

From a Liminal Place: An Asian American Theology

Sang Hyun Lee



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Drawing on decades of teaching and reflection, Princeton theologian Sang Lee probes what it means for Asian Americans to live as the followers of Christ in the "liminal space" between Asia and America and at the periphery of American society.

As one moves away from the societal center, either intentionally or by virtue of marginalization, one often finds oppression and dehumanization. Yet, Lee argues, one can also sometimes find liminality - a creative and edgy space with openness to the new, the emergence of community, and the ability to take a prophetic stance over against the status quo. For Lee, the liminal is key to the authentic calling and future of Asian Americans, other ethnic-racial groups and minorities, persons with mixed identities, and indeed all Christians.

From this insight, Lee unfolds a systematic theology. Searching the Gospels, one discovers that God became incarnate as a liminal and marginalized Galilean. Jesus the Galilean in his life and ministry widened the meaning of liminal creativity and exercised that creativity in embodying the boundary-breaking love of the Father. On the cross, he entered the ultimate space of liminality in which sinful humanity can experience communion with Christ. United in loving communion with God in Christ, Asian American Christians and all other believers are transformed into a new existence in which they are emboldened to struggle for justice and reconciliation.

Asian American Christians, like the Galilean followers of Jesus, have the particular vocation to exercise the creative potentials of their liminal predicament and thereby to participate in God s own project of repeating in time and space the beauty of God s inter-Trinitarian communion.

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