

time, especially if one is living in a manse. Mellow concludes her book with an assessment of how the “work” of ministers provides useful patterns and examples in re-thinking the concept of work.

Whatever the contribution to her particular field, Mellow’s book is very useful to an understanding of ministry, particularly rural ministry. The insights gleaned from her interviews represent the best description I have read of the reality and of the challenges of serving as a minister in a rural area. Among the topics she considers, all of which I thought were well done, I found most helpful her discussion on the subject of ministerial friendships with parishioners. Literature on this subject, written from an urban perspective, usually assumes that any such relationships are inappropriate. But Mellow’s interviewees, and Mellow’s assessment of their comments on this subject, generate a more nuanced (and I would assert necessary) approach to what may be one of the most challenging aspects of rural ministry.

I had two frustrations in reading the book. First, the convention in the social sciences for referencing one’s sources (i.e., the “author/date/page inserted into the text) makes following the author’s argument tedious; one must constantly flip to the bibliography to see the

particular text to which reference is being made. Second, and more off-putting, the book is poorly edited. In its slightly over 200 pages, I noted eight errors of spelling or sentence construction. McGill-Queen’s University Press needs to do better in a book for which the asking price is no less than \$70.

— John H. Young

**HEART OF THE CROSS:
A Postcolonial Christology
by Wonhee Anne Joh
Louisville: Westminster
John Knox Press, 2006,
164 pages. \$28.99**

The author explores the meaning of the cross from a Korean American perspective, as she draws traditional christologies into conversation with feminist and postcolonial theories. She uses postcolonial tools of hybridity, mimicry and interstitial space to consider the power of the cross through *jeong*, a Korean concept of a radical form of love that encompasses compassion, affection, solidarity, relationality, vulnerability, and forgiveness. Joh juxtaposes the Korean concepts of *jeong*, which she summarizes as right-relation, and *han*, summarized as suffering, with Julia Kristeva’s

notions of love and the abject, defined as the identity of an individual or collective that is shaped by exclusion or expulsion. Joh suggests that Jesus' *han* and his abjection on the cross should be understood within the power of his *jeong/love*. She also portrays the cross as mimicry, which both represents and challenges patriarchal notions of power and obedience. Through the cross, Joh demonstrates that the concept of *jeong* can break down the binary opposition of oppressed and oppressor.

Joh draws upon the hybridity of Korean American experiences, including her own, as a starting point for a constructive and political theological reflection. She begins with the tracing of her roots in Korea and explains her sense of displacement both in the United States and in Korea. She feels within herself the tensions between home and elsewhere, roots and routes, Korean and American. She embodies the poststructural understanding of multiple, shifting and fluid identities and the postcolonial description of hybridity—living in the unsettled, interstitial space between different worlds.

The first chapter explores these postcolonial and poststructural challenges of identity politics and essentialism. Joh examines

postcolonial, non-totalizing theories, such as Gayatri Spivak's notion of "strategic essentialism" and Chandra Mohanty's theory of relational agency, which allow a political standpoint in the midst of fluid, shifting identity. This examination provides Joh with a feminist appropriation of *jeong*.

The second chapter further defines both *han* and *jeong* through a psychoanalysis of a Korean avant garde film concerning the Demilitarized Zone and a Korean American documentary of race riots in Los Angeles. Within these definitions, Joh explains the different manifestations of *han*. *Won-han* is a defensive reaction to overwhelming pain and presents itself as hate and vengefulness, sometimes exploding in *hu-han*, aggressive attacks on the oppressor. In contrast, *jeong-han* seeks collective healing and compassion while fighting societal injustice.

The third chapter explores Korean American experiences of racism. She demonstrates how the hybridity of their identities offers both resistance to and collaboration with dominating powers through the phenomenon of mimicry. The interstitial, third space, in which those of hybrid identities inhabit is the contact zone of oppressor and oppressed — a zone which dilutes these binary oppositions into permeable boundaries.

It is not until the fourth chapter that Joh engages in theological reflection through the use of these postcolonial and poststructural analyses of *jeong* and *han*. Joh engages Jürgen Moltmann's theology of the cross because it resonates with her own *jeong* theology of the cross. However, she faults Moltmann with not going deeply enough into the abjection of *han* on the cross and not engaging the participation of humanity in the work of redemption. She further adds that the *jeong* of the cross would help to radicalize his theology. Joh argues with feminist theologians who suggest that the cross merely perpetuates violence and cannot be redeemed. Rather, Joh suggests that the encompassing of the depth of both *han* and *jeong* within the crucifixion can offer a more transformative, feminist theology.

In the fifth chapter, Joh develops her Christology of *jeong* in conversation with a diverse range of feminist theologians. She discusses atonement, sin, salvation and redemption. She then offers a psychoanalysis of the cross using Kristeva's psychoanalytic categories of abjection and love.

Joh concludes with a critique of minjung theologians who try to replace *han* with *dan* (cutting off the oppressor). She contends that a relational theology of *jeong* would be more effective in its transformation, rather than dismantling, of structures of oppression. *Jeong*, as portrayed through the life and death of Jesus, places itself in the interstitial space between oppressor and oppressed, diluting boundaries and binary oppositions.

This book offers an important feminist, postcolonial contribution to the development of contemporary christologies. As evident in this review, it is immersed in the jargon of postcolonial and poststructural theory, which makes it inaccessible to those not familiar with these theories. It reads as a revised doctoral thesis. This is unfortunate, as Joh offers creative christological corrections and developments that would be helpful not only in theological classrooms but also in parishes committed to liberative theologies.

— Loraine MacKenzie Shepherd