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We Review the
Best of the Latest
Books

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Arts & Photography / Crafts / Guides

[Beauty of Cannabis: 200 Strains of Marijuana, A Visual Guide](#) by Spurs Broken (Amherst Media, Inc.)

[Beauty of Cannabis](#) is my way of sharing the beauty of cannabis, both visually and spiritually. My hope is to create greater understanding of this incredible, miraculous plant, with all its healing properties – a true gift to us all. Not only beautiful to look at, it is full of color in its core that the naked eye cannot see. It is ultimately my intention to share all that beauty with you, take you where you may not have thought to look: from the blooming flower to the flame. – from the book

Welcome to the world of 'craft cannabis.'

[Beauty of Cannabis](#) is a visual journey into the marijuana strains being grown in the 21st century. Award-winning photographer Spurs Broken takes readers as deep as the lens will allow by directing light into the valleys between the leaves and through fissures full of crystal trichomes to reveal the strands, strings, and balls of earthly delight.

Author Robert R. Sanders (a.k.a. Spurs Broken), a commercial photographer, is a pioneer in the industry's journey from analog to digital. He has mentored thousands of aspiring artists through his photographic lighting workshops, lectures, and as an adjunct professor at the Academy of Art University–San Francisco.

In **[Beauty of Cannabis](#)**, Sanders introduces readers to over 200 strains of craft cannabis, exploring the botany that makes each plant unique, as well as its notable effects.

With this book, photographers learn to direct light inside each bud so it can reflect off the crystals to reveal beautiful colors and discover the rewards of alternating the depth of field by a few microns to find the deep-orange pistils and the saturated brilliance that manifests from the contrast when a shot is done just right.

In **[Beauty of Cannabis](#)** readers see:

- The marijuana strains being grown today.
- The heritage of craft cannabis strains from a variety of top-notch growers.
- The physical and psychological effects produced by the THC and CBD in various plants.
- Information and images about sativa and indica – as well as hybrids.
- Detailed macro images that will excite growers, smokers, and photographers.

According to Sanders, craft-level grow is something special, a platform of quality that is cleared of all things negative. The

grower at this level has developed an intense connection with the genetics of each plant, as well as with the plants themselves. They become what they grow, and it becomes them: their time, their skill, their compassion, care, and most of all, heart.

[Beauty of Cannabis](#) represents dozens of craft cannabis growers in Oregon, many of whom Sanders has never met. Of those he has met, three stand out above the rest. They're humble in their genius, yielding spiritually to the ways of nature. Spooky Gardens, Liberty Gardens, and Novik Industries are iconic in Oregon, and Sanders says he is truly been blessed to have walked their gardens and photographed their flowers. In these 200+ photographs, readers will see some of their work making his work easier and fun to shoot.

I love Spurs Broken artwork so much that I use it in my published works. Got to love the way he sees and interprets cannabis. – Jorge Cervantes, Author, Photographer.
Spurs Broken is at the top of my list as a premium photographer of cannabis, not only because of his vision, but also for his activism on the part of all medical cannabis patients before it was a 'thing to do.' His macro-photography evokes images of the inner space of the flower and to

the outer space of shiny resin stars against a cloudless dark night sky. – Ophelia Chong, Founder & Owner, Stock Pot Images

Readers take a close-up look at the myriad benefits of marijuana, losing themselves in beauty of 200 strains of the cannabis plant. 'Cannasseurs' will delight in detailed, macro images of favorite and lesser-known varieties in [Beauty of Cannabis](#). Cannabis connoisseurs will delight in intimate views, as Spurs' signature style of macro-photography reveals the makeup of each plant's personality and characteristics of the individual strains in all their glory. <>

Children's Books / Animals / Science / Evolution / Grade Level: 6-12 / Reading Level: Grade 8

[The Evolution of Birds, Library Binding](#) by Carol Hand (**Animal Evolution Series: Essential Library**, ABDO Publishing)

[The Evolution of Birds](#) explores what we know about bird evolution, from theories of the past to recent breakthroughs in research. This title also looks at the science behind the research, from studying fossils to analyzing DNA. The book features full-color photographs and full-color illustrations. Other features include: author/illustrator biography, glossary of key words, index, informative sidebars, sources for further research, table of contents, and timeline of key events. The book is aligned to Common

Core Standards and correlated to state standards.

The author, Carol Hand, a zoologist, is a freelance science writer. The content consultant is Frederick E. Wasserman, an associate professor of biology at Boston University. The editor is Marie Pearson and the series designer is Becky Daum.

[The Evolution of Birds](#) is part of the **Animal Evolution** series. From tiny fleas to gigantic whales, the world supports an incredibly diverse array of animals. These species' unique aspects – like birds' lightweight wings or frogs' webbed feet – help them thrive in their surroundings. But impressive adaptations like these aren't static. Rather, they grow and change dramatically over time. In mammals, two bones in the jaw slowly migrated, eventually becoming part of the middle ear. Other animal groups have undergone even bigger transformations. To take a deeper look at these variations, and to learn how and why scientists think they developed, readers can dive into the **Animal Evolution** series.

Books in the **Animal Evolution** series of reinforced, library-bound hardcovers include:

1. **The Evolution of Amphibians**
2. [The Evolution of Birds](#)
3. **The Evolution of Fish**
4. **The Evolution of Insects**
5. **The Evolution of Mammals**
6. **The Evolution of Reptiles** <>

Children's Books / Computers & Technology / Grade Level: 6-12 / Reading Level: Grade 8

[Facebook, Library Binding](#) by Gail Radley (**Tech Titans Series**: Essential Library, ABDO Publishing)

[Facebook](#) explores how founder Mark Zuckerberg grew his social networking site from a small service only available on a single college campus to the world's largest social network. Features include: author/illustrator biography, glossary of key words, index, infographics, informative sidebars, sources for further research, table of contents, and timeline of key events. The book is aligned to Common Core Standards and correlated to state standards.

The author, Gail Radley, teaches English part time at Statson University in DeLand, Florida. The content consultant is Dr. Sherali Zeadally, Associate Professor, College of Communication and Information, University of Kentucky. The editor is Arnold Ringstad and the series designer is Laura Polzin.

[Facebook](#) is part of the **Tech Titans** series. Today's top technology companies play an increasingly central role in our lives. People habitually use Apple or Samsung smartphones to monitor social networks such as Twitter and Facebook. Amazon and Netflix are disrupting the shopping and television industries. Google dominates online search and advertising, and Microsoft's software runs on the vast majority of the world's personal computers. In the **Tech Titans** series, young readers delve into the history of these companies, get to know the products and people

associated with them, and consider the ways they are changing our world.

Books in the **Tech Titans** set of reinforced, library-bound hardcovers include:

- **Amazon**
- **Microsoft**
- **Apple**
- **Netflix**
- **[Facebook](#)**
- **Samsung**
- **Google**
- **Twitter <>**

Children's Books / Fiction / Age Range: 6-8 / Grade Level: 1-3 / Reading Level: Grade 2

[Pop of the Bumpy Mummy](#): #6, Library Binding by author/illustrator Troy Cummings (**The Notebook of Doom Series**: Scholastic, Spotlight, ABDO Publishing)

In **[Pop of the Bumpy Mummy](#)** Alexander's school field trip sleeping over at the Stermont science museum begins to unravel when he thinks he sees the mummy they've been reading about in class walking around. The Bumpy Mummy is walking the halls! Then Alexander finds out the famous Ruby Scorpion has been stolen, and he hears strange popping noises. His friends Rip and Nikki think he must be seeing (and hearing) things. But as a member of the S.S.M.P., Alexander knows ANYTHING is possible in Stermont. The book is aligned to Common Core Standards and correlated to state standards.

Author/illustrator Troy Cummings has written/illustrated a truckload of books.

These chapter books in the **Notebook of Doom** series feature action and adventure.

The books in the **Notebook of Doom** series of reinforced, library-bound hardcovers include:

1. **Rise of the Balloon Goons**
2. **Day of the Night Crawlers**
3. **Attach of the Shadow Smashers**
4. **Chomp of the Meat-Eating Vegetables**
5. **Whack of the P-Rex**
6. **[Pop of the Bumpy Mummy](#)**
7. **Flurry of the Snombies**
8. **Charge of the Lightning Bugs**
9. **Rumble of the Coaster Ghost**
10. **Snap of the Super-Goop**
11. **Sneeze of the Octo-Schnozz**
12. **March of the Vanderponts <>**

Children's Books / Fiction / Age Range: 6-9 / Grade Level: 1-4 / Reading Level: Grade 4

[A Tale of Two Sisters](#), Library Binding by Debbie Dadey, illustrated by Tatevik Avakyan (**Mermaid Tales, Book 10**: Aladdin, Spotlight, ABDO Publishing)

With the **Mermaid Tales** series, young readers join Shelly Siren, Echo, and other merkids of Trident City on their aquatic adventures as they navigate their friendships and explore life 20,000 leagues under the sea.

Echo Reef is tail-flipping with excitement when she finds a shiny, sparkling human object near her shell. Not only is Echo obsessed with people, but she finally has something she doesn't have to share with her bossy big sister, Crystal. So when Crystal takes Echo's precious human

object, claiming that she found it first, Echo is one mad mermaid.

In [A Tale of Two Sisters](#), their mother takes the object away and says she will return it when the girls learn to get along. How far is Echo willing to go to get her precious human object back in [A Tale of Two Sisters](#)? And can the sisters put aside their squabbles and learn to be friends?

The book is aligned to Common Core Standards and correlated to state standards.

Features include: author/illustrator biography, detailed maps, glossary of key words, and table of contents. Author Debbie Dadey taught first grade before becoming a librarian. It was while teaching that she first realized how much she wanted to write a book for reluctant readers.

Mermaid Tales Set 1 is a set of 8 reinforced, library-bound hardcover books including:

1. ***Trouble at Trident Academy***
2. ***Battle of the Best Friends***
3. ***A Whale of a Tale***
4. ***Danger in the Deep Blue Sea***
5. ***The Lost Princess***
6. ***The Secret Sea Horse***
7. ***Dream of the Blue Turtle***
8. ***Treasure in Trident City***

Mermaid Tales Set 2 is a set of 6 reinforced, library-bound hardcover books including:

9. ***A Royal Tea***
10. **[A Tale of Two Sisters](#)**
11. ***The Polar Bear Express***
12. ***Wish upon a Starfish***

13. ***The Crook and the Crown***

14. ***Twist and Shout*** <>

Children's Books / History / Age Range: 8-11 / Grade Level: 3-6 / Reading Level: Grade 4

[Ruby Bridges and the Desegregation of American Schools](#), Library Binding by Duchess Harris, with Tom Head
(**Freedom's Promise Series**: Core Library, ABDO Publishing)

In 1960, six-year-old Ruby Bridges walked into William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans, Louisiana. She became the first black student to attend the previously all-white school. This event paved the way for widespread school desegregation in the South. **[Ruby Bridges and the Desegregation of American Schools](#)** explores Bridges's legacy. **[Ruby Bridges and the Desegregation of American Schools](#)** features full-color photographs and historical photographs. The book is aligned to Common Core Standards and correlated to state standards. Core Library features:

- A wide variety of high-interest topics.
- Well-researched, clearly written informational text.
- Primary sources with accompanying questions.
- Multiple prompts and activities for writing, reading, and critical thinking.
- Charts, graphs, diagrams, timelines, and maps.

Author Duchess Harris is the chair of the American Studies department at Macalester College and curator of the Duchess Harris Collection of ABDO books. Tom Head is a writer. The editor is Maddie Spalding and the series designer is Claire Vanden Branden.

[Ruby Bridges and the Desegregation of American Schools](#) is a part of the **Freedom's Promise** series. History is shaped by people who work for change. Throughout history, those who have faced discrimination have made significant accomplishments while fighting to secure their rights. Some of these achievements have become well known, while others are more obscure. The books in the **Freedom's Promise** series detail many of these stories and perspectives. Readers discover important events and the people who have influenced society, science, culture, and the arts.

Books in the **Freedom's Promise** set of reinforced, library-bound hardcovers include:

1. ***Barbara Jordan: Politician and Civil Rights Leader***
2. ***Blacks in Paris: African American Culture in Europe***
3. ***Daisy Bates and the Little Rock Nine***
4. ***The Grand Contraband Camp***
5. ***Hidden Heroes: The Human Computers of NASA***
6. ***The Making of Motown***
7. ***The March on Washington and Its Legacy***
8. ***Oney Judge: Escape from Slavery and the President's House***

9. **[Ruby Bridges and the Desegregation of American Schools](#)**
10. ***The Scottsboro Boys***
11. ***The Story of the Black National Anthem***
12. ***Two Bloody Sundays: Civil Rights in America and Ireland***

Core Library is the must have line of nonfiction books for supporting the Common Core State Standards for grades 3-6. <>

Children's Books / Race / Sports / Grade Level: 6-12 / Reading Level: Grade 8

[Fighting Stereotypes in Sports](#), Library Binding by Duchess Harris with Carla Mooney (**Race and Sports Series: Essential Library**, ABDO Publishing)

[Fighting Stereotypes in Sports](#) delves into common stereotypes in sports, especially the sports or positions that are typically played by a certain race. It also examines the effects when the 'norm' is disrupted. The book features full-color photographs and historical photographs. Other features include: author/illustrator biography, glossary of key words, index, informative sidebars, sources for further research, table of contents, and teaching guides. The book is aligned to Common Core Standards and correlated to state standards.

Author Duchess Harris is the chair of the American Studies department at Macalester College and curator of the Duchess Harris Collection of ABDO books. Carla Mooney is a writer of books for young people. The editor is Patrick

Donnelly and the series designer is Craig Hinton.

According to [Fighting Stereotypes in Sports](#), becoming a famous coach or athlete might seem like the epitome of the American dream. No matter one's race or background, enough talent and drive should get them to the big time, right? But the playing field is not really that level. Minorities are often passed over for prestigious coaching positions. Black athletes are described as 'naturally gifted' while white athletes are praised for their hard work. And universities make billions off their sports teams even as players – most of them minorities – collect fleeting benefits. [Fighting Stereotypes in Sports](#) is a part of the **Race and Sports** series. In the **Race and Sports** series, readers examine the systemic biases in sports for themselves and consider what they mean for American society.

Books in the **Race and Sports** set of reinforced, library-bound hardcovers include:

1. [Fighting Stereotypes in Sports](#)
 2. **Gender and Race in Sports**
 3. **Politics and Protest in Sports**
 4. **Race and College Sports**
 5. **Race and Sports Management**
 6. **Race in Sports Media Coverage**
- <>

Cooking, Food & Wine

[Potluck: Food and Drink to Share with Friends and Family](#) by The Editors of *Food & Wine* (Oxmoor House)

One of the easiest and most fun ways to throw a party is to make it a potluck. When guests contribute dishes, it takes the pressure off the host and gives guests a chance to shine – everybody wins.

Readers can reimagine the potluck dinner with the collection of *FOOD & WINE*'s favorite recipes in [Potluck](#). Featuring more than 150 contemporary dishes for readers' next potluck – [Potluck](#) delivers inspired and innovative recipes for the way people cook and entertain today. These elegant recipes, shared by a selection of celebrated chefs including David Lebovitz, Ina Garten, Molly Yeh, Hugh Acheson, Julia Turshen, Carla Hall, and Donald Link or created by the *F&W* Test Kitchen, feature fresh ingredients and bold flavors like Rosemary Chicken with Corn and Sausage Fricassee, Jalapeno-Pickled Shrimp and Vegetables, and Harissa-Spiced Cassoulet. Readers will also find plenty of upgrades to potluck classics and recipes that are gluten-free and vegetarian to help them set an inclusive spread. [Potluck](#) also includes *FOOD & WINE*'s gorgeous photography, make-ahead tips, and potluck party strategies.

These recipes, shared by *F&W*'s favorite chefs or created by the *F&W* Test Kitchen, include recipes like Christmas-Morning Casserole, Mexican Chicken Casserole, Chicken Pot Pie, Hummus and Salad Pizza, and Rye and Crème Fraiche Strata with Smoked Salmon. Readers will also find plenty of upgrades

to potluck classics. (Because who doesn't love a knockout pasta salad?)

The book is organized around Starters, Sides, Mains, Desserts and Drinks. Each dish has been selected for its potluck-friendliness, and is easy to make and easy to transport and serve.

The right bottle of wine can elevate a potluck into a dinner party, so the Editors have invited their wine experts to share their favorite potluck-friendly wine pairings. They have also included some 'big batch' beverages that are perfect when readers are entertaining a crowd.

With more than 150 contemporary recipes, [Potluck](#) is guaranteed to please potluck hosts and guests everywhere.

<>

History / England

[Queen Victoria: Twenty-Four Days That Changed Her Life](#) by Lucy Worsley (St. Martin's Press)

[Queen Victoria](#) is the story of the queen who defied convention and defined an era.

A passionate princess, an astute and clever queen, and a cunning widow, Victoria played many roles throughout her life. In [Queen Victoria](#), Lucy Worsley introduces her as a woman leading a truly extraordinary life in a unique time period. Queen Victoria simultaneously managed to define a socially conservative vision of Victorian womanhood, while also defying its conventions. Beneath her exterior image of traditional daughter, wife, and

widow, she was a strong-willed and masterful politician.

Worsley is a historian, author, and curator who worked for English Heritage before becoming Chief Curator of Historic Royal Palaces. She also presents history programs for the BBC.

Drawing from the vast collection of Victoria's correspondence and the rich documentation of her life, Worsley recreates twenty-four of the most important days in Victoria's life. Each day gives a glimpse into the identity of this powerful, difficult queen and the contradictions that defined her.

In recent years, there have been many attempts in popular culture – for example, the cinema film *Young Victoria*, or the television series *Victoria* – to overturn the funereal image of Victoria. The big and small screens have both shown their audience a less decorous, more passionate young princess who loved dancing. People seem to have ended up with two Victorias, bearing no clear relationship to each other. How did she go from dancing princess to potato?

That's a tale worth telling, but in [Queen Victoria](#) Worsley presents a third Victoria. The little old lady, sullen in expression, gloomy in dress, proved to be a remarkably successful queen, one who invented a new role for the monarchy. She found a way of being a respected sovereign in an age when people were deeply uncomfortable with having a woman on the throne.

Perhaps the Victorians were even less comfortable with women in power than, say, the Tudors, with Elizabeth I, or the Stuarts, with Queen Anne. According to Worsley, Victoria got around this by working out rather a clever way of ruling that we might characterize as stereotypically feminine. She operated by instinct rather than logic, emotion rather than intellect. This turned out to be perfect for an institution like the monarchy. It had lost its cold hard power, but it might – through gesture and spectacle – be able to retain its influence. The accident of her gender turned out to be just what the monarchy needed.

But what did this cost Victoria as a human being? A lot. As well as a queen, she was also a daughter, a wife and a widow, and at each of these steps along life's journey, she had to perform all sorts of troubling mental contortions to conform to what society demanded of a woman. On the face of it, she was deeply socially conservative. The idea of votes for women, for example, disgusted her. But if readers look at her actions rather than her words, she was in fact tearing up the rulebook for how to be female.

Worsley in [Queen Victoria](#) is particularly interested in Victoria's years as a widow. Her early life was so traumatic and dramatic that biographers in the past have tended to concentrate upon it. But historians have more recently begun to swing the other way. Only in maturity did she come out of the shadow of her husband's domineering personality, to

emerge imperious, eccentric and really rather magnificent.

Victoria was a prolific diarist, spilling out millions of words over her lifetime, three or four thousand some evenings.

But the journals can only take readers so far. Worsley also selected important days from her parents' lives, the date of her own birth and days when her children came into her life and she was too busy to pick up a pen. Victoria's journals lay traps for readers, leaving them a blandly smiling account of a day containing a desperate quarrel. Or else her past editors have tripped us up by leaving out details that they in their own times thought unimportant. Her words were important, but her subjects knew her even better in the form of her unmistakable image, firstly through the work of artists and then, as the century wore on, in the form of those ubiquitous, instantly recognizable photographs.

[Queen Victoria](#) tries to conjure up her physical body in words, not from prurience but because so much of the success of her reign lay less in doing than simply in being. The pictures still hold the eye today because there is something so countercultural about them. Why does she not smile? Why does she look so unamused? We forget that 200 years ago, it was surprising to see a female at all.

Worsley has also selected the days when she met people like Florence Nightingale, or the Maharaja Duleep Singh, because of their significance to the age to which Victoria gives her

name. No other monarch's reign has so shaped the world in which readers still live.

Worsley gives us Victoria in all her infinite variety – queen and mother, matriarch and minx. I loved it. – Daisy Goodwin, author of *The American Heiress, The Fortune Hunter and Victoria: A Novel*

A wonderfully fresh, vivid and engaging portrait. – Jane Ridley, author of *Bertie: A Life of Edward VII*
The glory of this book is in the details, and the specific moments, that Worsley chooses to single out for mention, and in her cheerful voice as she leads us by the hand to the next window of Victoria's life calendar. – *The London Times*
An insightful, sympathetic, and vividly written examination of the 'good woman' who ruled England for 64 years.... Worsley's command of the material and elegant writing style make this a must-read for anyone interested in the British monarchy. – *Publisher's Weekly*

[Queen Victoria](#) is an intimate introduction to one of Britain's most

iconic rulers as a wife and widow, mother and matriarch, and above all, a woman of her time. Readers see Victoria up close, examine her face-to-face, as she lived hour-to-hour through twenty-four days of her life. This might help readers imagine meeting her themselves, so that they can form their own opinion on the contradictions at the heart of British history's most recognizable woman. <>

History / Maritime

[Don't Never Tell Nobody Nothin' No How: The Real Story of West Coast Rum Running](#) by Rick James (Harbour Publishing)

At the stroke of one minute past midnight, January 17, 1920, the National Prohibition Act was officially declared in effect in the United States.

From 1920 to 1933 the manufacture, sale, importation and transportation of alcohol and, of course, the imbibing of such products, was illegal. According to [Don't Never Tell Nobody Nothin' No How](#), prohibition was already a bust in Canada and it wasn't long before fleets of vessels, from weather-beaten old fish boats to large ocean-going steamers, began filling their holds with liquor to deliver their much-valued cargo to their thirsty neighbors to the south.

Contrary to popular perception, rum-running along the Pacific coast was usually carried out in a relatively civilized manner, with an oh-so-Canadian politeness on the British Columbian side. Most operated within the law. But there were indeed shootouts, hijackings and

even a particularly gruesome murder associated with the business.

Using accounts of old-time rum-runners, extensive research using primary and secondary documentation, and newspaper coverage, [Don't Never Tell Nobody Nothin' No How](#) explains what really went down along the West Coast during the American 'Noble Experiment.'

Author Rick James provides a detailed account of prohibition and the ruckus it caused on the west coast. James is a writer, maritime historian, photographer and field archaeologist who comes from a long line of smugglers.

[Don't Never Tell Nobody Nothin' No How](#)

is impeccably researched, and James draws on first-hand accounts from old-time rum runners, the often-sensational newspaper coverage of the day, and his expert knowledge of the various vessels that speckled the coast – from beaten-up fishing boats to ocean-going steamers. In addition, he offers astute commentary on the parallels between the prohibition of alcohol and the regulation of recreational drugs such as marijuana.

It's high time that a meticulously researched book on rum running was written and Rick James has skillfully created the definitive work which both entertains and acts as a solid historical reference ... [It is] a delight to read. – John MacFarlane,

director, The Nauticapedia Project

Writer, shipwreck researcher and historian Rick James opens a new chapter in maritime history with this insider's view of the men and ships that spurred BC into a lead role as booze supplier to thirsty prohibition-bound Americans.... fortunes are made and governments topple. A stirring adventure, start to finish. – David Rahn, publisher, Western Mariner: The Magazine of the Coast

Rick James is a master storyteller... He has written a book many thought could never be written. In doing so, he brings a colourful 'wet' bit of maritime history to life. – James P. Delgado, author and former executive director, Vancouver Maritime Museum

In [Don't Never Tell Nobody Nothin' No How](#), James has brought history alive, making it relevant to today. It is a lively volume in which James separates fact from fiction, taking an authoritative look into the West Coast's rum-running past. <>

History / Politics / African American Studies / Nevada / Biographies & Memoirs

[The Westside Slugger: Joe Neal's Lifelong Fight for Social Justice](#) by John L. Smith (**Shepperson Series in Nevada History**: University of Nevada Press)

[The Westside Slugger](#) is the powerful story of civil rights in Las Vegas and Nevada through the eyes and experience of Joe Neal, a history-making state lawmaker in Nevada. Neal rose from humble beginnings in Mound, Louisiana, during the Great Depression to become the first African American to serve in the Nevada State Senate. Author John L. Smith is a freelance writer and journalist who writes an award-winning weekly column for *The Nevada Independent* and offers weekly commentary on National Public Radio station KNPR.

Filled with an intense desire for education, Neal joined the United States Air Force and later graduated from Southern University – studying political science and the law at a time of great upheaval in the racial status quo. As part of a group of courageous men, Neal joined a Department of Justice effort to register the first black voters in Madison Parish.

When Neal moved to southern Nevada in 1963 he found the Silver State to be every bit as discriminatory as his former Louisiana home. As Neal climbed through the political ranks, he used his position in the state senate to speak on behalf of the powerless for more than thirty years. He took on an array of powerful opponents ranging from the Clark County sheriff to the governor of the state, as well as Nevada's political

kingmakers and casino titans. He didn't always succeed – he lost two runs for governor – but he never stopped fighting. His successes included improved rights for convicted felons and greater services for public education, mental health, and the state's libraries. He also played an integral role in improving hotel fire safety in the wake of the deadly MGM Grand fire and preserving the pristine waters of Lake Tahoe, which brought him national attention.

As told in **[The Westside Slugger](#)**, Neal lived a life that personified what is right, just, and fair. Pushing through racial and civil rights hurdles and becoming a lifelong advocate for social justice, his dedication and determination are powerful reminders to always fight the good fight and never stop swinging.

*Smith uses an effective mix of interviews, new reports, and contemporaneous quotes to track Neal's political rise.... Smith's book portrays him as a man well respected even by his opponents for his consistency and convictions. With a daughter following in his political footsteps, Joe Neal's story isn't yet over, and **[The Westside Slugger](#)** does a nice job detailing what's happened so far. – Foreword Reviews*

*In **[The Westside Slugger](#)**, John L. Smith has worked*

assiduously to chronicle the life of a man whose political activism and electoral career left an indelible mark on Nevada history... Political junkies will love to learn how Neal deftly used the Mason's Manual, the legislature parliamentary rules book, against his opponents in floor fights over progressive measures such as the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. Rich in detail, [The Westside Slugger](#) also tells the larger, but rarely recounted, story of the struggle against racial discrimination in Nevada. – James McGrath Morris, New York Times bestselling author of *Eye on the Struggle: Ethel Payne, The First Lady of the Black Press*

Las Vegas has always been blessed with sharp penned journalists, but I'm not sure anyone else can serve up a story of modern Vegas/Nevada politics as fine-grained and readable as this one by native son John Smith... [The Westside Slugger](#) recreates the life of a brave, principled man inhabiting a glittering place in a sordid time. It's a fascinating ride of a book. – Dan Flores, The

New York Times bestselling author and Professor Emeritus, University of Montana

John L. Smith has written an amazingly comprehensive book of the complex life and times of Joe Neal dealing with matters from Mound, Louisiana, to South Africa.
– Claytee D. White, Director, Oral History Research Center at UNLV Libraries, from the foreword

Comprehensive yet readable, [The Westside Slugger](#) richly details Neal's life and his struggles against racial discrimination in Nevada. <>

History / World War II / Biographies & Memoirs

[Death March Escape: The Remarkable Story of a Man Who Twice Escaped the Nazi Holocaust](#) by Jack J Hersch (Frontline Books, Casemate Publishers)

National Socialism and the Shoa, the Holocaust, succeeded in violently destroying communities and their common histories, fragmenting them and scattering their pieces all over the world. Isn't it, therefore, absolutely necessary to collect stories like the one in this book, to gather them and bring

them back together, to link them to each other, and in doing so, make history 'whole' again? – Christian Dürr, Curator, Mauthausen Memorial, Vienna

As told in [Death March Escape](#), in June 1944, the Nazis locked 18-year-old Dave Hersch into a railroad boxcar and shipped him from his hometown of Dej, Hungary, to Mauthausen Concentration Camp, the harshest camp in the Reich. After ten months in the granite mines of Mauthausen's nearby sub-camp, Gusen, he weighed less than 80 lbs. Jack J. Hersch, an expert in the field of distressed companies, a strategic advisor to corporate managements and investment institutions, has served as a corporate board member, and has guest-lectured in the business schools of MIT, USC, and UC Berkeley.

Somehow surviving the relentless horrors of these two brutal camps, as Allied forces drew near Dave was forced to join a death march to Gunskirchen Concentration Camp, over thirty miles away. Soon after the start of the march, and more dead than alive, Dave summoned a burst of energy he did not know he had and escaped. Quickly recaptured, he managed to avoid being killed by the guards. Put on another death march a few days later, he achieved the impossible: he escaped again.

Dave often told his story of survival and escape, and his son, Jack, thought he knew it well. But years after his father's

death, he came across a photograph of his father on the Mauthausen Memorial's website. It was an image he had never seen before – and it propelled him on an intensely personal journey of discovery.

Using only his father's words for guidance, Jack in [Death March Escape](#) takes readers along as he flies to Europe to learn the secrets behind the photograph, secrets his father never told of his time in the camps. Beginning in the verdant hills of his father's Hungarian hometown, readers travel with Jack to the foreboding rock mines of Mauthausen and Gusen concentration camps, to the dust-choked roads and intersections of the death marches, and, finally, to the makeshift hiding places of his father's rescuers. Readers accompany Jack as he describes the unimaginable: what his father must have seen and felt while struggling to survive in the most abominable places on earth.

Hersch effectively uses his father's unusual story to convey the horrors of the Holocaust. – Publishers Weekly

This deeply personal and extremely informative portrait of a man of indomitable will to live, as Hersch emphasizes, reminds us of why we must never forget nor trivialize the full, shocking truth about the Holocaust. – Booklist

In a warm and emotionally engaging story, Jack in [Death March Escape](#) digs deeply into both his father's life and his own, revisiting – and reflecting on – his father's time at the hands of the Nazis during the last year of the Second World War, when more than mere survival was at stake – the fate of humanity itself hung in the balance. <>

History / World War II / Military

[From the Riviera to the Rhine: US Sixth Army Group August 1944–February 1945](#)
by Simon Forty (**WWII Historic Battlefields Series**: Casemate Publishers)

As detailed in [From the Riviera to the Rhine](#), two months after D-Day, just as the battle of Normandy was reaching its climax, with all eyes on the Falaise Pocket, the Allies unleashed the second invasion of France, not in the Pas de Calais but in the French Riviera.

Immaculately planned, effectively undertaken, the Allies quickly broke out of their bridgehead, drove 400 miles into France in three weeks, and liberated 10,000 square miles of French territory while inflicting 143,250 German casualties. On September 10 they linked up with Patton's Third Army and advanced into the Vosges Mountains, taking Strasbourg and holding the area against the Germans' final big attack in the west: Operation Nordwind in January 1945.

Author Simon Forty was educated in Dorset and the north of England before reading history at London University's School of Slavonic and East European Studies. He has been involved in

publishing since the mid-1970s, first as editor and later as author. Son of author and RAC Tank Museum curator George Forty, he has continued in the family tradition writing mainly on historical and military subjects.

US Seventh Army and 6th Army Group, according to [From the Riviera to the Rhine](#), undertook a successful campaign placing a third Allied army group with its own independent supply lines in northeastern France, at a time when the two northern Allied army groups were stretched to the limit. Without this force the Allies would have struggled to hold the frontage to Switzerland and Third Army would have been exposed to attack in its southern flank – something that could have had disastrous repercussions particularly during the Ardennes offensive of December 1944.

The images of palm trees and azure seas obscure observers' view of this campaign. It was no cakewalk. The Germans knew the Allies were coming and had strong defenses in the area. A shortage of landing craft, vehicles, and matériel meant that the US Seventh and French First armies were restricted in the assault. The heavy fog and anti-glider defenses made for a difficult airborne assault, but it was carried out effectively; the amphibious assault was textbook in execution and the drive north covered 500 miles a month. American casualties were 3,000 killed and missing and 4,500 wounded. Besides suffering far heavier casualties, the German armies lost 100,000 POWs, about a third of their total effectives in

the south.

But the story of 6th Army Group wasn't finished. As described in [From the Riviera to the Rhine](#), taking up a position on the east flank of Third Army, it fought its way through the Vosges and withstood the Germans' last throw: Operation Nordwind – the vain attempt to relieve pressure on the Ardennes assault by attacking in the Vosges with the intention of destroying US Seventh and French First armies before attacking Third Army. Heavy fighting pressed hard towards Strasbourg and led Eisenhower to consider withdrawing from the city's defense, but the Allies were ultimately victorious, inflicting severe losses on the Germans.

Beautifully illustrated with 450 black and white and color photographs, [From the Riviera to the Rhine](#) is ideal for military history aficionados and those with an interest in World War II. <>

Home & Garden / Building & Maintenance / Sustainability / DIY / Guides

[Essential Rainwater Harvesting: A Guide to Home-Scale System Design](#) by Rob Avis & Michelle Avis (**Sustainable Building Essentials Series**: New Society Publishers)

Readers can design a rainwater harvesting system for any home in any climate with [Essential Rainwater Harvesting](#).

Water is a crucial resource increasingly under stress. Yet rainfall, even in arid climates, can make up a sizable portion

of any home, acreage, or farm's water requirements if harvested and utilized with care. The key is appropriate planning and high-quality site- and climate-specific design.

[Essential Rainwater Harvesting](#) is a comprehensive manual for designing, building, and maintaining water harvesting systems for the warm and cold climates of the world. Authors Rob Avis and Michelle Avis own and operate Adaptive Habitat, a leading edge property design firm for resilient homes, acreages, and farms and Verge Permaculture, a globally recognized award-winning education business.

Presenting design considerations and approaches for the most common household rainwater supply scenarios – primary, supplemental, and off-grid supply – this step-by-step approach covers:

- Demand planning and conservation strategies.
- Supply calculations and design implications for extreme rainfall and drought.
- System and site assessment.
- Sizing and design of gutters, conveyance, tanks, and pumps.
- Pre-filtration, filtration, and disinfection options.
- Planning for full-property water security.
- Guidance on navigating regulatory requirements.
- Templates for building their own spreadsheet-based calculation tool.
- Site-specific planning and spatial layout.

- Materials and component design and selection.
- System maintenance and upkeep.

Incorporating the latest independent research, [Essential Rainwater Harvesting](#) provides DIYers, trades, and rainwater practitioners with the essential tools, methods, and technical know-how to design, build, and maintain rainwater harvesting systems that produce quality water without necessarily needing end-of-line disinfection or sterilization.

This book is essential for anyone intending to live a healthy sustainable lifestyle. Rob and Michelle Avis are brilliant permaculture designers of the highest caliber worldwide. Their work is always accurate, precise, and detailed, and this book is exactly that. It will probably be in print for the next century. Buy one for yourself and it will be useful for all future generations. – Geoff Lawton, Permaculture consultant, designer and teacher

[Essential Rainwater Harvesting](#) is chock-full of detailed advice for how to design a personalized rainwater harvesting system for a wide variety of purposes. The authors have many years of professional experience to draw on, giving you all you

need to know to accomplish a successful plan. I wish I had this book when I built my first harvesting system. – Kelly Hart, author, Essential Earthbag Construction

You owe it to your family to follow the prescriptions in this book and be prepared for droughts and shortages through rainwater harvesting. You'll learn everything you need to know to make it happen by following 'the Avis method.' – Jerry Yudelson, P.E., author of Dry Run: Preventing the Next Urban Water Crisis

With growing populations, fast-depleting aquifers, and climatic instability, the information in [Essential Rainwater Harvesting](#) will only get more valuable as we move into the future. The science-based approach that Rob and Michelle Avis take should help not only to get your system set up, but also educate policymakers with the most recent research. – Dave Boehnlein, author, Practical Permaculture, and Principal, Terra Phoenix Design

Inspired to save your own rainwater for garden and home? [**Essential Rainwater Harvesting**](#) is bursting with personal, practical, and precise information to get gardeners saving water right now. In this comprehensive look at a complex subject, I discovered that everyone benefits from a little extra water sense, so dive in now and start saving water today. – Donna Balzer, horticulturalist and author, *No Guff Vegetable Gardening*

This book is an essential addition to every homeowner's library. The challenge of designing a safe and reliable rainwater harvesting system for your home is presented in a logical and easy-to-follow way, and makes it easier than ever to take advantage of the benefits of rainwater harvesting for urban and rural sustainability. – Rene Michalak, Governor, Canadian Association for Rainwater Management, Prairie Chapter

A great book... It is well-structured, allowing the reader to pick up and implement the basics, or

delve into the details with complex analysis on feasibility and optimization. This book is unique with all the tools being provided for the calculations and explained clearly, as well as fantastic advice on best location, materials selection, and plumbing connections. Well done Rob and Michelle; this book certainly compliments the Sustainable Building Essentials series. – Rod Wiese, Managing Director & Principal Engineer, Storm Consulting

Rob and Michelle have taken a lot of complex information and created a really down-to-earth, step-by-step guide. This user-friendly handbook helps you understand and define your own water harvesting goals before digging into the specifics of rainwater harvesting systems. I love the examples, explanations, and personal insights that make data collection and use so approachable! – Steven Biggs, Radio Host: *Farm. Food. Garden*

[**Essential Rainwater Harvesting**](#) is a easy-to-follow guide in an easy-to-read

format providing everyone – from the inexperienced to the professional – with the essential know-how to design, build, and maintain rainwater harvesting systems anywhere. <>

Religion & Spirituality / Christianity
[Awesome Glory: Resurrection in Scripture, Liturgy, and Theology](#) by
Jeremy Driscoll OSB (Liturgical Press)

In **[Awesome Glory](#)**, Abbot Jeremy Driscoll OSB offers readers a deep dive into the mystery of the Resurrection of Jesus. Starting from the conviction that the liturgy is meant to be for Christians an immediate and effective contact with the Resurrection, this profound book draws out the riches of each celebration from the Paschal Triduum through Pentecost.

Driscoll is the abbot of Mount Angel Abbey in Saint Benedict, Oregon. He has also served for many years as a professor of theology at Mount Angel Seminary and the Pontifical Athenaeum of Saint Anselm in Rome.

With **[Awesome Glory](#)**, Driscoll focuses particularly on the Scripture texts of Mass, but also on important rituals like the washing of feet, the lucernarium, and the baptism of catechumens.

Driscoll suggests that people are in need of a much clearer focus on the mystery of the Lord's resurrection as the principal content of the Christian message. He comes to a more foundational level of the question, one that explores the deep structure of the entire Christian message with its center in resurrection.

Resurrection is the deep structure and message of each of the four gospels. It is the deep structure of the birth of the church as narrated in the Acts of the Apostles. All of Paul's letters are constructed and move within this same deep structure. Likewise, the liturgy, in all its constitutive parts, echoes the same deep structure represented in all these New Testament texts.

There are many ways to think about the mystery of the resurrection. The Scriptures come especially alive when they are proclaimed in the liturgy, but they also expand from being words proclaimed into becoming sacramental events that totally draw believers up into the mystery of resurrection.

Scriptural words become sacraments, and Christians die and rise with Christ in baptism and live from his glorious risen life in the nourishment of the Eucharist. All this makes it possible and, indeed, imperative that readers live in a new way in the world. The world is meant to be changed radically because of the way Christians live within it their participation in the resurrection. Each of these dimensions suggests both a method and a structure for **[Awesome Glory](#)**.

Part 1 offers a summary of the proclamation of resurrection in theological terms. Driscoll wants in part 1 to pull all the different scriptural ways of speaking about the extraordinary experiences of these chosen witnesses into a single synthetic vision that describes the Christian experience of the resurrection of the crucified Jesus.

Part 1 finishes with a presentation of the birth of the liturgy as a constitutive part of the event of the Paschal Mystery itself. This leads naturally into part 2.

Part 2 of [Awesome Glory](#) considers the witness to cross and resurrection in the liturgy of the church, not in general terms, but in a focused way on the very heart of the liturgical year – namely, the Paschal Triduum with its climax in the Paschal Vigil and the opening of this into the fifty days of Easter until Pentecost. There are separate chapters on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, the Paschal Vigil, Easter day and its Octave, Ascension, and, finally, Pentecost. These liturgies present readers with abundant materials for exploring and deepening readers' understanding of resurrection. From these liturgies – from the Scriptures proclaimed in them and the rituals enacted – the church's rich theological understanding has developed. These liturgies effectively establish readers in communion with the death and resurrection of Jesus in such a way that they can live in the world with the Spirit-filled energy that is given in them. Reflecting on these liturgies will require of readers what could be called a liturgical exegesis; that is, a discussion of passages of Scripture that takes account of their place in the liturgy, in relation to the other passages in that liturgy and in relation to the sacramental realities celebrated there.

A supremely important contribution revealing the depth and breadth of the meaning of the liturgy as a

communal event centered on the paschal victory of Christ. – MSGR. Kevin Irwin, The Catholic University of America

In this extraordinarily rich volume, Jeremy Driscoll shows how we experience the awesome glory of the resurrection in the liturgy of the Paschal Triduum and the Easter season. His insightful liturgical exegesis reveals how the Lectionary proclaims a coherent story of God's saving grace in the crucified and risen Christ. A perfect resource for the Triduum and the Easter season! – Frank J. Matera, Professor Emeritus, The Catholic University of America

Everyone should make a Lenten spiritual reading retreat by turning to this book during the last days of Lent and preparing themselves for the mystery of the Paschal Vigil. Abbot Jeremy becomes theologian, poet, homilist, mystagogue, and spiritual father. – David W. Fagerberg, Professor, University of Notre Dame

Abbot Jeremy takes us on a spiritual journey through the most basic belief that

gives meaning to our Christian identity – the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When read slowly and meditatively, this book is life changing. – Abbot Gregory J. Polan, OSB, Primate of the Benedictine Confederation, Sant Anselmo, Rome

Loaded with new insights and approaches, [Awesome Glory](#), a profound book, will be a welcome resource for homilists, pastors, liturgy directors, catechists, faith formation leaders, scholars, and any Christian adult who wants to better understand, teach, and live the good news of Christ's Resurrection. <>

Religion & Spirituality / Christianity / Politics / Theology

[Political Theologies in Orthodox Christianity: Common Challenges – Divergent Positions](#) edited by Kristina Stoeckl, Ingeborg Gabriel, & Aristotle Papanikolaou (T&T Clark)

[Political Theologies in Orthodox Christianity](#) gathers a wide range of theological perspectives from Orthodox European countries, Russia and the United States in order to demonstrate how divergent the positions are within Orthodox Christianity. Orthodoxy is often considered to be out of sync with contemporary society, set apart in a world of its own where the church intertwines with the state, in order to claim power over the populace and

ignore the individual voices of modern societies.

The editors are Kristina Stoeckl, Ingeborg Gabriel and Aristotle Papanikolaou. Stoeckl is Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Innsbruck. Gabriel is Full Professor in the Institute of Social Ethics, Faculty of Roman-Catholic Theology, at the University of Vienna. Papanikolaou is Professor of Theology at Fordham University. The book has 14 contributors

The contributors present their views and arguments by drawing lessons from the past, and by elaborating visions for how Orthodox Christianity can find its place in the contemporary liberal democratic order, while also drawing on the experience of the Western Churches and denominations. Touching upon aspects such as anarchism, economy and political theology, these contributions examine how Orthodox Christianity reacts to liberal democracy and explore the ways that this branch of religion can be rendered more compatible with political modernity.

This publication adds to the scholarly debate on the place of religion in political modernity at the intersection of the social sciences and theology.

[Political Theologies in Orthodox Christianity](#) gathers a wide range of theological perspectives from Orthodox European countries, Russia and the United States, thereby demonstrating the diversity of Orthodox theological engagement with the political. The chapters provide a window into how

Orthodox Christianity continues to struggle with the modern political order in that they utilize theological arguments that render Orthodoxy either more or less compatible with liberal democracy. By drawing lessons from the past and reflecting on their present, the authors elaborate their own vision for the future of how Orthodox Christianity might find its place in the contemporary pluralistic society.

Political Theologies in Orthodox Christianity consists of five parts. Part I offers a broad contextualization of Orthodox political theologies with regard to sociological theories of modernity, the history of modern Europe, the Catholic experience of secularization and modernization, and the contemporary European legal framework on religious freedom. In Chapter 1, Kristina Stoeckl develops a model of political theologies that locates the specific Orthodox political theologies presented in this book within what she calls 'the challenges of modernity.' Vasilios N. Makrides in Chapter 2 compares Orthodox Christian and Western Christian relations with political power over two millennia of European history, analyzing their different trajectories. Ingeborg Gabriel's chapter begins with an interpretation of a central biblical text from the Gospel of St. John, indicating that from its inception, the Christian community took a differentiated and innovative position vis-à-vis the political and elucidating some normative theological implications of this biblical passage. In Chapter 4, Effie Fokas observes that

European norms for religious freedom represent a challenge to Orthodox Churches, especially in states with majority Orthodox populations. She asks whether this challenge differs qualitatively or quantitatively from that faced by other faith groups and seeks an answer by comparing four majority-Orthodox contexts from data generated in a research project on pluralism and religious freedom.

The next sections of **Political Theologies in Orthodox Christianity** distinguish four ideal types of political theologies: prophetic, ecclesial, civic, and symphonic. Part II offers four views of an Orthodox prophetic political theology, deemed 'anarchic' by two of this book's contributors. Prophetic political theologies focus on small Christian communities that resemble the earliest Christian communities and their practice of an 'ethics of brotherhood' (Max Weber), avoiding entanglement with the inherently violent political powers. In Christianity, this position has always been at the heart of monasticism. In Chapter 5, Athanasios N. Papathanasiou develops an alternative understanding of the political role of Orthodox Christianity as antipolitics. He argues that Christianity's difficulty is accepting Christ's invitation to a radical anti-egoistic and self-sacrificial attitude based on indiscriminate love, one that could have important social and political consequences for the Church as a community becoming a counter-model for corrupted societies. Davor Dialto's chapter explicates a self-consciously

'anarchist' perspective. Dialto asserts that, in the Orthodox world, the concept of symphonia has profoundly shaped the dominant theological and popular view of the 'ideal' sociopolitical, ecclesial whole. In Chapter 7, Brandon Gallaher takes a more analytical approach toward eschatological anarchism. Pantelis Kalaitzidis in Chapter 8, argues the legitimacy of a public role for the Church in the secular, pluralistic societies of late modernity, finally applying the described theological presuppositions for an Orthodox political engagement to the particular case of the current acute economic crisis in Greece.

Part III of [Political Theologies in Orthodox Christianity](#) is dedicated to Orthodox ecclesial political theology, a model that sees the Church as a Eucharistic community and thus as the only community where true humanity can be realized in the imitation of Jesus Christ, which the faithful are then to emanate into society as a whole. Andrey Shishkov in Chapter 9 focuses on Eucharistic ecclesiology and its impact on the way religious groups conceive of themselves as political actors. In Chapter 10, Alexander Kyrlezhev reflects on the experience of religion-state relations in the post-Soviet space and elaborates the difficulties the Russian Orthodox Church faces to find a theologically adequate approach to secular politics and a secularized society. Bogdan Lubardic's chapter offers a critical overview of the relationship between theology and the political in the work of

Justin Popovic, a major churchman, intellectual, and saint of the Serbian Orthodox Church. His approach to the political is a preeminently Christological hermeneutic of the lifeworld of the political, set in a polemical style.

All three chapters in Part III of [Political Theologies in Orthodox Christianity](#) are relevant for understanding the difficult relationship between the West and Russian or Serbian Orthodoxy. They represent a counterpoint to the previous articles, which, albeit church-centered, take a prophetic rather than an ecclesial approach.

Part IV offers three treatments of Orthodox civic political theology, which considers Orthodoxy a force of civil society. In Chapter 12, Aristotle Papanikolaou interrogates the very category of 'the public' and examines whether 'public ecclesiology' depends on where the Church is located. Konstantin Delikostantis argues in Chapter 13 that Orthodox Churches, facing contemporary challenges, need to surpass their negative attitude toward modernity, to reevaluate their position vis-à-vis humanism and autonomy and to widen their dialogue with modern positions, aiming 'even at a synthesis between the two.' Chapter 14's author, Cyril Hovorun, analyzes various aspects of civil religion in the Orthodox sociopolitical milieu. Hovorun concludes that both the constructive and destructive effects of Orthodox civil religion threaten to obscure the original nature and mission of the Orthodox Church.

Finally, Part V of [Political Theologies in Orthodox Christianity](#) gathers church-centered treatments of Orthodox symphonic political theologies. These chapters consider the extent to which Orthodox Churches are or should be institutional partners of the state, rather than forces of civil society. In Chapter 15, Elena Namli reflects on the growing political and social role of the Russian Orthodox Church. Radu Preda, in Chapter 16, describes the particular challenge the Romanian Orthodox Church faces as a majority church under the conditions of Western modernity, a democratic political system and membership in the EU. In the final chapter, Mariyan Stoyadinov argues that, for a variety of historical reasons, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church is yet to find an adequate response to modern challenges or to develop positions of 'political theology' for the Bulgarian context. The burden of the totalitarian experience, the schism in the Church, and the rapid transformation in Bulgarian society still await an adequate response from theologians.

Questions of political theology are some of the most challenging for theologians today. Political realities confront theologians daily in their specific historical and geopolitical contexts, requiring them to determine effective ways to proclaim God's revelation in this age. The theologians in [Political Theologies in Orthodox Christianity](#) do just that.

*Deserve[s] wide attention
from all theologians and*

*scholars of religion who
wish to understand how
Orthodoxy is speaking to
issues of politics today. –
Journal of Church and
State*

[Political Theologies in Orthodox Christianity](#)

is an invaluable and timely contribution to political theology. As a collective, these essays present a different understanding of the relationship of Orthodoxy to secular politics, comprehensive, up-to-date and highly relevant to politically understanding today's world. <>

Religion & Spirituality / Christianity / Ecumenical

[A Saint for East and West: Maximus the Confessor's Contribution to Eastern and Western Christian Theology](#) edited by Daniel Haynes, with an introduction by Andrew Louth (Cascade Books)

In 1054 CE, the Great Schism between Eastern and Western Christianity occurred, and the official break of communion between the two ancient branches of the church continues to this day. There have been numerous church commissions and academic groups created to try and bridge the ecumenical divides between East and West, yet official communion is still just out of reach. The thought of St. Maximus the Confessor, a saint of both churches, provides a unique theological lens through which to map out a path of ecumenical understanding and, hopefully, reconciliation and union. Through an exposition of the intellectual

history of Maximus' theological influence, his moral and spiritual theology, and his metaphysical vision of creation, a common Christianity emerges.

[**A Saint for East and West**](#) brings together leading scholars and thinkers from both traditions around the theology of St. Maximus to cultivate greater union between Eastern and Western Christianity. Editor Daniel Haynes teaches Religious Studies at Georgia Gwinnett College and Bioethics at Brenau University. He also serves as the current Resident Theologian at the Episcopal parish of St. Mary and St. Martha of Bethany in Buford, Georgia. The book has 15 contributors.

In many areas of contemporary culture, it seems incongruous to consider that a figure from the past could inform present-day life. However, there are those luminous saints of old who challenge us to think things anew. St. Maximus the Confessor is one such saint. Despite the fact that Maximus is a deeply cherished saint of both Eastern and Western Christian traditions, his theology is still not very well known or understood.

Over the last couple of decades, there has been a renaissance of interest in the thought of the Confessor in both traditions. Numerous monographs and articles have been published attesting to his brilliance and importance for understanding central dogmas of both East and West. There is even an interest in aligning Maximus' metaphysics with

modern developments in science. The noted Maximus scholar Paul Blowers has recently explored the compatibility of Maximus' doctrine of the *logos* and *logoi* with the scientific theory of evolution.

In [**A Saint for East and West**](#), leading scholars, spiritual masters, and theologians engage with Maximus' thought in creative ways. They examine the historical influences and intellectual trajectories of Maximus' theological synthesis in depth, and new theological vistas open up to create possible paths forward in ecumenical understanding.

[**A Saint for East and West**](#) is broken up into three key parts: (1) reception and influence; (2) anthropology, Christology, and spirituality; and (3) ontology and metaphysics. Maximus' vision of the cosmos and the Christian life would not make such distinctions, but this approach was chosen in order to make his theology more esculent for readers. Andrew Louth provides an erudite introduction to the importance of Maximus' theology for today and how the authors in [**A Saint for East and West**](#) contribute towards it. Then in part one, Adrian Guiu, Edward Siecienski, and Christophe Erismann trace the historical and intellectual pathways of Maximus' theological influence. Part two unpacks Maximus' moral and spiritual theology in relation to his Christology and cosmic vision. Metropolitan Kallistos (Timothy Ware), Adam Cooper, David Bradshaw, and Luis Granados offer fresh perspectives on these classical Maximian subjects. Finally, in part three

of [A Saint for East and West](#) hieromonk Törönen, Baron Rowan Williams, John Milbank, Nikolaos Loudovikos, Torstein Tollefsen, Vladimir Cvetković, and Joshua Lollar venture deep into Maximus' ontology and metaphysics of creation.

St. Maximus the Confessor is not only one of the most profound Christian theologians of Late Antiquity, but one who uniquely, in his own lifetime and again today, unites both East and West. The essays gathered here together are likewise from eminent Eastern and Western theologians, and show a common spirit in their engagement with the texts, theology, and legacy of their common Father. – John Behr, St. Vladimir's Seminary, New York

The essays in this collection prove that there is much work yet to be done on Maximus the Confessor, and that his legacy in Eastern and Western Christian thought is both deep and wide. Fresh insights are offered here into an array of classic themes in Maximus's theology, from his cosmology and metaphysics to his

theological anthropology and ascetical doctrine. Veteran and younger scholars weigh in on issues that continue to compel modern theological retrieval of this prolific Byzantine thinker. This book is a welcome addition to the continuing renaissance of Maximus studies in recent decades.
– Paul M. Blowers,
Emmanuel Christian
Seminary, Milligan College

Through their analyses, each contributor to [A Saint for East and West](#) shows how Maximus' thought took shape in Eastern and Western Christian theology. The Confessor's theological genius creates a vision of the world that makes him truly a saint for East and West. <>

Religion & Spirituality / Shamanic Yoga

[The Mother Mantra: The Ancient Shamanic Yoga of Non-Duality](#) by
Selene Calloni Williams (Inner Traditions)

[The Mother Mantra](#) is an initiate's spiritual and philosophical guide to the healing practices, spiritual exercises, and secret rites of the Mother Mantra tradition.

According to Selene Calloni Williams, hidden at the heart of nearly all spiritual and esoteric traditions lies the powerful teachings of the Mother Mantra. Williams, a direct student of James Hillman, has studied and practiced Buddhist meditation in the hermitages of the forests of Sri Lanka and is an initiate

of Shamanic Tantric Yoga. She is the founder and the director of the Imaginal Academy Institute in Switzerland.

The Mother Mantra initiates have preserved its consciousness-expanding techniques for millennia. Originating in the ancient practice of shamanic yoga, this tradition allows people to perceive the full complexity of reality. It helps readers see both the visible and the invisible, moving beyond the consciousness of duality that limits us to only the material world. Operating in this heightened state of non-ordinary consciousness, readers can see beyond their subconscious programming and behavior patterns and understand their possibilities and powers. By removing all fear, the Mother Mantra allows readers to love themselves exactly as they are. Williams explains how these practices bypass the thinking mind to access readers' higher spiritual consciousness, allowing them to awaken to the dream nature of reality and release them from all fear. She details the exercises and practices of the four-part Mother Mantra. The first series, which dissolves the constructs of the ego; the second, which invokes ancient spirits and deities for their aid in this endeavor; the third, where they experience a divine androgynous tantric union to transcend sexual identity and spiritually fuse with the divine; and the fourth, where the first three rituals are combined to unlock an expanded state of consciousness and a true seeing of the complexity of both the visible and invisible worlds.

Williams in [The Mother Mantra](#) also describes the practice of the Egyptian

mantra, a soul-making ceremony that unites the initiate with the Chthonian realms and attracts wealth and abundance, and the Mystical Marriage Mantra, which opens a path to authentic transformation and rebirth. Additionally, Williams presents five spiritual rituals, including yogic poses and exercises, that can be incorporated into daily life to allow divine communication through the chakras, awaken the mind and body from the aging process, and reestablish the universal balance between humanity and the divine.

In the first chapter of [The Mother Mantra](#), "Natural Spiritual Experience," natural tradition is contrasted with social tradition. The differences in worldview and life experience that result from the immersion in and adherence to one or the other are explored in detail, resulting in greater clarity about beauty and the good, death and immortality, power and fighting, and sacred and healing rituals.

This provides the necessary background to understand the experiences of the Great Image – the erotic creative union of the mystical marriage – presented in the second chapter, "The Great Image," dramatized by the author's explorations in widely different cultural settings around the world.

The third chapter, "The Underworld or Celestial Bride/ Bridegroom," invites readers to the intimate understanding that both counterparts of the mystical marriage are within each person and

the energy and joy that are fostered by that understanding.

"The Four Movements of the Mother Mantra Tradition" presented in the fourth chapter are the core practices that have the power to reabsorb reality and reunite the divine lovers, leading to the awakening of the initiated. These include a number of significant psychic formulas, especially the two universal variants of the Mother Mantra: the Egyptian Mantra and the Mystical Marriage Mantra.

The Mother Mantra tradition also includes the application of the mantras in spiritual healing rituals and in several effective spiritual exercises that open the body, mind, and heart to the revelation and an inspired life; these occur throughout [The Mother Mantra](#) and are highlighted in chapter 5, "The Spiritual Practices of the Morning and Evening," and chapter 8, "Further Spiritual Practices for Well-Being," which includes the creation of a visionary mandala and a ritual of self-healing.

In chapter 6, "Rite, Myth, and Compassion," readers meet the seven great messengers and learn how to understand their messages, to heed the soul's calling. This chapter also shares a crucial difference between therapy and the aesthetic experience of sacred ritual.

Chapter 7, "Freeing the Hostage Prometheus," explores the deep meaning of the ancient myth of 'the enchained hero,' representative of true knowledge and the love that leads to

liberation. This chapter also includes practices of the Mother Mantra tradition that bring about spiritual revolution.

*The most ancient of wisdom traditions call on our relationship with the mother. Now at the point of the shift away from the dominance of patriarchy, Williams presents us with what can take us beyond dualism. [The Mother Mantra](#) is a calling to our depths toward unification from a place of love. – Mike Booth, author of *The Aura-Soma Sourcebook**

[The Mother Mantra](#) endows practitioners with the blessings of the Mother Mantra tradition and creates a bridge to a new perception of reality. <>

Social Science / Anthropology / Biology

[The Goodness Paradox: The Strange Relationship between Virtue and Violence in Human Evolution – Deckle Edge](#) by Richard Wrangham (Pantheon)

*A fascinating new analysis of human violence, filled with fresh ideas and gripping evidence from our primate cousins, historical forebears, and contemporary neighbors. – Steven Pinker, author of *The Better Angels of Our Nature**

[The Goodness Paradox](#) offers a startlingly original theory of how, in the

last 250 million years, humankind became an increasingly peaceful species in daily interactions even as its capacity for coolly planned and devastating violence remains undiminished. In tracing the evolutionary histories of reactive and proactive aggression, biological anthropologist Richard Wrangham forcefully and persuasively argues for the necessity of social tolerance and the control of savage divisiveness still haunting us today. Wrangham, who trained with Jane Goodall, is Ruth B. Moore Professor of Biological Anthropology, Harvard University.

Wrangham says that years ago his bucolic research on chimpanzees was disturbed by discoveries that were too intriguing to ignore. Chimpanzees exhibited occasional episodes of exceptional violence. To shed an evolutionary light on this behavior, he compared chimpanzees with their sister species, bonobos. In various collaborations that he describes in [The Goodness Paradox](#), but most particularly with Brian Hare and Victoria Wobber, his colleagues and he concluded that bonobos had diverged from a chimpanzee-like ancestor by a process that was strongly akin to domestication. They called the process 'self-domestication.' And since human behavior has often been considered similar to the behavior of domesticated animals, the insights from bonobos suggested lessons for human evolution. The key fact about humans is that within their social communities they have a low propensity to fight: compared to

most wild mammals they are very tolerant.

Wrangham says that he was acutely aware, however, that, even if humans are in some ways notably unreactive, in other ways they are a very aggressive species. So how could human's domesticated qualities and their capacity for terrible violence be reconciled? For the next twenty years or so, he grappled with this question.

The resolution that he describes in [The Goodness Paradox](#) is that human's social tolerance and their aggressiveness are not the opposites that at first they appear to be, because the two behaviors involve different types of aggression. Their social tolerance comes from their having a relatively low tendency for reactive aggression, whereas the violence that makes humans deadly is proactive aggression. The story of how the human species came to combine these different tendencies – low reactive aggression and high proactive aggression – has not been told before. It takes researchers into many corners of anthropology, biology, and psychology, and will undoubtedly continue to be developed. But it already offers a rich and fresh perspective on the evolution of human's behavioral and moral tendencies, as well as on the fascinating question of how and why the species, *Homo sapiens*, came into existence at all.

Much of the material in [The Goodness Paradox](#) is so new that it has been

published only in scientific papers. Wrangham's goal is to make this richly technical literature and its far-reaching implications more accessible. He approaches the topic through the eyes of a chimpanzee-watcher who has walked, watched, and listened in many habitats of East and Central Africa.

A work accessible to those outside the scientific field, offering a great deal of information. – Library Journal

Based on Richard Wrangham's path-breaking work and on many riveting examples, this magnificent and profound book shows how our violent, even murderous, impulses actually shaped our species to be kind and cooperative, progressively shaping our evolutionary trajectory, our moral expectations, and our genes. – Nicholas A. Christakis, Sterling Professor of Social and Natural Science, Yale University

*A brilliant analysis of the role of aggression in our evolutionary history. – Jane Goodall, author of *In the Shadow of Man**
Richard Wrangham has written a brilliant and honest book about humanity's central contradiction: that we are

*capable of mass murder but live in societies with almost no violence. No other species straddles such a wide gap, and the reasons are staggeringly obvious once Wrangham lays them out in his calm, learned prose. This book is science writing at its best: lucid, rational and yet deeply concerned with humanity. – Sebastian Junger, author of *Tribe**
Wrangham has been the most original and influential interpreter of ecological and evolutionary factors in the origin of our species. In [The Goodness Paradox](#) he extends his evidence and reasoning into yet another fundamental human trait. – Edward O. Wilson, University Research Professor Emeritus, Harvard University
*Nobody knows more, thinks deeper, or writes better about the evolution of modern human beings than Richard Wrangham. Here he reveals a rich and satisfying story about the self-domestication of our species, drawing upon remarkable observations and experiments. – Matt Ridley, author of *The Evolution of Everything**

This will prove to be one of the most important publications of our time. Fully supported scientific information from many directions leads us to a new and compelling analysis of our evolutionary history. Every page is fascinating, every revelation is unforgettable. It will change how we see ourselves, our past, and our future. – Elizabeth Marshall Thomas, author of The Hidden Life of Dogs This is the most thought-provoking book I have read in years. In clear, elegant prose, drawing on riveting data and vivid scenes gathered from species all over the world, renowned anthropologist Richard Wrangham examines the issues most central to human morality. [The Goodness Paradox](#) is a breakthrough that deserves careful reading, thoughtful consideration, and lively debate among all those who care about our evolutionary history and the future of human morality. – Sy Montgomery, author of How to Be a Good Creature

Authoritative, provocative, and engaging, [The Goodness Paradox](#) offers

a startlingly original theory. Here are many thought provoking ideas from a deep thinker and a lucid writer to boot.
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Social Work / Education & Training

[Generalist Social Work Practice, 1st edition](#) by Janice A. Gasker (Sage Publications, Inc.)

[Generalist Social Work Practice](#) provides students with the foundational skills and knowledge needed to serve clients across micro, mezzo and macro areas of practice. Author Janice Gasker brings a focus on self-reflection as the first stage in the planned change process and writes with the perspective that practitioners consider work at all levels of practice simultaneously rather than in isolation. Gasker is the bachelor of social work program director at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania.

In accordance with the 2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) set forth by the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE), the planned change process is presented as dynamic and interactive, providing students with a clear understanding of how each stage of the planned change process can be utilized at any point when serving a client system. The text spotlights the distinctive characteristics of the worker – their values, attitudes, and experiences – that may influence client interaction. [Generalist Social Work Practice](#) also includes case studies, collaborative learning exercises, and critical thinking

questions to help students apply concepts to practice.

Key features of [Generalist Social Work Practice](#) include:

- Coverage of micro, mezzo, and macro practice as a 'flattened' hierarchy emphasizes social workers practice on all levels at all times.
- Case studies reveal workers' thoughts and feelings include sections on the workers' emotions as they impact practice.
- What If... Focus on Diversity boxes stimulate critical thinking about case studies and the strengths and challenges of diversity.
- Ethical Perspectives boxes directly reference the 2018 Code of Ethics set forth by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and provide critical thinking exercises about ethical decision-making that allow students to apply various aspects of the Code to practice scenarios.

There are three reasons [Generalist Social Work Practice](#) should exist, and they all start with 'new.' First, there are new developments in the understanding of generalist practice. If readers are old enough, they remember the days before generalist practice when practitioners were straggling to find a way to coordinate an increasingly confusing array of practice methods: structural, functional, interactional, generic, the life model, etc. When generalist practice came along, it was an answer to many prayers: a common base for practice with a set of concepts like person-in-environment (PIE) and

stages of change, that practitioners could all – finally – agree on.

Some new developments that are present in [Generalist Social Work Practice](#) include a focus on self-reflection that shows up as a new first stage of planned change. The evidence-based practice of mindfulness for reflection is illuminated. Also in service to self-reflection are the case studies that are presented in a unique way. Each chapter includes a validated personality survey to guide students' thinking about their own thinking and a section on the emotions of the worker in the chapter's case study. In addition, the new, more nuanced understanding of diversity is presented using the concepts cultural humility and intersectionality. Gender expression works its way in too. In that vein, the gender-neutral pronoun 'they' is used throughout in its new singular form. The overall self-reflection message to students is that they should understand themselves and build a professional use of self before they begin engagement in every case.

Another development in generalist practice that underlies [Generalist Social Work Practice](#) is the understanding of the stages of planned change as what the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) now calls 'ongoing, dynamic, and interactive.' This book points out a more nuanced understanding of levels of practice. The message to students is that there is no hierarchy of levels of practice. We practice on all levels, all of the time. Macro practice examples

occur throughout the book specifically to assure that students come to understand this flattened hierarchy of mezzo, macro, and micro. In addition, the new term client system representative is employed to make macro practice feel more accessible. The idea is that teachers often work directly with individuals when they work with large systems, so there is no reason to be intimidated by macro practice.

Finally, these days generalist practice rests on a new code of ethics. Students are introduced to the NASW Code of Ethics (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2018) in several ways: There is a feature at the end of each chapter that includes an ethical dilemma, and there is an ethical challenge question in every chapter that directs students to actually read portions of the code. For those who may have become used to the 1996 version, there is an appendix to the book that identifies all of the changes that appear in the 2018 version.

The second 'new' that accounts for [Generalist Social Work Practice](#) is that teachers have a new audience. While the book is friendly to the mature student, it speaks directly to the young person who lives in a dynamic culture. Readability is paramount in this text. The book is full of diagrams, and concepts are also illustrated with a lot of sample 'he said, she said' dialogue. Ideas are introduced in one chapter and reinforced and practiced in the next. And the next. Important concepts are infused throughout, and mastery is

assessed through exercises provided in ever-increasing complexity while students' understanding of concepts develops.

The final 'new' [Generalist Social Work Practice](#) responds to is advancements in evidence-based pedagogy.

Collaborative learning methods have been shown to be effective, particularly with women, and this text is filled with exercises that allow students to experience those modalities. In addition, concepts are introduced and revisited in increasingly complex ways. This allows reinforcement of meaning as well as integration of knowledge with other knowledge and with the self. The approach fits nicely with the types of learning CSWE has newly identified as cognitive and affective processes. In short, the book enables another concept from educational theory: transformative learning. For this reason, topics come up in a number of chapters with each building on the previous in terms of gradations and complexity. The transformative learning that takes place as a result of this approach is essential to the beginning generalist social worker who has to synthesize theories with a developing professional self. At the end of each section, exercises are provided in ways that incorporate opportunities for students to work together with their peers to solve critical thinking challenges. Finally, at the end of each chapter is a detailed feature where students interact with the chapter's material in ways that address each of the CSWE 2015 educational competencies. These exercises reflect

aspects of each chapter that integrate practice, research, policy, social justice, and diversity. The book touches on and synthesizes every area of the curriculum.

Other aspects of [Generalist Social Work Practice](#) facilitate student mastery of concepts and their documentation of that mastery. For example, following each chapter, readers will find a matrix noting which competencies are addressed in which sections and features that align with each of the competencies are identified. In this simple table, students are able to recognize their progress with the competencies they must ultimately demonstrate.

This text is a holistic teaching tool for the generalist social worker. I believe it will help engage students at every level plus offer case studies and materials for intense discussions. I also think the students can use it as handbook in the future. – Octavia Edinburg

This text is very comprehensive and encouraging, and will motivate students to understand difficult concepts. The layout of the chapters, the emphasis on critical thinking, and the collaborative learning exercises are very useful

for students and teachers.

– Veronika Ospina-Kammerer

A great introductory book for students who are new to the profession of social work. The book is written in a way that encourages students to read and practice the concepts.

Although this is meant to be a practice book, there are topics that can be used to review and reinforce the entire social work education curriculum. – Renie Rondon Jackson

[Generalist Social Work Practice](#) is basic enough to give students that first overview in what one might call a Generalist Practice course while ultimately building a level of complexity that will make it perfect for seminar discussions. For that reason, it is appropriate for both undergraduates and foundation level graduate students. If teachers want to ramp up their graduate curriculum, they could place a focus on the suggested readings at the end of each chapter. In addition, there may be room for individual chapters (available in electronic format) in the level-specific courses on individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities on both the undergraduate and graduate levels. <>

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