



We Review the  
Best of the Latest  
Books

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April 2021

# April 2021

## Contents

April 2021 .....	1
Biographies & Memoirs / Autobiographies / African-American .....	3
<b>Floating in a Most Peculiar Way:</b> A Memoir by Louis Chude-Sokei (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) .....	3
Business & Economics / Administration & Management .....	4
<b>Handbook of Collaborative Public Management</b> edited by Jack Wayne Meek (Elgar Handbooks in Public Administration and Management Series: Edward Elgar Publishing) 4	
Elgar Handbooks in Public Administration and Management .....	6
Children's Books / Ages 5-7 / Grade Level: K-2 .....	7
<b>Because I'm New</b> by Brad Sneed (Sleeping Bear Press) .....	7
Crafts & Hobbies / Woodworking / Reference .....	8
<b>The Lathe Book:</b> A Complete Guide to the Machine and its Accessories, 3 <sup>rd</sup> edition by Ernie Conover (Taunton Press) .....	8
Crafts & Hobbies / Woodworking / DIY .....	10
<b>Spalting 101:</b> The Ultimate Guide to Coloring Wood with Fungi by Dr. Seri C. Robinson (Schiffer Publishing Ltd) .....	10
Education & Learning / Teaching .....	11
<b>Whole School Health Through Psychosocial Emotional Learning</b> by Jared Scherz, with a foreword by Esther Wojcicki (Corwin) .....	11
History / African-American Studies / Biographies & Memoirs .....	14
<b>The Three Mothers:</b> How the Mothers of Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and James Baldwin Shaped a Nation by Anna Malaika Tubbs (Flatiron Books) .....	14
History / Media Studies .....	16

<b>The New Enlightenment and the Fight to Free Knowledge</b> by Peter B. Kaufman (Seven Stories Press) .....	16
Literature & Fiction / Historical / Science Fiction .....	18
<b>Master of the Revels: A Return to Neal Stephenson's D.O.D.O.</b> by Nicole Galland (D.O.D.O. Series, Book 2: William Morrow) .....	18
Literature & Fiction / Short Stories / Anthologies .....	19
<b>Best of R. A. Lafferty</b> by R A Lafferty, edited by Jonathan Strahan, with an introduction by Neil Gaiman ( <i>Tor Essentials: A Tom Doherty Associates Book</i> ).....	19
Outdoors & Nature / Photography / Canada.....	22
<b>Step into Wilderness: A Pictorial History of Outdoor Exploration In and Around the Comox Valley</b> by Deborah Griffiths, Christine Dickinson, Judy Hagen, & Catherine Siba (Harbour Publishing) .....	22
Religion & Spirituality / Christianity / Politics / Social Policy.....	23
<b>Abortion Policy and Christian Social Ethics in the United States</b> by Mako A. Nagasawa (Wipf & Stock) .....	23
Religion & Spirituality / Biblical Studies / History & Culture .....	25
<b>Censoring God: The History of the Lost Books (and other Excluded Scriptures)</b> by Jim Willis (Visible Ink Press).....	25
Religion & Spirituality / Christianity .....	26
<b>After Doubt: How to Question Your Faith without Losing It</b> by A.J. Swoboda, with a foreword by John Mark Comer (Brazos Press) .....	26
Religion & Spirituality / Christianity / Social Issues .....	28
<b>Faith, Class, and Labor: Intersectional Approaches in a Global Context</b> edited by Jin Young Choi & Joerg Rieger ( <b>Intersectionality and Theology Series:</b> Pickwick Publications) .....	28
Bibliography .....	32

## **Floating in a Most Peculiar Way**: A Memoir by Louis Chude-Sokei (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)

**Floating in a Most Peculiar Way** is the astonishing journey of a bright, utterly displaced boy, from the short-lived African nation of Biafra, to Jamaica, to the harshest streets of Los Angeles – a memoir that adds depth to the coming-to-America story.

The first time Louis Chude-Sokei realizes that he is 'first son of the first son' of a renowned leader of the bygone African nation is in Uncle Daddy and Big Auntie's strict religious household in Jamaica, where he lives with other abandoned children. A visiting African has just fallen to his knees to shake him by the shoulders: "Is this the boy? Is this him?"

Chude-Sokei is a writer, scholar, and director of the African American studies program at Boston University. He is the editor in chief of *The Black Scholar*, the premier journal of Black studies and research.

In **Floating in a Most Peculiar Way** Chude-Sokei's immersion in the politics of race and belonging across the landscape of the African Diaspora takes a turn when his traumatized mother, who has her own extraordinary history as the onetime "Jackie O of Biafra," finally sends for him to come live with her. In Inglewood, Los Angeles, on the eve of gangsta rap and the LA riots, it's as if he's fallen to Earth. In this world, anything alien – definitely Chude-Sokei's secret obsession with science fiction and David Bowie – is a danger, and his yearning to become a Black American gets deeply, sometimes absurdly, complicated. Ultimately, it is a boisterous pan-African family of honorary aunts, uncles, and cousins that becomes his secret society, teaching him the redemptive skill of navigating not just Blackness, but Blacknesses, in his America.

*Herein lies the beauty of **Floating in a Most Peculiar Way**: It reveals how we carry trauma with us, how that trauma can cause us to hurt one another, and how we still love and carry one another with wounds unhealed...*

*These are words in which those of us who have floated outside for so long can touch down for a bit, and connect. – Ijeoma Oluo, New York Times Book Review*

*A beautifully told story about displacement and coming-of-age. – People Magazine*

*Chude-Sokei chronicles his... missteps, advances and inner conflicts to create a moving, perspicacious account of disguising his origins, of adopting pose after pose, of seeking acceptance. It is a story of perplexed identity, of its permutations and specificities. – Minneapolis Star-Tribune*

*Stupendous doesn't even begin to describe the extraordinary power and*

exhilarating beauty of [Floating in a Most Peculiar Way](#). Here is a memoir that blazes like a star and rhymes like Paul Beatty at his best. Louis Chude-Sokei is a writer with all the gifts and then some. – Junot Diaz, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* and *This Is How You Lose Her*

Chude-Sokei's [Floating in a Most Peculiar Way](#) is a rich, immersive coming-of-age tale from a man of eccentric, transnational upbringing. Chude-Sokei's honest and eloquent writing ultimately transforms his memoir into a superlative and unforgettable book. – Chigozie Obioma, author of *The Fishermen* and *An Orchestra of Minorities* (both finalists for the Booker prize)

*This is autobiography at its best. In stories of the multiple blended accents, atrocities, musics, prejudices and foods of London, Biafra, Jamaica, D.C., South Central L.A. and elsewhere, Chude-Sokei confronts the nightmare of history – along with the persistent, sometimes joyful adventure of awakening from it.* – Robert Pinsky, Poet Laureate of the United States, 1997-2000

[Floating in a Most Peculiar Way](#) delivers a riveting immigrant's journey spanning the African Diaspora that is certain to refine our sense of what it means to be American, and to complicate, especially, what it means to be a Black American. – Charles Johnson, author of the National Book Award-winning *Middle Passage* and *The Way of the Writer: Reflections on the Art and Craft of Storytelling*

*An affecting memoir of life as an exile, with a David Bowie soundtrack in the background... deftly profound.* – Kirkus Reviews, starred review  
*Absorbing... highly recommended for all memoir readers.* – Booklist  
*A beautiful, plainspoken work... This hard-to-put-down memoir both enlightens and inspires.* – Publishers Weekly

[Floating in a Most Peculiar Way](#) is a searing memoir that adds fascinating depth to the coming-to-America story – an astonishing journey. <>

Business & Economics / Administration & Management

[Handbook of Collaborative Public Management](#) edited by Jack Wayne Meek (Elgar Handbooks in Public Administration and Management Series: Edward Elgar Publishing)

[Handbook of Collaborative Public Management](#) presents readers with a comprehensive range of original research within the field of Collaborative Public Management (CPM).

As a central area of study and practice in public administration, the Handbook explores the most important questions facing collaboration and provides future research directions and new areas of study.

Featuring expert contributions from a diverse range of scholars, [Handbook of Collaborative Public Management](#) showcases the emergence of collaborative governance research and charts connections among the multiple arenas of CPM; including public/private partnerships, emergency management and climate change management. Chapters cover the fundamental practices and limitations of CPM as well as future possibilities. Reflecting on leading theories and research, the Handbook argues that CPM is both an evolving field, as well as a varied and maturing one that is worthy of continued exploration.

The Handbook is edited by Jack Wayne Meek, Professor of Public Administration, College of Business and Public Management, University of La Verne. The book has 48 contributors.

Books of this kind find meaning when the contributing authors are free to explore questions of research they view as most significant. This is the cornerstone of the [Handbook of Collaborative Public Management](#). The contributors were asked to offer new research or a fresh reflection on an area of study in collaborative public management. The scholars included hold the study of collaborative public management as a significant subject in the field. As readers discover, this is a subject that has received enormous attention starting just before the turn of the century when government began the transformation into governance. The energy and vibrancy that originally brought readers to this subject remains. Part of the interest is that collaboration is a central component in the practice of public administration. Those who study public administration are comfortable with the exploration of collaboration as well as seeking ways to improve collaboration. Four themes contribute to comfortable acceptance: interdependence, the commons, the disarticulated state and complexity.

New forms of collaborative public management, the subject of [Handbook of Collaborative Public Management](#), are emerging to address the interdependent conditions people experience. The profound variety of approaches – creating governance arrangements in both smaller forms (neighborhood councils) and larger forms (region-wide metropolitan planning organizations) functioning at the same time – is evident in many of communities. The increasing complexity of societies forces public officials to develop new models of governance processes. Recognition of common interests has led to the formation of networks of arrangements, formal and informal. Civic and public engagement collaborative efforts to co-produce services with citizens, to engage in public deliberation of the design and implementation and assessment of public services are illustrations of extending collaboration to include citizens and stakeholders in communities. Governance and cross-sector collaboration strategies to

engage stakeholders and partners in policy design and implementation are reflective of the emergence of collaborative public management.

[Handbook of Collaborative Public Management](#) focuses on improving understanding of how these governance networks evolve, are managed and how they perform. The scholars in this collection ask important questions: what leads people to collaborate, what determines the arrangements, what arenas can we find collaboration in, what limits collaborative efforts and how do we improve collaboration? One message is clear, collaborative public management is a fundamental area of practice and study in public administration. We are continually learning more about how administrative systems operate and function together.

A diverse community of authors was asked to [Handbook of Collaborative Public Management](#). The mix of intellectual traditions, approaches, geographic contexts and scholarly experience produced a wide variety of productive thinking about collaborative public management. The global reach of the scholars included here speaks to the significance of the subject across an array of cultures and experiences.

*At a time of growing complexity of pressing public policy problems, the authors in this book masterfully examine collaboration as a way to address those problems. The balanced and thoughtful assessments of the many facets of collaboration open doors to greater understanding concerning the what, how, and why behind the decision to collaborate. The new ideas presented here – from macro network analyses to micro examinations of how to collaborate – are a breath of fresh air. This is a 'must read' for anyone interested in collaboration as a management, leadership, or policy strategy. – Rosemary O'Leary, University of Kansas School of Public Affairs*

Insightful and significant, [Handbook of Collaborative Public Management](#) will be a valuable resource to scholars and graduate students in subjects such as public administration and public policy, who are interested in examining current research and approaches within the field. The examination of collaborative initiatives will also be beneficial to administrative leaders in public services who want to understand how to lead and manage more dynamic arrangements.

Elgar Handbooks in Public Administration and Management

This series provides a comprehensive overview of recent research in all matters relating to public administration and management, serving as a definitive guide to the field. Covering a wide range of research areas including national and international methods of public administration, theories of public administration and management, and technological developments in public administration and management, the series produces influential works of lasting significance. Taking an international approach,

these Handbooks serve as an essential reference point for all students of public administration and management, emphasizing both the expansion of current debates, and an indication of the likely research agendas for the future. <>

Children's Books / Ages 5-7 / Grade Level: K-2

## **Because I'm New** by Brad Sneed (Sleeping Bear Press)

A new baby in the family means a lot of changes – from late night diaper changes to learning new ways to play – but in this sweet offering from Brad Sneed, baby tells their older sibling just what to expect. **Because I'm New** is a heartfelt celebration of those first months with baby and the genesis of the sibling bond.

Author/illustrator Sneed has illustrated many picture books, including *Johnny Kaw: A Tall Tale*. He has written and illustrated several books for children; including *Lucky Russell* and *Deputy Harvey and the Ant Cow Caper*. Sneed is known for using unusual viewpoints when creating his art. So perhaps it's no surprise Sneed chose an unusual perspective from which to tell the familiar story of a mom, dad, and child welcoming a new baby to the family.

Welcoming a new baby is one of the most exciting and scary challenges that a family can go through. While lots of books have chronicled what it is like to become a big brother or sister, **Because I'm New** is told from the baby's perspective. The narration makes readers wonder: what is it like to simply ... become?

Short, sunny language reflects the baby's earliest thoughts and feelings. Readers will watch them grow... and grow... and grow... into a toddler. But, as readers already know, being less new just means there's more to do! Just like there's plenty of fun to be had, and plenty of love to be shared, in **Because I'm New**.

*The joys and difficulties of adding a baby to the family are detailed in this sweet tale. The text unfolds from the point of view of a new baby, giving readers an inside perspective on the things a baby can't do – like catch the ball an eager older sibling tosses and the wide range of things a baby can do: watch, listen, and, of course, cry. A tender relationship between the siblings blooms from their first encounter, when the baby muses, 'I've been waiting a long time to meet you'. The older sibling is warmly portrayed as a role model, teacher, and friend, the text never skipping over the loud and exhausting elements of life with a baby. The tiny protagonist reminds readers that while babies need a lot of help from their parents, they need it from their older siblings, too. One double-page spread depicts the exhausted parents, older sibling, and even dog collapsed on the couch, recovering from all that helping. Over the course of the story, the baby grows and changes and shows off the new skills*

*gained 'once I am less new'. The baby, now a toddler, can now catch that ball and actively play with the older sib, the illustrations charmingly depicting the changing, still-affectionate relationship. The characters depicted in the story present White. A giftable book that is both encouraging and honest. – Kirkus Reviews, starred review*

Perfect for new parents, new siblings, and especially new babies, [Because I'm New](#) is a story about love. <>

Crafts & Hobbies / Woodworking / Reference

## [The Lathe Book](#): A Complete Guide to the Machine and its Accessories, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition by Ernie Conover (Taunton Press)

Completely revised and updated, [The Lathe Book, 3rd edition](#) is the definitive guide to this essential turning machine written by legendary woodturning author and teacher, Ernie Conover.

Conover, whose work has received numerous awards and been the subject of several one-man shows, is also a lathe designer, having developed his own lathe and worked on the designs of the Nova and the Powermatic 3520b. When not writing, lecturing, or consulting he provides academic oversight and teaching at Conover Workshops, a craft school founded by the Conover family.

In the 17 years since the **2nd edition** came out, Conover says there have been tremendous advances in lathes, accessories, and sharpening equipment. He brings this classic reference up-to-date, incorporating the many recent innovations in the lathe and its accessories. [The Lathe Book](#) covers every aspect of the lathe including:

- Introducing the novice or professional woodturner to the expanded range of lathes now available, including information on choosing a lathe.
- Featuring many new chucks for holding work.
- Offering comprehensive advice on selecting turning tools, including the popular carbide-insert tools.
- Outlining the groundbreaking developments in sharpening equipment.
- Emphasizing the importance of full-face shield protection, hearing protection, and dust collection.
- Including information on basic lathe maintenance and repair, as well as basic techniques for bowl and spindle turning.

The wood lathe is among the oldest of machines, and woodturning has been a profession for millennia and a hobby since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. All readers need to start woodturning today is a lathe, a grinder, and a handsaw, making it a great hobby from a cost and space perspective. The lathe is also a wonderful adjunct for the cabinetmaker, adding line, form, and function to furniture. Conover says as a furniture maker himself, all of his furniture incorporates some turning, if only knobs for drawers.

Conover says he took up woodturning as a teenager, and in retrospect he thinks this was to avoid competition with his father, who was never particularly talented at a wood lathe.

The **first edition** of [The Lathe Book](#) came out in 1993 and focused heavily on the craftsman woodturner. By the time Conover wrote the **second edition**, an industry had grown out of the many people who were devoting themselves exclusively to woodturning. The trend has continued, with entrepreneurs and companies coming up with new ideas every day.

In this **third edition** of [The Lathe Book](#), Conover speaks principally to those pursuing turning to the exclusion of other forms of woodworking, but he does not forsake furniture makers, architects, and builders because the information they need is in the narrative. Woodturning has grown additional branches since the **second edition**. Bowl turning has bifurcated into traditional faceplate-turned vessels and hollow forms, which are spindle-turned vessels. This edition covers all this new ground and throws light on the useful machines, tools, and gadgets that make readers' time in the turning shop productive and fun.

Since 1993, Conover has taught thousands of people to turn and has put in thousands of hours at lathes of all descriptions. To that end, he has worked as a design and usability consultant for lathe and accessory manufacturers and has also made a huge number of architectural turnings for furniture makers, architects, and builders. This is all to say that he knows what the pitfalls are and how to get beginners beyond them.

Conover says it is his firm belief that most people have the ability to turn, but this skill has been buried deep inside during the process of formal education and today's hectic digital-based workplace. One appeal of turning may well be to get away from the world of mass production and create something unique.

*Conover has a wonderful way of taking his subject apart and putting it back together again in a way I can finally understand. – David Ellsworth, master woodturner*

Legendary turning author and teacher Conover brings [The Lathe Book](#), a classic and venerated reference, up to date with this **3<sup>rd</sup> edition**, incorporating the many recent innovations in the lathe and its accessories. Book in hand, readers will be off to a great start as they learn about the tools and techniques they need to enjoy the craft. <>

## **Spalting 101**: The Ultimate Guide to Coloring Wood with Fungi by Dr. Seri C. Robinson (Schiffer Publishing Ltd)

No more beer, mayonnaise, leaves, and blind hope.

Instead, **Spalting 101** gives readers the specific instructions they need for successfully inducing spalting into wood, that is, giving it color.

They learn how to get amazing colors and lines while minimizing time and decay, whether they are working with green to dry timber, with indoor conditions or out, with zone lines or pigment, and more.

Author Seri C. Robinson leads the Applied Mycology Lab, the Center for Spalting Research in Corvallis, Oregon. A professor of wood anatomy at Oregon State University, Robinson is the coauthor of *Spalted Wood: The History, Science, and Art of a Unique Material*.

In **Spalting 101**, a basic explanation of wood structure and fungal anatomy explains the whys behind the transformations. Readers learn the different types of spalting, their temperature moisture content preferences and their time frames, and how to make their own fungal pigments.

Robinson says that back in 2014, when he was just putting the finishing touches on *Spalted Wood: The History, Science, and Art of a Unique Material*, he thought, this is it; this is everything everyone needs to know about spalting.

Turns out he was wrong.

Spalting is so much more than its history or current use. Spalting is a complex intersection of science, art, history, and human development that could take a lifetime to truly unravel and properly explore. Since then, he, his students, and his collaborators have found spalted work all over the world, both historical and modern. From ancient legends to modern sculpture, spalted wood continues to fascinate, but what he says he gets asked more often than anything else is “Yeah, but how do you DO it?”

**Spalting 101** gently sets aside history and modern context in favor of straight-up biology – what spalted wood is in its most basic components, how it interacts with wood, and how it can be induced and controlled. All aspects of the biology are touched upon, from wood and fungal anatomy, to decay, to spalting recipes and safety tips for woodworking. An easy FAQ at the back of the book offers an even quicker way to get answers to some of the most prevalent questions about spalting.

Readers take their spalting time from years to hours with this detailed DIY guide to spalting wood. [Spalting 101](#) is a comprehensive guide debunking myths and offering detailed guidelines for every type of spalting, including laboratory-level spalting in just one hour. If readers are new to spalting, Robinson welcomes them to the rabbit hole. Even those who think they know spalting will find this deep dive into spalting biology fascinating. While it's meant for a lay audience, those interested in the more subtle decay and mechanical issues associated with spalted wood will not be disappointed.

<>

Education & Learning / Teaching

## **[Whole School Health Through Psychosocial Emotional Learning](#)** by Jared Scherz, with a foreword by Esther Wojcicki (Corwin)

With rapid technological advancements and changes to how schools must respond to learning and mental health needs, the educational scene looks considerably different from how it did 20 years ago. How do educators contend with this ever-changing landscape? Jared Scherz in [Whole School Health Through Psychosocial Emotional Learning](#) answers this question and many more by outlining the 15 critical steps to educators' and students' health through psychosocial emotional learning.

Scherz is a clinical psychologist, author, and consultant who has worked with educators for over 30 years. He earned his M.Ed. from Penn State University and became an elementary school counselor before gaining his Ph.D. in psychology. He has created innovative prevention and intervention programs in both rural and inner-city schools. As the CEO of TeacherCoach, Scherz's mission is to develop educational ecosystems that bring new revenue streams into school districts, make schools the hub of wellness in their community, and blend personal growth and professional development for faculty.

Designed for everyone involved in the educational system – including district administrators, teachers, students, parents, and the business community – [Whole School Health Through Psychosocial Emotional Learning](#) provides a practical plan with steps to harmonize whole-school health, including sustainable growth in student character development, improvement of organizational health, and reduction of violence and other threats to education. A blueprint of applicable resources is provided, including:

- 15 easy-to-follow guidelines for successfully implementing social-emotional learning practices.
- A spotlight on issues such as empathy, identity formation, self-control, and conflict resolution.
- Dozens of real-world stories from educators.
- Anecdotal and data-driven results from successful implementation.

Scherz in the introduction to [Whole School Health Through Psychosocial Emotional Learning](#) says that as a microcosm of society, schools can be more than preparatory academies for careers; they can be incubators for solving polarizing social problems. As people begin to appreciate how the erosion of the collective personhood is a cause and catalyst for many of the threats they are working to solve, they need to treat psychosocial emotional learning (PSEL) as a paradigm beyond a solution. Developing the whole person, capable of deep dives into the etiology of life's largest threats is a modality that encompasses prevention, intervention, and pedagogy.

We are increasingly aware of how academic success may be limited by psychological impediments but are only in our infancy when it comes to developing a whole child approach. Constraints of time, training, and finance are just a few of the barriers hindering the understanding of and the need for social emotional learning (SEL) in schools.

The starting point, personal growth, is accomplished through PSEL that embraces all levels of the system. Most SEL programs are simply skill building, not cognizant of the greater context. Whole child education means preparing students to become productive members of society, appreciating the influence of self in relation to others and the large community.

Through an integrated lens, people can expand from a model of skill building to embodied learning. Educators will appreciate both the macro and micro prevention efforts through a paradigm that integrates PSEL into curriculum and classroom activity. The macro is the health of the organization, and the micro is the specific tools to help each student with strengths and limitations for each of the learning elements.

Fifteen PSELs are explored in [Whole School Health Through Psychosocial Emotional Learning](#), developed through an iterative process, emulated by the adults, and actualized through the culture of the school and the achievement of the students. Educator/principals should read this book with their faculty and together prepare for the challenges of incorporating these ideas into whole school success.

*This important book discusses how to cultivate success, happiness, and a healthier world for all and will enhance the tools educators use to shape our children's future. [Whole School Health Through Psychosocial Emotional Learning](#) is not only for educators, but also for parents and others interested in cultivating favorable emotional and physical health in the next generation. – Joel Fuhrman, M.D., New York Times Bestselling Author [Whole School Health Through Psychosocial Emotional Learning](#) is a useful guide for empowering educators to facilitate what we now know are critical elements of childhood development. At a time when so many families are reflecting on the immense value teachers and schools bring*

to their lives, Jared Scherz successfully connects the dots between how students learn and how they interact with the world around them. Using evidence-based descriptions of psychosocial emotional learning sprinkled with personal accounts from real-life educators, this book offers a practical roadmap for schools looking to create an integrated, engaging, and supportive environment for the next generation. – Amy Kennedy, Education Director of The Kennedy Forum

**Whole School Health Through Psychosocial Emotional Learning** highlights the importance of relationships, communication, and compassion for others. It presents a critical view in supporting, training, and retaining teachers through the lens of engaging and modeling behaviors that will help our rural students be better civic leaders and community members. My favorite quote from the book gives credit to the author's upbringing and modeling from his parents: 'We must experience the world through others so we can fully engage in educating all children. My father and mother modeled to me and my siblings how to experience the world through somebody else's eyes, especially if their outer differences stirred up discomfort or displeasure, enriching all lives involved.' I recommend all leaders, teachers, and stakeholders secure their copy as they prepare for school. – Allen C. Pratt

While education faces an unrelenting threat, Dr. Jared Scherz reminds us to invest in our frontline defense. Impactful personal narratives blended with a new paradigm around SEL makes Dr. Scherz one of our premier thought leaders in education and this book a must read. – Dr. Richard Bozza

This book provides a useful introduction to the complex challenge of improving psychosocial emotional learning (PSEL). Building on the experiences of 15 educators, Jared Scherz proposes a new paradigm for whole school and individual health that balances body and brain and builds capacity both to self-regulate and tolerate distress. – James Harvey Psychosocial-emotional skills are much harder to teach than the insouciant moniker 'soft skills' has, for decades, suggested. **Whole School Health Through Psychosocial Emotional Learning** provides a clear and welcome roadmap for professional educators around the world to follow as they upgrade their approach to nurturing the whole child. Schools and districts that adopt these principles will boost the mental health and stamina of their students and faculty alike. – Christopher Thurber

Educators today must navigate a more dynamic terrain than previous generations. **Whole School Health Through Psychosocial Emotional Learning** provides a practical

framework for improving the satisfaction and well-being of educators and students, all through the lens of whole school health. <>

History / African-American Studies / Biographies & Memoirs

## **The Three Mothers**: How the Mothers of Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and James Baldwin Shaped a Nation by Anna Malaika Tubbs (Flatiron Books)

Much has been written about Berdis Baldwin's son James, about Alberta King's son Martin Luther, and Louise Little's son Malcolm. But virtually nothing has been said about the extraordinary women who raised them.

In her debut **The Three Mothers**, scholar Anna Malaika Tubbs celebrates Black motherhood by telling the story of the three women who raised and shaped some of America's most pivotal heroes.

Tubbs is a Cambridge Ph.D. candidate in sociology and a Bill and Melinda Gates Cambridge Scholar. Outside of the academy she is an educator, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion consultant, and the First Partner of Stockton, California.

Berdis Baldwin, Alberta King, and Louise Little were all born at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and forced to contend with the prejudices of Jim Crow as Black women. According to Tubbs in **The Three Mothers**, these three extraordinary women passed their knowledge to their children with the hope of helping them to survive in a society that would deny their humanity from the very beginning – from Louise teaching her children about their activist roots, to Berdis encouraging James to express himself through writing, to Alberta basing all of her lessons in faith and social justice. These women used their strength and motherhood to push their children toward greatness, all with a conviction that every human being deserves dignity and respect despite the rampant discrimination they faced.

These three mothers taught resistance and a fundamental belief in the worth of Black people to their sons, even when these beliefs flew in the face of America's racist practices and led to ramifications for all three families' safety. The fight for equal justice and dignity came above all else for the three mothers celebrated in **The Three Mothers**.

*Tubbs does a masterful job of interweaving the facts of these women's lives into the evolving social and political histories of civil rights, including accounts of the horrific injustices suffered by women of color. – Booklist, starred review*

**The Three Mothers** is a fascinating exploration into the lives of three women ignored by history after raising sons who helped shape a movement. By tracing the intellectual, political, and emotional strands of each woman's life, Anna Malaika Tubbs uncovers hidden complexities

*within black motherhood that illuminate our understanding of the past while also shedding light on the overlooked contributions of black women today. An eye-opening, engrossing read!* – Brit Bennett, New York Times bestselling author of *The Vanishing Half* and *The Mothers*

*Tubbs's connection to these women is palpable on the page – as both a mother and a scholar of the impact Black motherhood has had on America. Through Tubbs's writing, Berdis, Alberta, and Louise's stories sing. Theirs is a history forgotten that begs to be told, and Tubbs tells it brilliantly.*

– Ibram X. Kendi, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *How to Be an Antiracist* and National Book Award winner *Stamped from the Beginning*  
**[The Three Mothers](#)** tells a captivating story of women traumatized by the nation they and their sons would ultimately help transform.... There's no doubt that [it] will be at the forefront of that changing conversation about Black womanhood. – Destiny Birdsong, BookPage

*Anna Malaika Tubbs does what Black women do best: hold up the light in darkness, calling us all to do our work. The light Alberta, Louise and Berdis deserve is finally shining on them, not only as mothers, but as women whose lives and examples can stir up the gift in all of us. When we tell the stories of Black women with the sharp truth and clarity Anna has, we can better honor the past and find guidance for the struggles of today. Anna is a powerful storyteller, and we should all be grateful she chose to tell this story.* – Brittany Packnett Cunningham, co-host of Pod Save the People and co-founder of Campaign Zero

*In excavating the life stories of the mothers who reared three of the most central figures in the struggle for civil rights, Anna Malaika Tubbs provides a profound reflection on the contours of Black freedom in the twentieth century and beyond. **[The Three Mothers](#)** is an essential celebration of Black women, one that illuminates the history of racism and resistance in critical new ways. A timely and important book.* – Elizabeth Hinton, author of *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime*

*Anna Malaika Tubbs' magnificent debut **[The Three Mothers](#)** is an intimate explication of motherhood as the shoulders upon which children stand. Yes, it is a biographical sketch of the Black women who erected strong foundations for their would-be famous sons while going largely unrecognized themselves, but it's also a love letter to these three particular Black women; a scholarly rejection of the trope of Black woman as conquered victim; and a literary declaration that Black women know best how to survive in this broken world while actively mending it for everyone.* – Julie Lythcott-Haims, New York Times bestselling author of *How to Raise an Adult* and *Real American*

*Tubbs debuts with an engrossing triple biography of Alberta King, mother*

*of Martin Luther King Jr.; Louise Little, mother of Malcolm X; and Berdis Baldwin, mother of James Baldwin.... Tubbs skillfully draws parallels between each woman's story, and vividly captures the early years of the civil rights movement. This immersive history gives credit where it's long overdue. – Publishers Weekly*

*... an intimate narrative that aims to link not only Little, King, and Baldwin, but all Black mothers. – New York Times Book Review*

*This ambitious book reframes African American history, supplying the female Black experience as a much-needed perspective. – The Washington Post*

*... a great examination of a rarely-told triple story you'll love. – The Miami Times*

**[The Three Mothers](#)** is a groundbreaking, essential and long overdue scholarly debut celebrating Black motherhood. These women, their similarities and differences, as individuals and as mothers, represent a piece of history left untold and Tubbs tells it well.

<>

History / Media Studies

## **[The New Enlightenment and the Fight to Free Knowledge](#)** by Peter B. Kaufman (Seven Stories Press)

How do we create a universe of truthful and verifiable information, available to everyone?

In **[The New Enlightenment and the Fight to Free Knowledge](#)**, MIT Open Learning's Peter B. Kaufman describes the powerful forces that have purposely crippled our efforts to share knowledge widely and freely.

A writer, teacher, and documentary film producer, Kaufman works at MIT Open Learning and MIT's Knowledge Futures Group. He previously served as Associate Director of Columbia University's Center for Teaching and Learning.

Popes and their inquisitors, emperors and their hangmen, commissars and their secret police – throughout history, all have sought to stanch the free flow of information. Kaufman writes of times when the Bible could not be translated – people would be burned for trying; when dictionaries and encyclopedias were forbidden; when literature and science and history books were trashed and pulped – sometimes along with their authors; and when efforts to develop public television and radio networks were quashed by private industry.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the enemies of free thought have taken on new and different guises – giant corporate behemoths, sprawling national security agencies, gutted regulatory

commissions. Bereft of any real moral compass or sense of social responsibility, their work to surveil and control people is no less nefarious than their 16<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century predecessors. They are all part of what Kaufman calls the 'Monsterverse.'

[The New Enlightenment and the Fight to Free Knowledge](#) maps out the opportunities to mobilize for the fight ahead. Kaufman says that with the Internet and other means of media production and distribution – video especially – at hand, knowledge institutions like universities, libraries, museums, and archives have a special responsibility to counter misinformation, disinformation, and fake news – and especially efforts to control the free flow of information.

A film and video producer and former book publisher, Kaufman begins to draft a new social contract for the networked video age. He draws his inspiration from those who fought tooth and nail against earlier incarnations of the Monsterverse – including William Tyndale in the 16<sup>th</sup> century; Denis Diderot in the 18<sup>th</sup>; untold numbers of Soviet and Central and East European dissidents in the 20<sup>th</sup> – many of whom paid the ultimate price. Who are their successors? Advocates of free knowledge, like Aaron Swartz; of free software, like Richard Stallman; of an enlightened public television and radio network, like James Killian; of a freer Internet, like Tim Berners-Lee; and of fuller rights and freedoms, like Edward Snowden. All have been striving to secure a better world, marked by the right balance between state, society, and private gain.

The concluding section of [The New Enlightenment and the Fight to Free Knowledge](#), its largest piece, builds on their work, drawing up a progressive agenda for how today's free thinkers can band together now to fight and win.

*Peter B. Kaufman's call for a new Enlightenment couldn't be more timely, or more necessary. His polemic against those who purport to own knowledge shows that knowledge is freedom and can belong to all or to none. The choice is ours. – Edward Snowden*

*Mellifluous, intelligent, erudite – a pleasure to read. – Charles Nesson, William F. Weld Professor of Law at Harvard Law School and founder of the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard*

*Kaufman's brilliant exposition of the need for an online Fifth Estate and his ardent support of an online creative commons are both timely and convincing. Everyone who draws on the web for research and intellectual inspiration should read this book. – Michael Scammell, author,*

*Solzhenitsyn: A Biography and Koestler: The Literary and Political Odyssey of a Twentieth-Century Skeptic and founding editor, Index on Censorship*  
*Peter Kaufman has provided a powerful argument for the right of all of us to know. In forceful prose, he explains how information has been controlled from the invention of printing to today. But, he argues, thanks to the internet, we can still win the battle to create the full and free access to knowledge necessary for self-governing. This is a book that will spearhead debate in the twenty-first century. – Alice Kessler-Harris, R.*

Gordon Hoxie Professor of History, Emerita, Columbia University  
*Peter Kaufman mounts an impassioned yet prodigiously documented argument for making the public sphere a public good. He surveys a wide swath of the past three centuries, from the Enlightenment's Encyclopedia, through the would-be intellectual seedlings of samizdat underground publications under totalitarianism, to the current maelstrom of data and content left unbridled in the hands of private corporations. From this, he delivers a historically informed account of the striving for information treated not as a commodity but as a public necessity and right. His arguments could hardly be more timely as we enter the third decade of both the major social media platforms and of Wikipedia – the Enlightenment philosophes' fantasy of what public enlightenment could become.* – Peter Baldwin, professor of history at UCLA, Global Distinguished Professor of History at NYU

With everything shut and everyone going online, [The New Enlightenment and the Fight to Free Knowledge](#) is a rousing call to action that expands the definition of what it means to be a citizen in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is well written and highly readable. <>

Literature & Fiction / Historical / Science Fiction

**[Master of the Revels](#)**: A Return to Neal Stephenson's D.O.D.O. by Nicole Galland (D.O.D.O. Series, Book 2: William Morrow)

**The Rise and Fall of D.O.D.O.** is an enthralling, history-bending adventure traversing time and space, fact and fiction, magic and science co-written with #1 *New York Times* bestselling author Neal Stephenson. In it, a daring young time traveler must return to Jacobean England to save the modern world.

**[Master of the Revels](#)** is **The Rise and Fall of D.O.D.O.**'s brilliant sequel.

Author Nicole Galland's five previous novels are **The Fool's Tale**; **Revenge of the Rose**; **Crossed**; **I, Iago**; and **Godiva**. She writes a cheeky etiquette column for the Martha's Vineyard Times.

**[Master of the Revels](#)** picks up where the original left off, as Tristan Lyons, Mel Stokes, and their fellow outcasts from the Department of Diachronic Operations (D.O.D.O.) fight to stop the powerful Irish witch Gráinne from using time travel to reverse the evolution of all modern technology.

Chief among Gráinne's plots: to encrypt cataclysmic spells into Shakespeare's 'cursed' play, Macbeth. When her fellow rogue agents fall victim to Gráinne's schemes,

Melisande Stokes is forced to send Tristan's untested, wayward sister Robin back in time to 1606 London, where Edmund Tilney, the king's Master of Revels, controls all staged performances in London.

And now Gráinne controls Tilney.

While Robin poses as an apprentice in Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, Mel travels to the ancient Roman Empire and, with the help of double-agent Chira in Renaissance Florence, untangles the knotted threads of history while the diabolical Gráinne jumps from timeline to timeline, always staying frustratingly one stop ahead – or is it behind?

Historical objects disappear, cities literally rise and fall, and nothing less than the fate of humanity is at stake. As Gráinne sows chaos across time and space, the ragtag team of ex-D.O.D.O. agents must fix the past – in order to save the future.

*Galland does a good job evoking the feel of each period from which the letters or other materials originate... for those who favor time-travel yarns, this will be an absorbing and satisfying experience. – Booklist*

*Galland's careful attention to everyday life in various time periods creates verisimilitude, as does the assortment of found documents through which the tale is presented. Fans of time-travel science fiction are sure to be engaged. – Publishers Weekly*

Critically acclaimed author Galland brings her deep knowledge of history and signature wit to [Master of the Revels](#), a gripping romantic adventure. <>

Literature & Fiction / Short Stories / Anthologies

**[Best of R. A. Lafferty](#)** by R A Lafferty, edited by Jonathan Strahan, with an introduction by Neil Gaiman (*Tor Essentials: A Tom Doherty Associates Book*)

Civilizations rise and fall in a single night, only to rise again.

A family hides its farm from prying eyes in a valley narrow enough to throw a rock across – maybe.

Strange men and wise women, the people who secretly rule the world, appear in stories and disappear just as quickly.

Acclaimed as one of the most original voices in modern literature, a winner of the World Fantasy Award for lifetime achievement, Raphael Aloysius Lafferty (1914-2002) was an American original, a teller of acute, indescribably loopy tall tales whose work has been compared to that of Avram Davidson, Flannery O'Connor, Flann O'Brien, and Gene

Wolfe.

Lafferty lived almost his entire life in Tulsa, Oklahoma. After service in the South Pacific during World War II, he worked as an electrical engineer. He began selling fiction regularly in the early 1960s, and went full-time as a writer in 1971. His work draws on many influences, ranging from Irish and Native American tales to the writings of St. Teresa of Avila. His novels include *Past Master* (1968), *Fourth Mansions* (1969), and the Native American historical *Okla Hannali* (1972).

The [Best of R. A. Lafferty](#) presents 22 of Lafferty's best flights of offbeat imagination, ranging from classics like "Nine Hundred Grandmothers" and "The Primary Education of the Cameroi" to his Hugo Award-winning "Eurema's Dam."

Introduced by Neil Gaiman, [Best of R. A. Lafferty](#) also contains story introductions and afterwords by, among many others, Michael Dirda, Samuel R. Delany, John Scalzi, Connie Willis, Jeff VanderMeer, Kelly Robson, Harlan Ellison, Michael Swanwick, Robert Silverberg, Neil Gaiman, and Patton Oswalt.

Gaiman says in the introduction, that there are few enough authors who simply make him happy. There are authors who make him think, or who trouble him in good ways, or make him worry for their characters. Lafferty did those things, and did them well. But he says he does more than that. He says he starts to smile with pleasure when he starts reading a Lafferty story. It's the way the tale is told, the voice of the teller, that brings him so much joy.

There isn't anyone out there with whom it's easy to compare Lafferty: Avram Davidson wrote unclassifiable and brilliant stories, and knew more of the world, but his stories did not feel like tall tales, nor were they such great lies told with so straight a face.

Gaiman in [Best of R. A. Lafferty](#) says he read all the Lafferty he could. He followed him as the work got darker, then more personal. He followed him from the big publishers to the small presses and the pamphlets. He read the work that he understood and the work that he didn't.

And as he writes, Gaiman says, it occurs to him that he has missed out all the biographical stuff.

Raphael Aloysius Lafferty, Ray to his friends, was from Tulsa, Oklahoma. He trained as an electrical engineer and worked for an electrical supply company. until he retired, aged forty-five. He was a professional writer from then until he retired again. He was Catholic ("Catholicism plays a big part in my life. Without it I would be in the gutter entirely. With it, I have only one foot in the gutter.") and an alcoholic ("Drinking has influenced my writing all in the wrong direction. I am an alcoholic and shouldn't drink at all. But once or twice a year I forget this and the results are usually sad. More of my writing has been ruined by my drinking than improved by it. Yet there's always a goose there, it's part of the 'to seek and not to find' motif. Somewhere, somewhere there must be this mind-

expanding elixir! Such delusions are part of life. When I was younger I got a lot of pleasure and companionship out of drinking, but probably no creative impetus.")

He was in the army in WWII, and was sent to the South Pacific, but maintained that, at twenty-eight, he was ten years too old when this happened to properly enjoy or appreciate it.

He published his first science fiction story, "Day of the Glacier," in *Original Science Fiction Stories* in 1960 when he was forty-six. "I was moderately successful," he said of his writing. "It didn't put me on easy street, but it put me on easy alley."

He won the Hugo Award in 1973 for "Eurema's Dam," which was a good story, but he lost awards with much better stories, and some of his finest stories were never noticed by the people who nominate one for awards. He retired from writing in 1984, having published over two hundred short stories and over twenty novels.

He had a stroke in 1994, and Alzheimer's in his final years. He died in 2002, in a nursing home in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, twenty minutes from Tulsa.

In a brief piece he wrote to accompany a photo of himself in Patti Perret's 1985 book *The Faces of Science Fiction*, he said, "When I was forty-five years old, I tried to be a writer. I became the best short story writer in the world. I've been telling people that for twenty years, but some of them don't believe me."

Gaiman says that he believed, and it is not impossible that, once readers also have read [Best of R. A. Lafferty](#), they may become believers as well.

*What we love about Lafferty's stories is the joyfulness of their telling, the playful diction, the topsy-turvy plot surprises, the knowing winks.... We're here for the ride. – Michael Dirda*

*The most important science fiction writer you've never heard of. – The Guardian*

*Lafferty is our unheralded American Garcia Marquez. – Terry Bisson*

*These stories will knock your brain off its axis. – Bill Hader, star of Superbad and Barry*

**Tor Essentials** presents science fiction and fantasy titles of proven merit and lasting value, each volume introduced by an appropriate literary figure. [Best of R. A. Lafferty](#) is such a volume. <>

**Step into Wilderness**: A Pictorial History of Outdoor Exploration In and Around the Comox Valley by Deborah Griffiths, Christine Dickinson, Judy Hagen, & Catherine Siba (Harbour Publishing)

**Step into Wilderness** is a photographic history of outdoor exploration in the Comox Valley and surroundings, from Qualicum to Campbell River. It focuses on the period from the mid-1800s to the 1930s and beyond.

The spectacular landscapes in and surrounding the Comox Valley on Vancouver Island have long shaped the lives of the valley's diverse inhabitants. From expansive shorelines to snowy mountain peaks, the region contains a wide variety of attractions to lure people over their thresholds for sustenance, recreation and survival, including such landmarks as Forbidden Plateau, Paradise Meadows, Comox Glacier, Mt. Washington and Miracle Beach.

In **Step into Wilderness**, the authors who created ***Watershed Moments: A Pictorial History of the Comox Valley*** in 2015 take another look at how people viewed Vancouver Island and how they interacted with it. In curating image collections, Courtenay and District Museum staff and volunteers saw central themes emerging. The book focuses on the theme of people living in the natural world and exploring both the opportunities it provides and the challenges it presents.

The book has four authors. Deborah Griffiths is the Executive Director of the Courtenay and District. Christine Dickinson is an educator with a passion for regional history. Judy Hagen has been writing her popular "Hunt for History" column for the Comox Valley Echo since 1992. Catherine Siba is the Curator of Social History at the Courtenay and District Museum.

**Step into Wilderness** features never-before-seen photos from the Courtenay and District Museum collection, showcasing the growing community's varied interactions with the wilderness they inhabit, from early hiking and skiing expeditions to encounters with wildlife, afternoon tea in the wilderness, beach races and early outdoor activity clubs. The collection also explores the ways in which inhabitants have altered the landscape, including K'omoks Bay fish traps and stump blasting to clear fields. These unique and arresting photos are complemented by equally engaging accounts of individuals surviving and thriving in the midst of natural beauty and great devastation, including survivors of the great fire of 1922 and pioneer skiers on Forbidden Plateau during the Great Depression.

Images, diaries and ephemera shape the narrative in [Step into Wilderness](#), conveying the Comox Valley's expansive beauty, from shore to mountain peaks, and taking readers back to a time when people relied on the land for survival, sustenance, recreation and enjoyment. Descriptions found in journals and letters of mountaintop views of the sweeping Desolation Sound area – referred to as the 'Sound country' to the east, at the foot of the mainland's Coast Mountain Range – reveal why the region continues to be an international destination. Publications, oral history transcripts, correspondence, logbooks, interviews and diaries provide context for the images and narrative.

More than a collection of beautiful photos, [Step into Wilderness](#) illustrates a community's evolving relationship with the natural wonders surrounding it, as well as the emergence of outdoor exploration on Vancouver Island. <>

Religion & Spirituality / Christianity / Politics / Social Policy

## **[Abortion Policy and Christian Social Ethics in the United States](#)** by Mako A. Nagasawa (Wipf & Stock)

Today's Christian pro-life movement has misplaced its priorities. The issue of abortion is more complex than the movement often appreciates. For a start, Scripture is less clear about the moral weight of the fetus than people often think. In fact, early Christians took different positions on abortion because they also relied on different scientific sources about the unborn. Furthermore, Christian conservatives today do not acknowledge that in American history, as today, Christian stances on abortion were motivated by other political fears: White Protestant Americans developed *different* state laws on abortion to accomplish anti-immigrant goals in the North, but anti-black racism in the South. That messiness impacts U.S. constitutional law, including *Roe v. Wade*. Meanwhile, Scripture commissions God's people to confront socio-economic factors that push abortion rates higher: male privilege and the disempowerment of women; the high cost of child raising; the causes of birth defects; the desire to care narrowly for just 'my children'; mistaken views about contraception and 'the culture wars'; and most of all, poverty. [Abortion Policy and Christian Social Ethics in the United States](#) incorporates biblical studies, church history, science, social science, history, and public policy to argue that readers must not approach abortion policy primarily from a criminal justice standpoint, as modern conservatives do, but from a broad social and economic standpoint meant to benefit and bless all children.

The author, Mako A. Nagasawa, is Director of The Anastasis Center for Christian Education and Ministry. He serves on the Elder Team of Neighborhood Church of Dorchester.

Nagasawa in [Abortion Policy and Christian Social Ethics in the United States](#) says he thought he understood abortion as an issue until he started examining it more deeply. When he investigated how Christians have historically understood the moral worth of the unborn, and what their biblical foundations were, the issues became unclear.

It's an important moment to look at the issues. Abortion is a hotly contested issue, so much so that some Christians have become single-issue voters. The Bible is clearer about how to organize communities and resources to encourage a mother and father to believe that bringing their child into the world will be a blessing to that child, to them, and to the world. Yet that clarity is largely ignored today.

Nagasawa's approach in [Abortion Policy and Christian Social Ethics in the United States](#) is not to focus on abortion as an issue of personal ethics primarily, but to approach it in terms of social policies and via what some would call Christian 'political theology.'

Nagasawa reexamines some of the history from the standpoint of how Christian theological positions, science, culture, law, and social policies interact. At times, he offers some tentative policy proposals, hopefully acknowledging where uncertainties exist. At other times, he speaks especially to Christians, Christian ministers, and ethicists, or to those hoping to understand why Christians have taken the positions that they have, hoping for more meaningful conversations with them. In the end, he hopes Christians can resume a much fuller and broader engagement with the issue of abortion, acknowledging the limits of their own knowledge and tools but still communicating the love of Jesus.

*Mako A. Nagasawa's [Abortion Policy and Christian Social Ethics in the United States](#) is a tough-minded, learned, and prophetic work of social history and political theology.... This book is a significant contribution to move some Christians from simply being reductionistic anti-abortion to more robustly pro-life. – Patrick T. Smith, Associate Research Professor of Theological Ethics and Bioethics, Duke Divinity School*

*Mako Nagasawa's book is an extraordinary contribution to the longstanding, deeply divisive, seemingly irresolvable debate over abortion in Christian ethics. No significant angle on abortion fails to receive Nagasawa's painstaking, detailed, convincing attention: biological science, biblical exegesis, theological and pastoral history, legal history and debate, ethical analysis, practical implications. This is a study that loves God, loves the miracle of life, and calls on Christians to promote responsible sexual and parenting behavior by men as much as women. – David W. Gill, author of *Doing Right: Practicing Ethical Principles**

*Amidst the toxic standoff of the culture wars, it is difficult to imagine a fresh Christian voice on abortion. But Mako Nagasawa's new book offers*

*us a way beyond the impasse that is nuanced, visionary, and deeply biblical. If you think there's nothing left to say about abortion, this book will surprise and challenge you.* – Gary VanderPol, co-author of *Return to Justice*

**[Abortion Policy and Christian Social Ethics in the United States](#)** takes a fresh look at the abortion debate in all its complexities: male privilege, disempowerment of women, the high cost of child raising, causes of birth defects, the desire to care for just 'my' children, mistaken views about contraception, the culture wars, and poverty. Nagasawa wants Christians to look more deeply and reorient their priorities. <>

Religion & Spirituality / Biblical Studies / History & Culture

## **[Censoring God](#)**: The History of the Lost Books (and other Excluded Scriptures) by Jim Willis (Visible Ink Press)

Why isn't the Book of Enoch in the Bible, even though Enoch is referenced multiple times? Why were texts considered sacred by many, excluded by others? Who made the decisions and why?

There are more than 50 books – some of which exist only in fragments while others are complete and whole – that are not included in the biblical canon. Why were they discarded? Most Protestant denominations settled on 66 canonical books of the Bible, while there are 73 for Roman Catholics and 78 for Eastern Orthodox adherents. Why are there these differences of opinion?

People are often taught that the Bible is, in the words of many religious catechisms, “the infallible word of faith and practice.” In reality, the Bible can also be seen as a political document as much as a spiritual one. Ordained minister and theologian Jim Willis examines the historical, political, and social climates that influenced the redactors and editors of the Bible and other sacred texts in **[Censoring God: The History of the Lost Books \(and other Excluded Scriptures\)](#)**. It looks at the power of God's words, the human frailties of interpretation, and a variety of dissenting, suppressed, and forbidden accounts of history and the origins of humanity.

Willis earned his master's degree in theology from Andover Newton Theological School, and he has been an ordained minister for over forty years. He has also taught college courses in comparative religion and cross-cultural studies. His background in theology and education has led to his writing more than a dozen books on religion, the apocalypse, cross-cultural spirituality, and the mysteries of the unknown.

In analyzing why texts were censored, Willis uncovers sometimes surprising biases. He investigates enigmatic hints of Bible codes and ancient wisdom that implies a greater spiritual force might have been at work. Willis explores the importance of the Book of

Enoch, its disappearance, and how it was rediscovered in Ethiopia. He analyzes over two dozen excluded texts, such as Jubilees and the Gospel of Thomas, along with the many references to books that scholars know about from fragments but remain lost.

Thought-provoking and provocative, [Censoring God](#) scrutinizes how sacred texts might have been used to justify the power of the powerful, including the destruction of sacred writings of conquered indigenous cultures because they did not agree with the finished version of the Bible accepted by the Church establishment. This book looks at the human failings in interpreting God's words and brings a deeper understanding of the power and importance of the lost words. With more than 120 photos and graphics, [Censoring God](#) is richly illustrated. Its bibliography provides sources for further exploration, and an extensive index adds to its usefulness. <>

Religion & Spirituality / Christianity

**[After Doubt](#)**: How to Question Your Faith without Losing It by A.J. Swoboda, with a foreword by John Mark Comer (Brazos Press)

Award-winning author, pastor, and professor A. J. Swoboda has witnessed many young people wrestle with their core Christian beliefs. Too often, what begins as a set of critical and important questions turns to resentment and faith abandonment. Unfortunately, the church has largely ignored its task of serving people along their journey of questioning. But, according to Swoboda, the local church must walk alongside those who are deconstructing their faith and show them how to reconstruct it. In [After Doubt](#) Swoboda offers a hopeful, practical vision for questioning your faith without losing it. Swoboda is assistant professor of Bible, theology, and world Christianity at Bushnell University in Eugene, Oregon, and leads a Doctor of Ministry cohort on the Holy Spirit and leadership at Fuller Theological Seminary.

Drawing on his own experience of deconstruction, Swoboda in [After Doubt](#) offers tools to help emerging adults navigate their faith in a hostile landscape. Doubt is a part of our natural spiritual journey, says Swoboda, and deconstruction is a legitimate space to encounter the living God.

[After Doubt](#) raises the question: Is it possible to question one's faith without losing it?

This book's title captures the side of following Jesus from faith toward doubt: **After Doubt**. Doubt and deconstruction, Swoboda shows, play important roles in the journey of following Jesus. They can be exhilarating experiences, but also oppressive and hopeless. Though both have their dark sides, he shows that they can play a vital role in how people follow Jesus. This book is largely the result of countless requests from

pastors, friends, and colleagues who've personally lamented the lack of resources on the topic. How do we follow Jesus after doubt takes hold?

Doubt – as a topic – has been given ample attention. As publications on the topic have proliferated, so have approaches to walking through it. Some valorize doubt. Others demonize it. The proposed solutions are almost always far too simplistic. Some point to progressive Christianity as a utopian community of freedom and liberation. Others warn that the only option is to retreat behind the safe walls of conservatism. [After Doubt](#) forges an alternative path. The core conviction of the book is that Christ's invitation is not to the right or to the left. Rather, Christ's call is to go deeper into himself. There is an abundance of books on the philosophy, history, and theology of deconstruction; books on how to approach doubt using self-help; how to understand doubt and deconstruction from a purely academic and theological perspective; how to minister to those in doubt; how to parent the doubting child; how to love the doubting parent; and even how to lead churches in this cultural moment filled with doubt. This is not those. In short, what Swoboda helps readers think through the how of doubt and deconstruction – the spiritual formation side of these experiences. [After Doubt](#), as such, is less about deconstruction and doubt as it is about how they walk through these experiences faithfully with and toward Jesus.

[After Doubt](#) is structured in two parts. Part 1 is primarily descriptive, providing critical language around the doubt and deconstruction experiences. Chapter 1 introduces readers to doubt and deconstruction, and chapter 2 locates them in the 'theological journey.' Chapter 3 explores how Western culture has shaped the way people doubt and deconstruct Christian beliefs. Readers will no doubt note a discernible shift in part 2 of [After Doubt](#), which turns toward vital disciplines and practices for those who are actually following Jesus in this age of deconstruction. These chapters explore and commend eight such practices, all rooted in ancient Christian practice and tradition.

*In this remarkable book, A. J. guides us into a path of stronger faith through the surprising valley of doubt. I resonated with this book at a profound level and think you will too. – Jon Tyson, Church of the City New York; author of Beautiful Resistance*

*Whether you're in the midst of the isolation and disruption that doubting your faith often leads to or if you're leading those who are, A. J. Swoboda's voice is one of a well-differentiated leader, accurately articulating the struggle many Christians are experiencing and casting a hopeful vision for a way forward together. – Emily P. Freeman, author of The Next Right Thing*

*A must-read for anyone who has realized that not everything we grew up believing about Christianity is true. With much wisdom and wit, Swoboda*

*navigates us through the turbulent waters of deconstruction-reconstruction.* – Preston Sprinkle, president of The Center for Faith, Sexuality & Gender

*Swoboda invites us to reimagine what's happening when we doubt the coherence of the Christian faith. What if the disorientation is actually a strange gift, pushing us toward growth and transformation? In this book you'll find wisdom and guidance as you take your questions deeper.* – Tim Mackie, cofounder of the BibleProject

*As a college professor who daily watches the challenges of life and the ideologies of the age batter my students' confidence in their Christian faith, I am eager to put this book into their hands. It offers an informed, insightful, and deeply empathetic conversation about the road home.* – Sandra Richter, Westmont College

*By the time I was done reading this, I was able to embrace my doubts-as-longing as a gift and found myself loving Jesus and his church in a new and deeper way.* – James Bryan Smith, author of *The Good and Beautiful God*

[After Doubt](#) offers a hopeful, practical vision of spiritual formation for those in the process of faith deconstruction and those who serve them. <>

Religion & Spirituality / Christianity / Social Issues

## **[Faith, Class, and Labor](#): Intersectional Approaches in a Global Context** edited by Jin Young Choi & Joerg Rieger (**Intersectionality and Theology Series**: Pickwick Publications)

Despite the fact that 99 percent of Americans work for a living and although work shapes them to the core, class and labor are topics that are underrepresented in the work of scholars of religion, theology, and the Bible. With [Faith, Class, and Labor](#), an international group of scholars and activists from nine different countries brings issues of religion, class, and labor back into conversation.

Editors are Jim Young Choi and Joerg Rieger. Choi is Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins and the Baptist Missionary Training School Professorial Chair for Biblical Studies at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School. Rieger is Distinguished Professor of Theology, Cal Turner Chancellor's Chair in Wesleyan Studies, and the Director of the Wendland-Cook Program in Religion and Justice at the Divinity School and the Graduate Department of Religion at Vanderbilt University.

Historians and theologians investigate how new images of God and the world emerge, and what difference they can make. Biblical critics develop new takes on ancient texts that lead to the reversal of readings that had been seemingly stable, settled, and taken for granted. Activists and organizers identify neglected sources of power and energy returning in new force and point to transformations happening. Asking how labor and religion mutually shape each other and how the agency of working people operates in their lives, the contributors also employ intersectional approaches that engage race, gender, sexuality, and colonialism.

As Rieger argues in chapter 1 of [Faith, Class, and Labor](#), the concerns of labor have the potential to deepen the experience and practice of religion, while engaged religion can help refocus and radicalize the labor movement. Examples are drawn from the Abrahamic religious traditions (Judaism, Christianity; and Islam) in various locations, with a focus on the southern parts of the U.S., where religion has often become part of the problem rather than the solution.

In the first section of [Faith, Class, and Labor](#), historical perspectives on class and labor are presented. In chapter 2, developments in China further broaden the horizons of both scholars and organizers. Kwok Pui-lan recalls the complex history of labor organizing in China and the various transformations that took place.

Juan M. Floyd-Thomas in chapter 3 examines the Black Manifesto that was introduced by civil rights activist James Forman in New York City's Riverside Church on May 4, 1969. Chapter 4, authored by Marcus Trammell, investigates how Pentecostal and other religious traditions that are usually classified as more conservative shape up in a context where working people of different racial and religious backgrounds begin to organize and gain influence in the worlds of politics and economics. What emerges is a fascinating picture of how the agency of working people is supported by (and shapes) seemingly unlikely religious traditions.

In the second section of [Faith, Class, and Labor](#), three biblical scholars provide trans-textual and/or trans-sectional readings of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, engaging issues around class and labor and intersections of gender/sexuality and race/ethnicity in the global and postcolonial contexts. In chapter 5, Jin Young Choi rereads the story of the poor widow (Mark 12:41-44) through the lens of her precarious life in the Roman imperial context, as well as in the context of Mark's narrative, in which Jesus appears to be concerned with economic transactions against the multitude (*ochios*). Choi's interpretation invites readers to watch through Jesus's eyes poor women's precarious work and lives within today's neoliberal capitalism.

Chapter 6, written by Gerald O. West, reflects on the capacity of trans-textual and trans-sectional resources to forge alliances across gender, race, and class. Employing Malchosazana Nzimande's intersectional *imbokodo* (grinding-stone) interpretive frame,

West provides a trans-textual reading of 2 Samuel 13:1-22 and 1 Kings 21:1–16 in the postcolonial context of South Africa.

Chapter 7 of [Faith, Class, and Labor](#) is another trans-textual reading, by Chin Ming Stephen Lim, of the book of Ruth with a play produced in Singapore, *Esperanza*, which centers on a Filipina domestic worker. Lim begins by situating Christians within class hierarchies of the wider society and the home in Singapore, particularly in relation to the foreign worker who provides 'intimate labor.' He examines the possible discursive effects of the text on Christian readers in Singapore so as to disrupt class desires that transform Ruth into a model worker while ignoring the systemic issues with her being a poor, foreign woman.

Chapters 8 and 9 in the third section focus on issues of class and labor that intersect with gender/sexuality, race, and powers manifested in the forms of militarism and white privilege, respectively. In chapter 8, Keun-Joo Christine Pae analyzes war and militarism through the two distinctive forms of necropolitical labor – military prostitution and soldiering. Pae constructs a class-sensitive Christian ethic of peace transected with gender/sexuality and race, asking the practical question of how 'God's preferential option for the poor' can critically inform transnational solidarity for peace.

In chapter 9, Sifiso Mpopu's interrogation of the intersection of race and class begins with the universal phenomenon that even the success of black people is treated not as being based on merit or hard work but as being stolen from white people. As class structures and Christian colonialism together have destroyed the spirit of *ubuntu* in Africa and the legacy of the structures of privilege have dominated Zimbabwe's society and church alike, the author argues that the church should speak out against institutionalized economic divisions that cause these social frictions.

The final section of [Faith, Class, and Labor](#) deals with organizing and activism. In chapter 10, Rosemarie Henkel-Rieger discusses how addressing economic realities, such as growing inequality, that affect workers and people of faith alike, can contribute to building relationships of solidarity.

Sithembiso S. Zwane in chapter 11 contrasts the 'invited spaces' of neoliberal capitalism that undermine working people and the 'invigorated spaces' that build agency among working class religious and social movements through engagements with the Bible.

In the final chapter, chapter 12 of [Faith, Class, and Labor](#), Karl James E. Villarnea investigates the employer-employee relationship as part of neoliberal capitalist construction of problematic forms of transcendence that are violent and destructive. In this context theologians have an opportunity to use the tools of their trade in order to develop alternatives, not merely in the field of knowledge but in engaging the world of social movements and political organizations.

*This collection of essays represents a fine addition to the growing juncture of religious-theological studies and economic studies. Its particular focus is on the significance of labor and class for the study and practice of religion and theology, and vice versa. Toward this end, the volume draws on an excellent group of scholars.... The result is a keen reading of the problematic from a broad variety of angles of vision. A creative and sophisticated interdisciplinary exercise; well done! – Fernando F. Segovia, Vanderbilt University*

*I thank the authors for laboring to connect work, faith as deep solidarity, and class realities as ways to breathe new life into labor struggles and the revitalization of religion. As long as people have to work for a living, this text is required reading for all who hunger and thirst for justice, and for those who labor and are heavy-laden. They are in fact, one and the same. – Angela Cowser, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary*

*This volume opens many lines of inquiry to redress one of the greatest failures of Christian theology, ethics, and biblical studies over the past few decades: not adequately engaging labor, class, and capitalism as such, in right proportion to the immense power the capitalist class exercises over every dimension of life. And the volume does so fully immersed in the intersections of class, gender, and race, thereby showing how each is indispensable for a full understanding of the others. – Jeremy Posadas, Austin College, Sherman, Texas*

***Faith, Class, and Labor** is a thoughtfully conceived anthology. Through the lenses of history, Bible, gender, and organizing and activism, authors representing eight geographical contexts present complex and nuanced readings of class that describe how intersectional circumstances influence and reveal the meaning of class in what people experience.... This book is a must-read for academic and practical engagement in Christian ethics as well as for all of us who sometimes are befuddled by the absence of concrete discussions of class as we witness its diverse, disappointing manifestations in our own communities and in communities around the globe. – Rosetta E. Ross, Spelman College*

In this collection of essays a group of scholars takes on labor and class and capitalism in religion. **Faith, Class, and Labor** presents transdisciplinary, transtextual, transactional, transnational, and transgressive work in progress, much needed in these times.

**Faith, Class, and Labor** is part of the **Intersectionality and Theology Series**. This series is a home for theologies that weave in the strands of gender, race, and class. This series exhibits the interwoven and intersectional natures of theology – theology is a weaving

or intersection where words, images, schemes, stories, bodies, struggles, cultures, and more, meet and exchange. At this weaving/intersection, traditions, standards and ideals inspire, transpire, and some even expire. <>

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