

# The second great awakening

Religion



The Second Great Awakening brought to fruition the efforts some social reformers had begun earlier in the 19th century (Calhoun, 1993). This is especially true of temperance societies. These groups saw many society's ills manifest in the use of alcohol. They crusaded against "demon rum" and sought a prohibition against the use of alcohol. Women were prominent members and often the leaders of these societies. In this way, the battle for temperance and women's suffrage carried on together, often with one society for temperance being almost indistinguishable from societies that advocated women's suffrage.

Both of these concerns were part of the Second Great Awakening because churches began to adopt a theology that said they should be stewards over society. They believed that Christian principles should be applied to all aspects of culture, so they became involved in causes, such as temperance and women's suffrage because the current state of the nation did not reflect good Christian principles and values (Sutton, 1992). Nowhere did this manifest itself more than in the movement to abolish slavery. Uncle Tom's Cabin is a good example of how the abolitionist viewed slavery and how the participants of the Second Great Awakening viewed the Christian's duty in regards to curing social ills.

#### Works Cited

Calhoun, C. (1993). New Social Movements of the Early 19th Century. *Social Science History*, 385-427.

Sutton, W. R. (1992). Benevolent Christianity and the Moral Government of God. *Religion and American Culture*, 23-47.