

MISSIONARY ATLAS PROJECT
MIDDLE AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

ARUBA

Snapshot Section

Country Name:

Aruba

Country Founded in:

Discovered in 1499; part of the Netherlands Antilles 1636-1986; independent since 1990.

Population:

100,018 (July 2007 est.)

Government Type:

Constitutional monarchy with parliamentary democracy

Geography/location in the world:

12 30 N, 69 58 W

Island in the Caribbean Sea, north of Venezuela

Number of people groups:

Five with the group of Arubans being the largest

Picture of flag:



Religion Snapshot

Major Religion and % of population:

Roman Catholic 82.1 %

Protestant 12.83%

Islam 0.28%

Chinese Religion 0.16%

Baha'i	0.14%
Judaism	0.14%
Non-Religious/other	2.83%

Government interaction with religion:

The government allows complete freedom of religion and government respects this right.

http://www.worldstatesmen.org/Aruba_const.pdf (Article I.1 of the Aruba Constitution)

Sources consulted:

Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, *Operation World*, 21st Century Edition. Updated and Revised (Harrisonburgh: R. R. Donnelley & Sons, 2005)

www.peoplegroups.org

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/print/aa.html>

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/22491.htm>

Country Profile

Basic Facts

Country Name:

Aruba

Population:

In July 2007, Aruba's population numbered 100,018. The population density was 518.23 people per sq km.

The age structure in July 2007 was as follows:

0-14 years: 19.7% (male 9,943/female 9,761)

15-64 years: 70.2% (male 33,553/female 36,661)

65 years and over: 10.1% (male 4,046/female 6,054)

The median age for the total population was 37.3 years (male 35.5 years/female 39 years). The life expectancy at birth for the total population was 74.83 years (male 71.8 years/ female 77.91 years).

With a birth rate of 12.83 births/1,000 population, a death rate of 7.61 deaths/1,000 population, and a net migration rate of 10 migrants/1,000 population, Aruba's population growth rate for 2007 was 1.522%. The 2007 estimated infant mortality rate was 14.75 deaths/1,000 live births (male 19.59 deaths/1,000 live births; female 9.81 deaths/1,000 live births). The total fertility rate was 1.85 children born/woman.

The sex ratio for 2007 was as follows:

At birth: 1.02 male/female

Under 15 years: 1.019 male/female

15-64 years: 0.915 male/female

65 years and over: 0.668 male/female

Total population: 0.906 male/female

Aruba's population is made up of a broad international mixture of well-educated people. The Aruban's mixed ancestry claims people groups from Caquetio Indian, African and European roots. Individuals from all over the world are attracted to Aruba due to its strong economy, excellent living conditions, and delightful weather.

Language:

Dutch and the native language of *Papiamentu* are the two official languages of Aruba, but most Arubans speak a minimum of four languages including English and Spanish.

In Aruba there are 5,289 Dutch native speakers (5.3%). The Dutch (alternative names are Nederlands or Hollands) classified as Indo-European, Germanic, West, Low Saxon-Low

Franconian, and Low Franconian language. Besides Netherlands and Aruba, Dutch is also spoken in countries such as Belgium, France, Germany, Indonesia, Netherlands Antilles, and Suriname. Even though Dutch is an official language in Aruba, it has been declining in use in the last decades.

According to 1999 census, there are 60,000 native speakers of Papiamentu (6%). The Papiamentu language (alternative names are Papiam, Curaçoleño, Curassese, Papiamentoe) is believed to symbolize friendliness with its unique sayings and mannerisms and has been in use for over 300 years. It developed from an essentially pidgin language classified as Afro-Portuguese Creole (or Creole, Iberian based). The first use in official documents of Papiamentu is found in the early 18th century. The language then was used for the purposes of communication among peoples with different native languages.

Through the middle of the 19th century Papiamentu was chosen for written documents that also included school books and Roman Catholic hymnals. Ultimately, Papiamentu grew into the more complex modern language with expansion in syntax and lexicon. Though the language borrowed much from Dutch, English and Spanish, Papiamentu still possesses its own unique rhythm and meanings. If it was not for the Dutch Crown to require solely the use of Dutch language in the school system, Papiamentu would have continued to be used as the language of instruction.

The first newspaper in Papiamentu language, “Civilisado” (The Civilizer), was issued in 1871 and the first Bible in Papiamentu language was published in 1997. Papiamentu, together with Dutch, was declared Aruba's official language only in March 19, 2003. Using Papiamentu and Dutch does not indicate lack of education; however, inability to speak Dutch leads to dissatisfaction and hinders social and political mobility.

English, classified as Indo-European, Germanic, West, English language, is spoken by 3,000 (3%) natives in Aruba and is also known as Aruban English dialect.

Spanish (alternative names are Español, Castellano, Castilian) is also classified as Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western, Western, Gallo-Iberian, Ibero-Romance, West Iberian, Castilian language. Total number of Spanish speaking people in Aruba indicates 12.6% according to the CIA government library.

<http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/print/aa.html>

According to the 2000 census, there are also other languages (2.2%) as well as unspecified or unknown (5.3%).

<http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/print/aa.html>

Society/Culture:

Aruba has a kaleidoscope of different cultures who, through the years, have contributed enormously to the development of the country from architectural designs to variety of cuisines.

These are immigrants from Caribbean islands, Colombia, Peru, Venezuela, as well as different African countries, China, and Philippines. Despite this multi-cultural and rich background, Arubans have a strong national identity which is marked by the high standard of living, successful economy, and a strong educational system. Being a relatively wealthy island and striving for separation for many decades, in 1986 Aruba became an autonomous country within the Dutch Kingdom.

The large number of immigrants primarily from Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, other Caribbean islands, as well as from China, Philippines, and 17 different African countries together with native citizens, share a common strong national identity which is sustained by the successful economy, strong educational system, and with Aruban people enjoying one of the highest standards of living on the Caribbean. Multi-cultural mix that reflects a rich past in the peoples of Aruba marks the look of the people, the languages they speak, and the innate hospitality that they express through local foods, architecture, celebrations, and peacefully living together.

A growing number of children attend day-care centers before going to school. The educational system is based on the Dutch model. Children attend kindergarten at the age of 4. When they turn 6, they are enrolled to the primary school and then after the age of 12, they enroll in secondary or lower vocational school.

Pedagogical institute of Aruba provides higher education. The national system of education is heavily supported by the government and these educational programs are (1) primary school education - 23 nursery schools, 32 primary schools, and 23 schools for secondary education, (2) vocational training (LTO), basic education (MAVO), college preparation (HAVO), advanced placement (VWO), and the higher education through the Professional Education program.

Private schools, such as the International Schools of Aruba (ISA), search for financial funding by their own means. Aruba takes after U.S. system in designing a hotel education. This is an education and training in hospitality and lodging industries including hotels, inns, and bed & breakfasts. Since the educational options of the country are limited, many students choose to study in North and South America as well as Europe.

A development project called Enseñanza pa Empleo (Education for Employment) is co-financed by the Aruban and the Dutch governments and a great number of for-profit institutes. The project provides education for adults, which has been very popular among Arubans.

Even though extramarital and premarital relationships are common, monogamy and legal marriage are the norm. Traditionally, Arubans favor interethnic marriages. However, in the recent years marriages to foreign spouses has increased drastically – 1991 census showed 45.2% of Aruban-born men married foreign spouses and likewise 24.8% of Aruban women married non-Arubans. The great number of these marriages caused by so-called of marriage of convenience (“fake marriage”) in order to obtain Dutch nationality. In the last few decades employ of concubines has doubled and teenage pregnancy is a growing concern for the Aruban government.

The traditional household is matricentric – the everyday authority lies with the mother and the ultimate authority with the father. However, within the nuclear family, the mother

predominately takes care of the children. In family affairs the oldest child (*yui mayo*) has special influence on situations of decision making and conflict. As a result of patri- or matrilocal settlement, groups of brothers and/or sisters and their spouses traditionally lived near each other on family grounds.

Until the beginning of the 20th century, the centers of kinship organization were the extended family and the conjugal nuclear-family household (marriage between close kin was common.) A shortage of land and urbanization caused a decrease in patri- and matrilocal settlement and the weakening of the traditional type of kinship organization.

Massive migration and shortage of adequate housing are the cause of number of social tension and resentment. Kinship terminology parallels that of Catholic canon law – ritual kinship focuses around the godparents (the *padrino* and *madrina*), who have clearly defined obligations regarding the godchild's baptism, first Holy Communion, and marriage. Though the kin group is the focal point of social interaction, it is also the biggest source of social conflict.

Arubans social life happens within the family and social organizations as well as at school. The most important organizations are sports and service clubs, scouting associations, community centers, as well as religious and professional organizations. Even though Aruba is divided along class, ethnic, and geographical lines, and the gap between rich and poor is significant, class lines are loosely defined.

Recent migration has created new boundaries between newcomers and older ethnic groups. Ethnic and geographical divisions can be seen in labor specialization, patterns of marriage and settlement, choice of language, and political affiliations. Society allows, on the small scale, gossip to be an effective means of social control even including newspapers to be carriers of gossip.

Traditional semi-religious ceremonies have a Catholic religion or orientation. Small bands singing a serenade called *Dandé* deliver best wishes to the homes on New Year's Eve. June 24th, St. John's Day, is celebrated with bonfires and the ceremony of Dera Gai (the burying of the rooster; at the present day the ceremony is carried without the rooster.) Easter Monday is called Black Monday that originates for the yearly picnic held by Afro-Caribbean Methodists. The present day observers of the tradition camp-out for up to a week at the beach in tents and shacks. Arubans make of special importance the celebrations of an individual's 15th, 50th, and 75th birthdays.

Most family doctors and medical specialists have been educated in the Netherlands, in the United States, or in South America. Though some of the traditional healing methods are legally forbidden, modern natural healing methods have been growing in popularity. Healing methods (Papiamento – *remedi di tera*) make use of herbs, amulets, etc., which are practiced by *curadó* or *curioso* (healer), who often also acts as *hacido di brua* (practitioner of *brua* – brua as a magician.)

The newspapers circulate in different languages: 4 in Papiamento, 2 in Dutch, and 3 in English.

Official and *de facto* holidays in Aruba include the following: New Year's Day (January 1), Official Holiday of the Memory of G.F. "Betico" Croes (January 25), National Anthem and Flag Day (March 15) Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Easter Monday, Queen's Day (April 30), Labor Day (May 1), Christmas Day (December 25), and Boxing Day (December 26). Non-holiday observances include Bonbini Festival (Year Round every Tuesday), Caribbean Festival (Year Round every Thursday), January/February or February/March Carnival, National Drag Race (March), Aruba Bartender's Contest (April), National Horse Fair (April), Summer Jam (April 30), One Cool Summer (May through October), Hi-Winds Amateur World Challenge (June), Windsurfing Festival (June), St. John's Day (June 24), Aruba World Youth Festival (August), ATP Aruba Open (September), Deep-Sea Fishing Tournament (October), Catamaran Regatta (November), St. Nicolas Day (December 5).

One of the cultural distinctive of Aruban people is celebrations and color and music play an important role in the majority of cultural events. Traditional Aruban dress is red and yellow shirt and a black trouser. "Aruba's Official Carnival Concept Design" is an organization that infuses themes of music, dance, colors, creativity, and merriment.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_Aruba (More on celebrations, superstition, and pagan beliefs)

Aruba hosts an annual jazz and Latin music festival and biennial dance and theatre festivals. Citizens of this multi-cultural island get immensely involved in fine arts such as music, poetry, singing, theatre, dancing, painting, and other visual arts. Aruban artists get involved in both non-commercial and tourism/local recreation spheres. Due to lack of funds and clear governmental policy, there is tension between the commercialization of art for the benefit of tourism and the professionalization of local talent for non-commercial purposes.

Aruba and the five main islands of the Netherlands Antilles (Curaçao and Bonaire – the Leeward group; Saba, St. Eustatius, and Sint Maarten – the Windward group) are part of the Lesser Antilles island chain. The music of these islands is a mixture of native, African, and European elements. The style of music is closely connected with trends from neighboring islands like Martinique, Trinidad and Gaudeloupe, as well as the mainland former Dutch possession of Suriname, which has exported *kaseko* music to great success on the islands.

<http://worldmusiccentral.org/article.php?story=20030414202502213> (More on *kaseko* music)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJjh-RWUWG4> (Listen to *kaseko* music)

Arubans enjoy sports which are evidenced by the existence of most popular sports clubs such as futbol (soccer), baseball, and softball.

<http://www.sportsaruba.com>

Other favorite sports are cross-country, downhill, open sea snorkeling, scuba diving, deep-sea fishing, sailing & boating, wind surfing, water skiing, parasailing, kite boarding, jet skiing, tennis, bowling, basketball, golf, volleyball, dune sliding, horseback riding, bicycling. Visitors greatly enjoy jeep tours as well as island tours provided by different tourist companies on the island.

<http://www.ehi.com/travel/carib/aruba/aruba-golf-tennis-sailing-scuba-diving-fishing.htm>

Arubans do not grow much of the fruits and vegetables locally; nevertheless, the variety of local cuisine is extensive. The typical Aruban cuisine is *Keshi yena* (cooks take a wheel of Gouda cheese, pack the hollowed-out center with a spicy meat mixture of either chicken or beef, and then bake the whole concoction), *Stobà* (lamb or goat stew), *Cala* (bean fritters), *Pastechi* (meat or cheese-stuffed turnovers), *Avacas* (leaf-wrapped meat rolls), *Pan bati* (famous Aruban corn bread), *Calco Tempera* (Pickled Conch), *Red Snapper*, and many other delicacies. There is no national drink as such but, as ever in the Caribbean, all alcoholic punches and cocktails will usually be given a ‘kick’ with a liberal dose of rum.

<http://www.iexplore.com/dmap/Aruba/Dining>

There are no rivers or railroads on the island though the road system connects all major cities. Also there are three deepwater harbors at San Nicolas, Oranjestad, and Barcadera. Royal Dutch Airlines (Koninklijke Luchtvaart Maatschappij – KLM) provides airline connections as well as other international carriers.

Sources consulted:

Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations, vol. 3: *Americas* (Detroit: Gale Research, 2007).

<http://www.everyculture.com/Middle-America-Caribbean/Arubans-Orientation.html>

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/22491.html>

<http://www.aruba.com/about/forlklore.php>

<http://www.aruba.com/about/history.php>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_Aruba

<http://www.arubarentals.com/calendar.htm>

<http://www.aruba.com/whattodo/holidays.php>

<http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Music-of-Aruba>

<http://www.visitaruba.com/facts/community/educ.html>

Government:

The Aruban government officiated by constitutional monarchy with parliamentary democracy. The 3 branches of the Aruban government are the executive, legislative, and judicial branches.

The Executive branch consists of the following: Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands (since April 30, 1980), represented by Governor General Fredis Refunjol, is the Chief of State (since May 11, 2004); the Head of the Government is Prime Minister Nelson O. Oduber (since October 30, 2001); and the Cabinet formed by the Council of Ministers is elected by the Staten. The government of Aruba is formed by a governor and the Council of Ministers. The Dutch Crown appoints the governor who in turn assigns the ministers.

The governor of Aruba has dual functions which are being the head of government as well as the representative of the Dutch Crown in the territory of the Dutch Crown. The Aruban single administrative layer of government has its seat in the capital Oranjestad. The Council of Ministers is accountable to the popular representatives, the respective parliaments of the Netherlands Antilles, and Aruba (comparable to the Lower House in the Netherlands).

The systems of government, education, social welfare and medicine also remain similar to the Dutch standard with some English common law influence. Aruba's Dutch foundations, combined with international influences, have contributed to a modern society with an advanced infrastructure.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aruba#Politics>

The Legislative branch (unicameral Legislature or Staten) consists of a 21 seats in the parliament members of which elected by direct popular vote for a 4-year term of office. Last election was held on September 23, 2005 and next is planned for 2009.) Suffrage is universal over age 18. There are 4 major political parties in Aruba: (1) People's Electoral Movement Party/MEP – 11 seats by party or 43%, (2) Aruban's People Party/AVP – 8 seats by party or 32%, (3) Aruban Patriotic Movement/MPA – 1 seat by party or 7%, and (4) RED – 1 seat by party or 7%. Other minor parties are Real Democracy/PDR – 6%, Aruban Liberal Organization/OLA – 4%, Aruban Patriotic Party/PPA – 2%, and Workers Political Platform/PTT.

The Judicial branch lies with the Common Court of Justice of Aruba and the Antilles Netherlands and a Supreme Court of Justice in Netherlands.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/aa.html#Govt>

Economy:

Aruba has had growth rates around 5% through the 1990s and into the 21st century. However, since September 11, 2001 a decrease in demand and the terrorist attack on the United States led to the 1st economic contraction in 15 years. The government of Aruba has made a high priority cutting the budget and trade deficit.

Aruban economy heavily depends on tourism which in the recent years, with the rapid growth, has resulted in a substantial expansion. Over 1.5 million tourists visit Aruba per year and 75% of those are from the USA. The other important sectors of the economy are offshore banking as well as oil refining and storage. The country's oil refinery provides a major source of employment, foreign exchange earnings, and economical growth.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/aa.html#Econ>

In 2005, the unemployment rate was 6.9% (divided equally among men and women), which reflects the presence of low poverty on the island. The labor force rate, defined as the population 15-64 years old, was 41,500 for the same year.

Most employment is based in wholesale, retail, trade, repair, hotels, restaurants, and oil refining. After the closure of the Lago refinery in 1985, the number of the hotel rooms was more than doubled and in the last few years it has even tripled. The single largest employer on the island is the government who has a payroll of approximately 5,000 people.

Aruban's GDP is \$2.258 billion (2005 est., an increase 2.4%) or 21,800 per capita (2005 est.). Agriculture in Aruba constitutes a meager 0.4% of GDP. Industry accounts for 33.3% and services for 66.3%. Aruba's revenues total \$507.9 million and expenditures \$577.9 million (2005 est.). The public debt is 46.3% of GDP (2005 est.) – a major improvement compared to the percentages during the early 1990s, when economic growth was too slow as well as a stable increase in the economy after the affect of September 11, 2001.

Aruba's export amount is \$80 million (includes oil re-exports – 2004 est.). The export commodities are live animals, animal products, art, collectibles, machinery, electrical equipment, and transport equipment. The 2 largest export partners are Netherlands and Panama. Others are Colombia, Venezuela, US, and Netherlands Antilles (2006 est.). Aruba spent \$875 million on import (2006 est.). The main import commodities are machinery, electrical equipment, crude oil for refining and re-export, chemicals, and foodstuffs. The main import partners are US, Netherlands, and UK.

Apart from oil refining and transshipment, trade is mainly directed toward tourism and local consumption; because of revenues related to port charges and services, a free zone is becoming more and more important. Aruba's currency is Aruban guilder/florin (AWG). More on Aruba's economy and development see in:

<http://www.everyculture.com/Middle-America-Caribbean/Arubans-Economy.html>
<http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/print/aa.html>
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/22491.html>

Literacy:

Total population: 97.3%
Male: 97.5%
Female: 97.1% (2000 est.)

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/aa.html#People>

Land/Geography:

Aruba located 15 miles from the South American coastline in the center of the southern Caribbean. The island is 19.6 miles long – six miles across at its widest point – with a total area of 70 square miles.



History

The earliest known Indian settlements date back to about 1000 A.D. and the first inhabitants of the modern Aruba were the Caquetios Indians from the Arawak tribe. Explorers, Spanish Alonso de Ojeda and Italian Amerigo Vespucci, discovered and claimed Aruba in 1499. They declared Aruba as useless island since there was an absence of precious metals on the island and too arid climate for cultivation. It soon became a center of piracy and smuggling but the natives of the island were not eliminated as happened elsewhere in the Caribbean.

Over a century Spain colonized Aruba but made little use of the island. Simas, the Indian Chief in Aruba, welcomed the first priests in Aruba and received from them a wooden cross as a gift. The Dutch conquered Aruba in 1634 whose authority of the island was confirmed by the other European powers two years later and they united five other islands in the Caribbean as the colony of Curaçao.

Spaniards and Dutch used the island as a huge cattle ranch. Even though the Dutch imported black slaves from Africa, the number of slaves was never large as plantation economy never developed on the island. The natives, under Spanish rule, enjoyed more liberty than the average northern European farmer of the period. During the 18th century the number of population on the island slowly grew where few Europeans were dominating the majority of Arawaks and the black slaves.

For over four centuries Aruba was part of the Netherlands Antilles with few interruptions. Britain forces occupied Aruba from 1799-1802 and from 1805-1816 protecting Aruba from French domination. After Netherlands were liberated from French, the island was returned to the Dutch rule and the development of the island began to take its course. Discovery of gold on the island in 1824 was the main economical stream until the turn of the 20th century. In 1863 the Dutch Crown abolished the slavery which followed the rapid decline of the island's economy. The finish production of gold rush in 1913 ever so deepened already existed economical depression and many Europeans left Aruba.

The first oil refinery in Aruba was established in 1924. In the next several years the huge oil refineries revived the economy of the island. Due to the Netherlands being captured by German Nazi during the World War II (WWII), Caribbean Dutch islands were left to self-governing under a local government based in Willemstad, the capital of Curaçao.

In 1933 Aruba sent its first petition of its separate status and autonomy to the Dutch Queen and for the next several decades Arubans were constantly appealing to the Netherlands for their independency. At the end of the WWII a sense of separate Aruban nationality began to emerge with its increasing demands for cultural and political autonomy. In 1986 Aruba became an autonomous member of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and following Aruba's request, the country was granted its independency in 1990.

Beginning in the 1960s, tourism became a new source of the island's income bringing the new prosperity to the Arubans and the island became a center of Caribbean tourism. By the year 1985 tourism has replaced Arubans' most important economic resource – the oil industry. In the 1990s offshore banking became the new growth industry.

The Arubans handle their own civil service, judiciary, revenue, currency, and own internal affairs. In the mid-2000, mainstreams of the Aruban's economy – tourism and banking, – began to falter due to the slowdown of the American economy. However, Aruba is determined to maintain its autonomy as well as keep important financial and military ties to the Netherlands.

Mixture of the nationalities on the island, South Americans, Europeans, the Far Easterners, and people from different islands on the Caribbean, bring to the island vitality of life and cultural experience.

Much of the information in this section is taken from:

James Minahan *Encyclopedia of the Stateless Nations: Ethnic and National Groups around the World*, vol. 1: A-C (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002).

Christian History

Aruba has almost 40 evangelical congregations with different outreach programs and ministries. Nearly half of those congregations held their services in English.

In 1822 believers from the Lutheran and Reformed churches were instrumental in founding of The Protestant Church of Aruba. Unfortunately, the latter one ceased to exist as separate entities few decades later. In Aruba Protestantism is believed to be the religion of the traditional elite. Less than 3% of the total population exercised Protestantism on the island. The identity of this denomination is often described as Calvinistic even though Protestantism does not belong nor has a specific denomination.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calvinism> (More on Calvinism)

With roots in the Holiness movement, the Pentecostal movement originated in the USA in the 19th century. The Pentecostal and Charismatic churches by the mid-2000 registered 8,450 “Christian adherents.”

The Great Commission Christians are the believers in Jesus Christ who are aware of the implications of Christ’s Great Commission, who have accepted the Commission’s personal challenge in their lives and ministries. Followers of this denomination make an effort to obey His commands and mandates and seek to influence the body of Christ implementing the call of the Great Commission. By mid-2000 there have been registered 5,402 “Christian adherents.”

Evangelical subdivision of Protestants consists of all affiliated church members or all persons belonging to Evangelical congregations, churches or denominations. The believers of this group are characterized by commitment to personal religion. By the mid-2000 the denomination has registered 4,100 “Christian adherents.”

Most of documentation on Aruba of the historical 18th-19th centuries’ is not available since the old archives were stored in Curacao and thereafter sent to Amsterdam, Holland. Aruba’s Dutch heritage is reflected by the Reformed Church in Aruba which is the largest single protestant group with 1,300 affiliated in 2001.

Most of the churches established on the island are the result of missionary work since World War II, with the exception of Methodists and Anglicans that have been set on the island around 1930. Much of the indigenous Christian outreach in the island has been shaped through the Radio Victoria and Assemblies of God broadcasts in Papiamentu and other languages.

The first Jewish family that ever established itself on the Caribbean (Curaçao Island) in 1754 was the family of Moses Solomon Levie Maduro, originally a Portuguese Jew. The family received a special permission from the Dutch crown and was one of the first Europeans to arrive the Dutch West Indies. The Maduro family later founded a branch in Aruba of the Dutch West Indies Company they worked for. By the year of 1867 other Jewish families, 23 persons total, built their roots in Aruba. Even though through the years their number grew increasingly, they were never able to establish a community like their fellow Jews in Curaçao.

It was only in 1956 that the Jewish community of Aruba (Israelitische Gemeente) received official recognition by the Dutch Crown and Beth Israel Synagogue was inaugurated in November 1962. The community consists of Jewish immigrants who arrived to Aruba from different parts of the world in the early 1920's and claimed the island their homeland. A large group of Jews settled in Aruba in 1924 who were immigrants from Poland, Holland, and Sephardic families for the previously Dutch colony Surinam (South America.)

For more than four decades the community played a prominent role in the development of cultural aspects of the island. However, in order to pursue their education, the big number of young generation Jews left the island in the 1960s and established their homes in the USA or in Holland. Today the Jewish community has about 85 members that live on the island.

<http://www.haruth.com/jw/JewsAruba.html> (The history of the Jews in Aruba)

The ministry outreach on the island varies due to the unique nature and makeup of the population. It is believed that Aruba has been a “launching pad for the gospel” in spreading the gospel to the utmost parts of the world. Media is used as a major part of the evangelical outreach efforts. Other methods are used as well, such as evangelical campaigns, gospel meetings, tracts distribution, personal evangelism, and bible studies among the unreached family and friends.

Some information in this section is taken from:

Lipe, David L. Ed. *Behold the Lamb: John's Gospel of Belief* (Tennessee: Freed-Hardeman University, 2008).

Source consulted:

Barrett, David B., George T. Kurian, and Todd M. Johnson. *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World*, vol. 1: *The World by Countries: Religionists, Churches, Ministries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

Religions

Non Christian

Non Religious

Most of the non-Christians in Aruba are nonreligious or Spiritists with a small number of Buddhists, Chinese folk religion, Jews, and Muslims in non-Caribbean ethnic minorities. Traditional popular assumptions about the supernatural are called *brua* (Spanish *bruja* – witch) and not to be equated with witchcraft. As a counterpoint to Christian belief, the evil spirit is called *spirito malu*. The practice includes magic, fortune telling, healing, and assumptions about good and evil and often it is not confirmed because of the low social esteem attached to it.

<http://www.everyculture.com/Middle-America-Caribbean/Arubans-Religion-and-Espression.html>

Buddhism (1.2%):

Buddhism is a religion and practical philosophy based on the teachings of Siddhartha/Buddha Gautama (6th-5th centuries BC). Buddhism is the 4th largest religion in the world. A Buddha “is generally considered to be a person who discovers the true nature of reality through years of spiritual cultivation, investigation of the various religious practices of his time, and meditation.” This transformational discovery is called *bodhi* (literally, – ‘Awakening’; more commonly called ‘Enlightenment.’). To reach this state of enlightenment or nirvana, a person must follow the Noble Eightfold Path, which is 1 of the Four Noble Truths.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism>

Islam (0.28%)

Islam means literally – ‘submission to the will of God.’ Islam’s holy book is the Qur’an. Some of the basic tenets of faith are belief in Allah and his unity, belief in the prophets (especially Muhammad; Jesus was only one of the prophets and fully man), belief in paradise and hell, and belief in judgment day.

Chinese religion (0.16%)

Chinese folk religion (often used synonymously as *Chinese traditional religion*) has been practiced in much of China for thousands of years and formed an important part of the modern Chinese culture. It also claims at least 400 million committed followers. Chinese folk religion is mainly based on two concepts such as Chinese mythology and ancestor veneration as well as it includes religious practices of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism.

Along side with ceremonies and festivals, devotion to different gods, deities, goddesses, “saints,” immortals, and demigods, the followers observe their worship to the sun, moon, earth, the heaven, various stars, as well as the animals. One of the key religious icons in these beliefs is the Chinese dragon.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_folk_religion

Baha’i (0.14%)

The Baha’i religion began in Persia in 1844 under the leader and founder Bahá'u'lláh, whose name means ‘glory of god.’ Followers of the Baha’i World Faith believe that the world is but one country and all people are its citizens. Baha’i emphasizes the unity of humanity, the equality of male and female, elimination of extreme riches and poverty, religious tolerance, and access for all to education and culture.

According to Baha’i, all religions are diverse expressions of the one universal religion. In government censuses Baha’is are usually counted as Muslims or Hindus and not shown separately.

Judaism (0.14%)

The religion of Jews characterized by belief in one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and in the mission of Jews to teach the Fatherhood of God as revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures. The Jewish Holy Book consists of the Torah (the law), the Nebiim (the prophets), and the Chetobim (the writings). Christians refer to this collection as the Old Testament. A central belief of Judaism is that God, the Creator of the World, made a covenant (agreement) with Abraham from whom the entire nation descended.

Throughout the history the Jewish people have often been called the “Chosen People.” This reference is based on the biblical tradition. God made a covenant with the handful of people in which He provided that they would be blessed by His love and protection if they remained faithful to His law, worshipped Him, and be accountable for sins against God’s laws. Orthodox Jews believe in a coming Messiah (from Hebrew “the anointed one”) who will unite the nation bringing peace and justice to all mankind.

Hinduism (number unknown)

The basic belief of Hinduism is that human and animal spirits reincarnate. The caste system, finding morality, merging with Brahman or ultimate reality, and reaching Nirvana (at which stage a spirit will no longer reincarnate) are other key concepts of this major world religion.

Roman Catholic Church (16,860)

The prevalent religion in Aruba is Catholicism but there is no territorial jurisdiction on the island which is covered by the Diocese of Willemstad in Netherlands Antilles. The Roman Catholic Church in Aruba is under the spiritual leadership of the Pope and curia in Rome. The first chapel on the island was built in 1750. The Roman Catholic Church plays a strong role among the Christians in Aruba as well as in the life of the country overall. Catholics comprise up to 90% of the Christians of the country which comes up to 82% of the general population.

Aruban Catholic Church steadfastly teaches and holds to the traditional Catholic belief. The Church stands solid on the traditional view as being an unbroken continuation of the early apostolic and later medieval universal church. It also affirms the view that in its customs and liturgical service, the Church has preserved more of the Catholic tradition than most other churches influenced by the Protestant Reformation on the island.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglicanism>

Christian or Evangelical

Anglican Church of Aruba (490)

The denomination started on the island *ca*1950 and it belongs to the Anglo-Catholic bloc. According to the 1995 statistics, there is solely 1 congregation present in the country with 669 individuals affiliated with this denomination. The denomination’s growth rate is 3.25% over 25-year period, 1970-1995. Nothing further is available on the history of the denomination at this time.

Assemblies of God (700)

There is no information available on the date of the denomination's start on the island except that it belongs to the Baptist-Pentecostal or Keswick-Pentecostal bloc. The functions of the denomination are similar to the Assemblies of God in USA. According to the 1995 statistics, there are 4 congregations present in the country with 1,000 individuals affiliated with this denomination. The denomination's growth rate is 0.05% over 25-year period, 1970-1995. Nothing further is available on the history of the denomination at this time.

Baptist Church in Aruba (300)

There is no information available on the date of the denomination's start on the island. The Church belongs to the Baptist bloc. According to the 1995 statistics, there are 3 congregations present in the country with 500 individuals affiliated with this denomination. The denomination's growth rate is 0.05% over 25-year period, 1970-1995. Nothing further is available on the history of the denomination at this time.

Church of Christ in Aruba (80)

The denomination started its function on the island *ca* 1970 and it belongs to the Independent Disciple / Restoration / Christian bloc. According to the 1995 statistics, there are 4 congregations present in the country with 133 individuals affiliated with this denomination. The denomination's growth rate is 6.14% over 25-year period, 1970-1995. Nothing further is available on the history of the denomination at this time.

Church of God in Aruba (300)

The church started its functioning in 1968 and it belongs to the Holiness-Pentecostal bloc. According to the 1995 statistics, there are 4 congregations present with 500 individuals affiliated with this denomination. The denomination's growth rate is 10.63% over 25-year period, 1970-1995. Nothing further is available on the history of the denomination at this time.

Church of God of Prophecy (200)

There is no information available on the date of the denomination's start on the island except that it belongs to the Holiness-Pentecostal bloc. According to the 1995 statistics, there are 2 congregations present with 400 individuals affiliated with this denomination. The denomination's growth rate is 0.05% over 25-year period, 1970-1995. Nothing further is available on the history of the denomination at this time.

Evangelical Church in Aruba (450)

The denomination started its functioning in *ca* 1950 and belongs to the Anglican Evangelical or Independent Evangelical bloc. According to the 1995 statistics, there are 5 congregations present with 500 individuals affiliated with this denomination. The denomination's growth rate

is 5.43% over 25-year period, 1970-1995. Nothing further is available on the history of the denomination at this time.

Methodist Church in Aruba (320)

The denomination started its functioning in *ca* 1930 and belongs to the mainline Methodist/United Methodist bloc. According to the 1995 statistics, there are 3 congregations present with 800 individuals affiliated with this denomination. The denomination's growth rate is 1.90% over 25-year period, 1970-1995. Nothing further is available on the history of the denomination at this time.

Reformed Church in Aruba (900)

The denomination started its functioning in *ca* 1940 and belongs to the Reformed / Presbyterian / Dutch Reformed bloc. According to the 1995 statistics, there are 6 congregations present with 1,500 individuals affiliated with this denomination. The denomination's growth rate is 1.64% over 25-year period, 1970-1995. Nothing further is available on the history of the denomination at this time.

Seven-day Adventist Church (100)

The denomination started its functioning in *ca* 1940 and belongs to the Adventist/Advent-Zendingen Genootschap bloc. According to the 1995 statistics, there is solely 1 congregation present with 300 individuals affiliated with this denomination. The denomination's growth rate is 7.43% over 25-year period, 1970-1995. Nothing further is available on the history of the denomination at this time.

United Protestant Church of Aruba (200)

The denomination started its functioning in *ca* 1930 and belongs to the Lutheran/Reformed United church bloc. According to the 1995 statistics, there are 2 congregations present with 500 individuals affiliated with this denomination. The churches within the denomination form the union of bodies of different traditions. The denomination's growth rate is 3.73% over 25-year period, 1970-1995. Nothing further is available on the history of the denomination at this time.

Other Pentecostal Churches (450)

The denomination started its functioning in *ca* 1980 and belongs to the Afro-Caribbean Pentecostal bloc. According to the 1995 statistics, there are 12 congregations present with 900 individuals affiliated with this denomination. The denomination's growth rate is 6.67% over 25-year period, 1970-1995. Nothing further is available on the history of the denomination at this time.

Other Protestant Churches (200)

The denomination started its functioning in *ca* 1950 and belongs to the Protestant bloc. According to the 1995 statistics, there are 5 congregations present with 500 individuals affiliated with this denomination. The denomination's growth rate is 6.65% over 25-year period, 1970-1995. Nothing further is available on the history of the denomination at this time.

Much information in this section is taken from:

Barrett, David B., George T. Kurian, and Todd M. Johnson. *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World, vol. 2: The World by Segments: Religions, Peoples, Languages, Cities, Topics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

People Group

All information, unless otherwise noted, is obtained from:

www.peoplegroups.org

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php>

<http://www.ethnologue.com>

Some reporting groups place Catholics, marginal Christian groups, and evangelicals in a category called "Christian Adherents." When the term is used, "Christian Adherents" is placed in quotation marks to indicate this usage.

00000

Antillean Creole (83,000)

The settlement of the Dutch and Spanish in the 15th and 16th centuries reflects European features in the Arubans. The word "Creole" was first used to differentiate Europeans from American born descendants. In the present day society, Creole has adopted a new meaning: the name describes the culture that is formed by the mixture of many influences with application to language, cooking, clothes, and architecture.

Among the "Christian adherents" of the population is 98.7% while only 5.9 % are evangelical Christians. Roman Catholic Church claims 86.7% of the "Christian adherents" whereas 4.8% are Protestants. Another 4% are Independent while the remaining 5.5% belongs to other Christian groups.

There are several Christian resources available for this people group. Portions of the Bible were translated as early as 1884. The complete Bible and other printed materials are available. People can view the Jesus film and other Christian films. There is no indication of existing radio broadcasts and Gospel recordings for this group of population.

16191

Aruban or Papiamentu (49,190)

The first inhabitants of modern day Aruba were peaceful Arawak Indian tribe of the Caiquetio nation who were farmers and fishermen. Indian ancestry is apparent in most Arubans. With the

20th century industrial increase, there is a further blending of the population of over 40 different nationalities who inhabit the island in peaceful harmony.

Among the Aruban or Papiamentu the number of evangelical Christians is unknown. There are no indications given as to religious affiliation or ministry tools.

114916

Deaf (4,400)

Little information is available on the group.

Among the “Christian adherents” of the population is 96.45% while only 6.17% are evangelical Christians.

Among the Deaf the number of evangelical Christians is unknown. There are no records of the Bible being translated or any other ministries available for this people group.

22312

Dutch (5,670)

The Dutch are a western-Germanic people. They speak Dutch and/or Frisian along with many dialects. The Dutch are known as hardworking, devout, tolerant, and liberal people. The Dutch are tall with fair skin.

Eighty-one percent of the population is “Christian adherents” but only 2.18% are evangelical Christians. Sixty-one percent of the “Christian adherents” belong to the Roman Catholic Church whereas 34% are Protestants. Another 4% are Independent while the remaining 1% belongs to other Christian groups.

There are several Christian resources available for this people group. Portions of the Bible were translated as early as 1477. The complete Bible and other printed materials are available. People can view the Jesus film and other Christian films. Radio broadcasts and Gospel recordings exist.

24981

East Caribbean (7,506)

Caribbean society is by definition, a mixture of different people and cultures. Caribbean people come from African slaves, Chinese or Indian workers, European colonists, Near East traders. The Caribbean Indian tribes come from South America. Caribbean people have a strong feeling of national and regional identity. There are no indications given as to religious affiliation or ministry tools within this people group.

http://caymanjobs.ky/caribbean/html/a_caribbean_mixture.html

00000

Filipino (400)

The term (feminine: *Filipina*) may also refer to people of Philippine descent, regardless of citizenship. Throughout the colonial era, the term “Filipino” originally referred to Spaniards born in the Philippines, also known as *insulares*, *criollos* or *español filipino*.

Presently, “Filipino” is also used to signify the nationality and citizenship of one who is from the Philippines. This means that Filipino now may refer not only to the indigenous Austronesian majority, but also to those of other ethnic origins, such as American, Spanish, Indian, Japanese, and Chinese Filipinos. The term “Austronesian” (Latin *auster* “south wind” plus Greek *nêsos* “island”) is referred to a language family which is similar to Indo-European, Afro-Asiatic and Uralic as one of the best-established ancient language families.

Ninety-three percent of the population is “Christian adherents” while only 7.4% are evangelical Christians. Eighty-seven percent of the “Christian adherents” belong to the Roman Catholic Church whereas 5% are Protestants. Another 5% are Independent while the remaining 1.3% of the population belongs to other Christian churches.

There are several Christian resources available for this people group. Portions of the Bible were translated as early as 1898. The complete Bible and other printed materials are available. People can view the Jesus film and other Christian films. Radio broadcasts and Gospel recordings along with ethnic worship music exist.

00000

Han Chinese or Mandarin (400)

Alternate People Names: Beijinhua, Chinese, Guanhua, Hakka, Hoton, Kreol, Northern Chinese

Han Chinese is the largest ethnic group in the world referring to the natives from China which constitutes 19% of the entire human global population. The name “Han” comes from the Han Dynasty. The word also stands for the name of the river sited in central China – Han River. It is believed that the founders of the Han dynasty once were based near the locality of the river. In Classical Literary Chinese the word “Han” can also mean the “Milky Way” or as people in ancient China called it – the “Heavenly River.”

The official modern language of Standard Spoken Chinese language is also known as Standard Mandarin. Even though it is usually just called “Mandarin” in non-academic, every day usage of the language, the linguists use the word “Mandarin” to refer to the entire language.

Twenty-two percent of the population is “Christian adherents” while only 1.1% is evangelical Christians. Seventy percent of the “Christian adherents” belong to the Roman Catholic Church whereas 20% are Protestants. Remaining 10% of the population belongs to the Anglican Church.

There are several Christian resources available for this people group. Portions of the Bible were translated as early as 1864. The complete Bible and other printed materials are available. People can view the Jesus film and other Christian films. Radio broadcasts, Gospel recordings along with ethnic worship music exist.

00000

Jew (200)

Alternate People Names: Azx, Bukharic Jew, Hasidim, Jewish, Judeo-German, Shanvar Teli, Yahudan, Yudan.

One percent of the population is “Christian adherents” while meager 0.005% are evangelical Christians. Eighty-seven percent of the “Christian adherents” are members of the ethnic religions while 12% consider themselves non-religious. Fifty percent of the “Christian adherents” belong to the Roman Catholic Church while the remaining 50% are Protestants.

There are several Christian resources available for this people group. Portions of the Bible were translated as early as 1530. The complete Bible and other printed materials are available. People can view the Jesus film and other Christian films. Radio broadcasts and Gospel recordings exist.

24689

Latino (12,188)

Alternate People Names: Colombian Mestizo, Latin, Old Latin, Venezuelan Mestizo

The Latino (fem. Latina) is defined as a native of Latin-America or Spanish-speaking descent regardless of race. Linguistically refers to the Romance languages in general (from Latin, *Hispanus*, adjective from *Hispania* – the Roman name for the Iberian Peninsula.) Due to the Spaniards taking the Roman Catholic tradition to Latin America, Catholicism continues to be the predominant religious affiliation. A growing number of Latinos convert into different Christian denominations.

Ninety-eight percent of the population is “Christian adherents” while only 8.6% are evangelical Christians. Eighty-nine percent of the “Christian adherents” belong to the Roman Catholic Church whereas 6% are Protestants. Another 3.7% are Independent while the remaining 1.3% belongs to the Anglican Church.

There are several Christian resources available for this people group. Portions of the Bible were translated as early as 1514. The complete Bible and other printed materials are available. People can view the Jesus film and other Christian films. Radio broadcasts and Gospel recordings along with ethnic worship music exist.

00000

Turk (200)

Alternate People Names: Anatolian, Masakhastian, Osmanli, or Rumelian Turk

The origins of the Turkish people group have their roots in Central Asia but with the historical migrations and conquests it took them to the present-day Turkey. The group is represented by a broad linguistic branch from the societies such as Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, Uyghur, Azerbaijani, Turkmen, Xiongnu, Kipchaks, Eurasian, Bulgarians, Huns, Seljuks, Khazars, Ottomans, and Timurids. The Turks first appeared in vast number in the Middle East as nomadic soldiers in the 10th century. Islam became the religion of the majority to the present day.

http://www.adiyamanli.org/r_who.htm

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15097a.htm>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkic_peoples

The only indication for religious affiliation is given to Islam and 100% of the people group adheres to Islamic believes.

There are several Christian resources available for this people group. Portions of the Bible were translated as early as 1782. The complete Bible and other printed materials are available. People can view the Jesus film and other Christian films. There is no indication of Radio broadcasts for this people group. However, Gospel recordings along with ethnic worship music exist.

Missiological Implications

1. Evangelical Christians and churches should pray for the growth in evangelical witness among the recent arrivals in Arubans. Pray for the greater impact on the Papiamentto-speaking population.
2. Evangelical Christians and churches should recognize that the presence of many nationalities on the island evangelism and church starting make Aruba a great field of reaching many nations.
3. Evangelical Christians and churches should develop and share with believers in Aruba ways of sharing the Gospel with Roman Catholics.
4. Evangelical Christians and churches should pray for the enduring fruitfulness for the media ministry that is evidenced through the Radio Victoria (TEAM-related churches) and the AoG (Assembly of God) station broadcasting to the whole Caribbean in Papiamentto and other languages. Trans World Radio (TWR) broadcasts from Bonaire for 14 hours a day in Spanish.
5. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek ways to minister to and evangelize the many tourists who visit Aruba each year.

Links:

<http://www.aruba.com/about/fastfacts.php>

<http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/print/aa.html>

<http://www.ethnologue.com>

http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=AW
http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=nld
http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=pap
http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=eng
http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=spa
<http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/namerica/caribb/aw.htm>
<http://www.everyculture.com/Middle-America-Caribbean/Arubans-Orientation.html>
http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=AW