

American Minute with Bill Federer

Second Great Awakening Revival

"No person seemed to wish to go home - hunger and sleep seemed to affect nobody - eternal things were the vast concern"

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The **First Great Awakening**

helped unite the colonies prior to the Revolutionary War.



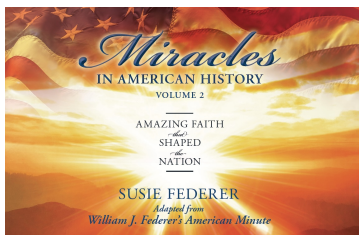
The embers of it began a **Second Great Awakening** in the early 1800s.

Thomas Jefferson noted in his *Memorandum Book*:

"I have subscribed to the **building of an Episcopalian church**, two hundred dollars; a **Presbyterian church**, sixty dollars, and a **Baptist church**, twenty-five" ...

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There are several **forms of Christian church government**:

- **episcopal**, through a hierarchy of bishops;
- **conference meetings** of church leaders;
- **presbyterian**, through elected elders;
- **congregational**, through church members voting.

Alexis de Tocqueville, wrote in ***Democracy in America*** (1835; 1840):

"**Americans** ... brought with them ... **a form of Christianity** which I cannot better describe than by styling it **a democratic and republican religion** ...

From the earliest settlement of the emigrants, **politics and religion contracted an alliance** which has never been dissolved."

On **July 14, 1826**, the Boston newspaper *Christian Watchman* printed an unverified story that **Jefferson** dined at **Monticello** prior to the Revolutionary War with **Baptist Pastor Andrew Tribble**.

The story described how **Jefferson** inquired of **Pastor Tribble** how **Baptist church government** worked, then **Jefferson** stated that he

"... considered it the only **form of pure democracy** that exists in the world ... It would be the best **plan of government** for the **American colonies**."

As recorded by Julian P. Boyd in ***The Papers of Thomas Jefferson***, **Jefferson** "organized" a church.

He drafted church bylaws titled "**Subscriptions to Support a Clergyman in Charlottesville**," February 1777:

"We the subscribers ... desirous of encouraging and

supporting the **Calvinistical Reformed Church**, and of deriving to ourselves, through the ministry of its teachers, the **benefits of Gospel knowledge** and religious improvement ... by regular education for **explaining the holy scriptures** ...

... **Approving highly the political conduct** of the **Revd. Charles Clay**, who, early **rejecting the tyrant and tyranny of Britain**, proved his religion genuine by its harmonies with the liberties of mankind ...

and, conforming **his public prayers** to the spirit and the injured rights of his country, ever addressed **the God of battles** for victory to our arms ...

We expect that the said **Charles Clay** shall perform **divine service** and **preach a sermon** in the town of **Charlottesville** on every 4th ... Sunday or oftener if a regular rotation with the other churches ... will admit a more frequent attendance.

And we further mutually agree with each other that we will meet at **Charlottesville** ... every year ... and there make a choice by ballot of three wardens to **collect our said subscriptions** ... for the use of **our church.**"

The Calvinistical Reformed Church met in the **Albemarle Courthouse** for seven years.

Jefferson was supportive of the evangelical ministry of **Rev. Charles Clay** (1745-1796), a distant older cousin of the famous statesman and orator **Henry Clay** (1777-1852).

Jefferson noted in his *Memorandum Book*, August 15, 1779:

"Pd. **Revd. Charles Clay** in consideration of parochial services."

As **Virginia's Governor, Jefferson** wrote in 1779:

"The **reverend Charles Clay** has been many years rector of this parish and has been **particularly known to me ...**

... In the earliest stage of the present **contest with Great Britain** while the **clergy of the established church** in general **took the adverse side**, or kept aloof from the cause of their country, **he took a decided and active part with his countrymen**, and has continued to prove **... his attachment to the American cause."**

The **Calvinistical Reformed Church** ceased meeting when subscribers **Philip Mazzei** and **John Harvie** moved away, and when **Jefferson**, depressed after the death of his wife and several children, agreed to take Ben Franklin's place as the **U.S. ambassador to France** in 1783.

The religious revival in Virginia continued as part of the **"Second Great Awakening."**

Where some historical church teachings stressed mental assent and outward conformity to state-approved doctrines, **Great Awakening preachers** stressed the inward need for each person to believe that **God is just** and therefore **must punish every sin**, but that **God is also love** in that He provided **His only Son** to **take the punishment for everyone's sins**.

When a person truly trusts that **Jesus' sacrifice** on the cross **paid for all their sins**, they experience **the fullness of the love of God**, which in turn inspires them to **share God's love with others**.

Methodist evangelist Jesse Lee, who traveled a circle of cities, reported in 1787 the **"circuits that had the greatest revival of religion"** included Albermarle county.

Nearly **all Baptist and Methodist churches** were of **mixed races**.

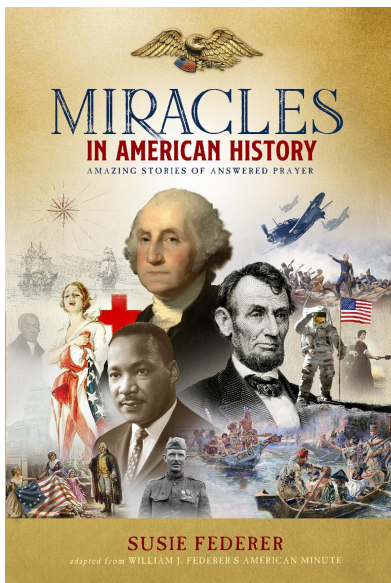
In 1788, **Rev. John Leland**, a friend of **Jefferson's** and pastor of Goldmine Baptist Church of Louisa, Virginia, personally baptized over 400.

John Leland wrote in a **Resolution** for the **General Committee of Virginia Baptists meeting** in Richmond, Virginia, 1789:

"Resolved, that **slavery is a violent deprivation of rights of nature and inconsistent with a republican government**, and therefore, recommend it to our brethren to **make use of every legal measure to extirpate this horrid evil from the land;**

and pray **Almighty God** that our honorable legislature may have it in their power to proclaim **the great jubilee**, consistent with the principles of good policy."

Leland referred to "**jubilee**" as it was a day in the **Hebrew calendar**, every **fifty years**, when all Israelites serving as indentured **servants and slaves** were to be given their freedom.



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In 1787, **Hampden-Sydney College** in Virginia experienced an **awakening** which **spread across the**

state.

In **Charlottesville**, attorney **William Wirt** attended the meetings of **Presbyterian Rev. James Waddell**, who had been influenced by **Colonial Preacher Samuel Davies**.

Wirt was later asked by **Jefferson** to lead the prosecution of Aaron Burr for treason.

Wirt was appointed by **President Monroe** as **U.S. Attorney General**, where he **defended the rights of Cherokee Indians** in ***Worcester v. Georgia***, 1832.

William Wirt wrote of the preaching of **Presbyterian Rev. James Waddell** in in 1795:

"Every heart in the assembly trembled in unison.

His peculiar phrases that force of description that **the original scene appeared** to be, at that moment, **acting before our eyes ...**

The effect was inconceivable. The whole house resounded with the mingled groans, and sobs, and shrieks of the congregation."

In Lee, Massachusetts, **Rev. Alvan Hyde** reported in 1792:

"A marvelous work was begun, and it bore the most decisive marks of being **God's work**.

So great was the excitement, though not yet known abroad, that into whatever section of the town I now went, the people in that immediate neighborhood, would leave their worldly employments, at any hour of the day, and soon fill a large room ...

All our religious meetings were very much thronged, and

yet were never noisy or irregular ... They were characterized with a stillness and solemnity, which, I believe, have rarely been witnessed ...

To the praise of sovereign grace, I may add, that the work continued, with great regularity and little abatement, nearly eighteen months."

James Madison, who was a member of **St. Thomas Parish** where **Rev. James Waddell** taught, exclaimed of him:

"He has spoiled me for all other preaching."

Madison invited **Presbyterian preachers** speak his **Montpelier estate**, such as **Samuel Stanhope Smith** and **Nathaniel Irwin**, of whom he wrote:

"Praise is in every man's mouth here for **an excellent discourse** he this day **preached to us.**"

Methodist Rev. Lorenzo Dow, nicknamed "**Crazy Dow**," traveled over ten thousand miles **preaching to over a million people.**

His autobiography at one time was the second best-selling book in America, exceeded only by the Bible.

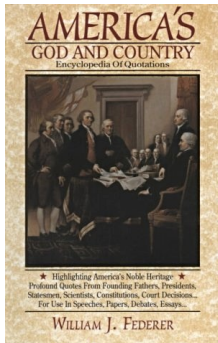
He hated slavery, would often speak in black churches, and as a result, was sometimes run out of Southern towns.

Well-known black preachers at this time were "**Black Harry**" **Hosier** and **Rev. Richard Allen.**

Rev. Lorenzo Dow preached to open air crowds of 10,000.

He held a **camp meeting near Jefferson's home**, writing in his ***Journal*** that on April 17, 1804:

"I spoke in ... Charlottesville near the **President's seat in Albermarle County** ... to about four thousand people, and **one of the President's daughters (Mary Jefferson Eppes) who was present.**"



[America's God and Country Encyclopedia of Quotations](#)

In the lawless Kentucky frontier, **Rev. James McGready** and his small church agreed in 1797:

"Therefore, we bind ourselves to **observe the third Saturday of each month for one year as a day of fasting and prayer** for the conversion of sinners in Logan County and throughout the world.

We also engage to spend **one half hour every Saturday evening**, beginning at the setting of the sun, and **one half hour every Sabbath morning** at the rising of the sun in pleading with **God to revive His work.**"

In June of 1800, 500 members of **James McGready's** three congregations gathered at the Red River for a **"camp meeting"** lasting several days.

This revival was similar to the **18th century Scottish "Holy Fairs,"** where **teams of open-air preachers** rotated in a **continuous stream of sermons.**

On the final day of **Rev. James McGready's** Red River Camp Meeting:

"A mighty effusion of the **Spirit**' came on everyone 'and the floor was soon covered with the slain; their screams for mercy pierced the heavens.'"

In July of 1800, the congregation planned another camp meeting at the **Gaspar River**. Surpassing their expectations, **8,000 people** arrived, some from **over 100 miles away**:

"The power of God seemed to shake the whole assembly. Towards the close of the sermon, the cries of the distressed arose almost as loud as his voice.

After the congregation was dismissed the solemnity increased, till the greater part of the multitude seemed engaged in the most solemn manner ...

... **No person seemed to wish to go home** - hunger and sleep seemed to affect nobody - eternal things were the vast concern.

Here **awakening and converting work** was to be found in every part of the multitude; and even some things strangely and wonderfully new to me."

On **AUGUST 7, 1801**, though Kentucky's largest city had less than 2,000 people, **25,000 showed up at revival meetings** in **Cane Ridge, Kentucky**.

Arriving from as far away as Ohio, Tennessee, and the Indiana Territory, they heard the preaching of **Barton W. Stone** and **other Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian ministers**.

Rev. Moses Hodge described:

"Nothing that imagination can paint, can make a stronger impression upon the mind, than one of those scenes.

Sinners dropping down on every hand, shrieking, groaning, crying for mercy, convulsed; professors praying, agonizing, fainting, falling down in distress, for sinners or in **raptures of joy!** ...

As to the work in general there can be no question but it is of **God**. The subjects of it, for the most part are deeply wounded for their sins, and can give a clear and rational **account of their conversion.**"

A young man who witnessed the **Cane Ridge revival** wrote in 1802:

"The noise was like the roar of Niagara. The vast sea of human beings seemed to be agitated as if by a storm.

I counted seven ministers, **all preaching at one time**, some on stumps, others on wagons ...

Some of the people were singing, others praying, some crying for mercy. A peculiarly strange sensation came over me.

My heart beat tumultuously, my knees trembled, my lips quivered, and I felt as though I must fall to the ground."

In 1795, **Timothy Dwight IV** was elected the **8th President of Yale** at a time when the student had become largely secular, enamored with **French infidelity and secularism**, with the lessening of moral restraints.

Soon after his arrival at Yale, **Dwight** was challenged by seniors to debate whether the **Scriptures Old and New Testament** were the **Word of God**.

Dwight listened to their arguments, then systematically demolished them in a series of weekly lectures, giving "**a well-reasoned defense of the Bible's accuracy.**"

Dwight's son, **Sereno Edwards Dwight**, became **U.S. Senate Chaplain** in 1816. He wrote *Life of David Brainerd* (1822), and a book about his great-grandfather, *Life and Works of Jonathan Edwards* (ten volumes, 1830).

Sereno Edwards Dwight wrote of the **Second Great Awakening at Yale:**

"From that moment, infidelity was not only without a stronghold, but without a lurking place."

A student related:

"The whole college was shaken. It seemed for a time as if the whole mass of the students would press into the kingdom. It was **the Lord's doing**, and marvelous in all eyes. Oh, what a blessed change! It was a glorious reformation."

Through the efforts of **Timothy Dwight IV**, over a **third of Yale's student body** experienced conversion, with many entering the ministry.

A **Yale tutor** wrote:

"**Yale College** is a little temple; **prayer and praise** seem to be the delight of the greater part of the students while those who are still unfeeling are awed with respectful silence."

Spreading to other colleges, hundreds of students entered the **ministry** and **pioneered the foreign missions movement** which made a global impact.

The Haystack Prayer Meetings at Williams College, Massachusetts, began a **world missionary movement**.

Young **men**, along with the **first women missionaries**, were sent to the **American West**, and as far away as the **Caribbean, Burma, China, and Hawaii**.

Prior to the Revolutionary War, there was a **FIRST Great Awakening**.

It was influenced by:

- Rev. William Tennent,
- Rev. Jonathan Edwards,
- Rev. George Whitefield,
- Rev. Gilbert Tennent,
- Rev. Samuel Finley,
- Rev. Theodore Frelinghuysen,
- Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf, and other preachers.

The **FIRST Great Awakening** resulted in the founding of the:

- Universities of Pennsylvania (1740);
- Princeton (1746);
- Columbia (1754);
- Brown (1764);
- Rutgers (1766); and
- Dartmouth (1770).

The **SECOND Great Awakening** led to the founding of colleges and universities, such as:

- **Lane Theological Seminary** (1829) and
- **Oberlin College** (1833).

It also contributed to the founding of the:

- **American Bible Society;**
- **Society for the Promotion of Temperance;**
- **Church of Christ;**
- **Disciples of Christ,;**

- **Seventh-Day Adventists;**
- **Millennialism**, preparing for Second Coming of Christ, supporting the later movement of **Zionism**.

The Second Great Awakening fueled movements to:

- reform prisons,
- care for the handicapped and mentally ill,
- found hospitals,
- care for immigrants, and
- working to end slavery with the abolitionist movement.

Attorney turned preacher **Charles Finney** preached on revival, inspiring:

- **William Booth** to found the **Salvation Army**; and
- **George Williams** to found the **Y.M.C.A. (Young Men's Christian Association)**.

George Addison Baxter, a skeptical professor at Washington Academy in Virginia, published an account of his travels throughout Kentucky, which was printed in the ***Connecticut Evangelical Magazine***, March of 1802:

"The power with which this revival has spread, and its influence in moralizing the people, are difficult for you to conceive, and more so for me to describe ...

I found Kentucky, to appearance, the most moral place I had ever seen. A profane expression was hardly ever heard.

A religious awe seemed to pervade the country.

Never in my life have I seen more genuine marks of that humility which ... looks to the **Lord Jesus Christ** as the only way of acceptance with **God** ..."

Baxter continued:

"I was indeed highly pleased to find that **Christ** was all and in all in their religion ... and it was truly affecting to hear with what agonizing anxiety awakened sinners inquired for **Christ**, as the only physician who could give them any help.

Those who call these things 'enthusiasm,' ought to tell us what they understand by **the Spirit of Christianity** ...

Upon the whole, sir, I think the revival in Kentucky among the most extraordinary that have ever visited the **Church of Christ**, and all things considered, peculiarly adapted to the circumstances of that country ...

... Something of an extraordinary nature seemed necessary to arrest the attention of a giddy people, who were ready to conclude that **Christianity** was a fable, and futurity a dream.

This revival has done it; it has confounded infidelity, awed vice to silence, and brought numbers beyond calculation under serious impressions."

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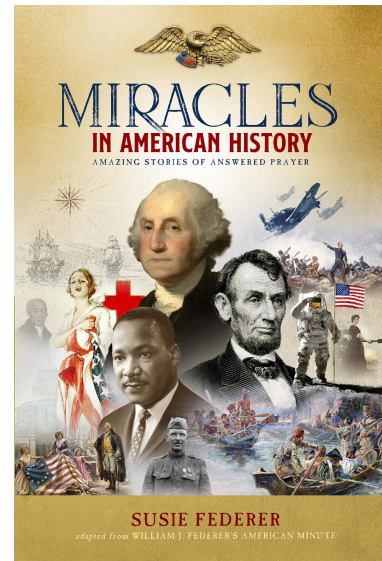
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