

Worship Service: 10am, 160 Paya Lebar Road, Orion@Paya Lebar #04-06, Singapore 409022  
Sunday School: 11.45am, Prayer Meeting: 8pm Wednesday  
Pastor Jack Sin at 91160948 and [jacksin710@gmail.com](mailto:jacksin710@gmail.com)  
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## **A Brief History of Presbyterian Missions**

An old friend of mine, at our first meeting in college, asked me what church I was a member of. When I told him I was Bible Presbyterian, he replied, "Oh, so you don't believe in evangelism, then!" His viewpoint is not unusual, but, of course, it is wrong. Presbyterians and Reformed believers have been among the leaders of the expansion of the visible kingdom of God ever since John Calvin sent a group of Huguenot missionaries to Brazil in 1555! Here are some of the highlights.

### **1555**

A small party of Huguenots attempts to establish a colony in Brazil, at what is now Rio de Janeiro. Though reinforced with a larger group, they were under poor leadership that allowed controversy to arise and were unable to adequately provide for food. The colony was eventually slaughtered by the Portuguese. In the 1560s, Huguenots under Coligny's leadership established the first Protestant colonies in North America, in what would become Florida and South Carolina. Not technically Presbyterian, but that effort laid the foundation for what we know today.

### **1600s**

Missions to Ireland, the island of Formosa, South Africa, Jamaica and North America all were undertaken in this century. Rev. John Eliot was a missionary to the native peoples in frontier America. Rev. John Copeland, with eight others, came as a missionary to Boston in 1656. Francis Doughty, the intrepid missionary and preacher who has been described as the apostle of Presbyterianism in America, labored in the Virginia colonies in the 1650s. There, too, his successor, Matthew Hill, labored and farther to the south in Somerset Co. on the eastern shore of Maryland. Presbyterians from England settled in the Mid-Atlantic colonies (NY, NJ, PA) and began building churches. Francis Makemie, who played an instrumental role in founding the first presbytery in America in 1706, was educated in Scotland, began his missionary endeavors in Barbados, and was an itinerant missionary in the frontier areas of the colonies from the Carolinas to Massachusetts during the 1680s. He eventually established himself on Maryland's Eastern Shore (his church in Rehoboth is still there and operating). He was a strong promoter of education and starting towns with churches. The first big wave of Scottish Presbyterians came about 1684, and most settled in New England and in the frontier areas to the west. In all of these efforts, starting churches with an aim to further biblical literacy, general education, and to capture hearts with the gospel of Jesus Christ was at the forefront.

### **1700s**

With the founding of the Presbytery of Philadelphia by Francis Makemie and others in 1706, along with a strong influx of Scots-Irish Presbyterians, Presbyterianism in North America entered a century of growth and expansion. In fact, the Presbyterians were the most missionary-minded of all the denominations in America during the colonial period, and churches were established throughout most of the colonies, with extensive

works aimed at the native populations as well. The Presbytery of Philadelphia grew and was formed into a General Synod in 1718 and saw its purpose as "spreading and propagating the gospel of Christ into these dark parts of the world." David Brainerd, John Brainerd, Charles Beatty, George Duffield, William and Gilbert Tennent (founders of the Log College in New Jersey in 1726), were prominent names among those who traveled over the mountains into the frontier areas, as far as the Ohio valley. The Delaware, Cherokee, Pawnee, Seneca, Oneida, Chicksaw, Mohegan, and many other tribes were reached and churches were established.

North America was not the only missionary focus of the Presbyterians. The 1750s saw the establishment of the Presbyterian Church of Singapore, at the tip of the Malay Peninsula. These churches originated with Dutch traders who built the famous Christ Church Melaka in 1753. Following the Dutch, the British [London Missionary Society](#) sent several [Presbyterian missionaries](#) to Malaysia, most notably Robert Morrison, William Milne, James Legge, and Benjamin P. Keasberry. The late 1790s saw mission works in Madagascar, Lagos, Sierra Leone, and what is now Nigeria. The Madagascar mission became known as the "martyr church of Madagascar" due to the extreme persecution that came to it, and the many who gave their lives for the name of Jesus.

### **1800s**

Presbyterian missions continued to expand in North America, as the nation expanded. More Indian tribes were reached, notably the Sioux, Pimas, Papagoes, and the Creeks, and a mission was established in Western Canada. David Livingstone penetrated the heart of Africa, and Presbyterian missionary Alexander Duff reached India in 1829. Alaska was reached by 1834 and the mission continued strongly through the century. Missions in Michigan and Texas were established about the same time. The late 1830s saw Presbyterian missions to the Chinese begin, and to the Spanish-speaking population of what would become the southwestern United States. Missions to the Jews of Syria and Lebanon were established. The New Hebrides heard the gospel beginning in 1850. The works in China and India were greatly expanded. In America, Wisconsin, Montana, and California had notable missions founded there. In 1859, a little over 300 years after Calvin first sent Huguenot missionaries to Brazil, the first official Presbyterian mission was established there in Rio de Janeiro. The first presbytery in Iran was established in 1879. Missions were established in Mexico and Guatemala. Alexander Duff in India, William Chalmers Burns in China and Manchuria, George Mackay in Taiwan, Mary Slessor in Nigeria, a Mr. Thompson in Tokyo...these and many more gave everything they had to further the cause of the gospel around the world. This was the century of the missionary society, and scores were formed in England, Scotland, America, Switzerland, France, Holland, and Germany. The leadership in almost all of them were Calvinists, regardless of the denominational flag they might have labored under. And, in addition to planting churches, medical missions were on the rise during this period, with a continued emphasis upon schools as well.

### **1900s**

Though at home divisions of various sorts were taking place in the late 19th century as the church was attacked by liberalism from without and within, the missionary push remained strong. Missionaries like Jonathan and Rosalind Goforth in China raised the banner of Christ high in the midst of incredible difficulties. The Goforths are perhaps best known for their 1000-mile escape on foot to safety during the Boxer Rebellion. But all was not well. The 20th century is marked by an emphasis upon ecumenicity at the expense of truth. A good example is that of Pearl Buck, born to Presbyterian missionary parents in 1892 and raised in China, she would be sent out by an increasingly apostate mainline Presbyterian church, and would be one of the crux personalities in the conflict over the nature of the gospel, the authority of the Church, and the truth of the Scriptures that would rend the PCUSA and lead to the formation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and later, the BPC. The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions was founded in 1935 by J. Gresham Machen to protest over the liberalism, social

gospel, and even communistic message of missionaries like Buck. He and those with him were defrocked, and soon established a new church with the goal of faithfully carrying out the Great Commission according to the Scriptures.

On Sunday evening, March 17, 1935, Dr. Machen preached in the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In his sermon he said:

Just before I stand before that Commission next Tuesday morning at ten o'clock in the First Presbyterian Church of Trenton, New Jersey, I have a profession of my faith to make. I cannot make it before the Commission because the Commission has barred me from discussing everything really relevant to the questions at issue and has thus refused even to hear my case. But I am going to make it before this congregation tonight, and I know that every real Christian will sympathize with me when I make it.

My profession of faith is simply that I know nothing of the Christ proclaimed, through the Auburn Affirmation, by the Moderator of that Commission. I know nothing of a Christ who is presented to us in a human book containing errors, but know only a Christ presented in a divine Book, the Bible, which is true from beginning to end. I know nothing of a Christ who possibly was and possibly was not born of a virgin, but know only of a Christ who was truly conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. I know nothing of a Christ who possibly did and possibly did not work miracles, but know only of a Christ who said to the winds and the waves, with the sovereign voice of the Maker and Ruler of all nature, 'Peace, be still.' I know nothing of a Christ who possibly did and possibly did not come out of the tomb on the first Easter morning, but know only of a Christ who triumphed over sin and the grave and is living now in His glorified body until He shall come again and I shall see Him with my very eyes. I know nothing of a Christ who possibly did and possibly did not die as a substitute on the cross, but know only of a Christ who took upon Himself the just punishment of my sins and died there in my stead to make me right with the holy God.

I must be true to that Christ of the Bible, despite all efforts of the Auburn Affirmations and the ecclesiastical machinery to make me untrue. I promised to be true to that Christ when I took my solemn ordination pledge as a minister, and I cannot break that promise now. I cannot support the anti-Christian propaganda now being furthered by the official Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. I cannot place the shifting votes of the General Assembly or any other human councils in a place of authority that rightly belongs only to the Word of God.

I have offered to defend my position about both these points. I have offered to prove that the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America is unfaithful to its great trust. I have offered to prove that the action of the last General Assembly requiring me to resign from The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions is contrary to the Constitution of the Church. The Commission has refused even to listen to my evidence. It has refused to listen to any argument by my council, Rev. H. McAllister Griffiths. It will of course condemn them. But I had rather be condemned for an honest adherence to the Bible and to my solemn ordination pledge than enjoy even the highest ecclesiastical honors and emoluments as the reward of dishonesty."

And so, another chapter in Presbyterian missions began. It began with Machen, and in spite of divisions through the years has continued to grow through the work of faithful missionaries in smaller Presbyterian bodies through the US and around the world. Out of the sorrows of men's affairs the Lord has brought causes for joy as He will not allow His kingdom to falter. And as the fruit of western missionary work prospered in places like Korea, Presbyterians there are now sending more missionaries around the world than America's Presbyterians are.

## **Conclusion**

So, should anyone ever call your desire to evangelize the world into question, remember the heritage in which you stand. The Reformed faith is the greatest incentive to missions and evangelism that can exist! Going out in obedience to a sovereign God with the confidence that the Lord will absolutely redeem His people keeps you going when nothing else will. Pray that the Lord will continue to bring new workers into His vineyards. Who knows? He just might call you.

Rev. Dr Leonard W. Pine  
Pastor, Providence BPC. USA

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### **Should or can Christians practice a kind of mystical meditation to relax or empty our minds to relieve stress today?**

That is a good question. We noted that an increasing number of Christians are enamoured or interested in Eastern meditation techniques in an effort to deepen or to grow their “spiritual lives.” Some churches are even offering yoga classes and transcendental meditation classes or contemplative prayer, for relaxation or stress relieving and many institutions are keen to give it a try and experiment with the latest spiritual fads from the East. As Christians, we need to be discerning so that these do not open us to spiritual compromise and perils that we are not aware of.

The Bible addresses the theme of meditation. In the Psalms, David sings of his love of meditating on the Law of God day and night (Psa. 199:97). The biblical concept of meditation has a basis and is not worldly, superficial or simply an emotional experience. As God told Joshua 1:8, *‘This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.’* It is always directed at and by the Word of God (i.e. scripturally sanctioned trend of thought and not aimlessness or nothingness). It is not secular, or any other form of mystical meditation, or a repetitive chanting, or a mantra that we repeat over and over against to gain inner peace or our own salvation. Rather, Matt 6:12 warns us of vain, repetitive, meaningless practices.

True biblical meditation is fundamentally different from Eastern practices of meditation, which sets the emptying of the mind as its goal (i.e. nirvana). This is never taught in the bible at all. The Eastern concept of emptying the mind is contrary to the biblical teaching of filling or renewing the mind with the Word of God (Rom 12:2).

Beware of the latest New Age mysticism that has affected some people, and even Christians are not spared.

The younger generation are susceptible as they seek tranquillity in meditation sessions and even relaxation camps. Spas, yoga, reiki classes and other transcendental meditation techniques, such as what the Beatles brought back in new age practices to the US in the 1970s, have since spread to many in the west. Rather Paul advises us in Philippians 4:8, *‘Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.’*

Some approach meditation through so called Christian activity like the ancient ritual of contemplative or centering prayer; while others develop their own style, like that patterned after the breathing techniques of popular New Age guru writer, Deepak Chopra. Some are taught to sit still, usually focusing on a mantra or on their breathing. One can even clear one’s mind while walking around, tending a garden or through movement-based activities, such as tai chi or chi kong. All these have spiritual

connotations. We need to be vigilant and careful and not be too quick to embrace them without examining their religious origins.

The biblical concept of meditation on the Word of God does not involve an emptying of the mind which is dangerous, but rather the transformation of the mind through Christ. Romans 12:1-2 says, *'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.'*

We need to remove ungodly and unbiblical thoughts from our minds, of evil cravings and desires for sinfulness. But that must involve a filling to the same mind with a submission to the word of God. It involves a mind in which unbiblical thoughts are replaced by knowing and remembering the truth of Scripture, not a blank slate of meditation that revolves around self or some repetitive sounds. We should search our hearts and as the Psalmist says in Psa. 19:14, *'Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.'*

There is an acceptable and an unacceptable meditation to God. We need to know the difference, which will affect our spiritual health.

King David's meditation did not revolve around David, nor did David try to empty his mind into nothingness. He wanted to draw near to God and to seek to hear and learn the word from God. He knew he would know God in the study of the OT law. He searched and studied the scriptures, which give comfort and hope, to purge and sanctify his mind of wrong thoughts and hence to have them replaced with right thoughts and patterns of thinking (Phil 4:8, Rom. 15:4). Joshua was told to meditate daily on the word of God in Jos 1:8 and God would guide him in the path of spiritual prosperity and good success.

Our lives should be lived to the glory of God and not for self. There are many who want to get rid of stress that is rooted in worldliness and the cares of this world. But getting rid of this worry or anxiety is not a matter of psychological self-help therapy, but of bible-based spiritual discipline. It requires faith and repentance of sins through the work of the holy Spirit to have our minds transformed by the Word of God over a period of time.

We live in a world so shaped by psychological or therapeutic concerns that most people doubt if God is able to help them in their stress, distress, depression or even confusion and haunting thoughts that clutter their minds. An attempt to empty the mind or to listen to the self may open ourselves to the wiles of the evil one, when we should seek guidance from God.

We need to know the dangers of trying to empty our minds by human effort without harm. Some Ancient hermits tried to do so by living in caves and running away from the world, and it has been documented that some have been deranged and even suffered from mental or psychological ailments. Beware that we do not end up shutting ourselves in the depravity of our sovereign self. What is true biblical meditation that gives true peace of the soul and mind? Isaiah 26:3-4 says, *'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.'*

Paul told us to seek divine guidance to fight against evil thoughts in 2 Corinthians 10:5 which says, *'Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the*

*obedience of Christ.'* For Christians, a kind of secular or mystical meditation is a potential grave spiritual danger, and certainly not a biblically sanctioned means to holiness or spiritual growth. Rather we should memorise scripture and focus our minds in the proper worship of God and fervent prayer, meditating upon the Word of God as part of our regular and consistent spiritual discipline in our daily Quiet Time. There should be no quest for an empty mind, but to a mind constantly directed by God through Scripture and prayers and guided by the leading of the Holy Spirit of God.

Hope this helps.

*Jack Sin*

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*Thank God for the salvation of bro Lim Swee Huat who is now in the presence of the Lord.*



*Sis Pit Yuen sharing her testimony of salvation at the YPF*



*Thank God for 20  
persons who attended  
the inaugural YPF  
meeting on Creation,  
Science and the Bible*

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### **Memory Verse**

*1 Thess 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.*

### **Announcements**

1. Rev Koh Hock Heng speaks next Sunday on “Anticipating Christ's second coming”. (1Thes 4:13-18)
2. Weekly Prayer meeting will be held on Wednesday 8pm at the home of sis Han Kin Kheng
3. SHBPC sends her deepest condolences to Sis Mui Khim and family on the home going of her father, Bro Lim Swee Huat.
4. Pastor and Angie will be away on a mission trip to teach the word to a group of pastors from 4-14 Nov.
5. Rev Nathan of New Life BPC will stand in for pastor during his mission trip for any pastoral assistance.