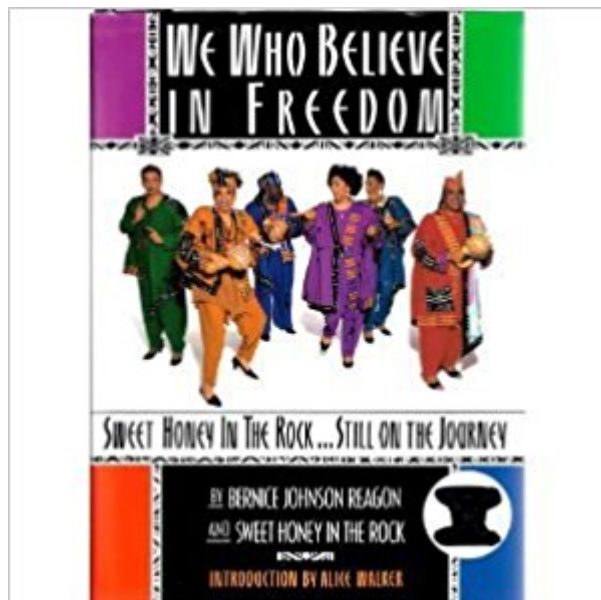


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# We Who Believe In Freedom



## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book celebrates the 20th anniversary of the Grammy Award-winning a cappella group Sweet Honey in the Rock. Starting out in 1973 at Howard University and singing in a wide range of styles from traditional gospel to songs of the Civil Rights struggle to original material, Sweet Honey in the Rock has lovingly explored every aspect of the African American musical experience. The group has maintained its vitality over the years by continuing to change its personnel, and the recollections of group members provide the book's format. While music is one constant of this story, freedom is another. The Civil Rights Movement, peace, and feminism have all received the support of Sweet Honey in the Rock's harmonizing. While this is not an essential purchase for many libraries, those with strong music and African American collections will definitely want to acquire.- Dan Bogey, Clearfield Cty. P.L. Federation, Curwensville, Pa. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Anything Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon says, writes or sings is always original, rooted in truth and (accurate) history, and causes one to realign their thinking. This book is no exception. It is written by the women of Sweet Honey over the years. You know - the women all of whom have perfect pitch and can take anything and turn it into magical harmony - and who make it look effortless. But you learn from reading that their lives and work are anything but effortless. They are disciplined and work hard. And they do it over if it's not their best. They have trouble in their lives. And as always,

they teach as a result. The sections written by Dr. Reagon are brilliant, insightful and sometimes painful.

Named for a song chronicling the life of civil rights activist Ella Baker, this book is a must-read for anyone interested in social justice, music, or personal biographies of some of the greatest heroines of our time. Its chapters chronicle not only the 20-year journey Sweet Honey in the Rock has taken as a singing group and social/historical force within the African-American community, but also communicate the forces of its members' personal lives which brought them to the group and their experiences as its singers and herstorians. With each chapter contributed from someone with a connection to the group, the reader is brought from singer to audience member to organizer and even sound technician. All perspectives give insight into the group's amazing and unique dynamics. Perhaps the most riveting chapter is contributed by the group's founder and only constant member, Bernice Johnson Reagon. She shares the experience, wisdom and courage of a woman whose life has been shaped by and devoted to the study and preservation of African-American culture, history, social movements and the music that naturally encircles and drives these forces. As she explains her roots in a southern Black church, her experiences as a member of the SNCC's Freedom Singers, and her life as a fighter for freedom in this world, singing is emphasized as a natural part of one who lives a life devoted to struggle for change. It is never seen as a force apart. Singing is who she is, rising from her community membership and historical roots, and taking shape as a driving cultural force communicating hope and the continuing struggle for change. In sharing its collective voice throughout its two-decade span, the current and former members of Sweet Honey, their producers, fans, friends, technicians, relatives and others share an appreciation for a world-renowned singing group and cultural institution which, using a surprisingly wide variety of African-American/African/Diasporatic styles of music, communicates a message of community solidarity, cultural history, progress, and struggle for social justice and peace.

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