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Ministries & Theology**

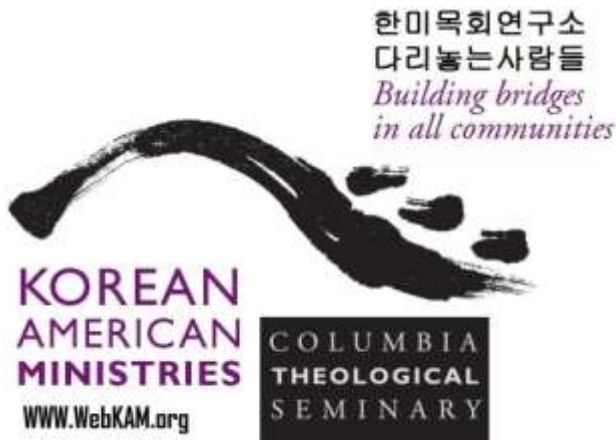
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## Connotated Bibliography

**Choi, Jin-Young.** “The Misunderstanding of Jesus’ Disciples in Mark: An Interpretation from a Community-Centered Perspective.” Nicole Duran, Teresa Okure, and Daniel Patte, eds. *Mark, Texts @ Contexts*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN. 2011.

In this article, Jin-Young Choi questions the hermeneutical perspective of Western Biblical scholarship on Mark focusing on the rationality of the individual disciples and their failure in *knowing* who Jesus is. She argues that the vertical model of “following” based on the personal relationship between Jesus and the disciples like that of patron and client should be replaced by horizontal model of “being with”, because the predominant value system of the ancient Mediterranean world is the honor-shame code focusing on communal relationships rather than individual autonomy. This communal relationship is not based upon patriarchal lineage, as Mark does not have a genealogy like Matthew and Luke. Rather, it is based upon their reaction to God: “Whoever does the will of God is the brother, sister, or mother of this Son of God.” This relationship is drawn not simply from the desire to serve and receive favor but from the desire “to be with” the Son of God. Furthermore, she questions Western scholars asserting that the disciples’ lack of faith is due to their lack of knowledge about who Jesus is. What is lacking for the disciples is not knowledge but faith and understanding coming from the hardness of their heart. Facing Jesus’ passion, they lose the solidarity based upon the kinship relationship rather than honor and shame and fall away from him. However, their sin of deserting him can still be forgiven, when they forgive sins of others. Though they lack knowledge and faith, Jesus will forgive and heal them, as he did to a paralytic by looking at his friends who brought him and to the father of the son having unclean spirit. This restoration of broken relationships occurs when they break one body of Jesus in communion which makes a community experience of “synchronicity” like the Korean Shamanism ritual which creates healing by bringing everything together. By seeing, hearing, touching, and eating

in communion together, we not only know but experience, understand, and have communion with the *Mystery* of the kingdom which is Jesus.

**Reflection:** In this compelling article, Jin-Young Choi brings a new model through which Jesus and his disciples relate to each other. The vertical model of the individual's decision to follow Jesus and knowing him is replaced by the horizontal model of kinship and "being with" Jesus. The core of relationship with Jesus is not built by one's knowledge about him but built by one's experience of him. By joining in the communion together and by seeing, hearing, touching, and eating, not simply knowing, partakers of communion finally experience and understand the mystery of God, which is Jesus.

From this community centered perspective on Mark's gospel, two helpful insights can be drawn. First, horizontal relationship between members should be emphasized in the church's Christian education rather than only focusing on individual's vertical relationship with God. This is a critical point in the Korean church context where church splits and internal fights are so frequent. It is because, as Choi's article implies, the deepening of one's faith and relationship with Jesus is possible through deepening one's kinship relationship with fellow believers. In order to implement this community centered perspective, Christian education and discipleship program in Korean churches should be reevaluated. So far, most materials that Korean churches use mainly focus on providing knowledge about the Bible. As a consequence, those who know a lot about the Bible often consider themselves having a deep relationship with Jesus but do not know how to be with other believers and therefore create problems in the church. By experiencing the communal aspect of Christian faith, they could learn how to forgive each other and reduce conflicts among themselves in the church.

Second, communion should be taken more seriously than a monthly ritual. Since Korean churches so focus on the preaching in worship, which often takes 40-50 minutes, time for communion is limited and it is often carried out in a short period time, even in less than 5 minutes for a 100 member church. However, the understanding which Mark's gospel teaches requires time to reflect for participants of communion. Without this time of reflection upon the forgiveness of Jesus for his disciples and for themselves,

communion can be a mere ritual rather than an opportunity to experience and understand who Jesus is.

**Park, Sophia. "The Galilean Jesus: Creating a Borderland at the Foot of the Cross (Jn. 19:23-30)." *Theological Studies* 70 (2009): 419-436.**

Sophia Park starts her article by introducing a word *dislocation* that signifies the hybrid identity of marginalized people living in the cultural and political borderland. This borderland is full of discrimination, feeling of inferiority, and violence, but it is also a place of transformation. People living there are, as Homi Bhabha puts it, "*neither the One...nor the Other...but something else besides.*" This dislocated people living in the borderland are also found in John's Gospel. They are Johannine community members excluded by "the Other" which equates frequently "the world" and "the Jews" but included by the "Father" who stands beside them. In this process of exclusion and inclusion, the center becomes the margins, and the margins become the center by the absolute power and authority of the Father. This community of believers is constituted by two elements, friendship with Jesus and kinship with other believers. According to Sophia Park, this borderline community is constructed at the crucifixion of Jesus in John's gospel. At his death, Jesus constitutes a community by saying these words, "Woman, here is your son" and "Here is your mother." Though there is no blood related relationship, the beloved disciple and Mary are now a family because of their friendship with Jesus. Because of this event, the new community is born, as Sophia Park translates *ap' ekeinēs tēs ōras* not as "from that hour" but as "because of that hour" – "the disciple took her into his own home." In other words, the space at the foot of the cross of Jesus is the borderland where marginalized people, such as disciples of Jesus and women, are brought into the family having kinship relationship with the Father. This configuration of different characters invites readers who also experience dislocation into the borderland space at the foot of cross where discrimination and violence take place, but at the same time, transformation and empowerment take place.

**Reflection:** "Who am I?" This is neither a rhetorical question nor a philosophical question but a real-life question that immigrants often ask. This question becomes greater