**The Second Great Awakening**

In general terms, what was the Second Great Awakening?

Who led the Second Great Awakening?

What was the goal of the Second Great Awakening?

Influence of the Second Great Awakening:

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| Leader(s) | Fought To Reform |
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**Great Awakenings**

The Great Awakenings were several periods of rapid and dramatic religious revival in Anglo-American religious history, generally recognized as beginning in the 1730s. They have also been described as periodic revolutions in U.S. religious thought. The term is also used in some respects to refer to American religious revivalism that the Protestant Reformation inspired during and after the 1500s, as well as to identify general religious trends within distinctly U.S. religious culture.

Although the Great Awakenings influence and are influenced by religious thought from throughout the world, the cycle of Great Awakenings appears unique to the USA. This could be because the USA is home to many different denominations and sects, while remaining largely Protestant. The lack of a single dominant faith or state-sanctioned religion means new ideas can be spread without having to slowly reform existing institutions from within, or allowing pressures to build up until the existing institutions are violently overthrown. The established sects have enough prestige and inertia that the pressure for new ideas builds into a regular cycle of bloodless revolution.

Since religion has often been used to support political platforms, the Great Awakenings have exerted significant influence on the politics of America. Joseph Tracy, the minister and historian who gave this religious phenomenon its name in his influential (and still, to many, definitive) 1842 book The Great Awakening, saw the First Great Awakening as a precursor to the War of Independence. For another example, the abolition movement, part of the wider Second Great Awakening, eventually contributed to the crisis over slavery, which led to the American Civil War. The Third Great Awakening would go on to be a major influence in guiding the USA through the Great Depression and World War II. In fact the New Deal was originated from that same era. The idea of an "awakening" implies a slumber or passivity during secular or less religious times. Thus, awakening is a term which originates and is embraced often and primarily by evangelical Christians. In recent times, the idea of "awakenings" in US history has been put forth by conservative US evangelicals.

1. In your own words, what is an awakening?
2. Why is the cycle of awakenings unique to the America?
3. How do awakening affect politics in America? Provide two examples.