

Sharon Kim. *A Faith of Our Own: Second-Generation Spirituality in Korean American Churches*. Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010. 214 pages. \$23.36.

In *A Faith of Our Own*, Sharon Kim argues that the second generation only Korean American churches are a sociological representation of their hybrid spirituality, composed uniquely of the combination of the spirituality of their parent generation and American evangelicalism. Written for students, lay leaders and pastors, Kim's book attempts to sociologically analyze the trend of second generation Korean Americans establishing their own churches instead of joining that of their parents or mainstream Americans. Fittingly, Kim converses with a wide array of resources in the fields of sociology, pastoral ministry, immigration history, and American politics, as well as personal interviews and news media outlets. Kim touts the second generation only Korean American churches as an ideal platform for future Korean American ministry as one that has the potential to reach out to other cultures and ethnic groups.

As a result, Kim indirectly dismisses the immigrant church, in which both the first and second generations co-exist, albeit messily. Though Kim does not directly claim such position, her strong support for the second generation only church as the way of the future for Korean American Christians spells irrelevancy for the still sprawling immigrant church, in which both first and second generations co-exist. Theologically, this assumption is problematic, as the biblical stance of the church as a whole is one of unity, while each local body may discern its unique makeup depending on its context; think Judaizers and Hellenists. Moreover, Kim assumes that all second generation only Korean American churches can evangelize recruit non-Korean members. While their English ability and Americanized culture are reasonable evidence for such assumption, this is simply not true. The leading second generation only churches in southern California – where the most number of Korean Americans and Korean churches reside in the country – are ministering primarily to Korean Americans, without much prospect of mixing up their membership, such as Crossway Community Church, Church of Southland, Good News Chapel, Sovereign Grace, Ekko, Living Way, Community Church of Holliston, etc. These churches are often located in Korean-dominated suburbs, and their multicultural outreach is often limited to other Asian Americans and a few token white or black Americans, most of whose population never exceeds to make any significant portion of the respective congregation.

Underlying Kim's assumption is a theological presumption that the eschaton of all nations, knees, and tongues is a uniformed calling for every Korean American congregation. Is there not value in upholding our God-given culture and teaching our children accordingly? Is God not pleased when we honor our parents? Of course, the scripture dictates a multicultural heaven, but I believe there is room for ethnic churches in such paradise. In fact, the multiculturalism comes from an overview of the entire world in which various people groups are mutually loving each other while affirming their cultural uniqueness. In her push for the second generation only Korean American churches, Kim has succeeded to argue for the former, but has left out the latter. An appropriate theological and ethical analysis would certainly bolster this book.

Still, Kim's book is a worthy read. Her sociological analysis is thoroughly researched and current. She depicts the generational tension within the Korean American church especially well. Anyone serious about serving the Korean American church – or even other Asian or pan-Asian

churches who may deal with similar issues – in any capacity would benefit much from *A Faith of Our Own*.

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