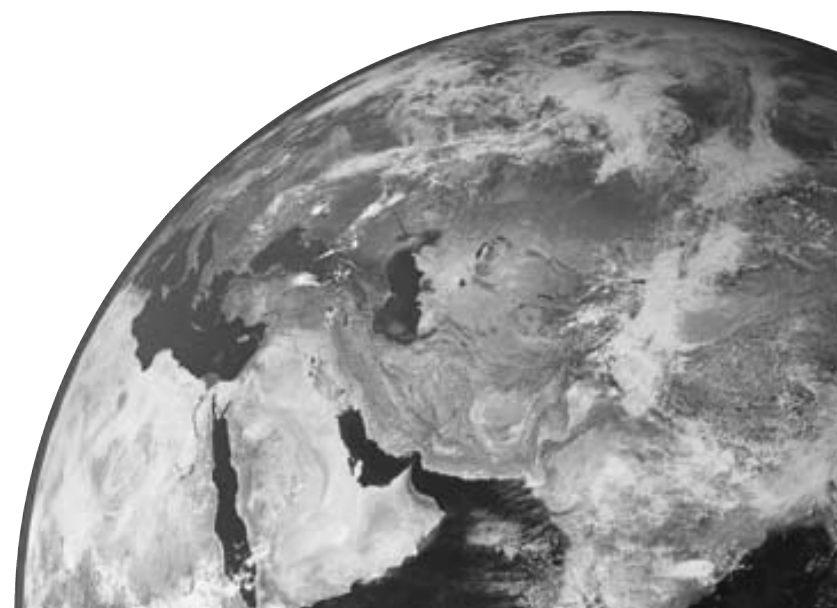


MISSION:
~~IM~~POSSIBLE

WEEK ONE

Introduction to the
mission of God,
the *missio Dei*.





The Diocese of Toronto seeks to become shaped for mission and faithful to God's call to serve all in a post-Christendom context. This Mission Possible course has been provided as a resource to parishes to help people begin to think about who God is, what is the mission of God and how does church need to be shaped to respond to that call.

I strongly commend the program to you as it has been developed by Jenny and Stephen, both of whom know what it means to serve in inherited churches that seek to be shaped for mission. My hope is that this course will begin a fruitful and lasting conversation on what it means to be missional in your own context.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Colin: Toronto". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

The Most Reverend Colin R. Johnson
Archbishop of Toronto
Metropolitan of Ontario



Diocese of Toronto
Anglican Church of Canada



Produced with the assistance of the
General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada
January 2010

Next week we will discuss more what these three words mean and how they are related to the *missio Dei*. We will look at how Jesus accomplished restoration, recovery, and redemption in his life, death and physical resurrection.

For next week

Cut out and bring pictures that represent creation/fall/redemption as you see it.



Closing prayer

Gracious God, we thank you for our creation, preservation and all the blessings of this life. We offer up to you the reality of our broken relationships; with you, with others and with the world you have made for us. Thank you that you desire to heal that brokenness and that your mission is to bring all of creation and humanity back into right relationship with you. We give you thanks in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Next week

Leader: See you next week when we will spend more time looking at how Jesus is at the centre of the *missio Dei*, the mission of God in the world.

God's mission awaits you if you choose to accept it.

Introduction for Leaders

- 1) First of all, thank you for leading this course! As it is the first time running this course, we are looking forward to learning from **your** experience and would value **your** feedback at the end.
- 2) While we have provided the core content for the course, it is our hope that you will make the course “your own.” You may need to shape things to make them appropriate for the context of your own parish. Feel free to do so.
- 3) We have provided Power Point slides to use if you wish, but the course will still be effective without the slides.
- 4) We have included notes and talking points for you as often as we thought appropriate. We know that some leaders will have led Bible studies before and for some this will be your first time. Use them if they help you, and don't use them if they don't help you... nice and easy.
- 5) The aim of the course is to help those who participate begin to think about the mission of God and how they are called by God to join in. It is a basic course that looks at core concepts, and would be a **first** step in preparing a parish to be shaped for mission in its local context.
- 6) The five weeks follow an intentional theological logic. We begin with Christology (who Jesus is), and then look at Missiology (what is God's mission that we are called to participate in) and we in turn let that shape our Ecclesiology (what is the shape of the church).

7) A term we will use a lot is *missio Dei*. The use of Latin is kind of misleading, suggesting an ancient pedigree, but actually it's a modern term, arising from theological debates in Germany in the 1930s.

To put it simply; the church participates and shares in God's mission already present and active in the world. Jürgen Moltmann speaks of it this way, *"It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfill in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father...that includes the church."*

Mission is of the very essence of who the God we know as Trinity is. Mission is part of God's very nature, not simply an attribute of God. Bishop Lesslie Newbigin would famously say that God is a *missionary God*, a sending God (John 20:21).

8) So, the mission of God in the world (as will be used in this course), the reason that God **sends** Jesus, is to bring humanity and creation back into right relationship with God.

Our end goal is for people to see that God is at work in the world and that they want to be part of God's work.

We are both parish priests who are **learning** what it means to be missional in a post-Christian context. We don't claim to have all the answers but our desire is to play a role in starting a conversation about how we are called to be faithful witnesses to Christ in our local communities.

We offer this course to the glory of God and for the extension of God's kingdom.

Jenny Andison, Stephen Drakeford
Advent, 2009, Toronto

This is 'the incarnation'

...God coming to earth in human form.

God came and dwelt among us as the man,
Jesus of Nazareth, so that we can be led to
Restoration
Recovery
Redemption.



What was Jesus' mission?

Leader: We have heard one very familiar story from the Bible, in Genesis, and now we are going to listen to another familiar passage. As we listen to it, have in your mind this question about Jesus.

(Have someone in the group read the story out loud.)

John 1:1–5, 9–18

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

A Note for Leaders...

Our hope for this week is that participants will begin to understand the *missio Dei* and how it is revealed in creation and the life of Jesus.

Icebreaking Exercise (15 mins)

Ask people to sit down, grab a coffee. Let them know that the evening will take about an hour and a half. Encourage them — wherever they are on their spiritual journey, they are welcome; you are all going to learn together for the next five weeks. Depending on how well people know each other, you may wish to use a different icebreaking exercise.

Leader: What is your favourite Bible story?
Why?
What is one thing about you that might surprise people?

Welcome



We are so pleased that you are taking this course. As it is the first year that this course has run, we are looking forward to hearing your constructive feedback at the end of it.

We are all at different stages of our spiritual journey. Some of us know a lot about the Bible; others of us are just beginning to dip our toes into it. Some of us have been Christians for a long time; others are beginning to

learn what it means to follow Jesus. While this is a basic course, we hope that there is a simplicity and richness that you are able to connect with.

Our five weeks have a deliberate thread running through them. We begin with looking at who God is in Jesus (our Christology), and then look at what is the mission of God that we are called to participate in (our Missiology) and then we will finally look at what shape the church needs to be in light of that mission (our Ecclesiology).

Our hope is that at the end of the course we will see that God is at work in the world and that we are invited be part of that.

God's mission awaits if you choose to accept it....

Leader: How did God go about God's mission with all this water under the bridge?

How was God going to end all the separation?

How was God's mission now still to be possible? To accomplish these things, God sent Jesus.

The brokenness and separation that we all experience in different parts of our lives is a **reality**. Despite this fact, **God's mission remains the same. God's mission, the *missio Dei*, is to bring both humanity and creation back into right relationship with God.**

God still has the same hopes and dreams for our lives.
God still has the same desire for us

creative
life/living
beauty
wholeness
“good”

But NOW with the important additions of

Restoration _____

Leader: God wishes to restore us into right relationship: with God, with others and with our creation.

Recovery _____

Leader: God hopes to recover that original intention of beauty and wholeness in our lives.

Redemption _____

Leader: God wants to rescue us from the consequences of our brokenness, our sin.

Missio Dei!

(The mission of God)

In our first week together we are going to be asking ourselves the big question, “What is the mission of God? What is the work of God in the world?” And we hope to find the answer by looking at God's original intention for

- 1) creation
- 2) humanity and
- 3) us as individuals.

Leader: So our first question is,
“What is God's intention for creation?”



What does the Bible have to say about God’s intention for Creation?

(Have a person read the story out loud.)

Genesis 1:1–2, 24–25

¹In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ²the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.... ²⁴And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so. ²⁵God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Genesis 1:26–28

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” ²⁷So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. ²⁸God 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 air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

So what went wrong?

Leader: Because humanity (represented here by Adam and Eve) disobeyed God there were consequences. The consequences revolved around becoming separated, separated from God’s original intentions for us that we looked at earlier.

Who did we get separated from?

(Put their answers up on a flip chart.)

- ▶ God (v. 9)
- ▶ Each other (v. 16)
- ▶ Creation (v. 15, v. 17)

Because of the Fall, humanity now finds itself in the natural state of being separated from God. There are divisions between human beings and brokenness between us and our creation.

(If you have more time for discussion)

Leader: Can you think of examples from your own life where you can sense that separation?

From God...have there been times in your life when you have ignored God or was there a time in your life that you did not know God?

From others...as you feel comfortable, can you share about a relationship that is broken in your life, or has been broken ?

From creation...are there ways in which you contribute to our broken relationship with our creation?

'The Question'

⁹But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." ¹¹He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹²The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." ¹³Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." ¹⁴The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. ¹⁵I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel."

The Curse

¹⁶To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." ¹⁷And to the man he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return." ²⁰The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living. ²¹And the Lord God made garments of skins for the man and for his wife, and clothed them.

When we read this account, how would we answer, "What is God's intention for creation?"

(On a flip chart write up people's responses to this question. Affirm the answers that you can and then add any of these that are missing.)

- ▶ creative (v. 24)
- ▶ life/living (v. 25)
- ▶ beauty (v. 25)
- ▶ wholeness (v. 27)
- ▶ "good" (v. 25)

What is God's intention for God's human creation? Is it the same or different from God's intention for the rest of creation?

- ▶ creative
- ▶ life/living
- ▶ beauty
- ▶ wholeness
- ▶ "good" and...
- ▶ guardianship/stewardship/caretaking (v. 28)

But then something went wrong....

If you wanted, you could show at this point a clip from *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe* (the scene where Edmund meets the White Witch and she gives him Turkish Delight in return for bringing his brother and sisters to her).

***We are now going to read the story from Genesis
that has become known as ‘The Fall.’***

(Have a person read the story out loud.)

‘The Fall’

Genesis 3:1–21

¹Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’” ²The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; ³but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.’” ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die; ⁵for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves. ⁸They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.