

# EXPONENTIAL

## Spiritual Awakenings

Stewart Holloway  
First Baptist Church Pineville, LA

### Session 7: The Second Great Awakening #2

#### The Need for Revival in the Frontier

- Enormous migration of population occurred from the eastern states into the great valleys to the west.
- Noticeable Problems of the Frontier:
  - Lack of Religion
  - Demoralization
  - Drunkenness
  - Incapability of the churches
  - Ministerial Misconduct

#### Origins of the Revival

- Frontier setting
- Larger religious context
- Wave of revivalism among Scots-Irish Presbyterians in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- Social and economic setting of KY.
- Hand of God

#### Rise and Spread of the Revival

- *James McGready*
  - Born ca. 1758-1763.
  - Thought himself to be sanctified from birth.
  - Question of Salvation and Conversion
    - McGready happened to overhear a conversation between his friends.
    - In 1786 he was finally converted.
  - McGready soon graduated and was licensed to preach. That fall, on his way back to NC, he stopped at Hampden-Sydney College. This visit, along with his conversion, ignited the revival fire and evangelistic zeal in his heart.
  - Upon returning to NC, he found religion at a low ebb. Spiritual apathy and formalism had crept over the majority of churches. In his own congregations, he began to preach against formalism, hypocrisy, and the sin of self-righteousness and emphasized the necessity of a new birth.
  - By the beginning of 1791 the McGready-led revival was spreading.

#### The Beginning of the Camp Meeting Revivals

- In August 1796, McGready became the pastor of three small congregations in Logan County, KY.
- The reprobate spiritual condition of the region could not stop the preacher. He continued to preach, emphasizing a personal salvation. He drew up a covenant that bound all who signed it to prayer.
- As a result of McGready's preaching and local concert of prayer, a sign of revival occurred in the Gasper River church and then at the others between 1797 and 1799.
- In June 1800, the first extraordinary manifestations of divine power began to appear when the members of McGready's church gathered for a joint communion service at Red River church. Due to the previous revivals

and on-going prayers, there was a great sense of expectancy among the people. After three normal days, a “great day of feast” occurred.

- Due to the success, a similar meeting was scheduled the following month at the Gasper church. People came from great distances, as far away as 100 miles prepared for camping for the weekend. Because of the large number of participants, the service was conducted in the open air. Woodsmen set about clearing away underbrush and building a preaching stand outside the tiny church. Simple log seats were arranged for the audience. People brought their own food and slept in wagons or on the ground. Thus began a first true camp meeting.
- From this point, the camp meetings spread across the land of KY, TN, and NC. In 1811, there were an estimated 500 camp meetings held annually throughout the country and in 1820 nearly 1000 were held. Camp meeting revivalism was on its way to becoming one of 19<sup>th</sup> century America’s most important and vital forms of public worship.

### **The Cane Ridge Revival**

- The most spectacular and largest of the revival meetings of the 1800 revival.
- The revival began when Presbyterian pastor Barton Stone, an early product of McGready’s ministry in NC, told his congregations about the revival of Logan County. Stone determined to hold a similar meeting in August of 1801 and announced it a month prior. When the meeting began, people of all denominations from all of KY, OH, and TN came. The roads were crowded with wagons, carriages, horsemen, and footmen. Military men on the ground judged that there were between 20-30,000 people
- This meeting ran from Friday to Wednesday evening, night and day without intermission, either in public or private exercises of devotion. As many as five preachers addresses simultaneously in different parts of the encampment without interrupting each other’s exhortation. Multitudes were converted or revived.
- Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian preachers all preached – united in the same song, the same prayer, and even preached the same things. During an era rank with contention and competition between churches, what was witnessed at Cane Ridge impressed many participants and observers.
- Manifestation of Physical Exercises: falling down, rolling on the ground, jerking motions, barking, dancing, and laughing and singing uncontrollably.
- These manifestations brought up strong criticism from church leaders who opposed revivalism as “disorderly, hysterical, and even immoral.”
- However, these unusual phenomena in themselves by no means disqualify the Cane Ridge camp meeting as a genuine, God-sent revival.