

Activity 3**Document-Based Activity**
The Second Great Awakening**DOCUMENT 2**

Before You Read The following words in the document below may be new to you: *depravity, sanctification, penitents, ere, incessant*. You may want to use a dictionary to look them up.

It was in the course of this summer that I found the opportunity I had long wished for, of attending a camp-meeting . . . this was in a wild district in the confines of Indiana . . .

At midnight a horn sounded through the camp, which, we were told, was to call the people from private to public worship; and we presently saw them flocking from all sides to the front of the preachers' stand . . . There were about two thousand persons assembled.

One of the preachers began in a low nasal tone, and, like all other Methodist preachers, assured us of the enormous depravity of man as he comes from the hands of his Maker, and of his perfect sanctification after he had wrestled sufficiently with the Lord to get hold of him . . .

The preachers came down from their stand and placed themselves in the midst of it, beginning to sing a hymn, calling upon the penitents to come forth. As they sang they kept turning themselves round to every part of the crowd, and, by degrees, the voices of the whole multitude joined in chorus . . . but ere I had well enjoyed it, the scene changed . . .

Above a hundred persons, nearly all females, came forward, uttering howlings and groans, so terrible that I shall never cease to shudder when I recall them. They appeared to drag each other forward, and on the word being given, "let us pray," they all fell on their knees . . . they were soon all lying on the ground in an indescribable confusion of heads and legs. They threw about their limbs with such incessant and violent motion, that I was every instant expecting some serious accident to occur.

—Frances Trollope, English traveler in America
Domestic Manners of the Americans, 1832

1. What was the message of the preacher's sermon?

2. Why do you think some people at this camp meeting howled, groaned, and flailed on the ground?

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Before You Read The following words in the document below may be new to you: *backslidden*, *profligates*, *harlots*, *infidels*. You may want to use a dictionary to look them up.

There is so little principle in the church, so little firmness and stability of purpose, that unless the religious feelings are awakened and kept excited, counter worldly feeling and excitement will prevail, and men will not obey God . . . The state of the world is still such, and probably will be till the millennium is fully come, that religion must be mainly promoted by means of revivals . . .

1. A revival always includes conviction of sin on the part of the church. Backslidden professors cannot wake up and begin right away in the service of God, without deep searchings of heart . . .

2. Backslidden Christians will be brought to repentance. A revival is nothing else than a new beginning of obedience to God. Just as in the case of a converted sinner, the first step is a deep repentance, a breaking down of heart, a getting down into the dust before God, with deep humility, and forsaking of sin.

3. Christians will have their faith renewed . . . They will feel grieved that others do not love God, when they love him so much. And they will set themselves feelingly to persuade their neighbors to give him their hearts. . . They will have a longing desire for the salvation of the whole world . . .

5. When the churches are thus awakened and reformed, the reformation and salvation of sinners will follow . . . Very often the most abandoned profligates are among the subjects. Harlots, and drunkards, and infidels, and all sorts of abandoned characters, are awakened and converted. The worst part of human society are softened, and reclaimed, and made to appear as lovely specimens of the beauty of holiness.

—Charles Finney, revivalist minister
Lectures on the Revivals of Religion, 1835

1. What criticisms does Charles Finney make regarding the church?

2. How does Finney suggest that revivals can have a larger social impact on America?
