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Reviewing *Human Sexuality & the Holy Spirit: Spirit-Empowered Perspectives*

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REVIEWS



Human Sexuality & the Holy Spirit: Spirit-Empowered Perspectives. Edited by Wonsuk Ma and Kathaleen Reid-Martinez. Tulsa, OK: ORU Press, 2019. 360 pp.

Human Sexuality & the Holy Spirit is a multi-authored work edited by Wonsuk Ma and Kathaleen Reid-Martinez that brings together a global list of contributors. Wonsuk Ma serves as Dean and Distinguished Professor of Global Christianity at Oral Roberts University. Kathaleen Reid-Martinez is the Provost and Chief Academic Officer of Oral Roberts University. She also served as a Co-Chair of the Scholars Consultation of Empowered21.

This book is a revised compilation of the studies presented at the 2017 Empowered21 Scholars consultation in Singapore. It assembles a host of global scholars who engage with the topic of human sexuality using an array of examples from real-life experiences within their global contexts. The overall theme running through the book is that human sexuality is a gift from God that has been corrupted by sin, but the Holy Spirit is at work restoring the gift through Spirit-empowered communities.

This book is divided into two parts. The first part contains four chapters that provide a biblical and historical background for the book's second part. In part one, Lian Mung's chapter on human sexuality and the OT Spirit-empowered leaders reveals the goodness of human sexuality. The second chapter is Mark Hall's study on the Pauline vice lists with an emphasis on homosexuality. In their own ways, both of these chapters assert that one can live within God's healthy sexual boundaries by submitting themselves to God (9, 24). Chapter three contains Clayton Coombs's historical survey of the church's response to homosexuality. In chapter four, Michael McClymond excellently evaluates some of the literature on gender identity. He suggests Christians should respond

by loving their neighbors as themselves while not accepting every transgender ideology (93).

The book's second part contains various contextual studies from Asia, Africa, North America, and Europe. The section's first three chapters focus on child discrimination within Korea, India, and Nepal. The following six chapters explore various issues among youths and young adults in different social settings in Africa, the Philippines, and North America. The chapters cover gender inequality, HIV, discrimination against women workers, and God's design for marriage. The last three chapters explore issues of adult sexuality and homosexuality within more of a Christian context. These studies include the struggles faced by celibate gay Christians, the role of women in Yoido Full Gospel Church's cell ministry, and the struggle of pursuing liberty under Christ. In summary, the studies reveal the extent of the fallenness of human sexuality within religious, cultural, and social settings and the restorative role of Spirit-empowered communities within these contexts.

The writing style of the authors is an engaging blend of scholarly thoroughness and easy reading. Having such an eclectic group of global scholars is particularly refreshing, as is the worldwide scope of their studies. This breadth of scholarship provides readers with fresh perspectives into their understanding and engagement with human sexuality within their own settings. The book's global scope was undoubtedly its greatest strength, but it was also a weakness to some extent. For instance, the second part of the book contained all the global studies. It would have added to the book to have these studies sub-sectioned by location (i.e., Asia, Africa, North America, Europe) and have a few introductory paragraphs beginning each subsection to provide the reader with a contextual overview of the region. Doing so would have given the reader some background information while helping the book flow. Naturally, as with many books published from academic consultations, it can be challenging to make the content flow. Still, even with these limitations, the book performs well. The postscript does an excellent job of drawing all the threads together.

While the input into the book is global, the underlying attitude behind the studies is that of a conservatively Evangelical approach

to human sexuality. In keeping with the studies' broad scholarly and contextual scope, it would have benefited the book to have the input of voices who hold alternative views of human sexuality to contribute to the dialogue. However, the absence of such voices makes this book "safe" to put in the hands of students and interested laypersons within the Spirit-empowered communities while still challenging them and expanding their understanding of the topic. To this point, the book does remarkably well. It undoubtedly fits the brief of providing a text to the global Spirit-empowered community discussing the theological and pastoral challenges regarding this issue of human sexuality.

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Depression, Where is Your Sting? By Robert D. McBain. Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2021. 158 pp.

Serving as a chaplain in two Pennsylvania state psychiatric hospitals for over three decades, I have read numerous accounts about depression. Why read another? Because each person's journey is different, and healing originates from God in various ways. This book reveals the spiritual aspect of recovery in depression that is profoundly missing from countless volumes. Mental health concerns have become immense topics of conversation in our society, and properly so.

Robert McBain's book, *Depression, Where is Your Sting?*, is a courageous description about one man's battle with depression. The author openly shares his fight with depression in his youth on the East Coast of Scotland. He relates his struggle about despair overwhelming his life as he walked into the Atlantic Ocean to drown himself. Providentially, he recounts that his cell phone rang and eventually he walked back on the shore to answer the device. These suicidal feelings pervaded his life for a number of years. As he wrote, "suicide acted as a vent to release the pain depression causes"