

Dr. Roger Green, American Christianity, Session 10, The Second Great Awakening

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This is Dr. Roger Green in his teaching on American Christianity. This is session 10 on the Second Great Awakening.

So, a word about the setup for the room. This is so small here to try to do this and put my notes and everything. So, it's been kind of driving me bonkers. So I emailed the provost at the beginning of the semester and I asked if there was any possibility of having a lectern in this room. Even a music stand from the music building would have been fine.

Anything to put my notes in so I'm not wrestling like I've been doing for the last five or six weeks. So yesterday, they presented me with this lectern. It has my name on it, the Roger Green lectern, and the seal of Gordon College.

So, this is going to remain, and this is going to be my gift to Gordon College. The provost said I can take this with me when I retire. I said no, this is going to be my gift to Gordon College for this room.

It's right here, this nice lectern. They even gave me a space underneath to put stuff here. So now, finally, I'm set to teach in this course.

So, we are ready. So, yikes, yikes, what could be better than this? So here we are. We are ready now.

So, thanks to Gordon College for that. So where are we? This is a second-grade awakening, lecture seven, the second-grade awakening. I'm on page 13 of the syllabus.

So that's where I am. And we're talking about the awakening, and I'm going to give a bit of an introduction, and then we're going to talk about these people. But I want to say a couple of things before we talk about Timothy Dwight.

So, he's there. We mentioned before that at the time of the Revolutionary War, there was a bit of an ebb in religion in America. It seems like people's interests were more political than religious.

So, what we have seen so far in the course is that we saw a very strong religious impulse among the Puritans. But then, remember the Puritans; there was a dying down of that religious impulse among them for a while. But then we come into the middle of the 18th century, then we have this first great awakening.

Remember that we talked about in the 18th century. That brought real strengthening of Christianity to America. Then there's that pendulum swinging back again to less religion and more politics.

Well, the second great awakening, in a sense, is an answer to that. So, the second great awakening is a resurgence of Christianity in America beginning; we usually put about 1800 as the date for the second great awakening so that we see that. The other thing we want to take notice of about this second great awakening is that in the last, say from 1750 to 1800, so from that period of time.

During that period of time, the territory tripled, and the population grew five times. So, in those 50 years, the amount of land that was being settled tripled. That's a lot.

However, the population also increased five times in those 50 years. So, there is tremendous expansion going on. The question that the second great awakening kind of raised is whether the church is going to be able to keep up with this expansion or whether we are going to lose the battle to this expansion. Which is it going to be? And they decided that they wanted the church to keep up with this expansion.

They wanted the church to be a mission to all people and a mission to the growing numbers in this new land. So, they made that decision and thus began, as we'll see, the second great awakening. Now, what we're going to do here is talk first of all about leadership in the second great awakening.

So that's the awakening, and there are four names. Page 13, there are three, and then the fourth comes after that. And then we'll see what happens with all of that awakening and then we'll do results.

Okay, the four names I'm going to mention. The first and most important one is Timothy Dwight. Those are the days of Timothy Dwight.

Very important. He became the president at Yale University. Now, we've already said when you think of these universities, don't think of the universities that you picture today with thousands of students and many buildings and so forth.

Yale was still a small, pretty tight-knit community. Yale, however, had lost its religious bearings. Timothy Dwight became the president of Yale, and he was determined to bring religion back into the life of Yale and into the life of Yale students.

And so as the president, he not only taught classes at Yale, but he also preached the gospel from the chapel at Yale. First, we usually put the date 1800 for the first great

awakening and second great awakening. The second great awakening really began at Yale with Timothy Dwight and with his preaching of the gospel.

So that's where it started. And there was a great revival at Yale. There was a real awakening at Yale, the kind that had been true of the first great awakening with people like Jonathan Edwards.

So, Timothy Dwight is an important name who, in a sense, begins all of this. But then there were three other people that we want to mention. The second and third are associated with Dwight.

The second one is Lyman Beecher. And so here is Lyman Beecher, who's also in your syllabus. But Lyman Beecher is really a very, very important person because Lyman Beecher had been trained at Yale by Timothy Dwight.

So, Lyman Beecher was a student of Timothy Dwight at Yale. Lyman Beecher picked up the revival impulse from his teacher and his mentor. You'd be familiar with the Beecher name.

You're probably familiar with his daughter, Harriet Beecher Stowe. So, the Beecher name became important in American life. Lyman Beecher is now known as a preacher.

He's a great preacher. He's not the college president or teacher or something, but he's kind of the pastor who helped to bring about the second great awakening. So, we do need to take note of Lyman Beecher.

My third name is Nathaniel Taylor. Nathaniel Taylor was at Yale at the same time Timothy Dwight was the president of Yale and a teacher at Yale. However, Nathaniel W. Taylor was a professor at Yale University at that time.

And he helped to instigate the second great awakening. He himself, like Lyman Beecher, had been trained by Timothy Dwight. He had been a student of Dwight's at Yale.

And so he picks up this impulse of the second great awakening, and that really becomes important. Now, the fourth name is not associated with Yale or Timothy Dwight, but it is a name that needs to be mentioned. And it's a man by the name of Alexander Campbell.

Now, we're going to see in a few minutes that the second great awakening had two places where it happened. It happened in the north, but it also happened in the south. Alexander Campbell was a churchman in the South, and he helped to bring about the second great awakening in the Southern states.

Alexander Campbell, a little bit later as you can see his dates, but Alexander Campbell began a movement called the Disciples of Christ in the south. And his movement he was the founder of the Disciples of Christ. And this movement was a really awakening movement in the south.

Now, we have a name for the Disciples of Christ and for the movement of Alexander Campbell. And it's a title, it's a kind of a theological title that we wouldn't use for the first three people that we've talked about. And the title that we give to them is Restorationism.

So, we need to figure out what Restorationism is. Alexander Campbell is a perfect example of this, as are the disciples of Christ. Restorationism is a belief that your denomination, your group is restoring the New Testament church.

So, you see purity in the New Testament church, and you're bringing that into the 19th century. So, there are groups that we would call Restorationist groups that feel that they are the true representative of the New Testament church and are kind of keeping alive the New Testament church in a way that maybe other churches aren't or that other groups aren't. So Restorationism becomes an important part of the Second Great Awakening in the South.

This picture to the right is a picture of Alexander Campbell. So if I were going to choose four leaders of the Second Great Awakening, these are the four that I would choose. Now, when we talk about the Second Great Awakening, we also want to mention Charles Grandison Finney.

I'll add his name to this. Charles Grandison Finney. Those are the dates for Charles Grandison Finney.

And let me just go to the next slide. Here's a kind of a picture of Charles Grandison Finney. The reason we mention Finney is because he also began a great revival, the Finneyite Revival.

Now his dates are later, as you can see. So the question is that we won't worry about now. We'll just raise it now but we'll ask when we get to Finney himself.

Was Finney continuing the Second Great Awakening, or was there enough of a break in American religious life that we call Finney's Revival, the Finneyite Revival, a Third Great Awakening? How should we label the Finneyite Revival? Is it a continuation of what was begun by Dwight and Beecher and others? Or was there a break, and now the Finneyite Revival is really a third wave or a Third Great Awakening? We don't need to settle that kind of here. We've got a whole lecture on Charles Grandison

Finney and you read an article about Charles Grandison Finney. So, we'll worry about that at a later time.

But here we just raise the matter. Also, in terms of people, we've already talked about Wesley Coke and Asbury. So I just want to mention them also in terms of people who would, in a sense, have been involved in the Second Great Awakening because, remember, Francis Asbury was finally ordained in 1784 and became the great itinerant preacher of Methodism in America.

So, we do want to just mention them. So now we want to talk about the manifestations of the Second Great Awakening. The Second Great Awakening had two very distinct manifestations.

There were two kinds of parts to the Second Great Awakening, and they were really quite different from each other. But they both come under the kind of umbrella of the Second Great Awakening. So, Timothy Dwight, the northern manifestation of the Second Great Awakening, is a perfect example of that.

And there are his dates. But the Great Awakening at Yale. Now, the Great Awakening at Yale was followed obviously by other places.

This is Timothy Dwight on the left-hand side here. The Great Awakening at Yale took on a lot of New England culture. It was restrained.

There was not a lot of emotionalism. There was great preaching and great singing of the hymns of the church and so forth. And people came to Christ but in a very restrained, unemotional New England kind of way.

It's kind of a Gordon College kind of way for this Second Great Awakening under Timothy Dwight. However, the fact of the matter is that the Second Great Awakening had another manifestation and a completely different manifestation. It had a southern manifestation, which was entirely different from the northern manifestation.

This is a picture here of a southern manifestation of the Second Great Awakening. The manifestation of the Second Great Awakening was of the camp meetings. Now, the first camp meeting to be held was in Cane Ridge, Kentucky.

And it was held in 1801. Cane Ridge, Kentucky, 1801. Now, this is a new phenomenon.

This is something that hadn't been experienced, that had not been experienced in American church history or American religious history before. The camp meeting is when people come together for maybe ten days or maybe a couple of weeks. And

you can see here in the picture in the background that there are tents where they live.

And on the left-hand side, you can see someone preaching there, and the people are listening and so forth. So, the camp meetings became the southern expression of the Second Great Awakening. But the camp meetings were very different.

The expression in the South was very different from the expression at Yale. Because the camp meetings in the south were very emotional, they were using lay preachers.

These were often uneducated people. They knew the Bible, knew the stories of the Bible, but they were lay preachers. They didn't have any formal training.

They didn't train with Timothy Dwight at Yale and so forth. So, they didn't have the theological knowledge. But there are lay preachers.

There's a great emotionalism in these camp meetings. There's a lot of people singing and dancing and fainting and so forth. So, it was a totally different experience from what people in the North were experiencing in the Second Great Awakening.

So, the camp meeting experience was very interesting. Now, whenever I talk about the camp meeting experience, there are a couple of things. Camp meetings still go on.

A couple of hundred years later there are still camp meetings in various places and not just the south. So, have any of you been to a camp meeting? Something you would say would be a camp meeting. Ten days and two weeks, the emphasis is on Bible teaching, preaching, and singing.

So, does something like that sound a little familiar to you? Okay, a couple of folks. Has anybody else been to a camp meeting? That sound familiar to you? So, not many of you have been to a camp meeting. I participate in camp meetings a lot during the summers.

Two big ones are in Old Orchard Beach, Maine, where there is a camp meeting. And then another one is with the Methodists in the south at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, is a huge camp meeting that comes together there. What is the closest camp meeting to where we are right here at Gordon College? Which was a major camp meeting.

In fact, they had to build a little bit of an extra railway line to get out because so many people were coming from Boston to the camp meeting. Is anybody familiar with Asbury Grove? You do. You lived there for the summer.

Bless your heart. Asbury Grove. So, you know the history of Asbury Grove.

Some of it. Do you want to tell us any of it, or do you want to help with this lecture or not? Well, Asbury Grove was a great camp meeting here in the north. They had the extra railway line come out because it was so large in those days.

They don't get the numbers now that they used to get. Pardon? That's great. Oh, that's great.

And you lived, did you live on the campgrounds? Okay. And do you remember the name of the chapel? It's the E. Stanley Jones Chapel who was a great Methodist missionary to India for many years. Right.

Okay. So, Asbury Grove. You can, if you drive down, is that Railroad Avenue? What avenue goes by Christ Church right to Asbury Grove? I forget what street that is.

But do some of you know where Christ Church is? If you know where Christ Church is here in Hamilton? Right. So there it is. Right in our own backyard, we had a great camp meeting experience.

And who was it named after, of course? Francis Asbury. So, the great Methodist revivalist evangelist. So, camp meetings weren't limited to the south but they were large and still are large in the south.

And I don't think Asbury quite has the numbers it used to have. However, the camp meetings in the south or even up in Old Orchard Beach, Maine, are still quite large. So there it is.

That's the second expression of the Second Great Awakening, and it was a pretty remarkable expression. Now, the people in the North did tend to look down on the experience in the South because they saw that as too emotional, to letting these lay people preach who didn't know theology and so forth. So, there tended to be a little bit of a look down on what was happening during the southern camp meeting experience.

But you have two very distinct experiences in the north and in the south. Okay, now what we're interested in is number B on page 14. And we're interested in the results of the awakening.

And I'm going to give six. I mean, you could give a lot more. The sixth one is going to take us a lot more time.

So that's why I've saved that one until the end. So, the results of the awakening. Okay, the first result of the awakening was an increase in revivalism in American culture.

American culture got quite used to revivalism being part of the culture, part of the kind of the Protestant world. And so now we've had a First Great Awakening. Now, we have a Second Great Awakening, an increase in revivalism.

And as we've mentioned, an increase in revivalism is going to be seen in Charles Grandison Finney later on. Later, at the very end of the 19th century, it's going to be seen in a man by the name of Dwight L. Moody that we don't need to worry about now, but we'll come to him. And then, in the middle of the 20th century, it's going to be seen in a man by the name of Billy Graham.

So, revivalism is part of American life and culture, as part of a Protestant expression of religion, and that's going to be part of our life here. Okay, a second kind of result here is the expanding network of what are called voluntary societies. Voluntary societies.

You had a little bit of this on the exam, but voluntary societies, in this case, voluntary societies mean a kind of organizing at a local level for certain projects. So, people, Christians who were believers but also people who became believers during the revival, would organize at the local level for certain projects. And that local level of projects would be often cross-denominational.

So, Presbyterians and people from the Congregational Church, and maybe some Methodists and maybe some Baptists, would come together and associate for a particular project that they wanted to do. Now, it was out of this that came the great kind of missionary movement of the 19th century, the American missionary movement, because the greatest of these local projects was the formation of missionary societies.

And these missionary societies became pretty strong. 1810 was the first formation. It was called the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions.

Basically, it was Congregational and Presbyterians who came together to form an 1810 form of missionary society. So that becomes really important. And it has become important for the history of this institution.

A lot of years later, in 1895, this place was founded as a missionary society, a missionary training ground by A.J. Gordon to send missionaries to the Congo. So the formation of voluntary societies, but especially missionary societies, is very important. Okay, number three is a stress on education.

Stress on education. Now, under education, there are three things I'm going to mention here. Number one, stress on education, but number one, a tremendous distribution of Bibles.

Getting Bibles into the hands of the people. And along with the Bibles, there would be things called tracts. Now, tracts would often be four-page paper gospel tracts that tell the gospel story.

So, along with the Bibles, would be tracts getting into the hands of the people. But you want the people to be biblically literate once they become believers, once they've been converted. So that would be the first thing.

The second thing, this stress on education, started in England earlier on, but not a whole lot earlier on, and that was Sunday schools. Sunday schools are going to be educational enterprises in churches now that teach people and children to read. So, they could do what? Of course, read the Bible and understand the Bible. There was a reason for that.

Now, the number three and the most important one is the founding of other colleges, universities, and seminaries. So, it is time now, they feel, to train our pastors and so forth. So, the founding of college universities and seminaries.

So, here's kind of another wave of founding of those things. And let me just go to some; I'm going to mention some of the most important that were found. Andover Seminary was founded in 1808 by the Congregationalists.

Now, my wife and I love the town of Andover. I don't know if you're familiar with Andover. One thing I've never done, however, is find out where this was founded in Andover.

I'm not sure of that. So, I'd really like to find that out. But the Congregationalists found their own seminary.

We've mentioned Princeton University, but the seminary was founded in 1812. The university, of course, was founded earlier as the log college. The seminary was founded in 1812.

The seminary was founded to train Presbyterian preachers. I had an interesting experience, long story short. I went to Princeton for an MTH degree.

I'm not Presbyterian, but I had a very interesting class at Princeton, mostly with Presbyterians. The class was on the 1967 Confession because the lead writer for the 1967 Confession, which in a sense took the place of the Westminster Confession, was a professor by the name of Dr. Dowie. He had a class on the 1967 Confession.

So I thought it would be kind of interesting to sit in on that class and to hear the discussions among Presbyterians about the 1967 Confession. This was just a year later. My first year at Princeton was 1968.

I could be very objective about this. They couldn't. And so the discussions in that class about that 1967 Confession were very, very interesting.

And some of the students saw the 1967 Confession as the greatest thing that's ever come down from the mountain. Others saw the 1967 Confession as the worst thing that the Presbyterian Church ever did in life. And so there were some interesting things. It was a fun class for me to be an objective observer of this.

But nevertheless, Princeton Seminary, I have fond memories of Princeton for a couple of years. The 1967 Confession was a replacement for the Westminster Confession for Presbyterians. And so, the whole class went through the confession pretty much line by line.

It was a pretty long confession with notes about the confession and everything. Very interesting. Thirdly, we've mentioned Harvard.

Their Divinity School was founded in 1816. But remember, it was founded by the Unitarians. The confession is a kind of a confession of faith that marks what believers in that particular denomination believe and what they adhere to.

So, we've always had confessions in the church. The Apostles Creed was finally developed as a confession. The Nicene Creed, the Chalcedonian Creed.

Right. It's a statement of basic beliefs that you hold to. But it's not just that.

It's not just a doctrinal affirmation of something. By confessing the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed or Chalcedonian Creed or the Westminster Creed, by confessing, you're giving your life to that creed. You're saying that this creed is so important.

This creed is everything. I'm ready to live my life in conformity to this creed. So, it's not just an assent.

Oh yeah, I happen to believe that. It's a life commitment to that. That's why discussing the 67 Confession in class for a semester was a very existential experience for those Presbyterian students.

Because am I going to give my life to this creed or not? Does that help? Yeah, absolutely. You're discussing, as you say, the Apostles Creed. Right.

It must be some kind of loyalty to this creed. You mentioned that you didn't give each other that, having just 50 years of Presbyterian connection to it. I don't know.

It's a thing you are. Right. Well, that would take us a whole semester to do that.

We're not all Presbyterians here, so it wouldn't be existential for everybody. But they are doctrinal confessions. But there again, not just assent.

You're giving your life to this confession. You're staking your life on what this says. I have the Bonhoeffer seminar, and a couple of folks are in Bonhoeffer.

In Bonhoeffer, we're going to talk about the Barman Declaration. The Barman Declaration was something they gave their life to. They put their life on the line for the Barman Declaration.

So, that's what confessions and declarations are. Yes. These had grown.

Now, not Andover. There was no university or anything, but Princeton and Harvard had grown into universities, kind of after the German model of kind of research universities. So, they were no longer.

They were a place where you could take courses in theology and courses in divinity, and so forth, religion. But they were no longer places that actually trained ministers. So, that's why the 19th century, at the beginning of the 19th century, these seminaries were founded, often attached to universities, but they were founded as seminaries specifically to train people for ministry.

That is not true of Andover. Andover was a standalone, but true of Princeton and Harvard. And then I'll mention just one more here, and that's, of course, Yale.

The Divinity School at Yale was finally founded in 1822. Timothy Dwight led the second great awakening at the university because the seminary had not yet been founded, but in 1822, it was founded to train congregational preachers. So, this interest in education, but especially what we might call higher education and seminary education, has become really, really important.

Okay, other questions about the interest in education? Okay, let me go. We've got to go back to a slide here. Okay, stress in education.

Okay, the next one, you've got these in your outline, too, but number four is moral and humanitarian crusades. There are lots of moral crusades and humanitarian crusades. That is going to be very important as a result of the second great

awakening because the second great awakening stressed this loving God, loving your neighbor.

Okay, let me mention three movements that would become really, really important in the broader American culture, but yet were movements really begun out of concern of the second great awakening? Okay, you'd be familiar with the first one, all three of them. The first one is going to be a temperance movement, a movement of total abstinence from alcohol, temperance because in the large cities, of course, there had been a proliferation of people coming into these cities to work and a terrible kind of plight of alcohol abuse, so forth.

Well, the second great awakening started to attack that and developed a temperance movement in the second great awakening, which became kind of a national movement. The second one would be a peace movement, which is very interesting. We're going to see this when we get to Charles Grandison Finney and Oberlin College, but the peace movement where we're hoping, praying that the 19th century is going to bring about peace and shalom and God's peace to the world and so forth, and so the peace movement and Charles Finney, Oberlin College, going to stress that.

The third one, of course, is going to take precedence over everything. The third one is going to be the major movement and battle of the 19th century in America, and that is going to be the anti-slavery movement, the movement for the abolition of slavery. This begins now with the second great awakening, but as we go into the 19th century, of course, in American public life, this is going to be a major event, and the churches are going to enter into this, and there's going to be great struggles over this, but the abolitionist movement, it's going to overshadow everything else.

Any other kind of temperance movement or peace movement, the abolitionist movement is what is going to distinguish the 19th century in American cultural life and religious life, so we'll see a lot of that. Okay, that's one through, oh, number five. I didn't get number five, and that is a growth in many denominations as a result of the second great awakening.

Lots of denominations grow. Let me give you just one example, and that would be the Methodists. Here's a couple of examples.

1784, let's take that date, 1784, at the time of Asbury's being ordained and so forth, there were probably about 15,000 Methodists in the colonies, 1784, 15,000 Methodists. Now remember that Methodism is not yet a breakaway movement. It's a movement trying to reenergize the Anglican church, and it's a movement stressing revivalism and so forth, but it's not a denomination, so 15,000.

The second kind of example is 1850. So, in 1784, there were 15,000. 1850 by 1850, there were over one million Methodists in the colonies, further out west, down south, and so forth.

There are over one million Methodists, so that's a growth within 65 years or so of a million people. Now, part of the reason for the growth is because Methodism, after the death of John Wesley, is a separate denomination. Methodism has broken away from the Anglican church.

It's a separate denomination. Actually, there are a number of Methodist denominations, especially in England, there were a few of them. However, Methodism in America is now seen as its own thing, and it has a real appeal, especially because of the people like Francis Asbury and the itinerant ministers.

So, Methodism is just one example. I could use the Baptists. I could use Presbyterians.

I could use Congregationalists, but denominations are growing after the Second Great Awakening, trying to keep pace with the Western expansion and the Southern expansion. What happened was that while Wesley was still alive, he felt very unfortunate that Asbury and Koch began to call themselves bishops. In other words, it sounded like they were forming a separate denomination over here, and he was opposed to that.

He actually called them to come back to England. They wouldn't go. So he was actually opposed to that.

But technically, no denomination was founded or formed until after Wesley died in 1791. Then, when he died in 1791, you could kind of say that American Methodists now see themselves as a denomination. And over in England, there were probably by 1795 or so, there were probably three or four Methodist denominations in England that broke away from the Anglican Church.

So, it's a little fuzzy. It's not an exact kind of science, but with the death of Wesley in 1791, that's when Methodism started to form itself in terms of a denomination here and in England. Yeah.

Yeah. It's time now. Thank you.

We've got one more question. Wesleyan Church began in this country as a church opposing slavery. So that's the middle of the century.

And we're actually going to talk about the Wesleyan Church because that's how it began, as an anti-slavery movement church. They named their church after John Wesley. So, yeah, but that becomes a denomination.

But that's not what we're talking about yet here because they're not formed until the middle of the century. Okay. Bless your hearts.

We're going to stop the lecture here.

This is Dr. Roger Green in his teaching on American Christianity. This is session 10 on the Second Great Awakening.