



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Genesis 1:20–2:3

“Man and the Cultural Mandate”

TRANSCRIPT

The Scripture reading for this morning is Genesis chapter 1 verse 20 through Genesis chapter 2 and verse 3. So, will you turn to Genesis chapter 1 and verse 20, where Moses writes:

Then God said, “Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens.” And God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind”; and it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” Then God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to everything that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food”; and it was so. And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it, He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

May the Lord bless this reading of his inspired word.

Our subject for this morning in the continuation of our series of studies in the book of Genesis is “Man and the Cultural Mandate.” A sudden transformation of the majestic creation narrative takes place at the point to which we have come in our studies. I am sure that in the reading of the word of God, you have noticed the impressive, almost ponderous phrases and clauses that have characterized the first part of the first chapter: “And God said, let there be, God created, God made.” An almost monotonous order has been maintained. God said, God created, God saw, and there was evening and there was morning, the second day or the third day.

But now something very different, something very startling, something rather strange takes place. Instead of “And God said, God created,” now the infinite and eternal God changes his course and engages in dialogue. And it is a dialogue within himself. It is not a monologue, it is a soliloquy. “Let us make man,” he says “in our image according to our likeness.” So it is clear that at this point the creation account reaches higher ground.

There are some very humbling things for man’s meditation here. Man is the crown of creation. He is the king of the creation, but he is to eat like the animals. He is to have glandulous secretions and hormones like the lions and tigers and like the cats and dogs too. Lashed by the same kind of desires, he shall receive the same command from the Creator to be fruitful and fill the world. The animals and man, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

The Psalmist says “O Lord, thou savest,” translated in some versions “preservist.” Man and beast, and thus links together the destiny of man and creation. And I think there

must be some really significant thing about the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, also a man, was cradled in an animal's feeding trough when he was born. Now, there are some grand things about this creation too. This man is to rule over the earth. He is to fill the earth. He is to subdue it. He is to rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves over the earth. The essence of the divine intention has been called the cultural mandate. Now that term raises some questions.

What is culture? Well, one can speak of culture in different ways. One can speak of the culture of plants, the culture of flowers, the culture of bees. Generally, however we refer the word to human beings. And in this context, it refers to the resulting improvement that comes from mental, moral, and social training. It connotes education. The man who is educated is thought to be a cultured man. It has to do with taste and experience and often it has to do with family background, refinement. The man who is a refined man from a fine family background and who has education and some taste in the arts is thought of as a cultured man.

Now, to some it is merely a veneer of the real thing, polish. There are some men who have polish, but have no real basic, deep down kind of culture. But to most, it is more than all of this. It is all of these things plus something almost indefinable. It includes the love of the arts, the love of paintings, the love of portraits, the love of music. But really from the biblical standpoint, these are just stepping-stones to the real culture. To put it biblically, culture is the fulfillment of the mandate given in the Garden of Eden to man. What did God say to man there? He said, “fill the earth; subdue it; rule over it.” The cultural mandate is the accomplishment of that great command that God gave to man. It is the execution of man's divinely given stewardship over the creation, for we are the kings of the creation under God. It includes the development and the improvement of the creation that is about us. And then

ideally, when this improvement and development takes place and is accomplished by the enabling power of God, man lays the whole thing down before the feet of him who is king of man and of nature and in whose image and for whom man and all things are created. So wrote one of the great thinkers about culture.

The passage we are to study contains some of the Bible’s opening shots at some very important and interesting questions. Of course, the question of evolution is still before us here. Does verse 26, “Let Us make man in Our own image” teach the doctrine of the Trinity? What’s the meaning of the expression “the image of God?” What does it mean to be created in the image of God? And the Bible incidentally makes it very plain that though the fall has taken place, the image of God in man still is there. It is marred, but it is still there. Looking about upon other men, what is there about other men such as we are that enables the Scriptures to say, “they are in the image of God.”

Did God intend for humanity to be bisexual or trisexual? Is there some other kind of sex than male and female? And what is the relationship between the male and the female? What about the population explosion? Has God never heard what our scientists have said? That we are in danger of overpopulating the earth? He said “fill the earth, multiply, be fruitful,” and then after the Fall, he repeated those things in the ninth chapter of the book of Genesis. He told Noah and the ones who survived the flood to go out, to multiply and fill the earth. Does not God know the dangers that face us? Well now, of course God does know the dangers that face us, but he has also seen West Texas. And if you have seen West Texas, you know there is no danger of the earth being filled up at the present time.

Now we turn to the fifth day of creation. And here we have the creation of the marine animals and birds. And let me read again the command of verse 20 of chapter 1:

“Then God said, ‘Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens.’”

One of the scientists who has written on the Book of Genesis has said, “The first introduction of animal life was not a fragile, blob of protoplasm that happened to come together in response to electrical discharges over a primeval ocean as evolutionists believe. The water swarmed with swarms of living creatures.” But we are not to think from this statement, “Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures” that it is the waters that have brought forth these creatures. It is evident that they are the product of the word of God. It is not they, the waters, who have created. It is God who has created. So when we read, “Then God said,” the power of this creation rests in the word of the Lord God. So the creation is from God, but as a result of his word the waters teem with swarms of living creatures.

Isn't it interesting too that we read in the twenty-first verse that God created the great sea monsters. The term sea monsters would appear to include all the large sea animals, even the monsters of the past that are now extinct, unless there is one swimming around in Loch Ness. Now the Japanese have a scientific expedition that has gone to Loch Ness to look for the monster of Loch Ness and others also have been there with their cameras, taking pictures of strange things in the waters. They told us in Scotland when we went to Loch Ness that we were much more likely to see the monster in lake Loch Ness if we went by the pub first. [Laughter.] It was highly likely that we might see something if we did that.

The use of the term אֲרָאָה [bārā'] here suggests something else too. You will notice this is the second time that we have it in this account. In the first verse “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” and now we read “And God created the great sea monsters” and also all of these things are created after their kind pointing to the programming of the reproductive systems of the animals in order to assure the fixity of the kinds. We know that

all replicating systems are fixed by the DNA molecule, but here it is evident that while there may be variations within a kind, there can be no variations beyond the kind and I think that that is the state of our scientific knowledge at the present day. The section concludes with the divine blessing and God blessed them saying, “be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas. And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.”

The divine blessing is intended to secure the perfection of the work of creation and of the ecological balance and the exactness of function in the biological world. God blessed them and said, “be fruitful and multiply.” Everything is arranged for the good of the creature of man who is to come as a result of the divine creation in just a moment. These things that the Lord has provided for man remind us, of course, of some of the statements the Lord Jesus made which are recorded in the gospels. We read in Matthew chapter 6 and verse 26 that the Lord Jesus said, “Look at the birds, they don’t sow, they don’t reap, but your heavenly Father feeds them. And are you not worth much more than the birds?” And then in the tenth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, he says, “Are not there two sparrows and not a one of them falls to the ground or hops about on the ground” if that is the meaning of the text there without our heavenly Father. So he cares for everything in his universe. He provides for everything and you can see as you read this account that he has made beautiful and sufficient preparation and provision for the man who is to come from his creative hand.

The sixth day and the account of it then follows. And here we have the creation of the terrestrial animals and man. Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures.” Now you’ll notice the word creation is not used of these animals. It may be the intention of the author to suggest by that that there was some inorganic substance that the Father used in the creation of these terrestrial animals and if you turn to chapter 2, verse 19, you’ll read there “And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the

sky.” So perhaps we are to think from this that just as man was created with the use of the dust of the earth, so the animals also.

There are three kinds of animals. In verse 24, we read, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind," and then there followed the three kinds, cattle, creeping things, beasts of the earth." Now the cattle refers to the domesticated animals, the creeping things to other small animals. Incidentally that word creeping probably covers a much wider range than the word normally covers in our English speech. It's used of animals, which are animals but their legs are not the prominent part of them, creeping. And then he mentions in verse 24 "and beasts of the earth." And evidently these are the game animals, what we would call the wild animals.

This classification has no correlation with the kind of system that our scientists use today. They speak of amphibians and reptiles and mammals and insects, but what we have here is probably a more natural kind of system based upon man's own interest. So it is looked at from the human standpoint. Probably also this term beasts of the earth includes the large mammals such as the lions and the elephants and also those extinct animals such as the dinosaurs which we do not have any of today.

Now you will notice that there is here another statement that touches on the question of evolution. You do not find any evidence here of any kind of evolutionary struggle for existence among these animals. This is before the fall and consequently, the animals evidently lived together in perfect harmony and in a moment we shall see that they lived by means of vegetation. It is a rather interesting thing that many of the animals today that live by meat can, if necessary, live by vegetation, a carry over from the original state before the Fall.

Then we come to man. In both the opening chapters of Genesis, Genesis chapter 1 and then next week we will look at Genesis chapter 2, man is portrayed as in nature and yet at

the same time over it. He is portrayed as continuous with the creation and yet there is a discontinuity. He is made of the dust of the earth, but at the same time, God breathed into him the breath of life. Part of his being is from the creation; part of his being is from God directly. Now let us look at the opening words of verse 26. Then God said, "Let Us make man." You know, when you read the Bible, you need to read it meditatively. Never approach the Bible and say "well, today I've got to get through 5 chapters" and read the 5 chapters reading all of the words, but not thinking about the things that you are reading. It is much better to read meditatively. You notice immediately a contrast between verse 24 and verse 26. Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures," but here, then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image and after Our likeness. Notice the note of self-communion, "Let Us make man." And the impressive plural number, "Let Us," not Let Me, but Let Us make man.

This marks out the creation of man as a momentous, different kind of step in His creative work. It marks out the divine decree as proclaiming a distinctiveness and a pre-eminence in connection with man over all of His other created beings. Over against the animals, it is said that man shall rule them. He shall govern them, he shall even give them their names. So he is given a great mandate over them, because he is different from them. He has his origin in the breath of God and that leads to the crowning glory of man, his communion with the creator, something that the animals do not enjoy.

That is right, your own pet, your own cat or your own dog does not pray, does not worship. Now I read this past week, I was speaking last night at Pine Cove to the conference down there on the subject of the charismatic movement, 15 years after. And I was reading in a recent book written by a well-known preacher, who received a letter from a woman who said that as a result of the gift of tongues, her dog had been given the power to bark in an unknown bark, but I assure you that that is not to be expected. Do not train your dog to bark in an

unknown bark. Now she said she trained her dog to do that and I could probably believe that. It is evident that that is not encompassed in the divine gift of tongues.

Now, what is meant by “Let Us make man?” That calls for attention because of the word, Us. What is meant by that? Now that has been debated for a rather lengthy period of time. You know, I sometimes think that when we talk about differing interpretations that we are really wasting our time. In fact, to be honest with you, after the message at 8:30, that is what my wife told me. She said, “You’re wasting your time to talk about these different interpretations, because after all it is what the Bible says and the proper interpretation that matters.” And of course, she is right to a point. [Laughter] But then there are a lot of us that are exposed to other people who have heard all of these interpretations and they want to know an answer for them. And so that is why I do refer to the interpretations of men such as Professor Von Ranke who is so highly regarded by liberal scholars.

Now remember this, liberal scholars are not anxious as a rule to find the meaning of the text of the Bible, because their own basic approach to the word of God is negative. They do not believe that the Bible is the word of God, they do not believe what the Bible says about man, they do not believe that they are sinners. They do not believe that Jesus Christ is the divine sacrifice for us, sinners. They do not believe that we must rely upon Him and Him alone for our salvation. So when they bring to bear on the study of the Scriptures their great learning and many of them have great learning, they are not anxious to support the orthodox interpretations of the word of God.

More often than not, they seek to find an interpretation that is plausible, that will be contrary to the orthodox interpretation of the Bible. Now Professor Von Ranke for example looks at this plural and says it is a reference to the Lord and to the angels, that what he is saying is “Let Us,” that is the Lord speaking with and to the angels, “let us,” the Lord and the

angels, make man in our image after our likeness. Does not the Old Testament call angels the sons of God? The answer to that of course is yes, it does call angels the sons of God. We shall deal with that when we get to Genesis chapter 6. It also calls man the son of God. Adam is called the son of God.

Now there are other views in addition to Professor Von Ranke. Some see this plural as the survival of an early polytheism. That is, the writer of the Book of Genesis, thinking about the fact that there are many Gods has said ‘let us.’ These various gods, let us make man after our image and the ‘us’ is a reflection of a view that there were many Gods, not just one God. Some on other grounds look at this ‘us’ and say this is a plural of majesty. That is that you tend to speak in the plural if the figure who speaks is a majestic figure.

Now, if I should speak to you this morning and should have an overblown view of myself, I might say, “this morning we are preaching to you from the Book of Genesis” and you would understand by that that I am such a majestic figure that I am reckoning myself to be more than one. We are speaking to you and I am not talking about the ‘editorial we’, but this is the plural of majesty. So it has been said. Others have said it is the plural of fullness of attributes. Now that is closer I think, to the interpretation. It is rather the plural of the fullness of persons in the divine Godhead.

Some may say that is a plural of deliberation, that there is deliberation within God and he speaks as if he is deliberating within himself. Let us make man after our image and after our likeness. You know the most plausible interpretation is so often the most accurate and the most supportable. And the most plausible interpretation of ‘Let Us make man’ is that there is plurality in the Godhead. Now, I would not want to affirm that this is a clear revelation of the doctrine of the Trinity, because we do not have the clarity of the revelation of the doctrine of the Trinity until we come to the New Testament. And there we learn that there are three

Gods and three persons who can be called God and only these three, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. Three persons who subsist in one essence. So we can speak of one God, but we can also speak of this Godhead as being a tri-unity. So the Christians speak of their God as a triune God.

Now, as for Professor Von Ranke’s view, popular with many liberals, it lacks the support of the word of God. Wherein the Bible do you ever read concerning the creation that God called a conference or a committee of angels together and thereafter consultation with them, decided to together with them create man? Where do you ever read in the Bible that man is created in the image of angels? While these are rhetorical questions you know the answer too, you never find these things. And furthermore, in the remainder of the Old Testament as the writers of the Old Testament reflect on the creation and remind their readers of what God did then, they always say there was one person involved. In fact, in Isaiah chapter 40, Isaiah challenges these people who follow the gods of the heathen and says where were they when God did this? Who was with him when he did this? He especially says there was no one there.

And you know if you read the account carefully here, my wife may be more right than I think. In verse 7, we read in chapter 2, listen, “Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground” and then in verse 22, “And the LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man.” This very account stresses the fact that it was the LORD God who created man and who created woman. No, the plural is probably a plural of fullness, but not a fullness of attributes, though of course that is true. It is a plural of the fullness of persons.

Now some of you theological students, if you want to know the technical term for this, it is the plural of *hypostasis*, the plural of persons within the Godhead. At this point, we

have the doctrine of the Trinity only in germ form, not a formal or foolproof of the teaching, but we do get a hint here that in the Godhead there is plurality, ‘Let Us make man after Our image, after Our likeness.’

Don’t be afraid of Professor Von Ranke. Don’t be afraid of others who interpret the word of God contrary to the general teaching of the unity of the Bible. There are always flaws in their interpretation, and if you study the Bible enough, the Holy Spirit will bring home to you the conviction of the truthfulness of the word of God and generally it is the most plausible interpretation, is the simplest.

Well the make is further explained in verse 25 as create. God made, rather verse 27, I should say, “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him.” I want you to notice that there are three occurrences of the word ‘create’ in this passage. In verse 1, “God created the heavens and the earth.” That is the passage from nothing to inorganic matter. Then in verse 21, “God created the great sea monsters” and there we have the passage from the inorganic matter to organic life. And here in verse 27, “God created man in His own image.” We have the passage from organic life to human life. So at three critical points in the record, the word “create,” בָּרָא [bārā’], is used.

Now the reference to the creation of man in the image of God has also created a great deal of discussion. Looked at from the outward side, how is man in the image of God? Well it is said, he stands upright, not like the animals. They crawl around or they move on their four legs, on all fours, but man stands upright. Furthermore, he gazes off and because of the sphericity of the globe, he always looks at the heavens and so his appearance is of a person who stands upright and he always looks toward heaven. And that ought to make sense to any Texan because there are no trees in the way. I refer you again to West Texas. In West Texas you always look at the heavens.

Furthermore, man is able to display emotions on his face. Now, I know you think your own pet animal laughs and cries, but it is man who particularly has the expressions that reflect the inmost being. It is man who blushes, an animal does not blush. And most of all, it is man who talks. Now if we were looking only at the outward side of things, we would say in these respects man has been created in the image of God. It is likely however that the Bible speaks from the inner side of things rather than the outer, because in the New Testament, that is the stress that is made upon the interpretation of the image of God.

In the New Testament, putting this with the Old Testament, you learn that man is in the image of God in three ways. He is a rational being. At the heart of his being, he is rational. This is something given him by God. But he is a rational being. He has a unique endowment that ultimately enables him to know God. He is able to worship God. And of course, he is also a person who has a moral nature. He is able to receive the holiness and righteousness of the truth as is expressed in those passages in Ephesians and Colossians. I suggest incidentally that you look them up.

And finally, he is the person who possesses the regal office. And that consequence of the image of God means that he rules over the earth. He is the image of God in his rational nature, his moral being and in his regal office. And even though the Fall has caused this image to be marred, it is still a possession of man. 1 Corinthians makes that clear, Genesis chapter 9 makes that clear, James chapter 3 makes it clear as well.

So in summary then the image of God in which man was created has to do with all those aspects of human nature that are foreign to the animals. Now we turn to some other things and before I do, I want to make a comment concerning things that are often said concerning this God about whom we are speaking by liberal interpreters. Some of the liberal interpreters and some of those that you might not classify as liberal, but Barthian, make a great

deal over the fact that God is the wholly other one. Sometimes you will see that in capital letters, that he is the wholly other one (wholly—W-H-O-L-L-Y, not H-O-L-Y), the wholly other being, making a great point over the fact that he is different from us and wholly different from us and therefore we can never really know anything definitely about Him. We can only have some analogies of the knowledge of God.

But let me assure you that while there is a sense in which that is true. For example, He is infinite, we are finite. He is omnipotent and even with all of the power given, man as a creature of God, he never has omnipotence. He has other powers that we do not have and yes, some of the same virtues that we have, but in the infinite sense. And so in that sense he is always the wholly other one. But nevertheless, by reason of the fact that he has created us in the image of God and has breathed into us the breath of life, there is a contact between man and God and it is possible for man to have fellowship with God. So there is a vastness of difference between the nature of the creator and the creature that can never be bridged, but there is also a likeness, which can never be lost. And we can know God and know him truly though he is incomprehensible in his fullness to us.

Now we all know that, we know many things that we cannot know fully and our knowledge is true knowledge. I know my wife; I will never know her fully. In fact sometimes, I think I am losing out, I don't seem to have quite as much knowledge as I used to have. And I am sure that she feels that way about me. Lewis, I just don't understand you. I have heard that sentence more than once. I assure you. And yet, we have lived together for 40 years. And I went with her 8 years before that. Now that is a lengthy period of time. I should know everything about her. But, I don't. Females, females, they are too much for us males. [Laughter]

Now the regal office has been given to man as the word ‘rule’ and ‘subdue’ indicate, and these are the consequences of the image of God. I wish I had time to turn to Hebrews chapter 2 and tell the story of how man has lost his regal office, but Christ the King of Kings has come and regained that regal office for man by virtue of the blood that was shed on the cross at Calvary. I suggest you read Hebrews chapter 2 verse 5 through verse 10. But now we have a new note in verse 27. “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” Male and female—humanity is defined as bisexual, not trisexual as contemporary culture and thought it often seems would have it. We do not read in the Bible, God created Adam and Freddy. But we read, God created Adam and Eve. Male and female created He them. Let me say something about this. Homosexuality is an awfully big issue today. But the Bible speaks very plainly about it. Homosexuality is sin. It is sin and brings the judgment of God. But let us not forget that it is not the only sin. We are all sinners, but homosexuals are sinners in their homosexuality and just as there is deliverance for sinners, so there is deliverance for the sinner who is a homosexual. The Apostle Paul when he wrote to the Corinthians said that certain types of people would not inherit the kingdom of God and he listed in the sixth chapter a series of sins among which there were these vile sexual sins. And then he adds and such were some of you. But you have been justified. You have been sanctified. You have been washed in the blood of Christ so that redemption is available for homosexuals. It is not true that a homosexual cannot be saved from his homosexuality. The Bible makes it very plain that it is a sin, a heinous sin. It is a sin that God hates. But it can be redeemed.

Male and female He created them. Incidentally, you’ll notice if you read that verse carefully, that man and woman were not androgynous in the beginning, as some have said. In the image of God, He created him. One might say, well, man here is used in the generic sense

and it is incidentally, feminists, please note. Man is the name for man and woman, the generic name. We are mankind, not person kind, mankind. But now notice what he says, “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him”; but then he says, “male and female He created them.” In other words, man originally was not a person with both male and female characteristics. He was created male and female, not as an androgynous person and then the separation, but male and female He created them. So the singularity of man and the plurality of the sexes is set forth.

Now the filling of the earth and the subduing of it emphasizes the cultural mandate. This is a very much neglected imperative among evangelicals. Too often in the recent past, we have abandoned the task of subduing the earth to the unbelieving pagan world. And the result has been that the unbeliever who is dominant in the sphere of the arts, the sciences, literature, philosophy, and politics is the one who is the force to be reckoned with in all of these areas. Evangelicals have unfortunately abandoned this earth to them. But let me remind you that when God said to man that he was to be fruitful and to multiply and to fill the earth and subdue it and to rule over it, that is part of the mandate that is given to man. It is the cultural mandate. Everything in this creation as it was is to be developed and ultimately rendered to our great God in heaven for his glory.

And that means that we shouldn't look when we look at the sciences and see men who excel in sciences, we shouldn't have to look to the unbeliever in science. We should have believing scientists, because they and they alone have the full capacity for understanding science, for understanding philosophy, for understanding the arts, for understanding literature, for understanding all of human activity. It is they who have the capacity for true understanding of the creation of God. The Christians should not be satisfied to eat the crumbs falling from the cultural tables of the unregenerate. It is because we have abandoned our task.

If you are a businessman, an insurance man, you should be the best in your business. If you are a scientist, you should be the best in your business or if you an artist, you should be the best in your business for God. It is the work of us as men to study the creation, to come to understand the creation, to learn the principles by which God has put this universe together and then use that information for the blessing of men. So in all spheres of activity, it is we and we primarily who are to be the leaders in all of the spheres of human activity. It is part of the cultural mandate that was given to us and it has not been withdrawn by God.

So, you who are scientists or you who are skilled in literature or the arts or whatever it may be, it should be a task which you do to the glory of God asking him to shed light upon it. Be wary of following the guidance of the unbeliever, listening, learning perhaps, but ultimately under God, subduing the earth and ruling over it. It is sad that we have turned this over to the unbelieving. This is our task and we should not forget that.

Culture in the sense in which I am speaking, of course, then is not contrary to Christianity. It is the task of the believing family of God. It is no wonder then, that John Calvin when in his school in Geneva, he sought to teach young men the ministry of the word of God, insisted that those who studied for the ministry should first have a broad cultural training just as he himself had had, for he was a humanist, originally by training. And then as a result of his conversion, and of the preeminence that the word of God came to have in his life, he was able to look out on the breadth of human activities and fulfill the cultural mandate of subduing the earth in a way that others were unable to do. The words “fill the earth,” incidentally suggest the fears of population explosion are much overdrawn. Evidently, the world is well able to support a large population, that mandate is repeated after the fall to Noah and those who came after the flood, to those who came through the flood. And that mandate

has never been rescinded. Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth – that is a mandate for individuals as well as for others.

It is an interesting fact that scientific studies show that when a given kind grows in numbers to the optimum number for its own ecological balance, the population of that particular kind tends to stabilize and evidently, for some built in psychological or physiological mechanistic reasons, there is no danger of the overpopulation. That is a rather interesting point. I wish I knew more about it.

Now, food is mentioned in verse 29 and 30. Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth." By the way, recently in Kansas, a young man was before a judge on account of the possession of marijuana. And he said before the judge that he would like to plead his case and he did. And he turned the judge to a passage of Holy Scripture. He said, I would like to cite Genesis 1:29. God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed and it shall be food for you." So how judge, can you say that I cannot have marijuana? Well, the judge was unimpressed by his argument, but he did conclude by saying, if you want to appeal to a higher authority, that is all right with me.  
[Laughter]

I never thought of that, but did you notice this incidentally that we have no record here of what Tennyson in his "In Memoriam" spoke of when he said, "nature red in tooth claw." We have no evidence here that animals fed upon one another at this time. Later on they did. Nature red in tooth and claw is a picture of the animal world after the Fall. But as we read in the Bible, finally in the says of the kingdom of God upon the earth, the wolf shall lie down with the lamb and the lion and the other small animals shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox which it apparently originally did.

Now the seventh day is the creation of the Sabbath and our time is drawing to a close. I suggest you read the Believers' Bible Bulletin. Let me close with just a word by way of application at the end. We close on the note of the greatness of primeval man. He was great in the time of his appearing, he was the capstone of the creative activity of God. He created the heavens and the earth. He has filled the earth with the animals and now he has created man as the capstone of his creative work. He was great in the solemnity of his creation for we read that the Godhead said “Let Us make man after Our image.” He was the subject of divine forethought, of divine planning, of divine care and of course of a divine purpose and delight. Let us make man like we are. And he is great in his nature having an affinity with God, a resemblance to God, a spiritual being. And he exercises his stewardship over the creation under God.

And finally, he is great in the grandeur of his dominion as king of the earth under God. That cultural mandate still rests upon us. It is our duty to fill the earth, to subdue it, and to render it finally to God for his glory. Even the Fall has not destroyed the mandate that is ours. It should be a tremendous challenge to a Christian to be in whatever occupation into which God has called him, to be the best for the glory of God and to do his work, his profession or whatever it is as unto the Lord in the fulfillment of the responsibilities given to us. The world can never do it. The unredeemed can never do it for they do not have the light of God in their activities. It is the Christian; it is the benefits of Christianity to culture which make it possible for the believing Christian to fulfill the cultural mandate that God has placed upon him.

Without Him we can do nothing, but with Him, we can do a great deal and we can recover for the church of Jesus Christ some of the glory that it had in the past. If you are here this morning and you do not know our Lord Jesus Christ, it is impossible for you to fulfill the

mandate that God has given man, for you are in your sin, under divine guilt and condemnation, headed for a Christless eternity. We remind you of the cross of the Lord Jesus where the blood was shed and through whom the offer of salvation goes out to every man who through the Spirit has come to recognize that he is a sinner.

And so in the place of the Lord Jesus Christ, as an ambassador of Him, I call upon you to believe in Him who offered himself a sacrifice for sinners. Come to Him. Be saved through Him. Accept as a free gift, eternal life which he so freely offers to all. May God help you to see your sin and your need and may you come to Him. And may you through Him fulfill the purpose that he has for you. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful for Thee words that are so timeless. Lord, we pray to you that Thou would enable us to multiply, to fill the earth, to subdue it, to rule it in the name of our great God. And now Lord, as a result of the fall, we pray that through the Holy Spirit thou will deliver us from our sin and enable us to understand science, technology, research, development, theory and practice in such a way that we may under Thy hand glorify Thee in all of the things that Thou hast given us to do upon this earth. And may great glory come to the Lord Jesus who loved us and loosed us from our sins in His own precious blood, in whose name we pray. Amen.