

Ann
Dunagan

*This generation
can only reach this generation . . .*

— David Livingstone

The Mission MindedTM Child



Raising a
New Generation to
Fulfill God's Purpose

“THIS GENERATION CAN ONLY REACH THIS GENERATION.”

DAVID LIVINGSTONE

THE
MISSION-MINDED
CHILD

Ann Dunagan is the most effective and gifted children's teacher and motivator that I have come across in my lifetime. . . . Let her teach you—listen to her—she knows how and is now sharing it with others.

—DORIS GENE STEWART, forty years of experience as a missionary to Brazil and founder of an orphanage

I have known Jon and Ann Dunagan since 1987, and have had the privilege of being their friend, pastor, and fellow worker in the kingdom. . . . Jon and Ann are people of integrity, and I have confidence that God will continue to use them greatly in this generation.

—PASTOR NELS CHURCH, director of REAP International and missionary to the Philippines

We sincerely appreciate Ann's willingness to help raise the voice of the persecuted church.

—MYRTLE DODD, The Voice of the Martyrs

Ann Dunagan's writing is for those who want a heavy emphasis on world missions. . . . This book was not whipped up by a novice. The author is an evangelist's wife and homeschooling mother of seven who has ministered in more than twenty countries. She knows her stuff!

—VIRGINIA KNOWLES, Hope Chest Newsletter

We pray that *The Mission-Minded Child* will be a continued encouragement to your readers to God's glory.

—HELEN DAVIDSON, assistant to the director,
The JESUS Film Project

Ann, may the Lord bless you in your publishing of this needed book. . . . We are truly hoping that the Lord will open our children's eyes and hearts to the tremendous harvest field that they may be called to work in someday. I know that living in a Third-World country broadens our perspectives and helps us to see the bigger picture of God's redemptive plan, so that's what we're praying for our children. May the Lord bless *The Mission-Minded Child* and your efforts for Him.

—VALERIE SHEPARD, pastor's wife and homeschooling mother,
and daughter of Jim and Elisabeth Elliot

THE MISSION-MINDED CHILD

Raising a New Generation to
Fulfill God's Purpose

ANN DUNAGAN



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To my children:

Patrick, Joshua, Christine,
Daniel, Mark, Caela Rose, and Philip

You are God's mighty men and women!
May you hit the bull's-eye target of His destiny
and completely fulfill the exact mission
He has prepared for your life!

I love you!

Mom

“At no [other] time
is there greater capacity for devotion
or more pure, uncalculating ambition
in the service of God.”

HUDSON TAYLOR'S PARENTS
[SPEAKING OF CHILDHOOD]

“When I am a man,
I mean to be a missionary
and go to China.”

HUDSON TAYLOR (AGE FIVE)

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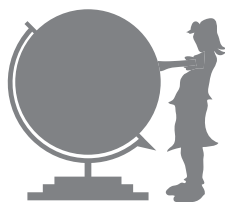
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How to Use This Book

This book is simply a tool to help you, as a Christian parent (or teacher), impart to the next generation a passion for Jesus Christ and a heart for God's mission to our world. It's not just information; it's inspiration!

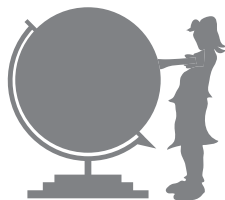
- **Get inspired!** Browse through the pages for motivating missions stories, songs, poems, and examples to renew your own passion for the lost and God's eternally minded purpose for teaching and training your child.
- **Get missions facts!** Use it to reaffirm your missions foundation, to remember the world's need and our call to reach the lost, and to research a biblical basis for *why* we should share God's love with the nations.
- **Look things up!** This book is a quick missions resource manual, with mini missionary biographies, famous world mission quotes, and a helpful guide to locate great kid-friendly resources with mission-minded vision.
- **Find practical ideas!** Are you looking for easy-to-use missions ideas? This book includes sections on giving to missions, encouraging missionaries, and promoting missions in your local church, plus creative ideas for making missions fun!
- **Teach with a heart for missions!** This book is filled with ideas to incorporate a heart for world missions into nearly every subject. For English, there are missions selections to read aloud, classical excerpts for memory and oratorical

practice, plus ideas to spark your child's creative writing. For geography and social studies, there are world maps, missions songs, and funny international stories. For a biblical foundation, there are Scripture verses to learn, prayer projects, and many practical ideas to encourage your child in solid Christian discipleship.

Note: Nearly all of the following mission stories and excerpts can be used for reading aloud to a child, although a few examples (due to difficult or graphic language) may be more appropriate to save until your child has grown into his or her teenage years. As a parent or teacher, please use your own judgment regarding the maturity of your child; and, in any case, let these stories and excerpts challenge *you*, as a mission-minded adult!

PREFACE

When I Was a Child . . .



I was eight years old when I first felt God’s “call” to world missions.

I’ll never forget the moment. It was a typical summer morning at Christian Renewal Center, a small family camp nestled in the midst of tall evergreens and majestic waterfalls. A teacher had encouraged my class to go out into the woods to pray and to ask God to simply “speak” to us from His Word.

So, taking my tattered children’s Bible, I marched down a familiar dirt trail, sat down on a log, and began to pray.

Lord, is there anything you want to tell me?

I was quiet . . . but I didn’t “hear” anything, except a small stream rippling beside me. *Would God ever talk to a young child like me?*

I tried to listen.

Just then, a strong thought came to my mind: *Look in Jeremiah.*

Gazing up through the trees, I wondered, *Was that from You, God?*

I knew “Jeremiah” was a book from the Old Testament, but it was in a part of the Bible I usually didn’t understand. I assumed it would probably just be full of a bunch of “so-and-so begat so-and-so” type of verses.

But the thought didn’t go away. *Look in Jeremiah, chapter one.*

Tentatively, I opened my Bible, found Jeremiah, and began to read. The verses started off like I had imagined they would—with big words and confusing names—but by the time I reached the fourth verse something

of God's Holy Spirit began to well up inside me. As I continued reading, it felt like God Himself was talking directly to me.

Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations."

Then said I: "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth."

But the LORD said to me: "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you," says the LORD.

Jeremiah 1:4–8

Two years later . . .

I was tagging along beside my mom at a Christian women's meeting when a lady came over and asked if she could pray for me. This woman didn't know me at all, but as she laid her hands on my head and started praying, she began quoting those same verses—"my" verses—from Jeremiah!

I was only ten years old, but once again it felt as if God was "speaking" directly to me—drawing me closer to Him and to the nations.

Tears welled up, as I began to cry. Inside, I just *knew* God was real, and those verses from Jeremiah *were* for me.

Thirty years later . . .

Not too long ago I was earnestly praying about this book, searching my motives, and trying to discern God's will. Unless I felt this project was something really "birthed" from the Lord for my life, I didn't want

any part of it. In all honesty, I wasn't willing to sacrifice the time and energy I knew it would take if it could be better invested in my own children, in our home church, and in our missionary work.

But I kept feeling a stirring—and urgency—to challenge other parents and teachers that “we must instill a vision for missions in the next generation!”

I sought counsel and prayer and was shocked when my husband actually began encouraging me to write. (Years before, my writing had become consuming, and neither of us wanted *that* again!) Our pastor also prayed with us and felt a strong affirmation about my pursuing this project.

In my prayer journal, I poured out my heart to the Lord: “Father, if this idea for ‘The Mission-Minded Child’ is not of You, I’m willing to just let this ‘baby’ die. Please show me, Lord. Not my way, but Your way; not my plans, but Your plans.”

Soon afterward I attended a church baby shower. During the refreshment time, I felt drawn to ask a certain elderly woman to pray for me. I didn't know much about her; I just knew she was a woman who prayed. As we talked by the punch bowl, she asked me to share more about my idea.

“It would be a book to impart a passion for world missions in parents and teachers,” I explained, “to help raise a new generation of children and young people to fulfill God’s Great Commission.”

This precious lady then caught me by surprise. “Didn’t you know?” she began. “World missions has been my life.” She started to share a few of her stories. For nearly fifty years this amazing woman had served God as a missionary in Brazil. She had founded an orphanage, cared for 777 children, and placed them all in families. (And I had thought raising *seven* children was an accomplishment; I was in total awe of this woman’s life!)

Right at that moment, our hostess (this woman’s grown daughter, who I had just learned was one of the children from this orphanage)

came over and asked if she could pray for me. Although she barely knew me, she believed God had shown her something in prayer several months earlier; but she had never felt a peace about sharing it with me—until now.

“As I’ve been praying for you, I feel like there’s been a dream in your heart,” the missionary’s daughter began. “There’s something you deeply wanted and worked on very hard, even through the middle of the night. For years you willingly laid it down—out of submission to your husband and out of submission to God; but now, I believe God is beginning to give it back to you.” Then she began quoting the exact verses from Jeremiah that meant so much to me as a little girl!

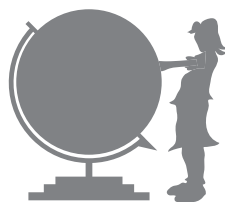
Before I could stop myself, I unexpectedly burst into tears. The Lord’s presence was so strong, I literally sobbed.

Surrounding me and supporting me—like midwives—were three godly women from around the world: the elderly missionary and her daughter (once an abandoned Brazilian orphan), plus a wonderful intercessor from Samoa (who had just arrived in our area that day and was the grandmother of the woman to whom we were giving the baby shower). Together we prayed for this book and interceded for God to raise up a new generation for missions.

Hours later, my husband said he had never seen me so overtaken by emotion—other than when I had given birth—and, spiritually speaking, that is almost what it felt like. I had been willing to totally surrender this idea; but, ironically, at an actual baby shower God confirmed in my heart that this “baby” was really “birthed” of Him.

The whole experience felt like a dream; and once again, I *knew* God was real. Those Jeremiah verses were not just for me, after all! God is calling a new generation of children and young people to the nations.

Acknowledgments



There are no words to express my thankfulness to God—my Heavenly Father, my Lord Jesus, and my precious Holy Spirit—for saving me!

I also thank the Lord for blessing me with my wonderful husband and family. Jon: I appreciate your integrity, leadership, and total heart to follow Jesus; and kids: your lives and examples have given me increased confidence to encourage others.

I want to honor my parents, Patrick and Judy Molitor, for raising me to fulfill God’s purposes and to never give up on God’s dreams; and Tom and Roberta Dunagan, for helping Jon and me to grasp more of God’s love for the world through your sacrificial giving.

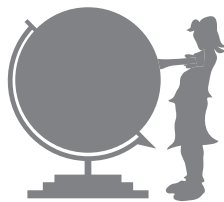
David and Renée Sanford (with Elizabeth Jones, Elizabeth Honeycutt, and Rebekah Clark) of Sanford Communications, Inc., I’m grateful for your “making it happen” expertise, and Volney James (with Andrew Sloan, Angela Lewis, and everyone at Authentic Media), I’m glad you “caught this vision” to help impact a new generation for missions.

I appreciate the prayers and support of our Harvest Ministry partners and NETS Ministers and the intercession of our Osanidde children. Thanks to Doris Stewart and Deloys from Brazil and my precious prayer-sisters: Nanci, Vicki, Lisa, Sue, and Carol. Thank you Christian Renewal Center and the Hansen family for providing a place where many, like me, have heard God’s call; Jennifer for telling me to “Capture this side of the pancake!”; and Pastor Fritz and Wendi Stranz and my CCHR family for your loving support and mission-minded vision.

Last, I thank you for reading this book . . . and letting me share my heart.

INTRODUCTION

What Is a Mission-Minded Child?



The famous missionary explorer David Livingstone once said, “This generation can only reach this generation.” But will we raise our children to reach effectively *their* generation for Jesus Christ?

We should answer “Yes!”, and *The Mission-Minded Child* is a motivational resource to help. We need to focus on God’s calling for our lives and work *with* Him to help raise a new generation of young people totally committed to His plans. Every follower of Jesus (including every Christian child) should have a “life mission” aimed at finding God’s purpose and fulfilling His potential.

Parents (and Christian teachers), do you realize how important you are? You have been placed in a strategic position to impact the next generation. Parenting children is more than a “duty,” and educating children is more than a “job.” If your vital role is perceived from God’s perspective and fulfilled with a focus toward the Lord and those who aren’t Christians yet, multitudes of mission-minded children could be motivated to live a God-centered life. Perhaps this book will even inspire you to reach your potential as well. Your child (and you!) could become today’s Christian leader and tomorrow’s world-changer.

The Mission-Minded Child is a Christian parent’s (and teacher’s) guide to world missions. It’s filled with practical ideas and information. Included are mini missionary biographies, motivational missions stories, classic poems, international songs and hymns, and hundreds of easy-to-use ideas. Hopefully, it will become a resource you’ll want to refer to again and again.

Yet *The Mission-Minded Child* is even more! It's filled with passion, zeal, and inspiration. Within these pages, you'll be encouraged to recognize God's potential in your child. You'll be challenged to release your child to God for His purposes, then motivated to effectively raise your child for God to fulfill His specific mission (whatever that may be).

Often an adult may ask a child, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" But as mission-minded parents and teachers, our typical question could have the potential of directing a child toward total obedience to God and complete surrender to His purposes. We *should* say, "Oh, I wonder what exciting plans God has prepared for your life? When you grow up, will you do whatever *God* wants you to do?"

A Mission-Minded Child

A mission-minded child . . . dreams of fulfilling God's destiny.

A mission-minded child . . . may want to become a missionary—or
a teacher or a doctor or a newspaper
reporter or a state governor or a pastor or
a businessperson or an airplane pilot or an
author or a florist or a mother—as long as
it's what *God* wants!

A mission-minded child . . . prays for that next-door neighbor.

A mission-minded child . . . is not a picky eater!

A mission-minded child . . . takes home a photo magnet from the
visiting missionary family and puts it on
the kitchen refrigerator.

A mission-minded child . . . is healthy, active, and adventurous!

A mission-minded child . . . spends a summer night sleeping outside
on the trampoline, gazes up at a sky filled
with twinkling stars, and realizes God's
plan is infinitely bigger than his or her own
backyard.

A mission-minded child . . . imagines rollerblading on the Great Wall
of China!

A mission-minded child . . . recognizes the names of David
Livingstone, Amy Carmichael, Hudson
Taylor, and Loren Cunningham.

A mission-minded child . . . knows how to use chopsticks.

A mission-minded child . . . has a reputation for thoroughly enjoying
the Bible sword drills and memory verse
contests at church.

A mission-minded child . . . puts extra money in the monthly missions
offering and feels extra good inside.

A mission-minded child . . . thinks it could be fun to sleep in a mud hut
in Africa!

A mission-minded child . . . reads all the way through the Bible by the
age of ten (or eleven or twelve)—and is
excited to start again!

A mission-minded child . . . stares at the photos in the new geography
textbook or magazine and imagines
climbing to the top of that Egyptian
pyramid, snorkeling in those tropical-blue
waters, and giving a new outfit to that poor
boy with the ripped-up shirt.

A mission-minded child . . . befriends the new kid at school.

A mission-minded child . . . thinks beyond the “box” of what’s merely expected and hopes to do something big, or something little, for God.

A mission-minded child . . . wants to obey (even when no one is looking).

A mission-minded child . . . loves Jesus!



TEACHING OPPORTUNITY

Creative Writing Idea—Mission-Minded Statements

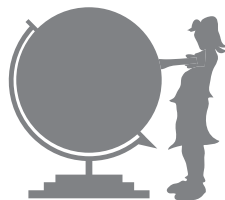
Read aloud the “A mission-minded child . . .” statements above and talk with your child about what it means to have a mission-minded heart. Encourage your child to write his or her own “A mission-minded child . . .” statements that share a heart for God and for His love for people all throughout the world.

Part I

Our Child and God's Plans

CHAPTER 1

Releasing Your Child to God



As Hannah embraced her little Samuel one last time, what thoughts must have filled her mind? As she placed his timid fingers into the hands of the old priest, Eli, . . . and let go, . . . what questions did she surrender to the Lord?

As Hannah looked back toward her home, what did her mother's heart feel? How could she walk away from the answer to all her prayers? How could she release this dream she had so desperately longed for—this dream that was now a real little boy looking up at her with questioning eyes and a quivering lip, trying to obey her loving instructions, and trying to hold back his tears?

If only Hannah could have known at that moment how the story looks from *our* perspective. We know her Samuel would soon hear the audible voice of God, he would impact the entire nation of Israel, and this very act of her obedient surrender would be recorded and recalled for generations.

But Hannah didn't know the future. She only knew it was time to say goodbye and go home—childless once again. She must have turned her face quickly so Samuel wouldn't see her mixed emotions.

As Hannah walked away, she released her little one into the mighty hand of God and chose to worship. As she did, God's plan began to unfold. For this child was not just Hannah's dream; he was God's dream. At the time, the nation of Israel desperately needed a new spiritual leader, and God had found a mother desperate enough for Him to willingly yield to His plans.

As parents or Christian teachers, we don't always realize the importance of our vital role in the kingdom of God. Will we equip our children to fulfill God's purposes and to reach for God's potential? Will we train our children to reach their world for Jesus?

Through this book I desire to light a spark for world missions that will grow into a fire for the unsaved like you've never had before. I want God's love for unreached people to burn so strongly inside you that it will start spreading to others, specifically to your own children and to the young people you come in contact with.

Over the years I've seen many of our world's appalling needs. I've had opportunities to travel and minister in dozens of countries. However, in this particular season of my life I'm primarily called to be at home. I love being a mother, raising a family, and teaching children. But sometimes, I admit, I get frustrated.

Many days I wonder if I am "doing" anything of significance and I often struggle with a horrible "striving" mentality in my flesh. When I hear of "big needs"—like the "big need" for world missions—I feel a striving to want to do something "important" (for God, of course!).

I want to be busy!

I want to go!

But sometimes it feels like I'm meeting only insignificant "little needs"—like sweeping the kitchen floor over and over, reading that naptime story (again!), and simply watching my children grow.

Yet, deep inside, I *do* know the truth. Raising and training children *is* important! "Striving," or mere "busyness," is not the same as "fruitfulness," and all God *really* requires is for me to stay close to Him and obey Him, day by day.

Today the Lord is simply showing me to be faithful—that is, to love God and to support my husband here at home; to be fruitful—to be a mother and to teach and train our children in the ways of the Lord; and to keep my eyes on the future—to eagerly anticipate the Lord's return and keep living in His joy.

As parents and teachers, we must “train up a child in the way he should go” (Proverbs 22:6), and in the Great Commission; Jesus said the way we should go is “into all the world and preach the gospel” (Mark 16:15).

David Livingstone said, “God had only one Son, and He made Him a missionary.” Jesus came as our missionary to earth. He relinquished everything in heaven to provide the way for us (and all people) to come into relationship with Him. He knew the cost before Him, and the price He paid was beyond anything we could imagine.

In Hebrews 12:2, the Bible says we are to look to Jesus, “the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame.” Jesus’ incredible love compelled Him to the cross. His burning desire was to fully obey the will of the Father, providing a way for humanity to be reconciled back to God. Jesus was willing to sacrifice whatever it took: His position in heaven, His unsurpassed riches and glory, His reputation, and even His very life. Jesus was whipped, beaten, tortured, and despised—all for the *joy* that was set before Him.

Isaiah 9:2–3 describes the joy of harvest as a light shining through darkness. There is rejoicing when a lost coin is found! There is joy when a shepherd finds a lost sheep or when a prodigal finally comes home! Luke 15:7 tells us that “there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.”

This is the joy that led Jesus to the cross.

How many of us are so captivated by God’s love that we would be willing to lay down everything to follow Him?

We should take a moment to consider our lives and our priorities from God’s eternal perspective:

- As we teach and train our children, what are we hoping they will achieve?

- As we steward God's resources, what are we saving toward?
- As we influence the next generation, what dreams are we instilling?
- As we talk to God, what is the primary focus of our prayers?

As Christians, we must realize that God's love, His passionate love, resides in us. Are we willing to allow this love to flow through us (and through our children) to the world? Second Corinthians 5:14–15 says, "For the love of Christ compels us . . . that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again."

Like Hannah, we must realize that our child is actually God's child—entrusted to us for only a short time. We need to release our child to God and then follow His guidance to raise His child for His divine purposes!

My prayer is for the simple words in this book to penetrate deep into your soul and spirit. I know you don't need more information; but we all need more inspiration. I pray that God's love for the world will someday explode in your heart like a blast of dynamite. I hope you will begin to be moved by the things that move God's heart and that you will allow God's precious Holy Spirit to impart this heart into your child.

We've all heard the famous saying, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." I say, "May the child in our cradle (or our classroom) *reach* the world . . . for the One who rules it all!"

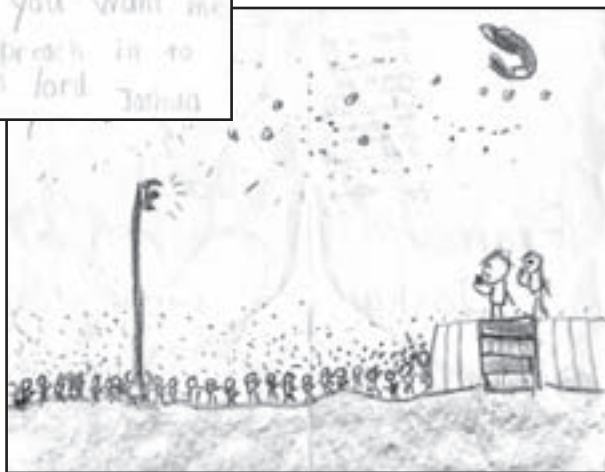
— FROM MY CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVE —

“A KID’S HEART FOR MISSIONS”

By Joshua Dunagan, at age seven

I wrote this letter and drew this picture about ten years ago when I was about seven years old. My spelling and handwriting is embarrassing, but it does show how God can give a vision for missions—even to a kid.

God I love you
Thank you for doing on
the cross for my sins
And that you rose from
the dead Lord. When
I grow up I will
do everything you want
me to do Lord.
Even if you want me
to go and preach in to
dangerous places Lord Joshua



God, I love You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins and that You rose from the dead, Lord. When I grow up, I will do anything You want me to do, Lord. Even if You want me to go and preach into dangerous places, Lord.

Joshua