About

THE CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

is a Presbyterian body formed during the Great Revival of 1800.

The revival caused disagreement within the Presbyterian Church (USA) over both the mechanics of the revival and the allowances the pro-revival faction was willing to make to secure ministers for its rapidly expanding following.

In two presbyteries, Springfield and Cumberland, the pro-revival faction dominated. These presbyteries, Cumberland in particular, believed the revival was an extraordinary circumstance that allowed exceptions to both educational requirements for ordination and the required subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith. Both Springfield and Cumberland Presbyteries were members of the Kentucky Synod of the Presbyterian Church (USA). In the Kentucky Synod, the anti-revival faction dominated. This anti-revival faction took steps to curtail the activities of the revival-oriented presbyteries. Frustrated, Springfield Presbytery withdrew from the Presbyterian Church in 1803. In 1804, to discipline its ministers, Kentucky Synod dissolved Cumberland Presbytery.

On February 4, 1810, at the home of Rev. Samuel McAdow near present day Dickson, Tennessee, McAdow, Rev. Finis Ewing, and Rev. Samuel King reorganized Cumberland Presbytery, previously dissolved by Kentucky Synod of the Presbyterian Church (USA). These disaffected Presbyterian ministers did not intend to found an independent Presbyterian body. They felt that they would have greater success resolving their differences with Kentucky Synod as an organized body than as individuals. They also felt that the organization of a presbytery would better enable them to serve their congregations. Growing rapidly, Cumberland Presbytery became Cumberland Synod in 1813 and, in 1829, when a General Assembly was established, the Cumberland Presbyterian denomination.

Cumberland Presbyterian congregations are located throughout the United States and in several other countries (Japan, Hong Kong, Colombia, etc.), but are primarily in the American South, with strong concentrations in Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, Missouri, southern Illinois, Arkansas, and Texas. The Cumberland Presbyterian denomination has a socially progressive tradition. Cumberland Presbyterians were among the first denominations to admit women to their educational institutions and to accept them in leadership roles, including the ordained clergy.

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church denomination was founded in 1810 in Dickson County, Tennessee (near Nashville), by a group of Presbyterians heading west to settle the frontier.

Born out of the early 1800s Great Revival and a desire to reach all who need Christ, the denomination has retained that "whosoever will come" approach to evangelism and outreach.

The denomination has approximately 670 congregations worldwide, with ministries in 18 countries. The largest concentration of churches is in Tennessee, followed by Alabama, Texas, Kentucky, and Arkansas.

Click here to learn more about our theology and polity.

The first woman ordained in the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition (in 1889) was Louisa Woosley, a Cumberland Presbyterian.

Cumberland Presbyterians were among the first to ordain African Americans to the ministry (circa 1830).

The 1984 revision of the Cumberland Presbyterian Confession of Faith was one of the first inclusive confessional documents in the Reformed tradition. Click here for more information about our theology and polity.

*** Adapted from the tract "Who Are Cumberland Presbyterians?**
by T. V. Warnick and Morris Pepper.