WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THE MISSION OF GOD?

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Categories: Mission, Theology

A while ago, I wrote a post entitled Missiology is MeaninglessÂ which suggested that missiology was too broad a term to be used without qualification. Terms like *missiological reflection* and *missiologically informed* are tossed around, but they can mean very different things to different people, depending on their starting point. Lately, I've noticed the same thing with the term *mission of God* and its Latin version *missio Dei.*Â People talk about doing things in the light of the mission of God without ever really defining what they mean by the term, despite the fact that mission of God or *missio Dei* is open to a wide range of interpretations and definitions.

> *A nearly ubiquitous concept in mission theology today is the phraseÂ missio Dei. The idea of a single mission rooted in God's nature at the very least stands in heuristic tension with the manifold and often competing ventures launched by churches and other organizations dedicated to missionary outreach. It is customary now toÂ talkÂ about the wide variety of ends to which the termÂ missio Die has been ut since it came into general circulation shortly after the 1952 Willingen conference of the International Missionary Council. As we will see, these different applications of the term draw on more than one set of scripture passages, as successive attempts have been made using this or related terms to establish a biblical foundation for the theology of Christian mission. John Flett has closely examined the origins of the termÂ missio Dei. He concludes that* ***the undoubted attractiveness of this formulation in the postcolonial era has obscured its basic incoherence, due to the illusory or nonsubstantial way mission theologians have related this concept to the doctrine of the Trinity****.*

FromÂ Comprehending Mission: The Questions, Methods, Themes, Problems, and prospects of Missiology (American Society of Missiology)Â by S. H. Skreslet pp. 31,32. Emphasis mine.

I'm not sure I agree entirely with this statement, but I have to admit that the more I see the phraseÂ *missio Dei*Â being used without being unpacked, the more I feel that the phrase is losing any useful meaning.