

Boston College Prof: “6 Books I Would Assign to Save Western Civilization”

In a [1993 talk](#), Peter Kreeft, professor of philosophy at Boston College, mentioned the following as the 6 books people should read if they want to save Western civilization:

1. *The Abolition of Man*, by C.S. Lewis



From the front flap of the 2015 HarperOne edition:

“In *The Abolition of Man*, C.S. Lewis sets out to persuade his audience of the importance and relevance of universal values such as courage and honor in contemporary society. Both astonishing and prophetic, this book is one of the most debated of Lewis’s extraordinary works. *National Review* chose it as number seven on their ‘100 Best Nonfiction Books of the Twentieth Century.’”

A quote from the book:

“In a sort of ghastly simplicity we remove the organ and demand the function. We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honour and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful.”

2. *Lost in the Cosmos*, by Walker Percy



From the Amazon.com review:

“The late Walker Percy’s mordant contribution to the self-help book craze of the 1980s deals with the heavy abstraction of the Western mind and speculates about why writers may be the most abstracted and least grounded of all.”

A quote from the book:

“You live in a deranged age – more deranged than usual, because despite great scientific and technological advances, man has not the faintest idea of who he is or what he is doing.”

3. *Mere Christianity*, by C.S. Lewis



From the front flap of the 2015 HarperOne edition:

“One of the most popular introductions to Christian faith ever written, *Mere Christianity* has sold millions of copies worldwide. The book brings together C.S. Lewis’s legendary broadcast talks of the war years, talks in which he set out simply to ‘explain and defend the belief that has been common to nearly all Christians at all times.’ Rejecting the boundaries that divide Christianity’s many denominations, Lewis provides an unequalled opportunity for believers and nonbelievers alike to hear a powerful, rational case for the Christian faith.”

A quote from the book:

“Even in literature and art, no man who bothers about originality will ever be original: whereas if you simply try to tell the truth (without caring twopence how often it has been told before) you will, nine times out of ten, become original without ever having noticed it.”

4. *The Everlasting Man*, by G.K. Chesterton



From the back cover of the 2012 EMP Books edition:

“Is man merely the accidental product of evolution? Or does Christianity provide deeper insight into the true nature and purpose of humankind? Published in 1925, *The Everlasting Man* is G.K. Chesterton’s exploration of the spiritual history of Western culture.”

A quote from the book:

“Pessimism is not in being tired of evil but in being tired of good. Despair does not lie in being weary of suffering, but in being weary of joy. It is when for some reason or other good things in a society no longer work that the society begins to decline; when its food does not feed, when its cures do not cure, when its blessings refuse to bless.”

5. *Orthodoxy*, by G.K. Chesterton



From the Ignatius Press edition:

“Of the numerous works that Chesterton wrote, the most scintillating synthesis of his philosophy and deeply religious faith was manifested in his masterpiece, *Orthodoxy*, written when he was only thirty-four and which tells, in his inimitable, soaring prose, of his earth-shaking discovery that orthodoxy is the only satisfactory answer to the perplexing riddle of the universe. *Orthodoxy* is perhaps the most outstanding example of the originality of his style and the brilliance of his thought.”

A quote from the book:

“Reason is itself a matter of faith. It is an act of faith to assert that our thoughts have any relation to reality at all.”

6. *Brave New World*, by Aldous Huxley



From the Amazon.com review:

“‘Community, Identity, Stability’ is the motto of Aldous Huxley’s utopian World State. Here everyone consumes daily grams of soma, to fight depression, babies are born in laboratories, and the most popular form of entertainment is a ‘Feelie,’ a movie that stimulates the senses of sight, hearing, and touch. Though there is no violence and everyone is provided for, Bernard Marx feels something is missing and senses his relationship with a young woman has the potential to be much more than the confines of their existence allow. Huxley foreshadowed many of the practices and gadgets we take for granted today—let’s hope the sterility and absence of individuality he predicted aren’t yet to come.”

A quote from the book:

“But I don’t want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin.”