

Side-by-side in the Minefields

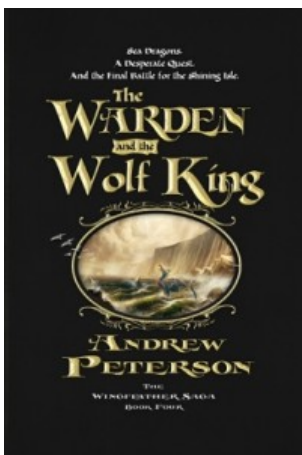
In the light of yesterday's post it seemed appropriate to repost this video:

Gill discovered this song on our 15th anniversary. We were 19 and 21 the year we got engaged...

We're hoping to see Andrew performing in the UK later this year.

Review: 30 Second Book Reviews

Some books I've read while I've been off-air, in 30 seconds each:



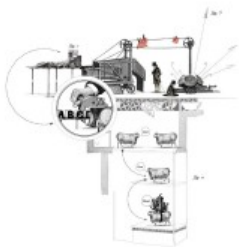
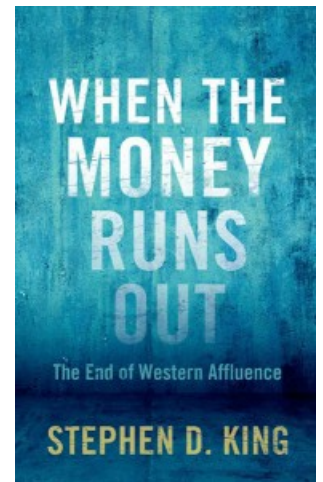
The Warden & The Wolf King (Andrew Peterson).

The last book in the absolutely fabulous Wingfeather Saga. A tale full of adventure through both fantastical lands and through the valleys and mountains of personal identity and purpose. Humour, suspense, and deep deep characters. Challenge and redemption, courage and reliance, solitude and compassion, separation and belonging.

When the Money Runs Out (Stephen D. King).

Subtitled “The End of Western Affluence.”

This book is by an economist, and one with UK point of view no less. A tough read for the lay-person with only a cursory understanding of macro-economics. This book lays out the problems associated with the Global Financial Crisis, and the further problems laid out by the attempts to solve it. Places the GFC in history and compares it with other greater economic crises of the 20th Century and, indeed, throughout much of Western history. In the end King resolves things down to one consideration: the Western World has bought into the lie that our wealth will always increase; in a flattened global economy this by no means certain, and the assumption that it is will make things worse.

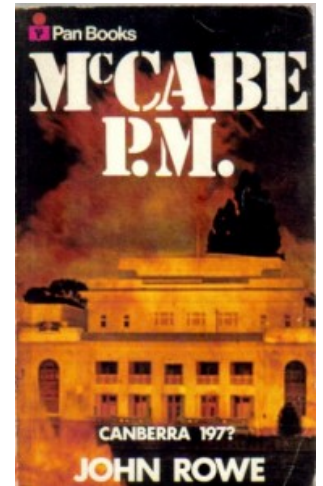


Mike Breen and the 3DM Team

Building a Discipling Culture (Mike Breen and the 3DM Team).

A good follow-up read from *Launching Missional Communities* this book gives a brief outline of the philosophy that undergirds MC's, namely that of holistic, intentional discipleship. Like *Launching MC's* this is a very practical book. In particular, it is the definitive articulation of the LifeShapes tools – mnemonical aids that help discipling relationships be necessarily broad and necessarily deep. For the theologically precise there are a number of “ouch” moments but they are generally superficial or excusable. I continue to find 3dm material resonating with my spiritual and ecclesiological DNA: as if someone has taken what we have experienced and learned over the last decade and a half and actually articulated it. A useful, helpful, fruitful read.

McCabe P.M. (John Rowe). How often do you get to read a 1970's Australian political thriller? I even had to buy this book off and ebay and read a copy that was printed on to *paper*! A friend had mentioned the plot line and it intrigued me – a Liberal politician suddenly becomes Prime Minister in the early 1970's (pre-Whitlam), three months out from a general election. Over those three months a sequence of seemingly-benign occurrences accelerate into a conclusion in which martial law is declared and consideration is being made of bombing Western Australia. It's a "do you really think this couldn't happen here?" story which transcends it's contemporary issues (e.g. militant Aboriginal activism) and style (e.g. sexual revolution pulp fiction). The only disconnection is a bewildering idealism on both sides of its politics – perhaps the only thing keeping us from descending into similar holes in 2014 is the utter cynicism of our political classes.

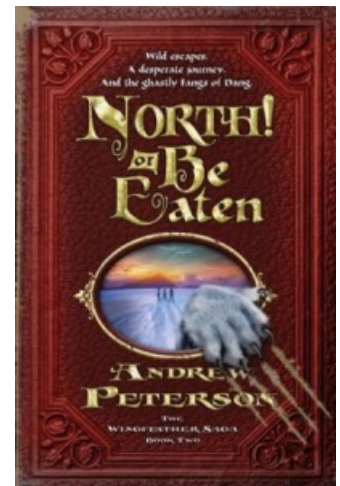
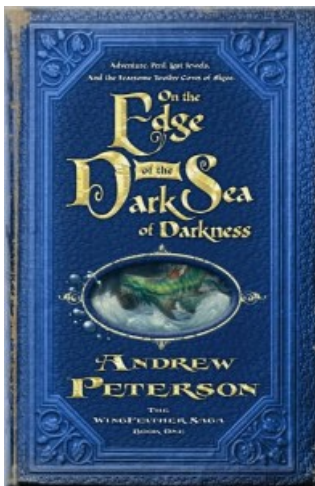


Center Church (Timothy Keller). A surprisingly disappointing book to read. Maybe that's a bit unfair: this book is self-confessedly not designed to bring scintillating new ideas to the task of growing the church. Consequently it contains a lot of wisdom. And it is perfectly titled – it's all about the "center" and finding the balance: e.g. between church that is separated from society and church that is syncretised; between church that focuses on evangelism, and church that nurtures the existing; about church that holds to the old, and church that finds new forms of expression etc. etc. Good stuff, but I don't find myself often going through a book and finding myself internally saying "well, duh!" But it's still well-written, and did prick my conscience and my passion in places. At the very least it's a solid reminder that the hard yards and joys of

being church is found in the practice, not in the theory.

Currently reading: N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*; Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged*; and wading through Moreland and Craig's, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*.

Review: The Wingfeather Saga – Books 1 and 2



I've started reading the *Wingfeather Saga* series of books by Andrew Peterson. They are excellent. The first two books are *On the Edge of the Dark Sea of Darkness* and *North! Or Be Eaten* and the third *The Monster in the Hollows* is due out in May. I can't wait.

I've mentioned Andrew Peterson a couple of times here and there with reference to his music. He is a lyricist extraordinaire, a true bard, constructing words in warp and weft so that truths are revealed, discovered and savoured by the reader, the listener.

He brings the same skill to the *Wingfeather Saga* – a story centred on three siblings Janner, Tink and Leeli Igiby in the

world of Aerwiar. It is fantasy but not flippancy – a mix of Narnia and The Hobbit perhaps. He mixes depth of character and meaningful events in the narrative so that you are left reflecting on your own real life. And he does this purely, without recourse to ugly allegory or meddling metaphor.

There is humour, even in nomenclature (“The Toothy Cows of Skree”), suspense and adventure. It is about quests and identity, the discovery of purpose and the exercise of bravery, humility, maturity and joy. There is betrayal to face, and evil both faceless and embodied in the poisonous Fangs of Dang. How to express it more without giving away the story? I dare not – read it for yourself!

The books suit themselves to be read aloud. I will be reading them to my children. Consider the rhythm and metre in this description of the Igiby family found early in the first book:

Well, except for the way they always sat late into the night beside the hearth telling stories, and when they sang in the garden while they gathered the harvest, and when the grandfather, Podo Helmer, sat on the porch blowing smoke rings, and except for all the good, warm things that filled their days there like cider in a mug on a winter night, they were quite miserable. Quite miserable indeed, in that land where walked the Fangs of Dang.

If you want a story that will move you, seize you and not let itself be put down, this saga is that.

Hope in the Night

I came across Andrew Peterson a little while ago and recently downloaded his album "Counting Stars." Peterson is a wordsmith and it shows in his songs. Their strength is their lyrics. I have found them to be extremely useful in my ongoing quest to have a more doxological life.

Currently my preference is for more declarative lyrics – worship in the sense of "Holy God, you are like this..." But if you are going to get personal and reflective this is how you do it, connecting to God and the arcs of salvation history:

In the Night ***Andrew Peterson***

I am weary with the pain of Jacob's wrestling
In the darkness with the Fear, in the darkness with the Fear
But he met the morning wounded with a blessing
So in the night my hope lives on

When Elisha woke surrounded by the forces
Of the enemies of God, the enemies of God
He saw the hills aflame with angels on their horses
So in the night my hope lives on

I see the slave that toils beneath the yoke unyielding
And I can hear the captive groan, hear the captive groan
For some hand to stay the whip his foe is wielding
Still in the night my hope lives on

I see the armies of the enemy approaching
And the people driven, trembling, to the shore
But a doorway through the waters now is opening
So in the night my hope lives on

Like the son who thought he'd gone beyond forgiveness,
Too ashamed to lift his head—but if he could lift his head

He would see his father running from a distance
In the night my hope lives on

I can see the crowd of men retreating
As he stands between the woman and their stones
And if mercy in his holy heart is beating
Then in the night my hope lives on

I remember how they scorned the son of Mary
He was gentle as a lamb, gentle as a lamb
He was beaten, he was crucified, and buried
And in the night, my hope was gone

But the rulers of earth could not control Him
They did not take his life—he laid it down
All the chains of death could never hope to hold Him
So in the night my hope lives on

I can see the Son of Man descending
And the sword He swings is brighter than the dawn
And the gates of Hell will never stand against Him
So in the night my hope lives on

Marriage Anthem

My wife and I recently celebrated our fifteenth wedding anniversary. Which is cool and fantastic. And then today she found this video. It says it all. Perfectly. **Absolutely freaking perfectly.**

