

**FACTORS RELATED TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE
CULTURAL MANDATE IN THE CREATION ACCOUNT
OF GENESIS AMONG THE CONVENTION OF
PHILIPPINE BAPTIST MINISTERS IN THE
PROVINCE OF ILOILO: ITS IMPLICATIONS
TO CPBC MINISTERS' CURRENT
PERCEPTIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL
CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP**

By Bernabe C. Pagara

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine factors related to the Convention Baptist ministers' understanding of the cultural mandate in the creation account of Genesis and its implications to their current perception of environmental Christian stewardship. A one-shot population survey was used. The mean and percentage distribution, gamma, t-test and the ANOVA were used as statistical tools. Results of the study revealed no significant relationship between the respondents' understanding of the cultural mandate and their current biblical-theological, ethical-economic, socio-political, and cultural-contextual perceptions of environmental Christian stewardship. Results further revealed no significant difference in the respondents' understanding of the cultural mandate when they were classified by residence, sex, age, educational attainment, pastoral status, and length of service, married ministers, however, have significant higher level of understanding of the cultural mandate than the single minister. In the exegesis of Genesis 1:26 and 28, the study revealed that human beings have the responsibility to be good and responsible stewards of God's world and environment. The majority of the ministers are knowledgeable of the cultural mandate; however, they are behaviorally passive in environmental Christian stewardship. Ministers are called to reflect on the biblical issue of the sin of omission.

INTRODUCTION

Background and Rationale

Traditional evangelical theology has identified a three-fold mandate given to man at the very dawn of history. The first was the Sabbath ordinance, which was designed to regulate man's week after the pattern of creation itself. The second was the marriage ordinance, patterned after the nature of God. While the Church has been unanimous, until fairly recently at least, in its view of the continuance both of the Sabbath and the marriage ordinances, the third has proved to be more of a bugbear. This is man's cultural mandate, summarized in the first great commission: 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground' (Genesis 1:28). Accordingly, Campolo observes, "There seems to be a conflict between those who emphasize saving souls and those who emphasize saving trees" (Campolo, 1992). Based on this comment, "evangelistic mandate" or "Gospel mandate" seems to have been given great importance and attention by Christians, but have failed in the practice of the so-called "cultural mandate."

This issue questions the unequal level of importance and concern given by our churches today to the evangelistic and cultural mandates. This study will serve as a corrective measure to the misconception of mission as individualistic soul-saving on the one hand, and a mere social action on the other extreme.

Background and Meaning of Cultural Mandate

Genesis 1:26-30 affirms that God gave man a "cultural mandate" which entailed certain rulership over his environment (Hesselgrave, 1992). Thus, when God created man and man's environment, He pronounced everything "very good" (Gen. 1:31). Hedlund (1985) asserts that "the concept of creation is the basis of God's sovereignty over the whole world, including its peoples." It is on this context that "Yahweh was affirmed to be the Lord of the material world and the source of its life ... Nature thus shares life with humanity" (Goldingay, 1995). Subsequently, "mankind collectively failed as miserably as Adam and Eve had failed individually with the result that God pronounced judgment upon man, beast, and land" (Gen. 6:6-7). Since the Fall, humankind has fulfilled the cultural mandate in an imperfect, fractured manner (Hesselgrave, 1982).

In the verse previous to Genesis 1:28, God is recorded as saying that He created Adam and Eve in His own image as "male and female." Thus the command "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish" suggests

that male and female are capable of procreation to populate the world and subdue it with more humans. The mandate was given for man to “rule over the earth” in His name, as His representatives with His delegated authority (Genesis 1:3-28) (from <http://www.islandcitychurch.org/resources/messages/74>).

Richard Mouw explains the nature of the filling and subduing to which Genesis 1 refers:

The command to “fill” the earth here is not merely a divine request that Adam and Eve have a lot of babies. The earth was also to be “filled” by the broader patterns of their interactions with nature and with each other. They would bring order to the Garden. They would introduce schemes for managing its affairs. To “subdue” the Garden would be to transform untamed nature into a social environment. In these ways human beings would be “adding” to that which God created (Mouw, 2003).

Man was to operate under God's authority, in God's stead, over all of God's creation. This restriction by God upon man in man's dominion means that man is always accountable to God. The Creator is always the final authority. As man obeys God's word in his dominion, all of God's creation is then used for God's glory and pleasure (from <http://www.biblicalexaminer.org/m19920621.html>).

Thus the phrase “subdue the earth” implies that humans have been given the resources to do it. It includes authority, intelligence and reason. To replenish and to subdue means to preserve, conserve and control the environment to maintain the ecological balance (CPBC Statement of Concern). Indeed, Genesis 1:26 and 28 remind God's people that man was created in God's image and likeness and destined for dominion over the remainder of the creation.

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine factors related to understanding of the cultural mandate of the CPBC ministers in the province of Iloilo, and its implications to their current perception of environmental Christian stewardship. Specifically, this study aims to ascertain the following:

1. Profile of the CPBC ministers in the province of Iloilo in terms of residence, sex, age, marital status, educational attainment, pastoral

status, and length of serve;

2. Respondents' understanding of the cultural mandate in the creation account of Genesis;

3. Respondents' perceptions of environmental Christian stewardship;

4. Relationship between the understanding of the CPBC ministers in the Province of Iloilo of the cultural mandate in the creation account and their current perceptions of environmental Christian stewardship; and,

5. Difference in the respondents' understanding of the cultural mandate of Genesis in the creation account when they are grouped according to their residence, sex, age, marital status, educational attainment, pastoral status, and length of serve.

Theoretical Framework

Creation is God's handiwork. Participation of man in the cultural mandate means development and conservation, not exploitation, of earth's resources. "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and take care of it" (Gen. 2:15). Hedlund asserts, "Man is responsible for his orderly behavior in society and for productive use of earth's resources" (Hedlund, 1974). Thus, the natural environment would be preserved for the good of God's people (Deut. 22:6; Ex. 23:11).

Conceptual Framework

Every society has its experience or share of environmental problems. What must the Christian minister's attitude toward environmental concerns and issues be? Lotz asserts that "true evangelists are also true ecologists" (Campolo, 1992). However, Church's theology has not offered appreciable resources to counteract a merely exploitative approach to nature. The Church needs no less urgently than society as a whole to hear anew the message of Genesis.

Below, the figure presents independent and dependent variables of this study. The following schematic diagram exemplifies the flow of relationship among the given variables:

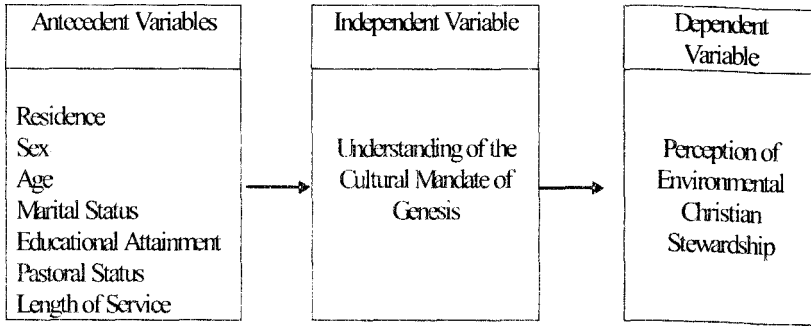


Figure 1. Assumed Relationships of Variables Influencing the CPBC Ministers' Understanding of the Cultural Mandate in the Province of Iloilo.

Hypotheses

1. There is a relationship between the understanding of the CPBC ministers in the Province of Iloilo of the cultural mandate in the creation account and their perceptions of environmental Christian stewardship.
2. There is a difference in the respondents' understanding of the cultural mandate of Genesis in the creation account when they are classified according to antecedent variables.

Significance of the Study

The critical study of the theology of Genesis in the creation account about the cultural mandate is helpful and important because of some major reasons:

1. This study helps to clarify and identify the contemporary attitude and expression in the "involvement" and "engagement" of the present-day ministers on environmental issues.
2. The result of this study benefits the said ministers as key persons as it will serve as the basis in educating the members on environmental awareness.
3. This research provides a biblical model for social awareness on the care of environment gleaned from the theology of Genesis in

the creation account of the cultural mandate.

4. The study will encourage Christian institutions to reevaluate their philosophy, broaden their perspective and methodology concerning environmental issues and concerns.

Scope and Limitation

This research was limited to the factors related to the CPBC ministers' understanding of cultural mandate and the critical study of Genesis' theology in the creation account of the cultural mandate and its implications to the current perception of environmental Christian stewardship among CPBC ministers in the province of Iloilo.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This is a descriptive study that used the one-shot population survey. It described the current understanding of CPBC ministers of the cultural mandate in the book of Genesis, whether or not it is influenced by the given variables as reflected in the conceptual framework.

The Study Respondents

The respondents of this study were the selected local church ministers [n=70] of the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches in the province of Iloilo. The convenient-purposive sampling was employed in the selection of the subjects of the study. This study was based on the data provided by 70 respondents who answered and returned the questionnaires.

Data Gathering Instrument

The researcher employed a self-made questionnaire. The respondents' level of knowledge of the cultural mandate is categorized as high, average, and low. The scoring system arbitrarily used was (1) 0-3 = "Low," (2) 4-5 = "Average," (3) 6-7 = "High," (4) 8-9 = "Very High." The respondents were asked to respond to statements related to the environmental Christian stewardship by choosing one of the following options: (1) SA = "Strongly Agree," (2) A = "Agree," (3) NO = "No Opinion," (4) D = "Disagree," (5) SD = "Strongly Disagree." In the discussion of results, "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" were converted to "Very Favorable" and "Favorable" while "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" were converted to "Unfavorable" and "Very Unfavorable."

Data Processing and Analysis

The data from the accomplished questionnaires were tallied, then the responses were tabulated into frequency tables. The statistical tools used to test the research hypotheses were gamma, t-test and the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Statistical computations were computer-processed using the 0.05 level of significance.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Personal Profile

The place of the church served by the ministers is classified into two, rural and urban. The data reveal that the majority (60%) of the ministers of CPBC in the province of Iloilo are working in rural churches (Table 1).

The results also show that most of the respondents are male (67.1 %) and are married (65.7 %). Only 32.9% and 34.3 % are female and are single, respectively. While CPBC believes that there is the equality of exercising gifts bestowed by God to every member whether male or female, relatively speaking, the figure implies that leadership office in the CPBC is made up of predominantly mature male individuals.

The age range is from 29 and below to 60 years old and above. The result of the survey shows that 34.3% of the respondents belong to the 40-49 years age bracket, 25.7% belong to the 30-39 years age bracket, 15.7% belong to 29 years old and below, 12.9% belong to 50-59 years of age and 11.4% belong to 60 years old and above. The survey reveals that the highest percentage of the CPBC ministers are 40-49 years old.

About 73% have attained college education, 18.5% obtained masteral degree, 5.7% elementary and secondary education, and only 2.9% obtained doctorate's degree.

The survey results also show that the great majority (77.1%) of the respondents are non-ordained but trained ministers, 20% are ordained and trained ministers, while 2.9% are layman pastors.

The data also reveal that the majority of the respondents had been serving the church for 6 to 15 years. Among the 70 respondents, most of the pastors (47.2%) who stay in the ministry are 40-49 years old.

Table 1. Distribution of CPBC Ministers When Grouped According to Their Personal Profile (N=70).

Respondents' Profile	f	%
<i>Residence</i>		
Rural	42	60.0
Urban	28	40.0
Total	70	100.0
<i>Sex</i>		
Male	47	67.1
Female	23	32.9
Total	70	100.0
<i>Age</i>		
29 and below	11	15.7
30 – 39	18	25.7
40 – 49	24	34.3
50 – 59	9	12.9
60 and above	8	11.4
Total	70	100.0
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single	24	34.3
Married	46	65.7
Total	70	100.0
<i>Pastoral Status</i>		
Ordained and Trained Minister	14	20.0
Non-ordained but Trained Minister	54	77.1
Layman Pastor	2	2.9
Total	70	100.0
<i>Educational Attainment</i>		
High School and below	4	5.7
College	51	72.9
Master's degree	13	18.5
Doctoral degree	2	2.9
Total	70	100.0
<i>Length of Service (Local Church)</i>		
5 years or less	19	27.1
6 – 10 years	20	28.6
11 – 15 years	20	28.6
16 years and above	11	15.7
Total	70	100.0

CPBC Ministers' Knowledge of the Cultural Mandate

As shown in Table 2, 55.7% of the respondents have average level of understanding of the cultural mandate while 44.3% have high level of understanding of the same. None of the respondents have low level of knowledge. The data reveal that the respondents' level of understanding of the cultural mandate was from average to high.

Table 2. Respondents' Level of Knowledge of the Cultural Mandate

Level of Knowledge	f	%
Average (3-5)	39	55.7
High (6-8)	31	44.3
Total	70	100.0

Respondents' Perceptions of Environmental Christian Stewardship

On the issue of the respondents' level of perception of the environmental Christian stewardship, data in Table 3 reveal that the majority of the ministers affirmed the statements on the different perception categorized. Results indicate that they have a strongly favorable biblical-theological perception (92.9%), ethical-economic perception (68.6%), and cultural-contextual perception (90%) of environmental Christian stewardship.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents According to Their Perception of Environmental Christian Stewardship

Perception	f	%
Biblical-Theological		
Very Favorable	65	92.9
Favorable	5	7.1
Total	70	100.0
Ethical-Economic		
Very Favorable	48	68.6
Favorable	22	31.4
Total	70	100.0
Socio-Political		
Very Favorable	21	30.0
Favorable	33	47.1
No-Opinion	14	20.0
Very Unfavorable	2	2.9
Total	70	100.0
Cultural-Contextual		
Very Favorable	63	90.0
Favorable	7	10.0
Total	70	100.0

Cultural Mandate and Biblical-Theological Perception on Environmental Christian Stewardship

Majority of those with average (92.3%) and high (93.5%) level of understanding of cultural mandate have a very favorable biblical-theological perception of environmental Christian stewardship. When the relationship between the respondents' level of understanding of the cultural mandate and their current perception of the environmental Christian stewardship on the basis of theological-biblical perspective was determined, a computed gamma value of -0.094 with a significance level of 0.840 was obtained. This indicates a non-significant relationship between these two variables.

Table 4. Distribution of the Respondents According to Their Understanding of the Cultural Mandate and Their Level of Understanding of the Environmental Christian Stewardship in the Biblical-Theological Perception

Biblical-Theological Perception	Level of Understanding of Cultural Mandate			
	Average		High	
	f	%	f	%
Very Favorable	36	92.3	29	93.5
Favorable	3	7.7	2	6.5
Total	39	100.0	31	100.0

Gamma value = $.094$

^{***} Level of significance = 0.840

Statistically not significant at the 0.05 level of probability

Cultural Mandate and Ethical-Economic Perception on Environmental Christian Stewardship

As shown in Table 5, majority of those with average (61.5%) and high (77.4%) level of understanding of cultural mandate have also a very favorable ethical-economic perception on environmental Christian stewardship. Statistical analysis with a computed gamma value of $-.364$ and a level of significance of 0.143 shows no significant relationship between the respondents' level of understanding of the cultural mandate and their perception of the environmental Christian stewardship in the ethical-economic perspective.

Table 5. Distribution of the Respondents' Understanding of the Cultural Mandate and Their Ethical-Economic Perception of Environmental Christian Stewardship

Ethical-Economic Perception	Level of Understanding of Cultural Mandate			
	Average		High	
	f	%	f	%
Very Favorable	24	61.5	24	77.4
Favorable	15	38.5	7	22.6
Total	39	100.0	31	100.0

Gamma value = -.364

Level of significance = 0.143

ns not significant at the 0.05 level of probability

Cultural Mandate and Socio-Political Perception on Environmental Christian Stewardship

More than half (51.3%) of those with average level of understanding of the cultural mandate have a favorable socio-political perception on environmental Christian stewardship. More than one-fourth (28.2%) of the ministers with this level of understanding have indicated a very favorable perception. On the other hand, most of the ministers (41.9%) with high level of understanding have a high socio-political perception on environmental Christian stewardship. When the relationship between the respondents' level of understanding of the cultural mandate and their current perception of the environmental Christian stewardship on the basis of socio-political perspective was determined, the computed gamma value obtained was 0.009 (P=0.965). Again, this result indicates that there is no significant relationship between these two variables.

Table 6. Distribution of the Respondents' Understanding of the Cultural Mandate and Their Socio-Political Perception of Environmental

Socio-Political Perception	Level of Understanding of Cultural Mandate			
	Average		High	
	f	%	f	%
Very Favorable	11	28.2	10	32.3
Favorable	20	51.3	13	41.9
No Opinion	7	18.0	7	22.6
Very Unfavorable	1	2.5	1	3.2
Total	39	100.0	31	100.0

Gamma = .009

Level of significance = 0.965

ns statistically not significant at the 0.05 level of probability

Cultural Mandate and Cultural Contextual Perception on Environmental Christian Stewardship

Similar to other results, majority of the ministers with average (87.2%) and high (93.5%) level of understanding on the cultural mandate have a very favorable contextual-cultural perception on environmental Christian stewardship. As presented in Table 7, statistical analysis with a gamma value of -0.362 and a level of significance of 0.359 show that there is no significant relationship between the respondents' level of understanding of the cultural mandate and their current perception of the environmental Christian stewardship on the basis of contextual-cultural perspective.

Table 7. Distribution of the Respondents According to their Understanding of the Cultural Mandate and their Level of Understanding of the Environmental Christian Stewardship in the Contextual-Cultural Perception

Contextual-Cultural Perception	Level of Understanding of Cultural Mandate			
	Average		High	
	f	%	f	%
Very Favorable	34	87.2	29	93.5
Favorable	5	12.8	2	6.5
Total	39	100.0	31	100.0

Gamma value = -.362
 Level of significance = 0.359
 ns - not significant at the 0.05 level of probability

Difference in the Respondents' Understanding of the Cultural Mandate in the Creation Account of Genesis

The data in Table 8 show no significant difference in the respondents' level of understanding of the cultural mandate when they were grouped according to age, sex, residence, educational attainment, length of service, and pastoral status. This means that the above variables did not affect their understanding of the cultural mandate. On the other hand, result shows that married CPBC ministers have higher mean level of understanding of the cultural mandate than the single ministers.

Table 8. Difference in the Respondents' Understanding of the Cultural Mandate in the Creation Account of Genesis When Grouped According to their Personal Characteristics

Personal Characteristics	cal t/F Value	Level of Significance
Residence	0.038 ^{ns}	0.847
Sex	0.009 ^{ns}	0.926
Age	0.378 ^{ns}	0.824
Marital Status	5.805 [*]	0.019
Educational Attainment	0.308 ^{ns}	0.0819
Pastoral Status	3.104 ^{ns}	0.051
Length of Service	0.936 ^{ns}	0.428

ns - Not significant at the 5% level of probability

* - Significant at the 5% level of probability

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Based on the above findings, the following conclusions are drawn.

1. Most of the member-churches of the CPBC in the province of Iloilo served by the ministers are located in rural areas.
2. The majority of the respondents are male, 40-49 years old, married, college graduate, trained but non-ordained, with an average of 6-11 years length of service rendered under the denomination.
3. The majority (55.7%) of the respondents have an average level of understanding of the cultural mandate in the creation account of Genesis, while 44.3% have high level of understanding.
4. A great majority of the ministers have a very favorable biblical theological perception, ethical-economic perception, and cultural-contextual perception on environmental Christian stewardship.
5. There is no significant relationship between the respondents' understanding of the cultural mandate and their current perceptions of environmental Christian stewardship in the biblical theological, ethical-economic, socio-political, and cultural-contextual aspects.
6. There is no significant difference among the respondents' understanding of the cultural mandate in the creation account of Genesis when they were classified by age, sex, residence, educational attainment, length of service, and pastoral status.

7. There is a significant difference among the CPBC Ministers' understanding of cultural mandate in the creation account of Genesis when they were grouped according to their marital status. Married CPBC Ministers have higher level of understanding of the cultural mandate than the single ministers.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are advanced:

1. There should be a personal commitment of every Christian to the responsibility and accountability for ecology and environment.

2. Disseminate informational and educational material on environment conservation within individual and collective spheres of influence.

3. There should be continuing education for the church members on ecology and environment through regular seminars, workshops and literatures.

4. The present findings of this research study should be circulated to different Convention Baptist local churches.

5. Due to scarcity of materials as reflected in the Bibliography, Protestant theologians should be encouraged to do more research and writing in this area of study.

REFERENCES

- Bailey, Waylon & Hudson, Tom. (1998). *Step by step through the Old Testament*. Makati City, Philippines: Church Strengthening Ministry.
- Bradshaw, Emerson. (1952). *Unconquerable Kagawa*. Minneapolis: Macalester Publishing Company.
- Campolo, Tony. (1992). *How to rescue the earth without worshipping nature*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publisher.
- Catolico, Milanie S., Diel, Domingo, Jr. J., & Equiña, Limuel R. (2005). (eds.). Christian faith and society today. *Journal of Theology, 1*, 175-180.
- Goldingay, Paul. (1995). *Theological diversity and the authority of the Old Testament*. U.K: Paternoster Press.
- Hedlund, Roger E. (1985). *Mission to man in the Bible*. Madras, India: Evangelical Literature Service.
- Hesselgrave, David J. (1982). Christ and culture. In *Perspectives on the world Christian movement: A Reader* (rev. ed.). Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library.
- Leithart, Peter. (1993). *Dominion*. Phillipsbury, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co.
- Narciso, Jerson B. (1995). *A study on the church and ecology in the Philippine context*. Unpublished masteral special paper, College of Theology, Central Philippine University, Iloilo Cit Philippines.
- Pagara, Bernabe C. (2003). *The implications of the Pauline theology of "ptochos" and "ptocheia" to the contemporary understanding of poor and poverty among the deacons and deaconesses of the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches in the province of Iloilo*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Asia Baptist Graduate Theological Seminary, Baguio City, Philippines.
- Santmire, Paul, (1970). *Brother earth: Nature, God and ecology in time of crisis*. New York: Nelson Publisher.