



THE
Mission
of God
and You

Created, Called, and
Commissioned for Something
Bigger Than You

Lori McDaniel
THOM S. RAINER, SERIES EDITOR

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The Mission of God and You: Created, Called, and Commissioned for Something Bigger than You

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*To my grandchildren—
two who have just learned to walk,
one learning to crawl,
one who is giving first smiles,
and the others who have yet to be born—
this is for you.*

*As you grow and learn new things, always keep an open
Bible, an open map, open hands, and an open heart. For you
were created to be a part of something bigger than you!*

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Introduction

You're Part of Something Bigger than You

I knew no one who had what I wanted; in fact I did not know what I did want. But I knew that if what I had was all the Christianity there was, the thing was a fraud.

OSWALD CHAMBERS

IT WAS NOT WHAT I'D EXPECTED, but it was the jolt my soul needed.

I was sitting on a tarp-covered dirt floor in a fledgling village church in South Asia. The air was thick with the smell of curry and sweat, and the sound of worship filled the space. Each believer gathered had been challenged in a previous meeting to share the gospel with thirty people over the next month, and now they were testifying to how God had worked as they obediently (and illegally, in their nation) shared Jesus' salvation with others.¹

"I shared the gospel with eighteen people—seven became Christ followers, four want to hear more, two were baptized, and God healed a woman who couldn't walk."

"I shared the gospel with twenty-six people—four were baptized, two were healed of demon possession, and five are meeting nightly in my home for prayer."

“I shared the gospel with nineteen. . . . I shared the gospel with twenty-nine. . . . I shared the gospel, and God . . .” The chorus continued around the room until everyone had added a verse.

I’m guessing you’re not accustomed to hearing reports like these in your church. Me neither. In comfortable and predictable North American church gatherings, we sing about faith that moves mountains, and we are encouraged to share the gospel, but these believers risked it all to do so. They dared mountains to move and witnessed the landscape of eternity change for many of their families and friends.²

Astounded by their reports, I jotted down the numbers. In one month, this embryonic group of fifteen believers shared the gospel with more than three hundred people.³

As they celebrated and prayed, their words echoed those of the early church: “Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to *continue to speak your word with all boldness*, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”⁴

Their Bible-sized, audacious faith confronted my neatly packaged, cautious faith, and I wanted what they had! Their obedience seemed almost radical, but according to Scripture, it was normal Christ-follower behavior. There was just one disturbing reality—it wasn’t *my* normal. It wasn’t *my church’s* normal. I suspect it’s not *your* normal either. But why? Shouldn’t it be? Shouldn’t the overwhelming love of Christ poured into us by his Spirit compel us at all costs to align our lives and all our ambitions to participate in his mission?⁵

We need our hearts jolted. God’s glory is too great. Eternity is too real. Lostness is too vast. And the task is too urgent for us to be unbothered about this.

A Purpose for You That's Bigger than You

You are part of something bigger than you! God's mission is to make his name and his glory known in all the earth. In love, he chose you and set you apart to play a unique part in that mission.

Its purpose is immeasurable,
its story is biblical,
its message is critical,
its plan is possible,
its activity is radical,
its scope is global,
its movement is unstoppable,
its span is historical, and
its value is eternal.

These phrases that characterize the mission of God also outline the trajectory of this book. You'll discover (or perhaps rediscover) that while your life may be small—wait, let me restate that—while your life *is* small, God created you to play a part in a grand purpose. It involves you, but it isn't about you. You are part of something *for*, and only for, God's glory. God is unwaveringly passionate about his glory and committed to act for the sake of his name in all the earth. This is his mission.

God is our message. He is our motivation. Collectively, his mission is the vision of the church. Individually, his mission shapes the life ambition of every believer.

In the chapters that follow, we will unpack the centrality of God's glory, but for now, let us begin by affirming that *God is worthy* of worship and deserves and desires praise not from just a few people in the world, but “from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages.”⁶

Mission Is What the Bible Is All About

God's mission is one of the most purpose-filled biblical realities we must grasp as disciples of Christ and as leaders in the church. Yet we sometimes act as if it's optional rather than foundational to the entire Bible and essential for every follower of Jesus.

I grew up in church memorizing the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and giving pocket change to VBS missions offerings. But when missionaries came to our church to speak about people whose names I couldn't pronounce and who lived in places I couldn't pinpoint on a map, I skipped the service. I believed the Great Commission was a *good thing*; it just wasn't *my thing*.

In a 2022 Barna survey, US Christians were asked, "Have you ever heard of the Great Commission?" The responses were not encouraging. Almost two out of three (63 percent) said no. When asked to identify the Great Commission from a list of five verses, only one in three did so correctly.⁷

Perhaps this describes your church as well. The church, the agent of God's mission, is in a precarious place when its people do not understand the purpose for which it exists and dismiss themselves from having any role in it.

Many followers of Christ have a fragmented view of God's mission based on a few segments of Scripture and snippets of Bible stories. Bible scholar Christopher Wright riddled it this way:

Think of a doctrine—any doctrine between 200 and 2000 (AD). Multiply it by historic confessions. Divide by denominational variations. Add a suspicion of heresy. Subtract the doctrine you first thought of. And what are you left with? Probably just about the sum of what theology and mission have in common in the mind of your average Christian—not much.⁸

God's mission is the thread that holds together the fabric of all Scripture. Pull out that thread, and the meaning of love, peace, grace, mercy, forgiveness, and so much more all unravels. Together, let's trace this thread and see God's redemptive mission throughout the metanarrative of Scripture. It's possible that as we do, you'll find yourself thinking, *Why have I not seen the thread of God's mission before?* and together, we will conclude that "mission is what the Bible is all about."⁹

A Mindset Shift Is Essential

When my boys were young, they could turn a stick into anything they imagined—a sword to fight off dragons or a lightsaber to battle Darth Vader. To our dog, that same stick was a chew toy. To my husband, it was an annoying impediment to mowing the yard. Perspective is everything.

When God invited Moses to participate with him in delivering the Israelites from slavery, Moses initially argued with God. He reasoned that his personal inadequacies would make it impossible for the plan to succeed. God didn't validate Moses' self-assessment; instead, he helped him shift his mindset, using the stick Moses held in his hand.

Then the LORD asked him, "What is that in your hand?"

"A shepherd's staff," Moses replied.

"Throw it down on the ground," the LORD told him. So Moses threw down the staff, and it turned into a snake! Moses jumped back.

Then the LORD told him, "Reach out and grab its tail."¹⁰

The passage doesn't indicate that Moses hesitated at this point, but I'm confident he must have at least paused!

So Moses reached out and grabbed it, and it turned back into a shepherd's staff in his hand.¹¹

What shifted? Was it Moses' view of the stick? Of his own abilities? Or was it Moses' view of the one true living God?

We need a mindset shift regarding our belief in God's purpose and our part in his plan. For that to happen, I invite you to follow Moses' lead and release whatever mindset you might be holding onto about missions.

Let go of the notion that missions is only for a select, super-spiritual few.

Let go of the view that missions is outdated and irrelevant.

Let go of the concept of missions as merely a project that solves problems in the world.

Let go of the feeling that God can't use you.

Let go of the thought that missions is a department of the church.

Let go of the opinion that your church is too small, too new, too old, or too set in its ways to participate in missions.

Let go of the belief that you're too young or too old.

Let go of the myth that you can't afford it.

Let go of the idea that it's someone else's responsibility.

Let go of the impulse to hold too tightly to anything and everything that leads you to dismiss yourself or your church from this critical role in the mission of God.

As you release these things, I challenge you to remain empty-handed before God in a posture of surrender. As Romans 12:2 says, "Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think." I pray that, like Moses, you experience a mindset change concerning God and how he desires to use you in what he's doing in the world. God's mission is critical, and you have a meaningful and crucial part to play.

Jesus Started It

If the idea that you are commissioned feels daunting to you, keep in mind that you cannot mess up the story of what God is doing in the world. But you can miss out on your part in it! Stop waiting for a program or for permission. You can begin right now to reposition your heart and adjust your life. You are already doing meaningful things. But are you doing what matters most?

Dawson Trotman, founder of the Navigators, was passionate about discipleship. In a talk he gave in 1955, he said:

Christians do important jobs, but not the most important. In every Christian audience, I am sure there are men and women who have been Christians for five, ten or twenty years but who do not know of one person who is living for Jesus Christ today because of them. I am not talking about merely working for Christ, but about producing for Christ.¹²

You were created by God, called to follow Christ, and commissioned to produce disciples. When Jesus gave this commission, it wasn't a last-minute thought before he ascended into heaven. It was a mandate for all followers to participate in a mission that was already in motion.

As Jesus commissioned his disciples, the mood on the mountain was mixed. The apostle Matthew writes, “When they saw him, they worshiped him—but some of them doubted!”¹³ Yet, Jesus’ mandate to “go and make disciples of all the nations”¹⁴ was not a new idea. From the beginning, Jesus invited the disciples to participate in his mission, saying, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!”¹⁵ They were called for this. They were trained for this.

You, too, are made for this! You are commissioned as an ambassador with a message for all people and given authority to speak on behalf of the King.¹⁶

In this book, you’ll acquire the same necessary tools the disciples received from Jesus as he led them through an immersive experience of building the Kingdom. They gained knowledge, but they also learned the rhythm of tenacious obedience needed to participate in the most significant movement the world has ever known—a movement that is still happening today.

You’ll Need an Open Bible and an Open Map

As you read further, you’ll likely begin asking questions such as, “What is God’s will for my life?” or “Where does my life fit into God’s purpose?” Consider this quote that is widely attributed to a trailblazing missionary named William Carey: “To know the will of God, we need an open Bible and an open map.”¹⁷ In this book, we will open both.

You’ll expand your missional view of the Bible and your biblical view of the world.

You’ll increase your knowledge of nations and peoples and grasp the urgency of taking the gospel to the least-reached places on the earth.

You’ll traverse the globe as we consider some global facts.

You'll pull up a chair to hear the stories of a great cloud of witnesses, both past and present, and gain perspective on how God *has* worked and *is* working for the sake of his name.

You'll be challenged to lead your church in disciple-making endeavors that do not shortcut the Great Commission by aiming at anything less than proclaiming the gospel to the ends of the earth.

For Every Follower of Christ

The Great Commission isn't for a select few but for every follower of Christ. Every word of this book was written with you in mind. My aim is not to convince you to uproot and move overseas—though you may. My aim is not for you to overhaul the ministries of your church—though you might. Instead, I hope to convince you of the truth that God's mission involves every believer (including you), and to encourage you to leverage every season of your life to advance the Kingdom of God.

My prayer is that what you read will kindle a desire in you to disrupt the status quo of faith in your life and within the church. When you know there is more to the Christian life than just showing up at church every Sunday, you will no longer be content with any discipleship that falls short of reaching more lives for Christ in every part of the world.

God's mission matters. Though I write from my experience of living overseas for a short time, partnering with missionaries and indigenous workers in more than thirty countries, working at a large missions-sending organization, and joining my husband in planting a missions-minded church, I am not an expert. My love for theology, missiology, and leadership drove me to pursue a seminary degree, but that degree simply etched deeper into my heart the need to continue learning and to integrate what I've

learned into my own life as I lead, teach, and exhort others. At my core, I'm a practitioner. In my heart, I'm a catalyst. In my mind, I'm still learning.

Let's sojourn together. We are not a select few, but part of an army of Christ followers, summoned by the King and commissioned by his authority to advance his global cause. The Great Commission is not gender specific. We need both men's and women's voices to speak into critical, theological, missiological, and gospel-urgent matters. We need every believer to understand and celebrate how God has used and will continue to use all his sons and daughters to make disciples, lead in the church, and advance his Kingdom.

Is it too lofty a goal to desire that at the end of my life, and at the end of yours, we can say to God as Christ did, "I brought glory to you here on earth by completing the work you gave me to do"?¹⁸

As I write, my heart for you deeply echoes the words of the apostle Paul: "I plead with you, encourage you, and urge you to live your lives in a way that God would consider worthy. For he called you to share in his Kingdom and glory."¹⁹

Immeasurable: The Ultimate Aim of God

Life is the tale of two stories, one tiny and frail, the other eternal and enduring. The tiny one, the story of us, is as brief as the blink of an eye. Yet somehow our infatuation with our own little story—and our determination to make it as big as we possibly can—blinds us to the massive God Story that surrounds us on every side.

LOUIE GIGLIO

PURPOSE. MEANING. SIGNIFICANCE.

We crave them and attempt to create them. Our hearts chase them, and our minds dream about them. They move us, elude us, seduce us, and deceive us. At times we think we have grasped them, only to find they've slipped through our fingers.

Humanity ceaselessly strives to find purpose without considering what pastor Louie Giglio describes as the “massive God Story that surrounds us on every side.” Like attempting to assemble a 1,000-piece puzzle without ever looking at the image on the box, we maneuver the pieces strewn about the table of life, wondering if this piece fits here or that piece fits there. In times of frustration, we might even force parts together, convincing ourselves that the fit is close enough.

Not once have I attempted to assemble a puzzle without doing

three things—looking at the picture on the box, gathering the straight-edged pieces to build the frame, and looking at the image on the box again, and again, and again.

It has been said, “The two most important days of your life are the day you were born and the day you find out why.”¹ You know when you were born, but do you know why? To find the answer, many people try journaling, life coaching, or counseling. Though there’s nothing wrong with those things—I’ve done them all—they won’t help you discover why you exist and how you fit within the larger picture of God’s mission.

We often approach the Bible as a self-help book filled with motivational taglines for life, but it’s so much more. Like the straight-edged pieces of a puzzle, it frames thousands of interlocking pieces that form a comprehensive picture of who God is, what he’s doing in the world, and why we exist. The puzzling part (pun intended) is that we are often uncertain about our piece of the puzzle.

We ask, “What is God’s will for my life?” But the first question we need to ask is, “What is God’s will for God?” In other words, the answer to this question functions something like the picture on the front of a puzzle box. As we look at that bigger picture, we’ll discover that God’s vision for our lives is better than any we could dream up on our own.

Let’s take a closer look at the front of the box and allow God to align our hearts and our lives to the purpose for which he created us.

Discover God’s purpose, and you’ll find your own.

Identify Your Aim

In the 1960 NFL championship game, the Green Bay Packers blew a fourth-quarter lead and lost to the Philadelphia Eagles. When the

next season began, Coach Vince Lombardi didn't present an innovative new playbook. Instead, he went back to basics. He entered the locker room at the first practice, held up an oblong pigskin filled with air, and said to his players, "Men, this is a football." He wasn't trying to insult their intelligence or minimize their experience, but to realign their thinking, simplify the task, and clarify their purpose.

Some of us have championed the church and been "professional Christians" for a long time. When we hear familiar words such as *missions*, *glory*, *discipleship*, and *the Great Commission*, we're so familiar with the terms that the fullness of their meaning ricochets off our hearts. So it's time to take a play from Coach Lombardi and get back to the basics. We need to realign our thinking, simplify our tasks, and clarify our purpose. I say *our* because that statement includes me. After thirty-one years of leading in ministry, I confess that it's too easy even for those of us in Christian leadership to lose sight of the goal. A continual flurry of projects, plans, programs, and problems diverts our attention and muddles our vision.

We invest time and waste time all at the same time.

We do important things, but not that which matters most.

We forget that which we are saved *from* and are prone to overlook that which we are saved *for*.

No matter how long you've been a Christian, consider this: If you could choose one phrase to sum up the direction of your life, what would it be? (We need to know what we're aiming at in order to tell if we're on course.)

Let's Begin at the End

Spoiler alert: We are starting at the end. Not at the end of the book, but at the end of your life, the end of the church, the completion of all history.

Sometimes, knowing the ending of a story makes us enjoy the story more. Perhaps that's why after telling a story to children, their immediate response is, "Tell it again!" Psychologists call this the "spoiler paradox," because knowing the end of the story doesn't diminish our enjoyment. In fact, researchers found that knowing the ending helps us do three things: simplify a complex story, process critical information, and understand a profound meaning.²

In the last book of the Bible, Revelation, God pulls back the curtain on eternity and allows us to peek inside as our imaginations travel to a time that does not yet exist but is certain to come. If you read Revelation and find yourself perplexed, congratulations! You are among the ranks of theologians who have studied it and feel the same way. One theologian used a phrase from Winston Churchill to describe the book: "If ever there was a book that could be described as 'a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma,' it is the last book in the Bible, the book of Revelation."³

Revelation, which means "to make known," wasn't written to keep us sidelined in controversial end-times conversations, but to activate us to obedience as we participate with God to accomplish his end aim—all nations worshiping him.

End Aim 1: Salvation Is Global Because God Is a Missionary God

Cue the cymbals and the drumroll. The Great Commission is concluded, the church's task is complete, and God's mission on earth ends. This is the climax of history, when both those who received him and those who rejected him will bow before him and "declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."⁴

Imagine you're standing before Christ's throne, surrounded by "a vast crowd, too great to count, from *every nation*."⁵ Symphonic worship permeates the air when it's broadcast that Jesus is the

only one able to open a sealed scroll because his “blood has ransomed people for God *from every tribe and language and people and nation*.”⁶

When you read “every nation” in Scripture, don’t limit its meaning to geopolitical lines on a map that shape nearly two hundred countries. Governments are shaken, geographical boundaries shift, and names of countries change over time. The Greek words used for “nations” (*ethnē*) or “all nations” (*panta ta ethnē*) throughout the New Testament might be better understood as clusters of common cultures, rather than what we view as countries today.

This is epic! Salvation isn’t just personal—it’s global! And it flows out of the missionary character of God.

God is a missionary God whose limitless love for his creation generates a relentless pursuit of his creation. Bible scholars Andreas Köstenberger and Peter O’Brien put it this way: “The Lord of the Scriptures is a missionary God who reaches out to the lost, and sends his servants, and particularly his beloved Son, to achieve his gracious purposes of salvation.”⁷

End Aim 2: Worship Is Inevitable and the Ultimate Aim of God

Global salvation is epic, but it’s not ultimate. Eighteenth-century theologian Jonathan Edwards brilliantly said, “The great and last end of God’s works . . . is indeed but *one*; and this *one* end is most properly and comprehensively called, THE GLORY OF GOD.”⁸

God’s glory is ultimate. It existed before Creation, exists in creation, and summons a Kingdom of worshipers in the new creation. It is the supreme end aim, the picture on the front of the puzzle box.

In eternity, there will be no sun or moon for God’s glory will illumine the city.⁹

In eternity, all nations will worship before God.¹⁰

In eternity, “All mission has come to an end, and it becomes clear that mission is in fact a means to an end, the end being a *total focus* on the worship and the glory of God in our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹¹

It will require eternity and humanity in all its diversity to give the full measure of worship that the weight of God’s glory deserves. A kaleidoscope of people will forever worship in linguistic harmony saying, “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”¹²

Salvation is global, worship is inevitable, eternity is inescapable, and God’s glory is immeasurable.

God’s glory is eternal, but God’s mission is not.

God’s glory will always be, but God’s mission will end!

God Reveals His Glory to Receive Glory

A group of Muslim women entered the refugee center where I was working. Burkas covered their heads, and the traumatic experiences they’d endured covered their hearts. They gathered for simple needs—food, diapers, charging their phones, and friendship.

They sought meaning behind their experiences and were very open to hearing what the Bible had to say. With each passage of Scripture we shared, they drew a picture—for Creation, they drew a globe; for sin, they drew a broken heart. Once we got to Jesus, they drew a cross and a tomb. That’s when one Iranian woman suddenly stopped drawing.

Knowing that Muslims believe Jesus was a prophet but not God’s Son, and the Quran teaches that a man wrongly perceived to be Jesus hung on the cross,¹³ I assumed that we hit an impasse.

“Why did you stop?” I asked.

She smiled and replied, “God cannot be contained to a piece of paper. He’s much too big.”

“This is very true,” I said.

God is beyond our full understanding. At times we even question what in the world he’s doing. The answer is this: He is making his name and glory known throughout the whole world. That’s what he’s about.

God Makes His Glory Known through His Creation

We cannot downsize God into an easily explained, user-friendly version. Doing so would be like trying to count the grains of sand on earth’s 372,000 miles of seashore, trying to describe each rock that makes up the 229,731 square miles of the Himalayas, or trying to explain how light travels around the earth seven times in one second. Attempt any of these and you’ll find yourself echoing Job’s words: “I was talking about things I knew nothing about, things far too wonderful for me.”¹⁴

Intrinsic is a word theologians use to describe God’s glory.

Astronomers also use this word to define the *absolute* brightness of a star. Billions of stars fill the sky, many of them larger than the sun and millions of times farther away. Our eyes see only the *apparent* brightness of a star. Its *intrinsic* brightness, or how bright it really is, cannot be seen with the human eye.

God doesn’t create his glory. It’s who he is. He partially displays his intrinsic glory in what he creates. “For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.”¹⁵

God’s glory is immeasurable. It is too large to be quantified or contained. King Solomon built a Temple for God and wrote, “Will

God really live on earth? Why, even the highest heavens cannot contain you. How much less this Temple I have built!"¹⁶

God displays his glory through his creation because he desires to be known and worshiped by his creation.

God Makes His Glory Known to His Creation

Just as an artist paints a portrait to reflect the image of a person, we were created to reflect the image of our Creator. We are the *imago Dei*, the image of God, created for God's glory and delight. The psalmist declares, "When you give them your breath, life is created. . . . The LORD takes pleasure in all he has made!"¹⁷

God delights in making himself known to his creation. As we come to understand the fullness of his delight in us, we desire to know and delight in him. As we delight in knowing him, we glorify him. As we glorify him, he delights in us. The more we experience his delight, the more we desire to glorify him.

And so it goes.

This is not a riddle. It's a relationship.

It is the reason for our existence. In the words of the Westminster Shorter Catechism: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever." In doing so, we find that our life's joy and satisfaction are tethered to God's glory and his goodness.

God Receives Glory from His Creation

Look around. Everything created exalts the Creator!

The doxology in Psalm 148 elicits praise from creation under the branches of angelology, astronomy, zoology, marine biology, meteorology, botany, and ornithology, before it ever gets to humans. The psalmist invites everything God created to praise the Lord—the heavens, skies, angels, sun, moon, stars, clouds, vapors, ocean creatures, fire, hail, snow, wind, mountains, hills,

trees, wild animals, livestock, birds, and—this one makes me laugh—scurrying animals. Then comes the finale, when the psalmist invites kings, rulers, judges, young men, young women, old men, and children to “Praise the LORD!”

All creation displays and declares God’s glory. Yet we still find it difficult to describe God’s glory without it sounding like a riddle.

God’s glory is grand, yet its grandeur is inscrutable.

God’s glory is majestic, yet its majesty is incomprehensible.

God’s glory is made known to us, but it is unsearchable.

On this side of eternity, we will never fully comprehend God’s glory. God makes his glory known to us so we can give glory to him. He has crowned us with his glory, and yet our sin separates us from his glory.

The Making of God’s Mission

“You won’t die!”¹⁸ In a split moment, these deceptive words burrowed into the hearts of the serpent’s two listeners. Satan twisted God’s truth, dangled it in front of Adam and Eve, and they bit the bait—literally. They dismissed God’s good design and desired to make their life as big as they could dream.

They could be like God!

They could have glory for themselves.

Glory isn’t a word we often use to describe what drives our passions in life; instead, we tend to cloak our desire for glory in other ways. When our middle child was younger, he disguised his dream of becoming great as a passion for innovative thinking. He continually searched for the thing he could invent or discover. First, it was a solar-powered car, until he realized someone had already invented that technology. Then, it was the desalination

of ocean water, yet someone had already blazed that trail as well. In his final attempt, he exclaimed, “I’ll be the first to summit the highest mountain in the world!” As parents, we hated to crush his spirit, but we helped him research the story of Sir Edmund Hillary summiting Mount Everest in 1953.

He slumped in frustration and declared, “Well, there goes all my glory!” And there it was. His goal revealed. He wasn’t passionate about the environment, clean water, or mountain climbing. His ten-year-old heart desired fame, renown, and glory.

Creation and God’s mission both unfold in the first three chapters of Genesis.

Adam and Eve’s rebellion resulted in utter destruction. Their life trajectory changed—and with it, the trajectory of all humanity. The *imago Dei* (image of God) needs the *missio Dei* (mission of God), or literally, “the sending of God.”

God met the sin of Adam and Eve with condemnation, but also with a swift proclamation of future salvation. Their curse was laced with what theologians call the “first gospel” (from the Latin *protoevangelium* = *proto* [“first”] + *evangel* [“good news” or “gospel”]). In other words, the announcement of condemnation contained a message of future redemption.

God made two key promises in Genesis 3:15: (1) Satan would wound the offspring of the woman; but (2) this offspring (the Messiah) would ultimately crush Satan. The ruler of creation would redeem his creation for his own renown and glory.

Aim Small, Miss Small

In this chapter, I long to capture a glimmer of God’s glory. For if the greatness of God never causes us to inhale his majesty, we will never move our feet to exhale his message. Theologian Keith

Whitfield puts it this way: “We will not be able to recover a vision and passion for missions until we recover the grandeur that God made us to know and worship him and to make him known throughout the whole earth.”¹⁹

God’s revelation of himself to us isn’t only an invitation to know him but to join him in making him known. God revealed his glory to Isaiah as seraphim exclaimed, “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Heaven’s Armies! The whole earth is filled with his glory!”²⁰

Experiencing God caused Isaiah to recognize the extent of his sinfulness, to which he responded, “It’s all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man.”²¹ After forgiving Isaiah, the Lord issued an invitation in the form of a question: “Whom should I send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for us?” And Isaiah demonstrated his willingness to make God known, saying, “Here I am. Send me.”²²

God is filling the earth with his glory, and he invites his creation to join in his global mission. When we align our lives with what God is aiming at, we will declare with Isaiah, “Your name and renown are the desire of our hearts.”²³

Benjamin Martin, a character played by Mel Gibson in the movie *The Patriot*, rallied two of his young sons to ambush British soldiers in revenge of his son’s death. Hiding behind the camouflage of trees, he said, “Boys, do you remember what I taught you?” Shaking with fear, they held their rifles and replied, “Aim small, miss small.” In other words, if we aren’t aiming at the bull’s-eye, we’re apt to miss the target altogether. God’s glory in all the earth is the epicenter at which we’re to aim. Why? Because God’s glory in all the earth is God’s ultimate aim.

God’s mission of making his glory known to all nations shouldn’t be a footnote at the end of a church’s vision statement.

It *is* the vision statement. God's mission defines not only the lives of those who live cross-culturally, but also the daily life of every Christ follower.

Since this is our aim, let us assess rightly how well our churches and our lives align with it. Are we leading our churches and making disciples to see God's glory realized in all the earth? Or are we aiming at peripheral activities and ministries that generate busyness but miss the target?

Let's realign with God's Word, his love for the world, and the global work he is doing for his glory.