

CHAPTER TEN: SLAVERY AND FREEDOM

PART A: AFRICAN AMERICANS AND SLAVERY BEFORE THE ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT

Lemuel Haynes and Phillis Wheatley

He never knew his father, knew only that he was Black. His mother, who was White, refused to recognize him. At the age of five months he was bound as an indentured servant until the age of twenty-one. Lemuel Haynes (1753-1833) served David Rose of Granville, Massachusetts. His master taught him religion, and his mistress treated him as one of the family; Haynes attended public school. When the church at Granville, without a pastor, asked Haynes to lead a service and read a sermon, he read his own sermon.

After serving in the Revolution, Haynes taught school in Wintonbury, Connecticut.¹ Haynes was licensed to preach in 1780 and for five years preached in Granville. In 1783 he married Elizabeth Babbit, a white school teacher and member of the congregation. The Litchfield Association in Connecticut ordained Haynes in 1785. He served congregations in Torrington, Connecticut, West Parish of Rutland (1788-1818) and Manchester, Vermont, and Granville, New York. Haynes was a New Light Congregationalist whose writings expressed that group's theological concerns. Only rarely did he write about slavery (*LTH* 5:31).

No one knew the age of the little African girl sold on a Boston dock in 1761. As she was losing her baby teeth, they guessed she was seven or eight. John and Susannah Wheatly bought her, and they called her Phillis Wheatley (ca. 1753-84). The Wheatleys treated Phillis like one of the family, not like their other slaves. She had a room in the main house, and ate at table with the family except when they had guests. Within sixteen months of her arrival Phillis understood English and was reading the Bible.

While a teenager, Phillis wrote a poem, "On the Death of the Reverend George Whitefield," which became popular in America and England among

¹now Bloomfield, Ct.

Whitefield's admirers. That same year, 1770, Phillis was received into membership at Old South Church, Boston. In 1772 the Wheatleys gave Phillis her freedom, and she went to England, where she published *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*. Back in Boston she married in 1778 John Peters, a free Negro from Newport, Rhode Island. Phillis Wheatley Peters wrote a few more poems, including *Liberty and Peace*. She worked in a boarding house, where she died in 1784.

Haynes and Wheatley had much in common. As Black persons in a White world, both won acceptance by achievements valued by that White world; both also experienced discrimination. Both treasured the heart-felt religious faith of the Great Awakening. That faith was the focus of their life's work. Neither wrote principally on issues of race and slavery. But when they did address these subjects, their views were clear: Both Haynes and Wheatley were convinced that the ideals of the Declaration of Independence would soon lead to freedom and equality for all. Both had the good fortune of having masters who respected them as children of God. Haynes and Wheatley demonstrated that persons of African ancestry were not inferior in intellect or piety to white New Englanders, by the standards of the latter.

Slavery and the Slave Trade

In North America slavery became equated with race. Slave traders from Newport, Rhode Island, and other northern seaports transported about a half million Africans to Britain's North American colonies, and more to the West Indies. Those transported to the southern colonies worked as field hands; a smaller number transported to the north worked as domestic servants. Most African Americans were not as fortunate as Lemuel Haynes and Phillis Wheatley. Most never had the opportunity to learn to read, or to use their intellects for anything other than hoeing tobacco or picking cotton. Racial prejudice justified slavery, and slavery reinforced racial prejudice. Fear of rebellion made slave owners more severe. Marriage and family were not legally recognized for slaves in some states, and male masters could rape female slaves with impunity. By 1790 24% of the United States population was of African origin: 694,000 slaves and 63,000 free.

Early Opponents

Most white Americans accepted slavery as a feature of society that had always existed. A few raised their voices in opposition.

Samuel Sewall was asked to give legal advice to Adam, a slave promised freedom who had not received it. Sewall turned to his Bible, concluded that

slavery was contrary to the Word of God, and in 1700 wrote *The Selling of Joseph* (LTH 5:30).

Samuel Hopkins, the disciple of Jonathan Edwards, served the Congregational Church in Newport, Rhode Island – the capital of the slave trade – from 1770 to 1803. He condemned slavery in *Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans* in 1776, and organized an anti-slavery society in 1789.

The Methodist Church, when it organized in 1784 prohibited its members from owning slaves. James O’Kelly condemned slavery in *Essay on Negro Slavery* in 1789, and continued his opposition to the institution after he left the Methodist Church.

Barton Stone favored the excommunication of slave holders in 1800, and declared in the deed of emancipation of his slaves in January, 1801, “that involuntary unconditional slavery is *inconsistent* with the principles of Christianity.” He and his wife moved from Kentucky to Illinois in 1834 as it was the only legal way to free slaves she had inherited.

Virginia Reformed pastor Johannes Braun spoke against slavery in 1812 (LTH 5:32).

Post-Revolutionary Movement of Abolition

The ideals of the Revolution led to action against slavery in the United States. From 1780 to 1804 the states from Pennsylvania north abolished slavery. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 prohibited slavery from the western areas north of the Ohio River. In 1808 Congress abolished the slave trade. Anti-slavery societies promoted abolition in every state of the union. The abolition of slavery in the North did not guarantee full civil rights to Americans of African descent.

PART B: THE AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY MOVEMENT

The first national Negro Convention, held August 1830 in Philadelphia, condemned the activity of the American Colonization Society. They saw in its activity a program to get rid of Blacks by sending them to Africa. The convention insisted that colonization was not a solution to the problem of slavery; African Americans needed to be granted freedom and full civil rights as Americans.

This strong position led some White Americans to re-examine their support

of colonization and to become more committed to abolition. The successful abolition of slavery in Jamaica in 1833 convinced more benevolent Americans that immediate emancipation could work in America. From 1830 to 1863 anti-slavery sentiment grew in the northern United States, while pro-slavery sentiment in the South hardened.

Arthur and Lewis Tappan

Arthur Tappan (1786-1865) of Northampton, Massachusetts, went to New York City in 1815, prospered in a dry goods business, and joined the Presbyterian Church. Lewis Tappan (1788-1873), Arthur's brother, went to Boston in 1803, where he was apprenticed to an importer. Lewis became a member of Ellery Channing's church and was briefly editor of a Unitarian periodical. He urged the formation of a Unitarian denomination, and when the American Unitarian Association organized in 1825 he was its first treasurer. Tappan's Unitarian beliefs were challenged first by the earnest piety of a handyman who prayed to Jesus for mercy, and second by his admiration of the benevolent and missionary enterprises that trinitarian faith generated. After seeking counsel from Lyman Beecher, Lewis Tappan left Unitarianism in 1827, and also left Boston to join his brother in New York.

Arthur and Lewis Tappan participated actively in the formation of national benevolent societies.² Arthur never gave a speech or wrote an article, but he held office in many societies and gave them crucial financial support. Tappan money made possible the founding in 1833 of Oneida Institute, an inter-racial school to train ministers in Whitesboro, New York, and in 1835 Oberlin College. The Tappans established and funded "Free Presbyterian" (no pew rents) churches in New York and convinced Charles G. Finney to serve one of them. With Finney the Tappans joined Broadway Tabernacle, a Congregational Church, in 1836, and continued in Congregational churches the rest of their lives.

Arthur and Lewis Tappan became unconditionally and emphatically committed to the cause of racial equality. When William Lloyd Garrison (1805-79), an abolitionist editor, was convicted of libel and placed in a Baltimore jail in 1830, Arthur Tappan paid his fine. Arthur Tappan was first president of the New York Anti-Slavery Society, and was also elected president at the organization of the American Anti-Slavery Society in Philadelphia in December, 1833. The Tappans began publishing an abolitionist journal, *The Emancipator* in 1836.

²They were active in organizing the ABS, AES, ASSU, ATS and AHMS.

Amistad

In June, 1839, the schooner *Teçora* arrived at Havana, Cuba, with a shipload of Africans to be auctioned as slaves. After the sale, the new owners placed 53 Africans on the schooner *Amistad* for transport to eastern Cuba. Enroute to their new home, the Africans led by Singbe (a.k.a. Cinque; ca. 1817-79) rebelled, took control of the ship, and commanded one of their captors to sail them back to Africa. The new ship's captain sailed east during the day and west at night, gradually zig-zagging up the coast until sighting Long Island on 26 August. The U.S. Navy took possession of the Africans and placed them in jail in New Haven, Connecticut.

Abolitionists Lewis Tappan, Simeon S. Jocelyn (1799-1879) and Joshua Leavitt (1794-1873) organized the Amistad Committee on 3 September (*LTH* 5:33). They appealed for funds and secured legal counsel for the prisoners. The Amistad case ultimately found its way to the Supreme Court, where former president John Quincy Adams argued for the Africans. On 9 March 1841, the Court freed the Amistad captives.

The Amistad Committee housed, fed, and taught the Africans, and raised funds with the intention of returning them to Africa with a missionary and a teacher. The Amistad Committee invited the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to conduct this mission provided they did so on anti-slavery principles (not receiving donations from slave holders). The ABCFM refused.

Talcott Street Congregational Church³ in Hartford, Connecticut, and its pastor, James W. C. Pennington (1809-70), invited other African American Christians to a convention on 18 August 1841 at which they organized the Union Missionary Society (UMS). An anti-slavery missionary society committed to sending African American missionaries to Africa, the UMS began collecting funds for a mission to accompany the Amistad passengers to Africa. They recruited a teacher, but could not gather sufficient funds.

On 21 November 1841, Americans said farewell in a worship service to the Amistad Africans and to five missionaries, two of African ancestry commissioned by the UMS and three of European ancestry commissioned by the Amistad Committee. In 1842 the Amistad Committee joined the UMS, and Lewis Tappan became corresponding secretary of this inter-racial missionary society.

The Amistad incident, which stretched across two years, received much

³now Faith Congregational UCC.

publicity and generated increased support for the abolitionist movement. White Americans saw the humanity of the Africans, the inhumanity of slavery, and the common love of freedom.

Radical and Christian Abolitionists

The American Anti-Slavery Society divided at its 1840 annual meeting. William Lloyd Garrison, spokesperson of radical abolitionism, had an exacting personality and was critical of all who were not in full agreement with him. His espousal of the cause of Non-Resistance led him to criticize the designs of other abolitionists to organize an anti-slavery political party. The division at the annual meeting was occasioned ostensibly over the appointment of women to the executive committee.⁴ However the underlying causes were Garrison's personality, his Non-Resistance, his opposition to use of the political process, and his criticism of organized religion. Garrison had managed to offend practically every other abolitionist leader, to alienate potential allies, and to energize the opposition.

Lewis Tappan led the "Christian abolitionists" while Garrison led the "Radical abolitionists." The Christian abolitionists organized the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. This however was not their main vehicle of action. Christian abolitionists worked primarily through a political party – the Liberty Party – and a missionary society – the American Missionary Association. Tappan's *Emancipator* became the most widely read abolitionist journal, with a circulation at least seven times that of Garrison's *Liberator*.

Battle in the Voluntary Societies and the Churches

Amos A. Phelps (1804-47), corresponding secretary of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, attended major ecclesiastical meetings to press the cause of abolition. The abolitionists secured resolutions and petitions from associations and presbyteries that put abolition on the agenda of national bodies.

The American Home Missionary Society at first resisted discussion of the subject of slavery. Beginning in 1847 it criticized slavery and maintained a diminishing number of missionaries in slave states. After repeated petitions, the Society declared in 1853 that it did not commission slave holders as missionaries. In December, 1856, the AHMS Executive Committee resolved that it would not grant aid to churches containing slave holding members, except in unusual

⁴It is difficult today to understand why this action caused the division. Those who withdrew were Finneyites, in whose revivals women first spoke, and the Tappans had championed women's right to vote in the Free Presbyterian Churches.

circumstances.

The AHMS then sent a letter to all of its missionaries inquiring if their churches contained slave holders. The German Evangelical pastors in Missouri who received this inquiry replied that their churches abhorred slavery and they were free to speak against it (*LTH* 4:51). Only one Kirchenverein congregation had slave holders – three men who each owned one slave. This was considered a scandal, but they were not disciplined.

The Christian Quadrennial Convention in 1854 in Cincinnati adopted a resolution condemning slavery and urging southern members to release their slaves. Southern delegates walked out. Southern Christians organized in 1856 as the General Convention of the Christian Church, South, with William B. Wellons (1821-77) as President.

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions avoided discussion of slavery for as long as it could. The 1845 annual meeting joined in a full discussion of the subject. Some Cherokee and Choctaw owned slaves and were members of churches founded by ABCFM missionaries. Phelps and other abolitionists argued that slave holders should be excommunicated, and the Board should not in any way support churches that included slave holders. Rufus Anderson considered any discussion of slavery a distraction from the Board's one grand object of world evangelization. He viewed the abolitionist proposal to be a step backward from the process of devolution – of recognizing the right of mission churches to govern themselves rather than imposing the values of mission supporters.

Edward Beecher (1803-91) and his brother-in-law Calvin Stowe (1802-86) introduced a new theological concept into the debate. The sin of slavery they argued was an *organic sin*. The *system* of slavery was sinful. Excommunicating *individuals* would be counter-productive; the system had to be changed.

The Beecher family and Leonard Bacon (1802-81) represented a third branch of the movement against slavery. Just as firmly opposed to slavery as Garrison's *Radical abolitionists* and the Tappans' *Christian abolitionists*, these *anti-slavery people* attacked the system rather than the person. Anti-slavery views became popular across a broad spectrum of society and were adopted by the Republican Party and Abraham Lincoln.

American Missionary Association

In October, 1845, the month after the ABCFM had rejected the abolitionist

appeals, Amos Phelps attended the Liberty Party convention. He called a private meeting of delegates concerned about missions. As a result a Convention on the Subject of Missions was held in Syracuse, New York, 18-19 February 1846. The Syracuse meeting recommended establishment of an anti-slavery missionary society. A second convention, at Albany, New York, 2-3 September, organized the American Missionary Association (AMA). The UMS joined the AMA, providing the foundation on which the new Association was built. Lewis Tappan, elected Treasurer, was the effective leader of the AMA until after the Civil War.

The AMA conducted a variety of missions before the Civil War, including:

1. The Kaw-Mendi mission in Africa, begun by missionaries who went with the Amistad Africans under the UMS.
2. A mission to freed slaves in Jamaica, begun in 1837 by an independent committee, adopted by the AMA in 1847.
3. Support of missionaries in Hawaii and Thailand who withdrew from the ABCFM because of its lack of a strong anti-slavery position.
4. Missions among the Ojibwa, begun in 1843 and conducted by Oberlin graduates in Ohio, adopted by the AMA in 1848.
5. Missions to African Americans in New York City, and refugees in Canada, begun by the UMS.
6. Home Mission support of white abolitionist congregations.

The AMA continued to agitate against slavery through the pulpit and the press.

Fugitive Slave Law

The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 permitted slave catchers to pursue runaway slaves into free states, and mandated severe penalties for citizens who did not cooperate with them. As a result, Northerners witnessed and were offended by the oppression of slaves, and anti-slavery sentiment grew.

Isabella Beecher, wife of Edward, witnessed the scandal of slave chasing in Boston, and wrote to her sister-in-law, Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-96), urging her to use her writing ability to “make this whole nation feel what an accursed thing slavery is.” While attending a communion service at the Congregational Church in Brunswick, Maine, Harriet had a vision of the climactic scene around which she wrote her book. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* appeared first in serial form in the *National Era* then as a book in 1852.

In *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Stowe described the horrors of slavery and expressed the doctrine of organic sin that her husband and brother had

articulated in 1845. A diverse parade of characters, black and white, good and evil, marched through the pages of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Every one was in some way tarnished by association with the sin of slavery.

Harriet Beecher Stowe expected that her sympathetic treatment of some slave holders would receive positive responses in the South, and condemnation from radical abolitionists. But the opposite resulted. Her portrayal of the degradation of slavery in human terms aroused anti-slavery feeling in the North.

Kansas

The Kansas-Nebraska Act passed Congress in May, 1854. The territories on the Great Plains were to determine for themselves whether they would be slave or free. The result was a competition between free and slave advocates to settle the territory and to deter their opponents. Numerous acts of terrorism and several pitched battles followed. Congregationalists were among the company of free-state settlers. The AHMS and AMA sent the first and second home missionaries to Kansas in 1854. Other colonies of free-state people came, including a Connecticut Colony that left New Haven in the spring of 1856, provided with twenty-five rifles for which Henry Ward Beecher had raised the funds (called "Beecher's Bibles").

Civil War

For more than a quarter of a century, the sentiment against slavery among northern Christians had been growing. Abolitionists looked to the Civil War as a war of liberation for slaves. All northern churches urged support of the war. Even the Reformed Church, which had never publicly discussed slavery, and where the common sentiment disapproved of both slavery and radical abolitionism, called for prayers for the union.

PART C: RECONSTRUCTION

Fortress Monroe

On 23 May 1861, three slaves fled to Union-occupied territory in eastern Virginia. General Benjamin F. Butler (1819-93) had no authority to free the slaves, but he had no intention of returning them. So he declared them "contraband": property that could not be returned because they could be employed in the Southern war effort. Soon a flood of refugees fled to the Union Army's Fortress Monroe in Hampton, Virginia.

Lewis Tappan wrote to Butler, and received permission to send a

missionary to the contrabands at Fortress Monroe. Lewis C. Lockwood (1815-1904) arrived 3 September 1861. He found the Black Baptist church of Hampton, with limited resources, had already begun relief efforts. Lockwood supported and extended their efforts. He had expected to preach and hand out clothing, but he found the local Black community had started a school. He reported, "It was suggested by the children themselves." The contrabands, prohibited by law from learning to read, eagerly wanted the power and opportunity that came with literacy. Lockwood supported Mary S. (Kelsey) Peake (1823-62), a free mulatto, who established a school at Fortress Monroe on 17 September.

Lockwood distributed more than a hundred barrels of clothing by December, and preached in cooperation with local Black exhorters. Responding to the desires of the African American community he placed education at the center of the AMA work in the South.

Schools

The AMA sent teachers, a significant minority of whom were African American, to establish schools for the "contrabands" – after emancipation the "freedmen" – of the South. Close behind the Union Army, a predominantly female army of "school ma'ams" settled upon the South; the AMA entered a massive literacy campaign for southern Blacks. In ten years, 1861-71, the AMA commissioned 3,470 missionaries and teachers for the South, who taught 164,723 pupils in 343 day schools and 156,376 in night and Sunday schools.

Other societies soon organized to send teachers and material relief south. By 1865 about eighty such societies were at work. In 1866 many of these groups federated in the American Freedmens Union Commission (AFUC). The AMA and the AFUC competed for financial support from the general public and the government.

The federal government established the Freedmen's Bureau in 1865 within the War Department. Under the direction of General Oliver Otis Howard (1830-1909), a Congregationalist, the Freedmen's Bureau virtually governed the South until 1872. Howard worked closely with AMA corresponding secretary George Whipple in developing education in the South. Theoretical lines of separation between church and state were blurred into non-existence, as Howard and Whipple worked hand in hand, acquiring land, building schools, hiring and transporting teachers, and appointing superintendents in this massive educational crusade. Congregational minister Lyman Abbott, secretary of the AFUC, protested to Howard against "the appropriation of public funds for the support of religious institutions." The AFUC, a secular institution, instructed its teachers to

not teach religion. The AMA, receiving most of its leadership and support from Congregationalists, had by 1869 received official endorsement from twelve denominations, and supported missionaries and teachers of more. The AMA was therefore not connected with one specific denomination, but its teachers saw themselves as Christian missionaries and used religious materials in their schools.

The AFUC federation soon fell apart, as western evangelical Christians objected to the non-evangelical leadership of New England Unitarians. The Cincinnati, Cleveland and Chicago sections withdrew from the AFUC and affiliated with the AMA, and in 1869 the AFUC dissolved. At least eight other denominations established departments to work with the Freedmen. Combined, they had fewer teachers and less financial support than the AMA.

While the American Missionary Association was leading in the reconstruction of the South, the AMA was being reconstructed. In four years, 1861 to 1865, contributions to the AMA multiplied by a factor of six to over a quarter of a million dollars (not counting barrels of relief or the direct aid of the Freedmen's Bureau). To finance the southern educational effort, the AMA terminated as soon as possible its work in Jamaica, Thailand, Hawaii, Canada, and among abolitionist congregations. Responding to a clear need, the AMA rapidly redefined itself and reallocated its resources. AMA participation in common schools fell sharply after 1871 as the schools became part of the newly established state public school systems.

Higher Education

The American Missionary Association decided to prepare African Americans to teach in common schools as quickly as possible by upgrading a few schools to be normal (teacher training) schools and colleges. The AMA sent Francis L. Cardozo (1837-1903)⁵ back to his home city of Charleston, South Carolina, to found a teacher training institute, Avery Institute, in 1865. The AMA founded a "colored high school" in Nashville which received a charter the following year as Fisk University. Hampton Institute, in Hampton, Virginia, was established in 1868 on the site of Mary Peake's school. Other schools soon

⁵Francis L. Cardozo, child of a Jewish father and African American mother, received his education in Scotland. He directed Avery Institute until 1868, when he became a delegate to the South Carolina Constitutional Convention. He then entered politics. Avery Institute was turned over to the state school system in 1947.

followed.⁶ Members of Washington's First Congregational Church founded Howard University in 1867; the AMA subsidized its Theological Department.

The support of higher education required a longer term commitment from the AMA than the common schools. Like most other Congregational colleges, these schools were governed by their own Board of Directors, not under the direct control of a mission board.⁷ By 1871 over a thousand graduates of AMA High and Normal schools were teaching school in the South.⁸

Jubilee Singers

In 1871 Fisk University ran out of money. George Leonard White (1838-95), school treasurer and volunteer choral director, had a desperate idea. He proposed to tour the North with a chorus of their best singers to raise funds for the school. The principal handed him the school's meager funds, White borrowed money on his personal belongings, and the troupe departed on 6 October 1871.

The chorus encountered discrimination in transportation, accommodations and dining, but they were often received in the homes of former abolitionists. As they gained popularity, their experiences exposed and publicized discrimination in the North.

White rehearsed the chorus, but Samuella "Ella" Sheppard, a Fisk student, directed and accompanied the group on stage. At first their concerts consisted of the popular songs of the day with an occasional opera aria. They sang *no* comedy or minstrelsy. At White's insistence the chorus sang one or two religious slave songs.

White had attended Black churches in Nashville and admired their music. However he did not use these 'plantation melodies' in his music classes.

⁶Colleges still related to the UCC as a result of AMA work in the South are: Fisk University, Nashville, Tn (1866); Talladega College, Talladega, Al (1867); Dillard University, New Orleans, La (formerly Straight University, 1869); Tougaloo College, Tougaloo, Ms (1869); LeMoyne-Owen College, Memphis, Tn (formerly LeMoyne College, 1872); Huston Tillotson College, Austin, Tx (formerly Tillitson Normal and Collegiate School, 1876).

⁷Hampton and Howard, receiving most of their financial support from other sources, became more independent of the AMA than the other schools.

⁸For more on higher education for African Americans go to Chapter 14, Part C, Schools.

He knew that the students did not enjoy singing songs that reminded them of conditions that they wanted to forget. Occasionally though, a few of these students would come to his home in the barracks. On these moments, 'with windows closed and shades drawn,' they sang for him the sorrowful songs of their sojourn in slavery.⁹

Performed reverently, not as a caricature, the deep feeling and spiritual power of these songs deeply affected their White audiences. The chorus changed its program and sang mostly spiritual songs. Observing the tears in the eyes of their White audiences, the singers came to value their own spiritual and musical heritage.

White named the chorus, the "Fisk Jubilee Singers." They performed for small audiences in Ohio, barely paying their expenses. After their first paid concert, in Chillicothe, Ohio, the chorus, moved by news of the Chicago fire, directed that night's proceeds to the sufferers in Chicago.

The chorus sang for the National Council of Congregational Churches at its first meeting, in Oberlin (See Chapter 13, Part A, National Council of Congregational Churches), 16 November. The pastors and delegates spread the news of these singers and their penetrating songs. Money wasn't sent back to Tennessee until they sang at Henry Ward Beecher's church in Brooklyn, New York, 22 December. Then they prospered. From 1871 to 1878 several troupes of Jubilee Singers sang across the North, England and Europe, raising \$20,000 for Fisk. More important, they had introduced the world to the *spiritual*.

African American Congregations

After the Great Awakening, African Americans were occasionally admitted into the communion of Northern Congregational churches. In the South, Christian, Reformed and Congregational churches all had "slave galleries" permitting slaves to attend worship seated in a separate area. Slaves and free Blacks who showed evidence of piety were received into the communion of these churches.

In 1820 African American Congregationalists in New Haven, Connecticut, organized Dixwell Avenue Congregational Church. In 1852 Free Black Christians

⁹*Story of Music at Fisk University* (Nashville: Fisk, 1936), 5; quoted in William Bures Garcia, "The Life and Choral Music of John Wesley Work (1901-1967)." Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1973, 8.

organized Providence Christian Church.¹⁰

Following the Civil War, the Southern Christian Convention appointed William Wellons and two other elders to assist African American Christians in organizing churches and ordaining pastors. The North Carolina Colored Christian Conference organized in 1866.

The Black Christian Conferences were self-governing, having fraternal relations with their White counterparts. Worship was free and emotional. Pastors received their appointments for the year at Conference meeting, as Methodists did.

The AMA did not organize Black churches in the South right away, because:

1. Their resources were committed to education.
2. Although most AMA support came from Congregationalists, money and workers came from over a dozen denominations, and the Association did not want to take actions that might alienate these supporters.
3. Any sectarian activity could jeopardize the assistance of the Freedmen's Bureau.
4. In the opinion of AMA leaders, existing Black churches in the South did not use discipline to enforce ethical standards. They did not want to organize churches until they had gathered a group willing to practice ethical discipline.

In Charleston, South Carolina, African Americans who left the slave galleries at Circular Church organized Plymouth Congregational Church in 1867. A few other African American Congregational churches organized.

In November 1869 the AMA held a consultation at Chattanooga, Tennessee, of the churches in the South related to it, to chart a strategy for church extension. The consultation recommended the formation of regional associations and adopted a "church beside the school" policy. Churches developed as companions of the AMA schools; the two institutions supported each other. Associations soon organized across the South that were predominantly African American, with a few White churches. All were in principle

¹⁰now located in Chesapeake, Va.

open to persons of any color.¹¹

Summary

The sin of slavery had finally been abolished. The long struggle of African Americans and a small minority of Whites had borne fruit. But enormous inequalities remained. The churches made the radical changes for which the times called. The AMA, a missionary society created by the abolitionist movement, transformed itself into an education society. Leaders of the Christian denomination in the South, in spite of poverty and defeat, reached out to their neighbors and established parallel self-governing African American Christian conferences. Christian abolitionists and anti-slavery people, motivated by pietism, stood up for justice, and saw part of the millennial vision come to pass. The Christian and Congregational communities now included growing numbers of persons of color. But full inclusion into the church had not yet come. Racism was far from dead.

¹¹For more on African American churches go to page ***.