



Rev. Bernie Barbour was born in Hampton, Virginia, April 1, 1950 in his great grandfather's house. He was delivered and named by his great aunt, Helen Roberts, who celebrated her 104th birthday, March 20, 2007. He was his mother's second child. He has one sister, three brothers, three nieces and five nephews.

In 1963, his mother moved them to East Orange, NJ. He graduated from East Orange High School in 1968 where he was considered a nerd since he was President of the National Honor Society and received a National Achievement Scholarship, which he used to attend Amherst College.

Rev. Bernie received his BA magna cum laude from Amherst College. He went to the University of Ibadan in 1970 for his junior year abroad. This was just nine months after the end of the Biafran War. While in Nigeria, he also visited Togo, Benin, Ghana and Chad. He had the unique opportunity of being present at the Nigerian celebration of 10 years of independence and was able to see in person some great figures of African history such as Haile Selassie, Leopold Senghor and others. While traveling through Northern Nigeria on a trip to Chad, he became fascinated by the role of Islam in the shaping of West African history and returned to the states and decided to pursue doctoral studies in this field at Princeton University. During the summer of 1972, he studied at the University of Tunisia at the Bourguiba School of Modern Languages. He has an MA from Princeton University in Near Eastern Studies and a M. Div. from the Iliff School of Theology where he was Student of the Year.

From December 1972 until August 1975, he served in the US Army. While serving as a Sergeant stationed in Kaiserslautern, Germany, he developed, wrote and presented a week-long radio program for armed forces radio for Black History Month. He taught all levels of military personnel in race relations' classes. He also was a liaison to the Regional Military Dependent School District. In 1974 he officially came out as a black gay male and served as such until his honorable discharge.

When he returned to New Jersey, he served two years as the New Jersey Representative to Heritage of Pride, which plans the New York City Gay Pride parade. Additionally he served as the President of the New Jersey Lesbian and Gay Coalition and held various positions with the Gay Activist Alliance of Morris County New Jersey. In 1980 the Exxon Corporation employed him in New York City.

In 1986, they transferred him to Houston, TX. While chatting with some friends they asked him if he had anything against church. He told them no, but he had stopped attending in 1963 when he moved to New Jersey. They said they knew of a church that they felt he would like. He attended his first service in July and became a member of Resurrection MCC seven months later.

1994 was a year in which his faith was challenged, i.e., it would grow or disappear. In June, his mother who was his best friend died suddenly. In July of the same year, his father died. In the span of thirty-two days, he buried both his mother and father. AA and the support he received from his local church kept him sane and helped him grow. In 1996, while attending a DPOC leadership conference in Burbank, CA, he realized during the opening luncheon speech of Bishop Leontyne Kelly that God was calling him to professional ministry. Lots of people chuckled because they had known for some time and they were wondering what had taken him so long to realize it.

During his MCC journey his church participation includes Member, Board of Directors, Vice Moderator of the Board of Directors, Assistant District Coordinator for South Central District, Member of the UFMCC Delegation to the World Council of Churches in Harare, Zimbabwe, faculty and Dean of Samaritan Institute for Religious Studies and Vice Chair of the UFMCC Board of Elders Taskforce on Structures and Systems.

Since his ordination in 2001, he has served as the Administrative Pastor of Resurrection MCC, Pastor of Emmaus MCC in Fayetteville, NC and Pastor of MCC of New Haven in Connecticut. He currently serves as Voluntary Staff Clergy at Resurrection MCC in Houston, TX.