

# Dr. Roger Green, American Christianity, Session 14, The Black Church in America Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## 1. Abstract of Green, American Christianity, Session 14, The Black Church in America, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Roger Green's lecture, "The Black Church in America," session 14 of his American Christianity series, explores the development and impact of Black Christian denominations in the United States. The lecture traces the origins of significant Methodist and Baptist denominations founded by Black Christians, such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the National Baptist Convention, highlighting figures like Richard Allen and James Varick. **Beyond their establishment, the session examines the crucial roles these churches played in the Black community, serving as centers for social identity, economic cooperation, refuge, and leadership development.** Finally, the lecture considers the appeal of sectarian movements like the Jehovah's Witnesses and Father Divine's Peace Mission to Black Americans disenfranchised from mainstream society and churches. **This session underscores the unique religious experiences and theological contributions that arose within the Black church.**

**2. 21 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Green, American Christianity, Session 14 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Church History → American Christianity).**



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### 3. Briefing Document: Green, American Christianity, Session 14, The Black Church in America

#### Briefing Document: The Black Church in America

**Overview:** This lecture by Dr. Roger Green explores the origins and significant contributions of the Black Church in America, primarily focusing on the development of Methodist and Baptist denominations within the Black community and the broader impact of these churches. The lecture also touches upon the appeal of sectarian movements to Black Americans disenfranchised after the Civil War.

#### Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:

##### 1. The Emergence of Black Methodist Denominations:

- **Richard Allen and the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church:** In 1793, Richard Allen began the Bethel Church in Philadelphia, a church for Black Methodists within the Methodist Episcopal Church. However, in 1814, the Bethel Church evolved into a separate denomination, the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Other Black Methodist churches followed suit. Allen was ordained as a bishop in this new denomination, having previously been ordained as a deacon in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Francis Asbury, a key figure in early Methodism, gave his blessing to Black Methodist leadership exemplified by Allen.
- **Quote:** "In 1793, Richard Allen began in Philadelphia, and he began a church of his own. It was called the Bethel Church. So, he starts his own church, but not his own denomination... In 1814, the African Methodist Episcopal Church was established."
- **Wilberforce University:** The AME Church established Wilberforce University in Ohio in 1856, highlighting the early commitment to education within the Black Church. This university still exists today and is operated by the AME Church.
- **Quote:** "The African Methodist Episcopal Church then had a magazine that came out of the church. That's important because it was the first black magazine in America, but also they began a university... It was called Wilberforce University, appropriate name, Wilberforce University in Ohio. And it was begun in 1856."
- **The African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AME Zion) Church:** Founded in 1821, the AME Zion Church followed a similar trajectory to the AME Church. James Varick, a Black leader in New York, established the Zion Church (a Methodist Episcopal

Church) in 1801. Due to friction with white ministers serving predominantly Black congregations, the Black leadership in New York formed their own denomination under Varick, the AME Zion Church. This was seen as a geographically motivated separation, focusing on ministry in New York City and surrounding areas. James Varick became the first bishop.

- **Quote:** "In 1821, they formed the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and they decided... that they didn't break off from the African Methodist Episcopal Church; they just started their own denomination... it seems as though their feeling was that the African Methodist Episcopal Church had ministry down in Pennsylvania and Maryland, and they wanted to have their own ministry in New York City and spread out from New York City."
- **The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church:** Formed in 1870 in the South, this denomination arose after the Civil War. The Methodist Episcopal Church in the South recognized the desire of Black members to form their own denomination.
- **Quote:** "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the South, after the Civil War, saw probably the value of saying to the black people in the Methodist Episcopal Church, if you want to form your own denomination, we certainly understand. And so, in 1870, they decided to form the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church."
- **The Negro Conference of the Northern Methodist Church:** Following the Civil War, Black members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the North who did not join the AME churches opted to stay within their denomination but formed their own annual conference. This Negro Conference eventually functioned as another distinct Methodist entity within the Black community.
- **Quote:** "As soon as the Civil War ended, blacks of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the North, who didn't join either of the AME churches, decided they wanted to stay within the Methodist Episcopal Church, but they decided to have their own conference."
- **Theological Unity:** Despite the denominational splits, Dr. Green emphasizes that there were no theological differences among these Black Methodist denominations. They all adhered to Methodist doctrines and church polity, with the primary motivation for separation being the desire for Black leadership and comfortable worship environments.

- **Quote:** "No, there are no theological differences. These people are Methodists. So, as Methodists, they believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit... So, no, there are no theological splits, though."
- **Missionary Work Among Freedmen:** Both the AME and AME Zion churches actively engaged in missionary work among freed slaves in the South after the Civil War, contributing significantly to their growth.
- **Quote:** "As Union armies moved into the South, both of the AME churches began missions among the freedmen, which they sustained with outstanding success during the years that followed."

## 2. The Development of Black Baptist Denominations:

- **Colored Primitive Baptist Church:** Founded in 1866, this was one of the earliest Baptist denominations formed by Black Christians. It mirrored the existing (predominantly white) Primitive Baptist Church, adopting its emphasis on being modeled after the early church but providing a space for Black autonomy.
- **Quote:** "One of the first groups that was founded was called the Colored Primitive Baptist Church, and it was founded in 1866... primitive is a term that means they're modeled after the early church."
- **Northern Carolina Black Convention:** Black Baptists in North Carolina formed their own state convention, separate from the predominantly white state convention. While Baptist polity emphasizes the autonomy of the local church, these state conventions served as a form of association. The Black convention technically became a separate denomination.
- **Quote:** "What happened in North Carolina was that the Blacks in that state convention decided to have their own state convention... So that's become technically a denomination."
- **National Baptist Convention:** Formed in 1895, the National Baptist Convention aimed to unite the various Black state conventions, including the North Carolina Black Convention, into a national organization. It remains a large Black Protestant denomination today. The North Carolina Black Convention eventually merged into the National Baptist Convention.
- **Quote:** "The National Baptist Convention was formed in 1895 and still today is a very large, basically Black Baptist denomination... The National Baptist Convention started to take all these state conventions that were forming... and

started to say at all the state conventions, why don't we come together? Why don't we come together as Black Baptists in a national organization?"

- **Motivation for Separation:** Similar to the Methodists, the formation of Black Baptist denominations was driven by the desire for Black autonomy in worship and leadership.
- **Quote:** "Among the Baptists, we started to get some denominations as well because Blacks wanted to have their own worship and so forth."

### 3. Contributions of Black Churches:

- **Primary Place of Social Identification:** The church became a crucial source of identity for Black Christians, especially in the aftermath of slavery, which had disrupted family structures.
- **Quote:** "The Black church became the primary place of social identification for Black Christians. Because what had been lost in slavery was the primary social identification that people have, and that's family."
- **Economic Cooperation:** Black churches fostered economic cooperation through initiatives like publishing magazines and establishing educational institutions (e.g., Wilberforce University), supporting Black ministries and businesses.
- **Quote:** "The church becomes a place of economic cooperation. Economic cooperation... publication of magazines and the sale of magazines, and the support of colleges, universities, junior colleges, and so forth, there is kind of an economic cooperation among the Black churches..."
- **Refuge from the Hostile World:** The church served as a sanctuary and source of protection for Black people facing racism and violence, particularly during the Civil Rights Movement.
- **Quote:** "The church became, as one author said, a refuge from the hostile world... I remember watching live television on television... you could hear the crowds outside pounding at the church, throwing rocks at the church. I mean, it was incredible. It was like being in a fortress."
- **Surrogate for Nationality:** In a society where Black individuals were excluded from full participation in national life, the church provided a sense of community and belonging, functioning as a substitute for national identity.

- **Quote:** "The Black church became a surrogate for nationality, a surrogate for nationality. Now, by a surrogate for nationality, it means a kind of a replacement for nationality. Why? Because the Blacks could not participate in the national experience..."
- **Development of Leadership:** The church became a vital training ground for Black leaders, particularly ministers, who often became prominent figures in the broader Black community due to limited opportunities for leadership in other sectors.
- **Quote:** "The Black church became a place where leadership was developed... because Blacks could not have leadership in a predominantly White community... where were their leadership skills developed? They were developed in the church, no doubt about that..."
- **Institution for Developing Black Heritage:** The Black church played a critical role in preserving and nurturing Black history and culture.
- **Quote:** "The church becomes an institution for developing Black heritage... Well, where did all this kind of development of Black heritage begin? It all began in the Black church, which kept Black history and Black culture alive..."
- **Development of Uniquely Black Religious Experience:** The church provided a space for the flourishing of distinct forms of Black religious expression, including:
- **Hymns and Spirituals:** A unique way of conveying biblical messages through song.
- **Quote:** "Obviously, is the hymns, the spiritual, the spirituals, the Negro spirituals, kind of a new way of singing, but a new way of getting the biblical message across..."
- **Dance:** An integral part of worship in many Black churches, as illustrated by the example in Nigeria.
- **Black Theology:** The interpretation of key biblical themes through the lens of the Black experience in America, focusing on concepts like salvation, redemption, and the Kingdom of God in relation to slavery and the pursuit of freedom. This theological movement gained significant traction in the 1960s and beyond.
- **Quote:** "Number three is the development of Black theology. The development of Black theology. The church became the place where Black theology was developed, written, preached about, talked about, and so forth... Black theology

is taking key theological themes of the Bible and interpreting them through Black Christian glasses in a sense."

- **Preservation of Revivalism:** Black churches maintained the core tenets of the revivalistic movement in America, emphasizing:
  - A sense of divine immediacy.
  - The spontaneity of individual response to the gospel.
  - Personal holiness.
  - The redress of present injustices.
- **Quote:** "The Black churches preserved the central core of the revivalistic movement in America... The Black church has conserved the revivalistic movement... number one, a sense of divine immediacy... number two, Askew and Perard talk about the spontaneity of individual response... number three, the third thing that Askew and Perard talk about is personal holiness... And then number four, for Askew and Perard, is the redress of present injustices."

#### 4. Sectarian Appeal:

- **Disenfranchisement and the Vacuum:** After the Civil War, many Black individuals felt disenfranchised not only from the nation but also from the Christian church, which they perceived as complicit in their oppression. This created a vacuum that sectarian movements sought to fill.
- **Quote:** "A lot of Blacks were not just disenfranchised from the nation; they were disenfranchised from the church... As far as they were concerned, the Christian church was part of the problem, not part of the solution. So, what happens is a vacuum is created."
- **Jehovah's Witnesses (Watchtower Bible and Tract Society):** Founded by Charles Taze Russell in 1872 in New York City, this movement appealed to Black Americans in inner cities with messages of the imminent end of the world (apocalypticism) and the opportunity to be part of a righteous remnant of true believers.
- **Quote:** "Jehovah's Witnesses was founded by a man named Charles Taze Russell... One message was the end of the world message, the very apocalyptic message of the end of the world... And the second thing that also kind of went along with that was, don't you want to be part of the remnant?"

- **Father Divine Peace Mission Movement:** Founded by George Baker (Father Divine) in Philadelphia around 1880, this was a more unconventional movement. Father Divine claimed to be God who had come to earth to establish a communitarian movement where followers lived in common under his authority. This appealed to those deeply alienated from mainstream society and the church.
- **Quote:** "His group was the Father Divine Peace Mission Movement. And it began in Philadelphia... Father Divine claimed... that he is God who has now come to earth... He came to earth to set up his movement, which was a communitarian movement."

**Conclusion:** Dr. Green's lecture highlights the crucial role of the Black Church in American history. Arising from the desire for autonomy and authentic worship, Black denominations not only provided spiritual sustenance but also became vital centers for social identification, economic cooperation, leadership development, cultural preservation, and theological innovation within the Black community. The lecture also acknowledges the appeal of sectarian movements to those who felt abandoned by both the nation and mainstream Christianity.



## 4. Study Guide: Green, American Christianity, Session 14, The Black Church in America

### The Black Church in America: A Study Guide

#### Key Concepts

- **The Black Church:** Refers to Protestant denominations and congregations predominantly composed of and led by African Americans. It has historically served not only as a religious institution but also as a center for social, political, and economic life within the Black community.
- **Denominationalism:** The formation of distinct religious groups or denominations, often with their own structures, governance, and sometimes specific interpretations of doctrine (though in this context, theological differences were not the primary drivers for the formation of Black denominations).
- **Autonomy (of the local church):** A principle particularly important in Baptist traditions, emphasizing the self-governance and independence of individual churches.
- **Revivalism:** A Protestant religious movement characterized by emotional conversion experiences, personal piety, and the desire to spread the Christian message.
- **Sectarian Appeal:** The attraction of nontraditional religious or spiritual groups to marginalized populations, often offering alternative frameworks of understanding and belonging.
- **Social Identification:** The process through which individuals define themselves and are defined by others based on group affiliations and social roles.
- **Economic Cooperation:** Collective efforts within a community to support financial well-being through shared resources, businesses, and institutions.
- **Refuge:** A place of safety and protection from hardship or hostility.
- **Surrogate for Nationality:** The way in which the Black church functioned as a substitute for full participation and belonging within the broader American nation.

- **Leadership Development:** The cultivation of skills and abilities necessary to guide and influence a community or organization.
- **Black Heritage:** The cultural traditions, historical experiences, and collective identity of African Americans.
- **Black Theology:** A theological perspective that interprets Christian scripture and doctrines through the lens of the historical and contemporary experiences of Black people, particularly in the context of slavery, oppression, and liberation.
- **Divine Immediacy:** The belief that God is directly present and active in the lives of individuals and the community.
- **Spontaneity of Individual Response:** The uninhibited and personal reactions to religious messages and experiences.
- **Personal Holiness:** The pursuit of moral and spiritual purity as a central aspect of Christian life.
- **Redress of Present Injustices:** The act of addressing and seeking to correct existing unfair or oppressive conditions.
- **Apocalyptic Message:** A religious perspective focused on the belief in an imminent end of the world or a cataclysmic transformation of society, often involving divine judgment and the establishment of a new order.
- **Remnant:** A small group of people who remain faithful during a period of widespread apostasy or destruction, often seen as chosen by God.
- **Communitarian Movement:** A social movement that emphasizes collective living, shared resources, and strong community bonds.

## Quiz

1. What was significant about the Bethel Church that Richard Allen began in Philadelphia in 1793, and what did it eventually evolve into?
2. Explain the primary reason for the establishment of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in 1821, highlighting the role of James Varick.
3. According to the lecture, what was the origin and purpose of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, formed in 1870?
4. Why did the black members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the North form their own "Negro Conference" after the Civil War?

5. While the lecture notes that there were no theological differences between the early Black Methodist denominations, what was a key motivation for their separation from white-led churches?
6. What does the term "Primitive" signify in the name of the Colored Primitive Baptist Church, and why did Black Baptists form their own denomination?
7. Describe the formation of the National Baptist Convention in 1895 and its relationship to earlier Black Baptist state conventions.
8. Identify and briefly explain two significant contributions of the Black church to the Black community in American life, as discussed in the lecture.
9. What were the two key messages of the Jehovah's Witnesses (Watchtower Bible and Tract Society) that appealed to Black people in inner cities after the Civil War?
10. Briefly describe the central claim of George Baker and the nature of his Father Divine Peace Mission Movement.

### **Quiz Answer Key**

1. Richard Allen's Bethel Church in Philadelphia (1793) was significant because it was a church specifically for Black Methodists, although it was initially still part of the Methodist Episcopal Church. It eventually evolved into the founding church of a new denomination, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1814.
2. The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was established in 1821 primarily because Black Methodists in New York, led by James Varick, desired to have their own denomination with Black ministers. This arose from friction caused by having white ministers leading predominantly Black congregations.
3. The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church was formed in the South in 1870. The Methodist Episcopal Church in the South recognized the desire of Black members to have their own denomination following the Civil War and supported its establishment.
4. Black members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the North formed their own "Negro Conference" after the Civil War because, while wanting to remain within the Methodist Episcopal Church, they desired their own annual conference for self-governance and fellowship.
5. While theologically aligned with Methodism, a key motivation for the separation of early Black Methodist denominations was the desire for Black Christians to

have churches where they could worship comfortably and be led by Black leadership, free from white control.

6. The term "Primitive" in Colored Primitive Baptist Church indicated that they modeled themselves after the early church. Black Baptists formed their own denomination because they were not comfortable within the existing, predominantly white Primitive Baptist Church.
7. The National Baptist Convention was formed in 1895 by bringing together various Black Baptist state conventions, including the North Carolina Black Convention. The aim was to create a national organization for Black Baptists, expanding beyond individual state structures.
8. Two significant contributions include the Black church becoming a primary place of social identification for Black Christians, replacing the fractured family structures due to slavery, and serving as a refuge from a hostile and discriminatory external world.
9. The two key messages of the Jehovah's Witnesses that appealed to Black people were an apocalyptic message about the imminent end of the world and an invitation to be part of the "remnant" of true believers who would be saved.
10. George Baker, known as Father Divine, claimed to be God who had come to earth. His Father Divine Peace Mission Movement in Philadelphia was a communitarian movement where followers lived in common under his authority, seeking refuge and belonging outside of mainstream society.

## **Essay Format Questions**

1. Analyze the factors that led to the formation of multiple distinct Black Methodist denominations in the 19th century. Consider both internal motivations and external circumstances.
2. Compare and contrast the reasons for the emergence of separate Black Baptist denominations with those of the Black Methodist denominations discussed in the lecture.
3. Evaluate the significance of the Black church as a multifaceted institution within the African American community, addressing its roles in social identification, economic cooperation, and leadership development.

4. Discuss the concept of "Black Theology" as it emerged within the Black church, explaining its core principles and the historical context that contributed to its development.
5. Examine the appeal of sectarian movements like the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Father Divine Peace Mission Movement to Black communities in the post-Civil War era. What needs and desires did these groups address that traditional churches may have overlooked?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **The Black Church:** Protestant denominations and congregations with a predominantly Black membership and leadership, historically serving as vital centers for religious, social, political, and economic life in the Black community.
- **Denominationalism:** The existence of numerous distinct religious organizations or denominations within Christianity.
- **Autonomy (of the local church):** The principle of self-governance and independence held by individual Baptist churches.
- **Revivalism:** A movement emphasizing personal conversion, emotional engagement with faith, and the importance of spreading the Christian message.
- **Sectarian Appeal:** The attractiveness of non-mainstream religious or spiritual groups to particular populations.
- **Social Identification:** The way individuals define themselves through their affiliation with social groups and how they are perceived by others.
- **Economic Cooperation:** Collaborative efforts within a community to support economic well-being through shared resources and enterprises.
- **Refuge:** A place offering safety and shelter from danger or hardship.
- **Surrogate for Nationality:** The function of the Black church as a substitute for full civic participation and belonging for African Americans facing systemic exclusion.
- **Leadership Development:** The process of cultivating and honing the skills and abilities necessary to lead and guide a community.
- **Black Heritage:** The cultural traditions, historical experiences, and collective identity of African Americans.

- **Black Theology:** A theological framework that interprets Christian beliefs and the Bible through the lived experiences of Black people, particularly in response to racism and injustice.
- **Divine Immediacy:** The belief that God is directly and actively present in the world and in individual lives.
- **Spontaneity of Individual Response:** Uninhibited and personal reactions to religious experiences and messages.
- **Personal Holiness:** The pursuit of moral and spiritual purity as a key aspect of Christian faith and practice.
- **Redress of Present Injustices:** Actions taken to address and rectify existing unfair or oppressive conditions.
- **Apocalyptic Message:** A religious message focused on the belief in a dramatic, often catastrophic, end to the current world order, followed by a new, divinely established era.
- **Remnant:** A small group of people who remain faithful to God during a time of widespread unfaithfulness or destruction.
- **Communitarian Movement:** A social movement that prioritizes collective living, shared ownership of resources, and strong community bonds.

## 5. FAQs Green, American Christianity, Session 14, The Black Church in America, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions: The Black Church in America

**1. What were the circumstances surrounding the formation of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, and who was a key figure in its establishment?** In 1793, Richard Allen, a Black lay leader in Philadelphia, began the Bethel Church for Black Methodists within the Methodist Episcopal Church. Due to a desire for greater autonomy and churches specifically for Black Christians, the Bethel Church, along with other Black Methodist churches in Philadelphia, evolved into a separate denomination in 1814. This marked the establishment of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, with Richard Allen ordained as its first bishop by Francis Asbury. The AME Church aimed to provide a space where Black individuals could worship comfortably without white leadership.

**2. How did the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AME Zion) Church originate, and what distinguished its early development from the AME Church?** The AME Zion Church was founded in 1821 in New York, not long after the AME Church. James Varick, a Black leader in New York, had established the Zion Church (a Methodist Episcopal Church) in 1801 for Black congregants who were primarily served by white ministers. Seeking their own denomination with Black leadership and a focus on ministry in the New York City area, Varick and other leaders formed the AME Zion Church. Unlike the AME Church's beginnings in Philadelphia and Maryland, the AME Zion Church intentionally started its ministry in a different geographical region, beginning in New York City, with James Varick becoming its first bishop.

**3. Besides the AME and AME Zion churches, what other Methodist denominations emerged within the Black community in America, and what were their origins?** Two other significant Methodist denominations formed within the Black community. The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church was established in the South in 1870, with the Methodist Episcopal Church in the South acknowledging the desire of Black members to form their own denomination after the Civil War. Additionally, the Negro Conference of the Northern Methodist Church emerged after the Civil War as Black members within the Methodist Episcopal Church in the North who did not join the AME churches chose to form their own annual conference, which effectively functioned as another distinct Methodist denomination.

**4. How did Baptist denominations develop within the Black community, and what were some of the key organizations that emerged?** Black Baptist denominations arose as Black Christians sought autonomy and spaces for worship that resonated with their experiences. The Colored Primitive Baptist Church was founded in 1866, reflecting a desire among Black members of the Primitive Baptist Church (a predominantly white denomination) to have their own organization. Also in 1866, the Northern Carolina Black Convention formed as Black Baptists in North Carolina decided to establish their own state convention, distinct from the mostly white one. The most significant development was the formation of the National Baptist Convention in 1895. This organization brought together various Black state conventions, including the North Carolina Black Convention (which eventually merged into the national body), to create a large national Black Baptist denomination.

**5. What were some of the key contributions of Black churches to the Black community and American society?** Black churches played multifaceted roles in the Black community. They became the primary place of **social identification**, replacing the family structures disrupted by slavery. They fostered **economic cooperation** through initiatives like publishing magazines and supporting Black educational institutions. The church served as a **refuge from the hostile world**, offering safety and solace during times of racial oppression. It acted as a **surrogate for nationality**, providing a space for community and belonging when Black individuals were excluded from broader national life. The church was crucial in **developing leadership** within the Black community, with ministers often becoming key figures. It also served as an institution for **developing Black heritage**, preserving Black history and culture. Furthermore, Black churches fostered a **uniquely Black religious experience** through spirituals, dance, and the development of **Black theology**, which interpreted biblical themes through the lens of the Black experience. Finally, Black churches **preserved the central core of the revivalistic movement** in America by emphasizing a sense of divine immediacy, the spontaneity of individual response, personal holiness, and the redress of present injustices.



**6. What factors led to the appeal of sectarian movements like the Jehovah's Witnesses among Black communities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries?** Following the Civil War, many Black individuals felt disenfranchised not only from the nation but also from the Christian church, which some perceived as complicit in or indifferent to their oppression. This created a spiritual and social vacuum that sectarian movements stepped into. The Jehovah's Witnesses, founded in 1872, gained appeal among Black communities in inner cities like New York through their apocalyptic message of the imminent end of the world and the call to be part of a righteous remnant of true believers. This message resonated with those feeling marginalized and offered a sense of belonging and purpose outside of mainstream society and traditional churches.

**7. What was the Father Divine Peace Mission Movement, and what were its core tenets that attracted followers, particularly within Black communities?** The Father Divine Peace Mission Movement, founded in Philadelphia around 1880 by George Baker (who claimed to be God, taking the name Father Divine), presented a unique sectarian appeal. Its core tenet was the belief that Father Divine was God incarnate who had come to earth. The movement was communitarian, with followers living together under Father Divine's authority. This communal living and submission to a figure claiming divine authority likely appealed to those who felt deeply disenfranchised from the broader nation and traditional religious institutions, offering a sense of community, order, and perhaps divine favor in a world that seemed hostile and unjust.

**8. How did the emergence of independent Black denominations and the engagement with sectarian movements reflect the broader social and political experiences of Black people in America during the 19th and early 20th centuries?** The rise of independent Black denominations and the attraction to sectarian movements were direct responses to the social, political, and religious realities faced by Black people in America. The formation of Black denominations like the AME, AME Zion, and various Baptist conventions stemmed from a desire for self-determination, leadership, and worship spaces that affirmed their identity and addressed their unique experiences of racism and marginalization within predominantly white churches. The appeal of sectarian movements like the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Father Divine Peace Mission Movement further highlighted the deep sense of disenfranchisement and the search for alternative spiritual and social frameworks for those who felt alienated by both the nation and traditional Christianity. These movements offered different forms of belonging, purpose, and interpretations of their place in a world marked by racial injustice.