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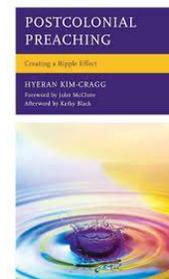
## Book Review

### Postcolonial Preaching: Creating a Ripple Effect

HyeRan Kim-Cragg

New York: Lexington Books, 2021.

As COVID-19 started to ravage the world in 2020, anti-immigration sentiment and white supremacy were on the rise and spreading. These destructive forces continue to threaten millions of lives, particularly those of immigrants. HyeRan Kim-Cragg, Timothy Eaton Memorial Church Professor of Preaching at Emmanuel College, offers a way to confront these destructive forces of colonialism, white supremacy, and racism that perpetuate unjust social structures. Her proposal is postcolonial preaching that creates what she calls a RIPPLE effect. The six-letter acronym highlights a postcolonial desire to focus homiletical attention on Rehearsal, Imagination, Place, Pattern, Language, and Exegesis in preaching.



Kim-Cragg uses the image of a ripple on the water created by a stone to undergird her vision for postcolonial preaching. She defines postcolonial preaching as “a circular multidimensional movement with the purpose of creating a ripple effect in people’s hearts and minds for the sake of the Kin-dom” (p. 6). The book is comprised of six chapters, following the spelling of the word ‘ripple.’ Chapter one examines preaching within an eschatological and liturgical framework. The author examines the implications of postcolonial preaching as a rehearsal of the Realm of God. Preaching as rehearsal emphasizes the importance of practice to ensure the quality of excellence and the active role of the community of faith as a participant in God’s drama. Postcolonial preaching as a rehearsal of the Realm of God anticipates the coming of God’s Kin-dom that disrupts the colonial legacy and calls for transformation. It seeks to offer a foretaste of a new reality, which is built on interdependent and mutually life-giving kin-relationships (p. 20).

Chapter two explores the critical role of the imagination in postcolonial preaching and its relation to the Realm of God, language, and scripture. Preaching as rehearsal of the Realm of God essentially relates to a capacity to imagine a new reality that challenges the status quo of a society, which is sustained by lingering colonial and neocolonial power. By retelling the story of the colonial past with imagination, postcolonial preaching not only reveals “the absurdity of injustice” (p. 36) but also enables the reconstruction of the history of those who have been silenced and dismissed. Imagination is a critical capacity in order to expose violence and injustice and to dream of a new reality in terms of the Realm of God.

Chapter three examines the shifting place of preaching in a postcolonial context of immigration. The author contends that “a preacher is positioned by the gaze of the congregation” (p. 55), and the white gaze upon nonwhite immigrant preachers creates a unique preaching place. The ethno-specific immigrant congregation, as well as multi-cultural and multi-racial congregations, are each a distinct place of preaching in the postcolonial immigration context. Preachers need to attend to their changing place of preaching, which requires critical self-study.

Chapter four reviews diverse patterns of preaching, including Puritan expository preaching, narrative and inductive preaching, as well as feminist and ethnic preaching. The author argues that the content of the sermon and the sermonic patterns are inseparable.

Postcolonial thought is based on the reconstruction of problematic traditions through deconstruction and imagination. In the same regard, a postcolonial preaching pattern does not have a particular form, but relates to and incorporates other preaching patterns.

Chapter five considers the nature of preaching language in relation to the body, inclusivity, culture, and colonialism. The author describes preaching language as theological body language that relates to the embodied experience and lives of the congregation. Sermonic language can reinforce a power imbalance between groups, and therefore the author highlights the importance of inclusivity and sensitivity to cultural differences. Preachers need to be more conscious of *how* they use sermonic language.

Chapter six explores contrapuntal reading as a way of doing postcolonial exegesis. The author reveals that the dominant exegetical approach for preaching, historical biblical criticism, was a product of the Enlightenment and inherently colonialist (p. 107). To counter this, the author introduces a contrapuntal reading, which takes “account of different perspectives simultaneously and seeing how the text interacts with historical or biographical contexts” (p. 111). Her contrapuntal reading offers a way to recognize differences, and enables preachers to listen to silenced voices and recognize power differentials in order to develop more just relationships (p. 112).

Kim-Cragg’s book provides a powerful image of postcolonial preaching creating a ripple effect. The colonial legacy continues to shape and perpetuate oppressive social relations between different groups. The pulpit has often been used to reinforce and sustain unjust colonial social structures. However, like a stone dropped in water, the gospel message can create a series of movements for transformation. This book integrates a critical examination of the postcolonial context of immigration with practical-theological insights for preaching. It may also be the first book that considers a distinctive preaching place for nonwhite immigrant preachers who serve white congregations. *Postcolonial Preaching* is a timely and invaluable resource for many preachers who struggle to understand their shifting place and the task of preaching in today’s postcolonial context.

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