



Leo Eaton

Great Readers, Great Leaders

We are delighted to feature book recommendations from Leo Eaton, President & CEO of Eaton Creative.

Leo's Bio

An Emmy award-winning filmmaker, Leo Eaton has written, produced, directed and executive produced TV factual series and specials for US and overseas broadcasters for more than three decades. In addition to his current project, *Sacred Journeys*, Leo's recent works include *Arts & the Mind and Homeland: Immigration in America* (both broadcast by PBS in 2012), and National Geographic Channel's Emmy award-winning *Can the Gulf Survive?* on the BP oil spill. He was the executive producer of British historian Michael Wood's *The Story of India* for PBS & BBC-TV. He was the series producer for *America at a Crossroads* (broadcast by PBS in 2007), which explores the challenges confronting America in the post-9/11 world.

Leo wrote and directed *In Search of Ancient Ireland*. He taught film production & script-writing at the University of Texas (Austin). Prior to Carroll County, Leo lived in the UK, Greece, Portugal and Mexico.

Q & A with Leo

How did you get started in filmmaking?

I was 15 years old when I swapped a 35 mm still camera for a 9.5 mm movie camera and started making films in high school. After graduation, I went right into television series production, working on *The Saint*, a mystery spy thriller starring Roger Moore as Simon Templar.

My first gig as a director and writer was on the Supermarionation series *Thunderbirds*, which was then the most expensive series in the UK. I also worked on *Gideon's Way*, a British television crime series based on novels by John Creasey (as J. J. Marric); and on *UFO*, a 1970 live-action television science fiction series created by Gerry Anderson about an alien invasion on Earth.

Following that I went to Mexico for three years, where I met my wife and we moved to Texas, where I taught filmmaking at UT - Austin.

After living in Portugal for a few years, I returned to the US and directed the musical documentary *My Heroes Have Always Been Cowboys*, hosted by Waylon Jennings, and focusing on the lives of modern cowboys in West Texas. While in Texas, I worked on a partnership project with San Antonio and Maryland Public Television. I was offered a job with MPT, then the 4th biggest public television station in the nation, where I was in charge of international productions. I settled in Carroll County and after 25 years I'm still loving living here.

Tell us about one of your favorite projects.

Ten years ago we produced *Tango, the Spirit of Argentina*. I think that was one of my favorite productions. To tell the story of the art form, we hired dancers and staged major concerts throughout Buenos Aires and other locations. More than 100 people worked on the project. The footage was shot at night during the winter. The dancers toughed it out in freezing temperature.

What is one of your most interesting Travel experiences?

Definitely going to the Kumbh Mela in India, the biggest gathering on the planet, where 20 – 25 million people gather every 12 years to bathe in the Ganges. A vast tent city is created over 20 sq. kilometers, yet it is wonderfully serene, with no violence. I had the amazing experience of rowing across the river at night, listening to chanting from a thousand different ashrams.

I also have to include my experience at Lourdes, where I accompanied veterans suffering from PTSD and other wounds and witnessed the great care given by the volunteers in greeting and helping the veterans with the bathing process. This experience offered insight into the deepest wells of spirituality.

Where do the people of the world need to focus their energy next?

Kindness toward fellow creatures; Kindness toward the environment and to ourselves. Life here is a privilege. We are God's Viceroy on Earth, facing major, major problems. However, there is a huge reason for optimism. In the 5th or 6th Century BC, across the known world, kingdoms were falling apart. Out of that came spiritualism. Across many cultures, the spiritual foundations of humanity were laid simultaneously and independently. These are the foundations upon which humanity still relies today. Mankind has gone through tremendous turmoil out of that great belief. We are entering a new Axial Age. If we are to survive, we need a new way of looking at the world that brings us together in harmony.

Leo's Reads

Walking the Bible: A Journey by Land Through the Five Books of Moses by Bruce Feiler

This inspiring odyssey by foot, jeep, rowboat, and camel from the Red Sea to the top of Mt. Sinai gives the reader an understanding of the geography where Judaism & Christianity were born. Bruce Feiler is the host of Sacred Journeys.

The Song of Bernadette by Franz Werfel

Werfel was a Jewish refugee hiding in Lourdes when he was inspired by the story of the miraculous visions of Bernadette Soubirous at Lourdes in 1858. He made a promise to God that if he escaped the Nazis he would write the story of St. Bernadette and the Shrine of Lourdes.

India by Michael Wood

Six journeys throughout India lead readers to discover the sights and sounds, achievements, and rich history of this vast nation and ancient civilization steeped in spirituality.

Japanese Pilgrimage by Oliver Statler

On his 1,000 mile circular pilgrimage, the author explores the 88 Sacred Places of Shikoku and shares the fascinating story of a Buddhist saint and Buddhism's coming to Japan.

Reflections by Gai Eaton

My father's new book (with a preface by me), published posthumously; a series of reflections on Islam and interfaith understanding. It is a compilation of a series of talks Gai Eaton gave on BBC Radio that incorporate wisdom, humanity, and humor to teach a spiritual approach to life.

A History of God by Karen Armstrong

The author is one of Britain's foremost commentators on religious affairs. She traces the history of how men and women have perceived and experienced God. It is a fascinating look at the history of belief and man's search for the divine.

