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THE EMANATION OF GOD'S MISSION IN GENESIS 3

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## THE EMANATION OF GOD'S MISSION IN GENESIS 3

### Introduction

The *missio Dei* is a subject that has been heavily examined, reviewed, and debated. Within an analysis of the *missio Dei*, its emanation is something that may be interpreted in varying ways.<sup>1</sup> A belief of when the mission of God began is something that heavily alters the lens through which one views both missiology and theology. Kirsten Kim states the importance of properly grasping theological and missiological truths in the following statement: “Theology of mission is therefore concerned with the relationship of truth and proclamation, gospel and society, salvation and history . . . Word and world, revelation and theologies.”<sup>2</sup> The two primary times theologians believe God’s mission was begun was in the creation account of Genesis 1 and the fall of mankind in Genesis 3. Within this paper, both views will be examined in order to most accurately embrace what may be deduced as the most accurate time that God’s mission began.

An analysis of the emanation of the mission of God is vital for understanding how one should function within their society.<sup>3</sup> The purpose of this paper is to explicate the emanation of God’s mission from Genesis 3 by defining *mission*, analyzing Christopher Wright’s opposing

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Barth, “Die Theologie and die Mission in der Gegenwart,” *Zwischen den Zeiten* 10, no. 3 (1932): 189–215.

<sup>2</sup> Kirsten Kim, “Mission Studies in Britain and Ireland: Introduction to a World-Wide Web,” *British Journal of Theological Education* 11 (2000): 76.

<sup>3</sup> Research in the history of mission is a prerequisite for understanding the plurality of society according to Tormod Engelsen, Ernst Harbakk, Rolv Olsen and Thor Strandaaes, *Mission to the World: Communicating the Gospel in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Oxford: Regnum, 2008), 411.

view of the emanation of God's mission, and to give both biblical and literary support of the emanation of God's mission in Genesis 3.

### **Definition of Mission**

One's definition of *mission* may significantly determine when *mission* began. At the outset of seeking to develop a definition of *mission*, David Bosch teaches of an important aspect of embarking on such an intricate journey; we must never delineate *mission* too sharply and too self-confidently.<sup>4</sup> Bosch concludes that *mission* is ultimately undefinable as it should never be incarcerated in the predilections of man's exiguous confines. Andreas Köstenberger and Peter O'Brien take a similar approach while addressing the definition of *mission*.<sup>5</sup> John Stott communicates that at the outset of his work, he does not define *mission* due to the Bible not defining it. Köstenberger and O'Brien refer to Stott in agreement as they write of a definition of *mission*.<sup>6</sup>

While *mission* is ultimately an undefinable word according the theologians mentioned above, a description of what it is without incarcerating it must be attempted. As Stott begins the first chapter of *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, he finds it crucial to acknowledge the contemporary polarization of the biblical definition of *mission*. The polarization is bifurcated between a traditional view that *mission* is evangelism with a strong emphasis upon verbal proclamation and the standard ecumenical view of *mission* being a quest for social harmony with an inclusion of racial and humanization development, as well as intellectual honesty and

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<sup>4</sup> David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Missions* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), 9.

<sup>5</sup> Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2001), 21.

integrity.<sup>7</sup>

While theologians such as David Bosch, Andreas Köstenberger, Peter O'Brien, and John Stott guard *mission* with great meticulousness, Christopher Wright writes of his definition of *mission* as the antithesis to the punctiliously guarded definition. Wright uses *mission* as a much more broad word to represent anything that has to do with making God known.<sup>8</sup> The concept of everything being mission is a dangerous notion because “if everything is mission then nothing is mission.”<sup>9</sup> Wright’s definition of *mission* falls under the rubric of John Piper’s *Desiring God* with the worldview that followers of Christ should be “Christian hedonists” since God’s purpose is to bring himself glory.<sup>10</sup>

While contemporary polarization of the definition of *mission* is extant, it must be realized in order to see why an opposing stance of the emanation of God’s mission exists. This paper will not seek to incarcerate *mission* within the confines of cramped colloquy, but will also not solely force the reader to interpret context in order to point the reader to a proper understanding of *mission*. A middle-ground must be embraced between too confining of a definition, and too lose of a demarcation. Therefore, as the word *mission* is used throughout this paper, it will be used as a meaning of “sending” since “. . . it is the central biblical theme describing the purpose of God’s action in human history, with God’s people (now the church) being the primary agents of God’s

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> John R. W. Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2009), 146–153.

<sup>8</sup> Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2006), 23.

<sup>9</sup> Stephen Neill, *Creative Tension* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1959), 81.

<sup>10</sup> John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* (Sisters: Multnomah, 2003). Later in this paper, the concept that God’s purpose in creation was to bring himself glory will be examined.

missionary action.”<sup>11</sup> In order to holistically communicate the emanation of God’s mission in Genesis 3, the opposing view must be examined.

### **Opposing View**

Christopher Wright has written one of the leading texts about the *missio Dei*, simply entitled *The Mission of God*. Within Wright’s text, he expresses his belief that God’s mission did not begin in Genesis 3 as this paper is seeking to communicate, but Wright expresses his opinion that God’s mission began in Genesis 1. Wright expresses this belief through his unique verbiage and by noting the grand narrative: *creation, fall, redemption, and future hope*. In the process of expressing his belief of God’s mission beginning in Genesis 1, he contradicts himself in the process of communicating his belief.<sup>12</sup>

### **Unique Verbiage**

At the introduction of his text, Wright writes of the Bible by stating that *mission* is simply “what it’s all about” because the mission of God, according to Wright, began in Genesis 1.<sup>13</sup> Another example of Wright’s verbiage expressing his belief that the *missio Dei* began in Genesis 1 is when he speaks of the phrase “. . . the missional basis of Bible” as having only one phrase that could be turned the other way: “. . . the biblical basis of mission.”<sup>14</sup> The phrase, “missional basis of the Bible” is only completely true if the entirety of the Bible contains the *mission of God*. Therefore, the mission of God, according to Wright, emanated in Genesis 1.

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<sup>11</sup> This definition is based on D. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 4–5, 11–12.

<sup>12</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 64.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

### Self-Contradiction

Wright contradicts himself within his argument. On one hand, he bases his argument on the four-point narrative of the Bible to explain that systematically moving through the Bible is the way to develop a proper hermeneutic of the mission of God. On the other hand, he goes out of his way to explicate Richard Bauckham's explanation that one should not read the Bible like a conventional novel with a single story-line, but should instead read it as a collection of many different narratives.<sup>15</sup> Wright's process of developing a biblical hermeneutic of the mission of God beginning of Genesis 1 because it is the first part of the story and then expressing it is irresponsible to try to read the Bible as a conventional novel is inconsistent.

Another way Wright contradicts himself within his text is when he writes of inadequate proof-texting while explaining how to search the Bible with a proper missional hermeneutic. While he writes of the danger of proof-texting by using the Bible to ratify one's preconception, he says that proof-texting turns the Bible ". . . into a mine from which we extract our gems— 'missionary texts.'"<sup>16</sup> Despite accurately explaining the danger of proof-texting, he falls into the proverbial mine as he searches for gems to prove his point that God's mission began in Genesis 1. Two examples of this include when he teaches of the heavenly bodies to the nations in Deuteronomy 4:19 and the complementary roles of man and woman in Genesis 1–2.

When Wright writes of Deuteronomy 4:19, he expresses his belief that the text is not an inference to God assigning the heavenly bodies to the nations for them to worship.<sup>17</sup> Instead,

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 36–37.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 378.

Wright infers that Deuteronomy 4:19 points back to Genesis 1 where God's mission began.

While Wright is correct in his reference that Deuteronomy 4:19 and Genesis 1 both refer to God creating the heavenly bodies for the benefit of the whole human race, he simply extracts a meaning of two texts and ties them to his preconception of God's mission emanating in Genesis 1.<sup>18</sup>

A second example of Wright's proof-texting is when he explains his stance of the complementary roles of man and woman. While he accurately and contextually defends complementarity, he unnecessarily attributes the complementarian roles of man and woman to the mission of God in Genesis 1. Wright ties complementarity to God's mission in Genesis 1–2 by noting that humanity was originally created “. . . for a task that requires relational cooperation.”<sup>19</sup>

### **Biblical Support**

As the definition of *mission* has been examined, and Christopher Wright's stance of God's mission emanating in Genesis 1 has been reviewed, biblical support of the emanation of God's mission in Genesis 3 must also come to the forefront. Within this section, an exegetical perspective of Genesis 1:1–3:7 will be shown, an analysis of the specific time God's mission began will take place, and an answer to the following question will be given: “Was creation the beginning of mission”?

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<sup>18</sup> Wright has consistently allowed proof-texting of Deut 4:19 and Gen 1 together. He also mentions this stance in a commentary he writes on Deuteronomy. Christopher J. H. Wright, *Deuteronomy*, New International Bible Commentary (Peabody: Hendrickson; Carlisle, 1996).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 428.

## Exegetical Analysis of Genesis 1–3

### *Genesis 1:1–31*

Genesis 1:1 is the beginning of the Bible and documents the beginning of creation. According to Christopher Wright, this verse is the emanation of the *missio Dei*. The word translated as “created,” בָּרָא, is in the qal stem.<sup>20</sup> The qal stem of the Hebrew language is only used with reference to God and his divine work.<sup>21</sup> God created the world *ex nihilo*. The author of Hebrews writes, “By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible” (Heb 11:3). The Psalmist writes, “For he commanded, and they were created” (Ps 148:5).

Throughout this first chapter of the Bible, the word “day” is used. יוֹם, meaning “day,” is used throughout to refer to a twenty-four-hour period of time.<sup>22</sup> During this creation account, time was created by God. There is no mention of millennia passing between the seven days of Genesis 1:1–2:3. In six literal days, the creation of the world took place.

During this period of time, man did not evolve from apes. Apes and man were both created on the sixth day. There is no time for evolution to have occurred. Therefore, no deistic evolution could have ever occurred.

On the first day, God created the earth, and divided light from darkness (Gen 1:3–5). On the second day, God separated the water from the air (Gen 1:6–8). The third day was when God created the land and plants (Gen 1:9–13). On the fourth day, God created the stellar heaven of the stars and sun (Gen 1:14–19). The fifth day was when fish and birds were created (Gen 1:20–

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<sup>20</sup> Francis Brown, S. R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), s.v. “בָּרָא.”

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

23). On the sixth day, land animals and man were created (Gen 1:24–31).

### ***Genesis 2:1–25***

As this paper is seeking to defend the stance of God’s mission beginning in Genesis 3, and arguing against the belief of God’s mission emanating in Genesis 1, it is necessary for the sake of embracing a proper context to examine Genesis 2. This chapter is split into two sections: the first three verses explicate the seventh day of creation, and the remainder of the chapter focuses on the creation of man and woman.

On the seventh day, the heavens and the earth were finished, plus the host of them, and God rested. Verse 3 indicates God “blessed” the day and he made the day “holy.” Linguistically, much can be learned particularly from the latter portion of verse 3. The day of rest was doubly set apart because of the use of the “pl” stem and the declarative nature of the verb *בָּרַךְ*, meaning God declaratively made the day holy.<sup>23</sup> The seventh day is the only day that is holy. What sets apart this day is that it signifies God completed his creation, he rested from his work, and blessed the day.

Verses 4–25 are not a second account of creation.<sup>24</sup> The only creation account is in Genesis 1. In Genesis 1:26 the Triune God says man is created in *their* own image. Genesis 2:4–25 give greater detail to the creation of man. In verse 5, it gives greater detail to the sixth day.

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<sup>22</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis, vol. 1*. (Waco: Word Publishers, 1987), 7.

<sup>23</sup> Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vol. 1 (Boston: Brill, 2001), s.v., *בָּרַךְ*.

<sup>24</sup> The greater detail given in Genesis 2:4–25 is dependent upon the foundation of information laid in Genesis 1:1–2:3. This information is built atop the previous account in order to assist the reader in understanding what God did with greater clarity according to Thomas L. Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 137.

Although Genesis 1:26 tells what God did as he created man, it is not until Genesis 2:7 that one may learn how God created man: “then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground . . .” Job elaborates on this truth when he states, “Your hands fashioned and made me . . .” (Job 10:8). Genesis 3:19 refers to the way God created man as it referenced the curse of death due to sin, “. . . till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken . . .” (Gen 3:19).

The latter portion of Genesis 2:7 speaks of how God actually made man come to life: “. . . and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.” This anthropomorphic action of the Lord transitioned Adam from a mere physical form to a living man. It is at this moment that man came into being.<sup>25</sup> This is the moment blood started pumping, oxygen started flowing, and limbs started moving. Genesis 7:21 communicates how God “breathed life” into animals as well. Man, however, is the only being which God breathed life into his own image.

Genesis 2:8–14 details God’s creation of the garden in Eden and the rivers that flow from its heart. Genesis 2:15 is a key verse in realizing that God’s mission had still not begun to this point. Genesis 2:15 is the verse where God gave man a vocation: “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.” In this verse, God did not put man into the garden to tell people of the saving grace of God or to journey on a quest for social harmony. It is evident by Adam’s job in Genesis 2:15 that God’s mission was non-existent. Man was simply to engage in the noble act of working.

In Genesis 2:16–17, God created a test for man to see if loyalty and love would show prevalent, or if selfishness and jealousy would reign. God told man to not eat of the tree of the

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<sup>25</sup> John E. Hartley, *Genesis: New International Biblical Commentary* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2000), 57.

knowledge of good and evil, and spoke of the consequence of death if man disobeyed. In verses 18–20 of the second chapter, it details how God made animals and man named them.

In Genesis 2:21–23, God put Adam to sleep, took bone from his side and flesh from him in order to make woman. Verse 24 of chapter 2 establishes the foundation for marriage and sexual behavior. Not only was man created on the sixth day, but marriage was also created at that time.

Genesis 2:25 documents Adam’s and Eve’s shamelessness. Their thoughts were pure and glorifying to God. Hubris was non-existent. Perversity did not touch their thoughts. There was no such thing as sin, and that resulted in a lack of reasoning to be ashamed when naked. God’s mission had still not begun because everything was perfect. Just as the garden in Heaven, will be perfect paradise (Rev 22), all was perfect and pure through the end of the second chapter of Genesis.

### ***Genesis 3:1–7***

The third chapter of Genesis is the section of the Bible where both sin and God’s mission entered the world. Despite this being the case, the words “mission,” nor “sin,” nor the word “fall” are found within this chapter.<sup>26</sup> Despite none of these words being written in this chapter, it is the moment when sin and God’s mission entered the world. The Apostle Paul reminds his readers that “just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned” (Rom 5:12). In a more succinct manner, Paul writes “For as in Adam, all die . . .” (1 Cor 15:22).

The monumentality of this incident cannot be overstated. Until this moment in the history

of the world, “God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Gen 1:31). Throughout the first two chapters, all was “very good.” The goodness being communicated by the Lord here signify two things for mankind: God’s work is good as the perfect and untainted will of God, but it is good because God looked at it and declared its goodness.<sup>27</sup>

God’s mission had not yet begun due to all being “very good.” If sin had not entered mankind as it did in the third chapter, nothing bad would ever happen because God said everything was “very good.” Sadly, however, sin did enter the world. Now, instead of everything being “very good,” it is very bad. It is because of sin that anxiety takes place, lies flow from peoples’ mouths, hatred spews from the depths of hearts, alcoholism controls peoples’ lives, divorce ruins families, depradation haunts, and dereliction stalks.

Genesis 3 may possibly be the most important chapter in the Bible. It is at this moment in history that God’s mission emanated. It is because of the events in this chapter that Jesus had to come to earth to die for the sins of man.

In Genesis 3:1, Satan the tempter enters the story. He overtakes the body of a “יְהוֹנָדָשׁ.” The word can be translated as either “serpent” or “dragon.”<sup>28</sup> The book of Revelation refers to Satan as “. . . the great dragon. . .” (Rev 12:9) and “. . . the ancient serpent. . .” (Rev 20:2).<sup>29</sup> There is one purpose for Satan to enter the story; he wants to talk Adam and Eve into disobeying God.

Satan, from the middle of verse 1 through verse 5, utilizes a strategy of lying in order to

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<sup>26</sup> Celia B. Sinclair, *Genesis* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1999), 14.

<sup>27</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Interpretation of Genesis 1–3* (London: Camelot Press Limited, 1959) 32.

<sup>28</sup> Francis Brown, S. R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, *Brown-Driver-Briggs*, s.v., יְהוֹנָדָשׁ.

accomplish his goal of destroying God's creation. Jesus referred to Satan as “. . . the father of lies” (Jn 8:44). Satan had already taken one third of the angels with him, and decided to target man as his next target of those who would disobey God (Rev 12).

As Satan sees Adam and Eve, it is the first time he sees a being that can procreate. This is his first opportunity to tempt someone who can pass their seed of disobedience to someone else. A strategy of Satan's lying is that he “. . . disguises himself as an angel of light” (2 Cor 11:14). Beginning in Genesis 3, and to the present day, Satan tries to make God appear untrustworthy, and the Bible is therefore untrustworthy. With Eve, Satan essentially talks her into doubting God before she gives into the lie and commits the first sin.

Before examining what Satan says to Eve, one must ponder why Satan approaches Eve instead of Adam. The New Testament refers to woman as “the weaker vessel” (1 Pet 3:7). Satan may have approached Eve because she was weaker.

Satan asks Eve a seemingly benign question: “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of any tree in the garden’ ” (Gen 1:3)? This is the first question in the Bible. Before this moment, the world had no dilemmas. Dilemmas do not come from God, but from Satan the deceiver. Instead of simply quoting what God said, Satan misrepresents God's words.

In verses 2–3, Eve replies, “We may eat of the fruit of the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’ ” It was at this moment that Eve begins to give in to Satan. She does not conduct an investigation about to whom she was speaking. She simply allows a serpent she has never seen to change the way she thinks about God. As she speaks to Satan, she omits the word “every.” “And

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<sup>29</sup> The LXX used the word “φίς” to describe the serpent or dragon Satan overtook. This same word is used to describe Satan in Rev 12:9; 20:2.

the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat . . .’ (Gen 2:16–17). Eve’s omission of “every” is a sign that she is losing sight of God.

In verses 4–5, Satan communicates to Eve that she will not die, and she will become like God. Satan claims that God is flawed, restrictive, and selfish. Satan positions himself to look like the one who is not flawed, releases people from the bondage and boredom of God, and has Eve’s best interest at heart. He does the same thing today with every human being.

In verse 6, both Adam and Eve give into temptation and sin against God as Eve approaches the forbidden tree, “. . . took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate” (Gen 3:6). As was previously mentioned, the monumentality of this moment cannot be overstated.

The first thing felt by Adam and Eve after sinning is shame. “Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths” (Gen 3:7). In Genesis 2:25, Adam and Eve are not ashamed. Once sin creeps into their lives and the lives of all mankind, wickedness and evil cause them embarrassment, so they cover themselves.

### Specificity of Mission Emanation

The specific moment God’s mission begins is in the latter half of Genesis 3:6 as Eve sees the tree where, “. . . she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.” It is at this moment when God’s “very good” creation becomes tainted forevermore.

Within the narrative of Genesis 3:1–24, the climax is verses 6–8. As opposed to the

preceding verses, Moses writes with great brevity. The fatal steps taken by Adam and Eve are described in eleven *waw*-consecutive clauses that assist in communicating the mercurial nature of the action—“she saw,” “she took,” she gave . . . .”<sup>30</sup> As the crescendo begins at the beginning of verse 6 when “she saw,” it culminates in the emanation of God’s mission when, “she ate.”

At the moment the *missio Dei* begins, a battle of man ensues between allowing God to reign or man removing God. Actions hitherto characteristic of the creator are now ascribed to the woman.<sup>31</sup> Eve “saw that the tree was good,” clearly mimicking the theme of Genesis 1, “God saw . . . that it was good.” In Genesis 2, the Lord takes the man and the rib (Gen 2:15, 21—23); in Genesis 3:6, the woman takes the fruit. Antecedently, God makes all that man needed (Gen 1:7, 11, 26, 31; 2:18); in Genesis 3:8, Adam and Eve make clothing for themselves.

Before the moment Eve gave into her temptation, the mission of God was nonexistent. Before this moment, Jesus was—and always has been—a member of the Trinity, but it was not necessary for Jesus to become incarnate to pay the price for sin by dying on the cross. As the first sin occurred, the plan of God to send his son was put into place. In order to clarify the stance of the mission of God beginning in Genesis 3, as opposed to during the creation account, the following question must be asked: “Was creation the beginning of God’s mission?”

Was creation the beginning of God’s mission?

Succinctly, the answer to this question is “no.” The reason one may think creation is the beginning of God’s mission is because the creation account involves actions from God himself. The belief that God’s mission began during creation draws upon an assumption that everything

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<sup>30</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis*, 75.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

God does is mission. An example of this belief is noted by Kathleen A. Cahalan: “God’s mission is to bring all creation into loving communion and relationship with the divine mystery, its origin . . . reaching out to draw all creation into this life of divine communion.”<sup>32</sup> As was previously quoted in this paper, “if everything is mission then nothing is mission.”<sup>33</sup> A key book that defends the belief of God’s mission emanating in Genesis 1, Wright’s *The Mission of God*, has been examined at length. While asking if creation was the beginning of God’s mission, the purpose of God creating man must be briefly addressed. Two perspectives may be perceived when examining God’s purpose of creation: God created man to bring himself glory, and God created man to give more of himself.

### ***God Bringing Himself Glory***

Why did God create man? One opinion is that God went through such an intricate process to create man because it was his desire. The reason he desired to create the world was to bring himself glory.<sup>34</sup> The Apostle John wrote, “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” (Rev 4:11). In Isaiah 43:10, the Lord indicated his purpose in creating the world “. . . that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he.” God created in order to be glorified.

### ***God Giving More of Himself***

A different perspective as to why God created man is so that he can give more of himself.

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<sup>32</sup> Kathleen A. Cahalan, *Introducing the Practice of Ministry* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2010), 2.

<sup>33</sup> Stephen Neill, *Creative Tension*, 81.

<sup>34</sup> John Piper, *The Pleasures of God* (Sisters: Multnomah, 2000), 27.

It is true that God's desire is to be glorified: "Jesus answered, 'If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, 'He is our God' " (Jn 8:54).

Although God's desire is to be glorified, it is improper to deduce that God glorified himself in creation, and therefore mission began when he created the earth, divided light from darkness, separated the water from the air, land and plants, stars and the sun, fish and birds, as well as animals and man.

From a theological perspective, mankind implicitly denies God's aseity. This means God does not need man. God is "of himself." Before creation, God was not suffering with eternal boredom in Heaven. God did not need someone to respond to his δόξα. Stating that God's purpose in creating the world, including man, was to glorify himself, is to essentially perceive God as an arrogant craver of himself. This makes understanding the image of God, in which man was created, that much more difficult. Since God is omniscient, and man is far from such a title, God could be vainglorious and his creation could not change that in any way. Conversely, his creation could consider this motive abhorrent humanly but allowable in God's existence. This, however, is not the case. Mankind does not honor arrogant cravers of self while intentionally being moralistic. Why? The reason is because one of the greatest characteristics possessed by a human being is selflessness even in moments of great personal achievement. One must hesitate before allowing God to be a vainglorious arrogant craver of self just because he is deserving. Throughout the Bible, God is not a taker, but a giver. God the Father gave his son (Jn 3:16) and the Holy Spirit (Lk 11:13), and God the son gave his life (Rom 5:8). God did not create the world as an act for himself, but as a selfless act to share of himself with others. With this understanding, God's mission did not begin in creation, but when it became necessary to give his son after Genesis 3:6. The actions of God are so selfless that "[16]The Spirit himself bears

witness with our spirit that we are [17] . . . heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him” (Rom 8:16–17). After examining the concept of God’s mission emanating at the creation account and extrapolating what the Bible teaches of the events in Genesis 1–3, literary support of the emanation of God’s mission in Genesis 3 must also be perceived.

### **Literary Support**

The Bible is the most important text to prove any theological stance, including when God’s mission began. The Bible needs no assistance by other books in order to prove its relevance or clarity. One must be careful to utilize the Bible in order to develop theological stances instead of books written about what the Bible says. The purpose of explicating literary support for defending a theological stance is not to build a belief, but to support it. Literary support is prevalent to support the biblical belief of God’s mission emanating in Genesis 3.

Within the literary support of God’s mission emanating in Genesis 3, scholars have written extensively to teach of the emanation of God’s mission in Genesis 3. This teaching has resulted in the following key aspects throughout literature to teach of this timing of the mission of God: Creator—role of creation, both an individual and institutional mission, the premise that mission precedes theology, and the logicity of mission.

#### **Creator—Role of Creation**

From a literary perspective, the belief of God’s mission emanating in Genesis 3 may be seen when examining the writings of scholars pertaining to God the Creator. One must be diligent to note the difference between the Creator and creation. God is the Creator; creation is that which

God made in six days.

Andrew Kirk implicitly writes of the emanation of the mission of God in Genesis 3 when noting the role God the Creator gave to God's creation. Christianity is not a religion that worships nature despite holding nature in high esteem.<sup>35</sup> Christianity's view of the natural world stems from passages such as: "The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein" (Ps 24:1); "The heavens are yours; the earth also is yours; the world and all that is in it, you have founded them" (Ps 89:11).

Within Kirk's writing, he details man's sole role prior to Genesis 3. The role at that time was not to live as sent vessels, but to "subdue" and "have dominion over." It may be argued against Kirk that man was *sent* to subdue and rule, but within the context of Kirk's writing, he states this for the purpose of communicating a lack of mission at this time in history.

Prior to the emanation of God's mission, the biblical basis of how God developed the idea of the existence of the universe may be biblically clarified by noting that God wills the existence of the universe. God imagined the universe, turned his thoughts into words, and everything came into being (Ps 104; 33:6). Creation rests upon the power of God as he sustains all things.<sup>36</sup> If God withdrew this for even a slight moment, all would disappear, as it were, into a black hole (Ps 104:27–30). The reason for creation, including the creation of man, is to express the "greatness, the power, the glory, the splendour and the majesty" of God: "O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures"

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<sup>35</sup> J. Andrew Kirk, *What is Mission? Theological Explorations* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 175.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

(Ps 104:24).<sup>37</sup>

Kirk notes two observations about creation and man's responsibility: First, humanity is responsible to control and bring order to nature.<sup>38</sup> Mankind is of a different order than the rest of creation (Ps 8:5–6). The Bible never mentions equality or sacredness of all objects, nor does it mention an indissoluble whole united together. It teaches of the genus *homo sapiens* as being different than all others in creation.<sup>39</sup> Roger Scruton, the philosopher, writes of the “. . . enormous gulf in the world of organisms: the gulf between us and the rest.”<sup>40</sup> He goes on to give specificity to the features of this distinction: “We have capacities that we do not attribute to animals, and which utterly transform all the ways in which we superficially resemble them. Two in particular deserve a commentary: rationality and self-consciousness.”<sup>41</sup>

Second, Kirk notes another observation about creation and man's responsibility by clarifying that Genesis 1 is not all the Bible says about creation.<sup>42</sup> “Subdue” and “have dominion over” are qualified by two verbs: “to till” (הֶאָרַם) and “to keep” (שָׁמַר) (Gen 2:15). It is from this biblical basis that in a Christian framework, caring for the earth is neither a pantheistic belief that all are part of the same stream of the circle of life, nor with a holistic perspective that affirms equality of worth to all living matter, nor on a pragmatic belief in the supreme value of

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<sup>37</sup> Gustavo Gutierrez, *We Drink from Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2003), 92.

<sup>38</sup> J. Andrew Kirk, *What is Mission*, 176.

<sup>39</sup> The only beings to rank above man are angels. In some ways, angels rank higher than man (Ps 8:4–5). Angels are stronger on earth, more knowledgeable, and can travel more quickly than man. Inversely, man ranks higher than angels in other ways. Every human being who follows Christ is positionally superior to angels, and this is why Christians have guardian angels (Heb 1:14). Furthermore, through sanctification, human beings who place their faith in Jesus Christ will be physically superior to angels.

<sup>40</sup> Roger Scruton, *Modern Philosophy: An Introduction and Survey* (New York: Penguin, 1996), 223.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 224–225.

survival.<sup>43</sup> Because creation belongs to God, it comes to mankind as a bequest.

Kirk's extrapolation of the role of man in the creation account does not once explain or infer Genesis 1–2 involving the mission of God. Kirk writes of God's entrustment of the earth (Gen 1:29), but mentions nothing of man being sent. While man is entrusted with a responsibility of bringing God glory in subduing and ruling over creation, this does not mean any "sending" has yet taken place. Kirk's literary work examining "What is mission?" implicitly notes the creation account of Genesis 1–2 as not involving the mission of God. Furthermore, Kirk's work notes the emanation of God's mission, particularly institutionally, in Genesis 3 by explaining how the church in mission has to be prepared to exert an internal discipline to confront and overcome sin.<sup>44</sup> As Kirk implies mission had not yet begun in Genesis 1–2, but mission had begun once sin took place, his literary work supports the belief of God's mission emanating in Genesis 3. Another example in literature supporting the emanation of the mission of God in Genesis 3 is in reference to an intertwining perspective between the individual and institutional mission.

#### Individual and Institutional Mission

David Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer implicitly write of the emanation of the mission of God in Genesis 3 within their text, *MissionShift: Global Issues in the Third Millennium*.<sup>45</sup> As a part of their context of implicitly writing about the emanation of God in Genesis 3, Hesselgrave and Stetzer write of the individual and institutional mission as being unified, and not bifurcated.

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<sup>42</sup> J. Andrew Kirk, *What is Mission*, 176.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

Hesselgrave and Stetzer examine a literary debate between Charles Van Engen and Enoch Wan.<sup>46</sup> Van Engen draws a distinction between the “institutional dimension” of mission and the “individual dimension” of mission. Wan criticizes Van Engen for splitting individual and institutional mission. Hesselgrave and Stetzer begin examining the emanation of the *missio Dei* when examining the debate between Wan and Van Engen.

Hesselgrave and Stetzer elaborate on Wan’s criticism of Van Engen by choosing to use the terms “personal” and “corporate” instead of “individual” and “institutional,” respectively. Hesselgrave and Stetzer argue that the concept of bifurcating personal and corporate mission is reductionistic when viewed from the biblical perspective of the Christian calling.<sup>47</sup> Hesselgrave and Stetzer do not seek to resort to western individualism as shaped by enlightened modernity, but they seek to emphasize how the personal and corporate mission of God are intertwined.

The church is the sign, the foretaste, and instrument of God’s mission.<sup>48</sup> Despite this being the case, an ecclesiocentric mission of God cannot be separated from the personal mission of God. It may be tempting to overcorrect leaning toward an ecclesiocentric mission and place too little emphasis on corporate calling, corporate discipleship, and corporate apostolate. “Beginning with the basic liturgical fact that one cannot baptize oneself, the personal and the corporate are inseparable.”<sup>49</sup> This liturgical truth serves as sufficient practical evidence to avoid even attempting to form an argument to bifurcate personal and corporate aspects of God’s mission.

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<sup>45</sup> David Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer, *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 54.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 133.

Hesselgrave and Rommen clarify their implication of God's mission emanating in Genesis 3 when they state the following: “. . . the *missio Dei* is God's sending of the Son, the sending of the Spirit by the Father and the Son, resulting in the sending of the Church by the triune God.”<sup>50</sup> As the authors have stated their perspective of what is the mission of God, it is not possible for said mission to have emanated in Genesis 1–2 because it was not necessary for Jesus to have come until the events of Genesis 3:6 took place. Furthermore, according to Hesselgrave and Rommen, the mission of God must have emanated prior to the beginning of the church. Therefore, the only logical time the mission of God could have taken place would have been at the time Eve ate of the fruit in Genesis 3:6.

#### Theology Precedes Mission

Writings from J. Andrew Kirk, David Hesselgrave, and Ed Stetzer have combined to explicate literary support for defending a theological stance of the mission of God emanating in Genesis 3. Vidar Leif Haanes also contributes to the same literary support. Haanes' contribution to this stance of the mission of God emanating in Genesis 3 comes from his debate that mission precedes theology.

Haanes quotes Martin Kähler when asking if theology or mission came first: “Mission is the mother of theology.”<sup>51</sup> In this question, similar to debating whether the chicken or the egg came first, Haanes seeks to clarify when mission began. According to Kähler, theology began as

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<sup>49</sup> David Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer, *MissionShift*, 56.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Haanes quoted Kähler within the following text: Tormod Engelsen, Ernst Harbakk, Rolv Olsen and Thor Strandaes, *Mission to the World*, 394. Haanes cited his quotation of Kähler from Bosch with the following information: David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 16.

an accompanying manifestation of the *missio Dei*, and not as “ein Luxus der weltbeherrschenden Kirche” (a luxury of the world dominating church).<sup>52</sup> Haanes goes on to state that “. . . mission is not primarily the precedent, but the future of theology.”<sup>53</sup> Despite Haanes’ concentration on the future of mission as it relates to theology, he also notes the history of God’s mission when stating its importance. Haanes intricately details “research in mission history” and traces the mission of God from the 1930s to 1705, and from 1705 he traces mission back to the fall of man.<sup>54</sup>

### Logicality and Mission

Literarily, support of the biblical belief of the emanation of the mission of God in Genesis 3 may be seen with the Creator and his role of creation, the intertwining of individual and institutional mission, the premise that mission precedes theology, and the logicality of mission. As Lesslie Newbigin wrote *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, he penned a chapter entitled “The Logic of Mission.” Newbigin notes the idiosyncratic nature of such a title, but ultimately chooses to name it in this way in order to explore how mission is rooted in the Bible.<sup>55</sup>

Newbigin writes of the beginning of mission is when he states: “It is impossible to stress too strongly that the beginning of mission is not an action of ours, but the presence of a new reality.”<sup>56</sup> Albeit, the beginning of mission did involve an action—Eve partaking of the fruit, but

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<sup>52</sup> „Die älteste Mission wurde zur Mutter der Theologie,” Martin Kähler, „Die Mission – ist sie ein unentbehrlicher Zug am Christentum?” In: *Schriften zu Christologie und Mission*, Herausgegeben von Heinzgünter Frohnes, Theologische Büchcherei Bd. 42 (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag 1971), 190.

<sup>53</sup> Tormod Engelsviken, Ernst Harbakk, Rolv Olsen and Thor Strandaes, *Mission to the World*, 394.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 411–412.

<sup>55</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 116.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

the continuation of mission results in a new reality. The old reality did not require the *missio Dei* because man was pure and sinless. The new reality is one that requires forgiveness of sins due to the wages of disobedience against God being death (Rom 6:23). The new reality necessitates the mission of God, or all would perish (Jn 3:16). It is only by the grace of God that the new reality can transition from a disobedient act of Eve resulting in death to an obedient act of Jesus Christ resulting in life.

Earlier in his text, Newbigin writes that from the beginning of the Bible, human life is seen in terms of relationships.<sup>57</sup> “The Bible does not speak about ‘humanity’ but about ‘all the families of the earth’ or all the nations.”<sup>58</sup> Newbigin’s notation of the intertwining of mankind in relationship to one another is one that ties with his belief of the mission of God emanating in Genesis 3.

While holding to the Bible as the most important text to prove any theological stance, including when God’s mission began, literature extrapolated within this paper has assisted in supporting the stance of the mission of God emanating in Genesis 3. The role of creation with the Creator, the intertwining of individual and institutional mission, mission preceding theology, and the logicity of mission have all combined to literarily support the mission of God beginning in Genesis 3.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this paper has been to explicate the emanation of God’s mission from Genesis 3 by defining *mission*, analyzing Christopher Wright’s opposing view of the emanation of God’s

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

mission, and giving both biblical and literary support of the emanation of God's mission in Genesis 3. Whether one concludes the same time of the emanation of God's mission as this paper, or if they determine it took place within a different juncture, the purpose of Christ followers is the same: make more and better followers of Jesus Christ (Matt 28:18–20). God does care about details as he is the epitome of detailed, but he also shows the importance of simplicity when studying who he is and what he wants his followers to do as they carry on with their daily lives. May the Lord Jesus Christ be glorified through this and other biblical theological studies of himself and his mission.

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