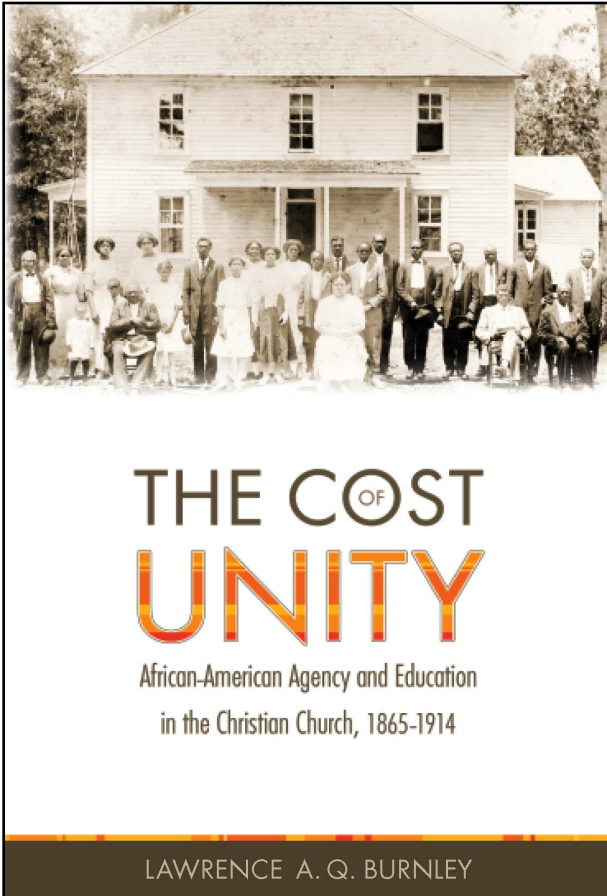


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The Cost of Unity

African-American Agency and Education in the Christian Church, 1865–1914

Lawrence A. Q. Burnley



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African-Americans and the Disciples of Christ

Like other Protestant organizations in the United States, the Christian Church was involved in the establishment of schools for African-Americans in the South in the years following the end of the Civil War. The most widely read books offering an interpretation of the history of this church tend to relegate the role of black people to passive recipients of white benevolence and largesse in this process of education reform. This book examines the agency of African-Americans in the founding of educational institutions for blacks associated with the Christian Church. The philosophical discourse within the Christian Church concerning the purpose, type, and control of these schools is examined as well as the prevailing racial assumptions and attitudes that informed each of these areas.

The author argues that African-Americans within the Christian Church played an active role, both in cooperating with Disciples' mission agencies, and acting independent of these agencies, in the conceptualization and founding of schools for their communities. In addition, contrary to Disciples' reformers claim of being motivated by their desire to "elevate the Negro race," the nearly exclusive application of the industrial model of education in schools established by the Disciples of Christ mission agencies for African-Americans reflects an intentional effort by whites within this movement to encumber African-American efforts to achieve socioeconomic and political advancement, autonomy, and self-determination. Finally, the conservative approach to schooling for African-Americans was largely the result of northern Disciples' acquiescence to the demands of Southern members of the church for the sake of maintaining unity within the national church.

LAWRENCE A. Q. BURNLEY, a native of Cleveland, Ohio, holds degrees from the University of Pennsylvania (Ph.D.), Christian Theological Seminary, (M.Div.), and the University of Cincinnati (B.A. honors). He currently serves as associate dean for Multicultural Programs and special assistant to the provost for Diversity Affairs at Messiah College in Pennsylvania. He is a contributing author of the forthcoming *A New History of the Stone/Campbell Movement* (tentative title; Chalice Press, Fall 2012).

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