

# ON THE WAY OF CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

By Gerry Pierse

## 1. Christian meditation

- a. Meditation is a *discipline* to follow – not a technique to be mastered.
- b. It is a way to be followed, a journey set out on – not a permanent destination.

## 2. Background to Christian Meditation

- a. During about the past 40 years, Christians have been seeking a deeper, more spiritual, more interior dimension to their lives. As a result, some explored Transcendental Meditation (TM), others followed Zen.
- b. John Main re-discovered practices of the rich Christian meditation tradition that had existed since apostolic times.

## 3. Consider the nature of ourselves: disunited within.

- a. Each of us is *disunited* within ourselves -- the apostle Paul described this disunity in Romans 7:15.
- b. This lack of silence and interior harmony is evident in today's world of radio, television, and consumerism – we have little opportunity to be silent.
- c. We seldom live in the present – the past worries us, the future calls for plans, and desires/illusions distract us.
- d. St Augustine said “Man must first be restored to himself that, making in himself as it were a stepping-stone, he may rise thence and be borne up to God”.
- e. So a quiet period each day, in which we do not try to do anything but be aware of God's unfolding presence, is essential to restore us to ourselves.
- f. It is important for us to “be still and know that I am God.” (See Psalm 46.)

## 4. Consider the nature of God: A God of love

- a. Our God is a Father/Mother who loves us – no matter what – seen in the parable of the Prodigal Son.
- b. Creatureliness is accepting that God, and not ourselves with our ego, is the centre of reality. We do this by the poverty of the single word, the prayer word, the mantra.
- c. By continuing to say the mantra we take the search light of consciousness off ourselves. As we remove ourselves from the centre of the stage God finds his true place there.

## 5. In meditation:

- a. Each time we meditate, we enter into the death and resurrection of Christ. He gave himself over to the will of his Father even unto death.
- b. In meditation we let go of all, we die. As we die to the self, the ego, we are reborn into Christ.
- c. God's life is already ours. We are temples of his Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is already praying in our hearts, crying “Abba Father” (Romans 8).
- d. Apart from this Spirit, we do not know how to pray. When we are present at our own centre through the mantra we are into the flow of communication between the Father and the Spirit, we are in the prayer of Christ himself, pure prayer.
- e. We do not have to seek God's presence, he is already within us, we must just realise it. “The Kingdom of God is within you.”

## 6. The practice of meditation

- a. The process of transformation is gradual, it needs perseverance. It takes time and discipline to unhook the ego.
- b. It needs saying the mantra twice a day everyday for the rest of our lives. It is a pilgrimage, a journey.
- c. The important thing is to begin; to begin soon and then to begin each time you sit down to meditate; to begin again each time you become distracted.
- d. There is no argument to convince one of the validity of the claims of meditation. Talking about it only delays the process. Experience is the great convincer.
- e. After trying it for some time you will find a rightness about it that will make you know that it is really prayer.
- f. Possessiveness is our great weakness. This can even be *spiritual possessiveness*. When we pray with images and thoughts we are trying to grasp God who is beyond grasp. We may be giving ourselves nice feelings or satisfying thoughts.
- g. In meditation we grasp nothing, we want nothing. If something extraordinary happens in meditation put it aside, it is a distraction.
- h. We apply the words of the Lord, “Anyone who wishes to be a follower of mine must leave self behind; he must take up his cross and come with me.” (Mark 8:34).
- i. The tradition that has come down from apostolic times is that praying the mantra is one of the best ways of carrying out this command.