

## ABSTRACT

Barbadian society, during the late nineteenth century, was riddled with a number of human problems and paradoxes. The life-blood of the society were the labouring classes who sustained the one-crop economy based on Sugar; yet it was they who reaped the least of the benefits and privilege. They were subject to a prevailing policy of social containment by the planter class. This policy was enforced throughout Barbados by a number of institutions, chief among which was the Anglican Church to which no less than 80% of the population claimed allegiance. Mainly through the clergy, the Anglican Church exerted itself in pursuing a policy of counter-disestablishment, by the control and use of the resources at its disposal, and by the influence which it exercised over the masses.

The opportunities for the revival of church life, and for innovations in social witness were allowed to slip from the grasp of the Church; it chose rather to maintain a harmonious and functional alliance between the State and itself. The clergy were State-paid functionaries. Between 1870 and 1890, organizational reforms in the Franchise, Education and Poor Relief failed to usher in any significant amelioration for the labouring classes, or any societal modifications in their favour. Thus they were forced, under the circumstances, to retain their nominal allegiance to the Anglican Church as a means of qualifying for the few civic benefits that were allowed to trickle down.

The pattern of dependence which the total social system engendered created its own ethic, and the efforts of Bishop Mitchinson to modify them were determinedly frustrated. Under the cloak of religion, the clergy defended the status quo, and managed also to blur the edges that should have divided their loyalty to God from that which they paid to 'Caesar.'