



COVENANT
CHURCH

SUMMER READING 2018

David Henderson - senior pastor

Summer is upon us! And what better way to welcome summer than by opening a good book as you settle in to your seat on a plane, or plop into your fold-out chair at the beach, or curl into a hammock in your backyard and enjoy an Indiana summer?

Continuing the annual tradition . . . here are some suggestion based on my reading and rereading over the past year. All of these are good reads but I've starred the ones that I think are stand-outs. Happy adventures in reading!

Can't wait to hear about your summer – and your own book suggestions – once we all gather together again at the other end!

Grace,

David

The Greatest Christian Classics

(Tackling any of these will richly reward you!)

*****The Confessions*, Augustine** (chapters 1-10; the rest is really another book): “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.” His spiritual autobiography has informed nearly all Christian writing since. Discover why!

***The Divine Comedy*, Dante Alighieri.** His imagined journey through hell, purgatory, and heaven shapes much of the modern view.

****The Imitation of Christ*, Thomas a Kempis:** A collection of spiritual counsel that has sold more than any Christian book outside the Bible.

****Pensées*, Blaise Pascal:** His brilliant collection of ideas for a book (never written) that was intended to defend the Christian faith. Incredibly relevant today.

***The Pilgrim's Progress*, John Bunyan.** Uses allegory to tell the story of the conversion, growth, struggles, and ultimate homegoing of a follower of Christ.

****Orthodoxy*, G. K. Chesterton:** Thoughtful and creative defense of the Christian faith.

*****Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis:** Perhaps the most influential book about Christianity in the modern era. A former atheist's crystal-clear explanation of the Christian faith and why it makes sense to trust Jesus today.

****The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer:** A bold and direct invitation to a life of complete abandon to Jesus as King.

Cultural Reflection

**12 Ways Your Phone is Changing You*, Tony Reinke: An unsettling critique and practical response to the pervasiveness of our screen-based society.

Fifty Inventions that Shaped the Modern Economy, Tim Harford. An intriguing parade of the cultural inventiveness that has shaped modern life.

Theological and Biblical Reflection

**The Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness*, Timothy Keller: A short and memorable invitation to step away from self-preoccupation and into a life radically oriented on Jesus.

Salvation by Allegiance, Matthew Bates. A wonderful challenge to conventional thought about what “saving faith” means. While the last portions of the book are problematic, the earlier portions are compelling in defining faith more in terms of allegiance than assent.

The Letters of John Hus, Jan Hus. Powerful Paul-like collection of letters written from prison by martyred Czech pastor Hus, one of the first of the reformers.

Novels

Henry V, William Shakespeare: A rich picture of humble, bold, and Christ-honoring leadership.

**David Copperfield*, Charles Dickens. One of the best from the Brits – the richly descriptive story of a boy’s growth to adulthood chock-full of memorable characters.

A Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens: Another classic – as well as a beautiful allegory of Christ’s sacrificial death on our behalf.

Emma, Jane Austen: A bemusing exploration of what happens when we become overconfident of our insight and influence in the lives of those around us.

Kidnapped, Robert Louis Stevenson. Grand fast-paced summer adventure.

**Treasure Island*, Robert Louis Stevenson. Ditto. The classic pirate story.

**Three Men in a Boat (To Say Nothing of the Dog)*, Jerome K. Jerome. Hilarious account of three bumbling friends setting out on a boat expedition on the Thames.

Something Fresh, PG Wodehouse. Light-hearted, jolly good fun, what what?

Thirty-Nine Steps, John Buchan. The prototype suspense novel from which James Bond traces its roots.

84, Charing Cross Road, Helene Hanff. A delightful (and true) record of correspondence between a brash American writer and a staid British bookseller.

**Peace Like A River*, Leif Enger: Wrestling with the issue of God’s goodness and involvement in a broken world in which evil seems so often to prevail. Some of the most artful writing to come along in a long time.

Authors, Artists, and Their Works

A Hobbit, A Wardrobe, and A Great War, Joseph Loconte: A fascinating exploration of how CS Lewis and JRR Tolkien’s experiences of World War I informed their fiction.

Arthur and Sherlock: Conan Doyle and the Creation of Holmes, Michael Sims: Sherlock Holmes fans, you’ll love this beyond-elementary introduction to the med school prof who served as the model for the best known fictional detective.

**Leonardo da Vinci*, Walter Isaacson: A beautiful book that will deepen your appreciation of this complex and gifted man, as well as his art.

History

Symphony for the City of the Dead, MT Anderson. The stirring story of Shostakovich writing the Leningrad Symphony while the city lay under siege by both Stalinism within and Nazism without.

History in 100 Numbers, Joel Levy. Fascinating windows onto key moments in world history.

**In Europe’s Shadow: Two Cold Wars and a Thirty-Year Journey Through Romania and Beyond*, Robert D. Kaplan: A richly informative history of Romania by its premier Western correspondent.

Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania, Erik Larson: Well-researched and told tale of the event that propelled the US into involvement in World War I.



The Lost City of Z, David Grann: Percy Fawcett's ill-fated search for a fabled Amazonian city.

The Battle of Britain, James Holland: Did you like the movies *Dunkirk* and *Darkest Hour*? This book, by one of the best World War II historians, is for you.

Apollo 8, Jeffrey Kluger: The author of *Apollo 13* brings his considerable skills to the story of the first launch to the moon.

Race Relations

The Underground Railroad, Colson Whitehead: A sobering interweaving of imagination (an actual rail line underground) and truth-telling (recounting the horrendous treatment of blacks region by region) during the years leading up to the Civil War.

**Twelve Years a Slave*, Solomon Northup: Solomon's remarkably articulate and true account of his experience of having been kidnapped as a free black man in the north and dragged into the south, where he worked as a slave for a dozen years before finally being set free.

Beloved, Toni Morrison: A jarring and painful fictional account of life as a slave.

Forgotten, Linda Hervieux: Well-researched account of the few African Americans who took part in the D-Day invasion, capturing the prejudice that was rife in our country in the years before and after the war.

Suspense / Christian Fiction / Cultural Reflection

**Death Comes for the Deconstructionist* and the sequel *Do We Not Bleed?* Daniel Taylor: *Christianity Today* award-winning books featuring a reluctant seeker as Holmes and his Downs Syndrome sister as Watson, both filled with wit and penetrating cultural insight. Perfect summer fare.

Other Odds and Ends

Visual Intelligence, Amy Herman: How studying art helps you to notice others and see more of what and who is around you.

The Secret Lives of Color, Kassia St. Clair: A stroll through the world of colors, where they've come from and how they, well, color our world.

AND, OF COURSE . . .

George Herbert

As I study the poetry of George Herbert this summer I'd love to have you read along. Here are some resources I'd recommend picking from.

For those who wish to dip in:

100 Poems, George Herbert, ed. Helen Wilcox: A collection of his best by the best of his scholars
Seeing Beauty and Saying Beautifully, John Piper. An overview of his life and poetry by a familiar preacher.

A Year with George Herbert, Jim Orrick, or *Heart in Pilgrimage*, Jane Falloon: Short collections of his poems with helpful explanations of their meanings.

And for those who want to dive in:

The Complete English Works, George Herbert, ed. Ann Slater

Music at Midnight, John Drury: An award-winning new biography including insightful explanation of his poetry.

