

# Creation and the Origin of Human Culture

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There is almost unanimous agreement among theologians and social scientists alike that the origin of culture is to be found in the origin of man. But different scholars come to this conclusion for very different reasons. For many this truth is tautological, based on a definition of man as "a being who lives by culture."<sup>1</sup> Others regard it as a truth discovered and confirmed by the empirical research of archaeologists and paleontologists, who have correlated the fossil remains of humanoid life with the surviving artifacts of human culture.<sup>2</sup> Others, again, regard this as a theological truth, taught by special revelation as recorded in the Word of God.

While theologians are agreed that the origin of man's cultural being is to be found in his creation, however this creation may be understood, there is no agreement about what constitutes the origin of human culture. On this point there seem to be two main schools of thought. The first locates the origin of man's cultural being in the cultural mandate given to man at the time of his creation, and the second finds it in man's creation in the image of God. We will examine each of these positions in turn.

### A Human Culture in the light of the Cultural Mandate.

Sometimes a direct link is made between the word "culture" and the Latin verb *colere*, used in the Vulgate to translate God's command to Adam "to till" the garden (Gen. 2:15). An example of this can be found in the writings of Francis Nigel Lee, who states,

The word "culture" is derived from the Latin *cultura*, meaning "cultivation," and it ultimately takes us back via the Latin Vulgate translation of the Scriptures to Adam's cult-ivation of the garden of Eden.<sup>3</sup>

Although he realizes that the reference in this passage is first of all to "horti-culture," Lee believes that in a wider sense such activities as "api-culture," "equi-culture," a "liturgical-cultic task," and a "socio-cultural task" can also be included, because all these cultural tasks were a part of the covenant of works which God made with Adam and his descendants.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Bohannon presents this as the cultural anthropologist's definition of man: in *Social Anthropology* (London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), p. 3. Here we may also note Benjamin Franklin's definition of man as "a toolmaking animal," and Vladimir Lenin's statement that man began when "a herd of apes grasped sticks:" cited by Francis Nigel Lee, *The Central Significance of Culture* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1976), pp. 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> F.g. Graham Clark attempts to correlate man's cultural achievements with his biological status as a hominid; in *World Prehistory: An Outline* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), pp. 26ff.

<sup>3</sup> Francis Nigel Lee, *The Central Significance of Culture* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1976), p. 5. Cf. Klaas Schilder, *Christ and Culture*, p. 37; also James M. Houston, *I Believe in the Creator* (Grand Rapids: Ferdmans, 1980), p. 81.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 10. Note that this linguistic connection must not be interpreted to mean that the origin of the word "culture" is to be found in the Latin Vulgate translation of this verse. For the origin and definitions of the word "culture" see A.L. Kroeber and C. Kluckhohn, *Culture, a Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (New York: Random House, 1952).

The Hebrew word translated into the Latin *colere*, "to till," is the word 'abad. This has its root meaning "to serve" or "to work." The context makes it clear that in Gen. 2:15 it should be translated "to till" or "to dress" (cf. v. 5).<sup>5</sup> The other word used in this verse, *shamar*, means "to take care of" or "to guard." Although the latter meaning is clearly meant when God appoints the Cherubim to "guard" the garden (Gen. 3:24), it would seem that the first meaning is more apt in the verse in question.<sup>6</sup> The primary meaning of the words is that they describe Adam's horticultural task in the maintenance of the garden of Eden. Even so, many interpreters agree that in Gen. 2:15 these words imply more than what is conveyed by this primary meaning of these words. They believe that these words are not just a description of Adam's occupation in the Garden of Eden, but that they speak about God's purpose for all mankind.

One example of such an interpretation can be found in Karl Rennstich's theology of socio-economic change. Rennstich interprets the paradise story as an attempt by the Yahwist author to guide Israel through the period of social turmoil marking the beginning of Israel's monarchy.<sup>7</sup> In line with this hypothesis, Rennstich interprets Gen. 2:15 as the Yahwist's understanding of God's purpose for man. He argues that the word 'abad points to man's service in his vocation and his religious service (*Gottesdienst*), and the word *shamar* to man's ethical relationship with God and with his fellow man. A sinful neglect of these tasks will lead to exploitation (*Ausbeutung*), corruption and, as in the case of Cain, even murder.<sup>8</sup> Rennstich goes on to argue that even obedience to God's purpose may lead to disruption, estrangement and suffering, because these are God's ways of bringing man to a new humanity. Such upheavals are the moving force behind social change and social revolution.<sup>9</sup>

There is no evidence that Rennstich's socio-economic interpretation of the passage has found much support. But there are others who also take the words 'abad and *shamar* as the starting point for their theology of sociology. We find this approach in the works of men like Klaas Schilder and S.G. De Graaf, who base their theology of culture on a covenantal theology. They interpret God's commands to dress the garden, to replenish the earth and to be fruitful and multiply as conditions imposed upon man as a part of the covenant of works. As a divine command governing God's relationship with mankind, this mandate continued to stand even when Adam failed to meet the covenant's conditions by eating of the forbidden fruit. This is demonstrated by the fact that Christ came to meet the demands of this covenant for man. As the second Adam, Christ went in the way of the covenant again, and so he made peace between God and those who follow

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<sup>5</sup> See *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, et al. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), *in loc*.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Rennstich writes, "Wir verstehen die Urgeschichte des Jahwisten nicht nur als 'Ätiologie Israels' wie G. v. Rad oder als die Lehre von 'Schöpfung und Fall' wie K. Barth und D. Bonhoeffer, sondern als 'Ätiologie des sesshaft werdenden Menschen,' der als 'ebed adamah' (als Baur) begann und später 'Städte' baute." Karl Rennstich, *Mission und wirtschaftliche Entwicklung, biblische Theologie des Kulturwandels und christliche Ethik* (München: Kaiser Verlag, 1978), p. 127.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 136; 146-54.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 154ff.

him. In this way Christ restores man to his original purpose, as expressed at the time of creation.<sup>10</sup>

Schilder describes the implications of Christ's restoration of the covenant as follows,

He [Christ] there read from the Law tables the work rules which God had originally imposed upon the man of God: that in the history of the created world any laborer created by God had to trace in himself all the 'talents' which God had distributed to His laborers in the morning of creation, and learn to use them in such a way that finally, by making productive the "possibilities" which had been put into the creation and afterwards had to be discovered and respected according to their "kind," man would exploit all its potentials.<sup>11</sup>

These "possibilities" or built-in potentials are an important aspect of Schilder's theology of culture. They form a link between the cultural activities of man before and after the fall. These potentials provide a basis for history, they point man to a goal, and in this goal lies God's purpose for the cultural activities of man. Despite the fall, God's purpose for the world must be realized. Therefore history continues beyond the fall, not as a matter of Common Grace, but in order that God's goal for the world may be realized through Christ. The importance of these creation potentials for Schilder's theology of culture is demonstrated in the prominence given to them in Schilder's definition of culture. Schilder defines culture as:

... the systematic endeavour towards the process-wise acquisition of the aggregate of labor by the sum-total of human beings as they belong to God, evolve themselves unto God in history with and for the cosmos, and are present at any historical moment, having assumed the task of disclosing *the potencies lying dormant in creation and successively coming within reach in the course of the history of the world, of developing them in compliance with their individual natures, of making them subservient to their environment, both far and near, according to their cosmic relationships and in submission to the norms of God's revealed truth; and all this in order to make the treasures thus acquired usable by man as liturgical creature, and, subsequently, to bring them, together with the now more thoroughly equipped man himself, before God and put them at his feet, in order that he may be all in all, and every work may praise its master.* [Italics added by the present author.]<sup>12</sup>

The view that the created world was made with built-in potentials for further cultural development was also present in the writings of Abraham Kuyper and

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<sup>10</sup> Klaas Schilder, *Christ and Culture*, p. 37; S.G. De Graaf, *Verbondsgeschiedenis, Schetsen voor de Vertelling van de Bijbelsche Geschiedenis* (Kampen: J.H. Kok N.V., 1935), vol. I. pp. 14ff. For a more recent version of this approach see W. Stanford Reid, "The Covenant Interpretation of Culture," *Evangelical Quarterly* (Oct., 1954), pp. 194-209.

<sup>11</sup> *Christ and Culture*, p. 36; cf. S.G. De Graaf, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>12</sup> *Christ and Culture*, p. 40.

Herman Bavinck.<sup>13</sup> However, they tended to view the development of these creation potentials as an aspect of Common Grace. Schilder rejected the traditional view of Common Grace, and used his own understanding of the creation potentials as a polemic against this doctrine. It was not God's Common Grace that prevented the dissolution of the world when Adam sinned, rather it was the fact that God's plan for the world had to come to its full development in spite of sin. In the creation potentials we have a testimony to God's plan for the world. These potentials need to be developed in order that God's plan might be realized.<sup>14</sup> Elsewhere he writes that paradise called for a consummation, because the very display of abundance in paradise implied that it had not yet reached its final destiny.<sup>15</sup> This also explains why God's covenant required man to multiply and fill the earth. The task that God gave to Adam was much too great for Adam alone, it was a task for the whole human race that would come forth from the union of Adam with Eve.<sup>16</sup>

Those who build their theology of culture solely on the demands made by God in the Covenant of Works find that this does not give the total answer to the question about the origin of culture. The reason is that it leaves unexplained why man in his fallen state, i.e. man the covenant breaker, should still practice cultural pursuits. Furthermore it leaves unexplained the obvious connection between the Christian pursuit of culture and that of the non-Christian, as they live together in one community and share a common cultural heritage. Schilder realizes this, and tries to solve this problem by introducing the concepts of a culture "urge" and of a "*sunousia*, a being together." He writes,

Towards all those people placed next to each other in *sunousia* comes the command to engage in cultural labor (which mandate is general because God has not abolished any command that is original and permanent in character) just as also the urge to cultural labor is an inborn one.<sup>17</sup>

Schilder bases his concept of an "urge" to culture on the fact that "man's qualities have been created in him in view of his *munus*."<sup>18</sup> This urge is therefore a "natural gift," shared by all men, Christian and non-Christian alike.<sup>19</sup>

It seems to us that Schilder's concept of an urge to culture cannot be supported by appealing to man's office. It is true that the Bible talks of gifts that equip one for office (Rom. 12:6,7; 1 Pet. 4:10-11), but such gifts are described as talents or skills, and not as a disposition or urge. The gifts govern man's *ability* to function in his office, not his *will* to do so. The concept of the *sunousia*, too, is introduced without any real justification from scripture. Although Scripture clearly identifies *koinonia* as the basis for all Christian community, there is no justification for positing a concept of *sunousia* as a secular equivalent.<sup>20</sup> It seems to us that

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<sup>13</sup> See Herman Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, N.V., 1906), vol. I, p. 356; Abraham Kuyper, *Pro Rege*, vol. III, pp. 230ff., 249ff.

<sup>14</sup> *Christ and Culture*, p. 17.

<sup>15</sup> Klaas Schilder, *De Openbaaring van Johannes en het Sociale Leven* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Ton Rolland, 1978), p. 332.

<sup>16</sup> *Christ and Culture*, pp. 40, 41.

<sup>17</sup> Schilder, *Christ and Culture*, p. 55.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

Schilder's need to bring in these postulates of an "urge" and a "*sunousia*" shows that there is a shortcoming in his approach to culture. Schilder does not present us with a satisfactory explanation of why the non-Christian is engaged in cultural pursuits, and this shows that he really leaves the question about the ultimate origin of human society and culture unanswered.

We may well ask why Schilder did not follow Kuyper and Bavinck, who found a basis both for man's social nature and his cultural being in the creation of man in the image of God. We suspect that the reasons are partly historical and partly polemical. The historical occasion that led Schilder to his first major work on culture was his participation in a symposium on *Jesus Christ and Human Life*.<sup>21</sup> Schilder's contribution was an article on "Jesus Christ and Cultural Life," and he approached the subject by means of an analysis of the terms used in the title. In analyzing the term "Christ" Schilder pointed to the offices of Christ as prophet, priest and king, and he interpreted Christ's relationship to culture in terms of these offices. In a similar way he went on to explain the Christian's relationship to culture in terms of his calling and office, as these are explained in Lords Day 12 of the Heidelberg Catechism.<sup>22</sup>

As for the polemical reason, Schilder was looking for a new approach to culture that would leave him free from the "cultural optimism" he detected in those who based their view of culture on a doctrine of Common Grace.<sup>23</sup> He sought an approach which would avoid placing the Christian's cultural pursuits on a common terrain with non-Christian culture. He believed that he had found such an approach in this understanding that Christian culture was man's obedient response to God's call to office. Thus at the end of his first work on culture he concluded,

... this concept of office is the real, Christian philosophy of culture.... As Christian culture-theorists we do not choose to take a stand in "common grace" in the above [Kuyperian] sense of the term. The ancient calling, the creation ordinance, the original office, that is and remains our point of departure.<sup>24</sup>

Schilder's theology of culture has many valuable insights for the Christian practice of culture, but it is lacking in that it does not give a satisfactory answer to the reason why the non-Christian is also engaged in cultural pursuits. It seems to us that a solid basis for man's "urge" to culture and his "*sunousia*" can be found in man's creation in the image of God. In fact, man's pursuit of culture is much more than an urge, it belongs to the very essence of man who is created after the image of God. Man's *sunousia*, too, is a direct consequence of man's creation in the divine image. The doctrine of the *imago Dei* provides an answer to the question why culture and society are universal phenomena with humankind.

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<sup>21</sup> *Jesus Christus en het Menschenleven*, ed. N. Buffinga (Culemborg: Uitgeversbedrijf "De Pauw," 1932).

<sup>22</sup> Klaas Schilder, "Jesus Christus en het Cultuurleven," in *Jesus Christus en het Menschenleven*, pp. 225-285.

<sup>23</sup> Schilder, *Christ and Culture*, p. 83.

<sup>24</sup> "Onze zevende conclusie, tevens onze laatste, is dan ook, dat deze ambtsgedachte de eigen, christelijke, cultuur-filosofische is.... Wij kiezen als christelijke cultuur-theoretici geen standpunt in de 'gemeene gratie' in den boven aangeduiden zin; de oude roeping, de scheppingstaak, het oer-ambt, dat is en blijft ons uitgangspunt." Cited from Schilder, "Jesus Christus en het Cultuurleven," pp. 282f.

## Human Culture and Man's Creation in the Image of God.

In the history of Christianity there has been a wide difference of opinion on the meaning and the content of the *imago Dei*. In the Roman Catholic tradition a distinction was made between the "image" and "likeness," the *tselem* and *demuth*. The "likeness" was believed to have been lost in the fall, when man lost his original righteousness. But the "image" of God in man, identified with man's rationality, his immortality, and the spirituality of his soul, was believed to have remained unaffected by the fall. Protestants did away with this distinction between the "image" and "likeness," recognizing only the one *imago Dei*. But there was no agreement about the meaning and content of this image, or whether it included man's cultural task. On the one side there were the Socinians, who interpreted the *imago Dei* wholly in terms of the *dominium*, i.e., man's lordship over the rest of the created order. On the other side there were the Lutherans, who interpreted the *imago Dei* in terms of man's original righteousness, and therefore believed that the divine image was no longer to be found in man.<sup>25</sup> The traditional Reformed position distinguished between the image of God in the narrower sense and in the wider sense. In the narrower sense man's image of God was said to consist of his original righteousness. This aspect of the image was lost in the fall, and can only be restored in Christ. But in the wider sense man continued to be regarded as the image bearer of God even in his fallen state (Gen. 5:1-3; 9:6; Jas. 3:9; cf. Acts 17:28), and it is here that many Reformed theologians found the origin of man's cultural being.<sup>26</sup>

It must be pointed out that the various historical positions have come under much criticism, and that there is an ongoing discussion among scholars representing Reformed and non-Reformed traditions about the meaning of the *imago Dei*. We cannot here discuss all the new insights and approaches, but we will be appealing to authors representing a wide range of theological thinking. In particular we will examine their views about man's *dominium*, man's relational being, and man's relationship with his Creator as these relate to the divine image. It will be noted that these three aspects touch on the core of human culture, namely man's mastery over his environment, his communal nature, and his religiosity.

G.C. Berkouwer has argued against the inclusion of the *dominium* in the *imago Dei*, because he is of the opinion that, "while the account in Genesis does say that man was created in the image of God, it does not give us any further details."<sup>27</sup> Berkouwer's reason for this position is that he believes that the meaning of the *imago Dei* can only be understood from the person of Christ.<sup>28</sup> This assertion is hard to accept, if only because it would mean that the statement that man was created in the image of God was therefore completely meaningless for the O.T. author who recorded it. The passage in question shows that this was not the case. When God makes the *declaration* that he will create man in his own image, this is followed immediately by the words, "and let them have dominion over the fish

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<sup>25</sup> See Herman Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*, trans. Henry Zylstra (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), pp. 208,9; G.C. Berkouwer, *Studies in Dogmatics - Man: The Image of God*, trans. Dirk W. Jellema (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), pp. 70ff.; and Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1958), pp. 205ff.

<sup>26</sup> *Our Reasonable Faith*, pp. 212,13; 185, cf. p. 215.

<sup>27</sup> *Man: The Image of God*, p. 87.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 87-9.

of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." These words are again immediately followed with the *description* of God's creation of man "in his own image" (v.27). There is no break in the progression of thought, and we must take the statement about man's dominion as an explanation of the *imago Dei*.<sup>29</sup>

The *dominium* concept expressed in Genesis 1 is denoted by the words *radah* and *kabash*. The word *radah*, "to have dominion," or "to rule," has the root meaning of "to trample," and it is a much stronger term than the usual word for "to reign," *mashal*. Similarly the word *kabash*, translated as "subdue," has the root meaning of "to tread down," and it denotes a forceful subjugation. The word is even used for rape (Est. 7:8).<sup>30</sup> Taken by themselves, these words suggest an almost violent relationship between man and God's other creatures. To soften the force of these words it has been suggested that the meaning of *radah* and *kabash* is demonstrated in Adam's naming of the animals, which would suggest a much more gentle relationship.<sup>31</sup> But here we must note that this naming of the animals is not presented as an example of Adam's cultural task. The context of this activity is God's concern that Adam should have a helper fit for him. In his study and naming of the animals Adam is shown that every creature has its own nature, and that therefore no animal was fit to be his helper. In this way a contrast is drawn between the relationship of Adam to his wife, and Adam to the rest of the created world.

Rather than to try and soften the forcefulness of the words *radah* and *kabash*, we may regard them as a counterbalance for the words used in the story in Genesis 2, '*abad* and *shamar*, "to till" and "to keep." The one story describes man's place as a part of the creation, and the other stresses man's mastery over the rest of creation. Together these stories give us a balanced view of man's place in God's world. A study compositum on the Christian stewardship of natural resources puts it this way,

Thus in Genesis 1 and 2 humans are described as *being* two different kinds of things: *a part of* nature and *apart from* nature; likewise, they are described as *doing* two different things: *ruling* nature and *servng* nature.<sup>32</sup>

The view that man's *dominium* is in some way explanatory of the *imago Dei* finds considerable backing among theologians. This position is defended by Gerhard von Rad, who writes,

... the text speaks less of the nature of God's image than of its purpose. There is less said about the gift itself than about the task. This then is sketched most explicitly: domination in the world, especially over the animals. This commission to rule is not considered as belonging to the

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<sup>29</sup> Exegetes agree that we are here dealing with a single pericope, and that the words must be taken together. This is clearly indicated in the Hebrew text by the use of the waw consecutive. Cf. G. von Rad, *op. cit.*, pp. 57ff.

<sup>30</sup> *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, in *loc.*

<sup>31</sup> E.g. in *Earthkeeping, Christian Stewardship of Natural Resources*, ed. Loren Wilkinson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), pp. 209f.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 210.

definition of God's image, but its consequence, i.e. that for which man is capable because of it.<sup>33</sup>

Von Rad goes on to explain that ancient eastern kings used to set up a statue of their own person in any newly won territory in order to show that they claimed dominion over that land. Thus the dominion symbolized by the divine image in man is God's own dominion, and man "is really only God's representative, summoned to maintain and enforce God's claim to dominion over the earth."<sup>34</sup>

The position that man's dominion over creation has its basis in his creation in the image of God is also defended by Karl Barth, who writes, "the *dominium terrae* is portrayed as a consequence of the *imago Dei*."<sup>35</sup> Since Barth interprets the divine image as an *analogia relationis*, this means that for him the *dominium* is ultimately grounded in man's relationship with God. This is also the position defended by de Graaf, who states that the purpose for which God created man in his image was that he should exercise dominion on behalf of God.<sup>36</sup> De Graaf points out that this does not mean that man is "merely an instrument of God," rather man enjoys a special status by virtue of God's covenant with him.<sup>37</sup> Through the covenant man is bound to God by mutual promises and obligations. Included here is man's cultural mandate, which gives him dominion over all creatures, and calls on him to till the garden and keep it.<sup>38</sup>

Moltmann also regards man's *dominium* as a consequence of the divine image. But here it must be noted that Moltmann has a rather unusual understanding of the scope of the *dominium*. Moltmann rejects the traditional interpretation that this *dominium* involves man's mastery over all of creation, arguing that only the commission to rule the animals follows from man's essential being as God's image on earth. This commission entails that human beings have a function as a "justice of the peace" over the animal world. Moltmann does not include the commission to "subdue the earth" with the *dominium*, but interprets this to mean that man and beast alike are allowed to use the earth's vegetation for food. The reason for this unusual interpretation is Moltmann's concern that man's dominion over the earth has "had disastrous consequences for the world."<sup>39</sup> What these disastrous consequences are is not explained, but the title of Moltmann's book suggests that these are of an ecological nature.

The view that the *dominium* is a consequence of man's creation in the *imago Dei* is also defended by Bavinck, although he gives it a different emphasis. For him the *dominium* is a "destination" to which man is called rather than a "condition" in which man is created.<sup>40</sup> On the basis of this definition of the *dominium* he

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<sup>33</sup> Gerhard Von Rad, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>35</sup> Barth, *op. cit.*, part 1, p. 195.

<sup>36</sup> "Opdat de mensch zoo de wereld zou kunnen regeeren, schiep God hem naar zijn beeld ..." De Graaf, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>37</sup> "Zonder verbond is de mensch slechts Gods instrument." *ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16ff.

<sup>39</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creations, An Ecological Doctrine of Creation: The Gifford Lectures 1984-1985* (London: CMS Press, 1985), pp. 220, 221. See also "God's Kingdom as the Meaning of Life and of the World," in *Why Did God Make Me?* ed. Hans Kung and Jürgen Moltmann (New York: The Seabury Press, 1978), p. 103.

<sup>40</sup> H. Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*, p. 216.

concludes that the "dominion is not a constituent element of the image of God," but "the image comes to expression in the dominion and by means of it must more and more explain and unfold itself."<sup>41</sup>

There are also those who hold that the *dominium* is a direct aspect rather than a consequence of the divine image. A number of different arguments are advanced to support this position. Dale Moody argues that the dominion of man must be understood as a reflection of God's dominion.<sup>42</sup> A.H. Leitch includes dominion as a part of the image because it is a distinctly human trait to have "superiority over nature, creativity, and the like."<sup>43</sup> James M. Houston argues that in the Genesis passage "there is also an implicit polemic that, unlike the myths of the ancient Near East in which the king alone is the god's deputy, all mankind is granted the status of kingship."<sup>44</sup> A. Hoekema identifies the *dominium* as a necessary aspect of man's ontological structure as a being created in the *imago Dei*, and concludes that "having dominion over the world, therefore, is essential to man's existence."<sup>45</sup>

From this brief survey it is clear that there is considerable support for the view that the *dominium* is related to man's creation in the image of God. However, there is no agreement on the question whether the *dominium* is to be identified as an aspect of the divine image or as its consequence. The reason for this division lies largely in the difference of opinion on whether the *imago Dei* is an analogy of being or an analogy of a relationship. Those who interpret the *imago Dei* as an *analogia entis* tend to view the *dominium* as an aspect of the divine image. But those who interpret it as an *analogia relationis* tend to view the *dominium* as a consequence of the divine image.

The interpretation that the *imago Dei* must be seen as an *analogia relationis* was suggested by Karl Barth. Barth argued that the declaration in Genesis 1:27 about the creation of man in the image of God must be interpreted in terms of the statement which follows it, "male and female he created them." These words point to a relationship, a relationship which exists between a man and his wife. This relationship is analogous of the relationship between the persons of the Trinity, the "us" of the creating God. Barth wrote,

The relationship between the summoning I in God's being and the summoned divine Thou is reflected, both in the relationship of God to the man whom he created, and also in the relationship between the I and the Thou, between male and female, in human existence itself.<sup>46</sup>

While we believe that a more correct exegesis of the passage in Genesis shows that the words "both male and female he created them" indicate that both Adam and his wife were created in the divine image, we do agree that this says something

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215.

<sup>42</sup> Dale Moody, *The Word of Truth, A Summary of the Christian Doctrine Based on Biblical Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), p. 226.

<sup>43</sup> A.H. Leitch, "Image of God," *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), vol. III, p. 256.

<sup>44</sup> James M. Houston, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

<sup>45</sup> Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids: Free Reformed Publishing Association, 1966), p. 79.

<sup>46</sup> Karl Barth, *op. cit.*, part 1, p. 169.

significant about the nature of the image. It was not Adam alone who imaged the Creator, but Adam and Eve together. We therefore believe that William Dyrness is correct when he argues that it is man's "system of relationships (with each other and with the rest of creation) that in some mysterious way reflects God's own relation to creation."<sup>47</sup> Note that this interpretation leaves room for the view that the *dominium* is an aspect of the divine image, because the *dominium* reflects the relationship between man and the rest of creation.

Herman Bavinck also stressed the communal aspect of the *imago Dei*, observing that the image of God comes to its fullest expression in mankind as a whole. Bavinck held that the purpose of the *dominium* was to manifest the divine image in the totality of mankind, or, more accurately, "the new humanity which is the church of Christ."<sup>48</sup> In support of this Bavinck appeals to the plural form of the word "men" in Genesis 1:26 and the fact that the text immediately goes on to speak of their creation as a man and a woman. From this Bavinck concludes that "the image of God rests in a number of people, with differentiation of race, talent, and powers - in short in mankind ..." <sup>49</sup> Berkouwer comes to a somewhat similar conclusion on the basis of the New Testament teaching that Christ came to remove all hostilities and barriers that have divided the nations. He writes, "... it appears that this newness does not merely refer to a new aspect in the life of an individual, but that it includes and indeed brings about the community."<sup>50</sup>

It is important to remember that, as relational beings, humans can only image the divine unity found in the Trinity when they themselves are firmly rooted in a living relationship with the Triune God. This is clearly brought out in Christ's high priestly prayer, when he prays for his people "that they may all be one, even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (Jn. 17:21). Christ's prayer demonstrates the important truth that human (comm)unity must be anchored in a (comm)unity with the Triune God. It is here that the covenantal aspect of man's cultural task, as emphasized by de Graaf and Schilder, comes to its own. Man is a cultural being because he is a creature made in the image of God, but he can only pursue his cultural task correctly when he relates to his Creator, his fellow men, and the rest of creation in obedience to his covenantal appointment as God's representative on earth. What this means is that man can only display the *imago Dei* in the wider sense when the image in the narrower sense has been restored in Christ.

Our conclusion is that man is a cultural being because he is made in the image of God. Man was created to image his Maker in: 1) his mastery over nature and its resources, 2) his social and communal nature, and 3) his religious being as a creature who relates to his Creator. These three aspects of the divine image are not only essential elements of man's constitution, they are also key elements of human culture. While man's covenantal relationship and divine mandate to culture guide him in the proper pursuit of culture, his ability to do so is rooted in his creation in the *imago Dei*.

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<sup>47</sup> William A. Dyrness, *Let the Earth Rejoice!* pp. 30-31.

<sup>48</sup> H. Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*, p. 206.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> G.C. Berkouwer, *op. cit.*, p. 98.