

Summer Reading

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On a couple of warm summer afternoons, I've been able to relax with a book. Even though Steve's pace has picked up this summer because he is in charge of the short-term ministry, he still makes time to read. Here's a peek into what's on our reading list these days. We thought these 6 titles might help you understand where our hearts and minds are.

Confucius Meets Piaget

One Saturday back in April when Steve was enjoying cherry blossoms with our neighbors in a local park, I was attending Jonathan Borden's seminar. This summer I'm reading his book to help me get an accurate educational perspective on ethnic Korean children and their parents. To our growing Korean population at CAJ, *"The grade is seen, quite simply, as being more important than the learning that has gone into it. It is a true 'mark' on the person and their future, as well as on the family."* As I plan for 7th grade math and Bible this fall, I want to help ALL my students see God's perspective on grades and learning.

Every Woman's Battle

The weather was perfect for having our small group meet outside on the picnic table. We were at the OMF conference in the mountains and the sun defied the June rainy season for the entire 4 days! Steve and 3 other OMFers taught out of I Thess for our Bible times. The message on 4:1-8 hit us hard on purity, so in our discussion group 2 of the women recommended Shannon Ethridge's book about sexual fidelity. It is very specific and sets a high standard for us as Christian women who want to be in the world but not of it.



The Africans

Journalist David Lamb's book was penned in 1983, shortly after the first AIDS case was discovered, but it is still a very good insight into that huge continent. A quote from a Kenyan journalist back in 1976, *"What Africans are doing to Africans is unbelievable,"* is still a very relevant observation as we listen to the news coming out of Zimbabwe and Sudan. Our interest in Africa is keen right now as Megan leaves in August for 1-3 years in Ethiopia. I also read a good book about Vietnam while Ben was there for the month of May. Our children travel. We just read about it!

Shutting Out the Sun

One of our OMF colleagues has begun working almost exclusively with *hikikomori*, the mostly male Japanese that withdraw to their rooms and live a sheltered life in their parents' home. Michael Zielenziger was a news correspondent in Japan for a number of years, so he has interesting insights. For instance, the following quote is helpful to us as we look for men to share the Gospel with: *"Where is Dad? He is either at home sleeping, recovering from a stressful week at work and the after-work 'drinking meetings' that are inseparable from his duties; or at the golf course, playing with his bosses or entertaining clients. Statistical surveys show that 'sleeping' consistently ranks as the most popular weekend pastime of Japanese men. According to family counselors, most Japanese fathers devote little attention to their children."* Steve and I want to be conduits of truth to these men: that God has given them families to raise up for His glory.

Effective Teaming Strategies

I have always seen myself as a strong team player, but as a result of the on-line course I'm taking this summer, I'm realizing that I don't always make decisions that help my 7th grade teaching team do what is best for our students. With my colleagues, I hope to be more open about weaknesses and flops in the classroom so we can help each other and learn.

Passing the Baton

One of Steve's big soapboxes is that most missionaries are not really called or equipped to be pastors in a national church. Missionaries, he says, should lead people to Christ, equip them as leaders as soon as possible, then move on to other areas, like Paul and Silas in the book of Acts. So this quote from Tom Steffen's book caught his attention: *"...a number of church planters perceived their roles to be long-term pastors. Moreover, local believers were trained to assist the expatriates in fulfilling their objectives rather than in training nationals to take over from them. Too frequently, expatriates assumed that many years of training and ministry experience were necessary in order for nationals to lead their churches effectively, let alone plant new churches."* Now that he's read the book, Steve has begun to apply its principles, trying to give up ownership, even from the very beginning. Every program we talk about has to be discussed with non-believers in our neighborhood. Will it work? We'll see.

Pray that we will keep learning and growing, that God will keep nudging us on to set higher goals.