

# 基督徒的文化使命

## The Cultural Mandate of Christians



**Rev Peter Pan Seng Tai**  
Associate Pastor at Sengkang  
Methodist Church.

宾升泰牧师  
盛港堂协理牧师。

Translator/翻译: Pr Joshua Ong 王志翔传道

前言：基督教是采用上帝的救赎事工去标记人类的日期和时间。这事工主要涉及圣子的道成肉身、祂在世的活动、受死、复活和再来。教会的活动和崇拜生活基本上都围绕在这一个框架里进行。今天的东西方教会在这结构里如何诠释、表述、实践信仰，以及表达我们各自文化的特质可说是一个很重要的因素。

华族信徒向来就有轻看或否定自己文化的倾向，这导致我们的信仰无法有效和充分地融入华人社群里。因此有关信仰与文化的课题是值得教会关注的。

我去年有机会到中国山东大学访学，特别学习有关儒家荀子的学说。回国后不少会友不解，为何一个教牧要投入资源于一个世俗和没有永恒价值的东西上。

我能够理解教友们的疑惑，但这些疑惑的背后显示大家在世界观和教会使命上有所偏差和不足。不少信徒都知道教会有福音使命，却没意识到其实我们还有文化使命。到底什么是文化使命呢？

首先，上帝在创造天地之后，便吩咐人要“管理海里的鱼、天空的鸟和地上各样活动的生物”（创1:28）。于是“人就给一切牲畜、天空的飞鸟和野地各样的走兽都起了名”（创2:20）。我们不妨想一想，给万物命名这行动实际上就已在执行上帝赋予人类的文化使命了。

命名是治理大地的开始，也是人类文化的起点。人给万物命名，如山、石、风、云和马牛；给各种属性命名，如红、橙、黄、绿、轻、重、大和小；给各种情感命名如喜、怒、哀、乐、烦与惧等等。人给自己所看到，听到、感受到和想到的所有东西命名，人类从此就可以记忆、谈论、叙述和思考有关一切受造物。这是人延续上帝使万有从混沌没有名字中给分别出来的行动。人类的物质与精神文明就在这基础上建立起来。

文化使命涉及人在特定的时空下发展出来的生活方式、价值观和世界观等等。所以东方人跟西方人的生活很不一样。一般的动植物只能顺其本能自然的生长运作，因此并没有所谓的文化可言。但人类却能创造精神与物质文明！文化使命因此涉及人类在物质文明、制度、习俗和思想理念上进行创作、发展、持守和承传。这是人类从上帝那里领受的使命，这使命既是神圣的，也是崇高的。

尽管在人类犯罪以后，人类在某方面的创作与发展有所偏差，但这并不意味着数千年来物质及精神文明的发展成果毫无价值！华人文化强调孝道、儒家思想中所谓的羞耻之心等都是值得保留的价值。作为华人信徒，我们可从圣经里所提出的罪恶感和忏悔意识等观念去丰富我们的文化传统。这是执行文化使命的一个重要环节。

使徒保罗说：“凡事要察验：美善的事要持守，各样恶事要警戒”。因此，教会得客观地去分辨何为美善的东西，不可盲目地排斥自己的文化传统。信徒作为人类共同体的一份子，我们一直在享受数千年以来前人累积下来的文化与文明遗产，我们有无可推卸的责任去承传与发展这文明遗产。作为一个基督徒，我们得通过上帝所给予的圣言去肯定、改善、发展和创作我们的国家与民族传统文化，这是我们的文化使命。无论是福音使命还是文化使命；最终，正如使徒保罗所说：“无论做什么，都要为荣耀上帝而做”（林前10:31）。

**Preface: Christianity marks the age and time of mankind, with God's work of salvation. This work involves the incarnation of the Son, and His life on earth - his death, resurrection and his coming again. Church programmes and services typically revolve around this framework as well. Under this framework, how the Eastern and**

**Western Church today, interprets, expresses and lives out their faith, and, also the expression of the cultural distinctives, are of utmost importance.**

**Chinese believers tend to neglect or even deny their own culture. This prevents an effective and complete integration of our faith in the Chinese community. The subject of faith and culture is therefore one deserving of the Church's attention.**

Last year, I had the opportunity to visit and study in Shandong University, China, particularly on the teachings of the Confucian Xunzi. After returning, numerous church members expressed their bewilderment as to why a pastor would invest his resources on some worldly teachings that lack eternal value.

I can understand their doubts, but these doubts also show the discrepancy between our worldview and the mandate of the Church. Most believers know about the Gospel mandate of the Church, but fail to realise that we also have a cultural mandate. What exactly is a *Cultural Mandate*?

Firstly, after God created the heavens and earth, He instructed man to “rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground” (Gen 1:28). And “so the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.” (Gen 2:20). Let us ponder on this; the act of naming all the creatures, is in fact a fulfilment of mankind's cultural mandate.

Naming is the start of the ruling of the world, and also the beginning of mankind's culture. Man named all creation, eg. mountains, rocks, wind, clouds, horses and cows; the naming of different attributes, eg. red, orange, yellow, green, light, heavy, big and small; and the naming of different emotions, eg. happiness, anger, sadness, joy, frustration and fear. Man named everything with what they saw, heard, felt and thought of, and these gave mankind the ability to remember, to communicate, to narrate and reflect on all

creation. This was man's way of continuing God's act of differentiating creation from its state of formlessness. And it is on such foundations where the worldly and spiritual culture of mankind was formed.

Cultural Mandate is the way of life, values and world views that mankind develops during a specific time and space. This is why the Eastern and Western people's lives are so different. Animals and plants live in accordance with their natural instincts, so they do not develop a so-called culture. Mankind, however, is capable of creation and innovation, and can build materialistic civilisations. Cultural Mandate thus involves man's creating, developing, preserving and passing on of the worldly culture, system, traditions and ideologies. This is the mandate man received from God, and this mandate is both holy and majestic.

Even after man sinned, which resulted in certain deviation in their creativity and development, this does not mean that developments of the worldly and spiritual culture over the last thousands of years are worthless. The Chinese Culture's emphasis on Filial Piety, and the “Sense of Shame” in Confucianism, are values worth our keeping. As Chinese believers, we can enrich our culture with bible teachings, such as the sense of guilt and confession. This is an important part in fulfilling our cultural mandate.

Apostle Paul said, “but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil.” Thus, the Church should objectively understand what is considered to be good, and not blindly reject everything in their own culture. Believers, being part of humanity and having been enjoying the rich culture and civilisation accumulated over thousands of years, have the unrefutable responsibility to develop them and pass them on. As a Christian, we have to, by the Word of God, affirm, improve, develop and create our national and racial traditional culture. Such is our Cultural Mandate. Be it the Gospel or Cultural Mandate; ultimately, just as Apostle Paul said: “whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31).