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#### BOOK REVIEW

Mark A. Yarhouse, et al. *Listening to Sexual Minorities: A Study of Faith and Sexual Identity on Christian College Campuses*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018. 320 pp. Pbk. ISBN 9780830828623. \$35.00.

Several things set this book apart from much that has been written in the past. First, this text examines a topic that has not been extensively explored in the evangelical Christian literature, namely, the experience of sexual minorities (i.e., the LGBTQ2 community) within the Christian community, and particularly Christian colleges and universities. Next, Yarhouse and his colleagues present the findings of a longitudinal study (n=160) they conducted that explored the experiences of sexual minorities who attend Christian colleges. These findings supplement two articles published by Yarhouse and his associates (cf. Yarhouse, et al., “Listening to Sexual Minorities on Christian College Campuses,” *Journal of Psychology & Theology* 37 [2009] 97–113; Stratton, et al., “Sexual Minorities in Faith-Based Higher Education,” *Journal of Psychology & Theology* 41 [2013] 3–23). Third, this book introduces the reader to the voices of those who participated in this study.

The organizational structure of *Listening to Sexual Minorities* reflects the hallmarks of a scientific and academic exploration of the subject. Chapter 1 “The Tension: Faith and Sexuality” briefly discusses three views relating to faith and sexual minorities within the Christian community and introduces the rationale and design of the authors’ longitudinal study. Readers will appreciate the fact this study employed a two-stage longitudinal mixed methods phenomenological design that employed both surveys and personal interviews with individuals (time 1, n=160; time 2, n=90).

Chapter 2 “A Closer Look” provides a demographic overview of the participants that includes their reasons for attending a Christian college, age demographics, information about the participants’ spiritual and religious commitment, the participants’ beliefs about sexual behavior, and the participants’ responses to questions related to their mental health.

Chapters 3–5 discuss the participants’ responses under three key headings “Milestones and Identity” (ch. 3), “Identity Development” (ch. 4), and “Faith and Sexuality” (ch. 5). These chapters, as with Chapter 2, provide the reader with an integrated narrative that incorporates qualitative data derived from the study, themes and insights drawn from the literature, and quantitative data obtained from the survey. This integrated narrative provides the reader with a thick description of the participants’ self-awareness and experiences, both as people of faith and with respect to their sexuality.

Chapter 6 “How Sexual Minority Students Fit into their College Campuses” incorporates the literature as well as quantitative and qualitative data to paint a picture of the relationship between LGBTQ2 students and their campus experiences. This honest discussion indicates that while there are aspects of their college experience that LGBTQ2 students found to be supportive and positive, there are other aspects of the college experience that LGBTQ2 students experienced as problematic and disturbing.

Chapter 7 shifts the focus from the participants’ experiences of campus life to their transition to life after graduation. The qualitative and quantitative data that informs this chapter are taken from a follow-up survey (n=90) that was conducted one year after the initial survey. This phase of the study asked questions about the participants’ sexual attraction, their sexual identity and their attitudes towards sexual behavior, whether their college was supportive of sexual minorities, the extent of their spiritual and religious commitment, their workplace experience, sources of social support, and their experience of psychological distress. Where possible, the discussion of the aggregate data from this phase is compared with the aggregate data obtained a year earlier. While this methodology offers a different perspective than the cross-sectional studies previously conducted by

Yarhouse and his colleagues, some readers may wonder if the fact the two data gathering events were only spaced a year apart may be too close together to provide a true longitudinal perspective.

The final chapter of the book “Summary, Reflections, and Conclusions” seeks to pull together key themes presented within the text in a way that is designed to identify important insights that are relevant to sexual minority students and Christian institutions. While the authors’ discussion of Christian community and developing intentional communities is focused on campus communities, this discussion raises themes and concerns that are relevant for any Christian community that desires to find ways to welcome and support anyone who self-identifies as being LGBTQ2. Of course, a challenge for any reader will be to move from the general findings of this study to engaging with specific individuals in ways that are experienced as respectful and supportive.

In conclusion, the authors of *Listening to Sexual Minorities* have successfully communicated their research findings in a way that is not excessively cluttered by statistical tables and is accessible to a population that extends beyond the counseling and educational communities. An appendix containing additional statistical tables is included at the end of each chapter for those who wish to delve deeper into the study’s findings. This decision has resulted in a text in which the authors provide a platform that allows Evangelical Christians to hear the voices of members of the LGBTQ2 community for whom Christian spirituality and beliefs matter.

Kelvin F. Mutter  
McMaster Divinity College  
Hamilton, ON