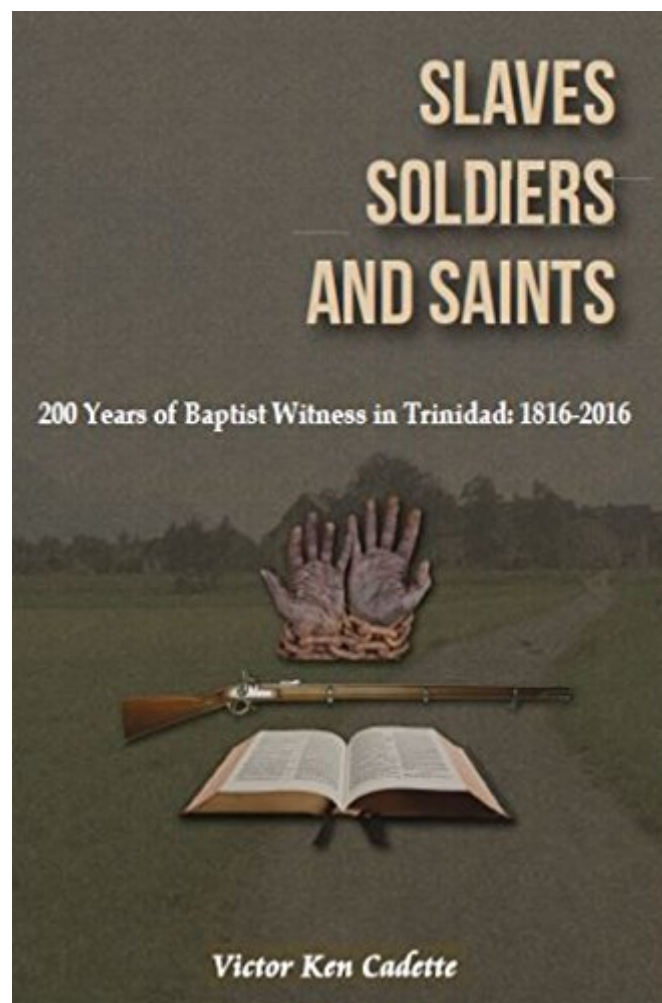




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Slaves, Soldiers And Saints: Two Hundred Years Of Baptist Witness In Trinidad: 1816-2016



Synopsis

In America, during the early years of the nineteenth century there were two significant political and human struggles. In one arena, Britain and America were at war (The War of 1812) over the issues of free trade and sailors' rights. In the other arena, black enslaved persons who were hemmed in by discrimination, inhuman treatment, and human injustice were struggling for their personal freedom and liberation as a people. During the War of 1812, many slaves found freedom by running away to the British forces. The British accepted them as refugees, but some of the able-bodied men were commissioned as marines in the British Navy. At the end of the war, these refugees and decommissioned soldiers were settled in the British colony of Trinidad. There they given land in the country districts of the island and there they began a new significant chapter in their lives by settling and developing the hinterland. But their lasting and most significant contribution was the expression of their Christian faith as they planted churches in their communities. They moved from servitude to human masters to personal freedom and servanthood in Christ. Usually the mission outreach to new areas across the world had the committed supportive network of agencies with financial and human resources. In Trinidad, these American pioneers were on their own without the resources of any mission agency, but they expressed their Christian faith by planting churches that would become the Baptist denomination. You have to admire their passion and commitment. They were poor and uneducated, they lacked formal theological training, but they were not dissuaded from the commitment to preach the gospel. Because of their commitment, they have left a legacy of Baptist denominational faith and witness. Out of their work, there are three significant Baptist groups were formed: Baptist Union of Trinidad and Tobago (BUTT), The Independent Baptists, and the Spiritual Baptists. This historical survey tells the story of the growth of the BUTT in Trinidad. This brief historical survey highlights the contextual struggles of politics, religion, denominational rivalry, education, theological perspectives and mission partnerships. In spite of missed opportunities, problems and challenges, the Baptist denomination was established and it has survived.

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