

THE HISTORY OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN COUVA

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## *Dedications*

This Research Paper is dedicated to my mother who always demonstrates to me that hard work is rewarded and in memory of my late father, Horace Siblal Junior.

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*List of Figures*

*page*

Figure 1- Age Range of Members of St Andrew's	30
Figure 2- Skill Areas of Members	31

*List of Maps*

*page*

Map 1- Map of Trinidad showing Couva	35
Map 2- Map of Couva showing St Andrew's	36

## *Table of Contents.*

	<i>Page</i>
Acknowledgment	I
Dedication	II'
List of Figures and Maps	III
Introduction	1
Chapter One-The Anglican Church in Trinidad 1797- 2005	3
Chapter Two- The Evolution of the St Andrew's Parish in Couva	15
Chapter Three- A portrait of the Church Today	" 24
Conclusion	33
Appendix	35
Bibliography	44

## Introduction

In 1838, the magnificent church building named St Andrew's Anglican Church was erected at the crossroads of the Couva Main Road. It is considered as a heritage monument of great historical importance. It was reconstructed in 1883. The light from the cross at the top of the tower has been seen as a beacon to fishermen in the Gulf of Paria. Today at the crossroads in Couva, it is a precious landmark to land developers of the Point Lisas, Couva Industrial Estate and the commercial entrepreneurs of the region.

## Objectives

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the development of historical work on the region. More local research is required to increase public awareness about the country. The history of the St Andrew's Parish, Couva has never been researched and this made it even more difficult to research. However, attempts were made to record the history as accurately as possible. Thus, this research will contribute to local historical information and to knowledge about the Anglican community.

## Methodology and Sources

This research paper is divided into three chapters and a conclusion. This was the most appropriate style for this paper, as it will make it easier for the reader to grasp the topic. Chapter one presents a brief history of the Anglican Church in Trinidad. Bernard Tappin's thesis, "History of the Anglican Church in Trinidad", was the main source that assisted me in this chapter. His doctoral thesis was loaded with information that was relevant to my area of study.

In chapter two the evolution of the St Andrew's Parish was discussed. This chapter touched on the stages of development in the church from 1838 to its reconstruction in 2000. This chapter was a challenge as little information was available. However, with the aid of Rev. Lynch I was able to acquire primary sources for my research.

The final chapter gives a portrait of the church today. This chapter studies the architectural design of the church, the church's contributions to society and its current decline. Again gathering evidence and information was also difficult in this chapter. I obtained the bulk of information through oral history and some church records.

My primary sources were obtained through data collection. These include the use of questionnaires, oral history, and sampling techniques. Appropriate questions were constructed for interviews. Then I used the snowball sampling technique to choose interviewees. Snowball technique is when one interviewee is chosen and she or he leads to other samples, or recommends other people to interview. The Anglican Primary School, Couva, led me to Rev. Lynch and Rev. Lynch led me to Mr. King and Mr. Mohammed. Secondary sources were thesis, books, magazines and statistical records.

Although little information was available, these sources and techniques assisted me in gathering and obtaining my information. I tried my best to offer a well-researched project to the local community and the University of the West Indies.

CHAPTER ONE  
THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN TRINIDAD  
1797-2005

The word "Anglican" means "of England"<sup>1</sup>. By inference therefore, the history of the Anglican Church in Trinidad began in 1797 when English forces took over Trinidad. Sir Ralph Abercromby and his forces captured Trinidad from the Spaniards. The Treaty of Amiens of 1802 officially declared Trinidad a colony of Britain. Trinidad was a unique island due to her historical background and her diversified population, which consisted of Spanish and French settlers, and free or enslaved Africans. The Cedula of Population in 1783 was the motivational factor, which attracted French citizens from other colonies to migrate to Trinidad. The free coloureds were also among the people who took advantage of the Cedula and migrated to Trinidad,

As a young British colony, the Anglicans comprised a minority. Spreading Anglicanism was a challenge since both the Spanish and French inhabitants of Trinidad were Catholics, who made up the majority of the population. The Catholic Church, as the chief competitor of the Church of England in the promotion of its faith, had the advantage of a head start over the Anglicans. This head start provided numerous challenges to the development and promotion of the Anglican Church. The British government could not forcefully convert the inhabitants of

<sup>1</sup> The Anglican Domain: Church History, <http://www.anglican.org/church/ChurchHistory.html>.

Trinidad to Anglicanism. This would be a breach of the Articles of Capitulation of 1797 in which the British government was explicit in its provision for the tolerance of religious beliefs, alongside the English Church. This was the background and the atmosphere in which the Anglican Church in Trinidad was established.

The Garrison Chaplain, Rev. J.H. Clapham, was the first Anglican rector of Trinidad and he continued to minister to the forces and other English settlers who made their way to Trinidad<sup>2</sup>. In 1801 the first Anglican Church, the Holy Trinity, a wooden building, was erected at the corner of Prince and Frederick streets, Port of Spain. This was a huge accomplishment despite the dissuasion of the prevalent Catholic Church. In 1808 a great fire devoured the town and the Church was destroyed. It was successfully rebuilt in 1818 at the same location. On Trinity Sunday of 1823 the Holy Trinity Church was opened. The Governor, Sir Ralph Woodford, in his commitment to the Anglican Church "was influential in rebuilding the church." In 1823 he invited Rev George Cummins, from Barbados, for the consecration of the Church and to become Assistant Minister at Trinity.

Prior to 1824 the Church of England in Trinidad was under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Canterbury. In 1824 it became part of the new Diocese of Barbados, The Rev W.H. Coleridge D.D was consecrated Bishop of Barbados<sup>4</sup>. He visited Trinidad in 1825 and preached at Trinity Church and also inaugurated a branch of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK).

<sup>2</sup> 175 Years of Anglicanism. 1823-1998. Granderson Bros Ltd, Trinidad and Tobago, 1998, pg 12

<sup>3</sup> Tappin, Bernard, "From Chaplaincy to Diocese: A history of the Anglican Church in Trinidad 1797 - 1904", PhD thesis, University of the West Indies St Augustine 1997, pg 14.

<sup>4</sup> The Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago 1872-1972, R~haman Printery Ltd, Trinidad and Tobago, 1972. pg 6

The progression of the Anglican Church in the West Indies and particularly in Trinidad occurred during a period when anti-slavery sentiments were prevalent in England and the British parliament. There was wide concern for the slaves and mechanisms were put in place to improve the conditions and welfare of the slaves. These mechanisms came in the form of laws and the Amelioration order of 1824 sanctioned these laws. The provision of adequate religious instruction for slaves was among the several laws proclaimed to improve the conditions and welfare of the slaves. Religion was the vehicle whereby the African slaves were to be trained in order to enjoy the supposed benefits of freedom.

However, the inadequate number of clergymen and catechists proved to be a problem for the Church of England in Trinidad. The Catholic Church was in a better position to preach to the slaves. Woodford requested more clergymen, one for the Couva district and another for Port of Spain. A significant step was made in 1828 when George Cummins, rector of Trinity, established the Trinidad Sunday School. But in general, the Anglican Church displayed a lack of enthusiasm towards the African population during the amelioration period 1824 to 1834<sup>5</sup>.

Although much effort was not made to provide religious instructions to the slaves, the Anglican Church compensated for this lack of effort by promoting education. Education was used as a catalyst for conversion. In 1836 the Church Missionary Society (CSM) sent two missionaries to Trinidad: -John George Mulhauser the senior missionary and Alfred James Emanuel Eckel, to assist in educating the apprentices, It became expensive to employ teachers out of England and in 1838 the committee of the CSM demanded that a local school for the training of teachers be

<sup>5</sup>Tappin, pg 65

established with a view to hiring local teachers, including coloureds. As a result the financial burden would be reduced and there would be a ready supply of teachers to promote education and religious conversion among the ex-slaves.

On the other hand while the Anglicans were consolidating the Church of England in Trinidad the Catholic Church was already well established. 'The CSM viewed the Catholic Church in a very negative way.' The Catholic Church was numerically strong and well organised. It already had a bishop, a vicar-general, and twelve priests to minister to large congregations. The Catholics also consolidated among the apprentices. In 1837 sixteen Irish and French priests came to Trinidad to convert apprentices to Catholicism<sup>7</sup>.

The Anglican Church did not let the Catholics Church's competitive edge hinder its determination and passion towards promoting and spreading the faith. Eckel had established five schools in the Savanna Grande district by 1840 with one hundred and eighty three children' in attendance.

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (S.P.G) also assisted the colonial government in financing the Church of England in Trinidad. A special West Indian fund was set up with large contributions coming from the S.P.C.K. The S.P.G assisted the Anglican Church in becoming the initiator in the establishment of schools especially in the northern half of the colony.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid pg77.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid pg78.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid pg79.

The Church of England in Trinidad also attended to charity work. In 1834 assistance was given to thirty-six persons. A number of physically challenged individuals received assistance",

In the 1840s the Anglicization Policy and Coleridge's initiatives were implemented in the legal and ecclesiastical institutions of Trinidad<sup>10</sup>. The Anglicization Policy included the Ecclesiastical Ordinance, which made the Anglican Church the Established Church of Trinidad. It was a policy promoting the Anglican Church in Trinidad. Coleridge played an important role in promoting the Anglican Church through his determination and endeavours. After slavery was abolished, many of the French Catholic plantocracy, both white and coloured deserted the island, as they felt no further profits could be made. This provided the Anglican Church with an opportunity to further promote its development. Ex-slaves migrated to Trinidad from Barbados, Tobago and St Vincent after 1838, the majority of whom were Anglicans. As a result the number of church members increased. However, the immigrants who came from India and China in the 1840s and after changed the composition of the society and the Anglican Church. now had new souls to convert.

In 1842 the diocese of Barbados was reorganised and the Anglican Church in Trinidad became an archdeaconry. Between 1839 and 1842 the Church was elevated from being a rural deanery to an Archdeaconry". Cummins was appointed the first Archdeacon in Trinidad, With the Ecclesiastical Ordinance in 1844 the Church of England became the established church of the colony. Trinidad was then divided into sixteen Anglican Parishes, of which six were endowed as rectories and the others as island curacies". The administration of the Anglican Church

<sup>9</sup> Ibid pg 85

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, pg 88.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, pg 109.

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.rootsweb.com/~ttowgw/research/blchurches\\_anglican.htm](http://www.rootsweb.com/~ttowgw/research/blchurches_anglican.htm).

depended on financial support from the colonial government. Other churches in Trinidad such as the Methodist church and the Catholic Church were also funded, but the Anglican Church got first preference. Inevitably opposition against the 1844 Ordinance increased, especially among the Catholics in Trinidad. The Chief Justice, George Scotland, also opposed the ordinance. In 1845 Bishop Parry (Bishop of Barbados) approved the Ordinance.

The sixteen Anglican Parishes were the Parish of Holy Trinity, which comprised the town of Port of Spain and the neighbouring quarters, the Parish of St Paul in San Fernando and the quarter of North Naparima, St Mary's in the quarters of Tacarigua and Arouca, St Andrew's in Couva and St Philip in Savonetta which constituted the rectory of the United Parishes of St Andrew and St Philip. However, at present St Philip is now a daughter church of the Parish of St Andrew. St Stephen's was another Parish in the quarters of Savana Grande. In South Naparima, St Luke was established in 1844 and is now Parish of St Clement. The Parish of St Michael in Diego Martin was made into one of the island curacies. In Chaguanas, St Thomas was established in 1848; however, it was not given the status of a rectory. In the South of the colony in Cedros and environs, Christ Church was created and the Parish of St Matthew was established in 1844. St Matthew is now the Parish of St Augustine, La Brea. St Mark in Moruga and Guayaguayare, St Peters in Point a Pierre, St Bartholomew in Mayaro, Nariva, Toco and the settlement of Manzanilla and the Parish of St Jude's in Arima, Guanapo with the settlement of Cuare, Turure, La Seiva and parts of Caroni. Today St Bartholomew is now the Parish of St Faith, Rio Claro. The Parish of St John was established in the quarters of St Joseph, Santa Cruz, Aricagua and Cimaronero. Nine parishes were made Island Curacies with a salary of one hundred and fifty pounds and seven parishes were constituted Rectories with a salary of three

hundred and fifty pounds". The 1844 ordinance was a significant milestone in the history of the Anglican Church in Trinidad as it contributed to its development and organisation.

However, in 1845 the Anglican Church was faced with another dilemma, that of the East Indian immigrants. Other indentured labourers came to Trinidad such as the Portuguese and Chinese, but it was the East Indian Immigrants who came in large numbers and altered the composition of the population. The first immigrant ship, the *Fatel Rozack*, sailing from Calcutta, brought 225 East Indians in May 1845. In the first three years of East Indian immigration, a total of 5392 Indians came to Trinidad<sup>14</sup> who were either Muslims or Hindus. The Anglican Church's mission was to westernise and Christianise the Indians. Special missionaries were commissioned to convert the Indians. In 1853 the Missionary Committee supplied books to the Indian and Chinese indentured labourers for religious instruction<sup>15</sup>.

Attempts were made to raise funds to recruit a clergyman from India to assist in converting the Indians, but this proved to be a financial burden. In 1862, 193 East Indians were baptised. However, the East Indian population stood at 19,984 in 1860 and was increasing every year". Attempts to convert East Indian labourers met little success because of a number of factors. Foremost the majority of Indians wanted to return to their motherland. The significant Indian population resident on the island enabled the recreation of traditional villages and the maintenance of their original culture and religion. They remained faithful to their religion. The shortage of clergymen and finance was always a problem for the Anglican Church. This

<sup>13</sup> The Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago 1872-1972, pg 8

<sup>14</sup> Brereton, Bridget, *A History of Modern Trinidad* Heinemann, London, 1989. pg 101.

<sup>15</sup> Tapping, pg 197.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, pg 201.

hindered the process of converting the Indians. Some success was achieved; in 1862 a school for East Indian children was established at Chacon Street, Port of Spain. More East Indians, however, resided and worked in the rural areas where such a school would be more fruitful. In July 1857 an Anglican Orphan Home in St Mary's Parish (Tacarigua) was established for "Coolie" orphans, which assisted in the conversion of the Indians.

The Anglican Church did not gain a satisfactory increase of East Indian membership to their congregation. But immigrants from other British colonies also migrated to Trinidad after slavery. Most of these ex-slaves were already Anglicans, as in these British colonies, the Church of England was well established.

In 1872 the Anglican Church in Trinidad took a major step forward. The Clergy and Laity resolved that Trinidad would depart from the Diocese of Barbados and form an independent see. As a result a Church council was convened in 1872 and Rev. Richard Rawle was elected as the Bishop. On August 2<sup>nd</sup> he arrived in Trinidad and was enthroned as Bishop on August 6<sup>th</sup> in the newly named Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. Bishop Rawle was no stranger to the West Indies; prior to his appointment as bishop, he was the principal of Codrington College, Barbados. Bishop Rawle certainly played his part in establishing Churches and Chapels, other institutions and organisations throughout Trinidad. During his prestigious stint as Bishop of Trinidad he built and consecrated new Churches at St. Paul's, San Fernando; St. Michael's Diego Martin; St Chad's, Carenage; and St John the Evangelist'. He also appointed the first Archdeacon of Trinidad in 1879, Rev Henry Richards of St. Mary's, Tacarigua. In 1883 when the Province of the West Indies was created he had a significant part to play in its formation.

<sup>17</sup> The Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago 1872-1972, pg 52.

Bishop Rawle was also responsible for employing the first priest of African descent to work in the Diocese. This was an important event in the Church's history, because throughout the nineteenth century the church had depended on England to supply clergymen to Trinidad. However, there were some exceptions; in 1836 German born missionaries Eckel and Mulhauser worked for the Church in Trinidad. A number of white creoles from the West Indies were also recruited as clergymen, such as S.L.B. Richards. On the 5<sup>th</sup> January 1889 Bishop Rawle retired, confident that he had contributed considerably to the development and organisation of the Anglican Church in Trinidad.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of May 1889 Rev Thomas Hayes arrived in Trinidad and was enthroned<sup>18</sup> as bishop and installed in his cathedral four days later<sup>19</sup>. In 1889 the governments of Trinidad and Tobago were amalgamated and in the succeeding period, territorial expansion and responsibilities were increased for the Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago. Hayes was responsible for the building and consecration of the Church of St. Margaret of Antioch; St Magdalene at Manzanilla; St Oswald at Caroni; and St Aidan's, Arouca. On the 26<sup>th</sup> January 1904 he died in England.

Rev John Francis Welsh took his place and was consecrated Bishop of Trinidad and Tobago at St. Paul's Cathedral on the 28<sup>th</sup> October 1904. He was enthroned as bishop a year after the Water Riots. Trinidad's economy during this period was experiencing great difficulties which impeded the development of the Anglican Church. However, Bishop Welsh was successful in building and consecrating some more churches, which include St. Augustine, La Brea; St Edward the Martyr at Tabaquite; St John's, San Juan; and St Mark's, Guapo. The Good Shepherd Church in Tunapuna was extended. A new Church of St. Chad, Tucker's Valley, was

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

constructed and Bishop Welsh was responsible for the laying of the corner stone for a new Church, St. Sylvan, at Carapichaima.

Rev Arthur Henry Anstey succeeded to the Bishopric of Trinidad and Tobago in 1918. He also contributed significantly in promoting the Church's status, by building Churches, Chapels, schools and colleges. He founded the St. Hilary's High School for girls in 1921. This school opened the doors for coloured and black girls of the middle class to access education, and aided in dismantling segregation in the country". The Bishop Anstey Foundation also funded several schools aimed at educating the mass population. He also founded hostels for young men and women. Often, Bishop Anstey had to play dual roles as Parish Priest and Bishop. Bishop Anstey was loved by the people and will always be remembered as a humble man who was loyal to the Church. In 1945 he resigned the office of Bishop of Trinidad and Tobago.

The see remained vacant for a year until Bishop Fabian Elliott Menteth Jackson filled the position in June 1946. Bishop Jackson possessed administrative skills and his capacity for leadership helped raise a quarter a million dollars for church work within six months". In my opinion, he also enhanced the Liturgy by raising it from a Low to a High Church style. Bishop Jackson did not adapt to the climate of the tropics and in 1949 he resigned his seat and returned to England.

The Synod then elected Douglas Wilson as the Bishop of Trinidad. He continued the Liturgical policy of Bishop Jackson and he appointed a new dean, Rev Mr. Vaughan. Together they

<sup>19</sup> The Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago 1872-1972, pg 50

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, pg 53

formulated plans for a Church of England High School for Boys in Trinidad. However, Bishop Wilson departed Trinidad in 1956, before the laying of the foundation stone for the College at Moka, Maraval<sup>21</sup>.

Frank Chamberlain was his successor and was enthroned and consecrated in Trinidad on August 1956. His role was meant to be temporary as he was merely the caretaker of the Diocese for no more than five years. In 1960 he confirmed the laying of the foundation stone of Trinity College, Moka, Maraval. He retired in July 1961.

In 1962 Bishop Hughes arrived in Trinidad after he was elected by the Synod to become Trinidad and Tobago's new bishop. The visit of Dr. Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury, was a noteworthy event during Bishop Hughes' reign. This was an important event because it was the first time an Archbishop of Canterbury visited the West Indies. Hughes employed and appointed non-white people to fill the vacancies in the Cathedral Church. He also appointed the first coloured Archdeacon of Trinidad and Tobago and agitated for renaming of the church from "The Church of England in Trinidad and Tobago" to "The Anglican Church in the Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago," The Anglican Church in Trinidad, as in other West Indian islands, had only a handful of clergymen. Bishop Hughes was instrumental in recruiting additional clergymen to supplement this shortage. His actions were clearly a reflection of the time, as Trinidad and Tobago had attained independence and the status quo of the white elite was being threatened. Bishop Hughes was a liberal church leader and a product of his time.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, pg 53

In 1970 a state of emergency was declared in Trinidad as a result of the Black Power Revolution. The time was ripe for her first native Bishop. In September 29<sup>th</sup> 1970 Bishop Clive O. Abdulah became the new bishop of Trinidad and Tobago. Bishop Abdulah was also the first West Indian Bishop to serve on the Board of Directors of the Anglican Centre in Rome from 1992 to 1995<sup>22</sup>. The reputation of the Anglican Church of Trinidad was enhanced immensely due to Bishop Abdulah's achievements. In 1991 Bishop Abdulah retired and was succeeded by Rev Rawle Ernest Douglin.

He was consecrated as Bishop on September 29<sup>th</sup> 1992. A year later he was enthroned as Diocesan Bishop. Bishop Douglin enjoyed somewhat of a good episcopacy, and his ability and influence were felt and recognized throughout the diocese<sup>23</sup>.

On December 21<sup>st</sup> 2002 Bishop Clive W. Bess was consecrated Bishop of Trinidad and Tobago as he succeeded Bishop Douglin and is the current Bishop. As he continues the job of the previous Bishops, Bishop Bess struggles to keep the Anglican Church alive even as its members dwindle.

<sup>22</sup> C:\Documents and Settings\Administrator\Desktop\OurBishops.htm

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

CHAPTER TWO  
THE EVOLUTION OF THE ST ANDREW PARISH IN  
COUVA

In the Spanish era in Trinidad there was a river called "Rio de Cuba", located south of the County of Caroni in Central Trinidad. The Spanish inhabitants developed a small settlement north of the mouth of the river where cotton was cultivated. Britain captured Trinidad in 1797 and the river was called "Rio de Couva" and later "Couva River". This was a consequence of poor pronunciation on the part of the English settlers, since the Spanish "B" sounded as "V",<sup>24</sup>. The settlement, which began north of the mouth of the river, grew and the village was soon placed on the map (see Appendix 1). The Exchange Estate was established a short distance away. The name Exchange Village survives to this day. The straight East-West strip of the Southern Main Road extends from Exchange Village to St Andrew's Village where the road veers south. At this junction is the Anglican Parish of St. Andrew. St Andrew's Village was so named because it faced the church. Alexander Village and Perseverance Village were formerly

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.uinbagopan.com/Townsandvillages/Couva.html> Couva

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

separate sugar estates, which now form part of Couva, and the road leading westward past Perseverance meets the sea at Carli Bay.

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the development of sugar plantations pumped life into Couva as it brought with it labourers, planters, managers and others attached to the estates in and around Couva. Couva was new territory for the British planters who brought their own labour and capital since the area had no resources. They also brought with them their belief in and commitment to the Church of England. Most of the slaves were not yet converted to any Christian faith. This meant that it was easier for planters to convert their slaves to Anglicanism. As a result the Couva district became a mainly Protestant slave community. The population increased from a handful of inhabitants during the Spanish period, to a small community mainly comprising slaves and planters. Several estates developed throughout the vicinity of Couva during the nineteenth century and it remains one of the oldest settlements in Trinidad. The establishment of more sugar estates required an increase in the slave population, which would later create a need to construct an Anglican Church in Couva, The descendants of slaves would form most of the congregation.

Abolitionist leaders in Parliament were seeking to improve the conditions of slaves at that time, Religious instruction formed part of the proposals for improved conditions. In April 1823, Thomas Fowell Buxton, the Parliamentary leader of the abolitionist movement, proposed to allow Sundays for the religious instruction of slaves. This policy initiated the process for the future establishment of the Anglican Church in Couva. In 1824 some slaves were baptised at estates in Couva. In 1824 Trinidad was under the Diocese of Barbados when W.H Coleridge

was Bishop. In 1825 Bishop Coleridge came to Trinidad and had intentions of visiting the Couva district where the greatest numbers of Protestant slaves were found. However, bad weather conditions prevented his visit. During his visit discussions sprang up on the inadequate provision of clergymen and Governor Woodford requested two additional clergymen: one for the Port of Spain district and another for the Couva district. This was an important element in the evolution of the Anglican Church in Couva, as this clergyman provided the necessary religious instructions to the slaves".

Slavery ended, and Apprenticeship began, on August 1<sup>st</sup> 1834 and during this period further efforts were made to promote the faith in Couva among the ex-slaves. Individuals connected to estates in Couva held a meeting in 1835 and decided to erect a Protestant place of worship to facilitate the large number of Protestant ex-slaves. The estimated cost of the project was 600 pounds. Duncan Me Bean, the attorney at Brechin Castle Estate, contributed 40 pounds to the project on behalf of his absentee employer, Member of Parliament, John Duncan". This ignited events to construct an Anglican Church in Couva.

However, the Anglican Church in Trinidad placed more emphasis on the development of schools rather than on the conversion of ex-slaves. In the Couva district attempts were made to establish schools. The Church of England, having decided to use education as the catalyst to attract and convert ex-slaves, erected a school on Crown lands in Couva.

<sup>26</sup> Tappin, pg 57

<sup>27</sup> Ibid pg 67

In Trinidad, as in many islands of the British West Indies, the Church of England faced two major problems: financial capital and the lack of clergymen. This slowed the conversion process of the slaves and ex-slaves. European clergyman experienced great difficulties in adapting to the tropical climate and in addition the colonial government provided limited funds for development. The Church of England in Trinidad thus became dependent on the planters for funding. Supplementary contributions were made by special societies in England such as, The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K) and the S.P.G. In 1836 Richard Rock began serving as Officiate Minister of the Carapachaima and Couva district. It was the S.P.G who provided additional stipends to sustain Rock's position at a salary of 250 pounds annually".

In 1841 a grand event took place when the Church at Couva was built and licensed for divine worship by the bishop. However, it was not consecrated. The Couva Church was described as "a very excellent church, because it was spacious and attractive,,29.

The Church's congregation comprised a few converted ex-slaves from scattered areas throughout Couva, Anglicans from the environs and persons from the Savonetta district, who now had a centralised place of worship. After slavery ex-slaves migrated to Trinidad from other British colonies. Many of these immigrants were Anglicans because the Anglican faith was well established in those colonies. This increased the need to build more churches in the colony as immigrants increased the size of the Anglican population.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid pg 82.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid pg 99

In 1842 there were requests for a parsonage for the Couva Church and funds were allocated for the construction of this house". A request was also made for funding of the salaries of lay functionaries such as clerks. These new services further enhanced the functions of the church.

The new Bishop Parry made a visit to Trinidad on April 28<sup>th</sup> 1843 and on May 5<sup>th</sup> he consecrated St Andrew's Church, Couva<sup>31</sup>

As we saw, the 1844 Ecclesiastical Ordinance divided the island into parishes and Couva was allotted to the Parish of St Andrew's. Under this Ordinance St Andrew's in Couva and St Philip in Savonetta were constituted as the rectory of the United Parish of St Andrew's and St Philip.

The Ecclesiastical Ordinance made the Church of England the established Church in Trinidad, as noted, and it also assisted in organising the Church, The challenge now was to maintain the buildings and ensure that the churches were provided with clergymen. The traditional problems however still haunted the Church of England in Trinidad. In 1846, only three years after St Andrew's was consecrated, the government received an application for a grant of \$506 to repair the Church<sup>32</sup>. The request was turned down. St Andrew's had to wait four years to receive funds when in 1850, the Ecclesiastical Board granted funds for repairs. The Ecclesiastical Ordinance also made provisions for churches to raise funds independently for development. Clause 36 of the Ordinance stated that half of the money received from the rentals of pews could be used as funds for Church repairs". However, in most cases few or no pews were rented. The lack of support from the white elites resulted in the reliance on the metropolitan church societies for funding. This made the task of preserving the St Andrew's church difficult.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid pg 105

<sup>31</sup> Ibid pg 112

<sup>32</sup> Ibid pg 218

<sup>33</sup> Ibid pg 219

The lumber and tapia used to construct the church were not durable and constant repair and maintenance were necessary.

St Sylvan's became an outpost station of St Andrew's in 1867. The St Andrew's Church was gradually evolving into a "Mother Church" in the district, as she still is today.

The Anglican Church of England in Trinidad was very dependant on the metropolitan country to provide clergymen. This dependence led to a shortage of clergymen. During the 1870s several clergymen died, mainly because of tropical diseases, and this further depleted the number of clergymen in the country. On 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1878 H.G Wall, Rector of St'Andrew's,

Frederick James Titcombe was one of the several deacons ordained for service in 1894. He became an assistant curate at St Andrew's. On 6<sup>th</sup> March 1898 De La Rosa was ordained priest at St Andrew's Couva, with his license as curate. These ecclesiastical appointments to the St Andrew's Parish ensured its survival as a religious institution, despite the obstacles of limited clergymen and financial difficulties.

The Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago, which was established in 1872, had a challenge ahead of it. It was now responsible for maintaining the vitality of the Anglican Church in Trinidad and Tobago. St Andrew's, one of the oldest churches in Trinidad, was one of the churches the Diocese wanted to expand. After St Andrew's was reconstructed in 1883<sup>35</sup>, it was

<sup>34</sup> Ibid pg 284

<sup>35</sup> St Andrew's Anglican Church in Couva Church Building Reconstruction Project. pg2

improved with a tower and a spire in 1891<sup>36</sup>. St Andrew's position as a "Mother church" in the district was further enhanced, when the churches at Mayo and Gran Couva became daughter churches of St Andrew's.

#### Plans to Rebuild The Church

The Church of St Andrew's, Couva was in a state of disrepair by 1995, it had been in a state of decay for more than twenty years. The fear of losing their church prompted parishioners to embark on a restoration/reconstruction project to replace the decrepit building (see Appendix 3). Designs were then put forward to rebuild the nineteenth century church into a modern building, which would reflect a more liberal concept of the church as a community institution. At the same time the building would cater for the spiritual, physical and cultural development of the people.

There was one major problem; the Government's Historical Restoration Unit listed St Andrew's as a heritage monument. Evidently, when the outline drawings were submitted to Town and Country Planning of the Ministry of Works, they rejected it. The Ministry of Works stated they would approve the plans subjected to two specifications: -Firstly, the existing structure must be rebuilt with modern materials. The architect should use those materials to reflect the current design and style of the nineteenth century building as far as

<sup>36</sup> Tappin pg 328

possible". Secondly, "the new building, though larger than the original and annexed to the Church Hall", must retain its landmark status and similar design lines.

It took a year for technical experts, architects and church officials to come to a compromise, and the Ministry of Works approved an agreement on the final outline. Meanwhile soil tests were conducted on the site to ensure the viability of the project. Excerpts from the report by Geoengineering Consultants Ltd, February 1996 (Appendix IV), showed that four lines were run over the site for an intended structure. There were two lines north- south and two lines east- west. The report illustrated that "in every instance where the complete suite of tests were conducted the specimen fell above the "A" Line of Casagrande (1948) classification?". This meant that the site was geologically safe for the erection of a new superstructure.

### Building Design

To reflect the existing 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture, the new parish church was to be a one-storey structure, with an extension to the northern side of the building. Two main entrances were to be constructed, a main entrance and a side entrance and a ramp entrance for the physically challenged. Areas for religious activities such as altar, choir stalls, seating for the congregation, the front, a robing room and toilets were provided, and a general office with connecting corridors and accommodation for the priest. Ancillary external works complemented the new structure. (See Appendix V for detailed plans)

<sup>37</sup> Building Reconstruction Project, pgl

<sup>38</sup> Ibid pg 5..

The new designs were estimated to be costly. Church officials had to resume their search for financial support. They decided to approach the wider population, Corporations and business organisations for assistance through donations. Reconstruction plans and an estimate were presented to several organisations for consideration. Site work was expected to commence by April 1997 and church officials had hoped to complete construction before the Patronal Feast Day of St Andrew's, 30<sup>th</sup> November *1997*.

However, the construction of the new church building was delayed due to a number of reasons. The church officials had wanted to complete construction on the Patronal Feast Day of St Andrew, 30<sup>th</sup> November 1997; however this deadline was not met. The increased estimated cost contributed to the delay. The church had to collect more donations and assistance to finance the increased cost. Three years after in 2000, the church was finally rebuilt and on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2000, a thanksgiving and resumption of worship service was the first service the new church had.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid pg 2

## CHAPTER THREE

### A PORTRAIT OF THE CHURCH TODAY

The St Andrew's Church, Couva stands majestically at its original location since 1841, on lands belonging to the Anglican Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago. Its surroundings, however, have changed considerably in keeping with the changing times. The church land is situated north of the "T" junction where roads to the east lead to Port of Spain, south, to San Fernando and west to the Gulf of Paria. Lands of the National Housing Settlement Authority presently bound the Church at the north, which is a low cost housing project where over 150 units were constructed. Development east and west of St Andrew's Village is stagnated with a number of small businesses along the main road. South of the church lands heading towards San Fernando, the sugar cane estates between the Southern Main and Road the Gulf of Paria have given way to the Point Lisas estate. Large industrial companies such as the great Powergen electricity plant and the Iron and Steel Plant now characterise Couva's surroundings. The St Andrew's Church sits at the heart of this active commercial, trade and manufacturing centre. These industries can benefit the church, in terms of their corporate responsibility to the community.

## Architecture

St Andrew's kept her nineteenth century architectural design (see Appendix VI). It is a severely simple Gothic architecture. The style emphasises verticality and features almost skeleton stone and concrete materials. There is one pointed spire on top of the skeleton stone structure and this is positioned at the front main entrance. On the skeleton concrete structure there is a bronze sculpture portraying Jesus. This is enhanced with light beams that light at night

The Gothic theme continues throughout the church with small stained glass windows . The ceiling is also higher, which allows more light to enter the building and improve ventilation. The architect was able to achieve "Caribbean Vernacular", a style which adapts foreign designs to the Caribbean environment and surroundings. For example the inclusion of louvers is an element of Caribbean Vernacular, but the Gothic theme is still emphasised with a few adjustments. Everything else was in accordance with the proposed plan as discussed in chapter two, with the exception of the security aspect. There are no security measures in place. The plans to build a fence, gate and a guard booth have not materialised. A cemetery still occupies the same territorial space, within the church compound.

The administration office was a new element for the church. It is located upstairs the J.T.A supermarket, on the Southern Main Road, Couva. It is the successful result of the hard work of the former priest.

St Andrew's as the "mother" Church in the ward of Couva

The vestry an Episcopal parish is composed of a rector and a group of elected parishioners administering the affairs of the parish. The vestry of St Andrew's is made up of elective representatives from St Andrew's, St Philip at Phoenix Park, St Alban in Tortuga and St Sylvan Carapichima. St Philip and St Alban both have one representative in the vestry, while St Sylvan has three. St Andrew's has five representatives because it has the largest congregation and is also the 'Mother' Church of these three daughter churches.

In 1844, by the Ecclesiastical Ordinance, St Andrew's Couva and St Philip in Savonetta made up the rectory of the United Parish of St Andrew's and St Philip, and *fn* 1867 St Sylvan's became an outpost station of St Andrew's. However, today this has changed and St Andrew's now claims the leading position among these churches as the "Mother" Church. The Priest of St Andrew's is responsible for the daily administration of the vestry. The four churches comprise 700 members with St Andrew's congregation numbering 400.

#### Out Reach to the Community

There are several groups attached to St Andrew's, which cater for the spiritual and physical needs of the wider community. Each group is assigned a particular duty. The Mothers' Union, the Anglican Church Men's Society and the Youth Group, all function in the name of the church as they each attend to their specific assignments.

The wife of the then Manager of Barclay's Bank, Mrs. Percival, introduced the Mothers' Union to Trinidad in 1921. She witnessed its work in Barbados and promoted the idea in Trinidad. Together with a group of churchwomen she started the first branch at All Saints Church, which was latter affiliated to the parent body in London.

Today, there are several branches across Trinidad and Tobago and the St Andrew's Parish also has a branch. Members are required to maintain high moral standards in family life. They are mandated to respect the sacredness of marriage, which is one of the main entry requirements. The Mothers' Union's main focus is the home and family life. They also aim at introducing programmes to fortify, preserve and promote Christian family life.

In the 1920s a group of churchmen met as members of the Cathedral Church. These regular meetings led to the development of the Anglican Church Men's Society. Members of the St Andrew's branch assemble to worship, for branch meetings and for active work in the service of the church. The Anglican Men's Society at St Andrew's regularly offer their service to the church. They provide labour in the routine maintenance of the church and are available to serve on special occasions.

The younger members of St Andrew's have formed themselves into a Youth Group. The youths are important because they will uphold the faith in the future and ensure that for generations to come the church will remain alive.

St Andrew's like any other Anglican Church has a traditional and folklore choir. The traditional choir on the one hand performs songs or hymns that are orthodox and their musical and vocal style is a reflection of English style. On the other hand the folklore choir mirrors the Creole society of Trinidad. Its musical style is also a product of the Caribbean. The Church is ensuring that traditional teachings of the faith are continuing and at the same time it is responsive to the change in society. During the twentieth century there was a growing black middle class. Its members were also carving out their own identity as distinct from the European whites. The folklore choir was a response to this social change. The Anglican Church was aware that adaptation was the key for its survival. Thus they introduced new elements in the church to promote its faith and signal its acceptance to the people. These choirs also fulfil the religious obligation of delivering spiritual messages through hymns to the congregation and the wider community.

The annual harvest in November can be viewed as a catalyst for reaching the wider community. This harvest welcomes everyone and it is full of activities and entertainment. St Andrew's harvest aids in fostering a united community as the community comes together despite race, class or religion.

St Andrew's plays an important role in Couva as she tries to share some of her blessings with the unfortunate. Rev. Carlyle Lynch became St Andrew's new priest and rector on Sunday December 11<sup>th</sup> 2005. Prior to this he was in the acting position as priest and care taker of St Andrew's. Rev. Carlyle Lynch makes regular visits to church elders who are unable to attend church services.

### Skill Areas of Members (Sample Size 75)

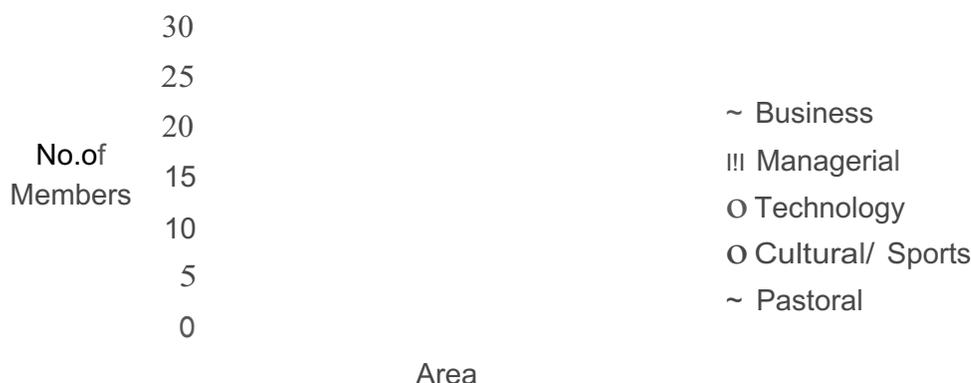


Figure 2

St Andrew's congregation consists of classes from all levels of society. The statistics above in figure 2, showing the different occupations of the church members, could be used as evidence to depict the social classes in the church. The ethnic make of the church is also diversified, 65% are Africans, 25% East Indians and 10% mixed. There are more Africans than East Indians, which is interesting because Couva is a district where the majority of the population is East Indians. The history of Anglicanism in Couva can explain this situation. Firstly, the Anglican clergymen made few attempts to convert the influx of East Indians from 1845 in Couva, and secondly the East Indians held strong to their traditional faiths. Statistics from the Roman Catholic Church, located on the Couva Main Road a quarter mile from St Andrew's, illustrate a similar trend. Its congregation was made up 50% Africans, 35% East Indians and 15% mixed.

Rev. Lynch is aware of this decline and he chooses to deal with the situation rather than ignore the problem as some churches. He was only given his license in December 2005 to preach in St

Andrew's, however he is already committed and offers all his free time to enhancing and promoting St Andrew's. Rev. Lynch is about to embark on a project to motivate the youngsters to attend church and keep their faith. He wants to "make the church more dynamic, to keep the youths involved.?" At present some youths are already involved. Every second Sunday of the month a young person delivers a message to the congregation. This instills some responsibility to the young person and at the same time makes him or her feel needed. Rev. Lynch is new to St Andrew's and it will take him some time to develop a perfect understanding of the church's problems and to deal with the decline issue. It is still too early to evaluate his plans to deal with the declining situation, as these plans are not yet made official. However, he is not new in the Ministry and he will use his expertise in tackling these problems and stabilising the 'future of St Andrew's, Couva.

<sup>41</sup> Interview, Rev. Carlyle Lynch, Thursday January 5<sup>th</sup> 2006.

## **CONCLUSION**

A lot has been learnt and achieved in this research project. An understanding and knowledge of the history of Anglicanism in Trinidad was gained. This paper recorded the struggles the Anglican Church faced with the competing Catholic Church in the nineteenth century, It also faced a number of obstacles throughout its establishment and disestablishment periods. This paper analysed and recorded the history of Anglicanism in Trinidad; as a consequence it illustrated the status of the faith today, which is in a declining position.

The paper's main focus, however, was on the history of the St Andrew's parish in Couva. It showed when the church started during the 1830s from a mere handful of slaves to a consecrated church in 1843. Problems that the church faced in maintaining its building, and during its reconstruction, were also mentioned. It also demonstrated its significance to the community.

An important part of this paper dealt with St Andrew's contribution to the community both spiritually and physically. The class, gender, age and ethnic make up of the church's congregation was discussed. As a result a depiction of the St Andrew's church today was achieved.

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APPENDIX III

Picture of the Old St Andrew's building

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## APPENDIX IV

### PHYSICLA SITE (Excerpts from the site Investigator's Report-Feb. 1996 pg.3)

Four lines were run i.e. two north-south and east west, over the site for the intended structure.

#### Line 1 North-South Line West of Church

The resistivity measurement indicate a clay formation from surface to depth of investigation i.e. 15 meters with alternating layers of sands or sandy clay and a distinct break at the water table, situated at about 3 to 3.5 meters from surface.

#### Line 2 East- West Line North of Church

This again revealed the presence of a clay formation to depth of investigation which was 17 meters.

What was rather spectacular on this section was the fact that the top layer of that clay was very compact, perhaps stiff, as evidenced by the above-normal high resistivity reading obtained, then at a depth of 3 meters where the water table was encountered a somewhat less reactant, very plastic perhaps sandy clay was encountered for about 7 meters, after which the lithology seemed to be clayey sand to the depth of investigation.

#### Line 4 North-South Line East of Church

Again a clay was encountered from surface but at a depth of about 2 meters from surface a sandy clay and the water table was encountered. After that 2.5 meter depth the formation

became progressively sandier, though still clayey with a distinct sand bed from 12.5 meters to 15 meters, then a repeat section to total depth of investigation at 17 meters.

Line 4 North-South Line East of Church

In this line as in the others, the Clay was encountered from surface to total depth of 16 meters, although there was increasing sandiness with depth. The water table was encountered at about 2.5 to 3 meters.

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## APPENDIXV

### SUBSTRUCTURE

The church building will be constructed of reinforced concrete {3000 p.s.i in 28 days} pad stripped foundation on 12" diameter bore piles, concrete filled block basewalls and pre-T- con double tee prestressed concrete slabs 14" x 48".

### SUPER STRUCTURE

Frame.

Reinforced concrete {3750 p.s.i in 28 days} columns and suspended beams.

Roof:-

The roof will be covered with "Etemit" slates on building paper on a soft wood framework, roof trusses and pitch pine eaves boarding and fascias.

Steps & Staircases>

Reinforced concrete in steps and ramp entrance.

Walls:-

The external walls will be constructed of 6" thick and internal walls of 4" thick hollow concrete blocks laid in cement mortar {1:3} rendered and painted both sides with gJazed gable and large areas of hard wood jalousie and glass blade louvers .

## INTERNAL FINISHES

### Floor:-

General polished terrazzo on screeded bed and plain cement and sand {1:3} between phius and non-skid ceramics in toilets and carpet on altar floor.

### Walls:-

1/2" thick cement and sand {1:3} rendering on block wall finish with three {3} coats of emulsion paint. The walls of the toilet and bath will be lined with glazed ceramic 'tiles 5" high.

### Ceiling:-

General pitch pine tongued grooved and beaded soffit lining finished with satin stain to approval and 3 coats of polyurethane lacquer.

### Drainage:-

The drainage comprises 4" diameter pvc soil pipes laid and jointed in trenches with connection to and including septic tank and soakaway pits.

### Parking-

The works include 4" concrete car parking area, driveway, walkaway, and storm water drains, landscaping and grassing.

**Security:-**

The property would be fenced by wall around the perimeter and the main entrance gates.

The building will be burglar proofed and accommodation provided for security guard.

**Ventilation:-**

Air conditioning may not be feasible as the sealing of the windows may be virtually impossible. Thus louvers and ceiling fans may be considered.

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APPENDIX VI Picture of the Reconstructed Church

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