

The Journey

*A Brief History of
The South Elkhorn Christian Church*

Richard Pope

Preface

It would be impossible to name and to thank everyone who has contributed in some way to the writing of this little book, but I must express my gratitude to Anne McGregor and Eula Spears, who headed the bicentennial committee which made possible this publication. Their patience, suggestions and encouragement helped bring it to the light of day. Special thanks should go to Eula who gave oversight to its publication. Mary Florence Jones' illustrations have enhanced its value, and it should not be forgotten that she was one of those who typed the minutes of the church, making them more accessible to those interested in its history. Franklin McGuire, who was the pastor of the church when much of this was being researched and written, contributed an enthusiasm for the subject, and some of his own reasearch. The librarians at the Lexington Theological Seminary and the University of Kentucky were unfailingly competent and helpful. In many ways, the people of the South Elkhorn Christian Church, by their interest in this project and their love for this old church, have provided much of the motivation for the writing of this history. Finally, the support of my wife, Kay, in this endeavor, and through the years, has meant more to me than words can express.

Richard Pope

Lexington, Ky.

Jan. 1, 1983

Lead on, O fiery pillar,
We follow yet with fears,
But we shall come rejoicing
Though joy be born of tears;
We are not lost, though wandering,
For by your light we come,
And we are still God's people,
The journey is our home.*

*From a hymn written by Ruth Duck, to be sung to the tune of "Lead On, O King Eternal" and quoted by Jean Caffey Lyles in an article "New Language For Liturgy" in the *Christian Century* (Dec. 30, 1981) p. 1359.

I

*SOUTH ELKHORN:
A PIONEER CHURCH
ON NEW FRONTIERS*



THE CHURCH BY THE SIDE of the road. Driving south from Lexington, Kentucky, on Highway 68 where it curves down and across a small valley, one might notice, off to the right, a cluster of buildings and a plain white church set back among some trees. This tiny village with its church takes its name from the quiet flowing waters of South Elkhorn Creek. In the background are beautiful antebellum homes, the white board fences and the green meadows of some world famous horse farms.

One might also see that the countryside around South Elkhorn is increasingly being converted into housing subdivisions with rows of new homes, neatly manicured lawns and curving drives.

Yet the hamlet still has something of the "feel" of rural America and a sense of history. A historical marker in front of the church identifies it as the South Elkhorn Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). It is also identified as "the traveling church," a Baptist congregation which moved in a body in 1781 from Spottsylvania County, Virginia, to "the dark and bloody ground," the wilderness of "Kentucke". By 1783 most of the members of this congregation had settled in this area and so, in this place, where a buffalo trail crossed the creek, they built their church. This founding date of 1783 makes it one of the oldest congregations in Kentucky and the first to be founded north of the Kentucky River. As a pioneer Baptist church, it helped to establish several other Baptist congregations and has been called "the mother church of Kentucky Baptists."

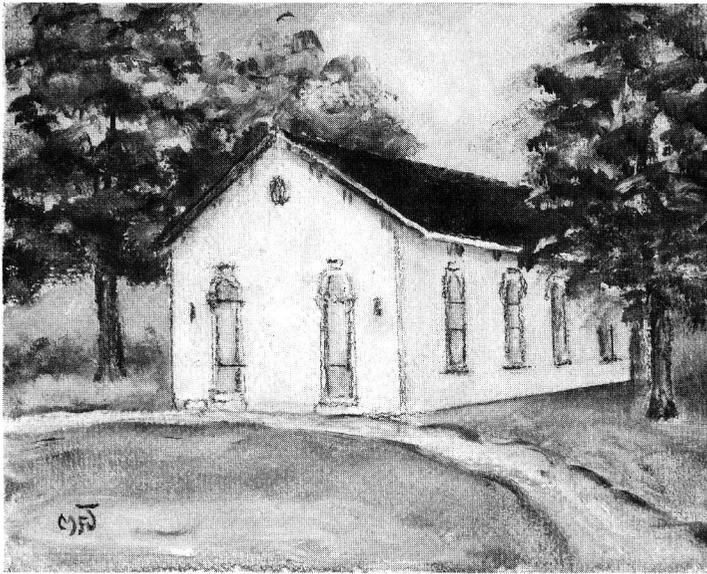
In the early 1830's it underwent a doctrinal controversy which resulted in a division in which a majority voted for it to become a part of a new religious movement known as the "Christian church," or "Disciples of Christ." The minority, who wished to remain loyal to Baptist Principles, withdrew to eventually form a new congregation which has continued as the South Elkhorn Baptist Church a few miles down the creek on what is now the Versailles Road.

The church's minute book, which records from the early 19th century the business transacted at the monthly business meetings, provides some fascinating glimpses into the theological, moral and social issues of the day and how one church tried to deal with them.

The story of this congregation, with its founding in colonial Virginia, its trek across the mountains, its settlement in the lush bluegrass region of Kentucky, its early years as a pioneer religious community which then became for more than a century a rather typical country church,

and which now finds itself a suburban church in a fast-growing urban area, is a story which mirrors something of the deep changes that mark the course of American culture for the past 200 years.

It has, then, a rich and significant history which deserves to be told, and not forgotten.



South Elkhorn Christian Church

by Mary Florence Jones

II

THE SEPARATE BAPTIST

THE STORY BEGINS with the founding of a Baptist congregation in the British colony of Virginia. The place is Spottsylvania County, near Fredericksburg. The time is November 20, 1767.

The founders were itinerate separate Baptist preachers who had conducted revival meetings in houses, tobacco barns, or wherever they could get the people together for services. With their new converts they had formed the Upper Spottsylvania Baptist Church. The leader in this endeavor was Lewis Craig, who had been converted the previous year.

Craig (c.1740-1825) had been born into a family of 11 children—seven sons and four daughters—all of whom became Baptists. Three of the sons, Lewis, Elijah, and Joseph,

became preachers and one of the daughters married Richard Cave who became one of the pioneer preachers in Kentucky. As a young man Lewis married Betsy Landers and they had several children. He died in Mason County, Kentucky, in 1825, being 85 years of age.

But to Craig the most important date in his life was undoubtedly that time in 1765 when he had been "born again" as a Christian. In early life he had lived, as he put it, "in all kinds of vanity, folly and vice." After hearing a strong Baptist sermon he felt convicted of his sins and spent several weeks agonizing over his guilt until finally he experienced a tremendous release from his burden of sin and a sense of new life through Christ. Always afterward, the grace of God, this "amazing grace", was the major theme in his preaching.

Craig began to preach almost immediately, even before his baptism, and became known as a powerful witness to his new found faith. Ordained in 1770, he became the regular pastor of the Upper Spottsylvania Baptist Church and under his effective preaching it grew rapidly. It is a tribute to his leadership that it was later to be known as "Craig's church."

Craig and his colleagues in the founding of the Upper Spottsylvania Baptist Church were part of a movement known as the Separate Baptists. They had grown out of the "Great Awakening", a revival movement that swept through the American colonies from about 1730 to the revolution. It owed much to the fiery preaching of a British Methodist evangelist, George Whitefield, and it was defended and promoted by Jonathon Edwards, one of the greatest of American theologians.

This revival movement brought new life and growth to the churches, but it also spawned division. The Separate Baptists for example, separated themselves from the state church in New England, the Congregational Church, and migrated southward into North Carolina from which they

spread into Virginia and other southern colonies.

Wherever they went, these Separate Baptists were aggressively evangelistic. In their preaching they called for sinners to have a personal experience of salvation through Jesus Christ. This "born again" experience was normally instantaneous, dateable; an individual's life was turned around in a moment of time. The conversion experience usually followed a period of soul searching penitence. Believing, as Jonathon Edwards had argued, that human beings are moved more by the heart than the head, their preaching, singing, and praying was frankly and deliberately emotional. Their preachers developed a style of preaching that was marked by wide ranges of vocal tone and what has been called a "holy whine" and frequently evoked in their congregations the sounds of weeping, screeching, cries for mercy and shouts of joy. Of one of them it was said that he could be heard for a mile—through the woods.

In all their efforts there was great sincerity. For them the stakes were high; they were nothing less than the eternal destiny of each individual soul. So they did not hesitate to preach of the fear of God and terrors of Hell, or the love of God and the joy of His salvation. Like most evangelicals, the Separate Baptists believed that all those who do not have Jesus Christ as their personal saviour are doomed through all eternity and it was this conviction which drove them and fed their evangelistic zeal. They had a tremendous experience of redemption to share, and they shared it.

This zeal and emotionalism was offensive to many of their religious neighbors, including the Regular Baptists whose approach was more formal and doctrinal. The latter adhered to the Philadelphia Confession of Faith (1742) which was Calvinistic in theology. They disapproved of so much emotionalism in religious services. They decried the doctrinal looseness that characterized the Separatist movement, and they disliked their practice of permitting women and illiterate

men to preach and exhort in their services.

After some time of conflict, however, the Separate and Regular Baptists began to grow together; from this union emerged the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention. It is said that much of the dynamic of this body, the largest Protestant communion in America, derives from its Separate Baptist heritage.

Baptists and the Struggle for Religious Freedom.

The zeal and preaching of Elijah Craig and his Separate Baptists also created problems for them in the colony of Virginia. It brought them into conflict with a hostile public and then with the colonial government.

As in the mother country of England, the official, established church in Virginia was the Church of England (now known as the Episcopal or Anglican church). It was supported by public tax money. In the early years of the Virginia colony this meant that by law only ministers of the state church could preach or teach religion, or conduct weddings or funerals. Parents who refused to bring their children to the parish priest to be christened were subject to fines of up to 2,000 pounds of tobacco. For a time attendance at the worship of the state church was required by law, though it must be admitted that this law was not usually enforced. In England, in 1689, after more than a century of bitter conflict, the Act of Toleration was passed which granted toleration to non-conformists. In the colony of Virginia this meant that dissenting (non-Anglican) ministers were given permission to form congregations and to serve them if they would first secure licenses to do so from the state. This was an improvement, but even so these licenses were not always easy to secure, as they required the approval of the local Anglican priest who could in some cases be very uncooperative.

In spite of these difficulties, the number of non-conforming ministers and congregations steadily increased, especially Presbyterians, Quakers, Methodists and Baptists. Of these the Separate Baptists were by far the most aggressive in the defense of religious freedom. They generally refused to obtain licenses to preach, believing that they needed only the authority of God. They resented being "tolerated", and argued that it's the right of every human being to worship God in his own way, and that the state should show no partiality towards one form of religion rather than another. Like the earlier Roger Williams in the colony of Rhode Island, they held that the state should only be concerned with the maintenance of public order and justice, and not meddle in the internal affairs of the churches.

In the battle for political freedom, which occupied the people of Virginia during the revolutionary era, it was only natural that there should be a rising concern for religious freedom as well. And in this struggle the Separate Baptists found themselves allied with such powerful liberal political leaders as Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and Patrick Henry. These men were Anglican laymen, yet they fought valiantly for every person's right to religious as well as political freedom, and for the separation of their own church from its entanglement with the state. Thus, we see an improbable alliance between liberal, aristocratic Anglicans, and conservative Baptist farmer preachers in the common cause of religious liberty.

In this common cause, Baptist preachers often faced verbal abuse and the risk of death or maiming from hostile mobs, as well as fines and imprisonment from the colonial government because of their refusal to obey laws they believed to be wicked and unjust.

It is against the background of this struggle for religious freedom that we should see the early years of the Upper Spottsylvania Baptist Church and its pastor Lewis Craig.

Soon after his conversion in 1766, when he was about 27 years of age, Craig began to preach—without a license from the state. For this he was brought before the Spottsylvania County court and charged with unlawful preaching. His courage and shrewd defense made a good impression on the grand jury. One of them was a rather wild young man named John Waller who was known as “swearing Jack” because of his profane language. He had heretofore been contemptuous of the Baptists, as ignorant fanatics, but now he saw them in a new light. He began to attend their meetings with the result that after several weeks of remorse for his sins he was converted. Like his friend, Lewis Craig, he too began to preach and to do so effectively.

On June 4, 1768, Waller, Craig and three other preachers were arrested at the Upper Spottsylvania meeting house and charged with being disturbers of the peace. In court the prosecuting attorney claimed that they “could not meet a man coming down the road but they must ram a text of Scripture down his throat.” On their way to jail they sang hymns as they walked through the streets of Fredericksburg. They were told that they might be released if they would promise not to preach again in the county for a year and a day. Two of the preachers who didn’t live in the county, agreed to these terms, but Waller, Craig, and a man named James Chiles refused, and served 43 days in jail, during which time they often preached from behind bars to people who gathered to hear them.

Other arrests and imprisonments followed all over Virginia as the Baptist preachers continued to attack the state church and to argue for religious freedom for everyone.¹ Public opinion continued to swing towards the Baptists as

¹On one occasion Waller was dragged from a platform and flogged with a horse-whip. After the whipping he climbed back on the stand, and, bloody and bruised, continued to preach. See William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist foundations in the south*: Nashville, Broadman Press, 1961, p. 98.

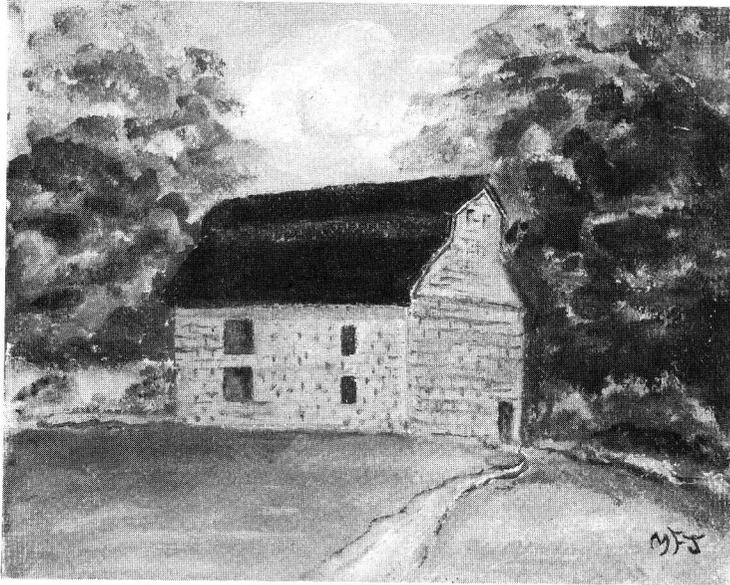
their churches grew steadily. The state was winning battles but losing the war.

In Spottsylvania County Craig’s church was growing. In 1769 Waller became the pastor of the newly formed Lower Spottsylvania Baptist Church—which subsequently became known as the Waller Baptist Church. In the same year the Blue Run church was formed with Lewis Craig’s brother, Elijah, as minister.

With liberal Anglicans and Protestant dissenters—especially the Baptists—working together, the struggle for religious freedom began to score some victories. In 1776 the Virginia Convention approved a Constitution which set forth the right of all men to religious freedom. It was largely the work of George Mason, who lived much of his life in Fredericksburg. In 1779 the Anglican church was disestablished. All religious bodies were to be on an equal footing before the law. Finally, in 1785, after a long struggle, Thomas Jefferson’s “Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom” was passed. Virginia then led the way in incorporating into the Federal Constitution the First Amendment with its familiar — “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

The cause of religious freedom thus triumphed, first in Virginia, then in the nation.² In this momentous development the Baptists of Virginia played a major role; also in this victory the Upper Spottsylvania Church and its minister made a modest but significant contribution. The love of political and religious freedom is a part of South Elkhorn’s heritage.

²Earlier the colonies of Rhode Island, Maryland, and Pennsylvania had made progress in the rise of religious freedom, and in Rhode Island Baptists had played a leading role in this movement. For a brief account of this development see Everts B. Greene, *Religion and the state: The Making And Testing Of An American Tradition*. N. Y. Scribners, 1941.



Higbee Mill

by Mary Florence Jones

III

WESTWARD HO!

TOWARDS THE END OF the American Revolution there was among the people of Virginia a surge of new interest in the land beyond the mountains known as "Kentucky." Daniel Boone and others among the early fur traders and explorers of that region came back to the border settlements with glowing accounts of this beautiful land with its rich soil, abundant game, flowing springs, park-like meadows, and magnificent hardwood forests.

The people of Craig's church, and Craig himself, became increasingly fascinated by the prospect of moving west to settle in this new Canaan. Many of their kinfolk in that area were likewise very much interested in this possible move. It undoubtedly became a main topic of conversation as they

met in one another's homes or in churchyard or store.

Here we may pause to wonder: Why this interest in such a difficult and dangerous enterprise? Why would a settled people consider giving up their relative security for a precarious existence in a howling wilderness where they would live in constant dread of Indian attack?

The answers to these questions are not simple. Human motivation is notoriously complex. But some possible answers may be hazarded. The opportunity to obtain large tracts of good land at little or no financial cost was very appealing to farmers whose soil was growing thin from repeated plantings of corn and tobacco. Further, to people of English descent the ownership of land was a sign of success, and here was an opportunity for a poor man to acquire land quickly. For Baptists the desire for complete religious freedom and relief from the vestiges of the state church was an obvious motive. Finally, a spirit of adventure and the sense of being a part of a great enterprise in which they were being led by a divine providence was very much in their thought. They often likened themselves to the children of Israel bound for the promised land.

A principle figure in all the talk about moving west was Lewis Craig. A man of medium build he had expressive eyes and a powerful, persuasive voice; he was about 40 years of age. One source says that he had made two trips to Kentucky, once in 1778 and again in 1779, to "spy out the land."³ Be that as it may, Craig and members of his family and others of the Waller and Ellis families decided to make the venture and they were soon followed in this decision by nearly the entire membership of Craig's church. The congregation in effect was moving as a body to the promised land, taking with them their pulpit Bible, communion service and record books. In addition, many others in the area decided to join

³Lumpkin, *Op. cit.*, p. 126.

them in this perilous journey. Several Separate Baptist preachers, including three of Lewis' brothers and a slave preacher called "Uncle Peter" belonging to him, were in the group going west. Eventually, the 200 people of Craig's church were joined by about 400 others from the Spottsylvania area, making a total of about 600 people who would be making this journey. In the light of the dangers they faced, there would be safety in numbers.

So a date was set on which to begin this difficult and dangerous enterprise: at this appointed time—a Sunday in September of 1781—all the people going to Kentucky, along with many of their relatives and neighbors, gathered in the woods and fields around Craig's church for a final day of worship and fellowship.

In the religious service Lewis Craig presided and preached the sermon. We do not have a copy of his sermon, but we can compare their situation to that of Abraham who in response to the call of God left the security of his homeland for a journey to an unknown land.

Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing' . . . So Abram went, as the Lord had told him . . . (Genesis 12:1-4).

He might well have used this text:

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go. (Hebrews 11:8).

Surely Craig would have spoken of how the children of Israel left the flesh-pots of Egypt and went through the ordeal of the wilderness in order that they might enter the promised land flowing with milk and honey. Like the pil-

grims who left their homes in England in order to found Plymouth colony in the wilderness they saw their lives as led by the providence of God. Their destiny was in his hands.

After the sermon, the spirited singing of hymns, and the fervent prayers of the morning worship, there was a big dinner on the grounds. As the afternoon wore on there was much visiting, reminiscing, a great deal of laughter with a great many tears. For many of those present, this would be their last time together. After darkness had descended, conversation continued about campfires; but at last the fires died down and the camp became silent.

Early the next morning, in the gray light of dawn, the camp began to stir. Fires were lighted against the morning chill. A bugle sounded reveille. A hurried breakfast was eaten and some last minute packing was done.

Then, under direction of their military leader, Captain William Ellis (son of a Separate Baptist minister and veteran of military service against both the British and the Indians) the long line of people, horses, wagons, carts, and livestock began to form.

Finally, the column formed, the signal was given and the whole procession began to move. It was an exciting moment. Dogs barked, cows bawled, babies cried and farewells were shouted to those who had gathered to see them off. They were under way! Ahead of them lay nearly 600 miles of wilderness.⁴

The route they traveled led them westward and southward through rolling farm land and past the settlements of

⁴In his novel *Oliver Wiswell*, Kenneth Roberts describes the scene in this way:

"A straggling long line of men, women, and children were plodding to the westward. A few men were on horseback, and their horses were hitched to loaded carts or to long poles to which bundles were tied. Other men drew light carts, and alongside the carts walked women leading cows and pigs. The children, too, carried bundles or led animals—hound dogs, pigs, sheep, goats."

See Kenneth Roberts, *Oliver Wiswell*. Garden City, Doubleday and Co., 1940, p. 584ff.

Orange Court House, Gordonsville and Charlottesville. The James River was forded at what is now Lynchburg. Here they got their first glimpse of the Blue Ridge. These first few days were tiring but pleasant. The woods and fields and distant mountains were beginning to flame with color. Virginia can be very beautiful in late September, with warm sunny days and cool nights. Their journey so far had been through settled country and over relatively good roads. At night, though tired and dusty, they gathered around campfires to sing and listen to banjo music.

At Bedford's Gap they laboriously made their way across the Blue Ridge. Here they entered into a very different country. It was the American wilderness—vast, ominous, and full of a thousand dangers. To some individuals, like Daniel Boone, its wilderness was like a tonic. To others, such as the poet and painters of the later romantic movement, it was suffused with mystic beauty; but to most of the pioneers who had to pit their strength and cunning against its impersonal and awesome powers, the wilderness was cruel and forbidding. Unlike the Indians who lived in harmony with nature, the pioneers saw it as something to be subdued, overcome, tamed.

Thus the people of the traveling church looked upon this new country with mingled fear and dread. Here and there they were greeted by the sight of an empty cabin, a blackened chimney or a lonely grave to remind them of the danger of Indian attack. The great forest through which they now made their way seemed forboding in its stillness.

Fording the Roanoke and New Rivers, they made their way through some rough country to the safety of Fort Chiswell (near present day Wytheville). Here they had to sell, trade, or otherwise dispose of their wagons, as the road they traveled would turn into a trail that was narrow and rough. Moreover, as everything had to be carried either by horses or humans, a lot of unessential things such as fancy

clothes or furniture had to be abandoned. Here their supplies of salt, flour, meal, and bacon were replenished. Horses were equipped with pack saddles and baskets in which were placed blankets, bandages, medicines, clothes, skillets, spinning wheel parts, and such things; as well as infants and small children. Now nearly everyone walked and carried what they could. The men and older boys, equipped with flint-lock rifles, powder horns, wadding and bullets, as well as hatchets and hunting knives, served as protective screen around the travelers. They also hunted for game from time to time. Now rude shelters of limbs and branches would have to be built at the end of each day.

At Fort Chiswell they heard more reports of Indian depredations. Nevertheless, they decided to push on to Black's Fort (Abingdon) in the Wolf hills. They had now been traveling about three weeks and it was late September. They were anxious to get to Kentucky before the winter storms struck. But, arriving at Black's Fort, they were told that Indian war parties were in the mountains, and they were urged to spend the winter there. Disappointed, they set to work building some crude huts. In the settlement they found another group of Virginia Baptists that were also waiting for a favorable time to cross the mountains. Craig took them under his wing, preached to them, converted and baptized some, and formed them into a church.

At Black's Fort they also heard the news of surrender of Cornwallis' British army of Yorktown, and joined in the celebration. America was now a free republic! They perhaps dimly sensed that they were a part of a new kind of nation, "conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Having been jailed twice for his courageous stand for the rights of conscience, and having played a small, but not insignificant part in the movement for religious as well as political freedom, Craig must have

been especially heartened by the news from Yorktown.

Reluctantly, the travelers spent the month of October at Black's Fort. They busied themselves with repairing their clothes and equipment, laying in a supply of food such as "jerked" venison, and resting their horses. It had been a beautiful month, with the mountains aglow with autumn color.

But in early November the weather turned cold and wet. It was a bad time to travel, but with this onset of winter it was reported that Indian activity had lessened. It was decided that they should press on.

They now faced the most difficult part of their journey. They were about 250 miles from their destination, and their way led through a rugged wilderness in which lurked hostile Indians. But again on the appointed day, the line of people, horses, and carts were formed, the horn sounded, and the long procession began to move slowly down an old buffalo trail in the Holston valley.

They soon came to Moccasin Gap where they turned off on Boone's Trace, or the Wilderness Road, which they would follow to Kentucky. This trail had been hacked out of the forest about six years earlier, in 1775, by Daniel Boone and a party of eight men in the pay of a land speculator and empire builder named Richard Henderson. Near the end of their work they had been attacked by a band of Shawnees who killed two of the men including a black man named Negro Sam. Though the road was crude and primitive it served for many years as a path of empire over which hundreds of pioneers made their way from the settled east to frontier Kentucky.⁵

⁵The classic account of this venture is that of George W. Ranck, *The Traveling Church*, which has recently been republished in *The Register* of the Kentucky Historical Society, vol. 79, no. 3 (Summer 1981), pp. 240-265. In this section I have leaned heavily on this source.

The story of the traveling church may also be found in Thomas D. Clark's *Kentucky: Land of Contrasts*. N. Y., Harper and Row, 1968, pp. 40-54.

Throughout their journey it was the custom of the traveling church to keep Sunday as a day of worship, and of rest for man and beast. But now there was a new seriousness as they gathered to give thanks to God and to ask for continued His blessing and help. They were often cold and wet. They suffered from aching feet. They slept fitfully at night in rude shelters being in constant fear of Indian attack. Ranck gives us a vivid account of their worship the second Sunday in November.⁶ With Clinch Mountain looming up in the background and the sound of rushing waters from the river in their ears, they gathered around blazing fires for prayer and worship. On the outskirts of their assembly, guards leaned on rifles while others watched the horses. Their pastor read, in his resonant voice, encouraging words from Scripture, and led them in earnest and eloquent prayer. In his sermon Craig recounted for them once again the story of God's great works in bringing the children of Israel through the wilderness and proclaimed that the same God was with them and would lead them to their promised land. In ringing words he exhorted them to keep the faith, to which they responded with a hearty "Amen".

The fires that brought warmth to them may also have attracted the Indians. At any rate they were attacked that night. But the guards posted about the camp were ready for them and fired with such effect that the Indians melted away in the darkness. In the cold light of dawn the next morning bloody tracks were found indicating that some of the volleys had found their mark. Sadly, though, they also found the scalped body of one of the guards. His burial place became another of the solitary graves to be found along the Wilderness Trail.

Now their journey through the wintry mountains became truly an ordeal. First, Clinch River then Powell River had to

⁶For a good history of the road see Robert L. Kincaid, *The Wilderness Road*. N. Y., Bobbs Merrill, 1947.

be crossed; they were swollen and fast flowing. At each crossing the pack-horses had to be unloaded and rafts were made, then the horses were swum across and the women, children, goods, and provisions were rafted over. Sometimes the horses became frightened and unmanageable, and more than once they ran away and had to be tracked down. The cold rains soaked nearly everyone. Their biscuits and meal became wet and useless and they had to eat such meat as they could get without bread. The trail became muddy and slick in places and they had to struggle slowly and painfully over first Clinch Mountain then Powell Mountain. They often went without fire at night for fear of the Indians. It took them three weeks to travel from Mocassin Gap to the Cumberland Gap — a distance of about 30 miles, which amounts to an average of not much more than a mile a day.

Numb with cold from the biting wind they grimly made their way through the Cumberland Gap in a driving snow-storm, and descended into the Yellow Creek valley.

Now it was early December. Their trail led them through marsh land and canebreaks and over snow-covered Pine Mountain to the Cumberland River, which they found flooded and thick with floating ice. They were able to get the women and children across on horses, but the men and boys had to wade across in waist deep water and walk with wet and frozen clothes for the rest of the day. Then there were other streams to be crossed—Stinking Creek and the Laurel and Rockcastle Rivers, (roughly following what is today Highway 25 east).

Coming down out of the mountains their hearts lifted; they were nearing their destination—the string of fortified settlements in the plateau of central Kentucky. But their joy was a bit premature. Stopping to camp at nightfall at the Hazel Patch (near Mt. Vernon), they were attacked during the night by Indians. No one was hurt, but some of their

horses and and cattle were driven off. Though worn and weary they pressed on past the Crab Orchard with its flowing mineral springs and finally—finally—they reached Logan's Fort (Stanford). There they were given a warm welcome and they were glad to build great fires and bask in their warmth, to eat hot food, to feed their livestock and to visit with their friends at the station, many of whom they had known in Virginia. No doubt they were eager to hear the news of their homeland, the latest rumors about the Indians, the best places to settle, etc.

And so finally these pilgrims had reached the promised land. They were tired but happy. They had left the security of their homes in old Virginia, and had completed a long journey of nearly 600 miles through a difficult and hostile wilderness. Like the heroes and heroines of their ancient faith that they had read about in their Bibles, (see Hebrews 11), they had suffered; they had been weary, cold, hungry, and sometimes afraid.

But now their long journey was over. Or was it? In one sense it had only begun.

The Journey: From Wilderness to Civilization

For the people of the traveling church the first order of business was now to find a place where they and their livestock could spend the rest of the winter while their leaders looked for a place where they might settle permanently. It was soon decided that this place would be a spot on Gilbert's Creek about 2½ miles southeast of what is now Lancaster, or about eight or nine miles northwest of Logan's Fort. There they proceeded, as quickly as they could, to build a stockade and some cabins. On a nearby hill they cleared away the trees and brush, built a log church, and laid out a place for a cemetery. Like Durham Cathedral, the meeting

house was half church and half fort, with loopholes and clear fields of fire. Like the Pilgrims of Plymouth Rock, they walked up the hill and worshipped with rifles in hand. That such precautions were needed is indicated by the fact that one of their number, Miles Hart, was killed and scalped by the Indians near the church, and his wife and children were carried off into captivity.

Indeed, although more and more settlers were coming into Kentucky, the danger from Indian attacks increased, in part because the Indians were now desperate to stem the tide of migration into their hunting grounds. Moreover, although the Revolutionary War had ended, the British still held Canada and the area around Detroit, and they encouraged the Indians to step up their attacks on the Kentucky settlements. And so 1782 was a year of danger, fear and much fighting for the Kentucky settlers.

At Limestone (Maysville) empty flatboats were regularly found floating down the Ohio—grim and silent testimony to the massacre of whole families upstream. In March of 1782 American militia treacherously massacred 96 peaceable Christian Indians—35 men, 27 women, and 34 boys at a Moravian mission station at Gnadenhutten in Ohio.

About this same time a Wyandot war party of about 25 Indians was in the area of Gilbert's Creek. They attacked Strode's station (near Richmond), killed two men, and destroyed a number of sheep and cattle. Turning back to the north they were pursued by about 25 men led by Col. James Estill, and were overtaken at Small Mountain Creek (Mt. Sterling). In the fierce fight that followed Estill and all but five of his men were killed, one of the heroes being a black man, Monk Estill. The Indians lost an equal number of men, but it was the settlers who retreated.

In August of 1782 a force of Indians numbering more than 300 led by some British officers as well as tribal chiefs invaded Kentucky. The main body of this force

attacked Bryan Station, but a skillful and courageous defense led the attackers finally to withdraw and retreat back towards the Ohio River. A pursuit force was quickly gathered and set out in hot pursuit of the marauders. At the Blue Licks they caught up with the invaders, recklessly attacking them, and were lured into an ambush and badly defeated. Soon after this tragedy another raiding party of Indians looted, burned, and killed in the settlements along the Salt River and in what is now Jefferson County.⁷

In this atmosphere of fear and insecurity, it is not surprising that the people of the traveling church were slow in finding a permanent place to settle. It is true that General George Rogers Clark in the Fall of 1782 led a force of regulars and militia against the Shawnee and other marauding tribes north of the Ohio River, defeated them and destroyed their villages and cornfields. After this there were no more large invasions of Kentucky by the Indians. Nevertheless, Indian war parties continued to attack the more isolated homesteads and settlements. Writing to the Secretary of War in 1790 Judge Harry Innes, attorney general for Kentucky, reported that more than 1500 had died at the hands of the Indians in the period from 1782 to 1789.⁸ One man recalled that as a boy living in Scott County in 1792 every time he went out after the horses he was afraid he might be killed by the Indians. The Indian menace did not cease, in fact, until General "Mad Anthony" Wayne led regular and militia troupes to a smashing victory over the Indian confederation in July 1794.

Yet, in spite of this atmosphere of constant danger and fear, Lewis Craig not only helped to sustain the morale of his people with his preaching at Gilbert's Creek (some peo-

⁷For a detailed account of this struggle, see George M. Chinn's *Kentucky: Settlement and Statehood, 1750-1800*. Frankfort, Kentucky Historical Society, 1975, p. 261ff.

⁸*Ibid*; p.388.

ple were giving up and going back to Virginia), but he did some preaching in other settlements as well. In 1782 he gathered and established a Baptist congregation at the forks of Dick's River—a congregation that lives on today. In his travels Craig also kept looking for a likely place where he and his people might settle permanently. Finally, he found it. The place was an area of rich soil and flowing springs a few miles southwest of the tiny fortified hamlet of Lexington, the focal point being the spot where an old buffalo trail crossed South Elkhorn Creek. At this point Craig himself settled in a bend of the creek where he built a house and a grist mill. In the Fall of 1783 most of his people moved into this area and began the task of clearing the land and building their cabins, barns, and rail fences.

Meeting first in the minister's home and then in a meeting house built across the road on rising ground, the traveling church reconstituted itself as the South Elkhorn Baptist Church. It thus became the first church to be established north of the Kentucky River and one of the oldest in the state.⁹

Although most of the people of the traveling church

⁹The Severn's Valley Baptist Church was founded near Elizabethtown in 1781. At about the same time the Cedar Creek Baptist Church was organized in what is now Nelson County. In the following year the Gilbert's Creek Baptist Church and the Forks of Dick's River Baptist Church were organized. In 1783 the South Elkhorn Baptist Church was founded. Thus the first five churches established in Kentucky would appear to be Baptist churches. In 1784 David Rice, a Presbyterian minister, founded three Presbyterian churches—Concord in Danville, Cane Run near Harrodsburg and New Providence near McAfee on the Salt River. The first church to be organized in Lexington was an Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church formed by David Rankin in 1784 whose house is still standing and is the oldest house in the city. At about the same time the first Methodist society in Kentucky was organized near Danville.

It should be kept in mind that the first Christian services of worship in Kentucky were conducted at Boonesborough under a large elm tree on May 28, 1775 by an Anglican (Episcopal) priest named John Lyth, who was apparently a chaplain serving with a unit of the Virginia militia then stationed in this area.

For a more complete account of this subject, see John B. Boles, *Religion in Antebellum Kentucky*. Lexington, The University Press of Kentucky, 1976, p. 1-12.

moved to the South Elkhorn area, the church at Gilbert's Creek continued to exist, though in a weakened condition. It was temporarily revived, however, by a "second wave" of pioneer Baptists from Spottsylvania County, Virginia who made the perilous trek across the mountains in the Autumn of 1783 and took up their abode temporarily in the cabins left by the people who had just moved to South Elkhorn. This group was also led by a Baptist minister, William E. Waller, brother of "swearing Jack," and many of them were former neighbors and friends of the people of the traveling church. They eventually settled on Howard's Creek in what is now Clark County and there constituted a church. The congregation at Gilbert's Creek continued to function for a number of years, eventually built a brick meeting house, then declined and finally disbanded. Today all that remains at its site on a wind-swept hill are a few gravestones and a historical marker.

The Land, The People and The Church

Back at South Elkhorn, the people must surely have found the land to be everything they had hoped it would be. The limestone soil was rich in minerals and fertility was evidenced by the thick canebreaks, pea vines, and clover that grew there. A magnificent hardwood forest of oak, poplar, walnut, ash, hickory, locust, maple, cherry, cedar, and many other kinds of trees besides so covered the earth that it was said that a squirrel could travel from the Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi River without ever touching the ground. Here and there in this great forest were park-like openings in which grew lush bluegrass that was ideal for grazing animals.¹⁰ A typical scene then, as now,

¹⁰Possibly caused by fires set by Indians or lightning.

would be rolling meadowland dotted here and there with gnarled blue ash and bur oak trees. Water was abundant. Clear flowing springs and swift running creeks provided life-giving refreshment for man and beast. Here and there were salt licks that drew animals, Indians, and settlers like a magnet. Game was plentiful and they left—especially the herds of buffalo—trails through the canebreaks and woods that were used by first the Indians then the settlers. It will be remembered that the church at South Elkhorn was built beside such a trail that in time became a road, then a highway. Buffalo, elk, deer, and other animals provided the settlers with food, clothing, robes, and other essentials.

Bird life was abundant. Wild ducks and geese might be seen in long, wavering lines against the sky in autumn and spring. In the evening whippoorwills and owls began their melancholy calls. At times great flocks of passenger pigeons darkened the sky. Wild turkey formed a staple item in the diet of the settlers.

The climate was variable but moderate. It is true that the winters can sometimes be severe—as in 1779-1780 when it was bitter cold from December into February; rivers froze over, wild animals and livestock perished in the frozen fields and woods, and the settlers just barely survived. But this was unusual, and in general it can be said that Kentucky was far enough north to destroy many injurious insects and far enough south to have a long growing season.¹¹

With its mineral rich limestone soil and its abundance of water and long growing season, this land was ideal for grazing animals and central Kentucky soon became famous for its fine horses, mules, beef cattle, sheep, and hogs.

¹¹For an early (1784) and enthusiastic description of the land and resources of Kentucky, see John Filson's *The Discovery, Settlement and Present State of Kentucke*. New York, Corinth Books, 1962.

In the 19th century the "salubrious climate" and mineral springs of Kentucky drew many people to "take the waters" and enjoy the social seasons at its numerous spas, one of which was near South Elkhorn at Keene.

It also produced excellent crops of tobacco, corn, wheat, oats, barley, hay and hemp.

To the land hungry farmers of the traveling church this productive country must have seemed to be truly a veritable Canaan flowing with milk and honey. So they labored hard to clear and plant the fields, fence their pastures, set out their orchards, and build their barns and houses.

Thus, set among thriving farms, South Elkhorn would be through most of its years a rural church and its people would have the conservative values of thrift, hard work, honesty, self-reliance, and religious faith associated with the Puritan work ethic. For these were mostly yeoman farmers and were, broadly speaking, middle class southern Puritans who had much in common with the earlier Pilgrim settlers of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay.

In these early years the vast majority of people in frontier Kentucky were not church members, nor were they very civilized in their behavior. They tended to be rough, violent, and undisciplined. The frontier attracted some individuals who were on the run from the law back east. There was a good deal of brawling, and when they fought they sometimes gouged out an eye or bit off an ear or nose of their opponent. There was a great deal of gambling, especially on horse races, cock fights, and card games.

There was also a great deal of drinking of whiskey, and at first it was an acceptable form of behavior. The preacher at South Elkhorn was sometimes paid in whiskey, (as well as beef, pork, salt, sugar, corn, wheat, flour, and some cash). It flowed freely at log-rollings, house-raisings, house warmings, corn huskings, square dances, marriages and chivarees, and other social occasions. It is widely believed that it was a Baptist preacher, Elijah Craig, (brother to Lewis) who discovered the process of making bourbon whiskey. Ward Russell writes that the minister of South Elkhorn was expected "... to keep his decanter always full and ready to

serve the brethren and strangers."¹² But this free use of whiskey led to excesses and to both personal and social problems which caused the church to become increasingly negative in its attitude toward the use of liquor.

For the people of the traveling church, as for frontier people generally, these early years were hard, full of loneliness and constant danger. They worked from dawn to darkness, fencing, milking, seeding, clearing, planting, weeding, harvesting, as well as doing many other forms of labor. Women and older girls also worked at night by firelight at their looms. They built crude one room cabins with a dirt or puncheon floor, pole beds, and a loft where the children and visitors slept on corn shuck mattresses - sometimes with the snow sifting through the logs. They lived - and died - without much medical care. The mortality rate was high, especially among children and women in childbirth.

But gradually their quality of life began to improve. Large numbers of people began to pour into Kentucky, making land more valuable. Larger and more comfortable homes were built, sometimes enclosing the original log structure. Some pillared brick mansions set back from the road among trees overlooking fields bordered by rock fences began to appear. In the South Elkhorn neighborhood, for example, the log fort built by Mary Todd Lincoln's grandfather, Levi Todd, gave way to the beautiful Helm Place. Here lived Mary Todd Lincoln's half sister, Mrs. Emillie Todd Helm, the widow of a Confederate general, Ben Hardin Helm, who fell at Chicamauga.¹³ Other antebellum mansions in the

¹²Ward Russell, *Church Life In The Blue Grass*. Lexington, 1933, p. 43. This is a warm, informative, and altogether delightful book, which has been extensively used in the preparation of this history.

¹³Lincoln had a great uncle, Thomas, who operated a farm and still in the south Elkhorn neighborhood, and with these family connections it is quite possible that the future President and his wife may have visited the neighborhood of South Elkhorn on one of their trips to Lexington. See W.H. Townsend, *Lincoln And His Wife's Hometown*. Indianapolis, The Bobbs Merrill Co., 1929 for a fascinating account of the early history of Lexington in its relation to the Lincoln family.

area included Cave Spring (presently being used as the Governor's mansion) and fabulous Chaumiere du Prairie, where Lafayette was lavishly entertained in 1825.

By 1823 Lexington had a weekly newspaper, schools, a courthouse, hotels, bookstores, a Masonic hall, churches, a public library, and other signs of a growing and progressive culture. A college, Transylvania, had been chartered in 1780 and had so prospered that Lexington became known as "the Athens of the West."

In a similar way there was considerable development in the village of South Elkhorn. Craig's house and mill (later bought by a man named Higdon) was followed by a church (a frame structure), a tavern, a blacksmith shop, a distillery, and a school whose first teacher was the future political leader and Confederate general, John C. Breckinridge.¹⁴ Later, after the Civil War, there would be in the hamlet additional houses, a physician's home and office, two stores, two "wood shops," and a post office. There were also several grist mills in the neighborhood that produced flour which was shipped by flatboat down the Kentucky and Mississippi Rivers for sale in New Orleans.

Thus the South Elkhorn Baptist Church of Christ (as they called themselves) was a part of a growing, prospering community in a state which was rapidly filling up with people. Its mission was to reach out to these unchurched folk with the Gospel, to convert them, to nurture them in the faith, and to help build a more just and Christian society.¹⁵

¹⁴W. H. Perrin, Ed., *History of Fayette County*. Chicago, Baskin and Co., 1882, p. 533.

¹⁵It has been said that on the American frontier there were three waves of people who formed the cutting edge of civilization as it moved westward across the continent. First, there were explorers, trappers, traders, and hunters. And after them came poor families looking for a place to settle and farm. The third wave was made up of people with more wealth and education, and included lawyers (who were much in demand due to much litigation over conflicting land claims), physicians, school teachers, ministers, surveyors, bankers, and men of wealth with capital to invest. This description should not be pressed too far, but insofar as it has validity, most of the people of the traveling church were of the second wave.

As the oldest Baptist church north of the Kentucky River, South Elkhorn also led in the formation of other churches.¹⁶ It further led in the organization of the first Association of Baptist churches in Kentucky - in 1785. It was called the Elkhorn Association and was made up initially of six churches - South Elkhorn, Clear Creek, Great Crossing, Tates Creek, Gilbert's Creek, and Limestone (Maysville). The first moderator and the moving spirit in this enterprise was Lewis Craig, who was held in much respect. Under his leadership the church at South Elkhorn grew from about 150 members in 1783 to 265 in 1793. In addition, he helped in the forming of churches at Clear Creek, Great Crossing, and Mount Pleasant, near Keene.¹⁷

In 1793 Craig, who had led his people so well for so many years, resigned as pastor, sold his property, and moved to Mason County where he bought a farm on the road between Dover and Minerva. True to his calling, he almost immediately led in organizing the Bracken Baptist Church, and a little later the Bracken Association of Baptist churches. He also worked as a stone mason and helped build the first courthouse in Washington, Kentucky. He died in 1825.¹⁸

Craig's successor as minister of South Elkhorn was John Shackelford, one of the Virginia Baptist preachers who had been jailed for unauthorized preaching. He served the church for more than 30 years. Thus, for the first 40 years of its existence the church at South Elkhorn had only two ministers, although its membership included several ordained preachers who assisted in the work of ministry.

Soon after Shackelford became pastor, membership in

¹⁶Boles, *Op cit.*, p. 1-12.

¹⁷A member of a prominent family in Virginia, and a leader in the "second wave" of the traveling church, Edmund Waller had a long and successful ministry at Mount Pleasant. Descendants of both the Craigs and the Wallers are now active members of the South Elkhorn Church.

¹⁸For a brief biography see Lewis N. Thompson, *Lewis Craig*. Louisville, Baptist World Publishing Co., 1910.

the church declined until by 1800 there were only 127 members.¹⁹ This loss, from a high of 265 in 1793, reflected a general decline in religion, not only in Kentucky, but in the country as a whole. In response to this religious depression, preachers and congregations of all denominations fasted and prayed for another "awakening," that is, for another wave of revivals like those which had swept through the colonies in the period from about 1730 to the Revolution. Some preachers proclaimed that this spiritual deadness was a punishment sent by God for the sins of the people.

In their prayers for a renewal of religious faith, the church people of Kentucky were not disappointed. In the southwestern part of the state, in Logan County, in the summer of 1800, a camp meeting drew hundreds of people. Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist preachers cried with great feeling to crowds gathered about stands in the woods for sinners to repent and accept the grace of God before it was too late. The results were spectacular. Individuals under conviction of sin wept and cried for mercy. Some fell to the ground as if stunned. Others laughed, danced, and sang in an ecstasy of joy. Some "jerked" and "barked" or were uncontrollably caught up in similar "exercises."

In the months that followed, the revival spread almost spontaneously into central Kentucky and reached its culmination in the famous Cane Ridge revival in August of 1801. Thousands of people were drawn to the old log meeting house and the woods and fields around it where the sensational behavior of the earlier camp meetings was again manifested and hundreds were converted.²⁰

¹⁹In Appendix A will be found a partial list of the members of the South Elkhorn Baptist Church of Christ as recorded in Ward Russell's book, p. 44. This list is apparently derived from the records of the Elkhorn Association of Baptist Churches.

In Appendix B will be found a list of the South Elkhorn Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) members as of Jan. 1, 1983.

²⁰For further reading on this subject see C.A. Johnson, *The Frontier Camp Meeting: Religion's Harvest Time*. Dallas, Southern Methodist Press, 1955.

To many religious people the revival and all its various manifestations was a sign that the world was coming to an end and that Christ would soon return. In 1805 Shaker missionaries appeared in Kentucky and they succeeded in convincing some preachers and lay folk that Christ had already returned in the person of the Shaker founder, Mother Ann Lee, and that Christians should withdraw from the world to form self-supporting communities in which everyone would live celibate lives, men and women would be equal, and all property would be held in common. As a result of this Shaker preaching, a commune was formed called Pleasant Hill (or Shakertown) about 20 miles down the road from South Elkhorn.

The excitement of the revival gradually subsided. To its detractors it was the product of mass hysteria. To its defenders it was the work of the Holy Spirit. But to everyone it was for awhile a main topic of conversation. Religion was once more a serious concern of many people.

There can be no doubt but that many hundreds of people were won by the revival to a vital and active Christian faith. Membership in the churches - especially the Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians - increased dramatically and South Elkhorn was no exception. From August 1800 to August 1801 its membership increased by 348. In 1816-1817 about 300 persons were converted in a revival which added many members not only to South Elkhorn but to Mount Pleasant and Providence (which had recently been organized). However, many must have been dropped from the church rolls, as the membership of South Elkhorn was 359 in 1817.²¹

The revivals of this era not only added thousands of members to the churches, but also raised the general moral level as well. At South Elkhorn and most Baptist churches

²¹Russell, *Op. cit.*; pp. 44, 60.

this was accomplished through the discipline exercised by the church in its monthly business meetings. A common pattern of procedure seems to have been that a minister would be employed to preach on a stated weekend in each month. He would preach on Saturday evening, Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon with dinner "on the ground" at noon. The minister would preside at a Saturday business meeting. At these meetings members could bring charges against other members as being guilty of wrong doing in either beliefs or behavior.²² If found guilty, the individual in question could either acknowledge his or her sin and mend his or her ways or be excommunicated from the church. Normally, some effort was also made by members to talk privately with the errant(?) person after the procedure set forth in Matthew 18:15-17.²³ To these southern Puritans one is saved wholly by the grace and election of God, but the saved are expected, by the strengthening power of God, to live a very strict moral life.

Back of this understanding of salvation is a beautiful idea: the church is made up of baptized believers, gathered by Christ, who covenant to help one another to keep and live the faith as they make their journey through life. The original Covenant of the church back in Spottsylvania, Virginia, expresses this idea, as is indicated by the following passage:

Having entered into a holy covenant with the Lord, we do this day agree in the divine presence, to bind ourselves to a church compact, to one another, and do solemnly covenant and agree to fill the duty of brethren to each other, not to expose each other's

²²*Ibid.*, p. 60.

²³"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector."

faults, but in the true letter and spirit of the Gospel. That we will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but to fill our seats, both in meetings of business and public worship, except providentially hindered. That we will watch over each other in brotherly tenderness, each endeavoring to edify his brother; striving for the benefit of the weak of the flock . . . That we will bear each other's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ; and as the Lord has prospered us, bear a proportionate part of the expense, to keep up the worship of God in decency - and in token of our above agreement, give each other our hands and hearts. Amen.²⁴

But in practice this idea of the church as a mutually supportive community in which members would keep a watchful care over one another, left much to be desired. Some members became too judgmental and censorious. The issues and quarrels that were brought before the church ranged all the way from genuinely serious matters to that which was trivial.²⁵ Here is a sampler of the charges brought against members: swearing, lying, intoxication, gambling, fighting, dancing, "frolicking," gossiping, adultery, fornication, deception in a business deal, moving boundary markers, false accusation, disturbing worship, absence from worship, wife beating, attending "carnal plays," mistreatment of slaves, calling someone a liar, cruelty to animals, participation in a riot, shooting for whiskey, unchristian conduct, failure to pay a debt, reckless financial dealings, and failure to heed the admonition of the church.

²⁴Quoted in Russell, p. 34.

²⁵South Elkhorn is fortunate in having minute books that go back to 1817. They provide an often fascinating glimpse into the life of the church in these early years. A. W. Fortune wrote that "there is perhaps no more important document for the study of the beginning of the Christian Church than this record book." See his *The Disciples In Kentucky*, published by the Convention of the Christian Churches in Kentucky in 1932.

In leafing through these records it seems, at least according to our standards today, that the church was overzealous in its enforcement of moral discipline. At times we can read between the lines and see a poignant human problem that had no easy answer. For example, in 1817 one of the slave members of the church, a woman named Joanne, came before the church meeting to confess that she had taken as a husband a man who had two living wives, one of whom lived in Virginia, and another who lived many miles away. Undoubtedly, her husband and she were caught in one of the most vicious aspects of the slave system - the break-up of families through selling their members to different people and places. In this case, the meeting expressed the opinion that she should be permitted to live with her present husband.²⁶

Not only did the church meeting deal with moral issues, but it also considered and judged doctrinal issues and disputes as well. And there were lots of them to consider, as the early 19th century in Kentucky was a time of intense and often rancorous debate over such theological concepts as deism, unitarianism, predestination, the proper subjects, mode, and meaning of baptism, the use of creeds in the church, the relation of Christ to God, the scriptural form of church government and the right answer to the question "what must I do to be saved?" Debates on these and related subjects drew crowds of people who followed closely the lines of argument advanced by the protagonists. In 1843, for example, a debate on baptism between a Presbyterian, Nathan Rice, and a Disciple, Alexander Campbell, in Lexington, with Henry Clay serving as moderator, drew hundreds of people and lasted for several days.²⁷

²⁶Quoted in Russell, p. 68.

²⁷See William E. Tucker and Lester G. McAllister, *Journey in Faith, A History Of The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*. St. Louis, The Bethany Press, 1978, p. 126.

between the denominations was sharp and heated. Theological controversies *within* the churches could also be sharp and divisive, as it was assumed that the church should supervise not only the morals of its members, but their beliefs as well.

South Elkhorn had earlier known some doctrinal conflicts, but in the late 1820's it became embroiled in a theological dispute that would profoundly affect its future and change its character as a church.

The controversy apparently began when someone raised the question of whether the church should continue to adhere to the Philadelphia Confession of Faith which had been drawn up by Baptists in 1743. The use of such creeds in the church had been the subject of earlier disputes among Baptists, but South Elkhorn had early come to adhere to the Philadelphia Statement. This creed was a Calvinistic document similar to the Presbyterian's earlier Westminster Confession of Faith of 1643. Its most controversial item was its teaching of the doctrine of predestination - that ". . . God hath, before the foundation of the world, fore-ordained some men to eternal life through Jesus Christ . . . leaving the rest in their sin, to their just condemnation . . ." ²⁸

Within the congregation the confessional statement was under attack on two counts: no creed is necessary in a church as long as it has the Bible, and this particular creed was wrong in its teaching of predestination.

In July of 1828 the church voted to dispense with the Philadelphia Confession of Faith and

" . . . from this time forth to take the word of God as contained in the Old and new Testaments . . . as her constitution to be guided and directed thereby in all things, believing them an all sufficient rule of faith and practice for the government of the church - endeavor-

²⁸*Documents of the Christian church*. Selected and edited by Henry Bettenson. London, Oxford University Press, 1963, p. 248.

ing to walk together in love bearing and forbearing with each other according to the law of Jesus Christ whom we esteem alone as King in Zion."²⁹

Under the leadership of their minister, Jacob Creath, and his nephew, Jacob Creath, Jr., still another fundamental change begins to quietly appear in the minute books.³⁰ Believers seeking membership in the church were not required to relate an experience of salvation, but simply to publicly profess their faith in Jesus Christ and to be baptized (immersed) for the remission of sins. They could then be assured that they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and the hope of everlasting life. Now to enter upon the Christian life at South Elkhorn one did not need to undergo a traumatic emotional experience of conversion. Rather salvation is seen as a process of rational growth and development. In all of this it is assumed that human beings are not predestined either to heaven or hell, but are free to accept or reject God's grace and love made known in Jesus Christ.

Later another change appeared: the Lord's Supper was celebrated every Lord's Day and not just once or twice a year as was the Baptist custom.

In the light of these changes it is not surprising that the Elkhorn Baptist Association ejected South Elkhorn in 1831, from its membership - as it had the Providence and Versailles churches the previous year. The charge was heresy. Nor are we surprised that South Elkhorn would drop the name of Baptist and came to be known simply as a Christian

²⁹Quoted in Russell, p. 71.

³⁰Jacob Creath (1777-1854) was born in Nova Scotia to parents who, sympathetic to the cause of the American Revolution, moved to North Carolina, where he grew to manhood and became a Baptist preacher. In 1803 he migrated to Kentucky where he became a prominent leader, first among the Baptists, then among the Disciples. He was noted as an eloquent speaker. His nephew, Jacob Creath, Jr. (1779-1886) likewise moved from the Baptists to the Disciples. Conservative in outlook, he was opposed to missionary societies and greatly influenced the later development of the non-instrumental churches of Christ.

or Disciples of Christ Church.

Thus, over a period of several years beginning about 1830, South Elkhorn, like numerous other Baptist churches in Kentucky, ceased to be a Baptist church and embarked on a new journey in faith. The leader in this transition was the minister, Jacob Creath and his nephew who then led the church to become part of a new religious movement that was growing rapidly in Kentucky and surrounding states.³¹ This movement was launched by two Presbyterians working independently of one another—Barton W. Stone (1772-1884) and Alexander Campbell (1788-1866).

Stone had migrated to Kentucky in 1796 and had become the minister of two Presbyterian churches in Bourbon County—Cane Ridge and Concord. As a conscientious young minister he had struggled with some theological issues—particularly the doctrine of predestination—that were set forth in the doctrinal standard of his church—the Westminster Confession in Faith. He also became concerned about the apathy of his people in matters of religion and he welcomed the “great revival of the west” as an antidote for this indifference. As the host pastor for the sensational Cane Ridge camp meeting he defended it on the grounds that it brought hundreds into churches, promoted Christian unity, and taught a doctrine of God's love for all people. Facing expulsion from the Presbyterian church for these views he resigned, along with several other ministers and formed an association of congregations which came to be known simply as Christian churches. These churches had no creeds, took the Bible as their authority, were congregational in polity, and worked for Christian unity on the basis

³¹In the course of this change the Baptist members seem to have gradually dropped out of view. Probably most of them continued to meet in homes or other Baptist churches. Eventually, in 1859, the South Elkhorn Baptist Church was formed (or reconstituted?) on the Versailles Road and is today a flourishing church.

of a return to the teaching, practice, and spirit of the New Testament. As the movement grew they also came to favor believer's baptism by immersion but would accept other forms of baptism, celebrated the Lord's Supper each Sunday, and made it open to all Christians of whatever denomination, and finally, cherished the freedom of congregations to order their affairs and the freedom of individuals to interpret the Scriptures for themselves.

Stone remained an ardent evangelist to the end of his days, but the emotionalism of his Cane Ridge days gradually subsided in favor of a more rational approach to religion. Christian unity continued to be the supreme concern of his life.

Stone published a paper, the *Christian Messenger*, that was influential in Kentucky and a Christian church had been formed in the Republican community near South Elkhorn. In July 1843, only about a year before his death, Stone visited South Elkhorn during a protracted meeting.

Alexander Campbell (1788-1866) migrated to this country from Northern Ireland at the age of 18. His father, Thomas (1763-1854) a Presbyterian minister, had left the year before to prepare the way for his family. In western Pennsylvania where he had settled he got into trouble with his presbytery through his policy of opening communion too freely to other Christians, and his concern for Christian unity through the restoration of New Testament Christianity, with the result that he left the Presbyterian church, formed an association of Christians to work for Christian unity and established a congregation at Brush Run.

When young Alexander arrived on the scene he was encouraged to become a minister and he accepted the challenge. Tall and dynamic, he was a clear thinker, a forceful speaker and a natural leader. Because he and his followers came to believe in immersion as the proper form of baptism they became Baptists in 1815. In these early years Campbell

married, moved to a large farm at what is now Bethany, West Virginia, and began to publish an influential paper—the *Christian Baptist* (later called the *Millennial Harbinger*). In 1823 he made his first tour of Kentucky, engaging in a debate at Washington, in Mason County and speaking to several large audiences elsewhere with such success that he returned the following year for a more extended tour. On this latter trip he met Stone and they discovered that they were working along similar lines for the same goal of Christian unity—although Campbell always remained a little cool towards Stone.

In his speaking and through his paper Campbell began to exercise great influence on some Baptist ministers—including such leaders as the Creaths, Dr. James Fishback, John T. Johnson, and “Raccoon” John Smith, all of whom were involved in South Elkhorn's separation from the Baptists.

Those Baptists under the influence of Campbell were known as “Reformers.” Their program of reform called for a new concern for Christian unity; rejecting the name “Baptist” as a hindrance to unity and substituting for it the Scriptural names “Disciples of Christ” or “Churches of Christ;” dispensing with confessions of faith and taking the Bible as “the only rule of faith and practice;” accepting the New Testament as the constitution of the church; changing judgemental associations into inter-church meetings for fellowship and cooperation; the celebration of the Lord's Supper each Sunday by lay elders or by any Christians designated to do so by the congregation; baptism on the basis of a confession of faith in Christ without requiring the candidate to relate an experience of salvation; and a rational rather than emotional approach to the process by which one becomes a Christian.

At about this same time (the 1820s) Walter Scott (1796-1861) a Scotch Baptist preacher from the old country came under the influence of Campbell and on an evangelistic tour

of Ohio developed a logical, reasonable "plan of salvation" that included hearing the Gospel, believing it, repenting of one's sins, and being immersed for the forgiveness of one's sins and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the hope of eternal life. Thus there are three things that every human being should do in order to be saved—believe, repent, and be baptized, whereupon God promises to do three things, forgive, grant the comfort and help of the Holy Spirit, and give the promise of eternal life.

Perhaps this is all too neat and reasonable but to many it was a relief from the emotional experiences required and encouraged by many Baptists.

In any event, through the period from about 1825 to 1835, many Baptist churches in Kentucky underwent painful divisions over these and related issues raised by Alexander Campbell and his Reformers with the result that out of this pain new congregations were formed which took the name Disciples of Christ. And we are struck with the irony of a unity movement which caused division.

However, in the midst of this disruption a successful effort was made to bring together Stone's Christians and Campbell's Disciples. Led by Barton W. Stone, John T. Johnson, and "Raccoon" John Smith, a series of meetings in Georgetown and Lexington culminated on January 1, 1832 in a dramatic and enthusiastic decision on the part of all present to work for the union of these two movements with the result that they gradually grew together and became one, and in spite of some differences.

And so the South Elkhorn Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) influenced by both Stone and Campbell, became a new kind of church. Its journey had taken a sharp and momentous turn.

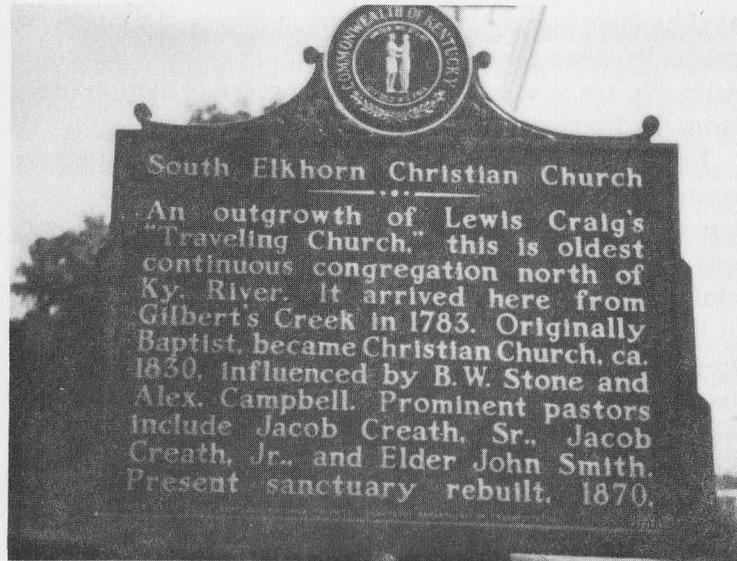
Considering the divisions among the Presbyterians and Baptists caused by the Stone and Campbell movements, it is understandable that there were some bitter feelings gener-

ated by these controversies. In time, however, the bitterness gradually disappeared and South Elkhorn and Disciples generally are now in a position to appreciate their heritage from the Presbyterian and Baptist traditions

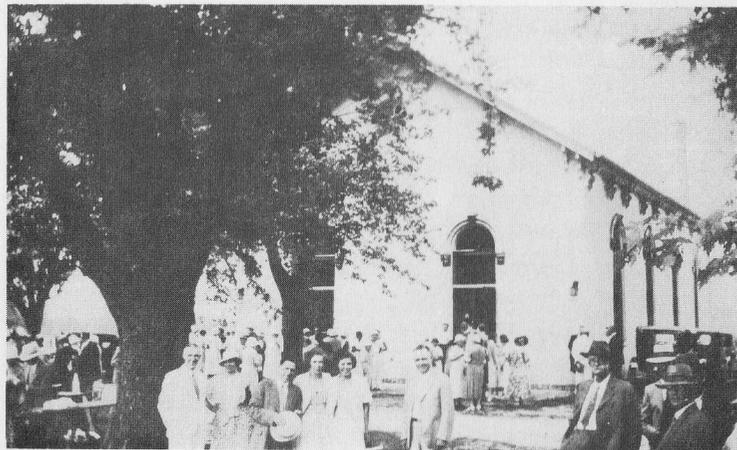
From the Presbyterian tradition it received a respect for reverent scholarship, a concern for an educated ministry, a conviction concerning the centrality of the Lord's Supper, and a high regard for the place of the Elder in the life of the church.

From the Baptist tradition it received a love of religious freedom, a belief in congregational polity, the concept of baptism as meaning immersion, a rejection of the necessity of infant baptism, and a belief in the separation of church and state.

From both it received a strong sense of the authority of Scripture in Christian life. It is a goodly heritage.



Kentucky Historical Society marker, erected August, 1978.



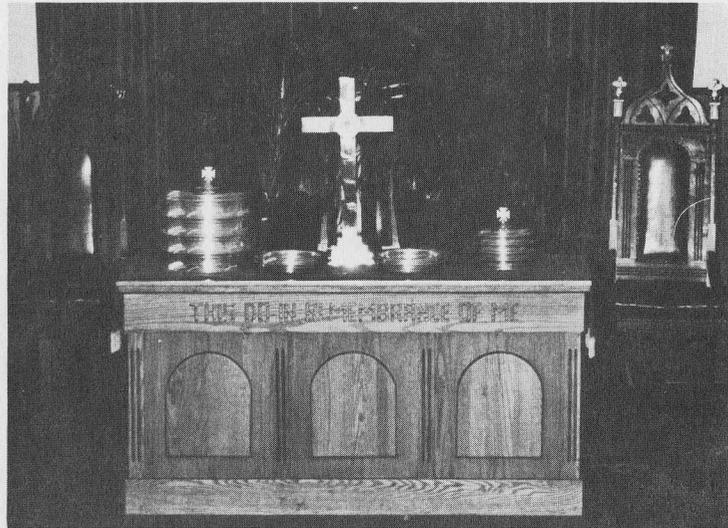
150th celebration, 1933



Center divider (August, 1956)



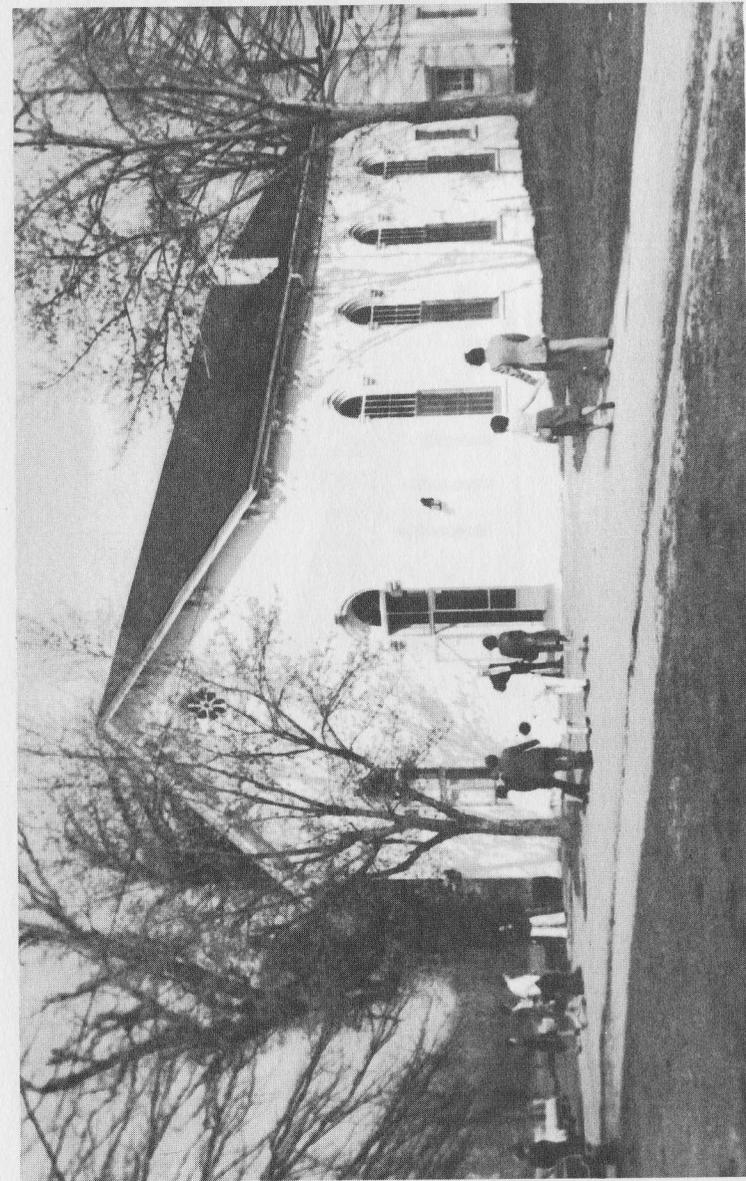
Old pews were replaced in 1958 by new ones which had no center divider.

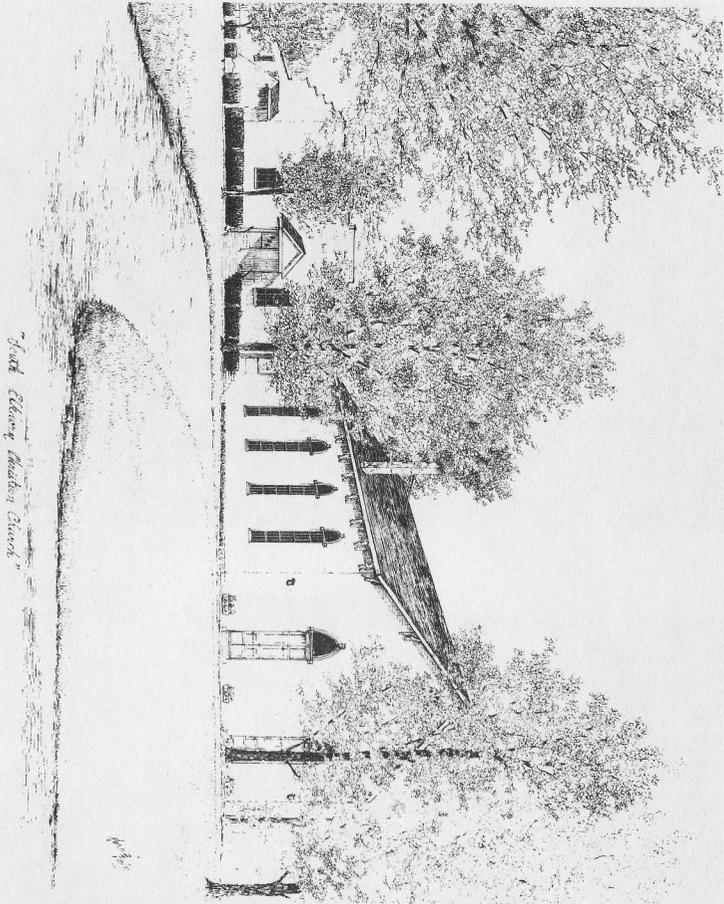


Communion Table



Sunday Worship Service





"South Clermont Methodist Church"

*Bicentennial Drawing
by Howard Fain, 1981*

IV

A COUNTRY CHURCH IN KENTUCKY, 1860-1960

THAT TERRIBLE SWIFT SWORD. The Civil War swept over Kentucky like a scourge. Being a border state, Kentucky was especially vulnerable to all the horrors of the conflict. Communities were cut up into bitter factions; churches were divided, families were torn apart, lawless guerrilla bands preyed on the weak and helpless, whole counties were laid waste, and many of her finest young men were killed or maimed.

The causes of the conflict are complex and may be described in political, economic, cultural, legal, and moral terms. But at the heart of the struggle was the issue of human bondage. Both sides fiercely defended their actions with emotional appeals that were grounded in religion and mor-

ality. As Lincoln put it in his Second Inaugural Address, both sides “. . . read the same Bible, and pray to the same God, and both invoke His aid against the other.” He went on to say that the prayers of both could not be answered and to declare that the prayers of neither were answered fully, for the war was a judgment of God upon the nation, upon both sides, for their part in the offense of slavery.

Strangely enough, the minute book of South Elkhorn for the years of the Civil War make no mention at all of the conflict or its issues. Although the people of South Elkhorn were undoubtedly divided in their loyalties, there must have been a successful effort on the part of the church's officers to keep the controversy out of the business of the congregation—or at least out of its official records.

Even more remarkable is the fact that ministers from both sides served South Elkhorn during these war years. In 1860-61 a strong Union man, Dr. L. L. Pinkerton, a physician-minister, was the church's minister, and with the outbreak of war he entered the Union Army as a surgeon and chaplain with the 11th Kentucky cavalry and took part in the bloody battle of Perryville.³²

But in 1860, at about the same time that Pinkerton was beginning his ministry at South Elkhorn, a protracted meeting was held here by a strong southern sympathizer,

³²Pinkerton (1812-1875) had been reared an Episcopalian and had practiced medicine in Ohio in his early years, but was converted to the Disciples by D. S. Burnett. He moved to Kentucky in 1838, served as a pastor and evangelist and founded Midway College. His younger brother, Elisha, followed him as a pastor at South Elkhorn and served until 1867. An early “liberal” among the Disciples, Pinkerton settled in Lexington after the war where he edited a religious journal and served in the Freedman's Bureau, an organization that sought to help former slaves adjust to their new life of freedom.

Dr. Winthrop H. Hopson, who was also a physician-minister. At the outbreak of war he had served the Confederacy as a chaplain with Morgan's cavalry.³³

After the war still another pro-Southern physician-minister, Dr. Richard M. Gano, preached at South Elkhorn in 1869-1873. He had been a Confederate line officer and Brigadier General and had also ridden with Morgan's Cavalry.³⁴

Then, as if to round out the picture, J. W. McGarvey, a pacifist, served as pastor at South Elkhorn in 1868-1870 and often preached there on other occasions.³⁵

Thus, in a turbulent period in American history, South Elkhorn somehow managed to avoid division and so serve all sides.

But inasmuch as it was a religious and moral issue of the utmost importance, we can be sure that South Elkhorn, like

³³Hopson (1823-1889) after the war became the minister of the First Christian Church in Louisville and led in founding the first school among the Disciples for the education of black ministers. He was an outstanding preacher and was famous for a two and a half hour sermon called “The Three-fold Aspects of Divine Truth.” His son-in-law, R. Lin Cave, was a Confederate veteran who had been wounded five times in combat. He was President of Kentucky University (Transylvania) in 1897-1900 and pastor at South Elkhorn 1899-1900.

³⁴Gano (1830-?) was the son of a prominent early Disciple leader, John Allen Gano, of Georgetown. He became a minister after the war and in 1873 moved to Texas where he became one of the outstanding ministers in Dallas and then in Fort Worth.

³⁵McGarvey (1829-1911) became probably the most influential figure among the second generation of Disciple leaders. Reared in Kentucky and Illinois, he had studied with Alexander Campbell at Bethany College and served as minister of the Main Street Christian Church, and the Broadway Christian Church in Lexington. He taught at the college of the Bible (Lexington Theological Seminary) from 1865 until his death in 1911. He was the author of numerous books, including *Lands of the Bible*, a pioneering work in its field, and *Commentary on Acts*, which was widely used by Disciple ministers in his day, and is still studied today in the more conservative branches of the Restoration movement. “Brother McGarvey,” as he was affectionately known, was opposed to the use of instrumental music in the worship of the church, and it is said that when he preached at South Elkhorn the organ was not used out of deference to his feelings.

all congregations in America, was deeply involved in the issue of slavery. At family dinners, at country stores, and blacksmiths shops, on Sunday afternoon visits to neighbors, in the churchyard after Sunday service, or wherever, a main topic of conversation must have been the subject of slavery. Indeed, it should have been, for no more serious moral issue—unless it be the present threat of nuclear war, has ever faced the American people.

Black People in the History Of South Elkhorn

As we have seen, blacks were a part of the history of South Elkhorn almost from the beginning. The Separate Baptists in colonial Virginia had been especially aggressive and successful in taking the Gospel to slaves and, in increasing numbers, they were converted to Christianity. Blacks had found the Christian religion attractive because they had a dim memory of a high God in Africa to whom they had prayed in times of distress. Moreover, in the Bible they found a God who was especially concerned for the poor and oppressed and who had liberated the children of Israel from their bondage in Egypt and had led them to the promised land. The Christian faith thus gave meaning and hope to their lives.

Among white Christians there developed strong opposition to slavery, with Quakers (Friends) leading the way. The outstanding minister in early Kentucky was probably the Presbyterian, David Rice, who fought hard to make slavery illegal in Kentucky; he had the support of many church people. In 1791 the Elkhorn Baptist Association in a special "memorial" condemned slavery. But its member churches were displeased by this stand, and forced it to recant. By 1805 South Elkhorn condemned, not slavery, but ministers

and churches and associations who dealt with the slavery issue, as meddling in politics. Nevertheless, the issue continued to be discussed, though after about 1840, opponents of slavery in Kentucky were increasingly intimidated and on the defensive.

Among black Christians there emerged preachers who were encouraged to exercise their gifts and who were often men of great ability. They helped their people to gain a sense of their dignity and worth as human beings and children of God.

Among the people with the traveling church on its dangerous and difficult journey over the mountains was, it will be remembered, a black preacher, "Uncle Peter" Durett, who delighted them with his preaching and singing. After arriving in Kentucky he somehow managed to purchase freedom for himself and his wife. He moved to Lexington and founded the First African Baptist Church which grew to number some 300 members at the time of his death. And by 1854 it had become, with 1,820 members, the largest congregation in Kentucky.³⁶

Another black preacher of note who was connected to South Elkhorn was a slave belonging to Lewis Craig named George DuPuy. When Craig died in 1847 DuPuy was the minister of the Pleasant Green Baptist Church in Lexington. When Craig's will was probated, DuPuy was scheduled to be sold. The distressed members of his congregation then appealed to the minister of the white Baptist church for help

³⁶John B. Boles, *Religion in antebellum Kentucky*, Lexington, The University Park Press of Kentucky, 1976, p. 88. Durrett was succeeded in the ministry of the First African Baptist Church by a free black, London Ferrill, who became a local hero during the cholera epidemic in Lexington in 1833 when he worked day and night to comfort the dying and to bury the dead, including his wife. It is said that he baptized more than 5,000 people. In marrying slaves he pronounced them united until death or distance did them part. See also J. H. Spencer, *A history of Kentucky Baptists*, vol II: first printed in 1886, republished by Church History and Archives in 1976, Lafayette, Tn., p. 653ff.

in buying their pastor's freedom. The deacons in the white church in response agreed to purchase him so that he could remain their minister. He sold for \$830.00 which was gradually paid off with payments made each Monday morning.³⁷

Though there were some outstanding black congregations in Kentucky, most black Christians before the Civil War were members of predominantly white churches. In these congregations they often took an active part in church affairs. They were baptized with whites, buried with them, were subject to the same discipline. This is not to say that they were accorded true equality, for they customarily sat apart in the church, either at the back or in a gallery, the latter being the case at South Elkhorn.

Although South Elkhorn continued to receive black persons as members for a number of years after they had been given their freedom during the Civil War, it is generally true that with the coming of freedom blacks formed their own congregations. South Elkhorn thus became in the late 19th century a white congregation and has remained such until the present. But it ought not to be forgotten that black people sang and worshipped and shared in the life of the congregation for more than 80 years.

The Little Brick Church In the Dell

In June of 1870 a committee was appointed to take down the old meeting house and to oversee the construction of a new one. The new church was subsequently completed at a cost of \$4,000.00. Like many country churches at that time it was a plain rectangle with solid brick walls. It had two front doors which opened upon a high ceilinged room. At the opposite end of the room from the doors was a raised

Ibid; p. 89.

platform on which was a pulpit with a Bible on it. A communion table stood in front and slightly below the pulpit and together they formed the focal point of the room. On both side walls there were large windows stained in amber and crystal grey, which gave the room a soft light. There was one chimney on either side of the room permitting two stoves to burn warmly on cold days. In winter weather the pews near the stoves would be very popular.

With aisles on two sides, the center pews were divided down the middle with a solid barrier which separated the congregation according to age and sex. The women and children sat on the left side (facing the pulpit), and the men and older boys on the right, thus the need for two front doors. Before and after the services the men and boys tended to congregate in the yard by the right door and the women and children on the left. After a night meeting a prospective swain might wait outside and when a certain girl emerged step up and ask if he might see her home. This required either courage or prior planning on the part of the young man, because if the girl turned down the invitation it was done in a very public way and his friends did not soon let him forget it.

This seating arrangement lasted for many years but gradually began to break down as families increasingly desired to sit together. Some non-conformist individuals led the way. Myra Owens remembers the stir created on a quiet sabbath morning by one woman when she boldly took a seat among the men and boys. Finally, in 1958, the old pews were taken out and replaced by new ones which had no dividing barrier down the middle.

People came to worship here for many years mainly on foot, or horseback, or in buggies or elegant surreys. The horses were tied to hitching rails back and to the side of the church. Some people thought nothing of walking four or five miles one way to church and Howard Owens remembers

one family that regularly walked from Lexington which at that time was about five miles from South Elkhorn. It is said that in the summertime some of the children walked bare-foot until they came in sight of the church where they paused to put on their shoes. Mary Florence Jones fondly remembers riding her pony to church.

Like many rural churches in Kentucky, South Elkhorn was a family church, and to outsiders it must have seemed as if everyone in the congregation were related by blood or marriage.³⁸ On special occasions this family life was celebrated with huge dinners after church on Sundays, at someone's home. On other occasions there would be "all day meetins" at the church with "dinner on the grounds." Tables would be set up under the trees in the church yard and were soon heavy laden with a great variety of meats, garden vegetables, and tempting desserts. Along with the consumption of this rich food there would be much socializing as the people exchanged neighborhood news, talked weather and crops, and engaged in some good-natured banter. Pity the poor preacher who had to preach during the afternoon service after eating such rich and bountiful fare! Even more, pity the poor people who had to try and stay awake during the sermon on a hot summer afternoon!

Another occasion which brought people together was the annual revival meeting, which was usually held during the summer, often in August, "when the crops were laid by." This was the spiritual harvest time for the church and frequently there would be 15 or 20 additions, sometimes more, during this two week period of time. The spirited singing of gospel hymns under the direction of a song-leader was an enjoyable and important part of these services, which usu-

³⁸An affectionate account of life in a Kentucky rural church in the early years of this century may be found in Edgar DeWitt Jones' *Fairhope: The annals of a country church*; N.Y., MacMillan, 1917.

ally drew large crowds. The preaching, too, was spirited and was aimed at getting a response and commitment from non-members. The "invitation" was usually emotional in nature, as the preacher pled with the unsaved to come forward and make confession of their faith in Christ and repent of their sins, before it was too late, while the congregation sang such hymns, as "Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling," or "Just as I am, Without One Plea," or "Lord, I'm Coming Home."

Christian education has always been an essential part of the life of South Elkhorn, but in the past century it has grown in importance. As we have seen, the first Sunday school was apparently first organized in 1863 by the then minister Elisha Pinkerton. Before this, the education of the members had been carried out primarily by the ministers and elders and had been mainly aimed at adults. But with the coming of the Sunday school there was a new concern for the nurture and teaching of children and youth. Furthermore, women now played an increasingly important role as teachers. And Sunday school literature which helped the teacher relate the subject matter to the needs and abilities of the pupils now became available.

In response to this growing concern for the education of its people as well as fellowship, successive additions were made to the church building which provided classrooms, a kitchen, and a fellowship hall. No longer was the sanctuary a babel of voices as different classes met in different parts of the room!

In the early years worship, like the sanctuary itself, was plain and simple. Led by the ministers or one of the elders, it consisted mainly of prayer, the reading of Scripture, the Acapella singing of hymns,³⁹ a sermon, and the solemn celebration of the Lord's Supper. But gradually, as the life of the people became more affluent and comfortable, the service

of worship, and the setting for it, became more elaborate, formal, and beautiful. A baptistry was built, so that baptizings no longer took place in the creek or Headley's pond. The stoves were moved out of the sanctuary to make room for a less conspicuous and more efficient form of heat. A pump organ, then a piano, and finally an electronic organ, were installed as aids to worship. Floors were carpeted. Eventually a dorsal curtain was added which covered much of the wall back of the table and the cross. A divided chancel with new pulpit furniture replaced the old centered pulpit and table. Attention was paid to the traditional church year. A choir was formed. Calls to worship were heard. Doxologies were sung and litanies were introduced in the service. With the growing use of office machines in the 1930s and 1940s orders of worship were printed and the Sunday morning service became more formal and structured.

The celebration of the Lord's Supper by lay Elders and Deacons continued to be at the heart of the congregation's worship at South Elkhorn, and did much to hold the church together in times when no minister was available. It also did much to give the worshippers a sense of the presence of God in their lives.

Thus, through the years that followed the Civil War worship at South Elkhorn became more elaborate and formal. Candles, carpets, organs, choirs, robes, preludes, printed prayers, altar cloths, and the singing of more stately and less subjective hymns, these and similar developments were all part of an effort to make worship more meaningful and to appropriate the liturgical riches of the total Christian tradi-

³⁹The minutes of the church meeting for November 1829 show that *Watts Psalms and hymns book* was purchased with a Bible at a cost of "three dollars and 62½ cts." Since the singular is used, the hymn book may have been used by a song-leader who "lined out the singing" for the congregation.

tion. In this process of change perhaps something has been lost in the realm of spontaneity and warmth even as something has been gained in the sense of beauty and reverence. Be that as it may, the old meeting house itself remains relatively plain and unadorned.

The organization of the congregation at South Elkhorn through much of its history followed a patriarchal pattern in which the older men were the leaders. This is not to say that women were not active, or that they did not in fact exercise great influence on the development of the church. But, although their names sometimes appear in the minutes of the church's business meetings, it is clear that the business of the church was carried out mainly by men. This patriarchal pattern reflects, of course, the attitudes and values of American society at that time.

After South Elkhorn became a part of the disciple movement it was led by Elders and Deacons who were ordained for life. They presided and served at the celebration of the Lord's Supper. They functioned as lay pastors to the people and they constituted the Board which guided the church. Major issues would be taken to the congregation for final decision, but the Elders especially were regarded as authoritative figures. Trustees held title to the church property and with the Deacons looked after that property and the business affairs of the congregation while the Elders were responsible for the spiritual welfare of its people. Business meetings were normally held once a month, and then, as now, there was trouble finding a time to meet that was suitable to everyone. Finances were also a perennial problem with which the Elders and Deacons had to wrestle.

By the end of the century women were present and active in the business meetings of the church. A woman's missionary society did much to awaken the church to outreach giving in general and to the cause of world missions in particular.

By the 1950s the Board was expanded so that it might be a more representative body and involve more people, including younger members, in the work of the church. Much of this work was now done through committees which reported regularly to the Board. This broader based organization was spelled out in a constitution produced by a committee headed by Joe Hardman, Sr. about 1960.

In the 1970s women for the first time were elected to serve as Elders and Deacons, and in 1977 the first woman, Eula Spears, was elected to chair the Board and congregation. For some time women had served as Deaconesses but now all the offices of the church were open to them. From the beginning women had shared fully in the dangers and hardships of the move from Virginia to frontier Kentucky, and they had always been an integral part of the church's life. But now they were recognized as equal partners in the privileges and responsibilities of congregational leadership.

Throughout its history South Elkhorn has been fortunate in the quality of its ministers. Lewis Craig, the first pastor, was obviously a man of strong character and a natural leader. John Shackelford's long pastorate and the growth of the church under his leadership speaks well of him. Then to name the ministers that served the church either as pastors or evangelists after it became a part of the Disciple movement is almost to call the roll of the outstanding figures among the second and third generation of Disciple leaders. They include: Barton W. Stone (who with John Gano preached and stayed four days at South Elkhorn on his last visit to Kentucky in 1843), "Raccoon John" Smith, John T. Johnson, John Rogers, Samuel Rogers (who was commissioned by South Elkhorn to evangelize and found churches in the mountain areas of the state), Jacob Creath, Jr., Phillip S. Fall, L. L. Pinkerton, Richard Gano, J. W. McGarvey, Moses E. Lard, Benjamin Franklin, W. T. Hopson, Robert Milligan, Robert Graham, R. Lin Cave, Burriss Jenkins,

Hall Calhoun, W. C. Bower, Roger Noe, A. W. Fortune, and E. E. Snoddy. Johnson and Smith probably converted more people and founded more churches than anyone in Disciple history. Lard and Franklin were the editors of influential papers. McGarvey, Milligan, Graham, Calhoun, Bower, Fortune and Snoddy were all teachers at the College of the Bible (now the Lexington Theological Seminary) and in addition were influential writers and lecturers. Pinkerton, Graham, Cave, and Jenkins served as Presidents of Transylvania University. Fall, Noe and Fortune became the beloved pastors of large churches.

The eight year ministry of E. E. Snoddy, which began in 1914, is remembered by some of the older members and with affection. Snoddy was a brilliant teacher at the College of the Bible whose open spirit and pragmatic approach to religion had a great impact on the students in his classes. For both students and lay people he was able to interpret complex biblical and theological issues in a way that made them exciting, intelligible, and relevant. He was a popular lecturer and preacher.⁴⁰

In 1920 there occurred an utterly tragic event that for a brief time brought national attention to the little community of South Elkhorn. A 10 year old girl, Geneva Hardman, a member of a prominent family in the community and church, was brutally attacked and murdered while on her way to school. The assailant was quickly arrested and jailed in Lexington. Fearing mob action the State Militia was called to take a defensive position around the building in which the prisoner was being held. As expected, a mob formed and confronted the soldiers. In a moment of tension the mob surged forward and in the melee that followed soldiers fired their weapons and six men were killed and several wounded. A detachment of regular troops was then

⁴⁰For a good account of his life, see A. W. Fortune, *Thinking things through with E. E. Snoddy*: St. Louis, the Bethany Press, 1940.

brought in from Louisville and order was restored. The accused man was subsequently tried, found guilty, sentenced to death and was executed in the penitentiary at Eddyville. Thus ended one of the saddest events in the long history of the old church.

In 1922 Snoddy resigned and was followed by Ward Russell, who had one of the longest and most outstanding ministries in the history of South Elkhorn, a ministry that lasted for nearly 30 years, from 1922 until his retirement in 1951. This ministry was shared fully by his wife, Laura, (famous for her big floppy hats), who organized and directed a choir, led the singing, and worked effectively with the youth and women of the congregation. Their son, Augustus, played the piano for services.

The Russell pastorate was more complete than any that had gone before. Most of the ministers before him had come into the community at an agreed upon time — say the first and third Sundays of each month — to conduct worship and preach and perhaps make some calls in the afternoon and sometimes to preside at business meetings. Beyond this they did not do much. Indeed, as we have seen, most of them were teachers or students at the College of the Bible and their major responsibilities were naturally with the school. In contrast, Ward Russell and his wife identified themselves with the people of South Elkhorn, and in turn were accepted as a part of the church and its community.

Russell, a thin, wiry Texan, had studied and taught at the College of the Bible, and had served congregations in Kentucky, Colorado, and Texas. So he brought a rich background of experience to his ministry at South Elkhorn, as well as a genuine pastoral concern for people.

But perhaps the greatest contribution of the Russells to South Elkhorn was in their work with young people. In the 1930s a school room in the old Republican meeting house was renovated and used by a youth group known as the Y

Club. Mrs. Russell also led in forming a missionary organization for young people called the Circle which made a deep impression on its members. An astonishing number of the present leadership of the church are the products of these youth groups. And not a few of them trace their marriages back to them. Mrs. Russell is also well remembered for her work with the women of the church, and for her interest in promoting the church library and good reading. Thus the ministry of the Russells was to the total life of the people of South Elkhorn.

After the retirement of Ward Russell, the church decided to return to the practice of securing part-time ministers from the Seminary. John White served from 1951 to 1952, Charles Manker from 1953 to 1956, Bronson Netterville in 1956-1957, and Manker again from 1957 to 1960. These were young men of promise, and they have all gone on to have distinguished careers.

Then in 1961 the church elected to call a graduating senior from the Seminary, Robert Bradley, as a full-time resident pastor. At the time it seemed like a large undertaking, but it proved to be a wise decision and the church prospered. Bradley served for about four years, from 1961 to 1965, when he resigned to accept a call from a Disciple congregation in Roanoke, Virginia. Bradley was followed by another graduating senior from the Seminary, Tommy Norvell, who served for about six years, from 1965 to 1972, then he resigned to accept a call from the First Christian Church in Owensboro, Kentucky. He was succeeded by Franklin McGuire, a graduate of Transylvania and the Seminary and an experienced minister widely known among Disciples, who served for about ten years — resigning in 1981 to accept a call from the Jeffersonville Christian Church in Louisville. He was then followed by a young graduate of the Seminary, Gerald Shepard, whose promising ministry is just beginning, but who has already achieved distinction as an out-

standing leader.

These are all good and able men, each made a distinctive contribution to the on-going life of South Elkhorn, and each helped the church face the challenge of a growing and expanding Lexington.

In addition, the church produced several ministers, including Charles Traugott, Richard Spellman, and David Rouse. Further, a number of associate student ministers from the Seminary have learned as they served.

The history of a church is notable not only for what is *in* that history but for what *is not* in it as well. For the past century and a half there has been almost no theological controversy in the life of South Elkhorn. This is all the more remarkable when one realizes that during this same period of time the Disciple movement itself underwent two major divisions which resulted in three separate and often mutually hostile churches — The Churches of Christ, the Christian churches, and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), — the latter being the body to which it has adhered. The first division occurred around the turn of the century and centered around such issues as the use of instrumental music in worship, the validity of church conventions and agencies, and just what is involved in restoring New Testament Christianity. The second division occurred during the early and middle years of this century and centered around the practice of open membership (admitting people to membership to the church who have previously been baptized in some way other than by immersion), the validity of missionary organizations, participation in the ecumenical movement, the growth of liberalism, the teaching of historical and critical studies of the Bible in the colleges and seminaries, and cooperation with other Protestant churches on the mission field. At the heart of these conflicts was (and is) the basic question: are we the exclusive New Testament church or are we simply a part of the universal church of Jesus Christ?

The freedom of South Elkhorn from such divisive controversy is also remarkable when one understands that several of the leaders on all sides of these issues were men who served as its ministers at one time or another. L. L. Pinkerton is sometimes described as the first liberal to appear among the Disciples. J. W. McGarvey was a staunch conservative who opposed the use of instrumental music in the worship of the church and battled the "higher critics." Benjamin Franklin was also an embattled conservative who was very influential in the founding of the Churches of Christ, as was Moses E. Lard. Hall L. Calhoun was likewise a conservative who held to the "old paths" and eventually became a prominent preacher among the Churches of Christ. E. E. Snoddy, on the other hand, was a liberal who enjoyed striking out in new directions in religion, while remaining evangelical in his loyalty to Christ.

At this point it may be interesting to note that Calhoun and Snoddy were colleagues on the faculty of the College of the Bible in the years just before and during the first World War. During a part of this time Snoddy, it will be remembered, was the pastor at South Elkhorn. During a part of this time Calhoun served as the minister of the nearby Providence Christian Church, and in 1906 had conducted a revival meeting at South Elkhorn in which 83 members were added to the church.

The theological clash between Calhoun and Snoddy (as well as some of Snoddy's liberal colleagues on the faculty, such as A. W. Fortune and W. G. Bower) finally came to a head in 1917 when Calhoun and a minority of students at the Seminary publically charged Snoddy and his liberal colleagues with teaching "destructive criticism," "German rationalism," evolution, and other heresies. The Transylvania campus was soon in an uproar, with students and faculty badly divided. The charges were finally brought before the college's Board of Trustees. After several days of testimony

and examination the Board exonerated Snoddy and his liberal friends of any wrongdoing, and gave them a vote of confidence. Calhoun then resigned, and eventually ended his days as a prominent Church of Christ preacher in Tennessee. Thus ended the famous "heresy trial" whose central figure was at the the time the pastor of South Elkhorn.

Through all this heated controversy, and the divisions that wracked many a congregation around it, South Elkhorn remained free of doctrinal conflict and committed to the Disciples of Christ. Much of this steadiness may be attributed to the confidence the people had in Snoddy and the tolerant spirit of Ward Russell. At any rate, South Elkhorn has remained loyal to the Disciple principle of working with other churches in the spirit of Christian unity. Happily, this ecumenical fellowship also includes Catholic Christians, and in recent years, through the influence of its choir director, Vance Kitchen, who also serves as choir director for the large Roman Catholic parish of Christ the King, South Elkhorn has been happy to join with the Catholic choir in annual services celebrating Christmas and Easter. Another sign of this ecumenical spirit occurred in about 1960 when the church quietly adopted the policy of open membership.

Thus, after much theological controversy in its early years in Virginia and Kentucky over such issues as predestination, the validity of creeds and confessions of faith, the authority of church associations, and the Scriptural way of salvation, South Elkhorn pursued a rather tranquil course that has avoided theological conflict.

But this raises a question: in the light of this history of theological silence, what, if anything, can be said about the religious beliefs of the people of South Elkhorn? Does such silence indicate indifference? Or ignorance? Or confusion?

It is risky to generalize very much on this subject but perhaps a few things may be said.

Judging by the hymns they sing, the sermons they hear, the lessons they discuss in Sunday school classes, and the prayers that are offered at the Lord's Table, the people of South Elkhorn are theologically in the mainstream of traditional Christian beliefs. They embrace no startling innovations in doctrine. They proclaim no unusual deviations from what most Christians have believed through the centuries. They exalt no book but the Bible. They recognize no Lord but Christ. And in spite of warnings from those who say that creeds are necessary if traditional doctrines are to be preserved, the creedless Disciples at South Elkhorn have remained remarkably orthodox in their beliefs, on the basis of taking "the Bible only as their guide to faith and practice."

Briefly, it can be said that the people of South Elkhorn believe in a personal God who hears and answers prayer, but who is also the transcendent creator and ruler of the universe. If their faith in Him could be articulated it would probably center on His steadfast love and mercy. A favorite verse of Scripture would undoubtedly be that one from the Gospel of John that begins "For God so loved the world..." (John 3:16).

They confess a simple but profound faith in Jesus as the Christ the Son of God, and they have accepted Him, and committed their lives to Him, as their Lord and Saviour. They believe in His divine birth, His religious and moral teachings, in the redemption from sin and death that He brings to all humankind through His suffering on the cross and His resurrection from death.

They may have, like many of their fellow Christians, neglected the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, but they believe in the active and redeeming presence of God in the world, and especially in the church.

They cherish the Bible as containing the inspired Word of God, though they probably don't read it as much as they think they should. They recognize the validity of other forms

of baptism, but practice only believer's baptism by immersion. They celebrate the Lord's Supper as the heart of their worship each Lord's day. This service is conducted by lay Elders and Deacons, and it is very meaningful to them, although they have never tried to define that meaning too closely, and are content to leave it as a sacred mystery. It is open to all Christians.

They believe in cooperating with other Disciple congregations, though they do not know much about the larger structure of the Disciples church. They support the idea of Christian unity, but are also deeply attached to their home congregation, and its freedom from control by any other ecclesiastical body.

They have a rather rational and practical approach to religion. They mistrust emotionalism and shy away from any emphasis on feelings. They are a pretty staid group of people.

They do not have much to say about the end of the world or the return of Christ to the earth. They tend to be post-millennial rather than pre-millennial in outlook—that is, they would stress that Christ is now present in the world, and can lead it to a golden age of peace, rather than believe that the world is facing a final crisis in which Christ will return to rule for a thousand years. They do believe in life after death, and bury their dead in that hope. They also tend to say little about original sin or total depravity. While not doubting the reality of sin, there is much more stress on human freedom and responsibility. Freedom is indeed a big word in the vocabulary of faith at South Elkhorn and means primarily the freedom of every individual, under God, to work out his or her salvation and to worship God according to the dictates of that conscience.

In evaluating this sampler, it must be said that there is great diversity of thought in the congregation at South Elkhorn. Like most suburban churches, its people are from

many different religious backgrounds. In its membership are both conservatives and liberals and various shades in between.

But the people of South Elkhorn are not ignorant, nor are they indifferent to religious thought. Underneath the placid surface of their religious life there are some deep currents of belief. There is also, it must be admitted, some confusion—but not more so than is true of most modern Christians who must try to live in the world of the Bible and the world of the 20th century. Perhaps the final word here must be that while there are some deeply held convictions in the minds and hearts of this people, there is also a certain wistful yearning, a seeking for more light in their faith. Like Christians of every age and time, they are seekers, they are a pilgrim people. "The journey is our home."

Facing New Frontiers

For most of its long history, South Elkhorn was a rather typical country church, family centered and traditional in outlook. Then, after World War II, it began to change and while still keeping something of its rural flavor, was transformed into a suburban congregation.

This new role was thrust upon it by some profound changes that were taking place in the world around it. Nearby Lexington began to grow rapidly and to expand dramatically. In the 1950s it began to attract some large industries. It became a medical center for central and eastern Kentucky with a new medical school. Corporate headquarters were established. High rise buildings began to loom up on the skyline. Two major interstate highways crossed at Lexington which further stimulated the tourist and motel construction. The horse industry also grew and continued to make the city world famous. A downtown civic center and

arena, plus new hotels, provided accommodations for national conventions and a home for the University of Kentucky basketball teams.

As a result of these and other factors in the growth of Lexington, subdivisions mushroomed, reaching out to South Elkhorn and beyond. Some of the people who moved into new houses were incorporated into the church. Instead of being made up largely of farmers and their families, South Elkhorn's membership increasingly included people who worked in industries, offices, classrooms, laboratories, hospitals, construction sites, business firms, sales promotion, as well as a growing number of retired people. Women as well as men made up this work force. Highly mobile, its members included those who could expect to be transferred to another city after three or four years. They were mobile, too, in the sense that they came to South Elkhorn from all over the city and from surrounding towns. Nor was it the only church in the neighborhood; within a decade seven new churches (a primitive Baptist, a Southern Baptist, a Unitarian, a Missionary Alliance, an Assembly of God, a United Methodist, and a Christian), made their appearance in the area. Competition was now a fact of life for South Elkhorn, and in spite of the influx of people that moved into its area South Elkhorn did not undergo much growth.

The reasons for this lack of growth are no doubt manifold and complex. Some that easily come to mind are complacency, a theology that does not stress individual conversion or that people are lost and need to be saved, and that underlines God's love rather than his judgment on sin, a lack of hoopla and campaigns to attract the masses, an emphasis on nurture rather than numbers, a certain formalism and staidness which has only a limited appeal, and a desire on the part of its members to keep South Elkhorn a rather small and intimate fellowship. In all fairness, it should be said, however, that the older families have made newcomers wel-

come and that there is now a new concern for evangelistic outreach. It should also be pointed out that in recent years the Christian church (Disciples of Christ) has nationally sustained a loss of membership, as have most mainline Protestant bodies.

Here it might also be pointed out that in order to protect its immediate environment, and to give future generations the option of becoming a large church with ample grounds, the church in the late 1970s purchased a tract of ten acres that adjoined the approximately one acre church property at a cost of \$60,000.

The dramatic changes that have marked the life of South Elkhorn in recent years are the result of a scientific and technological revolution that has changed the way people live and the way they think. This revolution has resulted in a process of industrialization and urbanization that has changed not only Lexington, but the United States and profoundly affected all people of the earth.

A new day was dawning for the world, and it was a time of danger and opportunity without parallel in human history. In this new day South Elkhorn is called upon to minister to people who must go forward into the unknown just as it had once ministered to a people facing a wilderness. Clearly, it was a pioneer church on a new frontier.

What were, specifically these new frontiers?

First, as we have seen, was the new world created by science and technology. The world has become an interdependent community. The church must help its people think in global terms and to be concerned with the well-being of all human kind.

Second, there are new frontiers of thought. Science gives us the image of an incredibly vast universe, of which our planet is but a small part. It was given to this generation to be the first to begin the exploration of this universe. This new world of thought must be related in an intelligent way to

the biblical world, the Gospel and the Christian faith. Third, technology has given us not only an interdependent world community, but the power to destroy civilization and perhaps even the earth and all its people. The church that once taught its members to face the terror of Indian attack, must now help them to face the terror of nuclear holocaust. Above all, and as never before, it must teach them to pray and work for peace.

Fourth, the church whose people once settled a beautiful and bountiful land, must now help them find ways of conserving the diminishing resources of soil, water, and minerals for the sake of future generations.

Then there is the frontier of an increasingly diverse population in the United States. The church must seek to find ways of ministering to all members of the human race, and to uphold "liberty and justice for all."

Finally, there is a new frontier of ministry to people who face the unique tensions and pressures of this busy, competitive, fast-moving, noisy and productive age. Many struggle with loneliness. Many also are plunged into depression and a sense of meaninglessness. Families buckle under the strain of modern living in unprecedented numbers. In the face of such stress, the church must seek to strengthen the family, to counsel the troubled, to provide a sense of dignity and worth to every human life, and to be a caring and redemptive community.

In the light of these and other frontiers of life in the latter years of the 20th century, what can be said about the future of South Elkhorn? Not much. At least not much can be said with any assurance. The one thing that we can be sure of is that there will be surprising developments.

So far as the church is concerned it will have to face some basic questions. Will South Elkhorn remain a relatively small congregation, or will it seek to be a large church like some of its neighbors? What use will it make of the ten acre

tract it purchased? What changes will it make in the physical plant? Will South Elkhorn and the Christian church (Disciples of Christ) enter into some kind of union with the United Church of Christ, the churches in the Consultation on Church Union, or other Christian groups? Will it help to found other Disciple congregations to serve a growing Lexington? And how will it be affected by developments in the world such as war, famine, or economic depression?

These are only some of the questions that might be asked, the answers to which will profoundly affect the future of the little brick church by the side of the road.

In any event, if the old church house could speak it would tell of many who prayed and sang and believed and waited for a word from the Lord. It has seen a lot of suffering and joy, penitence and forgiveness, faith, hope, and love and it will continue to minister to the age-old needs of the human spirit. Its walls are hallowed.

And so we come to the end of our story. Actually, it is only the beginning of a plot which will continue to unfold. "The past is prelude." The people of God are a pilgrim people. The journey is our home.

Selected Bibliography

- Boles, J. B. *Religion in antebellum Kentucky*. Lexington, Ky. 1976.
- Chinn, G. M. *Kentucky: Settlement and statehood, 1750-1800*. Frankfort, Ky., 1975.
- Clark, T. D. *A history of Kentucky*. Lexington, Ky., 1960.
- Coleman, J. W. *Historic Kentucky*. Lexington, Ky., 1967.
- Coleman, J. W. *Slavery times in Kentucky*. Chapel Hill, N.C., 1940.
- Dick, E. *Dixie frontier*. New York, 1948.
- Filson, J. *The discovery, settlement, and present state of Kentucke*. Reprint, New York, 1962.
- Fortune, A. W. *The disciples in Kentucky*. Lexington, Ky., 1932.
- Kincaid, R. L. *The wilderness road*. Middlesboro, Ky., 1973.
- Lumpkin, W. L. *Baptist foundations in the south: Tracing through the separates the influence of the Great Awakening, 1754-1787*. Nashville, Tn., 1961.
- "Minute Books of the South Elkhorn Christian Church, 1817-1933," 2 volumes. Typewritten copies in the library of the Lexington Theological Seminary.
- Perrin, W. H. *History of Fayette County, Kentucky*. Louisville, Ky., 1926.

Ranck, G. W. *The Traveling Church*. Louisville, Ky., 1910. This valuable little book has been reprinted in the summer, 1981 issue of the *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*.

Russell, W. *Church life in the blue grass, 1783-1933*. Lexington, Ky., 1933.

Sonne, N. H. *Liberal Kentucky, 1780-1828*. Lexington, Ky., 1968.

Spencer, J. H. *A history of Kentucky baptists*, 2 volumes. Lafayette, Tn., 1886; republished 1976.

Stevenson, D. B. *Lexington Theological Seminary, 1865-1965*. Lexington, Ky., 1964.

Taylor, J. *A History Of Ten Baptist Churches*. Frankfort, Ky., 1823.

Townsend, W. H. *Lincoln And His Wife's Home Town*. Indianapolis, In., 1929.

Tucker, S. E., & McAllister, L. G. *Journey in faith: A history of the Christian church (Disciples of Christ)*. St. Louis, Mo., 1975.

Appendix A.

A complete list of the members of the traveling church does not exist. However, Ward Russell's "Church Life In The Bluegrass" (p. 44) provides a partial list of the members "prior to 1800," that is apparently based on an original source. The list is as follows:

Richard Allen	Morgan Morgans
Lewis Craig	Elizabeth Morris
Toliver Craig	James Neal
Joseph Craig	George Neal
William Cave	Timothy Parish
Benjamin Craig	John Conner
William Hickman	John Hays
Asher	John Haydon
John Shackelford	Tho Ammons
A. Williams	Andy Hampton
J. White	S. Craig
J. Lucas	Jno. Keller
J. Kitter	William Sullivan
S. Ayres	Wilson Hunt
John Higbee	Abraham Hedo
W. Hughes	Hart
J. Parker	William Hickerson
John Taylor	James Lockett
John Dupey	Shadrach Moore
James Rucker	Charles Marshall
Richard Curd	Mitchum
George S. Smith	John Mosley
John Staydent	John Todd
John Price	Isaac Wells
Shadrach Moore	Abraham Bowman
Dedman	Andrew Thompson
William Dawson	John Young
Benj. Martin	Robert Hyman
Morton	Lowell Wolfolk

David Bryant
 Joseph Bledsoe
 Barrow
 Burbridge
 Buckner
 Carr
 Dudley
 John Darnaby
 James Parrish
 Robinson
 Shipp
 George S. Smith
 Robert Asher
 Joseph Faulkner
 Evan Price
 Samuel Craig
 William Ellis
 Josiah Elam
 Elly

Austin Eastin
 Garrard
 Goodloe
 Jacob Hiatt
 John Payne
 Pitman
 John Proctor
 Preston
 Shotwell
 Mason Singleton
 Saunders
 Walton
 Dudley Ware
 Steward
 Watkins
 Woolridge
 Thompson
 Edmund Waller
 Ahijah Wood

APPENDIX B.

Church membership lists are notoriously difficult to establish with any degree of clarity or satisfaction. At South Elkhorn, for example, there are individuals who are active in its life but whose membership, for various reasons, remains with another congregation. On the other hand, there are individuals, whose names are on its rolls, who have not been involved in its life for many years. Nevertheless, with all their limitations, church membership rolls are useful, and so we list the members of the South Elkhorn Christian Church as of January 1, 1983.

Andrew L. Aavatsmark
 Ivar P. Aavatsmark
 Julie A. Aavatsmark
 Mary Chloe Cisco Aavatsmark
 Kenneth Anderson
 Todd Anderson
 Bettie Welch Armstrong
 Darra E. Armstrong
 James E. Armstrong
 K. Gail Dillingham Arnold
 Barry R. Atkins
 Mark A. Atkins
 Norman R. Atkins, Jr.
 Susan Lathrem Atkins
 Virginia Atkins
 Connie Silvanik Aubrey
 Elizabeth Baumann
 Joyce Linn Beckett
 Marian Bell
 Walter Bell
 Linda McMurry Betterman
 Anna Mae Blackwell
 June Kerns Bowsher
 Samuel F. Bowsher, III
 Sharon Bradford

David G. Briggs
 Julie A. Briggs
 Phyllis Terry Briggs
 Stanley G. Briggs
 Betsy Bradshaw Bryan
 Robert C. Bryan
 H. Elaine Bryden
 John Reed Bryden
 John Rennie Bryden
 Ernest E. Bullard
 John R. Burrier
 Edna Lowry Burris
 Ernest B. Byington
 Iris C. Byington
 Sharon Williams Campbell
 Hugh S. Carnes
 Juanita Tipton Carnes
 John Henry Carroll
 Fred Cecil
 Edwin Christian
 Faye Ethington Cobb
 Bessie Wilson Cole
 David Cole
 Felix P. Cole
 Leslie Elwood Cole

Lesley Ann Cole
 Lucille Grow Cole
 Edna Bruner Compton
 George M. Compton
 Narcissa Coons
 Grace Bullard Copeland
 Kimberly A. Copeland
 Philip E. Copeland
 Mary Elizabeth Gooch Couchman
 Billa Jarrell Coy
 Jasrrell R. Coy
 Ray A. Coy
 Denise Deaton Craycraft
 Larry Crouch
 Jamie Duff Crouch
 Ann Curd
 P. Clayton Curd
 Thomas J. Curtis
 Donald Cutter
 Deniese Dabson
 Dineen Dabson
 Howard L. Dabson
 Rose Marie Dabson
 Frank Dalby
 Lillian Searcy Dalby
 Lillian F. Davis
 Mary Grace Gooch Davis
 Dane L. Deaton
 Darrin Deaton
 Hilma Barkley Deaton
 Lillie Pearl Johnson Deaton
 Vernon L. Deaton
 William Deaton
 Dorothy Downing DeMoisey
 Wanda Pettyjohn Dillingham
 Charles G. Eades, Sr.

James M. Eades
 Lula Moore Eades
 Wanda Burke Eades
 Curtis D. Ehrmantraut
 Janet Miller Ehrmantraut
 Amos Ethington
 Catherine Traugott Ethington
 Peggy Moore Fields
 Kathy B. Fields
 Mark Fields
 Nancye Hughes Fields
 Geraldine Spears Fritz
 Frances Waller Gamboe
 Allen Garner
 Ellen Garner
 E. Jean Gatewood
 Richards S. Gatewood
 J. Stewart Gatewood, Jr.
 Phyllis Gavey Gay
 Betty Gibbs
 Matthew Gibbs
 F. E. Gilliam
 Erik S. Goes
 Susan Goes
 Virginia Goes
 Bessie Owen Gooch
 John Graham
 Anthony Green
 Diane McMahan Gregory
 James S. Haag
 Katherine Copeland Haag
 Melissa S. Haag
 Wendell R. Haag
 B. Kent Hammel, Jr.
 Bruce K. Hammel
 Nancy S. Hammel

William Hammons
 Eva Lee Johnson Hardman
 Frances Simpson Hardman
 Hugh R. Hardman
 Joe C. Hardman
 Tupper J. Hardman
 Jessee H. Harned
 Anne Dora McGregor Hart
 Mildred Oliver Haynes
 Roy Haynes
 Charles Headley
 Richard J. Hempel
 Gordon A. Hewitt
 Nellie W. Hewitt
 William T. Hinson
 Alma Holley Hopkins
 C. Wayne Hopkins
 E. Arnett Huffman
 Edna Traugott Huffman
 J. Edward Huffman
 Kathleen Grady Huffman
 Nell M. Hughes
 Betsey Couchman Ilfeld
 Connie Cole Innes
 Theodore L. Innes
 Jean Graham Johnson
 Suzanne Morgan Johnson
 Mary Florence Huffman Jones
 Jeffery Jordan
 Paul Jordan
 Tag Jordan
 Thomas P. Jordan
 Juanita Lunsford Keller
 Lynn Kelley
 Joe Kines
 Oneida Kines

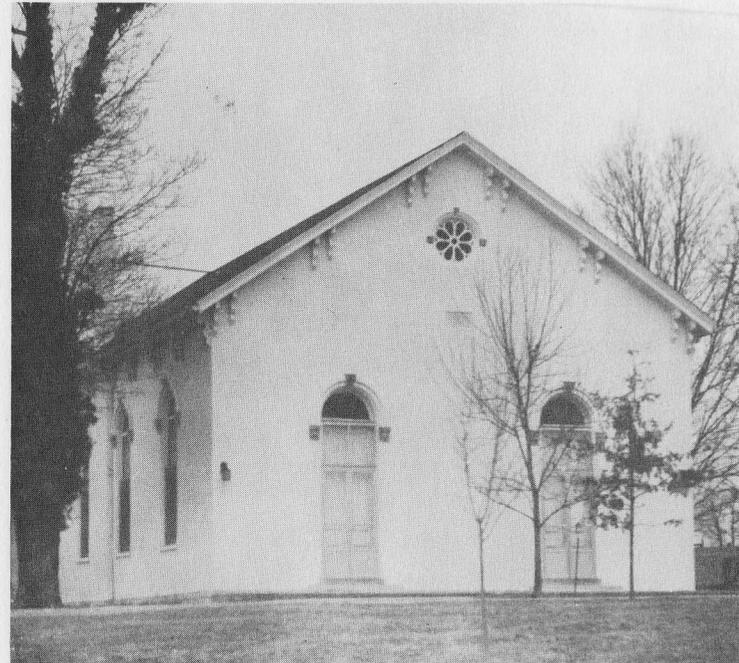
Robert F. Kinnard
 Michael D. Lathrem
 M. Elodie Murphy Lawson
 Donald L. Leach
 Emily Owings McCaw
 J. Edward McCaw
 Edward McGarvey
 Helen Cannon McGarvey
 Anne Hardman McGregor
 Douglas B. McGregor
 Evelyn McGregor
 Helen H. McGregor
 Malcolm B. McGregor
 Joyce D. McGuire
 Karen Kelly McGuire
 Kevin R. McGuire
 Melanie F. McGuire
 Waller McGuire
 Anna Thomas McMahan
 Edward Del McMahan
 Edward McMahan
 Erda Belle McMahan
 Luke T. McMahan
 Mark D. McMahan
 Matthew E. McMahan
 Betty Kinnard McMurry
 Dale McMurry
 E. Louise Traugott McMurry
 Larry T. McMurry
 Jean Mallory
 Marion Mallory
 Rebecca Mallory
 SuAnn Mallory
 Clifford Meece
 Hallie Downing Meyers
 Tracy McMurry Miller

Eloise Barkley Moeltner
 Mary Neville Moore
 Nancy E. Moore
 Ronald E. Moore
 Geneva Moore
 Michael T. Moore
 Ann Edelen Morgan
 David A. Morgan
 Marion T. Morgan
 Steven A. Morgan
 Dorothy Moseley
 Mary Tom Parks Moynahan
 Joseph H. Murphy, Jr.
 Mary Genevieve Townsend Murphy
 Patricia Eades Murphy
 Richard V. Murphy
 C. Shane Neal
 E. Maurice Neal
 Martha Ann Cox Neal
 Melissa M. Neal
 P. Carol Ballard Neal
 P. Shaun Neal
 Patty Haydon Neal
 R. Kevin Neal
 Richard E. Neal
 Robert D. Neal
 William D. Neal
 DeAnn Olmstead
 Dean Olmstead
 Judith Olmstead
 Paul Oliver
 Elizabeth Young Owen
 Howard G. Owen
 Marie Salyers Palmer
 Grace Lowry Parks
 Harry Parks
 W. Earl Parks
 William T. Parks
 Garnett Patterson
 J. Douglas Pennebaker
 James L. Perkins
 J. W. Perkins
 Mabel Perkins
 Donald Pettyjohn
 Lee Pettyjohn
 E. Earl Pfanstiel
 Marilyn Dixon Pfanstiel
 Susan K. Pfanstiel
 William E. Pfanstiel
 Maggie Yount Polen
 James R. Pope
 John Pope
 Kathryn Holdridge Pope
 Richard M. Pope
 Elizabeth Parks Price
 J. William Ready
 Suzanne Ready
 Craig Robertson
 Kelly Robertson
 Jo Brent Robertson
 William C. Robertson, Jr.
 Kenneth J. Rolfes
 Rhoda M. Rolfes
 Lois Ross
 Sharon Ross
 Robert Rouse
 Joan Duvall Russell
 Michael Russell
 Agnes Tucker Sandford
 James F. Sandford
 James F. Sandford, Jr.
 Kimberly C. Sandford

Carolyn Sandusky
 H. Clay Sandusky
 Henry S. Sandusky
 Mary Blanche Wilson Sandusky
 Shirley Hopkins Sandusky
 Fleta Gray Saunders
 Candace Ruby Shepard
 Gerald L. Shepard
 Claudene Moore Simpson
 Ella Stewart Simpson
 Leslie E. Simpson
 Leslie Ward Simpson
 Norma Coyle Simpson
 W. Franklin Simpson
 W. Franklin Simpson, III
 Cheryl Skeen
 Milton Skeen
 Russell J. Slone
 Russell J. Slone, Jr.
 S. Bette Slone
 Sallie Green Slone
 Sandra Lowrey Smith
 Marie Stofer Smith
 Carol Sue Southworth
 Dorothy Alexander Southworth
 Drexel M. Southworth
 Eula McIntosh Spears
 Russell D. Spears
 Susan D. Spears
 Willis R. Spears
 Jennifer J. Spohn
 Judith Caddell Spohn
 Jill Stanley
 Jean Stewart
 Robert Stewart
 Susan Stewart
 Ruth Roop Stofer
 Nancy Storey
 Homer Lee Sutton
 Kenneth Tackett
 Flonnia Taylor
 Paula Coy Taylor
 Rhea Taylor
 Peggy Tucker Thomas
 Dawn Thompson
 Diana McGlothlin Thompson
 Lynn Thompson
 Teresa Simpson Thompson
 Raymond W. Thore
 Dennis Tolson
 Grace Stanley Tolson
 Selbert Tucker
 Beverly Sandusky Underwood
 Kendal Veatch
 Marilyn Veatch
 Mary Harned Versaw
 R. Lester Versaw
 Daniel Vincent
 Robert Vincent
 Gary Waits
 Dorothy Traugott Waits
 Richard Waits
 Jo Ann Walker
 Maurice Walker
 C. Carl Wardle, Jr.
 Diane Watson Wardle
 Stephanie Wardle
 Doris Cromley Welch
 James A. Welch
 Bessie Wiggs
 Janie Schultz Williams
 David Williams

Kathy Williams
Susie D. Williams
Nancy Williams
Terry Williams
Amy G. Wilson
Edward C. Wilson
Erin L. Wilson
Graham S. Wilson
Gregory L. Wilson
J. Jacqueline Lewis Wilson
James Robert Wilson, Sr.
Kevin C. Wilson
Philip L. Wilson
Clarice Penny Yates
K. Joyce Yates
Norma Yost
Ronald Yost
Margaret Young

Views of the church in recent years



Views of the church in recent years

