

## On the passage commonly referred to as the Cultural Mandate, 1 pg

**Gen.1:26-30** is known as the Cultural Mandate, *Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; exercise dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living creature that moves on the earth. (v.28)*. The Cultural Mandate is seen as a directive and taught as a commission given to mankind to explore all areas of creativity (arts and sciences) and as a duty to harness, develop and control earth's resources. Some even see it as **a command to have children**. However, these words were not meant to convey a duty, but are rather to express and define the freedom of man in the form of a blessing upon Man's natural inclinations. It is descriptive of what man is and does. God is giving a benediction, not a requirement to undertake a task, *God blessed them. And God said to them ... (v.28)*. Is the content of the blessing unstated, separate from the specifics that follow or is the blessing being specified? God again spoke the first half of the blessing, *And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them ... (Gen.9:1, 7)* after the judgment of the flood when life was taking hold anew. The content of the declaration encompasses all that there is. Why would it be necessary to command such pursuits since they relate to what man was made to be: artist; creator; explorer; investigator; builder; organizer ... like the God whose image he bears? Both at the creation and after the flood, there is a clear difference between the benediction with attendant gifts (1:29-30; 9:3), and the command with its warning for disobedience (2:16-17; 9:4-6).

**This BENEDICTION upon mankind has at least two fundamental parts:** **1-***be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth, Gen.1:28* - the same type of blessing that God gave to water creatures and birds, and which is understood to be for all living creatures, a benediction corresponding with their natures, *God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful and multiply ... v.22*. However, with man, there is a declaration accompanying this benediction that describes the proper legal circle within which the blessing is to operate, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh, 2:24.

**2-**subdue the earth and exercise dominion over the other living creatures - unique to man because man is different from the other conscious creatures, *God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them, 1:27*. This "image" is the thing that sets us apart from the rest of the conscious creation. It is fitting that God's image bearer should have dominion over the other creatures he created. Notice that God creates the first plants (11-12) and living creatures and blesses them in the proliferation of their own kind. He calls their procreation *be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters, let the waters swarm (or teem) with swarms, v.22 & 9:7*. God uses the very same description for the propagation of the human race. Thus mankind is like the other creatures in being of the earth (or ground), but unlike them in bearing the likeness of God.

The fall of Man did not change his essential nature which includes being the image bearer of God [see Man in God's Image], nor did it change that of the other creatures. It did, however affect the blessing of God upon man for fellowship with God had been lost and life is now marked by contention, hardship, suffering, and death. Because of these, man is no longer able to find fulfillment in the natural pursuits of his life upon earth. [continued in The Great Commission]