

as such becomes a new creation. But all in continuity with what exists now, as Paul stresses in his analogy of a seed and its resultant “body”—different yet the same...

An...important element in the biblical framework of the two great commissions is that, while profoundly different, they are equally important. This is not to say that the interests appropriate to creation are never to be subordinated to the exigencies [demands] of salvation. Christians are called to a life of sacrifice...we must not be “tempted to overthrow or deny either in the name of the other”.

The two commissions are equally important, first because they are equally *divine and universal commands*. As Adam and Eve and their descendants were sent to exercise dominion over *all* the earth, so the apostles and their followers were sent to preach to *all* peoples. The first was a universal command to exercise righteous and beneficent dominion in keeping with their nature and status as “the image of God”, a command they could no longer fulfil adequately after the fall of Genesis 3, yet binding still. Though limited and corporeal “creatures”, and to that extent similar to their natural surroundings, nevertheless as “persons” they were distinct. As [Herman] Bavinck puts it,

If now we comprehend the force of this "subduing" [dominion] under the term culture ... we can say that culture in the broadest sense is the purpose for which God created man after his image ... [which] includes not only the most ancient callings of ... hunting and fishing, agriculture and stock-raising, but also trade and commerce ... and science and art.

None of this is altered by mankind's fall into sin: the New Testament, reflecting the view taken throughout Scripture, refers explicitly to sinful human beings as the image of God (James 3:9).

The Great Commission is a universal command also, though somewhat differently. The Creation Mandate is inherent in the way men and women are made, so in that sense unavoidable. The latter involves human choice and divine grace. Only those who have received Christ can pass on the good news. Nevertheless, since the gospel represents the epitome of God's love and reflects his desire that none should be lost, what is true of him must become true of those who are his image. From God's view—that is, from the way reality actually is—the idea of love is inconceivable without the proclamation of the gospel. Therefore, following Christ and sharing his love means being completely committed, like him, as an “evangelist”.

We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

Old Orchard Church

June 13, 2010—10:15 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

What is man that you are mindful of him,

the son of man that you care for him?

*You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings
and crowned him with glory and honor.*

*You made him ruler over the works of your hands;
you put everything under his feet.*

O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

—Psalm 8:4-6, 9—

Celebrating the Great Commissions of God

Praises be to God
Who made the world and commanded us to fill it,
And as stewards of what belongs to Another,
To subdue and care for and develop it.

Yet our guilt plunged the good world into ruin;
It is now broken, and its form is passing away.

But blessed be Christ,
The First Man of a New Creation,
Who by his Cross and Resurrection
Has begun a New Humanity in the Spirit,
Restored to the image of its Creator.
In due time the New will swallow up the Old,
And the ancient harmony of the world will return.

For now, the Lord calls us to give ourselves
To his two Great Commissions:
Go, care for the world and develop it;
Go, preach to the world and make disciples,
Baptizing them into my triune Name.

Sing praise to the Lord,
To him who created the world and redeems it!



Scripture Readings

Old Testament Lesson: Genesis 1:26-31

New Testament Reading: Matthew 28:16-20

Today's Sermon

“Concrete Hearts and Unearthly Powers:
Our Dead Body—and Holy Mind” (Part 5)

Romans 7:13-8:11

Ron Lutjens, senior pastor, preaching

The Great Commissions

One way to overcome a dualistic mindset [=the spiritual is good; the physical is bad], while preserving the appropriate emphasis on Scripture and evangelism, is to re-examine the theology behind the two great commissions of creation and salvation (the Creation Mandate of Genesis 1:28 and the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18ff)....

...The church has always struggled to find and then maintain the right expression of its two-sided calling, to be fully engaged in the world yet with priorities transformed by its own eternal perspective.....

The question is, does a biblical framework exist within which to understand the relationship between the two? For without one it becomes difficult to moderate the imbalances which easily arise....

...the biblical narrative derives its very meaning from the coherence of these two central themes: creation and salvation—whether viewed from the beginning, especially in the creation of the image of God, or from the events which introduced the end—the death, resurrection and ascension of the 'new man', Jesus. As in the famous text John 3:16, it is because **God so loved the world** (which he had created) **that he gave his only Son** (that all might eventually be restored). Those who would otherwise **perish** through judgement and death he enables to live eternally because of Christ's salvation, not as disembodied spirits but as restored human beings with resurrected bodies. For the resurrection of Christ, as Oliver O'Donovan puts it, “directs our attention back to the creation which it vindicates”, it constitutes a “proclamation that the very thing which God has made will continue and flourish”, and demonstrates “that the God who rules the world is the same as the God who made it, and that the outcome of history will affirm and not deny the order of its making”.

This is the framework defended and elaborated here, specifically the resurrection of the image of God.

An immediate problem with the idea of the renewal of creation, however, is that it seems to imply less radical distinctions than Scripture allows, whether between Old and New Testaments, between old and new natures, or between this world and the next. For Jesus insists that everyone must be “born again”, and Paul likewise emphasises the need for a “new creation”. The old cannot simply be tinkered with like a malfunctioning engine; it has to be replaced. **The old has gone, the new has come!** (2 Corinthians 5:17). ...

Humanity is corrupt and powerless—left to itself. But, like polluted water or a damaged work of art, the fault lies not with the water or the picture but with what has become of them. The water remains good in essence; so does the picture. Both need to be restored to purity and beauty.

So with human nature. I am helpless to save or change myself unaided; only Christ can redeem me. But what he rescues me from is not my “self”. in the sense of my created being. I am saved, rather, from the guilt and power of sin. I am gradually restored to the sort of experience for which I was made. The humanity ruined in Adam is rescued in Christ, it is delivered even from death and