

THE GREAT SENDING - AMPLIFIED

Seventeen Treatises

amplifying and accompanying the essence and essentials of

*The Great Sending, God's Heart for the World
Beating Through You*

John 17:18 *As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world*

καθώς ἐμέ ἀπέστειλας εἰς τὸν κόσμον, καὶ γὰρ ἀπέστειλα αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν κόσμον·

John 20:21 *Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."*

εἶπεν οὖν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς πάλιν· Εἰρήνη ὑμῖν· καθὼς ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ πατήρ, καὶ γὰρ πέμπω ὑμᾶς. 22 καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐνεφύσησεν καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· Λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον· 23 ἂν τινῶν ἀφήτε τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἀφένονται αὐτοῖς· ἂν τινῶν κρατῆτε κεκράτηται

In commemoration of the 505th Anniversary of the Reformation,
October 31, 2022, SDG
Will Sohns

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INTRODUCTION

A Great Sending Leadership team, comprised of certain of the book's contributors, and certain former and current mission-oriented District and Synod Leaders, is committed to keeping the momentum going and initiating a broad Great Sending movement for the multiplication of the Gospel.

These 17 Reformation anniversary **Treatises** are to help keep the conversation and the momentum going with additional or accompanying insights and amplification of the essence and essentials of the *Mission Dei ad Mundum*.

The Treatises are also intended to spur one another on to go through the doors unlocked by Jesus by His resurrection and leave the room of existing cognitive dissonance for the sake of intentional and active participation in God's Heart beating for the world, and for encouraging one another to immerse in God's Word for immersion in the *Missio Dei*.

Let's leave the locked room of bureaucratic confinement, intellectual and academic rhetoric, and discussion, as well as the nominal, secondary, and side-line support.

505 years ago, Luther posted 95 theses on the door of the church to focus on "human beings...are justified as a gift on account of Christ through faith" – AC IV [Latin text], (Kolb)

In 2001, ***The Great Sending, God's Heart for the World Beating Through You*** was published. It included *Nailing Twelve Mission Theses to the Church Door*, which was based on and reflected a work by Dr. Dean Nadasdy, *A Vision for the Future...* and a work by Dr. Robert Newton, *A Theological Statement*. *The Twelve Mission Theses* serve as a summary of the church's mission as God's mission (The Great Sending) and is accompanied by many Bible references as the *Sedes Doctrinae*. (The works of Dr. Nadasdy and Dr. Newton are available on the website, www.thegreatsending.org)

Today, October 31, 2022, Seventeen Treatises are available for use to accompany and amplify ***The Great Sending, God's Heart for the World Beating Through You***

The Treatises are to encourage the shaping of our mission being, mindset, and life through immersion in God's *Missio Dei* Word and keeping the conversation going for a heart transformation.

Soli Deo Gloria
Will Sohns

John20:19 *On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."*

Rev.14:6 *Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to Those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. [Reformation pericope Epistle]*

WHY THE “GREAT SENDING” MOVEMENT OF GOD?

THE PREFACE FOR THE 17 TREATISES amplifying and accompanying

- *The Great Sending, God’s Heart for the World Beating Through You, Viewing the Scriptural Missio Dei through the lens of the Missio Dei*

WHY? TO EMPHASIZE ONCE MORE THAT IT IS THE GREAT SENDING OF CHRIST INTO THE WORLD, [MAGNI MISSIO DEI AD MUNDUM] (John 17:18; 20:21-23; Luke 4:18-19; 24: 45-49; Matthew 28:16-20), WHICH IS IN AND THROUGH GOD’S RELATIONSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP WITH HIS REDEEMED PEOPLE:

THE SENDER-FATHER’S SENDING OF CHRIST, WHO opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead (Luke 24: 45-46), IS THE CENTRAL LOVE-ACT OF GOD, THE SENDING OF THE SENT ONE INTO THE WORLD TO REDEEM AND RESCUE HIS CREATION.

- **THE FATHER AND SON SENDING THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE PROMISED PARACLETE** *And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high* (Luke 24:49).
- **CHRIST, THE SENT ONE, AND SENDER SENDING THE BELIEVERS, THE SENT ONES INTO THE WORLD WITH THE GOD-ORDAINED GOSPEL OFFICE** (*and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations* ^{Lk 24:47}, **AND** *when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld* ^{John 20:22-23} [AC V])
- **THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE SENT ONE, SENDING HIS POWER AND HIS STRONG WORD TO CREATE, EMPOWER AND ACCOMPANY THE PRIESTHOOD (1 Peter 2:9), AND ITS GOING INTO THE WORLD** (^{Matt. 28:19} *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*), with the divine-instituted gift of the **pastoral office (AC XIV)**

TO SEND AWAY SIN, CAPTIVITY, BLINDNESS, AND OPPRESSION, TO MAKE DISCIPLES, WITH PROCLAIMING AND WITNESSING THE GOSPEL TO ALL NATIONS UNDER THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (John 20:23; Luke 4:18-19; 24:45-49; Matt. 28:16-20; Acts 1:8)

SENDING WITH “*Justification sola fide* ...the central doctrine of Christianity...all other doctrines antecedent or consequent to this doctrine.” (Christian Dogmatics, F. Pieper, Volume II, page 404, CPH, 1951)

SENDING, SO THAT IN ONENESS WITH GOD, HIS LOVE AND ONE ANOTHER (John 17), whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life, I.E, so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (John 3:16; 20:31)

Through the lens of the *Missio Dei* in interpreting, and understanding Scripture, we view not only the necessary and beneficial distinctions between the various essentials of the *Missio Dei.*, (enunciated in the Theses), but also its wholeness, interrelationships, and partnership (koinonia).

Magni Missio Dei ad Mundum with its various essentials is a seamless act of the one God from a heart that loves the world and that beats through the called believers! That is why the church finds its mission being and identity in the mission(ary) identity and being of God and His Word and not just in what the “church does,” nor just the distinct essentials, nor routine church activities.

Whenever the church relegates its mission focus and priorities to activities, duties, and performances, the church is guilty of being disconnected from the *Missio Dei*. It will be marked by distractions, disruption, and being disassembled from the Christ-apostolic authority, priority, and promises.

WHY? The highest “office of disconnect” is the disconnection from being a co-heir and co-associate with Jesus in the *Missio Dei*, The Great Sending, with other accompanying ubiquitous disconnects:

- Drowning the Great Sending (*Missio Dei*) under disobedience to God’s Word
- Submerging the Gospel mission (*Missio Dei*) under misinterpretation of God’s Word
- Drowning the Great Sending (*Missio Dei*) under ecclesiology
- Submerging the Gospel mission (*Missio Dei*) under the pastoral office (Pfarramt – AC XIV)
- Drowning the *Missio Dei* under a misinterpretation of AC V, the Gospel office.
- Submerging the Gospel mission (*Missio Dei*) under an *ORTHODOX* “Divine Service” - worship
- Drowning the Great Sending (*Missio Dei*) under “theologizing” the mission under the academic and intellectual pursuit of theology, systematics, or dogmatics for the sake of theology
- Submerging the Gospel mission (*Missio Dei*) under doctrinal disorder, adjuncts, and subsets into theological categories
- Drowning the Great Sending essence and core under culture, duties, structure, or even under one or more of the essential elements of the *Missio Dei* such as only “witness,” or “evangelism.”
- Submerging the Gospel *Great Sending* under practices, traditions, and methods (seasonal)
- Drowning the Great Sending (*Missio Dei*) under a once or at the most twice-a-year “mission festival” with an “appropriate” financial collection “support.”
- Submerging the Gospel mission (*Missio Dei*) under the sending out of foreign “missionaries.”
- Submerging the *Great Sending (Missio Dei)* as a “cafeteria option” or as a secondary side dish
- Submerging the *Missio Dei* under being confessional and protectionists of doctrine

HOWEVER, THE MISSIO DEI IS THE CHRIST-CENTERED CORE, THE CENTRAL FOUNDATIONAL BEING, THE WILL, WORD, AND ACT OF GOD, AND AS SUCH, THE PARADIGM AND/OR LENS FOR INTERPRETING, UNDERSTANDING, AND APPLYING THE SCRIPTURES FOR

The Great Sending, God’s Heart for the World Beating Through You

Therefore, viewing the church’s mission through the lens of the Missio Dei in the spirit of Deut. 6:5-9,

[You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates].

*rather than submerging OR DROWNING in the ubiquitous disconnects, the believers immerse in the Missio Dei JUBILEE Word such as the connections provided by the contributors in *The Great Sending, God’s Heart for the World Beating Through You*. Only the power of God’s Word can transform the heart and behavior into a Missio Dei-being and a Missio Dei image of God.*

LET GOD DO IT FOR GOD’S SAKE!

Soli Deo Gloria - Magni Missio Dei ad Mundum! John 17:18:

“καθὼς ἐμὲ ἀπέστειλας εἰς τὸν κόσμον, καὶ γὼ ἀπέστειλα αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν κόσμον;”

“sicut me misisti in mundum et ego misi eos in mundum,” (Vulgate);

“Gleichwie du mich gesandt hast in die Welt, so sende ich sie auch in die Welt. “

AN ANALYSIS – “THE DOORS BEING LOCKED”

*An attempt to pinpoint the current missional “locked-in” malaise by church leaders including pastors
(The state of affairs)*

John 20:19-20 *On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, **the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews**, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”
20 *When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.**

John 20:26 *Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although **the doors were locked**, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.”*

Κεκλεισμένων – locked shut

- **Locked behind the door of disobedience to God’s Word (abandonment of God’s Word)**
- **Locked into sacerdotalism or clericalism with Augustana XIV and misinterpreted Article V as the paradigm.**
- Locked into the same routine – a rut and satisfied with the status quo
- Locked into Church “practices” and supportive teachings as the paradigms for mission
 - Start and stop practices
 - A new practice after new practice “will do the trick” (another evangelism program)
- Practices that are short-lived and unfruitful continue the disconnect and decline since they do not flow from the core Missio Dei mindset and do not come from a changed heart.
- Compartmentalizing of doctrines with the *Missio Dei* as secondary or having non-priority
- **Locked into a very narrow and limited knowledge and understanding of the Missio Dei**
 - **Rhetoric only**
 - **A mission/missionary charlatan**
- Locked into laziness
- Locked into one’s “comfort zone”
 - Can’t change the Divine Service’s customary pericope and practices
 - Can’t change the “come to…” or “they will come” (attraction model) – a false mission strategy - A “*build and they will come*” mission strategy displaces apostolic sending, evangelical and evangelistic authority of Jesus! But “we don’t do it that way anymore.” A “They will come” (“come to Him”) syndrome is contrary to the theology of “grace” and the “call” and is more akin to “enthusiasm” and/or “predestination.” (See Will Sohns article “They Will Come Strategy for Church Planting”)
- Can’t OR WILL NOT CHANGE the performance and “activities,” “busyness,” classes, boards, committees, meetings mindset, or behavior
- Locked into “fear” of (fear flows from or is a characteristic of the following):
 - Insecurity
 - Doubt
 - Inconvenience
 - Timidness
 - What others think
 - Not being accepted
 - Being exposed for who you are
 - Shame of one’s inability and incapableness

- Locked into **disobedience** of God's sending
- Locked into "mission is missions" and is optional
- Locked into church-centeredness
- Locked into clergy domination (negative to the laity involvement)

Καταρτίζετε – restore, equip, perfect, reset, mend; βαστάζω – Bear, take, "remove"

Eph. 4:12 to **equip** the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

Gal.6: 1-2 Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should **restore** him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. ² **Bear** one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Need to have a ministry of Καταρτίζετε, because

- No intentionality ministry to restore, perfect or mend the mindset and behavior of the saints
- No intentionality to carry (remove) the burdens of "brokenness" of yourself or others
- No intentionality in the ministry to change hearts
- No ministry of repentance, no change of thinking and behavior
- Going through routine motions only (just meaningless rote, *ex opere operato*)

μεταμορφοῦσθε – Transformed, ἀνακαινώσει – renewal, δοκιμάζειν – test, examine, τέλειον – perfect, complete

Romans 12: 1-2 I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world but be **transformed by the renewal of your mind**, that by **testing** you may **discern** what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and **perfect**

Need of μεταμορφοῦσθε, because

- No willingness to be transformed and renew the mind (thinking and way of thinking)
- No willingness to test and examine oneself or the congregation – so business as usual
- Preserve the current way of doing things – no contemplation of change but maintenance only
- Inability and or unwillingness to adapt
- No desire, no studies, or actions to determine God's will
- A self-satisfied mind-set

αὐτὸ φρονῆτε – same mind, one mind, think the same, τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὁ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ - have the mind of Christ, think the same as Christ

Philippians 2: 1-5 *So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ²complete my joy by being of the **same mind**, having the **same love**, being in full accord and **of one mind**. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others. ⁵Have this **mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus**,*

The need to think and love the same as Jesus, because

- The pastor-leaders or an ecclesiastical supervisor giving no overt and continuous encouragement or direction to think like Jesus
- NOT looking to the interest of others, such as being sent into the **world**, and sent to those under your ecclesiastical supervision to have the mind of Christ to have the same love to look at the interest of others and be sent to the world.
- Individually and congregationally to have selfish ambition or conceit
- Just performing manifold, time-consuming, and complex outward duties, instead of always “teaching,” advising, and encouraging, as the key pastoral role and historical role of ecclesiastical supervision - either in an institutional jurisdiction relationship or in the divinely established congregation and ministry to think the same as Christ.
- In the teaching, advising, and encouraging role, it is critical that the Biblical resources and tools be encouraged and made available intentionally and forthrightly, including the resource of websites to the participants or potential participants – all to have the mind of Christ!
- Not Gospel-centered; not Christ-centered – lack of Christ’s “peace be with you”
- No gladness or joy in the Lord and the comfort of His love
- No participation in the Spirit; shortchanging the presence and power of the Holy Spirit
- Lacking a relationship with Christ, His love for the world, and God’s heart for the world, beating through “you” – the mind of Christ!

HOWEVER –

“By the mercy of God” Romans 12:1 AND “encouragement in Christ” Philippians 2:1 -

Acts 18:9 And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid but go on speaking and do not be silent, (In Corinth)

*Ezekiel. 11:19 -20 **And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, ²⁰that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God***

A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE OF “OBEDIENCE” UNDER CHRIST’S “PEACE” (THE Gospel):

- If Congregation leaders, and or pastors *do not wish to use the Great Sending, God’s Heart for the World Beating Through you*, which is a thorough already researched, and prepared study tool of the theology of mission, *The Missio Dei ad Mundum*, a study which has been served for use co-associates on a “silver platter,” THEN –
 - **THE PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONS ARE ENCOURAGED TO DO THEIR OWN THOROUGH RESEARCH AND STUDY (Scripture, Confessions, other writings, historical**

paradigms and mission(s), LCMS conventions and “programs,”), PREPARE THEIR OWN RESOURCES AND MAKE THEIR OWN PLANS IF THEY ARE REALLY SINCERE ABOUT OBEYING GOD’S SENDING

- If Congregation leaders, and or pastors do not wish to carry out their own thorough research and study, prepare their own resources, or make their own plans, but are really sincere about obeying God’s sending and not just talk about it, THEN IN OBEDIENCE TO GOD’S SENDING –
 - *“Do not be afraid, [locked in] but go on speaking and do not be silent” (Acts18:9)*
 - Intentionally and overtly have a face-to-face heart-to-heart talk with each other to use the immersion tool (The Great Sending Book) already provided
 - Use the other available resources and be encouraged to go to the website www.thegreatsending.org for downloading the available resources and making use of the tools.
 - Intentionally pray for each other and each other pastors/congregations
 - With participating in a goal to have 1/3 (2000) of Synod’s congregations involved in the immersion *Missio Dei* transformation, forthrightly target at least 1/3 of the pastors/congregation for intensive encouragement, care, prayer, and for a “teaching moment” in history.
 - MAKE USE OF A TOOL THAT HAS NEVER BEFORE BEEN PROVIDED FOR SUCH A HEART TRANSFORMATION
 - Keep nourishing forthrightly the participants throughout the Word-immersion execution
 - Plug into the power of the Holy Spirit, Who just happens to make Himself available for another “Pentecost” through you!

LETTING GOD BE GOD – AND GOD DOING HIS GOD THING –

And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, ²⁰ that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God (Ezekiel. 11:19 -20)

THE JUBILEE: GOD’S HEART FOR THE WORLD, BEATING THROUGH YOU IN HIS GREAT SENDING TO THE WORLD (MISSIO DEI AD MUNDUM)!

UNDER GOD’S LOVE AND PEACE (THE GOSPEL) OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD:

John 3:16-17 ¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

John 17:1-3 ¹ When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ² since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

John 17:17-19 ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ **As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.** ¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

John 20:19 – 23 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” ²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, “**Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.**” ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “**Receive the Holy Spirit.**” ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are **forgiven** them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld

Luke 4:18-19 ¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Luke 10:1-5 ¹ After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. ² And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. ³ Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. ⁴ Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. ⁵ Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’

Luke 24:36-38, 44-49 As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!” ³⁷ But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. ³⁸ And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ... ⁴⁴ Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷ and that **repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations**, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ **You are witnesses of these things.** ⁴⁹ And behold, I am **sending the promise** of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are **clothed with power from on high.**”

Matthew 4:19-22 ¹⁹ And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” ²⁰ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹ And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. ²² Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Matthew 28:16-20 ¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Acts 1:8 ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

We Pray: God, please make it happen again by your power as at Pentecost. Amen!

IT IS OK TO LIE - CULTURE

A BIBLE STUDY IMPACTING THE MISSION

A new commandment I give to you, that you LIE [not love] to one another John 13:34

NOT LOVE? REALLY? WHAT A LIE! The great lie in the garden of Eden has not ceased but it persists (1 “...Did God really say ...? 4 You certainly won't die!” ... 5 ...You'll be like God...” - Genesis 3:1,4,5 [GW]). It still impacts the life, ministry, and mission of individuals, congregations, a Synod, society, and the world.

The “OK to Lie” mindset creates a messy world to say the least: chaos, dysfunction, indolence, disunity, divisiveness, disobedience, broken relationships, destruction, and demise (the devil, a murderer) impacting families, society, and the church. And believing and living the GREAT LIE has temporal and eternal consequences.

The source of such a false “new commandment,” which is a lie, is revealed in **John 8:44**

You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He [the devil] was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he [the devil] lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he [the devil] is a liar and the father of lies.

And consider this penetrating Word of God (including God's Word about lying to justify oneself):

“... Let God be true though everyone were a liar, as it is written, “That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged” (Romans 3:4), “I said in my alarm, “All mankind are liars.” (Psalm 116:11), and “through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared” (1 Timothy 4:2)”

Yes, this “new commandment” is a LIE and is the devil's attempt to replace the Biblical truth of -

Leviticus 19:11 ...you shall not lie to one another.

Numbers 23:19 God is not man, that he should lie,

Proverbs 14:5 A faithful witness does not lie, but a false witness breathes out lies.

Acts 5:3 But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit...?”

Colossians 3:9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices

Hebrews 6:18 ... in which it is impossible for God to lie...

And the lie even removes and replaces the **truth** of **John 13:34-35**

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another. –

and replaces Romans 13:10 “**Love is a fulfilling of the Law**”

And the second and 8th commandments (about lying) are replaced or removed.

While the “Great Lie” can lead to eternal condemnation, every lie, “great” or “small,” “minor impact” or “major influence,” is a sin. Sin is sin, a lie is a lie with temporal or eternal consequences. Every lie needs to be acknowledged, confessed, repented, and forgiven with fruits of the repentance!

1 John 1:9-10 *God is faithful and reliable. If we confess our sins, he forgives them and cleanses us from everything we've done wrong.¹⁰ If we say, "We have never sinned," we turn God into a liar and his Word is not in us. (GW).*

James 5:16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

LIVING THE LIE! WHAT DECEIT IS BEING LIVED! THE "LIE" IS A CHARACTERIZATION OF THE LOST NEEDING TO BE SAVED!

Psalm 32:5 I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. (Cf. Luke 24: 47)

The "IT IS OK TO LIE" DECEITFUL CULTURE and how it plays out in our mission and life together in society, the larger church, and a congregation (Three sets of Ten "New" Commandments):

INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY:

1. *Life is centered around looking out for self now, not only so-called life after death – **It is ok to lie***
2. *I do not need any help (including from a God, who may or does not exist) – **It is ok to lie***
3. *Seek first the material/temporal for self and be "right" at expense of relationships– **It is ok to lie***
4. *The "thing" in the womb is not a living human being, especially not in God's image – **It is ok to lie***
5. *My body is my own and with the right to choose and I have the freedom to... – **It is ok to lie***
6. *Homosexuality, transgender-sexual identity, etc. is how God made some, or IS a choice–**It's ok to lie***
7. *Same-sex marriage is a right and privilege or acceptable choice – **It is ok to lie***
8. *Government is the teacher of morality, including CRT, but not a curb or an avenger of wrongdoing – **It is ok to lie***
9. *"Live and let live" is the best get-along behavior if you want to make it in life – **It is ok to lie***
10. *One never needs to be accountable for his/her behavior and not considered lost – **It is ok to lie***

THE CHURCH AT LARGE AND MISSION (Applies also to each individual and a congregation):

1. *The mission authority given to the church is to be "church/survival-centered" – **It is ok to lie***
2. ***The Sending of God** (the Missio Dei) to the world is not the heart of Christianity – **It is ok to lie***
3. *The substance and content of the Christian faith is the doctrine of Scripture – **It is ok to lie***
4. *The mission purpose of the church is to teach the treasures of Lutheranism and have right, pure doctrine at the expense of a saving faith-sending relationship in/with Jesus Christ – **It is ok to lie***
5. *The Divine Service, Liturgy, daily offices, and performances are the heart of Mission – **It is ok to lie***
6. *The clergy (clericalism, sacerdotalism, the "ordained," the pastoral office) and their control are the core of God's mission – **It is ok to lie***
7. *Pastors, including SMP, are not accountable and are to be under no supervision – **It is ok to lie***
8. *The role of the laity, in God's scheme of things, is to pay, pray and obey – **It is ok to lie***
9. *It is a spiritually healthy church, including a new church plant, for sins of lies, of slander against a pastor or fellow members, or of any sort of sinful baggage not to be dealt with – **It is ok to lie***
10. *It is a spiritually healthy church, including a new plant, for sins against Christ-authority(s) and Christ-sending principles/foci, established by God's sending not to be regarded – **It is ok to lie***

THE LIE IS REFLECTED IN THE MISSION AND LIFE OF A CONGREGATION:

1. *The heart of a congregation's mission is mere activities, buildings or performances – It is ok to lie*
2. *The heart of a congregation's mission is caring for and maintaining itself – It is ok to lie*
3. *The heart of a congregation's mission is not the sending of God to the world – It is ok to lie*
4. *A culture of disobedience to, distraction, and disconnection from the mission of God (Missio Dei ad Mundum) is acceptable – it is ok to lie*
5. *A culture of self-centeredness, meddling, and/or non-accountability is acceptable – It is ok to lie*
6. *A culture of ingratitude, irresponsibility, slander, and insolence is acceptable – It is ok to lie*
7. *Besmirching the pastor or any pastor in public or private is acceptable – It is ok to lie*
8. *Assuming the responsibility, controlling, and complaining of another is acceptable – It is ok to lie*
9. *Dominating the members/boards by defaming with no defending is acceptable – It is ok to lie*
10. *It is not necessary to confess one's sin and practice repentance and forgiveness – It is ok to lie*
11. *Partiality or favoritism in a congregation by the pastor or leaders is acceptable – It is ok to lie*
12. *Fruits of repentance are not expected (including restoring unity and relationships) – It is ok to lie*

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Psalm 32:1 *Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.*

“IT IS OK TO LIE” ADDENDUM

The power to get rid of “It is Ok to Lie” and “obey” the 8th commandment

SMALL CATECHISM QUESTION #69:

What does God require of us in the Eighth Commandment? [God's perfect will and truth]

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

What does this mean?

Answer: We should fear and love God, and so we should not tell lies about our neighbor, nor betray, slander, or defame him, but should apologize for him, speak well of him, and interpret charitably all that he does.

Proverbs 31:8-9⁸ *Open your mouth for the mute [speechless, not able to defend oneself],*

[Open your mouth] for the rights of all who are destitute.

⁹ *Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.*

- We should **defend** our neighbor; that is, we should **take his part and shield him** against false accusations.
- We should **speak well** of our neighbor; that is, we should **praise his good qualities and deeds** so far as it can be done in keeping with **the truth**.
- We should put the **best construction** on everything; that is, we **should cover up his faults and explain in his favor** whatever can be so explained.

1 Peter 4:8 *Above all, keep loving one another earnestly since love covers a multitude of sins.*

1 Corinthians 13:7 *Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

Matthew 3:8 *Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.*

Ephesians 4:22-32 *You were taught to change the way you were living. The person you used to be will ruin you through desires that deceive you. ²³ However, you were taught to have a new attitude. ²⁴ You were also taught to become a new person created to be like God, truly righteous and holy. ²⁵ **So then, get rid of lies. Speak the truth to each other, because we are all members of the same body.** ²⁶ Be angry without sinning. Don't go to bed angry. ²⁷ Don't give the devil any opportunity {to work}. ²⁸ Thieves must quit stealing and, instead, they must work hard. They should do something good with their hands so that they'll have something to share with those in need. ²⁹ **Don't say anything that would hurt {another person}.** Instead, **speak only what is good** so that you can give help wherever it is needed. That way, what you say will help those who hear you. ³⁰ Don't give God's Holy Spirit any reason to be upset with you. He has put his seal on you for the day you will be set free {from the world of sin}. ³¹ Get rid of your bitterness, hot tempers, anger, loud quarreling, cursing, and hatred. ³² **Be kind to each other, sympathetic, forgiving each other as God has forgiven you through Christ.***

James 5:16 *Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.*

Matthew 5:23-24 *So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go. First, be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.*

Romans 12:1-2 *I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

COMMENT:

We “cannot by our own reason or strength” be transformed, adapt, change, or even desire such, but can only be oblivious, or resist change in our thinking and aligned (cognitive consonance) behavior.

“...[By] our own reason or strength,” we are stuck and locked in (“with the doors locked” John 20: 19, 26), to cognitive dissonance and cannot get rid of any non-missional (non-*Missio Dei*) mindset, and all missional lies, as well as all lying (Ok to Lie), slander, etc., which are mechanisms of individuals as well as congregations and church bodies of caring for self, self-centered control, domination and conforming to the world.

But Christ of the Great Sending, through His power alone as He exercises His Word, transforms, and renews “your mind,” which is the dynamic of the jubilee immersion in “the Great Sending.”

Romans 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”*

THE SEAMLESS MISSIO DEI CORE AND LENS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Various treatments of the Gospel of John have included “*Angelomorphic Christology*”¹ by Dr. Charles Gieschen, Provost at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (I have deep gratitude and respect for him and have the privilege of knowing him personally). Dr. Gieschen’s work is an excellent and beneficial addition to the discussion on the interpretation and understanding of John’s Gospel, especially on the identity of Christ.

I would humbly suggest, however, that using the *Missio Dei* as the lens, which is reflected in *The Great Sending, God’s Heart for the World*,² would strengthen his excellent supporting work and amplify the Gospel treasure. With that said, however, his Christological treatment certainly is or is expected to be a treasure with its focus on the necessary and essential identity of the SENT ONE AND SENDER (Jesus).

In “A Theological Statement,” Dr. Robert Newton asserts: *The Missio Dei rightly serves, then, as the primary lens through which we read the Scriptures and apply its message to ourselves and our world. In short, the Missio Dei determines our being and purpose as a Synod and our biblical confession in the world.*³ Dr. Newton also shares, that Christopher J. H. Wright “argues that our Lord Himself identified His Mission as the hermeneutical key that unlocks the resources of Old and New Testaments.”⁴

Christopher J. H. Wright states: “*Jesus Himself* [Cf. Luke 24:44-47⁵; Cf. also Luke 4:17-21⁶] provided the hermeneutical coherence within which all disciples must read these texts, that is, in the light of the story that leads *up to* Christ (messianic reading) and the story that leads *on from* Christ (missional reading). That is the story that flows from the mind and purpose of God in all the Scripture for all the nations. That is a missional hermeneutic of the whole Bible.”⁷

¹ *Angelomorphic Christology, Antecedence and early evidence*, by Charles Gieschen, Brill-Leiden-Boston-Koln, 1998. *Although Jesus is addressing his disciples as ones whom he will send out, his self-identification as the Apostle sent by the Father is implicit and Jesus is not one of many who are sent from the Father and will return; he is the only one* (John 1.18).

² *The Great Sending, God’s Heart for the World Beating Through You*, by Will Sohns, Tenth Power Publishing, 2021

³ With Dr. Robert Newton as the lead author, an informal missional “network” adopted this missiological statement on November 21, 2019. The “network” group was comprised of current and former district presidents, other Synodical and district missional leaders, parish pastors, and laity.

⁴ *The Great Sending, God’s Heart for the World Beating Through You*, by Will Sohns, Tenth Power Publishing, 2021 (More Than a Supporting Role, page 23)

⁵ Luke 24:44 *Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”* ⁴⁵ *Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,* ⁴⁶ *and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,* ⁴⁷ *and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.*⁵

⁶ Luke 4:17 *And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,*

¹⁸ *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,*

¹⁹ *to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”*

²⁰ *And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.* ²¹ *And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”*⁶

⁷ *The Mission of God, Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative*, by Christopher J. H. Wright, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1947

Under the seamless “*Missio Dei*” lens and predicate, an exegete certainly does discover **who** (the identity) the **Sent One and Sender** are. So, Luther in His commentaries/sermons on John⁸ demonstrates the identity of the Trinity but especially the divinity and humanity of Christ (Christology). Thus, a close reading of John’s Gospel also implies Jesus’ identity as the **Apostle** while also explicitly revealing **Jesus Christ** as *The Logos* (the Word), as God, the Testifier-Witness (cf. Ex. 3:2 **Angel of the Lord** מַלְאֲכֵי יְהוָה), the Life and the Light of the world, the Son of God Who became flesh, the Messiah, the Lamb of God, Rabbi (Teacher), Son of Joseph, True Israelite, Jesus of Nazareth, Son of man, King of Israel, Bread of Life, the Prophet, the Teacher, the Gate, the Good Shepherd, the Resurrection, and the Life, the Savior, the Way, the Truth, and Life, the Vine, and the Holy One of God (Cf. the “I Am’s”). YES, Jesus Christ as the **Sent One and Sender, The Apostle** (John 17:18 and John 20:21-23).

Under the seamless “*Missio Dei*” lens and predicate, an exegete also discovers **what the task or work was of the Sent One and Sender**, such as His discourses and sayings, His miracles and acts, His tasks of speaking the words of God, of finishing the Father’s task/work to love and be the Savior of the World. His task included His testimony to the truth, such as the validity and reliability of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and in cooperation with the Father, the act of sending the Holy Spirit. The task or work of the **Sent Christ** culminates in the glory of His perfect life, suffering, crucifixion, death, and resurrection for forgiveness, life, and salvation together with ongoing fellowship with His followers (disciples).

Under the “*Missio Dei*” lens and predicate, an exegete of the Gospel of John, discovers that together with the **sent Jesus**, John the Baptist was **sent**, The Holy Spirit was **sent**, the Scriptures were **given**, and the sanctified (John 17: 17-19) disciples-apostles (saving faith-believers) were and are **sent** into the world by the Sent One Christ to testify (witness) the truth of **God’s sending** in and to the world “... **so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name**” John 20:31(Cf.John3:16-17;17:1-3).

In his commentary on John17:3, “**And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent,**” **Luther** said: “Therefore, **the real treasure lies altogether in the word sent.** For it reveals and shows to us the mind, heart, and will of the Father toward us and **encompasses all** that Christ did, preached, suffered, accomplished, and brought or gave us. It also clearly testifies that this passage does not speak of the life to come, since to know **Christ as the one sent by the Father** means nothing else than to believe and know how He **came** [being sent] to earth, died for our sins, rose from the dead, won, and granted us the forgiveness of sins—all of which pertains to this life.”⁹

And in his commentary on John 17:18, **Luther** also comments: “For it is truly a pregnant saying when He says, “**I am sending them just as You sent Me.**” **Just as** we heard Him extol what a remarkable, great skill it is to believe that **Christ was sent** into the world from the Father, that is, to be able to rest all your confidence upon this [His sending] and without any doubt hear and esteem **all the words proceeding from His mouth**, as if you were now **hearing the voice of the Father present and speaking to you from heaven.** If we could earnestly believe this, we would not cast it to the winds as does that great mass of teachers and disciples who so highly extol the Word of God and yet do nothing but play tricks and games with it, just as if some cobbler had spoken it. Instead, we would treat it with all humility, honor, and great thanksgiving and consider it our **most treasured possession.**”¹⁰

To hear, esteem, observe, interpret, understand, and apply “all the words proceeding from His mouth,” (The Logos, the Word Who became flesh, the Messiah, the Divine messenger [angel], the Son of

⁸ Cf. LUTHER’S WORKS. VOLUMES 22-24, CPH

⁹ LUTHER’S WORKS. VOLUME 69. SERMONS ON THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN, Chapters 17–20. CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE • SAINT LOUIS

¹⁰ ipse

God, the Light, the Christ, the Lamb of God, The Truth, etc.), the **Missio Dei**, that is the seamless **Sending of God (The Great Sending)**, is the central identity, will and act, and thus must be **THE LENS** for interpreting and understanding His Word, the Holy Scripture, including the Scriptural Gospel of John. The **Missio Dei**, God's sending, is the heart of God, the **Missio Dei** is His "I Am," His being, His treasure, and the seamless core from which all His testimony, witness, work, life, and reign flows – *God's Heart for the World Beating Through You* - but all centered in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the Son of man, **the Sent One and Sender, The Apostle** (Hebrews 3:1).

[Emphasis added in all the above quotes]

Dr. Gieschen¹¹ states: *While the title "Apostle" is not explicitly given to Jesus in John, the understanding of Jesus as the "Sent One" pervades this Gospel (Pages 284-285)... The Father sends "the Apostle" who, in turn, sends out "the apostles" (John 17.18; 20.21).*

The above truths are not only clear from John 17 and John 20 but revealed and clarified in the thread of repetitive sent passages as a seamless garment throughout the Gospel of John in sixteen of the twenty-one chapters. Not only the thread and number of passages but the immediate and broader context clearly indicates the *Missio Dei ad Mundum*, with its essence and inherent essentials as the core motif, source, centrality, purpose, predicate, and lens (or seamless paradigm):

THE SEND/SENT MOTIF

[Like an introduction or preface, **John 1** references John the Baptist as being **sent** from God as a witness to testify of the Logos, the true Light, and Lamb of God as the Sent One]

John 3:16-17, 34 ¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not **send his Son** into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him...³⁴ For he whom **God has sent** utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure.

John 4:34 ³⁴ Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him **who sent me** and to accomplish his work.

John 5:23-24, 30, 36-38 ²³ that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father **who sent him**. ²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him **who sent me** has eternal life. He does not come into judgment but has passed from death to life...³⁰ "I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just because I seek not my own will but the will of him **who sent me**...³⁶ But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that **the Father has sent me**. ³⁷ And **the Father who sent me** has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, ³⁸ and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one **whom he has sent**.

John 6:29, 38-39, 44, 57 ²⁹ Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him **whom he has sent**." ...³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him **who sent me**. ³⁹ And this is the will of him **who sent me**, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me but raise it up on the last day...⁴⁴ No one can come to me unless **the Father who sent me** draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day...⁵⁷ As the living **Father sent me**, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.

John 7:16-18, 28-29, 33 ¹⁶ So Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his **who sent me**. ¹⁷ If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. ¹⁸ The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him

¹¹ *Angelomorphic Christology, Antecedence and early evidence*, by Charles Gieschen, Brill-Leiden-Boston-Koln, 1998.

who sent him is true, and in him, there is no falsehood...²⁸ So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple, “You know me, and you know where I come from. But I have not come of my own accord. He **who sent me** is true, and him you do not know. ²⁹ I know him, for I come from him, and **he sent me.**” ...³³ Jesus then said, “I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him **who sent me.**”

John 8:16-18, 26-29, 42 ¹⁶ Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and **the Father who sent me.** ¹⁷ In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. ¹⁸ I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the **Father who sent me** bears witness about me.” ...²⁶ I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he **who sent me** is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.” ²⁷ They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father. ²⁸ So Jesus said to them, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. ²⁹ And he **who sent me** is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.” ...⁴² Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but **he sent me.**”

John 9:4 ⁴ We must work the works of him **who sent me** while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.

John 10:36 ³⁶ do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and **sent into the world**, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’?

John 11:42 ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that **you sent me.**”

John 12:44-45, 49 ⁴⁴ And Jesus cried out and said, “Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him **who sent me.** ⁴⁵ And whoever sees me sees him **who sent me.** ⁴⁹ For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the **Father who sent me** has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak.

John 13:16, 20 ¹⁶ Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one **who sent him.** ²⁰ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives **the one I send** receives me, and whoever receives me receives **the one who sent me.**”

John 14:24-26 ²⁴ Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father’s **who sent me.** ²⁵ “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. ²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the **Father will send in my name**, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

John 15:21, 26 ²¹ But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who **sent me.**... ²⁶ “But when the Helper comes, whom **I will send to you from the Father**, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

John 16:5-7 ⁵ But now I am going to him **who sent me**, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. ⁷ Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, **I will send him to you.**

John 17:3, 8, 18, 20-25 ³ And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom **you have sent.**... ⁸ For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that **you sent me.**...¹⁸ **AS YOU SENT ME INTO THE WORLD, SO I HAVE SENT THEM INTO THE WORLD.**...²⁰ “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that **you have sent me.** ²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know **that you sent me** and loved them even as you loved me. ²⁴ Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because

you loved me before the foundation of the world.²⁵ O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that **you have sent me**.

John 20:21-23²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit¹².²³ If you forgive (ἀφίημι – send away) the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

While not de jure, it is apparent historically that de facto the lenses for interpreting, understanding, and applying scripture have included such as only the supporting essentials (antecedent and consequent to the core) as knowledge, education (narrow view of discipleship), doctrines, the doctrine of Scripture, evangelism, the divine service, liturgy, the institution, Pastoral Office (AC XIV), Ordination, and ecclesiology (Church and Ministry), theology, church polity, membership, service, etc. But the Scriptural core and lens (the hermeneutic) are and must be **THE MISSIO DEI (Preferably, the Missio Dei Ad Mundum)**:

-Sending of God to the world

-*Missio Dei ad Mundum*

-John 17:18 - καθὼς ἐμέ [Ἰησοῦς] ἀπέστειλας εἰς τὸν κόσμον, κἀγὼ [Ἰησοῦς] ἀπέστειλα αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν κόσμον

-John 20:21 - εἶπεν οὖν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς πάλιν· Εἰρήνη ὑμῖν· καθὼς ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ πατήρ, κἀγὼ πέμπω ὑμᾶς. [ἀπέσταλκέν (ἀποστέλλω) πατήρ (θεός) - πέμπω -Ἰησοῦς]

-Exodus 3:13-14: ἐπιλάξ (ἐλξ) πλψ

-Exodus 3:13-14(LXX): θεός ἀπέσταλκέν

[Emphasis added in all the above quotes]

A POSTSCRIPT – PERSONAL NOTE:

Without any presumptions or presuppositions, and letting Scripture interpret Scripture, soon after graduating from the Seminary in 1959, God enlightened me to understand that the lens (hermeneutic or paradigm) to interpret, understand and apply the Scriptures is through the lens of the *Missio Dei* or what I have called the Sending of God (The Great Sending). God did this to me through His power and the exercise of His Holy Word -

Such Scripture passages as Luke 4:18-20, in which Jesus revealed Himself as the fulfillment of Scripture in being the anointed and **Sent One**, opened my mind. In Luke 24:45-49, Jesus opens the minds to understand Scripture through the lens of Christ Himself, Who suffered and rose for the holy work of repentance and forgiveness to benefit all the nations and Who promised the sending of the power from on high. And then immersing in John 17, in my early ministry, convinced me that the heart of God for the world in the sending of God's Son to and for the world is the very core of God's being, will, word, and work. A careful reading of the whole chapter reveals that the *Sending of God (The Missio Dei)* in Jesus Christ, is Central, the Sanctified, the Holy Truth, the Holy Word, and the Glory of God.

- Thus, in my pastoral-missional ministry, not the blessed cradle of Holy Scripture, the pastoral office, "doctrine," the divine Service, nor systematic theology is the center, i.e., the core and lens.
- There is no justification, no sanctification, no message, no doctrine, no witness, no means of grace, no forgiveness, no eternal life for the nations, and no church unless, and without the Sending of God in Jesus Christ (The seamless Great Sending, God's Heart for the World – His being, His will, work, gift, and purpose).
- The *Missio Dei* in the sending of Christ, is the seamless core and lens to interpret, understand (σύνεσις), and apply (a wisdom, σοφία) Holy Scripture!

¹² Cf. John 14, 15, and 16 for the sending of the Holy Spirit to be "receive[d]" as revealed in John 20:22 for the ἀφίημι τὰς ἁμαρτίας – sending away of sin

AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, THE GREAT DISTRACTIONS FROM THE GREAT SENDING

A RESEARCH STUDY,¹³ LEADER'S SUMMIT, AUGUST 2021

The Great Sending, God's Heart for the World Beating Through You is an endeavor and a Gospel movement for Christians and congregations everywhere to observe, understand and apply the central identity, will, and act of God in history, the sending of His Son, the Messiah Jesus, into the world to rescue and restore humankind and the whole creation.

The Sending of God, known as the *Missio Dei*, which is centered on the sending of Christ into the world, inherently includes the sending of the Holy Spirit by the Father and Jesus, and the sending of the followers of Jesus into the world by Jesus with the task and purpose to send away the sins of the world.

John 20:21-23 *Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."*

Thus, a central historical teaching of the Evangelical Lutheran Church is centered on "that we receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith..." (AC IV, Tappert). This central truth can also be explained or elucidated as being rooted in the *Missio Dei*, which is the core and foundational act of God in Christ, the lens for interpreting, understanding, and applying all of Scripture, as centered in *God's sending "that we receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous..."*

By the mercies of God, how great it is, and how grateful we can be to be rooted in that evangelical truth and be co-heirs and co-associates with Christ and one another in the seamless *Sending of God, (Missio Dei)* which intrinsically includes all the supporting essentials (and teachings that are antecedent or consequent) of Christianity as revealed in God's Word.

God also makes it crystal clear that the sending of Christ by the Father and the sending by Christ of His believers, is to the world, as revealed in His High Priestly prayer recorded in John 17, that the world may be one with God and know His love for them. While the disciples are in the world and not of the world, they are sent into the world just as Christ was not of the world but sent to the world to be in the world for eternal rescue.

John 17:18 *As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world*

However, given that Scriptural grounding, a mission-historical review¹⁴ of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod has revealed a lack of central focus on the *Missio Dei* as well as revealed faulty

¹³ Resources for *The Great Distractions from the Great Sending*, a 114-page review, study, and analysis of the LCMS focus:

The Scriptures

The LCMS Constitutions and Bylaws, 1847 to present (Handbooks, 1924-present)

The Survey Commission, 1959-1962, CHI, Dr. August Suelflow

Heritage in Motion, 1962-1995, CPH 1998, Dr. August Suelflow

The LCMS Convention Proceedings (Focus years: all proceedings 1917 to present)

Moving Frontiers, CPH, 1964

Government in the Missouri Synod, CPH, 1947

¹⁴ *The Great Distractions from the Great Sending*, by Will Sohns, Leader's Summit, August 2021, self-published

paradigms and lenses for interpreting, understanding, and applying Scripture other than the *Missio Dei* lens. This is true despite a God-blessed marvelous history of mission activities, including foreign and home missions, with a history of flourishing growth during the 19th and 20th centuries¹⁵.

The research of all the Missouri Synod conventions from 1917 to the present, which included the Synod President's Reports, the convention essays, and all the resolutions, revealed distractions, disconnections, disturbances to unity, and a stack of unresolved anxiety, all of which has contributed to disobedience to God's Word and disobedience to the God-willed *Missio Dei* identity and nature, and thus has resulted in and continues to contribute to the malady of our 60-year decline and demise.

The referenced historical review of the Mission focus (or lack thereof) analyzed how doctrinal pressure points throughout the LCMS history had a profound negative impact on the utilization of God's will for a *Missio Dei* nature or being. The review also demonstrated profound blessings "doctrinally."

A culture of a preoccupation with the formal principle of theology, the "Battle for the Bible," protecting the purity of doctrine, clericalism, sacerdotalism (and AC XIV focus and misinterpretation of AC V), and theology for theology's sake as well as a focus on activities, buildings, tools, the means or "how-to," all distracted from the *Missio Dei ad Mundum focus*.

Various paradigms through the years took our eyes off the *Missio Dei* ball as the heart and center. Even though necessary and/or supportive, when disconnected from the *Missio Dei*, such paradigms as confessional/doctrinal unity, fellowship issues, unionism, ecumenism, divine worship/liturgy/service, "**church and ministry**," the role of women, education, practices (such as communion), etc., became or were the lenses to interpret, understand, and apply Scripture instead of the central, being, will and act of God, His great sending for the salvation of the world (John 3:16-17, plus other).

The historical review also revealed a primarily political culture and focus on convention after convention on structure, and governance. The good convention mission resolutions in many cases were not enacted at all or not widely implemented. If they were, they were short-lived with no long-lasting effect and were displaced with the "political" focus.

Thus, ***The Great Distractions from the Great Sending*** 114-page study demonstrated the need to be freed from behind the locked doors, from being locked in the prison of the bureaucratic maze, and immerse instead in the *Missio Dei* by exercising and submitting to the power of the Word to create a new mission HEART, to resurrect the dry bones and not just be "locked-in" by addressing the symptoms, the routines, and activities, even though such may understandably be "needed" but not to consume and destroy our energy, time and focus and thereby distract or disconnect from the *Missio Dei ad Mundum*.

The great distractions from the great sending over the history of the Synod can be summed up with one word, "disobedience" – disobedience to God's Word.

Thus, it is the heart-malady which is to be addressed and laid at the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Sent One, Who alone has the power and authority, through the exercise of His strong Word, to transform the heart!

¹⁵ *Gospel DNA, Five Markers of a Flourishing Church, Learning from a movement called "Missouri" by Michael Newman, 2016, Ursa Publishing*

Amid the great distractions and disconnects, the research strongly suggests God's solution of submitting to God's work of mending, repairing (καταρτισμὸν), and transforming (μεταμορφοῦσθε) through the immersion in His strong Word, which cleaves the darkness of disobedience, the disconnects, and distractions from the *Missio Dei*.

THE GREAT SENDING: CHRIST-CENTERED – GOSPEL-CENTERED

Sending of God, which is English for the *Missio Dei*, is an exposition of what it is to be Christ-centered and Gospel-centered. Or, said in another way, being Christ-centered and Gospel-centered is an exposition of the *Missio Dei*. ***The Great Sending, God's Heart for the World Beating Through You*** is an amplification and explanation of the *Missio Dei*, and what it is to be Christ-centered and Gospel-centered. *The Great Sending of God* is the Gospel¹⁶ in a nutshell!

In “***The Meyer Minute for May 13, 2022***,” Dr. Dale Meyer stated: *I find Christ-centered thinking a daily challenge, and My challenge is being Christ-centered in my every conscious, waking moment.* This is most certainly true, not only for each of us personally but for the Church, the community of believers.

For us to understand and apply this challenge, there is hardly a more excellent explanation of **Christ-centered** than Luther's explanation of the Second Article of the Apostle's Creed, “*I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, delivered me and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with silver and gold but with his holy and precious blood and with His innocent sufferings and death, in order that I may be his, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as he is risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.*” (The Book of Concord, the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church).

Related to being *Christ-centered* is being **Gospel-centered**, which is being evangelical (εὐαγγελίζω). *Evangelical*, a Greek word for Gospel, is being loyal to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Book of Concord provides the confessions of the **Evangelical** Lutheran Church. In our confirmation and ordination vows, we vow, as a member of the **Evangelical** Lutheran Church, to continue steadfastly in the confession of this [evangelical] Church. Many congregations include in their names “*Evangelical*.” Being **evangelical is to be a Gospel-centered person and church**.

And there is hardly a more excellent explanation of “**Gospel-centered**” than Article IV of the Smalcald Articles, “**IV. THE GOSPEL** We shall now return to the Gospel, which offers council [counsel] and help against sin in more than one way, for God is surpassingly rich in his grace: First, through the spoken word, by which the forgiveness of sin (the peculiar function of the Gospel) is preached to the whole world; second, through Baptism; third, through the holy Sacrament of the Altar; fourth, through the power of the keys; and finally, through the mutual conversation and consolation of brethren. Matt. 18:20, “Where two or three are gathered,” etc. (The Book of Concord, the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church).

The *Missio Dei ad Mundum* which is amplified and explained with the term, ***The Great Sending, God's Heart for the world***, is like a seamless Gospel garment that is **Christ-centered (ἐν Χριστῷ) and Gospel-centered (εὐαγγελίζω)** and which intrinsically includes and manifests, the Sent One, and Sender, the CHRIST, Who is the authoritative representative of and possesses a relationship with the Sender-Father. The Messiah Sent One also manifests the official sending, leaving, and going for the task of the redemption, rescue, and restoration of the world and all creation together with the GOSPEL message and proclamation of the sending away of sin (forgiveness), through the power of the sent Holy Spirit under the promise of Christ, the divine Apostle.

¹⁶ “The Gospel is...the good news of our salvation in Jesus Christ...The Gospel teaches what God has done and still does, for our salvation...The Gospel shows us our Savior and the grace of God” (A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's *Small Catechism*, Concordia Publishing House, 1943)

Under the Christ-centered and Gospel-centered “Missio Dei” lens, it is revealed that together with Jesus being the **Sent One** by the Father, the Holy Spirit was **sent**, and the Spirit-sanctified disciples were and are **sent** into the **world** (John 17: 17-19) by the **Sent One Christ** to **send** away sin under the power of the **sent** Holy Spirit (John 20:21-23) and to testify or proclaim (εὐαγγελίζω - to “gospel”) the **Good News** (Luke 4:18; 24:45-49; John 17:17-19) of **God’s sending** into the **world** “... **so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name**” John 20:31 While not exhaustive, a Scriptural witness of The Great Sending, as being both Christ-centered and Gospel-centered, is demonstrated in the following texts with the *Missio Dei* as the lens:

John 3:16-17, 34 ¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not **send his Son** into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him...³⁴ For he whom **God has sent** utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure.

John 17:1-3, 8, 18 ¹ When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ² since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ...⁸ For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you, and they have believed that **you sent me**...¹⁸ **AS YOU SENT ME INTO THE WORLD, SO I HAVE SENT THEM INTO THE WORLD**

John 20:21-23 ²¹ Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has **sent me**, even so I am **sending you**.”²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you **forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld**.” [Note the **Trinity** and the *Missio Dei* in this passage, together with the **centrality of Christ, and the Gospel of sending away sin (forgiveness)**]

John 4:34 ³⁴ Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him **who sent me** and to accomplish his work.

John 5:23-24, 30, 36-38 ²³ that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father **who sent him**. ²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him **who sent me** has eternal life. He does not come into judgment but has passed from death to life...³⁰ “I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just because I seek not my own will but the will of him **who sent me**...³⁶ But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that **the Father has sent me**. ³⁷ And **the Father who sent me** has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, ³⁸ and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one **whom he has sent**.

John 6:29, 38-39, 44, 57 ²⁹ Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him **whom he has sent**.” ...³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him **who sent me**. ³⁹ And this is the will of him **who sent me**, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me but raise it up on the last day.⁴⁴ No one can come to me unless **the Father who sent me** draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁷ As the living **Father sent me**, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.

John 7:16-18, 28-29, 33 ¹⁶ So Jesus answered them, “My teaching is not mine, but his **who sent me**. ¹⁷ If anyone’s will is to do God’s will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. ¹⁸ The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him **who sent him** is true, and in him, there is no falsehood...²⁸ So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple, “You know me, and you know where I come from. But I have not come of my own accord. He **who sent me** is true, and

him you do not know. ²⁹ I know him, for I come from him, and **he sent me.**” ...³³ Jesus then said, “I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him **who sent me.**”

John 8:16-18, 26-29, 42 ¹⁶ Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and **the Father who sent me.** ¹⁷ In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. ¹⁸ I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the **Father who sent me** bears witness about me.” ...²⁶ I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he **who sent me** is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.” ²⁷ They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father. ²⁸ So Jesus said to them, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. ²⁹ And he **who sent me** is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.” ...⁴² Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but **he sent me.**”

John 9:4 ⁴ We must work the works of him **who sent me** while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.

John 10:36 ³⁶ do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and **sent into the world,** ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’?

John 11:42 ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that **you sent me.**”

John 12:44-45, 49 ⁴⁴ And Jesus cried out and said, “Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him **who sent me.** ⁴⁵ And whoever sees me sees him **who sent me.** ⁴⁹ For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the **Father who sent me** has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak.

John 13:16, 20 ¹⁶ Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one **who sent him.** ²⁰ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives **the one I send** receives me, and whoever receives me receives **the one who sent me.**”

John 14:24-26 ²⁴ Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father’s **who sent me.** ²⁵ “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you.

²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the **Father will send in my name,** he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

John 15:21, 26 ²¹ But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me... ²⁶ “But when the Helper comes, whom **I will send to you from the Father,** the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

John 16:5-7 ⁵ But now I am going to him **who sent me,** and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. ⁷ Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, **I will send him to you.**

John 17: 20-25 ²⁰ “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that **you have sent me.** ²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know **that you sent me** and loved them even as you loved me. ²⁴ Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵ O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that **you have sent me.**

A Christ-centered and Gospel-centered believer and Church is a *Missio Dei* believer and Church. A *Missio Dei* disciple and congregation is a Christ-centered and Gospel-centered one!

In and with the Great Sending, the *Missio Dei*, which focuses on Christ as Savior and Lord –

We believe, teach and confess that Jesus Christ is our Savior and Lord, and that through faith in Him we receive forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation. We confess that “our works cannot reconcile God or merit forgiveness of sins and grace, but that we obtain forgiveness and grace only by faith when we believe that we are received into favor for Christ’s sake, who alone has been ordained to be the mediator and propitiation through whom the Father is reconciled” (AC, XX, 2).

We believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven and that all who die without faith in Him are eternally damned. We believe that those who believe in Christ will enjoy a blissful relationship with Him during the interim between their death and His second coming, and that on the last day their bodies will be raised.¹⁷

While the Law is used to bring men to a knowledge of their sins and provide guidance, the Christ-centered Gospel’s primary emphasis is “*God forgives them all their sins through Christ, accepts them for His sake as God’s children, and out of pure grace, without any merit of their own, justifies and saves them.*” (FC, SD, V, 25)

The mission of the Church (a holy assembly, a holy flock, a holy communion¹⁸ of the baptized in Christ [ἐν Χριστῷ]) is the Christ-centered and Gospel-centered *Missio Dei ad Mundum*!

CHRIST-CENTERED – GOSPEL-CENTERED! THE *MISSIO DEI* – THE [GREAT] SENDING OF GOD

¹⁷ Article I, *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, 1973

¹⁸ Article Three, *Apostle’s Creed*, *Luther’s Large Catechism*

THE GREAT SENDING AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

Together with the Father, and the Son, the Holy Spirit is of the essence of the *Missio Dei*, the sending of God, **the Great Sending** by the Holy Trinity into the world.

A proper understanding of the Holy Spirit is needed in order to understand His role in our lives.¹⁹ This statement by Dr. Luecke holds true also for understanding the Holy Spirit's role in the seamless act of the *Missio Dei*, God's sending into the world. Dr. Luecke also explains: *The [A] Greek term for the Holy Spirit is Paraclete, one who comes alongside. An alternate translation is Advocate, like a lawyer who advocates the case of his client. The Spirit advocates for the will of the Father and the Son in our personal lives. And he further states In shorthand, He [the Holy Spirit] works through God's Word.*²⁰

On the occasion of the 500th anniversary (1522-2022) of Luther's translation of the New Testament into vernacular German, **Lutheran Bible Translators** reminded its subscribers recently, "Sharing God's Word is an energizing and unifying mission" and that **"The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of the Lord endures forever." Isaiah 40:8.** In an LBT mailing on 7.5.2022, Martin Luther was quoted as saying, "I wish that every village had its own interpreter and that this book alone would live in the hands, eyes, ears, and hearts of **all people**"²¹

Participating in the sending of God (the *Missio Dei*) does involve Christians in **Bible translation** especially because the **Holy Spirit** not only gives the Holy Scripture (2 Peter 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16) to the world, but the **Holy Spirit** also works in and through it (1 Cor. 2:13; John 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:15-17 Ps. 119:105) for the core and lens of the *Missio Dei ad Mundum*.

With the *Missio Dei* lens for the interpretation, understanding, and application of God's Word, we are convinced of, committed to, and applying the role of the *Holy Spirit*, not only in our lives but in the mission of the Church. The Gospel of John reveals the person and work of the Holy Spirit in the seamless mission of God, which is centered on the sending of Christ, the sending of the Holy Spirit, and the sending of the believers-disciples-apostles into the world, which is the mission of the church:

JOHN 1:32-33 And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. ³³ I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit'

John 3:5-6 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life

John 7:39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified

¹⁹ Reflections On Ministry Blog, June 21, 2022, by Rev. Dr. David Luecke, who has written many books addressing the work of the Holy Spirit

²⁰ ipse

²¹ **Put God's Word in Their Hands**, Lutheran Bible Translators, Concordia, Missouri

John 14:16-17 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

John 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit [τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον], whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

John 15:26-27 "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.²⁷ And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning

John 16:7-15 Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.⁸ And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:⁹ concerning sin, because they do not believe in me;¹⁰ concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer;¹¹ concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.¹² "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.¹⁴ He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.¹⁵ All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

John 17:17-19 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

JOHN 20:21-23 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

Parallel passages to consider:

Luke 4:1, 18-19 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness ...¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Luke 24: 45-49 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,⁴⁶ and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,⁴⁷ and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.⁴⁹ And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Acts 1: 1-8 In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach,² until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.³ He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.⁴ And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me;⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own

authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.”

The Gospel of John connects the dots of *The Great Sending!* While Jesus, the Word made flesh, is the heart and center of our salvation, The Father Who sent Him cannot be dismissed, and the Holy Spirit Who was sent by the Father and the Son, i.e., Christ, cannot be dismissed.

The Missio Dei is one seamless central act of the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with the interrelation and interaction of the Trinity revealed in Scripture, especially in the Gospel of John, such as in chapters 14-16. While the Father sent Jesus to be the Rescuer of all mankind through His life, suffering, death, and resurrection, the Holy Spirit (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον) was sent to be the Paraclete.

Utilizing the lens of **the Missio Dei**, view the holy week (168 hours) of Christ’s suffering, death, and resurrection as an elucidation of the *Missio Dei*, revealed in John beginning with **chapter 12**, the anointing of Jesus by Mary and His triumphal entry on Palm Sunday into Jerusalem. Jesus came as the Sent One to save the world and restore His creation:

In chapter 13, Jesus, the Sent One, washes the disciple’s feet, signifying the new commandment on Maundy Thursday of Holy Week.

And in chapter 14, Jesus, who is the Way, Truth, and Life, declares His relationship with the Father and **the Holy Spirit**, Who is our Helper (Paraclete, i.e., Comforter, Consoler, Encourager, Advocate), the Spirit of Truth, and Who will teach (Teacher) us all things.

John chapter 15, which reveals Jesus as the true Vine and the Father as the “vine-dresser,” again refers to **the Holy Spirit** as the Helper and Spirit of Truth Who bears witness of Jesus, and Who with the Father SENDS the Holy Spirit

With Jesus still sharing with the disciples on Maundy Thursday in John 16, He reveals the work and role of **the Holy Spirit** in relation to the Father and Himself (the Son, Jesus). The church is not left in the dark or left to itself to discover the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit and the role of each. It is revealed!

With still connecting the **Missio Dei** dots, in chapter 17 Christ has a heart-to-heart talk in prayer with the Heavenly Father, Who had sent Him. With a *Missio Dei* lens, Christians can view Jesus as the Sent One to the world praying for His own mission role (His glory), praying for the disciples and the world. Then in verse 17, *Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth*, the work of the Holy Spirit is implied, which is explained explicitly in the previous chapters 14-16 (*The Spirit of truth*), but is now connected to the Sending of God in Christ and His sending of the disciples (verse 18, *As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.*).

John 18-19 portrays the climactic events of Jesus for our rescue/salvation, citing JESUS’ betrayal, and arrest, facing of Annas and Caiaphas, the denial by Peter, Jesus before Pilate, His crucifixion, death, and burial – the Sent Jesus redeeming the lost world, ^{John 20:31} *but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

For the glory of God, John 20 tops it off as more majestic than the Tetons or anything in the whole world with the glorious triumphal victory of the Resurrection, with the risen Lord appearing to the disciples behind the locked doors, granting His *peace*, and involving them in and commissioning them to participate

as co-associates with Him in the *Missio Dei* just as He prayed in His High Priestly prayer a few days or hours before.

And in God's great scheme of the great *Mission Dei*, **the Holy Spirit** is seamlessly involved. Now the disciples are to RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT (cf. John 14:17 – *Whom the world can't receive*), Who was sent and promised just a few days and hours previously (See John 14-16 and John 20:22). Also spoken that same resurrection night behind the locked doors, Christ, as recorded in Luke 24: 49, said, *And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.*"

While it was post-Resurrection night but yet not anticlimactic, John 21 records another appearance of Jesus to have a breakfast fellowship (He was alive in His body, though glorified) with the Disciples who are to feed and nourish in love all the sheep and lambs who are following the Sent-One Jesus Christ in the *Missio Dei*.

For an illuminated understanding of the person and work of the **Holy Spirit** in the great Sending of God, we need to review Luther's explanation in the Small Catechism²²:

I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my LORD or come to him, but instead, the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, made me holy, and kept me in the true faith, just as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and makes holy the whole Christian church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one common, true faith. Daily in this Christian church, the Holy Spirit abundantly forgives all sins—mine and those of all believers. On the Last Day the Holy Spirit will raise me and all the dead and will give to me and all believers in Christ eternal life. This is most certainly true.

Luther's explanation of the Holy Spirit in the Large Catechism²³ is especially significant for the Spirit's role in the *Missio Dei*:

*In it are expressed and portrayed **the Holy Spirit and his office**, which is that he **makes us holy**...so the Holy Spirit effects our being made holy through the following: the community of saints or Christian church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. That is, he first leads us into his holy community, placing us in the church's lap, where he preaches to us and brings us to Christ...In order that this treasure might not remain buried but be put to use and enjoyed, God has caused **the Word to be published and proclaimed, in which he has given the Holy Spirit to offer and apply to us this treasure, this redemption**...**In the first place, he has a unique community in the world, which is the mother that begets and bears every Christian through the Word of God, which the Holy Spirit reveals and proclaims, through which he illuminates and inflames hearts so that they grasp and accept it, cling to it, and persevere in it**...Of this community I also am a part and member, **a participant and co-partner** in all the blessings it possesses. I was brought into it by **the Holy Spirit** and incorporated into it through the fact that I have heard and still **hear God's Word**, which is the beginning point for entering it...**The Holy Spirit must always work in us through the Word**, granting us daily forgiveness until we attain to that life where there will be no more forgiveness. In that life there will be only perfectly pure and holy people, full of integrity and righteousness, completely freed from sin, death, and all misfortune, living in new, immortal, and glorified bodies...This, then, is the article that must always*

²² "What Does This Mean," 3rd Article of the Apostle's creed, the Small Catechism, Martin Luther

²³ The Third Article, Apostle's Creed, the Large Catechism, Martin Luther

*remain in force. **For creation is now behind us, and redemption has also taken place, but the Holy Spirit continues his work without ceasing until the Last Day, and for this purpose he has appointed a community on earth, through which he speaks and does all his work. [62] For he has not yet gathered together all of this Christian community, nor has he completed the granting of forgiveness...**But neither could we know anything of Christ, had it not been revealed by the Holy Spirit...*

The Book of Acts which is understandably called the Acts of the Apostles, could also rightly be called the Acts of the Holy Spirit, Who is a divine participant in the *Mission Dei ad Mundum* and in the multiplication of the believers and the community of believers (the church), such as (not all):

Acts 1:1-2 In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ² until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."

Acts 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 2:17-18 "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; ¹⁸ even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

Acts 2:38-39 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

Acts 4:8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders,

Acts 4:31 And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

Acts 8:29 And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot."

Acts 9:17 So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Acts 9:31 So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.

Acts 10:44-47 While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. ⁴⁵ And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶ For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, ⁴⁷ "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"

Etc.

SO, WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE GREAT SENDING TO THE SENDING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

This summary from the *Great Sending, God's Heart for the World Beating Through You*, demonstrates the relationship and the necessity of the participation of the Holy Spirit in the mission of the Church, which is the *Missio Dei*:

In the great sending of John 20:21-23, Jesus spoke of receiving the Holy Spirit for the mission. In Luke 24:49, Jesus referred to sending the promised "power from on high." In Acts 1:8, Jesus spoke again of the power when the Holy Spirit comes to empower the believers' mission of witnessing to the ends of the earth. In John chapters 14-16, Christ speaks at length about the sending of the Holy Spirit with references such as "Counselor," "Spirit of Truth," "Teacher of all things," and "Guide." The Holy Spirit lives with and in the believers. The Holy Spirit is connected to the Father and the Son and is connected to the church. He is a Divine resource of the Missio Dei for the church, through which He speaks and does His work...

...Through the Holy Spirit, the spoken Word of God, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the Office of the Keys are the divinely appointed means of grace that create and sustain saving faith in Christ and His merits...

...A sanctified life is required to honor God, and the holiness of Christ is provided through the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit...

...The Holy Spirit enters human hearts by God's grace alone, as a gift. And the Holy Spirit is designed by God for us to be of help in God's mission task...

...The Holy Spirit had emboldened them (for example, see Acts 4:8 and 4:31). At all times, this same Spirit functioned as the "Comforter," providing the first Christians with encouragement to keep pursuing the mission to which they had been called...

...Not only were these Christians commissioned by the church; they were "sent out by the Holy Spirit" (Αὐτοὶ μὲν οὖν ἐκπεμφθέντες ὑπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος) in [Acts] 13:4. It was the missionary God who propelled them, and those who owned the name responded by going!..

...We believe, teach, and confess that the divine sending includes the sending of the Holy Spirit to empower the sent into their everyday world and lives to "proclaim the excellencies of him who called [them] out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9) ...

...the central focus is the same: the heart of the dynamic mission is the sending of Christ, the sending of the Holy Spirit and of Christ's sending the church...

...The Missio Dei centers on the sending of Jesus, who in turn sends believers into the world and who, together with the Father, sent the Holy Spirit to empower God's people to receive and proclaim the Gospel and participate in God's mission to save the lost.²⁴

THE SUFFERING, DYING, RESURRECTED, AND ASCENDING/ASCENDED CHRIST, TOGETHER WITH THE FATHER, SENT THE WORLD THE HOLY SPIRIT. When Christ ascended and left this earthly existence, He left us with the Holy Spirit. You can't beat that!

²⁴ *The Great Sending, God's Heart for the World Beating Through You*, Tenth Power Publishing, by Will Sohns and select contributors, 2021.

THE MISSION SIGNIFICANCE OF “AS” (“JUST AS-EVEN SO”)

The *Missio Dei* is revealed as the *Great Sending* (commission) in St. John’s Gospel account of Maundy Thursday night in the High Priestly Prayer of Christ, “**As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world,**” (John 17:18) and in his resurrection account three days later when behind locked doors, *Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you”* (John 20:21).

The dynamic great sending of the church is centered in Christ, determined, and defined by Christ – the dynamic of His believers-disciples being **sent AS He was sent, AS being a sent one of Christ (John 20:21; John 17:18)** to the world which He so loved and for which He gave His life (John 3:16). The “Just as Christ was sent” dynamic (καθὼς...καὶγὼ) initiates and empowers a going of the disciples to disciple and to baptize (**Matt. 28:18-20**), **as** a going to teach (Matt. 28:18-20) and to proclaim (**Luke 24:47**) the message of salvation for the world.

The “**AS**” makes clear that this fixed mission is based on, patterned after, encouraged, and flowing from Christ’s being sent and executed by His Word in the context of the world, community, and culture(s) to which He was sent and to which the baptized in Christ are sent (**John 17:2-4, 18; John 20: 21-23**). The *Missio Dei ad Mundum*, centered in the *sentness* of Christ, is Gospel and is a Gospel movement.

The “**AS**” of the *Missio Dei* makes it clear that the mission of the church is not centered in nor even analyzed or clarified by a human institution such as The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, and its demographic context, its “traditions,” groupthink, ethos, historical, and cultural context. It is not based on “fertility,” “birth rates,” “race,” “gender,” or a focus on “ministry efforts on [in] areas where Northern Europeans are in the majority.” Nor is it based on focusing on the growth or decline of the Missouri Synod human institution with its political culture. It certainly is not based on periodic institutional tools programs of “stewardship” and “evangelism,” nor the quality or the skills of the institution and its members.

In his 1879 essay, “*Duties of an Evangelical Lutheran Synod*,” C.F.W. Walther said:

“Our primary goal should be to spread God’s glory, to rescue souls and bring them salvation...the moment we consider our District [Synod] more important than the invisible kingdom of God, the kingdom of grace and salvation, we begin to be a sect...we never attempt to attract people to ourselves.”²⁵

The church (believers in Christ) is an authorized agent of God’s mission in Christ. Thus, it must never turn in on itself. The focus is not to be on “synod” but on being sent ones **AS** Christ was sent to the world – sent to the lost (Luke 19:10), not just to “demographically-favorable neighborhoods” or to those who are predestined to “come to us.” It is not about the human institution! Christ makes it clear that “**AS**” must explain and direct the mission.

When the focus is on Christ’s sending-focus (“**as**” – “**even so**”), which is a focus on people who do not know Him, then the growth of a synod will come as a result or as a fruit of that. Prof. William W Schumacher of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, stated:

²⁵ “*Duties of an Evangelical Lutheran Synod*,” *Thesis VI*, Essays for the Church, C.F.W. Walther, Volume II © 1992 CPH,

“The LCMS as a denomination does not reach the lost...If we want to document decline, we should look at ourselves. If we want to seek and save the lost, we should look at them – and at Christ, because He is in that business.”²⁶

The dynamic “AS” (according as, just as, likewise, to the degree that) means that the baptized are sent into the world on Christ’s official and joyful Gospel business (Cf. *Christology* as a supporting “AS” study) --

- with Christ’s authority
- with Christ’s passionate sacrificial love
- with Christ’s initiative
- with Christ’s work/mission
- with Christ’s message/proclamation
- with Christ’s truth
- with Christ’s (and the Father’s) Sent-one, the Holy Spirit
- with Christ’s means of grace (Word and Sacraments)
- with Christ’s peace, power, promise and presence
- with Christ’s ultimate purpose

The “AS” of John 17:18 and John 20:21 (Cf. Matt. 9:35-38; Matt. 10) clearly declares that the mission of the church has its source in the heart and mission of the Triune God. It is rooted in the sending by God, the Father, as the Sender of the Sent-One, Jesus Christ, into the world to rescue it from all its lostness. This *sent-ness* of Christ is a Gospel movement, which alone encourages and produces a Gospel joy-filled sending movement into the world.

The mission is not simply based on Scriptural “commission texts” with a law orientation use (curb, mirror, rule [3rd use of the law]) or of focusing on the human institution and its mission data, demographics, mission commands, convention mission resolutions, mission support/funding, on institutional success or failure, on institutional growth or decline, survival, and self-introspection. Such a focus results in a loss of the Great Sending Christ-mission focus.

The *Missio Dei* is centered in and focused on the sender/sent-one/sending-saving activity of God in Jesus Christ and as revealed in the Word made flesh and God’s holy written Word (Gospel orientation). Thus, it is necessary for an observance, understanding, and application by the baptized sent ones of the “JUST AS – EVEN SO” (καθὼς...καὶ) in John 17 and 20.

In the article, “*Those Who Are Sent: Christ and His Church Christology, Missiology, and Ecclesiology in the Gospel of John*,” Prof. Robert Kolb of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, emphasizes:

“...a vital part of his understanding of the person of Christ is His sense of His sentness and His sending of the people whom He calls and gathers as a loving community and propels them on His mission to the world...His understanding of mission, of the sentness of His people on the basis of His own being sent by the Father, originates in his conviction that human beings have met God in Jesus because the Father sent His only-begotten Son into the world to redeem the world. Jesus then sends His followers... John’s entire gospel depicts Jesus on the move, on the mission on which the Father sent Him... The evangelist emphasized this — sending of both the Father and the Son

²⁶ “*Demography and Mission in the LCMS: A Response to Journal of Lutheran Mission, December 2016*,” *Missio Apostolica* (Lutheran Mission Matters) - a journal of the Lutheran Society for Missiology, Volume XXV, No. 1 (Issue 50) May 2017, pp 18-26

throughout his gospel. We can see —mission as its theme... God's mission becomes the mission of His people."²⁷

In the "as," everything in Scripture and in history takes on a missionary character and a dynamic sending by a God whose burning desire is to make all people His own. As Christ was sent to rescue (John 3:17; Luke 4:18; 1 John 4:9-14; John 17:3, 8, 18, 21, 23, 25), the believers were sent (before Pentecost) by Christ into the world with the forgiveness of sins and the promise of the Holy Spirit (John 20:22-23). As Christ was sent, the Holy Spirit was also sent (John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:7; John 20:22; Luke 24:49; cf. Acts 1:8) to provide impetus, to empower, and create and sustain faith. He was sent to teach the people of Christ the truth, to do His work through the Word and Sacraments, and to testify to the Gospel, all of which are instruments of the Holy Spirit for the creating and sustaining of faith.

The mission of God and the participation in that mission by the believers (the church) is God's great sending dynamic. As such, and under the "AS," **this great sending is bound to Christ**, The Word, Who was sent and Who was made flesh and dwelt among us in the world and is bound to His revelation through His Word (John 17:6-8, 14, 17, 20, 26) and under the "AS," the Sent-One, Sender is bound to those whom He sends.

The Evangelist's use of "AS" in his whole Gospel also gives character and meaning to the "as" in John 17 and 20:

John 3:14 And as Moses **lifted up** the serpent in the wilderness, **so must the Son of Man be lifted up**,

John 5:23, 26 that all may **honor** the Son, **just as they honor** the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him...²⁶ For as the Father has **life** in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have **life** in himself.

John 6:57 As the **living** Father sent me, and **I live** because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will **live** because of me.

John 8:28 So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own authority **but speak just as** the Father **taught** me.

John 10:15 **just as** the Father knows me and I **know** the Father; and I **lay down my life** for the sheep.

John 12:50 And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I **say**, therefore, I **say as** the Father has told me."

John 13:15, 33-34 For I have given you an example, that you also should **do just as** I have **done** to you...³³ Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and **just as I said** to the Jews, so now I also **say** to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.'³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: **just as** I have **loved** you, you also are to **love** one another.

John 15:4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.

John 15: 9-12 As the Father has **loved me**, so have I **loved you**. Abide in my love.¹⁰ If you **keep my commandments**, you will **abide in my love**, **just as** I have kept my Father's **commandments and abide in**

²⁷ *Missio Apostolica* (Lutheran Mission Matters) -a journal of the Lutheran Society for Missiology, Volume XX, No. 1 (Issue 39) May 2012

his love. ¹¹ *These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.* ¹²
"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. (Cf. Eph. 4:32; 5:1)

The "as" immediate context of John 17:11, 21-23 also sheds light on the *Missio Dei* significance of (καθώς...κάγω):

¹¹ *And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be **one**, even as we are **one**...*
²¹ *that they may all be **one**, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, **so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*** ²² *The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be **one** even as we are **one**,* ²³ *I in them and you in me, that they may become **perfectly one**, so that the world may know that you **sent me and loved them** even as you **loved me.***

In the article "As the Father Has Sent Me," Rev. Henry R. Schriever²⁸ states:

"In John's reporting of Jesus' commission, Jesus tells the disciples, —As the Father has sent me, I also send you|| (Jn. 20:21–23). What does Jesus mean? What did that mean for this first community of followers? What does that mean for modern communities of followers called Christian congregations? An exceedingly great deal, especially in our day and age. We explore the message and implications. It was on the evening of that first day, John tells us, that Jesus stood there among His disciples. They were still afraid. They had locked the doors. Suddenly, they see Jesus in front of them! Is it He? Is it a ghost? (Cf. Lk 24:37) Jesus, knowing their hearts and minds, quiets them with —Peace be with you|| as He shows them His hands and His side. It is He! They rejoice. He greets them again with —Peace be with you.|| Following this greeting, Jesus goes right to the point and tells them, —As the Father has sent me, I am also sending you.|| In this —commission,|| He compares what He is doing with them with what the Father was doing with Him."

The significance of "as" is exemplified and characterized by many reoccurring concepts in the Gospel of John (significant as compared to Matthew, Mark, and Luke), such as "sent" (54 verses), together with "love," "truth," "word," "that" (ὅτι, denoting purpose-114 significant times), "light," "life," "believe," (48 times) "world" (64 times) and "work" (Christ's work as recorded in the Gospel of John: salvation, life, bear witness, utter the Word of God, do the Father's will, reap, that the hearers know, see and believe, teach, glorify God, bear the truth, cleanse, forgiveness, give peace and eternal life).

Christ's "work" is actually reflected in the "work" of the believers as revealed in John and other passages of Scripture such as, forgive John 20:23; proclaim, preach, Matt. 10:7; Luke 24: 47; seek and search, Luke 15; witness, Luke 24: 48; Acts 1:8; disciple, baptize and teach, Matt. 28: 19-20; Matt. 18:15ff; confess, Matt. 16:16; declare, tell out, show forth, 1 Peter 2:9.

The John 17:18, "AS (καθώς...κάγω) [according as, just as] YOU SENT (ἀπέστειλας -send out, away) ME INTO THE WORLD (κόσμος)..." does indeed take on a great deal of meaning as seen in these John 17 verses:

- ² ... authority (ἐξουσία) over all flesh, to give eternal life to all ...

²⁸ *Missio Apostolica* (Lutheran Mission Matters) -a journal of the Lutheran Society for Missiology, Volume XX, No. 1 (Issue 39) May 2012

- ³ And this is eternal life, that they know (γινώσκω) you the only (μόνος) **true God**, and **Jesus Christ** whom you have **sent (ἀπέστειλας)**.
- ⁴ I glorified you on earth, having accomplished (τελειόω) **the work** (ἔργον) *that you gave me* to do
- ⁶ I have **manifested** (φανερώω – appear, show) your name to the people (ἄνθρωπος)[human beings]
- ⁸ For I have given them **the words** (ῥήμα) [utterance, matters] *that you gave me*
- ⁹ I am **praying** (ἑρωτάω) [request, ask, entreat] for them
- ¹² ...I **kept** (τηρέω) [watch, keep eye on, guard] them in your name, which *you have given me*. I have **guarded** (φυλάσσω) [to be on guard, preserve from tribe] them...
- ¹⁴ I have given them **your word** (λόγος)...
- ¹⁵ I do **not** ask *that* you **take** them [disciples] out of the world
- ¹⁷ Sanctify (ἀγιάζω) them in **the truth** (ἀλήθεια); **your word** (λόγος) **is truth**.
- ¹⁹ ...they [the world] **also** may be sanctified **in truth**.
- ²⁰ ... who [the world] **will believe** in me through their [disciples] word
- ²¹ ...they may **all be one** (εἷς), just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also **may be in us**, so that the world may believe **that you have sent (ἀπέστειλας) me**.
- ²⁶ I **made known** (γνωρίζω – declare) [γινώσκω] to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, *that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.*"

In his article, "As the Father Has Sent Me," Rev. Henry R. Schriever²⁹ also states

"The disciples are to be like the Son: sent into the world out of love for the world to be as He was in the world, in the same relationship He has with the Father! Even as the Father who loved His Son and bound Himself to Him, sending His Son into the world that the Son will also love, so now Jesus, who loves His disciples and has bound Himself to them, sends them into the world in the same way. What is of first importance here is the intimacy of the relationships. Jesus often spoke of His —oneness|| with the Father, of the Father being in Him and His being —in|| the Father (Jn 17:21) ... We conclude therefore that as the Father sent a —part|| of Himself in Jesus, so Jesus sends a —part|| of Himself in the disciples (cf. the Pauline image of the Church as the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 12:12ff.)."

In the attached Addendum I, "**as**" is depicted with bullet points from the Gospel of John. The 1st column indicates what it is to be sent "**according as**" the sent Christ (it must be understood that the "as" does not apply to being the person of Christ or His work of atonement for the world's sins. Example: We can be like a Shepherd but not THE SHEPHERD), the 2nd column, what it means to be sent into the world as was confronted by Jesus and the 3rd column shows our mission purpose, which is the same as Christ's. In the attached Addendum II, the "as" is pointed out regarding how the very role or "office" of Christ is similarly reflected in the sending of the baptized into the world.

The mission of the baptized indeed flows from the "**AS...SO**" (John 17:11,18; 20:21-23; Cf. Jn. 13:15, 34; 15:9-13; Eph. 4:32). Not derived from a synod with its caretaker self-focus, "resolutions," and analyses, it proceeds from and is a continuation of the mission of God – a dynamic sending that is derived and results

²⁹ *Ibid*

from the costly sending and saving activity of Christ. It truly grows out of, is based on, and is a continuation (Cf. Acts 1:1-2) of the dynamic mission of the sent and sending Christ to rescue and restore His people in the world – a new heaven and new earth.

JUST AS Christ, the Missionary Son of God full of grace and truth, being made flesh and dwelling among us, was sent in and with authority, love, truth, self-sacrifice, the Word, power, and a task³⁰ that all may be one with Him, have His joy, forgiveness, and eternal life, **EVEN SO** the believers in Christ are sent!

³⁰ In a book, *Gospel DNA – Five Markers of a Flourishing Church*, authored by [Rev. Michael W. Newman](#) (LCMS Texas District Mission Ministry Facilitator), five markers are traced, *People (love/care for)*, *Multiplication*, *Truth*, *Adaptability* and *Self-Sacrifice*, all of which describe a flourishing Gospel movement and all of which reflect the mission significance of “As...So” in the *sending* motif.

ADDENDUM I

"AS" THE SENT CHRIST

- ✓ MAKE KNOWN GOD
- ✓ THE SON OF GOD*
- ✓ THE SON OF MAN*
- ✓ ONE WITH FATHER
- ✓ THE LAMB OF GOD*
- ✓ MADE FLESH
- ✓ DWELLING AMONG
- ✓ SENT W. AUTHORITY
- ✓ LIGHT OF WORLD
- ✓ THE LIFE*
- ✓ GRACE AND TRUTH
- ✓ CALLS DISCIPLES
- ✓ REVEALS GLORY
- ✓ TRUTH
- ✓ LOVE
- ✓ KINGDOM OF GOD
- ✓ ESTABLISH RELATION
- ✓ MIRACLES
- ✓ TEACH
- ✓ MISSIONARY/TESTIFY
- ✓ HEAL
- ✓ FEED
- ✓ PREACH
- ✓ PROPHET
- ✓ THE KING*
- ✓ WORK
- ✓ WATER OF LIFE
- ✓ BREAD OF LIFE
- ✓ THE DOOR*
- ✓ SEND HOLY SPIRIT*
- ✓ FORGIVE
- ✓ THE SHEPHERD*
- ✓ THE RESURRECTION*
- ✓ SERVANT
- ✓ THE WAY*
- ✓ COMFORT
- ✓ THE VINE*
- ✓ REDEMPTION*
- ✓ SAVE THE WORLD*

"AS...TO THE WORLD

- DARKNESS
- NATURAL DESCENT
- IN THE FLESH
- NOT KNOWING GOD
- CHILDREN OF DEVIL
- BLIND
- EVIL
- HATRED
- SIN
- TROUBLED
- WEDDING GUESTS
- TEMPLE PARTICIPANT
- PHARISEES
- JEWISH COUNCIL
- ALL PEOPLE
- WOMAN AT WELL
- OFFICIAL'S SON
- BLIND
- LAME
- PARALYZED
- CROWDS (5000)
- JEWISH FEASTS
- JEWISH LEADERS
- ADULTRESS WOMAN
- MAN BORN BLIND
- UNBELIEVING JEWS
- UNBELIEVERS
- DISCIPLES
- BELIEVERS
- SOLDIERS
- ONLOOKERS
- HIGH PRIESTS
- SANHEDRIN
- RULERS
- SERVANT GIRL
- PARENTS
- RELATIVES
- FRIENDS
- WOMEN AT TOMB

"AS.. FOR HIS PURPOSE

- CHILDREN OF GOD
- GOD'S GLORY
- SEE HEAVEN
- BELIEVE/HAVE FAITH
- FORGIVENESS
- PEACE
- ETERNAL LIFE
- ABUNDANT LIFE
- NOT CONDEMNED
- BELIEVE IN THE SON
- BELIEVE IN THE SAVIOR
- RAISED ON LAST DAY
- BELONG TO GOD
- ACKNOWLEDGE HIM
- BE ONE FLOCK
- HAVE ONE SHEPHERD
- BE MISSIONARY, SENT
- KNOW TRUTH
- KNOW THE TRUE GOD
- BE ONE WITH THE FATHER
- BE ONE IN CHRIST
- BE ONE WITH ONE ANOTHER
- CHRIST'S JOY
- SANCTIFIED IN TRUTH
- LOVE
- SERVE
- FOLLOW
- BELIEF IN TRUE CHRIST
- BE WITH CHRIST
- GLORIFY GOD

ADDENDUM II

"AS YOU HAVE SENT ME INTO THE WORLD

CHRIST SENT AS -

THE APOSTLE (MISSIONARY) Heb. 3:1; Jn. 17:18
THE PROPHET (REVEALER) Matt. 13:57; 21:11
THE EVANGELIST-MESSENGER-Mt. 4:23; Lk 4:18
THE SHEPHERD (PASTOR) – John 10:11-16
THE TEACHER – Matthew 4:23; 5:2; John 3: 2;
THE PROCLAIMER (PREACHER) – Matthew 4:17
THE HEALER – Matthew 4:23-24; Luke 4:18-19
THE PRIEST - Heb. 3:1; 5:10; 7:26-27; 10:11-12
THE KING (RULER) – John 12:15; 18:36-37;
THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD – John 1:4; 8:12; 9:5
THE WAY – John 14:6
THE TRUTH – John 14:6; 17:17
THE WORD – John 1: 1-14
THE DOOR – John 10: 7, 9
THE BREAD OF LIFE – John 6: 4, 35, 41, 48, 51
THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE - John 11: 11-13
THE SERVANT – Mk 10: 45; Mt. 20:28; Jn. 13: 16

I [ALSO]HAVE SENT THEM INTO THE WORLD"

WE ALSO, EVEN SO, SENT AS -

MISSIONARIES – John 20:21-23; Acts 8; 13:2-4
PROPHETS – 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11; Acts 21:9
EVANGELISTS – Eph. 4:11; Acts 21:8-9; 2 Tim 4:5
PASTORS – Eph. 4:11; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 1:23
TEACHERS – Eph. 4:11; 1 Cor. 12: 28; Acts 13:1
PROCLAIMERS – Acts 5:42; 8:4; 15:35; Gl. 1:23
HEALERS – 1 Cor. 12:9, 28, 30
PRIESTS – Exodus 19:6; 1 Peter 2: 5, 9; Rv. 1:6
KINGS – Rev. 1:6; Exodus 19:6; 1 Peter 2:9
LIGHTS – Matt. 5:14-16; Phil. 2:15; Eph. 5:8-9
WAY PROVIDERS – Mk. 1:3; Lk 20:21; Acts 18:25
TRUTH BRINGERS – Eph. 4:15,25; 6:14; 1 Jn 3:18
WORD CENTERED – Lk 11:28; Acts 4:29; Col 3:16
DOORS TO WORLD – Acts 14:27; 1 Cor. 16:9
FEEDING-TENDING – John 21: 15-19; 1 Peter 5:2
LIFE GIVING – Acts 5:20; Rom. 6:4; Phil. 2:16
SERVANTS/SLAVES – Matt. 20:25-28; 1 Peter 5:3

DYNAMIC OF AUTHORITY AND SENDING!

THE CHRIST-APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY

ABSTRACT:

At its foundation, the *Missio Dei* is an authority issue. Christ, Who was given **authority** over all flesh to give eternal life to all (John 17:2), Who was given all **authority** in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18), and was **sent** (authorized) into the world (John 3:16-17), authorized (sent) the baptized and the fellowship of the baptized into the world (John 17:18) that the world *may know...the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Who was sent (authorized)* [John 17:3]. Therefore, at the heart of the *Missio Dei ad Mundum* is what can be termed the **Christ-apostolic authority**.

“**Authority**” (ἐξουσία) in all of life, in all relationships, and in all the God-created estates in His creation³¹, even the created-ecclesiastical estate, which is the assembly of believers, is an essential foundational principle. Thus, the function and faithful exercise of authority is an absolute necessity. Rejection, negligence, any violation, and abuse of authority (aka abuse of power) are causes of brokenness, confusion, chaos, separation, and destruction (self-destruct) in the world as well as in the church.

A deep and dynamic understanding of the *Missio* (*send*, root: ἀποστέλλω) *Dei*, is to understand that intrinsic in the Greek word (concept) ἀποστέλλω and the Hebrew word, נָחַץ – (*shalach*, - ἀποστέλλω in the LXX) – is **authority, sending authority, both the authority of the sender, the sending and authority of the sent-one**. Christ, the Sent-one (authorized) by the heavenly Father, and thus Christ’s sent-ness was authoritative sending. Christ, the sender, and thus Christ’s sending (authorized) of the baptized, is authoritative sending.

Thus, intrinsic in “sending” (apostolic) is also the authoritative representation (sent one) of the sender. Christ, the Sent-one is the authoritative representative of God the Father. The Holy Spirit, a Sent-one, is the authoritative representative of God the Father and God the Son. The baptized, that is the sent ones, are authoritative representatives of God the Son. With authority, the Divine Apostle (Christ) “apostled” (root: ἀποστέλλω) the “Apostolic Church” (the one holy catholic and apostolic Church – the Nicene Creed). **In Christ’s apostolic authority, the baptized and the fellowship of the baptized in Christ are representatives of Christ *de jure* and *de facto* in His mission.**

In both the Hebrew “send” word, נָחַץ, and the Greek send word ἀποστέλλω, “**authority**” is not just implied. It is intrinsic and explicit. In the sending, is the AUTHORITY to leave and go, the authority to represent, the authority message, the authority to witness and proclaim the given message, the authority of the sending task (forgive), the authority of the sending target (to whom), and the authority to carry out and achieve God’s sending purpose with His authorized resources. **Sending is an authorizing!** The authorized Christ, in His sending to the world, authorizes the baptized and assembly of believers in their being sent and their sending to the world.

John 17:2-3,18: “... since you have given him **authority** over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent [authorized] ...As you sent [authorized] me into the world, so I have sent [authorized] them into the world.

³¹ Cf. Attached Addendum, **Dynamic of Authority and Sending**

John 20:21-23: “Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent [authorized] me, even so I am sending [authorized] you.’”²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld’” (by the power of the Holy Spirit, a forgiving authority in the sending). (Emphasis added)

CHRIST-APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY is the source, foundation, and core being, life, and service of the sent believers and assembly of believers, whom Christ sends into the world!

THE “AUTHORITY” DYNAMIC IN THE SENDING:

The true God, Who is the God and author of all creation, the author of life, the home, society, and political estate, and the author of His Word, is the author of His mission to the world, which mission has created His Church. The true God is the God of authority and confers authority for the well-being, multiplication, and fruitfulness of all that He has created including the Church.

This authority dynamic permeates everything that God has authorized. God is not only the creation authority, history authority, health authority, vocation authority, weather authority, happiness authority, peace authority, world authority, and sanctification authority, **He is the mission (sending) authority.**

When His authority and who and what He has authorized in all estates of life is disregarded, rejected, abused, and violated, then failure, chaos, confusion, dysfunction, destruction, and demise are the result, rather than the multiplication and fruitfulness which is what the authority-God desires. Rejecting, violating, or abusing the rightful authority makes the rejecter himself/themselves authoritarian and guilty of anarchy.

When authorization is being rejected - not being fulfilled or carried out - the rejection is not only of the authority granted but the rejection of the very author of the authority. When Christ (His honor and authority) is rejected, the heavenly Father, Who sent and authorized Him, is dishonored and rejected. God takes the matter of His authority and the rejection of His authority very seriously. And so, must we (cf. Mark 11:27-33; John 7:16-18, 28-29, 33)!

“Ah! I also and my sin wrought Thy deep affliction; This indeed the cause hath been of Thy crucifixion...Grant that I Thy Passion view with repentant grieving nor Thee crucify anew by unholy living...” (TLH 140; cf. LSB 440)

In the mission of Christ (*the Missio Dei*), Christ was sent (ἀποστέλλω) to the world with all authority (ἐξουσία) over life, sin, death, Satan, the world, and judgment. Christ conferred His authority to the baptized in becoming children of God for being sent into the world and for the building up and work of His kingdom “*that I may be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness.*” Taking a cue from Luther, we can say “***that I may be His own and live under His apostolic authority in His kingdom and serve Him as sent ones in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as He has risen from the dead, lives, and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.***”

Christ conferred His authority to the baptized, the believers, in the sending of His believers to the world with His forgiveness to represent Him with and under His authority. The one holy, catholic, apostolic Church *lives, serves, and participates* with Christ under the apostolic (sending, mission) authority of Christ.

This divine authoritative and core act of God gives the meaning of existence and direction to every congregation.

At the present time, there appear to be differing views, and even confusion, in our confessional fellowship about **authority**, whether it be the **authority** of the Synod President, of the institutional Synod itself, of its District Presidents, seminaries, the clergy (the ministry of the “ordained”), or the laity (priesthood of believers), divinely established congregations and especially of their respective **mission authority**. The confusion is affecting the relationships and function of our laity, called workers, congregations, circuits, districts, and mission starts or plants throughout Synod, and is having an adverse impact upon our life and mission together.

The **divine mission** (sending) **authority is a dynamic of God in His world and to His world** for the building and gathering of the sanctified Una Sancta in Christ. God’s loving **authority** in Jesus and the conferring of His **authority** are at the heart of His burning desire to make all people His own through Christ, yes, to rescue mankind in this broken and dying world (John 3:16-17; 17:3, 11-23).

The assembly of the baptized is the **authorized** instrument of God and His mission (sending) to the world. Christ’s Church on earth, the office of the public ministry, and the incumbents in the office, though mediately called, are instruments of God to participate together through distinct servant roles and gifts in Christ’s **authorized** mission to the world. As Christ was not **self-authorized**, the mission of the baptized, the Church, and pastoral office, are not **self-authorized**, not arrogated unto self, or unto a rogue or self-appointed committee and not to be self-serving. The essence of the nature, function, and mission of the Church and ministry is de jure divino even though a congregation and pastor can decide not to be who/what God authorized them to be and thereby refusing, rejecting, and abusing His **authority and His apostolic authorization**.

Because God is the God of mission (apostolic) authority, the good news is that the gates of hell cannot prevent God’s mission (Matthew 16:18-19) even when His authority is rejected, and even if believers, a congregation, or a pastor intentionally or unintentionally and knowingly or unknowingly become a “hindrance” and a rejecting force to God’s mission and His apostolic authority.

Even as Synod and its congregations have experienced many blessings of **God’s authority** throughout our history in administering the means of grace at home and abroad and in “missions,” we have also experienced battles against the authority of God, His Word, and His conferred **authority** amid non-mission focus, church-centered, clergy-centered tendencies and actions (clericalism), and amid romanizing, hierarchicalism, institutionalism, and individualism forces – all contributing to the abuse of authority, which includes the mission brokenness of pastors serving the self-centeredness of congregations and congregations serving the self-interests of pastors instead of mending, perfecting, and restoring (καταρτισμὸν) the saints for Christ’s mission (Ephesians 4:11-12).

In the targeted and limited study that follows, the aim is that the God-given *Christ- apostolic (sending, mission) authority* and the exercising of the *authority* of His Word, will motivate, determine, shape, empower, direct, and execute the believer’s *MISSIO DEI authority and life* in this current non-Church, post-Christian, technological, bio-medical, pagan, secular, progressive, and broken culture and world to whom Christ and the Church are sent in the great apostolic (sending) authorization – an absolute authority.

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit - shalach - ἀποστέλλω - ἐξουσία – missio = send – sending – mission – authority – authorize = Christ-apostolic authority of the baptized and fellowship of the baptized - absolutely!

ἐξουσία:

There are many New Testament words that have the connotation of granting **authority** such as charge, call, right, set apart, give oversight, anoint, appoint, make, instruct, and “breath(ed)” in (on, out), coupled with edicts or commands, but the sending words, especially the **send** word, **ἀποστέλλω**, has the strongest implication of and association with **ἐξουσία – authority, authorize**.

“ἐξουσία” proper: Authority, power, weight, especially moral authority, influence; a spiritual power, an earthly power; privilege; also force, capacity, competency, freedom; or (obj.) mastery, **delegated** influence, authority, jurisdiction, liberty, power, right, strength, prerogative, and permission.

- **Authority possessed by Jesus:**

Matthew 7:29 for he was teaching them as one who had **authority**, and not as their scribes.

Matthew 21:23-27 And when he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what **authority** are you doing these things, and who gave you this **authority**?”²⁴ Jesus answered them, “I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what **authority** I do these things.²⁵ The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?” And they discussed it among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’²⁶ But if we say, ‘From man,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet.”²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what **authority** I do these things.

Matthew 28:18, 20 And Jesus came and said to them, “**All authority (ἐξουσίαν)** in heaven and on earth has been **given to me**” coupled with “**And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.**”

Matthew 9:6 “But that you may know that the Son of Man has **authority (ἐξουσίαν)** on earth to **forgive (ἀφιέναι)** sins”—he then said to the paralytic — “Rise, pick up your bed and go home.”

Mark 3:15 and have **authority** to cast out demons (cf. Mark 11:27-33).

John 10:18 “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have **authority** to lay it down, and I have **authority** to take it up again. **This charge (ἐντολή - command) I have received from my Father.**”

John 5:27 And he has given him **authority** to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.

John 10:17-18 For this reason the Father loves me, because **I lay down my life that I may take it up again.**

¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have **authority** to lay it down, and I have **authority** to take it up again. **This charge I have received from my Father.**”

John 17:2-3, 18 since **you have given him authority over all flesh**, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.³ And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom **you have sent...** As you **sent me into the world**, so I have **sent them into the world.** (Cf. also John 17: 8, 21, 23, and 25)

- **Authority conferred by Jesus:**

John 1:12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right (ἐξουσία - **authority**) to become children of God,

Matthew 10:1 And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them **authority** over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. (cf. **Luke 9:1; Luke 10:17; Matthew 10: 5-7**)

John 17:18 As you **sent me into the world**, so I have **sent them into the world**.

John 20:21-23 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has **sent** me, even so I am **sending** you."²² And when he had said this, he **breathed on** them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and said to them, "All **authority** in heaven and on earth has been given to me.¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ **teaching** them to observe all that I have commanded you. **And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.**"

Mark 6:7 And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them **authority** over the unclean spirits.

Mark 13:34 It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants **in charge** (ἐξουσία), each with his work, and commands (ἐντέλλω) the doorkeeper to stay awake.

2 Corinthians 13:10 For this reason I write these things while I am away from you, that when I come I may not have to be severe in my use of the **authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down**.

ἀποστέλλω:

Authoritative sending, commission; put forth, set apart. i.e., to **send out** (properly on a mission), put in, send away, forth, out, set [at liberty], to send away, to send forth upon a certain mission, a messenger, ambassador, delegate, representative, deputy, envoy, missionary.

- **Christ, the sent [authorized] one:**

Luke 4:18-19 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has **anointed** (ἔχρισέν) me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has **sent** (ἀπέσταλκέν [ἀποστέλλω]) me (and I am here) to proclaim liberty (ἄφεισιν [ἄφεις] – release, freedom, pardon, dismissal) to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to **set at liberty** (ἀποστεῖλαι, ἀφέσει* [ἄφεις]) those who are oppressed (to **send away** [ἀποστεῖλαι] the crushed [broken to pieces, shattered] into freedom [ἀφέσει] [release, deliverance etc.] – "send forth the oppressed into freedom" – "to send away in deliverance such as are shattered"),¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Matthew 10:40 "Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who **sent** me.

Luke 4:43 but he said to them, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was **sent** for this purpose."

John 3:17 For God did not **send** his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

John 3:34 For he whom **God has sent** utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure.

John 5:36 But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that **the Father has sent me** (cf. John 9:7-11).

John 17:2-3 since you have given him **authority** (ἐξουσίαν) over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have **sent** (ἀπέστειλας).

John 17:18 As you **sent** (ἀπέστειλας) me into the world, so **I have sent** (ἀπέστειλα) them into the world.

John 20:21-23 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the **Father has sent me**, even so I am sending you." ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you **forgive** the sins of any, they are **forgiven** them; if you withhold **forgiveness** from any, it is withheld."

[Similarly, in fourteen other references in the Gospel of John alone, Jesus points out and appeals to the fact that He has been "sent," i.e., that He is the authorized one without a doubt. For Christ, it is a matter of His absolute authority]

- **Christ sends [authorizes] the disciples:**

Matthew 4: 18-22 While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will **make** (ποιέω – do, make) you fishers of men." ²⁰ Immediately they **left** their nets and followed him. ²¹ And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he **called** (ἐκάλεσεν – call, name, summon) them. ²² Immediately they **left** the boat and their father and followed him.

Matthew 10:5 These twelve Jesus **sent out**, **instructing** (παραγγέλλω – ordering, charging, directing) them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans,

Matthew 10:16 "Behold, I am **sending** you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

Matthew 11:10 This is he of whom it is written, "'Behold, I **send** my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.'

Matthew 20:2 After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he **sent** them into his vineyard.

Mark 3:14-15 And he appointed (ποιέω – do, make) twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might **send** them out to preach ¹⁵ and have **authority** to cast out demons.

Mark 6:7 And he called the twelve and began to **send** them out two by two, and gave them **authority** over the unclean spirits.

John 17:18 As you **sent** (ἀπέστειλας) me into the world, so I have **sent** (ἀπέστειλα) them into the world.

John 20:21-23 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has **sent** (ἀπέσταλκέν) me, even so I am **sending you**." ²² And when he had said this, **he breathed** (ἐμφυσάω – wind, expire, breath out) on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you **forgive** (ἀφῆτε) the sins of any, they are **forgiven** them; if you withhold **forgiveness** from any, it is withheld."

Cf. Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:45-49; Acts 1:8)

Reviewing the foundational dynamic of ἐξουσία (authority) and ἀποστέλλω (sending)³²:

ἐξουσία (authority) and ἀποστέλλω (sending) are closely associated since *sending* has the connotation of “with authority” as also used in the Hebrew O.T. פָּרַשׁ אֲפִיָּהּ, a N.T. Greek word, is another *sending* word often translated as “leaving,” as well as “forgiveness,” which gives meaning to authoritative “forgiveness” in the “sending” texts such as Matthew 9:6, Luke 4: 18-19, and John 20:22-23 (see above), which indicate a *sending with authority*, a *forgiving with authority*, to send away sins or leave sins (and nets, boat [Matt. 4:20-22] and water pots [John 4:28]) behind. “Anointed” (ἐχρισέν) in Luke 4:18 also has the connotation of “giving the authority.” Thus, note the meaning of the Greek “sending” words ἀποστέλλω and ἀφίημι and the Hebrew פָּרַשׁ with the LXX use of ἀποστέλλω:

ἀποστέλλω: official or authoritative sending, to *send out* (properly on a mission) literal or figurative; *send* (off, away, forth, out [of place, time or relation]), *dispatch* (on service), *to send with a commission*; **Note the word for apostle: ἀπόστολος**— from ἀποστέλλω - a *delegate, a messenger, one sent on a mission, representative; official*, especially an *ambassador* of the Gospel; officially a **commissioner** of Christ, messenger, *he that is sent*.- John 17:18; 20:21-23 (Cf. στέλλω— *set apart*; denotes properly the orderly motion involved) [Cf. LXX ἀποστέλλω for Hebrew פָּרַשׁ - *shalach*, Gen. 3: 23; 45:7-8; Exodus 3:10-15; Lev. 16:10; Is. 6:8; 18: 1-2; 48:16; 61:1-2; Jer. 1:4-10 [Cf. John 9:7 (Siloam); ἀποστέλλω; ηἵψ]

ηἵψ = Send, send away, forth, out; authoritative sending on an official mission as envoys or authorized representatives; Also = leave, let depart, let loose, free, release. (Derivatives include: “weapon” [“missile”], outstretching). NOTA BENE: The LXX use of the Greek ἀποστέλλω for ηἵψ.

ἀφεσις: *aphiemi; freedom; (figurative) pardon*: - deliverance, forgiveness, liberty, remission. ἀφίημι— from apo and *hiemi (more of the object point) -let go, a release, freeing (to send; an intensive form of eimi, to go); to send forth*, in various applications (as follow):- cry, forgive, forsake, lay aside, leave, let (alone, be, go, have), omit, put (*send*) away, remit, suffer, yield up. (Cf. “forgive” Matt 9:5-6; 26:28; John 20:23 and “leave” Matt. 4:20, 22; 19: 27,29; Jn 4:28; Cf. also Lev. 16:10; Cf. Lev. 16:10; Luke 4:18 and Is. 61:1)

The Christ-apostolic authority (mission authority) of the Church under Christ:

- **Under the power of the sent Holy Spirit, the power of Christ, His Gospel, and the exercise of His Word is the Christ-apostolic and governing authority in the mission to the world.**
 - Believers and assembly of believers are the **sent, authorized, and engaged** (priesthood of believers) by Christ in His mission (John 17:18; 20:21-23) to the world.
 - Believers and assembly of believers are the **authorized** possessors of “the office of the keys” – “All things are yours” (1 Cor. 3:21) for being sent to the world.
 - Christ’s apostolic **authoritative** mission, which has the Church as Christ’s instrument, is not institution church-centered, inward-centered, nor survivor-centered but Christ-Gospel mission-centered.

³² Cf. Attached **Addendum, Dynamic of Authority and Sending**, which also provides the resources of the *Old Testament* and the *Lutheran Confessions* with respect to “Authority.”

- Leader-pastors, missionaries, deacons, and other auxiliary workers are “sent” (called) or “**authorized**” (authority conferred mediately) only by those who are the “sent” or “authorized” by Christ versus a “**clandestine, authoritarian, clericalism, and ordained clergy-centered syndrome. No conventicle!** (Cf. proper interpretation of AC V and XIV)
 - Regarding church planting, it is the divine constituted congregation or a constituted group of divine congregations or the association (Synod) of congregations that is the “sending church.” (a sponsoring vis a vis a “supporting” congregation)
 - Not a self-appointed group or committee (or rogue group) or even a “supporting” congregation.
- Ordination and/or commissioning is only a public confirmation of being the “sent” or “authorized” by the authorized congregation. The “ordained” and “commissioned” of the public ministry is not directly or immediately authorized by God but only “mediately” authorized.
- Public absolution, the proclamation of the Gospel, administration of the means of grace (the public use of the “office of the keys”) is carried out by the called “sent” and “authorized” - on behalf of and in the stead of Christ under the authorization of the sent believers and assemblies of believers (congregations).

“Sent” and “authorized” examples in Acts 13:1-4, and Acts 15: 2-3, 22, 24-27, 30, 33:

Acts 13:1-4 Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” ³ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. ⁴ So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

Acts 15:2-3, 22, 24-27, 30, 33 And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed (ἔταξαν) to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question. ³ So, being sent (προπεμφθέντες from πέμπω, sent) on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the brothers....²² Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose (ἐκλεξαμένους) men from among them and send (πέμψαι) them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brothers,...²⁴ Since we have heard that some persons have gone out from us and troubled you with words, unsettling your minds, although **we gave them no instructions** (διστευόμεθα, charge, order), ²⁵ it has seemed good to us, having come to one accord, to choose (ἐκλεξαμένους) men and send (πέμψαι) them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, ²⁶ men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷ We have therefore sent (ἀπεστάλακμεν) Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth....³⁰ So when they were sent off (ἀπολυθέντες), they went down to Antioch, and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter...³³ And after they had spent some time, they were sent off (ἀπελύθησαν) in peace by the brothers to those who had sent (ἀποστείλαντας) them.

EVALUATION, OBSERVATIONS, AND COMMENTS:

An evaluation and observation through the Missio Dei lens of God's Word and with praying God's Word:

Col. 1: 9-10 *And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge (ἐπίγνωσις) of his will in all spiritual wisdom (σοφία) and understanding (σύνεσις),¹⁰ so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge (ἐπίγνωσις) of God;*

WE DO NOT CEASE TO PRAY that the baptized, the gathering of the baptized such as congregations, an association of congregations (a human Synod), and/or any formal mission partners “may be filled with knowledge” in all spiritual riches of the full assurance of understanding, and in all spiritual riches of the full assurance of wisdom, to apply the hidden treasures of God to the world, to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord's mission and to bear mission fruit for the Lord in every good work. Amen. Amen. Amen.

The passionate triple “Amen” in this prayer is that all believers “know,” “understand” and have the “wisdom” that God the Father **authorized** and **sent** His only Son, Jesus Christ, to the world for the salvation of the world, that Jesus has **authorized and sent** His believers and the assembly of believers to participate in His mission to the world.

Thus, WE DO NOT CEASE TO PRAY that the baptized, the gathering of the baptized, such as congregations, an association of congregations (Synod), and/or any mission partners, possess the Christ-apostolic authority - knowledge, understanding, and wisdom of -

- A vibrant mission (sent) congregation (and by implication, Synod, an association of congregations, mission partners) is one living and serving under Christ's **authority** and is being Christ's **authoritative** “*unique community in the world,*” in which each believer-missionary is an **authorized** “*...part and member, a participant and co-partner*” under Christ's **mission (sent) authority** (cf. LC, Apostle's Creed, Article III).
- The mission, ministry, and fellowship of a divinely established congregation and of any humanly instituted partnerships must reflect the dynamic of **Christ's apostolic (mission) authority**.
- Recognizing that the Scriptural authority of teaching all doctrine and the truth (John 17:17-19; Matthew 28:20) supports the core mission of Christ instead of being the heart of the mission.
- “The church gathers where the Gospel is preached” instead of “The Gospel is preached (only) where the church is gathered” -AC Art VII (Newton, Rev. Dr. Robert, *Recovering the Heart of Christ's Mission, Lutheran Mission Matters*, 2018 re: “church-centered-protected Gospel”).
- All Church practices and activities are to be aligned with Christ's mission authority and purpose instead of preoccupation with and focus on the human institution and arrangements (means of assistance).
- New Church planting that must not bypass the lines of authority, responsibility, and accountability but honor and uphold (abide by, act, and teach in accordance with) God-established authority (Christ Apostolic Authority) and the divine agent of the congregation. This applies to
 - A sending or sponsoring congregation
 - A sending association of congregations
 - A sent congregation
 - A sponsoring congregation
- Seeking and saving the lost (Luke 19:10) and exercising the authoritative Word of Christ's mission, **the Missio Dei ad Mundum**, instead of pre-occupation and focusing on saving, protecting, or preserving the pure doctrines, which are certainly commanded but are supportive, auxiliary,

antecedent or consequent and are not the **central *Mission Dei* act**, and instead of focusing on human institutions or their survival.

- Absolute authority of Christ's mission and His Word instead of pre-occupation and focus on Lutheran traditions, sacerdotalism, ceremonies, and ethos, coupled with legalism, control, and domination.
- Planting the one holy, catholic, apostolic Church instead of planting, nourishing, and maintaining institutional churches (Building the Body of Christ instead of human castles or buildings or campus').

CONCLUSION:

Spiritual decay, decline, and demise of believers and congregations as well as any human institution, result from **anarchy or a disregard for Christ's absolute apostolic authority such as:**

- 1.) the outright rejection of **Christ's apostolic authority (the *Missio Dei*, the Gospel mission)**,
- 2.) rejection of the **apostolic authority of Christ** by making any and all other "doctrines" the marrow, substance, and golden thread of all theology instead of *antecedens* and *consequens*,
- 3.) rejection of **Christ's apostolic (mission, sending) authority [*Missio Dei*]** as the predominant focus, the lens, the core, and the center (not just an adjunct or compartment) of all theology,
- 4.) and rejection of participation in His **authoritative** mission.

In repentant grieving, we need to put the "blame" and the sin where it belongs, and while in repentant joy, we put the rejection of *Christ's sending authority* at the foot of the cross.

***"I lay my sins on Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God; He bears them all and frees us from the accursed load. I bring my guilt to Jesus to wash my crimson stains white in His blood most precious till not a spot remains."* (TLH 651; LSB 606)**

Spiritual blessings in Christ abound and multiply under the riches of His grace, the Gospel of His salvation, with all the knowledge, understanding, and wisdom according to the mystery of His **dynamic Gospel sending authority** – to the praise of His glory (Eph. 1: 3-14)! **Christ-apostolic authority (*Missio Dei*) is the heart of all mission partners and partnerships that are sent into the world!**

We are indeed living and serving in Christ's mission to the world under the apostolic authority of Christ! That is the essence of *The Great Sending, God's Heart for the World Beating Through You!*

ADDENDUM

THE DYNAMIC OF AUTHORITY AND SENDING

INTRODUCTION

THE CREATOR AND PRESERVER HAS AUTHORITY OVER HIS CREATION AND HAS THE RIGHT (entitled, “owned,” permitted, allowed, privileged, enabled, directed, granted edict, authority and liberty to act) TO CONFER AUTHORITY (grants the divine right).

CREATED BY THE GOD OF AUTHORITY AND MADE IN GOD’S IMAGE, MAN LIVES AND BREATHES BEING SENT WITH THE AUTHORITY THAT GOD CONFERS

THE OLD TESTAMENT

There are many O.T. words that have the connotation of granting authority such as “place” or put one, consecrate, set apart, anoint, appoint, coupled with edicts or commands, but the O.T. word send, הלש, has the strongest implication of and association with “authorize.”

הלש = Send, Send away, forth, out; sending on an official mission as envoys or authorized representatives; Also = cast, cast out, put forth, out...; leave, let depart, let loose, free, release. (Derivatives include: “weapon” [“missile”], outstretching). NOTE BENE: The LXX use of the Greek ἀποστέλλω. (O.T. usage 566 times for “send”; 847 total count of הלש)

Cf. Genesis 45: 5-8 (Joseph); Exodus 4:28; 1 Sam. 15:1,18,20; 2 Sam. 12:1; Jer. 1:7; 14:14-15; Ezekiel 2:1-5; Is. 18: 2; Is.55:11; See also Exodus 19:1-9 for an historical outcome of the sending (Ex. 3:10-15) of Moses (Even though הלש is not used in the Ex. 19 text); See also Genesis 12:1-4 for God’s command to Abraham - הלך (walk, go – cf. leave, went, depart, get out of, set out) “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” ⁴ So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. (“ἀποστέλλω” in NT count: 133)

THE OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

- **AUTHORITY AND SENDING AT CREATION**

Genesis 1:26-28 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Genesis 2: 15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

Genesis 3:23 therefore the LORD God sent (הלש) him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.

- **THE “I AM” SENDS MOSES, I.E., GIVES HIM THE AUTHORITY:**

Exodus 3:10-20 Come, I will *send* you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”¹¹ But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”¹² He said, “But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that **I have sent you:** when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”¹³ Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has *sent* me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?”¹⁴ God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘**I AM has sent me to you.**’ ”¹⁵ God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has *sent* me to you.’ This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.”¹⁶ Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, “I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt,”¹⁷ and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.” ’¹⁸ And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.’¹⁹ But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand.²⁰ So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go.

- **SENDS AND AUTHORIZES SPIES**

Numbers 13: 1-3 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,² “*Send* men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel. From each tribe of their fathers you shall *send* a man, everyone a chief among them.”³ So Moses *sent* them from the wilderness of Paran, according to the command of the LORD, all of them men who were heads of the people of Israel.

- **THE LORD GOD ANOINTED AND SENT...APPOINTED, I.E., GIVES AUTHORITY**

Is. 61: 1-3 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has *anointed* (משח – apply oil as the one set apart and authorized) me to bring good news to the poor; he has *sent* me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;³ to grant to those who mourn in Zion— to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified. (Cf. Luke 4:18-20)

Is. 6:8 And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I *send*, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here am I! *Send* me."

Isaiah 18:1-2 Ah, land of whirring wings that is beyond the rivers of Cush, which *sends* ambassadors by the sea, in vessels of papyrus on the waters! Go, you swift messengers, to a nation, tall and smooth, to a people feared near and far, a nation mighty and conquering, whose land the rivers divide.

Is. 48:16 Draw near to me, hear this: from the beginning I have not spoken in secret, from the time it came to be I have been there." And now the Lord GOD has *sent* me, and his Spirit.

Jer. 1:4-10 Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying,⁵ “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I *appointed* (נתן – to give, make, place) you a prophet to the nations.”⁶ Then I said, “Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.”⁷ But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’; for to all to whom I *send* you, **you shall go,**

and whatever I *command* you, you shall speak. ⁸ Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the LORD.” ⁹ Then *the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth*. And the LORD said to me, “Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. ¹⁰ See, I have *set you* this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”

- **UNAUTHORIZED OR NOT SENT PROPHETS**

Jeremiah 23:21 “I did not *send* the prophets, yet they ran; I did not speak to them, yet they prophesied.

THE CONFESSIONS

- **AC XXVIII**

[8] The same power (*gewalt, potestas*) of the keys or of the bishops is used and exercised only by teaching and preaching God’s Word and by administering the sacraments to many persons or to individuals, depending on one’s calling. Not bodily but eternal things and benefits are given in this way, such as eternal righteousness, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life. [9] These benefits cannot be obtained except through the office of preaching and through the administration of the holy sacraments. For St. Paul says [Rom. 1:16*]: “The gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith.” [10] Now inasmuch as the power (*gewalt*) of the church or of the bishops bestows eternal benefits and is used and exercised only through the office of preaching, it does not interfere at all with public order and secular authority. [11] For secular authority deals with matters altogether different from the gospel. Secular power does not protect the soul but, using the sword and physical penalties, it protects the body and goods against external violence.

[12] That is why one should not mix or confuse the two authorities (*regimente*), the spiritual and the secular. For spiritual power has its command (*befehl*) to preach the gospel and to administer the sacraments. [13] It should not invade an alien office. It should not set up and depose kings. It should not annul or disrupt secular law and obedience to political authority. It should not make or prescribe laws for the secular power concerning secular affairs. [14] For Christ himself said [John 18:36*]: “My kingdom is not from this world.” [15] And again [Luke 12:14*]: “Who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?” [16] And St. Paul in Philippians 3[:20*]: “Our citizenship is in heaven.” [17] And in 2 Corinthians 10[:4–5*]: “For the weapons of our warfare are not merely human, but they have divine power to destroy strongholds ... arguments and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God.”

[18] In this way our people distinguish the offices of the two authorities (*regimente*) and powers (*gewalten*) and direct that both be honored as the highest gifts of God on earth.

[19] However, where bishops possess secular authority and the sword, they possess them not as bishops by divine right but by human, imperial right, given by Roman emperors and kings for the secular administration of their lands. That has nothing at all to do with the office of the gospel.³³

- **TPPP**

[11] 4. In 1 Corinthians 3[:4–8*, 21–22*] Paul regards all ministers as equals and teaches that the **church is superior to its ministers**. Thus he grants neither preeminence nor lordship over the church or the other ministers to Peter. For he says, “All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas” [1 Cor. 3:21–22*], which is to say, **neither Peter nor the other ministers may assume lordship or preeminence over the church or burden the church with traditions or allow the authority** (*gewalt, auctoritas*) of

³³ Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). [*The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*](#) (pp. 92–94). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

any person to count for more than the Word. Nor may they pit the authority of Cephas against that of the other apostles, asserting, as was done at that time, “Cephas, who is the greater apostle, observes this; therefore Paul and the others ought to also.” Paul deprives Peter of this as a pretext and denies that his authority (*gewalt, auctoritas*) takes precedence over that of others or of the church.³⁴...

Thus, in the beginning the authority of the Roman bishop grew out of a conciliar decision, that is, by human right,³⁵...

[22] But certain verses are cited in objection to our position, namely: “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church” [Matt. 16:18*]. Also: “I will give you the keys” [Matt. 16:19*]; “Feed my sheep” [John 21:17*]; and certain others.²⁰ However, because this whole controversy has been treated fully and accurately elsewhere in the books of our theologians and it is not possible to rehearse the details here, we refer to those writings and wish to underscore their arguments. Nevertheless, we shall respond briefly by way of interpretation. [23] In all these sayings Peter represents the whole company of apostles, as is apparent from the text itself. For Christ did not question Peter only but asked, “Who do you (plural) say that I am?” [Matt. 16:15*]. What is said here in the singular—“I will give you the keys” and “Whatever you bind ...”—is said elsewhere in the plural: “Whatever you (plural) bind ...” [Matt. 18:18*] and, in John [20:23*], “if you (plural) forgive the sins of any ...” These words show that the keys were entrusted equally to all the apostles and that all the apostles were commissioned in like manner. [24] **Moreover, it must be acknowledged that the keys do not belong to one particular person but to the church,** as many clear and irrefutable arguments show. For having spoken of the keys in Matthew 18[18*], **Christ goes on to say: “Wherever two or three agree on earth ...” [Matt. 18:19–20*]. Thus, he grants the power of the keys principally and without mediation to the church, and for the same reason the church has primary possession of the right to call ministers.** One must, then, see Peter as representing the whole company of apostles in these sayings, which consequently do not attribute to him any special **prerogative**, preeminence, or lordship.

[25] Granted that it is said, “On this rock I will build my church” [Matt. 16:18*]. Certainly, the church is not built upon the **authority** (*gewalt, auctoritas*) of a human being but upon the ministry of that confession Peter made, in which he proclaimed Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God. For that reason Christ addresses him as a minister: “On this rock,” that is, on this ministry. [26] Furthermore, the ministry of the New Testament is not bound to places or persons like the Levitical ministry, but is scattered throughout the whole world and exists wherever God gives God’s gifts: apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers [cf. Eph. 4:11*]. That ministry is not valid because of the **authority** of any person but because of the Word handed down by Christ. [27] Most of the holy Fathers (Origen, Ambrose,²³ Cyprian, Hilary,²⁵ Bede) interpret the statement “On this rock ...” in the same way, that is, as not applying to the person or superiority of Peter. [28] Thus Chrysostom declares: “Christ says ‘on this rock,’ not ‘on Peter.’ For truly he has built his church not upon the man but upon Peter’s faith. But what was that faith? You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” [29] And this from Hilary: “The Father revealed this to Peter so that he might declare: ‘You are the Son of the living God.’ Upon this rock of confession, therefore, the church is built. This faith is the foundation of the church.”³⁶

...

³⁴ Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). [*The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*](#) (pp. 331–332). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

³⁵ Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). [*The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*](#) (p. 332). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

³⁶ Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). [*The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*](#) (pp. 333–335). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

[67] For wherever the church exists, there also is the right (*ius, befehl*) to administer the gospel. Therefore, it is necessary for the church to retain the *right (ius, gewalt)* to call, choose, and ordain ministers.

This right (*ius, gewalt*) is a gift bestowed exclusively on the church, and no human authority can take it away from the church, as Paul testifies to the Ephesians [4:8*, 11*, 12*] when he says: “When he ascended on high ... he gave gifts to his people.” Among those gifts belonging to the church he lists pastors and teachers and adds that such are given for serving and building up the body of Christ. Therefore, where the true church is, there must also be the right of choosing and ordaining ministers, just as in an emergency even a layperson grants absolution and becomes the minister or pastor of another. So Augustine tells the story of two Christians in a boat, one of whom baptized the other (a catechumen) and then the latter, having been baptized, absolved the former.⁵⁹ [68] **Pertinent here are the words of Christ that assert that the keys were given to the church, not just to particular persons: “For where two or three are gathered in my name ...” [Matt. 18:20*].**

[69] Finally this is also confirmed by Peter’s declaration [1 Peter 2:9*]: **“You are a ... royal priesthood.” These words apply to the true church, which, since it alone possesses the priesthood, certainly has the right (*rechte, ius*) of choosing and ordaining ministers.** [70] The most common practice of the church also testifies to this, for in times past the people chose pastors and bishops. Then the bishop of either that church or a neighboring one came and confirmed the candidate by the laying on of hands. Ordination was nothing other than such confirmation³⁷

Emphasis added above with such as -

befehl – order, command, according to instructions

gewalt – power, authority, dominion, control

rechten – right, privilege, by law (command), authority

iure divino (divine right),

iure humano (human right),

ius, (legal right, permission, binding, authority, prerogative)

regiment – power, authority, control

auctoritas – power, authority

LIFE EXAMPLES AND APPLICATIONS OF THE SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY (SENT) DYNAMIC:

1. In civil society (The political estate – cf. Romans 13:1-6 – “*Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God...*”)
 - City, county, state officials – the ones “sent” or “authorized” to act on behalf of the electors (those with the right to authorize)
 - Nominations and elections only by those “sent” or “authorized.”
 - Weddings, law enforcements, prosecutions, courts, judgments only by those “sent” or “authorized.”
 - Delegations, representatives only by those “sent” or “authorized.”
 - Teachers, health professionals, etc. only by those “sent” or “authorized.”

³⁷ Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). [*The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*](#) (pp. 340–341). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

2. In the home (The domestic estate – cf. Eph. 5:21 – 6:4; Col. 3:18-25; the fourth commandment):
 - The authority of the husband/father
 - The authority of the wife/mother
 - The authority of the parents
 - The authority of the family in society
 - The authority of the “School” under the authority of the parents

3. LCMS reflections of “**authorized sending**” (The ecclesiastical estate) [LCMS Constitution]:
 - a. Constitution Article IV Powers – the authorized legal power
 - b. Articles V and VI Membership/conditions of membership – authoritative, such as
 - i. Authority of “Acceptance of the confessional basis of Article II”
 - ii. “Regular [authoritative] call of pastors, teachers... regular election of lay delegates by the congregations”
 - iii. “received into membership only... the constitution of the congregation... contains nothing contrary to the Scriptures or the Confessions.”
 - c. Constitution Article VII Relation of the Synod to Its Members
 - i. The authority of the self-governing congregations
 - ii. The Synod authorized as advisory only
 - iii. The binding authority of the Word of God
 - d. Constitution Article VIII Synodical Meetings
 - i. Authorized and authoritative meetings
 - ii. Authority of the Word of God only in resolutions of the meetings
 - e. Constitution Article IX Representation
 - i. authorized delegates entitled to vote
 - ii. authorized delegates entitled to advise
 - f. Article X Officers – elected to have the authority to act on behalf of membership
 - g. Constitution Article XI **Rights** [authority] and Duties of Officers
 - i. “only such rights as have been expressly conferred”
 - ii. “rights and the performance of their duties they are responsible to the Synod”
 - iii. “Synod at all times has the right to call its officers to account... remove them from office”
 - iv. “Synod reserves the right to abolish any office”
 - v. Specific and limited [authorized] duties of the President, Vice-presidents, Secretary and Board of Directors”
 - h. Constitution Article XII Districts of the Synod and Their Regulation
 - i. Authority of the district as a whole
 - ii. Authority of the district officers, especially the District President and supervision of the individual and congregation members of the Synod (not the Synod President)
 - i. Constitution Article XIII Expulsion from the Synod
 - i. Authorized causes for expulsion
 - ii. Authorized procedures for expulsion
 - j. Constitution Article XIV Bylaws
 - i. Constitution has authority over the Bylaws
 - ii. Bylaws have authority if consistent with the Constitution
 - k. Constitution Article XV Changes in, and Amendments to, the Constitution – authorized procedures only

LCMS “authority” Summary (the authority dynamic as reflected in LCMS polity):

- Authority of Christ and the exercise of His Word [of God] only, coupled with “advisory”
 - “Regular call” “Regular election of lay delegates”
 - “Constitutional” authority Congregation “self-government”
 - “regular meeting” “officers...must assume only such rights”
 - “jurisdiction” of national and district “advisory” only
 - “control” authority “supervision” authority (the one “sent”)
 - “Bylaws that are consistent with...the constitution”
4. Administration of the Absolution - Lutheran Liturgy: “by virtue of my office...and in the name...and in the stead...”
5. Summary, the three authorized estates, reflecting the giving of authority in –
- a. The Church/heavenly estate (ecclesiastical for eternal salvation)
 - b. The society/political estate (well-being of the community) [political for protection]
 - c. The family/home (domestic for multiplication of the human race)

OTHER REFLECTIONS, THOUGHTS AND RESOURCES RE: AUTHORITY

- in adopting “Church and Ministry” (*Kirche und Amt*) in 1851, Synod clearly stated and delineated the **authority** of the Church and Ministry, the **authority** given to the priesthood of believers and the **authority** given MEDIATELY to the clergy.
- in adopting “Church and Ministry” (*Kirche und Amt*) in 1851, Synod clearly stated and delineated that the **authority** of the spiritual, divine, and heavenly gifts, rights, powers, and offices were procured for and possessed by the church of believers and saints as stated in such Biblical **authority** passages as Matt. 16:15-19; 18:18-20; 28:18-20; John 3:28-29; 20:21-23; 1 Cor. 3:21-23; Gal. 4:6; 1 Peter 2:9; Eph. 4:12 and 1 Cor. 4:1 and as stated in the Lutheran Confessions and church fathers.
- in “The Congregation’s Right to Choose Its Pastor,” C.F.W. Walther (1860 ff) clarified the **authority (Right)** with these Biblical and confessional points:
 - Believing Christians have the Keys
 - All believing Christians are spiritual priests
 - Christians have the office originally
 - Pastors are a gift
 - Pastors are servants and stewards
 - Christians have the **right** to judge doctrine
- **Authority** passages such as Matt. 9:38 – Matt 10; Luke 10; 24:45-48; John 21: 15-17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17, etc. are not limited to the clergy and must not be coopted for clergy-centered use only.
- The Constitution of the Synod from the beginning in 1847 clearly set forth the **authority of the Word** in its existence together with the **authority** of the objectives, of officers, of duties, or jurisdictions, of boundaries, districts, of the members and of congregations and therefore that the Constitution must not be misinterpreted and misused to fit the hierarchical-ism, clericalism, institutional-ism, anti-congregation and anti-mission tendencies.
- The life and service of a congregation and of a Synod will experience chaos, confusion and division when **authority** is usurped, rejected or abused and boundaries of **authority** are violated.

- The “clergy authority” is stated in **1 Peter 5:2-3** - ² *shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising **oversight**, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; ³ not domineering over those in your charge (κλήρος – lot, portion, charge, place [**authority**]), but being examples to the flock. (emphasis added)*
- In the context of “**authority**,” **1 Peter 4:15-16** says: ¹⁵ *But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a **meddler** (ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος – busy body and not given oversight authority). ¹⁶ *However, if you suffer as a Christian...praise God that you bear that name.”**
- In applying the “**authority**” dynamic, the health and beneficial life of any estate, such as marriage, family, home, society, government, nations and ecclesiastical institutions will experience chaos, confusion, division, decline and demise when **authority** is usurped, rejected, abused, and boundaries of **authority** violated.
- The lack of or the inadequate mutual 3-fold knowledge (recognition, acceptance), understanding (insight, comprehension) and wisdom (intelligent, mature application) of the **Missio Dei** (Christ’s mission authority) by the clergy, congregations, laity and Synod is rampant.
- The failure of having a **Missio Dei** focus, orientation and habitus in pastoral formation is significant (cf. the vision, mission and strategy statements of the Synod’s Pastoral Formation admin. and the Seminaries).
- Just as chaos, confusion, and division result from any form of anarchy in the home, so a congregation will experience that same consequence when a pastor, the congregation as a whole or its members violate (anarchy) God’s established authority of governance by His Word.
- Just as chaos, division, decline and demise result from any form of anarchy in a congregation, so a Synod will experience that result when a Synod President, a Commission on Constitutional Matters, a Board of Directors or any Synod agency violate any authority of governance by His Word, such as violating the authority of “advisory only,” “congregation self-governance,” “binding authority of the Word of God,” and “only such rights...expressly conferred.”
- **The failure to “read, mark, learn and inwardly digest” and execute the Christ-apostolic authority (Missio Dei) in God’s Holy Word, as well as the beneficial Synod mission statements and resolutions over the years (lacking implementation), has had a significant negative, if not destructive, impact.**
- **Disobedience of God’s Word is anarchy and against God’s Authority in Christ! (This is evident with the focus on clericalism [clergy-centered], sacerdotalism, hierarchicalism in the church instead of the Christ Apostolic Authority-Missio Dei as set forth in God’s Word properly interpreted, understood and applied)**
 - **It is a matter of authority and being disobedient, insolent, and insubordinate when God’s Word is under siege**

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN DISCIPLESHIP AND THE APOSTOLATE

*A “discipleship” emphasis study from the Gospel of Matthew, with reference to Mark, and Luke, which accompanies The **Great Sending** study foci on the Gospel of John and The Great Distractions of The Great Sending*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*To understand and apply the correlation of discipleship and the apostolate, it is necessary to review the essence of **being a Christian disciple or discipleship**, which is to be called to a saving faith relationship with Jesus Christ, a called learner, and follower of Jesus Christ, called to grow in an ever-deeper relationship with Christ and with one another, called to serve Him and one another, and called to be a co-heir and co-associate (apostle, apostolate partner fellowship) with Jesus.*

Like every human being, a Christian disciple is created in the image of God and redeemed by Christ, but a “Christian disciple,” is also one who and whose life is sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Thus, a Christian disciple is “to thank and praise, to serve and obey...be HIS [Christ’s] own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as HE is risen from the dead, lives, and reigns to all eternity,” which “is most certainly true.”³⁸

Intrinsic in “discipleship” is not only knowing Jesus, not only being transformed by Him and in unity with Him, not only being a co-heir with Him, not only holding to His teaching and truth, not only learning (following) to live or walk with Him, suffer and bear the cross with Him, pray with Him, die and rise with Him, BUT going fishing with and for Him (fishers of men-Matt. 4:19), being an apostle and co-associate with Him, **SENT** by Him to the world and participating in His apostolate, i.e., participating in His great “sent-sending.” As inherent in discipleship is the apostolate, so inherent in the apostolate is discipleship. Under the *Missio Dei*, a disciple is an apostle, and an apostle is a disciple – **NO DISCONNECT!**

In his book, “Follow Me,”³⁹ Dr. Martin Franzmann said, “**The apostolate does not differ essentially from that of discipleship.**” This truth stated by Dr. Franzmann helps us understand the great commission in Mathew 28:19 “**Make disciples** of all nations.”

The Office of the “Twelve” Disciples/Apostles, including the personal office of the Apostle St. Paul, is not to be confused with that of every believer being and functioning as Christian disciples and apostles, beginning from our baptism in Christ and not to be confused with the Christ-Created discipleship and apostolate of all in the called community of saving faith and missionaries. Even the Nicene Creed spoke of the apostolic (small letter “a”) community of the “one holy Christian (catholic) and apostolic Church.”⁴⁰

“Christ Himself commits to all believers the keys of the kingdom of heaven, Matt. 16: 13-19; Matt. 18: 17-20; John 20: 21-23, and commissions all believers ...Matt. 28: 19-20; 1 Cor. 11: 23-25.”⁴¹ And although the context of John 17, the High Priestly Prayer, (Jesus praying for Himself, the disciples, and the world), records the presence of the “Twelve” disciples (minus Judas?) and the context of John 20:21-23 records the presence of the “Twelve” disciples (minus Judas and Thomas), in the theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church all the passages in the above quote are applied to all believers-disciples, not just to the clergy or pastoral office.

³⁸ Luther’s explanation of the first and second article of the Apostle’s Creed, the Small Catechism

³⁹ “FOLLOW ME: Discipleship According to Saint Matthew” by Dr. Martin H. Franzmann, CPH, 1961 [Cf. Dr. Franzmann’s St. Louis seminary exegetical class on St. Matthew]

⁴⁰ For a good understanding of the “One, Holy, Christian (Catholic) and apostolic Church,” see *THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH, One, Holy, Catholic and Missionary* by Rev. Dr. Robert J. Scudieri, 2016, Mission Nation Publishing

⁴¹ *The Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod*, adopted 1932, reaffirmed 1947

Matthew 4: 12-22; 9: 9-13; Mark 1: 14-20; 2: 13-17; Luke 5: 1-11, 27-32; 6: 12-13 (cf. John 1: 35-51)

Matthew 4:19-22 *And he said to them, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.²⁰ Immediately they left their nets and followed him.²¹ And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them.²² Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.*

Matthew 8:18-22 ¹⁸ *Now when Jesus saw a crowd around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side.* ¹⁹ *And a scribe came up and said to him, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.”* ²⁰ *And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”* ²¹ *Another of the disciples said to him, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.”* ²² *And Jesus said to him, “Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.”*

Matthew 9:35-10:7, 16 ³⁵ *And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction.* ³⁶ *When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.* ³⁷ *Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few;³⁸ therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”* *Matthew 10:1-7* *And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction.² The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; ³ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴ Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. ⁵ These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷ And proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ ...¹⁶ “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”*

Matthew 28:18-20 *And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go [as you are going] therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

Cf. Luke 6:13 *And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles*
Cf. The foundational study: **The Great Sending, God’s Heart for the World Beating Through You** – Sedes doctrinae:
John 17:3, 17-19 ³ *And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent...¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.*
John 20:21-23 ²¹ *Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”* ²² *And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive [send away] the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”*

INTRODUCTION:

“Follow Me,” “fishers of men,” “left,” “followed Him,” “disciples,” “apostles,” “sent out,” “sent me,” “sending you,” and “make disciples of all nations,” all are to be interpreted, understood, and applied through the lens of the *Missio Dei*, the Sending of God to the world.

The essence of the *Missio Dei* is that Jesus Christ, the Son, and Lamb of God was SENT In love, to save the world (John 1:14,29; 3:16-17; 1 John 4:9-10, 14), and to redeem, rescue, and restore His whole creation (Romans 8:18-23; Revelation 21: 1-5; 22:1-5), which included the SENDING of the Holy Spirit (John 14:1,26; 15:26; 16:7). The Messiah was SENT to call/make “disciples” (Matthew 4:18-22; John 1:35-42), SENT to reign (Matthew 4:17 – “kingdom;” Ephesians 1: 18-23; Revelation 19:6; 20:6), SENT to reveal and proclaim

the Gospel (John 1:1-logos; John 3:31-36; 5:36-37), and was SENT to SEND **disciple-called** “apostles” (Luke 9:1-10; 10: 1-24; John 17:18; 20:21-23 - i.e., authoritative SENDING of the disciples). **NO DISCONNECT!**

Discipleship and Mission? Disciples and apostles? Discipleship and apostleship? What is the correlation? How is it observed and understood together, much less applied? It is curious how this 2004 convention resolution with the Bible references was interpreted, understood, and applied. [2004 LCMS Res. 1-01A] – **Through the *Missio Dei* lens??: *Last Resolved, That fulfilling God’s mission today requires all entities of the church to prepare individuals to learn the cultures and languages around us in order to equip all the saints (Eph. 4:12) for mission and discipleship in our current age so that all honor and glory is afforded our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who grows His church (1 Cor. 3:6) as souls lost, are won by knowing that there is only one name under heaven by which one may be saved and that is the name of Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:9–11). Yes:980; No:247? (Emphasis added)***

A COMMENTARY:

I.

First and foremost, discipleship and the apostolate go together under the *Missio Dei*. As recorded in all the Gospels, among the first Messianic acts of the Sent-One Jesus is the calling of disciples, followed by “the deepening fellowship between Jesus and His disciples,”⁴² and then concluding with “the climactic commission word [to the apostles] of Jesus...in Matthew, ‘Make disciples (Matthew 28:19).’”⁴³

YES, as a seamless garment, inherent in the *Missio Dei*, i.e., in the Great Sending of God, is making disciples, fellowship with Jesus, **and** His sending of the apostles. The *Missio Dei* is the heart or core, or **essence**, the central foundational will/act/work of God, and the lens for interpreting, understanding, and applying all of Scripture and all other accompanying **essentials**, such as missional activities, arrangements, functions, teachings, and Bible knowledge, which are necessary intrinsic elements, and are the sanctified **Spirit**-led life as based on and flowing from the core of *The Great Sending of God*, which enhances and encompasses all else in the genuine Christian faith, life, and mission, which we call discipleship.

Therefore, the Holy Gospels are to be understood as God’s Great Story of the *Missio Dei*, (the Great Sending of the Trinity), centered on the sending of and by Christ, with the sending of the Holy Spirit by the Father and the Son. To repeat, the Sending of God, the *Missio Dei* then is the core and lens to interpret, understand and apply Scripture as well as the calling, making, and sending of **disciples/apostles** by Jesus, the Messiah, Who is the *Great Sender* of the *Great Sending* revealed in the Great Gospel Story.

The Great Story⁴⁴ tells Who Jesus is, His sending, why He was sent, what His work, action, deeds, message, and revelation were and are, and all circumscribed by His reign (The Kingdom rule). The great narrative is all about Jesus and His mission: His **sending**, which begins with God’s promise (Genesis 3 ff) and His incarnation. The “I am” (Identity) of Jesus, which includes “Sent One” and “Sender,” and intrinsically includes both the calling of His disciples to “**follow Me**” and “**even so I am sending you,**” also reveals who we are and why we exist (“I am” identity) as the *one holy Christian and apostolic Church*.

⁴² “FOLLOW ME: Discipleship According to Saint Matthew” by Dr. Martin H. Franzmann, CPH, 1961 [Cf. Dr. Franzmann’s St. Louis seminary exegetical class on St. Matthew]

⁴³ “FOLLOW ME: Discipleship According to Saint Matthew” by Dr. Martin H. Franzmann, CPH, 1961 [Cf. Dr. Franzmann’s St. Louis seminary exegetical class on St. Matthew]

⁴⁴ Cf. “Joining God’s Great Story: Reading Matthew’s Gospel as Narrative” by Prof. Jeff Gibbs, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Therefore, the calling of the “disciples-apostles” by Christ at the beginning of His public mission and ministry, which is recorded in all four Gospels, is, in essence, an intrinsic act of and the manifestation of the ***Missio Dei ad Mundum, the great sending of God*** in and to the world. When He was preparing to ascend back to His heavenly home, Jesus gave the commission to the believers ***as they were going [sent]***, to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19). At the beginning of His public ministry, that is exactly what Christ Himself was doing: making disciples of Peter, James, John, Andrew, Nathanael, Philip, and Matthew besides creating the Office of the “Twelve.”

Christ’s ***“follow me”*** also makes every disciple a missionary, a “fisher of men.” Christ’s “follow me” and “Just AS the Father has sent Me” makes the disciple an apostle. Christ’s “follow me” establishes the disciple-apostle’s path and steps, which is a journey of steadfast love, compassion, sending, and “making disciples of all nations.” Under the ***Mission Dei***, being called and made a disciple is being made an apostle. The ***Missio Dei***, the Great Sending of God, comprises both. NO DISCONNECT!

With the *Missio Dei* as the lens, the ***sent*** followers of Jesus will understand and apply Matthew 28:18-20: As you are now going (having been ***sent***), make followers (***disciples***) of Jesus in and from all nations (***sent*** to the world), creating and maintaining saving faith in Jesus through the divinely created power of Baptism in the Name of the Trinity, through the Word (HIS commands), the promise of Christ’s apostolic authority and as circumscribed by God’s four-fold ALL - “ALL AUTHORITY,” “ALL NATIONS,” “ALL COMMANDS,” and “ALL DAYS” [a Will Sohns paraphrase].

Just as the *Missio Dei* is God’s heart-love initiative, the above texts on the “calling of people” to faith, to become learners of Christ, to come after Him, and to accompany Him in His mission, also demonstrate that He takes the initiative to put followers into a relationship with Him (co-heirs) and partnership (co-associates) in His great sending (fishing for men). The SENDER, not THE one called and sent, takes the initiative. And not only is the *Missio Dei* initiative with God and Christ, but just as the *Missio Dei ad Mundum* is God’s heart-commitment for the world, the discipleship-apostolate is the Christ-believer-follower’s heart-commitment (*com-together*; ***mittere-sent/send***) – *Missio Dei* heart action: **initiative and commitment!**

The movie, “Field of Dreams,” was a sort of magical realism about “***if you build, they will come.***” This “magical realism” is reflected in a very historically ***flawed*** trending mission strategy and attraction model, that has the effect of If you establish or are engaged in collaboration, in any traditional, new, and/or different arrangements, “missional” programs, in meetings, building and maintaining buildings, in establishing and/or engaging in pure Lutheran worship, liturgy, empty rituals after rituals, reams of liturgies, learning processes, newsletters, and “words,” multiple “numbers” of small Bible study groups, and/or practices, that “***they will come***” without the recognition, understanding, and application of the core *Missio Dei* ***essence*** and without the initiating, transforming, and committed Christ-discipleship-apostolate authority and truth.

To emphasize this important truth, even such **essentials, and they are essentials**, like the Office of the Public Ministry (and ordination), evangelism, education, stewardship, divine liturgy/service, church planting, the institution, ministry of comforting, caring for, and serving one another, piety, the good practices of and arrangements for making contact, connection, caring, compassion, cultivation, celebration, and community, are indeed important, supportive, and “necessary” but are not the core *Missio Dei* ***essence***, or the *Missio Dei* lens, nor the **essence** of discipleship and the apostolate.

Thus, if “discipleship” is only a pious or superficial life, and the mere performance (*ex opere operato*) of activities, arrangements, volunteering your spiritual gifts, serving as a member of a board or committee,

practicing stewardship, learning, "attending" a Bible class, worship life, home devotions, fellowship activities, building or upkeep of the church buildings and campus but not connecting it to Christ's **sent/sending** (*Missio Dei*) transformational action (Christ-apostolic authority), it is not at all discipleship or the apostolate. It may be only a cognitive dissonance or disconnect.

However, "verily, verily" it is the **Missio Dei**-discipleship-apostolate **essence** in Christ (**έν Χριστώ**) that both *de jure* and *de facto* transforms (cf. Romans 12:1-2), motivates, drives, and directs our **living έν Χριστώ**, **leadership έν Χριστώ**, world **view έν Χριστώ** (2 Corinthians 5:16-17), **servicing έν Χριστώ** (John 13:14-17) of the world, of the neighbor, the barber, the waitress, all social groups in our citizenship, in our work, and vocational purpose, witness opportunities, our responsible play, eating, and hospitality, and **sending έν Χριστώ** (John 17:18; 20:21-23).

So much of Scripture may not use the words "disciples or discipleship" but still explains and describes it, such as "**calling**" in Eph. 4:4 *There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were **called** to the one hope that belongs to your **call**—⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷ But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.*

Another example of "**making disciples**" is "**Equip**" (**καταρτισμός**) in Ephesians 4: 11-16 ¹¹ *And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip (**καταρτισμός**)⁴⁵ the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*

Yet **another example is John 8:31** ³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "**If you abide (**μείνητε**) [**dwelling, remain, continue**] in my word, you are truly my disciples." If *Missio Dei* is the core and lens, discipleship-apostolate will indeed be true and demonstrate true cognitive consonance.**

In naming the disciples "apostles" (Mt. 10:2; Luke 6:13), Christ makes it clear that discipleship is also essentially apostolic. As the initial Sending of God is a call to the apostleship⁴⁶, the call to discipleship is also a call to the apostolate (being sent), i.e., a call to participate in the *Missio Dei*. As stated in the Executive Summary above, "In his book, 'Follow Me,'⁴⁷ Martin Franzmann said, '**The apostolate does not differ essentially from that of discipleship**.'" The call to discipleship authorizes the "followers" and "sent ones," just as Christ, to **take the initiative** to establish relationships, to **make disciples**, which includes to **καταρτισμός** or to mend (repair, restore) the nets, to **leave** their comfort zone, being both **called** and **sent** to where the world works, lives, plays, eats, and exercises evil upon evil.

In taking the initiative, Christ demonstrated **the grace** of going where the world is, where the people were, on the seashore, fishing, mending the nets, collecting taxes, eating with public sinners, and people with fears, brokenness, tragic mess after mess, and doubts. This act of **grace-call** evoked an **immediate** response as they **immediately** followed and **left** (a "sending" Greek Word: **ἀφήμι**) their boats, nets, family, hired hands, and tax office. It is interesting that the word, "**left**" (leave) comes from the **sending**

⁴⁵ **Καταρτισμός** – repair, mend, restore, perfect [compare this operative word in Eph. 4: 12 with "**making disciples**"]

⁴⁶ *The Great Sending, God's Heart for the World Beating Through You*, by Will Sohns, Tenth Power Publishing, 2021

⁴⁷ "FOLLOW ME: Discipleship According to Saint Matthew" by Dr. Martin H. Franzmann, CPH, 1961 [Cf. Dr. Franzmann's St. Louis seminary exegetical class on St. Matthew]

word and from the same root word for “*forgiveness* - ἀφίημι” So, they *sent away* their boats and nets, etc., while not leaving the world to which the disciples-apostles were sent to *send away sin* - Jn. 20:23.

In addition, it is mind-boggling and insightful that Jesus summoned an odd assortment of fishermen and a tax collector to follow him, which included joining Him in fishing for men. His summons to be disciples (summons to “follow Me”) was not based on the quality of the men such as “educated,” “reputable in the community,” “self-righteous,” “religious leaders,” etc. While in fellowship with Him and In His *grace-call* of “follow me,” it is Christ Who creates and shapes His learners (followers) and sent ones. Because of their relationship to the *sent Son of God*, it was a life-changing “follow me” for the followers, who were also *sent as Christ was sent*, to renounce self-service and to be sent to the world to send away sin.

II.

The “FOLLOW ME” narratives-reflections, which are gleaned from St. Matthew (and from elsewhere), demonstrate the correlation of discipleship and the apostolate as well as the *Missio Dei* essence and essentials with using the template of “Just as...” “even so” in John 17:18 and 20:21 -

[John 17:3, 18](#)³ And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent...¹⁸ **As** you sent me into the world, **so** I have sent them into the world.

[John 20:21-23](#)²¹ Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. **As** the Father has sent me, **even so** I am sending you.”²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”:

- **Just as** the **essence** of the Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, their works of Creation, Redemption, and Sanctification, and all doctrines are like a seamless garment and not to be compartmentalized and unrelated, **even so**, the *Missio Dei*, its essence and all its applications and supportive accompanying **essentials** are like a seamless garment and all interrelated.
- **Just as** “Justification *sola fide* is the central doctrine of Christianity [and] Scripture teaches that all other doctrines are either antecedent or consequent to this doctrine,”⁴⁸ **even so** the *Missio Dei* is the core, central, and the heart-redemptive being of and action of God (the essence) and as such is the hermeneutical lens for interpreting, understanding, and applying all of Scripture, God’s revelation of His great redemptive sending plan and work, and His heart for the world.
- **Just as** all other doctrines are essential antecedents or consequents⁴⁹ (auxiliary and supportive) in the theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, **even so**, all other doctrines, all aligned missional activities, and practices, the worship life, evangelism, witness, church planting, etc. are all supportive and auxiliary essentials, but not the core or essence of the *Missio Dei*.
- **Just as** the Evangelical Lutheran Church makes a distinction between the **Material Principle** (Justification by faith alone through the merits of Christ) and the **Formal Principle** (the Holy Scripture, the means of grace)⁵⁰ [the distinction between the Sending of Christ and His cradle], **even so**, there is a necessary distinction between the essence of the *Missio Dei* and all the essential auxiliary arrangements, practices, and applications, i.e., the “cradle.”

⁴⁸ *Christian Dogmatics*, Volume II, page 404, F. Pieper, Concordia Publishing House, 1951

⁴⁹ ipse

⁵⁰ *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, edited by Erwin Lueker, CPH, 1954, 1975, 1984

- **Just as** the **calling** of disciples “Follow Me” in Matthew 4:19 is to personal saving faith in Jesus, **even so**, is the “Just as...even so” **sending** in John 17:18 and John 20:21 a personal calling (sending) to the apostolate.
- **Just as** the calling to discipleship was a calling to the community of faith, **even so**, the “follow me” was a calling to the community of mission/missionaries (apostles, apostolate, apostolic, or sending community).
- **Just as** the commission is to **make disciples**, **even so**, the same commission is to **make apostles**.
- **Just as** the calling of the disciples and apostles was immediate (in-person) by Jesus, **even so** now **the calling to apostolic discipleship is mediately through the Word and Baptism**.
- **Just as** the calling of the disciples was by the initiative of Christ and an act of grace, **even so**, was and is the sending of the disciples-apostles into the world.
- **Just As** the “Sender” takes the initiative and the “Sent” is the recipient of the action, **even so**, the “Sent” is designed and created also to take the initiative to be a “Sender.”
- **Just as** the calling (Follow Me) demanded: “leaving” of boats, nets, father’s, father’s house (Mt. 4), a tax office (Mt. 9:9), a water pot (John 4), and “leave” the dead to bury their own dead (Mt. 8:22), **even so**, the apostolate requires a “leaving” (ἀφίημι, a sending away).
- **Just as** the call to discipleship established an authoritative relationship with and representation of Christ, **even so**, the basis and nature of the apostolate is a significant authoritative relationship with and representation of Christ under His authority.
- **Just as** Christ was “God with us,” born in this world, called out of Egypt, faced apostate people, called a Nazarene (an earthly home), proclaimed repentance, the Kingdom and His reign, was tempted, and was baptized, and called the Great Light, **even so**, the followers-disciples, who are apostles sent to the world, are also in the world while yet called out of the world, and are rescued, redeemed and repentant humans in an earthly home (IN the world) that are proclaiming repentance and Christ’s reign, and serving as salt and Gospel lights in the world.
- **Just as** Christ was sent into the fallen and lost world and faced conflict and rejection but was sent with His mission of victory over sin, death, and evil, **even so**, the disciples/apostles are sent “amid wolves,” with a discipleship-apostolic life of facing conflict, antagonism, persecution, and rejection but are promised-sent with Christ’s assurance of HIS redemptive victory.
- **Just as** Christ was sent into the fallen and lost world and not just to the church or a monastery, **even so** the disciples/apostles are sent to the world not just to the church or a monastery.
- **Just as** Christ created and shaped humans in His image, **even so**, the authorized disciple-apostle represents Christ in His *Missio Dei* work of creating and shaping followers in His image in the making of disciples.
- **Just as** the disciples are recipients of the beatitudes and promise of Christ, **even so**, discipleship-apostolate extends Christ’s blessings and promise to the world under His sending authority.
- **Just as** Christ was/is righteous, **even so**, the disciple-apostle delivers Christ’s righteousness
- **Just as** Christ marked the disciples as missionaries from the first, **even so**, all followers are marked for the discipleship-apostolate - **the great sending** – the sent life under the *Missio Dei*.
- **Just as** Christ was sent to reveal the Trinity, **even so**, the apostolic followers reveal the Trinity
- **Just as** Christ (the Messiah) was endued with the **authority** over the devil, temptation, sin, death, stormy seas, suffering, and to forgive sin (ἀφίημι, a sending away), **even so**, the disciples-apostles, as called and sent, are endued with such **authority** of the Caller and Sender, Jesus.
- **Just as** Christ and His calling and sending came from a heart of **compassion** with selfless and self-sacrificing love, **even so**, the apostolate is marked by Christ’s **compassion and hearts beating through** them [You] as followers (disciples) of Jesus.
- **Just as** the Lord of the Harvest bids His disciples pray for worker missionaries, **even so**, *prayer* marks the life of the missionary (*Missio Dei*) apostle-disciple (Luke 10:2).

- **Just as** Christ was an authorized official and a sent representative of the Father, **even so**, all the disciples of Jesus are officially authorized, and representative-sent ones of Jesus (*The power of proxy*⁵¹) and wholly subordinate to His will (“Follow Me”).
- **Just as** the word “*disciple*” designates the act of following (heeding the call of Jesus to “Follow Me”), **even so**, the word “*apostle*” designates an assigned function - a sending into the world, “*rather than a fixed office.*”⁵²
- **Just as** Christ was sent to bring about and grant forgiveness, salvation, and divine peace, **even so**, the apostolic disciple distributes to the lost world that very Christ-forgiveness, salvation, and divine peace through the power of the Holy Spirit (John 20:21-23).
- **Just as** the *Missio Dei* is the lens that interprets, understands, and applies the Scripture, and all its aligned essentials and elements, **even so**, the *Missio Deo* interprets, understands, motivates, directs, and applies ***discipleship as well as the apostolate together.***

III.

NOTE THAT, TOGETHER WITH THE FOLLOWING INHERENT SENDING ESSENTIALS, “DISCIPLESHIP” IS ALSO INTRINSIC IN THE CORE SENDING OF GOD (MISSIO DEI):

JUST AS THE GREAT SENDING POSSESSES AN INHERENT NATURE (THE FULL SEAMLESS CHARACTER, ESSENCE, ESSENTIALS, AND SIGNIFICANCE OF “*SENDING.*”),⁵³ **SO** Thus ***Discipleship*** [“Follow Me”] also includes many of the following inherent essence and/or essentials of the apostolate:

- An official act or an official function
- “Sending” is, in its essence, the granting of authority (a grace-initiative of the Sender)
- The Sender is authorizing an official representation of the Sender (grace-initiative of the Sender)
- Sending always involves a relationship between the sender and the sent (a grace-initiative)
- Sending always requires the sacrifice of ἀφίημι *leaving* (as Jesus *left* His heavenly home for the earth, the disciples left their nets, family, and boats, and the Samaritan woman left her waterpot) – **the grace of renunciation – a sending away (ἀφίημι)**
- Authorized sending always requires the sacrifice of going (see Matthew 28:19 – “as you go”)
- Sending always is the granting of an authorized task, such as Christ’s rescue mission to save the world (John 3:16-17), and the believers or disciples proclaiming the Gospel, witnessing, etc. (see Luke 24:47-49 and Acts 1:8)
- Sending always involves an authorized message such as reconciliation through Christ alone, the Gospel message (2 Corinthians 5:14-21)
- The sending always involves the promise and provision of resources, such as the power of the Holy Spirit, who was sent by the Father and Christ (John 14-16; 20:22), the consistent, steadfast, and bountiful presence of Jesus (Matthew 28:20), together with His Word, and accompanied by prayer
- A core ingredient of sending is its purpose, God’s *ἵνα (hina, so that)*, such as forgiveness, eternal life, unity with and in Christ, salvation, knowing God’s love, belief, etc.

⁵¹ “FOLLOW ME: Discipleship According to Saint Matthew” by Dr. Martin H. Franzmann, CPH, 1961 [Cf. Dr. Franzmann’s St. Louis seminary exegetical class on St. Matthew]

⁵² ipse

⁵³ *The Great Sending, God’s Heart for the World Beating Through You*, by Will Sohns, Tenth Power Publishing, 2021

- A necessary essential of being sent is the recipient or target, the audience of the sending – that is, the world, every tribe, language, nation, and all people living on earth
- A final essential is reporting back and rejoicing

And so, we greatly celebrate every step of the discipleship-apostolic journey with the Sent One and Sender, Jesus, Who never LEAVES His sent forth followers, HIS disciples-apostles, who are the *one holy Christian and apostolic church*, and who are designed and created to be and to make disciples-missionaries in His image, under Jesus' great promise for the disciples' apostolate: ***“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*** (Matthew 28:20)!” –

24-7 we have the pillar of His cloud! His *Great Promise* accompanying His *Great Sending* and the disciples-apostle's *Great Going!*

PRAYER:

Missionary and sending God, Whose love sent Your Son, Jesus, into the world, and together with the Son, sent the Holy Spirit, we praise You that Your heart provided global redemption. As You “disciplined” and sent us through the grace of Baptism and the Word, we beg of you to keep us following, learning, and being called and sent by Your Son. As co-heirs with Jesus, empower us ever to embrace and follow HIM as our Savior, and ever as co-associates, to embrace and participate in His apostolic worldwide endeavor, His Great Sending.

In the power of Jesus' name, the divine Apostle. Amen.

THE *MISSIO DEI* AND THE WORLD (κόσμον)

“AS YOU SENT (ἀπέστειλας) ME INTO THE WORLD, SO I HAVE SENT (ἀπέστειλα) THEM INTO THE WORLD (κόσμον),” John 17:18 (Cf. “Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent (ἀπέσταλκέν [ἀποστέλλω]) me, even so I am sending (πέμπω) you” – John 20:21)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Right from the top, God’s Word in John 17:18 says it. In His High Priestly Prayer, the Word of Christ empowers us to “get it” – Sent to the WORLD, not to the ordained, the commissioned, the Office of the Public Ministry, or the Church, a monastery, but to the WORLD! The current trajectory of the church must change to “sent to the world” instead of to ourselves.

As **Christ** was sent into the **WORLD**, to the publican and sinner, to the straying, to the lost, to the Pharisees, to the weak, doubters, and fallen, to the diseased and devil-possessed, to those of “little faith,” He sends the **Church** into the **WORLD** to the end of the world, to the end of time! The *Missio Dei ad Mundum* is the paradigm of Christian mission!

Under the authority of Christ, the Church, through which the Holy Spirit does His work, is sent to the “least of these,” to those who have gone astray, the immoral, the alcoholic, the drug addict, the adulterer, the prostitute, the thief, the tormentor, the “pro-choice,” the killer of babies, to the transgender, LGBTQ, to the enemy, the mentally deranged, the self-serving politicians, the twisted protestors, to the “woke,” to those who have “sinned against you,” to the “cancel” culture constituents, TO THOSE WHO DISMISS AND DISOBEY GOD – TO THE WORLD!

And even more than that, just as Christ was sent, so the Church is sent to the **world** suffering the subsequent consequences of sin, corruption, chaos, confusion, conflicts, terror, the fearful, the oppressed, both the victims and the perpetrators, messy and broken lives, broken marriages and families, broken society, broken relationships, and institutions, together with broken minds, bodies, spirits, and emotions.

The High Priestly Prayer of Christ in John chapter 17, which highlights the *Missio Dei*, is one of the most profound passages of Scripture. It emphasizes the sending (mission) of Christ, and the sending by the sanctified Christ of the disciples, who are sanctified by the truth (the Holy Spirit of Truth), and emphasizes the ultimate purpose of the Church’s mission, that **THE WORLD might believe, know Him and His love and be one with Him.**

The alpha and omega and the context of the church’s mission are the *Missio Dei ad Mundum*. And it is Christ’s mission, not the *Missio Anthropos*! It is His work of being Sent to the WORLD to redeem **the world**

and His work of sending the believers and assembly of the believers to proclaim the *Missio Dei* to **the world** not just to themselves, cloister, or just to the gathering of themselves!

I. THE *MISSIO DEI* AND THE WORLD GOD LOVES

II. THE *MISSIO DEI* AND THE SENDING OF THE CHURCH INTO THE WORLD

INTRODUCTION

We see in John 17 the significance of “**the world**” 18 times in how Christ in His High Priestly Prayer refers to and targets “**the world.**” The world, not just the believers, is the object of His redeeming love. The world is on the receiving end of the “*Missio Dei ad Mundum*” and therefore, the mission of the church.

*“And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.⁶ I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.⁷ Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you.⁸ For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you, and **they have believed that you sent (ἀπέστειλας) me.**⁹ I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.¹⁰ All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.¹¹ And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.¹² While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.¹³ But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.¹⁴ I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.¹⁷ **Sanctify them** in the truth; your word is truth.¹⁸ **AS YOU SENT (ἀπέστειλας) ME INTO THE WORLD, SO I HAVE SENT (ἀπέστειλα) THEM INTO THE WORLD.**¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.²⁰ “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word,²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also **may be in us**, so that the world may believe **that you have sent (ἀπέστειλας) me.**²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one,²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you **sent (ἀπέστειλας) me and loved them** even as you loved me.²⁴ Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.²⁵ O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and **these know that you have sent (ἀπέστειλας) me.**²⁶ I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, **that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.**” (John 17:5-26)*

I. THE MISSIO DEI AND THE WORLD GOD LOVES

God's love and heart for the world are demonstrated in one way or another by referring to the *κόσμος* 205 times in the New Testament, 77 times in the Gospel of John alone with the context of the *Missio Dei ad Mundum*.

Just what is the "world" that God loves?

It is more than just the land or the earth, the sea and the animals, the plants, and the sky. It is more than just age, dispensation, or the universe. He certainly loves this whole creation. But the primary target of His love is His created people (Anthropos, Homo, Mensch, "Man"), made in His image. This land was not only arranged with water, sky, animals, etc. but was decorated and adorned (*κόσμος*) with His created mankind in His image. And this "world," this "decoration" (Meaning of *κόσμος*) is humanity which needs to be saved, that is, be rescued and restored.

***"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."* John 3:16-17 (ESV)**

The "world" is a people with created reason and senses, with ways of thinking and logic, with material things and relationships, with feelings and emotions, with language and communication, with actions and interactions, with learning and knowledge. But it is mankind that, while created holy in the image of God, are fallen sinners, lost, and condemned, with unbelief and disobedience, with evil values and distorted world views, with deviant behavior and an offensive life; living in darkness and filth, tribulation, and sorrow, living under the prince of this world and under judgment; and a life full of iniquity and guilt, spiritual ignorance, foolishness, and deceit. And yet, that is the world God so loved and to which Christ was sent, and to which, He sent the Church.

The fallen "world" can be truly described as the "valley of dry bones" in Ezekiel 37 – bones that are dried up, hopeless, cut off, in the grave, divided, defiled, idolatrous, detestable, and reflecting transgressions, backslidings and sin (Ez. 37). It was a wonderfully created world, but subsequently, a fallen lost world, to which the Father sent Christ and to which Christ sent the community of believers.

But in a heart of love, Christ was "set...down in the middle of the valley...full of bones" (Cf. the Prophet Ezekiel in Ez. 37). He was sent (the "*Missio Dei*") into this world (John 17: 8, 18, 21, 23, 25)!

***"...that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation"* 2 Corinthians 5:19 (ESV);**

***"The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'"* John 1:29 (ESV);**

***"The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost."* 1 Timothy 1:15 (ESV);**

“He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world”

1 John 2:2 (ESV). Yes, through Christ, the dry bones can live!

Thus Christ was sent into the world (John17:18) for the very express purpose “...that (ἵνα – so that; in order that; for the purpose that) they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that (ἵνα) they may become perfectly one, ***so that the world may know that you sent (ἀπέστειλας) me and loved them even as you loved me***” (John 17:22-23). ***“I came that (ἵνα) they may have life and have it abundantly”*** John 10:10.

Christ connecting with the world is the *Missio Dei*! While being sent into the world but “not of the world” (John 17:16), Christ became our brother, became flesh of our flesh, and became one of us. Though without sin, He became true man. He fit in. He lived in our world (John 17:11). It was also His world (though He was “not of the world”).

Christ, Who was not myopic, but in the love with the world, became man to live this life with mankind, to live life on mankind’s behalf, and to live this life to the fullest for mankind so that man might live an eternal life with Him. He was a real people person because He also expressed ideas, channeled messages, acted and interacted, and grew up and lived according to the culture of the people. He participated in the affairs and lives of the people. He related to people. He did not isolate Himself from humanity but participated in humanity.

“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery”
Hebrews 2:14-15 (ESV);

“For our sake he made (ἐποίησεν [ποιέω] — make, do, abide, be, bear, deal with) him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become (root word: γίνομαι) the righteousness of God.” 2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV) [“He made the one not knowing sin, on behalf of us, sin, in order that we might become the righteousness of God”]

THIS LOVE ACT AND EVENT BY CHRIST HAS SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE CHURCH’S MISSION TO THE WORLD!

The “*Missio Dei*” needs to be understood and applied in the context of the “world” and the “world” needs to be understood in the context of the essence of the “*Missio Dei*”! For administering the church’s mission, the “*Missio Dei*” is to be understood and applied in the love initiative, being, and action of God’s heart for the world, beating through the believers, who are sent to the “world” with His love!

II. THE *MISSIO DEI* AND THE SENDING OF THE CHURCH INTO THE WORLD

The paradigm and context of the Church’s mission is not the church and therefore, not the sinner/saints gathered around their Divine Service/liturgy but the *Missio Dei ad Mundum, the sending of God to the World*, which we have summed up, ***The Great Sending, God’s Heart for the World Beating Through You!***

Missiology is a study of the church's mission in the context of the *Missio Dei*. Therefore, it is really a study of the ***Missio Dei ad Mundum* core, paradigm, and lens.**

Thus, It is a study of God's sending in history of "reconciling the world to Himself in Christ" (2 Cor. 5:18-19, 21); It is a study of the ultimate purpose (*ἵνα*) of His mission (John 3:15-17; 17:2-3, 21-26; 20:31; Gal. 4: 4-6); It is a study of His mission message and the content of the message which He communicates to humankind (John 3:16-21; 14:1-27; Luke 24: 45-47); It is a study of the sending of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; Luke 24: 49).

The fullness of the *Missio Dei* paradigm for the mission of the church also requires a study of the mission means which He has created and arranged for communicating His Word of sin and grace to the world (John 14:16-27; 16:12; 17: 17-19; 20:21-23; Luke 24: 45-49; Matt. 28: 18-20; Acts 1:1-8); It is a study of the "Sender," the "Sent One," and the "Sending" (Cf. the ***Missio Dei*** of Jn. 17; Jn. 20; Lk.4:18-20, etc.).

This all means that it is a study of and applying God's Word. The study of the *Missio Dei* ad Mundum requires one to **exegete the Word!**

But, there is another important component to missiology and that is a study of the created and then fallen **WORLD**. **A study of the *Missio Dei* requires one also to exegete the world!** One must not only study the Word but study the world! Certainly, such a study of the world always begins with a study of the Word including a study of the First Article of the Creed concerning the nature, function, and purpose of mankind. But while it begins with a study of the Word, one must also profoundly exegete the world and all that it means! Why? Christ was and we are sent to the world!

So, for a genuine study of and participation in the ***Missio Dei ad Mundum***, the church must not be myopic but first and always understand and be sensitive to a WORLD THAT IS VERY EVIL, wrong, judged, and marked with no gladness, no "light," no vision, very limited knowledge and power, hopeless and lying-in dust and ashes (Cf. the hymn "The World is Very Evil" – TLH 605).

For participation in the ***Missio Dei***, the church must not be myopic but also understand and be sensitive to the CULTURE AND CULTURES OF THE WORLD. (See treatise X) This is implied from

"Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people," Rev. 14:6 ; and,

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth," Acts 1:8; and,

"I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.¹⁵ So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." Romans 1:14-16;

A very helpful passage is 1 Cor. 9: 19-23, ***"For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.²⁰ To the Jews I became (root word: γίνομαι - to cause to be, generate, to become, come into being) as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I***

might win those under the law. ²¹ *To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law.* ²² *To the weak I became (γίνομαι) weak, that I might win the weak. I have become (γίνομαι) all things to all people, that by all means I might save some.* ²³ *I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.” (Cf. use of the root word “γίνομαι” also in verse 23 – “And all things I do because of the Gospel, that a fellow partaker of it I may become”)*

Under the seamless *Missio Dei*, the church knows, understands, appreciates, and/or utilizes the language, the objects, and materials, the actions and interactions, choices and changes, way of thinking, values, beliefs, and worldview of the world’s people. The church is sent, not to be of the world but in the world, not to be taken out of the world or to be isolated from the world (including its religions and all the world’s Christians) but to be kept from the evil one while in the world.

Being in the world, we can be “one of them” while not being “of the world.” Secure in Christ and His Word, we truly are to “fit in.” Secured, we relate to mankind and to their culture and are true people-persons without one’s own cultural baggage getting in the way. That baggage can be as Dr. Robert Newton is known to have said recently, “being stuck to the context of the church instead of the world.”

SO, the church is SENT TO “to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. Rev. 14:6. This is not just a geographical thing but SENT TO creation with the vision and hope of the new creation, the new heaven, and new earth! As Christ connected with the world, which was the context of His sending, the church connects with the world, which is the context of her sending!

Genetically and physically, Christ “became” (root word: γίνομαι – Cf. **John 1:14, Gal. 4:4**) **man**, even was made to be sin for us even though He was holy, without sin and “not of the world” that “**we might become** (γενώμεθα [γίνομαι] – to cause to be, generate, originate, enacted, to become, come into being) **the righteousness of God**” (2 Cor. 5:21). Does this truth of the *Missio Dei* give the church a clue of what it means for the church not to be “of the world” or of its evil while at the same time being “in the world?” And that being “in the world” can even be like existing under the same roof but living in different worlds?

While it is not genetic or biological, can the church, as a fellow worker and instrument of God in His sending (1 Cor. 3: 9), “become” (γίνομαι – Cf. **1 Cor. 9: 19-23**) **the people to whom we are sent**, “become” **the “culture” or “world”** (correctly understood) without being of the world and without the world’s baggage of sin and one’s own personal baggage? (Examples: a pastor/missionary with his own baggage, born and reared in a metropolis, “becoming” the rural church/agricultural community culture; or the missionary/pastor, with his baggage, born and reared in the USA, “becoming” the culture[s] of Ghana, New Guinea or Belize?)

Cf. Jn. 17: 11-16: “in the world;” “not of the world;” “not...take[n]...out of the world.”

The church and pastors/teachers that participate in the *Missio Dei* should be missional leaders in identifying and analyzing the culture and subcultures of the world including in the local community. Consciously and intentionally, the sent leaders are to exegete, to “become” and utilize (without compromising the relationship with God and His Word) **the culture**, not only of the nation and local community but in the local congregation.

This includes identifying and analyzing the changing demographics, mobility, generations, trends, way of thinking and way of life, the ever-changing communication and language, the changing values and distorted world views, “pop culture” and influential false religions, “other” Christians with whom we may disagree confessionally, quality of education, the effect of the economy, redefinition of the family and even “childhood,” health and job issues, “family of origin,” and the ever-changing relationships in the family, church, community, nation, and world **for the Church’s sending to the world, including the local parish and community.**

CONCLUSION

This matter of studying (exegeting) both the Word and the world together and applying that study for participation in the ***Missio Dei ad Mundum***, applies to a congregation, pastors, and teachers as well as to the Synod in its global mission. While sent into the world, the “locals” need to be fully sensitive to both the world and local culture and subcultures to communicate the Gospel to the people of their world and community!

Participating in the *Missio Dei* involves participating in the very lives of the people where they are. The manufacturer, Panasonic, who claims to have ideas for life, advertised its *Toughbook for a Toughworld* by proclaiming ***“In my world, we walk a thousand miles in our customers’ shoes... We’ll keep walking in your shoes so we can deliver the reliability you have to count on.”***

For the tough world, Christ, Who is truly *reliable*, *delivers* eternal life (cf. John 17: 1-5)! With the community of Christian believers participating in the context and paradigm of the *Missio Dei*, it participates in the very delivery of the abundant life that Christ alone provides “that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have *life* in His name” (John 20:31).

Not of the world, but called out of the world, Christ sent the community of believers into the world to participate in the ***Missio Dei ad Mundum*** (John 17:18; 20:21).

“they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent (ἀπέστειλας) me... they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent (ἀπέστειλας) me and loved them even as you loved me... that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world” (John 17: 21-24).

WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD! AND WHAT A WONDERFUL MISSION TO THE WORLD!

HYMN 920 LSB (Cf. 1 Peter 2:9):

Forth in the peace of Christ we go; Christ to the world with joy we bring;
Christ in our minds, Christ on our lips, Christ in our hearts, the world's true king.

King of our hearts, Christ makes us kings; Kingship with Him His servants gain;
With Christ the servant-Lord of all, Christ's world we serve to share Christ's reign.

Priests of the world, Christ sends us forth This world of time to consecrate,
This world of sin by grace to heal, Christ's world in Christ to recreate.

Christ's are our lips, His Word we speak; Prophets are we whose deeds proclaim
Christ's truth in love that we may be Christ in the world, to spread Christ's name.

We are the Church; Christ bids us show That in His Church all nations find
Their hearth and home where Christ restores True peace, true love to all mankind.

With the mission of the Church being the *Missio Dei ad Mundum*, the world so loved by God, which is the core, the context, the paradigm, and lens, we view:

And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world
as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come, Matthew 24:14

These men who have turned the world upside down, Acts 17:6

and But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed, they have, for
“Their voice has gone out to all the earth,
and their words to the ends of the world.” Romans 10:18

THE MISSIO DEI AND CULTURE

The Missio Dei and Culture is a companion resource of *Mission Dei and the World*, Treatise IX. To understand what God expects in the sending of Christ into the world and Christ's sending of the believers into the world, understanding cultures is necessary for participating in the *Missio Dei ad Mundum* and its execution.

As the *Missio Dei* is the lens for interpreting God's Word, it must also be the lens for interpreting and understanding the world and its cultures for effectual participation in the church's mission.

Exegeting God's Word requires an exegesis of the world and culture:

<u>THE DEFINITION OF CULTURE:</u>	LANGUAGE:	COMMUNICATION
	ARTIFACTS:	COLLECTED OBJECTS/MATERIALS (Including symbols, facilities, etc.)
	BEHAVIOR:	ACTIONS/INTERACTIONS
	DECISION METHODS:	CHOICES/CHANGES (Pragmatic, matriarchal, patriarchal)
	COGNITIVE PROCESS:	WAY OF THINKING
	VALUES:	WHAT IS CONSIDERED GOOD AND BAD (Ruling principle)
	BELIEFS:	WHAT IS CONSIDERED TRUE
	WORLD VIEW:	WHAT IS CONSIDERED REAL (Essential assumptions)

The Cultural Mosaic (*Joy to the World*, Philip Bickel, CPH, 1989):

INTEGRATED CUSTOMS OBJECTS, IDEAS, VALUES (different features):

1. Objects and materials – what is used and collected
2. Cognitive processes – ways of thinking, forms of logic
3. Linguistic forms – ways of expressing ideas (cf. body language, gestures)
4. Art and media – ways of channeling a message
5. Behavioral patterns – ways of acting (including nod of the head, use of the left hand/manners, attitude towards time)
6. Social structures – ways of interacting
7. Decision methods – ways of making choices and changes
8. Values – what is good or bad
9. Beliefs – What is true or false
10. World view- ways of perceiving reality (highly technological people may have highly superstitious beliefs)

Culture defined in Pastoral Theology, Mueller, and Kraus, CPH, 1990:

“The integrated pattern of what a given group of people does and believes and what it transmits (by other means than heredity) from one generation to the next”

Culture as gleaned from the same source, Pastoral Theology, 1990, CPH:

- ...binds or separates
- ...defines what is acceptable or deviant
- ...governs what is real and right
- ...teaches how to think and live
- ...is helpful and harmful
- ...is always in transition and can change

MIRRIAM-WEBSTER:

Etymology:

Middle English, cultivated land, cultivation, from Anglo-French, from Latin *cultura*, from *cultus*, past participle

Date: 15th century

1: CULTIVATION, TILLAGE

2: the act of developing the intellectual and moral faculties especially by education

3: expert care and training <beauty *culture*>

4 a: enlightenment and excellence of taste acquired by intellectual and aesthetic training

b: acquaintance with and taste in fine arts, humanities, and broad aspects of science as distinguished from vocational and technical skills

5 a: the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations

b: the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group;

also: the characteristic features of everyday existence (as diversions or a way of life) shared

by people in a place or time <popular *culture*> <southern *culture*>

c: the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization <a corporate *culture* focused on the bottom line>

d: “the set of values, conventions, or social practices associated with a particular field,

activity, or societal characteristic <studying the effect of computers on print *culture*>

<changing the *culture* of materialism will take time” — *Peggy O'Mara*

6: the act or process of cultivating living material (as bacteria or viruses) in prepared nutrient media; *also:* a product of such cultivation

ENCARTA:

- **Shared beliefs and values of a group** – beliefs, customs, practices, and social behavior or a particular nation or people.
- **People with shared beliefs and practices** – a group of people whose shared beliefs and practices identify the particular place, class, or time to which they belong
- **Shared attitudes** – a particular set of attitudes that characterizes a group of people.

WJS additional reflections:

For participation in the *Missio Dei ad Mundum*, make note of Culture’s impact, including its observance, understanding, and application on the communicator, the message, and the hearer (recipient)

This “**culture**” **example is helpful:** Agri-culture/Ager Cultura (cultus)- Land culture – Land care/cultivation for exegeting the world culture including the local culture in a congregation:

Quality (and condition) of soil/seed/livestock (heat/drought/cold resistance)
Genetics of the “seed”
Growing season/first and last frost/temperature/moisture/elevation
Crop – forage/grain/row crop/livestock
Herbicides/fungicides/pesticides/pests/diseases/weeds
Management practices – till/no-till; planting/harvesting; rotating; fertility
THE RHYTHM: The mindset of farmer/rancher - the preparation – fertilization - the seed
–
planting – nurturing – “weeding” - maturing – harvesting - celebrating

Dr. WILLIAM SCHUMACHER IN CONCORDIA JOURNAL, SUMMER 2016:

Culture and implications for Mission

- Complex set of behaviors, relationships, values, assumptions allegiances, artifacts, and products
- Interrelated system of thoughts, beliefs, morality, ethical principles, social and family structures and physical products
- Part of creation and result of countless decisions, choices, and ideas made by a group of people over a long period of time

- Learned, like a language over a period of time
- Comprehensive, integrative, dynamic (the constant process of change and transformation) under powerful driving forces (**Cf. the creative power of the Word of God at work in the world**)
- Communication determined what the hearers hear and understand not my knowledge and intentions and what I think.
- Creative participants within the doctrine of vocation, culture-making, adding goods, values, and artifacts, and cultural goods (Example: “Hope” and the good news which changes the world...we do not change it)

Additional Definition of *culture* from other undisclosed readings

1a: the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group *also:* the characteristic features of everyday existence (such as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time *popular culture (Southern culture)*

1b: the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization, *A corporate culture focused on the bottom line*

1c: the set of values, conventions, or social practices associated with a particular field, activity, or societal characteristic *studying the effect of computers on print culture Changing the culture of materialism will take time ...— Peggy O'Mara*

1d: the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations

2a: enlightenment and excellence of taste acquired by intellectual and aesthetic training

2b: acquaintance with and taste in fine arts, humanities, and broad aspects of science as distinguished from vocational and technical skills *a person of culture*

3: the act or process of cultivating living material (such as bacteria or viruses) in prepared nutrient media *also:* a product of such cultivation

4: **For proper CULTIVATION, TILLAGE, We ought to blame the *culture*, not the soil.**— Alexander Pope

5: the act of developing the intellectual and moral faculties especially through education

6: expert care and training in *beauty culture*

OTHER, such as manners, taste, the way people live, act, play, relate, tastes, food, and entertainment;
cf. agriculture above

THE MISSIO DEI AND COMMUNICATING THE GOSPEL IN EVERY CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

“Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. But how can they call on Him whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear if the message is not proclaimed...So then faith comes by hearing the message and the message comes through preaching Christ” Romans 10: 13, 14, 17

INTRODUCTION:

The mission of the Church, which is the Mission of God (The Sending of God), must, among many essentials, focus on “culture” as regards the mission and ministry TO THE WORLD of/by the local parish and its leaders, as well as an awareness of the culture of every sent believer and congregation.

One cannot focus on being sent to the world and its cultures without including the total picture of communicating in the context of the culture, the Gospel message in the context of culture, and the context of the ever-changing contemporary world, national, community, congregation, and personal cultures and subcultures.

PARTICIPATION IN THE MISSIO DEI (THE SENDING OF GOD) AND THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH REQUIRES:

- I. Awareness of the culture (SELF, family, congregation, community, society, nation)
- II. Understanding the culture (SELF, family, congregation, community, society, nation)
- III. Applications for a CONGREGATION’S mission and ministry, for a church planter, for missionaries, church workers, individuals, etc. with a Missio Dei ad Mundum lens for:
 1. The **great sending** to the world (not just geographically and not just to the church)
 2. A *sending* evangelistic outreach locally (but in a world context)
 3. A *sending* Church Planting, for One Holy Christian apostolic Church – world context
 4. A *sending* administration of THE Word (all ministries of the Word) and Sacrament – world context
 5. A *sending* Divine Service/liturgy – world context
 6. A *sending* Pastoral care (shepherding) – world context
 7. A *sending* - Servant leaders/leadership – world context
 8. A *sending* Leadership development – world context
 9. A *sending* Parish “administration” – world context
 10. The sent believers and the community of believers has a culture that is **BAGGAGE** that may be or must be left behind (sent away) or be transformed (Rom. 12: 1-3) See Treatise XI – in a world context

11. ETC. – world context

- IV. Implications for a District and Synodical “Great Sending, Missio Dei” being or existence: An effective “cross-cultural” mission by District and/or Synod is directly proportional to the effective contemporary cultural and cross-cultural “Missio Dei” sending and local congregation’s ministry.
1. **Such as bilingual** pastors, teachers, congregations, Synod; all ethnic ministries, etc.
 2. **Such as consistent or steadfast use of the Missio Dei lens for interpreting, understanding, and applying the Scripture in all sending and teaching/proclaiming/healing/serving, all of which are *sending* ministries and missions centered, and aligned with the core *Missio Dei ad Mundum*.**

POSTSCRIPT: (Plus any relevant works/articles by Bob Newton about culture????)

For a thorough understanding of the critical “culture” nature and elements of an essential “Missio Dei” in the church’s sending existence, being, and participation in the great sending, read and digest the books of *Essays* by the sainted Missionary, Bible translator, Seminary professor, and renowned missiologist, *the Rev. Dr. Eugene w. Bunkowski*:

- *God’s Communicators in Mission*
- *Receptor-Oriented Gospel Communication*
- *The State of Gospel Communication Today*
- *The Role of the Laity in Gospel Communication*
- *Church Growth: A Biblical Perspective*

Essays, Missions Congress, Great Commission Resource Library, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana

THE MISSION DEI – THE RHYTHM OF LEAVING AND GOING

Leaving and going is an integral part of the rhythm of the *Great Sending*. The rhythm of God’s heart beating for the world is sending, leaving, and going. In the sending of Christ into the world, He left His heavenly home to go, left for going to live a perfect life on earth, a leaving and going for suffering and dying, and rising from death for the redemption and rescue of mankind – Having been sent, an intentional leaving for incarnation, human/earthly existence and going to seek and save the lost.

This *Missio Dei ad Mundum* rhythm can be understood by reviewing the rhythms in our life, such as life and death; day, night, times, and seasons; the beats in music; breathing; the biological rhythms, which are a series of bodily functions regulated by your internal clock in roughly 24-hour cycles, and which are most affected by light. They control cycles like sleep and wakefulness, body temperature, hormone secretion, and more; The natural cycle of physical, mental, and behavioral changes that the body goes through in a 24-hour cycle is critical to one’s well-being.

Just as your light exposure, eating habits, and other environmental cues can maintain or disrupt your biological rhythms, the rhythms of your spiritual and missional life can maintain or disrupt the *Missio Dei ad Mundum* participation. Just as disrupting your biological rhythms can lead to serious health problems, so disobeying, disrupting, disconnecting from, or distracting from the *Missio Dei ad Mundum*, God’s great Sending, can lead to serious missional health problems (decline and demise) in the congregations.

Scripture implies a rhythm in Psalm 121: **8**: *The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.* (Note the rhythm of going out and coming in)

The Father sent Jesus, Jesus and the Father sent the Holy Spirit, and Jesus sent His followers, the community of believers, into the world. Being **sent** requires the rhythm of **leaving** and **going**. Leaving and going are inherent in the sending of God.

When Jesus in His High Priestly prayer said, *As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world (John 17:18)* and on Resurrection night in the locked room, (John 20:21-23) *Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”*²² *And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”*²³ *If you forgive (ἀφήτε - ἀφίημι,) the sins of any, they are forgiven (ἀφέωνται) them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld,”* Jesus expected the disciples to leave the physical presence of Jesus and get going.

The word, “forgiveness” in Greek is ἀφήτε - ἀφέωνται from ἀφίημι, which is used elsewhere:

Matthew 9:2-6² And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, my son; your sins are **forgiven (ἀφιενταί).**”³ And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.”⁴ But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts?⁵ For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are **forgiven,**’ (ἀφιενταί) or to say, ‘Rise and walk’?⁶ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to **forgive (ἀφιέναι) sins**”—he then said to the paralytic— “Rise, pick up your bed, and **go (ὑπάγε-go away)** home.” (Note the rhythm of being forgiven, healed, rising, picking up, and **going**).

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to **forgive (ἀφῆ)** us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

ἀφίημι, which is from (apo) and hiemi (to *send*; an intensive form of eimi, to *go*); to *send forth*, in various applications (as forgive, forsake, lay aside, leave, let (alone, be, go, have), omit, put (send) away, remit, suffer, yield up, is translated **forgiveness** 47 times but also translated **leave** 52 times. **So, the sending away or putting away or yielding up (abandon)**. These Scripture passages help us understand the importance of **leaving** (ἀφίημι):

Matthew 4:20-22

²⁰ Immediately they **left** their nets and followed him. ²¹ And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. ²² Immediately they **left** the boat and their father and followed him.

Matthew 18:12

¹² What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not **leave** the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray?

Mark 10:28 ²⁸ Peter began to say to him, “See, we have **left** everything and followed you.”

Luke 18:28

²⁸ And Peter said, “See, we have **left** our homes and followed you.”

John 4:28

²⁸ So the woman **left** her water jar and went away into town and said to the people,

John 14:18

¹⁸ “I will not **leave** you as orphans; I will come to you.

John 16:28

²⁸ I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am **leaving** the world and going to the Father.”

Revelation 2:4

⁴ But I have this against you, that you have **abandoned** the love you had at first.

Another Greek word for leave, leaving, which has the same root, is ἀνίημι, and emphasizes the meaning of loosening or unfasten as used in **Hebrews 13:5 Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave (ἀνίημι) you nor forsake (ἐγκαταλείπω) you.”** This comforting passage also uses a “leave” word translated as “forsake” (ἐγκαταλείπω from καταλείπω), which is used such as in (meaning, “leave down,” “abandon” or “forsake”):

Matthew 19:5

⁵ and said, “Therefore a man shall **leave** (καταλείπω) his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?”

Luke 5:28

²⁸ And **leaving** everything, he rose and followed him.

Luke 15:4 ⁴ “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not **leave** the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it?”

Just how is this rhythm of leaving and going apply to participation in the *Missio Dei ad Mundum*?

The Great Sending, God's Heart for the World, recalls how the disciples left their nets and boats, the Samaritan woman left her water pot, and how the Israelites left Egypt, not just as a physical act but leaving a mindset, culture, traditions, and comfort zone. Reference was made to Matthew 10: 9-10 (Luke 9:3-4) of Jesus' instruction, ⁹ *Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, ¹⁰ no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food* and to Luke 10:34, ³ *Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. ⁴ Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road.*

The Great Sending, God's Heart for the World also recalls Abraham who was sent to leave his country marked with idolatry, his relatives, and his parents, to go to the land of Canaan to be a great nation. *The Great Sending* also in Matthew 10:7-8, 19 referenced the disciples, who as they were going, were commanded to proclaim the "Kingdom of Heaven" and ⁸ *Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay...and Matt. 28:19 as you are going, make disciples of all nations* and referenced the women in Matt. 28: 7 and 10, to "go quickly and tell...go and tell my brothers"

Mathew 28:18-20 *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go [πορευθέντες, as you are going] therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age*

With the disciples previously sent as Christ was sent to the world (cf. John 17:18; and 20:21-23 Easter night), with the further explanation of the commission that, while they are leaving and going, they are to make disciples by baptizing and teaching all nations under His promise to be with them until the end of the age. The rhythm of the *Missio Dei ad Mundum* is focused on sending and going to the world, to all nations, but intrinsically includes a *leaving behind or sending away* self, the past, the comfort zone, the baggage, sin that besets one, faulty thinking and behavior, etc.

As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. John 17:18
Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld." John 20:21-23

THE GREAT QUESTION:

HOW DOES IT APPLY TO US since the rhythm of *sending* always involves the intrinsic essence of and consequents of *leaving and going*?

In the context of God's GREAT SENDING INTO THE WORLD (The *Missio Dei*) and as the very core and lens, what does the Lord and owner of the mission require of us to *leave behind, abandon, or send away*?

- The unrepentant sins that hinder and entangle us (Hebrews 12: 1-3)
- Broken relationships
- Usurping the authority Christ has given us

- Being centered on caring only for ourselves and the community of faith
- Being focused on “building/buildings” and what is in them
- Our comfort zones
- Baggage of thinking, emotions, behavior, ideas, worldview, culture, etc. that are not in harmony with God’s heart and will or that distract from or displace the *Missio Dei* to the world
- Any mission paradigm other than the essence of the *Missio Dei*
- Baggage that serves only self
- Geographical locations that hinder God’s heart for the world (the heart rhythm of sending, leaving, and going)
- Preoccupation with the pastoral office (and/or clericalism, sacerdotalism)
- Preoccupation with the Divine Service/liturgy/the Word for the community of faith only
- Preoccupation with doctrinal issues or not viewing the teachings in the *Missio Dei* context or the proper status/place.
- Being myopic, only viewing arrangements, meetings, institutions, church polity, missions, and “activities/programs” as the mission instead of the *Missio Dei ad Mundum*, which alone is the mission of the Church
- The bondage and prison of time and energy-consuming bureaucratic duties
- The refusal to be transformed or changed in thinking and behavior
- Being stuck, locked in, or boxed in by traditions, practices, and/or an ethos that are not consonant with the Great Sending of God
- Any cognitive dissonance
- Delays and distractions that keep from having the “exit velocity” (leaving and going) demanded by the sending.

The *Missio Dei* rhythm must also take into account staying put for the Holy Spirit’s timing and “power from high,” or for a productive “waiting” for God’s resources to be available, and for productive spiritual “equipping, restoring, or mending the heart, thinking, and behavior.” Staying put for the Holy Spirit’s timing and power empowers the believer for the rhythm of sending, leaving, and going!

Eph. 4:12- 13 ...to equip (καταρτισμὸν – to mend, restore, perfect) the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

The *Missio Dei* rhythm must include being constantly transformed and being renewed by testing, determining, and applying God’s will.

Romans 12:1-3¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. ³ For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

Leaving or “sending away” (ἀνίημι) the baggage of individual Christians and of each congregation is an urgent-care ministry of *καταρτισμὸν (to mend, restore, perfect)*, μεταμορφοῦσθε (transform), and

ἀνακαινώσει (renewal). It is a heart matter, a mindset matter, an attitude matter that should be a mark of all leading, preaching, teaching, learning, and the *Missio Dei* rhythm.

Philippians 2:1-5 ¹So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ²complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,

God alone, through the divine defibrillator, the Holy Spirit, can restore or perfect a normal mission heartbeat and get out of a potentially fatal abnormal *Missio Dei* heart rhythm. The Holy Spirit, through the Word alone, can restart the heart or “shock” it back into its correct rhythm or treat the mission life-threatening conditions that affect the great sending of Christ’s sending, leaving, and going rhythm, **Sent to the World, ἀπέστειλα εἰς τὸν κόσμον, Missus ad Mundum!**

Thus, the encouragement in *The Great Sending, God’s Heart for the World* for a jubilee immersion in God’s Word for a *Missio Dei ad Mundum* rhythm that requires a purposeful commitment and initiative to leave immediately the “water pots,” the “boats,” and the “baggage” to let God’s Holy defibrillator exercise His transforming and renewing-power to create or restore the mission heart rhythm for the *mind of Christ and the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ... to be sent, leave and go!*

Do we, do I, do you have the courage and commitment or the initiative to leave what we are doing time and time again and leave to let God do His work through His Word on transforming our hearts and leave to participate with a renewed heart in His Missio Dei ad Mundum???

So, what is your answer?

THE GREAT SENDING, YOU, COGNITIVE CONSONANCE, AND DISSONANCE

JUST **WHO** IS THE SENDER? **WHO** IS THE SENT ONE? **WHO** IS THE “THEM”? **WHO** IS THE “YOU” WHO POSSESS THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR SENDING INTO THE WORLD?

The answer to these questions has far-reaching implications for the Church’s mission and for fully understanding and carrying out the *Missio Dei ad Mundum*. For instance, the sent one, the “you,” is to demonstrate cognitive consonance, i.e., for your knowledge, understanding, and application of God’s Word and His *Missio Dei* to be in harmony with your commitment, life, action, thinking, and behavior in being a co-heir and co-associate in the great sending, God’s heart for the world, beating through **YOU**.

Among other many paradigms in Christianity and its mission that distract from and are disconnected from the *Missio Dei ad Mundum* as the core, (the heart of God, the paradigm), is that of being entangled in the cognitive dissonance of a faulty “You,” such as the paradigm of sacerdotalism, instead of ALL BELIEVERS being empowered by the Holy Spirit in the seamless essence of the Scriptural *Missio Dei*. It is all the saints, the Baptized in Christ who have received the Holy Spirit that is the sent ones, God’s heart for the world, beating through YOU, not the exclusive pastoral office, the clergy.

The pastoral office (The Pfarramt), the ordained, only flows from the God-given participants and participation in His *Missio Dei ad Mundum*. Just as the Divine Service is not the paradigm of Christianity and the Christian mission, the exclusive pastoral office is not. The heart of the *Missio Dei ad Mundum* is the Lord Jesus Who is sent by the Father, Who possesses and owns the mission, and Who sends all His believers who receive the Holy Spirit in a seamless sending to the world. Intrinsic in the *Missio Dei*, the Gospel, is the Gospel-proclaiming co-heirs and co-associates with Jesus.

With the *Missio Dei* as the lens, heed to the Word of God for a holy cognitive consonance sending:

John 17:18 As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

John 20: 19-23 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.²¹ Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”

Luke 24: 33-35, 44-49 And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together,³⁴ saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!”³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread...⁴⁴ Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,⁴⁶ and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,⁴⁷ and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.⁴⁹ And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

2 Cor. 5: 20; 6:1 Therefore, **we** are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through **us**... Working together with **him**, then, we appeal to **you** not to receive the grace of God in vain.

Luke 10:1-3 After this the Lord appointed **seventy-two others** and sent **them** on ahead of **him**, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. ²And **he** said to **them**, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to **send out laborers** into his harvest. ³Go your way; behold, **I** am sending **you** out as lambs in the midst of wolves. (cf. Matthew 9:36 – 10:5)

Matthew 28:16-20 Now **the eleven disciples** went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed **them**. ¹⁷And when they saw him, they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to **them**, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the **Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded **you**. And behold, I am with **you** always, to the end of the age."

Acts 1:8 But **you** will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon **you**, and **you** will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Eph. 4:11-16 And he gave the **apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers**, ¹²to equip the **saints for the work of ministry**, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

In this treatise consider all the different pronouns (you, they, them, etc.) used for any "participant," such as the sender or "actor" or sent ones (recipients) under the word, "**YOU**." So, the question is who is the "**You**" in all the above Scripture passages as the ones sent by Christ to the world and accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit?

"YOU" IN THE GREAT SENDING ARE:

- **The heavenly Father, the Sender Who sent Jesus.**

The Father is the first Person of the Holy Trinity. While considered the first Person of the Godhead, Who is primarily responsible for the creation:

Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? – Mal.2:10.

He is the Father of my Lord Jesus Christ and also my Father:

I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God – John 20:17

The almighty creator Father is the Sender of Jesus:

As the Father has sent me, I am sending you

- **Jesus Christ, The Apostle, The Sent One to the world, and the Sender of all believers to the world.**

He is *God the Son* (2nd Person of the Trinity), Who was sent into the world –

became a human being, born of the pure Virgin Mary...true God and true human being who truly was born, suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried...to be a sacrifice not only for original sin but also for all other sins...descended into hell, truly rose from the dead...ascended into heaven, is sitting at the right hand of God in order to rule and reign forever over all creatures. (AC, Article III, Concerning the Son of God)

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him – Jn 3:16-17

As the Sent One, the Apostle to the world, He and His work of redemption is the core and center of *the Missio Dei ad Mundum*, the paradigm of Christianity and its mission.

- **The Holy Spirit, the 3rd Person of the Trinity, Who was sent by the Father and the Son.**

He is true God with the Father and the Son, makes us holy, brings us to true saving faith in Jesus Christ, imparts Christ’s blessings, keeps us in the faith, and generates good works, by the Gospel. The Holy Spirit is the power from on High promised by Jesus and is the power at work through the Word and through the Church. Together with Christ, Who promised to be with the believers always, the Holy Spirit is received by the believers, and accompanies, supports, encourages, and guides the Church’s mission, which is centered in the *Missio Dei ad Mundum*.

*And when **he** had said this, **he** breathed on **them** and said to **them**, “Receive the Holy Spirit – John 20:22*

- **The “12,” the 12 (11) Disciples, were called the Apostles by Jesus Himself.**

When Jesus first called the fishermen, etc. to follow Him and be his disciples, they also were sent. In His training of the “12”, He sent them out. On Holy Maundy Thursday night, the “11” were present for His High Priestly prayer to the Father about them being sent to the world as He was sent. On Easter night, the Emmaus disciples, the “11” and those with them behind locked doors, the Resurrected Christ sent them to the world.

On the Mountain in Galilee, He told the “11” (and many others!?) as they were going, to make disciples of all nations. The “12” were simply like forerunners, models, and trailblazers to/for all the subsequent followers of Jesus in the New Testament age. And with Word being multiplied as recorded in Acts in early New Testament history, multitudes were following and being sent as the “11” were sent, and as 1 Peter 2:9 tells us, the priesthood of all believers were and are the “sent ones.”

- **THUS, ALL THOSE WHO WERE MADE “DISCIPLES/APOSTLES”, THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE BAPTIZED IN CHRIST, ALL WHO RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE ONE HOLY CHRISTIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH (THE COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS) – ARE SENT ONES**

The New Testament speaks of the “72;” in Luke and Matthew, the women in the Gospel accounts; the “500 hundred;” and “all the apostles” in 1 Cor. 15:7; Barnabas in Acts 14:14; of the “apostles of the churches” in 2 Cor. 8:23; of Epaphroditus in Phil. 2:5; of Andronicus and Junia, “outstanding among the apostles”; of Priscilla and Aquila; and of Philologus and Julia in Romans 16:7; and so

many more resulting from the dynamic in 1 Cor. 12:28-29 and Eph. 4:11. While some erroneously limit those two passages only to “The Twelve” [exclusivity of the Pastoral Office, the ordained], many theologians correctly consider these gifts to the Church also as the wider apostolic (missionary) role and function in planting and nurturing churches.

Also, in the New Testament consider the many missional (sending-sent) roles, activities, and functions of individuals and congregations as recorded in the Book of Acts, those in Jerusalem, the 120, the 3000, the 5000, the deacons of Acts 6 and 7, the persecuted, scattered and dispersed *apostles* in Acts 8, and deaconesses, Philip’s daughters, the apostles, and brothers throughout Judea (Acts 11), the Antioch co-associates (Acts 13), Ephesus, Philippi, and Thessalonica, etc. (cf. 3 John: 1-8).

In the Scriptures cited above, *The Missio Dei ad Mundum* is the identity and the “being” of all Christians. All are disciples and ones who are “apostles.” ALL are “missionaries” who were commissioned at Baptism and received the Holy Spirit. The Great Sending is God’s Heart for the world, beating through **YOU, yes through us.** All the baptized in Christ and the fellowship of Una Sancta is the YOU.

- **You** are *the sent* ones to the world by Christ in John 17:18 and 20: 19-23!
- **You**, in the power of the Holy Spirit received, forgive, and send away sins in John 20: 23
- **You ate bread with Jesus, received His Word, the commission to be witnesses and proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations, and received His promise of the Holy Spirit in Luke 24: 33 ff.**
- **You** are the ambassadors to the world in 2 Cor 5:20
- **You** are the “72”, the praying disciples to the Lord of the Harvest, the laborers, and the sent ones in Luke 10:1-3
- **You** are the going disciples and the recipient of Jesus’ promise In Matthew 28:16-20
- **You** are the witnesses under the power of the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:8
- **You** are among the **apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers** in the roles, arena, and functions in Ephesians 4:11 ff.

Recently Dr. Robert Newton reminded me that In the Ordination / Installation Service of a Pastor, John 20: 19-23 and Ephesians 4:11-16 are cited as the institution by Christ Himself of the Office of the Holy Ministry and as the gift to the Church of the pastoral office (Lutheran Service Book Agenda). It is well known that passages such as those cited above have been used as referring exclusively to the Office of the Holy Ministry (the ordained, the Pfarramt). This interpretation not only causes confusion and misunderstanding, but is in error, and is contrary to the *Missio Dei*, the mission of the Church. It is a cognitive dissonance that will always adversely affect the Church.

Those passages do apply in a certain sense to the ones holding that Public Office since such is among the believers/disciples of Jesus. And the passages apply because the church, which is instituted by God, and which alone possesses the Office of the Keys (Predigamt) with Jesus, chooses, authorizes, calls, and ordains those in the Office of the Holy Ministry (Pfarramt), which was also instituted by God, but simply and profoundly to exercise publicly the office given to all Christians.

Luther's commentary on John 20:19-23⁵⁴ sets that matter straight. Luther rejected the premise that the Keys of binding and loosing sins had been given exclusively to the clergy. So, Luther's commentary helps us understand Who is the Who that received the Holy Spirit and His power in being the sent ones. So, for a healthy spiritual cognitive *Missio Deo* consonance, digest what Luther has to say:

Christ's words in John 20:22–23, Luther said, had been spoken not to the apostles and their successors in ministerial office alone but "to all Christendom and to each [Christian] in particular." Against the overwhelming medieval consensus denying the sacramental efficacy of lay Absolution, Luther therefore insists that the Absolution spoken by a lay Christian to his brother is the Word of God, fully as effective as the Absolution spoken by the pastor, as effective as if spoken by Christ Himself.

Luther further states, This power is here given to all Christians, though some have unjustly appropriated it to themselves alone, as the pope, bishops, and priests, who want to possess that power and claim it has been given to them alone and not to the laity.¹² But here Christ is speaking neither about priests nor about laymen, but He says, "Receive the Holy Spirit." Whoever has the Holy Spirit, that is, whoever is a Christian, has been given this power. But who is a Christian? Whoever believes. Whoever believes has the Holy Spirit. Just as heat follows the sun, so also the Holy Spirit follows faith.

Luther emphasizes, "As the Father sent Me," He says [John 20:21]. This is the highest work that a Christian is able to do: that through preaching I should bring [my neighbor] to the same [faith] to which I [have been brought]. He appoints each one to this office.²⁰ He Himself came to preach and teach the truth. This is said and written for us, as if to say: "You have all you need of consolation in Me, and I, Christ, am the true joy. The Father sent Me into the world out of love, so that I might serve it, so that the world might enter into joy and consolation, and I have given up My body and life. Do likewise. For whatever remains of your life, live as those sent by Christ." It is the office of everyone to instruct his neighbor, etc. And this power is given not to the clergy alone (though [here it is] spoken to the apostles) but to all believers. When you have performed this highest work, seek to become Christ's apostle, to serve all people, so that they may come unto God as you have. Do not do this that you may merit anything thereby; rather, you already possess [everything] through Christ. (Emphasis added)⁵⁵

In summary, Luther's commentary points out strongly that in John 20:21-23 every Christian is an "apostle" [sent one] of Christ, and is exercising the greatest power that is given to mortal man, that He entrusts the Gospel to us, that we **all** should seek to be Christ's apostles, and that this gift and office of the church do not consist in having many good works but in spreading the resurrection of Christ. The power and authority to distribute this Gospel to human beings in the world is **The Great Sending, God's Heart for the World Beating Through You** [the *Missio Dei ad Mundum*].

The "Brief Statement" adopted in 1932 by the Synod as a formal Doctrinal Statement confesses

"Since the Christians are the Church, it is self-evident that they alone originally possess the spiritual gifts and rights which Christ has gained for, and given to, His Church. Thus St. Paul

⁵⁴ LUTHER'S WORKS. VOLUME 69. SERMONS ON THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN, Chapters 17–20. CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE • SAINT LOUIS

⁵⁵ LUTHER'S WORKS. VOLUME 69. SERMONS ON THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN, Chapters 17–20. CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE • SAINT LOUIS

reminds all believers: "All things are yours," 1 Cor. 3:21, 22, and Christ Himself commits to all believers the keys of the kingdom of heaven, Matt. 16:13- 19; 18:17-20; John 20:22, 23, and commissions all believers to preach the Gospel and to administer the Sacraments, Matt. 28:19, 20; 1 Cor. 11:23-25.

Just as Luther in his commentary, this official statement of the Synod does not include such passages as John 20: 22-23 and Mathew 28:19-20, and others as being exclusive for the Holy Ordained Ministry.

Walther's *Kirche Und Amt* (1852) is often misunderstood and misapplied in this matter for interpreters and readers who push for and practice the exclusivity of the Pastoral Office (Sacerdotalism). But others correctly focus on the office of the **Gospel Word** (*Predigamt*) given to all Christians.

In His "*The Congregation's Right to Choose Its Pastor*,"⁵⁶ CFW Walther quotes Chemnitz "*The office* [the keys committed to the royal priesthood] *together with the ministers all belong to the church*" and in the full quote, Chemnitz cites 1 Peter 2, Matt. 18, Rom. 3:9, 1 Cor. 3:21 and Eph. 4: 8, 11 as Scriptural proof (pages 31-32). Walther here clearly explains the WHO!

Probably most significantly in "*The Congregation's Right to Choose Its Pastor*,"⁵⁷ is Walther's comment on Luke 24:47. The Luke account records the same appearance, events, and words of Jesus as in the John 20: 19-23 account of Easter night in the locked room with the "11," the Emmaus disciples and many others.

After a summary that 1.) all believing Christians have the keys of the kingdom of heaven, 2.) all Christians are spiritual priests, and 3.) Christian congregations have the right to choose their own pastors, and believing Christians have the command and right to preach the Word of God, therefore, in one word, they have the office originally, Walther states:

"The command of Christ "to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins in His name among all nations, Luke 24:47, is by no means given only to the apostles and to their successors in public office, but to His entire church on earth...the responsibility for this rests upon the entire church, on all Christians" (Page 137-138)

In this matter of who is the who in the great sending of Jesus, Walther himself continues to make it clear: "*For in this passage [Matt. 16:15-19] the keys of the church or of the kingdom of heaven are clearly and plainly given to all who believe and confess with Peter, therefore to all true, believing Christians, to the whole church, to every group of Christians it ever so small and despised, that is, they are promised all church rights and powers by Christ the Lord Himself. Whoever denies this to them is a 'sacrilegious', that is a robber of churches and of God, and therefore enters the kingdom of Antichrist as his servant and helper*" (Page 35).

On page 51 of "*The Congregation's Right to Choose Its Pastor*,"⁵⁸ Walther quotes Luther's reference to John 20: 22-23 as a "must fit" for Christ giving *the keys to the entire congregation*. And Walther, in quoting Johann Otho, continues to emphasize that while "*this office* [the public ministry-the pastoral office] *is not committed to all...every Christian has the right...to teach...to rebuke, to strengthen, to comfort...*" (Page 105).

⁵⁶ *The Congregation's Right to Choose Its Pastor*, CFW Walther, Concordia Seminary Publications, translated by Fred Kramer, Robert Rosin, General Editor, Concordia Seminary, 1997

⁵⁷ *The Congregation's Right to Choose Its Pastor*, CFW Walther, Concordia Seminary Publications, translated by Fred Kramer, Robert Rosin, General Editor, Concordia Seminary, 1997

⁵⁸ *The Congregation's Right to Choose Its Pastor*, CFW Walther, Concordia Seminary Publications, translated by Fred Kramer, Robert Rosin, General Editor, Concordia Seminary, 1997

The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church need to be viewed and understood correctly for a God-willed and God-created *Missio Dei*, the Gospel mission:

AUGSBURG CONFESSION

AC [V. Concerning the Office of Preaching]

[1] To obtain such faith God instituted the office of preaching, giving the gospel and the sacraments. [2] Through these, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit who produces faith, where and when he wills, in those who hear the gospel. [3] It teaches that we have a gracious God, not through our merit but through Christ's merit, when we so believe.

[4] Condemned are the Anabaptists and others who teach that we obtain the Holy Spirit without the external⁵⁹ word of the gospel through our own preparation, thoughts, and works.⁵⁹

AC XXVIII [5] Our people teach as follows. According to the gospel the power of the keys or of the bishops is a power and command of God to preach the gospel, to forgive or retain sin, and to administer and distribute the sacraments. [6] For Christ sent out the apostles with this command (John 20[:21–23*]): "As the Father has sent me, so I send you.... Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

[8] The same power of the keys or of the bishops is used and exercised only by teaching and preaching God's Word and by administering the sacraments to many persons or to individuals, depending on one's calling. Not bodily but eternal things and benefits are given in this way, such as eternal righteousness, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life. [9] These benefits cannot be obtained except through the office of preaching and through the administration of the holy sacraments. For St. Paul says [Rom. 1:16*]: "The gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith."⁶⁰

TREATISE

[67] For wherever the church exists, there also is the right to administer the gospel. Therefore, it is necessary for the church to retain the right to call, choose, and ordain ministers.

This right is a gift bestowed exclusively on the church, and no human authority can take it away from the church, as Paul testifies to the Ephesians [4:8*, 11*, 12*] when he says: "When he ascended on high ... he gave gifts to his people." Among those gifts belonging to the church he lists pastors and teachers and adds that such are given for serving and building up the body of Christ. Therefore, where the true church is, there must also be the right of choosing and ordaining ministers, just as in an emergency even a layperson grants absolution and becomes the minister or pastor of another. So Augustine tells the story of two Christians in a boat, one of whom baptized the other (a catechumen) and then the latter, having been baptized, absolved the former.⁵⁹ [68] Pertinent here are the words of Christ that assert that the keys were given to the church, not just to particular persons: "For where two or three are gathered in my name ..." [Matt. 18:20*].⁶¹

Dr. Eugene Klug authored a book on *Church and Ministry*⁶², which He based on Scripture, the Lutheran confessions, and the writings of Luther and Walther. *Dr. Klug* comments that for building God's church through His Word, the term ministry has both a wide and narrow sense with the first sense that of the rights and duties in connection with the Gospel, which belong by Christ's ordering to the totality of the spiritual priesthood of believers in citing 1 Peter 2:9; Matt. 18:17; John 20:23; and 1 Cor. 3:2ff., and in the second sense, the office of the public pastoral ministry.

⁵⁹ Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). [*The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*](#) (p. 40). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press

⁶⁰ Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). [*The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*](#) (p. 92). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

⁶¹ Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). [*The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*](#) (pp. 340–341). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

⁶² **CHURCH AND MINISTRY, The Role of Church, Pastor, and People from Luther to Walther, by Dr. Eugene Klug, CPH, 1993**

Dr. Klug clearly states that Walther was in accord with Luther in Walther's first Thesis on the Ministry, "the holy ministry, or the pastoral office (parish pastorate), is an office distinct from the priestly office, which belongs to all believers." What is this saying? Both the pastoral office and the priestly office belong to all believers, who possess the Ministry of the Word, the Ministry of the Gospel. And as Klug iterates, "God had established the public pastoral office through the congregation's call and for its sake."

In commenting on AC V, Tractate 67, and AC XXVIII (see quotes above), Dr. Klug states,

On the basis of Article V in the Augsburg Confession Walther notes that the first and primary emphasis of the Confessors was to stress "in the wide sense", the ministry of the Word, the Gospel, by which God builds His kingdom or church of believers.

And he further states that while the pastoral office is implicit only in AC article V, it is explicit in AC article XIV. Klug makes it clear by saying "Thus the Ministry of the Word is the property of the general priesthood, [priestly office], but it is performed, under God's careful ordering, by designated ministers who are called into their parish pastorates through the instrumentality of the churches" Klug leaves no doubt that it is self-evident that the Gospel ministry is the possession and the duty of all believers.

With respect to having cognitive consonance (being in harmony with God's Word and the Confessions) in the matter, especially regarding the *Missio Dei* and who is being sent, an essay on *Ministry in Confessing the Gospel*⁶³ expounds on Augsburg Confession Article V, which is noted to be in the context of Article III, the redemptive work through Jesus Christ and Article IV, which states that we receive forgiveness of sin out of grace for Christ's sake through faith:

Article V emphasizes that God instituted the ministry of teaching the gospel and administering the sacraments for the purpose of effecting saving faith in the hearts of those who hear the gospel...That this article does not refer to the pastoral office only should not be used as an argument in support of a purely functional understanding of the office of the public ministry, since elsewhere the Augustana makes clear that there is a divinely established office, the pastoral office, to which men are called

***The Great Sending, God's Heart for the World Beating Through You*, a book encouraging immersion in God's Word for mission transformation in the church and an immersion in the *Missio Dei ad Mundi*, emphasizes the royal priesthood of believers as participants in God's Mission, as *Kingdom of Priests Who Serve, Kingdom of Priests Who Pray, and Kingdom of Priests Who Witness*. Dr. Gerhard Michael, one of the contributors, bases his commentaries in part on 1 Peter 2:4-12.⁶⁴**

***The Great Sending, God's Heart for the World Beating Through You*, which involved many mission-passionate contributors and mission leaders, was written because of the cognitive dissonance that has marked and distracted the awareness of, understanding of, and participation in the *Missio Dei ad Mundum* for at least 60 years or more (A cognitive dissonance includes the Pastoral Office as the paradigm of the church's mission).**

When disconnected from the Word or disobedience of the Word, wrong paradigms of Christianity and Christ's mission will take the church off course and will suffer decline. Such wrong and disconnected

⁶³ CONFESSING THE GOSPEL, A LUTHERAN APPROACH TO SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY, Volume Two, Edited by Sam Nafzger with John Johnson, David Lump, and Howards Tepker, CPH, 2017

⁶⁴ *The Great Sending, God's Heart for the World Beating Through You*, Commentaries 36-38 by Dr. Gerhard Michael, Tenth Power Publishing, 2021 by Will Sohns

paradigms are when the pastoral office is the core instead of the *Missio Dei ad Mundum* with the baptized believers in receipt of the Holy Spirit – getting the “Who” of the sending right.

When connected to and with the Word (the transforming immersion), the church will experience the Spirit-led cognitive consonance of the *Missio Dei ad Mundum* being the paradigm and lens! Spiritual leaders will want to get rid of any old paradigm and destructive yeast and “put on” and commit to the new Biblical revealed lens. Through immersion in Christ’s Word, the Spiritual leaders will lead the believers, not just the clergy, to leave the locked room and with Jesus, and go into the World, ***The Great Sending, God’s Heart for the World Beating Through You.***

A PostScript: This treatise about “YOU”, Number XII, is to amplify certain segments of ***The Great Sending, God’s Heart for the World Beating Through You*** as additional fodder for the mission-minded that are immersed in the Word and transformed for a *Missio Dei ad Mundum* participation.

THE IMAGE OF GOD AND THE MISSION OF GOD

Imaginem Deus et Missio Dei

εἰκόνα θεός καὶ Αποστολή θεός

Genesis 1:26-27 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים וַעֲשֵׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ וַיְרַדְדוּ בְדִגְתַּת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל־הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל־הַחַיָּה אֲשֶׁר חַיָּה עַל־הָאָרֶץ:

וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֱת־הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמֵוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם²⁷

Genesis 1:26-27 et ait faciamus hominem ad **imaginem** et **similitudinem** nostram et praesit piscibus maris et volatilibus caeli et bestiis universaeque terrae omnique reptili quod movetur in terra^{† 27} et creavit Deus hominem ad **imaginem** suam ad **imaginem** Dei creavit illum masculum et feminam creavit eos (Vulgate)

Genesis 1:26-27 καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεός Ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ' **εἰκόνα** ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ' **ὁμοίωσιν**, καὶ ἀρχέτωσαν τῶν ἰχθύων τῆς θαλάσσης καὶ τῶν πετεινῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῶν κτηνῶν καὶ πάσης τῆς γῆς καὶ πάντων τῶν ἔρπετων τῶν ἔρπόντων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.²⁷ καὶ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός τὸν ἄνθρωπον, κατ' **εἰκόνα** θεοῦ ἐποίησεν αὐτόν, ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς. (LXX)

Genesis 1:26 - 27 *Then God said, "Let us make man in our **image**, after our **likeness**. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*²⁷ *So God created man in his own **image**, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

For one to know what it means to be made in the image of God, in His likeness, we must know Who God is. Then we will understand who we are. To know and understand the mission of God, we need to know Who He is. To understand the mission of the church, and of every believer, we need to understand who we are as being made in the image of God. God's great idea of creating humankind in His image sheds light on the **Great Sending of God into the world**.

God, Who is "I am that I am" wants to be known as the one Who sends (Exodus 3:13-14: ¹³ *Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"* ¹⁴ *God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you)*

The humankind "I am that I am" is the very "I am that I am" of God – His image and His likeness, Who is a sending God. While we are not omnipotent and omnipresent, He created us with a soul to be eternal, perfect, all-knowing, holy, just, faithful, benevolent, merciful, gracious, and forgiving, and love as God is love. But add to that great "I am," God is a sending God Who created us in that sending image and likeness. He is a missionary God. And being made in His image and likeness makes us missionary people of God.

We know Him like Jesus knew Him and therefore know Who the only true God is. John 17:3 *And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*

As created beings in His image, like Him, we love, we have compassion, we serve, and like Him, we are sent and send (Cf. Christ's "**Just as**" in John 17:18 and John 20:21). Like Him we have a heart for the world, for every human being, for all. Like Jesus, we are sent. Like Jesus, we send. Like Jesus, we are sent to the

world. Like Him, we pray for laborers in His harvest. Like Jesus, we leave things behind. Like Jesus, we leave immediately. Like Jesus, we sacrifice. Like Jesus, we die to ourselves.

The mission of the church is the image of the “I am that I am” of Missio Dei. The mission of the church is the creation of God in the likeness of the Missio Dei. As Jesus was an apostle to the world, His followers are apostles to the world. As Jesus was a missionary to the world, His followers are missionaries to the world. As Jesus was sanctified (consecrated) for His sending, His followers are sanctified.

John 17:17-19 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

John 20:21 Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so, I am sending you.” ²²And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”

Just as God and who He is, is not imaginary, so the Church, created in the image of God’s Great Sending is not imaginary. I am that I am has sent you. His heart IS beating through you. The mission of every Christian is not imaginary but made in the image of God. *And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent* is amplified in *John 17:18 As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world* and in *John 20:21 Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so, I am sending you.*

This is all in the context of what the resurrected Lord said to Mary Magdalene just after He rose, *John 20:17 Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”* The Christ of His Resurrection and Ascension created the mission of the church in the image of the Missio Dei.

THAT IS NOT IMAGINARY!

1 Corinthians 15:49 (GW) *As we have worn the likeness of the man who was made from the dust of the earth, we will also wear the likeness of the man who came from heaven.*

Romans 8:29 (GW) *This is true because he already knew his people and had already appointed them to have the same form as the image of his Son. Therefore, his Son is the firstborn among many children.*

2 Corinthians 3:18 (GW) *As all of us reflect the Lord's glory with faces that are not covered with veils, we are being changed into his image with ever-increasing glory. This comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

Colossians 3:10 (GW) *and you've become a new person. This new person is continually renewed in knowledge to be like its Creator.*

Made in the image and likeness of God and His mission, and ***just as*** Christ was sent to redeem and restore God’s creation and create humankind anew, so the Community of believers is sent as God’s authorized representatives to carry out the redemption and restoration-Missio Dei ad Mundum under the resurrected and ascended Lord and by the power of His sent Holy Spirit.

In the Missio Dei sending of Christ and the Holy Spirit, the church as ***fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel (Eph. 3:6)*** participates ^{Eph. 4:23-24} ... ***to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ^{Ephesians 3: 24} and to put on the new self, created after the likeness***

of God in true righteousness and holiness. And the community of believers is urged in ^{Col. 3:10} ***and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.***

Created in the image and likeness of “I am that I am” gives clarity to the *Missio Dei*, clarity in who we are, clarity to the mission of the church, and how each Christian and congregation fits into God’s eternal plan and mission. Being made in His image, we think and behave like Christ (Philippians 2), and the sending like Christ’s (John 17 and 20). We have a heart like His. We love like Him. We are sent as He was sent.

In the image and likeness of God, we are heirs and co-associates with The Great Sending, God’s Heart for the World Beating Through You.

A GREAT SENDING SEQUENCE OF GOD'S SENDING

The "SENDING" Biblical sequence AS REVEALED IN SCRIPTURE (Not exhaustive, examples only)

OLD TESTAMENT

- **The promised sending of the Messiah**

- **Genesis 3:15**, *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."*

- **The sending of Adam and Eve out of the garden**

- **Gen. 3:23**, *therefore, the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. [take note of the symbiotic relationship between agriculture and the Missio Dei]*

- **The sending of Noah and his family**

- **Genesis 7:1** *Then the LORD said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation*
- **Genesis 8:16** *"Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you*
- **Genesis 9:1, 7, 19** *And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth..."⁷ And you, be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it...¹⁹ These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the people of the whole earth were dispersed.*

- **The sending of Abram and his family**

- **Genesis 12:1-4** *Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." ⁴ So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him*
- **Genesis 17: 5-8** *No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. ⁶ I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. ⁷ And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. ⁸ And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God*

- **The sending of Isaac, Jacob, and his children, including Joseph and his sons**

- Genesis 18-50

- **The sending of Moses**

- **Exodus 3:12, 14** *He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain." ...¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'*

- **The sending of God's people**

- **Exodus 19:5** *Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me a*

kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel

- **The sending of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Jonah, and all the prophets**

- **Isaiah 6:8-9** And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me.”⁹ And he said, “Go, and say to this people:
- **Isaiah 61:1-2** The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
- **Jeremiah 26:5** and to listen to the words of my servants the prophets whom I send to you urgently, though you have not listened to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor,
- **Malachi 4:5** “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes
- **Jonah 1:1-2** Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ² “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me
- **Jonah 3: 1-3** Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, ² “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.” ³ So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD

- **THE SENDING OF THE FORERUNNER PROMISED**

- **MALACHI 3:1-2** Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.

NEW TESTAMENT

- **The Sending of John the Baptist (Forerunner)**

- **John 1:6** There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light

- **The Sending of The Apostle, Jesus, the Christ – the heart of the Missio Dei**

- **Luke 2:10** And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord
- **Hebrew 3:1-2** Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, ² who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God’s house.
- **John 3: 16-17** “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.
- **1 John 4:9-10** In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins
- **Luke 4:18-19** “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.

- **The sending dynamic of Jesus’ “He/the Father/who sent me” (or similar form which is in sixteen of the 21 chapters in the Gospel of John) is highlighted in Jesus’ sending-prayer of John 17 and the central command in John 20:21-23**

- **John 6:29, 38-39, 44, 57** ²⁹ Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him **whom he has sent.**” ...³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him **who sent me.** ³⁹ And this is the will of him **who sent me**, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me but raise it up on the last day...⁴⁴ No one can come to me unless **the Father who sent me** draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day... ⁵⁷ As the living **Father sent me**, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.
- **The sending prayer for Harvest workers’ invoked by the compassionate Jesus**
 - **Matthew 9:37-38** Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; ³⁸ therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest
- **The sending of the Twelve disciples/apostles on a training mission**
 - **Matthew 10:1-5** And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. ² The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; ³ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴ Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. ⁵ These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “Go ...
- **The sending of the seventy-two by Jesus and sending prayer (10:2)**
 - **Luke 10:1-3** After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. ² And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. ³ Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves
- **The sending of the Holy Spirit as recorded in John 14-16**
 - **John 14:26** But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.
 - **John 15:26** But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me
 - **John 16:5-7** But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. ⁷ Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you
- **The sending prayer of Jesus on Maundy Thursday**
 - **John 17:3, 18** And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent... ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world
- **The sending of the women on the day of Resurrection by the angel and resurrected Jesus**
 - **Matthew 28: 5-10** But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.” ⁸ So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”
 - **Mark 16:7** But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.”

- **Luke 24: 8-11** *And they remembered his words,⁹ and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.¹⁰ Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles,¹¹ but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them*
- **John 20: 2, 17-18** *So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him..."¹⁷ Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her.*
- **The sending of the disciples [120?] in the locked [upper?] room by the resurrected Christ on Resurrection night (first appearance to the disciples)**
 - **John 20:19-23** *On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."*
 - **Luke 24:13, 33, 36-37, 40-49** *That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus...³³ And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together...³⁶ As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!"³⁷ But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit...⁴⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.⁴¹ And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?"⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish,⁴³ and he took it and ate before them.⁴⁴ Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,⁴⁶ and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,⁴⁷ and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.⁴⁹ And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."*
- **The resurrected sending Christ's appearance eight days later in the locked room (second appearance)**
 - **John 20:26-29** *Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe."²⁸ Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed*
- **The resurrected sending Christ prepared breakfast for the "gone fishing" disciples (third appearance) at the Sea of Galilee**
 - **John 21:1, 12-14** *After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way...Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord.¹³ Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish.¹⁴ This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.*

- **The resurrected sending Christ rendezvous with the disciples on the “mountain in Galilee” (Mount Hebron? The Mount of Transfiguration?) [the fourth appearance?]**
 - **Matthew 28: 16-20** *Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*
- **The resurrected sending Christ made numerous appearances during the 40 days before the Ascension – Women, Peter, Emmaus disciples, the company of the apostles, more than 500, etc. (Cf, 1 Corinthians 15:5ff) in Jerusalem, Galilee, Bethany, etc.**
- **The resurrected sending Christ ascends into heaven from Bethany (Mount of Olives) equipping and empowering us for the mission (the Missio Dei) on which HE sends us into the world with and under the sending of the Holy Spirit**
 - **Luke 24:50-53** *And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. ⁵¹ While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and were continually in the temple blessing God.*
 - **Acts 1: 1-9** *In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ² until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³ He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴ And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” ⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷ He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. ⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight*
 - Cf. The Book of Acts, the acts of the company and congregations of the apostles

SUMMARY

- **The sending of all God’s people**
 - **All of the above**
 - **Romans 10:15** *And how are they to preach (κηρύσσω – proclaim, publish) unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news = (one Greek word: εὐαγγελίζω – bring good tidings, evangelize)!*
 - **1 Timothy 1: 1,12** *Paul, an apostle [sent one] of Christ Jesus...¹²Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing [commissioned] me to his service,*
 - **1 Peter 2:9-10** *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy*
 - **Rev. 14: 6-7** *Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. ⁷ And he said with a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.”*

BREATHED ON THEM *John 20:22*

John 20:19-23 “On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.²¹ Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”²² And when he had said this, he ***breathed*** (ἐμφυσάω – φύω, to puff or blow, breath on) on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. (ἅγιος πνεῦμα -BREEZE, WIND, CURRENT OF AIR, BREATH, BLAST)²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”

Genesis 2:7 then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and ***breathed*** into his nostrils the ***breath of life***, and the man became a living creature

Psalms 33:6 *By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the ***breath of his mouth*** all their host.*

Psalms 150: 6 Let everything that has ***breath*** praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is ***breathed*** out by God (θεόπνευστος – πνέω – breath hard, blow) and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

Note the rhythm of breathing in the human body, which needs O²-breathing in O² and exhaling. The blood carries O₂ throughout the body, giving life to all parts – helping organisms grow, reproduce and turn food into energy – needed for the health of the brain, heart, lungs, and all the organs. The oxygen level is always tested by a doctor with the desired level of 95-100% - Cf. SpO₂ reading device.

O₂ is produced by plants – the rhythm of plants taking in carbon dioxide (CO₂) and giving off oxygen.

For the sending, we possess the O² of the Holy Spirit, the O² of Gospel power, the O² of forgiveness, the O² of Peace, the O² of the Word, the O² of the rhythm life of *sent, sending, send*.

The breath of God created the living of the great sending and sent the Holy Spirit to “breathe in.” [“Receive the Holy Spirit = Receive the Holy Breath, Breeze or Wind to breath on the world the forgiveness of sins]

Acts 17:25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

John 20:22 *And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit”²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”*

- Without the breath, the O² of God there is no life
- Without the breath of God there is no soul
- Without the breath of God there is no strength
- Without the breath of Jesus there is no authority
- Without the breath of Jesus there is no sending
- Without the breath of Jesus there is no eternal life
- Without the breath of Jesus there is no Holy Spirit sent
- Without the breath of the Holy Spirit there is no faith
- Without the breath of the Holy Spirit there is no sanctification
- Without the breath of Jesus and the Holy Spirit there is no forgiveness
- Without the breath of the Holy Spirit there is no Scripture, no Word

IN THE BREATH OF CHRIST, THE BREATHED-ON PEOPLE OF GOD ARE CO-PARTICIPANTS OF JESUS’ O² FOR THE WORLD!

IN THE BREATH OF CHRIST, THE CHURCH HAS ITS MISSION LIFE!

IN THE BREATH OF CHRIST, THE SENT ONES BREATH ON THE WORLD!

IN THE BREATH OF CHRIST, THE CHURCH’S MISSION IS CHRIST’S MISSION!

JOHN 20:22 - AND WHEN HE HAD SAID THIS, HE BREATHED ON THEM

Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD! Psalm 150:6

“PEACE” AND THE MISSIO DEI

PEACE: - [שָׁלוֹם , εἰρήνη] state of wholeness, unity, reconciliation, well-being, welfare, prosperity, all is well, a quietness

MISSIO DEI: – The sending of God, the sending of Christ by the Father, the sending of the believers by Christ, the sending of the Holy Spirit by God the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ. – the Great Sending!

John 14:27 ***Peace** I leave (ἀφίημι - send) with you; **my peace** I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.*

John 20:19-23, 26-29 *On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “**Peace be with you.**”²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.²¹ Jesus said to them again, “**Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.**”²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.” ...²⁶ Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “**Peace be with you.**”²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.”²⁸ Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!”²⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”*

Matthew 10:40 *“Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who **sent me.***

COMMENT:

On Maundy Thursday evening - Good Friday night, Jesus assured the disciples whom He sent (John 17:18) *As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world*) that they would be given His peace as He sent the Holy Spirit (John 14-16). In the locked room on Easter Evening, Jesus assured the disciples again that His peace is with them as He sends them out to the world to send away sin (The *Missio Dei*). In Matthew 10:40, Jesus assures the disciples that the world to whom they are sent receives them, the Father and Christ Himself. The disciples are sent both in and with the peace of Christ.

Luke 2:14 “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been *justified by faith*, we have *peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and *peace* in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Ephesians 2:15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making *peace*,

Colossians 1:20 and through him *to reconcile* to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, *making peace* by the blood of his cross.

COMMENT:

The source and nature of the PEACE that Jesus sends and gives, is Himself, the incarnate Christ born in Bethlehem (Luke 2:14). It is the Christ Who creates or makes the peace by justifying, reconciling, and forgiving us by faith or in believing through the blood of His cross.

Ephesians 4:3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the *bond of peace*.

Philippians 4:6-7 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the *peace* of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Genesis 15:15 As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age.

Genesis 26:29 that you will do us no harm, just as we have not touched you and have done to you nothing but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the LORD.”

Numbers 6:26 the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you *peace*.

Numbers 25:12 Therefore say, ‘Behold, I give to him my *covenant of peace*,

COMMENT:

It alone is the peace of Christ that surpasses ALL understanding and that binds us to Him, the Holy Spirit, and to one another in unity. Christ’s peace removes anxiety, guards and keeps us in all troubles and harm and that sends us away from this earth to the new heaven and earth. *Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word* (Luke 2:29).

Luther proclaims that PEACE is the fruit of His resurrection:

Now, on the evening of that Sabbath, the Lord Himself comes to the disciples through closed doors, stands in their midst, greets them kindly, and says, “***Peace be with you,***” as if He wanted to say: “*Through Mary Magdalene, I had a proclamation brought to you that I am risen from the dead and ascend to My God and Father, yet in such a way that I am not ashamed to call you [My] brothers. And I receive you as My co-heirs in all that is Mine, so that My God is your God, and My Father is your Father, and I the heaven that I possess is your heaven. Now, so that you may be certain of this proclamation, I Myself have come here in My own person, and I offer you happiness and salvation as your glory and inheritance. And so that you may have no doubt about My resurrection, I am showing you My hands and My side. Here you see that I am the very one who was nailed to the cross by His hands and feet and whose side was opened by a spear.*”

...In the midst of this trembling, He Himself comes and bids them a friendly greeting: “***Peace be with you.***” And immediately, then, He shows them His hands and His side and ***quickens their heart,*** so they are ***gladdened*** by this friendly greeting and lovely sight and ***return to life as from death...***

This is the power and fruit of His resurrection: that we have ***peace*** and joy—that is, that we are ***comforted*** and made ***joyful*** and ***alive*** amid the heavy thoughts, sadness, and sorrow of our hearts.

For to escape from death, to **conquer** *the heart's fear, trembling, and terror*, requires a divine power. Human strength and power is much too small and weak for this. The **superabundant greatness of His power** must do it, [as] St. Paul says in Ephesians 1 [:19–20], “according to the working of His great might that He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.” (Luther, Luther’s Works, Volume 69)

John 20:21-26 *Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”*²² *And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”*²³ *Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came.*²⁴ *So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.”*²⁵ *Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.”*

- To those locked in, Jesus gives His Peace
- To those who doubt, Jesus gives His peace
- To those that fear Jesus gives His Peace
- To those who are hesitant Jesus gives His Peace
- To those who have failed Jesus gives His Peace
- To those that are weak Jesus gives His Peace
- To those who do not believe Jesus gives His Peace
- To those of the world Jesus gives His Peace
- To those who have not yet seen His hands and His side, Jesus gives His Peace
- To those who have seen His hands and His side, Jesus gives His Peace
- TO ALL THOSE SENT, TO THE WHOLE CHURCH, JESUS GIVES PEACE

“PEACE BE WITH YOU:” JESUS GIVES THE PEACE OF HIS LOVE, FORGIVENESS, POWER, AUTHORITY, HIS SPIRIT, PROMISE, AND HIS PRESENCE!

WHAT A BLESSING! *In peace let us pray to the Lord; For the peace from above and for our salvation...For the peace of the whole world...let us pray to the Lord; Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth; The peace of the Lord be with you always; Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world grant us peace; Lord now let Your servant go in peace; The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace (Divine Service, Setting One, LSB).*

*Forth in the Peace of Christ, we go;
Christ to the world with joy we bring;
Christ in our minds, Christ on our lips,
Christ in our hearts, the world's true King. (LSB 920)*

THE PEACE OF THE *MISSIO DEI* IS SENT TO THE WORLD THROUGH HIS SENT ONES IN PEACE!

**SHALOM,
Will Sohns**