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# Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling



## Synopsis

2009 Christianity Today Book Award winner! Named one of Publishers Weekly's best books of 2008 (religion category) It is not enough to condemn culture. Nor is it sufficient merely to critique culture or to copy culture. Most of the time, we just consume culture. But the only way to change culture is to create culture. Andy Crouch unleashes a stirring manifesto calling Christians to be culture makers. For too long, Christians have had an insufficient view of culture and have waged misguided "culture wars." But we must reclaim the cultural mandate to be the creative cultivators that God designed us to be. Culture is what we make of the world, both in creating cultural artifacts as well as in making sense of the world around us. By making chairs and omelets, languages and laws, we participate in the good work of culture making. Crouch unpacks the complexities of how culture works and gives us tools for cultivating and creating culture. He navigates the dynamics of cultural change and probes the role and efficacy of our various cultural gestures and postures. Keen biblical exposition demonstrates that creating culture is central to the whole scriptural narrative, the ministry of Jesus and the call to the church. He guards against naive assumptions about "changing the world," but points us to hopeful examples from church history and contemporary society of how culture is made and shaped. Ultimately, our culture making is done in partnership with God's own making and transforming of culture. A model of his premise, this landmark book is sure to be a rallying cry for a new generation of culturally creative Christians. Discover your calling and join the culture makers.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Let's reclaim the culture for Christ! We need to transform the culture! Let's redeem the culture! We should resist the culture! What do these phrases really mean? What do we mean by "culture" when we talk about transforming it? Is it our Christian calling to redeem "culture?" Andy Crouch's new book *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* (IVP, 2008) is a landmark work that will create a new culture of its own within evangelicalism. Crouch points out the areas where evangelical thinking about culture-making has been counterproductive, and he charts a new path - one that would have evangelicals understand culture in more tangible ways. Crouch points out the fallacious ways in which we conceive of "culture." Christians too often think simplistically about "culture" - as if it were some nebulous, overarching thought system in our world. Crouch believes we are wrong to talk of "culture" in this way. Instead, we must start thinking of culture as specific cultural goods (29). Culture is what human beings make of the world. And these things we make eventually affect the world we live in. We cannot withdraw or escape culture because it is what we were made to do (36). Analyzing culture does not substitute for the creation of real cultural goods (64). "The only way to change culture is to create more of it," Crouch says (67). Crouch sees much of evangelicalism's desire to "engage the culture" as well-intentioned but often misguided. We tend to take certain, appropriate gestures toward cultural artifacts and make them postures - our position towards all cultural artifacts.

Someone once told me that our twenties are about figuring out who we are, and our thirties are about figuring out what we should be doing with our lives. I'd say that's about right, in my own limited experience. A mid-career switch from a steady and well-paid job I was good at to a couple of iterations of a new vocation I'm not sure I'm good enough at--this has been the story of my life in my thirties, and I've sometimes gotten pretty lost in all of it. The Church's varied, and usually unsolicited, opinions on these matters often don't help at all. "Culture Making" offers sharp insight into the issue of vocation, delivered methodically, yet beguilingly, via elegant and sometimes beautiful prose. Andy Crouch sets the scene and tells the story of culture, then rapidly sweeps the reader into this story, finishing with a heart-stopping, imagination-grabbing, challenge to go and make something of the world. After defining the terms--culture is what we make of the world, creating new culture is the only way to change culture (although gestures of condemnation, critique, copying and consumption may certainly have validity)--Crouch filters the biblical story from Genesis to Revelation through the lens of culture, then addresses our role as co-creators and cultivators with God in this world and the next (it's filled with co-created cultural goods that pass what I call the 'new Jerusalem test', and the idea takes my breath away). While all three sections of the book are tightly

integrated, it is this third section, entitled "Calling", that really sings. Crouch's broad definition of culture making--the introduction of any cultural good--is also liberating for those of us with a narrow view of vocation.

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