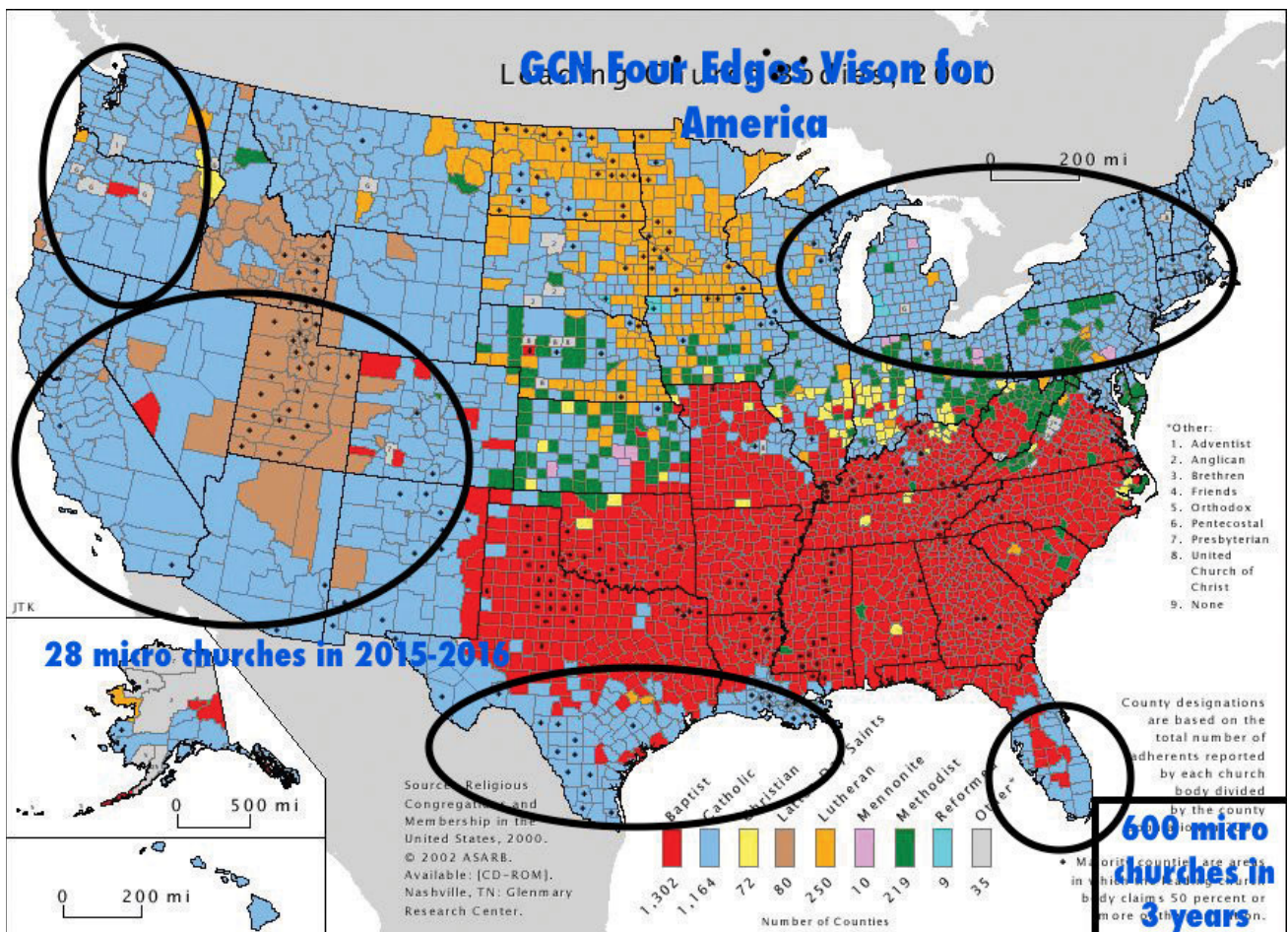


Case Study from Early America - Sandy Creek Baptist Micro-Church Movement - by Jay Judson



Have you ever noticed the two dates on the flag of North Carolina? On both May 20, 1775 and April 12, 1776 North Carolina colonists declared their independence from Great Britain. The May 20, 1775 date happened over a full year before New England

Revolutionaries caught up with the Southerners on July 4, 1776. This Southern thirst for democracy started twenty years earlier in a tiny church on the frontier, at Sandy Creek Meeting House near present day Liberty, North Carolina. As sociologist Robert Woodberry correctly pointed out, the gospel and Biblical literacy among the poor oppressed masses are forerunners to democracy.



From 1755-1825 over 2,000 churches multiplied across 13 American states, and 4 countries. Apostolic leader Shubal Stearns trained a handful of people at Sandy Creek who network of apostolic catalytic leaders started churches from the Chesapeake Bay to the Mississippi River. Shubal's fourth generation trainees started illegal secret micro-churches among African slaves who started black baptist churches in Jamaica, the Bahamas, Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone, West Africa. The Sandy Creek movement is the reason why there is a baptist church on nearly every corner of the southeast U.S.



"Tidence Lane Preaching at Buffalo Ridge, Tennessee, in 1780", Tidence and many other early settlers in what became the state of Tennessee were persecuted religious refugees. Both Tennessee and Kentucky were started by persecuted Baptists.

Sandy-Creek-governor North Carolina Colonial Governor Tryon's efforts to force Baptists into the state run Anglican church of England led to the Regulator's Rebellion that led to 6,000 baptist refugees fleeing over the mountains into what later became Kentucky and Tennessee. Baptists were forced to meet in underground house churches in oppressive Anglican controlled Virginia, Spanish Catholic controlled Mississippi, and Missouri. Sandy Creek Baptists were then known for extremely emotional, often noisy worship and preaching. Morgan Edwards, a visiting reformed Baptist minister from Philadelphia was first very disturbed at the excess of emotion at the Sandy Creek worship services but became more cordial when he witnessed the fruit of these tiny frontier believers. Healings were common and even exorcisms as Sandy Creekers practiced the laying on of hands. Both women and men were appointed as elders. They trained leaders through Paul-Timothy style chains. There were almost no salaried shepherds, no expensive church buildings, no Cooperative Program, no Sunday Schools, no mission agencies, and no conventions, yet these farmer-preachers multiplied and led their country to Christ. Sandy Creeker John Leland even helped Thomas Jefferson write the Constitution, especially the part about protecting the church from the State controlled Angelican church.

The Sandy Creek Baptist Church Story is a prophetic word to the American church. "This is what the LORD says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, 'We will not walk in it.'

Jeremiah 6:16

Below are just a small sample of the rapidly multiplying networks (what became known as associations) of new churches ignited by the leaders of the Sandy Creek movement. Henry Blackaby and Claude King pointed

out in Fresh Encounter, "Revivals are for the converted and Spiritual Awakening occur among the lost unchurched." Sandy Creek has been labeled a "Revival" by historians however it should be categorized as a "Spiritual Awakening."

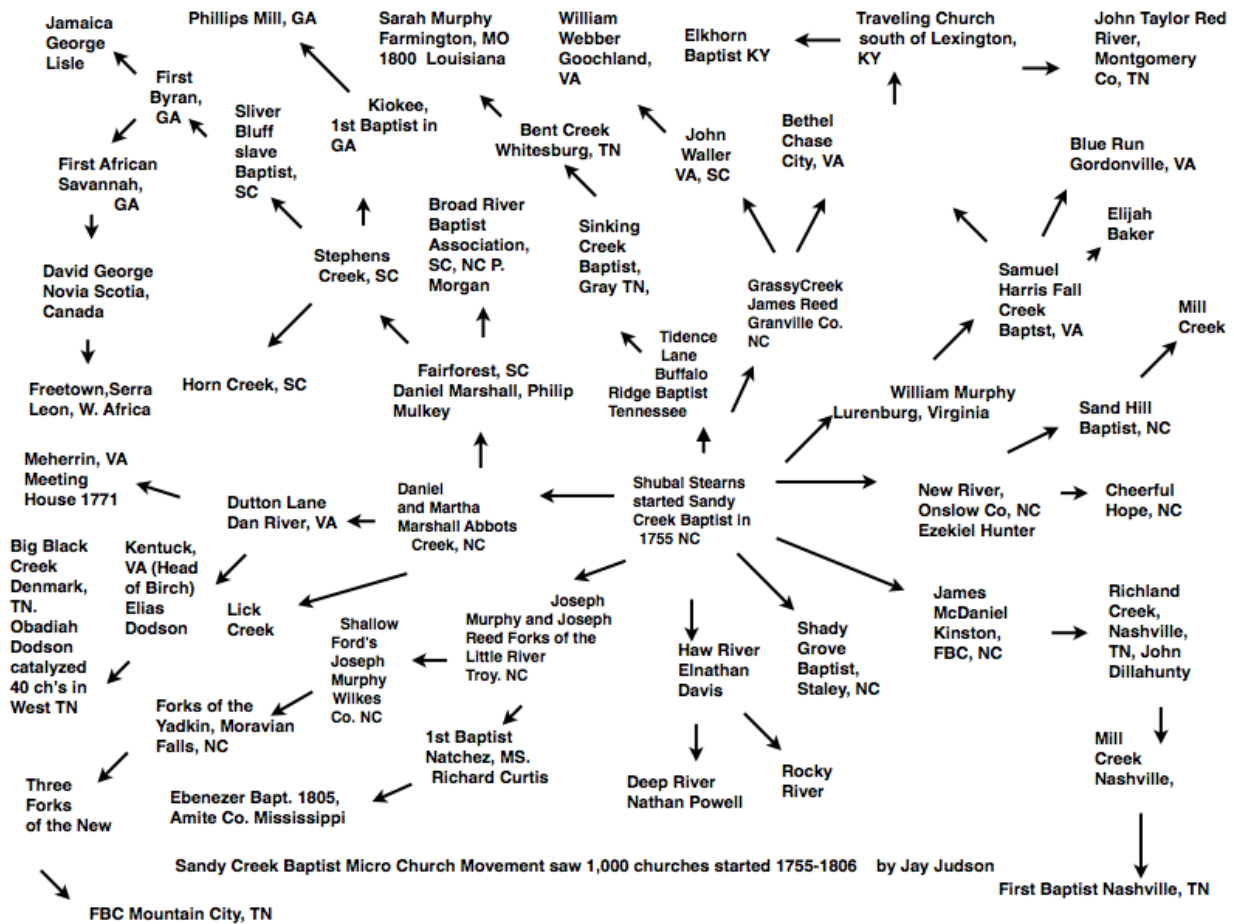
It is my assertion that Micro Church Movements are Spiritual Awakenings among unevangelized sinners that often proceed what has been called "Revivals" by 20-40 years. Micro Church Movements are precursors to revival of God's people.

Revivals do not just miraculously appear, I can prove through various historical case studies that Revival most often comes as a result of large amounts of the word of God getting into the hearts of unchurched families. This most often occurs in their homes.

Sandy Creek was the mother of the Separate Baptist (which) in 17 years, spread daughter and grand daughter churches from the Chesapeake Bay; northward into Pennsylvania and westward to the Mississippi River. In it's 17 years it became the mother, grandmother, and great grandmother to 42 churches from which sprang 125 ministers." Baptist historians, Lumpkin and Morgan Edwards were referring to the first and second generations of new churches but not to the third, fourth and fifth generation of Sandy Creek churches.

Historian William Lumpkin, "judged that a definite missionary strategy was planned by the leadership as Shubal Stearns worked primarily in eastern North Carolina and to the west of Sandy Creek; and Stearns brother-in-law Daniel Marshall itinerated to the north; Philip Mulkey preached primarily in the east and southeast. Samuel Harris, "the Apostle of Virginia" catalyzed a large network of underground micro churches. One of the members of this underground house church movement John Leland petitioned

Thomas Jefferson who faught for the right of these oppressed and persecuted believers when he wrote the U.S. constitution



For a fuller picture of the generational multiplication of Sandy Creek click link below

https://mapsengine.google.com/map/edit?hl=en&authuser=0&mid=zdeTwc_fslhs.kydfAMMKm-oU

Nine Rights of the Sandy Creek Baptist Micro Church Movement

1. Baptism
2. the Lord's Supper
3. love feasts
4. laying on of hands
5. anointing the sick
6. washing feet
7. the right hand of fellowship - rite related to church fellowship and discipline.
8. the kiss of charity - rite related to church fellowship and discipline.
9. devoting children

Rather than the formal classroom seminary model of church leadership training Sandy Creekers used Paul-Timothy mentoring chains as the primary form of leadership training. One out of 20 leaders would keep a library that other farmer-preachers would borrow from and they informally discussed theology and best practices with their mentors much in the same way that Paul trained Timothy in Ephesus and Titus on the isle of Crete.

Morgan Edwards witnessed that the Sandy Creek Baptists would not begin their Association meetings without feeling the leading of the Holy Spirit. They did not spend a lot of time on business and making resolutions but they spent a lot of time praying, encouraging one another, sharing needs and worship Christ.

The vast majority of American evangelicals have an unrealistic and unbiblical view of success. Instead of pouring millions of dollars into

Mega-Church start ups and little wanna be church plants who's only vision of success is the sacred cow of Mega-Church, why aren't we casting the vision of Mega movements of multiplying micro-churches. This is not just my vision but it has happened before around the birth of America

I have heard this reply numerous times when I share the vision, "Do you really think Micro-Church Movements work in North America?" Can hundreds and thousands of new churches rapidly obedient to the Word of God and, multiplying to the third or fourth generation? "Maybe in India, China or Burma but that'll never happen here, this is hard ground." For the past 13 years this author has witness Mirco Church Movements catalyzed across junta oppressed Burma.

The African American church was birthed out of the Sandy Creek Movement and has kept more of the emotional style worship of Sandy Creek than most Baptist in the American south.