



# Culture, Inculcation, and Theologians: A Postmodern Critique

*Gerald A. Arbuckle*

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The split between the Gospel and culture is without doubt the drama of our time," wrote Paul VI in 1975. Since that time there has been an increasingly urgent awareness that inculturation is an indispensable task of the church. But inculturation, the dialogue between church and cultures, demands first of all that we who would enter into the dialogue understand what "culture" itself means and what dialogue entails. To that end, cultural anthropologist Father Gerald Arbuckle gives us this important volume.

He traces the history of the development of the concept of culture, and the too-often negative, rarely positive effects of encounters between church and culture. He explores how Jesus Christ approached the cultures of his time, and outlines the current treatment of culture and inculturation in church documents and in Catholic theology. He shows that modest progress in understanding has recently stalled, and there are even forces working to turn that progress into regress. He concludes with a description of inculturation as it needs to happen 'and a sharp critique of those who resist. With a sense of prophetic hope, Arbuckle seeks to help us bridge the lamentable split between Gospel and culture, the drama that continues to unfold in our time. *Gerald A. Arbuckle, SM, PhD, is codirector of Refounding and Pastoral Development, a research ministry, in Sydney, Australia. He is internationally known for his expertise in helping church leaders minister effectively in a postmodern world. Arbuckle's most recent books include: Laughing with God: Humor, Culture, and Transformation; Confronting the Demon: A Gospel Response to Adult Bullying; Violence, Society, and the Church: A Cultural Approach; and Healthcare Ministry: Refounding the Mission in Tumultuous Times (2001 Catholic Press Association Award), all published by Liturgical Press. "*

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