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## I. Introduction

This author will claim that the discourse of the contemporary minjung theology must be operative at the very center of the social, economic and political arenas by intervening the conflicts of different powers and narratives to seek or create a right narrative that can be reached through dialogues and agreements among them in society.

I think that minjung theology stands between political and public theologies when it comes to reflecting on the meaning of Christian mission in the face of socio-economic-political issues. Not only being critical but being public is necessary for minjung theology discourses. Minjung theology must raise its public voice so that it is reasonable and open enough to be heard by the public.

I will argue that minjung theology must become a politicized public theology in order to address public issues. Being a public theology minjung theology will no longer be out of the main current of the society. Minjung theology, however, currently tends to deal with marginal issues of the society. Minjung theology has been ghettoized. Minjung theology has been isolated from the main current in social and ecclesiastical discourses, and even from theological communities in Korea. It quite often avoids being involved in the current issues of the times, focusing instead on detailed issues or abstract ideas. In order to overcome this problem, minjung theology must

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recover its public nature and expand its narrative dimension. I think that minjung theology must be a public theology when it comes to reflecting on the meaning of Christian mission in the face of socio-economic-political issues.

It seems that the presence of minjung theology in the public domain has been diminishing. No more attention is given to minjung theology in seminaries, churches, universities and the society as a whole. The ghettoization of minjung theology is caused by marginalization, particularism and exclusivism in minjung theological discourses. Minjung theological works are not read even by minjung theologians themselves. Terminologies and contents of minjung theological discourses are not easily understandable to many. Minjung theologians in our time need dialogue for identifying divergent points, building consensus among differences, and establishing common issues, problems, methods, languages and concepts.

Because of the lack of recognition of the church and seminaries for minjung theology, it has become a marginal theology in Korea. The responsibility lies in both the conservative theological communities and minjung theologians themselves. The latter have failed in making their theology public, reasonable, and creative enough to be acceptable to the mind of the contemporary intellectuals, the public, and Christians, and more importantly to the mind of minjung, the ordinary people. In the 1970's and 80's minjung theology was marginal in the church, but it was in the main currents in the then world of discourses and loved by minjung themselves. Now it is marginal in the church, in the world of discourse, and even in the ecumenical movement. Lamentation and shedding tears are not the right choice for us to take at this time. We need to change ourselves. My suggestions that I will propose here in this paper include reviving the subjecthood or subjectivation of minjung in our practice and theory and making our discourses more dynamic and universal, and importantly public. I think my suggestion, strengthening the narrative strategy to overcome the conceptual strategy that has been employed by many minjung theologians, will provide a breakthrough for the stalemate of minjung theology.

## II. The Loss and Recovery of the Public Dimension of Minjung Theology

Now, I will attempt at finding the reasons why minjung theology has lost its public dimension and has been ghettoized. I will analyze in two directions: the loss of universalism and the loss of narrativity. These two losses are closely connected.

### 1) Particularism and Universalism

Minjung theology has boasted of its uniqueness and has made many claims that can be considered particularistic and one-sided to the eyes of ordinary people and academics. I will argue that new minjung theology must cope with particularism, and, as much as it can, expand universalism based upon "enlarged thought or mentality" to borrow the terms of Hannah Arendt.

Minjung theology is a *Korean* theology. It values Korean-ness. Recently some theologians even coined a neologism, K-Theology, imitating the world-renowned expression K-Pop. Ironically, this Korean particularism can be seen more than any other in Ahn Byungmu, who had studied in Europe for a long time and had come under the influence of German theology and Existentialism. He criticizes the theology and philosophy of the West, which he says is captivated by the binary formula of subject and object. But I think that such a critique is seriously unfair and inexact, because such claims cannot stand any more. He tried to defend minjung theology from the critiques of Western theologians by distinguishing the way of holistic thinking in the Orient from

the binary way of thinking in the West.<sup>2</sup> Ahn argues that our way of thinking and theologizing is different from that of the West, because the colonial experiences and distinct cultures and traditions of the people in Korea and Asia are different from those of the imperial West. Contextualization has the tendency of leaning toward particularism. But contextualization can do justice to people in different contexts, because they have unique, contextual questions and issues to answer. Ahn wished to realize the movement of minjung theology not only as uniquely Korean and Asian, but as an authentic alternative to Western theology. On the other hand, Suh Nam Dong was nicknamed the antenna of theologies in the world. He thought that minjung theology walks hand in hand with liberation, political and progressive theologies and philosophies from other parts of the world.<sup>3</sup> We can detect universalism alive in Suh Nam Dong's thoughts.

Ahn's attempt was valuable, and we have to continue such an orientation in our reasoning and theologizing. Particularism, however, must be overcome. Particularism, a hardening of contextualization, may hinder us from being universal and from live dialogues with and learning from others in the West and other parts of the world. The 1970s and 1980s of the first generation minjung theologians was the period before the age of globalization.

Now I would like to move to a fundamental issue that is related to minjung particularism or exclusivism. My argument is that we the normal people in this outrageous normality have to be justified to the victim, the crucified people. Why not justified to the generally accepted reason or common sense of the common citizens? There are two opposing positions: particular and universal. How can we harmonize the claims and demands of the victims with those of all

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<sup>2</sup>We can see it in his reply to German Christians and theologians. Ahn Byungmu, "A Reply to the Theological Commission of the Protestant Association for World Mission (Evangelisches Missionswerk)" *An Emerging Theology in World Perspective, Commentary on Korean Minjung Theology* (Mystic, Conn.: Twenty-third Publications, 1988): 198-199.

<sup>3</sup>Suh Nam Dong, *Minjung Shinhak ui Tamgu* (Study of Minjung Theology) (Seoul: Hankilsa, 1983), 164.

reasonably moral persons, i.e. the democratic public? To put it another way: how can we harmonize revelation and reason? I think it is safe to follow the insight of Paul Tillich: revelation is the depth of reason. In other words, reason, the general consensus of all participating members of society, must be justified to the revelation and message for the unconditional care for the victims of the world. But our another problem is this: can the revelation (the unconditional care for the victims) also be justified to the common reason that can be agreed by all members? Of course, it would look excessive to the eyes of common reason. So it would not be agreed upon by all; but for God's faithful subjects it is not only acceptable but required. How can we resolve such a clash between rationality and revelatory imperatives? I will attempt at resolving it in the below.

Some exclusive nuance can be detected when we hear Suh Nam Dong saying: rich people are not entitled to pray the prayer Jesus taught (The Lord's Prayer).<sup>4</sup> In other places, Suh Nam Dong announced that resurrection is not related to natural death, a universal phenomenon for all humanity, but to the special death of murder and political execution.<sup>5</sup> For him the crucifixion of Jesus is a political murder and execution, and resurrection has nothing to do with other deaths that are related to age, accident, disease, and other causes. He established a correlation between political murder and resurrection, which can end up with a particular and limited meaning of resurrection. Then faith in resurrection can be limited and particularized.

How can we reconcile particularity and universality in the project of minjung theology, a project of the poor and the victims liberating themselves by their own subjectivization and power? Particularity should not go to its extreme, that is, to exclusivism, i.e., an exclusive claim of the poor to justificatory power or to any automatic privilege for redemption. Particularity (the unlimited care for the poor) must not be confined within itself, but branch out to reach, touch, and change all aspects of all people's social and political life. Minjung theologians warned against universalism

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<sup>4</sup>Suh Nam Dong, 13.

<sup>5</sup>Suh Nam Dong, 54.

without particularism' of the danger of spiritualization and de-politicization. Genuine universalism must begin with particular contexts. This, I believe, is what the first generation minjung theologians had a keen interest in, and what we must continue.

Love that traverses all different classes, groups and individuals in a particular context can only be fulfilled when the constituent members and groups reach an agreement that is justified to the victims of the particular existing structure or to the least benefitted from the society. The demand of the revelation for the care of victims and for the justification of our situation to the victims must be met in the public sphere that is open to hear the voice of the victims. An authentic public sphere cannot be closed to the voices of the victims. It must be also an open and free communicative space where each member of the society is given the privilege of sharing his/her narrative and arguments.

## 2). Why Has the Narrative in Minjung Theology Been Diminishing?

We find very few narratives in minjung theological writing today. The first generation theologians such as Suh Nam Dong and Kim Yongbock employed narratives in their theologizing. But now this trend has significantly disappeared. We need to look into the reason for this phenomenon. The demise or the loss of narrative in minjung theology seems to constitute one of the reasons why minjung theology has been dying. The loss of narrative turns the language of minjung theology into the language of abstract ideas and concepts. The conceptual strategy has overshadowed the narrative strategy in grappling with suffering minjung, the Bible and other scriptures. The result is the decline of the dynamics of our discourses. Narrative is a more useful discourse than any other types of discourse to represent the real conditions of our lives and to expose conflicts and power relations among different social and political groups, which have their

own narratives and discourses. As a political and public theology, minjung theology needs to increase its narrative strategy in its discussions of theological problems.

One of our weaknesses in doing theology lies in our conceptual-only strategy. Our ability to bring narratives into our discourse and to make our theology aesthetically acceptable to the taste, sentiment and mind of the ordinary people has been weakened. A meaningful event and action that creates a new thing cannot be expressed if not through a narrative. A narrative has two sides, historical and fictional. It depicts reality by telling stories. I am here distinguishing between narrative and story. By narrative I mean a form of making the representation of things and figures in plot, that is, in their causal and temporal relations, and by story I mean the content of the narrative. By telling stories, narrative redeems the life of defeated and *han*-ridden people. Narratives resurrect defeated people and their unfulfilled hopes into life. The story of Spartacus, for example, resuscitates the hope and dreams of defeated slaves/people. Narratives let us transcend our ordinary normative life and lure us in the midst of uncertainty, to a life narratives reveal to us anew. Narrative reveals an alternative life and reality. Narratives with agents, protagonists, and other figures and their interconnections show us what life is. A narrative is like a mirror, on which we see ourselves and learn about life. This is why we love stories and narratives.

Narrative creates an alternative time and history by accounting actions and events into stories with plots and themes. Actions and events are, I believe, two major motives that make us subjects of history. Narratives, which are written in texts, can hold the two easily disappearing phenomena in a permanent way, being always available for our hearts and minds. The narrative stories of Jesus's actions and events are an example. By creating meaningful stories, narrative holds the significance of actions and events in permanence for the hearers. Without the narrative, actions and events disappear quickly. A narrative holds and coordinates action and events in the plot, so that their meanings can be released by a proper hermeneutical process in different contexts.

Narrative provides us with identity, sense of direction, the common value and worldview, the common ethos, and often consolation and redemption. Suh Namdong claims, "The means of God's self-revelation is primarily historical events of salvation, and the authentic means of communication of such events is 'narrative.'" He continues, "Therefore, New Testament and Old Testament are full of narrative literatures. The language (?) of God is narrative, Jesus's communication method narrative, and that of the Holy Spirit the language of the body, not of the head. The means of God's revelation is not speculative reasoning, concept, and word, but action, event, life, and narrative." He adds, "God may be like a person who gets headache with abstract thoughts and concepts, so I imagine He communicates Himself with acts, events, and narratives."<sup>6</sup> Suh Namdong's idea of counter theology or de-theology should not be confused that by that he actually wanted to be graduated from theology, but his intention with those terminologies is that narratives instead of doctrines and abstract concepts must become major tools and means by which to communicate revelation and gospel relevant to our contexts.

Minjung theology has the tendency of favoring synoptic Gospels especially the Gospel of Mark because they are composed of narratives. Letters of Apostle Paul are non-narrative, although they are not necessarily conceptual and abstract. Miracles and stories are hardly visible in Pauline letters. But I would argue that Pauline letters also have a high narrativity, and are full of insights into the teachings of Christianity. The Gospel authors, who were the second and third generations of writers of Jesus' movement, may have sensed that the way of describing Jesus' movement in Pauline letters is necessary, but not enough. They had sensed the need of narratives of Jesus' actions and of God's events through Jesus for communicating the spirit of Jesus to their contemporaries and beyond.

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<sup>6</sup>Suh Namdong, 305.



### 3) Convergence and Divergence of the Narratives

As mentioned in the above, my discussion will be based on the distinction between story and narrative, although that distinction may sound artificial and not be helpful often. Agreeing with other literary scholars, I suppose that a narrative is a representation of events in a structure and that a story is a presentation of series of events in a chronological sequence. Story is closed in the past events. We cannot alter the events in the past. A story can be revived and resurrected in a new form by the narrative. Narrative is open to the present and the future. Narrative is delivered by narrators. A story is a raw material for a narrative. A narrative involves plot that is the "causal and logical structure that connects events." Thus, plot intensifies the connectivity between events in a narrative. A story and narrative is open to, and invites interpretations. Social and political groups offer conflicting narratives on the same social and political events. For example, the sinking of Sewol ferry in 2014, which killed 304 persons, whose majority were high school students, has brought forth conflicting narratives on the same incident, depending on the narrators. The Government and its representatives picture the event as an unpredictable, unavoidable accident, while victims' families tell that the incident was structurally caused and most of the victims might have been rescued if the government had the will to rescue them.

Our society is full of conflicts among different interest groups. Their stories and discourses are different according to their group identities. They are different in interests, powers, narratives and discourses. There are different narratives that are competing to win an overdetermining and hegemonic status in the society. For example, there is the Tripartite Committee of Labor, Management, and Government, a government committee that aims at creating a consensual narrative out of different narratives of labor, management and government. Recently the three party committee failed and labor strikes broke out in Korea. The Korean society experiences everyday such divergences of narratives and discourses on many social, economic,

cultural and political issues. The recent divergence on the Public Servants Pension Plan in Korea is another example. Public servants are diametrically opposed to the plan of the government. Society is divided on various issues. Convergences of narratives are rare phenomena in our times. Narratives diverge between the poor and the rich, and between right and left. Conflicts among different narratives are common phenomena. There are hegemonic narratives and counter-narratives that aims at replacing the former.<sup>7</sup> Different social positions, offices, and authorities create conflicting narratives.

Convergence and consensus take place in the public realm. They do not happen unless a certain group of people take actions. Such a group of people, I propose, are faithful subjects, to borrow the term of Alain Badiou, the contemporary French philosopher. Badiou defines the faithful subjects as a group of people who has the fidelity to the truth of an event.<sup>8</sup>For Badiou, "every singular truth has its origin in an event taking place in a singular evental site."<sup>9</sup>

I would argue that Alain Badiou's conception of the fidelity of the faithful subject to an event or an idea lead us to a stalemate. He does not fully consider the possible fallibility of the faithful subject. He does not take into account the connective relationship of the faithful subject with other subjects. Also, he does not fully account for the possibility of the change of the narrative told by the faithful subject as others do. I would argue that rather than being faithful to an idea or an event, the subject must be open to and ready to change him/herself, so that his/her mentality may be enlarged. Alain Badiou is a so-called sophisticated Platonist. He believes that the meaningful change is made possible by the subject who has a truth or an idea. The problem is how a truth is gained. The Platonist Badiou believes that a truth has "its origin in an event taking

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<sup>7</sup>Rainer Forst, *Justification and Critique* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2014), 10.

<sup>8</sup> Alain Badiou, *Logics of Worlds, Being and Event, 2* (New York: Continuum, 2009), 53.

<sup>9</sup>Peter Hallward, *Badiou: A Subject to Truth* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003) xxvi.

place in a singular evental site.”<sup>10</sup>Badiou implies here that one can be expected to experience a truth only when he/she stands at the “outside of the cave,” which is equivalent to the evental site.<sup>11</sup>

But I would like to suggest an alternative path, whose essence is a relational conception of truth. Other thinkers such as John Rawls and Rainer Forst call it “procedural justice.”<sup>12</sup>Similarly, I here utilize a relational conception of truth that is derived from Hannah Arendt’s concept of judgment in her monumental work, *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy*.

According to Arendt, Kant believed that judgment made by a private sense by individuals without communication with others can be not only irrelevant but insane.<sup>13</sup> A common sense is created when actors or faithful subjects communicate with the spectators who constitute the public realm. Arendt argued, “The public realm is constituted by the critics and the spectators or the makers.”<sup>14</sup> Therefore, if actors and faithful subjects lose the contact with spectators and the public, they cannot be supported by the public. Actors alone cannot change the world. That is the lesson Korean minjung learned from history. The *Donghak* peasants’ arms struggle against the Japanese imperial powers aligned with the *Chosun* dynasty failed because they did not get any support from other sectors of *Chosun* (an old name of Korea) such as intellectuals, elite groups, and *Chosun* royal armies.<sup>15</sup>From history we learn that the public realm is opened and widened by

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<sup>10</sup>Kwon Jinkwan, “The Dialectic of Presentation and Representation: A Strategy to Fight Neocolonialism in Korea,” *Asian Christian Review*, Vol.6 No.1, Summer, 2012, (Tokyo, Japan): 98.

<sup>11</sup>Refer to Plato’s Parable of the Cave. Plato described a gathering of people who had lived chained to the wall of a cave all of their lives, facing a blank wall. They watched shadows projected on the wall by things passing in front of a fire behind them. Plato believes that the philosopher is not like the prisoner, but he is a freed man from the cave and comes to understand the true form of reality rather than the mere shadows seen by the prisoners.

<sup>12</sup> Forst, 36.

<sup>13</sup>Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), Kindle Edition, Location 1278 of 3603.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., Location 1262 of 3603.

<sup>15</sup>I explained it in my article “The Dialectic of Presentation and Representation.”

the collaborations between the actors (the faithful subjects) and the spectators (the third party).

Minjung theology has seen minjung (faithful subjects) as subjects and changers of history. But historical actors are involved in the events so immediately and closely that they sometimes fail to create a critical distance and are lost in the complexes of the events. They need the third parties, critics, and spectators, which can be categorized under the term, the public. The families of the victims of the *Sewol* Ferry disaster appeared as faithful subjects and actors of change since April 16, 2014 when the disaster occurred. They know the importance of the remembrance of the disastrous events by the public, without which their action cannot have the momentum. Actors need the public's applauses, participations, representations, assistance, and favor. Therefore, actors need to take communicative actions. Without communication with others, the actor cannot achieve his/her values and goals. Communication lets the actor be vulnerable to change, and furthermore it lets him/her enlarge his/her mind and thought. Arendt asserts that one needs to "'enlarge' one's own thought so as to take into account the thoughts of others."<sup>16</sup> For Kant and Arendt "an enlarged mentality is the condition *sine qua non* of right judgment, [and] one's community sense makes it possible to enlarge one's mentality."<sup>17</sup> Arendt states, "communicability obviously depends on the enlarged mentality, [and] one can communicate only if one is able to think from the other person's standpoint."<sup>18</sup>

Faithful subjects and actors are expected to reinterpret and renarrate their self-narratives, thus "getting their histories straight" and telling the "right story."<sup>19</sup> They have to be open to transform themselves by thinking from others' perspectives. They must be ready to transform their narratives on the enlarged thought and mind achieved from communication with others. They must narrate a new narrative in a way that takes into account other narratives. Minjung

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<sup>16</sup> Arendt, Location 851 of 3603.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., Location 1459 of 3603.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Location 1485 of 3603.

<sup>19</sup> Joseph E. Davis, ed. *Stories of Change: Narrative and Social Movements* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 2002), 23.

public theology aims at achieving such an enlarged and truthful narrative. It seeks convergence of different narratives through dialogues and negotiations into an enlarged narrative that is supposed to rule the public life.

### III. Jesus the Hero of Communicative Action in the Gospel of Mark

Now, I would like to secure the Biblical foundation for my conception of minjung public theology. Following Richard Horsley and Tom Thatcher and adopting their narrative approach to the Gospels, I will focus on Jesus' activities in terms of his interaction with villager, followers, opponents, and rulers of Israel.<sup>20</sup>

#### 1) With Rulers and Contemporary Revolutionaries

What did the historical Jesus do for his movement of the Kingdom of God? One thing for sure is that Jesus was not a popular messianic figure in the ordinary sense of the first century Judea and Galilee. He certainly did not organize a revolt against the established powers. Jesus distanced himself from violent uprisings against the Roman imperial order. But he was crucified as a political prisoner. Some of his disciples pictured him as a popular king. Pontius Pilate crucified him as "king of the Judeans." But Jesus rejected such a designation.(Mark 8:32-33) What provokes the high priests and Pilate to put Jesus to death was not Jesus's actions as king or messiah (Christ) of the Judeans, but his communicative actions in the communities of Judea and Galilee. The aim of his public actions was to renewal of Israel.<sup>21</sup> By communicative action I mean intersubjective and relational action that is done by individuals and groups on the basis of mutual recognition

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<sup>20</sup>Richard Horsley and Tom Thatcher, *John, Jesus & the Renewal of Israel*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2013), 63.

<sup>21</sup>Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and the Powers: Conflict, Covenant, and the Hope of the Poor* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 2011), 191.

and deliberation especially on justice for all members of a community and a society. His activities of healings are not one-sided one, but mutual and communicative one ("Your faith has saved yourself.") Jesus' heroic character is not attested by his suffering and death on the cross, but by his communicative actions in cooperation with the villagers (and *minjung*) of Judea and Galilee for the Rule of God, which actually points to the sovereignty of people or to people's public realm.

Jesus' rejection of the title king or messiah has important implications. At the time of Jesus, man who had the title of king or messiah was thought to gather people, overthrow evil and unholy powers, and restore Israel as a kingdom. But what Jesus tried to build is to restore the sovereignty of people, especially the oppressed.<sup>22</sup> What made Jesus' actions different from those of the other popular prophets, kings, and messiahs in the 1<sup>st</sup> century Israel was that whereas the latter led "their followers out of their villages and into the wilderness or up to the Mount of Olives," Jesus with his disciples and followers entered the villages and "addressed issues of social-economic interactions in village communities." Thus, Jesus' sayings and doings must be understood in connection with villagers and their concrete problems and issues.<sup>23</sup> Jesus' speech and action were political even though he did not lead a revolt unlike then popular kings and messiahs. Jesus established an equal dialogical relationship with villagers. Jesus was very critical of the exploitative system of the Jewish temple structures, which make poor villagers poorer. The Roman governor Pilate, however, posted "king of the Judeans" on Jesus' cross, which denotes that it was "the official charge for which he was crucified."<sup>24</sup>

## 2) With John the Baptizer

**Location:** In the beginning of the Gospel of Mark, it is said that Jesus met first John the

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 192.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 93.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 193.

baptizer who was in the wilderness proclaiming the baptism of repentance. What made Jesus distinct from John in the wilderness is that Jesus went into the villages and cities. He went to Capernaum and on the Sabbath, he entered the synagogue, a public place and opined his ideas on important issues with power and authority.(1:21-22) The mission strategy of Jesus was different from that of the baptizer who remained in the wilderness, proclaiming the baptism. Not only the mission field was different between Jesus' and John's, but also the kind of activities was different. Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God, healed the sick and shared meals with people. John proclaimed repentance and judgment. John was not intercommunicative; his was a one-way communication.

More distinctively Jesus communicated and interchanged with the people by telling narratives and teaching about many life-related issues. That is, Jesus entered the villages and acted communicative actions with and for the villagers and city-dwellers. The Gospel of Mark emphasizes that Jesus and his disciples went throughout Galilee (1:39). Jesus healed a leper, a paralytic and many others. In Capernaum, Jesus' residential house was surrounded by the multitude. Jesus taught them.(2:1-2) Jesus went out beside the sea, a big crowd gathered around him.(2:13)

**Fasting:** John's disciples (and the Pharisees) fasted, but Jesus and his disciples feasted.(2:16-19) Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners. Eating together means dialoguing and sharing commonalities, and creating friendship and community.

### 3) With the Pharisees

**Keeping the Sabbath:** The Pharisees were critical of Jesus for he ate with tax collectors and sinners and healed the sick on the Sabbath. He defended his disciples who plucked heads of grain and ate them on the Sabbath. The Pharisees rebuked them because they claimed it was unlawful to do it on the Sabbath.(2:23-24) Jesus pronounced that the Son of Man (the

humans) is the lord of the Sabbath. For the Pharisees, keeping the commandments and the law of the Sabbath is the priority, while for Jesus eating together with people and curing the sick is more mandatory, urgent and necessary.

#### 4) The Kingdom of God and the Public Realm

A large crowd very often gathered around Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother." (3:34) The crowd got encouraged and spirited to become his co-workers. In the parable of the sower, the seed, a symbolic expression of the Kingdom of God, is sown in different soils. The seed sown in good soil yield "thirty and sixty and a hundredfold." (4:8) But dry land, rocks, and thorns, which symbolize structures and powers that deny the sovereignty of ordinary people and God, prevent the Kingdom of God from growing and spreading.

I would like to propose that we use the term "the Kingdom of God" and the modern term the "public realm" in parallel. If the Kingdom of God is not a substantive object like an already established and closed structure, but is a space where ordinary people (the son of man), sovereign equals, are called to participate in God's liberation and justice, then it is close to the public realm where sovereign equals deliberate and cooperate together to construct a democratic and humane society. Jesus came to spread the Kingdom of God (the public realm) in every village and town of Israel. The parable of the growing seed (4:26-29) and the parable of the mustard seed (4:30-32) help us to understand why the Kingdom of God can be read as the public realm in a modern sense. The Kingdom of God is not a closed system, but it grows from small to large. A mustard is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, but it grows to the greatest of all shrubs. (4:31-32) Likewise, the public realm has to grow like a seed sown in good soil.

How does the Kingdom grow? Mark's text states that like the sower does not know how the tree has grown out of a small seed. Traditionally interpreters suggested that the Kingdom of



God is grown without our efforts and participations, and that it is a gift by the grace of God. I think that such an interpretation has misunderstood the real intention of Jesus. Jesus strategy for the Kingdom is to visit all the villages and towns to call all the dwellers to participate to construct justice, peace, and love in Israel. If not for their participation, the Kingdom movement may end up in failure. The Kingdom of God like the public realm in a modern sense is a space in which people as sovereign equals deliberate and determine on justice and peace. It is an intersubjective and socio-political realm. The Kingdom of God as well as the public realm does not grow automatically without people's self-critical and self-conscious participation. That is why Jesus invited but very often avoided the crowds and multitudes because they might have been swayed only by Jesus' wondrous work such as healings of the sick.(3:7-10) Jesus did not want the multitudes to remain passive masses or emotionally agitated mobs. If that was Jesus' principle, the event that the Gerasene person, who had been healed from the possession of the evil spirits called Legion, "begged" Jesus that he might be with him, but Jesus "refused"(5:18-19), may well be understood. Jesus may have seen the danger of an emotional decision. Jesus wanted the former maniac to return to a restored life in his community. Jesus did not want his miraculous healings to become public.(5:43, 7:36) He sternly commanded the cleansed leper not to say anything to anyone.(1:43)

**Communicative Action:** I would argue that the amazing event of feeding the five thousand was a pinnacle of Jesus' and his disciples' communicative action. Jesus, his disciples and the large multitude were communicative with one another. Jesus offered first what he had, the five loaves of bread and the two fish, and the multitude responded by sharing theirs. All five thousand were filled.

Jesus' pronouncement that "your faith has made you well" is another expression of Jesus' communicative action. To the woman who had suffered from hemorrhages for twelve years touched Jesus' cloak and got healed Jesus announced, "Your faith has made you well."(5:34) He pronounced the same to Bartimaeus, a blind man who actively sought healing from

Jesus.(10:52) Jesus denounced scribes because they wanted to monopoly honor, status, and properties.(12:38-40) Jesus even put down king David, by denying the tradition's belief that the Messiah is the son of David, and by this he criticized the tradition keepers, the scribes.(12:25-37) The large crowd heard it "with delight."(12:37) We may well conclude that Jesus shared with the large crowd communicative action that can be possible in the absence of unequal distributions of privileges and powers in the religious, social, economic life of people.

Jesus' remark that God is God not of the dead, but of the living (12:27) is a highly politicized statement. Jesus responded to the Saducees, who occupied high ranks in the Judaic religious structure and were manipulators of the past tradition to justify the hierarchical religious structure. By announcing that God is the God of the living, Jesus turned the table on the manipulators of the past tradition such as chief priests, the Saducees, and the Pharisees, and stood for the change of politics of the past to that of the present that concentrates on mutual concerns in the livelihood of common people. For Jesus, caring and healing the needy and keeping the Sabbath cannot be equal in the priority. The former is far more important, because the son of man (the humanity) is the lord of the Sabbath. Also, that is more imperative than offering whole burnt sacrifices.(12:33)

#### IV. Conclusions

I have analyzed the reasons why minjung theology has been declining. Minjung Theology has been ghettoized and isolated from the main currents of discourses in the church, academia, and society. Minjung theology has suffered from marginalization, particularism, and conceptual strategy. Thusly, minjung theology has lost its public dimension, indulging in abstractions and conceptualizations. I have claimed that in order to overcome the ghettoization of minjung theology minjung theology must fully utilize narratives in its theological discourses. Narratives keep theology from being abstract and ideological. Narratives reveal the reality as it is. The

narrative is related to the present and to the future. In this sense, narrative invites us to interpretation. Narratives induces new actions, and through new actions narratives expand and enlarge themselves. Taking others' thoughts and narratives into account allows for the enlarged mentality and narrative. An enlarged right narrative will provide a basis on which members of society can live harmoniously. Similarly, communicative actions and deliberations with spectators and the public will expand and widen the public realm, which is a space for people's sovereignty.

I have argued in this essay that minjung theology must become political and public theology that may be able to deal with major issues of the society. I reinterpreted the Gospel of Mark from the perspective of a political, public theology. I conclude that Jesus can be pictured as a hero of communicative action. Finally, the public theological elements in Jesus such as the conception of communicative action and the parallel between Kingdom of God and the public realm were inherited by Apostle Paul, who used the term *ecclesia* for the church. The *ecclesia* was a democratic and public space where equal citizens gathered to communicate and deliberate together on social and political issues in the time of ancient Athens. The Christian *ecclesia* was the place where there are no differences between free and slaves, male and female, and Jews and Gentiles.

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