

A Practical Guide to Culture

Introduction and Chapter 1

Introduction

Their background and motivation/purpose of writing this book.

- Part 1 **Why Culture Matters**

provides a framework of culture for Christians.

- Part 2 **A Read of the Cultural Waters**

focuses on those powerful yet subtle undercurrents of our culture that often go unnoticed.

- Part 3 **Pounding Cultural Waves**

each chapter focuses on a singular cultural issue.

- Part 4 **Christian Worldview Essentials**

contains four shorter chapters on topics that are “Christian worldview essentials”

Chapter 1

Like fish immersed in water, we become so immersed in ways of thinking and patterns of living that we become unable to recognize them. [Culture shapes our perceptions of reality](#) in similar ways.

What culture does to us

We may be fully aware of the hot topics of our time and yet be oblivious to the many cultural undercurrents shaping how we think and live.

Culture's greatest influence is in what it presents as being normal. As C.S. Lewis said, "The most dangerous ideas in a society are not the ones that are being argued, but the ones that are assumed."

Each culture has its own [blind spots](#). (eg. genocide 种族灭绝)

What culture is (and what it is not)

- **What people have cultivated**

Culture was an integral part of God's plan for us and His world from the very beginning. (Gen. 1:26-28)

创世记 1:26 神说：“我们要照着我们的形像，按着我们的样式造人，使他们**管理**海里的鱼、空中的鸟、地上的牲畜和全地，并地上所爬的一切昆虫。”1:27 神就照着自己的形像造人，乃是照着他的形像造男造女。1:28 神就赐福给他们，又对他们说：“要生养众多，遍满地面，**治理**这地；也要**管理**海里的鱼、空中的鸟，和地上各样行动的活物。

从神的心意来说，“文化”是治理过程中的产物。但是人的罪，使得文化很多时候对我们产生负面的(不合神心意的)影响。

What culture is (and what it is not) cont.

- **Reflection of their worldviews**

Chuck Colson often said:”Culture is a reflection of the belief system of a group of people. (conceptions of God, truth, morality, humanity, and history that shape how we live)

Dramatic differences between cultures reveal dramatic differences of worldview.

- **Good and bad ; and dynamic**

Should distinguish between people and culture: If we see people as culture and culture as enemy, we’ll likely see people as the enemy and confuse their bad ideas with evil intentions.

How culture works and what it does to us

- **Externalization:**

humans externalize their values, imaginations, innovations, and ideas on the world around them by what they do.

When what we do becomes part of our normal way of living together, it's called objectification.

- **Internalization:**

We internalize culture as we settle into its routines, lifestyles, and habits, and as we consume its products, ideas, and assumptions about the world.

The worlds we create powerfully influence our lives by convincing us of what is normal. As we live in a culture, we become committed to its vision of life, unless we're intentional otherwise. We make our cultures, and then our cultures shape us.

What culture is made of:

- **Ideas:** first we absorb the **ideas** of our culture.

- **Champions:** Ideas spread in a culture through **champions's artifacts** .

Artists, storytellers, entrepreneurs, and educators, people make media, social network (eg. founder of playboy magazine)

- **Institutions** maintain and perpetuate culture.

family, church, school, government (both local and federal), university...

Culture determines how these institutions function and carry with them the power to enforce a certain way of life.

When certain institutions become less influential, others become more influential.

Discussion questions:

1. What are the often unnoticed norms of the local culture in the “community” you live? Or you grew up in? 在你生活或成长的文化环境中，有什么不被察觉的“常态”影响了你？
2. 通过什么方式(champion, institution)影响你？
3. How are they different from what the next generation (younger people) grew up in? 这些与下一代的年轻人们被影响的文化“常态”和方式有什么区别？