

The Second Great Awakening

Overview:

The Second Great Awakening was a religious revival of the early 1800s that emphasized the importance of **individual choice and a personal relationship with God, inspiring people to live religious lives devoted to God and good works.** Large outdoor revivals, called "**camp meetings,**" featured sermons and emotional worship services heard by large crowds. By stressing that individuals could assert their "FREE WILL" in choosing to be saved and by suggesting that salvation was open to all human beings, the Second Great Awakening embraced a more optimistic view of society and opened religion to more people of all classes and backgrounds. It therefore also helped spread many ideas from the American Revolution, such as equality and liberty. **Church attendance greatly increased, especially in the Baptist and Methodist churches.**

The Second Great Awakening also included **greater public roles for white women and much higher African-American participation in Christianity.** Finally, the **Second Great Awakening inspired other reform movements, as people sought to improve society and make it more Godly.**

Historical Context:

By the late 1700s, many people in the U.S. no longer regularly attended church services, and new changes in the **economy and technology also led to societal changes.** As a result of these social changes and declining religious devotion, many religious faiths sponsored religious revivals to emphasize dependence upon God and the importance of an individual's faith and being saved. Revival leaders hoped to create ideal, utopian societies where people were devoted to God and would be productive and moral members of society.

Historical Significance:

The revivals encouraged people to return to God. Many people in the U.S. were convinced to more actively dedicate their lives to God and to live in a godly manner. As a result, church attendance increased during the first half of the nineteenth century. **A desire to reform the U.S. also arose out of the Second Great Awakening.** The U.S. temperance and abolitionist movements were both greatly influenced by the revival movement and its messages. Additionally, women's involvement in the revival provided support for the women's rights movement.



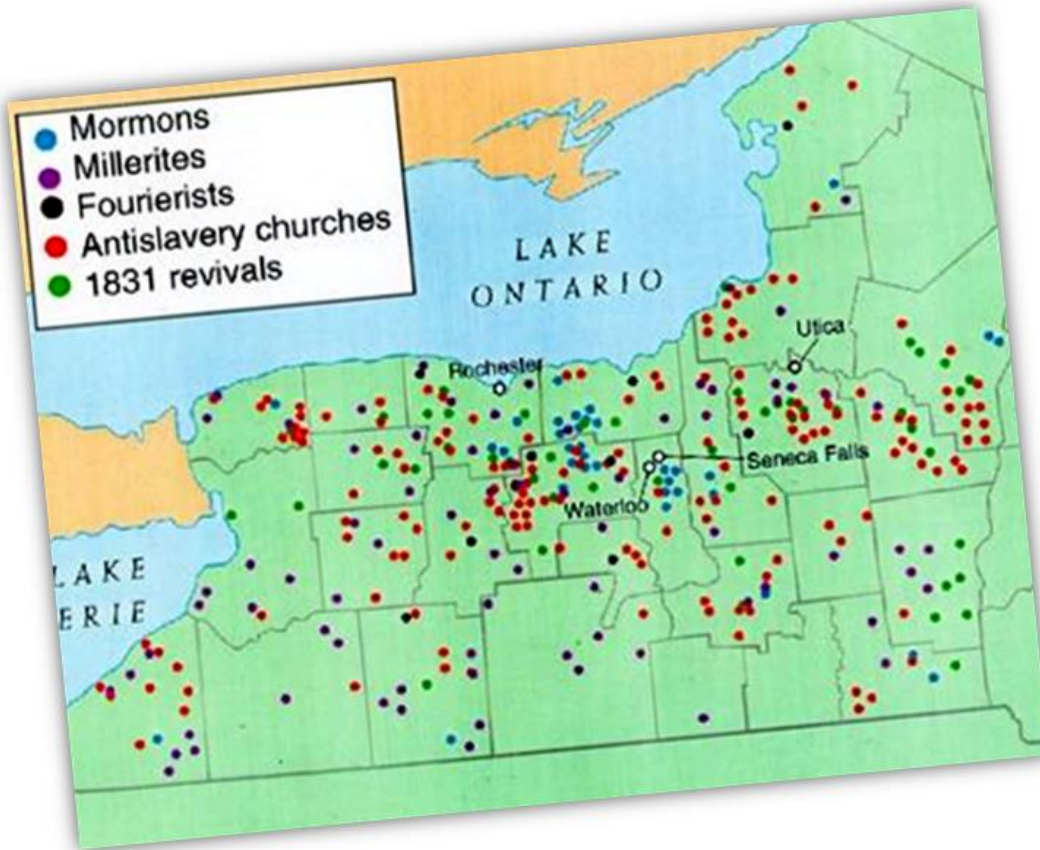
A camp meeting in Kentucky. Camp meetings were large, outdoor revivals that featured emotional sermons and conversion experiences or baptisms.

Geography of the Revival:

The more Prosperous and conservative denominations in the East were less revivalists.

Methodists and Baptists who participated in the revival more fervently were from the less prosperous, less educated communities in the rural South and West.

You also see the rise of Mormonism at this point. They were met with harsh violence, that drove them west to Utah. In New York, the “burned over district” was a hotbed of revivals.



Key Leaders:

Charles Grandison Finney- Known for his ability to inspire crowds with his passionate sermons. He converted over a half a million people. Established Oberlin College to train ministers. He also spoke out against slavery and alcohol.

Lyman Beecher-A preacher who educated and trained future ministers and was also involved in the temperance movement. He had 13 children, many of whom were also involved in reform movements.

Peter Cartwright-Methodist missionary known as the “Backwoods Preacher;” he baptized over 12,000 people. He also worked as an abolitionist.