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Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne of the African Methodist Episcopal Church:

The Life of a 19<sup>th</sup> Century Educational Leader, 1811-1865

DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO

The School of Education and Allied Professions

THE UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

The Degree

Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Leadership

Mark Kelly Tyler, B.A., M.Div.

THE UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON



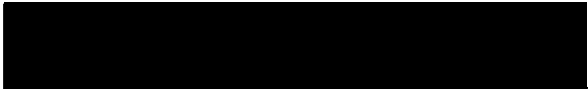
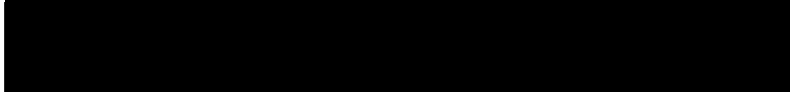
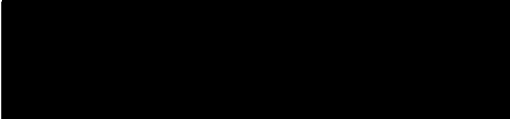
DAYTON, OHIO

2006

Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne of the African Methodist Episcopal Church:

The Life of a 19<sup>th</sup> Century Educational Leader, 1811-1865

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Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne of the African Methodist Episcopal Church:  
The Life of a 19<sup>th</sup> Century Educational Leader, 1811-1865

By

Mark Kelly Tyler, Ph.D.

The University of Dayton, 2006

Thomas Hunt, Ph.D.

Abstract

Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne, often unheralded by education historians, was one of the most important and intriguing figures in educational leadership in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He served as the founder and instructor of a highly advanced primary school for free and enslaved Blacks in antebellum Charleston, South Carolina; his efforts to set educational standards for clergy resulted in a revolution in the ministry of the African Methodist Episcopal Church; and, he led the purchase of Wilberforce University, making it the first college owned and operated by a Black religious denomination in the United States. In so doing, Payne was confronted with a great deal of adversity each step of the way. This study provides an analysis of Payne's response to adversity as an educational leader. By applying the method of historical narrative, the researcher examines Payne's response to the many obstacles that he confronted in each of his major educational initiatives. Although secondary sources were used, the researcher relied heavily on important primary sources, such as Payne's autobiography,

sermons, speeches, and writings. Additionally, the research presents previously unexamined primary sources that greatly add to the understanding of Payne's work as an educational leader. Assisted by newly available primary sources, this research challenges the conclusions of several long held assumptions about Payne's work as an educational leader in each of his three most significant contributions: his first school in Charleston, South Carolina; his efforts to educate clergy; and, his relationship with Wilberforce University. The significance of the conclusions about Payne's role as an educational leader can be helpful for modern day educational leaders. Although faced with constant adversity, Payne met with a great deal of success. However, he also met with failure in several of his major initiatives. A reading of both his positive and negative experiences can be insightful for today's educational leaders confronted with various obstacles of their own.

To Leslie and our children (Nishon, Jason, Madison, and Sharon) who sacrificed much in order that I might pursue this wonderful opportunity.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

It can be argued that Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne was to education in the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC), what Horace Mann was to education in the American Common School Movement. While Mann holds the distinction as the father of American education, Payne can equally be regarded as the father of education in the AMEC. Payne was in many ways like Mann, a pioneer venturing into the forest of 19th century educational leadership with only an axe in hand and clearing out what would become the foundation upon which others would build. The mere fact that Payne led the AMEC in the purchase of Wilberforce University in 1863, making it the first African American owned college in the United States, was a major accomplishment in the field of educational leadership. So significant was his role in 19<sup>th</sup> century African American education, it is surprising that his name is not synonymous with the likes of W.E.B. DuBois or Booker T. Washington. Payne was senior to both DuBois and Washington and each man held Payne's work in education in high regard. It is ironic that these two historic figures, who were often at odds with one another about the educational needs and

philosophy for the African American community, both saw in Payne an ally to their individual causes. In fact, DuBois' first professorate was at Wilberforce University. It may be safe to infer that DuBois' selection of Wilberforce over Lincoln University (Missouri) as the location of his first teaching job in 1894 (only 1 year after Payne's death) had something to do with Payne's lasting presence at the university. Years later, speaking of Payne's impact on the school while delivering the commencement address at Wilberforce in 1940, DuBois remarked on Payne's role in the founding of Wilberforce and his influence in the AMEC:

Daniel Payne, the little bishop, short, slight, shriveled, was a man of plodding learning, of austere personal morality, of unflinching firmness and indefatigable energy; no thought of himself or of his own interest ever stood for a moment between him and what he thought best for Wilberforce University, for the African Methodist Church, and for the Negro race. (p. 558)

Washington, like DuBois, saw Payne in an admirable light. Payne and Washington collaborated on the publication of personal correspondence in the Indianapolis based newspaper, *The Freeman*, to encourage African American ministers in the South to strive toward education. In response to critics who felt that status in the laity prevented his speaking on clergy issues with authority, Washington (1890) deferred to Daniel A. Payne:

But some seem to think that my experience is not broad enough, that I have not come enough into contact with the rank and file of the ministers to justify me in speaking as I have. To this I answer, let one whose name is not only national but international, and whose name is a synonym for learning, courage, purity and the

truth speak. Will any one say that Right Rev. Daniel A. Payne, D.D., L.L.D., senior Bishop of the A.M.E. Church, does not know whereof he speaks? (p. 103)

Payne's unwavering call for the education of the clergy was a prominent aspect of his significance in the 19<sup>th</sup> century field of educational leadership. Next to Richard Allen, the founder of the AMEC, no other person has done as much as Payne to change the trajectory of the denomination (Campbell, 1995). His writings and efforts from 1843-1844 ultimately led to the adoption and the implementation of the first set of basic educational standards for persons seeking ordained ministry in the AMEC. This was remarkable for a number of reasons, not the least being that it was illegal to teach any Black person to read or write in many of the states in the nation in 1844. In many ways, the addition of these standards was nothing short of revolutionary and the impact changed the character of the AMEC clergy forever. Shortly after Payne's death, Frederick Douglass (1894), the noted abolitionist and statesman, spoke about his role as an educational leader within the vocational training of the clergy at a memorial service in his honor:

I first saw the face and heard the voice of Bishop Daniel A. Payne fifty-four years ago. I saw and heard him in the pulpit of the old and historic Bethel Church on 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Philadelphia. I was much impressed by the sweetness of his spirit and the purity of his language, for at that day the speech of the colored pulpit was not always rhetorically or grammatically faultless. There is great improvement in this respect in these latter days and I suppose no man has contributed more to this result than Bishop Payne....His influence on raising the standard of intelligence, morality, and education in the AMEC, is admitted by all. (p. 2)

Payne's work and influence in educational leadership had another facet. There was his first love, the schoolhouse. He served as a traveling schoolmaster for a period of more than 20 years in South Carolina, Pennsylvania, the DC, and Maryland. By the time he was 19 years old, he opened his first school in Charleston, South Carolina. The students were composed of slaves and free Blacks and the student body grew from 3 to 60 active students in less than 6 years. The school enrolled children of some of Charleston's most affluent freed Black families. The curriculum was advanced by any standard for 1829: history, grammar, English, botany, zoology, Greek, Latin, French, gymnastics, art, map drawing, chemistry, philosophy, arithmetic, and astronomy (Payne, 1888). Payne, like Horace Mann, had been largely self-educated up to this point in his life. His "formal" education was the basic training received in those days: reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, and "ciphering" to the rule of 3. He received this 2-year education through the benevolence of the Minors Moralists Society, a group of free Black men who provided basic literacy and trade skills to Black orphans in Charleston. At the conclusion of this period, Payne continued learning under the tutelage of Thomas S. Bonneau, a member of the Minors Moralists Society and a popular, local school teacher. Payne continued to study with Bonneau for 3 years and at the age of 13, he was hired out to work in a trade. However, for the next 6 years, Payne used his free time to continue to learn on his own.

By 1835, Payne's school had attained a favorable reputation. It is regrettable that in many ways, as will be examined in detail in chapter 3, his success may have led to the closing of the Charleston school. Payne would, however, continue to open schools elsewhere and teach whenever the opportunity presented itself. As a testament to his

effectiveness as a primary and secondary school leader, the noted Martin Delany (1852/1968) said that Payne's school in Baltimore in the 1840s had gained the "respect and esteem" of many (p. 124).

Payne became a pastor, the first historiographer of the AMEC, and later a bishop, but he never ceased in serving as an educational leader for Blacks in America in general, and for the AMEC in particular. As Hildebrand (1995) states, Payne's name "was synonymous with African Methodist education" and he "remained a teacher at heart throughout his life" (p. 59). He was a lifetime advocate for education as a means for the elevation of African Americans and as a complement to emancipation from slavery. His educational endeavors led him into the company of many of the most intriguing figures of the 19th century: Abraham Lincoln, Bishop Morris Brown, the Rev. Alexander Crummel, the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, William Lloyd Garrison, Martin Delany, Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, and many others. His efforts led him into three major areas of concern: primary and secondary education, education for the clergy, and higher education. His role as an educational leader in each of these areas was examined in this dissertation.

#### *Purpose of the Study and the Research Question*

Payne's labor as an educational leader was often done in the context and the backdrop of laws and norms that either outlawed the efforts of African Americans seeking an education, or at the very least, provided a hostile environment by resisting those efforts. Add to this, not everyone in the African American community viewed education as necessary or valuable. This environment created many barriers for Payne as an educational leader. With this context in mind, the purpose of this study was to

examine how Payne responded to these adverse situations as an educational leader. In each significant area under discussion in Payne's life, he encountered organized resistance and opposition. This study sought to demonstrate the harmony of his efforts as an educational leader that began in the one-room schoolhouse, moved through the training of clergy, and culminated in the purchase and re-opening of Wilberforce University as an institution of the AMEC. This study was the first in several generations that investigated Payne's comprehensive life and work as an educator.

When one considers that Payne's life as an active educational leader spanned over 60 years, combined with the fact that he was a prolific writer and public speaker, it is no surprise that he left behind an enormous body of work. There is, in fact, enough information that one could hardly do it justice by attempting to cover his entire life as an educational leader in one dissertation. In an attempt to answer the question of how he responded to adversity as an educational leader, the timeline in this body of research was concentrated to a period that was both comprehensive and manageable. Although Payne lived until 1893, the years examined in this research were concerned with 1811 through 1865. This period covered Payne's role as an educational leader in the opening of his first schoolhouse in 1829 and concluded in 1865 after his first 2 years as president at Wilberforce. The researcher had a difficult decision in selecting a place to end the study. However, the researcher was confident that closing this dissertation in 1865 was the appropriate ending point.

The years 1811-1829 introduce important details into the life of Payne as it relates to his upbringing and education prior to adulthood. The next period, 1829-1841 (with some overlap into 1852), covers attempts at educational leadership as an elementary and

secondary school leader. The following episode, 1841-1856, is concerned with his attempt to reform and shape the educational philosophy of the clergy within the AMEC. The final time period, 1856-1865, examines the formative years of Wilberforce University: origin, closing, purchase for the AMEC, re-opening, debt reduction, destruction, and re-building. While his work at Wilberforce University continued till his death, the selected time frame was more than adequate to address the major issues that shaped and confronted Payne as an educational leader.

Historical narrative was the selected methodology used to examine Payne's life as an educational leader. The primary text used as a starting point in the investigation was Payne's autobiographical work *Recollections of Seventy Years* (1888). As a result of clues found in *Recollections*, the researcher then examined related primary sources that included Payne's sermons and speeches, minutes of AMEC meetings of which he attended or presided, minutes of the Wilberforce University Board of Trustees, articles published by Payne, his personal correspondence, his Last Will and Testament (1889), and the firsthand accounts of Payne's contemporaries. In addition to primary sources, the research of others was used in an attempt to validate the events written by and about Payne. This list of secondary sources included the work of social scientists, historians, theologians, and educational historians.

The constant danger in conducting a historical study is that the researcher may unknowingly fall prey to his or her own bias. According to Barzun and Graff:

No one can be a perfectly clear reflector of what one finds. There is always some flaw in the glass, whose effect may be so uniform as not to disclose itself. The



only protection against this source of constant error is for the writer to make all assumptions clear. (2003, p. 13)

Put in another way, Barzun and Graff (2003) state plainly that the researcher must remain self-aware to avoid the pitfall of bias. In approaching the study of Payne, the researcher sought to remain ever mindful of his own bias. The researcher entered the dissertation process aware of his own preconceived notions due to a deep orientation as an ordained clergy person in the AMEC and a graduate of the seminary that bears Payne's name and legacy. For almost 20 years, the researcher has held the unquestioned view that Daniel Payne was the "Apostle of Education" in the AMEC. Further, the researcher assumed that Payne was the foremost educational leader in the history of the AMEC and that no one person had done more to advance the cause of education in the life of African Methodism. To guard against the researcher's own bias and assumptions, the researcher adopted an approach grounded in skepticism and suspicion. The researcher took nothing for granted, but questioned everything. This was particularly important in that a number of the primary sources were written by Payne or by those who identified closely with him. This approach of skepticism and suspicion happily led to the discovery of many new primary sources that at times both validated and at other times contradicted Payne's account of events. The following examples provide a glimpse into the steps taken by the researcher to guard against the influence of bias.

To begin with, Payne wrote in his *Recollections* that he operated an advanced elementary and secondary school in Charleston, South Carolina, and that he taught the children of some of the most influential free Black families. Rather than accepting that the school existed, the researcher sought to validate this claim with outside sources. This

quest led to one of the more fascinating finds early in the study. The researcher began an exploration of proper names of individuals that lived in antebellum Charleston that Payne cited as acquaintances. The search led to an online copy of an 1833 handwritten letter addressed to Richard Holloway, Sr., from the Bonneau Library Society (BLS). The BLS, named in honor of the late Thomas Bonneau, was a well documented literary society that included a number of prominent free Black men in Charleston. The researcher printed this letter out, believing at the time that the significance was in the fact that Payne claimed to have been tutored by Bonneau and to have been apprenticed out by Richard Holloway, Sr. The researcher then shared the letter with a group of colleagues in the doctoral program. One fellow student in the group noticed something very captivating in the postscript that the researcher had entirely overlooked. The postscript contained a reminder that the next meeting of the BLS was to be held at the schoolroom of Mr. Daniel A. Payne. The 1833 date coincided with the timeframe that Payne stated his school was in operation in Charleston; the note strongly suggested that Payne and Holloway were at the least known associates; and, the location of the meeting in Payne's schoolroom lent credibility to his claim to have had a freestanding schoolhouse.

In another example of fact checking Payne's assertions, the researcher "stumbled" across the complete set of Volume 1 of the *African Methodist Episcopal Church Magazine (AMEC Magazine)*. This magazine ran from 1840 through 1848 and was the precursor to other AMEC literature. Volume 1 contains all five of Payne's "Epistles on Education" which to this point were presumed to be lost. Payne made constant reference to these letters in his writings as the source of great controversy over the education of the clergy in the AMEC. The researcher knows of no other research into Payne's life as an

educator that had access to these documents for examination. In the seminal study of Payne's work in education, *Daniel A. Payne: Christian Educator*, Coan (1935) makes reference to his own inability to secure these documents:

The Quarterly Magazine of the A.M.E. Church came into existence in 1840, and due to lack of support, it was discontinued after eight years of existence. So far, I have not been able to discover existing copies. Excerpts from the paper are found in most of the books written on A.M.E. Church history in last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. (p. 65)

Numerous works on Payne as an educator have since emerged and none to the researcher's knowledge have included these documents. In the pages of these newly found issues were Payne's systematic arguments and rationale for an educated clergy.

Perhaps it will help some researcher in the future to briefly share the steps taken that led to the discovery of the *AMEC Magazine*. The investigation began with a title search of the magazine on all available databases. When that search failed to produce any results, an investigation was done using the name of the editor of the magazine, George Hogarth. Again, there was no success. The researcher then localized the search and began to look at the specific library collections and holdings contained in archives near Hogarth's last known residence. The researcher thought that as editor, Hogarth most likely had the magazines printed near his home in Brooklyn, New York. Using the online catalog at the Brooklyn Public Library, the researcher got close to the magazines. In the holdings of the Brooklyn Public Library was the 1844 *Doctrines and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* edited by Hogarth. Although the *AMEC Magazine* was not found in the collection, this find held out hope that it was near. The search was

expanded to other libraries in the New York City area. That search led to the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture located in Harlem, New York. The Schomburg Center is a significant resource for African American history. However, the researcher did not have much hope in finding anything at the Schomburg Center because Josephus Cone had searched the same archives some 70 years before without finding the material. Yet, when the search was made for Hogarth, the reply turned up the *African Methodist Episcopal Church Magazine*. It was unclear whether or not the holding was the entire two volume set or a single issue. After contacting the Schomburg Center, arrangements were made to have the documents photocopied. The researcher's close proximity to the New York City area was of great help in driving the short distance to personally retrieve the information. After paying for the copies, the researcher was absolutely floored to discover that the package contained the entire first volume with all 12 issues. This find holds out great possibility for further research into the life of the AMEC in the 1840s in a variety of disciplines.

Finally, the approach of skepticism and suspicion led to a new discovery related to the founding of Wilberforce University (WU). The researcher noted that in all the available research conducted on the founding of WU, no one had cited the minutes of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC) as a primary source. It was well established that prior to the AMEC purchasing WU from the MEC in 1863, the MEC founded the school in 1856. Yet, in all the historical accounts and research available on the events that first led to the opening of WU, all historians and researchers appear to have relied on secondary sources in their reporting. Additionally, all these secondary sources seem to have found their genesis in the writings of Payne. To put it quite simply, everyone

appears to have used the work of Payne as the primary and authoritative source as to the activity of the MEC in founding WU. In an effort to gain more firsthand information on the events as they occurred and to fact check Payne's account, the researcher began searching for minutes of meetings of the MEC that possibly contained the discussion on the founding of WU. According to all available information, the idea of WU originated within a group of White Methodists in the Cincinnati, Ohio, area in the mid 1850s. Therefore, the researcher first began by looking in libraries in the Ohio area for minutes of any meetings held by this group of Methodists in the 1850s. Finding no valuable information in Ohio, the researcher turned to the Library of Congress (LOC). Its online catalog stated that a portion of the minutes in question were possibly in the library's holdings in Washington, DC, but the specific dates were unavailable. Again, the researcher's residence in the Northeast Corridor of the United States proved to be of great assistance. Boarding an Amtrak train the next morning, the researcher took a 2-hour train ride to the nation's capital. Once inside the library, the researcher quickly (as fast as the staff of the LOC can move) recovered the minutes from the holdings of the LOC. Like the episode 1 year before at the Schomburg Center with the *AMEC Magazine*, the finding was more than could have been expected. The minutes only contained 3 years, 1854-1856, but the 3 years were the most pertinent in regard to the organization and establishment of Wilberforce University. This new source validated a great deal of the events as recorded by Payne. However, as explained in chapter 5 of the dissertation, the newly discovered minutes also seem to contradict Payne's reporting of other key events into the founding of WU.

The researcher did not attempt to glorify or demonize the work and life of Daniel Payne. The effort of this dissertation was an attempt to reconstruct as best as possible what happened in what the researcher believes was a pivotal time in the history of the AMEC with regard to education. In so doing, the researcher made every attempt to guard against his own previously mentioned bias. Great care was taken to examine and re-examine each statement in an attempt to present the “facts” as they occurred. Additionally, the researcher attempted to sift out the biases found in the primary and secondary sources. While this process of constant fact checking was very time consuming, it was truly rewarding in the end. The researcher found great joy in “finding” new documents that at times confirmed portions of the story and at other times dispelled them. The researcher is hopeful that the attempt made in this research has been faithful to the standards of scholarship.

## CHAPTER II

### FORMATATIVE YEARS: AN EDUCATIONAL LEADER IN THE MAKING (1811-1829)

The unique character of early 19<sup>th</sup> century Charleston, South Carolina, had a lasting influence on Payne's outlook and view toward education. Before delving into his life as an educational leader, it will be helpful to provide a concise and descriptive overview of the intriguing and complex social world that Payne first came to know as home. According to Birnie (1927), the period of time that covered Payne's first 24 years was the greatest period of prosperity for Blacks in antebellum Charleston (p. 17). In spite of living within the harsh reality of the slave system, the Black community in Charleston had somehow created a culture of its own that was considered by many a golden era.

#### Black Life in Antebellum Charleston

As Payne grew into adulthood, freed and enslaved Blacks were active in at least 38 different professional trades and were over-represented in 9 of the 10 most important

occupations (Powers, 1994, p. 45). Although they met hardship with laws and restrictions governing their work, these skilled professionals could be counted in virtually every part of the economic life of the city. Blacks worked as shipbuilders, carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, painters, engineers, blacksmiths, butchers, brick masons, and bakers to name a few. A testimony to the effectiveness of many of these skilled persons is that some Whites would send their slaves to apprentice with them (Powers, 1994, p. 42). Many other Whites, however, failed to see this competition for jobs as something favorable and openly complained about the dominance of Blacks in certain professions. These persons would often cite that the Black hold on occupations led to the labeling of certain jobs as “nigger work” and thus was responsible for driving respectable, young White men out of Charleston in search of employment elsewhere. Unsuccessful efforts were launched through the state legislature to prohibit Blacks from participating in certain trades (Powers, 1994, pp. 44-45).

Even in the face of such attempts to prevent progress, life among free Blacks in Charleston rivaled that of Black life in New York and Philadelphia. This could be seen clearly in the affairs of the free Black church. By 1819, Charleston’s AMEC membership had eclipsed almost all of her northern peers and was second only to Philadelphia, the site of the denomination’s founding. Up until 1822, the AMEC provided an independent religious outlet for well over 3,000 members in Charleston (Smith, 1922, p. 14). Most of these persons had left the White Methodist church as a protest in 1815. The departure was prompted by at least two important events. First, it was discovered by White church leaders that Black members were using their funds to emancipate fellow slaves. In addition to this, Black leaders were conducting church trials of members who were



brought before them on charges. In an effort to regain control, White Methodist leaders asserted that all monies raised would now be turned over to the officers of the parent body. The Black Methodists were also informed that all church trials would now be conducted by White church officials. Rather than comply, the group decided to send a delegation to Philadelphia in 1818 to officially join with Richard Allen and the newly organized AMEC. The Rev. Morris Brown led the delegation to Philadelphia and upon his return the group of Black Charleston Methodists officially joined the AMEC (Payne, 1891). The establishment of the new church did not bring an end to their problems with their White neighbors. Members were harassed, threatened, and arrested repeatedly (Campbell, 1995). Others sought to close the church through state legislative action. In a resolution to the state house of representatives that was signed by over 100 persons, the erection of the new AMEC building for worship and the ordination of Morris Brown by Northern Blacks were cited as "evils" which must come to an end (Jenkins, 1820). Yet, even with such hostility and intolerance, the church continued to thrive. The presence of this church in a city that sought to legally prevent Blacks from meeting without the presence of Whites (even in religious settings) was astonishing, revolutionary, and unparalleled in the Deep South.

Free Blacks also experienced significant financial gains and held considerable real estate holdings. Some used their skills as entrepreneurs and enjoyed modest to great success. Jehu Jones had amassed sizeable wealth and property, and he operated a popular hotel that was often frequented by White aristocrats. Free Black women were also accomplished in business. Mrs. Eliza Lee ran a profitable hotel that was fashionable with the White elite (Powers, 1994, p. 44).

Some of the free Blacks, themselves, were even slave owners. This was done in part to circumvent the laws that sought to deny Blacks emancipation. As with the example of members of the AMEC using church funds to emancipate Black slaves, other free Blacks used their position and capital to purchase slaves and hold them in a virtual slavery which allowed them to live essentially as free persons. Free Blacks were not alone in this endeavor. Some benevolent members of the White community also engaged in this subterfuge by granting freedom to their slaves while maintaining the appearance to the outside world of a normal slave-owner relationship (Powers, 1994). However, like the former slave-turned-slave owner, William "April" Ellison, there were certainly free Blacks that kept slaves strictly for the profit and treated them as property (Johnson & Roark, 1984).

This description thus far is, by no means, a suggestion that Charleston was a utopia where all of the Black population was content and pleased with the status quo. One needs only to consider the planned revolt by Denmark Vesey in 1822. Vesey was a former slave who purchased his freedom with the proceeds of lottery winnings. Active as a class leader in the AMEC, he began to organize an overthrow of Charleston. It is said that the plot involved killing all White persons in the city and commandeering ships docked in the harbor to set sail for Haiti (Robertson, 1999, p. 4). The plot was alleged, by some accounts, to have involved approximately 9,000 persons, the majority of whom were slaves. If this number were correct, then over one half of the total Black population in the city would be implicated. The genuine number of persons involved may never be known, but of the 131 arrested, 35 were executed, 32 were sentenced to banishment, and

the remaining 64 were acquitted. Vesey and the other five leaders were the first group to be executed.

The question may be raised as to why a planned revolt would garner such widespread support in a city where free and enslaved populations both seemed to have enjoyed great freedom of movement and opportunity. One possible catalyst for Vesey's success in recruiting could have been a recently passed law that sought to reduce the number of manumitted slaves from a flow to a trickle. Johnson and Roark (1984) pointed to this new law as the spark Vesey needed. The South Carolina legislature, in 1820, made it much more difficult for the freeing of slaves. The new law provided that persons could only be freed by an act of the state legislature. No longer could owners at their death simply release their slaves through the power of a will nor could a slave simply purchase his or her freedom. The slave now needed the official sanction of the state. Those who were fortunate enough to have such sanction granted were still compelled to pay an annual "capitation" tax and they were in perpetual need of a White guardian who could vouch for their good character (Powers, 1994). Although some slaves would eventually evade this law on their way toward freedom, the immediate effect seems to have created the climate that made the Vesey plot possible.

With the loss of hope of ever being free, it is not difficult to understand why many slaves and free persons with family still living in bondage would have seen that there was nothing to lose by joining the plot. Vesey and his co-conspirators never had an opportunity to implement their plan, however. They were betrayed by an informant and promptly arrested. The backlash of its discovery was immediate and repressive. The AMEC, which many Whites saw as the staging ground for the plot, was pressured to

close; its buildings were destroyed; and it would not reopen until the conclusion of the Civil War (Johnson & Roark, 1984). The pastor of the church, the Rev. Morris Brown, was interrogated, found to have no connection with the plot, and soon moved to Philadelphia never to return. Though Charleston would eventually calm down and life would return somewhat to normal, the attempted revolt in many ways would color Black life for the remainder of Payne's time in Charleston. While Payne was too young to be involved or implicated in the planned Vesey revolt, the lingering effects would revisit him in 1835, and he too would feel its consequence in a painful way.

### *Race Relations in Early Charleston*

The Vesey plot notwithstanding, it is still safe to say that the Charleston of Payne's youth was a city that provided unusual opportunities for advancement to a number of Blacks in both the free and slave communities. Payne's Charleston was a city populated by an opportunistic Black majority that took every advantage in any crack in the wall of oppression (Powers, 1994). Although pressed by all sides with humiliating and repressive laws and norms, the Black advance for full inclusion was relentless. According to data cited in Powers (1994), the free Black population more than tripled during the years between 1790 and 1830 from 586 to 2,107, accounting for 7% of the total population; while 15,924 enslaved Blacks in 1830 represented over 50%. The White minority made up the remainder with 42% at 12,888. Within these groupings, a carefully crafted social pecking order emerged (Poole, 1994). The rights of slaves were considered last and they had very few protections, followed by the concerns of the free Blacks which often hinged greatly on their relationship with Whites, with the rights and concerns of

Whites placed at the forefront. However, there were nuances even in each of these distinct groupings.

In the slave population, there were multiple layers of difference. The most obvious distinction cited was between those who worked closely with the master versus those who had much more distance between themselves and the owner. These groups have been commonly referred to as the house Negro and the field Negro, respectively. Of course, this is an oversimplification in that those who did manual labor were sometimes found to be just as close to the master as the domestic worker. The significant difference was not in where the slave physically worked, but in the slave's emotional attachment or detachment with the master. For example, Vesey co-conspirator Peter Poyas often cautioned that slaves that were too near to the master's affection should not be recruited for the overthrow. According to court transcripts, Poyas was known to say that slaves who received gifts of "old coats" from the master should be treated with caution (Killens, 1970). Whether plotting a revolt or not, distrust was a primary characteristic in the interaction of the two groups.

Another significant difference was between the suburban/rural and the urban slaves. The suburban/rural slaves lived a life that was mostly under the watchful eye of the master, limiting their access to information outside of the plantation. However, the daily experiences of the urban slave were not as easy to control, and they were in constant contact with an array of different persons and views. This was greatly aided in the fact that Charleston was a seaport bringing these urban slaves into contact with the surrounding world. Upwards of 15% of these slaves lived independently of their masters. Although they were required by law to wear badges to identify themselves as slaves and

observe a curfew, they were still afforded a freedom of movement that their suburban/rural counterparts surely envied (Powers, 1994). Other differences were attributed to the types of work the slaves were involved in. Most were unskilled laborers, working on plantations or in the industries in the city (Powers, 1994, p. 10). A small group, however, were highly skilled craftsmen and well polished domestic workers who were sought after because of their expertise.

Like the slave community, Powers (1994) states that the free Black population in antebellum Charleston could hardly be considered a homogenous group, and the differences among them were considerable (p. 160). The free Black community that dated as far back as the 1690s was "a class conscious, exclusive, economically independent group with an intermediate caste position" (Fitchett, 1947, p. 430). Fitchett (1947) suggested that the group of free Blacks emerged in one of 4 ways: (a) mulatto children born of free colored mothers; (b) manumitted slaves; (c) children of free Negro and mixed Indian parentage; and (d) children born of free colored parents (p. 433). In the free Black population, there were important distinctions made by economic and class status, chosen profession, and other variables. The most notable difference in the free Black population was based on the color of one's skin. Lighter or brown skinned Blacks were referred to as free persons of color or mulatto, while darker skinned Blacks were considered free Negroes. When encountered by Whites, mulattos were normally presumed to be free while their darker skinned counterparts, free Negroes, were presumed to be slaves (Johnson & Roark, 1984).

Mulattos fared much better with Whites than did their dark counterparts. Many mulattos, like former Payne student Michael Eggart, understood well that their position in

the community depended heavily on slavery. The mulattos increasingly separated themselves from the slaves and the darker free Blacks in an attempt to gain social position by presenting themselves as the lesser of two evils to White society. They became a perceived buffer zone that provided a sense of security to Whites (Poole, 1994). According to Eggart, this group occupied a "middle ground" between Whites and darker skinned Blacks (Poole, 1994). As a result, there was often social distance between the two groups and a level of distrust existed due to the closeness of the mulattos with the Whites. The practice of slave holding was much more prevalent with those that considered themselves mulatto. Of the total number of slaveholding free Blacks, 85% were mulattos at one point, increasing the animosity between the groups (Powers, 1994). All differences aside, the free Black population was of great benefit to White society by providing a ready source of skilled labor and a perceived safeguard between Whites and the slaves (Drago, 1990; Poole, 1994). Another aspect they shared was that both the mulatto and the Negro lived somewhat as slaves without masters (Berlin, 1981). Although they had no legal owner, both groups lived in a tenuous situation with their rights perpetually hanging in the balance. As noted above, free Blacks were compelled to pay an annual tax each year and a White person had to be willing to stand for their good character. Their freedom was always a moment away from being taken, and the free Blacks "that measured their liberty against that of Whites everywhere found it wanting" (Berlin, 1981, p. 90).

The attitude of Whites toward Blacks in Charleston was in no way monolithic. Within White society, there existed descendents and immigrants from numerous European countries, varying class differences, a multitude of religious denominations,

and differing educational backgrounds. Add to this that each group saw the "Negro problem" in a conflicting light. Some felt that the best way to deal with the slaves and free Blacks was to keep tight control. This was reflected in the numerous laws and ordinances that were aimed at curbing Black freedom, movement, and advance; laws, for example, that forbade Blacks from meeting behind closed doors that were locked. No Black person, free or slave could bring charges against a White person in court nor could he or she serve on juries. Laws prevented the immigration of free Blacks into South Carolina and those who left the state, like Morris Brown and eventually Daniel Payne, were forbidden to return. There were even laws that set a cap on how much Blacks could earn in wages for a day's work and a fine and /or incarceration awaited those who dared ask for more money in return for their labor. There were laws that prevented Blacks from owning firearms and laws that provided for the temporary arrest and detention of free Black sailors who worked on ships that happened to dock in Charleston (Fitchett, 1947; Johnson & Roark, 1984; Powers, 1994). However, before and after the Vesey incident, many of these and similar laws aimed at controlling the Black population were essentially "dead letter laws" and the enforcement of them was sporadic at best (Johnson & Roark, 1984). This was partly due to the economic interests of the city.

Blacks were involved in every aspect of the life of Charleston and the enforcement of many of the laws would have simply made business too burdensome to conduct. However, there were some White persons who held a very different view of their Black neighbors and their neglect of the laws did not stem only from an economic interest. Even after the Vesey incident, this group still held very liberal views toward certain of their Black neighbors and slaves. Some of the most prominent members of the



White community could be counted in that number and would later prove to be a great resource to Payne's efforts as an educational leader. It should be noted, however, that the institution of slavery was just as acceptable and was equally as dominant in the more liberal quarters of Charleston's White community as it was among those who held more conservative views.

Consider that one of the most prominent White persons to assist Payne's efforts was the Reverend William Capers. Capers would go on to become a Methodist bishop and would serve as a leading proponent for the church endorsement of the institution of slavery. In 1844, his pro-slavery speech delivered at the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC) General Conference would aid in the splitting of the denomination into two new churches over the issue of slave holding. At the same time, however, his life and ministry were both devoted to work among the slaves for their religious improvement, and he continued to build new missions over the south to affect his plan (Whelchel, 2002). Capers's complex and seemingly contradictory portrait demonstrated that conservatives and liberals in the Charleston White community did not necessarily mean those who were pro- versus anti-slavery. The question among Charleston's White aristocracy was often not the "if" of slavery, but the "how" of slavery. To be sure, there were some who deplored the institution, but they were often the silent minority.

All together, the slaves, free Blacks, and Whites joined to make a complex, three-tiered, social structure with the free Blacks (particularly the mulattos) serving as a pseudo buffer for the Whites (Drago, 1990). Ironically, there was no other place that this social stratification could be seen more clearly than at church on Sunday morning. Each Sunday, the Whites would sit up front with the mulattos sitting right behind them. Behind

the mulattos were the free Negroes, and the slaves sat behind everyone (Johnson & Roark, 1984). Black and White life was indeed so intricately woven together, that as the Reverend John B. Adger observed, "They belong to us. We also belong to them. They are divided out among us and mingled up with us and we with them in a thousand ways" (as cited in Powers, 1994, p. 10).

### *Education for Blacks in Charleston*

One of the most compelling characteristics in light of the present discussion was the highly advanced degree of education among Blacks in antebellum Charleston. Organized schooling for Blacks in Charleston dated back to 1701, and the first attempt was religious in nature. This emphasis was consistent with schooling aimed at poor Whites. The belief was that education would help civilize the slaves and lower class Whites, thus making for a more stable colony (V. Ward, n.d., p. 3). By 1705, the London based Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) could claim 20 slaves who could read and write. The focus of this education was primarily concerned with teaching the students to read the Bible. In 1731, the Rev. E. Taylor of St. Andrew's Parish, located near Charleston, added secular, elementary education to the curriculum of religious instruction (Birnie, 1927, pp. 13-14).

Another school for Blacks was opened by the missionary, the Rev. Garden, in 1743 and carried up to 36 students on the roll at one time (Birnie, 1927). Rev. Garden's efforts culminated in one of the most well-known and consistent educational efforts on behalf of slaves in South Carolina during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In 1744, he built a schoolhouse that would be used to educate slaves who would then go out to teach others. While this school was concerned with producing Christian missionaries, it was also a source for

secular education. It marked the beginning of an organized plan that provided for Blacks teaching other Blacks. Up until this time, all organized instruction was led by Whites. Two slaves, Harry and Andrew, were purchased, educated, and given the responsibility of teaching at the school. The attendance at times rose as high as 60 students and ran consistently for 20 years, closing in 1764. The circumstances surrounding the closing of the school were unclear, but probably resulted from the death of one of the teachers (Birnie, 1927).

Unlike the school set up for Harry and Andrew by concerned Whites, the next organized effort toward the education of Blacks in Charleston was self motivated and originated in the growing free Black population. This new movement was aimed primarily at educating the free Black population, but would prove beneficial to the slaves as well. In 1790, the Brown Fellowship Society was organized by free persons of color for benevolent work, mutual economic benefit, and to educate the orphaned children of its members (Powers, 1994). While this group tended to be exclusive by providing benefits only to mulatto members or their descendents, it marks a shift toward self determination with regard to education among Blacks in Charleston. Other groups soon followed the lead of the Brown Fellowship Society. In 1802, the Humane and Friendly Society started, followed by the Friendly Union, the Unity and Fellowship, and the Society of Free Dark Men. The most pertinent group for this discussion was the Minors Moralist Society. Established in 1803 by free persons of color, each member donated the sum of \$5 for its founding. Each month, thereafter, all members paid dues of 25¢. The Minors Moralist Society counted some of Charleston's most enduring figures as members. Founding members read like a Who's Who list of free Blacks in Charleston

and included James Mitchell, Joseph Humpries, William Cooper, Carlos Huger, Richard Holloway, and Thomas Bonneau (Birnie, 1927). Like the other societies that formed with similar aims, they too sought to train orphaned children and put them out to apprentice when they reached their teens. However, education was also a major emphasis of the society, and they cared for up to six orphans at a time. This group would later provide the educational foundation for Payne and would expose him to one of Charleston's most successful free Black teachers, Thomas Bonneau.

Bonneau was a member of both the Minors Moralist Society and the Brown Fellowship Society. The latter persuaded him to open a school for its children in 1807 at the home of Richard Holloway. Unlike the benevolent societies, Bonneau charged each student \$1.50 per month for tuition (Drago, 1990). The school enjoyed so much success that Bonneau was compelled to hire two assistants, William McKinney and Frederick Sasporatas (Powers, 1994). Bonneau offered the basic curriculum of the day which compared favorably to the public schools; he covered reading, spelling, writing, and arithmetic (Payne, 1888; V. Ward, n.d.). The establishment of Bonneau's school coincided with the growing movement in South Carolina by Whites to create a statewide public school system. By 1811, legislation was passed providing \$13,320 to establish a public school in each of the 44 election districts in the state (V. Ward, n.d., p. 6). The problem these schools faced early on was the stigma associated with them due to their outreach and preferential treatment of poor and orphaned children. Upper, middle, and working class Whites shunned them as pauper schools, and by the 1840s, only 1 in every 50 eligible students attended such schools (V. Ward, n.d.). Even though these schools had

been stigmatized, their doors remained closed for free Blacks and slaves, making Bonneau's school even more important.

It is ironic that free Blacks, who because of the capitation tax, paid more to the state each year than their poor White counterparts (who benefited most from these free schools) and were unable themselves to take advantage of the state funded schools. Ineligible to receive assistance from the state, free Blacks turned inward. Some parents, like Samuel Weston, went to great lengths to ensure the academic success of their children. After Payne's school closed in 1835, the Westons joined other free persons of color with financial means and hired Henry Mood to teach their children in an afternoon school. Mood, a White student at Charleston College, was later joined by an assistant teacher, Thomas Mood, and later by Francis Mood. This move by the Westons sought to increase the curriculum to an advanced level (Powers, 1994). The Westons were not alone in this practice, and other families who could afford to do so followed their example. Unlike the poor wages paid to teachers in the public schools, tutors of the free Black children sometimes received enough compensation that they were able to pay their entire way through college (Birnie, 1927). W.W. Wilburn, a White man, was paid a full salary to teach a school for Blacks. The members of the board that oversaw his school included Bonneau's former assistants, McKinney and Sasporatas (Birnie, 1927).

Other schools opened as Blacks continued to see an opportunity to rise through education. It is no surprise that Charleston soon gained a reputation as an intellectual center and a breeding ground for Black teachers (Freedman, 1999). In 1820, Mrs. Strommer, a free person of color established a school that continued through the Civil War. Others found educational opportunity through Sunday School departments of local

churches. The Episcopal and Methodist Churches both were very active in this regard (Powers, 1994). The list of those who kept schools for Blacks during this time period included free Black men and women, White men and women, Catholics and Protestants, and recent immigrants from other countries such as Haiti (Birnie, 1927). The reputation for their success by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century began to draw students from as far as Augusta, Georgia (Birnie, 1927). Some historians, like Woodson (1919/1968), have gone as far as to suggest that southern Blacks in general and Charleston in particular, were intellectually superior to their Black neighbors in the north. There were even cases where free Blacks left the northern cities and returned to the South to take advantage of the educational opportunities (Woodson, 1919/1968, pp. 129-130).

While this portrait displays an incredible image of educational progress by Blacks in Charleston from the colonial period through the antebellum days, it must be stated that almost all of these efforts met continuous resistance from many in the larger White community. According to Woodson (1919/1968), the attitude of Whites toward Black education in the South prior to the Civil War can be broken up into two periods (p. 2). In the first period, from the early 1700s through 1835, most Whites felt that education for Blacks was something that should be pursued. The type of education was primarily religious teaching and is reflected in the work of missionary groups like the SPG. The second period began at the height of the insurrection movement and ran from 1835 through the Civil War's conclusion. During this time most Whites strongly disapproved of any education among Blacks for any reason, religious or otherwise. While Woodson's characterization is helpful in understanding what generally occurred with Blacks and education in the South, the picture in Charleston is not so easily compartmentalized.

The first laws preventing the education of slaves in South Carolina, for example, showed up in 1740, in the heart of the period Woodson (1919/1968) suggests was most sympathetic to the cause. This law was in reaction to the growing number of slave revolts that began in 1730 and culminated with the uprising of 1739 led by the slave Cato (V. Ward, n.d., p. 5). In that revolt, a number of White men, women, and children were killed, thereby creating a climate that allowed for such legislation to make its appearance. It is not clear if this law represented the feeling of the majority of White South Carolinians, but we can safely infer that it was the sentiment of the majority of those in control of creating the laws. However, as seen with the continuing educational efforts on behalf of Blacks by the Rev. Gardner in 1743, and the school run by the two slaves, Harry and Andrew, it would appear that at least some were still committed to teaching Blacks and that the law itself had become a "dead letter" in some places (V. Ward, n.d.). On the other hand, Woodson (1919/1968) points to 1835, the height of the insurrection movement, as the start of the period that Whites overwhelmingly were against any form of Black education. On the surface, this seems to be the case in Charleston. In 1834, the state legislature passed a new law that prohibited the education of all slaves and free Black persons. Yet, this law met a great deal of public pressure for its repeal. State records reveal that a petition was signed and filed by 122 White slaveholders asking the state to reconsider the ban on educating Blacks. The motivation behind the request was not to suggest that Blacks and Whites have the same rights, but it was aimed at fulfilling their duty as Christian slave owners by improving the lives of slaves through religious instruction (Hemphill, 1835). They were clear that they were not asking for any secular instruction. The petitioners asked the legislature exactly how the "teaching of slaves to

read the scriptures, or any book strictly religious” could jeopardize the safety of the state (Hemphill, 1835). As with the aforementioned, Rev. Capers and his efforts to teach slaves through his missions suggest there were many Whites who simultaneously endorsed the institution of slavery *and* the religious education of the slaves. At least as far as the resolution suggests it was a matter of conscience for many owners (Hemphill, 1835). The issue of owners teaching their slaves to read and write was at the heart of the debate over Black education in South Carolina in the White community.

Those who were opposed to any education of Blacks cited that even a minimal amount of education, regardless of the nature or the purpose was a dangerous prospect. Frederick Douglass’ Maryland slave owner often stated that an education would ruin a slave (Douglass, 1845/1966). First, he said, when the slave realized what he or she was truly missing by being in captivity, it would make him or her discontent with the institution. This would lead, quite naturally, to the problem of security of the state in that the same slaves would now seek to escape. Once a slave was educated, there would be nothing to stop the longing within him or her to be free. Finally, he said that “learning would spoil the best nigger in the world” and afterwards, “there would be no keeping him” (Douglass, 1845/1966, p. 44).

Connected with this reasoning was the constant fear that educated slaves and free Blacks would come into contact with writings from northern and European abolitionists. The 1820s saw an increase in abolitionist activity in the North and in Europe. There was a great awareness of this activity in the South and it caused a good deal of anxiety for those who lived in the seaport city of Charleston. Reflective of this fear is the work of the South-Carolina Association, a vigilante group who served to help enforce the laws aimed



at controlling the Black majority. Petitioning the state senate 1 year following the Vesey episode, they express this fear:

In the first place, there can scarcely exist in our southern community, an evil of greater magnitude, to the country at large, than the constant intercourse, which is maintained between the blacks of the North and the South. The means of communications has been confined, principally to the City of Charleston.

(Simons, 1823)

The resolution went on to express that the threat was also from those in England, like William Wilberforce, who presented a Quaker petition against slavery to the British Parliament. This played up the fear of the northern Black and European abolitionist connection. Whites who sought to end Black education did not limit their fear to those outside of South Carolina. Some went as far as to blame other slaveholders, calling them to account for their wayward activities. Court documents from the Vesey trial indicate that at least some Whites were willing to place the blame of the planned insurrection at the feet of these types of slaveholders who overindulged their slaves with reading and writing (Hamilton, 1822).

Conversely and a bit ironically, the slaveholders who sought to educate their slaves also used Vesey and other insurrectionists such as Nat Turner to illustrate the precise reason why the slaves *should* be educated. Their position simply stated that slaves who were not able to read and interpret the Bible for themselves would be easy prey for “every Nat Turner who might chance to pass along” (Hemphill, 1835). This belief reflected the fear still alive from the Vesey incident 13 years before, where many owners felt that better educated slaves would not have been so easily swayed into revolt. One of

the leaders of the plot, Gullah Jack, was purported to be a medicine man and persuaded many of the Vesey followers that he could not be killed (Robertson, 1999). Using persons like Gullah Jack and Nat Turner, these slaveholders argued that the denial of a proper, religious education to slaves opened the door to those who preached superstition and witchcraft.

Still, others went on to argue that even if a law banning the instruction of slaves should be passed, it would become a “dead letter” and would have no effect in stopping the teaching of slaves. Most masters admitted that they could hardly keep their slaves from learning how to read and write, even in the tight control of the plantation (Hemphill, 1835). A further argument on behalf of educating the slaves was rooted in the economic makeup of Charleston. Many slaves were often engaged in the business affairs of the owner and were made literate out of financial necessity. Owners relied on them to transact business in their absence and a literate slave was a more profitable slave. The debate over whether or not to educate slaves would never be settled and even after the passage of the law prohibiting their education, many owners simply ignored it and continued to teach them. Free Blacks did not stop their quest for learning either. Schools for and by free Blacks continued through the Civil War. Commenting in 1859, 25 years after the law of 1834 that sought to prevent any Black person to learn, a slaveholder in Charleston pointed out how ineffective the law had been when he bemoaned the fact that on any given morning, you could see Black children in the streets “with satchel well filled with books” (Powers, 1994, p. 54).

*Daniel Alexander Payne Steps onto the Stage*

It was into this diverse cultural mix that Daniel Alexander Payne was born on February 24, 1811. Born into the free Black population, Payne was considered a free person of color, with his brown skinned complexion placing him into the brown elite (Powers, 1994). The sparse information we have concerning Payne's parents is based largely on his personal memoirs, *Recollections of Seventy Years* (1888). His mother Martha was of mixed heritage, being partly Black and partly from the Catawba tribe of Native Americans. He credits her with being a pious woman who regularly took him to worship at the Cumberland Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC). Cumberland was the MEC mission for Blacks in the city and served as the Payne family church. This congregation served many of the more prosperous and prominent members of the free Black community. While both of his parents were born free, his father London was said to have been tricked into slavery as a young boy. Stolen from Virginia, he was taken to Charleston where he was sold. As an adult, he purchased his freedom with \$1,000 and began to raise a family. Although London died by the time Payne reached 5 years of age, he had already made a lasting impression. Payne credited his father with teaching him the alphabet and even reinforcing the importance of the lessons with corporal punishment (Payne, 1888, p. 11). His mother soon followed her husband in death when Payne was about 9 years old. While his father received credit for starting him on the road to education, it was Martha who left with him the importance of religion and personal morality. She would often take him to church meetings, and these experiences created "strong religious feelings" (Payne, 1888, p. 12). These two points of emphasis, education and personal piety, would become the cornerstone of Payne's adult life.

After the death of Martha, Daniel was placed in the care of his grandaunt Sarah Bordeaux. Not much is known about Sarah, except that she served as a nurse to Bishop Theodore Dehon. His parents left him nothing to use to care for himself, and he was truly in a destitute condition. Correspondence from Elizabeth Holloway to the Brown Fellowship Society, illustrates just how much he found himself truly impoverished:

viewing a Minor and distressed fellow creature being an [sic] helpless orphan induces me thus petitioning and presenting him to your benevolence, feeling that is a little helpless orphan in a distressed case without relatives or indeed friends....I therefore pray and solicit you gentlemen as fathers and men of humanity to assist the object in whom I solicit and cordially entreat for clothing; his name is Daniel Payne. (Ransom, 1913, p. 381)

It is interesting to note that in the reply to Mrs. Holloway, one of the signers on behalf of the Brown Fellowship Society is none other than Thomas Bonneau, the Charleston schoolteacher and aristocrat that would later serve as Payne's tutor. As stated, he held membership in both the Minors Moralists Society and the Brown Fellowship Society and was thus brought into contact with Payne early on. Bonneau's influence over Payne was only just beginning.

After his brief stay with his grandaunt, Payne began his tenure with the members of the Minors Moralists Society. During his residence with the Minors Moralists Society, Payne learned various professional trades. He also studied the basic curriculum provided. The curriculum of the Minors Moralists Society was rudimentary and equivalent to that of the public schools. Here, Payne studied the three R's: reading, writing, and arithmetic (Payne, 1888). This course of study with the Minors Moralists Society ended, however,

somewhat abruptly when he was only about 10 or 11 years old. The typical course of study for these benevolent organizations went on until the children were 14 years old (Powers, 1994, p. 51). Coan (1935) suggests that Payne's study with the Minors Moralist Society was halted due to the reaction in the White community to the Vesey conspiracy. This fits the timeline in that Payne was 11 years old when his education ceased and the Vesey incident was at its height. It is very plausible in the wake of such a controversy, that conservative groups like the Minors Moralist Society would take the option of avoiding any behavior that might be deemed questionable by the White authorities, such as operating a school for Blacks in public view. Whatever the actual cause may have been, his education with the Minors Moralist Society was halted and he then spent the next 3 years under the personal tutelage of Thomas Bonneau. In a fashion that would mark Payne's life, adversity seemed to have pushed him into a situation that was much better than his former state. This close association with Bonneau, the well known educator, proved to be of great advantage to Payne.

#### *Payne Receives the "Call"*

Throughout his study with Bonneau, Payne was sent out to apprentice and tried his hand at several different trades. He worked briefly as a shoe merchant when he was 12 years old. He then worked with his brother-in-law James Holloway as a carpenter for the next 4 ½ years, and finally he served as a tailor for 9 months. It is toward the end of this period as an apprentice that Payne experienced the two most defining events that set him on a course as an educational leader. The first was his conversion to Christianity. Religion always played a significant role in his life, even as a child. Once, when only 8 years old, Payne was so moved by a sermon that he cried in the streets all the way home

(Payne, 1888, p. 16). He spoke of his tender young heart being moved as he listened to the religious experiences of the adults. Even after the death of his parents, Payne continued his relationship with the Cumberland Mission, yet, he did not consider himself to be a converted believer. He declared himself ready for membership when he was 15 years old and was received in the church on probation, being placed in the class of Samuel Weston. The class in the Methodist church was a small group of roughly 12 members that met weekly to address their spiritual concerns. Three years later, members of the congregation began to notice that the religion of the membership had "waxed cold" and that they were in need of a revival (Payne, 1888, p. 17). Richard Holloway requested that all the classes of the church meet together in a special prayer meeting every Sunday night in order that they might pray for a revival. The schoolroom of Thomas Bonneau was selected as the meeting place. This move paid large dividends for the congregation, and a number of persons experienced a religious awakening. Payne, along with many others, was converted at this time. It seems to be a foreshadowing of things to come that Payne's conversion occurred in the classroom of a schoolhouse, not in a church building.

Not many weeks after his conversion experience, Payne went through the second most significant event that would shape his life as an educational leader. While at home one afternoon, he went into prayer. During this prayer, he felt what he described as two hands pressing down on his shoulders, and he heard a voice declare, "I have set thee apart to educate thyself in order that thou mayest be an educator to thy people" (Payne, 1888, p. 17). As far as he was concerned, the message was clearly from God, and he knew what had to be done. From that moment on, he focused all his energy on educating himself in order to fulfill what he sensed was a divine call to teach. He began to use all his available

free time to study. He read each evening until midnight and started again at 4 a.m. Payne began drawing sketches and composing poetry (Payne, 1888, p. 18). He used his skill as a carpenter to build useful items that he sold over the weekend to raise money to buy books and writing materials. His conversion experience, coupled with his resolute belief that he had been called by God to the work of education, would continue to drive and shape his efforts as an educational leader for the remainder of his life.

If indeed this was a divine call to serve as an educator, Payne had been situated perfectly for the task. The three most important adults in his life were all leading proponents of Black education in Charleston. From the time of his entrance in the Minors Moralists Society until his "call" to teach, he was surrounded by persons who advocated and worked to make education for Blacks a reality. The researcher would argue that Payne's attraction to the idea of the classics as a foundation for education, opposed to the prevailing curriculum of the three R's, was due in large part to his exposure to Thomas Bonneau, Richard Holloway, Sr., and Samuel Weston. These three men were central to Payne's development and they shared a family bond, as well. Holloway's son married Payne's only sister (Payne, 1888, p. 15). Additionally, Bonneau's daughter married into the Weston family, while another daughter married the son of Holloway (Powers, 1994). In a sense, it was one large extended family and Payne was a beneficiary of these powerful unions.

According to Birnie (1927), these men possessed more than a basic and fragmentary education and demonstrated an advanced learning. One important distinction within this group that would impact Payne's outlook toward education was the manner in which they viewed fellow freed Blacks and the slaves. Bonneau tended to be more of an

exclusionist, preferring to build up and educate only the free persons of color to the neglect of free dark persons and slaves (Poole, 1994). This outlook was rejected by Holloway and Weston, who viewed their own success as an avenue of helping others who were still in need, regardless of complexion or class (Drago, 1990). Payne would ultimately adopt the more inclusive worldview of Holloway and Weston. His broader vision toward education would be seen most clearly in the makeup of the student body in his first school, an equal mix of children from the free Black elite and adults from the slave community. It is not surprising that Payne would follow the lead of Weston who he credited as being the “chief religious guide” of his youth (1888, p. 17).

While these men certainly had their differences surrounding issues of class and status, they were united in their belief that education was the best way for Black advancement. Each man played a critical role in the advancement of the cause of education in Black Charleston. Drago (1990) places Samuel Weston and Richard Holloway alongside others at the “center of education for free blacks” in Charleston (p. 38). As previously stated, Samuel Weston’s desire to educate his children ultimately led him to hire college students to teach them advanced subjects. Holloway was also innovative in that he opened his home in 1807, that a school might be set up for his children and others. He was then successful in convincing Bonneau to teach at the school for more than 20 years. His relationship with Bonneau would have quite naturally exposed Payne to other leading educators of the day, such as William McKinney and Frederick Sasporatas, Bonneau’s assistant teachers.

Under the tutelage of Bonneau, Payne’s curriculum grew from the three R’s to include the histories of Greece, Rome, and England. The main text used to teach the art



of public speaking was the *Columbian Orator* (Payne, 1888, p. 15). While this book stated that its aim was to help young schoolchildren in elocution (Bingham, 1814), the selected readings could be revolutionary in the hands of young, Black children in a world dominated by the system of slavery. This text included, among other things, a fictional dialogue with a slave and his master in which the slave attempts to explain why he keeps running away even though he belongs to a “good master.” The conversation ends with the master unexpectedly releasing the slave from his service, being so convinced of his guilt. The book also included an actual anti-slavery speech at a northern abolition meeting, human rights messages delivered before the British parliament, and other material that could have easily been deemed abolitionist propaganda by the Charleston authorities (Bingham, 1814). The noted abolitionist Frederick Douglass purchased this same book for 50¢ when still a young teenager and slave in Maryland during this same period. In his autobiographical narrative, he points to the repeated reading of the *Orator* as the basis of forming his opinions on the subjects of abolition and human rights (Douglass, 1845/1966). His account and testimony help us understand the possible effect the book may have on Payne. Douglass (1845/1966) states that the reading of the *Orator* “gave tongue to my interesting thoughts of my own soul, which had frequently flashed through my mind, and died away for want of utterance” (p. 49). So controversial are some of the readings contained in the *Orator*, it is surprising that a conservative like Bonneau would even own it, let alone share it with his tutee. Like Douglass, this book played a critical role in opening the mind of young Payne to the larger world around him and to ideas central to an education rooted in the classics.

These relationships also opened the door to another text that would impact him far more than the *Columbian Orator*. While working in the Holloway's carpentry shop, he was granted access to the *Self Interpreting Bible* by the Rev. John Brown of Scotland. By Payne's own admission, the reading of this version of the Bible was the "turning point" of his life (1888, p. 15). Brown had been largely self educated and his version of the Bible had become very popular in the United States. What struck Payne most was that Brown was able to learn Hebrew, Latin, and Greek without the help of a teacher. He determined that he could do the same thing as Brown. From that moment, he began to read whatever he could get his hands on in his drive for learning. The reading of these books occurred before his conversion and his call to education, but the experience of reading them was foundational in his preparation as an educational leader.

*Summary.*

It is not simply enough to say that Payne became an educator because he felt called by God. While that is clearly the most compelling reason that placed him on the road of educational leadership, other factors were at play shaping and molding him into an educator long before that momentous afternoon epiphany. The early exposure to learning at home with his parents, his birth as a free person in a city that afforded an unparalleled measure of freedom for the Black population, the care and education provided by the Minors Moralists Society, the eventful relationships with his three mentors, and his exposure to a wide array of literature all combined to set the stage for Payne gaining the confidence needed to step out into the world of educational leadership. By the time he was 19 years old Payne gave up life as a carpenter and became a full-time educator.

### CHAPTER III

#### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MASTER: UNFORSEEN CHALLENGES (1829-1841)

Freedman (1999) asserts that antebellum schools for Blacks in the South were “the training grounds for the African-American leadership of the Reconstruction” (p. 3). This was especially true in the case of Daniel Payne. The experience gained from his first effort at educational leadership continued to be of value to him even as he later served as a Reconstruction era bishop. The lesson began in 1829, as he stepped forward and opened his first school on Tradd Street in Charleston.

##### First Attempt at Educational Leadership

It is not clear how he arrives at his conclusion, but Birnie (1927) cites that Payne’s first school was the continuation of the work started by Thomas Bonneau (p. 19). That Payne followed in the footsteps of his tutor as a teacher is undeniable. However, it

may be misleading to suggest that Payne actually took over the school run by Bonneau. There are a number of facts that make this thesis untenable. To begin with, Bonneau's school was in an existing building on the property of Richard Holloway (another Payne mentor). Payne did not occupy that space for his new school, but instead used the home of Caesar Wright. Another point of contradiction stems from the lackluster attendance at Payne's school during the first year. The school only consisted of Caesar Wright's three children in the daytime and three adult slaves in the evening. This hardly compares to the success enjoyed by Bonneau who had to hire two assistants to help with the teaching responsibilities. Bonneau also charged \$1.50 per student on a monthly basis compared to the 50¢ a month charged by Payne. It does not appear that his new school benefited much in the short term from his long association with Bonneau. The most compelling evidence that suggests that there was no connection with this effort and the previous school is that Payne did not mention it in his memoirs. Payne was very meticulous in his account of this first school and his associations in Charleston. It is very unlikely that he would have omitted such an important detail. It is also likely that the school run by Bonneau was still open at the time that Payne started his own school which put them in a somewhat competitive relationship. Reports cite that Bonneau did not close his school until 1829 or 1830, sometime near his death (Fitchett, 1947, p. 435).

As opposed to Birnie's (1927) portrayal of Payne taking over an existing and successful operation, Payne's own *Recollections* (1888) provide a different account. According to Payne, he began his school with very little support at all. His effort to provide educational leadership in his community was done without the backing of a group of trustees who paid his salary, without a spacious building with ample amenities,

and without a ready pool of waiting pupils. Payne also lacked formal training and credentials. His first year was so dismal that he was dependent on the kindness of a slave woman to provide his meals to make up for his lack of income. He was so discouraged by the outcome of his first year that he decided to give up on teaching and find employment in another profession.

Payne learned that a slaveholder was in town seeking to hire an intelligent, free person of color. The slaveholder was moving to the British West Indies under orders of his doctor and he was now in need of an educated, free Black person to manage his business affairs. Upon the recommendation of someone in Charleston, Payne was interviewed for the position. In the course of the conversation, unbeknownst to the slaveholder, Payne experienced another turning point that pushed him closer to a full commitment as an educational leader. Almost matter-of-factly, the man told Payne that the only difference between the slave and the owner was “superior knowledge” (Payne, 1888, p. 20). Payne instantly decided that if this were true, then he would not set sail with him but rather “go and obtain that knowledge which constitutes the master” (Payne, 1888, p. 20). Adding to this revelation was his deepening sense that to turn his back on education as a vocation was to betray his call from God:

In abandoning the school-room am I not fleeing from the cross which the Saviour [sic] has imposed upon me? Is not the abandonment of the teacher's work in my case a sin? The answer was easily found, and I resolved to reopen my school and to inform my patrons to that effect. (Payne, 1888, p. 20)

The school reopened in the early months of 1830, and the result from this attempt would be much more gratifying to Payne.

As opposed to the first year, the school now experienced such rapid growth that Payne was compelled to find larger accommodations. The increase in new students may have been attributed to the death of Bonneau and the closing of his school. This might explain why Birnie (1927) erroneously arrived at the conclusion that Payne took over teaching responsibilities directly from his mentor. He moved the school to a new and larger location but quickly grew beyond its capacity. In trying to meet the physical demands placed on the new school, he now faced a new challenge as an educational leader. Payne's problem with space was permanently solved with the help of a generous benefactor. Robert Howard, one of Charleston's wealthiest free persons of color, stepped in and built a schoolhouse for Payne's exclusive use. The school was erected in the backyard of the Howard home and was still standing near the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Smith, 1896). Howard's reason for building the edifice is not provided, but it is probable that his children were also students at the school. Howard had become one of Charleston's most successful entrepreneurs in the fuel business and employed a number of persons (Powers, 1994, p. 43). This philanthropic move followed the example of earlier free Blacks, such as Richard Holloway, Sr. As noted above, he also built a school in his backyard that was used by Thomas Bonneau. This investment by Howard lends support to Payne's view that his school had become a favorite among free persons of color in Charleston (Payne, 1888, p. 25). It also casts doubt on Morgan's (1995) suggestion that the school never had more than 12 students at a time (p. 50). It is unlikely that a businessman like Howard would have gone to such lengths as to construct a building when the attendance never went beyond such a small group of students. This was also an important first step for Payne in cultivating philanthropists and donors. The

lessons learned in this experience would later aid him in the establishment and development of Wilberforce University.

With the issue of accommodations resolved, Payne turned his attention to expanding the curriculum. While studying with Bonneau, he acquired the basic skills of reading, writing, spelling, rudimentary arithmetic, public speaking, and history. Yet, he found that he was deficient in more advanced subjects. Although this elementary education adequately prepared him to teach the curriculum that most public schools used at the time (V. Ward, n.d.), Payne sought to continue building his knowledge base. However, his newfound success at the school did not translate into a financial windfall, and a lack of money to purchase books was very much an issue. Yet, he seemed to stay on the side of good fortune. The following is illustrative of how events seemed to move in his favor. On one occasion, he sat outside in a public place thinking of how he could obtain an atlas so that he could add geography to the curriculum. Just then, a woman approached him and asked if he wanted the book in her hands. As he turned to look at it, he was surprised and overjoyed to see that it was an atlas. After a bit of negotiating, she took all the money he had, 12 and ½ cents in the form of a York shilling and he set out to master his new book:

Immediately I went to work with my geography and atlas, and in about six months was able to construct maps on the Mercator's and globular projection.

After I had acquired this ability I introduced geography and map-drawing into my school. (Payne, 1888, p. 21)

In similar fashion, Payne added to his curriculum English grammar, botany, descriptive chemistry, natural philosophy, descriptive astronomy, Greek, Latin, French, and zoology.

In some instances, he could not find textbooks at all, which forced him to improvise. For example, when he could not find a text to teach zoology, he made his own book:

This I did by killing such insects, toads, snakes, young alligators, fishes, and young sharks as I could catch. I then cleaned and stuffed those that I could, and hung them upon the walls of my school-room. The following fact will give the index of my methods. I bought a live alligator, made one of my pupils provoke him to bite, and whenever he opened his mouth I discharged a load of shot from a small pistol down his throat. As soon as he was stunned I threw him on his back, cut his throat, ripped open his chest, hung him up and studied his viscera till they ceased to move. (Payne, 1888, p. 23)

Not all of his self education went so smoothly. In 1832, he watched an eclipse with his naked eye and was almost blinded. His vision was never totally restored and he gained a valuable lesson at a high cost. He also added gymnastics to the curriculum in order to break the monotony of the day.

The student body that began with only six pupils soon grew to 60 by 1834 (Payne, 1888, p. 36). According to Payne (1888), other school teachers came to him to learn the more advanced subjects used in his school (p. 25). He was even given the responsibility of tutoring the daughters of his deceased tutor, Thomas Bonneau. The fact that Bonneau's widow, Jeanette, entrusted their education to Payne must have given him a sense of accomplishment. Certainly, Jeanette Bonneau, the widow of Charleston's most popular educator would not take her children to just anyone for an education. One of the



daughters, Frances, went on to a career in teaching and taught during the Reconstruction in Georgia (Drago, 1990, p. 120).

His schoolhouse also became a meeting place for the newly formed Bonneau Library Society. Named in honor of Thomas Bonneau, this group involved a number of Charleston's prominent free Black men and it was dedicated to the cultivation of the mind. Communication from William Catto (Minutes of the Bonneau Library Society, 1833) to Richard Holloway, Sr., indicates that the main purpose of the society was for literary improvement and the development of the members' mental faculties. The postscript of the same letter also reminded Holloway that the next meeting would be held in a few days at the schoolhouse of Daniel A. Payne. It is quite impressive that Payne, at such a young age, was counted in their number. His membership and standing in this group granted him rare access to one of America's most elite, free Black communities.

However, Payne did not use his position to become an elitist or an exclusivist like many free persons of color that he often associated with in Charleston. He demonstrated a willingness to follow the example of the Minors Moralist Society by providing a full scholarship for one young boy who had no father. Although he did not know it at the time, this act of good will would prove to be as much benefit to Payne as it was to the young boy. The boy's sister, knowing of his love for insects, gave Payne a caterpillar apparently out of appreciation for his taking in her brother. Payne was unable to classify it and he began to seek out anyone that could help him. His quest ended with the prominent South Carolina naturalist, Dr. John Bachman. Bachman assisted him in determining the species of the caterpillar and continued to have Payne over to his home. Payne was astonished that he and the Bachman family conversed openly as if they were

all one race (Payne, 1888, p. 24). This relationship proved to be critical as new events unfolded in South Carolina in the mid-1830s.

In 1834, Payne faced his greatest challenge as an educational leader up to that point. The South Carolina Legislature amended an existing law with regard to Blacks and education. The new version of the law, originally passed in 1740, while South Carolina was still a colony, stated that no one was allowed to teach any Black person to read or write, and no Black person was allowed to operate any school for free or enslaved Blacks. The fines and punishment varied. Whites convicted were fined a maximum of \$100 and sentenced to no more than 6 months in jail. Free persons of color, if found guilty, were to be fined a maximum of \$50, placed in prison at the discretion of the court, and to be whipped with no more than 50 lashes. Slaves, convicted, were to be whipped no more than 50 lashes (Payne, 1888, p. 27).

It is not surprising that the impact of this new law had an immediate and devastating impact on Payne and his school. As he reflected years later on the experience, he strongly felt that the law was pointed directly at his school. He came to this conclusion based on an incident that occurred some 6 months before the passage of the law. Payne has been largely unchallenged on this interpretation of the role his school played in the passage of the law of 1834. An examination into Payne's conclusion is warranted, in that his decision to close the school and move from Charleston was influenced by the belief that this new law was targeted directly at him.

According to Payne (1888), the law came about in the following way (pp. 25-26). In the summer of 1834, he sent three of his advanced students to find and capture a highland moccasin snake for his zoology class. These students (John Lee, Robert Wishan,

and Michael Eggart) were to secure the services of a local slave on the Kennedy plantation to assist them in their task. When they arrived at the plantation, they were stopped by Attorney Lionel Kennedy and his son, Dr. Kennedy. The children and Payne were all known to Kennedy and his son, yet he began to ask questions about the type of school they were attending. After the children explained what they had learned at school, Kennedy's son stated that Payne was "playing hell in Charleston" (Payne, 1888, p. 26).

The result of the incident was clear to Payne:

SOON [sic] after the opening of the General Assembly of South Carolina in December, 1834, a bill was drawn up by *two lawyers from Charleston*, it was said, who were members of the Legislature. It was fully discussed, passed both houses, and became a law to be enforced April 1, 1835. (Payne, 1888, p. 27)

The use of italics on the "two lawyers from Charleston" belongs to Payne and was clearly meant to provide a strong suggestion to his belief that the events were more than a mere coincidence. Payne stops short, however, of saying directly that the law was aimed at his school as a result of the incident on the Kennedy plantation.

Kennedy, like many in his day, was a complicated and contradictory personality. While he loved liberty and freedom from tyranny, his conception of freedom did not include Blacks and slaves. It was, in fact, Kennedy who pronounced sentence on Vesey co-conspirator, Gullah Jack in 1822. In passing down the verdict and the death sentence on Gullah Jack, Kennedy seemed shocked and offended that Jack and others would contemplate the use of force and violence to break free from slavery (Hamilton, 1822, p. 50). However, Kennedy was comfortable with the use of force and violence against the

British exerted by the participants of the American Revolution as evidenced in a speech he delivered in 1813 in honor of the Fourth of July:

Let us then cherish in their purity, the sacred feelings and principles of '76; our freedom will be erected on a bright and immoveable base: remotest ages will participate in the blessings we enjoy, and America, now the only Republic on earth, will become the PARENT of UNIVERSAL EMANCIPATION. (Kennedy, 1813, pp. 21-22)

Apparently for Kennedy, the concept of "universal emancipation" was only for a select group. With Kennedy's background, it is not surprising that Payne distrusted him. Perhaps, however, Payne gave Kennedy too much credit for the passage of the new legislation.

One must ask exactly how plausible Payne's conclusion was in light of historical data surrounding the event. Whether or not his thesis is accurate, it is not difficult to understand how he arrived at such a conclusion. Lionel Kennedy was, after all, more than just any attorney in the city of Charleston. Only 12 years before, he served as one of the lead prosecutors in the case against Denmark Vesey. Payne would have known this detail about Kennedy. More than his many liberal neighbors, Kennedy was an advocate for keeping tight control on the Black population; free or slave. He was one person that had a great deal of respect for the educated Black mind and would have likely erred on the side of caution due to his time spent on the Vesey trial.

However, the forces at work surrounding the passage of the law seem to point far beyond the Kennedy plantation incident. To begin with, Carter G. Woodson's aforementioned timeline is useful. Woodson suggested that 1835 was the height of the

insurrection movement and the point where White opinion in the South turned against Black education. According to Woodson (1919/1968), the major movements turning Whites against educating Blacks were driven by the industrial revolution and the fundamental shift it made in the nature of slavery from paternalistic to economic, the fear of abolitionists from outside the South, and the threat of organized revolt led by educated Blacks (p. 152). It was unfortunate timing for Payne (at least in the short term) that his school reached its height at the end of the period of tolerance for educating Blacks in the South.

This negative reaction throughout the South against educating Blacks had its foundation in real events. In 1829, David Walker published his *Appeal*, a scolding attack on the institution of slavery and a call to arms for fellow Blacks to rise up and violently throw off their oppression. Although Walker died of unknown causes 1 year later, the work generated a great deal of excitement and anxiety in the South. Walker was not alone in publishing his anti-slavery sentiments. William Lloyd Garrison, the outspoken abolitionist, began publishing the *Liberator* in early 1831, calling for an end to slavery. The actions of Nat Turner were of even greater consequence than the stinging words of Walker and Garrison. In the summer of 1831, Turner (who had been well educated by his master) led a bloody uprising in Virginia that left some 60 Whites dead. Although Turner was captured, the attack shook the core of the South. The occasion of the revolt caused Governor James Hamilton of South Carolina to ask the governor of Virginia to tell him firsthand the details of Turner's insurgency. Gov. John Floyd of Virginia complied and sent him correspondence that placed the blame of the insurrection on northern agitators and religious leaders who stirred up the slaves and free Blacks (Floyd, 1831). This

interpretation certainly did not aid those who sought to further education among Blacks. Add to all of this that in the summer of 1834, the British Parliament took a major step toward abolishing slavery by passing the British Emancipation Act. This move emboldened northern abolitionists, like Garrison, who vowed to set up groups throughout the South in an effort to bring down the system of slavery in America, as well (Cornelius, 1991, pp. 42-43).

Well before the law of 1834 in South Carolina, similar ordinances were appearing throughout the South in an effort to prevent Blacks from reading and writing. In fact, South Carolina was late in passing such legislation when compared to its neighbors. Woodson (1919/1968) provides a helpful summary of these “reactionary” laws (pp. 160-165). In 1823, Mississippi made it unlawful for a gathering of more than five Blacks for the purpose of education. Louisiana made it illegal to teach slaves to read or write in 1830, followed by Georgia the next year. Also in 1831, Virginia extended its ban on teaching to include free Blacks. Alabama adopted similar legislation in 1832, prohibiting the instruction of any Black person. So much fear about insurrection surrounded the South that in 1831, Mississippi gave all free Blacks 90 days to leave the state. Again, this timeline is helpful in making clear that the incidents in South Carolina did not occur in a vacuum.

Although Payne only identified Kennedy as one of the two Charleston lawyers responsible for the new law, the other person he referred to was most likely Whitemarsh Seabrook who was widely considered the architect of the law (Cornelius, 1991; Powers, 1994). Seabrook, a member of the State Legislature and future governor of the state, had in fact sought (unsuccessfully) to pass the same law in the previous year. Like Seabrook’s

failed attempt, the City Council of which Kennedy was a member had also tried to encourage the State Senate to pass such a law as far back as 1828 (J. Johnson, 1828). Seabrook and Kennedy indeed shared similar attitudes about Blacks and the necessity to keep tight control. Kennedy, as prosecutor of the Vesey trial, was known to be an advocate of limiting opportunities for Blacks. Seabrook, like Kennedy, hoped to use his office to curb the Black advance. In 1850, as governor, he sought to expel from the state all free persons of color who did not own property (Drago, 1990, p. 25). The fact that Seabrook sought to pass the law banning education for Blacks originally in 1833 casts doubt on Payne's theory in that his students were not confronted by Kennedy until 1834, one year later. Seabrook, himself trained at Princeton, began his crusade to end Black literacy as far back as 1825 (Cornelius, 1991, p. 39).

However, these facts do not necessarily rule out the possibility that the incident at Kennedy's plantation had nothing to do with the passage of the law. It could be that Kennedy and Seabrook worked together on its passage and used Payne's school as evidence to persuade their colleagues who voted against the measure in the previous year to now change their position and vote in the affirmative. Seabrook was well known for playing on the fears of Whites, and the advanced curriculum offered by Payne (without any White supervision) in a climate of growing distrust may have been what many needed to push them over to his opinion. While it is difficult to establish the link Payne seeks to make, it is not totally out of the question. The explosive charge set to destroy hopes of educating Blacks was set long before Payne stepped on the scene, but it is possible (though not very plausible) that his successful school could have been the match used to light the fuse.

Regardless of a Payne tie with Seabrook and Kennedy, the movement toward outlawing education for Blacks must be understood in its larger context and connection with unfolding events in the region and the nation. The move toward limited educational opportunity in Charleston was likely to happen with or without the presence of Payne's school. In fact, had Payne kept his eye on the "big picture" in the South, he would not have been surprised at the passage of the law but would have been (and should have been) expecting it. As pointed out above, it was clear that the sentiment in the South was changing rapidly in favor of those who sought to clamp down on Black freedom.

*Payne Prepares to Depart Charleston*

These events weighed heavily on Payne. After having a dream about teaching in the North, he consulted a number of his supporters about leaving Charleston. He spoke with Rev. William Capers (the aforementioned missionary to the slaves), Dr. Benjamin Palmer, Dr. John Bachman, Bishop Gadsen, Rev. Kennedy his pastor, and Samuel Weston his class leader. Each of these men approved of Payne's decision to move north. The fact that they all agreed should not be surprising. Payne sought counsel from an extremely conservative group. Rev. Capers, for example, was a supporter of education for Blacks. However, he was also very much tied into the system of slavery and one of the most outspoken activists over the issue within the Methodist Episcopal Church. Samuel Weston, the only person of color included in the list, was certainly not known as one to go against the establishment. Payne received letters of introduction from each of them, except Weston. The letters tended to share the belief that what occurred to Payne was the will of God. Bachman's letter is enlightening:



Daniel A. Payne: A mysterious providence has so ordered it that your usefulness in the profession you have chosen is at an end in your native city. *Yield submissively* [italics added] to the laws of the land; do your duty and trust in God, and all will most assuredly be overruled for your future good. (Payne, 1888, p. 36)

Such interpretations freed Bachman and others of any responsibility in overturning such laws. However, not many of the Blacks (free or slave) who were injured due to its consequence would have hardly considered it “providence” or God’s will. One can only imagine how different Payne’s course of action would have been had he sought out the advice of the less conservative and more radical members of the community.

In deciding to depart South Carolina, Payne entered a growing movement for free Blacks during the 1830s. Unlike the previous four decades that witnessed dramatic growth among the free Black population, this was the first decade that saw a decline in their numbers. The free Black population dropped from 2,107 in 1830 to 1,558 in 1840 (Powers, 1994). Although the number of free Blacks would again double before the end of the Civil War, this was a trying time for this segment of the population. Payne’s choice to follow this trend north has been often mischaracterized by Payne biographers. There is a significant difference between Payne “choosing” to leave versus Payne being “forced” to leave. His narrative does not reveal any account of an authority demanding the closing of the school, nor is there any evidence that he was ever told to leave the state. To the contrary, Payne closed his school before the law ever took effect without as much as a word from any government agency. However, his departure has often been misrepresented. Campbell’s (1995) words are typical of the manner in which this episode is depicted when he says that Payne “fled” to the North after his school was “forced” to

close (p. 37). The image of Payne fleeing is one that conjures a person being hunted or driven out and clearly overstates the case. Cornelius (1991) takes this image a step further by suggesting that Payne was forced into "exile" (p. 37). Powers' (1994) account is closer to what Payne's own narrative suggests occurred:

Such legislation was offered in direct response to the level of educational activity maintained by Charleston's blacks....Because of this legislation, Daniel Payne became so disenchanted with his continued prospects as an educator in Charleston that he closed his school and moved to Philadelphia. (p. 54)

It cannot be overemphasized that the closing of his school and his moving to Philadelphia were both done voluntarily. The decision to close the school and move away speaks to the issue of his leadership and the lessons that he learned. If Payne would have considered the law of 1834 in its larger context rather than viewing it as an attack on him personally, he may have been able to continue his school and keep the doors open when the climate changed.

The actions taken to prevent the educating of Blacks in Charleston reached a high in the mid-1830s and created new barriers, but it was never enough to eradicate the presence of schools for Blacks. Drago (1990) asserts that this new legislation, with its array of punishments, was not sufficient to end the quest for education among Charleston's Black community (p. 38). There is a great deal of agreement among researchers on this point. According to Birnie (1927), "the part [of the law] relating to free persons of color was simply ignored" (p. 18). As many had predicted, the law became another dead letter. Schools for free Blacks in Charleston continued through the Civil War.

For Payne, however, the end of teaching in Charleston arrived on the last day of March, 1835. During the final week, the parents and visitors witnessed open examinations of his students in various subjects: orthography, orthoepey [sic], reading, writing, arithmetic, history, botany, descriptive astronomy, natural philosophy, and composition (Payne, 1888, p. 35). The closing of the school had a devastating impact on the parents of the students, as well. The parents of Payne's students were well organized and even had elected officers. The group met on March 31, 1835, to approve a resolution in support of Payne and to recommend him to the "Colored Brethren" in the North "as a Teacher of Youth and in every way worthy of being encouraged in that employment" (Smith, 1896, p. 24). The resolution, signed by the president, Thomas Ingles and the secretary, John Mishaw, also confirms that Payne was self educated and that he taught courses unavailable at other schools in the area. John Mishaw took Payne into his own home and paid for his expenses up until his departure from South Carolina. Mishaw's son, Robert, was one of the three students Payne sent to the Kennedy plantation. If the perception was shared by others that the law was in fact in retaliation against Payne, it is plausible that Mishaw covered Payne's expenses from a feeling of guilt. Whatever the reason, his last days in Charleston were made comfortable by the Mishaw family.

#### *New Experiences in the North*

On May 9, 1835, Payne set sail for New York City. Upon arriving in New York, Payne's first visit led him to the home of a Black clergyman in the Protestant Episcopal Church. While visiting with the Reverend Peter Williams, Payne presented his letter of introduction from Bishop Gadsen. As they spoke, Rev. Williams received a young visitor seeking financial assistance so that he could attend the school of Miss Prudence Crandal.

Rev. Williams gave him \$10 toward his tuition. This act so inspired Payne that he gave him \$2, in spite of the fact that he only had \$40 himself. The young man, Alexander Crummel, would grow to become one of the most important clergymen of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Payne, in that small act of aiding in scholarship, again demonstrated a commitment toward the education of his race. Reflecting some 50 years later on the experience of meeting Crummel in 1835, Payne's words are insightful as to his views on the relationship of finance and education:

How much silver and gold is wasted, sinfully wasted, upon human pleasures, which degrade their votaries, but which might be successfully employed in the diffusion of knowledge, the drilling of the gifted intellect for leadership under the command of God's anointed Commander to the people! (1888, p. 43)

Although the meeting with Rev. Williams was pleasant, it did not amount to any concrete opportunities for Payne. He then took letters of introduction to leaders of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Protestant Episcopal Church, and the Congregational Church. Each of these religious bodies suggested that Payne go to Africa as a missionary. Payne refused to accept that his role was to serve as a missionary abroad and continued to seek out opportunities in the United States (Payne, 1888, p. 44).

Payne next went to the Reverend Strobel of the Lutheran Church and presented a letter of introduction by Dr. Bachman, the botanist. Strobel told Payne that the Society of Inquiry on Missions (the student organization) at Gettysburg Seminary in Pennsylvania had recently "resolved to educate a talented, pious young man of color for the intellectual, moral, and social elevation of the free colored people in this country" (Payne, 1888, p. 44). It is ironic that the meeting in which the students gathered to set up the

scholarship occurred on March 4, 1835, the same time Payne was making preparations to close his school and move to the North (Strobert, 2001, p. 29). Payne asserted to Rev. Strobel that his goal was to be an educator, not a minister. Strobel, however, replied to Payne's concern by suggesting that "if you should not enter the ministry, your training in theology will make you more useful in the school-room" (Payne, 1888, p. 45). This obviously struck a chord with Payne, who went away for 3 days to consider the offer. During the next 3 days, he read up on Lutheran doctrine and then returned to Strobel. After Payne was assured that he would not be obliged to enter the ministry nor accept the Lutheran doctrine, and that he would not be compelled to go to Africa as a missionary, he accepted the scholarship.

Payne was now in position to receive a graduate level education at no cost as a result of his friendship with John Bachman. Payne, however, would not have likely made that friendship had he not been generous enough himself to take in a student for no cost. It was, after all, the aforementioned sister of the fatherless student that attended his school on scholarship that opened the door for him to meet Bachman in the first place. In his later years, Payne (1888) reflected on the significance of the "caterpillar incident" in relation to his lifelong career as an educator:

That worm! That worm! that [sic] curious, beautiful worm!...From that worm sprung up an acquaintance with that great naturalist who gave me those letters of introduction to the Lutheran clergy, who placed me in the theological seminary at Gettysburg, which prepared me for the enlarged usefulness of more than fifty-three years. (pp. 333-334)

His small sacrifice of free tuition made in Charleston now came back to him in the form of a full scholarship to Gettysburg Seminary.

Payne's trip to New York City also changed his view on education and emancipation. Prior to leaving South Carolina, Payne held the view that slaves should be educated before emancipation in order that they might be able to enjoy freedom. Payne's views on slavery were probably influenced by several factors. First, he had been born free and did not have personal knowledge of the institution. Secondly, many of the persons who had a great deal of influence over him were themselves slaveholders. Thomas Bonneau, his teacher and mentor, held slaves on his plantation and passed them on to his wife at the time of his death (Fitchett, 1947, p. 436). However, once Payne arrived in the hotbed of abolitionist activity, his views were called into question. Payne shared his view with Lewis Tappan, an abolitionist, who quickly responded:

"Don't you know that men can't be educated in a state of slavery?" He then convinced me in a few words that education and slavery were antagonistic and could not exist together—that the one must crush out the other. (Payne, 1888, p. 50)

From that time on through the end of the Civil War, Payne held the view for total and immediate emancipation.

Payne began his studies at Gettysburg in July 1835, as the first Black seminarian in the school's history, and he became one of a handful of Blacks pursuing higher education in the United States. At Gettysburg, he was exposed to the teaching and leadership of the president, Samuel Simon Schmucker. Schmucker was an outspoken abolitionist whose thoughts about slavery were well documented. Payne read his *Popular*

*Theology* while in New York as he wrestled with whether or not to attend the seminary. The reading of the text was cited by Payne as sufficient to settle his mind that Lutheran teachings were not in conflict with his own Methodist understanding (Payne, 1888, p. 45). The candid Schmucker was a stark contrast to former Payne mentors like Dr. Palmer of Charleston who had only whispered thoughts about the end of slavery within the repressive walls of Charleston (Payne, 1888, p. 44).

Once on campus, Payne settled into life as a student again. His curriculum included Greek, Hebrew, Sacred Geology, Sacred Chronology, Biblical and Profane History, and Biblical Antiquities (Strobert, 2001, p. 31). Payne was also involved in the extracurricular life of the school, joining the student group that made his scholarship available. Although he was grateful for the opportunity of studying at Gettysburg, Payne continued to lament over Charleston. He particularly missed his students and school. This longing for his old surroundings possibly led him to seize opportunity in his present situation.

In 1835, shortly after he arrived on campus, Payne realized that there was no provision for the instruction of Black children in the town of Gettysburg. Payne approached the administration of the seminary and secured the use of an old building on campus for a new Sunday School for children in the town. According to Payne, he rounded up as many of the children in the neighborhood as he could and utilized seminary personnel and local persons to serve as teachers. For Payne, however, most of his free time would be spent in nearby Carlisle where his role as an educational leader would have even more of an impact.

It was in Carlisle that he first began to interact with the members of the AMEC. Discovering that the White Methodist church in Gettysburg was served by a pro-slavery pastor from Maryland, he decided to worship with the AMEC. Here, he made connections with other educators in the area, most notably a White woman by the name of Sarah Bell. Miss Bell ran a school that offered elementary education and Payne's diary, as cited by Coan, reflects that he often visited (Coan, 1935). Her school was operated in the basement of the AMEC in Carlisle. Payne addressed the school once on the subject of temperance and was shocked to discover that the parents of many of the children objected to Miss Bell's teaching on the subject. After viewing the exercises on one particular visit, Payne commented that he was "extremely pleased" (Coan, 1935, p. 42).

Also during his time at Gettysburg, Payne moved his educational efforts in a new direction. On Thursday, March 5, 1836, Payne met with a group of women for the purpose of organizing The Female Moral and Mental Improvement Society of Carlisle. In addition to dealing with moral issues, Payne taught them a secular curriculum. His diary makes continued reference to his meeting with the group when he visited Carlisle. Payne once walked 25 miles in one day from Gettysburg to Carlisle (the longest trip he had ever made by foot) in order to deliver grammar textbooks to the group and to begin their instruction in other areas such as geography. By Payne's (1888) account, the group had become strong, and he would often call them forward for their recitations (pp. 40-41).

In a move reminiscent of his own encounter with Thomas Bonneau, Payne also became the private tutor of two pupils in Carlisle, John and George Peck. Although we



know little about the course of study used with his tutees, his prayer is helpful in understanding how he viewed the seriousness of their education:

Give me the Sanctity and wisdom which is actually necessary for me to have in order that I may educate my 2 scholars in a manner pleasing to thee, ... Make their minds like the new molter [sic] was, that I may be able effectually to write upon them the lessons of eternal wisdom. (Coan, 1935, p. 37)

John served as an ordained minister in the AMEC and would later prove to be a Payne ally in ushering in reforms for an educated clergy. The work of Payne in educating AMEC clergy started several years before he was actually given credit.

Most of Payne's free time was spent in Carlisle. In Carlisle, he found a vibrant AMEC that welcomed him and extended the rights of membership without joining (Coan, 1935, p. 28). He was able to converse with fellow educators like Miss Bell. In Carlisle, he found eager students such as the Ladies Mental and Moral Improvement Society and the Peck brothers. Carlisle provided a place where he could find social connections and exercise his gifts as an educational leader. Payne had firmly established himself as an educational leader in both Gettysburg and Carlisle in the short space of 2 years. When he was not studying or teaching, however, the remainder of his free time was spent in religious activities where he preached a great deal in the AMEC in Carlisle.

Although Payne had been preaching for almost 2 years, he had not made a conscious decision to enter the ministry as a vocation. His efforts to this point had been the duty of any Christian, as far as he was concerned. Yet, in 1837, events would again occur that would send his life in a new direction. The problem with his eyesight that began in 1832 when he witnessed the solar eclipse flared up again and rendered him

unable to continue his studies. During this hiatus from his schoolwork, he had an experience that led him to believe that he was being called into full-time ministry. Lying on his bed troubled by his future prospects, he felt the presence of God in a way that left him saying "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel!" (Payne, 1888, p. 62). Payne turned to Dr. Schmucker for advice and direction. Schmucker advised that he would be of more usefulness as a minister in the AMEC, rather than the Lutheran Church. Even though his studies were not completed, Payne decided to follow the call of his new vocation. Strobert (2001) contends that Payne's termination of his seminary experience without graduating was not at all uncommon for students at that time and that the number of those completing the entire course of study was small by comparison to those that did not (p. 33). With 2 years behind him, Schmucker gave Payne a sound letter of endorsement:

As you are about to leave the institution in which for about two years you have been pursuing a course of study preparatory to the holy ministry, it affords me unfeigned pleasure to testify that the effect of our daily intercourse during this time has been in unwavering confidence in the integrity of your purposes and the excellence of your character. (Payne, 1888, p. 63)

Heeding the words of his president, Payne packed up and headed for Philadelphia, the birthplace of the AMEC with the intent of joining.

#### *First Experiences in Full-Time Ministry*

Before he could unite with the AMEC, however, Payne encountered a long time family friend from Charleston. After disclosing his intent on joining with the AMEC, the friend persuaded him to change his mind by explaining that many of the ministers were against education. As evidence, he offered the following testimony:

In proof of this he said that it was a common thing for the preachers of that Church to introduce their sermons by declaring that they had "not rubbed their heads against college-walls," at which the people would cry, "Amen!" they had "never studied Latin or Greek," at which the people would exclaim, "Glory to God!" they had "never studied Hebrew," at which all would "shout." (Payne, 1888, p. 64)

If true, this placed the denomination at the polar opposite of all that Payne stood for and believed. In his own words, "preferring peace rather than strife," Payne returned to the Lutheran Church where he was eventually ordained into the ministry (1888, p. 65).

This encounter is very much like the closing of his school in Charleston. It is difficult to imagine why he would allow one conversation to dissuade him from joining the denomination. For 2 years, he had worked closely with the AMEC in Carlisle. However, like the Charleston experience, Payne gave up without even putting forth the effort to see if the church was truly as his friend described.

Although ordained a Lutheran, Payne did not receive a church in his new denomination. Yet, it was not long before he was offered his choice of three congregations; the churches were in New York City, Philadelphia, and East Troy, New York. The former was a Protestant Episcopal Church and the latter two were Presbyterian. Lutheran officials of the Franckean Synod gave Payne permission to serve and he accepted the call of the Presbyterian church in East Troy in 1837. While he served this mission congregation as a supply pastor, there is little evidence that he provided much educational leadership to the Troy community. This was the only time in his professional career that the schoolroom or some other form of educational leadership was

not a dominant part of his daily life. Payne did organize The Mental and Moral Improvement Association, another women's group like the one he formed in Carlisle. However, unlike the first group where Payne taught grammar and geography, this group was focused more on "temperance and moral reform" (Coan, 1935, p. 55). The absence of any verification of his educational efforts may be due in part to his feelings of inadequacy as a pastor which caused him to preoccupy his time with his new congregation:

Thus I commenced my career as a pastor at a little more than twenty-six years of age. With no pastoral experience, I deeply felt my own insufficiency and need of more than human counsel, of more than human aid, and found it necessary to spend much time on my knees both in praying and studying out my sermons.

(Payne, 1888, p. 65)

In addition to these feelings, he took his new role very seriously and he became "anxious to convert every impenitent sinner on the spot" (Payne, 1888, p. 68). Payne would often spend all day Sunday in prolonged worship services in order to produce spiritual revival (Killian, 1971).

In addition to his church responsibilities, the community quickly called on him to provide leadership. Payne was elected by the Black citizens of Troy to represent them in Philadelphia at the National Moral Reform Society (Payne, 1888, p. 66). While attending the meeting, he met some of the most prominent Black activists in the nation. As he returned to Troy from the convention, he was invited to preach at the Shiloh Presbyterian Church in New York City. As a result of this speaking engagement, he was offered a \$300 a year job (plus expenses) as a lecturer for the Anti Slavery Society. Again, Payne

was faced with a vocational challenge. He turned to a confidant for counsel, an attorney in Troy, who offered the following words of advice:

I turned aside from my chosen profession to engage in work which others had marked out for me, and now I repent that I did. I think God has called you to the pulpit, and therefore advise that you stick to theology and the work of the Christian ministry. (Payne, 1888, p. 68)

Payne resolved to continue in the ministry and he declined the offer by the society. A change for Payne, however, was coming with or without his consent.

His short time as pastor in the Presbyterian Church was coming to a close almost as soon as it had started. In an effort to save as many souls as he could, Payne often held long worship services that ended with prolonged periods of prayer. Payne preached so “long and loud” during one such service at the end of 1837 that he ruptured a gland in his throat and was left unable to speak for a full year (1888, p. 68). Additionally, he came down with a severe cold that kept him bedridden from January through April of 1838. After his lengthy illness, Payne resigned from his church. Regaining his voice, he returned for a short while to Carlisle. He decided that until he could find a new church to serve, he would go back to what he knew best and open a new school. Payne chose Philadelphia as the location, and in the early part of 1840 he resumed his career as a primary school leader.

### *Back to the Classroom*

Once in Philadelphia, Payne went to work recruiting students for his school. Similar to the Charleston experience, he began this school with only three students, all children of the Reverend Joseph Corr. According to Payne’s (1888) account, there were

only two other “select” schools besides his and a handful of primary schools (p. 72). By the end of the year, both of the select schools had closed because their students chose to attend Payne’s school, thus increasing his enrollment to 60 scholars. Contrary to Payne’s depiction, Woodson (1919/1968) provides a more descriptive and complex picture of education among Blacks in 1840s Philadelphia. He notes that numerous schools were open and had “developed to the extent that they seemed like a system” (Woodson, 1919/1968, p. 146). Citing data provided in a report published in 1849 entitled the *Statistical Inquiry into the Condition of Colored People in and about Philadelphia*, Woodson (1919/1968) reported that there were 1,643 pupils in the city by 1849.

While in Philadelphia, Payne began to associate with a number of persons within the AMEC, namely Bishop Morris Brown. Brown, the second bishop in the AMEC, was also a native of Charleston. As discussed in chapter 2, Brown served as pastor of the AMEC in that city from 1815-1822 until the effects of the Vesey incident pressured it to close. When the church ceased to operate in Charleston, Brown moved to the North and continued his work with the AMEC, eventually rising to the top office. The new relationship with Brown and others led Payne to identify more closely with the AMEC and he soon overcame his earlier objection, joining the denomination in 1841.

As indicated in the introduction, it is difficult to make a clear break from Payne’s role as leader in elementary and secondary education and his leadership role in clergy education within the AMEC. The two roles began to overlap with one another beginning in 1842. During that same year, after only a short time in the AMEC ranks, he introduced his first resolution for an educated clergy. However, by 1843 (though Payne was a full

member of the AMEC clergy), he still served as leader of his school. This dual vocation as school leader and pastor continued until 1850.

In 1843, Bishop Brown requested that Payne serve as pastor of the Israel AMEC in Washington, DC. After prayerful consideration and overcoming his objection of returning to a part of the country that still maintained the institution of slavery, Payne prepared to leave Philadelphia (Payne, 1888, p. 74). He left the school in the care of the Reverend Alexander Crummel of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Crummel was the same young man who benefited from Payne's generosity almost 10 years before. Payne hoped that his new duty in Washington would not last more than 1 year and that he would soon be able to return to his responsibilities at the school. His hopes, however, were not realized as 1 year turned into 2 years. During the 2 years in Washington, Payne found an opportunity to use his teaching skills. Evidence of this is gleaned from his diary entry of July 22, 1844, where he writes on that afternoon, he went to hear the recitations of his "Sicentific [sic] and Literary class" (Coan, 1935, p. 64). Unfortunately, no additional evidence can be found that supports his effort to teach in Washington.

The amount of information known about his next (and last) primary and secondary educational effort, by contrast, was a very different story. In 1845, Payne was moved from Washington, DC to Baltimore to take charge of the historic Bethel AMEC. The new appointment consisted of three congregations and a membership of roughly 1,500 persons. By now, Payne had developed a reputation within the church as an educator. Perhaps as a result of this well-known status, he was approached by one of his members who pleaded with him to teach her children. The mother, a wife of a local AMEC preacher, was so unrelenting that Payne finally gave in to her demand and began

lessons in his home. Soon, others heard about the "school" and Payne again found himself at the head of a class of about 50 pupils. According to Payne (1888), the school was kept open from 1845 through 1852, and operated daily from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. In addition to teaching all of the English branches, he also included Greek and Latin. The school gained national recognition in 1852 when Martin Delany listed Payne among the "Literary and Professional Colored Men and Women" in the United States:

To extend his usefulness, he joined the African Methodist Connexion [sic], and for several years resided in Baltimore, where he taught an Academy for colored youth and maidens, gaining the respect and esteem of all who had the fortune to become acquainted with him. (p. 124)

This would, however, be his last effort in the lower branches of educational leadership.

*Summary.*

In 1850, Payne left the responsibilities of full-time pastor and spent 2 years doing research on the history of the AMEC as the first Historiographer (Dickerson, n. d.). During the 2 years he collected data on the history of the church, the school remained open (Payne, 1888, p. 79). At the end of his search, he was elected and consecrated a bishop, thus bringing to a close his career as an elementary and secondary school leader. For over 20 years, he started schools where they did not previously exist. Although none of his schools remain open for further examination, we have the lives, careers, and testimony of his former students as means of examining the result of his efforts. Many of his former pupils went on to use education for their advancement and the advancement of others.



Picking up where Payne and her father Thomas left off, Frances Bonneau became an educator. She operated her own school in Charleston in the 1850s. She and her sisters had been under Payne's tutelage before he left for the North. Frances apparently was very successful and was able to charge more than three times the tuition Payne received (Birnie, 1927, p. 21). The Reverend John Peck, a Payne student in Gettysburg, went on to serve as a preacher in the AMEC. Peck would likewise follow in Payne's footsteps by advocating an educated clergy (Payne, 1891, p. 169).

Payne's influence as an elementary and secondary school leader reached as far as the state of Kentucky. William H. Gibson distinguished himself as a teacher in Louisville, Kentucky. Before his family moved from Baltimore in 1847, however, he credits his early education to Payne's school. Gibson noted that he took classes in English and Latin grammar from Payne (Simmons, 1887, p. 545). Another Kentucky educator exposed to Payne's teaching was the president of the State University at Louisville, Alexander Tardiff. Tardiff and his siblings received their early education at home from their uncle, William Simmons. Simmons was a slave at the time of his study with Payne in Charleston. Simmons later left the South for Philadelphia, but passed on his education from Payne to his family (Simmons, 1887, p. 41).

Not all of Payne's former students embraced his understanding and views on education. Two of his former students in his advanced class in Charleston rose to positions of leadership among free persons of color in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Charleston. Michael Eggart and Robert Mishaw both played prominent roles in the Friendly Moralist Society, an elite mulatto organization founded in 1838 around similar principles that guided predecessor groups like the Minors Moralist Society and the Brown Fellowship

Society. The mulattos increasingly felt that they occupied a “middle ground” between the hatred of dark skinned Blacks and the prejudice of the Whites (Poole, 1994). The only way some felt they could protect their position was to distance themselves from the Blacks and ingratiate themselves with the Whites. The Society was intent on retaining its privileged position with Whites by allowing only light or brown skinned mulattos to join. In 1844, Mishaw led a successful campaign to deny the admission of a new member based on the candidate’s previous association with a group of darker skinned free Blacks, The Society of Black Men (Johnson & Roark, 1984, p. 214). But it was Eggart who took this notion of exclusiveness even further by suggesting that education should be used to put more distance between the mulattos and the darker Blacks, thus putting the group closer to its goal of total acceptance by the Whites. Eggart suggested that free Blacks that were uneducated only intensified White prejudice. To combat this problem, he suggested that the free persons of color hire more teachers to continue to develop the intellectual gifts of the group. Eggart asked the rhetorical question, “And what but Education raises us Above the level of the slaves[?]” He later added, “how much more vivid how much more brighter would the line of separation be between us and the slaves. it [sic] would be so bright that it would Eventually [sic] triumph over the prejudices of the white man” (Powers, 1994, p. 58). Apparently, not all of Payne’s former students shared his views and values with regard to the role of education as a means of inclusion, not exclusion.

Although Payne never operated a school in one place for more than 6 or 7 years, his lessons had a lasting impact on a number of his students. His efforts at providing educational leadership in Charleston are well documented and a well-established part of the state’s history of education. While the other schools are lesser known, they also

provided vital services to communities that were either underserved or not served at all. Equally important for Payne in his new role as a religious leader in the AMEC, his experiences in organizing and leading schools would soon be of benefit as he attempted to provide educational leadership among the ranks of AMEC clergy.

CHAPTER IV  
CLERICAL ROLE: MAKING THE CASE FOR AN EDUCATED CLERGY  
(1841-1856)

By 1844, Payne was serving as a pastor in the AMEC and had helped his new denomination adopt its first set of uniform, educational standards required by all incoming clergy seeking ordination. Innocuous as this statement may seem, this new legislation nearly led to the split of the denomination. Opposing groups held very differing views on how clergy should (and should not) learn on their way toward ordination. Writing almost 50 years later of the events, Payne recalled the experience with language that alluded to a great battle:

These were all vigorous appeals for more learning in our midst, and at the same time indicative of the minds among us already influenced by that great lever in the uplifting of any nation or race. But the causes of a *revolution* [italics added] in the character of our ministry had just begun to be planted like a few seeds in the ground, and they required time to germinate, then to vegetate, and afterwards to bring forth fruit in the ripened *revolution* [italics added]. The African Methodist

Episcopal Church has been progressing steadily from the time that the General Conference of 1844 acted in favor of an educated ministry. (1891, p. 181)

Payne was not the only person that considered the events of 1844 an act of “revolution.” Writing from college shortly after these events occurred in 1844, undergraduate student John M. Brown declared in a letter to George Hogarth:

I have been, however, delighted to learn the course which the General Conference took, in relation to my favorite theme, viz: the education of the ministry. The plans, if carried out, will, in ten years, produce an entire *revolution* [italics added] in the ministry.... I can well recollect, when the idea of an educated ministry was repudiated among our beloved fathers and brethren, but thanks be unto the God of Heaven for our present prospect. (as cited in Payne, 1866a, p. 64)

In many ways, the adoption of the course of studies in 1844 was indeed a revolutionary event in the life of the AMEC. It signaled a turning point for the denomination. The old model of training preachers was quite literally overthrown and a new model took its place. These events, however, did not occur without a fierce struggle.

#### The Struggle to Educate Protestant Clergy

The AMEC was not alone in the fight over how best to teach clergy. In the 1800s, a great number of American Protestant denominations experienced some degree of resistance over the issue of how best to prepare the next generation of preachers. This was a pivotal moment for clergy education. Fraser (1988) states that the manner in which Protestants provided education for clergy experienced significant change in the years between 1740 and 1875. During this time, the first Protestant theological seminary was founded, and by 1875 the current model of educating preachers was firmly in place: 4

years of undergraduate college, followed by 3 years of graduate study in a theological seminary. Most of these changes occurred in the midst of great opposition within the respective denominations. Accordingly, Fraser concludes that theological institutions and movements “were born not out of consensus and cooperation but out of turmoil and disagreement” (1988, p. xiii).

Great “turmoil” and “disagreement” often characterized the manner in which educational initiatives for clergy made their way through the Methodists. In the 1840s, theological seminaries were viewed with distrust by many northern and southern Methodist clergy, regardless of race. Although members of the MEC and the AMEC split in 1787 surrounding the preferential treatment of Whites over Black members, most in both denominations found common ground on their views about the education of clergy. The arguments for and against an educated clergy in the MEC and the AMEC had striking parallels. The proponents of an educated clergy and those opposed of both denominations voiced almost identical arguments to support their claims and to refute the views of others.

From the earliest days of American Methodism, the established method of teaching preachers was done through apprenticeship. Veteran ministers would take young preachers under the wing, so to speak, and teach them the way. Ordination weighed heavily on the recommendation of the older minister. This system had proven very effective in the early days of Methodism when most pastors served on a circuit. These circuit rider preachers would serve as the pastor for any number of churches at one time and would ride on horses from church to church, preaching on their circuit. Many of these preachers educated in the apprentice system saw nothing wrong with the current

arrangement and they were distrustful of anything like seminaries that sought to “manufacture” preachers (Fraser, 1988, p. 110). It is not surprising, then, that the MEC did not open its first theological seminary until 1839, with the AMEC following in 1844, both relatively late compared to similar denominations. Even then, the Newbury Bible Institute (later Boston Theological Seminary) did not have the endorsement of the MEC, but was a singular effort of the New England Annual Conference (Bucke, 1964, p. 568). Likewise, the AMEC had its first effort at establishing a seminary in similar fashion with the work being done by the Ohio Annual Conference in founding the “Union Seminary of the African Methodist Episcopal Church” (later Payne Theological Seminary; Payne, 1891, p. 186; Smith, 1922, p. 368).

A more detailed examination of issues confronting the MEC surrounding the education of clergy provides a necessary context for viewing the work of Payne in the AMEC. By 1816, reliance on the apprentice system began to allow room for more formalized education. The General Conference, the governing body of the MEC, mandated in 1816 that preachers complete a 2-year course of study within their respective Annual Conference to be considered in “full connection” with the church (Bucke, 1964, p. 567). By 1844, this course was lengthened to 4 years. However, in 1816 and in 1844, the MEC met with opposition from clergy in passing these reforms. Fraser’s (1988) analysis is helpful in understanding the concerns of those opposed to the course of study:

The course of study was not adopted without opposition....Any move which might make the preachers less dependent on the Spirit or less directly in touch with the common people—which might replace spontaneity with formalism—was bound to provoke opposition. (p. 92)

In spite of opposition, those who advocated the course of study eventually prevailed in both instances. The course was largely viewed as a fair compromise in that it allowed for more emphasis on academic preparation while still granting room for the apprentice model to co-exist.

Necessary courses were left up to the Annual Conference to decide and they often varied. The Illinois Annual Conference in 1827, for example, required the following courses: the Bible, Methodist doctrine and church government, English grammar, ancient history, church history, moral and natural philosophy, logic, and geography. In providing detail on the subjects and texts required by the Illinois Annual Conference, Bucke (1964) suggested that the courses would have been commonplace in any American college of the day:

Among the twenty-seven texts recommended for study were, of course, the Holy Scriptures, Wesley's *Sermons* and *Notes*, the usual English Methodists' commentaries and theological argumentations, the *Discipline* and *Methodist Magazine*, and for the secular subjects, "Woods or Martindales Dictionary—...Murrays Gramar [sic]—Morse's Geography—Rollins's Ancient History—Mosheims's Ecclesiastical history—Lock[e] on the Understanding—Paley's philosophy—Evidences—Wesley's Philosophy—Duncan's or Watts' Logic." (p. 534).

After almost 20 years with the course of study in place, advocates for theological education began to speak out publicly for the church to do more in educating new preachers. The course of study proved to be only as effective as those who administered it, and the results often met with mixed outcomes. Examinations were not known to be



thorough, and candidates were seldom rejected for a lack of knowledge in the required courses (Bucke, 1964, p. 567).

Speaking out against this and other educational issues related to the clergy in the MEC, Reverend LaRoy Sunderland caused quite a controversy in his "Essay on Theological Education" published in the *Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review* in 1834. Over the next year, he engaged in a very public and testy debate in the pages of the magazine with David M. Reese, M.D., over the issue of the proper manner in educating Methodist clergy. Many of the ideas and concerns expressed by Sunderland, Reese, and others on the subject were very similar to Payne, his own supporters, and opponents.

To begin with, Sunderland proposed that the successful completion of the course of studies be used as a prerequisite for preachers seeking to *enter* the ministry of the MEC, not just those already admitted into the clergy. Up to that point, the course only applied to those who were already active in the MEC clergy. He offered, however, to use the course of studies as an admission requirement, citing that a theological education was now "considered an indispensable prerequisite for persons entering upon the duties of the Christian ministry" (Sunderland, 1834, p. 424). For Sunderland, God was the "patron" of sciences and therefore required that the "priests [sic] lips should keep knowledge" (1834, p. 423). Those who taught others, he declared, should first be educated themselves. While he conceded that the current model of the 19<sup>th</sup> century theological seminary was a new invention, theological education itself was not. He argued that theological education could be found in both Old and New Testaments of the Bible, the history of the Christian Church in every era, and was considered to be necessary by church founder John Wesley.

He suggested that the course of studies, as it was applied, was too limited and often resulted in sending out unqualified preachers:

Do we not often say, practically, that one is qualified to go out into the world in the awful and responsible office of a public teacher of Christian theology, when, in fact; that very person, for all that any of our rules say to the contrary—that very teacher of Christian theology has never read or studied one single book on any subject embraced in the science which he is licensed to *teach* to others! Nay, more: when he himself will tell you, that he has, indeed, never studied any thing enough to acquire a knowledge of the very first principles of his vernacular tongue! (Sunderland, 1834, p. 429)

While Sunderland's call for a more thoroughly educated clergy was rooted in an idea that God required it, he also had another agenda for promoting theological education.

From a practical standpoint, Sunderland argued that it was in the best interest of the MEC to keep up with the requirements of the day simply to remain competitive with other denominations. Local congregations were now demanding an educated clergy, he argued:

Every circuit cries out, "Send us acceptable preachers." How can we do this? We are obliged to take what offers. The time is coming, and now is, when illiterate piety can do no more for the interest and permanency of the work of God than lettered irreligion did formerly. (Sunderland, 1834, p. 427)

The threat of loss was not confined to the membership. There was also the risk of losing the most hopeful young clergy to other denominations who offered them the opportunity

and resources to gain a theological education. For Sunderland, this should not have been surprising:

Need we marvel, my brethren, that some of the brightest and most promising young men in the country leave our congregations, and not unfrequently [sic] our Church, to seek and find an education among another people? And when they are encouraged and helped to an education among another people, do we marvel that they return no more among us? Instances of this kind occur every year, five or six of which, within a short time, have come within my own personal knowledge.

(1834, p. 429)

Indeed, Sunderland was clearly concerned that clergy receive a theological education on the grounds that it was a necessity for any clergy person's full, spiritual development; but he also understood the MEC's reluctance to do more with regard to education for clergy, placed the church in a competitive disadvantage among other denominations.

His most outspoken critic, David Reese, zealously protested Sunderland's views and branded him as a threat to the Methodist idea of ministry. Reese accused him of being an anti-Christian heretic that put forth dangerous doctrines contrary to Methodism (1835b, p. 348). The public argument began with the publication of Reese's response, entitled *Brief Strictures* (1835a). Another round followed later that year with each publishing a rejoinder to the other. The bad blood between the two became so great that the editor of the magazine, Nathan Bangs, told the readership that he refused to publish anything else by the two men on the subject because the controversy had grown so large. Reese, however, was unconcerned about the controversy and considered his attack on Sunderland as a part of his own Christian duty as evinced in his following statement:

If our controversy shall prevent the future agitation of the question, and should the epitaph be written for theological seminaries among the Methodists, I shall rejoice to have contributed in any way to a burial, from which I pray there may never be a resurrection. (1835b, p. 352)

Although the supporters of Reese would eventually lose their war by giving way to the theological seminary model, they were not willing to concede without a fight.

Interestingly enough, many of the opponents of theological education were indeed supporters of an educated clergy. A number of voices in the MEC that spoke out against theological education had themselves attended college and promoted the benefits of higher education (Fraser, 1988). This was particularly the case with Reese. Reese's writings portrayed him as being anything but a friend to an educated clergy:

But while we protest against theological learning being made an '*indispensable prerequisite*' for the ministry of the Gospel, we are free to admit the high importance of sanctified learning, and would fain promote, by every possible means, the diligent and preserving acquisition of every species of useful science upon all those whom God calls to the work. (1835a, p. 113)

It was Sunderland's claim that clergy should possess a theological education *prior* to their admittance into the ranks of Methodist clergy that caused Reese to take exception. As far as he was concerned, the only pre-requirement to enter the ministry was a call from God. He took particular offense to the inference that an illiterate person could not enter the ministry and still find success. This was against his beliefs as a Methodist.

On the other end of the spectrum, Sunderland argued that to deny a proper theological education was also against his beliefs as a Methodist. To clarify himself, he

appealed to the founder of the Methodist Church, John Wesley. Prior to establishing a new denomination, Wesley had been educated at Oxford and prepared for the priesthood of the Church of England. This education, Sunderland asserted, was the equivalent of a modern theological education. Reese, however, was not prepared to allow Sunderland to have the only interpretation of Wesley. He also placed the basis of his argument on Wesley's life and experiences. While conceding that Wesley had been educated in the manner used to train priests in the Church of England, Reese countered that the Oxford education toward the priesthood had been useless in Wesley's preparation in ministry. Reese pointed out that Wesley was made a preacher by his conversion experience, not by his education (1835a, p. 110).

Reese's fear of theological seminaries was not grounded in a fear of educated clergy. He was not opposed to clergy being highly educated; he was opposed specifically to theological education. He was not alone in his apprehension. Many Methodists were wary of any isolated education that would remove the preacher from the experiences of the people they were called to serve (Fraser, 1988, pp. 81-83). More than losing touch with the people, an even greater concern of Reese and others was that the preacher would lose contact with the Spirit:

The great danger, proclaimed again and again in Methodist literature was that exclusive education for those preparing for the ministry in any setting separated from the rest of the population, was that they would lose their spontaneous dependence on the Holy Spirit. (Fraser, 1988, p. 83)

Hence, the debate was not necessarily whether or not Methodist clergy *should* be educated; rather, it was the *type* of education appropriate for the clergy.

The tension between Sunderland and Reese existed around the manner and type of education for clergy that would prevail in the MEC. Reese expressed the view that theological seminaries sought to manufacture preachers in the same manner as any other secular profession. This was a foreign concept to Methodists, with their strong attachment to each preacher being individually called to the ministry by God, rather than choosing the ministry for themselves. He accused Sunderland of trying to “depreciate the holy office of the ministry to the standard of mere secular callings” by promoting this new education (Reese, 1835a, p. 110). In the most significant indictment made by Reese, he accused Sunderland of harboring a hidden agenda in an attempt to covertly establish a theological seminary in the MEC. He was adamant that the establishment of a theological seminary would be the downfall of Methodism as it presently existed:

The name “*theological seminary*” carries with it associations utterly repugnant to the feelings of our people, from the fact, that it is inseparable from the idea of “*men-made ministers*,” by which we mean, those who have no “other qualification than the appointment of men, and human erudition,” a class with which we have no fellowship, and with whom we *love* to have none. And if in the Methodist Church a distinct organization should ever be formed, in which young men are to be placed for a “theological training” to make them ministers, before the Church shall have acknowledged their call of God to this work, the glory will have departed from us as a people, and the purity of the sacred office, that high and holy calling, will be degenerated and degraded into a mere secular profession. (Reese, 1835a, p. 115)

Sunderland responded to this scathing criticism by stating that he always presupposed that those who entered the course of study prior to admission to the MEC clergy were first called by God. He had no argument on that point and it seems that Reese may have misread his *Essay*. Sunderland also staunchly refuted the accusation that he was covertly seeking to set up a separate theological seminary. While it is true that Sunderland never openly suggested that the MEC operate a theological seminary, it is perhaps more than coincidental that the first MEC seminary (opened 4 years after his debate with Reese) credits this same 1834 *Essay* as their genesis (History of Boston Theological Seminary, 2005).

Coming to Sunderland's defense was the editor of the *Magazine*, Nathan Bangs. As editor, Bangs (1835) used his position to advocate on behalf of the initiatives offered by Sunderland. He included in his editorial the full text of John Wesley's address to the clergy, dated February 6, 1756, in an effort to demonstrate that the new views supportive of theological education were in concert with Wesley's teaching. In that address, Wesley argued that clergy should be educated in Greek, Hebrew, history, logic, natural philosophy, geometry, geography, the sciences, and that they should have a good knowledge of the world and of other peoples (Bangs, 1835, pp. 95-105). For Wesley, the most important subject was the study of the Bible. Wesley, however, asserted that in order to understand the Bible, the preacher required a working knowledge of all other disciplines that were found in the Bible. Bangs hoped that by presenting the supportive attitude of Wesley, the argument surrounding theological education would cease and its supporters would no longer be considered "anti-Wesleyan" and "anti-Methodistical [sic]" (1835, p. 105). The debate in the MEC like in the AMEC, however, would not end so

easily. According to Fraser, the argument on how best to educate clergy in the MEC was not finally concluded for another 40 years (1988, p. 145). The former ideas did not completely disappear, but the public debate over the necessity of a theological education had largely come to an end by 1875.

*AMEC Attempts at Clergy Education prior to 1841*

In 1837, Payne departed the Lutheran seminary at Gettysburg intent on joining the ministry of the AMEC. As previously noted, he was deterred by a family friend who advised him that such an action would be a mistake on the grounds that the preachers of that church were anti-intellectual and opposed to educated clergymen. Payne's associate, however, only painted half the picture of the current state of affairs with regard to AMEC clergy and their outlook on education. There were others that held an opposite view and were in full support of an educated clergy in the AMEC. Payne, however, would not discover this fact for almost 4 years. Payne opted instead for membership in the Lutheran Church and was ordained within a month. It is ironic that Payne's fear of anti-intellectualism in the AMEC prevented him from making the trip to Philadelphia, in that the AMEC at that very moment was making its greatest stride to date in the direction of an educated clergy. Had Payne gone to Philadelphia, he would have found himself a welcome visitor amid a group of people receptive to his advanced views on theological education. On May 20, 1837, the Philadelphia ministers of the AMEC were just beginning their session of the Annual Conference. Payne was at the same time preparing to leave Gettysburg, as seen in his letter of recommendation from his Greek and Hebrew professor, C. P. Krauth, dated May 16, 1837 (Payne, 1888, p. 64).



The Annual Conference was a yearly gathering called by the bishop and attended by all preachers of the region that comprised the Annual Conference boundaries. The business conducted was varied, including: presentation of reports by the pastors of their labors over the past year, the ordination of new clergy, the appointment of pastors to churches for the upcoming year, presentation of reports on the status of the church as a whole, and the passing of various resolutions. During this particular session, the Conference was heavily influenced by the supporters of an educated clergy. If he had gone to Philadelphia to unite with the AMEC, Payne would most certainly have been in attendance at this meeting. Visitors outside the denomination were welcome and even participated. One such visitor was William Yates, an attorney from Troy, New York. Yates appeared at the Conference as a representative of the American Anti Slavery Society and delivered an address on the need for an educated clergy. Yates made such an impression on the members of the Conference that a committee was immediately formed to draft a response to his "thrilling address" (Payne, 1891, p. 114). The committee members were William Cornish, John Voight, Stephen Smith, Moore Walker, and Yates (Payne, 1866a, p. 34). The committee worked overnight drafting a resolution in favor of an educated clergy in the AMEC. The next morning, they presented the resolution to the body for its adoption.

The resolution asserted that ministers of the gospel be educated to be considered fully qualified to exercise their responsibilities. However, they recognized that there were few doors of higher education open to Black clergy even in the American North. To that end, they called for the formation of a new committee headed by Bishop Morris Brown to draft an appeal and statement to the presidents of northern colleges and universities that

addressed the needs and desires of the “Church of Christ among the people of color in regard to the ministry, and the obstacles which embarrass candidates for that office in obtaining suitable preparations, and often hinder access even to the ordinary means of education” (Payne, 1891, p. 115). Payne would have been pleasantly surprised to hear the following:

*Resolved*, That as education is the only sure means of creating in the mind those noble feelings which prompt us to the practice of piety, virtue and temperance, and elevate us above the condition of brutes by assimilating us to the image of our Maker; we, therefore, recommend all our preachers to enjoin undeviating attention to its promotion, and earnestly request all our people to neglect no opportunity of advancing it, pledging ourselves to assist them so far as it is in our power. (Payne, 1891, p. 115)

Contrary to the portrait painted for Payne of preachers taking pride in their lack of education, the committee’s report and the adoption by the Conference demonstrated that at least some in the ranks of AMEC clergy were not content with the current level of training.

While this particular resolution was unique in the amount of detail it provided and included the specific call to petition the presidents of colleges and universities to admit Black students, it was by no means rare. The AMEC had been promoting education through its Annual Conferences for several years prior to this meeting; thus this resolution followed a well established pattern. Since the emergence of the first known resolution in the Ohio Annual Conference drafted by the Reverend Lewis Woodson in 1833, Conferences annually expressed their attitude in favor of education in written form

(Payne, 1866a, p. 29). A brief examination into the minutes of the last series of Annual Conferences before Payne joined the AMEC in late 1841 is illuminating in this regard. During this time, all six Annual Conferences of the AMEC passed varying resolutions that addressed the subject of education.

In 1840, the Upper Canada Annual Conference saw the lack of education as such a crisis that it instructed "all the preachers of this Conference preach expressly in favor of education, and encourage it in all our societies" (Minutes of the Upper Canada Annual Conference 1840, 1841, p. 5). Later that year, in September 1840, the Pittsburgh Annual Conference was convened. They took the resolution of Upper Canada a step further and called for the preaching of 4 sermons a year in each church on the importance of education. Preachers that failed to do so were to be held accountable to the Annual Conference. In similar fashion, the Indiana Annual Conference met in October 1840, and encouraged all preachers to meet with parents and their children under their care to discuss the significance of education. They were also encouraged to promote the creation of new schools "in every place where it is possible to have them" (Minutes of the Indiana Annual Conference 1840, 1841, p. 11). In April 1841, the Philadelphia Annual Conference called for the revival of all resolutions on education previously passed, including the above cited resolution from 1837. Meeting in the city of Baltimore in May 1841, the Baltimore Annual Conference reported that they had a day school under their care with one teacher and 50 students and they passed a resolution in favor of encouraging Sunday Schools. Later that month, the New York Annual Conference met and called for the previous resolution on education to be renewed. Although the church had not yet developed a comprehensive plan to address its deficiencies with regard to

education, it continued to keep the issue alive by giving it a priority in each Annual Conference through resolutions.

However, there was growing discontent among some members of the AMEC that the resolutions for an educated clergy needed to move toward more action. To this point in the AMEC's history, no one articulated this concern more clearly than future bishop, 23 year-old John Mifflin Brown. An undergraduate student at Oberlin College, Brown had two of his letters to Editor George Hogarth published in the newly established *African Methodist Episcopal Church Magazine (AMEC Magazine)*. The letters were both critical of the current state of education among AMEC clergy. In correspondence dated November 6, 1840, Brown expressed his frustration that the church continued to pass resolutions in support of education, but did not act on them. His letter, dated April 4, 1841, was published in the same issue. This letter, however, was much longer than the first and the argument was detailed and systematic. He made it clear that it was not an either/or proposition, but the minister needed to be both educated *and* "filled with the Holy Ghost" ("Communications," 1841, p. 51). The problem as he determined was a lack of preachers with the former. Conceding that race and a lack of financial resources were authentic obstacles that prevented many Blacks from receiving an education, Brown maintained that these obstructions did not relieve anyone from their duty of improving their minds through an education. He added that if members of the AMEC ceased in overindulging preachers with expensive food and refrained from spending money on "luxury" items such as coffee and tea, the extra savings could be diverted into scholarships for young men preparing for the ministry ("Communications," 1841, p. 49).

Brown did not offer criticism without suggesting a solution. As a remedy, he offered several correctives for the AMEC. First, he suggested that the financial barrier that prevented students from attending college could be removed by duplicating the plan of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC). This borrowed innovation suggested that each member of the AMEC give \$1 a year toward deferring the cost of a student's college tuition. Brown estimated that tuition averaged about \$60 a year and the plan, if adopted, would be adequate to enroll a number of new AMEC clergy in colleges that were open to Blacks. He also addressed the inequity created for those who could not gain entrance to higher education because of policies that prevented Black enrollment. To subvert this system, he simply suggested that Blacks attend the few schools open to an integrated student body, and he then provided a list of the four known institutions in the North and in Canada. Sounding very much like the early advocates for an educated clergy in the MEC, Brown did not push the issue too far. He went on record to say that he was not advocating a full college education, "but simply provide some way that they can lay a foundation for future improvement" ("Communications," 1841, p. 51). To this end, he recommended that the college portion of the minister's education should only be for 3 years, not the full 4-year course. This would be supplemented by a 4-year course of study within the denomination, taught by members of the AMEC clergy. For those regions that could not secure anyone in the AMEC to teach the required courses, persons outside the church could be used. For those who lived close to New York City, for example, he recommended the Rev. LaRoy Sunderland as a "suitable person to direct what course of studies will be most appropriate for them" ("Communications," 1841, p. 50).

Possibly because Brown was still very young and an undergraduate student at the time of his writing, his recommendations seem to have gone largely unnoticed and unheeded. In fact, his question on the legitimacy of the bishop's office, published in the same correspondence, provoked more controversial responses than his thoughts on education for clergy. Hogarth, like Bangs in the Sunderland-Reese debate, used his position as editor to offer a strong endorsement of those who put forth the pro-education agenda:

The decided stand our brother has taken in the glorious cause of educating our young men for ministry, is highly commendable to him, and requires the approval and co-operation of every member and friend of our church....Go on, dear brother: you may meet with some who may oppose your efforts, but be not discouraged. (Hogarth, 1841, p. 52)

These words of warning became a harbinger of things to come. Although they were directed toward Brown, they would become much more meaningful to Payne and his allies in favor of an educated AMEC clergy in the months and years that followed.

#### *Payne's First "Open Collision" in the AMEC*

In the winter of 1841, Payne put aside his previous objections and united with Bethel AMEC in Philadelphia, the mother congregation of the denomination. His influence with regard to education in the church was almost immediately felt. Minutes of the Philadelphia Annual Conference in 1842, held just months after his joining, revealed that in the very meeting that Payne was admitted on a trial basis into the church as a preacher, he presented a resolution calling for a radically different way of educating all clergy in the Philadelphia Annual Conference. In language that would become

characteristic of Payne throughout his years as an educational leader in the AMEC, he argued that:

The great literary advantages which the rising generation enjoys require more than ordinary intelligence in the ministry that may be called to instruct them; and, whereas, our excellent discipline cannot be fully executed, nor our present plans of improvement fully consummated without an intelligent ministry; and still more, whereas, the word of God requires that the priest's lips should keep knowledge. (Payne, 1891, p. 141)

The resolution called for all levels of ministry in the Conference to be instructed in the following: English grammar, geography, arithmetic, Rollin's ancient history, modern history, ecclesiastical history, and natural and revealed theology. The resolution was adopted and plans were laid to implement the recommendations, making the Philadelphia Annual Conference the first in the AMEC to institute educational requirements for ministerial candidates. This historic first for the AMEC appears to have been received without any upheaval. The same cannot be said about similar reforms Payne sought to usher into the Baltimore Annual Conference. Looking back more than 20 years later, Payne cited the event as the “*first open collision* between ignorance and education—between religion and superstition—between truth and error, as they existed in the ministry of the African Methodist Episcopal Church” (Payne, 1866a, p. 49).

At the invitation of Bishop Brown, Payne visited the Baltimore Annual Conference in April 1843, one year after successfully guiding his educational legislation through the Philadelphia Annual Conference. During the meeting, two committees were appointed by Bishop Brown to examine the candidates who were presented to the

Conference for ordained ministry. The committee to review the first candidate, Adam S. Driver, consisted of the Reverends Daniel A. Payne, John Boggs, and Thomas W. Henry (Minutes of the 1843 Baltimore Annual Conference, 1843, p. 142). Although Payne was a member of the Philadelphia Annual Conference, not Baltimore, he was tapped to serve as chair of the committee. After examining Driver, there was sharp disagreement within the committee about whether or not he should be ordained. Boggs and Henry advocated ordaining him on the grounds of expediency. The majority argued that the ordination would solve the problem of a lack of ministers in the Conference who could perform vital church sacraments and rituals. Serving as chair, Payne refused to agree with the majority. Likewise, the second committee was chaired by Payne and also included Boggs, with Levin Lee replacing Henry. This committee reviewed the qualifications of Thomas Hall and Savage Hammonds, also presented for ordination. In the same manner, Payne opposed Boggs and Lee who argued for ordination on similar grounds of expediency.

Boggs, Henry, and Lee echoed the concern of many pastors in the Baltimore Annual Conference. Their argument also mirrored the apprehension felt in many other denominations. Other Protestant bodies asked themselves if they could seriously wait to ordain candidates who did not meet the literary requirements while congregations went without ordained ministers to carry out vital functions (Fraser, 1988). In the AMEC, only ordained clergy could carry out the sacraments and rituals: Holy Communion, baptism, marriages, and burials. Not all churches, however, were served by ordained ministers. Those that were ordained were often called to serve more than one congregation and their members were spread out over vast geographic areas. This was the case for committee members Thomas Henry and Levin Lee. Henry served the Fredericktown Circuit in



Maryland which had 7 congregations with a total of 315 members. Lee shared the Chambersburgh Circuit in Pennsylvania with Henry Waters accounting for 6 congregations and 313 members (Minutes of the 1843 Baltimore Annual Conference, 1843, pp. 139-140). The geography required a great deal of physical exertion by the pastor in charge of such a circuit. It was perhaps from self-interest that they desired the ordination of the candidates:

The reasons assigned by the majority were, in the case of one of the candidates, that a christening or a marriage might be desired when the elder in charge might be at one end of the circuit, and the minister, though upon the spot, would be unable to act. (Payne, 1891, p. 155)

These were likely trivial concerns to Payne when he compared them to the more important issue of producing an educated clergy. Payne's reluctance to agree with the majority, however, may have also been due to the fact that he did not know firsthand the rigors of serving as a circuit rider. His only experience as a pastor was in one city and lasted less than 1 year. Circuit riders, on the other hand, often wore themselves out at an early age due to the demands of the post. This lack of firsthand experience on Payne's part may have added to his seemingly insensitive approach to the rest of the committee members.

Refusing to join the majority report, Payne stood alone on one basic issue. Payne was opposed to ordaining any of the three based on their lack of literary qualifications per the *Doctrines and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (*Discipline*; Payne, 1866a, p. 49). The *Discipline* governed most aspects of the AMEC, including the requirements for ordination. The first *Discipline* was published in 1816, and subsequently

published every 4 years following the quadrennial meeting of the General Conference. Payne argued that the candidates could not possibly meet the basic criteria for ordination found within the *Discipline* because they lacked the academic preparation.

The committee, unable to resolve its differences, presented two opposing reports to Bishop Brown and the members of the Baltimore Annual Conference. The report offered by Payne created such a controversy within the Conference that one preacher, Robert Collins, sprang to his feet and demanded whether or not the candidates needed to “know how to read Hebrew, Greek and Latin” before the Conference would ordain them (Payne, 1866a, p. 50). Collins followed with a lengthy attack on Payne’s recommendation. A contentious discussion followed on the floor and it was clear that many others were also opposed to Payne’s view and were determined to vote him down. At that moment, Bishop Brown took control of the floor and exerted his influence. Brown, lacking formal education himself, proved to be an ally of those seeking educational reform for AMEC clergy. Bishop Brown informed the group that even “if the whole Conference voted for the ordination of the said brethren, in view of their disqualifications he could not and would not ordain them” (Payne, 1891, p. 156). By overriding the majority in favor of Payne’s minority report, Bishop Brown exercised extreme power and set the tone for a new direction in the attitude of the AMEC with regard to educated clergy.

Bishop Brown was clearly an advocate for educating the clergy in the AMEC. In 1839, he and Bishop Edward Waters placed their signatures on the first, written appeal by bishops of the denomination for financial support for the schooling of preachers.

Although Hogarth receives credit for authorship (Payne, 1891, p. 122), it nonetheless speaks to the commitment by the bishops toward an educated clergy:

The claims of our young men, too, for aid to sustain them while they are preparing themselves for the ministry (that they may become approved workmen in the Lord's vineyard,) are urgent upon you, as the future prosperity of the Church, and of generations to come, is dependent upon the care we now take in raising up suitable teachers for our people, well qualified in every respect....it is no other than the cause of God. (Payne, 1866a, pp. 38-39)

Educating the next generation of preachers was emerging as a priority of AMEC leadership. It is not surprising that Bishop Brown began to use Payne's knowledge and skill as an educator in advancing his own cause.

With Bishop Brown's statement to the conference as the essential support needed, the minority report offered by Payne was unanimously accepted and the three candidates were all rejected for ordination. The denial of AMEC clergy candidates because of a lack of education was unprecedented. Never before in the AMEC had education played such a role in the advancement of candidates for ministry. Building on the momentum already created with the refusal of the candidates for ordination, Bishop Brown re-presented Payne to the Baltimore Annual Conference to put forward his resolution on educational reform. A previous version of the resolution had been adopted by the Philadelphia Annual Conference 1 year before in 1842. The resolution, calling for a course of study identical to the course approved in Philadelphia, was adopted unanimously by the Baltimore Annual Conference. Unlike the excitement caused at the rejection of the candidates for ordination, there is no record of resistance toward its passage. The absence

of any recorded opposition, however, may be due more to Bishop Brown's leadership and influence in the conference than the overwhelming support of the new initiative. In the "second open collision," however, not even the venerable Bishop Brown would easily quiet Payne's opponents.

*Payne's Second "Open Collision" in the AMEC*

Ironically, Payne returned to the Baltimore Annual Conference 1 month later to replace former committee member and opponent John Boggs as the new pastor of Israel AMEC in Washington, DC. Over the next year, he engaged in the most trying episode of his life since leaving his schoolhouse in Charleston. The source of the struggle was rooted in his effort to install educational reforms for clergy throughout the entire denomination. This attempt was done through a series of short letters on education that outlined his views. The genesis of the debate, however, was not found with the writings of Payne. Payne was merely responding to a challenge extended by the editor of the church magazine.

Hogarth, like Bangs in the MEC, used his position as editor to push the agenda of an educated clergy. In an editorial in the *AMEC Magazine*, Hogarth asked "what shall we do to aid our young men" to become competent for the ministry (Hogarth, 1842, p. 82). Hogarth challenged the church to become stimulated around the subject of an educated clergy, and pointed out that the AMEC lagged far behind other denominations in this area:

Whilst theirs, through the proper cultivation, are enabled to "rightly divide the word of God," must ours still remain in ignorance for the want of proper

improvement? We trust that a thorough reform will soon take place among us in this particular. (1842, p. 82)

Acknowledging that modest efforts had been made in certain Annual Conferences, his call pushed the church to do even more by holding special conventions, raising monies, and sending young men to school to become educated for the ministry. It was fortunate for Payne, like Sunderland in his debate with Reese, that the editor was friendly to his cause. With Hogarth in position as the head of the *AMEC Magazine*, Payne had an unobstructed path to share his views on educating clergy with a much larger audience. This he did by answering Hogarth's question through a series of five epistles that appeared in the *AMEC Magazine* from 1843 through 1844.

The researcher is not aware of any published work that has examined all five of these epistles or the firsthand response from Payne's numerous critics and supporters found in correspondence to the magazine. The significance of this find is that it provides a rare glimpse into the thinking and debate that went into the reforms of 1844. Up until this point, the voices of the dissenters and supporters have mostly been heard through the words of others. To be more specific, this story has been largely shaped by Payne himself in the *History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (1891) and his autobiography *Recollections of Seventy Years* (1888). In the telling of the story, Payne used many excerpts from the *AMEC Magazine* in both the history and his autobiography. He reprinted many items that were favorable toward his position on an educated clergy. However, he did not present one rejoinder, one letter, or one fragment from his opponents with the exception of his quoting them briefly (and that was not flattering). As these new and important voices are now heard through this recently available primary source, a

greater understanding of the issues that shaped the debate surrounding the adoption of educational standards for AMEC clergy will be clarified.

Payne's first epistle appeared in the *AMEC Magazine* in April 1843, and the last debuted in March 1844. However, following the final epistle, he continued to write on the subject in the magazine and published an additional eight essays between 1844 and 1848. Other critical sources are included in these writings, including a final rejoinder to an opponent and a very lengthy appeal to the ministry on behalf of an educated clergy. Strangely enough, the first article appeared during the contentious Baltimore Annual Conference where Payne led the effort to reject the above mentioned candidates for ordination. At the very time he argued on the floor of the Annual Conference that candidates should have literary qualifications before advancing in ministry, he expounded the very same idea in his epistle that was being delivered to AMEC members across the country. Sounding much like he did on the floor of the Baltimore Annual Conference, Payne opened by asserting that the manner of receiving preachers into the AMEC set in the *Discipline* was "defective" ("Communications," 1843c, pp. 108-110). The *Discipline* of 1840 stated that preachers received into the AMEC on probation should know general church history, AMEC history, the connections of a discourse, and the *Discipline* and doctrines of the AMEC prior to their admittance (Brown, 1840, p. 78). As far as Payne was concerned, this was impractical for someone who was illiterate and lacking the use of English grammar. He stated that candidates should first be able to pass an examination on grammar, geography, intellectual and moral philosophy, natural and revealed theology, and church history in order to satisfactorily meet the requirements found in the *Discipline*. The examination process also posed problems for Payne. He was troubled by

what he saw as a testing system that was too lax and produced ministers that were unqualified to carry out their duties. Speaking of the exam administered to candidates at the Philadelphia Annual Conference in 1842, Payne states:

The examination was rigid until it came to the doctrines of the church. Here, two or three questions were asked; when, without carrying him through the whole system of our church doctrines, without a question relative to the connections necessary in a discourse, without a question on Church History in general, or a word concerning the history of our church in particular, he was sent forth as an accredited minister of the gospel! (1843c, p. 109)

Payne viewed this experience as evidence of a system-wide failure from the local church to the highest echelon of the denomination. The only solution, as far as Payne was concerned, was to legislate against the problem (1843d, p. 160). He recommended that new legislation requiring a basic set of literary qualifications for all incoming clergy be adopted by the upcoming General Conference, the highest legislative body in the AMEC. As mentioned above, the *Discipline* did require certain standards for candidates of ordination such as the knowledge of church doctrines, the connections of a discourse, and church history. The presumption in these requirements, as far as Payne was concerned, was that basic literacy was required to know the church doctrines, make a proper discourse, and understand church history. Not being satisfied with relying on the presumed meaning, Payne and others now desired to clarify what they believed was inferred.

Payne built on his existing resolutions that had been passed and implemented in the Philadelphia and Baltimore Annual Conferences. The plan appears to have been

heavily influenced by the MEC course of studies. Payne proposed that the AMEC implement a 4-year course of study for all preachers covering such topics as: the Bible, church doctrine, church history, theology, homiletics, Greek, Hebrew, philosophy, geography, and English grammar (1843f, pp. 209-211). He further recommended that prior to receiving a license to preach, all candidates should demonstrate basic literacy.

Payne called for the establishment of seminaries “of a high order” in each Annual Conference—open to men and women (1844d, p. 277). This is not to suggest that Payne was an advocate for women in ministry, for he was not. His rationale for coed study was that if future mothers were enlightened, they would then pass their education on to their children. In this group, there were bound to be future ministers, who by virtue of their mother’s influence would be receptive to an educated clergy. Offering as evidence of this important role played by mothers, Payne reminded his audience that although Martin Luther achieved great recognition, the “cradle of the Reformation was rocked by the hand of a woman” (1844e, p. 279).

Payne was realistic that leaving home for schooling was not possible for everyone called to the ministry. That being said, he did not believe this excused anyone from obtaining a proper education. For those who were either too old or had family obligations that prevented their going away to college or seminary, Payne suggested that they consider a plan of self-study by building their own library at home:

If you cannot go to college, that is no reason why you should remain in ignorance. Select the best books, study day and night, embrace every opportunity to become educated, and you will soon find the gain more than a reward for all your pains



and trouble....Don't say you can't, until you have made use of every means in your power. (1844d, p. 277)

Those who objected to self-study on the grounds that it was not possible would find no support with Payne. Payne did not see anything special in his own make up. Therefore, he felt that if he could learn on his own, anyone could learn by themselves. Addressing those who suggested that learning difficult subjects such as Greek and Hebrew could not be accomplished without a teacher, Payne sternly rebuked them and offered them the source of his own inspiration:

This is an error; for there have been, and are, persons living, who have learned themselves these and other languages, without a teacher, and if any brother will put himself to the trouble of reading the life of Rev. John Brown, of Haddington, in Scotland, he will be convinced that men may learn Greek and Hebrew, and anything besides, without going to College. (1844d, pp. 275-276)

Payne's own success in mastering many difficult lessons without the benefit of a teacher may have made him appear more unfeeling toward those who felt they could not learn on their own.

Payne concluded his argument for an educated clergy in "*An Appeal to the Ministry of the A.M.E. Church*" where he summarized his writings into three major areas: the Bible, the work of John Wesley, and the advantages for the denomination in adopting the new plan (1844g, pp. 304-311). Citing that his call for educational reform was biblically based, Payne stated that he was in complete agreement with the Bible by speaking against ignorance in the ministry. Referring to over 15 verses of scripture to support his claim, Payne stated:

And we say more, we say that we never will encourage any young man to enter the ministry who will not obey that apostolic injunction, “*study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*” Nor will we, as an individual, ever commit “*the things*” of God only “*unto any but faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.*” (1844g, p. 306)

Payne viewed the fight for an educated clergy as more than mere legislation, but as a “struggle between darkness and light, between ignorance and knowledge, between baptized superstition and Christianity” (Payne, 1891, p. 155).

In addition to the biblical witness, Payne found support for his views in the message of Methodist founder John Wesley. He appealed to the very sermon Bangs used in his defense of Sunderland (as cited by Bangs, 1835, p. 94). Payne highlighted the fact that in Wesley’s 1756 address to the clergy, the founder of Methodism instructed ministers to be proficient in logic, metaphysics, natural philosophy, history, geography, Greek, and Hebrew (1844g, p. 307). He also pointed out that as early as 1784 the MEC under the leadership of Bishop Asbury sought to establish a “literary institution for the education of the sons” of preachers and others (1844g, p. 307). Continuing to echo the thoughts put forth by Sunderland, Payne stated that the adoption of educational standards would help the denomination keep up with the demands of the day. Citing the positive changes in the MEC as a result of educational initiatives for the clergy, he argued that reforms would lead to greater numbers of members and increased revenue for the Book Concern.

An obstacle that Payne surely anticipated was the opposition from clergy who according to him, “either by denunciation or insinuation,” took great joy in their lack of literary qualifications (1843c, p. 109). Payne held that these anti-intellectual preachers discouraged many young ministers and left them with a negative view about education. D.W. Moore’s letter to the *AMEC Magazine* is illustrative of this mindset discussed by Payne. His image of anti-intellectual preachers in the AMEC echoed concerns put forth by Payne:

I have frequently heard from our elder in Chazy, that education was nothing—  
....and such expressions would bring such loud hosannas as though the Prince of  
life was riding on a foal of an ass and had arrived at the descent of the Mt. of  
Olives. I have also heard from our sub-elder, expressions that were calculated to  
paralyze education, (so far as his influence goes)—“he never looked in a  
dictionary, to his knowledge, more than three times in his life.” And, sir, he  
triumphed as though he had gained a great victory over the devil, by not opening a  
dictionary oftener. (1843b, p. 110)

P. Loveridge, agent for the Colored Schools in New York City, added to the discussion. Although not a member of the AMEC, Loveridge wrote to Editor Hogarth after reading Payne’s first epistle and the comments of Moore:

It is pleasing to me, Sir, to see that there are some men among you, who are  
making efforts for the increase of human learning;...The time Sir, has happily  
passed by, when “thank God I never was at a college—I am none of your learned  
rabbis,” and such exclamations will not in future be so much applauded. (1843k,  
p. 156)

Whether or not the accusations about such preachers were true, it demonstrated that Payne was not alone in his view that many AMEC clergy held an antagonistic view toward the relationship between education and the practice of ministry. Inference may also be made, by the examples cited, that many in the laity were just as opposed to an educated clergy as witnessed by the ecstatic responses.

Yet, the most controversial issue that arose over Payne's writing was not his view on education, but his view on inspiration. Like Sunderland before him, he claimed that inspiration had come to an end. And also like Sunderland, he immediately drew the sharp rebuke of his contemporaries. Payne asserted that the doctrine of inspiration that inspired the Apostles to teach and preach a perfect message had come to an end as it was found in the New Testament. Payne defined this inspiration as:

*such a degree of divine aid as will enable him who receives it, to make known to men, all things relative to the salvation of the soul, without possibility of error [underline added]; and which is beyond the highest efforts of human reason to discover.* (1843d, p. 159)

As far as he was concerned, all persons could be moved by the Spirit; but, inspiration that led an illiterate person to preach an infallible and perfect message from God was not true to biblical teaching. Payne maintained, that those who proclaimed that they were inspired when they preached were "either the desperately wicked, or shamefully ignorant;" proven by the many doctrinal and grammatical errors made in their sermons and teachings (1843d, p. 159). The reason that Payne connected this doctrine to his reform movement was that he accused many illiterate clergy of refusing to study on the grounds that inspiration removed the need for education:

Every man who sneers at education, commentators, and study, believing that God dictates every word he speaks, and that therefore he cannot “speak any thing amiss.” Now we have met such men, talked with them, begged them to study, and they have laughed us to scorn. And when we speak of such evils, we are called infidels, accused of reckless slander, and of a “base attempt to throw contempt on the ministry.” (1844f, pp. 301-302)

Payne’s controversial view on inspiration released a firestorm of criticism and an array of voices stood in line to express their discontent. The most outspoken critics were M. Walker, William Moore, and Charles Burch.

Payne directly quoted from the writings of Walker and Burch in his autobiography as illustrations of those who stood against an educated clergy. However, an examination into the actual writings of his opponents seems to suggest that he unfairly mischaracterized them as anti-intellectuals. There is little evidence that any of the above mentioned men were actually against an educated clergy, even though they opposed Payne on other issues. Fraser’s analysis of Sunderland’s confrontation with Reese is very helpful in understanding Payne’s somewhat skewed reporting of his opponents:

What Sunderland failed to recognize was that those who were opposing him were not opposed to “any literary qualifications for the work,” but had a different understanding from his of both the nature of the work of ministry and of proper preparation for it. (1988, p. 147)

Sunderland characterized his opponents, such as Reese, as anti-education for the clergy when in fact some were only opposed to his theology. In reviewing the actual writings of his opponents, this appears likely to have been the case with Payne.

It is difficult to verify Payne's claim that Walker was against an educated clergy. Payne himself cites that at the previously mentioned Philadelphia Annual Conference in 1837 that adopted the first advanced resolution calling for an educated clergy, Walker was a committee member and signer of the document. The document was the strongest statement in favor of advancing the cause of an educated clergy in the AMEC to date:

And further, that the Bishop or committee, by correspondence with brethren throughout the United States, with Christian philanthropists, by appeals from the pulpit and press, and by all suitable means, endeavor to awaken a general interest amongst ourselves and friends on this important subject, viz.: a suitable preparation for the pulpit or ministry. (Payne, 1891, p. 115)

Payne, however, accused Walker of being unintelligent and a poor scholar of the Bible. Writing in his autobiography, Payne quoted him as saying that the epistles were "full of absurdities" and that "infidels could do no more" as an example of his attack on educational reform (Payne, 1888, p. 75). However, the quotes when placed in the original context were actually challenging Payne's view on the doctrine of inspiration, not education:

"An Epistle on the Education of the Ministry," which is full of absurdity; and coming from the pen of a professed theologist [sic], is most surprising. To deny inspiration the bulwark of christianity [sic], the corner stone of revealed religion, and that too by a minister of the Methodist Church. Why sir, infidels can do more! (1843j, p. 196)

Walker's rejoinder did not take issue with Payne over his suggestion that AMEC clergy needed an education prior to executing the office of ordained minister. Walker's issue

with Payne was rooted in what he viewed as Payne's flawed understanding of the doctrine on inspiration.

Likewise, William Moore was concerned about Payne's interpretation of the doctrine of inspiration more so than his efforts to instill a standard for the education of the clergy. Moore clearly stated in his rejoinder to Payne that he did not "exclude the necessity of either learning or study" for clergy in preparation for the work of ministry (1844k, p. 256). Moore, however, had his own working definition of inspiration:

The inward assistance of the Holy Spirit, that is necessary to the conversion and sanctification of every true believer....That special influence of the Holy Spirit that moves us to engage in the great work of the ministry, and then enlightens our understanding, helps our infirmities, and thus renders us more secure from error (in the interpretation of divine truth) than we otherwise could be with the use of our mental faculties alone. (1844k, p. 256)

He agreed with Payne that inspiration did not make a person infallible nor did it mean that God was literally speaking through the preacher at that moment; but inspiration aided the preacher in ways that an education could not do alone. Moore maintained that all clergy in the AMEC knew this and that none to his knowledge sought to claim the ability to preach an infallible message. Thus, Moore accused Payne of slandering the ministry of the AMEC based on his statement that he witnessed certain AMEC clergy state in sermons that they were so inspired by God that their preaching had become infallible. Moore maintained that there were no such persons in the AMEC clergy to his knowledge and that if Payne knew of such persons, it was his responsibility to name them. Payne refused to name any such persons, presumably on the grounds of decency.

Along the same line of thought, Charles Burch appears to have been most concerned about what he perceived as slander against the AMEC clergy. In *Recollections* (1888), Payne obviously spoke of Burch when he said that he was accused of “reckless slander” and branding the ministry with infamy for simply trying to pass education reforms (p. 76). Like the remarks by Walker, this remark by Burch seems to have been largely taken out of context. The comment was made in relation to Payne’s contention that the Church knowingly and willingly allowed ignorant and superstitious preachers into the ranks of the ministry (Burch, 1844a, pp. 240-243). Burch allowed that the level of education was woefully deficient among AMEC clergy; but, he also contended that God could use whomever God chose to preach. Burch credited God’s use of such illiterate preachers in explaining the growth and expansion of the AMEC membership. Burch felt that the AMEC had grown through the labors of such preachers who had been denied a proper education, and that to now defame them for a lack of learning was reckless, slanderous, and unfairly placed the ministry in a negative light. Payne did not argue with Burch that God had indeed used such illiterate persons to build the early church. He countered that his resolution was not aimed at these older men who had “borne the burden in the heat of the day,” but at younger men now entering the ministry (1844g, p. 304). It would have been difficult for Payne to establish that Burch was against an enlightened ministry. The opening of his rejoinder to Payne did not necessarily cast him as an anti-intellectual:

when the effulgent rays of the sun of science and literature shall beam forth upon us as a people, and forever scatter that mist of ignorance that has long concealed much of the true genius, and many of the noble intellectual qualities of our



colored brethren....The improvement of the ministry among us is also a theme upon which I have long dwelt with deep interest, and have looked forward to the day with anxious solicitude when our brethren in the ministry should become more fully awake to this important subject. (1844c, p. 240)

As in the case of other outspoken critics, Payne seems to have unfairly mischaracterized Burch as against a reform in the educational standards of the clergy. A reading of the documents now available, however, does not support that sentiment. This mischaracterization of his opponents has been largely unchallenged and accepted by scholars due to a lack of evidence to the contrary.

Mischaracterization, however, went both ways. It is fair to say that the new material found in the *AMEC Magazine* also sheds light on the way in which Payne's opponents misunderstood him, as well. The opponents sought to portray Payne as seeking to remove the preacher from any dependence on God and a total reliance on education. Walker incorrectly suggested that Payne's view on inspiration led to the conclusion that preachers were no longer necessary:

If inspiration has ceased, then is our preaching vain, and our faith is also vain...if this be a fact, then all that is wanted is education, so that we may read the written word. I would then ask, what use is there of ministers? (1843j, pp. 196-197)

Payne, however, advocated for a ministry that was first and foremost called by God and then fully prepared by education to do the work. He called for a clergy that was concerned about the head and the heart, which could deal with both secular and pious issues confronting the Church:

We seriously ask, how will our injured race roll from their shoulders the weight of an oppression that has been accumulating for two hundred years? How will our ministry ever command that respect which the ministry of other churches commands? How will our church attain unto that eminence, and wield that influence, that other churches have attained, and are wielding? The answer is found in a ministry that will be as full of light as it will be full of heat; in a people as well educated as they will be pious. (1844g, p. 310)

Payne's call for a clergy that depended on both "heat" and "light" seemed to fall on deaf ears with his opponents that accused him of trying to remove the heat from the ministry, leaving only the light behind.

Although both groups essentially called for the same thing, an educated clergy that was dependent on the Spirit of God, the acrimony between them continued to deepen as the tension mounted. Walker said sarcastically "not having received a classical education, as our learned opponent; and if his rejoinder is a specimen of logic, we wish it not" (1844j, p. 273). Burch considered Payne to be too arrogant to be a modern reformer (1844c, p. 241). The criticisms of others who did not write to the magazine are gleaned from the writings of supporters and opponents. Some said that Payne was using the reforms to exclude all the older men from ministry. Others suggested that he was trying to make the AMEC a Presbyterian denomination. Still, others claimed that he sought to deny all persons without a liberal arts education the benefits of ministry ("Communications," 1844g, pp. 304-311). Payne for his part did not sit idly by. He was not afraid to trade barbs with his opponents, and he publicly questioned their intelligence (1843g, pp. 214-218).

While the war of words flew back and forth across the pages of the *AMEC Magazine*, Payne was not left to stand alone. A group of supporters lent their strong endorsement of his plan. Chief among them was the editor, Hogarth. Hogarth took the opponents to task for only offering rebuke without putting forth an alternative plan to improve the ministry:

Much is said for and against the steps taken by our brother, in his epistles, for the improvement of the ministry. No one has, as yet, come forward with his pen, to propose anything better....They admit themselves friendly to education—to an intelligent ministry, and an enlightened congregation—yet they appear to be backward, in coming forward with their objection and views on the subject.

(1843, pp. 230-231)

Although Walker, Moore, and Burch did not offer a substitute plan, others did propose alternative means of educating the clergy. Other plans were offered by an anonymous student, by D. W. Moore, and by W. G. Thomas. None of these plans, however, seemed to raise the ire of Payne's opponents in the manner he did.

Mary Lewton, a member of Union AMEC in Philadelphia also encouraged Payne and others to continue toward reform. She was glad to hear that Payne and others had "come out fearlessly" and that they were "taking the high and holy stand for a reform in the ministry" (1843i, p. 207). Following Walker's first, blistering attack on Payne, Lewton sought to console her dear friend:

I will only say, you may expect three vices will make a powerful stand against you. I mean ignorance, selfishness, and impudence. Fear them not, my brother, your weapons are mighty, and will prevail, only use them with humble, holy skill,

and they are calculated to batter down a host of such enemies as have, or may oppose you. (1843i, p. 207)

While not certain, it is possible that Lewton was also the author of similar letters of support to Payne under the pen name "A Female Voice" written by a member of Union AMEC in March and May 1844. In one letter, the unidentified writer aptly described the conflict between Payne and his opponents. While Payne continued to put all opposition in one group, she was careful to state that there were actually two separate groups of opponents; the first against improvement in learning, and the second against his view of inspiration (1844b, pp. 279-281). In the following letter, the anonymous writer expressed a great deal of concern that the tone in which Payne and his opponents addressed each other was not appropriate for the magazine. She openly expressed her hope that as the next volume of the magazine was published, that the rancor would come to an end. As to her desire that the General Conference would support Payne's initiative, she stated "I trust its [education] friends will lift up their voices until it vibrates throughout the country, and the Methodist churches become awake from their lethargy to a lively sense of their duty upon that subject" (1844a, p. 298).

Payne also received the timely endorsement from the *Lutheran Observer*, a newspaper of the Lutheran Church. The following was submitted to the *AMEC Magazine*:

Our old friend Paine [sic], late of the Lutheran church, who studied at Gettysburg, recently attached himself to this church, and is now stationed at Washington, D.C. He is exerting himself to elevate the standard of ministerial qualification, and is

likely, by the blessing of God, to become the instrument of much good among this people. (1843h, p. 225)

This support provided much needed credibility to Payne, who was still viewed by many as a newcomer and an outsider.

Student voices also joined in support of Payne. Future bishop Alexander Wayman wrote to Editor Hogarth on October 5, 1843, to express his satisfaction with the new course of studies Payne helped to institute in the Philadelphia Annual Conference:

I wish to inform you that since our last Annual Conference, held at Philadelphia, I have obtained those books recommended to us, as students for the ministry, the first year. I am very much pleased with them, as a branch of studies. I find that since I have commenced to exercise my mind upon them, they have proved to be very advantageous to me as a student. (1843a, p. 218)

Although pleased with his studies, Wayman admitted that he struggled to master the content in the time required. Yet, he seemed happy with being a “student in the ministry” with the new guidelines.

Perhaps the most surprising and affirming backing Payne received in the midst of this struggle, however, was from Savage Hammonds. Hammonds was one of the three candidates for ministry rejected by Payne at the Baltimore Annual Conference. However, after being rejected, he began to devote himself to the courses prescribed by Payne. Hammonds informed him that he had been reading *Popular Theology* by Schmumaker and conveyed the following:

You may have thought I had forgotten you. How can I forget my best friend? I have read that our best friends are those who tell us of our faults, and teach us

how to correct them; which has been your case in reference to me. I bless God a thousand times for the day that I became acquainted with so distinguished a personage, for you have manifested interest in my welfare. (as cited in "Communications," 1843e, p. 189)

Payne included this letter in his third epistle as proof that the initiatives were already working. Support from the rejected candidate was certainly difficult for his opponents to refute. Other voices not cited also lent their support to Payne's desire to create an educational standard for AMEC clergy. These tributes offer evidence that Payne's efforts toward an educated clergy received as much support as they did opposition.

As the General Conference of 1844 drew near, the harsh rhetoric continued. Payne had originally planned to propose the measures for an educated clergy at this meeting. However, he began to reconsider attending the General Conference as talk of a denominational split gained momentum. Hogarth noted that as the General Conference loomed even closer, "great fear" surrounded the denomination that if Payne's plan was adopted into church law, the result would be "discord and dissolution" (1843, pp. 230-231). Stressing that he did not want to be the source of such controversy, Payne shocked his followers and opponents in his final appeal for an educated clergy. After spending one full year in public and private debates over the education of clergy, Payne decided that it would be best if he excused himself from the meeting:

In the epistles we have written, there is enough to convince every unprejudiced mind that we seek the purity of the church, and the Providence of God seems to call upon us to give some evidence that we seek its peace also. That evidence we

will give in absenting ourselves from the General Conference, for we desire not to be the cause of “discord and dissolution.” (1844g, p. 310)

This choice by Payne was reminiscent of earlier decisions that he made when the situation became difficult. This behavior recalled that of his experience in Charleston when he closed his school to avoid conflict with the authorities although no one actually instructed him to close. Also, he first avoided joining the AMEC in 1837 because he thought that there might be strife due to his views on education and the clergy.

Payne’s letter was published in May 1844, the month that the General Conference planned to meet in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Due to its late arrival at the *Magazine*, there was not enough time for the written reaction of his many opponents and supporters with exception of Editor Hogarth who received the note from Payne. Using his position as editor, he took it upon himself to address Payne directly on the issue of missing the General Conference:

This we are extremely sorry to hear. So unexpectedly does the information come, that we hardly know how to receive it. We would here say to our brother, that unless you have given your constituents, who delegated you, timely notice of your absence from the Conference, we fear it will be looked upon as doing them injustice. (1844b, p. 327)

After all the build up over the previous year around the charged and public debate, it must have seemed unbelievable for his supporters that he would choose not to attend at the last minute.

Although Payne does not define it as such, the researcher contends that this was the defining moment for Payne as an educational leader. In the previous encounters when

he decided to avoid conflict, no one pushed Payne to consider fighting through it. In Charleston, his inner circle of support encouraged his decision to close his school and seek opportunity in the North. Some even considered it God's will (Payne, 1888, pp. 36-39). Although President Schmucker sought to guide Payne into the AMEC in 1837, he supported him when he decided not to join and assisted his ordination as a member of the Lutheran Church. This situation, however, was different. When Payne consulted Bishop Brown about his decision to miss the Conference in order to prevent strife, the reply he received was not what he expected:

On account of the abuse heaped upon me I had determined not to approach the coming General Conference, but I was advised by Bishop Morris Brown to do so *by all means* [italics added], and lay my plans before it for consideration. He also said to me: "To stay away would be just what your enemies desire." (Payne, 1888, p. 76)

Unlike his previous professional challenges, Bishop Brown pushed Payne to view conflict in a different light. Bishop Brown was not easily willing to allow the opponents to stop what he viewed as progress for the Church. Payne's subsequent actions as an educational leader would never again be deterred by his concern for creating strife, discord, or dissolution. On the contrary, following the events of the General Conference, Payne would ever more be on the offensive. Following Bishop Brown's advice, Payne set out for the General Conference intent on presenting his plan for an educated clergy.

#### *The General Conference of 1844*

Payne and the other delegates from the East departed Philadelphia on Wednesday, May 1, 1844, headed for Pittsburgh by way of Harrisburg. Bishop Brown was also in this



group traveling aboard the John Adams, a packet boat. The night before they arrived in Pittsburgh, the party was addressed by “an aged gentleman” who held a high “civil office” (“Communications,” 1844h, p. 24). In speaking to Bishop Brown and his entourage, the high ranking civil servant strongly encouraged the pursuit of education for the AMEC:

He complied with the request, and in the midst of his interesting remarks, urged us with great emphasis, to establish a college, for the education of our children and young men, as one of the most powerful and successful means of attaining the rights and dignity of American citizens. (“Communications,” 1844h, p. 24)

The encounter did not fall on deaf ears and seemed to set the tone for one of the central themes of the General Conference—namely, the education of the clergy.

The seventh General Conference of the AMEC opened on Monday, May 6, 1844, with Bishop Brown presiding. The Conference met for the next 2 weeks and dealt with a range of issues. Following the opening address by Bishop Brown, one of the first actions of the Conference was the organization of the Revisions Committee. This five man committee was chaired by Payne and was charged to “examine into our Discipline, and propose to the Conference from time to time, such amendments as they in their judgments may deem necessary” (Minutes of the General Conference, 1844, p. 3). This committee appointment positioned Payne strategically to place his resolution before the General Conference and to see that it be placed in the *Discipline* should it pass the vote.

By late Thursday night on the 9th of May, Payne presented his resolution for an educated clergy to the body. He felt strongly that the resolution was so clear and convincing that it did not warrant any comment or discussion (Payne, 1866a, p. 60).

Payne said as much earlier in his final appeal printed in the *AMEC Magazine* when he declared his intent to be absent from the General Conference. In the appeal, he indicated that his presence was not necessary because the resolution stood on its own merit and would pass without any persuasive speech. Records state that following Payne's introduction of the resolution "relative to the education of the ministry," much discussion followed and led to adjournment until the next morning (Minutes of the General Conference, 1844, p. 5).

Conference minutes often have a way of leaving out important, narrative details about proceedings. According to Payne (1891):

As soon as read it was seconded, and, convinced as he [Payne] was of the reasonableness and utility of the measure, he thought that the majority of the Conference looked at it in the same favorable light, and that it would be carried without much opposition; *he, therefore, did not make any speech for the purpose of convincing his brethren* [italics added] of that utility and excellence which he believed was apparent to all. But in that he calculated without his host, for as soon as the Bishop had put the question to the house, the effect was like unto that which follows when a fire-brand is cast into a magazine of powder. With the greatest apparent indignation the resolution was voted down by a large and overwhelming majority, and the house adjourned amid great excitement. (p. 168)

Payne (1866a) would later write that following the rejection of the motion, the "confusion was great; the friends of *progress* were mortified—its opponents were jubilant—the author struck dumb with astonishment" (p. 60). It is almost beyond belief that Payne would have imagined that the resolution would pass without any opposition and that it

did not require any promotion on his part. He spent the entire year leading up to the Conference in a war of words with opponents of his ideas; he announced his plan not to attend for fear of their backlash; and, he was well aware of Hogarth's warning that many feared that this plan would cause great discord and possibly split the church in two. Yet, he presented the resolution without one influential comment thinking that it would pass without opposition. Payne appeared to be either very naïve about his opposition or overly confident in his resolution. Whatever the reason, his miscalculation almost defeated his cause. Not even the venerable Bishop Morris Brown could contain the house. All Bishop Brown could do was to adjourn until the next day.

The clergy delegation was not alone in being swept away in an uproar. That evening, proponents for an educated clergy among the laity informed the delegates that they intended to leave the AMEC if the resolution offered by Payne was not adopted. Although they had no vote at the General Conference, they sought to use the threat of a split to force the hand of the delegation. This added to an already tense situation (Payne, 1891, p. 169).

The following morning, Payne received one of his most important lessons on leadership. When the session opened the next morning, the Rev. Abram D. Lewis rose to his feet and took the floor and called for a reconsideration of the proposal that had been rejected:

His motion was seconded and stated by the chair. This venerable man then advocated its claims and demonstrated its utility in a speech of uncommon eloquence and power. He addressed the understanding, the conscience, the passions of the audience till it was bathed in tears, and from many a voice was

heard the impassioned cry, "Give us the resolution, give us the resolution."

(Payne, 1891, p. 169)

Payne could not believe that the same delegates who could not be restrained the night before now sobbed and pleaded for the rejected resolution. The motion was then put to a vote and adopted by the General Conference. Payne was clearly the architect of the proposal, but he did not demonstrate the leadership and know-how necessary to implement his plan. Reflecting on this episode, Payne biographer Coan (1935) suggested that Lewis simply used better "psychology" than his younger colleague (p. 68).

Immediately after the resolution was adopted, former Payne tutee John Peck moved that a committee of seven be appointed to "select a proper course of studies" (Minutes of the General Conference, 1844, p. 6). Bishop Brown appointed Payne chair of the new committee and rounded it off with H. C. Turner, David Ware, Richard Robinson, Abram D. Lewis, W. R. Revills, and George Weir. The committee presented its full plan to the Conference the next day. The plan addressed two groups of clergy, the exhorters and the preachers. The exhorters, who had less rigorous standards and fewer responsibilities than the preachers, received a 2-year course and the preachers received a 4-year plan. The following arrangement was adopted and ordered into the appendix of the 1844 *Discipline*:

I. EXHORTERS.—*First year*.—The Bible, Smith's English Grammar, Mitchell's Geography, our Discipline, and Wesley's Notes.

*Second year*.—Original Church of Christ, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and Watson's Life of Wesley.

II. PREACHERS.—*First year.*—Smith's English Grammar, Mitchell's Geography, Paley's Evidences of Divine Revelation, History of the Bible, and Horn's Introduction.

*Second year.*—Smocker's Mental Philosophy, Paley's Natural Theology, Schnecker's Popular Theology, and Watson's Institutes.

*Third year.*—Ecclesiastical History, Goodrich's Church History, Porter's Homiletics, and D'Aubigne's History of the Reformation.

*Fourth year.* Geography and Chronology of the Bible, with a Review of the above studies.—*Signed*, D. A. Payne, H. C. Turner, A. D. Lewis, W. R. Revills, George Weir, Richard Robinson, and David Ware.—*Committee.* (Minutes of the General Conference, 1844, pp. 7-8)

It is not surprising that the committee was able to return only one day later with such a well thought out plan. The plan was based on the proposal previously presented by Payne in his fourth epistle and committee members would have been already familiar with it ("Communications," 1843f, pp. 209-211).

Within 2 short weeks, the change in the method of receiving and training preachers in the AMEC had gone through a complete revolution. Although Payne failed the initial test, the resolution was now church law. With its passage, Payne was now in the proverbial driver's seat sitting as the chair of both the Revisions Committee and the committee to establish the course of studies. Only a member of the AMEC for approximately 3 years, he was now in position to shape and mold the very manner in which clergy would and would not enter the ranks of ministry for years to come. This was a critical time for the AMEC as noted by AMEC historian Smith (1922) who stated

that “the decade between 1844 and 1854 may be regarded as the first period of development” (p. 17). Payne and his continued efforts to reform the clergy played a leading role in this first period of development. Woodson’s interpretation is helpful in understanding how important Payne’s role was in changing the direction of the AMEC:

Working zealously, however, Bishop Payne committed the denomination to the policy of thorough education for the ministry, a position from which the African Methodist Episcopal Church has never departed, and to which it owes not a few of the advantages that it now enjoys in having so many intelligent men in its ministry. (1921, p. 172)

Although Payne was not the person to push the legislation through the Conference, his contribution of providing a systematic plan for educating the clergy was one of the most important elements that secured its successful passage. It was clear that as much as he needed the assistance of A. D. Lewis on the floor of the General Conference, Lewis and others also needed his ideas to have something to use in their fight for educational standards.

#### *Summary.*

The work that Payne helped begin that led to the first set of educational standards for AMEC clergy developed a momentum all its own. By 1912, the requirements added that all candidates have the equivalent of an eighth grade education. In 1920, those seeking ordination were required to score at least a 65 out of a possible 100 on an examination on the course of studies. Another jump in the prerequisites occurred in 1940 by requiring that all preachers seeking admission possess a high school diploma. By 1988, a college degree was required and in 2000, the General Conference mandated a

Masters of divinity degree for all persons seeking ordination. Throughout each of these changes in the prerequisites, the basic framework of the 4-year course of study for preachers has remained in place. Textbooks have obviously been updated, but the system remains remarkably close to the original design. Although there have been some exceptions made for clergy attending AMEC sponsored seminaries, the majority of clergy from 1844 to the present have passed through the course of studies constructed by Payne and his supporters. Whether the standards have been for the benefit or the detriment of the AMEC is a question for another time. The issue that concerns the present discussion is that of Payne's far reaching effect as an educational leader in the ranks of AMEC clergy. It can be argued that he has influenced the denomination in ways that are unparalleled by any other AMEC leader with the exception of the founder, Richard Allen.

From 1844 to 1852, Payne continued to work to raise the level of education among the clergy in the AMEC. He wrote an additional eight essays on the education of the ministry from 1844 to 1845. These, like the former epistles, created a great deal of strife even though Payne sought to soften the tone ("Communications," 1844i, pp. 25-27; Payne, 1891, p. 194). In the fall of 1845, Payne served as chair for the first Educational Convention in the AMEC. The group of 86 delegates met in Philadelphia to create the Parent Education Society "for the purpose of aiding poor, pious and talented young men in their preparation for the Gospel ministry" (Payne, 1891, p. 188). Payne compared the results of this promising gathering, however, to a stillborn baby. In the meeting, delegates from the East sought to establish a literary institution of their own, even though they were aware of the plans previously laid by the Ohio Annual Conference to create Union Seminary in the West. Resources were already scarce and many could not envision

supporting one school, let alone two. Additionally, a third group thought it best to simply raise scholarship money for those already in college or who desired to attend. As a result, the meeting was largely unfocused; all three plans were adopted; and “for lack of unity in purpose and oneness in action” not much was accomplished (Payne, 1888, pp. 222-223).

In 1848, Bishop William Paul Quinn sought to have Payne elected a bishop. Payne declined, but was elected the first historiographer of the Church in the same meeting. He resigned from his church as pastor in 1850 and spent the next 2 years in deep research into the history of the AMEC. Four years after Quinn initially approached Payne about serving in the episcopal office, he could no longer resist the request of his bishop and his peers. At the General Conference of 1852, he was elected and consecrated a bishop, the highest office in the AMEC. Speaking of his newfound abilities in this office, Payne stated that:

when I wrote and sent abroad my thoughts on education, I had not the power to enforce them, but in my episcopal capacity what was formerly only advice to be given became a duty to be performed. Two things I found necessary to be done. The first was to organize literary and historical associations among and of the ministers, to improve the ministry; the second, to improve the people. An educated ministry is more highly appreciated by an educated laity, and hence always better supported. They act and react upon each other. (Payne, 1888, p. 137)

Payne would make certain in his new capacity that the reforms he fought so hard to establish in 1844 would take hold. As demonstrated with his involvement at Wilberforce



University, Payne utilized the leadership lessons of the 1840s to the advantage of the AMEC.

## CHAPTER V

### THE EARLY YEARS AT WILBERFORCE UNIVERSITY: THROUGH THE FIRE

(1856-1865)

Perhaps no part of Payne's multifaceted professional life has been researched and written about more than the many roles he played at Wilberforce University (WU). Payne became involved with WU almost from its inception, dating back to 1854, and he died in its shadow almost 40 years later. During that period, he served as a founding board member, purchasing agent on behalf of the AMEC, president, faculty member, fundraiser, student recruiter, and revivalist.

This chapter is not an attempt to provide a thorough history of the founding of WU. A definitive history has been well researched by McGinnis (1941) in *A History and Interpretation of Wilberforce University*. His research has been relied upon over the years by a number of researchers (W.M. Davis, 1993, *First Foundations: An Inquiry into the Founding of 3 Selected African American Institutions of Higher Education*; Killian, 1971, *Bishop Daniel A. Payne: Black Spokesman for Reform*; Stokes, 1973, *Daniel Payne: Churchman and Educator*). Rather, the focus of this chapter is an examination

into Payne's response to the various challenges he faced during the formative years of WU as the foremost educational leader in the AMEC.

### Wilberforce University Conceived

A decade following the first AMEC Education Convention, clergy and laity were anxious to continue pushing forward the agenda of educational reform. The 1840s had been marked by the effort to educate the clergy. By the mid-1850s, however, the predominant concern was for a college for all members of the AMEC, not just education for the clergy. Writing to the *Christian Recorder*, the AMEC newspaper that replaced the now defunct *AMEC Magazine*, Joseph Curtis stated:

that one great cause why we and our children are not more acquainted with literature, the arts and sciences of the present day, is the comparative small interest of the Church or her ministry in behalf of the education of the rising generation of the present day. I say let the ministry become foremost in advocating the cause of education of colored youth, and the placing of our entire people upon a level with all other people, wherever [sic] found; let them "cry aloud and spare not," for they are our mouth-pieces. (1855)

Members of the denomination looked to the clergy for a solution to the problem of a lack of educational opportunity. This is not to suggest that no attempt had been made to furnish the church with a school of its own. The Union Seminary traced its origin back to 1844 and had operated near Columbus, Ohio, since 1847 (McGinnis, 1941). However, the results had been less than what was expected at its founding, and it had not come near the requirements of a university.

The lack of educational opportunity available to members of the Black population was not only troubling to the AMEC, but was also a concern shared by certain members of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC). The Cincinnati Annual Conference of the MEC sought to remedy the problem in its annual meeting. In 1853, the Cincinnati Annual Conference met in Hillsboro, Ohio, and formed a committee "to inquire and report to the next session of the conference what can best be done to promote the welfare of the people of color among us" (Minutes of the Cincinnati Conference, 1854, p. 29). The following year, the committee reported back to the Cincinnati Annual Conference which was meeting in Cincinnati in 1854. After the report was read and adopted, the Conference resolved to establish "a literary institution of a high order for the education of the colored people" (Minutes of the Cincinnati Conference, 1854, p. 34). An agent, Presiding Elder John F. Wright, was appointed to develop the plan and report back to the Conference. The Conference also resolved to seek the cooperation and support of the AMEC with the hope that it would consolidate the Union Seminary into the planned, new university.

In the balcony of the 9<sup>th</sup> Street Church in Cincinnati during these 1854 deliberations sat Bishop Payne. He had received word of the planned school and knew that the issue of a new university for Blacks would be brought up for a vote at the Conference. Though he was raised in the MEC in Charleston, this was his first visit to a MEC Annual Conference (Payne, 1888, p. 130). Even though he sought anonymity, Payne was recognized as a bishop in the AMEC and he was presented to the presiding officer. The Conference then pressed him for his views on the endeavor:

The Conference interrogated me concerning the probability of securing our co-operation, and I assured the members that my opinion was that if the A. M. E.

Church could obtain a clear apprehension of the question it would readily cooperate. The same night, by invitation, I preached for the Conference. (Payne, 1888, p. 131)

Payne would realize later that his assurance of AMEC cooperation would not be so easily attained. Nevertheless, this Conference marked the beginning of an active relationship with WU that would last the remaining years of Payne's life.

Also in 1854, Payne re-married following the death of his first wife. His new spouse, Eliza Clark, was also widowed and living with her three children in Cincinnati. Payne decided to move from the east coast and make his home with her in Ohio. Perhaps it was his knowledge of the impending action of the MEC that aided in his choice of moving to Ohio rather than his new spouse relocating to the East. At any rate, he quickly became alarmed at the "corrupting influences" of city life in Cincinnati and convinced Eliza that the children would do better in a more suburban setting (Payne, 1888, p. 133). As Payne looked at various areas throughout Ohio, the agents for WU convinced him that the future home of WU would be an ideal location to raise children and simultaneously provide a good education (Payne, 1888, p. 134). Tawawa Springs (later known as Wilberforce), located 3 ½ miles east of Xenia, Ohio, became home for the Payne family in the summer of 1856. His move to Tawawa Springs was of benefit to both Payne and the agents for WU. As stated, Payne and the organizers of WU had hoped to eventually persuade the AMEC into a joint effort with the new school. Payne's presence near the campus, therefore, was a hopeful sign that this might soon be a reality.

Meanwhile, the Cincinnati Annual Conference continued to develop the plan for the new college. On October 31, 1855, the "Primary Meeting" of the committee met, and

John F. Wright served as chair. In that meeting, "The Ohio African University" was chosen as the name of the school, although it later gave way to its present name in honor of the English abolitionist, William Wilberforce (Minutes of the Wilberforce University Board of Trustees, October, 1855). The following March, land and buildings were acquired in Tawawa Springs for \$13,500, and the plans were adopted to open the school in the fall. The committee continued to adhere to its mandate by seeking the collaboration of the Black Methodists and made plans to attend the AMEC General Conference to present the proposal.

### *Rejection by the AMEC*

Payne now sought the support and affirmation of the General Conference of the AMEC for the adoption of the plan presented by his MEC colleagues. The MEC and the AMEC shared a similar governing structure. The annual conference in both denominations was composed of a group of clergy, laity, and congregations in a specific geographic area. As suggested in the name, they met annually. The formal name adopted by the annual conference usually suggested the geographic area to which the work of the conference was relegated. However, the work often extended far beyond the area the name suggested. For example, the report of the Cincinnati Annual Conference of the MEC in 1854 claimed congregations in both Cincinnati, Ohio and as far away as Detroit, Michigan (Minutes of the Cincinnati Conference, 1854, p. 61). The 1853 Indiana Annual Conference of the AMEC was represented obviously by congregations in the state of Indiana. However, they also included congregations as far as Lexington, Kentucky (Payne, 1891, p. 256). The general conference, on the other hand, served as the highest governing body of each denomination. Unlike the annual conference that dealt with local

and regional matters, the general conference represented the interests of all congregations in the denomination and was composed by elected delegates from across the Church. In both the MEC and the AMEC, the general conference met every 4 years to deal with legislative issues concerning the denomination. In many ways, the structure was comparable to the relationship between the states and the federal government in the United States. Although the annual conference exercised a great deal of autonomy like states, they were ultimately accountable to the general conference that operated like the federal government.

As the General Conference of the AMEC scheduled for 1856 approached, events could not have been going better for Payne's effort to pull the AMEC into cooperation with the MEC in founding WU. Ironically, the General Conference of the AMEC was already scheduled to take place in Cincinnati, home of the Cincinnati Annual Conference of the MEC; Payne had already made his decision to move near WU just before the inaugural session in the fall; and, resolutions on behalf of the AMEC to support WU had easily passed through the pro-education Ohio and Indiana Annual Conferences of the AMEC in 1855. The agent of WU, J. Wright, had visited the two conferences and presented the plans for the new school. The reception in the Ohio Annual Conference in August 1855, was exactly what Payne desired. His pro-education forces were in place and openly praised the plan. Payne's old friend and former student, John Peck, "rose and, in a powerful speech that was full of pathos and fiery words, hailed the enterprise of the Cincinnati Annual Conference as the very thing we needed" (Payne, 1891, p. 325). The next month, meeting in the Indiana Annual Conference, Payne's ministers also gave him

reason to rejoice. Following Wright's presentation, the members of the conference took the speech-making and well-wishing of the Ohio Conference a step further:

The educational report came from the committee, recommending that an "intelligent committee" be appointed, authorized to propose and receive any proposition "which our brethren of the M. E. Church have to offer." It also recommended that the presiding Bishop act with that committee. (Payne, 1891, p. 326)

Payne and Wright were emboldened by the words and actions of the AMEC Annual Conferences. However, Payne's joy would not be long lived. The General Conference of the AMEC met 8 months later in 1856, and unanimously rejected the proposal and branded it as a MEC colonization plot aimed at removing free Blacks from America.

Accusing the Cincinnati Annual Conference of a plan of colonization was a serious charge from an AMEC perspective. The colonization movement was crystallized in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the work of the American Colonization Society (ACS) formed in 1816 (Burin, 2005). The colonization movement aimed to speed up the end of slavery by returning all Blacks, freed and enslaved, to Africa. The ACS formed into state chapters and sought state funding for the purpose of sending Blacks to Liberia. Although the ACS considered itself to be an ally to Black people, many Black and White abolitionists by the 1850s were outspoken against it. Efforts to resist the colonization movement dated back to 1817, when AMEC founder Richard Allen and others led over 3,000 people in protest at Mother Bethel AMEC against the ACS (Delany, 1852/1968; Stokes, 1973). This anti-ACS sentiment was particularly prevalent with members of the AMEC clergy.



In 1851, the Philadelphia Annual Conference adopted resolutions condemning the ACS activity as an attempt to remove free Blacks so that the anti-slavery movement would quietly die. The Conference deemed the success of the ACS as the demise of the AMEC and similar Black institutions:

WHEREAS, That detestable scheme, the colonization movement, is again formidably presented to the public for their support, and every means set on foot to destroy the fixedness of this, our people, in this their native country; and WHEREAS, Our religious and moral institutions must be disbanded in the event of its success....Be it further resolved, That this Conference recommend to its members to suspicion the motives and spurn the advice of any and every man or minister, be he white or colored, who shall attempt to disturb and unsettle the institutions that exist among us by attacking the permanency of our people in their native land. (Payne, 1891, p. 250)

A similar resolution passed in the same year at the New York Annual Conference. Even before he joined the AMEC, Payne himself was fearful of colonization. In 1835, he had sought assurances from the president of Gettysburg Seminary that he would not be compelled to go to Africa in exchange for a free education. Neither Payne nor the AMEC was opposed to the voluntary emigration of Blacks to Liberia or the development of Africa by Black Americans. Clergy from the AMEC had gone to Liberia from time to time to develop the church in that nation (Payne, 1891, p. 484). The opposition to the colonization movement stemmed more from suspicion of the motives of those that promoted it. The issue for this discussion is not concerned with the motives of the ACS, be they ulterior or not, but with the overall perception held by the AMEC clergy toward

it. This negative perception is critical to understanding the reasons behind the rejection of the proposal of the Cincinnati Annual Conference.

The history of interpretation of the AMEC's rejection of WU in 1856 was largely shaped by Payne's view and presents a one-sided estimation of the events. Payne wrote about the actions in the *Semi-Centenary and Retrospection of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (1866a), in his autobiography *Recollections* (1888), and in the *History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Volume 1* (1891). His consistent characterization of those opposed to cooperation with the MEC was that they were prejudiced and blinded by their hate for the plan of colonization; that they were moved by emotion, not intellect, in distrusting the motives of the Cincinnati Annual Conference; that the charge of colonization was baseless; and, as a result, they had missed the best opportunity afforded the AMEC in regard to higher education. This interpretation has been largely unchallenged and unquestioned by researchers. Researchers have mostly followed Payne's lead and adopted his conclusions about the AMEC rejection of WU (Killian, 1971; McGinnis, 1941; Stokes, 1973). Others, like Woodson (1919/1968) and Coan (1935), have simply ignored the issue, opting not to address it as germane to the story. No major scholar on Payne or WU, however, has cited the minutes of the Cincinnati Annual Conference as a primary source in their research on the founding of WU (Coan, 1935; Killian, 1971; McGinnis, 1941; Stokes, 1973; Woodson, 1919/1968). Each, instead, relied on secondary sources for the actions of the MEC in establishing WU. A reading of the minutes of the Cincinnati Annual Conference, however, provides additional information that casts the events of 1856 in a new light. When the events recorded by Payne are added to the minutes of the Cincinnati Annual Conference, a new

picture emerges surrounding the rejection of the plan. A detailed examination of the events of 1856 illustrates that the charge brought by Payne's opponents that the Cincinnati Annual Conference of the MEC was indeed involved in the colonization movement appears to be grounded in more than mere emotionalism and unwarranted prejudice.

On May 5, 1856, the General Conference of the AMEC opened in Cincinnati and welcomed clergy and laity from the respective Annual Conferences. As planned, Bishop Payne introduced J. Wright and Mansfield French to the General Conference to present their plan for AMEC involvement with WU (Payne, 1888, p. 132). What was not intended on Payne's part was the angry outburst that followed. Molison M. Clark took the floor and argued that the university was a colonization plan by Dr. Durbin, Secretary of Missions for the MEC and outspoken advocate of colonization. M. M. Clark maintained that the proposed university:

was a scheme of the Doctor, to *ensnare us into measures for our expatriation*.

That the Colonization Society was anti-republican, anti-Christian, and anti-humane, that he who advocates its principles and measures is an enemy of the colored race, that Dr. Durbin advocates its principles and its measures, therefore Dr. Durbin is an enemy. It was impossible for him to mean anything *generous* in behalf of that race, and therefore the General Conference was in duty bound to oppose any measure which he might suggest, or which had for its *ultimatum, the accomplishment of his object—the expatriation of a race* from their native land. (Payne, 1866a, p. 105)

The measure was defeated and Payne was dumbfounded. Writing about the event some 10 years later, Payne expressed his frustration:

It was in vain that the friends of *co-operation* expressed their confidence in the purely benevolent and upright intentions of the Cincinnati Annual Conference;....Defeated in the General Conference by the injudicious vote of the *majority*—the *minority* silently, but firmly resolved to give their *personal influence* and *aid* to this wise and beneficent measure of the Cincinnati Annual Conference of the M.E. Church. (Payne, 1866a, pp. 105-106)

Rejected by the General Conference, French visited the Ohio Annual Conference later in 1856 and appealed once more for AMEC cooperation. Although his speech had “a lasting impression upon his audience” and he vowed that Durbin had nothing to do with the plan, the Ohio Conference followed the action of the General Conference in rejecting the proposal (Payne, 1891, p. 410). Not even Payne’s reputation as the leader of educational efforts in the AMEC could alter the perception that WU was a colonization ploy once Durbin’s involvement was insinuated.

No other person in the colonization movement infuriated the AMEC clergy like the Reverend John Prince Durbin. Durbin, former president of Dickinson College, had become a leading advocate in the Pennsylvania Colonization Society. In 1852, he addressed the state legislature and governor of Pennsylvania and secured \$2,000 to send 35 Black Pennsylvanians to Liberia (Burin, 2005, pp. 93-94). Durbin hoped that if the Pennsylvania legislature led the way, other northern states would follow their example. He suggested that the only practical “remedy” to the Black problem was colonization, which was founded on historical evidence:

that two strongly marked races of people cannot live peaceably and equally together as citizens under the same government...or the one must be subjected to the other. This, at least up to this period of the world's history, is the decree of Providence. (Durbin & Pettit, 1852, p. 38)

Durbin added that Blacks living outside of Africa and alongside Whites were not in the will of God. He contended that the divine plan was for all races to be bound to their own geographic areas. He continued by asserting that colonization would be a positive step for the elevation and self worth of Black men in that "nowhere else but in Africa, is the African a man" (Durbin & Pettit, 1852, p. 41). Durbin proposed that perhaps slavery and now emigration back to Africa was a part of God's plan of salvation. If it were not for slavery, he suggested, Blacks would still be pagans and uncivilized. However, their new elevated status allowed them to return to impart Christianity and civilization to Africa. Durbin acknowledged that slavery was always wrong, but maintained that it was equally wrong to keep Blacks in America because the enterprise was doomed to fail.

Contrary to Payne's denial of the MEC involvement with the colonization movement, the minutes of the Cincinnati Annual Conference from 1854 through 1856 displayed a well established connection between the Conference and the ACS. Durbin, in fact, visited the Cincinnati Annual Conference in 1855 and gave an "interesting" address to the members (Minutes of the Cincinnati Conference, 1855, p. 34). This visit and lecture occurred just weeks after Wright had secured the support of the AMEC in Ohio and Indiana. Considering the antipathy of AMEC clergy for Durbin, his presence among the Cincinnati Annual Conference was not helpful toward gaining the trust of the AMEC. Additionally, in 1855, W. P. Strickland was appointed the agent for the Cincinnati

Annual Conference to the Ohio Colonization Society (OCS), the state chapter of the ACS. He was responsible for promoting colonization, raising money, and cooperating with the OCS throughout the MEC congregations in the Cincinnati Annual Conference. Further damaging the credibility of the Cincinnati Annual Conference with the AMEC was the standing committee on colonization formed in 1854. According to their report to the Conference, the committee was seeking the best manner to achieve its goal of organizing a state society:

This state society is yet to be organized; and it is proposed, through the agency of Mr. Christy, Agent of the American Colonization Society, to organize that society in co-operation with this conference during its present session. The great object of this society will be to check the extension of slavery, and contribute toward its extirpation by promoting civilization on the coast of Africa. This object the society proposes to effect by inducing and assisting the more intelligent free people of color in this country to emigrate to Africa. (Minutes of the Cincinnati Conference, 1854, pp. 27-28)

The committee also requested that each pastor cooperate with agents of the OCS when they visited their respective churches (Minutes of the Cincinnati Conference, 1854, pp. 5-6). Ironically, the committee was set up in the same meeting that members adopted the plan for the establishment of WU.

The chair of the colonization committee, the Reverend A. Lowrey, was also intimately involved in the plan to establish WU from the very beginning. Lowrey authored the resolution to form the committee to establish a college for Blacks in 1853, and his signature was listed alongside Payne's as an original signer to the Articles of

Association for WU in 1856 (McGinnis, 1941, 1962). Lowrey was a part of the founding of WU each step of the way, including the "Primary Meeting" in October 1855, where several key details were established including: composition of the board of trustees, the amount of money set aside to purchase the facilities, and the decision to open the school to both sexes (Minutes of the Wilberforce University Board of Trustees, 1855). It is clear that the Cincinnati Annual Conference saw no contradiction in simultaneously promoting colonization and the establishment of WU. Rather, the Conference viewed both as attempts to help alleviate the problems faced by Black Ohioans. Viewed by the members of the AMEC clergy, on the other hand, the two initiatives were antithetical to one another. Any possible good the AMEC clergy found in the WU plan was negated by the collaboration of the Cincinnati Annual Conference and the colonization movement.

Placed in this context, it should not be surprising that members of the AMEC, with a hard-line stance against the ACS, rejected the plan for WU. From their vantage point, the Cincinnati Annual Conference was sending mixed messages. Although Payne was highly respected as the educational leader of the AMEC, the delegates of the General Conference clearly questioned his judgment in seeking to align the denomination with those who were avowed members of the colonization movement.

Payne was undaunted by the rejection of WU by his own denomination, and he vowed to continue working with the organizers of WU even without the support of the AMEC. On August 29, 1856, Payne was elected to the first board of trustees. Of the 24 board members, 4 were Black, including 3 persons from the AMEC. Joining Payne on the board from the AMEC were the Rev. Lewis Woodson and Mr. Alfred Anderson.

Right away, Payne became active in the workings of the board. Although he traveled extensively to carry out his episcopal duties, he often participated in board meetings and committees. In September 1856, he was placed on the Scholarship Committee along with J. Wright and A. Lowrey (Minutes of the Wilberforce University Board of Trustees, 1856). By 1858, Payne was a member of the Executive Committee. This committee afforded Payne much needed experience in that he dealt with issues related to tuition, student recruitment, public relations, and securing insurance for the buildings (Minutes of the Wilberforce University Board of Trustees, 1858). In 1860, he served on a committee with President Rust to select a new member of the faculty, and he assisted other board members in the audit of the president (Minutes of the Wilberforce University Board of Trustees, 1860). Payne also continued to serve as a de facto liaison between WU and the AMEC. Payne kept the affairs of WU in front of the AMEC, and he continued to seek AMEC support for the school (1861). In addition to his work as a board member, Payne also involved himself in the daily operation of the school when time permitted. He delivered the daughter of the late Bishop Morris Brown to the campus in the summer of 1857 to begin her studies. That same year, Payne helped in revival services on campus that led to the classroom conversion of his stepson in a manner reminiscent of his own conversion experience in Bonneau's classroom (Payne, 1888, p. 138).

According to Payne, however, the school never truly attained the level of a college during the 6 years that it was operated by the MEC. He stated that the "studies were elementary English studies; therefore, the institution was improperly called a university" (Payne, 1888, p. 151). During this time, the school also failed to attract many



students from the North. Instead, it drew its largest group of students from the mulatto children of southern slaveholders. Arnett and Mitchell (1885) state that of the 207 students enrolled in the 1859-60 academic term, the majority were children of southern slaveholders (pp. 17-18). One such student from the South was Emma Castleman Bowles, the daughter of a slave and her master in Vicksburg. Stephen S. Castleman sent his daughter Emma to Cincinnati in 1858, granted her emancipation, and sent her to WU. She recalled that "with a few exceptions" the students were all children of slaveholders in the South (Bowles, 1923, p. 336). Although she said that abolition was preached constantly, problems still arose over race. She and another mulatto child, George Harding began dating. Like Emma, Harding's father was a slaveholder in Tennessee, and his mother was a slave. President Rust attempted in vain to break apart the relationship and finally sought the help of her father:

Castleman wrote his daughter that he did not send her North to waste her time with a nigger. If she did not stop he would come and get her, cow hide her and bring her home and put her in the cotton field. (Bowles, 1923, p. 337)

The threat was not carried out and she ultimately married Harding. This portrait of campus life, with a heavy influence of southern slaveholders, provides another possible explanation at the continued reluctance by the AMEC to involve itself with the school while under MEC control.

The dependence on southern philanthropy ultimately led to the demise of WU as a MEC institution. By 1861, doubt about the future of the school began to arise with the onset of the Civil War. Writing to the *Christian Recorder*, Payne assured readers that President Rust intended to keep the school open for the 1861-62 school term (1861).

Rust, however, could not operate a school without students. As the students from the South were recalled home, money and support from their fathers also ceased (Arnett & Mitchell, 1885, pp. 5-6). By the board meeting in June 1862, the school was at its lowest point. President Rust was owed almost \$1,000 in unpaid expenses; the board voted to suspend operations for 6 months; and Rust resigned as president before the meeting adjourned (Minutes of the Wilberforce University Board of Trustees, June, 1862). By September, the board could not meet for a lack of a quorum.

*Purchase by the AMEC*

As time wore on, the financial condition of WU continued to worsen. President Rust informed Payne that the board was prepared to sell the property of WU and all its assets to the AMEC for \$10,000, the cost of its indebtedness. Rust assured Payne that this amount was only for the AMEC, and the offer was time sensitive, in that the State of Ohio was interested in the land. Payne began a two-fold attack on the problem by praying to God and seeking the advice of colleagues:

So I reflected again and again, and sought counsel of the Lord, until I felt at liberty to make the effort; then I opened correspondence with several of our leading men, both young and aged, among whom were Dr. Willis R. Revels, Lewis Woodson, and Stephen Smith. (Payne, 1888, p. 152)

Revels and Woodson both encouraged Payne to make the purchase, with the latter pledging \$100 toward the purchase price. Although Smith was known as being one of the wealthiest men in the AMEC, he never replied to Payne's inquiry.

As Payne traveled to the board meeting on March 10, 1863, he was still uncertain on how to make the purchase. The defeat at the hands of the General Conference in 1856

likely played a role in his reluctance to act on behalf of the denomination without prior consent. The meeting opened with Payne offering the word of prayer. The trustees did exactly as Rust had predicted and offered the school to the AMEC for \$10,000, on the condition that the deal was made that evening. Payne informed them that he needed at least 3 months to secure the support of the Annual Conferences. They explained, however, that the state legislature was in session and needed an answer from the board the following day. It was “now or never” for the AMEC to make the deal (Payne, 1888, p. 152). With no time left and without the approval of any official body of the AMEC, Payne made the purchase:

Then immediately I threw myself on the “strong arm of the Lord,” and said: “In the name of the Lord I buy the property of Wilberforce for the African Methodist Episcopal Church.” The brethren (all white men) cried out, “Amen, amen, amen!” then fell on their knees and prayed for my success. (Payne, 1888, p. 152)

By the end of the evening, Payne had agreed that the AMEC would buy the property by paying \$3,000 down in 3 months and the balance due in 2 years. Payne often remarked when reflecting on the events of that night that at the time he signed the contract for \$10,000, he did not have \$10 in his pocket.

This was a bold and unprecedented move on Payne’s part. It was especially risky considering the reaction the last time he presented WU to the general church. Rather than wait a full year until the next General Conference for connectional approval, Payne made his appeal on behalf of WU directly to the people of the AMEC. On April 4, 1863, he published “Bishop Payne’s Appeal in Behalf of the Wilberforce University” in the pages of the *Christian Recorder*. Had Payne known in advance the positive response of the

AMEC toward his actions, he would have probably acted long before the March board meeting. If he were guilty of miscalculating its predicted support in 1856, he was equally mistaken in anticipating its lack of support and the amount of opposition he thought would rise against him in 1863. Contrary to the explosive negative reaction of the General Conference, this venture was hailed as the very thing needed for the AMEC.

The editor of the *Christian Recorder*, E. Weaver, offered his support for the purchase of WU, but also shared Payne's concern that some might be upset at the autocratic manner he used to make the purchase:

It is just what we want, by which we can educate our young men for the ministry....Let every body send us what they can: and let our ministers wake up to the subject. We know that some will say that neither the General nor annual conferences have authorized such a movement, and may hold back on that account. (1863a)

As will be discussed later, a small minority expressed their displeasure at the purchase of WU; the overwhelming majority, however, was in favor of it and applauded Payne for making what they considered the right decision. Over the next 2 years, the pages of the *Christian Recorder* were filled with letters of support for the actions of Bishop Payne. The support for Payne and WU came from all geographic areas, from clergy and laity, and from young and elderly members alike.

Writing from Cincinnati, a layperson wrote to express her desire for the AMEC to own WU. She wrote that the church could not "afford to lose it" and that it must be saved for the children (Aleph, 1863). J. M. Maxwell, a youth in Fayette County, Ohio, pleaded with the fathers and mothers of the AMEC to buy the school for the next generation, and

they would be repaid “with honor” (1863). The Reverend Benjamin T. Tanner argued that there was an “urgent demand for an educated ministry” and that the education needed should be of a “particular kind” suited for AMEC clergy:

We must have a college, and our young men must be instructed in the doctrines of *our* [italics added] church. They must not be taught Presbyterianism nor Lutheranism, but good old fashioned John Wesley Methodism, so will our integrity be preserved, and interest enhanced. (1863)

Writing from Brooklyn, New York, the Reverend Richard H. Cain stated that if “there ever was a time when we should be interested in establishing an institution of learning for our children, the time is now” (1863). None were as enthusiastic in their support as the young preacher and future missionary to the south, James Lynch of Baltimore, Maryland, whose words almost leaped from the pages of print: “The appeal of Bishop Payne to the ministry, laity, and friends of the A.M.E. Church, has reached my sight and also my heart. I feel all within me crying, Amen! My pocket cries, Amen!” (1863)

Encouragement for the purchase came from various locales. Orderly Sergeant J. H. Welch of the 55<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts wrote from duty at Folly Island, South Carolina, to offer God’s blessing on WU (1863). The cause of WU came to the attention of Brigadier General R. Saxton, military governor of South Carolina, through the agency of James Lynch. According to Lynch, Saxton openly hoped that children from South Carolina would one day enroll as students of WU (1864). Possibly more surprising to Payne than the support received from the military governor of his self-exiled home state was the endorsement by his former opponent on WU, M. M. Clark. Shortly after Payne’s appeal, Clark outlined the plan of support for the Missouri area churches:

Our plan in St. Louis for aiding in the purchase of the Wilberforce University, is this: To form an association called the Wilberforce Scholarship Association. Our object is to raise at once one thousand dollars, a part, of which we have already in hand.... In this way we propose to serve the cause of education, not only by assisting in the purchase with one thousand dollars, but also by assisting ourselves and friends in the education of our children, having as an institution, a standing scholarship of ten students. (1863)

Although Clark led the defeat of the WU plan as offered by the MEC in 1856, he was clearly supportive of the new independent venture by the AMEC.

Although it existed, record of discontent with the acquisition of WU was scarce. It has often been necessary to find the thoughts of opponents expressed in the writings of supporters. For example, Robert A. Johnson from Detroit wrote to report the efforts of their fundraising bazaar held for WU which netted \$100 against a host of objections:

Some said the college would do them no good; others said they had no children. Some would say we have our own church to take care of and support. Others would say you are always sending money away to something that never will do us any good, when it ought to have been kept home for home consumption....But, nevertheless, we were determined to go ahead in spite of the opposition made by old "decrepid [sic] fogysm [sic]." (1864)

W. J. Davis, however, was not afraid to place his opposition in writing. Davis offered several reasons why the AMEC should not buy WU. Davis reminded the readers of the *Christian Recorder* that the nation was still in the midst of an undecided war and that the fate of Black people was unsettled, which made the purchase unwise. The war also made

raising money very difficult. Davis was not against the AMEC establishing a college, but he felt that the Church already had too many competing demands:

Now, I want to be understood, that I am as much in favor of an educated ministry, as any man in the connexion [sic]; but I am not in favor of purchasing the Wilberforce property; I think we have too many irons in the fire already, and if we are not more careful, some of them will burn before they are taken out. (1863)

Davis represented the opinion that any money raised should go toward supporting existing educational efforts of the AMEC, such as the faltering Union Seminary near Columbus, Ohio. He suggested that with only half of the funds needed to purchase WU, the AMEC could invest in Union Seminary and develop it into a first rate school. As previously noted, Union Seminary opened in 1847, but never reached its goal of providing higher education. At most, it operated as a primary school and continually struggled with a lack of finances (Payne, 1891). Davis' concerns, valid or not, were essentially dismissed by the majority of members and clergy in the AMEC. Those who had been reluctant to give to Union Seminary or similar ventures in the past were now energized around the prospect of owning WU.

### *Fundraising in the AMEC*

Against a bleak financial backdrop, an uncertain future in the United States, and doubts raised against the practicality of such a venture at the time, the members of the Annual Conferences of the AMEC quickly took action in support of the undertaking. Beginning in the Ohio Annual Conference, the purchase of WU was accepted and plans were made to raise the necessary funds (Arnett & Mitchell, 1885, pp. 6-7). The Ohio Annual Conference in the same meeting also voted to close the Union Seminary, sell the

property, and turn the proceeds over to WU. The momentum, once started, carried over to the other conferences. As the editor of the *Christian Recorder* noted, "Wilberforce University went through the Baltimore Conference like a hot potato; and we hope that they will keep the ball a rolling" (Weaver, 1863b). Payne's problem was not gaining the support of his denomination; he received all the support he needed. Rather, his problem was in devising a means to raise the \$14,000 needed to pay off the debt and operate the school for the next 2 years.

Payne's approach to gaining support and raising the needed capital was to seek the buy-in of all seven Annual Conferences of the AMEC. In return for their financial support and ratification of the contract, each Annual Conference essentially became co-owners of WU. Each of the seven conferences had equal say in the management of the institution and an equal amount of representation on the trustee board, two lay persons and three clergymen. While this proved to be an advantage in gaining the necessary support for the purchase of WU, this concession led to serious problems. Within 12 years, the AMEC experienced explosive expansion, growing from 7 Annual Conferences to 23. Due to the formula previously designed for the composition of the trustees at WU to include representatives from each Annual Conference, the result was a board with well over 100 persons. Writing at the time of his retirement from office, Payne reflected on the board composition:

The lesson taught us at the end of twelve years is, that there is no need of having more than one clergyman and one layman to represent an Annual Conference, who may have alternates. These, with ten or twelve honorary members, and the ex



officio, from whom a quorum can be convened within three hours' ride of the University, would be sufficient for all practical purposes. (1891, p. 437)

Although the decision created unforeseen, negative consequences, it was an effective means of gathering denominational support around the procurement of WU.

To fund the purchase, Payne offered the simple plan of each conference pledging \$2,000 over a 2-year period of time. He appointed strong leaders in each Annual Conference to collect the monies raised on behalf of the school: M. M. Clark, St. Louis; W. Revels, Indianapolis; L. Woodson, Pittsburgh; E. Weaver, Philadelphia; R. Cain, New York; H. M. Turner, Washington, DC; and G. Graham, Cincinnati (1863). Rather than place strict requirements on how to raise the money, he left the fundraising mechanism up to each Annual Conference. As a result, a contest type atmosphere emerged in the pages of the church newspaper as various ideas were offered. Each plan presented itself as *the* means the AMEC needed to use to raise the \$14,000. Payne included the plans of Cain and Woodson as possibilities in his original appeal. Cain proposed that each pastor raise an offering on the first Sunday of May. Woodson set his sights on the larger donors. He suggested that 100 persons be identified that would each give \$100. W. Whipper offered a joint stock system whereby each member would buy transferable shares at \$1 each (1863). J. Griffin's letter on behalf of the trustees of WU shows that the board had hoped to have the last week of 1863 set aside in each local church for a bazaar to raise at least \$100 in each congregation (1864).

Ultimately, people simply did what worked best in their own situation. The results varied widely, but the money continued to come into the treasury. In Circleville, Ohio, Mary McLoud and Nancy Riley organized a bazaar that raised over \$175 (1864).

According to F. Waugh, the Xenia church also held a bazaar that netted \$160 (1864a).

There was a sense of pride in raising the necessary funds within the Black community, as expressed by the following person from Xenia:

That which is done for us will not be appreciated as that which we do for ourselves. We have hung long enough on the charity of white friends. But let us make one grand and unanimous effort during the holidays, through the means of bazaars, to raise the \$8,000, and pay for our Institution property at once. Let us prove to this prejudiced country that we have the energy and the means among us to pay the debt. (Omega, 1863)

The same spirit was exhibited throughout local congregations in the AMEC connection on a large and small scale. Mother Bethel AMEC in Philadelphia, a large congregation, held a benefit concert with the noted performer Professor Shadd (Masten, 1863).

Ebenezer AMEC in Georgetown, a much smaller group, raised \$32.71 through offerings in its various organizations (Georgetown Correspondence, 1863). Yet, large and small churches did their part to raise funds.

The pages of the *Christian Recorder* were also filled with gifts received from individuals. For example, the February 27, 1864, issue reported the following: M. M. Clark, \$95; J. A. Handy, \$100; E. D. Davis, \$162.10; and R. Cain, \$42. Bishop Payne reported the receipt of \$30 on a pledge from a Mr. Childs who was serving as a surgeon in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Arkansas Colored Volunteers (1864). Most members, however, gave very modest amounts, such as in the following offering taken up at Mt. Pisgah AMEC in Princeton, New Jersey: Thomas Jones, \$1.50; Henry Davis, \$1; Andrew Schenck, \$1; Joseph Lake, \$1; Agnes Jones, \$1; Margaret B. Conover, \$1; Richard

Striker, .50; Thomas Beckman, .50; Elias Conover, .50; Francis Vanzant, .50; Catherine Shudder, .50; Harriet Hagerman, .50; and, Amelia Jennings, .50 (H. Davis, 1865).

Payne and his fundraising agents, James A. Shorter and John G. Mitchell, kept up the pressure during the first 2 years making repeated appeals for WU in the *Christian Recorder*. The first payment was raised in only 3 months and paid in June 1863. The school was then officially transferred to the AMEC and a new charter was secured (Arnett & Mitchell, 1885, p. 18). J. Shorter was selected as treasurer, J. G. Mitchell became the principal, and Payne was elected as president. The school opened on July 3, 1863, (7 years to the day that Payne moved to Wilberforce) to a student body of six (Payne, 1888, p. 153).

The next payment of \$2,500 was raised over the next year and paid as scheduled. Writing from campus, student F. B. Waugh happily reported, "Shout aloud and rejoice with me, that the second installment of the debt, on this property, has been paid!" (1864b) As the campaign came near its end, Payne and Shorter continued to press for the fulfillment of pledges. Shorter made one final, hopeful appeal toward the last payment:

May I not be allowed to urge on the friends of education and of Wilberforce to forward as fast as possible their donations,—*be* they great or small. Will not the ministers in the various conferences do something that will be as a lasting perfume to their names....On the 10<sup>th</sup> of next June will be two years since the purchase was made. On that day if the rest of the brethren will do as well as the above, Wilberforce will be paid for. (1865)

In the same correspondence, Shorter reported receiving nearly \$1,100 from individuals in the various conferences and \$100 each from Mansfield French and John F. Wright.

Optimism about the success of WU was running rampant throughout the AMEC. One day after the above issue of the *Christian Recorder* was issued the Civil War came to an official end. The future for WU could not have been brighter at that time.

*Out from the Ashes: The Decision to Rebuild*

April 14, 1865, opened as a hopeful day on the campus of WU, but ended in a double tragedy. The faculty and student body left campus and headed to Xenia for a celebration in honor of the fall of Richmond and the end of the Civil War. By the evening, they were informed of the assassination of President Lincoln *and* the destruction of WU. According to Payne's account, the campus was purposely set on fire by arsonists (Payne, 1888, p. 153). Board Chairman E. D. Davis had the sad duty of breaking the news to the many supporters of WU:

We are under the painful necessity of announcing the fact that Wilberforce University has been reduced to ashes, and our Institution, therefore, has been thrown into great confusion....Two of the Trustees were immediately dispatched to Wilberforce, to ascertain the true nature of the case. While there, we called a few of the Trustees together, to make some temporary arrangements for the continuance of the school. (1865a)

The sense of loss was not confined to the students on campus and the members of the trustee board, but was shared throughout the AMEC.

John Warren said that there "never was such an hour in the history of our Church. God grant we may never see the like again" (1865). Editor E. Weaver was almost

speechless and reserved comment for a later issue (1865). A shared sense of shock seemed to have gripped the AMEC in the days after WU burned down. The sense of loss was deepened when it was determined that although the university had suffered more than \$30,000 in damage, the insurance only covered \$8,000 of the loss (Cousins, 1865). Although courses continued in the makeshift classrooms until the end of the term, the outlook for the next academic year was bleak. Many of the advanced students decided not to return in the fall.

Shock, however, gave way to resolve. As the board gathered on May 3, 1865, to consider its options, it set out immediately laying plans for the rebuilding of the facilities that had been destroyed (E.D. Davis, 1865b). Payne missed the board meeting, as he had been busy preparing to lead a group of clergy into South Carolina to organize new churches among the recently freed slaves. He recalled his first visit to campus following the fire:

On my return in the month of June, as I stood and gazed on the ruins my heart ached, but my spirit soared to heaven, and as my faith laid hands upon the strong arm of the Almighty I said: "From these ashes a nobler building shall arise!"  
(1888, p. 154)

Payne's response to crisis was noticeably different from his first challenges faced in Charleston in 1835. Now, more resolute than ever, he planned to embark on a fundraising trip throughout Europe to expand the donor base of WU. Even before setting sail from the US, Payne and members of the board continued to receive a great deal of domestic support.

T. M. D. Ward, the AMEC missionary to the far west, wrote from California that “we must rebuild our temple of learning...it must be done” (1865). Quinn Chapel AMEC in Louisville, Kentucky, sent its encouragement and “raised \$100 in greenbacks, for the benefit of Wilberforce University” (Strother, 1865). Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, Salmon P. Chase, wrote to encourage Payne, as well. Chase had been a member of the board under the auspices of the MEC, but continued to support WU even after the AMEC purchase:

Dear Bishop....Wilberforce ought to be rebuilt and endowed: and I earnestly hope that your endeavors for these objects may be crowned with success. You may count on me for two hundred and fifty dollars, for half of it you may call at any time, and for the remainder at any time after two months from the first collection.  
(as cited in Payne, 1866b)

There was no sign that members of the AMEC and supporters of WU ever intended to turn their backs on the school. Rather, the support continued to flow to WU and actually increased in the months and years following the catastrophe.

#### *Summary.*

As it has been demonstrated, Payne’s greatest struggle in his first years as president of WU was not gaining the support of the denomination for the school, but gathering the needed resources to keep the doors open. It is estimated, however, that during his tenure as president from 1863-1876, Payne raised \$92,875 for WU (Smith, 1922, p. 349). It has already been noted above that the AMEC contributed heavily through individuals and congregations. In the latter years of his presidency, Payne sought and received support from outside the AMEC in various circles. Chief Justice Chase

added to his previous gifts by placing WU in his will for \$10,000; Charles Avery also bequeathed \$10,000; the Freedman's Bureau contributed \$28,000; the Society for the Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education at the West contributed over \$1,800; Gerrit Smith gave \$500; and, the American Unitarian Association gave \$500 per year from 1868-1875 (Payne, 1891, pp. 434-435; Smith, 1922, p. 349). Additionally, Payne secured free lectures by the faculty of Antioch College in nearby Yellow Springs (Payne, 1891, p. 435). While he had success with individuals in other denominations, Payne achieved very little in raising funds within other Protestant judicatories. He shared his rationale behind this failing in a speech delivered to the Society for the Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education at the West. Payne placed the burden on "denominational narrowness and jealousy" and "denominational aggrandizement" (1868).

Under his leadership as president, the school continued to struggle financially, but paid off the debt to the MEC in full and erected a new building following the fire of 1865. WU became a college in the true sense of the word and opened the Classical Department (1866), the Theological Department (1866), the Scientific Department (1867), and the Normal Department (1872; Arnett & Mitchell, 1885). Payne could boast that from a humble beginning with a handful of primary English students, WU had graduated 13 women and 16 men on a college level.

Although he enjoyed some success in fundraising and expanding the college offerings, Payne's presidency was not without criticism. As early as 1865, some began to publicly question his ability to serve as bishop and president. As noted, the AMEC grew tremendously in the immediate years following the Civil War by absorbing thousands of

freed slaves into its ranks. Payne led this effort, personally, and now added frequent trips to the South to his ever-growing list of responsibilities. Added to the pressure of raising money for the debt at WU, Payne also had to find funds to rebuild the school following the fire. All of this activity, in addition to the demanding schedule placed on the bishops of the church, prompted the following criticism:

Now, the question is in our minds, whether it is better for the bishop to seek after the interest of Wilberforce University—let thousands of souls go, who, through him, might be brought into the sheep-fold, or to leave the institution to the working of those brethren who cannot do his work as a bishop, and for him to travel through those Southern States, and bring the people into the church. We hope the bishop will look to this. (“The Work South,” 1865)

As demonstrated in the statement above, some members of the AMEC were not comfortable with the many hats Payne wore. Payne, however, appears to have been unaffected by the critique and he remained in office for another 11 years until he voluntarily stepped down as president.

Payne’s success in developing the AMEC in the South created another problem for WU, one that was much more serious than mere criticism. By the time of his death in 1893, some 13 new AMEC colleges were organized in the South. Prior to 1870, WU had enjoyed the enviable position of being the only college in the AMEC. These new colleges, often inspired by WU, were a direct threat to the viability of Payne’s work in that they diverted funds that had previously been allocated for WU. Payne expressed frustration that many of these attempts would lead to nothing more than “sham colleges” if adequate funding were not secured to fully operate the institutions (Payne, 1885, p. 6).



Payne argued that a college needed at least \$1,000,000 in the bank before opening its doors. He contended that even a poor denomination like the AMEC could raise the amounts needed, but only if it operated in a concentrated, focused, and systematic effort:

Upon this principle the A.M.E. Church could build and endow a *first-class college* every five years. She boasts of numbering four hundred thousand. Let one-half of that number be discounted as old age and youth, unable to give anything, there would remain two hundred thousand who are able to give one dollar apiece for five successive years. Then we would be in possession of a million of dollars—a *sum sufficient to build and to endow a strong and powerful college*....She could then bide her time till millionaires could raise up themselves from her Alumni. (Payne, 1885, p. 8)

However, short of a denomination-wide mandate banning the establishment of colleges without prior consent of the General Conference or some other board, Payne's counsel was not enforceable. In many ways, Payne's purchase of WU without the prior knowledge and permission of the denomination set the precedent on how new colleges were established in the AMEC. In light of the financial struggle WU continually faced in its formative years, it may have been better for WU had Payne followed his own advice and opened the school once adequate funding had been secured and an endowment established.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Had Payne lived in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, he would rightfully be deemed a workaholic. In his early years as a school leader in Charleston, he filled his days and nights teaching two different groups of students. As he later served as a pastor in Baltimore, he also maintained a vibrant primary school at the same time. By the time he served as president at WU, he took multitasking to a new level. While serving as president, he also presided over his existing territory as an active bishop. In the latter role, he held Annual Conferences, assigned pastors to new churches, and served as one of the chief administrators of an ever growing denomination. In addition to these demanding responsibilities, Payne led the development of African Methodism in the South following the fall of the Confederacy in 1865 and personally provided leadership to one of the greatest moments of growth in AMEC history as the denomination absorbed thousands of recently freed slaves. Added to this hectic schedule was a fundraising trip to Europe, lecturing on the campus of WU as time permitted, publishing articles in favor of

education, delivering speeches on behalf of WU when invited, and writing the history of the AMEC as historiographer.

Throughout his life, the overarching theme that tied Payne's activities together was his non-stop effort to make education a priority in the life of Black Americans in general and the AMEC in particular. The unique tapestry of his life that led to his election as president of WU began with his dream of a one-room schoolhouse in Charleston and six students. Each step along the way, he sought to improve conditions and open new opportunities for learning for those who had been previously denied an education. Payne continually developed a curriculum grounded in the classics, regardless of the makeup of his student population: slaves, children, ministers, college students, and seminarians. These efforts, however, were all met with various forms of resistance. Payne's responses to the different challenges were many times laudable and other times not very heroic. His commitment to education, however, never wavered. Over time, his approach to crises evolved from the closing of his school in Charleston and moving north in 1835, to his bold declaration of rebuilding WU following the devastating fire of 1865. School leaders on any level, K-12 through higher education, can gain a great deal of insight into their own current challenges by a new reading of Payne's life and work as an educational leader. No era in education has been, nor will be, without its share of predicaments and leaders who must respond.

His first school in Charleston provides several insights. To begin with, Payne opened his school without the benefit of government funding, the benevolence or backing of a mutual aid society or religious group, or a thriving student body necessary for a school that was tuition driven to meet the financial needs. Payne also faced the challenge

of his own deficiency in subjects he desired to teach. Thus, he first needed to become proficient in new disciplines in order to expand his course offerings. This required ingenuity, determination, and a bit of serendipity. His success in turn led to the problem of insufficient classroom space to teach, which necessitated the support of an outside donor. His student body could not have been any more diverse. He taught young students from the most affluent families during the day. However, at night, he taught adult slaves who worked all day before class. Payne faced a White society in Charleston that had differing attitudes toward Black self-education that ranged anywhere from support, indifference, to outright hostility. Yet, in the midst of these great hurdles, Payne somehow created a thriving and flourishing school that far exceeded the expectations of many in his native city. His story is encouragement to school leaders who face similar circumstances today and feel that success is somehow out of reach due to the challenges that are faced. Payne's school was able to overcome a lack of finances, poor teacher pay, diverse students, lack of adequate classroom space, few textbooks, inadequate instructional equipment, and a social environment that was often hostile to the educational process for Blacks.

However, Payne's story in Charleston is also instructive from a different vantage point. A lesson can be learned by his failure in his first school. In 1835, when faced with the prospect of being forced to close due to the change in the state law that forbade the education of Blacks, Payne simply closed his school and moved. Many historians have erroneously suggested that he was forced out of Charleston by this new law. Yet, when the historical evidence is examined, there is no support for this thesis. In fact, there are numerous examples of persons who continued to teach Blacks in Charleston in spite of

the same law. It is likely that if Payne had chosen to remain in Charleston to teach, that his school would have endured the crisis of 1835 and been allowed to remain open. Payne, however, erred in viewing the law of 1835 as a personal attack on his school, rather than as reflective of larger events governing race relations in the southern United States. Payne's failure to view the events of 1835 in light of the larger picture led to his decision to close one of the most successful schools of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

With regard to his work to educate the clergy, Payne's efforts were invaluable and lasting. Prior to his entrance in the AMEC, efforts to educate the clergy had gained no traction. Resolutions continued to pass in favor of education and members wrote on the necessity of it, but no one was able to design a plan that galvanized any widespread support. Payne's entrance into the AMEC changed that reality. Within less than 3 years as a member in the AMEC, Payne assisted in leading a revolution in the education of the clergy by drafting legislation for the clergy course of studies. The course laid out by Payne and adopted by the denomination is still largely in place to this date.

Yet, behind the tough rhetoric he exchanged with his opponents leading up to the passage of the first legislation in 1844, Payne appeared to struggle with self-doubt. When faced with confronting his dissenters at the General Conference, Payne inexplicably decided not to attend at the last minute. He contended that it was better to avoid the meeting so that he would not be the source of strife. Bishop Morris Brown, in that moment, provided Payne with one of his most valuable lessons in leadership. Brown stated that if Payne were to miss the meeting, he would give his opponents exactly what they desired. Brown told Payne that he must attend the General Conference and present his plan for educating the clergy. By insisting that he be there, Brown taught Payne a new

approach to dealing with conflict by meeting it head on. Although Payne experienced moments in that General Conference that were less than heroic, he persevered with the help of others and reshaped the meaning of ministry and education in the AMEC. The researcher argues that this event was the turning point in Payne's life as an educational leader. From this time forward, Payne's approach to conflict that arose as a result of his educational initiatives was different. Prior to 1844, Payne avoided what he deemed as strife rather than pushing forward what he felt was best. Following this event, however, he did not waver in advocating what he considered to be in the best interest of the AMEC with regard to education. This he did, even in the face of strife and conflict.

As a result of his new approach to dealing with conflict, Wilberforce University (WU) became the crowning achievement in Payne's life. He began his experience at WU fighting those in the AMEC who held the view that it was a colonization scheme on the part of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC). Yet, in the wake of the controversy, Payne remained involved with WU even though his own denomination rejected it. At the height of the Civil War, he took the bold step of agreeing to purchase WU in behalf of the AMEC with no money to pay for it. Following the purchase and reopening of WU, he withstood criticism from those who felt the acquisition was not necessary and the rebuke of others that expressed concern that he should not serve simultaneously as bishop and college president. When the campus was burned to the ground by arsonists (just as the trustees prepared to make the final payment to the MEC), Payne declared without hesitation that the school would be rebuilt out of the smoldering ashes.

As an educational leader, he was involved in every aspect of WU from virtually the beginning. He spent almost 40 years of his life at WU; he and his wife raised their

family in its shadow; and, he remembered it materially in his death with such means as he possessed. Further, it is unlikely that WU would have survived its infant years under AMEC control had it not been for the tireless effort of Payne. He strengthened the faculty; he raised the academic standards; he traveled the world to raise funds and awareness about WU; in 13 years as president he raised over \$92,000; and, he led in the rebuilding of the burned down campus.

As he neared his death, however, Payne was deeply troubled about the viability of WU as it now faced competition from an ever-increasing number of new AMEC colleges. He warned that because the AMEC could not properly fund more than one college at the time, many of these new schools would amount to nothing more than sham colleges. Despite his dire warning the new schools remained open and were joined by others in the years to follow. Fulfilling his prophetic words, many of the schools that opened in the years following the close of the Civil War have long since closed due to a lack of finances. Some of the remaining colleges at the present moment fight to maintain accreditation due primarily to inadequate funding. It is unfortunate for AMEC higher education that Payne's bleak vision of the future has often been correct.

However, in many ways, Payne himself could have shared in the blame for the chronic under-funding of AMEC colleges. If Payne had heeded his own advice when purchasing and opening WU, he may have changed the face of higher education in the AMEC. Payne offered an excellent plan to begin new colleges in the AMEC. His plan called for 200,000 members of the AMEC to each donate \$1 a year toward the establishment of a new college. After 5 years, the \$1,000,000 would be enough to properly endow the school and provide an operating budget. If this plan were followed,

he argued, the AMEC could properly open 10 colleges in 50 years. This plan, however, was offered by Payne more than 20 years after he opened WU. Rather than heeding his own advice of raising sufficient capital prior to operating a college, he impetuously purchased WU and plunged the school into debt even before it started. The fact that the building was under-insured when it burned down 2 years later deepened the financial woes of WU. Bishop Payne was the symbol and embodiment of educational leadership for many in the AMEC. As other schools opened, many of them did so emulating his act at WU. Not surprisingly, a number of the new colleges bore Payne's name out of respect for his contribution to education in the AMEC. If he had provided a different model through his own actions in opening WU, perhaps the colleges that followed would have emulated his example by first raising the proper funds.

The critique offered into what the researcher views as Payne's failings takes nothing away from his many successes. The researcher contends that Payne met with more success in educational leadership than he did failure. As seen in the historical narrative, he overcame many adverse experiences in his life: orphaned at an early age, limited access to education, laws that hampered his ability to provide education to others, inadequate finances to fund his educational initiatives, and various opponents hostile to his efforts. However, to tell Payne's story without including the bumps and setbacks he experienced along the way, is to diminish the magnitude of his achievements. Much can be gained from the experiences in his life as an educational leader if those experiences are viewed in their totality. While hailed by many as the Apostle of Education in the AMEC, some viewed him as arrogant and out of touch. The criticism of such persons should not be simply dismissed as anti-intellectual or obstructionist behavior. Payne's



work as an educational leader finds its value in the testimony of his supporters and his opponents. Both groups, however, would have been able to agree that for better or for worse, Payne continually took the AMEC into new directions with regard to education. Regardless of whether he met success or failure, the risks that Payne took in the name of education led to the creation of new paths and trails that many in the AMEC and beyond continue to use in the present.

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