



Missio Hominum Echoing Concursus Divinus Parallel to Missio Dei

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ABSTRACT

The notion of divine concurrence (*conkursus divinus*) has been extensively examined within the broader context of divine providence, particularly concerning human freedom. This doctrine asserts that God actively collaborates with individuals while simultaneously preserving their ability to exercise free will. In essence, divine action occurs concurrently with human action, without undermining divine authority or restricting human autonomy. Consequently, the *missio hominum* operates in tandem with and enriches the *missio Dei*, creating a dynamic and reciprocal relationship. The *missio hominum* not only emphasizes humanity's purpose but also demonstrates how God's grace impacts redemptive endeavors (*missio Dei*) in a manner that honors human free will. Within the framework of *missio hominum*, human free will is oriented toward attaining salvation alongside *missio Dei*, rather than portraying a solitary missionary deity. This paper utilizes literary sources to analyze the doctrine of divine concurrence, with the objective of clarifying *missio hominum* as inspired by *missio Dei*. In this investigation, both “Free Willed – *Missio Hominum*” and “Free Graced – *Missio Dei*” are presented to illustrate the collaborative interplay between divine and human efforts on the path to human salvation.

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INTRODUCTION

The relationship between divine actions and human existence has historically been a prominent topic within theological and philosophical discussions.¹ In contemporary scientific inquiry, studies often lead to the conclusion that divine and human actions either intersect or exert influence upon one another.² A significant aspect of this discourse is captured in the notion of *missio Dei*,³ which underscores God's essential role in His mission, particularly concerning the salvation of humanity.⁴ The Latin phrase “*missio Dei*,” translating to “Mission of God” or “the sending of God,” indicates that

¹ George F R Ellis, “Ordinary and Extraordinary Divine Action: The Nexus of Interaction,” *Chaos and Complexity: Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action*, 1995, 359–96; Thomas Howard Morris, “Self-Directed Learning: A Fundamental Competence in a Rapidly Changing World,” *International Review of Education* 65, no. 4 (August 13, 2019): 633–53, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-019-09793-2>.

² John C Polkinghorne, *Science and Providence: God's Interaction with the World* (Templeton Foundation Press, 2009); Nicholas Saunders, *Divine Action and Modern Science* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511610035>.

³ D. J. Konz, “The Even Greater Commission: Relating the Great Commission to the *Missio Dei*, and Human Agency to Divine Activity, in Mission,” *Missiology* 46, no. 4 (2018): 333–49.

⁴ Phillipus J. Buys, “The Roots of *Missio Dei* in the Reformation, and Its Implications for Theological Education,” *In Die Skriflig* 54, no. 2 (2020): 1–9.

the impetus for this mission stems from God rather than being solely the responsibility of the church. Thomas Aquinas posited that although human actions arise from free will, they are fundamentally dependent on God's actions as the primary cause. Consequently, his perspective—and that of others—views God as a transcendent intellect and a wellspring of action, governed by an eternal will.⁵ This perspective underscores that while individuals have the autonomy to make choices, those decisions operate within the parameters established by God's design and providence.⁶ Thus, God is perceived as the essential enabler of moral actions. Notably, the emphasis on *missio Dei* received renewed focus during the 1952 International Missionary Council (IMC) meeting in Willingen, Germany, where it was asserted that the church's mission should not be viewed as separate but rather as participation in God's redemptive purpose. The insights of early theologians, particularly Augustine, along with the redefinition of mission advocated by Karl Hartenstein at the Willingen conference, encouraged a reassessment of the church-centric view of salvation, famously encapsulated in the phrase "extra Ecclesiam nulla salus" (no salvation outside the church). While the Willingen conference sparked a movement toward a more inclusive understanding of God's mission, it is essential to acknowledge that influential figures such as Dutch missiologist Hans Hoekendijk, despite advocating for a broader interpretation of divine mission, continued to regard the church as a crucial element of God's redemptive endeavor. In the wake of the Willingen conference, a range of viewpoints has emerged that, despite their diversity, collectively affirm the primacy of the divine in its mission.

It can be accepted that the notion of *missio Dei* serves as an all-encompassing framework that represents God's endeavors primarily aimed at achieving human salvation and, subsequently, at establishing the Kingdom of God as the ultimate goal. In essence, as will be elaborated in the subsequent three subsections, an examination of *missio Dei* reveals the actions of God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit in relation to the attainment of complete salvation,⁷ which is a crucial prerequisite for the formation of God's Kingdom.⁸ According to Arthur, the mission of salvation is intrinsically connected to the work of the triune God, as reflected in the roles of Creator (*Missio Pater*), Redeemer (*Missio Christos*), and Sanctifier (*Missio Spiritus*).⁹ Consequently, it is essential to acknowledge that the entirety of the mission focused on achieving human salvation exemplifies the collaborative involvement of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, particularly in the context following the fall, as described in Genesis. Moreover, as pertinent arguments will be presented throughout this paper, a broader historical perspective indicates that the salvific actions of the triune God have, since the moment after the fall, aimed to extend an invitation for humanity to engage in this divine mission. The concept of *Concursus Dei*, especially when considered through the framework of *missio Dei*, may help to harmonize the understanding of the Triune God as the leader of the redemption process while acknowledging human agency and preserving divine sovereignty.¹⁰ Essentially, while the Triune God remains the primary and pivotal actor within *Missio Dei*, He concurrently invites and empowers human beings to realize His plan, thereby emphasizing collaboration over mere participation. As a result, this empowerment has manifested in three distinct forms since the fall, each corresponding to the specific roles represented by the members of the Trinity within the broader context of the work of salvation.

This paper investigates the interrelation of the Trinitarian missions (*missio Trinitatis*) within the broader context of the *missio Dei*, a dynamic that has been active since the fall of humanity. The objective is to demonstrate how divine action facilitates human involvement in God's mission. By conducting a thorough analysis of the complex interplay between the divine mission (*missio Dei*) and

⁵ J.P. Wawrykow, *God's Grace and Human Action: 'Merit' in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1996); Bernard McGinn, "The Development of the Thought of Thomas Aquinas on the Reconciliation of Divine Providence and Contingent Action," *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review* 39, no. 4 (1975): 741–52.

⁶ T. O'Connor, "Agent Causation," in *Free Will* (Watson, G., Ed.) (London.: Oxford University Press, 2003), 257–84.

⁷ B G Collins, "The Process of Salvation," *Baptist Quarterly* 9, no. 6 (1939): 323–35.

⁸ George Raymond Beasley-Murray, "Jesus and the Kingdom of God," *Baptist Quarterly* 32, no. 3 (1987): 141–47.

⁹ E. Arthur, "Missio Dei and the Mission of the Church," 2025, <https://www.wycliffe.net/what-we-do/articles-for-further-reflection/missio-dei-and-the-mission-of-the-church/>.

¹⁰ Denis Edwards, *Partaking of God: Trinity, Evolution, and Ecology* (Liturgical Press, 2014); S.S. Jang, "Philosophical Textuality and Khoral Theology: Concursus in the Providence of God of Charles Hodge and Event in Khora of Jacques Derrida" (University of Glasgow, 2008).

human participation (*missio Hominum*), this study utilizes the *Concursus Dei* framework to underscore the eternal collaboration of the Triune God, while also highlighting the significant role of the church (*missio Ecclesiae*) as a pivotal participant in the *missio Dei*. This approach consequently offers a novel perspective on the relationship between the Triune salvific mission and human agency, both of which converge towards the ultimate aim of human salvation and the secondary objective of establishing God's Kingdom on Earth.

In summary, this paper seeks to elucidate the intertwined nature of divine and human missions, thereby enriching theological discussions and motivating active involvement in contemporary mission initiatives. By examining the interconnectedness of the *missio hominum*—encompassing human participation in the realization of the *missio Dei*—the following sections of this paper are structured into several subsections that concentrate on the distinct functions of the *Missio Trinitatis* as they operate concurrently to fulfill the *missio Dei*. This discourse aims to clarify their inherent mutual attraction and the application of human agency within the framework of *missio Trinitatis*, whether individually (*missio hominum*) or collectively (*missio Ecclesiae*), all working in concert (*concursus Dei*) to achieve the overarching objectives of the *missio Dei*. Ultimately, it is concluded that the *Concursus Dei* offers insight into how human participation is directed by the *missio Trinitatis* towards the fulfillment of the *missio Dei*.

Trinitarian Mission

The doctrine of the Trinity does not necessitate extensive scrutiny, as it has been the focus of continual examination and development throughout the years.¹¹ Nevertheless, it is crucial to elucidate the representation or manifestations of its dynamics within various theological frameworks.¹² Over time, this doctrine has been interpreted in multiple ways, with a core and practical belief that God exists as three distinct divine persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In the realm of mission, the Triune entities, among other things, exemplify the interrelation of the three persons, each embodying unique yet harmonious aspects of the mission directed toward salvation.¹³ Consequently, as observed by several scholars, every dimension of salvation is attributed to a tripartite cause from the inception to the conclusion of creation.¹⁴ Historical research corroborates that God exists as three coeternal and consubstantial persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, who, while distinct, share a singular essence or nature.¹⁵ Therefore, the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is central to the role of the Godhead in the mission of achieving complete human salvation, culminating in the full realization of God's Kingdom (*Baselia*). Arthur insightfully emphasizes the importance of this inauguration, asserting that since the mission of God (*missio Dei*) is rooted in the Trinity, the establishment of God's Kingdom should be perceived as a progressive process characterized by enhancements in social and ethical conditions.¹⁶ Essentially, the concept of *missio Dei* highlights the central role of God in missionary activities, reflecting the idea that, as articulated in the emerging perspectives of the 1952 International Missionary Council, God's presence permeates all social and ethical contexts, thus facilitating the ongoing establishment of His Kingdom.

Missio Pater

As previously articulated, the Christian theological concept of the Trinity posits that God the Father (*Pater*) functions as the foundational source or origin of all existence within the universe. This notion is prominently illustrated in the book of Genesis in the Old Testament, where God the Father is portrayed not only as the creator of all beings,¹⁷ but also as the architect of human history and the

¹¹ David Brown, *The Divine Trinity* (Open Court Publishing, 1985); Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God* (Fortress Press, 1993).

¹² Michael Amaladoss, "The Trinity on Mission," in "*Mission Is a Must*" (Brill, 2002), 99–106.

¹³ Kevin Daugherty, "Missio Dei: The Trinity and Christian Missions.," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 31, no. 2 (2007); Robert M Doran, *The Trinity in History: A Theology of the Divine Missions*, vol. 1 (University of Toronto Press, 2012).

¹⁴ William J Hill, *The Three-Personed God: The Trinity as a Mystery of Salvation* (CUA Press, 1982); J. Wright, *The Holy Trinity, Mystery of Salvation* (Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America, 1980).

¹⁵ David Coffey, "The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love of the Father and the Son," *Theological Studies* 51, no. 2 (1990): 193–229.

¹⁶ Arthur, "Missio Dei and the Mission of the Church."

¹⁷ K. Ward, "The Concept of God," in *Companion Encyclopedia of Theology*, ed. P. Byrne and L. Houlden, 1974, 342–66.

divine plan for redemption in response to humanity's transgression.¹⁸ Accordingly, the narrative of the Old Testament presents God the Father, in an inseparable unity with the two consequently revealed persons of the Trinity,¹⁹ as the sovereign creator of all that was designed to be inherently good. He is also acknowledged as the initiator of the redemptive mission following the corruption of His "once perfect" creation. Furthermore, the Old Testament includes numerous instances of God the Father inviting individuals to partake in His salvific work.²⁰ Therefore, while God the Father remains central to the creation of the universe and all its inhabitants, He also holds a crucial position in orchestrating the conditions surrounding the redemptive mission. As will be highlighted in the following sections, God the Father, as the originator of this mission, is recognized as the one who commissions both the Son and the Spirit.²¹ In a similar vein, just as God the Father summoned nations to participate in the Old Testament, the missional endeavors of God the Son (*missio Christi*) and the Spirit (*missio Spiritus*) in the New Testament are interpreted as inviting individuals into salvific engagement through the Church (*missio Ecclesiae*). Consequently, within the Trinitarian framework, the role of the Father signifies ultimate authority, establishing Him as the initiator of both creation and redemption, thereby functioning as the head of the Godhead.

Consequently, Christian theology has historically maintained the perspective that God the Father serves not only as the origin and source of all existence but also as the fundamental principle of life itself.²² It has been previously emphasized that, although the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit exist as co-eternal and co-equal entities within the framework of the Trinity, the Father is acknowledged as the origin from which both the Son and the Holy Spirit emanate. This concept is perhaps more effectively articulated using the terms 'arche' or 'principium', which are commonly explored in Eastern Orthodox theological discussions.²³ The Latin term 'Principium', which corresponds to the English word 'principle', is rooted in several interrelated Latin terms, including 'origo' (meaning source), 'initium' (indicating beginning), and 'basis' (representing foundation). These terms are often employed to define something as the foundational truth or basis upon which other concepts are established. In essence, God the Father is perceived as the eternal source of the Godhead, from whom the Son is eternally begotten and through whom the Holy Spirit is eternally dispatched. Furthermore, as highlighted by numerous scholars, identifying the Father as the source from which both the Son and the Holy Spirit proceed serves to eternalize and immortalize the inception of the *missio Dei*.²⁴

Missio Christos

Although God the Son and the Holy Spirit have shared the same divine essence as God the Father since the beginning of creation, as described in the Old Testament, their involvement in the mission of salvation becomes more evident in the New Testament.²⁵ Indeed, as will be elaborated upon in detail throughout this paper, the missional activities of both the Son and the Holy Spirit in the New Testament serve to affirm their unity with the Father from the very outset of creation. The term 'consubstantial,' derived from Latin and translating the Greek word (ὁμοούσιος) 'homoousios,' meaning 'of the same substance,' has been pivotal in Christological discussions,²⁶ emphasizing the inseparable relationship between God the Father and the Son. This term gained significant prominence during the Council of

¹⁸ Gerald N Lund and D H Ludlow, "Plan of Salvation, Plan of Redemption," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* 3 (1992): 1008–91; Mary E McDonough, *God's Plan of Redemption* (Living Stream Ministry, 1999).

¹⁹ A.T. Hanson, *Jesus Christ in the Old Testament* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011); Walter C Kaiser Jr, "The Indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament," *Evangelical Quarterly* 82, no. 4 (2010): 308–15.

²⁰ Jiri Moskala, "The Mission of God's People in the Old Testament," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 19 (2008); Walter C Kaiser Jr, *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations* (Baker Books, 2012).

²¹ Darren Cronshaw, "Missio Dei Is Missio Trinitas: Sharing the Whole Life of God, Father, Son and Spirit," *Mission Studies* 37, no. 1 (2020): 119–41.

²² John Scott Lidgett, *The Fatherhood of God in Christian Truth and Life* (T. & T. Clark, 1902); George Leonard Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2008).

²³ Patrick Henry Reardon, "Father, Glorify Thy Name!," *Pro Ecclesia* 7, no. 2 (1998): 138–51.

²⁴ Fred Sanders, *Fountain of Salvation: Trinity and Soteriology* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2021); Benjamin B. Warfield, *Miracles: Yesterday and Today, True or False* (Grand Rapid: Eerdmans, , 1954).

²⁵ Paula Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ: The Origins of the New Testament Images of Jesus* (Yale University Press, 2008); James M Hamilton Jr and James M Hamilton, *God's Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments* (B&H Publishing Group, 2006).

²⁶ Schubert M Ogden, "The Point of Christology," *The Journal of Religion* 55, no. 4 (1975): 375–95.

Nicaea in 325 AD, where it was employed to articulate the orthodox understanding of the Trinity and to counter the Arian heresy, which posited that Jesus was a created entity, not of the same essence as God. Consequently, the outcomes of the Council of Nicaea led to what is now referred to as the Nicene Creed, which has since served as a foundational statement of Christian belief, using the term "homoousios" to characterize the indissoluble relationship between the Father and the Son. Nevertheless, without suggesting any form of separation, the *missio Christi* came to embody the active manifestation of Christ's earthly ministry in the New Testament. It is important to note that while the Son (Jesus Christ) executes the plan of salvation and the Holy Spirit applies it to believers, all three persons of the Trinity are fully God, each possessing distinct roles.

Missio Spiritus

It can be unequivocally asserted that both God the Son and the Holy Spirit are consubstantial with God the Father, even prior to the act of creation. This essential comprehension underscores the unity of the Trinity concerning the *missio Dei*, which aims to engage all of humanity in an active role toward holistic salvation. The activities of the Holy Spirit, especially following the ascension of Jesus, signified a crucial shift from Christ's earthly ministry (*missio Christos*) to the mission of the Spirit (*missio Spiritus*). During Pentecost, the Spirit, recognized as the third person of the Trinity, was dispatched to empower the apostles and continues to enable believers for acts of witness and service, as depicted in Acts 1:8. The Holy Spirit is instrumental in convicting individuals of sin (John 16:8), guiding them into the fullness of truth (John 16:13), and sanctifying believers to embody the likeness of Christ. This illustrates the intrinsic functionality and unity within the Trinity, wherein the Spirit also grants spiritual gifts to believers, as evidenced in various passages of the New Testament (e.g., 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Romans 12:6-8).

This understanding highlights the essential characteristics of the Trinity and the inherent connections among its persons. This clearly articulated perspective has been transmitted from the early Church Fathers, through medieval Christian theologians, and continues to be upheld by various contemporary thinkers.²⁷ Accordingly, the triune God is identified according to the divine ontological substance rather than the threefold structured embodiment(s).²⁸ Consequently, or as largely cemented by Trinitarian theology, the concept of God's mission (*missio Dei*) is realized through the equal and eternal nature of the three persons, all working toward the singular goal of guiding humanity toward salvation. Rather than operating as independent beings with divergent wills, the Trinity functions in perfect unity and harmony, collaboratively advancing the divine mission. Furthermore, as illustrated in the subsequent section, the eternal vision of the Father (*missio Pater*) as expressed in the Old Testament, and further realized through Christ (*missio Christos*) and the Holy Spirit (*missio Spiritus*), collectively calls humanity to partake in the Trinitarian mission of salvation. The endeavour to engage all of human life in active participation is intricately linked to the work of the Holy Spirit, who empowers and enables believers to engage within the coordinated framework established by the Trinitarian Will. Consequently, the mission of the Spirit not only fosters individual transformation but also promotes the renewal of all creation, aligning with the divine goals of the Trinity.

Human Contribution

The notion of *Missio Dei*, or the mission of God, underscores the continuous work of God within the world, alongside an invitation for humanity to engage in this sacred mission. Both the Old and New Testaments provide numerous examples of individuals and communities who actively contribute to this mission, thereby underscoring the essential role of human collaboration in the salvation process. It is crucial to recognize that the divine endeavour of seeking salvation for humanity commenced with the fall, as described in Genesis 3. This account illustrates how the disobedience of Adam and Eve not only resulted in their banishment from the Garden of Eden but also led to a profound entrenchment in

²⁷ Richard Swinburne, "The Social Theory of the Trinity," *Religious Studies* 54, no. 3 (2018): 419–37.

²⁸ Denis Edwards, "'Everything Is Interconnected': The Trinity and the Natural World in *Laudato Si'*," *Australasian Catholic Record*, *The 94*, no. 1 (2017): 81–92; Rowan Williams, "'Sapientia' and the Trinity Reflections on the 'De Trinitate,'" *Augustiniana* 40, no. 1/4 (1990): 317–32.

suffering due to sin. The fall serves as a demonstration of how humanity, through the actions of its initial representatives, fell into corruption, thereby establishing a rationale for individuals to engage actively in their own redemption.

To fully comprehend the experience of faith within the Christian framework, it is essential to recognize it as an active participation rather than a mere passive occurrence in God's mission. Extensive scholarly discourse, particularly drawing from the 1952 insights of the International Missionary Council in Willingen, has progressively transformed mission theology to highlight that God serves as the foundation of mission, while human beings, including the church, play crucial roles as active participants. This viewpoint encourages believers to engage in worship and sacraments—such as Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist—through which they collectively and individually represent the body of Christ in the *missio Dei*. Furthermore, this interpretation strengthens the Reformed tradition's doctrine of the Priesthood of all believers, underscoring that each believer is involved in the priestly work of Jesus Christ. By participating in acts of worship and disseminating the Gospel, believers contribute to the redemptive work of salvation, thus advancing God's mission in the world. Such active involvement not only cultivates a sense of community but also enhances the spiritual lives of believers as they express their faith through actions and a shared commitment, perpetuating the mission that commenced in the biblical narrative.

Missio Hominum

The concept of "*Missio hominum*," or human mission, cannot be adequately understood without considering the humanity of Jesus Christ, which serves as a fundamental basis for comprehending the nature of a relationship with God. In the temple of his hometown, Jesus of Nazareth boldly declares, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me" (Luke 4:18), alluding to a passage from Isaiah that signifies His divine commissioning to bring good news to the impoverished. He further articulates that God has sent Him to announce freedom for those imprisoned, to restore sight to the blind, and to liberate the oppressed, culminating in the declaration of "the year of the Lord's favour" (Luke 4:19). This phrase is frequently interpreted as a period of joy, grace, and redemption, which is closely associated with the Jewish Year of Jubilee—a 50-year cycle during which enslaved individuals were freed, land was restored, and communal renewal was celebrated.²⁹ In a similar vein, the Roman Catholic Church observes jubilees every 25 years, marked by special solemnity and opportunities for indulgence, thereby reinforcing themes of salvation and human liberation (Najman 1999; Thurston 1900). Therefore, "the Lord's favour" highlights the understanding that divine intervention in liberating humanity from the bondage of sin is not merely an endpoint but serves as a pathway to restoring the authentic purpose of human existence.

Expanding on this theme, the Book of Genesis suggests that humans are not designed to exist as entirely autonomous beings; rather, they possess a unique purpose that distinguishes them from other living entities. This divine calling is exemplified in the life of Jesus Christ, who, despite the inherent flaws of human existence, reassures that every individual is redeemable and can be restored to their intended divine purpose. By fully embracing human nature through His incarnation, the Son of God illustrates that genuine fulfilment of humanity is attainable solely through a relationship with God, the ultimate source of life.³⁰ Jesus' exemplary life on Earth serves as a model for this relationship, indicating that true satisfaction is found in responding to God's divine invitation. Thus, the fundamental mission of every believer is to guide others toward God, recognizing that this sacred engagement simultaneously transforms individuals into renewed beings that mirror the authentic image of God, as described in Colossians 3:9-10. Additionally, the revitalized community of believers can be referred to as a communion of saints, symbolizing the collective mission of Christ (*missio Christus*). This gathering of devoted followers not only highlights the importance of individual redemption but also underscores the communal dimension of faith. As believers unite in their mission, they reflect

²⁹ Ernest Wiesenberg, "The Jubilee of Jubilees," *Revue de Qumran* 3, no. 1 (1961): 3–40.

³⁰ Alistair McFadyen, "The Trinity and Human Individuality: The Conditions for Relevance," *Theology* 95, no. 763 (1992): 10–18; Aristotle Papanikolaou, *Being with God: Trinity, Apophaticism, and Divine-Human Communion* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2006).

God's restorative efforts in the world, cultivating a spirit of unity and purpose that extends Christ's mission beyond individual lives to encompass the wider community. By embodying the values of love, grace, and redemption, this congregation actively engages in the ongoing mission to promote God's kingdom, further solidifying its identity as collaborators in the divine plan for the restoration of humanity.

Missio Ecclesiae

Although the specific term "communion of saints" does not appear in the Old Testament, its foundational concepts are embedded in themes such as the chosen people and the covenant community with God, which highlight an ongoing fellowship with the Divine. These ideas serve as the basis for a community engaged in a relationship with God, actively participating in His mission, referred to as the *missio Dei*. The New Testament further elaborates on this understanding of communal relationships, particularly through the Apostle Paul's teachings in passages like Romans 12:4–13 and 1 Corinthians 12:12–27, where he expresses the notion that Christians, united through Christ, constitute one body. Paul underscores the significance of each member's contribution to the Church's overall mission, which aims to fulfil God's purpose. The Greek word "κοινωνία" (*koinonia*), commonly found in the New Testament, is translated as "communion" or "fellowship," emphasizing the collective experience and unity among believers. Consequently, akin to the Old Testament framework, the New Testament reinforces that the communion of saints includes the shared salvation and common destiny of all believers, who are united in love and harmony, as reflected in Colossians 3:14, thereby affirming that this community transcends earthly limitations.

Engagement within a religious community, or assembly, embodies the concept of *missio Dei* and elaborates on the previously established notion of *missio hominum*. Adherents unite to participate in the *missio Trinitatis*, with the intention of achieving the goals set forth by the *missio Dei*. This collective gathering is identified as a religious assembly, or *ecclesiae*, a term that originates from the Greek word ἐκκλησία (*ekklēsia*), which translates to "those called out," and signifies a formal congregation or church within the Christian tradition. Their assembly is characterized by a common mission: to disseminate faith and carry out divine assignments, thereby defining it as *missio ecclesiae* (the mission of the Church), which parallels the Great Commission as articulated in Matthew 28:19-20. This biblical command from Jesus to His disciples to make disciples among all nations encapsulates the core of *missio ecclesiae*, emphasizing the spiritual cohesion of believers collectively engaging in their religious duties within their respective faith communities. Over time, the term *missio ecclesiae* has specifically come to denote those participative in Christ's mission, underscoring the interrelatedness of believers as the Holy Body of Christ.

The Catholic Church conceptualizes the "communion of saints" as a community that encompasses all believers—those residing on earth, those in purgatory, and those in heaven—who are interconnected through Christ and mutually benefit from each other's spiritual gifts. Conversely, although Protestants acknowledge the importance of fellowship and unity among believers, they generally place greater emphasis on the individual's relationship with Christ and the significance of personal faith, which highlights the sanctity of their communion. This distinction illustrates the broader theological discourse regarding the communion of saints, where both traditions uphold the fundamental importance of unity within the community of believers, albeit interpreting its significance in different manners. The ensuing dialogue enhances the understanding of how believers connect with one another in their collective faith journey, ultimately fostering a deeper appreciation for the communion that exists among the saints, both those who are living and those who have passed away.

Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus

The Church, in conjunction with various faith communities, operates within the collaborative framework of *missio Ecclesiae*, signifying a collective of believers dedicated to the overarching goal of attaining complete salvation, albeit through distinct methodologies. Although the Scriptures, particularly the Old Testament, do not explicitly articulate multi-faith tolerance in terms that correspond with modern understandings, the New Testament does encompass principles that can be

interpreted as endorsing the coexistence of different faiths. In addition to the Golden Rule outlined in the Gospel of Matthew (7:12), the New Testament features other passages, such as Romans (14:1) and Acts (7:26-27), which promote harmonious interactions among individuals despite varying beliefs. On the other hand, the doctrine of "*Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*" (no salvation outside the Church) undeniably stems from Christian theological reflection, which emphasizes Christ as the sole source of salvation; however, its implications may resonate with several exclusivity mandates found in the Old Testament. Notable among these covenantal exclusivity directives are verses such as Deuteronomy 7:6, Exodus 20:3-5, and Isaiah 45:22. In an apparent effort to reconcile these existing tensions, Isaiah also speaks to the acceptance of foreigners who commit themselves to the Lord (Isaiah 56:6-7). This latter point seems to foreshadow the New Testament narrative, particularly concerning the evolving relationship between Jewish and non-Jewish individuals within the context of the Christian faith.³¹

Since 1952, developments in missiology have notably redirected attention toward God's eternally established plan for salvation. Scholars, such as von Rohr, have observed that the Christian church has historically asserted a monopolistic claim over the mission of salvation, which has cultivated a sense of exclusivity within ecclesiastical frameworks.³² A significant turning point transpired during the 1952 International Missionary Council (IMC) meeting in Willingen, which initiated a conceptual evolution that centered God's mission on Him, rather than on the church itself. Although this shift is frequently underappreciated, it has resulted in a reduced role for the church, placing it alongside other faith traditions. Nevertheless, the unique contributions of the Christian church in articulating the meanings of *missio Dei* are integral to its historical narrative. The sacred plan for salvation was ultimately revealed through Jesus's earthly mission, but its design was a collaborative effort by the Triune God. Consequently, the Holy Spirit plays a crucial role in steering humanity's participation towards the Second Coming and the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God—*βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ* (*basileia tou Theou*). Jesus' ministry and teachings underscore the advent of God's kingdom, which he initiated through his life, crucifixion, and resurrection. The Kingdom of God is perceived to have both a present spiritual dimension, indicative of God's reign in the hearts of believers, and a future, eschatological aspect that signifies God's ultimate dominion over all creation. The post-1952 discussions further elucidate that the aims of God's Kingdom are focused on God's authority and power, rather than being limited to a specific geographic territory.

In this comprehensive context of the *βασιλεία*, the Apostle Paul's declaration that "there shall neither be a Jew nor Gentile" is fully articulated. The *missio Dei*, with its primary aim of achieving total salvation, seeks to establish the ultimate ordination of the *βασιλεία* as a secondary objective. This divine initiative is intended to embrace all geographical regions, abolishing the distinctions between Jews and non-Jews, and restoring the original unity of humanity (*Homo sapiens*) as created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:18-25; 5:1-2). Therefore, the *missio Dei* is wholly committed to acknowledging the various nations and traditions of humanity as recipients of God's mercy, reflecting the inclusive essence of His salvation.

Concursus Dei

Concursus Dei, also referred to as *concursus divinus*, is a theological and philosophical concept that posits the coexistence of divine activity with human and natural actions. This framework seeks to address the distinction between "natural or human actions" and "divine actions." Originating from the work of Thomas Aquinas, *concursus divinus* is employed in scholastic philosophy to articulate the relationship between divine agency, which serves as a final cause, and natural agencies, which function as the efficient causes of events and processes. This conceptualization enables an understanding that human and natural occurrences can transpire concurrently or in harmony with divine actions, thereby reflecting God's will and guiding the trajectory of existence towards intended outcomes.

The term "Concursus Dei" finds its origin in Latin theology, with "concursus" referring to cooperation or concurrence. However, in its broadest sense, the concept of *concursus Dei* is prominently reflected in various biblical passages, but more finds its roots in Christian theological

³¹ A. Cohen and B. Susser, "Jews and Others: Non-Jewish Jews in Israel," *Israel Affairs* 15, no. 1 (2009): 52–65.

³² John Von Rohr, "Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus: An Early Congregational Version," *Church History* 36, no. 2 (1967): 107–21.

discussions committed to highlighting the relationship between divine actions in conjunction with the functioning of creation, all living creatures and in particular human acts. From as early as the Old Testament, for instance, in Isaiah 26:12, the text articulates, "indeed, all that we have done, you [God] have done for us," implying that human achievements are fundamentally connected to divine influence. Similarly, in the New Testament the Apostle Paul, in his correspondence with the Corinthians, states, "In fact, I worked harder than all of the apostles, though it was not I, but the grace of God that was with me" (1 Corinthians 15:10). However, as an idea that became prominent during the Medieval period as theologians sought to reconcile God's sovereignty with human freedom, its meaning was based on the necessity of God's active involvement in the created world, especially concerning human actions. Among some of its early advocates, Augustine of Hippo (1225-1274) appears to be the one who laid important groundwork for the discussion of God's grace and free will. In other words, he emphasized God's sovereignty and the necessity of divine grace for human beings to act rightly, thereby reflecting on divine concurrence. Similarly, though pursuant to bringing a systematic philosophical approach to Christian theology, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) in his seminal work *Summa Theologica* articulated the same principle by proposing that God cooperates with created entities, allowing them to act but ensuring that their actions fulfil His divine plan. As it has been observed to constitute the heart of his work, Aquinas argued that God is the first cause and that all secondary causes exist through God's action.

Consequently, the earlier philosophical inquiries regarding God's concurrence prompted a deeper investigation into how divine involvement operates without compromising human autonomy. This exploration has been articulated by numerous influential scholars typically associated with the Augustinian tradition in medieval philosophical theology, including figures such as Bonaventure (circa 1221-1274), Giles of Rome (circa 1243-1317), and William of Ockham (circa 1287-1347). As noted by Toth, William of Ockham, aligning with the perspectives of these medieval thinkers, contended that both God and created beings actively participate in the causal events of the world.³³ This underscores the significance of God's transformative power in supporting human purpose and mission, particularly regarding the quest for salvation. It suggests that the notion of divine intervention is crucial in steering human free actions and providing direction and meaning in the pursuit of goodness, potentially integrating this concept within the framework of free will. Thus, many theologians have argued that this theory should not be seen as infringing upon free will or human autonomy. Rather, within the model of *concursum Dei*, human actions—whether collective (*missio Ecclesiae*) or individual (*missio Hominum*)—are divinely sanctioned to contribute to the realization of salvation without coercion. As a result, the coexistence of free will and determinism is viewed as harmonious within this theological framework, with human choices serving as instruments for either destruction (evil) or salvation (good). This distinction highlights that while *concursum Dei* embodies life-affirming forces, the existence of destructive evil falls outside its purview, thereby enriching the ongoing discourse concerning the divine role in human actions.

In summary, *Concursum Dei* represents a profound intersection of divine sovereignty and human freedom, encouraging exploration from diverse theological viewpoints. Although it may not have been fully examined, it invites continued reflection on essential questions related to morality, autonomy, and the nature of the divine within the wider context of life and existence.

CONCLUSION

The concept of divine concurrence (*concursum divinum*) is essential for understanding the interplay between divine providence and human autonomy. This principle posits that God operates in harmony with humanity while allowing individuals the freedom to make choices, thus upholding divine sovereignty alongside human independence. As a result, the idea of *missio hominum* is closely intertwined with *missio Dei*, creating a synergistic relationship in which human objectives and God's redemptive purpose mutually reinforce one another. In this framework, *missio hominum* highlights that human endeavours are not isolated actions but rather shaped by divine grace, steering them toward salvation. The relationship between *missio hominum* and *missio Dei* illustrates that the exercise of

³³ Zita V Toth, "Ockham on Divine Concurrence," *Saint Anselm Journal* 15, no. 1 (2019): 81–105.

human free will is inherently linked to divine will, confirming that individuals are invited to participate in God's mission. By drawing on theological insights and scriptural narratives, this paper clarifies how the doctrine of divine concurrence frames *missio hominum* as an expression of *missio Dei*. It delineates the interactions of 'Free Willed – *Missio Hominum*' and 'Free Graced – *Missio Dei*,' illustrating the ongoing collaboration between the divine and human realms on the path to salvation. Therefore, the exploration of this doctrine not only highlights the significance of both collective and individual contributions within the Church but also encapsulates the essence of the "communion of saints," as believers unite in their common pursuit of divine grace and purpose across both temporal and eternal dimensions.

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