



## 12.1 THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING

<p><b>EVANGELICAL ACTIVISM</b> <b><u>Doctrinal Shift:</u></b> <b>From Calvinism to Arminianism</b></p>	<p>Nineteenth century America contained a bewildering array of Protestant sects and denominations, with different doctrines, practices, and organizational forms. But by the 1830s almost all of these bodies had an EVANGELICAL ACTIVISM in common.</p> <p>This EVANGELICAL ACTIVISM involved an important DOCTRINAL SHIFT away from the predominately CALVINIST ORIENTATION that had characterized much of 18<sup>th</sup> century American Christianity. Eighteenth-century Calvinists like Jonathan Edwards or George Whitefield had stressed the sinful nature of humans and their utter incapacity to overcome this nature without the direct action of the grace of God working through the Holy Spirit. Salvation was purely in God's hands, something he dispensed as he saw fit for his own reasons.</p> <p>Nineteenth-century evangelicals like Charles Grandison Finney, Lyman Beecher, or Francis Asbury were no less unrelenting in their emphasis on the terrible sinfulness of humans. But they focused on SIN AS HUMAN ACTION. For all they preached hellfire and damnation, they nonetheless harbored an unshakable practical belief in the CAPACITY OF HUMANS FOR MORAL ACTION, in the ability of humans to turn away from sinful behavior and embrace moral action. Whatever their particular doctrinal stance, most nineteenth-century evangelicals preached a kind of practical ARMINIANISM, which holds that humans have the capacity to freely accept or reject divine grace and that even after conversion their failure to do God's will could lead to a loss of salvation.</p>
<p><b>CONVERSION EXPERIENCE</b></p> <p><b><u>Triggers:</u></b> <b>Human Sinfulness</b> <b>God's Omnipotence</b> <b>Promise of Salvation</b></p> <p><b><u>Results:</u></b> <b>Transformation</b> <b>Altered "Self"</b> <b>New Identity</b> <b>Spiritual Rebirth</b></p>	<p>The core of 19<sup>th</sup> century evangelicalism was the EXPERIENCE OF CONVERSION. Conversion was triggered by a set of clear ideas about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The INNATE SINFULNESS of humans after Adam's fall</li> <li>■ The OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD (his awful power and his mercy)</li> <li>■ The PROMISE OF SALVATION for fallen humankind through Christ's death on the cross as the atonement for human sin.</li> </ul> <p>Conversion was AN EXPERIENCE. It was NOT SIMPLY SOMETHING THAT PEOPLE BELIEVED (though belief or faith was essential to it) but SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED TO THEM, a real, intensely emotional event they went through and experienced as A PROFOUND PSYCHOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION that left them with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A fundamentally ALTERED SENSE OF SELF</li> <li>■ An IDENTITY as a new kind of Christian.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Steps:</u></b> <b>Concern</b> <b>Inquiry</b> <b>Anxiety</b> <b>Conviction</b> <b>Repentance</b> <b>Surrender</b> <b>Dedication</b></p>	<p>As they interpreted it, they had undergone SPIRITUAL REBIRTH, the death of an old self and the birth of a new one that fundamentally transformed their sense of their relationship to the world.</p> <p>Conversion consisted of a SEQUENCE OF CLEARLY MAPPED-OUT STEPS, each of which was accompanied by a powerful emotion that led the penitent from the terror of eternal damnation through redemption to the promise of heavenly salvation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The process of conversion characteristically began in a STATE OF "CONCERN" about the state of one's soul and "INQUIRY" into what were called the doctrines of salvation propelled by the question "WHAT CAN I DO TO BE SAVED?"</li> <li>■ This led to a state of ACUTE SPIRITUAL "ANXIETY," marked by deep fear over the prospect of eternal damnation, which in turn grew into an unmistakable SENSE OF "CONVICTION," the heartfelt realization that one stood justly condemned for one's sins</li> </ul>



<p><b>PROTRACTED MEETINGS</b>  <b>Preaching</b>  <b>Anxious Bench</b>  <b>Prayer</b>  <b>Counseling Visits</b></p>	<p>preaching.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The second, major variant of the new revivalism consisted of the "PROTRACTED MEETINGS" most often associated with the "new measures" revivalism of Finney but which by the late 1820s had become the characteristic form of most northern and western revivalism. "Protracted meetings," ordinarily conducted once a year at a time when they would be less disruptive of ordinary life, usually lasted two to three weeks, during which time there would be PREACHING two or three times each day, addressed especially to the anxious penitents who would gather on an "ANXIOUS BENCH" at the front of the church to be prayed for by the congregation, and PRAYER AND COUNSELING VISITS by newly converted Christians to the concerned and anxious. Once a person had gone through the experience of conversion and rebirth, he or she would join the ranks of visitors and exhorters, themselves becoming evangelists for the still unconverted around them.</li> </ul>
<p><b>RESULTS</b>  <b>Erosion of Calvinist Beliefs</b></p>	<p>One important result of the new revivalism was a further EROSION OF OLDER CALVINIST BELIEFS, especially the doctrine of predestination. Although some evangelical clergymen did not abandon the idea of predestination entirely (the idea that God had preordained who would be saved and who would not was, after all, a logical extension of the conception of God as an eternal, omniscient, and omnipotent being), in practical terms they held out what amounted to an idea of universal salvation.</p>
<p><b>Universalism</b></p>	<p>Most Methodist clergymen came pretty close to embracing the IDEA OF UNIVERSALISM which held that Christ's atonement was potentially universal, available without restriction to all who would repent and surrender to God. Alexander Campbell, the founder of the Church of Christ, made universalism the hallmark of his doctrinal system.</p>
<p><b>Non-Sectarianism</b></p>	<p>The Second Great Awakening TRANSCENDED SECTARIAN AND DENOMINATIONAL BOUNDARIES. Most clergymen (and communicants as well) had specific denominational affiliations. But just as the 17<sup>th</sup> century Puritans saw their Massachusetts Bay experiment as the spearhead of a broader movement to reform Protestantism itself, so too did 19<sup>th</sup> century evangelicals consider themselves participants in a much broader spiritual movement to evangelize the nation and world.</p>
<p><b>Extension of God's Kingdom</b></p>	<p>It was a period characterized by a special outpouring of God's Saving Grace, a period that placed a special burden of responsibility on ministers of God and saved Christians alike to enlist themselves wholeheartedly in the work of EXTENDING GOD'S KINGDOM.</p>
<p><b>Millennialism</b></p>	<p>Finally, this sense of participation in and responsibility for the vast outpouring of Saving Grace promoted a sense of direct connection to the ultimate teleological goal of Christian history, namely, THE MILLENNIUM. They came to believe that it was given to them and their generation of evangelical Americans to prepare the way for Christ's Second Coming (which Jonathan Edwards had predicted would take place in the New World) by working unrelentingly to bring about the thousand-year reign of righteousness that would precede his return to earth. More specifically, what this meant was that they and their communicants were to enlist themselves in a broad set of CAMPAIGNS TO REFORM AMERICAN SOCIETY.</p>
<p><b>Reform</b></p>	<p>Adapted from : <a href="http://www.nhc.rtp.nc.us:8080/tserve/nineteen/nkeyinfo/nevanrev.htm">http://www.nhc.rtp.nc.us:8080/tserve/nineteen/nkeyinfo/nevanrev.htm</a></p> <p><b>DISCUSSION QUESTION</b>  <b>Explain the connection between the Second Great Awakening and the reform movement which swept the country in the pre-civil war era.</b></p>