

Definitions starting with R: Religion

The Bahamas is a very Christian country; the largest groups are the Baptists (29%), the Anglicans or [PISTABLES](#) (23%), the Roman Catholics (22%), and smaller groups such as the [SEVEN-DAY PEOPLE](#). The fundamentalist or [JUMPER CHURCHES](#) are historically connected to similar Black churches in the American South. They are noted for joyful [SONG SERVICE](#) or [SHOUTING MEETINGS](#) with lively rhythms and hand-clapping as well as [CRYING](#) when members GET THE HOLY GHOST. Sinners who are [SEEKING](#) repent at the [MOURNER'S BENCH](#), guided by the [DRAWING SPIRIT](#); the saved will not [BOOGIE](#) in hell. Religion is a source of [UPLIFTEMT](#) throughout life; most Bahamians are [PRAYED FOR](#) as babies and [CHURCHED](#) before burial. Small acts of piety are integral parts of everyday life for many: when speaking of future plans –even for the next day –people will add ["IF GOD SPARE MY LIFE."](#) Many families would not think of eating a meal before [GRACING](#) it, and children are taught to say [OUR FATHER PRAYS](#) before going to bed. To emphasize that what they are saying is the absolute truth, Bahamians will say, "This is [BIBLE](#)." They invoke the strength of the Deity by crying ["FATHER!"](#) but refer to the Devil when they exclaim ["JOHN BROWN!"](#) An Anglican or Catholic priest is referred to as the [FATHER](#), but Baptist ministers are referred to as the [REV](#), which is also a polite term of address. In some Protestant sects the second in command within a congregation is called the [SOCIETY STEWARD](#).

Although church life is certainly important for many people in Nassau, in some small out-island settlements it can become the major focus of social life and even entertainment in places without cinemas or television. In such communities churches may present [CONCERTS](#) to raise funds. A [CHAIRMAN](#) acts as master of ceremonies, announcing hymns sung by the choir. Then the [BEGGAR-MAN](#) collects donations from the congregation, announcing the amount as the money is handed over to the [BOX-MAN](#). Large contributions are met with a [RALLY](#), in which members of the congregation so moved may march or [STRUT](#) up and down the aisle to the rhythm of a joyful spiritual.

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