

Scott E. Shaum 2015 Annual Reads List

sshaum@barnabas.org

Hey Everyone

Happy New Year. Here is my annual list of books read.

This is, obviously, a very personal list. I long ago gave myself permission to go where I am eager to learn as far as topics and titles. I often do read books I think I “should” read either because of current affairs or for my organizational responsibilities. But largely, these titles are what I *want* to read in response to where I sense God is drawing me. I hope you can find something beneficial for yourself in this list.

This year’s list is shorter too. I cut out several titles I am not sure are worth recommending. Here is what made the cut.

Remember, one of the traits of a servant who finishes well is a life-long learning posture. Reading is a primary way to continue to grow.

Please send me titles you benefited and/or enjoyed recently.

Thank you! And May you Grow in Union with Christ this Year!

Scott

Spiritual Formation/Growth

Called to Be Saints Gordon T Smith

This is likely the most formative book I read this year for my own journey both in my growing union with Christ but also my theological grasp of spiritual formation and how those both play out in my leadership and shepherding of others. Smith does a wonderful job of describing a mature Christ-follower. Before launching into that subject though, he delivers us from the common teaching of today’s evangelical world of moralism. He also argues that every local congregation have a clearly written description of what a mature follower of Christ looks like and means to move towards that. **I highly recommend this book, especially if you are a teacher, preacher, shepherd, etc.**

With: Reimagining the Way we Relate to God Skye Jethani

Jethani describes four ill-fated means of relating to God: Life under God, Life over God, Life from God, Life for God. Each of these can be found in today’s evangelical world. He then describes *Life with God* and the implications of such a walk. **I highly recommend this book.** It could be especially poignant for anyone who has grown up in the church.

Enjoy your Prayer Life Michael Reeves

This is a very short book, less than 100 pages. It is likely the most encouraging book I have ever read on the subject of prayer. Reeves disarms the subject, moves it away

from mystical mumbo-jumbo into the realm of relational responsiveness to God amidst everyday life. The book is only available in electronic version (as far as I know). I obtained mine via Amazon. Get it, read it, live it. **Highly recommended.**

The Land Between: Finding God in Difficult Transitions Jeff Manion

Manion does a marvelous job of walking the reader through a time of difficulty and/or transition using the story of Israel in the wilderness. He does not fudge on the realities of pain and loss during such seasons of our lives *and* lifts our eyes off of such potential self-absorbing elements to see God's greater works and purposes. Both those realities are to be honored and held in their tension.

Holy Meal: The Lord's Supper in the Life of the Church Gordon T Smith

Confession: I have an eating problem. I really, really like food. At my age, that can cause lots of width problems. Sometimes I find I eat compulsively. OK maybe more than sometimes. This book is about the place of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in our personal and communal lives. He begins the book with a short theology of eating, which was profoundly insightful for one such as me who consumes much food gleefully. More than that, he explains the practical implications of the sacrament on our life of faith and union with Christ. Good stuff.

Starting Something New: Spiritual Direction for your God-Given Dream

Beth A Booram

Booram is a spiritual director in the Indy area. This book is a creative look at launching into any sort of new venture. She begins each chapter with an interview of a leader who has started something new (an organization, ministry, movement, etc.). Each section describes a different stage of a new beginning. She writes with a spiritual directors eye, ear, and voice and is laced with excellent questions to ponder. This can be a wonderfully guiding resource.

Spiritual Direction: A Guide to Giving and Receiving Direction Gordon T Smith

In my training as a spiritual director I have read many books on the subject by both catholics and protestants. I found this one of the best I have read for two reasons. First, it is simple. Smith describes the role and function of a spiritual director clearly and simply. Second, he grounds it theologically as well as any other author I've read. I will keep this by my side to keep my spiritual director role well grounded.

Courage and Calling: Embracing Your God-Given Potential Gordon T Smith

(Have you noticed I was on a Gordon Smith binge this year???) This is one of Smith's older books and has been revised over times. I read this to help inform my effort to create a development culture and structure for the staff in my organization. It is a long read, thorough, and helpful on understanding our vocation and means to grow in it. At times it feels a little "long-winded" yet there are some true gems in here. This is a good book for anyone who works in the field of developing others or crafting a developmental culture for their organization (like pastors!).

Rejoicing in Christ Michael Reeves

This book follows Reeve's excellently written *Delighting in the Trinity*. This book focuses on the second member of the Trinity, the Son of the Father. In Reeve's readable style, he invites us into pondering Jesus Christ and respond to him constant movements towards us. **Another highly recommended book.** (For anyone new to this list, *Delighting in the Trinity* is one of the top 3 books that have impacted me over the past 5 years. Can't recommend it enough.)

The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World Peter Scazzero

I have put Scazzero's *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* into dozens of people's hands over the years. That title is a must read. This newest book of his, not so much. In fact, I found myself a bit put off at times as much of it comes across as a moralistic self-help book. Even the title can be misleading, I cannot transform my own inner world. I am dependent on the Spirit as I am responsive to him. Thus, the book has a tendency toward moralism which is a real issue in today's Evangelicalism. That being said, he does get his point across that leaders are responsible to constantly grow and insure that the "darker" areas of their inner world are being addressed. His chapter on sabbath is excellent. This is worth reading, but with a filter.

Dreams and Visions Tom Doyle, Greg Webster

This is an immensely readable and encouraging book. Doyle has researched and personally interviewed scores of muslims who have come to Christ after Jesus initiated through dreams and various visions. These stories will rock your socks and leave you thanking God for how he circumnavigates man's efforts to hold him at bay to reveal himself to us. If you need a perspective correction on the muslim world, how God is at work in that group of people and a simple boost to your faith, read this book.

Consolation: The Solace, Nourishment, and Underlying Meaning of Everyday Words David Whyte

I have enjoyed many of Whyte's books in the past. However, I found this one laced with mucho humanism and other spiritualistic muck. He is obviously very creative, intelligent, and a wonderful writer, and has some good observations on life in general. Read it with discretion if you are a Whyte fan.

Lead with Humility: 12 Leadership Lessons from Pope Francis Jeffery A. Krames

I have been intrigued by Pope Francis' leadership style, as have many. Krames is not a catholic, nor a believer. He observes Francis' leadership decisions and styles and makes applicable principles from his observations. It has some interesting points but not a have-to read.

I read a number of novels this year, two I highly recommend:

All the Light We cannot see Anthony Doerr

This book's plot is good, though not brilliant. But Doerr's writing style is. His is a poetic, beautiful, fluid, wonderful style. I found myself rereading sentences just for pure enjoyment of the flow of his words. Masterfully written.

Ordinary Grace William Kent Krueger

This is a redemptive story of human brokenness. Wonderfully written, poignant and real - no spiritual platitudes here. An enjoyable read.

Seeking God's Face: Praying with the Bible through the Year

I want to bring your attention to a prayer book that I have come to truly enjoy and read daily. It is simply a short portion of Psalms and another passage set within some short prayers and invitations to sit quietly with God. The book is structured according to the church calendar and thus begins with Advent. There are various formats of this book available - I have a small, nearly pocket-sized version that travels well. Love it.

And I love your feedback and any titles you have enjoy - on any topic or genre.

Peace!

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