

*Episode 2: African American Lutherans on the U.S. Mainland & the Stories that Four Pioneer Pastors Could Tell*

Testifying to early evangelical outreach efforts among African Americans within the predecessor bodies of the ELCA (specifically, the Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church), a man of African descent by the name of “Emmanuel” was baptized on Palm Sunday, 1669, in New York City by Jacob Fabritius, a Lutheran pastor. And, Pastor Justus Falckner, the first Protestant ordained in North America, baptized and married black people during his ministry in Albany, New York, New York City, and northern New Jersey.

One of the churches that Justus Falckner began was Zion Lutheran Church, now in Oldwick, Hunterdon County, New Jersey, and Zion’s first service was held in a free black man’s home. Aree Van Guin was a slave who bought his freedom and --- bought land in the Raritan Valley in 1708. There was a law which prohibited the ownership of land by slaves (or former slaves) but the deed was transferred to his name in 1724. Three children were baptized on August 1, 1714, one of them...a black person for whom the Van Guins were sponsors.

And, a Caucasian Lutheran pastor with an unusual passion for reaching out to people of African descent Was John Bachman who was directly responsible for the training of the first two black Lutheran pastors; the first black overseas missionary, and a number of black persons in the South Carolina Synod.

Regarding John Bachman’s ministry in Charleston, South Carolina:

In 1825 St. John’s congregational report listed ninety-two black communicants, and in 1831 and again in 1845, the congregation had to enlarge its seating space reserved for black worshippers == **segregated, of course!**

The scope of Bachman’s work can be shown in the number of baptisms of Black people he did. In 1829 he baptized 29 Black people; all other Lutheran pastors in the synod baptized nine. The following year Bachman baptized 40; all other pastors six. John Bachman was not the only pastor to work among the Black people, but --- his work was the most extensive.

Three men came out of St. John’s parish in Charleston to become the first Lutheran pastors of African descent: Jehu Jones, Daniel A. Payne, and Boston J. Drayton.

A word about Jehu Jones:

Mr. Jones was a free black man whose vocation was tailoring. As a congregant of St. John’s in Charleston, it is surmised that he indicated to Pastor Bachman his desire to become a Lutheran missionary to the continent of Africa. Jones traveled to New York City with (letters of recommendation from Pastor Bachman) as well as, other Charlestonian ‘gentlemen’ attesting to his good character. The goal was to share these letters with the Ministerium, but Jones

arrived in New York after the meeting had adjourned. Several of the pastors, however, were still in New York City when Jones arrived, so they took it upon themselves to assemble (as a self-constituted body) in order to arrive at a decisive and instant action. Jones was accordingly ordained, and the matter was reported the following year to the Ministerium, which decided that in an emergency ---- the brethren had done well, and their act was approved.

Pastor Jehu Jones later had a change in vocational interest, and in 1834 he began a domestic mission in Philadelphia: St. Paul's Colored Lutheran Church. Despite a valiant effort by Pastor Jones to raise the money needed to keep the mission afloat, St. Paul's did not survive. A Plaque, paid for by the Philadelphia Chapter of the Association of African-descent Lutherans (in the early- 2000's) was erected at the church building --- that now serves as a fraternity house for students of the University of Penna.

#### A WORD ABOUT: Daniel Alexander Payne

I take great delight in reminding my African Methodist Episcopal (AME) colleagues that Daniel Payne, the second Presiding Bishop of the AME, started out as a Lutheran minister!

Payne was a freed Black Charlestonian who was orphaned before his tenth birthday. He became well - educated and began his own school at the age of eighteen. White and Black students attended Dr. Payne's school, to the chagrin of the slaveholding population. A state law was passed, specifically aimed at Mr. Payne. It forbade persons of color to teach in or, administer their own schools.

Disheartened, Payne headed north to fulfill his vocation in education. Pastor Bachman was one of the leaders of Charleston to write Payne a letter of recommendation. Payne was advised [by well-meaning white people] to go to Africa to fulfill his teaching ambitions. He rejected that advice and—**reluctantly**—entered the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg.

Payne went to Gettysburg on two conditions—1) that he would not have to embrace the teachings of the Lutheran Church, and 2) that his training would not be in African colonization. These two caveats were agreed to, and Daniel became a student of theology of great distinction.

Daniel affiliated himself with the Franckean Synod, a synod that advocated for the emancipation of American slaves. Payne was called to a black Lutheran congregation in Troy, New York, and was ordained on June 9, 1839. But he took ill soon after his ordination and relocated to Philadelphia, where he began to interact with Richard Allen, the first Presiding Bishop of the AME, who invited Payne to affiliate with that indigenous African American denomination. Being an honorable man, Pastor Payne wanted to sever his relationship with the Franckean Synod by repaying his financial debt. But, the synod insisted on receiving the money **before** his severing connections with them. His request was turned down, & he never sent them the money, and his name was dropped from the rolls of Synod in 1846.

It was not until forty-four years later, in 1890, that Payne was acknowledged by the synod in their Minutes that: *Daniel Paine had made good in the [African Methodist Episcopal] Church and his qualifications "had induced this Church body to elect him as their bishop, and...he was highly esteemed for his great usefulness."*

The (mid- to late years) of Dr. Payne's life were distinguished by his service as the second Presiding Bishop of the AME and as founding president of Wilberforce University, an historically black institution of higher learning. **"Usefulness"— indeed!**

A Word about: Boston J. Drayton

Mr. Drayton was an active member of St. John's, Charleston. He informed Pastor Bachman that he felt God's call to go to Liberia as a Christian missionary. Drayton was ordained in 1845 and departed later in that year for Liberia. It is not clear how long Drayton kept at mission work, but apparently he had become an important member of the Liberian community, for when he died in 1866, he was celebrated as one who had served as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia, who also served as Governor of the neighboring African state of "Maryland," until it was merged with Liberia in 1857.