

ABSTRACT

From Chaplaincy to Diocese: A History of the Anglican Church in Trinidad, 1797-1904

Bernard Swainson Tappin

This thesis examines the institutional growth and development of the Anglican Church in Trinidad from the Capitulation of 1797 to the death of the second Bishop of Trinidad, John Hayes, in 1904. It traces the church's rise in status from a military chaplaincy to an archdeaconry (1842) and a self-governing diocese (1872). The thesis examines the tentative beginnings of Anglicanism in early British Trinidad and the young church's response to slave amelioration, abolition and apprenticeship. It then focusses on the establishment of the church in 1844. The Anglican Church gained denominational ascendancy, especially over the larger and longer functioning Roman Catholic body. Establishment ensured financial security for clerical functionaries, but the thesis argues that it bred increasing denominational rivalry and stultified the independence of the church, limiting its potential for involvement in education, where the church was a pioneer in the 1830s. The trauma of disestablishment (1870) and the creation of the diocese ushered in a period of growth under the leadership of institution-building bishops, Rawle and Hayes. The church ensured a position of strength for itself, and markedly so with the addition of Tobago to the responsibility of the diocese. By 1904, the thesis concludes, the Anglicans were entrenched as the second largest Christian denomination in Trinidad and Tobago and as the church of the governing elite, as well as that of growing numbers of migrants from the near-by British islands.

Keywords: Bernard Swainson Tappin, Anglican Church, Trinidad and Tobago, Religious and Social History.