

HyeRan Kim-Cragg and EunYoung Choi. *The Encounters: Retelling the Bible from Migration and Intercultural Perspectives*. Daejeon: Daejangan Publisher, 2013. 159 pages. \$13.

Intercultural and interracial global movements increasingly characterize today's human communities. In this context, we are challenged to confront and to evaluate critically such acute situations, which can be perceived as a neo-colonializing phenomenon that suppresses differences. For example, South Korea, the mother country of the two authors, Dr. Kim-Cragg and Dr. Choi, historically, was one of the most ethnically homogeneous countries in the world. Korean people had not experienced living with people of other ethnicities in their society. The phenomenon of multicultural families and the influx of Southeast Asian migrant workers, generated by the impact of economic globalization in South Korea, started in the late 1990s. Due to the lack of experience of living with people of different ethnicities, a series of human rights violations as well as ongoing incidents of discrimination has regrettably emerged as the source of major social problems in Korean society. Especially, sexual harassment of female migrant workers in the agricultural and industrial sectors is a major problem in South Korea as well as worldwide. These individuals, considered to be local victims, should also be recognized as global migrant slaves in the context of the economic globalization of the twenty-first century.

In this context, homiletics is challenged to shift its new humanizing direction against dehumanizing power to alternative biblical perspectives, respecting cultural diversity and differences in the text as well as in the larger globalized context. The two authors provide readers an "eye-opening contribution" (9). This very valuable resource supports the intercultural reality and its issues in light of biblical stories with the most common biblical interpretations such as "feminist biblical criticism," "literary narrative criticism," and "reader-response criticism." In this respect, the two authors direct their efforts toward filling the gap in the biblical and Christian education scholarship, while focusing on migration, intercultural and interracial issues related to women's lives in the global context.

This insightful text is divided into twelve chapters according to twelve biblical characters: Hagar (23–33), Tamar (34–45), Gershom (46–57), Rahab (58–67), Ruth and Naomi (68–81), Servant Girl (82–91), Elderly Woman in Nineveh (92–103), The Family of Jesus (104–114), the Syrophenician Woman (115–126), the Woman from Samaria (127–137), Priscilla (138–148), and Lydia (149–159). In each chapter, the invisible discriminatory experiences of women in biblical stories are recovered as the sources of the reality of migration and multiculturalism. The authors retell each biblical encounter in such a way that these well-known biblical figures become living bridges for women on the margins today. That is, each chapter deals mainly with female figures in the Bible who were marginalized in their respective societies by the patriarchal structures that dominated them, causing them to become migrant persons crossing national borders, much like thousands of women today.

The Encounters brings to our attention compelling situations of biblical women that are replicated in contemporary society. The authors have designed the text as a useful resource for preachers and Christian educators as well. Each chapter consists of four parts. In the first part, the focus is on the background of the given biblical text. In the second part, the additional scholarly references for deeper understanding of the text are supported. In the third part, the authors intentionally introduce "re-telling and re-interpreting the biblical stories with creativity and imagination" (17). By using the monologue style, readers experience an effective interpathic approach, looking at themselves through the eyes of others or strangers as well as learning about

“the reality of migration and multi/inter-cultural lives” (7, 12) found in the biblical world. In the final part, various open-ended questions promoting probing discussions are found. These questions can serve as mutually transformative dialogue tools directed toward a new reality of humanization for the global family to fully liberate individuals from forms of various discriminations in our current multi-cultural societies.

The creative endeavors of the authors promote awareness of the marginalized as others or strangers, living in inter-cultures within local and global societies. Such places, nevertheless, reflect God’s revelation, work, and presence, and challenge readers to look more deeply for indications of “God’s grace, God’s justice, and God’s love” (10) in the Bible. This book reminds readers that the important task for the preacher is to identify the margins of society globally as well as locally and to discern the presence and work of God everywhere, to make and keep human lives human. Overall, *The Encounters* is well worth reading and a significant resource for preaching and educating with a focus on intercultural understanding and the empowerment of women.

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