

**July 2018**

**Grace Ji-Sun Kim, *The Holy Spirit: Hand-Raisers, Han, and the Holy Ghost*.  
Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2018.**

Grace Ji-Sun Kim grew up in a very traditional Korean Presbyterian church in Toronto. She defied the patriarchal conventions of that version of Christianity and became a Minister of Word and Sacraments. But she didn't stop there. She did a doctorate in theology at the Toronto School of Theology and now teaches at Earlham School of Religion in Richmond, Indiana. She is one of the most articulate and prolific writers and speakers advocating for a Christianity that respects and integrates voices that have been silenced for centuries, especially those of women and racial minorities in North America. These voices open up dimensions of the Biblical witness to the living Word of God in Jesus Christ that speak of justice and inclusion in a new humanity inaugurated in Jesus Christ. Many of these threads in her theological considerations come together in this wonderful book on the Holy Spirit written for Tripp Fuller's provocative Homebrewed Christianity series of books.

Kim points out how neglected the Holy Spirit has been in the Western theological tradition. Perhaps, she suggests, it's because the Spirit breaks the kinds of controlling certainties many theologians want to impose on the Gospel. And she's right in insisting that it's time to take a fresh look at the ways in which a focus on the reforming Spirit can challenge the status quo, destroy inequity, and promote justice and liberation. In the polarized cultures of our church life these days, Kim offers a compelling witness to a reconciling orthodoxy that has deep roots in her Canadian Presbyterianism. But like those who represent the best of that tradition, she keeps pushing the boundaries in exploring what Christ is really up to in the world. Here's the spoiler alert. It has everything to do with justice, kindness, and humility.

I was particularly taken, given our connections with the jazz community at Brentwood, with her opening chapter that improvises on the idea that the whole creation vibrates with the music of God's energy. And this leads Kim to a very important conclusion/assumption. The whole of creation vibrates with the energy of God, whether recognized or not. The Spirit is this presence in the whole creation, taking hold of us and changing our lives in the ways God intends. That growth, if authentic to the Gospel, will always move in sync with the prophetic witness that formed Jesus. That's what the Spirit is up to, both inside and outside of the church.

As an Asian woman in North America, Kim brings a new voice into the theological dialogue on the Holy Spirit. 'Chi' is "an energy that brings wholeness, health, and vitality," generating a flourishing communal life for everyone. That's what the Spirit does as it blows where it will. Not where we want it to, or where we think it should, but where God intends it to do its reconciling work. She delves into the Korean concept of 'han,' something that is difficult to translate into the limiting frameworks of the English language. It points to, but is not confined to, "unjust suffering" and "a piercing of the heart." Think of the comfort women traumatized into silence by soldiers in the world's wars. That unspeakable suffering is "han." The Spirit that Kim is revealing for us awakens us to the "han" of human existence and brings us all into the realm of "chi," a commonwealth of justice and inclusion.

This book is a provocative blend of autobiographical reflections, theological insights, and prophetic challenges. The elegant writing draws you forward into new ways of seeing and living your faith. This

book should be on the must-read list for every congregational book club and for every congregational participant who wants to reform the energy of their discipleship.