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**Some Christmas recommendations**.

From Stephen McQuoid December 2013

I have found a few more books quite useful and would like to recommend.  First is a very easy read but helpful if you are involved in counselling or speaking on the issue of conflict.  It is ***The Five Languages of Apology*** by Gary Chapman and Jennifer Thomas.  It is very practical as it talks about 1. Expressing regret 2. Accepting responsibility 3. Making restitution 4. Genuinely repenting 5. Requesting forgiveness.  The book does not engage with scripture so if you are using the material in sermons the use a concordance in preparation.

On a totally different vein I have just enjoyed reading ***Faith, Power and Territory: A Handbook of British Islam*** by Patrick Sookhdeo.  I always find Patrick good though his introductory material on Islam appears in a similar form in several of his books.  In this one however he does a brilliant section on some of the sects and theological strands in Islam and makes good use of explanatory charts.  He then goes through a wide range of issues such as Islamic finance, education, political action and charities.  Patrick is polemical so some won’t like his style especially if they are very into ‘Insider Movement’ thinking and the ‘Dialogue approach’ to Islam.  Personally I prefer Patrick’s approach (it’s the evangelist in me).  I particularly liked his chapters on *Muslim thinkers shaping British Islam* and *Muslim Periodicals in English*.  All in all a good read.

I have also enjoyed Don Carson’s ***The Intolerance of Tolerance***, not least because I have written on the subject myself.  Carson is slightly preachy here but well thought out as usual and well worth a read.  For me the most helpful chapters were on The Church and Christian Truth Claims (ch.5), Tolerance, Democracy and Majoratism (ch.7)   And Still there is Evil (ch.6) and Ways Ahead, Ten Words (ch.8).

Finally there is ***Everyday Theology*** by Kevin Vanhooser.  Actually it’s a series of essays by Vanhoozer students with him as the editor. It attempts to be reflective and demonstrate that theology is not just for Sundays or for professional theologians as it should relate to everyday issues like shopping, leisure, transhumanism and blogging.  The essays vary in quality and their relevance will depend on your situation but it is a worthwhile read.  Vanhoozer is one of the few TEDS professors who is admired by the emergent church leaders.  It speaks volumes for his relevance as a theologian though he is also a thorough going evangelical and so is safe to read.  However if you want Vanhoozer at his best you need to read ***Is there Meaning in the Text?***

Enjoy the read – these are all good stocking fillers.