

HyeRan Kim-Cragg. *Postcolonial Preaching: Creating a Ripple Effect*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021. 160 pages. \$95.

HyeRan Kim-Cragg is perfectly positioned to introduce a methodology for postcolonial preaching. As a Korean female teaching homiletics in a Canadian city on unceded indigenous land, she has direct experience with the intersections of culture, immigration, language, misogyny, and racial/ethnic stereotyping. She has integrated these perspectives into a postcolonial homiletic method that will help preaching instructors, students, and clergy alike to deconstruct oppressive colonialist hegemony while crafting multilayered sermons that preach a liberative and hope-filled gospel truth.

The central metaphor of the book is the ripple effect that moves in waves to disrupt the dominant narratives of the white, Western, patriarchal, Christian paradigm that has biblically and theologically justified the invasion, extraction, domination, enslavement, and erasure of those it deems “other.” RIPPLE is also the acronym that cleverly positions the principles and movements of Kim-Cragg’s postcolonial homiletic method. The order of *rehearsal*, *imagination*, *place*, *pattern*, *language*, and *exegesis* is less a linear movement of how to construct a postcolonial sermon than an arrangement of concentric circles of a postcolonial approach to preaching that overlap, co-inform, and reinforce each other. Each chapter takes the six principles in turn, explaining their undergirding values and norms by drawing on a vast array of postcolonial scholarship in the areas of biblical studies, theology, rhetoric, cultural studies, philosophy, and homiletics. This in itself models for preachers what it looks like to engage scholars who are often sidelined by the white colonial structures of academia, and center them for the wisdom they bring.

This centering of the colonial experience is especially necessary when reading the Bible itself. As Kim-Cragg notes, “every book of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation contains colonial experiences” (106). She a *contrapuntal reading strategy* suggested by Palestinian literary critic Edward Said that “makes visible that which is invisible,” namely the ones who are colonized “behind, between, and before” the biblical text (111, 112). Preachers can use the contrapuntal reading method, as well as the other RIPPLE principles, to hear those who have been silenced, see and value the cultural and linguistic differences among colonized peoples, uncover the power differential between the colonized and colonizers, and, ideally, craft creative sermons that proclaim the good news that liberates both the oppressed and oppressor.

Each chapter concludes with a sermon to illustrate the concepts that make up each RIPPLE principle, and they are excellent models of postcolonial preaching. For example, in the chapter on language, Kim-Cragg’s sermon lifts up the nuances of the word “family” as it is depicted in both Chinese letters (“all will be well when family is well”) and ascribed meaning in the Cree language (“all my relations,” including Earth-kin). She then brings these linguistic variations into conversation with Jesus’s promise in John 14:15–21 not to orphan his followers but to send the Spirit who will connect them to each other, to himself, and to God. In this way, the sermon demonstrates how to center and validate the culture and language of colonized people who offer profound insights about Jesus’s concern for individual and communal wellbeing.

White, Western preachers and congregants who have no experience being part of a colonized people may naturally wonder if this book is relevant for their contexts. The answer is a definitive yes: “What I contend,” Kim-Cragg announces, “is that every preacher who mounts the pulpit, or faces a congregation, or seeks to share in any venue the Word of God in the twenty-first century, needs to be a postcolonial preacher” (106). This is because “the church has too

often been complicit with colonialism and its more recent manifestation, neoliberal transnational capitalism” (118). Thus, “postcolonial preachers have a distinctive role to play in terms of faithfully interrogating and scrutinizing the text as a way of challenging the status quo” (118).

The goal of the book is to “get preachers thinking about how to live out their vocation in the current neocolonial context” (125). The reality is that as climate change, social unrest, economic hardship, war, political violence, and weather catastrophes push more and more people from their countries of origin, all preachers, no matter their language or culture, will need tools to navigate these constantly changing dynamics in communities and congregations. The book’s last chapter includes a postcolonial preaching checklist with questions to spark the preacher’s sermon preparation and accountability to the RIPPLE principles. Altogether, these principles and standards are a welcome and necessary approach to preaching that both applies a critical postcolonial lens to homiletics and generates new and creative energy for preaching.

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