopment or negation of the self."³¹ Pinpointing women's dilemma as the opposite of men's, she drew two different maps for the sin and salvation of men and women. If men emphasize salvation as selfless love, Saiving realized that such a drive might result in no self-identity for women.³² Thus, she suggested the redefinition of the categories of sin and redemption.

Saiving's understanding of sin has radically challenged and changed the traditional male-centered concept of sin. While affirming that women are capable of sinning, Saiving's insight into the different contexts of men and women in a patriarchal society revealed that women's sin of negation of self reflects not only their agency, but their status as "other" in that society. The sins of women are both sins and a reflection of the wounding of the systemic sins of patriarchal society: both sin and its other side.³³

In the late 1960s, Latin American liberation theologians, particularly Gustavo Gutiérrez, treated sin as socioeconomic oppression. There are three aspects of sin in Gutiérrez's system. First, sin is social, economic, and political oppression that exploits the poor. Second, sin is historical determinism that deters the oppressed from becoming the subject of their own destiny. Third, sin is a breach of communion with God and neighbors that harms the human spirit. (He calls this "spiritual sin.")³⁴ His first and second concepts of sin are not really sins from the perspective of the oppressed. They are the unmistakable

marks of the other side of sin. He used these aspects of sin to portray victims' pain under oppression and their helpless resignation. The third type of sin is the sin of the oppressor as well as of the oppressed. Spiritual sin calls our attention to the fact that even the oppressed are "sinners."

Since the late 1960s, James Cone has raised his voice for liberation for African Americans with his stress on the combination of "black power" and black theology. In *A Black Theology of Liberation*, Cone discussed the sin of black and white communities. Cone describes sin in a communal sense. He rejects the universal definition of sin—both the white fundamentalist view of sin as moral purity and liberal and neo-orthodox understanding of sin as broken relationship with God. For Cone, the sin of white communities is to define their existence in terms of their whiteness. This, he argues, has led to Native American reservations, black concentration camps, and the Vietnam War. Sin is whiteness—the desire to play God in the world.³⁵ For blacks, sin is "a desire to be white," the "loss of identity," accepting the oppressive condition as it is,³⁶ a statement of their estrangement from self and God. Whites cannot talk about the sin of black communities. Only blacks can define their own existence.

Cone's black sin is not the sin of the first cause. It is the consequence of white sin. White sin is a sin of commission; black sin is submission to it. His definition of black sin is his effort to describe the other side of sin, the estranged condition of black communities.

In the 1980s, womanist theologians began to speak to the experience of African American women. Jacquelyn Grant and Delores Williams have spearheaded this movement. They have pointed out the failures of white feminist theologians, who assumed that they had spoken for African American women as well as for themselves. It is unacceptable for womanists, they argued, that Euramerican feminists speak for them again, although both feminist and womanist theologians share the common resistance against patriarchy. To womanist theologians, even African American male theologians have failed to include African American women's issues for their theological construction, although the women affirm their struggle against racism. Unlike feminist and African American male theologians, womanist theologians take account of the issues of gender (sexism), race (racism), and class (classism). This means that they see the problem of sin not only as diffuseness, distractability, and lack of an organizing center (which definition can sound more individualistic and less like a critique of a social system), but also discrimination, poverty, and dehumanization. Their cry is the voice of the victim's victim. This movement is important in exposing the reality that even victims can victimize the weaker and that no one is free from the potential of oppressing others. Furthermore, the threefold nature of African American women's problems opens a door to the liberation of the oppressed from the multidimensional oppression of life.

Another feminist theologian, Mary Potter Engel, has heightened the importance of viewing sin from "the other side" in her description of sin in the context of the evil and violence suffered by the vulnerable in situations of domestic and sexual violence. For her, sin is individualistic, while evil is sys-

temic. Individuals' sins, however, reinforce the structural dimension of evil. In this sense, sin and evil buttress each other. Potter Engel speaks of sin as the condition of the perpetrator and evil as that of both victims and perpetrators. Our language of sin and evil must be appropriate to the context in which it is spoken, otherwise when we stress sinfulness to victims, we invite the development of self-blame. For victims, evil is about lament and the accepting/assigning of appropriate blame. For perpetrators in these situations, sin is lack of moral sensitivity, betrayal of trust, distortion of boundaries, and lack of consent to vulnerability.³⁷

These scholars have tried to transcend a one-dimensional understanding of human sin and have delved into the deeper dimension of sin, alienation, and evil when viewed from both sides. All of these thinkers have written from an awareness of the other side of sin and of the importance of that awareness for Christian churches and for the healing of the world. Our intention in this book is to continue in this project to make theology more relevant to the sinned-against, voicing their pain and their predicament and incorporating their issues into theological discourse. The wounds and alienation of the sinned-against require us to deepen our theological reflection. The category of sin by itself is insufficient to tackle the wounds and alienation of the sinned-against. Evil is not just about sin. It is interwoven with woundedness and alienation, what Ted Peters names "the effect of sin such as loss, pain, suffering, and destruction."³⁸

To several of the theologians we have reviewed, Schleiermacher and Peters for example, sin is the cause, evil the effect. In fact, we would argue that wounds and alienation that are not attended or healed generate evil. In this sense, we realize that the doctrine of sin can itself perpetrate evil from victims' perspective.

THE CONTENTS

We start this task from the Old Testament. In his chapter "The Shri11 Voice of the Wounded Party," Walter Brueggemann challenges the prevalent proclivity to diminish the theology of the Old Testament to a simple formula of sin and punishment. He does not deny the strong presence of a retribution theology in the Old Testament, but would not merely reduce Old Testament theologies to it either.

First, Brueggemann finds three players in the community that generated the Hebrew Bible. In the Exodus narrative, he finds Yahweh, Pharaoh, and Israel. Yahweh plays the third role—advocating Israel as the sinned-against. In the prophetic traditions, he becomes aware of Yahweh, the urban elite of the Jerusalem establishment, and the marginalized as the three players. Yahweh as the third player always shows the divine solidarity with the marginalized. Second, Brueggemann sees the witness of the Old Testament strike at the foundations of the ethical structures of deeds-consequences. In the story of the garden (Gen 2-3), like Milton and Ricoeur, he highlights the fact that before our involvement, something already happened. Beyond a mere "sin-punishment"

theology, the narrative addresses the misery that binds human beings. Third, Brueggemann sees the psalms of complaint also deabsolutizing the oversimplified formula of “sin–punishment” and “deeds–consequences.” They are the voices of the wounded and weak within the three parties of speakers, God, and the enemy. The poets of these Psalms call for God’s attention to intervening against abuses and threats. Fourth, the great poem of Job that culminates in the Old Testament moves against simplistic and absolutizing ethical schemes of deeds—consequences. Job declares that God is morally unreliable, and therefore the entire theory of a moral order to reality is absurd. God approved Job’s theology, not that of his friends. Brueggemann’s God is the God who embraces Job’s accusation of Godself, siding with Job—the sinned-against.

Beyond the formula of sin and punishment God’s love is abundant for sinners. How much more compassionate and gracious God would be for the innocently sinned-against! Brueggemann implies that humanity is, after all, a victim of the cosmic drama of creation and of the Fall. This fact that the God of the Hebrew Bible is a God of mercy and grace is the foundation of the Old Testament theology. In contrast with the popular mechanistic image of God in the theology of retribution, Brueggemann has cogently brought out the *compassionate* and *generous* image of God who allows a hermeneutics of suspicion of God’s own justice and goodness.

His understanding of the merciful God, however, raises a question about God’s justice and anger. For him, the fact that God sides with the wounded party is God’s judgment upon sinners. While not neglecting the side of God’s justice, Brueggemann articulates God’s mercy, the expression of justice, for all in this cosmic drama. He thinks that the oppressor and the oppressed are the victims of this cosmic drama. We should not, however, attenuate the difference between the oppressors and the oppressed under the rubric of the universal tragedy. For him, on account of God’s mercy, the universal drama does not end as a zero-sum game, but as a win-win story.

While Brueggemann cares for the wounded party in the Old Testament, Andrew Sung Park is concerned about the experience of the wounded in the Bible, including the New Testament. In his chapter “The Bible and Han,” he notices that the Bible revolves around the sinned-against rather than around sinners (oppressors). God works for the deliverance of victims from their plight. The Bible cares about the suffering of victims more than about the well-being of their oppressors. Consequently the pain of victims, not the sin of oppressors, is a key to understanding the redemptive deliverance of God. It is difficult to find a term that describes victims’ deep pain in the West, thus with his Asian-American (Korean) background, Park introduces a term from the East that expresses the victims’ pain: han. Han is a victim’s deep wound that festers from within. It is the hopelessness and helplessness of the powerless, the marginalized, and the voiceless in the world. In Brueggemann’s term, it is “the shrill voice” of the victim. Han is also the silence of the wounded. Sinners can repent of their sin. Victims cannot repent of their han. Han needs to be healed. Job’s episode shows that God judges Job’s friends who demanded repentance from

Job, a han-ridden victim, not understanding the han of a victim. Even God cannot bear such a unilateral theology of sin. Why do we?

In the New Testament, Jesus mainly contacted the so-called sinners—the downtrodden and he ministered to their physical and spiritual wound, han. When Jesus said that he came to call the sick, not the righteous, he made his mission of caring for the wounded clear. Park analyzes the Lord's Prayer as a good example of showing to whom that teaching was mainly given. Jesus' ministry was built around resolving the han of the sinned-against, challenging the oppression of the sinners. Park acknowledges that Jesus was for both sinners and the sinned-against. However, he holds that since Jesus primarily taught and healed the sinned-against in his ministry, the Bible should be primarily interpreted for their sake in light of han in addition to the doctrine of sin. In such an interpretation of the Bible, the notion of han may be a great asset. Wherever sin is named, han should be taken into account together. No more sin-talk alone.

Park's notion of han concurs with Justo L. González's idea of *alienation*. In his chapter "The Alienation of Alienation," González treats the other side of sin, *alienation*. Questioning the denotation of the term *alienation*, González is critical of its exclusively psychological usage in church history. Such a psychologized term enhances the internalization and individualization of sin. Using Pelagius and Augustine, he explains the individualization of sin in terms of the atomization of reality and the privatization of sin. Drawing upon Abelard's and Anselm's theology, he further explores the meaning of the internalization of sin.

On the one hand, using Anselm's concept of sin, González points out that sin should be seen not only from the will and intention of the sinner, but also from the perspective of the sinned-against. On the other hand, against Anselm's idea of hierarchical authority and its consequential assumption of sin, González points to the subversive principle of the gospel concerning the concept of sin. Without denying the necessity of some measure of order, he rejects any authoritarian and hierarchical suppression in the process of the internalization of sin.

In opposition to the effort to fix the sin of internalization through psychotherapy, he suggests "the alienation of alienation." For him, the term *alienation* means not only becoming psychologically dysfunctional, but also turning into something alien from God and from ourselves. With his ample knowledge of Christian history, he discloses the abuse of the doctrine of sin for two thousand years. The church, he argues, has internalized and individualized the significance and breadth of its notion. He brilliantly suggests that we alienate the alienation of the doctrine of sin for the sake of the alienated. Unlike Hegel who believed in reconciliation with alienation, he negates or alienates the alienation of the doctrine of sin. He directly contradicts Freudian psychoanalytic diagnosis of social wrongs. His idea of *alienation* as widespread among Christians matches Marx's concept of *alienation* prevalent among laborers. Contrasting with Marx who wanted to remove religion altogether, his notion of theological alienation can redeem Christianity by alienating the alienation of the traditional doctrine of sin.