



NEWCHURCHES

MULTIPLY THE MISSION.

SATURATE BY JEFF VANDERSTELT - BOOK REVIEW

by Daniel Im

When I first stepped into my role as a small-group pastor, I was at a loss as to how to help my church get on mission. I knew what it meant to be missional and intentional with my relationships. I knew how to share my faith. I even knew how to motivate my leaders to get on mission with God. However, the one thing that I didn't know was how to make mission normal in our church—I didn't know how to help the congregation get on mission with God in everyday life.

As a result, much like Jeff Vanderstelt explains in *Saturate: Being Disciples of Jesus in the Everyday Stuff of Life*, I loaded my leaders and groups with a task list of missional activities. There was only one problem: I was teaching and expecting my congregation to be Jesus—when only Jesus can truly be Jesus. As a result, I was expecting my group leaders to do more than Jesus every asked of them. In reality, as Vanderstelt puts it, “we are not meant to carry the weight of the world or the mission of Jesus on our shoulders. Jesus came to seek and save. He doesn't expect us to become the saviors.”

So when I first encountered Vanderstelt's ministry, Soma, I was impressed with the way they were able to normalize mission and make it easy for their church members to get on mission with God in everyday life. That's what led me on my journey to digest everything I could get my hands on from Vanderstelt and Soma—articles, seminars, audio files, and the like. But now you can simply read *Saturate*, a book with all of their wisdom in one place.

As I was preparing to develop a discipleship pathway for my multi-site church, I was inspired by the ministry philosophy, identities, and rhythms of Soma because they have the clearest missional paradigm of discipleship. Soma's focus, and subsequently, the focus of *Saturate*, is to provide a vision for complete and utter Jesus saturation rooted in who you are in Christ, rather than in what you do.

Let Jesus Saturate Your Life

In *Saturate*, not only will you be inspired by Vanderstelt's stories and the origins of Soma, but also you'll come to understand that discipleship is "an ongoing process of submitting all of life to Jesus, and seeing him saturate your entire life and world with his presence and power." In other words, through *Saturate*, you'll learn how to help your congregation understand that discipleship is not a passive activity and someone else's responsibility. Instead, it's their responsibility, and it's achievable.

Saturate presents a three-tiered strategy for discipleship: environments, identities, and rhythms. Environments are where discipleship happens, identities are who we are and who we're growing into, and rhythms are how we live out everyday life with gospel intentionality.

In order to better understand this discipleship strategy, let me break it down. The three key environments for discipleship are life on life, life in community, and life on mission. In and through these environments, the goal is to grow in our understanding of who we are in Christ. It's out of this identity that we do everything that we do. Because this is so important, everyone at Soma learns that they're part of the Father's family, servants of Christ, and missionaries filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

In order to make mission normal and live everyday life with gospel intentionality, Vanderstelt and the leaders at Soma asked the question, "What are the everyday rhythms of life that everybody engages in everywhere?" With that list of rhythms, they then looked at ways to train their people to engage in those rhythms, in light of the gospel, with the purpose of making disciples. They narrowed those rhythms down to: eat, listen, story, bless, celebrate, and recreate.

Who Should Read This

If you're a small-group coach, *Saturate* will provide you with a framework to help your group leaders deeply understand the gospel so that they'll be fully saturated with Jesus. They'll understand that they've been saved because Jesus did it better; that they're being saved because Jesus does it better; and that they'll be saved because Jesus will make it better.

If you're a group leader, you'll not only learn how to normalize mission for your group, but also how to take it out of the "weird" category, integrating it into the rhythms of your group and the rhythms of your

group member's lives. Vanderstelt provides a roadmap to do this. Instead of starting with mission, the first step is to start with the gospel and help your group members understand who they are in Christ (their identity). By starting with the gospel, you'll develop the right foundation, which will be a springboard for everything else.

The next step is then to clarify the mission, which means asking God who he is sending you to (as an individual), but also who he is sending the collective group to. The last step is to form an actual plan. Instead of clarifying the mission and hoping that it happens, Vanderstelt suggests that "once we've clarified our mission, we walk through each of the identities, asking how we live in light of our identities in the everyday stuff of life."

If you're looking for a way to make mission normal for your church, to integrate it into the everyday lives of your group members, and to do all of this from a gospel foundation, then *Saturate* is the book for you.

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