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**ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN  
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:  
RELIGION IN TRINIDAD-TOBAGO**

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# Religion in Trinidad & Tobago

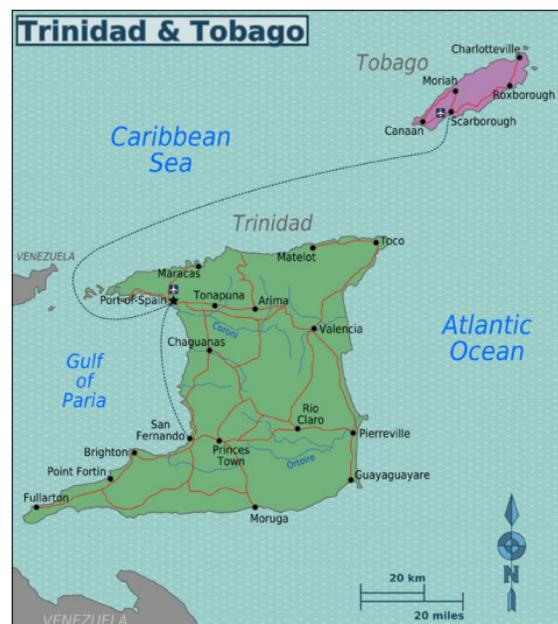
## Country Summary

The nation of Trinidad & Tobago is located northeast of the Republic of Venezuela in the Atlantic Ocean, south of the Windward Islands in the Caribbean Sea and just seven miles off the northeast coast of South America. The nation has a tropical climate with a rainy season that lasts from June to December. The country (both islands) has an area of 1,980 square miles (5,131 sq km) and a population of 1,299,953 (July 2009).

Trinidad is traversed by three distinct mountain ranges. The Northern Range, an outlier of the Andes Mountains of Venezuela, consists of rugged hills that parallel the coast. This range rises into two peaks: the highest, El Cerro del Aripo, is 940 meters (3,084 ft) high; the other, El Tucuche, reaches 936 meters. The Central Range extends diagonally across the island and is a low-lying range. The Caroni Plain extends southward, separating the Northern Range and Central Range. The Southern Range consists of a broken line of hills with a maximum elevation of 305 meters (1,001 ft). There are numerous rivers and streams on the island of Trinidad; the most significant are the Ortoire River and Caroni River.

Tobago has a land area of 300 sq km (116 sq mi), and is approximately 42 km (26 mi) long and 10 km (6 mi) wide. The population was 54,084 in 2000. The capital is Scarborough, with a population of about 17,000. Tobago is mountainous and dominated by the Main Ridge, which is 29 km long with elevations up to 640 meters. There are deep, fertile valleys running north and south of the Main Ridge. The southwestern tip of the island has a coral platform. Although Tobago is volcanic in origin, there are no active volcanoes. There are numerous rivers and streams, but flooding and erosion are less severe than in Trinidad.

The island of Trinidad was sighted and named by Christopher Columbus on his third voyage to the New World in 1498. The later Spanish explorers enslaved much of the indigenous population, taking them as forced laborers to the new South American colonies. The next 200 years saw Spanish colonizers fail in their attempts to establish tobacco and cacao plantations on the island, but Spain was determined to defend the island from foreign occupation and protect the mouth of the Orinoco River. However, Britain seized Trinidad from Spain in the late 1700's and abolished slavery in 1830. The end of slavery on the island made it necessary for Britain to bring in thousands of indentured laborers, mostly from India, to work on sugarcane and cacao plantations. Indenture-ship is the state or period of being a servant bound to service for a specified time in return for passage to a colony.



Throughout the early 1900s, the country welcomed thousands of mostly black immigrants from other Caribbean countries, as well as Venezuela and Colombia. Following World War II, Trinidad and Tobago was combined with various other British Caribbean countries to form the West Indies Federation, but the different countries could not get along and the federation soon collapsed. The Great Depression of the 1930's led to a series of strikes and riots, and eventually led Britain to grant universal voting rights. Trinidad and Tobago eventually achieved independence on 31 August 1962 as a British Commonwealth nation and became a republic in 1976.

Trinidad's economy is strongly influenced by the petroleum industry. Tourism and manufacturing are also important to the local economy. Tourism is a growing sector, although not proportionately as important as in many other Caribbean islands. Agricultural products include citrus, cocoa and other products. According to the World Bank, Trinidad-Tobago rank 69<sup>th</sup> among the high income economies of the world.

Unlike most of the English-speaking Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago's economy is primarily industrial, with an emphasis on petroleum and petrochemicals. Trinidad and Tobago has a sound macroeconomic framework and a long tradition of institutional stability. It scores relatively well in many of the 10 economic freedoms, and its economy has grown at an average rate of close to seven percent during the period 2003-2008. The government has tried to diversify the economic base, and the country has evolved into a key financial center in the Caribbean region.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the country prospered thanks to the discovery of large deposits of oil and natural gas, which made Trinidad and Tobago the wealthiest nation in the Caribbean. However, in the late 1980s, oil prices dropped significantly, which caused a major economic meltdown. Thousands of Trinidadians left the country at this time in search of better opportunities elsewhere. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, the country recovered dramatically and it continues to improve today.

Historically, Trinidad was divided into eight counties (Caroni, Mayaro, Nariva, Saint Andrew, Saint David, Saint George, Saint Patrick and Victoria), and these counties were subdivided into wards. Tobago was administered as a ward of Saint David County. Prior to reforming the system in the early 1990s these counties functioned as the administrative bodies for local government. Currently, local government is handled through five municipalities and nine regional corporations in Trinidad, and the Tobago House of Assembly in Tobago.

**The two islands have distinct personalities.** Trinidad is the larger of the two, and is the location of most of the country's cities and activity. It is also the country's industrial center, noted for petroleum and natural gas production, which made Trinidad and Tobago one of the most prosperous countries in the Caribbean. Tobago is known for tourism, which is its main industry. Both islands are known for their natural beauty.

Unlike most of the Caribbean islands, Trinidad and Tobago have often escaped major devastating hurricanes because the islands are located to the south of the Atlantic Hurricane Belt. Nevertheless, the nation was struck by Hurricane Flora on 30 September 1963, the effects of which were so severe that they changed the face of Tobago's economy. The hurricane laid waste to the plantations of banana, coconut and cacao, which largely sustained the economy. It caused considerable damage to the largely pristine tropical rainforest that makes up a large proportion of

the interior of the northern half of the island. Subsequently, many of the plantations were abandoned, and the economy changed direction away from cash crop agriculture toward tourism. In September 2004, Hurricane Ivan, the most powerful storm to pass close to the islands in recent history, although less severe than Flora, did cause significant damage also.

As of 2005, most of the country's 1.3 million inhabitants (96 percent) resided on the island of Trinidad and the remainder resided on Tobago. **The ethnic composition of Trinidad and Tobago** reflects a history of conquest and immigration. Two major ethnic groups, Indo-Trinidadians & Tobagonians and Afro-Trinidadians & Tobagonians, account for almost 80 percent of the population, while people of non-African or Indian mixed race, European, Chinese and Syrian-Lebanese descent make up most of the rest of the population.

**Indo-Trinidadians** make up the country's second-largest ethnic group (approximately 37 percent). They are primarily descendants of indentured workers from India, brought to replace freed African slaves who refused to continue working on the sugar plantations. The Asian Indian community is divided roughly half-and-half between those who maintained their original religions and those who have converted to Christianity or have no religious affiliation. Through cultural preservation groups, Trinidadians of Asian Indian descent maintain many of their customs and rites.

**Afro-Trinidadians and Tobagonians** compose the country's largest ethnic group. Many are of mixed ancestry (*mulatto*, *dougl*) but self-identify as Blacks (approximately 50.5 percent). Although African slaves were first imported in 1517, they constituted only 11 percent of the population in 1783. The majority of the African slaves arrived during the last years of Trinidad's Spanish colonial era and at the beginning of the English colonial period. The *Cédula de Población* (an edict by Spanish King José de Gálvez in 1783 that opened Trinidad to immigration from, primarily, the French Caribbean islands) transformed a small colony of 1,000 in 1773 to 18,627 by 1797. In the census of 1777, there were only 2,763 people recorded as living on the island, including about 2,000 **Arawaks**. During this time there were many African slave owners. In 1807, the UK Parliament passed the Slave Trade Act 1807 that abolished the trading of slaves, and the Slavery Abolition Act 1833 abolished the practice of slavery.

The **European population** is primarily descended from early settlers and immigrants. About half are of British origin, and the remainder is of French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and German heritage. The most recent census counted 11,000 of British, 4,200 of Spanish, 4,000 of French, 2,700 of Portuguese and 2,700 of German descent. These numbers do not include people who have at least some European ancestry or self-identify as African or Asian Indian. There are some who have descended from Spanish settlers or from mixed-raced immigrants from Venezuela, commonly referred to as *Cocoa Panyols*.

The **French** arrived mainly to take advantage of free agricultural lands offered by the Spanish colonial government between 1783 and 1797. The **Portuguese** were brought to replace freed African slaves after they refused to accept low wages. The Europeans who remained in Trinidad live in areas in and around Port-of-Spain. In Tobago, most Europeans are mainly retirees from Germany and Scandinavia who have recently arrived there.

Given the large number of ethnic identities in Trinidad and Tobago, many citizens have a **mixed ethnic heritage**. Common ethnic mixtures include people of European and African descent (*mulattos*), and Asian Indian and African descent (often colloquially known as *dougla*). This mixed population is estimated at around 20.6 percent; however, it is much higher when considering the various degrees of African, Asian Indian, European and Amerindian ancestry of the total population. A person might self-identify as Black or Asian Indian based on physical appearance; however, they might be genetically more similar to a person of Asian Indian and African descent (*dougla*).

There are groups of **Chinese** who, like the Portuguese and Asian Indians, are descended from indentured laborers. They number about 20,000 and live mainly in Port-of-Spain and San Fernando. There are also about 2,500 **Arabs**, originally from Syria and Lebanon, who live mainly in Port-of-Spain. The **Syrian and Lebanese** communities of Trinidad are predominantly Christian; they migrated from the Middle East in the 19<sup>th</sup> century while fleeing religious persecution from the Ottoman Empire and later landed in the Caribbean and Latin America. Other Lebanese and Syrians came in the early-to-middle 20<sup>th</sup> century to escape war and turmoil in the region. Finally, there are the mixed-race **Caribs** who are descended from the original Amerindians of the Caribbean islands. They are organized around the Santa Rosa Carib Community and live mostly in and around Arima.

**Emigration from Trinidad and Tobago**, as with other Caribbean nations, has historically been high; most emigrants go to the USA, Canada and Britain. Emigration has continued, albeit at a lower rate, even as the birth-rate sharply dropped to levels typical of industrialized countries. Largely because of this phenomenon, since 2007, Trinidad and Tobago has been experiencing a low population growth rate (0.37 percent).

English is the country's only official language (the local variety of Standard English is known as Trinidadian English), but the main spoken language is either of two English-based Creole languages (Trinidadian Creole English or Tobagonian Creole English), which reflects the Spanish, Asian Indian, African and European heritage of the nation. Both Creoles languages contain elements from a variety of African languages; Trinidadian Creole, however, is also influenced by French, French Creole, Spanish, and by Bhojपुरi/Hindi. The Spanish language and other vernaculars are normally spoken in informal situations, and there is no formalized system of writing. *Patois* (a variety of Spanish/ French) was once the most widely-spoken language in Trinidad, and there are various remnants of the language in everyday vernacular speech. There was also a Spanish-based Ceole, known as *Coco Payol*, a term also used to describe people of Spanish ancestry.

Because of Trinidad's location on the coast of South America, the country has been slowly redeveloping a connection with the Spanish-speaking peoples, but this has been impeded by the fact that, in 2004, only 45,500 inhabitants spoke Spanish. In 2005, the government initiated the Spanish as a Foreign Language (SAFFL) Initiative. People from Venezuela travel to Trinidad and Tobago to learn English, and many English schools have expanded to feature both English and Spanish instruction.

Because of the country's colonial heritage, the names of towns in Trinidad are derived in roughly equal proportions from **English** (Chatham, Brighton, Green Hill, St. Mary's, Princes Town, Free-

port, New Grant), **French** (Blanchisseuse, Sans Souci, Pointe-à-Pierre, Basse Terre, Matelot, Petit Bourg), **Spanish** (San Fernando, Sangre Grande, Rio Claro, San Juan, Las Cuevas, Maracas, Manzanilla, Los Bajos), **Asian Indian** (Fyzabad, Barrackpore, Indian Walk, Madras Settlement, Penal, Debe) and **Amerindian languages** (Chaguanas, Tunapuna, Guayaguayare, Carapichaima, Mucurapo, Chaguaramas, Arima, Arouca, Guaico, Oropouche, Aripo). In Tobago, English names predominate. However, some of the names are representative of its colonial past: Belle Garden, Bon Accord, Charlotteville, Les Coteaux, Parlatuvier (French), Auchenskeoch, Blenheim (Dutch), Great Courland Bay (the Courlanders, from a region of modern Latvia).

Trinidad and Tobago is the birthplace of steelpan, calypso, soca and limbo. The nation influenced the music world with the steel drum, invented by using the ends of discarded oil drums. It is also the home of calypso, which started when slaves used their patois in music to mock their masters. The nation is well-known for its Carnival, which is similar to *Mardi Gras* in New Orleans. The peak tourist season falls just before Lent as visitors arrive for Carnival.

Ethnic and religious divisions are reflected in political life, with the governing **People's National Movement (PNM)** party drawing much of its support from Afro-Trinidadians and many Indo-Trinidadians supporting the main opposition party, the **United National Congress (UNC)**, as well as the non-parliamentary opposition **Congress of the People (COP)** party. Religious overtones are sometimes present in the messages and ceremonies of the PNM and the UNC. All political parties claimed to focus on issues and embrace all potential voters without reference to race, creed, or ethnic origin.

### **Current Religious Situation**

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and other laws and policies contributed to the generally free practice of religion.

According to the 2000 Census, 50.6 percent of the population was Christian – **Roman Catholic** 26 percent and **Protestant** 24.6 percent (including 7.8 percent Anglican, 6.8 percent Pentecostal, 4 percent Seventh-day Adventist, 3.3 percent Presbyterian / Congregational, 1.8 percent Baptist, and 0.9 percent Methodist) – 22.5 percent was **Hindu**, and 5.8 percent was **Muslim**. About 5.5 percent were adherents of **Afro-Caribbean religions**, such as the **Spiritual Baptists** (also known as “Shouter Baptists”), 5.4 percent; and **Orishas**, 0.1 percent. Other groups reported were the Jehovah's Witnesses (1.6 percent) and atheists (1.9 percent), and those listed as “other” (10.7 percent), which included the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) and other small Christian sects, as well as **Baha’is, Buddhists and Jews**. Those with no religious affiliation were 1.4 percent.

A comparison of census data from 1990 and 2000 reveals that adherents to Roman Catholicism, Hinduism and other traditional religions are declining, whereas the Protestant denominations and independent churches are growing. The *Sunday Guardian's* headline on Easter Sunday 2008 was “Catholic Church in Crisis,” and it focused on the dramatic decline in numbers of practicing Catholics and priests-in-training.

Afro-Trinidadians are predominantly Christian, with a small Muslim community, and are concentrated in and around Port-of-Spain and the east-west corridor of Trinidad. The population of

Trinidad's sister island, Tobago, is overwhelmingly of African descent and also predominantly Christian. Indo-Trinidadians are primarily concentrated in central and southern Trinidad and are principally divided between the Hindu and Islamic religions, along with significant Protestant and some Catholic representation.

To receive tax-exempt donations or gifts of land, or to perform marriages, religious groups must register with the government, which requires them to demonstrate that they are nonprofit organizations. Religious groups have the same rights and obligations as most legal entities, regardless of whether they are registered. They can own land, but they must pay property taxes; they can hire employees, but they must pay government-mandated employee benefits. Some religious groups register their organizations for increased visibility and to attract wider membership.

The government subsidizes both nondenominational public schools and religiously-affiliated public schools (for example, Catholic, Protestant, Hindu and Islamic). The government permits religious instruction in nondenominational public schools, allocating time each week when any religious organization with an adherent in the school can provide an instructor. Attendance at these classes is voluntary, and the religious groups represented are diverse. Parents may enroll their children in private schools for religious reasons. Homeschooling is not allowed, since the Education Act mandates formal schooling for all children either in public or private schools.

The Ministry of Social Development is responsible for ecclesiastical affairs and administers annual financial grants to religious organizations. It also issues recommendations on land use for religious organizations.

The law prohibits acts that would offend or insult another person or group on the basis of race, ethnic origin or religion, or which would incite racial or religious hatred. The law also provides for prosecution for the desecration of any place of worship. Government officials routinely speak out against religious intolerance and do not publicly favor any religion. Judicial review is available to those who claim to be victims of religious discrimination.

The government has established public holidays for every religious group that has a large following. The government observes the Christian holidays of Good Friday, Easter Monday and Christmas; the Hindu holiday of Divali; and the Islamic holiday of Eid al-Fitr. In addition, the government recognizes Liberation Day, which is associated with the Spiritual Baptist religion. The government grants financial and technical assistance to various organizations to support religious celebrations.

The government does not formally sponsor programs that promote interfaith dialogue; however, it supports the activities of the **Inter-Religious Organization (IRO)**. This organization is an interfaith coordinating committee for public outreach, governmental and media relations, and policy implementation. It also provides the prayer leader for several official events, such as the opening of parliament and the annual judicial court term. The IRO cooperates with the Ministry of Social Development as well as the Ministry of Education. The bylaws of the IRO do not exclude any religious groups from membership. However, most Pentecostal denominations and Seventh-Day Adventists do not participate in the IRO for doctrinal reasons.

Cabinet Ministers, members of Parliament, and public figures represent every major religious group and denomination and the broad spectrum of religious beliefs in the country. They often participate in the ceremonies and holidays of other religions and actively advocate religious tolerance and harmony.

Foreign missionaries are permitted to operate freely. However, the government limits the number of foreign missionaries to 30 per religious group at any given time. Missionaries must meet standard requirements for an entry visa and must represent a registered religious group. They may not remain for more than three years per visit but may reenter after a year's absence.

## **Historical Overview of Social, Religious and Political Development**

**Spanish colonial period:** Trinidad was discovered in 1498 by Columbus on his third voyage to the New World and remained under Spanish control until 1797, but it was peacefully settled by French colonists and their slaves between 1783 and 1797. Prior to 1797, Trinidad was part of the Spanish province of Venezuela. The territory was a veritable backwater of the larger Spanish Empire in the Americas. Until 1783, the Spanish colonial authorities and the Catholic Church administered a small population comprised of Spanish settlers, Amerindians and African slaves. Some of the latter entered Trinidad-Tobago by secondary immigration from Venezuela.

**St. Joseph** (founded 1592 by Antonio de Berrio) is the oldest town in Trinidad and Tobago. Originally named **San José de Oruña**, it served as the capital of Spanish colonial Trinidad between 1592 and 1783.

The Amerindian population of Trinidad, which stood at an estimated 30,000-40,000 in 1492, had declined to about 1,500 in 1784. The reasons for this drastic population decline were the same as for the Americas under Spain and Portugal: disease, enslavement in *encomiendas* and wars of resistance, such as the Amerindian uprising against Capuchin *encomenderos* at the Mission of San Francisco de los Arenales (now known as San Rafael) in 1699.

The Dutch West India Company considered Tobago to be its colony, and prior to 1636 had established several trading posts: at New Walcheren (Plymouth) on Tobago and at Moruga on Trinidad. The Spanish governor of Trinidad retaliated and sent a military expedition to exterminate these settlements, which motivated the Dutch to attack and destroy the Spanish settlements at San Thomé and San Josef during the 1640s. In addition, the Protestant ruler of the Baltic province of Courland, encouraged by the Dutch and British, made numerous attempts at establishing settlements on both Trinidad and Tobago. However, the Spanish continued to dominate the territory.

By the Treaty of Paris in 1763, Tobago (along with the islands of Grenada and the Grenadines, Dominica, and St. Vincent) were added to the British Empire and governed jointly as the territory of "Grenada." Between 1580 and 1814, Tobago was settled periodically by colonists from Spain, England, France, Courland, Sweden and Holland. In 1889, Tobago was united with Trinidad into a British Crown Colony.

During the Spanish colonial period, the African-born slave population was imported (after 1610) to Trinidad mainly from the Bight of Biafra in West Africa, followed by slaves from the Central African and Senegambia regions. According to historian Claudius Fergus (2008: 78):

Under Spanish governance, the "Royal Cédula de Población" of 1783 supported a liberal policy towards free black and colored settlers who were recognized as property-owners and sharing common, though unequal, interests with propertied whites. Governor Chacón broke down other racial barriers which, elsewhere, set the free colored as a marginal entity among the free population. One consequence of this demographic experiment was the resetting of social distinctions of Trinidad's plantation society to basically two classes, namely free and enslaved.

**French colonization:** 1783-1797. After 1783, African slaves were imported from other Caribbean islands by European planters who peacefully resettled in Trinidad after the Spanish colonial authorities offered tracts of land for colonization in an effort to attract more permanent residents. Many white settlers of French origin relocated from the islands of Martinique and Hispaniola and brought thousands of African slaves with them to Trinidad.

A census taken in Trinidad in mid-1784 recorded the following: 335 Spaniards, 384 French settlers, 765 "mixed race" Spaniards, 633 French "free coloreds" (persons of mixed French and African descent) and free blacks, 260 Spanish African slaves, and 2,027 French African slaves.

The African-heritage population of Trinidad surged from about 2,500 in 1748 to 10,000 in 1797 and to over 20,000 at Emancipation in 1838 in conjunction with the shift from small-scale tobacco production to a sugarcane plantation economy. The Trinidad situation was similar to that experienced by Cuba from the juncture of the Seven Years War (1756-1763) into the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**British colonial period:** 1797 (Trinidad), 1814 (Tobago); Abolition of the Slave Trade in the British West Indies in 1807; Emancipation from Slavery in 1834; Trinidad and Tobago merged to form a single British colony in 1888 and remained a UK-administered territory until 1962.

A pre-Emancipation stream of Africans to Trinidad were of Yoruba, Hausa/Fulani, Ibo, Ewe-Foh and other tribal nations that had been caught up in the fighting linked to the simultaneous rise of the Mushín Caliphate to Sokoto and Gwandu and the collapse of the Yoruba Empire of Old Oyo in the modern Nigerian-Benin (ex-Dahomey) region during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Some of these ethnic Africans were rescued by the British-led Anti-Slave Trade Squadron off Africa's West Coast, then were taken to Freetown in Sierra Leone and were "liberated." Between 1834 and 1867, an estimated 9,000 "liberated Africans" entered Trinidad under indentured servant contracts.

Another pre-Emancipation immigration stream was composed of African-Americans (called "Merikins" – adapted from "ah-mericans") who had supported the British in the War of 1812-1815 against the newly-independent United States of America, which was won by the latter. The Merikins had served in Black Regiments, such as the Corps of the British Colonial Marines. Regarding religion, they tended to be Baptists. After losing the war, the British first settled the Merikins in Nova Scotia, Canada, and from there the Merikins were relocated to Trinidad to

settle and develop Company villages in virgin tropical lands. Today, the many descendants of the Merikins still live in the Company villages, such as New Grant, Matilda Junction, Hardbargain, Hindustan and Indian Walk in southern Trinidad. The name Hindustan mirrors the African-Asian Indian interaction that arose from the entry of the Asian-Indian indentured servants after 1845.

Yet another pre-Emancipation immigration stream entered Trinidad from older, saturated Caribbean plantation colonies via an illicit slave trade after the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1807. An estimated 6,000 to 10,000 black slaves were taken to Trinidad-Tobago between 1811 and 1833 from the Bahamas, Grenada, St. Vincent and Barbados.

With Emancipation in 1838, ex-slaves and “liberated Africans” dispersed throughout Trinidad and Tobago. In Trinidad, for example, they settled across the East-West corridor of the northern region between Cocorite and Diego Martin; and through Port-of-Spain and environs to St. Joseph, Tunapuna and Arouca.

According to historian Claudius Fergus (2008: 78-79), in 1823, the British Parliament launched its “amelioration experiment,” which it greatly expanded by an Order in Council dated 10 March 1824: Britain's first imperial slave code. Amelioration was a synthesis of British philanthropy and Spanish law and jurisprudence, driven by the imperative of transforming Caribbean colonies into economically competitive enterprises. Indeed, amelioration had originated in mid-18<sup>th</sup> century Barbados and Jamaica for purely economic reasons. According to Dunn, amelioration was “a great discovery” by English sugar planters (Dunn 1972:324):

By funneling a small part of the money they had been spending on new slaves into ameliorating the living conditions of those they already had, they could significantly reduce the rate of natural decrease within the West Indian population. At Codrington and elsewhere the planters launched a new policy of “amelioration,” which gradually raised the Negro birth rate, lowered the Negro death rate, freed the slaveholders from dependence on the African slave trade, and cut costs.

The Imperial Government's adoption of amelioration was essentially to counter the demographic fallout from the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. Dubbed “the colony of experiment” for over two decades, Trinidad was the natural choice as the nursery for the amelioration project. Imperial advisors chose to construct the experiment in official amelioration on Spanish slave laws, which enjoyed an inflated status for their humaneness within Britain's anti-slavery circles.

Under British rule the colony was consistently chosen as the nursery for various projects in the reconstruction of the colonial system. As early as 1802, it hosted the first experiment in free labor under the codename “creole colonisation,” a term coined by George Canning, a prominent figure in Parliament and Government. Colonial Secretary Lord Hobart quickly responded to the appeal for a new paradigm in colonialism by sending out dispatches to Governor Picton to prepare Trinidad for “establishing a Colony of White Inhabitants of the laboring class for the purpose of bringing the Hilly and most healthy parts of the Country into early cultivation.”

The inducements extended to a wide spectrum of immigrants, including demobilized soldiers and Dissenters from Ireland and Scotland. Under the proposed settlement scheme, each white corporal received 10 acres and each lieutenant, 75 acres. Dissenters would be contracted under five-year indentures with wages fixed by law; at the end of their contracts a token acreage would

be granted as inducement for permanent residence on the island. Heads of such families would be given five acres; to every other free person, three acres; and for every child, two acres.

The colonization scheme included emancipated Africans with military training, which was a master strategy to convert legendary "enemies" into allies. The preferred Africans were the most trustworthy soldiers of the West India Regiments, who were expected to become small farmers after demobilization. Underpinning this landmark project was the selection of Trinidad as the premier stage for the launch of the first phase in the abolition of the slave trade, two years prior to the general Abolition Act. The colony was also first into compulsory registration of the enslaved class. It was the first colony to experiment with emancipation, though limited in scope.

In 1815 six companies of discharged black soldiers, self-styled the "Merikins," who had escaped servitude to serve in the British Army during the Anglo-American War of 1812-1815, were disembarked in the island as free settlers under the protection of the governor; each veteran was apportioned sixteen acres of land, the same as that granted to non-whites under the *Cédula de Población* de 1783. Beginning in 1816 discharged soldiers of the West India Regiment began to augment this class of demobilized settlers; they were accorded similar civil liberties and land grants. Trinidad was also the first colony to be pushed headlong into the most contentious experiment of all, the amelioration of slavery under Britain's first metropolitan slave code.

After Emancipation in 1834, the incipient plantation owners were in severe need of labor, and the British filled this need by instituting a system of indenture. Various nationalities were contracted under this system, including Chinese, Portuguese and Asian Indians. Of these, the Asian Indians were imported in the largest numbers, beginning on 1 May 1845 when 225 Asian Indians were brought in the first shipment to Trinidad on the "Fatel Rozack," a Muslim-owned vessel. Indentureship of the Asian Indians lasted from 1845 to 1917, during which more than 147,000 were taken to Trinidad to work on sugarcane and cacao plantations.

The Asian Indians added what was initially the second-largest population group to the young nation and their labor developed previously underdeveloped plantation lands. The Indenture Contract system was exploitative and called "a new system of slavery." Persons were contracted for a period of five years with a daily wage (25 cents in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century) after which they were guaranteed return passage to India. Coercive means were often used to obtain laborers, however, and the indenture contracts were soon extended to 10 years after the planters complained that they were losing their workers too soon.

In lieu of the return passage to India, the British authorities soon began offering portions of land to encourage settlement; however, the actual number of people who did receive land grants is unclear. Asian Indians entering the colony were also subject to particular crown laws that segregated them from the rest of the Trinidad population, such as the requirement that they carry a "pass" on their person when off the plantations, and that if freed that they carry their "Free Papers" or Certificate indicating completion of the Indentureship period. Despite this, however, the former indentureds came to constitute a vital and significant portion of the population, as did the former slaves.

The period between 1797 and 1914 saw the emergence of an Afro-Saxon middle-class in Trinidad. The term "Afro Saxon" expresses the socialization of this category in the British/

European culture stream via Christianity: Roman Catholicism; Church of England (Anglican Church); Presbyterian Churches (Church of Scotland); Non-Conformist groups such as the Quakers, Methodists, Baptists, Adventists and their church schools; or the State schools that were established after Emancipation.

The “prestige” schools for the children of the French-Spanish élites were St. Mary's College (boys) and St. Joseph's Convent (girls). Well into the 1870s, the language of instruction was French. This was to protest the passage of the English Language Law of 1840, as well as another measure that made the Church of England the State Church. The school of the English Establishment became the Queen's Collegiate School. Founded in 1857 and later renamed Queen's Royal College, it was “a government run and financed college offering secular and classical education on guidelines of the British public school to Brereton.”

Under an Education Ordinance of 1870, the Colonial State set up a dual system of state-aided Church Schools, side by side with Government or Ward Schools at the primary level. By 1885, there were 61 church/denominational and 55 government schools. The language of instruction was English. The increasing emphasis on English as the official language of State and education, combined with a measure in 1870 disestablishing the Church of England, led the French-Spanish elites to abandon French as the language of instruction in their prestigious secondary schools.

These developments, along with socio-economic changes, created openings for bright black and colored children to enter the secondary tier of education, from a base in the primary schools. Moreover, a system of Annual Island Scholarships, set up by the State, opened the horizon of Tertiary Education to them in the prestige Universities of Oxford and Cambridge in Britain.

The cacao (cocoa) crop contributed greatly to the Trinidadian economy in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. After the collapse of the cacao crop due to plant disease and the Great Depression, the petroleum industry increasingly came to dominate the economy. The collapse of the sugarcane industry, together with the failure of the cocoa industry, resulted in widespread depression among the rural and agricultural workers in Trinidad and encouraged the rise of the Labor movement in the 1920s.

The Labor movement was led by Tubal Uriah "Buzz" Butler, who, together with his Asian Indian partners (notably Adrian Cola Rienzi), sought to unite the working class and agricultural laborers to achieve a better standard of living for all, as well as to hasten the departure of the British. This effort was severely undermined by the British Home Office and by the British-educated Trinidadian elite, many of whom were descended from the plantocracy themselves. They instigated a vicious “race politicking” in Trinidad aimed at dividing the class-based movement on race-based lines, and they succeeded; Butler's support collapsed from the top down. The Great Depression of the 1930s and the rise of the petroleum-based economy led to changes in the social structure. By the 1950s, petroleum had become a staple in Trinidad's export market and was responsible for the emergence of a growing middle-class within all sections of the Trinidad population.

The presence of U.S. military bases in Chaguaramas and Cumuto in Trinidad during World War II profoundly changed the character of Trinidadian society. In the post-war period, the wave of decolonization that swept the British Empire led to the formation of the **West Indies Federation** in 1958 as a vehicle for independence. Chaguaramas was the proposed site for the federal capital.

The Federation dissolved after the withdrawal of Jamaica and the Trinidadian government chose to seek independence on its own. Trinidad and Tobago became an independent nation within the British Commonwealth in 1962. In 1976, the country severed its links with the British monarchy and became a republic, though it retained the British Privy Council as its final Court of Appeal.

Today, Trinidad and Tobago has a two-party system and a bicameral Parliament based on the Westminster system. The head of state of Trinidad and Tobago is the President, currently George Maxwell Richards. The head of government is Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar. The President is elected by an Electoral College consisting of the full membership of both houses of Parliament. The Prime Minister is elected from the results of a general election which takes place every five years. The Parliament building, called The Red House, was rebuilt in 1906 after the original building was completely destroyed in a 1903 fire.

The President is required to appoint the leader of the party who in his opinion has the most support of the members of the House of Representatives to this post; this has generally been the leader of the party that won the most seats in the previous election (except in the case of the 2001 General Elections). Tobago also has its own elections, separate from the general elections. In these elections, members are elected and serve in the Tobago House of Assembly.

The Parliament consists of two chambers, the Senate (31 seats) and the House of Representatives (41 seats). The members of the Senate are appointed by the president. Sixteen government Senators are appointed on the advice of the Prime Minister, six opposition Senators are appointed on the advice of the Leader of the Opposition and nine Independent Senators are appointed by the President to represent other sectors of civil society. The 41 members of the House of Representatives are elected by the people for a maximum term of five years in a "first past the post" system.

From December 2001 to May 2010, the governing party was been the **People's National Movement** (PNM) led by Patrick Manning; and the opposition party was the **United National Congress** (UNC) led by Kamla Persad-Bissessar. Another recent party was the **Congress of the People** (COP), led by Winston Dookeran. Support for these parties appears to fall along ethnic lines with the PNM consistently obtaining a majority Afro-Trinidadian vote, and the UNC gaining a majority of Indo-Trinidadian support. COP gained 23 percent of the votes in the 2007 general elections but failed to win a seat. Prior to May 24, 2010, the PNM held 26 seats in the House of Representatives and the UNC Alliance (UNC-A) held 15 seats, following elections held on 5 November 2007.

After just two and a half years, Prime Minister Patrick Manning dissolved Parliament in April 2010, and called a general election on May 24, 2010. After these general elections, the new governing party is the **People's Partnership** led by Kamla Persad-Bissessar. Persad-Bissessar and "the People's Partnership" wrested power from the Patrick Manning-led PNM, taking home 29 seats to the PNM's 12 seats, based on preliminary results.

There are 14 municipal corporations (two cities, three boroughs, and nine regions), which have a limited level of autonomy. The various councils are made up of a mixture of elected and appointed members. Elections are due to be held every three years, but have not been held since 2003;

four extensions having been obtained by the government. Local government elections were held in July 2010.

The Trinidad and Tobago Defense Force (TTDF) is the military organization responsible for the defense of the twin island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. It consists of the Regiment, the Coast Guard, the Air Guard and the Defense Force Reserves. Established in 1962 after Trinidad and Tobago's independence from Britain, the TTDF is one of the largest military forces in the English-speaking Caribbean.

Trinidad and Tobago is a leading member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), of which only the Caribbean Single Market (CSM) is in force. It is also the seat of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), which was inaugurated on 16 April 2005. The CCJ is intended to replace the British Judicial Committee of the Privy Council as the final Appellate Court for the member states of the CARICOM. Since its inauguration, only two states, Barbados and Guyana, have acceded to the appellate jurisdiction of the CCJ. The CCJ also serves as an original jurisdiction in the interpretation of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, to which all members of CARICOM have acceded.

### **The Roman Catholic Church in Trinidad**

The Roman Catholic Church was firmly established in Trinidad during the Spanish colonial period (1498-1797). Until 1820, Trinidad was part of the Spanish Diocese of Guyana (erected in 1546), with its seat at San Tome de Angostura on the Orinoco River in modern Venezuela, which in turn was under the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Santo Domingo (also erected in 1546).

Roman Catholicism was introduced by the Spanish discoverers and colonists who established permanent settlements in those islands. The first Catholic missionaries to arrive in Trinidad were Fathers Francisco de Cordova and Juan Garcés, both Dominicans, who died at the hands of hostile Amerindians in 1513. The Parish and Church of St. Joseph were established by Antonio de Berrio in 1592. The Franciscans arrived in 1596 and maintained their connection with Trinidad until the British occupation that began in 1797.

The Franciscan Fathers Esteban de San Felix, Marco de Vique and a lay-brother, Ramon de Figuerola, were killed by the natives in 1699. Their bodies were interred in the parish church of San José de Oruña, then the chief town of the colony, and they were venerated as martyrs of the Faith. The Spanish governor of the colony, Don José de Leon, and a Dominican, Father Juan de Mosin Sotomayor, lost their lives defending them.

After the occupation of Trinidad by British forces in 1797, the presence of Spanish and French Catholic Churches substantially increased the number of Roman Catholics under British rule in the Caribbean region. The Spanish and French residents in Trinidad, together with their slaves, maintained their Catholic traditions but were forced to live in a pluralistic society after the arrival of Protestant denominations during the British colonial period (1797-1962).

The Dominicans and other religious served in Grenada and the other islands, but as these colonies fell into British hands they were replaced by the secular clergy. When in 1797 Trinidad was surrendered to Great Britain, the status of the Catholic religion underwent no change, as

stipulated in the terms of capitulation granted by Sir Ralph Abercrombie. In keeping with the British Government's policy of toleration, it gave official recognition to the Roman Catholic Church in Trinidad. The new British authorities began to contribute to the maintenance of the Catholic clergy and continued to do so for more than 100 years. In February 1818, at the request of the British Governor of Trinidad, Sir Ralph Woodford, the Trinidad Catholics were withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the Catholic Bishop of Guyana (Venezuela), and Mgr. James Buckley was nominated by the Holy See and appointed in March 1819 by the British monarch, King George III, to be the Catholic Bishop of the **Vicariate Apostolic of Trinidad** (served 1819-1828). As such, Bishop Buckley's jurisdiction included the British, Dutch and Danish West Indies. The building of the cathedral of Port-of-Spain was begun during his administration, with the active support of Governor Woodford, but was not completed until 1832.

Not only was there always a chronic shortage of priests, the Church in Trinidad was faced with a bitter schism (1825-1841) led by a colored priest, Francis de Ridder, who was born in British Guiana (Guyana). He was determined to advance the cause of his own people. The Church also had to get its house in order after the Abolition of Slavery in 1834, when the Protestant churches were seeking to win converts among the newly-freed Africans. The **Vicariate Apostolic of Trinidad** had to face yet another crisis in 1844 when the Anglican Church became the Established Church of the British colony. The Catholic Church was relegated officially and legally to a position of secondary importance.

Bishop Buckley was succeeded by **Mgr. Daniel McDonnell (served 1828-1844)**, who was successful in recruiting 16 new Irish and French Catholic priests who arrived in 1837. Mgr. McDonnell's successor was **Mgr. Richard Patrick Smith (served 1844-1852)**. The **Vicariate Apostolic of Trinidad** was elevated to an Archdiocese in April 1850, with Mgr. Smith as Archbishop. According to Dr. Bernard Tappin (<http://rcpos.org/about/140-a-brief-history-of-the-archdiocese-of-port-of-spain-1850-2000.html>):

A new era dawned for the church on 30th April, 1850 when Pope Pius IX transformed the Vicariate into the Archdiocese of Port-of-Spain with jurisdiction over St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Grenada and Tobago and with Roseau, Dominica as its suffragan see. In 1850, the catholic population of Trinidad stood at 44,000 out of a total of 70,000 persons. There were sixteen parishes served by twenty resident priests, with thirteen primary schools along with St. Joseph's Convent, Port-of-Spain (1836) and St. George's College (1838). The church's new status was of added significance as it was made months before the hierarchy was restored in England on 24th September 1850. Indeed the Church of Port-of-Spain lays claim to be one of the oldest in the English-speaking world.

When the Archdiocese of Port-of-Spain was created in 1850, Trinidad was becoming an even more complex colonial society, with the arrival of varying numbers of migrants from neighboring West Indian islands and Venezuela, Africa, Madeira and China. The Asian Indian indentured laborer immigration scheme was becoming entrenched, which added a totally new religious dimension to the colony because these immigrants were either Hindu or followers of Islam. There was need for the British to stamp their authority, institutions, language and religion on the colony: the "anglicization" policy was in its prime.

The Catholic Church was often regarded in official government circles as being a "foreign church" because it was very French in character. It drew its staunchest support from the influential French Creole elite; many adherents also came from the French Patois-speaking former

slaves. Moreover, many priests were French, who as a rule preached in that language. The years following the creation of the Archdiocese continued to witness antagonisms between the British colonial government and the Catholic Church.

Tensions came to a head with the appointment of **Msg. Vincent Spaccapietra, C.M.**, in 1855 as Archbishop. There was difficulty in finding a successor to Msg. Smith who died suddenly in 1852. Spaccapietra, the Apostolic Delegate to the West Indies, was touring the islands when he was directed by Rome to assume control of the Archdiocese of Port-of-Spain. He was the first non-British subject to head the Catholic Church in Trinidad; Spaccapietra was an Italian from the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. The manner of his appointment aggravated the relations between himself and Governor Charles Elliot because the colonial office in London had not been informed by Rome of the appointment of Spaccapietra. Prior to the creation of the Archdiocese, there had been a steady flow of correspondence between Rome and London. After the Archdiocese of Port-of-Spain was formed, it was the opinion of Holy See that there was no longer any need to communicate with the British colonial authorities. Rome dealt directly with the Archdiocese of Port-of-Spain. Governor Elliot refused to recognize the new archbishop. Leaders among the Catholic party in Trinidad sprang to the defense of their Church and Archbishop. Rome sent Monsignor Talbot to diffuse the situation in December 1855 and to assure the Governor that no slight was intended to the colonial government. Given the continued strained relations, it was no surprise that Spaccapietra resigned as Archbishop, assuming a new post in 1859 as Archbishop of Smyrna.

During his short term in office, Spaccapietra carved for himself a monumental role among the archbishops of Port-of-Spain. He effectively established the church's social outreach to the less fortunate. Spaccapietra arrived in Trinidad after the dreaded outbreak of a cholera epidemic, which also plagued other West Indian islands. There was an immediate need to care for the poor. He therefore established the Les Amantes de Jesus Society, the St. Vincent de Paul Society (1857), and the L'hospice Spaccapietra (1858). These organizations have all stood the test of time and exist even today. Mgr. Spaccapietra was transfer to the See of Smyrna in 1859.

**Mgr. Ferdinand English was appointed as Archbishop of Port-of-Spain (served 1860-1862).** At that time, there was need for the Catholic Church to improve its relationship with the British colonial authorities. The new archbishop was an Englishman, aptly named Ferdinand English, a canon from the Diocese of Clifton. The Holy See reported his appointment to the British Government in London in a timely manner. Msg. English arrived in Trinidad in 1861, but he died suddenly in September 1862 during a pastoral visit to Grenada. Archbishop English is remembered for his initial efforts in bringing the Holy Ghost Fathers to Trinidad to establish St. Mary's College. This was important for the Church because the "old" Catholic St. George's College had failed and the Protestant English elite had their needs met with the establishment in 1857 of the Queen's Collegiate School, sponsored by the colonial regime. Msg. English was the founder of the Catholic Press with the establishment of the Catholic newspaper, the *Star of the West*, in 1862.

Archbishop English was succeeded by **Mgr. Louis Joachim-Hyacinthe Gonin, O.P. (served 1863-1889)** as Archbishop of Port-of-Spain. His appointment ushered in a period of growth and consolidation for the Church and satisfied the wishes of the contending power brokers in colonial Trinidad. Born in France, he grew up in Mauritius, a British colony in the Indian Ocean. French

in culture, Gonin was above all a British subject and he was also a member of the Dominican Order. Gonin's arrival in 1864 with a party of six young Dominicans was an important development for the Church in Trinidad, which now had an adequate supply of clergy to serve the increasing number of parishes. The Dominican Order was further strengthened with the arrival in 1868 of sisters of the Congregation of St. Catherine of Siena of Etrepagny, France, who came to take charge of the leprosarium at Cocorite. In May 1874, a group of contemplative nuns from Venezuela arrived after fleeing their Dominican Monastery in Caracas during the persecutions under President Antonio Guzmán Blanco (1870-1877), a Liberal and freemason who sharply reduced the power of the Catholic Church in Venezuela while in office.

The Archdiocese of Port-of-Spain became a stronghold of the Dominican Order. The Holy Ghost fathers arrived in 1863 to administer St. Mary's College. The Cluny Sisters were also in an expansionist mood during Msg. Gonin's tenure. Convents were founded in St. Joseph (1870), San Fernando (1882) and Arima (1885). The Good Shepherd Sisters of Angers arrived in 1890.

Under Msg. Gonin, there was a "rapprochement" between the Catholic Church and the British colonial officials. Governor Arthur Gordon nurtured the easing of tensions as colonial policy. The once vexing issue of the primacy of the Anglican Church was resolved by its dis-establishment in 1872. The Catholic Church won an even more significant battle for its continuing role in education when the Keenan Report (1869) recommended that church schools be granted state aid under certain conditions. The dual system of primary education subsequently came into effect in 1870. The colonial government sought the Church's help in furthering its work in education and social welfare. In 1868, Governor Gordon requested that Msg. Gonin bring the Dominican sisters to care for the lepers. In 1878, Gordon's successor, Henry Turner Irving, offered Msg. Gonin government funding if the Church would undertake the responsibility of finding a suitable religious order to run a reformatory. In 1890, the Girls Reformatory was opened, run by the Good Shepherd Sisters of Angers.

The number of Dominicans in Trinidad increased under Mgr. Gonin's successor, **Mgr. Patrick Vincent Flood, O.P. (served 1889-1907)**, and their work expanded to Grenada. He was the first of the Irish Dominicans to govern the see of Port-of-Spain. His appointment signaled a new era. In 1897, the Irish Dominican fathers replaced those from the Province of Lyons, France, in staffing the archdiocese, following the departure of the Superior, Fr. Hilaire Arnaud. The long-standing battle between the French and English elements in the society was abating. The Church could no longer continue to allow itself to be viewed as "foreign."

Archbishop Flood's episcopacy stands out for his strong support for Catholic education at the primary school level. In 1890, public discussion was renewed concerning the dual system of state-run and church-run schools, and there was widespread support for a secular system of education. Msg. Flood strongly advocated for the continuation of the dual system, and he won the day. A new ordinance was passed giving church primary schools increased financial support from the government. The dual system was maintained and the government provided very generous support for the church-sponsored schools.

By 1903, the Catholic Church ran the largest number of schools in Trinidad (72), with a student population of 11,286. The government had 51 schools with 8,731 pupils, the Anglicans operated 48 primary schools with 8,831 pupils, and the Presbyterians had 50 schools with about 5,200

students. The long battle in favor of church schools had borne fruit, which greatly strengthened the presence and growth of the Catholic Church throughout the colony.

Following Mgr. Flood's death in 1907, there was an extended vacancy in the office of Archbishop of Port-of-Spain. His replacement was Bishop **Mgr. John Pius Dowling, O.P.** (born in County Kilkenny, Ireland, in 1886), who was consecrated as Archbishop of Port-of-Spain in 1909 and served until 1940. Before his appointment as archbishop he held important offices in his religious order as professor and novice-master, and rector of the well-known College of San Clemente in Rome.

Msg. Dowling advocated for an increase in the number of religious orders serving in Trinidad. He welcomed the Spanish Augustinians, the Recollect Hermits of St. Augustine, who were placed in charge of a number of rural parishes where there were many Spanish-speakers. In 1911, Dom Mayeul de Caigny, O.S.B., sought entry into the Archdiocese because of political pressures in Bahia, Brazil. A year later the first monks arrived to establish the **Abbey of Our Lady in Exile at Mt. St. Benedict.**

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**This brief history of the Abbey of Our Lady of Exile at Mount Saint Benedict in Trinidad** covers the period from conception and inception. It is extracted from the diamond jubilee souvenir magazine printed in 1972.

That the Benedictines came to Trinidad is largely due to the missionary zeal of Dom Mayeul de Caigny, Abbot of San Sebastian in Bahia and first Conventional Prior of Mount St. Benedict. Civil unrest in Brazil during 1911 compelled the monks to seek refuge in other lands. His first visit to Trinidad began on 27th December 1911 and he spent two months here discussing plans for the new foundation with the late Archbishop John Pius Dowling. After much searching in the districts around Sangre Grande and Arima, a site was finally chosen on the 17<sup>th</sup> January, 1912, on the estate of Mr. Andrew Victorino Gomez in the hills above St. Joseph, which commanded a breathtaking view of the island. The first monks arrived on the sixth of October of the same year, and by 1917 the monastery of Mount St. Benedict was complete according to the plans of the Abbot.

By June 28, 1912 transactions were completed and the property of Mr. Gomez passed over to the BENEDECTINES. On September 27, 1912 the first monks departed from Bahia for Trinidad. They were Rev. Dom Ambrose Vinckier, Rev. Dom Paul Dobart, and Brother Anthony Feldner, who became the founders of the first Benedictine Monastery in the West Indies. They arrived in Trinidad on the morning of October 6, 1912 on the "Vauban." It was Rosary Sunday and the three Benedictines received a truly Benedictine hospitality from their Dominican hosts.

In a letter of introduction presented to Archbishop Dowling by Dom Ambrose, the mission was called Our Blessed Lady of Exile, situated on Saint Benedict's Hill. These titles were officially bestowed upon the new foundation by the Abbot founder. Shortly afterwards, however, the name Mount St. Benedict was adopted by the monks on the suggestion of Archbishop Dowling. Ever since the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 1912, the Benedictine property in the hills above St. Joseph has been known as Mount St. Benedict or simply the Mount.

The Stations of the Cross were canonically erected by Dom Mayeul on January 18, 1914. At the same time, there took place also the solemn enthronement of the life-size statue of Our Holy Father St. Benedict, which is still in our Abbey Church. It arrived on January 7th by the "S.S. Venetia" from Ham-

burg. In May 1914, the Apostolic Delegate of the Brazilian Congregation, the Right Reverend Laurence Zeller, visited the Monastery and suggested the erection of a guest house for pilgrims, who were coming daily to the Mount in greater numbers.

Dom Mayeul will be remembered as a brilliant student, an accomplished preacher and an able conversationalist. These qualities of his made him popular in all classes of society from the Governor himself down to the poor pilgrims who frequented his parlour daily. In 1923, ten years after his arrival in Trinidad, he resigned his office of Conventual Prior and retired to the Abbey of St. Leo in Florida, USA, where he died in 1939.

After Dom Mayeul asked to retire in 1923, the Holy See sent a Visitor Extraordinary in the person of the Right Reverend Dom Maurus Etcheverry, O.S.B. On invitation of the Lord Abbot Primate, the newly appointed Prior, Very Reverend Dom, Hugh van der Sanden went to Rome and during his sojourn in Rome sought affiliation of his monastery to another Congregation, as communication with Brazil was becoming increasingly difficult. The Trinidad Community accepted Provisional Affiliation granted them by the Belgian Congregation in May 1925. Following upon a favourable report of a Canonical Visitor, the Right Reverend Dom Chrysostom de Saegher, who came to Trinidad in 1927, the General Chapter (upon the definitive incorporation of) in December of that year, decided upon the definitive incorporation of the Priory of Mount St. Benedict with the Belgian Congregation. This decision was fully approved by the Holy See in December 1928. At the same time the Trinidad Government granted the community the right of corporation with perpetual succession.

In 1947, the Monastery, having made wonderful strides was raised to the dignity of an Abbey. The monks in conclave, under the presidency of the Right Reverend Lord Abbot Theodore Neve, O.S.B., D.D., Head of the Congregation, elected the then Dom Adelbert van Duin, O.S.B., Ph.D., I.C.D., as first Abbot; he received the abbatial blessing on 16 June 1947 from His Grace the most Reverend Dr. Fanbar Ryan, Archbishop of Port of Spain. This was a memorable day in the history of Mount St. Benedict: that the people of the Island were pleased at this event was clearly demonstrated by the crowds that arrived to witness the great function and filled the small church to overflowing; all the Chief Catholic Clergy, numerous important personages, and well wishers of all classes; messages of congratulations poured in and many journeyed from distant parts to offer their felicitations in person.

Dom Placid Ganteaume, the first local vocation for the monastery was ordained in 1926. Dom Maurus Maingot, another local, joined the Benedictine Community together with Dom Placid. Both of these eminent sons have now gone to their eternal reward. The other early local vocations are Dom Basil Mathews, professed 6 August, 1930, ordained priest 21 December 1935, and Dom Bapt. Osborne, professed 25 December 1933, ordained priest 27 July 1939, both of whom are still with us. At present thirty percent of the Community are locals.

During the many years from the foundation of the monastery to the present day, there has hardly ever been a lull in the building and other activities: first, under the wise direction of Dom Mayeul de Caigny and later that of Dom Hugh van der Sanden, to whose perspicacity and driving force, supported by the able advice of his Council, was due a succession of important developments.

We are fortunate to have as Architect and Builder one of our own monks, Brother Gabriel Mokveld, who meticulously carried out the plans and personally superintended all building, including the building of the present Abbey. The first public act of the newly-elected Abbot was the laying of the foundation stone on 11 July 1947.

The new Abbey Church and the greater part of the present living quarters of the monks were completed in 1952. The guestrooms of the monastery were constructed in 1954, and the first Rest House, by now in-

adequate to meet the needs of the increasing number of pilgrims, was replaced by the present structure in the same year. In 1961 the kitchen and refectory of the Abbey School, along with the library and auditorium were built by Bro. Gabriel, who is also responsible for building the Holy Shop and pilgrims' parlors, which now constitute the southeastern wing of the Abbey, completed in 1963. The building of the tower, made possible through the generosity of a benefactor, was begun in 1964, and is to be capped off soon. The road, which was fast deteriorating, was resurfaced in 1965, thus making it possible for everyone to enjoy a comfortable drive to and from the Mount.

St. Bedes Technical School, opened in January 1967, completed the Mounts building project for the 1960s. The early seventies have so far been taken up with general repairs and maintenance of the huge complex of buildings that go to make up MOUNT ST. BENEDICT.

#### Patroness of the Abbey

In the letter of introduction, presented by Dom Ambrose Vinckier, O.S.B., to the Archbishop of Port-of-Spain on the arrival of the first monks in the island, Dom Mayeul de Caigny expressly stated that the Benedictine mission should be dedicated to Our Lady of Exile. The name was chosen by the Abbot because he intended the foundation in this island to be a place of refuge in the event of persecution, which was threatening in Bahia. The Abbot was, no doubt, well acquainted with the devotion to the Mother of God under this title because veneration of Our Lady of Exile was popular in Brazil as well as in other Portuguese territories.

Adapted from: <http://msb69.tripod.com/id3.html>

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**The Archdiocese of Port-of-Spain, in 1910, was an archiepiscopal and metropolitan see that included the islands of Trinidad, Tobago, Grenada and the Grenadines, St. Vincent, and St. Lucia.** The Catholic population of the Archdiocese at that time was about 200,000. Most of the clergy were from England and Ireland, and only a few were natives of the diocese. English was taught exclusively in the schools and most generally spoken, though Creole *patois* was widely used by the lower classes except in Tobago and St. Vincent. Spanish was spoken in some parishes of Trinidad and by Venezuelan residents of Port-of-Spain. There were also many Portuguese. Confessors with knowledge of these languages were provided and sermons were preached in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese. Work among the East Indian immigrants made knowledge of the dialects of Hindustan necessary.

Statistically, in 1910, the number of parishes was 48; secular clergy, 20; Order of Preachers, 40; Congregation of the Holy Ghost, 15; Fathers of Mary Immaculate, 20; and there were a few members of the Order of St. Augustine. There were two Catholic schools for boys and four for girls, as well as one orphanage and two alms-houses. The Leper Asylum and the municipal alms-house were under the care of the Sisters of St. Dominic, and many of the elementary schools were under the supervision of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

In 1919, Msg. Dowling welcomed from England to the Archdiocese a small group of nuns, Dominican Tertiaries, who became affiliated with the Carmelite Order in 1928 and took up the now familiar brown habit in 1935. The name of the congregation became Corpus Christi Carmelites. This relatively small congregation of sisters – just 75 professed (53 over 60 years of age) in July 2007 – continues to run a day nursery, a convalescent home for children, a home for

the mentally challenged, vocational and high schools. They have been involved in parish ministry, hospital and prison ministry, counselling and many other activities.

Msg. Dowling's most difficult moments as archbishop were during the years 1926 to 1932 when he fought tenaciously but unsuccessfully against the introduction of divorce legislation into the colony. In 1931, he presented yet another "solemn protest" to the Governor, Claud Hollis, signed also by the Anglican Bishop, Arthur Anstey, the Kazi of the Islamic faith and many Hindu pundits. On 22 March 1931, Msg. Dowling addressed a mass protest rally at the Savannah along with Anglican, Hindu and Labor leaders. In the media, the Catholic Church was portrayed as being reactionary, and divorce was viewed as "progressive" social legislation. Consequently, the government won the day, and the divorce law was approved.

Archbishop Dowling was succeeded by his co-adjutor, **Patrick Finbar Ryan, O.P.**, in 1940. When he assumed office, Ryan already had a long and distinguished career in the Church in Ireland. Although he was not a young archbishop, he governed the Church for the next 26 years. Msg. Ryan witnessed Trinidad's political emergence as an independent country, and he had the honor of being the first religious leader to bless the nation, minutes after the National Flag was raised on the first Independence Day, on 31 August 1962. Archbishop Ryan was also present at the sessions of Vatican Council II in Rome (1963-1965).

**As Archbishop of Port-of-Spain, Msg. Ryan saw the church grow in the Caribbean.** He celebrated the centenary of the Archdiocese in December 1950, with days of celebrations. In 1956, St. Lucia and Grenada became separate dioceses. On 10 December 1957, the **Antilles Episcopal Conference** was born, one of the first in the Church worldwide. The vast majority were only established in the wake of Vatican II. In December 1958, Msg. Ryan consecrated his Vicar-General, **William Michael Fitzgerald, O.P.**, as his auxiliary.

Msg. Ryan was the founder of the **Seminary of St. John Vianney and the Uganda Martyrs**. As early as 1819, Rome proposed the foundation of a seminary, but it was not until January 1943 that the seminary was actually founded, housed in a building within the monastic compound of Mt. St. Benedict. The monks assumed responsibility for the seminary. In 1961, the seminary was transferred to its present site. Msg. Ryan also stands out for his determined advancement of Catholic education. Not only were primary schools built and renovated, Msg. Ryan was responsible for the rapid growth of Catholic secondary education in Trinidad. He invited to Trinidad the Presentation Brothers (1946) and the Holy Faith Sisters (1947) for this purpose, and he encouraged the Holy Ghost Fathers to open Fatima College (1945). His own Dominican Fathers opened Holy Cross College in 1957. The parishes of St. Joseph and Tunapuna had their own colleges, St. Joseph's College and St. Charles. The Dominican Sisters opened St. Dominic's in Barataria. The Church was the effective pioneer in the spread of secondary education in the years after World War II.

When Msg. Ryan resigned in 1966, it was anticipated that a native Trinidadian would be his successor. The time was ripe for change and the man of the moment was **Gordon Anthony Pantin, C.S.Sp.**, who was merely 38 years old. He served as Archbishop from 1967 until his death in March 2000. The current Archbishop is **Mgr. Edward Joseph Gilbert, C.S.S.R.**, who was appointed in March 2001. The *Catholic News*, the weekly newspaper of the Archdiocese of Port-of-Spain, was founded on 6 May 1892.

## *Catholic Charismatic Renewal*

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) movement began in 1967 when a handful of students and university theology professors from the Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, got together for a weekend spiritual retreat. From there the CCR spread to university campuses in South Bend, Indiana, and East Lansing, Michigan, in 1968. From this small beginning, the CCR spread throughout the USA and Canada, Latin America and the Caribbean, and around the world.

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal is focused on the renewal of individual commitment to the person of Jesus Christ in His Church, through the power of the Holy Spirit, as in the day of Pentecost of Acts 2. The individuals in the Charismatic Renewal believe that they have been "filled" or "baptized" with the Holy Spirit, often through the laying on of the hands. The signs of the "baptism" or "filling" may include joy, the gifts of speaking in tongues, resting in the Spirit or slaying in the Spirit, prophecy, healing, interpretation of tongues, discernment of spirits, which are the nine spiritual gifts mentioned in 1 Cor.12:8-10. The essence of the Charismatic Renewal experience is a life of joyfully praising the Lord and service to others.

Ursula Bleasdell, affectionately called "Auntie Babsie," became involved in the CCR in the early 1970s. She was mainly responsible for the formation of many prayer groups throughout Trinidad and Tobago. Bleasdell has been a leading spokesperson for the CCR and involved in the planning of National and Caribbean CCR Conferences, teaching seminars, days of renewal, parish retreats and missions. Since 1975, "Auntie Babsie" has become a well-known speaker at various international CCR conferences and retreats, including the International Priests Retreat in Rome in 1990. She was also the founder of the Word of Life Prayer Community in Trinidad. Her outstanding gifts in her ministries include spiritual counseling, preaching, teaching, prophesy, and healing. She has authored three books: *Growing in Praise*; *Babsie, Go Teach My People*; and *Refresh Your Life in the Spirit*.

The National Service Team is responsible for the growth and activities of the CCR in Trinidad and Tobago. The Spiritual Director is Fr. Urban Hudlin, O.P., and the Lay Coordinator is Ms. Deborah de Rosia. The Towers of Strength prayer group is located in the Financial Centre in downtown Port-of-Spain, and has an average membership of 300 persons.

The real strength of the CCR is its parish base. There are over 30,500 active members who attend weekly prayer meetings at one of the prayer groups in the various worship centers (parish communities) of the archdiocese. Since the mid-1970s, numerous CCR communities have been established in Trinidad: *Catholic Charismatic Centre*, Frederick Settlement, Caroni; *Emmanuel Community*, Woodbrook, Port-of-Spain; *Emmanuel's Cradle c/o Emmanuel Community*, Woodbrook; *Eternal Light Community*, Tunapuna; *Living Water Community*, Port-of-Spain; *People of Praise Community*, Arima; *Servants of Jesus Christ the Lord Community*, Point Fortin; *Word of Life Community*, Arima; *Zion Community*, Mootoo Lands, Marabella. Also, a Bible Institute for training laypersons was established at the *Catholic Charismatic Centre* in Frederick Settlement, Caroni.

## *Contemporary Overview of the Archdiocese*

Roman Catholic adherents in Trinidad and Tobago totaled 26 percent of the population in 2000 (census). Between 1966 and 2005, the archdiocese expanded from 59 parishes to 61. In 1966, there were 18 diocesan priests and 118 religious priests (total = 136), compared to 45 diocesan priests and 76 religious priests in 2005 (total = 121). In 1966, there were 51 religious brothers and 255 religious sisters (total = 306), compared to 94 religious brothers and 147 religious sisters in 2005 (total = 241). During this time period, the “Catholics per priest” ratio changed from 2,203 in 1966 to 3,167 in 2005. These statistical comparisons reveal a decline in the ability of the Catholic Church, in general, to provide adequate pastoral care, as well as educational and social services, for the Catholic population, which increased from 299,649 in 1966 to 383,300 in 2005, according to the Catholic-Hierarchy.org website.

At the end of 2001, a priest was assigned to every canonical parish in the archdiocese (64 priests were assigned to the 61 parishes and they served 197 worship communities). However, not all those who were assigned were expected or able to serve in full-time ministry. In two parishes Religious Sisters were appointed by the archbishop for full-time ministry with the assigned priest.

Currently the following religious orders/congregations serve in the Archdiocese:

- Congregation of Holy Ghost Fathers
- Order of Preachers
- Order of St. Benedict
- The Sons of Mary Immaculate
- Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mt. Carmel
- Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer - Redemptorists
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny
- Dominican Sisters
- Holy Faith Sisters
- Corpus Christi Carmelites
- Franciscan Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother
- Missionaries of Charity

**The Central Vicariate** comprises five canonical parishes and 24 worship centers. Four local diocesan priests are assigned to the parishes in this vicariate. There are two communities of religious sisters (Holy Faith Sisters and the Franciscan Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother); 13 Catholic primary schools and two Catholic secondary schools.

**The Eastern Vicariate** comprises a total of 12 canonical parishes with 54 worship centers. Four religious priests and eight diocesan priests are assigned to the parishes. There are three religious communities of women (Holy Faith in Valencia; and Cluny in Arima and Arouca); one religious community of men (Dominican Priory in Arima). There are 35 Catholic primary schools and two Catholic secondary schools in this vicariate. Also, there are two ecclesial communities based in Arima (People of Praise and Word of Life).

**The Northern Vicariate** comprises 20 canonical parishes with 43 worship centers. In addition there are five approved places for Sunday worship (Rosary Monastery, St. Mary's College Chapel, the St. Dominic's Children Home, the L'hospice and the Living Water Community). There are three male religious communities (the Spiritans at Frederick Street and Fatima College and the Dominicans at St. Finbar's) and fifteen religious communities of women (Carmelite Sisters at Belmont, St. Clair, L'hospice, Diego Martin and Cocorite; Cluny Sisters at Pembroke Street, Belmont and Scarborough; Dominicans at St. Dominic's Home, Holy Name, Robinsonville; Dominican Nuns at St. Ann's; Sinsinawa Dominicans at Woodbrook, Holy Faith-Woodbrook; and Missionaries of Charity at Laventille). There are two ecclesial Communities (The Living Water Community and Eternal Life Community). There are 35 primary schools and ten secondary schools.

**The Southern Vicariate** is made up of 15 canonical parishes and 35 worship centers. There are three Religious Sisters serving the pastoral needs of this vicariate: Sr. Paul Clarke in La Brea, Sr. Genevieve Baptiste in New Grant, and Sr. Annette Chow in Rio Claro. There are four religious communities of women (Carmelites at Gasparillo, Cluny at San Fernando, Holy Faith at Siparia, and Dominicans at Point Fortin). There are 26 Catholic primary schools and five Catholic secondary schools in this area. There are two ecclesial communities (Zion Community at Marabella and Servants of Our Lord at Point Fortin).

**The Suburban Vicariate** comprises nine canonical parishes with 18 worship centers. This vicariate has four male religious communities (the Benedictine Monastery, a Dominican Priory, the Carmelite Formation House, and the FMI formation community) and five female religious houses (Cluny Sisters at St. Joseph; Carmelite Sisters at Novitiate House/Generalate and Back Street, Tunapuna; and the Dominican Sisters in Malick and St. Augustine). There is also the Deaf Ministry, called Touch of Christ Community; the Regional Seminary; the Archdiocesan Pastoral Institute; the Chaplaincy to the University of the West Indies; the Bible School; and the School of Evangelization. There are 17 Catholic primary schools and five Catholic secondary schools. There is one lay ecclesial community: Eternal Light Community at Tunapuna.

### **The Roman Catholic Church in Tobago**

Tobago was sighted by Christopher Columbus on the Feast of the Assumption in 1498. Consequently, it was dedicated to **Our Lady Assumed into Heaven** and called Assumption Island. However, that was the only known Spanish involvement with the Tobago.

The early history of the evangelization of Tobago is very different from that of Trinidad. In Tobago, various Protestant denominations were the first to bring Christianity to the islands inhabitants. Between 1781 and 1870, missions were established by Anglicans, Moravians, Wesleyan Methodists and Presbyterians. This has given the Catholic Church in Tobago an enviably ecumenical openness. Catholic missionary activity did not begin until the appointment of **Mgr. Louis Joachim-Hyacinte Gonin, O.P. (served 1863-1889)** as Archbishop of Port-of-Spain. He arrived in Trinidad in 1864 accompanied by a significant number of priests and religious of his Order. In 1870, Fr. Andre Violette, O.P., paid a visit to Tobago. The baptismal register recorded a baptism performed by him, the first in Tobago, on 5 March 1870. However, Catholic missionary activities in Tobago assumed a definite shape with the establishment of a mission house in Scarborough in 1880. Tobago became a British Crown Colony in 1877.

The 1880s saw not only the growth of the Catholic Church in Tobago with the founding of the mission of Delaford in 1886, but also a change in the politics and economy of the island. Tobago, unlike Trinidad, changed hands several times. Neglected by Spain, the island was colonized unsuccessfully by many European powers until it was occupied by the English who governed the island from 1803 onward. In 1889, Tobago became part of the British colonial administration of Trinidad, which facilitated the work of Catholic priests and religious workers from Trinidad on the island. In the 1890's, Delaford became part of the Toco parish and its parish priest, Fr. Reginald Sarthou, O.P., made the formidable crossing several times a year to continue missionary activities there.

The missionary thrust expanded considerably during the tenure of Archbishop Vincent Flood between 1889 and 1907. A church was constructed at Scarborough, a chapel at Delaford and also at Patience Hill in 1892. The spread of the Catholic Faith was accompanied by the erection of chapels in strategic locations. The mission at Goodwood, which began in 1895, was strengthened with the presence of a church that was built two years later. The decade of building was completed by the erection of a school-chapel at Mason Hall in 1898.

As a result of the infrastructure laid down in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Catholic Church in Tobago experienced gradual growth in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The primary focus was the building of chapel-schools reflecting the settlement pattern of small villages throughout the island. Private schools were founded and served as an effective means of spreading the Catholic Faith. In 1924, Fr. P. Stack, O.P., built two of these at Bloody Bay and Roxborough. The Church was considerably strengthened by the presence of another priest appointed to Delaford in 1939. One of his first acts was to build a school-chapel there. A primary school built in Scarborough in 1940 concentrated on the formation in the Catholic Faith of children in the capital in its environs.

The Catholic Church in Tobago received another boost with the arrival of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny in 1942. The Religious Sisters assisted first in primary and then later in secondary education. They also took part in the Church's social outreach by visiting the aged and infirm, and fostering the Legion of Mary and other Catholic devotions.

In the 1960s a new church, elegant in architecture and located on a hill overlooking the harbor of Scarborough, was built by Fr. Juhel, O.P., who served for several years on the island. A new church dedicated to St. Anthony was constructed at Mason Hall and a new chapel at Patience Hill.

In the 1970s, under the leadership of Frs. Kevin de Loughry and Michael O'Connor, O.P., the Catholic Church in Tobago began a Roadside Preaching Project in different areas of the island with the involvement of other Christian denominations. This decade also saw the introduction of folk-songs into the liturgy and more congregational participation. The St. Vincent de Paul Society also was active and a home for the aged was built. As the Catholic parishioners grew in number, lay ministers were trained to assist in the liturgy and other ministries of the Church.

In the late 1970's, Fr. Sebastian Madhosingh started a mixed community of religious and lay persons to assist in various parochial activities of the parish of Delaford. They taught in the

primary schools and also created a Catholic presence at the Roxborough Government Secondary School. A preschool adjacent to the presbytery also was built at this time.

**The Catholic Charismatic Renewal** also spread to Tobago in the 1970's and several prayer groups were formed in both parishes of the island. Besides their weekly meetings, members were engaged in the study of the Bible and were involved in various other Church activities. They also participated in the Annual Charismatic Conventions and Rallies in Trinidad and in other National Church Conventions. Basic Christian Communities have grown throughout the island and have brought an increased vibrancy and ecumenical flavor to the Church.

At the dawn of the new millennium, the Catholic Church in Tobago was firmly established and under its Patroness, Our Lady of the Assumption.

### **The Protestant Movement in Trinidad & Tobago**

Between 1781 and 1870, Protestant missions were established in Tobago by Anglicans, Moravians, Wesleyan Methodists and Presbyterians. The period between 1797 and 1897 saw the emergence of the Protestant movement in Trinidad, but it was not until the 20<sup>th</sup> century that numerous U.S. denominations arrived and became established throughout the nation.

#### *Early Protestant Work in Tobago*

Tobago became a British colony in 1762 as part of the British Windward Islands. Tobago was ceded to Britain by France in the Treaty of Paris on 10 February 1763 and became a separate British colony in November 1764. Between June 1781 and April 1793, Tobago was under French colonial administration and the Roman Catholic Church experienced a brief resurgence. British military forces re-occupied Tobago on 15 April 1793. Between June 1802 and June 1803, Tobago was, once again, a French colony, but the British regained possession in June 1803. In 1889 Tobago was united with Trinidad into a British crown colony.

**1781 – Members of the Anglican Church (Church of England)** were present among the first English colonists. However, the Rev. Thomas Carew was the first Anglican minister to serve in Tobago, beginning in 1781, followed by the Rev. John Matthews in 1788. By 1867, there was a strong Anglican presence on Tobago, according to historian Henry Iles Woodcock, *A History of Tobago*, published in 1867, from which much important information was gleaned.

**1790 – The Church of the United Brethren (Moravian Church).** The Rev. and Mrs. John Montgomery arrived from Barbados in April 1790 and took up residence at Signal Hill. His residence was destroyed by a hurricane in August of that same year. After his wife died of an illness, Montgomery returned to Barbados and the work in Tobago was continued after 1799 by other Moravian pastors and missionaries. Moravian churches were founded in Tobago as follows: at Montgomery (1790, 1828), Moriah (1840), Spring Gardens (1851), Bon Accord (1861), Black Rock (1869), Bethesda (1874), Evangel (1989), and Buccoo (2009). The Spring Garden Moravian Church building in Tobago was constructed in 1852 on the ruins of an old sugar factory. The building served the Moravian Church and the wider community as a sanctuary, school and community center; and it survived the ravages of Hurricane "Flora" on 30 September 1963. Although

replaced by a new sanctuary, the old church building now serves as a remedial learning center and a meeting place.

Currently, the **Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province** includes the islands of Antigua, Barbados, St. Croix, St. John, St. Kitts, St. Thomas, Trinidad & Tobago. The Province has 49 congregations, 19,510 members, and 47 pastors and educators.

**1817 – The London Missionary Society (LMS)** arrived and constructed a chapel at the bottom of Old Market Square, under the leadership of the Rev. Elliot. The LMS was a nondenominational missionary society (largely supported by Congregationalists) formed in England in 1795 by evangelical Anglicans and Non-Conformists. The LMS merged with the **Commonwealth Missionary Society** (formerly the Colonial Missionary Society) in 1966 to form the **Congregational Council for World Mission (CCWM)**. At the formation of the **United Reformed Church** in England in 1972 it underwent another name change, becoming the **Council for World Mission** (Congregational and Reformed).

**1818 - The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society** arrived and established its work throughout the island. Between 1823 and 1826, a Methodist Chapel was built in Scarborough by the Rev. Nelson. By 1866, there were Methodist chapels at Mt. St. George, Mason Hall, Cartara, Ebenezer, Mt. Stewart, Plymouth and Francklyn. At that time, an estimated one-third of the island's population was considered Methodist adherents, including 1,083 communicant members, and 500 children attended Sunday School.

**1836 – The Missionary Society of Greyfriars Original Secession Church (Presbyterian)** began work in Trinidad and Tobago, but by 1841 Presbyterian work in Tobago had ceased and their chapels in Scarborough and St. Paul's were given as a loan to the Anglican Church.

**The Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Tobago Mission** (organized in 2004), reported 30 local churches with 7,845 members in September 2009, whereas in 2003 there were 7,129 members in 28 churches.

Elder Eric John Murray, former president of the **Caribbean Union Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists** died at age 88 on 29 September 2008 at the St. Clair Medical Clinic after a four-month illness. When he was appointed Secretary-Treasurer of the Caribbean Union in 1965, he achieved the distinction of becoming the first West Indian to serve as an administrator at the Maraval-based regional office.

Born in Tobago, Murray was taught and influenced by Lionel P. Mitchell, an outstanding Tobago educator, musician, and social activist. With limited opportunities available in Tobago for further education, Murray left for Caribbean Training College in Maracas Valley in 1941. He was a twelfth grade graduate of that institution in 1945. Murray was among the early graduates of the Caribbean Training College who travelled to Adventist institutions in the USA to pursue undergraduate studies. In 1964 he was ordained as a gospel minister in Barbados.

Murray completed a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration in 1951 from Emmanuel Missionary College. He graduated from Andrews University in 1969 and became probably the first Adventist minister in the southern Caribbean to have earned a Master's degree in Business

Administration. In 1970, he was appointed as Secretary-Treasurer of the Caribbean Union, the first national of Trinidad and Tobago to hold that position. Previously he had served as Secretary-Treasurer in Adventist organizations with headquarters in the Bahamas and Barbados.

In 1978, Murray was elected as president of the **Caribbean Union Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists**, the first “Trinbagonian” and only the third West Indian to be president, a position he held until 1991, longer than anyone else. In that capacity he presided over major advances at Caribbean Union College and Community Hospital in Trinidad and Tobago, and Davis Memorial Hospital in Guyana. During this period he was a member of the General Conference Executive Committee at the World Adventist headquarters in Maryland.

Among his other accomplishments, Murray was author of *A History of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Trinidad and Tobago, 1891-1981* (1982), *National Biography Handbook of Trinidad and Tobago* (1996), and editor and compiler of *Religions of Trinidad and Tobago: A Guide to the History, Beliefs and Polity of Twenty-Three Religious Faiths*. Port of Spain, Trinidad: Murray Publications, 1998.

**Other Protestant denominations that arrived in Tobago later include:** the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Church of the Nazarene (began work in 1926 in Trinidad), Pentecostal Assemblies of the West Indies (founded in 1912 in Trinidad; eight local churches Tobago in 2009), New Testament Church of God (Church of God, Cleveland, TN; at least two churches in Tobago), The Salvation Army (began work in 1893 in Trinidad; currently with one church in Tobago), the Seventh-day Adventist Church (first arrived in 1901), and Victorious Faith Ministries (five churches in Trinidad and one in Tobago).

#### *Early Protestant Work in Trinidad*

**1797** – The first to arrive was the **Church of England (Anglican Church)**. Anglican chaplains arrived with the British occupation of Trinidad in 1797, but they only ministered to the small English-speaking population. In 1824, the Rev. Dr. William Hart Coleridge was appointed as Bishop of the Anglican Church in Barbados and arrived there on 29 January 1825. The Diocese of Barbados then included the Leeward and Windward Islands, Trinidad, Tobago and Guyana. Missionaries of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) arrived in 1837 to work in the southern part of Trinidad, where they challenged the predominance of the Roman Catholic Church.

Bishop Coleridge was succeeded in 1842 by Bishop Thomas Parry, who urged the British colonial government to have the Church of England declared the Established Church and become better endowed with stronger financial support from the government. This was done in 1844 by the colonial government’s Ecclesiastical Ordinance, which officially “established” the Anglican Church in Trinidad, divided the island into parishes, and increased its financial support to the Church. Unfortunately, this action aggravated the acute tension that had been building between the Catholic majority population and the Anglican minority, which only came to an end when the Anglican Church was disestablished in 1870. The Baptists and Presbyterians also protested against the ordinance. This denomination is known today as the **Diocese of the Anglican Church of Trinidad and Tobago**.

One of the earliest efforts to aid East Asian orphaned children in Trinidad was begun in 1857 by the Church of England, called the “Coolie Orphan Home and Industrial School,” located in Tacarigua. The initiative for this came from two Anglican plantation owners, one of whom also sent an Anglican missionary to work among the Asian Indians at his Orange Grove Estate in St. George Parish.

The original Diocese of Barbados and the Leeward and Windward Islands, established in 1824, was subsequently divided into five: Guyana (1842) and Antigua (1842), Trinidad (1872), and Windward Islands (1879). The Windward Islands continued to be administered by the Bishop of Barbados until 1930. These five dioceses together with the Dioceses of Jamaica (1824), Nassau and the Bahamas (1861) and Belize (1891, formerly British Honduras) make up the **Anglican Province of the West Indies**. The first Anglican Bishop of Trinidad, the Rev. Richard Rawle, was appointed in 1872. By 1968, there were an estimated 35,000 Anglican adherents in Trinidad-Tobago.

**1808 – The London Missionary Society (LMS)** sent workers to British colony of Demerara (later became part of British Guiana and now Guyana) and Tobago in 1808, and the following year one of them relocated from Demerara to Trinidad. However, the missions in Tobago and Trinidad survived only a few years.

**1809 - The Wesleyan Methodist Church** in Trinidad was founded by the **Wesleyan Missionary Society of Great Britain**. Because of Roman Catholic opposition and the policy of Governor Woodford in Trinidad to favor and protect Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, both the Wesleyan Methodist and the LMS missionaries encountered difficulties in the development of their respective church bodies. In 1818, all Nonconformist chapels were closed for a time, and ultimately the LMS withdrew from the colony. At the time of Emancipation in 1834, only one small Methodist congregation in Port-of-Spain had survived.

Over time, however, this situation greatly improved. By 1968, the Methodist Church in Trinidad and Tobago had an estimated 7,300 adherents. It is affiliated with the **Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas (MCCA)**, established in 1967 with headquarters on the island of Antigua. The MCCA has eight Districts: Bahamas/Turks and Caicos Islands, Belize/Honduras, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Leeward Islands, Panama/Costa Rica and South Caribbean (includes Barbados, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, and Trinidad & Tobago).

**1815-1816 - Negro Baptists** were among a group of freed African slaves (“Merikins”) who were relocated by British military forces to Trinidad from the southern USA as a reward for fighting with the British during the Anglo-American War of 1812-1815. The Merikins settled as freedmen in “Company villages” in the Savanna Grande area. William Hamilton (d.1860) was a Baptist lay preacher in the Fifth Company Baptist Church who began to evangelize and organize Baptist churches in rural Trinidad. The first Baptist church was organized in 1816 under Hamilton’s leadership. Some of these Negro Baptist congregations were aided by English missionaries from the **London Missionary Society** in the 1840s.

During the 1860s, the **Baptist Union of Trinidad** distanced itself from “Baptist churches” with strong African cultural features of worship. The latter were banned from the London Baptist Missionary Society in 1907, which led to the formation of the **Union of Independent Baptist**

**Churches.** The labels "London Baptists" and "Independent Baptists" have since become the colloquial names of the two Baptist traditions in Trinidad; the latter group was first referred to as "Disobedient Baptists" by the BMS because of their reluctance to conform to the British norms of propriety. These "Independent Baptists" adapted **Yoruba (Orisha) beliefs and practices** and became known as **Shouter/Spiritual Baptists** in the West Indies.

**1836 - The Presbyterian Church of Scotland.** The Missionary Society of Greyfriars Original Secession Church (Scottish Presbyterians) began work among British colonists in Trinidad in 1836 with the arrival of the Rev. Alexander Kennedy, who founded Greyfriars Church in Port-of-Spain. Later, outstations were established in Arouca, Sangre Grande, San Fernando and elsewhere. This Missionary Society later affiliated with the Church of Scotland and became known as the **Church of Scotland in Trinidad**. Historically, this denomination has served the White and Mulatto populations, and ordained ministers were provided by the Church of Scotland. In 1968, there were about 700 total members; in the late 1990s, this denomination reported a total of only four local churches, served by three pastors, with a total membership of about 520 in Trinidad.

In 1845, a group of about 600 immigrants from the Portuguese Colony of Madeira (an island discovered by Portugal in 1419, located in the Atlantic Ocean, 520 km from the African coast and 1,000 km from the European continent) came to Trinidad to escape religious persecution. The Madeiran emigrants had been converted to Protestantism in their native land by a Scottish medical doctor, Robert Kalley, who introduced Scripture reading and Protestant worship to the Madeirans. Those who were converted to Protestantism were persecuted by Roman Catholics. After arriving in Port-of-Spain, these refugees held Portuguese worship services in Greyfriars Church, and later founded St. Ann's Church with a Portuguese minister. This congregation became associated with the Free Church of Scotland. However, eventually, most of the Madeirans in Trinidad relocated in the USA, and St. Ann's Church gradually became a second English-speaking Presbyterian congregation in Port-of-Spain.

**1843** – There was a short-lived attempt, begun in 1843, by the **Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church** to start a mission at Iere Village among former African slaves. However, this attempt ended with the illness and death of the missionaries.

**1843 – The London Missionary Society (LMS,** an independent mission board supported by Congregationalists) sent the Rev. George Cowen from England to Trinidad to begin work in Spanish Town in 1843, where he founded St. John's Baptist Church in 1854. Cowen provided assistance to some of the independent Shouter Baptist congregations that had been established by English-speaking Afro-Americans ("Merikins," former soldiers who fought with the British Army in the Anglo-American War of 1812) in the "Company villages" of southern Trinidad. Another LMS missionary, John Law, arrived in 1845 and settled in southern Trinidad. Until his death in 1852, he worked among the Afro-Americans in the "Company villages." The LMS withdrew from this field in 1892, allegedly to promote indigenous church growth, but returned in 1946.

Today, the **Baptist Union of Trinidad and Tobago** is the continuation of the LBMS legacy. In 1999, according to the Baptist World Alliance Statistics website, the Baptist Union had 22 organized congregations with about 3,300 baptized members. However, in 1960, the Baptist Union reported 40 churches with about 6,000 members, which is evidence of a serious decline in

strength between 1960 and 1999 or the separation of churches to become independent or join other denominations.

**1868 - Canadian Presbyterian missionary work** (sponsored by the Presbyterian Church of the Maritime Provinces of Canada) began among the East Indian population in Trinidad, which was later administered by the **United Church of Canada**. In 1866, the Rev. John Morton, a Presbyterian minister from Nova Scotia, made a four-month tour of Trinidad, where he became concerned about the welfare of an estimated 20,000 East Indian indentured laborers, who first came to Trinidad in 1845 as a source of cheap labor on the sugarcane and cacao plantations. Morton returned to Trinidad with his wife Sarah in 1868 as Canadian Presbyterian missionaries and began work in Iere Village (on a site donated to them by the **Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church** that had worked there in 1843) among Asian Indians.

The Mortons initiated five methods that proved vital for their undertaking: (1) the learning of the language and culture of the East Indian people; (2) the establishment of schools for boys and girls; (3) the recruitment and training of local leaders for schools and churches; (4) recognition of the importance of working in the new settlements established by East Indians who had finished their indentureship; and (5) special attention to work among women and girls.

The Mortons soon spoke, preached and taught in Hindi on the plantations and later helped form Asian Indian villages and established churches and schools. A second Canadian Presbyterian missionary couple, the Rev. and Mrs. Kenneth Grants, arrived in 1870 and began work in San Fernando. The Mortons started their first school in Iere Village. In 1871, the first State-financed school for East Indian children was opened in San Fernando as a result of the advocacy efforts of the Mortons. The Presbyterian Theological College was founded in 1892 (now called St. Andrew's Theological College); later, secondary schools for boys and girls were also established.

Fortunately, in 1869, an Asian Indian teacher was obtained for the Iere Village School, Charles Clarence Soodeen, who became the first in a long line of teachers who, together with the missionaries, laid the foundation and continued the work of the Canadian Presbyterian Mission school system, which also provided trained leadership for the Presbyterian churches. Later, many of these students emerged as community leaders, and some became active in the nation's political life. The Canadian Presbyterian Mission also pioneered secondary education for East Indian girls by founding Naparima Girls' High School in 1912, which was followed by the establishment of a vocational school for girls, the Archibald Institute, in 1931.

In 1891, the separate Scottish and Canadian Presbyterian communities were incorporated into one presbytery, but the Church of Scotland refused to recognize this arrangement. By 1968, there were an estimated 4,000 Presbyterian adherents in Trinidad-Tobago. The churches affiliated with the **United Church of Canada** became entirely independent and self-supporting in 1977 as the **Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago**, which is mainly composed of Asian Indian-Trinidadians. Many Presbyterian churches in Trinidad have Hindi names.

**St. Andrew's Theological College (SATC)** was founded in 1892 to provide training for local pastors of the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago (founded 1868). Located in San Fernando, Trinidad, it opened its door to students of other denominations to receive part of their

training at SATC before proceeding to other theological colleges. Although SATC is administered under the authority of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago, it is committed to theological training within an ecumenical setting with both students and lecturers coming from other Christian denominations.

SATC caters to those who are preparing to serve in the Ordained Ministry, the Deaconess Order, Lay Pastor, Presiding Elder, and the Assistant Lay Pastor, either on a part-time or full-time basis. SATC also offers a variety of courses catering to a broad spectrum of interest – such as those who want to have a better understanding of the Christian faith to enable them to be more effective Christian witnesses in the Church and within a multi-racial, multi-religious, pluralistic society. It encourages clergy and laypersons to engage in the integration of theology and the practice of ministry, which are integral for a curriculum designed to prepare leadership for the Church.

In 2007, this denomination reported 108 churches with an estimated 40,000 members. The Canadian Presbyterians also administered 72 primary schools and five secondary schools, and they were involved in a number of social justice issues. The Rev. Elvis Elahie, the moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago, told leaders of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) in October 2007 that his multicultural country needs “an all-embracing liberation theology” that provides an opportunity for solidarity from which many social issues can be addressed in a quest to achieve greater social justice in modern society.

#### *Protestant Missions in Trinidad-Tobago after Unification in 1889*

**1893 – The Seventh-day Adventist Church** (General Conference) arrived in Trinidad at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. **Charles D. Adamson**, an Adventist colporteur from Antigua, responded to an appeal made by the first four Sabbath keepers in Trinidad. He came to Trinidad in 1893 and started work in Couva, which soon led to the establishment of the Couva Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In 1900, **Elder L. M. Crowther**, a U.S. Adventist missionary, arrived in Trinidad. He joined forces with Adamson and together they started work in San Fernando and Tunapuna. In a short time they raised up a company of believers and later a church building was erected.

Elder Crowther visited Tobago in 1901, and shortly after his arrival contracted what the doctors called “pernicious malaria fever.” Elder Crowther died on 25 August 25, leaving Adamson to carry on the work alone. One year after his death, two colporteurs, William Porter and C. N. B. Dunmetz, pioneered literature work in Tobago.

Among those who purchased literature from Porter was J. L. Jerry of Mount St. George, who accepted the Advent message and began sharing his faith with neighbors; a company of believers was soon formed at Mount St. George. Later, Joseph Timothy, a lay preacher, moved into the district and held meetings. Several persons, including Joel N. Titus, accepted the message. Joining the group also was Hector Jordan. Jerry's home became the meeting place for the Mount St. George believers.

By 1906, Advent believers were meeting regularly in Scarborough, Tobago. A church building was later built in Mount Grace, and it became the church home for the Scarborough members and

served as a central meeting place. Every quarter believers came together from as far as Glamorgan and Mount St. George. This arrangement continued until the early 1930s when the Scarborough believers moved their meeting place to Rockley Vale.

The Mount St. George Seventh-day Adventist Church started as a branch from the Scarborough Seventh-day Adventist Church between 1935 and 1938 with about 14 members. Most of these members were families and it was not easy for all of them to go to church, as they had to walk six and a half miles in the morning carrying their lunch and walk back in the evening after service to their homes. So the men journeyed to Scarborough, while the women and the children met at the Weekes-Timothy's house and worshipped. Sister Timothy was an elderly Seventh-day Adventist woman, the wife of Joseph Timothy, who donated her property for the erection of a tabernacle "to the glory of God," so that the arduous journey to Scarborough would no longer be necessary.

The men soon became tired of making the journey to Scarborough and got together with the help of Elder T. J. Warner; who was pastor at the time, and rented a hall near the main road, known as Louis Barracks, where the members held their services. However, on the Twelfth Sabbath of every quarter, they united with the Scarborough Church for the Ordinance of the Lord's House (Communion). They also made the journey to Scarborough Church on the Thirteenth Sabbath for that Program and for collecting of Quarterlies and other Church supplies.

Elder John Roberts (the first Tobagonian to be ordained to the gospel ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, on 9 September 1939) became the pastor of Mount St. George Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1942, when the church members were organized into a Company. Until this time, the Mount St. George believers held membership in the Scarborough Seventh-day Adventist Church. As time went on Elder Roberts was transferred and Pastor Lionel Brathwaite replaced him. Like Elder Roberts, Elder Brathwaite was the only pastor for the entire island of Tobago, and traveling was done on foot or bicycle most of the time.

Due to the growth of the Adventist Church in Tobago, the churches were reorganized geographically in 1977 from two to five districts North, Southwest, Central, Far East and Near East (also called Mid East). The SDA churches in Tobago general take on the name of the village in which they are located. Because the pastors were (and still are) responsible for several churches in their respective districts, lay leadership played an important role in the local church.

**The University of the Southern Caribbean (USC)**, a Seventh-day Adventist institution of higher education, was founded in 1927 as **East Caribbean Training School** for the purpose of educating the youth of the **Caribbean Union Conference**. Two years later, it became **Caribbean Training College**. In 1945, the College developed a well-defined college preparatory instructional program; and in 1947, Caribbean Training College was officially declared a Junior College, offering two-year post-secondary certificates in theology, teacher training, and business and secretarial science. In 1956, Caribbean Training College assumed a new name: **Caribbean Union College**.

In September 1970, the two-year Junior College program in theology was extended to a four-year program, leading to the Bachelor of Theology degree. Subsequent changes since 1985 included the conferring of Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Business Administration, and Associate degrees in a wide range of disciplines in affiliation with Andrews University in

Michigan, USA. Today, USC is located on 384 acres of land in the beautiful Maracas Valley, which is about ten miles northeast of Port-of-Spain.

**The Caribbean Union Conference (organized in 1926) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church** has its headquarters in Maraval, Trinidad. As of October 2010, this jurisdiction reported 589 organized churches with a total membership of 211,244. The Caribbean Union is composed of the East Caribbean, Grenada, Guyana, North Caribbean and South Caribbean Conferences; and the Saint Lucia, Suriname and Tobago Missions. It currently includes the following territories: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Carriacou, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, U.S. Virgin Islands, and the islands of Petit-Martinique-Saba, Saint Eustatius, and Saint Maarten in Netherlands Antilles.

**The Caribbean Union Conference** had its genesis in the **West Indies Union Conference**, which was established in 1906. The work of Adventism in the Caribbean first started on the island of Jamaica and spread south rapidly. By early 1916, it became clear that the South Caribbean Conference was now ready to become a conference and was established as such. From its small beginning with nine churches and 348 members, it has grown to over 100 churches and 55,000 members.

Initially the **West Indies Union Conference** consisted of all the islands of the southern Caribbean, from Barbados southwards. Barbados and St. Lucia joined the Leeward Islands Conference on 1 January 1930, which left the **South Caribbean Conference** with the territories of Grenada, St. Vincent, and Trinidad and Tobago. However, St. Vincent and the Grenadines were assigned to the **East Caribbean Conference** on 1 January 1976. Grenada became an administrative unit of the East Caribbean Conference on 1 January 1981. Grenada organized as a Mission on 19 January 1983, while Tobago was organized as a Mission in 2004.

**The South Caribbean Conference** (organized in 1906, now with headquarters in St. Augustine, Trinidad) reported 116 organized churches with a total membership of 54,446 as of August 2010. **The Tobago Mission** (organized in 2004, with headquarters on Plymouth Road, Tobago) reported 30 organized churches with a total membership of 7,845 in August 2010. The combined totals for Trinidad-Tobago were 146 churches with 62,291 members.

According to the 2000 Census, about four percent of Trinidad-Tobago's population claimed affiliation with the Seventh-day Adventist Church, or about 160,000 people; however, only about 50,000 were adult baptized church members. In 2010, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was the largest Protestant denomination in the nation, with about 62,300 members, followed in size by the Anglican Church.

**1901 – The Salvation Army** arrived and was incorporated in Trinidad-Tobago in 1915. By 1968, there were an estimated 4,000 Salvation Army adherents in the country. However, in 2010, there were only seven Salvation Army churches in Trinidad and one in Tobago, with less than 1,000 baptized members.

**1902** – The first known **Plymouth Brethren** missionary, Mr. John Sparrow, arrived in Trinidad in 1902; the McLachlans arrived in **1910 - Christian Brethren (Open Brethren, Gospel Hall) Assemblies**. One source (Rowdon 2009: xvi) reported 44 congregations with an estimated 2,200 baptized believers in 2007, while another source (Wright, October 2007) reported 26 Brethren Assemblies in Trinidad and five in Tobago, for a total of 31.

John Sparrow was a commended Brethren Assembly missionary from the UK who served in Guyana between 1888 and 1899 before transferring to Bermuda in 1900. He visited the West Indian islands of Grenada, St. Vincent and Trinidad in 1902. Alexander Marshall from Prestwick visited Trinidad in 1909, but did not find any Brethren Assemblies.

On 2 February 1910, John and Alice McLachlan, with their eldest son Hedley, arrived in Trinidad from Barbados and obtained housing in the Belmont district of Port-of-Spain; their other two sons arrived soon afterwards from Barbados. The McLachlans met two women who had been converted in 1902 by Sparrow, and who had been praying during those intervening years that “the Lord would send someone to preach the gospel on the island.” The women held a Sunday school in a small hall in Belmont. Soon afterwards, on 27 February 1910, the first “breaking of bread” took place with five believers present. Belmont Gospel Hall was opened on 1 October 1915 under the leadership of the McLachlans.

However, it was not until 1923 that a Brethren Assembly was established on Tobago. Frank and Mabel Mansfield arrived in Trinidad in 1922 and the following year settled in Scarborough, where a few years later a Gospel Hall was established. From these small beginnings Brethren Assembly work grew as other commended workers arrived from the USA, Canada, England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, either to reside or to hold short-term evangelistic and Bible teaching sessions.

**1906 – The Church of God Reformation Movement** (founded in the USA in 1881 as a movement “emphasizing the unity of God's people and holy living,” led by Daniel S. Warner; later known as the **Church of God of Anderson, Indiana**). Its affiliated churches are known as the **General Assembly of the Church of God in Trinidad & Tobago**. The Rev. Herman Stephen Smith and wife Lavera served in Trinidad and Barbados from 1942 to 1946. The Rev. Clair Shults and wife Retha helped establish the **West Indies Bible Institute** (now known as **West Indies Theological College**) in Port-of-Spain in 1950 during their term of service, 1945-1958. In 1972, there were 15 organized churches with about 600 members, mainly among Trinidadians of African ancestry.

**1909 – The Pilgrim Holiness Church** (merged with **Wesleyan Methodist Church** in 1968 to form the **Wesleyan Church**, now with headquarters in Fishers, IN). In 1972, there were 13 organized churches with 527 members, mainly among Afro-Trinidadians.

**1912 - Fundamental Baptist Mission of Trinidad, Tobago and the West Indies**. The first independent Baptist mission on Tobago was founded in 1912 by the Rev. James Vincent Quamina, who had been expelled from the Baptist Union over doctrinal issues. Several years later Quamina went to the USA and presented the needs of his mission to a gathering of Fundamental Baptist pastors, who responded by organizing the U. S. Board of the Fundamental Baptist Mission of Trinidad-Tobago (FBMTT) and the West Indies in 1921.

The main focus of FBMTT is the evangelization and discipleship of people, and the establishment of New Testament churches. For 15 years FBMTT has been reaching out to prisoners in Trinidad with ministries at the Men's Maximum Security Prison, the Ladies Prison and the Youth Training School. FBMTT has been reaching out to Trinidad & Tobago by radio for over 50 years. Hokett Baptist Primary School is a Christian grammar school run by FBMTT.

**The Baptist Seminary of the West Indies**, located in Cunupia, Chaguanas, in northwestern Trinidad, was launched in March 2005 as a joint effort of Trinidad and Tobago national pastors, FBMTT, and U.S. missionaries from **Association of Baptists for World Evangelism (ABWE)** and **Baptist International Missions Inc. (BIMI)**. While FBMTT spearheaded the creation of the school and provided most of the funds for its start-up, the school is "a vibrant testimony of the joint effort of like-minded Christian groups and people to provide needed training to produce Christian pastors, missionaries and workers for Trinidad and Tobago." In addition to Trinidad and Tobago, the school has a vision to reach out to all the Caribbean, both to provide training for people from other countries and to see missionaries go forth from its doors to proclaim the Gospel in other islands.

The current General Director of the FBMTT is the Rev. Ken Best who lives in Winston-Salem, NC. The work is supported by Fundamentalist Baptist churches in the USA and Canada. The Trinidad Field Director is the Rev. Dominic Maitland who lives in Harriman Park, Point Fortin, in southwestern Trinidad. No statistical information was available on the number of churches and members.

**1920 - The Pentecostal Assemblies of the West Indies (PAWI)** was founded internationally in 1912 by national pastors and missionaries who became affiliated with the **Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC)**; in 1946, the **West Indies School of Theology (WIST)** was established, currently in Maracas Valley, St. Joseph. Today, the PAOC is the largest Pentecostal denomination in Canada, with headquarters in Mississauga, Ontario. The PAOC was formally organized in May 1919; and, until 1925, it was formally affiliated with the U.S.-based General Council of the Assemblies of God, with headquarters in Springfield, MO.

As early as 1910, there were some Christians in the Caribbean region who had experienced a personal Pentecost. In 1912, on the island of Montserrat, the **Rev. Robert J. Jamieson** from the USA, whose Pentecostal experience had revolutionized his life and ministry, found support among a small group of other Pentecostals. Among this group were A. B. Mulcare (Sr.), William Morgan and Lydia Mings (nee Downey).

The young Pentecostal movement spread rapidly on Montserrat and to other Caribbean Islands, from St. Croix in the north to Trinidad-Tobago (1920) in the south. Jamieson and his associates, who eventually included national pastors and Pentecostal missionaries from the USA and Canada, sought to establish Pentecostal churches throughout the West Indies. This group of leaders and their congregations became the nucleus of the present-day **Pentecostal Assemblies of the West Indies**.

On 17 August 1946, the Pentecostal movement in the Caribbean held its first conference at Petit Valley in Trinidad. At that conference, the movement became affiliated with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (POAC), and was officially organized as the **West Indies District of the**

**Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.** The establishment of the West Indies School of Theology (WIST) at the Woodbrook Pentecostal Chapel in Trinidad in 1946 is considered to be the most significant contribution to the Caribbean region by the parent body. WIST graduated its first group of students in 1949. Since then, WIST has trained thousands of national ministers, lay workers and church leaders at its main campus and through its Extension Schools dispersed among PAWI Districts. Today, WIST graduates pastor an estimated 90 percent of PAWI churches throughout the region. Others give able spiritual leadership to various ministries, regionally and globally.

At the 1958 conference held in Trinidad, the association changed its name to the **Pentecostal Assemblies of the West Indies**. This reorganization allowed the young fellowship of churches to become self-governing, self-propagating and self-supporting. Today, the PAWI is organized under General Bishop Rev. Pat Glasgow in the following districts: Antigua, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Monsterrat, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Tobago, North West Trinidad, North East Trinidad, Central Trinidad and South Trinidad. In 1972, there were 60 organized churches with 6,162 members in Trinidad-Tobago, principally among Afro-Trinidadians.

\* \* \* \* \*

**The history of WIST.** This school was intended to provide training for people who became pastors in the **West Indies District of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada**. As the vision expanded and the student body increased, classes were removed from the Woodbrook Pentecostal Chapel, its birthplace, to the El Dorado Pentecostal Church.

In 1954, the six and one-third acre campus at Fourth Bridge, Maracas Valley, was purchased, and from that time has been the home of the school. Since its founding, the scope of the school has gone beyond training for Pastoral Ministry and now includes training for Evangelism, Christian Education, leadership in para-church organizations, and general leadership for the church.

The student population has significantly increased from six in 1946 to an average of 130 over the past five years. Approximately 85% of the students come from member churches of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the West Indies. The remaining 15% comprise representatives from other Evangelical church groups.

Students are drawn mainly from the English-speaking Caribbean countries. Now, the leadership has completely changed from Canadian missionaries to Caribbean nationals. The first Caribbean national President was appointed in 1970. Since that date, all Presidents have been WIST graduates.

WIST is a member school of the **Caribbean Evangelical Theological Association (CETA)**, formerly the **Caribbean Association of Bible Colleges (CABC)**.

Source: <http://wistef.com/3-history-wist.html>

**1926 - Church of the Nazarene:** founded by missionary James Hill. The Nazarene Training College was established later. Between 1945 and 1950, the membership increased from 58 to 114; by 1959 there were 372 members and in 1963, 653 members. In 1972, there were 20 organized churches with 740 members, mainly among Afro-Trinidadians.

*Protestant Missions in Trinidad-Tobago, 1950-1969*

**1953 - World Team** (formerly, West Indies Mission), affiliated with the **Evangelical Church of the West Indies (ECWI)**. By 1962, there were about 150 members; in 1968 membership had increased to 268 members; and in 1972, there were 10 organized churches with 306 members; 180 members among Afro-Trinidadians and 140 among East Indians.

**1954 - Church of God of Prophecy (headquarters in Cleveland, TN)** – the current field supervisor is the Rev. Maurice Jones.

**1954 - Open Bible (Standard) Churches.** By 1956, there were about 200 members; in 1962 the membership increased to 500 members; in 1968 there were 1,100 members; and in 1972, there were 30 organized churches with 1,500 members: about half were Afro-Trinidadians and the other half were Indian-Trinidadians.

**1956 - Church of God World Missions** (Cleveland, TN) is known as the **New Testament Church of God in Trinidad-Tobago**. By 1968, there were an estimated 640 church members in the country. It operates the **New Testament Church of God Bible Institute** in Trinidad, under the direction of the Rev. Alonzo Jones, for the Trinidad-Tobago-Grenada District.

**1962** – The **Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention**, (FMBSBC, now called the **International Mission Board**) sent its first missionaries to Trinidad-Tobago in 1962, when the Rev. and Mrs. Emit Ray arrived from the Bahamas and started a church in northern Trinidad. However, that same year, the **London Missionary Society** resumed work in Trinidad-Tobago and restored relations with the Baptist Union, which created a problem for the FMBSBC. After solving its legal problems with the new independent government of Trinidad-Tobago, the FMBSBC attempted to establish a relationship with the Baptist Union but this proved difficult because the Baptist Union required the FMBSBC missionaries to officially join their organization. When they refused to do, the FMBSBC missionaries and their affiliated churches withdrew and organized the **Trinidad and Tobago Baptist Association (TTBA)**.

The Rays and other FMBSBC missionaries worked among the Afro-Trinidadians as well as among Europeans. The Valley Baptist Church of Port-of-Spain became the center of the new Baptist thrust among Europeans. In 1969, six FMBSBC missionary couples were working in various parts of Trinidad. By 2005, the TTBA reported 13 organized churches with an estimated 1,250 members.

**Note:** According to Justice C. Anderson (2005: 550-551), the Baptists of Trinidad-Tobago are divided into five distinct groups, but there is some cooperation among them. The **Trinidad-Tobago Baptist Fellowship** had been organized to sponsor some ministry and leadership training projects. All of the evangelical Baptist denominations combined were estimated by Anderson to number about 40 congregations with approximately 4,000 baptized members in 2004. However, the *World Churches Handbook* (Brierly 1997: 823) estimated the total Baptist membership for Trinidad-Tobago to be 5,260 members among 54 organized churches; these statistics do not include the Shouter/Spiritual Baptist organizations.

**1963 - TEAM** (The Evangelical Alliance Mission) - currently with 14 churches in northwest (3), east (7) and central (4) Trinidad. The **Association of Evangelical Bible Churches of Trinidad**

**and Tobago** was established to manage the joint affairs of the churches, which includes Victory Heights Bible Camp and other joint ministries.

*Protestant Missions in Trinidad-Tobago, 1970-1989*

**1971 - Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions:** a medical ministry was begun by Mennonites in Trinidad in the 1970s, which resulted in the organization of a small conference of four congregations with a total of 130 members as of 2005; pastoral leadership for the conference is trained at the West Indies Theological College; currently there are two missionary couples in TT, under Joseph Sookram, president of the **Mennonite Church of Trinidad & Tobago**.

**1974 - Baptist International Missions** (headquarters in Chattanooga, TN; nine missionaries in Trinidad-Tobago as of mid-2009)

**1977 - Campus Crusade for Christ**

**1980 - United Pentecostal Church International** – currently with six churches in Trinidad.

**1982 - His Word To The Nations** (USA headquarters in Lawrenceville, GA; a transdenominational service agency of Pentecostal tradition engaged in leadership development, church planting, Christian education, evangelism, and support of national churches).

**1986 - STEM Ministries** – currently with outreach ministries to Hindus and Muslims in St. Helena, Piarco, Toco and Port-of-Spain, Trinidad.

*Protestant Missions in Trinidad-Tobago, 1990-2010*

**1990 - The Elijah Centre** was founded by Noel Woodroffe (senior elder) and Graham Taylor (associate elder), followed by the organization of the **World Breakthrough Network (WBN)** in 1993 with affiliates in Trinidad, the Caribbean, the USA, Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America. These organizations identify with the New Apostolic Reformation within the Pentecostal Family of Churches. Its headquarters are at La Joya Complex, St. Joseph, Trinidad.

**1993 - International Pentecostal Holiness Church** (headquarters in Oklahoma City, OK)

**1996 - Habitat for Humanity**

**1999 - Association of Baptists for World Evangelism (ABWE)**, with headquarters in Harrisburg, PA.

**Date of founding unknown:**

- African Methodist Episcopal Church. **The 16<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church**, with headquarters in Kingston, Jamaica, includes the following nations: Jamaica, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Grenada, Barbados, Trinidad-Tobago, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- Church of God in Christ
- Church of God (7<sup>th</sup> Day), with headquarters in Salem, West Virginia: Elder James Murray founded the work in Trinidad during the 1920s. Currently, there are three organized churches in TT.

- Church of God Ministries International (headquarters in Gretna, Louisiana) – Tunapuna, Trinidad
- Endtime Harvest Ministries
- Evangelical Baptist Association
- International Church of the Foursquare Gospel
- Independent churches of Christ (*a capella*): San Fernando Church of Christ Panco Lane West, San Fernando, Trinidad.
- Independent Christian Churches and Churches of Christ (instrumental)
- International Churches of Christ – Port-of-Spain Church of Christ (founded ca. 1990)
- Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship
- Pentecostal Church of God (headquarters in Joplin, MO) – Missions Caribbean
- Victorious Faith Ministries (five churches in Trinidad and one in Tobago; headquarters in Belmont, Trinidad).
- Worldwide Church of God

*Charismatic Renewal Movement*

INFORMATION LACKING

**ESTIMATED MEMBERSHIP FOR LARGEST  
PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS IN TRINIDAD-TOBAGO, 1960-2010  
(Sorted by estimated membership in 2010)**

	DENOMINATIONAL NAME (DATE OF ORIGIN)	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2008-2010
		MEMBERS (1)	MEMBERS (2)	MEMBERS (3)	MEMBERS (4)	MEMBERS (5)	MEMBERS (6)
1	Seventh-Day Adventist Church (1893)	4,120	7,000	15,000	30,000	50,000	62,291
2	The Anglican Church (1781) (note: statistical data on members may include baptized children)	28,500	29,000	29,300	29,400	29,500	29,800
3	Presbyterian Church (1836)	4,000	10,100	9,630	15,300	18,500	22,100
4	Pentecostal Assemblies of the West Indies (1920)	2,500	5,710	9,500	13,300	17,100	20,900
5	Open Bible (Standard) Church (1956)	800	1,200	5,000	5,800	7,460	9,130
6	New Testament Church of God (Cleveland, TN) (1956)	400	1,080	2,900	5,280	6,960	8,780
7	Int'l Church of the Foursquare Gospel (?)	--	550	2,200	4,650	6,680	6,710
8	Wesleyan Methodist Church (MCCA , 1809)	6,400	4,728	4,550	4,300	4,100	3,900
9	Church of the Nazarene (1926)	372	711	1,470	2,080	2,760	3,410
10	Baptist Union (1843)	6,000	5,500	5,000	4,500	3,300	3,000
11	Wesleyan Church (1909)	512	550	1,115	1,730	2,180	2,650
12	Christian Brethren (Gospel Halls) (1902)	1,000	1,300	1,100	1,900	2,280	2,610
13	Church of God (Anderson, IN) (1906)	550	600	1,100	1,480	1,830	2,170
14	Evangelical Baptist Association (?)	--	--	400	960	1,530	2,100
15	African Methodist Episcopal Church (?)	360	400	500	1,150	1,500	1,900
16	Trinidad and Tobago Baptist Assoc. (FMBSBC) (1962)	--	150	278	670	1,050	1,450
17	Evangelical Church of the West Indies (WorldTeam, 1953)	140	310	520	750	940	1,150
	<b>SUBTOTALS</b>	<b>55,654</b>	<b>68,889</b>	<b>89,563</b>	<b>123,250</b>	<b>157,670</b>	<b>184,051</b>
	Other denominations & independent churches	3,360	4,800	7,700	11,300	14,000	16,900
	<b>ESTIMATED TOTALS</b>	<b>59,014</b>	<b>73,689</b>	<b>97,263</b>	<b>134,550</b>	<b>171,670</b>	<b>200,951</b>

**SOURCES:**

(1) Taylor, Clyde W. and Wade T. Coggins. *Protestant Missions in Latin America: A Statistical Survey*. Washington, DC: Evangelical Foreign Missions Association, 1961; supplemented by denominational sources.

(2) Dollar, Harold and Herbert Ratcliff. "A Church Growth Study of Six Denominations in Trinidad & Tobago, 1973," a typewritten document produced for the West Indies Mission (WorldTeam) in Miami, Florida; supplemented by denominational sources.

(3) Holland, Clifton L. (editor). *World Christianity: Central America and the Caribbean*. Monrovia, CA: MARC-World Vision, 1982; supplemented by denominational sources.

(4-6) Brierly, Peter. *World Churches Handbook*. London: Christian Research, 1997; supplemented by denominational sources.

*Ecumenical Organizations*

**The Christian Council of Churches (CCC) of Trinidad & Tobago** was founded in 1970. Its members include: *African Methodist Episcopal Church, Anglican Church (Province of the West Indies), Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, The Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas, The Moravian Church (Eastern West Indies Province), The Presbyterian Church in Trinidad & Tobago, The Roman Catholic Church, and The Salvation Army*. The CCC is affiliated with the **Caribbean Conference of Churches** and the **World Council of Churches (WCC)**.

**The Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC)**, founded in 1973, is the recognized Regional Ecumenical Organization (REO) of the Caribbean and one of the major development agencies at work in the Caribbean today. It is currently comprised of 33 member churches in 34 territories across the Dutch, English, French and Spanish-speaking territories of the Caribbean region. It has had many accomplishments in the social, economic and theological spheres. Throughout its existence, the CCC has also been able to establish sound collaborative relationships with other ecumenical and developmental organizations on a territorial, regional and international level. These include U.N. Agencies, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the British Government's Department for International Development (DFID), and Regional Governmental and State Bodies including the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

## **Other Religions**

In 2000, other major religions were Hinduism, 22.5; Islam, 5.8 percent; and about 5.5 percent were adherents of traditional Afro-Caribbean religions, such as the Shouter/Spiritual Baptists, 5.4 percent; and the Orisha, 0.1 percent. Atheists were 1.9 percent; those with no religious affiliation were 1.4 percent; and **those listed as "other religions" were 10.7 percent**, which included the Jehovah's Witnesses (1.6 percent), the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), several Eastern Orthodox groups, and other small Christian-derived sects, as well as the Baha'i Faith, Buddhism and Judaism.

**The Eastern Orthodox tradition** of Christianity is represented by:

- **Orthodox Catholic Church in America** (Bishop Michael Edward Verra): as of 2002, the church had two parishes and three priests in the USA and two parishes and two priests in Trinidad-Tobago: **Ethiopian Orthodox Church Mission**, Old Golden Grove Road, Arouca, Trinidad; and **Ethiopian Orthodox Church Mission**, Darrel Spring, Scarborough, Tobago.
- **The Byzantine Catholic Church, Inc.**, assumed its present form in 1984 by a merger of the Byzantine Old Catholic Church and the Holy Orthodox Catholic Church, Eastern and Apostolic. The Byzantine Old Catholic Church, Inc. was an Old Catholic jurisdiction and now an Orthodox Catholic Jurisdiction whose history is intimately tied to the career of its leader, Mar Markus I (aka Mark I. Miller), the duly elected Patriarch, in 1967, with headquarters in Los Angeles, California; affiliated churches were reported in the USA, Brazil, Chile, Trinidad, Mexico, as well as in Africa.
- **Ethiopian Orthodox Coptic Church, Diocese of North and South America**; organized by Most Rev. Abuna Gabre Kristos Mikael, an Ethiopian-American who established his jurisdiction under the authority of the Archbishop Walter A. Propheta of the American Orthodox Catholic Church in 1959; affiliated churches were reported in the USA, Mexico and Trinidad.
- **Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the United States of America**: organized by priest Laike Mandefro under the jurisdiction of Abune Teklte Haimanot, Patriarch of Addis Ababa in Ethiopia; it has affiliated churches in the USA, Jamaica, Trinidad and Guyana.
- **Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church**: part of the Coptic Orthodox Church until 1959, when it was granted its own Patriarch by the Coptic Orthodox Pope of Alexandria and

Patriarch of All Africa, Cyril VI; it is a founding member of the World Council of Churches.

**Marginal Christian groups include:**

- **Assemblies of Yahweh** (part of the Sacred Name Movement, which began among members of the Seventh-Day Church of God during the 1930s in the USA; headquarters are in Bethel, Pennsylvania; founded in 1966) – San Juan, Saint George, Trinidad (a suburb of Port-of-Spain).
- **Yahweh’s Assembly in Yahshua** (part of the Sacred Name Movement, headquarters in Kingdom City, Missouri; founded in 1980, a split from the Assemblies of Yahweh in the USA) - Cunupia, Trinidad.
- **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints** (Mormons); in 2009, there were 11 congregations with 2,695 members in TT.
- **Jehovah's Witnesses – Watchtower Bible and Tract Society**; in 2008, there were 109 congregations with 8,621 members (“peak witnesses”) in TT.
- **Church of the Great God** (headquarters in Fort Mill, South Carolina; a split from the Worldwide Church of God in 1992) – Port-of-Spain, Trinidad.
- **Living Church of God** (headquarters in Charlotte, North Carolina; a split from the Worldwide Church of God in 1998) - Chaguanas
- **Philadelphia Church of God** (headquarters in Edmond, Oklahoma) – Chaguanas, Caroni, in northwestern Trinidad.
- **United Church of God** (headquarters in Cincinnati, Ohio; a split from the Worldwide Church of God in 1995)
- **Unity of Trinidad & Tobago** (Unity School of Christianity) – Port-of-Spain
- **Universal Foundation for Better Living** (similar to Unity School of Christianity: an association of New Thought churches, centers, and study groups, founded by the Rev. Dr. Johnnie Coleman in June 1974, with headquarters in Chicago, IL) - Christ Circle is located in the town of Diego Martin, Saint George, in northwestern Trinidad.
- **Universal Church of the Kingdom of God** (from Brazil) – Port-of-Spain, Trinidad

*Non-Christian Religions*

**Chinese Traditional Religions (Animism, Ancestor Worship, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism).** The Chinese immigrants, who arrived as indentured laborers between 1806 and 1866, brought their ancient customs, religious traditions, dances, food, games, and way of dress with them when they came to Trinidad. Even though they have been assimilated into Trinidadian society they still observe some of these customs and religious traditions.

In 1806, the **first Chinese immigrants** (from Macao, Penang and Canton) arrived in Trinidad aboard the ship “Fortitude,” which docked in Port-of-Spain on 12 October with 192 passengers. This first attempt at Chinese immigration was an experiment intended to set up a settlement of peasant farmers and laborers. The objectives of this experiment were to populate the newly acquired British colony of Trinidad, and more importantly, find a new labor source to replace the African slaves who would no longer be available once slavery and the slave trade were abolished. It was felt that the Chinese immigrants could work on the sugarcane and cacao plantations.

The **second wave** of Chinese immigration took place after the Abolition of Slavery in 1807. Most of the immigrants came from the southern Guangdong province (Cantonese and Hakka-speaking): an area comprising Macao, Hong Kong and Canton. First organized Chinese immigration to Trinidad began in 1853; the vessels Australia (4th March), Clarendon (23rd April), and Lady Flora Hastings (28th June) brought 1,100 Chinese indentured laborers. In 1866, Chinese immigration to Trinidad ceased. On the last 5 voyages between 1862 and 1866, a total of 2,984 emigrants were from Macao, Amoy, Canton and Hong Kong; however, only 2,837 actually landed in Trinidad, 154 perished at sea and seven were born on board ship.

It was normal for the Chinese to migrate in large numbers to countries in South East Asia, but the period 1853 to 1866 saw them migrating on a global scale to countries such as Australia, Canada, the USA and the Caribbean. Trinidad received a small portion of this vast movement. Those who came here included both indentured laborers and free Chinese who migrated voluntarily. The indentured laborers were assigned to work on the sugar estates, and their terms and conditions of employment were the same as those given to the Asian Indian indentured laborers. The Chinese indentureship program came to an end in 1866 because the Chinese government insisted on a free return passage for the laborers. The British government, which had organized the indentureship program, felt that this was too costly and ended the program.

After their period of indentureship was finished, the Chinese left the sugar and cacao plantations. A few of them returned to China, but most of them opted to remain in Trinidad. They became shopkeepers, farmers, restaurant owners and small traders. Many of them set up shops in the rural villages, competing with the already established Portuguese shopkeepers. The Chinese were gradually accepted in their local community and became an indispensable part of village life.

The **third wave** of Chinese migration was a direct result of the Chinese Revolution of 1911. Between 1920s and 1940s immigration increased significantly. These new immigrants comprised families and friends of earlier migrants. They did not work on the sugarcane and cacao estates but came as merchants, peddlers, traders and shopkeepers.

In addition to the immigrants from China there were also Chinese immigrants from other parts of the Caribbean region, mainly Guyana. These were Chinese who had originally served their indentureship on the mainland of South America. After their period of indentureship was finished they migrated to Trinidad to seek better opportunities.

Migration ceased completely during the period of the Chinese Revolution (1946-1950). However, during the late 1970s, when China started opening up to the outside world, migration resumed once more. This was the **fourth wave** and continues on a small scale today. Between 1940 and 1990, the Chinese-heritage population was concentrated mainly in St. George County, which includes the city of Port-of-Spain.

According to the 1960 Census, there were 8,361 Chinese descendents in Trinidad and Tobago, about one per cent of the population; by 2000, the Chinese-heritage population had declined to about 3,800. The main languages spoken by the Chinese are English, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese and Hakka.

**Judaism:** From a high of 700 in the mid-1900s, the Jewish community had dwindled to less than a *minyan*, the ten males traditionally required for Jewish prayer services, by September 1999. The Jewish community dissolved as many intermarried or assimilated to the national culture.

**Hinduism. Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha** is the principal Hindu organization in the country; it operates 150 *mandirs* (temples) and over 50 schools. It was formed in 1952 when Bhadase Sagan Maraj engineered the merger of the *Satanan Dharma Association* and the *Sanatan Dharma Board of Control*. An affiliated group, the **Pundits' Parishad**, has 200 affiliated *pundits* (a scholar or teacher, particularly one skilled in Sanskrit and Hindu law, religion, music or philosophy). The organization's headquarters are in St. Augustine. Other known Hindu and Sikh organizations are listed below:

- Academy of Hinduism in Valsayn
- Arya Pratinidhi Sabha
- Barrackpore United Hindu Sabha – Barrackpore
- Bharatiya Sevashram Sangh
- Brahma Kumaris Raj Yoga Center
- Caratal Hindu Temple
- Chinmaya Mission
- Dattatraya Yoga Center
- Divine Life Society
- Edinburgh Hindu Temple
- Eckankar Satsang Society of Trinidad and Tobago (Sant Mat)
- Gandhi Seva Sangh
- Gurudwara Sahib Trinidad & Tobago (Sikh Temple in Tunapuna, El Dorado, Trinidad), the only Gurudwara in the entire Caribbean.
- Hindu Prachar Kendra – Enterprise Village
- Hindu Festivals Society of Trinidad and Tobago
- International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)
- International Sri Sathya Sai Baba Organization
- Kabir Panth Association
- Railway Road Dharma Sabha - Chaguanas
- Saraswati Mandir Inc. – Tunapuna
- Sathya Kabir Nidhi - McBean Village, Couva
- Satya Prakash Mandali – Chase Village
- SEVA – Flanigan Town
- Shiva Dharma Sabha
- Shiv Narayan Dharam Sabha – Princes Town
- Shri Sevak Sabha – San Fernando
- Shri Swami Rampersad Sampradaya – Chaguanas
- SWAHA – Aranguez
- Temple of Cosmic Religion (Satguru Sant Keshavadas)
- Transcendental Meditation (TM) – World Plan Executive Council
- Trinidad Sevashram Sangh – McBean Village, Couva
- Vidya Bhavan – California
- Vishwa Hindu Parishad
- Vishnu Mandir – Barrackpore

- Yoga Meditation Center – San Fernando
- Yoga Vidya Sanskriti Sansthaan – Williamsville

The vast majority of the imported East Indian indentured laborers were Hindus (87 percent) and came from the mid-Gangetic Plain (Ganges River) in the north-central region, although a minority were recruited from the Madras area of southeastern India. Their descendants (Indo-Trinidadians) constituted 41 percent of Trinidad-Tobago's population in 1990 (census), whereas in 2000 (census) they had declined to approximately 37 percent. Those affiliated with Hinduism were 24 percent of the total population in 1990 and 22.5 percent in 2000. Indo-Trinidadians are the country's second-largest ethnic group, after the Afro-Trinidadians. The Hindu festivals of *Divali* and *Phagwah* are widely celebrated in Trinidad.

**Muslims**, in 2000 (census), constituted six percent of the population of Trinidad and Tobago, which was an estimated 65,318 individuals, the majority of whom lived in Trinidad but there were a few in Tobago as well. The first Muslims to arrive in the country came from Africa and were brought as slaves by Spanish and French colonists. The second group arrived in 1816 as a small proportion of the British Corps of Colonial Marines who were African-born and had been recruited in 1815 in Georgia during the Anglo-American War of 1812; they mostly settled in the Fifth and Sixth Companies within the Company villages near Princes Town.

They were followed by African Muslims among disbanded members of the West India Regiments who settled between 1817 and 1825 in Manzanilla on the East Coast and in a group of villages southeast of Valencia; and further African Muslims were brought to Trinidad as a result of the British Royal Navy's interception of slaving ships after the signing of the Slave Trade Acts. From the 1840s, Muslims came from South Asia as part of the Indian indentured labor system to work on sugarcane and cacao plantations.

Muslims today are mostly of South Asian descent but there are converts from all races. Trinidad has Islamic primary and secondary schools. The first Muslim secondary school in the country, ASJA Boys' College, was established in San Fernando in 1960. There are many mosques and *Eid ul Fitr* is a public holiday. In 2005, an Islamic television channel, the Islamic Broadcasting Network, went on the air, and in 2006 a Muslim website was created. Islamic groups in Trinidad & Tobago include the following organizations:

- American Muslims
- Anjuman Sunnat-ul-Jamaat Association
- Ansaaru Allah Community
- Bamboo Masjid Jamaat – Bamboo Settlement No. 2, Valsayn
- Barrackpore Islamic Community – Barrackpore
- Chaguanas Masjid - Chaguanas
- Charlieville Masjid - Charlieville
- Dow Oropouche Asja Mosque - Charlieville
- Felicity Masjid - Felicity
- Islamic Center - Kelly Village, Caroni
- Islamic Resource Society (a member of the United Islamic Organization of Trinidad and Tobago) – Port-of-Spain
- Jami Masjid - Port-of-Spain

- Jamaat al Muslimeen
- Manahambre Masjid – Manahambre
- Masjid Al Falah – Arima
- Masjid Al Tawbah – Lowlands
- Masjid Nur Ul Islam – San Juan
- Masjid ul Muttaqeen – Cunupia
- Masjid Umar ibn al katab – Rio Claro
- Masjid-Ul-Ahad – Princes Town
- Masjid-Ur-Rahman - Princes Town
- Masjidus Sunnah – Barataria
- Massahood Junction Jamaat – Fyzabad
- Montrose Masjid - Montrose, Chaguanas
- Nation of Islam
- Nur-E-Islam Masjid – San Juan
- San Fernando ASJA Jama Masjid – San Fernando
- Sangre Grande Muslim Association – Sangre Grande
- Sidiqqi Masjid – Caroni
- Tackveeyatul Islamic Association
- The Community Islamic Center – Barataria
- Trinidad Muslim League
- TriniMuslims - Gathering of Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaa'h (Sunni / Salafi) Muslims
- United Islamic Organization of Trinidad and Tobago: an organization aimed at uniting Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago. It demonstrates that groups – some of which have no membership and very little assets while others with very large membership and considerable assets – can work together for the pleasure of Allah and the uplift of the wider Muslim community.

*Afro-Caribbean Syncretistic Religions (animistic)*

**Myalism and Obeah** are reportedly practiced in secret by some Afro-Trinidadians, especially those who are not active members of Christian churches. **Myalism** is an African-derived belief system that developed among blacks in the British West Indies during the slavery period; Obeah is the specific practice of “black magic” or witchcraft by priests, known as “obeahmen.” The **Obeah Ordinances of 1867 and 1868**, which outlawed this practice, were adopted in the British colonial states of the Caribbean to demonize African tradition religion; such laws still exist in the books of independent Trinidad & Tobago.

One aspect of Obeah that is familiar to Trinidad & Tobago, though not in all other nations where Obeah is practiced, is the Moko-Jumbie, or stilts walker or dancer. In the Trinidad & Tobago Obeah tradition, a *jumbie* is an evil or lost spirit, related to the Kongo word *nzumbi* or *zumbi*, which led to the sensationalistic Zombies of Hollywood. Jumbie, however, retains more of the word's original meaning. It is sometimes associated with a child who has died before being baptized; such a child is called a *douen* and is said to be forced to forever walk the earth at night and is easily identified by its backward-facing feet. The connection between the *jumbie* and death is extended into botany: *Abrus precatorius*, a species of tropical legume bears deadly toxic red and black seeds called Jumbies, Jumbie Eyes and Jumbie Beads in English-speaking regions of

the Caribbean. By contrast, the Moko-Jumbie of Trinidad & Tobago is brightly colored, dances in the daylight, and is very much alive. The Moko-Jumbie also represents the flip-side of spiritual darkness, as stilt-dancing is most popular during holy days and Carnival.

**Shouter Baptists / Spiritual Baptists.** After the War of 1812-1815, hundreds of former African slaves and their families (reportedly a total 574) from North America, who had been offered their freedom in return for serving in the British Army, were relocated by the British to southern Trinidad along Moruga Road, where they formed six settlements, called “Company villages,” in 1815. The head of each household was given 16 acres of land “in the middle of the jungle” and freedom from slavery.

Some of the black settlers in these “Company villages” were from plantations on the Sea Islands along the coast of the Carolinas and were predominantly “Baptist Christians” who had developed their own brand of religion, known as “**Shouter Baptists.**” The name *Shouter* derives from the fact that when the Baptists “catch the Spirit,” they clap and shout, which makes a loud noise. This particular “Baptist” tradition has incorporated elements of **Orisha beliefs and practices** that produced a syncretistic religion of Christian and African origins, known today as the **Spiritual Baptists, Shouters or Tie-Heads**, which is characterized by intense displays of ecstatic expression (called “spirit possession”).

According to Kim Johnson (<http://www.raceandhistory.com/historicalviews/africanspirit.htm>):

The [Baptist faith] came to Trinidad in 1815 with the “Merikins” [nicknamed for their slanted pronunciation of “Ah-merican”], the liberated African slaves who fought for the British in [North] America and were rewarded by being settled as free men in the Company villages in Trinidad. “Their services were apocalyptic and noisy, and caused concern in the staid English Baptist ministers who visited them,” wrote historian Donald Wood in *Trinidad in Transition*. “Two streams of religious experience met in their worship, a West African one of rhythm and the dance, and the Puritanism of sixteenth-century Munster and East Anglia; their fusion brought about ‘shouting’ and jumping and shaking by those who felt themselves the chosen of the Lord of Hosts.”

According to Maarit Laitinen (2002: 40), the religious practices of Merikin Baptists included “tenting,” nightly religious gatherings in tents, and intense evangelism, baptism by total immersion in running water, spirit possession, the spiritual interpretation of dreams, and a firm belief that repentance and spiritual regeneration were totally an individual responsibility. There was revivalist singing, rhythmic groups shouting, hand-clapping and spiritual seizures. The Merikins’ way of “shouting” or “catching the power” led to their being called “Shouter Baptists.”

In attempting to practice their faith, they experienced struggles with the government and with the more established Christian denominations “who regarded the religious exercise of bell ringing, shouting, chanting and their loud manner of singing and praying as disturbing the peace” and as a form of “devil worship.” The practice of their faith was, therefore, restricted to secluded areas. Some leaders of this movement claim that the civil ordinance banning “shouting,” which was in effect between 1917 and 1951, was discriminatory against their religion. Similar ordinances were approved on other islands of the British West Indies.

The British colonial government responded to the complaints of the “taxpayers, landowners and police” by passing the Shouters Prohibition Ordinance on 16 November 1917. The thirty-four years of prohibition were difficult for the Shouter/Spiritual Baptists. The ordinance forbade them from erecting or maintaining any “Shouters’ house” or from holding meetings. A “Shouters’ house” is defined as any house or building or room in any house or building that is used for the purpose of holding Shouters’ meetings, or any house or building or room in any house or building that is used for the purpose of initiating any person into the ceremonies of the Shouters. Estate managers and owners were required to report any meetings to the police, and the police were authorized to enter a building (“Shouters’ house”) where a meeting was being held, without a warrant. Worshipers were arrested, beaten and jailed if they were caught practicing their religion. They had to flee to the hills and forests to practice their religion. Even then, the police still pursued and brutalized them. Nevertheless, the Spiritual and Shouter Baptists have survived.

In 1996, the UNC government granted Shouter/Spiritual Baptists an annual public holiday, which is celebrated on 30 March and is called **Shouter Baptist Liberation Day**, in memory of the struggle for and repeal of the **Shouters Prohibition Ordinance of 1917**. In addition, Shouter/Spiritual Baptists were also granted 25 acres of land in Maloney to build churches, schools and a spiritual park.

**In Trinidad there are numerous Shouter/Spiritual Baptist denominations.** *The West Indian United Spiritual Baptist Sacred Order*, incorporated in 1943, was the first Diocese to have been formally established within the Spiritual Baptist Faith. It is the largest of the Spiritual Baptist dioceses in Trinidad and Tobago with affiliated churches in Grenada, St. Vincent, Venezuela and the USA. The *Council of Elders Spiritual Baptist (Shouters) Faith of Trinidad and Tobago*, the *National Evangelical Spiritual Baptist Faith Incorporated*, and the *National Congress of Incorporated Baptist Organizations of Trinidad & Tobago* were all incorporated in 1985. Later, a splinter group from the National Congress, called *Spiritual Baptist Christians*, was formed.

Although many churches came under the umbrella of one or the other of these jurisdictions, they still maintain their autonomy. However, many other local Spiritual Baptist churches are unaffiliated with any organization and function independently. In 2001, forty-three Spiritual Baptist churches were reported to exist in Tobago, many of which had a small membership (Laitinen 2002: 305). An estimated community of 100,000 to 300,000 Shouter/Spiritual Baptists exists in Trinidad and Tobago.

At the church level, organization of the Shouter/Spiritual churches can sometimes be complex. There are as many as 22 ranks or positions. The most important of these in descending order of importance are Leader/Pastor, Mother, Teacher, Shepherd/Shepherdess, Prover, Watchman, Nurse, Captain, Surveyor, Baptizer, Pointer and Healer.

There are several practices that are important to the Shouter/Spiritual Baptists: baptism in water preceded by repentance and faith; mourning (fasting, praying, meditating for an extended period and going on a spiritual journey – dreams, visions, soul travel); pilgrimages; commemoration of the dead; use of colored cloth head bands during baptism and mourning; “dooption” (a groaning sound made to various rhythms while praying or while on a spiritual journey); spirit possession and speaking in tongues; roadside preaching missions; praying aloud during church services; and their particular mode of dress.

Members of the Shouter/Spiritual Baptist faith wear uniforms or spiritual clothes in various designs and colors. The choice of color is guided by the instructions received during “spiritual journeys” while fasting and praying for extended periods in isolation (called “mourning”). The uniforms define the office and function the member has in the church. Women must cover their heads during worship with large pieces of cloth called head-ties. Senior female members often wear their head-ties at all times and not just during worship.

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According to an official history of the **West Indian United Spiritual Baptist Sacred Order** (WIUSBSO), the Spiritual Baptist Faith is the only “indigenous religious tradition” of Trinidad and Tobago. It was born out of the 19<sup>th</sup> century struggle of the Afro-American adherents of the Baptist Faith for freedom of worship and to practice their Christianity with a blend of Africanism – a brand of African survival, reflecting the joys, trials, tribulations and frustrations of a people whose ancestors were uprooted from their Motherland and its rich traditions, and dehumanized, seeking to spiritually go back home. Hence in their worship emphasis is placed to a greater extent on handclapping, singing, shouting, and rejoicing more than formal worship. In the past, Spiritual Baptists were called: *Wayside Baptists* because they held religious meetings at the side of the road; *Candle Baptists* because they preached the “Gospel by the wayside,” in tents by candle light, and with the ringing of bells and blowing of horns; and *Shouter Baptists* because of the practice of shouting loudly during worship.

The WIUSBSO was born out of the struggle of the Elders of the Faith to be identified as Christians and part of the worldwide Baptist Community because of their beliefs and not to be barred from practicing their religion by the **Shouters Prohibition Ordinance of 1917**. The passing of the Shouters Prohibition Ordinance in 1917 is one of the darkest periods in the history of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. It seemed to be an attempt by the British Colonial Government at the time to appease the powers that be (the police, the landed gentry, and the established Church) in suppressing the growth and development of a local religious movement, the Shouter Baptists. However, this did not happen. By 1946 the movement was approximately 30,000 strong and also a political might by virtue of Universal Suffrage, which gave each Shouter Baptist over 21 years of age the right to vote.

There were two umbrella organizations representing the Shouter/Spiritual Baptists at that time. The *West Indian United Baptist Sacred Order* (claiming to represent the Spiritual Baptists) established in 1942 and the *West Indian Evangelical Spiritual Baptist Faith* (claiming to represent the Shouter Baptists) established in 1945. General agreement existed on the articles of faith, but important differences were to be found among the leaders, especially on the question of mode of worship.

Therefore, because of this question, the leaders of the *West Indian United Baptist Sacred Order* (at that time Leo Sandiford, Clifford Cato, Harvey Glaud, Christopher Meyers, Phillip Alexis, Farrell Thomas and Roderick Nicholas) decided to obtain legal incorporation status from the Colonial Government. The name of the Order was also changed to *West Indian United Spiritual Baptist Sacred Order*.

It should be noted here that as late as 1993, His Grace The Archbishop of the West Indian United Spiritual Baptist Sacred Order, Inc., the Rt. Rev. Ivan Lancaster, in his capacity as Head of the National Congress of Incorporated Baptists of Trinidad and Tobago, amid growing controversy again on this question, in a letter to the editor of the Trinidad Express captioned “Baptist: We are not Shouters,” reinforced this point to all Spiritual Baptists and to the world at large.

The Trustees/Leaders of the West Indian United Baptist Sacred Order were bringing the Shouter Baptist Faith within the boundaries of the law as it stood in 1949. From their Constitution, their aims and objectives implied that they were not Shouter Baptists.

After accepting the Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council on the private bill entitled, “An Ordinance for the incorporation of certain persons as trustees of the West Indian United Baptist Sacred Order,” which had held two meetings – on 9 May and 1 September 1949 – with the Trustees, the ordinance to incorporate *The West Indian United Baptist Sacred Order* was passed in the Legislative Council of Trinidad and Tobago on 4 November 1949. The organization was now known as *West Indian United Spiritual Baptist Sacred Order, Inc.* to look after the affairs of Spiritual Baptists as enshrined in their constitution.

In 2007, the WIUSBSO reported, nearly sixty-five years after its establishment, more than 125 active ordained ministers and with more than 59 organized member churches: 52 in Trinidad and seven in Tobago. The archbishop was the Rt. Rev. George Flemming.

The WIUSBSO operates the *Herman Parris Spiritual Baptist Southland School of Theology*, which is located in Chinese Village, La Brea, in the southwestern end of Trinidad. It started as a small group of interested elders in the Diocese sharing the knowledge gained by Dr. Parris during his studies at the Canadian Chapter of the Universal Life Church of California, USA. Although the Trinidadian Diocese offered classes for ordination as all Spiritual Baptist Dioceses did, there was no established pastoral training school. Dr. Parris established a school, which became not only the source of training of ministers for ordination in the Diocese, but also for members of the Spiritual Baptist Faith who wanted to study theology or ministry. Classes were conducted in the respective church buildings of Mt. Paran, La Romaine; St. Peters, Vistabella; Mt. Zion, Arima and Mt. Prigsah, La Brea.

When Dr. Parris became the minister of Mt. Prigsah, he acquired the lands adjacent to the church for the purpose of erecting a permanent structure for the school. After many years of preparation, the M.P. for La Brea, The Honorable Mr. Hedgewidge Bereaux, participated in the official groundbreaking ceremony for the Southland School of Theology, held on Saturday, 27 July 1991. Although incomplete, the building was put to use in January 1993. Finally, in July 1995, Dr. Parris witnessed his dream become a reality when the completed building was consecrated by the then Bishop His Lordship the Rt. Rev. David Cox and formally opened by the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, the Honorable Mr. Patrick Manning, after the ceremonial laying of the cornerstone by His Grace the Archbishop, the Rt. Rev. Ivan Lancaster.

The operation of the school was expanded in 2005 with the establishment of a Tobago Campus, with classes being held at the Scarborough Government Secondary School. Since its establishment, the Herman Parris Spiritual Baptist Southland School of Theology has had approximately 400 graduates.

Adapted from: <http://www.wiusbsoinc.org/index.htm>

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**The Shouter/Spiritual Baptist Movement** also exists in Barbados, Grenada, St. Kitts, St. Vincent, and other Caribbean-basin countries (Guyana and Venezuela), as well as in North America and Europe (New York City, Los Angeles, Toronto and London). Spiritual Baptist membership is predominantly black, with Asians and Whites comprising less than five percent of the total adherents, according to Stephen Glazier (2001: 315-319). The largest Shouter/Spiritual Baptist churches are reported to be outside the Caribbean among West Indians migrants to Canada, the USA and Europe.

It should be noted that **Spiritual Baptists** condemn Orisha rites as “heathen worship,” because Orisha rites are directed toward African-derived deities, whereas Spiritual Baptist rites are directed to their own version of the Holy Trinity of Protestant Christianity. *Although the Spiritual Baptists and Orisha are clearly separate traditions, they are also interrelated on a number of levels.* Glazier believes that their memberships overlap in the context of Trinidad-Tobago, where he estimates that “about 90 percent of all Orisha adherents also participate in Spiritual Baptist services and that about 40 percent of all Spiritual Baptists also participate in African-derived religions” (2001:316).

Other African-derived religions include **Orisha** (also known as **Shango**) among the Yoruba descendents and **Rada** (similar to Vodou) among the Dahomey descendents. There was a large influx of Yoruba between the 1830s and the 1850s as freed slaves from other areas of the Caribbean. Most settled as a “free community” in the north-eastern area of Trinidad, where it became one of the dominant African ethnic groups during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Since the 1970s, the Orisha religion has become the dominant African-derived religion in Trinidad with more than 150 Orisha shrines in existence throughout the northern and southern regions. Several such shrines are **Ile Ijuba Obaluwa'Ye, Omo Orunmila 'Ti Oshun**, located in Enterprise, Chaguanas, Trinidad; **Omo Ifa-Orisa Esba** in Saint James; and **Orisha Shrine of Lord Ochosi** in Arima.

Among the **Orisha (Shango)** tradition’s estimated 10,000 practitioners in Trinidad, two major trends have developed in modern times. First, Orisha adherents have sought to gain public legitimacy by being included in Trinidad’s “official grouping of religious bodies.” During the 1990s, the nation’s Orisha shrines were officially organized into two government-recognized groups: Opa Orisha (Shango) of Trinidad-Tobago and the Orisha Movement. Secondly, there has been tension between two groups of Orisha adherents over what constitutes the Orisha religion in Trinidad. Several key leaders of the Orisha community have sought to purify the Orisha movement of non-African elements and reorient Trinidadian religious practices to reflect the standards of traditional Nigerian Yoruba religion, whereas another group of Orisha practitioners contends that the local variants of Orisha tradition are legitimate and valid interpretations of the ancient Orisha religion.

The history of the **Rada religion** in Trinidad is well documented. During the 1860s, a group of freed slaves of Dahomean origin settled in the Belmont area of Trinidad, where they revitalized

their ancient religious traditions under the leadership of “Papa Nanee” (Abojevi Zahwenu, also known as Robert Antoine) who was born in the early 1800s in Dahomey (now, the nation of Benin). He arrived in Trinidad about 1855 and was employed as a laborer on a plantation near the town of St. Joseph. Zahwenu, a trained shaman and herbalist within the traditional Dahomean religion, established a residential compound on Belmont Valley Road that eventually became the center of Rada religious rites and ceremonial activity. This compound contained a “house of the gods” (*vodunkwe*) where public ceremonies were held and statues of Dahomean deities (called “little black gods”) were honored with numerous shrines. In addition, it was reported in 1873 that the Rada community in Trinidad venerated the Roman Catholic saints of the Virgin Mary, St. Michael, St. Catherine and St. Bernard. This religious center survived Zahwenu’s death in 1899 and was still in existence in 2000, although it had become overshadowed by the growing Orisha movement among the Afro-Trinidadian population.

The decade of the 1880s in Trinidad was a high-point of colonial repression of both African and Asian Indian cultural expressions. The repertoire of African culture expressions then included the annual Carnival and formative calypso “Nation Dances” that were organized by ethnic-based “secret societies,” with their respective Kings, Queens, Dauphins and Dauphinesses, and Princes and Princesses. Other dances include Calinda/Kalinda, a stick-fighting dance; the equally aggressive bamboula; and the more elegant Bel Air. The women dancers in the later wore and still wear the billowing “French Creole” dresses.

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### *A far cry from Africa*

By Marcia Henville

AFRICANS and their descendants, namely the Rada, Ibo, Congo and Mandingo people settled in communities in Belmont around 1870. At that time they were practically the only settlers there.

The place where the leading group of Africans, the Radas, gathered for social activities and followed the religion of their forefathers in Belmont was called the Compound. A Rada is a native of the French West African Protectorate of Dahomey, which is now known as Benin.

Abojevi Zahwenu, popularly known as Papa Nanee, was the founder of the Dangbwe Comme Compound (house or place of Dangbwe, who is the serpent god deity). Zahwenu, who was born around 1800 in Dahomey, adopted the French name Robert Antoine in Trinidad.

The Compound housed Zahwenu's home in which he lived with his wife and one son; a chapel aka a Vodunkwe (house of the gods); and a tent or covered shed adjoining the house and facing the road. Drum dances took place in the tent. Two other shrines were also built in the Compound. Many Rada families from the district frequented the Compound, where gatherings were often huge.

Zahwenu was a household name in his day—people said he was a kind and selfless medicine man. He died in July 1899, around the age of 99—though the doctor who tended to him before his death said he was around 108. He was buried on the Compound.

In spite of the impact of western culture and religion, the Rada community has retained a large measure of ancestral religious beliefs and rites. Christianity is practised in conjunction with the recognition given to the African deities, and the African gods have Christian counterparts.

The Rada community performs seasonal and non-seasonal sacrifices. For sacrificial ceremonies, called Vodunu or Saraka, they often use three consecrated drums which have special names. Sometimes, depending on the occasion, four normal drums are used.

Only devotees who are in a state of possession dance at sacrificial ceremonies—usually women who are each mounted by one deity only. Possession can occur at any time. The woman is called a Vodunsi or wife of the god ("si" is Dahomean for wife). A new Vodunsi must spend days in prayer and abstinence as part of her initiation into the new role.

Source: <http://www.trinicenter.com/TrinidadandTobagoNews/2001/Apr/>

### **Remembering the hubono: Sedley C. Antoine**

A MONUMENT has passed from the scene of Pan-Africanism and traditional African religion in the Caribbean. Sedley C. Antoine, chief and high priest, or hubono, of Trinidad's Rada Community, has gone to join the ancestors. His passing on April 9, shortly before his 83<sup>rd</sup> birthday, marks the close of an era.

The Rada Community was founded in the mid-19th century by immigrants from Dahomey (now Benin) under the leadership of the first local hubono. Antoine was born into this milieu on April 30, 1918. He knew from early that he was destined to lead the community, and in 1948 he became the fourth hubono, a responsibility that he retained for the rest of his long and fruitful life.

In 1969, Antoine moved to Montreal where he worked as a cabinet maker, while continuing as a religious leader both in Trinidad and Canada. He returned to Trinidad every year to conduct the Rada Community's Thanksgiving ceremony in the week before Carnival.

Antoine's religious leadership was deliberately conservative. Observances were dominated by traditional drumming, and he led the chants in the ancestral Fon language. Visitors from West Africa sometimes remarked that this was how their grandparents practised.

I first met Sedley Antoine toward the end of 1995. Having read Andrew Carr's fine short book: *A Rada Community in Trinidad*, and a feature article by Kathy-Ann Waterman in the Express, I went looking for him. After some searching I finally found the house at the end of Belmont Valley Road. The door was opened by a magisterial old man who, despite being casually dressed looked very much like a chief. I introduced myself and described my interest in traditional African religion and asked if any observance was imminent that I might be permitted to attend. Antoine invited me to Thanksgiving, about three weeks later.

Several people have described to me impressions from their first attendance at a Rada ceremony. My own were much the same. I was electrified. It was serious, intense and profoundly African. It picked me up and shook me. Although not a religious man, I have been Rada ever since.

Despite his very long service as hubono, Mr Antoine never physically set foot in Africa, although he very much wanted to. Early last year some of us decided that the time had come to push for just such a pilgrimage. Under the leadership of Orisha priest Olakela Massetungi (known as Oludari), we constituted ourselves as the Rada Pilgrimage Committee and sought to organise a substantial, formal visit to West Africa. During a recent visit to Ghana, I attempted to advance the aims of the committee. To our great regret, the Rada Pilgrimage Committee's main objective is now beyond reach.

Sedley C Antoine is survived by his wife of 62 years, Elaine "Dolly" Antoine, their children Francis, Henry, Hermina, Magdalen and Veronica, 19 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren, and his siblings Patrick Antoine, Rosita Ince and Empress Millington.

Source: <http://www.trinicenter.com/TrinidadandTobagoNews/2001/Apr/>

**Rastafarians: Marlon Asher** is a Trinidadian reggae singer from Enterprise Street in the Borough of Chaguanas, which is the largest municipality and fastest-growing town in Trinidad and Tobago. His first hit song was "Ganja Farmer" and he later went on to release three more popular reggae songs, his latest being "Fit and Strong." He was a member of the Mount Ararat Spiritual Baptist Church Choir and later converted to Rastafari.

Asher has toured together with the stars such as Beenie Man, Sizzla, Maxi Priest and even the American R&B Group Boyz II Men. He has toured Boston, Miami, Baltimore and Toronto. He has since paved the way for other local reggae stars such as Prophet Benjamin, I-sasha, Khari Kill, Jah Bami, Xebulon, King David and so many more.

#### *The Ancient Wisdom Tradition*

**The Ancient and Mystical Order of the Rosae Crucis (AMORC).** There are two Rosicrucian bodies: the Kairi Lodge in Port of Spain, Trinidad, and the Tobago Atrium group in Scarborough, Tobago.

**Freemasonry** (first founded in 1794, Scottish rite); today there are lodges affiliated with Scottish, English and USA jurisdictions:

#### **Lodges under the Scottish Constitution**

- Lodge Eastern Star No 368, founded in 1854.
- Lodge Rosslyn No 596, founded in 1876.
- Lodge Arima No 899, founded in 1899.
- Lodge Alexandra No 1044, founded in 1908.
- Lodge Caribbean Light No 1391, founded in 1937.
- Lodge Royalian No 1605, founded in 1964.
- Lodge Tobago Kilwinning No 1643, founded in 1968.
- Lodge Felicity No 1681, founded in 1974.
- Lodge Trinity No 1733, founded in 1980.
- Lodge Hesperus No 1738, founded in 1981.
- Lodge Bi-Centennial No 1812, founded in 1996.

#### **Lodges under the English Constitution**

- Royal Philanthropic Lodge No 405, founded in 1831.
- Royal Prince of Wales Lodge No 867, founded in 1861.
- Royal Connaught Lodge No 3266, founded in 1909.
- Saint Andrew Lodge No 3963, founded in 1920.
- Naparima Lodge No 7108, founded in 1952.
- Trinidad & Tobago Masters Lodge No 8057, founded in 1966.
- Daniel Hart Lodge No 9028, founded in 1982.

## **Lodges under the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts**

Cosmopolitan Lodge No 18

Alpha Lodge No 20

Harmony Lodge No 21

Dan Reuben Lodge No 33

The four Prince Hall lodges in Trinidad-Tobago are under the Free and Accepted Masons, Jurisdiction of Massachusetts, and they are collectively known as the Eighth Masonic District, Trinidad and Tobago. The Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts was the first of the Prince Hall Grand Lodges to be recognized by the United Grand Lodge of England (December 1994).

The four Prince Hall lodges of the Eighth Masonic District of Trinidad and Tobago are presently under the leadership of a Right Worshipful District Deputy Grand Master, who is currently RW Bro. Courtney W.T. Browne. Each year on St. John's Day, or the Sunday before the 24<sup>th</sup> of June, the four lodges meet in one of their temples. As is their usual custom, they open directly into the Third Degree, after which they adjourn and form a procession that is accompanied by a brass band, usually from the local company of army cadets or some other youth group, to the nearest Anglican church for a religious service.

### *Psychic-Spiritualist-New Age Movements*

**Superet Light Doctrine / Superet Brotherhood (Spiritualist).** Founded in 1926 by Dr. Josephine De Croix Trust (d. 1957), called Mother Trust by her followers, in Los Angeles, CA, as “a pilgrimage from the senses to the soul, and points also the way for all humanity – the Superet Way – which She travelled to earn the Light from God.” This movement is also called Superet Atom Aura Science. In 2001 there were three churches in the USA (Los Angeles, CA; Reynoldsville, PA; and Washington, DC) and one in British Columbia, Canada. There were also affiliated groups in Mexico (one), Nigeria (20), Panama (two), and Venezuela (one). There were Prince of Peace Clubs in the Bahamas, Chile, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Panama, Trinidad-Tobago, and the USA.

**Temples of Wicca**, an eclectic Wiccan group based in Trinidad and Tobago, is involved in the teaching and learning of all traditions of modern Wicca, which includes magick, astrology, alchemy, rituals, healing, herbal, divination, ESP, clairvoyance, UFO, dreams, etc.

Compiled and Edited by Clifton L. Holland

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**Note #1: The following books were unavailable to the author while compiling the current chapter.**

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**Note #2: In addition, many denominational sources were consulted, which are too numerous to list here.**

(about 28,950 words)