A Brief History of Christian Missions | 11/8/2026
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I. Missions in the New Testament

A. Jesus came to proclaim good news to the poor, including many Gentiles.

B. Jesus sent his Apostles to make disciples of all nations, which we see in Acts.

C. Paul spread the Gospel throughout the Mediterranean world on 3 missionary journeys.

D. There are traditions about other Apostles spreading the Gospel to far off peoples.

II. Missions in the Ancient Church

A. Who were the missionaries? Ministers of the Word; later, Bishops and monks.

B. Other opening considerations: Persecution and doctrinal conflict.

C. Gregory the Illuminator (mid-3rd to mid-4th c.): Bishop of Armenia.

D. Frumentius (4th century): Bishop of Axum (Ethiopia).

III. Missions in the Medieval Church

A. Opening considerations: Growing corruption, threat of Islam, the Crusades.

B. St. Patrick (late 5th century): Bishop of Ireland.

C. St. Boniface (late 7th – mid-8th c.): Bishop and Missionary to Germany and Frisia.

IV. Missions in the Reformation Church

A. Opening considerations: Was the Reformation a missionary failure?

B. John Calvin's Geneva: The Reformation's missionary training ground.

C. Pierre Richier and Guillaume Chartier (1557 –1560): Mission to Brazil.

D. John Eliot (mid-1600s): Mission to the Native Americans in New England.

V. Missions in the Presbyterian Church in America

A. J. Gresham Machen, the Independent Board of Foreign Missions, and the OPC.

B. The PCA and our mission agencies, MTW and MNA.