



pockets) and the *goal* that is reached (keys located in the kitchen beside the microwave).

When we consider the *Mission of God*, we must consider both the *work* involved in the mission and the *goal* of the mission. These both flow from the relational nature and character of the triune God. *Trinity* is the man-made word that attempts to describe the fundamental relationality of God. He is three unique persons (Father, Son, Spirit) consisting of the same composition, substance, purpose, and love. Each member of the Trinity is engaged in deep relational transactions with the other members. Their fundamental disposition toward one another is always outward for the benefit of the others.

Understanding this at deeper levels reveals more of the nature of the Mission of God. At the core, God's mission is about relationship. Whatever the *work* of the mission is, it must center on relationship. Whatever the *goal* of the mission is, it must center on relationship. We conclude this because of the relational nature of God! If He is the definer and initiator of the mission, then the mission must flow from His fundamental nature, which is relational.

### **GOD'S BIGGER MISSIONAL STORY**

God gives us a snapshot of the *work* and the *goal* of his mission in Genesis 1:28 when He defines and initiates His mission through the command to the man and the woman, "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."

The *work* of God's mission for humanity was to *be fruitful and multiply*. Interestingly, the process of being fruitful and multiplying is inherently relational between the man and the woman. God's design for this to occur was through a covenant marital relationship. God's missional work for humanity was to move

forward as they relationally connected with one another while depending on Him for wisdom, direction, and strength<sup>1</sup>. The **goal** of the mission was to *fill the earth with His relational image bearers* who were relating with God and each other in the same way that God relates to Himself in the Trinity (an outward relational disposition for the benefit of others). Out of this relational dynamic with God and others, they were to rule over the entire earth, glorifying God (making much of Him) by putting His love on display in various ways.

In conclusion, we see *relationship* being both the **source** of God's mission and the **goal** of God's mission. It was the **source** of His mission because people were to relationally depend on Him while doing the work of the mission through relating with one another. It was the **goal** of the mission because the end result of the missional work was deep relational connections between God and others where His love was manifested among His image bearers.

It was through a relational partnership with God that the work of the mission was to be directed and empowered. Although the work of God's mission has taken on different forms throughout history, the goal has always been the same: *to fill the earth with God's relational image bearers* who relate with God and each other in the same way that God relates to Himself in the Trinity.

God is continuing the work of His mission to this very day and will continue it until the goal is accomplished. He is devoting all his resources to this end. As with Adam and Eve, He invites all His children to make a committed choice to partner with Him in His mission as the central motivation for their lives.

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<sup>1</sup> This is inferred from God walking in the garden in the cool of the day from Genesis 3:8. We believe this was a common interaction between God and Adam and Eve before the Fall.

