BOOK OF THE YEAR 2021

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The best book that I read in 2021 is not one that fits into what I normally cover here.
Category: Observations

I'm not sure how many books I read last year. The vast majority of them are novels and history books that I manage to get cheaply for my Kindle through bookbub. I do know that the last physical book I read in the year was on foot care for long distance runners.

You can see books I reviewed on the blog over 2021 if you follow this link.

However, for my money the best book that I read this year (actually, I didn't read it, we listened to it as an audiobook), was English Pastoral by James Rebanks (read my review here). Although it doesn't fit into the normal rubric of theology or missiology that I cover here, it still touched me more than any other book that I *read* over the year.

There are aesthetic reasons why I like English Pastoral, it is beautifully written, talks about a place I love and reflects over changes that have occurred during my lifetime.

However, it is also a very important book. In our urban society we tend to dismiss farming as an unimportant, fringe, or even harmful activity. In doing so, we ignore the fact that virtually everything we eat comes from farming in one form or another. We can live without politicians, but we wouldn't survive long without farming. In tracing the challenges faced by farmers over three generations, Rebanks also traces the difficulties involved in keeping you and I fed. If you don't think this is important, try going without food for a couple of weeks.

We live in a world where information and opinions about farming are sharply defined. On one hand we have the zealots proclaiming that all livestock farming is bad for the planet and on the other there are those who say that we have nothing to worry about. This is further complicated by the public (and the government's) appetite for cheap food. Rebanks treats a complex subject with the seriousness it deserves. There are no easy solutions and simple slogans don't actually help anyone, if you want to be informed about the challenges of providing food in a sustainable way; this is the best place to start.

To put it bluntly, if you live in the UK and you ever eat food, then you should read this book.