


# Missio hominum in missio Dei: Biblical embodiment of missio hominum

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Recent efforts to introduce and develop the concept of *missio hominum*, first by Prof. Nico Smith, followed by Dr Jonas Thinane, are equally plausible and commendable. However, these efforts leave untouched the question of the biblical roots of the *missio hominum* as a missiological framework in the context of the *missio Dei*. For the *missio hominum* to stand up to scholarly criticism, it is important to first restore its biblical basis. This objective is achieved through a literary analysis of Noah in the Old Testament, probably as the first biblical model of a *missio hominum* framework encompassing human participation in the *missio Dei*. The extraordinary personality of Noah initiating human participation in the *missio Dei*, while not comparable to the perfect human nature of Jesus Christ, nevertheless contributes significantly to the task of constructing or reconstructing the *missio hominum* from a biblical perspective. *Missio hominum* is presented here as one of the important frameworks of missiology, and it is perhaps somewhat surprising that it has been neglected by previous studies. Therefore, there is an urgent need to fill this gap through further research.

**Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications:** *Missio hominum* is introduced here as a biblically rooted framework that encompasses human participation in the work of the *missio Dei*, and as such, it enriches both the field of theology in general and missiology in particular with the knowledge and understanding of human participation as mandated by the *missio Dei*.

**Keywords:** *missio Dei*; *missio Christos*; *missio Spiritus*; *missio hominum*; *missio ecclesiae*; mission; human beings; God's mission.

## Introduction

All Christian missiological frameworks such as *missio Christos*, *missio Spiritus*, *missio hominum* and *missio ecclesiae* are mandated by the *missio Dei*. In conjunction with other scholarly efforts to identify all missiological frameworks geared towards the eternal goal of the *missio Dei*, Thinane (2021a) suggests the use of the project management model, primarily to underline and further illustrate the significance of the concept of the *missio Dei* from the perspective of the 1952 Willingen Conference. He then considers the superior location of the *missio Dei* as the main project, followed by the *missio Christos*, *missio Spiritus*, *missio hominum* and *missio ecclesiae* as subprojects aligned or deployed towards achieving the eternal goal of the *missio Dei* (Thinane 2021a:1–2). However, if the *missio hominum* is to be accepted unchallenged, or at least from the perspective of Smith (2002) and Thinane (2021a), as an important missiological framework signifying human participation in God's mission, it must first be made clear on what biblical basis it is constructed or maybe reconstructed. Furthermore, such a construction or reconstruction of the *missio hominum* as a missiological framework must be compatible with the pool of historical missiological frameworks to ensure uninterrupted coherence of all frameworks aimed at achieving the eternal goal of the *missio Dei*.

Accordingly, the next sections will attempt to go beyond the *missio hominum* perspective proposed by Professor Nico Smith and trace the origin of *missio hominum* as a missiological framework in the Bible by examining the account of Noah, son of Lamech (Gn 5:29), perhaps as the first righteous man to participate in the work of the *missio Dei*, or better still, as the first patriarch to participate in the triadic God's sending (mission) course aimed at securing salvation for the world. Accordingly, in the next section, firstly, the concept of the *missio Dei* and its background will be presented from the perspective of the International Missionary Council (IMC), which took place in Willingen, Germany, in 1952. Secondly, attempts are made to understand the broader origin of *missio Dei* from the context of the Old Testament. Thirdly, the concept of the *missio hominum* is introduced by tracing it from the Old Testament account of Noah as the first recorded biblical account which encompassed the human participation in the *missio Dei*. Fourthly and finally, the

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*missio hominum* is further strengthened as an important framework by giving a brief discussion of the human character of Jesus Christ, who is irrefutably presented in the New Testament as the only immaculate or perfect embodiment of the *missio hominum* in the *missio Dei*. Of course, such a discussion is conducted with undiluted caution and requisite reverence for his hypostatic nature as both fully divine and fully human.

## Missio Dei

Defining the concept of the *missio Dei* has become a task of great importance in recent missiological studies. *Missio Dei* can be described as a Latin theological term that refers to God's mission in the world. This term is made up of two Latin terminologies: *missio*, which means mission or to send; and *Dei*, which means God. The combination of these two terms can be translated into English as the mission of God or the sending of God. The mission of the triadic God in this regard includes the mission of God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit for the redemption of the world. Although this term became popular in the second half of the 20th century, the origin of *missio Dei* is located in the book of Genesis, while its history as a theological concept or expression goes back to the 4th century, as shown in the following sections.

Much missiological evidence suggests that the story of the *missio Dei* as the theological framework encompassing God's mission in the world originated decades before the well-known IMC of Willingen in 1952. Mostly, the origin or the broader use of *missio Dei* is attributed to early Christian church fathers like St Augustine, as its early user in the 4th CE, and Thomas Aquinas in Engelsviken (2003:482), Goheen (2017:63–67) and Kemper (2014:188). They were followed by Karl Barth in his paper at the Brandenburg Missionary Conference in 1932, wherein he spoke of mission as an activity of God himself (Laing 2009:90; McPhee 2003:6). According to Daugherty (2007), Barth's thought on mission as an activity of God became influential and reached its peak at the 1952 Willingen conference (Daugherty 2007:163). Although Willingen is much credited with the climax of Barthian thought on the Triadic God as the source of mission in the world, the actual term '*missio Dei*' could not be located within the conference documents themselves. Instead, this term was only coined by Karl Hartenstein (1952) upon compiling the Willingen conference report (Engelsviken 2003:482; McPhee 2003:6). Hartenstein (1952), as recited in Anderson (2017:422), by all indications sought to emphasise that God alone is the source of mission and not human beings. He says:

Mission is not just conversion of individuals, not just obedience to the Word of the Lord, not just an obligation to gather the church, it is participation in the sending of the Son, the *Missio Dei*, with the all-encompassing goal of establishing the lordship of Christ over the entire redeemed creation. (Hartenstein 1952:54)

Subsequent to the work of the Karl Hartenstein, *missio Dei* as a framework was popularised by the work of the German

missiologist, Georg F. Vicedom, firstly, in his 1958 book titled *Missio Dei: Einführung in eine Theologie der Mission* and published in 1960. In the words of Sundermeier (2003), it was through this publication that Vicedom succeeded in the work of summing-up: 'the new approach and message of the conference so precisely' (Sundermeier 2003:560). Secondly, its popularisation came as the result of his (Vicedom's) 1965 book titled *The Mission of God: An Introduction to a Theology of Mission*, wherein he sought to reflect on the biblical understanding and new perspectives of *missio Dei*, whereby God is shown as the acting subject of his own mission (Laing 2009:98). In fact, according to Engelsviken (2003), Vicedom (1965) was the first instrumental work towards the development of the concept of the *missio Dei* in a way that better accords with the classical missiology that preceded the Willingen Conference, which emphasised God as the source of his own mission from the beginning to the end (Engelsviken 2003:482).

Since the Willingen Conference, the correct understanding of the *missio Dei* has naturally dominated the missiological discussions. According to this correct understanding of the *missio Dei*, the mission of the redemption of the world begins and ends primarily with the triadic God, who historically expressed himself through God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit. In emphasising the trinitarian union of God as an inherent constituent in *missio Dei*, Flett (2009) recites Kirk (1999) who states that 'to speak about the *Missio Dei* is to indicate, without any qualification, the *missio Trinitatis*' (Flett 2009:5; Kirk 1999:27). This understanding is consistent with Daugherty's (2007:163) statement; 'The term *Missio Dei*, then, indicates that mission is not primarily a human work but the work of the triune God'. This means that *missio Dei* is about God the Father (*missio*) sending God the Son and God the Father and Son sending God the Spirit to accomplish the divine acts of salvation in the world. This understanding is reflected in Niemandt (2016), as he agrees with Bosch (1991), who describes the triadic God as the source or fountain of sending love, precisely because the entire sending narrative begins and ends with him as the main subject of his own mission (Bosch 1991:402; Niemandt 2016:86–87). In this regard, the triadic God becomes both the sending and the sent subject of his own mission in the world. Youn (2018:227) clarifies that God as the sending missional God means that the triadic God alone is the sending subject and the sent initiatives of his own mission.

## Missio Dei in the Old Testament

Although the concept and terminology of *missio Dei* were only discovered and popularised by certain people, the work of *missio Dei* can be seen in the very early stages of the biblical narrative. Apart from that, the question of whether God's missionary activity began before or after the onset of sin is immaterial to the scope of this article. What is merely important to highlight at this stage is that the observations made by scholars such as Anderson (2017) agree with Irenaeus of Lyons and further concur with Beale (2005), who seeks to place the start of *missio Dei* at the very opening chapters of the Bible in Genesis 1 and 2, while, on the other

hand, differing from the likes of Vicedom (1965) and Wright (2018), who point at the entrance of sin in Genesis 3, while Newbiggin (1995) points to God's covenant with Noah in Genesis 9 as the start of *missio Dei* (Anderson 2017:414–420). Clearly, views on this topic remain the subject of scientific opinions, which the author of this work does not want to go into further. Consequently, without discriminating against any of these views, one can simply state that several scholars seem to generally agree with the assertion that the starting point of *missio Dei* is found in the first few pages of the book of Genesis. What then becomes the priority of this article is to reconcile the roots of the *missio hominum* with the biblical genesis of the *missio Dei*.

Although most scholars disagree on what scene constitutes the fall metaphor as highlighted in Fretheim (1994:144–153), many view the interaction between or the account in relation to the serpent (arguably associated with the devil), Eve and ultimately Adam as a typical story marking the beginning point of the fall (Biddle 2006:359–370; Williams 1981:274–279). This incident is described as somewhat constituting human disobedience, rebellion and sinfulness. This incident marks some conflicts between God and human beings, representing the first instance of rupture in the brief history of the God-and-human relationship, which is why human beings are depicted as suddenly being imprisoned with guilt and resolving to hide themselves from God's holy presence (Gn 3:8). This incident leads to human beings being catastrophically expelled from the Garden of Eden lest they be immortal as God (Gn 3:24). This expulsion is described with words such as alienation, estrangement, separation or displacement as it is signalling further distance between God and human beings (Fretheim 1994:153). The expulsion of human beings from the garden is immediately followed by the violent incident of Abel's murder at the hands of his own brother Cain, or as it were, the rapid growth of sin in the line of Cain (Gn 4:8). This reality causes a further human estrangement from God (Bird 2017:258–275). Further, these disturbing events naturally contradict or rebel against God's intended order of creation, altering or distorting it from its original perfect state to a broken one, wherein God's creation is broken away from him as its sole Creator (Wiesel 1984:3).

Although the framework of *missio Dei* encompasses the inseparable divine work of God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit, the key roles that God the Son and God the Spirit play in the wider work towards the accomplishment of the overall purpose, *missio Dei*, can be well arranged accordingly as *missio Christos*, which points to the *missio Dei*'s work of Jesus Christ on Earth, and *missio Spiritus*, which points to the *missio Dei*'s work of the Holy Spirit on Earth (Thinane 2021a:1–17). Any other subsequent mission model is then built upon the framework of *missio Dei*. In fact, there exists a very extensive literature wherein scholars such as Engelsen (2003) and Bosch (2011) emphasise the understanding of *missio Dei* as the theological framework upon which other mission models are built. It is for this reason that scholars such as Stetzer (2016) will speak of *missio Dei* as the starting point of all other mission frameworks or

models (Stetzer 2016:91–116). Such models include but are not limited to *missio hominum* and *missio ecclesiae*. The reader is pointed to the works of Ashford (2011:36–47), Bosch (2011:377, 524–530), Stenschke (2013:66–78) and Bevans et al. (2016:3–116) for further reading on *missio ecclesiae*. The next section focuses on introducing the concept of *missio hominum* with the intention of setting the stage for the reconstruction of its Old Testament roots.

## Missio hominum

Much of the early work on *missio hominum* has centred on the excellent 2002 article by Professor Smith titled 'From *Missio Dei* to *Missio hominum*: En route in Christian mission and missiology', as he attempts to outline the inherent and active human involvement in the work of *missio Dei*. In essence, he develops this framework as it encompasses active human participation in keeping with the ultimate goal of *missio Dei*. In his view, it remains the responsibility of each individual, especially Christians, to continue the work of personally seeking human approaches that justify or ensure their active participation in the *missio Dei*, both inside and outside the church. *Missio hominum* naturally contradicts the notion or theological axiom suggesting that salvation belongs only to the church (Smith 2002:11; Thinane 2021b:5, 2021c:2), or as it were for St Cyprian, who located salvation at the doorstep of the church, arguing that '*extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*' – without the church, there is no salvation (Greenwood 1973:416–425).

*Missio hominum* can be described as a Latin theological expression that signals human participation in the broader framework of the *missio Dei*. This term is made up of two Latin terms: *missio*, which means mission or send; and *hominum*, which means human being or human being, and can therefore be translated as human mission or mission of human. However, it is more important to understand that *missio hominum* is all about human participation in God's mission. That being said, as a missiological framework, *missio hominum* cannot exist independently of *missio Dei*. So while *missio Dei* encompasses the triadic mission of God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit, *missio hominum* encompasses the mission of the individual persons who participate in the sending course of the triadic God to achieve the ultimate goal of *missio Dei*. Hence, the primary and ultimate goal of *missio hominum* is to ensure the fulfilment of the *missio Dei*'s goal of total salvation. In essence, *missio hominum* focuses on human participation based on an individual person being sent into an activity that emerges from the *missio Dei*. Hence, the activities that involve sending, which *missio hominum* is a part of, are at the core of what *missio Dei* is all about. Just as the church is missionary because it has its origin from the sending God, the *missio hominum* equally arises from the triadic sending activity (Kavunkal 2013:2).

## Missio hominum in the Old Testament

After God created man and woman in his own image, he blessed them and instructed them to be fruitful, to multiply,



to fill the Earth, to subdue the Earth and to rule over all other creatures (Gn 1:27–28). Although these instructions or commandments may sound like some sort of mission, they do not fall within the scope of the *missio Dei* because they do not relate to the *missio Dei*'s purpose of salvation. At this point, everything God had created was still good and perfect, no harm threatening the peace and perfect state of God's creation, so he deservedly rested on the seventh day (Gn 1:31). In other words, at this stage, God's creation is not littered with nor faced with human sin to mandate salvation. However, the question of salvation came to the fore immediately after the fall.

## Missio hominum through Noah

The above narrative culminates in Genesis 6, where God observes humans as wicked with a continuing tendency toward evil, or as Lee (2016:301) puts it so well, the situation is an 'outburst of evil and disorder' prompting total destruction. In fact, violence and corruption are the order of the day, and such a reality grieves God so much that he regrets that he had created man in the first place (Gn 6:6). Because there are some doubting that this story ever happened (Collins 2018:52–57; Rappaport 1978:4–6), some scholars reasonably believe it to be a mere metaphor that can be used to relate human efforts with God and his creation (Blumenthal 2012:89–92; Kempe 2003:157; Kotze 2005:149–164; Spero 1999:13–17), wherein God considers wiping people off the face of the Earth with the flood to uproot or eliminate such wickedness from his sight (Gn 6:5–14). However, this article will not endeavour to address the question of metaphor, as it can mislead the focus. It is only important to mention that the story of Noah is meant to show how God tried to blot out sin from the surface of the universe and tried to restore it using one or a few humans.

Describing this stage, Wiesel (1984:3–4) says: 'God has invented all things and created all men – and now He is about to destroy them all, in one fell swoop', and even compares God to an author who is dissatisfied with his draft, rejects it and starts over. It can then be argued that the flood metaphor correctly signifies a drastic turning point in the history of humankind (Clines 1972:129), the end of history before history begins (Spero 1999:13) or even a creation renewal and starting point after the retribution (Dynes 2003:171). On the other hand, before doing so, God first institutes the then 600-year-old Noah as the righteous man who qualifies for God's special and chosen grace among his sinful contemporaries (Helberg & Krüger 2011:33), or as an exception among his own kind, just as Abraham would be in the case of Sodom (Wiesel 1984:4). Noah's righteousness is here depicted as the predicate that God is seeking to select a suitable participant in *missio Dei*. This means his righteousness is not only utilised for participation, but also is used as an attribute that is required in achieving the ultimate purpose of *missio Dei*. In the words of Clark (1971:274), Noah's righteousness is the reason: 'not primarily the past merit of Noah but rather the purpose of Yahweh' as it relates to the salvation of humankind.

God issues his missional instruction directly to Noah, leaving the responsibility to order members of his family into the 'salvation ark' squarely upon his shoulders. Piehl (1982:82–83) writes: 'The animals need to be fed and watered, and Noah's sons must speak softly to them, urging patience'. Actually, the rabbinic text or Talmud records that during those 40 days and nights, Noah, together with members of his family, had to selflessly devote their energies to all the ark's occupants by ensuring that they are kept alive and can eat sustainably until the predetermined day of salvation. Wiesel (1984) opines that Noah as the leader of that vessel had to know who, how and when to feed at all material times, stating: 'Noah is at his best ... He knows whom to feed when; some eat standing, others lying down, some have to be fed in the morning, others in the evening. Noah forgets no one' (Wiesel 1984:17). In other words, Noah understands that it is his personal responsibility (*missio hominum*), as mandated by the *missio Dei* (Gn 6:21).

Consequently, in relation to the flood story, *missio hominum* is epitomised by Noah, as he becomes the very first participating human entity who, in obedience to the will of God, draws others (be they individuals or a group) into accomplishing salvation as the ultimate goal of *missio Dei*. This is stated by Warfield (1914:85), who argues that God's primary plan in his own mission is to save through a process, whether it be the individual or the whole world. In other words, Noah merely represents the very first human being to actively participate in *missio Dei* with the expressed purpose of salvation. Thus, Noah becomes the first distinct person to demonstrate *missio hominum* in relation to the work and goal of *missio Dei*.

## The ark and *missio Dei*

As related in the biblical story of Noah, the triadic God destroyed the first-generation people because of their wickedness but spared, or limited his salvation to, the occupants of Noah's ark, which carried members of his family and couples of all kinds of living species. For Noah and his family to be saved, he first needed to participate in *missio Dei* by building an ark exactly according to God's specifications. Excluded from this are those who must perish according to divine eschatological judgement, since this judgement is just as central in the triadic plan of salvation (Moskala 2011:31). As the correct understanding of *missio Dei* indicates, this mission and its ultimate goal (salvation) do not belong to Noah as a mere human participant, but both belong to the triadic God as its source. Noah's taking on the task of building the ark signifies nothing other than his righteousness and obedience to the expressed will of the triadic God (Gn 6–7), which is also the reason why the triadic God bestowed salvation on him and his family (Clark 1971:261). In other words, Noah's obedient participation in the *missio Dei* is demonstrated by building the ark exactly as God directed. His obedient participation will eventually lead to salvation for himself and his family members. In the words of Vanderkam (1980), accurately recited in Hafemann (2014), 'Noah's righteousness serves as a model of that obedience to

the divine which will enable one to endure the Lord's universal assize' (Hafemann 2014:319; Vanderkam 1980:25).

In the narrative, God is pictured giving Noah instructions on how to build the ark (Gn 6:15–16). He gives these specifications to Noah for the simple reason that God alone is the source of his own mission, just as proper understanding of *missio Dei* suggests (Bosch 1991:392; Thinane 2021a:5). He is merely recruiting Noah's participation in the work that will result in the salvation of him and his family members. Since the triadic God is the initiator and executor of this project, he alone is the source from whom every activity is derived. As if agreeing with Thinane (2021a), who argues that *missio Dei* should be considered as a main project and further suggested using the project management model to show the coherence between all missionary activities commissioned by *missio Dei* (Thinane 2021a:1–17), both Finkel (2014) and Payne (2017) refer to the flood story as the project of Noah's survival or ark project (Finkel 2014:152; Payne 2017:75), a project during which Piehl (1982) suggests that God himself from time to time could have arrived to inspect the work and offer further instructions (Piehl 1982:81), while Wiesel (1984) also refers to God as Noah's manager who guides him: 'when to board the ark, when to open the windows, when to send scouts' (Wiesel 1984:17). Since the triadic God is the sole source of this mission (*missio Dei*), Noah has to patiently follow or obey every divine command with precision and caution to attain salvation. By all indications, Noah's story represents an example of human participation (*missio hominum*) in the work of the *missio Dei* to obtain salvation.

## The ark and salvation

The term ark in the flood story is translated from the Hebrew term תבה *tbah* (Gn 6:14). The same term is also used in Exodus to refer to a small chest that was used to transport the infant Moses to safety (Ex 2:3–5). As if consciously defining the ark in accordance with the idea of salvation, Payne (2017:74) describes the construction of the ark as a conservation measure and correctly submits that the English word ark is derived from the Latin word *arca*, describing a large container that can be used when one wishes to save something or a large object intended to save its contents over time. Newbiggin (2009:11) speaks of salvation as a process of healing, the process of healing something that was broken. This would mean that through the participation of Noah and his family in the *missio Dei*'s project, the once-broken relationship between God and his creation would be healed or restored. Salvation in relation to the flood story boils down to Noah, his family and a few other living beings surviving the flood, while the rest perish. In essence, the concept of the ark itself is connected in one way or another to the notion of salvation. So what becomes more important in the flood story as it relates to Noah's active participation in the *missio Dei* is the demonstration of human effort towards the goal of salvation. In fact, the Epistle to the Hebrews confirms this by saying that Noah built an ark with the clear intention of saving his household (Heb 11:7). Thus, for Noah and his family, salvation begins not the day they enter or leave the ark, but

with the building of the ark itself, which inherently is the transformation of the majestic divine plan into human faculties, or as it were, *missio Dei* into *missio hominum*. This is why Luger (2010:124–125) would argue that the mere fact that Noah is able to begin and complete the project to build the ark within the given limited time demonstrates his righteousness, obedience and loyalty to God or to the commission of *missio Dei*, so to speak. Thus, every aspect of Noah's participation (*missio hominum*) in the *missio Dei*'s project leads naturally to the attainment of salvation for him and members of his family.

## Missio hominum through Jesus Christ

From the above sections, it can be concluded that Noah's obedient participation in the *missio Dei*, particularly with regard to salvation as the ultimate goal of the *missio Dei*, makes Noah the first epitome of the *missio hominum* in the Old Testament. However, religious history is replete with similar narratives describing several individuals who, like Noah, are quintessential *missio hominum* as they personally participate in the *missio Dei*, while simultaneously inviting other fellow human beings to participate in the total redemption as the intended ultimate goal of the *missio Dei*. In the case of Christian Bible, from the Old to the New Testament, it is replete with stories of specific individuals who, like Noah, personally participated in the eternal work of the *missio Dei* for total salvation. Such people in the Old Testament include Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Samuel and David, among others. The lives of these individuals represent the first instances of *missio hominum* as prescribed or inherently mandated by *missio Dei*.

Although it is presumably the task of subsequent studies to discuss *missio hominum*, as demonstrated by all biblical characters who personally participated in the work of *missio Dei*, it is nonetheless important to consider Jesus Christ in his human capacity as the perfect embodiment of *missio hominum*. Complex as it is, the Christian central doctrine of incarnation is well studied, so there is a very large body of literature that attempts to simplify it (Crisp 2007; Torrance & Walker 2008). As if directly connecting *missio Dei* to *missio hominum*, this doctrine provides the context of how God became flesh in the form of Jesus Christ, or better yet, how *missio Dei* translates to *missio hominum*. Such a transition becomes even clearer when one understands that when Jesus Christ gathers or sends his disciples into the inherent work of *missio Dei* as recorded in the gospels, such episodes are an unswerving continuation of the Father's purpose as it relates to the sending of the Son in the world (Schirrmacher 2018:20). In John (20:21), Jesus Christ outlines the mandate of his mission by stating, 'As the Father has sent me, so do I send you'; here he seeks to emphasise that the mission of his Father is not only limited to his identity as Jesus of Nazareth but also extends to every single person who takes part in the work of *missio Dei*. By nature, his missionary approach tries to emphasise that the triadic God is not a self-serving God but a God who turns to humanity to

enlist participation to achieve *missio Dei's* goal of total salvation. As the above section has shown, as early as the Old Testament, this was the consistent character of the triadic God looking for persons through whom communities would participate in the work to achieve the purpose of the *missio Dei*. Thus, such individual persons as found in both the Old and New Testaments constitute early epitomes of the *missio hominum* in the context of the *missio Dei*.

## Conclusion

In summary, this article first discussed the *missio hominum* by situating its understanding within the broader understanding of the *missio Dei* from the perspective of the IMC in Willingen, Germany, 1952. Furthermore, it followed the broader idea of *missio Dei* in the Old Testament with the intention of shaping the subsequent discussion of the *missio hominum*, postulating Noah in Genesis as the first man to embody the *missio hominum* through his virtuous and obedient participation in the work of *missio Dei*. Comprehensively, a brief discussion was then undertaken to further deepen the understanding of the *missio hominum*, rightly introducing Jesus Christ as the only perfect personification of the *missio hominum* in the *missio Dei*. In other words, this article has successfully traced the origin of the concept of *missio hominum* within the biblical context in which Old Testament Noah is introduced as the first epitome of *missio hominum*, followed by a brief discussion of New Testament Jesus Christ as the perfect epitome of the human participation in the *missio Dei*.

In conclusion, this work followed the foundation laid by Prof. Nico Smith and Dr Jonas Thinane in their respective yet corresponding research that introduces and develops the framework of *missio hominum* as another important framework in missiology. Everything considered, the content of this article leads to the main conclusion that *missio hominum*, although neglected in the literature, is one of the important frameworks of missiology that encompasses human participation in the work of the *missio Dei*, and as such, it justifies an urgent need for further research that will enrich the field of theology in general and missiology in particular with the knowledge and understanding of human participation as mandated by the *missio Dei*.

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## Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the author.

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