

Cherokees and Methodists, 1824–1834

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On 29 May 1831, the Reverend James Jenkins Trott, a Methodist missionary to the Cherokee, was arrested in the Cherokee Nation by the Georgia Guard and forced to march 110 miles to prison at Camp Gilmer. Released after four days, he was required to post a five-hundred-dollar bond and ordered to keep out of that part of the Indian nation within the territorial limits of the state of Georgia. He refused to obey the order. Married to a Cherokee who lived near his mission station at New Echota, he went to visit his wife and two children in July. On 6 July he again was arrested and forced to march 110 miles back to prison. With him this time were two Presbyterian missionaries, the Reverend Samuel A. Worcester and Dr. Elizur Butler. Two of Trott's friends, the Reverend Dickson C. McLeod and the Reverend Martin Wells, who were also Methodist circuit riders within the Cherokee Nation, heard of his arrest. They saddled up and rode after him. When they caught up with the prisoners along the road, the officer in charge, Col. C. H. Nelson, ordered them curtly to "flank off!" When McLeod made some disparaging remarks about the treatment of the missionaries, Nelson ordered him off his horse, arrested him and made him march with the prisoners. Wells, who was left holding McLeod's horse, also was ordered with oaths to flank off. When he refused, "Col. Nelson cut a stick and making up to Mr. Wells gave him a severe blow on the head."¹

The trip to prison took four days. At night the prisoners sometimes were chained to one another to keep them from running away. Upon their arrival at the "filthy" jail, a guard shoved Trott through the door shouting, "Damn you, go in there and from there to hell." Because McLeod lived in the Tennessee area of the Cherokee Nation, he was released after five days. Two months later the other three missionaries were sentenced to four years at hard labor. Their crime was failure to obtain a permit from the governor to reside and preach in the Cherokee Nation, a permit they could obtain only after taking an oath of allegiance to the state.²

1. Various accounts of the incident written by Trott, McLeod and Worcester can be found in the *Methodist Christian Advocate and Journal and Zion's Herald*, 29 July 1831 and 12 August 1831 (hereafter cited as *Advocate*) and the *Cherokee Phoenix*, 2 July, 9 July, 16 July, 30 July and 3 September 1831 (hereafter cited as *Phoenix*).
2. This law is quoted together with the required oath in Edmund Schwarze, *History of the Moravian Missions among Southern Indian Tribes of the United States* (Bethlehem, Pa., 1923), p. 194.

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The story of the arrest and imprisonment of the missionaries to the Cherokees is well known, but it is always told in terms of the Presbyterians, Worcester and Butler. There is some justice to this focus, for it was they who, with the help of their mission board in Boston, brought the test case before the United States Supreme Court which resulted in John Marshall's famous decision (which Andrew Jackson refused to execute). Still, some explanation is needed for the failure, even on the part of most Methodist historians, to give much attention to the Reverend J. J. Trott and his friends.³ In certain respects, they deserve more credit than Worcester and Butler. The two Presbyterians acted out of their own private conscience; the majority of their Presbyterian colleagues in the Cherokee Nation opposed their stand.⁴ The Methodist missionaries stood together, however, and three months before the Presbyterians spoke out, they issued a unanimous declaration opposing the removal of the Cherokee Indians. Worcester and Butler acted only after receiving full assurance from their Mission Board that they would receive its wholehearted support. Trott and McLeod acted knowing full well that they would receive no support whatever from their superiors in Tennessee.

It is a classic example of the situation H. Richard Niebuhr described in *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*: the perspective taken by the missionary boards on Georgia's effort to harrass the missionaries to the Cherokees was dictated less by transcendent Christian values than by mundane, political, regional and racial values.⁵ The Presbyterians were responsible to a board in Boston, most of whose members had no love for Southerners, for frontier oppressors of the Cherokee or for supporters of Andrew Jackson. The Methodist missionaries were responsible to a missionary society under the Tennessee Conference of the Methodist Episcopal

3. The standard works dealing with the Methodist Indian missions are Nathan Bangs, *An Authentic History of the Missions under the Care of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York, 1832); Enoch Mudge, *History of the American Missions to the Heathen* (Worcester, Mass., 1840); Isabelle G. John, *Handbook of Methodist Missions* (Nashville, Tenn., 1893); Anson West, *History of Methodism in Alabama* (Nashville, Tenn., 1893); Marion E. Lazenby, *History of Methodism in Alabama and West Florida* (n.p., 1960); Mary T. Peacock, *The Circuit Riders and Those Who Followed* (Chattanooga, Tenn., 1957); Walter B. Posey, *The Development of Methodism in the Old Southwest, 1783–1824* (Tuscaloosa, Ala., 1933); Wade C. Barclay, *History of Methodist Missions, 1769–1844*, 2 vols. (New York, 1950); George F. Mellen, "Early Methodists and Cherokees," *Methodist Review* 66 (Nashville, Tenn., 1917): 476–489. None of these works provides a full discussion of the Methodists' stand on Indian removal, and Barclay is the only one to mention the effort of the Methodist missionaries to protest against removal.
4. For discussions of the internal divisions among the Presbyterians' missionaries regarding the proper posture on the removal question see William G. McLoughlin, "Civil Disobedience and Evangelism among the Missionaries to the Cherokees, 1829–1839," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 51 (Summer 1973): 116–139, and Edwin A. Miles, "After John Marshall's Decision: *Worcester v. Georgia* and the Nullification Crisis," *Journal of Southern History* 39 (November 1973): 519–544.
5. Niebuhr has a chapter titled "Sectionalism and Denominationalism" but does not mention the Indian removal question. H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York, 1929), pp. 135–199.

Church. The members of that conference were ardent Jacksonians, Southerners and frontier people; the donations for their religious activities came largely from people who thought the Indians should move across the Mississippi and let white settlers plant cotton upon the rich black soil where the Indians had lived. Not all of them favored removal by force, but as Christians they believed the Methodist Episcopal Church should not become involved in what struck them as a political and not a moral controversy. In this respect Cherokee removal prefigured the schism which split the Methodists (and the Presbyterians) into Northern and Southern denominations over the abolition of slavery.

One of the key articles in the Methodist Discipline, Article 6; was perfectly clear on the separation between religion and politics:

As far as it respects civil affairs, we believe it is the duty of Christians, and especially all Christian ministers, to be subject to the supreme authority of the country where they may reside, and to use all laudable means to enjoy obedience to the powers that be.⁶

The difficulties which Trott, McLeod and the other Methodist missionaries got into when they sided with the Cherokees resulted from their conviction that silence was not a "laudable means" to take in this case. They persisted in making a transcendent moral issue out of what most Methodists in that region of the country chose to describe in strictly political terms.⁷ The Methodists in the South were to use Article 6 against their northern brethren in 1844, when they decided to split off because abolitionists insisted upon questioning the legitimacy of slavery under the U.S. Constitution. But in 1861 the article was to give the Southern Methodists difficulty when the South decided to renounce its allegiance to the so-called Black Republicans elected with Abraham Lincoln.

In a sense the decision of the Tennessee Conference against supporting the protest of their missionaries in the Cherokee Nation against removal prejudged the fundamental question at stake. That question, which the United States Supreme Court finally decided in March 1832, was the extent to which the Cherokee Nation was a foreign nation. The Presbyterian and Baptist mission boards placed missions to the American Indians under their foreign mission boards. After all, the Cherokee spoke a different language, they had a different culture, they governed themselves by their own political system, and they dealt with the United States of America only through treaties. According to the final clause of Article 6 of the Methodist Discipline, the missionaries might be said to have owed allegiance to the Cherokee government rather than to that of the state of Georgia: "and, therefore, it is expected that all our preachers and people who may be under

6. Quoted in John M. McFerrin, *History of Methodism in Tennessee* (Nashville, Tenn., 1879), pp. 373-374.

7. As noted below, some Methodists in the North took a different view which found expression in the pages of the *Advocate*, written and published in New York City.

any foreign government, will behave themselves as peaceable and orderly subjects.”

Even if the Methodists of the Tennessee Conference were correct in assuming that the Cherokee were not really a foreign nation, they still prejudged the issue between the sovereignty of Georgia and the sovereignty of the federal government in this situation. The Presbyterians assumed loyalty to established authority in Congress under the treaty power of the Constitution; the Methodists assumed their missionaries should be loyal to the states’ rights theory by which Georgia abrogated the treaties with the Cherokees and, in effect, nullified the Trade and Intercourse with the Indians Act passed by Congress. Georgia’s unilateral assertion of its jurisdiction over the land of the Cherokee would seem to have been the revolutionary act, not the protest of the missionaries against it.

It might be argued that for both denominations the overriding desire was to sustain their missionary activities by giving no political offense. As it turned out, neither the Presbyterians nor the Methodists succeeded in convincing the Cherokee that they were loyal to the best interests of the Indians. The Tennessee Conference, by pulling the rug out from under its missionaries, steadily lost ground among the Cherokee. The Presbyterians, after reaching the very brink of success in 1832, pulled back at the last minute, refusing to put Jackson to the final test for fear of fomenting secession and civil war.⁸ In the end, they put patriotic loyalty above moral justice (as the Cherokee saw it), and they too lost out. The missionaries who gained the most by this crisis were the Baptists who worked wholeheartedly and to the last ditch with the Cherokee against the removal effort. However, the Baptist missionaries had the good fortune of being located for the most part in the North Carolina area of the Cherokee Nation as well as having a mission board in Boston which fully sympathized with their stand.⁹ But in this essay, there is space only to consider the clash between the Methodist circuit riders and their mission agency.¹⁰

The Methodists got a late start among the Cherokee. They were first invited into the nation in 1822 by a man of mixed blood named Richard Riley who asked a circuit rider in Alabama to come across the Tennessee River and preach at his home.¹¹ This preacher, Richard Neely (or Neeley) decided that his brethren had been neglecting the Cherokee and persuaded the Tennessee Conference to include regular circuits through the Cherokee

8. See Miles, “After John Marshall’s Decision,” pp. 527–529.

9. For the Baptists see Solomon Peck, *History of American Missions to the Heathen* (Worcester, Mass., 1840), pp. 390–394.

10. A full-scale study of the missionaries and removal would require consideration of the Presbyterian, Baptist and Moravian missions as well as of the Methodists.

11. For Riley’s role in the inauguration of Methodist missions see *The Methodist Magazine* 7 (1824): 192–195 and 11 (1828): 256–258.

Nation starting in 1824.¹² By this time the Moravians had been preaching in the nation for twenty-three years, the Presbyterians (of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions) for eight years, the Baptists (of the American Baptists Foreign Mission Society) for six. Nevertheless the Methodists made rapid headway, particularly in the Alabama region of the nation. They had a very different style and approach from the other denominations. Their enthusiastic love feasts, quarterly meetings and camp meetings proved extremely popular; their willingness to admit Cherokee to their religious societies (classes) without a great deal of doctrinal knowledge seemed more democratic; they were more willing to grant official status as interpreters, exhorters, licensed preachers and circuit riders to Cherokee who were bilingual and even to some who spoke only Cherokee, opening up places for a native ministry which the other denominations were slow to sanction. In addition, the Methodists preached an Arminian rather than a Calvinistic theology, emphasizing the ability of the sinner to act in obtaining salvation rather than waiting passively for God to act first. There was an egalitarian and participatory spirit in Methodist evangelism which contrasted sharply with the formalism and paternalistic elitism of the other missions. In addition, the young, uneducated, dedicated Methodist circuit riders (most of them in their early twenties) were enthusiastic and friendly. Poorly paid, their self-sacrifice was evident; and as they made their rounds, they ate and slept in the homes of the Cherokees. (The other missionaries lived in well-constructed mission compounds.) Two of the first missionaries, Richard Neely and James J. Trott, married Cherokees and began to raise families in the nation. By Cherokee custom, to marry into the tribe was to be adopted as a member of the tribe.

Trott started his work among the Cherokee in 1825. Born in North Carolina in 1800, he had moved to West Tennessee in 1815 and joined the Methodists in 1821. A year later he felt a call to preach and in 1823 "joined the travelling connexion" as an assistant circuit rider. The Tennessee Conference assigned him to the Wills Valley circuit in the Cherokee Nation in 1827. In 1828 he married Sallie Adair, a mixed blood Cherokee of some education; they had a son Benjamin and a daughter Mary. Neely, also born in North Carolina (in 1802), moved to Rutherford County, Tennessee as a child, was converted in 1819 and became a licensed Methodist preacher in 1821. He married a mixed blood Cherokee named McNair, but the strenuous life of a circuit rider was too much for him, and he died of tuberculosis in February 1828. Dickson C. McLeod, born in North Carolina in 1802, admitted on trial as Methodist preacher in 1823, was first assigned to the Cherokee Nation on the Salakowa circuit in 1828; he left the Cherokee Nation in 1832 and died in 1840.

12. In 1823 the Tennessee Conference sent Andrew Jackson Crawford to conduct a school near Riley's home, and while he preached in the vicinity no formal circuits were established that year.

The annual reports of the circuit riders to the Indian Missionary Society of the Tennessee Conference reveal an astonishing success story among the Cherokee. Starting with 33 converts the first year when Neely preached at Richard Riley's home, the denomination grew to 283 in 1825, 400 in 1827, and 1028 in 1830. Roughly half of these converts were in the Alabama section of the nation where the other denominations had the fewest missions. In 1830 the two Moravian mission stations in the Georgia area of the nation reported only 45 Cherokee members; the Baptist mission in North Carolina reported 90; and the Presbyterians (who were strongest in eastern Tennessee and Georgia) reported 167.¹³ Obviously the Methodist style of Christianity had an appeal that far outdistanced that of their rivals.

The missionaries of other denominations expressed some sharp criticisms of Methodist theology and methods in their private correspondence, charging them with being superficial in their doctrinal preaching and willing to count anyone as a convert who expressed any interest in the gospel. "Their manner of receiving members is directly calculated to lead souls to hell," said one Presbyterian missionary; "no more than one out of twenty of their members was a real christian."¹⁴ The coming of the Methodists should be viewed as "a calamity to this people." The Methodists' preachers were ridiculed as uneducated and their religious meetings characterized as overly emotional and excessively concerned with numerical results. The Reverend Henry G. Clauder of the Moravian mission spoke of "ignorant Methodists who maintain absolute christian perfection as possible"; and he deplored "the curious custom prevalent in Methodist meetings of jumping and tumbling about like persons bereft of sense."¹⁵ A Presbyterian said after attending a Methodist prayer meeting that it was "a scene of utter confusion, as you may well suppose, when perhaps 30 Cherokees were all praying aloud at the same time."¹⁶ Their missionaries were also accused of "sheep stealing," that is, taking converts from the other mission stations. A Baptist missionary went to visit a group of Cherokee he had recently preached to who expressed interest in becoming Baptists only to find that "the Methodists were here a few days ago and took seventeen of the inquirers into their Society."¹⁷ Methodist mission schools were considered shallow and useless because they lasted only six months in any one location and were taught by circuit riders more interested in saving souls than in teaching. Itinerating schools, wrote the editor of the *Cherokee Phoenix* (himself a dedicated

13. See *Phoenix*, 1 January 1831.

14. Isaac Proctor to Jeremiah Evarts, 10 July 1828, Papers of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Houghton Library, Harvard University (hereafter cited as ABCFM Papers).

15. Diary of Henry G. Clauder, 12 December 1828 and 7 March 1829, Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pa.

16. David Green to Jeremiah Evarts, 28 July 1828, ABCFM Papers.

17. Evan Jones's Journal, 16 May 1830, American Baptist Foreign Mission Society Papers, Baptist Historical Society, Rochester, New York.

Presbyterian convert) “will but poorly qualify” a Cherokee to teach others; “it is not from schools of this nature that an ignorant child will derive great permanent benefit.”¹⁸ But unlike the Presbyterians, the Methodists firmly believed that Christianization must precede civilization. Hence, for them, elaborate school systems with trained and educated teachers were of secondary importance. In a report as chairman of the Missionary Committee of the Tennessee Conference, Thomas L. Douglass said in 1824,

Indeed, your committee are of opinion that a great parade about Missionary establishments and the expenditure of many thousands of dollars to give the heathen science and occupation, without religion, is of but little advantage to them. For after all their acquirements they are still savages, unless their hearts be changed by the grace of God and the power of the gospel.¹⁹

But the Methodists held that once Cherokee were converted, their savagery disappeared, and they could be led easily into civilized ways by their own motivation to self improvement.

Much of the criticism of the Methodists by other missionaries seems to have stemmed from jealousy of their success. One Presbyterian expressed admiration for their egalitarianism and criticized the snobbery of his own denomination which preferred to concentrate its effort upon the more acculturated Cherokee of mixed blood: “If we will not condescend to the poorest class of Cherokees . . . they will either go to the Baptist or methodist meetings where they can find someone who does not feel above them.”²⁰

The tremendous success of the Methodist missionaries in “christianizing and civilizing” the Cherokee ran head on into the rising demand by the frontier whites for the removal of all Indians to some place west of the Mississippi River. Southern whites were particularly anxious to get rid of the five large tribes which were blocking their effort to expand the cotton kingdom. The federal government did its best to negotiate removal treaties with the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw and Seminole throughout the 1820s, but the Indians were uncooperative. They did not want to leave their ancestral lands; they were doing their best to become farmers, herders, traders and artisans. Ever since their first treaties with George Washington, they had been promised that they could remain where they were and eventually be incorporated into the republic as equals. The government had provided them with ploughs, spinning wheels, axes, looms and other technical assistance to help their transformation from a fur-trading to an agricultural economy. Since 1819 the government had provided money for mission schools to teach their children reading, writing, arithmetic and vocational skills, like blacksmithing. In 1827 the Cherokee had adopted a constitution modeled on that of the United States. They had a republican form of government with elected chiefs and representatives biennially elected

18. Elias Boudinot, *Phoenix*, 12 November 1828.

19. *The Methodist Magazine* 7 (1824): 194.

20. Daniel Butrick’s Journal, 4 November 1828, ABCFM Papers.

to a bicameral legislature. They had a written code of laws administered by a highly efficient mounted police and a series of local and circuit courts under a supreme court. In 1821 Sequoyah had invented a syllabary in which they could write their own language and since 1828 they had their own bilingual newspaper. As the missionaries of four denominations could testify, they were rapidly increasing in the number of converts to Christianity.

But the election of Andrew Jackson in 1828 seemed to change the whole arrangement. Jackson frequently had said that it was foolish to make treaties with savages. As a Tennessee planter and longtime Indian fighter, he was convinced that Indians were not able to meet the standards required for equal citizenship and probably never would be. He was more than willing to help the western frontier people find some way to force the Indians off their land. His plan was to give them land in the West in exchange for the land they would give up in the East. This proposal was not original with Jackson. Jefferson, Madison, Monroe and Adams had all offered this alternative to the Indians. But Jackson was the first to insist that the federal government would not take no for an answer. The people of Georgia decided to implement Jackson's plan by asserting that, under the Constitution, the sovereign states had the right to assume jurisdiction over all the land within their borders at any time regardless of treaties with the Indians.

The first step in this new Indian policy began shortly after Jackson was elected. In December 1828, the Georgia legislature passed a series of laws assuming possession of all Indian land within its border, abolishing all Cherokee tribal government and reducing the Indians to second-class citizens by denying their right to testify in court.²¹ These laws were to go into effect on 1 June 1830. The Georgians assumed that by that time Jackson would have explained clearly to the Cherokee that if they did not exchange their land in Georgia for land in Oklahoma, then he could do nothing to stop the Georgians from expropriating their land and giving it to its own white citizens, leaving the Cherokee to live on only those few barren acres which no whites wanted.

Georgia's actions placed the missionaries in a dilemma. Should they support the Cherokee in resisting or should they acquiesce in the new policy? The four denominations had invested a considerable amount of time, money and effort into building schools and mission churches within the Cherokee Nation. Their missionaries told the mission boards that the Cherokee were making astounding progress toward civilization and Christianization. Indeed, by 1828 the Cherokee had attained the reputation as "the most civilized tribe in America." Still, the American doctrine of separation of church and state seemed to imply that saving souls and not meddling in politics was the chief task of religion. So long as the government did not interfere with the right to preach the gospel, the missionary, it seemed, was

21. See Ulrich B. Phillips, *Georgia and State Rights* (Washington, 1902), pp. 66–86.

obliged to accept whatever policy the majority chose to enact, and the majority clearly had elected Jackson to remove the Indians.

However, Christians were citizens. They had the right to speak freely, and the men had the right to vote; many Christians had opposed Jackson and his policy from the beginning. Many Methodists had opposed Indian removal even when John Quincy Adams advocated it. In December 1828, in the Methodist *Christian Advocate and Journal and Zion's Herald* (the quasi-official organ of the denomination), a long editorial took issue with a statement by Adams's Secretary of War, Peter B. Porter, in which he not only advocated Indian removal but blamed the missionaries and the mixed blood Indians who were well-to-do as the prime opponents. In a report to Congress, Porter alleged that most Indians would be favorable to removal, but the missionaries had a vested interest in opposing it. "Missionaries and teachers with their families," Porter told Congress, "having acquired principally by the aid of this [federal civilization] fund, very comfortable establishments, are unwilling to be deprived of them by the removal of the Indians." They had become "agents" who were "operating, more secretly to be sure" than the "half-educated" Indian opponents of removal, "but not with less zeal and effect, to prevent such emigration."²²

The Methodists felt particularly indignant about this allegation. They had expended little money on missionary establishments and had never taken any money from the government's "civilization fund" to support their schools. All of their budgets went toward paying itinerants; such schools as they taught were built by the labor of their converts. "If comfortable establishments were the only inducements presented to these self-denying men to persuade them to remain in their present stations," wrote the *Advocate's* editor, "we venture to predict that they would soon abandon them 'to the moles and the bats.'" Methodist missionaries worked in conditions of great deprivation to bring the gospel to the heathen; "in the prosecution of their benevolent designs [they] are reduced to all the privations and hardships peculiar to half civilized society, and are obliged from their scanty allowance to unite the most rigorous economy with the most patient industry."

Nay, such is the strong attachment of these devoted missionaries to the eternal interests of those Indians that should the event come to pass, now so much deprecated by some and wished for by others, that they must be removed beyond the Mississippi, rather than abandon them to their own deplorable fate, they would remove with them, identify their interests with the interests of the Indians, share in their privations and suffering, with a view to exalt ultimately to all the blessings of Christianity and civilization.²³

What the Methodist editor objected to was the effort "to *compel* them" to sell their country and "remove into the remote forests," and to compel this

22. Porter's report is printed in the *Phoenix*, 7 January 1829.

23. *Advocate*, 19 December 1828.

“either by direct coercion or by the intrigues which too often disgrace state policy, or by that cupidity which so frequently characterizes mercantile and speculating operations.” Against this “we would protest with all the energies which a just regard to original right can inspire, with all the force which may be derived from a sense of their indubitable rights, as the free and original lords of the soil—with all the argument which can be based on the faith of the most solemn treaties” and by the golden rule of Christianity: “DO TO OTHERS AS YE WOULD THEY SHOULD DO UNTO YOU.”

On 8 January 1830, a year later, the *Advocate* published a memorial adopted at a meeting of citizens in New York City on 9 December 1829 and sent to Congress to oppose the removal bill. The efforts of the Georgians to assert sovereignty over Cherokee territory, these citizens asserted, was “entirely mistaken, it is subversive of the plainest principles of justice” and would make “force the first and only arbiter between separate communities.” The decision of Jackson to support this states’ rights position was simply “reducing independent tribes to a state of vassalage . . . with a particular view to driving them into exile or insuring their speedy extinction. Such a usurpation of power exerted by the strong over the weak” was an “enormous injustice” and “a great public calamity.” No individual state can “lawfully get possession of Indian territory lying within its chartered limits except by means of the treaty making power of the United States.” The petitioners requested Congress to “interpose” between Jackson and the Indians to “save the Cherokees from such injustice and oppression.”²⁴

As regular readers of (and frequent contributors to) the *Advocate*, the Methodist missionaries to the Cherokee no doubt felt compelled to add their own firsthand testimony against compulsory removal. Who knew better than they the progress the Cherokee were making and how strongly they were attached to the land of their forefathers? On 25 September 1830, seven of the nine Methodist missionaries assigned that year to work among the Cherokee assembled at the Chattooga camp ground in the nation to express their feelings on the topic of the day. Their ultimate goal was to arouse the Methodist Church to add its Christian witness on behalf of justice for the Cherokee. The Reverend Francis Owen, Superintendent of the Mission among the Cherokee, was chosen chairman; the Reverend Dickson C. McLeod of the Wills Valley circuit was chosen Secretary. Participants in the discussion were the Reverend Greenberry Garrett of Selacoa circuit, Jacob Ellinger of Coosawattee circuit, Joseph Miller of Chattooga circuit, William M. McFerrin of the Agency station, Nicholas D. Scales of Lookout Mountain circuit, James J. Trott of the Mount Wesley and Asbury station. Probably also present were most of the Cherokee assistants, interpreters and exhorters: Jack Spear, John Fletcher Boot, Young Wolf, Edward Graves, Turtle Fields, Joseph Blackbird and William McIntosh. Two missionaries

24. *Advocate*, 8 January 1830.

were not present—Robert Rogers of the Valley Town Circuit and G. M. Rogers of Connesauga circuit. The following resolutions were “unanimously adopted” by those present:

Resolved: That it is the sincere opinion of the meeting that the present oppressed condition of our brethren, the Cherokees, and the future prosperity of the missionary cause among them do most importunately solicit from the Tennessee Annual Conference a public and official expression of sentiment on the subject of their grievances.

Resolved, That the present missionaries in the Cherokee nation and belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church give, as soon as practicable, a public detail of the civil, moral and religious condition of this nation and embody their several accounts in one condensed general report.

Resolved, That all the missionaries in their detailed accounts unequivocally testify that the Cherokee nation is firmly resolved not to remove from their present home unless forced so to do either by power or oppression.

Resolved, That it is the unanimous opinion of this board of missionaries that a removal of the Cherokees to the west of the Mississippi would, in all probability, be ruinous to the best interests of the nation.

Resolved, That whereas it has been stated to the public that the missionaries in this nation are associated with, and under the controlling influence of the principal men of the nation, merely in order the more effectually to extend our missionary operations here, we do hereby most solemnly and unhesitatingly deny the charge. It is unanimously resolved by this missionary convention, that the present aggrieved condition of the Cherokee in this nation calls for the sympathy and religious interposition of the Christian community in these United States, together with all the true and faithful friends of humanity and justice.

Resolved, That the secretary of this meeting forward the above resolutions to the editor of the *Cherokee Phoenix* and to the editors of *Christian Advocate and Journal* for publication.²⁵

The list of resolutions was signed by all the white missionaries present. The *Advocate* printed it on 29 October without comment, but the editor of the *Cherokee Phoenix*, Elias Boudinot, used the occasion to urge the other missionary denominations to similar actions:

The time has come when it is the duty of every friend of justice and humanity to speak out and express his opinion and raise his voice in favor of oppressed innocence. Why should not missionaries, the true friends of the Indians, who toil day and night for their spiritual good, be permitted to exercise the sacred right of freemen, *liberty of speech* and *freedom of opinion*? Must their mouths be muzzled because they are ambassadors of religion?

Boudinot was aware that some missionaries were reluctant to speak out in support of the Cherokee for fear that they would be accused of meddling in politics.

However, some of the Methodist ministers were so exercised about the matter that they could not refrain from injecting it into their sermons. Dr. Elizur Butler, a Presbyterian missionary, attended a camp meeting (prob-

25. *Advocate*, 29 October 1830; *Phoenix*, 1 October 1830.

bly at Chattooga) the same month in which these resolutions were adopted and could hardly believe his ears:

I was tolerably well pleased with the fore-part of the meeting. Near the close of the discourse the speaker imagined a council held in hell which extended to some of the state legislatures and also included the President of the U.S.: all for the purpose of rob[b]ing the Cherokees of their country and breaking them up as a Nation. He also imagined a council held by Christians, by holy angels, and finally by the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the purpose of saving the Cherokees; and he predicted the Salvation of the Nation. This much affected the minds of some, even produced groaning and tears.²⁶

The willingness of the Methodist ministers to preach so directly and colorfully to the Cherokee on matters of direct personal interest was, of course, part of their great attraction.

Apparently the work of the Methodists and the comment of Boudinot had their effect. On 28 December 1830, the Presbyterian missionary, Samuel A. Worcester, called a meeting of all the missionaries in the nation to meet at his home in New Echota, the Cherokee Nation's capital, to discuss passing a set of resolutions on the question. After some debate, the resolutions were adopted and signed by nine members of the interdenominational American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, two members of the United Brethren (Moravian) mission and the Superintendent of the Baptist Mission. These resolutions were essentially a reiteration of the Methodist resolves. The third of the five resolutions stated,

that we view the removal of this people to the West of the Mississippi as an event to be most earnestly deprecated; threatening greatly to retard, if not totally to arrest their progress in religion, civilization, learning and the useful arts, to involve them in great distress, and to bring upon them a complication of evils for which the prospect before them would offer no compensation.

The fourth resolution, however, went beyond the Methodist pronouncement by specific reference to the Georgia laws:

that the establishment of the jurisdiction of Georgia and other states over the Cherokee people, against their will, would be an immense and irreparable injury.

The resolves did not specifically state that Georgia's action was unconstitutional, simply unconscionable.

Following the resolutions was a long description of the remarkable progress the Cherokee had made toward acculturation and an estimate of the numbers who had embraced Christianity in each of the four denominations at work in the nation. The twelve signers concluded by noting that while none of them had publicly advised the Cherokee to oppose removal, they had freely expressed their private views against it when asked.²⁷

26. Elizur Butler to Jeremiah Evarts, 22 September 1830, ABCFM Papers. Butler did not identify the speaker, but the sermon was later attributed to James J. Trott by Col. J. W. A. Sanford; see *Phoenix*, 29 October 1831.

If the free expression of such an opinion be a crime, to the charge of that crime we plead guilty. If we withheld our opinion when called for, we could not hold up our heads as preachers of righteousness among a people who would universally regard us as abettors of iniquity.²⁸

In short, the missionaries felt trapped. If they spoke out against removal, whites would accuse them of meddling in politics. If they did not at least let the Cherokees know where they stood, they would lose all respect and influence among them.

The people of Georgia were well aware that the missionaries had expressed such views and that their moral support gave the Cherokee added courage to resist. Furthermore, the missionaries carried great weight with the churchgoing public at large. Consequently, even before these resolves were adopted (and perhaps more in reaction against the resolves of the Methodists in September), on 22 December 1830, the legislature of Georgia passed a law requiring all white men living within the Cherokee Nation to swear an oath of allegiance to the state of Georgia prior to March 1831 and to obtain a license from the governor if they wished to remain within the Cherokee Nation. Those who failed to do so would be required to leave the state. Any who refused to leave could be sentenced to four years or more at hard labor in the state penitentiary.²⁹ The law clearly was aimed at the missionaries, though it also enabled the state to take action against white men who had married Cherokees and were now siding with them against Georgia.

Meanwhile the Chattooga resolves adopted by the Methodist missionaries had come before the Tennessee Conference for consideration. The conference met in Franklin, Tennessee on 12 November, but the result was a bitter disappointment. After “an animated debate,” the conference not only refused to endorse the resolves but also severely criticized the missionaries for daring to publish them before the conference could respond to them:

1. *Resolved*: That whatever may be our private views and sentiments as men and free citizens relative to the sufferings and privations of the aboriginal nations of our country or of any particular section of the United States, or of the policy adopted and pursued by the State authority or General Government, yet, as a

27. Henry Clauder, one of the Moravian signers, reported, “Mr. McLeod of the Methodist Church and some others were also present but did not unite with us.” Henry Clauder’s Diary, 29 December 1830, Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pa. It was probably because of this statement that McLeod and the other Methodists present did not sign the New Echota resolutions, for they had publicly (in their sermons) exhorted the Cherokee to oppose removal.

28. The New Echota resolutions were printed in an extra edition of the *Phoenix*, 1 January 1831.

29. Schwarze, *History of the Moravian Missions*, p. 194. The law specifically excluded women (and children) from the oath; Althea Bass, *Cherokee Messenger* (Norman, Okla., 1936), p. 130.

body of Christian ministers, we do not feel at liberty, nor are we disposed, to depart from the principles uniformly maintained by the members and ministers of our Church in carefully refraining from all such interference with political affairs.

2. *Resolved*: That however we may appreciate the purity of motive and intention by which our missionary brethren were actuated, yet we regret that they should have committed themselves and us so far as to render it impossible for us to omit with propriety to notice their proceedings in this public manner.

3. *Resolved*: That while we have confidence in the wisdom and integrity of our rulers, we sincerely sympathize with our Cherokee brethren in their present afflictions and assure them of our unabating zeal for the conversion and salvation of their souls.³⁰

This repudiation of the missionaries led the Cherokee to see the Methodists, in Boudinot's words, as "abettors of iniquity."³¹ The *Cherokee Phoenix* printed the conference resolves with the following comments:

We sincerely regret that so respectable a body as the Tennessee Conference should call the *Indian question* merely a *political question*. It is exactly the way enemies of the Indians blind the people. . . . Perhaps nothing has a greater tendency to prejudice the cause of the Indians.

The editor believed, as did most who read the resolves, that "the Missionaries are censured for expressing their honest opinion." Further, he contended that the conference, "in approbating the present policy in regard to the Indians (for such is the inference drawn from their 3d resolution) they have as much interfered with *political affairs* as their Missionaries." Not to act in such a crisis was in itself an action.³²

In January 1831, the missionaries of all denominations received notice from the governor of Georgia that they were expected to comply with the oath law by 1 March or face the consequences. The Baptists had no missionaries residing in Georgia, but the Presbyterians and Moravians immediately wrote to their mission boards for instructions. Clauder reported that "the instructions received from his Society [in Salem, North Carolina] were to the effect he should remove from the Cherokee country at once if he

30. *Phoenix*, 8 January 1831.

31. This impression was greatly strengthened by the activities of Dr. Alexander Talley, the prominent Methodist missionary to the Choctaw Nation who was an ardent advocate of the removal of that nation. In 1831 Talley played a leading role in writing a treaty which effected their removal and many of the Choctaw petitioned for his removal from their nation. Angie Debo, *The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic* (Norman, Okla., 1934), pp. 52, 63, 64.

32. *Phoenix*, 8 January 1831. The action of the conference may have helped to convince the Georgians that the churches would not oppose their effort to put a quietus on missionary opposition to removal. When Trott was arrested, Col. J. W. A. Sanford of the Georgia Guard referred to him as a preacher "who had been discountenanced by his own Conference for his officious and overzealous interference in Indian politics." *Phoenix*, 29 October 1831. However, the Conference did not have any idea how rough the Georgians would be on their missionaries, so it is not accurate to suggest that they willfully threw them to the wolves.

could not pursue his missionary labors peaceably.”³³ The American Board decided that its missionaries would have to follow their own consciences, but it promised its full support to any of them who chose to disobey Georgia and bring a test case before the United States Supreme Court.³⁴ The Methodist missionaries received no instructions, but on 12 February 1831, Dickson C. McLeod reported on the frustrating state of religious affairs and the position the missionaries would be compelled to take: “the disagreeable excitement and almost utter confusion produced by the operation of the laws of that state [Georgia], in opposition to those of the nation, are wholly indescribable. . . . all white men in this part of the nation are placed in very unpleasant and precarious circumstances.” The Methodists had four missionaries residing in Georgia or itinerating regularly within it: McLeod, Trott, Nicholas Scales and John W. Hanna.

Having every reason to believe that our taking the oath prescribed by the Georgia legislature would be attended with ruinous consequences to the missionary cause here, and being ourselves conscientiously opposed to the measure, we shall be compelled to move our residence from this disputed ground in order to avoid the fearful penalty of the law. These things will doubtless operate very much against our success.³⁵

As it turned out, Trott refused to change his residence (probably because his wife was ill), and the others felt that if they resided outside the state they would still be able to itinerate in peace. McLeod said in his report that he and his colleagues were determined to do all they could “for the spiritual benefit of these disheartened and injured people. Never will we give over our united efforts for the salvation of the Cherokees until we are called off by proper authorities or driven away by the propelling edicts of a republican state.” It sounded as though McLeod expected to be called off by his superiors.

As soon as the 1 March deadline passed, Governor George R. Gilmer ordered the arrest of all white men who had not complied with the law. The first group of missionaries rounded up on 12 March included Samuel Worcester, Isaac Proctor and John Thompson, all of the American Board. Treated roughly by a newly constituted group of civil law enforcement officers known as the Georgia Guard, they were taken before the Superior Court of Gwinnett County where Judge Augustin S. Clayton released them on the grounds that missionaries were “agents of the government” because their missions were supported in part by the government funds. On 7 May Dr. Elizur Butler was arrested, but he was released temporarily because of sickness in his family. Meanwhile Governor Gilmer had written to Jackson’s Secretary of War, John Eaton, to see whether in the view of the government,

33. Schwarze, *History of the Moravian Missions*, p. 196.

34. See McLoughlin, “Civil Disobedience,” and Miles, “After John Marshall,” p. 522.

35. *Advocate*, 11 March 1831.

missionaries were in fact federal agents. Eaton assured him that they were not and relieved Worcester of his postmastership to make it easier for Gilmer to arrest him. On 16 May Gilmer wrote to all the American Board ministers telling them what Eaton had said and giving them ten days to sign the oath or leave the state. At this point all the board's missionaries in Georgia except Worcester and Butler took up residence elsewhere in the nation. The Methodist missionaries received no ten-day notice, and three of them—Trott, McLeod and Wells—continued to itinerate within Georgia.

The arrest of the missionaries in March had stirred up widespread censure of the Georgians from outside that state. The Methodist *Advocate* joined dozens of other religious and secular newspapers in denouncing the action. An editorial on 20 May called the action “most singular and [it] cannot fail to call out a burst of disapprobation”; in fact, “a more outrageous act could not have been looked for” among the “Turks and Arabs.” According to the *Advocate*, “As this oath was designed only for those who resided on the Cherokee lands [in Georgia] the missionaries of the Methodist Episcopal Church have avoided its obligations and penalties by removing their families out of the Cherokee district” in that state though continuing to ride their circuits within it.³⁶ But the *Advocate* was mistaken. Trott had not moved his family, and on 31 May he was arrested by the Georgia Guard while visiting them. Forced to march 110 miles (mostly on foot) to the prison, he spent four days on the road and eight more before he was arraigned. “I was chained four nights in succession and compelled to lie on the floor.” Then he was released on bail of \$500, told to leave Georgia and ordered to return in September for trial in the Superior Court. The colonel of the guard who arrested him, J. W. A. Sanford, “stated to me that he did not suppose the missionaries would be allowed to itinerate and preach in the territory of Georgia [even] provided they were to remove their residence, for it was the determined policy of the state to expel from her charter [limits] all white persons who refuse to obey her laws and pursue a course detrimental to her interest.” If there ever had been any doubt of the antimissionary purpose of the law, Trott announced, “It is now clear as noon day that they [the legislators] designed to destroy missions in that part of the nation which they so confidently claim.”³⁷

On 22 June the Georgia Guard took over the Presbyterian Mission at Etowah (Hightower) and arrested the Reverend John Thompson who came to protest against this trespass upon mission property. After marching him to

36. *Advocate*, 20 May 1831. However, because women were excluded from the oath, some mission establishments were left under the care of wives of missionaries who departed Georgia refusing to take the oath.

37. *Advocate*, 29 July 1831, and *Phoenix*, 2 July 1831. Col. Sanford also told Trott “that the Cherokees were going backward and that they were incapable of understanding the Christian Religion and that if God wished them to become religious he would make them so without so much concern on the part of the missionaries.” *Ibid.*

Camp Gilmer, they lectured him on his insubordination to Georgia's laws and then released him.³⁸

On 6 July Trott was arrested again for making a visit to his home. The next day the guard picked up Worcester and Butler for the second time. They also arrested John Wheeler, employed to help print the *Cherokee Phoenix*. In this general roundup seven white men married to Cherokees were arrested for failure to take the oath. They all were forced to walk to Camp Gilmer and sometimes chained up at night. At one time Butler was forced to walk with a chain around his neck and the other end fastened around the neck of a mounted guard's horse. It was on this occasion that McLeod and Wells went to Trott's aid, and McLeod was arrested for not flanking off. After his arrest, he said, "I was told that if I opened my mouth I should be run through with a bayonet."³⁹ Being very devout men, the missionaries found it sacrilegious that they were made to march on the Sabbath, and they considered the profanity of the guards a form of intentional mental torture.

McLeod was released from Camp Gilmer after two days, and no further charges were brought against him. The rest were let out on bail and told to return for their trial at Lawrenceville, Georgia, on 15 September. Citizens and newspapers around the country were shocked. "Why was Mr. Trott, the Methodist minister put in chains?" asked the Methodist *Advocate*. "The conduct of the authorities of the state of Georgia toward the missionaries stationed among the Cherokee Indians . . . is a barbarous outrage. . . . Has it come to this? Is a missionary, peaceably pursuing his calling, for no other crime alledged than a refusal from conscientious motives to take an oath of allegiance to a particular state, to be suddenly apprehended, bound in chains, and incarcerated in prison? . . . Are these inquisitorial transactions to be tolerated in a Christian land?"⁴⁰ A letter from McLeod printed in the *Advocate* on 12 August added new details:

I am prepared to prove that in the present hostile measures of the state towards the missionaries in this nation and other white citizens, policy prevails over law. Col. Nelson told me that their orders from the Governor were to let the missionaries feel the heaviest weight of the law and that they did not intend to show them any mercy.⁴¹

Stirred by this mistreatment of their missionaries, the Methodists, through the Reverend John Howard of Georgia, sent a letter to Governor Gilmer demanding an explanation. Gilmer asserted that McLeod's statements "are wholly destitute of truth" and placed the blame entirely upon the mission-

38. Robert S. Walker, *Torchlights to the Cherokees* (New York, 1931), pp. 261-262. On 31 May, Henry Clauder had been arrested, but he was released when he promised to leave the state. Schwarze, *History of the Moravian Missions*, p. 196.

39. *Advocate*, 12 August 1831; *Phoenix*, 3 September 1831.

40. *Advocate*, 8 July 1831 and 29 July 1831. *Phoenix*; 20 August 1831.

41. *Advocate*, 12 August 1831.

aries for refusing to obey the law. Three hundred white men had obeyed it, Gilmer noted; only a handful had not. “The missionaries alone have publicly denied the power of the state to extend its jurisdiction over them and expressed their design to disregard the law.” The governor regretted, of course, any excesses committed by any individual guard who may have been overzealous because he was “so much excited by the improper conduct of these men,” but unfortunately the missionaries “were in the constant habit of speaking in the most opprobrious terms of our government.” They were, he was convinced, dupes of political operators: “the missionaries have not been compelled to desert their religious labor by any conduct of the authorities of the government, but by their improper connection with political parties and refusal to obey the laws.”⁴²

The trial on 15–16 September went as expected. The lawyers for the missionaries (hired by the American Board) tried to show that the law under which they were arrested was unconstitutional because the Cherokee were under the protection of federal treaties and the state had no jurisdiction over their country. Judge Clayton said he thought the law perfectly constitutional. The jury took fifteen minutes to agree with him.⁴³ Trott explained his position in the following terms:

Believing that the law was unconstitutional and knowing that it was passed for the purpose of stripping the Cherokee of religious and educational privileges, by driving the Missionaries from the field of their labors, in order to force the Nation into a treaty with the United States, I could not conscientiously take such oath. I was compelled to do this, leave my field of labor, without any instructions to that effect, or continue at my post of honor in the Lord, and leave the event with Him; and, in the name of the Lord, I preferred the latter alternative.⁴⁴

In his decision sentencing all eleven defendants to four years at hard labor, Judge Clayton took notice of the pleas of Trott, Worcester and Butler that they had to rely upon their private conscience in refusing to obey the law. If anyone, he said, could treat such a serious matter with “a smile,” he might be inclined to “ask if this be not the doctrine of *Nullification*?” In any case, he was sure such views could only lead to “anarchy.” At best their conduct sprang from “misguided zeal” designed to arouse public sympathy by sheer “fanaticism.”⁴⁵

The convicted men were then marched to the penitentiary at Milledgeville, Georgia. On 22 September they all were asked by the prison inspectors whether, if pardoned, “they will now give assurance that they will not again violate the laws of the State.”⁴⁶ All except Worcester and Butler agreed to these terms and were pardoned. Trott was accused by some of admitting his

42. *Advocate*, 30 September 1831; *Phoenix*, 29 October 1831.

43. *Phoenix*, 15 October 1831.

44. J. Edward Moseley, *Disciples of Christ in Georgia* (St. Louis, 1954), p. 127.

45. *Phoenix*, 15 October 1831.

46. *Phoenix*, 22 October 1831.

guilt by signing the oath and accepting the pardon: "This is a slander, and has not the shadow of truth in it," he answered. "I was not only willing to be imprisoned four years, but by the help of my Lord and Master, to suffer death even, rather than take such an oath."⁴⁷ The pardon was granted simply upon his agreement not to return to the state of Georgia.

About this time Trott's Cherokee wife died, and he underwent a new religious experience. He had read the works of Alexander Campbell in prison, and six weeks after the trial he left the Methodist denomination to join the Campbellites (later known as the Disciples of Christ). He wrote a moving letter to Campbell on 1 December 1831, describing his conversion as well as his continued commitment to the Cherokee.

The Cherokees are an interesting people and with them (God willing) whatever their destiny may be, I expect to live and die. My heart's desire and prayer to God is that the primitive gospel may be introduced, prevail, and triumph among this oppressed people.⁴⁸

By "primitive gospel" Trott meant the nondenominational, nonritualistic, noncreedal form of Christianity which Campbell taught. Trott was sick of denominationalism. Soon after this, he remarried (again to a Cherokee) and began preaching "the primitive gospel" among the Cherokee. But the turmoil over removal made work difficult, and he made only a few converts to the new religion.⁴⁹

Meanwhile the Methodist mission effort among the Cherokee went into rapid decline. By 1834 the denomination had lost over half the converts it had made up to 1830. With the total at only 508, the Tennessee Conference decided to close its missionary effort. The explanation given at the time, and by Methodist historians ever since, for this decision and the decline which precipitated it, was best expressed by Anson West:

From the close of 1830 the membership steadily declined and the field contracted, not because the Indians were less interested in the gospel than formerly, not because the membership apostatized, not because the Missionaries engaged in the work were not efficient and faithful, but because many emigrated to the Cherokee possessions west of the Mississippi River.⁵⁰

But this explanation is not adequate. Grant Foreman, the most thorough scholar of Cherokee removal, concluded that "only about 2000 of the eastern

47. Moseley, *Disciples of Christ in Georgia*, p. 128.

48. *Millennial Harbinger* 3 (February 1832): 85.

49. Trott at first did not go West with the Cherokee but remained in the South as an itinerant Campbellite preacher. In 1856, however, he moved into the Cherokee Nation again, purchased land for a mission and made 75 converts to the Disciples before he was forced out by fighting during the Civil War. He returned to the nation in 1866 but became ill and went to Nashville, where he died in 1868. Moseley, *Disciples of Christ in Georgia*, pp. 123–131.

50. West, *History of Methodism in Alabama*, p. 398. It is worth noting that on 22 December 1832, Georgia repealed its law requiring an oath of allegiance; hence white missionaries were free thereafter to preach in the Georgia part of the nation. Evidently, few were aware of this, however.

Cherokee had removed by 23 May 1838.”⁵¹ When a census was taken by the federal government in 1835 there were still 16,542 Cherokee (plus 1592 black slaves) in the Cherokee Nation East, and that number signified an increase of almost 3000 since the census of 1825. What is more important, the other three denominations continued their work and the number of their converts continued to increase right up to the time of removal in the fall of 1838. The growth of the Baptists was particularly strong in the years after 1830.⁵²

It seem obvious that some other cause is needed to explain the failure of the Methodist mission to the Cherokee after 1830. The evidence points rather clearly to the failure of the leaders of Southern Methodism to support the stand of their missionaries in the field. Or, to put it another way, the Methodists were willing to lend their tacit support to the removal program. However, they did not totally desert the Cherokee. After 1834 missionaries from the Holston Conference continued to itinerate in the nation. One of these, the Reverend David B. Cumming, marched with the Cherokee along the “Trail of Tears” in 1838–1839; at that time there were still 480 Methodists in the nation.⁵³ But the Methodists in the Tennessee Conference wanted to believe that removal of the Cherokee was probably in their best interest. In any case, they chose to act as though it were not an issue about which they could or should do anything. What they did do was to assign some of their missionaries to the Arkansas Conference in the hope that they could serve the Cherokee emigrants when they got to their new land.

Much as the Cherokee were attracted to the Methodist version of Christianity, Methodism failed them on the critical issues of dignity and patriotism. After 1830, to be a Methodist was to be a traitor to the Cherokee Nation. Cherokee nationalism was a more potent force than Cherokee Methodism. It was not so simple a question as the Methodists thought to separate what was Caesar’s from what was God’s. They discovered that again in 1844 and in 1861; and missionaries of all denominations are still finding it unanswerable today.

51. Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal* (Norman, Okla., 1932), p. 286.

52. For the census figures see William G. McLoughlin and Walter H. Conser, Jr., “The Cherokees in Transition,” *The Journal of American History* 64 (December 1977): 678–703. Between 1831 and 1838 the Moravians increased from 45 to 132 church members; the Presbyterians remained static at 167; and the Baptists increased from 90 to over 500.

53. See Barclay, *History of Methodist Missions*, pp. 131–134. Barclay comes closest among all the historians of Methodist missions to explaining the decline when he says “widespread demoralization set in” after 1830. However, he seems to use that phrase to refer to Cherokee political demoralization. I would argue that there was a more general demoralization (especially after the Presbyterians seemed to acquiesce in removal in 1833) which included a loss of faith, and particularly faith in the whites’ professions of benevolence, humanity and Christian concern. The strong growth of the Baptists after 1830 seems to me to stem from their continued effort to identify Christian brotherhood with active support of social justice for the Cherokee.