



At Home In Exile: Finding Jesus among My Ancestors and Refugee Neighbors

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Russell Jeung's spiritual memoir shares the joyful and occasionally harrowing stories of his life in East Oakland's Murder Dubs neighborhood—including battling drug dealers who threatened him, exorcising a spirit possessing a teen, and winning a landmark housing settlement against slumlords with 200 of his closest Cambodian and Latino friends.

More poignantly, *At Home in Exile* weaves in narratives of longing and belonging as Jeung retraces the steps of his Chinese-Hakka family and his refugee neighbors. In the face of forced relocation and institutional discrimination, his family and friends resisted time and time again over six generations.

With humor and keen insight, *At Home in Exile* will help you see how living in exile will transform your faith.

At Home In Exile: Finding Jesus among My Ancestors and Refugee Neighbors Details

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Author : Russell Jeung

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Nathan M Duriga says

This book exceeded my expectations! A work on "lived theology," the author tells the story of his Christian community seeking to be faithfully present in one of the worst neighborhoods in Oakland. He asks provocative questions about how Christians - called to be exiles in this world and citizens of heaven - should view their work, family life, and relationships . He questions common cultural views of family and proposes a "Panda model" of parenting and a "loyal love" model for marriage in place of the individualistic approaches we commonly see that promote worldly accomplishment and personal happiness. His style is humble, thoughtful, humorous, challenging and refreshing.

Cherrie says

Huge fan of Russell's attitude and heart -- thankful that he went after his convictions to live and build community at Oak Park. I was initially skeptical about the unintended effects of a group of college grads moving into a low income neighborhood but the more I read, the more I understood Russell's calling to serve by loving the community. Great book!

Michael-David Sasson says

I enjoyed this reflective story of how someone lived out their faith in Oakland, where I live, and in recent history. I continue to be intrigued/befuddled/enriched by how Protestant's use Hebrew in ways that are at a tangent (at least) from how the same words were used in my studies and religious education in the synagogue but if I put that aside (worth doing in this instance) then I'm super-glad to have wrestled with this book.

Tanya says

"At Home in Exile" is an example of a ministry according to the heart of God, Russell Jeung is serving the poor, troubled, needy and hungry in the slums of East Oakland, CA. He is not the epiphany of the gospel of prosperity, because here he lives in an apartment ridden of roaches and lady bugs, his living conditions are pretty desperate actually, but it is all by choice. He is showing how to love and be real, how to feel better by helping others even in the most difficult circumstance. I believe that only ministries like this have a chance to turn the Millennials closer to God and bring Christianity out of exile in America.

Pam Thomas says

Interesting book about following your calling, giving sacrificial love for the Cambodian families and refugees. The author embodies with courage the families of poor and broken immigrants from Asia where

exile is a unique place to serve got at the same time.

Jomei says

Written by a true egghead, Russell toots his and his wife's horns of pulled-up-by-the-bootstraps ancestry, privilege, educational and monetary attainment and largess, but also humbly bows to being a complete fool about street wisdom. And willingly subjects himself to be taught through the stark whipping of residing in East Oakland by choice. Pretty hipster and gentrifier, but what we're all called to do to glorify Christ: share the gifts God's given us with others.

Nissa says

This was a pretty good read that challenged a lot of my ideas surrounding the refugee and immigrant communities and what it looks like to love them as Christ loves them.

Albert Hong says

Honest reflection on the messiness of trying to do good in the world. Insightful observations on an Eastern correction to white Christian theologies and practices. And fun to read about our own little community through Russell's eyes.

SooHo Lee says

The grandeur of this autobiography is not the grand things Russell has done or experienced (as jaw-dropping as some of them are). No, rather, it is his candor and glee. Russell, it seems to me, does not seem obliged to write an embellished, poetic lore of his conquests and defeats. Instead, he slips in "dad jokes" (at least, I would categorize them as such or "professorial jokes") here and there -- not taking himself too seriously. What he does take seriously are the joys and sorrows of his life with his community -- Oak Park and his family. The first half is dominated by OPM (Oak Park Ministry) and the second half his nuclear family: the highs and lows of each. The highs are definitely eye-opening wonders, but the lows are heart-wrenchingly painful. And such are the stuff of life.

Russell, whether with intention or not, seems to tug at Asian American Christian (particularly Evangelicals) hearts. Though he did not blow out of proportion the prestigious sacrifices he made (such as going to Stanford for undergraduate but devoted a bulk of his life living with the marginalized in mold and roach infested apartments and turning down two promising academic careers to be with his church's community), any Asian American pressured by the model minority myth will be keen on these sacrifices, especially. I doubt Russell shared this to make us feel guilty or shamed (even more than we might already feel!), but to offer his life as one example of a non-model-minority Asian American Evangelical (though the other extreme to avoid is moralistic Asian American Evangelicals...!).

Towards the end, he seems to make a Christian endorsement of Confucian systems (esp, food and sacrificial

forms of love). This isn't to say Confucianism must be adopted by Asian/Asian American Christians, nor that it is 100% sanctified. No, Russell seems to say that Confucianism affected his life in more ways than one, which God graciously adopted and used to sanctify him and his community.

cf. www.sooholee.wordpress.com

Jerry Chen says

Russell Jeung's stories are both relatable and challenging. As a half-Hakka from Taiwan, I am familiar with the "guest family" heritage that resonates so well with the biblical theme of exile. The Asian American experience (many generations) as well as the shared struggles living with with underclass refugees and immigrants are uniquely inspiring and even somewhat instructional. Jeung's middle-class upbringing makes his perspectives on vocational aspirations and familial goals easy to understand, and his courageous pursuit of ministry with Oakland's poor (as accompanied by his understanding of his own cultural background) provokes both self-reflection and hope.

Marie says

I struggled to finish this one. It wasn't that the information wasn't interesting; I think I struggled with the structure of the book. There seemed to be little chronology. I also was very unsure of where his theology lays, as it wasn't stated clearly though I love the concept of the living together as Christians!

Sandra says

Everyone has a story to tell, but not everyone can tell their story very well. This book is very well written and thought provoking. I absolutely love this book! It's different from any other Christian book I've read. I'm glad I read this book because it made me think a lot, and I plan to share it with others.

I want to say to Russell Jeung, thank you for sharing your beautiful story with us.

A copy of this ebook was generously provided by NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Laura Cheifetz says

This book is beautiful, funny, interesting. I love learning about Asian American history, especially in California. I also think the author is pretty funny. Anyone who struggles with how to live in alignment with the call of the gospel, while also being 21st century professionals, should read this. It's so very thoughtful.

I also enjoyed how he delved into his own life of thinking he should be special, which is an occupational hazard of being a Christian, particularly of a Christian pastor. One of his insightful comments about vocation: "I do not believe God has gifted me with the potential for a special job or task uniquely meant for me, especially in regard to the work that I do. How can I make such presumptions when, throughout history,

the overwhelming majority of people toiled in the fields?"

Side note: It also made me laugh because I used to get asked by white and black people about Asian American intentional communities, and I would say "um, that's just how Asian Americans live." This is a story of intentional communities without the annoyance of upper class whiteness so prevalent in many intentional communities.

The only thing for my mainline friends to keep in mind is that he uses exclusive language for God. It didn't bother me overly much because: context. And he's not obnoxious with it.

Karin says

It was hard to get started reading it ... beginning felt very disjointed. But as it went it got better and gave some good perspective to life in a different culture than mine in the way that helps to expand my world.
