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**ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:
RELIGION IN BURMUDA**

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Religion in Bermuda

Country Overview

Bermuda comprises an archipelago of 150 small coral islands in the Atlantic Ocean located east of Georgia-South Carolina (USA), about 1,700 km or 1,060 miles. The total land area of Bermuda is slightly over 20 square miles. An estimated 68,679 (July 2011) people live on Bermuda, over half being of African heritage: black 54.8 percent, white 34.1 percent, mixed 6.4 percent, other races 4.3 percent, unspecified 0.4 percent (2000 census).

Bermuda was uninhabited until 1609, when some British immigrants on their way to North America settled there after being shipwrecked. These original inhabitants encouraged others to join them, and in 1684 a government was organized under the British Crown. Over the next decades an agricultural economy developed, and, as with many lands settled by Europeans, it depended on slaves imported from West Africa. At the time slavery was discontinued in the 1830s, the majority of the population on the 20 inhabited islands was of African descent. In 1968, the colony was given a level of local autonomy, and since that time the majority party in the parliament appoints the prime minister, whereas the governor is appointed from London.



Religious Affiliation

According to the official 2000 census, religious affiliation was estimated as follows: all Protestants 52 percent (Anglican 23 percent, African Methodist Episcopal 11 percent, Seventh-day Adventist 7 percent, and other Protestant denominations and churches 11 percent), Roman Catholics 15 percent, other religions 12 percent, unaffiliated 6 percent, unspecified 1 percent, and none 14 percent (2000 census). In addition, Dr. Peter Brierly (1997) estimated that religious affiliation in 2000 was as follows with a breakdown for major denominations:

ESTIMATED RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION IN 2000

(Sources: Brierly 1997 & Census 2000)

RELIGIOUS CATEGORIES	CHURCHES	MEMBERS	ADHERENTS	PERCENT	CENSUS 2000
All Baptists	4	450	1,200	1.8	
All Pentecostals	10	1,540	2,420	3.7	
Christian Brethren	9	500	1,220	1.9	

Church of the Nazarene	1	21	80	0.01	
Presbyterians	5	700	930	1.4	
Roman Catholics	9	8,150	10,600	16.3	15.0
Anglican	13	3,410	18,100	27.8	23.0
All Methodists	14	3,460	9,480	14.6	11.0
Seventh-day Adventists	9	3,080	4,320	6.6	7.0
Jehovah's Witnesses	6	480	1,070	1.6	
Other Protestant	65	3,770	7,540	11.5	11.0
Other Marginal Christian	4	240	450	0.7	
Other religions					12.0
None/unaffiliated/unspecified	--	--	--	12.0	21.0
TOTALS (65,000 in 2000)	149	25,801	57,410	100%	100%

By comparison, if the census figures are considered more reliable than Brierly's for 2000, then the latter overestimated the number of Anglican adherents (27.8 percent vs. 23.0 percent for the census) and seriously underestimated the population in the census category "none/unaffiliated/unspecified," which was reported to be 21.0 percent by the census. This means that, overall, the statistics reported by Brierly for all Protestant adherents were too high (62.7 percent = 40,755 vs. 52.0 percent for the census = 33,800).

A search of the Bermuda Yellow Pages directory on the Internet in July 2012 revealed the presence of 143 religious groups, which is about the same number reported by Brierly in 1997: <http://www.bermudayp.com/searchresults/1/CHURCHES/>

Overview of Religious Development

The original settlers in Bermuda were primarily Anglicans (1609-1684). Though Presbyterians arrived a few years later (1612) and eventually became the largest church in the colony, the **Church of England** regained its majority status later in the 1700s and has remained the largest religious body in Bermuda to the present. St. Peter's Church on St. George's Island, constructed in 1612 by Governor Richard Moore, is the oldest Anglican Church in continuous use in the Western Hemisphere. It was also the meeting place of the first General Assembly (forerunner of Bermuda's Parliament) on 1 August 1620. The Anglicans have unique status as an extra-provincial diocese directly under the Archbishop of Canterbury. Today there are nine local Anglican churches in Bermuda, one in each parish: St. Peter's Church (founded in 1612, rebuilt in 1713); St. John's Church (built in 1621, rebuilt in 1721 and 1821); Holy Trinity Church, located in Hamilton Parish, is one of the oldest churches in Bermuda, but its exact date of construction is unknown); St. Mary's Church (dates to 1626, rebuilt in 1832) in Warwick Parish; St. Anne's Church (first built of wood and replace with stone in 1717) in Southampton Parish; St. Mark's Church (built about 1746) in Smith's Parish; St. James' Church (dates to 1789) in Sandy's Parish; St. Paul's Church (dates to 1796) in Paget Parish; and Christ Church (build in 1846) in Devonshire Parish. Enlarging the Anglican community is the **Reformed Episcopal Church**, a 19th century group that broke from the **Episcopal Church** in the USA and began work in Bermuda around 1890.

Presbyterians from the **Church of Scotland** first arrived in 1612. Christ Church in Warwick, established in 1719, is believed to be the oldest Presbyterian church in the British colonies of America. However, it remained an independent congregation, served by ministers from Scotland,

Canada and the USA, until 1845 when it became affiliated with the Free Church of Scotland. Another Presbyterian church (later named St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church) was founded in Hamilton in 1846 by the Rev. James Morrison, minister of Christ Church in Warwick, who served both congregations until his death in 1849. Christ Church in Warwick became affiliated with the United Free Church of Scotland in 1900 and then with the Church of Scotland in 1929. Ministers serving this church remained members of the presbytery in Scotland to which they previously belonged and came to Bermuda trained and ordained, usually with experience in a number of parishes in Scotland. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, in 1873, petitioned the Presbytery of Halifax in Canada to sever the pastoral connection with Christ Church in Warwick and to ordain Mr. Kenneth Junor as their minister. In 1875, the Presbyterian Church of Canada was established and St. Andrew's in Bermuda became part of that body. Today, this congregation is under the pastoral supervision of the Presbytery of Toronto West.

The Methodist community of Bermuda was served by 15 local congregations with a total of about 7,150 adherents in 2000 (census). Methodists first arrived in Bermuda during the late 18th century and settled in Hamilton. Currently, there are three local churches affiliated with the **Bermuda's Methodist Synod**, a separate presbytery of the **United Church of Canada's Maritime Conference**: Ebenezer Methodist Church in St. George's Parish, Emmanuel Methodist Church in Port Royal (Whale Bay, Southampton Parish), and Wesley Methodist Church in Hamilton Parish.

The first (unofficial) Methodist preacher was George Whitefield, who came to the islands in 1748 for some rest and relaxation but began holding open-air services in fields and at Christ Anglican Church in Warwick. He was banned from preaching in most Anglican parish churches.

In 1799, Reverend John Stephenson was appointed by the Wesleyan Methodist Conference to preach the gospel in Bermuda, but on May 10, he was 'summoned' for holding a meeting for slaves in the house of a black man named Soco on the South Shore in Smith's Parish. An act was passed to silence him, but Stephenson continued to preach. After his arrest, the undaunted reverend preached from his cell window in St. George's. The grating through which he preached is inserted in the wall of the Historical Society Building in St. George's.

Emmanuel Methodist Church in Port Royal was dedicated on December 26, 1869, though the cross-section was not added until 1884, and the tower and bell in 1911. Hurricanes destroyed the roof in 1921 and 1948, and in 1970 a tornado tore off part of the roof and cracked the bell tower.

Wesley Methodist Church was formally opened in 1881, replacing the original Zion Chapel built in Hamilton in 1810 at the intersection of Church and Wesley streets (now the southwest corner of the City Hall parking lot). This church was the first in Bermuda to hold services in which blacks and whites worshipped together.

Sources: <http://www.wesleyanmethodist.bm/j3e.html> -
<http://www.wesleyanmethodist.bm/j3w.html>

Marsden Memorial Methodist Church, founded in 1861, is now affiliated with the United Methodist Church in the USA as of 2001. Marsden, which celebrated its 140th anniversary in 2001, is in Smith's Parish. The church, now **Marsden First United Methodist Church**, unveiled its new sign, displaying the official United Methodist cross and flame insignia on Sunday, 14

October 2001. This church became part of the Baltimore North District of the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, led by Bishop Felton Edwin May.

The Methodist community was originally served by the **British Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada** during the mid-to-late 19th century, but some of the established churches later became affiliated with the **African Methodist Episcopal Church** in the USA in 1885. Currently, the latter has 11 affiliated congregations in Bermuda.

- St. John's AME Church (founded in 1866), Bailey's Bay, Hamilton Parish - <http://www.bdaconfame.bm/j3sj.html>
- Bethel AME Church (founded in 1870), Shelly Bay, Hamilton Parish - <http://www.bdaconfame.bm/j3be.html>
- Allen Temple AME Church (founded in 1877), Somerset-Mangrove Bay, Sandy's Parish - <http://www.bdaconfame.bm/j3at.html>
- St. Phillip AME Church (founded in 1877), Smith's Parish - <http://www.bdaconfame.bm/j3ph.html>
- St. Luke AME Church (founded in 1887), St. David's Island, St. George's Parish - <http://www.bdaconfame.bm/j3sl.html>
- Mt. Zion AME Church (founded in 1896), Southampton Parish - <http://www.bdaconfame.bm/j3mz.html>
- Bright Temple AME Church, Warwick Parish
- Heard AME Chapel, Pembroke, Hamilton Parish
- Richard Allen AME Church, St. George's Parish
- St. Paul AME Church, Hamilton Parish
- Vernon Temple AME Church, Southampton Parish

Source: <http://www.ame-church.com/directory/district.php?district=1>

MAP OF BERMUDA'S PARISHES



Source: <http://www.bermuda-online.org/bermudaparishes.htm>

Because of the country's relative closeness to North America, a number of Christian groups, representative of the broad spectrum of Christianity, expanded to Bermuda through the 20th century. Bermuda, as a loyal British colony, developed a special relationship to Canada in the decades after the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783). The religious expression of that

relationship is found in the congregations in Bermuda with direct ties to the **United Church of Canada**, the **Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada**, and the **Presbyterian Church in Canada**.

The **Seventh-Day Adventist Church** traces its origin in Bermuda to the arrival from Nova Scotia, Canada, of Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Enoch in the 1890s. About the same time, Frank and Marquis Poque (two brothers) arrived from Minnesota, USA, as colporteurs. Their first converts were the R. T. Munroe family who began observing the seventh-day Sabbath after studying SDA literature purchased from the Poque brothers. In 1895, after Marshall Enoch heard about the Munroes, he visited them and began to hold weekly services in their home.

The first local SDA church (called a “company”) was organized on 16 March 1901 by J. W. Bartlett, who was the first SDA minister to arrive in Bermuda. During the pastorate of J. A. Morrow, the first permanent pastor (1903-1909), the first SDA church was built in the outskirts of Hamilton. A large church building, which also served as an evangelistic center, was later built on King Street in Hamilton and dedicated in 1949. This facility was used for more than 40 years until it was demolished and replaced by a larger modern structure, which was completed in 1996.

The second SDA church was a small chapel erected in 1926 on land donated by Mr. Profirio Gomez near Jews Bay in Southhampton. This structure was later enlarged and housed the forerunner of the present SDA school, the Bermuda Institute of Seventh-day Adventists (founded in 1943), until it was sold after the congregation moved to a large building, completed in 1961. The third SDA church was organized in 1935 in St. George’s Parish, but the members met in rented quarters until 1954, when the congregation bought the historic Cooper Estate on Duke of York Street, the main street in the old town. They remodeled the building into an auditorium and Sabbath school rooms, which were dedicated free of debt in 1957. The St. George’s church members worshipped in this building until 1984 when they moved into a larger facility that they had spent several years constructing on Secretary Road, located some distance from the center of town. A portion of the old church on Duke of York Street became the Community Services’ Center for the St. George’s SDA church.

In 1962, the SDA leadership purchased two properties as future sites for new church buildings at Crawl Hill in Hamilton Parish and on the South Shore road in Warwick Parish. The Warwick SDA church was constructed in 1965, and the Midland Heights SDA church was built and dedicated at Crawl Hill in 1978. By the end of 1998, four more SDA churches had been organized, three of which had their own buildings in Devonshire, Somerset and on Glebe Road in Pembroke Parish. The largest congregation met at St. David’s SDA church, which was located in a rented building on the former U.S. Naval Base in the area of Southside in St. David’s Parish.

From 1901 until Bermuda became part of the Atlantic Union conference in 1915, SDA work in Bermuda was directed by the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a “miscellaneous mission.” The Bermuda Mission became fully organized in 1959 and was incorporated as an act of Bermuda Parliament in 1960. On 4 May 1986, the Bermuda SDA Mission became the Bermuda Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, with nine organized churches. Today there are 11 organized SDA churches and the Bermuda Institute of Seventh-day Adventists is now fully accredited by the Government to teach Kindergarten through Grade 12.

The first Pentecostal denomination in Bermuda was **New Testament Church of God** (Church of God, Cleveland, TN), which began mission work in Bermuda in 1939 when Carl J. Hughes and his wife arrived as missionaries. They led the fellowship made up of J. H. Ingram's followers in Hamilton, which was not yet an established church, then officially organized the first approved congregation in Warwick in 1940. World War II affected the Hughes' ability to secure a visa. The missionary was conscientious about taking photographs to send to the mission's offices in the USA, but his activities caused him to be accused as a German spy and he had to leave Bermuda in early 1941.

A Bermudian Pentecostal minister, Absolam Bean and a missionary from Jamaica, S.A. Robertson, led the two young churches for most of the 1940s. In early 1952, J. Willard Brummett and his family arrived in Hamilton to supervise the work. During his three-year tenure, another congregation was organized in White Hill, which was led by a woman preacher from Barbados, Elise Bean.

In 1955, J. L. Goins replaced Brummett in Hamilton. A successful pastor in the USA and a former overseer, he recognized the importance of education and started a Bible school. Although it operated only briefly, it trained 48 students, many of whom became the island's future Church of God leaders. One of them, Charles Fubler, was the first national to be appointed to the overseer position, in 1956. The New Testament Church of God in Bermuda in 2010 had seven congregations with about 4,000 adherents, under the leadership of Overseer Lloyd E. Duncan.

Other major Protestant denominations, some of which have headquarters in the USA, include: the **New Life Church of the Nazarene** (Smith's Parish); the **Christian Brethren/Plymouth Brethren** (eight churches: Paget Gospel Chapel, North Shore Gospel Chapel, Cobbs Hill Gospel Chapel, Harington Sound Gospel Chapel, Crawl Gospel Church, Calvary Gospel Church, White Hill Gospel Chapel, St. George's Gospel Chapel); **Bermuda National Baptist Fellowship** (Emmanuel Baptist Church in Hamilton was organized in 1930; First Baptist Church of Devonshire was organized in 1956; and Wellington Park Baptist Church was organized in 1975); **The Salvation Army** (Hamilton, Devonshire and Warwick Parishes); **Church of God of Prophecy** (Pembroke Parish); **Revival Assembly of Bermuda** (located in the City of Hamilton, Pembroke Parish; affiliated internationally with the Apostolic Christian Church); **Churches of Christ** (Devonshire Parish and Sandy's Parish); and **The United Holy Church of Bermuda** (Pentecostal: Beulah Tabernacle Deliverance Temple in St. George's Parish, Faith Tabernacle in Sandy's Parish, Gospel Tabernacle in Hamilton Parish, and Warwick Holiness Church in Warwick).

Smaller denominations or independent churches include: **West Pembroke Pentecostal Assembly** (Princess Estate, Pembroke Parish); **Peace Lutheran Church** (Paget Parish); **Rehoboth Church of God** (Apostolic Faith, Warwick); **Agape Faith Kingdom Ministries** (Sandy's Parish); **New Nehemiah Apostolic Worship Centre** (Warwick Parish); **Grace Communion International** (Devonshire Parish); **Evening Light Pentecostal Church** (Pembroke Parish); **House of Prayer International Ministries** (Pentecostal); **Bermuda International Christian Fellowship**; **Living Word Christian Fellowship** (Warwick Parish); **Restoration Fellowship** (City of Hamilton, Pembroke Parish); **Restoration House Ministries** (Devonshire Parish); **The New Evangel Tabernacle**; **United Apostolic Church of God in Christ Jesus** (Somerset, Sandy's Parish); **Deliverance Temple** (Pentecostal); and **The Body of**

Christ (Devonshire Parish). Also, there is a **New Apostolic Church** (historically linked to the Irvingites in Great Britain during the 1830s) on Horseshoe Road in Southampton.

Known nondenominational Protestant churches include the following:

Better Covenant Christian Covenant	City of Hamilton, Pembroke Parish
Church of God & Saints of Christ	Southampton Parish
Cornerstone Bible Fellowship	City of Hamilton, Pembroke Parish
New Evangel Tabernacle	Smith's Parish
New Covenant Faith Centre	Paget Parish
New Creation Worship Centre	Devonshire Parish
Open Door Christian Assembly	Harrington Sound, Smith's Parish
Radnor Road Christian Fellowship	Hamilton Parish
Sounds of Praise Radio Ministry	Pembroke Parish
Transfiguration Ministries	Crawl, Hamilton Parish
Word of Life, Bermuda	Southampton Parish

The **Roman Catholic Church** developed from a small presence in the 19th century to become the second-largest religious body in Bermuda by the middle of the 20th century. Also a part of the country's Canadian ties, the work existed as an outpost of the Diocese of Halifax (Nova Scotia). In 1953 it was made a prefecture and three years later a vicariate. Finally, in 1957 the Diocese of Hamilton was created as a subordinate to the Diocese of Kingston (Jamaica).

Other Religions

Marginal Christian groups in Bermuda include congregations of the **Unity Foundation of Truth** (City of Hamilton, Pembroke Parish), **United Church of Religious Science** and the **Church of Christ, Scientist** (also in the City of Hamilton, Pembroke Parish). The **Watchtower Bible & Tract Society** (Jehovah's Witnesses) reported four Kingdom Halls (St. George's, Devonshire, Heron Bay and Hamilton) with about 240 members and about 450 adherents in 2000. The **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons)** also is active. The **Armstrong Family of Churches** (sabbatical, non-Trinitarian) is represented by the **Worldwide Church of God** (founded in 1934 by Herbert W. Armstrong in Eugene, Oregon) on Watlington Road in Devonshire Parish, and the **United Church of God** (founded in Columbus, Ohio, in 1995).

Not only has Bermuda attracted members of many Christian groups, but also it has drawn adherents of a variety of other religions. There exist presently in Bermuda small communities of **Baha'is** (Baha'i National Centre with Spiritual Assemblies in Hamilton, Devonshire, St. George's, Sandy's, Smith's, Southampton, Paget, Pembroke, Warwick parishes), **Ethiopian Orthodox Church** (aka Egyptian Coptic Church, Old Military Road, St. George's Town), **Freemasonry**, **Hindus** (most are of Sri Lankan or Tamil descent), **Jews**, **Muslims**, **Rastafarians** (International Rastafari for Inity, 79 Court Street, Hamilton), **Rosicrucians** (AMORC, Evan Smith is the Grand Councilor for Bermuda), **Spiritualist**, and **Subud**.

Freemasonry existed in Bermuda in 1744-1745 (earliest historical record), when the Earl of Strathmore, Grand Master of England, appointed a Provincial Grand Master for the Islands of

Bermuda. The oldest lodges are Prince Alfred No 233 (EC), originally chartered under the Moderns in 1792 as No. 507, and later in 1801 under the Ancients; Lodge St. George No. 200 (SC), date of Charter 7 August 1797; and Atlantic Phoenix No. 224 (EC), date of Charter 9 August 1797. The latter two celebrated 200 years in 1997.

There are three Grand Lodges represented in Bermuda: The District Grand Lodge of Bermuda of the **United Grand Lodge of England** (EC) with five Lodges, **The Grand Lodge of Scotland** (ES) with three Lodges under a Grand Superintendent, and the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bermuda of the **Grand Lodge of Ireland** (IC) with four Lodges. Some other organizations that meet at Freemasons Hall, Reid Street, Hamilton, include the Royal Order of Scotland, Royal Arch, Rose Croix and Knights Templar.

The Jewish community regularly meets in a metaphysical church, the **Unity Foundation of Truth**, in the City of Hamilton, Pembroke Parish. Some Jews have lived on the island since the 17th century, but a congregation was formed only in the 20th century. The permanent Jewish population is often outnumbered by many Jewish tourists from Britain, the USA and Canada, and Jewish personnel attached to the U.S. military base on the island. Religious services, conducted by a lay reader, are held once or twice a month and also on the High Holy Days, in different locations.

The Muslim community is about 50% indigenous Bermudans of African descent. The rest is composed of immigrants from Trinidad, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Malaysia, Morocco, Bosnia and other countries. The four Mazhabs are represented as well as those who follow the interpretations of Warrith Deen Muhammad of Chicago. The majority are Sunni with a sprinkling of Shia, Ahmadia, Salafis and Murabitoon. There were non-practicing Muslims in Bermuda since the mid-1900s. First recognized Muslims were those who reverted to Islam from **The Nation of Islam** after the death of Elijah Muhammad in February 1975. There are two bodies with established premises: (1) Masjid Muhammad #1, Cedar Avenue, City of Hamilton (Imam Basim Muwaakkil); and (2) Bermuda Islamic Cultural Centre, 12 Lighthouse Road, Southampton (Imam Ashmead Ali).

The Church of Revelation is a New Age Spiritualist church founded in 1976 by Rev. Harrison Ray Hasketh of Honolulu, Hawaii, and Rev. Linda L. Harrison of Seattle, Washington. Hasketh, a popular spiritual/psychic counselor known as Tat, had previously taught at the **Mystic Island Center** operated by medium Patricia Diegel in Honolulu. In 1975 he opened his own **Astral Physics School** and was ordained in the **Life Science Church**, a church that ordained independent ministers by mail. He also began two call-in radio shows. There area affiliated churches in the USA, Canada and Bermuda. The Astral Physics School was founded as a non-profit society in Bermuda in 1983, known as the **Church of Revelation / The Golden Circle Bermuda**.

Given the relative smallness of the country, most new groups have had difficulty establishing more than one or two centers of worship in what has become a highly competitive atmosphere.

Compiled and edited by Clifton L. Holland

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