

**Journal of Korean American
Ministries & Theology**

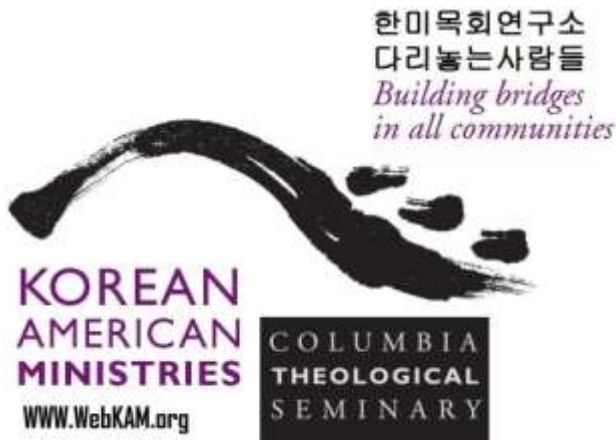
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communion can be a mere ritual rather than an opportunity to experience and understand who Jesus is.

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

especially for illegal immigrants trying to find their place in the foreign countries. Even people with status ask this question experiencing the reality of American society, especially reflecting to ethnic, gender, and class barrier. And they often conclude that “We are outsiders.” But, in her inspiring article, Sophia Park awakens readers to see another reality, the reality opened to those who believe in Jesus Christ at the foot of the cross. Believers of Jesus Christ are not in the margins but in the center in God’s reality in newly instituted family of believers.

There are two points of importance in Sophia Park’s article. First, the reality which immigrants are living is not in the margins but at the center of society, because the Father is standing with them. A goal of immigrants is often working at the center of American society or helping their children to be influential members of society. Though their goal is inspirational, it also has a great danger. This goal or this kind of thinking makes immigrants outsiders hoping to get inside where power and privilege prevails. But, what happens, when they fail to get in? Are they outsiders of this American society? Are their lives failures? No, they are not, because they are given a new identity in Jesus. They are members of Jesus’ family which God stands beside. They are at the center of God’s kingdom and, as a result, in the society. This paradigm shift enables us, immigrants, not to despair due to one’s performance in American society but to constantly rejoice and be encouraged by the presence of God in our lives.

Second, the community of believers comes into existence only when they accept each other. Becoming a family of God begins by believing and accepting Jesus (John 1:12), and it is completed by accepting other believers, as the beloved disciple takes Mary to his home in the word of Jesus. This teaching has a message for immigrants. Discrimination and difficulty that they experience in a foreign land takes place because of differences that they have, ethnicity, language, culture, etc. In return, many Koreans also discriminate people in other ethnic groups and even with their own groups due to differences especially for intermarriage couples and for location of one’s hometown in Korea. When they accept each other, they are a family of God and at the center of this society, because the Father is with them.

