

Hak Joon Lee (ed), *Intersecting Realities: Race, Identity, and Culture in Spiritual-Moral Life of Young Asian Americans*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018. 178 pages. \$39.27 ISBN 9781532616235

In *Intersecting Realities*, Hak Joon Lee brings together much-needed essays around ten themes—God, parents, friendship and social networks, money, vocation, sex, gender, the myth of the model minority, racial identity, and community—written by five Asian American theologians. These themes aim to address the complexities of Asia American identity of hybridity and marginality. All the chapters reflect the authors' sociological, psychological, and theological analysis of identity.

Daniel D. Lee starts off chapter one by unpacking the common Asian American perception of God who desires honor, respect and love. For Lee, such an understanding of God has an inevitable connection with how young Asian Americans relate to their parents. Therefore, in chapter two, Lee addresses the problematic dynamics of Asian American parenting and provides some thoughts on honoring parents from a theological perspective. In Chapter three and four, Jeff M. Liou addresses friendship, social network, and money. Liou candidly presents the struggling nature of young Asian Americans who, on the one end, desire their friendship network to be diverse but, at the same time, remain rooted in their Asian-ness. Liou enables us to see the beauty of diversity in light of Jesus Christ and yet acknowledges the “treasures from our cultures of origin” (pg. 49). The argument for diversifying also continues in Liou's chapter on money where he challenges the ‘us’ oriented approach of Asian Americans and encourages the reader to see wealth in the light of “other-centeredness” (pg. 57) and to use their business, entrepreneurial efforts to serve people in need who may even be outside of the Asian American communities.

In chapter five, Janette H. Ok challenges the familial expectations of job security and invites both the Asian immigrant parents and the young Asian Americans to be more intentional in discerning the voice of God instead of exclusively focusing on achieving a job that secures societal status. Further, in chapter nine, Ok addresses the societal expectations of being a model minority. Ok integrates concepts such as ‘hyper-selectivity,’ ‘bamboo ceiling,’ ‘perpetual foreigners,’ and ‘honorary whites’ to demonstrate the myth and the partial privilege Asian Americans carry in navigating the American educational and public landscape. Ok uses the biblical story of Esther to provide some refreshing insights into steering such liminal space. In chapter nine, Ok writes another important and insightful essay dealing with the myth of the model minority. She criticizes that the praise Asian Americans receive as the model minority is fundamentally racial and problematic. For Ok, the problem of the myth of model minority is its stereotyping way of pitting Asian Americans against other minority people of color by valorizing us relative to whites, who continue to be the standard bearers for mainstream success. In her opinion, “the greatest damage of the model minority myth is that it perpetuates the notion that racial barriers can be overcome through good behaviors, implying that if other people of color (namely the blacks) behaved better, they too would overcome inequality and racism” (123).

Moreover, Hak Joon Lee touches on some of these elements under the theme of racial identity (chapter 6). However, building a holistic Asian American identity from one's relationship with Jesus Christ as a foundation, Lee further explores the concept of community in chapter ten. He explores the problem of the traditional cultural way of hierarchical relationship and suggests the need for transforming communal way of relationship. He identifies Asian American churches as better positions to serve the young Asian Americans where they can remain in their liminality and identify themselves in Christ.

Sensitive themes such as sex (chapter 7) and Gender (chapter 8) are dealt with by Kristen S. Oh. Oh presents the contemporary struggles among the Asian Americans who are torn between the traditional Asian understanding of abstinence from sex until marriage and the popular sex practices. As a response, Oh introduces a covenantal Christian sexual ethics convincingly, to shift the focus of discourse from abstinence to building a deep-rooted covenantal friendship. At the heart of Oh's thesis is an egalitarian understanding of men and women who are created in the image of God. However, the only drawback in Oh's analysis is her lack of engagement (biblical or sociological perspective) in what she means by "spectrums" (pg. 117) of gender identities that fall in between males and females.

Collectively *Intersecting Realities* make a vital contribution to the Asian American pastoral and missiological discourse even though it only engages with the topics on an introductory level. The book is an apt resource intended to serve as a pastoral guide for Christian Asian Americans to think theologically about the various identity questions they may grapple with who they are. To that extent, every chapter ends with a section on 'discussion questions,' which are helpful for group discussions.

However, the scope of engagement in the book is limited, as all the authors are from East Asian origins. As it stands, the readers may find sporadic engagement with Confucius ideas, but there is no engagement with the Hindu or Buddhist ethnoreligious framework. Perhaps by adding an author who is of a South Asian origin and of a Southeast Asian origin would have enhanced the breadth of this work as it truly represented the entire Asian American community in its ethnic diversity. Nevertheless, the authors have done a very thoughtful task of engaging with the living experiences of second-generation Asian Americans who navigate a liminal cultural space. Therefore, the book will be an excellent resource for any Asian American or to anyone who engages with Asian diaspora from an anthropological perspective or to those involved in Christian ministry among Asian Americans.

Allan Varghese