

For a long time, the clock in the steeple of St. Matthew's Church and another in Christ Church Cathedral were the only reliable time-pieces, on New Providence.

### Baptist Churches

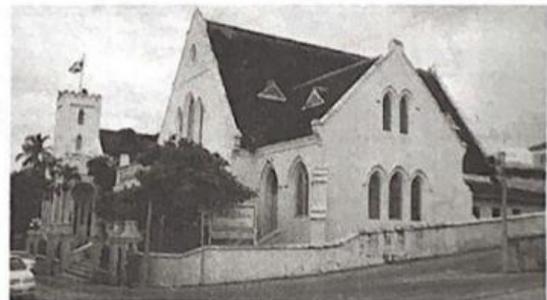
The Baptists have the largest number of followers in The Bahamas today. The first Baptist church was founded by a man named **Prince William**. He was a slave from America. He and another slave, **Sharper Morris**, escaped from Florida in an open boat. They landed on New Providence, and here Prince William preached in the open air, near Government House. Most black people in The Bahamas were still slaves at this time. To obtain their freedom, men had to pay £90 to the government, a very large sum of money in those days.



On 1<sup>st</sup> August 1790, the ground-breaking ceremony for **Bethel Baptist Meeting House** was held. Other freed black joined Prince William and helped him to build the new place of worship. That first wooden meeting house was just 11 meters wide and 20 meters long. The members of this church called themselves **Native Baptist**. Bethel Baptist Church is still on the original site, on Meeting Street. Hundreds of people now attend service here.

### St. Andrew's Presbyterian Kirk

In 1798, 55 Scottish settlers founded St. Andrew's Presbyterian **Kirk** (Kirk means church in Scotland). They laid the foundation stone for their church on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1810. St Andrew's Kirk is the **second oldest** church building in New Providence. The Kirk was not a missionary church. Only a few black people were converted to the Presbyterian denomination.



### Rastafarians

**Rastafarians** is both a religion and a way of life which originated in Jamaica. The movement in The Bahamas began to grow after a concert performance by Bob Marley in the late 1970s. Rastafarians believe that Ras Tafari is God and that black people can find salvation by going back to Africa. They call their God, **Jah**.

