



Lesson 1: Pioneers and Settlers

1. In Manning's scheme, key aspects of our faith are placed in the setting of the Old West. Did any of these comparisons strike you as interesting or thought provoking? Are any of them unsettling or convicting? Why or why not?
 - God— "Mayor" vs. "The Trail Boss"
 - Jesus— "The Sheriff" vs. "The Scout"
 - The Holy Spirit— "The Saloon Girl" vs. "The Buffalo Hunter"
 - The Church— "The Covered Wagon" vs. "The Courthouse"
 - The Pastor— "The Banker" vs. "The Cook"
 - You and I— "The Settlers" vs. "The Pioneers"

2. Think of the first non-Christian who comes to mind. If you were to ask them which metaphor —pioneers or settlers— best describes the Church in North America, how would they respond?

Which metaphor do you think would more compelling to that non-Christian? Would they jump at the chance to become a settler, or would they more want to join a group of pioneers?

3. Being careful not to judge or be negative about any particular person or group of people, answer this question as honestly as you can: is our church a church of pioneers or of settlers? Are we a movement or an institution?

4. In his sermon, Manning asks some hard questions about the the things in this past week that made us happy, and the things that saddened us. His goal is to get us to take a honest look at our own faith.

While It's sometimes easy to stand back and evaluate or judge "the church," it's harder to take an honest look at our own lives and sort out where we ourselves actually are. Are you more of a pioneer in the way you understand your faith, or more of a settler? Are you living like a pioneer or living like a settler?

Where do you want to be?

How do you get there?