

# **Dr. Roger Green, American Christianity,**

## **Session 12, Roman Catholicism in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

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This is Dr. Roger Green in his teaching on American Christianity. This is session 12 on Roman Catholicism in the 19th century.

Right up to date in terms of the lectures. This is lecture number eight, Roman Catholicism in the 19th century. We began that and just got that started the other day. We're looking at growth, let me just put this up here: we're looking at the growth of the Roman Catholic Church, and then we're looking at the Americanization of the Roman Catholic Church.

We're still in the growth part. So, just as a reminder, we gave three reasons why Roman Catholicism grew so much during immigration to America. So, we talked about those three reasons.

Then, we talked about two problems that the Roman Catholic Church faced here in America. There's an internal problem and an external problem. Remember, we mentioned the internal problem was the problem of trusteeship.

The Roman Catholic Churches were so spread out, not just throughout the colonies, but as you went west and as you went south, so spread out that they didn't have priests to be able to cover these churches. And so, the laypeople had to start running the churches. And they got kind of out of control.

They were the trustees of the Roman Catholic Churches, but they wanted, you know, this good American spirit of freedom and choice. They wanted to be able to hire priests and fire priests and all kinds of things. So, it really got out of control, and the Roman Catholic Church had to rein that in.

So, trusteeship became a real problem because it did not mesh with the hierarchical church and with the way the church is set up by church polity. So, there was real friction there. And I ask you in advance to talk about that trusteeship and the problems that it caused.

That's the external, the internal problem. The external problem we mentioned was anti-Catholicism coming into the Roman Catholic Church. And I think we just mentioned that, but I don't think we got started with that.

So, okay. So, the whoops, a good example of this is a party. There is actually a political party that was formed in 1837, and it was called the Native American Party.

The Native American Party was formed as specifically as an anti-Catholic party because they were so upset with the tremendous number of Roman Catholics and Roman Catholic immigrants coming into America. And so, there's a number of things that they wanted, but basically, they wanted to stop the immigration of Roman Catholics. They wanted to do that politically.

But if Roman Catholics did come into America, what they wanted was, and tried to press home unsuccessfully, but they wanted people to wait 21 years before they could apply for citizenship. And they thought if they made Roman Catholics wait 21 years before they could apply for citizenship, that would, that would kind of discourage Roman Catholics from coming over here. So this was a very anti-Catholic party that was established.

The party actually got a nickname for it. The party was known as Know-Nothingism or the Know-Nothing Party. And the reason it got this nickname is because the party, the people in the party who said, you know, if you're questioned about our policies and if you're questioned about what we think about Catholics, just say you don't know anything.

So, they got this nickname from the press: the Know-Nothing Party or Know-Nothingism. They refused to answer any questions. They don't know anything, so forth.

So, it was kind of an underground movement, but it was a very, very strong kind of anti-Catholic movement that was, that arose in the major cities against Roman Catholics. There's a sense in which I guess I maybe saw this a little bit close up and personal because I got my PhD from Boston College. Boston College had a bit of a difficult time getting started.

They didn't actually begin in Chestnut Hill, where it is now. They actually begin in the city of Boston. But they had trouble getting a charter to start.

It was a Jesuit, obviously a Jesuit institution, but they had trouble getting a charter to begin Boston College. The reason for that was that the Massachusetts legislature was so anti-Catholic, so they weren't going to give Jesuits and Catholics the chance to begin their own place of study. So, there was tension between the legislature, the Jesuits, and the Roman Catholic leadership trying to get Boston College up and running.

There is kind of an urban myth that there used to be signs posted in shops saying, if you are Roman Catholic, you need not work here. There was an urban myth about Boston College that is probably only that, probably isn't, it probably is only an urban myth. But the myth was that Harvard used to advertise, and I've never been able to track this down.

So, I've looked but haven't been able to track this down. However, the myth was that Harvard University used to advertise in the Boston newspapers. The advertisement went like this: if you are Roman Catholic, you need not apply here.

And so, the Roman Catholics got so incensed by this that they decided to form their own institution. When they finally moved out to Boston, to Chestnut Hill, they built a beautiful neo-Gothic campus. I don't know if any of you have been to Boston College, but it is really something to see.

And so, they wanted to demonstrate the kind of power of the Catholic community here in Boston. But the Know Nothing, the Native American Party, or the Know Nothing Party, was kind of a pushback against Roman Catholics and in the major cities. So, we want to mention that.

If you fast forward, a couple of us in this room were around at the election of John F. Kennedy. If you fast forward to the time of the election of John F. Kennedy, there was a fair degree of anti-Catholic feeling coming up because there was a Roman Catholic running for president. And people were afraid, you know, if John F. Kennedy became president, then the Pope would be running the country and so forth.

He'll be the shadow president. And I mean, there were all kinds of feelings about JFK becoming a Roman Catholic president. But nevertheless, he did, obviously.

So those kinds of things. Okay, now we're still in this growth business. The Roman Catholic Church, in the light of the problem of trusteeship, but also especially in the light of anti-Catholic feelings, knew they had to establish themselves, and they knew that Catholics had to take care of Catholics.

The Catholic communities were so large, Boston being a perfect example. So, they knew they would have to do that. So, what they do, what the Roman Catholic Church does, is develop three ways of providing Roman Catholics coming into these major cities, providing immigrants coming into this major city.

There were three major ways in which they tried to bring Roman Catholics into the broader culture and help them understand the broader culture and so forth. Okay, let me mention those three ways. The first way was they developed schools.

They developed parochial schools and Roman Catholic schools for Roman Catholic children. And this way, the children would have a good Catholic education in the midst of a broader culture. So, the first way was to get Roman Catholic kids a good education here in America.

And being in a school system where they wouldn't feel anti-Catholic pressure on them. They would feel at home in the school system. So that's number one.

Number two, the second way was developing charitable institutions, hospitals, or places where you care for the aged. So that these charitable institutions would really go out of their way to take care of Roman Catholics. Roman Catholics would feel comfortable that they were being taken care of, that their medical needs were taken care of, that the needs of their aged were being taken care of, or that kids were being taken care of in Roman Catholic orphanages.

So, this pretty strong charitable network was established in the United States. And of course, you would know that's true today. I mean, you look at hospitals and places like that that are part of that.

Okay. The third way to keep Roman Catholics is to keep them secure in the culture, yet not totally apart from the culture. But the third way was through the press.

A lot of Catholic newspapers were published. And giving the Catholic kind of giving the Catholic perspective. And I chose the pilot because that's the oldest Catholic newspaper in the country.

And this is still being published. And it began in Boston. So here, Boston takes pride in first place in publishing the first newspaper that has been published after all these years.

And look at the subtitle of the newspaper, the pilot, Get the Catholic Perspective. Get the Catholic Perspective. So, newspapers and publications become important as well.

So how do we retain the loyalty of Catholic immigrants? We do it through education. We do it through the works of charity and institutions of charity. And we do it through newspapers to get the Catholic perspective.

So that's how things started to grow. That's how it started to develop in America. And no place is stronger than right where we live.

Boston became Americanized, as we'll see in just a minute. So, do you have any questions about that first part? Okay. The second part, then, is the Americanization of Roman Catholics.

Yeah. They are growing. And now, we need to know how the Roman Catholic Church is going to take care of them. How is the Roman Catholic Church going to minister to them? It ministered to them in these three ways, helped them, and brought them into the culture and Catholic life in America. Because of that, it also stimulated even more growth.

Catholics, like in Boston, felt quite at home because they had their own schools, hospitals, orphanages, newspapers, Boston College, and other Catholic colleges. So, it's a way to make them feel that America is their home. And that they don't have to fear kind of anti-Catholic feelings in the broader culture because you've got kind of these places for them.

Yeah. Does that help? Sure. Okay.

The Americanization of all of this. How did this all happen here? Okay. Americanization started in the second half of the 19th century.

So, they're coming in in great numbers. They're being taken care of. The second half of the 19th century, specifically the date 1852, becomes an important date in American Catholic history.

The reason that's so important is because the Roman Catholic Church in America held its first conference or first council, what we would call a plenary council or a full council, in 1852. They held it in their major city, Baltimore. Remember, Maryland was established as a place where Roman Catholics could feel at home and so forth.

So, Baltimore became the seat of the first Archbishop in America, and so forth. So, Baltimore, 1852. Okay.

The purpose of the plenary council in 1852 was to tackle one basic question. And the question was, how is the Roman Catholic Church going to feel at home in the broader culture? What can the Roman Catholic Church do so that we become part of, play a larger role, and become part of the culture in this national life? So, they really sat down in 1852 and tried to think through the relationship of the Roman Catholic Church to the broader culture and national life. How should we relate to that? Okay. Following that along comes the most important Roman Catholic leader in the second half of the 19th century.

And, oops, sorry, I've got to just go back here. His name was James Gibbons. James Gibbons.

All right. James Gibbons eventually became a bishop, archbishop, and Cardinal. James Bishop became the Cardinal of Baltimore and became the leading figure in Roman Catholic Church life in the second half of the 19th century.

You can see his dates. He became Cardinal in 1886, but he lived until 1921. So he had a long, long life of leadership in Baltimore.

So, what James Gibbons did, or what he accomplished, helped to ease the tensions between Roman Catholicism and the broader culture—helping to navigate or negotiate the possible tensions between the Roman Catholic Church and the broader culture. And so help people to understand how the Roman Catholic Church should feel at home in the broader culture and should contribute to the broader culture.

Okay. So, let me mention two of his accomplishments. I mean, that's his major goal, and he has accomplished it.

And this is Gibbons on the left-hand side. So, it was James Gibbons here. But let me mention two of his accomplishments.

Number one, of course, he was, as the Roman Catholic Church had always been, he was a real supporter of the separation of church and state. He wanted to make it absolutely clear that the Roman Catholic Church had no desire to take over the government. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic Church wants to be free to worship.

As God has given us this freedom to worship, the Roman Catholic Church wants to be free to worship. It wants to be free from governmental control or constraints. And so he was a real champion of church and state separation.

Now, okay. So, he goes along with who? People like the Congregationalists. That had been true with them since the 19th century.

The Baptists had always wanted the separation of church and state. So, there were a lot of Protestants who also believed strongly in the separation of church and state. So, he's appealing to a very strong kind of Protestant understanding.

He also believes in that. So that's one thing. The second thing that James Gibbons was kind of noted for was that he was on the side of the working class.

A lot of these immigrants, a lot of these Catholic immigrants, belonged to the working classes, and they had a really, really difficult life. We'll talk about this later in another lecture, but in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, the Lower East Side of Manhattan at the turn of the century in 1900, so at the end of the 19th into the beginning of the 20th century, the Lower East Side of Manhattan was the most populated place in the entire world. There was no place more populated than those few square blocks in the Lower East Side of Manhattan.

It was absolutely jammed. The tenements were absolutely jammed with the working class, and they weren't only Roman Catholics, but of course, Gibbons is concerned with the Roman Catholics. But he's going to put the church on the side of the working people, and he's going to help the working people as much, working

Catholics, as much as he can through wages, better wages, better working conditions, better living conditions, and so forth.

Now, when we talk about Walter Rauschenbusch, we're going to talk a lot more about this, but here, the Roman Catholic Church is standing on the side of the working people. Now, the Pope at the time is on the right-hand side. The Pope was Pope Leo XIII, and he was Pope from 1878 to 1903, Pope Leo XIII.

Now, Pope Leo XIII, one of the reasons Gibbons could have such a strong stand so strongly on the side of the working classes and the working people was that Pope Leo XIII was also internationally on the side of the working people, on the side of the working classes. And he, from his office as Pope, he made this very clear. There's one of the greatest documents coming out of the Roman Catholic Church at this time was a document called *Rerum Novarum*.

Some of you, you may have talked about this in other courses, but *Rerum Novarum* was his encyclical, placing the Roman Catholic Church on the side of the working classes and trying to help them. So those were the two things that he's known for a lot of things, but those are the two things that kind of stick in our minds: separation of church and state and also being on the side of the working classes. Okay, we're going to say just a few more things about the Americanization of the Roman Catholic Church.

As long as we're talking about Pope Leo XIII, let's stay with him for just a minute. Pope Leo XIII was very nervous that the Roman Catholic Church in America was breaking off from the worldwide Roman Catholic Church and from the authority of the papacy. So, while Pope Leo XIII was helpful in standing on the side of the working classes, he was nervous about the Americanization of the Roman Catholic Church.

He was afraid that the Roman Catholic Church would be in danger, I guess you could say, of becoming too American and not Roman Catholic enough and not sticking with Roman Catholic doctrines and principles. He actually wrote a document about this and about the dangers of the Americanization of the Roman Catholic Church. He was very nervous about this because the Roman Catholic Church needed to be under the control of the hierarchy.

Just at the end of the lecture, I'll mention something about this, but we'll come back to this. Okay, now, a couple of events happened that really solidified the Americanization of the Roman Catholic Church. One event happened in 1908.

In 1908, the American Roman Catholic Church was taken off of missionary status from Rome. In other words, the Roman Catholic Church no longer saw America as a mission field. It didn't need to be a mission field anymore because it was self-sustaining.

So, in 1908, it was no longer considered to be under a missionary status. There was a recognition in America that the Roman Catholic Church could stand on its own two feet. And that helped, of course, toward the Americanization of the Roman Catholic Church, no doubt about that.

And then also, from 1914 to 1918, with the First World War, Roman Catholics in America served next to their Protestant brothers and sisters and Jewish brothers and sisters and so forth. Roman Catholics served nobly in the First World War. And remember, the First World War was such a war of such absolute destruction, it's almost impossible to kind of imagine how devastating the First World War was.

However, the Roman Catholic Church and the Roman Catholics in America were really praised for showing their courage along with others in the First World War. So this brought also the Americanization of Roman Catholics really further on, no doubt about that. Okay, so when you get to the middle of the century or so, the Roman Catholic Church is well established.

I've got a long article here about one of the cardinals in Boston, and his name was William Henry O'Connell. This is William Henry O'Connell. But for 37 years, he was the leader of the church in Boston.

And there's a quotation that he made. He said, the Puritan has passed, talking about Boston, the Puritan has passed, the Catholic remains. Now that Protestant leaders in Boston took that, it was a little hard for them to hear that.

But in a way, he was right that the Puritan influence upon Boston life, cultural life, political life, social life, and religious life, the Puritan influence upon Boston life had passed. Boston is now, he said, a Roman Catholic city, which is essentially was true, and still essentially is true. I mean, when you look at Boston politically, religiously, and so forth, Roman Catholicism really pretty much dominates Boston's public life, no doubt.

So that tells the story of Americanization, and it's really pretty remarkable what has happened since 1852 in American Christianity—just a word about this Americanization thing. Here, I say this at the end, but it has nothing to do with anything, but that's okay.

You can never, don't ever measure worldwide Roman Catholicism by what you hear in America by American Catholics. Some of you may belong to the Roman Catholic Church. That may be the place of your denomination or affiliation.



However, the Roman Catholic Church in America is quite liberal compared to the rest of the Roman Catholic Church around the world. So, you can't ever measure worldwide Roman Catholicism by American Catholicism. I certainly found this out.

My PhD is from Boston College. And so, during that time of my PhD at Boston College, I found out a lot of things from my Roman Catholic friends at Boston College that I thought were kind of at odds a bit with Roman Catholic history or Roman Catholic doctrine or with the papacy or whatever. So, it is a Jesuit school, and the Jesuits are sworn to obedience to the Pope.

But I did hear occasionally a Jesuit priest say things about the Pope he shouldn't have been saying. So, there were times when you couldn't measure that. So just an example of this is when Pope John Paul II came to America for his first visit.

Now here's one of the great kind of pious popes of the 20th century, 21st century, John Paul II. He came to America, and he wasn't very well prepared for what he was going to face there. And I'll never forget he was sitting on his chair.

There was a big audience, and there was an open mic for people to ask questions of John Paul II about the Catholic Church and so forth. And I'll never forget the look on his face when a woman came to the mic. She was a nun, and when she came to the mic, she asked when we were going to have women priests in the Roman Catholic Church. Well, poor John Paul II almost had a heart attack.

Women, who are discussing women priests in the Roman Catholic Church? Maybe the Americans are, but nobody else is. And this Pope is not for sure. So, he was like a deer in the headlights.

I mean, when he had that question. So, the Americanization of the Roman Catholic Church has taken an interesting kind of life and turned to it. But there it is.

That's what happened. Okay. That's number eight, Roman Catholicism in the 19th century.

Okay. Any questions about that? Some of you may be Roman Catholics. At the end of the course, we're going to kind of tell each other what our denomination or affiliation is, if you'd like to.

Nobody has to enter into this, but if you'd like to. So, it'd be kind of interesting to see what kind of diversity we have here in the class. But any questions about that? Okay.

We journey on to lecture number nine, Slavery and the Churches. Slavery and the Churches, lecture nine. Okay.

I'm going to begin here. Okay. Slavery and the Churches.

First of all, I want to get a background. You can see background number A. And there's a lot to be said in terms of background. So, we won't even get through this now.

So, we have to continue this on Wednesday. But I do want to kind of set your mind on it; I think we talk about slavery objectively. We talk about it academically.

But I always begin this lecture by reading Elkin's book on slavery. And I do want you to get the picture of how disastrous, how absolutely disastrous, this whole institution of slavery was. And it's just about three paragraphs.

Within the three paragraphs, the middle passage is talked about. So, it's a section called Shock and Detachment. So, here's what happened to people, human beings, when we had slaves.

We may suppose that every African who became a slave underwent an experience whose crude psychic impact must have been staggering and whose consequences superseded anything that had previously happened to him. Some efforts should, therefore, be made to picture the series of shocks that must have accompanied the principal events of that enslavement. The majority of slaves appeared to have been taken in native wars, which meant that no one, neither persons of high rank nor warriors of prowess, was guaranteed against capture and enslavement.

Great numbers were caught in surprise attacks upon their villages. And since the tribes acting as middlemen for the trade had come to depend on regular supplies of captives in order to maintain that function, the distinction between wars and raiding expeditions tended to be very dim. The first shock in an experience destined to endure many months and to leave its survivors irrevocably changed was thus the shock of capture.

It is an effort to remember that while enslavement occurred in Africa every day, to the individual, it occurred just once. The second shock, the long march to the sea, drew out the nightmare for many weeks. Under the glaring sun, through the steaming jungle, they were driven along like beasts tied together by their necks.

Day after day, eight or more hours at a time, they would stagger barefoot over thorny underbrush, dried reeds and stones. Hardship, thirst, brutalities, and near starvation penetrated the experience of each exhausted man and woman who reached the coast. One traveler tells of seeing hundreds of bleaching skeletons strewn along one of the slave caravan routes.

But then, the man who must interest us is the man who survived, he who underwent the entire experience of which this was only the beginning. The next shock, aside from the fresh physical torments that accompanied it, was the sale of the European slavers. After being crowded into pens near the trading stations and kept there overnight, sometimes for days, the slaves were brought out for examination.

Those rejected would be abandoned to starvation. The remaining ones, those who had been brought, were branded, given numbers inscribed on leaden tags and herded on shipboard. The episode that followed, almost too protracted and stupefying to be called a mere shock, was the dread of Middle Passage, brutalizing to any man, black or white, ever to be involved with it.

The holds of the ships, packed with squirming and suffocating humanity, became stinking infernos of filth and pestilence. Stories of disease, death, and cruelty on the terrible two-month voyage abound in the testimony, which did much toward ending the British slave trade forever. The final shock in the process of enslavement came with the Negroes' introduction to the West Indies.

Brian Edwards, describing the arrival of a slave ship, writes of how, in times of labor scarcity, crowds of people would come scrambling aboard, manhandling the slaves and throwing them into panic. The Jamaica legislature eventually, quote, corrected the enormity, unquote, by enacting that the slaves be held on shore. Edwards felt a certain mortification at seeing the Negroes exposed naked in public, similar to that felt by other leaders.

Yet here, they did not seem to care. They displayed very few signs of lamentation for their past; they were talking about the slave traders or apprehension for their future condition but commonly expressed great eagerness to be sold. The seasoning process, which followed, completed the series of steps whereby the African Negro became a slave.

The mortality had been very high. One-third of the numbers first taken out of the total of perhaps 15 million had died on the march and at the trading stations. Another third died during the middle passage and the seasoning.

Since a majority of the African-born slaves who came to the North American plantations did not come directly but were imported through the West Indies, one may assume that the typical slave underwent an experience something like that just outlined. This was the man, one in three, who had come through it all and lived and was about to enter our closed system. What would he be like if he survived and adjusted to that? So, just kind of that, I think that image is important of these shocks that took place of the slaves who were captured, marched to the sea, put on the ships, sold, and so forth.

As we are talking about slavery, not just academically talking about it, but we're talking about it from that perspective, we need to talk about it from that perspective as well. Okay, so here we are in the background. I'm going to start the background by first talking about Great Britain and the abolition of the slave trade in Great Britain.

And then I hope on Wednesday, I'll be able to show you a little bit of a clip, a film clip that I have. I won't interrupt the PowerPoint now, but I hope we can start with that on Wednesday. But when we start with Great Britain, we have to start with one of the great kinds of heroes, in a sense, in Great Britain at this particular time, and his name was William Wilberforce.

Those are William Wilberforce's dates. William Wilberforce was a member of Parliament. He was obviously to be a member of Parliament, you had to be well off, and you had to come from a good family, and so forth.

You had money and positions and so forth. But William Wilberforce was a member of Parliament. And he was so incensed, so absolutely grieved by the whole slave trade business that we just kind of mentioned in Elkins.

And he was so incensed, so grieved by that, that William Wilberforce decided that he was going to make it his life's job to end slavery in the British Empire. And so, William Wilberforce, that became his kind of crusade. William Wilberforce began an Abolition Committee.

The Abolition Committee began in 1787. I just wanted to get that for spelling, but I need to come back to Wilberforce. 1787, an Abolition Committee begins.

Now, the Abolition Committee has to decide under Wilberforce and other leaders, but Wilberforce was the main person here. The Abolition Committee has to decide how we are going to convince the public. How are we going to convince the public to end slavery when so many in the British Empire depended on slavery for their economy? How are we going to convince the public to do that? And so the way they decided to do it was by kind of pressure politics in a sense. And they decided to start pressure politics.

Pressure politics took two forms. The first form of pressure politics was, and we're going to see this, I hope we're going to see this on Wednesday in a little film clip. The first form of pressure politics was to bring wealthy people out to the Thames, out to the river, bring them out on boats out into the river, and kind of make them feel that they were going on a lovely boat trip for the day.

Give them some food and so forth. And all these wealthy people who hold lots and lots and lots of slaves kind of make them feel that they're just going to have a nice day. What Wilberforce and his buddies did, however, was kind of as they got out into

the Thames and they're in these lovely ships and so forth, they brought these ships, boats I should say, and they brought them alongside slave ships that had just brought slaves over from West Africa.

And the stench of the slave ships was just overwhelming to these people. And William Wilberforce would say to the people, now breathe in that air. That's what you're breathing in, and it is the smell of death.

And by holding slaves, you are the ones who have been responsible for the middle passage. And he tells them to remember that a third of the people who were chained at the bottom of this ship didn't even make it. They died during the passage.

So, pressure politics. The second thing about pressure politics was petitions. Petitions went out for people to sign to end the slave trade.

And these petitions, of course, were brought to Parliament and discussed in Parliament. And as William Wilberforce and others moved along here with this kind of pressure politics, there started to be a real serious discussion about whether we should continue slavery in Great Britain. Now, one of the persons who supported William Wilberforce was John Wesley.

John Wesley died in 1891. This is a picture of John Wesley on his deathbed. John Wesley The last letter that John Wesley wrote in his lifetime before he died was a letter to William Wilberforce.

And he was encouraging William Wilberforce to keep up the pressure to end the slave trade in Britain. Actually, the title, not the title, but the little phrase that John Wesley used in the letter is that slavery is that villainy of villainies. Slavery is that villainy of villainies.

And so, here's Wesley really encouraging William Wilberforce on his very, very difficult task of ending slavery. This is kind of a picture of Wilberforce in Parliament speaking against the Slave Trade Act. There is a movie called Amazing Grace.

Have any of you seen the movie by any chance? If you haven't seen Amazing Grace, about half of you have. So, if you haven't seen Amazing Grace, just we, I'm sure we have in our library, just rent it or not rent it, but get it out and take a look at it. It's really a remarkable movie.

It's about William Wilberforce and the ending of the slave trade in America and Great Britain. I'll just say, just to put a plug in here, those of you who saw the movie would know that it was based on a biography of William Wilberforce written by a Gordon College graduate. So, an alum of Gordon College wrote the biography upon which that movie was based.

So, if you get a chance to see the movie, you should do that. Okay, I've got to give you a break in just a minute, but two dates. First of all, 1807.

The pressure had to be kept up, but the slave slavery was finally abolished in Britain in 1807. William Wilberforce lived to see it abolished in Britain in that time, 1807. But let's go back to William Wilberforce's, let's go back to his dates, 1833.

Before he died, he saw the slave trade abolished in the whole British empire. So, here was one man, one Christian man. Maybe we should have mentioned that along the way, but here's one Christian man with a Christian sense of what justice is all about for all people. Here is one Christian man with one idea who brought down the slave trade in Great Britain.

I feel long, and now I feel a long sermon coming on. Maybe you won't get a break, but anyway, I'm going to stop here. But 1833.

Now, notice that we haven't come to grips with this in America yet. This is 1833, but we haven't come to grips with it yet and won't come to grips with it for another 30 years or so. So, William Wilberforce.

So, we wanted first to see the abolition of slavery in Great Britain before we get to America in terms of the background. Are there any questions about William Wilberforce's pressure politics bringing down the slave trade in Britain first and then in the British empire? Yes. The abolition committee was 18; let me just get it here.

1787 was the abolition committee. Now there was, we're going to see, we don't need to worry about now, but there was an anti-slavery committee in America that started before the abolition committee. However, this is an important committee for British history.

Something else. Yeah. 1807 is the abolition of slavery in Great Britain.

1833 is the abolition of slavery in the British Empire. So, it extended beyond Great Britain. Okay.

I haven't given you a break today. So, take a look. Okay.

All right. Now, we want to know the next thing I want to do, and this is all background, so you haven't left me yet, background. What I want to do now is I want to give you a chronological kind of march through the abolitionism that came in America.

So, I want to highlight some dates here that are really, really important to see what happened in America so that we got to the point where slavery was abolished. Okay. So, you're with me on that? All right.

Okay. We begin with 1775, an important date and an important event with the foundation, the beginning of the anti-slavery society in 1775. Now, this is the first anti-slavery society in the world because you can see the abolition committee was founded after this in Britain, but this predates the abolition committee.

This was founded by the Quakers. Quakers really take the privileged place of having the first anti-slavery society. The reason it was founded by Quakers in the U.S. is that this is all the U.S. now.

Yeah. This is all the United States now, what's happening on our soil. The reason it was founded by Quakers in 1785 was, first of all, to address Quakers who owned slaves.

There were Quakers who were beginning to own slaves. They didn't see any problem with that. And other Quakers said, yes, there's a problem with that.

There's a biblical problem and a humanitarian problem. And so, the anti-slavery society was founded in 1775, first by Quakers, but first to address fellow Quakers on this issue and to convince fellow Quakers to give up their slaves if they still had slaves. So, Philadelphia, God bless you. Philadelphia, Quakers, 1775, an anti-slavery society, holds a kind of privileged place.

Okay. So, the next date I want to give is a date you've already heard of, and it's 1784. 1784.

Does anybody remember the date 1784 for any particular reason? Does anything kind of ring a bell? 1784. Baltimore, Maryland, some events happened in 1784, such as the Christmas Conference. That's when Francis Asbury, remember, was ordained.

That's called the Christmas Conference because it was held on Christmas Eve of 1784. But at the Christmas Conference, of course, these people said, if you're going to be Methodists, you cannot own slaves. This comes right from John Wesley himself, who was still alive until 1791, and John Wesley was an anti-slavery advocate in Britain.

So, in 1784, the Christmas Conference instituted measures to say that if you own slaves, you can't be a Methodist. So, that's an important date. Now, you need to remember that date for other reasons, too.

Okay. Another date would be the 1770s, 1780s, just general, 1770s, 1780s. Because in that time, remember, there was a group of people called the Edwardsians.

Do you remember? We mentioned the Edwardsians. We gave you the names of the four Edwardsians if you want to look back to that to remember who they are. Now, the Edwardsians were real followers of Jonathan Edwards, but Jonathan Edwards owned slaves.

Remember that? We talked about that. But the Edwardsians are really getting into the anti-slavery spirit. And so, the Edwardsians, and especially Jonathan Edwards' own son, began to speak out against the slave trade as preachers in America.

So, the Edwardsians have a pretty powerful cultural influence here as they preach, speak, and so forth. So, we do want to mention that. Okay.

We also want to mention 1817. Okay. 1817, another important date.

So, what we're doing is chronologically, we're seeing anti-slavery in America, on American soil. Now, we come to 1817, and we come with the founding of a group called the American Colonization Society. The American Colonization Society.

Okay. Now, the American Colonization Society had a plan. Now, I'm not saying it was a good plan.

We're going to see some failures in this plan, but let me explain the plan first. The plan of the American Colonization Society was to purchase slaves from their owners. So, you buy slaves back from their owners because the American Colonization Society wanted the elimination of slavery, but then you send those slaves back to Africa.

So, they thought this was a good idea. Purchase slaves and send them back to their own homeland. So, they were well-intended.

It was a good intention, the American Colonization Society. So, a lot of ministers and churches played a role in this. We would call the American Colonization Society a transitional movement because the American Colonization Society came under a lot of attack.

It came under a lot of people who didn't like them, but it was a transitional movement. Okay. Here are the reasons why people opposed the American Colonization Society.



You would think, on the face of things, that this would be a good thing. Buying slaves back so they no longer would be slaves, and then we're trying to send them home. So, you think on the surface of things, this would be pretty good.

Here are the reasons for the criticism of the American Colonization Society. Number one, they didn't really deal with the kind of institutionalization of slavery. They really didn't deal with the institutional problem and the problem of injustice and so forth.

So, it kind of diverted attention away from really addressing the larger issue of this institutionalized evil. So, that's number one. Number two, many people in the American Colonization Society believed in black inferiority.

They believed that the blacks were inferior, and that's how they got into this problem of being taken as slaves. And so, there was this kind of hidden belief in black inferiority. That becomes kind of problematic.

Number three, it rid the country of potential, a real potential leadership among blacks. Because if you can buy slaves away from their owners and they're now free people, just think of the leadership ability that those free people would have among their own people and among people, maybe people were being freed and so forth. But it really rid the country of some real potential black leadership at this time of transition.

Because what are you doing? You're sending them back home. You're sending them back to Africa. You're not freeing them and then saying, okay, now you should get established in leadership positions in Boston, Philadelphia, New York, number three.

And number four, a lot of people felt that it really didn't accomplish very much. It only freed 4,000; it is estimated that about 4,000 slaves were freed through this process and sent back to Africa. And the problem was far, far, far, far greater than that.

So, there was a kind of criticism for that reason. But that's the American Colonization Society. And that is a transitional organization, I would say.

1817, it was founded. Yeah. No, no, they were; they had raised the money to be able to actually free slaves.

They actually purchased them from their owners. But there was no, and they weren't pretending to be other slave owners or something. They were above board, purchased the slaves from the owners, freed the slaves, and then sent them back to Africa.

No, I don't think so because they would take that money and buy other slaves. And so, this was not going to be a problem for slaveholders, which was another bit of a problem here. But, or maybe they needed money.

Maybe some of them really needed the money, and not all the slaves. So, no, it didn't seem to be a problem for the slaveholders. They seemed to be willing to sell the slaves.

Is there any record of what happened to the free people who went back to Africa? Like, how, I mean, if they're, like, whole, like, religious, you know, Jewish or whatever, like, what did they go back to? Right, right. Yes, that I've never, I've never followed. I'm sure if we looked up the American Colonization Society and saw it, I'm sure there have probably been dissertations written on this and so forth.

And I haven't pursued this. We won't look it up right now, but we'll look it up someday. And so, I haven't, I haven't really pursued this memory.

So, I'm not sure of that. I know that from an American point of view, it was a failure, basically a failure. It was a bit transitional.

People admit that, okay, we're getting to see the problem here, but primarily, it was a failure. Okay, let me mention one more thing, then we've got to go. So, we're looking at this chronologically.

I want to come now to the year 1835. 1835 was a very important date in American Christian history. And that's because in 1835, in Ohio, Oberlin College was founded.

And the first president was a fellow by the name of Charles Grandison Finney. He was a professor of theology and then became president of Oberlin College. So, this, this becomes, this becomes really important.

No, he was first; he was the first professor, and then he became president in 1851. But he was, he was one of the founders of Oberlin. Okay, first of all, real quick, have any of you been to Oberlin College? Have you seen the campus of Oberlin? Is anybody here at all out in Ohio? No? Okay.

All right. Okay, Oberlin College was founded as the first abolitionist institution in America. It was founded as an anti-slavery abolitionist institution.

So, it holds a, and because Finney and the other founders were abolitionists, they believed in the abolition of slavery. So, it holds a place of privilege in American Christian history. But it is also, as we'll see later on down the line, it was the first co-educational college in America as well.

So, it was the first college co-educational to admit men and women. As a matter of fact, as we'll also see further down the line, the first woman in America to receive a theological degree received it from Oberlin College. And then she became ordained.

Her name was Antoinette Brown. We'll talk about that later. But Oberlin College was founded as an abolitionist institution; that's pretty strident, you know, to say that's the reason for the mission of this institution to proclaim the doctrine of the abolition of slavery.

That's pretty, that's a pretty giant step in American Christian history, founded by these Christians in 1835. So, okay, we'll pick this up on Wednesday and continue this. Have a good day.

This is Dr. Roger Green in his teaching on American Christianity. This is session 12 on Roman Catholicism in the 19th century.