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known they “needed,” were they not enslaved to the marketing of such products (chapter 9). In the same chapter, he adeptly treats the significance of almsgiving: an act of trust in God’s provision indicative of one’s faith toward God.

Although not a Lutheran, Stanglin’s account of political theology (chapter 11) squares well with Scripture’s teaching on the two kingdoms. His treatment of race relations is refreshing for its clear condemnation of racism, and for his equally perceptive and straightforward diagnosis of the destructive character of identity politics. “Identities were once shaped primarily by a sense of belonging to a faith community and a state or country, by being a part of a stable nuclear family in proximity to an extended family, and by having a workplace. . . . With the loss of church, family, work, and neighborhood ties, it is no wonder that more people than ever are experiencing an identity crisis. Intersectional identity politics appeals to a culture in an identity crisis” (176–177). Yet, identity politics cannot solve the problem: “Since your intersectional identity is thought to be incommensurate with mine, then mutual understanding becomes impossible, and antagonism results” (176). However, out of this crisis, Stanglin is able to open up a rich section discussing the truly Christian society—that is, the church—called out of the world, cleansed by the blood of Christ, and living in repentance and reconciliation. A restored humanity in Christ recognizes the secondary character of other “identities,” and is able appropriately to appreciate them, without entrenching divisions by them (177–183).

Stanglin has, in fact, provided a primer on ethics that does not reject rules. By lucid scriptural reasoning and broad research adeptly distilled, Stanglin offers wisdom in the face of contemporary challenges, and even leaves us a number of rules for action. Stanglin’s rules, along with the principles, paradigms, and theological convictions of Scripture, unfailingly shape the Christian’s understanding of love and the good. This book could be used to teach Bible classes (each chapter concludes with helpful discussion questions), by pastors in a study group, or even by scholars looking to familiarize themselves with the current state of Christian ethics.

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***After the Revolution: Sex and the Single Evangelical.* By David J. Ayers. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2022. 245 pages. Paperback. \$24.99.**

Less than a decade ago, a faithful pastor was installed at a mid-sized Midwest congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. He eventually learned

there were thirty-five unmarried member couples cohabiting. That pastor and congregation are not alone; the disordered sexual practices of our individualistic society have influenced even active congregants.

David Ayers, a conservative evangelical sociologist, has been observing this trend for decades as the sexual revolution bears fruit. Drawing on sociological studies in a clear and conversational tone, this book gives solid evidence of a very disturbing trend: with regard to heterosexual sex, most evangelicals are mimicking the sexual practices of the world. Yet, Ayers is not without hope. Confident in Christ's redeeming and restoring work, he sees a path forward in confession, absolution, faithful teaching of our Lord's word, and the work of pastors and congregations in encouraging youth and adults in the rich and beautiful design of our Lord's gift of sex.

Along with an insightful foreword by Carl R. Trueman and an introduction, the book contains nine chapters. The first chapter delightfully explores "God's Design for Sex and Marriage." Ayers is no prude, nor is he simplistic in his anthropology or theology. Man is an embodied soul. Marriage reflects the Trinity and the union of Christ and the church. Controlling our passions and living according to our Creator's design is a fruit of faith flowing from freedom in the gospel, while anything else is enslavement to sin.

The second chapter describes, from a sociological perspective, what has happened in the worldview and sexual practice of American society since the early twentieth century. Clear-eyed sociologists saw the sexual revolution coming decades before it became popular. Ayers identifies this shift as a movement from an ethic of covenant to an ethic of consent. This chapter matches what we have learned about modernism and postmodernism and the triumph of expressive individualism but views these changes through the lens of sociology.

Based on survey data, chapters 3–5 demonstrate the embrace of the sexual revolution among evangelicals. Ayers was shocked by his early research at a conservative evangelical college. These chapters are a sober reminder of what we are up against in these gray and latter days.

The next two chapters explore how evangelicals got into this mess, both philosophically and socially. The eighth chapter explicates the damage from sex outside of marriage.

The ninth chapter is exceptionally helpful. Here Ayers rejects simplistic emotional pledges of purity but offers concrete guidance on what a congregation might offer to promote chastity in its fullness. He advocates for both faithful teaching and compassionate soul care for those who sin.

There is some language that does not fully resonate with the Lutheran Confessions, but in general this book is a grounded, biblically faithful, and helpful tool for

pastors, church workers, and laity who wish to be more fully equipped to serve souls in these challenging days.

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