

Introduction

Church planting has received renewed attention in North America since the early 1990's. The causes are uncertain, but it may be due to the rapid growth of new paradigm churches that began to be noticed in the last decade. Regardless of the cause, the interest in church planting has led to a resurgence of denominational activity in church planting.

The key leaders of the church planting movement have almost exclusively focused on church planting with professionally trained clergy and large budgets.¹ Some church

¹ Almost all church planting books published since 1990 have focused on church planting by professional clergy including Paul Becker, *Dynamic Church Planting* (Vista, CA: Multiplication Ministries, 1992); Charles L. Chaney, *Church Planting at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1993); Samuel D. Faircloth, *Church Planting for Reproduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991); Hozell C. Francis, *Church Planting in the African American Context* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000); Raymond W. Hurn, *The Rising Tide: New Churches for the New Millennium* (Kansas City, MO: Beason Hill Press, 1997); Fred G. King, *The Church Planter's Training Manual* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1992); Larry L. Lewis, *The Church Planter's Handbook* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1993); Robert E. Logan and Steven L. Ogne, *Church Planter's Toolkit* (Pasadena, CA: Charles E. Fuller Institute for Evangelism and Church Growth, 1991); Kevin Mannoia, *Church Planting: The Next Generation* (Indianapolis, IN: Light and Life Communication, 1994); Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21 Century: A Comprehensive Guide for New Churches and Those Desiring Renewal* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992); Joe S. Ratliff and Michael J. Cox, *Church Planting in the African-American Community* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1993); Opal Reddin, *Planting Churches that Grow* (Springfield, MO: Central Bible College Press, 1990); and Lyle E. Schaller, *Forty-Four Questions for Church Planters* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1991).

Some have some application for lay church planting, but are limited in such. These include: Harvie M. Conn, ed., *Planting and Growing Urban Churches: From Dream to Reality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1996); Oscar I. Romo, *American Mosaic Church Planting in Ethnic America* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1993); Bill M. Sullivan, *Starting Strong New Churches* (Kansas City, MO: New Start, 1997); Floyd Tidsworth, Jr., *Life Cycle of a New Congregation* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1992); and C. Peter Wagner, *Church Planting For A Greater Harvest* (Ventura: Regal Books, 1990).

The only recent books with direct application are missiology texts geared toward international planting. David J. Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: North America and Beyond* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2000); Tom Steffan, *Passing the Baton: Church Planting that Empowers* (Center for Organization and Ministry, 1997)

Also, the burgeoning house church movement provides some help, but some of these works are more about promoting an agenda for house-based congregations. Some are included that predate 1990. These include: Robert J. and Julia Banks, *The Church Comes Home: A New Base for Community and Mission*, rev. ed. (Claremont, CA: Albatross Books, 1989); Robert J. Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community*, rev. ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1986); Lois Barrett, *Building the House Church* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1994); David T. Bunch, Harvey J. Kneisel, and Barbara L. Oden, *Multihousing Congregations: How to Start and Grow Christian Congregations in Multihousing Communities* (Atlanta, GA: Smith Publishing, 1991); C. Kirk Hadaway, Francis M. DuBose, and Stuart A. Wright, *Home cell groups and house churches* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987); Donald Jones, "The House Church as a Tool for Urban Evangelism," *Urban Mission* 6 (4): 27-32; George Patterson, "The Spontaneous Multiplication of Churches," *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981); Dick Scoggins, "Reproducing House Churches: An Autobiographical Pilgrimage," *Urban Mission* 11 (3): 46-54; Clyde W. Taylor, "Twelve Case Studies of Pioneer Church Planting: An

planting leaders have started to advocate new church budgets of over \$100,000.² The North American Mission Board is promoting a new program called “High-Impact Plants”³ where the new church begins with multiple staff and a budget of \$500,000. The Nehemiah Project of the North American Mission Board and the Southern Baptist Seminaries is specifically geared toward seminary graduates who, in order to be appointed missionaries, must serve as full-time church planters. This has been the major funding initiative of the Board for two years and will probably continue to be such in the foreseeable future.

The emphasis on full-time church planting (*or even full-time teams*) is not a bad thing. However, more and more are beginning to recognize that the needed strategy must not be a full-time approach alone. Church planting by lay persons has received less attention, particularly among Baptists and other more established denominations. However, most missiologists recognize that the need for new churches will not be met by recruiting seminary trained pastors.

There are many reasons why lay church planting has received little attention in North America. These would include the seminary bias promoted by denominational leadership, the availability of seminary trained graduates (regardless of the quality), and the ignorance of the success of lay church planting. However, a change in attitude has emerged.

Upper Class People Movement,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian movement: A reader* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981); and Dick Scoggins, *Handbook for House Churches* [on-line], accessed 1 December 1999, <http://genesis.acu.edu/cplant/archive/contr036>; Internet.

² James Emory White uses this figure in his church planting conference.

³ The nomenclature has undergone some revisions over time. These have been called “anchor,” “regional,” and mega-starts.

Such a study is timely with the increased interest in lay church planting in North America.⁴

The concept of church planting by the laity has again become a high profile issue.

This article will seek to address the lack of information concerning North American lay church planting by examining the several lay church planting movements that have been most successful in North America. The fact remains that lay church planting has not had great success in North America. However, when the circumstances were right, lay church planting movements did have an impact.

This article will examine two successful movements: lay church planting by Methodists and Baptists on the Western Frontier (1795-1810) and the Calvary Chapel / Vineyard movements (1970-1990). Following such, I will examine the moderately successful house church movement, multi-housing church planting strategies, and new GenX churches with lay leadership. Lastly, I will propose some solutions for a pilot lay church planting project among Southern Baptists.

⁴ The North American Mission Board has made lay church planting a major focus since 1999.

Case Study Number 1: Frontier Baptists and Methodists

America's Greatest Lay Church Planting Movement

Lay church planting on the Western Frontier has received little attention though it is the most remarkable church planting era in American history. There have been mentions of such in larger works of mission history and in encyclopedias. However, no book has been published to focus specifically on the lay⁵ church planting movement on the Western Frontier. (The reasons for this will be explored later.)

The founding of the American Home Mission Society in 1814 was heralded as the beginning of a new era of missions *to* North America. However, the reality is that a great missions movement was already taking place in North America as thousands of churches were being planted on the Western Frontier.

This was to become the most successful lay church planting movement in American history. Obviously, this epoch itself was an important part of missions history. It is often called the "Great Century of Missions."⁶ Studies of this period have tended to focus on the acts of mission agencies, which proliferated during this era. However, I will ignore the work of mission agencies to specifically focus on the lay church planting movement of ordinary believers.

In 1795 the Western Frontier *was* Kentucky and the surrounding environs. The area experienced tremendous growth in population and church involvement at the end of the 18th century. (By 1790 counties that were virtually uninhabited in 1776 contained 1/3 of the

⁵ I have chosen to refer to the church leaders as the "lay" pastors. I recognize that lay frequently refers to the non-ordained. However, in this case I am referring to untrained, not unordained, pastors.

⁶ Kenneth Scott Latourett, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, vol. IV, *The Great Century: Europe and the United States, 1800A.D. to 1914 A.D.* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969).

nations population.⁷) It was in this locale and at this time that both the Methodists and Baptists experienced their explosive growth.

That growth was primarily experienced in small local Baptist and Methodist churches led by lay preachers and, at times in Methodism, overseen by regional leaders. This paper will analyze the methods and success of Baptists and Methodists on the frontier.

Goodykoontz estimates that from the start of the Revolutionary War until 1800, Baptist ranks swelled ten fold-- from ten thousand to one hundred thousand.⁸ In Kentucky alone, by 1810 there were 15 Baptist associations, 286 registered churches, and 16,650 members.⁹ This growth was remarkable as it occurred while the mainline religious groups (Congregationalists, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians) lost ground proportionally. Speaking of the Methodists, Goodykoontz explained:

“It is doubtful if a missionary system better adapted to the needs of the frontier in the early part of the nineteenth century could have been found than that used by the Methodist Episcopal Church. The settlements were widely scattered; the people generally had not the means, and frequently not the desire, to call and settle ministers in their midst. The circuit rider did not wait for a call—he sought the people. Church buildings were rarely found, but that did not hinder the work of the itinerant; the cabin of a friendly settler would do at the outset. . . . The Methodist circuit riders were the advance guard of American Christianity in the occupation of the West.”¹⁰

The Baptists were also making tremendous advances on the frontier. They traveled with their relocating congregations or rose up from within frontier churches. Torbet explains:

⁷ Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 30.

⁸ Colin Brummitt Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier: With Particular Reference to the American Home Missionary Society* (Caldwell, ID: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1939), 108.

⁹ Penrose St. Amant, “Frontier, Baptists and the American,” in *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1982), 511.

“The success of Baptist home missionary endeavors was due to the persistence and zeal with which their leaders accompanied the streams of migrants down the Mohawk Valley from New England, and out from the mid-Atlantic seaboard through southern Pennsylvania and Maryland, as well as through the Valley of Virginia and the Blue Ridge passes into Kentucky and Tennessee. Early Baptists were hardy people, woodsmen, hunters, pioneer stock with a will to work and the courage to face the unknown with God. Their ministers were of the same caliber, plain-spoken men with a heart-warming message told in the homespun language of the frontier. In some cases they went right along with their migrant congregations; in other cases they were missionaries who spent a winter or two along the edge of civilization, establishing little churches, then returning to their homes.”¹¹

The growth of Baptist and Methodists was remarkable. Goodykoontz breaks down the numbers as follows:

At the beginning of the Revolutionary War it has been estimated that in numerical strength the churches in America ranked as follows: Congregational, 700; Baptist, 380; Church of England, 300; Presbyterian, 300; Lutheran, 60; German Reformed, 60; Dutch Reformed, 60; Roman Catholic, 52; Methodist societies, 30. By 1860 the order, based on the number of churches, had changed materially, as is shown by the following figures: Methodist, 19,833; Baptist, 11,221; Presbyterian, 5,061; Roman Catholic, 2,550; Congregational, 2,234; Protestant Episcopal, 2,145; Lutheran, 2,128; Christian or Disciples of Christ, 2,068. In these shifts in position the most striking changes were the growth of the Methodists from thirty small societies in 1776 to nearly twenty thousands congregations in 1860.¹²

The grouping of Baptists and Methodists may seem strange. The Baptists emphasized local congregational autonomy while the Methodists utilized a hierarchical structure. However, recent scholarship has reemphasized the democratic nature of both structures. While Baptists were theologically autonomous, Methodists were functionally autonomous on the local level.

Finke and Starke explain:

¹⁰ Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier*, 161-162.

¹¹ Robert G. Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 3rd ed. (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1963), 356.

¹² Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier*, 411-412.

In this era, the actual pastoral functions were performed in most Methodist churches by unpaid local "amateurs" just like those serving the Baptist congregations up the road.¹³

In other words, both functioned in the same manner at the local level. Both organized in small groups in isolated places. Both were led by local laypersons who served as the primary provided or spiritual guidance. Both were highly democratic in their polity and attitude. The Methodists tended to be overseen by a regional coordinator (called a circuit rider¹⁴) and the Baptists tended to monitor each other through an autonomous local body called an association.

Interestingly, the Methodists did not convictionally and doctrinally believe in the ecclesiastical structure they adopted. Though they came from Anglicanism, with its emphasis on Bishop structure, they did not believe that their structure was mandated by scripture. Instead, Wesley believed that the form of church government was of secondary importance.¹⁵

There are several reasons for this explosive growth. Baptists experienced remarkable growth, but Methodists were even more successful on the Frontier. This paper will explore the historical situation, provide descriptions of local church life, explain how lay persons become lay pastors, and provide some observations and implications.

¹³ Roger Finke and Rodney Starke, *The Churching of America: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 73.

¹⁴ Hatch explains that surprisingly little is known about the Methodist circuit rider. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 87. Most of our knowledge comes from hagiographies and autobiographies.

¹⁵ William Warren Sweet, *Religion on the American Frontier, 1783-1840*, vol. IV, *The Methodists* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1946), 31.

Historical Overview

As mentioned earlier, a great shift occurred in the American religious landscape from 1776 to 1850. Certainly, part of this transformation was due to the religious awakening that occurred at the turn of the century. As a whole, the movement has been referred to as “The Great Awakening.” However, the religious movement beyond the Alleghenies was known as the Great Revival in the West. It began in 1797 in Logan County Kentucky under the preaching of a Presbyterian minister.¹⁶ In many respects the movements were similar, though the western revival was evidenced by camp meeting fervor.¹⁷

Some have credited the Second Great Awakening with the “churching” of the West.¹⁸ This revival impacted the West primarily between 1797 and 1803. However, Methodists and Baptists were at work before the awakening and were prepared to reap the harvest. (The first Baptist church in Kentucky, Severens Valley Baptist Church, was founded in 1781. The founding of the first Kentucky Methodist church was in 1783 or 1786.) It may be more accurate that Baptists and Methodists benefited disproportionately from the Great Awakening. (According to some, the Baptists often benefited from the conversion and subsequent Biblical study of former Congregationalists.¹⁹)

Mainline denominations quickly lost their preeminence and were replaced by the new Methodists and the Baptists. Methodists went from 2.5% to 34.2% of American

¹⁶ Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier*, 122.

¹⁷ The camp meeting, unlike its eastern establishment counterpart, could include elements as diverse as barking, “falling” under the spirit, etc.

¹⁸ Martin Marty, *Pilgrims in Their Own Land: 500 Years of Religion in America* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1984), 170.

¹⁹ Judson Boyce Allen, “Westward Expansion, Southern Baptist,” in *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1982), 1490.

Christians during this time.²⁰ By 1800 Baptists had experienced an outward transformation to become the largest denomination in America and an inward transformation into a confident denomination with evangelism, missions, and education as core values.²¹

Hatch refers to this as the "democratization" of American religion in his seminal work on the topic. He explained that this time was a transition from institutionalism to individualism. The Baptists and Methodists were best suited for this transition.

“All in all, the West of the early years of the nineteenth century was a region of aggressive, individualistic, materialistic, and yet emotional Americans who had outrun the cultural institutions of social control, and who were necessarily tremendously absorbed in their tasks of erecting cabins, laying out towns, digging ditches, building roads, and fighting Indians. With respect to religion and morals these people, in the eyes of eastern Christians, were ‘destitute.’”²²

The work of the Methodists on the frontier began in the late 1700's:

“There were doubtless some Methodists among the very early settlers, but we find no organization of that society, till 1783, the same year that the first Presbyterian congregations were gathered, and in the same locality. During that year, Francis Clark, a local preacher, accompanied by John Durham, a class leader, and some others came from Virginia, and settled about six miles from the present site of Danville. Here a class was formed, and Mr. Durham was appointed its leaders. About the same period, Thomas Stephenson and his wife, both Methodists, came from Maryland, and settled in Mason county. A church was organized in their house, in 1786.”²³

This shift is not minor. However, it is usually unnoticed by the casual reader of history. The Puritans and the congregational church dominated the early colonies. The Episcopalians were prominent in early political history. Even the Presbyterians were

²⁰ Finke and Starke, *The Churching of America*, 55.

²¹ H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), 251.

²² Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier*, 119.

²³ J. H. Spencer, *A History of Kentucky Baptists: From 1769 to 1885 Including More Than 800 Biographical Sketches*, rev. and corrected (Cincinnati, OH: J. R. Baumes, 1885), 562.

frequently mentioned. However, their influence waned as the Baptists and Methodists exploded in growth. This caused alarm among the mainline denominations.

Historically Underreported

McBeth errs when he says, "Baptist growth occurred though migration, not organized mission activity."²⁴ He creates a false dichotomy-- migration and organized mission activity. According to St. Amant, it was not the migration that caused the growth. Instead, he explained citing Sweet, Baptist grew because of their "genius for making Baptists out of the raw materials which the frontier afforded."²⁵ The frontier Baptists migrated²⁶ but also raised up leaders from within their ranks. They were organized and systematic, though they did this without an external organization.

As a denomination, Baptists had no enduring evangelistic program until the start of the 19th century.²⁷ There was never a *Book of Discipline*, a *Book of Common Prayer*, or Canon Law to appeal to for policies and procedures. However, the work did proceed, as we shall see, in an organized and systematic manner. The organization was local, and thus is missed by many historians. Most Baptists knew how "it needed to get done." However, it was not recorded in a rule book, systematized in an organizational structure, or proclaimed in a regional meeting.

²⁴ McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 226.

²⁵ St. Amant, "Frontier, Baptists and the American," 511.

²⁶ According to Walter Brownlow Posey, *The Baptist Church in the Lower Mississippi Valley, 1776-1845* (Lexington, University of Kentucky Press, 1957), 4, cited by William B. Shurden, "Associationalism Among the Baptists, 1707-1814" (Ph.D. diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1967), 41.

²⁷ Shurden. "Associationalism Among the Baptists", 169.

Charles Chaney has written the seminal work on the history of mission work to North America. Unfortunately, Chaney's work lacks information on the unorganized activities of ordinary believers.²⁸ Though he mentioned Sweet's "farmer-preacher" (126) and the Methodist circuit rider, he dwells with them only briefly. Though the vast majority of home missions in the late 18th century was conducted by these figures, they receive little notice as Chaney focuses on the mission boards and their handful of home missionaries. Even when discussing the work of the Baptists, he almost exclusively focuses on missionaries appointed by Baptist Associations (170-172) and not farmer preachers who made up the vast majority of frontier missionaries.²⁹

Chaney explains:

If one means by "missionary" only those sent out and supported by organizations distinctly formed for missionary purposes, the majority of these men cannot properly be called missionaries. However... these men considered themselves missionaries in exactly the same way that Paul was a missionary.³⁰

With this brief mention, Chaney overlooks³¹ what many consider one of the most important mission movements in North America. Finke and Stark persuasively argue that educated clergy were the exception during this time,³² and that even with mission agency subsidies, the mainline denominations made little headway on the frontier.³³

²⁸ The comments that follow are partly excerpted from my book review of Chaney's *History of Missions in America*.

²⁹ In fairness to Chaney, this emphasis on the lay missionary has never been a major concern of historians who tend to focus on organizations with recorded minutes. Exceptions include John Taylor's eyewitness accounts, the writing of William Warren Sweet, and, more recently, Finke and Stark.

³⁰ Charles Chaney, *History of Missions in America*, (South Pasadena, Calif: William Carey Library, 1976), 126

³¹ Chaney explained to me that this is one of the changes he will make if the book is updated. His new work will recognize more of this effort and point out that much of the early home mission societies were actually created to counter the growth of Baptists.

Elliot Smith's *The Advance of Baptist Associations Across America* gives scarce attention to the formation of *churches* that formed Baptist associations on the frontier. Instead, he focuses on the mission efforts of one of the few associational itinerant ministers, John Gano. Though Gano's work was tremendous (he was sent by the Philadelphia Association and later became moderator of the Elkhorn Association in Kentucky), it is but a small part of the mission work on the frontier.

Chaney and Smith are not alone. Brackney's *Source Book*, McBeth's *The Baptist Heritage*, and most other works overlook the actions of these ordinary believers, though they outnumbered the actions of mission agencies by hundreds to one.³⁴ The overlooking of these actions is not surprising—lay pastors tend to not record history as mission agencies do. The lay pastor is typically worried about the next Sunday and not the witness of history.

Speaking of Missouri Methodists just a few years after the time period described, M'Anally explains a situation similar to the Baptists of the time:

“It was a remarkable and perhaps a Providential feature in the early history of Methodism in this country, that it took deep and fast hold on the minds and hearts of the less wealthy classes of society; those less cumbered with worldly goods and worldly cares. These are the classes most given to migration from place to place, and these especially are they who are most likely to be early in the occupancy of new countries; and among the early emigrants towards the west were Methodists, members, leaders and local preachers who, though far removed from former associations and influences, retained their love for the cause they had espoused, and acted together for their mutual accommodation and benefit. These local preachers were among the people, and of the people, identified with all their interests, partakers in all the benefits of the new country and settlements, and sharers in all the difficulties and dangers of the settlers. They worked with them, prayed with them, preached to them and fought with them when attacked by a common foe, and laid wide and deep the foundations of Methodism in a

³² Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America*, 78.

³³ Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America*, 66.

³⁴ Between 1795 and 1810, home mission societies sent less than 100 missionaries. During that time, the Baptists and the Methodists planted thousands of churches.

large proportion of the new settlements, before these settlements were ever visited by an itinerant minister. Then, their fidelity to the Church was earnest and steadfast. They asked nothing for themselves; but, noble and self-denying men as they were, they labored in their own settlements and in contiguous settlements, gathering the few Methodists that might happen to be there, gaining many new converts, banding and keeping them together, then at the earliest opportunity sending for the regular itinerant and cheerfully putting themselves, with all the fruits of their labors, under his charge, agreeably to general polity of the Church.”³⁵

Description of Church Life

The *establishment* church and *frontier* church were remarkably different. Though at times they worshipped in the same town, typically their strength was in differing regions. The establishment church was generally concentrated in the established area of the early colonies, particularly in the East (Virginia to New Hampshire). The frontier church was strong on what was the Western frontier—Kentucky in particular.

The congregants of the establishment and the frontier wanted different things from their leaders, from their worship, and from their faith. They did not want what the other had. The frontier believers did not want the dead orthodoxy of the East. The Eastern Congregationalists and Presbyterians found the West to be an “uncongenial atmosphere.”³⁶

In the West, the church, whether Methodist or Baptist, tended to have certain characteristics. They differed from town to town and certainly between denominations, but some things were consistent in most frontier churches. It was these characteristics that made the frontier church “frontier.”

³⁵ D. R. M’Anally, *History of Methodism in Missouri: From the Date of Its Introduction, in 1806, Down to the Present Day; with an Appendix, Containing Full and Accurate Statistical Information, Etc.*, Vol. 1, (Saint Louis, MO: Advocate Publishing House, 1881), 71-72.

³⁶ Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier*, 129.

Preaching

The preaching on the frontier was markedly different from the well-schooled preaching of the Eastern churches. However, this did not concern the frontier congregation. Cartwright³⁷ explained that these uneducated men "preached with more success... than all the... D.D.'s in modern times."³⁸ Finke and Starke contrast the frontier message and the establishment message as one of "conversion" versus "erudition."³⁹ Phares explained, "(The frontier preacher) was not an interpreter of the fine points of theology. Basically, he was a gadfly whose purpose was to sting the sinful and negligent, a chider rather than an expositor on the fine shadings of Biblical meaning."⁴⁰

Preaching was affective and emotional. Extemporaneous preaching was valued above prepared sermons.⁴¹ Francis Wayland describes the preaching of early American Baptists, "They delivered their message in such a manner that every body (sic) understood them. But besides this, they were not often enticed into the fields of literature and science. They occupied themselves mainly in the study of the Scriptures."⁴²

Lay preaching was the order of the day. In the established churches of the East, sermons were prepared by professionals and were theologically erudite and exegetically

³⁷ Peter Cartwright is the best known of the Methodist circuit riders. His autobiography is one of the most important works on the subject.

³⁸ Peter Cartwright, *Autobiography* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956), 408.

³⁹ Finke and Starke, *The Churching of America*, 84.

⁴⁰ Ross Phares, *Bible in Pocket, Gun in Hand* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1971), 45. Phares gives a colorful rendition of the frontier preacher. Unfortunately, he moves from one era to another without historical mile-markers for reference. His "frontier" preacher is, at times, in Kentucky and later in Texas, etc.

⁴¹ Phares, *Bible in Pocket, Gun in Hand*, 15.

⁴² Francis Wayland, *Notes on the Principles and Practices of Baptist Churches* (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman & Co., 1857), 34.

sound. However, in the West, the lay preacher reigned supreme. The preacher tended to preach a simple form of Calvinism and appealed to the authority of scripture above human reason.⁴³ He appealed to the scripture even when it seemed to contradict human reason.

A commitment to this lay preaching was foundational in all the insurgent religious movements of the day, not just the Baptists and the Methodists.⁴⁴ On the frontier, the culture valued the working man, not the learned preacher. Therefore, where theological erudition lacked, affective preaching reigned.

The Church of the Common Person

The establishment church was a church with history and tradition. The frontier church valued its commoner roots over history and elegance. They valued the leadership of the common man – someone just like them. The Methodists and the Baptists both were led by local lay persons, but the structure of authority did differ.

The Methodist Circuit Rider acted as a visiting pastor, occasionally visiting the church under his care.⁴⁵ He was the primary overseer of the local church. These circuit riders were legendary for their pioneering spirit. A humorous expression among Baptist about bad weather was, "There's nobody out today but crows and Methodist preachers."⁴⁶ The rivalry was good natured⁴⁷, but intense.

Sweet explains how the circuit rider typically functioned:

⁴³ Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier*, 413.

⁴⁴ Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 138.

⁴⁵ Finke and Starke, *The Churching of America*, 73.

⁴⁶ Phares, *Bible in Pocket, Gun in Hand*, 120.

⁴⁷ Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 244.

“How a circuit-rider succeeded in securing a foothold for his work in a new country is illustrated by the early activities of Benjamin Ogden. Ogden probably came to Kentucky by way of the Ohio River, landing at Maysville. Making his way to Simon Kenton’s Station, about three miles to the southwest, he found the cabin of Thomas Stevenson and his wife, Methodists from Maryland. There he was welcomed and there the first regular Methodist preaching took place. Ogden visited among and prayed with the families in the station, and before he left for central Kentucky he had formed a class, evidently with Stevenson as the class leader. At the end of the first year ninety members were reported from the Kentucky Circuit.”⁴⁸

Each of the Methodist circuits included 20-30 preaching points. Worship services were generally held in whatever facilities were available—even outside. Obviously, the circuit rider was unable to shepherd this number of preaching points. The class president (another “farmer-preacher”) served as the under-shepherd. He was the one who actually led the congregation.

Baptists practiced similar methodologies on the local level but they lacked an ecclesiastical authority structure. They shared a vision of winning the West for Protestantism, and entire congregations often moved with their pastors.⁴⁹ These traveling churches moved for economic reasons, but not for economic reasons alone.

The “farmer-preacher” worked five to six days a week, preached Sunday worship, and frequently mid-week as well.⁵⁰ Though he did not have an overseer in the pattern of the Methodist circuit rider, he worked with equal fervor. Theodore Roosevelt explained that the Baptist preacher “lived and worked exactly as their flocks.... They cleared the ground, spit rails, planted corn, and raised hogs on equal terms with their parishioners.”⁵¹

⁴⁸ Sweet, *Religion On the American Frontier*, 52-53.

⁴⁹ Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 244.

⁵⁰ Sweet, *Religion On the American Frontier*, 36

Simplicity was the order of the day. One frontier preacher in the 1790s commented upon his Baptist counterparts in Boston, explaining that their pulpit robes, pew cushions, and powdered wigs distracted from true worship.⁵² Charles Finney explained in *Lectures on Revivals in Religion*, that "(A) Methodist preacher, without the advantages of a liberal education, will draw a congregation around him which a Presbyterian minister, with perhaps ten times as much learning, cannot equal."⁵³

Churches were small. The first Baptist church in Kentucky, Severns Valley Church, was formed with fifteen white and three black members.⁵⁴ Three weeks later, the Cedar Creek Church was formed. The third church formed in Kentucky was an exception to the rule. The Gilbert's Creek Church was a "traveling church," a common phenomena mentioned earlier. In this case, an entire church migrated from Virginia. Two hundred members arrived in Kentucky five months after beginning their journey.⁵⁵

John Taylor⁵⁶ provides a first hand account of such:

⁵¹ Cited in St. Amont, "Frontier, Baptists and the American," 511

⁵² McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 201.

⁵³ Charles G. Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell, n.d.) cited in Finke and Starke, *The Churching of America*, 86.

⁵⁴ McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 224.

⁵⁵ McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 225

⁵⁶ John Taylor, *A History of Ten Baptist Churches of Which the Author Has Been Alternately a Member*, 2nd ed. (Bloomfield, KY: printed by W.H. Holmes, 1827; reprint, New York, NY: Arno Press, 1980), 42-43. John Taylor provides a wonderful resource for a person studying Baptist planting on the frontier. In his *A History of Ten Baptist Churches of Which the Author Has Been Alternately a Member*. Taylor describes his involvement:

"The first opportunity I had, I gave my membership to the Church at Gilbert's Creek—this had been one of the traveling Churches, from Virginia to Kentucky. Lewis Craig, with a great number of the members of his Church, in Spotsylvania, had moved to Kentucky, as I have been told, they were constituted, when they started, and was an organized Church on the road—wherever they stopped, they were a housekeeping at once. Just before I got to Kentucky, Craig with a number of others, had left Gilbert's Creek, and moved to South Elkhorn and set up a Church there. The remnant left of Gilbert's Creek, kept up Church order; it was this remnant I united with, among

“From the Heavenly buddings already named at Clear Creek, we began to think of having a Church there. Through the winter and spring of 1785, several preachers had moved into the neighbourhood [*sic*], as John Dupuy, James Rucker and Richard Cave—we held a council on the subject of a constitution, but we found a difficulty, and in this way; a number of the members had been in the Church with Lewis Craig, in Virginia, and in the traveling Church through the wilderness, and its establishment in Kentucky, and above all, if we had a new Church, we might loose Lewis Craig as our pastor, and though we had four ordained preachers, all of us did not make one Lewis Craig. But after several councils, we concluded that to have a church, convenient to us, we would go into a constitution, under the hope that brother Craig would visit us and set us right when we got wrong; to this height of respectability was Lewis Craig, in Kentucky. We could only apply to South Elkhorn for assistance, and the helps from that establishment agreed to acknowledge us a sister Church. I think in April, 1785, about thirty members, to the best of my recollection, was in the new Church; under the style of Baptist Church of Christ at Clear Creek. We soon began to Baptize our young converts, for some of them were waiting for an opportunity; we went on in great harmony through that year, we had four ordained preachers as named above. I think we baptized twenty that year. Clear Creek was the second Church on the north side of Kentucky.”⁵⁷

Though there were patterns that were common, Taylor explained that "(I)t is probable that no Baptist church ever came into existence exactly in the same style."⁵⁸ Some were traveling churches, and some rose up from the community.

Buildings were not necessary for churches on the frontier. Frontier pastors used any place that people would gather together-- "in the open, in homes, saloons, gambling halls, and under brush arbors."⁵⁹ Often, the first Baptist churches met in the humble cabins of the settlers.⁶⁰

them was George Smith, commonly called Stokes Smith, a valuable preacher; Richard Cave, then an ordained minister; William Cave, who afterwards became a very good preacher, and many other valuable members." (42-43)

⁵⁷ John Taylor, *A History of Ten Baptist Churches*, 54-55.

⁵⁸ John Taylor. *A History of Ten Baptist Churches*, 188.

⁵⁹ Phares, *Bible in Pocket, Gun in Hand*, 165.

⁶⁰ Sweet, *Religion On the American Frontier*, 53

Baptist churches had monthly business meetings with the minister as moderator. Each church had a constitution or covenant and rules to carry on its business and discipline its members.⁶¹ Churches took the practice of church discipline seriously. Wills explains, in painful length, the process of church discipline in frontier churches.⁶² (His focus is primarily in Georgia but the practice was the same in the Western frontier.⁶³) Churches sat in judgment on issues from church attendance, to drinking, to profanity, to adultery.⁶⁴

The church on the frontier was not disorganized. It was very methodological in all it did. However, its organization was local. For Methodists, it included an overseer—but the primary organization was still local. The church was a commoner church with commoner leadership, but it took its function and call more seriously than many of the establishment churches of the day.

Planting Patterns

There were patterns regarding how churches were planted on the frontier. Methodists tended to form a "class" before a church. Baptists followed a similar pattern, forming what McBeth calls "fellowship groups" before forming churches. These fellowships often celebrated the ordinances and practiced church discipline.⁶⁵

The Methodists added what could be called a "traveling overseer" to their planting pattern. They were a part of the "grand plan" that Asbury envisioned: "Our grand plan, in

⁶¹ Sweet, *Religion On the American Frontier*, 48

⁶² Gregory A. Wills, *Democratic Religion: Freedom, Authority, and Church Discipline in the Baptist South, 1785-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁶³ Personal conversation, Greg Wills.

⁶⁴ Phares, *Bible in Pocket, Gun in Hand*, 94-99.

all its parts, leads to an itinerant ministry. Our bishops are traveling bishops.”⁶⁶ These itinerants oversaw many lay preachers. The itinerant work was difficult and sixty percent of these traveling bishops who died in this service before 1819 were under 40 years of age.⁶⁷

The Methodist system on the local level was made up of a "class." The Class was made up a few believers, and a class leader led them. The class tended to meet weekly in the homes of members. The "exhorter" was the next level of leadership and the "local preacher" was the final on the local level. All of these were under the direct oversight of the circuit rider and the quarterly conference.⁶⁸

The Methodists were organized in circuits. The Baptists functioned differently. After four or five churches were formed in an area, the Baptist soon formed as association.⁶⁹ New Baptist churches were often established under the auspices of a mother church. Elkhorn Church was a daughter church from South Elkhorn Church. The minutes of Elkhorn Baptist Church refer to South Elkhorn as "our Mother church." The constitution refers to "helps" from South Elkhorn and from Clear Creek Church.⁷⁰

The "democratic spirit" of Baptist polity contributed to the growth of the churches on the rugged frontier.⁷¹ Both the Methodist and Baptists were locally run. This empowered the frontiersmen and women to be involved in every segment of church life—from church

⁶⁵ McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 226.

⁶⁶ *Doctrines and Disciplines* (1798), 42.

⁶⁷ Hatch, *The Democratization of America*, 87.

⁶⁸ Sweet, *Religion On the American Frontier*, 47-48.

⁶⁹ Sweet, *Religion On the American Frontier*, 54.

⁷⁰ Sweet, *Religion On the American Frontier*, 46

discipline, to worship, to preaching, and in limited occasions, to the exercise of the ordinances.

They planted churches because it was a natural response to their understanding of the gospel. They wanted every man and women to be converted and to be a part of a local church. Their humble institution, at times small enough to fit in a home, was important enough to warrant their time and effort.

How Ministers Were Called

In both Baptist and Methodist life, ministers came from the people and, perhaps more importantly, stayed as part of the people. They preached affective vernacular sermons for little or no pay.⁷² It was easy for them to relate to the people-- they were the people.

Methodists and Baptists made it easy for God called men to pursue a call to ministry. At times, more than one member of the congregation would receive "God's call," and the other might amicably leave to start a new congregation.⁷³ This openness to the call often provided an overabundance of clergy,⁷⁴ while at the same time the mainline denominations were experiencing a clergy shortage.⁷⁵

The Methodist *Book of Discipline* in 1784 explained: "If you can do but one, let your studies alone. We would throw by all the libraries in the world rather than be guilty of

⁷¹ Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier*, 109.

⁷² Finke and Starke, *The Churching of America*, 76.

⁷³ Finke and Starke, *The Churching of America*, 79.

⁷⁴ McBeth actually reports that a shortage of clergy led to the formation of fellowship groups instead of churches. McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 226. Yet, he described the functions of these fellowship groups as inclusive of "church like" activities. McBeth may simply be missing the obvious: these were churches led by lay pastors.

the loss of one soul."⁷⁶ Education was not the key to calling, the *calling* itself was adequate. If a man was called, he was already prepared or God would have not selected him.⁷⁷ Asbury believed that Methodism was apostolic because they had experienced a tremendous outpouring on the uneducated, precisely as had the early church.⁷⁸

Education was not universally opposed, but it was not considered necessary.⁷⁹ Although Baptist and Methodist pastors may have been undereducated by mainline standards, they were not much different than the people they served.⁸⁰ They tended to "raise up" preachers from within their own ranks.⁸¹ An effective speaker was often asked to be the pastor of the congregation.⁸² This was not considered a negative thing by the churches. Instead, they often bragged about the "humbleness and ignorance" of their pastors.⁸³ Even though preaching ability was important, it was the orthodoxy of doctrine that was always most important.⁸⁴ A godly layman with good preaching ability and correct doctrine was often "called" by the church to function in local leadership.

⁷⁵ Finke and Starke, *The Churching of America*, 79.

⁷⁶ Cited in Finke and Starke, *The Churching of America*, 77.

⁷⁷ Phares, *Bible in Pocket, Gun in Hand*, 12.

⁷⁸ Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 83.

⁷⁹ Shurden, *Associationalism Among the Baptists*, 183.

⁸⁰ Finke and Starke, *The Churching of America*, 78.

⁸¹ McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 226.

⁸² Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 357.

⁸³ Phares, *Bible in Pocket, Gun in Hand*, 10.

⁸⁴ Allen, "Westward Expansion, Southern Baptist", 1491.

It would be erroneous to say that only the Baptists and Methodists valued God-called uneducated clergy. The Presbyterians experienced a split over the issue as the Cumberland Presbyterians accepted clergy without formal education if they evidenced appropriate gifts. They soon created an itinerant ministry and split from the mainline Presbyterians.⁸⁵

The calling process varied between the denominations. The specific process among Baptists was as follows.

When a ‘brother’ was impressed that God had called him to preach, he made it known to the church and if, after the church had heard the trial sermon, it approved of his ‘gifts’ a license was then given him to preach in a small territory, as for instance within the bounds of a single church. After further trial, if his ‘gifts’ proved real, and he gave further evidence of usefulness as a preacher he was then permitted to preach within the bounds of the association. If, on the other hand, his ‘gifts’ as a preacher did not seem to improve he was advised to make no further attempts to preach.”⁸⁶

Sweet sees more of a dichotomy:

There were two types of Baptist preachers on the frontier, the ‘licensed’ and the ‘ordained.’ Licensing a preacher was the first step in the making of a Baptist preacher after he had been permitted to ‘exercise his gifts’ by vote of the church. These licensed ministers frequently served in much the same way that the ‘local’ or ‘lay’ preachers among the Methodists served. That is they preached more or less at large. Frequently a congregation had several of these licensed preachers in its membership and many a Baptist church on the frontier was first gathered and finally organized by these licensed preachers. Frequently ‘licensed’ preachers were called to take regular charge of congregations, when they were generally ordained.... A licensed preacher could only preach, while an ordained preacher might also administer the sacraments.⁸⁷

Francis Wayland would echo this process decades later in his advice to those scattered on the frontier. He exhorted them to:

⁸⁵ Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier*, 128.

⁸⁶ Sweet, *Religion On the American Frontier*, 39

⁸⁷ Sweet, *Religion On the American Frontier*, footnote on page 40.

You need someone who shall, in a greater or less degree, take oversight of you. Where shall you look for such gifts? I would say, without reserve, look at home, and not abroad. Who has received for you ministerial gifts?⁸⁸

For frontier Baptists, ordination was generally a local church function. It eventually evolved to involve seeking the general approval of the churches in the association.⁸⁹ However, Methodists were different. Ordination was technically an ecclesiastical function among the Methodist hierarchy. However, the church still raised up local lay preachers who were then often appointed by the bishop.

The Opposition of the Mainlines

Baptists were widely despised. Throughout the 1770s, respectable community leaders led mobs against Baptist meetings.⁹⁰ However, the Baptists on the frontier were held in particular contempt. Beecher, a leading Congregational minister, condemned the preaching of "ignorant and unlettered" men emphasizing "Illiterate men have never been the chosen instruments of God."⁹¹ Methodists were held in similar disrepute.

Samuel Mills, of Haystack Prayer Meeting fame, toured the West with J.F. Schlermerhorn to gather information on the status of the church and its needs. He spoke of the Methodist circuit rider system with some admiration. However, he described the frontier Baptist preacher as inadequately educated and given to "excite the passions... rather than to

⁸⁸ Wayland, *Notes on the Principles and Practices of Baptist Churches*, 230.

⁸⁹ Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 358.

⁹⁰ William H. Brackney, ed., *Baptist Life and Thought, 1600-1980: a Source Book* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, in cooperation with the American Baptist Historical Society, 1983), 109.

⁹¹ Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 18.

inform the mind, (and) convince the understanding.”⁹² Schlermerhorn and Mills recommended that the Presbyterians move to settlements while they were new, so as to establish a church at its start as the Methodists and Baptists did. Unfortunately, they misunderstood that it is often the unlearned man who is willing to go to the frontier.

The opposition of the mainline denominations was more than just attitudinal. It was also evident in the appointment of missionaries to the frontier.⁹³ Goodkoontz explains it well:

“The American Home Missionary Society discouraged its missionaries from engaging in secular pursuits. They were expected to keep themselves ‘unspotted from the world’ and to spend their time in ministerial duties. One of the most common of the current adverse criticisms of the local Western preachers, especially the Baptists, was that so many of them spent their time during the week in farming or other worldly vocations. It was felt in the East that his lowered the dignity of the minister and seriously interfered with his efficiency.”⁹⁴

The American Home Missionary Society would send out its own missionary church planters to the frontier. They were sent without any specific location in mind and with a pledge of full support, generally for one year. This could be extended to a second year.⁹⁵

The American Home Mission Society often solicited funds for mission work in frontier areas indicating a lack (or even complete absence) of churches even while knowing

⁹² J.F. Schermerhorn and Samuel Mills, *A Correct View of That Part of the United States Which Lies West of the Allegany Mountains With Regard to Religion and Morals* (Hartford: Peter B. Gleason and Co., Printers, 1814), 37, cited in Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier*, 140.

⁹³ Charles Chaney first told me of this.

⁹⁴ Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier*, 185

⁹⁵ Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier*, 183.

of the presence of Baptist and Methodists.⁹⁶ Even with the support of mainline denominations, the AHMS made little headway against the Baptist and Methodists.

The Methodists and Baptists were competitive at times,⁹⁷ however, they were in agreement concerning their opposition to the American Home Mission Society. In 1830 the Apple Creek Baptist Association in Illinois disfellowshipped any society sending missionaries into their territory.⁹⁸ The Baptists and Methodists did not wish to have “fancy Easterners” in their territory.

The Missionary Society of Connecticut was formed in 1798 to “Christianize the Heathen in North America, and to support and promote Christian Knowledge in the new settlements, within the United States.” By 1801, fifteen missionaries were in the employ of the society. The Massachusetts Missionary Society, founded in 1799, had a similar mission. It sent Adoniram Judson as a missionary to the “interior parts of Vermont.” Other agencies followed—each sent out a handful of missionaries to the West with generally little response.

The Baptists and Methodists were different. These frontier pastors did not generally go *as* missionaries. They went in search of economic opportunity that the West provided.⁹⁹ As they *went*, they were, or became, the missionaries. Their success “won” the West for the Baptist and Methodists.

Established eastern Baptists were at times similar to their establishment counterparts among the Congregationalists, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians. At times they

⁹⁶ Finke and Starke, *The Churching of America*, 65.

⁹⁷ Methodist Circuit rider Peter Cartwright actually *physically* wrestled with Baptists from time to time.

⁹⁸ Marty, *Pilgrims in Their Own Land*, 173.

displayed concern for their brethren on the Frontier. However, they more frequently were seeking establishment credibility they had lacked.¹⁰⁰ The messages were mixed.

The Philadelphia Baptist Association, the Maine Missionary Baptist Association, and the Baptists in New York, were engaged in missionary work during these years. However, their work was devoted to Western New York, Western Pennsylvania, and Ohio. There was brief activity in North America from some of the newly formed mission sending agencies. However, in 1820 the Triennial Convention closed its Western Mission.¹⁰¹

The establishment often sought to “fix” the problems they saw in the frontier Baptist church. One tour among Baptist churches convinced Luther Rice of the need for theological education among Baptist clergy. In 1817 the Triennial convention authorized such a venture, though it did not provide the funds for such.¹⁰² The Baptists appointed missionaries such as John Mason Peck to respond to the need on the frontier. Peck, like his mainline brethren, had little regard for the farmer-preacher. “Peck reported that he found many of the farmer-preachers unfit, not always sober, and not always better when they were sober.”¹⁰³

McBeth reports with that Peck led a mission tour in 1831 to find:

“(Many) frontier families had no Bibles...; overworked pastors trying to stretch their time to serve four to six churches at once, many churches without buildings, and others with inadequate buildings... (M)ost pastors in the West were bivocational, devoting

⁹⁹ Allen, “Westward Expansion, Southern Baptist”, 1490.

¹⁰⁰ Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 94.

¹⁰¹ McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 354.

¹⁰² McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 355.

¹⁰³ McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 367.

only a fraction of their time to ministry and often dividing that among several churches."¹⁰⁴

Yet, under just these conditions, (and perhaps *because of* these conditions) the church flourished.

Methodists did not have similar resistance from their Eastern brethren, and they generally did not form mission societies. This perhaps can be explained by their organizational structure. The itinerant preaching system established each Conference as its own home mission society.¹⁰⁵

Another factor was that Methodists were not as strong in the established areas. Methodists had been established in America at an earlier time, but they did not make great advances until they were established on the frontier. The early Methodists tended to be British loyalists during the revolutionary war, causing many “Americans” to view them negatively.¹⁰⁶ As they began to flourish on the rugged frontier, the loyalist past was forgotten. Methodism was soon part of the religious landscape that was the American West.

Nevertheless, the establishment was alarmed, and in, 1832 the American Baptist Home Missions Society was formed to promote missions to North America.¹⁰⁷ Not all welcomed this formation.¹⁰⁸ Many in the West opposed paid clergy and viewed these paid

¹⁰⁴ McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 368.

¹⁰⁵ Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier*, 157.

¹⁰⁶ Marty, *Pilgrims in Their Own Land*, 170.

¹⁰⁷ McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 368.

¹⁰⁸ McBeth oddly lumps the anti-missional Baptists with those opposed on regional or educational grounds. This is a strange choice since his own quotes seem to support differing justifications for opposing home mission agencies - not just that they opposed missions per se. He explains that what "began as objections to mission methods soon expanded to include other issues, such as the nature of biblical authority, distrust of denominational leaders and programs, and a suspicion of any new ideas or methods" McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 377. However,

missionaries as a threat.¹⁰⁹ This "anti-missions" movement was partly a response to such paid clergy but other issues were involved as well.

Baptists had a "deep-seated prejudice against educated and salaried preachers."¹¹⁰ John Taylor is a good representation of such. Taylor called Luther Rice "a Tetzal... and his motive about the same."¹¹¹ He resented the ridicule that John Mason Peck heaped upon the uneducated preacher.¹¹²

Methodist laypersons may have had similar feelings (we have no extant records of such). However, as might be expected in a denomination that had educated clergy as bishops, these thoughts were left unpublished. However, all professions of the day were under assault (law, medicine, etc.) as unnecessary systems of merit.¹¹³ Thus, it is natural to assume that Methodist laypersons shared the view of the day.

Some saw the ABHMS (and other such ventures) as an attempt to assert the authority of the Eastern Baptist establishment on the Western Frontier. McBeth cites the word of John Taylor that he "did begin strongly to smell the New England Rat" in these new efforts.¹¹⁴ Frontier churches cherished their newly won freedom and would not allow the "coldness" or eastern preaching and polity to impact negatively their churches.¹¹⁵

though the rise of Campbell may have been aided by the backlash of societal missions, it did not cause it. It is more accurate to say that Baptist farmer-preachers shared similar suspicions of Campbellites and other anti-missional movements.

¹⁰⁹ McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 370

¹¹⁰ Sweet, *Religion On the American Frontier*, 36.

¹¹¹ McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 374.

¹¹² Alexander Campbell was also an opponent of such mission societies and paid clergy. His influence was widespread though he would eventually leave the Baptist denomination to form the Churches of Christ.

¹¹³ Hatch gives a helpful explanation of the reaction to "professionalism" (Hatch, 27-30).

Negative views toward remuneration were not new in Baptist life. Roger Williams spoke against paid ministry in *Hireling Ministry None of Christ's*. These opinions may have been influenced by resentment toward the state church taxation.¹¹⁶ However, it was the emphasis on unpaid clergy that was its greatest boast, but eventually its great detraction. Over time, the anti-remuneration mentality led to several consequences including a negative view toward organized missions, an anti-intellectual spirit, and a poorly developed theology.

Conclusion

The Baptists and Methodists were able to plant churches on the frontier without remunerated clergy and institutions of higher learning. Their success was unparalleled. There were external factors at work: the Second Great Awakening, the westward migration, and the failure of the establishment to respond to the mission need. However, while the Baptists and Methodists exploded in growth, the mainlines declined.¹¹⁷ New movements adapted and thrived and forced each other to adapt further.¹¹⁸ The reasons are worth exploring and, perhaps, applying to modern lay church planting needs.

¹¹⁴ McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 376.

¹¹⁵ Phares, *Bible in Pocket, Gun in Hand*, 10.

¹¹⁶ Victor I. Masters, *Baptist Missions in the South* (Atlanta, GA: Publicity Department of the Home Mission Board, 1914), 32.

¹¹⁷ Finke and Starke primarily focus on the denominational shift, considering it a change in the religious “economy.” They overemphasize the aspect of competition and miss the focus of mission.

¹¹⁸ Martin E. Marty, *Pilgrims in Their Own Land*, 169.

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