

## Creation Mandate Turbo-Boost

The question “What is the purpose of man?” is answered in the book of Genesis.<sup>1</sup> Man was created by God to bring the rule and reign of God on earth. This is called the Creation Mandate—some call it the Culture Mandate.

Jesus reiterated this mandate when he gave his disciples instructions on prayer.

This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

(Matthew 6:9–10 NIV)

After acknowledging God with the appellation “Father” and acknowledging God’s holiness, Jesus stressed the truth that God’s will should be done on earth the same as in heaven. God’s will is expressed through his rule and reign. Any effort to live outside God’s rule and reign is rebellion. Therefore, it is incumbent on Christ’s followers to be agents of God’s rule and reign. Another way to phrase this truth is to say that Jesus Christ’s disciples should live in alignment with God’s will and ways.

If you believe that Jesus is Lord of all, then you believe in the Creation Mandate. Arguably the Creation Mandate is the Great Commission of mankind. It is the divine directive that should answer some of the great questions of life, such as, *who* we are, *why* we are here, *what* we are to do, and *how* we are to do it.

Since the fall,<sup>2</sup> mankind has been infected with a depraved nature, which impairs man’s ability to obey the Creation Mandate. A depraved nature is a nature in rebellion against God. From birth, mankind defaults to doing his will according his ways, not God’s will according to God’s ways. Since this state of rebellion against God is systemic in man’s nature, mankind needs divine enablement to fulfill the Creation Mandate.

One of the purposes of the Old Testament is to reveal that the systemic nature of man was—and is—rebellion against God, which means that man must have divine help to be able to change from the default state of rebellion to alignment with God’s will and ways. This reality sets the stage for the vicarious substitutionary work of Christ and helps us better understand what is commonly, but mistakenly, called the Great Commission.

The misnamed Great Commission is a supportive mandate that provides the means by which a fallen human race can find victory over sin and therefore fulfill the Creation Mandate—the *true* Great Commission. In other words, those who receive Christ as their personal Savior are saved by Christ’s vicarious substitutionary work on their behalf so that they can fulfill their original purpose expressed in the Creation Mandate, namely, to bring God’s rule and reign on earth.

Given this understanding of Christianity's nature, one might ask how man is doing bringing God's rule and reign to earth? That is, how well has man multiplied on earth and brought God's dominion to earth through mastering God's marvelous universe?

If you assume a young earth, human history is a little more than six thousand years old. Up until the Industrial Revolution, mankind largely lived to eat; food was the major focus. Relatively speaking, there was little time for man to devote to mastering the universe because most people were simply working to eat. In 1790, 90 percent of the US population lived and worked on farms. By 1910, the number was 31 percent. And by 1990, the number was less than 3 percent. Today, the world's food requirements can be met with relatively few people, so the rest of mankind can turn their attention to other pursuits. The ability for mankind to make dramatic progress in obeying the Creation Mandate has occurred only in the past two hundred years.

Given a hospitable planet, man's basic needs are food, clothing, and shelter. But the greatest need is food. Shelters can be found and built. Clothing can be made. Both shelters and clothing are durable, that is, they do not have to be renewed each day. But food is fuel for the human body and must be supplied each day or the body runs out of energy. Arguably, food is the only daily need of mankind. The necessity for daily sustenance has dominated human existence.

Historically, a family could farm and provide for their own food needs but had little left over for others, which is why before the Industrial Revolution so many people worked and lived on farms. But with the advent of new farm technology developed during the Industrial Revolution, farmers could grow much more food without additional labor. Farm efficiency led to economic prosperity and relieved people of their preoccupation with food production. People who were no longer needed for food production could now turn their attention to other pursuits, such as, more fully mastering God's universe. And so they did.

Over the past two hundred years, technology in all areas exploded because of the available efficiencies in food production. The ability to produce more food with fewer people led to the need for improved food storage, transportation, marketing, processing, and distribution. In some cases new industries were birthed, such as the commodity exchange. In other cases, systems were expanded, such as railroads and shipping companies. With the increased amounts of food available, processing and storage requirements increased, which drove new technologies. And all this meant more worldwide trade. Food became a world currency. Famine was reduced, and technical advancement increased along with financial prosperity.

The domino effect of more efficient food production is indeed dramatic. So consider the genesis of this development. Arguably the seminal events that led to the nineteenth-century revolution in food production began in the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation.

Two of the key figures of the Protestant Reformation were John Calvin in Geneva and John Knox in Scotland. Calvin disciplined Knox in the principles of his theology, known as Calvinism. Knox adopted Calvinism and took it to Scotland where he established the Presbyterian Church and

fought the Anglican Church controlled by the British Crown. It was a bloody battle for both the Scottish and the British. Many Scottish people fled, some to America, seeking freedom from religious persecution. Consequently, the Presbyterian Church, rooted in Calvinism, came to America.

Two of Presbyterianism's key principles are the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. Many view these principles as antithetical, but Presbyterians do not. Presbyterians view God as totally sovereign over his creation and man as responsible to obey God. Given the incomprehensibility of God, Presbyterians do not expect to fully understand God's character and nature. The ostensible contradiction between divine sovereignty and human responsibility is not an issue to them.

The Mac family was one of the families that came to America. Born in 1809 in rural Virginia, Mac was a fourth-generation American<sup>3</sup> of Scotch-Irish descent. His father's name was Robert and his mother's name was Mary Ann Hall.

Mac was destined to play a pivotal role in the Industrial Revolution. Specifically, his contribution would be critical to the development of a highly efficient system of food production. Herbert Casson, one of Mac's biographers, stated that Mac "was predestined by the conditions of his birth to accomplish his great work".<sup>4</sup> Such a statement reflected a strong belief in the sovereignty of God, part of the Presbyterian worldview.

Casson noted that Mac was trained by his father as an inventor, inherited executive ability and ambition from his mother, and received tenacity from his Scotch-Irish lineage<sup>5</sup>.

Mac's father was an educated man. He was a proprietor who engaged in many business ventures, including farming. As a farmer, he was interested in developing labor-saving machines. One of his ideas was a harvesting machine, which he worked on for fifteen years without success.<sup>6</sup> Finally in frustration, he gave up.

Mac asked his father for permission to continue development work on the machine. His father granted his request. With the help of a slave, Mac worked to solve the problems that his father encountered. In 1831, Mac successfully developed an operational harvesting machine. Three years later, he patented the machine.

The productivity gains realized by the machine's use were stunning. Prior to automated harvesting equipment, one worker was required to feed five people. Ultimately, Mac's fully developed machine would enable one worker to feed four hundred people—a massive difference.

Mac gave public demonstrations of his new machine. Supporters and opponents attended, mostly out of curiosity. After one exhibition, the machine was put on display in the town square of Lexington, Virginia. A professor from a local academy examined the machine carefully and exclaimed, "This—machine—is worth—a hundred—thousand—dollars."<sup>7</sup>

Mac's father said, "It makes me feel proud to have a son do what I could not do."<sup>8</sup>

In 1834, Mac became the forty-seventh person to apply and receive a patent for a harvesting machine.<sup>9</sup> The difference between Mac's machine and the others was that Mac's machine worked. Mac's machine worked better than the others because he was a farmer. He understood the realities of harvesting, such as dealing with uneven topography and wet conditions. Other inventors lacked an understanding of these practical issues. Their machines would typically work only in ideal situations—flat terrain and dry conditions. But Mac's machine was versatile. It reflected real-world knowledge and long hours of development.

It was nine years from the day in 1831 when the harvesting machine was developed until the first machine was sold. From 1831 to 1835, Mac supported himself by farming. Realizing that this work would not provide the resources to help him build and market his harvesting machine, much less continue to develop the machine, he saw an opportunity to make more money by producing iron from a nearby deposit of iron ore. With the help of his father and another investor, Mac built a furnace to produce iron. This venture went well until iron prices fell, which led to bankruptcy. Mac lost everything—the iron business and his farm. The only tangible business asset he retained was the patent on his harvesting machine.

It was during these dark days that Mac committed his life to Christ. Though he was raised in a strong Presbyterian culture, he had not personally accepted Christ as Savior. But with the trials and tribulations of life, he was driven to no longer trust in himself, but to trust in Christ alone. Undoubtedly, Mac's personal relationship with Christ was critical in helping him through these trying times

By 1839, Mac was financially broke. His only wealth was his spiritual wealth from knowing Christ. He had no money, no credit, no factory, and no customers. What was he to do? Instead of giving up, he pressed in. In a little log workshop near his father's home, he founded the world's first factory that produced harvesting machines. While continuing to develop his harvesting machine, he gave more demonstrations. Many people were impressed but there were no buyers. Part of the challenge was the surplus of labor in Virginia and a dearth of money.

During these difficult days, Mac clung to his belief in the harvesting machine, just as John Calvin and John Knox clung to their faith during the persecutions they faced. Like these great spiritual reformers, Mac would not be dismayed. Even when he couldn't sell a machine, he worked on improvements and gave demonstrations.

Finally in 1840, breakthrough came. Abraham Smith bought the first harvesting machine for \$50. By year's end, Mac had sold a total of three machines. He set the price at \$100 per machine and used Abraham Smith's testimony to help market his product. In 1842, 1843, and 1844, he sold, respectively, seven, twenty-nine, and fifty machines.

In 1844, one of Mac's customers was so impressed with the machine that he paid \$1,333 for the right to sell the machine in eight counties. Mac had his first agent.

As the business grew, Mac realized that Virginia was not the best place to manufacture harvesting machines. The Midwest was a much larger farming area. Furthermore, the Midwest had fertile fields, flat topography, and a dearth of labor. Mac began to search for a location in the Midwest to build a manufacturing plant. Briefly, he experimented with subcontracting manufacturing and franchising, but he was not satisfied with the quality. Because of his obsession with quality control, he determined to have one central plant so that he could make all the machines and maintain the level of quality control he demanded.

The central manufacturing facility would need to be close to the grain-producing farms of the Midwest. The facility would also need access to railroads and shipping. Mac envisioned selling his harvesting equipment internationally. In 1847, he located a small nascent swampy town by the name of Chicago.

The Chicago that Mac discovered was a small village founded in the 1830s. There were no railroads and no shipping services. Though it lacked the transportation services that Mac needed, Chicago was the right location; it was close to the vast, but still growing, farming activity in the Midwest. Because of the dearth of labor, Mac's machine would enable farmers to dramatically grow their farms and therefore the food production. Chicago was the right place. And though the transportation systems were lacking, Mac could envision that the transportation services would come in time.

Mac decided to build a manufacturing plant in Chicago; however, he lacked capital. He needed a financial partner. A prominent real estate and civic leader named William Ogden became impressed with Mac and his machine. Ogden invested \$25,000 and was given a 50 percent interest in the factory.

The manufacturing plant was built, but Mac and Ogden were both strong personalities and did not get along well. The partnership only lasted two years. In 1849, Mac bought Ogden's interest. Through the rest of his life, Mac had no partners except family members.

As the business grew, Mac realized that he had not only invented a harvesting machine, but he had invented an industry. He needed to develop values, principles, practices, and a philosophy that reflected his beliefs. He was a committed Presbyterian in the John Knox tradition. He believed strongly in the sovereignty of God and human responsibility. He believed that God called him to this business and that it was his responsibility to glorify God in his work.

Based on this theology, his philosophy was to work under the sovereign hand of God knowing that he would give an account to God. His value system emanated from this philosophy. Honesty, tenacity, loyalty, accuracy, efficiency, dedication, sincerity, and integrity were of his prominent values. These values were expressed in the principles and practices that he adopted for his farm machinery business. Specifically, he developed six key commandments (i.e., principles and practices), which are summarized below.

Provide a written guarantee including a full warranty.

Set prices on all products.<sup>10</sup>

Use advertising as a means to communicate the value proposition.

Use responsible agents to sell, stock, and service the machines.

Build goodwill with customers; work for the good of the farmers.

Use field tests to develop product enhancements and to market the product.

Eventually Mac's principles and practices became the industry standard, though few probably knew that Mac's theology shaped these standards.

By 1850, Mac had established a new business and the means and methods for conducting this business. In those days, patents expired after fourteen years. Mac's original patent expired in 1848. As was common in that day, Mac filed for a patent extension. But the jealousy and greed of many competitors led to a nearly twenty-year legal battle, which cost Mac dearly. During this time, many copied Mac's design but none could produce the harvesting machine as well as Mac. In the end, Mac prevailed against his opponents in business and in the courthouse.

The foundation had now been laid. Mac (Cyrus Hall McCormick) spent near two decades developing his machine, "the Reaper," and establishing a new industry for making farm equipment. The significance of this development was just being understood. For the first time, farmers were able to harvest enough wheat to feed not only their families but also to sell. The Reaper introduced a new level of prosperity to the American farmer. Farmers went from subsistence to abundance. Coupled to this was the ability for labor to move from farming to other pursuits, which put obedience to the Creation Mandate into turbo-boost.

But Mac's days of challenge were not over. In 1871, one of the largest disasters of the nineteenth century took place—the great Chicago fire. The fire burned for three days in October of that year; four square miles of the city were destroyed, including Cyrus's manufacturing plant. Cyrus and his wife, Nettie, discussed the situation—should they rebuild? Finally, Cyrus and Nettie agreed to rebuild. But not only did Cyrus rebuild his own facility, he paid to rebuild a large part of Chicago. Cyrus's motive was never money; it was obedience to God. He used money simply as a tool to obey God. When Cyrus and Nettie felt led of the Lord to give to help others rebuild, they did so without hesitation or reservation. Generosity is a mark of a person who lives based on sound biblical theology.

The benefits of the Reaper were not limited to the USA; the Reaper was a global blessing. After establishing the domestic business, Cyrus moved quickly to develop an export business. Soon Reapers were in every grain-producing country in the world. The Reaper enabled the world to rise from poverty and, in the process, provided manpower and financial resources to facilitate the Industrial Revolution.

One must understand that a key element in these worldwide developments was the way God designed wheat. Wheat is a "world" food. Every nation in the world uses wheat. One can see

this by simply looking at the famine in Egypt during Joseph's time. What enabled people to survive was grain.<sup>11</sup> Wheat is perfectly suited to the human need. It contains the nutritional elements in the right proportions needed by the human body. Wheat is easily stored, transported, and processed. And with the Reaper, wheat became easy to harvest.

The last half of the nineteenth century was a time of unprecedented prosperity in world history. The Reaper was clearly one of the catalysts, if not a primary catalyst. The Reaper's development was pioneered by Cyrus Hall McCormick—a man who responded to God's call on his life and who obeyed the call faithfully and biblically. Arguably the requisite character in Cyrus was his foundation in Christ and his discipleship in the teachings of Knox and Calvin. Cyrus's life illustrates that Christianity has consistently provided the basis for human advancement in obedience to the Creation Mandate.<sup>12</sup>

Cyrus's accomplishments were not only because he obeyed God's will for his life, but also because he obeyed God's ways. God's ways are the means and methods by which God wishes for us to live.

The Beyond Babel Model is a tool to help organizations align with God's ways. Consider a brief analysis of the means and methods employed by Cyrus compared to the salient elements of the Beyond Babel Model.

<b>Beyond Babel Model</b>	<b>Principles and Practices of Cyrus McCormick</b>
Customer Validation	Customer centered, always treated the farmers well
Execution Excellence	Focused on one product—the Reaper Pioneered and built world-class teams and systems Financially astute, generous
Strategic Planning	Global multi-generational perspective
Equally Yoked Leaders	Built a strong, equally yoked leadership team
Biblical Worldview	Rooted and grounded in the Bible (favorite texts Psalm 1; Romans 8:35ff) Committed to both God's sovereignty and human responsibility Driven by excellence not money Teachable, humble, listened to the ideas of others

Cyrus McCormick obeyed God's will and ways and played a key role in turbo-boosting the fulfillment of the Creation Mandate. His Reaper facilitated the food supply of the world,

making the supply abundant and, in the process, releasing human and financial capital to focus on bringing dominion to the world.

Wheat, as the world food, has been an extraordinary blessing to mankind. Given the blessing from the abundance of wheat, one might ask why there is so much gluten intolerance. According to some reports, 46 percent of the US population has some degree of gluten intolerance. If wheat is indeed a world food and a primary source of gluten, why are so many allergic to it? Some studies suggest that gluten intolerance is over diagnosed. But perhaps there is another reason.

Science today is largely based on naturalism. Naturalism presumes that there is no spiritual reality, only physical reality, and therefore everything must be explained in terms of natural causes. Furthermore, naturalism assumes there is no external design in the universe, rather the design that we experience is the product of natural causes driven by the principle of survival of the fittest. The common assumption of the scientific community is that there is no intentional purposeful sovereign designer of the universe. Therefore, scientists can easily conclude that the food supply is not necessary perfectly suited for mankind. Or that some human organs, such as tonsils and gall bladders, don't really serve a purpose in the human body so they are removed with temerity.

If the universe is the product of a Creator who is intentional and purposeful, there is a reason for everything. Then it is not surprising that the food supply would be perfectly suited to human needs. And one would expect that each organ of the human body would have a purpose, therefore, physicians should be cautious about removing them.

For each of us, our view of God defines our view of reality. One's theology is the basis for understanding and living in reality.

Cyrus Hall McCormick, a fourth-generation Scotch-Irish Presbyterian, believed in a sovereign Creator who functions with intent and purpose. And he lived his life based on this belief. Because of his sound theology, this ordinary man accomplished extraordinary feats that served to turbo-boost man's ability to fulfill the purpose for which man was created, that is, to fulfill the Creation Mandate. Cyrus's life illustrates that sound theology is the predicate for anyone to successfully find and fulfill their life purpose.

Another lesson to learn from Cyrus is the reality that those with sound theology should be the best workers and produce the best products and services. From the year Cyrus obtained his patent (1834) through the remainder of the nineteenth century, there was no significant improvement in the Reaper made by anyone except Cyrus. Competition focused on copying Cyrus's design, but no one was able to produce the Reaper as well as Cyrus.

Because of Cyrus's conviction about the sovereignty of God, he believed in the intentionality of God, that is, that there is a purpose for everything. Hence, Cyrus was persuaded that he was called to invent the Reaper and this calling was not of human origin, it was divinely ordained. This conviction was a guiding light for Cyrus all his life, including the dark days of bankruptcy.



Cyrus McCormick's life is an illustration of a man who found and fulfilled his life purpose. He was a man driven to obey God, no matter what the cost. He was a man of passion and compassion. He was a man of truth and righteousness. He was a man who demonstrated the power of sound theology to provide the foundation for success in business, and indeed, in all of life. His contribution to the Creation Mandate was to provide a turbo-boost for mankind so that mankind could bring God's rule and reign to earth more effectively than ever.

May God grant us grace to do this well.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 1:26–28.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 3.

<sup>3</sup> Herbert N. Casson, *Cyrus Hall McCormick: His Life and Work* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1909), p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pg.25.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>10</sup> Haggling was common in that day.

<sup>11</sup> Genesis 42:2.

<sup>12</sup> Alvin J. Schmidt, *How Christianity Changed the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004).