

Hee An Choi. *A Postcolonial Leadership: Asian Immigrant Christian Leadership and Its Challenges*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2020. 277 pages. \$89.93.

In *A Postcolonial Leadership*, Hee An Choi offers an eye-opening analysis of the current situation and the challenges of Asian immigrant Christian leadership in the US context, and proposes postcolonial leadership as a new leadership model for Asian immigrant Christian leaders. The author develops her project in three parts.

In the first part, she investigates theories of leadership in both secular and Christian contexts. Whereas trait theory examines what distinctive qualities of individual leaders enable them to exercise effective leadership, transformational leadership theory concerns what inspires people to follow the leader and how it transforms the values and environments of the organization. While these theories relate to the dynamic between leaders and followers, feminist theory seeks to reveal the structure in which predominately male leaders exercise leadership and attempts to deconstruct and reconstruct such a privileged power structure. Choi presents feminist leadership as an alternative leadership model that affirms a collaborative, participatory, democratic, and horizontal leadership style through empowering others and sharing power, in opposition to the top-down hierarchical model of leadership. In addition, she seeks to create a new type of Christian leadership beyond the traditional male-centered clergy leadership. Exploring the understandings and models of Christian leadership in scripture and Christian history, Choi discovers women's leadership as a potential resource for a new Christian leadership model.

The second part investigates current understandings and challenges of Asian immigrant leadership in the United States. According to Choi's analysis, because privileged white male leaders have occupied the leadership positions, the traits of white male leaders are considered the normative qualities of ideal leadership. Meanwhile, as the privileged whites have reinforced the prejudice that denies the leadership of other racial-ethnic groups by producing negative stereotypes of them, African Americans, Latinx, and Asian Americans have been marginalized from the opportunities to hold leadership positions. However, as shown in the civil rights movement and the immigrant rights movement, African American leaders and Latinx leaders created distinctive leadership styles by resisting the white normative leadership and its supporting structure as well as advocating and serving their racial-ethnic communities.

Similarly, Asian immigrants have struggled to overcome the barrier to leadership opportunities due to racial prejudice. The challenge to Asian immigrant leadership is more complex because of the conflict between the values and morals of Asian communal culture and the US individualistic culture. The conflict between self-confidence and self-awareness is an example of such a challenge. A person seeming to lack self-confidence is disqualified for leadership in the United States. However, self-confidence is not a positive trait for leaders in Asian countries. Instead, self-awareness, which is a way to cultivate the self in a harmonious and balanced relationship with the community, is recommended for Asian leaders. Thus, showing respect for authority with humility is not a sign of lacking self-confidence but of the commendable practice of self-awareness. In the same manner, Choi analyzes other similar challenges of Asian immigrant Christian leadership, which they face through the living in the United States as a crossing boundaries person of marginality and hybridity.

Although the hybrid identity of Asian immigrants causes challenges for Asian immigrant leadership, Choi finds it can offer a unique potential to develop a new type of leadership. From this perspective, in the final part, she proposes postcolonial leadership as a new leadership model for Asian immigrants. She defines postcolonial leadership as "a leadership that has existed and

been performed in the space of immigrants, the oppressed, the marginalized, and the voiceless,” (218) which develops “a consciousness of difference to acknowledge the difference with authenticity in each person and community” (189) and creates “a common ground” to challenge “postcolonial institutional power” in solidarity with others (189). Hybridity, authenticity, communality, and individuality are the features of postcolonial leadership. Hybridity empowers Asian immigrant Christian leaders to deconstruct the colonial hierarchy, which legitimizes discrimination, and reconstruct the postcolonial power by hybridizing their living world. Authenticity enables them to continue to make their own voices heard within multi-intercultural immigrant contexts. Communality and individuality in the form of “leading together in solidarity” (210) secures individuals as the agents for collaborating communal leadership.

Choi’s research is significant for preachers because a primary way to exercise leadership is speech and the majority of Asian immigrant Christian leaders are preachers. Her analysis of the postcolonial self as the foundation of postcolonial leadership is helpful for Asian immigrant preachers to find their own preaching voice in the postcolonial self, instead of assimilating to the preachers idealized in the colonized mind. This study will help them go beyond the stereotype of Asian/Asian American preachers, which is internalized not only in other racial-ethnic groups but also in themselves consciously and unconsciously, to become transformative public speakers.

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