

ABSTRACT

“Evangelical Protestantism in the Post Emancipation Caribbean: The Contribution of the Moravian and Methodist missions towards the development of the former slaves in Antigua and Barbados 1834-1914.”

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Historically, the Church has simultaneously been credited as a liberator of oppressed peoples and denounced as a perpetrator of inequality. In the Caribbean, such a paradox can be traced to the missionary enterprise that began with the coming of the Roman Catholics in the fifteenth century and continued in later centuries with the Protestants. This comparative study attempts to examine the channels through which the Evangelical Protestants instigated or denied avenues of liberation for the Caribbean men and women in Antigua and Barbados. The scope of the study is limited to the Moravian and Methodist missions, which emerged as the two dominant Evangelical Protestant movements in Antigua and Barbados during the period from 1834 to 1914.

Bearing the characteristics of Evangelicalism, the Moravians and Methodists pioneered missions in a religious climate where the Church of England was far more dominant in Barbados than Antigua. To achieve this, the Evangelicals equally embraced a mission to both males and females and, in so doing, utilized the service of men and women in their exploits.

This writer traces the significant transitions that marked the 80 year period during which the former slaves adapted to their new state of freedom

and the Evangelical missions evolved into self-sufficient Churches. The Evangelical Protestants contributed towards the development of the former slaves by establishing institutions, transmitting a Christian faith and providing access to religious privileges.

What remained frustrating for the Evangelicals was the limited success of their efforts to instil Christian and European ideals of sexuality and morality, aimed at engendering appropriate masculine and feminine behaviour for the emancipated Africans. By 1914, the Evangelical Protestants had facilitated the development of male and female Evangelical Blacks who on the one hand capitalized on the avenues opened for personal advancement but on the other were socio-cultural misfits.

Keywords: Winelle Kirton-Roberts; Evangelical Protestants, Moravians, Methodists, African population