

Grace Ji-Sun Kim. *Invisible: Theology and the Experience of Asian American Women*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2021. 177 pages. \$28.00.

The upheaval of anti-Asian hate crimes during COVID-19 has brought attention to the severity of racism against Asian Americans only recently. Grace Ji-Sun Kim, an ingenious Korean American theologian, uncovers in her book, *Invisible: Theology and the Experience of Asian American Women*, the history of racism against Asian Americans that has been dismissed for too long. While addressing the plight of Asian Americans as a whole, Kim's emphasis lands on the intersecting axes of "Confucian culture, patriarchal Asian history, and racism and sexism in America, which create multiple layers of oppression (131)" for Asian American women. This book embodies Kim's commitment to bringing "voice to the voiceless and color to the invisible (162)" for doubly marginalized Asian American women.

The book includes five chapters. Chapter one, "Motherland: War and Comfort Women," lays the foundation of the book by tracing back the agonies of Korean women: the wars, domestic violence under the patriarchal system, silent endurance of pain, and the horrors of the systemic sexual enslavement of Korean women governed by the Japanese Imperial Army. Chapter two, "Immigration: Old Doors, New Doors," focuses on the stories of the Asian indentured workers who lived in "dismal conditions, enduring the indignities of discrimination and racism as invisible noncitizens (42)" after having sacrificed their safety to build the transcontinental railroads in the U.S. and Canada. Chapter three, "Racism: Yellow People," centers on the systemic racism against Asian immigrants, which has too often been dismissed. By controlling the representation of Asians, creating stereotypes, and displaying the "yellow people" through a white lens, Western dominance has deprived Asian Americans of the right to tell their own stories. Asian men were emasculated, and Asian women were hypersexualized by the white gaze. In chapter four, "Sexism: Home, Church, and Society," readers follow Kim's journey from joining the church to getting ordained, and the sexism she encountered throughout. Kim delineates how patriarchal culture of Asian immigrant churches create double marginalization for Asian American women rather than offering empowerment to overcome the oppression in the white dominant society. In the final chapter, Kim proposes a "theology of visibility"—a call to envision new ways of understanding the divine by using non-Western tools. Kim argues that theology must embrace four Asian concepts of Ou-ri (which means "our"), Han ("unjust suffering"), Jeong ("sticky love"), and Chi ("the spirit") to make Asian American women visible as full participants in the kin-dom of God (139).

What is most powerful in this book is the interweaving of real-life stories and personal narratives in addressing the difficult topics of racism and sexism. While reading the book, one learns effortlessly about the essential Asian American histories of wars, immigration, xenophobia, and Exclusion Acts through stories. Different stories guide each chapter and offer readers a palpable comprehension of each topic. Kim tells the pains of Asian Americans not as an academic outsider but as an inside storyteller whose personal experiences carry the flesh-and-blood stories of Asian American history. The interweaving of personal narratives invites the readers to a more intimate level of understanding of the suffering of Asian American women. *Invisible* is not only a phenomenal book that powerfully tells the stories of Asian American women but also an incredible example that gives insights for an effective preaching pattern to engage the audience.

In the meantime, I would have loved to see a more nuanced proposal of the “theology of visibility” for Asian American women. If we were to be mindful of the margins within the margins, as Kim herself notes, we need to be aware of the hegemony behind the concept of “Asian Americans” and how it is being dominated by people of East Asian descent. While Kim uses “Asian Americans” as a monolithic term, the stories of racism and sexism against South and Southeast Asian Americans are rarely addressed. Ironically, by introducing four concrete tools for theology of visibility, Kim excludes the readers who do not, or cannot, resonate with the Korean/East Asian concepts from embodying the theology of visibility. I wish Kim, rather than suggesting the four concepts as a generalized tool to encompass theology of visibility for all Asian American women, suggested the concepts as “a” set of examples for her own and invited the readers to also find their own concepts that could reflect their own theology of visibility.

Despite such weakness, *Invisibility* is an excellent model of rediscovering and reclaiming one’s community’s silenced history by sharing stories and giving voice to the voiceless. Anyone reading this book will experience the power of storytelling and gain great insights for interweaving personal narratives with social history in writing, preaching, and teaching.

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