BLACK CHURCHES AND THE CIVIL WAR:
THEOLOGICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL SIGNIFICANCE
OF BLACK METHODIST INVOLVEMENT, 1861-1865*

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The advent, duration, and impact of the American Civil War marked
an ecclesiastical and theological turning point for independent black Chris­tianity. One might argue that the civil conflict occasioned a kind of rebirth
for independent black denominations. Theologically, black Christians,
especially as the war progressed, interpreted the event as an intervention
of God in human history. Finally, God, acting through and in spite of
the activities of mortals, had heard the cries of an enslaved people, and
as God had done in the past, the Divine One was liberating them from
a hard hearted Pharaoh. But the faithful must not remain simply quies­
cent and passive; they must join in partnership with God to carry out the
divine work in the world. Hence, black church leaders urged their com­
unities to respond by becoming soldiers in the physical battle and mis­sionaries, chaplains, and teachers in the spiritual and educational struggle.
During this period and because of it, the independent black Methodists
and Baptists did more than drastically augment their memberships to the
extent that the numerical bases of the churches shifted south. In addition,
they rejected merger with white groups and reaffirmed their identity and
sense of mission as black churches through whom God would act to uplift
their race spiritually and temporally throughout the world. 1

The purpose of this article is to examine in a limited manner the
ecclesiastical and theological impact of the Civil War upon the black
churches. I have selected for treatment three developments and activities
relating to black churches and occasioned by the advent of the Civil War:
1) the role of the black churches in the recruitment of black soldiers, focus­
ing on the Reverend Henry M. Turner and the African Methodist Episcopal
Church (AME); 2) the missionary activities sponsored and supported by
the churches during the conflict, concentrating on the efforts of the

* An earlier form of this paper was delivered at the Spring meeting of the American Society
of Church History, Louisville, KY, April 1989.

1 Clarence Walker, A Rock in A Weary Land: The African Methodist Episcopal Church
During the Civil War and Reconstruction (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press,
1982) in booklength form offers a very good treatment on the role of the AME Church in
the Civil War and Reconstruction.
Reverend James Walker Hood and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZ or Zion); and 3) the movement to form organic unions involving the AME and AMEZ.

Some background information concerning the principal players might be useful. The AME and AMEZ\(^2\) are both independent black groups that began separating from the original multiracial, but white-controlled, Methodist Episcopal Church (ME) in the late 18th century. The AME was established as a separate denomination in 1816, the AMEZ or Zion, in 1821 or 1822. Though they both seceded from the Methodist Episcopal Church, politics of personalities and leadership styles prevented a consolidation of their forces. Later in 1844, the ME under pressure of the black and white abolitionist minded members on one hand and the pro-slavery white members on the other, finally separated over the issue of slavery, roughly along geographical lines. The resulting Methodist Episcopal Church, South (ME, S) and the ME both retained significant numbers of black members.

Henry M. Turner was born in South Carolina in 1831. He was licensed to preach in the ME-South, and he affiliated with the AME in 1858. He was designated elder in 1862, and elected the 12th bishop of the AME in 1880. He journeyed south as an officially commissioned Chaplain of black US troops during the war and served in various positions of the Georgia state reconstruction government. Writer, race spokesperson, newspaper founder, and devoted church worker, Turner died in Canada in 1915.\(^3\) James Walker Hood's life paralleled that of Turner's in many ways, although the roots of the former lay in the north. Hood was born and spent most of his early years in Pennsylvania. He was licensed to preach in the AMEZ in the late 1850s and spent time as a pastor in Nova Scotia. Ordained as elder in 1862, Hood in early 1864 journeyed to North Carolina as a missionary and church organizer and participated in Reconstruction era politics after the war. He was elevated to the bishopric in 1872 and served actively until 1916. A promoter of education, newspaper founder, and writer, Hood died in 1918 in Fayetteville, North Carolina.\(^4\)

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Henry M. Turner, the AME, and Military Involvement

Let us first turn to the AME and the recruitment of black soldiers. During the earliest days of the Civil War black churchpeople felt that they had no vested interest in its ultimate outcome. Indeed, many of them tended to exhibit a rather hostile attitude toward President Abraham Lincoln because he did not originally pursue the war on the premise of abolishing slavery and since he obviously did not intend to view African-Americans as full members of the nation. With continued defeats, small victories, and stalemates, the government realized that the war would not be of short duration and that drastic measures were required to break the stubborn will of the Confederacy. Ever mindful of the resentment among many white northerners about fighting a war to liberate black slaves, Lincoln, nonetheless, felt compelled to draft in 1862 an Emancipation Proclamation, which became effective January 1, 1863 and granted freedom to all slaves held by those persons in active rebellion against the United States. In addition, the American government became much more receptive to the idea of using black soldiers in its campaign to defeat the south.

By May 1863 the recruitment and organization of black troops were well underway. One area in which black troops were recruited and trained was Washington, D.C. and Virginia, and the Reverend Henry M. Turner, AME minister, was among those in the forefront in recruiting the regiment. There were genuine concerns expressed by the black religious leaders as well as the general black populace regarding questions of equity for black soldiers. These soldiers faced discrimination in terms of pay, harsher treatment by the Confederates on the battlefields and in prison camps, and being required to serve under only white officers.

Black soldiers obviously felt more comfortable when white officers who commanded them had histories of abolitionist sympathies and activities rather than those whose commitments and sympathies were unknown. But there remained resentment among some ebony soldiers over the fact that only whites were permitted to assume command. But the black community endured the insult for three reasons. 1) Despite the discomfort and insult of the situation, the organization of black soldiers by the government to fight southern but white confederates represented a huge step forward for the country in racial matters, especially given the fact that many secular and religious black leaders had been calling for such a step for sometime. 2) The indignities of the moment could be subordinated to the glory of fighting on the battle field for the liberation of their racial siblings. 3) By proving their courage and manhood on the fields of battle black soldiers would pave the way for all blacks to enjoy equal treatment before the law in post–Civil War America.5

In the final analysis, Turner and other members of the religious community provided active support for military measures to support the Union cause. For example, Turner joined other prominent members of the black community in a mass meeting as the black Ebenezer Church on July 6, 1863 to examine the advisability of organizing a home guard of patriotic black men to fend off the very real possibility of an invasion from southern forces in the capitol city. Turner heartily endorsed the idea that was crystallized in a series of resolutions and adopted unanimously by those assembled. The document offers insights into the motives of those urging their racial counterparts to become militarily involved, including the idea that black men by their willingness to shed blood for the Union cause would demonstrate that, "the colored American will deserve the citizenship which he now holds in common with the white man." The resolutions called for blacks in obedience to the President to rise above their minor concerns and unite as husbands and fathers to secure the safety of the Capitol as well as their wives, children, and homes against any possible aggressors. Thirty-six men enrolled as members of the home guard.\textsuperscript{6}

Turner and others discovered, however, that while support from the community was generally good, there were strong pockets of resistance to both the military regiment and the home or domestic guard. The opposition came from two constituencies: 1) many freed people or "contrabands of war," who had been liberated in battle or had escaped as opportunities presented themselves and 2) residents of the city. Those who had been enslaved probably felt that since whites inaugurated slavery, they should be the ones paying the price of abolishing it. Perhaps they too feared, and correctly so, that capture in battle would bode a much worse set of circumstances for them than for their white compatriots.\textsuperscript{7}

Sometimes this opposition within the black Washington community manifested itself in very pointed and heated criticisms of those who struggled to organize the black militia. An article in the AME Christian Recorder, September 26, 1863, captured the vociferous response of the pro-militia AME leaders to the accusations of those termed "Colored Copperheads and Dead Heads." Some of these opponents argued that the activities of Henry M. Turner and others had led to the action of Congress in March 1863 to impose the military draft. The writer of the article disputed this contention by pointing out that Congress had acted before any black men had actually enlisted.\textsuperscript{8} Furthermore, the writer reiterated the classic argument that Turner and others used for raising a black militia: the presence of the black soldier in the U.S. Army had done wonders in illustrating clearly that black men were both capable and willing to

\textsuperscript{6}The Christian Recorder, July 18, 1863, 117.
\textsuperscript{7}See Litwack, Storm, 64-103, and The Christian Recorder, July 18, 1863, 117.
\textsuperscript{8}The Christian Recorder, September 26, 1863, 153.
demonstrate their right to equality under the law. The black community needed to understand that the present conflict involved the destinies of both blacks and whites. This was a battle for both “God and liberty,” for noble ends, a pure cause, and universal results.

The opponents to black military involvement were portrayed as unshakeable in their hardened, absolute opposition to the supporters of the war efforts. The black copperheads were too ignorant or unmotivated to demonstrate their manhood by fighting for the very rights and opportunities they claimed to value. In addition to opposing black involvement in the regular military, some very influential people in the Washington community had little use for the idea of a “home guard.” For example, a meeting of those concerned with the formation of the home guard had to abandon plans for their July 10, 1863 meeting because the trustees of a local church refused them the right to use its facilities.9

Black Methodists not only answered the charges levelled against them by these black Christian critics but also responded to the white Copperheads who abhorred the idea of risking their lives to bring freedom to black people. A Christian Recorder commentator noted the anti-black, proslavery riots in New York City in 1863. This writer resented the fact that though blacks had been among the first to settle in the country every group which came thereafter had joined in the oppression of the race. The article reflected on-going tensions and conflicts between Irish immigrants and indigenous black Americans that resulted in some black-style nativist sentiments of corresponding intensity to that of native-born whites. “Even the ‘Irish,’ who were kept down and oppressed in their country, . . . and . . . in a certain sense of the word, were servants, are allowed to come over in all their grease and dirt, and are put above the most refined colored persons in the country. . . .” Originally the Irish had been unaccustomed to regarding themselves as superior to any race or group of people. The new immigrants initially had little difficulty in their impoverished state with moving into the same neighborhoods with blacks. But soon they learned that customs and laws would permit them to ride roughshod over the rights of blacks. They were encouraged by “a class [of people] here who would buy them rum and [whiskey] to get them to vote and swear men’s lives away.” But despite all of this mistreatment, African Americans still remained loyal to their government, unlike many of the pro-southern, Copperhead Irish.10

Opposition notwithstanding, many black Christians proceeded to involve themselves ministerially as well as militarily in the conflict. In May 1863 the first AME missionaries for work below the Mason Dixon line sailed from New York City, James D. S. Hall of the New York Conference

9The Christian Recorder, July 25, 1863, 121.
10The Christian Recorder, July 18, 1863, 118.
and James Lynch of the Baltimore Conference. In November 1863, Henry M. Turner left for the southern missionary field as the official Chaplain of the First District Regiment of U.S. Colored Troops. Turner’s commission as Chaplain was the first awarded an African-American in history. Many laudatory, but also some critical comments were attached to the pastor of Israel Bethel AME Church in Washington.\footnote{The Christian Recorder, May 30, 1863, 89, and The Christian Recorder, November 28, 1863, 189–190.} One thing is clear, however: the Christian Recorder during the Civil War years attests that Turner played a major role in the war effort and in debates within the AME Church. The Chaplain among other things 1) kept the denomination informed about the military bravery, heroism, activities, and conditions of black troops; 2) served as an advocate for their concerns, including their complaints about unequal treatment and pay in the army; 3) distributed copies of the denominational newspaper (Christian Recorder); 4) kept the general black populace informed on the progression of the war; and 5) passed along his viewpoints concerning theology and church politics as well as national politics. After the war, he remained in the south as a pastor and served in political offices during the Reconstruction.

James W. Hood, the AMEZ, and Black Church Expansion

As indicated earlier in this paper, representatives of independent black denominations—Methodists and Baptists—ventured south as designated missionaries to the newly-freed people behind advancing government forces. This phenomenon also reveals black church involvement in the conflict and the impact that that involvement had upon the black church. We now turn to the AMEZ and its participation in this arena. During the years 1863–1864 Bishop Joseph Jackson Clinton of the AMEZ Church dispatched four individuals to the southern mission fields, David Hill, W. G. Strong, W. F. Butler, and J. W. Hood. By practically all accounts J. W. Hood emerged as the most successful of these missionaries in terms of organizing churches and expanding the Zion denomination. By the time he was elected bishop in 1872 the majority membership of Zion had clearly shifted south. Various accounts credit him as establishing approximately 600 churches and supervising the erection of five hundred buildings in the south. The crucial role of Hood and other southern missionaries manifests itself in the establishment in North Carolina of the denominational newspaper, The Star of Zion, and Livingstone College in Salisbury, North Carolina (founded by J. C. Price with the active support of Hood). Of course there were other significant players in the missionary expansion. But clearly, Hood stands out as the most successful and the state of North Carolina, heavily influenced by him, emerged as the mother state of
Zionism, a reality still supported by the fact that Charlotte, North Carolina remains the headquarters for the group.12

Hood arrived in New Bern, North Carolina in January 1864 following the Union forces. He came with the intention of spreading the gospel and improving the conditions of the black race. He must have come to the new field of duty with both a keen sense of opportunity and a degree of trepidation. In his person is symbolized the fact that northern and southern black Christians were uniting and reuniting and that the northern black church in a spiritual sense was returning home. For example, Hood was surely aware of the fact that one of the earliest superintendents of the AMEZ, Christopher Rush, was born and spent some of his early life in New Bern, North Carolina, the site of Hood's first missionary activities. And, now he was returning as a denominational agent to the same area. To be sure, the missionary spent a substantial portion of his early days serving as a non-commissioned, but de facto Chaplain for African American soldiers. Indeed, the New Bern area was still a battleground, both religiously and militarily, in 1864. Two major military battles were being fought in the vicinity during the time following his arrival. Undoubtedly, the situation posed some physical danger for Hood.13

But the greater area of conflict for Hood and the AMEZ lay in the ecclesiastical domain. Andrews Chapel proved to be the center of Hood's first contest. Three other denominations were fighting for the allegiance of this congregation—the northern Methodist Episcopal Church represented by a Reverend J. E. Round, the Congregational Church represented by a white minister named Fitz, and finally the northern AME group. Hood masterfully pulled off a coup for the Zionites. First, he already enjoyed the advantage of having credentials of approval from the War Department. When the Secretary of War ruled that the members of Andrews Chapel themselves must be permitted to choose their affiliation, Hood moved quickly. On Easter Sunday he preached a very spiritual message after which he informed the people of the ruling. Perhaps given the powerful service led by Hood and the knowledge of some type of connection between them and the Zionites through the person of Christopher Rush, the congregation voted to join the Zion Family. This historic Andrews Chapel would later be renamed St. Peter's Church and become the "Mother Church of Zion Methodism in the South" and the mother of several churches in the immediate area. Within the first four months Hood had secured his first and historically significant victory on the mission field.14

13Walls, AMEZ, 185–187.
14Walls, AMEZ, 187–189.
The above description of the Andrews Chapel episode demonstrates the reality of evangelism in the south during the Civil War and post-War era. We normally associate “missions” with the conversion of people from one or no religion to another given religion. Actually, much of the theological rhetoric of the northern churches, black and white, Methodists and non-Methodists, during this time generally supported the idea that they were travelling south to save the poor, unfortunate, degraded, non-Christian slaves or former-slaves from barbarianism and non-religion to the Christian faith. In reality, as Wheeler and other historians illustrate, much of the increased memberships in the missionary denominations in the south derived less from converts in this particular understanding of conversion than by persuading and encouraging black southern church people to transfer their memberships from white-controlled southern groups to the missionary groups. Most of the new members in the AME, AMEZ, and the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (CME), founded in 1870, came at the expense of declining black membership with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. In 1861, the southern ME church included in its membership 207,000 black communicants. By 1866 that number had been reduced to 78,000 with the largest percentage of this number having defected to the black Baptists and to Methodists, white and black. It should be noted, however, that many if not most southern black Christians placed their true religious allegiance not in the outward, visible structure of the churches supervised by the white southern Methodists but in the unobserved, secret “invisible institution” of slave religion which convened during the night, behind cabin doors, or in other secluded spaces.

We must grant the presence of northern denominational rivalries. But we must not suppose that southern black Christians were mere unthinking pawns in the hands of outside forces. To be sure, these northern denominations provided valuable services to the southerners in terms of humanitarian ministries and by providing institutions whereby they could practice their faith and enjoy a degree of public, ecclesiastical freedom largely unknown during the era of slavery. Not surprisingly, northern black denominations secured the largest share of southern blacks’ allegiance because of the attractiveness of organizations controlled at all levels by black Christians and offering, in general, clearer possibilities for the greatest display of racial dignity and leadership. But the affiliations were made by thinking, southern black Christians based upon their perceptions of their interests and viewpoints.

15Wheeler, Uplifting, 14.

Hood extended his organizational skills and enthusiasm to other areas of the south, especially in the North Carolina cities of Wilmington, Fayetteville, and Charlotte. Because of Hood’s labors and those of other ministers and missions, Bishop J. J. Clinton, the supervisory bishop, was able to organize the North Carolina Annual Conference composed of a dozen ministers and 400 congregants on December 17, 1864. From this conference others developed in later years. In Wilmington, Hood extended the hegemony of the Zionites at the expense of the Allenites. The AME had followed the Union forces into the port city and acquired the allegiance of two black congregations, St. Stephens and St. Luke. Later, however, Hood was successful in persuading the congregation of St. Luke to transfer its allegiance to Zion. According to the Zion historian, Bishop Walls, Hood was “an adroit maneuverer and experienced missionary” who “worked ardently and manipulated matters so that the St. Luke Church withdrew from its compact with Bethel.”

The AMEZ changed the title of its supervisory officers from “superintendent” to “bishop” in 1868. Perhaps part of the motivation was to demonstrate the authenticity of the group’s Methodism by emphasizing the compatible structural make-up with the AME and the northern ME, with whom the Zionites were contemplating merger. Also, it is possible that the title “bishop” carried more prestige and apparent authority than “superintendent” and thus made Zion more equal in its ecclesiastical contests with other Methodist bodies for the allegiance of southern churchpeople. At any rate, we observe the impact of the war upon this black church, even in a matter so minor (or major) as the renaming of an ecclesiastical office.

Hood’s organizational skills and successes undoubtedly played a key role in elevating him to the office of bishop in 1872 and, in conjunction with the efforts of others, securing for North Carolina a central place in Zion Methodism. The General Conference of 1872, convening in Charlotte, struggled with a number of significant issues. One was the election of bishops. Hood seems to have been the only new bishop elected in 1872. With the death of Bishop J. J. Moore in 1894 after 25½ years of service, Hood became the senior bishop of the Church. Upon Hood’s removal from active service in 1916 he had served as bishop for a total of 44 years.

The Civil War and Black Methodist Ecumenicity

The third and final area of concern in this article is the significance of the war for interracial and intraracial movements toward the union of Methodist bodies. During the Civil War years and the imnmediate period

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17Walls, AMEZ, 188–189.
thereafter a number of individuals in the black Methodist Churches and the white ME Church and ME Church, South turned their attention toward organic union. From the perspectives of the black Methodists, efforts toward union were in two directions: 1) the creation of one pan-black Methodist body, and 2) union with the ME Church and in one instance an interest in some type of affiliation or union with the ME Church, South.

Though there were sincere efforts on the part of both blacks and whites, union of the ME and the black denominations failed for a number of reasons: the abiding sense among black Methodists that they had a special, providential mission as black churches; the freedom, authority, and power of black religious leadership that could not be enjoyed in white contexts; lingering racial prejudice among many white Methodists; and the ME's subordination of black interests to that of reuniting with white southerners.  

The most serious possibility for ecumenical union involving black Methodists, which in part was created by the conditions of the Civil War and emancipation, was that between the AME and AMEZ. There were some minor differences in the disciplines and practices of these two black organizations. For example, the Zionites permitted a greater role in governance for the laity and until 1868 referred to its episcopal leaders as superintendents rather than bishops. But these relatively minor obstacles were surmountable and as early as 1864 the two groups worked out an agreement on union under the name “The United African Methodist Episcopal Church in America.” The Articles of Confederation extolled union as consistent with Christian tradition and worldwide evangelism and the document addressed the specific condition occasioned by the Civil War, the need to unite black forces for “the instruction and elevation of the million of freedmen in the South.”

The anticipated union of black denominations, however, did not materialize in 1868 as planned. Both AME and AMEZ General Conferences approved the plan, but there appears to have been more opposition among the quarterly and Annual conferences of the AME. Surrendering positions of power and influence, reducing their impact, and forsaking certain aspects of denominational traditions seem to prove the obstacles black church people could not surmount. Bishop Walls in Chapter 30 of his massive work gives an account of the Zionites' ecumenical efforts during this period. As the merger between the AME and the AMEZ was appearing to falter by 1868, the latter turned its attention to union with the ME. But by 1872 the Zion bishops had stated their opposition to any union with the white group and from 1880 onward chances for union of Zion

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and ME became increasingly remote. When the ME, S supported the formation of the black Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church from its membership in 1870, this action eventually encouraged the AME and Zion to begin merger negotiations afresh in 1884. But by 1896 it was clear that no pan-African Methodist union was within reach and each group resorted to blaming the other for the failure. 21

Perhaps the greatest regret within the ranks of the independent black Methodists came not over the failure to unite with each other or with the white-controlled Methodist group. Rather, it was the creation of the Colored (later, Christian) Methodist Episcopal Church in 1870. As indicated above, this group came into existence with the support of the ME, South. The predominantly white group assisted its black membership of approximately 80,000 members to establish their own independent church free of both white and northern black control. The AME and Zion groups both interpreted the inauguration of this denomination as a sinister plot on the part of ME, S to prevent the further consolidation of black Methodist forces. Bishop Walls and other Zion as well as AME historians have tended to portray CME leaders such as bishop William H. Miles and Richard H. Vanderhorst at best as pawns in the hands of whites and at worst as "Uncle Toms." To support this analysis they point to the fact that during the post Civil War era the CME denomination tended to remain aloof, officially speaking, from political activities that were understood as detrimental to the desire of many southern whites to exercise political and economic domination over blacks.

CME historians, such as Bishop Othal Lakey, conversely emphasize the active role of CME leaders in the formation of the denomination. These leaders in creative, diplomatic, and self-sacrificing ways did the best that could be expected in a relatively sensitive and difficult situation. Though as an official policy the denomination did not encourage partisan politics, neither did it prohibit individual ministers and laypersons from exercising their civil rights. Lakey points out the fact that the church properties that CME occupied were legal possessions of the ME, S and that some compromise had to be drafted to secure full control of these by the CME. 22 It is also instructive that the AMEs and AMEZs did not operate from unmixed motives. One might argue that the independent black groups saw the southern blacks as pawns to buttress their own organizations' power and influence. At some point, the CME historians seem to posit, the southern black Methodists made it clear that they were not pawns or "spoils" of battle, but free people who would decide their own destiny. There is abundant evidence that northern black and white Christians

21 See Walls, AMEZ, 459-471.
coming south had distorted and incomplete impressions of the enslaved and formerly enslaved. Northerners often undervalued the significant role that southern black Christians had played in the interpretation and dissemination of the gospel among themselves. Conversely, they overrated the influence of the white proslavery ministers and the inhibiting socio-economic factors of American chattel slavery as they related to southern black interpretations of the faith.

Both the critics and the CME historians have some truth on their side. It is very reasonable to suspect that the many white southern Methodists had no intention of permitting independent black Methodists to consolidate their ecclesiastical power in the south if it endangered white political domination. They would surely prefer to place their legally-owned church properties into the hands of those who would not use them in overt, political, Republican causes. On the other hand, it is too simplistic and probably unfair to credit the organization of the CME solely to the political machinations of southern white Methodists. Rather, it must be judged possible that Miles and Vanderhorst left the AME because they saw greater opportunities for service, influence, and recognition in a newly-created CME. In addition, we must not forget the average layperson. In many instances he or she preferred the church surroundings, ministers, and styles of worship with which he/she was accustomed. These took precedence over disputes and opinions about more distant bishops and quarterly, annual, and general conferences.

**Conclusion**

We may conclude that factors relating to and arising from the Civil War had a profound impact upon both the theology and structure of the independent black denominations: the campaign to enlist black soldiers; the fervent conviction that God was liberating an enslaved people and creating a racially inclusive Christian democracy; black sponsorship of missionaries and church organizers for work in the south; greatly increased memberships and ecclesiastical hegemonies of independent black denominations; union of southern and northern black Christians in the AME and AMEZ; and the organization of a new body, the CME.

Black Methodist denominations did not succeed in forming ecumenical union, but the fact that so many black Christians actively and earnestly pursued this goal so consistently was such that it reminded them that in some real, significant way they were nevertheless racially and spiritually united as one people and had some collective, providential destiny and responsibility.

Finally, the Civil War meant emancipation for thousands of black Christians who for the first time in American history knew the substantial meaning of open, freely expressed worship. These ex-enslaved people's love for religious and political liberties, nurtured by the history of a chattel bondage that had sought to stamp out or vastly curtail both, reinvigorated
the originally northern-based churches and greatly strengthened the new CME. In sum, the Civil War for nineteenth century black Christians and their white sympathizers was not simply a military conflict; it was a new Exodus.