

Baltimore 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1863

To His Excellency

A. W. Bradford

Governor of Maryland

Sir:

The undersigned, stewards of the Central, Chatsworth, and Biddle street Methodist Episcopal Churches in this City—having by an extraordinary order from Major Genl. Schenck, Military Commander for this District, been deprived of the right and privilege of holding public worship, except upon conditions prescribed by Military Authority, feel constrained to make application to your Excellency for that relief and protection, which is guaranteed to them by the Constitution and Laws of Maryland, and which we are well persuaded is entirely within the power of your Excellency to afford.

In bringing to the notice of your Excellency a statement of our grievances we beg your indulgence for the reference we shall make to the commencement of our Organization, it seeming to us to be essential in order to a correct understanding of the whole subject.

The General Conference of the M.E. Church, which met at Buffalo New York, in May 1860, changed the discipline of our Church, and un-constitutionally introduced a new dogma or Chapter into the discipline, very objectionable to a number of the Annual Conferences, and especially so to the Baltimore Conference; by reason of which a majority of the ministers & laymen determined that they would no longer hold affiliation with, or be subject to, the jurisdiction of said General Conference.

In furtherance of this, a laymens Convention, numerously attended by delegates from the various Stations and Circuits within the bounds of the Baltimore and East Baltimore Conferences, was held in the Cutaw M.E. Church in this City in December 1860. The Hon. J. Summerfield Berry was Chairman—and the Convention adopted Resolutions declaring they would not submit to the new Chapter, and in effect ignoring the jurisdiction of the Buffalo General Conference.

Another laymens Convention, convened under a call from the Presiding Elders and lay stewards, met at Staunton Va. in March 1861—(at the same time as the Baltimore Annual Conference) and re-affirmed the position which had been taken at the Baltimore Cutaw Convention the preceding December—the most prominent supporters of this second Convention being Hon. J. Summerfield Berry and the Hon. Hugh L. Bond.

The Baltimore Conference then in session at Staunton, received and acted upon the memorial from the laymens Convention—approved of, and agreed in sentiment with said laymens Convention, and Resolved, That we hereby declare that the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church held at Buffalo in May 1860, by its unconstitutional action has sundered the Ecclesiastical relation which has hitherto bound us together as one Church, so far as any act of theirs could do so. That we will not longer