

Great Awakenings

- Periods of religious advances and increased religious activity
- Predominantly in America but some in Europe

First Great Awakening – 1730-1755

- Pre-revolutionary
- Changed colonial society in America
- Affected New England most of all
- Increased inclusion of African Americans and African American churches
- Geographical:
 - New England Congregationalists
 - Middle and Southern Presbyterians
 - Northern Baptists and Methodists
- Preachers
 - George Whitefield (supported by Benjamin Franklin through printing)
 - Jonathan Edwards
 - Gilbert Tennent
- Preachers were itinerant, sermons were dramatic, services were emotional, many people were converted
- All of this brought controversy and opposition
- Ideas of religious equality led to ideals of political and social equality
- Challenging the Anglican church caused ministers to be arrested and tried, therefore religious freedom was incorporated into basics of American government
- Age of Faith rises in opposition to the Age of Reasoning and Enlightenment – trusting the heart rather than the head
- Advocates of the awakening became known as “New Lights,” opponents were “Old Lights”

Second Great Awakening – 1790-1840

- The beginnings of the Restoration Movement were part of the Second Great Awakening
- Other religions emerged during this time – Mormons, Holiness Movement, Adventism
- Religion spread through frontier regions through camp meetings
- July 1800 – a camp meeting at Gasper River Church in Kentucky
- 1801 – Cane Ridge, Kentucky – 20,000 people in attendance – Barton W. Stone preached
- Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists expanded during this time
- Kentucky, Tennessee, and southern Ohio were major centers of this awakening
- People sought to apply religion to social reform – abolition, women’s rights, temperance

Third Great Awakening – 1850-1900

- Worldwide missionaries spread religion
- Strong social activism
- Built off of postmillennial theology of the second coming of Christ
- Mainline Protestant churches growing in numbers, wealth, and education
- More colleges associated with churches
- Christian Science, Salvation Army, and Jehovah’s Witnesses founded
- Holiness movement
- Baptism of the Holy Spirit – miracles, prophesy, speaking in tongues

Fourth Great Awakening – 1960-1970

- Increased growth of conservative denominations
- Emphasis on personal relationship with Jesus
- Non-denominational churches and community churches
- The Jesus Movement
- Growth of mega-churches