

Christianity Moves Westward

He gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers.—
Ephesians 4:11

In the early 1800s there were many influences on the churches in the United States. Some of these were the westward movement, the new immigration, and the Civil War. Many divisions occurred as people left established churches and started new ones. Missionary societies were formed and were often interdenominational. In 1816 the American Bible Society was founded and distributed Bibles to even the remotest areas.

In 1786 the Methodists brought to the United States the idea of religious instruction for children. By 1816, only thirty years later, Sunday Schools were found in every section of the country.

As the West was being settled, there was growing need for religious leaders. Many denominations founded schools for religious education where future priests and ministers were trained.

Evangelists and missionaries became part of this move to the West. Evangelists are those who preach the gospel. They are Protestant ministers or ordinary people who speak at special services, often moving about to different places. Missionaries also preach the gospel, often in newly settled regions or in foreign countries. As a rule, they also do educational and hospital work.

The early nineteenth century also saw the beginning of camp meetings. These became a common practice in American evangelism and were held in every section of the West.

The immigrants coming from Europe and the large number of

people moving west caused the rapid growth of many new religious groups. Some of these were Mormons (known as Latter Day Saints), Adventists, Christian Scientists, and later the Jehovah's Witnesses. Evangelist Dwight Moody carried on Christian work among the Civil War soldiers.

Many churches, in the South as well as the North, felt an obligation to the blacks who had been freed from slavery, so they set up schools to provide religious instruction. Eventually the blacks organized their own churches.

These fulfill the words of the text at the start of this lesson and are examples of how God's word was brought to the people.



Original Photo-Drama slide

Missionaries preached the gospel in newly settled areas and in foreign countries.