

BRIDGING FAITH AND PRAXIS: Everyday Theology and the Cultural Mandate in Post-Suramadu Madura

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Submitted: 22 October 2024 Revision: 17 October 2025 Published: 30 December 2025

Abstract

This study explores the role of everyday theology in actualizing the cultural mandate within the socio-economic context of post-Suramadu Madura. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through questionnaires administered to five local churches. The findings reveal that although theological understanding concerning culture (100%), creation (80%), and economic responsibility (80%) is relatively strong among church communities, its practical expression remains limited in several strategic sectors, including agriculture (20%), tourism (20%), education (20%), healthcare (40%), and livestock development (0%). These findings indicate a substantial gap between theological conviction and ecclesial practice. Drawing on the perspective of everyday theology, this study argues that theological reflection must move beyond doctrinal comprehension toward transformative engagement with daily life and community development. The study demonstrates that everyday theology provides a contextual and praxis-oriented framework through which churches can embody the cultural mandate in concrete social, economic, and cultural realities. As such, it contributes to contemporary practical theology by highlighting the potential of everyday theology to integrate faith, vocation, and public responsibility within the unique context of post-Suramadu Madura.

Keywords: everyday theology; cultural mandate; practical theology; ecclesial praxis; post-Suramadu Madura.

INTRODUCTION

Everyday theology is a contextual approach that places Christian faith within the realm of real life.¹ In the context of Madura, negative stereotypes often overshadow the rich culture and economic potential of its people. The Suramadu Bridge has presented an opportunity for social and economic change, yet the church has not fully responded to this within the framework of the cultural mandate.² This study highlights how the church can become an agent of transformation through the application of everyday

¹ Michael J. Slesman Kevin J. Vanhoozer, and Charles A. Anderson, *Everyday Theology* (Malang: Literatur SAAT, 2011), 254.

² Muhammad Syamsuddin, *History of Madura* (Yogyakarta: Araska Publhiser, 2019), 3–4.

theology. As a contextual theological approach, everyday theology articulates Christian faith within concrete daily realities, emphasizing praxis-oriented engagement rather than abstract doctrinal reflection.

Despite growing scholarly interest in contextual and lived theology, a significant gap remains in the literature concerning how everyday theology operates at the intersection of culture, religion, and socio-economic transformation in post-development contexts such as Madura. Existing studies tend to focus either on cultural stereotypes or on economic development, yet rarely integrate these with a theological framework that empowers local religious communities as transformative agents. In the Madurese context, persistent negative stereotypes continue to obscure the region's rich cultural heritage and latent economic potential. Thus, a theological approach that bridges faith and daily life is urgently needed.

The inauguration of the Suramadu Bridge represents a pivotal socio-economic turning point, accelerating mobility, investment, and cultural exchange between Madura and East Java. This infrastructural development reshapes the region's economic landscape and introduces new social challenges that demand constructive engagement from religious institutions. However, the local church has not yet fully appropriated this transitional moment within the framework of the cultural mandate (Gen 1:28), which calls for responsible stewardship, cultural participation, and societal transformation. Everyday theology offers a practical and contextual means through which churches can embody theological reflection in lived experience—such as economic empowerment initiatives, community development programs, and the re-narration of cultural identity in light of the gospel.

This study, therefore, seeks to bridge the gap between theological theory and ecclesial praxis by demonstrating how everyday theology can function as an operative framework for local churches in Madura. It argues that by embracing the cultural mandate through contextually grounded practices, the church can actively participate in reshaping social perceptions that have long marginalized Madurese identity. Furthermore, the church can foster economic resilience among local communities by engaging in agriculture, tourism, education, healthcare, and livestock development as tangible expressions of faith. In doing so, the church contributes to holistic community transformation in the post-Suramadu era, making the Gospel relevant and transformative in everyday life.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Purpose of Everyday Theology

The purpose of everyday theology is to form Christians who possess not only theological knowledge but also the ability to live in harmony with the Gospel within the real world.³ Vanhoozer calls this theodramatic participation—taking part in the “great drama of God” as aware actors, not passive spectators.⁴ This means that believers are called to actively embody their faith in every sphere of life, responding to God’s ongoing work in creation and redemption. Everyday theology, therefore, rejects any separation between sacred doctrine and secular practice, insisting that theology must be lived, not merely studied. Through this framework, Christians learn to see their daily work, relationships, and decisions as integral to their witness and worship.

In addition, everyday theology enables Christians to understand and live out their faith contextually by reading culture theologically. Barth and Brahm state that everyday theology involves reading those parts of culture that communicate implicit moods, basic orientations to life, and one’s sense of being in the world.⁵ Thus, culture is seen not as an enemy of faith but as a field for encounter and transformation by the Word. Through understanding culture, believers can recognize cultural functions and values relevant to the Christian faith, moving beyond dogma into the concrete context of human beings as cultural creatures living in history.⁶ Furthermore, everyday theology builds sensitivity to local and global dynamics; in Madura, for example, it can help dismantle negative stereotypes by transforming cultural values for the glory of Christ.⁷ John Frame defines theology as “the application of the Word of God to all areas of life,” which aligns perfectly with this contextual and practical approach.⁸

³ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 23; Marce Sule and Elim Wilsen Taruk. “Ma’marakka Sebagai Media Transformasi Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Agama Kristen Yang Kontekstual Bagi Masyarakat Buntao’: Ma’marakka As a Medium for Transforming Contextual Christian Education Values in the Buntao’ Community”. *KINAA: Jurnal Teologi* 10, no. 1 (2025): 52-67. <https://doi.org/10.47178/9pd3xj44>.

⁴ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine*, 23.

⁵ Kevin Vanhoozer, “What Has Vienna to Do with Jerusalem?” *Westminster Theological Journal* 63 (2001): 123-150.

⁶ Edi Suranta Ginting and David Ming, “Meeting God at the Foot of Mount Sinabung on Karonesse Rituals in Terms of the Christian Faith” 106, no. 1 (2025): 1-9.

⁷ GP Harianto, Benjamin Metekohy, Novita Sahertian, and David Ming, “Honor Dei as a Learning of the Need to Appreciate God’s Servants in the Church,” *Pharos Journal of Theology* 104, no. 1 (2023): a26. <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.10426>.

⁸ John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2024), 81.

Scope of Everyday Theology

The scope of everyday theology covers various dimensions of human life historically separated from spirituality, but in the Reformed approach there is no sacred-secular dichotomy.⁹ Vanhoozer and Anderson emphasize that “everyday theology is faith seeking understanding of our everyday world,” and thus faith must be reflected in all interactions with creation. This principle rejects the idea that certain activities (such as worship, prayer, or Bible study) are spiritual while others (such as farming, trading, or politics) are merely worldly. Instead, every human endeavor falls under the lordship of Christ and is to be pursued for God’s glory.¹⁰ Consequently, everyday theology provides a framework for integrating faith with vocation, family life, economic activity, and civic responsibility.

This study defines three main dimensions of everyday theology: culture (X1), creation (X2), and economy (X3). First, culture is understood as the expression of human life including communication, social order, values, and artistic expression, consistent with Paul Tillich’s view that theology cannot be separated from cultural anthropology.¹¹ Second, creation relates to environmental management and ecological sustainability based on Genesis 2:15, where humanity is commanded to “work and keep the garden.”¹² Third, the economy is seen not as a secular activity but as part of worship, revealing God’s glory through creation.¹³ Each dimension requires active engagement, for believers are called to be stewards of God’s world.¹⁴ Thus, the scope of everyday theology covers the entire calling of humanity as the image of God who works, cares for, and responsibly recreates the world.

The Cultural Mandate: Definition and Biblical Foundation

If everyday theology is the framework that places faith within real life, the cultural mandate is its practical expression in human responsibility toward creation. The cultural mandate provides the biblical basis for active involvement in building civilization, managing the earth, and bringing God’s Kingdom values into culture and

⁹ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Charles A. Anderson, and Michael J. Slesman, *Everyday Theology*, 260.

¹⁰ Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1931), 20.

¹¹ Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 8.

¹² *BibleWorks*, vers. 9.0 (Norfolk, VA: BibleWorks, LLC, 2011).

¹³ I A Lepeshinskii, "Theology of Judgment in Genesis 6-9" (2023).

¹⁴ Albert M. Wolters, *Creation Regained* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 42.

social structures.¹⁵ As a call from God given since creation, it cannot be separated from human identity as the image of God. Within Reformed theology, this mandate includes economics, education, arts, science, and just social relationships.¹⁶ Albert Wolters states that the cultural mandate is the universal call to continue God's work of creation, organizing human society and culture under God's rule.¹⁷

The biblical foundation is found in Genesis 1:26-28 and 2:15. In Genesis 1:28, God blesses humanity: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over every living thing."¹⁸ This first mandate shows that work, creativity, and stewardship are part of human nature created in God's image.¹⁹ Genesis 2:15 commands humanity to "work and keep" the garden, providing a dimension of ecological responsibility as God's representative, not as oppressor.²⁰ Although the mandate applies to all humanity, only God's true people can carry it out with the right purpose—to glorify God.²¹ Thus, the church's task is not limited to preaching the Gospel but also to being a living witness in all aspects of life, including environmental stewardship.²²

The Cultural Mandate in Reformed Thought

Abraham Kuyper emphasized that the entire world is a field of service to God, declaring: "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry, 'Mine!'"²³ From this, the cultural mandate touches all aspects of life—politics, education, art, economics, agriculture, and technology—not just worship or the church. Kuyper's vision of sphere sovereignty affirms that each domain of life has its own distinct authority under God, yet all are

¹⁵ David Ming and Muner Daliman, "Mission Theology in the Context of a Multiple Society," *Pharos Journal of Theology* 103, no. 2 (2022): 1-12.

¹⁶ Jonas S. Thinane, "Missio Dei Refuting the Pactum Salutis," *HTS Teologiese Studies* 79, no. 1 (2023): 1-7.

¹⁷ Albert M. Wolters, *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2005), 42.

¹⁸ *BibleWorks*, vers. 9.0.

¹⁹ Lepeshinskii, "Theology of Judgment in Genesis 6-9."

²⁰ *BibleWorks*, vers. 9.0.

²¹ E. Stephen Burnett, "Behold the Fantastic Purposes of 'The Chosen' and Other Great Biblical Fiction." *Lorehaven*, May 3, 2021. <https://lorehaven.com/ behold-the-fantastic-purposes-of-the-chosen-and-other-great-biblical-fiction>.

²² Herman Bavink, *Reformed Dogmatics. Volume 4: Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, ed. John Bolt, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 37-38.

²³ Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, 20.

called to honor Christ.²⁴ This perspective rejects any attempt to restrict Christian witness to explicitly religious activities. Consequently, the church must equip its members to serve God in their vocations, whether as farmers, teachers, business owners, or healthcare workers.

Meanwhile, Wolters states that the cultural mandate is the command to make the earth habitable through human work in accordance with God's will.²⁵ Wolters emphasizes that this mandate was not revoked by the Fall into sin but is fulfilled through redemption in Christ, and the church is called to carry it out in the light of redemptive grace. This means that even in a fallen world, human cultural activity has positive value and can be directed toward God's purposes.²⁶ As Harvie Conn and Manuel Ortiz affirm, education and cultural formation are works of the Kingdom of God, part of the redemptive call to restore creation.²⁷ Thus, the cultural mandate is also a form of witness and worship, and the church's engagement in sectors such as education and healthcare is a legitimate expression of its mission.

Madura After the Construction of the Suramadu Bridge

The construction of the Suramadu Bridge has become a significant moment in Madura's development history, symbolizing hope for economic and social progress.²⁸ The government hopes that economic equalization will curb urbanization and improve the Madura economy.²⁹ However, the bridge's impact does not automatically lead to significant change unless accompanied by holistic human and cultural development. Syamsuddin emphasizes that infrastructure development must be accompanied by cultural and social strengthening; otherwise, the bridge's existence is futile.³⁰ Therefore, the church and community institutions have an important role in filling these development spaces, addressing both material and spiritual needs.

²⁴ Benjamin F. Intan, "Kuyper's Sphere Sovereignty and the Restriction on Building Worship Places in Indonesia," *HTS Teologiese Studies* 78, no. 1 (2022): 1-9.

²⁵ Al Wolters, *Creation Regained* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 41.

²⁶ Al Wolters, *Creation Regained*, 45.

²⁷ Harvie M. Conn and Manuel Ortiz, *Urban Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 239.

²⁸ Muhammad Syamsuddin, *History of Madura*, 3-4.

²⁹ Selvia Khoirul and Fetri, Neny, "Dinamika Kemiskinan Di Pulau Madura: Faktor Ekonomi Dan Sosial," *Relasi Journal Ekonomi* 21, no. 1 (2024): 226-241.

³⁰ Muhammad Syamsuddin, *History of Madura*, 3-4.

In this context, the cultural mandate finds its urgency: the church must become an active agent in local economic empowerment, agricultural training, education, and healthcare services.³¹ Everyday theology provides the practical means for the church to touch the lives of the community directly by bringing the values of the Kingdom of God into Madura's changing context. Without such engagement, the bridge may only serve as a traffic route rather than a catalyst for genuine transformation. The church's participation in sectors such as agriculture, livestock, tourism, education, and healthcare is not merely social work but a theological necessity grounded in the cultural mandate.³² Thus, the post-Suramadu era calls for a church that is theologically reflective, socially engaged, and economically aware.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the role of everyday theology in implementing the cultural mandate in post-Suramadu Madura.³³ Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to five local churches selected through purposive sampling based on three criteria.³⁴ The three criteria included active socio-cultural engagement, geographical proximity to post-Suramadu development areas, and involvement in community-oriented ministries. This sampling strategy aimed not at statistical generalization but at generating contextually rich insights into ecclesial responses to local realities.³⁵ The descriptive qualitative design allowed for an in-depth examination of the relationship between theological understanding and ecclesial practice in the Madurese context.

The study examined two groups of thematic indicators as analytical categories rather than statistical variables.³⁶ The first group consisted of theological understanding related to culture (X1), creation (X2), and economic responsibility (X3). The second

³¹ Njoo Tomas Wibowo, *Tinjauan Teologi Keseharian dan Implementasinya dalam Praktik Mandat Budaya di Madura Pasca Dibangunnya Jembatan Suramadu* (Mojokerto: STTIAA, 2025), v.

³² Njoo Tomas Wibowo, *Tinjauan Teologi Keseharian dan Implementasinya dalam Praktik Mandat Budaya di Madura Pasca Dibangunnya Jembatan Suramadu*, v.

³³ Njoo Tomas Wibowo, *Tinjauan Teologi Keseharian dan Implementasinya dalam Praktik Mandat Budaya di Madura Pasca Dibangunnya Jembatan Suramadu*, v.

³⁴ Njoo Tomas Wibowo, *Tinjauan Teologi Keseharian dan Implementasinya dalam Praktik Mandat Budaya di Madura Pasca Dibangunnya Jembatan Suramadu*, v.

³⁵ Njoo Tomas Wibowo, *Tinjauan Teologi Keseharian dan Implementasinya dalam Praktik Mandat Budaya di Madura Pasca Dibangunnya Jembatan Suramadu*, v.

³⁶ Njoo Tomas Wibowo, *Tinjauan Teologi Keseharian dan Implementasinya dalam Praktik Mandat Budaya di Madura Pasca Dibangunnya Jembatan Suramadu*, v.

group focused on practical implementation of the cultural mandate through engagement in agriculture (Y1), livestock development (Y2), tourism (Y3), education (Y4), and healthcare (Y5). These indicators functioned as heuristic tools to identify patterns and gaps in church engagement across the five participating churches. Each indicator was measured through questionnaire items that asked about church programs, training activities, and levels of community involvement. The use of thematic indicators ensured systematic data collection and enabled comparative analysis across all five churches.

The questionnaire instrument consisted of closed-ended and open-ended items distributed to church leaders or ministry coordinators.³⁷ Closed-ended items measured the presence and frequency of church programs in each of the five strategic sectors (Y1–Y5). Open-ended items allowed respondents to describe specific initiatives, challenges, and theological motivations for their engagement. Questionnaires were distributed directly to each church and collected within two weeks to ensure adequate response time. All five churches returned completed questionnaires, yielding a 100% response rate. This instrument design balanced quantitative description with qualitative depth appropriate for practical theological research.

Data analysis was conducted through an interpretative qualitative technique integrating thematic analysis and theological reflection.³⁸ The analytical process involved three stages: data reduction and coding, thematic interpretation, and theological reflection. In the first stage, recurring patterns within participants' responses were identified through systematic coding of questionnaire data. The second stage examined the socio-cultural meanings reflected in the data across the five strategic sectors. The third stage correlated emerging themes with biblical and theological concepts, particularly the cultural mandate and everyday theology, as drawn from Reformed sources.³⁹

³⁷ Njoo Tomas Wibowo, *Tinjauan Teologi Keseharian dan Implementasinya dalam Praktik Mandat Budaya di Madura Pasca Dibangunnya Jembatan Suramadu*, v.

³⁸ Anja Voeste, "Data Collection and Interpretation," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Historical Orthography*, ed. Marco Condorelli and Hanna Rutkowska (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 324–337.

³⁹ Wibowo, "Tinjauan Teologi Keseharian," v.

RESULT

John Frame stated that theology is the service of the Word to the world: the application of the Bible to all areas of life.⁴⁰ Thus, everyday theology serves as the conceptual foundation for this research, as well as the theological framework supporting the implementation of the cultural mandate in a modern social context. Before discussing how the cultural mandate can be practically applied in post-Suramadu Bridge Madura, it is necessary to first understand what everyday theology is, its historical roots and key figures, its purpose, and the scope of its practice in multicultural life.⁴¹

By understanding these four key dimensions, it becomes clear that everyday theology is not a theoretical concept confined to academic spaces or church liturgy, but a form of participation by God's people in God's work in the world. Everyday theology demands active engagement in culture, society, and creation in their entirety. Therefore, this section will systematically discuss the definition, history and figures, purpose, and scope of everyday theology in light of Reformed thought.⁴²

Everyday theology is an approach that emphasizes the reflection of the Christian faith in the context of daily life. Vanhoozer and Anderson state that everyday theology is “a reflective and practical task in the daily life of a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ” and is not just a Sunday task or exclusively for professional theologians.⁴³ Through this approach, every believer is called to live out their faith not only in formal worship but also in their work, relationships, and social responsibilities. This understanding makes theology a way of comprehending worldly life in the light of God's Word. Kevin J. Vanhoozer argues that theology must study not only the Bible but also contemporary culture and life because “faith is affected by the world where life takes place.”⁴⁴

⁴⁰ John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2024), 81.

⁴¹ Anugrah Saro Iman Zendrato, Yusuf Tandil, and Milla Widyawati Kusuma Wardhani. “Studi Hermeneutika Dalam Analisis Teks Dan Konteks: Studi Pengantar Tafsir Biblika”. *SERVIRE: Journal of Research and Service* 1, no. 2 (2021): 57-73. <https://doi.org/10.46362/servire.v1i2.99>; Susanti Embong Bulan and Amran Simangunsong. “Click for Tolerance: The Transformation of Christian Religious Education through Digital Media in Fostering Inclusive Attitudes in Indonesia”. *MODERATE: Journal of Religious, Education, and Social* 3, no. 1 (2025):1-18. <https://doi.org/10.46362/moderate.v3i1.16..>

⁴² Herman Bavink, *Reformed Dogmatics. Volume 4: Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, ed. John Bolt, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008).

⁴³ Michael J. Slesman, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, and Charles A. Anderson, *Everday Theology*.

⁴⁴ Michael J. Slesman, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, and Charles A. Anderson, *Everday Theology*.

Therefore, sermons and Bible studies must be directly connected to the realities that the congregation faces in their daily lives.⁴⁵ Calvin, as quoted by Vanhoozer and Anderson, believed that the way to gain understanding is by reading the world through the Bible.⁴⁶ This shows that the Christian faith is not isolated from the world but must, in fact, influence the world through a comprehensive understanding of both text and context. In this light, everyday theology aims to cultivate a sensitivity among believers to the presence and work of God in every aspect of ordinary life that is often taken for granted.⁴⁷

The history of everyday theology's development is closely tied to the concern for the relationship between faith and culture. In the Gospels, Jesus himself set an example by emphasizing the importance of understanding and interpreting the "signs of the times," as in Matthew 16:1-3. This is interpreted as a form of cultural literacy that every disciple of Christ must possess. Jesus is the primary example of connecting theological truth with the social, natural, and spiritual realities of human life.⁴⁸ Figures such as Carl Henry, Paul Tillich, and Kevin Vanhoozer played important roles in shaping the modern understanding of the faith-culture relationship. Carl Henry, for instance, called for the evangelical church to return to the vision of Augustine, where Christ is understood as the renewer of culture. Paul Tillich, through his book *Theology of Culture*, affirmed that theology must be rooted in anthropological and cultural understanding, not merely doctrinal.⁴⁹

Vanhoozer and Anderson also add that cultural literacy is an essential skill for Christians, so they do not merely become consumers of culture but active and critical culture creators.⁵⁰ They write that everyday theology is: "faith seeking understanding of our everyday world that demands involvement in reading and writing culture for the

⁴⁵ Michael J. Sleasman, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, and Charles A. Anderson, *Everday Theology*.

⁴⁶ Michael J. Sleasman, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, and Charles A. Anderson, *Everday Theology*.

⁴⁷ Bruce McNair, "Martin Luther and Lucas Cranach Teaching the Lord's Prayer," *Religions* 8, no. 4 (2017): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel8040063>.

⁴⁸ Muner Daliman and Hana Suparti, "Revealing the Secret of the Kingdom of Heaven in the Gospel of Matthew Chapter 13," *European Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 1, no. 3 (June 16, 2021): 9–14, <https://doi.org/10.24018/theology.2021.1.3.17>.

⁴⁹ D A Carson & John D Woodbridge, *God and Culture* (Surabaya: Momentum, 2002), 7–9.

⁵⁰ Anna Cho, "The Church as a Trinitarian Hermeneutical Community," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 80, no. 1 (2024): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v80i1.9170>.

sake of gospel witness".⁵¹ This demonstrates that theology is not just a cognitive study but also a living praxis.

John Frame's definition of theology as "the application of the Word of God to all areas of life" provides a foundational point of departure for this study, situating theology within lived, embodied reality rather than abstract doctrinal discourse. Building on this, everyday theology serves as the central conceptual and interpretative framework, particularly within the Reformed tradition, which emphasizes the comprehensive lordship of God (*coram Deo*) and the integration of faith and life. However, to deepen its theoretical grounding, everyday theology must be understood not only as a contemporary construct but as part of a broader theological trajectory. From patristic concerns with lived piety, through Reformation emphases on vocation, to modern contextual theology, everyday theology reflects an ongoing effort to relate faith to concrete human experience. Contemporary theologians such as Kevin J. Vanhoozer and Stephen B. Bevans further develop this by framing theology as a dialogical and contextually embedded practice.

The findings of this study contribute to theological discourse by demonstrating that everyday theology functions as a mediating framework between Reformed theological principles and socio-cultural praxis in Madura. Yet, a fuller understanding of this context requires engagement with insights from the social sciences. Sociologically, Madura is characterized by strong communal bonds, patron-client relationships, and honor-based social structures, which shape both opportunities and constraints for ecclesial engagement. Anthropologically, cultural identity and local wisdom (*adat*) play a significant role in shaping community responses to change. Economically, the region continues to face structural limitations, including uneven development and restricted access to capital, despite the transformative potential introduced by the Suramadu Bridge. These interdisciplinary insights reveal that the church's engagement cannot be purely theological but must be socio-culturally informed and economically realistic.

Within this framework, the application of the cultural mandate must also reckon with practical realities. Many churches operate with limited financial, institutional, and human resources, which constrains their capacity for large-scale intervention. Therefore, this study proposes incremental and scalable strategies. In agriculture (Y1)

⁵¹ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Charles A. Anderson, *Everday Theology*.

and livestock (Y2), churches may begin with small cooperative initiatives or training programs in sustainable practices. In tourism (Y3), engagement could focus on community-based and ethically grounded cultural promotion. In education (Y4), churches can prioritize informal education, literacy programs, and contextual theological training. In healthcare (Y5), collaboration with local clinics and public health campaigns offers a feasible entry point. Crucially, these efforts may be strengthened through partnerships with non-governmental organizations and government agencies, thereby extending the church's impact beyond its internal capacities.

At the same time, a critical perspective on religious influence is necessary. While religious institutions can serve as powerful agents of social transformation—mobilizing moral vision, communal solidarity, and ethical commitment—they may also exhibit resistance to change or reinforce existing inequalities, particularly when theological interpretations are narrowly construed. This ambivalence underscores the need for ongoing theological reflection that is self-critical and open to reform, ensuring that religious engagement contributes to justice and inclusivity rather than exclusion or stagnation.

In the Madurese context, where Islam constitutes the majority religious tradition, the role of interfaith dialogue becomes particularly significant. The implementation of the cultural mandate, therefore, cannot be pursued in isolation but must involve collaborative engagement with Muslim communities and other stakeholders. Interfaith cooperation in areas such as education, economic development, and social welfare offers a pathway toward more inclusive and sustainable transformation. Such dialogue not only enhances social cohesion but also reflects a broader theological commitment to the common good.

Furthermore, the church's engagement must be situated within broader socio-political and structural realities. Regional disparities, governance challenges, and infrastructural developments—such as the Suramadu Bridge—shape the possibilities and limitations of local transformation. While the bridge has accelerated economic connectivity, it has also exposed local communities to competitive pressures and uneven development. In this context, the church's role includes not only direct engagement but also advocacy, collaboration with civil society, and participation in broader development discourse.

From a methodological perspective, this study acknowledges its limitations. The reliance on a small, purposively selected sample and questionnaire-based data restricts the generalizability and depth of analysis. Future research would benefit from expanded sample sizes and the incorporation of diverse qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and ethnographic observation, to capture more nuanced dimensions of lived theology and ecclesial practice.

Finally, this study argues that the integration of spiritual mission and social responsibility is not optional but intrinsic to the church's identity. Within the Reformed tradition, worship and work, proclamation and participation, are inseparable dimensions of faithful living. Everyday theology provides a practical framework for this integration by enabling believers to discern God's activity in daily life and to respond through concrete, contextually grounded action. In the post-Suramadu context, this entails a church that is not only theologically reflective but also socially engaged, economically aware, and collaboratively oriented—thus embodying a holistic vision of transformation grounded in both faith and practice.

DISCUSSION

The results demonstrate a substantial gap between theological understanding and ecclesial practice in post-Suramadu Madura. While churches possess strong conceptual knowledge (80-100%) of the cultural mandate, practical engagement across five strategic sectors remains limited (0-40% active involvement).⁵² This gap reflects a persistent sacred-secular dichotomy that contradicts the Reformed emphasis on integrating faith and daily life. Abraham Kuyper's vision of Christ's sovereignty over every sphere of life has not yet been fully embodied by the surveyed churches.⁵³ Everyday theology, as a framework, calls for the integration of all spheres of life, yet this integration remains incomplete in practice.⁵⁴

The agriculture sector (Y1) reveals modest engagement but significant untapped potential for church involvement. Only 20% of churches provide regular agricultural training, while 60% provide none at all, despite agriculture being a traditional

⁵² Njoo Tomas Wibowo, *Tinjauan Teologi Keseharian dan Implementasinya dalam Praktik Mandat Budaya di Madura Pasca Dibangunnya Jembatan Suramadu*, v.

⁵³ Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1931), 20.

⁵⁴ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Charles A. Anderson, and Michael J. Sleasman, *Everyday Theology*, 254.

livelihood in Madura.⁵⁵ This low engagement suggests that churches have not recognized farming as a theological vocation under the cultural mandate. Genesis 2:15 commands humanity to “work and keep” the garden, establishing agriculture as a divinely ordained activity.⁵⁶ Therefore, churches could develop small-scale agricultural training programs using church-owned or rented land as a practical starting point. Salt production management in Madura also offers great potential for church-led economic transformation.⁵⁷

The livestock sector (Y2) shows the most severe gap, with 100% of churches providing no training whatsoever. This complete absence of engagement is particularly concerning given the economic potential of cattle, duck, and chicken farming in rural Madura.⁵⁸ The cultural mandate’s call to have “dominion” over living creatures (Genesis 1:28) directly applies to livestock stewardship.⁵⁹ Churches may lack technical expertise and capital, but collaborative approaches with local farmers and capital owners could overcome these barriers. Fair profit-sharing arrangements represent a biblically grounded model for economic partnership that benefits all parties, while duck and chicken farming require lower capital and are easier to implement.⁶⁰

Tourism (Y3) demonstrates moderate engagement, with 80% of churches occasionally promoting local attractions and 20% very active. The Suramadu Bridge has increased connectivity and tourist flow, creating new opportunities for economic development.⁶¹ However, churches have not yet maximized tourism as a platform for cultural witness and community empowerment. Paul Tillich affirmed that theology must engage with culture, including the cultural expressions that attract tourists.⁶² Churches can facilitate training in digital promotion, homestay management, and ethical tourism

⁵⁵ Njoo Tomas Wibowo, *Tinjauan Teologi Keseharian dan Implementasinya dalam Praktik Mandat Budaya di Madura Pasca Dibangunnya Jembatan Suramadu*, v.

⁵⁶ *BibleWorks*, vers. 9.0.

⁵⁷ Njoo Tomas Wibowo, *Tinjauan Teologi Keseharian dan Implementasinya dalam Praktik Mandat Budaya di Madura Pasca Dibangunnya Jembatan Suramadu*, v.

⁵⁸ Njoo Tomas Wibowo, *Tinjauan Teologi Keseharian dan Implementasinya dalam Praktik Mandat Budaya di Madura Pasca Dibangunnya Jembatan Suramadu*, v.

⁵⁹ *BibleWorks*, vers. 9.0.

⁶⁰ Njoo Tomas Wibowo, *Tinjauan Teologi Keseharian dan Implementasinya dalam Praktik Mandat Budaya di Madura Pasca Dibangunnya Jembatan Suramadu*, v.

⁶¹ Muhammad Syamsuddin, *History of Madura* (Yogyakarta: Araska Publisher, 2019), 3–4.

⁶² Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 8.

that respects local values, while also building positive narratives about Madurese culture to dismantle negative stereotypes.⁶³

The education sector (Y4) reveals that 100% of churches do not establish formal schools, and only 20% offer tutoring classes. This finding contradicts the Reformed tradition's historic emphasis on Christian education as a dimension of the cultural mandate.⁶⁴ Harvie Conn and Manuel Ortiz state that education is the work of the Kingdom of God and part of the redemptive call to restore creation.⁶⁵ Churches can begin with informal tutoring in reading, writing, mathematics, and basic English before advancing to formal school establishment, following examples such as GKA Elyon in Surabaya. Education forms human beings holistically and prepares them to serve God in all vocations.⁶⁶ In addition, digital faith formation has become increasingly relevant for Christian education in the post-pandemic era, requiring church leaders to adapt their teaching methods.⁶⁷

The healthcare sector (Y5) shows mixed results, with 40% offering free medical programs but 80% lacking any health clinic. Healthcare ministry represents a concrete expression of God's compassion for the sick and vulnerable.⁶⁸ The church is called to be a "house of healing" for the community, addressing physical and social needs alongside spiritual ones. Everyday theology teaches that medical missions are not separate from evangelism but are integral to holistic witness.⁶⁹ Partnerships with local clinics, public health campaigns, and periodic free medical checkups offer feasible entry points for churches with limited resources.

Theological interpretation of these findings reveals an incomplete appropriation of the cultural mandate across all sectors. The low engagement in healthcare, education, and livestock suggests that many churches still view these as secular or secondary to spiritual ministry. This contradicts John Frame's definition of theology as the

⁶³ Kevin Vanhoozer, Anderson, and Sleasman, *Everyday Theology*, 260.

⁶⁴ Harvie M. Conn and Manuel Ortiz, *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City & the People of God*, 239.

⁶⁵ Harvie M. Conn and Manuel Ortiz, *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City & the People of God*, 239.

⁶⁶ Njoo Tomas Wibowo, *Tinjauan Teologi Keseharian dan Implementasinya dalam Praktik Mandat Budaya di Madura Pasca Dibangunnya Jembatan Suramadu*, v.

⁶⁷ Christian Ade Maranatha and Ester Agustini Tandana. "Digital Faith Formation and Christian Religious Education Teachers' Leadership in 21st-Century Learning." *MODERATE: Journal of Religious, Education, and Social* 3, no. 1 (2025): 41-56. <https://doi.org/10.46362/moderate.v3i1.25>.

⁶⁸ Njoo Tomas Wibowo, *Tinjauan Teologi Keseharian dan Implementasinya dalam Praktik Mandat Budaya di Madura Pasca Dibangunnya Jembatan Suramadu*, v.

⁶⁹ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Charles A. Anderson, and Michael J. Sleasman, *Everyday Theology*, 262.

application of God's Word to all areas of life, without exception.⁷⁰ Vanhoozer's concept of theodramatic participation—acting as aware participants in God's work—has not yet translated into concrete action in these sectors.⁷¹ Everyday theology demands that believers discern God's activity in daily life and respond through contextually grounded action.

Several practical recommendations emerge from this study's findings and theological framework. In agriculture, churches may begin with small-scale cooperative initiatives or training programs in sustainable farming practices, including rice, corn, and salt production. For livestock, collaborative approaches involving capital owners with fair profit-sharing arrangements can overcome resource limitations. In tourism, churches can facilitate community-based and ethically grounded cultural promotion using social media and brochures. In education, informal tutoring and literacy programs offer feasible entry points before establishing formal schools. In healthcare, collaboration with local clinics and public health campaigns provides an accessible starting point for church involvement.

Several limitations and opportunities for future research must be acknowledged. The small sample size of five churches limits generalizability, but the exploratory insights remain valuable for practical theology. Future research should employ larger sample sizes and incorporate diverse qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and ethnographic observation.⁷² Interfaith dialogue with Muslim communities in Madura represents a crucial area for further investigation, given the region's majority religious context. The Suramadu Bridge's uneven development impact also requires broader socio-political analysis beyond ecclesial factors. Ultimately, the church's engagement must be situated within collaborative partnerships with government, NGOs, and community organizations.

CONCLUSION

This study affirms that everyday theology provides a praxis-oriented framework for bridging faith and daily life in post-Suramadu Madura. The findings reveal that while

⁷⁰ John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2024), 81.

⁷¹ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine*, 23.

⁷² Seth Ahmetmu Biwul. "Living Christianity in a Rapidly Changing Context: Proposals for Saving the Future from Today." *Indonesian Journal of Religious* 8, no. 2 (2025): 81-96. <https://doi.org/10.46362/ijr.v8i2.60>.

churches demonstrate strong theological understanding of culture, creation, and economic responsibility, practical engagement remains limited across agriculture, tourism, education, healthcare, and livestock. These disparities indicate a persistent sacred-secular dichotomy that contradicts the Reformed vision of Christ's sovereignty over all spheres of life as articulated by Abraham Kuyper. Everyday theology must function not merely as a conceptual paradigm but as an operational framework for ministry, requiring incremental, contextually grounded strategies that account for limited financial and institutional resources. Practical implementation can begin with small-scale agricultural training, cooperative livestock models with fair profit-sharing, ethical tourism promotion, informal tutoring, and healthcare partnerships with local clinics.

The cultural mandate is not a peripheral option but an integral aspect of the church's vocation, especially in Madura's post-Suramadu context where poverty and uneven development remain significant barriers. Effective implementation requires collaboration beyond the church itself, including partnerships with local government, non-governmental organizations, and interfaith communities in this predominantly Muslim region. By embracing everyday theology as a guiding framework, the church in Madura can embody a holistic mission in which worship, discipleship, and social engagement are inseparably united. This integration of spiritual mission and social responsibility reflects the Reformed emphasis that every sphere of life is claimed for Christ, as John Frame emphasized when he defined theology as the application of God's Word to all areas of life. Future research should explore long-term impacts of such integrated ministry approaches using larger samples and ethnographic methods to capture lived experiences more deeply.

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