

# CLASS 5

## Protestant Growth on the Frontier

- Enlightenment Theology
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> 'Great Awakening'
- Voluntary Societies



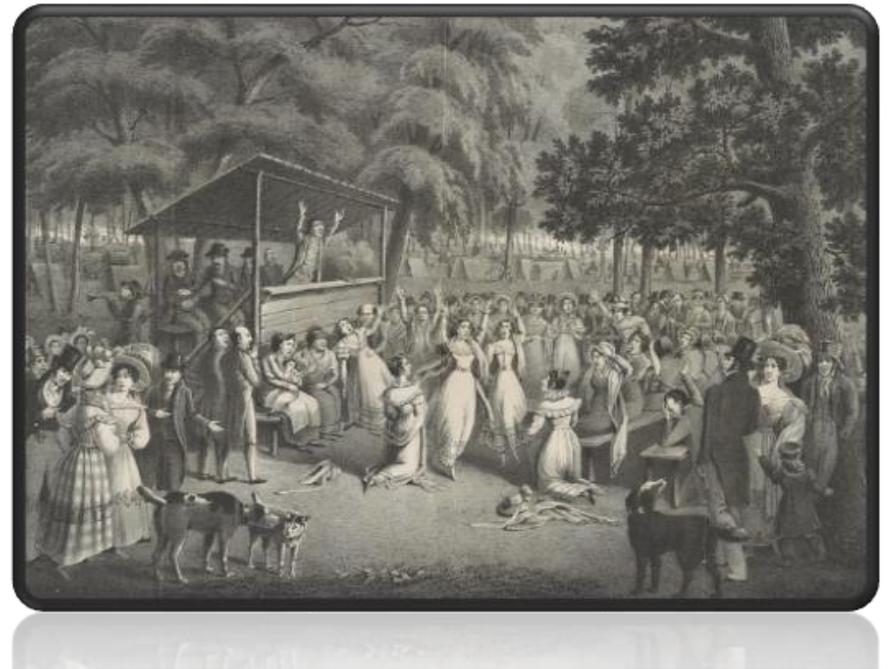
# Enlightenment Theological Shifts

- A shift away from Calvinist ideas of dependence on God for salvation, the necessity of theocratic government, and “one true” church
  - Less church-centric view affected practical membership practices
- A shift toward “common-sense” thinking about religion and morality
  - The ability of every individual to determine and obey the truth (instead of the direct action of God)
  - The existence of a common, innate morality (instead of innate immorality)
- Applications of Enlightenment principles to religious and moral behavior become vital to discussions of moral and social order in a nation with no official church



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Great Awakening (1795-1810)

- War, rebuilding (local and national), and expansion caused a sharp decline in church participation (<10% national membership) and spiritual interest
- New religious fervor kickstarted at Cane Ridge (KY) Revival, 1801
  - Week-long camp meeting hosted by Barton W. Stone's Presbyterian church
  - 10-20,000 attendees; 18+ preachers from Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist churches
  - As many as 3 sermons preached at once
  - Records of hysterical behavior—jerking, running, dancing, laughing, and “the barking exercise”
- Numerous churches founded; renewed general interest in religion



# Revival (Camp) Meetings

- Purpose: to stir up believers to action and convert unsaved
- 10+ hours of preaching, prayer, and devotion
- Participants lived onsite in tents
- Often ended on a Sunday with a Communion service
- Important social event for local populations with hard lives
- Crossed (some) denominational boundaries
- Forerunner of modern gospel meetings and denominational revivals



# Discussion Question

Why do you think people found the revival meetings such a powerful and compelling experience? How did such an emotional experience produce such lasting, genuine results?

“Whatever be the cause, the effect is certain, that through the state of Tennessee, parts of Mississippi, Missouri, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, these excitements have produced a palpable change in the habits and manners of the people. The gambling and drinking shops are now deserted; and the people that used to congregate there now go to the religious meetings.” – Timothy Flint, 1820s

# Voluntary Societies

- Purpose: to combat indifference and hostility to church and religion
- Funded by voluntary donations from churches and individuals
- Emphasized religion through
  - Distributing Bibles (American Bible Society)
  - Moral behavior (American Society for the Promotion of Temperance)
  - Religiously-affiliated schools (Society for the Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education)
    - DePauw, 1837 (Methodist); Ohio Wesleyan, 1842 (Methodist); Notre Dame, 1844 (Catholic); Baylor, 1845 (Baptist)
  - Preaching abroad (American Board for Foreign Missions)
- Result: A “tamed rationalism” that stopped short of Jeffersonian deism while achieving social progress and civilization



# Discussion Question

Based on the Records from the American Bible Society reading, how do you see Enlightenment and common-sense principles expressed in the various missions the voluntary societies set for themselves? Why do you think they were, generally speaking, successful?