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THE AMERICAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION'S ANTISLAVERY CAMPAIGN IN
KENTUCKY, 1848 TO 1860

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Todd Armstrong Reynolds, B.A., M.A.

* * *** * *

The Ohio State University
1979

Reading Committee: Approved By

Dr. Merton Dillon, Advisor
Dr. Paul Bowers
Dr. Warren Van Tine

Merton Dill
Advisor
Department of History
Dedicated to:

Connie, Chris, and Nikki
November 11, 1943 ........................................... Born - Columbus, Ohio

1965 ....................................................... B.A. Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Kentucky

1966-67 ................................................... Teaching Assistant, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Kentucky

1967 ....................................................... M.A. Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Kentucky

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Mid-Nineteenth Century American History

Studies in the Slavery Controversy, Civil War, and Reconstruction.
Professor Merton Dillon

Studies in Colonial America.
Professor Paul Bowers

Studies in the Early Republic.
Professor Bradley Chapin

Studies in Colonial Latin America.
Professor Steven Stone
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INTRODUCTION

The American Missionary Association began its involvement in the State of Kentucky in 1848. It was the expressed intention of this organization to champion an antislavery cause in this slave state as a prelude to an expanded abolitionist initiative into the South. The principal agent in the Kentucky mission field was John Gregg Fee. Under his leadership, the A.M.A. would employ a multitude of strategies to engender an antislavery sentiment within the bluegrass population.

For twelve years before the outbreak of the Civil War, A.M.A. missionaries distributed great volumes of Christian and antislavery literature in the state. There was an equally great commitment to the establishment of free churches and schools. These Christian abolitionists also illustrated the debilitating effects of slavery on Kentucky's economic development and encouraged settlement in the state of freedom-loving people from the North and East. Within the state, A.M.A. operatives offered a tenacious defense for their program through an anticafe interpretation of the Bible, a commitment to the principle of freedom of speech, and an appeal to the higher law doctrine.

A toehold for the campaign was secured in Lewis and Bracken Counties. These northern locations would remain the focal point of the A.M.A. crusade until 1854. In that year, the interior counties of Kentucky were successfully penetrated with the center of A.M.A. activity being identified at Berea, Kentucky, in Madison County. From that time until early in 1860, the association, through its ministerial staff, established a network of antislavery cases throughout many of the central and northern counties of the state.
The Kentucky mission was temporarily curtailed by February, 1860. Strong emotions were released in response to the John Brown Raid in Virginia, and latent frustrations created by the presence of antislavery ministers and schoolteachers ultimately resulted in the expulsion of virtually all A.M.A. personnel from the state. Their return to Kentucky was delayed until after the guns of war had fallen silent.

This work is primarily a study of the A.M.A.'s Kentucky mission and the activities associated with it in the period before the war. The association's home department expectations for a southern mission will be examined. In addition, the internal management of the Kentucky organization will be reviewed. The study will also focus on those aspects of the missionary experience which reflect its strengths and weaknesses as an antislavery force. Finally, attention will be paid to specific initiatives taken by the Kentucky agents to achieve their goals. Only in a limited sense will this work deal with the A.M.A.'s overall organization and program. Neither will it examine closely the western fields of the home department nor other southern missions.

In assessing the association's efforts in Kentucky, five conclusions are apparent:

1) The missionary effort was influenced by Oberlin principles and ministers trained at that Ohio college.

2) The fundamental objection of the A.M.A. toward slavery was that it was a moral affront to Christian teachings.

3) The A.M.A.'s support of abolitionists principles was out of step with the prevailing antislavery attitude in Kentucky. Even those antislavery advocates within the state who were sympathetic to
the association's objectives regarded representatives as radicals in their pronouncements on the slavery issue. This attitude was strongly felt by Cassius Clay and ultimately resulted in the withdrawal of his support.

4) Their success worked against them. Many Kentuckians who were converted to the A.M.A. antislavery position found the recalcitrant proslavery forces in the state to be intolerable. Unfortunately for the association's interests, many of these individuals chose to leave Kentucky and thereby undercut the population base which the A.M.A. hoped to employ in its campaign.

5) During its years of involvement in Kentucky, the American Missionary Association advanced the antislavery cause more successfully than others who campaigned against slavery.

In spite of the many adverse conditions it faced, the association did conduct a successful antislavery campaign. Antislavery churches and schools were established. Christian and antislavery books and tracts were carried and distributed by A.M.A. colporteurs throughout many counties within the state. In the dozen years prior to the Civil War, these antislavery missionaries continued to present the slavery question as being a state, as well as a national concern. Their position was presented through the A.M.A.'s own publications, the national antislavery press, and the few Kentucky papers that supported their cause. From the pulpit and in the field, they expressed their deep conviction that slavery had no justifiable basis in Kentucky. Their arguments aroused great interest and sparked much debate. The ministers conducted an ongoing dialogue with the people of Kentucky and strongly opposed those
who tried to silence the discussions. The extensive sponsorship of educational institutions was unprecedented in the early history of the A.M.A. This emphasis within the Kentucky field was strongly supported by the Oberlin ministers who joined the struggle after 1854. The A.M.A. promoted schools because it believed that the reach of the mission should extend to the youth of Kentucky as well as to its adult population.

The A.M.A. campaign in Kentucky during this period succeeded in keeping the slavery issue before the public as morally evil inconsistent with the foundation principles of the country and wholly incompatible with Christian teachings. Furthermore, it resulted in the establishment of visible expression of the missionaries' beliefs in the form of antislavery churches and schools. Though subjected to physical assault and mental anguish, these Christian abolitionists persisted in their struggle until they were finally driven from the state beginning in late 1859. The extralegal measures which eventually succeeded in purging Kentucky of these ministers could not, however, displace their influence nor did they permanently disable their institutions.
Chapter I
Kentucky: Its Promise and Problems

The Constitution of the American Missionary Association provided for the establishment of both a foreign and home missionary field. In the beginning the major priority was the foreign effort. Because the A.M.A. inherited many foreign enterprises and because it feared conflict with the American Home Missionary Society in the domestic areas, the association's leadership at first was not inclined to encourage much development at home. The antislavery principles of the association, however, mandated an eventual involvement with the citizenry of the United States. These principles were nowhere more rigidly applied than in the state of Kentucky. By 1855 the success of the campaign in the home department in general and the American South in particular had become so important to the association's executive committee that it decided "not to undertake any new missions in the foreign field". Kentucky was regarded as the most significant of the slaveholding states and the program there had clearly become the principal indicator of the American Missionary Association's ability to succeed in its southern crusade. "We hope . . . to make Kentucky," an association spokesman declared, "the model of our operations in the South." Great expectations were associated with the movement of A.M.A. personnel into

1 American Missionary, II (May, 1848) p. 33.
Kentucky. This chapter will review this initial mission field in the southern campaign and reflect upon the programs and problems associated with establishing a successful beginning.

As the officers of the A.M.A. undertook the expansion of their program into the southern section of the United States, they did so with the understanding that the South represented a set of problems and circumstances totally different from those associated with the western missions in the home department. "The work to be done in the slave states," an A.M.A. publication said, "is unlike that in the free states. It is not only the establishing of new institutions but the removing of old ones." The association's southern mission proposed to bring about the abolition of slavery by winning converts to a religious fellowship that condemned the institution as a violation of God's Law.

Many of the A.M.A.'s leaders believed that the natural point of departure into the slave South was the state of Kentucky. "With education, morals, and true religion," they reasoned, "Kentucky would be free indeed to exert a mighty influence on all the slave states for the abolition of slavery." "From this fact," they continued, "and considering . . . her relations to the Northwest, no state should be more the object of attention and of Christian and antislavery effort."

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The plan for Kentucky envisioned a broad range of programs undergirded by the commitment of Christian abolitionism. Fundamental to a successful campaign was the placement of a ministerial corps in the state. This staff's effectiveness would be bolstered by the wide distribution of Christian and abolitionist literature and the creation of antislavery institutions, especially of churches and schools. A.M.A. efforts would also include the active solicitation of freedom-loving settlers from the East and North to consider moving into Kentucky. In this regard the state's agricultural and manufacturing potential was stressed in association materials. In addition to assurances that an economic livelihood could be secured, A.M.A. appeals also emphasized the fact that antislavery institutions had been established within the borders of this slave state and showed promise of succeeding. "A general feeling exists," a Kentucky leader said, "that antislavery schools and churches can exist and prosper in Kentucky." This optimistic view was a continuing feature of A.M.A. assessments of its programs in the Kentucky mission field. Only through the difficult months of 1857 was pessimism more frequently expressed over its endeavor.

Other activities of these Christian abolitionists involved the presentation of illustrative arguments that the economic development of Kentucky could be enhanced if slavery did not exist within its borders. Also, as a strategy to keep their emancipationist sentiments before the public, A.M.A. personnel assumed an active role in both the state and

7John Fee to George Whipple, January 9, 1850 in A.M.A. Archives (Dillard University, New Orleans, Louisiana) The Author used microfilm copies of these documents.
national debates over slavery. Association executives and several of their Kentucky ministers provided frequent correspondence to national, antislavery papers in addition to their own publications. Particularly, the National Anti-Slavery Standard, the Liberator, and the National Era, served as a forum from which A.M.A. activity and principles could be communicated to a nationwide audience. Within Kentucky the clergymen found it more difficult to find a state newspaper through which they could protest slavery's influence. During the twelve years before the Civil War only a limited number of Kentucky antislavery newspapers were published. The Examiner, a successor to Cassius Clay's True American, was published in Louisville until 1850. William S. Bailey, a machinist turned newspaper editor in Newport, Kentucky, published a series of papers throughout the decade before the war. The Free South is the most notable, but the Daily News, the Daily and Weekly News, and the Kentucky Weekly News were all papers under Bailey's editorship. Effective use of the Examiner was impossible because of its financial collapse shortly after the arrival of association personnel. Likewise, the availability of the Newport papers did not provide a viable outlet for A.M.A. pronouncements. The head of the missionary force in Kentucky had serious reservations about William Bailey's ability to edit an antislavery newspaper. The particular details of this conflict will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

In spite of the lack of coverage in Bailey's papers, the association campaign in Kentucky did not pass unnoticed by other newspaper journalists within the same. Several Kentucky papers, the Louisville Journal, the Kentucky Statesman (Lexington), the Observer and
Reporter, (Lexington), the Kentucky Yeoman, (Frankfort), the Louisville Courier, the Richmond Chronicle, and the Mountain Democrat, (Richmond) provided sporadic coverage of the work of the Christian abolitionists.

All of these papers identified with either the Whig or Democratic parties. In Kentucky neither political party wanted to be identified with the antislavery movement. Consequently, these papers provided adamant criticism of antislavery activity within the state. And during the 1850's this required that attention be paid to the campaign of the association ministers. Not only did the Kentucky press denounce the abolitionist ministers' presence in the South, but rarely did it permit the clergymen an opportunity to rebut the claims made against them or their cause. The ministers had to respond to their critics at church meetings, antislavery rallies both in and out of the state, and through individual discussions conducted during colportage activity, or through out-of-state publications.

The need to respond to criticism and the need to debate slavery issues were an important part of the mission. "Continual agitation on the subject of slavery," a Kentucky minister explained, "does good, by directing the attention of persons to it."8 "Slaveholders will lose some of their power over the public mind. . . the people will better understand the character and design of the abolitionists. . . if they are able to contemplate their principles as a result of either reading or hearing about the subject."9

9Ibid.
Clearly the central point of discussion upon which the A.M.A. crusade in Kentucky and the South was founded was its strong adherence to antislavery principles. The position was addressed from a broad range of perspectives, i.e., the immorality of slavery, the inconsistency of slavery with constitutional guarantees, the repressive economic impact of slavery, and the psychological effect of slaveholding on the owners. Concerns expressed by Association ministers not only showed compassion for the slave but equal interest in the slaveholder. "It seems germane to us and our principles," the Executive Committee stated, "that we should press vigorously a work which enlightens the South, and promotes the conversion of slaveholders and others to the doctrines and practices of true Christianity and which will thus secure the abolition of slavery."

Likewise, it was assumed that such a bold assault on the foundations of southern society was consistent with Christian teachings and divinely sanctioned. "Nothing is more evident," the A.M.A. leadership wrote, "than that God has connected the destiny of this nation with its treatment of the colored man." "Divine blessings," they continued, "will be denied as long as slavery exists. It is a law of slavery necessary to its existence that the family institution, the Bible, the knowledge of letters, the preaching of the pure gospel, and the unfettered liberties of Christianity shall not appertain to the slave. The end of all our efforts must be slavery's abolition."

Kentuckians had debated the slavery issue long before the initiation of A.M.A. activities in the state. The early churches organized the first antislavery sentiment. Initial activity was conducted by David Rice, a Presbyterian minister, who came to Kentucky in 1783. Less than ten years later in 1792, as part of his preparation for attendance at the state's Constitutional convention, Rice issued a formal statement in a pamphlet entitled "Slavery Inconsistent With Justice and Good Policy". Within that publication, the minister challenged the readers' sense of morality by asking them to justify why "rational creatures were reduced by legislative action to the state of the brute." He raised a further question about the wisdom of "keeping a growing number of slaves who add nothing in times of war... and who have no reason for loyalty." 12

While at the convention, Rice more clearly expressed the Presbyterian position. It is apparent from his comments that the church believed slavery to be a doomed institution. He explained that an appropriate role for clergymen to play was to be a force supporting educational and other types of preparedness opportunities for slaves in anticipation of the day they would be freed. Formal implementation of this position was undertaken in 1794 by the Transylvania Presbytery. The Presbytery ordered its slaveholding membership "to teach slave children under fifteen to read and write and... to prepare them for the enjoyment of freedom." 13


13Ibid. p. 105.
The Presbyterians were not alone in the discussion of slavery and the church. Kentucky's two largest religious denominations, the Baptists and Methodists, held dialogue on the subject by the late 1780's. Antislavery representatives from these churches were also in attendance at the constitutional convention in 1792. Further evidence of their feelings about slavery is revealed in the fact that at least twelve Baptist churches in Kentucky openly preached antislavery principles by 1811.\textsuperscript{14} The Methodist church took an antislavery position as early as 1784 when it provided for a process of gradual emancipation under the Ohio Rule.

It is possible to overestimate the role of the churches if evaluations are based solely on their antislavery positions through the early 19th century. While it is true that the Kentucky clergy debated the slavery issue within the church, it is equally true that the church hierarchies moved the formal institutions toward a more conservative position in the middle years of the nineteenth century. In 1836 the general conference of the Methodist church met in Cincinnati and declared that the church would not interfere with the civil and political aspects of slavery and denounced abolitionism. Nine years later in 1845 southern delegates of this church met in Louisville, Kentucky and organized the Methodist Episcopal church. In that same year the Kentucky conference voted to join the recently formed southern wing of the church.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{14}Tbid. p. 112.

\textsuperscript{15}Tbid. p. 139-140.
Debates within the Baptist church polarized feelings on slavery along regional lines and by 1845 the national church had split into a northern and southern branch. Practically all of Kentucky's Baptist congregations joined the southern group.

Presbyterians, representing the smallest of the major denominations in Kentucky, conducted the strongest antislavery activity prior to the A.M.A. beginning. By 1833, however, the church was beginning to reflect a more conservative attitude also. In that year the Kentucky Synod defeated a critical statement against slavery and voted to "postpone indefinitely any decision on 'the very difficult and delicate question of slavery. . . .'" The antislavery ministers in the Synod did, however, generate enough support to create a committee to "provide for the instruction and future emancipation of slaves." These guidelines, though never enacted by the Synod, did reflect the feelings of many individual clergy. In particular they supported gradual emancipation, religious instruction, and basic education for slaves. For the most part the antislavery sentiments of these ministers stopped short of abolitionist expressions.

In reviewing the influence of Kentucky's churches on antislavery feelings in the state, it is important to remember that it was individual ministers and specific church congregations that agitated the slavery

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17 Ibid., p. 86.
question most. Those who came forward represented a small percentage of the clergy and laity in the various churches. They did, however, tend to be some of the more dynamic leaders in their denominations. Among the more notable ministers were John C. Young, President of Centre College and Robert J. Breckenridge, son of Senator John Breckenridge and Secretary of Education in Kentucky.

The presence of antislavery protagonists within the churches was not the only condition which drew A.M.A. interest toward Kentucky. There was much additional evidence to indicate that the permanency of institutional slavery in the state was not an accomplished fact. Prior to the association's presence in Kentucky other efforts challenging slavery included David Barrow's organization in the early 19th century of the Kentucky Abolitionist Society, the formation of the Kentucky Colonization Society in 1823, the successful passage of a Non-Importation Act in 1833, the chartering of a state association of the American Antislavery Society in 1835, and the publication of an antislavery newspaper True American beginning in 1845 in Lexington. These activities perhaps contributed to the often-cited mild nature of Kentucky slavery.¹⁸ Some may have had an additional impact on the declining percentage of slaves within the Kentucky population. During the 20 years from 1830 to

¹⁸Several scholars confirm the mild nature of the slave condition in Kentucky as compared to slavery in other southern states. For a complete review of this thesis consult J. Winston Coleman, Slavery Times in Kentucky (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1940), p. 53.
1850 the slave population dropped from 24.0% in 1830 to 21.5% in 1850.\textsuperscript{19}

In part, this reduction was due to the passage of the Non-Importation Act. There are other reasons which help explain the decline, but for purposes of this paper it is only necessary to understand that in the years antislavery activity in Kentucky increased the percentage of slaves within the population was clearly on the decline.

All these signs encouraged A.M.A. leaders to select Kentucky as the point of departure for their southern campaign. It was upon this foundation of emancipationist history that the association intended to undertake the task of freeing Kentucky from slavery. An important point should be noted here. That point is that while the A.M.A. was attracted to Kentucky for its antislavery history, it felt no obligation to operate its program within the conservatism of previous antislavery ventures. The association conducted an abolitionist campaign based on strong religious principles. The result was that it not only represented a more extreme position on the slavery question, it would also be in conflict with some existing antislavery programs and several of Kentucky's leading antislavery spokesmen. Specifically, the A.M.A. ministers opposed the efforts of the Kentucky Colonization Society. In time they

would also find objection to the antislavery position of such individuals as William Bailey, Robert Breckenridge, and Cassius Clay. 20

Within Kentucky five different types of staff people were utilized. They included settled pastors, missionaries-at-large, evangelists, itinerant preachers, and colporteurs. Each position was assigned a task different from the others. Their diversity of function serves to illustrate the variety of approaches taken by the A.M.A. to accomplish its objectives. It should also be pointed out that admission of ministers into the A.M.A. involved a rigorous process which required absolute proof of antislavery principles and devotion to duty.

Of all the staff positions within Kentucky the single most important was that of the settled pastor. It was this individual who would in large measure determine the success or failure of A.M.A. efforts. The risks involved in preaching an antislavery gospel in a slave state called for more than ordinary men. Those ministers who served the

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communities of the bluegrass state in any service capacity shouldered the responsibility of involving persons who expressed sympathy, as identified by the itinerant staff and colportures, into cohesive church units fired by a common dedication to Christian abolitionism. Needless to say, this was not an easy task, and the history of the A.M.A. mission in Kentucky is marked with many acts of violence and outrageous behavior towards those who identified with this religious society. It was perhaps good fortune that the primary responsibility for the missionary effort in this state fell into the hands of unusually able pastor, the Reverend John Gregg Fee.

John Fee, born in Bracken County, Kentucky as the son of a slaveholder, was strongly influenced by the church throughout his life. As a Presbyterian he did not strongly endorse antislavery principles during his early years. Upon leaving the proslavery environment of his home, he developed antislavery sympathies while attending college. Initially attending Augusta College in Bracken County, he later transferred to Miami University at Oxford, Ohio. In 1842 he enrolled at Lane Seminary. It was during this part of his life that Fee and his father had a serious falling out. The elder Fee simply could neither abide his son's being educated in a free state nor his now open support for the abolitionist cause. "Bundle up your books," he wrote, "and come home. I have spent the last dollar I mean to spend on you in a free state." Fee had no choice but to return to Kentucky and he came home. The relationship between father and son continued to deteriorate.

21Fee, Autobiography, p. 12.
John Fee's strong commitment to the antislavery position would establish an immutable barrier between the two.

In 1844, Fee was ordained by the Harmony Presbytery in Kentucky. Shortly afterward, he was commissioned by the American Home Missionary Society and was assigned to Lewis County, Kentucky. In very short order his antislavery sympathies brought him into disfavor with both the Presbyterian Synod and the American Home Missionary Society. As indicated above the Presbyterian church had moved toward a more conservative position on the slavery issue at this time. John Fee found this trend to be wholly incompatible with his own views of slavery. Likewise, the same sense of conflict was present in his relationship with the A.H.M.S. Reacting to stronger antislavery feelings than were endorsed by his church or his employer, the minister asked to be dismissed from the Synod in 1846 and in 1848 he resigned his commission to the Missionary Society. Later in the same year he would accept an appointment from the A.M.A.

During the course of his disagreements with the two religious groups, Fee's position was presented in various newspapers. The *New York Evangelist* was one publication that reproduced Fee's correspondence. Another paper was more local to his Kentucky home. Cassius Clay, son of General Green Clay, and an emancipationist from Madison County, had begun publication of the antislavery newspaper, *True American*, in

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23 Ibid.
Lexington. Clay printed several articles by Fee and from general appearances the relationship between Fee and Clay showed promise of merging into a powerful antislavery force. As a result of this exposure John Fee came to the notice of the officers of the American Missionary Association. In the same year that he resigned his appointment to the A.H.M.S., he was commissioned by the New York-based organization as a settled pastor in Kentucky and was assigned to both Lewis and Bracken counties.

The association's leadership came to hold John Fee in such high regard that he was given virtually autonomous authority to direct the Kentucky effort, which included both the appointment and disposition of staff. In addition, he was a much respected speaker at A.M.A. meetings, and his published works were regarded as authoritative and worthy of reproduction for purposes of distribution throughout the home mission field. Fee's three most popular writings were *An Anti-Slavery Manual* (1848), *The Sinfulness of Slaveholding Shown by Appeals to Reason and Scripture* (1851), and *Non-Fellowship with Slavery* (1854).

While John Fee was unquestionably the dominant A.M.A. personality in Kentucky, he was not the only agent in the field carrying on the antislavery crusade. Those assisting Fee as ministers and/or teachers included Francis Hawley, George Candee, Daniel Worth, Wiley Fisk, Otis B. Waters, William Lincoln, James Davis, James White, Jacob Emerick, and John A. R. Rogers. In addition to ministers and teachers the Kentucky campaign maintained an extensive staff of colporteurs. They included James Gillespie, A.G.W. Parker, James West, Peter West, J. C. Richardson, Seth Shearer, William Kendrick, William Hauce,
William Newton, and Robert Jones. Virtually all colporteurs were native Kentuckians as were many of those who served as ministers and teachers. The majority of those not from Kentucky were graduates of Oberlin College or were students at Oberlin who worked in the Kentucky field during their vacations. The utilization of Oberlin-trained ministers was heaviest after 1854.

It should be noted that not all the individuals named above were active at the same time. Throughout the twelve years covered by this study, it was the practice for some ministers to serve for a specified period of time and then to be replaced. Some of the staff held regular pastorates outside Kentucky and had been asked to assist the effort in that state only for a limited time. Others were students who intended to return to their studies after a brief period of service. Some, as was true of Daniel Worth, were expected to view their Kentucky experience as a training period. In the late 1850's Worth, for example, went to the state of North Carolina and under the auspices of the A.M.A. undertook the task of introducing the Association's program in that slave state.24

The association's staff and missionary field grew steadily in Kentucky through the years before the Civil War. At the time of the A.M.A.'s expulsion from the state in December, 1859 it was conducting

24 In addition to Worth in North Carolina another Kentucky-schooled minister, James S. Davis, went to Virginia to determine the possibility for mission work by the A.M.A. Tenth Annual Report of the A.M.A. (1856) pp. 69-71.
its operations in twelve Kentucky counties. It supported churches in all twelve counties and non-caste schools in seven of them. The pride of the Kentucky effort was the founding of Berea College in Madison County in 1858.

The Kentucky mission began near the Ohio River in 1848 in Lewis and Bracken Counties with the appointment of John Fee. From that time until 1854 the A.M.A.'s activity was characterized by an ever-widening area of colportage, the screening and gradual expansion of staff and sympathizers, the occasional organization of an antislavery church congregation or anticafe school outside of the two river counties,—all as evidence of the association's determination to undertake a moral reform in Kentucky. That the proper course was one of caution was clearly expressed by James West, a colporteur from Mt. Carmel, Kentucky, in a letter to George Whipple, corresponding Secretary to the A.M.A. "This work... must be gradual," he advised, "great ignorance prevails both in a moral and religious point of view. And it must be pious, ethical, cross-bearing, thorough going, Christian laborers to perform this work or else farewell to Christianity in these ends of the North." In a similar vein, John Fee cautioned against great expectations for massive

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25 A.M.A. churches were located in the following Kentucky counties: Bracken, Clay, Estill, Jackson, Laurel, Lewis, Madison, Mason, Pendleton, Pulaski, Rockcastle, and Whitley. Schools were operated in Bracken, Jackson, Lewis, Madison, Pendleton, Pulaski, and Whitley. Twelfth Annual Report of the A.M.A. (1858) p. 50.

26 James West to Whipple, June 26, 1852 in A.M.A. Archives.
conversions in these early years. Drawing a parallel to the period of early Christianity, Fee provided the following assessment:

As in the days of the Apostles not many mighty nor many noble came . . . by consequence truth can be blessed to the conversion of a few. This will exist until prejudice wears away, and time, arguments and facts demonstrate to the people that we are the friends (not the enemies) of both master and slave.  

In 1854 the mood of caution and the acceptance of limited goals gave way to a decision to launch a more direct assault on slavery in Kentucky. "If there ever was a time for the friends of universal freedom," James West declared in 1854, "now is certainly the time in Kentucky . . . ."  

This change in outlook was encouraged in large part by the relocation of the association's leading clergymen in Kentucky. At the prodding of Cassius Clay, John Fee moved his family to the Berea Ridge in Madison County in 1854. This land, given Fee as a gift by Clay, lay well into the interior of the state and adjacent to Kentucky's most populated slave county. Fayette County, with its slaveholding hub at Lexington, represented all things the A.M.A. found repugnant in the slave system. In a manner of speaking the forces of perpetual servitude had come face to face with Christian abolitionism.  

Throughout the years from 1854 to 1860 the reformers would accelerate their efforts to establish visible expressions of success in the form of free churches and schools. Fee also worked diligently to expand the ministerial force and to urge residents from free states to

27 John Fee to Whipple, March, 1851 in John Fee papers (Hutchins Library, Berea, Kentucky).  
28 James West to Simeon Jocelyn, May 13, 1854 in A.M.A. Archives.
move into Kentucky. A need for increasing amounts of printed materials was required because of the greatly expended area now being canvassed by the association's personnel. Additionally, the staff was having to respond to national antislavery pronouncement and enactments. They required informative publication on the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, the Republican Party, the constitutional problems in Kansas, and other national concerns.

Undoubtedly the project dearest to Fee during this period was the establishment of an educational institution within Kentucky which would be a counterpart to Oberlin College in Ohio. Fee and John A. R. Rogers were the prime movers of this undertaking. The college, founded on principles advanced by the A.M.A., was located in the antislavery settlement on the Berea Ridge. This college and the surrounding community were part of Fee's vision of establishing "an industrious, non-slave-holding community as a protest against the sluggishness of a slaveholding society" in Kentucky.29

Throughout the years of A.M.A. involvement in Kentucky it became increasingly evident that initial perceptions about the differences between conducting an antislavery campaign in free and slave states did not anticipate the extent of dissimilarity. As indicated previously the southern field did not have the regular support of a state newspaper.

Although the association's regular publications, American Missionary and American Missionary Magazine, circulated in Kentucky,

there was interest in establishing an antislavery paper within the South. John Fee was asked by the Executive Committee to evaluate Bailey's paper. Fee visited Newport and delivered a highly critical report on Bailey to the A.M.A. leaders. He described the editor as having "neither intelligence nor correct principles for the work . . . and no correct motives for reform". In a later communique to Simeon S. Jocelyn, corresponding secretary for the Association, Fee suggested that the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society might want to consider sponsorship of the Free South in much the same fashion as it supported the National Era. He further recommended a change in editorship and offered William Goodell's name for consideration.

The intent of having a newspaper was two-fold. It was primarily to provide a vehicle through which the association's positions might be more widely publicized throughout the state. Also, it could provide an additional source of income to help support the mission field. This latter concern was a continuing point of aggravation for the association. Funding for both foreign and domestic fields required great sums of money. It was customary for the congregations in any given area of missionary activity to support their minister and thereby lessen the financial burden on the A.M.A. This support was mostly in the form of housing and boarding provisions, but frequently included an annual stipend. The notable exception to this arrangement was in the southern

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30Fee to Whipple, October 28, 1852 in Fee Papers.

31Fee to Jocelyn, February 15, 1853 in Fee Papers.
field, where local partisans were few. There the association was forced to provide near total fiscal support for the missionary staff. Leaders of the A.M.A. hoped that the sale of subscriptions and newspaper ads for southern-based publications would generate needed income to support that missionary endeavor.

In addition to newspaper sales and congregational support the association solicited the general public for contributions on a regular basis. Likewise, it was assumed by the leadership corps that if people knew more about the purposes and activities of the association they would be more inclined to support the cause. In order to increase the visibility of the association a decision was made by the executive committee to hold the annual meetings in a number of locations throughout the northern states. Coverage by local newspapers, delegates' spending for goods and services, and greater public exposure were all assumed to be worthwhile motivations for this strategy. Again, however, because of the inability of the organization to hold its conventions in southern or border states, these areas did not benefit from the kind of spontaneous giving that characterized some of the annual meeting sites in the North.

The fiscal records presented in the A.M.A.'s Annual Report suggest that these fund-raising efforts successfully met the needs of the organization. The greatest strain was witnessed in the southern field, but even there it appears that the availability of money was not a major consideration in evaluating success or failure. Perhaps the only

time that funding was a matter of serious concern was in 1857. In that year southern mission work truly suffered due to the lack of funds.  

The financial hardship of 1857 resulted in reduced monies for ministerial support, but the greatest problem was the inability of southern ministers and colporteurs to get requested printed materials. The publication effort was seriously curtailed because of the absence of funds. This economic hardship was eased considerably late in 1857 when the A.M.A. received $100,000 from the estate of the Reverend Charles Avery of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.  

In the area of publications the association developed a beneficial relationship with the American Reform Tract and Book Society. The support provided by the Tract and Book Society was especially important to the Kentucky mission field. "We view it," an A.M.A. report asserted, "as an instrumentality well adapted to the propagation of a pure Christianity, to the abolition of all the strongholds of vile and wrong, and to the elevation of all classes of human beings, and . . . we welcome this institution as a valuable aid to free missions, cordially recommending it to the liberal patronage of all who desire the conversion and salvation of the world." This society not only held attraction for the association because of a similar commitment to antislavery principles, but also because of its facility to produce a high volume of Christian and antislavery publications.


As indicated above one of the important objectives of the Kentucky mission field was the circulation of a great quantity of printed materials. Typical of the orders placed by John Fee for the Kentucky colporteurs was the one dated February 7, 1853. That request was for the following works:

5 dozen Bibles
1/2 dozen Bibles with New Testaments
1/2 dozen Bibles without Psalms
26 dozen Pilgrims Progress
1/2 dozen Memoir of Isabella Graham
1 dozen Religion and Eternal Life
1/2 dozen Journey on Love to God
1/2 dozen Practical Piety
1/3 dozen Morrison's Counsels to Young Men
1 dozen Social Hymns
1/2 dozen Temperance Manuals
1/3 dozen Beecher on Temperance
1/2 dozen Children of the Bible
1/2 dozen Heavenly Manna
1/2 dozen Milk for Babes
1/2 dozen Henry Bibb's Narratives
1/2 dozen Frederick Douglass's Narrative

The materials underscore the association's commitment to Christian and antislavery ends. Other subjects are identified, however, suggesting that the Kentucky reformers had concern for a greater range of sins than slaveholding. Though history will give emphasis to the antislavery expressions of the A.M.A., the association's leaders believed that their true Christian discipleship would be for nought if they did not bring their religious training and conviction to bear on all the attacks upon God's kingdom and work. As the association once explained,

36 Fee to Lewis Tappan, February 7, 1853 in Fee Papers.
Our God is a jealous God and if while laboring for the interest of his kingdom we give any minor object the place due only to the ultimate objective of all Christian labor - the honor of God and the glory of His name in the conversion of men from all their sins - if we regard the abandonment of any sin as the means of obtaining that salvation which comes to us only through faith in Christ as our atoning sacrifice and savior, we may well fear that our labors will fail to meet the divine blessing which alone can make them efficient for the accomplishment of our work.  

Further evidence of the association's broad-based assault on the multiple sins of mankind is provided by the process for recruitment of ministers. Other than citing evidence of their antislavery principles, prospective ministers were also required to demonstrate equal devotion to the practice of temperance, and the rejection of avarice. There is at least one instance of the near dismissal of a Kentucky minister because of his practice of soliciting money "for personal profit" while in the employment of the A.M.A. This minister, Reverend Wiley Fisk, a teacher in Madison County, was operating a school independent of the Association-supported school and charging ten dollars per pupil. This circumstance was brought to the attention of the A.M.A. by a private citizen in Richmond, Kentucky. "Fisk is a disgrace to the cause you have espoused," Mr. Robert Smith wrote, "... he is not fit to appear anywhere as the advocate ... of anything that bears the name of religion."  

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38 Robert Smith to Fee, September 23, 1853, in Fee Papers.
John Fee investigated the allegation himself and, though he found it to be true, Fisk was retained under a probationary arrangement. A later accusation against Fisk of adultery, although unproven, had eroded his credibility to the point that Fee felt compelled to release him.

The dependability of missionary staff was a serious concern which plagued the Kentucky reform effort in the years before 1854. In the years between 1848 to 1854, Fee relied heavily on Kentucky ministers and friends to meet staffing needs for the campaign. For the most part they proved to be undisciplined and not as committed to association principles as Fee required. Frequently, the Kentucky leader found it necessary to censure the activity of some members of his staff. On less frequent occasions staff members had to be released for ill-advised behavior which could not be overlooked. An extended examination of the A.M.A. staffing problems prior to Fee's move to Berea will be discussed in Chapter III.

Another important revelation which association ministers experienced after the beginning of the southern campaign was the recalcitrance of slavery in Kentucky. William Bailey expressed it best in a letter to Simeon Jocelyn in October, 1856. "... we are destitute of the ballot vote, destitute of money, and degraded," he explained, "and in this condition ... suffered to go to war against an enemy glittering in wealth, proud in literature, and noble by their laws of inequality." 39 The frequent reports of physical assaults on the

39 William Bailey to Jocelyn, October, 1856 in A.M.A. Archives.
missionaries and occasional expressions of despair in the reports from colporteurs and teachers gave credence to Bailey's assessment of the arduous task represented by the Kentucky mission field.

Additionally, slavery in Kentucky drew much strength from the laws of the state. The institution was protected not only through a system of repressive jurisprudence, but also by acquiescence to a callous use of force to keep the slave in check. Support of this contention is presented in a resolution penned by the association staff at Mt. Vernon, Kentucky on July 18, 1855. "Slavery in Kentucky," the resolution read, "could not be maintained without laws... and force. No man is a slave by nature, no one is so by choice. Nothing but the fear of the sword, the pistol, the bowie knife, and the cowhide keeps him a slave." No stronger evidence exists to illustrate the legal support for slavery than those safeguards written into Kentucky's State Constitution in 1849.

The unsuccessful attempt by emancipationist groups to rewrite the Constitution in 1849 along antislavery lines resulted instead in having the proslavery majority reinforce its influence over the State's charter of government. Slavery is specifically referred to in the Kentucky Constitution in Article 10 and Article 13. Article 10 declares:

The General Assembly shall have no power to pass laws for the emancipation of slaves, without paying their owners, or without the consent of owners... a full equivalent of money... and providing for their removal from the state.

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40 Richmond Mountain Democrat, July 19, 1855.

41 Kentucky, Constitution (1849), Article 10.
Article 13, Section 3 presents a statement on property rights and underscored the privileged standing slaveowners held in Kentucky. This section of the Constitution provides:

The right of property is before and higher than any constitutional sanctions and the right of the owner of a slave to such slave, and its increase is the same and as inviolable as the right of the owner of any property whatever.\textsuperscript{42}

William Bailey expressed the unhappy sentiments of antislavery proponents about the Constitution in an editorial comment in the \textit{Free South}. "Kentucky is made by her Constitution," he wrote, "to declare to the world that property in human beings as articles of trade . . . rests not upon Constitutional law . . . , but upon the Divine Law of natural rights and justice."\textsuperscript{43} He continued to lament the fact "that no man, woman or child held in slavery . . . shall be set free without owners consent, without the highest price being paid, or without banishing them from the land of their birth."\textsuperscript{44}

In addition to supportive Constitutional statements the pro-slavery authors also blunted any possible attack on slavery through the amendment process. The procedure by which an amendment could be added to the Constitution was so designed that it took nearly eight years to complete. There were five steps in the process which followed a sequential order. Furthermore, certain of these steps could only be

\textsuperscript{42}Kentucky, \textit{Constitution} (1849), Article 13, Section 3.
\textsuperscript{43}\textit{The Free South}, October 29, 1858.
\textsuperscript{44}\textit{Ibid.}
accomplished at specific periods in the legislative meeting schedule.

Briefly, the five requirements for amending the Constitution were:

1st Within the first twenty days of a regular session (held every two years) the legislature must call for a sense of the people to amend the Constitution.

2nd At the next State election the people vote for it or against it.

3rd The legislature at the next regular session must poll the people a second time to reaffirm their sense toward amending the Constitution.

4th At the next legislative session, the legislature establishes the mechanism by which the amendment will be presented at the next session.

5th Upon approval of the amendment by the legislature it is submitted to the people for ratification.

If the association's ministers required additional evidence of the intransigence of slavery in Kentucky, they needed only to direct their attention toward Frankfort, the state's capital. Many of the state's legislative proclamations and resolutions addressed national issues. They clearly reflected a proslavery sentiment that was directed to local, as well as, national antislavery groups. Particularly strong disdain was expressed toward those individuals or groups who agitated the slavery issue as a matter of principle. Governor Charles S. Morehead spoke to this point in his annual State of the State Message on December 8, 1856. After addressing the many issues confronting the country and speaking of the threats to the nation's stability, he commented directly

45 Ibid.
to those who encouraged debate on the slavery question. "I ask in the
spirit of patriotism," he said, "that this mischievous agitation, so
vitaly affecting our interests as a border state, shall cease forever."

Previous to this, Representative John G. King from Jefferson County had
presented a resolution in the House expressing great annoyance over the
antislavery agitation within Kentucky.

The A.M.A. had neither the inclination nor sufficient political
strength to challenge slavery on the political level in Kentucky. In
fact, this association was neither a part of nor did it succeed in
organizing an antislavery coalition in the state. Joint ventures
through formal alliances were impractical considerations for the very
busy missionaries. Given the difficulty of their task it was generally
felt that all their time and energy would be required to carry out the
association's mission. Additionally, the emphasis on moralism and in-
flexible standards maintained by the association in its struggle against
slavery were considered as extreme, even by many friends. This latter
sentiment was at the core of Cassius Clay's disaffection with the
missionary program after mid-1856.

Clay had renewed his ambition to hold political office with the
formation of the Republican party. It was during his efforts to gain
recognition by this new political party that Fee noticed a moderation
in Clay's previously stronger endorsement of the A.M.A. program. He

46Kentucky, Report by the Governor on the State of the State,
Joint Session of the Legislature, Frankfort, Kentucky, December 8, 1856.

47Kentucky, Resolution by Representative John G. King, Jefferson
County, House of Representatives, Frankfort, Kentucky, February 2, 1850.
was particularly distressed by the private letters he received from Clay. "I think in the main," Clay wrote to Fee, "that you overdo Demosthenes precept of action, action, action . . . . Those we influence do not at once feel all the wrong of slavery that we do; and may be chilled rather than warmed by your over heat."\(^{48}\) By September, 1857 Clay's assessment of Fee and the Kentucky reformers had reached the point that he considered their "course to be revolutionary" and that they ran the risk of "being treated as criminals."\(^{49}\) Fee aggravated the strained relationship between himself and Clay by openly chastising his friend for compromising his antislavery principles for political gain. Ill feelings between the two improved by the time of Fee's expulsion from the State. After the Civil War, and after Clay's return from Russia, the two would on occasion work together again in support of Berea College.

The absence of an antislavery block in Kentucky in the decade preceding the Civil War and the temporary defection of a key personality like Cassius Clay diminished the association's chance for success. Another threat to success was the initiation of the Southern Aid Society's missionary program in the South in 1853. The potential competition represented by this organization was important not only for the bluegrass mission field, but for the entire southern strategy of the A.M.A.

\(^{48}\)Cassius Clay to Fee, July 8, 1855 in Cassius M. Clay Papers (Filson Club, Louisville, Kentucky).

\(^{49}\)Fee to Jocelyn, September 11, 1857 in A.M.A. Archives.
In a statement issued in New York City on September 28, 1853, the Southern Aid Society declared its intention to provide a religious alternative to the A.M.A. "because of its aggressive abolitionism." The article forecast the inevitable demise of the A.M.A. "owing to its endorsement of principles so contrary to the southern way of life." It was the intention of the Southern Aid Society to neither "denounce or defend the domestic institution of slavery, established by law, in the states to which its operations were directed." Moreover, the society would represent a pacifist, conciliatory stance on the issue of the widening sectional division. Great efforts were made to illustrate that the sections of the country were interdependent. The South was portrayed as being in need of northern-made products and the North was cited as "reaping a rich harvest from southern tourists, trade, and exchange." S.A.S. missionaries were found in every southern state except Florida before the Civil War.

The A.M.A.'s response to the new society and its program was strongly worded and frequently presented. The association's executive committee regarded the society's approach as providing an unwarranted "comfort to the slaveholders and their apologists." Stressing the need to counteract the work of the S.A.S., the association leaders proposed to strike at the moral heart of their missionary rivals by

50 The Southern Aid Society, Address to the Christian Public, (New York, 1854) p. 4.
51 Ibid. p. 5.
pointing out the disparity of logic that permitted an organization to preach the Gospel and the teachings of Christ while ignoring the anti-Christian institution of slavery. In an article in the *American Missionary Magazine* the Association's position was presented:

... it is the domestic institutions as established by law that the Society proposes to ignore, not as they are per se or in the abstract, but as laws of the state. If then rum selling, gambling, duelling, or houses of ill-fame were established by law ... it would be no part of the proposed operations of this society to denounce, condemn, or to pull down such domestic institutions. But worse /sic/ of all is the implication ... that all this may be done consistently with preaching the Gospel in its power and purity.53

The national antislavery press responded to the Southern Aid Society in tones similar to the A.M.A. Condemning the S.A.S. as an "auxiliary of the slave power, an ally, giving it aid and comfort", the *Liberator* encouraged those fighting slavery in the South to stand fast. The *National Anti-slavery Standard* published a highly critical article on the S.A.S. at the time the society was formed in 1853.

The threat represented by this society was short-lived and not visible at all in Kentucky. The economic decline in 1857 had devastating impact on the society, and in the subsequent years sufficient funds were not secured to sustain the operation. A Southern Aid Society treasurer's report for 1858, printed in the *Liberator*, cited a 35% reduction in revenue from 1857 to 1858.54 In addition to money problems


54*Liberator*, (December 24, 1858), p. 206.
this organization found it increasingly difficult to maintain a non-committal position on the question of slavery. Sectional feelings had grown too intense for a voice of moderation and compromise to prevail. After 1858 the Southern Aid Society ceased to be a serious threat to the A.M.A. The Aid Society officially disbanded in late winter, 1861.\(^{55}\)

A final, important issue that diverted the attention of the Kentucky reformers away from their work was the threat by some of the association's western ministers to break away from the parent organization and establish an independent society. The leading advocate of this independence movement was the Reverend Charles A. Boynton of Cincinnati, Ohio. His concern was that the western and southern mission fields were not receiving the support they both needed and deserved. Boynton, and others of like mind, believed this neglect to be the result of an attitude which was held by the executive committee. More specifically, they felt that home mission fields deserved greater attention and support than the foreign field. They further believed that the western and southern missionaries were entitled to more consideration in regulatory and policy decisions. As an indication of the association's recognition of the importance of the western and southern missions, the dissidents ask that a western city be identified where a policy making body for the home department would be located.\(^ {56}\)


\(^ {56}\)Charles Boynton to Tappan, July 21, 1852 in A.M.A. Archives.
Feelings on this matter grew intense and the possibility of an East-West division of the A.M.A. was very real by 1852. The harmful consequence of such a possibility demanded the full attention of the association's leadership. Until the matter was eventually settled, limited attention was given to the Kentucky mission field. Great pressure from western ministers was put on John Fee to use his influence in support of a western based office. Fee expressed his frustration with the whole affair in a letter to Lewis Tappan in New York. After speaking to the need to resolve this internal problem for the sake of the missionary work, Fee spoke in favor of a western office to help shape the home effort. Fee was not, however, very specific as to where such an operation should be located. The general choices seemed to be Chicago, Cincinnati, Oberlin, or Cleveland.

In July, 1852 the Association's General Convention averted further tension by identifying Cincinnati as the city from which home mission activity would be conducted. The organizational body through which this effort was carried out was the Western Home and Foreign Missionary Association. At its organizational meeting in the Vine Street Congregational Church in Cincinnati, Ohio the Western Association clearly reflected an independent attitude. "While it shall be the design of the association to sustain and cooperate with the A.M.A.," its constitution stated, "it shall reserve the right to select its

57 Coverage of this entire matter is provided in: *Sixth Annual Report of the A.M.A.* 1852 pp. 12-13, 51, 81-82.

58 Fee to Tappan, March 10, 1852 in Fee Papers.
own missionary field, appoint and sustain its own missionaries, and
superintend and control its own operations . . . ."\textsuperscript{59} The strong
independence asserted by the language of the constitution was not an
accurate reflection of the more dependent relationship which existed
between the W.H.F.M.A. and the A.M.A. In actual fact, it operated as
an auxiliary of the American Missionary Association with broad recom­
mending powers on the home missionary programs. Furthermore, it would
not be the only western auxiliary sanctioned by the A.M.A. The
Northwestern Home Mission Society located in Chicago would be organized
in late 1852 with responsibilities similar to those of the Cincinnati
association.\textsuperscript{60}

In summary, it can be observed that in spite of the long
history of antislavery activity and sympathy in Kentucky, the state
would not easily relinquish its support for the peculiar institution.
Slavery had become ingrained in Kentucky society and emancipation was
viewed as the prelude to a great social and economic chaos.\textsuperscript{61} The
forbearance of these Christian abolitionists is a remarkable statement
on the tenacity of the human spirit. Faced with the threat of physical
assault and with constant mental anguish, they continued to expand the
mission field over an ever-increasing area. The number of association-
sponsored free churches and schools grew in the years before the Civil

\textsuperscript{59}W.H.F.M.A., Constitution, Article 3, cited in American
Missionary, IV (August, 1852), p. 81.


\textsuperscript{61}Stephen A. Channing, \textit{Kentucky} (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977),
pp. 108-09.
War. Though they were not to succeed in every instance of missionary activity, they conceded no part of the state to slavery's exclusive dominion.

Perhaps the greatest testimony to the A.M.A.'s effect in the Kentucky mission was the concerted effort by the proslavery forces to eliminate its churchmen from the state. Resistance to the religious crusade was a common feature of this effort. Fee expressed the optimism of the pastors when he forecast "The sword, the bowie knife, and the pistol will give way to the power of truth and to a holy trust in the special providence of God." 62

Unfortunately, Fee's vision of a free Kentucky would not be accomplished by moral persuasion. Freedom would be granted only after the guns of the Civil War had fallen silent and the states had ratified the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

Though driven from the state in December, 1859, the reformers had succeeded in establishing a sufficiently solid foundation of churches, schools, and friends of the cause so that upon re-entry into the state after 1865 they had little difficulty in renewing their work. Even as they left in 1859 it was evident that their presence in Kentucky had not been in vain. Nor could those who took part in their expulsion deny that the ministers had established a model community at Berea.

"The men . . . expelled from Kentucky," Eliza Wigham noted, "were of

unimpeachable character . . . and the Berea neighborhood was the best in Kentucky. At a state Republican party convention in Covington, Kentucky on April 25, 1860 several speeches were made expressing regret over the removal of the association's clergy. As an official protest to the removal a strong resolution condemning Governor Beriah Magoffin for allowing the unconstitutional action was presented by E.R. Sandford and forwarded to Frankfort. Cassius Clay offered a vigorous protest to the removal of his friends, and in a "Letter to the Men of Madison," reprinted in the Louisville Journal, he berated the slaveholders of Madison County for their deed. In a prophetic closing statement, Clay predicted the consequences of rejecting the view of slavery as a moral evil, which the A.M.A. clergy had declared it to be, and the folly of believing that slavery would exist forever. "Blood shall atone for the wrongs of my race," he predicted, "and these states shall be free."

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64 Louisville Courier, April 27, 1860.
65 Louisville Courier, April 4, 1860.
Chapter II
The Early Years - Defining The Mission

John Fee was commissioned by the American Missionary Association on October 10, 1848 to provide pastoral services to the people of Bracken and Lewis Counties in Kentucky. His appointment was the initial endeavor by the A.M.A. to establish a Christian, antislavery mission field in a slaveholding state. The association's program would be directed from these northeastern counties until Fall, 1854 when Fee moved his family to Madison County. In the years before the move to Berea the Christian organization would establish a solid church base, experience a modest increase in staff, expand the mission field through colportage activity, and clarify the mission's objectives. These successes would not be accomplished without a struggle. From the very beginning it was apparent that the association's intentions in Kentucky were in large measure alien to the established practices and beliefs of a large segment of the Kentucky population. Consequently, the association's ministers found themselves involved in a series of debates over the slavery issue as it was being discussed in relation to both state and national policy. The revisions in the state constitution in 1849 and the national debates over the extension of slavery in 1850 could not be ignored by these reformers.

Fee began the work in the small community of Cabin Creek in Lewis County as pastor of the Cabin Creek Church. His antislavery
principles and those of the association were perfectly aligned. Both Fee and the association had been inspired by individuals who had an initial association with Lane Seminary and later became involved with Oberlin College. As mentioned earlier John Fee's antislavery views were fashioned from those represented at Lane Seminary. Likewise, the three parent organizations which merged to form the American Missionary Association reflected the attitudes of the Lane rebels. The Western Evangelical Missionary Society, the Committee for West India Missions, and the Union Missionary Society all were influenced by Lane rebels who later went on to Oberlin. In 1846, after their joint involvement with the Amistad Case, these missionary societies rescinded their individual autonomy and organized the A.M.A.

This merger was precipitated by more than their united involvement in the Amistad Case. These societies, along with the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, also shared intense feelings of contempt for the two largest missionary societies in the nation, i.e., The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and The American Home Missionary Society. A point that particularly aggravated the missionaries was the failure of the two larger societies to condemn slaveholding even among their members. Individuals like Lewis Tappan and Simeon Jocelyn of the Union Missionary Society, David S. Ingram of the Western Evangelical Missionary Society, and A.A. Phelps of the Committee for the West India Missions and the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society were fully united in mutual opposition to the American Board and the A.H.M.S. They were equally committed to forming a new antislavery organization.
Oberlin's antislavery principles carried by the individuals mentioned above were transferred to the American Missionary Association at its inception. These principles were perpetuated by the placement of Oberlin sympathizers and ministers into officer positions in the organization. Likewise, over 90% of the A.M.A.'s mission placements were former Oberlin students.\(^1\) The first requirement for one of these home missionaries was "that he had to be aggressively antislavery; must talk it, must preach it, pray it, and vote it."\(^2\) Formal appointment to a mission field by the Association further required that the applicant be interviewed by the A.M.A.'s Executive Committee, provide letters of endorsement and convincing proof that he "had been called and consecrated to missionary work."\(^3\) The maximum appointment was for one year, but usually less. At the end of the appointment period the employee was scrutinized by the same standards and procedures he had been evaluated by at the time of his initial consideration.

The executive committee had the power of dismissal "for just and sufficient reasons."\(^4\) It was not, however, given ecclesiastical authority over the missionaries. In certain areas the A.M.A. leadership adopted stringent guidelines. This was especially true in the area of financial support for the missionaries. In order to assure


\(^2\)Ibid. p. 260.


that no employee would have divided loyalties all ministers had to "pledge that they would receive aid from no other missionary society except by agreement with the Executive Committee." Likewise, no secular pursuits were permitted.

The restrictive qualifications and demanding standards of the A.M.A. were suitably matched by John Fee's personal character and devotion to duty. Fee was determined to implement both the spirit and the letter of the organization's constitution. This reformist group carefully avoided compromising any of its principles with slavery or its supporters. Article 8 of the A.M.A. constitution established a clear statement on this latter point.

This society, in collecting funds, in appropriating officers, agents and missionaries, and in selecting fields of labor, and conducting the missionary work, will endeavor particularly to discountenance slavery by refusing to receive the known fruits of unrequitted labor, or to its employment those who hold their fellow beings as slaves.  

William Goodell, a long standing supporter of temperance and antislavery causes who served as editor of many reform publications and who helped organize the Liberty party, further asserted the association's decision not to allow slave holders to become members in its churches. In the October, 1846 issue of the American Missionary he wrote: "... we therefore account it a perversion of Christian institutions to receive into the churches the proud Brahmin remaining proud and refusing to embrace fraternally the man of lower caste, the oppressive ruler still

5Ibid.

6American Missionary Association, Constitution, Article VIII. The entire constitution is presented in Tappan, History, pp. 55-56.
remaining oppressive and not dispensing justice to the subjects, . . . and the slave master refusing to desist from his violation of the natural rights of man by breaking the bonds of the slave."\(^7\)

In addition to the principle of excluding slaveholders from their churches or to benefit themselves in no way at the expense of slave labor, the A.M.A. leaders were determined to develop antislavery institutions and distribute great amounts of Christian and reform literature.

The principles of excluding slaveholders from their churches or in no way to benefit themselves at the expense of slave labor were strongly endorsed by association leaders. In Kentucky, as in the other slaveholding states where the A.M.A. operated, the number of churches that excluded slaveholders was minimal. Consequently, the thrust of mission activity in these states required the successful development of new antislavery institutions and communities and the wide distribution of Christian and reform literature.

Given the strong mandate for antislavery churches, Fee set about the task of making the church at Cabin Creek into the first slaveholder excluding church in the South sponsored by the American Missionary Association.\(^8\) The foundation for such a church was laid during Fee's previous tenure in that county as a minister in the service of the American Home Missionary Society. As a member of that society

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\(^7\) *American Missionary*, I (October, 1846), p. 2.

Fee had openly expressed a commitment to antislavery principles. His zealous abolitionist leanings ultimately resulted in his separation from the A.H.M.S., but not before he developed a body of sympathetic followers. By early 1849 the Cabin Creek Church had twenty antislavery members.

A historical study of Lewis County written by the Reverend O. G. Rogan provides some information explaining conditions which led to Fee's important, early success. According to Reverend Rogan, Lewis County did not have a large slave population. In 1850 the county population was 7,292 "with a little less than 200 colored people."\(^9\) The majority of residents in the county derived their income from mining, river trading, and small farms. None of these activities were practiced on a big enough scale to warrant largescale slaveholdings.\(^10\)

The successful establishment of an antislavery church encouraged Fee about the prospect of the association's ability to succeed. In a letter written in January, 1849 he expressed his optimism to the leadership of the A.M.A. "My sanguine expectations," he observed, "... did not anticipate such freedom of speech as we now have, nor did I expect to see such progress among the people in antislavery sentiment." "The general impression through the community now," he continued, "is that an antislavery church can exist and prosper in a slave state. We have peace and can circulate antislavery documents with great readiness."\(^11\)


\(^10\) Ibid. p. 466.

Fee pressed his desire to increase the flow of appropriate materials into the field by requesting "an individual who would distribute Bibles to slaves and others and provide antislavery literature as well."\(^{12}\) Not only did Fee urge such an appointment, but he was able to identify a potential source of funding for such a person. The Sullivan Street Congregational Church of New York City had approved an annual sum of $150.00 to support a colporteur in Kentucky.\(^{13}\) After hearing Fee's persuasive arguments stressing the importance of colportage as a necessary component to the growth of the mission, the Association assigned a second appointment to the Kentucky field. Reverend James Gillispie, a native Kentuckian from Lewis County, was appointed colporteur in November, 1849. An additional point for consideration which Fee raised at this time was the possibility of the association supporting a Kentucky-based newspaper. "Consider the impact that could be made with a strong antislavery paper," he wrote to Lewis Tappan, "... now is the time for us to sow some seed, Kentucky society is reaching the transition point, it will settle one way or the other."\(^{14}\)

Fee was particularly concerned that The Examiner, a Louisville antislavery publication, was "going under" and that the cause needed an in-state newspaper.\(^{15}\) The Kentucky minister corresponded frequently with the editors of The Examiner. Fee used the paper to explain his

\(^{12}\)Fee to Tappan, October 31, 1849 in Fee Papers.

\(^{13}\)John E. Benton to Fee, February 9, 1848 in Fee Papers.

\(^{14}\)Fee to Tappan, October 30, 1849 in A.M.A. Archives.

\(^{15}\)Ibid.
antislavery feelings and to respond to his critics. During the months of November/December, 1849 he published long drafts from two of his pamphlets *The Sinfulness of Slaveholding and Non-Fellowship with Slaveholders the Duty of Christians*.

In addition to providing an outlet for Fee's writings, *The Examiner* reported other antislavery activity within the state. For example, during 1849 it covered the successful campaign by Kentucky's antislavery forces to call a state constitutional convention. Their intention was to re-write this body of laws to reflect emancipationist sentiment. For several previous years the antislavery forces within the state had pressed for this constitutional reform. Cassius Clay, Henry Clay, Robert J. Breckinridge, John A. Underwood, and others eventually succeeded in forcing the state legislature to address the reform issue in 1849. John Fee, at the request of Cassius Clay, was an active participant in the constitutional debates. The association's minister took his appointment seriously. He had John Wesley's "Sermon on Slavery" reprinted and distributed to the convention delegates. When given the opportunity to speak he quoted heavily from David Rice's "Address on Slavery" which that minister had given before the 1792 convention gathering. The antislavery proponents did not have success in reforming the constitution, but Fee's involvement in the debates gave exposure to the A.M.A.'s presence in the state.

Greater attention was being focused on Kentucky's antislavery struggle as a result of the national attention given the constitutional debates. Fee's presence in the controversy did not go unnoticed. An itinerant minister for the Congregational church in Ohio wrote to Fee:
"Stand up for God and humanity," he asserted, "and great will be your reward. You will not long stand alone. Truth is mighty and others will take the same stand."^{16}

Within Kentucky the association's greatest supporter in the early years was Cassius Clay. Clay identified with the A.M.A. from its very beginning in 1846 and took first notice of Fee when the minister was writing antislavery letters to the New York Evangelist. As mentioned earlier Fee also provided articles to Clay's True American. Because of his high regard for Fee, Cassius Clay continued his interest in and support for the A.M.A. in Kentucky. In a letter to Lewis Tappan, Clay asked for continued A.M.A. involvement in Kentucky's emancipationist activity. "Kentucky is open for more preachers and colporteurs," he suggested, "I trust the Society will give all the aid it can."^{17} Clay was willing to do his part to support the Association's effort in Kentucky. On several occasions he would identify, and recommend for service, preachers he believed to be suited to the A.M.A. program. He also was willing to provide financial support and armed protection when necessary. His greatest demonstration of support came in 1854 when he donated several acres of land on the Berea Ridge "to establish a 'higher law' church and school."^{18} This Kentucky native made regular visits to A.M.A. churches and assemblies to add his personal backing to the association program. Furthermore, on several occasions he and Fee

^{16}I.R. Bardour to Fee, August 22, 1849 in Fee Papers.

^{17}Cassius Clay to Tappan, September, 1853 in A.M.A. Archives.

^{18}Smiley, Lion of Whitehall, p. 105.
were speakers at holiday banquets or at public gatherings.

Clay's influence on the association's program in Kentucky took the form of financial support, a grant of land, and personal involvement with the cause. In proper perspective, however, Clay's role should be regarded as a benevolent friend of the association rather than its chief benefactor. A majority of the A.M.A. churches and schools were established by hard working missionary staff after long months of colportage activities, individual meetings with sympathetic persons and families, the formation of small antislavery groups, and ultimately the development of free churches and schools. After Fee moved his family to Madison County, he received at least one other invitation with an accompanying grant of land to relocate in another part of the state. This offer for "land and materials" about 40 miles north of Louisville along the Ohio River in Trimble County was made by Delia A. Webster. Miss Webster, a Vermont school teacher who moved to Lexington to become principal of the elite Lexington Female Academy, was convicted of assisting fugitive slaves out of Kentucky in 1844. After serving just six weeks of a two-year sentence, she was pardoned and left the state shortly afterward. She returned to Trimble County in 1853 and purchased 600 acres of land along the Ohio River. It was part of this acreage which was offered Fee in 1854.

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19 Delia A. Webster to Fee, April 4, 1857 in A.M.A. Archives.

Fee's decision to remain in Berea, was due primarily to the more central location for settlement offered by Clay. Also, colportage activities in this area were very promising. The area was uniquely situated on the edge of Kentucky's bluegrass section. Most of the largest slaveholding counties were in the bluegrass. This included Madison County except for the area of the Berea Ridge which was the entryway into Eastern Kentucky's more mountainous and least slave populated counties. Within the mountainous eastern section of Kentucky lay thirty counties with a geographic area greater than Massachusetts and Connecticut combined. The majority of the inhabitants traced their ancestry to Scotch-Irish parents. Several more had migrated into the region from Virginia, western Pennsylvania, and North Carolina. Most of the settlers owned small farms and slaveholding was the exception and not the rule in this section of the state. Both Clay and Fee understood the challenge and reward of establishing a successful antislavery colony in this area of the state.

Prior to his movement into central Kentucky Fee and the other association reformers had attracted attention through the continued development of antislavery institutions and increased colportage activity. As indicated earlier, Fee was assisted by Reverend James Gillispie in late 1849. By March of the following year the association had added another colporteur to the Kentucky field. This minister, the Reverend William Hauce, a local clergyman, was given the territory of Lewis,

Bracken, and Mason counties along the Ohio River as his primary area of responsibility. Hauce's early reports to George Whipple further illustrate the difficulties to be experienced in the mission field of Kentucky. In his letter to Whipple, the minister reported that while visiting homes "along the banks of the Ohio" he met a slaveowner who was the master of six slave families. "He would not read or hear anything on the subject of slavery," he wrote to Whipple," and contended that until God by his own hand should take vengeance on the oppressor he should believe slavery justifiable." Hauce's experience underscores one of the major arguments in slavery's defense. Proslavery advocates contended that slavery was not an un-Christian act and fully believed that several Biblical passages could be cited to substantiate their claim. Furthermore, the fact that slavery had existed for such a long period of time added credibility to their argument of divine approval.

It was on this ground of Scriptural justification that Fee had most confidence about the righteousness of his cause. Consequently, to those who challenged his preaching of the immorality of slaveholding or to those who questioned the religious basis of his antislavery position, Fee was amply prepared to defend himself.

Fee's pamphlets provide much insight into his Christian beliefs. Of particular importance is the material presented in his Anti-Slavery Manual. In his explanation of why the struggle was being waged principally

22William Hauce to Whipple, March 25, 1850 in A.M.A. Archives.
on religious grounds Fee noted:

Our argument is chiefly a bible argument;  
1. We need to enlist the conscience.  .  .  .  
it is sin against God.  2. The Bible, in  
our country, is the standard of right.  
3. We appeal to the Bible because the  
apologists of slavery also appeal to it,  
and. . . make it to support despotism of  
the grossest form.  

Drawing heavily from the Old Testament, Fee quoted passages  
from Genesis and Isaiah to clarify misunderstandings of the word servant  
as used by the Hebrews. He pointed out that the Hebrew term for servant  
in the Bible did not imply slavery.

The word servant in English, and Ebed in  
Hebrew, which is the word translated by our  
word servant, does not always mean slave,  
or one who is deprived of personal ownership  
and held in involuntary servitude both before  
and after he is of age.

One of his biggest critics in the state was the Louisville  
Courier. On several occasions the editor of this paper challenged the  
Biblical authority for Fee's position. Unable to get his responses  
published in the papers that condemned him, the minister turned frequently  
to the national antislavery press to plead his case. Citing I.  
Corinthians he offered clear evidence of the antislavery basis of  
Christian teaching. Paraphrasing the Biblical text he argued:

Slavery is the worst form of extortion.  
It extorts from the poor enslaved man  
not only the proceeds of his labor, the  

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23 John Fee, An Anti-Slavery Manual: or The Wrongs of American  
Slavery Exposed by the Light of the Bible and of Facts; With a Remedy  

24 The True American, December 23, 1845.
wife of his bosom, the child of his body, the right to worship God where and when he pleases, but the very right to himself.\textsuperscript{25}

Further justification that slaveholding was contrary to Christian principles is given in Fee's interpretation of I. Timothy. Assuming the "Law" referred to as being the "Law of God", Fee explained that passage which identified manstealers in a long list of disobedient and ungodly sinners who acted contrary to the "Law and Glorious Gospel of the Blessed Lord."\textsuperscript{26}

Aside from his review of scriptural text, Fee also believed strongly in the enlightened thinking which typified mid-eighteenth century America. Many of his writings reflect the thinking of John Locke and Thomas Jefferson. His endorsement of the principle of a higher law is rooted in the soil of both the religion and philosophy of this period.

Fee was not alone in the Kentucky campaign. As mentioned above he had assistance from two colporteurs by March, 1850. These men circulated printed materials among families in the counties along the Ohio River. The distribution of books and tracts was a key element in the association's plan. It was not, however, the only valuable service provided by this body of workers. Personal meetings with individuals or small groups was another important objective for the colportage campaign. In Kentucky this personal contact was invaluable in giving Fee a feel for the antislavery sympathies in a given area, as

\textsuperscript{25} National Anti-Slavery Standard, April 21, 1855, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
well as for identifying specific individuals who might provide support for expanded missionary work. Favorable reports from Gillespie and Hauch encouraged Fee to consider the possible establishment of a free church in the Locust Creek section of Lewis County. During the spring and summer of 1850 the association provided support for the development of "A Free Church of Christ" in Lewis County. Fee had also established another church in Bracken County by the end of 1850. As 1850 drew to a close the association could point favorably to the growth of its southern missionary effort. The ministerial force, directly in the employment of the association, in Kentucky consisted of three staff people, three active churches, and colportage activity throughout at least three Kentucky counties. In a report to the A.M.A.'s Executive Committee on September 24, 1850, John Fee reported that the free churches in Bracken and Lewis Counties "were having as many as 250 people in their congregations per week with about 63 younger children who might be enrolled in free schools if they were available."28

Fee's encouraging reports to Whipple were evidently borne out in the impressive, early growth of the mission field. His optimism for the success of the association's program at that time, was boosted considerably as he contemplated the future growth of antislavery sentiment in Kentucky. "It is apparent from the reports of the colporteurs," he


confidently wrote, "that there are a number in this slave state who will, if the churches with which they are connected do not entirely divorce themselves from all connection with slaveholders, withdraw from them and form antislavery churches." Though it would not always be his attitude, in 1850 Fee felt confident enough of Kentucky's acceptance of the antislavery program that he invited George Whipple, the association's corresponding secretary, to visit the southern field. With adequate precautions "to avoid festive gatherings and election days," he wrote Lewis Tappan, "there is no reason to believe that he would be treated with violence in going from house to house and giving Bibles to slaves."

Further evidence of the mission's growth in 1850 is reflected in the colporteurs regular requests for more printed materials. Orders for the month of March alone asked for 200 publications. By the end of the year Fee was calling for more manpower in Kentucky. "We need to have in Kentucky at least three good colporteurs, and many prayerful and efficient ministers," he reported, "to fill the openings for those who are willing to cooperate with us on the principles of Christian unity and purity." The association's missionaries in Kentucky did have

29 Fee to Whipple, September, 1850 in A.M.A. Archives.
30 Fee to Tappan and Whipple, January 23, 1850 in A.M.A. Archives.
31 John Fee to Whipple, March 12, 1850 in A.M.A. Archives.
32 Fee to Tappan, November 27, 1850 in A.M.A. Archives.
reason to boast about their early accomplishments. Nevertheless it would be inaccurate to say that the missionary effort did not have problems.

By 1850 political events in Kentucky were being shaped by the recently rewritten state constitution and the national debates over the many issues relating to the Mexican Cession. The Kentucky Legislature's Committee of Federal Relations was empowered to formulate the state's opinion on national policy. The committee, dominated by pro-slavery congressmen, became a very active body during the years before the Civil War. This committee's position on several issues ran counter to the A.M.A. stance. Of particular distaste to the Kentucky ministers was the committee's support for popular sovereignty as an acceptable approach toward the spread of slavery into the territories, its approval of the Fugitive Slave Act, its endorsement of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, and its approval of a Congressional proposal to establish a mail line from the United States to Africa. This latter proposal was viewed favorably by the committee as a convenient opportunity for the state's colonization society to transport "free negroes" from Kentucky.33

The proslavery position in these debates was based on the solid foundation of property rights as presented in the state's constitution. On the question of government interference in the newly acquired

territories the Committee of Federal Relations resolved that "No
involvement is expected . . . any involvement would be unconstitutional,
unwise, and a breech of understanding between the states and the central
government."³⁴ Individual support for this position was echoed by
other individual congressmen. Representative William A. Hooe of Mercer
County offered a resolution early in 1850. "Kentucky insists," he
declared, "that the Congress not agitate the slavery issue through
illegal interference." "Congress has no right," the representative
from Mercer County continued, "to abolish the right of private property
. . . nor to prohibit any slaveholder from taking his property where
he might."³⁵ Equally strong statements were offered by Representative
Albert G. Talbott of Boyle County and Representative Charles Wicliffe
of Fayette County. Wicliffe, a longstanding figure in Kentucky politics,
had pointed words for both congressmen and abolitionists who would
impede the expansion of slavery. "Congressional power over slavery has
been defined," Wicliffe explained, "and it does not include the power
to legislate slavery in the territories."³⁶ He also chose this opportu-
nity to comment on what he believed to be the unconstitutional and
rebellious nature of antislavery spokesmen. "Abolitionist activity,"

³⁴Kentucky, Resolution of the Federal Relations Committee,
Senate, February 5, 1850, p. 147.

³⁵Kentucky, Resolution by Representative William A. Hooe,
House of Representatives, February 16, 1850, pp. 278-79.

³⁶Kentucky, Resolution by Representative Charles Wicliffe,
House of Representatives, January 31, 1850, pp. 179-80.
he said, "is a flagrant violation of the Constitution, and is calculated, if not intended to dissolve the Union . . . and Kentucky will resist these fanatics." 37

These proslavery pronouncements were incompatible with A.M.A. opinions on the slavery question. On virtually every issue confronting the nation during this crucial decade, the association's position differed from the majority opinion of the Kentucky Legislature. The backbone of the A.M.A. argument was its endorsement of the principle of the higher law. This Christian defense was expressed in a resolution responding to the Fugitive Slave Act at the association's convention in 1850. "We believe," the resolution read, "that the Christianity of the nation is about to be tested in view of the late act of Congress for the recovery of fugitive slaves." The statement delineated the basis of A.M.A. disapproval for such an act and concluded with the pledge that "we do solemnly covenant with each other and our colored brethren that we cannot obey it, nor any law that evidently contravenes the higher law of our maker, whatever persecution or penalty we may be called to suffer." 38

The support for the higher law doctrine permeated the association's organization. In Kentucky it was most strongly debated after Fee moved to Berea. It was, however, very much on John Fee's mind in a letter he sent to Cassius Clay as early as April 4, 1854. "What is the duty of a

37 Ibid.
minister in Kentucky," he questioned, "does he leave slavery alone and
treat it as a national affair or make it a religious question—a sin
against God and man . . . and oppose it on the force of moral truth." 39
Similar sentiments were expressed by the Reverend James West, who was
appointed to the Kentucky field in 1852. "May God grant strength,"
he wrote, "to those in the cause of Christ who are not willing to bow
down to the gods of this world" He went on to express hope that God
would intervene and give those involved in His work the strength to
resist man's law when it conflicts with His teachings. 40

Kentucky agents strongly opposed other proslavery actions by
the Kentucky legislature. They opposed legislative approval of the
Fugitive Slave Act, the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, and all other enactments
and pronouncements which benefited slavery. Unquestionably the state
issue that raised the greatest ire within the Association's staff was
the legislature's continuing support for the Kentucky Colonization
Society.

The Kentucky Colonization Society was begun in 1829 as an
affiliate of the American Colonization Society. The state organization
throughout its history provided a convenient platform from which to
debate the slavery question. Debates on the purpose of the society
clearly demonstrate the duality of thought in Kentucky on the slavery
question. The conflicting positions of Robert Breckinridge and Robert
Wickliffe as presented as early as 1830 aptly illustrate the divergence.

39Fee to Clay, April 4, 1854 in Fee Papers.
40West to Whipple, approximate date of May, 1852 (cited in files
as #43127) in A.M.A. Archives.
In an address to the female members of the society, Wickliffe characterized the society as providing an opportunity "to rid Kentucky of its rapidly increasing burden of free persons of color." Breckinridge, holding a contrary view, believed the society's purpose to be "the eventual emancipation of slavery."  

In 1845 the Reverend Alexander M. Cowan, agent of the Kentucky Colonization Society, conducted a successful fund-raising campaign and a "Kentucky in Liberia" was founded. A plot of land in Africa, "40 miles square and agriculturally rich," was purchased for $5,000.00 with great expectations that it would become an active trade center attracting free Negroes from several states. The entire enterprise was incorporated by the Kentucky legislature in 1847 with the estimated expense of moving one individual from Louisville to Liberia with support for six months at $50.00.

As was true of the American Colonization Society this movement was not abundantly successful. In 1851, thirty years after its founding,  

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42 Ibid.


44 Kentucky, *Speech by Representative William S. Bodley*, House of Representatives, January 9, 1855, pp. 66-68.
the effort resulted in only 658 emigrants from Kentucky. This figure represents slightly less than twenty-two per year. In spite of its meager success the state government continued to support the effort. In 1851 the lawmakers passed a bill requiring all free Negroes to leave Kentucky after manumission, and in 1856 they approved an annual appropriation of $5,000.00 to support the society. During 1851 the Kentucky legislature gave its approval to a Federal subcommittee's proposed mail line to Africa. Representative Thomas Y. Payne of Mason County presented the case to the Kentucky house of representatives on January 17, 1851. In his presentation he gave ample illustration of the potential for increased economic and commercial growth for the nation. He was also equally conscious that the Kentucky colonization activity might directly benefit from the establishment of such a shipping line. "This may provide," he argued, "another means by which Kentucky may rid herself of the free negro population within her limits." In addition to the legislature other elements of Kentucky society gave support to the Negro purge. Churches opened their sanctuaries for meetings on the subject, some railroads and shipping lines provided free


47Kentucky, Speech by Representative Thomas Y. Payne, House of Representatives, January 17, 1851, p. 288.
passage for the emigrants to the ports of embarkation, and the Kentucky press as a whole gave favorable publicity to the undertaking. Typical of the opinion being expressed in the state's newspapers is that found in the *Shelby News* of Shelbyville, Kentucky and the *Frankfort, Kentucky Commonwealth*:

> Every citizen is deeply interested in having the free negroes removed from our midst. Every citizen must know that this portion of our population . . . rests like an incubus upon society: they are known to be the very worst class we have among us; 9/10 of them . . . are dissolute and idle, thriftless and improvident; they are degraded beyond the possibility of elevation; they corrupt and demoralize the slaves and induce them to rob their masters.

The A.M.A.'s staff, and particularly John Fee, railed at the apparent determination within Kentucky to have the colonization society succeed. The society was opposed not only because it "was not a practical or moral solution to the problem of slavery," but also because of its characterization of the Negro people. Colporteur reports throughout 1851 clearly express the opinion that the free Negro population, and even the slaves with proper encouragement and opportunity, would become productive, contributing members of Kentucky society and not objects to be controlled.

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50 Quoted in Loesch, *Dissertation*, p. 34.
Rather than support a movement to remove Negroes from the state, the association, and other antislavery sympathizers, countered with an argument stressing that the greater benefit to Kentucky would be the removal of institutional slavery. Efforts were made to prove that slavery retarded economic development, stagnated the population base, undercut educational opportunities, prevented urban development, and limited vocational choice for non-slaveholders. From the beginning of the A.M.A. involvement evidence had been presented to convince the Kentucky population that slavery was adversely influencing the state's rate of growth. The Examiner, in its December 30, 1848 edition, compared the growth of Ohio and Kentucky from 1800 to 1840. Citing slavery as the most significant difference between the two states, the article reported an increase in Ohio's population from 45,000 in 1800 to 1,520,000 by the 1840 census. Kentucky's population, however, had only grown from 220,000 in 1800 to 780,000 in 1840. Having made the comparison, the newspaper developed a strong argument in favor of the free-labor system.51 A more comprehensive assault on the slave system emerged during the gubernatorial race in 1851. Cassius Clay was a candidate for Kentucky's highest office, and slavery within the state was a principal issue in the campaign. Clay's most avid antislavery speech was given in Lexington on August 1, 1851.

The speech was reprinted in the National Era on November 13, 1851. On the question of slavery in Kentucky, Clay was adamant in his belief that the state would be far better off without slaves. Citing

51Ibid. pp. 76-77.
state census reports, he revealed that only one person in every twenty-four actually owned slaves and that slavery served the direct interest of very few Kentuckians. "Furthermore, when you plant slavery in a state," he explained, "you do that thing which tends most powerfully... to dishonor labor, and render it inefficient... slavery denies others work." "It is of course, an unfit association for sons and daughters to be put to work beside a slave," the statesman continued, "consequently sons and daughters are brought up in idleness... mind and body go to wreck." He went on to make a comparison between slavery and the fabled shirt of Nessus. "That shirt, like slavery," Clay contended, "was to bring pleasure and comfort in the use, but maddened its unhappy possessor in the end."52

Clay's speech added the points that slavery drove people from the state, depressed common school education, and denied Kentucky her full marketing and manufacturing potential. He concluded with an appeal to the moral conscience of his fellow Kentuckians. "Upon that ever-to-be-held-sacred and glorious saying, 'Do unto others as you would have others do unto you', I rest the question of the moral relation of slavery to reason, to conscience, to nature, and to God."53

For many antislavery Kentuckians who assumed the debate over slavery in the state had been settled at the 1849 Constitutional Convention, Clay's indictment of the institution came as a gratifying indication that the cause was still very much alive. Clay's feelings

52 National Era, November 13, 1851, V, p. 184. Also consult the Cassius M. Clay Papers, (Filson Club, Louisville, Kentucky).

53 Ibid.
were consistent with those held by the A.M.A. Its agents expressed great displeasure at the negative impact slavery was having on the state. "The natural advantages of Kentucky are great for agriculture and manufacturing," an association publication reported, "by virtue of her extended facilities of river navigation, for commerce, and were slavery abolished, and the masses of her population educated, she would rank among the first states in the Union." Fee presented the economic argument against slavery in his Manual. He showed that the value of the agricultural crops of cotton, rice, sugar, and tobacco in all the slave states in 1839 had been less than seventy-five millions of dollars, whereas the agricultural income for the single free state of New York in the same year was over a hundred and eight millions of dollars. A greater contrast was drawn between the value of manufactured products in the slave states and their value in the free states: "the slave states produced only forty-two millions of dollars worth, whereas the free states produced over one hundred and ninety-seven millions of dollars worth. The annual earnings of slave states totaled slightly over four hundred million dollars, of free states over six hundred and fifty million dollars." 

Another serious concern to the Kentucky missionaries was the disappointing exodus of Christian individuals and families from the state. Not only did they lament the population loss because of its impact on Kentucky, but it was this very group that the mission field


55Fee, Anti-Slavery Manuel, p. 162.
needed in order to continue its growth. Virtually every association agent employed in Kentucky would comment on this distressing condition within the state's populace. It was a regular topic of discussion among the association's staff after 1855 and a source of increasing frustration.

This gradual loss of people and reports from colporteurs which indicated that many Kentuckians were waiting to see if the association's program would succeed only served to reaffirm in Fee's mind the absolute rightness of the movement to establish free churches and schools in the state. "Others . . . are with us," a colporteur wrote Fee and Whipple, "they are waiting to see whether or not a pure gospel will succeed in Kentucky." "I know of hundreds in this situation," he continued, "they would take hold but they fear our efforts will fail."\(^56\) Fee was equally aware of the need for visible evidence of success. "I am satisfied," he wrote to Whipple, "we must have houses of worship in Kentucky. . . people want to see houses of permanence before they break their old connections and commit themselves."\(^57\)

The Kentucky mission envisioned not only the establishment of free churches and schools. It would encourage an antislavery social system including advanced educational opportunities and settlements in which those who opposed slavery could live and work in environments that had no association with slaveholding. The missionaries also made a concerted effort to reverse Kentucky's population flow through a

\(^{56}\) Peter West to Whipple and Fee, approximate date of December, 1853 (cited in A.M.A, File #43204) in A.M.A, Archives.

\(^{57}\) Fee to Whipple, December 2, 1852 in Fee Papers.
campaign to attract antislavery immigrants into the state. As early as January, 1851 the Kentucky ministers were promoting Kentucky's healthful climate and available farm lands. Also by this date association reformers had identified the need for Kentucky to have available a higher educational institution grounded in Christian and antislavery principles. "Upon completing their education in our free schools," John Fee wrote in the American Missionary, "the students must leave the state to obtain additional schooling. Many go to Oberlin." "We need a college here," he continued, "which will be to Kentucky what Oberlin is to Ohio."58

The campaign in Kentucky was primarily a moral crusade fired by the same revival spirit that characterized the reform period of the 1830's. Beyond that it intended to change attitudes about slavery and, where it could, establish antislavery institutions. These institutions would not only provide visible accounts of their success, but would also train Christian men and women to continue the struggle in Kentucky.

By 1851 the A.M.A. was successful in establishing an identifiable mission field in Kentucky. Its program was operating, and from all reports operating successfully, and the state's mission leader had set forth his ideas as to the future direction for the campaign in Kentucky. The difficulty of transforming plans into realities, however, would not be easy in this border state. A clear indication of the obstacles to a successful venture was presented in a letter signed

58 Fee to Whipple, January 14, 1851 in A.M.A. Archives.
"55 citizens of Kentucky" which was sent to the association's executive committee. "Your mission is challenged," the letter reported "by 1500 million dollars of investment, a moral sense stultified by habit and long-established association, public sentiment educated by the press, ministers, and speakers who believe slavery is sanctioned by God, and public sentiment also prejudiced against the slavery movement . . . men and associations." 59

These conditions supporting slavery in Kentucky were evident as the Christian reformers became involved in the state. It was equally assumed, however, that public opinion and prejudiced attitudes could be changed if enough manpower, funding, and printed materials could be provided. This optimism about the mission program was a commonly shared attitude among the Kentucky staff. In 1851, the leaders of the association did not share fully in that optimism and were not yet prepared to offer preferential treatment to the Kentucky field. By 1855 this condition would change, and the southern mission field would become the principal area for association concern and support. This change in attitude would be encouraged by the successful expansion of the Kentucky field and the growing influence of John Fee within the association in the years after 1850.

The years immediately preceding the move to the Berea Ridge were important to the mission effort. A toe hold had already been secured and the mission strategy had been clarified. Antislavery proponents were now waiting to see if the association's program could succeed over a prolonged period. This was also a time of careful watching by the A.M.A. leadership. Kentucky was the testing ground for an expanded campaign in the South. If a Christian-antislavery doctrine could not be preached in this border state, then the association was prepared to re-think its commitment to a southern mission field. Much to the satisfaction of many, both in and out of Kentucky, the activities of the state's Christian reformers would continue a successful expansion. Additional staff, drawn largely from native Kentucky ministers, and greatly increased colportage involvement accounted for much of the success. Long before John Fee moved to Madison County, association agents were active in the area. Also, it was apparent that other Kentucky ministers, not formally associated with the A.M.A., were going to support its cause and encourage the development of non-slaveholding congregations in their own denominations. This rippling influence of the mission effort would heighten awareness of antislavery sympathizers outside of Kentucky thereby focusing greater attention on the struggle in the state. John Fee, as leader of this southern effort, gained increased recognition within the association and would frequently address its annual meetings. A recounting of
the Kentucky campaign, its successes and needs, would become a regular feature of the association's newspapers and occasionally would appear in a feature article in such important publications as the National Era, the Liberator, and the National Anti-Slavery Standard. Fee's move to Berea and the generous support by Cassius Clay underscored the feeling that the association's mission in Kentucky would succeed. Shortly after this move in 1854 the executive committee of the A.M.A. decided not to increase their foreign mission field in order to concentrate greater resources on the southern effort.

The continued territorial expansion of the mission field was very much a part of the strategy of the Kentucky program. From its beginning in the two northern river counties the mission effort would spread to Fleming, Pendleton and Mason Counties by 1852. The advance into these areas was accomplished as a result of a staffing increase. The Reverend James West was appointed to colportage responsibilities in April, 1852 with "especial preference to circulating the Bible among slaves." In December of the previous year West had written to the secretary of the A.M.A. explaining his interest in being involved in the Kentucky mission. He indicated that as a native Kentuckian he already knew many who were sympathetic to the cause and that he had shared with some members of his congregation the works of John Fee, as well as Wesley's Thoughts and The Sinfulness of Slaveholding. He further stated that he was already regarded by many as an abolitionist

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and thought himself suited to become a colporteur. In his letter of application he wrote about his antislavery views:

I have often expressed my antislavery principles in Kentucky, Illinois, and Iowa, and owing to the position that I occupied relative to the secession from the Methodist Episcopal church in 1845 while a resident of Lewis County I was called an abolitionist not only behind my back but to my face also and that in harsh language.²

His initial term of employment with the association was for "20 months and 26 days" and he would be under the direction of John Fee.³

In that same year (1852) another name was given to Lewis Tappan as a good man for the Kentucky field. Cassius Clay suggested that the Reverend Wiley Fisk, an antislavery minister of the Union Church at the Glade in Madison County, might be utilized by the association. Clay believed that Fisk would be effective in relating to the slaveowner. He reported that Fisk had been a proslavery advocate who had been converted to an antislavery position. Accordingly, the minister could understand proslavery feelings while at the same time be prepared to counter these sentiments with rational antislavery arguments and true Christian teachings.⁴

As was customary of the association's selection process, Fisk was required to provide a personal testimony on his Christian values. This was accomplished in a letter to Simeon Jocelyn on January 3, 1853.

²James West to Whipple, December, 1851 in A.M.A. Archives.
³Whipple to West, April 8, 1852 in A.M.A. Archives.
⁴Clay to Tappan, October 24, 1852 in A.M.A. Archives.
Fee was also instructed to offer an opinion. As it turned out John Fee had already made plans to visit Madison County to assess the prospects for expanding the mission activity to that section of the state. This visit was not scheduled before Spring, 1853 but he did manage to investigate Fisk and on March 2, 1853 officially notified the association's leadership of his approval of Wiley Fisk.\(^5\) Fisk was contracted by the A.M.A. for $500.00 per year and his service would be that of itinerant minister to four counties in the central Kentucky area. His immediate supervisor was to be John Fee.\(^6\)

The opening of this section of the state greatly pleased Fee. His feelings on this important advance for the mission were presented in the association's Annual Report published in 1854. "I have most ardently desired and prayed for this day," he wrote, "when interior Kentucky would be so opened that the people there would be willing to hear the gospel of impartial love and freedom."\(^7\) Later on that year Fee would move his family to this interior setting in order to gain better advantage in directing the Kentucky campaign.

By the time Fee moved to Madison County other staffing changes had taken place within the field. At least four additional ministers were employed in Kentucky. Two of them replaced the Kentucky agents who had concluded their service for the association. The employment of

\(^5\)Fee to Whipple, March 2, 1853 in A.M.A. Archives.
\(^6\)Whipple to Wiley Fisk, February 9, 1853 in A.M.A. Archives.
James Gillespie, and William Hauce ended by late 1853. James West was continued as a colporteur through the decade. Of these three staff members James West had been the most effective employee. His reports to the American Missionary Association were more regular than other colporteurs, and he had a greater commitment to the work of the association.8

The new staff was added with an eye toward maintaining the success of the campaign along the river and to increase colportage activity in the interior counties. A minister that would eventually assist Fee in the northern counties was not initially brought to Kentucky as an employee of the A.M.A. In his Autobiography, Fee explains the circumstances under which the Reverend Francis Hawley came to Lewis County. Apparently Fee had great concern over the act of baptism. Of particular concern to this Kentucky minister was whether sprinkling or immersion was the proper Christian experience. After intensive scriptural review and debate with ministerial colleagues he determined that immersion was the appropriate technique. Neither John Fee nor his wife had been immersed and he felt compelled "to live up to his conviction ... and be baptized."9

William Goodell suggested that the Reverend Francis Hawley might perform the sacred act. Hawley, a native of North Carolina reared in the Baptist church and a practicing antislavery minister, was at that time serving the undenominational churches near Syracuse, 

8Fee to Whipple, February 3, 1852 in A.M.A. Archives.
New York. Fee, impressed with his background, asked the Baptist minister to come to Kentucky and baptize his wife and himself. Hawley came and the two Kentuckians were immersed in the waters of Cabin Creek near their home.\textsuperscript{10} As a consequence of this meeting between the two ministers Hawley was persuaded to join the southern mission field. It was, however, to be an ill-fated appointment within the staff. Among the association's Kentucky ministers, Hawley would become Fee's greatest critic. He openly criticized Fee's support of several association appointments to Kentucky. In particular he admonished Fee as a poor judge of character for his approval of Mr. Peter West as a colporteur. West, a native of Virginia, was a popular figure in the Madison County area. He was not a minister, but was an active member of the Methodist church and a strong advocate of antislavery principles. Hawley's objection to West was not very specific other than to say he was not effective in his tasks.

By the time Hawley presented his feeling about Fee to the association's secretary, Fee had already raised serious questions about the desirability of continuing Hawley in the Kentucky field. Fee's concern was not with Hawley's commitment to either Christian or antislavery principles. Rather, he was critical of his snobbish attitude toward his Kentucky congregations.\textsuperscript{11} The fact that Hawley had refused to move his wife to Kentucky upset Fee considerably,

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{11}Fee to Jocelyn, September, 1854 in A.M.A. Archives.
but it was his continual chastisement of his congregation that eventually drove the men further apart. The question of Hawley's continuation in Kentucky was decided on March 8, 1855 when he left the state. On that same day Fee wrote to Gerrit Smith explaining that Hawley's "love of harpooning the people" was an intolerable style for ministering to the delicate condition in Kentucky. Characteristic of Fee's sense of Christian benevolence, however, was his additional observation that Hawley could be effectively utilized "for the cause" in another location.12

Francis Hawley was one of five new appointments to begin their work in Kentucky by mid to late 1853. Two others included the Reverend A.G.W. Parker, a minister from Madison County, and Peter West (mentioned above) to assume colportage activity in Madison, Rockcastle, Lincoln, and Boyle Counties. In May, 1853 George Whipple wrote to Fee inquiring as to whether or not these two men should be commissioned by the association.13 Fee approved and they were added to the staff by early summer. In his reply to Whipple, John Fee cited the need to have another man in Fleming County for added support in the northern Kentucky area. He was particularly interested in having the Reverend Daniel Worth join him. After an appropriate inquiry into Worth's background Fee informed the association that Daniel Worth "is ready to work with me and this is as I desire."14 In October, 1853 Worth was added to the

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12 Fee to Gerrit Smith, March 8, 1855 in Fee Papers.
13 Whipple to Fee, May 12, 1853 in A.M.A. Archives.
14 Fee to Whipple, October, 1853 in A.M.A. Archives.
staff. Another appointment was given to Seth Shearer, an antislavery proponent from Bath County, in late 1853. Assigned as a colporteur in interior Kentucky this man was retained only briefly before his dismissal from service in early 1854. His chief weakness lay in his desire to carry arms. This practice was discouraged by the association and when Shearer refused to change his habit, he was let go. Shearer's appointment was the last for the Kentucky mission until just before Fee's move to Berea.

The majority of those appointed to the Kentucky field at this time were residents of the state. During the early years of A.M.A. involvement there, Fee relied on local ministers and friends to staff the churches and distribute the materials. They would succeed in expanding the mission operations, but Fee held serious reservations as to whether or not they could sustain their successes. His primary concern was the lack of commitment to association principles exhibited by many of the native Kentuckians. Some of the difficulties Fee had with his staff are mentioned above. A more complete coverage of this issue and the related decision to meet future staffing needs by using Oberlin-trained ministers and students will be presented in a subsequent chapter.

Other ministers were considered for this southern field, but were not commissioned. The Reverend Isaac Hambrick was given an opportunity as a colporteur in the river counties. In his evaluation Fee reported of "giving him bibles for slaves and antislavery books and documents... that he could make a trial." "Frequently the people yoke him about his antislavery condition," Fee continued, "and
Gillespie can beat him in argument . . . I believe we can do better."\textsuperscript{15} Another minister, referred to only as Reverend Gibson, who served two churches near Ripley, Ohio had expressed interest in the Kentucky mission. After careful evaluation, Fee determined that "Brother Gibson was not a pastor to either of the churches." "He meets the congregations for a short time," he reported, "and does not preach to them at all."\textsuperscript{16} This kind of assessment was regarded as extremely unfavorable and Brother Gibson received no further consideration.

Fee concerned himself not only with investigating association applicants. He also maintained a constant inquiry into those Kentucky ministers who were receiving assistance from other missionary societies. Of particular concern was clergy who received materials from the American Home Missionary Society. His interest was to know the types and kinds of literature provided in order to determine how the subject of slavery was being related.\textsuperscript{17}

The gradual expansion of the association's staff and the mission field during this period was resisted and was not accomplished without some violent actions. A grim illustration of the possible consequences of being an antislavery advocate in Kentucky is provided in an account reprinted in the \textit{National Era}. This account, taken from an article in the \textit{Richmond Chronicle}, told of the lynching of the Reverend

\textsuperscript{15} Fee to Whipple, February 3, 1852 in A.M.A. Archives.

\textsuperscript{16} Fee to Whipple, September 10, 1851 in A.M.A. Archives.

\textsuperscript{17} Fee to Whipple, approximate date of September, 1851 (cited in A.M.A. File #43110) in A.M.A. Archives.
Edward Matthews in Richmond, who had given an "antislavery speech in a colored church."\textsuperscript{18} He was driven from town and told never to return. He did, however, return to protest his treatment. It was a fatal mistake. This act of brutality was given sanction in many Kentucky publications. Perhaps the most ominous statement on the matter was the one printed in the \textit{Journal and Messenger}, a Baptist church newsletter. Referring to the hanging in Richmond, the paper asserted that, "... no one in his position should go to Kentucky to agitate the question of slavery unless he expects to die."\textsuperscript{19}

Fortunately, none of the A.M.A.'s ministers would be killed. Correspondence does indicate, however, that threats were frequently made on their lives and that they were on occasion assaulted, harassed, and arrested. John Fee was the focal point of the proslavery resentment, but all of the Christian abolitionists felt its scorn. James West was threatened with arrest for selling books without a license. James Gillespie was arrested for allegedly telling a slave how he might escape. A more common form of antagonism was the citizens' committees that forbade the association's ministers to enter certain Kentucky counties. Wiley Fisk and John Fee were warned against preaching in several of the interior counties. Responding to those efforts to limit his personal freedoms, Clay applauded Fee's unwillingness "to be censured" and urged "God speed John Fee in his errand of love and mercy."\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{18}National Era, April 3, 1851, V, p. 54.

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{20}Liberator, September 30, 1853, p. 153.
Cassius Clay was threatened with bodily harm if he appeared in some counties. No evidence exists that these efforts to restrict the ministers were effective in keeping the antislavery clergy out of these areas. The principle which was most seriously challenged was that of freedom of speech. Those citizens groups that protested the presence of such men as Fee and Clay failed to realize that their acts only strengthened the antislavery contention that slavery deprived basic rights to white citizens.

Unquestionably, the strain on these men was great, and there are many indications that feelings of frustration were constantly with them. "God forbid that what we have done in Kentucky," Peter West wrote, "should fall to the ground." Even John Fee, the most determined of the Kentucky agents, had his moments of pessimism. "I am pressed beyond measure," he confided to George Whipple, "... Satan is busy. The slaveholding spirit rages against us..."21

In addition to the personal outrages against the staff, other individuals sought the associations churches as the object of their scorn. An incident of importance occurred in 1851 which greatly disheartened John Fee. The combination church and schoolhouse in Bracken County was burned to the ground. In his report to the secretary Fee explained that proslavery sentiment had been building in the area for quite some time. A particular resentment was being directed toward the school's teacher

21 Peter West to Jocelyn, June 15, 1854 in A.M.A. Archives.

22 Fee to Whipple, October 15, 1851 in A.M.A. Archives.
"who was quite popular and averaging 115 scholars daily." Fee continued by indicating that he had no proof as to who the incendiary might have been, but he suspected a man he had seen "at a barn raising the previous day who was cursing the abolitionists." The buildings were not insured, and Fee requested assistance from the association to begin the rebuilding. It is uncertain if the involvement with internal governance questions raised by the western ministers so preoccupied its time that the association was unable to consider the request or if it simply did not have the funds available. At any rate, no record exists that Fee ever received a response to his request for financing. The rebuilding of the church in Bracken county was, however, begun through personal funds and contributions over a period of two years. Finally, in March, 1853 Fee received word that Lewis Tappan and his friends would pledge money to complete the construction of the Bethesda church.

For a mission operation like the one in Kentucky the presence of antislavery, anticate churches was crucial to the conduct of the campaign. The church was the visible evidence of success. The desire to have churches did not, however, lessen the importance of colportage activities during this period. In spite of the fact that the staff increased greatly, there was a continuing appeal for more manpower.

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23Fee to Whipple, approximate date of August, 1851 (cited in A.M.A. file #43109) in A.M.A. Archives.

24Ibid.

25Tappan to Fee, approximate date of March, 1853 (cited in A.M.A. file #43155) in A.M.A. Archives.
Colporteurs' reports strongly urged the continued addition of ministerial support. This was especially true after the opening of the interior counties. Not only would a large corps be able to cover more territory, but it was expected to have a favorable impact on keeping antislavery converts and sympathizers in the state. Peter West expressed it best when he wrote to Simeon Jocelyn. "The curse of slavery drives away many of those who disapprove the system and dread its effects," he commented, "we need more preachers."\(^{26}\)

The benefit of colportage activity is difficult to assess. Its impact would manifest itself in subtle changes in public opinion and changing attitudes toward slavery. A.M.A. colporteurs were active and their reports illustrate how extensively they circulated through Kentucky and how widely they distributed materials. Every month they provided reports to Fee and to the association's secretary. Every report included the number of family visits, the number of guest speaking or preaching visits, and the number of book sales and/or distributions. Other material provided in these reports sometimes included general impressions of how they were received, any difficulties they might have encountered, supply orders, or special materials to emphasize a particular Christian teaching or antislavery position. A.M.A. records from 1851 to 1854 indicate that the average monthly activities of a single colporteur included as many as 150 family visits, 25 guest speaking or preaching engagements, free distribution of over 40 separate

\(^{26}\)Peter West to Jocelyn, November 1, 1853 in A.M.A. Archives.
publications (including Bibles), and the sale of over 75 separate pieces of literature. An illustration of the kinds of information reported by a colporteur is provided in the June, 1852 report of James West. After identifying that he spend the entire month in Fleming County and that he had visited 181 families he noted:

I sold them 120 volumes. Exhorted, Read & Prayed with about 100 of them & with some of them we had a precious season of rejoicing together, in hopes of a blessed immortality. Delivered 21 Lectures, convinced some of the sinfulness, & the evil of Slaveholding, found 38 about right on the subject of Slavery most of whom are lifting up their voices against the evil but some refuse to say anything against themselves unpopular, & I am sorry to say that some professed Christians refused to believe the inspired volume & to follow the teachings of our Lord & Saviour, and also to answer plain Scripture questions, while 35 rec'd me very coolly, many of whom would refuse to even look at the Books, or to read a pamphlet. And 4 refused to have reading or singing & Prayer, 3 of whom are Church members. And about 25 used abusive language and some of them grossly abused the anti-slavery cause & myself, & would refuse to reason or talk calmly, consequently to such I found it necessary to say but little & that with much calmness and composure. I have interrogated but one gentleman on the subject of slaves reading the Bible, but what was willing for their slaves to read & to have the Bible.

These monthly reports provide an additional dimension in assessing the nature of the struggle in Kentucky. They illustrate repeatedly that success would be achieved only after enormous investments of time,

27 Colporteurs' Reports 1851-54, passim in A.M.A. Archives.
28 James West to Whipple, June 28, 1852 in A.M.A. Archives.
manpower, finances, and patience. In many instances the task was not one of debating the issue of slavery or Christian morality, but rather the more difficult problem of even getting individuals to consider that another position could be considered. "Proslavery men refuse to read or debate the issue," James West wrote, "for fear that the world will be converted." 29

The reasons for many Kentuckians to reject an antislavery point of view has been discussed earlier. Fee considered one of the more important reasons to be prejudice. "Prejudice has a grip on the people," Fee wrote, "our work is therefore slow. These prejudices have to be lived down." 30 "The prejudice existing against us," he continued in a later letter, "keeps congregations . . . small and greatly cripples the influences of truth." 31 This prejudiced attitude Fee believed to be largely the result of poor religious instruction by the churches. "This prejudice would not exist to the extent it does," he explained, "if other churches in Kentucky were not pursuing a policy directly opposed to us." 32 "The Kentucky people have not been trained to be Christians during the week," he observed, "it is a Sunday business." 33 Peter West expressed a parallel view in a note to the secretary. "Oh could you be here and see the mockery that is carried on in the churches,"

29 James West to Whipple, December 30, 1852 in A.M.A. Archives.

30 Fee to Whipple, approximate date of November, 1852 (cited in A.M.A. files #43150) in A.M.A. Archives.

31 Fee to Whipple, December 2, 1852 in A.M.A. Archives.

32 Ibid.

he wrote to Whipple, "The Sunday Christians on Monday . . . put Christ upon the auction block in the person of his poor and sell him to the slave driver."  

The years before the move to Berea were truly trying times. Buoyed up by their faith, the righteousness of the mission, and feelings of success as demonstrated in the growing numbers within their churches and schools and the increased distribution of printed materials through 1852-54, these Christian abolitionists were committed to successfully carrying out their tasks. In spite of the hardships, they were convinced that they were doing God's work and they would succeed. "God loves this cause," Fee proclaimed in a report to the association's secretary, "he watches over it and is still pressing it on towards millennial glory."  

The frustration and sentiments of futility were always counter-balanced by stronger feelings of hope and Divine virtue.

The successful accomplishments of the mission were stressed by those associated with the southern field. Such feelings were not without justification, especially after late 1852. Even before that time, however, the Kentucky mission was receiving attention and support from outside the state. A Christian antislavery convention held in Chicago on July 3, 4, and 5, 1851 passed the following resolution: "Be it resolved," the statement read, "that the success of the Reverend John Fee in establishing free churches in a slave state proves that it

34 Peter West to Jocelyn, June 15, 1854 in A,M,A. Archives.
35 Fee to Whipple, December 2, 1852 in A,M,A. Archives.
is practicable to plant the South with a slavery excluding gospel."

The resolution continued by recommending "that measures be taken to
collect and report to a future convention information necessary to
carry forward this great edict."

The association had three churches in operation along the
river at this time. The congregations continued to increase over the
250 level Fee cited in his September 24, 1850 report to the association.
Records available through 1851 indicate that these churches were attract-
ing slightly more than 300 people for Sunday services with as many as
80 actual church members by the end of 1851. A report issued in early
1852 indicates that school attendance at two church schools was averag-
ing 91 students each session. During this time the third church had
not yet been rebuilt and it is uncertain as to whether the children who
had attended that school were attending one of the other schools or not.
Nor can it be absolutely determined how many other churches were relying
on A.M.A. colporteurs or itinerant ministers as their single source of
ministerial service; apparently several were.

In comments provided in its Sixth Annual Report the association's
leaders expressed their approval of the work being done in Kentucky.
"Our missionaries and colporteurs in the slave state are performing a
highly useful work," the report stated, "... in a judicious, kind,
and Christian spirit they are fearlessly disseminating truth, and
especially antislavery religious truth, and their labors are evidently

36Minutes of the Christian Antislavery Convention, July 3-5,
1851 in Special Collections (Hutchins Library, Berea, Kentucky).
attended with the blessing of God." Yet at this time the association's funds were not sufficiently supportive of a southern mission. "If the funds of the association permitted," the report continued, "the executive committee believes they could be no more usefully employed than in sustaining similar efforts . . . in each of the slave states bordering upon free states." This is not to say that Kentucky received no support from the association. Rather it suggests that the funding requests through 1852 were not always provided, e.g., monies to replace the church or to increase the staff. The area that received the greatest amount of financial support was that of book and tract supplies.

The increased requests for printed materials reflect the increased area of coverage by association colporteurs and ministers. Throughout 1852 John Fee ordered and received 3,500 tracts on the subject of the sinfulness of slaveholding. He also ordered 100 of his own Antislavery Manuals, an unspecified number of Bibles and a few copies of Uncle Tom's Cabin, and several copies of the following:

- Tribute to the Negro
- Unity of the Human Race
- Sumner's Lectures on White Slavery in the Barbary States
- No Higher Law
- Voice of Freedom
- Lectures to Young Men
- Prison Life and Reflections
- True History of the Divisions in the Antislavery Society

The importance of printed materials to the mission effort was a major consideration in John Fee's support for a western base of

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38 Fee to Tappan, June 25, 1852 and September 25, 1852 in Fee Papers.
operation. One of this minister's reasons for supporting the western cause was that it would put source materials closer to Kentucky. Fee, who did not express a strong preference for which city to locate an A.M.A. center in, may have been suggesting one when he wrote to Tappan in favor of greater western autonomy. "Would it not provide an arrangement to get Bibles and tract society publications from depositories in Cincinnati," he wrote, "without the expense and delay from New York."39

Association files indicate that 1852 was also the year when greater public attention from Kentuckians began to focus on the missionary effort. The staff found it necessary to further clarify their practice of excluding slaveholders from their churches. Additionally, the question of the true Christian attitude toward slavery was examined. For those Kentuckians who regarded the number of religious conversions as a sign of success the ministers had to explain why the winning of converts to A.M.A. principles in Kentucky would be a slow and difficult process.

In all attempts to address the questions, the association's staff relied upon scriptural explanations. It was generally believed by these agents that slaveholding or support of slavery in any manner was morally wrong, and therefore slavery and Christianity were wholly

39 Fee to Tappan, approximate date of February, 1852 (cited in A.M.A. file #43125) in A.M.A. Archives.
inconsistent with each other. These ministers were quick to point out that the misguided religious instruction received by most of the people in Kentucky was a major reason for the limited rate of religious conversions. Since much religious teaching in the state did not recognize a contradiction between the enslavement of persons and Christian principles, it was of little wonder that people felt no strong compulsion to embrace A.M.A. views. "The scriptures tell us," an association publication explained, "that in order to be truly converted one must crucify self, become humble as a child, and love your neighbor."

"Prejudiced minds . . . mislead by ministers stand in the way," it continued, "only time, truth, and the spirit of God can overcome this obstacle." Applying these principles to their churches and schools, the association subscribed to a practice that insisted on openness.

"We are opposed to Negro pews," Fee explained, "and declare to all that in our church they will have equal rights, equal chances, and encouragement to hear the gospel of impartial love."42

The association's expectation was that the mission in Kentucky would be accomplished as a result of the continued application of Christian truths to immoral acts. In these early years the correspondence

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40 Frequently the ministers would respond to an often asked question through their reports to the association's secretary. They would then be put into the Annual Report and/or printed in the organization's publications. Fee to Whipple, August 25, 1852 in A.M.A. Archives.


42 Fee to Whipple, August 11, 1851 in A.M.A. Archives.
from the colporteurs suggests that the gradual process of changing opinion was meeting with some success in spite of the proslavery resistance. "The cause of reform seems to be on the advance," James West wrote in late 1852, "many with whom I have left antislavery documents on inquiring how they liked the arguments answered . . . that the position is clearly sustained by the scripture evidence." 43

Encouraging reports and identification of antislavery sympathies caused the ministers to think of other ways to join together those who held views similar to their own. One very interesting effort in this regard was the attempt by the association's ministers to organize antislavery clergy in Kentucky not employed by the A.M.A. This project was most strongly encouraged after successfully establishing a foothold in the interior counties. Wiley Fisk, in a letter to Whipple, explained the plan more fully. The intent was to form an alliance among the antislavery ministers and to hold an annual convention "that we may better know our strength and who will stand the scowls of Kentucky." "Our object," he continued, "is to present as formidable a front as possible." 44 In that report to the secretary he reported that the Reverends B. Mills of Woodford County, D. Mower of Bath County, G. M. Nichols of Mercer, D. Smith of Louisville, and M.A. McCampbell were trying to move their congregations to acceptance of the concept of an open church. Fee offered further evidence of the growing interest

43 James West to Whipple, October 2, 1852 in A.M.A. Archives.

44 There is no further evidence that this coalition was ever formed. Fisk to Whipple, March 11, 1853 in A.M.A. Archives.
in open churches in a report to the association. In his annual report, reprinted in the *Eighth Annual Report*, Fee's assessment of the future developments in Kentucky were highly favorable. Citing the influence of the association's presence in the state as an important factor, he explained that, "fields are opening for the establishment of more free churches, three local ministers have moved their churches to a free church basis." He also expressed encouragement over similar trends in the interior counties.

In order to get a better feel for the mission activity in the interior counties, Fee decided to visit Clay in Madison County in 1853. The association had ministers and colporteurs there who were providing reports to Fee, but he had never visited that area before.

With a great sense of anticipation he wrote to Lewis Tappan that the early struggle to keep the mission going in the river counties was now beginning to bear fruit. "One movement leads to another," he wrote, "the movement in Madison County was... inspired by what has been accomplished in Bracken and Lewis Counties."\(^{45}\)

Fee stayed in Madison County for several weeks. During the stay he and Fisk traveled extensively through Madison, Rockcastle, and Jessamine Counties. Had time permitted, Fisk believed that Washington, Anderson, and Mercer Counties were safe to travel in. Fee was sufficiently impressed with the reception they received and the "real


\(^{46}\)Fee to Tappan, approximate date of March, 1853 (cited in A.M.A. file #43155) in A.M.A. Archives.
opportunities for growth" that he became far more interested in moving to Kentucky's interior.\textsuperscript{47}

Though impressed with the prospects for having a successful mission activity in this area, Fee was displeased with Wiley Fisk. The minister was reported to have carried arms on occasion, had a reputation as a horse trader, and chewed tobacco.\textsuperscript{48} Furthermore, Fee believed the territory assigned to Fisk was too great for one man to handle. Fisk was providing ministerial services to three churches: the Union church at the Glade, the Scaffold Cane church in Rockcastle County and the Pleasant Run church in Jessamine County. In spite of his concern about Fisk, Fee did not feel that he could leave his work in Lewis and Bracken Counties. His biggest reservation about going was that he felt very uneasy about leaving the churches, schools, and congregations in these northern counties in the control of any of the association ministers that were then in Kentucky. It would be several months before he felt confident enough in one of his fellow staff members to leave his home in Lewis County.

During those months he continued to receive encouraging reports from the interior. He was particularly pleased to hear about a letter written by the Reverend Fisk indicating that his visit to Madison County had improved prospects considerably for a successful campaign.\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{47}Fee to Jocelyn, April, 1853 in A.M.A. Archives.

\textsuperscript{48}Fee to Whipple, June 18, 1853 in A.M.A. Archives.

\textsuperscript{49}Fisk to Jocelyn, May 30, 1853 in A.M.A. Archives.
Likewise, he was flattered to know of Casius Clay's efforts to get him to edit an antislavery newspaper. Clay offered to "back Fee" if he would assume editorship of Bailey's newspaper in Newport.50

There was consensus among the mission staff that additional ground could be gained in Kentucky if the association were to fully support the effort. Hawley, Peter West, Fisk, James West, Worth, and Fee all agreed that the closing months of 1853 and the months of 1854 were an opportune time for the advancement of the cause. "I think our antislavery sentiments are looked upon more favorably than in times that are gone by," James West observed, "the good people are beginning to read and think for themselves."51 The Reverend Frances Hawley, though not always supportive of individual staff members, felt good about the Kentucky mission. "I feel confident," he wrote, "that the Kentucky mission is determined to be popular . . . and should be liberally supported."52 Peter West after traveling and preaching unharmed and uninterrupted through Lincoln, Boyle, Mercer, Anderson, and Washington Counties was highly optimistic. "Everywhere," he exclaimed, "I find strong friends to the cause of suffering humanity." "There is a glorious work going on in Kentucky," West continued, "... and we intend to keep it before the people."53 Even the association's leadership shared in the enthusiasm of the Kentucky clergy. "There is a

50 Clay to Tappan, July 15, 1853 in A.M.A. Archives.
51 James West to Jocelyn, June 27, 1853 in A.M.A. Archives.
52 Francis Hawley to Jocelyn, August 17, 1854 in A.M.A. Archives.
53 Peter West to Jocelyn, August 15, 1854 in A.M.A. Archives.
marked tendency to freedom in Kentucky," the Annual Report declared, "the efforts of our emancipationists . . . have signs of promise. The freedom with which our missionaries . . . preach against slavery, and establish and sustain churches on antislavery principles is proof."

"It is by such missions," the report continued, "that we are ultimately to give the gospel to the millions of slaves in the South."

Favorable recognition of the association's Kentucky activity in such national publications as the Liberator, the National Anti-Slavery Standard, and the National Era gave further encouragement to the southern crusaders. The National Era was particularly supportive of Fee's effort. His publications and speeches were given extensive coverage in the Era and it is quite evident that he favored corresponding with the publication more than with any other antislavery newspaper. As the identified leader of the Kentucky mission, Fee's recognition as a devoted antislavery leader rose quickly in these papers. On several occasions they provided commentary on his presentations before church groups and antislavery societies concerning his work in Kentucky or to reflect his opinion on national issues. A review of the pages of these papers indicate the extent of Fee's travel. Examples of the coverage include his speech on the Fugitive Slave Bill at an antislavery meeting in Putnam County, Illinois in 1851. They also covered his speech before an antislavery convention in Cincinnati in 1853. The papers gave some attention to the annual meetings of the A.M.A. and on several occasions Fee's presentations were highlighted. On several other occasions when

Fee was invited to speak at places in Kentucky, the antislavery press offered additional coverage of the A.M.A.'s leading southern minister.\footnote{55 For examples of the type of coverage given Fee by some anti-slavery papers refer to the following: \textit{Liberator}, April 19, 1853, p. 70; October 21, 1853, p. 1; August 17, 1855, p. 122; August 14, 1857, p. 129; \textit{National Anti-Slavery Standard}, September 24, 1853, pp. 69-70; October 8, 1853, p. 78; April 21, 1855, p. 1; August 4, 1855, p. 1; \textit{National Era}, January 3, 1850, p. 1; April 10, 1851, p. 131; September 11, 1851, p. 163; August 9, 1853, p. 135; October 5, 1854, p. 158; August 2, 1855, p. 122; March 4, 1858, p. 33; October 6, 1859, p. 159.}

Coverage by the national press and the increased sphere of operation within the mission field had created a greater awareness of the A.M.A. presence in Kentucky. More recognition and a sense of improved toleration toward their preachings were clear signs to the clergymen that their efforts were not in vein. Colporteurs' reports and the correspondence of ministers reflected a dramatic decline in the number of abuses against the staff by the autumn of 1853. A further indication of a changing attitude was the successful election of an avowed abolitionist from Lewis County to the office of Justice of the Peace in June, 1853. John Fee saw particular significance in this election. In a letter to the secretary he explained the importance of this event. "David W. Fearis," he began, "for the last years has been an outspoken abolitionist and a good friend who has stood by me in all times of difficulty. This win we regard as a triumph." "Emancipationists in favor of gradualism or colonization have been elected," he continued, "but Fearis is probably the first abolitionist that has been elected to civil office in Kentucky for fifty years."\footnote{56 Fee to Whipple, May 12, 1853 in A.M.A. Archives.}
Those laboring in the Kentucky field community credited their growing acceptance to the increased discussion of the slavery issue at both the state and national level. Perhaps Fee's belief that a continual agitation of the subject of slavery would lessen its hold over public opinion was being realized in Kentucky. "The very efforts of slave propagandists to defend the institution," he reported to the association, "have awakened in the minds of the people a desire to read and hear, so that they may know what these men are doing." "This together with the agitation of the Church," he predicted, "will give us access to the ears and eyes of many of the people . . . . Thousands are now reading. This removes prejudice and awakens interest." Also, for those who had any doubts that the church would play an important role in this struggle, Fee was quick to point out that "if there is any one thing that will stay the progress of proslavery propagandism, it is the establishment and maintenance of anti-slavery churches, churches which shall constantly manufacture a public sentiment against it."

Again the visible presence of the church was declared to be important. Fee also identified another important role for the church. "As little religious feeling as our people have," the minister observed, "still they revere the Church. A Church that is humble and faithful they regard as the oracle of God." A church that commanded that kind of respect could wield a mighty influence over public feelings. More

58 Ibid., pp. 71-72.
importantly Fee saw the ability to maneuver attitudes as the necessary first step in changing laws. "The Church forms public sentiment," he reasoned, "and public sentiment forms laws."59

Belief in a linkage between the public will and public laws encouraged the ministers to intensify their effort to get more personnel into the field. A particular appeal was made to encourage northerners to move into Kentucky. The association's publications advertized for ministers from states free of slavery. "Ministers from free states can labor in Kentucky," the Annual Report proclaimed, "and preach un­sparing­ly against all know­sins, especially where free Churches are al­ready organized . . . ."60 Association appeals were not limited solely to the recruitment of northern ministers. They frequently urged other missionary organizations to endorse stronger antislavery positions in order to effect a more rapid change in public opinion against slavery.

It was in the midst of this improved climate for mission activ­ity that Fee made up his mind to go to Madison County. Cassius Clay had promised land and support. Friends of the cause in Berea had prom­ised labor and time to build a house and church. In his Autobiography Fee expresses his thoughts about the move. In a conversation with his wife Matilda, Fee outlined the advantages of going to the interior

59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
counties. He believed that the move "would enlarge my sphere of labor and increase my power at home and abroad." His thoughts were not only of himself, however; he was aware of the sacrifice being asked of his wife and children. "For us to leave these churches on the border of the state," he explained to his wife, "to sell out our small effects, take our little ones 140 miles into the interior and into a place comparatively a wilderness, without schools, railroads, or even turnpikes, will be a privation to say the least." His wife, ever supportive of her husband's endeavors, replied, "If you feel that it is duty so to do, we will go, and leave the future with God."

Another concern Fee had about leaving the northern Kentucky mission field to inexperienced ministers was removed when the Reverend James S. Davis joined the association in mid-1854. James Davis, a native of Virginia, was a graduate of Oberlin and had established a reputation as a Christian abolitionist. Fee was favorably impressed, and Davis was awarded guardianship of the border churches and schools. "The way was now made clear," Fee wrote, "for me to go into the interior." An additional motive was also at work. In a further effort to evaluate the work to be done in the interior, Fee had revisited Madison County in the spring of 1854. Much to his dismay opinion in the antislavery churches had turned against Fisk. The thought of losing congregational members was added incentive for Fee to make the move. With the northern

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62 Ibid.
63 Ibid., pp. 89-90.
field in good hands and with a sense of urgency to counteract a potentially serious problem in the interior. Fee moved his family to Berea in September, 1854.

By this time the mission field in Kentucky had been in operation for nearly six years. It had greatly expanded its territorial involvement and staff. The missionaries had succeeded in establishing and maintaining free churches and schools which continued to reflect modest increases in participation and membership. These programs in turn encouraged other ministers to move their congregations to an open church basis. Enormous amounts of Christian, antislavery literature had been circulated in Kentucky by A.M.A. representatives.

In many ways the period after 1854 would parallel the preceding six years. Efforts would continue to expand the territorial reach of the mission, new schools and churches would be developed, and new staff would be added. In significant other ways, however, the move to Berea would symbolize a departure from earlier practices. The Kentucky staff would assume a far more assertive posture, their arguments would become much more sophisticated particularly as they related to the higher law issue and the freedom of speech question. Oberlin-trained ministers would replace the Kentucky ministers, a serious effort would be made to establish a model community, and Christian schools would become as important as Christian churches.
Chapter IV

A Change in Strategy: The Struggle Intensifies

Fee's move to Berea was regarded by many as evidence of continuing success in the southern mission field. The association's activity could no longer be viewed as a limited operation crowded into the northern Kentucky counties bordering on the Ohio River. Interior Kentucky had been penetrated and mission involvements extended to the Tennessee line. In his annual report to the association Fee commented on how the move expanded the reach of the A.M.A.'s influence. After identifying the significance of the move to the ridge he observed that "probably in no former year has there been so large an extent of Kentucky territory visited by our missionaries."¹ The history of the A.M.A. in Kentucky after 1854 is characterized by this continued expansion. In part this chapter will examine the growth of the mission program. It will also identify the activities of the clergy which gave the mission after 1854 a decidedly different quality than in preceding years. Of particular importance in making the post-1854 period different was the rapid succession of debates over slavery as they related to national concerns. It was because of the high visibility and intensity of feeling generated over this subject nationally that A.M.A. personnel found themselves speaking out more frequently on the national issues. Also,

the association's antislavery arguments broadened. Slavery was still considered to be a grave moral injustice, but the clergy's position would now include appeals to a higher law doctrine and the freedom of speech principle. Association ministers would continue to criticize southern churches for being soft on slavery.

The strategy endorsed by the Kentucky staff after 1854 sanctioned direct political and judicial action in their war against slavery. There was a concerted effort to increase the educational undertakings within the Kentucky field. The national turmoil caused by the slavery debates may also explain the renewed agitation against the antislavery ministers, another characteristic of the period. A final distinguishing characteristic of the post-1854 period is the dramatic change in appointment practices to the Kentucky field. The use of local ministers and laymen had not worked satisfactorily, and those appointed to positions after 1854 would virtually all be from outside the state; most from Oberlin. The consequence of the changing emphases within the association's campaign would result in the loss of support from Cassius Clay by late 1856 and the estrangement of A.M.A. programs from other antislavery activity in the state.

The early days and weeks of the settling-in process for John Fee were filled with confusion. His Autobiography richly explains the difficulty he had in finding a location to build his house and in transporting his family from Bracken County. Even through this period of adjustment, Fee continued the work of the mission. Shortly after Fee

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Fee, Autobiography, pp. 91-92.
established residence in Berea, he accepted an invitation to debate the subject of colonization with a lawyer at Crab Orchard in Garrard County. What he found instead, as he recalled in the Annual Report, was "a wicked, lawless, and profane band of men" who informed him they wanted no further discussion on slavery because "it only does injury." When Fee refused to leave and threatened to pursue his right to free speech through the courts, the mob responded by forcing him back on his horse and leading him down the road toward Berea. This incident sobered Fee's view of the task ahead of him in this section of the state. It became evident to Fee that resistive forces were very much at work in interior Kentucky. Referring to his treatment in Garrard County, Fee commented, "This is the policy of slavery . . . it shuns the light." He was pleased when it became evident that the incident had not gone unnoticed. On April 8, 1855 Fee received a letter from Allan A. Burton, a resident of Lancaster, Kentucky (county seat of Garrard County), deploring his recent treatment at Crab Orchard. "I need not express the indignation that should fire the heart of every American freeman," Burton wrote, "whenever the liberty of speech, the highest and dearest rights of the citizen, is invaded." Fee's treatment was further lamented by Cassius Clay. Clay also took the

4Ibid.
5Allan A. Burton to Fee, April 28, 1855 in Fee Papers.
opportunity to connect slavery to the denial of a precious constitutional right. "The evil of slavery," Clay wrote, "is now taking away liberty of speech." Lewis Tappan wrote Fee extending his personal regret over the episode and to offer words of encouragement to continue his efforts.

Similar experiences of mob hostilities were reported by the colporteurs and reprinted in the Annual Report. Great pressure was put upon these ministers to be silent or leave the state. This challenge to a constitutional guarantee was an exploitable condition for the A.M.A., and it did not hesitate to seize the moment. John Fee assessed the potential benefit of a counterattack in a report to the association. "This is likely to produce quite a sensation in the public mind, and possibly a new era in the anti-slavery enterprise in the state," he wrote. "We must try to show it as the legitimate fruit of slavery. The slave system," he continued, "is selfish and forceful. It disregards the interests of all men, white and black. . . ."

The principle of freedom of speech had strong appeal within the A.M.A.'s network of mission activity and friends. It was the prominent topic for discussion at the association's annual meeting in May, 1855. John Fee was invited to Boston to address that meeting. Probably at no other time was there as much awareness of and interest in the Kentucky mission field by the A.M.A. membership. Referring specifically

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7 Tappan enclosed fifty dollars as a "present to John Fee." Tappan to Fee, April 3, 1855 in Fee Papers.
to the efforts of the "mobocrats" to destroy freedom of speech, Fee explained how the people of Kentucky were responding to these unlawful acts. "Hundreds are speaking out against these actions," he commented, "slaveholders in their lawlessness seem to be precipitating the work of freedom." Hoping to convey the impression that many Kentucky citizens opposed slaveholding, he took the opportunity to encourage Christians to settle in the border state. The increasing number of converts who were leaving Kentucky made this problem a very real concern. The southern staff not only wanted to offset their losses, but they hoped that Christian settlers in Kentucky would give added strength to the churches, schools, and missionaries.

The consequence of Fee's visit to Boston is chronicled in the report from that meeting. "The people everywhere are deeply interested in the statements made by him," this report declared. "They wanted to hear about the churches which do not fellowship slaveholders, the progress of antislavery principles in Kentucky, and of the labors in which he and the missionaries and colporteurs . . . are engaged. They were moved," it continued, "by his earnest appeals and views of the duty of Christians in relation to the overthrow of slavery, and the true Christianization of the slave states." The executive committee was also moved by Fee's presentation, because in this year they suspended any new undertakings in their foreign ministry in order to direct greater attention and resources to the Kentucky mission.

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9 John Fee's address to the A.M.A. Annual Convention in Boston, Massachusetts, May 31, 1855. Reprinted in Ibid., pp. 75-76.

10 Ibid., p. 78.
No sooner did Fee return from Boston than he was confronted with another challenge to his right to free speech. Prior to his leaving he had accepted an invitation to join Clay for an antislavery rally at Scaffold Cane church in Rockcastle County. During the several days he was attending the convention, a public meeting had been called at Mt. Vernon, the county seat of Rockcastle County. At that meeting a committee was appointed to inform both John Fee and Cassius Clay they were to stop preaching and speaking in that county under penalty of law. 11

Tension mounted when upon receiving word that they could not speak in Rockcastle County both Clay and Fee responded by informing the citizens group that they intended to keep the appointments. Further excitement was generated when a group calling themselves the Citizens of Jessamine County met to support the freedom of speech principle.

"All peaceful means should be explored," they resolved, "but it may result in repelling force by force . . . . We stand by the citizens in the Glade and at Berea." 12

In predictable fashion Clay proposed that "one hundred friends armed and ready" accompany them to Rockcastle County. 13 The armed

11 Those gathered at Mt. Vernon selected M. J. Miller, John Adams, J. Loplin, and R. G. Williams to deliver their warning to Clay and Fee. Liberator, August 17, 1855, p. 122.

12 National Era, June 14, 1855, p. 95.

escort did not, however, accompany the two men and they made their speeches without interruption to a large and attentive audience.

The importance of this as a great victory for free speech is reflected in the response received from the press. The *National Anti-Slavery Standard* observed that "Mr. Fee and Mr. Clay are achieving greater results than mere triumphs over physical force. They are slowly effecting a change in popular opinion in Kentucky."\(^{14}\) The *Liberator,* credited the affair as being a "great victory for free speech."\(^{15}\) With the exception of little Delaware," the *National Era* stated, "Kentucky is the only slave state in which the right of freely discussing and denouncing slavery is firmly maintained. For this honorable distinction, Kentucky is indebted to two of her native sons John G. Fee and Cassius M. Clay."\(^{16}\) Even the *Louisville Journal* approved Clay and Fee "for vindicating freedom of speech."\(^{17}\)

The Scaffold Cane challenge was the last instance of any great consequence to limit the movement of association staff until the summer of 1857.

A period of relative calm did not lessen the intention of the ministers to continue their insistence on free speech opportunities. In fact, a modest controversy arose over how important association personnel had been in preserving the free speech principle. Association

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\(^{15}\) *Liberator*, August 17, 1855.

\(^{16}\) *National Era*, August 16, 1855, p. 130.

\(^{17}\) *Louisville Journal*, July 28, 1855.
critics suggested that the only reason freedom of speech existed at all was because of Cassius Clay and that it was the association's friendship with him that stopped them from being silenced.\textsuperscript{18} No evidence exists that the Kentucky clergy ever claimed a monopoly in the advocacy of this important principle. Nevertheless, after the allegation that free speech in Kentucky was preserved by a single individual, it seemed incumbent upon the ministers to respond. Fee, in particular, felt that the welfare of the mission required a rebuttal. He feared that new settlers would seek the protection of this one man and that others might become discouraged if they felt that their rights could only be protected by the pistols which Clay was known to have strapped to his chest at all times.\textsuperscript{19} Nearly all the ministers took up the challenge and responded. In general, they pointed to the fact that free speech had been obtained in many places without the use of force. They also pointed out the difficulty for Clay to be with every association employee as they carried out the work of the mission from the Ohio River to the Tennessee border.\textsuperscript{20} After July, 1856 the controversy ended. Clay had a serious fallout with Fee and from that time on he (Clay) would not defend the free speech principle on behalf of the A.M.A. again.

\textsuperscript{18}In a letter to Simeon Jocelyn, John Fee cited several Kentucky newspapers that had commented on Clay's role in protecting freedom of speech for the ministers. Fee to Jocelyn, September, 1855 in Fee Papers. This issue was given consideration at the Annual Meeting. \textit{Ninth Annual Report of the A.M.A.} (1855), p. 77.


\textsuperscript{20}\textit{Ibid.}
For reasons which will be discussed in Chapter V Clay chose to separate himself from the A.M.A. program by mid-1856. Clay's frequent absence from A.M.A. gatherings and churches after 1856 silenced those who believed that the abolitionist ministers depended on him to defend their freedom of speech.

Unquestionably, the activity in Kentucky required that the clergy be able to speak freely and it is true that after Clay's break with the A.M.A. there was extreme violence directed toward its missionaries. In spite of the disruptions and physical assaults the clergymen persisted. The proslavery force did not understand the depth of commitment held by these ministers. With the single exceptions of Rockcastle and Whitley Counties, the efforts to silence these missionaries had minimal impact until December, 1859, when they were driven from the state. On the contrary, the history of this period indicates that for the most part the ministers were not intimidated by the mobs. Even in those instances when churches and schools were destroyed or ministers were assaulted physically, only once did a staff member leave Kentucky. The general response was simply to relocate and begin again.

The staff seemed inclined to speak to the more inflammatory national issues during these years. Also, the association did not rely entirely on its own powers for persuading others to honor the free-speech principle. On at least three occasions, Kentucky ministers sought redress in the courts. "We asked for protection of person and liberty of speech," Fee recalled in his book, "by appeal not to arms, but to civil magistrates and to civil courts."21 At two of these court hearings

21 Fee, Autobiography, pp. 100-102, 121-122.
Kentucky magistrates supported the minister's right to freedom of speech.

The increased attention paid to the Kentucky field was viewed as an excellent opportunity to promote Kentucky as a desirable place for settlement. Ministers and laymen alike were needed in this southern field. Every clergymen on the staff encouraged colleagues to come to Kentucky. This urging was done through personal letters, newspapers, and public speeches. A recurring theme in much of the correspondence from 1855 on relates to this subject. Wilber Fisk notified Simeon Jocelyn in March, 1856, that permanent free churches could be established in Clay, Estil, Anderson, and Washington Counties if ministers could be secured.\(^{22}\) Also, there was an expression of optimism that the same spirit of freedom that was attracting free state settlers to Kansas might somehow be duplicated in Kentucky. "Will not the same principle of action which prompts free state men to go to Kansas to exclude slavery," Fee reasoned, "lead others to come to Kentucky to help abolish slavery?" In this same note he outlined the advantages for those who might be considering this border state. "We have eighteen to twenty free churches, and could have more," he wrote. "There are free schools taught by antislavery teachers, land value is good and personal freedoms are protected."\(^{23}\)

These efforts to influence the settlement pattern in Kentucky were expected to serve many ends. Initially they were to provide a

\(^{22}\) Fisk to Jocelyn, March 6, 1856 in A.M.A. Archives.

\(^{23}\) Fee to Jocelyn, December 1856 in Fee Papers. For additional information on Fee's thoughts about the Kansas issue refer to National Anti-Slavery Standard, December 15, 1855, p. 2.
counter-balance for the loss of antislavery families leaving the state. It then became evident that as the mission field grew, freedom-loving settlers and ministers would be required to hold the ground gained by the association’s staff. The ministers also believed that in some locations antislavery voters could swing the local elections toward antislavery candidates. Such was the case in Madison County when the votes were tallied for the judicial positions in the county in 1858. George Candee, an Oberlin minister serving at McKee, Kentucky in Jackson County, reported to Jocelyn that "four of five abolitionist judges were elected." He went on to express optimism over the future and indicated that this result could be duplicated elsewhere if antislavery populations would move into the state.24 A final reason expressed by the ministers for wanting outsiders to move to Kentucky was to help build communities for Christian, antislavery settlers. The idea was not to only attract ministers and teachers, but to encourage lumbermen, blacksmiths, carpenters, and farmers to these communities in order to assure a feeling of completeness and permanency. This was especially true of Berea.

The Reverend J. S. Davis explained the advantages of settlement in Kentucky. In his private correspondence and in an article printed in the American Missionary entitled "Why Move to Kentucky," Davis presented a strong position in favor of family settlement in the state. He explained that the land available was good and ranged in size from 16 acre parcels to much larger farms of 2,500 acres. The good growing season provided the ability to grow a wide variety of crops. He

24 George Candee to Jocelyn, May 12, 1858 in A.M.A. Archives.
pointed out the market facilities which were available and the excellent river system that permitted access to the shipping points along the Ohio River. As for the general conditions of climate and environment, Davis explained that there were good clean water supplies available throughout the state, the weather was seasonal, and the climate was healthful. Of course he stressed the presence of antislavery churches and schools which he hoped would "serve as the basis of growing communities founded on antislavery and Christian principles."  

Not all descriptions to settlers were as pastoral. Some appealed to a sense of Christian mission and others reflected a note of desperation. Typical of the latter sentiment was one expressed by William Lincoln, an Oberlin student who spent his vacation in Kentucky. Commenting on the delicate balance between proslavery and antislavery forces in Rockcastle County he wrote, "the forces are so evenly matched, that the victory could be won if a few northerners would observe the call of Christ and settle in Kentucky." In that same year Peter West expressed a similar concern. "Oh that the friends of freedom North and East would turn an eye to Kentucky," he wrote, "what

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26 William Lincoln to Jocelyn, October, 1857 in A.M.A. Archives.
we want is men to come and form a colony and show Kentuckians what free labor can do."

The numbers of people that the association believed to be necessary to satisfy all these goals was never revealed. Correspondence in the Fee Papers indicates that the appeals of the Kentucky ministers struck a responsive chord throughout the North and East. Several letters were written to Fee, or in some cases to Jocelyn and/or Tappan, by individuals who were interested in coming to Kentucky to join the cause and help build the community. These letters are too numerous to cover completely, but a representative sample would include the letter from Francis A. Strong of Ripon, Wisconsin who was a miller and would come to Kentucky if a mill could be purchased or built. Another from A. J. Lancaster of Foxboro, Massachusetts expressed an intention to come to Kentucky with his wife. They had heard about the southern field through the American Missionary. He was a hunter by trade, but could do carpentry work. H. H. Hendrick from Batavia, Illinois informed Fee of his interest in Kentucky. The good prospects for farming attracted him. Others wrote to offer encouragement or to offer teaching and/or ministerial services. Fee received a letter from his friends at the Sullivan Street Congregational church in March, 1857 expressing their continuing interest and concern over the Kentucky

27 Peter West to Jocelyn, December 22, 1857 in A.M.A. Archives.
28 Francis A. Strong to Fee, April 30, 1857 in Fee Papers.
29 A. J. Lancaster to Fee, May 4, 1857 in Fee Papers.
30 H. H. Hendrick to Fee, March 5, 1857 in Fee Papers.
mission. They also renewed their financial support of the mission.31 A Reverend Silas W. Higgins from Buford, Ohio wrote explaining that his church in Sardinia, Ohio was splitting and could he be considered for service in Kentucky.32 In December, 1858 a letter from D.L. Beace of Urbana, Ohio was received by Fee. "I do not know how you can bear the persecution, buffeting, and fiery trial through which you are made to pass," he wrote, "nothing but implicit faith in Christ and the assurance of the ultimate triumph of truth and justice can sustain you." Beace was interested in moving to Kentucky "to join the struggle."33

Other inquiries from outside of Kentucky gave the association's ministers a further opportunity to explain the conditions in the slave state. For example, the Society of Inquiry at Andover Theological Seminary in Massachusetts proposed a series of questions to John Fee inquiring about the areas of A.M.A. involvement and the religious condition of the population in those areas. Fee responded by saying that in general there was little preaching in the eastern mountain counties and very few churches and schools. The literacy rate was quite low in this region. Slavery was virtually non-existent there and strong anti-slavery activity was not required. Western Kentucky was outside the scope of their manpower to serve, but the United Brethren church was maintaining a Christian, antislavery presence in the area. The major

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31 Kiah Bayley to Fee, March 2, 1857 in Fee Papers.
32 Silas W. Higgins to Fee, May 18, 1857 in Fee Papers.
33 D. L. Beace to Fee, December 5, 1858 in Fee Papers.
area of A.M.A. operations was the central section of the state with additional activity along the Ohio River. Within the association's areas in Kentucky, Fee pointed out, at least four major church bodies existed. He assessed their position on slavery in the following manner:

The Presbyterians denounce slavery in an abstract way. The Methodist Church is split over the issue. The Campbellites have little knowledge of what constitutes religion. The Regular Baptists show some promise as a reforming group.  

This society also inquired as to the religious condition of the slave population and the extent of the association's work with them. To this question Fee responded by pointing out that only one in 100 slaves could read. "They are easily deceived," he continued, "by religious leaders who distort the real meaning of Christianity." He also pointed out that some churches were available to slaves and some slaves were called ministers. As for the A.M.A. involvement it was primarily a colportage relationship. Slaves were welcome to attend their open churches but "because of restriction on their movements and threats," they did not attend to any great extent. Even so, Fee was convinced that slaves knew of the A.M.A. presence in Kentucky. "The very presence of our churches," he reported, "with their well known principles, speaks volumes to the mind of the poor slave, and they are stars of hope to his crushed spirit."  

Fee continued to explain that it was the white population which constituted the greatest number of individuals who were involved.
with A.M.A. activity. There are no records in the association's archives or in the holdings in the Hutchin's Library at Berea that provide an exact accounting of either slave or free-black populations within the organization's schools or churches. Many references cite an individual involvement, but no references to aggregate numbers. It is, however, reasonable to assume that this number is not large. Nevertheless, the association's critics were quick to point out how the ministers' abolitionist leanings directly affected the Negro, and in particular the slave population in Kentucky. Such an observation adds credibility to Fee's claim that Kentucky's Negro population, though not directly involved in any significant numbers, was aware of and influenced by the presence of the A.M.A.

Southern churches and other missionary organizations operating in the South were constantly criticized by the association for their lack of conviction on the question of the abolishment of slavery. Drawing upon nearly seven years of experience with its Kentucky ministers, the following resolution was passed at the association's annual convention in 1855:

American slavery is one of the greatest obstructions to the conversion of the world. It is the duty of the church . . . to bear an unequivocal testimony against it, and that the silence of the pulpit, ecclesiastical bodies, missionary boards, Bible and tract societies, and individual professors of religion . . . is a reproach to the county, to Christianity, and evidence of defection from religion.37

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Additional criticism of southern religion was offered by James Davis and reprinted in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*. "Southern religion is like the Romish church of the 16th century," he observed, "it is full of mummmery and show but devoid of life giving power." The antagonistic feelings held by the A.M.A. clergy toward the churches of the South were drawn from fundamental differences in scriptural interpretation. Also, the churches in Kentucky reflected the society of which they were a part and as such they chose to "emphasize the theology of the church and not the moral truths of the founder of Christianity."  

Though there is no evidence to claim that association petitions had any direct influence on the decisions, the ministers took great delight in three reports that appeared to be in response to their appeals. One of the most satisfying was the official announcement by the American Home Missionary Society that after 1856 it would refuse to provide aid to churches with slaveholding members. By the end of 1857 the society had completely withdrawn from Kentucky. There is also some evidence to suggest that the moral repugnance against slaveholding, a basic tenet in the association's argument, was striking individual conscience in the state. On January 19, 1856 the *Louisville Journal* printed an editorial urging "the Kentucky legislature to pass a law forbidding the sale of children . . . from their mother." The article continued by indicating

that at least this part of the peculiar institution "was vulnerable to
the abolitionist argument particularly as it is presented in this state." In a similar vein, Simeon Jocelyn received a letter from the Reverend J. M. Lewis, a Kentucky minister whose exact church location is unknown, indicating that "the slaveholding interest are troubled by the institution and many are freeing these slaves in their will in order to ease guilt feelings and seek Heaven." Within a few months after his removal to Berea it became apparent to Fee that with the kind of challenges the mission was facing it would require stronger men than those available in Kentucky; stronger in their devotion to Christian principles and stronger in their reliance on Christian faith. The use of native Kentuckians to serve as colporteurs and missionaries had for the most part not been a success. Fee looked beyond Kentucky's boundaries to find the kind of ministers he felt necessary to carry out the mission. The trend of outside appointments had begun with James Davis. Davis, educated under Charles Grandison Finney, would be the first of many Oberlin students who would make their way to Kentucky. "God will not commission angels to come and do this work," Fee wrote, "men and women must come and do it." The new appointments were not angels, but they would bear an unequivocal Christian testimony against the evils of slavery.

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41 Ibid. On March 9, 1857 the Kentucky Legislature passed a Bill prohibiting the sale of slave children under five years of age: Kentucky, Minutes, House of Representatives, March 9, 1854, pp. 634-635.

42 J. M. Lewis, exact mailing location in Kentucky not cited, June 2, 1857 to Simeon Jocelyn in the A.M.A. Archives.

43 Fee to Jocelyn, November 21, 1857 in A.M.A. Archives.
Before the end of 1854, but after Fee's move to Berea, the association appointed another minister to assist in the Kentucky field. The Reverend George Candee, an Oberlin-trained clergyman who was serving a church in New York, was to join Fee in Madison County. Although Candee arrived in Madison County in early 1855, he would not then be available for full time service. Rather he was only able to stay for brief periods when he was not attending college. In 1858 he graduated from Oberlin and with his bride settled in Pulaski County to provide preaching services for the community and to direct the church-school for the children.

During his stay with John Fee the two men fully explored the idea of expanded educational opportunity beyond that provided in the church schools. The two ministers discussed the prospect of a more extended school experience "to educate not only in knowledge of the sciences, but also in the principles of love in religion, and liberty, and justice in government." Such thinking reaffirmed in Fee's mind the desire to establish a college in Kentucky.

The move to increase the formal educational component of the mission is clearly indicated in the next series of appointments to the staff. Including Candee the association made five consecutive appointments of teachers. In 1856 two Oberlin students, William E. Lincoln and Otis B. Waters, were assigned to temporary teaching duties at Berea in Madison County and at Cummins in Rockcastle County. In 1857 the Reverend J. C. Richardson, one of the few native Kentuckians appointed

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44 Fee, Autobiography, p. 95.
after 1854, was commissioned to conduct a school at Williamsburg in Whitley County. The fifth addition was the Reverend J. A. R. Rogers, who came to replace Lincoln at the school in Berea in 1858 and stayed to help found a college.\(^{45}\) This development in Kentucky is unique within the A.M.A. As a general practice the association was not intimately involved with education. Prior to the Civil War only eight school teachers were employed by the organization throughout its many mission fields. Five of those eight would be operating in Kentucky.\(^{46}\)

Not all the new appointments were settled pastors and teachers. Others were assigned to Kentucky as itinerant preachers and colporteurs. In these positions also, Fee sought outsiders. Some Kentuckians were, however, appointed to colporteur assignments. As a group the new itinerant preachers and colporteurs were overshadowed by the greater exposure given to the ministers and teachers. One explanation for their anonymity is that their terms of service rarely lasted even one year and their activity, though important, was not as visible. Those serving in these positions were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>Time of Service</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jacob Emerick</td>
<td>Oberlin</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Itinerant Preacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James White</td>
<td>Oberlin</td>
<td>1855</td>
<td>Itinerant Preacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Newton</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>1855</td>
<td>Colporteur</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Jones</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>1855</td>
<td>Colporteur</td>
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<tr>
<td>William Kendrick</td>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Colporteur</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As new staff came into Kentucky others were leaving either because their service period was over or because they had been dismissed.

\(^{45}\)\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 92-97, passim.

\(^{46}\)\textit{Annual Reports of the A.M.A}, (1848-59).
Already mentioned in the latter category was William Hauce who left Kentucky in 1855. Fee found it necessary to dismiss two other missionaries. Wiley Fisk had already created doubts in Fee's mind about his suitability for the mission when the latter minister visited Madison County in 1853. Discouraging reports about Fisk's alienation from his churches in 1854 had added to Fee's worries about this clergyman. The final blow came after Fee's arrival in Berea. Fisk had been charged with adultery and though Fee's investigation exonerated him of this act he felt that irreparable harm would be done to the cause by keeping him on. Fee simply asked that Fisk's commission not be renewed.

The third dismissal was Peter West. Fee believed that West did not hold the mission activity as his principal commitment. West had a rather large hog trading business and Fee became convinced that West's interest in the association was more for the extra income which could be applied to his business than it was in distributing books and tracts for antislavery purposes. Fee dismissed Peter West in late 1857.47

James Davis considered leaving the Kentucky field in early 1856. In addition to his work at the Cabin Creek Church in Lewis County and the Bethesda church in Bracken County, Davis had extended his area of preaching to some of the western counties of Virginia. In particular he was preaching in a German Reformed church and a United Brethren church in Paige and Rockingham Counties. Davis urged the appointment of a missionary to that area and gave serious consideration to going himself. He decided against the move when persuaded that the

47 Rogers, Birth of Berea College, p. 40.
mission work in Kentucky was far from secure. Daniel Worth voluntarily left the Kentucky mission in early 1855 to assist an association ministry in Ohio. Two years later he was appointed to direct another A.M.A. initiative in North Carolina.

The majority of those coming into Kentucky were being assigned some teaching responsibilities along with their preaching duties. In some cases the primary obligation of a minister was to direct a school. As indicated previously, the strong emphasis on education by the Kentucky mission was not shared by any other operation in either the home or foreign fields of the A.M.A.

Association schools were administered under the same Christian principles as its churches. In that regard A.M.A. schools, like the churches, were open to all children in Kentucky, both black and white. Providing equal access to education was not well received by the pro-slavery sympathizers. Virtually every school opening was met with strong resistance and some schools were burned down. On a few occasions their teachers were pressured into leaving. Candee's school in Pulaski County was destroyed by fire, and Richardson was forced to leave Williamsburg after being mobbed and beaten. Candee did not

48 Davis recommended the Reverend G. W. Brindenhall of Lafayette, Ohio to replace him if he went to Virginia. Davis to Jocelyn, January 21, 1856 and February 28, 1857 in A.M.A. Archives; National Anti-Slavery Standard, March 15, 1856, pp. 1-2.

49 In a letter to the executive committee, John Fee explained the major reason for Richardson's expulsion from Whitley County. According to Fee, Richardson had agitated the mob when he exclaimed that "40,000 Negroes in Canada are training and plan to come down and slit the throats of the slave holders": Fee to executive committee, July 15, 1857 in A.M.A. Archives.
leave the field after his school was destroyed. Fee moved him to McKee, Kentucky in Jackson County to run the school and provide ministerial services.

Acts of violence were not limited to the schools. Rather, hostile actions were directed toward the broad range of mission activity. This was especially true through 1857 and early 1858. In no previous period had the faith of the ministers been more fully tested. The calm period of late 1855 and 1856 which had led James Davis to consider leaving Kentucky was shattered in 1857.

Drawing definitive conclusions as to why events in Kentucky turned from apparent harmony to confrontation is not an easy task. Part of the explanation lies in the growing anxiety created by the continuing national debate over slavery. The influence of national events is clearly expressed in many of the reports and letters of the association. "Many of the inhabitants of Kentucky, both pro and antislavery, have emigrated to Kansas," the Annual Report revealed, "and consequently much interest is felt . . . as to the issue of the great contest in that territory between freedom and slavery."50 The Dred Scott Case was cited as another issue generating much discussion.51 The national circum-


51 For a detailed discussion of how the A.M.A. responded to the Dred Scott decision, refer to: Eleventh Annual Report of the A.M.A. (1857), p. 41
stance that evoked the greatest response in Kentucky, however, was the Presidential election of 1856. "The present intense opposition," Fisk noted, "is doubtless in a greater or lesser degree the fruit of the political campaign." Because of the importance of national events it became necessary for the Kentucky ministers to improve their knowledge on these issues. The need for this information is reflected in the orders for printed materials. In addition to the regular materials, Fee was requesting passages from the minutes of the House and Senate and interpretive writings on the various national concerns. The association was able to provide some of the requested materials, but the depression in 1857 made it impossible to satisfy all of the publication requests. The Kentucky ministers were greatly concerned about the lack of funds to provide them with these vitally important materials. The frustration felt by the ministers over the prospect of having fewer materials for circulation and use in Kentucky was only part of the concern registered by Fee in his Annual Report for 1857. Speaking to the more fundamental issue of a national compulsion to place worldly gains over spiritual rewards Fee wrote:

52Fisk to Jocelyn, August 13, 1857 in A.M.A. Archives. Though Wiley Fisk was no longer employed by the A.M.A. he maintained continuing correspondence with association ministers for several years.
We have this year passed the culminating point of a series of magnificent enterprises for worldly advantage, which have, for several years, been multiplying and growing... westward expansion, foreign investment, California gold, and railroad development.

Now that mammon, the god of this nation is smitten by the hand of the Almighty, the finances of the country deranged, and the hopes of multitudes prostrated; and among them not a few of those who have aided in missionary and other benevolent enterprises, it will be a matter of anxious inquiry by many, how the cause of this mission is to be carried out.53

In addition to the national ferment events within the state would also have a role in unsettling the peaceful pursuit of association goals. The most important of these occurrences, as expressed by the clergymen themselves, was the split between John Fee and Cassius Clay. Though these men would remain cordial towards each other after their break, they would never again exhibit the personal closeness that characterized their relationship prior to July 4, 1856. In a letter to Simeon Jocelyn, Fee attributed the increased hostility of the proslavery force in 1857 to the loss of Clay's support for the mission. "The enemy is bolder," he wrote, "now that Clay is away."54 A similar observation was made by Wiley Fisk in writing his impressions of the association's struggle. "Clay has called Fee a radical," he stated, "... and it

54Fee to Jocelyn, August 14, 1857 in A.M.A. Archives.
gives comfort to the enemy to see the split."55

Other important issues would emphasize the differences between Fee and Clay and result in further aggravation for the A.M.A.'s missionaries. Specifically, the extended discussion of the higher law principle and the formation of the Republican party were two subjects that drove the wedge deeper between the two. This relationship between Fee and Clay is of sufficient importance that it deserves more coverage that is possible in this chapter. Chapter V will explore more fully the nature of the relationship as it existed before mid-1856, as well as the reasons for its breakdown after that date. An attempt will also be made to determine the extent to which it can be rightfully claimed that the A.M.A. operation in Kentucky was benefited by Cassius Clay.

Regardless of the difficulty in determining the exact reasons for the increased opposition in the Kentucky field through 1857 there is no question about its intensity. The violence against the clergymen and their operations was extreme. Beginning in 1857 literally all of the staff would suffer assaults or in other ways be made to feel the presence of the repressive force of slavery. Rockcastle County was to become the center of hostilities and it would be all but lost to the mission field by the end of that year. Fee had been asked to go to Rockcastle County to preach in the Reverend A. G. Parker's free church at Dripping Springs. He would also visit the school being run by W. E. Lincoln. Shortly after he arrived at his destination, he was

55 Fisk to Jocelyn, July 29, 1857 in A.M.A. Archives.
confronted by a mob "with threats of death and hands on their weapons."\textsuperscript{56} After an exchange of harsh words Fee was dragged from the church, bound, and led out of the county along the road to Crab Orchard. As the mob led him away, he was warned, "if you return again it will be at the peril of your life."\textsuperscript{57} This forced removal of Fee was just the beginning of hostile acts in Rockcastle County. The mob returned and burned Parker's church to the ground.

For some unknown reason Lincoln's school was spared. He was, however, losing his student population because of the reign of terror in the county. "Antislavery families are moving out," he wrote Jocelyn, "Rockcastle County is nearly lost."\textsuperscript{58} Lincoln would leave Kentucky in early 1858 thereby removing the last official representative of the A.M.A. in that Kentucky county.

John Fee experienced another mob within four months of the incident at Dripping Springs. In September, 1857, Fee traveled to Laurel County to preach in the church of a minister he refers to only as Brother Powell. As was true of his experience in Rockcastle County, he was confronted by an angry mob just as he began to preach. "Swearing they would take me dead or alive," he wrote the Secretary, "I terminated


\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{58} Fee to Jocelyn, July 21, 1857 and August 13, 1857 in A.M.A. Archives.
the meeting and left peacefully."59 In this instance, however, he was not driven out of the county, and he reported to Jocelyn that the congregation regrouped in a private home and continued their prayer meeting. 60

The ministers were not the only association staff members experiencing this kind of pressure. Colporteur reports in the 1857 Annual Report cite several cases of being surrounded while on the road and having all their printed materials taken. Nor was the enmity toward an antislavery position directed solely at A.M.A. offices. In late 1856 a citizens group formed in Frankfort, Kentucky. This group, simply known as "Many Citizens," prepared an extensive list of names of free blacks and antislavery sympathizers in the Frankfort area and warned them to "leave town or die."61

In the midst of the most trying days of the mission, Fee suggested that it may be necessary to fight violence with violence. "I believe the people . . . will have to defend themselves against the lawless," he wrote, "with their rifles if need be or we shall have to give up the field . . . in some places."62 These words infuriated Lewis Tappan. When he learned that John Fee allowed his escorts to bear arms in case of sudden mob violence, he severely admonished him

59 Fee to Jocelyn, September 4, 1857 in A.M.A. Archives.
60 Ibid.
61 Orlando Brown to Orlando Brown Jr., September 23, 1856.
62 Fee to Jocelyn, August 20, 1857 in A.M.A. Archives.
and told him to rely on God to keep him safe. With the exception of this single suggestion of an unchristian act to use arms, the staff drew heavily on their faith to see them through. Likewise, they believed that victory would be less a struggle if individuals accepted the moral principles of Jesus Christ. "A conviction is coming and is even now felt," one of the ministers wrote, "that between cardinal moral, religious, and political principles, and their opposites, an issue is building toward a struggle so intense and violent, as to necessitate the extermination of the one or the other. We pray," he continued, "that this conflict not be with garments rolled in blood, . . . but will be won by the teachings and goodness of Him who is called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."64

Perhaps Fee's optimism was based on faith rather than fact in 1857. After the turmoil in the Kentucky mission through the summer and fall the year ended with a lull in the confrontations. During this period of relative quiet Fee wrote to Jocelyn, "I think mob violence . . . has expended its greatest strength and is fast wearing out."65 Unfortunately, his belief that violence was on the wane was premature. In January, 1858 the turmoil would begin again resulting in the most vicious

63 Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War Against Slavery (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1969), p. 333.


65 Fee to Jocelyn, November 24, 1857; American Missionary, XII (January, 1858), pp. 20-21.
of the assaults on the missionaries. This attack, the final hostile act until the time of the expulsions of the Bereans, would occur at Lewis Chapel in Madison County. John Fee was involved, but the most severe abuse was directed toward Robert Jones, a volunteer colporteur who had taken over for J. M. McLane. 66

Jones had been involved with A.M.A. activity in Kentucky for only four months when he was asked to join John Fee at the church in Madison County. On the morning of the day Fee was to preach, he learned of possible mob action against him. He advised his friends not to arm themselves, telling them "he would meet the consequences." 67 His information was correct, and as he preached, the service was disrupted by a mob of thirty to forty men. Otis B. Waters fully described this odious event in detail in a report to Simeon Jocelyn which was reprinted in the Annual Report. "They rushed in and seized Brother Fee and Brother Jones," Waters reported, "and tried to extort from Brother Fee a promise that he would never return, threatening to duck him in the river till there was no breath left in him. Failing to get a pledge," he continued, "... they rode with their captives about two miles to the Kentucky

66 J. W. McLane withdrew his volunteer involvement in the mission field because of marital problems (cited in A.M.A. File No. 43504) in A.M.A. Archives.

River and descended into a dark, lonely ravine upon the bank."

Fee's Autobiography provides an account of what happened next. Identifying a Mr. Covington as a leader of the mob, the minister spoke directly to him at the river. "I can make no pledge," he insisted "duty to God and my country forbid it." This act of defiance infuriated the captors and they responded with force. In an effort to intimidate Fee, their wrath was first leveled at Jones, who was stripped naked and "beaten until he could not stand." The mob then turned to Fee and threatened him with 500 lashes. "He knelt to receive the blows," Waters reported, "and then, for some unaccountable reason, they desisted without striking a blow." Fee regarded his being spared "this certain death" an act of Divine intervention.

The Kentucky minister, expressing great sorrow over the treatment of Jones, hired lawyers to prosecute the mob leader. Also, because of Jones' affiliation with the Republican party, an effort was made to garner the support of Cassius Clay. On both counts, no help was secured.

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68 Twelfth Annual Report of the A.M.A. (1858), p. 64. Other accounts of this assault include: Fee, Autobiography, pp. 114-122; Prudential Committee Report (Cincinnati: Elm Street Printing Company, 1875), pp. 11-13. The Prudential Committee was appointed by the trustees of Berea College in 1859. The primary purpose of the committee was to manage the fiscal affairs of the college. It did, however, issue several reports on the history and purpose of Berea College and it is from one of these reports that the incident at Lewis Chapel was discussed.


70 Ibid., p. 117.

Clay refused to involve himself, and the mob prevented any legal action from being taken. In an open meeting in Richmond the leaders of the mob declared they "would give 500 lashes to any lawyer who would prosecute the case." Fee registered his disappointment over this lack of support when he exclaimed, "the civil arm has been paralyzed by the slave power." Accounts about the violence in Madison County also reported that incendiaries had destroyed the school in Pulaski County to which George Candee had been assigned. Even those ministers who did not experience any direct adversity sensed that these were trying days. "Fee is depressed," Davis reported to Jocelyn, "friends . . . were afraid to act when he was taken by the mob . . . There are many threats of violence." Davis' observation was entirely correct; Fee was depressed. In February he communicated his feelings to Jocelyn. "There is still some threatening by the mob," he wrote. "some Republican friends are ready to give me up—the mob knows it. Most of the church members stand firm," he continued, "Clay stands entirely aloof. We may be crushed out."  

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74 The difficulties in Pulaski County are discussed in the *Twelfth Annual Report of the A.M.A.* (1858), pp. 50-51; George Candee to Reverend York, January 23, 1858 in A.M.A. Archives.
75 Davis to Jocelyn, May 4, 1858 in A.M.A. Archives.
76 Fee to Jocelyn, February 5, 1858 in A.M.A. Archives.
In an article printed in the *National Era*, Fee responded to an inquiry as to why he refused to defend himself in these attacks. In his explanation of why he rejected the use of force to guarantee his well-being, Fee donned the cloak of martyrdom. He wrote:

I suppose a moral reform, especially in its beginning, is not advanced by such contests. In such contests, both parties have friends and if any are injured passion will override reason.

The moral question is lost sight of in the sanguinary struggle.

God's will shall be done. His course, a righteous course never has been retarded by persecutions, however severe. The heavier the persecutions, the more vitality they give to the zeal and piety of survivors - the more it arrests the attention of the careless, and shows the sustaining power of truth and Divine grace.

The death of Lovejoy was no loss to the cause of human freedom in this nation. He perhaps has accomplished far more by his death than by his life. Had he lived to die a natural death, he would have been unseen amid the luster of brighter stars, and his writings would probably have gone to the grave with him. But his violent death gave immortality to his name, embodiment and perpetuity to his words, and sent every sentiment to the hearts and consciences of men...  

In assessing his personal contribution he wrote:

I shall probably live secluded, struggle with adversity, and die a premature

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77*National Era*, March 4, 1858, p. 33-34.
death, worn out with care and toil; but truth will not die with me— it will live . . . in the hearts of young men all through these hills and valleys.\textsuperscript{78}

The pessimism of these early weeks in 1858 was eventually overcome by the optimism that characterized this group. Their faith gave them the strength to persevere. This determined spirit was at work even during the darkest hours. Disappointing reports from the Kentucky field were tempered by accounts of success. Reverend Waters recounted in the \textit{Annual Report} satisfaction with his itinerant ministry through some parts of Rockcastle County in the closing months of 1857. He was particularly pleased with a meeting he had with the mother of one of John Fee's assailants. "By her and her daughter and many friends," he reported, "I was received with the greatest kindness. She begged me repeatedly," he continued, "both to pray myself and to ask all my praying friends to pray, that the Lord would appear and open the way for the preaching of his Gospel there in its purity and fullness."\textsuperscript{79} Likewise, James Davis provided Fee with good reports about the success he was having in the northern Kentucky counties. This area of mission activity experienced none of the violence that characterized the campaign in the interior region. Fee was heartened by this news, as well as the reports from Candee that his new assignment at McKee was meeting with great success and no opposition.\textsuperscript{80}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[78]Ibid.
\item[80]Candee to American Missionary Association, August 12, 1858 in A.M.A. Archives.
\end{footnotes}
The middle 1850's were trying times for the missionaries and their mission. Though it could not be known in the difficult days of 1857, the Kentucky mission was on the verge of a major undertaking that would succeed in placing an antislavery, anticastr institution of higher education in the state. The harsh violence against the A.M.A.'s ministers reached its greatest intensity through this period and would subside dramatically after the early months of 1858. The mobs had tried mightily to displace the association's mission activity in Kentucky. The consequences of their efforts, however, only strengthened the resolve of the Christian abolitionists. Also, the assaults had been instrumental in causing the ministers to pursue their goals more aggressively and to broaden their mission appeal beyond that of moral persuasion. Clearly, the ministers of the A.M.A in Kentucky had played an important role in defending the right to free speech. Their support for the principle of a higher law will be discussed in the following chapter.

The mission had been challenged and emerged stronger and more entrenched than before. The addition of Oberlin-trained ministers and students brought the Kentucky field into much closer synchronization with A.M.A. principles. These placements also gave this southern mission strong impetus toward a ministry which endorsed the belief that moral enlightenment could result from being in Christian schools, as well as from being in Christian churches.

After the period of conflict had ended in early 1858 the ministers began several months of peaceful co-existence with their adversaries. The peace would last until December, 1859. In that
year a mob succeeded in removing the missionaries, their families, and some friends from the state. They could not, however, remove totally the association's influence or its institutions. Before reviewing the concluding activities of these ministers prior to the Civil War, it is appropriate to investigate more fully the relationship of Kentucky's two leading antislavery proponents in the 1850's and why they were unsuccessful in forming a permanent alliance.
Chapter V

Fee and Clay: Differing Opinions

The relationship between John Fee and Cassius Clay is an important consideration in the history of the American Missionary Association in Kentucky. The nature of that relationship up to 1856 has been discussed in previous chapters. In the way of a brief review it is known that Clay and Fee first contacted each other in 1845 after Fee had submitted several antislavery articles to Clay for publication in his newspaper, The True American. From that beginning Clay and Fee remained in close contact for the next several years. Through Fee, Clay would become interested in the A.M.A., supporting it with donations and suggesting ministers for consideration by the executive committee.

There can be no doubt that Clay admired Fee's ability. In 1853 he offered to pay Fee's salary and settle his debts if he would assume editorship of the antislavery Newport News. In the same year he invited Fee to come to Madison County to carry on the work of the association. Eventually, Fee accepted Clay's offer of land and support and moved to Berea. On many occasions before and after the move to Madison County, Clay defended the work of his friend in the press and with threat of arms.

The apparent harmony in this relationship was fractured when the two openly disagreed on the question of whether or not there was a
higher law than the duly constituted body of laws governing the nation and the states. The completeness of this break and the rapidity with which they reached contrary positions on many important issues after 1856 suggest that there may have been fundamental differences between the two men all along. This chapter will explore their relationship. An attempt will be made to examine basic differences in their thoughts on slavery, their personalities, their methods of operation in conducting antislavery activity, and their political views. After achieving some understanding on these matters it will become easier to understand the differences these men had on the higher law question and on the Republican party.¹

Interesting differences existed in the two men. Clay held a more moderate antislavery view than Fee, at the same time Fee was less energetic than Clay in carrying out his principles. The man with the more extreme position chose to rely on moral persuasion to achieve his goal. The man with the more moderate views had the reputation of being a flamboyant, gun wielding speaker who would be heard.

The two held differing views on how institutional slavery should be perceived. Fee saw slavery as fundamentally an immoral act; an obvious sin against the teachings of Christ. Clay viewed slavery as a bad economic system which hindered financial development in Kentucky and wherever else it might exist. This is not to suggest that Fee and Clay excluded other thoughts about the evils of slavery; rather it is to point out that one man saw slavery principally as a moral issue and the other saw slavery principally as an economic issue.

Another important difference between the two was centered around the question of slavery's legal right to exist. Recognition of a conflict between Fee and Clay on this point is necessary in understanding their disagreement on the higher law question. Clay believed that slavery had been given sanction through political processes he believed in. Clearly he did not believe it was a worthwhile institution nor did he feel any compunction in criticizing slavery simply because it had legislative approval. Clay believed in the republican form of government and his disapproval of removing slavery through extra-legal means should be interpreted more as a statement supporting republicanism than as approval of slavery.

John Fee viewed the legality of slavery in the same light as Gerrit Smith. Smith, a benefactor of many abolitionist projects and a

\footnote{A general comparison of Fee to Clay was given by Francis S. Hutchins, former president of Berea College, in a speech before the Filson Club in 1955. Francis S. Hutchins, "Berea College: Its Centennial Year," Filson Club Quarterly, XXIX, (1955), pp. 104-17.; Also, The Frankfort Commonwealth, July 16, 1856.}
presidential candidate for the Liberty Party, believed that slavery was illegal and unconstitutional. Fee shared that belief basing his feelings on the teachings of eighteenth century rationalism, the common law concepts of Blackstone, his Christian principles, and his belief that the inalienable rights of Negroes were violated by enslaving them.

The occasion which caused the open disagreement between Clay and Fee was a Fourth of July political rally held at Salt Lick Springs in Madison County in 1856. Members of the Kentucky Republican Party and others interested in the speeches had come to hear the names of the electoral ticket for the state. This meeting had been looked forward to by a great many people within central Kentucky. The two principal speakers were John Fee and Cassius Clay. That fact in itself was nothing new because these two had spoken together on many previous occasions. What was new was the fact that these two men were known to hold views toward slavery that were no longer consistent with each other. The formation of the Republican party and the possibility of a renewed political career had tempered Clay's position on slavery. Fee, who had no political aspirations, did not alter his attitude. Even before their July meeting it had become apparent that Clay now viewed John Fee as occupying an increasingly radical position.

Fee had always held a more extreme position than Clay on this subject, but the charge of increased radicalism is doubtful. Nearly a full month before the July 4 meeting Fee wrote to Gerrit Smith inviting

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3Gerrit Smith's position on the slavery question is presented in National Era, April 14, 1853, pp. 60-61.
him to the Salt Lick gathering. In that note the minister spoke to the radical position and a ploy he was considering that might undercut the slave system. "My present conviction," he told Smith, "is that the radical position is nearest right." He then explained a plan to get a slave case before a Federal judge. He was convinced that slavery could not withstand a legal examination at the Federal level. Because of that belief he felt sure that if the court wanted to "it could free the slaves just like they created a bank earlier. Slavery," he continued, "will have to be ended either by law or by war."^4

The July 4 celebration was highlighted by the speeches of Fee and Clay. In his Autobiography, Fee covers the activities of that day in great detail. It is only necessary for this study to know the consequences of the day. The outcome was that a previously close friendship would experience a major disruption. Clay asked Fee to speak first. Fee, assuming that Clay's intention was to rebut his speech in order to prove his radicalism, caught Clay off guard when he arose and read from the Declaration of Independence. Giving special attention to passages referring to principles asserting that "All men are created equal" and are "endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights," Fee drew attention to the fact that proslavery legislation violates the spirit and the letter of the Declaration of Independence. He made

^4 Fee to Gerrit Smith, June 11, 1856 in Fee Papers
^5 Fee to Smith, January 28, 1857 in Fee Papers.
^6 Fee, Autobiography, pp. 105-106.
particular reference to the Fugitive Slave Law and declared his refusal to obey it. He concluded his presentation with a strong and impassioned statement on the immorality of slavery and an appeal to a higher authority than the laws which govern the nation.

Clay spoke next. He declared Fee's position to be "insurrectionary and dangerous." Referring to the higher law principle, Clay expressed his disapproval by declaring that "as long as a law is on the statute books it should be respected and obeyed until repealed by the Republican majority." The higher law controversy was the greatest obstacle to their reconciliation. Not only did the Kentucky minister stress the importance of the Bible as a guide to individual behavior, but he strongly argued that it must serve as the basis for all civil laws as well. "All human laws," he wrote in the American Missionary, "must be based upon or in harmony with the Divine law." He continued by explaining that "laws do not invest rights, they protect rights that already exist." As an illustration he cited the Ten Commandments as an example of divinely given rules for the protection of rights already existing. Applying this principle to civil law, Fee believed that there were natural rights which all persons possessed and which could not be denied.

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9 Ibid.
by human enactments. "That which is true in a moral argument is true in a political argument," he reasoned. "Laws contrary to the laws of nature and of revelation ought not to be enforced by the courts."\(^{10}\)

Relating this thought to the question of slaveholding he explained, "I will help a slaveholder hold his horse or ox as property, for by nature God gave these to be property, but he did not so design man."\(^{11}\)

The articulation of the higher law thesis by Fee was not unlike that of others who espoused the same principle. Evidence exists that those who were sympathetic with the position gave Fee and other A.M.A. personnel advice when it became apparent that they were presenting vulnerable arguments. The best illustration of this is represented in a letter to Fee from William Goodell on May 1, 1858. Goodell had been in correspondence with Fee previous to this time about the struggle in Kentucky, the difficulty with Clay, and the higher law principle. On the latter issue Goodell provided constructive criticism of Fee's implication that slavery was the product of civil law. Fee had developed a position that rejected slavery as having any basis as a natural condition. Neither, in his opinion, did it have any claim to existence through Christian teachings. Accordingly, in the minister's mind it had to be a product of civil enactments. Goodell objected to tying slavery to any legal code. "The moment we admit slavery is the creation of any kind of law," he asserted, "we virtually give up the doctrine that slavery is unlawful and ought not to be enforced by the

\(^{10}\)Ibid.

\(^{11}\)Ibid.
courts—courts must enforce laws." Fee received additional advice on this subject from other supporters like Gerrit Smith and Lewis Tappan.

Other Kentucky staff members supported Fee's contention, the result of which was that all felt alienated from Cassius Clay. In the intervening years between late 1856 through 1860 many reports from the Kentucky ministers comment on the higher law thesis and its importance as the wedge between Clay and the A.M.A.

Resentment continued to mount toward Clay from the southern missionaries, particularly after June, 1858. On June 24, 1858, almost two years after the debate with Fee, Clay agreed to return to the Berea settlement to give the end-of-the-school-year address. As might be expected, there was much curiosity over how Fee and Clay would react toward each other after several months of separation. It turned out to be a pleasant reunion for both men and according to Fee, Clay made a great concession to the higher law doctrine. Fee's Autobiography records a private conversation in which Clay commented, "I am in heart as much a Higher Law man as you are, and if we were in Massachusetts we could carry it out; but here we cannot." While it was a confession that undoubtedly pleased Fee, it also reaffirmed in his mind how political Clay had become. In a letter to Gerrit Smith, Fee expressed some disappointment about this meeting with his former close friend. "He

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12 William Goodell to Fee, May 1, 1858 in Fee Papers.

13 Fee, Autobiography, p. 126.
made some concessions not made before," he reported to Smith. "He is, however, not a man of God." 14

Others directed critical remarks toward Clay also. Some of the A.M.A. staff observed that Clay had accused Fee of being ungrateful and of drifting toward fanaticism. They believed that Clay's non-supportive attitude toward the association's mission activity was causing them undue hardship and loss of support. In letters they wrote to Clay and to the secretary of the association, they continually reaffirmed their support for Fee's position. The most critical letter was sent by the Reverend George Candee to Clay just four months after the A.M.A. ministers and settlers had been expelled from Kentucky. "It is unfair for you to have encouraged Fee to come to Kentucky, as you did," Candee angrily wrote, "giving him land and money to build with, then cause him to be exiled and degraded before the world as I consider that you have done." Addressing the issue of the higher law, he commented, "to say that there is no higher law than any human enactments is to say that all human enactments are infinitely perfect, and that it would be sinful to change or amend them. Fee's position and mine," he continued, "is to obey no human law which requires us to violate our understanding of the laws of God." "The Bereans opposed slavery," he noted, "through an active moral and persuasive opposition. How else can it be removed," he inquired of Clay, "except by a revolutionary and bloody war?" 15

14 Fee to Smith, April 12, 1858 in Fee Papers.

15 Candee to Clay, Feb. 12, 1860 in A.M.A. Archives.
In spite of the criticism Clay took pains to publish to the world that he did not approve of Fee's position. He maintained that "Fee and his followers taught disobedience to law and were, therefore, radicals and revolutionaries," while he advocated opposition to slavery through regular constitutional channels. In a similar statement, Clay wrote to the editor of the Richmond Messenger that he "opposed radical abolitionism and Mr. Fee." At the time of the expulsion of the Bereans, Clay was particularly active in his effort to draw a clear distinction between his beliefs and those of John Fee. In a public speech in Frankfort on January 10, 1860 he criticized the mob action which had driven the Berea settlers out. He spent an equal amount of time reviewing the reasons for his break with Fee. Two months later he gave a speech in Richmond and again denounced all connection with Fee. In addition to his personal conviction against the higher law principle, Clay was also motivated in his censure of Fee by the prospect of involvement with the national Republican party. The formation of this political party in Kentucky is another issue of importance in understanding the discord between Fee and Clay.

At the initial meeting of the Madison County Republican Association on May 2, 1856, Fee was elected to the office of corresponding secretary. The purpose of this meeting was to nominate delegates to

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16 National Anti-Slavery Standard, March 6, 1858, p. 1.
17 Richmond Messenger, December 28, 1859.
19 The Kentucky Statesman, March 30, 1860.
the national convention and to approve the association's constitution. Once again Fee was recognized and along with A. E. McWilliams, J. H. Rawlings, and Barrson Durnum he was nominated to attend the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia on June 17, 1856. At that convention Fee was elected to serve on the executive council for the Republican National Nominating Committee. While at the Philadelphia meeting he presented a rousing antislavery speech just prior to joining John Rawlings in placing Cassius M. Clay's name in nomination for the Vice-Presidency.

Though Fee was the only representative from Kentucky on the Executive Committee, the bluegrass state was well represented in the Republican Party. In addition to Fee, Kentuckians held positions on several committees. George D. Blakey, Lewis N. Dembitz, Allen J. Bristow, Charles Bendley, Robert L. Wintersmith, and William Gallagher served on a variety of party organizations including the Credentials Committee, Resolution Committee, Rules and Order of Business Committee, and the Committee on Permanent Organizations. Throughout the late 1850's


21Curtis, Republican Party, p. 255.

Kentucky's status within the national party was far greater than would be warranted on the basis of state strength. A possible explanation of this condition is recorded in the minutes of the 1860 National Republican Convention. In the discussions on delegate strength, John H. Ewing of Pennsylvania argued successfully that "men who were upholding the party in hostile areas be rewarded . . . by granting them full recognition for their labors." As it turned out, Kentucky was allowed twenty-three votes, giving it more strength than Maine, New Hampshire, Connecticut, New Jersey, Illinois, or Michigan.

The Republican movement in Kentucky was never a serious challenge to other political parties in the state. In truth, its importance was that of a substantial antislavery symbol rather than a vigorous political force. Other than a Republican candidate for President in 1856 no other Republican candidate appeared on any ballot in Kentucky until 1860. Republicanism was, however, very much in the thoughts of many Kentuckians. Many Kentucky newspapers established editorial positions against the Republican party. Papers in Louisville, Lexington, Frankfort, and Richmond all accused the party of attempting to destroy slavery, the Constitution, and the Union. The major crises of the period were all portrayed as being inspired by the Republicans.

24Tbid.
Republicanism and abolitionism were synonymous in Kentucky journalism. Clay, a prominent force in the Republican party in Kentucky, did not wish to have this party identified with the single issue of slavery. He attempted an appeal to the bluegrass region and the Ohio River area based on the economic program of the party. In particular he explained the benefits Kentucky might receive if Republican policies were enacted. Federal aid to industry, river and harbor improvements, and financial assistance for railroad development were all portrayed as having great advantage for his state.

It was, however, the obvious linkage between the political movement and its antislavery sentiment that captured the A.M.A.'s attention. As early as May, 1856, J. S. Davis was expressing a ministerial sense of identity with Republicanism. In a note to Simeon Jocelyn he explained, "our sympathies are inclined toward the Republicans." This initial indication of support would lessen as it became more apparent that the Republican position on slavery was softer than that of the A.M.A. This was especially true of John Fee. It is perhaps unfortunate that Fee's reappraisal of the Republican party occurred at approximately the same time that he and Clay began to drift apart. Because of the timing it could be argued that his disaffection with Republicanism was influenced by personal feelings toward Cassius Clay. A careful review of the evidence, however, refutes this claim and suggests

25 Malberg, Thesis, pp. 14-17. Also the rival political parties were critical of the Republican movement. For one such illustration consult: "American Party Minutes," Louisville, Kentucky, July 30, 1856, in the William Bodley Papers.

26 Davis to Jocelyn, May 16, 1856 in A.M.A. Archives.
that the minister's political response was predictable and would have been the same regardless of Clay's involvement with the Republican party.

The association's leading spokesman in the South was not able to reconcile his personal feelings toward slavery with those of the Republicans. An early indication of this conflict was expressed in an April, 1856 speech given by Fee. In that talk he indicated that the Republican position to restore the principle of the Missouri Compromise was not satisfactory. "The Kentucky Association," he commented, "asked not for the restoration of the Missouri Compromise, but for no more slavery either North or South."\textsuperscript{27} Fee's assessment of what the Kentucky Association's position was is not accurate. The Kentucky Republican Party and the Madison County Association both supported the position of the National Republican Party on the question of the Missouri Compromise. Undoubtedly, Fee was expressing his personal desire for what he hoped the state party position might be. A sample of the provisions cited in the constitution of the Madison County Republican Association offers an illustration of the tenor of feeling in the Kentucky Republican Party.

The Constitution Provides:

\textit{Article II, Section I,} This society affiliates itself with the National Republican Party.

\textit{Section II,} The society disclaims any right to interfere except by moral influence with slavery in the local sovereignties of South Carolina, Mississippi, Missouri, or any state north or south.

\textsuperscript{27}Newport News, May 2, 1856.
Section V, We hold that without law there is no liberty. We will resist all violence and indiscretion either for the overthrow or defense of slavery.28

In July, 1857 the Republican party of the 10th Congressional District in Campbell and Kenton Counties met to nominate candidates for the upcoming election. Resolutions passed at that meeting further demonstrate the parallel stance between the state and National Republican Party. In a summary statement of their feelings on the questions of governmental interference with slavery and the extension of slavery, the delegates agreed to the following:

Slavery is regretted and if free from it we would oppose its introduction in Kentucky . . . . We support the principles of the great American Republican Party, namely; non-interference (on the part of Congress the free states) in regard to slavery in the sovereign states where it now exists, and non-extension of slavery over territories now free.29

Quite obviously the position of the Kentucky Republicans was not in accord with Fee's antislavery principles. Neither can it be said that the Republicans gave any support to Fee's higher law pronouncements. Maintaining his support for the higher law, he challenged the Republican position of limiting the expansion of slavery while leaving it alone where it already existed. "Is the Republican Party disposed to let existing slavery pass by?" he inquired. "God demands more--the party in power ought to demand the same."30 In raising this question,

28Liberator, May 4, 1856, p. 78.
30Fee to Clay, May 10, 1856 in Fee Papers.
Fee's intention was to illustrate how the absence of a single position on slavery which "was consistent throughout the nation and in the territories" would place a Republican administration in an awkward position.31

As Fee's early enthusiasm for the Republican party began to wane, rumors began to circulate that association ministers in Kentucky were considering an independent political movement. The kind of evidence that fed this rumor is reflected in the vague implications contained in a letter he wrote to Gerrit Smith. "I desire a radical ticket for the state," he wrote to Smith, "and have consulted upon the propriety of forming a ticket."32 It is not clear in his correspondence if Fee considered himself to be a candidate or if he had others in mind.

The prospect of the association considering a more radical political movement was further implied in Fee's communication with the executive committee of the A.M.A. "Should I support the Republican Party," he wrote, "or should I stand off with a few and keep away from the movement . . . until I can get men to take abolitionist ground?"33

Cassius Clay was fearful that Fee, and through him the association ministers, were seriously considering rival political activity. Writing to the editor of the Republic, he explained his concern "about Fee forming another party" in the state which would result in the serious

31Fee to Clay, September, 1856 in Fee Papers.
32Fee to Smith, October 6, 1856 in Fee Papers.
33Fee to Executive Committee, April 4, 1857 in Fee Papers.
fragmentation of the Republicans. Clay reaffirmed this concern to J. S. Davis. In his letter to the minister who replaced Fee in Bracken and Lewis Counties, he chastised his former close friend for breaking with the Republican movement. He also cited Fee's avoidance of the party as being further evidence of Fee's preference for the radical position.

From the available evidence it is safe to conclude that Fee did not believe the new party had properly addressed the slavery question. If these feelings led him to consider a separate political movement, they did not result in any overt organizational activity. Some of the missionary staff declared themselves Republican during this period, but not to the exclusion of their greater support for Fee and the association. The minister from Berea did maintain a keen interest in the Republican party and its leadership. Commenting on the upcoming presidential election in 1860, Fee expressed to Clay the need to nominate "men of high standing to the ticket or else the movement will flatten out." In a related letter to the editor of the National Era, Fee clarified further the kind of presidential candidate he hoped the Republicans would nominate. After expressing a feeling that the national party must not be satisfied with "just running an opposition candidate," he urged them to nominate "a man whose long and well-tried

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34 Clay to William L. Dayton, November 5, 1857 in Fee Papers.
35 Clay to Davis, November 5, 1857 in Fee Papers.
36 Fee to Clay, December 12, 1859 in Fee Papers.
fidelity to the cause of human freedom will be of itself a guarantee to an antislavery commitment. "37

In formulating concluding remarks about the relationship between John Fee and Cassius Clay it is apparent that the two men had strong, but different, feelings on the slavery question. Consequently, it is doubtful that this relationship could have remained intact through an indefinite period of time. Simply put the differences between these two men is best illustrated in the differences between an abolitionist position and an emancipationist position; the former held by Fee and the latter held by Clay.

37 National Era, October 6, 1859, p. 159.
Chapter VI

The Calm And The Storm

The final two years prior to the Bereans being driven from the state continued to be busy times for the ministers. Additional churches and primary schools were added to the mission field and new populations were sought to expand the base of operation. The campaign experienced important success and minimal resistance. The most notable accomplishment was the successful beginning of Berea College. Fee regarded the college at Berea as the single most important contribution of his efforts. In a letter to Lewis Tappan he expressed the importance of this goal. "If I can see a good school started in Kentucky," he wrote, "I shall feel that I have accomplished the greatest work of my feeble life."1 This chapter will review the various mission programs of 1858 and 1859. Particular attention will be given to the developments on the Berea ridge.

Berea represented the justification for a decade of struggle. This settlement served as visible evidence that an antislavery colony could exist within a slave state. More importantly the ministers considered it as the foundation for a successful campaign throughout Kentucky. The settlement was well established by December, 1859 when

1Fee to Tappan, December 18, 1857 in A.M.A. Archives.
the fear created by the John Brown raid was ignited following a speech John Fee gave in Henry Ward Beecher's church in Brooklyn, New York. Proslavery newspapers in Kentucky misinterpreted Fee's words and credited the abolitionist minister with being fully supportive of Brown's bloody attack on slavery. The actual meaning of Fee's speech, the efforts to abate the hysteria created by the Kentucky press, the final days at Berea, and the reaction to the forced removal of the Bereans will provide the concluding pages of this chapter.

Mission activity other than that related to the development of Berea College was conducted throughout 1858 and 1859. A review of these activities clearly indicates that the missionary campaign was intended to continue on all fronts and not just at Berea. As had been the case throughout previous years some of the initiatives undertaken would not succeed. They do, however, add further testimony to the diversified approaches the A.M.A. approved in its support of the Kentucky field. John Fee's wife Matilda undertook a new endeavor to attack the proslavery force within Kentucky. In early 1858 she organized the Children's Missionary Society. With the express purpose of appealing to adolescent emotions about family relationships, Matilda Fee delivered impassioned appeals for preserving parent and child unity. "Would you not love to help sustain a Gospel that rebukes the barbarous practice of exposing women to sale on the auction block," she wrote, "and sunders the dear relationship of parent and child."^2 John Fee explained the

^2 Matilda Fee to Jocelyn, January 8, 1858 in A.M.A. Archives. For a discussion by the Association about this auxiliary consult: Twelfth Annual Review of the A.M.A. (1858), p. 56.
more subtle reasoning behind this undertaking in a letter to Simeon Jocelyn. After pointing out that today's children would be tomorrow's voters and legislators, he noted that with a proper sense of moral justice these children would eventually take over for their parents and be able to change oppressive laws. This particular program had special appeal to James Davis. He believed strongly in the value of building programs for children and attached particular importance to youth activities in his ministry in the northern Kentucky counties. Far more children were enrolled in the mission schools than there were members of the respective churches. Davis regarded that as a positive sign for the future. Like Fee he felt that the proper moral training of the youth would serve the association's purpose well in the years ahead.

The Children's Missionary Society was approved by the executive committee of the A.M.A. as an official auxiliary organization in January, 1858. For children's societies the association also furnished appealing certificates of membership, engraved with an interesting group of antislavery pictures and quotations. Minimal reference is made to the society in the association's records. It is safe to assume, however, that it did not develop much influence in its brief history. In spite of the limited effect of this program, it was this kind of imaginative approach to combat slavery that bolstered Fee's spirits in the troublesome early weeks of 1858. As mentioned earlier this was a difficult time for Fee. The mob hostility at Lewis Chapel and the loss of a school in Pulaski County had discouraged him considerably.

^Fee to Jocelyn, January 1, 1858 in A.M.A. Archives.
Other encouraging activities were being reported from throughout the mission field in 1858. Davis reported on the creation of a new church near the border of Pendleton County. He was also greatly pleased with the assistance his ministry was receiving from two clergymen who had volunteered their time "with great profit to the church and benefit to the ungodly."^ Candee provided accounts of the success in the mountain regions, and William Lincoln, just prior to his departure from the Kentucky field, expressed his feelings that "Kentucky was a good field with lots of promise."^5

The uninterrupted expansion of mission activity after March, 1858 restored Fee's confidence in the righteousness of the labors of the A.M.A.'s clergymen. Furthermore, by late summer 1858, Fee received reports that convinced him that the Lord's Will was being carried out in Kentucky. Reflecting an uncharacteristically vindictive attitude Fee reported to Jocelyn that "the prophecies of God are at work in this field." Some of those who had been part of the mob at Lewis Chapel had themselves met with violent deaths. "Those who before were brandishing their pistols and bowie knives over a defenseless man," he wrote to Jocelyn, "were now wilting in their own blood. Thus did they illustrate that Scripture," he continued, "they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword."^6

^5Candee to Jocelyn, December, 1858 in A.M.A. Archives.
^6Fee to Jocelyn, August 18, 1858 in A.M.A. Archives.
Two staffing additions in 1859 added to the growing sense of optimism in Kentucky. The Reverends Jacob Emerick and William Kendrick would provide support at places other than in Berea. Emerick, from Middletown, Ohio, was assigned to assist Reverend Davis in the river region. Kendrick had been serving the A.M.A. in the Missouri field since November, 1857 prior to his appointment to Kentucky. His primary area of service in this new assignment was Jackson County where he assisted the Reverend Candee at McKee and the surrounding communities. These added staff attest to the commitment which the association had to holding its ground in regions beyond the major activity. Reports from the ministers in these areas indicate that the investment was worth while. Davis reported to the association in June, 1859 that there was "greater excitement for the mission in this area than there has been for eight years before." William Kendrick reinforced this good feeling. After commenting on the need to erect a house of worship because of the increasing numbers of churchgoers, he expressed gratification that "there seems to be, among many, a great desire to learn our way of life."

The spirits of these ministers continued to improve throughout 1858 and into 1859. Mob action against the clergy and their activities virtually ceased, tolerance toward and acceptance of the ministers and their cause seemed to be at an all time high, and in their minds the

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7Fee had written to Jocelyn in September, 1858 about the need to make additional appointments because "pro-slavery preachers are beginning to move in." Fee to Jocelyn, September, 1858 in A.M.A. Archives.

8Davis to Jocelyn, June 6, 1859 in A.M.A. Archives.

Divine Will of God was clearly in evidence in the Kentucky field. "Aggressive opposition," Candee exclaimed, "seems to have entirely ceased in this community. Everybody appears to respect us, and acknowledge our rights." This impression of improved acceptance was not just wishful thinking. The Annual Report reported that two circuit judges in Jackson and Laurel Counties had ruled in favor of free speech with specific reference to the abolitionists' right to "preach their doctrines" and to "promulgate their sentiments." Referring directly to these decisions, Candee wrote, "we feel that the door for preaching the Gospel is thrown wide open by these acts." Candee was also heartened by the improved image of abolitionism. "In some neighborhoods," he observed, "instead of connecting everything bad with abolitionism, everything good is identified with it. If a man chews tobacco, he is said not to be a thorough abolitionist." No realization, however, was more satisfying to the missionaries than their belief that their work was divinely sanctioned and was the fulfillment of God's word. A letter from Rogers in August, 1859 best illustrates this feeling. "There are few truths," he expressed, "that the missionary learns more fully than that 'God's mill grinds slow, but it grinds very fine.' The first part of this proverb," he continued, "... is usually learned through much sorrow

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11 Ibid., pp. 51, 60.
12 Ibid., p. 60.
13 Ibid.
and hope deferred; but if he can feel that God is using him to carry out the truth contained in the latter part, therein he finds his comfort."¹⁴ Rogers saw the Kentucky mission as a manifestation of this scriptural truth. "I feel confident," he wrote, "that God is using our missionaries in Kentucky to do a thorough work, however slow for a time may be its progress."¹⁵

Through these late years it became evident that those involved in the Kentucky mission were interested in re-emphasizing that their activity in the state should be viewed as a truly Christian crusade and not solely as a single issue campaign. In the May, 1858 issue of the American Magazine Fee, Rogers, Candee, and Davis issued a joint statement emphasizing this point. "We are not here to wage a mere antislavery warfare," they wrote, "our object and desire is to plant and train spiritual churches, which shall honor Christ. . . . To connive at sin however popular, we feel would be to give up our object and directly to tempt God. Consequently, we treat slavery as we do any other sin."¹⁶ The executive committee, of the A.M.A. however, while acknowledging the multiple sins against which the southern ministers toiled, did want to recognize that the struggle against slavery was one of their foremost commitments. In 1859 that committee announced that, "henceforth one of our official prominent aims is to bring our


¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶American Missionary, II (May, 1858), p. 108.
principles and influence to bear upon slavery . . . and to give the largest increase possible to our force in the South."^{17}

As might be expected the encouraging reports from Kentucky helped in the association's solicitation of support. Representative of the type of appeal the association made in its effort to increase resources for the southern field was the resolution printed in the *Thirteenth Annual Report*.

That the success attending the efforts of this association in the southern states of the Union, especially in Kentucky . . . and the peculiar wants of the various classes composing the population of that section, should encourage the people of God to furnish the means of prosecuting this department of the home missionary work with increased vigor.^{18}

As indicated in the narrative above there was much justification for both the ministers and the association to take satisfaction in the events in Kentucky. For the ministers, however, the development that was most gratifying was the establishment of the advanced educational opportunity at Berea. This achievement, already identified by Fee as the single most important measurement of the Kentucky mission's success, was regarded as important for several reasons.

John Fee had always given a higher priority to education as a missionary activity than was typically held by agents of the A.M.A. Initially, the intent was to establish a school that would serve Kentucky in the same manner that Oberlin served Ohio. This school was to provide an

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"antislavery, anticalte, and antirum" environment that would educate men and women of all colors and classes and send them out to minister to the injustice in the world. By 1856 when it became apparent that many of the antislavery families in Kentucky were leaving the state it was reasoned that the presence of a college would provide a purpose for them to stay. "Our churches suffer much by removals to free states," Fee observed in a report in 1856, "... many go to schools in the north to get an education." Likewise, the absence of advanced educational opportunities was thought to be a major deterrent to the association's ability to attract great numbers of outside settlers. This point was made in the Annual Report. After explaining the obvious objective of preparing "teachers and preachers for the state who opposed slavery, caste, and all ungodliness," the report commented on the role the college could play in influencing outsiders to settle in Kentucky. "The institution," the report forecast, "will encourage emigration into the state from the north. . . . It will assure settlers that their children will have a means of education as in the free states." Because of the relatively low income levels in the areas that might provide students it was desired that expense not be a formidable barrier to anyone who wanted to attend. "We need a college . . . that will furnish facilities for those of small means," Fee wrote in the American Missionary. Some

19Quoted in: Peck, Berea, p. 8. Also, Fee to Jocelyn, November 9, 1855 in Fee Papers.


months later he wrote to Simeon Jocelyn that the school would encourage manual labor and that those students who could not pay for their education with cash could provide services to the college through their work.23

Unquestionably John Fee was the missionary most involved with the development of both the college and the settlement on the ridge. Other members of the Kentucky staff had less contact with the actual beginning of the school but had equal awareness of its significance to the mission. The one notable exception was the Reverend John A. R. Rogers who was directly associated with the founding of Berea College and a review of his background and the reasons he came to Berea is appropriate.

John Rogers, a native of Cornwell, Connecticut, was a descendant of Puritans. His parents had moved to Ohio near Oberlin and in the mid-1840's he enrolled at Oberlin College. In 1850 he graduated from Oberlin and in 1854 he had completed his work at the theological seminary. During that time he taught at the college, in the Oberlin Preparatory Department and at another school in New York. It was also during this time that he became interested in eastern Kentucky. In particular he was interested in the religious and educational life of the mountain areas.

After completing seminary requirements he accepted a commission with the A.M.A. and was assigned to a Congregational church in

23 Fee to Jocelyn, July 9, 1858 in A.M.A. Archives.
Roseville, Illinois. While at a meeting of the Congregational Association in Galesburg, Illinois he met a friend who had recently visited Kentucky. The two discussed events in Kentucky as they related to the activities of Fee and the other southern missionaries.

Rogers followed-up his interest in the Kentucky mission by contacting his friend George Whipple in order to gather more information. He was interested in finding out about the number of schools and churches and how they were being received. Rogers' sister was married to James Davis, so concern for her well-being was another reason for his interest.

John Fee had learned about Rogers' interest in Kentucky through George Whipple. The minister fit Fee's new staffing criteria and he invited him to visit the state. Fee was well aware of Rogers' reputation as an excellent teacher, a scholar, and a strong advocate of education. Rogers was using new teaching techniques including the use of magazines, music, and exhibitions at the end of the term. Rogers had already decided to visit Kentucky before receiving Fee's invitation. On November 23, 1857, his diary records, "I started for Kentucky." He spent a few days with his sister and Davis in Lewis County and on December 16, 1857 he and Fee met for the first time on Kentucky soil at Berea. The two ministers discussed Rogers' importance to the southern field. On December 18, 1857 Fee wrote to Jocelyn explaining that he and Rogers had held productive talks centering around the desirability of having

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25 John A. R. Rogers, "Diary" (uncatalogued material) in Special Collections, Hutchins Library.
advanced educational opportunities available in Kentucky. "I am sub­mitting to Brother Tappan," he wrote, "our plan for establishing our school and colony." That he continued to put great importance to these goals is expressed in his next thought. "I do not feel," he commented, "that I can rest in spirit until that end shall be attained." 26

Rogers had to make some preparations before he could assume full time duties in Kentucky. In February, 1858, he and his family began their journey to Madison County. His arrival coincided with the departure of Lincoln and Waters from the mission field. On March 29, 1858 he assumed his new responsibilities as director of the school at Berea. From that point until the association's final expulsion the greatest energy in the Kentucky effort would be directed toward the development of an educational counterpart to Oberlin and a model community at Berea.

Upon Rogers arrival in Berea no college existed. The educational opportunity on the ridge consisted of the church school that Otis Waters had directed. Rogers continued this successful school while planning for the future development of a college. Fee was hope­ful that the positive reputation which the church school had developed would make the idea of a college more acceptable. As indicated earlier the other A.M.A. ministers were actively engaged in missionary work in other parts of the state. It is safe to assume, however, that they ap­proved of the educational emphasis within the Kentucky field and that the establishment of a college was consistent with their plan. The official

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26 Fee to Jocelyn, December 18, 1857 in A.M.A. Archives.
position of the A.M.A. is more difficult to discern. There is no evidence to suggest that the association directly supported the college in Berea. Tappan believed it was an overly ambitious gesture and expressed an early reluctance to have the A.M.A. sponsor such activity.\textsuperscript{27} Reverend Rogers indicates, however, that the association did assist Berea's growth in several ways. In addition to providing financial support for himself and Fee, the association "provided small basic salaries" for others who helped at Berea. It "furnished access to benevolent people through a widely read magazine, the American Missionary, and social contacts at the association's annual meetings," Rogers recorded, "and the leaders recommended Berea College as a wise investment in Christian education."\textsuperscript{28} It can also be said that the association gave the college a high visibility through invitations to John Fee to speak at the annual meetings and at numerous other churches throughout the north where he would report on the work in Kentucky and appeal for support. In fact, Fee's fateful speech in New York shortly after John Brown's raid in Harper's Ferry was an appeal for college funds in a friendly church.

The appeal for support was a constant feature in the early history of Berea College. Support for this venture, however, involved more than fiscal resources. Equal effort was made to obtain land for the school and the community. Solicitations were made for teachers and settlers with a variety of skills. By mid-1858 it had become evident that the college was to be a symbol of stability around which the

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\textsuperscript{27}Brown, Tappan, p. 334. \\
\textsuperscript{28}Rogers, "Diary." Also, quoted in: Peck, Berea, pp. 26-27.
\end{flushright}
Berea community could be developed. It was also to represent an unequivocal statement on the virtue of the Kentucky mission. In the event a college was not immediately possible, Fee was willing to consider the sponsorship of an academy as an interim educational opportunity for those who required schooling beyond that provided by the church school. He was, however, fully committed to seeing the college begun as quickly as possible. There is evidence that at least one other site besides Berea was considered for the college. Fee considered founding the college in Rockcastle County. The prospect of being able to begin the college sooner and the offer of cheaper land were two of the principle lures of this adjacent county. "We are thinking of locating our college . . . in Rockcastle County," he informed Jocelyn, "the land is not as good or as accessible, but it is cheaper than in Madison County and can be obtained sooner." Fee was also persuaded to consider this location because of what he thought to be a more favorable climate of support than existed in Madison County. "There are fewer slaveholders in Rockcastle," he continued, "we can elect officers there sooner who will be sympathetic." The difficulties of 1857, particularly in Rockcastle County, ended further consideration of that area as a place for the college.

At the time Rogers arrived in Berea there was much interest in the education being offered in the church school. Enrollment had grown

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30 Fee to Jocelyn, February 6, 1856 in A.M.A. Archives.
31 Ibid.
steadily and five slaveholding families were sending their children to the school.\textsuperscript{32} Evidence suggests that association with the school caused these slaveholders to have less hostile views toward the Christian reformers. Mrs. Leslie Rogers expressed this sentiment well in a letter to Simeon Jocelyn. "We are warmly received," she wrote, "in proslavery homes who have children in the school."\textsuperscript{33} Fee's Autobiography cited many additional, satisfying conversations he had with slaveholders who attended graduation and other ceremonies at the school. One example will provide an indication of the expressions of support Fee heard at the ceremonial events at the school. "I expected to see a small group in the brush," an unidentified slaveholder told Fee, ". . . I see this large assembly, orderly and listening with marked attention and interest and my heart is touched."\textsuperscript{34}

So pleased were Fee and Rogers with the success of the school by mid-1858 that they felt the timing was right to press for serious consideration of a college at Berea. "The time is right for renewed

\textsuperscript{32}Berea School operated on a quarter system and charged $3.00 for tuition per quarter. J. A. R. Rogers kept extensive records regarding the enrollment and fiscal matters of the school. In his Ledger, Reverend Rogers showed that 52 students had been enrolled for the term ending July 9, 1858. J. A. R. Rogers, "Ledger" (uncatalogued material) in Special Collections, Hutchins Library.; Fee to Jocelyn, April 26, 1858 in A.M.A. Archives.

\textsuperscript{33}Leslie Rogers to Jocelyn, May, 1858 in A.M.A. Archives. The Prudential Committee adds additional support to the contention that children of slaveholders willingly attended the school in Berea. Committee, Berea, p. 18. Also, consult the Twelfth Annual Report for information that slaveholding families enrolled their children at other association schools throughout Kentucky. Twelfth Annual Report of the A.M.A. (1858), p. 50.

\textsuperscript{34}Fee, Autobiography, p. 134.
efforts for the college," he told Gerrit Smith in July, 1858, "enthusiasm is high for us to strike for a stronger hold in the state and a wider sphere of influence."

Rogers added his support for the college when he submitted fall enrollment reports for Berea School to Simeon Jocelyn. Reflecting an increase of nearly thirty students over spring enrollment, the reports convinced Rogers that the college would be supported. Even Cassius Clay gave his tacit approval for the venture. Though he never issued a public endorsement for the college, he did accept an invitation to deliver the graduation address at Berea in June, 1858. On this, his first return to Berea for several months, Clay had an opportunity to discuss with Fee the current and future prospects of the Kentucky mission. Not only did Clay express support for the principle of a higher law, but he encouraged the continued development of the Berea community and the educational emphasis within the mission.

Fee believed there was a need to obtain more land than was included in Clay's original gift. Of particular importance was his interest in securing adequate space to allow for the full development of his college plans. Land would be required for the building of "boarding places for students and faculty," a classroom building, and other structures as the enrollment increased. It should be noted that while association members and close friends knew of the interest

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35 Fee to Smith, July 15, 1855 in Fee Papers.
36 Rogers to Jocelyn, September 18, 1858 in A.M.A. Archives.
38 Fee to Jocelyn, July 9, 1858 in A.M.A. Archives.
in a college and the expanded development of the Berea community it was thought inadvisable to make the information common knowledge. There was some expectation that once a fuller understanding of the association's program was realized the proslavery resistance in the area would stiffen. Fee was especially fearful that it would organize against the further purchase of land by the missionaries and thereby seriously undermine their ability to succeed. For this reason Fee moved discreetly, but with a sense of urgency to secure the necessary funds for a major land purchase prior to an actual chartering of a college. "We need to secure the land," he wrote Gerrit Smith, "before our purpose is known."\(^{39}\) In the same letter he commented on his intention to raise $10,000 for land purchases. His hope was to solicit the support of twenty friends who would contribute $500 each. "Reverend Emerick, myself, Brother Rogers, John Smith, and you," he explained, "could be the first five."\(^{40}\) Whether or not Fee achieved his $10,000 goal through that means is not known. He was, however, successful in raising sufficient funds by early 1859 to purchase 110 acres on which to build his college and expand his settlement. Additional land acquisitions were considered throughout early 1859. In another letter to Gerrit Smith, Fee spoke of "two adjacent tracts of land totaling 169 acres that could be helpful to the college."\(^{41}\) He feared that the "land would be bought by enemies" if he could not get

\(^{39}\) Fee to Smith, July 15, 1858 in Fee Papers.

\(^{40}\) Ibid.

\(^{41}\) Fee to Smith, March 10, 1859 in Fee Papers.
it quickly. Fee asked Smith to consider purchasing the land. Smith did not buy the land, but it was secured by other friends of the cause.

Fee's arrangements for buying the land followed closely advice received from Kiah Bayley of Hardwich, Vermont. Bayley had seen an article mentioning the idea of a college in Kentucky in the *American Missionary*. In March, 1857 he wrote to Fee encouraging him to pursue his college plans. The Vermont native had been involved previously in developing the Tennants Lay College in New Jersey. According to Bayley this educational institution was resisted mightily by many New Jersey citizens. "It succeeded," he informed Fee, "because we moved quietly to secure funding . . . and prepared for any resistance before the others knew." The remainder of his letter was equally important to Fee. Bayley assured the Kentucky minister "that many persons from Connecticut and Massachusetts were interested in moving to your settlement and the college would attract others." In September, 1858 Fee called together John Rogers, George Candee, James Davis, and John Hanson in his office to get their feelings on three questions. Fee wanted them to consider whether or not they were fully convinced that the college had a legitimate purpose. To satisfy his own feelings on the matter, Fee asked that the group consider the following questions:

1. Is there a demand for the school?
2. Are we the men charged by God to begin it?
3. Is it to be wholly for God and not for our own glory?

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43 Bayley to Fee March 2, 1857 in Fee Papers.
After much thoughtful discussion the group responded to the questions. Recognizing that most of the region was not served by any school they had no doubt that this school was needed. They determined that they knew of no others who were available to begin the college. They also believed that if God had not wanted them to undertake the task he would not have made the church school so successful. On the final concern they pledged that only the cause of God would be advanced by this college and no personal gain would be sought. 45

During the closing months of 1858 and the early months of 1859 the constitution and charter of Berea College were written. These works manifested the Christian teachings which the ministers had struggled so hard to implant in Kentucky. Since much has already been written about these documents, they need not be thoroughly discussed here. Illustrative of their tone, however, is this example taken from the Bylaws of the Charter. "This college shall be under an influence strictly Christian," the authors wrote, "and as such opposed to sectarianism, slaveholding, caste, and every other wrong institution or practice." 46 Also, the documents clearly indicate the intention of the founders to permit the enrollment of Negro students. As it became apparent to the people in Madison and adjacent counties that a college at Berea was a real possibility there began to be increased discussion over the open admission question. Fee reflects on this point with some apprehension

45Rogers, Birth of Berea College, pp. 67-68.

46John Fee, J. A. R. Rogers, et. al., The Charter of Berea College, Bylaw II, p. 3.
in a report to the A.M.A. "The question of opening the school on strictly Christian principles, to all persons irrespective of color, has come before the citizens," he reported. "This had been the teaching and practice of the church here . . .," he continued, "and it seemed to be expected of Abolitionists in church relations." The minister was concerned that the citizens who had come to accept integration in church were unable to approve of integration in school. "The question of having colored students come into the school-room with white students," he explained, "had not come practically before the people of this district." The topic would become a consuming issue and be debated in many forums from the newspaper in Richmond to the Young Men's Literary Society of Madison County. Public support was vital to the success of Berea College. Kentucky law required local school officials to be elected from the population where the school was located. As names began to appear on the ballot for election as a District Trustee, it was apparent that the issue to be voted on was whether or not Negro admission should be permitted. The slate of candidates was equally divided on the anti-caste position. Fee reports the outcome of this situation in a letter to Simeon Jocelyn. "The issue was fairly before the district," he wrote, "two sets of directors were in nomination, one for an anti-caste school, the other set against it. Appeals were made to prejudices, threats held out," he continued, " . . . on the other hand Christian considerations were held up from day to day before the

47 Fee to Jocelyn, April 12, 1859 in A.M.A. Archives.
48 Ibid.
people." This struggle was waged against an additional threat by Rogers "to oppose opening the college if the anti-caste slate was not elected." Undoubtedly Fee took great pride in informing Jocelyn that "the trustees favoring an anti-caste school were elected by a majority of more than three to one." In a later report he described the results as being "a decisive victory for the equal rights of colored children . . . to the privileges of the school."

The only remaining procedure to make Berea College official was the receipt of a charter from the state. This was a simple act requiring that the constitution of the college be registered with the state and that it be signed by ten citizens who were serving as trustees. The charter was signed by nine persons, five of them were A.M.A. ministers associated with the Kentucky field. The other four included farmers and businessmen who had moved to Berea in support of John Fee.

Cassius Clay had been asked to sign his name to the charter but refused because of his unwillingness to be so closely identified with Fee and with the principle of bi-racial education. The absence of the tenth signature meant that the school at Berea was not officially recognized by the state as a college. The school operated under the name of Berea Academy until it received its official charter in 1866.

49 Fee to Jocelyn, April 12, 1859 in A.M.A. Archives.
50 Quoted in Peck, Berea, p. 24.
51 Fee to Jocelyn, April 12, 1859 in A.M.A. Archives.
52 Signatories of the charter representing the A.M.A. included: John Fee, J. A. R. Rogers, George Candee, Jacob Emerick, and J. S. Davis. Those representing the Berea settlement include: John G. Hanson, William Strapp, John Smith, and T. J. Renfro. Peck, Berea, p. 12.
During the intervening years between 1859 to 1866 the Bereans were in exile. In all fairness, however, it can be said that Fee had realized his dream of founding a college in Kentucky and it was opened before the Civil War. Only a technical point, the absence of a single signature, kept the school from its official recognition.

John Fee was elected President of the Board of Trustees of Berea College. Other members of the trustees were: J. A. R. Rogers, John G. Hanson, and T. E. Renfro. When Rogers was designated as the chief administrator of the school, and the new educational institution in Kentucky acquired its formal administrative structure. All of those associated with the school were optimistic about its future. "The efforts to build up a school here for the education of the youth...," Fee explained, "is regarded by most of the neighbors with favor." As always their optimism was strengthened because they believed they were doing God's work. Commenting on the opening of the school, Rogers wrote to Jocelyn that regardless of the difficulties they may encounter he had faith they would succeed. "We will have to contend not only with flesh and blood," he predicted, "but eventually with powers unseen and though the contest may be protracted our Master's victory will be more glorious."

An improved toleration of A.M.A. operations in the entire mission field, as well as at Berea was a source of great satisfaction for Fee. The executive committee of the association was equally

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54 Rogers to Jocelyn, February 26, 1859 in A.M.A. Archives.
impressed with the reduced hostilities in Kentucky. Evidence of the committee's sense of optimism is reflected in the increased financial support which was directed toward Kentucky. Financial statements in the Annual Reports indicate that A.M.A. money began to show a marked increase in home mission operations in 1855. By 1858 the annual funds increased nearly 25 percent over the amount allocated to the home mission in the preceding three years. The allotment in 1859 was, for the first time, higher for the home missions than for the foreign missions, and disbursements to the southern field accounted for most of this increase. In addition to showing their support for the Kentucky mission through greater financial support, the executive committee invited Fee to address the annual convention and speak about the Kentucky mission and Berea College. Fee accepted the invitation as an opportunity to address a large number of potential benefactors for Berea College. Though the association had increased its aid there was a need to generate even greater amounts of support. The employment of faculty, construction of buildings, additional land purchases, and general operational expenses would require a constant—and if Fee's plan succeeded—an ever increasing amount of money.

Much of John Fee's time through 1859 was taken up with matters relating to the college. The expanded missionary activity in the field required that he continue his ministerial duties as well. This he did with little hesitation. He continued to preach regularly. In July, 1859 he accepted an invitation to preach in Estill County, an area that had previously been serviced only by colporteurs. Though meeting with a modest threat of opposition to his presence there, Fee believed that

55Annual Reports of the A.M.A. (1848-59).
"the majority of the citizens were good and were determined to maintain freedom of speech."\textsuperscript{56} He preached without disruption and believed the future looked good for establishing a permanent church in that county.\textsuperscript{57}

Late in the summer of 1859 Fee made plans to travel through the North to raise money for the college. He planned his trip so that he would be in Worcester, Massachusetts by mid-October in order to attend the association's annual meeting. Augustus F. Beard in his book, A Crusade of Brotherhood: A History of the A.M.A., indicates that Fee was determined to find financial support for the college. "Mr. Fee found few friends among the wealthy," Beard asserts, "but he did secure sufficient aid to encourage him to go forward. Had he received only rebuffs," he continued, "they would have been to him no discouragement. The meaning of the word was beyond his comprehension. He never turned to it in his dictionary."\textsuperscript{58}

The Kentucky clergyman made his presentation at the annual meeting and though it was received enthusiastically it would not have as great an impact on the Kentucky mission as an event taking place several hundreds of miles away in Virginia. At approximately the same time as the A.M.A.'s meeting in New England, John Brown raided the Federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry. This event caused great excitement in the slaveholding states, including Kentucky.


\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{58} Beard, Crusade, p. 102.
The anxiety and fear that had been loosened by this ill-fated act was elevated to hysteria in Kentucky as a result of a speech John Fee gave in New York on his return home from Massachusetts. Lewis Tappan had arranged for Fee to address the congregation of Henry Ward Beecher's Plymouth church in Brooklyn, New York. He was to speak about Berea College. On November 13, 1859, Fee devoted much of his time instead to discussing John Brown. He clearly disassociated himself from the violent acts at Harper's Ferry, but he greatly admired Brown's courage. He encouraged more John Browns to go into the South "not with carnal weapons, but with the word of the Spirit--men who would appeal in love to both slaveholders and non-slaveholders." The proslavery papers in Kentucky manipulated Fee's words to their advantage. The Louisville Daily Courier garbled his words and wrote that Fee "said that more John Browns were wanted especially for Kentucky." The Kentucky Statesman, of Lexington, copied the Courier's words. The Frankfort Tri-Weekly Yeoman quoted the Mountain Democrat as saying "the two leading men of the Black Republican party in this county... have made public addresses during the past fortnight, and both have alluded in almost similar terms to the inhuman outrage at Harper's Ferry." The other man besides Fee was Cassius Clay.

59 Ibid.

60 The Louisville Courier, November 17, 1859.
The Kentucky Statesman, November 18, 1859.

61 Frankfort Tri-Weekly Yeoman, December 1, 1859.; The Kentucky Statesman, November 18, 1859.
The Yeoman and the Statesman continued to quote the Democrat's charge that there had been an "almost constant stream of northern immigrants" passing through Richmond for Berea. Those immigrants were supposedly heavily laden with trunks, and even those of the ladies were so heavy that it required two men to carry them. The allegation was that they contained arms and ammunition to stage a revolt on the model of John Brown's. The Kentucky Statesman even reported that a box of Sharpe's rifles addressed to Fee had been intercepted.

More hostility was generated by a report printed in the Louisville Courier on December 21, 1859. The report alleged that the paper had intercepted a letter from an abolitionist named Day which was addressed to John Brown. The content of the letter made reference to a "Negro uprising in Frankfort and Versailles."62

Word about the strong reaction to his speech reached Fee from many sources. His wife, J. A. R. Rogers, and others wrote to the minister asking him to clarify his sermon so that they could counter the attacks. Even the association asked for an official copy of the speech. That directive was communicated to Fee by George Whipple after he had received the request from Lewis Tappan. Tappan, while attempting to be nonjudgmental became critical about the overly strong language Fee had used. He wrote to Whipple as follows:

I think Mr. Fee may be required by the Kentucky people to state what he actually said in the Plymouth Church, and perhaps

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62 This report is covered in the Liberator, December 23, 1859, p. 206.
it may be well to put the stenographer's affidavit ... after Mr. Fee's state-
ment. ... It will please Kentuckians best to have him manfully answer what
he did say; and if he spoke too strongly apologize for it. But it will do him no
good either in Kentucky or at the north to apologize for anything he said that
was proper to be said. ... 

I pray that the Lord will deliver him from the jaws of the lion.

Taking all Mr. Fee said at Mr. Beecher's Church I do not think it would excite
wrath in Kentucky unless it was mis-
represented. Still the ideas were not
couched in just such language as would
have been best. 63

Fee responded to the request for clarity. It was not, however,
until January, 1860 that a nearly complete text of his speech was made
public. The American Missionary Magazine printed a reproduction of the
sermon as it was submitted by John Fee. A careful review of the words
reveals it to be a strong endorsement for spirited missionary work in
the South, but it emphatically discounts armed rebellion or violence
as being defensible Christian practice. Some excerpts are below:

I say we want John Browns in the field of
consecration. Let men take their lives in
their hands as that honest and bold man has
done. Let them go down South with their
money in their pockets, determined to spend
this also for the redemption of God's poor.
You can make an impression even upon slave-
holders. Did not the courageous man when
he stood up for the truth of God, say that
the word of God required that he do unto
the slaves as he would they should do unto
him, make an impression upon the mind of
Governor Wise. ... A correspondent of the

63 Tappan to Whipple, December 10, 1859 in A,M,A. Archives.
Independent has said that now that the people in the South have had this demonstration they are convinced that there is an antislavery sentiment there, but I want to show you that they must have another demonstration . . . .

When you go down South as the Apostles went into the world clothed with the Spirit of Christ; and armed with the word of the Spirit, ready to lay down your lives for the soul of the slaveholder, as well as the slave, then the South will have a demonstration that will make an impression.

In all recent addresses when allusion was made to John Brown, and speaking of our wants in spreading a gospel of impartial love, I have said, 'we need more' John Browns, not in the manner of his actions but in his spirit of consecration—men who would go not to entice away a few slaves, for that would not remove the difficulty—men who would not with carnal weapons but with the sword of the Spirit and the Bible; and who in love would appeal to slaveholder and non-slaveholder—to be ready if need be, to give up property and life.64

All the efforts by the Bereans to appease the fears of their adversaries failed. The animosity which had lain dormant for several months prior to October, 1859 came fully alive after John Brown's raid. The worst suspicions of the slaveholders were revealed in the Harper's Ferry incident, and they were determined that no similar assaults would take place in Kentucky. The best way to guard against that eventuality was for slavery's defenders to organize and purge the state of potential disruptors. The community at Berea and the other A.M.A. settlements became principal targets for the proslavery mobs.

Many accounts exist detailing the tension-filled weeks from mid-October through December, 1859. No report offers more descriptive material than that provided by the Prudential Committee of Berea College. In describing the reaction of the proslavery citizens of Madison County, to John Brown's Raid, the Prudential Committee reported that "fear and distrust had taken hold." "All northern men were regarded as dangerous," the report continued, "and especially those who openly and fearlessly opposed slavery. Who knew but that John Brown's band was only one of a hundred others scattered through the South, for the purpose of stirring up insurrection among the slaves."65

The Frederick Douglass Monthly, commented further on the hysteria in Kentucky. In the December, 1859 issue he wrote that "the people of Kentucky think that this matter of insurrection in their midsts is becoming serious, and that it behooves them to be on their guard."66 Certainly the Madison County population had their attention focused on the Berea settlers as having just such a potential. The movement of people and supplies in and out of Berea was watched very carefully. The personal belongings of the Bereans were searched, wagons stopped and searched, and individuals stopped and questioned about their movements outside of the Ridge community. Eventually a group of citizens of Madison County came together for a public meeting to resolve the Berea question. A committee of 62 was appointed to carry out the will of the com-

65 Committee, Berea, p. 23.
66 Douglass Monthly, December, 1859.
On December 23, 1859 this large group made its way to the home of the Reverend J. A. R. Rogers to present a formal statement requesting that the Bereans leave the state of Kentucky, and do so within ten days. Their resolution was printed in the Richmond paper:

Liberty and slavery cannot dwell together. That in a slave state men advocating liberty were a dangerous element, and that, as self-preservation was the first law of nations, as well as individuals, and that as it was a settled matter that Kentucky was to remain a slave state, it was essential to the peace of the Commonwealth that the school at Berea should be suppressed, and those who were its originators and supporters should be driven from the State, and that although this could not be done by law, necessity was higher than all law.

On the day following this confrontation the Bereans made a formal appeal to Governor Beriah Magoffin. Their appeal stressed the spiritual nature of their mission in Kentucky and their previous strong support of state and national laws. They strongly objected to the illegal demands of the Richmond mob whose hysteria had been fanned by the false reports, half truths, and wild accusations about their

67 Ibid., p. 24. After those in attendance at the public meeting in Richmond had determined to "remove the Bereans peacefully if they could, forcefully if they must," they circulated a petition to get a public endorsement for their decision. Over 700 signatures were obtained. For a more comprehensive version of this entire affair consult: American Missionary Magazine IV (February, 1860), pp. 25-39.

68 Mountain Democrat, December 24, 1859.
purposes. The Governor's response was disheartening. He refused to intercede in the affairs of Madison County, but did promise protection of life and property during their trip out of the state. With no support from the state and with genuine fear for their lives the Bereans began their departure on December 29, 1859. Rogers noted the occasion in his diary with a single sentence; "left Berea with 20 others to go to Cincinnati."

No accurate records exist as to the precise number of Bereans who eventually left. The most commonly cited figure is 36, but estimates of the number range from slightly above to slightly below that total. The purge did not require all who lived in Berea to leave. Generally, those who were settled on the ridge prior to 1854, even though they may have supported Fee, were left alone. Again, however, inadequate records exist to provide exact census data on the Berea population and who of them left and who stayed. An unofficial figure of the population of the Berea community is provided in Roger's diary. On the night before they departed Berea a dinner was given for settlers on the Ridge to say goodbye to each other. Rogers identifies one-hundred and fifty in attendance.


70 Ibid.

71 Ibid. Also consult the Liberator, January 27, 1860, pp. 13-15 for an account of the events at Berea.

72 Rogers, "Diary," December 28, 1859.
Perhaps more information could have been provided through a review of the Union church records. This was the major church in Berea and the one that John Fee most closely identified with. Within its files were membership lists, financial records, personal letters, and much additional correspondence with the people in Berea. Unfortunately, shortly after the December 29 exodus some members of the Madison County committee returned to see if all the "dangerous element" had left. In particular they were looking for John Hanson. An unknown woman, fearing further reprisals against those who stayed behind, seized all the records of the Union church and burned them thereby eliminating that source of information to those who might wish to build a case against other Bereans.\footnote{Interview with Dr. Gerald Roberts, Director of Special Collections, Hutchins Library, November 11, 1977. A complete review of the search for John Hanson is given in Mountain Democrat, March 29, 1860.}

The removal of the Bereans was only the first step in an attempt to blot out the whole A.M.A., presence in Kentucky. That objective was accomplished within a few months. On January 22, 1860 while speaking at Orangeburg in Mason County, J. S. Davis was interrupted by a mob that insisted upon his leaving the state with his family.\footnote{Louisville Journal, April 4, 1860, p. 2., Fee, Autobiography, p. 150, American Missionary Magazine, IV (February, 1860), p. 36.} The next month, George Candee, Robert Jones, and William Kendrick were seized by a mob in Laurel County, "and had their hair and beards shaved and their faces and heads tared and feathered."\footnote{American Missionary Magazine, IV (February, 1860), p. 37.} Even John Fee, who was out of the state during this time and who met the Bereans in
Cincinnati, was driven from the state when he tried to return to his home. On January 23, 1860 he was stopped in Bracken County by 62 men who were determined that he could not come back to the state. Fee returned to Cincinnati where he took up residence until it was possible for him to renew his work in Kentucky.

The events in Kentucky drew immediate attention. Of course the association's publications and committees adamantly denounced the purge. In a speech at Frankfort, Kentucky on January 10, 1860, Clay protested the forced removal of the Bereans. "The people around Berea, previous to Mr. Fee's settlement there," he said, "were the most vicious I ever knew, they were a drunken tobacco-chewing and whiskey drinking people. But now it is greatly changed," he asserted, "the price of land has advanced and morality reigns where disorder was predominant. The children before idle and dissipated, have long been reformed and were going to the best school in the country. . . . I believe," he concluded, "that there were no better people in the state than those surrounding the colony of Berea."

Several antislavery newspapers through the North offered strong editorial support to the Bereans. They also reported the extent to which the plight of the exile was being responded to. The Liberator, reported that the Ohio legislature had acted favorably on a petition

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76Fee, Autobiography, p. 151. John Fee was permitted to make a brief visit to Kentucky in 1862. In that year his four-year-old son, Tappan Fee, died. He requested and was given approval to bury him in the court yard of the Bethesda church. Fee, Autobiography, p. 143.

of W. W. Hopkins to appropriate $5000 for a relief fund.\textsuperscript{78} The \textit{National Era}, recounted the resolutions of the Church Anti-Slavery Society of Pittsburg in support of the Kentucky ministers. Also, this paper appealed for funds on behalf of the Bereans. Requesting that all contributions be sent to Lewis Tappan, the newspaper stated:

\begin{quote}
\ldots forced out of Madison County and the state \ldots not because they had violated any law, or been guilty of any misdemeanor, but simply for being engaged in promoting the cause of Christ and humanity, as peaceful emancipationist and Christians.\textsuperscript{79}
\end{quote}

The matter even made its way to the Republican National Convention in Chicago. Joshua Giddings successfully introduced a resolution asking the convention to "express sympathy with me for men who were denied the protection of state laws and expelled from their homes because of their political views. \ldots"\textsuperscript{80}

Regardless of the protestations, however, the association's mission operation in Kentucky had finally yielded to the pressure of the mob. The preceding years had been challenging times, but they had also been productive, and it is wrong to assume that the mere removal of A.M.A. ministers had resulted in the elimination of their influence. The missionary activity had succeeded in numerous ways. Great amounts of Christian and antislavery literature had been circulated through the state. Christian churches and schools were established and they

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{78}\textit{Liberator}, February 24, 1860, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{79}\textit{National Era}, February 16, 1860, p. 25-27.
\end{footnotes}
persevered. These institutions were maintained, not by ministers alone, but by congregations and communities who donated time and money to preserve principles they believed in. Certainly their contributions to keeping discussions about the moral issues of slavery before the public, their explanation of the relationship between civil law and God's law, and their reasoned debate of many state and national policies contested the proslavery defenses. In summary, it can be said that the expulsion of ministers and some other citizens in 1859-60 should not be considered as a terminal point in the association's history in Kentucky. Rather it should more properly be perceived as a disruptive, but temporary break in the progression of related historical events which were renewed in 1865 when John Fee returned to Berea to continue his work. This task was made simpler because of the successful foundation laid by gallant men and women in the years before the Civil War.
Chapter VII

Conclusion

The preceding study examines the twelve-year history of the American Missionary Association's operations in the state of Kentucky. From 1848 to 1860 a small number of association clergymen, under the leadership of John Fee, struggled successfully to make manifest the principles of Christian abolitionism. Their influence was highly visible, in the form of churches and schools in twelve Kentucky counties by 1859, and it is reasonable to assume it could have been extended had time and staffing been more plentiful. Less overt expressions of their mission came in the form of hundreds of family visits, the distribution of great quantities of printed materials, frequently provided ministerial services to churches other than those directly identified with the association, and open discussion of slavery and its consequences.

The activities of the A.M.A. from its founding in 1846 until the outbreak of the Civil War challenge Gilbert Barnes' claim that evangelical abolitionism ended in the early 1840's.¹ Association ministers in general and the Kentucky missionaries in particular viewed themselves as conducting a moral crusade. Slavery was treated as a

sin against God and the teachings of Christ.

In Kentucky this struggle was waged against a religious and social order that tolerated slavery. The major church bodies had split over the slavery question, and in Kentucky the churches generally supported slavery. It was necessary, therefore, for the A.M.A. to establish "free churches" independent of the existing denominations. These churches and companion "free schools" were sponsored by the A.M.A.'s agents. Through these institutions they spread antislavery doctrines and ideas. For those who did not or could not attend an association church or school, the A.M.A. utilized a staff of colporteurs to circulate books and tracts to expand the reach of their ministry.

Kentucky was by far the largest operation in the slaveholding states. Other association activity in North Carolina and Missouri remained by comparison relatively underdeveloped. The campaign in the bluegrass state was the first of the southern mission fields to receive aid from the A.M.A.'s executive committee and their investment was watched with interest throughout the membership. Kentucky offered the best opportunity for a successful beginning in the South. Its long history of antislavery activity and its close proximity to free states were conditions which A.M.A. leaders felt would be advantageous to their cause.

Association appointments to the Kentucky field preceded by one year the final united effort by the state's antislavery forces to dispose of the peculiar institution. That effort, the attempt to rewrite the state constitution in 1849, was a joint venture involving
antislavery religious leaders, politicians, and other opponents of slavery. Constitutional reform would not succeed and Kentucky's anti-slavery coalition would never again organize to challenge slavery in the state. This is not meant to suggest that the association ministers were the only opponents of slavery in Kentucky through the 1850's, for clearly they were not. Other emancipationist proponents remained in the state after 1849, but they made no serious attempts to arrange for unilateral activity against their common foe. Furthermore, the position of the American Missionary Association towards slavery was uniquely held by its ministers and not shared by others in Kentucky who were considered as emancipationists.

A recognition of those characteristics which made the A.M.A. position unique in Kentucky is one consequence of this research. Another is that it provides a greater awareness of the many staff members who were at work in this venture. While no one can deny that John Fee was the dominant antislavery force in Kentucky in the 1850's, it is apparent that other ministers made valuable contributions to the success and maintenance of the mission. Not only does this study tie the mission's success to the involvement of several clergymen, it also details staff appointment periods and assignments to an extent not found in other works.

The Oberlin influence within the association was obvious in the Kentucky mission. Not only did John Fee intend to implement the antislavery principles of Oberlin, but he was determined to place Oberlin-trained ministers in the field and to establish and educational institution in his state that would parallel Oberlin College in Ohio.
The endorsement of Oberlin's principles required that the ministers embrace abolitionism.

Other antislavery reformers in Kentucky did not support what they considered to be the extremist position of the association. Cassius Clay and William Bailey, two notable critics of slavery, believed John Fee and his fellow workers to be radicals and thus chose to disassociate themselves from the Bereans. Had there been a common ground on which these individuals could have met, the antislavery cause in Kentucky might have been advanced considerably. Fee and the association ministers were enthusiastic and committed to ending slavery. Bailey could offer an antislavery newspaper that Fee felt to be so necessary to the cause. Clay represented a respected opinion on the slavery question which could silence the critics. He had access to the proslavery papers in Kentucky which neither provided extensive coverage of A.M.A. activity nor permitted the ministers to use the papers to press their case. The alliance might have been formidable, but given the divergent views they held on the slavery issue their merger was not possible.

The absence of an antislavery union in the 1850's did not discourage the Christian abolitionists. Neither did the resistance to their labors deter them from their mission activity. On many occasions the ministers were threatened and their civil rights violated. A determined spirit and an implicit faith in the righteousness of their purpose aided them considerably. Some degree of toleration may have been granted them because of the high quality of their church schools. Even some Kentuckians who opposed the religious preachments of the ministers supported the schools. Enrollment figures for church schools
showed a steady growth through the years before the war. Reports from
the ministers also recorded an increase in attendance of children from
proslavery families.

Through their churches and schools the ministers reached a
few hundred adults and children. Hundreds more were contacted by col-
porteurs. While no exact number of contacts can be determined, it seems
likely to assume that several hundreds of Kentuckians came to hear about
the evils of slavery as a result of the A.M.A.'s presence in the state.
The ministers also can claim much credit for the defense of free speech
in Kentucky through the testy years of the 1850's. Their voice was also
heard in favor of the preservation of the union.

The influence of A.M.A. agents in Kentucky extended beyond the
boundaries of the state. In particular, John Fee's published works were
widely circulated. Furthermore, his frequent communication with anti-
slavery newspapers and his out-of-state speaking engagements added
greatly to the numbers of those who knew about the antislavery campaign
in Kentucky. Other ministers corresponded with northern newspapers as
well and the accounts of their many privations and hardships may have
persuaded some to join the antislavery cause.

Not all A.M.A. initiatives met with success. The early reliance
on local ministers and antislavery friends to staff the mission field
did not work out. Their efforts to influence northern settlers to move
to Kentucky did not achieve the results they hoped for. The attempt to
organize antislavery ministers in Kentucky and the effort to create a
children's missionary society were fruitless projects. On balance,
however, the successes of the A.M.A. in Kentucky were greater than
its failures. Perhaps, because of limited coverage of its activities in the Kentucky press through the decade of the fifties and the acceptance of a historical analysis which ended Christian abolitionism in the 1840's, the role of the A.M.A. in Kentucky has not received its proper recognition. An appropriate judgment of its role in Kentucky during the period 1848 to 1860 is that it was not only the most extreme in its hostilities and slavery, it was also the most important force in the state's anti-slavery agitation. No other antislavery activity in the state during this period could demonstrate the kinds of success attributed to the ministers of the American Missionary Association.
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