



The Corrymeela Podcast – Season 3

Thanks so much for listening to The Corrymeela Podcast. You might like to discuss the episode and the accompanying questions with friends, family, or a discussion group, or just use them for your own writing and reflection.

If you're part of a group, be mindful and considerate of one another's willingness to engage in the discussion - leave space for people to keep their reflections to themselves if they want to. You might also want to agree on some general principles to stick to, like: everybody's invited to speak once before anyone speaks twice, and: try to assume that everybody is speaking with good intent.

In group discussions at Corrymeela, we seek to locate political and religious points of view within the story of the person speaking. If you're gathering as a group, consider how to create a sense of connectedness among you.

You might like to choose one or two of the Very Short Story questions that we like to put to guests at the end of each episode. Your answers to these can be one sentence long, or a few. Belongings are plural, as are identities and nationalities. So feel free to respond to these prompts in a way that reflects your own story.

- What's something important that you've changed your mind about?
- Are there books, poems, films, albums, works of art, etc that you've turned to again and again?
- Tell us about a time when your national identity felt important to you.
- Tell us about a time when you felt foreign.
- Is there a very short story you can tell us about a time when you said something that surprised you?
- Has anyone ever said that you were disloyal to one of your cultures or identities? Why?



Season 3, Episode 3. Dr. Dong Jin Kim
reflection questions & episode transcript

1. How much do/did you know about the situation on the Korean peninsula? Did anything in Jin's explanations surprise or especially stand out to you?
2. Jin complicates ideas around unification/ reunification, exploring the different ways in which those terms can be thought about. What struck you about that? Can you think of other examples of contested language being reflective of wider issues?
3. Jin talks about the difficulty of 'parity of esteem' as applied to any peace process on the Korean peninsula. What do you think are some of the complexities around the idea of parity esteem? What do you make of the idea that a peace process on the Korean peninsula would require there to be parity of esteem between the parties?
4. 'So it's almost like giving aid to the enemy with love, because, you know you care about each other's humanity. So humanitarian aid is really all about human relationship and humanity, rather than just providing goods to people you don't even see' (page 14). What possibilities do you think humanitarian aid can offer, beyond simply providing for people's immediate needs? What are some of the ways in which humanitarian aid has been problematised/weaponised? What are some of the nuances around it?

Dong Jin Kim is a writer and academic whose research interests are in the areas of peacebuilding, humanitarian and development cooperation, theology, and comparative studies of peace processes. He has collaborated with various humanitarian, development, and peace and reconciliation organisations, including Okedongmu Children in Korea, Korean Sharing Movement, and Corrymeela. Jin was a Senior Research Fellow in Peace and Reconciliation Studies at the Irish School of Ecumenics at Trinity College Dublin. He was a Goodwill Ambassador for Peace on the Korean Peninsula at the South Korean Ministry of Unification from 2020 to 2022. Jin is the author of *The Korean Peace Process and Civil Society: Towards Strategic Peacebuilding* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), and co-editor of *Reconciling Divided States: Peace Processes in Ireland and Korea* (Routledge, 2022, with David Mitchell).

Welcome to The Corrymeela Podcast: exploring stories and ideas about conflict, peace, theology, and art.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

Hello, my name is Pádraig Ó Tuama and you're listening to The Corrymeela Podcast. With me today is Dr. Dong Jin Kim: Jin is an author and academic who's written extensively about peace processes, with a particular focus on comparative studies of Ireland and Korea. He's worked in collaboration with various humanitarian and development and peace and reconciliation organisations, including Corrymeela and the Korean Sharing Movement and the Understanding Conflict Trust. He's also lectured at Trinity College Dublin, and universities in South Korea and England. For two years, from 2020 to 2022, he was Goodwill Ambassador for Peace on the Korean Peninsula at the South Korean Ministry of Unification. So Jin, you're very welcome to The Corrymeela Podcast.

Dong Jin Kim:

Thank you so much Pádraig for having me.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

It's a real pleasure. I want to start off with a question about your childhood, Jin: I'm curious if there was any friendship or experience of your childhood that you feel prepared you for the work that you do now?

Dong Jin Kim:

That's a very interesting question. I often recall the time when I visited this church, where my father, who is a theologian and a peace and human rights activist, had to sub in for the absence of this particular pastor (who was also a peace and human rights activist who later, he visited North Korea for peace and reconciliation movement), but anyway, upon his absence for his activism work my father had to go and sub in in that church. And then, although I wasn't really sure what was going on- and then to be honest, I, I tend to be very bored during, during any sort of service, worship service - I mean, I should have said it in the past sentence, so I'm not anymore! - but then, but then actually, in that church, I don't remember really the exact person who actually inspired me or prepared me for these types of work, but it was about the atmosphere of that particular church still stays with me; but I've, of course I've forgotten about this whole thing, but then I don't know, I mean, I mean, just when I heard from you about this

question, and then suddenly that, that kind of atmosphere, kind of the feeling sort of came back to me.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

And what was the feeling?

Dong Jin Kim:

It's, it's a bit like Corrymeela: it's kind of a hospitality, and then kind of welcoming spirit towards one another, although at that time, it was, I mean, South Korea was under the military dictatorship and then the church was full of sort of peace activists and human rights activists, those who wanted peace and reconciliation on the Korean peninsula, and then at the same time, democracy in South Korea. So it'd been really tough for many of them. But still, I could see smile, I could see generosity from people, but again that it was kind of a short encounter from my point of view to, to those types of community, however, it must have stayed with me.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

We're gonna talk a fair bit about Korea and the processes there and a little bit about the history, but I'm curious just to pick up on one thing, like you mentioned that your father too was a human rights worker, and a theologian also, and you also served as a chaplain in the Korean army. Could you talk a little bit about that sense of vocation for you into chaplaincy, and how that formed your perspective on conflict, as well as the contribution of theology?

Dong Jin Kim:

Thanks, Pádraig. To be honest, in terms of my sense of vocation, working as a chaplain was actually...I mean, in the beginning, it was probably because, you know, I had to serve in the military because it was a mandatory service...

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

Yeah, two years - is that right?

Dong Jin Kim:

Um, at the moment, it's, it's one and a half years for soldiers, and then for officers it's two to three years, so for me it was three years' mandatory service. And then I was really privileged to serve as a chaplain in the military because not many would get that opportunity. Because in

terms of the training that we get as a chaplain- so it wasn't just about Christian religion, but also Buddhism and other traditional Korean religion, sort of offers the types of chaplaincies in, in the military, and then you, you're still an officer; so I was a captain in the army, in the Korean army, and Presbyterian chaplain, and it was almost like for me to, to just automatically swooped into the military because of my theological training, and as well as the, kind of the sort of military but not full military training, so because I was- we were, we were not going to attack anybody because we were chaplains, but our main role was to give counselling to the soldiers, and then a bit of a civilian-military relations, and of course offering religious service. And then that actually became, for me that experience was quite life changing, because for the first time that I realised that this Korean conflict, which seemed dormant, and then nothing much is happening between North and South Korea physically, is, has been actually affecting many young people's life, even killing many young people because of the military service.

And then one day I got this phone call from the headquarter that I needed to go back to my unit, and, and then I realised that one of the soldiers got pretty upset, and then he actually killed one of his superiors with a snipe rifle, and then fled with that rifle; and then people were on a search mission, and then we were all really scared because people didn't know where the blood would come from, and, and then everybody was really panicking and I was the chaplain, and then, so asked- the soldiers asked for me to pray. And then the next day we were told that this particular soldier tried to commit suicide while fleeing, but he wasn't successful but he was paralysed for his life. And there were funerals, and then, and then after that, I sort of learned that he was terribly upset of course, I mean, most of the soldiers were upset because it was a mandatory service, and then, I probably can say that most of them didn't want to be there, separated from their loved ones and family. But they had to be there. And then there needed to be a strong justification for them to spend their time as a young man to be in that situation in the name of defending their country. But then, you know, they get upset, and then my role was to give them counselling and, and a bit of a justification, you know, for them to be there. However, as a chaplain, I failed. I must have met this young soldier because it was a mandatory thing for any new soldiers to go and meet with chaplain, but I mean, at that time in my division, there were about 10,000 soldiers; there were only three chaplains, but then that particular soldier, you know, must have met me, however, I couldn't really remember his face.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

It's a lot of, it's a lot of pressure to be a chaplain in the context of mandatory service, huge amounts of people in a division, and with all of the strange pressures that come from people who are wanting to serve their country, but also then probably having- wishing to be elsewhere, rather than being involved in mandatory service.

Dong Jin Kim:

Yeah, and that, I mean after that incident, I mean, I didn't really cope well. I mean, besides those tragic events and accidents, there were many other unfortunate events and accidents happened, including suicide accidents, and whole lot of things, but during those times I was challenged by one of the soldiers, that he was saying that it seems like you know things about two thousand- I mean happened two thousand years ago, as a Christian chaplain, but what do you know about, know about our situation now? Why do you think that we are here now, how does that relevant, I mean, how do you really see that all these Christian teachings are relevant in this situation, where North and South Korea are confronting each other with armed weapons and you're the chaplain- how could you really justify this from the perspective of Christianity which was born two thousand years ago? And, but my answer, I mean, I couldn't really find the right answer, although that I still love the teaching from Jesus about love and love your enemy, but I couldn't really explain very well about how that Jesus teaching can be reconciled with the situation we were all in, in the military. And then I, I asked the soldiers, and I mean, to be honest, I'm not too sure, and then what do you know about our situation, and then he actually said that he studied about North Korea in a political science department. And then he went to a university called the University of North Korean studies. And then I asked him: Is there a university such as University of North Korean studies in South Korea? And then he said yes! And then, so I got curious about, about that. So that's when I looked for further studies about North Korea, and peace and reconciliation in a different discipline. So, I was trained as a theologian but then later on life began another journey in the different disciplines, such as political science and peace studies, and try to learn more about the situation where I was in, and then the soldiers were in, and then all of the Korean citizens were in.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

Yeah. I mean, I'm guessing that lots of people know some things about Korea. I wonder if you could give a broad introduction to some of the history, and perhaps a little bit about the current

state of affairs, just as some broad brushstrokes in order to give some grounding for the conversation we're gonna have.

Dong Jin Kim:

Um, so Korean peninsula was under the Japanese colonial rule in the early 20th century, and then it was liberated from the Japanese colonial rule in 1945, but then immediately following the independence from Japan, it was divided by two. So North Korea- the northern part of the Korean peninsula was occupied by the Soviet army, and then the southern part of the Korean peninsula was occupied by the US military, effectively dividing the country into two, and for about three years they actually ruled the peninsula. And then, with the UN military mission, South Korea - southern part of the Korean peninsula - set up its government first, establishing Republic of Korea. And in reaction to this the northern part of the Korean peninsula, North Korea, created their own government called Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in North Korea, and again, consolidating the division, and in two years' time the war began; invaded so by North Korea (DPRK) into the south, south, southern part of the Korean peninsula was almost under the rule of DPRK, but then US intervened with United Nations, and it became like a world war on the peninsula. And then US was going to end the war with the use of atomic bomb like they did in Japan, but then it was actually facing a huge resistance from the European countries, mainly because they were worried about the spread of the war to the European continent, might mean the third world war, not only on the Korean peninsula, but, you know, in the European continent, between the east and the west block. So, the US actually reconsidered and began kind of the armistice negotiations with North Korea, and then by the time Chinese got involved and obviously the Soviet Union got involved, and then so, out of those negotiations the armistice agreement was established in 1953, and ever since that armistice agreement of 1953 and until now, the Korean peninsula is, is still technically at war, but still undergoing the armistice situation.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

And like in describing the peninsula it's impossible - and even in your hop, skip, and a jump through 20th century history - it's impossible to talk about the jurisdictions there without mentioning these other huge military and economic interests, from the USA, from Russia, from China, Japan... Um, so what is happening in Korea has eyes on it from all kinds of other large world powers: that must give a certain weightiness to any dialogue that's happening or any initiatives that occur to know that significant attention is being given to it.

Dong Jin Kim:

Yes, and again, that, you know, it's a geopolitical location that the Korean peninsula is in: it's surrounded by China, Japan, and Russia, and then US has bases in South Pacific, in Japan, and then it has base in Korea. And, you know they have Guam and Hawaii and all this sort of geopolitical context is making actually the Korean reconciliation very, very difficult. And as I mentioned before, now the North Korean leader this year is came out very strongly and saying that now we no longer want unification on the Korean peninsula. So it's, it's part because the leader, if I assume that is seeing the changing geopolitical situation in the world, and then right after the end of the cold war, North Korea was put into a very difficult situation because it was losing its allies, and it was isolated from its allies, and then former allies such as China and Russia, all normalised their relationship with South Korea, (ROK) and then they felt betrayed; and then they were suffering from various natural disasters like flooding and landslides, and, you name it. So, the country became quite poor and impoverished and suffering from humanitarian situation. And then, at that time, South Korea (ROK) initiated a peace and reconciliation, sort of movement and gesture toward North Korea; by the time South Korea became a more democratic country where people could vote for their president, and then there was this president called Kim Dae-jung, who initiated so-called 'Sunshine Policy' towards North Korea, initiating peace process, ended up meeting with then North Korea leader (the father of the current leader) Kim Jong Il, in 2000. And, and then our peace process began back then.

So it- but back in the day, many people were actually included in the peace process, even civil societies. Erm, I was part of the humanitarian aid community, so one of the NGO that I worked with, called Okedongmu Children, built hospitals in North Korea, so South Korean NGO built hospitals in North Korea, provided nutritional support to North Korean young people, so as part of the humanitarian missions, I was allowed to visit North Korea; under the South Korean National Security Law, I'm normally not allowed to do that, but then back in the day, we were able to do it. But, North- even though that we were going through peace process, whenever the geopolitical situation changes, and then the peace process became really vulnerable.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

You're listening to The Corrymeela Podcast, and I'm Pádraig Ó Tuama; with me today is Dr. Dong Jin Kim, who's an academic in peace and religion and comparative studies between Ireland and Korea, based currently in Dublin, and associated with Corrymeela and

many other humanitarian organisations, also. Jin, there's two particular questions I'd love to draw you out on, one of which is the term unification or reunification. I know in South Korea there's a ministry dedicated to this that you've had some affiliation with: I'd love to hear you talk a little bit about that, and to bring some complexity into the waters of it, and then to talk a little bit about the comparative analysis of Ireland and Korea, particularly when it comes to the concept of parity of esteem that you find in the Good Friday peace agreement. But let's, let's start off by talking about unification. I wonder if you could muddy the waters of that term for us a little bit.

Dong Jin Kim:

I'll try my best, I mean it's a really complicated situation; but perhaps I could start with my personal story related to the issue of re- or, reunification or unification, is that my grandparents were from North Korea: they were internally displaced during the Korean war, the active war time, and then they have never been allowed to go back to their hometown, so from their point of view, that it was a reunification that meant that it's kind of reunion with their loved ones and their family. And then most of the people who were from North Korea who had a family, actually trapped family who'd have passed because of their advancing age, and it's been nearly 80 years of division, so it's been very, very difficult for them; and then when we were having peace process, every year we had about a hundred family from each sort of, you know, part of the Korean peninsula to get together for three days. Er, six meals, but it was like a lottery because there were, you know, tens of thousands of people applied for that reunion, but then, you know, my grandparents didn't even get a chance. And of course, they all passed many years ago, they passed many years ago but then, not only my grandparents, there were many family who were affected by this: for those reunification means going back to their hometown and be reunited with their family. But for those who think about unification it's more like gearing towards the future. So that means we want unified Korean peninsula. It might not be the unification like before, because we came a long way, and then we've been divided for a long time, so it might not be possible for us to imagine reunification, but maybe we could be united again; so at the minute, the ministry that you referred to is called Ministry of Unification. And then North Korea actually had a department called United Front Department, which was the party, their workers' party organ. But again that as I mentioned before, the leader of North Korea, Kim Jong Un, ordered- I mean because of his belief that we shouldn't push unification anymore and, until, you know, the conditions are right, so he actually ordered the abolishment of that particular department. So this year, it's- so most of the organisations worked on the issue

of unification from the North Korean part, they are gone. And, yeah, in South Korea, we still have the Ministry of Unification.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

Yeah. I mean, what I hear therefore, is that, in South Korea, there are different motivations and different imaginations about what some kind of cross-border unification might look like. It's interesting, you know, from an outside point of view, it could be the imagination that each side- that there's only two points of view, you know, one from the north and one from the south. However, you're complicating it for us, which is helpful, and it's helpful too when it comes to thinking about other places that have known partition, to know that it isn't just that there's two points of view, that there's possibly three or four or five. Erm, what's being done- in South Korea, Jin, what's being done in terms of internal dialogue about the differences of approach, about what it means to address the border, and partition?

Dong Jin Kim:

Mmm, and again, that as you mentioned, it's a complicated issue, and also, it's a generational issue, too. So young people probably would not want anything to do with North Korea, because they might not understand why Koreans should be united; probably, they would probably still say that, I mean, unification might be needed because we are asked to say so, meaning that there is a unification called- you know, there is an education called unification education.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

OK. In high school- is that mandatory?

Dong Jin Kim:

Some are meant- I mean, it changes a lot, but then, yes. So it's an education called unification education. So it, I mean, you don't take an exam, it doesn't affect your, your academic studies but then every school has unification education, where you learn about North Korea and then a need for unification. But when you do the survey, I will say that probably still 30 percent of the population in South Korea, in the Republic of Korea will say that they want unification. But if you're asked to imagine unification happening right now, they say- only 30 percent, or less than 30 percent of the population say yes to unification now because they see North Korea as a poor country, and then unification'd bring the increase of tax. And then, that it might create a security problem for South Korea, because North Korea would feel that, you know, there

might be people from North Korea who'd feel angry about how the unification happened. So unification, it's the words itself, it's about integration and unity, but it's actually becoming- I mean, it's a root cause, I think it's a cause for all the different conflict and then violence, not only between North and South Korea, but also in South Korea it's a really contested term and concept, because again, in terms of ethnicity, of being Korean, it's quite a cultural thing. However, for many, unification has become a political thing. And then, in terms of the- again, the previously many old generation people, who actually wanted to have an opportunity to be reunited with their family, it was about human relations. However, in terms of the unification on the Korean peninsula, it's as though that it's kind of a norm. And it's a normative thing in Korea, you just have to say it, however, that it's really quite a political term, so, so that it creates conflict. Because if you somehow kind of eliminate the human dimensions and human relationship inside of those concepts.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

Yeah. I mean, what you're doing is, is kind of highlighting some of the problems that are not just unique to questions of unification on the Korean peninsula, you know, that that to look at the question of unification anywhere - we're gonna go on to talk about Ireland now - but, you know, to talk about that brings up questions of, and motivations of culture, and politics and trauma and conflict and family and memory and the future, and economics, all of these dynamics come in, and sometimes people are motivated ideologically and other times people are cautious pragmatically. And, those, those contribute to a very difficult environment for easy public communication and dialogue. What is it that drew you to come to do some comparative work in Ireland, Jin, and what are some of the things that you think are fruitful in, in doing some comparisons between Ireland and our relationship with partition and the border, and Korea?

Dong Jin Kim:

Thanks, thanks for the question, Pádraig. Erm, one thing I must say is that it's a completely different situation, and then the kind of you know, unification issue on the island of Ireland, and then the causes of the conflict: all very very different. But then what's interesting for me is, like you mentioned, that it's, although that we are all different, and we experience some common challenges, and that's what interests me. And because we are far away from one another, and each other, er we are not a threat to one another. So in- when I look at the situation on the island of Ireland, even though it's really about Ireland, I think about Korea a lot, and

then I know that it's not a scientific sort of method of, kind of drawing some kind of, you know, findings out of these comparative, sort of methodologies, but then to me it was really about seeing myself from the stories of the other. Um, let me give you an example, like we were talking about parity of esteem, the concept of parity of esteem...

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

That's a phrase that you find in the Good Friday Agreement- parity of esteem.

Dong Jin Kim:

Exactly, but it's a very, very challenging concept on the Korean peninsula. And I don't think that it can be used at the minute in South Korea, for example, particularly when North Korean leader, the DPRK leader, said that they don't want unification of the Korean peninsula and then he actually pointed out South Korea (ROK) as its constitution, claiming the entire territory of the Korean peninsula. And then North Korean leader blamed South Korea for having a dream of unification by absorption, so that means that South Korea would want the Korean peninsula be united under the South Korean flag. And that's not going to happen. As long as South Korea has its constitution, they say we are not interested in talking about, talking about unification. So...

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

Because parity of esteem is something from the Good Friday Agreement that says that esteem is given to people who wish to continue the way things are where Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom, as well as give esteem and parity of esteem to people who would say that they're moving and working for a democratic way within which the north of Ireland would be reunited with the Republic, and that constitutionally as a result of the peace agreement in Ireland, esteem is given to both of those points of view politically. Whereas you're saying that esteem and parity of esteem would be impossible at the moment because they see each other's constitutional point of view to be invasive, I suppose.

Dong Jin Kim:

Yeah. You know, I mean, while listening to you, and you're talking about north of Ireland, slash Northern Ireland. And then I can really can see that, that even, you know, in terms of the expressions about north of Ireland, and Northern Ireland, and all these sort of different understanding about the region, culture, ethnicity, and it actually fascinates me, although again,

that I'm not an expert on the issues of Ireland, but again, that I'm seeing sort of my issues from, from the conversations and stories of the island of Ireland. For example, John- the late John Hume talked about unification saying that it's not about the, you know, it's not about the territory. It's about people. So I completely agree with him, even though that we come from really different contexts. But then in terms of the Korean peninsula, at the minute because North Korean leader said such a thing about South Korean constitution, it's going to be hard to imagine South Korea revise its constitution. Just like Republic of Ireland - southern Ireland, or south of Ireland - did back in the day right after the Good Friday or Belfast Agreement. And it was, I think, on the basis of parity of esteem, that the Republic of Ireland revised its constitution from claiming the entire island of Ireland and recognising the sovereignty of Northern Ireland, but on the condition that if people from the north of Ireland - Northern Ireland - and then Republic of Ireland all wants unification, then you know, you can have unity on the island of Ireland.

So I would think that, you know, without the condition of parity of esteem on the Korean peninsula, peace process will be very, very difficult. But another challenging bit about concept of parity of esteem on the Korean peninsula is that the image of North Korea. Because North Korea (DPRK) has been accused of human rights violation, and personally, I think that most of the accusations are true; so that means, you know, North Korea, and people are suffering from human rights violations in the country, not only civil and political rights, but also economic rights, too, because they are put in a really difficult situation. But, these human rights violation is possible, not just because North Korean leader wouldn't care about its people- I do believe that any leaders - I mean, you know, you can't really judge the character of a person - but then would care for, for their citizens, but then they're put in an impossible situation when they're facing against the, the pressure from the western world and also from their neighbours, such as China and Russia. So their justification of that human rights violation is that they're actually at war situation, and at a war time that you just have to do these things and that things- it was the same justification mechanism happened when South Korea was under the military dictatorship. So I think that you know, the best way to resolve the human rights issues in North Korea is to achieve peace and reconciliation, and then peace and reconciliation requires peace process on the Korean peninsula, and peace process requires the concept of parity of esteem, which is necessary, but then the parity of esteem concept has been challenged because of the image of North Korea, which is being seen as human rights violator with nuclear weapons.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

You're listening to The Corrymeela Podcast and I'm Pádraig Ó Tuama. With me today is writer and academic and peace worker Dong Jin Kim. Jin, I'd like to talk to you a little bit about humanitarian efforts. You know, you've written about the complexities about- around humanitarian aid and we see that particularly at the moment about how humanitarian aid itself can become contested and even a weaponised thing during times of conflict, and you have written about the possibilities that could be offered by global health diplomacy. I wonder if you could share some of your thoughts about the place of humanitarian relief and joint efforts to address global health concerns and what they might offer as part of a suite of interventions regarding conflict, regarding marginalisation, regarding separation and the threat of war.

Dong Jin Kim:

So, I've been working with various humanitarian organisations and although that their priority is to assist a vulnerable population in the situation of poverty, and hunger, and various disasters, but then, you know, that can also create a space for reconciliation between people; for example, like if South Korean organisation provide humanitarian aid to North Korea, and then that interaction between North and South Korean people, if it's been, you know the aid cooperation is actually respecting, again, the concept of parity of esteem, and then it could really, actually create a space for people to think about the other. So it's almost like giving aid to the enemy with love, because, you know you care about each other's humanity. So humanitarian aid is really all about human relationship and humanity, rather than just providing goods to people whom you don't, you don't even see, so I think that there is a value in it; and then there's also the issue of justice because of the globalisation and then with the neoliberalism, and there are many people who are suffering not only from natural disaster, but man-made disaster in the name of capitalism, and in the name of free market economy, and you see many, many people are suffering, even within so-called wealthy countries and in countries in part of OECD, and all these situation when it's, when it's happening, and affecting one another. And then again, the humanitarian action isn't just about providing aid to the people from another country, and it's about care for people who are put in an impossible situation, not because of they're less fortunate, or not hardworking, but because again the injustice in the global situation. For example we have seen this during COVID time, when we had all these vaccines, and then the countries are freeing up, and most of the other countries didn't even get a chance to do the vaccination, and it affecting so many people's life. And, so for example like in North Korea, I mean it was again very impossible situation. And then from the perspective of global justice,

and it's not just about donation, you know, it's, it's really about living together and in getting out of this crisis together. So, what I meant by global health diplomacy and global health work and humanitarian aid, it's really about human relations, rather than just about, you know, donating or doing some charity work.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

Jin, as we move toward the end, I'm curious to hear some of your thoughts about the role of women in conflicted societies, and their experience and contribution and analysis and the, what it is that you see from your comparative work.

Dong Jin Kim:

That's a very, very important question, Pádraig. Um, about five/seven years ago, I got a chance to organise a conference in Trinity College Dublin about the role of women in peace process. Because at that time, we were hosting a group called Women Making Peace from Korea, and then like, you know, the group, the Christian groups who initiated the peace and reconciliation movement back in the 80s, and then just right after that Christian initiatives, this women's group was created to initiate peace and reconciliation movement between women in East Asia. So they were the first groups who actually created kind of a triangular meeting between North/South Korea and Japan, to talk about the issue of comfort women, who was a sexual slave, if I may, during the second world war, the Pacific war, by Japanese army, and then to address those issues of injustice. So the womens from the three jurisdictions came together and discussed these matters in the late 80s, and early 90s. And then with the legacy of that, Women Making Peace was imagining, so-called a six party talk by women, equivalent to the six party nuclear talk, involving North/South Korea, US, Japan, China and Russia. So they actually had a meeting in East Asia about, about creating those kind of a consortium and platform. And then in 2010 they invited Bronagh Hinds, from Northern Ireland, to be their keynote speaker. And then I didn't know about that seven years ago when I was, you know, organising the conference; without knowing I invited Bronagh to be part of that gathering, and then, and then Bronagh came and she met people whom she met in 2010 in Korea for that conference, and it was really amazing reunion by these really sort of courageous women. And then, you know, I was beginning to learn more about the women's role in peace processes, and then not only Ireland and Korea, but everywhere in conflict affected societies there are almost always women who're initiating peace and reconciliation movement, which is just amazing. There almost always there are women who are, who are actually addressing problems made by mostly men, and then as

though these men are being celebrated in most peace processes, as the successful politicians and negotiators, and I think that most, most of the grunt work would have been done by many women's groups. So I think they are unsung heroes for, for peace and reconciliation of our planet.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

Dong Jin Kim, thank you very much for your time coming on The Corrymeela Podcast and sharing so much about your work and your interest, your studies and your comparisons.

The Corrymeela Podcast is created in partnership between Corrymeela and FanFán. It's produced by Emily Rawling, with mixing, editing, and theme music by Fra Sands at Safeplace Studios, and presented by me, Pádraig Ó Tuama. The podcast is generously funded by the Henry Luce Foundation, and the Community Relations Council Northern Ireland, and the Irish government's Reconciliation Fund. Thanks to them, and thanks to Corrymeela's friends and supporters, and thanks to you for listening.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

Are there any books or poems or films or albums or artworks that you've turned to again and again throughout your life?

Dong Jin Kim:

I don't know whether prayers could be included in that, just in that definition?

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

Oh, there you are, yeah, you can expand the table, yeah- there's a prayer?

Dong Jin Kim:

Well, because I think it's part of art, and then I always go back to this prayer we do in Corrymeela called courage. And I, if I may, I might want to just recite some part of it. So,

'We bear witness to our faith,
knowing that we are called
to live lives of courage,
love and reconciliation

in the ordinary and extraordinary
moments of each day.

We bear witness, too, to our failures
and our complicity in the fractures of our world.

May we be courageous today.

May we learn today.

May we love today.

Pádraig Ó Tuama:

Can I put you on the spot, Jin, and ask if you're able to do some kind of a live action translation of some of those lines into Korean: I'd be curious to hear how they land with you in Korean?

Dong Jin Kim:

OK. I'll try...