

Riddles of 21st Century Culture

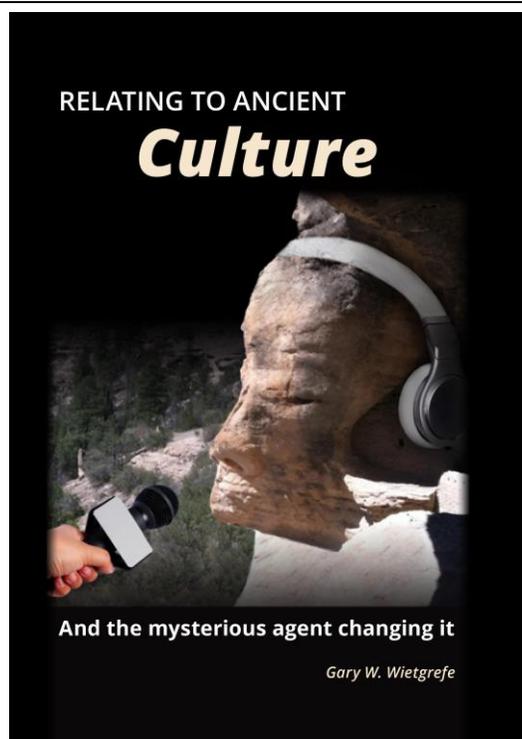
Introduction: Website has background information: www.RelatingtoAncients.com

- My wife and I have traveled during our careers, but since retiring early we have only traveled since 2012—no home, no permanent apartment.
- We found each society somewhat different and found shocking changes to family culture and learning systems. I'll give you a few perplexing riddles that may interest you.

Ask questions:

- Are things different today than a century ago? Is Johnny and Mary as socially stable and employed as when their grandparents were 20? (Get audience involved rather than rhetorical.) Yes, culture is changing.
- What caused the change? (This can be rhetorical if nobody responds.) Technology? Transportation? Communications????
- What are symptoms of changes in society? (play toys, gadgets, social media, marry later)

2018 Book tour presentation by Gary Wietgreffe books kickoff Feb. 26 in Sioux Falls, SD Holiday Inn; U. of Arizona at Tucson Festival of Books March 10-11, and Los Compadres Resort, La Penita Mexico March 20, 2018.



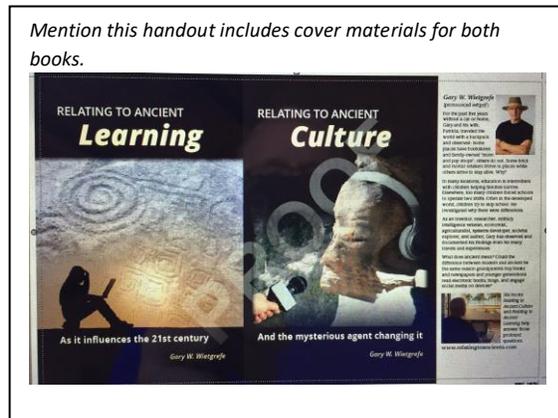
Mention: Both my new books in "Relating to Ancient" series are 2018 copyright. I received them February 19 to start a book tour.

Show book. (Read highlighted areas from book except very short quotes.)

- What will be some of the consequences of cultural changes as the 21st century unfolds? "Relating to Ancients" is my series of books that provide current and historical comparisons, disputable contentions, and subtle humor to explain the books starting with "Culture and the mysterious agent changing it".
- The book is non-fiction, but it is set up as a mystery. 20 of the 22 chapters begin with a riddle. Here are a few:
 - "I am contained, but free, yet cost more every year. What am I?"
 - "What spreads but has distinct beginnings and ends?"
 - "What can nurse, function as a pacifier, and it is not unusual to publicly observe two abreast?"

- Our travels allowed us to see, and these books explain, in story form, what we observed.

Hold up brochure:



This is a presentation on Riddles of the 21st Century.

- Historically, diversity was the norm. In the last half of the 20th century, certainly in the 21st century the world is developing around standardized systems.

Brief background: *(Expand, take from other presentations if majority were not in previous sessions on another book topic)*

My book cover bio states:

- “As an inventor, researcher, military intelligence veteran, economist, agriculturalist, systems developer, societal explorer, and author, Gary has observed and documented his findings from his many travels and experiences.”
- We only know where we are at by looking at the past.
- A friend who reviewed the early stages of my book wrote:
 - “As a seafaring Captain once said, "...If you wish to know where you are heading, you must first look back at the ships wake, and from that you will understand where you are going". You appear to have done that very effectively. I recall our past conversations, when you spoke of the material that you were developing for these books. My compliments to you, as you seem to have achieved your goal....”
- Fifty years from now, in the last half of the 21st century, our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren will still find these books relevant as they are relating to ancients, like us. They will have a much better understanding of how their culture and society developed.

Let’s review some possibilities of cultural change: Here’s quotes to tempt your curiosity:

(Again, hold up and open brochure.)

- Early childhood memory affects a person’s learning and cultural understanding.

- In recent decades, children have learned through many sources outside family, including daycare, schools, and after-school activities. Learning is in great contrast with centuries past where most things were taught by parents and family.
- Why were teenagers old enough to work eight hundred years ago, but not today?
- Experience cannot be passed on; it must be learned.
- Some of the world's most fascinating and innovative problem solvers of the past two centuries were independent thinkers.
- Fascination with technological gadgets has replaced intellectual pursuit.
- Should students calculate and reason, or simply operate a computer?
- At what age do parents give children responsibility? If it is at college graduation, they are two decades too late. Dependency is taught.
- There is an evolving change back to independent learning. Toddlers now use technology to learn and entertain themselves in a perceivable drift away from brick-and-mortar institutions.

Generational record:

- **Culture -- pg. 18** "Those born in the mid-twentieth century into the twenty-first century are unique. In the history of the world, a significant percentage of children in our generation were old enough to know and learn from their great-grandparents, great-uncles, and great-aunts. Previously, few children have ever had three living generations to pass on cultural knowledge, also known as the generational record."
- **Culture pg.111:** "Never in human history have so many lived so long off the efforts of so few.

"After spending the most years in world history being formally educated, more young adults are living off older workers. Never in human history have young adults been structurally blocked from work and a decreasing part of the labor force. Never in recorded history, as explained in Relating to Ancient Learning, has life expectancy been so long. Never in recorded history have the so-called "educated" been the laggards in technology adoption.

If you haven't already, please take in my presentation on 21st Century Technophobia and Busiphobia".

"Never in recorded history have so many lived off government freebies. It will not last."

Responsibility: *(If time is short, this section can be reduced with Alex story abbreviated.)*

- At what age do parents give responsibility?

- Talk about Alex' children age 2 & 4: Our daughter had sponsored a girl in Guatemala for the past six or seven years. Some years we joined her helping build homes, put in floors, replace stoves, and during each trip we would take a day and go on hikes through the mountains.

On one of our earlier trips we met our guide, Alex, a former illegal U.S. immigrant, who returned to his Mayan mountain culture and being multi-lingual (two dialects of Mayan, Spanish, and English) he increased his pay by taking Europeans, Australians, and North Americans on hikes. On one such hike when I was alone with the guide, he seen our children and grandchildren hiking a mountain. We started at about 5,000 feet and hiked to the summit at about 10,000 feet. He asked: "Your children seem so successful. My children are almost two and four. What should I do? Have them become a lawyer or something?"

I said, "If you raise them with responsibilities, they will figure out how to be successful."

"But," Alex went on, "They are not yet two and four. They are too young to give responsibilities."

"No, they are not." I asked: "Do you have pets?"

"No, we just have a four chickens." "OK," I said. "Good. Give them responsibilities. Have your oldest boy feed the chickens and while he is at pre-school, have the youngest gather the eggs. They are certainly old enough to do that."

A year later, we were back to Guatemala and hired Alex to take us up San Pedro Mountain with our daughters, son, my wife and two of her sisters. When I asked Alex if his sons are caring for their chickens, he just smiled.

For more details, refer to pages 114-121 in my book Culture.

Show Culture book again. *(Read highlighted areas.)*

- **Culture pg. 120:** "When given responsibility at two, three, and four years old, children grow and live as responsible people. Those that graduate from college at twenty-two or twenty-five, and have never had chores at home or responsibility at a job, are the losers.

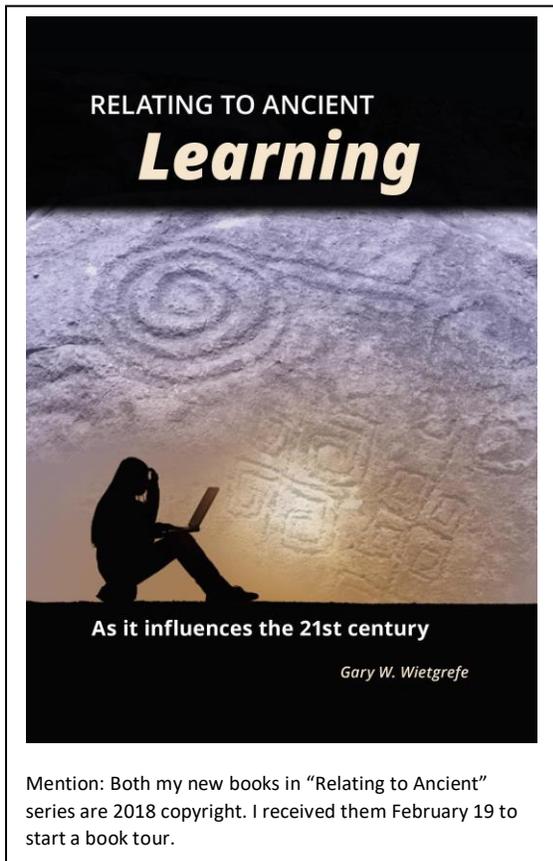
"A child given responsibility early develops to be independent and caring by helping others, just as they did at two or three. Character is built, not reached at a certain age. When are we giving college-educated adults responsibility? Graduation day!

"After opening congratulation cards, real life emerges."

- **Culture pg. 126:** “Failure to give responsibilities leads to a failed society.

“For thousands of years, most people lived off the land. What their plot would produce fed their multigenerational family. They traded for the rest. Everyone worked. Everyone had responsibilities. Life expectancy was often less than forty. Teenagers had to learn how to feed themselves. With rare exceptions (e.g., ancient Rome city dwellers), people worked to eat.”

- **Culture pg. 225** “When responsibility is someone else’s venue, conflict is ripe. “The path ahead has been developed, but the journey can be one of headache or adventure. Happy is the one who arrives content.”



Show “**Learning**”. This first quote may be read from book, not necessary.

- **Learning pg. 64:** “Relating to Ancient Learning is a concept lost in 3 generations. Actually, responsibility has been lost.”

(Speak abbreviated personal story. Shorten if time tight.)

My mother was the daughter of a teacher. My her mother had to quit teaching because she was pregnant with my aunt. Grandma had to quit teaching. Pregnancy was not allowed at school. My mother was ten years older than her closest sibling.

Anyway, at nine to eleven years old, my mother had to walk to her one-room country school after finishing her chores. In the winter time she got up early to finish chicken chores and get to school early to start the coal stove. The new teacher didn’t know how to start it. When it was so cold and snow drifting, mother would watch the north

windows for two of her classmates who had to come across the Missouri River bluffs, pastures, and fields to get to school on their horses. Mother would welcome them into the warm school, often before the teacher would arrive.

How many children today would be given the responsibility to open the public school, start the heating system, no less a coal-fired stove, and care for her classmates to insure they arrived safely?

More details of that story can be found on pages 63-64 of my book "Learning".

Employment: Let's talk about employment situation.

- When do young people get their first job?
- **Learning pg. 95:** "Preoccupation with not working is noteworthy in history. It is not sustainable.

"High school graduates certainly are confused about what career they should pursue, when they should marry, and what is the right number of children they should have. That is not historically unusual, although such decisions are being pushed later — showing delayed maturity of those in their late teens and early twenties."

- **Learning pg. 96:** "When unemployment of eighteen- to twenty-two-year-olds is reported as 15 to 20 percent, keep in mind the unemployment rate only includes those "willing and able to work." What percent are not willing to work?

"Those adults with competence must ask:

"Is the path we are laying foundational for the next generation?

"Is the next generation capable of path maintenance?

"Can they upgrade life's road as has been done for thousands of years?

"Is the path of substance to provide a respectable journey? Or, are they just using it?"

"With the established school system, can we say with confidence our generational path is most appropriate? If not, what change must occur before our pubescent youth reach adulthood?"

- **Learning pg. 128:** "Historically, the young and the aged have always expected teenagers and young adults to be society's source of muscle and innovation. Fear of adulthood is not innate. It is learned."

- **Culture pg. 101:** “Even with limited education, developing countries are supplying many of the world’s manufactured goods.

“Many so-called “developed countries” have developed enough productive workers or have enough exportable natural resources to supply those that do not work. In developed countries, supply of efficient workers is dwindling. As Baby Boomers age and young adults delay entering the workforce, there is increasing need to squeeze more from those that do work. The trend cannot continue.”

Let’s move to the largest segment of developed economies:

Services: Let me explore this huge segment of developed cultures.

One of the most perplexing riddles of the late twentieth and early 21’st century is why servants don’t want to serve.

In my book “Culture”, I start with the riddle:

Culture – pg. 181: “What service with different names rewards accomplishments, but does not accept responsibility when they remain untrained servants?”

College student loans were supposed to keep the U.S. on pace with the Russians during the Cold War. Since President Eisenhower initiated the student loan program in the late 1950s, the U.S. and much of the world has turned from a production and manufacturing economy to a service economy. Health services, transportation services, communication services, educational services, construction and maintenance services, police and fire services, personal and business security services, hospitality services, food services, retail services, government services, etcetera and etcetera have expanded greatly.

More details can be found in a chapter on “Servants” specifically pages 190-191 of **Culture**.

Producers and manufacturers have always chosen to create and develop products to supply needs and eventually wants. Throughout history, the largest percentage of workers were producing needs for food and shelter for themselves and others. Around the world, transition from rural population to urban is still occurring. The U.S. 1860

Census for the first time showed more urban than rural residents. China only made that transition to a majority of urban population a few years ago--between 2010 to 2015. (See "Culture" page 3-5.)

Those producing needs have historically been on a lower rung of the social ladder than those producing wants. That is no riddle. It is still that way in the 21st century.

*Repeat: **Those producing needs have historically been on a lower rung of the social ladder than those producing wants.***

On the other hand, education historically was and obstacle to advance socially and economically to be able to have servants care for needs and wants too trifle for the educated to be bothered.

A 21ST century conundrum: We are training our young adults in service industries, but everybody wants to be served and nobody want to be servants.

*Repeat: **We are training our young adults in service industries, but everybody wants to be served and nobody want to be servants.***

Why?

Adoption of technology for production and manufacturing has become so efficient that a majority of the developing world's population have shifted into service industries. Expansion and maturation of the service industry has created an economic hierarchy.

Through the ages, those that cared and taught children did it out of love for family and youth, or necessity. Likewise, those that cared for the injured, sick or disabled knew they were in a health preservation service—a caring service.

Would you consider the current health care industry **a caring service**?

Now young men and women go into medical field for nursing yet expect someone of a lower educational status to help them. In Canada and the United States, they are called "Licensed Practical Nurses" (or LPNs) or nurses aides. Educational services have followed the same trend. Teachers get an education to teach, yet they expect to have "teacher assistants".

The service industry has separated so far from “servants” practicing their profession that those becoming a “Chef” go to culinary schools; yet, upon job acceptance are not expecting to prepare food or cook. Restaurant waiters and waitresses are hired off the street, generally paid less than minimum wage, expected to increase pay from customer tips, yet are given no training. Most sure are not getting it at home.

Although that is true, what caused the social riddle?

- 1.) First: As I mentioned a bit ago, technology has improved efficiency in production and manufacturing.
- 2.) Secondly: Also as mentioned, we have been taught historically education carries with it social and economic status deserving to be served—not be servants.
- 3.) Thirdly, those directly paying servants are different than those receiving the service. Example: Those seeking medical care will seek care more often when insurance or government is paying the medical bill. Also, citizens in free societies insure government is not overspending; and in corrupt societies, government employees pay themselves more and the public expects graft, laziness, and inefficiencies. An economic reality is when payment is expected from someone other than who gets the service, there is a disconnect matching performance vs. expectation vs. pay.

Repeat: ***There is a disconnect matching performance vs. expectation vs. pay.***

Learning – pg. 160: “When someone shines your shoes, you pay them for the shine. When someone cleans your windows, you pay them when residue is removed and luster appears. When a service technician fixes your phone, you pay when your phone works and you can make a call. Unlike teaching, services (e.g., bus drivers and janitors) or those unable to directly measure worth are substitutable and generally low-paying occupations.

“One may argue that teaching is a service—a public service. Unfortunately, segmented components of that service are difficult to measure, which is why teacher pay is standardized.”

- 4.) Fourthly: A standardized system is managed by an expanding hierarchy. The larger the organization, the more pay is standardized at low rates because there is a huge number of replacements coming into and exiting the system annually. Those operating within those standards, from lower to upper hierarchy, are blocked within

the same economic strata. The lower level jobs always get paid less (e.g. LPNs get paid less than nurses, and nurses get paid less than doctors; similarly, teacher's aides get paid less than teachers, and teachers get paid less than administrators).

Efficiencies are expected with standardization.

5.) The fifth part of a 21st century riddle is that efficiencies have not been achieved with standardization. Training service efficiencies have not matched production and manufacturing efficiencies.

To summarize the service conundrum: 21st Century developed nations are operating in a circular puzzle. Take the school system as an example:

- Those training (i.e. teaching) are allowed to operate differently than production and manufacturing. Training through the school system refuses to have education replaced with communications efficiencies—(e.g. distance learning; on line training) and drop unneeded transportation—point one.
- Those in the school system are part of a government composite; are removed from its citizenry, and have reached an economic and social level where they expect to be served—point two; because
- Parents and students are not regularly paying teachers. Teachers are not being directly paid by those receiving the service. Citizens expect waste! Pay is not matched with performance—point 3.
- Those teaching work within a standardized hierarchical school system have pay standardized at low level by a large influx of young qualified individuals—point 4, but
- Historic, expected efficiencies have not matched output—point five.

Many services parallel the current school system. The riddle must be solved, or a civilization runs out of true servants. Yes, immigrants can fill the gap, but that is temporary until immigrants become adopted citizens.

As I write in **Culture—pg. 101**: “At some point, productive workers retire. A dwindling supply of young workers with slack work ethics will not be able to supply the wants of the population. Eventually, service needs will not be met, or immigrants will fill the void.”

Gadgets: Let me delve a bit into gadgets.

- When did you get your first electronic gadget? *(Bring back audience participation.)*
- When did your children get their first electronic gadget? How about grandchildren?

- **Culture pg. 77:** “Often, I hear people talking about how much things are changing. “I am unable to keep up with all the changes” is a favorite saying of senior citizens.

“Technological gadgets have replaced intellect, and senior citizens are referencing their inability to operate gadgets. Gadgets and intellect are not interchangeable. A well-designed app cannot replace a well-educated brain. Students want to use gadgets to look up an answer so they do not have to remember and thereby learn.”

- **Culture pg. 216:** “A time for change continues. Technology is perplexing. Is that why we send children to school earlier?

“Many believe we are learning faster and earlier than any generation. Based on historical accomplishments of people that lived a third, or half of our current life expectancy, we are weaning later, learning slower, and are less mentally developed upon entering adulthood than previous generations. Result: Innovation has slowed. Things seem to be changing faster as technology utilizes previous innovation. It is an illusion compared to my grandfather’s generation.”

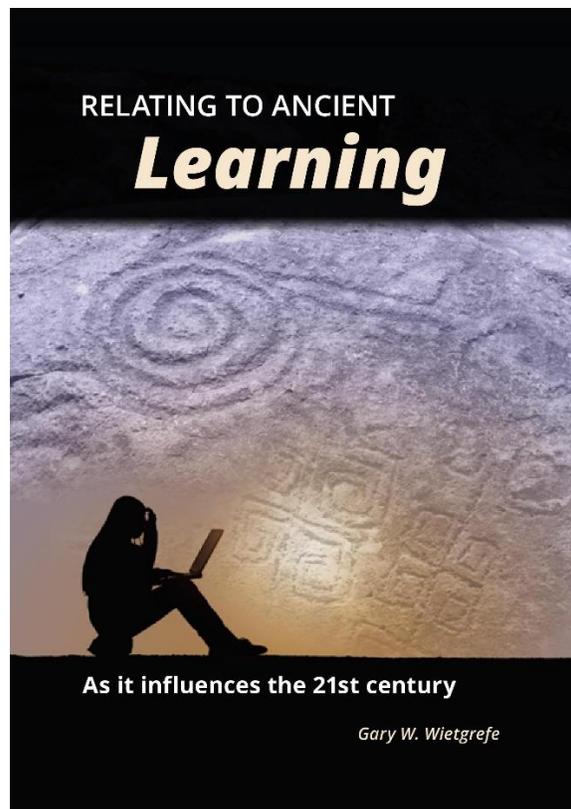
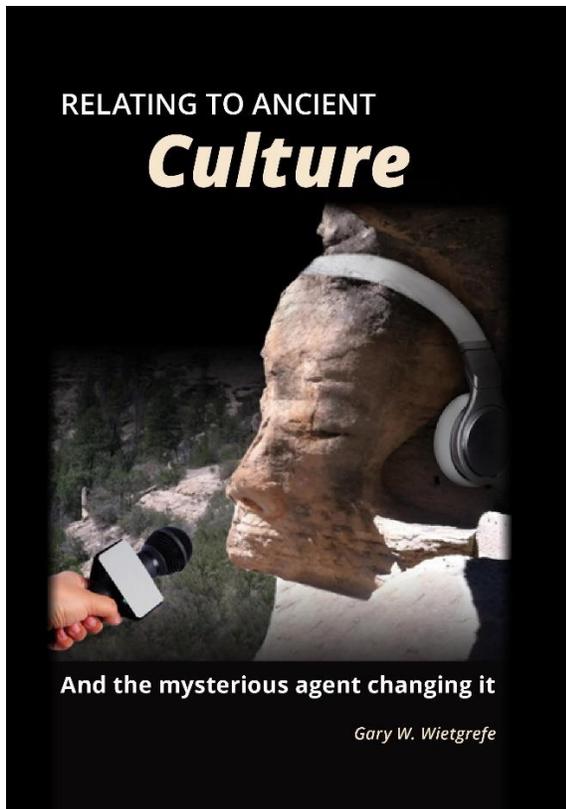
I have another session on technology, actually on 21st century Technophobia and Busiphobia. Please join me in that session.

In summary:

My goal of these presentations and books are: 1.) To Entertain; 2.) Make you think; 3.) Discuss various topics with your spouse, family, friends, and at work.

My style and purpose of these books and presentations are to give modern and historic stories and societal riddles in both books “Culture” and “Learning”. I think you will enjoy both.

(Hold up both books.)



Read my "***Relating to Ancient***" series of books:

- "***Culture and the mysterious agent changing it,***" and
- "***Learning as it influences the 21st century***".

Where can you get my books?

- My website: www.RelatingtoAncients.com has a list of worldwide suppliers of hardcover & e-books. My New York hardcover distributor will supply all channels; as well, my e-book distributor has downloadable versions for mobile readers.