

2016 Pastor's Reading List

1. **The Autobiography of JAMES T. KIRK, THE STORY OF STARFLEET'S GREATEST CAPTAIN**, edited by David A. Goodman (2015). This book chronicles the life of Starfleet's greatest Captain from his birth to his disappearance (?) (2233-2371) in his own words, with a supplemental by Spock (Captain Kirk's best friend) at the end. The book fills in some of the gaps in the Star Trek doctrine dealing with his home life, his upbringing on Tarsus IV and his various relationships that the TV shows and the movies aren't clear on. We see a side of the Captain that we all knew was there but he very seldom ever let out...a softness and a side of indecision that comes with growing up as quickly as he did and being under the shadow of an older brother...traits that actually make him seem arrogant and cock-sure much of the time because there is always an undercurrent of baggage of having to prove oneself adequate to every task, as with all real people. This "autobiography captures the essence of James Tiberius Kirk in a way that none of the other materials...books, comics, television/animation or movies...has been able to. This is a must read for any and all who are devoted to the original series and its characters. (288 pages)
2. **William Johnson's Natchez: The Anti-Bellum Diary of a Free Negro**; edited by William Ransom Hogan and Edwin Adams Davis (1951, 1979). Discovered in 1938 this diary and personal papers of William Johnson (1809-1851) is the first and possibly only complete firsthand account of a former slave who rose to prominence as a successful business owner in Natchez, Mississippi in the years leading up to the Civil War (or the War of Northern Aggression). Mr. Johnson was a barber by trade and a mentor to other freed slaves as well as slaves in the area deemed qualified by their owners to be taught a trade. Mr. Johnson, a free black man, was also a slave owner... a topic of discussion I had only heard about through my forays into American history but never actually seen proof of. His daily logs which range from lively to dull with comments like "Nothing much happening today" capturing a good portion of his daily accounts. On the other hand we see his first hand transaction of sales and money lending and rentals along the way giving us a clear picture of daily commerce...but also, a lack of prejudice often associated with the South. Oh, there were clear class structures but occasionally some blending was allowed by both sides which led to what appears to be a somewhat harmonious relationship in a town that saw literally hundreds of thousands of people sold like cattle at auction. Natchez seems to have been a very paradoxical place to be sure. The introduction which is 63 pages in itself is full of historical data and is extremely helpful in understanding the people and the times in this very Southern yet progressive city. And then the next 730 pages or so you see from his own hand Mr. Johnson's day to day activities even the ones that lead up to his murder. (812 pages)
3. **The Doctrine of Repentance**, by Thomas Watson (1620-1686). This is a book and a subject that needs to be reprinted and re-read today for it is a topic of little significance today. And yet it is foundational to true Christianity. Interestingly in his own introduction he makes this claim, "A good case could be made out for believing that repentance is one of the least used words in the Christian church today. In a world that will not tolerate the

mention of sin, and in churches where it has been defined only in sociological terms, the biblical teaching on repentance has inevitably been ignored. Knowing what repentance is, and actually repenting is essential to true Christianity.” The times do not change much as we see that even in his writing this was a topic that was not much talked about. Thank God for the Puritans that saw the need in the church not to walk away from such important doctrines. One of the strengths of this book is how it handles the nature of repentance consisting of sight, sorrow, confession, shame, hatred and turning from sin. Something that I thought interesting is when it is pointed out that though confession is directed primarily to God, there are occasions where it should be done to "some prudent, pious friends, who may advise him and speak a word in due season (James 5:16)." Then Watson adds, "It is a sinful modesty in Christians that they are not more free with their ministers and other spiritual friends in unburdening themselves and opening the sores and troubles of their souls to them. If there is a thorn sticking in the conscience, it is good to make use of those who may help to pluck it out".

4. **Calvin on Prayer**, by John Calvin (1509-1564). This was lifted out of Calvin’s Institutes of Christian Religion, Book 3, Chapters VII-VIII, so that individuals could read and consider the individual subjects with more clarity. We are too easily distracted these days so the Chapel Library decided to begin breaking out different sections of the Institutes, modifying the language and “reprinting” (e-form mostly) them so that this generation can be exposed to such historical and doctrinal materials. As with all things it is better to read the Institutes within the context of the whole but this is helpful in that this may get these sections into hands that otherwise wouldn’t pick up the whole book to read. It was good once again to read Calvin’s teaching on this. So good in fact that I have planned to re-read the whole Institute now this year.
5. **Reason with Me, On the Doctrine of Election, for those Terrified, Flabbergasted, Horrified, Distressed or Disturbed by God’s Sovereignty over Salvation**, By JD Hall. This is a wonderful little flyer on a big subject. He writes this treatise in the form of the great Puritan writers of old to help the faithful to grasp better these doctrines and to help the skeptical to come to grips with what they truly believe. He wished to get people thinking and talking through their positions, hence the name Reason with Me. He presents a challenge in his introduction that he carries throughout the treatise. He asks his readers to listen well enough and study well enough to (a) refute what he presents as the Bible’s teaching of God’s sovereignty over salvation or (b) submit yourself to its teaching if you cannot refute it biblically... and he does not want anyone to submit to this teaching simply because he had a persuasive argument but only if they are convinced by the Holy Spirit. I will be having the officers of our church look this one over in the coming months.
6. **The History Buff’s Guide to World War II: Top 10 rankings of the best, worst, largest and most lethal people and events of WWII**, by Thomas R. Flagel (2012). So much information worked into a small digestible top 10 list for each category like: Top 10 speeches, the top 10 causes of military deaths, the top 10 popular myths and misconceptions, the top 10 forms of resistance, the top 10 causes of the war, the top 10 military blunders, the top 10 weapons, top 10 soldiers diet and hardship to name just a few... This book is extremely easy to read and very informative for the history buff that is too old to keep all of these facts in his/her head. At the end it even gives the top 10 sites to visit to learn more with travel information. It was too bad that most of the places

he focused were overseas...I get why...but for most buffs we work on a shoestring budget and there are many wonderful places to go in this country...memorials, museums, and exhibits including WWII ships from coast to coast that can be visited maybe with not as much affect but certainly the same amount of knowledge and grandeur.

7. **The Joy Project: A True Story of Inescapable Happiness** by Tony Reinke (2015). Mr. Reinke works with the Desiring God ministry of John Piper and has written a book with a catchy title. He knows that if he titled this book with the topic of this book not many would read it. But titling the book **The Joy Project: A True Story of Inescapable Happiness** almost guarantees that many more will pick it up since everyone is looking for a formula for happiness. But rather than filling this little booklet with a bunch of psychological and/or spiritual dribble he takes us to the Scriptures affirming the doctrines of election and predestination and how the Bible guarantees our happiness in these doctrines of God's eternal truth. He breaks down these truths by using the mnemonic aid TULIP to explain the content of God's redemptive work in the Bible and when his readers grasp these truth then they will also grasp the joy that has been provided for God's own. This is a really great read. I sometimes wish more Reformed Presbyterians would write like this so that more people would be introduced to these wonderful truths proclaimed by Moses, David, the prophets, Jesus and His Apostles. I think most are often too afraid of their colleagues misunderstanding such an approach to actually do anything about it that gets beyond the academic. This is different than JD Hall's **Reason with Me** in that Hall's work is set up as a conversation and this one is truly a read about how true happiness/ joy is experienced in the Christian life.
8. **THINKING IT NOT STRANGE: Navigating Trials in the New America**, edited by John Piper and David Mathis (2016). An interesting little book on the "goodness" of suffering and how we are ultimately spoiled and cowards when it comes to suffering in this life. Now, to be honest, they never used the word "cowardly", which is my word in describing the weakness of the American church to be able to stomach suffering. In the introduction you begin to get the tone with this truth from history, *"Suffering for the gospel was not just tolerated in the early church, it was expected...For Christians, it really is strange not to be persecuted."* But this suffering will have a positive result...the spreading of the gospel. 8 other contributors (pastors and missionaries) will seek to show us believers this positive aspect of suffering and how the 2/3rds world does in fact suffer for its faith and how it is not a matter of "if" but "when" suffering will truly come to our door. The messages of the book come from explaining the reality of the Christian experience, one that we often overlook in 21st Century America as portrayed in I Peter 4:12-14. And then a cursory look at the book of Acts in many of the other additions to this book will let us see that God consistently appoints adversity and opposition to advance His kingdom and it works like a charm. So the question is, Are we ready?
9. **THOMAS JEFFERSON AND THE TRIPOLI PIRATES: THE FORGOTTEN WAR THAT CHANGED AMERICAN HISTORY**, by Brian Kilmeade and Don Yeager (2015). A fine bit of writing to be sure. It started off a bit slow but as I made my way through I found myself intrigued with the on-going story of which I am very familiar. Brian and Don brought these characters to life in a way that I haven't before seen or experienced. I have read much concerning this time in our history and how these battles played out the way they did enabled us to emerge as the naval power after the war of 1812. But it is in knowing the struggles, frustrations and exploits of these men that we see how such a feat could be

accomplished. There were so many events that should have doomed the US from ever having a Navy or ever becoming the naval power of the sea and Brian and Don outline this history so well and so powerfully that you simply wanted more. The only other book that I have read that even came close to this was the book **SIX FRIGATES: The epic history of the founding of the U.S. Navy** by Ian W. Toll(2008).

10. **BLOOD WORK: How the Blood of Christ accomplishes Our Salvation, by Anthony Carter (2013).** Christianity is a bloody faith...or so the Bible tells us. It is a bloody faith because if sin is to be forgiven, for sinful people to be made right with God, there must be a payment of blood. That payment was made by Jesus Christ. Blood is an integral part of the Scriptures...but the sad thing is it is not that integral to many pulpit ministries. We like things tidy and neat and clean...blood is not...but it is the blood of Christ that accomplishes our salvation...nothing else. Jesus is our propitiation for sin. **Blood Work** is a powerful book that calls the reader to better understand why blood is such an integral, beautiful and necessary commodity to the Christian faith. It is a book that calls the reader not only to understand, but also to marvel and to worship. This book has recently come out as a free Kindle download and ought to be downloaded by any and all who wish to see the practical truth and the joy behind the blood work of Christ on our behalf.
11. **YOUR SORROW WILL TURN TO JOY**, edited by John Piper (2016). I loved this little devotional. It gives two brief messages...morning and evening...for each day of Holy Week...expounding the Scriptures enabling us to live the week over and over again through these short messages. John piper has put together many of the voices and leaders of today's Christian leadership in comprising this little book; men like Justin Taylor, Andreas Kostenberger, Johnathan Purnell, Tony Reinke and David Mathis along with a host of others. I will hope to whet your desire for this free download from www.desiringGod.org with these quotes: *"Easter now has become our annual dress rehearsal for that great coming Day."* And, *"Easter announces, in the voice of the risen Christ, 'Your sorrow will turn into joy' (John 16:20) and 'no one will take your joy from you' (John 16:22)."*
12. **A REPORTER'S LIFE**, by Walter Cronkite (1996). As one of simply millions of people worldwide that watched "Uncle Walter" on the CBS Evening News, I was not overly impressed with this book. There seemed to be simply too much ego in it for me. Maybe that is the price of reading about such pioneers...and maybe I am too sensitive...more sensitive to my own failures than my successes. But as I read this book I felt let down by the lack of information given and the amount of credit taken in many cases. However, having said that it is a good book when looked at as a reflection of a Century of vast growth and change. And even somewhat insightful in that it was written 20 years ago and he ends with this rather ominous prophecy. *"There is going to be social and political and economic evolution, which will explode with such suddenness as to have the character of revolution. The revolutionary forces are already at work today, and they have humankind's dreams on their side."* My family regularly alternated between the Huntley-Brinkley Report and the CBS Nightly News. When "Uncle Walter" got too political especially during the Vietnam war...we would switch over to Huntley-Brinkley who seemed to be more balance and less political ...more journalistic than Uncle Walter. All in all a good read, one that I was hesitant to read at first and am grateful for completing it now. *"And that's the way it is..."* or *"...it was..."* and I was happy for the experience.

13. **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**, by A. W. Pink (1941). This was first written and published in a monthly magazine *Studies in the Scriptures*, but was later put in booklet form by Chapel Library who have been publishing Pink's materials in book form since 1932. Most of these are now on line as a free download. This is a helpful little booklet (80 plus or minus pages depending upon how it is published) that focuses on the absoluteness of God's Word for the Christian. There is a lot of helpful material here as he outlines the significance of each Commandment. But one of the gems of this booklet is tucked in the middle of this book. Right after the 5th Commandment he stops and writes a few pages for parents and how they might grow children who love the Lord. His advice is sage and timely in many respects even for today's parent. All in all as with much of Pink's material extremely helpful for the edification of believers.
14. **THE BARBARIAN WAY; UNLEASH THE UNTAMED FAITH WITHIN**, By Erwin Raphael McManus (2005). This book came out a few years after John Eldredges' **WILD AT HEART**, obviously seeking to kick start that bandwagon of doing Christianity your own way. Both authors stretch the Bible to say what they want it to say and for that reason I would not recommend this book for Christian or non-Christian consumption. In McManus' book he conveniently forgets that we are to emulate Jesus in our Christian walk. We can learn from those who went before us but we must keep in mind that the many that are talked about in the Scriptures, like John the Baptist, (whom he seeks to compare the Barbarian Way of Christianity with), were given a specific calling and purpose that is not our calling or our purpose. He wishes to turn Christian men into barbarians and wild men about their faith. While Christian men certainly need a backbone when it comes to standing firm in their faith this book is not the solution! This was yet another book that I was asked to read by one of our church family...but I would not recommend this, even if you find it sometime on a dollar book sale or at a garage sale.
15. **HEAL US, O EMMANUEL: A Call to Racial Reconciliation, Representation and Unity in the Church, (2016)**. This book of almost 400 pages is a collection of essays by 30 or so authors on the titled issues concerning the church. This book may make you angry. It may make you sad. It may make you cry, perhaps...except for us old salty types! But more importantly it will...or should make you think deeply about our relationship with God as defined by Christ and our relationship with other believers as defined in Christ. Most of the articles are very similar in content and context, many of them are extremely helpful theologically, ecclesiastically, and culturally...and a few of them are simply not helpful. But overall a very good read. The "not so helpful essays" seem to surround people...that seemingly just woke up to the fact that there is racism in America as well as the fact that conservative radio and TV shows like Fox News have an agenda just like all the rest and they are a bit put out at this revelation as if they somehow didn't know as adults and pastors that the things of the world are bad and corrupt...some more than others but still...I digress. The good stuff is well worth your time. I was able to meet some of these men at General Assembly and they shared their hearts with me and their time as we worked together on the Overtures Committee, so even if you don't agree with their conclusions please know that these are people of Christian and Reformed integrity seeking the Lord's glory in His Church. There is an interesting difference in approach of these issues by many of the Black, Asian and Hispanic pastors of our denomination than the White pastors which makes reading this very enlightening and intriguing to one like myself who has studied people and cultures for years. The

materials offered are very sound and are of some of the most helpful I have read of recent years. Even our own Greg Ward contributes an interesting article here as well, if you weren't aware...which should make it worth the purchase of at least the Kindle version. A companion book which you also might find extremely helpful, one that I read in 2013 is Anthony Bradley's book, **Aliens in the Promised Land: Why Minority Leadership is Overlooked in White Christian Churches and Institutions**. This maybe an unfortunate title but an extremely insightful book, principles of which transcend the normal Black- White conversation. It actually takes a bit different direction than the first which makes both of them very worthy of our time.

16. **OPENNESS UNHINDERED: Further Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert on Sexuality and Union with Christ**, Rosaria Butterfield (2015). Some may think naturally given the title that this is yet another book describing Rosaria's climb out of the lesbianism and feminism that she had been enthralled with...and it is...but she did that in an earlier book called **Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert**. This book is more about our Union with Christ and why we need to mortify our sin...whatever it is...so that we can be fruitful and loving children of God. She knows sin well...and she describes this sin and she also clearly defines what Christ did with our sin so that we might daily put our existing old man to death. This is an extremely well written stuff...theologically sound and culturally relevant for the Church and the society around us. She calls on the Church to be authentic about our sin...for like her, we all know sin well. Theologically I would put this book right alongside John Owens classic, **The Mortification of Sin**...with the main difference being it is immediately readable, relatable and applicable. She tackles such issues as sexual orientation and other "gay" speech to help us understand our audience. Just like with any other mission field, we must know our audience so that we can communicate the gospel effectively. But mostly it is a book that causes one to reflect closely on our own hindrances... (Can you say, "sin"?)...to fully embrace the Bible so that we can actually have an effective witness and so we can be effective family members of God's family. At the end of the book is an excellent chapter on community...how we are to live in the world and then what Church community means when we take our vows. Once again, I have not read such deep thoughts with ease since the Puritans. As far as the ease of applicability she stands with men like Richard Sibbes, Thomas Watson and G.K. Chesterton for clarity and compassion for God's Church.
17. **THE MAJESTY OF GOD**, edited by the Free Grace Broadcasters. This is an edited piece of a few of the good works written on the subject of God's majesty so that we as His people can gaze upon God in the manner that He requires. G.D. Watson opens us with his little work entitled, **The Majesty of God in Providence** talking to us about God working His will in and through creation. Then there is a selection from John Piper which was among my favorites entitled, **The Great Work of God: Rain!**, showing us how even common rainfall reveals the glory and majesty of God beyond the understanding of men. Then from Charles Spurgeon...can't have a discussion on this topic without including a piece from Spurgeon...**The Majestic Voice**, spelling out how God's voice is resident in the thunder...and the chirp of the cricket. John Piper contributes yet another piece entitled, **The Pleasure of God's in His Creation**, helping us to see how the heavens declare the glory of God simply and yet profoundly. Then there is a rather long piece from a long winded Presbyterian named, John Flavel, **The Righteous Man's Refuge**, highlighting how we can rest secure in God's "divine power." Yet another piece from

John Piper called *The Pistol Star and the Power of God*, talking about how even science displays the majesty of God. And then finally, a piece from Thomas Chalmers, one of my personal favorites entitled, *Majesty Come Down*, speaking to his hearers about how the Immanuel principle reveals to us God's majesty in keeping His covenant promises.

18. **HABITS OF GRACE: Enjoying Jesus through the Spiritual Disciplines, (2106)**, by David Mathis. There are so many books written of the spiritual disciplines that I did not think that this book really added to the discussion of so many better books of old. It is easily read. It is very practical...as is the discussion on spiritual disciplines. It is helpful especially if you have never picked up a book on this topic before. But given that he is only "somewhat" Reformed there is still a lot of emphasis on personal choice in these matters. I have read other things by him in the past that were deeper and more thought provoking so while I would recommend this book...it would be for the beginner to be sure.
19. **SHIFTY'S WAR**, by Marcus Brotherton (2011). This is **THE** authorized biography of Sgt. Darrell "Shifty" Powers, the legendary and heartwarming sharpshooter from the HBO miniseries the Band of Brothers. This is the author of such books on Easy Company as **We Who Are Alive and Remain and A Company of Heroes**. This book interestingly enough is written autobiographically. The author studied Shifty from interviews and other things written about him and people who knew him and wrote this account as if Shifty was telling it. Shifty however died before he could see this finished work. His family said that this book captures Shifty and his actions as they understood them well enough that they thought it was Shifty speaking. The author does add a "few" embellishments on the occasional story (but he tells you so when he does) but overall this story moves along just as if Shifty was telling it. This man remained in virtual obscurity until the HBO series came out and after that until his death he was always talking about his experiences with school age children and troops on the battle field all over the world. A wonderful book for anyone who wants to know even more about the greatest generation as well as these few heroes who were Easy Company, 506th paratroopers of the 101st Airborne.
20. **DON'T FORGET ME**, by Cleve Franks (2016). Cleve is the grandfather of 2 precious girls in the congregation that I serve named Kati and Kylie. They gave me this book written by their grandfather and I found it to be a delightful read. I grew up hearing that everyone has a book in them. Then I went off to Bible college and was told by a professor there that everyone has at least 100 books in them by the time they die. When you consider a life time of experiences...that seems about right. Well, it would seem the Mr. Franks is just getting started with his experiences and he has so much yet to experience if the Lord tarries. His stories will make you laugh and cry...but mostly they are given for us to think...think about the faith we profess...think about the world that God has made and how it glorifies His name...think about where and how we fit into this world made by God. The stories he tells call us out to tell the stories of our lives...stories that God has caused to happen so that we might better reflect Him in this world He has placed us in. Stories...true stories that clearly reflect the fact there is a God and that He is watching and laughing and delighting in His children. Mr. Franks, keep telling those stories so your grandchildren and others who read will see God everywhere they look.
21. **THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE**, by Samuel Waldron (2013). This was written and is available as a free eBook online for any and all who wish to read about this topic of 1st

importance. For every Christian needs to be assured of the fact that the Bible they hold is the Bible God intended for His Church. As a Reformed Baptist, his desire is to “*make solid and sure the Christians confidence in the orthodox, evangelical, Reformed and biblical view of the canon.*” With a plethora of great books on this subject he has taken much of the information offered up in these books and disseminated it into a readable fashion and offered it up for pastors, teachers, but also regular church people to be able to see a cogent argument for the canonicity of the 66 books of the Bible having been given by God...and confirmed by His Word. This book is especially helpful in dealing in short order with the objections to the canonicity of the Bible as well as other subjects directly and indirectly connected to this like the authority and cessation of the office of the Apostle. This is a great read. This is one of those books that will actually grow your faith and assurance as you see how the canon is confirmed by God Himself. Monergism.com has it as a free download for Kindle, ePub and mobi.

<https://www.monergism.com/canon-scripture-samuel-waldron>

22. **THE REASON FOR MY HOPE: SALVATION**, by Billy Graham (2013). I keep picking up these books because I suppose them to be his last. Now I find out he has yet another book out as of last year entitled **Where I am: Heaven, Eternity and Our Life Beyond** (2015) which is reported to be his last...we will see. This book is a typical revival book. Calling people to choose salvation or be lost. His passion for people comes out in this book as it has in each of the others that I have read. He makes such a compelling case for us to choose faith that I almost begin to believe his call. He walks us through the steps to be saved...along the way making a very biblical case for our fallenness and our total depravity which always leads me to wonder how he of all people could then come to calling people to choose salvation rather than rejecting it. Even in this book he makes a clear case that men are sinners in need of rescue. Rescue clearly means that there is nothing we can do on our own to be saved...someone has to do it for us...but in the end we can reject God's offer...according to this esteemed and wonderful believer/preacher. And that is so sad because his own argument proves that men could never choose salvation on their own. We could never even want it. Without Jesus we have no righteousness on our own...no way without Christ's cross work for any to be saved. Thankfully the gospel is being preached in there and I believe God has used this wonderfully gifted man to bring His children to Himself. So I read his books because we should read the books of the “greats” the fathers of the faith especially as they get close to eternity for we may hear the voice of God speaking through them. I look forward to reading his last book.
23. **WALLS OF MISCONCEPTION: DOES THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE MEAN THE SEPARATION OF GOD AND GOVERNMENT?** By Peter A. Lillback (2007). This book began as a response to a letter from a pastor who while agreeing in principle with a Christian world and life view, nevertheless has problems with the what our culture has described as a mandated “church and state” separation of God and country. The minister speaks to how it should be considered a problem with any thinking rational Christian to go along with anyone having to say the pledge of allegiance, what the uproar is concerning removing the Ten Commandments from courthouse walls and what appears to him a desire on the part of some to blend that which is constitutionally mandated to be separate. What follows this letter is a response that delves into the extensive Christian history and influence of our countries founding fathers and how their work influenced the

building and sustaining of the virtues and values that have defined the character of this nation up to about a half century ago. His argument shows well what we have been giving up with the acceptance of this statement that was never intended by its author. The book is full of facts and statements from the original sources that more than adequately exposes the weakness in many people's thought process and relates these principles to modern day church and state issues and controversies and comes to the same conclusion that so many others have if Christian faith is not at its center the republic will fail. John Adams said this famous statement: *"Our Constitution was made only for a moral religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."*

24. **LEONARD: My Fifty Year Friendship with a Remarkable Man** by William Shatner with David Fisher (2016). This is a warm and whimsical account of a fifty year friendship that ends like so many friendships...with things left unsaid but deep love and admiration. This story is told by the only one who could tell it, a man who considered him to be his best friend...William Shatner. These two men thrust together with very similar backgrounds and drives became for the world the ultimate duo, Captain Kirk and Commander Spock. While Spock took on his own persona in a global way, these 2 men grew together through their own demons and their successes in various other fields of endeavor to influence generations not just with their work on Star Trek but also and maybe more importantly through their life together. Their friendship was on constant display and this book is a crowning tribute to a relationship that should be emulated in this generation and beyond. Their friendship has gone boldly where few friendships ever go and I am thankful to have read these lines describing it. This book is obviously for every Trekkie but also for anyone who enjoys reading about the ups and downs of strong relationships. And more importantly anyone who wants to know the real man between the ears as told by his best friend...LLAP!
25. **KILLING PATTON: THE STRANGE DEATH OF WWII'S MOST AUDACIOUS GENERAL**, by Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard (2014). This was an interesting assessment of Gen. George S. Patton's military career, especially concerning his involvement in World War II. He begins the book with a possible conspiracy and end the book with the same possible conspiracy...but as the book unfolds there is nothing of the conspiracy to speak of. He builds a case about all of Patton's possible enemies but most of this has been well documented elsewhere. It is well written but it is not the "historical thriller" that **KILLING LINCOLN** was. This was a good historical read but was not as focused on its purpose.
26. **KILLING REAGAN: THE VIOLENT ASSAULT THAT CHANGED A PRESIDENCY**, by Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard, (2015). Now this one gets back to the "Killing" methodologies of **KILLING LINCOLN**...at least, somewhat. This book intertwines for the reader the events of the lives of the two men on which this event hinges... John Hinckley, Jr. (Pres. Reagan's would-be assassin) and President Ronald Reagan... that will eventually bring them to that eventful day when Hinckley decides to pull the trigger to try and take Pres. Reagan's life because of a twisted notion of love toward an actress, Jodie Foster. This book highlights the main events that show just how twisted Hinkley's thinking was as well as the rise to the Presidency of one of the most popular presidents of the 20th Century. He draws a remarkable contrast between these two men who come together on a fateful day in March...2 months after Reagan was elected President of the United States. The one declining into utter ruin...while the other rises to heights

unimagined before this terrible event to finally defeat America's greatest enemy of the time...Communism. This book also highlights the careers that intersect with Ronald Reagan's through the years. If you have never read a biography of this great American or have tried and found it difficult to get through the large number of pages in other biographies this is the one to read.

27. **THE IMPERFECT PASTOR: Discovering joy in our limitations through a daily apprenticeship with Jesus**, by Zack Eswine (2015). This is an excellent book for all new pastors and all old pastors. There are far too many tired pastors on the front lines. There are far too many pastors wanting to cry burnout...and others that use burnout as an excuse to get out. This is a book that could possibly redirect those looking for an excuse for their "condition" by showing them the cause of their condition. Far too many "good guys" began this trek ill prepared for what they would encounter. Far too many have had to heavy of burdens thrust upon them. Far too many have placed heavy of burdens upon themselves all in the name of bringing God glory in their calling. They have been told or they have assumed that they are to be the know-it-all and the fix-it-all for every congregation and that places upon them burdens they were never meant to bear. I know...I have been there myself. I wish I had read this book years ago...maybe even before I was ordained....but then maybe I wouldn't have listened to this any more than I did my mentor Dr. Donald J. MacNair when he said similar things. However, if this had been the emphasis in our spiritual developments classes in seminary it may have had an impact. I know my basic nature as a man is to fix it...but it would have been good if someone had driven home this point that it wasn't my job...lead others to the One who can fix it...that is my job. I know this now...I believe I learned it early enough to keep me from "burn out"...but many have not. This is a book that can help! One book that started me thinking back then that you don't find on many shelves in many pastoral studies was Kent Hughes book **Liberating Ministry from the Success Syndrome** (1988, I think). You can actually get this for free (.pdf download from WTS). Zach's book like Kent's is filled with personal struggles that God used to teach him the importance of ministry so that he could speak to his generation of the realities, burdens and joys of the ministry.
28. **THE SAINT'S POCKET BOOK OF PROMISES**, by Joseph Alleine (published separately in 1766). Joseph Alleine was a very revered and devoted nonconformist minister who wrote most of this from gaol (jail). The original work was sent to his father-in-law while he was still in jail and his father-in-law published it under the title **HEAVEN OPENED** in 1666. He wrote these for his church in Taunton, England to encourage them in his absence. He writes much of his material as if God is speaking...which of course, He is... since the majority of this work placed in to sections (like, *the privileges and the prerogatives of the covenant, God conveys Himself to us in all essential perfections and personal relations...the means of grace*) are God speaking about these section from Scripture. I have never seen Scripture used in what looks like a continual conversation of God using both OT and NT texts as part of the conversation and there is little to no need for transitions between. This work shows something that we only talk about it and that is the perspicuity of Scripture and also how well it all fits together from beginning to end. It is an encouraging few pages...52-60 pages depending upon the version you download as an eBook. Look it up and read it all the way through when you have an hour to kill...extremely refreshing and encouraging.

29. **THE TIMES OF OUR LIVES: COLLECTED WRITINGS** by Peggy Noonan(2015). This is a great read of many of Noonan's best works. The thing that makes her columns so good is her perspective of history that is infused into each article. Whether she is talking politics, war, or 9/11, she writes as a person who is deeply connected with history and with the day at hand. She writes about the hearts and minds of people and her own struggles in such a way that we relate to these as ours. She is very personal and yet inspiring in her approach to each category of articles she has chosen to highlight for this book. She writes with a bent toward professionalism and an ability to relate to audiences across the spectrum that we do not see any longer. These articles are ones you could pick up at any time and be re-energized for they are in many ways timeless in their approach and conclusions because of her being so in touch with history and with the people of today. These articles will make you laugh and cry for they are about US...all of us! Read for enjoyment...read her for intellectual growth...read her to see what character used to be...but whatever you do don't NOT read her!
30. **WORDS IN SEASON: ONE SHARING THE HOPE THAT IS WITHIN US**, by Rev. Leon Brown (2013). This is an extremely helpful and insightful little book (150 or so pages) concerning personal evangelism and personal piety that leads to corporate piety and edification. Rev. Brown's approach on this sometimes scary topic is one of "matter of factness" in that we have the truth for life, joy and contentment and if we truly believe this is true than how can we not be sharing this wonderful treasure called the gospel with any and all we are brought into contact with by God? But the problem with most of us is how do we do this so that we are not just robots reproducing a method? From his own personal story he supports the call for personal evangelism that all believers have been given focusing on the privilege and opportunity that is involved with this calling...and in so doing shows the hardness of heart that we display when we do not share the truth of the hope within us with others. "We get to share the greatest story in the world"...and we can't mess it up because the outcome is in the hands of God...and His Word never returns void. This truth is the truth I wished I had heard when I first started sharing my faith for I am tainted by the teaching of how my salvation is tied to the number of people that "I win" to the Lord and how many conversions I can affect for the kingdom...even to the point of keeping a count. I know this a lie from the pit of hell, but it is always in the back of my mind; even as a minister of the gospel. This is a great book for those wanting to know why they need to share their faith, and how to share their faith in an ordinary and easy way. Pick it up and read about the privilege God has given us in sharing our faith with others!
31. **THE ENVY OF EVE: FINDING CONTENTMENT IN A COVETOUS WORLD**, by Melissa Kruger, (2012). What Melissa has done here in this book is amazing in how she takes the Scriptures in each chapter and then unfolds them in each area of envy that she wishes to speak about for us, making it abundantly clear how the Bible speaks to us on these topics and what we are to do about it. This book as one commentator said gets to the heart of our struggle for that elusive gift from God, known as contentment. One of my favorite Puritan authors, Jeremiah Burroughs, wrote on this subject to another generation just as loudly and boldly but not as specifically as Melissa has done writing from the perspective of a woman to women. Burrough's book, **The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment** came at a time in the history of the church that people were asking the same kind of questions as they are now and so God has had Melissa Kruger write to our women today

to understand where our contentment is found...or better in Whom is our contentment found and how we need to rise above the noise and temptation within our own hearts-and the world-to seek Him otherwise there is no hope. But the end of the story is this...there is hope in Christ...the only place to experience the contentment we have been promised and given by God the Father through God the Son and administered by God the Holy Spirit. Good stuff.

32. **GOD'S GOSPEL OF GRACE**, by various authors, compiled and edited by Free Grace Broadcasters (2016). I don't know much, yet about Free Grace Broadcasters, also known as the Chapel Library...but what I do know is that they have in their possessions what appears to be one of the largest collections of works by the pastors who were the movers and shakers since the reformation even up to modern day. This particular book is comprised of the sermons and articles from men such as J.I. Packer, Charles Spurgeon, Thomas Manton, J.C. Ryle, A.W. Pink, Jonathan Edwards, Thomas Boston, John Owen, John Murray, Hodge and the list goes on. 22 in all in this book devoted to the doctrines of grace ...or the doctrine of salvation. An excellent read...especially in this day and age where people say we can't really know what the church used to teach as if we don't have this material...well here it is...on display...for us to know the Church's understanding on such doctrines. These works are with us to teach us and remind us of what the scriptures say...just like the Federalist Papers and the hundreds of letters from our Founding Father tell us what the Constitution means, even for today.
33. **GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE**, by various authors, compiled by Free Grace Broadcasters (2016). This little booklet (50 pages or so) has been put together for the expressed purpose for today's contemporaries to know the Church's understanding of the Covenant of Redemption. This pamphlet utilizes the sermons and articles of D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, Charles Spurgeon, Patrick Gillespie (a Westminster Divine), Thomas Brooks and others...in all 10. This has been an eye opening experience when you look at these men and the understanding the church had and has on such an important issue. They can't be read in one sitting but they are written so well you certainly don't want to put them down.
34. **RESTORING ALL THINGS: GOD'S AUDACIOUS PLAN TO CHANGE THE WORLD THROUGH EVERYDAY PEOPLE**, by Warren Cole Smith and John Stonestreet, (2015). The name literally tells the story. Telling the stories of everyday Christians in this dark world helps us to realize the light is "on" and it is shining even if we can't see it. It is almost the sense you get when you read about God's people in the Scriptures...you see so much darkness you begin to wonder where God's people are and then they show up and you are warmed in the glow of what God is doing in your midst...that is why we need to tell each other what God is doing so we don't get steeped in the thinking of Satan - that all is lost. This book is put out by men who emulate the men of Issachar who knew the times and taught God's people accordingly. We need more of these men that can give insightful commentary of today's culture with thoughtful and biblical direction in making a difference for God right where we are.
35. **What Every Christian Needs to Know About the Qur'an** by James R. White. I picked this up again as we went through this together with the Men of Valor in our church. We have not finished the discussion but I decided to finish the book again this year. the discussion in our group has made this critique to be true and how necessary this book is for the church. I am convinced that we spend too

much time talking about the cults like; Mormonism and Jehovah Witnesses. As Christian we need to know about one of the main threats to our faith and worldview that exists in the world today and that would be Islam. We need not fear it but we do need to understand it for it is coming and is here in so many parts of this country. This book clearly and succinctly takes you through the main doctrines of Islam using their own sacred texts. It can shed light on global politics and the worldview of your Islamic next door neighbor. From their own documents the author reveals the inconsistencies in what the orthodox Muslim refers to as the Book of absolute authority, without error, and that no other book can claim this...the Qur'an. He goes on through this book to reveal how the Qur'an speaks against Christian doctrines to which it is not even familiar like the Trinity. They, of course, say the Christian believes in three gods when we speak of the Trinity. Who makes up the Trinity according to the Qur'an? The Father, Mary and Jesus! In many places this is attested to in the Qur'an revealing the Qur'an's weakness in understanding what Christians teach and what the Gospel...the Injil, which they hold to be from God, actually teaches. In fact, there is little evidence, if any, to support that Mohammed or any of his followers ever read the Injil/or the Gospels. This is a timely book that clearly shows that Islam and Christianity represent two contradictory truth claims. This book will aid in our engaging in open and honest discussion with Muslims and others who wish to know more. Within the book is also a "correct" reading guide for reading the Qur'an. (307pages)

36. **The Marrow of Modern Divinity**, by Edward Fisher (?) (1645 with notes by the Rev. Thomas Boston added 1726) I have a question mark beside the author since the work is simply titled and signed E.F...it is the speculation of time that attributes this wonderful work to Edward Fisher a learned Christian man and lay preacher. The decision that lead to this work being outlawed seems to have been based on the shame of with which this work pointed out the practical Arminianism that was afoot within the Reformed Church of the day just like today. There seems to have been a working practical confusion of the connection between the law and gospel just like today. The teaching while subtle seemed to be one of conditional salvation as taught by the Pharisees though many of the men teaching it were unaware...but being unaware is no excuse. This work exposed a flaw within the Church that many of the leaders did not want to admit or even look into. Many of the men who recommend this work Joshua Spriggs and others were big names at the time...but the Rev. Thomas Boston perhaps was the largest name to endorse this work for what it was...a clear look into the church comparing the gospel with what was being taught not to harm the church but to reform and revitalize the church that had become somewhat stale and staid in its teaching. This work caused such a stir that for years it was used as a litmus test for men being ordained. If they sounded like the work they were not admitted...an unfortunate show of arrogance by a church that had lost its way concerning the grace of God. My e-version was over 1200 pages but well worth a read...a slow read.
37. **The Whole Christ: Legalism, Antinomianism and Gospel Assurance; Why the Marrow Controversy Still Matters**, by Sinclair Ferguson (2016). Even if you

haven't read **The Marrow of Modern Divinity** you will come away from this book with a good overview of the document and its importance to the church in the 21st century. For the subject matter in which it dealt is still controversial today whether in Reformed Churches or not. One of the problems plaguing the modern Reformed Church is that it has once again a strain of practical Arminianism running through it weakening it and confusing its congregation. The covenant and the promises of God from eternity past are not seen as relevant to our current condition so we don't teach that aspect thus leaving a gap in our theology that we then fill in with practical Arminianism. Dr. Ferguson takes us back to the basics just like the Marrow Men did...do we have to forsake our sin to be received into God's favor...or are we redeemed by God so that we can forsake our sin. Or another truism that was then taught and in some ways is taught again... "God loves you because Christ died for you!"...implying, as Ferguson points out, that the death of Christ is the reason for the love of God for us when the Scriptures clearly state that God first loved us and then sent His son to die...in other words, it was God love for us that is the reason for the death of Jesus. As Dr. Ferguson points out, these may seem like semantics but they really aren't for one clearly speaks of a work we must do into order for us to be favored by God. So, as I said, he seeks to set out to set the record straight as he does so well in so many of his works. A scholarly book that every pastor who claims to be Reformed ought to read as well as any other believer wanting to be reminded that our language often reflects our heart in what we believe and we need to believe better so our language is not confusing to others. (258 pages)