

MISSIO DEI

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“WE’RE ON A MISSION FROM GOD”

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## “We’re on a Mission from God”

*Mission—from the Latin word “missio” means: to send, to dispatch, to release.*

*God—in Latin is “Dei”*

*God’s Mission—“Missio Dei” means God’s sending, God’s dispatching, God’s releasing*

**H**ow would you describe the mission of God? Why does God “send”? What does he “send”? Whom does he “send”? Where does he “send”?

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### ICON KEY



Exercises



Journaling



Forms



Bible Study

### What is God’s mission?

God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is beyond description, yet personal. The Triune God defies our imaginations, while revealing himself to us in ways he can be known. God as sovereign, creator, sustainer, redeemer, lover continues to guide the unfolding salvation story of his relationship to the world and all that is in it. This is the Good News.

Followers of Jesus Christ, students of the Scriptures, workers engaged in Christian ministry discover the heart of God’s sending throughout the Bible. Mission is in God’s character, motivated by his unfathomable love for the world. William

Dyrness writes, “The relation of God to the world is not the relation of cause to its effect. The relation is rather one of a personal Creator to his creation.”<sup>1</sup>

**“Mission’ is the act of being sent with a commission to carry out the will of the superior.”**  
—Paul DeNeui

God has been and continues to be at work in the world. The living God is a missionary God, according to John Stott, who acts to heal and reconcile all of creation to right relationships. One could say, God sent himself first, as he came to the Garden looking for Adam and Eve<sup>2</sup>, to restore their broken relationships. Then, through a call to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God sent his people, Israel, to be a blessing to all nations.<sup>3</sup> God, the Father, sent Jesus to the world to bring Good News of salvation, culminating in the ultimate sacrifice, that all may be reconciled to God, to one another, and to creation.<sup>4</sup> God, the Father and Son, sent the Spirit to continue the work of love and truth.<sup>5</sup> God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, sends the Church as ambassadors of this ministry of reconciliation.<sup>6</sup> David Bosch says, “*Missio Dei* enunciates the good news that God is a God-for-people... The *missio Dei* is God’s activity, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church may be privileged to participate.”<sup>7</sup>

**God’s mission comes before any human missions.**

Christian mission begins with, and belongs to, God. Human beings, made in the image of God,<sup>8</sup> are called to reflect God’s character and love in this world. Our ability to conceive of this whole idea of mission comes from the very nature and heart of the One who created us. Christian mission activity, which develops from a local context, grows out of God’s all-encompassing mission for the sake of the world. Paul DeNeui, director of the Center for World Christian Studies at North Park Theological Seminary, describes the starting point this way, “Mission’ is the act of being sent with a commission to carry out the will of the superior.” If Christian mission is about being sent by Jesus Christ, to carry out the will of the Father, through the power of the Holy Spirit, then it’s important for us to take the time to listen to God’s will, his heart for the world. A key component of our involvement in God’s mission is growing our ability to see the world as God sees it.

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<sup>1</sup> Dyrness, William, *Let the Earth Rejoice* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1983), 26.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 3:9

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 12:1-22

<sup>4</sup> John 3:16-17

<sup>5</sup> John 14:16, 26

<sup>6</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:16-6:2

<sup>7</sup> David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 10.

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 1:26-27



## Learning to See the World as God Sees It

How do we come to a greater understanding of who God is and what his mission is all about? Once we catch a glimpse of God's will, how do we figure out what participating in his mission looks like?



### Bible Study, Prayer

We put ourselves in God's presence and spend time in the Scriptures as learners and listeners.

The great salvation story is woven throughout the Old and New Testaments. As we read, we discover God's promises, witness the growth of relationships, and learn about successes of connection with God's heart and the tragic consequences of human failure. As we spend time in the Word, we grow deeper in our understanding of who God is, who we are, and how we are invited into his mission in this world.

**As we read Scripture,** we place ourselves in God's presence, with an attitude of humility. Through prayer, we ask the Holy Spirit to open our minds that we might know God better, open our hearts that we may love him more deeply, open our ears that we might hear his Word for us, and open our eyes that we may see ourselves and this world through the lens of his great love.



Below is a list of Bible passages which serve as a starting point for discovering God's heart for the world, and his intentions for the Church. Study them on your own, or with a group. As you read,

- Pay attention to the context in which they were written.
- Take time to reflect on the message of those who first received these words.
- Consider how God – the Father, Son and Holy Spirit – is pictured in the stories, in the relationships, in what happens and what is said.
- Ask, “How is the Good News proclaimed?”

When you are done, identify themes that connect with God's mission in the world—who is God sending and where, what is the purpose of the sending, how is God sending?



**The Law**

Genesis 1-2  
 Genesis 3  
 Genesis 12:1-11; 22:18  
 Genesis 50:1-21  
 Exodus 20:1-17  
 Exodus 40

**The Writings**

Kings 8:41-61

**Poetry**

Psalms 2  
 Psalm 8  
 Psalm 33  
 Psalm 67

**The Prophets**

Isaiah 6:1-8;  
 Isaiah 11:1-12  
 Isaiah 35:1-6  
 Isaiah 42:1-10  
 Isaiah 45:15-25  
 Isaiah 49:1-7

**The Gospels**

Matthew 3:13-17  
 Matthew 4:12-22  
 Matthew 11:1-19, 25-30  
 Matthew 25:31-46  
 Matthew 29:16-20  
 Mark 2:1-17  
 Mark 4:1-25  
 Mark 6:30-44  
 Mark 11:15-19  
 Luke 4:17-21

**The Letters**

Acts 1:6-11  
 Acts 4:32-37  
 Acts 8:26-40  
 Acts 13:1-3  
 Acts 17:1-9  
 Acts 17:22-23  
 1 Corinthians 3:1-17  
 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

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**TEXTS FROM  
 THE OLD  
 TESTAMENT**

Lev 19  
 Lev 20:22-26  
 Deuteronomy 6  
 Deuteronomy 7:6-8  
 Deuteronomy 28:1-14

2 Kings 4:8-36

Psalms 87  
 Psalm 96  
 Psalm 145

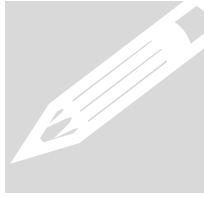
Isaiah 52:7-15  
 Isaiah 56:1-8  
 Isaiah 61:1-4  
 Daniel  
 Jonah

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**TEXTS FROM  
 THE NEW  
 TESTAMENT**

Luke 9:1-6  
 Luke 10:1-12  
 Luke 15  
 Luke 24:45-48  
 John 3:1-21  
 John 4:1-42  
 John 8:12-20  
 John 10:14-16  
 John 14  
 John 17

2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2  
 2 Timothy 2  
 Philippians 2:1-22  
 Hebrews 2:10-18  
 James 1:26-2:13  
 1 Peter 2:4-10  
 1 John 3:16-18  
 Revelation 21:1-5



### **Learning from Others Who Have Been Sent**

God has been about this mission, this sending, from the beginning of time, there are a myriad of lessons to be learned about God, his love for the world, and how others have responded to being sent. From William Carey, the “Father of Modern Missions”, to Amy Carmichael, Robert & Mary Moffat, E. Stanley Jones, Cameron Townsend, Lesslie Newbigin and Mother Teresa, we can discover what “living out” a call to God’s mission looks like. So, spend time reading missionary biographies to learn from others who have been sent. How did God’s mission grab hold of their hearts and lives, how did God lead and guide as he sent them, what joys did they experience, what mistakes did they make, what challenges did they encounter?

### **Learning from Current Events**

God is at work throughout the world. It is important for us to listen to our neighbors, read the news, watch documentaries, and allow these learning experiences to impact our hearts and minds, lead us to ask questions about causes and effects, respond in prayer. Jesus Christ is already at work, and as his followers listen to those around us, we may likely discover how to join God in his mission in neighborhoods, cities, regions, and countries around the world. Jesus Christ invites us to follow him in mission where we live, and sometimes that invitation is extended to other parts of this world.

#### **Missio Dei Resources:**

David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007).

Peterson, Roger, Gordon Aescheliman and R. Wayne Sneed, *Maximum Impact, Short-Term Mission* (Minneapolis, Minn.: STEM Press, April 2003).

Borthwick, Paul, *A Mind for Mission: Ten Ways to Build Your World Vision* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress; 1st edition, October 1, 1987).

Winter, Ralph D. and Steven C. Hawthorne, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader* (Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library Publishers, January 2009).

