

PAYNE "TOUCH"

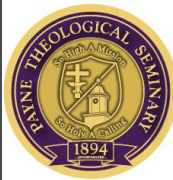
SPRING 2020

The Official Newsletter of Payne Theological Seminary



IN THIS ISSUE:

- Letter from the President
- Institutional Advancement Chair Letter
- Program Highlights
- Faculty Corner / SAS
- Alumni Association / Friends for Payne
- Events



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Letter from the President



Thriving Congregations

Many mainline Protestant congregations across the country find their local congregations responding to significant population shifts, all of which impact the tenor of delivering ministry. The three Black Methodist traditions -- African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, and Christian Methodist Episcopal -- provide no exception. Black Methodist congregations are, in fact, challenged to do local ministry and meet connectional fiduciary responsibilities. Population shifts and larger denominational demands offer but a few challenges to thriving ministry.

Michael Joseph Brown, Ph.D.

But what does it mean for congregations to "thrive"? They must know their communities. Population shifts

obviously make this a tricky matter, but other shifts also muddy the waters as with the ebb and flow of various industries. In the midst of such vicissitude, congregations must not only serve as a resource but also as a broker of resourcefulness. Besides knowing their communities, congregations need to honor their heritage in various and important ways. Some feed the hungry particularly effectively; others provide shelter. Finally, congregations must breathe into their respective missions. Missional orientation invites congregations to understand their "why", which is to live into God's call for their lives and then to align their ministries accordingly.

Payne proposed and was awarded a \$1 million dollar grant for a project to "map the future of Black Methodism" in response to an invitation by the Lilly Endowment's Thriving Congregations initiative. The project offers our effort to address what we see as a "gap" in contemporary conversations about Black Methodism. Outside of the studies conducted primarily on United Methodism, we Methodists that took an alternative route are rarely, if ever, addressed. We want to feel that deficiency at least when it comes to A.M.E.s, A.M.E.Z.s, and C.M.E.s. We believe that we can serve as a facilitator for important and far-reaching conversations that will allow us -- with the help of the Holy Spirit -- to take agency for our congregations and communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "MJ Brown", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

From the Institutional Advancement Committee Chair

Greetings!

Several years ago my Bishop invited me to represent the 4th District as a trustee on the board of Payne Theological Seminary. I felt very proud and honored to accept. As a lifetime member of First A.M.E. Church in Gary, Indiana where I currently serve as Sunday School Superintendent, Steward and Treasurer, I have felt the weight of responsibility that comes with position. Payne however, felt different in some way. This is the first school in the country dedicated to the purpose of training spiritual leaders to reach the lost and minister to the household of faith in the uniquely African American tradition. I needed to learn much more to reach my personal goal of making a difference with my service.



Dr. Claude Powers

While serving on the board and learning at the feet of some very talented and capable staff and board members, I have witnessed the first graduating class from our new Doctoral Program. I have also enjoyed seeing the largest graduating class in Payne history cross the stage. And though we still have work to do, we have made long overdue repairs to our facilities and equipment. We have much to be pleased with.

Most recently, I was given the assignment of chairing the Institutional Advancement and Alumni Relations Committee. Once again, I will be leaning on the blessing of having a talented committee with diverse skills coupled with a fresh new commitment from a team of staff led by Kim King. I am excited and encouraged by the tremendous potential that we have to raise our profile and improve our engagement with all of our stakeholders including our connnectional churches and all others who have a heart for God's work through Payne Theological Seminary.

Beginning with the revitalization of this newsletter, one of our goals will be to get the story of Payne out to our base, and beyond, by making better use of multimedia. We are in a competitive market and our future success will depend on our support from many sources. With better engagement, we hope to build a network of support capable of sustaining the mission of Payne for as long as the Lord sees fit. I look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas.

Dr. Claude Powers

PAYNE RECEIVES \$1M GRANT

Leveraging a historic \$1 Million grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc., Payne Theological Seminary wants to help Black Methodism and congregations understand what it means to thrive. A wide range of challenges beset Black Methodism, much like mainline Protestantism, to provide robust local ministry. Sometimes such challenges come in the form of natural disaster. Last spring, for example, an outbreak of tornadoes decimated portions of southwest Ohio. Some neighborhoods, along with their churches, are still digging out even amidst the new year. At other times, congregational threats are engendered by bigotry. Just last November, Bethel African American Episcopal Church (Gainesville, GA) dodged tragedy. The vigilance of law enforcement apprehended a white teenager who idolized Dylan Roof, the assassin of the Emanuel 9.

Over the next three years, Payne will partner with congregations in the form of "learning communities" from southwest Ohio and other strategic national and international markets to promote congregational resourcefulness. Payne is excited, that is, about helping local ministries learn their local context, embrace their assemblies, and honor their heritage in various and important ways. The sum total of this project will help Black Methodism map its future and sustain its relevance throughout the 21st century.

Incorporated in 1894, Payne Theological Seminary has been dedicated to the preparation of ministerial leaders in the tradition of liberation, reconciliation, social justice, and the dignity of all humankind.

As we continue to gain strides in our vision to become a global leader by providing access to theological distance education, Payne offers two professional degrees.

Master of Divinity

100% online

Doctor of Ministry

Blended - online and traditional

Vision: To be recognized as a global leader in distance theological education.

Faculty Corner



Charles Brown, Th.D.
Distinguished Professor of
Social Ethics

Thriving congregations are compassionately and constructively related to the geographic communities in which they reside. They are not simply geographically located. They choose to live in that geographical space, interacting with the community as well as among the membership.

In so doing, they are able to bring the spiritual and human resources of the congregation to bear on community problems in ways that are helpful and healing. An opportunity to focus on this in the Dayton community will be the focus of the Thriving Congregations event series.



Student and Academic Services (SAS)

In an effort to make the overall learning experience more efficient, Payne developed a new Student and Academic Services (SAS) department that operates as a “one-stop shop” beginning in the fall 2019 semester. SAS now consists of admissions, financial aid, and academic services.

While each staff member will still have primary responsibilities, the entire staff has been cross-trained to handle the majority of student questions and needs. A dedicated email address (sas@payneseminary.edu) and phone number (937.971.2948) has been established for students to contact SAS directly.

Payne has also updated its web domain to payneseminary.edu.



Master of Divinity Program

Highlighting: Lewis McCarter, alumnus

Q: Why did you choose Payne Theological Seminary to pursue your advanced degree in theology?

A: I specifically chose Payne because it offered an Afrocentric focus. I was searching for a program that would allow me to attain an education to become more effective. I had served the community in various roles to include social worker, counselor, and case manager and desired to be able to address religious and spiritual needs as well.

Q: Given Payne's Africentric focus, how did that make a difference in your learning and/or the value of your degree?

A: Learning theology from an Africentric perspective, has given me a new and more rich understanding of my identity in Christ. I believe that my old lens and understanding prior to Payne was still rooted in oppressive concepts. My new understanding is one of liberation and empowerment. The value is priceless and the experience was blessed in every aspect.

Q: How are you using your Payne education to help your congregation to thrive?

A: My pastor has asked me to develop a nonprofit organization for my church. It will address several underserved populations in the church and in the community. I have been working on this project while engaging the community by providing outreach services. These services include being a chaplain for a program that houses people overcoming addictions from drugs and alcohol.



Doctor of Ministry Program

Highlighting: Susan Buckson, alumna

Rev. Dr. Susan Hillary Buckson is the daughter of Joseph E. and the late Gwendolyn Beasley Buckson. Her professional education began at The University of Maryland Eastern Shore where, as an honor scholar-athlete, she received a Bachelor of Arts in English Education (1992). Her advanced degrees include a Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction from Coppin State College (2001), a Master of Divinity with a concentration in Theology from The Interdenominational Theological Center (2004), and a Doctor of Ministry with a concentration on Adaptive Leadership in the Church and Community from Payne Theological Seminary (2019).

Susan is a gifted educator. She has enjoyed a productive career in public education starting in Baltimore City Public Schools. Since 2001, Susan has served in the Atlanta Public Schools and has been recognized as both the APS System-wide High School Teacher of the Year and as a Milken Family Foundation National Honor Teacher. Civically, Susan is the Chief Financial Officer of Higher Standards Foundation, Inc., a 501c3, faith-based organization whose continuous effort is to serve as a liaison with community and businesses to address issues pressing those who have been incarcerated or otherwise impacted by the legal justice system with a smoother reentry into society.

Susan answered God's call to the preaching ministry in 1999 at Waters A. M. E. Church in the Baltimore Annual Conference under then pastor, Rev. Ronald E. Braxton. She is the author of two Lenten devotionals, *The Lenten Experience: A 40-Day Revival* and *Preparing the Soil*. She has also published *My Praise Is My S.W.A.G: A Bible-based Curriculum For Youth And Young Adults*. She is currently writing a devotional for young women: *That was Then...This is Now: My Daily Diary Journey toward Womanhood*.



Susan has served as a workshop presenter for the A.M.E. Church on both the District and conference levels with a critical focus on empowering components toward innovative, practical ministry. She is currently pastor of the phenomenal people of Allen Temple A.M.E. Church in Atlanta, GA where she endeavors to lead with integrity of heart and skill of hand. (Psalm 78:72) Therefore, she works diligently to be a servant to God's people, and a seeker of God's presence.

Student Government Association (SGA)

With so many churches closing each month, it is hard to grasp the concept of a thriving church. More often, it seems that term “thriving” is reserved for the large mega churches that individuals flock to each Sunday. However, any church can be a thriving congregation regardless of its size.

A thriving congregation is a church that has a full concept of the ministry work of the Gospel and how it relates to their surroundings. They are open to new ideas for ministry and understand that they must adapt their methods to reach each generation. Thriving congregations recognize that the younger generations also need to be active participants in the ministry but view changes and obstacles as opportunities for God to work.

A thriving congregation has a passion and zeal for the work. They understand that the ministry must expand outward past the four walls of the physical church. They want to share their faith with others and know how to inspire and influence. The pastor can not only accurately articulate the vision, but also has a plan for implementation. He/she can lead while also working as part of the team, delegating responsibilities where needed.

Finally, thriving congregations recognize that the work of the ministry requires financial assistance. The members tithe consistently with the understanding that their finances are not to support the pastor, but to further the work of the church. They walk in obedience to God’s word and walk in faith to a God who never fails.

Rev. Alice Cato

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Alumni Association

Greetings!

My name is the Reverend Dr. Bruce Lambert Butcher. I am a part of the graduating classes of 1994 and 2019, respectfully. I have served, with pleasure, as the alumni president for Payne Theological Seminary Alumni Association since 2009.



Rev. Dr. Bruce Butcher

Alumni associations have been critical to the survival of historically Black colleges and universities. And Payne alumni are no different. We support the school with our financial resources. We serve as ambassadors for Payne Seminary. We are one of the best recruiting tools for Payne because we “model” the results of a Payne Seminary education. Many

persons who attend or have attended Payne Seminary were recruited by a Payne alum. Many of our graduates share a deep love for Payne that makes us go beyond what may be required from other alumni organizations. When people ask why we are so passionate about Payne Seminary, my reply is “there is something about Payne, its mission, its ministry that makes you want to be a part of its success.”

We want to continue to the success of Payne by doing the following: 1) Continue to give financially to the school; 2) Recruit potential students and encourage them to enroll in Payne; 3) Utilize social media and other means to stay connected with one another after we matriculate; and 4) Send trained ministers who will help build strong communities and thriving congregations.

In closing, I want to say on behalf of alums all around the world that we love Payne Seminary and “For the Love of Payne” we will go to great lengths to keep it moving forward.

Friends for Payne

Friends for Payne, founded by Nancy Stokes, was established as a volunteer non-profit group to support Payne Theological Seminary’s commitment to the A.M.E. Church, the acquisition of a ministerial education for those interested in pasturing, counseling, teaching, the



chaplaincy and lay Christian awareness. By perpetuating the Seminary’s legacy, established by pioneer educator Daniel A. Payne, we facilitate and encourage sound preparation as we serve and hope to engender service in others. Friends for Payne is a cross section of people whose services advance Payne and assist in keeping it viable. The current Friends for Payne president is Mrs. Anginette Coleman.

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If you would like to speak with Institutional Advancement staff about different ways to support Payne, contact:

advancement@paynseminary.edu

or

937.376.2946

EVENTS

Thriving Congregations: Mapping the Future of Black Methodism
Ongoing series - Dates to be determined

Alumni Worship Service
Postponed - Date TBD

2020 Commencement
Postponed - Date TBD

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