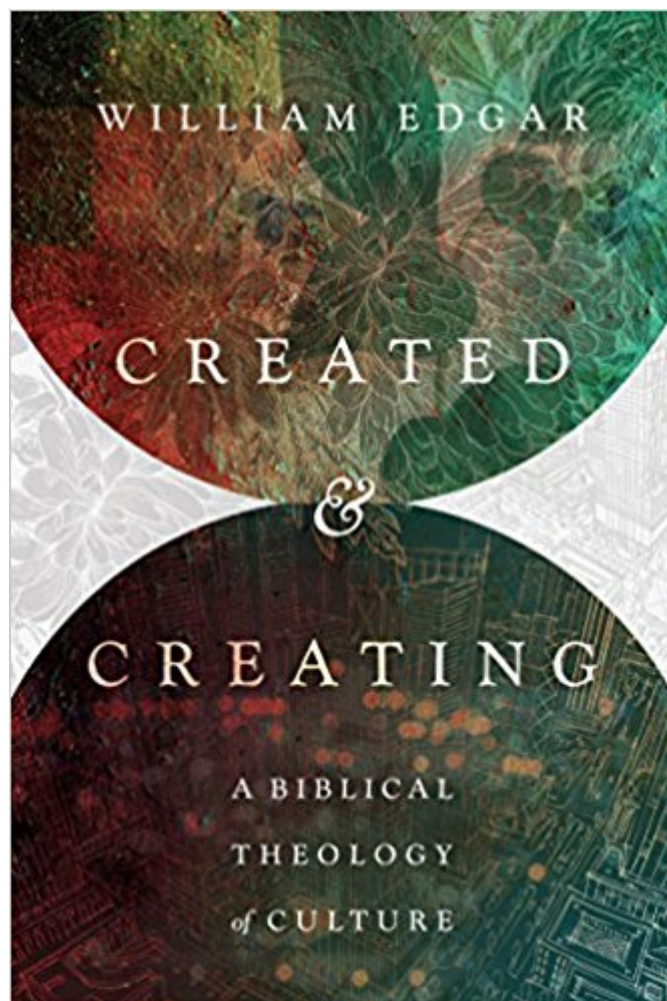


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# Created And Creating: A Biblical Theology Of Culture



## Synopsis

The gospel of Jesus Christ is always situated within a particular cultural context. But how should Christians approach the complex relationship between our faith and our surrounding culture? Should we simply retreat from culture? Should we embrace our cultural practices and mindset? How important is it for us to be engaged in our culture? And how might we do that with discernment and faithfulness? William Edgar offers a rich biblical theology in light of our contemporary culture that contends that Christians shouldâ•indeed, mustâ•be engaged in the surrounding culture. By exploring what Scripture has to say about the role of culture and by gleaning insights from a variety of theologians of cultureâ•including Abraham Kuyper, T. S. Eliot, H. Richard Niebuhr, and C. S. Lewisâ•Edgar contends that cultural engagement is a fundamental aspect of human existence. He does not shy away from those passages that emphasize the distinction between Christians and the world. Yet he finds, shining through the biblical witness, evidence that supports a robust defense of the cultural mandate to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28). With clarity and wisdom, Edgar argues that we are most faithful to our calling as God's creatures when we participate in creating culture. IVP Instructor Resources forthcoming

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Anything from the pen of Bill Edgar is profitable to read, but this subject is in Bill's wheelhouse. An important book on a topic that, for Western Christians, has never been so crucial." (Tim Keller, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York City)"Cultural engagement has become a contested

project in our times. Culture has been the turf on which too many battles have been fought and lost. With conviction and civility, Bill Edgar's *Created and Creating* helps us avoid those culture wars on one side while also keeping clear of the deep suspicion of all cultural activities on the other. He does this by mining the breadth of Scripture for the Creator's own thoughts about the cultural mandate, a mandate which turns out to be both a privilege and a danger. It is a privilege because the created order continues to beckon all of us to find significance in the reflection of the Creator in our earthly endeavors. It is a danger because the dysfunctions of the human heart too easily cause us to forget the call to reflect the Creator in those endeavors. Edgar's book is a biblical call to think more wisely, to engage more graciously, and to live with greater faith in the world God has created and in which he has purposively placed us." (Richard Lints, Andrew Mutch Distinguished Professor of Theology, vice president for academic affairs, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary)"Edgar undertakes the important task of evaluating the concept of culture through a rich biblical-theological lens that diagnoses, affirms, and challenges the contemporary view of cultural dynamics. This work is not only valuable for understanding what Scripture has to say about culture, but also helpful for seeing how Scripture interacts with the constantly evolving concerns of culture in our modern world." (Stephen T. Um, senior minister of Citylife Presbyterian Church of Boston)"Bill Edgar's *Created and Creating* is the most thorough and the most solidly biblical contribution to the current discussion of Christ and culture. Edgar's analysis of the historical discussion is wonderfully erudite and nuanced. His treatment of biblical texts and principles is deep and cogent. His conclusion is that God's cultural mandate to Adam is still in effect and that the Great Commission of Jesus applies that mandate to a world lost in sin. I hope and pray that many will read this book and take its message to heart." (John Frame, professor of systematic theology and philosophy, Reformed Theological Seminary)"I have been waiting for this book since I first met Dr. Edgar. I can count on one hand the people who are qualified to write such a work, and Bill Edgar is at the top of the list. He is a Christian theologian who is also an expert in cultural studies. This should be the first volume one reads when questions of Christianity and culture are broached." (K. Scott Oliphint, professor of apologetics and systematic theology, Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia)"Christians are often confused or even fearful about cultural trends. The help they need is clearly and accessibly offered in Bill Edgar's book. It is biblical, gently Reformed, and written with wisdom and grace." (William Dyrness, professor of theology and culture, Fuller Theological Seminary)

William Edgar is professor of apologetics, holder of the John Boyer Chair of Evangelism and Culture, and coordinator of the apologetics department at Westminster Theological Seminary in

Philadelphia. He is the author of several books, including *A Transforming Vision: The Lord's Prayer as a Lens for Life*, *Francis Schaeffer on the Christian Life*, *Christian Apologetics Past & Present*, and *Truth in All Its Glory: Commending the Reformed Faith*.

I bought it for someone else

This is an important book that addresses the false dichotomy of evangelism versus cultural engagement. If evangelicals/fundamentalists tend to fault at focusing too much on evangelism at the neglect of cultural engagement, then liberal/progressive Christians tend to fault at focusing too much on cultural engagement at the neglect of evangelism. The author provides historical, biblical, and theological arguments for the case that the Great Commission encompasses both imperatives of evangelism and cultural engagement with equal measure. In the last section of the book, he makes a powerful argument that the Great Commission is actually the fulfillment of the cultural mandate from Genesis 1 thus weaving both imperatives as humanity's central calling from the beginning of history to the consummation. If this is the case, then the applications are endless. For younger evangelicals who are passionate about evangelism but are also frustrated with the broader American evangelical community for their lack of empathy concerning the plight of immigrants, people of color, etc., then this book is for you. For more traditional evangelicals who have concerns that the pursuit of social justice, cultural renewal projects, etc. undermine the primacy of the Gospel and the Great Commission, may I encourage you not to brush me off and try reading the book first? The author himself comes from an evangelical and Presbyterian institution that has been described as the bastion of Old School Presbyterianism. He is very well-informed and addresses your concerns faithfully from Scripture.

I once heard a sermon that contained a lot of good information about the text. At the end, though, the preacher basically said, "Let the Holy Spirit apply this to your hearts" and quit without making any application himself. It was kind of a disappointing experience. *Reading Created and Creating* gave me a similar feeling. While it contains a lot of good content and thought, the author was very reticent to draw his own conclusions or follow those conclusions toward practical application. Basically, all William Edgar leaves us with is his belief that there shouldn't be a dichotomy between the sacred and the secular in culture. This conclusion may be accurate but is quite limited. To be honest, it may be my fault that I didn't get this book; it was fairly academic and some of it may have gone over my head. Nevertheless, I think I would have benefited more if Edgar's theology of culture

had been fleshed out a bit more and brought to the world where we live. This book is effective in its explanation of the historical views of culture held by Christian theologians over the years. I appreciated that section and learned from it. Overall, though, this book's conclusions are too limited to be very helpful for me. I received a digital copy of this book for free from the publisher and was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I express in this review are entirely my own.

Great!

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