

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

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Green, American Christianity, Session 10, The Second Great Awakening, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Roger Green's lecture, Session 10 of his American Christianity series, focuses on the **Second Great Awakening**. He begins by describing a new lectern gifted to him by Gordon College. The lecture then transitions to the historical context of the Awakening, noting a decline in religious fervor after the Revolutionary War, similar to a lull experienced by the Puritans before the First Great Awakening. **The Second Great Awakening, starting around 1800, is presented as a response to this decline and the challenges of rapid territorial and population growth.** Green highlights key figures like Timothy Dwight, Lyman Beecher, Nathaniel Taylor in the North, and Alexander Campbell in the South, explaining their roles in this religious resurgence. **He contrasts the restrained Northern expression with the emotional camp meetings of the South, emphasizing their distinct characteristics.** Finally, Green outlines several significant results of the Awakening, including increased revivalism, the rise of voluntary and missionary societies, a new emphasis on education, moral and humanitarian crusades, and the growth of various denominations like the Methodists.

2. 20 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Green, American Christianity, Session 10 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Church History → American Christianity).



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3. Briefing Document: Green, American Christianity, Session 10, The Second Great Awakening

Briefing Document: The Second Great Awakening in America

Overview:

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Roger Green in his lecture on the Second Great Awakening in America. The lecture outlines the historical context, key figures, distinct manifestations (North and South), and significant results of this religious resurgence that began around 1800.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. Context and Catalyst for the Second Great Awakening:

- Following the American Revolution, there was a decline in religious fervor as political interests took precedence. This was a swing of the pendulum away from the strong religious impulse seen among the Puritans and the strengthening of Christianity during the First Great Awakening.
- The Second Great Awakening is presented as a direct response to this religious ebb. Dr. Green states, "Well, the second great awakening, in a sense, is an answer to that."
- Simultaneously, the United States experienced rapid territorial expansion (tripling) and population growth (five times) between 1750 and 1800. This raised a crucial question: "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." The leaders of the Second Great Awakening sought to ensure the church kept pace with this growth and saw it as a "mission to all people and a mission to the growing numbers in this new land."

2. Key Leaders of the Second Great Awakening:

Dr. Green identifies four primary leaders:

- **Timothy Dwight:** As the president of Yale University, Dwight is considered the most important figure and the initiator of the Northern manifestation of the Awakening. He aimed to "bring religion back into the life of Yale and into the life of Yale students" through teaching and preaching in the chapel. Dr. Green notes,

"The second great awakening really began at Yale with Timothy Dwight and with his preaching of the gospel." This led to a "great revival at Yale."

- **Lyman Beecher:** A student of Timothy Dwight at Yale, Beecher was a significant preacher who "picked up the revival impulse from his teacher and his mentor" and helped spread the Awakening. He is characterized as "the pastor who helped to bring about the second great awakening."
- **Nathaniel Taylor:** Also associated with Yale, Taylor was a professor who, like Beecher, had been trained by Dwight and played a role in "instigating the second great awakening."
- **Alexander Campbell:** Representing the Southern manifestation, Campbell was a churchman and the founder of the "Disciples of Christ." His movement is described as a "really awakening movement in the south." Campbell and his followers adhered to "Restorationism," which is "a belief that your denomination, your group is restoring the New Testament church." They saw purity in the early church and aimed to replicate it in the 19th century.

Dr. Green also mentions **Charles Grandison Finney** and raises the question of whether his later revival (the "Finneyite Revival") was a continuation of the Second Great Awakening or a distinct "Third Great Awakening." This question is deferred for a later lecture.

Finally, **Wesley, Coke, and Asbury** are briefly mentioned as individuals who, through the rise of Methodism, were also involved in the broader context of the Second Great Awakening. Francis Asbury, in particular, is highlighted as "the great itinerant preacher of Methodism in America."

3. Distinct Manifestations: North vs. South:

- The Second Great Awakening exhibited two very different expressions: a northern and a southern manifestation.
- **Northern Manifestation (led by Timothy Dwight at Yale):** Characterized by New England culture, it was "restrained" and lacked significant emotionalism. It involved "great preaching and great singing of the hymns of the church," with conversions occurring in a "very restrained, unemotional New England kind of way."
- **Southern Manifestation (centered on Camp Meetings):** This was a "completely different manifestation" marked by emotionalism. The first major camp meeting

was held in **Cane Ridge, Kentucky in 1801**. These gatherings could last for extended periods (ten days to two weeks) and involved people living in tents on the grounds. Key features included:

- Use of "lay preachers" who were often uneducated but knowledgeable about the Bible.
- "Great emotionalism" with people "singing and dancing and fainting."
- Dr. Green highlights the significance of camp meetings, noting they were a "new phenomenon" in American religious history. He provides examples of ongoing camp meetings, including Asbury Grove in Massachusetts, which was large enough to warrant a special railway line.
- Dr. Green notes that there was a tendency for people in the North to "look down on the experience in the South" due to its emotionalism and the reliance on untrained lay preachers.

4. Results of the Second Great Awakening:

Dr. Green outlines six key results:

- **Increase in Revivalism in American Culture:** Revivalism became a more accepted and recurring feature of American Protestantism, evidenced later by figures like Charles Grandison Finney, Dwight L. Moody, and Billy Graham.
- **Expanding Network of Voluntary Societies:** These local, often cross-denominational organizations focused on specific projects. A major outcome of this was the rise of the **American missionary movement**. The formation of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions in 1810 (primarily Congregational and Presbyterian) is cited as a key example. Dr. Green connects this to the founding of Gordon College in 1895 as a missionary training ground.
- **Stress on Education:** This manifested in three ways:
- **Tremendous distribution of Bibles and tracts:** Aimed at getting religious materials into the hands of the people.
- **Growth of Sunday schools:** Educational initiatives within churches to teach reading, primarily to enable people to read the Bible.
- **Founding of colleges, universities, and seminaries:** To train pastors and religious leaders. Dr. Green lists several key institutions founded during this period:

- **Andover Seminary (1808, Congregationalists)**
- **Princeton Seminary (1812, Presbyterians)** - Dr. Green shares an anecdote about the theological debates surrounding the 1967 Confession, which replaced the Westminster Confession. He explains that confessions are not just doctrinal affirmations but involve a "life commitment."
- **Harvard Divinity School (1816, Unitarians)** - It's noted that by this time, Harvard and Princeton had evolved into research universities and no longer primarily trained ministers, necessitating the establishment of separate seminaries.
- **Yale Divinity School (1822, Congregational preachers)** - Founded after Timothy Dwight's initial revival efforts at the university.
- **Moral and Humanitarian Crusades:** The emphasis on "loving God, loving your neighbor" spurred various reform movements:
- **Temperance Movement:** Advocating for total abstinence from alcohol to address issues in growing cities.
- **Peace Movement:** Reflecting a hope for a peaceful 19th century.
- **Anti-Slavery Movement (Abolitionism):** This is highlighted as the most significant moral crusade, "the major movement and battle of the 19th century in America," which would heavily involve the churches and overshadow other reform efforts.
- **Growth in Many Denominations:** Several denominations experienced significant growth. Dr. Green provides the example of the **Methodists**, who grew from approximately 15,000 in 1784 to over one million by 1850. This growth was partly due to Methodism becoming a separate denomination after the death of John Wesley in 1791 and its appeal through itinerant ministers. He also mentions the potential growth of Baptists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists. The Wesleyan Church is mentioned as a later denomination formed in opposition to slavery.

Quotes:

- "Well, the second great awakening, in a sense, is an answer to that."
- "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."
- "The second great awakening really began at Yale with Timothy Dwight and with his preaching of the gospel."

- "Restorationism is a belief that your denomination, your group is restoring the New Testament church."
- "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."
- "Tremendous distribution of Bibles."
- "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?"
- "Loving God, loving your neighbor."
- "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."

Conclusion:

Dr. Green's lecture provides a comprehensive introduction to the Second Great Awakening, emphasizing its role as a response to a perceived decline in religious interest and the challenges of westward expansion. He highlights the crucial leadership of figures like Timothy Dwight and Alexander Campbell, the distinct characteristics of the Northern and Southern revivals, and the profound and lasting impact of the Awakening on American religious and social life, particularly in the areas of revivalism, voluntary organizations, education, moral reform, and denominational growth.

4. Study Guide: Green, American Christianity, Session 10, The Second Great Awakening

The Second Great Awakening: A Study Guide

I. Key Figures

- **Timothy Dwight:** President of Yale University who initiated the Second Great Awakening in the North through his preaching and teaching, emphasizing a return to religious foundations.
- **Lyman Beecher:** A student of Dwight at Yale, he became a prominent preacher and played a crucial role in spreading the revival impulse beyond the university setting.
- **Nathaniel Taylor:** A professor at Yale University during Dwight's presidency, he was also a student of Dwight and contributed to the intellectual and theological underpinnings of the Second Great Awakening.
- **Alexander Campbell:** A churchman in the South who founded the Disciples of Christ movement, emphasizing a "Restorationist" theology that sought to recreate the New Testament church.
- **Charles Grandison Finney:** A later revivalist whose methods and the extent to which his "Finneyite Revival" was a continuation of or a distinct movement from the Second Great Awakening is debated.
- **Francis Asbury:** An early figure, ordained in 1784, who became a key itinerant preacher for Methodism in America, contributing to the environment in which the Second Great Awakening flourished.

II. Key Events and Manifestations

- **Yale Revival (c. 1800):** Often seen as the starting point of the Second Great Awakening in the North, marked by Timothy Dwight's preaching and a renewed religious fervor among students.
- **Northern Manifestation:** Characterized by a more restrained and intellectual approach to religious experience, centered in established churches and featuring traditional preaching and hymn singing.

- **Southern Manifestation (Camp Meetings):** Distinct from the North, these large, multi-day gatherings, exemplified by the Cane Ridge Revival in 1801, were highly emotional, featured lay preachers, and often involved fervent expressions of faith.
- **Restorationism:** A theological belief prominent in the Southern manifestation, particularly with Alexander Campbell's Disciples of Christ, that aimed to restore the practices and purity of the New Testament church in contemporary denominations.

III. Results of the Second Great Awakening

- **Increase in Revivalism:** Revival meetings and a focus on personal conversion became a more normalized aspect of American Protestant culture.
- **Expanding Network of Voluntary Societies:** Christians organized locally and across denominations for various moral and social projects, including missionary societies.
- **Stress on Education:** This included increased distribution of Bibles and religious tracts, the growth of Sunday schools for literacy and religious instruction, and the founding of numerous colleges, universities, and theological seminaries (e.g., Andover Seminary, Princeton Seminary, Harvard Divinity School, Yale Divinity School).
- **Moral and Humanitarian Crusades:** The awakening fueled movements addressing social issues such as temperance (abstinence from alcohol), peace, and most significantly, the abolition of slavery.
- **Growth in Many Denominations:** Denominations like the Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists experienced significant growth in membership as a result of the revivals and efforts to reach new territories.

IV. Key Themes

- **Response to Declining Religiosity:** The Second Great Awakening is seen as a reaction to a perceived decline in religious interest following the Revolutionary War.
- **Adapting to Expansion:** The rapid territorial and population growth raised concerns about the church's ability to keep pace, leading to a renewed missionary impulse.

- **Regional Differences:** The awakening manifested differently in the North and South, reflecting existing cultural and social distinctions.
- **Emphasis on Personal Conversion:** A central tenet of the awakening was the importance of an individual's personal experience of conversion and faith.
- **Social Reform Impulse:** The religious fervor generated by the awakening translated into efforts to address various moral and social ills within American society.

Quiz: The Second Great Awakening

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. Who was Timothy Dwight, and what role did he play in the Second Great Awakening?
2. Describe the key differences between the northern and southern manifestations of the Second Great Awakening.
3. What were camp meetings, and why were they a significant aspect of the Southern religious landscape during this period?
4. Explain the concept of "Restorationism" as it relates to the Second Great Awakening, and provide an example of a group associated with this idea.
5. What were voluntary societies, and how did they contribute to the growth of American religious influence in the 19th century?
6. Discuss at least two ways in which the Second Great Awakening led to an increased emphasis on education in America.
7. Identify and briefly describe two major moral or humanitarian movements that were significantly influenced by the Second Great Awakening.
8. How did the Second Great Awakening impact the growth and development of various Christian denominations in the United States? Provide one specific example.
9. What was the historical context (around the turn of the 19th century) that contributed to the rise of the Second Great Awakening in America?
10. How did the leaders of the Northern Second Great Awakening generally view the religious expressions occurring in the Southern camp meetings?

Answer Key to Quiz

1. Timothy Dwight was the president of Yale University and is considered a key initiator of the Second Great Awakening in the North. He revitalized the religious atmosphere at Yale through his preaching and teaching, emphasizing a return to traditional Christian beliefs and practices.
2. The northern manifestation was generally more restrained and intellectual, centered in established churches with educated clergy and traditional services. In contrast, the southern manifestation, characterized by camp meetings, was highly emotional, often led by lay preachers, and involved fervent and demonstrative expressions of faith.
3. Camp meetings were large, multi-day religious gatherings held outdoors, particularly in the South. They were significant because they provided a space for intense religious experiences, fostered community among scattered populations, and empowered lay individuals to take on leadership roles in spreading the Christian message.
4. Restorationism was a theological belief prevalent in some groups during the Second Great Awakening, particularly in the South, that the goal of their movement was to restore Christianity to its original, "pure" form as described in the New Testament. Alexander Campbell's Disciples of Christ is a prime example of a Restorationist movement.
5. Voluntary societies were local, often interdenominational organizations formed by Christians to address various social, moral, and religious needs. They played a crucial role in expanding American religious influence by organizing missionary efforts, distributing religious materials, and advocating for social reforms on a broader scale.
6. The Second Great Awakening led to an increased emphasis on education through the widespread distribution of Bibles and religious tracts to promote literacy and biblical knowledge among converts. Additionally, it spurred the founding of numerous Sunday schools to educate children and adults, as well as colleges and seminaries to train future religious leaders.
7. Two major movements influenced by the Second Great Awakening were the temperance movement, which advocated for abstinence from alcohol due to its perceived social ills, and the anti-slavery movement (abolitionism), which grew

significantly as a moral imperative rooted in the awakening's emphasis on Christian love and human dignity.

8. The Second Great Awakening led to significant growth in many denominations as the revivals spurred conversions and increased religious engagement. For example, the Methodist denomination saw a dramatic increase in membership, growing from approximately 15,000 in 1784 to over one million by 1850, partly due to their use of itinerant preachers.
9. The historical context for the Second Great Awakening included a perceived decline in religious fervor following the American Revolution, coupled with rapid territorial expansion and population growth that raised concerns about maintaining religious influence in the new republic. This created a desire for religious renewal and a sense of urgency to evangelize the expanding nation.
10. Leaders of the Northern Second Great Awakening often viewed the religious expressions in the Southern camp meetings with some skepticism and criticism. They tended to see the emotionalism, lack of theological training among lay preachers, and sometimes chaotic nature of the camp meetings as less refined and potentially prone to excess compared to their more orderly and intellectually focused revivals.

Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the primary factors that contributed to the rise and spread of the Second Great Awakening in the United States between 1800 and the mid-19th century. Consider the social, political, and religious landscape of the period.
2. Compare and contrast the characteristics and impact of the northern and southern manifestations of the Second Great Awakening. In what ways were they similar in their overall goals, and where did their approaches and outcomes diverge significantly?
3. Evaluate the long-term significance of the Second Great Awakening on American religious life and culture. Discuss at least three lasting impacts of this period, providing specific examples.
4. Explore the relationship between the Second Great Awakening and the various social reform movements of the 19th century, such as abolitionism and temperance. How did religious beliefs and revivalist fervor contribute to these efforts?
5. Discuss the role of key individuals, such as Timothy Dwight, Lyman Beecher, Alexander Campbell, and Charles Grandison Finney, in shaping the course and character of the Second Great Awakening. In what specific ways did their leadership and ideas contribute to the movement's development and impact?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Revivalism:** A belief in and the promotion of religious revivals, which are periods of intense religious interest and spiritual renewal within a community, often marked by emotional preaching and conversions.
- **First Great Awakening:** An earlier period of religious revival in the American colonies during the 18th century, associated with figures like Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, that emphasized personal piety and emotional conversion.
- **Second Great Awakening:** A period of religious revival in the United States, beginning around 1800 and lasting through the mid-19th century, characterized by increased religious participation, the rise of new denominations, and social reform movements.

- **Camp Meeting:** A large, multi-day religious gathering held outdoors, often in rural areas, that was a prominent feature of the Southern manifestation of the Second Great Awakening. These meetings typically involved preaching, prayer, singing, and communal living in temporary shelters.
- **Lay Preacher:** An individual who preaches religious sermons without formal theological training or ordination by an established religious institution. Lay preachers were particularly common in the Southern camp meetings.
- **Restorationism:** A theological movement that believes in restoring Christian doctrine and practice to what is understood as its original, New Testament form.
- **Voluntary Society:** A non-governmental organization or association formed by individuals to pursue a shared interest or goal, often religious or philanthropic in nature. These societies played a significant role in the social and religious landscape of the 19th century.
- **Temperance Movement:** A social movement advocating for moderation or complete abstinence from alcoholic beverages, which gained significant momentum during the Second Great Awakening.
- **Abolitionism:** The movement to end the practice of slavery, which was significantly fueled by the moral and religious convictions arising from the Second Great Awakening.
- **Denomination:** A recognized branch or autonomous division of Christianity, characterized by a distinct name, organization, and set of beliefs and practices (e.g., Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian).
- **Itinerant Preacher:** A traveling minister who moves from place to place to preach and establish religious communities, a practice particularly associated with the growth of Methodism during this period.
- **Tract:** A small pamphlet or leaflet, often containing religious or moral messages, used for evangelism and dissemination of beliefs.

5. FAQs Green, American Christianity, Session 10, The Second Great Awakening, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: The Second Great Awakening

1. What was the Second Great Awakening, and when did it primarily take place?

The Second Great Awakening was a significant resurgence of Christian faith and religious fervor in the United States. It is generally considered to have begun around 1800 and continued for several decades. Unlike the First Great Awakening, which had a more unified character, the Second Great Awakening manifested in distinct ways in different regions of the country. It emerged in response to a perceived decline in religious interest following the Revolutionary War and aimed to keep pace with the rapid territorial expansion and population growth of the nation.

2. Who were some of the key figures associated with the Second Great Awakening, and what were their contributions?

Several influential individuals played crucial roles in the Second Great Awakening. In the North, Timothy Dwight, as president of Yale University, is credited with initiating a revival among students through his preaching. His students, such as Lyman Beecher and Nathaniel Taylor, further spread the revivalist impulse through their preaching and teaching. In the South, Alexander Campbell led a movement known as Restorationism, emphasizing a return to what was believed to be the purity of the New Testament church and founding the Disciples of Christ. Later, Charles Grandison Finney became a prominent figure known for his powerful revivals, though the relationship of his work to the Second Great Awakening is debated. Additionally, figures like Francis Asbury, a key leader in early American Methodism, contributed to the broader religious awakening through itinerant preaching.

3. What were the key differences between the Northern and Southern manifestations of the Second Great Awakening?

The Second Great Awakening exhibited distinct characteristics in the North and the South. In the North, particularly at Yale under Timothy Dwight, the revivals tended to be more restrained and less overtly emotional, reflecting New England cultural norms. They often centered around powerful preaching and the singing of hymns within established church settings. In contrast, the Southern manifestation was characterized by highly emotional camp meetings. These gatherings, often lasting for days or weeks, involved lay preachers (who lacked formal theological training), spontaneous expressions of faith

such as singing, dancing, and fainting, and drew large crowds. While both aimed at religious revival, their styles of worship and expression differed significantly, with Northerners often viewing the Southern camp meetings as overly emotional and theologically unsophisticated.

4. What is "Restorationism" as it relates to the Second Great Awakening?

Restorationism was a significant theological perspective within the Southern manifestation of the Second Great Awakening, particularly associated with Alexander Campbell and the Disciples of Christ movement. It is the belief that a particular denomination or religious group is actively restoring the church to its original, pure form as described in the New Testament. Restorationists believe their practices and doctrines are a direct continuation or revival of the early Christian church, often implying that other denominations have deviated from this original model. This emphasis on restoring New Testament Christianity was a powerful motivating factor in the growth of certain denominations in the South during this period.

5. What were some of the significant results or impacts of the Second Great Awakening on American society?

The Second Great Awakening had far-reaching consequences for American society. It led to a significant increase in revivalism as a recurring feature of American Protestantism, influencing later revivalists like Dwight L. Moody and Billy Graham. It spurred the growth of voluntary societies, which were local, often interdenominational organizations focused on various projects, most notably the formation of American missionary societies. The Awakening also fostered a renewed emphasis on education, resulting in the widespread distribution of Bibles and religious tracts, the growth of Sunday schools for literacy and religious instruction, and the founding of numerous colleges, universities, and seminaries to train ministers and educate the populace. Furthermore, the religious fervor of the Awakening fueled moral and humanitarian crusades, including the temperance movement, the peace movement, and most significantly, the anti-slavery movement, which became a defining issue of the 19th century. Finally, the Second Great Awakening contributed to the growth of many Protestant denominations, such as the Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians, as they sought to reach the expanding population.

6. How did the Second Great Awakening contribute to the rise of the American missionary movement?

The Second Great Awakening played a crucial role in the development of the American missionary movement through the formation of voluntary societies. The spirit of revival and the desire to spread the Christian message led believers from various denominations to organize at the local level for common religious goals. The most significant of these projects was the creation of missionary societies. The American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions, founded in 1810, was an early example of this collaborative effort, primarily involving Congregationalists and Presbyterians. This emphasis on mission, driven by the evangelical zeal of the Second Great Awakening, had a lasting impact, as seen in the later founding of institutions like Gordon College as missionary training grounds.

7. In what ways did the Second Great Awakening impact education in the United States?

The Second Great Awakening fostered a significant "stress on education" in several key ways. First, there was a concerted effort to distribute Bibles and religious tracts widely, aiming to put scripture in the hands of the people. Second, Sunday schools emerged as important educational initiatives within churches, teaching both literacy and biblical knowledge, enabling individuals to read and understand the Bible for themselves. Third, the Awakening led to a surge in the founding of institutions of higher learning, including colleges, universities, and theological seminaries. These institutions, such as Andover Seminary, Princeton Seminary, Harvard Divinity School, and Yale Divinity School, were established to train pastors and provide a more educated religious leadership for the growing nation.

8. How did the Second Great Awakening relate to social reform movements of the 19th century?

The Second Great Awakening provided a significant impetus for various social reform movements in the 19th century by emphasizing Christian love and concern for one's neighbor. The religious conviction and moral fervor generated by the Awakening translated into action aimed at addressing societal ills. The temperance movement, advocating for abstinence from alcohol, arose in response to concerns about the social problems associated with alcohol abuse in growing urban centers. The peace movement, while perhaps less prominent, also found roots in the Awakening's ideals of Christian harmony and shalom. However, the most impactful social reform movement linked to the Second Great Awakening was the anti-slavery movement, which called for the

abolition of slavery. This issue deeply divided American society and churches but was significantly fueled by the moral and religious convictions inspired by the Awakening, ultimately becoming the central social and political struggle of the 19th century.