



We Review the
Best of the Latest
Books

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Archaeology / Mysteries / Civilizations / Ancient

Forgotten Civilization: New Discoveries on the Solar-Induced Dark Age, 2nd edition, revised & expanded by Robert M. Schoch Ph.D., with Catherine Ulissey (Inner Traditions)

My contention, as I will develop in [Forgotten Civilization](#), is that the sudden appearance of civilization circa 3000 BCE ... is not the first appearance of civilization. Rather it is the reemergence of civilization after some six thousand or more years. True, unambiguous civilization is evident during the period of circa 10,000 BCE, thousands of years earlier than the dynastic Egyptians and their contemporaries in Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley. This earlier flowering of civilization has been generally forgotten by humanity, although allusions to it are still to be found in sacred scriptures, traditional legends, and ancient texts; the Garden of Eden, tales of a golden age, and Plato's recounting of Atlantis may all be referencing this primordial civilization. Now it is time to recognize its legacy. – from the book

Forgotten Civilization is the **2nd edition** of a groundbreaking investigation into early high cultures and ancient solar outbursts.

In this expanded edition, updated throughout with recent developments, geologist Robert Schoch builds upon his revolutionary theory that the origins of the Sphinx date

Schoch, a tenured faculty member at Boston University, is known for his research on ancient civilizations and is the author of numerous books. Schoch is assisted by his wife, Catherine Ulissey, who contributes to his research while teaching art at Wellesley College.

Combining evidence from multiple scientific disciplines, Schoch makes the case that the abrupt end of the last ice age, circa 9700 BCE, was due to an agitated Sun. Solar outbursts unleashed electrical/plasma discharges upon Earth, triggering dramatic climate change as well as increased earthquake and volcanic activity, fires, high radiation levels, and massive floods. Schoch explains how these events impacted the civilizations of the time, set humanity back thousands of years, and led to six millennia of a Solar-Induced Dark Age (SIDA). Applying the SIDA framework to ancient history, he explores how many megalithic monuments, petroglyphs, indigenous traditions, and legends fall logically into place, including the underground cities of Cappadocia, the Easter Island rongorongo glyphs, and the Göbekli Tepe complex in Turkey. He also reveals that the Sun is a much more unstable star than previously believed, suggesting that history could repeat itself with a solar outburst powerful enough to devastate modern society.

Schoch says he was initially hesitant to produce a revised edition of [Forgotten Civilization](#), finding it in some ways easier to start fresh and write a new book. However, [Forgotten Civilization](#) has found a wide audience, and he feels that at this point, nearly a decade since its original publication, readers deserve an updated version while keeping the tenor and feel of the original edition. With this in mind, the original text – chapters 1 through 14 and appendices 1 through 5 – has been kept intact. He has incorporated selected updates in these chapters, but none of them has been fully rewritten.

The major addition to this edition is chapter 15. In this new chapter, Schoch discusses various developments that have taken place, evidence that has come forward, which supplement and reinforce the major themes of [Forgotten Civilization](#). True civilization existed at the end of the last ice age but was decimated by the natural catastrophes – namely, solar outbursts – that brought the last ice age to a sudden end, circa 9700 BCE. Today it is imperative that we learn from the past, as our active and sometimes unstable Sun is posed to unleash another major solar outburst, the likes of which we have never experienced in modern times.

Schoch is a true scientist, following the data wherever it leads, heedless of political pressures or worn-out paradigms. His redating of the Sphinx in 1991 launched the New Archaeology. [Forgotten Civilization](#) distills all that has happened since into a simple conclusion: that solar activity ended the last cycle of high culture and may destroy ours in turn. Schoch is no scaremonger, no hawk of a pet theory. What we do with this

*knowledge is up to us, but once digested, it changes everything. –
Joscelyn Godwin, author of Atlantis and the Cycles of Time*

Weaving together a new view of the origins and antiquity of civilization and the dynamics of the planet we live on, Schoch in [Forgotten Civilization](#) maintains we must heed the megalithic warning of the past and collectively prepare for future events. <>

Arts & Photography / Travel

[The Karakoram](#): Ice Mountains of Pakistan by Colin Prior (Merrell)

[The Karakoram](#) is a unique photographic record of the spectacular Karakoram Mountains of Pakistan, with spellbinding duotone and color images by the celebrated landscape photographer Colin Prior.

Prior is an acclaimed landscape photographer with almost four decades of experience. He seeks out patterns in the landscape and the hidden links between reality and the imagination. His images capturing sublime moments of light and land are the result of meticulous planning, and often take years to achieve.

The ice mountains of the Karakoram are among the world's greatest natural treasures. At 8611 meters (28,251 ft), K2 is the second tallest mountain on Earth. There are three other mountains in the range that top 8000 meters (26,247 ft) – Gasherbrum I, Broad Peak and Gasherbrum II – and more than 60 peaks above 7000 meters (22,966 ft). Extending in a southeasterly direction from the northeastern tip of Afghanistan and spanning the borders of Pakistan, India and China, the Karakoram is part of a complex of ranges in Central Asia that includes the Hindu Kush to the west and the Himalayas to the southeast. These mountains are distinctive. This is the most glaciated region on the planet outside the Arctic and Antarctic. But while most of the world's great peaks are almost blanketed in snow and ice, the Karakoram is an exception: the mountains are so vertical that they rapidly shed snow, leaving their bold, jagged outlines of black granite glistening in the sun.

Prior was initially inspired to visit the Karakoram in his early twenties: in his local library he picked up the book *In the Throne Room of the Mountain Gods* (1977) by the American climber and photographer Galen Rowell, and was instantly captivated by images of the sharp, fractured peaks and vast glaciers. His first trip to the Karakoram came in the mid-1990s, and he has been passionate about these mountains ever since. Prior's [The Karakoram](#) is the result of six expeditions he has made to the Gilgit-Baltistan region of northeast Pakistan over the last six years. Because the region is so remote, there are no established base camps, and each expedition requires careful planning and miles of trekking with a large team of guides, porters and ponies to carry the equipment and

provisions. There are regular rock falls and perilous snow-covered crevasses to contend with. The reward for Prior is what he calls the ultimate mountain landscape: 'The scenery is graphic, with towers, minarets and cathedrals of rock.' [The Karakoram](#) is a beautifully produced volume showcasing the breathtaking beauty of the Karakoram in some 130 duotone and color photographs. The images are largely arranged to follow Prior's progress up the glaciers, and are accompanied by well-chosen quotations from accounts of historical expeditions to the region. A selection of 'making of' images at the end of [The Karakoram](#) highlights the challenges of documenting the most exceptional mountain range in the world.

Having spent years documenting the range, Prior in [The Karakoram](#) perfectly captures the magnificence of the Karakoram: the stunning rock formations, the swirling mists that envelop infinitely complex mountains and clustered peaks, and seemingly endless glaciers blanketed in pristine snow. <>

Business & Economics / Management Nonprofits / Guides /
Law

[Starting & Building a Nonprofit: A Practical Guide,](#)

9th edition by Peri Pakroo, J.D. (Nolo)

Much like starting a typical, for-profit business, starting a nonprofit requires ingenuity, passion, and an entrepreneurial spirit. But nonprofit ventures offer unique rewards that many people find more compelling than the lure of financial gains in the for-profit world. For many socially minded entrepreneurs, starting a nonprofit is an ideal way to maintain a commitment to causes they care about while pursuing a career at the same time.

With practical advice, legal information, tips, and step-by-step instructions, [Starting & Building a Nonprofit](#) will help readers get their nonprofit up and running – and keep it going.

Author Peri Pakroo is a business author and coach, specializing in strategies for self-employment and small business. She has started, participated in, and consulted with start-up businesses for more than 20 years. She is the founder, publisher, and editor of *PyraGraph*, an online career magazine for artists, musicians, designers, filmmakers, writers, and other creative workers worldwide.

[Starting & Building a Nonprofit](#) explains how to:

- Develop a strategic plan and budget.
- Recruit, train, and manage board members, volunteers, and staff.
- Market the organization to the target audience.

- Launch successful fundraising efforts.
- Raise money including traditional methods and crowdfunding.
- Build a website, use social media strategically, and avoid copyright troubles.
- Adopt policies that are legally sound.

Whether readers are dreaming of starting a nonprofit or are already in the trenches, [Starting & Building a Nonprofit](#) will help them and their organization. The fully updated **ninth edition** contains new material on developing and implementing meaningful diversity, equity, and inclusion policies within their organization. It also covers recent changes to the law, including new incentives for donors under the CARES Act.

[Starting & Building a Nonprofit](#) comes with downloadable and customizable essential forms, including Contractor Work-for-Hire Agreement, Volunteer Assignment Agreement, and sample budget forms.

[Starting & Building a Nonprofit](#) describes the nonprofit organizational model and outlines all the steps and tasks involved in setting one up. It explains the practical steps necessary to start and run a nonprofit, from deciding whether to form a nonprofit in the first place, to engaging in strategic planning, managing finances and taxes, and developing a website. The first chapter explains some of the choices readers have to face at the outset, such as what to call their nonprofit, whether to incorporate, and whether to apply for a tax exemption. Each subsequent chapter focuses on an issue they face when launching their nonprofit, such as building a board of directors, recruiting and training staff and volunteers, fundraising, and marketing. At the end of each chapter, readers find a checklist that summarizes the key takeaway points, such as tasks for marketing the nonprofit.

Takes readers through the nuts and bolts, from deciding on a name to bookkeeping. – Library Journal

Describes the steps required to start and run a nonprofit organization. – Chronicle Philanthropy

Offers tons of practical advice and step-by-step instructions... – Accounting Today

Pakroo, a business and communications consultant specializing in legal and start-up issues for businesses and nonprofits, provides a guide to starting and building a nonprofit. Chapters cover naming and structuring the nonprofit, developing a strategic plan and initial budget, the board of directors, staff and volunteers, fundraising, risk management and insurance, contracts and agreements, marketing, publishing informational materials, creating an online presence, managing finances, and hiring

lawyers, accountants, and other professional help. – Eithne O'Leyne, Editor Ringgold, Inc., ProtoView

Offers practical advice to allow nonprofits to set up their operations so that they run smoothly and efficiently... – Deborah Brody Hamilton, Former Director, Member Services, Association of Small Foundations

Starting & Building a Nonprofit covers such fundamental issues as: Developing a strategic plan and budget; Recruiting and managing board members, volunteers, and staff; Market a non-profit organization to a targeted audience; Raising money including traditional methods and crowd-funding; Building a website, using social media strategically, and avoiding copyright troubles; Adopting policies that are legally sound; and so much more! Whether aspiring to start up a nonprofit or are already 'in the trenches', **Starting & Building a Nonprofit** will help any organization make a real difference in the world in this age of social media. – The Midwest Book Review, Taylor's Bookshelf

Readers learn to build great nonprofits with **Starting & Building a Nonprofit**, an essential guide. When they are finished reading, they will have a clear understanding of what it takes to run a successful nonprofit, and they will be ready to pour their efforts into the important work ahead. Armed with the information in the book, they will be ready for the challenges – and rewards – that await them in the nonprofit sector. <>

Business & Economics / Management / Self-Help / Series

Getting It All Done by Harvard Business Review, with series editor Daisy Dowling (**HBR Working Parents Series: Harvard Business Review Press**)

Taking Care of Yourself by Harvard Business Review (**HBR Working Parents Series: Harvard Business Review Press**)

The **HBR Working Parents Series** contains tips, stories, and strategies for the job that never ends.

This series with Daisy Dowling, Series Editor, supports readers as they anticipate challenges, learn how to advocate for themselves more effectively, juggle their impossible schedule, and find fulfillment at home and at work.

Dowling is founder and CEO of Workparent, the executive coaching and training firm, and the author of *Workparent: The Complete Guide to Succeeding on the Job, Staying*

True to Yourself, and Raising Happy Kids. She is a full-time working parent to two young children.

From classic issues such as work-life balance and making time for themselves to thorny challenges such as managing an urgent family crisis and the impact of parenting on their career, the **HBR Working Parents Series** features the practical tips, strategies, and research readers need to be – and feel – more effective at home and at work.

Books in the series include:

- ***Advice for Working Dads***
- ***Getting It All Done***
- ***Advice for Working Moms***
- ***Managing Your Career***
- ***Communicate Better with Everyone***
- ***Taking Care of Yourself***

One volume in the series, [Getting It All Done](#), says that it used to be simple before kids: Say yes to everything, stay late, turn in flawless work, catch up on sleep later. But now, with kids, readers need a different mindset to succeed at work, as parents, and as family members.

[Getting It All Done](#) can't teach readers to be in two places at once, but it provides them with expert advice as they manage the challenges of succeeding at work while making sure their family is housed, fed, healthy, safe, and educated.

Readers learn to:

- Delegate, enlist the help they need, and say 'no' to taking on more.
- Put their management skills to work outside the office.
- Get more work done with kids at home.
- Move on with resilience when they drop the ball.
- Navigate the chaos during the busiest times at work and at home.

Another volume in the series, [Taking Care of Yourself](#) says that too many working parents focus solely on those around them – their families, their work, and a never-ending list of other commitments – only to lose sight of what they need themselves. But neglecting their own needs and wants can prevent them from being happy, healthy, and productive.

[Taking Care of Yourself](#) provides expert advice to help readers identify what they value most at work and at home, make choices that align with those values, and be the best version of themselves for their jobs and for their families.

Readers learn to:

- Prioritize the tasks that are most meaningful to them – and let go of the rest.
- Deal with complex feelings, including parental guilt and perfectionism.

- Carve out time for self-care, including friends, hobbies, exercise, and sleep.
- Communicate their needs to their boss and their family.
- Feel more present, both at work and at home.

Whether readers are up with newborns or planning the future with their teens, in the **HBR Working Parents Series** they will find the practical tips, strategies, and research they need to make working parenthood work for them. <>

Entertainment & Sports / Crafts & Hobbies / Fishing

[The Orvis Guide to Stillwater Trout Fishing](#) by Phil Rowley, with a foreword by Tom Rosenbauer (Lyons Press)

Lakes are one of the most challenging opportunities available to today's fly fisher. Stillwaters offer a long active season with numerous hatches and presentation challenges. Fish grow big and fat and many fishers find this appeal hard to resist. But the transfer from rivers and streams is often difficult, especially if a prolonged trial-and-error approach is adopted. This book examines the stillwater fly fisher's kit bag, expectations, and offers an introduction to the diverse stillwater food sources. [The Orvis Guide to Stillwater Trout Fishing](#) explains everything the aspiring stillwater fly fisher needs to be successful and build a sound foundation that will last through a lifetime plying stillwaters.

Author Phil Rowley is the most highly respected authority on Stillwater trout fishing in North America. He does seminars, writes magazine articles, and gives presentations. He is also active in Trout Unlimited Canada and is a regular host for The New Fly Fisher TV show.

Tom Rosenbauer in the foreword to [The Orvis Guide to Stillwater Trout Fishing](#) says that the times when he actually gets on a lake or pond and conditions are right, whether it's fishing a Hex hatch on a northern lake for brook trout or sight-fishing to big browns cruising the shoreline, he loves stillwater trout. And he does okay as long as he does exactly what Rowley tells him. He may be having a difficult time and then Rowley set him up with a long indicator rig and he catches fish that way. Suddenly his spirits lift. That's what Rowley does to readers. He loves stillwater fishing and he adores teaching.

A lot has happened in stillwater trout fishing over the past twenty years, and North America has a long way to catch up to European anglers. Just ask members of the US fly-fishing team about the first time they competed against European anglers. It was a humbling experience, and North Americans, with vast resources as compared to those of Europe, were so far behind in techniques that they had to learn fly fishing from scratch. Rowley has been quietly forging ahead with innovative techniques that match the North American waters even better than borrowed tactics from the other side of the Atlantic.

Rosenbauer says that when he realized that the Orvis series of instructional books was missing a thorough, modern guide to stillwater trout fishing to complement the podcasts and videos Rosenbauer has done with Rowley over the years, it was pretty much a no-brainer to find the right author.

If readers have been searching for answers on finding trout in lakes and ponds, how to rig for them, what watercraft to buy, and how to pick the right fly, they need to go no further.

[The Orvis Guide to Stillwater Trout Fishing](#) has everything the stillwater fly fisher – or the aspiring one – needs to know. <>

Literature & Fiction / Mysteries / Thrillers / Classics

[The Progress of a Crime: A Fireworks Night Mystery](#) by Julian Symons, with an introduction by Martin Edwards (**British Library Crime Classics Series: Poisoned Penn Press**)

The murder, a brutal stabbing, definitely took place on Guy Fawkes Night. It was definitely by the bonfire on the village green. There were definitely a number of witnesses to a row between a group of Teddy Boys. And yet, was it definitely clear to anybody exactly what they had seen? In the writhing, violent shadows, it seems as if the truth of the crime may have gone up in smoke.

From the archives of the British Library comes [The Progress of a Crime](#), a classic thriller, full of mystery, police drama, and simmering tension.

Based on a real case, Julian Symons' phenomenal 1960 crime novel is a searing drama of wrongful accusation, gripping policework and a sharp portrait of small-town tensions.

Symons (1912-1994) was a notable writer of British crime fiction from the 1950s until his death, publishing more than thirty novels. He served as President of the prestigious Detection Club, won two Edgar Awards from the Mystery Writers of America, and is well known as the author of **Bloody Murder**, a classic history of crime fiction.

This **British Library Crime Classics** edition also includes the short story "The Tigers of Subtopia" and an introduction by award-winning author Martin Edwards.

[The Progress of a Crime](#) when it was published was one of the most successful crime novels of its era. With economy and skill, Symons blends his ingredients: a crime based on a real-life case; ruthless police methods; an insider's view of the newspaper world; and courtroom drama. Crisp dialogue, vivid characterization, and a sharp eye for the ironic flavor his narrative. The result is a book which, as the *Evening Standard's* reviewer

said, 'has the cool, accurate vision of the best documentary.' It is in many ways a very British book, yet its quality impressed the Mystery Writers of America, who gave it the prestigious Edgar Allan Poe Award for the year's best novel.

The lead character is a young journalist, Hugh Bennett. At the start of the story, naiveté is one of his defining features, evidenced not just by his passionate devotion to the work of his namesake Arnold Bennett (Symons was not a fan) but also by many of his attitudes: 'It seemed to him almost morally wrong that anybody over the age of thirty should experience sexual desire.' Hugh happens to be present at a bonfire on Guy Fawkes Night, when a local resident known as "the Squire of Far Wether" is killed after an altercation. The consequences of this tragedy are life-changing for Hugh, as well as for other characters. Over the course of the story, he begins to grow up.

[An] engrossing puzzle. – Booklist

Symons excels at conveying the wide impact Corby's murder has on multiple people. Fans of realistic, downbeat crime fiction will welcome this British Library Crime Classic reissue. – Publishers Weekly

With thorough research, skillful plotting, [The Progress of a Crime](#) gives readers insight into life in the English provinces sixty years ago. To this day it remains a good read. <>

Philosophy / Modern / Russian

[The Woods \(Hyle\)](#), 1st edition by Vladimir Bibikhin, edited by Artemy Magun, translated by Arch Tait (**New Russian Thought Series: Polity**)

In modern, urbanized societies, our engagement with the natural world often seems distant and superficial. Human life is now far removed from its prehistoric origins, when humans dwelt deep within the forests and depended on them for their survival.

In [The Woods](#), Vladimir Bibikhin, one of Russia's most influential twentieth-century philosophers, argues that, although most humans now live far from woods and forests, our existence remains profoundly linked to them.

Bibikhin (1938-2004) was a researcher at the Institute of Philosophy at the Russian Academy of Science.

Editor Artemy Magun is Professor of Democratic Theory and Chair of the Department of Political Science and Sociology at the European University at Saint-Petersburg.

It was Aristotle who first appreciated the primal role of the woods, even deriving his notion of 'matter' from the Greek words for wood and forest. As timber, the woods may be seen as inanimate material, but at the same time they also constitute a living

ecosystem and the source of energy and life. By opening up this duality, the woods are transformed from simple matter to a living environment, serving as a reminder that we belong to the world of biological life to a far greater extent than we usually think.

[The Woods](#) is the first book-length translation into English of the work of Bibikhin.

According to Magun in the preface to the book, in the 1990s, Bibikhin's public lecture courses enjoyed immense popularity, the lecture hall was packed, and almost every course was later published as a solid philosophical treatise. Within some fifteen years, Bibikhin created an impressive oeuvre on the scale of a philosophical encyclopaedia. This work was 'marked' (to use his term) and remarkable for many reasons, including a virtuoso Russian style, freely flowing in unpredictable directions to express an original thought, to connect a foreign word to a Russian word, a metaphysical formula to the spirit of the times and to the lived experience of contemporary politics and everyday life. Bibikhin's was a free, original philosophy of genius which, nevertheless, was based on great erudition, some bibliographical research, and, as is clear with hindsight, was moving towards becoming systematic.

[The Woods](#) by Bibikhin is perhaps his most overtly theological work. Despite being a devout Orthodox Christian, he usually avoids explicitly speaking of God in his philosophy, treating him as something 'unapproachable', but in [The Woods](#) he makes an exception and actually discusses religion at some length. The forest, with its trance, is a site of natural religion, of a devout attitude to the mystery of life; it is also the site of the Cross, which was made of wood. The law of nature is, Bibikhin says, an immediate form in which grace is manifest. Life is sanctified and sanctioned by energy, of which a human ethical effort, a 'yes' to the world, is a part.

One could say that Bibikhin's book is a lengthy commentary on Baudelaire's 'Nature is a temple where the pilasters/ Speak sometimes in their mystic languages.' However, when finally considering God, Bibikhin says that he is simply the human him/herself, but taken as the hidden Other in the human being.

Magun in the preface says that [The Woods](#) was partly an attempt to repeat and surpass the gesture of Heidegger, who in 1929-30, in ***The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*** decided to ground his existential phenomenology in biology, but ended up reasserting a sharp divide between humans and animals which Bibikhin, in contrast, seeks to undermine. The task of addressing the natural sciences from a philosophical point of view is extremely important, particularly now, with positivism on the rise in the life sciences. There are not that many authors who have done this. However, Bibikhin does not refer to the most famous of them, Henri Bergson. The lack of engagement with Heidegger or Bergson, like the rudimentary nature of some of the notes, has to do with the fact that Bibikhin died early and did not have time to prepare the manuscript for publication.

[The Woods](#) is the first book-length edition of Bibikhin to appear in English. It contributes to our understanding of the meaning of life: a fascinating spectacle set up in a cosmic amphitheatre for the potential audience of humans and gods-in-humans. It sets itself the ethical task of rehabilitating the scale of human ambition as a sanctioning instance of being. It contains an important discussion of genetic Darwinism and natural selection in the spirit of Continental philosophy.

In all this, it may leave a foreign impression on English-speaking readers, not only because of its impressionistic methodology and ethical pathos (common in both contemporary Russian and French philosophy), but also because of its conservatism and the extent to which it is embedded in twentieth-century Russian thought.

I think this is a 'great book', in terms of its ambition, of the richness of its content, of its brilliant style, and of the popularity of its author at the time of its public delivery. Even though written recently, it must be seen both as a contribution to current debates and as a monument of its own time and space, on which it bestows the sanction of memory and even a certain grandeur. – Artemy Magun, Department of Sociology and Philosophy, European University at St Petersburg, Russia (from the preface)

*An encounter of English-speaking audiences with Vladimir Bibikhin has been long overdue. I cannot think of a better text for introducing this outstanding philosopher than [The Woods](#). Here, Bibikhin is at his virtuoso best: navigating between ancient thought and contemporary biology, theology and philosophy, East and West. This book is sure to transform your way of thinking. – Michael Marder, author of *Plant-Thinking: A Philosophy of Vegetal Life**

At a time when we are urgently in need of a new holistic philosophy of life in order to understand our current situation on this fragile planet, this lecture course by one of Russia's most eminent philosophers provides us with some profound and valuable ideas. – Peter Trawny, Martin Heidegger Institute at University of Wuppertal

[The Woods](#) is an important book, and it will be of interest to students and scholars in philosophy and the humanities generally and to anyone concerned with the environment and our relationship to the natural world. <>

Religion & Spirituality / Biographies & Memoirs

[R. C. Sproul: A Life](#) by Stephen J. Nichols (Crossway)

[R. C. Sproul](#) is the first biography of the life and ministry of R. C. Sproul, a master theologian.

Sproul (1939–2017) was a pastor, a professor, an author, and the founder and president of Ligonier Ministries. His contributions in the areas of biblical studies, theology, worldview and culture, Christian living, and church history continue to be held in high regard.

Author Stephen J. Nichols serves as the president of Reformation Bible College and chief academic officer of Ligonier Ministries. He has written over twenty books and is an editor of the Theologians on the Christian Life series. He also hosts the weekly podcast **5 Minutes in Church History**.

In [R. C. Sproul](#), Nichols offers an in-depth look at Sproul's life and ministry – his childhood; his formative seminary education; his marriage and partnership with his beloved wife, Vesta; his influence on broader American evangelicalism; and his many friendships with key figures such as James Montgomery Boice, John MacArthur, John Piper, J. I. Packer, and Chuck Colson. This biography details the profound impact Sproul had on the lives of many during his lifetime, and highlights the various ways his legacy continues to influence countless pastors and students worldwide.

This theologically rich, warm, and personal look at a rare servant of the Lord is masterful. The range of R. C.'s vast interest and contribution, along with the irresistible charm of his personality, require a biographer who is a church historian, theologian, and very close friend. Stephen Nichols is the best choice, as this account demonstrates. He has brought to the pages a story truly revealing R. C. – an account that lives and breathes the man we loved as our teacher and friend. There will be other biographies of R. C., but I cannot imagine any that would come close to this one. – John MacArthur, Pastor, Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, California; Chancellor Emeritus, The Master's University and Seminary

This book is worth your time because it celebrates a man worth remembering. R. C. was a masterful theologian who could so easily squeeze sweetness from what others considered dry doctrine. His sermons and books beautifully adorned the gospel, but so did his life. It's what I love about Stephen Nichols's remarkable work. He takes us behind the scenes to reveal the true makings of this great saint of the twentieth century, why his words endure, and why we are inexorably drawn to his live-large character. I've always admired R. C. Sproul for his razor-sharp mind; now, with this biography, he's printed on my heart. Thank you, Stephen Nichols, for helping the reader fall in love with this lion of a man, my friend, the good Doctor Sproul. – Joni Eareckson Tada, Founder, Joni and Friends International Disability Center

I couldn't put this book down, for it doesn't just tell the fascinating story of a life well lived; it takes you on R. C.'s own journey. Through it you see where the fire came from. Through it you get the thrill of soaking up his passion for the gospel of Christ, for biblical truth, and for the beauty of God in his holiness. But my hope for this book is not that it might provide a nice reunion for those of us who knew and loved R. C.; my prayer is that the Lord might use it to inspire more faithful Reformers, more God-fearing defenders and proclaimers of the faith, more like R. C. Sproul. – Michael Reeves, President and Professor of Theology, Union School of Theology, UK

I remember once hearing R. C. Sproul preach on Psalm 51, and I asked him afterward how long it had taken him to prepare his lecture that day. He smiled and said, 'About five minutes ... and thirty years.' I have no doubt that future generations will benefit from R. C.'s prolific ministry two hundred years from now, should the Lord tarry. Stephen Nichols has given us a gift in this book. Anyone whose life was marked, as mine has been, by R. C.'s life and ministry will treasure getting to know him better through these pages. – Bob Lepine, Cohost, FamilyLife Today; Teaching Pastor, Redeemer Community Church, Little Rock, Arkansas

I am thankful for this accessible biography of R. C. Sproul by Stephen Nichols. His clear and simple way of writing is certainly appropriate in his biography of a man who always sought to communicate the glorious theology of Scripture in a clear and simple way. – Burk Parsons, Senior Pastor, Saint Andrew's Chapel, Sanford, Florida; Editor, Tabletalk

... This book will give you the historical and spiritual context around R. C.'s greatest series, books, and sermons. You will be able to understand the power of God's grace in R. C.'s life, R. C.'s dominion of all areas in systematic theology, and his ability to understand and teach biblical text in a simple and clear way. Knowing the man helps you better understand the preacher. Stephen Nichols has helped me get to know better the man that God has used to bless my ministry. – Augustus Nicodemus Lopes, Assistant Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Recife, Brazil; Vice President, Supreme Council, Presbyterian Church of Brazil

R. C. Sproul highlights the theology, biblical integrity, courage, character, and intellectual prowess of one of the late giants of the modern-day church. The biography, masterfully written, thorough and well balanced, brings this leader of the Reformed revival to a new generation. <>

[Dinner Party with the Saints](#) by Woodeene Koenig-Bricker
(Paraclete Press)

"Guests invited. Room set up. At least we know there won't be a problem with weather," said St. Teresa of Avila with a laugh. – from the book

Welcome to a dinner party in heaven. With a blend of imagination and historical detail, the bestselling author of **365 Saints** invites readers to get to know the saints in food and fellowship. Hinting at one of the traditional images of heaven, the Banquet or Marriage Feast of the Lamb (Revelation 9:9), the author in **[Dinner Party with the Saints](#)** gathers sixteen holy souls – from St. Peter and St. John the Baptist, to St. Kateri Tekakwitha and Bl. Solanus Casey – enabling readers to better understand what they were like on earth.

Author Woodeene Koenig-Bricker is a journalist who has written extensively about spirituality and family for most major Catholic publications including *Our Sunday Visitor*. She is a former editor of *Catholic Parent* magazine and author of several books.

Combining fictional narrative, fascinating biographies, and mouth-watering dinner party recipes, **[Dinner Party with the Saints](#)** offers a resource for families and other groups to celebrate saints spanning the history of the Church, and to better understand the 'people behind the halos.'

Why a dinner party? Revelation 19:9 says, "Blessed are those who called to the wedding feast of the Lamb." The idea of those who have lived a holy life, gathering in celebration, has often been interpreted as our being present at the Eucharist with all those saints in heaven. But what if the banquet could be seen as a little more earthly than theological? In **[Dinner Party with the Saints](#)**, Koenig-Bricker imagines what it would be like if sixteen saints were to gather for a dinner party in heaven as they await the arrival of the Guest of Honor.

The foods they bring in **[Dinner Party with the Saints](#)** are based, as much as possible, on ingredients and foods that they either talked about eating or would have eaten in their historical periods. With classically trained avid home cook Celia Murphy's masterful touch, recipes are designed for modern cooks and modern palates, including vegetarian and gluten-free options.

Charming, inspirational, educational, and tasty, this is a lovely book that reminds us that the saints were real people, who worked, slept, prayed, read and ate. Being holy means being yourself, and part of our shared humanity is enjoying a well-cooked meal. I learned a lot about the saints

*from this book, and also am eager to try some of these recipes! – James Martin, SJ, author of My Life with the Saints and Learning to Pray
Here's an offering that is both factually delightful and delightfully true to the facts. This author has done her homework, bringing into real life stories of a whole panoply of saints, revealing their idiosyncrasies and describing the cultures in which these holy men and women practiced their vocations with holy partying and praying. – Luci Shaw, poet, author of The Generosity; Writer in Residence, Regent College*

I never had so much fun reading about saints as I did when I enjoyed [Dinner Party with the Saints](#). Woodeene Koenig-Bricker has created a unique book about sixteen holy men and women, who gather in heaven for a potluck banquet. I laughed at their amusing interactions as they awaited the arrival of the surprise guests of honor. Woodeene tells the saints' lives, includes fascinating factoids about the saints and their times, and provides carefully crafted recipes for each saint's dish – some of which I'm eager to try. Playing off the title from a previous bestseller, she could have called it Love, Pray, and Eat! – Bert Ghezzi, author of Saints at Heart

We get to know people around the dinner table. Jesus did that. When He met people of all different backgrounds, they eventually were fed by His words and actions. He nourished their souls. They became saints because they accepted the Invitation, 'blessed are those called to the Supper of the Lamb!' I'm grateful that many others are coming to understand the 'theology of food,' which I've been writing and preaching about for years. And I'm especially grateful that this book will help us to get to know Saints at their favorite pulpit: the dinner table! – Fr. Leo E. Patalinghug, IVDei, Founder of the International Food and Faith movement, [PlatingGrace.Com](#)

In [Dinner Party with the Saints](#), a charming book, readers get to know the saints in a new and entertaining way by seeing them interacting in an imaginary setting, but while still being the very real men and women they were. They will come away with a deeper appreciation for these holy people, as well as a few moments of amusement and great recipes to try. <>

Engaging the Christian Scriptures: An Introduction to the Bible, 2nd edition by Andrew E. Arterbury, W.H. Bellinger Jr., & Derek S. Dodson (Baker Academic)

Engaging the Christian Scriptures, 2nd edition, a readable, faith-friendly, one-semester textbook, aids students as they engage in their first reading of the biblical text in an academic setting. The authors, who have significant undergraduate teaching experience, approach the Christian Scriptures from historical, literary, and theological perspectives.

The authors are Andrew E. Arterbury, W.H. Bellinger Jr., and Derek S. Dodson. Arterbury is professor of Christian Scriptures at Truett Theological Seminary, Baylor University in Waco. Bellinger is the W. Marshall and Lulie Craig Chairholder in Bible, professor of religion, and chair of the Department of Religion at Baylor. Dodson is senior lecturer in religion at Baylor.

Text boxes, illustrations, maps, and suggestions for further reading are included. This new edition of **Engaging the Christian Scriptures** incorporates professor and student feedback, adds a glossary, has been revised throughout, and is supplemented by updated and expanded web-based pedagogical resources.

Because the authors believe the biblical texts should function as the primary texts, they crafted this textbook to function as a supplemental resource. For example, they focus readers' attention on the prevailing conversations and leading opinions within the field of biblical studies on most subjects. In other words, they do not attempt to provide exhaustive descriptions of every academic conversation about the Bible, but rather they introduce the most important conversations for students who are encountering the field of biblical studies for the first time.

Methodologically, **Engaging the Christian Scriptures** employs a contextual approach to the Christian Scriptures, giving attention to historical, literary, and theological contexts. Rather than telling students about the Bible, it helps students become educated readers of the Bible. While introducing critical perspectives and approaches, it simultaneously highlights and underscores the theological claims found within the Christian Scriptures rather than critiquing or deconstructing those claims. It encourages beginning students to 'engage' the Christian Scriptures.

This **second edition** of **Engaging the Christian Scriptures** introduces some new material, updates previous material, and improves the overall flow of the book. This new or updated material equates to about twenty percent of the book.

This readable and accessible introduction to the Bible is a breath of fresh air for faculty and students tackling the seemingly insurmountable task of learning about the entire Christian Bible in a single semester. This revised edition boasts expanded materials on the biblical writings and contexts, as well as updated suggested readings and a complete glossary to guide readers. This textbook will continue to be a valuable resource in a variety of classrooms, introducing students to the Bible and inspiring them to dig more deeply into its contexts and to interpret it in theologically responsible ways. – Alicia D. Myers, Campbell University Divinity School

[Engaging the Christian Scriptures](#) navigates well the challenges of beginning academic study of the Bible. It introduces the Bible's foreignness without making it inaccessible, critical approaches without allowing them to steal the spotlight from the Bible itself, the distinct witness of the Hebrew Bible without minimizing the New Testament's claims to continuity with it, the Bible as an object of study without silencing its personal address, and debate about its meaning without making it impenetrable. The second edition builds on these strengths. The electronic resources included with the book aid teacher and student alike in following the clear path the authors have blazed through this pedagogical thicket. Rarely have I received such praise from my students for a textbook choice; but it is Arterbury, Bellinger, and Dodson who deserve the credit for producing an accessible and, yes, 'engaging' introduction to the Bible. – Will Kynes, Samford University

From cultural and geographical backdrops, to literary and rhetorical features, to canonical and theological connections, [Engaging the Christian Scriptures](#) immerses students in the Bible, introducing tools necessary for reading Scripture well. Helpful charts and illustrations throughout distill complex concepts, and suggestions for further reading offer supplements for students who want to dig deeper. Finally, the glossary compiles terms introduced in boldface within the textbook, providing quick access to concise explanations. From beginning to end, the authors carefully facilitate student learning and exploration. Informative and accessible, this textbook is an excellent companion for study of the Christian Scriptures. – Kathy Maxwell, Palm Beach Atlantic University

A trusted introduction to the Christian scriptures, [Engaging the Christian Scriptures](#), **2nd edition**, is a manageable, accessible, and affordable textbook that first and foremost benefits students rather than their professors. <>

Earthing the Cosmic Queen: Relevance Theory and the Song of Songs by Yael Klangwisan, with a foreword by Tim Meadowcroft (Pickwick Publications)

Earthing the Cosmic Queen explores the connection of poet, world, and text in the Song of Songs based on the process of reading as understood by Relevance Theory. This linguistic theory reveals new insights into the Song of Songs by tracing associations between the poet and her world. The main portion of **Earthing the Cosmic Queen** involves a discourse analysis of the entire Song for the purpose of revealing the poet's cognitive environment and communicative intentions. Seven sites of discourse are explored: entreaties, wasf, the daughters, royalty, the brothers, losing and finding, and the Garden. The Garden of Eden strongly figures and could be considered a flashpoint of engagement. There is suggestion in the text that there is a crisis for the poet regarding her place in ancient Hebrew society. Thus, the Garden of Eden texts and the Song of Songs are carefully contrasted to highlight the contours of her radical message.

The author, Yael Klangwisan, is Senior Lecturer at Laidlaw College, Auckland, New Zealand.

Tim Meadowcroft in the foreword to **Earthing the Cosmic Queen** says that 'At sundry times and in divers manners' God spoke to our ancestors in the faith, according to the writer of the book of Hebrews, as rendered by the Authorized Version. At one time, and by means of one of those 'divers manners', God surprisingly spoke in an erotic poem between two young people urgently in love with one another, apparently as physically engaged with each other as it is possible for a man and woman to be, and deliberately heedless of anything that might confine or constrain the expression of their love, including – in that patriarchal society – any hint that their relationship might be other than mutual and egalitarian. And, however much sober commentators wish it otherwise, there is no mention by them of marriage.

What are readers to do with this, those who read the Song of Songs today as part of a collection of texts through which they expect to hear God speak? The title of **Earthing the Cosmic Queen** gives people a broad clue. That the 'cosmic queen' is 'earthed' reminds Meadowcroft of two important matters when approaching the Song. First, this is an earthy poem about everyday lived experience, partly because of the entrenched bucolic imagery that drives it and partly because it reflects that aspect of human experience which reminds readers of and attracts them towards their physical embodiment as central to who they are. Secondly, that the Song should be 'earthed' is a gentle reminder from Klangwisan to read it first on its own terms, and not merely as a

pointer to some less physical and hence less dangerous reality, or as a metaphor of something else. In any case, if the Song does have significance beyond itself, then this can hardly be glimpsed if the bodily experience of the Song itself is not fully entered into by readers.

Yet this earthing is of something or someone named by Klangwisan as the 'cosmic queen'. To think first of the word 'cosmic' by means of a change of medium, a good piece of art draws those who view it to wonder about the life outside the art itself.

The Song of Songs piques curiosity of a life just outside the text. At one level it does so by means of its allusive poetic nature, which constantly evokes but never quite describes. It does so also as a participant in the collective known as the canon of Scripture. As a result readers cannot escape a sense that, while the Song is an ode to human eros, it is also a Song that erects human eros as a signpost to something more. And so Klangwisan sets the poetry in a garden context which helps readers of [Earthing the Cosmic Queen](#) to appropriate the significance of the Song in the wider panorama of the Hebrew Bible. And the author does so by a creative deployment of the rabbinic concept of *pardes* in interpretation.

Meadowcroft says that these comments were occasioned by the word 'cosmic' in the title, an adjective which begs the question: 'cosmic' what? And the answer is the 'queen.' This too is an important pointer to what goes on in [Earthing the Cosmic Queen](#), for it is a hint at Klangwisan's punt that the authorship of the Song is feminine and that the hero of the story is the beloved, sometimes referred to by her as 'the Shulamith'. It also indicates that Klangwisan's literary approach is a consciously feminine one, not only because she is a woman but also because she believes that this is the best way to encounter the Song on its own terms. This does not mean that there is no analysis or proposition; the center of [Earthing the Cosmic Queen](#) is after all a discourse analysis. But it does mean that she seeks at every turn to allow the Song as much as is possible to speak in its own terms and not in those imposed by the interpreter.

Klangwisan now joins the ranks of those deploying Relevance Theory in biblical studies, as she enables for her readers an encounter between contemporary reading and the ancient world and words and life of the Singer herself. In so doing she draws readers, in the rabbinic terms laid out early in [Earthing the Cosmic Queen](#), below the surface or *peshat* of the text to the subterranean echoes, the *remez*. She draws readers into the Song itself and in doing so introduces them to the life of the Lover and the Beloved – and perhaps thereby opens the curtain a little to allow a glimpse of the very life of God. In doing so Klangwisan demonstrates both an impressive technical excellence, as evidenced in the discourse analysis on which her reading is based, and a rich affective and affectionate response to the poem and the lives it portrays.

This is a fascinating book that introduces us to new modes of reading the Song of Songs. Yael Klangwisan's careful and beautifully written analysis shines fresh light on an oft-studied biblical text and inspires us to contemplate it in new and sometimes surprising ways. [Earthing the Cosmic Queen](#) will be a valuable addition to the libraries of biblical scholars and interested readers alike. – Caroline Blyth, Lecturer in Biblical Studies, School of Theology, University of Auckland

As it unfolds, Klangwisan's book becomes as much a warm and joyous love song to the ancient poem as it is a careful analysis of the text. Her reading of how echoes from the primeval garden of Genesis are heard and reimagined in the voice of the Song yields much sweet fruit to savor and enjoy. – Kirsten Dawson, author of *Divine Violence in the Book of Job*

Klangwisan in [Earthing the Cosmic Queen](#) demonstrates both an impressive technical excellence, as evidenced in the discourse analysis on which her reading is based, and a rich affective and affectionate response to the poem and the lives it portrays. <>

Religion & Spirituality / Theology

[Our Sacred Source: A Theology Grounded in Modern Physics, about a Creator God and Why We Are Here](#) by Andrew Kneier (Wipf & Stock)

Life is not a cakewalk. We each have our individual sufferings and challenges in life, and we each must endure vital questions that have no certain answers. Why are we here? Where is God when we need him? How do our lives matter in the long run? Science cannot help with such questions, but theology can. And that's what [Our Sacred Source](#) has to offer.

While working on his doctorate at the University of Chicago Divinity School, author Andrew Kneier switched to becoming a therapist for cancer patients and worked for nearly three decades at the University of California, San Francisco, Comprehensive Cancer Center. He is now retired from UCSF, which has allowed time for him to circle back to his initial interest in theology and to work on [Our Sacred Source](#).

This book's theology is based on an arresting theory about God. Turning to modern physics, it finds God in the origin of the universe and in the innermost foundations of the natural world. The universe flowed from his nature, but his nature was not perfect, which is why we have an imperfect world where bad things happen to good people. And yet we also find this God deep within us, enabling us to confront our suffering with resilience and grace. The evil in the world has power, but we have power too, the power from our inner God to hold steady against the slings and arrows of misfortune.

The theology presented in [Our Sacred Source](#) builds on the discoveries of particle

physics and quantum mechanics about the foundational building blocks and forces in all of creation. These reveal the abounding spirit and purposes of the Creator – a spirit that empowers us and instills in us purposes we can embrace and foster. It may seem we are essentially on our own as we navigate through life, but in this book's theology, God is always and everywhere with us and in us.

Chapter by chapter the book includes:

1: The Book of Nature. The book starts with the book of nature, as opposed to a revered religious text. The discoveries of modern physics about the fundamental building blocks and forces in nature have profound implications. This is the basis of [Our Sacred Source's](#) theology, as these discoveries could imply the existence of a creator God and aspects of His nature. Thanks to modern physics, we know so much more about the nature of matter and energy, and we can ask what these discoveries might reveal about God. Kneier focuses on seven such discoveries and what they imply about God.

2: God's Purposes and **3: God's Purposes in Relation to Goodness, Beauty, and Love.** These chapters move on to the question of God's purposes in bringing the universe into being. Based on the twin ideas that the creation emanated from God and manifests aspects of His nature, we can imagine that God's essential goodness, beauty, and love are manifested in the created world. And we actually find support for this speculation in modern physics, in the metaphysics of Plato and Alfred North Whitehead, and in the philosophy and neuroscience of love.

4: On Having a Purposeful Life. This chapter turns to the question of how God's purposes apply to us and what it means to live a purposeful life. In [Our Sacred Source's](#) theology, all of creation is imbued with God's purposes as a driving force. And yet the fulfillment of His purposes is not a sure thing because of the random forces at work in the universe. From this perspective, we have a better grasp on why we are here – namely, to manifest as much goodness, beauty, and love as we possibly can. This is how we are aligned with God's cause.

5: The Theology of Paul Tillich: God as the Ground of Being. Chapter 5 turns to the theology of Paul Tillich and his conception of God as the Ground of Being and thus as the Ground of Our Being. The idea that God is in us and can help us is fundamental to our theologies.

6: A Personal God? Is the God of this book's theology a person with whom we can have a personal relationship? And in what sense does God know and care about us? These questions occupies us in chapter 6.

7: The Experience of God's Presence. Here we take on a challenge to [Our Sacred Source's](#) conception of God: if God resides in the innermost core of our being, then why

don't we experience the presence of this God on a daily basis? Why aren't we always aware of the God within? This chapter explores three answers.

8: God and the Problem of Evil. For many, the problem of evil is perhaps the most resolute nail in God's coffin, proving that He is dead or never existed. [Our Sacred Source](#)'s theology challenges the entire theory of an all-powerful God and attributes the evil in our world to the random forces that exist in the universe. Our theology suggests that these forces came from God's nature but are not willed by Him.

9: A Theology of Death. The book now turns to the ever-present reality of death in God's world. All living beings eventually die. We need a theology of death to explain this, a theology that sees the ebb and flow of life as grounded in God's nature and purposes. This chapter also offers a perspective on how God can help us as our death approaches.

10: A Theology of the Human Spirit. While the previous chapter offered a theology of death, Kneier proposes a theology of the human spirit. This is a theology about the human response to trauma, a response of astounding courage, resilience, and perseverance ... often called, simply, the human spirit. In [Our Sacred Source](#)'s theology, the source of the remarkable tenacity is deep within us, from the spirit of God that resides there, in our innermost depth.

The relevance of this theology is that it speaks to us personally. Kneier says he believes each chapter does that, and perhaps this last chapter is a fitting last word on that topic, as it presents illustrations of how the human spirit, empowered by God, can turn even extreme adversity into a personal triumph.

[Our Sacred Source](#), 9th edition, is written in clear, easy-to-read, nontechnical prose for lay persons who do not have a background in theology but who are interested in questions related to God and religion. These include the theological implications of contemporary physics, the sacred meaning and purposes of existence, the source and meaning of spirituality, and coming to terms with suffering and death. At the same time, the book is relevant to religious professionals and to students and professors in divinity schools and theological seminaries. <>

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