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We Review the
Best of the Latest
Books

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Archaeology / Bronze Age / Mediterranean

[**Seafaring and Seafarers in the Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean** by A. Bernard Knapp \(Sidestone Press\)](#)

Seafaring is a mode of travel, a way to traverse maritime space that enables not only the transport of goods and materials but also of people and ideas — communicating and sharing knowledge across the sea and between different lands. Seagoing ships under sail were operating between the Levant, Egypt, Cyprus and Anatolia by the mid-third millennium BC and within the Aegean by the end of that millennium.

The author, A. Bernard Knapp, is Emeritus Professor of Mediterranean Archaeology in the division of Archaeology, Department of Humanities, University of Glasgow, and Honorary Research Fellow at the Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute, Nicosia.

As told in [**Seafaring and Seafarers in the Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean**](#), by the Late Bronze Age (after ca. 1700/1600 BC), seaborne trade in the eastern Mediterranean made the region an economic epicenter, one in which there was no place for Aegean, Canaanite or Egyptian trading monopolies, or 'thalassocracies.' At that time, the world of eastern

Mediterranean seafaring and seafarers became much more complex, involving a number of different peoples in multiple networks of economic and social exchange.

This much is known, or in many cases widely presumed.

Is it possible to trace the origins and emergence of these early trade networks? Can we discuss at any reasonable level who was involved in these maritime ventures? Who built the early ships in which maritime trade was conducted, and who captained them? Who sailed them? Which ports and harbors were the most propitious for maritime trade? What other evidence exists for seafaring, fishing, the exploitation of marine resources, and related maritime matters?

[Seafaring and Seafarers in the Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean](#) addresses such questions by examining a wide range of material, documentary and iconographic evidence, and reexamining a multiplicity of varying interpretations on Bronze Age seafaring and seafarers in the eastern Mediterranean, from Anatolia in the north to Egypt in the south and west to Cyprus. The Aegean world operated on the western boundaries of this region, but is referred to more in passing than in engagement. Because the social aspects of seafaring and transport, the relationship different peoples had with the sea, and the whole notion of 'seascapes' are seldom discussed in the literature of the eastern Mediterranean Bronze Age, [Seafaring and Seafarers in the Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean](#)

devotes significant attention to such factors, including: mobility, connectivity, the length and purpose as well as the risk of the journey, the knowledge and experience of navigation and travel, 'working' the sea, the impact of distance and access to the exotic upon peoples' identities and ideologies.

The outline includes:

1. Introduction: A Brief (Pre)History of the Mediterranean Bronze Age
2. Maritime Matters and Materials – Social Aspects, Material Aspects
3. Early Bronze Age – The Levant and Egypt, Cyprus, Anatolia
4. Middle Bronze Age – The Levant and Egypt, Cyprus, Anatolia
5. Late Bronze Age – The Documentary Record, The Levant and Egypt, Cyprus, Anatolia
6. Seafaring, Seafarers and Seaborne Trade – A Diachronic Overview, Networks and Routes of Exchange, Seafaring, Seafarers and Bronze Age Politics
7. Conclusions

The chapters in [Seafaring and Seafarers in the Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean](#), present first a general discussion of two different aspects of the maritime world of the Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean: (1) social – seascapes and seafaring; merchants, mariners and pirates; and (2) material – shipwrecks; ports and harbors; ships' representations and boat models or wall paintings; stone anchors and fishing equipment. Then Knapp presents a broad selection of the actual evidence – material, iconographic and documentary – for each period under discussion: the Early, Middle and Late Bronze Ages. This is followed by a

chapter that summarizes the evidence, and engages it in discussions of seafaring, seafarers and seaborne trade, the various routes and networks of exchange that characterized the Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean, and the impact of seafaring and seafarers on Bronze Age polities. The conclusion outlines developments in the Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean in light of the materials and ideas presented in [Seafaring and Seafarers in the Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean](#), revisiting some of the social and material aspects of Bronze Age maritime matters, and considering just what we have learned from them. Knapp returns to the questions raised earlier, and gauges the extent to which the present work has been able to answer them. The book in closing offers a few final thoughts about seafaring and seafarers in the Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean. <>

Arts & Photography / History / African American

[Brooklyn On My Mind: Black Visual Artists from the WPA to the Present, 1st edition](#) by Myrah Brown Green, with a foreword by Chirlane McCray (Schiffer Publishing Ltd.)

[Brooklyn On My Mind](#) assembles 129 Black artists and their works, highlighting their important contributions to art worldwide. Beginning with the Brooklyn-based artists active during the Works Progress Administration years and continuing with artists approaching their prime today, the collection spans 80 years of art. Author Myrah Brown Green

is an art historian, lecturer, and independent curator. Her quilts are in a number of prestigious collections. For the past decade she has devoted her time to assisting artists in documenting and archiving their art.

From highly publicized artists to rising talent, each is tied to Brooklyn in their own way.

Artists include Jacob Lawrence, Otto Neals, Onnie Millar, Kehinde Wiley, Dindga McCannon, Melvin Edwards, Dread Scott, Xenobia Bailey, Dr. Vivian Schuyler Key, Kay Brown, Russell Frederick, and more. Seven chapters highlight overarching themes that connect the artists, besides their Brooklyn connections. A foreword by New York City's 'first lady,' Chirlane McCray, marks the importance of Brooklyn's Black creators within the city's art community.

McCray in the foreword to [Brooklyn On My Mind](#) says that when she moved to Brooklyn, she discovered artists, her sister and brother descendants of Africa, who made passionate commentary on daily life and politics through textiles, sculptures, drawings, and paintings. It did not take long to realize that in Brooklyn artists have been producing work for decades, expressing the sorrow and joy – and all the messy in-between – of what it means to be Black in America.

They immortalized the trailblazing pioneers and leaders often left out of the history books and museums. Reflecting the impressive diversity within

the African Diaspora, these artists were nourished by the roots of cultures spread all across the globe. They told the stories of everyday struggles and triumphs, as well as a larger story of a people's ongoing journey. That is why it is so important to document, celebrate, cultivate, and share Black art, and to nurture Black artists.

Green in the foreword says that [Brooklyn On My Mind](#) includes 129 fine artists who have lived and made art in Brooklyn since before the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Sculpture, painting, collage, printmaking, public art, and photography are among the mediums. Each artist is connected to Brooklyn in his or her own way. Some were born and raised in Brooklyn, and some worked there in art institutions, while others became transplants from other parts of the world to Brooklyn to pursue their careers in art.

The artists in Chapter 1: The WPA Experience include those who were assigned commissions by the WPA, which began in the late 1930s and ended in 1943. The WPA was one of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New

Deal initiatives, a branch of the Federal Art Project, which paid professional artists living wages to create art. Sculpture, public buildings, paintings, prints, posters, and other forms of art were included. Although there are four artists featured in this chapter, others,

including Roy De Carava, Ronald Joseph, Robert Blackburn, and James Lesesne Wells, also made considerable contributions to the Brooklyn art scene through their teaching and artistic masterpieces. Many of their works are still accessible for public viewing throughout the country today. These artists, along with a host of other masters featured in Chapter 2: Passing It Forward, have set the standards for the artists who followed.

Chapter 3: Songs of Our Mothers and Fathers celebrates the artists whose work reflects ancestors throughout the African Diaspora. Their images, both narrative and abstract, pay homage to that link.

Subliminal traces of spiritual symbolism can be found in the works of the artists featured in Chapter 4 of [Brooklyn On My Mind](#): In the Spirit. Some of these artists use brushstrokes or very abstract symbols to mimic what they believe to be the movement of spirit, while other artists are very direct in how they speak their relationship to spirit through the works that they create.

Many of the works in Chapter 5: Global Inspirations intentionally connect the viewer to places outside Brooklyn. The themes that these artists use may spring from world travel, research, or memories of their home before settling in Brooklyn.

Chapter 6: Contemporaneous Connections include artists whose works embody another new art movement placed within the twenty-first century. Their ideas reflect today's global issues,

the use of technology, and cultural diversity. Many of the artists have turned their backs on prior organized art movements. This idea is depicted in their work by the surfaces that they paint on, the materials that they use, and their updating of past ideals that include self, family, their community and the nation.

Chapter 7: New Thought includes the artists who will take us into the next decade, reminding us of those who came before. They are the ones who have been mentored by many of the artists in prior chapters and have learned to mentor others so that they keep the creative arts burning in Brooklyn and the world.

With [Brooklyn On My Mind: Black Visual Artists from the WPA to the Present](#), Dr. Myrah Brown Green celebrates more than eighty years of Black art in Brooklyn and keeps a critical aspect of our city's history alive. The visual artists featured on these pages exhibit a variety of styles and a range of influences. They work with different tools and in distinct mediums. Some are young, breaking the mold for future generations while standing on the shoulders of the barrier-breaking giants who came before them. Some have passed on, leaving behind brilliant

expressions of work that will be enjoyed for years to come. Each artist is an essential part of what we treasure about Brooklyn. And in New York City - one of the great cultural capitals of the world - we could not be more proud to claim all of them as our own. - Chirlane McCray, First Lady of New York City

We agree with Green that as we welcome a growing legacy of new Brooklynites, it is important that [Brooklyn On My Mind: Black Visual Artists from the WPA to the Present](#) become an archive used by those millennials who try to explore what once existed in Brooklyn through the arts. <>

Audio / Literature & Fiction / Science Fiction / Young Adult

[Akata Warrior \(Akata Witch\)](#), **Audio CD – Audiobook, MP3 Audio, Unabridged, running time 12.5 hours** by Nnedi Okorafor, narrated by Yetide Badaki (Tantor Media Audiobook)

[Akata Warrior – Hardcover](#) by Nnedi Okorafor (Viking Books for Young Readers)

[Akata Warrior](#) is the newest novel by the author of *Akata Witch* and the forthcoming Marvel comic book series about Shuri, Black Panther's sister. The book is available in MP3-CD, hardcover, kindle, audiobook and paperback.

In [Akata Warrior](#), a year ago, Sunny Nwazue, an American-born, Nigerian

girl, was inducted into the secret Leopard Society. As she began to develop her magical powers, Sunny learned that she had been chosen to lead a dangerous mission to avert an apocalypse, brought about by the terrifying masquerade, Ekwensu. Now, stronger, feistier, and a bit older, Sunny is studying with her mentor Sugar Cream and struggling to unlock the secrets in her strange Nsibidi book.

Eventually, Sunny knows she must confront her destiny. With the support of her Leopard Society friends, Orlu, Chichi, and Sasha, and of her spirit face, Anyanwu, she will travel through worlds both visible and invisible to the mysterious town of Osis, where she will fight a climactic battle to save humanity.

Much-honored Nnedi Okorafor, winner of the Hugo, Nebula, and World Fantasy awards, merges today's Nigeria with a unique world she creates. [Akata Warrior](#) blends mythology, fantasy, history, and magic into a compelling tale that will keep listeners spellbound.

Okorafor is an author of fantasy and science fiction for both adults and younger readers. Her novella *Binti* won the 2015 Hugo and Nebula Awards; her children's book *Long Juju Man* won the 2007-08 Macmillan Writer's Prize for Africa; and her adult novel *Who Fears Death* was a World Fantasy Award winner. Okorafor holds a PhD in English and is a professor at SUNY Buffalo.

The audio version is read by Nigerian-born actress Yetide Badak.

The most imaginative, gripping, enchanting fantasy novels I have ever read! – Laurie Halse Anderson, New York Times bestselling author of *Speak*

Okorafor's novel will ensnare readers and keep them turning pages until the very end to see if and how Sunny fulfills the tremendous destiny that awaits her. – *Booklist*, starred review

[Akata Warrior](#) swiftly synthesizes the lessons and knowledge of the first book into a heart-racing story of resilience and a determination to save the world. This title is a unique coming of age story, coupling the distinct experience of the cultural duality as both African and African-American with lessons of love, loyalty, and the pains of adolescent insecurities. – BCCB, starred review
Don't miss this beautifully written fantasy that seamlessly weaves inventive juju with contemporary Nigerian culture and history. – *School Library Journal*, starred review
Satisfy fans eager for more of Okorafor's signature

brand of magic. – The Horn Book
The narrative is well paced and multifaceted, taking the reader on a tour of both modern Nigeria and the mystical worlds of the Wilderness (sometimes simultaneously). Along the way, the reader is given a fascinating glimpse into Nigerian culture. – VOYA

Nnedi Okorafor writes glorious futures and fabulous fantasies. Her characters take your heart and squeeze it; her worlds open your mind to new things. – Neil Gaiman

Highly original and imaginative, uplifting and gripping, [Akata Warrior](#) will hold readers or listeners spellbound. <>

Business & Management

[Understanding, Measuring, and Improving Daily Management](#): **How to Use Effective Daily Management to Drive Significant Process Improvement**, 1st edition by Ross Kenneth Kennedy (Productivity Press, Routledge)

[Understanding, Measuring, and Improving Daily Management](#) explains the critical parts of a continuous improvement strategy to achieve Operational Excellence and where reactive improvement through effective daily management fits in. In addition, it shows the consequences to the

Operational Excellence journey if daily management is not performed well.

Reactive improvement develops the capability and discipline within the organization to be able to rapidly recover from an event or incident that stops readers from achieving their expected or target performance for the day, shift, or hour and most importantly – their ability to capture the learning and initiate corrective actions so that the event or incident will not re-occur anywhere across the organization. As such, reactive improvement focuses on improving daily management through daily review meetings, information centers supporting the daily review meetings, and readers' frontline problem-solving root cause analysis capability at all levels.

[Understanding, Measuring, and Improving Daily Management](#)

introduces the seven elements of reactive improvement that must work in concert for effective daily management and allows readers to rate their site or department to determine their starting point compared to best practices:

1. Supportive organization structure to support development of the workers so they have ownership and accountability for the performance of their area of responsibility.
2. Effective frontline leaders to ensure everyone else in the leadership structure are not working down a level.
3. Appropriate measures with expected targets that are linked to the site's Key Success Factors

for Operations to ensure goal alignment, and are relevant to the area being focused on.

4. Structured daily review meetings to identify opportunities (problems/incidents) and monitor progress of their solution so they don't happen again.
5. Visual information centers that visually display daily and trending performance along with monitoring of actions to address problems/issues raised.
6. Frontline problem-solving root cause analysis capability across the site.
7. Rapid sharing of learning capability across shifts, departments, and the organization.

Author Ross Kenneth Kennedy commenced his working career in 1970 at the Port Kembla Steelworks (12 yrs); followed by Cable Makers Australia (5 yrs) and David Brown Gear Industries (3 yrs). Over these 20 years he gained hands-on manufacturing and operational experience covering maintenance (14 years), production, operations and executive roles before moving into management consulting.

In 1985, Kennedy developed his passion for Lean Production following his involvement in the Value Added Management (JIT) initiative by the New South Wales (NSW) Government. Kennedy quickly and effectively applied the new Lean principles and practices first at the CMA Foam Group Lullaby Bedding Factory while Factory Manager, then CMA's Cable Accessories Factory as Site Manager before moving to David Brown Gear

Industries as Manufacturing Manager to establish and oversee the relocation of the company.

In 1989 after the new facility was well established and recognized for its leading edge improvements based on Lean, Kennedy was invited to join the new JIT / Lean practice being established by the Manufacturing and Operations Group of Coopers & Lybrand's International Management Consulting Practice.

Over the next 5 years Kennedy had the opportunity to work on major assignments with some of the firm's leading Lean practitioners from the US, Canada and the UK. In August 1994, Kennedy established his own consulting practice specializing in TPM. He organized and chaired Australasia's first TPM conference in 1995 and, at the request of the delegates at the conference, Ross with several colleagues founded The Centre for TPM (Australasia) in January 1996.

After extensive research including a trip to Paris in 1997 to attend Europe's first World-Class Manufacturing & JIPM-TPM Conference and associated workshops with leading TPM practitioners from throughout the world, The Centre for TPM (Australasia) launched its TPM3 methodology in January 1998.

Kennedy in [Understanding, Measuring, and Improving Daily Management](#) outlines in detail why each of the seven elements are important to achieving Operational Excellence, and most importantly, how to implement each

element supported with many templates and tools. The book is straightforward and detailed. <>

Cooking, Food & Wine / Regional / South

The New Nashville Chef's Table: Extraordinary Recipes from Music City
by Stephanie Stewart-Howard (Globe Pequot)

Food, cooking and restaurants reflect the down-home spirit of Nashville, the people who live there, and their many cultures and cuisines. Culinary traditions are firm, but there is a dynamic food/dining evolution taking place – from homey mom and pop cafes to chic new eateries. [The New Nashville Chef's Table](#) features recipes for the home cook from the city's most celebrated eateries alongside beautiful photography. Recipes are arranged by restaurants.

Author Stephanie Stewart-Howard is a journalist and author whose resume also includes work as an artist, actor, costume designer and researcher. After spending several years as managing editor and primary writer at *Nashville Lifestyles* magazine, she decided to leap into the book and freelance world.

Nashville has been a music town for decades, ever since the Grand Ole Opry began in the 1930s with the rise of 'old-time' music, followed by an even greater musical influx after World War II, with the birth of Music Row. It dates back to the days of RCA Studio B, on to Hank and Patsy, through George and

Tammy and Dolly and Porter, then Willie and Kris and Johnny and Merle, on to Garth Brooks and George Strait, to Carrie Underwood and Blake Shelton.

Two thousand thirteen, the year the **first edition** of [The New Nashville Chef's Table](#) was written, saw Nashville become an 'it' city in the eyes of the nation and the world – about, for once, more than just the musical superstars. Dozens of publications, domestic and international, rushed to talk about Nashville – its food, arts, craftspersons, businesses, sports, and real estate – and proclaim it the hottest thing in the nation.

As the world rediscovers Nashville, its culinary culture is blooming. Unlike Charleston and New Orleans, they don't have a fundamentally defined cuisine that's spent two hundred years fermenting into something distinct. They have instead a food history that is deeply tied to the history of the South itself.

So what is Tennessee food, anyway? Like most of the cuisine native to the South, it depends on seasonal eating and what's available on the farm at the time. It is the food of farmers more than it is the culinary creation of the affluent, and it grows out of a need to make the best possible with what one has at hand. It's food that evolved through the era of slavery and Jim Crow, that Nashville residents never entirely felt comfortable admitting they owed to innovative African-American cooks whose names are now lost to history,

something they still struggle to come to terms with, even as they acknowledge that 'Southern' food has myriad parallels with Soul food.

At its heart, traditional Southern food is tied to the food Nashville people's grandparents ate growing up during the Depression, which isn't all that different from what their own parents and grandparents ate during their farm-based childhoods. Many of those who are adults now are fortunate enough to have had grandparents and great-grandparents who still maintained 'gardens' through their childhoods, who canned the fresh produce or froze it and sent it home with them each time they visited.

What you got was straightforward: corn and beans, peppers, greens, squashes, and pumpkins; tomatoes whole and made into sauces; chow chows and pickles, and even old-style fermented sauerkrauts. Jellies and jams and preserves were there, too, made from the fruit they or the neighbors grew. Today they connect all of that with the notion of farm-to-fork and somehow often forget that it's a rediscovery, not a new thing.

Coming from a Southern family (Virginia and South Carolina), albeit one centered first in the military, then corporate America, Stewart-Howard in [The New Nashville Chef's Table](#) says she learned about this kind of food from her own parents and grandparents.

Her friends are learning how to can again, and make jams and preserves.

They are learning to forage – flowers like honeysuckle for simple syrups, wild berries and herbs, morels. They have learned to appreciate the taste of things that don't come from supermarket shelves – that are fresh, or freshly preserved – and value that which they make with their own hands.

Many of them are buying chicken, pork, or beef directly from the farmers. There is new appreciation for game meats like wild turkey, duck, and venison, and freshly caught fish that they can fry up in cornmeal or grill. Barbecue is a thing for them – slow-cooking meats until they are tender to falling apart, then shredding them with a fork.

When they prepare these simple, fresh foods, cooking them in a traditional manner – the turnip greens long simmered with a bit of pork, the tomatoes and cucumbers marinated overnight in vinegar and oil – they return to their roots.

Nashville's chef contingent is very aware of this past, and true to it. A few of them, most notably Tyler Brown and Matt Lackey, have turned farmer themselves. That doesn't mean that they aren't also blending in the tastes and traditions of other cultures – hints of South Asia and France, Germany and Morocco. They are indeed. And the arrival of Food Network star and international chef extraordinaire Maneet Chauhan has inspired a new level of introspection and invention – the blending of traditional foods of many cultures into a rich hybrid that

may be the new normal of American eating.

When putting together [The New Nashville Chef's Table](#), Stewart-Howard says she was faced with the daunting task of sorting out the most representative of Nashville's restaurant scene. Her preliminary list had over a hundred places on it, and she reduced it to half that for readers.

The book serves not only as a cookbook, but also as a guide to all Nashville has to offer, whether readers are cooking for the family or planning a trip to the area.

[The New Nashville Chef's Table](#) explores new ideas and maps new culinary ground, and readers can expect Nashville to grow more exciting and expansive in the coming years, whether Nashville is an 'it' city of the moment or not. <>

Crafts & Hobbies / Quilting / Guides

[sew + quilt: techniques + projects for hand-stitching + patchwork: A Beginner's Guide](#) by Susan Beal (The Taunton Press)

In [sew + quilt](#), author Susan Beal provides step-by-step instructions for 4 fundamental hand-stitching techniques and 4 quilt blocks as the foundation for learning how to use hand-stitching as an embellishment to add texture and color to quilt projects.

Each technique includes a small project as a learning tool, followed by 12 more generous yet accessible patchwork projects that build on the basics.

Beal is a jewelry designer and author of many craft books, including *Bead Simple*, *Button It Up*, and *Hand-Stitched Home*. In [sew + quilt](#), Beal leads sewists through all the steps for making two modern samplers, using just five simple embroidery stitches and four beginner-friendly quilt blocks. Two dozen colorful and creative projects follow, from bags and pillows to mini-quilts and bed quilts.

With hundreds of photos and illustrations, [sew + quilt](#) is a guide that shows just how easy and fun it can be to master fundamental techniques while making beautiful and meaningful projects to keep or give to someone special.

Beal says that sewing, along with quilting and embroidery, changed her life, but she didn't learn how to sew until she was 26. Once she got her confidence up, it was exciting. She vividly remembers the feeling of suddenly being able to make anything she wanted – night and day from just a week earlier.

A few years later, she says she nervously tried her hand at patchwork for the first time, and once she got used to the teeny-tiny ¼-in. seam allowance, she made two improvisationally pieced log cabin pillows for her couch and dreamed up a million more ideas. She made her first quilt for her mom's birthday over the next few weeks, started an anniversary quilt for her husband and herself after that, and really never stopped.

So whether readers are complete beginners, like she was, they already know how to sew but want to try some new patchwork quilting or embroidery projects, or they are all-around sewing superstars who are looking for a fun and easy quilt to whip up in a weekend, [sew + quilt](#) is for them all.

First, readers learn five simple embroidery stitches and four beginner-friendly quilt blocks by making two Sew + Quilt Samplers. In the first section, their practice of marking lines and stitching on plain fabric becomes a pretty embroidery to display in a hoop, and in the next, their first four patchwork blocks come together in a pretty little mini-quilt. Then, after finishing these two modern samplers and building their skills and confidence, they are ready to take on any project in [sew + quilt](#) and make it their own, from colorful embroidery to beautiful bed quilts.

With the pressures of work, family, and personal life, it can be difficult to find time for a creative hobby. But even a few minutes of handwork like embroidery, sewing, or quilting nurtures mindfulness, much like meditation does. Creativity can feel very elusive in a busy; modern life crowded with work, digital distractions, and chores, especially in our increasingly dark and polarized world. But when we sew or embroider – even the simplest project – the process reconnects us with our creative hearts while calming some of the rushing anxiety that seems to be the backdrop of modern life.

Making something special for a dear friend or to use every day in one's own home is a double gift – the practice of stitching that calms and centers, followed by the true happiness of enjoying something beautiful, made with one's own hands.

Both inspiring and instructional, [sew + quilt](#) is ideal for beginners as well as more experienced sewists looking for fresh new projects to make. With clear, step-by-step instructions, and lots of illustrations and photos, plus tips and advice on everything a quilter needs to experience the joy of making something beautiful and personal, [sew + quilt](#) is a mix of traditional and modern patterns for both smaller, faster quilts and larger quilts. <>

Culture / Biographies & Memoirs

[Bettie Page: The Lost Years: An Intimate Look at the Queen of Pinups, through her Private Letters & Never-Published Photos](#) by Tori Rodriguez, with Ron Brem (Lyons Press)

When the documentary film *Bettie Page Reveals All* was released in 2013, it would have been easy to assume we would never again hear directly from the adored icon. After all, the film is narrated by Bettie Mae Page herself, and she spills on lots of subjects that she had previously kept private – even in her authorized biography – though she does maintain her own decades-long, no-photos rule in the movie. She loathed the effects of aging, said it made her sad to see her own celebrity idols when they were older and wanted people to

remember her as she looked in her pinup days.

Fortunately for the hordes of Bettie fans worldwide, a bounty of unreleased Bettie material awaits in [Bettie Page](#). For years – since before Bettie's death from heart failure in December 2008 at the age of 85 – boxes and file folders of Bettie mementoes have been gathering dust in the closets of Bettie's nephew's house.

Ron Brem, a musician living in Bakersfield, California, is the only child of Bettie's beloved sister, Goldie Jane Page. Bettie never had kids, other than three stepchildren. Goldie died during the summer of 2004, but in the several years before her death, she had carefully stored heaps of incredible family photos, the bulk of which feature Bettie as either the sole subject or part of the shot. None of these hundreds of photos has ever been published until now, and few people even know they exist. Goldie also saved approximately 29 letters from Bettie spanning the years 1949 to 2000, ranging in length from note-size to 18 full pages, which tell the unknown story of Bettie's 'lost years' following her retirement from modeling in 1957.

Author Tori Rodriguez is an Atlanta-based freelance journalist, licensed psychotherapist, health and fitness expert, and singer-songwriter.

Additionally, she is the blog editor for [BettiePage.com](#) and the social media manager for all three of Bettie Page's official sites.

And there are certainly plenty of photos of Bettie from those days; in fact, she is believed to be the most photographed model of all time, with more published photos than Marilyn Monroe and Cindy Crawford combined. In addition to her own body of work, Bettie's influence shows up all over the place in pop culture as the inspiration for entertainers, artists, fashion designers, and hordes of women worldwide who idolize her. Her enduring popularity has made her a mainstay on the Forbes magazine list of the world's top-earning deceased celebrities, an ongoing topic of intrigue for fans, and a muse for top stars like Madonna, Beyonce, Katy Perry, and P!nk. But while Bettie Page the icon is firmly established, much mystery remains regarding the actual woman.

As revealed in [Bettie Page](#), the stories Bettie tells through these letters provide the closest look yet at her life and fill in details of what happened after she quit modeling. Some of these, of course, have never been shared, while others help to flesh out, from Bettie's personal perspective, events that have already been made public. For example, it is known that she was hospitalized for psychiatric problems on several occasions, but almost nothing has been revealed about her actual experiences during those times.

Bettie wrote some of the letters while still living with her third husband, Harry Lear, and others were penned as she served out her sentences at Patton State Psychiatric Hospital for violent altercations with landlords; she was

there for twenty months the first time, and the second time she was sentenced to ten years after being found not guilty by reason of insanity. In her letters, she discusses her day-to-day doings throughout the years, her mental illness (though only using old-school euphemisms like 'emotional strain' and 'nervous tension') and her experiences at the hospital, as well as her hopes, regrets, and struggles. Excerpts from these letters are reproduced in [Bettie Page](#) uncorrected and unedited.

Along with the letters from Bettie that fill in many gaps of her later years and further reveal the mysterious star's endearing personality, these exclusive photos span Bettie's life from infancy through 1970. Even with the photos taken during the 1950s, we've never seen this Bettie before – in scenes from her real life rather than a professional photo shoot: Bettie the sister, daughter, and aunt.

Among the countless gems in the family archives are a couple of handfuls of post-pinup photos. After she retired from modeling in 1957 and retreated into anonymity, there have been only a few published pictures of Bettie from the rest of her life, and – except for mugshots from a 1972 arrest – those later photos were taken when she was around eighty years old. While she remained resistant to having her photo taken after she gave up modeling, her former husband snapped her in 1958, and Goldie got some shots during a couple of family gatherings in the 1960s and '70s.

Other rarities in [Bettie Page](#) include a photo of Bettie as a baby, shots of her parents and siblings, her first modeling composite card from the 1940s, and never-seen photos of Bettie during the pinup days. There are also some gorgeous solo images of Goldie, a stunning beauty in her own right who looked a lot like Bettie.

The photos of Bettie and Goldie together are especially compelling. One set from the early 1950s, for example, features the sisters on the beach at Coney Island. Even when they're striking a pose, the images retain a touching candor and innocence, since they are not professional photos. In a lot of these shots, the sisters are wearing bikinis they made by hand – at a time when it was basically unheard of and quite scandalous for women to wear bikinis in public.

Other neat mementos include poems from Goldie's diary that outline key events in Bettie's and her family's life, and letters exchanged between Goldie and their brother Jack in the early '90s in which they discuss Bettie's newfound fame.

Bettie has become a symbol of authenticity, sexual freedom, and unabashed nudity. She rejected the notion that nudity is immoral or sinful, once saying, "I want to be remembered as the woman who changed people's perspectives concerning nudity in its natural form." Ironically, this new part of her story – told in her own words to her family as the events unfolded – may be

the barest we will ever see the beloved pinup queen.

[Bettie Page](#) offers the most intimate look yet into the life of the reclusive legend.

<>

Education & Learning / Teaching / K-12

[A Walk in Their Kicks: Literacy, Identity, and the Schooling of Young Black Males](#)

by Aaron M. Johnson, with a foreword by Elizabeth Birr Moje, with an afterword by Jay B. Marks (Teachers College Press)

[A Walk in Their Kicks](#) is a compelling book providing a deep examination of the experience of African American males in schools. Moving beyond basic notions of culturally relevant instruction, [A Walk in Their Kicks](#) offers new understandings that assist educators in developing instruction that respects these young men and fosters their participation and success.

Author Aaron M. Johnson is an associate superintendent of instructional services and organizational leadership for Farmington Public Schools in Michigan and adjunct lecturer of reading, language, and literature at Wayne State University, Detroit.

Through research data and conversations among teachers, readers explore the impact that trauma has on the lives of African American students, examine how their own identities and perceptions of these students influence their text selections and instruction, and identify the conditions that need to be present to engage African American male students in literacy. Chapters end

with “What Teachers Can Do Right Now” and “What Administrators Can Do Right Now,” sections that provide easy-to-implement strategies.

Johnson believes that literacy gave him a future as an African American male and, at the same time, recalls school friends who never got that chance. He calls for educators to transform schools into environments that are free of negative assumptions about African American males and provides recommendations for engaging in this work.

[A Walk in Their Kicks](#) features:

- A brief history of schooling in the United States, particularly as it relates to African American children.
- A framework for engaging African American males in school-based literacy.
- Recommendations to help teachers plan lessons, build equitable classroom environments, and foster positive relationships with all students.
- Recommendations to help administrators build school-wide affinity groups, implement and change policy, and plan alongside their teaching staff.

Elizabeth Moje in the foreword says that [A Walk in Their Kicks](#) educates its readers in deep ways. Johnson writes a book for teachers and school leaders that respects their intelligence by inviting them into a discussion of the historical underpinnings of the [mis]education of African American children, with Detroit as an instructive case study. He does not shy away from

citing research literature like so many texts written for educators do. He does not talk down to teachers. Instead, he insists that great teaching must be rooted in educators' understanding of history, psychology, linguistics, and literacy. He challenges his fellow educators to do the right thing by their students by learning from them and with them.

Each section of each chapter provides deep historical or evidence-based analysis, bolstered by practical suggestions, such as ensuring that African American children are reading literature that they love and in which they see themselves represented, talking with Black youth to hear what they care about, putting African American students – especially boys – in leadership positions, engaging African American children and youth in analysis of various discourse practices so that they become 'metadiscursive,' and showing students that the teacher 'gives a damn' by respecting what African American children and their families bring to the learning environment and never, ever, giving up on them.

[**A Walk in Their Kicks**](#) is also clear-headed about how hard the work is, particularly if readers do not first try to understand the cultural values, experiences, and practices of their students. As Johnson emphasizes, we must first see the potential and possibility in all our students if we are to invite them to reach for new potentials and possibilities. To do that, all teachers must overcome race-based assumptions or

blindness and recognize that we live in a racist and classist society, one that depends at some level on the subjugation of some groups to ensure the privilege of others. And we must work collectively to challenge the assumptions that lead teachers to consign young people to educational categories that will determine their future opportunities.

Read Dr. Aaron Johnson's book if you want to learn not only about systemic racial and economic oppression, but also about ways that educators can counter such oppression through everyday practice. Read his book if you care about the lives of countless young African American men and women who deserve the chance to achieve their dreams. Read the book if you care about young Black men and women who have much to offer our society if given the opportunity to learn – and to learn on their terms, with respect for their cultural values, experiences, and beliefs. Read his book if you want to walk in his kicks and be the kind of educator who makes a difference. – Elizabeth Birr Moje, University of Michigan

This is a uniquely important book that mixes history, theory, research, and practice in a masterful way. Johnson offers deep insights into one of the most timely issues in our society today. He is a trustworthy guide not just through the issues and the complexities but to solutions, or at least to much better ways to proceed. – James Paul Gee, Mary Lou Fulton Presidential Professor of Literacy Studies and Regents' Professor, Arizona State University

[A Walk in Their Kicks](#)

elucidates what's possible for educators and what's essential to the schooling of African American males in our quest to eliminate the gaps in opportunity, access, equity, equality, culture, relationships placement, discipline, rigor, and more that manifest themselves as the gaps in achievement so prevalent among this student population. This thought-provoking text provides practical solutions to reversing the educational trajectory for African American male students. – From the Afterword by Jay B. Marks,

diversity and equity
consultant, Oakland
Schools, Oakland, MI

This compelling examination offers new understandings and practical strategies.

[A Walk in Their Kicks](#) is a powerful book sure to open the eyes and hearts of many teachers. Johnson has lived the complex experience of an academically and musically gifted young African American boy who wanted to learn and excel, but also wanted to be part of his community. His willingness to open up his identities to readers, to expose the struggles of dual consciousness he experienced and the sense of loss that a 'subtractive education' can leave in a child, is a window into the psyches and the souls of Black boys across multiple U.S. education contexts. <>

Medicine / Alternative

[Complementary, Alternative Methods and Supplementary Medicine](#) by Giovanni Vincent Belcaro (World Scientific)

[Complementary, Alternative Methods and Supplementary Medicine](#) contains an accessible, yet critical, discussion of the most complementary-alternative treatments based on medical evidence.

The author is Giovanni V. Belcaro. Belcaro is the founder of the Irvine Vascular Lab, Ch-Pe University, Italy and the leader of the San Valentino Vascular Screening Project. He has worked and operated in different projects in several places including

Africa, the Philippines, Japan, China, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Among the many research projects he completed – he was the first to implant an artificial Gore-Tex venous valve and to use lymphatic transplant. His work on early atherosclerotic plaques evaluation and screening has been a significant progress in the early management of atherosclerosis.

Providing readers at any level an introduction to alternative and supplementary medicines, [Complementary, Alternative Methods and Supplementary Medicine](#) is a simplified, complete text including management and medical information. It is arranged in a direct manual style, with select information explaining some of the most important concepts of complementary and alternative medicine and circulation sciences.

Since mankind has had memory, health has meant a series of things such as happiness, wealth, power and supremacy. At the same time, lack of health has also represented fear, pain, survival and death. To a simple question like "what does health mean to you?", the answers may change according to places where people live and the circumstances that are occurring at that moment. The meaning of health also changes according to historical events and is different in peaceful times than in war times.

Good health means wellness, and this also leads to concepts such as growing a family, improving beauty and making

money. At the same time, health conditions can change professional conditions, jobs, skills and other most challenging situations. Health-influencing herbs, drugs and even mind-conditioning treatments are capable of changing the strength, temper, resistance and will of a person.

According to [Complementary, Alternative Methods and Supplementary Medicine](#), it is easy to understand the idea that a healthy community can help the sick person, while a lonely individual is by himself and also weaker when unhealthy. For this reason, the 'health man' has always distinguished himself, being both powerful and feared by the community. With time, the man that actually cured the disease also began teaching why and how to do the job, gaining the definition of 'doctor.' Of course being a doctor in China was, and maybe still is, different than being one in Africa or in the Andes, but the searched result always is the same: wellness with health. Still, in every part of the world, the word 'doctor' means the same thing even if the methods may change and above all the cures may vary.

At present, medical drugs with their use and evolution have achieved global distribution and prescription patterns. Diseases and treatments are now quite comparable in different nations. In other words, there is also globalization in diseases and in some remedies.

Nevertheless, in recent years, we are witnessing a continuous evolution of

how to deal with and treat diseases. People are searching for alternative cures and methods, and more often, these remedies are searched for among nonqualified 'medicine treatments'. This definition is actually generic, and so the correct one should be distinguished by 'official' and 'alternative and complementary'. Even so-called 'official' medicine may be different dependent upon latitudes, countries and available wealth conditions.

Paradoxically, world globalization is also introducing 'alternative medicine' and even 'do-it-yourself'. Moreover, media and the worldwide web have created a parallel world where increasingly often 'real and by law' doctors are totally skipped over by parallel medicine practitioners.

Listening every day to remonstrance and criticisms towards medical doctors and general practice as a whole, the first problem is bureaucracy, which takes more of a medical doctor's time than actually doing the healing. From here, the step is quite short to frustration by patients, and thus a growing number of patients look for 'alternative' cures rather than wait for doctors to take time off from administrating to return to healing. Their health conditions are or may be dangerous, and above all, there is so much confusion among the 'alternative' cures that some distinctions require adequate attention, and only doctors can provide this healing knowledge and attention.

[Complementary, Alternative Methods and Supplementary Medicine](#), divided into arguments and sections and easy to read, is perhaps one of the most distinguished attempts to explain alternative and complementary medicine and should be read by both medical practitioners and by their patients. It is a clear roadmap to distinguish what to do and, above all, what not to do. A guide such as this book has been missing from modern libraries, and readers are grateful to Belcaro for his work, particularly that he has made such a complex topic much more simple and palatable. <>

Philosophy / Humor / TV & Film / Cartoon / Sci-Fi

[Rick and Morty and Philosophy: In the Beginning Was the Squanch](#) edited by Lester C. Abesamis & Wayne Yuen (**Popular Culture and Philosophy Series, Vol. 125**: Open Court)

The adult-oriented science-fiction cartoon series *Rick and Morty*, shown on Cartoon Network as part of its late-night Adult Swim feature, is famous for its nihilistic anti-hero Rick Sanchez. Rick is a character who rejects God, religion, and meaning, but who embraces science and technology.

This leads to a popular show that often presents a world view favorable to science and dismissive of spirituality. It is existentialism mashed up with absurdism with a healthy (or unhealthy) dose of dick jokes thrown in. [Rick and Morty and Philosophy](#) focuses on the philosophical underpinnings of the show.

Editors are Lester C. Abesamis and Wayne Yuen. Abesamis is a philosophy instructor who teaches at Chabot College and Ohlone College in California. Yuen is also a philosophy professor at Ohlone College. The book has 21 authors.

The authors explain and develop ideas that are mentioned or illustrated in various episodes, so that fans can get really solid evidence for what they know already: this show is awesome and deep. Rick has access to technology that allows him to jump between dimensions or realities. He brings his grandson, Morty, along with him on these adventures, often putting Morty in mortal danger. However, Rick's attitude is that there are an infinite number of Mortys in the multiverse, so if his Morty dies, he can always replace his Morty with another Morty from a different dimension. One question that arises is, are these Mortys really identical to each other? And if one of them dies, can he really be replaced without loss?

Another character in the show is Jerry, the husband of Rick's daughter. Jerry is a complete and total loser with no self-respect, desperate to get any kind of respect from others. Why is it so important that he has self-respect? How does his lack of self-respect affect those around him?

[Rick and Morty and Philosophy](#) also includes chapters that examine the experience of watching *Rick and Morty*. One writer argues that many of the *Rick and Morty* episodes induce within viewers a state of 'Socratic aporia,' or confusion. Viewers are forced to reflect

on their own moral beliefs about the world when characters do something that seems good but results in horrendous consequences.

According to Abesamis and Yuen in the introduction, a lot of people connect the philosophies of Nietzsche to *Rick and Morty* for a variety of reasons, but one of the hallmarks of Nietzsche's writings was that he didn't want to be understood by everyone. He purposely made his writings confusing and contradictory, so that the Jerrys of the world would walk away understanding one thing, and the Ricks of the world would understand what Nietzsche really meant. In this way, modern popular culture is mirroring Nietzsche's writings.

Sure, readers can enjoy a show like *Rick and Morty* by laughing at dick jokes and seeing Jerry being his pathetic loser self, but underneath it all is a pretty serious and deeply philosophical television show. It's a world that reflects the intellectual, Rick, who has come to believe that there is no objective meaning in the world, no God to provide people purpose or guidance, and despite all of this, readers still find meaning in the world. Rick loves his family and hides it behind self-interest because loving one's family clashes with the idea that the world is utterly meaningless.

The world may be meaningless, but like quantum physics, things change when people stop taking a grand perspective of the universe, and look at the world from their own perspectives. They start

finding meaning everywhere. Does this microscopic meaning add up to something on the cosmic level? Only the dead really know for sure. And maybe Fart and Unity. But as for living humans, they can put their best thoughts and arguments together and maybe they can get a little closer to grabbing the truth.

Are weddings just funerals with cake? What about that universe where Hitler cured cancer? Is love simply a chemical reaction? Is a Pop-Tart living inside a toaster suicidal or just a realist? For the answers to these burning questions and so many more, pick up this damn book. Read some Descartes, Plato, Nietzsche, and Sartre so that before you die, and we're all gonna die, or turn yourself into a pickle, you'll know shit. After that, go watch TV. – Kimberly Baltzer-Jaray, Sessional Lecturer for Philosophy, Women's Studies, and Social Justice and Peace Studies at King's University College (Western)

Possible worlds, the ends justify the means, perception is reality, God might be something another god made up, and, of course, hostile

xenomorph-like insectoids that want to destroy the planet... Rick and Morty is just jam-packed with philosophy, as this marvelous book proves. – Robert Arp, editor of 1001 Ideas to Inspire You Before You Die

In today's topsy-turvy world, [Rick and Morty and Philosophy](#) embraces the irony that a cartoon can remind us of what's real in our lives. The authors take us on an insightful, challenging, and exhilarating journey through one of TV's most clever shows. – Jamey Heit, editor of Vader, Voldemort, and Other Villains

Fans of Rick and Morty will get a huge kick out of this fascinating exploration of the philosophical themes embedded in their wacky cosmic adventures. – Sander Lee, author of Woody Allen's Angst

Rick and Morty forces viewers to become invested and involved, regarding such real-life topics as terrorism, ethics, the cosmos, and the meaning of our own lives amidst it all. [Rick and](#)

[Morty and Philosophy](#)

should be required reading for any fan of the show. – Jack Bowen, author of *The Dream Weaver: One Boy's Journey through the Landscape of Philosophy*

Insightful, fascinating, [Rick and Morty and Philosophy](#) helps readers get a grip on this absurd nihilist philosophy cartoon series. <>

Political Science / Anthropology

[Anti-Science and the Assault on Democracy: Defending Reason in a Free Society](#) edited by Michael J. Thompson & Gregory R. Smulewicz-Zucker (Prometheus Books)

This collection of original essays defends the role that science must play in democratic society – science defined not just in terms of technology but as a way of approaching problems and viewing the world.

In [Anti-Science and the Assault on Democracy](#) experts in political science, the hard sciences, philosophy, history, and other disciplines examine contemporary anti-science trends, and make a strong case that respect for science is essential for a healthy democracy.

Editors are Michael J. Thompson and Gregory R. Smulewicz-Zucker. Thompson is professor of political theory in the department of political science at William Paterson University and the founding editor of *Logos: A Journal of Modern Society and Culture*. Smulewicz-

Zucker is a graduate student in the Department of Political Science at Rutgers University, New Brunswick and the managing editor of *Logos*.

The editors in [Anti-Science and the Assault on Democracy](#) note that a contradiction lies at the heart of modern society. On the one hand, we inhabit a world increasingly dominated by science and technology. On the other, opposition to science is prevalent in many forms – from arguments against the teaching of evolution and the denial of climate change to the promotion of alternative medicine and outlandish claims about the effects of vaccinations. Adding to this grassroots hostility toward science are academics espousing postmodern relativism, which equates the methods of science with regimes of ‘power-knowledge.’ While these cultural trends are sometimes marketed in the name of ‘democratic pluralism,’ the contributors contend that such views are actually destructive of a broader culture appropriate for a democratic society. This is especially true when facts are degraded as ‘fake news’ and scientists are dismissed as elitists. Rather than enhancing the capacity for rational debate and critical discourse, the authors of [Anti-Science and the Assault on Democracy](#) view such anti-science stances on either the right or the left as a return to premodern forms of subservience to authority and an unwillingness to submit beliefs to rational scrutiny.

Since the birth of the United States, science and democracy have been inextricably intertwined, feeding one another and bending the arc of the moral universe ever upward. Unfortunately, when scientific facts conflict with deeply held religious or political beliefs, it is almost always science that gets sacrificed. What can we do about this problem? [Anti-Science and the Assault on Democracy](#) provides a multitude of voices on causes and solutions. It is an invaluable volume that should be on the desk of all 535 members of Congress, every state governor, and every member of the presidential administration, including and especially the president himself. An indispensable contribution to the future of the republic. – Michael Shermer, publisher of *Skeptic* magazine, monthly columnist for *Scientific American*, Presidential Fellow at Chapman University, and author of *The Believing Brain*, *The Moral Arc*, and *Heavens on Earth*
This book astutely

diagnoses one of the main ailments afflicting democracy in our post-truth world – the overvaluing of feeling, intuition, and first-person experience. As a corrective for the relativism, cognitive bias, and motivated reasoning of subjective perception, it offers a more reliable prescription: apply to public discourse the scientific method of critical thinking, empirical evidence, and rigorous peer review. – Ralph Lewis, MD, psychiatrist at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, Toronto, and author of *Finding Purpose in a Godless World*
Democratic civilization is fragile, just a set of agreements and choices made moment by moment, mind by mind. When those minds cannot distinguish between good and bad evidence for a claim, pseudoscience and anti-science rise. The principles of scientific inquiry can be grasped by a kindergartner but must be continuously reinforced. [Anti-Science and the Assault on Democracy](#) helps to instill

these principles. – Cameron M. Smith, PhD, Department of Anthropology, Portland State University
As scientific institutions find themselves operating in increasingly difficult environments, questions about science and politics, and science and democracy in particular, keep coming to the fore. The essays in [Anti-Science and the Assault on Democracy](#) confront these questions directly, in full understanding of their importance for our civilization. The contributors do not represent any single perspective, but this makes the collection even more vital for anyone who wants to explore the current debate. – Taner Edis, professor of physics, Truman State University
[Anti-Science and the Assault on Democracy](#) passionately proclaims that the only hope for democracy is a rebirth of the scientific attitude among citizens, for how else can people make the right decisions other than by knowing the truths about the world? Anti-science, coming from the

*political right and from the left, is nothing new, but it must be continually opposed; the struggle is never over. This book's contributors come from diverse disciplines and cover everything from the theoretical foundation of science and freedom to the most current crises. – Stanley A. Rice, Professor, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, author of *Scientifically Thinking: How to Liberate Your Mind, Solve the World's Problems, and Embrace the Beauty of Science**

Beyond critiquing attitudes hostile to science, the essays in [Anti-Science and the Assault on Democracy](#) put forward a positive vision for how we might better articulate the relation between science and democracy and the benefits that accrue from cultivating this relationship. <>

Religion & Spirituality / Christianity

[Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World](#), 3rd edition by John MacArthur (Crossway)

Everywhere there is apathy. Nobody cares whether that which is preached is true or false. A sermon is a sermon whatever the subject. – Charles Spurgeon

In the late 1800s, Charles Spurgeon warned that the church was drifting away from the purity of the gospel, candy-coating God's Word rather than proclaiming the truths of Scripture. Over one hundred years later, John MacArthur, troubled by the seeker-sensitive movement and an emphasis on pragmatism within the church, sounds the same alarm in [Ashamed of the Gospel](#), 3rd edition.

MacArthur is the pastor-teacher of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California, where he has served since 1969. MacArthur serves as the chancellor of the Master's University and president of the Master's Seminary.

Issuing a warning against preaching and teaching a shallow gospel that neither offends nor convicts anyone, MacArthur calls readers to a firm and humble reliance on the power and sovereignty of God for salvation and to resist compromising the proclamation of God's Word.

In the preface to the 2nd edition, MacArthur says that sometime in the summer of 2007, he picked up a copy of [Ashamed of the Gospel](#) (1st edition) for the first time in fourteen years and started thumbing through it. Before he put the book down again, he had devoured eight chapters. He says he was pleased and amazed to see the enduring relevance of the book – especially since he has written it to critique the notion that relevance is achieved by dragging the church from

fad to fad in a vain effort to stay abreast of the times.

He says his passion for the message of [Ashamed of the Gospel](#) has not diminished since he first proposed the idea to the publisher, but he was nevertheless surprised and encouraged to see how much of what he wrote in 1993 is expressed exactly as he would want to say it today. Only rarely does he re-read his own books, he says, especially those that were first published more than a decade ago. In this case, 'more than a decade ago' was a different century! The world of 1993 was another time in many significant ways. That was a unique year, strikingly different from the rest of the twentieth century – but also nothing at all like the Internet era, which was just about to begin.

MacArthur describes many developments and says they were already discernible in the early 1990s, and that is precisely what prompted him to write [Ashamed of the Gospel](#) in the first place. Evangelicalism's growing superficiality, a spiraling loss of confidence in the power of Scripture, the relentless pursuit of worldly fads, and a steady drift away from historic evangelical convictions were already widespread and serious problems in the '90s. Those trends were driven by evangelicals' obsession with pleasing the world. It was obvious that the market-driven approach to evangelism and church growth was headed for disaster.

The discovery of postmodernism by Gen-Xers in seeker-sensitive youth groups culminated in precisely the kind of disaster [Ashamed of the Gospel](#) foretold. It was a recipe for the perfect apostasy: thousands of young people had been indoctrinated with pragmatism as a way of life, raised with the idea that worship must be tailored to please 'Unchurched Harry' in order to be relevant, and taught to regard truth as unattainable. Now they were embracing all those errors at once and attempting to blend them all into A New Kind of Christianity.

Emerging mainly from the shallow end of the evangelical movement, the new post-evangelical subculture lacked any solid doctrinal moorings. That goes for truths as basic as the doctrine of the Trinity, as important as the authority of Scripture, and as precious as the doctrine of substitutionary atonement.

Predictably, the Emerging movement fragmented within its first decade. A handful of early participants who were theological conservatives recognized the dangers of such neo-liberal theology and eventually repudiated the movement completely. Several of the moderates in the original Emerging network still seem to be trying to work out where to go from here.

All those developments have followed the same pattern of doctrinal and spiritual erosion that Charles Spurgeon described more than a hundred years ago and labeled 'the Down-Grade.' It is the same broad path to destruction

MacArthur warned about in [Ashamed of the Gospel's 1st edition](#). The church still needs to hear and heed the same plea.

MacArthur says he has altered as little as possible of the original work, cleaning up a sentence here and there. He has left as many of the anecdotes, illustrations, and citations intact as possible, even though some of them might seem somewhat dated. All of them could easily have been replaced and perhaps amplified with more recent examples, but one of the main reasons for reissuing [Ashamed of the Gospel](#) was to underscore the fact that its message is not out of date. There's a clear line of philosophical continuity that ties the modernists of Spurgeon's era to the champions of seeker-sensitivity in the twentieth century and the scions of postmodernity in the current generation.

MacArthur has let what he originally wrote speak for itself, commenting via the footnotes when he wants to expand on a point or explain something in more detail than he did the first time around. He has also added two new chapters (11 and 12) and an additional appendix consisting of material quoted from Spurgeon's sermons and writings. In the original edition, Chapter 10 was titled "Epilogue." He has changed that to "Interlude" because the chapter now ties the content of the original book to the new chapters. The new appendix seemed to fit best between the first and second appendixes of the first edition, so he put it there and renumbered the remaining appendixes. <>

Religion & Spirituality / Christianity / Reference

[The Handy Christianity Answer Book](#) by Stephen A. Werner Ph.D. (**The Handy Answer Book Series**: Visible Ink Press)

Christianity is the world's biggest religion, with two billion followers covering nearly one third of the world's population. Christianity begins with the life and teachings of Jesus. Over the past two thousand years, Christianity has spread throughout the world to become the religious faith giving meaning to the lives of countless people. Christianity has also had enormous influence on global culture. It has a profound impact on the modern world, but what does it mean to be a Christian?

[The Handy Christianity Answer Book](#) provides detailed descriptions of the teachings of Jesus, Christian beliefs about Jesus, explications of ceremonies, symbols, rituals, observations, customs, leaders, and organization of the world's largest religion. This is an important reference that answers nearly 900 questions and offers fun facts that cover Christian history, religious practices, and cultural perspectives.

Author Stephen A. Werner, Ph.D. received his doctorate in Historical Study of Christian Theology from Saint Louis University. He has nearly 30 years of experience teaching courses in Christian History; Early, Medieval, Reformation and Modern Christianity; the New Testament; Essence of Christianity; and American Religion at several universities in the St. Louis area, including at the

Department of Theological Studies at Saint Louis University and the Religious Studies Department at Webster University.

[The Handy Christianity Answer Book](#)

takes an accessible, enlightening and informative look at one of the world's most important religions. Among the questions answered are:

- Why are there so many different kinds of Christians?
- What were the last words spoken by Jesus?
- What did Jesus say about loving one's enemies?
- Did Jesus have brothers?
- What is the Nicene Creed?
- Is Heaven up and Hell down?
- What is the earliest major film about Jesus?
- What does it mean to follow the gospel?
- What are the differences – and similarities – between Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Protestantism?
- What are the five major divisions of Christianity?
- What is the Devil?
- What were the Crusades?
- What are the requirements to get to Heaven?
- Who was Joan of Arc?
- Why is Martin Luther so important?
- Why was the artist Michelangelo important to Christians?
- Why do most churches have organs?
- What is the Salvation Army?
- What are the miracles of Jesus?
- What are the names of the Twelve Apostles?
- What was the Inquisition?

- Why is Martin Luther so important?
- What is Mardi Gras?

The teachings of Jesus, the people in his life, the important events in his life, the Bible, Christian celebrations and ceremonies, Angels and Demons, the earliest history, through to the present, Christian art, music, and movies are all covered. Delving into the richness of Christian traditions, this convenient primer illuminates the meaning, development, and history of symbols, rituals, observations, customs, worship, sacraments, and prayer. It looks at important leaders and the organization of the religion. It explains how different Christians think as well as the historical schisms and divisions among different denominations.

[The Handy Christianity Answer Book](#) explores the beliefs, practices, and influence of Christianity. It is written both for Christians who want a deeper understanding of their own tradition and for non-Christians and nonbelievers who want to understand the influence of Jesus, the history of Christianity, and all the diverse expressions of Christianity in the modern world.

Christianity is very diverse. If readers are believing and practicing Christians, they may discover practices and beliefs that are different from their own. **[The Handy Christianity Answer Book](#)** advises readers to keep an open mind and understand that, from the beginning, different ways to live out the Christian message have existed. **[The Handy Christianity Answer Book](#)** will give them an understanding of how different Christians think and the

richness of the Christian tradition. On many points they may be reaffirmed in their understanding of their beliefs. On other points they may see things in a different way.

The first chapters explore Jesus: what we know about Jesus, what happened during his life, his teachings, other people in his story, Christian beliefs about Jesus, and the Bible. A detailed overview of Christian history follows. If readers have never learned about Christian history, they may discover it to be fascinating. Knowing Christian history helps people understand the shape of modern Christianity and the origins of various Christian denominations. **[The Handy Christianity Answer Book](#)** then goes on to investigate how Christians live out their faith today. Since the Catholic Church is the largest denomination, it is described in detail. Finally, the book explores the influence of Christianity on culture in the arts of painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and film. The book also includes a helpful bibliography, timeline of important events, and an extensive index, adding to its usefulness.

This book is written in a clear and straightforward style. Illustrating the rich tradition and enormous influence of one of the world's great religions, **[The Handy Christianity Answer Book](#)** is perfect for browsing, a convenient place to go to look up basic facts, and an ideal resource for anyone interested in gaining a better understanding of Christianity. <>

[Welcome to the Table: Post-Christian Culture Saves a Seat for Ancient Liturgy](#)

by Tony Kriz, with a foreword by Bishop Todd Hunter (Wipf & Stock Publishers)

The culture in North America is shifting out from under the Christian church. [Welcome to the Table](#) demonstrates how this shift is calling for change in the church and the art of Jesus proclamation. On the one hand, the church is losing its place of influence within greater society, but on the other hand, this post-Christian citizenry are more open (less anxious) when faced with many Christian expressions.

Author Tony Kriz is a teacher of faith and culture. He pastors an imbedded community of life-servants in one of Portland's most culturally diverse neighborhoods.

One particular hope for the church, according to Kriz, as it discovers a new life within post-Christendom, can found in historically grounded, liturgical worship. [Welcome to the Table](#) was written by a churchman who is also a citizen of post-Christian culture.

[Welcome to the Table](#) addresses the following question: What hope does Eucharistic liturgy bring to the future of church planting within the increasingly post-Christian urban centers of the Pacific Northwest and beyond?

According to Kriz's research of a sample zip code of inner-city Portland, only one in four people self-identify with

Christianity and fewer than one in five attend church. Churches are shrinking rapidly and closing their doors. Our culture is increasingly defined as post-Christian. The plans of the recent church-planting efforts are losing ground. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, but there is significant evidence that the Anglican Eucharistic liturgy speaks today in certain places where other strategies have not.

Section 1 describes the cultural reality of the Pacific Northwest in greater detail and includes the specifics of the unique and localized research (which shows the spiritual state in shocking detail). Within this context [Welcome to the Table](#) also explores the Anglican Eucharist as it foreshadows the conclusions to come.

Sections 2 and 3 lay the global-historical continuity of liturgical worship and forms. By the leading of God, the people of Jehovah have voted again and again across generations and cultures – throughout biblical times (section 2) and church history (section 3) – and have concluded that liturgy is meaningful and transcendent.

Section 4 defines the essential dance of contextualization. As the church continues to serve and love into post-Christian culture, it must strive to keep the forms and passions of consistent church history while incarnating the unique and particular voice of each localized context. Out of this, section 5 provides a critique of existing church-planting methods.

Section 6 contains Kriz's primary

conclusions. It considers the structural viability of birthing liturgical communities in post-Christian localities throughout North America, including a discussion of the Eucharistic liturgy in light of a post-Christian encounter with truth, experience of community, and spirituality. Section 7 further applies the liturgy within this new context.

[Welcome to the Table](#) was originally completed as the culmination document of a Doctor of Ministry degree in spiritual formation from George Fox University. It was received with enthusiasm and awarded distinction from both the faculty and his academic advisors, most specifically The Right Reverend Dr. Todd Hunter (bishop in the Anglican Mission) and Rev. Canon George Hemingway (Episcopal priest, retired).

Originally [Welcome to the Table](#) was not composed with an eye toward publication, at least not in this form, but since its completion there has been demand for its content far beyond Kriz's hopes or expectations.

*The world has changed.
You feel it in pluralistic
approaches concerning
all things divine, polarizing
political opinions, and
pervasive mistrust for
anything institutional. No
longer have evangelical
Christianity's modern maps
provided the post-
Christian culture a reliable
direction to experience*

*faith, hope, and love. Tony Kriz provides a compass pointing 'true north' that honors the apostolic tradition of the early church and yet speaks the language of this emerging culture. – Tony Baron, author of *The Cross and the Towel* and *The Art of Servant Leadership**

*Tony Kriz has thought deeply about the intersection of secular urban culture and liturgical spirituality. More than just thinking, he lives it better than anyone I know. Based on a couple decades of experience in several cities of the world, and using Anglican Eucharistic worship as his grid, in [Welcome to the Table](#) Tony makes a genuinely unique contribution to the current, popular literature on urban ministry! —Todd Hunter, author of *Giving Church Another Chance**

In this compelling book, Tony Kriz issues an impassioned plea to do more than engage in liturgical worship. He invites us into liturgical life – a life enriched by the symbiotic parities of mystery and meaning, formality and

freedom, structure and spontaneity, antiquity and emergence, stasis and service, collectivism and individuality, solemnity and jubilation. Kriz offers a way for the church to be the church to a generation of people that has abandoned ecclesial cultures of the recent past but still hungers for the Bread of Life. – Charles J. Conniry Jr., author of *Soaring in the Spirit: Rediscovering Mystery in the Christian Life*

Tony Kriz engages the missional realities of North American, urban, post-modern culture with a frankness and vigor fed by real data about real people and by a love for the ancient rites and principles of worship preserved in Anglican liturgy. – George Hemingway, Priest-in-Residence, St. Catherine of Alexandria Episcopal Church

I am a pastor at a liturgical church. I am often asked by people of all sorts, 'why liturgy? What does it matter'? This current and insightful work of Tony Kriz examines the compelling nature of ancient liturgy,

the beauty that draws our culture and the proclamation of the Gospel that happens through worship in the Anglican tradition. Tony offers a true churchman's understanding of God's work through the sacraments and how he can woo a post-Christian culture with the song of liturgy. I recommend this book wholeheartedly to the curious, and especially to the hungry. – Trish Nelson, Christ Church Anglican, Overland Park, Kansas

[Welcome to the Table](#) provides a thoughtful discussion of the place of liturgical worship within the culture shift, addressing it thematically and providing specific and practical suggestions for the administration of ancient forms. <>

Religion & Spirituality / Hinduism

[The Hindu Religious Tradition](#), 1st edition by Thomas J. Hopkins, with series editor Frederick J. Streng (**The Religious Life of Man Series**: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning)

Series editor Frederick J. Streng says that **The Religious Life of Man** series is an introduction to a large, complex field of inquiry – man's religious experience. It presents the depth and richness of religious concepts, forms of worship, spiritual practices, and social institutions

found in the major religious traditions throughout the world.

As a specialist in the language and culture in which a religion is found, each author illuminates the meanings of a religious perspective and practice as other human beings have experienced it. To communicate this meaning to readers who have had no special training in these cultures and religions, the authors provide clear, nontechnical descriptions and interpretations of religious life.

The Religious Life of Man is concerned with, on the one hand, the variety of religious expressions found in different traditions and, on the other, the similarities in the structures of religious life. The forms are interpreted in terms of their cultural context and historical continuity, demonstrating both the diverse expressions and commonalities of religious traditions. Besides the single volumes on different religions, the series offers a core book on the study of religious meaning, which describes different study approaches and examines several modes and structures of religious awareness. In addition, each book presents a list of materials for further reading, including translations of religious texts and detailed examinations of specific topics.

In the introduction to [The Hindu Religious Tradition](#), author Thomas J. Hopkins, who is at Franklin & Marshall College, elucidates the case for Hinduism.

If readers were to stand by a street in an Indian city, he says, and watch the endless variety of people who pass: men in slacks and sport shirts or Western suits; men in loosely wrapped *dhotis* with a cloth draped over bare shoulders; women in saris, some of rough peasant cloth and some silk, in constantly changing colors and styles; a few boys, some in blue jeans, with a Beatles record; a holy man in loincloth and sandals and long tangled hair; a Sikh, with turban and beard; a group coming from a nearby temple, with flowers in hand and fresh spots of red powder on their foreheads; priests from the Ramakrishna Mission in long saffron robes; a funeral party, led by drummers, carrying a corpse on a palanquin; a beggar. If they were to go to another city nearby, the pattern is the same, but subtly different. Go to another part of the country and the variety is still there but the styles and types of people have changed; what readers are learning to identify is no longer seen, and there is much that is new and never seen before.

This is the horizontal pattern: city differs from city, region from region, east from west, north from south. If readers take one region or group and trace it back in time, the complexity is no less. Centuries or millennia of changing customs and rituals, accumulation of myths and legends, stories and scriptures, new rulers and new people, new contacts and new alliances, new conflicts.

If readers know a family, there are more questions. The mother, a widow, is a

devout worshiper of Siva; her sister-in-law, equally devout, follows the teachings of Ramakrishna; the eldest son is an engineer trained in England, a worshiper of Siva but not as knowledgeable or dedicated – at least not yet – as his mother and younger brother; his wife's father worships Krishna, as does all her family.

The family priest or *purohit* is learned and conservative; he is prepared to converse in Sanskrit, but not English. He conducts regular services in the family worship room and advises the family on the time for special rituals; he also draws up horoscopes and serves as the family astrologer. The *purohit* of their relatives is younger and more liberal, though no less learned; he conducts morning worship services for the family before he goes to his full-time job in a business office.

The family worships Siva in the home; they go to a temple of the Goddess Camunda or Durga for special occasions; they visit a temple and teaching center dedicated to Vishnu; they sing devotional songs to Krishna. There are ties to all these, family traditions that connect them and personal preferences that make each family member unique. Another family would have a different pattern; a third would have yet another.

How can readers sort out all these patterns – family, regional, historical – and come to a simple understanding of the whole? The answer quite simply is: they cannot. No one can, or has, or

perhaps ever will. The patterns keep shifting; and, as readers understand more, they have more questions. [The Hindu Religious Tradition](#) is a guide to better understanding and, doubtless, also to more questions. The approach, as far as possible, is historical and chronological; this seems the minimum requirement to sort out the strands of accumulating tradition. It is also selective, since scholars, too, have their personal preferences. The subject is the thoughts, values, and practices of roughly one fifth of the world's population: where they came from, how they developed, what they are now, and where perhaps they are heading.

The Hindu tradition has never ceased to grow and develop new forms to meet new circumstances. This is as true in the modern period as it was in the past, though it is harder to see clearly the directions of growth or the shape of the emerging forms. Some patterns and developments are established, others are as yet tentative; the lines of development the book traces are even more complex than before. The tradition is nonetheless alive not only in India but, increasingly in recent years, beyond India in Europe and America.

An outline of the chapters in [The Hindu Religious Tradition](#) includes:

1. The Aryans and Early Indian Culture
2. The Creative Power of the Sacrifice
3. The Upanishads
4. Challenges and Change

5. The New Brahmanical Synthesis
6. The Religion of the Epics and Puranas
7. Late Puranic Religion: The Full Tradition
8. The Continuing Tradition
Outline of the Development of Vedic Writings

A Schematic Diagram of the Hindu Religious Tradition

Readers will find [The Hindu Religious Tradition](#), like all the volumes in the series, 'introductory' in the most significant sense: an introduction to a new perspective for understanding themselves and others. <>

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