

Good Summer Reading Ideas

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Reading more effectively

Following is a sampling of books I have read in recent months that have proved to be very refreshing and helpful.

Before I list the books let me recommend two resources related to reading. I am consistently helped by reading the book summaries created by David Mays, Great Lakes Regional Director for ACMC (Advancing Church Missions Commitment). You can subscribe to receive them by e-mail and also find them arranged in common leadership topics at his website; www.davidmays.org.

In a recent book note Mays did an excellent job of distilling the book [*Reading on the Run: Continuum Reading Concepts*](#) by Dr. Robert Clinton, which seeks to assist leaders in reading effectively. [Click here](#) to read Mays' two page summary. I recommend Clinton's book to all leaders, but if your "to be read" pile is too high for another book, the summary by Mays will help you read more and read more effectively.

I find it easy to drift into what I call "lazy reading." That is, reading everything I pick up "word for word" like a good novel. Clinton outlines various levels of reading, and guides us in choosing a level appropriate to a particular selection. I know from personal study in Clinton's doctoral classes, that assessing of how a book should be read and then selecting an appropriate reading approach bears great fruit.

The reading list

Now, on to some titles for your summer reading. All of these can be found by using www.addall.com as your book search resource.

[*Leadership and Self Deception: Getting Out of the Box*](#) by the Arbinger Institute tops my list. It's short and reads like a storybook, but it gets to the core reason why so much leadership effort fails to bear good fruit. Even though the book is written for corporate leadership, you'll see the theological reflection on the sins of how we see others and our self. I was introduced to the book by one of our alumni, Joe Mayden, who is on pastoral staff at McKinney Bible Church in Texas, where the book is required reading for staff and elders. I have since given copies to the leaders of CIU.

I've used [*Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church*](#) by Reggie McNeal as one of the required texts in my course at Columbia Biblical Seminary called *Emerging Trends in Evangelism and Mobilization*. I taught the course to missionaries in Hungary in October and then again on our Columbia campus during spring term in a four-weekend format. This book stimulated questions and challenges. It received high marks from many in the class. Several students expressed that their vision for what the church *should be becoming* would change how they experience church the rest of their life. Through the book, you will sense Reggie's hurting heart for the church in America to make a deep impact on those outside our "Christian clubs." His questions of what the church *should be asking* are worth the price of the book.

[*At the Altar of Sexual Idolatry*](#) and [*Biblical Guide To Counseling The Sexual Addict*](#) by Steve Gallagher equip church leaders to deal with their own heart and the hearts of those around them on THE topic that is cutting the heart out of the church--sexual immorality in thought and deed. He deals with both men and women, young and old, and he does not throw stones or cheap cliché answers. His writing flows with grace and truth of one who was deep in bondage and has found healing and freedom. These books were recommended by the two men who created www.xxxchurch.com, an excellent resource on the web for addressing a subject that the church must approach boldly.

[*The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*](#) by Thomas Friedman, who has won the Pulitzer Prize three times for his work at the New York Times. This new book takes us from India to China to Japan to Colorado to Utah and many other spots around the globe. Using a historical review of the 20th century, he develops a grid for understanding globalization and its implications for all circles of leadership (political, corporate, financial, technological, educational and social). A large book, well written and engaging for all of those seeking to ride the waves of change, instead of resisting them.

To round out our list let me offer a fresh book on praying and enjoying your walk with God. David Hansen's [*Art of Pastoring: Ministry Without all of the Answers*](#) is my all-time favorite for anyone in pastoral ministry. Lately, I've been going through his newer book, [*Long Wandering Prayer: An Invitation To Walk With God*](#), for a second time. David has created a book that feels like a conversation among friends. He offers fresh insight into understanding the Psalms and other biblical prayers. He records his own prayers and those of other men and women who have had long lives of prayer. He weaves Scripture, the inner meditation in the heart, and the lifestyle of one who enjoys watching football on TV into a realistic and authentic enjoyment of God. I have read many books on prayer over the years, partly because of my hunger to relate to the God who loves me, but also because I have tried and failed at many of my approaches to prayer. This book is helping me discover freedom, joy and grace in my prayer life.