

Culture Matters: A Call for Consensus on Christian Cultural Engagement

T. M. Moore, Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2007

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T. M. Moore has given us a fine little volume, *Culture Matters*, in which he argues that Christians should engage culture in a way that reflects God's reign and that Christians should therefore overcome their cultural passivity and find a broad consensus for cultural involvement. Moore is dean of the Centurions Program of the Wilberforce Forum, principle of The Fellowship of Ailbe, author or editor of twenty books, and author of numerous other essays, papers, articles, and poems.

In the Introduction, Moore argues that "culture matters, and our approach to it must be as informed and consistent as possible" (p.11). In his estimation, however, the Christian community is divided on how to relate to its cultural context. He lists six misguided approaches to culture—indifference, aversion, trivialization, accommodation, separation, and triumphalism—and then encourages the reader to look to our Christian heritage in order to discover a common approach to matters of culture.

In the first five chapters of the book, therefore, Moore draws upon historical case studies. The first chapter draws upon Augustine in order to instruct us how to critique contemporary culture, while the second chapter draws upon Celtic Christianity as an illustration of renewing culture in an age of darkness. Chapter Three resources John Calvin's educational innovation, Chapter Four portrays Abraham Kuyper's life and work in reforming the cultural spheres, and Chapter Five summarizes the life and work of Polish-American poet Czeslaw Milosz in order to show the prophetic power of culture. The final chapter is a summary and conclusion, arguing for a Christian consensus on cultural engagement. He argues that Christians should form powerful critiques

of their cultural contexts (p.148), develop distinctly Christian cultural forms (p.149), educate the church for living under God's reign (p.151), appreciate cultural pioneers of the Christian past (p.153), and seek to deploy Christian culture in the world and for the world (p.154).

Moore writes in a manner accessible to thoughtful laypeople, includes discussion questions at the end of each chapter, and connects each historical case study to a contemporary person or work that is in the same vein. Unfortunately Moore's historical case studies are a bit too tidy, not providing incisive critiques of Augustine, Calvin, Kuyper, Milosz, and the Celts. In spite of this, however, *Culture Matters* is highly recommended.

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