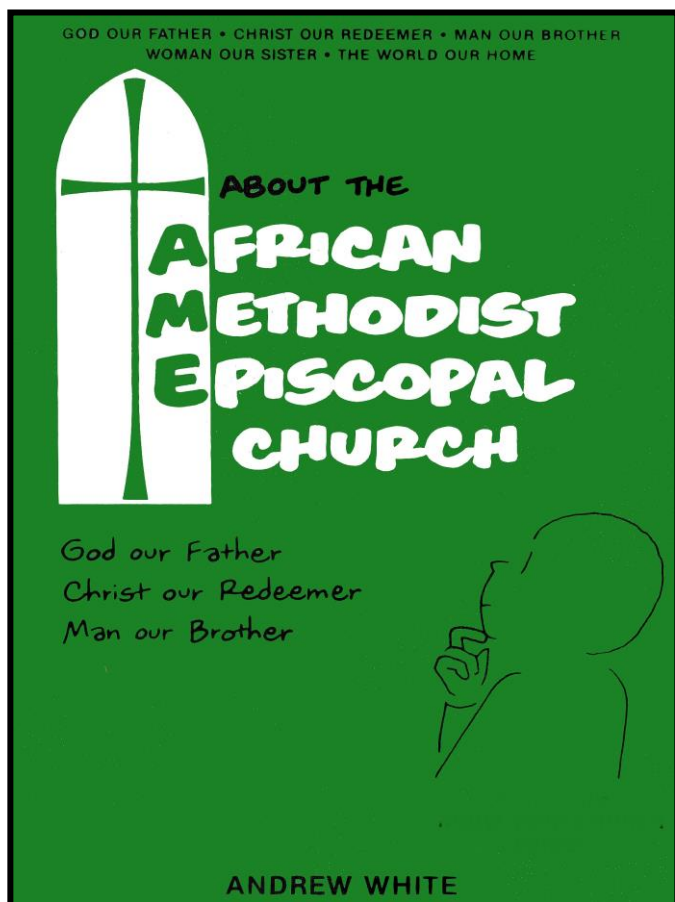


ABOUT THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

by

ANDREW WHITE

Former Executive Secretary, Division of Christian Education of the AMEC



OUR BEGINNINGS... 1787 AND 1816. Two landmark dates in the history of the AME Church. A time when black people (or “Africans”) formally affirmed their desire for self-expression and fuller involvement in the worship of God. So began the movement to separate from the white people’s church — a major step in the black American’s quest for social recognition, personal dignity and group self-determination.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF PROTEST. Most religious groups originated out of some theological, doctrinal or ideological dispute or concern. But the AME Church grew out of a protest against prejudicial treatment forced upon black people in the St. George Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. It is important to remember that the AME Church came into being as a direct result of racial discrimination rather than any theological or doctrinal dispute.

A TRADITION THAT CONTINUES TODAY. It was in the late 18th century that Richard Allen initiated education classes for black people. The purpose of these classes was twofold: to educate and to stress the value of self-help. These themes have carried through to this day. In addition to educational programs at the local church level, the AME Church operates more than ten institutions of higher learning throughout the world.

WHY METHODISM? The AME Church is a member of the worldwide family of Methodist churches. Richard Allen felt that no denomination was better suited to the needs of his people. He recognized that Methodism’s plain, simple gospel could be understood by everyone, even those with little education. And he liked Methodism’s orderly system of rules — a sense of organization that his people so badly needed. In short, Methodism provided “Africans” with the best way to help all Blacks achieve, both spiritually and intellectually.

What is the
**AFRICAN
METHODIST
EPISCOPAL
CHURCH**
?

...It's the
CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY
founded in 1787
by **RICHARD ALLEN**
(a Methodist preacher
and ex-slave)

--part of the family of Methodist churches

IN 1787-- the church
began as a protest against
discrimination at St. George
Methodist Episcopal Church
in Philadelphia, Pennsyl-
vania.
-- Most early members had
no formal education; many
were ex-slaves.

TODAY -- the church
has over 2 million members,
mostly in North and South
America, Africa, the West
Indies and England.
-- It gives hope and strength
to black people around the
world.

THE NAME
tells a lot about
our church.



AFRICAN-- founded by Black
Americans who came from Africa
(open to all races)

METHODIST-- teaches plain
gospel, follows orderly rules

EPISCOPAL-- chief executive
officers are bishops chosen by
the general conference

CHURCH part of the whole body
of Christ.



The A.M.E. Church emphasizes the **IMPORTANCE** of being a **TOTAL CHRISTIAN CITIZEN** in every way...

 **in the FAMILY**



- using Christ's teachings as guidelines
- together, asking Christ's guidance.

 **in the CHURCH**



- taking part in devotions and other church activities
- joining with fellow members in worshipping God.

 **in the COMMUNITY**



- giving time and energy to help develop adequate neighborhoods
- working through the political process
- bringing God's word to everyone.

 **in the WORLD**



- using our influence and resources to help the poor and oppressed everywhere, to avoid war.

Let's look at the HISTORY of the A.M.E. Church

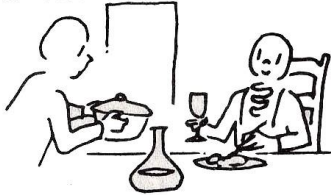


The founder -- **RICHARD ALLEN** (1760-1831)



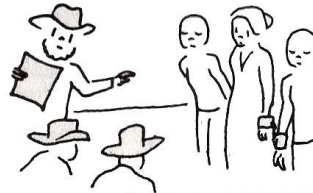
BIRTH

- born a slave in 1760 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- worked as a domestic for his master, Benjamin Chew.



SOLD

- in 1768, sold (with the family) to a Delaware farmer
- later, mother and siblings sold; Allen never saw them again.



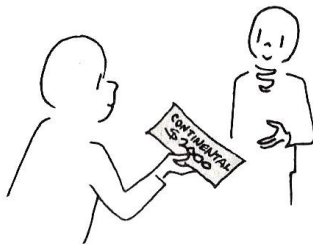
CONVERSION

- in 1777, experienced conversion at a Methodist meeting
- Allen wrote:



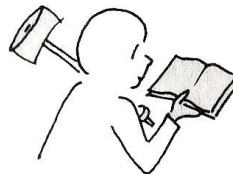
FREEDOM

- bought his freedom from his Methodist master for \$2000.



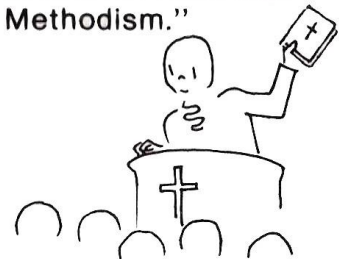
CIRCUIT PREACHER

- spent Revolutionary War years traveling and preaching
- held many jobs: teamster, merchant, woodcutter, laborer.



RETURN TO PHILADELPHIA

- in 1786, returned to preach in St. George's Church -- the "Mother Church of American Methodism."

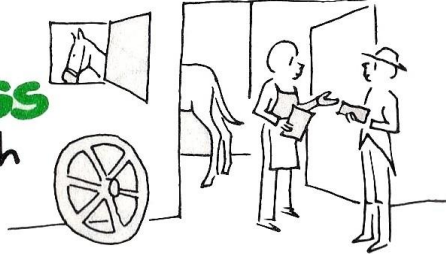




Founded to

- meet the spiritual, material, educational and cultural needs of black Americans.
- encourage black independence, dignity, self-reliance, development.

The BEGINNINGS of the church



1787 WALKOUT AT ST. GEORGE'S

One Sunday when Allen and other black worshippers arrived for services, they were ordered to new, segregated seats. Allen led the blacks out of the church. They never returned.



1787-1815 YEARS OF STRUGGLE

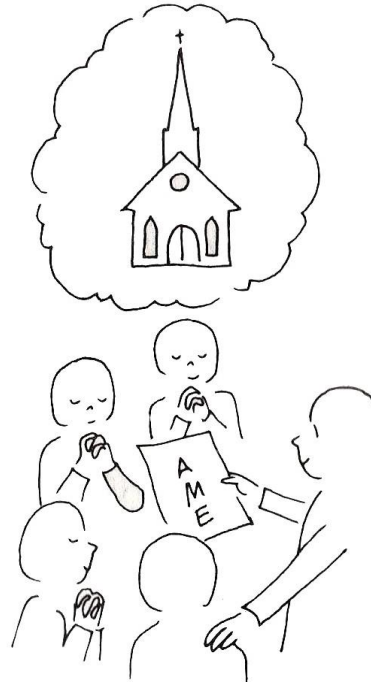
Allen and his followers set out to build a new church. They faced problems:

- **DISCRIMINATION:** free blacks were denied social, economic and educational opportunities
- **RESISTANCE:** white Methodist leaders kept trying to control the black congregation.



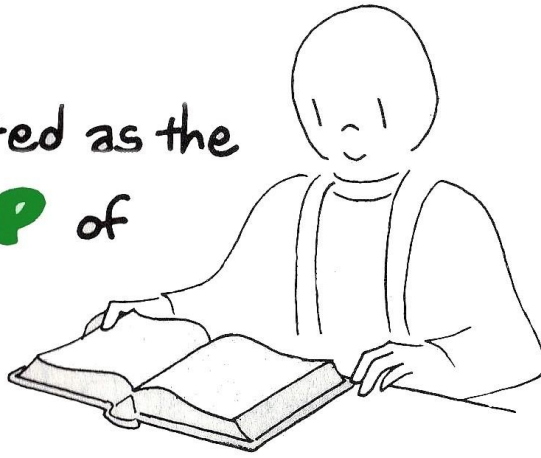
1816 A NEW CHURCH

Following a decisive court victory, representatives from 5 black churches met and formed the A.M.E. Church.



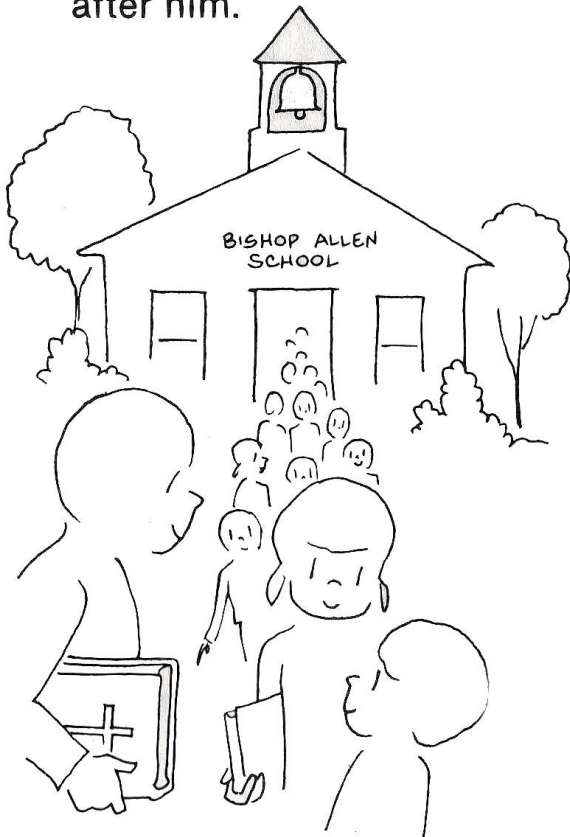
MORE... →

Allen was consecrated as the **FIRST BISHOP** of the A.M.E. Church in 1816.



BISHOP ALLEN

- led the A.M.E. Church for 15 years
- led the first "Convention of Colored Men of the U.S." (1830)
- became a national leader; his people named many churches and schools after him.

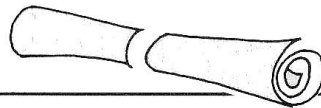


A.M.E. BISHOPS

were the first popular LEADERS and HEROES of black people in the U.S. and around the world.

IN EDUCATION

- used churches as schools
- sponsored black colleges and universities.



IN EQUALITY

- supported the original NAACP
- worked for civil rights through politics.

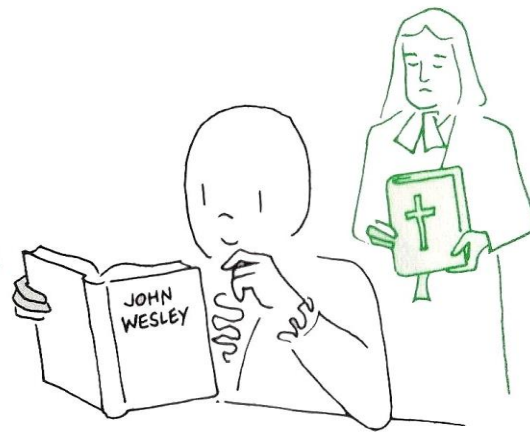


IN ECUMENISM

- played a large role in founding the National Council of Churches, etc.



Allen chose
METHODISM
 for its emphasis
 on --



JUSTICE

- equal justice for people of every race; decent living standards for all.



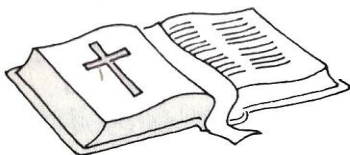
INDEPENDENCE

- a totally free church, not controlled by other countries or other churches in this country.



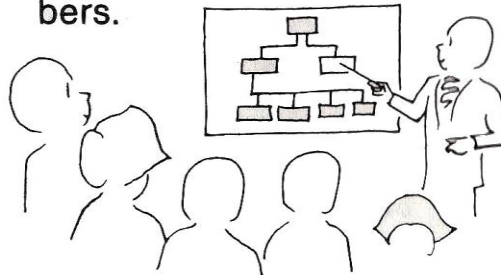
GOSPEL

- direct appeal to the heart
- to be understood by all worshippers.



ORGANIZATION

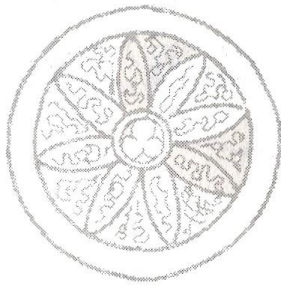
- orderly structure of rules and regulations for members.



...and especially,
CHRISTIAN CONSCIOUSNESS

(an emphasis on the importance of Christian faith in everyday life)

- unites all believers in brotherhood
- helps each member become God-directed, not self-directed.



WHAT WE BELIEVE AS A.M.E.'s



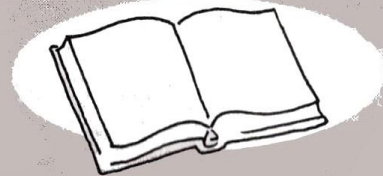
Our beliefs are basically the same as those of all Methodists.

They are summed up in the church's motto:

"God our Father,
Christ our Redeemer,
Man our Brother."

1
AMONG THE
CHIEF SOURCES
FOR OUR
BELIEFS
ARE...

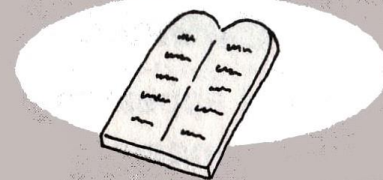
The Holy Bible



The Lord's Prayer



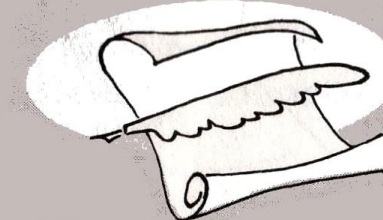
The Ten Commandments



The Apostle's Creed



The 25 Articles
of Religion



2

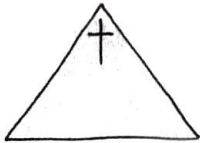
25 ARTICLES OF RELIGION

-- written by John Wesley, who founded Methodism.

The major ones are:

THE TRINITY

There is one God revealed in three persons: Father, Son, Holy Ghost.



INCARNATION

In Christ, divine and human are joined together in one person.



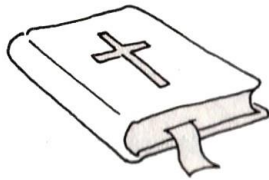
RESURRECTION

Christ truly arose from the dead and ascended into heaven.



SCRIPTURE

The Bible contains all we need to know to be saved.



ORIGINAL SIN

All people have inherited evil impulses as a result of Adam's sin.



FREE WILL

Every person is free to choose right or wrong.



JUSTIFICATION

We are saved by faith in Christ and by that faith alone.



GOOD WORKS

These are the fruits of our faith in Christ.



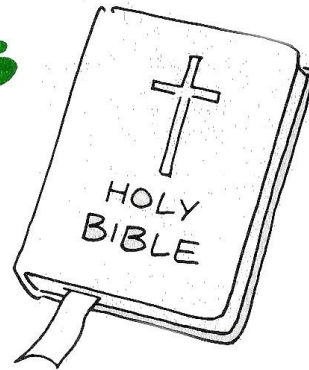
THE CHURCH

Here, the pure word of God is preached and the sacraments given.



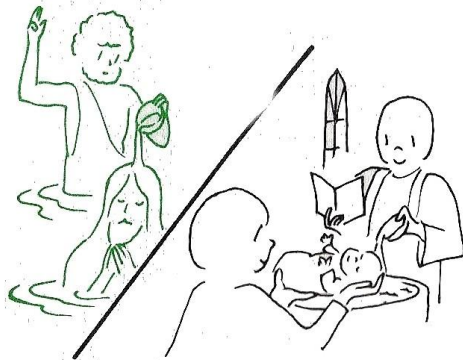
THE SACRAMENTS

The A.M.E. Church recognizes the two in which Christ Himself participated.



BAPTISM

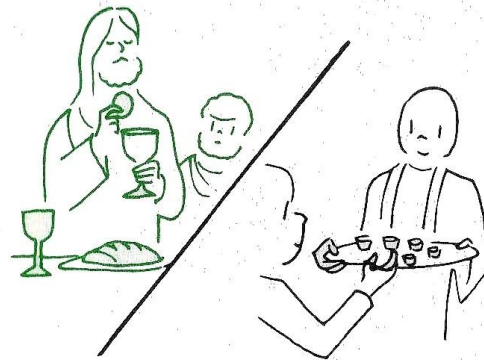
- symbolic of the cleansing and regenerating power of God.
- allows full membership in the church.



- Water is applied by sprinkling. Pouring and immersion are also modes.
- In the vows of baptism, we declare faith in Christ and the church, and ask for help and guidance.
- Parents vow to teach infants or children in Christ's way.

COMMUNION

- to remember Jesus died for us
- to experience his continued life in the body of the church.



- The bread and wine symbolize Christ's body and blood.
- In the sacrament, the believer follows Christ's order to "Do this in remembrance of me."
- It is a time to feel a part of the community of believers and Christian servants.

EVERYONE in the
A.M.E. Church has a
**RESPONSIBILITY
TO SERVE GOD**
and the world
through



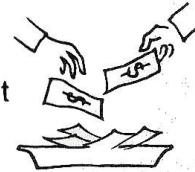
WORSHIP

-- bringing members together in Christ; strengthening and renewing faith.



STEWARDSHIP

-- cooperating to give needed financial support to the church.



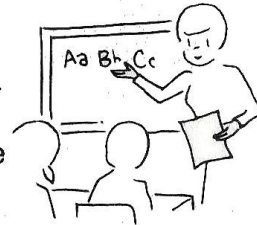
FELLOWSHIP

-- sharing the joy of Christian living with others.



EDUCATION

-- every local Church supporting Christian Education; there are 10 A.M.E. colleges.



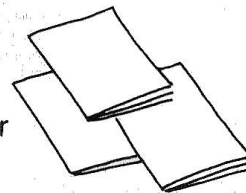
MISSIONS

-- supporting missionary efforts all over the world.



PUBLICATIONS

-- informing members about the work of the church and their Christian responsibility.



EVANGELISM

-- reaching out to win new members for Christ and the church.



WELFARE

-- making an effort on all levels for progress and social justice.



ORGANIZATION of the A.M.E. Church

Each Church is part of a larger structure which unifies members and coordinates efforts.

GENERAL CONFERENCE
Supreme legislative body; meets every 4 years; sets policy, elects bishops and general officers.

EPISCOPAL DISTRICTS
Each is presided over by a bishop; divided into annual conferences.

GENERAL BOARD
Elected by General Conference; administers and coordinates.

ANNUAL CONFERENCES
The basic units of the whole church. Meet every year to consider church business and appoint pastors and presiding elders.

LOCAL CHURCHES

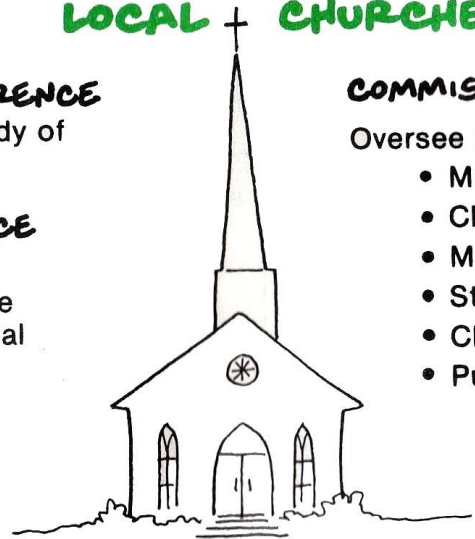
QUARTERLY CONFERENCE
Supreme governing body of the local church.

CHURCH CONFERENCE
All members meet to discuss the work of the church; consider special proposals.

OFFICIAL BOARD
Runs administration and programs.

COMMISSIONS

- Oversee major church concerns:
- Membership and evangelism
 - Christian education
 - Missions and welfare
 - Stewardship and finance
 - Christian social relations
 - Public relations, etc..

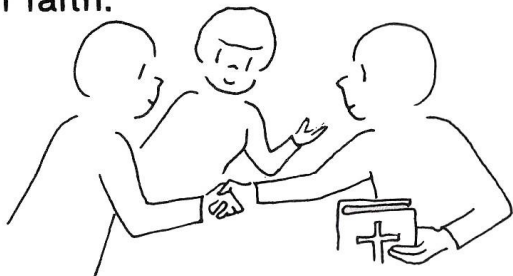


BECOMING A MEMBER

2 BASIC WAYS

RESPONSE TO INVITATION

The person presents him/herself to the pastor. He or she is admitted after 3 months probation and an examination of faith.



PROFESSION OF FAITH

A person may be admitted after baptism, professing faith in Jesus Christ and taking vows of membership.



(When you move, get a letter of transfer to your new church.)

RESPONSIBILITIES of a member--

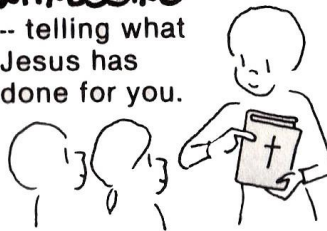
DISCIPLESHIP

-- committing our lives to Christ.



WITNESSING

-- telling what Jesus has done for you.



GIVING

to support the work of the church.



PARTICIPATING

actively in church affairs.



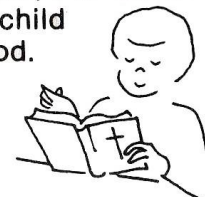
REPRESENTING

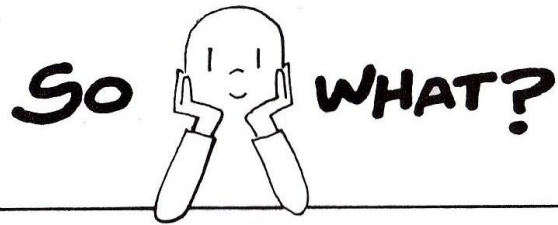
the church in daily activities.



PERSONAL GROWTH

as a child of God.





So--

The African Methodist Episcopal Church is --

SPECIAL

DESIGNED to meet the special needs of black people -- in a time of slavery and oppression, and in the present as well.

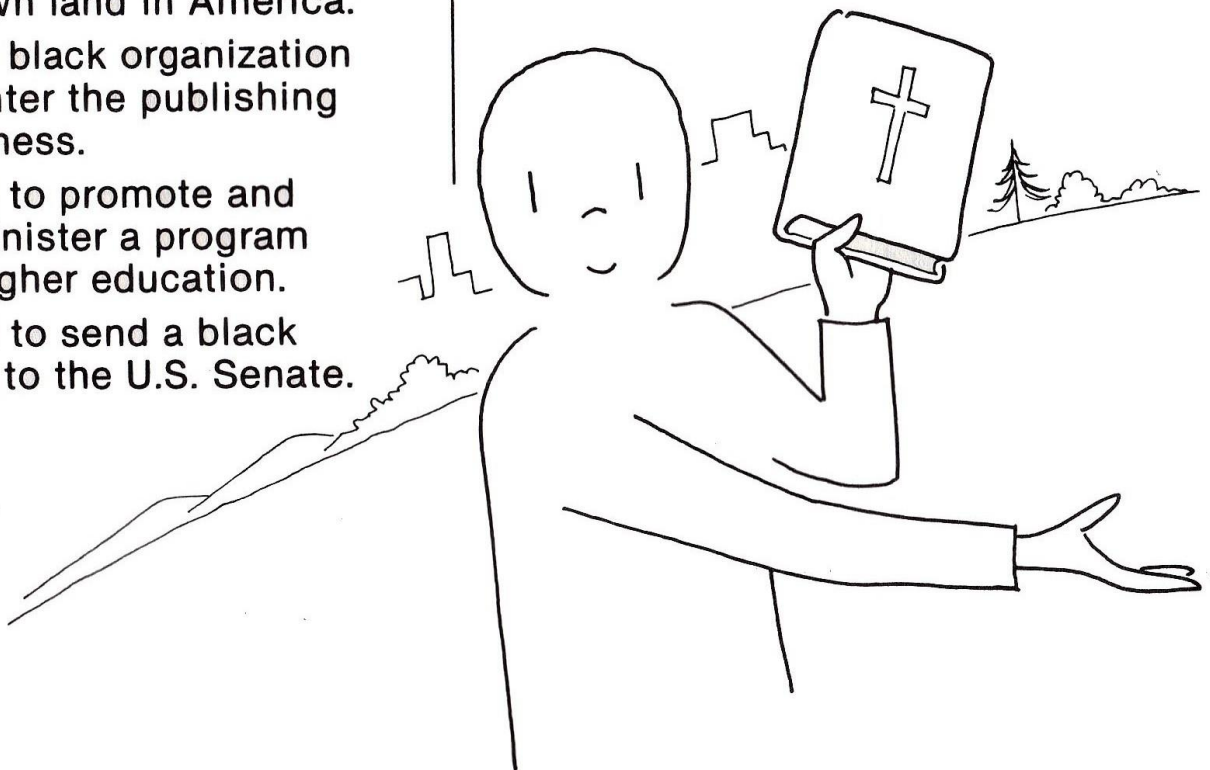
A LEADER responsible for many firsts in black growth:

- First black organization to own land in America.
- First black organization to enter the publishing business.
- First to promote and administer a program of higher education.
- First to send a black man to the U.S. Senate.

UNIVERSAL

Part of the worldwide Christian community which embraces all people who

- submit each area of their lives to God.
- serve Christ with their full hearts, minds, souls.





Being a member
of the A.M.E. Church
means being a part of a
**GREAT BLACK
TRADITION**

- of struggle
against oppression,
injustice.
- of a Christian community
united to serve God and man.

**The A.M.E. Church is a way
for you to play an ACTIVE ROLE
IN OUR WORLD!**

