

Matthew D. Kim. *Preaching to Second Generation Korean Americans: Towards a Possible Selves Contextual Homiletic* (American University Studies. Series VII. Theology and Religion). Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang International Academic Publishers, 2007. 234 pages. \$75.60.

Matthew D. Kim in his *Preaching to Second Generation Korean Americans* provides a “possible selves contextual homiletic” for second generation Korean Americans who encounter unique bicultural and liminal experiences as an ethnic minority in American society. From a viewpoint of homiletic and practical theology, the intent of the book is “to create a contextual homiletical approach that facilitates Korean American preachers’ exegesis of their second generation Korean American congregant’s lived experiences and simultaneously encourage imaginative and innovative processes for cultivating new possible selves (3).” Put it simply, his contextual preaching is to formulate the congregant’s positive future self-perception toward a radical Christian existence beyond their status of cultural chaos and liminality through preaching ministry (208).

In order to conceive his possible selves contextual homiletic, Kim critically adopts and theoretically re-interprets three main disciplines as follows; Hazel Markus and Paula Nurius’ social psychological theory of possible selves, Gerald Arbuckle’s cultural anthropological schema for understanding transitional cultures, and Leonora Tubbs Tisdale’s notion of contextual preaching as local ethnography. In detail, he first proposes that the model of possible selves as a conceptual framework for preaching can proffer a conduit to recognize current congregants’ diverse self-concepts and behavioral motivations (3). The theory of possible selves can also motivate the congregants to conscientiously execute specific actions to actualize their desired possible self (3). This theory can allow preachers to enhance their comprehension about their congregations’ past and present memories/experiences as well as provide positive possible self-images on behalf of the congregants. Second, Arbuckle’s insights for comprehension on transitional cultures are helpful for exemplifying second generation Korean Americans’ condition of cultural chaos and liminality. Third, Tisdale’s preaching conception of local ethnography is a theoretical framework to evaluate the exegetical methods of their hearers’ lived experience and situations for sermonic preparation (161). Kim extends and reconstructs each of three theories to apply to the bicultural ethnic minority group by considering about the hearers’ spiritual aspiration and concerns.

In order to develop his possible selves contextual homiletic, Kim includes seven chapters in total. Chapter 1 explores the first Korean immigrant’s lived experiences and philosophies that have an influence on the development of the second generation and their marginalized experience. Chapter 2 suggests Markus and Nurius’ theory of possible selves as a conceptual tool to reinterpret the congregant’s ethnic and contextual contexts by examining some existing contextual preaching literatures. Chapter 3 displays his primary research method; that is, in-depth empirical and ethnographic work through semi-structured qualitative interview on Korean American preachers and second generation Korean Americans. Chapter 4 reveals the byproduct of his empirical and ethnographic work by especially manifesting the respondents’ embodied and relational selves dimension. Chapter 5 reinterprets Arbuckle’s schema for understanding transitional culture to more thoroughly appreciate the respondents’ cultural chaotic and

liminality. Also, this chapter explores the participants' spiritual dimension to reveal their future spiritual potentials in the notion of possible selves. Chapter 6 investigates Tisdale's preaching as local ethnography in the context of the specific ethnic minority situation to sufficiently analyze their bicultural context. In the final chapter 7, the author proposes his possible selves homiletic that consists of five stages to inspire the congregation to achieve a new cultural integration by experiencing their possible selves, a constructive path-finding dissenter (202).

Among the impressive qualities of this volume, Kim's critical insights on five stages for the possible selves homiletic are definitely worth reading. For example, the author declares that the preacher must imaginatively articulate the corporate "a context-specific vision" and "new spiritual possibilities" of the entire second generation Korean American church community (199). Moreover, on these stages, the author gives a dazzling vision toward preaching for his congregation; second generation Korean Americans as path-finding dissenters who have positive selves can imaginatively innovate "alternative way for the bridging of the gap between the Gospel and cultures" with their unique socio-religious experience and they can actualize "radical Gospel values (197)." In other words, Kim's contextual homiletic that deeply engages with the listener vitalizes their faithful living within an eschatological perspective of God's narrative beyond their negative selves and their liminality.

Finally, this volume can be a fascinating sample of contextual homiletic as practical theology. Especially, Kim's contextual preaching is a marvelous achievement for the specific ethnic minority cohort through not only empirical and ethnographic research but also theoretical interdisciplinary conversation with cultural anthropology, social psychology and preaching. Also, his reconstructive work for his homiletic through interdisciplinary research challenges and re-evaluates other academic fields from the perspective of the ethnically marginalized group's situation. Thus, I recommend the volume to Korean American practical theological and homiletic researchers as well as other social and psychological researchers who have a strong interest in the bicultural and ethnic studies.

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