

Summer 2021 Suggested Reading

If I may take a liberty, this year's list will take a more personal turn. I am a bit pensive this Pentecost season because it is my 30th anniversary in ordained ministry. Looking back, the first four books are ones which I have either returned to repeatedly or given away most frequently across the years.

[The Valley of Vision](#) – Arthur Bennett

Do you know your John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*? The times when I took By-path Meadow, held prisoner in Doubting Castle and was savagely beaten by Giant Despair, it was this devotional book of prayers and my commitment to the Scriptures through the Daily Office that lead me back to the Gospel Road. Bennett was a Church of England priest who loved the Puritans as did J.I. Packer. I have a theory as to why. Old Book of Common Prayer men like them and our Anglican forebears of the 17th and 18th Century represented in these prayers were all schooled and shaped in the same way: the liturgy and doctrine of our Anglican Formularies.

[The Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray McCheyne](#) – Andrew Bonar

I first heard of McCheyne mentioned by Sinclair Ferguson in his systematic lectures at seminary in the early 1980's. When I got around to reading him about a decade later, I was so struck by his love of Christ and his pursuit of holiness that as a young man I wanted to be McCheyne, but I soon realized I couldn't. But I could share the same goals he had. This book is one of my most treasured possessions.

[The Letters of Samuel Rutherford](#)

I have known seasoned pastors who have kept Rutherford's letters at the bedside. In times of significant trial they have proved again and again to be a healing balm that has sustained them. I can testify to this, how wonderfully he writes of the beauty of our Savior! In the worst times I felt as though Rutherford was writing to me. I regularly give my copy away and buy another. There is also a shorter [abridgement](#) available.

[The Christian Ministry](#) – Charles Bridges

Whenever the pace and press for innovation overwhelms, Bridges remains my 'reboot' text. He's also a great 'talk' book. I have used him with young men who were discerning their vocation. It offered so many solid discussion points.

[*Seeker's Progress*](#) - Robert McKenzie

Seeker's Progress explores the world that John Bunyan created in his classic book, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. McKenzie cleverly and faithfully to the original uses the same landscape and journey to reimagine *Progress* for our time. *Seeker* also flees The City of Destruction but wrestles with modern questions like, "Don't all roads lead to the Celestial City?" "If the King loves everyone, wouldn't He save everyone?" and, "Don't all religions contain some truth?"

[*The Heritage of Anglican Theology*](#) - J.I. Packer

Packer's last book before his death in 2020. The origins of this book are to be found in a course on Anglican history and theology that J. I. Packer taught at Regent College over a number of years. It was his hope that this book would communicate some of his enthusiasm for the great tradition of Anglicanism and convince many that the evangelical Anglican tradition is a proper and valued expression of Anglicanism with its roots in the Anglican formularies and its Prayer Book.

[*Stewards of Eden: What Scripture Says About the Environment and Why It Matters*](#) - Sandra L. Richter

[*Creation Care: A Biblical Theology of the Natural World*](#) (Biblical Theology for Life) - Douglas & Jonathan Moo

I became a gardener out of necessity. Thirty years ago I was given an English clergy house and a garden that the Vicar was expected to maintain! I found I enjoyed resting with my hands that tending a garden gives and have been one ever since. While I have worked the garden as God's husbandman, I have noticed that climate change has altered significantly how and what I plant. There is a danger that our thinking on the environment will be influenced more by the political soundbite rather than its proper biblical foundation. You may not agree with everything Richter and the Moos write, but you will go away with a greater depth of understanding what the Scripture testifies concerning creation, its goal, and our purpose in stewardship. Both have electronic and audio options.

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