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## Book Review: Here I am: Faith Stories of Korean American Clergywomen

Rebecca S. Jeong

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# Asian American Theological Forum

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## Here I am: Faith Stories of Korean American Clergywomen

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This volume, *Here I am: Faith Stories of Korean American Clergywomen* is a unique compilation of narratives, theological reflections, and sermons from the eleven Korean American female ministers whose voices and wisdoms have been easily disregarded and overlooked. The particularity of the book has obviously originated from Korean American clergywomen's distinct experiences; for example, marginalization and racism from the dominant society, immigration and displacement, creative existence in bicultural and multi-religious heritages, ongoing struggling because of cultural prejudice against female leadership, and sexism and ageism in the male-centered hierarchical and patriarchal ecclesiological setting.

This book is largely divided into three parts; 1) faithful story, 2) theological reflection and 3) preaching. In the first part of the story, Rev. Mihee Kim-Kort narrates a personal story about clergywomen's inventive wisdom of experiencing God's grace as vocational practice even in full-time motherhood and its vulnerability. Next, disclosing the personal painful experience of living as a perpetual foreigner because of the hierarchical systems and certain privileged groups' superiority and normativity, Rev. Dr. Grace Ji-Sun Kim claims an authentic Christian way of *embracing love* toward foreigners based on the book of Ezra; the story of the religious leader's wrong decision on foreign wives' forcible expulsion from the exiled community.

In the theological reflection part, Rev. Nayoung H. encourages Korean Christianity to change the dominant and problematic Christology- a white racist, homophobic, exclusionary religious Christology- in order to eliminate racial discrimination and build solidarity with the outcast. Plus, Rev. Jean Kim theologically reflects on her own

experience of God's irresistible calling and vision toward ministry for homeless people even though Kim's life was in a constant state of loss of loved ones, grief and brokenness.

In the final part of preaching, Korean women preachers seek to discern God's breaking-in-grace (*Karios*) in their current chaotic and painful life. In addition to that, the preacher faithfully sings a song of hope in a time of hopelessness and uncertainty by homiletically identifying herself with the song of Mary, the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55).

In this way, Korean American clergywomen not only lift their voices for justice and equality through truth-telling stories, but also praise the divine grace and God's miraculous work in their daily hardships. I believe that their tearful story will break our hearts. Assuredly, their story of God's powerful existence in their suffering, their Spirit-filled wisdom, and their admirable devotional life will also rekindle our withered spirituality. Finally, in this publication, Korean American clergywomen's daily life story, critical-confession reflection and practical wisdom will inevitably be a wonderful source for further discussion of practical theology, feminist theology, and Asian American ethnic theology as well.

Seungyoun Jeong, PhD Candidate

Boston University School of Theology