



For Immediate Release

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**United Methodist Church Releases Publication Describing
Historic Struggles and Triumphs of African Americans Within Denomination**

PHILADELPHIA, PA, November 22, 2010 – African Americans have been part of the formation of Methodism since it was established in the United States in the early 1700's. The history has been typified by trials and tribulations and that story is being presented in a new publication entitled, "*Freedom Drawn From Within: A History of the Delaware Annual Conference*" by Rev. David W. Brown.

The publication is the result of a year-long research effort by a committee that included clergy, historians and persons interested in preserving and telling the story of perseverance that characterized the African American experience within Methodism according to Bishop Peggy A. Johnson, the Episcopal leader for the Eastern Pennsylvania and Peninsula-Delaware Conferences that includes parts of the Greater Delaware Valley where much of this history originated.

"The publication focuses primarily on the formation of the Delaware Annual Conference in 1864– the first Annual Conference authorized by the Methodist church to be defined by the race of its membership," Bishop Johnson. "Even today, the issue of race can serve to either divide or bring together people and it is our hope that the proud history of The Delaware Annual Conference will educate people of all walks of life in building bridges as a human family."

The Delaware Annual Conference was established in 1864 and operated until 1965 when it was merged into the mainstream of the Methodist Church as part of the denomination's centuries-long struggle to accommodate the diverse needs of its African American members according to the publication's author, Rev. David W. Brown.

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“The history of African Americans within the Methodist movement is a complicated tale to tell,” Rev. Brown writes in the opening paragraph of *Freedom Drawn From Within*. “There are moments of conflict, compromise and collaboration – all striving toward a freedom that celebrates the unique nature of who African Americans are as a people while remaining true to the traditions of the Methodist faith.”

The Delaware Annual Conference had an impact beyond Methodism in that it shaped the nation’s treatment (and eventual abolition of) slavery, the higher education of African Americans and the ongoing fight for equal rights in this country.

The publication is available for \$15 with the proceeds to support the denomination’s ongoing efforts to preserve and present the history of African Americans within United Methodism. Rev. Brown will be speaking at various churches and venues to promote the publication. Copies may be obtained by ordering them on-line at epapendelarea.smartevents.com.

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About the author: Rev. David W. Brown is a Deacon in Full Connection within the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church. He is also President/Founder of BrownPartners, one of the largest minority-owned advertising agencies in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; and he serves as the Executive Vice President and General Manager of 900 AM WURD, the only black-owned talk radio station in the State of Pennsylvania.