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To Willie and Lillian Little
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INTRODUCTION

A Slice of a Movement

At the turn of the century, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church served as a vanguard institution of political and social activism in the formative middle stages of a worldwide social revolution that culminated, in part, in the civil rights movement of the 1960’s, a revolution that redefined social, political, and economic relations between differing peoples of the world. From at least the Crusades, Europeans and, later, Americans have used skin color and physical characteristics as a basis to dominate and impose their institutions upon the world's people of color. This domination included the near extermination of Native Americans, the enslavement of Africans, the colonization of much of the world, and the physical and intellectual destruction of numerous civilizations. Such acts enabled the European and American communities to achieve a near worldwide hegemony by the close of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth.

Indeed, this period from the partition of Africa in 1884 to the United States invasion of Haiti in 1916, the age of imperialism, marked European and American attempts to
expand and solidify their institutions across the globe. Imperialism affected most of the nations of the world, as colonizer or colony. The nations of Europe had partitioned and colonized nearly all of Africa and most of Asia. Imperialist leaders hoped that colonies would provide raw materials and cheap labor; readily accessible markets for finished products; and, extremely important to the colonizers, an enhanced international image and status. Having colonies was tantamount to being a world power. The Spanish-American War and the subsequent Philippine-American War marked the entry of the United States into this economically profitable yet humanly exploitive world of imperialism.

Meanwhile in the United States, the age of imperialism was marked by increased racism, racial violence, discrimination, and disfranchisement that further polarized American society, forcing African Americans to actively pursue full equality and self-determination. Moreover, many African Americans at the turn of the century concluded that the increased racial prejudice and violence that they suffered was a part of the political, social, and economic domination that European and American imperialists were attempting to impose upon the rest of the globe. In the face of this imperial agenda—an agenda by which the stronger nations of the world seemingly led a worldwide movement against darker people—many leaders in the AME
Church developed a cosmopolitan view of racial prejudices and injustices that expressed the need for universal human rights and emphasized self-determination and equality.

Indeed, in the future, leaders of the civil rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's actively supported international demands for self-determination, especially in Africa, and often concluded that the question of civil rights in the United States was part of a broader search for universal human rights. The drive for self-determination and equality that spurred the civil rights movement in the United States simultaneously motivated movements for independence throughout the world. Still, the civil rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's too often is confined to the borders of the United States and not placed within a broader international or historical context. Throughout the course of American history, the African American struggle for equality and self-determination has been a part of a worldwide social revolution to end European and American hegemony.¹

Thus, international, as well as national, issues and events have continuously influenced the manner African Americans have shaped and refined the arguments, motivations, goals, and strategies in the struggle for equality and self-determination of which the civil rights movement was a part. Each generation of African Americans adopted, according to circumstance, various ideologies and
tactics that they believed would lead to autonomy and full equality. The struggle in North America began in 1619 with the arrival of the first Africans at Jamestown, Virginia colony and, until the Civil War, focused on the liberation of American slaves. Thus, events and issues like slave revolts in the Caribbean, the international antislavery and antislave trade movements, the possibility of self-determination in Liberia, and the liberation of Haiti had profound effects on the abolition movement in the United States.

In the post Civil War era of Reconstruction, African Americans planted the seeds for the modern day civil rights movement. Former American slaves demanded civil and political rights to protect their new found freedom. Throughout Reconstruction, African Americans supported antislavery movements in Brazil and the Caribbean as constant reminders of the subjugation of liberty that continued to exist in the world. Yet at home, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments proved ineffective, and African Americans experienced a period that institutionalized segregation and discrimination in the United States. This story examines that period, the age of imperialism, when many African Americans began to recognize that their worsening plight in the United States paralleled the plight of many people across the globe who suffered under the grip of imperial powers.
Still, the story does not conclude here. World War I, the League of Nations, and issues on international self-determination coincided with the spread of Pan-Africanism and the emergence of the "New Negro" during the 1920's and 1930's. Meanwhile, the Garvey movement of the 1920's had profound international implications that included much of the African diaspora and placed a greater emphasis on black nationalism. With World War II, African Americans at home and abroad fought for the double victory against fascism and for democracy. Armed with victory abroad and the promise of democracy, African American veterans returned home to kick start and energize the civil rights movement. Meanwhile, World War II veterans from colonial nations in Africa and Asia intensified efforts toward independence for their nations. Throughout the 1950's and 1960's, the civil rights movement and independence movements, especially in Africa, influenced one another and were influenced by international issues and events like the Cold War and the formation of the United Nations.²

Still, the story continues. As long as economic and social inequities across the globe continue to exist because of skin color or physical characteristics, then the worldwide social revolution continues. Strides have been made in the arena of civil and political rights, yet the promise of civil rights and independence has yet to bring about full equality and self-determination for most of the
darker peoples of the world. Therefore, as in generations past, universal human rights, which includes economic and social equality as well as civil and political rights remains a deep concern for African Americans. Consequently, the study of the efforts of an earlier generation of African American leaders greatly broadens the historical understanding of the scope, breadth, and continuity of the civil rights movement and its role in the wider worldwide social revolution.

In this episode of the long durée and in many of the episodes that follow, although many African Americans supported universal human rights, domestic considerations caused civil and political rights to be major focuses that at times placed universal human rights in jeopardy. African Americans at the turn of the century grappled with questions of self-determination and equality at home and abroad. The story at hand examines the leadership of an autonomous African American religious organization, the AME Church, and how that leadership viewed the world and their place in the world during the age of imperialism. Several scholars, upon which this work attempts to build, have documented the history of the denomination or have used the church to examine some aspect of the African American experience. Typical of the more general early church histories is The History of the African Methodist Church, written by Bishop Daniel Payne in 1891. Elected the denomination's first
official church historian by the 1848 General Conference, Payne spent years collecting interviews, church records, conference reports, diaries, and other related church documents and painstakingly chronicled the development of the church from 1816 to 1856.¹

Later church histories include George Singleton's *The Romance of African Methodism* (1952) and Bishop Richard Wright's *Bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (1963). Singleton, former editor of the AME's *Christian Recorder*, maintained that the church was a protest similar to Runnymede and concluded that the rise of the AME must be considered in the light of "revolutionary ideas in the realm of religious, political and social philosophy," formed in the dawning days of the Republic. Throughout his study, Singleton stressed AME efforts to increase racial self-esteem and self-help in the African American community.

Wright, official church historiographer, used brief biographies on the eighty AME bishops elected from 1816 to 1962 to illustrate the role of bishops in the development of the church. Wright maintained that the church sprang from sociological differences rather than theological differences with the primarily white Methodist Episcopal denomination and that the AME church was the first African American experiment at self-government, which American society closely scrutinized. All three histories concentrated on internal church developments, especially theological, and as
Singleton's title suggested, all tended to be romantic, viewing the spread of African Methodism as part of God's grand design.4

Biographies of prominent AME members have been useful tools for more recent studies on the development of the denomination and its role in the African American community and American society. In Segregated Sabbaths: Richard Allen and the Emergence of Independent Black Churches (1973), Carol George maintains that the life of the AME founder exemplified the separatist movement that swept black religion from the American Revolution through the early national period. Calvin S. Morris, in Reverdy C. Ransom: Black Advocate of the Social Gospel (1992), examines the early career of Ransom before he became a bishop in 1924. Concentrating on the progressive era, Morris asserts that as a black Christian activist and Social Gospeler, Ransom used the power of the church to seek racial and social advancement for African Americans. Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, because of his black nationalist and African emigrationist stances, has been the focus of several works including Stephen Angell's Bishop Henry McNeal Turner and African America Religion in the South (1992). Angell examines Turner's role as a denomination builder who helped to transform the church from a regional to a national organization by facilitating a change in power relations within the church that reflected the population and
influence of AME southerners. Although not biography, Clarence Walker’s *A Rock in a Weary Land: The African Methodist Episcopal Church During the Civil War and Reconstruction* (1982) complements the other works and examines denominational missionary activities in the South. Walker contends that AME missionaries in the South, as God’s instruments, developed a common belief system that sought to Christianize and improve the social and economic status of black Southerners, thereby helping to create a black middle class. All of these studies, as does this dissertation, depend on the wealth of data—including conference reports, budgets, autobiographies, and publications—left behind by members of the AME church.

Greatly assisting this study are the three official publications that the AME published at the turn of the century, the *AME Church Review*, a quarterly magazine; *The Voice of Missions*, a monthly missionary newspaper; and the *Christian Recorder*, a weekly newspaper. All three publications were read widely within the African American community and are valuable sources in establishing the diverse opinions of individuals and groups within the AME. African-American newspapers, published during this period, notably the *Baltimore Ledger*, *Indianapolis Freeman*, *Cleveland Gazette*, and *Chicago Broadax*, place AME activities in a broader context in relation to the African American community in general. Also nationally circulated, these
newspapers reported local, national, and international news and, like the AME publications, writers expressed opinions and responses that often differed from those expressed by the mainstream American press.  

Other important sources of information in this story are the published minutes and proceedings from the AME general conferences, held every four years, and the regional annual conferences. Each general and annual conference appointed a committee to draft a "State of the Country" report that formulated the stance of the conference on various issues that committee members believed faced the nation and the world. The committee members packed the reports with persuasive rhetoric designed to influence public opinion and government policy and often included a list of resolutions to accompany the report. The delegates of the conference then debated the report before adopting it, often making additions and deletions. Men dominated these conferences, yet the women of the AME also held conferences, and their emphasis on missionary societies fostered a concern for international affairs. Although they differed in level of detail, the published conference proceedings furnish a wealth of fresh information with which to reconstruct the institutional actions and responses of the AME leadership to international events and issues and to the dilemmas of worldwide imperialism.
The story, which is told in analytical narrative form and uses the voices of the participants as often as possible, focuses on the highly political, confident, and outspoken AME clergy, but does not exclude influential lay people. Many of these leaders developed a political consciousness that actively pursued a course of international and national self-determination. Still, their efforts often were hampered by the very political ideology and rhetoric and the theology they helped to develop and their belief in the promise of western society. An examination of the AME Church, imperialism, and world events at the turn of the century provides insight into African American thought in the area of United States foreign policy, an area often overlooked. Members of the AME scrutinized American, European, and Asian imperial and colonial policies and international events related to autonomy and the reporting of these incidents and policies by an American press that was often racist, manipulative, and jingoistic. They responded with rhetoric that sought to influence American foreign policy and sway and inform the African American community. In doing so, the interplay between black theology and black political ideology as played on an international field caused conflicts, dilemmas, and contradictions within the church. Nevertheless, the concern by AME members for world events and issues clearly illustrated the little explored cosmopolitan outlook.
developed by many African Americans apprehensive over their place in the world. By placing the civil rights movement in the broader perspective of international movements of self-determination, this study examines the more universal goals and aspirations of African Americans who viewed their condition in the United States as a domestic offshoot of worldwide imperialism and racism. The actions and rhetoric of the AME leadership in the greater arena of international events and issues revealed the development of an AME agenda on universal human rights and self-determination that included most of the world’s oppressed peoples.
Endnotes for Introduction


7. For instance, August Meier’s study of *Negro Thought in America* during the same time period only mentions the affect imperialism had on white Southerners. Similarly, Thomas Bailey’s *A Diplomatic History of the American People* has no reference to African Americans.
Chapter I

One Church, Indivisible: The Political Structure of the AME

The AME Church is one of the best examples of African American religious institutional development. Founded in 1816, the AME Church is the oldest and, for much of the nineteenth century, was the largest African American religious denomination. By 1890, the AME had a membership of 466,202, a number that had increased to 673,700 by 1900. The AME church reached every corner of the United States with more than 4,000 churches and parsonages valued at 6.8 million dollars and located in every major city. In 1890, the church leadership consisted of ten bishops, seven general officers, 196 presiding elders, and more than 16,000 pastors, ministers, and local preachers. Extremely influential and political, AME church members, beyond the prominent clergy, included businesspeople, educators, journalists, and politicians. Especially in urban areas, the AME drew from the black middle class for leadership and support.¹

In 1890, the church also supported twenty-three educational institutions including five colleges (such as Wilberforce University in Ohio, the oldest African American college; Allen University in South Carolina; and Morris
Brown College in Atlanta) as well as eighteen other schools, academies, and seminaries valued at $425,000. Church members participated in the debate concerning liberal arts and industrial education for African Americans and produced a great deal of rhetoric that supported both sides of the argument. Nevertheless, the meager funds allocated and lack of viable curricula for industrial education supports James Anderson’s conclusions in *The Education of Blacks in the South* (1988) that the AME placed a "low priority" on industrial education. Instead, the primary stimulus for building schools came from the need and desire to have an educated ministry. Thus, curricula for all AME schools included a significant emphasis on moral and religious training. Delegates at the 1896 North Ohio Conference illustrated this concern when they maintained that "Our first care should be to provide for the training of educated ministers, teachers and leaders of the people." William Gaines, an AME presiding elder who lectured at Fisk University and Gammon Seminary in Georgia, further maintained that education was an important requirement for interpreting the Bible. Delegates at the 1900 General Conference displayed the importance of education by fighting to get more money for schools in their districts, accusing one another of prejudice toward certain parts of the country. By 1900, the number of AME schools, colleges, universities, and seminaries had increased to more than
forty-one, and between 1884 and 1899, AME members had raised $1,140,013 for education.  

The AME church as an institution was an active and integral part of the African American community, responding to its physical as well as spiritual needs. The age of imperialism marked a period of transition for society in the United States. Technological changes initiated a drive toward industrialization and urbanization that, along with racism and nativism, fortified rigid social, economic, and political hierarchies in American society. The vast imbalance in the distribution of wealth left millions of Americans unable to share fully in the fruits of scientific and technological advances. American institutions underwent profound changes, and AME members constantly devised and amended institutional goals to respond to a transitional American society. Thus, AME leaders consistently sought answers to the economic downturns that adversely affected the African American community and to the racism and discrimination that polarized American society.  

Indeed, the AME church members displayed the reform traditions of the progressive era, primarily seeking change within the parameters of American society. Consequently, AME members engaged in a variety of reform and social welfare activities to benefit the African American community. For instance in Chicago in 1900, the radical and highly political AME minister Reverdy Ransom, whose church
was bombed in 1903 after sermons denouncing political corruption, organized the Institutional Church and Settlement House based on the moral and social redemption tenets of the social gospel. Incorporating the themes of racial solidarity and self-help, the AME church established old folks' homes, orphanages, and mutual benefit societies. The denomination operated kindergartens and libraries, lecture and literary societies as well as penny savings banks and employment agencies. For much of the period, the black church in general provided the major source of social welfare activities for the African American community. Members of the AME realized they lived in an era of reform and, as seen in a speech by W. H. Council, president of an AME normal school in Alabama, searched for their place within the movement.

Not only did AME members participate in the reform and social welfare traditions, they also exhibited much of the impulse toward organization and efficiency that characterized the era. Historians of progressivism who ascribe to what is known as the organizational synthesis maintain that organization building--with its new and innovative forms of bureaucratization, integration, and marketing and its drive toward professionalization--constituted the primary process of change in America's basic institutions. They further assert that this process involved a fundamental shift by a new middle class to values
that stressed efficiency, continuity, systematic controls, and group action. Unfortunately, these scholars have overlooked the organizational synthesis in efforts at organization building in the African American community. Moreover, these historians tend to view African Americans as essentially victims, targets of both scorn and reform. Yet, members of the AME church displayed many of the attributes of the synthesis. In 1900, participants at the North Ohio Conference maintained that African Americans could best improve their positions through organization building, while members of the Indiana Conference maintained that "we must perfect organizations already in existence rather than create new ones. Though they seem at odds, nevertheless, they both stressed the importance of organizations. Meanwhile at the 1900 General Conference, church officials made efforts to centralize finances and to departmentalize and consolidate various functions in the name of efficiency. Such actions suggest that African Americans actively sought to bring more order to their institutions and make them more efficient and that members of the AME actively sought to improve the organizational structure of their church.4

The ministry of the AME also became more professional during this period. Indeed, the clergy of the AME could be viewed as leading the way in the professionalization of Protestant ministers in America. In "Military Professionalism and Officership in America," Allan Millet
asserts that during the nineteenth century, the authority and dominance of Protestant ministers declined because congregations began to demand that ministers justify their social usefulness more than their religious functions. Accordingly, ministers sought to gain their former status and authority through the social gospel and by applying skills of occupations such as youth or social worker, teacher, sociologist, and social psychologist. The clergy of the AME did not suffer a corresponding decline in authority. On the contrary, an increasingly hostile and divided American society enhanced the status of ministers in the community. Buoyed by an African helping tradition, AME ministers, as all black ministers, had long been accustomed to providing for the social needs of the African-American community that other segments of American society ignored. Discrimination and segregation intensified those needs. The AME also fulfilled another prerequisite to professionalization by creating an educational system designed to produce a learned and professional ministry, capable of teaching as well as preaching. Rather than victims, members of the AME sought to participate in the transitional American society, regardless of racial limitations.5

The organizational structure and, more specifically, the political structure of the AME church played an important role in the manner AME members responded to
international events and world affairs. Founded on principles of self-determination, the church provided a political framework that allowed political participation and the growth of leadership outside the norm of American politics and encouraged the development of a political rhetoric that was strongly rooted in the traditions of American republicanism. In many ways, the AME church functioned on the representative principle. The five levels of conferences—general, annual, district, quarterly, and church—performed the legislative functions, representing national, regional or state, and local divisions within the denomination. They also performed some judicial functions. At the highest level were the general conferences, which, from the founding of the church in 1816, AME officials held every four years. The 1900 General Conference was the 21st Quadrennial Session, and included 267 ministerial and 127 lay delegates from eleven episcopal districts and sixty-five annual conferences. A different bishop presided over the conference each day. The general conference formulated official church policy and, according to the by-laws, had "full power to make rules, regulations and modifications under certain limitations and restrictions." Although influential, the bishops had no veto power over the decisions of the conference, which, as all the conferences, operated on the one person one vote method to reach decisions. Members of the annual conferences elected
delegates to the general conference. The ministers of each annual conference elected one representative for every twenty of their number. Meanwhile an electoral college composed of an elected lay official from each church within the bounds of an annual conference elected two lay representatives for the general conference.⁶

The episcopal districts were divided into annual conferences, representing a particular region or state and presided over by the bishop of that region. The annual conference made rules and regulations within the region as long as they did not conflict with rules established by the general conference. The annual conferences varied in size. For example in 1900, the Pittsburgh conference had seventy-nine delegates; the Ohio conference had fifty-seven, while the California conference had only twenty. Composed of all the traveling ministers, pastors, and elected local preachers as well as elected lay officials from the circuits and churches within the conference, representatives at the annual conferences often displayed a degree of independence from the presiding bishop who did have a veto power. The annual conferences were divided into district conferences composed of several circuits, stations, or missions. Presided over by an elder and occasionally a bishop, the district conference conducted AME business within the various districts. The quarterly conferences, which met four times a year, and the church conferences, which met at
least once a month, conducted religious and secular business for the individual circuits and churches within the district. Although all ministers automatically served in the district, quarterly, and church conferences, congregations elected the local preachers and lay members who participated. Working under the premise of one person one vote, the various conferences illustrated the democratic spirit that ran deeply within African Methodism.⁷

The ministry served as the executive and judicial branches of the AME. The Council of Bishops, composed of all the bishops and headed by the senior bishop, met semi-annually to manage administrative affairs. The general conference assigned bishops to the various episcopal districts; however, the Council of Bishops annually reviewed those assignments and could and did make changes when necessary. It was not uncommon for bishops to rotate assignments yearly. Still, bishops had authority over the entire connection and were not confined to particular districts; they were pastors-in-chief of all the churches in the connection. Although such a system enhanced the bishops' power at a national level, it also contributed to greater autonomy by regional and local leaders. The bishops, assisted by presiding elders, managed the day-to-day activities of the church within the episcopal districts. Indeed, the word "Episcopal" in the name denoted rule by bishop. Every four years at the general conference, church
delegates elected new bishops, if needed because of expansion, death, or retirement. Bishops were answerable to the general conference, which could suspend, expel, or reprimand them for improper or imprudent behavior. As overseers or superintendents of the church, their duty was to travel at large and conduct the spiritual and temporal affairs of the denomination.8

Presiding elders were assistant bishops, a sort of sub-episcopate. Bishops appointed presiding elders who governed in local districts just as bishops did in episcopal districts; they were pastors-in-chief for all the churches within the district. Presiding elders could not serve in the same district for more than four consecutive years and likewise traveled throughout their districts conducting the spiritual and temporal affairs of the church. At the general conference the presiding elders of each episcopal district formed Episcopal Cabinets that made recommendations and suggestions on appointments and other church matters to the bishop of their district. Presiding elders were answerable to the annual conference as well as the bishop, both of whom had powers of removal. Members of the AME church considered the presiding eldership system "a system of power, strength, and forcibleness to the Methodist Church." The bishops and presiding elders wielded an enormous amount of power within the AME, and in The Negro Church in America (1963), E. Franklin Frazier likened the
hierarchy of black Methodist denominations to czars who rewarded and punished subordinates to extract loyalty. Nevertheless, the lack of bishop veto power, the removal powers of the conferences, and the required mobility in appointments insured that the general conference was the final authority and hampered the ability to consolidate power in any one specific area.⁹

Ordained traveling minsters, pastors, and deacons, and licensed local preachers exercised executive duties at the local level. Pastors and local preachers remained at home and could find secular employment although pastors who did such did not receive full pay. Traveling minsters could not pursue a secular occupation and were expected to devote their full energies to the church and be ready to do any work and travel anywhere the church sent them. In a sense, the AME considered the entire ministry as traveling ministers, and the ability to travel was an important prerequisite for advancement within the ranks. Each ministerial position, with the exception of presiding elder, required some type of election from one the conferences. Because of the highly competitive nature of positions within the AME ministry, members of the clergy consistently projected themselves in a manner that would improve their chances for advancement and leadership roles in the church and thereby the African American community.¹⁰
Lay officials also contributed essential administrative duties, especially financial and legal. The various lay positions, as the ministerial positions did for the ministry, offered the opportunity for political competition and upward mobility among the laity. Congregations elected or approved most lay officials, providing mass participation within the AME political process and structure. Church congregations elected three to nine trustees whose primary duties included holding legal title to church property. In theory, women, who also voted for trustees, could serve as trustees although the church discouraged such practice. Trustees also cared for and improved church property, represented the church in legal matters, and generally managed all secular affairs not already provided for. The extent of the powers and duties of the trustees was a source of debate within the AME. At times, as AME attorney D. August Straker noted in 1887, trustees found themselves suing the church rather than representing it in matters that concerned "property owned by the people."

Other lay officials included stewards and class-leaders who were considered spiritual officers with temporal duties. Nominated by the pastors and elected by the quarterly conferences, stewards served as advisors to the pastors and performed such duties as opening and preparing the church, providing for janitorial services, and collecting church donations. Three to nine stewards per church comprised
Boards of Stewards who chose the official church recording secretary and treasurer from their ranks. Class-leaders, appointed by the pastors and charged with teaching the doctrine, conducted religious classes, administered relief to the sick and poor, and collected church donations. The stewards and the class-leaders met weekly to form an Official Board, which the pastor chaired and which made decisions on the day-to-day operation of the church. The lay officials served as valuable links between the congregation and the ministry and more directly represented the congregations on the various boards, councils, and conferences within the AME. The participation of the congregations within the political process added to the democratic and republican spirit of the AME. Congregations elected the electoral colleges which chose the lay delegates to the general conferences, and the 127 lay delegates at the 1900 General Conference represented a significant voting force. Moreover, the system was designed so that the ministry and laity formed checks on one another that preserved the constitutional rights of both. Congregations not only elected and approved lay officials, they also voted on many decisions concerning individual churches from financial matters to capital improvements to new membership, further adding to the democratic spirit.¹²
Women also participated in the organizational and political structure of the AME, which likewise provided women the opportunity to develop critical political skills and leadership outside the norm of American politics. Not only did women participate as equal members in elections at the congregational level, they also formed conferences to support the missionary activities of the church. In 1874, the wives of seven bishops founded the Woman's Parent Mite Missionary Society, and two years later, the 1876 General Conference officially recognized the society's role within denominational affairs. The Parent Society established conferences that corresponded with the principal general and annual conferences. This allowed the wives of the ministers to be in conference at the same time as their husbands. Local auxiliaries of the society elected delegates to the annual conferences who elected delegates to the general conference. The membership of the Parent Society, however, was entirely from the North; therefore, in the early 1890's, AME women in the Midwest and South formed the Home and Foreign Missionary Society. The separate societies created some sectional tensions, and leaders of both societies failed to agree to efforts to unite the two at the 1900 General Conference. The two eventually united in 1944. The primary charge of the women's missionary societies was to raise funds for home and foreign missions, a function they
performed expertly.\textsuperscript{13}

The question of whether women could or should serve as ordained ministers received considerable debate within the AME. Bishops like William B. Derrick and Henry M. Turner supported licensed female preachers but not ordained ministers. Turner maintained that there were "too many, drunkards, gamblers, liars, lynchers, mobs, Sabbath breakers, blasphemers, slanderers and sinners in the land to stop and quibble over women preachers." The 1884 General Conference recognized female preachers and allowed them to become licensed. Several AME women preachers were active in states in the North and South and as such were automatic voting members in the quarterly conferences. Nevertheless, although Sarah A. Hughes became the first ordained woman minister in 1885, the church eschewed such action throughout the period. Instead, the 1888 General Conference created the office of deaconesses, a sort of quasi-ministerial position for women. Certified by the church, deaconesses performed an array of duties, prime among which was "to minister" to the poor and sick. Each annual conference formed a nine-member Board of Deaconesses that included at least three women and that certified deaconesses recommended by the quarterly conferences. Some women in the AME defined the word "minister" quite literally and considered deaconesses the equivalent of ordained ministers, noting as Mary Louise did in the August, 1899, \textit{Voice of Missions} that
Deaconesses "conducted revivals, saved souls and built churches." Nevertheless, most members of the AME regarded deaconesses in a similar light as stewardesses.¹⁴

Stewardesses were lay officials of the church who assisted stewards, class-leaders, and pastors in spiritual and temporal affairs. The pastor of each church nominated and the Board of Stewards elected a three to nine member Board of Stewardesses. Although they had no legislative or judicial power, stewardesses performed administrative duties that kept the church smoothly functioning. Most of the women who were active in church affairs were the wives of the bishops, presiding elders, and ministers, and as Cynthia Neverdon Morton concludes in *Afro-American Women of the South* (1989), women often implemented the programs and plans that men devised. Several women involved in denominational affairs, like Ida B. Wells, Frances Ellen Walker Harper, Fanny Jackson Coppin, and Josie D. Heard, were active in social and political affairs outside of the church. Heard, speaking for the Parent Missionary Society, maintained that "whenever the conditions of the American negro is discussed, or wherever any effort is put forth for the bettering of his condition, that there we also have an interest." On behalf of the Society, she sent a communication to the 1899 meeting of the National Afro-American Council pledging the Society's support. Politically active women such as Josephine Turpin and Mary Church Terrell maintained close relationships with
the AME and were constant speakers at AME events and contributors to the various AME publications. Although women suffered sexism within the denomination, the AME church, nevertheless, provided a political structure in which women participated and offered a more egalitarian atmosphere than the rest of American society.¹⁵

III

Indeed, the organizational and political structure of the denomination furthered the democratic and republican nature of the AME and allowed participation in decision making at nearly every level. Members were consistently concerned with the type of people who would represent them at the various levels. Church members and officials, like presiding elder Walter Thomas, repeatedly reminded one another to elect to the various conferences delegates "who are true African Methodist" and "who are not political tricksters and wire pullers." Viola Caliman, delegate to the 1901 Pittsburgh Missionary Society Conference, warned members to avoid "a selfish ambition for office and honor . . . [and] cliques and rings" that only have "their own selfish interest in view." In Henry M. Turner's The Genius and Theory of Methodist Polity, which the 1888 General Conference accepted as the official guide book for the ministry and laity, the senior bishop outlined the qualifications for various church positions. Beyond education, piety, character, and honesty, Turner cited
assertiveness, business practicality, impartiality, judgement, and broad views as ideal qualifications for officials of the AME. Such qualifications suggest that the AME sought to enlist people who could deal with the challenges of a secular world.\textsuperscript{16}

Members competed fiercely for the highly coveted and influential positions within the various conferences and the AME bureaucracy, and it was likely that people voted for those who represented their views. Moreover, each member of the clergy had to pass through three elective positions in order to be positioned for an appointment to presiding elder. With more than 16,000 members in the clergy in 1900, many of whom actively pursued advancement within the church, the AME was a very political organization. In an era of discrimination and disfranchisement, these delegates often constituted the only African Americans for whom African Americans voted. Moreover in the South, the church provided the only opportunity for many African Americans to vote for anyone. Not bound to follow the opinions of the presiding bishops or elders, the delegates made decisions based on their views and the views of their constituents.

Members of the AME also used the church as a national and international political forum from which they addressed issues that affected the African American community, the nation, and the world. In several ways, many of the women and men of the AME functioned as members of what black
political theorist and activist W. E. B. Du Bois termed as the "Talented Tenth," educated people capable of leading the African American community in a plural American society. Thus, they functioned as leaders of one of the interest groups that James Madison believed was so necessary to keep democracy from becoming tyrannical. As the age of imperialism encompassed more people of color, many within the AME extended their leadership roles to represent and identify with oppressed people in a plural international society. In a world of increasing political alienation for people of color, the AME stood as one of the few voices of color within an emerging world power that could speak out against the national and global subjugation of liberty.

Accordingly, the political-minded ministry and laity of the AME developed a political ideology and rhetoric that was strongly rooted in traditions of American republicanism and in the African American struggle against American racism. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, AME members sought self-determination as the means to liberty and equality for African Americans and indigenous people of foreign lands. Much of world history has developed around the concept of self-determination—the ability to make choices, to be self-governing, and to act according to independent beliefs and values. Self-determination has been both motivation and goal in American society since the earliest colonists who linked self-
legislation with liberty and equality. Synthesizing Whig ideology, Lockean philosophy and other seventeenth century political theories, the promoters of the American Revolution espoused a political rhetoric that promised a republican government with full participation by all citizens. Full participation, however, did not come as white Americans placed limits on black Americans through racism.

Meanwhile, during the early national period, AME founder Richard Allen and others, influenced by racial restrictions and the need to express Christianity through black theology initiated a black religious separatist movement that contributed to the democratization of American religion as described by Nathan Hatch in *The Democratization of American Christianity* (1989). Indeed, Hatch maintains that African American preachers were the "most striking evidence of the democratization of Christianity" because they were able "to infuse ordinary existence with profound spiritual meaning," making them natural leaders in the black community. Black ministers manifested much of that "spiritual meaning" in the black theological gospel of liberation, developed in response to two hundred years of slavery. Thus, buoyed by the liberation gospel in the ideological struggle against racism, African Americans and, specifically, members of the AME began to develop political rhetoric and action that reflected the spirit of the American Revolution and that, in part, led to the Civil War
Members of the AME during Reconstruction, as Clarence Walker illustrates in *A Rock in a Weary Place* (1982), through a version of American "civil religion," attempted to ensure full equality and participation by educating former slaves in the South to be good American citizens and Christians. Moreover, as God's chosen, it was the duty of the church to participate in the liberation of African Americans and the realization of American democratic ideals by eliminating racism. During the age of imperialism, AME leaders continued to practice and expand this version of American civil religion to oppose international as well as national racism that limited access to self-determination for people of color in the United States and across the globe. Also during the age of imperialism, members of the AME displayed elements of the five themes of black political thought described by Charles Hamilton in *The Black Experience in American Politics* (1973)--constitutionalism, sovereign nationalism, plural nationalism, leftist thought, and pan-Africanism. Plural nationalism stressed racial consciousness and cohesiveness and cooperative action to avoid complete assimilation or separation. The traditions of racism and republicanism and the autonomous nature of the AME led the majority of politically active members to pursue a course toward plural nationalism in the United States. Meanwhile, imperialism and its racial implications led
members to expand their thought into a plural internationalism that would export American ideals and institutions without American racism.\textsuperscript{18}

Hamilton stressed that black political thought sought the implementation of constitutional theories. Moreover, the rhetoric and actions of AME members suggest that implementation of the ideals imbedded in the Declaration of Independence and the American Revolution also was a major theme of black political thought. Throughout AME literature, members often quoted from the "Declaration of Independence"—"life liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" and "all men are created equal;" the preamble to the Constitution—"We the people . . . ;" and the Gettysburg Address—"of the people, by the people and for the people." The rhetoric of liberty and equality permeated AME political rhetoric and consciousness. In 1898, members reveled at the paintings by Henry Tanner, Bishop Benjamin Tanner's son, that the French government displayed at the Luxembourg Gallery. Symbolically, one presiding elder maintained that the featured painting, "Resurrection of Lazarus," and the fact that an African American had paintings on display at a European art gallery represented the "dawning of liberty." In an 1887 Review article, a Baltimore attorney compared the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Magna Charter, "that Pallium and Gibraltar of English Liberties." He also quoted from the French Constitution of 1793 and Alexander Hamilton,
"Can this be free government if partial distinctions are tolerated or maintained." A year later in the Review, one of the clergy voiced a tenet of civil religion and called for support of the Blair bill, national aid to education, because educating "the people" was the best way to insure the vitality of American republican institutions. The social gospeler Reverdy Ransom believed that the African American right to liberty, equality, and justice was part of God's evolving plan and was inherent in the nation's democratic heritage. Such rhetoric held Americans accountable for American ideals and was echoed beyond individual members.¹⁹

Not only the state of the country committees at the AME annual conferences but many of the other committees like education or missions used the language of the American Revolution to express their views. Quoting the Gettysburg address and asserting that "we are part of the people," the delegates at the 1885 North Ohio Conference declared that the "right and duty of self government devolves upon us in common with the other people of this country." The conference thus linked self-determination to being a part of American society. Representatives at the 1899 Ohio Conference maintained that the worse feature of the African American condition was the "unjust limitations put upon our freedom in the exercise of our rights as American citizens." They argued that "the negro has free and equal chances only
to enter the saloon, penitentiary, jail, workhouse, idleness, ignorance, disease and death." The representatives defined the limits placed on their ability to secure self-determination. Placing the struggle for liberty within an international perspective, members of the 1915 Virginia Conference continued to stress the importance of "Christian education as a levelling effect upon the world" that would eventually "strike down all caste and superficial distinction." To drive home their point the delegates quoted de Tocqueville--"Despotism may govern without religious faith, but liberty may not."^29

Throughout the era, representatives of the Illinois Conference illustrated the continuity of political rhetoric and thought within the AME. At the 1890 conference, delegates resolved that since "taxation without representation is tyranny and the elective is one of the fundamental principles of our christian civilization," they therefore supported a national elections bill. In 1897, the delegates maintained that it was "the duty of the church to inquire into the cause or causes of this condition . . . [and] bring within reach of the people the equal distribution of the benefits of our republican form of government or that our government shall be indeed and in truth 'a government of the people for the people and by the people.'" By 1911, little had changed in the delegates' rhetoric which insisted that "There is a principle
underlying this government . . . that liberty be the cornerstone of the Republic . . . This is our country home; by birthright, and by conquest." For members of the AME the promise of the American Revolution had been far from fulfilled. Accordingly, they continuously reminded American society in American terms that the republican form of government would not be realized until racism was destroyed and African Americans participated fully in the American political process.²¹

Ironically, women in the AME often turned the tables on men and demanded greater and equal participation in denomination affairs. For instance, an 1886 contributor to the Recorder asserted that if the church only collected money from male members, then the treasury would decrease by three fourths. She maintained that church law "accepts men and women on an equal basis, and by so doing implies an equal right to representation in that part of the Church that the Dollar Money supports [the ministry]." The delegates at the First Woman's Convention held in Nashville in 1895 placed "taxation without representation" as number seven on their agenda and called for a greater role for women within the church. One of the speakers at the convention maintained that one of the changes the AME General Conference should make would be to "give the women an equal footing with the rest of the laity." Not content to play a passive role within the church, AME women actively
sought greater equality in both the ministry and laity and
developed a political rhetoric partly based in American
traditions. Moreover, as illustrated by Josie Heard's
letter to the Afro-American Council, AME women, like AME
men, sought a greater role in American politics and fuller
participation in American society.22

Many of the women and men of the AME considered the
franchise as the best means to secure and protect liberty
and achieve equal participation in American politics and
society. They believed that through the vote African
Americans would attain the autonomy that insured both full
American citizenship and control over their own social
institutions in a pluralistic American society. Throughout
the era, AME members consistently opposed efforts to
disfranchise African Americans and supported efforts to
guarantee the right to vote. In 1890, Congress considered
federal elections legislation, known as the Force Bill, that
would authorize use of federal troops to protect African
Americans voters. The bill received overwhelming support
from many sectors of the denomination. Editorial writers
for the Recorder considered the proposed law the best
protection for the rights of African Americans. Reverdy
Ransom, a rising star in the AME, supported the bill and
denounced the "outrages and frauds committed against the
ballot, especially in the South." Delegates at the 1890
Pittsburgh Conference favored the bill and voiced their
"honest disapproval of attempts by the Mississippi Constitutional Convention to disfranchise" African Americans. The more radical Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, who often voiced opinions different from the mainstream of the church, also supported the bill, though reluctantly. Turner maintained that "weak as the bill is, it is a menace in our favor, at least. But it seems that the bill is to be defeated by Democrats, Negro-hating Republicans and a herd of Negro monstrosities." As predicted by Turner, Congress failed to pass the bill, which coupled with the introduction of the poll tax in Mississippi ushered in an era of disfranchisement for African Americans.\(^{23}\)

Efforts to disfranchise African Americans and the effects of those efforts caused AME members to develop a political rhetoric of equality and liberty that expressed outrage and encouraged political activism. Members wrote articles in all the AME publications, denouncing Democrats for attempts to deny the vote to African Americans, chastising Republicans for remaining apathetic, and promoting government intervention to end racial disfranchisement. The delegates at the 1900 Ohio Conference declared that "we are now face to face with the question of our complete civil, social and political rights, and from this struggle we can not, we dare not retreat. We should stand firmly for equality of opportunity, the equality of right, and the equality of privilege." Two years later, the
Ohioans urged African Americans not to yield the "powerful weapon" of the ballot. Although a few AME members approved of the equal disfranchisement for all illiterate citizens, black and white, most AME leaders and members seemed to agree with the delegates of the 1901 North Ohio Conference who condemned North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana, and Mississippi for disfranchisement and called for the president to instruct the attorney general to institute proceedings against the four states. Delegates at the 1902 Pittsburgh Conference chastised the largely Republican Congress because it "failed to do for the negro that which is necessary to be done, relative to the protection of the rights of franchise in the South." Thus, combining the political rhetoric of liberty and equality with demands for constitutional enforcement, AME members sought to gain self-determination through the franchise.24

The separatist origins and organizational structure of the AME created a representative form of governance and a democratic atmosphere within the denomination that allowed members to actively participate in the political process within the church. Nearly every position in the church required some type of election, and the ministry and lay officials all served on the various church boards, councils, and conferences, making collective decisions. Moreover, the men and women of congregations voted on issues that directly affected their individual churches and for people who would
represent them on the various boards, councils, and conferences. In addition, in a time of increasing political alienation of African Americans, the church provided an arena for the growth of political leadership and a platform from which that leadership spoke and acted. From that platform, AME members helped to develop a political rhetoric and ideology that demanded the promise of the American Revolution and the self-determination necessary for plural nationalism. Indeed, as the nation and the European and Asian "great powers" raced toward imperialism, AME members grappled with questions of self-determination on an international scale and searched for their place within a global community. The relationship between the AME church and the Republican party gravely affected the answers to those questions.
Endnotes for Chapter 1


7. Ibid., 46-72.


10. Turner, Genius and Theory, 95-114;


Chapter II

The AME Church and American Politics

The age of imperialism marked a time of increasing racial tensions in the United States. The problems of segregation, discrimination, and disfranchisement caused grave and considerable debate within the AME church and the African American community. In 1876, northern Republicans, in what historian Rayford Logan characterized as "the betrayal," abandoned the cause of liberty and equality for African Americans in exchange for the presidency, symbolically and substantively ending Radical Reconstruction. Although southern Democrats promised to respect the rights of African Americans in the compromise that brought Rutherford B. Hayes to the Oval office, once Hayes removed federal troops from the South, white southerners escalated efforts at intimidation, violence, fraud, and bribery to deny the franchise to black southerners. Southern states readily adopted dubious legal devices such as the literacy test, the poll tax (introduced in Mississippi in 1890), and the "grandfather clause" (developed in Louisiana in 1897) to relegate African Americans to permanent second-class citizenship. Moreover, the failure of Congress to pass the "force bill" in 1890
revealed the increasing powerlessness of African Americans at the national level to secure legislation that would guarantee self-determination through the franchise. In A Revolution Gone Backward (1987), Bess Beatty details the erosion of African American political rights from 1876 to 1896 and includes the political thought and actions of many AME members. Emphasizing the active participation of African Americans in the debate over their political future, Beatty demonstrates that many African Americans continued to fight for political rights, a battle that united black America across class, sectional, and political lines. Throughout the era, leaders and members of the AME were active in attempting to preserve the rights of African Americans.¹

Meanwhile, in the wake of Booker T. Washington’s Atlanta Exposition speech in 1895 that seemed to sanction segregation and the Plessy v. Ferguson decision by the Supreme Court in 1896, discriminatory "Jim Crow" laws and restrictions increased in both the North and the South, creating two Americas, one white, one black. In the Negro Thought in America (1963), August Meier examines African American efforts to build a viable black community through racial solidarity and self-help. Meier concludes that during times of increased racial hostility, African Americans emphasized economic and moral development rather than political action and civil rights as the best
strategies for racial progress. Nevertheless, by the turn of the century, African Americans and, particularly, AME members ascribed to a full spectrum of solutions to the "Negro problem"—from assimilation to racial solidarity, from agitation and political activity to economic and moral advancement, from the desirability of segregation and the "accommodation" of Jim Crow to emigration. Still, two basic schools of thought dominated the debate. One school, identified with Booker T. Washington, promoted what has been termed an accommodationist stance on political issues and emphasized moral, social, and economic development through self-help and gradual integration into American society. The other school, associated with W. E. B. DuBois, stressed political and social equality through politics and agitation and immediate integration into American society. Leaders of the AME internalized elements of both philosophies, both of which aimed for the same goal of inclusion in American society.

Moreover, although strategies differed slightly in emphasis on gradual and immediate integration, economic and political development, and industrial and liberal arts education, both were rooted in American traditions. Indeed, a major difference in the philosophies of Washington and DuBois was their visions of American society that formed their vision of the role of African Americans in that society. In the Jeffersonian tradition, Washington
envisioned a more democratic American, especially southern, society of independent, black yeoman farmers working and living beside white yeoman farmers in self-sufficient communities that could feed the world. On the other hand, in the Hamiltonian tradition, DuBois envisioned a more republican American society that included an elite led community of educated, middle-class African Americans who functioned as an interest group within the larger society. Consequently, much of the inconsistency in black political ideology stemmed not only from the hopelessness of the African American condition, as several scholars have illustrated, but also from the inconsistencies inherent in American political ideology since the conception of the nation. Moreover, both visions included autonomy for the African American community to insure liberty and equality in a plural society, and both expressed a firm faith in American ideals and institutions. Still, as Beatty suggests, "revolution" for African Americans rather than progressing "had gone backwards," and African American leaders continued to employ the rhetoric of the revolution. Americanism, racism, and ethnicity created a duality of consciousness in individual African Americans as well as the community--the "twoness" that W.E.B. DuBois examines in *Souls of Black Folks* (1903). This duality allowed African Americans to continue the revolution by absorbing the philosophies of Washington, DuBois, and others and espousing
one or the other or all to varying degree depending upon any number of factors. Leaders within the AME, like most African American leaders in the struggle for liberty and equality, practically applied whatever philosophy seemed to best fit the nation's evolving racial attitudes and condition.3

Church members had always expressed a doctrine that was similar that of Booker T. Washington. Washington's success gospel for economic advancement through hard-work, diligence, thrift, and good, individual moral character originated from Protestant ethics that had been the cornerstone of AME teachings. Moreover, the unique social welfare role assumed by members the church as early as the African Free Society in 1787 often relied on the strategies of self-help and racial solidarity. Founded as a separate institution where all could worship in equality, the AME Church, for many African Americans, proved that separate institutions not only worked but were necessary and that African Americans could be self-governing and economically viable. Thus the AME publications, successful black businesses that depended on African American readership for survival, often featured articles that embraced the philosophies of economic chauvinism and separate institutions. Members of the AME espoused much of the Washington ideology. Although the physical mobility required for upward mobility within the denomination made
regional generalizations difficult, some regional trends were evident. Even with the radical Turner, based in Atlanta, in terms of political participation, the most conservative voices in the AME came from the South. In the north, the voices of radicalism centered in Philadelphia and Chicago. The Midwest, especially in Ohio, tended to be moderate with flashes of both conservatism and radicalism.4

Perhaps the most ardent supporters of the Washington philosophy was Bishop John Wesley Gaines, also based in Atlanta. A self-educated former slave, Gaines emphasized individual uplift and proclaimed that African Americans "must rise as individuals and not as a race." At the 1900 South Florida Conference, Gaines called for "friendly race relations" and "the maintenance of law and good government, and the eternal overthrow of vice and crime." A favorite strategy of Washington followers was to hold agricultural, business, and educational conferences throughout the South, designed to disseminate information, create unity, and promote moral and economic advancement. In 1902, AME members helped organize the Negro Young People's Christian and Educational Congress held in Atlanta to formulate a plan for the future of African Americans. Gaines served as president, and Washington, also a major organizer of the conference, served as keynote speaker. The apolitical work of the Congress pleased Gaines who noted that the Congress "recognized the truth that mere political agencies are
powerless to change our status or remedy the evils of our situation." Instead, the conference predictably offered educational and economic solutions to the "Negro problem" and eschewed political activism.  

Another former slave, Bishop Abram Grant, based in Texas, also consistently supported Washington as did transplanted Canadian Charles S. Smith who helped to increase the influence of the Nashville region within the AME church. Smith maintained that the "best way to help the race is through self-help, self-support and self-culture." Such rhetoric promoted a brand of black nationalism that sought autonomous inclusion into American society. Although Washington's greatest support within the denomination came from the South, many northern AME members also supported much of Washington's outlook. By 1904, after years of greater militancy, delegates of the Ohio Conference had fully developed much of the rhetoric surrounding this philosophy. The delegates recommended "moderation in public speech and manner and political demand; frank and honest admissions in debate of privileges and benefits" and "less pessimism, more hope, development, cautious prudence in the so called 'up-to-date' idea [talented tenth], less imitation and more genuine character." The delegates of the conference, as many church members, adopted what detractors considered an accommodationist stance to political rights and promoted individual, moral character to solve the "Negro
Moreover, the supporters of this stance, rather than displaying resignation, demonstrated an optimism that American ideals would eventually overcome racism.  

Still, for other members of the AME, the secondary status assigned to acquiring political and civil rights was the least appealing aspect of the Washington philosophy. For instance, as late as 1900, editors of the *Review* continued to call for bipartisan support for a new federal elections (force) bill. Moreover, delegates at the 1901 Philadelphia Conference spoke for many in the AME:

> Others argue that we must refrain from all part in the political affairs of government, but to this we are compelled to answer that our duties are the common duties of American citizens, and we cannot be content to take any course other than that held by our brother citizens of other race varieties.

Ironically, just as the more republican Federalists coopted the rhetoric of the American Revolution from the more democratic Antifederalists to ratify the Constitution, the advocates of the more republican DuBois ideology seized that same rhetoric from advocates of the more democratic Washington ideology to oppose Washington and demand political inclusion. Moreover, for many, participation in American politics was the true test of "manhood." In 1896, Bishop Turner proclaimed that "for the Negro to stay out of politics is to level himself with a horse or a cow." DuBois maintained that "silent submission to civic inferiority," as advocated by Washington, eventually would "sap the manhood of any race in the long run." Thus DuBoisian philosophy
linked manhood to suffrage which led to self-determination, the ability to make decisions based on African American experiences and values.  

Members of the AME, consistently pointed to themselves and their denomination as proof that African Americans could govern themselves and thus were worthy of equal citizenship. In History of the AME (1891), senior bishop Daniel Payne asserted that the existence of the AME church was "a flat contradiction and triumphant refutation" of the tendency to prove African Americans incapable of self-government and self-support, which was a "slander so foul in itself and so degrading in its influence." A year earlier in an 1890 Recorder article, elder A. B. B. Gibson similarly maintained that "if you doubt this assertion you will first have to snatch the A. M. E. Church out of existence." African Americans had governed themselves successfully within the AME Church since 1816, and many church members agreed with elder Albert Jackson who asserted in 1896 that the AME church was a perfect proof that the "Negro is in possession of that power to govern." Even in the apolitical atmosphere of the Negro Young People's Congress, AME financial secretary E. W. Lampton proclaimed that the "AME Church is a perfect government in all its ramifications." Thus, even the most conservative of church members of the AME believed that African Americans could govern themselves. To believe otherwise would have denied their own accomplishments.
Beyond rhetoric and ideology, throughout the period, members of the AME also helped to establish and actively participated in local, regional, and national organizations that espoused political rights for African Americans. Foremost among the national organizations were the Afro-American League, National Federation of Colored Men of the United States, Afro-American Council, and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. In 1890, influential lay journalist T. Thomas Fortune finally organized his dream, the Afro-American League, formed in part to protest and take legal action against disfranchisement. An original goal of the League was to bring African American leaders together before elections to decide which candidates would get the black vote. League members, however, attempted to create an all black political party, one of several attempts during the period, but lack of support led to the organization's demise within a few years. Although short-lived, the National Federation of Colored Men, organized in 1895, continued the tradition of political protest and agitation to promote the "welfare, progress and general improvement of the race." Led by lay attorney D. August Straker, the Federation sought involvement in Republican party politics. The Afro-American Council, organized by Fortune and powerful AME Zion Bishop Alexander Walters in Chicago in 1897, also stressed African American involvement in the political process to alleviate
African American grievances. Bishop Grant served as first vice president, and Turner, Arnett, Derrick, and Ransom all served as members on the Council. Like its predecessor Afro-American League, the Council promoted active political participation, even after coming under Washington's influence in 1901. Still, ideological differences between Washington and his critics eventually led to the Council's downfall in 1908. Moreover in 1905, critics of Washington, led by DuBois, organized the Niagara Movement to press for immediate political and economic equality. Founders of the Movement, including the radical and highly political Reverdy Ransom, issued a "Declaration of Principles" that demanded progress, suffrage, civil liberty, and economic opportunity. By 1909, a coalition of black Americans and sympathetic white Americans had transformed the Niagara Movement into the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The NAACP, like the other organizations, sought to improve conditions for African Americans through litigation and legislation, yet at times, all of the organizations employed tactics of protest and agitation. Members of these agencies refused to concede political power and asserted that active involvement in politics was the best way to solve the "Negro problem."

Many within the AME, especially within the clergy, remained active in American politics, and like most African Americans of the period, AME leaders and members maintained
close ties to and supported the Republican party, the party of Lincoln. Vigorous supporters of abolition, after the Civil War, African Methodist ministers, along with other black ministers, played a central role in Reconstruction politics in the South, supporting important legislation on education and economic improvement. Historian Eric Foner notes that nearly every AME minister in Georgia was reported to be active in Republican organizing, and Clarence Walker identifies twenty-three AME preachers, all Republicans, who became politicians during Reconstruction. Walker maintains that the ministers, all educated and including sixteen former slaves, were among the brightest and most talented that the AME had to offer. This group included United States senator Hiram H. Revels from Mississippi and congressman Richard H. Cain, future AME bishop from South Carolina. Most of the others served in various state legislature or state constitutional conventions. Even more AME clergy participated in the postwar black convention movement in the South that helped to encourage the passage of the 14th and 15th Amendments. Other future bishops who served in southern state legislatures were Josiah Armstrong in Florida, Charles S. Smith in Alabama, William H. Heard in South Carolina, and Henry M. Turner in Georgia. These AME ministers envisioned a color blind American society in which African Americans could participate fully and equally.¹⁰

Nevertheless, the betrayal of 1876 placed political
power in the hands of southern Democrats and initiated the removal of African Americans from southern politics. In 1877, Democrats in Georgia expelled Turner and the other black state legislators, and by 1880, all the AME ministers and the majority of other black legislators had been unseated. Moreover, the 1884 election of Grover Cleveland, the first Democratic president since the Civil War, produced an atmosphere that caused some AME leaders like Frances Harper to warn against too much reliance on politics. Indeed, some within the denomination began to question whether AME ministers should become involved in politics at all. In 1885, two Floridian elders, A. J. Kershaw and future bishop Morris M. Moore, engaged in a mini-debate over the role of AME ministers and politics. Kershaw maintained that political preachers "have done more to retard the advancement of our church than any other cause, ignorance excepted." He asserted that "air blown bubbles of fame and the 'almighty dollar' drive men into politics," and that ministers of the AME should stay out of the political arena. In reply, Moore questioned what Kershaw meant by "political preachers" and then declared that AME ministers in southern politics were the "sole means" by which African Americans learned to understand their rights and the their worth in American society.  

In the wake of the 1900 presidential elections, a
Recorder contributor defended what he considered the bishops' "right and duty" to be involved in politics. Defending Bishops Arnett, Grant, and Derrick, stalwart Republicans, the writer maintained that being a "high dignitary in the Church does not bar one from being a man." Again, the writer linked participation in politics to manhood. Throughout the period, AME members rejected periodical efforts to officially restrict the political involvement of the church hierarchy. Expressing prevalent AME attitudes on the political role of ministers, the representatives of the 1916 Pittsburgh Conference maintained that the "divine 'call'" to the ministry was not intended to preclude "our concern for the temporal welfare and prosperity of the people and race." They declared that it was among their civic rights and duties to serve as "watchmen" for the people. During the age of imperialism with the political and civil rights of people of color under siege throughout the globe, AME members steadfastly sought to remain actively involved in American politics and, indeed, international politics. As Americans, political participation was their duty as well as their right; it was a question of "manhood," which could only be achieved through self-determination.12

Though most of the church hierarchy remained loyal to the Republican party, the degree of loyalty fluctuated, and support often differed regionally along lines similar to the
support for the Washington or DuBois philosophy. In the South, those most loyal to the Republican party and the Washington philosophy identified with the John Wesley Gaines faction in Atlanta. Many, with the notable exception of Charles S. Smith, were former American slaves, self-educated and self-made, who maintained close relations with the party of Lincoln. Although not as politically active as their northern counterparts, this group, which included Abram Grant, Evans Tyree, and Edward W. Lampton, still sought to influence Republican party politics. A few from this group, like W. H. Mixon of Alabama, served at Republican party conventions as "tan" delegates from an increasingly segregated Republican party in the South. In the North, the most loyal and active AME Republicans centered around Benjamin W. Arnett in Wilberforce, Ohio, the only AME minister elected to a state legislature, Ohio, 1886, in the post-Reconstruction era and William B. Derrick in New York. This group included Benjamin Franklin Lee and lay educator William S. Scarborough in Ohio and Richard R. Wright and AME journalist J. M. Henderson in New York. George W. Prioleau and Theophilus G. Stewards, AME army chaplains whose views often ranged beyond the borders of the United States also identified with this group. Although loyal, deteriorating conditions for people of color often forced these leaders to criticize individual Republicans and Republican party politics.
Those within the Henry McNeal Turner circle based in Atlanta were the most outspoken southern critics of the Republican party and the Washington philosophy of political disinvolveinent. Turner surrounded himself with several of the rising stars in the denomination who were extremely critical and, at times, preached complete separation from the party. Moreover, this cadre leadership, which included William H. Heard, William D. Chappelle, Henry B. Parks, and Joseph Simeon Flipper, in a form of black nationalism and emigrationism often preached a solution to African American problems that lay outside the borders of the United States. In the North, Philadelphia provided the greatest voices of dissent and dissatisfaction with the party. Though not as inclined to break with the party as their southern counterparts, Levi J. Coppin, Benjamin T. Tanner, Cornelius T. Shaffer, AME editors Hightower Kealing and Henry T. Johnson, publisher James Embry, and other members of the Philadelphia based AME Minister Association often encouraged black voters to consider the worth of individual candidates rather than their political affiliation. Reverdy Ransom and the much less radical but equally political Archibald J. Carey also led greater voices of dissent in Chicago. Still, the mobility required for advancement tended to blur regional differences, and the coalitions and friendships that formed within the denomination depended on many issues beyond American politics. In addition, there were some
black Democrats within the hierarchy like journalist and missionary H. C. C. Astwood and lay attorney and educator C. H. J. Taylor, considered the most influential black Democrat of the period. Although not a significant force within the church, black Democrats, nevertheless, constantly reminded members that the Republican party had failed to deliver on the promise of liberty and equality for African Americans. Still, most within the AME continued to support and work through the Republican party to try to obtain a political solution to the problems of racism.¹³

Based on patronage as well as the promotion of political and civil rights, the relationship between the members of the AME church and the Republican party became increasingly tenuous as the party became less interested in issues concerning African Americans. In the years between the betrayal of 1876 and the election of Grover Cleveland in 1884, African Americans, particularly members of the AME, had supported three successive Republican administrations, which compiled lackluster records on racial matters. Leaders and members of the church enthusiastically continued to support Republican candidate James G. Blaine in the 1884 election, accusing the Democrats of having a "white man's party." Editors of the Recorder warned against election fraud by the Democratic party in the South and maintained that there could "be no certainty that the election will be free or honest." Many feared that a Democratic victory at
best would reverse the gains of radical reconstruction and at worst return the nation to American slavery. With the election of Cleveland, however, AME leaders began to regard the Democratic president with guarded optimism, noting that Cleveland was a better man than most in his party. The January, 1885, Review contained a seminar on the election in which fourteen prominent African American leaders viewed the election with varying levels of optimism. Cleveland contributed to this atmosphere by making the traditional appointments of African Americans as ministers to black nations, including C. H. J. Taylor to Liberia and H. C. C. Astwood to San Domingo. Indeed, as Bess Beatty points out, the number of black Democrats increased after the election of Cleveland, never to return to the Republican fold.14

Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of AME members continued to view the Republican party as the best hope for equality and liberty, and the election of Benjamin Harrison in 1888 renewed hopes for a legislative solution to African American problems. The failure of Congress to pass the elections and education bills in the early 1890's, however, caused many African Americans to search for political alternatives. One such alternative was the populist movement. Thus, church members closely scrutinized the goals of populism and were very tentative about supporting the movement. For a short time, a coalition between black and white farmers and workers seemed possible. Although C.
H. J. Taylor was unsuccessful in his bid for the Kansas legislature on the Populist-Democratic ticket in 1890 and 1892, such a coalition did make noteworthy gains in Georgia and North Carolina. Nevertheless, racism doomed any chances of a lasting coalition. White populists, especially in the South, considered African Americans socially inferior, and although they may have allowed a degree of political equality to resolve economic problems common to both black and white farmers, they never advocated social equality. Black populists did not belong to the same alliance organizations as the white populists but instead forged their own alliance organizations. W. D. Chappelle summed up many AME attitudes on populism when he maintained that peaceful relations only came about because of the ability of white southerners to impose their wills. He concluded that such relations "depended on a mutual respect that did not exist in the South." By 1900, populism had proved to be a disaster for African Americans, who bore much of the blame for the failures of the movement. Many deemed the Republican party as the only alternative.\(^5\)

The height of AME involvement in the Republican party came during the McKinley administration from 1896 to his assassination in 1901. During this period, AME members maintained a faith in the American political system and supported the patronage system that symbolically represented equality and citizenship for African Americans. Though
symbolic, often self-serving, and beneficial mainly to the black middle class, as Martin Kilson points out in "Political Change in the Negro Ghetto," the patronage system did benefit the entire African American community. Through clientage politics, African American leaders maintained access to government officials and institutions, provided public services, and built a network of important appointive positions, tax boards, school boards, teaching, and post office among others. Not only did individual church members serve as black clients but the church itself served as a black political interest group that provided a collective and united front on political issues. Thus, AME members sought to transform political support for the Republican party into patronage. Even the defeat of Harrison in 1892 failed to dampen the optimism of many. Republican loyalist W. B. Derrick asked if the Republican party had a future; answered the question, "Yes;" and concluded that the Republican party was the best "hope" for African Americans. Indeed, the Republican party made considerable congressional and statewide gains in the 1894 elections, and church officials such as R. A. Adams in Louisiana reminded party leaders not to forget party supporters when time for appointments came around. With the 1896 elections looming, AME members like the editors of the Review increasingly condemned the Democratic party efforts to disfranchise African Americans and maintained that in the face of such
adversity the "colored man" would remain "a law-abiding citizen; true to the American flag, true to American institutions." \(^\text{16}\)

Indeed, after four years of Democratic rule and increasingly successful efforts by southern Democrats to disfranchise and segregate African Americans, the 1896 presidential nomination of William McKinley, who as governor of Ohio used the national guard to put down a series of lynchings, seemed to hold special promise for black America. Moreover, African Americans played a crucial role in the nominating process at the 1896 Republican Convention held in St. Louis and expected some type of patronage should McKinley defeat Democrat William Jennings Bryan. African Americans and AME church members in particular were extremely visible at the Republican Convention with more than seventy-five black delegates from the North and South and an even larger number of black political lobbyists and interest groups. Bishop Benjamin W. Arnett, former Ohio state legislator and political ally of McKinley, served as chaplain for the convention. During the convention, AME church members helped to exert pressure on the convention to force St. Louis hotels to admit African American guests. Moreover, AME members, led by D. August Straker, supported the efforts of the National Federation of Colored Men of the United States to insert a plank against lynching into the Republican party platform. With great difficulty according
to Straker, the Federation succeeded, and the Republicans placed an anti-lynching provision in the final platform.\textsuperscript{17}

After the nomination of McKinley, AME members lent overwhelming support to his election. For many, as a fellow Methodist, McKinley represented the foremost opportunity to improve conditions for African Americans. Both the \textit{Recorder} and the \textit{Review} endorsed McKinley's candidacy and "the strong work" of the Republican party. Several AME annual conferences also endorsed the nominee. The members of the 1896 Pittsburgh Conference resolved that "We believe Major McKinley to be the highest type of statesmanship, the most able exponent of American protection and strong advocate of sound money." Wilberforce University conferred an honorary LL.D. degree upon McKinley who, the \textit{Recorder} reported, received the degree with "sincere expressions of his appreciation." Members worked tirelessly to elect McKinley and enthusiastically acknowledged McKinley's victory, concurring with \textit{Recorder} editors that "Hail to the Nation's new Chieftain, the Advance Agent of righteousness, prosperity and protection, should thereby be the refrain on every patriotic lip from Yankeedom to Dixie." "In McKinley," the editors wrote, "American citizens of all classes and in general are to have an advocate, and the Afro-American especially a trustworthy friend." Members reiterated the constant theme that McKinley would protect the rights of all American citizens, regardless of race,
color, or religion. At his inauguration, McKinley took the oath of office with a bible given to him by the AME bishops. The president-elect requested the bible, which close friend and political associate Arnett presented on behalf of the bishops. Arnett later served as a key advisor on African American affairs and appointments throughout the McKinley administration. Thus, the association between the AME church and the Republican party was as close as it had ever been since Reconstruction, and members looked to McKinley for protection and patronage.

Political patronage was a major concern to members of the church. The author of a March, 1897, Recorder editorial noted "the evils connected with the political service prize system" but maintained that there were "greater evils" in considering patronage as a peace offering to those who did not support McKinley. The author contended that a "good Republican" would better serve the McKinley administration than a "good Democrat," and that African Americans had proven to be "good Republicans." The author realized that the patronage system was flawed, yet as long as it existed, African Americans needed to be considered. McKinley's record of appointment of African Americans was mixed. On one hand, his appointments were highly visible, symbolic gestures that fell short of what black Republicans, especially those in the North, expected. On the other hand, as Recorder editors noted in March, 1897, "Up to date, the
present Republican administration has outranked all predecessors in the matter of giving representative appointment to citizens of color, either North or South." McKinley believed his record of appointment was "of consequence" and noted that because of his thirty or so appointments, "the colored man has a fair share of representatives in Federal service." No doubt because of Arnett's influence and the relationship between the church and the political party, AME members received an unprecedented amount of appointments during the McKinley administration. Leaders within the AME such as Judson W. Lyons and Henry Y. Arnett received important domestic positions while others like William Heard and Campbell Maxwell received overseas appointments.¹⁹

Nevertheless, AME members were not completely satisfied. For instance, while praising the selection of Richard T. Greener as consul to India, Recorder editors maintained that the president "should see fit" to assign church members D. August Straker and H. C. C. Astwood to positions as well. Ironically, some appointments of AME church members caused conflict with other African American leaders. The nomination of Bishop Abram Grant to the United States Labor Commission produced negative responses from within the African American community. Writers in both the New York Age and the Washington Colored American complained about the nomination and the appointment of AME clergy to
civil positions. Grant, citing the demands of his duties as bishop, diffused the potential rift by rejecting the nomination. Still, political patronage solidified the relationship between the AME church and the Republican party, and again, most members supported McKinley in the rematch against Bryan in the 1900 elections.20

Yet, during the 1900 elections, dissatisfaction over a variety of issues from imperialism to disfranchisement caused members of the AME to increase criticism of McKinley and the Republican party. The greatest voices of dissent originated from the Turner faction that outright endorsed Bryan. Typical was presiding elder W. D. Chappelle who supported Bryan and maintained that "it must be evident to every Negro that the Republican party is a party of money, and has clearly proven that the Negro is not wanted in their ranks." The monthly AME missionary newspaper, the Voice of Missions, edited by Turner, printed articles that severely criticized the motives and record of McKinley and the party. Moreover, several AME leaders concluded that African Americans should not blindly support either party. Many within the Philadelphia faction, such as Coppin and Tanner, took this approach, not completely breaking from the party while counseling caution. Tanner explained that "The white man has given us the cue. He goes for the party that goes for him. Let the Afro-American do the same . . . The Negro should be tied to no party. He should vote for the party
Nevertheless, most decided the political party that would do the "most good" was the Republican party and, therefore, denounced such attitudes and refused to swap "the tried and safe steed of Republicanism for the bucking bronco of deteriorated Democracy." Some members maintained that even though as an individual, McKinley "may not have pleased us all, but in the party to which he belongs are to be found the most of our friends." In October prior to the elections, a Recorder contributor found it difficult to believe that Turner had gone Democratic. Indeed, Turner’s rhetoric was so vehemently anti-Republican that Derrick traveled to Atlanta to try to get him to soften his tone. The ill-fated mission, however, caused more damage than good and provided Turner an opportunity for greater criticism in the next edition of the Voice of Missions. Such rhetoric fueled mounting pressure for Turner to resign his position as editor of the Voice of Missions, which he did at the end of the year. Even the more moderate stance of Tanner came under fire. In an unnamed Recorder article, the author maintained that Tanner’s advice only proved the "current adage that ‘politics makes strange bed fellows.’" The author asserted that the bishop’s questionable advice, which would not be heeded, harmed both himself and others and that African Americans would continue to support the Republican party. Moreover, much of that support was rooted in the
desire for self-determination through the franchise for African Americans. Editors of the Review, in assessing the "lessons of the [1900] elections", concluded that members of the Democratic party had defeated themselves by advocating African American disfranchisement in the southern states. The editors declared that "to the Negro the paramount issue was the question of his own political salvation." 22

Although neither party championed the cause of African Americans or, more importantly, had ready made solutions to the pressing economic, social, and political problems of the age, support for the Republican party reached a pinnacle with the presidential elections of 1904. Indeed, after the assassination of McKinley, AME members found little difficulty supporting Theodore Roosevelt. Several members of the AME believed that the Republicans would have gained even greater support from the black community in 1900 if the presidential ticket had been reversed with Roosevelt running for president rather than McKinley. The year before the 1904 elections, delegates at the 1903 North Ohio Conference unanimously resolved to endorse Roosevelt's "wise and patriotic administration." The delegates also believed "that the peace and prosperity of this country will be enhanced by his continuance as the chief executive of the government." Review editor H. T. Kealing was extremely pro-Roosevelt. He maintained that Roosevelt represented "progressiveness vs stagnation, Americanism vs
Provincialism, the reign of all the people vs the tyranny of a favored class." Delegates at the 1904 Ohio and Pittsburgh Conferences formally endorsed Roosevelt. At the Pittsburgh Conference, delegates declared that Roosevelt had "a spirit of fairness relative to all that is allied to the highest and best interest of humanity, without regard to race or condition." After the inauguration of TR, at which several African Americans organizations reportedly marched in the parade, Review editors echoed a constant refrain: "Mr. Roosevelt does not stand for the Negro as a Negro, but for him as a man: and his stand would be just the same if the oppressed were a Jew, an Irishman or a native Mississippian."

Nevertheless, AME criticism of the Republican party began to expand during the second Roosevelt administration, and the annual conferences, which more often had taken more conciliatory tones, became more vocal in reproaching the party. Roosevelt contributed to this atmosphere by apologizing for inviting Booker T. Washington to the White House, condemning the entire black regiment rather than individuals in Brownsville incident, and generally ignoring the plight of African Americans. The Republican nominee William H. Taft inherited much of that criticism during the 1908 elections. Although, editors of the Review reluctantly maintained that Taft ought to win, they did not outright endorse Taft and acknowledged that "work must be done." The
representatives of the 1908 Illinois and Indiana Conferences endorsed Taft, but only after downplaying the Brownsville incident and severely reprimanding the party for losing sight of its principles and not living up to the standards set by the founders. The delegates of the 1908 Iowa Conference refused to support Taft and maintained that continued affiliation with the Republican party had failed to protect African American rights and privileges as citizens. Even after Taft’s victory, the delegates of 1910 Pittsburgh Conference found little difference between the parties, and the delegates at the 1911 Indiana Conference advised that "instead of casting it (sacred ballot) for party and party fealty, cast it for men and measures." A year later, the Indiana Conference maintained that the nation was in the "throes of a great political upheaval" and refused to support any candidate in the five candidate race for the presidency. Indeed, no annual conference officially endorsed a candidate in the 1912 elections, and the Review, now edited by Reverdy Ransom, ran articles supporting all the major candidates, admonished the Republican party platform, remained non-committal, and praised the twenty percent of African Americans who voted for Wilson.24

By 1912, the dependency on the Republican party became easier to overcome. The Republican party and prior Republican administrations failed to enforce laws that protected African American rights and privileges, stood mute
in the face of mounting violence against African Americans, and helped fashion American apartheid in the South and North. Accordingly, AME members increased their criticism of the party and government policies, yet they did so by keeping an enormous faith in the American political system. They did not voluntarily remove themselves from American politics and continuously sought to participate in the political process by whatever means at their disposal. Although they had much in common with the Washington philosophy, members of the AME steadfastly believed that the franchise in the United States meant manhood, self-determination, and equal citizenship. Moreover, the political differences between Washington and DuBois concerning political participation was in degree of emphasis, and the AME publications often reported efforts by Washington to halt disfranchisement and influence the American political process. Members of the AME internalized the doctrines of Washington and DuBois, and throughout the period, sought to participate in a plural American society as an autonomous African American community. Indeed, providing a national forum, the AME functioned as a political interest group concerned with racial matters that transcended class, economic, and even political lines. Members of the church established a client-patron relationship with the Republican party that was both detrimental and beneficial to the African American
community. Moreover, during the age of imperialism, African Americans were among the few people of color in the world who could address the problems and racial implications of imperialism at an international as well as national level. Ironically, in the United States, the party most associated with imperialism was the Republican party. Thus, the relationship between the AME church and the Republican party conditioned the way in which church members would respond to international affairs and issues during the age of imperialism, often causing dilemmas and contradictions for AME members.²⁵
Endnotes for Chapter 2


2. Meier, *Negro Thought in America*, 24-25; For similar themes and conclusions and the development of the physical and institutional urban, black community see Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto*.


5. W. J. Gaines, "How We Learn Wisdom," *AME Church Review*, 18 (January, 1902), 273; Minutes of the 8th Session of the South Florida Annual Conference of the AME Church, February 21-26, 1900, (West Palm Beach, FL: Dean Bros., 1900), 16; Garland Penn, ed., *The United Negro: His Problem and His Progress*, (Atlanta: D. E. Luther, 1902), 491.

6. Quoted in Wright, *Bishops of the AME*, 321, 191-192; Minutes of the 73rd Session of the Ohio Annual Conference of the AME Church, September 30-October 4, 1904, (Hamilton, OH: Whitaker and Brown, 1904), 68.


13. Wright, Bishops of the AME; Wheeler, Uplifting the Race; For more on African Americans in the Democratic Party see Beatty, A Revolution Gone Backward; August Meier, "The Negro and the Democratic Party," Phylon, 17 (Second Quarter, 1956), 182-91.


1900, 2; Voice of Missions, 1 October 1900; Voice of Missions, 1 November 1900; Bishop's Advice to Voters, "Christian Recorder, 9 November 1900, 2; "One of the Lessons of the Election," AME Church Review, 17 (January, 1901), 287.

23. "A Strong Ticket," Christian Recorder, 28 January 1900, 2; Minutes of the 22nd Session of the North Ohio Annual Conference of the AME Church, October 7-11, 1903, (Hamilton, OH: Brown and Whitaker, 1903), 55; H. T. Kealing, "The Convention That Nominated Roosevelt in Chicago," AME Church Review, 21 (October, 1904), 125; Minutes of 37th Session of the Pittsburgh Annual Conference of the AME Church, October 12-17, 1904, (Philadelphia: AME Book Concern, 1904), 101; Minutes of the 74th Session of the Ohio Annual Conference of the AME Church, September 28-October 2, 1904, (Hamilton, OH: Brown and Whitaker, 1904), 40, 43; "President Roosevelt's Inauguration," AME Church Review, 21 (April, 1905), 333; "At the Old Stand," Ibid., 396.

24. Sinkler, Racial Attitudes, 318-19; "Editorial," AME Church Review, 25 (July, 1908), 75; AME Church Review, 25 (October, 1908); Journal of Proceedings of the 37th Session of the Illinois Annual Conference of the AME Church, 1908, 44-45; Journal of Proceedings of the 70th Session of the Indiana Annual Conference of the AME Church, September 16-21, 1908, (Seymour, IN: Graesdale-Mercer, Co., 1908), 64; Minutes of the 26th Session of the Iowa Annual Conference of the AME Church, September 9-14, 1908, 65; Minutes of the 43rd Session of the Pittsburgh Annual Conference of the AME Church, September 28-October 2, 1910, (Philadelphia: AME Book Concern, 1910), 38; Minutes of the 73rd Session of the Indiana Annual Conference of the AME Church, September 6-10, 1911, (Philadelphia: AME Book Concern, 1911), 78-79; Journal of Proceedings of the 74th Session of the Indiana Annual Conference of the AME Church, September 11-15, 1912, (Philadelphia: AME Book Concern, 1912), 76; "The Negro's Political Consciousness," AME Church Review, 29 (July, 1912), 84-85; AME Church Review, 29 (October, 1912); "Editorial," AME Church Review, 29 (January, 1913), 264-67.

25. For an example of an article highlighting BTW's efforts to halt disfranchisement see "On Time," AME Church Review, 18 (July, 1901), 94.
Chapter III

Redeem the World: The Influence of Black Theology

During the age of imperialism, religion critically influenced the manner in which African Americans, particularly members of the AME, viewed themselves and their place in the world as well as the manner in which they responded to imperialism and related events and issues. As American Methodists, AME members believed that evangelical Protestantism was a part of their earthly mission. They considered themselves members of the elect, and thus, chosen by God, they believed it was their duty to spread the gospel to the unredeemed peoples of the world. During Reconstruction, the men and women put this doctrine into practice by sending missionaries among the former American slaves in the South not only to Christianize but also to educate and "Americanize." As Clarence Walker points out, AME members believed it was their duty to take part in the liberation of American slaves. Moreover, AME members helped develop a black version of Christian evangelism that centered on the Old Testament Psalm 68:31: "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." This "theory of providential design," which in part was used to justify slavery, maintained that Africans...
in America suffered through slavery so that they could become civilized and Christianized. Once this was done, God ended slavery and opened Africa so that the African American elect could return to Africa and spread the gospel. Thus, as Olin P. Moyd explains in Redemption in Black Theology (1978), the concept of redemption had the dual purpose of liberation and confederation. As early as 1808, AME founder Absalom Jones expressed such sentiment: "Perhaps his [God's] design was that a knowledge of the gospel might be acquired by some of their [slaves'] descendants in order that they might be qualified to be the messengers of it to the land of their fathers." The redemption of Africa became a prime obligation for AME leaders and members. In the age of imperialism, church members applied their version of evangelical Protestantism to the entire African diaspora and, in time, to the various people of color throughout the world.¹

Yet for AME members, slavery and oppression meant that religion had to assume a greater political posture. Emancipation did not bring full equality or participation in American society, and although the philosophies of Washington and DuBois dominated the political debate within the AME, another, more radical strain of thought had considerable influence. Believing that there was no political solution to the "Negro question" as long as African Americans remained in the United States, several
prominent church leaders and members supported black nationalism and African emigration. In doing so, they also stressed the importance of the biblical prophesy of David in Psalm 68. In *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism* (1978), Wilson J. Moses explains that black nationalists and African emigrationists believed that the redemption of Africa would accompany the decline of the West and that God would then make a new covenant with black people. Indeed, the vision of African emigrationists like Bishop Henry McNeal Turner could be cast in the same light as the Puritan religious-political vision of the "city on the hill." Just as the Puritans ventured to the New World to recreate a better European society, so would African Americans venture to Africa to recreate a better American society that was free from racism and racial discrimination. Thus, to promote evangelism, political equality, and economic opportunity, AME members became actively involved in colonization efforts in Africa and other parts of the world. Yet unlike evangelism that received near unanimous support, emigration met considerable and solid opposition from those who maintained that the "Negro question" could only be solved in the United States.²

Members of the AME participated in overseas missionary activities almost from the denomination’s inception. In 1820, Daniel Coker, who had been elected the first bishop of the church but had refused the position, emigrated to Africa
and established churches in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Although much his work did not survive, he became the first in a long line of AME missionaries to travel overseas to spread African Methodism. Coker also was among the first to combine emigration and evangelism and was instrumental in developing the American colony of Liberia, established by the American Colonization Society (ACS) in 1821-22. Most antebellum African American leaders, however, opposed African emigration as a solution to the "slavery question," and the black convention movement in the North consistently rejected such efforts. On the other hand, the evangelical spirit did not receive such scrutiny, and throughout the 1820's and 30's, individual AME conferences rather than the church in general conducted missionary activities. For a variety of reasons, including finance and proximity among others, members concentrated most activities in the Caribbean, especially in the young black republic of Haiti. In 1827, for instance, the Baltimore Conference sent presiding elder Scipio Beans to Haiti to establish the church's presence. As the church grew so did missionary aspirations, and in 1841, the denomination organized the Home and Foreign Missionary Department to pursue and coordinate AME evangelical objectives. Although the church sent a few missionaries to Africa in the 1850's, financial limitations and lack of knowledge on Africa continued to confine most overseas endeavors to the Caribbean.
Of course there were other factors that contributed to the delay of missionary activities in Africa, including the unpopularity of the ACS among African American leaders, the lack of volunteers willing to travel to Africa, and the lack of general interest in what many considered the "dark continent." Yet, the situation soon changed. After concentrating most of their missionary efforts in the South during Reconstruction, members of the AME expanded their missionary activities on a broader scale. While members increased missionary endeavors in the Caribbean and initiated them in the Indian Territory, Africa also began to draw greater attention. Recent explorations and evangelical activities by white Protestant denominations, which employed both black and white missionaries, sparked a renewed interest in the "redemption" of Africa. Moreover, the church expanded tremendously during Reconstruction, giving the AME hierarchy a larger financial base to draw upon to establish and operate overseas missions. Leaders like Daniel Payne, who had earlier maintained that limited AME finances were better spent elsewhere, began to view the Congo River as "the artery to circulate African Methodism into Africa." The loudest voices for African mission, however, emanated from the South where the majority of AME African missionaries originated. Elected by the 1880 General Conference to give the South greater representation within the denomination, Bishops Richard Cain and Henry
McNeal Turner had little problem transferring their evangelical work among former American slaves to their brethren in Africa.4

Cain, Turner, and others developed an evangelical doctrine that was a complex web of black theology and black political ideology. Formulated by the unique experience of African Americans in the United States, black theology and political ideology emphasized the themes of liberation and equality. For many in the denomination, the redemption of Africa was a sworn trust, a religious decree from God that eventually would bring liberty and equality to those within the African diaspora. In an 1885 Christian Recorder article, one presiding elder maintained that the redemption of Africa would be the dawning of a Christian millennium led by "Africa's scattered son's." Thus, the elder, as many within the denomination, incorporated a millennium philosophy within the AME conception of African redemption.5 Those who called for the redemption of Africa declared that it was the duty of the church that could not be shirked. An October, 1885, letter to the Recorder demonstrated the urgency of such sentiment. The writer, a presiding elder from Texas, maintained that Africa's "hands are stretched out right now and we had better take hold of them." He warned that African Americans would live in regret "until we shall feel it to be our duty" to evangelize Africa. This sense of duty led several within
the AME clergy to develop a theology that identified God with oppressed peoples and emphasized that God, therefore, had a special mission for Africa and those of African descent. Turner expressed this theology in its most radical form by asserting that God was black and calling for the church to "liberate" Africans by bringing them in contact with God. He maintained that there should be at least one black missionary for every white missionary. Even more moderate leaders like future Bishop Levi Coppin also shaped black theology within the evangelical Protestant theme. In 1890, Coppin stated that it was his "solemn belief, that if ever the world becomes Christianize . . . it will be through the means, under God of the Blacks, who are now held in wretchedness, and degradation, by the white Christians of the world." After viewing the effects of imperialism, some clergy like Reverdy Ransom extended such doctrine to maintain that white denominations had forfeited their right to evangelize among people of color because of continued subjugation in the name of Christ.6

Many AME leaders believed that the redemption of Africa could provide greater racial unity and agreed with rising star William B. Derrick who, in 1884, maintained that "As negroes, we are one. Let those brethren look to this church and to this continent for help and aid." Leaders both felt a special affinity for their ancestral birthplace and often associated the redemption of Africa with future prosperity.
Bishop William Arnett directed the delegates to the 1891 Michigan Woman's Mite Missionary Society convention to look to "Africa for the hope of the race." Arnett maintained that "No race was ever redeemed except it produced its own redeemer. No race can be redeemed from without, but it must be from within." As such, racial unity would benefit all of African descent. More importantly, a few more radical AME members pushed notions of racial solidarity into a full scale form of black nationalism that they often expressed in terms of African emigration. As early as 1884, they agreed with the presiding elder who maintained that "The only future for the negro is building up a nation in Africa. It is God's law, and the negro cannot evade it." Thus, the black political ideologies of black nationalism and African emigrationism took on a religious character and tone.7

Among the most outspoken AME leaders on the issues of African emigration and black nationalism were Cain and Turner, making the leading AME evangelists also the leading emigrationists. Located in the South, they developed a religious-political message that appealed to the masses of black Southerners who continued to languish in an increasingly segregated and hostile environment. Cain attributed part of denomination's success in the South to black nationalism. As Secretary of Missions during Reconstruction, a position he lost partly because of his emigrationist attitudes, Cain maintained that "the blacks
recognize in our organization the idea of nationality of manhood." The church provided black Southerners racial unity as a means to learn and exercise their rights as free Americans. Cain believed that emigration to Africa was a viable alternative to the political situation of African Americans. He and Turner formed a formidable duo. Turner was the consummate black nationalist who in his opening address at the 1899 Georgia Conference declared that "I am a race man. Before I was a Methodist I was a Negro, and if the Methodist Church gets in the way of my loyalty to my race, then away with the Methodist Church." Such commitment to black nationalism from a senior bishop of the AME church excited many black Southerners but also produced many opponents, both inside and outside the church, and caused several conflicts within the denomination during the age of imperialism.®

As noted, AME church members participated in the African emigration movement in antebellum United States. Although the black convention movement opposed emigration during the 1830's and 40's, the passage of the fugitive slave law and the Dred Scott decision among other events motivated African American leaders to reevaluate the feasibility of colonization not only in Africa but in Canada and Latin America as well. Leaders held a special convention on emigration in 1854 and assigned Martin R. Delany to investigate possibilities in Africa. In 1859,
Delany--lay editor, author, physician, abolitionist, and black nationalist--signed a treaty with an African king in the Niger Valley that granted land for colonization to members of "the African race in America." The Civil War ended the venture. After Reconstruction, interest in Africa re-emerged, and AME leaders such as Turner and Heard spearheaded African emigration and black nationalism movements into the twentieth century. The perceived failure of Reconstruction and the economic plight of former American slaves helped to reenergize colonization efforts. In 1877, members from South Carolina and Georgia helped to organize the Liberian Exodus Joint Stock Steamship Company to provide passage for those willing to emigrate to Africa. Delany served as vice president, and several AME ministers served as officers of the company. Stockholders raised enough to buy a ship, and in 1879, several families and individuals including AME missionary Simon F. Flegler emigrated to West Africa. Although lack of money and preparedness doomed the colonizers and forced investors to sell the ship, the venture provided missionaries the opportunity to establish the church in West Africa and fueled the new interest in Africa. The enterprise, however, revealed the hardships involved in trying to establish African emigration as a viable solution to the political and economic problems of African Americans.9
Undaunted, Cain, Turner and others continued to support and promote African emigration, yet throughout the 1880’s, they found little audience and much opposition for their form of black nationalism and African nation building. Cain’s untimely death in 1887 on the eve of a long planned trip to Africa was a blow to the emigrationist faction within the denomination. Meanwhile, conditions in the South continued to worsen. Turner became so disgusted with the treatment of African Americans in the South that he supported a bill by South Carolina senator M. C. Butler to appropriate five million dollars to provide transportation for any African American who wanted to leave the South. Although not mentioned in the bill, most African Americans believed that Africa was the perceived destination. The bill was a Democratic response designed as an alternative to Republican measures regarding voting protection and education. Turner realized that Butler had no regard for African Americans but maintained that the Butler bill did propose some type of solution. Turner’s major complaint was that five million dollars was inadequate because the "nation owes the Negro $40,000,000,000 for the services he has rendered in the past 200 years." Most AME leaders, however, agreed with the delegates of the 1890 Philadelphia Conference who reportedly "deplored" and "condemned" the bill "to send Southern Afro-Americans to the Congo Basin." The delegates considered the bill an unwise obstacle.
designed to "destroy the hope of ever reaching manhood in this country." Nevertheless, Turner had struck at the nerve of African American problems in the South, and his message for African emigration began to find a greater audience.¹⁰

Part of the reason for the spread of emigration propaganda were the AME publications. The *Voice of Missions*, founded in 1893 and edited by Turner, became an unofficial organ for African emigration because it consistently featured articles on the opportunities available in Africa. Editors of the *Christian Recorder* were generally anti-emigrationists and considered the *Voice of Missions* "a champion of the other wing of the most radical and utopian type." Still, they printed passionate "back-to-Africa" pleas from church members, though usually near the rear of the newspaper. For instance, editors placed 1890 *Recorder* essay on Africa by Lucy Norman on page six of eight pages near the advertising section. The AME deaconess and women's activist maintained that Liberia was ideal for emigration, a constant theme for emigrationists. The *AME Church Review* also published lengthy articles that both supported and opposed colonization, yet the editorial content of the Northern based magazine tended to be anti-emigrationist. Regardless, the failure of federal elections and education legislation and, more importantly, the depression of 1893, which affected African Americans earlier
and more severely, created a hopelessness among black Southerners that made the notion of African emigration far more appealing.\textsuperscript{11}

During the 1890's, church members, led by Turner, an honorary vice president of the American Colonization Society, supported and formulated various plans and organizations that encouraged African emigration. Frustrated by the ineffectiveness of the ACS, in 1892, Turner helped form the Afro-American Steamship Company to transport passengers and cargo to Africa. The depression, however, caused the venture to fold within a year. Meanwhile, Turner traveled to West Africa in 1891 and 1893 where he established a working relationship with Liberian president J. James Cheseman and strengthened AME presence in the region. Upon his return, Turner traveled throughout the nation describing near idyllic conditions and opportunities available in Africa. In 1894, Turner approached white businessmen in Birmingham who consequently organized the International Migration Society (IMS) to sell passage to Africa for a profit. Cheseman fueled even greater interest by offering cheap land and farming equipment to anyone who would settle there. Moreover, he offered to donate the land if emigrationist could sustain schools on it. Indeed, the back-to-Africa movement of this era reached its height in 1894-95 with support coming from various sources within the denomination. The delegates at
the 1894 California Conference were among the few delegates of any conference to officially endorse African emigration. The delegates maintained that those who had gone to Africa in the past year illustrated a "pioneer spirit" that would eventually bring good results through "self-reliance, more aggressiveness, more union . . . ."12

African emigrationists continued to fuse the political and religious messages and promote the notion of a mighty black Christian nation in Africa. One contributor to the Recorder encouraged readers not to give up on colonization because of past failures and maintained that African Americans could "make a republic like Rome through untiring efforts of men like Romulus or Cincinnatus." Southern presiding elder J. G. Robinson made a passionate plea that rich and educated African Americans should help the less fortunate go to Africa. Robinson hoped that future historians would be able to "chronicle the fact that the sable sons of Africa have crossed the mighty waters and built upon the banks of the Nile and Niger a civilization and nation that will protect us while religion, art and commerce keep pace with the hours and journeys of the sun."

Late in 1895, Turner; S. T. Mitchell, president of Wilberforce; and H. T. Johnson, editor of the Recorder, assisted members of the Gammon Theological Seminary of the Northern Methodists in organizing the Congress on Africa in Atlanta. According to Johnson, the Congress offered "the
fullest, clearest, most accurate, most inspiring information on the Dark Continent, given by natives, missionaries and scholars competent to speak of Africa." Although the Congress primarily focused on missionary activities, Turner reportedly maintained the Congress would "throw important light on the question" of emigration. The rhetoric and activity toward African emigration bore little results, and although the IMS successfully transported a few hundred colonists to Africa, mismanagement and ill preparation caused the settlements to fail.13

Other colonization schemes met similar fates. Emigrationists designed many of these to be profit-making enterprises that would generate trade between the United States and Africa and provide economic opportunities for African Americans. Many agreed with Bishop Cain who maintained that Africa offered "the strongest and most encouraging commercial opportunities open to enterprising colored men of business." Attempting to place this rhetoric into action, John Lewis Waller, ex-United States consul to Madagascar, received a 150,000 acre rubber concession on the African island in 1895, but an invading French army upset his plans to create "Wallerland" for African American colonization. In 1897, J. Albert Thorne, an AME physician, helped to organize the African Colonial Enterprise and set up a colony in Nyassaland, British Central Africa. A less than enthusiastic British colonial government hastened the
colony's demise. In 1901, Turner and members of the AME also organized the Colored National Emigration Association and Shipstock Company with future bishop and former American consul to Liberia William H. Heard, who favored emigration to Liberia, as president. Lack of finances also doomed this effort. Indeed, the lack of finances was among the most formidable obstacles to the back-to-Africa. The group that found African emigration most appealing, black Southerners, could least afford the expense of traveling to Africa and setting up colonies. The failure of colonies and a revived American economy at the end of the century contributed to the demise of the back-to-Africa movement. Though largely unsuccessful, the various organizations and ventures that AME members initiated and participated in revealed a willingness by AME members to act upon rhetoric and attempt to place black political ideology and black theology into concrete improvements for all descendants of Africa.¹⁴

Beyond economics, the most formidable obstacle to African emigration or emigration of any type was opposition from most African American leaders. Prominent leaders from Booker T. Washington to Ida B. Wells denounced African emigration in most of the AME publications. Wells maintained that "we would not be a true race if we conceded" that anyone "had more right to claim this country [United States] as home than the Afro-American race." Most AME leaders and members, especially in the North, never
seriously considered the question of emigration and consistently opposed the mass emigration of African Americans. The American Colonization Society was a constant target of scorn for anti-emigrationists who seized every opportunity to discredit the organization. Editors of the October, 1885 Review took an official of the ACS to task for suggesting that African emigration would help solve the problems of miscegenation in the United States. Although the official apologized for any misunderstanding, the editors refused to let him off the hook and used his statement to undermine ACS efforts. Returning visitors, missionaries, and colonists often supported anti-emigrationist contentions by describing harsh conditions that emigrationists would face in Africa. For example, in 1883, William Nesbitt, who had spent thirty years in Liberia, declared that the nation was "a delusion, a snare" and "not a fit place to emigrate to." He offered a terrible description of malaria, poor lands, and unfriendly natives. During the resurgence of the back-to-Africa in the 1890's, Turner and soon-to-be bishop Charles Smith became embroiled in a bitter debate concerning conditions in Africa. Upon his return from a five month journey from Sierra Leone to Angola, Smith described conditions that stood in stark contrast and perhaps nearer in reality to the idyllic conditions that Turner found. At the 1895 Atlanta Exposition, Smith accused Turner of being an emigrationist
and spoke out against African emigration. Smith noted that European imperialism controlled all of Africa except Liberia and declared that African Americans "must fight battles and work out destinies in the western hemisphere." In an open letter to the Recorder, Turner maintained that he was not an agent of African emigration, but regardless, "the Negro has no manhood future in this country and any Negro must be an idiot not to see it . . . . If Dr. Smith wishes to eat dirt and endorse the deviltry of this nation toward my people; I do not . . . ." The bitter exchange between the two caused long term animosities, and Turner unsuccessfully opposed Smith's election to bishop in 1900. For at least one anti-emigrationist minister from Illinois, the debate was meaningless because "Africa may be a country of milk and honey; it is true; but it will never do the American Negro as a whole, any good." Though not as extreme, many within the AME agreed that African emigration offered little hope for the future of African Americans.  

During the exchange, Smith also revealed another contention of anti-emigrationists that was somewhat in conflict with the notion of redemption. Emigration would be impossible because of European imperialism and colonization. In 1884, editors of the Recorder predicted that Africa would experience white emigration during the next fifty years that was "equal to that now received in America." In answer to Robinson's plea for financial aid for the less fortunate to
go to Africa, William Chappelle, a Turner ally on most issues, maintained that "If we go to Africa we will find the white man there ahead of us." The "white man" had indeed made it to Africa before the AME church, and the European nations that carved up Africa discouraged African American colonization ventures. Moreover, AME missionaries and visitors to Africa often described the brutal treatment indigenous Africans suffered from at the hand of colonial regimes. Thus, in condemning the treatment of "colored men" in the British colonies, a 1904 Review writer summed up much of the AME sentiment toward African emigration. "The land of refuge, Africa, seems to be less tolerable than the American frying pan from which they contemplate leaping," the writer surmised. "Why not fight the battle of liberty in whatever land we happen to be?" Indeed, the delegates at the 1899 South Carolina Conference contended that the emigration question exasperated African American problems by "creating great unrest and disquietude." The delegates argued that "we are not yet either financially or intellectually prepared for such a move." The delegates of the 1899 North Ohio Conference echoed their southern counterparts and determined that "we do not think a remedy is to be found for the ills we are suffering by immigrating to Africa." By the close of the era, the question of African emigration was nearly moot, and many agreed with the poem "Old Liberia," which appeared in the October, 1916
Although I'm trodden underfoot,  
Here in America--
And the right to life and liberty,  
From me you take away,
Until my brethren in the South
From chains are all set free--
The Old Liberia
Is not the place for me.

For most AME leaders and members, the question of African emigration came down to a matter of political choice. Fight racism at home or leave home and fight racism abroad. Most choose to stay at home.16

While most leaders chose to fight racism in the United States, many of those same leaders who denounced African emigration because of political ideology, supported the economic and missionary possibilities that was explicit in the emigrationist message. For instance, William Nesbitt who described Liberia as an unfit place for emigration also asserted that the republic was "okay for missionaries, teachers, and even men of capital, but no so for the masses-ordinary people." Bishop Grant, an avid anti-emigrationist who believed that it was "simply foolishness" for the "masses" to consider going to Africa, nevertheless, maintained that going to Africa for economic and missionary purposes was acceptable. Early on, many AME members developed a Washingtonian type contention that overseas economic development through hard work, thrift, and Christian values would prove that African Americans were worthy of self-determination. The members of the 1890 New
York Conference state of the country committee maintained that it was "useless to talk of African emigration," but also recommended that colonies be formed in Africa that "would offer points for proving the ability of the Negro to control financial, political and mechanical interests." Ironically, to promote migration to the sparsely settled regions of southwestern and northwestern United States, the delegates to the 1900 North Ohio Conference, who had denounced emigration a year earlier, reiterated much the emigrationist argument. The delegates maintained that African American strides toward greater independence accounted for increases in racial violence and discrimination. Therefore, African Americans should migrate to the west where they could assert their manhood, claim their rights, build cities, start business enterprises, and develop resources. The delegates declared that "by our energy, thrift and industry," African Americans would "win the respect and confidence of the civilized world." Thus, emigrationists and anti-emigrationists linked the concept of self-help, which coincided with concepts of racial solidarity, to economic advancement. Economic advancement would prove African American "manhood" and, thereby, lead to greater self-determination.

The evangelist message, which had near unanimous acceptance within the denomination, also incorporated the concepts of self-help and racial solidarity. Some within
the church, like Bishop Arnett, even maintained that evangelism could unite all of black Africa. Yet, AME evangelists combined self-help and racial solidarity with notions of spiritual and social uplift that maintained a degree of religious and cultural chauvinism similar to that of white denominations. The elder who maintained that the redemption of Africa would be the dawning of a Christian millennium also asserted that "the blood-stained cross" was "the reserved force to elevate them [Africans] to, if not above, the level of their fellows." While promoting self-help for Africans, Cain asserted that there were many well-qualified teachers among "native" Africans who needed only "proper general superintendence and the means and material furnished to carry forward the great work of mission." Many agreed that with the "proper" help Africans could become Christianized and civilized based on western institutions and values. To do so meant the destruction of indigenous African cultures and traditions which many believed would eventually lead to the redemption and liberation of Africa. Paradoxically, evangelist often utilized many of the themes constant in black theology to justify imperialist actions. Just as Americans of African descent had to suffer slavery to become Christianized and civilized, Africans had to suffer imperialism and colonization to become a part of the "civilized" world community. Moreover, just as Union armies liberated American slaves and opened the way for the armies
Indeed, during the Civil War, AME members established the missionary pattern that continued throughout the age of imperialism. Future bishop Benjamin Tanner described this pattern in his 1867 church history when he maintained that "it is one of the brightest pages in the history of our Church, that while the Army of the Union were forcing their victorious passage through the southern land and striking down treason, the missionaries of our Church . . . were following in their wake and establishing the Church and the schoolhouse . . . ." The military of the United States cleared the way for the AME to conduct missionary and educational activities among the unredeemed and uncivilized in the South. As noted, after Reconstruction, the AME hierarchy began to expand overseas missionary efforts, especially in Africa. In doing so, many within the church adopted a political-religious stance that linked the redemption of Africa to the "conquering" of Africa for Christ through imperialism. The members of committee on foreign missions for the 1885 New England conference succinctly assessed AME attitudes: "The translation of the Scriptures into nearly every language and dialect, the opening up of India, China, Australia and Africa to the Gospel of Christ, the Congo Conference, with its projected 'Congo Free States,' are among the numerous events which
herald the advancing conquests of the conquering Cross." For the committee, the advance of western society and imperialism opened new territories for Christianity and, ironically, provided the opportunity for self-determination in the Congo. Later that year AME missionaries in Liberia touted their success at making converts and proclaimed that "The banner of the A.M.E. Church is waving victoriously in the fatherland." Such reports increased missionary interests and activities.¹⁹

As expected, Cain and Turner led the way, but northerners quickly got on board. Since finances had been the major obstacle to overseas missions, Cain asked each person within the AME to donate twenty-five cents for missionary work and all preachers to set aside a day to amass supplies such as hymn books, disciplines, and Sunday school literature. The bishop planned an oft-postponed trip to Africa, and although he received some skepticism, most AME leaders and members generally supported his trip. For instance, the AME Ministers' Association, also known as the Preachers' Meeting and based in Philadelphia, supported Cain's venture and pledged three hundred dollars to the trip. After consistent pressure from Cain and Turner, the Bishop's Council, which had been lukewarm toward overseas missions especially in Africa, concluded that something must be done about missions in Africa. In 1888, the Council maintained that "the opening of the Congo brings us
increased responsibilities, as well as enlarged opportunities" and recommended that the church raise $3000 for African work and create an African Missionary Conference. By 1894, the church had accomplished much of these early goals including missions in Liberia and Sierra Leone which comprised a West African conference. The AME Missionary Board for that year reported expenditures for African missions in excess of $3600. The Board reported more than $7100 in expenditures for all overseas missions including the Indian Territory. The women of the AME accounted for much of these funds.20

Women administered most of the home missionary work, establishing missionary societies throughout the nation to raise money, train missionaries, and implement programs. Women also became missionaries as educators often instructed female students to broaden their fields of interest beyond the shores of the United States. An 1897 female contributor to the Voice of Missions maintained that mission and temperance work were "the most appropriate means of women taking an active role in the moral reformation of sinners." Speaking before the 1900 Special Conference of the Woman's Missionary Society Convention, held in conjunction with the 1900 General Conference, L. M. Beckett declared that AME women were "destined to fill important positions in life." She pointed to the many missionary enterprises that women participated in throughout the globe, especially in Africa.
The resurgence of interest in Africa during the mid-1890's coincided with the emergence of the black women's club movement. During the same period, the AME Home and Foreign Missionary Society (HFMS) emerged in the South and Midwest to challenge the dominance of the northern controlled Woman's Parent Mite Missionary Society (WPMMS). Thus, AME women across the nation were at a height of activism that considered an array of domestic and foreign issues that affected racism, sexism, and classism. Much of their work involved the spread of African Methodism. Speaking before the delegates of the 1900 Pittsburgh Mite Missionary Society Convention, Eliza Glassgo from Wheeling supported the role of the missionary as an expansionist. Moreover, Glassgo criticized the "too much praise for men" and maintained that "Upon every national and international problem, woman has constantly contributed to the very best influences of her nature in cooperation with that of man's" Thus, according to Glassgo, "Women have been the advance agents of expansion of Christianity."  

In this bevy of activism, the redemption of Africa became a prime international focus for AME women. Addressing the delegates to the 1899 Indiana Mite Missionary Society Convention, Elizabeth Weaver from Marion contended that while China and Japan had received some missionary attention, "there is a land that is nearer to the heart of every Afro-American. This land is Africa." The delegates
to the convention, whose motto was "Christ Our Leader and
the World Our Field," maintained that work in Africa
dominated the conference. The AME women also published a
short-lived monthly missionary journal, *Women's Light and
Love for Heathen Africa*. Edited by Emma Ransom, president
of the Chicago Mite Missionary Society, the magazine
featured articles that promoted evangelism and stressed the
role of women within the church and society. Still, the
title suggests that women were susceptible to some of the
same religious and cultural chauvinism as were men.
Nevertheless, women proved to be indispensable fund raisers,
and at the 1900 General Conference, representatives from the
both women's missionary societies earmarked forty percent of
their proceeds for foreign missions with the bulk to go to
Africa.  

By 1898, the AME church had established such an
extensive network of missionaries that a *Recorder* headline
boasted, "1816—We Now Almost Belt the Civilized World--
1898." The *Recorder* also featured a recurring column, "Why
the AME Church Should Support Missions," written by a
different church member each time the column appeared.
Spurred by the new fields of opportunity for evangelism
opened by the Spanish-American War and American imperialism,
many AME leaders and members began to stretch the limits of
the African diaspora. They believed that the AME was
uniquely qualified to bring the word of God to the darker
peoples of the world and promoted the opportunities for mission among those of "Nigritic descent" in places like the Philippine, Hawaii, and Cuba. The entire globe became an arena for AME missionary activities. In a July, 1900, Church Review article, F. G. Smelson suggested that the church add to the Apostles' Creed the words, "I believe in the conversion of the world . . . the evangelization of the world in this generation." Smelson concluded, "It is, therefore, the supreme duty of the Church to participate in the world-wide conquest in the name of the Lord." The delegates of the 1900 General Conference proclaimed that "our foreign interests demand our attention" and created new bishoprics in Africa and the Caribbean to organize and manage AME mission policies in those areas. In the last official act of the Conference, delegates passed a resolution authorizing the incorporation or registration of the AME Church in foreign lands "in accordance with the regulations and laws of those several countries and colonies."23

In March, 1902, in a rare instance of unanimity, all the bishops signed a proclamation extolling the use of American and British imperialism to spread African Methodism:

Whether following the Union Jack or the Stars and Stripes, African Methodism with the simple and assuring proclamation, "I come to seek my brethren," with no ambition to establish an earthly kingdom, nor inclination to disturb or discourage the peaceful and loyal activities of
any people, but to excite them to a higher appreciation of good government and personal character, and to bring them into the Kingdom of God.

Imperialism had become the instrument of God, and AME members forged a religious-political doctrine that sought to expand not only American Christianity but also American democracy across the globe. Although they claimed "no ambition to establish an earthly kingdom," a few of the signers would have done just that. They would have built a black Christian nation on the shores of their African motherland, a nation that would have recreated better American institutions free from racism and prejudice and that would have stood as an example of the capabilities of those of African descent. The majority of the signers, however, saw no future in African Americans undertaking such a task, and in many instances, their religious concerns paralleled the concerns of white denominations. Yet unlike many members of the major white denominations, most AME members did not share in the belief that the darker people of the world had to be subjugated in order to advance social and political progress. Although some within the church believed that their mission to the people of color of the world was simply "to teach the mind to think, the heart to love and the hands to work for humanity and God," others believed that imperialism together with Protestant evangelism would lead to liberation for people of color. Thus paradoxically, while supporting imperialism, many AME
members, well acquainted with the evils of racism that accompanied imperialism, often viewed themselves as protectors of conquered people and fought for self-determination for indigenous people.24

The evangelical spirit ran deep within the church, and the spread of Christianity and African Methodism was a motivating factor for many church members. As people of color, many church members believed that they were singularly capable of bringing Christianity to the people of color of the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia. Still, with paternal, chauvinist rhetoric similar to that used by white denominations, some church members referred to the people of conquered territories as uncivilized or barbaric "races" who were in need of Christianizing. Moreover, by the end the period, many agreed with the delegates of the 1915 Michigan conference that "As for Africa, she is being won for Christ." Nevertheless, black theology, which emphasized liberation and justice, love and suffering, and hope combined with various black political ideologies to cause contradictions and dilemmas for church members who sought to spread Christianity in the wake of imperialism. In addition, the support for imperialism was never unanimous, and racial injustice forced even the most outspoken imperialists within the denomination to denounce American and European actions. During the age of imperialism all of these factors converged to shape the manner AME members
viewed themselves and the world they lived in.


17. Nesbitt, "Liberian Question;" Quoted in Meier, Negro Thought in America, 272; Minutes of the 70th Session of the New York Annual Conference of the AME Church, May 28-June 3, 1890, (Philadelphia: Recorder Steam Power Job Print, 1890); 1900 North Ohio Conference, 37-38.


21. Neverdon-Morton, *Afro-American Women*, 8; *Voice of Missions*, 1 January 1897; Minutes, Reports and Addresses of the First Woman's Day and Special Conference of the Woman's Missionary Society of the AME Church, May 18-19, 1900, 19-20; Minutes of the 4th Convention of the Woman's Mite Missionary Society of the Pittsburgh Conference of the AME Church, July 5-9, 1900, (Pittsburgh: Scott Dibert, Printer, 1900), 43-44.


25. Minutes of the 29th Session of the Michigan Annual Conference of the AME Church, September 1-5, 1915, (Nashville, TN: AME Sunday School Union Print, 1915), 44.
Chapter IV

The Burden of Racial Attitudes

In imperialism, white is superior to non-white; in imperialism, racism plays an intrinsic role. During the turn of the twentieth century, American and European imperialists used prevalent racial attitudes and racism to justify, in part, military and technological subjugation of people of color throughout the world. Imperialists relied on "scientific" racism that produced an array of distortions and falsehoods that attempted to verify the inferiority of darker people. Foremost among these distortions was the adaption of Darwin's theories of evolution and natural selection to the social development of people whom scientists and scholars ordered into racial as well as gender and class categories. Scientists formulated a hierarchical evolutionary scale that placed white people or a sub-category of white people at the top and black people at the bottom. Scholars manipulated the burgeoning social sciences of history, anthropology, psychology, and others to confirm their biological biases. Those like British sociologist Herbert Spencer and his disciple, William Graham Sumner, a founder of American sociology, maintained that conflict between people was good because "natural law" would
select those with superior institutions and culture to survive and dominate. Such attitudes permeated the psyche of American society, and newspapers such as the *Baltimore American* often declared that "It is the same old law of the survival of the fittest. The weak must bend to the strong and today the American race is the sturdiest, the noblest on earth." American and European imperialism fed upon such logic of white supremacy.¹

Still, many imperialists, especially among social gospelers, believed that evolution should not be used to exploit people, but instead, Anglo-Saxons and Aryans, as the most advanced and civilized people in the world, had the duty and the burden to Christianize and civilize the world's inferior people of color. Social gospelers, unlike social Darwinists, acknowledged the role of environment in shaping the human condition yet still relied on prevalent racial theories when they attempted to change oppressive conditions. Thus, "the white man's burden" combined evangelical Protestantism with white supremacy and a paternal mission of uplift. Because people of color were inferior, however, they could never be uplifted to the same stage as white people; nevertheless, the fate of the "white man" was to try, if only for self-attainment. In 1899, Alfred T. Mahan, an architect of the modern United States navy, maintained that "the inhabitants may not return love for their benefits [of American civilization], comprehension
or gratitude may fail them; but the sense of duty achieved and the security of the tenure, are the rewards of the ruler." This supremacist and paternal attitude was not new in the United States--Southerners had long internalized such racial arguments in defensive of slavery. Yet "scientific" racism and greater contact among the various people of the world helped to transfer southern racial attitudes that characterized African Americans as savage children to the rest of the nation and, with imperialism, to the rest of the world. Indeed, social scientists in the 1903 American Sociological Review maintained that "slavery was the most humane and the most practical method ever devised for 'bearing the white man's burden.'" Such racial sentiment became ingrained in popular culture as the media of the times often published blatantly racist material that created a negative racial image of inferiority for people of color. Consequently, imperialists used racial assumptions based on these pseudo racial theories to deny self-determination to people of color because they were believed incapable of self-government.²

In the United States during the age of imperialism, the rights of African Americans were increasingly besieged under a wave of racial violence, segregation, and disfranchisement. The killing of "little brown men" in imperialist ventures overseas seemed to pardon or even sanction the lynching of "niggers" in the South. From 1893
to 1904, mobs lynched an average of more than one hundred African Americans a year for supposed infractions ranging from murder and rape to the "crime" of being disrespectful to a white person. In 1897 alone, the Recorder reported 122 lynchings, including the lynching of four African American women. In the wake of Booker T. Washington’s Atlanta Exposition speech in 1895 that seemed to sanction segregation and the 1896 "separate but equal" Plessy decision, an institutionalized apartheid system emerged in the United States. By law in the South and by fact in the North, the inequalities of the system confined African Americans to an inferior status in American society. Moreover, southern states readily adopted legal devices such as the poll tax, grandfather clause, and literacy tests to deny African American suffrage and create second-class African American citizenry. As imperialists who denied the suffrage to people of color in American overseas possessions, the Republican party, once supporters of African American suffrage, lost the moral high ground and stood helpless when confronted with southern racial logic. Indeed, northern capitalists encouraged the prevailing racial images and attitudes which allowed them to maintain and exploit cheap labor in the South as well as in overseas territories. Many within the AME church regarded these manifestations of racism as part of a worldwide movement against darker people, an attempt to subjugate and dominate
darker people because of perceived white superiority.\footnote{2}

Leaders within the denomination also experienced the first-hand indignities of racism and inequality. The 1884 General Conference, for instance, condemned the assault of three bishops on a train traveling through the South as a "disgrace to national civilization, and Christianity." By 1904, conditions had changed little, compelling Bishop Arnett to pay $81.50 for an entire sleeping car from Ohio to Alabama because he could not buy a berth on the segregated train. The required mobility of the clergy and lay officials allowed them to view and experience racism in various sections of the nation and made them sensitive to regional conditions that affected African Americans. Armed with the personal knowledge of the consequences of racism, many church leaders ardently denounced the prevalent racial theories of the times and attempted to project positive racial images of not only African Americans but of people of color in other lands. In doing so, AME members developed a rhetoric of equality that opposed racial images of inferiority. Mastering the oratorical and literary skills necessary for persuasive rhetoric in itself was considered proof that African Americans were not inferior. To disseminate information to the African American community, nation, and world, the men and women of the AME developed several publications to counter what many considered an unfair, inaccurate, and often racist American press. In
addition, many in the AME church sought to expose the hypocrisy of an American society that condemned European treatment of other people while ignoring the racial violence committed in the United States. Members of the AME attempted to influence European opinions by tarnishing the American image abroad and thereby bring about a change in American racial attitudes.⁴

II

In the struggle for freedom and equality in the United States, political rhetoric was a powerful tool and, at times, the only tool available to African Americans to fight racial injustice and counter racial stereotypes. Since first learning the English language, African Americans have expressed their desires for racial equality in oration and literature. The black clergy’s particular role as leaders within the African American community ensured that AME ministers would have to address racial issues. Indeed, the ability to address racial concerns with a degree of oral competence was necessary for any leader of a people whose history was grounded in an oral tradition. As Arthur Smith points out in his essay "Socio-historical Perspectives of Black Oratory," antiliteracy laws during slavery intensified an African oral tradition, making vocal communication a fundamental element of African American life and history. Thus, oratory was essential for the black ministry, and with AME emphasis on literary competence for their ministry, the
denomination produced articulate racial spokespersons for the community.\textsuperscript{5}

Long accustomed to presenting themselves at the pulpit, the legislature, and the stump, by the turn of the century, AME members demonstrated skills that produced a political rhetoric that focused on equality and rivaled the rhetoric of any other group in the nation. In this dawning age of mass communication and mass society, oratory and literary skills also helped to express the self-consciousness of the individual and the community, an important factor for people who many in the nation considered second-class citizens. Rhetoric created the optimum in self-determination and self-awareness that allowed African Americans to declare "I am a man," or "I am a woman," or "We are a people." In "Metaphors of Self-Identity as Contained in the Black Press" (1978), Odessa Baker notes that several African American editors of the period attempted to overturn the "hewers of wood and drawers of water" metaphor and confirm black equality by popularizing the term "Afro-American." Because the 1857 Dred Scott decision and southern slave owners denied citizenship to American slave men and women, editors believed the term indicated their status as equal American citizens. Turner, Coppin, H.T. Johnson, and other AME editors often used the term "Afro-American" and the more radical departure "Black." Moreover, the term "Negro" was consistently capitalized in all AME publications as many
asserted that the uncapsulized "negro," which the white press perpetuated, denoted inferiority. Language allowed African Americans to identify themselves, an important and necessary step toward self-determination and equality.

Rhetoric not only had to persuade and inform but also it had to impress; thus, how an issue was presented under many circumstances was as important as the issue or the opinion. Members of the AME church, especially the ministry, spiced their prose with flowery, classical language that demonstrated knowledge of the Bible, Shakespeare, the Classics, foreign languages, especially Latin and Greek, and, of course, the American revolutionary tradition. Members of the AME easily traversed the realms of religion and politics by blending allegorical biblical themes of liberation and equality with American revolutionary symbols of liberty and equality. Restricted by racism and racial assumptions, the men and women of the AME had to choose language that would be acceptable to the widest possible audience, especially those who could affect a change. Nearly all Americans, even the most racist, could readily identify with the biblical and American revolutionary themes of equality imbedded in AME political rhetoric. Still, however impressive the language of the political rhetoric, the oral and written discourse of AME members expressed an in-depth analysis of the problems that the nation, the world, and African Americans confronted.
Far from considering themselves as inferior, many of the men and women of the AME viewed themselves as representatives of African Americans and, as imperialism increased, people of color throughout the world. Indeed, African Americans leaders were among the few people of color in the world who could address at a national and international level the conditions brought forth by imperialism.

The men and women of the AME, especially those in the highly political ministry, stood within the forefront of African American struggles and had developed a long tradition of political rhetoric. Prior to the Civil War, abolitionists within the AME had traversed the nation delivering speeches and conducting lyceums that condemned the evils of slavery. They established newspapers and published essays and books to sway public opinion to their cause. During Reconstruction, AME leaders and members continued to develop the rhetoric of equality and, for a brief moment, were able to help bring oratory skills to bear to pass key but temporary civil rights and more permanent education legislation in several southern states. At the turn of the century, AME members proposed many solutions to the "Negro question," which was fast becoming part of a broader cluster of international problems that included the "Philippine question" and the "Cuban question" among others. They vigorously debated over which solutions would serve the African American cause best, and the AME provided an ideal
forum for discussion of the many issues of the times. In Chicago for example, Reverdy Ransom, pastor of Bethel Church, instituted the Sunday evening forum for the expressed purpose of generating dialogue concerning the pressing issues of the day. The format quickly spread so that on Sunday evenings the rhetoric of debate echoed through the halls of AME churches across the nation. Some churches even initiated and supported debating and literary societies. Among the most popular of these was the Bethel Literary and Historical Society founded by Bishop Payne in 1881. At the monthly sessions, African American leaders presented a range of scholarly works that emphasized African and African American history and contributions. In the Philadelphia area, ministers formed the influential AME Ministers' Association, commonly known as the Preachers' Meeting, and conducted weekly sessions to discuss pertinent issues. The ministers held the meetings on Thursday night so that they could issue public statements in the current edition of the Recorder. Leaders within the denomination also vigorously debated issues at the various general and annual conferences. In addition, although the editors of the several AME publications used editorial prerogatives to promote their own views, they, nonetheless, readily printed opposing perspectives and often initiated debate on certain issues. Thus, the AME church provided the means by which members sought to influence American and worldwide racial
attitudes and rebuke "scientific" racism that legitimized inferior status for people of color.  

One area in which the men and women of the AME sought to reverse prevailing racial attitudes was in the mainstream American press, which exhibited and conveyed many of the racial assumptions that afflicted European and American society. Indeed, many white Americans and Europeans formed their racial prejudices from the information they received in the popular media rather than by actual contact with people of color. The mainstream press not only repeated most of the pseudo-scientific racial theories of the age but also printed front page examples that supposedly "proved" these theories were correct. Accordingly, AME members consistently condemned the one-sided and racist manner in which the press portrayed African Americans. In an 1899 Review article, Judson Lyons, AME layman and political appointee, appealed to the press not to "unjustly poison the popular mind with recitals that upon close investigation do not square with actual fact." Judson argued that "if the Negro is to be painted, paint him as he appears in the life of his leaders, his teachers, ministers, lawyers, doctors, literary men, his artisans and his sturdy laborers." 

Such sentiment echoed throughout the denomination, and the general and annual conferences formed a collective chorus of condemnation of American newspapers. The members of the state of the country committee for the 1900 North
Ohio Conference charged "the press with having much to do with creating sentiment against the Negro." They noted that "his smallest offense is picked, colored as black as the wings of midnight, placed in the most conspicuous place in the paper, given the most attractive headlines, and sent on a mission of mischief around the world." The delegates of the 1903 Indiana Conference condemned "the 'yellow journalism' of this country for the studied and wily attempts to encourage race hatred and to magnify the defects of the Negro even to the extent of falsehood in order to incite riot and bloodshed." Leaders and members within the church wholeheartedly believed that the mainstream press mistreated and misrepresented African Americans. The delegates to the 1900 General Conference went so far as to consider barring the press completely from the assembly but ultimately asked the local newspaper to replace the current reporter covering the conference because of his inaccuracy in reporting on conference proceedings. Nevertheless, the mainstream American press continued to depict African Americans in an inaccurate, negative, and inferior manner. Consequently, AME members sought other means to cast a positive light on people of color and thus overcome racial attitudes.  

One of the most natural mediums to oppose the perceived inaccuracy of the mainstream press was through the black press. The black press was a means for African Americans to
express self-determination based on their own perceptions, interpretations, and values that were shaped by their unique African heritage and their unique experience in the United States. Self-determined behavior required that African Americans receive information that often differed from that which appeared in the white press—the other side of the story. Editors of black newspapers used journalism to promote racial protest, racial pride, racial solidarity, and self-help. In a 1900 Review article, Willis T. Menard, an influential African American editor, maintained that black journalism "is the only means of heralding to the world the great strides in science, invention and art made by the Negro race." According to Menard, the black press not only revealed the strength of African American commercial enterprise but also stood "as a mediator for the race." More importantly, as Betty Rathbun maintains in "The Rise of the Modern American Negro Press" (1978), the black press served as a "clearinghouse for ideas," allowing African Americans to publicly sort through the myriad of problems they faced.¹⁰

Members of the AME understood the importance of the black press in the drive for equality and self-determination. At the 1889 Colored Press Convention, held in Washington D.C. and dominated by the black religious press, the delegates urged black journalists "to continually insist on three things: 1. We are Americans by nativity . . .
. 2. If American by nativity, we are citizens--common and equal citizens . . . 3. There is to be no compromise connected with the manly and fearless advocacy of all that pertains to the rights, the elevation, the advancement, the general and equal good of our race." Thus, African Americans and members of the AME in particular considered the black press as critical to racial uplift and advancement. Many within the denomination simply agreed with Menard who asserted that the "salvation of any race of people rests with the press, pulpit and schoolhouse."11

Accordingly, members continued and expanded a long AME tradition of combining the pulpit and the press. Indeed, back in 1817 Richard Allen had organized the AME Book Concern, and the first African American newspaper, the Freedman's Journal, was co-founded in New York in 1827 by AME minister Samuel E. Cornish. After several short-lived attempts to establish a weekly religious newspaper, the denomination published the Christian Herald in 1848 and changed its name permanently to the Christian Recorder in 1852. The newspaper continues to exist, making it the longest continuously published African American newspaper in the nation. At the turn of the century, advertising for the Christian Recorder boasted that the newspaper was "the oldest, largest, and best weekly paper published by colored people" with "the widest, steadiest, and most reliable circulation." Although the claim was exaggerated and
circulation averaged around 2,500, the Recorder was an influential black newspaper that contained religious, local, national, and international news often written in the form of letters from various church members who traveled throughout the nation and world. As the flagship newspaper of a denomination that included more than a half-a-million African Americans, the Recorder attracted most of the leading African Americans of the period who readily contributed articles and editorials on a variety of issues.12

In 1884, the General Conference decided to publish a quarterly newsmagazine, the AME Church Review, and elected as editor Benjamin Tanner, who had elevated the quality and status of the Christian Recorder during his sixteen year tenure as editor. Tanner maintained that "the design of this publication [the Review] is to know what the negro scholars of the Church, of the country and of the world have to say upon history and theology, upon science and religion, upon art and poetry . . . to bring to the front the talent and culture which prejudice and condition have relegated to the rear." The July, 1884 first edition of the Review attempted to live up to this pledge. The magazine featured four articles on religion in general, one on the past and future of the AME, another on Greece of the New Testament, and poems on the demise of slavery and Lincoln. It also contained an article on the duties of black political
appointees, a historical account on the Republic of Haiti, an essay on black accomplishments in science, art, and literature, a letter from Turner that condemned a recent Supreme Court decision, book reviews, and editorial notes on conditions in the South. Contributors included a range of African American leaders, both members and non-members of the denomination. The magazine created quite "a stir" within the African American community. Editors of the Recorder declared that "Verily we should strive to make this one [the Review] the equal of the average magazine of the whites." Indeed, throughout the age of imperialism the Review continuously published material that attacked notions of racial inferiority and highlighted African American contributions to society.¹³

In 1893, Turner founded the Voice of Missions, as a monthly newspaper that disseminated information concerning the numerous missionary activities of the church. The church soon took over the financial responsibilities of the Voice, but Turner remained as editor. Consequently, the newspaper became an unofficial sounding board for Turner, promoting African emigration and black nationalism while condemning United States domestic and foreign policies. Turner was most proud of the success the newspaper had in exposing many African Americans to their African roots for the first time. The various AME publications also helped to build leadership within the church and community, and
throughout the period, several leaders used the periodicals as stepping stones to political and denominational advancement. The AME also published periodicals at a local and regional level, notably the *Southern Christian Recorder*, keeping congregations informed of more immediate events and issues. These local religious papers often reprinted articles that appeared in the national publications, and likewise, the national periodicals at times printed stories that first appeared at the local level. This reciprocal flow of information helped the AME hierarchy to remain in contact with local congregations. The publications were read widely within the African American community and beyond, as AME soldiers and missionaries brought the AME church in contact with the world. By 1900, the circulation of AME publications included Africa, Europe, Asia, Latin American, and the Caribbean. The men and women of the AME built a communication network that transmitted AME political rhetoric of equality to a local, regional, national, and international audience. Thus, the AME brought to the world perceptions, interpretations, opinions, and responses that often differed from those expressed by the mainstream American press.¹⁴

III

One issue on which the AME press and the white American press differed greatly was the manner that they depicted lynching and mob violence in America. Many AME men and
women maintained that the white press in the North and especially the South encouraged and justified lynching by depicting the victims of racial violence as inferior, savage, and deserving of their punishment without due process. The representatives at the 1894 Michigan Conference contended that "The public press, which should voice the sentiments of our leaders in church and state, so far distorts facts and palliates truth as to give the most fiendish and inhuman act the semblance of justice."

Similarly, some AME members blamed the white clergy for condoning racial violence. For instance, the delegates at the 1899 South Carolina Conference charged organized religion as largely responsible for lynching and mob violence. "The moral and spiritual force in churches in this country has greatly waned," the delegates declared, "and by this we mean the white churches and their pulpits."

The delegates accused white ministers of "apathy and seemingly studied indifference" that made them "guilty of the grossest dereliction of those solemn duties." Instead, AME members maintained that American journalists and clergy should unite to end lynching. In 1899, the AME Ministers' Association organized a national day of fasting and prayer to protest lynching. The preachers hoped that "moral suasion by enlisting public opinion through the press and pulpit" would bring about an end to mob violence. The delegates to the 1899 Indiana Woman's Mite Missionary
Convention also maintained that "the evil should be suppressed by the combined powers of the pulpit, press and legal authority." Church members from all ranks condemned lynching and actively lobbied the federal government to take steps to eliminate the practice. Review editors condemned the government for failing to use muscle to halt lynching while using that same muscle to break strikes. Delegates at the 1899 Indiana Conference maintained that the "existence of mob rule is a dangerous menace to constitutional government" and favored presidential authority to protect all citizens from violence that interfered with their rights. At the 1896 Republican convention, church members led by D. August Straker were instrumental in the efforts of the National Federation of Colored Men of the United States to get an anti-lynching plank inserted in the Republican platform. Thus, AME members sought to end racial violence by every means at their rhetorical disposal--moral imperatives, legislation, executive enforcement, and public opinion.¹⁵

Members of the AME church also sought to provoke world opinion against the abomination of American lynching by highlighting the cruelty and injustice of the practice. For instance in 1899, North Ohio Conference delegates declared that "this nation stands disgraced in the eyes of the civilized world because of the horrible and barbarous lynchings." The assembly reported statistics on lynchings
for the preceding three years. The 1899 Indiana Woman's Mite Missionary Society denounced "taking life by mobs as a species of barbarism that is disgracing our Christian civilization." Editors of the Voice of Missions compared the United States to Imperial Rome, which they declared was "noted for crimes, death and mob violence." Commenting on lynching, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, an AME women's activist, compared African American persecution in America to Jewish persecution in ancient Rome and medieval Europe, a constant theme in much of the AME literature.16

Many of the men and women of the AME sought to reveal the hypocrisy of an American society that often condemned European abuses in colonial lands but overlooked racial abuses toward African Americans in the South. In 1894, G. F. Richings, representing the AME, traveled to London with Ida B. Wells to arouse European sentiment against lynching. Wells and Richings appalled London society with accounts of lynchings and especially highlighted the threats to tar and feather a white Texas Episcopalian bishop who invited a black minister into his home. Wells and Richings were instrumental in securing a resolution from the British and Foreign Unitarian Association that called for the civilized world to reprobate lynching in the United States. Upon her return home, Wells toured AME churches and conferences and received recognition as "this Esther who has dared and done so much for her oppressed people" from Recorder editors. In
1900, elder W. D. Chappelle warned Americans of the possible loss of international image and status because of lynching. "The American government," warned Chappelle, "went to Cuba and said to Spain: 'Stop.' The united powers have gone into China and said to her: 'Stop.' Now that the American government has taken such high grounds for humanity, based upon the claims of Christianity alone, may not the other powers say to her: 'Stop.' Will they not be justified in carrying out such a policy? Think not that America's lynching record is being watched by the world?" 17

Church members considered European opinion a valuable weapon in the fight against racism and sought to portray positive racial images that emphasized African American achievement. For example as early as 1897, AME leaders expressed the need to "set the European straight" with an African American exhibit at the Paris Exposition of 1900. Thomas J. Calloway, church member and United States commissioner to the Paris Exposition in charge of the American Negro Exhibit, explained the need for such an exhibit. Calloway maintained that the exhibit would "correct erroneous ideas" and "prove that all classes in the United States are prosperous, progressive, and valuable citizens." Calloway determined that since most of Europe engaged in colonizing Africa, "the 'Negro problem' is destined to become a burning reality in their African colonies, and it is our privilege to furnish the best
evidence at hand to prove that the only solution that will ever succeed is that of an equal chance in the race of life without regard to color, race, or previous condition."

Thus, Calloway linked the need for equality for African Americans with a similar need for Africans in colonial Africa. In 1902, a group of African Americans that included several AME members formed a committee that proposed a "Negro World's Fair" to be located in a southern city. Although the project never proceeded beyond initial planning, the delegates believed that such an undertaking if managed properly would have resulted "in incalculable good for the race." The men and women of the AME realized that international conferences could illustrate to the world that people of color were not inferior and were capable of advanced civilization.¹⁸

Moreover, international conferences provided a world forum from which AME members could address a global audience. The AME church sent the fourth largest delegation to the 1901 Ecumenical Conference of Methodists, an international religious conference of Methodist denominations held in London. At the conference, Bishop Benjamin F. Lee, usually more conservative, defended the role of people of color in spreading Methodism to the world. After a speech by J. Briggs of the Methodist Church of Canada who claimed that Anglo-Saxons alone had been responsible for Methodism in the world, Lee delivered a
speech that acknowledged that "Methodism sprang from Anglo-Saxon men and ideals" but argued that members of the conference "should not forget that it [Methodism] is being spread by non-whites who far outnumber the Anglo-Saxon in Africa, India, China and the islands." Bishop Derrick maintained that Lee’s speech "changed the current of thought upon the expression, 'the Anglo-Saxon people,'" to the broader term "the 'English-speaking people' which all acknowledged was more appropriate." Indeed, inspired by Lee’s speech, one contributor to the Recorder asserted that because of the common English language, "the Anglo-African is the best ally the Anglo-Saxon can have" and the "destiny of the two races is inseparably woven together." Members of the AME considered the acknowledgement by the conference of their contribution to the spread of Methodism a major advancement toward improving racial relations worldwide.19

Not all international conferences met AME approval as evidenced by the 1898 World’s Congress of Anglo-Saxons held in Philadelphia. One AME writer questioned the validity of the term "Anglo-Saxon" and condemned the Congress as an effort "to insure and perpetuate their [white] supremacy over the aspiring and competing race-forces of the world." The writer insisted that "it is as foolish to suppose all white people are Anglo-Saxon as to suppose all Americans [are] white folks, or all Africans [are] Negroes." The
writer realized that racists used the nebulous term to consolidate white supremacy. Even international conferences that excluded African Americans provided AME members the opportunity to challenge racial theories and combat racism.20

Of course, most of American society, white and black, was infected in some manner by the overwhelming pervasiveness of the "evidence" that led to the classification of people and left psychological scars of inferiority on a class of American citizens. Nevertheless, many men and women within the AME officials and members were within the forefront of efforts to refute assertions of Anglo-Saxon or Aryan superiority. The Review and Recorder consistently published articles and essays that emphasized the past and present accomplishments and contributions of people of color especially those of African descent. Thus, in part, several AME members and contributors to AME publications used history, often Biblical history, to challenge the racial theory that Africa had no history before European intrusion and that Africa never contributed to civilization. The renewed interest in African redemption and black evangelism in general, both rooted in David's prophesy for Ethiopia (Egypt in some versions), undergirded efforts to acknowledge African achievements. In the 1895 Review article, "The Ancient Glory of the Hamitic Race," George W. Brent attempted to dispel the theory that African
Americans were inferior because they were descendants of Ham, Noah's son whose descendants God supposedly cursed to be degenerate servants. Brent noted that the ancient Egyptians were Hamites who were neither degenerate nor servants and who had built a mighty civilization. In an earlier essay, Brent used similar logic to assert that white people and black people were essentially brothers and sisters. The title of an 1892 Review essay, "The Boasted Inherent Superiority of the Anglo-Saxon on Trial: With the Universal Authoritative Acknowledgement of the Unique Ethiopian," by William W. Moe, revealed the author's intent. Not only did Moe stress African achievements beginning in ancient Egypt, he also maintained that history revealed that the "Anglo-Saxon" was not necessarily superior. In "Adversity and the Negro," which appeared in an 1897 issue of the Recorder, Mississippi elder J. Robinton traced the adversity of oppressed people down through the ages. Emphasizing the "advances of the Negro since emancipation" and the current "Anglo-Saxon rulership," Robinton noted that past civilizations such as Greece and Rome had fallen because they oppressed people and predicted that the United States, unless racial attitudes changed, would meet a similar fate. In a similar yet ironic vein, elder J. G. Monroe attempted to use social Darwinism to illustrate that African Americans were not inferior. In the 1899 Recorder article "The Fittest Must Survive," Monroe maintained that
by surviving slavery and contributing to American society, African Americans demonstrated that they were among the fittest people in the world. Often used as a weapon by racists to "prove" the inferiority of people of color, history could also reveal that African Americans, aided by their African heritage and tradition, withstood oppression and contributed to the current civilization.\footnote{21}

The editorial staffs of the AME publications often used sarcasm and humor to counter notions of white superiority. The following satirical poem, "The Original Aryan," was reprinted from Punch Magazine in the May 2, 1895, Christian Recorder:

I am the ancient Aryan
And you have done me wrong.
I did not come from Hindustan--
I’ve been here all along.

I never traveled from the east
In huge successive waves.
You’ll find your ancestors deceased
Inside your own old caves.

There my remains may now be sought
Mixed up with mastodons,
Which very long with flint I fought
Before I fought with bronze.

In simple skins I wrapped me round
Ere mats I learned to make.
I dug my dwelling in the ground
Or reared them on a lake.

I had no pen, I’m sure of this,
Although you say I penned
All manner of theologies
In Sanskrit and in Zend.

My nature you’ve misunderstood.
When first I sojourned here,
I worshipped chunks of stone or wood;
My rites were rather queer.
The more my little ways you scan
   The less you'11 care to praise
And bless the dear old Aryan
   Of neolithic days.

They've mixed me up till, I declare,
   I hardly can report
Whether I first was tall and fair,
   Or I was dark or short.

But of two things I take my stand
Through all their noise and strife--
   I didn't come from Asia, and
I had no higher life.

The unauthored poem ridiculed the notion of an "Aryan race" whom many scholar considered the progenitors of all civilizations, past and present. Although the poem first appeared in the popular British journal, the choice by AME editors to reprint it in an AME publication demonstrated that they were willing to question prevalent racial classification. 

Perhaps no piece of literature had as much influence on the world of imperialism as Rudyard Kipling's poem "The White Man's Burden," published in February, 1899. In the poem, Kipling emphasized the superiority of the white man who consequently was charged to "Take up" the near impossible "burden" of uplifting the "Half-devil and half-child" darker people of the world. The poem quickly became a rallying point for imperialists around the world and a focus of scorn for members of the AME church. A Recorder editor maintained that "the back of the black man is quite inured to the duty of burden-bearing" and referred to the
poem as a "beautiful and interesting something in the light of poetic license, especially when colored by arrogant reflections of the Kipling kind." The writer maintained that arrogance rather than superiority was the basis for the supposed burden. Another editorial writer declared that Kipling had "outlived his usefulness, having reached the acme of inefficiency in the poem" of which "production is unquestionably a verse license to injustice and tribute to Caucasian avarice and cruelty such as has no parallel in any mad flight of the poetic muse." In this analysis greed rather than superiority undergirded white paternalism. In response to Kipling's poem, a few church members devised other poems such as "The White Man's Chance," by Edward O. Clarke, who maintained that white ego not superiority had created alleged burden. Instead of considering his Christian mission as a burden, the "white man" should speak in terms of the opportunity to advance civilization.23

Perhaps, the best reply was Recorder editor H. T. Johnson's 1899 "Black Man's Burden":

Pile on the Black Man's Burden.
'Tis nearest at your door;
Why heed long bleeding Cuba,
or dark Hawaii's shore?
Hail ye your fearless armies,
Which menace feeble folks
Who fight with clubs and arrows
and brook your rifle's smoke.

Pile on the Black Man's Burden
His wail with laughter drown
You've sealed the Red Man's problem,
And will take up the Brown,
In vain ye seek to end it,
Sarcasm at times denotes a degree of frustration, and nothing frustrated the men and women of the AME more than racism. Because of racism, Kipling’s poem was read by millions; Johnson’s by relatively few. Talent and ability did not matter. Yet, Johnson did not accommodate and was not inactive. Indeed, his poem demonstrated a defiance, insisting that it would be better to "pile on" more "burden" for African Americans than to "take up" more on foreign shores. Johnson ridiculed the superiority of military forces that fight clubs and arrows with rifles. Finally, he reminded people of color of the plight of American slaves and the fate of Native Americans and warned them that it was better to die defending their "problem." Johnson saw the beginnings of the application of American racism on a global level and responded in a political rhetoric that scorned the premise of subjugation, white paternalism. His rhetoric, like much of the rhetoric of equality that the men and women of the AME helped to develop at the turn century, was designed to persuade, inform, and impress the African American community, the nation, and the world. More importantly, his rhetoric opposed racism, an intrinsic part of imperialism.24


7. For more on abolition see Merton L. Dillon, *Slavery Attacked: Southern Slaves and Their Allies, 1619-1865*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990); for
examples of African American political activity during Reconstruction see Thomas Holt, Black Over White: Negro Political Leadership in South Carolina During Reconstruction, (Urbana, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1977); Spear, Black Chicago, 92.


9. 1900 North Ohio Conference, 36; Minutes of the 65th Session of the Indiana Annual Conference of the AME Church, September 23-28, 1903, (Xenia, OH: W.B. Chew, 1903), 54; 1900 General Conference, 63.


12. Wright, Bishops of the AME, 32; Christian Recorder, 23 November 1900, 7.


Chapter 5

The Paradox of Patriotism: AME and American Imperialism

Turn-of-the-century American imperialism combined several factors usually summarized as military and technological superiority, Christian proselytism, social Darwinism, and Manifest Destiny. Racism undergirded all these factors, presupposing that one people was superior to another. Only a handful of historians have written about how African Americans responded to American imperialism and its underlying currents of racism. African American opinions during the age of imperialism have been noted in Response to Imperialism: The United States in the Philippine War, 1899-1902 (1979) by Richard Welch. He devotes a chapter that succinctly summarizes the "Influence of Racism and the Response of Black America." In The Black Press Views American Imperialism, 1898-1900 (1971), George Marks compiles an extensive collection of articles from African American newspapers. The articles document the full range of pro- and anti-imperialist sentiment within the African American community. Other authors, such as Philip S. Foner in The Spanish-Cuban-American War (1970), Daniel B. Schirmer in Republic or Empire (1972), and Stuart C. Miller in Benevolent Assimilation (1982), include some of the varied
opinions of African American leaders in the American
imperialism controversy. By far the most comprehensive
study of African American involvement in American
imperialism is *Black Americans and the White Man's Burden*
(1975) by Willard B. Gatewood who demonstrates that African
Americans stood on both sides of the argument but never
fully identified with either. Still, most of these authors
view African American opinions as shaped by the frustrations
they faced because of pervasive racism. Although
frustrations played a role, African Americans, nevertheless
individually and collectively formed their responses and
actions with a firm faith and an optimism in American ideals
and institutions.¹

Americans chose to engage in the imperial and colonial
quest that reshaped the world order for many reasons. Yet
regardless of the "white man's burden" or delusions of
worldwide Manifest Destiny, economic and strategic
competition among burgeoning industrial nations rated among
the strongest reasons. In the early 1890's, the United
States suffered through a crippling depression brought on,
in part, by technological advances and the rise of corporate
America. Big business simply produced more than Americans
could consume, and many Americans believed that this
overproduction could only be alleviated by developing
overseas markets. Meanwhile, inspired by the writings of
Alfred T. Mahan and others, many of the same Americans began
to maintain that overseas economic development rested on a strong naval and merchant marine presence and unrestricted travel on the seven seas. To accomplish these goals, however, Americans needed coaling stations and naval bases far from the shores of the United States. Thus in the 1890's, Americans began to build an overseas empire to secure these goals. Although American overseas imperialism did not begin in earnest until the Spanish-American War, the Indian Wars and American intervention in Hawaii revealed some of the ambiguities and difficulties that politics, religion, and racism presented for AME members concerned with United States foreign policy. In both instances, members of the AME condemned American action while simultaneously promoting the missionary and economic opportunities for African Americans that those actions presented.

In several ways, the United States was an imperial nation since its conception because of the presence of Native Americans on what amounted to foreign lands within the borders of North America, land that Americans coveted. Through genocidal warfare, forced removal, and the reservation system, the United States government, which originally treated Native Americans as sovereign nations, by the 1890's, had reduced Native Americans to a quasi-colonial status. Thus, long before Americans embarked on overseas imperialism, they experienced a history of subjugating
people in the name of expansion. To build and sustain an overseas empire, Americans easily transferred many of the same methods that conquered and controlled Native Americans to the people of color in the Pacific and Caribbean. Ironically, to conquer and control red Americans, white Americans often enlisted the aid of black Americans. From American slaves on the colonial Chesapeake frontier to "buffalo soldiers" in the Southwest, African Americans were instruments of racial oppression. Indeed, much of the history of North America could be characterized as a struggle of dominance and survival, which did not end until the 1890's, between Native Americans, Europeans, and Africans. Moreover, not all contact between Native Americans and African Americans involved warfare. At various times in this triangular conflict, Native Americans owned slaves, returned runaway slaves for bounty, and fought with the Confederacy. They also, however, protected runaway slaves and admitted them into their communities and opened their lands to African American settlers. After the Civil War, four of the "Five Civilized Tribes" accorded full tribal citizenship and property rights to their former slave men and women. During Reconstruction, many former American slave men and women migrated west to Indian, Oklahoma, and Dakota Territories. Lured by the opportunity to control their own destinies and pushed by racial violence and discrimination, many African Americans fled the South,
established black towns and communities throughout the West, and, for most, came into direct contact with Native Americans for the first time.²

The AME church rode West with these settlers, and members established churches and missions on the western frontier. Several members of the AME openly supported westward migration because they believed that the West presented a real opportunity for economic advancement. As Kenneth Hamilton notes in Black Towns and Profit (1991), many of the black towns and communities were themselves designed as profit making ventures. Most of these communities contained an AME congregation, and the preachers who serviced these communities often spoke of the opportunities available for black entrepreneurship. For instance, in 1884, AME minister J. W. Malone noted the outstanding business prospects for African Americans in the Dakota Territory. In a similar vein, delegates to the 1889 Ohio Conference admired attempts by the government to settle difficulties with Native Americans in the Northwest. The delegates noted that the purchase of Native American lands in the Northwest "opened up 11 million acres for the spread of enterprise and christian civilization." Some men and women in the AME considered migration to the Indian Territories as a viable alternative to African emigration. For instance, editorial writers for the 1883 Recorder asserted that Bishop Turner should "become a Moses" and lead
black Southerners to settle in Indian Territory. The editors were not concerned that the land already belonged to Native Americans and maintained that "the Indian territory is no imperium in imperio." They noted that the 30,000 African Americans who already resided in the territory needed to be aware of their Constitutional rights and that other people, presumably Native Americans, must also "submit to the Constitution and its laws." At the time, the Native Americans in the region wanted the government to pay a fee for them to adopt black settlers. In a letter from the Indian Territory to the Recorder, elder D. Barrows declared that "The Freedmen don’t want to be adopted" and noted that the Native Americans only offered black families 40 acres rather than the 160 acres offered by the Homestead Act. The AME members wanted African Americans to be allowed to settle autonomous communities within Native American lands. Eventually, an 1893 amendment to the Homestead Act allowed African Americans who had been "adopted" to directly take advantage of the 160 acre offer.³

The men and women of the AME also conducted missionary activities among the various Native Americans who were the first people of color, beyond those of African descent, to attract the missionary activities of the AME. The 1876 General Conference organized the Indian Mission District, and in 1878, members established the first AME missions in Indian Territory. The 1880 General Conference increased the
funds allocated to the district and placed newly appointed Bishop Turner in charge. Many members of the AME, like the delegates to the 1883 Philadelphia Conference, believed that as people of color, they were better prepared to spread the Gospel to Native Americans than their white counterparts:

We must labor on behalf of the Indian. Perhaps he who will not receive the civilization and religion of the cruel Saxon directly will receive it when tendered by the loving hand of the generous African, to whom God has given the wonderful faculty of perceiving in other human beings a man and a brother.

The delegates intimated that God had endowed African Americans with a greater sense of brotherhood. The representatives at the 1882 and 1883 Indian Missions Conferences noted that warnings of failure from white missionaries did not deter the AME and that the denomination was "in advance of the other colored churches in this territory." Still, AME members were not immune to the religious and cultural chauvinism that affected many of their white counterparts, and at times looked upon Native American culture and lifestyle with scorn. At the 1892 Michigan Conference, John Hall, a Chippewa, warned AME missionaries that "when you come to preach don't come proud. Indians want to be friendly. They want to be like you. You are doing well, cousins." Throughout the age of imperialism, AME members constantly warned themselves, many times to no avail, to respect the culture of other peoples.
Members of the AME also recruited and trained Native Americans to become preachers and missionaries and placed a premium on the value of education. The training of indigenous people to carry out missionary work was a pattern that the men and women of the AME followed throughout the period as they sought to spread African Methodism across the globe. In the Dakota Territory, Malone proposed that two Sioux be trained at Wilberforce. He also maintained that the church send missionaries who were willing to learn the Sioux language to make teaching and preaching more acceptable. By 1890's, AME missionaries in the Oklahoma and Indian Territories had trained several Native Americans who became missionaries among their own people. The Chippewa missionary John Hall received such training, and in speeches before the 1890 and 1892 Michigan Conferences, he placed an importance on education by appealing to the Conferences to "Send us some books so our children can read." Like African Americans, Native Americans also realized the need for more formal education in American society. Throughout his tenure, Turner continuously made strong and elaborate appeals to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to allocate more money for schools for Native Americans. The 1884 Indian Mission Conference also petitioned the government for educational aid and warned Congress of the need to be aware of the adverse conditions in the Indian Territory.⁵
Indeed, missionary life among the Native Americans was often harsh and unrewarding and missionaries often talked of the hardships they faced. Delegates at the 1884 Indian Mission Conference complained that "We had cases of sickness and death among our missionaries, and no one found on hand to buy medicine, or care for the dead." The scarcity of meat in the Indian Territory caused one AME missionary to chase rabbits for his supper, becoming known as the "rabbit runner." As harsh as conditions were for AME missionaries, Native Americans not only suffered from worse conditions but also had the added fear of attack from land hungry Americans. Many members of the AME denounced the treatment of Native Americans and at times sought to overcome the racial stereotypes that denoted Natives Americans as "bloodthirsty savages." Editors of the 1887 Recorder condemned "raids against Utes orchestrated by those who want to instigate an Indian war so that they can seize Indian lands." In an open letter, a Recorder contributor denounced the unfair depiction of Native Americans by the Arizona press and castigated the use of bloodhounds to pursue Apaches. Such descriptions of bloodhounds chasing down people surely invoked images of runaway slaves. Perhaps the best means of overcoming racial stereotypes came from missionaries who described Native American life. For instance in 1884, the Recorder ran a series of entries from the diary of Miss H. Q. Brown, who taught at the Chilocco
Indian School in Indian Territory. The accounts gave very sympathetic descriptions of Native American life and culture and tended to "humanize" Native Americans for the readers. Reports from AME missionaries of deplorable conditions and human suffering on reservations also contrasted images of "bloodthirsty savages." 

Some AME leaders and members criticized the government and politicians for not taking the actions necessary to improve conditions for Native Americans. Editors of the August, 1884 Recorder were "disappointed that the Republican platform makes no expression on the Indian as to whether his only alternatives are passive babyhood or extermination" The editors declared that a republic that treated the "noble red man" as the United States did could not continue to exist and that Republicans had missed the opportunity to become the party for Native Americans. "As citizens of the U. S.," the delegates of the 1891 Louisiana Conference rejoiced that the United States was at peace but noted the "internal disturbances with the Indians." The delegates maintained that "A careful study of our dealings with these people since we first came in contact with them until now, we believe will show that we have been in many respects unjust towards them and unless this country changes its course . . . retribution will overtake us in some form." The delegates invoked black theological expressions of the gospel of justice while the editors of the Recorder conjured
images of a failed, corrupt republic. Moreover, during the mid-1880's, editors of the *Recorder* often expressed a commonality of oppression between African Americans and Native Americans. Editors of the 1885 *Recorder* argued that the "American negro and the American Indian have a common cause against many claiming the name of Christian." In 1887, an editorial writer asserted that the "negro, forced here, and the Indian, born here, should be given the least trouble by their betrayers, on the one hand, and their intruders on the other." Ironically, the writer called for greater "Americanization" of black and red Americans. 7

By the close of the century, the conflict between red, black, and white took on less the nature of warfare. Native Americans were no longer able to sustain military campaigns against the United States and thus were forced into a quasi-colonial status dependent upon the benevolence of the government. During the final Indian Wars, African Americans, as they always had with few notable exceptions, assisted in the defeat of Native Americans. One oppressed people helped to oppress another. Yet to serve in the United States military was a sign of citizenship, especially crucial for people regarded as second class citizens. Still, that oppression helped to create a sense of affinity that caused some members of the AME to view the Native American condition in the United States in a similar light as their own. Thus, they often spoke for Native American
rights and portrayed Native Americans in a more favorable manner. Nevertheless, many within the AME promoted western migration for African Americans that often interfered with Native American rights. Moreover, AME members sought to evangelize among Native Americans often displaying much of the same cultural and religious bias as white denominations. During the age of imperialism, such contradictions and dilemmas continued to surface as the men and women of the AME responded to the economic, social, and political implications of an expanding imperial world.

II

Among the first of the imperial conquests of the United States were the Hawaiian Islands, gateway and stepping stones to the mythical markets of the Far East and strategic buttress of the Pacific. The United States had maintained cultural and economic relations with the islands since the 1790's when American merchants organized a trade network with the Pacific kingdom. During the 1820's, American missionaries established a presence, often serving as advisors who urged Hawaiians to adopt American institutions. In the 1840's, Hawaii became an unofficial United States protectorate under the Tyler doctrine, and in the 1870's, economic treaties linked Hawaiian and American trade permanently. By the 1890's, American interests were firmly entrenched in Hawaii with second generation Americans serving in the royal cabinet and American business
controlling the single-crop sugar economy. Hawaii's strategic location, cheap labor supply, and tropical agricultural economy consistently attracted American expansionists, and many believed that it was only a matter of time before Hawaii would become a United States possession. The time came in 1893 with the betrayal of Queen Liliuokalani. In 1893, seeking a return to traditional heritage, Liliuokalani proposed a new constitution that broadened her powers, involved the people more in governance, and interfered with American economic interests. Through lies, deceit, and the duplicity of the American minister to Hawaii, John L. Stevens, a junta of Hawaiian-born Americans and American businessmen rebelled and overthrew the queen. The rebels set up a provisional government and petitioned the United States government for annexation. The Harrison administration sent an annexation treaty to the Senate, but in 1884, the Cleveland administration withdrew the treaty, initiating a five year debate on American overseas expansion.

The overthrow of Queen Liliuokalani and subsequent efforts to annex Hawaii to the United States elicited considerable discussion among members of the AME and revealed some of the racial and political complexities of imperialism. Several members of the AME condemned the actions of Stevens, who promised to support the queen but sent American troops to support the rebels. A contributor
to the 1894 Recorder chastised a Senate report that justified the revolution and asserted that the queen should be reinstated. Another Recorder writer considered the interference of a foreign minister in the domestic affairs of another nation as unwarranted and demanded the recall of the minister. Both writers judged Harrison's efforts to annex Hawaii in the final days of his administration as improper. Cleveland's withdrawal of the annexation treaty aroused considerable discussion at the March, 1894, AME Ministers' Association in Philadelphia. J. C. Embry, elder and publisher, introduced a resolution to endorse Cleveland's actions toward the "Hawaiian question," maintaining that the American minister had acted "more with a desire to acquire territory and seize a government, than in the interest of peace." Embry also condemned the depiction of Hawaiians in the American press and argued that "the publication in the different papers in this country of the caricatures and burlesques of the colored Queen showed beyond doubt that there was a disposition to ridicule and disrespect the darker races." Supporters of the resolution agreed that "Cleveland had shown a plain desire to respect the autonomy of a foreign nation irrespective of color." Nevertheless, a Recorder writer at the meeting reported "strong argument" against the resolution. Although many of the ministers present agreed with much of Embry's argument, they were not willing to support a Democratic administration
and condemn the actions of a Republican administration. The resolution failed indicating that domestic political considerations, at times, outweighed international concerns for self-determination and racial attitudes. Still, several AME leaders continued to support efforts to reinstate the deposed queen. In 1895, a Recorder contributor criticized Cleveland's refusal to meet with representatives of the queen and denounced the official United States recognition of Hawaii's provisional government. By 1895, however, the members of provisional government had only achieved half of their goals; Hawaii still was not annexed.²

As Thomas Osborne maintains in "Empire Can Wait" (1981), the debate over Hawaiian annexation was a pivotal moment in United States foreign policy that attracted a sizable anti-expansionism coalition from various segments of American society who feared annexation would end American republican traditions. Those on both sides of the argument continued the standard economic, political, strategic, religious, and racial appeals. Within the AME, American racial attitudes influenced the debate, and several leaders feared that American racism might spread to Hawaii. Early on in 1893, W. S. Scarborough, AME educator and scholar, opposed the annexation because, as he explained, "no race or class has any standing in the United States except the Anglo-Saxon." Nevertheless, the racial implications of imperialism were much more complicated, as indicated by the
delegates of the 1898 South Florida Conference who intimated that racial attitudes accounted for the government's "lethargy" in settling the Hawaiian situation. In a May, 1898, AME Church Review article, prominent lay journalist T. Thomas Fortune challenged a December, 1897, article in Forum by a member of the British parliament and student of American institutions, James Bryce. Bryce maintained that the United States should not annex Hawaii because Polynesians were an inferior race. Bryce blamed the failure of Reconstruction on African American inferiority and warned that Americans should have learned their lesson. Fortune defended annexation to keep Hawaii out of other hands, especially British hands because "Europeans are diligently engaged in this work of ethnic and psychic metamorphosis of alien races, and condemning them as worthless incorrigibles." Fortune contended that "their [European] foolish efforts always end in the utter subjugation and or extermination of the stubborn aliens who reject the civilization offered them, often at the point of the sword, because they are wedded to their own civilization." He, along with others in the AME, conceived the notion of a worldwide solidarity of people of color as an answer to the worldwide spread of racism. Sarcastically, editors of the August, 1898 Voice of Missions defended the "annexation of these dark hue governments" of Hawaii and Cuba as "the only hope for the American Negro, if he is to remain in the
meanest nation this side of perdition."^{10}

In July, 1898, Congress annexed Hawaii. The overthrow and annexation of Hawaii revealed some of the ambiguities and difficulties that racism and politics presented for AME leaders and members concerned with United States foreign policy and their place in world society. On the one hand, members feared the spread of American racism to darker inhabitants of foreign lands. On the other hand, American imperialism could ignite a worldwide unity of darker peoples that would benefit African Americans at home. At various times, AME leaders supported self-determination for Hawaii and condemned depictions of Hawaiian inferiority. Yet, many refused to support the policies of the Democratic Cleveland administration even when those policies opposed annexation. As the nation plunged into the world of imperialism, these dilemmas often created conflict and contradictions within the AME church and the African American community. The annexation of Hawaii opened the floodgates, but the Spanish-American War pushed the nation through.

III

By the mid-1890's, war with Spain seemed inevitable with the Caribbean island of Cuba as the focus point. Cuba had been a part of the now-decaying Spanish empire since the earliest days of the conquistadors. The Spanish ruled the empire with an iron fist that left little room for local autonomy. Cubans had few civil rights, and slavery
continued to be practiced well into the 1870's. Spanish control and restrictions led to severe political repression and economic oppression of native Cubans, provoking a series of revolts that began in the late 1860's. Throughout, Spain brutally attempted to suppress the revolution, and in 1878, the rebellions ended with little settled on the question of local autonomy. Spain remained firmly entrenched partially because fear of slave insurrection caused potential revolutionary allies to continue to look to Spain for protection. Under worldwide pressure, however, Spain abolished slavery in 1880, diminishing the need for a protector. In the 1890's, severe depression led to new revolts and new rounds of suppression that included the use of concentration camps. This time, however, rival factions united under the banner of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, founded in 1892 by Jose Marti. 

American interests in Cuba were similar, if not more intense because of proximity, to interests in Hawaii—economic and strategic. During the antebellum period, southern slave owners had encouraged the annexation of the island to bolster the American slavocracy. By 1890, American economic ties with Cuba, mainly in the sugar and tobacco industries, amounted to more than 100 million in trade. American and Cuban businessmen were concerned that revolts would disrupt this lucrative trade. Strategically, many Americans considered Cuba the gateway to the Atlantic
and, combined with Puerto Rico, a buttress for southern United States and Central and South America. Americans also cited humanitarian reasons for entering into war with Spain as jingoistic and manipulative American newspapers sensationalized Spanish brutality and called for war. In April, 1898, after a series of incidents pushed the two nations apart, Congress declared war against Spain. The "splendid little war" was quick and decisive, lastly little more than three and a half months before United States military forces crushed Spanish opposition. The war marked the long overdue demise of the Spanish empire and the emergence of the United States as a world power.¹²

Most of the men and women of the AME members responded to the Spanish-American War with patriotic fervor and hopes for self-determination for the colonies of Spain. In some ways, the American nationalism that the war produced aroused elements of black nationalism. Indeed, many members of the AME considered the conflict a war of black liberation in the Caribbean that would end the subjugation of people of color within the Spanish empire. They further believed that participation in the war by African American soldiers would prove that African Americans were loyal to the flag and ready to take part equally in American society. The exploits of African American soldiers and sailors also instilled a sense of pride within the African American community. Thus, black liberty and black pride converged
with American nationalism leading to overwhelming support for the war. Nevertheless, a small number of AME leaders denounced the war as an attempt at building an American empire. These leaders feared that American racism and inequalities would be exported to foreign shores.

Even before the war, many leaders and members within the AME identified with the "darker" Cuban rebels who fought against the tyranny of Spain. A writer in the January, 1896, Review noted that "the attempt by the people of this important island [Cuba] to throw off the yoke of Spain received the approval and sympathy of liberty loving people, especially Americans, their near neighbors." The delegates of the 1896 North Ohio Conference sympathized with the Cuban revolution and declared that "the crowned heads of Europe should not govern a foot of land or sea on the Western Hemisphere." They wanted an end to Spanish imperial rule in Cuba "because we believe a Republican form of government is the best to secure happiness, prosperity and progress of mankind, and because the majority of patriots engaged in the struggle for Cuban independence are men of our own race."

In their call for Cuban freedom from Spain, the delegates maintained that American style democratic institutions would insure black liberty on the island. Meanwhile, the delegates of the 1897 Southwest Georgia Conference expressed "sympathy with the heroic Cubans, who are fighting for liberty with the courage of despair." The delegates likened
Cuban courage and despair to that which ended American slavery. The exploits of the black rebel general, Antonio Maceo, also fired the imaginations of AME members. Maceo had been one of the few rebel leaders who refused to sign the peace in 1878, and one of the first to join the cause in the 1890's. Writers in the Review offered accounts of his career in the April and July, 1897, issues. Maceo became a symbol of black determination, black liberty, and black pride, as did Solero Figueroa, black Puerto Rican editor of the Cuban rebel newspaper Patria. After hostilities erupted with Spain, AME leaders often portrayed the war as a black man's war to liberate the oppressed, darker people of the Spanish empire.13

Ironically, one the prime catalyst for war, the sinking of the U.S.S Maine, received second page coverage in the Recorder because of the death of Senior Bishop Daniel Payne. Nevertheless, editors of the Recorder feared that war was inevitable although they hoped a board of inquiry would find out that the incident was an accident. Such optimism proved ill-fated, and as the threat of war mounted, members of the AME increased their patriotic rhetoric. In March, 1898, Bishop W. B. Derrick delivered a patriotic speech before an integrated audience at Waters AME in Baltimore. A contemporary report described the church as "profusely decorated with Stars and Stripes and other insignia appropriate to the occasion." Derrick, who delivered a
similar speech throughout the nation during the course of the war, according to press reports, praised "the bravery of colored soldiers and sailors in the wars of the republic." Once Congress declared war, AME church members became enthralled in the wave of patriotism that the Spanish-American War prompted. Decorated in red, white, and blue, AME churches served as meeting places for patriotic gatherings, lectures, and rallies. In May, 1898, the Afro-American League held a meeting at an AME church in Milwaukee to reaffirm the patriotism of the African American citizens of Milwaukee. The members of the League resolved to "tender our service to the governor and promise to raise a company of volunteers to assist in repelling the enemy and avenging the lives of the 266 brave young sailors, of whom 35 were Afro-Americans," referring to the sinking of the Maine.

Participants of the June, 1898, AME Ministers' Association gave patriotic speeches and initiated a Declaration Day celebration. Prominent lawyer George Fitzpatrick spoke in similar terms in a speech delivered at the AME church in Coffeyville, Indiana. He urged support and loyalty for the war effort even though the flag failed "in many instances to protect the Negro." Thus, as they echoed the patriotic strains of 1898, African American leaders such as Fitzpatrick continued to cite American inequities.

Representatives at several annual conferences during and immediately after the war also displayed an optimistic
patriotism that supported American foreign policy. The delegates of the Philadelphia Conference resolved to express and pledge devotion to the flag, commend the wisdom of McKinley, and stand ready to march to defend the honor and integrity of the nation. In his episcopal address at the conference, Bishop Grant deplored the "bloodshed, suffering, and inflammation consequent upon the war, however justifiable," but praised the loyalty of the African American soldier and "race." In the wake of the war, delegates to the Illinois Conference praised "the flag that floats over Santiago, Porto Rico and Manila," while those at the Pittsburgh Conference, in what they considered one of the "ablest" state of the country reports, commended the war effort that "liberated" Cuba. The report inspired the delegates to sing a chorus of "America." Members of the Indiana Conference regarded the American victory over Spain as a "great step forward" and prayed that the president and his advisors be given the wisdom to provide "wise government." In the state of the country report, committee members announced that "we are of the opinion that the American flag should never be lowered when once raised and therefore favor such disposition of the country [Cuba] as to keep it always under the flag." The resolution met with stiff opposition and debate from those who "differed radically." The "radicals" who opposed the wording lost out, however, and after the reading of the state of the
country report, the conference sang the "Star Spangled Banner." In this instance, American nationalism triumphed over other kinds of group consciousness.\textsuperscript{15}

For many within the AME, the Spanish-American War provided yet another opportunity for African American soldiers to prove their loyalty to the flag and bravery under fire. Many AME members believed that serving in the war would eliminate the stigma of second class citizenry. Writing in the Recorder, G. E. Taylor, black Democrat and president of the Colored People's National Protective League, contended that "the Negro has nothing in this country to fight for, yet he will, must and ought to fight because he is a citizen and will fight to maintain the honor of his country, the bad treatment he receives from the hands of those who should protect him, to the contrary notwithstanding." Theophilus Steward, AME chaplain for the 25th Infantry, was even more optimistic, noting the "great things" the war made possible for African Americans. Steward maintained that "Never in our history have white men so earnestly pleaded for justice to the black soldiers." At the Philadelphia Conference, elder J. M. Palmer praised the predominantly African American 25th Infantry, regular army, "who were hungering and thirsting to strike a blow that would give liberty to the oppressed Cubans." Black volunteer units sprang up across the nation. One of the first of these units was the 8th Illinois Volunteers, and at
the 1898 Illinois Conference, the presiding elders' report praised the volunteers unit, even though the creation of the unit "caused a decrease in financial and spiritual work." Upon the unit's triumphant return a year later, Reverdy Ransom commended the city of Chicago for "forgetting the color line and recognizing only heroism and patriotism in the gallant colored defenders of the flag." The Indiana Conference offered similar praise for the exploits of African American soldiers, especially the role of the nearly 250 black officers who served.\(^6\)

Moreover, AME leaders routinely criticized the unwillingness of the Southern press to print stories about African American bravery in Cuba "for fear of alarming the repose of the Caste-Demon." Instead, African Americans had to rely on black newspapers for news of black soldiers, and all of the AME publications recorded, as one writer explained, "the heroic and noteworthy part played in this struggle by our own sable skinned patriots." African Americans were well aware that black soldiers played a key role in the Spanish-American War, as evidenced by the African American citizens of Washington who lined the streets to cheer the Tenth Cavalry as they passed in review before McKinley and Bishop Arnett on their return from Cuba. At another post-war rally at Waters AME Church in Baltimore, the keynote speaker asserted that the "trump of our [black] soldiers' feet meant the spirit of liberty was marching to
Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippines." Indeed, many within the denomination agreed with the delegates to the 1898 Michigan Conference who argued that the war was a struggle for "human rights" in which African Americans did their duty and thereby expected similar action in the United States. Much of the euphoria that affected AME members affected the entire African American community as the currents of pride in being an American and pride in being black flowed together during the course of the war.  

Although the men and women of the AME praised the exploits and service of black military personnel, they often criticized the mistreatment of African American soldiers and the discriminatory policies of the government that seemed to sanction that mistreatment. The military uniform or the prospect of loss of life in battle did not halt the indignities that much of American society dispensed to African American troops. Before, during, and after the war, George W. Prioleau, AME chaplain for the Ninth Cavalry and staunch McKinley supporter, wrote a series of articles in the *Recorder* that described and documented many of the prejudices African American soldiers faced, especially in the South. The articles prompted *Recorder* editors to describe attitudes between the North and the South as "the difference between light and darkness, civilization and barbarism, intelligence and semi-savagery, patriotism and diabolism." African American soldiers were forced to ride
in "Jim Crow" trolleys and railroad cars. Stationed mostly in the South, African American soldiers faced daily insults from white Southerners who resented their presence. When the soldiers resisted, white Southerners characterized them as brutes in uniform or "nigger soldiers" and accused them of inciting riots. One such riot occurred in Tampa, in June, 1898, when members of the 24th and 25th Infantries retaliated against the "fun" shooting of a black child by a white soldier from an Ohio regiment. After observing prejudices while stationed at Port Tampa, Prioleau asked, "Is America Any Better Than Spain?" Church members also denounced the policies of promotion in the military. Reverdy Ransom, for example, approved of the efforts to organize the 8th Illinois Volunteers but maintained that "while I believe patriotism should be unconditional, I believe also, we should demand colored line officers for the colored volunteer regiments." In July, 1898, the Ohio AME Sunday School Institute Conference passed a resolution that condemned the discriminatory practices and promotion policies of the United States army. The treatment of black soldiers notwithstanding, their performance in the field inspired members of the AME church and the African American community, who looked upon the soldiers' record as further evidence for claims to full citizenship.

The men and women of the AME also were especially interested in the opportunity the war presented to spread
African Methodism to the people of color in the Caribbean. With missions already established in West and Southern Africa, Barbados, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic, members of the AME believed their record of evangelism within the African diaspora was unmatched. Even before the war, members called for a greater missionary presence in the prime targets of Cuba and Puerto Rico. After the war started, church leaders immediately formulated a policy for an increased presence. In May, 1898, the Board of Bishops recruited H. C. C. Astwood, influential journalist and former United States counsel to the Dominican Republic, to establish a mission in Cuba. Fluent in Spanish and considered by most within the denomination as highly qualified for the task, Astwood accompanied the 8th Illinois Volunteers to Cuba in August. Astwood quickly established what he claimed was the first Protestant church in Santiago. 19

Several annual conferences praised the appointment of Astwood and the "victories of the Church in Cuba." The Pittsburgh Conference commended Astwood's appointment, while at the Philadelphia Conference, Astwood was "applauded and cheered heartily." The delegates of Indiana Conference resolved to "hail with delight" the wisdom of establishing missionaries in Cuba and Puerto Rico. Anti-Catholic sentiment also played a role in AME evangelic thought, and although such sentiment did not appear as widespread as in
white Protestant denominations, it did exist. One AME member, commenting on the appointment of Astwood, noted that "long and firm has been the grasp of Roman Catholicism upon the people of this unhappy land and it is against this influence that our missionary will fight." The writer further asserted that the "false and debasing teachings . . . the fascination and allurements of a most magnificent ritualistic religion will have to be shown in all their hollow mockery." Still, anti-Catholicism played a relatively minor role to the major concern of spreading African Methodism. The following year, in assessing the events of 1898, the delegates of Indiana Missionary Mite Society Convention acknowledged that because of the war "new fields have been opened in Cuba and Porto Rico." The delegates maintained that God called for women to volunteer to go to the Caribbean and that "When you hear his voice calling, say 'Here I am, send me.'"  

Ironically, missionary activities in the Caribbean did not please everyone within the AME. J. M. Henderson, elder and editor of the Methodist Herald, a regional AME newspaper in New York, accused church leaders of creating a color line in Cuba by establishing a mission for "colored" Cubans. H. T. Johnson, Recorder editor, found the charge "time-worn and threadbare . . . decidedly mischief-making at the expense of consistency and truth." Johnson cited the AME record of opposing color prejudice. Unfortunately, both editors lost
track of the important original issue, and instead, the argument degenerated into a dispute over using AME publications to promote personal opinions. Nevertheless, missionary work constituted a major incentive that, along with patriotism, fueled AME support for official American foreign policy in 1898.  

AME support for the war and American imperialistic policy was far from unanimous. Although they generally supported the war effort, editors of both the Recorder and Review printed articles by those who opposed the war. A Review article, "The Deity of the Pulpit in the Hour of War," soundly criticized ministers who had the "warlike spirit of the pulpit" and accused them of "drifting with the current of public opinion." A writer in the Recorder opposed the war by questioning the logic of white superiority and American imperialism in light of the discrimination African Americans faced at home:

That is an anomalous national condition indeed which justifies discrimination against and oppression of citizens at home; fights a country less hostile to that class of citizens; sheds the best blood to atone for the rivers of blood ruthlessly shed from those too weak to defend themselves; then shoulders an elephant and accepts the inevitable by acting superior for the same class of people whose condition, whether Cuba, Havana, or the Philippines, is much more unpromising and vexatious than at home.

The ever fiery Bishop Turner, who was in Africa at the outbreak of war, asserted that he would have opposed African American enlistment because in his travels he found Spain
"far better friends to our race than the United States will ever be." It was a "hypocritical war," he observed, that threw away two hundred million dollars that "could have been spent to build a nation for the colored man" in Liberia. Some AME leaders, although not directly opposed to the war, feared that the American racism and inequalities that were not addressed at home would be exported to foreign shores. Leaders decried the appointment of M. C. Butler, ex-Congressman from South Carolina, as military governor of Cuba noting his role in the "Hamburg (S.C.) Massacre of defenseless colored people." One church member maintained that "unless his record is improved infinitely Butler would treat the colored Cuban not so well as their Spanish rulers." For these church members, Butler represented American racism, and no matter how good American institutions were, racism was an overwhelming flaw.\(^2\)

Nevertheless, the majority of leaders and members of the church supported the Spanish-American War with patriotic zeal. The delegates at the AME annual conferences of 1898 adopted reports and resolutions that supported American military and foreign policies and emphasized loyalty to the flag. Delegates enthusiastically sang patriotic songs. Members of the AME held patriotic rallies and lectures in churches symbolically adorned in the red, white, and blue regalia of revolutionary Americana. The war allowed African Americans to fight and die for American democracy, and
thereby prove that African Americans were prepared to participate fully and equally in American society. Accordingly, the performance of black troops during the war instilled the African American community with a sense of black pride and black unity. Moreover, many men and women in the AME considered the war to liberate the colonies of Spain an opportunity not only for African Americans but for all darker peoples. Thus, the sense of black unity and the rhetoric of liberty extended beyond the United States and into the African diaspora. In the wake of the war, church officials also established missionaries in Puerto Rico and Cuba to spread African Methodism to their brethren. Although some individual AME leaders refused to support the war, the majority responded with explicit support for the war and the foreign policies of the Republican administration.

By the close of the war, the rhetoric of some church members had grown as imperialistic as any in the nation. Editorial writers in the Recorder pondered over the question of how to make "our new possessions of profit to our government" and assured readers that the United States would not "lose the fruits of its well earned victory." Another writer called for the complete possession of the Philippines so that the islands would not be left to the "tender mercy of European jealousy." Nevertheless, leaders remained cautious in their patriotism, wary of the spread American
racism, discrimination, and violence. Astwood had spent little less than a month in Cuba before he observed that "the color line is being fastly drawn by our whites here, and the Cubans are abused as Negroes." With the war concluded and patriotic fervor waning, AME response to imperialism entered into a new phase.23
Endnotes for Chapter 5


Printing Co., 1890) 7-8; Minutes of the 6th Session of the Michigan Annual Conference of the AME Church, September 1-6, 1892, (Detroit: W. L. Smith Printing Co., 1892) 12.


7. "The Republican Party, Christian Recorder, 19 June, 1884, 2; Minutes of the 26th Session of the Louisiana Annual Conference of the AME Church, February, 1891, 47; "Editorial," Christian Recorder, 28 May 1885, 2; "Americans First," Christian Recorder, 28 April 1887, 2; also see "Divide the Spoils," Christian Recorder, 26 April 1883, 2.


12. Foner, Spanish-American-Cuban War, xxii.


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Gazette, 21 May 1898 in Marks, Black Press; Reverdy C. Ransom, "Honors for Negro Soldiers," Christian Recorder, 19 May 1898, 6; Cleveland Gazette, 23 July 1898 in Marks, Black Press.

19. "Secretary of Missions," Christian Recorder, 13 January 1898, 3; Gatewood, Black Americans, 162.


Chapter VI

Liberty and Equality in the American Empire

The Spanish-American War had united the nation and the members of the AME church in an orgy of patriotism that cared little for the long term affects of the victory over Spain. Yet, as events unfolded leading to the Philippine-American War early in 1899, the desire of some Americans for conquest bitterly divided the population and many of the nation's institutions. Americans tended to separate into two camps, imperialists or anti-imperialists. Economics, social status, morality, patriotism, religion, racism, and politics placed Americans on either side of the argument. Intellectuals, journalists, politicians, businesspeople, religious leaders, and others chose sides and drew lines between themselves. Those same people, however, often crossed those lines when interest or convenience dictated, tending to blur differences. The arguments over American imperialism, beyond the ever present economic concerns, focused on whether to extend the Constitution to peoples of conquered territory and whether the existence of an American empire corrupted the notion of republic. Thus, overseas self-determination and what form it would take became a major moral and political issue in the United States.
Racism was an important ingredient in the debate as both sides of the argument used prevailing racial theories of the inferiority of people of color to justify their stances, also tending to blur differences.¹

Anti-imperialists often maintained that imperialism compromised American principles and that the universal appeal of freedom placed the United States in the immoral role of the subjugator of liberty. Moreover, most anti-imperialists believed that because of racial inferiority, people of color were incapable of self-government. Thus, American imperialism only assumed more international racial burden for a nation already confounded by the domestic "Negro question." Ironically, many anti-imperialists believed that because of the racial inferiority of conquered people, the United States had to create some type of protectorate before granting independence, thus diluting much of their argument. Nevertheless, the most compelling argument of the anti-imperialist was that imperialism was contrary to the spirit of the Declaration of Independence that governments derived "their just powers from the consent of the governed." At its Chicago conference in October 1899, the American Anti-Imperialist League adopted a platform which declared, "We hold that the policy known as imperialism is hostile to liberty and tends toward militarism, an evil from which it has been our glory to be free." The doctrine of imperialism denied the right of
self-determination to the people of territories conquered by American military superiority and was thus, an abomination to the ideal of American Republic.²

Consequently, to justify imperialism, American imperialists asserted that the self-determination applied only to superior "races;" therefore, the American constitution could not be extended to inferior peoples. Indeed, racists in the South used a similar rationale to deny black suffrage. Many leaders and politicians in the United States, especially within the McKinley administration, embraced the philosophy that "our abstract right to acquire and hold is as plenary and sovereign in the Philippines as in Alaska or Arizona," as proclaimed in 1899 by Charles A. Gardiner, president of the National Bar Association. Most imperialists considered Filipinos, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and others of color within the newly formed American empire as murderous, barbaric, childlike, and incapable of self-government. Men such as Alfred T. Mahan encouraged the United States to adopt the British model of empire of "benevolence and beneficence." Moreover, president McKinley agreed that the United States had the burden and duty "to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and Christianize them," embarking the nation on the road toward militarism and imperialism.³

The imperialist philosophy of the McKinley administration created dilemmas for AME leaders. At once,
AME and other African American leaders found themselves supporting an administration that favored overseas expansion through military aggression that many leaders believed was based largely upon racism. Moreover, the administration called upon African Americans to wage imperial war against darker people abroad but failed to address the violence and racism African Americans confronted at home. The Republican party increasingly ignored and sometimes supported Democratic party politicians when they passed discriminatory Jim Crow laws and restrictions and successfully limited self-determination for black Southerners. Indeed, Republicans lost much of their moral argument for the protection of African American rights as Democrats duly noted administration policies that subjugated people of color overseas because they were people of color. United States foreign policy, therefore, forced the men and women within the traditionally Republican AME to chose between what they perceived as the lesser of two evils, either domestic racism that limited African American autonomy or imperial racism that denied self-determination to people of color of other nations. Just as the rest of American society, AME members maintained a wide range of opinions from the staunch imperialist to the morally outraged anti-imperialist; however, concern over the spread of American racism based on racial attitudes of superiority transcended all other political opinions within the church. Moreover,
the increasingly imperialistic policies of the McKinley administration disillusioned, angered, and divided members of the AME church who now more frequently linked overseas imperialism to racism at home. Thus, many within the denomination unsuccessfully attempted to reconcile calls for evangelizing abroad and political patronage at home with demands for self-determination within the American empire.

The conclusion of the war with Spain left many unanswered questions on the status of the peoples of conquered territories, and members of the AME intently followed the proceedings of the peace talks in Paris. The war had been fought to liberate the people of color who lived under Spanish subjugation, and many AME leaders and members expected them to be granted independence under American guidance or citizen status within the American republic. Either case would insure self-determination, and AME members, though cautious of American racism, believed the United States would act in the best interest of those who suffered from Spanish tyranny. In December, 1898, the United States signed the Treaty of Paris which granted independence to Cuba, ceded Puerto Rico and Guam to the United States, and allowed the United States to purchase the Philippines for 20 million. Eventually, all four nations became American protectorates and additions to the American empire in one form or another. The treaty marked the emergence of the United States as a world power, and AME
members were generally optimistic that the conditions of the treaty would benefit all parties.

Indeed, the new year entered with an optimistic January, 1899, issue of the Review in which writers cited the advantages that American conquests and acquisitions presented in the Caribbean. In the article, "Porto Rico Under the Stars and Stripes," black Puerto Rican Charles Sheen argued that the annexation of Puerto Rico was a "desirable part of manifest destiny." Puerto Rico would gain the advantages of "a higher Christian civilization" and prosper under "American influence and protection." Sheen noted the "racial" links between African Americans and Puerto Ricans and asserted that Americans could learn from the lack of racial conflict in Puerto Rico. Moreover, the AME could "bring Protestantism to a Catholic nation." Still, Sheen warned of the possible spread of American prejudice. An editorial writer in the same issue predicted that the "conquest of Cuba and Porto Rico will cause a rush of Protestant denominations to these countries" and that the AME had an advantage in the effort to spread Protestantism because the AME already had a "foothold in Cuba." In both articles, the authors assumed that self-determination would come as a part of a larger American republic. Events in the Philippines, however, soon changed many such attitudes.

Since the mid-1890's, the Filipinos, like the Cubans, had been fighting a war of independence against Spain. At
the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, United States forces allied with Filipino insurgents to fight the Spanish. In June, 1898, insurgent leader Emilio Aguinaldo declared Philippine independence, but no American official attended the ceremony. After the Treaty of Paris essentially ceded the Philippines to the United States, President McKinley announced that the United States would maintain sovereignty and institute a policy of "benevolent assimilation." Already strained relations between the United States forces and the now "betrayed" insurgent forces mushroomed to explosive levels needing only the slightest spark to ignite full-scale hostilities. On February 4, 1899 in the outskirts of Manila that spark was kindled. Opposing forces confronted one another; shots were fired, and for the next three years, the United States armed forces and Filipino insurgents struggled for control of the Philippine Islands. In a war remarkably similar to the Vietnam conflict, especially in the use of guerilla warfare, more than 5000 Americans, 25,000 Filipino insurgents, and 200,000 Filipino civilians died. On July 4, 1902, several months after the capture of Aguinaldo, President Theodore Roosevelt declared a "glorious" end to one of the nation's most inglorious wars.  

II

In the United States, the Philippine-American War and related issues in United States foreign policy prompted a
host of differing opinions and responses within the AME Church, sharply dividing members. Much of the division focused on the best manner to respond to the racial and political attitudes in the nation that increasingly relegated African Americans to a marginal and exploited caste. Racial unity was a key component for both sides of the argument. Those within the AME who supported American imperial policies often argued that the more people of color united within an American republic than the greater the voice to demand equality for all. Moreover, many supported the Washingtonian doctrine of equality through economic advancement and self-help, and thus readily cited the economic opportunities and advantages for African Americans among people of color in conquered lands. Those who opposed American imperial policies, on the contrary, feared the spread of American racism within an American empire and often argued that the people of color of the world suffered under a similar yoke of white oppression that deprived them of their autonomy. Consequently, people of color across the globe needed to unite to demand equality and liberty.

Increasingly, the argument within the church centered on the Republican administration's inability and unwillingness to halt the spread of racism and racial discrimination and violence at home and abroad.

Religion and black evangelism also played a significant role in the formation of AME attitudes toward the
Philippine-American War and the emergence of an American empire. Indeed, even the most anti-imperialist agreed that American imperialism provided the opportunity to spread of African Methodism to the people of color in the Philippines and the Caribbean—a major denominational goal. For the most part, AME members concentrated international missionary ventures in Africa and the Caribbean. Distance and limited funds severely restricted AME evangelism in the Philippines and throughout Asia; however, AME soldiers, especially AME chaplain Theophilus Steward who developed a ministry in the Philippines, accounted for most of the AME evangelical activities in the region. Garrisoned in villages and towns throughout the Philippines, AME soldiers often conducted Sunday school and other religious activities on a small scale. Although the denomination never launched full scale missionary activities in the Philippines, evangelism provided administration supporters with a powerful rhetorical weapon that often placed administration opposers on the defensive. Leaders of the AME incorporated the people of color in the Philippines and other parts of the American empire in the twin themes of black redemption—liberation and solidarity. Thus, religion transcended many of the divisions within the church that developed because of American foreign policies and actions. These divisions posed a double paradox for the men and women of the AME. Supporters of imperial policies seemed to reject liberty and
equality at least temporarily while opposers seemed to retard the advancement of Christianity and civilization.\footnote{7}

At one end of the division stood leaders like chaplains Steward and George Prioleau and Bishop John Wesley Gaines, ex-slave of the politically powerful Toombs family of Louisiana, who proposed to go to the Philippines to "help finish the job." Gaines maintained that opportunities were available for African Americans in the Philippines among people who were "like us a colored people." The delegates to the 1899 South Florida Conference with Gaines presiding, adopted a highly favorable state of the country report on the "actions of the United States concerning recent acquisitions." The authors of the report approved of the westernizing and Christianizing of conquered lands. Likewise, the state of the country report for the 1899 Pittsburgh Conference praised the execution of the war, citing United States action as "proper and right." The authors of the report held that American conquests provided "an enlarged domain and an extended field for usefulness." In imperialistic rhetoric, the report noted the need to manage the Philippines properly for the Filipino and the right for the United States to possess pathways to the seas. During the Philippine-American War, especially in the earlier stages, the position of the supporters American imperialism increasingly came under fire from those who demanded independence and autonomy for United States
overseas territories."

At the other end of the spectrum from those who endorsed imperialistic policies stood those like the highly anti-imperialist Bishop Henry M. Turner, black nationalist, African emigrationist, first African American chaplain in the U.S. Army, and chancellor of Morris Brown College. Outspoken and extremely critical of the McKinley administration, Turner was a powerful, eloquent speaker who launched a one-man crusade against American foreign policy. In May, 1899, Turner maintained that "the Negro has no flag to defend. There is not a star in the flag of this nation . . . that the colored man can claim," and having "once been proud of the flag . . . as a Negro we now regard it as a worthless rag." In October, 1899, seemingly in response to Gaines, Turner asserted "that a number of scullionized Negroes, not fit to brush the dust from the feet of the Filipinos, prompted by a set of government pap-suckers, propose to go there and shoot down those men . . . the contemptible fools." True to his promise, immediately following the Spanish-American War, he denounced the recruitment black soldiers to fight in the war. He declared that "any Negro soldier that will cross the ocean to help subjugate the Filipinos is a fool or a villain, more fool, however, than villain we trust." Turner's radical stance did not reflect the mainstream of the church, but throughout 1899, more AME members began to acknowledge some
justifications in his extreme position.\textsuperscript{9}

Between the two extremes, church members debated about American foreign policy and support for the Republican Party in a swirl of ambiguities that defied the terms "imperialist" and "anti-imperialist." In October, 1899, for instance, McKinley was the guest of four hundred African Americans and powerful clergyman Archibald James Carey, pastor of Quinn AME Chapel in Chicago. Carey, who at times was highly critical of the administration, pledged support for McKinley and the United States wherever "the folds of Old Glory have been unfurled, whether it be in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, or the faraway Philippines, there let the starry emblem continue to wave at least until stable and satisfactory government has been established." A faith in American institutions and principles allowed a generally anti-imperialist Carey to support the imperial policies that denied self-determination until the policy makers decided to allow self-determination. Nevertheless, church officials increasingly questioned the unwillingness of the McKinley administration to grant self-determination to the people of conquered territories. Racism remained central to the debate, and AME church members rejected the premise of racial superiority and social Darwinism, both at home and abroad.\textsuperscript{10}

Signs of the new AME skepticism were numerous. A writer in the Recorder, for example, called the war "semi-
barbarous" and noted that the defeat of the Filipinos was "a certainty, but their defeat will not rob them of their sense to be free in every sense of the word." The writer declared that the Filipinos "believe they are fighting for freedom, and in this they may be right." An April, 1899, Review editorial writer questioned the "White Man’s Burden." Citing "lynchings, murders, riots, fraudulent practices, and unjust constitutions," the editorial writer declined "to be lectured on white superiority." The AME Ministers’ Association also cited "mutilation, lynching and burning of alleged rapists and murderers" and resolved that the "flagrant contempt for law and order . . . presents a situation far more deplorable than that which caused our nation to interpose in behalf of the Cuban or station our navy in the Philippine waters or on the Philippine shores." The ministers and the editors questioned the ability and right of the United States to rule a foreign people. In June, 1899, AME editor Johnson asserted that the universal sympathy for the fight against Spain did not exist for hostilities against the Filipinos. He asserted that Filipinos were "as much entitled to independence as Cubans and Americans" and would not yield to the United States "who has no right than might on her side." Johnson later declared that "the call . . . for the enlistment of colored soldiers to embark for warfare against the Filipinos should be met with universal protests from Afro-American citizens
In August, 1899, H. C. C. Astwood objected to Bishop Grant’s statement to McKinley that Liberia should be incorporated into the United States by citing American discrimination in Cuba, Hawaii, and the Philippines. At the August, 1899, meeting of the Afro-American Council held at Bethel AME in Chicago, members did not criticize McKinley directly, but rather intimated that if the administration wanted African American help overseas, McKinley would have to do something about violence and racism at home. Grant served as first vice president for the Council. Turner, Derrick, and Ransom also served on the Council. The Council expressed sympathy for the Filipinos and concern that discrimination and color prejudices would spread overseas. In a sermon delivered in October, 1899, in Nashville, Bishop Charles S. Smith summed up some of the doubts and frustrations within the AME Church caused by American imperialism. Smith asserted that there was a "lack of unanimity of sentiments as to the wisdom and justness of our efforts to subjugate the Philippines." Smith expressed "grave doubts whether we are justified in our efforts to gain control of the affairs of dark-skinned people six thousand miles distant, when we have not yet demonstrated our ability to adequately protect the eight millions of dark-skinned people within our domains." Several AME annual conferences of 1899 also rejected
the evils of racism and the denial of self-determination inherent in imperialism. Members of the different conferences debated the issue of self-determination and the application of the Teller Amendment, which supposedly guaranteed Cuban independence, to the Philippine situation. They also questioned the wisdom and morality of the war. Several of the conferences, such as the North Ohio Conference, issued statements that expressed "grave fears for the liberties of dark skinned inhabitants." The members of the Indiana Conference, although believing that the nation had good intentions, were concerned that the people of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines would soon be able to take over their own counties and "govern selves as independent nations." Meanwhile, the delegates to the South Carolina Conference adopted a state of the country report concerned with self-government in the territories and "the consent of the governed." Ironically, a year earlier all three conferences had expressed a firm optimism that the war with Spain would help to liberate people of color and stamp out racial prejudices. Disillusioned with the continued use of arbitrary power to control the territories, the members of the conferences maintained that the United States had forgotten the purpose of the Spanish-American War. The United States, they asserted, dealt in "subterfuge unworthy of the greatest of nations." Many AME leaders officially responded to post-Spanish-American War imperialism by
stressing self-determination and thereby opposing the policies of the McKinley administration.\textsuperscript{13}

This response intensified in 1899 when the Treaty of Sulu caused a moral outcry and bitter debate within the AME church. On August 20, 1899, General John C. Bates and the Sultan of Sulu signed a treaty that, among other guarantees, sanctioned slavery on the Isle of Sulu. Defenders of the treaty in Congress and the administration maintained that the United States had no right to disturb the "social customs" of Sulu and that slavery was so deeply embedded that to make it a subject for consideration would have imperiled negotiations. Sanctioned slavery prompted anxiety and anger among the leadership of the AME. The delegates of the 1899 Indiana Conference resolved that Congress should "withhold their approval from said treaty until so much of it shall be stricken out as relates to the recognition of the institution and until in lieu thereof a clause shall be inserted abolishing forever slavery in the Philippines." They also amended the state of the country report, adding that the conference was "grieved and pained over the recognition of slavery in the treaty with the Sultan of Sulu." Considerable debate then developed around the adoption of the Indiana Conference state of the country report. The original report read that "the American flag was floating over and covering slaves." Elders C. W. Mossell and J. D. Barksdale objected to this language. In
turn, S. B. Jones opposed the phrase "white and colored of this country being closer together because of the war." J. Butler opposed the entire report. The debate continued from the morning to the afternoon session. The members of the conference voted 45 to 25 to retain the phrase Jones opposed. Butler proposed the "grieved and pained" amendment, which the conference also adopted. The delegates then approved Mossell's resolution calling on Congress to disavow the treaty and banish slavery. The next day, the members of the conference voted to strike out the language Mossell and Barksdale opposed. The conference condemned the treaty, but, clearly, the more moderate faction won in setting the language of that condemnation.14

By the end of the year, AME officials had begun seriously to question whether to support McKinley and American foreign policy. The week following McKinley's visit to Quinn Chapel in Chicago, lawyer B. F. Mosley soundly criticized McKinley at the meeting of the Young Men's Sunday Club of Quinn Chapel. Mosley contended that the nation needed "a President who will recognize officially the outrages perpetrated on black men . . . who will enforce the law and protect the lives and liberties of men and women of color . . . who is in favor in recognizing men for worth and merit without taking into consideration the color of their skin." In an October, 1899, Review editorial, Grant saw danger for the administration in the recent call to
organize African Americans around the idea of anti-
expansionism. Grant warned McKinley that "things are not
what they seem" and that there was "unrest" among African
American supporters of the Republican party. Grant
respectfully noted the failure of the administration to
address key issues such as discrimination in the army,
lynching, and the denial of self-determination at home and
abroad as some of the causes of the unrest.  

III

The criticism and debate on United States expansionism
continued into the presidential year of 1900. The war in
the Philippines bogged down; nothing was settled. The
January, 1900, Review featured an article, "Spread-Eaglism,"
by black Protestant Episcopal Bishop James Theodore Holly,
black nationalist, American emigre to Haiti, and constant
contributor to AME publications. Highly critical, Holly
likened imperialism to a "deadly virus" and defined it as
"the law of hell." He maintained that "jurists are ready to
twist the spirit and the letter of the Constitution by a
forced and non-natural interpretation, so as to circumscribe
its sacred guarantees, in order to effectually exclude
conquered peoples from the benefit of the same." In April,
the delegates to the New Jersey Conference also expressed
concern over apparent violations in American principles. As
"friends of freedom and equality," they opposed the
annexation of Puerto Rico and petitioned Congress to allow
Puerto Ricans to govern themselves. The delegates feared that Congress would pass laws that would amount to "taxation without representation" for Puerto Ricans and that would allow white people in Puerto Rico to dominate black people. Indeed, throughout the early months of 1900, editors of AME publications consistently warned against "American ideas of race prejudice."^16

Still, others continued to support American foreign policy and noted racial unity as well as the economic possibilities present in conquered nations. While in the Philippines, for instance, chaplain Steward wrote a series of articles in the Recorder that supported American presence in the archipelago for a variety of reasons from economy to morality. In Voice of Dissent (1991), William Seraile points to the irony that Steward opposed African emigration but later supported African American colonization in the Philippines on the same economic arguments as the emigrationists. In a January, 1900, Recorder article Steward maintained that "We shall insist that the Filipino have justice and fair play, and as soon as they get into the American Union we shall make common cause with them in fighting American prejudice, whatever shape the vile thing may take." Moreover, even those who were less inclined to support imperialistic policies noted the importance of such racial unity. In a March Recorder article, Bishop Tanner sarcastically compared the conquest of the Philippines to
the taking of a "larger dose" of medicine to help the nation
cure the "Race question." Tanner believed that once the
nation had "fully possessed itself of its extra-continental
acquisitions it will get 'proper' sick," and the more united
darker races the nation had to contend with, the sooner it
would get well. Thus both leaders, though coming from
different perspectives, arrived at similar conclusions on
the importance of racial unity. Still the debate within the
church continued, and the spiritual-evangelical and national
political agendas of the AME continued to clash with racial
geo-political considerations to cause conflict, disillusion,
anger, and division within the AME Church. 17

As the Republican presidential convention and the
election of 1900 drew nearer, the spread of racism at home
and abroad remained the primary concern, but self-
determination as independent nations for the people of color
within the American empire, which directly opposed
Republican imperialist policies, became less and less an
issue. Although the presidential elections of 1900 prompted
considerable and, at times, bitter debate, when faced with
the inevitability of American overseas aggression and the
realities of domestic racism, the voices of dissatisfaction
weakened. The concern for political patronage and racial
self-interests at home induced many AME members to
accommodate to the imperialistic tendencies of the
Republican administration. Moreover, many within the
denomination agreed with the *Review* editorial writer who maintained that Holly's argument was "not likely to carry much weight in modern politics" because American "statesmanship" would "arouse the consciousness of a thousand Christian patriots" who would liberate the world. A firm faith and optimism in American institutions and principles allowed the writer as well as many others to view imperialism as a vehicle of liberation.¹⁸

The 1900 General Conference led the way and set the tone. The delegates at the 21st Quadrennial Session of the General Conference held May 7-25 in Columbus, Ohio, did not attempt to reconcile the contradictions of imperialism nor did imperialism play a divisive role. Most of the delegates at the conference were also Republicans, and at least three of the delegates would also be delegates to the 1900 Republican Convention, including Arnett who would serve on the advisory committee of the Republican convention. Since, political patronage was always a concern for church members, any definitive statement denouncing Republican policies would have hurt opportunities for patronage. Although, the state of the country committee included in its report a statement that opposed and condemned racism at home and abroad, the report did not make a statement for or against American foreign aggression. The conference adopted the report with no apparent debate. To be sure, the conference recorded lively debates over the appointment of editors to
the official publications and the number of bishops to be appointed, but no debate on American foreign policy appeared.\textsuperscript{19}

Bishop Benjamin F. Lee added to this more accommodating atmosphere toward the Republican party by delivering a conservative Episcopal Address with patriotic overtones. "While we do not feel called upon as a church particularly to follow the United States flag, in ministration to our people," Lee asserted, "yet it is the hand that opens the way to great bodies of our race and, so far, Divine." He maintained that expansionism opened "new avenues" of missionary endeavors and "extended the sphere" of economic advantages for African Americans. Finally, Lee declared that "the AME Church regards it highly proper that the Filipino should be governed as part of the United States--not a dependency--in the final settlement of their status."

Although self-determination as a separate and independent Philippine Islands was not a concern, Lee intimated that self-determination as a part of an American commonwealth was most desirable. Perhaps greater concern for independence would have been exhibited if Turner, the chief AME critic of the McKinley administration, had not been suffering from the effects of a debilitating stroke. Although present, Turner did not appear to be a major factor in any of the conference proceedings. Regardless, the lack of debate over imperialism suggested a concerted effort to present a united
front on the major issue of racism. Moreover, the delegates to the First Woman's Day and Special Conference of the Woman's Missionary Society, who held their assembly in conjunction with the General Conference, also displayed a conservative attitude toward American foreign policies. Primarily concerned with evangelism, the delegates reiterated the new opportunities available "in which we may perform our beneficent, holy and Christian work." Indeed, evangelism was also a major concern of the General Conference as the delegates made the newly elected Levi Coppin the first bishop to be directly assigned to Africa. The tone of the Conferences conveyed a qualified support for the Republican party and a pressing need to address domestic concerns that the Republican party ignored. Still, AME members and leaders argued and divided over the candidates and issues concerning American imperialism in the upcoming presidential elections of 1900.20

Traditionally major endorsers and supporters of the Republican Party, several AME leaders deserted the ranks of the party during the presidential election because of the foreign policy stance of the party platform, among other reasons. The election of 1900 was a rematch of 1896 with Populist-Democrat William Jennings Bryan opposing incumbent Republican William McKinley and his vice presidential running mate, the outspokenly imperialistic Theodore Roosevelt. The Republican party platform called for the
extension of sovereignty and the maintenance of authority and law and order in the Philippines. The Democratic party platform made imperialism "the paramount issue" and called for the establishment of a stable government and the granting of independence in the Philippines with United States protection. The lines were drawn. On one side was the Democratic "protectorate scheme" while on the other side stood the Republican "imperial benevolence." Both parties attempted to take advantage of the war issue while neither, especially the Democratic Party, addressed the rampant racism of the times. African Americans and AME members faced a cruel choice of dilemmas, the racist imperialist or the racist anti-imperialist.21

Disgusted with both parties, a few prominent church leaders sought to avoid the dilemmas by joining an effort to form a national African American party "because of the ruthless betrayal of popular government by both the two great parties." This latest attempt to form an all black political party began in 1898. Powerful lawyer, journalist, and black Democrat C. H. J. Taylor became deeply involved in trying to establish a separate and independent political voice for African Americans. His time consuming efforts to create a "Negro National Party" caused him to attempt to resign as dean of the law department at Morris Brown. In declining the resignation, Turner, chancellor of Morris Brown, professed "no faith" in such a party but applauded
Taylor's efforts to organize one. In June, 1900, in Philadelphia, several leading African Americans organized a meeting, chaired by Bishop Levi J. Coppin, to discuss the possibility of forming a national political party. The members of the organizing committee declared they "recognize in the spirit of Imperialism, inaugurated and fostered by the administration of President McKinley, the same violation of Human Rights as practiced by the Democratic Party" in the South. Moreover, J. P. Sampson, an AME presiding elder, spoke for many in asserting that "we are tired of being used as puppets by the Republican party. Our rights are trampled upon; our protests ignored." Coppin proposed "to force recognition" of the party with "enough votes to determine elections in doubtful states" and to offer a full slate of African American candidates around whom "our race will rally to their support." The group outlined a party platform that demanded "the immediate independence of Cuba and the Philippine Islands" and called for a national convention. Nevertheless, the reality of lack of finances and interest outweighed optimism, and stiff opposition from other African American leaders caused the idea to be abandoned. The proposed convention never met, and the choice of dilemmas remained the same.  

Several prominent church officials chose to support the Democratic party. Some, like Astwood and Turner, had supported Democrats in the past. Others, like Taylor, were
consistent Democrats. By the time of the 1900 elections, others such as Bishops Grant, Derrick, Tanner, and Arnett, dissatisfied with Republican domestic and foreign policies, lent intermittent and often unintended support and rhetoric to the Democratic cause. In the October, 1898, Review, Willis T. Menard had expressed a view taken by many supporters of the Democratic party. Menard maintained that the time had come for African Americans to affiliate with any party they chose. There was "nothing to lose." Menard stressed the importance of the black vote, the value of African Americans to any party, and the danger of supporting only one party. Menard addressed the need to "equip self with live topics and vote independently" and to "be prepared to defend and plead for the Negro of today not 30 years ago." African American members of the Democratic party believed that they could affect the outcome of the election in key northern states; however, the successful efforts of the Democratic party to disfranchise black Southerners lessened the chance of any widespread African American support.23

In October, 1900, Turner, recovered from the stroke and claiming he was "not a Democrat," launched a two-issue barrage in the Voice of Missions criticizing McKinley's foreign and domestic policy and any supporter of McKinley and the "unholy war of conquest . . . [against] a feeble band of sable patriots." He posed the question "Has
McKinley ever said he would call congress together to give those black Filipinos their liberty, as Bryan has?" Turner attempted to create a kindred sympathy in his reference to "black Filipinos." He also criticized the Republicans for violations of human rights and supported the Democrats, regardless of Democratic domestic policies, because any change was better than blind loyalty. The October, 1900, Voice Of Missions contained six anti-Republican or pro-Democratic articles, four on one page. In a seventh article, the editors declared that the paper could not print a letter from "50 prominent colored men" supporting Turner's position because "we are not in politics and do not care to appear in that character... The Voice Of Missions is a missionary newspaper." The November issue carried the same seven articles plus three more including a letter from the New England Anti-Imperialist League, writers of which urged support for Bryan. Rhetoric was so vehemently anti-Republican that Derrick, himself wavering slightly in his normally solid Republican support, traveled to Atlanta to try to get Turner to soften his tone. The November issue of the Voice of Missions soundly criticized Derrick's efforts. Turner's rhetoric, however, did not sway the majority of AME leaders or members.24

The AME church and the majority of its leaders and members continued to support McKinley and the party of Lincoln. In October, 1900, a group of AME ministers from
Philadelphia and the surrounding area organized a mass meeting in Woodbury, New Jersey, to support the Republican party in the upcoming elections. Accounts estimated that more than three thousand African American voters attended the rally where they reportedly "ate ox and made speeches" to support the Republican party. At the September, 1900, National Afro-American Press Association meeting, Review editor H. T. Kealing officially endorsed the Republican party. Recorder editor H. T. Johnson also endorsed the Republican party, earlier citing Tanner's qualified support for individual Democratic candidates as "tantamount to suicide." Support for McKinley from these two AME publications more than compensated for the support for Bryan in the Voice of Mission. In the October 25th issue of the Recorder, editors devoted the entire front page and much of the rest of the paper to support the Republican party and condemn the Democratic party. The feature article quoted Bishop Derrick's "eloquent appeal" to voters at a mass meeting: "The Democratic party should never be allowed to gain power in the Nation if the colored citizen can prevent it." The same issue printed a large picture of Booker T. Washington with a quote of his support for McKinley.

Even those who opposed American imperialism supported McKinley as the lesser of two evils. A set of October, 1900, Review editorials outlined several of the reasons for supporting the Republicans. The authors of the editorials
reasoned that African Americans could not vote for Bryan because of the many racist Democrats like South Carolina Senator Ben "Pitchfork" Tillman, "a self-confessed and gloating slayer of men because they are black." The authors disliked McKinley's stand on imperialism but contended that "his practical stand and open voice are for right, liberty and equality before the law of all men." To justify their stance, the writers maintained that even though the imperial powers had "undeniably and declaredly selfish and sordid" motives, "the fact remains, however, that the rape of Africa, Asia, and the islands will open them up to Western progressiveness, invention, comfort, personal liberty, and the Christian religion." In September, the members of the Ohio Conference asserted that "We care but little for the cry of expansionism, imperialism, militarism." The delegates maintained that they cared for "the lives and liberties of our people," and that the Filipinos should get a fair hearing at "the bar of an impartial and unprejudiced public opinion." Nevertheless, they resolved to "commend the statesmanlike and impartial administration of McKinley" and to "reaffirm our allegiance to the principles of the Republican party."26

Still, many within the denomination gave unqualified support to the Republic party and defended American foreign policy. In October, taking a cue from the General Conference, the state of the country committee for the
Pittsburgh Conference maintained that "the conflict in the Philippines is gradually disappearing." The committee indicated that the United States was establishing civilian government and that Filipinos could count on better conditions under American rule. The election of McKinley would insure the liberty of the Filipino people. At the North Ohio Conference the same month, Bishop Arnett explained what many within the denomination considered a prime reason for supporting McKinley and his expansionist policies. Arnett declared that "Christianity and patriotism go hand in hand. Under the flag of African Methodism, with its motto, 'God our father, man our brother, Christ our redeemer,' we are pushing our conquest for Christ wherever the stars and stripes, the flag of our country, has gone."

For the Pittsburgh delegates and Arnett, the spread of African Methodism and the promise of liberty more than offset any "temporary" disadvantages of American imperialism.27

The December, 1900, Voice of Missions headline described the frustration of Democratic supporters--"McKinley, God of Fool Negroes, Re-elected." The AME Republican supporters did not consider themselves "fool Negroes." When faced with a choice of dilemmas of whether to support overseas expansion and racism or domestic violence and racism, African Americans pushed domestic concerns to the foreground and chose the more immediate
lesser of two evils. The delegates of the 1900 General Conference had set the tone for the institutional response to imperialism, and AME leaders officially continued to support the party of Lincoln. Just as nationalism had triumphed over other group consciousness during the Spanish-American War, so too, did concerns for domestic racism triumph over concerns for foreign self-determination during the 1900 presidential elections. Unfortunately, the Pittsburgh Conference assessment of the situation in the Philippine was premature, and for the next two years, conflict in the islands entered into a more deadly phase of guerilla warfare with both sides committing cruel atrocities.  

IV

Still, events after the 1900 elections continued to lessen the conflicts within the AME church over the dilemmas of imperialism. The resignation of Turner as editor of the Voice of Missions, the passage of the Platt Amendment that gave Cuba at least the semblance of self-determination, the assassination of McKinley, and the capture of Aguinaldo in the Philippines combined to diminish concerns for self-determination. William Scarborough, for instance, who eight years earlier steadfastly promoted Hawaiians' right to self-determination and opposed the idea of African American emigration to Hawaii, now wrote an article in the Forum that promoted African American emigration to the Philippines as a
means of solving "race" relations. The members of the 1901 Pittsburgh Conference forecast a "glorious future for our government and its subjects" and resolved that the United States was "devising an equitable system of government" that produced a higher moral, spiritual, and intellectual life among the "liberated people" of conquered lands. In a seemingly unprecedented move, Derrick, who believed that the interest of African Americans was best served by the Republican party, advised the state of the country committee of the 1901 New York Conference that the nation was "all right" and warned them not to mention anything about imperialism, lynching, or Tillman. "Shall we bring in a blank piece of paper as a report bishop?" questioned committee chairman and elder William H. Heard. "Yes," reportedly replied Derrick, "a blank piece of paper would be a good deal better than a lot of inflammatory rubbish." No state of the country report or debate appeared in the official proceedings of the conference. Commenting on whether the nation should annex Cuba or grant independence, the members of the 1901 Ohio Woman's Mite Missionary Society Conference maintained that the uppermost concern should be "How can Cuba be brought to Christ." For the delegates the answer would be the best way to secure freedom and liberty.29

The issue of self-determination did not completely die out, however, and members of the AME sporadically raised
concerns about the American empire. Editors of the April, 1901 Review, for instance, maintained that "Cuba must remain absolutely free from American paternalism." Also in April, editors of the Recorder praised Aguinaldo for his long and unsuccessful struggle to secure liberty and home rule for his country. The editors maintained that by "substituting ethics for politics and the golden rule for the imperial sword, the capture of the Filipino chieftain, is shorn of its boasted glitter and glory." Meanwhile, the members of the 1901 Colorado Conference, questioned the entrance of the "land of liberty "into the world scene as an imperial power" and the "ability to administer justice in a far away land." The delegates could not conceal "certain feelings of apprehension for those people who are for the most part men of dark skin." They warned the American colonies to "beware of American colorphobia." Indeed, although concern for self-determination dwindled, AME members consistently worried about the spread of American racism abroad. The delegates of the 1901 Baltimore Conference were typical of AME concerns. While they pledged loyalty to the flag and the Republican party, the delegates also noted that American racism "accounts for the unsettled state in Cuba and the stubborn rejection by the Filipinos of American rule." Still, even the question of racism raised ambiguities within the church. Ironically, the delegates of the 1902 Virginia Conference resolved that "more perhaps can be said of the
policy of the President in essaying to extend the blessing of liberty to Cuba and the far-off Philippines, while the same blessings are unable to be secured by some of its immediate citizens." American imperialism continued to create paradoxes.\textsuperscript{30}

The AME church first responded to the entry of the United States into the game of international imperialism with enthusiastic patriotism that supported the Spanish-American War. War would not only liberate darker peoples from colonial rule, but would also give African Americans an opportunity to prove their loyalty to a nation in which they were considered second-class citizens. As American policy grew increasingly imperial, using force to subjugate other peoples, AME responses reflected disillusion, anger, and division as forces within the church grappled with the dilemmas imperialism posed to African American aspirations and standards. Forced by events of the era to make a choice of dilemmas, the men and women of the AME church chose to place the more immediate concerns of domestic racism ahead of concerns for self-determination for other peoples. Church officials did not abandon the darker peoples of other lands but, instead, demonstrated an affinity by placing a global perspective on the plight of people of color. Racism was to be fought everywhere, and although American conquest brought American racism, American conquest also brought African Methodism which could Christianize, civi"
create a unity of darker peoples. The men and women of the AME could not reconcile the inherent contradictions of imperialism. For many AME members and African Americans, imperialism represented an unyielding and cruel dilemma as noted by an October, 1900, *Review* editorial writer:

Imperialism seems to mean the bringing of more colored people in contact with American contempt; while anti-imperialism is saving all this contempt for the colored people already on hand.
Endnotes for Chapter 6


4. Aptheker, Racism, Imperialism, and Peace, 137; Beisner, Twelve Against Empire, 219; Schirmer, Republic or Empire, 83-92.


8. Quoted in ibid., 300; Journal of Proceedings of the 7th Session of the South Florida Annual Conference of the AME Church, March 1-6, 1899, (Tampa: Tribune Printing Co., 1899), 35; Minutes of the 32nd Session of the Pittsburgh Annual Conference of the AME Church, October, 12-17, 1899,
(Hamilton, OH: Brown and Whitaker), 91.


10. Quoted in Iowa State Bystander, 13 October 1899 in Marks, Black Press.


12. Voice of Missions, 1 August 1899; Voice of Missions, 1 September 1899; "Dr. C. S. Smith on the Philippine Question," Christian Recorder, 12 October 1899, 1, 3.

13. 1899 North Ohio Conference, 68-69; 1899 Indiana Conference, 42; also see 1899 Pittsburgh Conference, 96; 1899 South Carolina Conference, 50-51; also see 34th Georgia Conference, 38.


20. Ibid., 329, 331; Voice of Missions, 1 February 1900; 1 June 1900; 1900 Woman's Day and Special Conference, 5.

21. Welch, Response to Imperialism, 64; "Racial Overtones of Imperialism as a Campaign Issue, 1900," Mid-America, 47 (July, 1900), 196-205.

22. Quoted in Marks, Black Press, 209-211; Voice of Missions, 1 December 1898; Gatewood, Black Americans, 233-34.


24. Voice of Missions, 1 October 1900; Voice of Missions, 1 November 1900.


June 2, 1901, (Philadelphia: AME Publishing Co., 1901);
Minutes of the 5th Annual Convention of the Ohio Conference Branch of the Woman's Mite Missionary Society of the AME Church, July 18-21, 1901, (Xenia, OH: Kump and Kiernan, Printers, 1901).


31. AME Church Review, 17 (October, 1900), 175.
Chapter VII

Entanglements: Oppression and War in Europe and Asia

The men and women of the AME also responded to and attempted to influence European and Asian imperialism and international events and issues related to self-determination. Historian Raymond Betts appropriately titled his study on European imperialism in the nineteenth century *False Dawn* (1975). He maintains that European imperial actions, which affected the daily lives of people across the globe, never approached the high minded talk of civilizing and Christianizing the world through Euro-centric cultural responsibility. Instead, western technology allowed the imperial powers to compete for power with little regard for the indigenous people of foreign lands. Members of the AME often sympathized and identified with oppressed people around the world. Consequently, several incidents in the history of imperialism were of particular interest to the AME membership. Less hampered by American political considerations, many within the denomination supported self-determination for the weaker nations of the world and formulated international arguments for liberty and equality. Moreover, they often used international incidents to highlight African American problems in the United States.
Thus the Hague peace conferences, the Irish struggle for independence, the Dreyfus Affair in France, the Greco-Turkish confrontation in the Mediterranean among other events and issues in Europe raised questions of self-determination and religious autonomy for AME members.¹

The men and women of the AME also scrutinized events in Asia, concentrating on the events and issues surrounding the Sino-Japanese War, the Boxer uprising in China, and the Russo-Japanese War among other events and issues. Fascinated by the "little brown men" from the Japanese islands, AME leaders believed that the ability of the Japanese to compete with Europeans and Americans on their own terms dispelled the myth of white superiority. Thus, AME leaders wholeheartedly supported the Japanese in the war against Russia. Indeed, unaware of Japanese imperialism and racism, church members praised Japan for maintaining the sovereignty of Korea in the Sino-Japanese conflict. Meanwhile, although church members condemned the actions of the Boxers, they sympathized with Chinese efforts to remain autonomous and pleaded that the imperial powers be merciful in their handling of the crisis.²

As with American imperialism, religion, politics, and racism influenced the manner in which AME members responded to various international events and issues. For instance, religion and humanitarianism inspired concern for areas of the world plagued by famine and disease. Church members
organized relief efforts to famine victims in Ireland in 1897, India in 1900, and Turkey in 1902. In 1900, the Recorder and the Methodist Christian Herald, main organ for the American Methodist Episcopal Church, joined in a biracial campaign to relieve starvation in India. Editors of the Review blamed the "exorbitant taxes on land" levied by the colonial government for contributing to the suffering in India and prayed for "India to share in the bounteous ways of world commerce and production." Accordingly, AME members found political and economic factors at the root of many of the world's problems. Politically, the leaders and members of the AME often condemned European anarchists whom many considered "desperate" and "unrepentant." Moreover, they often denounced the ruling monarchies of Europe as brutal and repressive regimes that denied liberty and equality to their own citizens.3

Racism, no doubt, constituted one of the greatest influences on distinctively AME opinions on international incidents and issues, as members consistently sought to overcome many of the theories of racial inferiority as previously noted. Moreover, several AME members placed racism toward African Americans within a global perspective. In an October, 1899, Review article, the author warned readers that "if we further consider that almost all the other movements involving the existence and integrity of weaker governments are against the dark races in Africa and
Asia, and add to that the domestic problems of the American Negro, we are faced with a startling world movement."

Optimistic, the author predicted that events would one day unite the "dark-skinned races." Bishop Tanner had expressed a similar optimism to endure American imperialism as the taking of a "larger dose of medicine" to help the nation cure the "Race question." The larger dose of medicine was the addition of the "darker races" in Cuba and the Philippines to American rule. W. E. B. DuBois, writing in the October, 1900, Review, accepted the "inevitability" of American and European imperialism but asserted that African Americans must maintain "an attitude of deepest sympathy and strongest alliance" with the darker peoples of the world and "stand ready to guard them with our vote and our earnings."

For all three leaders, worldwide imperialism created an opportunity for racial unity to combat the prevalent racism of the era.4

Several members of the AME feared that the imperialistic nature of the industrial nations and the insatiable nationalism that the era spurred would destroy the world or, at best, lead to world war. Before his unexpected death in 1884, Bishop William F. Dickerson, in the first issue of the Review, asserted that the world "seems to be disintegrating" because "suspicion, distrust and jealousy are felt in every throb of the political world." Dickerson noted that this decline could be traced
to, among other things, "Russia with her Nihilists, Germany with her Socialists, France with her Communists, [and] England with her secret Dynamite Leagues." The bishop maintained that only Christianity could save humanity from worldwide turmoil. In 1886, Recorder editors, pointing to German nationalism and designs on Poland, contended that "The great powers are not limited or regulated by any moral scheme that asks from them a yielding of rights or privileges in favor of other powers or class." Later that year, the editors reported on "rumors of war in Europe" and maintained that "It is not unreasonable to expect great wars among those 'great powers' soon. They are too large to all hold their own much longer." If the immorality of the industrial and imperial nations remained unchecked, the world would go up in flames.  

A few leaders in the AME, like AME chaplain Theophilus Steward, believed that world war would be God's punishment for Anglo-Saxons and would usher a new millennium of African primacy, led by African Americans. In 1888, Steward placed his controversial theology in *The End of the World; or, Clearing the Way for the Fullness of Gentiles*. In the polemic, as biographer William Seraile suggests, Steward questioned accepted biblical interpretations and the role of Christianity in favor of a bigotry-free black theology. In an 1894 letter to the *Recorder*, Steward predicted war among the European powers and made what "might be wild
speculation" that because Africa laid outside the circle of conflict, "a great empire will arise from the collapse of civilization." He then quoted Psalm 68: "Go forth Princes of Ethiopia . . ." Later in 1898, Steward expanded on his earlier predictions. Steward examined European coalitions and determined the possibility of a war that would find the United States and Britain allied against the nations of continental Europe. Steward warned that if racism became an issue, the imperial powers would find the thirty million people of African descent in North America and the Caribbean as a force to be reckoned with.®

Indeed, by the mid to late 1890's, imperialism seemed to bring the competing nations of the world to the brink of war. Recapping events in 1895, Recorder editors concluded that "the year just closed . . . [was] prolific of war and rumors of war." The editors cited the humiliation of China by Japan, the invasion of Madagascar by France, the Cuban-Spanish rebellion, the Italian-Ethiopian conflict, and the Turkish ravages of the Christian population of Armenia. The editors also blamed British aggression in Venezuela and the Transvaal for putting the world into a state of war. A writer in a March, 1898, Recorder considered the possibility of world war escalating from the Spanish-American War. Responding to reported German threats against the United States, the writer believed that if Germany entered the conflict and sided with Spain, then France would enter to
recover Alsace and Lorraine, bringing the French ally Russia into the fray. In a similar vein, editors for the October, 1900, Review denounced the Philippine-American War, the Boxer uprising, and the Boer War for heightening world tensions. One writer proclaimed that the "three apparently detached operations . . . [characterized] all of the manifestation of one spirit, that of European and Anglo-American expansion." In the next issue, Review editors continued to predict the possibility of war in Europe for other factors. The editors contended that "It is coming, slowly but surely--Slav against Saxon." The editors noted the new German-English alliance would cause Russia to take action and warned that the United States could not be a "non-participant." Recognizing that the military entanglements of the imperial powers could lead to a worldwide conflict, AME members concerned with their role in the new world order that imperialism was creating closely followed the imperialist activities of the "Great Powers."

Moreover, several leaders sought to avoid the possibility of war and wholeheartedly supported international peace efforts. In an October, 1887, Review article, Josephine J. Turpin, a constant contributor to AME publications and who later married Booker T. Washington, proposed a "remedy for war." Turpin proposed a Supreme Court of Nations to settle and arbitrate disputes and a
Congress of Nations to establish a definite and fixed code of international laws. She gave examples of arbitration throughout history to bolster her proposal and noted that the bishops of the AME had supported the formation of a National Arbitration League. She called for "united effort and prayer to abolish war." Turpin not only displayed a keen analysis of international issues and problems but also revealed a detailed solution to those problems. Unfortunately, her pleas were little heeded, and the warlike spirit continued to permeate imperial thoughts throughout the 1890's. Still, many within the AME remained optimistic. A writer in the July, 1899, Review, for instance, analyzed the outcome of the 1899 Peace Conference in The Hague and surmised that the delegates to the conference had achieved little and that the threat of world war continued. Still, the writer maintained that the conference had been a step in the right direction.®

The delegates to the 1907 New Jersey Conference optimistically looked forward to the 2nd Hague Peace Conference. They traced the history of the Peace Congress since 1848, and hoped the conference could "strengthen its power, extend its jurisdiction and add to its authority." They also quoted from Isaiah 2:24--"swords into plowshares"--a consistent biblical passage for those who opposed war. The delegates further asserted that the United States had done its role by ending Spanish misrule in the western
hemisphere, saving China from partition, and mediating the Russo-Japanese War. Members of the 1907 Iowa Conference also saw the the United States "as the leader in the great and humanitarian 'Peace Movement,' which looks to arbitration as an effective panacea for all international ills." Delegates to both AME conferences had a firm faith that the United States could assume a leadership role in peace efforts. Still, war loomed ever closer, and a third Peace Congress was held in Baltimore in May, 1911. Delegates to the 1911 Ohio Conference praised the Peace Congress, condemned the practice of nations loaning or borrowing money for war, and endorsed the triple "Peace Arbitration Treaties" between the United States, Britain, and France. They likewise quoted Isaiah 2:24 and declared that peace would usher a new Millennium. Members of the 1911 Illinois Conference, however, did not share such optimism and worried that "The Arbitration Treaty for Peace and other measures of world importance are meeting resistance by powerful minds and belligerent opposition." Indeed, the world plunged into war in 1914. Members of the 1915 Philadelphia Conference concluded that the war spirit "possibly is the outcome of human ambitions, human greed, human avarice, human tyranny and oppression" because "nations have become drunken by their prosperity." For these and other AME members, imperialism had driven the world to war. 9
Beyond being a major cause of war, imperialism denied self-determination, an important concern for people who fought to gain and maintain their own autonomy. Thus, many of the women and men of the AME observed and analyzed many of the tumultuous events and regional conflicts that denied self-determination across the globe during the age of imperialism. One area that received attention from AME members was the ailing Ottoman Empire, and church members were decidedly anti-Turk for religious as well as political reasons. For instance, AME publications printed graphic accounts of the Turkish massacres of Armenians in 1894 and 1896. Editors condemned the "disgraceful killing of Armenian Christians by Turks" and asserted that "religious persecutions belong to the past ages." These atrocities and religious concerns influenced AME members who supported Greece in the Turkish-Greco conflict in 1897. Members of the AME questioned the seemingly general European support for Turkey. A writer in the April, 1897, Review was "appalled at the position of Christian Europe against Christian Greece and Crete over Mohammedan Turkey." The writer called for Greece to annex Crete and ominously complained that "European diplomacy and statesmanship has become more and more insecure and hypocritical, rapacious and unjust [and] . . . can only bring a cataclysm, though it be long delayed." In a September Recorder article, elder J. P. Sampson, after analyzing the causes of the conflict,
feared that the impending peace treaty would "favor an Islamic Turkey at the expense of Christian Greece and Crete," an outcome that would also "be an advantage for Germany." The delegates of the 1897 Southwest Georgia Conference called for both political and religious autonomy for Greece. For delegates and many within the denomination, the Ottoman Empire, just as the Spanish Empire, represented a dual evil that was not in "the best interest of humanity." Nevertheless, the delegates to the 1903 North Ohio Conference were quick to denounce sarcastically the "broad-hearted and liberty loving people of this country," who condemned Turkish abuses while overlooking similar abuses toward black Southerners. In a strange yet interesting bit of irony, years later the Turkish ambassador to the United States was recalled for expressing similar sentiment.10

Another empire that received considerable interest and criticism from AME members was the British. Like most of American society, AME men and women developed a love-hate relationship with "John Bull." On the one hand, England had been instrumental in the anti-slavery and anti-slave trade movements and continued to use British muscle to stem late nineteenth century slave traders. Moreover, British supporters considered the nation a valuable ally in securing African American rights and protection. Indeed, many within the denomination could be considered Anglophiles, like future Bishop Derrick who in 1888 declared that "England
stands to-day as the leaders of civilization, the mightiest of all nations upon the globe, and the strongest defender of human liberty." Because there were few direct passenger routes from the United States to Africa, most AME missionaries and visitors who travelled to Africa stopped over in England for several weeks, both coming and going. Consequently, in correspondence to the church media on their voyages to Africa, AME travellers, in the first set of letters, usually commented on the cordial and unbiased treatment they received from their English hosts and the tourist beauty of London. Moreover, British imperial policies, when compared to the brutal policies of European rivals, appeared more humane with greater promise of liberty and equality.¹¹

On the other hand, England, although enlightened, was instrumental in the spread of imperialism and the denial of self-determination. Thus, several AME members agreed with the 1904 Review writer who maintained that "The Color Question A World Question" and condemned the "treatment of colored men in the British colonies of South Africa, Australia and India." Another Review writer asserted that the "trouble with John Bull is that pawing dirt and vociferations are normal pastimes rather than an affair of seriousness" in reference to overextension and near casual use of British power. Indeed, the overextension of the British empire was a constant theme among detractors.
Recorder editors noted that "Her children are so numerous and so obstreperous that she finds her lion paw quite full of reins and whips." The church media highlighted rebellions against British authority like an 1897 uprising in India of which Recorder observers noted that the "British Lion's tail has been sorely twisted of late . . . ." Yet, the Recorder reporters as did many opposers of British policies eventually yielded to the inevitability of British technological and military superiority. For the editors, the "tribesmen posses splendid fighting mettle but the prowess, endurance and resources will tell to the enemy's disadvantage soon." Ironically, the language used by even those who opposed imperial policies--"her children," "tribesmen," and "British Lion," "John Bull,"--conveyed images of cultural superiority, a culture in which AME members sought to participate. Moreover, the spread of African Methodism and civilization in the wake of British imperialism continued to be powerful messages. Like American imperialism, British imperialism posed paradoxes that often placed AME members in the dilemma of choosing between African American interests and interests of oppressed people in foreign lands. Still, several within the church continued to view those interests as the same and, therefore, opposed British imperialism and supported indigenous struggles for self-determination, liberty, and equality.
One example of AME support for independence from British imperialism laid just across the Irish Sea or Saint George Channel, depending on the point of view. Conquered by Henry II in 1171, the Irish were ruled by successive generations of brutal and repressive British governors and landlords. The Irish continuously rebelled in varying degrees of severity. The intoxicating nationalism that swept across Europe during the age of imperialism and continued economic ruin from famine in the 1840’s initiated increased calls for home rule by the Irish accompanied by increased acts of violence against British authority during the 1870’s and 80’s. Although they deplored the violence, members of the AME generally supported the Irish struggle for independence with qualifications. In the January, 1886 issue of the Review, elder Andrew Chambers traced the history of republicanism from the Magna Charta to support his call for Irish liberty and equality. In the same issue powerful lay journalist T. Thomas Fortune, while not endorsing violence, identified with the Irish and explained that "truth compels the affirmative that such violence was frequently the logical evolution of the attending circumstances and conditions." In the October issue consummate African American leader Frederick Douglass who recently toured Ireland described those circumstances and conditions as "misrule and social misery" and "injustices." Douglass declared that he was "favorable to what is called
'Home Rule.'" He also identified with the Irish, noting that "I am for fairplay for the Irishman, the Negro, the Chinaman, and for all men of whatever country or clime, and for allowing them to work out their own destiny without outside interference." Such statements from eminent African American leaders carried much weight within the AME community.

Editors of the Recorder also supported Irish demands for autonomy. In a September, 1887 issue, editors maintained that in "this great struggle the Irish people and their liberal allies have the sympathy of all liberty lovers throughout the world." A month later another writer compared conditions in Ireland to those in the South and asserted that the "Negro had he the means would no more tolerate the powers that oppressed him than Ireland would." Thus, AME members formulated an international political rhetoric that espoused liberty and equality and human rights for the oppressed no matter where. Still, AME support for the Irish struggle for independence was qualified because of American racism. Many within the denomination considered the racial attitudes of Irish Americans, especially those within the Democratic party, to have been as bad as any southern racist. In his recollections of Ireland, Douglass described the power of Irish Democrats in the Boston, New York, and California and denounced their racist policies toward African and Asian Americans. The delegates to the
1888 General Conference supported "the Irishman fighting for 'home rule' in Ireland" yet chastised Irish Americans as "the meanest most inveterate foe of the Negro from Maine to Mexico." Editors of the Recorder determined that African American support for Irish home rule would be "more consistent" if African Americans were treated with respect from Irish Americans. Indeed, AME members at times even engaged in victim blaming as illustrated by the Recorder contributor who attributed many of Ireland's problems to the "predominance of Catholicism" or the contributor who blamed the problems on "her own non-progressive and unstable character." Still, both responses were to Irish bombings in London, and both writers cited British abuses and injustices as contributing to rebellious Irish attitudes. Thus, Irish violence along with American racism qualified AME support for Irish independence, liberty, and equality. Nevertheless, the Irish example revealed that the men and women of the AME identified with oppressed people everywhere, regardless of race. 14

Another oppressed people that the men and women of the AME identified with were Jewish people. Indeed, the Hebrew story of Moses sustained American slave men and women with a sense of hope for liberty, as did other Old Testament tales that conveyed the promise of God's justice upon the oppressors. Therefore, AME members closely scrutinized the events that surrounded the infamous Dreyfus affair and
severely criticized what they considered discriminatory French justice. French imperialist tendencies notwithstanding, church officials generally supported the republican leaders of the French government and opposed the French royalist element. Members of the AME deplored the assassination of French president Lazare Carnot in 1894 at the hands of a young Italian anarchist; cheered the 1895 election of President Faure, "a man of personal magnitude;" and praised the continuance of the French Republic. After Faure's death in 1899, Recorder editors spoke of his humble beginnings and compared him to Lincoln and Grant. The editors also endorsed the republican candidate for French president. Nevertheless, scorn for French justice overshadowed praise for the French government as members of the AME became aware of the questionable circumstances that surrounded the 1895 arrest and conviction for treason of the Jewish French captain Alfred Dreyfus. For many within the denomination, the sordid affair raised questions of religious and racial persecution and self-determination for the French people.\textsuperscript{15}

The Dreyfus affair went well beyond a simple case of injustice. The case became a war of ideology between royalists and republicans for the hearts and mind of the French people and the political structure of the French government. Framed and convicted by the aristocratic and Catholic military for selling French military secrets, the
republican and Jewish Dreyfus languished in the penal colony at Devil's Island for several years. His family continued to plead his innocence, and new evidence appeared to confirm their cries. Army leaders blatantly attempted to end the growing support for Dreyfus by "legally" suppressing the new evidence. Instead, they provoked staunch and articulate Dreyfus defender Emile Zola to write *J'accuse* (1898), a searing political indictment of the army generals involved and the royalist cause. Zola's accusations led to charges against him, forcing him to flee to London. Still, *J'accuse* placed the entire incident in the eyes of world and AME opinion, which took exception to French justice. In February, 1898, a *Recorder* writer reviewed and analyzed the court proceedings and the events surrounding the Dreyfus affair. The writer surmised that "the Republic of France is greatly excited and a condition bordering on revolution seems imminent." The evidence against Dreyfus was "flimsy," determined the writer, and the Jewish ancestry of Dreyfus "had a role" in his conviction. The writer intimated that the recent verdict against Emile Zola may have been "an attempt of the Roman Catholic Church to incite popular feelings against the Jews of France with intent to expel." Finally, the writer concluded that the entire affair "could be a covert attack on Protestants," a "far more serious" situation. April, 1898, *Review* editors printed a description of the court proceedings of the Zola trial and
called the conviction "a shameless perversion of justice"
made possible by the "open vice and immorality of French
life."16

Indeed, the evidence against Dreyfus was "flimsy," and
the suicide by an army officer who falsified documents and
the flight of the suspected real traitor increased calls for
a new trial for Dreyfus. Still, army leaders refused to
accept a humiliating defeat, and rumors circulated of a
possible coup. In June, 1899, before the retrial of
Dreyfus, Recorder editors warned that "France has greater
need of watching her friends than enemies" and to beware
"those who want to re-establish the French empire . . . the
Royalists." Members of the AME worried that France might
possibly return to the monarchy and thus deprive the French
people of their voice in government. Throughout the months
of retrial, AME editors continually predicted that Dreyfus
would be acquitted and vindicated, noting changes in public
sentiment toward support for Dreyfus. Not surprisingly,
when the courts confirmed Dreyfus's guilt, AME editors
called the "outrageous" verdict a "notorious defiance of
justice" that illustrated "French anti-Jewish animus and
subserviency of French law and sentiment to French military
authority." The editors noted that the tribunal revealed
the power of the military and Catholic establishment.
Still, republicans averted any coup attempt by forging a
powerful and unprecedented coalition between the Left and
the Right, and the new government granted Dreyfus a pardon. Recorder editors did not comment directly on the pardon of Dreyfus in September, 1899, choosing instead to print a large front-page cartoon of a female "Public Opinion" shattering Dreyfus's chains and showing him the way to liberty. The caption read, "Dreyfus Liberated."  

Opinions within the AME concerning the Dreyfus affair essentially coincided with those of mainstream America with one glaring exception. The Dreyfus affair provided AME leaders an opportunity to expose American hypocrisy. In the wake of the Zola conviction, Recorder editors asserted that "before Americans stone and brick-bat France for its unfair and anti-Jewish feelings in the Dreyfus and Zola trial cases, they should pay attention to what is happening to Afro-Americans in trial cases in the South." The following year, AME writers continued to eschew American hypocrisy after French courts confirmed Dreyfus's guilt:

Any American effort on Dreyfus' behalf is likely to be met with "Physician, heal thyself." As long as our nation furnishes object lessons of abject powerlessness or wanton cowardice to the gazing world, when the life or liberty of its own citizens are involved, its remonstrance or appeals to any first class foreign power, no matter how just in itself, can only miss the mark or react like a boomerang upon the nation's head.

For these writers as for many within the church, American justice was no better than French justice. Neither nation applied justice equally to oppressed people; therefore, white Americans who ignored racial injustices against black
Southerners had no right nor moral standing to criticize the French. Thus, the Dreyfus affair allowed AME members to highlight the sorry state of the African American condition in the United States. Moreover, during the Dreyfus affair, AME members again identified with an oppressed group and supported democratic principles. They developed rhetoric that condemned religious persecution and called for the preservation of the French Republic, égalité and libre.  

II

More than French justice, French imperialism received considerable attention from the men and women of the AME, and beyond the African diaspora, AME members focused much of that attention on French and European activities in East Asia, especially activities surrounding China and Japan. Issues of Christian mission, racial superiority, and self-determination influenced AME opinions and responses to conflicts in Asia. Although by the early 1890's, the Chinese had restored much of the sovereignty they had lost to French and British military might during the 1840's and 1860's, they still remained highly susceptible to European power. Throughout the 1880's, members of the AME denounced European imperialist and militarist policies in China. In 1884, editors of the Recorder condemned French attacks in the Chinese port cities of Tonquin and Foo-chou. The editors queried, "Is it missionary work that France and England are doing . . . or is it a work of wicked greed,
unscrupulous ambition and crushing tyranny." They feared that "the brave Mongolian must pay dearly for his courage." Another editorial writer feared that war between France and China would profoundly affect the tenuous relations between France, Britain, and Germany. The writer used the occasion to remark sarcastically on British imperialism in Asia by noting that "England is deeply interested in all the movements of Asiatic governments and always ready for the 'Lion's' share of any partitions of power or territory." Although AME members encouraged the spread of Christianity in China, they also supported the maintenance of Chinese sovereignty.  

Moreover, many of the leaders and members of the AME identified with the Chinese people, especially Chinese in America who like themselves suffered from American racial discrimination and violence. Anticipating the presidential nomination of James Blaine at the 1884 Republican party convention, editors of the first issue of the Review explained that they "have never cared much for Blaine since he lent the influence of his great name and ambitions" to crusades against Chinese immigrants. One writer in an 1885 Recorder article described American injustices toward Chinese living in the United States and asserted that the "proscribed Chinese, with all his hereditary repulsiveness, should be able to live among us free . . . ." Ironically, in condemning racial injustice, the writer invoked prevalent
attitudes of racial inferiority. The editors of the Recorder also supported a petition to Congress to repeal a law that did not allow a Chinese American to bring his wife into the country. Several months later, the editors reported on efforts by the Chinese government to investigate the "butchery" of Chinese workers in Rock Spring, Wyoming. The editors argued that "It is worth something to have a government at one's back. Had the American colored people a governmental relation with a strong, sympathetic power ... outrages would diminish in number and magnitude." Thus, Chinese sovereignty stood as an example that strong, independent, self-determining nations could influence and protect against discriminatory racial practices. Unfortunately, China was neither strong nor self-determining, and the nation's independence remained in constant jeopardy throughout the age of imperialism. The European powers continued to carve out larger spheres of influence in China, yet the nation's greatest threat came from its Asian neighbor--Japan.²⁰

While Britain and France used war to kick open the China door to western influences during the 1860's, the United States used the threat of war to accomplish the same in Japan. In response to the new foreign threat, the Japanese restored the emperor, realigned the government, and began to accept certain aspects of western society, especially economic, industrial, and military advances and
innovations. The Japanese determined that they should be on par with the West, and therefore, they had to compete with the American and European imperial powers by creating its own Asian empire. In "Attitudes Toward Asia and the Beginnings of Japanese Empire" (1973), Marlene Mayo maintains that Japan consciously joined the world of imperialism for security purposes among other reasons. Indeed, the Japanese, just as Americans would fifty years later, believed that Korea, the longtime vassal state to China, stood as a dagger pointed at their heart. Accordingly, one of Japan's first acts of military aggression was aimed at Korea. Much of the world and many within the AME, however, did not see Japan's actions as aggression. Instead, many viewed the Japanese as liberators, freeing the Koreans from the Chinese yoke of subjugation.  

In 1894, officials of the AME watched a dispute in "Corea" escalate into a full-fledged war between China and Japan. The Recorder offered weekly accounts of the progress of the war and the mounting Japanese victories. Although many officials considered the conflict a war between "two proud members of the same race," most were decidedly pro-Japanese. One writer cited "Japanese superiority in soldiery, education and achievements" and maintained that "the sympathy of the civilized public is with Japan as this power is on the defensive rather than offensive." According
to the weekly reports, however, Japan was hardly "on the
defensive." Along with their military victories, the
Japanese signed treaties with the United States and Britain
and thwarted foreign aid to China. After isolating China,
the Japanese launched an offensive that decimated and
humiliated Chinese forces. Members applauded every move by
the Japanese as well as Cleveland's role as mediator to
"stave [off] European intervention." In the spring of 1895,
Japan forced China to sign a humiliating peace settlement
that not only insured Japanese primacy in Korea, which they
were to annex in 1910, but also ceded Japan the strategic
and commercially important island of Formosa. In January,
1895, Review editors offered an insightful yet biased and
misleading assessment of the war, professing that "the war
between China and Japan may be regarded as an epoch in the
National life of the Orient . . . Japan has accepted
Christianity and the advanced civilization more readily than
China--whose defeat it is believed will force open China to
higher and better civilization." To be sure, the Sino-
Japanese War allowed Japan to become dominant among Asian
nations and a force to be reckoned with among the imperial
powers. The war also exposed China to further imperialist
exploitation.22

The outcome of the war, however, did not end all
sympathy for the Chinese, and the 1900 Boxer uprising
brought about renewed interests in Chinese sovereignty.
Although church members and leaders did not condone the "massacring of Christians, foreigners and missionaries in China by the 'Boxers,'" they still sympathized with the Chinese struggle to remain independent. "There can be little doubt that the [Chinese] have the better of their opposers as far as the weapon of argument goes," declared Recorder editors, "but since might is right according to the code of our civilization, it is certain that China must get the worst of the bargain in the end." The Chinese argument, which the editors supported, was that "foreigners had no right to invade their interior and make havoc of their sacred customs." Church members also implored the imperial powers "not to seek vengeance in Christ's name" and to remember the "forgiveness of Christian civilization." The delegates to 1900 Pittsburgh Woman's Mite Missionary Society Convention resolved that "we, as missionaries and Christians ... earnestly and feverently implore His mercy, rather than justice, upon the unenlightened natives." Thus, in their rhetoric, AME members coupled arguments for self-determination with pleas for mercy and forgiveness. Moreover, several within the denomination used the uprising to highlight African American problems. In opposing the use of American troops in China, especially African American troops, Bishop Turner argued that the "Chinese have done little 'devilment' to Afro-Americans," and "from a race standpoint there are plenty of 'Boxers'" (Red Shirts, Ku Klux
and the like) in the South who are greatly in need of the presence of soldiers." Still, McKinley sent African American soldiers to China, but the end of the uprising before they arrived ended the need for their presence. A year later, another AME editor warned Americans that white domination in the South, as it had in China, created conditions that could lead to revolt in the South "similar to the revolt of the Chinese 'Boxers.'" The pleas of the men and women of the AME notwithstanding, the imperial powers quelled the uprising with brutal force and extorted from China further humiliating concessions. Distrust among rival industrial powers along with the United States "open door" policy helped save China from petition.  

In an April, 1901, Review analysis of the Boxer uprising, the writer concluded that the "preparedness and excellence of the little brown troops of Japan" led the way for the success of the European Powers. Indeed, the Japanese broadened their Asian empire at Chinese expense, especially in Manchuria, and secured their position as the only Asian great power. Japan fascinated church members, who demanded information on every aspect of Japanese life and culture. Ironically, AME members, as most of the people of the western world, were not yet aware of Japanese racist attitudes. For members of the AME, Japan's emergence as a world power proved the fallacy of white superiority. Here was a nation, non-white and non-European, that competed with
the "Great Powers" and often came out ahead. One writer speculated, "Perhaps one of the most progressive nations of the Orient is the Japanese Empire." During the 1905 Russo-Japanese War, such sentiment magnified. Earlier, editors of the January, 1901, *Review* had suggested that as a result of the Boxer uprising, Russia had been effectively shut out of China. Indeed, Japanese intrusion into Manchuria set the stage for confrontation with the Russians as the two imperial powers collided head on.  

Fascination with Japanese culture and the ability of the Japanese to compete with Europeans, thus dispelling the myth of white superiority, were not the only reasons that AME members supported Japan in the Russo-Japanese war. Recent historians have made several comparative studies of American slavery and Russian serfdom. At the turn of the century, decades before ground-breaking works comparing American slavery and Russian serfdom, members of the AME recognized the similarities and moreover, identified with oppressed Russians. One presiding elder, in an 1888 *Review* article, compared Russia to "a vast prison house, where inhumane use of the knout is the chief delight of a despotic jailer." The elder predicted revolution if the tsar did not "yield to the legitimate request of the people." In an 1890 speech at the American Academy of Music, Bishop Tanner maintained that Russian oppression under the tsar was similar to the oppression that African Americans faced.
Tanner expressed sympathy for the "exiles of the Czar" who suffered hardships as convicts in Siberia. Thus, AME members adopted a rhetoric that denounced the tyranny of the tsar and invoked images of universal oppression. In 1895, a Recorder writer described the severe conditions suffered by peasants in Tsarist Russia and compared those conditions to the suffering of American slaves. A month later, another AME writer described "The Russian Knout, A Brutal Punishment Inflicted in the Czar's Domain." The knout was a "single throng of leather, rough, very hard, tapering toward the extremity, where it is weighted with a ball of lead" and could be used by a skilled executioner to "inflict as great or as little suffering as he pleases." According to the writer, one hundred lashes was a normal sentence, but the victim would often be dead after three lashes with the remaining lashes given to a corpse. The author compared the knout to the American slave master's whip and alleged that more than three thousand Russians had died by the knout in the previous ten years. For African Americans, many of whom were barely thirty years removed from slavery, such images confirmed their antipathy toward Tsarist Russia and aided in their decision to support Japan in the Russo-Japanese War.25

Several members of the AME church believed that war between Russia and Japan was unavoidable. During the 1894 Sino-Japanese conflict, AME editors had warned of possible
Russian intervention on behalf of China. A January, 1898, Review editor assessed the "state of the world as concerned with imperialism" and foresaw possible conflict between Japan and Russia over the Yellow Sea and China. The author also analyzed existing and possible alliances "as each European power and Japan contend for dominance." As Japanese activities increased in Manchuria, the members of the 1903 Pittsburgh Conference noted the "uneasiness relative to the warlike aspect that exists between Russia and Japan." Once war between Japan and Russia commenced in 1904, editors of the Review took a decidedly pro-Japanese stance against the "Slavs." Corrupted by contemporary racial beliefs, the editors proposed that "Slavs" were not the "same kind of whites as Anglo-Saxons." The delegates to the 1904 Virginia Conference warned that the war might lead to greater international conflict. They also identified with the Japanese and maintained that "to all fair-minded Americans it is a case of might against right, and thus we have Russia against Japan, Germany against the poor Africans in Africa, and the world against the Negro."26

Indeed, for many like the delegates of the 1904 Indiana Conference, a Japanese victory was a powerful weapon in the struggle against white supremacy:

... the boasted superiority of the white race has gone down before the sturdy blows of the liberty loving Japanese, and the world has another object lesson, that there is no inherent superiority in the white race, and there is no virtue in color.
The theme continued to be very popular throughout the course of the war, as praises of Japanese victories echoed throughout the AME. The Woman's Home and Foreign Mission delegates to the 1905 Kentucky Conference asserted that "Japan, under the flush of a signal of victory, has convinced the heretofore victorious Caucasian that the accident of color is no badge of inferiority." During the course of the war, members of the AME also continued to call for greater self-determination for the Russian people. Editors of the Review, for instance, supported the Russian Revolution of 1905 and called for the overthrow of the tsar, maintaining that "the present internal struggle in Russia is for the purpose of freeing the people." Still, at the conclusion of the Peace of Portsmouth, Review editors reserved one final praise for Japan: "Japan has been as magnanimous in her concessions for peace as she was brave in her defence of her right in war, thus placing upon her head the crown of double honor." In victory and in peace the Asian nation of Japan had smashed the theory of white superiority, and ten years later members of the 1915 Virginia Conference continued to consider Japan "a competent representative of the darker races, who by sheer force of physical, mental and moral power wrested . . . a right to the place the comity of Nations have given her." 27

Like so many of the people of the world, the men and women of the AME were caught in the swirl of international
conflicts and entanglements. Many AME members developed a cosmopolitan view of racial prejudices and injustices as the stronger nations of the world in the quest for imperial goals led a worldwide movement against darker people. They identified with oppressed people everywhere, regardless of race. In Asia, Japan's ability to compete with European nations assisted the struggle to disprove the theory of white superiority. Although they found the massacre of diplomats and missionaries during the Boxer uprising appalling, church members and leaders sympathized with Chinese efforts to maintain self-determination. In Europe, church members found difficulty understanding European support for Islamic Turkey rather than Christian Greece. The French Dreyfus affair contained religious, and racial as well as political overtones for AME members. Through it all, the men and women of the AME developed international rhetoric around notions of universal self-determination and human rights.
Endnotes for Chapter 7


14. "Editorial," Christian Recorder, 8 September 1887, 4; also see "Editorial," Christian Recorder, 21 April 1887, 2; Charles A. C. Lear, "The 'New South,'" Christian Recorder, 13 October 1887, 2; Douglass, "Thoughts and


27. Minutes of the 66th Session of the Indiana Annual Conference of the AME Church, September 7-14, 1904, (Xenia, OH: W. B. Chew, 1904) 43-44; Journal of Proceedings of the 38th Session of the Kentucky Annual Conference of the AME Church, October 4-9, 1905, (Kentucky: Nichols-Shaw Publishers, 1905), 45, 31; "The Russian Revolution," AME
Chapter VIII

One People: Autonomy in the African Diaspora

The women and men of the AME developed and maintained an important relationship with the peoples and nations within the African diaspora, especially the independent black nations in the Caribbean and Africa. In an age of increasing racial restrictions and limitations across the globe, the independent black nations symbolically represented hopes of self-determination for darker people. Although some argued that the interests of people within the diaspora would be best served under an American or British banner, most AME members passionately sought to maintain the sovereignty of black nations against the increasingly hostile forces of imperialism. Moreover, calls for autonomy within the diaspora by more radical AME leaders, many of whom supported African emigration, helped preserve and foster the ideology and rhetoric of pan-Africanism within the African American community. Even a more conservative Bishop Gaines acknowledged a oneness within the diaspora. Indeed, pan-Africanism, which assumed collective experiences, goals, and destiny for all people of African descent, just as black nationalism and unity, was an intrinsic component of the AME black theological
interpretation and application of the doctrine of African redemption. Thus, the entire African diaspora provided an arena for AME missionary activities that included the black rhetoric of liberty, equality, and self-determination, much to the disapproval of colonial governments.

Church officials closely scrutinized European and American aggression in the Caribbean, especially in Haiti and the Dominican Republic where the AME concentrated missionary activities. Suffering from chronic revolution caused in part by racial economic underdevelopment, the two nations on the isle of Hispaniola continuously struggled for autonomy under threat of foreign military and financial forces. Many members of the AME steadfastly supported that struggle. In addition, beginning with the Berlin Conference and the partition of Africa in 1884-1885, the men and women of the AME responded to European imperial and colonial policies in Africa. The nations of European carved out greater spheres of influence, established colonies, and systematically exploited the populations and resources in most of Africa. Leaders within the denomination outspokenly supported indigenous African efforts to preserve the sovereignty of Liberia among other places and fought racial injustice in Madagascar. Still, AME support for the "civilizing" and "Christianizing" influences of western political, economic, and social institutions that Europeans and Americans began to solidify throughout the African
diaspora continued to create ironies and contradictions. Moreover, the Boer War ironically illustrated the dilemmas AME leaders faced in the age of imperialism when confronted with the complex realities of self-determination and racism in southern Africa. Throughout, the members of the AME were driven by a faith and optimism in evangelical liberation and American principles and by their experiences as racially oppressed people in American society.

Latin America, especially the Caribbean, was an important part of the African diaspora in the western hemisphere, and like members of the AME, many of the peoples of Latin America were descendants of slaves. Indeed, one of the many issues in Latin America that concerned AME members during the 1880’s was the persistence of slavery in Brazil. The AME media graphically described adverse conditions among the slave population and demanded the abolition of Brazilian slavery. In 1886, editors of the Recorder depicted Brazil as the "one dark spot among civilized nations" and often warned that slavery would be the ruin of Brazil unless action against it was taken soon. A year later, they called for an American boycott of coffee from Brazil. The editors reminded the nation "that we Americans are helping the Brazil slave holders by purchasing their coffee, at the same time adding to the profits of slave labor by admitting the product duty free." Eventually, under world and indigenous pressures, Brazil abolished slavery in 1888. The voices of
the AME had added to the successful chorus of condemnation.²

Still, most of the AME attention in Latin America during the age of imperialism focused on the Caribbean where members centered much of their overseas missionary activities. Indeed, AME members often incorporated elements of pan-Africanism in their outlook toward Afro-Caribbeans. In calling for increased missionary activities in the Caribbean in 1898, Bishop Turner also advanced a "plea for the unity of the dark races." During the Spanish-American War, the men and women of the AME had supported what they considered efforts to liberate the "black" nations of Cuba and Puerto Rico from the tyrannical Spanish empire. Church members had hoped that Puerto Ricans and Cubans would be allowed to govern themselves and further prove that people of African descent were fully capable of self-government. Although disillusioned and disappointed by postwar American foreign policies that denied total independence to these nations, many within the denomination remained optimistic that complete self-determination was only a matter of time. Already liberated and independent during the age of imperialism, the nations of Hispaniola, especially Haiti, posed slightly different situations for the women and men of the AME.

The relationship between Haiti and the AME dated back to the 1820's when the members of individual annual
conferences sent missionaries to their brethren in Haiti. By the 1840’s, the General Conference had assumed responsibilities for evangelism within the region and steadily increased AME presence, forming an episcopal district there during the 1880’s. Many within the church believed that white denominations had created a religious caste system on the island that could not fulfill the social and religious needs of the islanders. Thus, the members of the AME began to incorporate the isle of Hispaniola into their conceptions of black evangelism and African redemption. Moreover, several AME members supported the religious-political message of James T. Holly, black Episcopal bishop, emigrationist, black nationalist, and consistent contributor to AME publications. Holly envisioned Haiti leading an Afro-Caribbean empire composed of all the nations of the Caribbean.³

Interest in Haiti went beyond evangelism. For many within the denomination, the 1804 Haitian Revolution proved that people of color were not inferior and could acquire autonomy through their own means. Thus, Toussaint L’Ouverture, the leader of Haitian revolution, and the revolution itself gained near mythical status within the AME community. In an 1885 Review article that endorsed missionary activities in Haiti rather than Africa, Bishop Payne compared L’Ouverture to George Washington, a constant comparison. In 1894, one contributor to the Recorder took
exception to the comparison because Washington owned slaves. Instead, the writer maintained that L'Ouverture whose "words of liberty are heard through the dark domains of Tyranny" was more like Hannibal. At the 1900 Indiana Conference, elder Charles W. Mossell, former AME missionary in Haiti, called L'Ouverture "a great and brave man." The elder further noted that the people of Haiti had a difficult time obtaining "their liberty on account of the surrounding nations, who wanted the country." Mossell declared that "the Haytien was a lover of humanity and liberty and therefore he never rested until he had gained his entire freedom." Thus, the Haitian example provided members of the AME with hope that liberty and equality would eventually persevere over tyranny and oppression.

Writing in the April, 1896, Review, John Hurst compared the Haitian Revolution to the American Revolution, stating that Americans had fought for political freedom while Haitians had fought for human rights. Hurst noted that despite the similarity of the struggles, the United States was among the last nations, not until 1863, to recognize an independent Haiti. Hurst maintained that Haiti existed under the constant threat of invasion because the American press misrepresented Haiti with reports on the incapacity of Haitians to govern themselves. A year earlier, Review editors had echoed similar claims, warning readers to "beware of what white authors write about Hayti." The AME
editors maintained that white authors treated Haitians as "revolutionary, treacherous, ambitious people who have no stable government and who are incapable of developing one." Instead, the editors asserted, the Haitians were "worthy examples for all who like themselves are struggling for recognition among men." H. C. C. Astwood, who had first-hand experience as a missionary in Haiti and an American diplomat in San Domingo, acknowledged the cruelties and oppression of the indigenous elite, but also contended that constant interference and meddling in the affairs of both nations by external forces contributed to their problems. Astwood likewise noted misrepresentations of the nations by the white press. The themes of outside interference and misrepresentation consistently appeared in AME literature about Haiti and San Domingo.\(^5\)

One particular incident that involved misrepresentation and interference in Haitian affairs raised the ire of church members and demonstrated the widespread American contempt for the tiny island republic. In 1897, Haitian authorities arrested a black German subject in a dispute at Port-au-Prince. The German government suspended diplomatic relations with Haiti and demanded the release of the prisoner and an indemnity of several thousand dollars. To enforce the demands, the German government sent two warships into the harbor at Port-au-Prince. Humiliated, the Haitian government acquiesced to the German demands. Sympathetic
toward Germany, the white American press, opined Recorder editors, asserted that Haiti "ought to have behaved herself." The AME publications, however, condemned German actions and chastised the American press. One Review editor wrote, "Germany has bullied Haiti on the principle stated by the fabled eagle when he pounced upon the dove: Thou must fall, For I am great and thou art small." Several AME officials questioned the role of the United States government in the whole affair. They reminded the administration that only a few years earlier, the United States had invoked the Monroe Doctrine and stood at the brink of war to protect the sovereignty of Venezuela. Several leaders of the AME surmised that the Monroe Doctrine had not been invoked in this case because Haiti was a "Negro nation." Nevertheless, the incident led to German migration and greater German influences in Haiti's economic and political policies.

The greatest threat to Haitian sovereignty, however, came from within the western hemisphere in the form of American imperialism. The United States had maintained an interest in Haiti since the establishment of trade in the 1790's. Yet, the United States, as most of the industrialized nations, viewed the black republic through prevalent racial biases and failed to respect the accomplishments of the Haitian Revolution. Thus, Haiti entered the community of nations and world economy as a
second class citizen, susceptible to racial violence, intimidation, and exploitation. Haiti’s intimidated elite grew rich and paranoid and kept the nation in perennial debt to foreign financial interests, especially American, German, and French, who controlled the nation’s underdeveloped economy that exploited and neglected the majority of Haitians. The nation, consequently, remained in near constant revolution from bickering elites supported by competing financial interests, mercenaries who fought for the highest bidder, and revolutionaries who sought to overthrow the corrupt governments. The industrialized nations used Haiti’s instability to justify control and regulation of Haitian affairs.7

The United States had a long tradition of employing gunboat diplomacy with Haiti and for decades had wanted to establish a naval station at the port of Mole Saint-Nicolas. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the United States had sent naval vessels into Haitian territory twenty-eight times and, between 1867-1900, landed marines on Haitians soil to protect American and foreign interests. In The Banana Wars (1985), Lester Langley notes that American military officers on the scene in the Caribbean often determined the manner of intervention, assuming the roles of diplomats and protectors of United States strategic interests. Langley asserts that all of these American officers predicated their actions on the belief that the
people of the Caribbean were racially inferior and that the United States had the obligation to police those incapable of governing themselves. After the building of the Panama canal, American strategic interest increased with Haiti seen as a part of a Caribbean line of defense that protected shipping lanes to the canal and the southern borders of the United States. Moreover, during the Taft administration, United States began to increase their efforts toward dollar diplomacy on the isle of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic as the model of American stewardship. While American, German, and French financial interests struggled for economic dominance, revolution continued to rock both sides of the island. In 1915, rebellious Haitians, who attempted to overthrow the government, dragged the Haitian president from the French embassy where he sought asylum and brutally assassinated him. The Wilson administration, which had appointed the first white American minister to Haiti, used the incident to land troops on Haiti, beginning a twenty year military occupation. The following year, the marines occupied the Dominican Republic. Racism played an intrinsic role in the administration's decision as American capitalists easily convinced the southern president Wilson that the racially inferior Haitians were incapable of handling their own affairs. Typical of American racial attitudes within the Wilson administration was secretary of state Robert Lansing who declared that "the African race are
devoid of any capacity for political organization and genius of government" or his predecessor Williams Jennings Bryan who disdainfully remarked, "Dear me, think of it. Niggers speaking French."  

Editors of the Review, led by Reverdy Ransom, responded to the events surrounding the 1915 occupation of Haiti. In the October, 1915, issue, editorial writers maintained they were "startled" when they heard the news of the marines landing in Haiti and naively noted that Haiti and Liberia had been "gliding smoothly down the currents of domestic felicity without a cloud on the horizon." Once they learned about the assassination of the Haitian president and the revolution, they understood the necessity of the occupation although it was "hurtful to the nation's pride." The writers saw a "German hand" in the revolution and declared that the "power of voodooism needs to be destroyed." Uncertain of Haiti's future, the writers remained optimistic that American troops would bring free elections. Thus, the writers were willing to accept temporary occupation, if it meant greater democratization of the nation.  

In a separate editorial reply by Ransom, the editor conceded that "Haiti, our oldest Negro government, is in a bad state" because of chronic revolutions. Yet he posed the question, Why Haiti and not Mexico? Both nations were in a similar state; indeed, Mexico had been in anarchy for six years while Haiti's current problems had existed only two
months before American intervention. He pointed to the "disorganized condition" of the administration foreign policy and noted the "unusual hurry in Washington to get at Haiti almost before the revolution got afoot." He blamed the occupation not only on United States strategic interest for the canal but also on "southern hegemony at Washington" and intimated that American interest in Haiti and Liberia was more than altruistic. Ransom concluded with a warning that African Americans "must recognize the fact that all white governments are inclined to show small patience with the bickerings of other peoples." In an article later in the issue, Ransom again recognized that many of the elite in Haiti placed "private fortunes above the nation's weal" and had tarnished L'Ouverture's sword; nevertheless, he continued to declare that "we protest against the extinction of her sovereignty." He maintained that in light of the administration's racial attitudes and past record, a proposed commission of African Americans to arbitrate the situation was "an illusion and a lie." Ransom simply argued that "Wilson's cheap white democrats are eagerly anxious to go in and reduce the Haitians to their idea of common American 'niggers.'"

Indeed, United States patience with Haiti was traditionally small and no doubt racism played a major role, especially considering that through all the internal strife, which included the assassination or forced removal of eight
president since 1911, Haiti never defaulted on a loan. In a letter to the Review, E. Chauvet, editor of the Haitian newspaper Le Nouvelliste, reminded AME readers of that fact. Chauvet worried about the Haitian national image that the Wilson administration presented to Americans and urged the United States to allow Haitians to handle their own financial affairs. The Haitian journalist maintained that an American takeover of the customs house "would be an occasion of ill feelings and would breed all kinds of trouble." In the January, 1916, Review, editors also asserted that Haitian should handle their own affairs. The editors maintained that since the Wilson administration had used the tragedy at the French embassy as an excuse to intervene in Haitian affairs and since the Haitian government had apologized for the incident, the United States "government should show the same willingness to get out as Haiti has shown to make amends." They noted that it was doubtful that the present administration realized "America's debt to Haiti" and cited the use of Haitian troops to relieve the siege at Savannah in 1779 and Toussaint L'Ouverture's defeat of Napoleon's troops that eventually were destined for the Louisiana Territory. Nevertheless, the Wilson administration forced the Haitians to sign a treaty that instituted martial law, installed a puppet government, and gave ultimate control over Haitian affairs to American officials. Upon ratification of the
treaty, editors of the Review sarcastically noted that the Republic of Haiti was finally under an American protectorate. They also warned the Haitians to "Now look for Democratic politicians here seeking positions there on the pay roll of the Haitian Government and American business men seeking concessions there." The editors hoped that "Meanwhile, may the chastened little Republic survive."

Still, as pointed out by the delegates to the 1916 Michigan Conference, Haiti remained "subjugated" and "St. Domingo in a frightful predicament." A year later on the eve of the United States entry into World War I, the editors criticized the irony of Wilson peace proposals that outlined freedom for places like Poland but ignored Haiti and the Dominican Republic among other nations. Many of the voices of the AME continuously demanded that Haiti and the Dominican Republic be given liberty and equal treatment in the community of nations.11

Although Puerto Rico, Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic received the most attention of the women and men of the AME, other parts of the Afro-Caribbean also drew concern. As early as 1883, for instance, AME members cautioned that "It would verily seem that England is bent on making a black Ireland of Jamaica." A couple of years later, an AME minister writing in the Review assessed the current situation in the British West Indies and noted the "British inadequacies in governing" Jamaica. The elder
maintained that "home-rule" was a pretense and that many islanders opposed unfair British trade restrictions. The elder declared that the time was right to send in African Methodism because Jamaica had "struck the first blow in asserting her rights of independence of the home rule." For the elder and others within the denomination, the AME church could aid in the Jamaican struggle for autonomy. The Danish West Indies also received attention and warnings from church members who followed United States negotiations with Denmark for the islands. In February, 1902, editors of the Recorder cautioned the islanders that although United States ownership might benefit the islanders commercially, the United States would also bring American racism. If such were the case, grieved the editors, "we extend sympathy, not congratulations, to our brethren." The editors feared that the "colored people of those islands" would suffer the most from the change of ownership. Purchase of the Danish West Indies was not complete until 1917. At the time of the purchase, editors of the Review lamented on the Bishop Holly's vision of an Afro-Caribbean empire where all nationalities within the islands would be united as one. The editors feared that annexation "would carry in its train, lynching, jim-crowism, and all the evils of highly civilized America." Ironically, by 1917, Holly's dream had partially come true. Many of the islands of the Caribbean had been brought together under one flag; however, the flag
was American not the banner of an independent Afro-Caribbean. From Cuba to the Virgin Islands, the United States had built of strategic buffer in lands primarily populated with people of African descent. The members of the AME continuously identified with Afro-Caribbeans and incorporated them in the struggle for liberty and equality.\textsuperscript{12}

II

The most important part of the African diaspora was the homeland itself, a sprawling continent of diversity and continuity that became the focal point of European imperialism and the forced recipient of western institutions and values. In Africa, the myth of white superiority thrived. Africa had a very special meaning for many of the men and women of the AME. By consciously placing "African" into the title of the denomination, the founders of the African Methodist Episcopal Church acknowledged bonds between the "Motherland" and her sons and daughters in America, what historian Sylvia Jacobs describes as the "African nexus." Throughout the generations, AME members consistently rejected attempts to change the denomination's name. During the mid to late 1880's, for instance, amid attempts to unify the church with the AME Zion Church, a separate black Methodist denomination, several members mounted a verbal campaign to change the name from "Africa" to Allen. Missionary H. C. C. Astwood argued for the
change. Astwood maintained that the name "African" had been chosen because at the time, it was the "only nationality to which persons of color were entitled to in the United States." He asserted that laws, for which the church had struggled, had that African Americans citizens, thus ending the need for the designation "African." According to Astwood, "the cause for which it [the name] was adopted had triumphed and the prophesy of Allen fulfilled." On the other side of the argument, presiding elder George Bailey from Ohio declared, "Let us not, therefore, become so Americanize as to despise the name of that land which gave our fathers birth." The elder maintained that members should be proud of their name and the heritage that it symbolized. The name remained the same, and several within the AME agreed with AME political activist George E. Taylor who predicted that "Africa is not only to be the center of African Methodism, but is destined to become the heart of civilization, learning and power." Taylor noted that Africa was the birth place of science, art, and literature and the "great luminary of the ancient world from which Greece and Rome borrowed their light." Taylor directed his words at the myth of white superiority and depicted a positive image of Africa, both past and future. Moreover, after 1890, every bishop, at one point, acknowledged the importance of Africa within the African Methodist doctrine of redemption and the black theology of liberation. Whether enterprise,
evangelism, or emigration, the future of Africa played a central role in AME thought.\textsuperscript{13}

Still, as Jacobs illustrates in \textit{The Africa Nexus} (1981), which examines African American perspectives on European imperialism in Africa, African Americans maintained a range of ambivalent emotions towards Africa, including pride and humiliation, attraction and repulsion, and hope and fear. Jacobs also concludes that the influence of western society on African Americans conditioned their responses and actions to European intrusion into Africa. Thus, members of the AME were susceptible to many of the prevailing racial and, especially, cultural biases as the rest of western society, creating contradictions and dilemmas. During the age of imperialism, AME missionary activities increased with missions established throughout Southern Africa, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. In 1900, the General Conference established the 13th Episcopal District in West Africa and the 14th Episcopal District in Southern Africa. In addition, several AME members--William Heard, C. W. Manning, and Owen Smith among others--served in the United States Diplomatic and Consular Service as representatives to various African nations. The AME missionaries and diplomats kept church members informed of events in Africa through letters and articles written for the AME publications. Thus, in these areas, the leaders and members of the AME, received information that had not been
filtered through the racially biased American or European press.\textsuperscript{14}

In November, 1884, most of the competing industrial nations of the world met at Berlin to lessen the possibility of warfare among themselves because of imperialist activities in Africa. Under the guise of free trade and uplift, the Berlin West African Conference justified and sanctioned colonialism and white superiority, thereby insuring continued European dominance of most of Africa's economic, political, and social institutions. The Conference had broad implications for racial relations across the globe as the southern way became the international way. The partitioning of Africa by Europe caused great concern among members of the AME. Indeed, the editors of the July, 1885, Review held their own conference in the form of a symposium that asked various African American leaders "What Shall Be the Policy of the Colored American Toward Africa?" In one manner or another the leaders maintained that African Americans should take an active role in the development of Africa. Thus, many members of the AME supported the advancement of western society that imperialism presented. Only a handful of AME leaders like Bishop Payne, who in 1885 warned members "against the Don Quixote idea of Ecclesiastical Imperialism," maintained that African Americans should stay completely out of Africa. Even Payne revised his views
within the year to include the need for African redemption. The choice was clear and simple—European imperialism with African Americans or European imperialism without. Armed with a faith and optimism in the possibilities of American principles and a mission of African redemption, the men and women of the AME sought to curb the brutal excesses of imperialism and to guarantee liberty and equality for Africans.\(^\text{15}\)

Although some church members like Elizabeth Cottrall Redding condemned European intrusion and defended African civilization and culture, typical among AME opinions and responses was D. Augustus Straker, attorney, writer, statesman. Straker supported the stated goals of the Conference because it offered the opportunity to "extend the benefits of civilization" and because of Christian duty. Nevertheless, Starker questioned the motives of the conference, citing a European history of "insatiable thirst for dominion and wealth." The attorney maintained that Africa would benefit if Europeans "go in with equality in their hearts" and asserted that the role of African Americans was to enter with the Europeans. Editors of the Recorder, who also supported the opening up of Africa to civilization and Christianity, still maintained that Africa's wealth was fading because of the "cupidity as well as the philanthropy of the civilized world." In an 1892 Review article, London educated West African Orishatukeh
Foduma, constant contributor to AME publications and supporter of the Conference who maintained that the "great sin--the sum of all villainy--committed by white men against Africa"--was the slave trade and slavery, reviewed European colonization. Foduma provided figures on the square mileage claimed by the various European powers; examined colonial policy; and concluded that "the Afro-American can not afford to remain behind as a mere looker-on." Many within the denomination agreed that Africa could not be completely abandoned to Europe. 16

Indeed, the messages of African redemption and pan-Africanism often intertwined as church members such as future bishop and publisher James C. Embry ascertained that the "work of evangelizing Africa has been reserved for the African." In the 1885 Review symposium, an elder and journalist from New York noted that by "diplomatic cunning and armed invasion, they seem determined to have a slice of the 'Dark Continent' . . . but God has beneficently reserved Africa for Africang." The elder declared that only the "power to make himself felt" through a powerful Africa would give the African in the diaspora the "rank at all times and at all places that the dignity of manhood claims for him."

Straker's law partner and AME minister T. McCants Stewart, who ended his illustrious career in the mid-1910's as a justice on Liberia's supreme court, emphasized unity through commercial enterprise. Upon his return from an 1883 visit
to Liberia, Stewart expressed his version of the theory of redemption in what AME Recorder critics considered a "literary gem," Liberia; or, the New Star in the East (1885). Writing in the Review, Sierra Leone educator J. Augustus Cole placed pan-Africanism in religious terms:

> Then the millennium of the Negro will be near, when the sheep of the other folds in Africa shall be united with those in America and the West Indies by the cord of Christianity, and then there shall be one flock under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

The notion of an African millennium was entrenched in AME attitudes toward African redemption throughout the diaspora.\(^{17}\)

The editors of the 1887 Recorder expressed the reservations towards European domination that many within the AME held. The editors maintained that the "great object is to white man Africa, rather than to Christianize Africa. Their literature, their religious notions, their very life and character . . . are tainted with the foolish notion of the negro's irrecovable inferiority." Even more moderate leaders within the denomination like Bishop Arnett asserted that the "redemption of the Dark Continent from control of foreign nations, from the powers of oppression . . . will depend on the African himself." Arnett maintained that the "redeemer, whoever he may be, will have African blood in his veins, African by birth or descent." Thus, many AME members placed a pan-Africanist perspective on African redemption and, unlike the Christian mission of white Europeans and
Americans that was based on racial superiority, developed a black theology that espoused teach Africa and Africa will lead the world. Confronted with the inevitability of European aggression and imperialism, AME members consistently sought liberty, equality, and human rights for the indigenous people of their homeland. 

Accordingly, throughout the age of imperialism, the women and men of the AME appealed to Christian morality as they condemned the brutal European abuses of the human rights Africans, like the atrocities the Belgians under Leopold II continuously committed in the Congo Free States. Typical were the members of the 1907 Philadelphia Conference who forwarded a memorial to the Hague Peace Conference requesting that the peace delegates "exert influence upon the King of Belgian to end the barbarous and inhumane treatment of the African brethren in the Congo Free States." Members of the AME also denounced the "horrible system of slavery" that was revealed under a British banner in Zanzibar, which they decried caused "the heart of Christian civilization to heaves sighs of sorrowful surprise." Meanwhile in West Africa, they cheered British military campaigns against the despised slave traders who conducted a "reign of terror" within the region. Moreover, they supported efforts by indigenous people to remain autonomous against the overwhelming military power of European imperialism. In 1883, editors of the Recorder praised the
victory of "El Mahdi, the black Sudanese Mohammedan prophet," over British led Egyptian forces as "one of the most significant events of the hour." During the mid-1890's, AME members steadfastly supported the successful Ethiopian efforts to halt Italian aggression. Church members maintained that the victory over the Italians "leaves no room for cavil as to the bravery even of the blackest men of the world." Thus, AME members, even before the partition and throughout the age, condemned European imperial policies and injustices across the continent. 19

Ironically, the island nation of Madagascar, which resisted French colonial efforts, provided AME members with a personal view of French political and racial justice in the years before the infamous Dreyfus affair. As early as 1883, a contributor to the Recorder denounced France as "an uncrowned despotism" because of "assaults upon free and independent people" in Madagascar. The writer maintained that France was like a "wolf upon the lamb" and that no European power would aid the island. Many within the denomination identified with the helplessness that the contributor expressed because of the inevitability of imperialism: "That the people of Malagasy have our sympathy is certain, but sympathy will go only a short distance in keeping them from the grasp of France." Still, AME members like Recorder editors who a few months later called France "the sulkiest nation of Europe," continued to condemn the
French. The editors declared that "whipped by Germany and outwitted by England," the vengeful France's "only course is to prey on weaker nations." Indeed sympathy and condemnation only went so far, and by 1890, the French had established a weak protectorate presence on the island.20

The Harrison administration, however, did not immediately recognize French claims and in 1891, appointed black Methodist John Waller as United States consul to Madagascar. As consul, Waller outspokenly supported Madagascan autonomy, which drew the ire of local French officials. Replaced by the Cleveland administration, Waller remained in Madagascar and secured a 150,000 acre rubber concession for thirty years from Madagascan Queen Ranavalona III. Waller amassed considerable wealth on the island and devised an elaborate plan for African American emigration and settlement, "Wallerland." The French, however, did not recognize Waller's claims. In 1894, the French invaded Madagascar and consolidated their hold over the nation, upsetting Waller's plans. French officials demanded that Waller relinquish the rubber concession, but Waller refused, testing French colonial resolve. Inflexible, the French colonial authorities court-martialed Waller in April, 1895, under the pretext that he communicated with the adversaries of France. With faulty evidence and inappropriate proceedings, a French court sentenced Waller to twenty years in prison and confiscated his lands and holdings. In the
United States, AME leaders, who considered Waller one of their own, reproached the Cleveland administration for failing to protect an American citizen and a former United States consul. A Recorder editor protested that "had the victim been a white American citizen . . . his interest would have been protected by the government and the results of such a farcical trial . . . not allowed to hold for a moment."$^{21}$

Meanwhile, French authorities transferred Waller in chains and under deplorable conditions to a prison in Paris. John M. Langston, successful international lawyer and former United States minister to Haiti, attempted to secure through the State Department the release of Waller with an indemnity. Langston demanded prompt action from the administration and a thorough investigation. C. H. J. Taylor and Astwood, Cleveland supporters, also attempted to pressure the administration into action. Cleveland acknowledged that the French had exceeded their authority under international law but, in order to maintain cordial relations with France, refused to take action. The French authorities allowed appeals to drag on for months. Constant agitation by AME members and other African American leaders, however, helped to bring the case to the attention of the white press as AME leaders attempted to get Congress involved. "Let it now be brought to the attention of the tribunal of the nation," wrote a Recorder editor. Church
leaders painted a picture of Waller's "poor" wife and her children starving in Washington without means while her husband unjustly languished in ill health in a French prison. Like the administration, Congress refused to act. Meanwhile, the Venezuela crisis removed the Waller case from the front pages and the minds of Americans. In December, 1895, the Recorder reported that "the Secretary of State has intimated that if Mr. Waller will yield his right to indemnity and his valuable concessions . . . his case could be arranged and he liberated." Early in 1896, the French government under the pretext of illness quietly released Waller, who returned to Washington empty-handed and broke. Throughout the remainder of his life, Waller became an avid critic of European imperialism and the denial of self-determination in Africa.

The struggle to prevent the denial of self-determination encompassed the long running AME relationship with the African nation of Liberia. More often than not, when Cain, Turner, and others within the denomination spoke of building a strong, "manly," black Christian republic in Africa, they were referring to Liberia, which very name denoted liberty. Liberia was the focal point of much of the AME emigrationist activities from Daniel Coker in the 1820's to William Heard in the 1910's. Founded by the American Colonization Society in 1822 as a proposed destination for freed American slave women and men, Liberia also was the
focal point for much of the AME missionary activities in Africa. Thus, the men and women of the AME built a relationship with Liberia that recognized and continuously championed the sovereignty of Liberia. Liberians encouraged AME emigrationists in hopes that African Americans could provide the nation, especially the interior, with the stability that could forestall European intrusion. Indeed, throughout the age of imperialism, the sovereignty of Liberia needed all the champions that could be mustered as the European powers unremittingly threatened the nation's borders and autonomy. Militarily weak and treated as inferior, Liberia depended primarily on American paternalism and European sense of morality to maintain its sovereignty, neither of which saved Liberian territory from being eroded by Britain and France. In the 1880's, Britain forced Liberia to give up territory, and in the 1890's, France did the same, both consuming more than half of the nation's original territory. In both instances, Liberian officials pleaded for assistance from the United States, and in both instances, the American administration counseled the Liberians to acquiesce to European demands. Nevertheless, Liberia managed to maintain its sovereignty, and the voices and actions of the AME supported that effort.  

The response of the men and women of the AME to British encroachment on Liberia in 1883-85 was typical of AME efforts to defend the nation's sovereignty. In 1883,
Britain initiated a border dispute as a pretext to invade and occupy Liberia's northwestern territory. Members of the AME condemned British actions. In March, 1883, Bishop Turner hosted a dinner in Washington, D.C., for leading African authority Edward Wilmot Blyden; in attendance were Senior Bishops Thomas D. Ward and John Mifflin Brown, future Bishop James A. Handy, Martin Delaney, and Francis J. Grimke. Not surprisingly, this collection of black nationalists and pan-Africanists publicly condemned British aggression and praised Liberian efforts, along with Haitian efforts, to maintain strong governments. Indeed, much of AME rhetoric surrounded the effectiveness of the Liberian government. In May, 1883, a Recorder contributor outlined the structure and analyzed the competency of the Liberian government. The writer acknowledged that some bribery existed in the government but concluded that the government functioned well, not unlike the two-party system in the United States. Still, Recorder editors warned that the British would use the current border dispute to take possession of Liberia especially in the wake of United States withdrawal of support. The British also used Liberia's default of a $500,000 1871 bank loan to continually meddle in Liberian affairs, and the editors suggested that African Americans raise the money "to relieve Liberia from the 'lion's paw.'" They realized that such a task would be difficult because of organization but,
nevertheless, feared for the survival of Liberia if something were not done. Editors of the 1885 Review examined the details of the loan and concluded that because of commissions, expenses, legal fees, and kickbacks, the government of Liberia realized less than 27% of the loan. Ironically, the editors suggested that American annexation might insure the nation's liberty. Indeed, throughout the age of imperialism, various members the AME considered American or British annexation as a solution for Liberian and Haitian problems. Still, most, like the editors of the 1902 Review, steadfastly upheld the sovereignty of the "only two independent Negro governments"--Liberia and Haiti. Britain and France with United States assistance continued to infringe on Liberian sovereignty first taking greater territory then assuming control over the nation's economy. In 1915, a besieged Liberian Supreme Court justice T. McCants Stewart, although critical of an "inner circle" of Liberians, continued, as he had done thirty years earlier, to uphold the independence and sovereignty of Liberia.24

The efforts of AME members to preserve the autonomy of indigenous African people, however, was continuously compromised by support for western society and culture. Such was the case in British Sierra Leone where AME missionaries displayed many of the contradictions inherent in spreading African Methodism in the wake of imperialism. The relationship between the AME and the people of Sierra
Leone, like Liberia, dated back to AME evangelist and emigrationist activities during the 1820's. Early in the age of imperialism, AME members had supported efforts by a Sierra Leone leader, Samudu, to unite the people of Sierra Leone. Editors of the *Recorder* hoped he would be a "Hannibal" who would build a European style army and initiate trade with the United States and Britain. Nevertheless, by 1890, a British colonial government, along with an AME missionary presence, was firmly in place in Sierra Leone, both aiding and complimenting one another. Missionaries in Sierra Leone like Alfred Ridgel illustrated the biases of cultural superiority by criticizing and condemning indigenous African cultures and religions and promoting the need to civilize the local population. Moreover, AME missionaries often supported British colonial policies that were detrimental to the people of Sierra Leone. In 1898, AME superintendent of missions, Floyd G Snelson, for instance, hoped the British would quickly put down a general uprising brought about by a repressive hut tax. The elder maintained that the Tax Hut Revolt was started by "war boys" who were "lusty and bloodthirsty savages." Snelson not only reinforced cultural stereotypes but also reinforced racial stereotypes, separating himself from the oppressed and identifying with the oppressors who considered all people of color inferior. Still, the men and women of the AME had chosen to
increase their presence in Africa and that often meant receiving permission from colonial governments. Indeed, European imperialism presented the members with the dilemma of which European imperial power to support. The choice was easy. Britain had the advantage of a shared language and culture and appeared much more beneficent than the other European powers. Most within the denomination believed that liberty and equality for Africans had a greater likelihood under British rule. In an August, 1894, Recorder article, London educated Archibald Johnson described the "scramble" for East Africa. Johnson maintained that Uganda was "highly esteemed and fortunate" that Great Britain had shown interest rather than one of the other colonial powers. The following year, Recorder editors explained why many in the AME echoed a similar sentiment. They concluded that the "English are hard masters, but if Africa must be ruled from without . . . let her fall into English rather than German, French or Italian hands." "Along with British rule," the editors justified, "goes the prayer book, the Bible and Protestant worship, together with moral ethics and common law of the best society on earth. In all this we think we see the hand of God." For them, God’s hand would eventually liberate. Still, AME support for British imperialism in Africa as did support for American imperialism continued to be fraught with disillusion and criticism. The question of self-determination was never simple and situations varied
depending the nature of the conqueror and the people they encountered. The Boer Wars in southern Africa, for example, presented AME members with difficult questions of self-determination and racism.

Since southern Africa was a prime target of AME missionary activities, events there received considerable attention from AME members, and no event during this period in South African history was more important than the Boer War. Initially, AME members responded to the conflict by supporting the Boers. For AME leaders and members, the war represented another example of British imperialism, another example of the British denying a people the right of self-determination. As early as 1896, editors of the Review maintained that Outlander complaints of injustices and mistreatment by the Boers were "largely imaginary," and if anything, the "Uitlander mistreat, cheat, and debauch the helpless laborers [Africans] that make them rich." By September, 1899, Recorder editors believed that war was imminent because "the Dutch in South Africa are bravely opposing demands of the greatest power on earth." The editors applauded the determination of the South African Republic to remain independent and questioned the right of England to interfere in the domestic affairs of the Republic. Still, the editors reasoned that in a war, "the little Dutch Republic would not stand a ghost of chance" and feared other nations might be drawn into the conflict
causing a world war. At the outbreak of hostilities in 1899, Recorder editors accused the British of "carrying on an unholy war in South Africa to acquire gold fields." In the April, 1900, Review, the editors reprinted an article from the Springfield Republican that compared the Boers to the American colonial Puritans "who likewise escaped religious persecution in Europe."  

Many such statements showed that members of the AME initially agreed with the pro-Boer sentiment stirred up by the American press in the early stages of the war. Slowly, however, AME members unraveled a story not told in the mainstream press. Church members began to recognize that Africans in South Africa suffered from greater injustices and mistreatment from the Boers than from the British. On his return from South Africa in April, 1899, Bishop Turner noted that although he had met with President Kruger and was well received by the Boers, "the Boers, as a rule, are not educated, and show more prejudice than the English." In a January, 1900, letter to the Recorder, Marshall Maxeke, a South African AME minister, described conditions he experienced as a black man travelling in the Transvaal. In Johannesburg, authorities did not allow him to go to certain places or even stand in certain places. He constantly had to show his pass to police whom he maintained could not even read his pass. He quickly learned that he dared not speak English. Moreover, he dared not speak his own language as
well. In order to get a job, claimed Maxeke, an African had to act like a "crazy man" who could not read or write. Maxeke described discrimination and segregation not unlike conditions in the American South. He concluded that the "English relieved natives from Boer slavery" and that Africans supported Britain in the war. Editors of the Recorder were still not convinced. In March, 1900, the editors acknowledged the "unsavory" history of the treatment of blacks under Boer rule but found difficulty in believing that "Kruger denies the native man the possession of a soul." Still, the editors "reluctantly" concluded that "the American colored man cannot afford to do other than side with England." In April, 1900, the Recorder published a letter from N. Fitzpatrick who was travelling in South Africa on church business. Fitzpatrick had arrived in South Africa in time to meet fifteen thousand African refugees fleeing for their lives from the Transvaal with accounts of Boer cruelties. Fitzpatrick thanked God that "England will triumph."

In denying local newspaper reports that they had passed a resolution of sympathy with the British, the delegates to the 1900 General Conference voted to express themselves "as neutral with regard to the South African War. Still, although Bishop Lee reiterated the denomination's neutrality and concern for the effect of the war on Africans no matter what the outcome in the Episcopal Address, the speech
contained decidedly pro-British sentiment in other areas. The straw that perhaps ended reluctance to support the British in the Recorder was a lengthy June, 1900, article by the articulate presiding elder and missionary, C. W. Mossell, also travelling in South Africa on AME business. Mossell recapped the history of South Africa and Africa in general relating the exploits of African scholar and explorer Wilmot Blyden, "the leading authority on Africa--white or black." He described the first Dutch settlers in South Africa as "the lower elements of the Netherlands" and maintained that it was "natural" that the descendants of those settlers failed "to understand English ideas and appreciate British policy; the higher and more advanced civilization." Mossell described Boer racism and hoped the prayers of "Afrikenders" would be answered just as the prayers of Jefferson Davis and the Confederacy were answered at Appomattox. Still, the editors of the Review maintained a pro-Boer stance, clinging to the issue of self-determination. The July issue featured a pro-Boer article that described the history of South Africa and analyzed the causes of the war. In the October issue, the editorial writer asserted that the "Boers have the right to unmolested occupancy." Meanwhile after Mossell's accounts of Boer treatment of Africans, the editors of the Recorder seemed to revise their stance and no longer printed pro-Boer articles. With the war seemingly coming to an end, Recorder editors
declared that "we cannot but feel relieved at the success of the English." The delegates to the 1900 Pittsburgh Conference also declared that although the "little Boer Government has made a great record for bravery and endurance," in their defeat "will be brought a better condition of things for the hitherto oppressed natives."

The success of the English, however, was slightly premature.29

In September, 1900, the British conquered and annexed the Transvaal, but rather than surrender, the remnants of the Boer army resorted to guerilla warfare. By January, 1901, the editors of the Review could no longer ignore reports of Boer racism. The editors condemned the Transvaal constitution and the laws passed by the Volkraad that declared an inequality between blacks and whites. The main cause of the reversal was evident in the title of the article: "Boer Treatment of the Blacks." In March, 1901, Levi Coppin, newly appointed AME bishop to Africa, arrived at Cape Town in the midst of a bubonic plague brought on by the ravages of the guerilla war. In a weekly series of letters appropriately titled "Bishop Coppin's African Letter," Coppin painstakingly detailed plague conditions, the effects of martial law, and the progress of the guerilla war. Coppin described and analyzed the effects of the caste system set up by the "Africanders" and found out the "true meaning of 'pass,'" as he attempted to travel into the
Transvaal. Moreover, Coppin realized the absurdity of European denial of human rights in Africa:

When we are told that a man in America is denied civil and political rights on account of being a descendent of Africa, we are content to call it unjust, ungodly; but when we are told that an African in Africa is denied civil privileges because he is an African, we feel that besides being unrighteous and unworthy of our Christian civilization, it is ridiculous in the extreme.

That Africans could not live in liberty and equality in their own homeland, for Coppin, was unthinkable.30

The AME publications continued to print accounts of the Boer War, often comparing it to the Philippine-American War. A November, 1901, Recorder writer sarcastically asserted "that both nations [United States and Britain] report the wars over. Peace may come to both in a few months or years." Six months later the British continued to try to subdue the Boers, and church members continued to maintain that it "would not be well for civilization generally were the Boers restored to power and the old regime regained."

In May, 1902, the Boers finally signed a peace treaty recognizing British sovereignty. Nevertheless, AME missionaries, whose activities in the Transvaal and Free State were curtailed at the onset of war, were not allowed back into those areas until 1909. Originally pro-Boer, AME members, after learning of the racism and discrimination practiced by the Boers against Africans, eventually switched allegiance to support the British. AME sentiment differed from the majority of the world opinion presented by an
American press that continued to support the Boers against British aggression.  

In South Africa, AME concerns for Boer racism against Africans outweighed concern for Boer self-determination. Meanwhile, self-determination and racism motivated AME support for the "black" Caribbean nations of Haiti and the Dominican Republic and the African nation of Liberia. Missionary activities in Africa and the Caribbean heightened AME apprehension of events taking place in all four nations. Missionary activities and a faith in western culture as a liberating influence also produced AME expressions of cultural superiority and support for imperial and colonial policies that led to cultural and racial contradictions in the relationship between AME members and those of African descent throughout the diaspora. Still, the men and women of the AME based their actions on their unique black theological interpretation of African redemption with its elements liberation and cohesion. The millenarian and pan-Africanist attitudes evident in AME rhetoric on African redemption illustrated that many within the denomination believed that the future of African Americans and the future of the African were inextricably intertwined.
Endnotes for Chapter 8


8. Langley, Banana Wars, 4-8; Quoted in ibid., 125; Quoted in Langley, United States and Caribbean, 69.

10. Ibid., 99-100; "Toussaint L’Ouverture’s Rusty Sword," ibid., 121-23.


29. 1900 General Conference, 94-95, 332; C. W. Mossell, "Glimpse of South Africa and Outline of Her Destiny," Christian Recorder, 7 June 1900, 1,6; also see idem, "Tells of Conditions in S. A." Christian Recorder, 12 July 1900, 1, 7; "A Short Account of the Transvaal and the Causes Leading Up to the Present Crisis," AME Church Review, 17 (July, 1900), 28-34; "Editorial Digest," AME Church Review, 17 (October, 1900), 177; "The South African War," Christian Recorder, 7 June 1900, 2; 1900 Pittsburgh Conference, 36.

CONCLUSION

The Myth of Accommodation

No matter how scholars have tried to define "accommodation" at the turn of the century, the term has grown to mean that African American leaders during this time not only allowed American society to become separate and unequal but also encouraged it. Many seem to consider the quest for economic equality as an acceptance of second class citizenship and, therefore, characterize African Americans as frustrated, passive victims. Indeed, many scholars maintain the black clergy was the most conservative group within this passive African American community. Yet, the men and women of the AME during the age of imperialism, especially the leadership, did not fit such a characterization. They never accepted second class citizenship, and they never stopped demanding self-determination and full equality in American society. They often disagreed on the best method to attain these goals, but they never backed away from those goals. Moreover, they helped to formulate a black political ideology and rhetoric and a black theology that sought to gain liberty and equality for oppressed people across the globe. The delegates to the 1914 Illinois Conference explained it
succinctly:

The signs of the times indicate that man to man, the world over, must acknowledge ... that empires, kingdoms, thrones and republics must continue to fall as long as they are founded on the crushed rights of a people's liberty, for greed of civil, military and commercial supremacy.

Thus, the men and women of the AME continuously fought against the worldwide forces of subjugation.¹

Moreover, they did so with a firm belief in the principles of self-determination and equality imbedded in American and western society. Such beliefs often led to contradictions, paradoxes, and dilemmas, but not accommodation. Indeed, their unique African heritage and experience of oppression in the United States caused them to view such principles as liberating influences within the world. They were not naive enough to believe that Americans and Europeans would automatically apply those principles to people of color around the world. Thus, they stood as international spokespersons who attempted to insure that American and Europeans lived up to their own principles. Thus, unlike those who used western culture to dominate others, they used western culture to guarantee justice, liberty, and equality for oppressed people everywhere.

The men and women within the leadership of the AME were not the average African Americans at the turn of the
century. They were mostly middle class, the elite of the African American community. Nevertheless, their work and the mobility required in their work brought them in contact with every segment of the African American community. They were well aware of the aspirations and desires of that community and suffered under the same racial prejudices as all African Americans. Educated and articulate, they maintained a vested stake in American society and, accordingly, sought to change the prevalent racial attitudes that maintained that they were inferior. To do so and to be a part of American society, they realized that African Americans had to have self-determination. Without self-determination, equality would only be a paternal illusion that could be taken away as easily as given. Perhaps they were frustrated at times, but that frustration never made them lose hope. And hope, as illustrated by the members of the 1915 Virginia Conference, kept them fighting:

The time is now at hand when the God of Nations has put a spirit of conscious worth in all his children from one end of the earth to the other. Fifty years ago all dark people would hardly lift their heads in the presence of the white race, who lorded it over the earth and would allow no act of his to be questioned. But now there is no supine acquiescence and unquestioned obedience to all that is said by him. For all people are beginning to think for themselves.
Endnotes for Conclusion


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