

REACHING
THE NATIONS

REACHING THE NATIONS

INTERNATIONAL LDS
CHURCH GROWTH ALMANAC

VOLUME I

DAVID G. STEWART, JR.
MATTHEW MARTINICH

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Cumorah Foundation
Henderson, Nevada
cumorah.com

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FOREWORD

Armand L. Mauss

STARTING in 1984, prominent sociologist Rodney Stark pointed to the remarkable growth of the LDS (Mormon) Church around the world, whose membership had been doubling about every twenty years. At that rate of growth, Stark declared, we could be seeing the rise of the first new world faith since Islam.¹ Stark was simply projecting into the future the annual growth figures from the Church's own almanac, which, as he has recognized, is always hazardous. Such straight-line projections make no allowance for intervening contextual factors that can slow growth rates, nor do they take account of failures to retain new converts.² Significant losses from the low LDS retention rate have been apparent since at least 1996.³ More recently, scholars have been able to compare official Church membership figures with personal religious identifications reported in the censuses of various nations. Such comparisons consistently show self-reported LDS identification as half or less of the official Church figures in North America and only about a fourth of self-reported figures elsewhere in the world.⁴

The new century brought a new and powerful voice to the discussions on LDS Church growth. Dr. David G. Stewart, Jr., a successful pediatric orthopedic surgeon, proved to have a passion well outside his professional practice. As a former missionary for the Church in Russia and a periodic traveler to various LDS mission fields, Stewart recognized the weaknesses not only in the official figures on church growth, but also in the actual proselytizing and retention efforts of the Church operationally. For the past decade at least, he has carried on a personal crusade to remedy those weaknesses through generating solid knowledge of both numerical and methodological kinds. This effort began with the establishment of the Cumorah Foundation, a private non-profit organization whose objective is to promote the growth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by analyzing the factors that facilitate and constrain that growth. Such analysis inevitably focuses largely on the effectiveness of the missionary program of the Church, requiring a thorough and realistic evaluation of the church's proselytizing methods and prospects.

Yet the Cumorah Foundation is not connected to the Church but is the product primarily of the creativity, dedication, and resources of its founder, Dr. Stewart. The principal project of this Foundation has been the website cumorah.com, which has accumulated an expanding encyclopedia of data about Mormons throughout the world and an ambitious mapping project. As the work of the Foundation has increased, Stewart has been joined by a few colleagues and assistants, most notably coauthor Matt Martinich.⁵ The Cumorah website also provides access to many other resources of potential interest to both scholars and lay members interested in the Mormon experience around the world. Not least among these resources is Stewart's own 450-page book

¹Rodney Stark, "The Rise of a New World Faith," *Review of Religious Research* 26:18-27 (1984). The full and correct name of the LDS or Mormon Church is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

²See Stark's explanation and updating in his more recent *The Rise of Mormonism* (Columbia University Press, 2005), where he shows that official Church figures still continue to track his projections closely.

³See the several relevant articles in Armand L. Mauss (guest editor), "Mormons and Mormonism in the Twenty-first Century: Prospects and Issues," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29:1 (Spring 1996).

⁴See Rick Phillips, "Rethinking the International Expansion of Mormonism," *Nova Religio* 10(1):52-68 (2006); and Ronald Lawson and Ryan T. Cragun, "Comparing the Geographic Distributions and Growth of Mormons, Adventists, and Witnesses," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 51(2):220-40 (2012).

⁵Martinich also maintains an informative website and blogsite of his own at <http://ldschurchgrowth.blogspot.com>.

surveying the problems and predicaments of LDS worldwide expansion since the middle of the twentieth century.⁶

The new almanac, offered here, is truly unique among publications on the Mormons. It is unique, first of all, in its *auspices*—namely, the Cumorah Foundation, not the Church or any commercial publisher. In some ways, the almanac can be seen as a culmination of the work started earlier by the website, though the overlap between the two is only partial. Thus a second way in which this publication is unique is in its *scope*. No assessment of Mormon missionizing effectiveness would be meaningful without relevant information on such large-scale contextual variables as geography, culture, economy, and politics, as well as on specific methodological variables. The latter would include the proselytizing policies, methods, techniques, and outcomes in the Church generally and of its local mission presidents in particular. Such comprehensive information can be found nowhere else but in the cumorah.com website and now more fully in this published almanac, which covers eleven regions and more than two hundred countries.

A third truly unique aspect of this almanac is its *candor*, which can be seen especially in how it deals with such topics as church growth, convert retention, member activity, and future prospects. In most parts of the world, the realities surrounding these topics are not very promising for LDS Church growth and expansion, despite optimistic expectations sometimes found in official Church sermons and statements. LDS convert retention and member activity are especially weak in comparison with what is achieved by such other proselytizing denominations such as Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses. This almanac makes all too clear why the Latter-day Saints are less successful than these others in achieving realistic and permanent church growth in most of the world.

Finally, this almanac is remarkable for the variety of *sources* on which it is based. These include not only the most reliable and independent secondary sources in the scholarly literature but also important primary sources that run the gamut from official Church publications to archival documents, including internal reports from missionaries and mission presidents. In future research and publications on growth patterns in the LDS Church around the world, this almanac will be the most reliable and indispensable source available. Conscientious reporters, commentators, academics, or spokespersons, whether Mormon or otherwise, will not be able to ignore it if their work is to be credible.

Armand L. Mauss
Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Religious Studies
Washington State University

⁶ Stewart's Law of the Harvest: Practical Principles of Effective Missionary Work (privately published, 2007) is also available in electronic form on the cumorah.com website. A condensed, somewhat updated and very valuable version of Stewart's work can be found as "Growth, Retention, and Internationalization," Chapter 12 (328–361) in Revisiting Thomas F. O'Dea's The Mormons: Contemporary Perspectives, edited by Cardell K. Jacobson, John P. Hoffman, and Tim B. Heaton (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2008).

INTRODUCTION

ORIGINALLY founded in 1830 in the United States in upstate New York, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) has church members and an organized presence in approximately 180 countries and territories today. The Church experienced an acceleration in membership and congregational growth during the latter half of the twentieth century as congregations were organized in previously unreached nations and territories, and missionaries were introduced to these locations. As a result of these efforts, church membership increased from one million members and 2,574 wards and branches in 1947 to ten million members and 24,697 wards and branches in 1997. Notwithstanding this progress, the Church has faced serious shortcomings in most countries retaining new converts, maintaining acceptable member activity rates, achieving commensurate unit and membership growth rates, and consistently opening new areas to proselytism. In 2011, we estimate that approximately 30% of worldwide Latter-day Saints regularly attend church meetings and that 22% of the world's population resides in a location with an LDS congregation that they can legally attend.

This almanac-styled book provides the most comprehensive statistics, historical data, and analysis on LDS Church growth available at present. Individual profiles were completed for 211 countries and territories, and regional profiles were completed for ten world regions. We have organized country and territory profiles by region in this book and have also produced regional profiles providing a synopsis of issues relating to church growth for ten of the eleven regions. Topics examined in regional and country profiles include geography, people groups, population, languages, history, culture, economy, religion, religious freedom, largest cities, LDS history, membership growth, congregational growth, member activity and convert retention, finding, language materials, meetinghouses, health and safety, and humanitarian and development work. Each profile includes an analytical section that examines opportunities and challenges for LDS growth in regards to religious freedom, cultural issues, national outreach, member activity and convert retention, ethnic issues and integration, language issues, missionary service, leadership, temple, comparative growth, and future prospects. Information on indices cited in profiles such as the Human Development Index and Corruption Index can be found in the bibliography section.

Aside from our desire to create a resource that catalogs facts on LDS Church growth and presents demographic, historic, economic, cultural, and religious background by country and region, we have analyzed the interplay of these factors on LDS growth and identified challenges, opportunities, and prospects for future growth. The analytical nature of this book is such as to help educate the general public about the distribution of LDS membership and issues that have favored and hampered growth in the past, as well as to suggest useful methods from accumulated experience to achieve the greatest real growth possible in locations around the world. We hope that this work will encourage lay members and leaders alike to learn from prior successes and failures around the world and adopt and implement growth strategies that are scripturally based, consistent with church teachings, and promote local self-sustainability in growth and leadership.

This work is divided into two volumes, with the first volume covering regions that have traditionally had a strong LDS presence or longstanding missionary outreach, including the Americas, Oceania, and Europe. The second volume covers the continents of Asia and Africa, where sustained missionary efforts have begun more recently and LDS populations are typically smaller. Although there are some exceptions to these generalizations – for example, the Philippines is home to the largest population of LDS members outside of the

Americas, whereas some nations in the Caribbean and Eastern Europe have relatively few members and small missionary programs – we have felt that this arbitrary geographic division is suitable for the need to divide the work into two volumes of similar length.

We gathered data from approximately two dozen primary sources listed in the bibliography and have sought to find the most accurate and current information available, including hundreds of member, returned missionary, and mission president reports, and our own research. Most of the information in this book is current as of mid 2013. We are solely responsible for any views expressed; these are not those of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

David G. Stewart, Jr.,
Matthew Martinich

NORTH AMERICA

Canada, **Greenland**, the United States

*Territories and countries in **bold** have no individual profiles*

INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY PROFILES

CANADA

Geography

AREA: 9,984,640 square km. Geographically the world's second largest country, Canada occupies vast stretches of northern North America and extends from the contiguous United States to Alaska in the west, the North Pole to the north, and Greenland to the northeast. Canada includes dozens of large islands between the North American mainland and the North Pole and borders the North Atlantic, the North Pacific, and the Arctic Oceans. Linked to the North Atlantic Ocean, Hudson Bay is a major geographic feature and occupies a large area in central Canada. Temperate climate predominates in southern Canada, which is modified by distance to the ocean, with wetter, milder maritime conditions occurring in coastal areas and continental, drier conditions in interior areas. Subarctic and arctic climate occur in central and northern Canada where terrain consists of plains and mountains covered by boreal forests and tundra. The Rocky Mountains dominate western Canada, whereas plains and lowlands occupy eastern areas. Permafrost and severe weather are natural hazards. Environmental issues include air and water pollution from industrial and urban activities and acid rain. Canada is administratively divided into ten provinces and three territories.

Peoples

White: 66%
Amerindian: 2%
Other: 6%
Mixed: 26%

Immigration and European colonization of Canada has resulted in the white population accounting for the majority. White Europeans account for two-thirds of the Canadian population, 42% of whom are of British-Isles descent, 35% of whom are of French descent, and 23% of whom descended from other European ethnic groups, including approximately two million of Ukrainian ancestry. Approximately one-quarter of the population is of mixed ancestry. Amerindians account for 2% of the population. Six percent of the population pertains to other ethnic groups, including Asian, African, and Arab ethnicities.

Population: 34,300,083 (July 2012)
Annual Growth Rate: 0.784% (2012)
Fertility Rate: 1.59 children born per woman (2012)
Life Expectancy: 78.89 male, 84.21 female (2012)

Languages: English (58.8%), French (21.6%), other (19.6%). English and French are the official languages. Other languages with the most speakers include languages native to India and Pakistan, other European

languages, and East Asian languages. Only English and French have over one million speakers with twenty million and 7.35 million speakers, respectively.

Literacy: 99% (2003)

History

Amerindian groups populated North America for millennia prior to the arrival of Europeans. The Vikings established a settlement in Newfoundland around 1000 AD, which was briefly maintained. The name *Canada* was adopted from an Iroquoian word meaning *village* when the French began exploring eastern areas along the St. Lawrence Seaway in the early sixteenth century. The French settled much of eastern Canada, and the English began colonizing Newfoundland during this period. The British annexed eastern Canada from the French during the eighteenth century as a result of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 and the Treaty of Paris in 1763. Canada was divided into Upper and Lower Canada in the late eighteenth century for English and French speakers, who later laid the foundation for the present-day provinces of Ontario and Quebec. The British based their war operations in Canada for the War of 1812 with the United States and expanded westward during the nineteenth century, establishing colonies on Vancouver Island and in British Columbia. Canada achieved independence from the United Kingdom in 1867 and encouraged settlement and development of the sparsely populated and undeveloped west. In the twentieth century, Canada participated in both world wars and bolstered ties with the United States. Many in the French-speaking province of Quebec pushed for greater sovereignty and independence from Canada during the latter half of the twentieth century, but these efforts never came to fruition. Canada participated in the United States-led Gulf War in the early 1990s and invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. Today, Canada numbers among the most technologically advanced nations, experiences a high standard of living, maintains numerous trade agreements with the United States, continues to exploit abundant natural resources, and pledges dedication toward protecting the environment.

Culture

Past British and French rule have heavily influenced the development of Canadian culture, and both English and French are official languages. Catholicism is a traditional cultural influence in French-speaking areas, but church attendance rates are generally low throughout the country. Canada has experienced heavy immigration over the past several decades, especially from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, which has altered traditional Canadian culture as these immigrant groups have integrated into society. Cuisine consists of foods and dishes common in Western Europe and the United States and many foods introduced by Asian immigrants. Ice hockey, Canadian football, and lacrosse are the most popular sports. Alcohol and cigarette consumption rates are comparable to the world average.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$40,300 (2011) [83.8% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.908

Corruption Index: 8.7 (2011)

Canada possesses ample natural resources, a skilled-labor workforce, and an advanced, diversified market economy that is highly integrated into the economy of the United States. Seventy-five percent of exports are destined for the United States, and 51% of imports originate from the United States. Proven Canadian oil reserves are the world's second largest; other natural resources include iron ore, nickel, zinc, copper, gold, lead, molybdenum, potash, diamonds, silver, coal, hydropower, timber, and wildlife. Strong economic growth occurred throughout the latter half of the twentieth century. The global financial crisis plunged the economy into recession for the first time in over a decade, but conservative lending policies from major Canadian banks contributed to a rapid recovery and a stable, robust financial sector. Services employ 76% of the workforce and generate 78% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 19% of the workforce and generates 20% of the

GDP. Motor vehicle equipment, chemicals, mining, food processing, wood products, fishing, petroleum, and natural gas are major industries. Agriculture accounts for 2% of the labor force and GDP. Common agricultural products include grains, tobacco, fruit, vegetables, dairy products, and fish. Aside from the United States, other primary trade partners include China, Mexico, and the United Kingdom. Canada ranks among countries with the lowest perceived levels of corruption.

Faiths

Christian: 77.1%

Muslim: 2%

Jewish: 1.1%

Buddhist: 1%

Hindu: 1%

Sikh: 1%

Other: 0.8%

None: 16%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 14,973,459

Latter-day Saints 187,982 472

Jehovah's Witnesses 113,989 1,358

Seventh Day Adventists 62,817 356

Religion

Christians account for approximately three-quarters of the population. Fifty-seven percent of Christians are Catholic and 38% are Protestant; the remaining 5% follow other Christian denominations. The largest Protestant denominations include the United Church, Anglican, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Baptist, and Pentecostal churches. Non-Christian religious groups constitute less than 5% of the population and with the exception of Jews are concentrated among Asian immigrants.⁷ Provinces in eastern Canada have the highest percentage of self-identified Christians, whereas western provinces and territories have the lowest percentages. Nonreligious populations comprise the largest percentage of the population in the west.

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. Major Christian holidays are recognized national holidays. Religious groups are not required to register with the government. To receive tax-exempt status and other financial benefits, a religious group must send overseas humanitarian aid only to government-approved individuals or locations, be nonpolitical, and submit to periodic audits. Societal abuses of religious freedom are infrequent. There have been accusations of some provincial governments limiting the freedom of religious expression for Muslims.⁸

⁷ "Canada," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148740.htm>

⁸ "Canada," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148740.htm>

Largest Cities

Urban: 81%

Toronto, Montréal, Vancouver, Calgary, Ottawa, Edmonton, Québec, Winnipeg, Hamilton, Kitchener, London, St. Catharines, Halifax, Oshawa, Victoria, Windsor, Saskatoon, Regina, Sherbrooke, St. John's, Barrie, Kelowna, Abbotsford, Sudbury, Kingston, Saguenay, Trois-Rivières, Brantford, Guelph, Moncton, Saint John, Thunder Bay, Peterborough.

All thirty-three cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. Sixty-nine percent of the national population resides in the thirty-three most populous cities.

LDS History

The first LDS missionary work to occur outside of the United States began in Canada in September 1830 by Joseph Smith, Sr. and his son, Don Carlos, in small towns north of the St. Lawrence River. Brigham Young performed missionary work with his brother Phineas in 1832, and the Prophet Joseph Smith visited Canada in October 1833 to perform missionary work. By 1834, there were 150 converts baptized and four branches established. LDS apostles John E. Page and Paley P. Pratt were assigned to special missions in Canada in the mid-1830s and experienced great success, baptizing hundreds of new converts and establishing additional congregations. By 1850, approximately 2,500 Canadians, primarily from Upper Canada, had joined the Church. Nearly all Canadian church members had emigrated to Utah or had gone inactive in the mid-nineteenth century. By 1861, the Ontario census reported only seventy-four members in the province.

In the late 1880s, the LDS Church established a presence in western Canada under the direction of Charles Card to avoid persecution by the United States government for some members practicing plural marriage. In 1887, the settlement of Cardston was founded, and an LDS congregation was organized as part of the Cache Valley Stake. LDS Church leadership advised Card to purchase 20,000 acres to make the settlement permanent and self-sustaining due to the degree of tolerance exhibited by the Canadian government to the Church at the time. By 1895, the first LDS stake outside the United States was organized in Canada, named the Alberta Stake. Additional towns and communities were founded by Latter-day Saint settlers in the region during the 1890s, including Raymond, Magrath, and Stirling, and Canadian businessmen contracted members to irrigate 720,000 acres between the United States border and Lethbridge. The reputation of Latter-day Saints with the general Canadian population improved in the early twentieth century following the discontinuance of plural marriage. However, LDS missionaries were banned from entering Quebec for many years. Missionary work occurred throughout western Canada before World War I but with little success. Missionary work expanded into eastern Canada during the mid-twentieth century.⁹ Future LDS Church President Thomas S. Monson served as a mission president over the Canadian Mission from 1959 to 1962, which at the time included Ontario and Quebec.¹⁰

Missions

LDS missionary efforts commenced in Canada during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century without official mission organization or through LDS missions based in the United States. The Canadian Mission was initially organized in 1919 from the Eastern States and Northern States Missions and was renamed the Ontario Toronto Mission in 1974. A second mission, the Western Canadian Mission, was organized in 1941 from missions based in the United States and was renamed the Canada Calgary Mission in 1974. The

⁹ "Canada: From Struggling Seed, the Church Has Risen to Branching Maple," *Ensign*, September 1988. <http://lds.org/Ensign/1988/09/canada-from-struggling-seed-the-church-has-risen-to-branching-maple?lang=eng&query=canada>

¹⁰ Farrington, John. "Return to Canada," *LDS Church News*, 8 May 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45526/Return-to-Canada.html>

Canadian-Alaskan Mission was organized in 1960 and renamed the Canada Vancouver Mission in 1974. By 1970, there were four missions. Additional missions were organized in Halifax (1973), Winnipeg (1976), Toronto East (1993), and Edmonton (1998). In 2011, the two missions in Toronto were consolidated into a single mission. The number of missions increased to six in 1980 and eight in 2000. In 2011, there were seven LDS missions.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 187,982 (2012)

There were approximately 10,000 Latter-day Saints in southern Alberta accounting for 3% of the provincial population by 1914. In 1923, 80% of Canadian church membership resided within one hundred miles of Cardston. In 1950, there were 30,000 members.¹¹ In 1973, there were 55,532 Latter-day Saints in Canada, 37,512 who resided within the boundaries of the ten stakes operating at the time.¹² By 1983, there were 90,321 members, 44,335 of whom resided in Alberta (49%), 17,439 in Ontario (19%), and 15,932 in British Columbia (18%). There were 12,000 members in Calgary in 1988.¹³ At the time, 75% of church membership in Alberta resided in Calgary and Edmonton.¹⁴ Canadian LDS membership increased to 118,000 in 1987, 138,000 in 1993, 151,000 in 1997, and 158,511 in 2000.

Slow membership growth occurred in the 2000s as membership reached 163,666 in 2002, 169,633 in 2004, 175,383 in 2006, 177,600 in 2008, and 182,142 in 2010. Annual membership growth rates ranged between 1% and 2% during the 2000s with the exception of 2008 when membership slightly declined (-0.3%). Church membership generally increases between 2,000 and 3,000 members annually. In 2010, one in 187 was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 327 Branches: 144 (April 2013)

There were 370 LDS congregations in 1987, 410 in 1993, 434 in 1997, and 468 in 2000. During the 2000s, congregational growth fluctuated from stagnation to slight increases in total congregations. There were 467 LDS congregations in 2002, 479 in 2003, 481 in 2007, and 480 in 2010. The number of wards increased from 217 in 1987 to 256 in 1993, 270 in 1997, 299 in 2000, 305 in 2001, 311 in 2003, 320 in 2006, 324 in 2007, and 328 in early 2011.

The first LDS stake in Canada was organized in 1895 and today is known as the Cardston Alberta Stake. Four additional stakes were organized in Alberta before 1960 in Raymond (1903), Calgary (1921), and Lethbridge (1951). The first stake outside of Alberta was organized in Toronto, Ontario in 1960. The number of stakes in Canada increased to eight in 1960, ten in 1970, 26 in 1980, thirty-four in 1990, forty-four in 2000, and forty-seven in 2010. The first LDS stake was organized in British Columbia in 1960, Quebec, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba in 1978, Nova Scotia in 1985, and New Brunswick in 1988.

As the number of stakes increased the number of districts declined from eleven in 1987 to eight in 1993, seven in 1997, six in 2000, five in 2003, and four in 2011. At present, districts operate in Fort Frances (1970), Terrace (1980), New Glasgow (1989), and Kingston (1996). The Yellowknife Branch and several branches in

¹¹ "Canada: From Struggling Seed, the Church Has Risen to Branching Maple," Ensign, September 1988. <http://lds.org/Ensign/1988/09/canada-from-struggling-seed-the-church-has-risen-to-branching-maple?lang=eng&query=canada>

¹² "Membership Distribution of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1973," Deseret News 1974 Church Almanac, p. 117.

¹³ "500 LDS Involved in Winter Games," LDS Church News, 13 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17552/500-LDS-involved-in-Winter-Games.html>

¹⁴ "Canada: From Struggling Seed, the Church Has Risen to Branching Maple," Ensign, September 1988. <http://lds.org/Ensign/1988/09/canada-from-struggling-seed-the-church-has-risen-to-branching-maple?lang=eng&query=canada>

Maritime Canada do not pertain to a stake or district and report directly to missions. The Canada Montreal Mission Branch administers to isolated members in northern Canada. By April 2011, there were forty-seven stakes and four districts. In early 2012, the Mississauga Ontario Stake closed, and the Barrie Ontario Stake was organized.

Activity and Retention

The average number of members per congregation increased from 319 in 1987 to 339 in 2000 and 379 in 2010. There were approximately 6,700 enrolled in seminary and institute during the 1987–1988 school year.¹⁵ 9,934 were enrolled in seminary and institute during the 2009–2010 school year. Short-term convert retention rates appear 50% or higher for most Canadian missions. Most wards in Alberta appear to have between 100 and 250 active members whereas most wards elsewhere in Canada generally have between seventy-five and 150 active members. Most branches have between twenty-five and seventy-five active members. Nationwide active membership is estimated between 60,000 and 65,000, or 33%–36% of total church membership.

Finding

Door-to-door proselytism and street contacting are the primary forms of LDS finding efforts in Canada. Member and investigator referrals are utilized less frequently but have yielded better teaching, baptizing, and retention prospects when available. Latter-day Saints at times have participated in international or national events and have held special meetings. In 1988, approximately 500 Latter-day Saints in Alberta volunteered for the Winter Olympic Games in Calgary.¹⁶ The Church is invested in local and national public affairs over a variety of issues, such as sustaining traditional family values and shunning pornography.¹⁷ In 1994, the Church broadcast a television series on the Church, its members, and its values and how these remain constant throughout different cultures and ethnicities.¹⁸

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English, French, Chinese (traditional and simplified characters), Spanish, Italian, Arabic, German, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Urdu, Polish, Korean, Farsi, Russian, Tamil, Greek, Romanian.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in English, French, Chinese (traditional and simplified characters), Spanish, Italian, Arabic, German, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Polish, Korean, Russian, Greek, and Romanian. Only the Book of Mormon and a limited number of church materials are available in Urdu, Farsi, and Tamil. Only the *Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith* is available in Punjabi. The *Liahona* magazine has monthly issues in English, French, Chinese, Spanish, Italian, German, Tagalog, Portuguese, Korean, and Russian; four issues a year in Vietnamese, Polish, and Romanian; three issues a year in Urdu; and one issue a year in Greek. Many other immigrant languages from Europe and East Asia have LDS materials available, such as Hindi.

¹⁵ "The Canadian LDS Profile," Ensign, September 1988. <http://lds.org/Ensign/1988/09/the-canadian-lds-profile?lang=eng&query=canada>

¹⁶ "500 LDS involved in Winter Games," LDS Church News, 13 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17552/500-LDS-involved-in-Winter-Games.html>

¹⁷ Farrington, John. "Family values honored in Canada," LDS Church News, 8 February 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43187/Family-values-honored-in-Canada.html>

¹⁸ Smart, William B. "Church begins series on TV across Canada," LDS Church News, 5 February 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24647/Church-begins-series-on-TV-across-Canada.html>

Meetinghouses

There were 243 LDS meetinghouses operating or under construction in 1988.¹⁹ In April 2011, there were approximately 320 LDS meetinghouses nationwide, nearly all of which have been built by the Church. Some smaller branches in remote locations meet in rented spaces or renovated buildings.

Humanitarian and Development Work

LDS humanitarian and development work occur on a congregation, stake, or mission level to meet local needs through service projects. There have been few humanitarian resources dedicated to Canada largely due to the government welfare system, high standards of living, and advanced national infrastructure. Projects completed by the Church have included donating to food banks, housing the poor projects, and medical equipment donations.²⁰ Young single adult members have frequently participated in local service projects.²¹

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Latter-day Saints experience full religious freedom to worship, proselyte, and assemble. Foreign missionaries regularly serve in Canada.

Cultural Issues

Nominal Christianity and secularism are major cultural issues limiting receptivity to the LDS Church and challenging efforts to develop culturally adapted outreach approaches. French Canadians traditionally identify as Catholic, although few attend church services, and affiliation with the Catholic Church is generally ethnically and culturally based. Religion has become increasingly marginalized throughout Canada as secularism has spread. Most who identify as Christians seldom attend church services or participate in daily personal religious activities. These norms challenge LDS mission efforts to instill practices such as daily scripture reading and weekly church attendance into many investigators. The high degree of cultural pluralism exhibited in ethnically diverse areas challenge LDS efforts to tailor teaching and outreach to individual cultural needs while simultaneously striving to integrate members and investigators from differing cultural backgrounds into the same congregations. Language-specific congregations present a helpful appropriate approach to meet the complex cultural needs in the largest cities with sizeable ethnic minority groups that continue to speak their respective languages. The LDS Church has maintained consistent outreach to Chinese-speaking populations in several cities but has not performed specific outreach to most immigrant groups.

Due to a long-term LDS presence and large LDS populations, a tight-knit LDS culture has arisen in many areas of Alberta that has created challenges for LDS Church growth, as many seasoned members limit their social interaction to fellow Latter-day Saints and lack needed member-missionary and social skills to interact with and invite nonmembers to learn about the church and attend meetings or activities in a natural way. Some face difficulty distinguishing LDS doctrines and teachings from customs, traditions, and attitudes that have originated from member communities. Instances of “cultural Mormonism” include overemphasis on church socializing activities, the marginalization of middle-aged and older single adults, the expectation of youth to attend church schools, and, at times, the marginalization of youth and young adults who do not conform to church standards or express no desire to serve full-time missions.

¹⁹ “The Canadian LDS Profile,” *Ensign*, September 1988. <http://lds.org/Ensign/1988/09/the-canadian-lds-profile?lang=eng&query=canada>

²⁰ “Locations—Canada,” *Humanitarian Activities Worldwide*, retrieved 20 April 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-205,00.html>

²¹ “Kaleidoscope of service in Canada,” *LDS Church News*, 20 July 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42138/Kaleidoscope-of-service-in-Canada.html>

National Outreach

Canada receives excellent LDS mission outreach, as manifested by the operation of seven missions in 2011 administering a population of thirty-four million, or approximately one mission per five million. All administrative divisions have at least one independent LDS congregation operating, with the exception of Nunavut, where members meet in groups under the Canada Montreal Mission Branch. At least 70% of the national population reside in cities with an LDS congregation. Five cities with over 60,000 inhabitants have no LDS congregations and are all located in Quebec (Terrebonne, Repentigny, Chateauguy, Saint-Jerome, and Granby). All cities over 20,000 inhabitants in Alberta have an LDS congregation.

The percentage of Latter-day Saints varies by Canadian province or territory, with the highest percentage in Alberta (2% or one in forty-nine) and the lowest percentage in Nunavut (0.03% or one in 3,320). Some small cities and towns in southern Alberta settled by Latter-day Saints remain over 50% LDS today. LDS membership constitutes over 0.5% of the population in Alberta, Yukon Territory, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Nova Scotia and constitutes less than 0.3% of the population in the Northwest Territories, Newfoundland, Quebec, and Nunavut. In 1983, 86% of Canadian LDS membership resided in Alberta, Ontario, and British Columbia; the three provinces accounted for 55% of the national population at the time. The distribution of Latter-day Saints has remained relatively constant over the past three decades, as in 2010, 83% of Canadian LDS membership resided in Alberta, Ontario, and British Columbia. The population of Quebec has been the most resistant to LDS mission efforts, as evidenced by Latter-day Saints accounting for only one in 722 in 2010, notwithstanding consistent mission outreach for decades. Several of Canada's largest cities, such as Toronto, Quebec, and Vancouver, have many neighborhoods and communities with no nearby LDS congregations and provide favorable conditions for church planting approaches, especially among ethnic minority groups. Although there have been few efforts to establish additional congregations in the largest cities, missionaries serving in Toronto reported that coordinated efforts to perform outreach among Farsi-speaking Iranians began in 2010.

Indigenous Inuit and other Native American populations are nearly completely unreached by the Church due to their small numbers distributed over enormous, isolated expanses of undeveloped territory, primarily in Nunavut and Northern Territories. The lack of LDS materials in indigenous Native American languages, few, if any, LDS members among native populations, and low receptivity to the LDS Church have continued to delay LDS mission outreach among Native Americans.

The Church operates no country-specific website for Canada, notwithstanding widespread Internet use. The Church in Canada utilizes the general lds.org and mormon.org websites for providing online explanations of church doctrine, Internet proselytism, and information of meetinghouse locations. French-speaking Canadians must utilize other LDS country websites in French, and as of April 2011, there were no French-speaking member profiles under the new mormon.org website. Local members utilizing social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter may increase opportunities for expanding national outreach, especially in lesser-reached areas of eastern Canada.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Active LDS membership in Canada has been nearly flat for over a decade, as manifested by few new congregations being organized and no significant increase in seminary and institute enrollment. Church membership increased by 23,600 between 2000 and 2010, whereas the number of LDS congregations increased by just twelve during this period, or one LDS congregation per 1,969 members. The number of members enrolled in seminary and institute declined by 2% between 2008 and 2010. Full-time missionaries have reported greater numbers of convert baptisms among ethnic minority groups, which appear more challenging to retain over the

long term than white Canadians. Member activity rates appear to vary by region, with New Brunswick and several other eastern Canadian provinces with the lowest member activity rates and western Canadian provinces with the highest member activity rates. Increasing secularism, inadequate pre-baptismal preparation, and low levels of member-missionary participation appear to be primary factors in modest to low convert retention rates over the past decade. Reactivation efforts in some cities have been successful but generally rely on full-time missionaries. Local leaders and full-time missionaries emphasizing seminary and institute attendance, the organization of additional language-specific congregations, and reduced full-time missionary involvement in reactivation and finding efforts may improve convert retention rates over the medium and long term.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Other than language barriers, there are few significant ethnic integration issues in Canada for the LDS Church, notwithstanding significant ethnic diversity in the largest cities. Establishing language-specific congregations has generally demonstrated greater success maintaining higher member activity rates among ethnic minority groups and retaining greater numbers of converts, as investigators and members from these groups often feel a greater attachment to their respective congregations and members. There were no Korean LDS congregations in Canada until 2003 when the North York (Korean) Branch was organized in Toronto. Prior to the organization of the branch, Korean members attended various congregations throughout the Toronto area. In 2007, the branch had sixty-nine Korean-speaking members and one of the highest member activity rates in Canada with member activity rates over 80%, sacrament meeting attendance at times exceeding 100% of church membership on branch records due to numerous investigators attending church, and regular convert baptisms, notwithstanding many traveling dozens of kilometers to attend church meetings from throughout the Toronto area. Some members reported that they did not feel like their testimony in the Church was progressing in English-speaking congregations.²² Reasons for success in the Korean branch were attributed to an inviting atmosphere for Koreans to attend church meetings in the native language, well-trained local priesthood leadership, and strong local member involvement in member-missionary work. Similar opportunities exist for other receptive ethnic minority groups that already have several Latter-day Saints, such as Iranians, Bangladeshis, and several African groups.

Language Issues

LDS materials and scriptures are available in both official languages and in all the most commonly-spoken languages among recent immigrant groups. Many foreign language speakers are bilingual in English or French or speak either language as a second language, reducing the need for LDS language-specific congregations to extend outreach. The need for language-specific congregations is also culturally-based, and in April 2011 there were nineteen non-English and non-French-speaking congregations in Canada (twelve Spanish, three Mandarin, two Korean, one Cantonese, one Chinese). In 2004, the Church provided translations of a regional church conference in eastern Canada in German and Portuguese,²³ notwithstanding the lack of any designated German or Portuguese-speaking congregations designated in Canada at the time. Prospects for the translation of LDS materials into Inuit and Native American languages are unlikely for the foreseeable future, as there are few speakers of these languages, few or no Latter-day Saints who speak these languages, and many of these languages are not written and are spoken primarily in the home.

Missionary Service

Less than 300 missionaries were called to serve throughout Canada from British Columbia to Manitoba

²² Dietlein, Sister Sandra. "Leading the way," LDS Church News, 20 January 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50030/Leading-the-way.html>

²³ Farrington, John. "Return to Canada," LDS Church News, 8 May 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45526/Return-to-Canada.html>

before World War I.²⁴ In early 2011, the number of full-time missionaries assigned to Canada was estimated at 800. Significant numbers of local members serve full-time missions, although LDS Canadian missionary manpower appears to be sufficient only in staffing its own missionary needs as seven LDS missions operate. American members serve in large numbers in Canada together with members from other nations, allowing for Canadian missionaries to serve elsewhere. Many Canadian Latter-day Saints serve missions internationally in virtually all missions in which missionaries from the United States are called to serve, as most can receive foreign language instruction in English at the Provo Utah Missionary Training Center.

Leadership

Abundant numbers of active, tithing Melchizedek Priesthood holders in western Canada and Ontario are capable of staffing dozens of stakes and providing adequate numbers of leaders to maintain local unit and stake administrative duties. Local leadership is much more limited in other areas of Canada, especially in the Maritime Provinces, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Yukon, Northwestern Territories, and Nunavut and has prevented the creation of additional congregations and jeopardizes the closure or consolidation of some smaller branches and wards. The overall strength of Canadian LDS leadership has originated from moderate rates of member activity and full-time missionary service. Canadian members have been overrepresented in international church leadership positions and have served as apostles, general authorities, seventies, Area Seventies, regional representatives, mission presidents, and temple presidents.

Temple

Latter-day Saint settlers in western Canada attended temples in the United States until the completion of the Cardston Alberta Temple in 1923. The temple in Cardston became the first LDS temple built outside of the United States and stands as a testimony to the self-reliance, dedication, and activity of early Canadian Latter-day Saints. Continued high levels of temple attendance among active members, the financial stability of the LDS Church in Canada, and long distances for many members to attend the temple have contributed to decisions by the Church to construct additional temples throughout the country even in areas with only one or two stakes. Temples have since been constructed in Toronto (1990), Halifax (1999), Regina (1999), Edmonton (1999), Montreal (2000), and Vancouver (2010). In early 2011, the Calgary Alberta Temple was under construction and in April 2010 the Winnipeg Manitoba Temple was announced by the Church. The Cardston Alberta Temple is the most heavily utilized Canadian temple, with hourly endowment sessions on weekdays, excluding Mondays, and sessions every forty-five minutes on Saturdays. In 2011, the Edmonton Alberta Temple scheduled six endowment sessions on Tuesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays and three sessions on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Two endowment sessions were scheduled Wednesdays through Fridays and three sessions on Saturdays at the Halifax Nova Scotia Temple. The Montreal Quebec Temple scheduled three sessions on Tuesdays, one on Wednesdays and Thursdays, five on Fridays, and three on Saturdays. Temple work occurs by appointment at the Regina Saskatchewan Temple. The Toronto Ontario Temple scheduled three sessions on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, six on Thursdays and Fridays, and sessions every half hour or hour on Saturdays. The Vancouver British Columbia Temple scheduled seven endowment sessions on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays and three on Thursdays.

Comparative Growth

The LDS Church in Canada has the eleventh largest number of members, eighth most congregations, eighth most stakes, third most temples, and ninth most missions in the world, although Canada ranks thirty-seventh by total population. There were more LDS temples in Canada than in Brazil in early 2011, notwithstanding nearly a million more LDS members in Brazil than in Canada. The LDS Church in Canada had the lowest

²⁴ "Canada: From Struggling Seed, the Church Has Risen to Branching Maple," *Ensign*, September 1988. <http://lds.org/Ensign/1988/09/canada-from-struggling-seed-the-church-has-risen-to-branching-maple?lang=eng&query=canada>

average number of members per congregation and one of the highest member activity rates among countries with over 100,000 members in 2010. The percentage of members enrolled in seminary and institute (5.5%) is higher than most industrialized nations with an LDS presence and comparable to the United States. Canadian Latter-day Saints appear to serve full-time missions more frequently than in most nations with large LDS populations. Membership growth rates are comparable those experienced by the Church in Western Europe and the United States. LDS congregational growth rates in Canada are comparable to those experienced in Australia and Western Europe and are much lower than in the United States. The percentage of Latter-day Saints in the general population is higher than most industrialized nations but ranks among the lowest in North and South America. LDS mission outreach in Canada, as evidenced by the ratio of LDS missions to the general population is comparable to the United States and much of Latin American. The percentage of the population residing in cities and towns with an LDS congregation is slightly lower than the United States but higher than most countries with a church presence.

Other missionary-minded Christian reports report ongoing frustrations extending mission outreach in Canada due to low receptivity but have made greater inroads among ethnic minority groups than Latter-day Saints. Some denominations have reported regular increases in the number of their congregations. The Seventh Day Adventist Church generally baptized between 1,500 and 2,500 new converts annually and creates several new congregations a year. The number of Adventist churches increased from 327 to 352 between 2000 and 2009.²⁵ Adventists also operate ethnic or language-specific congregations for Filipinos, Spanish-speakers, Koreans, Cambodians, Portuguese-speakers, Ghanaians (Twi), Romanians, Russians, Rwandans, Chinese, Hungarians, Italians, Japanese, Ukrainians, former Yugoslav peoples, and Zimbabweans. Jehovah's Witnesses operated three times as many congregations as Latter-day Saints, claimed over 100,000 active members, and baptized over 2,000 new converts in 2010. Evangelicals were in decline for much of the twentieth century and have begun to increase in numbers over the past couple decades.

Future Prospects

The outlook for future LDS Church growth in Canada is mixed, as member activity rates remain moderate in most locations and stable among youth, but few new congregations have been organized in recent years, indicating possible shortages of capable church leaders, a lack of vision in expanding outreach in the largest cities and unreached rural areas, overstaffing Canadian missions with large numbers of full-time missionaries who serve in many areas with low receptivity, and lower member activity rates among nonwhites. The large number of temples built by the Church in Canada are evidence of the strength of active membership in meeting individual and congregational church responsibilities, which will carry on as a major strength for decades to come. New stakes may be organized in the near future in Calgary and Edmonton, as many stakes have a large and often increasing number of congregations, but no other areas of Canada appear likely to have additional stakes organized in the foreseeable future. Focus on dedicating mission resources to ethnic minority groups and fostering the development of self-sufficient local leadership will be critical towards ensuring ongoing church growth in the coming years, particularly to capitalize on more receptive populations. Efforts directed towards several Asian groups and Spanish-speakers are encouraging. There is need to begin outreach among Native American populations in remote areas through the wise appropriation of limited mission resources and will most likely be accomplished effectively through member-missionary efforts. LDS proselytism approaches in French-speaking areas remain largely ineffective in addressing low receptivity issues and developing personal religious habits among nominal Catholics.

²⁵ "Canada Union Conference," www.adventiststatistics.org, retrieved 13 April 2011. http://www.adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldID=U10021&Year=2009&submit=Change

UNITED STATES

Geography

AREA: 9,826,675 square km. Geographically the world's third largest country, the United States consists of the contiguous forty-eight states between Canada and Mexico, Alaska, Hawaii, and five major overseas territorial possessions in the Caribbean and Pacific including American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin Islands. Several small islands in the Pacific with no indigenous population are under United States sovereignty, such as Wake Island and the Midway Islands. Primary geographic features include the Great Plains, the Rocky Mountains, the Appalachian Mountains, the Great Lakes, and the Gulf of Mexico. Climate varies from arctic in northern Alaska to tropical in south Florida and Hawaii, with most areas experiencing temperate climate. Semi-arid conditions occur on the Great Plains, which stretch from the Canadian border nearly to the Mexican border between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains. Western interior basin-and-range areas are generally arid desert marked by cool winters and hot, dry summers. Mediterranean climate prevails along the southern California coast, whereas wet, temperate climate occurs in the Pacific Northwest. The Midwest and Northeast generally experience cold winters and hot summers with frequent precipitation. Warm temperate conditions occur in the Southeast with mild winters and frequent precipitation. Major rivers include the Mississippi, Rio Grande, Colorado, Columbia, Ohio, and Arkansas Rivers. Flooding, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis, mud slides, and permafrost are natural hazards. Environmental issues include air pollution, water pollution, desertification, and water scarcity. The United States is administratively divided into fifty states and several incorporated unorganized territories, unincorporated organized territories, and unincorporated unorganized territories.

Peoples

White non-Hispanic: 63.4%

Hispanic: 16.7%

Black: 12.85%

Asian: 4.43%

Amerindian and Alaska native: 0.97%

Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander: 0.18%

Mixed race: 1.61%

Population: 313,847,465 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.899% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.06 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 76.05 male, 81.05 female (2012)

Languages: English (82.1%), Spanish (10.7%), other Indo-European languages (3.8%), Asian and Pacific Islander languages (2.7%), other (0.7%). Languages with over one million speakers include English (257.2 million), Spanish (33.5 million), Chinese languages (2.0 million), French (1.6 million), Tagalog (1.2 million), Vietnamese (1 million), and Italian (1 million). According to the 2000 census, languages with between 200,000 and one million speakers included Korean (894,063), Russian (706,242), Polish (667,414), Arabic

(614,582), Portuguese (564,630), Japanese (447,997), French Creole (453,368), Greek (365,436), Hindi (314,057), Farsi (312,085), Urdu (262,900), Gujarati (235,988), and Armenian (202,708).²⁶

Literacy: 99% (2003)

History

Native Americans are believed to have populated North America for millennia prior to its discovery and colonization by Europeans. The Spanish and French were among the first to explore the vast coastline and interior of the United States. The Dutch founded a colony on Manhattan Island named New Amsterdam, which later became the British colony of New York. During the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Britain founded thirteen colonies along the eastern coast of the present-day United States. Issues arose in the colonies regarding government representation in Britain and a desire for greater autonomous rule, which fueled the American Revolutionary War during the 1770s and 1780s and culminated in the emergence of the United States of America as a sovereign nation with a republican form of government and thirteen administrative states. The constitution was ratified in 1788, and the Bill of Rights was instituted in 1791. Following the Revolutionary War, the United States obtained territory ceded by the British west of the colonies to the Mississippi River, and additional states were organized. Territorial expansion ensued during the nineteenth century as the United States nearly doubled in size from the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Additional territories acquired included portions of present-day Minnesota and North Dakota in 1818; East Florida, West Florida, and a portion of present-day Louisiana in 1819; Texas in 1845; Oregon Territory from Great Britain in 1846; much of the western United States from Mexico in 1848; the Gadsden Purchase from Mexico in 1853; Alaska from Russia in 1867; Hawaii in 1898; Puerto Rico and several Pacific islands from Spain in 1898. The United States purchased the Virgin Islands from Denmark in 1917. The War of 1812 was fought with Britain and resulted in no changes in land holdings for either side. The United States fought the Mexican-American War between 1846 and 1848, which resulted in the acquisition of California and much of the Southwest. The debate over slavery sparked the American Civil War during the first half of the 1860s and ended with the freeing of the slaves, defeat of the Confederacy in 1865, and granting citizenship and voting rights to former slaves. Rapid industrialization occurred following the civil war, and Spain's defeat in the Spanish American War in the late 1890s solidified the United States as a world power. The United States joined the Allies towards the end of World War I. Rapid economic growth in the 1920s came to an abrupt halt in 1929 and deteriorated into the Great Depression during the 1930s. The Dust Bowl left large areas of farmland in the Great Plains desolate following poor farming techniques and severe drought. The United State officially joined the Allies in World War II in 1941 following the surprise Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Nuclear weapons were developed by the United States during the war and were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, effectively ending the war in the Pacific. Following World War II, the United States emerged with the Soviet Union as the world's superpowers and nuclear-armed nations. An arms race, a space race, and a series of proxy wars were fought between the United States and Soviet Union in nations such as Korea and Vietnam as part of the Cold War, as the United States and the Soviet Union competed for domination in their respective ideologies. The Soviet Union won the race to launch the first satellite in 1957 and put the first man in space in 1961, but the United States successfully landed the first man on the moon in 1969. A cultural revolution addressing civil rights issues occurred in the 1960s and 1970s; various economic reforms were also instituted during this period. Economic stagnation and political instability led to the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the end of the Cold War, leaving the United States as the world's dominant superpower. Economic prosperity and widening American cultural influence worldwide characterized the 1990s. Al-Qaeda terrorists carried out catastrophic terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on September 11th, 2001 that led to a global War on Terror launched by the Bush administration that led to military conflicts and occupations in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003. Economic instability occurred in the late 2000s. In 2008, the first African American president was elected into office. Increasing economic prosperity and technological development in China,

²⁶ "Language Use and English-Speaking Ability: 2000," Census 2000 Brief, October 2003. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-29.pdf>

Russia, and the European Union as well as economic stagnation and mounting national debt in the United States are increasingly leading to a multi-polar world in which the United States still holds a dominant position, but other nations play a strong role. These trends are expected to continue over the next several decades with the maturation of developing nations.

Culture

Christianity and agriculture were the dominant influences on American culture and society until recent decades as the population has become more urbanized and religion's influence has been increasingly superseded by materialism, secularism, and technology, especially on the East and West Coasts and in major metropolitan areas. Christianity and churches nonetheless remain powerful forces in society, especially in the southern region nicknamed the "Bible Belt." Symbols of American culture include fast food, shopping malls, cars, and traditional foods such as apple pie. Americans have integrated a variety of foreign foods into their diet that have been introduced by immigrants from Europe, Asia, and Latin America. Cigarette and alcohol consumption rates compare to the worldwide average. The United States has one of the highest divorce rates worldwide. Illicit drug use is high as the United States is the world's largest consumer of cocaine and Latin American heroin and marijuana. A variety of methamphetamines, hallucinogens, depressants, and stimulants are consumed. The United States has the highest reported number of prisoners incarcerated in the world, primarily on drug offenses.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$48,100 (2011)

Human Development Index: 0.910

Corruption Index: 7.1 (2011)

The American economy is the world's largest, most technologically advanced economy and heavily influences world economic conditions. The GDP of the United States in 2010 was roughly the equivalent of the European Union and one-fifth of the total world GDP. In 2010, public debt accounted for 59% of the GDP. Economic growth occurred for much of the latter half of the twentieth century as a result of market-based economic policies and private companies and enterprises accounting for most economic activity. The longest recession in American history since the Great Depression occurred in the late 2000s and resulted in attempts by the federal government to stabilize the situation by providing taxpayer "bailouts" to failing banks, increasing government spending on stimulus packages, and reducing interest rates. Although these measures added considerably to government debt, most economists feel that they had little impact on economic recovery. The United States has the world's largest coal reserves. Services generate 77% of the GDP, whereas industry and agriculture generate 22% and 1% of the GDP, respectively. Industry is highly diversified; petroleum, steel, motor vehicles, aerospace, telecommunications, chemicals, electronics, food processing, lumber, and mining are major industries. Common agricultural products include grains, fruit, vegetables, cotton, beef, pork, poultry, dairy products, and fish. Canada, China, Mexico, and Japan are the primary trade partners.

Corruption is perceived as less prevalent than in most nations and comparable to some larger Western European countries such as the United Kingdom and France. Due to its large, advanced economy that is highly integrated into international markets, the United States is a money-laundering center. Inner-city areas, small rural towns, and the Mexican border region are most prone to corruption.

Faiths

Christian: 78.5%

Jewish: 1.7%

Buddhist: 0.7%

Muslim: 0.6%
 Other/unspecified: 2.5%
 Unaffiliated: 12.1%
 None: 4%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 68,503,456
 Southern Baptist 16,228,438
 United Methodist 7,853,987
 Latter-day Saints 6,321,416 13,742
 Church of God in Christ 5,499,875
 Jehovah's Witnesses 1,200,572 13,309
 Seventh Day Adventists 1,063,823 4,939

Religion

Christians account for slightly over three-quarters of the American population, most of which are Protestant. Fifty-one percent of Americans are Protestant; half of which are Evangelical. Mainline churches and historically black churches account for 18.1% and 6.9% of the population, respectively. Latter-day Saints comprise around 1.7% of the population, whereas Jehovah's Witnesses constitute 0.7%. The United States is the world's greatest supplier of Christian missionaries. Non-Christian religious groups together comprise 4.7% of the population, 36% of which are Jewish, 15% are Buddhist, 13% are Muslim, and 9% are Hindu. Americans unaffiliated with a religious group and the nonreligious account for 16.1% of the population.²⁷

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. There are no restrictions on religious freedom and few societal abuses of religious freedom.

Largest Metropolitan Areas

Urban: 82%

New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas, Philadelphia, Houston, Washington, Miami, Atlanta, Boston, San Francisco, Detroit, Riverside, Phoenix, Seattle, Minneapolis, San Diego, St. Louis, Tampa, Baltimore, Denver, Pittsburgh, Portland, Sacramento, San Antonio, Orlando, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Kansas City, Las Vegas, San Jose, Columbus, Charlotte, Indianapolis, Austin, Virginia Beach, Providence, Nashville, Milwaukee, Jacksonville, Memphis, Louisville, Richmond, Oklahoma City, Hartford, New Orleans, Buffalo, Raleigh, Birmingham, Salt Lake City, Rochester.

All fifty-one metropolitan areas with populations over one million have an LDS congregation. Fifty-four percent of the national population resides in the fifty-one most populous metropolitan areas.

LDS History

The LDS Church was founded in upstate New York in 1830, ten years following the Church's first president Joseph Smith receiving the First Vision. The Church soon established its headquarters in Kirtland, Ohio, and

²⁷ "A Portrait of Mormons in the U.S.," The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 24 July 2009. <http://pewforum.org/Christian/Mormon/A-Portrait-of-Mormons-in-the-U.S..aspx>

members began relocating to Independence, Missouri as a second gathering place. The Church completed its first temple in Kirtland in 1836. Persecution intensified in both church centers, forcing the Church to move its headquarters and main body of members to Nauvoo, Illinois in late 1839 and in the early 1840s. The revelations and writings contained in LDS scriptures today primarily originated between the late 1820s and early 1840s. Missionaries were sent to preach in the United States beginning in the 1830s and were called to serve in Canada, the British Islands, and French Polynesia shortly thereafter. Following the martyrdom of Joseph Smith in 1844 and the dedication of the Nauvoo Temple in 1846, Latter-day Saints under the direction of Brigham Young ventured westward in the face of consistent persecution, ultimately settling in the Salt Lake Valley in present-day Utah and establishing church headquarters in Salt Lake City. President Brigham Young initiated an aggressive colonization campaign designed to spur industry and self-reliance among the embattled Latter-day Saints. Colonies were founded throughout the western United States, primarily in Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, Arizona, Nevada, and Colorado, and later in Alberta, Canada and northwestern Mexico. The United States government remained suspicious of the Church throughout the nineteenth century, sending military personnel in the late 1850s to put down an alleged rebellion and passing anti-polygamy legislation designed to bar the territory statehood. The LDS Church officially discontinued the teaching and practice of polygamy in 1890, and government relations began to improve, resulting in the formation of the state of Utah in 1896. During the twentieth century, the Church remained a major societal force in Utah and areas of surrounding states due to the concentrated number of members in the region. In recent years, the Church has taken a firm stance opposing pornography, gambling, and same-sex marriage.

Missions

LDS missionary activity in the United States occurred without the organization of a mission until 1839 when the Eastern States Mission was organized. The Eastern States Mission was closed in 1850, reopened in 1854, closed in 1858, reopened in 1865, closed in 1869, and reopened in 1893. The California mission was organized in 1846, closed in 1858, and reopened in 1892. The Sandwich Islands Mission opened in 1850, closed in 1858, and reopened in 1864. In 1855, the Indian Territory Mission was organized and closed in 1860, reopened and closed in 1877, and reopened in 1883. By 1900, there were eight missions operating in the United States. By the end of 1950, ten additional missions were organized. The number of missions increased from eighteen in 1950 to thirty-five in 1973, seventy-one in 1987, eighty-six in 1993, ninety-five in 1997, and one hundred in 2000. The number of missions in the United States reached a high of 106 in the mid-2000s and declined to 104 in 2009, 102 in 2010, and 100 in 2011 as missions were consolidated in Illinois (2), California, Connecticut, Georgia, New Jersey, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. In 2010, new missions were organized in Farmington, New Mexico and St. George, Utah. In 2012, new missions organized included the Nevada Reno, Utah Salt Lake City Central, and Utah Salt Lake City West Missions. In 2013, new missions organized included the Arizona Gilbert, Arizona Scottsdale, California Bakersfield, California Irvine, California Rancho Cucamonga, Colorado Fort Collins, Georgia Macon, Idaho Nampa, Idaho Twin Falls, Illinois Chicago West, Kansas Wichita, Ohio Cincinnati, Oregon Salem, Utah Salt Lake City East, Virginia Chesapeake, Washington Federal Way, and Washington Vancouver Missions. The number of missions totaled 103 in 2012 and 120 in 2013.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 6,321,416 (2012)

In 1973, there were 2.53 million members, 97.4% of which resided in a stake.²⁸ Membership increased to 3.05 million in 1983, 4.1 million in 1987, 4.52 million in 1993, 4.92 million in 1997, and 5.21 million in 2000. There were 5.41 million members in 2002, 5.6 million in 2004, 5.78 million in 2006, 5.97 million in

²⁸ "Membership Distribution of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 1973," *Deseret News* 1974 Church Almanac, p.117.

2008, and 6.14 million in 2010. Church membership generally increased by approximately 100,000 a year. During the 2000s, annual membership growth rates ranged from a high of 1.95% in 2001 to a low of 1.41% in 2010 and generally decreased year to year. Increase of children on record in the United States may account for 50% or more of the worldwide increase in children of record, as well as half or more of the U.S. growth in active membership.

During the 2000s, membership growth was highest in the District of Columbia (87%), Tennessee (44%), Iowa and Kentucky (37%), and Texas and North Dakota (35%), whereas membership growth was lowest in California (2%), Oregon (9%), New Hampshire (10%), Michigan (11%), and Vermont (13%). In 2010, states with the most Latter-day Saints included Utah (1.91 million), California (763,370), Idaho (414,182), Arizona (387,950), and Texas (296,141). Overall membership increased by 18% between 2000 and 2010 in the United States.

In 2010, approximately one in fifty was nominally LDS (1.96%), whereas in 2000 one in fifty-four was nominally LDS (1.85%). The Pew Forum reported that Latter-day Saints comprised 1.7% of the United States population in 2009.²⁹ States with the highest percentage of Latter-day Saints in 2010 included Utah (69.1%), Idaho (26.4%), Wyoming (11.2%), Nevada (6.5%), and Arizona (6.1%), whereas New Jersey, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania had the lowest (less than 0.4%). The greatest increase in the percentage of members in the general population between 2000 and 2010 occurred in Hawaii (0.43%), Alaska (0.41%), North Dakota (0.24%), and Montana and West Virginia (0.22%) whereas the percentage of members in the general population declined in Utah (-3.87%), Nevada (-0.93%), Idaho (-0.51%), California (-0.16%), Oregon (-0.12), and Arizona (-0.04%).

Congregational Growth

Wards: 11,831 Branches: 1,950 (April 2013)

There were 8,682 congregations in 1987, including 7,456 wards. The number of congregations increased to 10,013 in 1993, 10,811 in 1997, and 11,562 in 2000. There were 11,879 congregations in 2002, 12,463 in 2004, 13,010 in 2006, 13,363 in 2008, and 13,601 in 2010.

The number of wards increased to 8,433 in 1993, 9,189 in 1997, and 9,853 in 2000. There were 10,158 wards in 2002, 10,567 in 2004, 10,978 in 2006, 11,289 in 2008, and approximately 11,560 in 2010.

The first stake in the LDS Church was organized in Kirtland, Ohio in February 1834 followed by a second stake in Clay-Caldwell, Missouri later that year. By 1840, there were ten stakes in the United States, most of which were in Illinois. As a result of the exodus of Latter-day Saints to Utah in the mid-1840s, all stakes were discontinued by 1846. A stake was established in Salt Lake in 1847, and the number of stakes increased to four in 1860, nine in 1870, and twenty-three in 1880. By the 1930s there were over one hundred stakes in the United States. There were 537 stakes in 1973 and 1,108 stakes and eighteen districts in 1987. The number of stakes increased to 1,169 in 1993, 1,257 in 1997, and 1,310 in 2000. There were 1,336 stakes in 2002, 1,380 in 2004, 1,410 in 2006, 1,438 in 2008, and 1,465 in 2010. In April 2011, states with the most stakes included Utah (550), California (158), Idaho (121), Arizona (91), and Texas and Washington (56). North Dakota became the last state to have an LDS stake organized in 1977.

Between 2000 and 2010 congregational growth was most rapid in Delaware (63%), Virginia (33%), North Carolina (32%), and Texas and Tennessee (29%), whereas congregational decline occurred in Louisiana (-18%), Connecticut and New York (-6%), Maryland (-5%), and New Jersey (-3%). During this period, the number of congregations increased by 2,039 in the United States; states with the largest increases in

²⁹ "A Portrait of Mormons in the U.S.," The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 24 July 2009. <http://pewforum.org/Christian/Mormon/A-Portrait-of-Mormons-in-the-U.S.aspx>

congregations were Utah (962), Idaho (229), Arizona (158), Texas (130), and Washington (49). The number of districts has declined over the past two decades from sixteen in 1993 to fourteen in 2004, thirteen in 2006, twelve in 2008, and ten in 2010. Districts currently function in Texas and New York (3) and Utah, Michigan, New Jersey, and South Dakota (1).

Activity and Retention

The average number of members per congregation nationwide was practically unchanged between 2000 and 2010, from 451 to 452, due to commensurate membership and congregational growth rates. In 2010, states and districts with the highest average number of members per congregation were the District of Columbia (794), South Carolina (596), Florida (584), California (561), and Louisiana (560), whereas states with the lowest average number of members per congregation were South Dakota (297), Wisconsin (355), Iowa (357), Vermont (365), and Nebraska (379). The District of Columbia (370), Louisiana (173), New York (127), South Carolina (100), and Connecticut experienced the greatest increase in the number of average members per congregation between 2000 and 2010 whereas Delaware (−81), Idaho and Utah (−26), Virginia (−12), and California (−7) experienced the greatest decrease in the average number of members per congregation. The average number of members per congregation increased in forty-three of the fifty states during this period. During the 2009–2010 school year, 349,595 were enrolled in seminary or institute. Between the 2007–2008 and the 2009–2010 school years, seminary enrollment was unchanged (196,000), whereas institute enrollment slightly increased from 141,752 to 153,305. With considerable variation by mission, most U.S. missions report short-term convert retention rates of 50% or higher, although activity of converts after one year appears to be below this figure. The number of active members per congregation varies dramatically by congregation and region, with the intermountain west often supporting the largest congregations generally between 200 and 400 active members per ward whereas most wards in other regions of the country generally have between 100 and 250 active members. Most branches have fewer than one hundred members. Nationwide active membership is estimated at 2.5 million, or 40% of total church membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English, Spanish, Chinese (traditional and simplified characters), French, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Italian, Korean, Russian, Polish, Arabic, Portuguese, Japanese, Greek, Hindi, Farsi, Urdu, Armenian, Navajo.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in English, Spanish, Chinese (traditional and simplified characters), French, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Italian, Korean, Russian, Polish, Arabic, Portuguese, Japanese, Greek, and Armenian (East). Only the Book of Mormon and a limited number of church materials are available in Hindi, Navajo, Farsi, and Urdu. LDS materials in Native American languages are limited to Navajo and Apache. Some General Conference addresses have been available in Apache in recent years. The *Liahona* magazine has monthly issues in English, Spanish, Chinese, French, Tagalog, Italian, Korean, Russian, and Japanese; four issues a year in Armenian (East), Polish, and Vietnamese; three issues a year in Urdu; and one issue a year in Greek. Many other immigrant languages from Europe and East Asia have LDS materials available, such as Romanian and Hmong.

Meetinghouses

In early 2011, there were approximately 7,000 LDS meetinghouses in the United States. With only a few exceptions for small branches, groups, and newly organized units in small rural towns or the inner city, all congregations meet in church-built meetinghouses.

Health and Safety

Some inner city areas pose safety concerns due to higher crime rates.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The number of humanitarian and development projects pursued by the Church in the United States (425) exceeds the number of projects undertaken in any other country and is greater than any continent with the exception of Asia.³⁰ One-quarter of LDS humanitarian projects in the United States have occurred in Utah. Nearly all projects in the United States have consisted of donating food, clothing, bedding, furniture, wheelchairs, emergency relief for natural disasters, and services for the homeless, poor, and disabled.³¹

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The LDS Church benefits from full religious freedom. Members and missionaries freely proselyte, worship, and assemble. Foreign missionaries regularly serve in the country.

Cultural Issues

The United States is an outlier among the wealthy industrialized nations of the world, as the rates of affiliation with a Christian church and church activity are moderately high, notwithstanding long-term economic prosperity and many cultural similarities with secularized Western European nations where rates of church attendance and self-identification with organized religious groups are low. These cultural conditions in the United States have provided fair opportunities for LDS missionary activity for decades, as most have a Christian background and have developed some personal religious habits. The LDS Church in the United States provides significant financial stability for the international church, allowing for church operations to continue in nations that are not self-sustaining in church finances from local members due to low activity or challenging economic conditions.

The heavy reliance of the LDS Church on the United States as its principal base of active membership, full-time missionaries, and church finances has offered both advantages and disadvantages to the international church. The seasoned U.S. member base, a strong economic foundation, and high rates of U.S. missionary service have been helpful in establishing the Church in new areas. However, the disproportionate reliance on U.S. membership has sometimes resulted in over-reliance on U.S. missionaries abroad, over-subsidization of international units, difficulty tailoring the gospel message to cultures and regions for which the American worldview is not well-suited, and decreased responsiveness to conditions and opportunities in nations without a strong existing LDS membership base.

Increasing secularism has contributed to declining church attendance in the United States over the past half century and threatens to continue to reduce the activity and affiliation of additional Christians in the future. Secular ideals and philosophies that oppose LDS teachings include widespread acceptance of casual sexual relations, indifference and ridicule of organized religion, and increasing tolerance to some forms of illicit drug use. Such attitudes and practices have generated a challenging atmosphere that has reduced receptivity to the LDS Church in the general population and threatens member activity rates for many LDS youth and

³⁰ "Locations—North America," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 5 April 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-6,00.html>

³¹ "Projects—United States," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 5 April 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-201,00.html>

young adults, especially if member testimonies are underdeveloped and members desire social acceptance. The Church has addressed some of these cultural issues at universities and colleges by operating several church-operated schools and by providing institute outreach in many public schools, particularly in the west. The high degree of individualism in American culture has reduced personal responsibility for family and can encourage behaviors and attitudes not in harmony with LDS teachings.

Eroding moral values and societal conditions provide a mixture of challenges and opportunities for the Church but generally reduce receptivity and exacerbate member attrition. The United States experiences moderate rates of cigarette and alcohol use and high rates of illicit drug use, requiring a specific mission outreach approach addressing substance abuse and addiction for potential converts and less active members using these substances to successfully overcome their addictions and live LDS teachings. Gang activity in many larger cities has created a criminal culture in which illegal activity and organized crime are glamorized. Severing gang connections for gang members investigating the Church can be an arduous and dangerous process, jeopardizing the safety of LDS missionaries and potential members. The United States has the highest reported number of incarcerated prisoners in the world, and the Church operated ninety-seven correctional facility branches in the United States in April 2011 primarily to serve Latter-day Saints in prison. Nearly all correctional facility branches are in the west and are located in Utah (65), Arizona (5), Idaho (5), Oregon (5), Washington (5), California (3), Texas (3), Nevada (2), Wyoming (2), Oklahoma (1), and Missouri (1). Rates of recidivism are also high and challenge efforts to perform outreach among inmates. Divorce rates in the United States are among the highest in the world, and the outcomes of divorce often severely affect the mental health of affected family members and create major barriers for LDS mission outreach. Divorce rates are somewhat lower for Latter-day Saints who have been married in the temple but are still significantly higher among temple-married Latter-day Saints than in general American society fifty years ago. Many converts and members alike have suffered from the disintegration of the family's role in American society, which has been manifested by a host of other societal problems.

Public dialogue on the widening divide of social issues has often involved Latter-day Saints and the LDS Church. The LDS Church and its members are often portrayed as highly conservative in their political disposition in the media, largely due to the stress on traditional moral standards and the LDS Church taking an official position on moral issues that are viewed as impacting political dialogue notwithstanding the Church officially declaring political neutrality. The public perception of the Church as politically conservative can attract converts and investigators with a conservative political orientation but create a barrier to outreach among those with more liberal views. A misunderstanding of the political disposition of most members and the actual teachings and doctrines of the LDS Church has fueled conflict and social disagreements in some LDS congregations that at times can reduce member activity and convert retention rates. Most Americans know few basic LDS beliefs and generally view Latter-day Saints as friendly and family-oriented but isolated and peculiar. In recent years, the Church and its members have come under greater scrutiny by the public for some members holding public offices and defining the traditional institute of marriage as only between and man and a woman.³² Many members feel defensive about their identity as a Latter-day Saint.

Due to a long-term LDS presence and large LDS populations, a tight-knit LDS culture has arisen in many areas of the United States that has created challenges for LDS Church growth, as many seasoned members keep to themselves and lose the needed member-missionary and social skills needed to interact and invite nonmembers to learn about the church and attend meetings or activities in a natural way. Like political issues, many face difficulty distinguishing LDS doctrines and teachings from customs, traditions, and attitudes that have originated from member communities. Manifestations of "cultural Mormonism" include overemphasis on church socializing activities, the marginalization of middle-aged and older single adults, the expectation of youth attending church schools, and, at times, the diminished fellowshiping of youth and young adults who

³² "A Portrait of Mormons in the U.S.," The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 24 July 2009. <http://pewforum.org/Christian/Mormon/A-Portrait-of-Mormons-in-the-U.S.aspx>

do not conform to church standards or express no desire to serve full-time missions. Church leadership has attempted to address these issues, which nonetheless still occasionally occur among lay membership and local leadership. Consequently, rates of member-missionary work vary by region and marital status. Self-identified Latter-day Saints are less likely to report sharing their faith on a weekly basis in Utah (13%) and the western United States (20%) where there are larger LDS communities and fewer nonmembers compared to other regions (37%), and Latter-day Saint converts are twice as likely to report sharing their faith on a weekly basis compared to members born into the Church (38% versus 19%).³³

National Outreach

Between 70% and 80% of the national population likely resides in a city or town with an LDS congregation. All but two of the 282 American cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. The two cities over 100,000 inhabitants without an LDS congregation, Port St. Lucie (165,300 inhabitants) and Miramar (122,041 inhabitants), are both located in Florida and receive some LDS mission outreach from LDS congregations meeting in nearby cities. Dozens of cities in California, the south, and the northeast have over 100,000 inhabitants and only one LDS congregation, resulting in many lesser-reached neighborhoods with few Latter-day Saints located far from the nearest meetinghouse. LDS congregations are most frequently established in lesser-reached or unreached cities and towns by active members moving to these locations, especially from Utah. Of the 3,143 counties nationwide in April 2011, approximately 1,100 had no LDS congregation operating. Most counties without an LDS congregation are located in rural locations of the Great Plains, Texas, and the south and have small populations.

The Church has conducted few church-planting initiatives in the United States, which have generally focused on reaching less active or inactive members in a concentrated area or ethnic minority groups that speak a different language. LDS missionaries serving in Little Rock, Arkansas reported in early 2011 that they were commissioned to organize a home group and begin a congregation from scratch by baptizing and retaining new converts in an urban area of the city. After several months, twenty-five recent converts attended regularly, and full-time missionaries were preparing local members for leadership responsibilities in order for an independent unit to be established. Similar opportunities exist in many communities in the country's largest cities that, at present, are far from LDS meetinghouses and have few active members.

In April 2011, there were twelve military-designated congregations in the United States functioning in California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. The LDS Church only devotes mission outreach resources to correctional facilities, residential treatment facilities, and nursing homes in high-member density regions of the Mountain West. In April 2011, there were ninety-seven care center branches and twenty-eight retirement branches operating for elderly Latter-day Saints, oftentimes in nursing homes or retirement communities. These congregations operate only in Idaho and Utah in locations with high Latter-day Saint population densities as evidenced by ninety-two of the ninety-seven care center branches and twenty-seven of the twenty-eight retirement branches functioning in Utah and the remaining six branches functioning in southeastern Idaho. Three youth center branches operated in West Jordan, Utah to meet the needs of troubled teens in residential treatment for substance abuse and other mental disorders.

LDS online outreach in the United States provides significant opportunities not only for Americans but for Internet users worldwide as the Church has extensive websites providing information on LDS beliefs and teachings, contact information for full-time missionaries, options on mormon.org to chat with a missionary online, free online requests for church literature and the Book of Mormon, General Conference addresses in over ninety languages, family history materials, and self-reliance and provident living resources. In recent

³³ "A Portrait of Mormons in the U.S.," The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 24 July 2009. <http://pewforum.org/Christian/Mormon/A-Portrait-of-Mormons-in-the-U.S.aspx>

years, the Church has encouraged Internet proselytism from members and missionaries by utilizing online social networks like Facebook and Twitter. The Church has regularly broadcast messages on television emphasizing family values and core church beliefs, offering free videos and copies of the scriptures, and relating the personal experiences of members in the Church. Media-based approaches are often costly and inefficient in extending invitations for nonmembers to learn about the Church or attend church services, but provide opportunities for nonmembers to discuss LDS teachings and beliefs with known Latter-day Saint friends and acquaintances. This approach is somewhat effective in addressing member anxiety and reluctance to actively bring up their faith with others.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Membership and congregational growth rates have been commensurate over the past two decades, indicating that member activity and convert retention rates have been relatively stable. Member activity rates appear highest in Utah and the western United States and lowest in the northeast and south but vary substantially on a local level from the inner-city, to suburbs, small towns, and rural communities. Generally, the inner-city and rural communities experience the lowest member activity rates due to transportation challenges, limited local leadership, lower standards of living, greater ethnic diversity in the inner city, and the desire for many active Latter-day Saint families to reside in suburban communities and small cities that tend to be more family-oriented and exhibit higher standards of living. Receptivity to LDS mission outreach has been highest in suburbs and the inner city, whereas retention rates appear highest in suburbs due to greater member involvement and reduced reliance on full-time missionaries for administrative duties. Areas with small LDS populations have been more susceptible to quick-baptism tactics by full-time missionaries and minimal post-baptismal fellowshipping, which has adversely affected convert retention rates. Overall the LDS Church in the United States heavily utilizes full-time missionaries for finding, teaching, and reactivation as indicated by the operation of one hundred missions in 2011. The dedication of large full-time missionary complements to areas that are self-sufficient in leadership, and capable of member-missionary activity has contributed to a sense of reduced responsibility for local members to participate in missionary activity. The entrenchment of LDS populations has resulted in reduced interaction with the general population, further exacerbating low levels of member-missionary efforts essential toward maintaining high member activity and convert retention rates.

Many converts are youth or young single adults; in recent years, many do not speak English as their first language. The creation of hundreds of Spanish-speaking and young single adult (YSA) congregations has significantly increased nationwide congregational growth rates, which may indicate that convert retention and member activity rates are more modest for the general LDS population. The organization of Spanish-speaking and YSA congregations has occurred in part to focus greater resources into reaching less active and inactive members among these populations, both of which experience low member activity rates and convert retention struggles. Self-reported rates of weekly church attendance are lower among single self-identified Latter-day Saints (60%) compared to married Latter-day Saints (82%),³⁴ although actual activity rates are considerably lower for both groups, as many individuals on LDS membership rolls do not identify the LDS Church as their faith of preference, and other sociologic studies demonstrate that actual U.S. church attendance is often substantially less than self-reported figures. The Church has focused on meeting the needs of local members, particularly those with the highest promise toward securing long-term growth for the Church and that demonstrate the strongest receptivity to LDS teachings, although the most receptive groups in the short term often face poorer long-term activity rates. Ethnic minorities often experience lower retention rates in ordinary LDS wards and branches due to cultural and linguistic barriers, transient lifestyles, factors related to their culture of origin, and decreased effectiveness of local fellowshipping. The organization of other language-specific congregations can ameliorate convert retention rates depending on mission outreach vision of local

³⁴ "A Portrait of Mormons in the U.S.," The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 24 July 2009. <http://pewforum.org/Christian/Mormon/A-Portrait-of-Mormons-in-the-U.S..aspx>

leadership, sufficient resources to meet the language and cultural needs of a given population, and desire by ethnic minorities to serve in the Church and teach friends and family.

Outreach to young single adults is of key importance to the Church in ensuring long-term stability in leadership and ecclesiastical administration, member activity rates among Latter-day Saints raised in the Church, and the retention of youth and young single adult converts. The Church underwent a massive reorganization of student single and young single adult congregations in 2010 and 2011 in Utah and Idaho in an effort to consolidate resources, reduce confusion, and concentrate on reactivation efforts among one of the largest concentrations of young single adult Latter-day Saints in the United States. In the Salt Lake area, 147 student single and young single adult congregations were realigned into 121 congregations in April 2011 following successful implementation of the merger of student-single and young single adult units in several other areas of Utah and Idaho. Young single adult congregations in several of the largest cities in Utah and Idaho were organized into young single adult stakes in 2010 and 2011, resulting in the renaming of student single adults stakes to young single adult stakes and the creation of an additional twelve young single adult stakes in Utah.³⁵ Efforts by local young single adult members to reach out to some 4,600 fellow less active or inactive members resulted in the short-term reactivation of 1,100 young adults in St. George, Cedar City, Logan, and Ephraim by early 2011.³⁶ In April 2011, there were approximately 1,200 young single adult and student single congregations and 124 student married congregations in the United States.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Non-English speakers are often poorly integrated into English-speaking congregations and are more prone to lower member activity rates due to fellowshiping and teaching challenges and cultural issues. Differing cultural backgrounds can result in some minorities feeling isolated in predominantly white congregations, but local members who have served full-time missions are often instrumental in conducting outreach to these groups, particularly if they served in the home country of a given immigrant group. At present, many of the largest American cities have large numbers of inactive members from immigrant minority groups that have been unable to support a language-specific congregation. Some past attempts to instill self-sufficiency and develop local leadership have failed, such as with Cambodians in Boston, Massachusetts and Sudanese in Omaha, Nebraska. Today local English-speaking congregations struggle to meet the needs of many ethnic minority groups, resulting in little outreach to these populations and limited understanding of their respective cultures and religious beliefs and practices. Ethnic groups that receive the greatest outreach are those who come from nations with the largest LDS populations. Overall Russians, non-English speaking Europeans, South Asians, and Arabs are almost entirely unreached by the Church whereas Polynesians, Spanish-speakers, and some Southeast Asian groups like Hmong received the greatest LDS mission outreach. Chinese, Koreans, Vietnamese, Haitians, and Portuguese-speakers receive moderate levels of outreach. Ethnic groups with moderate populations including Russians, Germans, Japanese, Burmese, and Swahili-speaking Africans receive outreach in Utah but rarely in other states.

The Church has struggled on a local level determining how and when non-English speaking congregations should be organized as non-English speaking ethnic groups generally have insufficient local LDS leadership to staff local congregations but often do not successfully integrate into often English language LDS congregations. Many congregations with an insufficient number of members speaking a given language to create a separate congregation often hold Sunday school classes in the language and offer translations of sacrament meeting talks by headset, or function as semi-autonomous groups under the administration of English-speaking wards.

³⁵ "Organizational Changes Help Church Leaders Better Care for Young Single Adults," LDS Newsroom, 15 April 2011. <http://newsroom.lds.org/article/organizational-changes-young-single-adults>

³⁶ Stack, Peggy Fletcher. "Loss of members spurred LDS singles ward changes," The Salt Lake Tribune, 26 April 2011. <http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/news/51700209-78/lds-single-ballard-lake.html.csp>

Returned missionaries have reported some instances of ethnic integration challenges in the South among whites and African Americans that have resulted in challenges maintaining member activity rates particularly among the African American minority. Studies have found that the large majority of African American Christians in the United States largely worship in black congregations; relatively few worship in substantially diverse congregations. These entrenched social trends present cultural and ethnic barriers to integration into LDS congregations that are not predominately black, as even diligent white fellowshippers are often less effective at meeting the needs of African American converts.

Local leaders stress the need for members from both ethnic groups to fellowship with one another as church members, and overcoming cultural and ethnic differences will be required for greater progress to have LDS demographics become representative of the general population in many southern states. Several large cities in the south and east have large numbers of inactive African American members due to increased distances to travel to church meetinghouses upon the closure of some inner-city congregations, the lack of African American LDS leadership in some areas, and challenges assimilating African Americans, whites, and other ethnic groups into the same congregations.

Language Issues

The LDS Church in the United States operates a large number of non-English speaking congregations. In early April 2011, there were approximately 765 Spanish-speaking congregations in the United States (299 wards and 466 branches), accounting for 5.6% of LDS congregations in the United States—22.7% of those branches were Spanish-speaking during this period. Other language-specific LDS congregations in the United States in early April 2011 included Tongan (67), Samoan (40), Chinese languages (14), Korean (12), Hmong (9), Portuguese (6), Marshallese (5), Cambodian (4), Laotian (4), Vietnamese (4), Haitian-Creole (3), Tagalog (3), Fijian (2), Japanese (2), Navajo (2), French (1), German (1), Karen (1), Russian (1), and Swahili (1). One Laotian-speaking ward in Salt Lake City, Utah also accommodates Thai speakers. The LDS Church once operated a few congregations that meet the needs of Armenian, Nuer, and Polish speakers, but these congregations were discontinued in the 2000s. Dependent branches, groups, and Sunday School classes operate in several areas to meet the needs of non-English speakers.

Missionary Service

The LDS Church in the United States supplies the Church with the most full-time missionaries of any country. The Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah provides foreign language education in approximately fifty languages and can accommodate up to 4,000 missionaries at a time,³⁷ although in recent years, the number of missionaries at the training center has generally been only around 2,000. The number of American members serving full-time missions has declined over the past decade due to declining birthrates among Latter-day Saint families in the 1980s. This has resulted in fewer mission-aged youth by the early 2000s, the percentage of members serving missions remaining unchanged or stagnant during this period, continuing challenges keeping youth and young adult active, inconsistent missionary preparation among teenage members, and higher standards for missionary service. The lack of progress in maintaining and increasing the number of American members serving missions during the 2000s is demonstrated by the decline in the number of full-time missionaries serving worldwide during the 2000s from a high of 61,638 in 2002 to 52,225 in 2010. Coordination with parents and youth leaders on missionary preparation, financial planning, and the development of personal religious habits such as scripture reading, weekly church attendance, and daily prayer will be essential in overcoming ongoing challenges in increase the number of full-time missionaries serving. Additional emphasis on missionary preparation for non-English speaking American members is warranted, as fewer Spanish-speaking members serve full-time missions compared to their English-speaking counterparts.

³⁷ "About the MTC," Missionary Training Center, Provo Utah, retrieved 9 April 2011. <http://www.mtc.byu.edu/themtc.htm>

Leadership

Most areas have an ample supply of well-trained members capable of holding a myriad of administrative and leadership positions. Available leadership among non-English-speaking members remains limited, frequently necessitating returned missionaries with second language abilities to serve as branch presidents, particularly for Spanish-speaking branches. The large number of returned missionary members provides a significant strength to local and international church leadership but has at times been detrimental in fostering self-sufficiency on a local level among some foreign-language speaking congregations, as local members rely on outsourced returned missionaries to perform administrative and ecclesiastical duties. American Latter-day Saints are overrepresented in international church leadership, as in April 2011 two of the three members of the First Presidency, all members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, five of the seven Presidents of the Seventy, thirty-one of the fifty-seven members of the First Quorum of the Seventy, sixteen of the twenty members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy, and all three members of the Presiding Bishopric were born in the United States. American Latter-day Saints constitute the majority of temple and mission presidents worldwide.

Temple

The first LDS temple was constructed in the United States in Kirtland, Ohio in 1836, followed by a second temple in Nauvoo, Illinois in 1846 through great sacrifice of local members. The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (RLDS), today known as the Community of Christ, took ownership of the Kirtland Temple in 1880, whereas the Nauvoo Temple was destroyed by an arson fire in 1848 and a tornado in 1850. Additional temples were constructed following the relocation of the body of church members to Utah with temples dedicated in St. George (1877), Logan (1884), Manti (1888), and Salt Lake (1893). The first LDS temple constructed outside of North America was dedicated in Laie, Hawaii in 1919, and the first LDS temple constructed along the Pacific coast was dedicated in Los Angeles in 1956. The Washington, D.C. Temple became the first LDS temple built east of the Mississippi River in 1974. The number of temples operating in the United States increased from four in 1900 to seven in 1950, nine in 1970, thirteen in 1980, twenty-one in 1990, fifty-one in 2000, and sixty-six in 2010. The large increase in the number of temples in the 1990s was attributed to the construction of dozens of small temples to service small LDS populations distant from larger temples. In April 2011, there were seventy-seven LDS temples in the United States, sixty-four of which were operating, two were undergoing renovation, three under construction, and eight of which were still in the planning stages. Thirty-five of the fifty states have an LDS temple, and twenty have only one temple (Alabama, Alaska, Connecticut, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina). States with more than one temple include Utah (15), California (7), Arizona and Idaho (5), Texas (4), Washington (3), and Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Missouri, Nevada, New York, Oregon, and Tennessee (2). Many states without temples have temples nearby such as Maine, Mississippi, Virginia, and Wyoming.

Large temples in the western United States are the most well-utilized by the Church worldwide, especially in Utah and Arizona where some temples schedule endowment sessions every twenty or thirty minutes from the early morning until late evening such as at the Jordan River Utah Temple. The busiest temples in the central and eastern United States generally offer endowment sessions no more than one per hour on weekdays and every thirty minutes on Saturdays. Most medium-sized temples are well-utilized, such as the Denver Colorado Temple and the Orlando Florida Temple. Member usage of the new generation of small, 10,700-square-foot temples unveiled in the late 1990s depends by location, with some small temples such as the Columbia South Carolina Temple and the Columbus Ohio Temple scheduling upwards of six endowment sessions on some days, whereas other temples requiring appointments to attend due to few temple staff and patrons. Small temples are most well-utilized in the western United States but generally have four or fewer endowment sessions scheduled per day.

Prospects for the continued construction of additional temples are excellent due to moderate member activity rates, steady congregational growth, and high rates of temple attendance among active members in most locations as well as ample financial funds originating from the large body of tithe-paying American Latter-day Saints. Cities that appear most favorable for potential LDS temples in the coming decade include Jacksonville, Florida; Tucson, Arizona; Cedar City, Utah; Price, Utah; Layton, Utah; Pocatello, Idaho; Eugene, Oregon; Rogers, Arkansas; Charlotte, North Carolina; Richmond, Virginia; Cincinnati, Ohio; Bakersfield, California; Farmington, New Mexico; and Pensacola, Florida.

Comparative Growth

The LDS Church in the United States has the most members, stakes, congregations, missions, and temples of any country and possesses five times as many members as the country with the second most members (Mexico), six times as many stakes as the country with the second most stakes (Brazil), almost seven times as many congregations as the country with the second most congregations (Mexico), nearly four times as many missions as the country with the second most missions (Brazil), and six times as many temples as the country with the second most temples (Mexico). The percentage of the population residing in a city or location with an LDS congregation in the United States is higher than any other country with over fifty million people. The ratio of the general population to LDS missions in the United States of three million to one is lower than any other country with over thirty million inhabitants and is comparable to Central America. Generally, at least half of the increase of congregations for the LDS Church occurs in the United States annually, and in recent years between one-quarter and one-half of all new LDS stake organizations occur in the United States. The LDS Church in the United States constituted over half of international church membership until March 1996³⁸ and accounted for 43.5% of worldwide church membership in 2010. In recent years, American convert baptisms may account for as few as 20% of worldwide convert baptisms. Member activity and convert retention rates in the United States are among the highest for countries with over 100,000 Latter-day Saints, notwithstanding the number of less active and inactive American members surpassing the number of active Latter-day Saints outside of the United States.

Some other major outreach-oriented Christians report comparable growth trends to the LDS Church in the United States, but self-identified Latter-day Saints are among the most active and devoted of all Christians. Self-identified Latter-day Saints in the United States report the second highest weekly church attendance rates (76%) of any religious group, whereas Jehovah's witnesses report the highest (82%). Latter-day Saints and Jehovah's Witnesses report the highest percentage of church attendance on a weekly, monthly, or yearly basis (92%). Latter-day Saints are no less likely than the general population in sharing their religious beliefs on a weekly basis (24%), whereas Jehovah's Witnesses are nearly three times as likely (76%).³⁹ When taking into account inactive and disaffiliated members, the LDS Church reports activity rates comparable to most mainstream denominations, although active Latter-day Saints demonstrate more intense participation. Other missionary-minded Christian groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists engage in more proactive member-missionary programs than the LDS Church.

Some Christian groups achieve⁴⁰ greater outreach among ethnic minority groups than Latter-day Saints. The Seventh Day Adventist Church generally increases by ten to fifty new congregations a year and 20,000 members while baptizing about 30,000 new converts annually. Adventists have established a greater number of congregations to meet the needs of non-English speaking minority groups and operate several congregations throughout the country for ethnic groups seldom reached by Latter-day Saints in the United States,

³⁸ Hart, John L. "Over half LDS now outside U.S.," LDS Church News, 2 March 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28254/Over-half-LDS-now-outside-U.S..html>

³⁹ "A Portrait of Mormons in the U.S.," The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 24 July 2009. <http://pewforum.org/Christian/Mormon/A-Portrait-of-Mormons-in-the-U.S..aspx>

⁴⁰ Searle, Don L. "One Million in Mexico," Ensign, Jul 2004, 35.

including Russians and Ukrainians. Adventists even operate a Hungarian-speaking congregation in New York City and several Indonesian-speaking churches. The extent of outreach directed toward Spanish-speakers is comparable to Latter-day Saints, although Adventists maintain a far greater number of Spanish-speaking congregations in the Northeast, whereas Latter-day Saints maintain many more Spanish-speaking congregations in the Southwest and in Utah.

Future Prospects

Steady congregational growth for decades, a strong leadership base, a large number of youth and young adult converts serving missions, an increased emphasis on member-missionary activity, and an abundant supply of mission and administrative resources generate a positive outlook for future LDS growth in the United States. Greater consistency regarding convert baptismal standards, reactivation efforts, and missionary preparation for LDS youth will be required to sustain growth and reduce convert and seasoned member attrition. LDS proselytism approaches will likely need to be increasingly more modified to suit investigators and less active members who have a secular background due to declining religious activity in public and family life. Dozens of additional LDS stakes will likely be organized on a yearly basis for the foreseeable future, but prospects for increasing outreach among non-Polynesians and non-Spanish speaking minority groups is bleak due to low receptivity, inadequate LDS leadership manpower among minority groups in many areas, and a lack of vision by local and area leaders in many locations. Additional missions will likely be consolidated in less productive areas of the United States such as the northeast due to limited international LDS missionary manpower. The ongoing trend of temple construction will likely continue due to high rates of temple attendance among active members in many areas of the United States.

CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, **Bermuda**, **Bonaire**, **British Virgin Islands**, **Cayman Islands**, Costa Rica, Cuba, Curacao, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, French Guiana, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Martinique, Mexico, **Montserrat**, Nicaragua, Panama, Puerto Rico, **Saba**, **Saint Barthelemy**, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Martin, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sint Maarten, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, **Turks and Caicos Islands**, United States Virgin Islands.

*Territories and countries in **bold** have no individual profiles.*

REGIONAL PROFILE

Geography

AREA: 3,190,193 square km. Central America consists of several narrow isthmuses that bridge North and South America from Mexico to Panama that border the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea. The Caribbean is comprised of several large island groups such as the Lesser and Greater Antilles, which are located between Central America, North America, South America, and the Atlantic Ocean. Due to historical and demographic similarities, the Guianas (Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana) are often considered part of the Caribbean despite being geographically located in northern South America. Most nations and territories in the region experience tropical climate year round. A rugged, mountainous interior circumscribed by a narrow coastal plain characterizes the terrain of many islands in the Caribbean. In Central America, highland areas experience semi-tropical climatic conditions modified by high elevation. Several large lakes occupy areas of Central America, such as Lago de Nicaragua in Nicaragua, Lake Chapala in Mexico, and Lago de Atitlan in Guatemala. In the Guianas and Mexico, several large rivers originate in highland areas and empty into the surrounding ocean. Mexico experiences some of the greatest diversity in terrain, landscapes, and climates ranging from desert plains to alpine conditions on high elevation volcanic peaks. Hurricanes, tropical storms, volcanoes, earthquakes, tsunamis, and flooding are natural hazards. Environmental issues include deforestation, pollution, desertification, soil erosion, fresh water scarcity, coral reef decay, and proper waste disposal.

Peoples

Mestizo: 48%
Amerindian: 21%
White: 12%
Black: 9%
Mulatto: 8%
East Indian: 0.5%
Other/unknown: 1.5%

Mestizo are mixed white European and Amerindian and comprise the majority in most Central American nations, especially in large cities. East Indians live primarily in Caribbean nations, whereas Mulatto are mixed black African and white European or other ethnicities and are found in smaller numbers throughout the region. Amerindians are concentrated in Central America, primarily in Mexico and Guatemala. Whites are primarily found in the Guianas and southern Caribbean.

Population: 198,745,580 (July 2011)
Annual Growth Rate: 0.989% (2011)
Fertility Rate: 2.09 children born per woman (2011)
Life Expectancy: 72.72 male, 77.43 female (2011)

Languages: Spanish (71%), Amerindian languages (7%), English (6%), Haitian Creole (5%), French and English Creoles (1%), other or unknown (10%). Languages with over one million speakers include Spanish

(141.5 million), English (11.3 million), Haitian Creole (9.24 million), K'iche' dialects (2.33 million), Nahuatl (1.75 million), and French Creole languages (1.2 million).

Literacy: 53%–99% (country average 90%)

History

Amerindian peoples are believed to have settled Central America and the Caribbean several millennia prior to the arrival of Europeans. Sophisticated and advanced pre-Colombian ancient Mesoamerican civilizations thrived in Mexico for centuries prior to European contact. The Olmecs, Mayas, Toltecs, and Aztecs occupied large areas of Mexico, and some exerted influence into northern Mexico and Central America. The Maya settled and founded several populous city states in Guatemala, the Yucatan Peninsula, and nearby countries before 1000 AD. Most cities were abandoned around 1000 AD. Arawak and Carib Amerindians populated the Lesser Antilles and coastal areas of the Guianas prior to European exploration. Led by Christopher Columbus, the Spanish first sighted land in the Americas in the present-day Bahamas in 1492. Spain quickly expanded its empire in the New World, laying waste to indigenous Amerindian populations through conquest and disease. In the 1520s, Hernan Cortes conquered the Aztec Empire and established a Spanish colony that endured for 300 years. The Spanish began exploring and colonizing the remainder of Central America in early sixteenth century. In the seventeenth century, the English, French, and Dutch established colonies in the Caribbean by overrunning the Spanish. By the end of the seventeenth century, most of the Lesser Antilles were no longer under Spanish control. The English and Spanish vied for control of present-day Belize during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as the English had a presence in many Caribbean coastal areas in Central America. The French and British transported African slaves to the Caribbean between the late seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries, significantly altering the demographic makeup of local populations. During this period most of the remaining indigenous Amerindian populations were wiped out by forced labor, disease, and war. Several islands in the Caribbean were invaded and liberated by the British, French, and Dutch during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Lesser Antilles became lucrative to European colonists for cultivating sugarcane, spices, and other crops due to favorable agricultural conditions. African slaves in Haiti rebelled against France in 1804 and gained independence, becoming the second sovereign nation in the Western Hemisphere after the United States. Mexico declared independence from Spain in 1810, but independence was not internationally recognized until 1821. Spanish colonies in Central America gained independence in 1821, and several efforts to unify Central America into one entity failed in the 1820s and 1830s, giving rise to political instability and revolution. The United Kingdom abolished slavery in 1834 and relocated populations from East India to labor in the plantations in the Caribbean as indentured servants. The Dominican Republic gained independence from Haiti in 1844. The United States annexed Cuba and Puerto Rico in the late nineteenth century during the Spanish-American War, and Cuba gained independence in 1902. The United States assisted in Panama's independence effort in the 1900s, resulting in Panama gaining independence in 1903. Panama signed a treaty with the United States allowing the construction of the Panama Canal, which included granting sovereignty to the United States in the Panama Canal Zone. During the 1910s, the Mexican Revolution gripped the nation as a result of major economic and social problems and culminated in the creation of the 1917 constitution. A single political party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), dominated government and politics for the rest of the twentieth century in Mexico.

In 1961, the United States strove to remove the communists from power in Cuba in the failed Bay of Pigs Invasion. The Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 brought the Soviet Union and the United States dangerously close to war when Soviet troops positioned nuclear warheads within striking distance of much of the United States. Twelve nations gained independence from the United Kingdom in the Caribbean and Central America between 1962 and 1983, including Jamaica (1962), Trinidad and Tobago (1962), Barbados (1966), Guyana (1966), the Bahamas (1973), Grenada (1973), Dominica (1978), Saint Lucia (1979), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (1979), Antigua and Barbuda (1981), Belize (1981), and Saint Kitts and Nevis (1983). Suriname gained independence from the Netherlands in 1975. The United States provided military assistance to several

Central American governments in the latter half of the twentieth century to fight Marxist and socialist insurgencies. Many Central American nations experienced civil war between the 1970s and early 1990s. A communist government came to power in Grenada in 1979 and fell into chaos in 1983, resulting in military invasion by the United States and other Caribbean nations to restore order. During the latter-half of the twentieth century, several hurricanes and volcanic eruptions devastated islands in the Lesser Antilles. In 1998, Hurricane Mitch caused widespread destruction from flooding and landslides in Central America. All United States land holdings in the Panama Canal Zone and military bases returned to Panamanian control by the end of 1999. In 2009, political instability worsened in Honduras as a military coup overthrew President Manuel Zelaya. Several islands in the Caribbean remain under American or European control at present. Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Monserrat, and the Turks and Caicos Islands pertain to the United Kingdom; French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Saint Barthelemy, and Saint Martin pertain to France; Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, Saba, and Sint Maarten pertain to the Netherlands; and Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands pertain to the United States. In recent years, Mexico has become the region's most powerful nation and has become increasingly integrated into the United States economy through free trade agreements and remittances from Mexican workers in the United States.

Culture

Christianity is the primary religious influence on society throughout the region. The Catholic Church has heavily influenced culture and society in Central America and in many nations and territories in the Caribbean for centuries, although in recent years its power and relationship with governments has decreased. Protestantism continues to thrive throughout the region. Central American nations generally experience strong cultural similarities with other Spanish-speaking Latin American nations due to a shared Spanish colonial past, the fusion of European and Amerindian cultures, and the dominance of the Catholic Church. Caribbean culture shares similarities with Latin American nations due to the fusion of indigenous and European cultures, but most nations and territories in the Caribbean demonstrate stronger ties to their former European colonizers than to Central America, have predominantly black African populations as a result of African slaves brought to labor in plantations, and have a culturally greater influence from South Asia due to the influx of East Indian workers in the nineteenth century. Secularism is most apparent in Caribbean islands with strong ties with Western Europe and in those countries that attract large numbers of European and North American tourists, such as Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, and Barbados. Indigenous beliefs, practices, and customs continued to be widely followed by Amerindian groups in areas of southern Mexico, the highlands of Guatemala, and isolated regions of Central America and the Guianas. Alcohol consumption rates are generally comparable to world averages while cigarette consumption rates are generally lower. Lawlessness and illicit drug use are increasing in some nations in the region, particularly those that struggle with corruption and have few government resources to fight crime, such as Belize and Jamaica.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$12,700 national median (2010) [24.9% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.738

Corruption Index: 3.8

Agricultural output drives many of the economies in Central America, and many countries experience low standards of living despite abundant natural resources, excellent geographical location, and suitable climate for growing a variety of crops. Corruption has seriously deterred economic growth in Mexico and Central America and continues to delay greater progress. Economies in the Caribbean are heavily dependent on tourism, as many nations in the region have few natural resources but possess pristine beaches, beautiful scenery, and attractive tropical climates moderated by the surrounding ocean. Offshore banking has attracted foreign investment in many areas in recent years. Services generate most of the GDP and employ most of the workforce in the Caribbean. Agriculture comprises an important but generally non-lucrative sector of the

economy. Primary crops in Central America and the Caribbean include fruit, vegetables, sugarcane, coconuts, cocoa, coffee, rice, and cotton. Major industries consist of tourism, banking, mining, petroleum, natural gas, cement production, construction, oil transshipment, and rum distilling. The United States, Western Europe, South America, and East Asia are primary trade partners.

Nations and territories with close ties with the United States and Western Europe such as Barbados generally experience lower levels of corruption. The transshipment of illicit drugs is a major challenge that is often perpetuated and exacerbated by corruption. Money laundering and illegal immigration are additional concerns. A lack of government transparency and corruption of government officials are concerns in some Central American nations. Haiti has been heavily dependent on international aid for decades. Corruption in Haiti is extreme and present in all areas of society. Marijuana and cocaine use are high in some nations and territories.

Faiths

Christian: 85%

Other (primarily Hindu and Muslim: 4%

None/unspecified: 11%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 108,285,922

Seventh Day Adventists 2,855,212 8,460

Latter-day Saints 2,188,000 3,407

Jehovah's Witnesses 1,083,104 17,785

Religion

Christianity is the predominant religion of Central America and the Caribbean, as 85% of the regional population is Christian, and Christians account for the majority of the population in all countries and territories in the region with the exception of Trinidad and Tobago, where Christians are nonetheless the largest religious group. Sixty-four percent (64%) of Christians in the region are Catholic. Catholicism is a major cultural influence and the primary Christian denomination in Central America and the Greater Antilles whereas Protestant denominations generally claim more members than Catholic Church in the Lesser Antilles. The size and strength of the Catholic Church has its roots in past Spanish conquest and colonial rule in Central America and the Greater Antilles and past French colonial rule in Haiti and the several French dependencies in the Lesser Antilles. Many Protestant denominations report large numbers of devoted converts and steady church growth in the region over the past half century. Hindus account for the second largest faith in the region and number over half a million followers whereas Muslims are the third largest faith and number approximately 250,000. Both Hindus and Muslims are primarily concentrated in Trinidad and Tobago and the Guianas among East Indians. Nonreligious individuals account for approximately 10% of the regional population. Some syncretism has occurred between Christianity and indigenous beliefs among Amerindian groups in Central America.

Religious Freedom

The constitution, laws, or government policies among all nations and territories in Central America and the Caribbean protect religious freedom and are upheld by the government with the exception of Cuba. Although the governments of Central America and the Caribbean are predominantly secular, Christianity is a strong

influence on government officials, policies, and laws and several countries maintain a special relationship with the Catholic Church or a specific Christian denomination. Many Christian holidays are recognized as national holidays in the region. Foreign missionaries serve without restrictions, proselyte freely, and in some nations are required to obtain visas and residency permits with the exception of Cuba where religious groups must obtain government permission to operate in a given location and invite foreign religious workers or guests. Some nations require religious groups to register with the government, especially to obtain tax-exempt status. There have been no reports of religious groups being denied registration in the region. Some nations permit religious instruction in public schools, which is usually optional. Societal abuse of religious freedom has been minimal in most nations. Rastafarians report some societal discrimination in the region and complain that marijuana use is often illegal.

Largest Cities

Urban: low (Trinidad and Tobago and Monserrat—14%); high (Anguilla, Bermuda, and the Cayman Islands—100%)

Mexico City, Guadalajara, Monterrey, Santo Domingo, Puebla, Guatemala City, San Juan, Port-au-Prince, Havana, Toluca, Tijuana, San Salvador, León, San José, Ciudad Juárez, Panama City, Torreón, Managua, Querétaro, San Luis Potosí, Tegucigalpa, Mérida.

All twenty-two cities with over one million inhabitants have an LDS congregation. Thirty-three percent (33%) of the regional population resides in the twenty-two most populous cities.

LDS History

The first LDS mission outreach in Central America and the Caribbean began in Mexico. LDS Church President Brigham Young called six missionaries to begin proselytism in Mexico with recently translated Spanish church materials in 1875. Missionaries first baptized converts in Hermosillo in 1876. In 1880 and 1881, missionaries dedicated Mexico for missionary work on two occasions in Mexico City.⁴¹ In 1885, 400 Latter-day Saint colonists settled in northern Mexico.⁴² The LDS colonies were evacuated in 1912 due to the Mexican Revolution; only Colonia Juarez and Colonia Dublan were resettled and continue today.⁴³ LDS missionaries returned to Mexico in 1922.⁴⁴ Missionary efforts in central Mexico were not reestablished until 1930 when six local missionaries were called.⁴⁵ In 1936, many local members debated about Mexican church leadership under the Third Convention and were excommunicated. Nearly a decade later, many of these members who separated themselves from the Church returned and stabilized local membership and leadership.⁴⁶

The first congregation in Panama was organized in 1941 for American military stationed in the Panama Canal Zone.⁴⁷ The first LDS missionaries arrived in Costa Rica in 1946. The first LDS missionaries arrived in Guatemala in 1947,⁴⁸ El Salvador in 1949,⁴⁹ Honduras in December 1952, and Nicaragua in 1953. The

⁴¹ "Country Profiles," LDS Newsroom, retrieved 24 September 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/mexico>

⁴² Hartley, William G. "The Church Grows in Strength," *Ensign*, Sep 1999, 32.

⁴³ Searle, Don L. "One Million in Mexico," *Ensign*, Jul 2004, 35.

⁴⁴ "Country Profiles," LDS Newsroom, retrieved 24 September 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/mexico>

⁴⁵ Swensen, Jason. "A million in Mexico on Aug. 1, after 128 years," *LDS Church News*, 10 July 2004. <http://www.ldschurch-news.com/articles/45820/A-million-in-Mexico-on-Aug-1-after-128-years.html>

⁴⁶ "Panama," *Country Profiles*, retrieved 19 April 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/panama>

⁴⁷ "Guatemala," *Country Profiles*, retrieved 1 June 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/guatemala>

⁴⁸ <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/el-salvador>

⁴⁹ "Guatemala," *Deseret News 2003 Church Almanac*, p. 344.

Church received official recognition in Guatemala in 1966.⁵⁰ The Church was not officially recognized by the Panamanian government until 1965, the same year missionary work began.⁵¹ In the late 1970s, the Church experienced some of its first successes reaching the indigenous inhabitants of Central America in small, remote villages in the Guatemalan highlands, prompting translations of selections of the Book of Mormon into multiple Mayan languages in the early 1980s. Missionaries were withdrawn from Nicaragua in September 1978 due to civil war that brought the Sandinistas to power in 1979. In 1978, the Dominican Republic was dedicated for missionary work, the first convert baptisms occurred, and the first congregation was organized.⁵² The first convert baptisms in Trinidad and Tobago occurred in the late 1970s and the first congregation was organized in 1980. Formal missionary work and an official LDS congregation was first established in Belize in 1980. An LDS presence was first established in the Bahamas in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The first LDS convert baptisms occurred in Haiti in 1978 and Haiti was dedicated for missionary work in 1983.

Most nations and territories in the Lesser Antilles and the Guianas began receiving permanent LDS outreach in the 1980s and early 1990s such as Aruba, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Guyana, and Suriname. The first LDS missionaries were assigned to Guyana in 1988, and the first LDS congregation was organized in 1989. North American missionaries were withdrawn from Panama for a period in the late 1980s due to political instability.⁵³ In 1990, the Central America Area was created from the Mexico/Central America Area with headquarters in Guatemala City.⁵⁴ Trinidad and Tobago was dedicated for missionary work in 1990.⁵⁵ Although Central America as a whole was dedicated for missionary work in 1952, Guatemala and other individual Central American countries were dedicated for missionary work in 1991.⁵⁶ The LDS Church was formally recognized by the Mexican government in 1993. North American missionaries were withdrawn from Haiti in the mid-1990s and again in the mid-2000s.

Mexico became the first nation outside the United States to have over one million nominal members in 2004 and in 2009 became the first nation outside the United States to have over 2,000 congregations. The Caribbean Area was formed from a division of the North America Southeast Area in 2006 and today includes the nations in the Caribbean. Dominica had its first LDS missionaries arrive in 2006, and the Turks and Caicos were opened for missionary work in late 2008.⁵⁷ The first LDS congregation on Saba was organized in the mid-2000s but was discontinued in 2011. In September 2009, the Guyanese government requested the Church to remove foreign missionaries serving in the country who were claimed to have expired missionary visas. The Jamaica Kingston Mission president began making visits to Cuba for church business in the early 2010s. By June 2011, all nations and territories in Central America and the Caribbean had an independent LDS congregation operating except Anguilla, Monserrat, Saba, and Saint Barthelemy. In the past 130 years, international Church leaders have repeatedly declared or suggested that indigenous Central American peoples have some ancestry from Book of Mormon peoples.⁵⁸

⁵⁰ "A new day in this great republic," LDS Church News, 21 September 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21533/A-new-day-in-this-great-republic.html>

⁵¹ VanDenBerghe, Elizabeth and Jed. "A Second Decade for Dominican Saints," Ensign, Oct 1990, 32.

⁵² Hart, John L. "New missions are evidence of Church's dynamic growth," LDS Church News, 25 February 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19163/New-missions-are-evidence-of-Churchs-dynamic-growth.html>

⁵³ Hart, John L. "Central America: Work is booming as members eagerly share their testimonies with friends," LDS Church News, 16 February 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21630/Central-America-Work-is-booming-as-members-eagerly-share-their-testimonies-with-friends.html>

⁵⁴ "Services in 3 South American nations and island republic," LDS Church News, 10 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20438/Services-in-3-South-American-nations-and-island-republic.html>

⁵⁵ "Book of Mormon land, Guatemala, is dedicated," LDS Church News, 2 November 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21312/Book-of-Mormon-land-Guatemala-is-dedicated.html>

⁵⁶ "Pressing forward on Caribbean Island," LDS Church News, 20 June 2009. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/57490/Pressing-forward-on-Caribbean-Island.html>

⁵⁷ Swensen, Jason. "A million in Mexico on Aug. 1, after 128 years," LDS Church News, 10 July 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45820/A-million-in-Mexico-on-Aug-1-after-128-years.html>

⁵⁸ "Membership Distribution of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1973," Deseret News 1974 Church Almanac, p.

Missions

Organized in 1879, the Mexican Mission became the first LDS mission to be organized in the Western Hemisphere outside of the United States. The mission closed in 1889 and reopened in 1901. In 1952, the Church organized the Central American Mission from the Mexican Mission with headquarters in Guatemala City. In 1965, the Central American Mission divided to organize the Guatemala-El Salvador Mission, and the Central American Mission was relocated to San Jose, Costa Rica and later renamed the Costa Rica San Jose Mission. Additional missions were created in Mexico before 1970, such as the Northern Mexican Mission [later renamed Mexico Monterrey] (1956), the West Mexican Mission [later renamed the Mexico Hermosillo] (1960), the Southeast Mexican Mission [later renamed the Mexico Veracruz Mission] (1963), and the Mexico North Central Mission [Mexico Torreon] (1968). There were seven LDS missions headquartered in Central America by 1970.

In the 1970s, additional missions were organized in Mexico Guadalajara (1975), Mexico Villahermosa [relocated to Merida in 1978] (1975), El Salvador San Salvador (1976), Guatemala Quetzaltenango (1977), Mexico Mexico City North (1978), and Puerto Rico San Juan (1979). The Puerto Rico San Juan Mission became the first LDS mission headquartered in the Caribbean. In the 1980s, additional missions were organized in Honduras Tegucigalpa (1980), Dominican Republic Santo Domingo (1981), the West Indies Mission [headquartered in Barbados until 1994 and relocated to Trinidad and Tobago] (1983), Haiti Port-au-Prince (1984), Jamaica Kingston (1985), Dominican Republic Santiago (1987), Mexico Mexico City East (1987), Mexico Mazatlan (1987) [relocated to Culiacan in 1995], Guatemala City North (1988), Mexico Chihuahua (1988), Mexico Tuxtla Gutierrez (1988), Mexico Puebla (1988), Mexico Tampico (1988), El Salvador San Salvador East [relocated to Santa Ana in 2011] (1989), Mexico Queretaro (1989) [relocated to Leon in 1992 and Aguascalientes in 2013], Nicaragua Managua (1989), and Panama Panama City (1989). In the 1990s, additional missions were organized in Honduras San Pedro Sula (1990), Mexico Oaxaca (1990), Mexico Tijuana (1990), Dominican Republic Santo Domingo East (1991), Trinidad and Tobago [discontinued in 1994] (1991), Mexico Monterrey South (1992), Guatemala City Central (1993), and Honduras Comayagua (1997). In the 2000s, additional missions were organized in Mexico Mexico City West (2001), Mexico Guadalajara South (2003) [renamed Guadalajara East Mission in 2009], Mexico Cuernavaca (2006), and Puerto Rico San Juan East [discontinued in 2010] (2007). In the 2010s, additional missions were organized in Guatemala Retalhuleu (2010), Mexico Mexico City Northwest (2010), Mexico Villahermosa (2010), Nicaragua Managua (2010), Mexico Mexico City Southeast (2011), Mexico Puebla North (2012), Mexico Xalapa (2012), El Salvador San Salvador East (2013), Guatemala Coban (2013), Honduras San Pedro Sula West (2013), Mexico Cancun (2013), Mexico Ciudad Juarez (2013), Mexico Ciudad Obregon (2013), Mexico Mexico City Chalco (2013), Mexico Pachuca (2013), Mexico Queretaro (2013), Mexico Reynosa (2013), and Mexico Saltillo (2013). The number of missions in the region increased to twenty-five in 1987, thirty-seven in 1993, thirty-seven in 1997, thirty-seven in 2000, thirty-nine in 2005, forty-seven in 2012, and fifty-eight in 2013.

Most nations and territories in the region have no LDS missions and are administered by a mission based in another nation or territory. In addition to Trinidad and Tobago, the West Indies Mission administered Anguilla, Barbados, French Guiana, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guyana, Martinique, Saint Barthelemy, Saint Lucia, Saint Martin, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sint Maarten, and Suriname in 2011. At that time the Puerto Rico San Juan Mission administered Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Monserrat, Saba, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and the United States Virgin Islands; the Dominican Republic Santo Domingo East Mission administered Aruba, Bonaire, and Curacao; the Jamaica Kingston Mission administered the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, Cuba, and the Turks and Caicos Islands; the New York New York South Mission administered Bermuda; and the El Salvador Santa Ana Mission administered Belize.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 2,188,000 (2012)

There were approximately 40,000 Latter-day Saints in Central America and the Caribbean in 1973.⁵⁹ Membership reached 326,124 in 1983, 528,125 in 1987, 1.067 million in 1993, 1.291 million in 1997, 1.473 million in 2000, 1.731 million in 2005, and 2.046 million in 2010. Between 2000 and 2010, LDS membership grew most rapidly in Guyana (384%), Suriname (182%), Guadeloupe (119%), and Nicaragua (107%) and grew the most slowly or declined in Puerto Rico (–11%), Costa Rica (23%), and Panama (25%). Regional church membership increased by 39% between 2000 and 2010. Among countries with a known LDS presence, LDS membership comprises the greatest portions of the population in El Salvador (one in 56), Honduras (one in 57), and Guatemala (one in 61) and smallest portions of the population in Cuba (one in 110,900) and Martinique (one in 1,959). Of the 41 nations and territories in the region, only 15 had over 1,000 Latter-day Saints in 2010. In 2010, one in 97 was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 2,352 Branches: 1,050 (2011)

There were 1,579 LDS congregations in Central America and the Caribbean in 1987. The number of congregations increased to 2,366 in 1993, 2,783 in 1997, 3,171 in 2000, 3,290 in 2005, and 3,434 in May 2011.

The first stake to be organized in Central America was the Colonia Juarez Mexico Stake in 1895, whereas the first stake to be organized in the Caribbean was the Santo Domingo Dominican Republic Stake in 1986. Other countries and territories that have stakes at present provided with the year the first stake was organized include Guatemala (1967), El Salvador (1973), Costa Rica (1977), Honduras (1977), Panama (1979), Puerto Rico (1980), Nicaragua (1981), Haiti (1997), and Trinidad and Tobago (2009). There were ten stakes in Central America and the Caribbean in 1974.⁶⁰ The number of stakes increased to 127 in 1987, 183 in 1993, 254 in 1997, 294 in 2000, 322 in 2005, and 345 in May 2011. Provided with the number of new stakes organized, between 2000 and mid-2011 new stakes were organized in Mexico (44), the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua (8), and El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Panama, Puerto Rico, and Trinidad and Tobago (1). Since 2000, five stakes have been discontinued in Guatemala and Mexico (2) and the Dominican Republic (1). There were 71 districts in Central America and the Caribbean in 1987. The number of districts totaled 112 in 1993, 127 in 1997, 124 in 2000, 85 in 2005, and 99 in May 2011.

Activity and Retention

The number of active members per congregation varies widely from only a couple dozen in the smallest branches to over 200 in the largest wards. Member activity and convert retention rates vary widely by country and subregion, with the highest member activity rates occurring in the Lesser Antilles (generally 30%–50%) and the lowest member activity rates occurring in Central America (13%–23%). Member activity rates are varied in the Greater Antilles and range from 19% in Puerto Rico to 75% in Cuba. Member activity rates range from 20%–37% in the Guianas. In Central America, Mexico (23%) and Belize (23%) are the nations that appear to have the highest member activity rates, whereas Panama (13%), Nicaragua (16%), and Honduras (18%) appear to have the lowest member activity rates. In the Caribbean, Cuba (75%), the Turks and Caicos Islands (75%), and Saint Lucia (70%) are the nations that appear to have the highest member activity rates, whereas Curacao (20%) and the Bahamas (20%) appear to have the lowest member activity rates. Past Mexican

⁵⁹ "Membership Distribution of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1973," *Deseret News* 1974 Church Almanac, p. 117.

⁶⁰ "Mexico," *International Religious Freedom Report* 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127397.htm>

censuses have provided valuable data on member activity rates in Mexico. In the 2000 census, only 205,229 persons self-identified as a Latter-day Saints,⁶¹ just 23% of the number of members reported by the LDS Church at year-end 2000, whereas in the 2010 census, 314,932 persons self-identified as a Latter-day Saints,⁶² or 25.5% of the number of members reported at year-end 2010. Active membership in Central America and the Caribbean is estimated at 440,000, or 22% of regional church membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Spanish, English, Haitian Creole, K'iche', Dutch, French, Kaqchikel, Mam, Q'eqchi', Maya, Tzotzil, Papiamento, Hindi.

All LDS scriptures are available in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Dutch, French, and Q'eqchi'. The Church recently translated an LDS version of the Bible into Spanish with full LDS footnotes, Bible dictionary, and topical guide. The Book of Mormon in full has been translated into Papiamento and Hindi. Only select passages of the Book of Mormon have been translated into Kaqchikel, K'iche', Mam, Maya, Tzotzil, and Kuna. Most church materials are available in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Dutch, and French, whereas limited materials are available in K'iche', Kaqchikel, Mam, Q'eqchi', Maya, Tzotzil, Papiamento, Hindi, Sranan, and Kuna.

Meetinghouses

There are approximately 1,100 LDS meetinghouses in Central America and the Caribbean. Most congregations in Central America and the Greater Antilles meet in church-built meetinghouses. Many congregations in the Lesser Antilles meet in renovated buildings or rented spaces. Smaller congregations throughout the region generally meet in renovated buildings or rented spaces.

Health and Safety

In 1990, two full-time missionaries from the United States serving in Guatemala drowned in Lake Atitlan when their boat capsized.⁶³ In 1993, the president of the Guatemala City North Mission and a mission counselor perished in a plane crash upon returning from a district conference in the remote Flores Guatemala District.⁶⁴ Homicide rates in Central America are among the highest worldwide and present safety and security threat for LDS missionaries.

Humanitarian and Development Work

LDS humanitarian and development work has occurred in the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Costa Rica, Dominica, the Dominica Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname,⁶⁵ and Trinidad and Tobago. Most projects have consisted of providing neonatal resuscitation training, completing clean water projects, teaching effective agricultural practices, and donating furniture, clothing, appliances, school supplies, hygiene kits, wheelchairs, clothing, emergency relief, children's toys, and medical equipment. The Church has provided extensive, long-term assistance and development work in Haiti following the 2010 earthquake.

⁶¹ "INEGI. Censo de Poblacion y Vivienda 2010: Tabulados del Cuestionario Basico," Instituto Nacional de Estadistica y Geografia, retrieved 3 June 2011. <http://www3.inegi.org.mx/sistemas/TabuladosBasicos/Default.aspx?c=27302&s=est>

⁶² "2 missionaries thought drowned in Guatemala," LDS Church News, 13 January 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20469/2-missionaries-thought-drowned-in-Guatemala.html>

⁶³ "Mission leaders die in plane crash," LDS Church News, 27 November 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23507/Mission-leaders-die-in-plane-crash.html>

⁶⁴ "Locations—South America," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 3 June 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-7,00.html>

⁶⁵ "Locations—North America," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 3 June 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-6,00.html>

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The LDS Church experiences full religious freedom throughout Central America and the Caribbean to worship, proselyte, and assemble with the exception of Cuba. Foreign missionaries serve regularly in all nations in which LDS missionaries are assigned, with the exception of Cuba. In Cuba, the government has not granted registration to the Church but has given permission for some church activity. Christian groups often openly proselyte in Cuba without government interference. No legal restrictions appear to prevent the introduction of full-time missionaries to Cuba from Caribbean nations. The LDS Church remains unregistered in only a few nations largely due to bureaucratic issues and pending changes in registration requirements, such as in Saint Lucia. Delays in obtaining visas to some nations in the region have interrupted planned departures for North American missionaries destined to several nations and territories.

Cultural Issues

The high correlation of family and religious affiliation appears one of the greatest cultural obstacles encountered by LDS missionaries in the region. Many Catholic families do not regularly attend mass or other religious meetings, which challenges full-time and local missionaries in their efforts to develop regular church attendance among former Catholic investigators and new LDS converts. High underemployment rates in many areas are added stressors to families and create economic challenges for Latter-day Saints to faithfully tithe. Many previously receptive individuals have been shepherded into other highly active Christian denominations, becoming less interested and willing to meet with missionaries, join the Church, and remain active. Most of the church-going population is socially entrenched into their respective congregations, creating societal challenges for full-time missionaries to address when finding, teaching, baptizing, and retaining new converts. Greater emphasis on local member-missionary efforts will be needed to overcome these issues and maintain self-sufficiency. Poverty, few opportunities for education, low literacy rates, and challenges developing economic self-sufficiency in rural areas remains obstacles to long-term church growth in Central America and the Guianas. The large range of cultures found in the southern Caribbean in Trinidad and Tobago and the Guianas complicates efforts to unify members in congregations, as converts come from a wide range of religious and social backgrounds. Religious harmony typically prevails, but segregation often occurs on a social level. Religious plurality among Christians has fostered church growth prospects for decades in the Caribbean, but increasing materialism and wealth attributed to the growth of the tourist industry has decreased the devotion and activity of many Christians. Latter-day Saints in some Caribbean nations receive greater prejudice and intolerance than other nontraditional Christian denominations, resulting in the marginalization of the Church and its members and dissuading many potential prospective individuals from learning about the Church and meeting with missionaries.

National Outreach

Central America and the Caribbean experience moderate levels of mission outreach as a whole as 54.5% of the regional population resides in a city or location with an LDS congregation. Seventy-five percent (75%) or more of the population is reached by LDS mission outreach in the United States Virgin Islands, Curacao, Puerto Rico, the British Virgin Islands, the Bahamas, Bonaire, and the Turks and Caicos Islands, primarily due to the populations of most of these nations and territories concentrated in a single city. Among these seven nations or territories, only three have more than one LDS congregation (the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Bahamas). Saint Martin, Bermuda, and Cuba receive some of the most limited LDS mission outreach in the region as indicated by less than 20% of the population residing in cities with LDS congregations. Fifteen of the forty-one nations or territories in the region have only one independent LDS congregation.

Territories that do not appear to receive LDS outreach at present all have fewer than 20,000 inhabitants and include Anguilla, Monserrat, Saba, and Saint Barthelemy.

For countries with over one million inhabitants there is a correlation between the number of inhabitants in a country and the percentage of the population reached by LDS mission outreach as the larger the population, the higher percentage of the population residing in cities with LDS congregations. This finding suggests that the LDS Church has devoted greater mission resources to more populous nations, such as Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras than to nations with smaller populations, such as Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. This trend does not hold true for Cuba, Haiti, and Puerto Rico, as Cuba and Haiti receive limited LDS outreach due to political, governmental, and societal conditions, whereas Puerto Rico has a highly urbanized population maximizing LDS outreach with a smaller number of congregations. The correlation between the size of the population and the percentage reached by LDS outreach becomes less apparent for nations and territories with fewer than one million inhabitants as geographic size, the percent of the population residing in urban locations, and receptivity are better predictors for the dedication of LDS outreach resources than the nominal number of inhabitants in a given nation or territory. The LDS Church has better appropriated mission outreach resources to needs and population sizes in Central America and the Caribbean than in most regions in the world. This is evident in Mexico, the most populous nation in the region, accounting for 57% of the regional population and twenty-four of the forty-five missions (53%) in the region and Guatemala, the second most populous nation in the region, accounting for 7% of the regional population and 11% of the missions in the region.

Opportunities for expanding national outreach appear most favorable in Mexico and Central America due to high receptivity, large populations, self-sufficient full-time missionary forces, and established LDS outreach centers in many administrative divisions in these nations. Vast areas of Mexico have no LDS congregations and have no LDS missionaries assigned as over 68 million Mexicans reside outside of cities with LDS congregations (34% of the regional population). Most of the unreached Mexican population resides in small towns or rural areas with fewer than 40,000 inhabitants. The LDS Church has faced logistical challenges in expanding national outreach with full-time missionaries to rural areas throughout Central America and the Caribbean due to small populations spread over large geographical areas located far from the nearest LDS outreach center. Opening many small cities and towns in Caribbean island nations and territories is impractical for the LDS Church due to limited receptivity, stagnant numbers of full-time missionaries serving worldwide in an era of increasing opportunities for outreach, and the tendency of LDS congregations overstaffed with full-time missionaries to become dependent on foreign missionaries for administrative and missionary duties. Many island nations or territories with small populations of less than 200,000 such as Dominica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and the Turks and Caicos Islands nonetheless hold meaningful opportunities for expanded outreach and noticeable, real growth if proselytism and church planting are carefully approached. Holding cottage meetings and encouraging member-missionary proselytism activities and programs may be useful prospective methods to expand outreach in Caribbean nations with fewer than one million inhabitants, as they require few full-time missionary resources and develop greater member self-sufficiency.

LDS Internet resources are limited in the region and are concentrated among Central American nations and nations and territories with larger populations. Utilizing social networking sites on a local congregational level for larger nations and a national or island level for less-populous islands may enhance efforts to expand national outreach in coordination with missionary efforts centered on involvement of local members in the finding, teaching, and fellowshiping process.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Low member activity and convert retention rates have resulted in large part due to inconsistent convert baptismal standards that often vary from mission president to mission president and have historically focused on meeting arbitrary baptismal quotas with minimal pre-baptismal teaching and inadequate or nonexistent

fellowshipping and support following baptism. Consequently indicators of real church growth and member activity have exhibited little improvement over the past two decades, as most converts have not been retained. Membership growth far outpaced congregational growth between 1987 and 2010, indicating poor convert retention and a shortage of capable local priesthood holders as the average number of members per congregation nearly doubled during a twenty-three-year period from 334 to 597. If the average number of members per congregation for the region were 334 in 2010, there would be an additional 2,700 LDS congregations operating in Central America and the Caribbean in 2010. Congregational decline occurred between 2000 and early 2011 in Guatemala (–35), Panama (–32), Puerto Rico (–11), Belize (–3), Costa Rica (–1), and French Guiana (–1), primarily as a result of low convert retention and little real growth. Additional factors that have worsened member activity and convert retention rates in the region include the emigration of active members and leaders, increasing secularism, counter-proselytism efforts, cultural influences encouraging limited individual participation in organized religion, and inadequately adapted LDS teaching approaches to cultural conditions.

Requiring or strongly encouraging youth and young adult converts to enroll and attend seminary and institute class to be baptized could significantly improve long-term convert retention rates for the LDS Church in the region as seminary and institute provide additional doctrinal instruction, teach self-sufficient gospel study and learning skills, and provide socialization opportunities. LDS mission leadership in some nations or territories in the region have focused on seminary and institute outreach and appear to have achieved higher member activity and convert retention rates compared to other nations and territories in which the efforts of mission and local leaders have been less coordinated or nonexistent.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Many nations in Central America and the Caribbean experience considerable friction between Mestizos, blacks, or East Indians and indigenous Amerindian peoples, although missionaries report few challenges at church. Geography generally separates these groups and reduces conflict in everyday living. Areas along the peripheries of larger cities in Guatemala are likely most prone to these issues affecting missionary work and member activity, as both Mestizos and indigenous peoples may interact and attend the same congregations. In the Guianas, Amerindian peoples are generally isolated in interior regions and have little contact with other ethnic groups, reducing potential conflict. East Indians, blacks, and whites socially segregate themselves in many Caribbean nations due to differences in religion and culture, reducing conflict but creating challenges for differing ethnic groups to assimilate into the same congregations. Socioeconomic differences among members appear to constitute the greatest challenge for integrating members into congregations.

Language Issues

As much as 95% of the regional population has LDS materials translated in their native language, one of the highest percentages in the world. The widespread use of Spanish, English, French, and Dutch has facilitated LDS proselytism efforts once a church presence has been established in nations and territories throughout the region. Efforts to speedily translate LDS materials into Amerindian languages in Guatemala and areas of Mexico have also contributed to the excellent capability and mobilization of LDS language and mission resources. Consistent and coordinated efforts to reach speakers of Amerindian languages has been primarily limited to Guatemala, however. Several Amerindian languages without LDS materials at present may merit the translations due to sizeable numbers of speakers and Latter-day Saints members. Nahuatl, Mixtec, Zapotec, Tzeltal, and Miskito appear to be in the greatest need of translations of LDS materials. With the exception of Haitian Creole and Papiamentu, no Creole languages in the Caribbean have LDS materials translated. Prospects for translating materials and scriptures into additional Creole languages are unlikely due to the fluency of many in standard English and French and the informal use of these languages in daily life.

Missionary Service

Local full-time missionary manpower in Central America is among the most self-sufficient outside of North America and Oceania. Two missionary training centers operate in Central America in Guatemala City, Guatemala and Mexico City, Mexico, providing additional long-term support and administration for newly called missionaries in the region. The Central America Area leadership indicated that the Central America Area became potentially self-sustaining in its full-time missionary force in late 2009. North American missionaries nonetheless serve in large numbers and often account for between a quarter and a half of the total missionary force. Central American missionaries regularly serve in South America. In Mexico, approximately two-thirds of the full-time missionary force is staffed by native members, with North Americans constituting most of the remainder. Prior to 2013, the Mexico Missionary Training Center received only local missionaries, who usually numbered over one hundred at a time. In 2013, the repurposing of the Church's high school in Mexico City as a new missionary training center capable of accommodating as many as 1,500 missionaries occurred in response to the surge in the worldwide full-time missionary force in the early 2010s and inadequate space in the flagship missionary training center in Provo, Utah.⁶⁶ In the past decade, Mexico appears to have increased self-sustainability in supplying full-time missionaries. Despite these nations being at or near self-sufficiency in meeting missionary needs, only a small percentage of young adult Latter-day Saints serve missions. Increasing the number of members serving full-time missions would provide for greater availability in missionary manpower to open additional areas and cities to missionary work that at present are unable to open due to insufficient numbers of missionaries serving in the field.

In the Caribbean, LDS missionary manpower relies on outsourced foreign missionaries to staff local missions despite few LDS missions in the region. There is one missionary training center in the Caribbean in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. The Dominican Republic and Haiti appear to be the only nations that are self-sufficient in meeting their full-time missionary needs. By October 2009 the number of Dominicans serving full-time missionaries had increased to about 500, close to the size of the missionary force in the Dominican Republic. There were seventy-four Haitian members serving full-time missionaries in Haiti in early 2010. The number of youth in Trinidad and Tobago serving missions has steadily increased in recent years and has potential to provide for greater numbers of prepared local leadership in the years to come as returned missionaries remain in their home country. Many Caribbean nations have had few if any local members serve missions. For example, Saint Lucia had had no local members who had served full-time missions as of late 2008.

Leadership

Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Puerto Rico have supplied regional and international church leadership for two decades or more. Dozens of Mexican Latter-day Saints have served as mission presidents, regional representatives, Area Seventies, temple presidents, and general authorities. Few local members have served in regional or international church leadership positions from Nicaragua, Panama, and Costa Rica and fewer from other nations and territories in the region largely due to the small number of members in other nations and territories in the region.

The Church in Central America and the Caribbean appears self-sufficient in supplying administrative and ecclesiastical leadership on a regional level although low member activity rates and few active male members limit growth in nearly all nations and territories in the region. Inadequate numbers of active male priesthood holders prevent the maturation of many groups and dependent branches into independent congregations. Full-time missionaries in some Central American nations report that there must be ten active priesthood holders for a group to become a branch. Establishing groups prior to branches has provided a more flexible approach

⁶⁶ Swensen, Jason. "New MTC in Mexico: Church to repurpose Benemerito de las Americas," LDS Church News, 1 February 2013. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/63206/New-MTC-in-Mexico-Church-to-repurpose-Benemerito-de-las-Amricas.html>

to developing additional native leadership that depends less strongly on full-time missionaries for administrative duties. Inadequate numbers of active priesthood holders in many districts in Central America and the Caribbean where there are sizeable Latter-day Saint populations has prevented the establishment of stakes. Additional congregations often cannot be organized within the largest cities in the region with multiple LDS stakes due to leadership development challenges. These issues have been less severe than in South America, as only five stakes have been discontinued since 2000 compared to approximately fifty in South America, but ongoing leadership challenges threaten additional stake consolidations in some areas such as Guatemala City.

Temple

The Mexico City Mexico Temple was the first LDS temple constructed in Central America and was completed in 1983 to service members throughout the region. Additional temples were constructed in Guatemala City Guatemala (1984), Colonia Juarez Chihuahua Mexico (1999), Ciudad Juarez Mexico (2000), Hermosillo Mexico (2000), Oaxaca Mexico (2000), Tuxtla Gutierrez Mexico (2000), Tampico Mexico (2000), Villahermosa Mexico (2000), San Jose Costa Rica (2000), Merida Mexico (2000), Veracruz Mexico (2000), Santo Domingo Dominican Republic (2000), Guadalajara Mexico (2001), Monterrey Mexico (2002), Panama City Panama (2008), San Salvador El Salvador (2011), and Quetzaltenango Guatemala (2011). The Tegucigalpa Honduras Temple was dedicated on March 17, 2013, and ground was broken for the Tijuana Mexico Temple on August 18, 2012. The number of operating temples increased from two in 1985 to thirteen in 2000 and sixteen in 2010. Temples in Mexico City, Guatemala City, and Santo Domingo appear to be the most utilized as evidenced by endowment sessions scheduled every hour or half hour on Saturdays and between seven and thirteen sessions on weekdays in 2011. The remaining eleven Mexican temples generally operate far below capacity, schedule only a few endowment sessions on weekdays, and are only moderately attended on Saturdays. Temples in Costa Rica and Panama are poorly attended, although the number of endowment sessions scheduled at the San Jose Costa Rica Temple has increased in recent years, suggesting that temple attendance has improved. Prospects appear favorable for the construction of additional temples in the region over the short, medium, and long terms. Several cities in Mexico appear likely candidates for future LDS temples in the near future, such as Puebla and Cuantla or Cuernavaca as the Mexico City Mexico Temple is well utilized, and these cities have sizeable LDS populations. Other Mexican cities, such as Coatzacoalcos, Juchitan, and Culiacan, appear likely candidates for prospective LDS temples over the medium or long term as they pertain to temple districts in which the temple is underutilized but is located a significant distance away from the closest temple and has a sizeable LDS population. Managua Nicaragua appears highly likely to have an LDS temple constructed in the near future. Over the medium and long term additional temples may be constructed in San Pedro Sula, Honduras; San Juan, Puerto Rico; and Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

Comparative Growth

Central America and the Caribbean support one of the largest LDS populations in the world and overall experience moderately high rates of LDS mission outreach, which is less than Oceania and South America but higher than other world regions. Member activity rates as a region are low and are comparable to South America and East Asia. The duration of an LDS presence in Central America has been slightly longer than most world regions, whereas the duration of an LDS presence in the Caribbean has been among the shortest compared to other world regions. The LDS Church in Central America is one of the few world regions that is self-sufficient in staffing its regional missionary force, whereas the local full-time missionary force is only partially sufficient in the Caribbean. The region as a whole supplies sufficient regional leadership manpower that is comparable to most world regions but like other world regions often lacks an adequate number of local leaders to organize additional congregations and expand national outreach. Congregational and membership growth rates have outpaced most world regions but lag behind sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia.

Other missionary-minded Christian groups have reported greater growth than the LDS Church in the region and higher member activity and convert retention rates. In 2010, Seventh Day Adventists reported 800,000 more members than the LDS Church and operate more than twice as many congregations. Jehovah's Witnesses report half as many members as Latter-day Saint but maintain five times as many congregations. Pentecostals, Evangelicals, and Adventists claim substantial numbers of adherents in the Lesser Antilles and the Guianas, often numbering among the largest Christian denominations. Most Christian groups have operated in the Caribbean for decades longer than the LDS Church, have self-sufficient local leadership, and operate a large number of congregations to service tiny island populations whereas other major outreach-oriented Christian groups have operated in Central America for as long as Latter-day Saints but have extended more penetrating outreach and have achieved higher convert retention for much longer.

Future Prospects

Improving prospects for future LDS Church growth in Central America and the Caribbean will be strongly linked to outreach efforts emphasizing member-missionary work to reduce dependence on full-time missionaries for finding and fellowshipping, greater consistency in convert baptismal standards to safeguard against convert attrition, sustained self-sufficiency of local missionary forces in Central America, continued focus on expanding seminary and institute outreach, and adapting LDS teaching approaches to nominal Catholics and church-going Protestants. Secularism in some areas of the Caribbean, nominalism in the Catholic Church in Central America, low living standards in many locations, and high crime rates pose ongoing challenges for church growth. Due to their large populations and sizeable numbers of Latter-day Saints, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, and El Salvador will strongly influence LDS growth trends in the region as each nation has at least five million inhabitants and 100,000 nominal Latter-day Saints. Increasing the stability of the Church over the long term in these nations will require greater resources that encourage members to remain in their home countries and marry within the Church. Establishing church schools and universities in Mexico, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic deserves serious consideration by regional and international church leadership to meet this objective. Nations and territories with fewer than one million inhabitants will likely experience little expansion of LDS outreach in the coming years unless the number of full-time missionaries assigned to these nations and territories increases commensurately with the opening of additional congregations, greater self-sustainability from local leadership is achieved, and augmentation of the number of local members serving full-time missions occurs. The first stakes may be organized in Guyana, Jamaica, and Belize within the next decade, and the creation of additional LDS missions appears most likely in Mexico and Central America. A separate mission for the Guianas may be forthcoming in the coming years, due to the high administrative burden placed on the West Indies Mission. The first full-time missionaries from Latin America and the Caribbean may be assigned to Cuba in the foreseeable future. Several districts in nations with LDS stakes may become stakes in the coming years once they reach the threshold of 120 active, tithe-paying Melchizedek Priesthood holders; nearly all districts that may become stakes are located in Central America and the Dominican Republic. Districts may be organized on some Caribbean islands once at least three, self-sufficient branches are organized. The translation of some LDS materials into additional Amerindian languages may be forthcoming, especially for Miskito and Nahuatl.

INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY PROFILES

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

Geography

AREA: 442.6 square km. Antigua and Barbuda is located in the Caribbean east of Puerto Rico and comprises the small islands of Antigua and Barbuda. Low-laying coral-based terrain occupies most areas with some volcanic hills. Tropical maritime climate prevails year round. Hurricanes, tropical storms, and droughts are natural hazards. Environmental issues include fresh water scarcity and deforestation. Antigua and Barbuda is administratively divided into six parishes and two dependencies.

Peoples

Black: 91%
Mixed: 4.4%
White: 1.7%
Other: 2.9%

Population: 89,018 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.276% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.05 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 73.66 male, 77.83 female (2012)

Languages: Antigua and Barbuda Creole English (80%), standard English (29%), other (1%). Antigua and Barbuda Creole English displays many linguistic similarities with other English Creoles in the Caribbean.

Literacy: 85.8% (2003)

History

It is believed that the Siboney Amerindians settled Antigua as early as 2400 BC. Arawaks replaced the Siboney and populated the islands when Christopher Columbus landed in 1493 on his second voyage. In 1632, the English began colonizing the islands and later in the seventeenth century established sugar plantations staffed by African slaves who were emancipated in 1834. Poor economic and labor conditions continued until the mid-twentieth century due to lack of available land, an agriculturally-based economy, and no access to credit. A trade union movement between Antigua and Barbuda began in 1939 that brought about political change in the following decades.⁶⁷ Independence from the United Kingdom occurred in 1981. Queen Elizabeth II is considered the head of state and Antigua and Barbuda pertains to the British Commonwealth of Nations.

⁶⁷ "Background Note: Antigua and Barbuda," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 15 July 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2336.htm>

Culture

British and American culture is highly represented in local culture. Most attend church on a regular basis. Cricket is the most popular sport. Corn, sweet potatoes, rice, fish, and fruit are common foods.⁶⁸ Alcohol consumption rates compare to the worldwide average alcohol consumption rate.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$22,100 (2011) [45.9% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.764

Corruption Index: N/A

Tourism drives the economy, generating 60% of the GDP. With few natural resources, Antigua and Barbuda will remain dependent on the tourism industry to grow the economy. Limited water and a small workforce limit agricultural output, and hurricanes and tropical storms can damage the economy. Services generated 74% of the GDP and employ 82% of the workforce, whereas industry generates 22% of the GDP and accounts for 11% of the workforce. Tourism, construction, and light manufacturing are the primary industries. Common crops include cotton, fruits, vegetables, coconuts, and sugarcane.

Corruption is less apparent than in most Caribbean nations. Antigua and Barbuda is a transshipment point for illicit drugs destined for the United States and Europe. There have been isolated reports of government corruption in recent years.⁶⁹

Faiths

Christian: 92.2%

Other: 2%

None/unspecified: 5.8%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Anglican 22,296

Pentecostal 9,196

Moravian 9,109

Catholic 9,022

Seventh Day Adventists 8,000 31

Methodist 6,854

Baptist 4,251

Church of God 3,904

Jehovah's Witnesses 519 7

Latter-day Saints 205 1

Religion

Most of the population is Christian and regularly attend church. There is a high degree of pluralism among Christians as the largest Christian denomination, the Anglican Church, accounts for 26% of the population. Other prominent Christian groups include Methodists, Moravians, and Catholics. Evangelicals are estimated

⁶⁸ "Cuisine of Antigua and Barbuda," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 22 January 2011. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuisine_of_Antigua_and_Barbuda

⁶⁹ "Antigua and Barbuda," Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor 2006," 6 March 2007. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78876.htm>

to account for 25% of the population. There are between 1,000 and 1,500 Rastafarians, over 200 Muslims, almost 200 Hindus, and approximately 50 Baha'is.⁷⁰

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. There is no state religion, and the government maintains strong ties with the Antigua Christian Council. Major Christian holidays are recognized as national holidays. The government does not require religious groups to register, but religious groups must incorporate to own property, enjoy tax-exempt status, and receive other duty-free concessions. Rastafarians complain that marijuana use is illegal and that they are sometimes discriminated against. There have been no recent reported societal abuses of religious freedom.⁷¹

Largest Cities

Urban: 30%

St. John's, **All Saints**, **Liberta**, **Potters Village**, **Bolans**.

Settlements listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

One of the five most populous settlements has an LDS congregation. Forty-five percent (45%) of the national population resides in the five largest settlements. Over 98% of the national population resides on Antigua.

LDS Background

In 1984, West Indies Mission president Kenneth Zabriskie visited St. John's, Antigua and received permission to assign full-time LDS missionaries. Later that year, the first missionaries were assigned, and the first convert was baptized.⁷² The sole LDS branch was organized the following year in St John's.⁷³ Seminary and institute began in the 1990s. Some Latter-day Saints were among those who lost employment and housing as a result of hurricanes Luis and Marilyn in 1995.⁷⁴ The LDS Church donated approximately \$10,000 for hurricane victims in 1995.⁷⁵ In 2002, some members from Antigua traveled to Trinidad to meet LDS Church President Gordon B. Hinckley in 2002.⁷⁶ In 2007, Antigua and Barbuda was assigned to the newly created Puerto Rico San Juan East Mission.⁷⁷ In 2010, the islands were assigned to the Puerto Rico San Juan West Mission.

There were approximately 70 members in 1995.⁷⁸ Membership totaled 112 by year-end 2000. During the 2000s membership slowly increased to 140 in 2002, 172 in 2005, and 181 in 2008. Stagnant growth or a slight decline in membership occurred during 2006 and 2007. Membership increased by less than twenty a year during the 2000s. In 2009, one in 470 was LDS. The St. John's Branch likely meets in a rented space

⁷⁰ "Antigua and Barbuda," International Religious Freedom Report 2010," 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148730.htm>

⁷¹ "Antigua and Barbuda," International Religious Freedom Report 2010," 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148730.htm>

⁷² "Antigua and Barbuda," Country Profile, retrieved 21 January 2011. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/antigua-and-barbuda>

⁷³ "Antigua and Barbuda," Deseret News 1995-96 Church Almanac, p. 193.

⁷⁴ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Extensive hurricane damage, but LDS safe," LDS Church News, 30 September 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26611/Extensive-hurricane-damage-but-LDS-safe.html>

⁷⁵ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "'Strong partnership' shared by Church, Red Cross," LDS Church News, 6 June 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30431/Strong-partnership-shared-by-Church-Red-Cross.html>

⁷⁶ "Visit to West Indies because 'We love you,'" LDS Church News, 1 June 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41901/Visit-to-West-Indies-because-We-love-you.html>

⁷⁷ "New missions bring total to 347 New missions," LDS Church News, 10 February 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50112/New-missions-bring-total-to-347-New-missions.html>

⁷⁸ "Antigua and Barbuda," Country Profile, retrieved 21 January 2011. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/antigua-and-barbuda>

or renovated building. Twenty-four were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year. Nationwide active membership is estimated at between eighty and one hundred, or 50%. Antigua and Barbuda are assigned to the Santo Domingo Dominican Republic Temple district.

Opportunities

Latter-day Saints benefit from full religious freedom to worship, proselyte, and assemble. Foreign full-time missionaries do not appear to face any restrictions. The high degree of religious plurality in Antigua reduces challenges for Latter-day Saints to assimilate in the local culture. The St. John's Branch is the only LDS mission outreach center on Antigua and reaches at least 32% of the national population. With the opening of a few additional congregations in the most populous, lesser-reached urban locations such as All Saints, nearly the entire population would reside within five kilometers of an LDS congregation. The Church has developed an ample supply of English-language LDS Internet resources, yet none of these materials have been customized to the needs of the population of Antigua and Barbuda or other English-speaking Caribbean nations. Membership growth grates have been slow, but Antigua has achieved higher member activity rates than many other Caribbean nations, likely due to strong member involvement in proselytism and the teaching of investigators and new converts; the development of regular church attendance habits before baptism; and independence and self-sufficiency that has arisen from isolation from mission leadership. The homogenous black population experiences no significant ethnic integration issues. Standard English is widely spoken and understood, reducing the need for Creole language materials although there are approximately 120,000 speakers of Antigua and Barbuda English Creole worldwide. The informal usage of the Creole further reduces any likelihood of future LDS translations. Increasing seminary and institute attendance in the late 2000s may indicate increases in the number of forthcoming local full-time missionaries in the near future.

Challenges

Although regular church attendance and interest in religion remain high, receptivity to the LDS Church is modest, as most are shepherded into the many denominations on the island to which they are socially and religiously bound. Most know little about LDS teachings and beliefs and do not personally know a Latter-day Saint. Few local leaders, moderate member activity rates, a small population, and limited missionary resources for the Caribbean challenge any advances in expanding national outreach in the coming years. Only one or two full-time missionary companionships appear to be assigned to Antigua, and at times LDS missionaries may not serve on the island at all. Few, if any, local members have served full-time missions. Local leadership remains limited and able to staff only one LDS congregation at present. It will be necessary for male Latter-day Saints to receive the priesthood, maintain regular church attendance, serve full-time missions, and remain in their home country for additional congregations to be organized. Organized temple trips likely do not occur, and members appear to attend on an individual or family basis. A future temple may be built one day on Puerto Rico, which would reduce travel times, but may not provide full accessibility due to visa requirements.

Comparative Growth

Like Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Martinique, Antigua and Barbuda has followed the predictable pattern of LDS growth for Caribbean islands with fewer than 200 members as membership increased between 30% and 70% during the 2000s, and one or no new congregations were organized. Member activity rates in Antigua appear higher than average for the region.

With the exception of the LDS Church, all other major missionary-minded Christian groups have a strong presence in Antigua. Generally, with few members and limited outreach in the Caribbean, Jehovah's Witnesses had a robust community of nearly 500 active members organized into seven congregations in 2009. Seventh Day Adventists rank among the island's largest denominations and operate thirty-one congregations. Adventists

maintain a website at <http://www.antiguaadventists.org/>, which provides a summary of church teachings, Adventist institutions on the islands, and the presentation of a culturally-adapted proselytism approach that has been refined through over a century of Adventist missionary activity on Antigua. Jehovah's Witnesses maintained seven congregations and had nearly 500 active members in 2009 but generally experience slow membership growth. Most denominations have had a long-term presence on the island.

Prospects

With a small population and few mission outreach resources dedicated, Antigua and Barbuda has demonstrated consistent but slow membership growth and increasing seminary and institute enrollment in recent years. Infrequent interaction with international LDS leaders and reliance on local members to operate the Church have facilitated moderate member activity rates and self-reliance. Growth in the number of active members and local leadership development may lead to the organization of a second congregation on Antigua over the medium term.

ARUBA

Geography

AREA: 180 square km. Aruba is a small island in the southern Caribbean Sea north of Venezuela that is a constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The tropical island is sparsely vegetated, has no rivers, enjoys a near-constant temperature year round, and is covered by flat terrain. White sandy beaches circumscribe the island, making Aruba a popular tourist destination. Infrequent hurricanes are a natural hazard.

Peoples

Mixed white/ Caribbean Amerindian: 80%

Other: 20%

The population represents a diverse admixture of peoples from the Caribbean and also includes Amerindians, Latin Americans, Europeans, and Asians.⁷⁹

Population: 107,635 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.413% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.84 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 72.89 male, 79.04 female (2012)

Languages: Papiamentu (66.3%), Spanish (12.6%), English (7.7%), Dutch (5.8%), other (2.2%), unspecified/unknown (5.3%). Dutch and Papiamentu are the official languages; English is widely spoken. Papiamentu is the only Iberian-based Creole spoken worldwide.

Literacy: 97.3% (2000)

History

Arawak Amerindians were the first known inhabitants of Aruba, settling the island as early as 1000 AD. Spanish explorers first sighted Aruba in 1499. Spanish rule endured until shortly after the Dutch overtook neighboring Bonaire and Curacao in 1634. The English captured Aruba from the Dutch in 1805 during the Napoleonic wars, and Dutch control was reestablished in 1816. A nineteenth-century gold rush was followed by the establishment of an oil refinery in 1924. Tourism developed the economy in the late twentieth century. Aruba seceded from the Netherland Antilles in 1986, becoming an autonomous entity under the Kingdom of the Netherlands.⁸⁰

Culture

Aruban culture shares its greatest similarities with Caribbean and Dutch culture, but immigrants from Latin America, Asia, and Europe have each made cultural contributions to society and cuisine. Christianity is a

⁷⁹ "Background Note: Aruba," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 11 May 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/22491.htm>

⁸⁰ "Background Note: Aruba," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 11 May 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/22491.htm>

dominant influence on society as many attend church. American influence on society has also increased in recent years as greater numbers of tourists from the United States visit. Cigarette and alcohol consumption rates appear comparable to worldwide averages. Divorce rates are high.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$21,800 (2004) [46% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: N/A

Corruption Index: N/A

Offshore banking and tourism sustain the economy; oil storage and refining ended in 2009. Approximately 1.5 million tourists visit annually. Services generate two-thirds of the GDP, whereas industry generates one-third of the GDP. Tourism and transshipment facilities are major industries. Agricultural and fishing activity is limited and includes fishing, raising livestock, and cultivating aloe. The United States, the Netherlands, and Panama are the primary trade partners.

Corruption appears less prevalent than many Caribbean nations. Illicit drug trafficking is a concern. The Aruban population suffers from a high rate of cocaine use.

Faiths

Christian: 90.1%

Jewish: 0.2%

Other: 5.1%

None/unspecified: 4.6%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 84,508

Evangelist 4,288

Methodist 1,255

Jehovah's Witnesses 895 11

Seventh Day Adventists 691 7

Latter-day Saints 516 2

Religion

Most Arubans are Catholic (80.8%). Protestants account for most of the population that identifies with a religious group. Non-Christian religious groups constitute 5.3%, and those who do not identify with a religious group comprise 4.6% of the population.

Religious Freedom

The constitution of the Netherlands protects religious freedom and grants the government authority to restrict religious practices if they become a risk to public order, traffic safety, or public health. The government upholds religious freedom guaranteed by the constitution and diligently works to foster an environment of religious tolerance. Public speech that incites hatred toward a religious group is a crime and has been an area of conflict due to freedom of speech rights. Common Christian holidays are recognized by the government. Religious groups are not required to register with the government to operate, but certain rights and privileges

such as tax-exemption status are only bestowed upon registered religious groups.⁸¹ There have been no recent reports of societal abuse of religious freedom in Aruba.

Largest Cities

Urban: 47%

Oranjestad, San Nicolas.

Both of the largest cities have an LDS congregation. Forty-seven percent (47%) of the national population resides in the two largest cities.

LDS History

The first LDS branch was organized in 1986,⁸² and full-time missionaries arrived the following year.⁸³ The Book of Mormon translation in Papiamentu was completed in 1987.⁸⁴ Jurisdiction over Aruba was transferred from one of the Venezuelan missions to the West Indies Mission sometime in the 1990s and later to the Puerto Rico San Juan Mission. President Hinckley and Elder Dallin H. Oaks visited Aruba in 2001.⁸⁵ Church meetings began to be conducted in Papiamentu in 2003.⁸⁶ In 2007, Aruba was assigned to the Puerto Rico San Juan West Mission⁸⁷ and in 2010 was assigned the Dominican Republic Santo Domingo East Mission.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 516 (2015)

There were 200 Latter-day Saints in 1997, increasing to 256 in 2000. Slow membership growth occurred during the 2000s as membership numbered 297 in 2002, 320 in 2004, 395 in 2006, and 458 in 2008. Annual membership growth rates during the 2000s ranged from 2% to 11%. Membership generally increases between 10 and 30 members a year. In 2009, one in 223 was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 0 Branches: 2 (2012)

The first branch was organized in Oranjestad followed by a second branch in San Nicolas 1991.⁸⁸ A third branch was organized in 2004 in Oranjestad but was closed in 2009. The Oranjestad Aruba District operated from 2004 to late 2009. In early 2011, there were two branches: the Oranjestad and San Nicolas Branches. Both branches do not belong to a stake or district and report directly to the mission president.

⁸¹ "Netherlands," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148969.htm>

⁸² Swensen, Jason. "Prophet teachers, motivates Caribbean islanders," LDS Church News, 24 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39534/Prophet-teaches-motivates-Caribbean-islanders.html>

⁸³ "Aruba," Country Profile, retrieved 3 February 2011. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/aruba>

⁸⁴ Warnick, Lee. "Book of Mormon in 80th language," LDS Church News, 9 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18233/Book-of-Mormon-in-80th-language.html>

⁸⁵ Swensen, Jason. "Prophet teachers, motivates Caribbean islanders," LDS Church News, 24 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39534/Prophet-teaches-motivates-Caribbean-islanders.html>

⁸⁶ "Aruba," Country Profile, retrieved 3 February 2011. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/aruba>

⁸⁷ "New missions bring total to 347 New missions," LDS Church News, 10 February 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50112/New-missions-bring-total-to-347-New-missions.html>

⁸⁸ "Aruba," Country Profile, retrieved 3 February 2011. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/aruba>

Activity and Retention

One hundred eighty attended a special meeting with President Hinckley in 2001.⁸⁹ The average number of members per congregation increased from 128 in 2000 to 235 in 2009. Eight were enrolled in seminary during the 2009–2010 school year. Sacrament attendance in the Oranjestad Branch reached 125 in late 2009 whereas sacrament attendance in the San Nicolas Branch ranged from 17 to 50 in 2010. Total active membership is estimated at 150, or 32% of nominal church membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Papiamento, Spanish, English, Dutch.

The Book of Mormon is translated into Papiamento. Other Papiamento LDS materials are limited to the *Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith* and General Conference addresses. All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in Spanish and Dutch. The *Liahona* magazine has monthly issues in Spanish and Dutch.

Meetinghouses

In the late 2000s, the Oranjestad Branch met in a church-built meetinghouse whereas the San Nicolas Branch met in a rented home.

Humanitarian and Development Work

LDS humanitarian and development work is limited to service projects sponsored by local LDS congregations and full-time missionaries completing weekly service hours.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

In late 2009, missionaries reported that they entered Aruba on tourist visas that permitted them to stay for up to ninety days at a time.

Cultural Issues

Interdenominational competition for new converts poses challenges for Latter-day Saint missionaries and members to navigate, as it has produced a religious society that encourages denomination hopping. Consequently, receptivity to the LDS Church has been modest. The unity of the diverse composition of local members has increased the harmony and integrity of LDS congregations despite cultural differences. Materialism and secularism arising from the tourist industry and European connections may further reduce receptivity over time. Illicit drug use among many Arubans poses a challenge for LDS mission outreach.

National Outreach

The entire urbanized population resides in cities with an LDS congregation. Approximately half the population appears to reside within five kilometers of an LDS meetinghouse. The small geographic size of Aruba reduces the need for many mission outreach centers. The operation of four or five LDS meetinghouses would effectively reach the entire population, but limited numbers of active members and mission resources render prospects of opening additional congregations unfeasible at present. Holding cottage meetings in some

⁸⁹ Swensen, Jason. "Prophet teaches, motivates Caribbean islanders," LDS Church News, 24 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39534/Prophet-teaches-motivates-Caribbean-islanders.html>

lesser-reached communities is a method that offers opportunities for local leaders and full-time missionaries to gauge receptivity by location without utilizing many resources.

There are no developed Internet resources specifically dedicated to Aruba or Papiamentu speakers with the exception of audio translations of General Conference addresses found at <http://lds.org/conference/display/0,5234,89-110,00.html>. The establishment of an LDS website in Papiamentu for Aruban members to utilize in their finding and member-missionary efforts may increase receptivity and national outreach.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Nominal Latter-day Saint membership nearly doubled in the 2000s, yet due to poor convert retention and mediocre member activity rates, there has been no noticeable increase in active membership during this period. Reaching arbitrary baptismal quotas through quick-baptism tactics, the assignment of multiple missionary companionships per congregation, and distance from mission headquarters have reduced accountability for new converts baptized and perpetuated local members relying on full-time missionaries for baptizing and retaining new converts and reactivating less active members. Consequently, the two Oranjestad branches were consolidated into a single unit, and the district was discontinued. Low levels of member activity are further manifested by the extremely low percentage of members enrolled in seminary and the lack of an institute program despite nearly 500 members on the island. Stressing member participation in seminary and institute may generate more consistent church attendance trends, increase doctrinal understanding among members, provide greater opportunity for reactivation efforts, and ultimately lead to greater self-sufficiency among Aruban leadership.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Missionaries report no significant ethnic integration issues due to the highly eclectic, cosmopolitan society that has embraced ethnic diversity. Many members speak several languages, providing some accommodation to those that are not fluent in Papiamentu.

Language Issues

In early 2011, there were no church manuals, gospel study books, and proselytism literature translated into Papiamentu. The Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price have yet to be translated. A lack of LDS materials in Papiamentu challenges efforts for local members to develop greater gospel study habits and gain stronger testimonies about the Church and its teachings. Many members likely utilize LDS materials available in other languages for gospel study and church instruction, albeit church services are held in Papiamentu.

Missionary Service

The Church has historically assigned a sizeable number of full-time missionaries to service a small population despite modest receptivity. There were eight missionaries assigned to Aruba in 2001.⁹⁰ Eight full-time missionaries assigned to the Oranjestad Branch alone in late 2009. As a result of the consolidation of the two Puerto Rico missions, by mid-2010 there were four young elder missionaries assigned to Aruba with one companionship per branch. The current missionary complement to Aruba appears appropriate as missionary resources have been limited and larger numbers of missionaries assigned in the past have likely hurt self-sufficiency and member-missionary involvement. Few local members have served full-time missions. Emphasis on seminary and institute attendance and missionary preparation classes may increase the number of Arubans that serve full-time missions.

⁹⁰Hinckley, Gordon B. "The Miracle of Faith," *Ensign*, May 2001, 67.

Leadership

Local members appear to lead both branches, but active priesthood holders and total active membership remains too limited to maintain additional congregations or a district. A lack of returned missionaries to facilitate the establishment of enduring local leadership is a major challenge. Fewer numbers of full-time missionaries assigned to Aruba may improve local leadership development as local members are forced to take on additional church administration duties. Both branches report directly to the mission president, offering greater interaction and training from mission leaders.

Temple

Aruba is assigned to the Santo Domingo Dominican Republic Temple. Temple trips may occur on an irregular basis due to few active members, distance to the temple, and economic constraints. Political conditions in Venezuela at present appear to prevent local members from attending the Caracas Venezuela Temple.

Comparative Growth

Aruba has demonstrated low to modest receptivity to the LDS Church like much of the Caribbean in recent years. Member activity rates, membership and congregational growth rates, local leadership development, and the percentage of Latter-day Saints in the general population are representative of the region. Aruba has one of the lowest percentages of members enrolled in seminary and institute worldwide. Convert retention rates rank among the lowest for the Caribbean.

Most outreach-oriented Christian groups report a strong presence on Aruba with several congregations and slow to moderate church growth. Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses conduct widespread mission outreach and report slow membership growth. Evangelicals have achieved the greatest growth among missionary-minded Christians in recent years.

Future Prospects

In 2001, President Hinckley predicted that one day there would be thousands of members in Aruba and Curacao and more chapels would be needed on Aruba.⁹¹ This prediction remained unrealized as of early 2011 due to mediocre member activity levels, poor convert retention, and inadequate numbers of active priesthood holders to staff a district and additional branches. Introducing the institute program and stressing member-missionary work may increase the prospects of a self-reliant, sustainable LDS community capable of staffing local church administration and full-time missionary needs. Increasing secularism and competition for converts among missionary-oriented Christians may further reduce receptivity over the medium term.

⁹¹ Swensen, Jason. "Prophet teachers, motivates Caribbean islanders," LDS Church News, 24 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39534/Prophet-teaches-motivates-Caribbean-islanders.html>

THE BAHAMAS

Geography

AREA: 13,880 square km. Consisting of over two dozen islands and hundreds of cays and islets, the Bahamas are located in the North Atlantic Ocean southeast of Florida and northeast of Cuba. The islands are built upon ancient coral reefs and limestone, resulting in generally flat terrain or swamps on land, with coral reefs surrounding many islands. Tropical maritime climate prevails year round that is modified by the Gulf Stream. Brief periods of cool weather have occurred occasionally. Wind and flood damage resulting from hurricanes and tropical storms are natural hazards. Environmental issues include coral reef decay and waste disposal. The Bahamas are divided into twenty-one administrative districts.

Peoples

Black: 85%

White: 12%

Asian and Hispanic: 3%

Legal and illegal Haitian immigrants constitute a sizeable minority estimated between 30,000 and 60,000.⁹²

Population: 316,182 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.904% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.98 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 69.04 male, 73.91 female (2012)

Languages: English is the official language and spoken by nearly the entire population. Most speak Bahamas Creole English in informal settings. Haitian Creole is spoken among Haitian immigrants.

Literacy: 95.6% (2003)

History

Lucayan Amerindians inhabited the Bahamas prior to the first arrival of Christopher Columbus to the New World on San Salvador Island in 1492. The entire Lucayan population vanished after twenty-five years following their relocation to Hispaniola to work in the gold mines. Due to the complexity of the islands' geography and proximity to major shipping lanes, the Bahamas became a haven for pirates in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The British began settling the islands in 1647, which were made a colony in 1783. Some American colonists who remained loyal to Britain following the Revolutionary War relocated to the Bahamas and helped establish plantations to improve the local economy. Slavery persisted until 1834, and many Bahamians today trace their genealogies to slaves brought from West Africa. Independence from the United Kingdom occurred in 1973. The Bahamas has achieved greater prosperity than much of the Caribbean

⁹² "Bahamas," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127377.htm>

due to tourism, geostrategic location between the United States and the Caribbean, and international banking. The Bahamas have also been a major drug and illegal immigrant trafficking location.⁹³

Culture

Bahamian culture blends European and African customs and traditions and shares many similarities with other English-speaking Caribbean nations regarding food, music, and language. Christianity is a dominant influence of daily life. Art and handcrafts are made from materials abundant in the islands, such as coral and straw.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$30,900 (2011) [64.2% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.771

Corruption Index: 7.3 (2011)

Tourism and international banking drive the economy. Construction and manufacturing related to the tourism industry constitute 60% of the GDP and employ half the workforce. The global financial crisis in the late 2000s severely hurt the economy and future growth and development will most likely depend on the tourism sector. Services account for 84% of the GDP, and industry generates 15% of the GDP. Limited agricultural activity produces citrus fruits, vegetables, and poultry. Major industries include tourism, banking, cement, oil shipping, salt, and rum. The United States, Singapore, and South Korea are primary trade partners.

Overall low levels of corruption and high levels of economic freedom compared to other Caribbean and Latin American nations have contributed to economic prosperity. Official corruption is prosecuted, and anti-corruption laws are enforced. However, the Bahamas have major corruption issues regarding illegal drug trafficking, illegal immigration, money laundering, and increases in violent crime.⁹⁴

Faiths

Christian: 96.3%

None/unspecified: 2.9%

Other: 0.8%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Baptist 108,863

Anglican 46,436

Catholic 41,515

Pentecostal 24,909

Seventh Day Adventists 20,816 55

Church of God 14,761

Methodist 12,916

Jehovah's Witnesses 1,712 27

Latter-day Saints 959 2

⁹³ "Background Note: The Bahamas," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 21 June 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1857.htm>

⁹⁴ "The Bahamas," 2010 Index of Economic Freedom, retrieved 13 September 2010. <http://www.heritage.org/index/country/Bahamas>

Religion

Most of the population is Christian and is religiously active. Despite a small population, a mosaic of Christian denominations flourishes. Most Christian denominations are racially integrated. There are few non-Christians or Christians who maintain aspects of cultural religious worship, mainly Haitians and immigrants from other Caribbean nations.⁹⁵

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. Individuals are free to choose or change their religious status and legislation prohibits discrimination. The government observes major Christian holidays, and the constitution proscribes that Christian values are to be respected. There are no requirements for religious groups to register with the government, but a religious group must be legally incorporated to purchase land. Religion is studied in public schools, but is not mandatory. The only religious restrictions imposed are upon witchcraft and some aspects of voodoo.⁹⁶

Largest Cities

Urban: 84%

Nassau, Freeport, **Marsh Harbour**, **Nicholls Town**, **Dunmore Town**.

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregation.

Two of the five largest cities have an LDS congregation. Eighty-one percent (81%) of the national population resides in the five largest cities. Nassau accounts for 69% of the national population.

LDS History

The first known Bahamian to join the Church was Clarence E. Newry Jr., who was baptized in Utah in 1977.⁹⁷ Latter-day Saints have lived in the Bahamas since 1979 when two LDS families moved to Nassau. Missionaries were first assigned in December 1979, but the government asked the missionaries to leave and refused visas. In 1981, the first branch conference occurred with forty-eight in attendance.⁹⁸ Seminary and institute began in the 1980s. Missionaries were sent to open Freeport to missionary work in 1988.⁹⁹ In 1992, senior missionaries placed LDS scriptures and famous books authored by Church leaders in the library of the College of the Bahamas.¹⁰⁰ Elder Neal A. Maxwell dedicated the Bahamas for missionary work in November 1997.¹⁰¹ The Florida Ft. Lauderdale Mission administered the Bahamas until the creation of the Florida Tampa Mission in 1998.¹⁰² In 2004, the Church gained national legal status. Prior to this point, legal status was only obtained

⁹⁵ "Bahamas," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127377.htm>

⁹⁶ "Bahamas," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127377.htm>

⁹⁷ Thomas, Janet. "Pioneers in the Beautiful Bahamas," Liahona, Aug 1998, 31.

⁹⁸ "Bahamas," Country Profiles, retrieved 13 September 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/bahamas>

⁹⁹ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 19 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17980/From-around-the-world.html>

¹⁰⁰ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 5 December 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21759/From-around-the-world.html>

¹⁰¹ Thomas, Janet. "Pioneers in the Beautiful Bahamas," Liahona, Aug 1998, 31.

¹⁰² "New missions created; total now 331," LDS Church News, 10 January 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31386/New-missions-created-total-now-331.html>

on New Providence Island.¹⁰³ In 2006, the Bahamas became part of the newly created Caribbean Area.¹⁰⁴ The Jamaica Kingston Mission began to administer the Bahamas shortly thereafter.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 959 (2012)

In 1988, membership stood at approximately eighty in the Nassau Branch, sixty in the Soldier Road Branch, and five in Freeport.¹⁰⁵ By year-end 2000, there were 608 members in the Bahamas. Membership grew slowly in the 2000s, with two years experiencing membership decline (2001 and 2005). The Church generally added twenty to eighty members per year and annual membership growth rates ranged from -4% to 18%. In 2009, membership increased by 143, but much of this increase was due to convert baptisms in the Turks and Caicos Islands that the Church included in membership figures for the Bahamas. Bahamian membership was likely around 800 at the end of 2009. In 2006, there were seventy members on Grand Bahama Island.¹⁰⁶ In 2009, one in 380 was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 0 Branches: 2 (2012)

Branches operated in Nassau and on Grand Bahama since the late 1970s. In 1986, the Soldier Road Branch was created.¹⁰⁷ In 1998, two branches functioned in the Bahamas in Nassau: the Nassau Branch (English speaking) and the Soldier Road Branch (French and Haitian Creole-speaking).¹⁰⁸ However, by the end of the year the branches were consolidated into the New Providence Branch with services in English with Haitian Creole translation available.¹⁰⁹ The first district was created in 2002.

During the 2000s, the New Providence Bahamas District Branch administered members meeting in small groups outside of Nassau and Grand Bahama. In 2010, the Church discontinued the New Providence Bahamas District, and groups meeting on isolated islands fell under the Jamaica Kingston Mission Branch, as the district branch was discontinued. One area known to have a small group of Latter-day Saints is Exuma Island.¹¹⁰

Activity and Retention

Member activity rates appear low as manifested by no enrollment numbers for seminary or institute released by the Church since 2008. In 2010, missionaries reported only a few baptisms per month in Nassau. The consolidation of the two branches in Nassau in 1998 and discontinuance of the district in 2010 also likely indicate poor member activity and involvement throughout the country. In 2006, sixty attended the groundbreaking for the first meetinghouse on Grand Bahama Island.¹¹¹ The New Providence Branch may have as

¹⁰³ Hart, John L. Out of obscurity: Helping in Grand Bahama," LDS Church News, 26 February 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46914/Out-of-obscurity-Helping-in-Grand-Bahama.html>

¹⁰⁴ "Southeast area divided; Caribbean Area created," LDS Church News, 10 June 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49062/Southeast-area-divided-Caribbean-Area-created.html>

¹⁰⁵ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 19 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17980/From-around-the-world.html>

¹⁰⁶ "Historic groundbreaking," LDS Church News, 4 February 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48481/Historic-groundbreaking.html>

¹⁰⁷ "Bahamas," Deseret News 2010 Church Almanac, p. 428.

¹⁰⁸ Thomas, Janet. "Pioneers in the Beautiful Bahamas," Liahona, Aug 1998, 31.

¹⁰⁹ "Bahamas," Deseret News 2010 Church Almanac, p. 428

¹¹⁰ "Bahamas," Deseret News 2010 Church Almanac, p. 428.

¹¹¹ "Historic groundbreaking," LDS Church News, 4 February 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48481/Historic-groundbreaking.html>

many as one hundred or more active members and the Grand Bahama Branch likely has no more than fifty active members. Total active membership for the Bahamas appears around 150, or 20%.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English, Haitian Creole.

All LDS scriptures are available in Haitian Creole. General Conference has had Haitian Creole translations at least since the early 1990s. Most Church materials are translated, including mission, temple, youth, priesthood, primary, Relief Society, and unit resources.

Meetinghouses

The first meetinghouse was dedicated in 1988 in Nassau.¹¹² The New Providence Branch continues to meet in the same meetinghouse. In 2010, the Grand Bahama Branch met in a Church-built meetinghouse in Freeport. Church services in other locations likely meet in members' homes.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Little humanitarian or development work has occurred by Latter-day Saints. The Church donated \$250,000 worth in humanitarian supplies to Grand Bahama following the destruction left by Hurricane Francis in 2004.¹¹³

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church has been legally recognized in the Bahamas and faces no restrictions regarding proselytism or church activity. There have been past challenges obtaining visas for foreign missionaries, but it appears that these issues have been resolved. Misinformation about the LDS Church has resulted in some isolation and ostracism from the rest of the Christian community.

Cultural Issues

Negative social attitudes and misinformation about the LDS Church have been widely circulated in the Bahamas even prior to the establishment of the Church in the late 1970s. Senior missionaries assigned to Grand Bahama Island in the mid-2000s met with ministers throughout the island and helped improve relations with the general Christian community.¹¹⁴ Many Bahamians may be receptive to the Church but are too deeply entrenched in their current churches to consider learning about or attending the LDS Church or have no interest based on false information propagated over the decades. Some investigators stop meeting with the missionaries once they encounter negative information from others or the Internet about the Church. However, the strong Christian background of many provides a foundation of belief upon which Latter-day Saint local and full-time missionaries can build.

¹¹² "Bahamas," Country Profiles, retrieved 13 September 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/bahamas>

¹¹³ Hart, John L. "Out of obscurity: Helping in Grand Bahama," LDS Church News, 26 February 2005. <http://www.ldschurch-news.com/articles/46914/Out-of-obscurity-Helping-in-Grand-Bahama.html>

¹¹⁴ Hart, John L. "Out of obscurity: Helping in Grand Bahama," LDS Church News, 26 February 2005. <http://www.ldschurch-news.com/articles/46914/Out-of-obscurity-Helping-in-Grand-Bahama.html>

National Outreach

Mission outreach centers on New Providence and Grand Bahama Islands may potentially reach up to 77% of the national population. New Providence is key to national outreach, as nearly 70% of the population resides on this small island. Most inhabitants on either of the two most populous islands know very little about the Church due to the lack of members and inconsistent missionary outreach over the past several decades. The nearly one-quarter of the population residing on small, remote islands will be challenging to reach, as few mission resources are dedicated to the Bahamas. Holding periodic cottage meetings with contacts of Church members and active church members in these locations may facilitate the expansion of national outreach in these remote, often difficult to access, areas.

Distance from mission headquarters ever since the commencement of missionary activity has been a major obstacle in assigning full-time missionaries and training members and leaders. High administrative maintenance and reliance on full-time missionaries in Jamaica may lead mission leaders to hesitate dedicating greater missionary resources to the Bahamas. Though Internet access may be limited in some areas, Church websites in English provide correct doctrinal and historical information for those seeking out the Church. A Bahamas Church website tailored toward the needs, concerns, and perspective of Bahamians may facilitate efforts to expand outreach and correct false information.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Sister missionaries and local priesthood leaders held firesides regularly with members and invited investigators and the community to attend. The Church has assigned few full-time missionaries in recent years, possibly in an effort for local members to rely less on full-time missionaries for church administration and finding investigators. Recent convert retention rates appear good, but membership growth rates are low.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Missionaries report challenges with Bahamians and Haitians meeting in the same congregation, especially from investigators. Some Bahamians view the Church as Haitian and are unreceptive to missionaries. The reestablishment of a Haitian Creole-speaking branch may help strengthen membership among both ethnicities over time, although current leadership potential may be too limited to warrant such a decision.

Language Issues

The widespread use of Haitian Creole among Haitians has in the past warranted the creation of a Haitian Creole-speaking congregation. Assimilating English and Haitian Creole speakers in the same congregation may have reduced member activity rates due to miscommunications and language barriers.

Missionary Service

In 1988, there were six missionaries serving in Nassau and two missionaries serving in Freeport.¹¹⁵ In the summer of 2010, sister missionaries were assigned to the Bahamas for the first time and were the only full-time missionaries in Nassau. The Bahamas remains dependent on foreign missionaries to staff its full-time missionary force as few natives are currently serving missions. Youth-oriented proselytism approaches, trainings, and church education may help attract and retain youth converts who later serve full-time missions.

¹¹⁵ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 19 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17980/From-around-the-world.html>

Leadership

Local members appear to lead both branches, but the branches likely do not have all leadership positions filled as a result of few active priesthood holders. Local leadership appears too underdeveloped to staff additional congregations on New Providence Island. The dissolution of the New Providence Bahamas District in 2010 likely occurred in order to have local and mission leaders focus on individual congregations rather than concentrate on the Bahamas collectively. Returned missionaries are important in sustaining self-sufficiency.

Temple

In 1997, the first temple marriage for a Bahamian Latter-day Saint couple occurred followed by several others.¹¹⁶ In October 2009, the Church announced the construction of a temple in South Florida that would include the Bahamas in the future temple district.¹¹⁷ Temple trips do not appear to occur regularly for members in the Bahamas and likely occur on an individual or family basis. Entering the United States for some members may be a challenge due to visa regulations.

Comparative Growth

The Church has experienced slow growth in the Bahamas, characteristic of many other English-speaking island nations in the Caribbean, such as Barbados and the Virgin Islands. The percentage of Latter-day Saints in the population is comparable to Barbados and Antigua and Barbuda. Many Caribbean nations had a Church presence established prior to 1980 and remain with fewer than 1,000 members today.

Seventh Day Adventists have achieved steady membership growth over the past decade, growing from 9,300 members in 1998 to 15,212 in 2008, yet only one new congregation was added during this period. Jehovah's Witnesses have experienced modest growth in membership.

Future Prospects

Low receptivity, negative cultural attitudes concerning the Church, and a high rate of church attendance in other faiths create significant challenges for future growth. Prospects for the creation of additional congregations appear poor until member reactivation efforts improve member activity rates and increases in convert baptisms occur. Traveling missionaries holding cottage meetings while visiting members and investigators on currently unreached islands may be a means of beginning missionary work in these locations.

¹¹⁶ Thomas, Janet. "Pioneers in the Beautiful Bahamas," *Liahona*, Aug 1998, 31.

¹¹⁷ "News of the Church," *Ensign*, Nov 2009, 127-28.

BARBADOS

Geography

Area: 430 square km. The easternmost island in the Caribbean, Barbados is a small island east of Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in the North Atlantic Ocean. Flat terrain occupies most the island, with some central highland areas. Warm tropical weather occurs year round, marked by a rainy season from June to October. Hurricanes and landslides are natural hazards. Environmental issues include ocean pollution, soil erosion, and improper disposal of waste. Barbados is administratively divided into eleven parishes and one city.

Peoples

Black: 93%
White: 3.2%
Mixed: 2.6%
East Indian: 1%
Other: 0.2%

Blacks are the descendants of African slaves who arrived before the 1830s. East Indians came afterwards to work on the plantations. Most Europeans are British.

Population: 287,733 (July 2012)
Annual Growth Rate: 0.354% (2012)
Fertility Rate: 1.68 children born per woman (2012)
Life Expectancy: 72.25 male, 76.82 female (2012)

Languages: Barbadian Creole English [Bajan] (95%), standard English (5%). English is the official language.
Literacy: 99.7% (2002)

History

The British arrived in the early seventeenth century to find Barbados uninhabited as Amerindian groups had likely abandoned the island. British settlers colonized the island and in 1639 established the House of Assembly, the third-oldest legislative body in the Western Hemisphere. Barbados was subject to continuous British rule until independence in 1966 and experienced a high level of autonomy during its colonial period. The sugar industry drove economic growth, with plantations staffed by African slaves. Slavery was abolished in 1834, but white British landowners and merchants continued to control local government and political affairs. East Indians arrived to work on the plantations in the nineteenth century. In the 1930s, the black population began to demand greater democratic freedoms, which came to fruition in the 1950s and 1960s. Universal adult suffrage was granted in 1951, and by 1961, Barbados gained self-governing autonomy. Barbados was included in the failed West Indies Federation from 1958 to 1962, which included nine other British islands in the Caribbean. Following independence in 1966, Barbados has achieved steady economic growth and development and today has one of the highest GDPs per capita in the Western Hemisphere.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ "Background Note: Barbados," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 14 July 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/26507.htm>

Culture

British colonial rule and influence on local culture is among the most apparent in the Caribbean on Barbados, due largely to four centuries of uninterrupted British rule. Cricket is the most popular sport, and Anglicans are the largest Christian group. Alcohol consumption rates are high. Barbados has one of the largest percentages of nonreligious individuals in the Caribbean.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$23,600 (2011) [49.1% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.793

Corruption Index: 7.8 (2011)

One of the wealthiest Caribbean nations, Barbados historically relied on the sugar industry for economic growth. In recent years, the economy has diversified to include tourism, finance, and light manufacturing. Small petroleum and natural gas reserves and fish are natural resources. Services account for three-quarters of the labor force and generate 78% of the GDP whereas industry employs 15% of the labor force and generates 16% of the GDP. Primary industries include tourism, sugar, light manufacturing, and component assembly. Ten percent (10%) of the workforce and 6% of the GDP is attributed to agricultural activity, which consists of sugarcane, vegetable, and cotton cultivation. Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, and Jamaica are the primary trade partners.

Transparency International ranks Barbados as the second least corrupt country in the Western Hemisphere after Canada. Barbados is a transshipment point for illicit drugs.

Faiths

Christian: 74.6%

Other: 4.8%

None/unspecified: 20.6%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Anglican 80,840

Pentecostal 53,417

Seventh Day Adventists 16,600 50

Methodist 14,568

Catholic 11,997

Jehovah's Witnesses 2,556 30

Latter-day Saints 844 3

Religion

Christians account for 75% of the population and are overwhelmingly Protestant. The largest denominations include Anglicans, Pentecostals, Seventh Day Adventists, and Methodists. Catholics constitute 4% of the population. Muslims number 4,000 (1.5%) and consist primarily of East Indians from the Indian state of Gujarat. One-fifth of the Barbadian population is unaffiliated with a religious group.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ "Barbados," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148734.htm>

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. Many major Christian holidays are recognized by the government. Religious groups must register with the government to obtain tax benefits. Public education includes religious curriculum that focuses on Christianity but also studies other religious traditions. Rastafarians claim some discrimination and restrictions on religious freedom. There have been no recent reports of societal abuse of religious freedom.¹²⁰

Largest Towns

Urban: 40%

Bridgetown, **Speightstown**, Oistins, **Bathsheba**, **Holetown**.

Towns listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Two of five most populous urban areas have an LDS congregation. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of the national population resides in the five largest towns.

LDS History

International LDS leaders visited Barbados as early as the 1950s, but the first convert baptism did not occur until 1978, which came as a result of an LDS convert from Scotland sharing his faith with friends. The Puerto Rico San Juan Mission opened Barbados to missionary work in September 1979. The following month, the first LDS congregation was organized in Christ Church. Created in 1983, the West Indies Mission was originally headquartered in Barbados until 1994 when the mission relocated to Trinidad and Tobago.¹²¹ Seminary and institute were both operating by 1983. Elder Marvin J. Ashton dedicated the islands of the West Indies for missionary work in 1988.¹²² In 2007, the Puerto Rico San Juan East Mission was organized and administered Barbados¹²³ until the mission was discontinued in 2010. At present, the West Indies Mission administers Barbados.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 844 (2012)

LDS membership stood at 400 in the early 1990s. There were 557 members in 2000. Membership grew slowly in the 2000s, reaching 601 in 2003, 663 in 2006, and 696 in 2008. Membership decline occurred for two years in the 2000s in 2005 and 2009. Annual membership growth rates generally range from 1%– to 4%. In 2009, one in 422 was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 0 Branches: 3 (2012)

The first LDS congregation was the Christ Church Branch (1979). A second congregation was organized in Black Rock (1983) and a third in Oistins (1985).¹²⁴ By the early 1990s, there were four branches. One of the branches was consolidated in the late 1990s. The three Barbadian branches were organized into a district

¹²⁰ "Barbados," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148734.htm>

¹²¹ "Barbados," Country Profile, retrieved 8 December 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/barbados>

¹²² "Barbados," Deseret News 2010 Church News Almanac, p. 429.

¹²³ "New missions bring total to 347 New Missions," LDS Church News, 10 February 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50112/New-missions-bring-total-to-347-New-missions.html>

¹²⁴ "Barbados," Deseret News 2010 Church News Almanac, p. 429.

in 2002. A fourth branch was recreated in 2006. In late 2010, branches functioned in Christ Church, Black Rock, Oistins, and Six Cross Roads. In 2012, the Church closed its branch in Six Cross Roads.

Activity and Retention

Full-time missionaries in 2010 reported that most active members joined the church in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Six were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year. In late 2010, there were twenty-two enrolled in institute. Most branches appear to have around fifty active members. Nationwide active membership is estimated at 200, or 30%.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English.

All LDS scriptures and materials are available in English.

Meetinghouses

In late 2010, each of the four branches had its own LDS meetinghouses, which consisted of Church-built chapels and renovated buildings or rented spaces.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Since 1985, the LDS Church performed one humanitarian project that involved donating wheelchairs to the disabled.¹²⁵

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Latter-day Saints face no government or societal restrictions regarding proselytism, assembly, worship, or obtaining visas for foreign full-time missionaries.

Cultural Issues

Barbados exhibits one of the most secular societies in the Caribbean, attributed to consistent cultural influence from the United Kingdom and economic prosperity. Full-time missionaries report challenges addressing widespread alcohol use and proselytizing the nonreligious population. Church-going Barbadians are difficult for Latter-day Saints to reach due to their strong social connections with their respective churches.

National Outreach

LDS mission outreach potentially reaches the majority of the Barbadian population, as 63% of the national population resides in the three administrative parishes with branches (Christ Church, St. Michael, and St. Philip). Full-time missionaries may occasionally work in other nearby parishes, but not on a systematic basis. Of the eight parishes that have no mission outreach centers, two (St. Andrew and St. James) have populations greater than St. Philip Parish, which is the parish with the smallest population with an LDS mission outreach center. The remaining six parishes have small populations with fewer than 20,000 inhabitants each and are unlikely to have individual LDS mission outreach centers established due to low receptivity, close proximity to

¹²⁵ "Projects—Barbados," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 8 December 2010. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-103,00.html>

parishes with a Church presence, and limited missionary resources. St. Andrew appears to be the most favorable location for the establishment of an additional LDS congregation due to the large population (21% of the national population) and its location on the other side of the island from other branches.

The Church performs no Internet outreach tailored to Barbados but has an ample supply of English-language materials and scriptures online. Internet outreach addressing specific local cultural and religious conditions may improve church growth prospects over time.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Latter-day Saints achieved the greatest progress on convert retention in the 1980s and early 1990s, as full-time missionaries report many currently active members joined the Church at that time. Increase in active membership likely influenced the administrative decision to create a fourth branch in 2006, but convert retention rates appeared to decline in the 1990s and 2000s. Issues that may have created greater challenges to retain new converts compared to the 1980s and early 1990s include integrating new converts into socially tight-knit congregations of older Latter-day Saints, increasing secularism in society, and no noticeable progress in expanding national outreach.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The relatively homogenous black population experiences few ethnic integration challenges. No ethnic integration issues have been reported at church for Latter-day Saints in Barbados.

Language Issues

No proselytism materials are translated into English-based Creoles spoken in the Caribbean. Standard English is widely used, reducing the need for LDS materials in Barbadian Creole English, which is spoken by fewer than 300,000, but is nonetheless the primary language of Barbados.

Missionary Service

North American full-time missionaries appear to constitute the bulk of the full-time missionary force on Barbados. Local member activity rates rank among the lowest in the Caribbean, as indicated by poor seminary and institute attendance and few members serving full-time missions. Greater emphasis on seminary and institute, youth-oriented outreach initiatives, and local member involvement in teaching and reactivating Latter-day Saint youth will be required to achieve greater self-sufficiency in the Barbadian full-time missionary force. Increase in institute enrollment in 2010 may indicate improving prospects toward full-time missionary service.

Leadership

Barbados has self-sustaining local church leadership capable of staffing district and branch callings despite having fewer than 1,000 total Latter-day Saints. Each of the island's four branches appears to have local branch presidents. Missionaries in the past have reported some challenges for branch presidents to unite members. Branch presidencies at times may lack sufficient training and mentoring from mission leaders due to distance from mission headquarters in Trinidad and Tobago. The creation of a district in 2002 and a fourth branch in 2006 demonstrate some progress increasing the number and self-reliance of local priesthood holders in recent years, but the dissolution of a branch in the late 1990s illustrates challenges maintaining sustainability.

Temple

Barbados pertains to the Orlando Florida Temple district. Temple trips likely occur infrequently on a district basis due to distance to the temple, travel expenses, few active members, and challenges obtaining needed travel documentation and visas. Prospects for a future temple closer to Barbados appear unlikely in the medium term due to the small number of members in the region.

Comparative Growth

Membership growth in Barbados ranked slower than most Caribbean nations in the 2000s, but Barbados remains one of the few small island Caribbean nations with a functioning LDS district. Several Caribbean nations with fewer than 1,000 members had their districts discontinued in the late 2000s and in 2010, including St. Kitts and Nevis, Aruba, and the Bahamas. The percentage of Latter-day Saints in the general population is comparable to the regional average and is similar to Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica. Barbados has one of the lowest percentages of members enrolled in seminary or institute worldwide. Member activity and congregational growth rates compare to most Caribbean nations.

Missionary-minded Christian denominations have more members than the LDS Church and generally have achieved stronger and more consistent church growth. Many of these groups have operated on Barbados for decades longer than Latter-day Saints and take a church-planting and member-missionary approach to proselytism. Seventh Day Adventists have functioned since the 1920s and today number among the largest denominations with over 16,000 members and 50 churches. Jehovah's Witnesses have experienced greater success in Barbados than in many other Caribbean nations and in 2009 had 2,500 active members meeting in 30 congregations.

Future Prospects

The experience of the LDS Church in Barbados demonstrates that contrary to some expectations, developed local church leadership, political stability, and a traditionally Christian population do not guarantee favorable church growth conditions. The majority of active Barbadian members have become entrenched in the LDS Church, resulting in poor member-missionary participation and slow church growth. Increasing the number of retained new converts will be necessary to reverse stagnant church growth trends over the past two decades. The creation of a district and a fourth branch in the 2000s point toward greater development of local priesthood leadership, but many of these church leaders likely joined the Church many years ago.

BELIZE

Geography

AREA: 22,966 square km. Just south of the Yucatan Peninsula in Central America, Belize borders Guatemala, Mexico, and the Caribbean Sea. The tropical climate experiences hot, humid conditions with rainy and dry seasons. Swampy coastal plains cover most of the terrain with some small mountains in southern areas. Dozens of cays dot the sea near the coast and are part of one of the largest barrier reefs in the world. Tropical rainforest occupies most of the interior. Natural hazards include frequent hurricanes and coastal flooding. Deforestation and water pollution are environmental issues. Belize is divided into six administrative districts.

Peoples

Mestizo: 48.7%
Creole: 24.9%
Maya: 10.6%
Garifuna: 6.1%
Other: 9.7%

Population: 327,719 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 2.011% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 3.15 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 66.61 male, 70.04 female (2012)

Mestizos have mixed ancestry from Europeans and Amerindians. Creoles are descendants of African slaves whereas the Garifuna arise from a mixture of Amerindian tribes and escaped African slaves. The Maya are descendants of the ancient May Empire.

Languages: Spanish (46%), Creole (32.9%), Mayan dialects (8.9%), English (3.9%), Garifuna (3.4%), German (3.3%), other (1.4%), unknown (0.2%). Mayan dialects include Kekchí and Maya. English is the official language.

Literacy: 76.9% (2000)

History

Many populous Mayan cities states occupied portions of present-day Belize a little over a thousand years ago and were mysteriously abandoned. Smaller numbers of Maya continued to live in the region during European exploration. The English and Spanish contended over the territory during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In 1854, the territory of Belize became a British colony named British Honduras. A major hurricane devastated Belize City in 1961, leading to the subsequent relocation of the capital to Belmopan to reduce damage to government and national infrastructure in event of another major hurricane. Belize did not achieve independence until 1981, due in part to border disputes with Guatemala, which continue to the present.

Culture

British, Latin American, and Caribbean cultures have heavily influenced Belize and increased cultural diversity. Bilingualism is very common. Poverty remains a major issue, especially among indigenous peoples. Common staples include wheat, corn, beans, and rice. Soccer is the most popular sport. Alcohol consumption rates are average compared to other nations.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$8,300 (2011) [17.3% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.699

Corruption Index: 2.9 (2010)

Tourism sustains the Belizean economy. Shortages of skilled labor limit economic growth. Belize remains dependent on international donors to reduce poverty levels. In 2002, 33.5% of the population lived below the poverty line. Oil was discovered in the 2000s and has begun to be exploited. Tourism, clothing, food, and construction are primary industries. Services employ 72% of the workforce and generate 54% of the GDP. Agriculture produces 29% of the GDP and employs 10% of the workforce. Common agricultural products include bananas, cacao, citrus, and sugar. The United States is the primary trade partner, followed by the United Kingdom and Mexico.

Increasing crime related to poverty and drug trafficking from South America are sources of corruption. Belize's small population and geographic location make it difficult to combat these challenges.

Faiths

Christian: 76.6%

Other: 14%

None: 9.4%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 152,718

Seventh Day Adventists 36,831 83

Pentecostal 22,785

Anglican 16,318

Mennonite 12,624

Methodist 10,776

Latter-day Saints 4,240 11

Jehovah's Witnesses 2,322 49

Religion

The majority of the religiously active population is Christian. Catholics reside throughout Belize and are the largest religious group in each of the six administrative districts. Mennonites and Pentecostals primarily live in the Cayo and Orange Walk Districts.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ "Belize," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127379.htm>

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. There is no official religion. Foreign missionaries must obtain a religious worker's permit, which has a modest yearly fee. Christian holidays are recognized national holidays. There have been no recent reports of societal abuses of religious freedom.¹²⁷

Largest Cities

Urban: 52%

Belize City, San Ignacio, Orange Walk, Belmopan, Dangriga, Corozal, San Pedro, Benque Viejo del Carmen, **Punta Gorda, Valley of Peace.**

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Eight of the ten largest cities have a congregation. All cities over 6,000 inhabitants have a congregation. Forty-eight percent (48%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

In 1980, the president of the Honduras Tegucigalpa Mission visited Belize to begin formal missionary work. The first branch was organized shortly thereafter. The first meeting was held in May 1980, and by the beginning of 1981 a district had been organized.¹²⁸ Seminary and institute began in the early 1980s. In 1990, the newly created Honduras San Pedro Sula Mission administered Belize.¹²⁹ Thirty-six members attended a meeting at which Elder Russell M. Nelson dedicated Belize for missionary work in 1992.¹³⁰ In 1993, Belize was assigned to the Guatemala Guatemala City North Mission.¹³¹ Belize returned to the jurisdiction of the Honduras San Pedro Sula Mission shortly thereafter. President Hinckley visited in late 1997 and encouraged members to serve missions and pay their tithing. He informed members of Belize's importance in the worldwide Church. President Hinckley also noted that the international Church assists the operation of the Church in Belize through tithing funds.¹³² In the late 2000s, Belize was assigned to the El Salvador San Salvador West Mission/Belize Mission.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 4,240 (2012)

Belize typically experiences a steady increase in converts year to year with the most rapid growth experienced occurring in the 1980s and 1990s. By 1990, there were 1,100 members.¹³³ Membership reached 2,000 in the late 1990s. At the end of 2000, there were 2,701 members. There were 3,079 members in 2005, increasing to 3,306 in 2007. Negative membership growth occurred in 2003, likely as the result of updating member records and few convert baptisms. Membership growth rates have usually ranged from 3% to 5% annually.

¹²⁷ "Belize," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127379.htm>

¹²⁸ Gardner, Mark K. "Tiny nation of Belize is dedicated," LDS Church News, 19 December 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21981/Tiny-nation-of-Belize-is-dedicated.html>

¹²⁹ "Growth leads to four new missions," LDS Church News, 3 February 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19827/Growth-leads-to-four-new-missions.html>

¹³⁰ Gardner, Mark K. "Tiny nation of Belize is dedicated," LDS Church News, 19 December 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21981/Tiny-nation-of-Belize-is-dedicated.html>

¹³¹ "Eight new missions announced," LDS Church News, 6 March 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23130/Eight-new-missions-announced.html>

¹³² Hart, John L. "Mexico's president welcomes prophet," 22 November 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29012/Mexicos-president-welcomes-prophet.html>

¹³³ "Growth leads to four new missions," LDS Church News, 3 February 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19827/Growth-leads-to-four-new-missions.html>

At year-end 2009, one in eighty-five Belizeans was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 11 (2012)

One district functioned in 1990. By the end of 1992, eight branches had been organized and three districts operated in Belize City, Orange Walk, and Cayo.¹³⁴ Branches numbered fourteen in 2000 and decreased to thirteen in 2003, twelve in 2007, and eleven in 2009. Discontinued branches met in Belize City and the Cayo District along the Guatemalan border. In 2008, the Orange Walk Belize District was discontinued and the remaining two branches joined the Belize City District.

Activity and Retention

Two hundred eighty-nine members gathered in late 1992 for the dedication of the Belize City meeting-house.¹³⁵ In 1997, 1,200 members gathered in a meeting with President Hinckley.¹³⁶ Around one hundred Belizean youth attended seminary in 2001.¹³⁷ The ratio of members to congregations is much lower than most of Central America and the Caribbean. However, this indicator has increased from 199 in 2001 to 328 in 2009 as congregations have been consolidated even as nominal membership has grown. Poor retention of converts was noted by Belizean leadership in 1998 as home teaching and visiting teaching programs faced challenges in fellowshipping new members. At the time, additional branches appeared likely to be organized,¹³⁸ but poor retention and limited leadership prevented this from occurring. Ninety youth attended the first youth camp in Belize in 2006.¹³⁹ One hundred and three were enrolled in seminary and institute during the 2008–2009 school year. Most branches have between fifty and one hundred active members. Active members likely number between 700 and 900, or 20%–25% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English, Spanish, German, Kekchí, Maya.

All LDS scriptures are available in Spanish, German, and Kekchí. An LDS edition of the Bible is translated into Spanish. Most Church materials are available in Spanish and German. The Church has translated the sacrament prayers, *Gospel Principles*, *The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony*, hymns, children's songs, and few priesthood and audio/visual resources into Kekchí. Book of Mormon selections are translated in Mayan. Mayan Church materials include *The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony*, hymns and children's songs.

Meetinghouses

Most congregations meet in Church-built meetinghouses.

¹³⁴ Gardner, Mark K. "Tiny nation of Belize is dedicated," LDS Church News, 19 December 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21981/Tiny-nation-of-Belize-is-dedicated.html>

¹³⁵ Gardner, Mark K. "Tiny nation of Belize is dedicated," LDS Church News, 19 December 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21981/Tiny-nation-of-Belize-is-dedicated.html>

¹³⁶ Hart, John L. "Mexico's president welcomes prophet," 22 November 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29012/Mexicos-president-welcomes-prophet.html>

¹³⁷ "Central American LDS youth gather to raise Title of Liberty," LDS Church News, 13 January 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39179/Central-American-LDS-youth-gather-to-raise-Title-of-Liberty.html>

¹³⁸ Hart, John L. "Belize: 'Great manifestations of faith,'" LDS Church News, 7 February 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30446/Belize-Great-manifestations-of-faith.html>

¹³⁹ "Belize youth enjoy camp," LDS Church News, 23 September 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49460/Belize-youth-enjoy-camp.html>

Health and Safety

In 2007, 2.1% of the adult population was infected with HIV/AIDS, one of the highest prevalence rates in the Western Hemisphere. Methods of infection include illicit sexual relations and drug use. Contaminated needles and HIV-positive mothers are other methods of contracting HIV/AIDS. High rates of HIV/AIDS require health precautions. Increasing violence from drug trafficking poses a safety threat to missionaries as the homicide rate has doubled since 2000 and currently ranks among the highest in the world.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church donated wheelchairs to Belize in 2002.¹⁴⁰

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church faces no restrictions on missionaries serving in Belize and is permitted to openly proselyte. Violence in some areas may limit the proselytizing activities of missionaries.

Cultural Issues

Poverty in rural areas and increasing violence create challenges for greater Church growth. Nominalism in other Christian churches contribute to low activity among LDS converts, especially when individuals are baptized rapidly with little preparation.

National Outreach

All major cities, which account for 46% of the national population, have a Church presence. Outreach in some rural communities, like Bullet Tree Falls, increases the percentage of Belizeans with nearby access to an LDS congregation to approximately 50%. The Toledo District is the only administrative district without an LDS congregation and accounts for 8% of the population. All districts have large, sparsely populated areas without a nearby congregation. Two districts, Corozal and Stann Creek, have only one LDS congregation.

The Church has yet to establish a more visible presence among rural communities, especially outside of Cayo District. Active membership in these locations is small. Recent efforts to strengthen the Church in established congregations and to prepare for a future stake, in combination with continued struggles with low member activity and poor convert retention, have contributed to the lack of any expansion of national outreach over the past decade. Cottage meetings in member homes and the formation of dependent branches or groups may present future options for expanding mission outreach.

The Church has operated an Internet site for Belize since the mid-2000s at <http://www.mormons.org.bz/>. The site offers some country-specific Internet outreach, but has not been updated recently.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Low member activity rates have delayed the creation of a stake. Missionaries report that members have worked towards the creation of the first stake for many years, but these efforts have yet to come to fruition. Convert retention issues have also limited national outreach efforts, as missionaries have had to focus on member

¹⁴⁰ "Hundreds more wheelchairs distributed," LDS Church News, 28 December 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43004/Hundreds-more-wheelchairs-distributed.html>

reactivation efforts and have held church callings or other ecclesiastical duties when native members are unable or indisposed. Poor convert retention appears partially due to poor pre-baptismal teaching and preparation and mission policies that have emphasized baptismal numbers but until recently have put little emphasis on convert retention or member activity. Distance from mission headquarters and frequent changes in mission boundaries over the past two decades have also likely exacerbated inactivity issues as Belize has received little attention from mission leadership due to more immediate needs within the countries missions have been based from.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The small, diverse Belizean population typically demonstrates cooperation and understanding between ethnic groups. Few issues arise integrating differing ethnic groups into the same LDS congregations. Potential for the greatest friction exists between Garifuna and Maya with the rest of the population, as indigenous peoples are sometimes marginalized due to their small populations concentrated in remote, rural areas. Gospel teachings help to reduce potential ethnic tensions in the Church.

Language Issues

The high level of bilingualism allows the Church to use fewer language-specific resources and enjoy greater flexibility addressing members' needs despite the diversity in language among the small population. LDS meetings are conducted in standard English, Belize Creole English, and Spanish. The "decreolization" and emphasis on standard English that has been observed with increasing public education reduces the need for separate Belize Creole translations of church materials, although a linguistic continuum of dialects exists between Belize Creole and English that will likely persist. Church materials in Kekchí and Maya provide opportunity for greater outreach to rural areas populated by speakers of these languages. There are no Church materials in Garifuna. Additional communities of Garifuna speakers in neighboring Central American nations may warrant the translation of some Church materials in coming years to expand mission outreach.

Leadership

All branches appear to have native leadership despite modest member activity. Limited priesthood leadership, specifically reaching the threshold of at least 120 active Melchizedek Priesthood holders, appears to be one of the major obstacles towards the creation of the first stake.

Temple

Belize pertains to the Guatemala City Guatemala Temple district. Temple trips frequently occur and members travel by bus. Long travel times and transportation fees limit the frequency members can attend the temple, although organized trips are subsidized. Prospects appear low for a closer temple to Belize in the near future, as few members live near the Belizean border in Mexico and Guatemala.

Comparative Growth

Although Belize has less than one-tenth the membership of the Central American nation with the second smallest Church membership, the percentage of LDS members in the population is comparable to most of the region. Member activity rates are consistent with most of Central America, whereas congregational growth rates are among the lowest.

Other Christian groups have developed more penetrating national outreach and have more adherents than the LDS Church. Most Christian churches operating in Belize were established decades prior to the LDS

Church. Growth rates among many Christian groups are steady. Belize has one of the highest concentrations of Seventh Day Adventists in the world, which constitute approximately 10% of the population. Adventists have developed local church leadership and have capitalized on opportunities to construct hospitals and schools. Religious groups that make building these institutions on a local level a priority tend to develop long lasting and efficient church growth trends. Both Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses have achieved much higher member activity and convert retention rates than the LDS Church while maintaining high member standards, although both of these groups generally require considerably longer preparation of prospective converts than LDS missions. This suggests suggesting that poor LDS convert retention rates are heavily influenced by quick-baptize mission policies rather than any insurmountable cultural obstacles.

Future Prospects

Accelerated growth in the late 2000s indicates that the population remains receptive to LDS mission efforts, but the decreasing number of LDS congregations points toward continued convert retention difficulties. Endeavors to establish the first stake appear close to fruition, although the current pattern of congregational consolidation and continued struggles with member activity suggest that stake formation is not imminent. Currently unreached areas may open to formal missionary work once a stake is organized, as mission resources tend to decrease within the boundaries of a stake compared to a district.

COSTA RICA

Geography

AREA: 51,100 square km. Located in Central America, Costa Rica is sandwiched between Nicaragua and Panama and borders both the North Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. The climate ranges from tropical to subtropical as a dry season occurs from December to April whereas a rainy season occurs from May to November. Highland areas experience cooler temperatures. The widespread rainforest contains rich biodiversity that has attracted tourism. Plains occupy coastal areas and the interior is dominated by mountains; the largest of which are in the southeast. Natural hazards include earthquakes, hurricanes, flooding, and volcanoes. Deforestation, soil erosion, and pollution are environmental issues. Costa Rica is divided into seven administrative provinces.

Peoples

White: 94%

Black: 3%

Amerindian: 1%

Chinese: 1%

Other: 1%

Most Costa Ricans are white. Blacks tend to live along the Caribbean coast. As many as 500,000 Nicaraguans live in Costa Rica.

Population: 4,636,348 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.288% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.92 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 75.26 male, 80.65 female (2012)

Languages: Spanish (98%), other (2%). Spanish is the official language and the only language with over one million speakers (4.17 million). Other languages spoken have fewer than 100,000 speakers and include Limón Creole English, Amerindian languages, and Chinese.

Literacy: 94.9% (2000)

History

Amerindian tribes have populated Costa Rica for thousands of years. The Spanish explored the region in the early fifteenth century but did not establish colonies until the mid-sixteenth century. Independence from Spain occurred in 1821 along with most of Central America. Costa Rica became a sovereign nation in 1838. Unlike other Central American nations, few instances of violence and political instability have occurred, and a democratic government has remained in power. In the past several decades, the standard of living and the tourist and technology industries have seen marked growth.

Culture

Costa Rican culture draws primarily upon Spanish influences. Holidays and some cultural practices originate

from the Catholic Church. Some areas along the Caribbean coast have more cultural similarities with other Caribbean nations. Education is valued, and literacy rates are higher than in many Latin American nations. Cuisine has its roots in Spanish, American, Caribbean, and European foods and cooking. Fruit is widely eaten. Alcohol and cigarette consumption rates are comparable to other Latin American nations and rank at or slightly below world averages.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$11,500 (2011) [23.9% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.744

Corruption Index: 4.8 (2011)

Costa Rica has experienced some of the greatest economic growth and stability in Central America. Land ownership is widespread. In addition to the traditional exports of bananas, coffee, sugar, and beef, technological products are now exported. The tourism industry is a major driver of the economy. Sixteen percent (16%) live below the poverty line. Services produce 68% of the GDP and employ 64% of the workforce whereas industry produces 26% of the GDP and accounts for 22% of the workforce. Primary industries include micro-processors, food processing, and medical equipment. The United States is the primary trade partner. Other important trade partners include the Netherlands, China, Mexico, and Venezuela. Costa Rica has the lowest corruption rates in Central America.

Faiths

Christian: 92%

Other: 4.8%

None: 3.2%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 3,232,946

Seventh Day Adventists 65,571 201

Latter-day Saints 41,353 73

Jehovah's Witnesses 27,199 406

Religion

Although 76% of Costa Ricans identify as Catholics, only 43% claim to be practicing Catholics. Evangelical Protestants constitute 15%. A wide range of Christian denominations function in Costa Rica, including Lutherans, Seventh Day Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses. There are also small groups of Jews, Muslims, and followers of Eastern and new age religions. There is some friction between Catholics and other religious groups.¹⁴¹

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. Catholicism is the state religion. Registration is not required for religious groups to assemble and operate.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ "Costa Rica," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127385.htm>

¹⁴² "Costa Rica," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127385.htm>

Largest Cities

Urban: 63%

San Jose, Limon, Alajuela, San Francisco, Desamparados, Liberia, Puntarenas, San Vicente, Curridabat, Paraiso.

All cities over 30,000 inhabitants and most cities over 10,000 have a congregation. Seventeen percent (17%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities. San Jose has 340,000 inhabitants within the city boundaries and 1.6 million in the metropolitan area (39% of national population).

LDS History

Costa Rica was assigned to the Mexican mission in July 1946. The Church assigned the first full-time missionaries to Costa Rica in September and presented the president with a copy of the Book of Mormon. The mission withdrew missionaries in 1948 for a year due to a national revolution. The first church conference was held in 1950 with seventy in attendance. The first branch was organized later that year, and property to build a chapel was purchased the following year. In 1952, the Central American Mission was created, which included Costa Rica. The Guatemala-El Salvador Mission administered to Costa Rica between 1965 and 1974. The Costa Rica Mission was organized in 1974. The first district conference was held in 1968 with approximately 300 in attendance.¹⁴³ Elder Boyd K. Packer dedicated Costa Rica for missionary work in August 1992.¹⁴⁴ Despite missionaries serving for nearly two decades, concentrated proselytizing efforts did not begin until 1965.¹⁴⁵ Costa Rica was assigned to the South America North Area prior to 2003 and today pertains to the Central America Area.¹⁴⁶ The Central America Area President visited the president of Costa Rica in 2006 and discussed the Church and its operations in the country.¹⁴⁷

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 41,343 (2012)

Membership grew slowly in Costa Rica for the first several decades following the organization of the first congregation. Between 1960 and 1970 membership increased from 214 to 1,700.¹⁴⁸ By 1977 there were 3,800 members. In 1990, there were 13,000 members. One of the reasons for increased membership growth in the late 1980s was due to greater involvement of local members in missionary work. The San Jose Costa Rica Stake in 1988 called one hundred stake missionaries to assist in missionary activities.¹⁴⁹

Membership reached 23,000 in 1996 and 31,127 by year-end 2000. Growth slowed in the 2000s, numbering 32,563 in 2002, 33,489 in 2004, and 34,777 in 2006. Membership growth rates slowed from 2.85% in 2001 to 0.7% in 2003 but rose to 2001 levels in 2008. Most years in the past decade have seen growth rates ranging from 1% to 2.5%. A large number of LDS members are immigrants from Nicaragua and Panama.¹⁵⁰ In 2008, one in 116 Costa Ricans was a nominal LDS member.

¹⁴³ "Costa Rica," Country Profiles, retrieved 6 April 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/costa-rica>

¹⁴⁴ Gaunt, LaRene Porter. "Costa Rica: Rising in Majesty and Strength," *Ensign*, Dec 1996, 22.

¹⁴⁵ "Central America: Saints in Six Nations Grow in the Gospel," *Ensign*, Feb 1977, 25.

¹⁴⁶ "Three areas to be realigned Aug. 15," *LDS Church News*, 14 June 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43897/Three-areas-to-be-realigned-Aug-15.html>

¹⁴⁷ "Costa Rica president hosts LDS leader," *LDS Church News*, 21 October 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49665/Costa-Rican-president-hosts-LDS-leader.html>

¹⁴⁸ Gaunt, LaRene Porter. "Costa Rica: Rising in Majesty and Strength," *Ensign*, Dec 1996, 22.

¹⁴⁹ "From around the world," *LDS Church News*, 5 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18327/From-around-the-world.html>

¹⁵⁰ Swensen, Jason, "Costa Rica: Land of peace, blessings," *LDS Church News*, 8 July 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38104/Costa-Rica-Land-of-peace-blessings.html>

Congregational Growth

Wards: 41 Branches: 32 (April 2013)

In 1977, the Church organized the first stake in San Jose. The following year a second stake was created in San Jose. By 1989 there were two districts in Guanacaste and Guapiles.¹⁵¹ Additional stakes were organized in Alajuela and San Jose in 1990 and 1991, respectively, bringing the total of stakes to four. By year-end 1996, six districts also functioned in Cañas, Rio Claro, Puntarenas, Limon, Naranjo, and Liberia. A fifth stake was organized in San Jose in 1999.

There were sixty congregations in 1992, twenty of which were wards. The number of total congregations between 2000 and 2009 remained nearly unchanging, dropping from seventy-eight to seventy-four. In 2003 and 2004, congregations dropped to seventy-four but rebounded to seventy-seven by 2009. During the 2000s the number of wards increased from thirty-five to forty-four. In late 2009, the Cañas Costa Rica District was discontinued and combined with the Liberia Costa Rica District.

Activity and Retention

Costa Rica has experienced challenges retaining converts and keeping members active. The average number of members per congregation rose from 317 in 1992 to 399 in 2000 and 482 in 2008. Poor retention in recent years is indicated by nominal membership growing by 5,500 between 2000 and 2008 with no increase in congregations. Seven thousand attended a conference held with President Hinckley in 1997.¹⁵² At the temple groundbreaking in 1999 there were 1,900 in attendance.¹⁵³

The size of active membership varies by congregation and location; however, major inactivity problems exist nationwide. The La Rita Branch in San Jose had fifty attending meetings in 2009, whereas one ward on the outskirts of San Jose in Santo Domingo had as few as thirty-five attending meetings regularly in early 2010. Another ward in the Heredia area of San Jose had nearly 200 attending sacrament meetings but 300 inactive members in just one neighborhood within the ward boundaries. Most wards appear to have around 100–120 active members and most branches have around fifty active members. The number and strength of active members appears greatest in San Jose and other large cities. Enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year were 1,610 students. Active membership is likely between 6,000 and 7,000, or 17%–20% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Spanish, English, Chinese.

All LDS scriptures, an LDS version of the Bible, and a wide body of Church materials are available in Spanish. All LDS scriptures and most Church materials are available in Chinese.

Meetinghouses

Congregations usually meet in Church-built meetinghouses. Some small or remote congregations meet in renovated buildings or rented spaces.

¹⁵¹ Hart, John L. "New missions are evidence of Church's dynamic growth," LDS Church News, 25 February 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19163/New-missions-are-evidence-of-Churchs-dynamic-growth.html>

¹⁵² "An outpouring of love for Prophet: Pres. Hinckley addresses 88,000 in Central America," LDS Church News, 1 February 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29180/An-outpouring-of-love-for-Prophet-Pres-Hinckley-addresses-88000-in-Central-America.html>

¹⁵³ "Temple groundbreaking heralded as 'glorious day,'" LDS Church News, 8 May 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35715/Temple-groundbreaking-heralded-as-glorious-day.html>

Humanitarian and Development Work

Few humanitarian and development projects have occurred due to relative economic prosperity. Local members and missionaries engage in service projects in individual communities.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

There are no laws or government policies that limit the Church's missionary program. Missionaries serve freely from a wide range of nations.

Cultural Issues

Many Costa Ricans struggle to actively participate in church meetings on a weekly basis due to casual cultural attitudes towards church attendance and worship. Missionaries report that many have difficulty understanding the need to attend meetings weekly, hold callings, and develop an individual, personalized religious experience. Greater wealth than in many other Latin American nations may have also contributed to increased materialism and irreligiosity.

National Outreach

LDS congregations operate in areas populated by approximately 46% of the national population. San Jose is central to mission efforts nationwide as 38% of the population lives in the metropolitan area. There remain many communities in San Jose without an independent congregation, particularly in northern and central areas. These lesser-reached neighborhoods could provide opportunity for greater growth as they have large populations, are close to current church outreach centers, and likely have many active and less active members. Long-term growth will depend on coordinated efforts from local members, leaders and missionaries.

Mission outreach outside the San Jose metropolitan area is challenging due to the small population of the largest cities and the large rural population. Limón (63,500) is the second largest city but only accounts for 1.5% of the national population. Every city with over 10,000 inhabitants, with a couple possible exceptions, has a congregation, yet only 8% of the national population lives in cities over 10,000 people outside the San Jose metropolitan area. Most of the more than one hundred small cities between 1,000 and 10,000 inhabitants do not have congregations. Many rural areas have no nearby congregations, including northern Alajuela and Heredia Provinces, large portions of Guanacaste and Puntarenas Provinces, and San Jose Province outside of the capital. Cottage meetings held with investigators and active or interested less active members in lesser-reached rural and small urban locations may help the Church establish greater national outreach.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

High inactivity and poor convert retention primarily originated in the 1990s and has slowed growth. Membership more than doubled in the 1990s yet the number of congregations increased only by 53%. Most inactive members likely experienced little or no meaningful Church attendance, making reactivation efforts very challenging. The major increase in membership in the 1990s resulted from quick baptism techniques that resulted in a failure of many converts to develop habitual church attendance and develop understanding and testimony of church doctrines and principles.

Low member activity and poor convert retention take a heavy toll on the Church's future growth prospects and outreach both in San Jose and elsewhere. Some branches outside San Jose have been discontinued due to

inactivity problems. More neighborhoods without a congregation in San Jose have likely not had congregations created due to limited active members and leadership.

Convert retention and reactivation efforts appear to have come to some fruition in several congregations in San Jose in 2009 and 2010. Several congregations set periodic new sacrament meeting attendance records during this period.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Most blacks reside in Caribbean coastal areas and are likely well-integrated into congregations. The integration of Amerindians may also be challenging due to their marginalization in Costa Rican society.

Language Issues

There are few language issues due to the widespread use of Spanish. English-speaking minorities may have difficulties assimilating into Spanish-speaking congregations. However, many nonnative Spanish speakers have some functionality in Spanish. There has been little to no active outreach among the growing Chinese community.

There are no church materials in Limón Creole English or Amerindian languages spoken in Costa Rica. Future materials in Limón Creole English may come forth due to the use of the language among some members in Caribbean coastal areas. Language materials appear unlikely to be developed in Amerindian languages as there appear to be few Amerindian Costa Rica members and the use and functionality of these languages is declining.

Missionary Service

In early 2009, 160 missionaries were serving in Costa Rica. The Central American Area became self-sustaining in its missionary force in 2009. Costa Ricans readily serve missions throughout Latin America. North American missionaries continue to serve in large numbers.

Leadership

Costa Rican leadership is strong but limited. Most or all congregations appear to be led by native members, but sometimes smaller congregations in rural areas depend on leadership from neighboring congregations or full-time missionaries. It is not uncommon for some congregations to not have a ward or branch mission leader to coordinate missionary efforts between members and missionaries due to limited leadership.

In 1991, two members in two newly organized stake presidencies worked for the Church in the Church Education System or for distribution services.¹⁵⁴ Currently, it does not appear that administration and leadership depend on Church employees. Regional representatives were called from Costa Rica prior to the mid-1990s. In 1995, Enrique R. Falabella was called as an Area Authority Seventy,¹⁵⁵ and in 2003, Luis G. Chaverri was called as an Area Authority Seventy.¹⁵⁶ In 2010, a Costa Rican native was called to serve as a mission president in Nicaragua.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ "New Stake Presidencies," LDS Church News, 18 January 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22199/New-stake-presidencies.html>

¹⁵⁵ "Church names area authorities," LDS Church News, 5 August 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26627/Church-names-area-authorities.html>

¹⁵⁶ "New Area Authority Seventies," LDS Church News, 19 April 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43636/New-Area-Authority-Seventies.html>

¹⁵⁷ "New Mission presidents," LDS Church News, 3 April 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59119/New-mission-presidents.html>

Temple

Prior to the dedication of the San Jose Costa Rica Temple, members traveled great distances to attend the temple in the United States, Mexico, or Guatemala. The San Jose Costa Rica Temple was announced in 1999 and completed in 2000. Attendees for the open house numbered 18,841, and 3,985 attended the dedication.¹⁵⁸ The temple served members in Panama prior to the completion of the Panama City Panama Temple in 2008.

The San Jose Costa Rica Temple remains underutilized compared to many other temples. In 2010, endowment sessions were held only on Wednesdays through Saturdays. Wednesdays had five sessions, Saturdays had four sessions, and Thursdays and Fridays had three sessions only held in the evenings. Although some temple ordinances and activities likely occur outside of published endowment session times, temple attendance appears low.

Comparative Growth

Costa Rica was the Central American nation to which the Church first assigned missionaries, yet has the fewest members and stakes besides Belize. The Church began organized proselytism in Panama at the same time as Costa Rica, yet in early 2010 Panama had three more stakes, eleven more congregations, and 7,000 more members. Although inactivity rates are high throughout Central America, Costa Rica appears to have had one of the most devoted, mature active memberships. This may be indicated by Central America's second temple being constructed in Costa Rica despite larger church memberships and more stakes in Honduras, El Salvador, and Panama in the late 1990s. In the 2000s, membership growth rates in Costa Rica were comparable to most of Central America whereas congregational growth rates were average or below average.

Several Christian groups have seen strong growth, most notably Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses. Seventh Day Adventists experienced rapid membership growth in the 1990s like the LDS Church. However, consistent congregational growth has taken place and much higher retention has been achieved by Adventists than Latter-day Saints. Steady, strong growth continued in the 2000s and Seventh Day Adventists now have two missions and a conference organized in Costa Rica. Jehovah's Witnesses also see strong growth and in 2009 had nearly 1,300 baptisms and 371 congregations. These denominations have been successful at retaining converts and developing local leadership to guide congregations.

Future Prospects

Prospects for future growth appear moderate as membership growth has increased in the late 2000s. Increased convert retention through more disciplined pre-baptismal teaching and more rigorous qualification for baptism will be needed to sustain growth and lead to consistent increase in congregations. Additional congregations may be organized in San Jose, whereas some small congregations in other areas may combine with neighboring wards or branches or become dependent branches or groups. Several of the stakes in San Jose have enough wards to divide to create additional stakes, one of which is in the Heredia area. The Liberia Costa Rica District may become a stake in the future, indicated by comments from missionaries and the consolidation of the Cañas Costa Rica District in late 2009.

¹⁵⁸ "Facts and Figures: San Jose Costa Rica Temple," LDS Church News, 10 June 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37929/Facts-and-figures-San-Jose-Costa-Rica-Temple.html>

CUBA

Geography

AREA: 110,860 square km. The largest country in the Caribbean, Cuba consists of one main island and countless small islands and keys located southwest of Florida between the Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean. Isla de la Juventud is the largest island off of mainland Cuba. Flat terrain covers most of the main island with the exception of some mountains in the center and along the extreme southeastern coast. Mangroves and swamps cover many coastal areas. Weather is tropical year-round with some seasonal fluctuations in temperature and precipitation. The United States operates a military base in Guantanamo Bay. Frequent hurricanes and droughts are natural hazards. Environmental issues include pollution and deforestation. Cuba is administratively divided into fourteen provinces and one special municipality.

Peoples

White: 65.1%

Mulatto and Mestizo: 24.8%

Black: 10.1%

Population: 11,075,244 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: -0.115% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.45 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 75.61 male, 80.27 female (2012)

Languages: Spanish (100%). Spanish is the official language and spoken by the entire population.

Literacy: 99.8% (2002)

History

Amerindian tribes populated Cuba prior to Spanish discovery in 1492. The Spanish quickly colonized the island and established plantations that were worked by African slaves. Cuba served as an important center of commerce and operations for Spain in the New World for several centuries due to its central location in the Caribbean. Independence movements were met with stiff opposition and were unsuccessful until the involvement of the United States in the Spanish-American War in 1898. The war brought Cuba under United States' sovereignty until becoming an independent nation in 1902. For the next half a century, several different governments came to power, most of which were backed by the military or were headed by corrupt politicians. Fidel Castro took control in 1959 and established a communist government with strong Soviet ties. In 1961, the United States strove to remove the communists from power in the failed Bay of Pigs Invasion. The Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 brought the Soviet Union and the United States dangerously close to war when Soviet troops positioned nuclear warheads within striking distance of much of the United States. Since the 1960s, the United States has embargoed Cuban goods, negatively affecting economic growth. Cuba experienced major economic challenges following the termination of aid from the Soviet Union in 1990, but has since gained economic support from China, Venezuela, and Bolivia. Fidel Castro remained in power until 2008 when

power was transferred to his brother Raul, who has initiated some reforms. Many Cubans have fled to the United States over the past half century. Cuban-Americans numbered over 1.6 million in 2008.¹⁵⁹

Culture

Indigenous Amerindians, the Spanish, African slaves, the United States, and communism have each contributed to Cuba's rich culture. Cubans are known for their friendly and intellectual personalities and have produced a large amount of literature. Many sports popular in the United States are also popular in Cuba, such as baseball and basketball. Cuisine consists of an amalgamation of Spanish and Caribbean dishes. Alcohol consumption rates rank lower than many nations, whereas cigarette consumption rates compare to the United States. Divorce rates are high.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$9,900 (2011) [20.6% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.776

Corruption Index: 4.2 (2011)

The Cuban economy remains underdeveloped and dependent on other nations to meet its basic needs. The quality of living remains lower than at pre-1990s levels due to the loss of Soviet aid and continued presence of a highly centralized authoritarian government. In recent years, Cuba has exchanged labor for oil and other needed resources with nations sympathetic to its cause, such as Venezuela. Services employ 61% of the labor force and produce 75% of the GDP, whereas industry accounts for 20% of the workforce and produces 21% of the GDP. Major industries include sugar, petroleum, tobacco, and nickel. Cuba boasts the second largest nickel deposits in the world. Primary trade partners include China, Canada, Venezuela, and Spain.

The strict control of society by the communist party for half a century has likely lessened corruption rates. Most other nations in the region experience more widespread corruption. However, corruption is perceived as a major problem in government and society.

Faiths

Christian: 65%

Other: 35%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 6,900,000

Jehovah's Witnesses 92,000 1,250

Seventh Day Adventists 31,915 297

Anglican 22,000

Methodist 21,000

Presbyterian 15,000

Latter-day Saints 50 1

¹⁵⁹ "2008 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates," U.S. Census Bureau, retrieved 23 June 2010. http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=01000U.S.&-ds_name=ACS_2008_1YR_G00_-&-_lang=en&-mt_name=ACS_2008_1YR_G2000_B03001&-format=&-CONTEXT=dt

Religion

The majority of Cubans are Christian or nonreligious. Catholics account for the largest religious group, and Catholic authorities estimate 10% of adult followers attend mass regularly. Interest in religion is growing nationwide. Protestants are growing rapidly and number over half a million.¹⁶⁰ Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Seventh Day Adventists appear to be gaining the most followers.

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects the individual right of religious belief and practice, but this right is restricted by law and government enforcement. Government monitors all aspects of social life, and religious groups are subject to surveillance. Greater tolerance has been granted to many religious groups recently, but needed permits to renovate or construct religious buildings remain difficult to obtain. There is no state religion, and references to atheism were removed from the constitution in 1992. Religious groups must obtain permission to operate and must register with the government in order to worship in a specific location, invite foreign visitors, and allow local religious leaders to travel abroad. In recent years, religious groups have experienced greater ease in importing religious materials, using the Internet and bringing in foreign religious workers.¹⁶¹

Largest Cities

Urban: 76%

Havana, **Santiago de Cuba, Camagüey, Holguín, Guantánamo, Santa Clara, Las Tunas, Bayamo, Pinar del Río, Cienfuegos, Matanzas, Ciego de Ávila, Manzanillo, Sancti Spíritus, Palma Soriano.**

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregation.

One of the fifteen cities with over 100,000 inhabitants has a congregation. Forty-six percent (46%) of the national population lives in the fifteen largest cities.

LDS History

In 2010, Cuba belonged to the Mexico Area.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: ~50 (2012)

Membership growth accelerated during the late 2000s. In 2007, there were an estimated fifteen members.¹⁶² The following year, membership doubled to thirty.¹⁶³

Congregational Growth

Branches: 1 (2012)

Members have met in a small group in Havana since the early 2000s. A branch has been organized more recently.

¹⁶⁰ "Cuba," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127386.htm>

¹⁶¹ "Cuba," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127386.htm>

¹⁶² "Cuba," International Religious Freedom Report 2007, retrieved 23 June 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2007/90249.htm>

¹⁶³ "Cuba," International Religious Freedom Report 2008, retrieved 23 June 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108521.htm>

Activity and Retention

The majority of Church members appear to actively attend church meetings. Local members and leaders maintain responsibility for teaching and baptizing converts.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Spanish.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are translated in Spanish, including an LDS edition of the Bible.

Meetinghouses

The Havana Branch rents space from another church to hold Sunday meetings.¹⁶⁴

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church has been largely unsuccessful in carrying out humanitarian and development work due to restrictions imposed by the Cuban government as well as the U.S. embargo against Cuba.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The government has not granted registration to the Church, but has given permission for some Church activity. In a written government agreement, the Church is entitled to hold meetings and baptize converts. In 2008, the Church expressed frustration with the government denying humanitarian aid destined for hurricane victims.¹⁶⁵ Christian groups often openly proselyte without government interference. No legal restrictions appear to prevent the introduction of full-time missionaries from Caribbean nations.

Cultural Issues

Although communism has created a more secular environment over the past half a century, many have maintained their Christian backgrounds yet lack the societal and familial pressures challenging Cubans from join non-Catholic denominations. This has resulted in high receptivity to many religious groups recently.

National Outreach

The currently reached population consists only of those in personal contact with Church members in Havana. Nineteen percent (19%) of the national population resides in Havana, a city of central importance in future mission outreach. The population is more urbanized than many nations in the Caribbean, allowing for fewer mission outreach centers. However, there are approximately 110 cities with over 10,000 inhabitants. Even if missionary work progresses as fast as in the Dominican Republic, which saw some of the most rapid national outreach and membership growth ever seen in the past thirty years, it would take over three decades to establish congregations in most these cities.

¹⁶⁴ "Cuba," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127386.htm>

¹⁶⁵ "Cuba," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127386.htm>

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Strong member involvement in missionary work combined with demands for self-sufficiency due to government regulations have resulted in likely high rates of member activity and convert retention. Little contact with Church leaders may make members more susceptible to doctrinal misunderstandings or administrative difficulties. Long distances from members' homes to the current meetinghouse and less convenient public transportation on Sunday create challenges for members to attend church weekly.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Tension between different ethnic groups remains low due to shared language and culture. Communism has also likely reduced potential ethnic integration issues, thereby creating a favorable environment for mission outreach among all ethnic groups in Cuba.

Language Issues

High literacy rates and universal usage of Spanish, the language with the most extensive Church literature other than English, provide enormous potential for Cubans to understand the gospel without language barriers frequently experienced in other nations.

Leadership

Few trained leaders appear as one of the largest obstacles for more immediate church growth. In mid-2010, no missionaries appeared to have served from the Havana Branch. Priesthood holders are few in number and have restricted contact with Church headquarters and regional Church leaders. Although opportunities for training and mentoring are few, isolation from the international Church has likely facilitated greater resilience among local leadership.

Temple

The Santo Domingo Dominican Republic Temple is the closest temple that members in Cuba may attend. Few if any members have been to the temple and coordinated temple trips do not presently occur for members of the Havana Branch.

Comparative Growth

Cuba remains the last sovereign nation in North and South America without an official LDS Church presence and one of the least reached predominantly Christian countries in the world. Cuba is the only nation in the Western Hemisphere that has had a long-standing communist government with a large immigrant population in the United States. Cuban communities in South Florida have been among the most receptive in the region to LDS mission outreach. Spanish-speaking nations in Central America and the Caribbean have experienced strong membership growth and an official Church presence for several decades. The Church entered the Dominican Republic in the late 1970s and in 2009 had 115,000 members, eighteen stakes, and eleven districts. Nations with recent or current communist governments have tended to initially experience large increases in convert baptisms followed by dissipating increases in national outreach, active members, and congregations.

Many Christian denominations have been established in the past several decades and experience rapid growth in membership, especially Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses. Many of these denominations have been successful in drawing upon membership outside the United States to assist in establishing their churches

in Cuba and have downplayed American connections. Jehovah's Witnesses have over 1,250 congregations and Seventh Day Adventists have over 270 in Cuba, compared to just one LDS congregation. Such figures reflect the potential of church growth for outreach-oriented faiths, as well as the advantages of Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh-day Adventists from indigenous growth through effective member-missionary programs in contrast to the LDS reliance on a large missionary force staffed primarily with North American missionaries.

Future Prospects

Poor diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States over the past fifty years have likely delayed the establishment of the Church in Cuba as Church headquarters is based in the United States. Furthermore, adequate Church infrastructure and self-sufficiency in missionaries and leadership did not occur in the Dominican Republic until the past decade and still has yet to occur in much of the Caribbean, thereby reducing the body of missionaries needed to staff functioning missions while simultaneously opening new ones. In late 2009, missionaries serving in the Dominican Republic reported that the Church was taking the first steps need to open Cuba for missionary work by utilizing missionaries from Caribbean nations. Canada may be another supplier of future missionaries to Cuba due to positive political relations and the number of full-time missionaries available. The rapid growth of other outreach-oriented faiths in Cuba as well as the relative receptivity of Cuban-Americans to the gospel suggest much greater potential for church outreach in Cuba than suggested by LDS progress to date.

Much of the challenge impeding LDS growth in Cuba consists in overcoming traditional LDS paradigms relying on full-time missions staffed with North American missionaries, and instead focusing on growth through member-missionary work and native or regional full-time missionaries. In the past couple years, consistent increases in membership and government agreements permitting Church meetings and convert baptisms is a positive development needed to establish the Church.

CURACAO

Geography

AREA: 444 square km. Curacao is a small island in the southern Caribbean Sea north of Venezuela that is a constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The terrain consists of low-lying plains and hills. Tropical semi-arid conditions occur with little seasonal variation in temperature. Hurricanes rarely impact the island and are the primary natural hazard.

Peoples

Mixed black: 85%

Other: 15%

Population: 142,180 (January 2010)

Annual Growth Rate: N/A (0.79% for the Netherland Antilles in 2006)

Fertility Rate: 2.1 children born per woman (2009)

Life Expectancy: 72.4 male, 80.1 female (2009)

Languages: Papiamentu (81.2%), Dutch (8%), Spanish (4%), English (2.9%), other (3.9%). Dutch is the official language. Papiamentu is the only Iberian-based Creole spoken worldwide. Many speak all major languages fluently.

Literacy: N/A [Netherland Antilles: 96.7% (2003)]

History

The Arawak Amerindians were the first known inhabitants. The Spanish sighted and claimed Curacao in 1499. In 1634, the Dutch took control of the island and used it as a base of operations for the slave trade and military operations against the Spanish.¹⁶⁶ The abolition of slavery in 1863 hurt the local economy, which did not recover until an oil refinery was established in the early twentieth century. In 1954, Curacao headquartered the newly-formed Netherlands Antilles government. The Netherland Antilles originally included the Dutch Caribbean possessions of Curacao, Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, Saba, and Saint Martin. In 2010, the Netherland Antilles was dissolved, and Curacao became a constituent country of the Netherlands as a result of referenda held in 2005 and 2009 in which Curacao citizens voted to become a self-governing country part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Culture

Curacao exhibits many cultural features adopted from African, European, and Caribbean cultures regarding architecture, cuisine, and language. African customs and traditions are more pronounced than on many other islands due to the role of Curacao as a base of operations for the Dutch slave trade. Most of the population is Catholic. Christianity is a dominant influence on society as many attend church. Carnival is a major

¹⁶⁶ "Netherlands Antilles," Previous Editions of Netherlands Antilles Background Note, 17 March 2010. <http://www.state.gov/outofdate/bgn/netherlandsantilles/154259.htm>

celebration in February that includes parades and parties. Cigarette and alcohol consumption rates appear comparable to the worldwide average rates of use. Divorce rates are higher than world averages.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$14,970 (2004) [31.6% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: N/A

Corruption Index: N/A

The economy relies upon a single petroleum refinery, tourism, and offshore banking to function. Curacao benefits from an excellent harbor to accommodate large ships, such as oil tankers. Venezuela leases the oil refinery; most Venezuelan oil is destined for the United States. Nearly all consumer goods are imported as soil and climatic conditions are poor for agriculture. Overall Curacao has a well-developed infrastructure. Natural resources include calcium phosphates, aloe, fruit, peanuts, and vegetables. Services employ 82% of the labor force and generate 84% of the GDP. Industry accounts for virtually the entire remainder of the labor force and GDP. Primary industries include tourism, petroleum refining and transshipment, and light manufacturing. One percent (1%) of the GDP and workforce is attributed to agriculture. Aloe, sorghum, peanuts, vegetables, and fruit are the major crops. Venezuela and the United States are the primary trade partners. Corruption rates are perceived to be at lower rates than most nations in the Caribbean. Drug trafficking is a concern.

Faiths

Christian: 93%

Jewish: 0.8%

Other: 1.3%

None: 4.6%

Unknown: 0.3%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 113,886

Pentecostal 4,976

Seventh Day Adventists 6,589 28 (includes Bonaire)

Jehovah's Witnesses 1,837 28

Latter-day Saints 572 1

Religion

Most the population is Catholic (80.1%). Protestants account for approximately 13% of the population. Jews account for nearly 1%. Approximately 5% of the population does not identify with a religious group.

Religious Freedom

The constitution of the Netherlands protects religious freedom and grants the government authority to restrict religious practices if they become a risk to public order, traffic safety, or public health. The government upholds religious freedom guaranteed by the constitution and diligently works to foster an environment of religious tolerance. Public speech that incites hatred toward a religious group is a crime and has been an area of conflict due to freedom of speech rights. Common Christian holidays are recognized by the government. Religious groups are not required to register with the government to operate, but certain rights and privileges

such as tax exemption status are only bestowed upon registered religious groups.¹⁶⁷ There have been no recent reports of societal abuse of religious freedom in Curacao.

Largest Cities

Urban: 97%

Willemstad, **Tera Cora, Barber, Labadera, Soto.**

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

One of the five largest cities has an LDS congregation. Ninety-six percent (96%) of the island's inhabitants reside in the five largest cities. Eighty-eight percent (89%) of the population lives in Willemstad.

LDS History

Ingeborg Zielinski was the first known Latter-day Saint convert from Curacao. She joined the Church in the Netherlands in 1970 and returned to Curacao in 1971. In 1972, Zielinski was crowned Miss Curacao and held hourly radio programs in which she shared some beliefs and practices of the LDS Church but with a nondenominational approach. The Venezuela Caracas Mission opened Curacao to missionary work in 1978, but missionaries were withdrawn the same year. Church meetings began to be held in Papiamento in 1982 when full-time missionaries were reassigned to the island; greater church growth soon followed.¹⁶⁸ The Book of Mormon translation in Papiamento was completed in 1987.¹⁶⁹ Jurisdiction over Curacao changed from one of the Venezuelan missions to the West Indies Mission sometime in the 1990s. Later, Curacao was reassigned to the Puerto Rico San Juan Mission. Seminary and institute were introduced in 2007 and 2008, respectively. Curacao was assigned to the Puerto Rico San Juan West Mission in 2007¹⁷⁰ and in 2010 was transferred to the Dominican Republic Santo Domingo East Mission.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 572 (2012)

There were fewer than one hundred Latter-day Saints in 1993. There were 300 members in 1997, and by 2000 membership reached 363. Membership totaled 342 in 2002, 424 in 2004, 464 in 2006, and 525 in 2008. Membership generally increases between ten and forty a year. In 2009, one in 264 was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 0 Branches: 1 (2012)

LDS congregations have divided and combined several times on Curacao. The first branch—the Curacao Branch—was organized in 1979.¹⁷¹ The branch was split into two branches in 1987, and the branches were consolidated six months later.¹⁷² The branch divided into two congregations again by 1997, and both branches were rejoined by 2000. In 2004, the branch divided into two congregations again and was unified into a single

¹⁶⁷ "Netherlands," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148969.htm>

¹⁶⁸ "Netherlands-Antilles," Country Profile, 8 October 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/netherlands-antilles>

¹⁶⁹ Warnick, Lee. "Book of Mormon in 80th language," LDS Church News, 9 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18233/Book-of-Mormon-in-80th-language.html>

¹⁷⁰ "New missions bring total to 347 New missions," LDS Church News, 10 February 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50112/New-missions-bring-total-to-347-New-missions.html>

¹⁷¹ "Netherlands-Antilles," Country Profile, 8 October 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/netherlands-antilles>

¹⁷² "Netherlands Antilles," Deseret News 1995–96 Church Almanac, p. 264.

unit in 2009. A district serviced branches in Curacao and Bonaire between 2004 and 2009. In early 2011, the Curacao Branch was a mission branch not assigned to a stake or district.

Activity and Retention

In 2007, there were approximately forty active members in each branch. That same year, there was a period of a couple months when one hundred attended sacrament meeting in each branch, including dozens of investigators. Twenty-four were enrolled in seminary and institute during the 2008–2009 school year. Total active membership is estimated at one hundred, or 20% of nominal church membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Papiamento, Dutch, Spanish, English.

The Book of Mormon is translated into Papiamento. Other Papiamento LDS materials are limited to the *Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith* and General Conference addresses. All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in Dutch and Spanish. The *Liahona* magazine has monthly issues in Dutch and Spanish.

Meetinghouses

An LDS chapel was dedicated in 1988.¹⁷³

Humanitarian and Development Work

There have been no major humanitarian or development projects sponsored by the LDS Church. Service activities are limited to projects organized by full-time missionaries and local members.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church benefits from full religious freedom to proselyte, worship, and assemble. Foreign full-time missionaries serve regularly on tourist visas, which last up to ninety days.

Cultural Issues

Most have a background in Christianity and have developed or are aware of common religious practices. Many are traditionally Catholic, creating challenges for LDS mission outreach in overcoming cultural barriers. Carnival celebrations interfere with LDS missionary activity through the societal promotion of casual sexual relations and heavy alcohol use.

National Outreach

LDS missionaries have performed mission outreach in virtually all major population centers. Notwithstanding that the sole LDS congregation operating in early 2011 offered immediate outreach only to a portion of Willemstad, up to 88% of Curacao's inhabitants reside in a city with a mission outreach center.

After the presence of church members in Curacao for more than forty years and continuous missionary work for more than thirty years, the repetitive failure of attempts to open additional congregations and the lack of

¹⁷³ "Netherlands- Antilles," Country Profile, 8 October 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/netherlands-antilles>

adequate leadership and member activity to maintain more than a single branch warrants serious concern. Organizing a few dependent branches or groups would likely extend efficient outreach to the entire island, but limited local leadership resources and few active members render any such efforts unfeasible at present. Holding cottage meetings with full-time and branch missionaries in various locations far from the LDS meetinghouse may provide an impetus for expanding national outreach.

There are no developed Internet resources specifically dedicated to Curacao or Papiamento speakers, with the exception of audio translations of General Conference addresses. The establishment of an LDS website in Papiamento for Curacao members to utilize in their finding and member-missionary efforts may increase receptivity and national outreach.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Steady growth in nominal membership during the 2000s becomes less impressive, considering that the number of congregations remained unchanged between 2000 and 2010. Quick-baptism tactics of converts with minimal preparation and without firm gospel habits in order to attain arbitrary baptismal quotas appear to be a major contributor to the current level of member activity in Curacao. Assigning large numbers of full-time missionaries to service Curacao's small population likely exacerbated convert attrition as the responsibility of local members to perform missionary activity and to develop local leadership was diminished. Reducing the number of full-time missionaries to just one or two missionary companionships is a move in the right direction that may increase member involvement in missionary activity, such as finding and fellowshiping. Increasing seminary and institute attendance in the late 2000s is a positive sign of youth member activity rates remaining constant or slightly improving.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The diverse society of Curacao has generated a cosmopolitan atmosphere in which differing ethnic groups have intermingled and peacefully coexist. Any ethnic integration challenges encountered will likely be language based.

Language Issues

In early 2011, there were no church manuals, gospel study books, and proselytism literature translated into Papiamento. The Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price have yet to be translated. A lack of LDS materials in Papiamento challenges efforts for local members to develop greater gospel study habits and gain stronger testimonies about the Church and its teachings. Many members likely utilize LDS materials available in other languages for gospel study and church instruction, albeit church services are held in Papiamento.

Missionary Service

There were up to five missionary companionships assigned to Curacao in late 2009. Missionaries reported that they did not have a shortage of investigators to teach, but few attended church meetings or joined the Church. Following the reassignment of Curacao from the Puerto Rico San Juan West Mission to the Dominican Republic Santo Domingo East Mission, there was only one full-time missionary companionship serving on Curacao. Very few if any local members born on Curacao have served full-time missions.

Leadership

A local member appeared to be serving as the branch president in early 2011. Limited local leadership and poor member activity appear to be the primary cause for consolidating branches during the past two decades.

Larger numbers of self-sufficient leadership may be developed through the retention of more male members and mission leaders providing adequate training with minimal full-time missionary involvement. Reactivation may also offer some potential, but efforts to recover lost members have borne little fruit to date.

Temple

Curacao is assigned to the Santo Domingo Dominican Republic Temple. Temple trips may occur on an irregular basis due to few active members, distance to the temple, and economic constraints. Political conditions in Venezuela at present appear to prevent local members from attending the Caracas Venezuela Temple.

Comparative Growth

Curacao experienced some of the most nominal rapid membership growth in the Caribbean among islands with fewer than 200,000 inhabitants during the 2000s. However, such growth appears to be more nominal than real, as member activity and convert retention rates rank among the lowest in the region. However, LDS membership in Curacao exceeds the church membership of any other Caribbean island with only one congregation. The percentage of nominal Latter-day Saints in the general population is representative of LDS percentages in most Caribbean nations.

Missionary-oriented Christian groups have achieved some of the greatest success in the Caribbean in Curacao, far outpacing Latter-day Saints. Most outreach-focused groups have had a presence for several decades, operate many congregations, and today experienced moderate rates of church growth. Curacao has one of the highest percentages of active Jehovah's Witnesses in the world. Witnesses have a strong presence on the island and operate twenty-two congregations to minister to the population of 140,000. Pentecostals and Seventh Day Adventists also report a strong presence and rank among the largest non-Catholic Christian denominations.

Future Prospects

After more than thirty years of proselytism in Curacao, the LDS Church has to date been unable to sustain more than a single congregation on the island due to high convert attrition and limited local leadership. On the whole, the LDS Church in Curacao appears to be experiencing little real growth or increase in active membership notwithstanding continued increases in nominal membership. In 2001, President Hinckley predicted that one day there would be thousands of members in Aruba and Curacao.¹⁷⁴ Inconsistent mission policies regarding convert baptisms, overstaffing of full-time missionaries to service a moderately receptive, small population, and the perpetual failure to develop greater numbers of active priesthood leaders have frustrated church growth potential. Implementing a member-missionary approach to proselytism, increasing the number of LDS materials translated into Papiamentu, strengthening the mentoring role of mission leaders, and weaning local members and leadership from reliance on full-time missionaries for administrative and ecclesiastical duties may improve the long-term growth outlook.

¹⁷⁴ Swensen, Jason. "Prophet teaches, motivates Caribbean islanders," LDS Church News, 24 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39534/Prophet-teaches-motivates-Caribbean-islanders.html>

DOMINICA

Geography

AREA: 751 square km. Bordering the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, Dominica is a small, lush island between Guadeloupe and Martinique. Known as the most mountainous island of the Lesser Antilles, Dominica possesses unique geographic features such as Boiling Lake, the world's second-largest thermally active lake, and boasts a network of natural parks that protect the environment. Terrain principally consists of rugged, volcanic mountains that are subject to tropical climate marked by heavy rainfall and trade wind-moderated temperatures. Flash flooding and hurricanes are natural hazards. Dominica is divided into ten administrative divisions.

Peoples

Black: 86.8%

Mixed: 8.9%

Carib Amerindian: 2.9%

White: 0.8%

Other: 0.7%

Nearly the entire population trace their ancestry to freed African slaves who arrived in the eighteenth century. Carib Amerindians are concentrated on the east coast and are the only pre-Colombian population remaining among the islands of the eastern Caribbean. Slow population growth has occurred primarily due to emigration to more prosperous nations.¹⁷⁵

Population: 73,126 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.216% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.06 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 73.23 male, 79.29 female (2012)

Languages: Dominican Creole French [patois] (80%), English (19%), other (1%). English is the official language. Dominican Creole French is mutually intelligible with Saint Lucian Creole French.

Literacy: 94% (2003)

History

The Caribs forcefully removed or eradicated the indigenous Arawak population in the fourteenth century and deterred the Spanish from colonizing the island due to their fierce, warlike demeanor. French rule began in 1635, and the first Europeans to reside on the island were French missionaries. Both France and Great Britain agreed to abandon Dominica and St. Vincent in 1660 due to Carib hostility. No European power claimed Dominica for the following century. During the eighteenth century, France claimed the island and began a settlement but lost control of the island to the British following the Seven Years' War in 1763. France invaded in 1778 and captured the island, but the island was returned to the British in 1783. Additional unsuccessful

¹⁷⁵ "Background Note: Dominica," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 23 July 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2295.htm>

French invasions occurred in 1795 and 1805. In 1838, Dominica became the only British Caribbean colony to have a black-majority legislature. Rivalry intensified as the white minority appealed for greater British control; by the end of the nineteenth century the black legislature had disappeared. Dominica was included in the Leeward Island Administration in the mid-twentieth century followed by the West Indies Federation. Dominica became a United Kingdom-associated state in 1967 and won independence in 1978. Since independence, Dominica has struggled to cope with successive hurricanes, an underdeveloped economy, and fluctuating banana prices.¹⁷⁶

Culture

Sporadic French rule during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries greatly contributed to the development of Dominican culture, leaving its footprint in continued widespread usage of Dominican Creole French and most of the population adhering to the Catholic Church.¹⁷⁷ The population exhibits a high degree of religious participation and plurality among Christian denominations. Music occupies an important role in society and features an agglomeration of genres found in the region, such as Afro-Cuban, European, African, and Creole music. Cuisine is representative of most Caribbean nations; common foods include mutton, beef, fruit, and vegetables.¹⁷⁸ Alcohol consumption rates compare to worldwide averages.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$13,600 (2011) [28.3% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.724

Corruption Index: 5.2 (2011)

The traditionally agriculturally-driven economy has diversified in recent years due to government restructuring efforts to develop tourism, banking, and geothermal energy. Consequently, strong economic growth occurred in the mid-2000s that ended as a result of Hurricane Dean and the global financial crisis in the late 2000s. Lumber, hydropower, and arable land are natural resources. Agriculture employs 40% of the labor force and generates 18% of the GDP, whereas services employ 28% of the labor force and generate 50% of the GDP. Common crops include bananas, citrus, mangos, root crops, coconuts, and cocoa. Industry accounts for roughly a third of the GDP and labor force. Soap, coconut oil, and tourism are major industries. Primary trade partners include Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Trinidad and Tobago. Dominica is among the least corrupt nations in the Caribbean. There have been some accusations of government corruption in recent years.

Faiths

Christian: 91%

Rastafarian: 1.3%

Other/unspecified: 1.6%

None: 6.1%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 44,707

¹⁷⁶ "Background Note: Dominica," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 23 July 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2295.htm>

¹⁷⁷ "Background Note: Dominica," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 23 July 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2295.htm>

¹⁷⁸ "Dominica," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 31 January 2011. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominica>

Seventh Day Adventists 6,175 31
 Pentecostal 4,078
 Baptist 2,985
 Methodist 2,694
 Church of God 874
 Jehovah's Witnesses 447 10
 Latter-day Saints 140 2

Religion

Catholics comprise 61% of the population. The 2001 population and housing census reported that Seventh Day Adventists and Pentecostals each account for 6% of the population. Nine percent (9%) of the population does not follow Christianity; most non-Christians are nonreligious.¹⁷⁹

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. There is no state religion. The government recognizes major Christian holidays as national holidays. Religious groups must register with the government as nonprofit organizations and are required to register meetinghouses and buildings. Registration permits public meetings and the status of missionaries. There have been no reported instances of societal abuse of religious freedom.¹⁸⁰

Largest Cities

Urban: 74%

Roseau, Portsmouth, **Canefield, Marigot, Grand Bay, Mahaut, Atkinson, Salisbury, Saint Joseph, Wesley.** Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Two of the ten largest cities have an LDS congregation. Fifty-one percent (51%) of the population resides in the ten most populous cities.

LDS History

The first Dominican joined the LDS Church in the early 1960s in England.¹⁸¹ In 2004, some members in New Jersey were immigrants from Dominica.¹⁸² One of the first Dominican Latter-day Saint families to join the Church in the mid-2000s was a former Seventh Day Adventist family. LDS full-time missionaries were first assigned in 2006. Created in 2007, the Puerto Rico San Juan East Mission administered Dominica in 2007.¹⁸³ Seminary and institute began in the late 2000s. In 2010, Dominica was assigned to the Puerto Rico San Juan Mission.

¹⁷⁹ "Dominica," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148750.htm>

¹⁸⁰ "Dominica," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148750.htm>

¹⁸¹ "Do you know the steps of prayer?," LDS Church News, 31 May 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43848/Do-you-know-the-steps-of-prayer.html>

¹⁸² "International ward sponsors family fair," LDS Church News, 20 November 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46506/International-ward-sponsors-family-fair.html>

¹⁸³ "New missions bring total to 347," LDS Church News, 10 February 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50112/New-missions-bring-total-to-347-New-missions.html>

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 140 (2012)

The Church did not report membership totals before 2007. There were seventy-seven Latter-day Saints in 2007, one hundred in 2008 and 143 in 2009. In 2009, one in 509 was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 0 Branches: 1 Groups: 1 (2012)

There were three branches in 2007 headquartered in Portsmouth, Roseau, and Marigot. In 2010, the Roseau and Marigot Branches were discontinued due to inadequate local leadership and reliance on full-time missionaries for administrative tasks, with the Roseau Branch becoming a group. It is unclear whether a congregation continues to operate in Marigot. In early 2011, there were at least two LDS congregations, the Portsmouth Branch and the Roseau Group. Both congregations reported directly to the mission president.

Activity and Retention

There were six students enrolled in seminary during the 2008–2009 school year. In 2008, church attendance for the Portsmouth ranged from thirty to sixty. The Roseau Group had approximately fifteen active members in mid-2010; church attendance increased to thirty in early 2011. Nationwide active membership is estimated at seventy-five, or 50% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English, French.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in French.

Meetinghouses

The Portsmouth Branch meets in a rented space or renovated building, whereas the Roseau Group meets in a missionary apartment.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church has donated clothing for the needy.¹⁸⁴

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Latter-day Saints benefit from full-religious freedom allowing worship, assembly, and proselytism. It is unclear whether the LDS Church has full government recognition.

Cultural Issues

Notwithstanding Dominica's small population and traditionally Catholic population, many have been receptive to outreach-oriented Christian denominations, as nearly all proselytizing Christian groups have a presence on Dominica.

¹⁸⁴ "Projects—Dominica," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 1 February 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-206,00.html>

National Outreach

Thirty-five percent (35%) of the population resides in the two administrative divisions with LDS congregations. The small size of the population and limited numbers of full-time missionaries worldwide make opening additional areas to missionary work unfeasible by the assignment of full-time missionaries. Senior missionary couples may facilitate expansion of national outreach by holding cottage meetings periodically in each administrative division and organize groups in more receptive locations. As of early 2011, there was no Dominica-specific LDS Internet outreach although an ample supply of materials was available online in English.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

The Church in Dominica has achieved modest levels of convert retention in recent years and moderate member activity despite strong reliance on full-time missionaries for administrative functions. Member activity levels have fluctuated in recent years. The introduction of seminary may lead to lasting increases in member activity rates.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

There are few ethnic integration issues, as most are black or of mixed ethnicity. Some cultural and socio-economic challenges may be presented by Caribs and whites assimilating into predominantly black LDS congregations.

Language Issues

Widespread use of English and the small number of speakers of Dominican Creole French worldwide reduce the need for translations of church materials. Full-time missionaries teach in English and report few language issues at present.

Missionary Service

In early 2011, there were two senior missionary couples and a few young full-time missionaries. Few, if any, local members have served missions. The introduction of seminary in the late 2000s provides some missionary preparation that may increase the number of local members serving full-time missions.

Leadership

Full-time missionaries appeared to staff the leadership for the Roseau and Marigot Branches prior to their closure. Limited numbers of full-time missionaries assigned to the mission, the need to reduce reliance on missionaries for administrative tasks, and limited local member participation were likely the primary reasons for the closure of the two branches. The lack of qualified, trained leaders is indicative of the recent arrival of the Church in the mid-2000s as most members joined the Church in the late 2000s. Many recent converts have remained active, and some have received the Melchizedek Priesthood, offering potential for future self-sustaining leadership. However, membership strength and local leadership remain too limited to have justified the continued operation of branches in Roseau and Marigot.

Temple

Dominica is assigned to the Santo Domingo Dominican Republic Temple district. No temple trips appear to

have occurred as of early 2011. Few if any local members have attended the temple due to transportation costs, long travel distances, and most members joining the Church during the late 2000s.

Comparative Growth

Dominica experienced the second most rapid membership growth rate among nations in the Caribbean during the late 2000s and appears to have one of the highest member activity rates in the Caribbean. Dominica experienced congregation consolidations like many other islands in the region, such as Aruba, Guadeloupe, and Saint Kitts and Nevis. The percentage of Latter-day Saints in the population is lower than most Caribbean islands.

Seventh Day Adventists are one of the largest Protestant denominations and perform mission outreach nationwide with over thirty congregations. Jehovah's Witnesses report slow membership growth but maintain excellent national outreach with ten congregations.

Future Prospects

The outlook for LDS Church growth appears favorable in the coming years due moderate levels of receptivity, consistent mission outreach, and efforts by mission leaders for local members to rely less on full-time missionaries. A member-missionary and church planting approach to proselytism will be required for additional advances in national outreach due to the island's tiny population and limited missionary resources in the region. Leadership development and increases in active membership may result in the reorganization of the Roseau Branch in the years to come.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Geography

AREA: 48,670 square km. Located in the Caribbean, the Dominican Republic occupies the eastern two-thirds of Hispaniola and borders Haiti. Rough mountains and valleys traverse most of the landscape. The tropical climate maintains a consistent temperature year-round, but higher rainfall occurs in mountainous regions and during wet seasons (generally May through November). Hurricanes and flooding are the greatest natural hazards. Water shortages, soil erosion, and deforestation are environmental issues. The Dominican Republic is divided into thirty-one administrative provinces and one district.

Population: 10,088,598 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.305% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.41 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 75.28 male, 79.69 female (2012)

Peoples

Mixed: 73%

White: 16%

Black: 11%

Most Dominicans have mixed heritage from European, Africa, and native Taino Amerindian sources. Whites mainly consist of Europeans who settled the island centuries before and have not mixed with local populations. Many blacks are Haitians.

Languages: Spanish (98.4%), Haitian Creole (1.6%). Spanish is the official language and the only language with more than one million speakers (9.5 million).

Literacy: 87% (2002)

History

Taino Amerindians settled the island prior to the exploration of the island by Christopher Columbus in 1492. Hispaniola played an important role in Spanish expansion in the Caribbean and Americas. In 1697, Spain recognized French control of the western third of the island, which became independent in 1804 as Haiti. The Spanish colony was named Santo Domingo and failed to become independent from Spain. Haiti controlled the territory for twenty-two years. The Dominican Republic became independent in 1844, but then temporarily returned to Spanish rule during the 1860s. Dictators marked Dominican history for the following century, notably Rafael Leonidas Trujillo. The United States intervened in the 1960s when the military overthrew President Bosch. In 1966, Joaquin Balaguer won an election and stayed in power for the following thirty years. A return to democratic rule occurred in 1996.

Culture

Dominican culture draws upon Spanish, Caribbean, and native influences. Culture differs by socioeconomic

class. Many Dominicans drink heavily. Tobacco consumption is similar to other Latin American countries and lower than United States and Europe. The Catholic Church has influenced local culture and customs. Baseball is the most popular sport. Dominicans take pride in their own form of music, merengue.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$9,300 (2011) [19.3% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.689

Corruption Index: 2.6 (2011)

The economy has been heavily dependent on agriculture, but recently services have grown increasingly important. Services account for 68% of the GDP and employ 63% of the workforce. Agriculture produces 11% of the GDP and employs 15% of the population. Tourism is the primary industry followed by sugar processing and mining. Primary agricultural products include sugarcane, coffee and cotton. There is a high inequality of wealth. The employment rate sits at 15%. Forty-two percent (42%) of the population lives below the poverty line. Most exports and 39% of imports are trafficked with the United States. Other prominent import and export partners include Venezuela, Mexico, and Haiti.

Faiths

Christian: 89%

Other: 11%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 9,170,000

Seventh Day Adventists 282,641 681

Latter-day Saints 124,435 202

Jehovah's Witnesses 34,643 445

Religion

Most Dominicans are Christian. Catholics form the majority. Surveys indicate that practicing Catholics make up 40% of the population, whereas 29% of Dominicans are nonpracticing Catholics. Eighteen percent (18%) of the population consists of Evangelical Protestants. Nearly 11% of Dominicans do not adhere to any religion.

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. The Catholic Church receives preferential treatment despite the constitution declaring that there is no state religion. Government provides financial support for Catholic institutions. Christian groups may operate freely in the Dominican Republic and must register with the government.¹⁸⁵

Largest Cities

Urban: 69%

Santo Domingo, Santiago, La Romana, San Pedro de Macoris, Puerto Plata, San Francisco de Macoris, La Vega, San Cristobal, Bonao, Bajos de Haina.

¹⁸⁵ "Dominican Republic," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127388.htm>

All ten of the largest cities have a congregation. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

The first Dominicans joined the Church in the United States and returned to the Dominican Republic in 1978. In August 1978, the first converts were baptized in the country. The first branch was organized in Santo Domingo in September 1978, and in December, Elder M. Russell Ballard dedicated the country for missionary work.¹⁸⁶ Missionaries arrived in 1979. In 1979, 350 converts joined the Church. Seminary and institute began in the early 1980s. In 2006, Santo Domingo became the headquarters of the newly organized Caribbean Area.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 124,435 (2012)

Membership rapidly increased to 2,500 in 1981 and to 5,000 in mid-1983.¹⁸⁷ Five years later, membership reached 11,000. In 1990 there were 31,000 members.¹⁸⁸ Membership surpassed 50,000 in 1996.¹⁸⁹ By the end of 2000, membership grew to 73,280. Membership growth continued but at a slower pace in the 2000s. Membership reached 88,123 in 2003, 102,144 in 2006, and 115,000 by late 2009.

Membership growth rates slowed dramatically in the 2000s. In 2001 and 2002 membership grew between 7% and 8% annually, dropping to 5% to 6% in 2004 and 2005 and averaging between 3.5% and 4.5% from the end of 2006 to the end of 2008. Membership grew around 5,000 or 6,000 annually in the early 2000s and in the late 2000s usually grew by around 4,000 a year. Comparable to most Latin American countries, 4,253 were enrolled in seminary and institute in 2008, or about 4% of total membership. The Dominican Republic has the highest percentage of LDS members in the Caribbean. In 2009, one in eight-eight Dominicans was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 121 Branches: 81 (April 2013)

In 1981, the Dominican Republic Santo Domingo Mission was created from the Puerto Rico San Juan Mission. Five years after the first branch was created, there were twenty-three branches and two districts.¹⁹⁰ The first stake was created in Santo Domingo in 1986. The Church created a second mission headquartered in Santiago in 1987. Two additional stakes were organized in the city in 1988 and 1989. By 1990 there were over seventy congregations, three stakes, and six districts.¹⁹¹

The first stake outside of Santo Domingo was created in Santiago in 1991. That same year the fifth stake was created in San Francisco de Macoris. The Dominican Republic Santo Domingo Mission was divided to create a second mission for the city. In 1992, two more stakes were created in Santo Domingo bringing the number of stakes to five and nationwide to seven. A second stake in Santiago was created in 1995 and a sixth stake in

¹⁸⁶ VanDenBerghe, Elizabeth and Jed. "A Second Decade for Dominican Saints," *Ensign*, Oct 1990, 32.

¹⁸⁷ Millett, Richard. "Missionary Couples—Sharing the Gospel through Service," *Ensign*, Aug 1983, 9.

¹⁸⁸ "Dominican Republic," *Deseret News 2010 Church Almanac*, p. 472-3.

¹⁸⁹ "News of the Church," *Ensign*, Apr 1996, 74-80.

¹⁹⁰ Millett, Richard. "Missionary Couples—Sharing the Gospel through Service," *Ensign*, Aug 1983, 9.

¹⁹¹ VanDenBerghe, Elizabeth and Jed. "A Second Decade for Dominican Saints," *Ensign*, Oct 1990, 32.

Santo Domingo in 1996. In 1996, there were eight stakes and nine districts.¹⁹² Over 600 full-time missionaries attended the groundbreaking of the Santo Domingo Dominican Republic Temple.¹⁹³

The Church organized two additional stakes in San Cristóbal and La Vega in 1997 and 1998 respectively. By the end of 2000, there were 168 congregations, sixty-one of which were wards, and eleven stakes and eleven districts. By the early 2000s districts functioned in Azua, San Pedro, Navarrete, Barahona, San Juan, Bani, Dajabon, Santo Domingo Los Alcarrizos, La Romana, Puerto Plata, Mao, and Cotui. In the early to mid-2000s, the district in Mao was combined with the district in Navarrete, and the Cotui Dominican Republic District combined with the stake based in La Vega. A seventh stake was created in Santo Domingo in 2003 followed by districts maturing into stakes in Puerto Plata, Los Alcarrizos, and La Romana in 2005. A third stake was created in Santiago, and Santo Domingo became the area headquarters of the newly created Caribbean Area in 2006. In 2008, three additional stakes were created in Santo Domingo on the northern and eastern portions of the city.

A district was created from mission branches in the Monte Plata area in 2007. In late 2009, the La Vega Dominican Republic Stake was discontinued. The former stake was divided into three districts in La Vega, Bonaio, and Cotui. This was one of the few instances in which a stake was discontinued and divided into more than two districts. By the end of 2009, the number stakes increased to eighteen, whereas the number of districts remained unchanged from 2000.

During the 2000s the number of wards nearly doubled, and the number of branches declined by twenty-two. The number of congregations reached 183 in 2003, 188 in 2006, and 197 in 2008. By early 2010 there were 201 congregations, including 115 wards.

Activity and Retention

Member activity and convert retention have been poor for several decades and worsened in the 2000s. The average number of members per congregation increased from 436 in 2000 to 559 in 2008. Although some of this increase can be attributed to the large number of branches that grew into wards, this trend indicates worsening convert retention or long-term members increasing in inactivity. Some large meetings have seen few in attendance compared to total membership. Four thousand from the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Puerto Rico attended the groundbreaking of the temple in 1996.¹⁹⁴ Some congregations report as many as 150 to 200 attending meetings weekly. Other congregations have as few as fifty attending sacrament meetings. Activity rates differ drastically between men and women as men have higher inactivity rates and in many districts delay the creation of stakes. Active membership likely ranges between 20,000 and 25,000 or 18%–22%.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Spanish, Haitian Creole.

All LDS scriptures are available in Spanish and Haitian Creole. Nearly all Church materials are translated into Spanish. The Church published an LDS translation of the Bible in Spanish in 2009. General Conference has had Haitian Creole translations since at least the early 1990s.¹⁹⁵ Most Church materials are translated into Haitian Creole, including mission, temple, youth, priesthood, primary, Relief Society, and unit resources.

¹⁹² "News of the Church," *Ensign*, Apr 1996, 74–80.

¹⁹³ Torres, Elias. "Ground broken for Caribbean's first temple," *LDS Church News*, 24 August 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27845/Ground-broken-for-Caribbeans-first-temple.html>

¹⁹⁴ Torres, Elias. "Ground broken for Caribbean's first temple," *LDS Church News*, 24 August 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27845/Ground-broken-for-Caribbeans-first-temple.html>

¹⁹⁵ <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20724/850-cable-systems-to-carry-conference.html>

Meetinghouses

Most congregations meet in Church-built meetinghouses. Smaller or recently created branches meet in renovated buildings or rented spaces.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church has provided humanitarian and development assistance for many years. Local leaders utilized fast offering funds to provide food and essential items for members affected by severe flooding in 2007.¹⁹⁶ Neonatal resuscitation training and vision treatment projects occurred in 2008.¹⁹⁷ The Dominican Republic served as an initial base for aid destined to Haiti following the earthquake in January 2010. A refugee center with two assigned humanitarian missionaries opened in the Haitian-border town of Jimani in early 2010. In 2010, the Church joined other charitable organizations in donating 750 wheelchairs.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church has benefited from the freedom of religion enjoyed in the Dominican Republic. No legal obstacles curtail the Church's growth and activities.

Cultural Issues

Widespread and frequent use of alcohol among many Dominicans presents a cultural obstacle that challenges church growth. Missionaries report that many converts with families have not been married and must postpone their baptisms until a civil marriage is performed. Many Dominicans are nominally Catholic and join the LDS Church with little time to develop a habit of regular Church attendance. Many converts become inactive, nominal, or disaffiliated Latter-day Saints. The Dominican Republic has a high homicide rate that can pose some safety risks for member missionaries.

National Outreach

The Dominican Republic is a small country with two-thirds of the population living in urban areas. The Church has a widespread presence in urban areas. Of the thirty-one administrative provinces, twenty-nine have a congregation. Only the provinces of Pedernales and Samana do not have a congregation. Eight provinces (Baoruco, Dajabon, El Seibo, Elías Piña, Hermanas Mirabal, Independencia, San Jose de Ocoa, and Santiago Rodríguez) have a very church limited presence with only one congregation. The population in provinces without congregations comprises only 1.3% of the national population, whereas the population in provinces with only one congregation account for 6.7% of the national population. The Church has multiple congregations in every province with over 100,000 inhabitants.

The rural population has only experienced limited outreach on the peripheries of Santo Domingo or outside other large cities. Establishing congregations and conducting missionary work in rural areas presents challenges for proselytism due to limited missionary resources and the small number of people in rural communities. Missionaries assigned to a rural setting may meet most of the inhabitants over a short period of time and have little opportunity to teach and convert if the people are unreceptive. Rural locations require longer travel times

¹⁹⁶ Swensen, Jason; Morales, Chris. "Widespread flooding," LDS Church News, 10 November 2007. <http://www.ldschurch-news.com/articles/51327/Widespread-flooding.html>

¹⁹⁷ "Neonatal resuscitation training" and "Vision treatment," Humanitarian Services on Ilds.org, retrieved 20 February 2010. <http://www.lds.org/library/page/display/0,7098,6211-1-3217-1,00.html>

to reach fewer people. The placement of full-time missionaries in cities and urban places provides the greatest opportunities for teaching and baptizing, as these typically benefit from an established Church infrastructure of local leaders and congregations.

Rural locations that have experienced some outreach often grow dependent on missionaries to run congregations. Leadership development is strained by the limited number of members in small communities. Cottage meetings periodically held to invite those interested in learning about the Church may assist in greater Church establishment in rural areas. Dependent groups have been reported to meet in several rural locations, which may have resulted from frequently held cottage meetings with local members, investigators, and visiting missionaries from the nearest location with assigned missionaries. Overall, few cottage meetings appear to be held in the Dominican Republic. A Church-sponsored country website has functioned since the late 2000s and provides outreach to Internet users in urban and remote areas.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Convert retention has suffered as a result of a rush to quickly baptize inadequately prepared converts and limited fellowshipping resources. Some congregational consolidations are possible in the coming years if convert retention does not improve. The number of active LDS members is estimated at 20,000–25,000, or approximately 20% of total membership.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Segregation, racism, and historical persecution of Haitians by Dominicans challenges outreach among the Haitian population in the Dominican Republic. Tens of thousands of Haitians were slaughtered in the 1930s by the Dominican military. Today, discrimination and persecution of blacks with predominantly African or Haitian heritages continues. Haitians experience persecution, as many cross the border illegally in search of employment and higher living standards. Little prejudice has carried over into the Church. Haitians have joined the Church in the Dominican Republic, assimilated into congregations, and served full-time missions.

Language Issues

The widespread use of Spanish has greatly facilitated the Church's nationwide outreach and may have contributed to rapid growth in membership. The marginalized Haitian minority may face some challenges in assimilating into Spanish-speaking congregations, although many Dominican Haitians speak Spanish with some level of proficiency.

Missionary Service

The Dominican Republic had its own Missionary Training Center established in the mid-1990s. Dominicans formed 30%–40% of the missionary force of the two missions in the country in 1990.¹⁹⁸ By 1996 40% of the missionaries in the three missions were Dominicans.¹⁹⁹ In 1997, Dominicans accounted for half the missionary force.²⁰⁰ By October 2009 the number of Dominicans serving full-time missionaries had increased to about 500, close to the size of the missionary force in the Dominican Republic.

The number of missionaries serving in the Dominican Republic increased in 2009 and 2010. The Dominican Republic Santo Domingo West Mission set a new record of 195 for new missionaries serving in the mission

¹⁹⁸ VanDenBerghe, Elizabeth and Jed. "A Second Decade for Dominican Saints," *Ensign*, Oct 1990, 32.

¹⁹⁹ "News of the Church," *Ensign*, Apr 1996, 74–80.

²⁰⁰ "Seeing firsthand fulfillment of prophecy," *LDS Church News*, 10 May 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30141/Seeing-firsthand-fulfillment-of-prophecy.html>

in 2010. In 2010, the Dominican Republic Santo Domingo East Mission added the Netherland Antilles and Aruba to its jurisdiction. In early 2010, Dominican missionaries accounted for over half the missionary force in the Dominican Republic. North American missionaries comprised nearly 40% of the missionary force and the remaining 10% came from other countries.

Leadership

A lack of active Melchizedek Priesthood holders has delayed the creation of additional stakes. The district in Azua was a couple dozen active Melchizedek Priesthood holders short of qualifying for a stake in early 2010. Challenges also face the Church on a congregational level. Some small branches or dependent groups cannot generate their own leaders and have members assigned from nearby congregations to fill leadership positions.

Temple

The Santo Domingo Dominican Republic Temple was announced in 1993, began construction in 1996 and was dedicated in 2000. Members previously traveled to more distant temples, such as in Lima, Peru or Orlando, Florida. Prior to the temple's completion, members set a goal of submitting 170,000 names for proxy ordinance work.²⁰¹ 39,520 attended the open house prior to the dedication and 9,630 attended the dedication.²⁰² In 2004, the fourth anniversary of the dedication of the temple was commemorated by a record 5,500 ordinances completed in one day by 1,200 members and 140 temple workers.²⁰³

The temple district serves members in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The temple has 67,000 square feet is the twenty-fourth largest worldwide, including four endowment rooms and four sealing rooms. In 2010, the temple was closed on Mondays and conducted three endowment sessions on weekday mornings, four endowment sessions on weekday evenings, and twelve on Saturdays between 6:00 AM and 5:00 PM. The temple is well utilized on weekends and receives additional patrons from the nearby Dominican Republic Missionary Training Center. An additional temple in the Dominican Republic appears unlikely due to the small geographic size of the country and the large size of the existing temple, which is not used to capacity.

Comparative Growth

The Dominican Republic has experienced some of the strongest nominal membership and congregational growth worldwide over the past thirty years, although low convert retention and member activity have presented ongoing challenges. No other nation had fewer than one hundred members in 1978 and in 2008 had over 100,000 members, although only about one in five members is active. The nation that has achieved the second highest growth in membership with less than one hundred members in 1978 is Nigeria. However, Nigeria had sixty-three more congregations than the Dominican Republic, and member activity rates are two and a half to three times greater. Activity rates in the Dominican Republic are comparable to or slightly less than most Latin American countries. No other nation in the Caribbean has as many members or stakes as the Dominican Republic.

Other Christian denominations achieve rapid membership growth in the Dominican Republic and also report difficulty retaining members. The Seventh Day Adventist Church reports around 10,000 baptisms a year

²⁰¹ "Excitement growing as members prepare for Caribbean temple," LDS Church News, 11 January 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30052/Excitement-growing-as-members-prepare-for-Caribbean-temple.html>

²⁰² "Facts and figures: Santo Domingo Dominican Republic Temple," LDS Church News, 23 September 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38521/Facts-and-figures-Santo-Domingo-Dominican-Republic-Temple.html>

²⁰³ "Observing anniversary," LDS Church News, 2 October 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46230/Observing-anniversary.html>

and has experienced a greater increase (both increase and percentage) in the average number of members per congregation than the LDS Church over the past decade. This trend indicates retention difficulties, although the number of active Adventists remains substantially higher than the number of active Latter-day Saints.

Future Prospects

The outlook for continued membership and congregational growth appears favorable, although poor retention and low member activity remain major challenges. Missionaries reported that the district in Azua was one of the closest districts to become a stake in late 2009. The district in Barahona was also close to meeting the requirements to become a stake in 2009. The district in San Pedro may also become a stake, as it is one of the most populous cities with several congregations. Additional stakes may be organized in Santo Domingo and Santiago. Accumulating inactivity and poor retention over the past three decades will likely continue to delay the creation of more congregations and stakes. Increasing baptismal standards to ensure that converts have established habits of regular church attendance and have firmly overcome substance abuse and other prohibited behaviors before baptism will be essential to long-term prospects for real growth. However, continued quick-baptism practices and an emphasis on achieving monthly baptismal goals over achieving real growth by retaining converts and strengthening congregations are ongoing factors in high convert turnover.

The Dominican Republic may one day play an integral role in the establishment of the Church in Cuba. The Caribbean Area gained jurisdiction over Cuba in late 2009. One of the missions in the Dominican Republic will likely administer to Cuba as the Dominican Republic is the closest nation to Cuba with the largest Spanish-speaking population.

EL SALVADOR

Geography

AREA: 21,041 square km. Positioned on the Pacific Coast, El Salvador is the smallest country and the only country in Central America that does not touch the Atlantic Ocean. Honduras and Guatemala border the country inland. Hills and mountains occupy most of the country with dormant and active volcanoes. Several large lakes dot the Salvadoran landscape by forming in the craters of extinct volcanoes. Periodic earthquakes and volcanic activity have threatened the country, along with hurricanes. Tropical climate allows for widespread agriculture, especially in coastal areas. Mountainous areas experience more temperate climate with distinct wet and dry seasons. El Salvador is administratively divided into fourteen departments.

Peoples

Mestizo: 90%

White: 9%

Amerindian: 1%

Population: 6,090,646 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.303% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.04 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 70.41 male, 77.12 female (2012)

Due to Spanish rule, intermarriage between the Amerindian population has resulted with 90% of Salvadorans today identifying themselves as Mestizo. Most whites have not intermarried with native populations while few Amerindians have not mixed with whites or Mestizos.

Languages: Spanish (99%), Kekchí (0.2%), Other (0.8%). Nearly the entire population (7.1 million) speaks Spanish with few speakers of Kekchí.

Literacy: 80.2% (2003)

History

The Pipil people resided in El Salvador when the Spanish conquered the area. El Salvador received its name from Spanish conquistadors, meaning *the Savior* in Spanish. Independence from Spain was granted, along with most of Central America, under the Central American Federation in 1821. El Salvador began its own independent nation in 1839. Coffee grew in importance as a cash crop during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A destructive civil war took place between 1980 and 1992, resulting in the death of 75,000 Salvadorans, as leftist rebel groups strove to overthrow the government, establishing their strongholds in the peripheries of the country in the departments of Morazan and Chalatenango. The United States has maintained strong ties with the Salvadoran government and provided assistance during the civil war. Since the end of the civil war, the government has sought to improve living conditions for its people and reform the economy.

Culture

The Roman Catholic Church plays a significant role in everyday life. Many of the national holidays are Catholic holidays, and Catholic leaders greatly influence politics and social attitudes. Violent crime is a serious problem, as El Salvador has one of the highest homicide rates in the world.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$7,600 (2011) [15.8% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.674

Corruption Index: 3.4 (2011)

Since the 1800s El Salvador has heavily depended on cash crops, especially coffee, in developing the overall economy. In 2009 El Salvador had the third largest economy in Central America after Costa Rica and Panama. Agriculture and food production is the dominant industry. Services are the largest sector of the economy, both in employment and in the percentage of the total GDP. Economic growth has continued in recent years, yet has declined recently due to the global financial crisis in the late 2000s. El Salvador struggles to diversify its economy while addressing the demanding needs of urbanization. The United States is El Salvador's largest import/export partner and has used the United States dollar as its currency since 2001. The Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement has helped increase El Salvador's exports.

Faiths

Christian: 80.9%

Other: 2.3%

None: 16.8%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 4,102,759

Protestant 1,523,266

Seventh Day Adventists 206,970 644

Latter-day Saints 114,674 162

Jehovah's Witnesses 38,005 673

Religion

The percentage of Catholics has declined as Protestant denominations have grown rapidly in the past fifty years. Secularism has increased in recent years.

Religious Freedom

Religious freedom is protected by the constitution and upheld by the government.

Major Cities

Urban: 61%

San Salvador, Soyapango, Santa Ana, San Miguel, Mejicanos, Apopa, Delgado, Nueva San Salvador, Ilopango, Colón.

All cities in El Salvador with over 20,000 inhabitants have at least one congregation of the Church. The largest cities without a Church presence have 16,000 or fewer inhabitants. The metropolitan San Salvador area, which includes many small towns on the peripheries of the city, numbers 1.56 million inhabitants, or 25% of the population of El Salvador. Twenty-six percent (26%) of the population lived in the ten largest cities as of 2008.

LDS History

President Arwell L. Pierce from the Mexican Mission was the first Church leader to begin exploring missionary opportunities in 1948. The first missionaries assigned came in 1949.²⁰⁴ A conference was held two years later in 1951 in San Salvador with 63 in attendance. The first convert baptisms took place the same year. El Salvador was included in the Central America Mission when it was created in 1952. The Guatemala-El Salvador Mission was created in 1965 and the El Salvador San Salvador Mission was created in 1976. In 1989 El Salvador became self-sustaining in its local missionary force.²⁰⁵ The following year a second mission was created, named the El Salvador San Salvador East Mission. Jurisdiction for the country of Belize was transferred from the Honduras San Pedro Sula Mission to the El Salvador San Salvador West Mission in March 2006. In 2011, the Church dedicated its first temple in the country in San Salvador. In 2013, the Church created a third mission (El Salvador San Salvador East).

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 114,674 (2012)

By 1965 there were 4,200 members living in El Salvador. In 1976 there were there were 4,745 members. By 1986 membership increased to 15,100.

Membership growth continued to increase rapidly to 38,000 in 1990 and to 64,000 in 1995. In 2000 membership stood at 86,758. Membership increased to 94,296 in 2005. Growth began to occur more rapidly in the latter part of the decade with membership increasing to over 102,000. Membership growth rates fell to less than 2% a year between 2001 and the end of 2006. In 2007 and 2008, membership growth rates rebounded to 2.76% and 3.52% respectively; the highest in a decade. In 2008, one in sixty-nine was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 123 Branches: 40 (April 2013)

The first district was created in 1965, and the first stake was created in San Salvador in 1973. The second and third stakes in El Salvador were created in San Salvador in 1979. For the first time stakes were created outside of San Salvador in Santa Ana in 1979 and 1980. A sixth stake was created in San Miguel in 1981. Between 1990 and the end of 1996 El Salvador had an additional ten stakes organized, six in small cities and towns to the southwest of Santa Ana and four in the San Salvador area. Only one of the ten new stakes was created from a district, the Juayua El Salvador Stake. The remaining nine new stakes were created from stake divisions. Two districts were organized in the mid-1990s in San Vicente and Usulután.

In 2000 there were 153 congregations. There were 152 congregations in 2005. Starting in 2006, the Church began to experience greater congregation growth as congregations increased from 152 to 155. The number of wards in El Salvador increased from 97 at the end of 2005 to 105 at the end of 2007. By late 2009 wards had increased to 114 and the total number of congregations reached 161. For the first time in thirteen years, a

²⁰⁴ "El Salvador," Facts and Statistics—LDS Newsroom, retrieved 17 April 2012. <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/facts-and-statistics/country/el-salvador/>

²⁰⁵ "El Salvador," Deseret News 2003 Church Almanac, p. 327.

new stake was created in El Salvador in 2009 in Santa Ana, bringing the total number of stakes to seventeen. In 2011, one new stake was organized in Sonzacate.

El Salvador has many mission branches that function in smaller cities and towns in rural areas. Two mission branches meet north of San Miguel in San Francisco Gotera and Santa Rosa de Lima. To the north of San Salvador, four mission branches function in Aguilares, Chalatenango, and Nueva Concepcion. Two more mission branches operate between San Salvador and Sonsonate in Armenia. Some of the stakes in El Salvador include branches or wards in more isolated areas of the country, particularly along the border with Guatemala.

Activity and Retention

El Salvador has one of the highest inactivity rates in Latin America. The average number of Church members per congregation was 567 in 2000 and 634 in 2009. Membership has grown more rapidly than the creation of new wards and branches, indicating that many new converts are not retained or the Church allows congregations to grow larger than in times past. Membership increased by 7,500 between 2000 and 2005, yet the number of congregations decreased by one. No increase in new congregations during this five year period was not due to branches maturing into wards considering the number of wards in El Salvador increased by one from ninety-six to ninety-seven. Active membership in El Salvador is likely no higher than 30,000.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Spanish, Kekchí.

All LDS scriptures are available in Spanish and Kekchí. The Church has translated nearly all of its materials into Spanish. The Spanish LDS version of the Bible was introduced in the fall of 2009. Kekchí has limited priesthood, missionary, and Sunday School resources.

Health and Safety

El Salvador's high homicide rate may have contributed to the calling of fewer North American missionaries to serve in the country. Missionaries may have limitations in times and places for proselytism where threats of violence may be highest.

Humanitarian and Development Work

El Salvador has received humanitarian work from the Church from time to time. The Church provided aid and service to the country when a powerful earthquake occurred in 2001, contributing over 1.1 million pounds of relief supplies²⁰⁶. The Church has provided many disabled Salvadorans greater mobility through wheelchair donations²⁰⁷. In 2005 severe flooding by Hurricane Stan resulted in the Church using some meetinghouses as evacuation centers. At the time several meetinghouses were also damaged from flooding²⁰⁸.

²⁰⁶ Johnston, Jerry; Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Members rebuilding lives, homes," LDS Church News, 24 February 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39388/Members-rebuilding-lives-homes.html>

²⁰⁷ "Wheelchairs given to Central American nations," LDS Church News, 27 October 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40788/Wheelchairs-given-to-Central-American-nations.html>

²⁰⁸ Swensen, Jason. "Latin America victimized by hurricane," LDS Church News, 15 October 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48014/Latin-America-victimized-by-hurricane.html>

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church has taken advantage of the freedom of religion in proselytism. There are no restrictions that impede missionary work.

Cultural Issues

Most have a Christian background due to the Catholic Church's influence on society. This has allowed for greater receptivity of the Church's teachings. The rise of Protestantism has possibly hid much of the Church's presence from most Salvadorans because the LDS Church grew rapidly at the same time as other Christian denominations. Weekly Church attendance and holding a Church calling appear against cultural norms for worship, which has contributed to high activity and low retention.

National Outreach

Due to El Salvador's small geographic size and high population density, the Church has established itself in most of the country, creating congregations accessible to nearly the entire population. This has allowed the Church tremendous opportunity to preach the Gospel to most.

Every department of El Salvador has at least one congregation. The largest city without a reported congregation was Olocuitla, located southeast of San Salvador, with 15,900 inhabitants in 2007. Most small cities and towns have branches established, some with only 10,000 people. Among rural communities in the country, the Church appears to have most successfully established itself in western El Salvador. The Juayua El Salvador Stake, the last stake to be created from a district, was based in Juayua, a city of less than 14,000 people. Rural areas that appear to have the Church the least established are to the south and east of San Salvador, considering four of the six towns with over 10,000 inhabitants without a Church presence were in this area. These rural areas that lack a Church presence are part of the El Salvador San Salvador West Mission. Many areas in eastern El Salvador in the departments near San Miguel also lack a Church presence in many rural communities. The Church has the opportunity to open these rural areas to missionary work, which will likely occur as already baptized members move to these locations and desire to establish the Church.

The Church has a greater challenge in establishing itself in greater numbers in eastern El Salvador than in central or western El Salvador. The four easternmost provinces of La Union, Morazan, San Miguel, and Usulután had a combined population of about 1.5 million in 2007, or 25% of El Salvador's population, yet the Church only had one stake, one district, and a couple mission branches in this area. The sole stake in eastern El Salvador, the San Miguel El Salvador Stake, was organized in 1981 and was the sixth stake in the country. Even though San Miguel is the third largest city in El Salvador after the San Salvador metropolitan area and Santa Ana, growth has been so slow that no additional stakes have been created since. If the ratio of stakes and districts in eastern El Salvador were the same in the rest of the country, we would expect no more than four stakes, four districts, and a half dozen or so mission branches for all of El Salvador. If the ratio of stakes to the population were the same in eastern El Salvador as it was in the rest of the country, an additional four stakes would exist in eastern El Salvador. It is unclear why the Church has not grown as rapidly in eastern El Salvador, but it may be due to the civil war, distance from the capital or greater success in other areas drawing away more mission resources such as missionaries and visits from members of the mission presidency.

The Church is most firmly established in western El Salvador, where eight stakes and a couple mission branches may be found in the departments of Ahuachapán, Santa Ana and Sonsonate that have a combined population of 1.5 million. The population of these three departments is equal to that of the four departments of

easternmost El Salvador. If the ratio of stakes to the population were the same in all of El Salvador as it was in these three westernmost departments, there would be thirty-two stakes in El Salvador. The strength of the Church in western El Salvador is manifest with the recent creation of the Paraiso El Salvador Stake in 2009 in Santa Ana. Greater growth in congregations has been experienced in western El Salvador than central or eastern El Salvador since 2000, likely the result of the stronger local leadership and membership integrating new converts into the Church.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Difficulties in retaining converts and creating new congregations appear as the greatest challenge the Church faces in El Salvador. The Church may be the most established out of all of Central America in El Salvador in terms of its presence in most rural and urban areas. Inactivity and retention problems worsened as a result of so many converts joining the Church in so short a period of time, combined with inadequate teaching of Gospel principles before and after baptism. The first five years after 2000 were likely spent in teaching and strengthening active and inactive members, considering membership growth rates were some of the lowest in the Western Hemisphere and no new congregations were created. It does not appear that the lower growth rates in the first half of the 2000s was due to El Salvadorans taking less interest in the Gospel but rather a shift in focus from finding and baptizing to retaining and reactivation. The recent increase in membership is a welcome sight after years of membership growth rates below 2%. However increased congregational growth has not increased in tandem with the recent increase in membership growth, perhaps indicating continuing issues with convert retention. Inactivity problems likely contributed to the delayed announcement for a temple in El Salvador until after there were 100,000 members.

The CIA *World Factbook* estimate for Mormons in El Salvador was reported at only 0.7% of the population, even though numerically Church members made up almost 1.41% of the population when the estimate was given in 2003. This discrepancy points to retention problems during the periods of most rapid membership growth.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The homogeneity of El Salvador's population has limited ethnic issues. Challenges may occur between whites and Mestizos based on socioeconomic class. The native peoples of El Salvador have seen little attention from the Church, likely due to their remote locations.

Language Issues

Besides English, no other language has as great a supply of Church materials as Spanish. The Church is highly unlikely to translate any Church materials in any of the local, Amerindian languages of El Salvador due to most of these languages being nearly extinct or having very few speakers

Leadership

Despite problems with member activity and convert retention, El Salvador has provided the Church with many leaders and missionaries. Fewer North American missionaries serve in El Salvador due to the self-sufficiency of the Salvadoran missionary force. Rapid growth in membership between the mid-1980s and 2000 resulted in the number of stakes increasing from six to sixteen. The strength of local leadership and priesthood holders is apparent due to stakes covering most of the country. This is partially due to the country's small geographic size but it is still impressive, considering neighboring Guatemala and Honduras have many more districts that are not strong enough to become stakes. El Salvador may prove to be a greater contributor to the

growth of the Church in Central America, considering membership is maturing in the Gospel and is ready to accommodate further, more rapid growth.

Several members from El Salvador have served in leadership positions for the Church outside of El Salvador. Area Authority Seventies have been called from among Salvadoran membership, such as Elder Carlos Rivas in 2006. In 2008 the newly sustained first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency was Sister Silvia Allred, a native to El Salvador. In recent years the Church has maintained positive relations with the Salvadoran government, evidenced by a meeting between the President of the Central American Area and the President of El Salvador in 2006.²⁰⁹

The Church appears stronger in urban areas than in rural areas, considering missionaries serving in isolated mission branches report that sometimes they serve as counselors to their branch presidents in 2009. This indicates that some branches in El Salvador struggle with filling priesthood holder positions with local membership for congregations to function.

Temple

El Salvador is assigned to the San Salvador El Salvador Temple district. In the early and mid-2000s El Salvador became the country with the second highest Church membership without a temple. Neighboring Honduras had its first temple announced for Tegucigalpa in 2006, leaving El Salvador as the country with the most members without a temple until the San Salvador El Salvador Temple was announced in November 2007. Groundbreaking for the temple was held in September 2008. In 2012, the temple appeared well utilized by local members as evidenced by eight endowment sessions scheduled Tuesdays through Saturdays. Due to El Salvador's small geographic size, low member activity rates, and the centrality of the new temple's location, it is unlikely that any additional temples will be built for the foreseeable future.

Comparative Growth

No other country in Latin America has had the Gospel carried to so many of its inhabitants, with the possible exception of Chile and Uruguay. Although some neighboring Central American countries have a higher percentage of members of the Church than El Salvador, these nations contain large, sparsely populated areas in which there are no congregations or official Church presence.

Christian churches with strong missionary and church building programs have a presence in El Salvador and experience rapid growth. The recent rise of Protestantism in El Salvador is additional evidence to the receptivity of Salvadorans to Christianity, climbing from less than 5% in the 1950s to over a quarter of the population.

Future Prospects

A seasoned Salvadoran membership in the Gospel appears ready to accommodate additional converts in greater numbers. Membership growth has begun to accelerate, possibly leading El Salvador into another period of rapid Church growth that would be better able to increase covert retention and member activity.

Additional districts in El Salvador may be created due to several clustered groups of mission branches distant from existing stakes or districts. A district may be organized from several mission branches in the Chalatenango area. A district may also be created to the north of San Miguel from two branches in the area if an additional

²⁰⁹ Rivas, Carlos. "Salvadoran president meets with Church delegation," LDS Church News, 4 March 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48598/Salvadoran-president-meets-with-Church-delegation.html>

branch or two are organized and active, worthy priesthood holders exist in large enough numbers to support a district presidency in addition to branch and elder's quorum presidencies.

Missionary reports on the strength of the two districts in San Vicente and Usulután are limited. It is unclear whether these two districts are close to becoming stakes. Both districts consist of only a couple branches in the cities in which the districts are headquartered and several branches in neighboring cities and towns. The limiting factor for these districts in becoming stakes likely stems from high inactivity, few branches in each district, and the large geographic area these two districts cover in central El Salvador. These areas also have smaller populations than other areas in El Salvador. Some stakes in the San Salvador and Santa Ana areas appeared close to dividing in 2012.

FRENCH GUIANA

Geography

AREA: 83,534 square km. French Guiana is located in northern South America and borders the Atlantic Ocean, Brazil, and Suriname. Hot, tropical weather occurs year round with little variation in seasonal temperature. Wet winters and dry summers characterize the climate. Most the terrain consists of coastal plains with some hills and small mountains in the interior. Sparsely populated dense rainforest covers the interior, making it nearly inaccessible. Thunderstorms and flooding are natural hazards. French Guiana is administratively divided into two arrondissements that are divided further into twenty-two communes.

Peoples

Black/mulatto: 66%

White: 12%

East Indian/Chinese/Amerindian: 12%

Other: 10%

Blacks are descendants of slaves brought to French Guiana or the Caribbean, some of which mixed with Amerindians giving rise to the mulatto ethnic group. Many blacks are Haitians. Whites are primarily French or other European. Other ethnic groups include Hmong, Laotians, Indians, Lebanese, Latin Americans, and individuals from other Caribbean nations. Approximately half the population was born in French Guiana.

Population: 221,500 (2008)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.96% (2006)

Fertility Rate: 3.21 children born per woman (2000)

Life Expectancy: male 72.77, female 79.6 (2000)

Languages: Guianese Creole French (77%), other (23%). French is the official language, widely spoken and used for business. Other languages include Amerindian dialects and immigrant languages such as Spanish, Arabic, Hmong, Haitian Creole, English Creole, and Chinese dialects.

Literacy: 83% (1982)

History

Prior to French settlement, French Guiana was inhabited by Amerindian groups. The French arrived in the sixteenth century but failed to establish any large colonies, as many of the settlers died. Some plantations were established, but many closed due to the abolition of slavery in 1848. Devil's Island served as a penal settlement for nearly one hundred years starting in the mid-nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, France relocated refugees from French Indochina to French Guiana. French Guiana has been an overseas department of France since 1946. There has been little support for an independence movement in recent years.

Culture

French customs and culture heavily influence French Guiana. However the small population is accommodating

to the many minority groups including Vietnamese, Hmong, Chinese, and Amerindians. There is a major divide in education, living conditions, and everyday life between coastal urban areas and the rural interior.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$17,300 (2006) [39.5% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.862

Corruption Index: N/A

The French Guiana economy relies heavily on France for sustenance and support. The French Space Center is located in French Guiana and provides additional economic support to the overseas department. Primary economic activities include logging and fishing. Services employed 61% of the workforce in 1980. Primary trade partners include France (with which over 60% of goods are exchanged), the United States, and other European nations.

Faiths

Christian: 80%

Other: 20%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 166,125

Seventh Day Adventists 2,245 11

Jehovah's Witnesses 2,122 34

Latter-day Saints 362 1

Religion

Most French Guiana natives and immigrants are Catholic. Many Christian groups have a presence in the urban areas, although no Protestant denomination claims more than 10,000 members. Most Christian groups report slow growth. European connections with the space industry have increased secularism. Most non-Christians are irreligious. There are small groups of Muslims, Baha'is, and other non-Christian religious groups.

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is generally upheld by the government. Discrimination towards some small, socially unaccepted religious groups regarded as cults occurs.²¹⁰

Largest Cities

Urban: 76%

Cayenne, **Saint-Laurent-du Maroni**, Kourou, Matoury, **Remire-Montjoly**.

Cities in **bold** do not have congregations.

Three of the five largest cities have a congregation. Fifty-five percent (55%) of the population lives in the five largest cities. About 100,000 or 45% of the total population live in Cayenne and surrounding communities.

²¹⁰ "France," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127310.htm>

LDS History

A native of French Guiana named Charles Fortin joined the Church in France and returned to French Guiana in 1980. Fortin held Sunday meetings in his home and invited others to Church meetings. Fortin died in 1986, but by this time several members were attending meetings. In March 1988, Elder Charles Didier visited and organized a group, and the first convert baptism took place in November. In 1989, two branches were organized in Kourou and Cayenne. Senior missionary couples were first assigned in 1989 to both congregations. The West Indies Mission administered French Guiana prior to the creation of the Trinidad and Tobago Mission in 1991. French Guiana returned to the West Indies Mission following the consolidation of both missions in 1994. French Guiana was assigned to the North America Southeast Area until it was transferred to the Caribbean Area in 2006.²¹¹

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 362 (2012)

In 1990, there were fewer than one hundred members.²¹² By 2000, membership increased to 250. Between 2000 and 2006 the number of members remained static and numbered 248 in 2006. In 2007 and 2008, greater membership growth occurred, increasing to 287 and 306. Although many members are natives, there are many Spanish-speaking members in Cayenne from Colombia, Venezuela, and Peru.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 1 (2012)

The Cayenne and Kourou Branches began operating in the late 1980s. A third branch was organized in Matoury when the first district in French Guiana was created in March 2009. In early 2011, the Cayenne French Guiana District and the Kourou Branch were discontinued. It is unclear whether members in the Kourou area continue to meet as a group or dependent branch. Later that year, the Matoury Branch closed.

Activity and Retention

In 1990, 45 members attended a fireside held prior to the dedication of French Guiana for missionary work.²¹³ In early 2010, the Matoury Branch had twenty to thirty attending meetings and the Kourou Branch had comparable sacrament attendance. The Cayenne Branch had fifty to seventy attending Church meetings. Twenty-six were enrolled in seminary or institute in the 2009–2010 school year. Active membership is likely around 120, or 35%–40% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: French, English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Arabic, Chinese, Hmong, and Vietnamese.

All LDS scriptures are translated in French, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Arabic, Chinese, and Vietnamese. An LDS version of the Bible is available in Spanish. Only the Book of Mormon is translated in Hmong. Most Church materials are available in French whereas some priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, young women,

²¹¹ "Southeast area divided; Caribbean Area created," LDS Church News, 10 June 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49062/Southeast-area-divided-Caribbean-Area-created.html>

²¹² "Six new missions to be created missions are added in Europe, Africa, Caribbean, and U.S.," LDS Church News, 23 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20711/Six-new-missions-to-be-created-missions-are-added-in-Europe-Africa-Caribbean-and-U.S.html>

²¹³ "Services in 3 South American nations and island republic," LDS Church News, 10 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20438/Services-in-3-South-American-nations-and-island-republic.html>

missionary, audio/visual, and family history materials are available in Chinese, Hmong, and Vietnamese. Most of these materials are available in Arabic and Haitian Creole.

Meetinghouses

The Cayenne Branch meets in a Church-built meetinghouse. The Matoury Branch met in the Cayenne chapel until early 2010 when meetings began to be held in the home of a newly called branch president in the community of Matoury. The Kourou Branch meets in a renovated or rented building.

Health and Safety

Malaria is endemic to French Guiana outside of Cayenne. Dengue, filariasis, and other tropical diseases also occur. An HIV/AIDS epidemic spread in the 2000s and is the highest among overseas departments of France.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church has performed little humanitarian and development work. Service projects appear limited to full-time missionaries' weekly service hours and branch service projects.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

No laws limit the LDS missionary program. The Church has sent missionaries to French Guiana with few or no challenges.

Cultural Issues

Urban areas contain the majority of the population yet have increased secularism and greater wealth that have posed challenges to proselytism. French Guiana's status as an overseas department allows many to immigrate to France in search of better employment and living conditions.

National Outreach

French Guiana's remote location and small population has reduced mission leadership visits and likely prevents the assignment of additional missionaries. The West Indies Mission serves a population of approximately four million in the southern Caribbean and the Guianas, of which French Guiana's population accounts for only 5.5%. Future outreach in terms of the frequency of missionary visits, the number of missionaries assigned, and the assignment of a senior missionary couple must be allocated with the demands throughout the West Indies Mission, as the mission administers to many small, island nations with burgeoning congregations. It is unclear whether the closure of branches in Kourou and Matoury in 2011 have resulted in a total cessation of missionary activity in these locations.

The highly urbanized population along coastal areas provides opportunity for national outreach among most inhabitants with few outreach centers. Established congregations provide outreach in the communities of 49% of the national population (including Kourou). Remire-Montjoly, a commune on the outskirts of Cayenne, has 19,000 inhabitants (8.6% of the national population) and is only five miles from congregations in Cayenne and Matoury, which likely allows for some additional limited outreach. Remire-Montjoly and other large communes on the outskirts of Cayenne appear likely locations for expanding mission outreach.

Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni appears the most promising location for future national outreach that is distant from established Church centers. The commune has the second largest population with 34,000 inhabitants (15.3% of the national population). Eleven of the twenty-two communes are in remote areas in the interior or are distant from larger cities. These eleven communes account for only 12% of the population but 77.5% of the geographic area. These locations will be very challenging to reach due to their small populations distributed over a large amount of terrain that is difficult to access.

Small groups or cottage meetings held in remote communities may facilitate greater national outreach as they require few resources and can result in strengthened local members, investigator finding, and teaching potential converts for baptism. It does not appear that there is an emphasis on cottage meetings in French Guiana, but some worship services have been or are currently held in members' homes when there is no nearby chapel for a small group of members.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Member inactivity is a serious problem that limits the Church's future growth in French Guiana. Congregations in Matoury and Kourou had few active members resulting in fewer fellowshipping resources for potential converts and their recent closure. Member activity and convert retention is partially influenced by geographical distance as some members cannot attend meetings regularly. The number of active members is insufficient to operate a district as evidenced by the creation of the first district in 2009 and its closure two years later. In the past, immigration to France has slowed membership growth and has likely reduced active membership.²¹⁴

Convert retention appears to have been poorest in the 1990s, as membership grew from fewer than one hundred members to 250 members, yet there was no increase in congregations. Retention appears highest in Cayenne, where many members can fellowship with other members of their same ethnic group.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

French Guiana has ethnic integration issues primarily caused by language barriers. There does not appear to be much friction between ethnic groups based on other issues. Haitians, Latinos, and French Guiana natives have shown desires to work together to resolve issues stemming from cultural differences. There appears to be little outreach among the Asians and Amerindians likely due to their limited numbers, differences in language, and distance of these communities from current outreach centers.

Language Issues

Misunderstandings and challenges with members speaking different languages create barriers between language groups. In Cayenne, French and Spanish-speaking members have experienced difficulties integrating into the same congregation, and sometimes do not attend meetings or leave worship services early when talks are primarily in a language they cannot understand. In early 2010, the Cayenne Branch received a new branch president who only spoke Spanish. This decision was likely partially influenced by the greater receptivity of Spanish speakers in Cayenne and the willingness of Spanish speakers in participating in member-missionary work. Many members have shown a willingness to make accommodations for other language groups but face many frustrations due to language barriers. Many of the Asian languages spoken have a large number of Church materials that can be utilized for future outreach. Unreached Amerindian groups do not have Church materials in their native languages.

²¹⁴ "French Guiana," Country Profiles, retrieved 10 April 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/french-guiana>

Missionary Service

In June 2009, six missionaries served in French Guiana and were assigned to the Suriname zone of the West Indies Mission. Very few members from French Guiana have served missions.

Leadership

In 2010, local members led branches in Cayenne and Matoury. In April 2010, the Kourou Branch had an acting branch leader, indicating that the branch presidency was in transition. The closure of the branch was likely due to a lack of local leadership. The creation of the first district and its closure less than two years later indicates that there are some capable and qualified leaders, but they remain too limited in numbers or are too inconsistent to sufficiently staff a district. Leadership potential is highest in the Cayenne Branch but severely limited in other branches. Emigration has likely contributed to local leadership challenges.

Temple

French Guiana pertains to the Caracas Venezuela Temple district. Many members likely travel to the Santo Domingo Dominican Republic temple instead due to challenges in entering Venezuela. Temple trips likely occur once or twice a year with very few members due to constraints on distance, time, and money. A closer temple is unlikely to be built in the near future as membership is small and young throughout the Guianas and southern Caribbean.

Comparative Growth

French Guiana has experienced slower LDS growth than Guyana and Suriname. In the 2000s, only a few other Caribbean nations such as Antigua and Barbuda and Grenada experienced such small increases in membership. French Guiana ranks among nations in the region with the smallest percentages of LDS members. The number of full-time missionaries assigned to French Guiana is comparable to many small Caribbean nations.

Christians have struggled to address the unique challenges of French Guiana's emigration of natives, ethnic diversity, secularism, small population, and unreached Amerindian groups. Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses have seen slow, consistent growth over the past decade. Adventist membership grew by nearly 1,000, and congregations increased by four; however, membership growth rates have generally slowed from year to year. Jehovah's Witnesses have experienced slow, consistent growth.

Future Prospects

The outlook for future growth is mixed, as mission leadership has been dynamic toward meeting the needs of receptive language groups in French Guiana, but local leadership sustainability and member activity issues frustrate growth. The creation of language-specific congregations in Cayenne providing church services in French, Haitian Creole, and Spanish may help address these issues. Immigration of French Guiana natives to France threatens growth among the largest ethnic group. However, the growing diversity of the population will allow for unique opportunities and challenges for proselytism. Long-term sustained church growth will largely depend on outreach efforts among various ethnic groups, the retention of converts, local leadership development, and local member involvement in missionary work.

GRENADA

Geography

AREA: 344 square km. A small Caribbean island nation north of Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada consists of the main island of Grenada and several small islands part of the Grenadines. Administration of the Grenadines is shared between Grenada and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Volcanic mountains dominate the interior of Grenada, and tropical weather occurs year round. Hurricanes are natural hazards. Grenada is administratively divided into six parishes and one dependency.

Peoples

Black: 82%

Mixed black and European: 13%

European and East Indian: 5%

Population: 109,011 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.538% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.15 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 70.76 male, 76.09 female (2012)

Languages: Grenadian Creole English (88%), East Indian languages (3%), Grenadian Creole French (2%), standard English (1%), other (6%). English is the official language. Grenadian Creole English shares many characteristics with English creoles spoken in Barbados and Trinidad whereas Grenadian Creole French is similar to Saint Lucian Creole French.

Literacy: 96% (2003)

History

Carib Amerindians drove most Arawaks from Grenada prior to the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1498. Caribs warded off any European colonization of the island for a century after its discovery. The English sold Grenada to a French company in 1650. The French established a small presence on the island and defeated the Caribs shortly thereafter. The English retook the island in 1762 and formally annexed Grenada in 1763. The English began cultivating nutmeg and cocoa after recurrent challenges growing sugarcane due to natural disasters, which brought Grenada to greater prominence in trade. Between 1833 and 1958, Grenada became part of the British Windward Islands Administration followed by the Federation of the West Indies until 1962. The British granted full autonomy in 1967 and independence in 1974. Between 1974 and 1979, Sir Eric Gairy held the office of prime minister until a coup brought a Marxist-Leninist government to power. The communist government fell into chaos in 1983, resulting in military invasion by the United States and other Caribbean nations to restore order. Political order has been reestablished for several decades. Hurricane Ivan devastated the island and the economy in 2004, killing thirty-seven, leaving between 8,000 and 10,000 homeless, and destroying or damaging 90% of the buildings on the island. The economy has recovered but continues to suffer from debt generated from the rebuilding process.²¹⁵

²¹⁵ "Background Note: Grenada," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 8 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2335.htm>

Culture

African, French, British, and Indian cultures have influenced contemporary Grenadian culture. Blacks, Europeans, and East Indians have traditionally segregated themselves, but intermarriage has increased in recent years.²¹⁶ Christianity is a dominant social influence. Common cuisine includes fruit, coconuts, dumplings, soups, fish, pork, and curry. Many common Caribbean music genres appear in Grenada, such as reggae and Zouk. Alcohol consumption rates compare to the world average.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$13,300 (2011) [27.7% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.748

Corruption Index: N/A

Hurricanes Ivan and Emily in the mid-2000s crippled the economy, which relied heavily on nutmeg and cocoa crops for stability and revenue. Some diversification of the economy has occurred in recent years, such as in construction, manufacturing, tourism, and financial sectors. The worldwide recession in the late 2000s has halted economic growth due to fewer tourists and lower remittances. Poverty remains a serious issue as a third of the population lives below the poverty line. Timber, fruit, and deepwater harbors are natural resources. Services employ 62% of the workforce and generate 77% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 14% of the workforce and generates 18% of the GDP. Primary industries include food products, textiles, assembly, tourism, and construction. Agriculture accounts for 24% of the workforce and generates 5% of the GDP. Major crops include bananas, cocoa, nutmeg, mace, avocados, sugarcane, and corn. Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, Saint Lucia, and Antigua and Barbuda are primary trade partners.

Corruption appears less prevalent in Grenada than in many other developing Caribbean nations. Concerns over corruption in government resulted in the passing of the Integrity in Public Life Act in 2007, which requires an Integrity Commission to review reported income and assets of government employees. Bribery is illegal, and corruption allegations are taken seriously. Grassroots organizations help monitor and report corruption.²¹⁷

Faiths

Christian: 95%

Other: 1%

Nonbelievers: 4%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 47,440

Anglican 12,938

Seventh Day Adventists 12,943 46

Pentecostal 11,860

Jehovah's Witnesses 590 9

Latter-day Saints 305 1

²¹⁶ "Grenada," Countries and Their Cultures, retrieved 11 November 2010. <http://www.everyculture.com/Ge-It/Grenada.html>

²¹⁷ "2010 Investment Climate Statement—Grenada," Bureau of Economic, Energy, and Business Affairs, March 2010. <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/othr/ics/2010/138074.htm>

Religion

Grenada has a homogenous Christian population. The largest denominations include Catholics (44%), Anglicans (12%), Pentecostals (11%), and Seventh Day Adventists (11%). Denominations that account for over 2% of the population include Methodists, Presbyterians, the Church of God, Baptists, and Evangelicals. Non-Christian religious groups include Baha'is, Hindus, and Muslims. Church attendance is high, as over 60% of Grenadians regularly attend formal religious services.²¹⁸

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. There is no state religion, and the government recognizes most major Christian holidays. To receive tax exemption status, a religious group must register with the Prime Minister's Office, which also provides licenses for buildings and events. There have been no reports of societal abuses of religious freedom.²¹⁹

Largest Cities

Urban: 31%

Saint George's, **Gouyave**, **Grenville**, **Victoria**, **Saint David's**

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

One of the five largest settlements has an LDS congregation. Sixteen percent (16%) of the national population resides in the five largest settlements. Over 90% of the national population resides on the island of Grenada.

LDS History

A few Latter-day Saints resided on Grenada prior to 1985, some of whom attended medical school on the island. The West Indies Mission placed two full-time missionaries in May 1985 in Grenada and established the St. George's branch in the following September.²²⁰ Church growth slowed in 1987 as a result of antagonism propagated by the local media, which resulted in senior missionaries being brought to court to testify about LDS beliefs. Missionaries were removed from Grenada that year and did not permanently return until 1990 when six-month visas were granted to the Church. In 2001, the Church dedicated its first chapel in St. George's.²²¹ Seminary and institute began in the mid-1990s. Some Grenadian members traveled to Trinidad and Tobago to attend a meeting with President Hinckley in 2002.²²² The West Indies Mission continues to administer Grenada. As a result of strong active membership and leadership growth in the late 2000s, mission and local church leaders in early 2010 were beginning to explore prospects of beginning a second congregation and mission outreach outside St George's.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 305 (2012)

During the mid-1990s there were approximately one hundred members. Latter-day Saints totaled 116 by

²¹⁸ "Grenada," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127391.htm>

²¹⁹ "Grenada," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127391.htm>

²²⁰ "Grenada," Country Profile, retrieved 11 November 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/grenada>

²²¹ "Grenada," Deseret News 2010 Church News Almanac, p. 494.

²²² "Visit to West Indies because 'We love you,'" LDS Church News, 1 June 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41901/Visit-to-West-Indies-because-We-love-you.html>

year-end 2000, increasing to 157 by 2002. Slow to stagnant LDS membership growth occurred thereafter as membership reached 173 in 2005 and 176 in 2007. Membership declines occurred in 2003 and 2006. In 2009, one in 564 was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 0 Branches: 1 (2012)

The St. George's Branch is the sole LDS congregation in Grenada. The branch is a mission branch of the West Indies Mission.

Activity and Retention

In 2010, three students were enrolled in institute.²²³ During 2009, church attendance in the St. George's Branch increased from forty to eighty. National active membership is estimated at eighty, or 40% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English.

All LDS scriptures and materials are available in English.

Meetinghouses

The St George's Branch meets in a church-built meetinghouse.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The LDS Church has completed at least two humanitarian projects in Grenada. Medical supplies, hygiene kits, newborn kits, clothing, and powdered milk have been donated.²²⁴ The Church sent sixteen pallets of hygiene kits and medical supplies to Grenada in 2004 following Hurricane Ivan.²²⁵

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Latter-day Saints face no government or societal restrictions regarding assembly, missionary activity, or worship. Foreign full-time missionaries serve on the island.

Cultural Issues

High rates of church attendance and religious interest create opportunities and challenges for Latter-day Saints, as most have a Christian background and have developed regular religious habits, but many are socially entrenched in their current churches. Competition between various denominations for converts can create a difficult environment for full-time LDS missionaries to find, baptize, and retain new converts.

²²³ "Grenada," Institute of Religion Locator, retrieved 11 November 2010. <http://lds.org/institutes/locate/0,10049,1397-1-36-0-134,00.html>

²²⁴ "Projects—Grenada," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 11 November 2010. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-111,00.html>

²²⁵ Swensen, Jason. "Hurricane Ivan batters Gulf Coast," LDS Church News, 18 September 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46151/Hurricane-Ivan-batters-Gulf-Coast.html>

National Outreach

Thirty-six percent (36%) of the national population resides in St. George Parish, the only parish with an LDS congregation. LDS mission outreach does not appear to occur regularly outside of St. George Parish.

The majority of the inland's inhabitants reside in small communities and rural areas outside the capital in unreached parishes that have never had full-time LDS missionaries assigned. The small geographic size of Grenada and its population over slightly over 100,000 require few LDS mission outreach centers to accomplish outreach among nearly the entire island population. A mission outreach center in each of the six parishes would provide outreach to virtually the entire population on Grenada. The most populated lesser-reached or unreached parishes appear most suitable for future expansion of national outreach in the foreseeable future and include parishes in St. Andrew and St. David. The creation of groups or dependent branches around a small nucleus of active members in these areas may help establish permanent branches over time.

The Church has no country-specific Internet site for Grenada but has abundant English language LDS materials online. A website tailored to the cultural conditions and circumstances of Grenada may assist in national outreach expansion and finding.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Grenada has historically experienced low member activity rates. Reactivation efforts by full-time missionaries and local members doubled member activity rates from 20% to 40% in 2009. Local members appear to be highly involved in member-missionary activity and reactivation work, working together with full-time missionaries.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The lack of ethnic diversity has resulted in few, if any, ethnic integration issues at church. LDS membership appears to reflect Grenadian population demographics.

Language Issues

Local members utilize materials in standard English. There are no LDS materials in Grenadian Creole English. Prospects for future translations in this and other Caribbean English creoles appear unlikely due to few speakers and the use of standard English in official settings.

Missionary Service

Few if any, Grenadian members have served full-time missions. Emphasizing seminary and institute attendance may help increase the number of local members who serve full-time missions. In 2009, two young, full-time missionaries and a senior missionary couple were assigned to the island. Few missionaries are needed to maintain current national outreach due to the small size of the national population and the operation of only one LDS congregation. Another missionary companionship may be assigned if the Church organizes additional congregations outside of St George's.

Leadership

Local leadership has matured in recent years, as in 2009, all three members of the branch presidency were local members. Local priesthood leadership would likely face challenges staffing callings for a second branch due to their limited numbers.

Temple

Grenada belongs to the Orlando Florida Temple district. Temple trips for the branch are not organized regularly, and most members attend the temple on an individual basis. Prospects for a temple closer to Grenada are unlikely due to few Latter-day Saints in the region.

Comparative Growth

Grenada is among Caribbean territories with the fewest Latter-day Saints, as only Martinique, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Dominica have fewer than 200 LDS members. Grenada, Martinique, and Saint Kitts and Nevis have all experienced similar membership growth trends during the 2000s. Some of the most rapid active membership growth in the Caribbean occurred in Grenada in the late 2000s. In 2010, Grenada had one of the highest member activity rates in the region. The percentage of Latter-day Saints in the population is lower than most Caribbean nations.

Several Christian groups have experienced rapid, sustained church growth over the past several decades. Pentecostals and Seventh Day Adventists are among the most successful. Seventh Day Adventists experienced robust church growth between 1998 and 2008, as membership increased by 50% and congregations grew from twenty-nine to forty-four. Adventists generally baptize approximately 500 new converts a year, more than five times the number of active Latter-day Saints in Grenada. Jehovah's Witnesses gain few new converts annually.

Future Prospects

The staffing of the entire St George's Branch presidency by local priesthood holders and recent growth in active membership are welcome developments in Grenada, which in the past has experienced low member activity and inadequate numbers of active members to fill leadership positions. Sustained growth will be most clearly measured by the creation of additional congregations in the coming years as active membership grows too large to be administered by one congregation. Youth regularly preparing and serving full-time missions and remaining in Grenada will add greater stability and promote long-term growth.

GUADELOUPE

Geography

AREA: 1,628 square km. Located in the Lesser Antilles of the Caribbean, Guadeloupe is an overseas region of France between Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica that borders the Caribbean Sea and North Atlantic Ocean. In addition to the main island of Guadeloupe, Marie-Galante, La Desirade, and Les Saintes are also part of the Guadeloupe Region. Guadeloupe Island consists of two islands connected by a narrow isthmus. Rugged mountainous terrain occupies the western half (Basse-Terre), whereas low-lying terrain occupies the eastern half (Grande-Terre). Plains and hilly terrain cover the remaining small islands. Subtropical conditions occur year round with a rainy season from June to October. Hurricanes, flooding, and volcanoes are natural hazards. Environmental issues include deforestation and pollution. Guadeloupe is divided into two administrative arrondissements.

Peoples

Black/mulatto: 71%
East Indian: 15%
White: 9%
Lebanese/Syrian: 2%
Other: 3%

Over two-thirds of the population are descendants of African slaves brought to the islands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. East Indians arrived as indentured servants primarily in the nineteenth century. Most whites are from metropolitan France.

Population: 405,500 (January 2008)
Annual Growth Rate: 0.88% (2006)
Fertility Rate: 1.9 children born per woman (2006)
Life Expectancy: 75.91 male, 82.37 female (2006)

Languages: Guadeloupean Creole French [Martiniquan Creole French] (95%), Haitian Creole (2.5%), French (1.5%), other (1%). French is the official language and commonly spoken. Nearly the entire population speaks Guadeloupean Creole French.

Literacy: 90% (2006)

History

Carib Amerindians populated Guadeloupe prior to discovery of the island by Christopher Columbus in 1493. The French captured the island in the seventeenth century and began cultivating sugarcane. British forces annexed Guadeloupe multiple times in the eighteenth century, but France regained control through the Treaty of Paris in 1763. Political turmoil erupted following the French Revolution between monarchists desiring independence and republicans opting to remain part of the French Republic, resulting in civil disorder during the 1790s. Slave revolts occurred following the brief independence of Guadeloupe in the 1790s during which the upper class fled and sought British assistance in quashing the rebellion. Jurisdiction over Guadeloupe

passed to Sweden and Great Britain until French control was reestablished in 1814. Slavery ended in the early nineteenth century. A massive cholera outbreak killed nearly 10% of the population in the 1860s. Guadeloupe became an overseas department of France in 1946 and Guadeloupe also administered Saint-Barthelemy and Saint-Martin until 2007. In 2009, a massive strike among lower-paid workers lasted over a month as protesters successfully demanded higher wages. The strike adversely affected the island's important tourist industry.²²⁶

Culture

The Catholic Church and French culture are the dominant influences on society. Literature and music are proud cultural legacies in Guadeloupe, and several locals have gained international recognition for their accomplishments. Soccer is the most popular sport. Cuisine consists of indigenous, French, East Indian, and African dishes and includes fish, fruit, meat, curry, beans, and okra. East Indians often retain many elements of Hinduism and its accompanying beliefs and practices. Increasing wealth disparities have resulted in socio-economic class segregation and mounting tension between differing social classes.²²⁷

Economy

GDP per capita: \$33,300 (2010) [69.6% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.872

Corruption Index: 6.8 (note: above figures are for France)

European tourism drives the economy. There is some limited agricultural activity and light industry, including sugar, rum, bananas, and vegetable crops. Hurricanes pose a recurrent challenge for economic growth. Services account for two-thirds of the labor force and generate two-thirds of the GDP. Agriculture and industry account for the remaining one-third of the labor force and GDP. Metropolitan France is the primary trade partner. Corruption is perceived at lower levels than in most Caribbean islands.

Faiths

Christian: 93%

Hindu and African religions: 4%

Other: 3%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 348,730

Seventh Day Adventists 12,124 59 (includes Saint Barthelemy and Saint Martin)

Jehovah's Witnesses 8,475 136

Latter-day Saints 470 3

Religion

Eighty-six percent (86%) of the population is Catholic, whereas 5% is Protestant. The remainder of the population is primarily Hindu.

²²⁶ "Guadeloupe," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 19 February 2011. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guadeloupe>

²²⁷ "Guadeloupe," Countries and Their Cultures, retrieved 21 February 2011. <http://www.everyculture.com/Ge-It/Guadeloupe.html>

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which, in general, is upheld by the government. Separation of church and state occurred in 1905. Traditional Catholic holidays are recognized by the government. Religious organizations may register with the government as an association of worship or as a cultural association. Associations of worship may only organize religious activities, whereas cultural associations grant religious organizations the right to make profits, receive government subsidies, and are not tax-exempt. Foreign missionaries may serve in France but are required to obtain a long-duration visa if their home country is not exempted from French visa entry requirements. Religious education does not occur in public schools.²²⁸

Largest Cities

Urban: 95%

Les Abymes, **Baie-Mahault**, Le Gosier, **Sainte-Anne**, **Petit-Bourg**, **Le Moule**, **Sainte-Rose**, **Capesterre-Belle-Eau**, **Pointe-à-Pitre**, **Morne-à-l'Eau**.

Cities in **bold** do not have congregations.

Two of the ten most populous cities have an LDS congregation. Sixty-four percent (64%) of the population resides in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

The first known Latter-day Saints to reside on Guadeloupe arrived in the early 1980s. The Guadeloupe Branch was organized in 1982 but was discontinued a few months later as a result of the apostasy of a member of the Church. French-speaking missionaries serving in Europe were assigned in 1984 to Guadeloupe under the West Indies Mission. The Grande-Terre Branch was organized that same year.²²⁹ Seminary and institute began in 1993. The West Indies Mission continues to administer Guadeloupe.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 470 (2012)

There were fewer than one hundred Latter-day Saints in 1993. By 1997, there were one hundred members. Membership reached 193 by year-end 2000.

Membership growth rates fluctuated from stagnation to moderate rates of growth in the 2000s. There were 251 members in 2002, 259 in 2004, 304 in 2006, and 383 in 2008. Annual membership growth rates ranged from a high of 20% in 2001 to a low of -1.9% in 2003, but generally ranged from 7%–10% for most years. Membership generally increases by thirty to sixty annually. In 2009, one in 917 was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 0 Branches: 3 (2012)

One LDS congregation operated until the late 1990s. In 2000, there were two branches. The number of branches increased to three in 2002, five in 2005, and seven in 2008. Branches operating in 2008 and 2009 included the Abymes, Basse-Terre 1st, Basse-Terre 2nd, Capesterre, Gosier, Lamentin, and Moule Branches. In 2010, the number of branches declined to four as the Basse-Terre 2nd, Capesterre, and Moule Branches were discontinued. In 2011, the Gosier Branch was closed. Some discontinued branches may continue to meet as dependent branches or groups. The Basse-Terre Guadeloupe District was organized in 2002 and in

²²⁸ "France," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148934.htm>

²²⁹ "Guadeloupe," Country Profile, 8 October 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/country/guadeloupe>

early 2011 included the four branches on Guadeloupe and an additional two branches in Martinique and Sint Maarten.

Activity and Retention

The average number of members per congregation decreased from ninety-seven in 2000 to sixty-three in 2009. Thirty-six were enrolled in seminary and institute during the 2009–2010 school year. The Gosier Branch had approximately twenty-five active members in early 2011. Most branches appear to have fifty or fewer active members. Nationwide active membership is estimated at 200, or 45% of total church membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: French, Haitian Creole, English.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in French and Haitian Creole. The *Liahona* magazine has monthly issues in French and one or two issues a year in Haitian Creole.

Meetinghouses

The first church-built meetinghouse was completed in 1998²³⁰ and houses the Abymes Branch. Other congregations meet in rented facilities.

Humanitarian and Development Work

There have been no major humanitarian or development projects sponsored by the Church in Guadeloupe. Some services activities are carried out by local members and full-time missionaries.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Latter-day Saints benefit from full religious freedom to proselyte, worship, and assemble. Foreign full-time missionaries serve regularly on Guadeloupe.

Cultural Issues

Most have a Catholic background, and many have been receptive to missionary-minded denominations, such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists. Increasing wealth and secular influence from France threaten to decrease receptivity to Latter-day Saint mission outreach efforts in the coming years among the Catholic majority. Non-Catholic Christians are often entrenched and highly active in their churches, reducing their receptivity to the LDS Church.

National Outreach

In early 2011, 56% of the population resided in a city with an LDS congregation. Prior to the closure of branches in Capesterre and Moule, LDS congregations extended outreach to an additional 10% of the population. Full-time missionaries likely continue to visit Capesterre and Moule and also perform some limited outreach in additional cities, perhaps increasing the percentage of the population reached by Latter-day Saints to as high as 75%.

²³⁰ "Guadeloupe," Country Profile, 8 October 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/country/guadeloupe>

Notwithstanding that Guadeloupe's population surpasses all other islands in the Lesser Antilles with the exception of Trinidad, there has never been an LDS mission operating on the island. The West Indies Mission administered approximately 4.2 million people in the Guyanas and several islands in the Lesser Antilles in early 2011, resulting in low interaction with mission leadership and limited missionary resources dedicated to Guadeloupe. Despite these challenges, the number of missionaries assigned to Guadeloupe is commensurate with the size of the population and the current level of receptivity exhibited by the population, as Guadeloupe receives greater numbers of full-time missionaries than any other island in the Lesser Antilles with the exception of Trinidad. Expansion of mission outreach led by local members will be required to reduce the reliance on foreign full-time missionaries and to form additional self-sustaining congregations. The assignment of larger numbers of full-time missionaries to Guadeloupe may reduce local member involvement in missionary work, as receptivity has been modest, and the size of church membership remains small.

The LDS Church does not perform any Guadeloupe-directed Internet outreach, but a large number of French-language websites and church materials are available, including an online edition of the LDS scriptures in French. Reference to these resources by local members and full-time missionaries and the development of member-missionary Internet proselytism can facilitate greater national outreach.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Guadeloupe exhibited modest to moderate levels of convert retention during the 2000s as the number of congregations doubled, but several newly created congregations were discontinued by the close of the decade. A lack of active members and few priesthood leaders appear to be the primary reasons for the consolidation of three branches. In early 2011, the average number of members per congregation remained much lower than most nations at slightly over one hundred members per unit. Congregations with lower member activity rates are prone to consolidate with neighboring congregations due to few total members. Seminary and institute enrollment has experienced fluctuating numbers of students and experienced a slight increase in the late 2000s.

Full-time missionaries report that distance to Church meetinghouses has presented challenges for getting members and investigators to church. Relocating rented meetinghouse locations closer to areas with concentrated numbers of Latter-day Saints may improve member activity rates and reduce the dependence of some members on full-time missionaries and other members with cars for transportation to church.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Cultural and socioeconomic differences challenge efforts to proselyte and integrate nonblacks into predominantly black and mulatto LDS congregations. Ethnic integration issues appear most pronounced among East Indians, Lebanese, and Syrians as many have a non-Catholic or non-Christian background and occupy differing socioeconomic classes than blacks and mulattos. French-speaking minorities appear the most capable of successful integration with the black majority at church. LDS missionaries have not reported any major challenges integrating members from differing ethnic backgrounds into the same congregations, but this appears primarily due to the limited size of LDS membership.

Language Issues

Widespread use of French simplifies LDS missionary approaches. Nearly the entire population speaks French as a first or second language. The number of non-French speakers remains too small to merit specific language outreach with the limited missionary resources dedicated to the region. Guadeloupean French Creole is widely spoken on Guadeloupe and Martinique with a total of 850,000 speakers worldwide. The need for LDS materials translated into Guadeloupean French Creole is low due to fluency in standard French and the informal usage of French Creole.

Missionary Service

In mid-2009, there were fourteen elders and one senior couple assigned to Guadeloupe. Few local members have served full-time missions. Increasing the number of local members that serve missions will be essential toward increasing the number of active priesthood holders. Emphasis on missionary preparation through seminary and institute attendance may increase the number of youth that serve missions.

Leadership

The LDS Church in Guadeloupe benefits from a strong, albeit small, body of active priesthood holders capable of serving in leadership and administrative duties. Local leaders staffed the Basseterre Guadeloupe District and all four branches in early 2011; notwithstanding, there were fewer than 500 total members on the island. The closure of four branches in 2010 and 2011 may have resulted from these congregations relying on full-time missionaries to staff leadership positions. Only one Guadeloupe native has served in an international church leadership position. In 2009, Claude Remy Gamiette from Lamentin was called to preside over the West Indies Mission.²³¹ Limited interaction from mission leaders and a commensurate number of full-time missionaries assigned to Guadeloupe's mission needs appear to have increased self-sufficiency of local leadership over time.

Temple

Guadeloupe is assigned to the Orlando Florida Temple district. Temple trips likely occur occasionally as a district or in small groups. Distance to the temple and travel expenses limit temple attendance for most members. Prospects for a future temple closer to Guadeloupe appear unlikely in the medium term due to the small number of members in the region.

Comparative Growth

Notwithstanding Guadeloupe possessing one of the lowest percentages of Latter-day Saints in the general population among Caribbean islands, congregational growth rates outpaced most islands in the region during the 2000s. Guadeloupe has the fewest Latter-day Saints with as many congregations in the Caribbean and was the only Caribbean country in 2010 with fewer than 500 members and a district. Membership growth rates, member activity rates, and the percentage of members enrolled in seminary and institute are representative for the region, whereas convert retention rates and the size and maturity of local leadership has outpaced most the Caribbean.

Outreach-oriented Christians have experienced strong church growth on Guadeloupe for decades. Seventh Day Adventists report stagnant congregational growth but modest membership growth as approximately 200 to 400 converts are baptized annually, but Adventists rank among the largest non-Catholic groups. The percentage of active Jehovah's Witnesses in the population is among the highest worldwide at approximately 2%. Witnesses generally baptize over 200 new converts a year. Evangelicals also report widespread church growth. Unlike Latter-day Saints, these groups have relied on local members to head and staff proselytism efforts and began outreach in Guadeloupe often several decades before the LDS Church.

Future Prospects

Moderate levels of receptivity, commensurate congregational and membership growth during the 2000s, an adequately-sized missionary force to service the population, and developed local leadership in many areas

²³¹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 7 February 2009. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/56592/New-mission-presidents.html>

generate a favorable outlook for LDS Church growth. The late establishment of the Church on Guadeloupe resulted in Latter-day Saints missing the window of opportunity in which the population was most receptive to missionary outreach. The closure of four congregations in the early 2010s may indicate challenges maintaining the current extent of national outreach over the medium-term. Additional congregations may consolidate if local leadership development and current member activity rates are not sustained. Greater numbers of local members serving full-time missions, the establishment of additional congregations, and efficiently utilizing limited missionary resources will be necessary to continue church growth into the 2010s and maintain and increase current levels of self-sufficiency.

GUATEMALA

Geography

AREA: 108,889 square km. Stretching from the Pacific Ocean to the Caribbean Sea, Guatemala is located in Central America and borders Belize, Honduras, El Salvador, and Mexico. Tropical hot weather occurs year round, with cooler temperatures in the highlands of the Sierra Madre Mountains in the west. Mountainous terrain with rainforest and jungle covers most central and southern areas, with plains along the Pacific Coast and in the north. Several large lakes occupy central and northern areas, such as Lake Izabal. Natural hazards include volcanoes, earthquakes, and hurricanes. Deforestation, soil erosion, and water pollution are environmental issues. Guatemala is divided into 22 administrative departments.

Peoples

Mestizo and European: 59.4%

K'iche': 9.1%

Kaqchikel: 8.4%

Mam: 7.9%

Q'eqchi': 6.3%

Other Maya: 8.6%

Indigenous non-Maya: 0.2%

Other: 0.1%

Population: 14,099,032 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.948% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 3.18 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 69.29 male, 73.14 female (2012)

Europeans and Mestizo—those of mixed Amerindian and European ancestry—account for nearly 60% of the population and are concentrated in the larger cities. Maya peoples consist of most of the remaining 40% of Guatemalans who usually live in rural, mountainous areas. K'iche' and Mam reside in the western highlands, Kaqchikel populate areas just west of Guatemala City, and Q'eqchi' live in north central Guatemala.

Languages: Spanish (60%), Amerindian languages (40%). Spanish is the official language. Fifty-three native languages are spoken in Guatemala, including twenty-three officially recognized Amerindian languages. Languages with over one million speakers include Spanish (8.1 million) and K'iche' dialects (2.33 million). Other commonly spoken Amerindian languages include Kaqchikel (0.524 million), Mam (0.510 million), and Q'eqchi' (0.4 million).

Literacy: 69.1% (2002)

History

The Maya settled and founded several populous city states in Guatemala and nearby countries before 1000 AD. Most cities were abandoned around AD 1000. The Spanish began exploring and colonizing the area in the early sixteenth century. Independence from Spain occurred in 1821, and for the following two years

Guatemala was part of the Mexican Empire. Several efforts to unify Central America into one entity failed in the nineteenth century and gave rise to political instability and a revolution. During the latter half of the twentieth century, the Guatemalan military received American support to restrict the spread of communism. Many coups, guerrilla groups, and massacres occurred during a thirty-six-year long conflict primarily between Maya peoples and the central government. By 1996, the conflict formally ended after 100,000 deaths and up to one million refugees. Greater democratization has occurred in the past two decades, and political ties with other Central American nations and the United States have been strengthened.

Culture

Cultural practices vary widely based on location and ethnicity. Both indigenous and Spanish influence shape modern culture in both urban and rural areas. Catholicism was a major historical influence that has weakened in recent years with the rise of Protestant denominations. Wealthier Guatemalans tend to include Mestizos living in the largest cities, whereas the poor primarily consist of rural Maya peoples. Maya peoples wear colorful clothing that features designs unique to each village. Food staples include corn, beans, and vegetables. Ruins of ancient Maya cities dot the landscape of northern Guatemala. Alcohol and cigarette consumption rates are lower than most nations.²³²

Economy

GDP per capita: \$5,000 (2011) [10.4% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.574

Corruption Index: 2.7 (2011)

Guatemala is one of the poorer nations in Central American and the Caribbean. A long-lasting civil war, lack of skilled workers, and corruption has dissuaded foreign investment and economic development. Wealth is unevenly distributed. Remittances from the large expatriate Guatemalan community in the United States and elsewhere equate to approximately two-thirds of export earnings. In 2004, 56% of the population lived below the poverty line. Poverty among indigenous peoples is most pronounced, as 76% live in poverty, and many children suffer from malnutrition. Agriculture employs half the workforce and accounts for only 13.5% of the GDP, whereas services employ 35% of the labor force and generate 61% of the GDP. Primary crops include sugarcane, corn, bananas, and coffee. The largest industries include sugar refining, textiles, and furniture. The United States is the primary trade partner. Other major trade partners include El Salvador and Mexico.

Endemic corruption has deterred greater economic development and stability. Violent crime and illegal activity is widespread, including money laundering, smuggling, drug trafficking, and human trafficking. The government struggles to gather the needed resources and personnel to reduce corruption and to enforce laws equitably; accusations of corruption have been made against the police, judicial system, and recent presidents.²³³ Highway robberies in rural areas occur frequently.

Faiths

Christian: 99%

Other: 1%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

²³² "Culture of Guatemala," en.wikipedia.org, retrieved 1 October 2010. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_Guatemala

²³³ "Background Note: Guatemala," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 22 March 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2045.htm>

Catholic 8,807,786
 Seventh Day Adventists 232,493 797
 Latter-day Saints 239,734 416
 Jehovah's Witnesses 31,637 496

Religion

Estimates of Catholic and Protestant percentages vary. The Catholic Church claims 65%–70% of the population, whereas Protestants estimate their numbers account for 35%–40% of Guatemalans. Both Catholics and Protestants may be found throughout the country and are present in all major ethnic groups and political parties. Some syncretism between Amerindian indigenous religious beliefs and practices has occurred with Christianity.²³⁴ Protestant groups have reported rapid growth over the past fifty years, and more Protestants than Catholics attend church each week.

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is typically upheld by the government. The Catholic Church receives special legal status and does not have to register with the government due to its historical legacy. There is no state religion. Religious groups must have at least twenty-five members and keep public order to apply for formal recognition. Thousands of Protestant churches have not obtained official recognition because they regarded the process as too lengthy and difficult. Missionaries must initially work on tourist visas for three months prior to applying for temporary residence status. Protestant groups have tended to be less tolerant than Catholics of the indigenous practices of Amerindian groups.²³⁵

Largest Cities

Urban: 49%

Guatemala City, Mixco, Villa Nueva, Petapa, San Juan Sacatepéquez, Quetzaltenango, Villa Canales, Escuintla, Chimaltenango, Chimaltenango.

All of the ten largest cities and all cities with over 20,000 inhabitants have a congregation. Twenty percent (20%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities. The Guatemala City metropolitan area accounts for 20% of national population.

LDS History

In 1947, the first missionaries arrived and began to organize the Church with the assistance of a member living in Guatemala on United States' government business. The following year, sixty-six attended the first official church meeting. Three small congregations functioned with 250 members by 1956.²³⁶ The Church received official recognition in 1966.²³⁷ By the late 1970s, Guatemala had nearly twice as many members as all the other Central American countries combined. During this time period, the Church experienced some of its first successes reaching the indigenous inhabitants of Central America in small, remote villages in the Guatemalan highlands, prompting translations of selections of the Book of Mormon into multiple Mayan languages in the early 1980s. In 1990, two full-time missionaries from the United States drowned in Lake Atitlan when their

²³⁴ "Guatemala," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127392.htm>

²³⁵ "Guatemala," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127392.htm>

²³⁶ "Guatemala," Country Profiles, retrieved 1 June 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/guatemala>

²³⁷ "Guatemala," Deseret News 2003 Church Almanac, p. 344.

boat capsized.²³⁸ The same year, the Central America Area was created with headquarters in Guatemala City.²³⁹ Although Central America as a whole was dedicated for missionary work in 1952, Guatemala was individually dedicated in 1991.²⁴⁰ The Guatemala North Mission administered Belize for a time in the 1990s. In 1993, the president of the Guatemala City North Mission and a mission counselor perished in a plane crash upon returning from a district conference in the remote Flores Guatemala District.²⁴¹ Some members postulate that many Book of Mormon events took place in Guatemala, leading to an emerging tourist industry catering to LDS members visiting ruins and archaeological sites.

Missions

In 1952, the Church organized the Central America Mission, which was headquartered in Guatemala City, with twelve missionaries. Headquarters were moved to Costa Rica in 1965 as the mission divided to create the Guatemala-El Salvador Mission.²⁴² In 1974, Guatemala gained its own mission with headquarters remaining in Guatemala City. In 1977, a second mission was organized in Quetzaltenango, and a third mission named the Guatemala City North Mission was organized in 1988. Additional missions have been organized in Guatemala City Central (1993), Retalhuleu (2010) and Coban (2013).

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 239,734 (2012)

In 1977, there were approximately 14,000 members.²⁴³ Rapid membership growth rates above 10% annually occurred through most of the 1980s and early 1990s. Membership increased to 30,177 in 1984, 99,000 in 1990, and 148,000 in 1994.

By year-end 2000, membership totaled 179,258. During the 2000s, membership grew 2 to 3% annually, numbering 188,531 in 2002, 200,537 in 2005, and 210,101 in 2007. For the past several years, membership has increased by approximately 5,000 per year.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 238 Branches: 179 (April 2013)

The first stake in Central America was organized in 1967 in Guatemala City with six wards.²⁴⁴ In the 1970s, the Church created three additional stakes in Guatemala City and a stake in Quetzaltenango, bringing the number of stakes to five. In the 1980s, five additional stakes were created in Guatemala City and seven stakes were organized in Retalhuleu, Quetzaltenango, San Marcos, Chimaltenango, Huehuetenango, Coatepeque, and Mazatenango. In the 1990s, Guatemala added ten new stakes in the capital and twelve stakes in Jalapa, Malacatán, San Felipe, Huehuetenango, Quetzaltenango, Coban, Zacapa, Momostenango, Patzicia, San Pedro, and Retalhuleu. The number of stakes reached forty in 2000.

²³⁸ "2 missionaries thought drowned in Guatemala," LDS Church News, 13 January 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20469/2-missionaries-thought-drowned-in-Guatemala.html>

²³⁹ Hart, John L. "Central America: Work is booming as members eagerly share their testimonies with friends," LDS Church News, 16 February 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21630/Central-America-Work-is-booming-as-members-eagerly-share-their-testimonies-with-friends.html>

²⁴⁰ "Book of Mormon land, Guatemala, is dedicated," LDS Church News, 2 November 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21312/Book-of-Mormon-land-Guatemala-is-dedicated.html>

²⁴¹ "Mission leaders die in plane crash," LDS Church News, 27 November 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23507/Mission-leaders-die-in-plane-crash.html>

²⁴² Hansen, Terrence L. "The Church in Central America," Ensign, Sep 1972, 40.

²⁴³ "Central America: Saints in Six Nations Grow in the Gospel," Ensign, Feb 1977, 25.

²⁴⁴ Hansen, Terrence L. "The Church in Central America," Ensign, Sep 1972, 40.

At year-end 2000, there were twenty-four districts, most of which were organized in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In 2010, seven districts met in small cities south and west of Guatemala City whereas six districts functioned between Guatemala City and the Caribbean Sea. Three districts operated north of Quetzaltenango, and two districts functioned in San Benito and Poptun in the north.

During the 2000s, one new stake was organized in 2009 in Totonicapán and six districts were discontinued. The Church has discontinued three stakes in Escuintla (1994), Guatemala City (2008), and Mazatenango (2008).

In 1991, 331 congregations met throughout the country, increasing to a high of 451 in 2001. With the exception of 2006, every year after 2001 experienced a decline in the number of congregations to 436 in 2003, 428 in 2005, and 415 in 2009. Approximately ten wards and twenty branches were consolidated between 2002 and 2010. Mission branches, dependent branches, and groups meet in several isolated, remote areas.

Activity and Retention

Despite adding 50,000 new members in the 2000s, the decline in total congregations over this period corresponds to poor convert retention and low member activity. The average number of members per congregation increased during the 2000s from 397 in 2000 to 456 in 2004, 489 in 2007, and 531 in 2009. Some congregations have grown, whereas others have seen stagnation or even decline in the number of church attendees in spite of increases in nominal membership. In 2010, several congregations in the Quetzaltenango area had over 130 active members and one ward had over 200 active members. Activity rates appear to depend on location. In 1993, more than 75% of indigenous members in the mountains of the Guatemala City Central Mission were active.²⁴⁵ 10,165 were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year. Although many wards have over one hundred attending weekly, the average number of active members per congregation does not appear to be greater than one hundred. Total active membership is estimated at around 40,000, or 20%.

Meetings held on a regional or national level tend to be well attended. In 1998, 35,000 attended two sessions held for twenty-nine stakes and districts in Guatemala City.²⁴⁶ Approximately 500 youth from nine stakes attended a fireside introducing early morning seminary in 1988.²⁴⁷ In 2004, the first national young women's conference had over 4,000 Guatemalan young women in attendance.²⁴⁸ In 2006, 2,200 young adults attended a last minute meeting with President Boyd K. Packer and Elder Neil L. Andersen.²⁴⁹

Distance from members' homes to meetinghouses may be a factor that has reduced church attendance. Some members in western Guatemala walked three hours to attend Church meetings in 1990.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁵ "Eight new missions announced," LDS Church News, 6 March 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23130/Eight-new-missions-announced.html>

²⁴⁶ An outpouring of love for Prophet: Pres. Hinckley addresses 88,000 in Central America," LDS Church News, 1 February 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29180/An-outpouring-of-love-for-Prophet—Pres-Hinckley-addresses-88000-in-Central-America.html>

²⁴⁷ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 27 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17976/From-around-the-world.html>

²⁴⁸ Alvarado, Julio E. "Thousands gather for historic Guatemalan camp," LDS Church News, 4 December 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46557/Thousands-gather-for-historic-Guatemalan-camp.html>

²⁴⁹ "Nothing will detain the Lord's work," LDS Church News, 28 January 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48450/Nothing-will-detain-the-Lords-work.html>

²⁵⁰ Hart, John L. "Central America: Work is booming as members eagerly share their testimonies with friends," LDS Church News, 16 February 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21630/Central-America—Work-is-booming-as-members-eagerly-share-their—testimonies-with-friends.html>

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Spanish, Q'eqchi', Kaqchikel, K'iche', Mam, Mayan.

All LDS scriptures are available in Spanish and Q'eqchi'. The Church recently translated a version of the Bible into Spanish with full LDS footnotes, Bible dictionary, and topical guide. Only select passages of the Book of Mormon have been translated into Kaqchikel, K'iche', Mam, and Maya. A few unit, priesthood, and missionary materials in addition to hymns and children's songs are translated in Q'eqchi', whereas translated materials in Mam are limited to the sacrament prayers, *Gospel Principles*, *The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony*, and hymns and children's songs. Maya Church materials include *The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony*, hymns and children's songs. The sacrament prayers, one Relief Society resource, *The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony*, and a family guidebook are available in K'iche'. Materials in Kaqchikel consist of *The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony* and the sacrament prayers.

Meetinghouses

Most congregations meet in Church-built meetinghouses, including small branches and dependent branches or groups. In 2004, Q'eqchi'-speaking members met in thirty-five meetinghouses.²⁵¹

Health and Safety

Guatemala experiences one of the highest homicide rates worldwide. Violent crime and illegal activity pose safety threats.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church has conducted at least thirty-six humanitarian and development projects, including clean water projects²⁵² and the donation of wheelchairs, construction materials, medicine, emergency aid, school supplies, and toys to children. Education has been provided for neonatal resuscitation and health care.²⁵³ In 2003, 250 wheelchairs were donated in Guatemala City.²⁵⁴ In 2005, 7,500 members participated in nationwide service project by invitation of the minister of education to clean and repair schools throughout the country, contributing over 40,000 work hours.²⁵⁵ The Church donated food and clothing and used a meetinghouse for shelter following a mudslide in northeastern Guatemala that claimed twenty-three lives, including three LDS members.²⁵⁶ In 2007, 300 school kits were donated in Senahu.²⁵⁷ In late 2009, over 7,000 members participated in nationwide Mormon Helping Hands service activities.²⁵⁸

²⁵¹ Swensen, Jason. "Gospel thriving among Guatemala's K'ekchi,'" LDS Church News, 31 January 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45034/Gospel-thriving-among-Guatemalas-Kekchi.html>

²⁵² "Clean water," Humanitarian Services, retrieved 3 June 2010. <http://www.lds.org/library/page/display/0,7098,6212-1-3216-1,00.html>

²⁵³ "Projects—Guatemala," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 2 June 2010. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-214,00.html>

²⁵⁴ "Church delivers hundreds of wheelchairs," LDS Church News, 20 September 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44355/Church-delivers-hundreds-of-wheelchairs.html>

²⁵⁵ Alvarado, Julio. "40,000 work hours donated in Guatemala," LDS Church News, 26 February 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46923/40000-work-hours-donated-in-Guatemala.html>

²⁵⁶ "Mudslides claim three in family after heavy rains," LDS Church News, 25 June 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47480/Mudslides-claim-three-in-family-after-heavy-rains.html>

²⁵⁷ Morales, Christopher. "300 school kits," LDS Church News, 10 February 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50121/300-school-kits.html>

²⁵⁸ Morales, Maria. "Helping hands: Guatemalan Latter-day Saints dedicate day to serving children," LDS Church News, 21 November 2009. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/58231/Helping-hands-Guatemalan-Latter-day-Saints-dedicate-day-to-serving-children.html>

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The church faces no restrictions on holding meetings or on proselytism by full-time missionaries.

Cultural Issues

Increasing materialism in Guatemala City and strong traditional ties to Catholicism and indigenous religious and cultural practices in rural areas challenges mission outreach. A Catholic legacy combined with rapid growth in Protestant denominations indicates enduring interest in religion that facilitated rapid membership growth for the LDS Church during the 1980s and 1990s. Many previously receptive individuals have been shepherded into other highly active Christian denominations, becoming less interested and willing to meet with missionaries, join the Church, and remain active. Poverty, few opportunities for education, low literacy rates, and challenges developing economic self-sufficiency in rural areas remains obstacles to long-term church growth.

National Outreach

Five LDS missions provide excellent national outreach potential as all 22 national administrative departments have multiple congregations. However, three of the five missions are centered in Guatemala City, home to 20% of the national population. Outreach centers are also found in many small towns and rural areas with higher population densities, such as in western Guatemala. Quiché appears the most populous, least reached administrative province, as only a few branches service over 650,000 people, nearly all of Maya descent. Most of the cities between 10,000 and 20,000 people without a mission outreach center are located in Quiché. Ethnic diversity, remote location, and few language resources have likely contributed to the limited Church presence in this department. Additional opportunities to expand national outreach exist in rural areas in mountainous areas with no nearby mission outreach centers, such as between Guatemala City and Coban.

Cities with a congregation account for approximately 40% of the national population. Those residing near a mission outreach center may increase the percentage of the population with close proximity to an LDS congregation and full-time missionaries to 60%, indicating that perhaps as many as 40% of Guatemalans remain unreached by mission efforts. However, most of the unreached population does not live far from established congregations. Forthcoming missionary work in these locations appears likely due to close proximity to mission outreach centers and expanding mission outreach potential following the organization of a fifth mission in 2010.

A website for the Central America Area is maintained by the Church in Spanish at <http://countrywebsites.lds.org/gt/>. The site provides information about the Church in Guatemala, church materials in Spanish, and a link to the meetinghouse locator.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Rapid numerical membership growth coupled with low member involvement in missionary work has resulted in low convert retention and member activity as manifested by the steady decrease in congregations over nearly the past decade. Missionaries heavily implemented quick-baptism practices in the 1980s and 1990s, and stopped teaching those who did not commit to baptism within two weeks of beginning the missionary discussions. Lessons were often highly abbreviated with so-called “doorstep discussions” sometimes being taught in as little as fifteen minutes, exacerbating difficulties of understanding in a nation with low literacy rates and little tradition of reading among indigenous peoples. Converts tended to be baptized rapidly, often

with little doctrinal understanding, and without having established regular habits of church attendance and scripture reading. Many of these converts stopped attending meetings after missionaries were transferred to different areas. Retained converts consisted primarily of those who could develop post-baptismal pattern of church attendance without adequate missionary teaching or member support. A large portion of converts are youth and children who join the Church without parental support.²⁵⁹ Some of these converts have greatly contributed to the building up of the Church in Guatemala, but most appear to have fallen into inactivity, as they never developed habits of meaningful church attendance and a solid understanding of the gospel. In the 2000s, missionaries appeared have made little progress in improving convert retention rates. The creation of the Guatemala Retalhuleu Mission in 2010 may have been partially influenced by a need for full-time missionaries to assist in reactivation and leadership training efforts nationwide.

Attempts to reactivate individuals with little remembrance of the Church has rarely succeeded, as most attended church for only short periods—and sometimes not at all—after baptism. Additionally, inactive converts often have little doctrinal understanding and lack the heritage of being raised in active homes that contributes to higher reactivation rates in Utah, and so work with inactives has often been less fruitful than fresh proselyting efforts. Missionaries report that many inactive members attend other churches or stopped actively attended the LDS Church due to proselytism of other denominations. Reactivation efforts have seen limited success in the past, although these successes were not sustained. In 1989, the Guatemala City Guatemala Mission implemented a program where full-time missionaries were paired with home teachers in their assigned congregations to visit less active members. These efforts resulted in some areas experiencing an increase in church attendance of up to 40% and many member families returning to church activity. Reactivation efforts also resulted in an increase in convert baptisms during this period. Missionaries taught fifteen minute lessons and reported to their branch president or bishop about specific member needs.²⁶⁰ Consistent involvement of local members in reactivation and member-missionary work is central to improving the quality and quantity of active membership.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Guatemala experiences considerable friction between Mestizos and indigenous peoples. However, geography generally separates these groups and reduces conflict in everyday living. Areas along the peripheries of larger cities are likely most prone to these issues affecting missionary work and member activity, as both Mestizos and indigenous peoples may interact and attend the same congregations. The large size of membership and support of five LDS missions provides opportunities to create language-specific congregations, which may also help to curb conflict between these two groups. Overall, there have not been many reported instances of ethnic conflict in the Church.

Language Issues

The Church has translated selected materials in the most commonly spoken indigenous languages. However, many less commonly spoken indigenous languages continue to have no outreach materials. Languages with over 40,000 speakers without church material translations include Poqomam (150,000), Achi' dialects (90,000), Jakalteko (89,000), Tz'utujil (84,000), Q'anjob'al (78,000), Ixil (69,000), Akateko (48,500), and Chuj dialects (40,000). Some of these languages are spoken in regions without LDS mission outreach centers. Initial efforts to establish the Church in regions with languages without Church material translations will have to rely upon the population's use and familiarity of a second language with Church materials available.

²⁵⁹ Moore, Carrie A. "Flood of converts alters the face of the LDS Church," LDS Church News, 5 October 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42548/Flood-of-converts-alters-the-face-of-LDS-Church.html>

²⁶⁰ "Visits harvest baptisms and reactive members," LDS Church News, 16 September, 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19301/Visits-harvest-baptisms-and-reactivate-members.html>

In 2000, the Church produced audio scriptures in Q'eqchi', Kaqchikel, and Mam.²⁶¹ Audio scriptures are particularly useful in areas of low literacy, although it is not clear how many local members have access to audio scriptures or the devices with which to play them. Indigenous languages continue to have few written materials translated and no other audio resources available. Efforts to improve literacy and increase the number of materials available in these languages may help generate greater breakthroughs with the indigenous population. Q'eqchi' is the only indigenous language with all LDS scriptures available due to the well-established Q'eqchi'-speaking LDS community as there were 4,500 Q'eqchi'-speaking members in 1990.²⁶² In 2004, Q'eqchi'-speaking members met in thirty-five chapels and three districts.²⁶³ Many full-time missionaries assigned to indigenous-speaking areas achieve at least some proficiency in local languages despite their complexity and lack of written literature. Audiovisual materials such as General Conference talks translated into several native languages offers a more immediate and practical approach to language issues.

Many indigenous peoples are illiterate and cannot speak Spanish fluently. Relatively few who are not fluent in Spanish are literate in their native language. This renders at least partially moot the need to translate a full church curriculum into indigenous languages with few speakers. The number of native speakers of small indigenous languages is also declining due to increasing Spanish-language education and gradual cultural assimilation. Those who do not speak Spanish experience severely restricted economic opportunities, and so it is likely that the need for translations into other languages will continue to decrease.

Missionary Service

Area leadership indicated that the Central America Area became potentially self-sustaining in its full-time missionary force in late 2009. Large numbers of North American missionaries continue to serve in Guatemala. The Guatemala Missionary Training Center was expanded in 1992.²⁶⁴ In 1994, a new missionary training center was completed able to house 102 missionaries.²⁶⁵ Missionaries often report of holding callings in their assigned congregations, particularly in smaller cities and in rural areas.

Leadership

Local leadership is found in the greatest numbers in Guatemala City, which has the fifth most stakes in a metropolitan area outside the United States. In 1998, President Hinckley spoke in a meeting to over 1,000 leaders from twelve stakes in Guatemala City.²⁶⁶ In 1989, Carlos Amado became the first Guatemalan General Authority.²⁶⁷ In 1992, Pedro E. Abularach from Quetzaltenango was called as a regional representative.²⁶⁸ In

²⁶¹ "Book of Mormon Editions," *Deseret News* 2003 Church Almanac, p. 634-635.

²⁶² Hart, John L. "Central America: Work is booming as members eagerly share their testimonies with friends," *LDS Church News*, 16 February 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21630/Central-America-Work-is-booming-as-members-eagerly-share-their-testimonies-with-friends.html>

²⁶³ Swensen, Jason. "Gospel thriving among Guatemala's K'ekchi,'" *LDS Church News*, 31 January 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45034/Gospel-thriving-among-Guatemalas-Kekchi.html>

²⁶⁴ Hill, Craig A. "New facility evidence of growth," *LDS Church News*, 18 July 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22120/New-facility-evidence-of-growth.html>

²⁶⁵ "Guatemala training center dedicated," *LDS Church News*, 12 February 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24160/Guatemala-training-center-dedicated.html>

²⁶⁶ "An outpouring of love for Prophet: Pres. Hinckley addresses 88,000 in Central America," *LDS Church News*, 1 February 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29180/An-outpouring-of-love-for-Prophet-Pres-Hinckley-addresses-88000-in-Central-America.html>

²⁶⁷ "New calls: Second Quorum of the Seventy created; 12 new general authorities sustained," *LDS Church News*, 8 April 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18446/New-calls-Second-Quorum-of-the-Seventy-created-12-new-general-authorities-sustained.html>

²⁶⁸ "New regional representatives," *LDS Church News*, 29 August 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22464/New-regional-representatives.html>

1993, Julio E. Alvarado from Guatemala City²⁶⁹ and Luis A. Amado²⁷⁰ were called as regional representatives. The following year, Mario A. Lopez, Eriberto Israel Perez Citalan, and Mario Salazar Moran were called as regional representatives.²⁷¹ In 2000, Jose E. Boza was called as an Area Authority Seventy.²⁷² In 2005, I. Poloski Cardon was called as an Area Authority.²⁷³ In 2007, Elder Enrique R. Falabella was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy and Carlos L. Astorga was called as an Area Authority Seventy.²⁷⁴ Many Church Education System (CES) employees have served in stake presidencies and other local leadership positions, but the majority of leadership positions are filled by non-Church employees.

Leadership in rural areas and districts remains limited and often lacks numbers or strength to function properly. The Q'eqchi'-speaking region has suffered from a lack of trained leaders as many are illiterate and have had little formal education. Returned missionaries who served in areas with a more established Church presence help to strengthen local leadership.²⁷⁵

Temple

The first organized temple trip to the Mesa Arizona Temple occurred in 1965 for members in Guatemala and El Salvador. Ninety-two traveled by bus to the temple. The temple trip subsequently became a yearly tradition.²⁷⁶ The Church announced the Guatemala City Guatemala Temple in 1981 and dedicated it in 1984. The temple served members throughout Central America until the dedication of the San Jose Costa Rica Temple in 2000. In 2006, a second temple for Guatemala was announced in Quetzaltenango, making Guatemala the first Spanish-speaking nation besides Mexico with more than one temple. Members in western Guatemala traveled over four hours one way to the temple in Guatemala City and were unable to attend frequently due to work schedules.²⁷⁷ In 2010, endowment sessions at the Guatemala City Temple were held hourly throughout most the morning and evening and at times held every thirty minutes if needed. In early 2012, the Quetzaltenango Guatemala Temple serviced fifteen stakes and seven districts in western Guatemala and held six endowment sessions Tuesdays through Fridays and seven sessions on Saturdays.

It is difficult to ascertain the portion of temple work conducted by Guatemalan members in the Guatemala City Guatemala Temple as the temple district in 2010 included Honduras, Nicaragua, and Belize. Stakes in Guatemala City appear to support a large portion of the workers and patrons on weekdays. With a second temple recently built in Quetzaltenango, no additional temples appear likely to be built in Guatemala in the foreseeable future. Some remote districts have difficulty financing and staffing temple excursions. The new temple in Quetzaltenango will help alleviate some of these burdens, but problems with few active members and leaders continue to hinder temple work in many districts. Members who travel long distances to attend

²⁶⁹ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 28 August 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23355/New-regional-representatives.html>

²⁷⁰ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 25 September 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23377/New-regional-representatives.html>

²⁷¹ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 27 August 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24738/New-regional-representatives.html>

²⁷² "New members of Seventy receive sustaining votes," LDS Church News, 1 April 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37478/New-members-of-Seventy-receive-sustaining-votes.html>

²⁷³ "38 new Area Seventies called, 37 are released," LDS Church News, 9 April 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47147/38-new-Area-Seventies-called-37-are-released.html>

²⁷⁴ "5 general authorities called to serve full time," LDS Church News, 31 March 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50362/5-general-authorities-called-to-serve-full-time.html>

²⁷⁵ Swensen, Jason. "Gospel thriving among Guatemala's K'ekchi," LDS Church News, 31 January 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45034/Gospel-thriving-among-Guatemalas-Kekchi.html>

²⁷⁶ Hansen, Terrence L. "The Church in Central America," *Ensign*, Sep 1972, 40

²⁷⁷ Swensen, Jason. "Joyous day awaits western Guatemala," LDS Church News, 13 January 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50012/Joyous-day-awaits-western-Guatemala.html>

the Guatemala City Temple may stay in temple patron housing, which can accommodate 112.²⁷⁸ However, travel costs to the temple remain too high for many indigenous members, including most in the Q'eqchi' region.²⁷⁹

Comparative Growth

Guatemala appears to have average to high member activity rates for Latin America, although these rates are low in an absolute sense. Less than 5% of members participate in seminary and institute annually in Guatemala, similar to other Central American nations. With the exception of Nicaragua, other Central American nations also experienced stagnant or declining numbers of congregations during the 2000s and a substantial drop in membership growth rates. Although Guatemala has the most nominal and active members in Central America and is the nation with the eighth largest number of LDS members worldwide, Guatemala experiences the most limited mission outreach in Central America because millions reside in remote rural areas.

Most Christian groups reported more rapid growth than the LDS Church during the past decade. The Seventh Day Adventists grew by 60,000 members between 2003 and 2009 with most remaining active whereas LDS membership increased by 28,000 during the same time period with few converts remaining active. The much higher convert retention and activity rates achieved by Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses demonstrate that low retention and member activity rates are not inevitable, nor do they result from cultural difficulties, but rather reflect policies and practices of the LDS missionary program that have traditionally focused on large numbers of quick baptisms with little attention to gospel habits, regular pre-baptismal church attendance, and long-term convert retention. The consequences of such short-term LDS mission policies are now leading to declines even in nominal membership growth as substantial missionary resources have been diverted from proselytism to deal with increasingly serious challenges of rampant inactivity and difficulties staffing congregations with many nominal members but few active ones.

Future Prospects

Guatemala will continue to be of key importance to the Church in Latin America due to its historical legacy, large LDS membership, inactivity issues, and rapidly growing population. The creation of a fifth mission in 2010 and a sixth mission in 2013 may facilitate greater attention to member-missionary efforts and may lead to greater outreach among lesser-reached indigenous groups, particularly in the highland areas.

Guatemala has yet to break its trend of declining congregations. The creation of the first new stake in a decade occurred in late 2009 from the Nahualá Guatemala District and a portion of the Quetzaltenango Guatemala El Bosque Stake. Missionaries report that many districts are diligently working towards becoming stakes, especially in the highland areas. Some districts have combined, such as the Ceiba Amelia Guatemala District and the Santa Lucia Cotzumalguapa Guatemala District in 2009, likely in preparation to create future stakes. Most districts will need to organize additional congregations as few districts had enough branches to become stakes in 2010. Very few stakes have enough congregations to divide to create additional stakes, another sign of poor retention and low growth rates over the past decade.

Church leaders appear optimistic about future growth, although that enthusiasm has tempered with the consolidation of many congregations and reluctance to open new ones. In 1992, Elder Ted E. Brewerton served as the Central America Area president and predicted that there would be many millions of LDS

²⁷⁸ "Guatemala training center dedicated," LDS Church News, 12 February 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24160/Guatemala-training-center-dedicated.html>

²⁷⁹ Swensen, Jason. "Gospel thriving among Guatemala's K'ekchi,'" LDS Church News, 31 January 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45034/Gospel-thriving-among-Guatemalas-Kekchi.html>

members throughout Central America.²⁸⁰ Predictions of future membership expansion into the millions are rendered moot by the fact that only a fraction of nominal members are active, and that the membership growth of the last decade has been inadequate to even sustain existing congregations. Very low convert retention and member activity rates suggest that a change in the primary focus of missions from achieving arbitrary baptismal quotas to a focus on growing the number of active, participating members expanding the number of self-sustaining, indigenously staffed congregations, will be necessary for sustainable future growth.

²⁸⁰ Hill, Craig A. "New facility evidence of growth," LDS Church News, 18 July 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22120/New-facility-evidence-of-growth.html>

GUYANA

Geography

AREA: 214,969 square km. Located in northern South America but generally categorized as culturally part of the Caribbean, Guyana is geographically the largest of the Guianas and borders Suriname, Brazil, Venezuela, and the North Atlantic Ocean. Tropical climate occurs in most areas marked by two distinct rainy seasons in the summer and winter. A low coastal plain occupies northern areas whereas dense tropical rainforest and hilly terrain dominate the interior. There are some areas of savanna in the south in highland areas. Major rivers include the Essequibo, Courantyne, Berbice, and Demerara. Flash flooding is a natural hazard. Environmental issues include water pollution and deforestation. Guyana is divided into ten administrative regions. Large portions of the eastern and western interior are claimed by Suriname and Venezuela, respectively.

Peoples

East Indian: 43.5%

Black: 30.2%

Mixed: 16.7%

Amerindian: 9.1%

Other: 0.5%

Guyana supports one of the most diverse populations in the Western hemisphere with no ethnic group constituting a majority. East Indians constitute 43.5% of the population and initially were brought as indentured servants by the British, whereas blacks account for 30.2% of the population and descend from freed Africans brought to the colony prior to the abolition of slavery in the 1830s. East Indians and blacks reside in coastal areas, whereas Amerindians populate rural interior areas and account for 9.1% of the population. The remainder of the population consists of mixed or other ethnicities.

Population: 741,908 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: -0.327% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.27 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 63.57 male, 71.4 female (2012)

Languages: Guyanese Creole English (87%), Amerindian languages (4%), other and unknown (9%). English is the official language. Caribbean Hindustani is spoken by some East Indians. Macushi is the Amerindian language with the most speakers (9,500).

Literacy: 91.8% (2002)

History

Denoting a “land of many waters” in Amerindian languages, present-day Guyana was initially settled by Arawak and Carib Amerindians. The Dutch were the first Europeans to colonize the region, but the British occupied the territory in 1796. Formal British sovereignty over the colonies in Guyana was implemented in 1815. The British cultivated sugarcane and staffed the plantations with African slaves until the abolition

of slavery in the 1830s. Indentured servants, primarily from India, were relocated to Guyana to work on the plantations until 1917. After the price of sugar fell dramatically in the late 1800s, the economy transitioned to growing other crops and mining. Guyana gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1966. Autocratic president Forbes Burnham enacted socialist one-party policies and ruled until 1985. In the late 1970s, Guyana received international attention due to a mass suicide in Jonestown by American members of the Peoples Temple cult where over 900 people perished. Democratic institutions and government were established in the late 1980s and early 1990s.²⁸¹ Guyana has experienced population decline or stagnant population growth for nearly two decades due to ongoing emigration.

Culture

Guyanese culture reflects the eclectic demographics of the population as evidenced in cuisine, language, religion, customs and practices. Caribbean culture is a major contemporary influence on society. East Indian dishes are widely consumed among all ethnicities. With the exception of predominantly East Indian Hindus and black Rastafarians, all ethnic groups are found among the country's major religious traditions. Creole is widely spoken and represents the fusion of ethnic groups. Notwithstanding the mixing of cultural traditions and practices, many ethnic groups retain their individual ethnic and cultural identities, particularly East Indians and Amerindians. Cigarette consumption rates are lower than the world average whereas alcohol consumption rates are slightly higher than the world average. Due to complexities and expenses surrounding legal marriage, many couples cohabit and have children together but are not legally married.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$7,500 (2011) [15.6% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.633

Corruption Index: 2.5 (2011)

Rice, sugar, timber, and mining dominate the Guyanese economy. Poor infrastructure and lack of educated and skilled individuals resulted in little economic growth for the past couple of decades. Major flooding in 2005 damaged the country's economy and stunted economic growth. Socialistic policies followed during the first several decades after independence culminated in a lack of integration with the world economy. Currently, the government is focusing on mining, agriculture, and exporting raw materials. Primary trade partners include Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Most Guyanese are employed in agriculture and service occupations.

Corruption is perceived as widespread. Guyana is a transshipment point for illicit drugs produced in South America destined for Europe and North America. Human trafficking for the purposes of forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation is a major concern, as many are placed in forced labor in mining camps in remote, interior areas. Women and girls are trafficked with neighboring countries for sexual exploitation.

Faiths

Christian: 57%

Hindu: 28%

Muslim: 7%

Other: 4%

None: 4%

²⁸¹ "Background Note: Guyana," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 4 April 2011. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1984.htm>

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Pentecostal 126,610

Catholic 59,581

Anglican 52,133

Seventh Day Adventists 57,471 147

Latter-day Saints 5,415 13

Jehovah's Witnesses 2,712 44

Religion

Slightly over half of Guyanese are Christian. Pentecostals are the largest Christian group and constitute 17% of the population. Other major Christian groups include Catholics (8%), Anglicans (7%), and Seventh Day Adventists (5%). Hindus account for 28.4% of the population, whereas Muslims account for 7.3%; both religious groups are concentrated among East Indians. There are small numbers of Rastafarians concentrated among black Guyanese.²⁸²

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. The government is secular, and there are no restrictions on individuals changing their religious affiliation. All religious groups worship freely. Major Christian, Hindu, and Muslim holidays are recognized national holidays. To operate in the country, religious groups must register with the government and obtain recognition. Religious groups must obtain the permission of local village councils to operate in areas populated predominantly by Amerindians. There have been no instances of societal abuse of religious freedom reported. In 2009, forty foreign Latter-day Saint missionaries were detained and requested to depart Guyana due to visa regulations. News media reported that the government was suspicious of the LDS Church for its independent charity work in the interior and alleged ties with opposition figures.²⁸³

Largest Towns

Urban: 29%

Georgetown, Linden, New Amsterdam, **Anna Regina**, Corriverton, **Bartica**, **Parika**, Rose Hall, Rosignol, **Mahdia**

Towns listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Six of the ten most populous cities have an LDS congregation. Sixteen percent (16%) of the population resides in the ten most populous cities.

LDS History

The first missionaries entered Guyana in 1988 and consisted of a single senior missionary couple serving under the West Indies Mission. The first sacrament meeting occurred in September 1988, and a branch was organized in March 1989. Twenty-three members attended meetings when the branch was officially organized. In February 1989, the Church received official government recognition. Guyana was assigned to the newly-organized Trinidad and Tobago Mission in 1991 and was reassigned to the West Indies Mission upon

²⁸² "Guyana," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148760.htm>

²⁸³ "Guyana," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148760.htm>

the closure of the Trinidad and Tobago Mission in 1994. During this period, greater numbers of missionaries were assigned to Guyana. Seminary and institute commenced in the mid-1990s. In 2000, the first LDS branch outside of Georgetown was organized in New Amsterdam, and in 2009 Linden became the first city in the interior to open for missionary work. The number of full-time missionaries assigned to Guyana steadily increased in the 2000s due to high receptivity.

In September 2009, the Guyanese government requested the Church to remove foreign missionaries who were claimed to have expired missionary visas. Missionaries reported that they were incarcerated for a day due to alleged visa violations. The Guyanese government enforced a new limit on the number of foreign LDS missionaries able to serve in Guyana to around twenty. Later that month, the Church withdrew about forty of the sixty missionaries serving in Guyana. Local members were provided with the opportunity to serve as full-time missionary companions in order to keep proselyting areas open, but this approach was not sustained. Government officials expressed concerns that the Church had a larger missionary force than most Christian churches in Guyana notwithstanding the small number of members.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 5,415 (2012)

There were 300 members in 1993 and 700 in 1997. By 2000, membership totaled 1,036. Moderate rates of membership growth occurred for the first half of the 2000s whereas rapid membership growth occurred during the latter-half of the 2000s. Membership increased to 1,251 in 2002, 1,607 in 2004, 2,072 in 2006, 3,935 in 2008, and 5,016 in 2010. During 2008 and 2009, there were over one hundred convert baptisms a month in Guyana. Annual membership growth rates in the 2000s ranged from a high of 53% in 2008 to a low of 3.5% in 2010 but generally varied between 7% and 20%. In 2010, one in 148 was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 0 Branches: 13 (2012)

There was one branch in 1993. By the end of 1994, a second branch was organized in Garden Park, a suburb of Georgetown. A third branch was organized in 1996 in Patentia. By 2000, there were four branches. The number of branches increased to five in 2003, six in 2004, eight in 2005, eleven in 2006, twelve in 2007, and sixteen in 2008. The number of branches declined to fifteen in 2009 and thirteen in early 2011. During the 2000s, most new branches were organized in the Georgetown and New Amsterdam areas, and districts were established in each city in 2003 and 2005, respectively. A third district briefly operated in Diamond during the mid-2000s. In the late 2000s, branches were organized for the first time in Crabwood Creek, Bushlot, Parika, and Linden. In the late 2000s and early 2010s, branches were discontinued in Parika, Georgetown 2nd, Georgetown 3rd, and New Amsterdam 2nd. In the late 2000s, groups also functioned in East Linden and in Skeldon. In the early 2010s, the Crabwood Creek Branch was consolidated with the Skeldon Group to create the Corriverton Branch and the Patentia Branch was renamed the La Grange Branch. In early 2011, the New Amsterdam Guyana District was discontinued and branches were placed under the West Indies Mission. In mid-2011, groups or dependent branches may have operated in Parika and East Linden.

Activity and Retention

Guyana experienced moderate rates of convert retention and member activity until the late 2000s as many of the thousands of converts who joined the Church between 2007 and 2009 were not retained due to minimal pre-baptismal teaching and poor new convert fellowship support. The apostasy of some members appears to have also significantly impacted overall activity rates, especially in New Amsterdam. Member activity rates appear to be higher in Georgetown than in New Amsterdam as quick-baptism tactics were more pervasive in New Amsterdam. The average number of members per congregation increased from 259 in 2000 to 334 in

2010, reflecting low convert retention. The number of members enrolled in seminary and institute increased from 127 during the 2007–2008 school year to 296 during the 2009–2010 school year. Most branches appear to have between fifty and one hundred active members. Nationwide active membership is estimated at 1,000, or 20% of total church membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English.

All LDS scriptures and materials are available in English.

Meetinghouses

The first meetinghouse in Guyana was dedicated in 2003. By early 2011, there were approximately eleven LDS meetinghouses, most of which consisted of renovated buildings and rented spaces.

Health and Safety

The risk for infectious disease is high, particularly for leptospirosis, dengue fever, malaria, typhoid fever, hepatitis A, and bacterial and protozoal diarrhea. HIV/AIDS infects 1.2% of the adult population.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The LDS Church has provided valuable humanitarian and development assistance in Guyana, completing at least twenty-four projects that included donating school supplies and equipment, wheelchairs, furniture, hygiene kits, bedding for orphanages, school uniforms, and food and clothing for the needy.²⁸⁴ In 2011, a senior missionary couple was assigned to Georgetown to help the unemployed find sustainable employment.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The LDS Church benefits from full religious freedom for its members to meet, proselyte, and worship without societal or government interference. Past visa challenges with foreign missionaries limits the number of North American full-time missionaries that can be assigned.

Cultural Issues

High receptivity to Christianity, few ethnic tensions, high literacy rates, and shared language have contributed to rapid membership and congregational growth for the LDS Church in Guyana over the past decade. Guyana provides a unique opportunity to extend outreach to Hindus and Muslims with no legal restrictions and develop culturally-tailored proselytism approaches that can be utilized among Hindus and Muslims elsewhere. A strong sense of community in many areas can foster sustainability of local congregations if a sizeable following of members is maintained. Low standards of living, low levels of commitment to a particular Christian denomination, and community opposition are cultural challenges that impede greater church growth. The complex religious background of many Guyanese merits missionary approaches that are flexible and varied. Although the poverty of many of the people in Guyana likely has made them more receptive to the gospel message, many struggle with unemployment, low living standards, and few financial resources. The Church has sought to meet economic and humanitarian needs through a variety of projects and opportunities

²⁸⁴ "Projects—Guyana," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 21 May 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-118,00.html>

for additional aid continue to abound. The lack of legal marriages for many couples presents challenges for outreach and can result in some potential converts losing interest if they are unable to get legally married. Missionaries have played a crucial role in preparing and arranging marriage ceremonies for potential converts.

National Outreach

Notwithstanding Guyana's small urban population, 63% of the national population resides in cities, towns, and villages with an LDS congregation. This relatively high degree of national outreach has been achieved only within the past decade as a result of the organization of congregations on the outskirts of Georgetown and New Amsterdam and the expansion of missionary activity into several of the most populous, previously-unreached cities in coastal areas and Linden. Five of the ten administrative regions have an LDS congregation and account for 84% of the population. Ninety percent (90%) of the national population resides in coastal areas.²⁸⁵

Opportunities for expanding national outreach appear most favorable in the most populous, lesser-reached or unreached towns in coastal areas such as Skeldon, Charity, and Bartica as these towns are within close proximity of LDS outreach centers and have sizeable populations. Holding cottage meetings to ascertain local receptivity and church growth potential in these and other locations can facilitate national outreach expansion through the smart allocation of limited missionary resources. The Church in the recent past has been flexible and dynamic in surveying growth opportunities, as evidenced by the establishment of a second home group in Linden before the organization of the first independent branch and the regular opening of groups and dependent branches in the late 2000s when foreign full-time missionaries were plentiful. Recent government-set caps on the number of foreign LDS missionaries permitted to serve in Guyana pose a major setback in expanding outreach. Local member and leadership capabilities are insufficient in meeting their own administrative and ecclesiastical needs and require mission support. This results in delays in expanding outreach into unreached and lesser-reached communities to plant new congregations. Reliance on full-time missionaries and low member activity rates and local leader sustainability are chiefly responsible for congregation consolidations in the late 2000s and early 2010s, which, left unchecked, may continue in the coming years and limit national LDS outreach.

There have been no concentrated efforts to extend LDS outreach among Amerindian groups or in the sparsely populated interior largely due to the unfeasibility of assigning full-time missionaries to villages difficult to access and with few inhabitants. Expanding outreach to these areas will require dedication and effort on the part of senior missionary couples and local members and leaders.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Many obstacles for member activity and convert retention rates include low long-term commitment of converts who received minimal teaching prior to baptism, the large number of children and youth baptized with no parental or congregational support, few capable leaders who are reliable and knowledgeable in church administration, the lack of native returned missionaries, counter-proselytism efforts by other denominations, and transportation challenges to attend church meetings. Transportation in Guyana is difficult and expensive. Often members will be picked up in trucks or wagons, especially for conferences. Frequent rain can dramatically lower the number of members who attend Church on a given Sunday.

Distance from mission headquarters in Trinidad has likely reduced missionary accountability for baptizing converts and exacerbated convert attrition issues. Less emphasis was placed on the quality and quantity of teaching for investigators who were baptized in the late 2000s. Sacrament meeting attendance is poor in

²⁸⁵ "Background Note: Guyana," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 4 April 2011. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1984.htm>

places such as New Amsterdam, where many branches rely on the missionaries to function properly and has been a major contributor to the consolidation of congregations in recent years. The mass exodus of full-time missionaries in 2009 and the inability of local members to sufficiently compensate for their loss is reflected in ongoing administrative challenges that included the dissolution of the New Amsterdam Guyana District in 2011, notwithstanding the district formerly including six branches.

Senior missionary couples have assisted in convert retention through organizing seminary and institute programs and young-single adult activities. Seminary and institute classes commenced in Linden within months of the assignment of the first full-time missionaries and may curtail inactivity through solidifying convert testimonies and provide socialization opportunities with fellow members. Increasing attendance in seminary and institute in the late 2000s is a positive development indicating that active youth membership has likely increased despite convert retention problems. In 2009, mission policies regarding convert baptismal standards were revised in an effort to improve retention resulting in a major slowdown to membership growth rates in 2010. Time will tell whether these reformed policies will be reflected in improved member activity and retention rates.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

LDS missionaries report that there have been no major ethnic integration issues at church, notwithstanding the ethnic diversity of the Guyanese population. Common usage of Guyanese Creole English has facilitated ethnic integration despite differing cultural practices and attitudes among differing ethnicities.

Language Issues

There are no LDS materials in Guyanese Creole English, but many are able to utilize standard-English LDS scriptures and materials for personal study and gospel instruction. Literacy rates are high notwithstanding low living standards. Translations of basic LDS outreach materials such as proselytism tracts into Guyanese Creole English may be warranted for culturally-effective outreach.

Missionary Service

Few local members serve full-time missions but the number of local members serving missions appears to have increased in recent years as a result of increasing emphasis on missionary preparation for youth. In 2010, the LDS Church in Guyana appeared to supply between one-third to one-half of the full-time missionary force in the country. The disruption of foreign full-time missionary service severely affected the Church in Guyana and demonstrates the reliance of many leaders and members on foreign missionary support. Efforts to have local youth serve mini-missions with a full-time missionary companion appear to have yielded few long-term effects and low sustainability after the removal of two-thirds of the missionary force in late 2009. Carefully-organized, consistent programs for local members to assist in missionary efforts could yield greater long-term results.

Leadership

The LDS Church in Guyana has faced consistent frustrations in developing and increasing the number of self-sufficient priesthood holders to lead congregations and maintain the organization of districts as indicated by two of the three districts being consolidated or closed by 2011. In 2011, nearly all the branches appeared to be led by local members notwithstanding these challenges. Mission leadership has worked to establish the first LDS stake in Guyana in Georgetown since 2008, but as of 2011 these efforts had not come to fruition due to leadership sustainability and member activity issues. An application was sent to Church headquarters for a stake to be organized in 2008 but was not approved. One of the obstacles that prevented a stake organization

was a lack of full-member families in Georgetown. A senior couple was sent to Georgetown and given the specific task to prepare the district for becoming a stake in the spring of 2009.

With two-thirds of the foreign missionary force now gone, local leadership will have to efficiently delegate responsibilities to full-time missionaries and commission local Church members and branch missionaries to assist in reactivation and member missionary work efforts. President Gamiette of the West Indies Mission began his tenure in mid-2009 and immediately turned full-time missionaries' focus towards the reactivation of lost new converts and strengthening leadership.

Temple

Guyana is assigned to the Caracas Venezuela Temple district, but due to political conditions in Venezuela many members attend the Santo Domingo Dominican Republic Temple. Organized temple trips occur regularly for members, but travel costs and distance limit the frequency members may attend the temple. Prospects for a temple closer to members in Guyana may be forthcoming for a temple in Trinidad and Tobago one day, but few members in the region and low member activity rates have thus far prevented a temple announcement.

Comparative Growth

The LDS Church in Guyana experienced some of the most rapid membership and congregational growth rates among nations with fewer than 10,000 members in the 2000s but also appears to have exhibited one of the lowest convert retention rates. Member activity rates are among the lowest in the Caribbean and are comparable to rates in many Latin American nations. The percentage of members in the population is lower than most Latin American nations but higher than most Caribbean nations. In 2010, Guyana was the country with the eleventh most members without a stake.

Other Christian churches and organizations with a strong missionary focus have seen modest to exceptional growth in Guyana. The Seventh Day Adventists have experienced great growth in Guyana, numbering 54,201 members in 148 churches in 2008. Membership for the SDA Church increases by about 2,000 every year and claims about 7% of the population in the country. Jehovah's Witnesses have seen more modest growth and reported about 2,400 members in forty congregations in 2008. These and other missionary-minded Christian groups appear to have much higher convert retention rates than the LDS Church as greater emphasis is placed on member-missionary work and pre-baptismal preparation.

Future Prospects

Ongoing member activity and local leadership challenges continue to frustrate church growth potential for the LDS Church in Guyana, notwithstanding high rates of receptivity. Improved standards for convert baptisms and efforts directed toward reactivation and strengthening congregations and leaders may yield more lasting church growth results. Pending steady improvement and greater consistency in convert retention and member activity, the district in Georgetown may become a stake within the next decade and a district may be reorganized in New Amsterdam. Increasing numbers of youth and young adults serving missions may lay a foundation for greater, more experienced local leaders who can reduce the administrative burden on mission leadership. The creation of a separate mission to administer Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana is warranted in order to improve interaction between local and mission leaders, reduce the administrative burden on mission leaders in the West Indies Mission, and improve accountability over the long term for convert baptisms in the Guianas. Visa restrictions on the number of foreign missionaries deters the Church from opening additional areas of proselytism but may improve leadership development by demanding greater self-sufficiency.

HAITI

Geography

AREA: 27,750 square km. Occupying the western third of Hispanola, Haiti borders the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean. Most of Haiti experiences tropical climate, and some inland areas are semi-arid. Mountains and hills dominate the landscape. Deforestation is a major problem and threatens the large biodiversity endemic to the nation's forests. Hurricanes and tropical storms frequently impact the region between June and October. Haiti is divided into ten administrative departments.

Peoples

Black: 95%

Mulatto and white: 5%

Blacks arrived as slaves under French rule. Mulatto are mixed race. Whites have arrived more recently.

Population: 9,801,664 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.888% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.98 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 61.15 male, 63.89 female (2012)

Languages: Haitian Creole (95%), other (5%). Haitian Creole and French are official languages. Other languages are spoken by white immigrants or Mulattos. There are few Spanish speakers near the Dominican border. Only Haitian Creole has over one million speakers (8.5 million).

Literacy: 52.9% (2003)

History

Indigenous tribes inhabited Hispanola prior to the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the late fifteenth century. The native population was almost completely wiped out during the first twenty-five years. French settlers arrived in the early seventeenth century and gained control of the western third of Hispanola from the Spanish in 1697. The French rapidly developed the colony with plantations and the arrival of slaves from Africa. Half a million slaves rebelled against France and declared independence as the first black republic in 1804. Following independence, little economic progress for the following 200 years. Poor government management and political violence have degraded the environment and economic development. The United States military assisted in restoring peace and order following a coup in the early 1990s. A second coup occurred in 2004 and has further destabilized Haiti. A United Nations stabilization mission has been underway since the 2004 coup. A 7.0 earthquake struck Haiti in January 2010, causing widespread damage throughout Port-au-Prince and its surroundings, killing between 100,000 and 200,000 and crippling the nation's government and infrastructure.

Culture

African slaves retained many of their beliefs and practices despite colonization from the French for over

a hundred years. Voodoo is widely practiced. Some French, Spanish, and native customs have influenced Haitian culture.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$1,200 (2011) [2.49% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.454

Corruption Index: 1.8 (2011)

Frequent natural disasters and high debt plague the economy. Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Eighty percent (80%) of the population lives below the poverty line. Few skilled workers deter economic growth and foreign investment. Two-thirds of the workforce labor in agriculture, which generates 28% of the GDP. Primary agriculture products include coffee, mangoes, and sugarcane. A quarter of the workforce labors in services, which account for half of the GDP. Several mineral resources remain unexploited, such as bauxite, copper, and gold. Primary industries include sugar and flour production and textiles. The United States and the Dominican Republic are major import/export partners. The January 2010 earthquake crippled the economy, which will likely take years to recover.

Haiti ranks as one of the most corrupt countries in the world; corruption is present in all levels of government and society. It has limited economic growth for two centuries despite the inherit wealth of the country in natural resources, location, and one of the largest workforces in the Caribbean. The neighboring Dominican Republic also suffers from corruption, but has a GDP per capita six times higher than Haiti and half the number of people living below the poverty line. Haitian government officials show little empathy for Haitians in poverty and lack a willingness to address the issue. Corruption scandals involving the president include kidnappings and an increasing number of murders. International assistance has provided 2.6 billion U.S. dollars in developing the economy and fighting corruption, without any positive results, while Haitian government officials demand more aid and claim that the international community has not provided enough assistance.²⁸⁶

Faiths

Christian: 96%

Other: 3%

None: 1%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 7,228,429

Baptist 903,553

Pentecostal 364,421

Seventh Day Adventists 370,985 492

Jehovah's Witnesses 17,954 227

Latter-day Saints 18,165 42

Religion

Most Haitians are Catholic. Protestant groups have grown rapidly in recent years. Around 2% solely practice Voodoo, which came with slaves from West Africa. Voodoo practices and beliefs are widespread and retained by many Christians and include rituals to protect against evil spirits, veneration of the dead, and singing.

²⁸⁶ Roc, Nancy. "Haiti: the sour grapes of corruption," FRIDE, 23 March 2009. <http://www.fride.org/publication/583/other-publications>

Religious Freedom

Religious freedom is protected by the constitution and upheld by the government as long as religious groups do not encourage lawlessness and disorder. Roman Catholicism was the official religion of Haiti until 1987. Foreign missionaries may operate freely in the country.²⁸⁷

Largest Cities

Urban: 47%

Port-au-Prince, Carrefour, Delmas, Cap-Haïtien, Petionville, Gonaïves, Saint-Marc, Les Cayes, Verrettes, Port-de-Paix.

All of the ten largest cities have a congregation. Hinche (23,600) is the largest city without a congregation. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 18,165 (2012)

In the summer of 1977, the first Haitian convert read the Book of Mormon, traveled to Florida where he was taught by missionaries, was baptized, and returned to Haiti. A year later twenty-two Haitians were baptized near Port-au-Prince.²⁸⁸ President Thomas S. Monson dedicated Haiti for missionary work in April 1983.²⁸⁹ Membership reached 500 in 1983, climbing to 2,200 in 1988 and 5,000 in 1993.²⁹⁰

In late 1997 membership was 5,300.²⁹¹ Very little growth occurred during a five-year period in the mid-1990s due to the withdrawal of foreign missionaries. Local leadership also focused on strengthening members and preparing for a stake. The return of rapid growth following the reintroduction of foreign missionaries suggests that at this time local membership was insufficient to provide enough missionaries and leaders to continue increasing membership and expanding into new areas of the country.

Membership reached 9,266 at the end of 2000. More than 200 member homes in northern Haiti were destroyed following the destruction left by Tropical Storm Jeanne.²⁹² Membership numbered 12,842 in 2004, 13,604 in 2006, and 14,493 in 2007.

Mission leadership feared that following the beginning of violence in 2004, membership growth would begin to slow as in the 1990s following the outbreak of violence. As predicted, membership growth rates fell from between 7.5% and 11.5% between 2001 and 2003 to 5.4% in 2004, 3.7% in 2005 and 2.1% in 2006. The slow membership growth rates were reversed starting following 2006 to over 6.5% for both 2007 and 2008.

²⁸⁷ "Haiti," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127394.htm>

²⁸⁸ "Haiti," Facts and Statistics—LDS Newsroom, retrieved 1 January 2010. <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/facts-and-statistics/country/haiti/>

²⁸⁹ "Merchant seeking truth opened way for Church," LDS Church News, 3 May 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43711/Merchant-seeking-truth-opened-way-for-Church.html>

²⁹⁰ "Temple to be built in the Caribbean," LDS Church News, 4 December 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23661/Temple-to-be-built-in-the-Caribbean.html>

²⁹¹ "New stake presidencies," LDS Church News, 4 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29785/New-stake-presidencies.html>

²⁹² Swensen, Jason. "Deadly storm season exacts precious toll," LDS Church News, 25 September 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46173/Deadly-storm-season-exacts-precious-toll.html>

By the end of 2008 one in 576 people in Haiti were members. At least twenty members perished in the 2010 earthquake.²⁹³

Congregational Growth

Wards: 22 Branches: 20 (April 2013)

The first mission contact with Haiti came from the Florida Fort Lauderdale Mission in 1977. Missionary work officially began in May 1980, and Haiti was assigned to the West Indies Mission. The Church created its first branch in Port-au-Prince in October 1980. The first Haitian called to serve a mission was in 1981.²⁹⁴ A second branch was created in March 1981 in Petionville. By 1982 there were twelve missionaries serving in the country, the Petionville Branch was divided, four missionaries opened Cap-Haitien for missionary work, and the Haiti District was organized.²⁹⁵ By 1984 the Haiti Port-au-Prince Mission was organized from the West Indies Mission.

An additional district was created in Les Cayes in 1990. The Church divided the Haiti District in January 1990 to create the Port-au-Prince Haiti North and Port-au-Prince Haiti South Districts likely in the early 1990s. Branches reached eighteen in 1991, and there were 140 missionaries serving, twenty-six of which were Haitian.²⁹⁶ Fifty-four foreign missionaries were serving in Haiti when missionaries were evacuated in late 1991. Missionaries were evacuated to Miami, Florida, reassigned to other missions, or extended early releases.²⁹⁷ In 1992, the first missionary called from Haiti in 1981 became the first Haitian mission president for the Haiti Port-au-Prince Mission replacing the evacuated foreign mission president from the previous year.²⁹⁸ In 1994 there were twenty-two native missionaries serving in Haiti.²⁹⁹

In 1993 members were anxiously working for the first stake to be created but faced political instability that delayed its creation for several years. Very little congregational growth was experienced during the 1990s as branches increased by only two.

The first stake was created in Port-au-Prince in 1997. The Port-au-Prince Stake was created from both districts in the city and included seven wards and two branches: the Carrefour, Carrefour-Feuilles, Centrale, Delmas, Haut Delmas, Martissant and Petionville Wards and the Croix Des Bouquets and Croix-Des-Missions Branches.³⁰⁰ Haiti remained part of the North America Southeast Area in 1998 following its division.³⁰¹ In 1999 an additional district was created in Gonaïves. In the early 2000s congregations met outside of Port-au-Prince in Gonaïves, St. Marc, Cap-Haïtien, Port-de-Paix, Les-Cayes, Petit Goave, Jacmel, and Croix-des-Bouquets

²⁹³ Lloyd, R. Scott. "Latter-day Saint aid to Haiti continues under 'huge, emotional, impactful' experiences," LDS Church News, 22 January 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/58495/Latter-day-Saint-aid-to-Haiti-continues-under-huge-emotional-impactful-experiences.html>

²⁹⁴ Avant, Gerry. "Present-day pioneers: Many are still blazing gospel trails," LDS Church News, 24 July 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23990/Present-day-pioneers—Many-are-still-blazing-gospel-trails.html>

²⁹⁵ "Haiti," Facts and Statistics—LDS Newsroom, retrieved 1 January 2010. <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/facts-and-statistics/country/haiti/>

²⁹⁶ Vandenbergheand, Elizabeth and Jed. "Haitian Saints See Hope in the Gospel," Liahona, November 1991. <http://www.lds.org/liahona/1991/11/haitian-saints-see-hope-in-the-gospel>

²⁹⁷ "Haiti's civil strife prompts removal of missionaries," LDS Church News, 2 November 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20986/Haitis-civil-strife-prompts-removal-of-missionaries.html>

²⁹⁸ Avant, Gerry. "Present-day pioneers: Many are still blazing gospel trails," LDS Church News, 24 July 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23990/Present-day-pioneers—Many-are-still-blazing-gospel-trails.html>

²⁹⁹ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 26 March 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24358/From-around-the-world.html>

³⁰⁰ "New stake presidencies," LDS Church News, 4 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29785/New-stake-presidencies.html>

³⁰¹ "5 new areas announced worldwide," LDS Church News, 4 July 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31389/5-new-areas-announced-worldwide.html>

Foreign missionaries returned in the late 1990s and numbered half the missionary force in 2003.³⁰² A second stake, the Port-au-Prince Haiti North Stake, was created in 2003 with six wards. Missionaries were withdrawn from northern Haiti in early 2004 due to violence in the region.³⁰³ All fifty-six foreign missionaries were evacuated in February 2004.

Between 2000 and 2009 congregations increased from twenty to thirty-one. Wards increased from seven to fifteen. The greatest congregational growth in the past decade occurred before 2004 and after 2006. In 2009, the Les Cayes Haiti District had four branches, and the Gonaïves Haiti District had seven branches. By late 2009 additional branches were also meeting in Deschapelles and Jeremie. Branches in Jacmel increased from one to three during the late 2000s. In early 2012, a new district was created in Saint Marc and two new stakes were created in the Port-au-Prince area, doubling the number of stakes in the country to four.

In early 2009 there were sixty-seven missionaries.³⁰⁴ A year later the number of missionaries increased to seventy-four. As of early 2012 only Haitian missionaries served in Haiti. Three Haitian Creole speaking branches met in the United States in early 2010: Two in South Florida and one in Massachusetts. Two additional branches meet up until the late 2000s in South Florida and were discontinued.

Activity and Retention

Haiti had 185 students enrolled in seminary in 1989.³⁰⁵ In 1993 the number enrolled in seminary was 150 and in institute was 280.³⁰⁶ By the 2008–2009 school year seminary and institute attendance increased to 383 and 989 respectively. Sacrament meeting attendance declined in northern areas following political instability and violence in 2004 and suffered large inactivity issues.³⁰⁷ Church meetings were disrupted throughout the country in March 2004. Average active membership per congregation is likely around 125–150, indicating that active members likely number between four to five thousand, or 30%.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Haitian Creole, French, Spanish.

All LDS scriptures are available in Haitian Creole, French, and Spanish. General Conference has had Haitian Creole translations at least since the early 1990s.³⁰⁸ Most Church materials are translated, including mission, temple, youth, priesthood, primary, Relief Society, and unit resources.

Meetinghouses

Meetinghouses numbered thirteen in 2003.³⁰⁹ The seven meetinghouses in Port-au-Prince served as shelters

³⁰² "Happy in Haiti celebrating dedication's 20th year," LDS Church News, 3 May 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43702/Happy-in-Haiti-celebrating-dedications-20th-year.html>

³⁰³ Swensen, Jason. "Missionaries relocated amid civil strife in Haiti," LDS Church News, 21 February 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45120/Missionaries-relocated-amid-civil-strife-in-Haiti.html>

³⁰⁴ Romney, Richard. "There is Hope in Haiti," New Era, January 2009. <http://www.lds.org/new-era/2009/01/there-is-hope-in-haiti?lang=eng>

³⁰⁵ Stoker, Kevin. "Early-morning/daily seminary builds foundation in gospel program has expanded to help youths worldwide," LDS Church News, 27 May 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19425/Early-morningdaily-seminary-builds-foundation-in-gospel-program-has-expanded-to-help-youths-worldwide.html>

³⁰⁶ Avant, Gerry. "Present-day pioneers: Many are still blazing gospel trails," LDS Church News, 24 July 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23990/Present-day-pioneers—Many-are-still-blazing-gospel-trails.html>

³⁰⁷ Swensen, Jason. "Missionaries relocated amid civil strife in Haiti," LDS Church News, 21 February 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45120/Missionaries-relocated-amid-civil-strife-in-Haiti.html>

³⁰⁸ "850 cable systems to carry conference," LDS Church News, 5 October 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20724/850-cable-systems-to-carry-conference.html>

³⁰⁹ "Happy in Haiti celebrating dedication's 20th year," LDS Church News, 3 May 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/>

for 5,000 homeless following the earthquake in 2010.³¹⁰ Less than 30% were Church members.³¹¹ Around half of meetinghouses are likely Church built with the remainder consisting of remodeled buildings or rented spaces.

Health and Safety

Those infected with HIV/AIDS constitute 2.2% of the population. Methods of infection include illicit sexual relations and drug use. Contaminated needles and HIV-positive mothers can also spread the disease. Although HIV/AIDS infection rates not higher than other nations in the Western Hemisphere, missionaries must take precautions in order to avoid infection and spreading the disease. Those infected with HIV/AIDS are less able than others to build the Church over the long term due to the disease significantly shortening their lifespan.

Safety concerns continue to keep foreign LDS missionaries from serving in Haiti. Violence can occur sporadically. One Haitian member was imprisoned for over three years for political reasons.³¹² If a political crisis worsens it may be difficult to quickly evacuate nonnative missionaries. Frequent natural disasters also pose safety threats from flooding, landslides, and hurricanes. Damage from the 2010 earthquake also severely impacted the poor health and safety conditions.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church has provided literacy programs.³¹³ American members donated farming tools in 2001.³¹⁴ Humanitarian aid was provided in 2004 and 2005 following tropical storms and hurricanes.^{315 316} Shelter and aid was provided for flood victims in 2007.³¹⁷

Humanitarian relief was promptly provided following the 2010 earthquake. A team of eighteen LDS doctors arrived a week following the earthquake to provide medical care.³¹⁸ Many other LDS members contributed their time and talents in helping those suffering, especially returned missionaries from the Haiti Port-au-Prince Mission. The First Presidency requested members worldwide to donate their time, money, and talents in meeting the humanitarian needs exacerbated by the earthquake.³¹⁹ Over one million pounds of food and

articles/43702/Happy-in-Haiti-celebrating-dedications-20th-year.html

³¹⁰ Taylor, Scott. "Returned missionary and family are among those finding refuge on LDS meetinghouse grounds in Haiti," LDS Church News, 19 January 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/58465/Returned-missionary-and-family-are-among-those-finding-refuge-on-LDS-meetinghouse-grounds-in-Haiti.html>

³¹¹ Lloyd, R. Scott. "Latter-day Saint aid to Haiti continues under 'huge, emotional, impactful' experiences," LDS Church News, 22 January 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/58495/Latter-day-Saint-aid-to-Haiti-continues-under-huge-emotional-impactful-experiences.html>

³¹² "Happy in Haiti celebrating dedication's 20th year," LDS Church News, 3 May 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43702/Happy-in-Haiti-celebrating-dedications-20th-year.html>

³¹³ Dockstader, Julie A. "Lifetime of literacy manifest through service," LDS Church News, 17 July 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/36074/Lifetime-of-literacy-manifest-through-service.html>

³¹⁴ Hattaway, John. "Boy Scout effort to Haiti includes farm tools, seeds," LDS Church News, 24 February 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39385/Boy-Scout-effort-to-Haiti--includes-farm-tools-seeds.html>

³¹⁵ Swensen, Jason. "Deadly storm season exacts precious toll," LDS Church News, 25 September 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46173/Deadly-storm-season-exacts-precious-toll.html>

³¹⁶ Swensen, Jason. "Dennis torments coast," LDS Church News, 16 July 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47567/Dennis-torments-coast.html>

³¹⁷ "Morales, Christ; Swensen, Jason. "Inundated state," LDS Church News, 17 November 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51332/Inundated-state.html>

³¹⁸ Taylor, Scott. "LDS medical team en route to Haiti finds new uses for lunch boxes," LDS Church News, 18 January 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/58460/LDS-medical-team-en-route-to-Haiti-finds-new-uses-for-lunch-boxes.html>

³¹⁹ <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/news-releases-stories/first-presidency-appeals-to-church-members-to-help-people-in-haiti>

supplies were delivered in the first two weeks following the earthquake. The Church has made it clear that humanitarian and development work will continue for years to come.³²⁰

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

No legislation or cultural restrictions prohibit missionaries from proselytism in Haiti. The Church has taken advantage of this opportunity during times of greater national stability with foreign missionaries and consistently with native missionaries.

Cultural Issues

Members face challenges when they forsake Voodoo religion and practices to join the Church. Members can be ostracized from their communities and family connections can be severed. Many Christians are tolerant of these practices. Ancestor worship in Voodoo may be misunderstood with Church teachings concerning salvation for the dead. Severe poverty limits the financial resources members can contribute toward building up the Church in their nation. Low literacy levels challenge outreach to those who are illiterate to help them study on their own.

National Outreach

Out of countries with an official Church presence in the Western Hemisphere with over one million people, Haiti has the lowest percentage of Church members. Despite the small representation of membership in the population, all departments have at least one congregation except for three: Centre, Nippes, and Nord-Est. These departments have a combined population slightly over one million, or 11% of the national population. In addition to these departments, large areas of provinces with only one congregation have limited outreach. These departments include Nord, Nord-Ouest, and Grand 'Anse, each of which have congregations in the largest cities and a combined population of 1.7 million. The Ouest Department has the strongest Church presence, containing half the total congregations and a third of the national population. Congregations are most accessible to those living in Port-au-Prince and the largest cities.

Outreach to rural communities remains a major challenge and opportunity for the Church. Poor transportation and poverty limit communication and movement between rural areas. These areas likely have few members who can assist in starting new groups or dependent branches. The greatest opportunity for additional outreach appears with larger cities and towns until more national active membership and leadership base is created. The 2010 earthquake has limited mission outreach temporarily as health and economic needs are first addressed.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Poorer convert retention appears to occur more often when foreign missionaries served in Haiti. This may be due to the higher number of convert baptisms during these years, resulting in less attention and care taken to fellowship and to teach new converts. Foreign missionaries have been instrumental in developing member activity and leadership. Member activity and retention have been affected by the departure of foreign missionaries in several ways. The lack of Haitian missionaries in the 1990s likely resulted in the many years of preparation for the first stake to be organized. Focus shifted from expansion to consolidation during years of few missionaries serving. The lack of growth and activity problems in the 1990s may stem from a previous

³²⁰ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Help for Haiti: a long-term effort," LDS Church News, 30 January 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/58528/Help-for-Haiti-a-long-term-effort.html>

reliance on foreign missionaries from local membership to run Church meetings and fulfill callings, which members failed to fulfill.

Member activity and convert retention further worsened during the early 2000s when foreign missionaries served, as members per congregation increased from 463 in 2000 to 494 in 2004. This ratio has held stable since 2005 at around 515, likely indicating that convert retention and member activity have improved from earlier levels. In 2004, political unrest and heavy flooding limited membership growth and activity, especially in northern areas in the Gonaïves Haiti District. These areas were also the first to have foreign missionaries evacuated. Low literacy levels have likely contributed to poor retention and activity as these individuals require greater care and support in understanding Church teachings and fulfilling callings.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Due to the homogeneity of the Haitian population, few ethnic integration issues challenge Church growth. Unlike most nations with a predominantly black population, the Church has the opportunity to conduct missionary work with a population lacking the ethnic complexities of most African and some Caribbean nations. Unity in culture and ethnicity may facilitate more rapid growth. Fellowshiping converts from the few immigrant groups may be a challenge due to differences in culture and language.

Language Issues

The Church is well mobilized with language materials to meet the needs of the linguistic demography of Haiti for proselytism. Minority groups speaking French and Spanish have a wide body of Church materials available in their native languages.

Leadership

Haiti has developed strong priesthood leadership in limited numbers. The first native mission president began serving in 1992 when membership was around 5,000. Most native mission presidents get called as mission presidents once membership reaches the tens of thousands. This decision was likely desperate due to the political situation at the time. A shortage of priesthood leadership has significantly limited the Church's growth in Haiti. In 1995, a lack of Haitian missionaries and active priesthood holders resulted in missionaries unable to serve as branch presidents thus preventing the creation of new branches.³²¹ None of the members of the first stake presidency in 1997 worked for the Church, indicating that the Church was not dependent on Church Education System employees like in many poor nations with few members.³²² Although the Church faces problems with finding enough leadership, the isolation of Haitian members from foreign missionaries has facilitated greater member development and leadership. Many nations grow dependent on foreign missionaries for the Church's functioning.

The Church has also been successful in avoiding an overrepresentation of Church employees serving in leadership positions. The only Church employee to serve in one of the stake presidencies was when the second stake was created in 2003. The stake president was a facilities manager for the Church.³²³

³²¹ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 25 February 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26394/From-around-the-world.html>

³²² "New stake presidencies," LDS Church News, 4 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29785/New-stake-presidencies.html>

³²³ "New stake presidents," LDS Church News, 27 September 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44369/New-stake-presidents.html>

Temple

Haiti pertains to the Santo Domingo Dominican Republic Temple district. Haiti was assigned to the Guatemala City Guatemala Temple following its dedication. Members were usually unable to travel the long distance due to time, transportation, and financial problems. Language problems were also an issue as temple workers spoke Spanish.³²⁴ The dedication of the Santo Domingo Dominican Republic drastically increased the accessibility of the temple to members. Violence and natural disasters have prevented members from attending the temple due to border closures such as in 2004.

Comparative Growth

The Church was established in the Dominican Republic at the same time as in Haiti, yet in late 2009 had a temple, a missionary training center, seven times as many members, nine times as many stakes, five times as many districts, and six and a half times as many congregations. Even during the 1980s when Haiti enjoyed greater political stability, growth in the Dominican Republic resulted with twice as many members as Haiti by the end of the decade. Other nations in the Caribbean with a primarily black population have seen greater outreach than Haiti. The first missionaries and congregations were established in Trinidad and Tobago in the late 1970s, and in late 2009 most of the population lived in areas where congregations met and one in 421 was a member. Jamaica has also seen similar results as Trinidad and Tobago.

More rapid membership and congregational growth has not occurred in Haiti as in other similar Caribbean nations due to political turmoil and poverty. As most areas rely heavily on foreign missionaries for greater national outreach, greater gains in unreached areas typically occurred during the years foreign missionaries served in the country. Natural disasters have also set back growth as focus shifts to meeting the temporal needs of the population more than the spiritual.

Future Prospects

Accelerated membership and congregational growth in the late 2000s without any foreign missionaries may indicate that the Church in Haiti has become better able to spur greater progress in outreach and growth without the assistance of foreign missionaries. Poverty and the 2010 earthquake may limit mission outreach in order to meet Haitian's humanitarian needs.

A district from three mission branches in Jacmel will likely be created. The Gonaïves Haiti District may also mature into a stake. Congregations may be organized in remaining departments with a Church presence in cities such as Hinche, Miragoâne, and Fort-Liberte. Cities that have had one branch for over a decade may also divide to create additional congregations in locations such as Cap-Haïtien and Port-de-Paix. Political instability, poverty, limited active members and leadership, and the close proximity of the Santo Domingo Dominican Republic Temple may deter a temple announcement until these conditions change.

³²⁴ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 26 March 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24358/From-around-the-world.html>

HONDURAS

Geography

AREA: 112,090 square km. Honduras occupies a segment of Central America that reaches both the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans and borders Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. Tropical rainforest covers most areas with temperate forest in higher elevations in the mountains. Mountainous terrain occupies most of the inland areas. Large areas along the Caribbean Sea are sparsely populated and consist of several national parks. Most people reside in valleys in the interior or along the northern coastline. Biodiversity is very high in rainforest areas. Urbanization and deforestation are great environmental concerns. Honduras is divided into eighteen administrative departments.

Peoples

Mestizo: 90%
Amerindian: 7%
Black: 2%
White: 1%

Most Hondurans claim ancestry from Amerindians and Europeans and identify as Mestizo. Many blacks arrived from St. Vincent to escape slavery during the colonial period.

Population: 8,296,693 (July 2012)
Annual Growth Rate: 1.838% (2012)
Fertility Rate: 3.01 children born per woman (2012)
Life Expectancy: 69.03 male, 72.47 female (2012)

Languages: Spanish (97%), other (3%). Spanish is the official language (7.5 million speakers). Ten languages are spoken, including eight Amerindian tongues, of which Garifuna (98,000) and Miskito (29,000) have the most speakers.

Literacy: 80% (2001)

History

The Maya civilization had a strong presence in Honduras for nearly a thousand years following the birth of Christ. Christopher Columbus reached the Honduran coastline on his final voyage. Spanish colonialism began in the sixteenth century; many important ports were established along the Caribbean coastline. Independence was achieved in 1821. Military rule and border conflicts with El Salvador continued for most of the 1960s and 1970s. Militant groups from politically unstable El Salvador and Nicaragua sought refuge in mountainous areas along the borders in the 1980s. Hurricane Mitch caused widespread destruction in 1998 from flooding and landslides. In 2009, political instability worsened as a military coup overthrew President Manuel Zelaya. International condemnation of the incident has resulted in no countries recognizing the new government.

Culture

The Catholic Church heavily influences culture and daily life and claims 97% of the population. Many Catholic holidays are national holidays. Cuisine primarily includes tortillas, beans, rice, plantains, and meat. Hondurans are known for warmth and hospitality.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$4,300 (2011) [8.94% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.625

Corruption Index: 2.6 (2011)

Honduras is the second poorest country in Central America, with half the population living below the poverty line. Wealth is distributed very unequally. Half of the GDP comes from services and a third comes from industry. Bananas and coffee drive much of the economy, as agriculture employs 39% of the workforce despite agriculture composing only 13% of the GDP. The economy is vulnerable to changes in world prices of bananas and coffee and to natural disasters. The largest industries are sugar and coffee. The United States is the primary trade partner, with over half of import and exports in Honduras exchanged between the two countries. Neighboring Central American nations make up most of the remaining trade.

Corruption has been a major problem for the past several decades. Military leaders have not been transparent with money provided from other nations to fight corruption and defend against radical groups. Government began to better address the massive crime and drug issues in the early 2000s. The overthrow of President Zelaya resulted in the termination of anti-corruption assistance from the United States.³²⁵

Faiths

Christian: 100%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 7,500,000

Jehovah's Witnesses 19,944 331

Seventh Day Adventists 247,236 424

Latter-day Saints 154,207 226

Religion

Centuries of Catholicism has resulted in most of the population nominally Catholic; as few as 20% of Catholics worship regularly. Some surveys report that the population is 47% Catholic and 36% Evangelical Protestant. Protestant groups have grown rapidly in the past few decades.

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. Only the Catholic Church is recognized under law, and religious groups are not required to register with the government. Missionaries may proselyte freely but are required to have residence visas.³²⁶

³²⁵ "Background Note: Honduras," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, November 2009. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1922.htm>

³²⁶ "Honduras," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/>

Largest Cities

Urban: 52%

San Pedro Sula, Tegucigalpa, La Ceiba, Choloma, El Progreso, Choluteca, Comayagua, Puerto Cortes, La Lima, Danli

All of the ten largest cities have a congregation. All cities over 15,000 inhabitants have a congregation. Eighteen percent (18%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

Elders Spencer W. Kimball and Marion G. Romney arrived in Honduras the early 1950s to evaluate prospects. The first missionaries arrived in December 1952. The Mexican Mission administered Central America prior to 1952 when the Central American Mission was created. Honduras remained part of the Central American Mission, later renamed the Costa Rica San Jose Mission in 1974, until the creation of the Honduras Tegucigalpa Mission in 1980. Seminary and institute began in 1972. Honduras was dedicated for missionary work in June 1991.³²⁷ The Honduras San Pedro Sula Mission was created in 1990 and included Belize. Additional missions were organized in Comayaguela (1997) and San Pedro Sula West (2013).

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 154,207 (2012)

By 1977, Honduras had the highest membership out of the four countries in the Costa Rica San Jose Mission.³²⁸ Membership increased to 6,300 by 1980.³²⁹

In the late 1980s, much of the rapid membership growth occurred in the north. In 1989, 3,200 were baptized in the northern portion of the Honduras Tegucigalpa Mission. Membership increased to 25,100 by early 1990. Fourteen thousand six hundred members lived in the mission headquartered in Tegucigalpa.³³⁰ Membership reached 65,000 in 1995.³³¹

When the Honduras Comayaguela Mission was created in 1997, the Honduras Tegucigalpa Mission retained 16,500 members in six stakes, and the Honduras Comayaguela Mission included 16,300 members in five stakes.³³² By the end of 2000, membership totaled 100,270, increasing to 112,815 in 2004 and 131,098 in 2008.

Membership growth slowed during the first half of the 2000s to a low of 1.1% in 2003. Subsequent annual growth rates have averaged around 3% and have increased since 2007 to over 4%, the highest seen since before 2000. In 2010, one in fifty-seven was LDS.

irf/2009/127395.htm

³²⁷ "Land of Honduras is dedicated," LDS Church News, 15 June 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20814/Land-of-Honduras-is-dedicated.html>

³²⁸ "Central America: Saints in Six Nations Grow in the Gospel," Ensign, Feb 1977, 25.

³²⁹ "Land of Honduras is dedicated," LDS Church News, 15 June 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20814/Land-of-Honduras-is-dedicated.html>

³³⁰ "Growth leads to four new missions," LDS Church News, 3 February 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19827/Growth-leads-to-four-new-missions.html>

³³¹ "Honduras," Deseret News, 2003 Church Almanac, p.347.

³³² "Church to create eight new missions," LDS Church News, 1 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29769/Church-to-create-eight-new-missions.html>

Congregational Growth

Wards: 148 Branches: 78 (April 2013)

The first branch was created in Tegucigalpa in March 1953, and a branch was organized in San Pedro Sula in 1955. The San Pedro Sula Honduras District was created in 1961.³³³

By 1977, there was one district in San Pedro Sula and another district in Tegucigalpa.³³⁴ Both the districts became stakes in 1977 and 1978 respectively. A third stake was created in Comayagua in 1982. Rapid increase in the number of stakes began occurred between 1986 and 1990 as six additional stakes were created in El Merendón, La Ceiba, La Lima, Valle de Sula, and Tegucigalpa. Three additional districts were created in the 1980s in Juticalpa, La Entrada, and Olanchito.

By 1990, there were nine stakes and seven districts. North American missionaries were temporarily withdrawn in 1993.³³⁵ Over 400 missionaries were serving in the two missions by February 1997.³³⁶ The Honduras Comayagua Mission was created later that year. Between 1994 and 1998, eleven new stakes were created in Comayagua, Danli, Choluteca, Fesitranh, Tegucigalpa, Comayagua, Satélite, El Progreso, and Villa Nueva, and eight new districts were created in San Lorenzo, Guaymaca, Talanga, Santa Rosa de Copan, Catacamas, Santa Barbara, Tela, and Tocoa. By 2000, twenty stakes, eleven districts, 127 wards, and ninety-two branches operated. In 2004, there were 127 wards and eighty-eight branches, increasing to 134 wards and ninety-two branches in 2008. In 2009, six branches were consolidated or closed.

In 2009, six districts were discontinued. Four of the districts only had two branches, and branches belonging to the former Santa Barbara and Tela Honduras Districts reported directly to the mission. Branches from the discontinued district in La Entrada joined the Santa Rosa de Copan Honduras District. The Olanchito Honduras District absorbed branches from the former district in Tocoa. Branches in discontinued districts in Guaymaca and Juticalpa joined districts in eastern Honduras. In 2010, a new district was organized in Monjaras, and in early 2011, a new district was organized in Valle Verde. In 2011, the Tegucigalpa Loarque Stake was organized, the first new stake to be created since 1998.

Mission branches operate near the Pacific coast in Los Llanitos, El Triunfo, Marcovia, and Pespire; in the west in Santa Barbara, Galeras, Marcala, Intibuca, and Jesus de Otoro; in the north in Tela and Telamar; and on the islands in Utila and Roatan.

Activity and Retention

The average number of members per congregation increased from 457 in 2000 to 650 in 2010. Congregations increased by seven between 2000 and 2008 but membership increased by 30,000. When President Hinckley visited in early 1997, 8,100 Hondurans attended in San Pedro Sula and 15,000 attended in Tegucigalpa. The largest stake in the country, the Tegucigalpa Honduras Tocontin Stake, had 1,300 to 1,400 active members in twelve congregations in 2009. The average number of active members per congregation is likely around one hundred, indicating that active membership is likely between 22,000 and 25,000 or 15% to 20% of total membership. During the 2009–2010 school year, 7,388 were enrolled in institute or seminary, or one in nineteen Honduran members.

³³³ "Honduras," *Deseret News*, 2003 Church Almanac, p.347.

³³⁴ "Central America: Saints in Six Nations Grow in the Gospel," *Ensign*, Feb 1977, 25.

³³⁵ Brewerton, Ted E. "A Conversation about the Church in Central America," *Liahona*, Jun 1993, 21.

³³⁶ "An outpouring of love for Prophet: Pres. Hinckley addresses 88,000 in Central America," *LDS Church News*, 1 February 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29180/An-outpouring-of-love-for-Prophet—Pres-Hinckley-addresses-88000-in-Central-America.html>

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Spanish.

All LDS scriptures, an LDS edition of the Bible, and a wide range of materials are available in Spanish. No materials are translated into Honduran Amerindian languages.

Meetinghouses

Most congregations meet in Church-built meetinghouses. Smaller branches meet in rented spaces or remodeled buildings.

Health and Safety

Honduras has one of the highest homicide rates in the world. Safety concerns have resulted in nonnative missionaries withdrawn in the past and have threatened their nationwide evacuation recently. HIV/AIDS infects 0.7% of the population and presents no greater threat than in other Latin American nations.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church has provided microloans to increase local economic development.³³⁷

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

There are no legal or cultural restrictions that limit proselytism.

Cultural Issues

The lack of activity among Catholics has carried over into the LDS Church. Activity rates between Catholics and Latter-day Saints are similar, although Latter-day Saints who do participate are typically more involved.

National Outreach

Approximately half the population resides in cities or towns with an LDS congregation. The greatest outreach occurs in the largest cities and towns and their peripheries. Very few communities do not have a nearby congregation. Cities with the most inhabitants without a congregation include Yoro, Gracias, Puerto Lempira, and Yuscarán, all of which have less than 15,000 inhabitants. Of the eighteen departments, sixteen have at least one congregation. There are no congregations in the Gracias a Dios (67,000) or Lempira (250,000) Departments, indicating that at least 4% of the national population is unreached. Ocotepeque (108,000) is the only department with one congregation. These departments are remote and have limited accessibility. Honduras is well-reached by fulltime missionaries with three missions serving a country of eight million.

Outreach is most limited among the rural populations. The departments of Francisco Morazan (includes Tegucigalpa and eight stakes and one district) and Cortes (includes San Pedro Sula and seven stakes) each have about 1.2 million people, averaging one stake per 150,000 people. Each stake has an average around eight congregations, indicating each congregation averages around 19,000 people within its boundaries.

³³⁷ Avant, Gerry. "Lifting families from poverty," LDS Church News, 17 November 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19710/Lifting-families-from-poverty.html>

During the decade of the 2000s, little net congregational growth occurred, with congregations being consolidated at nearly the same rate that new congregations were organized. Few congregations have been organized in new cities over the past decade; almost all new cities entered have been on the outskirts of San Pedro Sula or Tegucigalpa.

The greatest growth and outreach will likely continue in urban centers and in the more populated rural departments, such as Yoro and Olancho. Only one large stake in Tegucigalpa appeared close to splitting in 2009, yet many stakes have a large number of branches preparing to become wards. The consolidation of six districts in late 2009 may indicate preparation for future stakes in rural areas such as Olanchito, Santa Rosa de Copan, and San Lorenzo. A district may be organized for remote branches in La Esperanza, and some of the recently discontinued districts may be reorganized if greater activity or membership growth occurs. Some members likely reside in unreached departments and could provide potential strength for future outreach.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Poor member activity and convert retention likely contributed to the announcement of the first temple in the country despite Honduras having had over 100,000 members for six years. Very rarely have countries had over 100,000 members and no operating or announced temple.

Much of the high inactivity began during the 1990s when membership grew from 29,000 to 96,000 in ten years. Although the receptivity of Hondurans was quickly addressed with the creation of two additional missions to provide better teaching, outreach, and leadership development, inactivity problems persisted and worsened in the 2000s. The latest increase in membership growth has failed to show indication that retention has improved, as there has been no increase in congregations between 2007 and 2009. Poor member activity continues to limit the Church's congregational growth and outreach in rural areas.

Low member activity and convert retention problems are serious concerns that have not improved over the past decade. The lack of any increase in stakes and districts since 1998 also points to low activity and poor retention. It appears that the number of members lost to activity is similar to the number who joined the Church and retained, with little real growth occurring even as membership rolls continue to expand. The decision to discontinue six districts in late 2009 was influenced by poor member activity.

Severe member activity and convert retention problems in Honduras mirror those in neighboring nations. The Honduran average of 580 members per congregation in 2008 closely parallels those in Nicaragua (688), El Salvador (634), and Guatemala (515).

Very low retention and member activity rates in Honduras, as in other Latin American nations, reflect decades of proselytism focused primarily on achieving high baptismal numbers through rapid baptisms rather than on fostering life-changing conversion and habits of discipleship. Although awareness of retention problems has increased, standards for baptism in most areas remain low or are inconsistently enforced, and an increased focus on reclaiming inactives has borne little fruit. Progress in improving retention and reactivation efforts appears to have occurred in the late 2000s as indicated by enrollment in seminary and institute increasing from 5,905 to 7,388 during a two-year period.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The relative homogeneity of Honduras' population has created few problems of integration. Amerindian groups and immigrants have had difficulty integrating into the Church, as they speak different languages and make up less than 10% of the population.

Language Issues

The wide use of the Spanish language has facilitated church growth and outreach. The small population of Amerindians has received limited attention due to their limited numbers. The greatest potential for outreach may be among the Garifuna. Missionaries already meet with the Garifuna, but it does not appear that many have joined the Church. The Church has no congregation in the Gracias a Dios Department, where most Miskito speakers live.

Missionary Service

The Central America Area reported in 2009 that it had become self-sufficient in sending missionaries, indicating strength among core members. The number of Honduran members serving missionaries appears to have increased in recent years and contributed to sustainable numbers of Central American Latter-day Saint missionary manpower. Increasing seminary and institute attendance in the late 2000s may indicate greater missionary preparation for prospective full-time missionaries. North American members regularly serve in Honduras and likely comprise around one-third of the missionary force.

Leadership

The rapid growth in the 1990s occurred with a large number of adult men capable of leading congregations. A quarter of convert baptisms in the Honduras Tegucigalpa Mission were adult males in the early 1990s.³³⁸ Honduras has the second highest number of stakes in Central America after Guatemala and has not had a stake discontinued. Roberto Ocampo R. from San Pedro Sula was called as a regional representative in 1994.³³⁹ Area Authority Seventies have been called, including Salomon Jaar from Tegucigalpa in 1996,³⁴⁰ Armando A. Sierra from Tegucigalpa in 2001,³⁴¹ Luis G. Duarte from Comayagua in 2005,³⁴² Rafael E. Castro from La Ceiba in 2007,³⁴³ and German Laboriel from Tegucigalpa in 2009.³⁴⁴ Hondurans have also served as mission presidents in their native country.

Temple

Honduras pertained to the Guatemala City Guatemala Temple District prior to the dedication of the Tegucigalpa Honduras Temple in 2013.³⁴⁵ Members traveled by bus for twelve hours from most areas in Honduras to Guatemala City. Honduras was the country with the most members without a temple announced between 1995 and 2006.

The Tegucigalpa Honduras Temple was announced in June 2006. Construction began exactly one year

³³⁸ "Church to create eight new missions," LDS Church News, 1 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29769/Church-to-create-eight-new-missions.html>

³³⁹ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 23 July 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24462/New-regional-representatives.html>

³⁴⁰ "First Presidency calls new area authorities," LDS Church News, 24 August 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28224/First-Presidency-calls-new-area-authorities.html>

³⁴¹ "New area authority seventies," LDS Church News, 14 April 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39723/New-Area-Authority-Seventies.html>

³⁴² "New area seventies," LDS Church News, 16 April 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47170/New-area-seventies.html>

³⁴³ "New area seventies called," LDS Church News, 21 April 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50490/New-Area-Seventies-called.html>

³⁴⁴ "New area seventies," LDS Church News, 11 April 2009. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/57123/New-Area-Seventies.html>

³⁴⁵ Betancourth, Ramon. "Ground broken in Honduras," LDS Church News, 23 June 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50735/Ground-broken-in-Honduras.html>

following the announcement but was halted the following fall due to opposition from officials and citizens who feared that the temple would overshadow the neighboring Catholic Our Lady of Suyapa Basilica. Construction remained on hold for over two years and resulted in the Church abandoning its decision to build on the previously designated site to maintain positive community relations. The Church allocated a new site and broke ground in September 2009. The temple was dedicated on March 17, 2013.

A second temple in San Pedro Sula appears highly likely as the bulk of membership resides either in San Pedro Sula or Tegucigalpa. Before the second groundbreaking for the Tegucigalpa Honduras Temple, there was some speculation that the temple would be relocated to San Pedro Sula. An additional temple will only be announced once the temple in Tegucigalpa is functioning at capacity.

Comparative Growth

In no other nation in Central America has the Church converted as large a percentage of the population as Honduras, although the significance of this figure is unclear when less than one-fifth of nominal members remain active. The majority of this numerical membership growth occurred between 1989 and 1999. Other Central American countries experienced rapid growth during the 1990s but saw greater growth prior to 1990. El Salvador originally had more members than Honduras before the early 1990s, and today has 30,000 fewer members. Guatemala saw its most rapid growth in the 1980s when membership grew from 18,000 to 99,000. Other Central American nations have greater outreach to the national population than Honduras, such as El Salvador.

Other Christian churches also experience rapid numerical growth but struggle with member activity. Seventh Day Adventists typically have much lower ratios of members to congregations than Latter-day Saints, but had a higher ratio in Honduras with 709 members per congregation in 2008. There were 17,549 Jehovah's Witnesses in 258 congregations (68 members per congregation). Jehovah's Witnesses have experienced significantly higher activity and retention rates due to lengthy pre-baptismal preparation demonstrating that poor convert retention is not inevitable.

Future Prospects

After decades of dependence on North American missionaries, the prospects for the Central America Area becoming self-sustaining with local missionaries are highly encouraging. Local leaders continue to mature and have assumed responsibility for administering almost all congregations, stakes, and districts. Nonetheless, the proliferation of paper membership numbers without meaningful increase in stakes or congregations over the past decade points to severe problems of member activity and convert retention, and outreach to inactives has born little fruit. Future prospects for increasing active membership and achieving commensurate growth of congregations will likely depend on the vision and discipline to implement and enforce scriptural standards of preparation and worthiness prior to baptism.

JAMAICA

Geography

AREA: 10,991 square km. Jamaica is an island in the middle of the Caribbean Sea subject to tropical climate. Most of the island is covered in forest and mountainous with some sections of coastal plains. Hurricanes and tropical storms frequently cause damage. Deforestation and pollution of sea water are primary environmental concerns. Jamaica is administratively divided into fourteen parishes.

Population: 2,889,187 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.714% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.12 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 71.78 male, 75.15 female (2012)

Peoples

Black: 91.2%

Mixed: 6.2%

Other: 2.6%

Africans arrived as slaves during European colonialism. Mixed ethnicity originated from East Indians, Chinese, and Europeans intermarrying with the black population. Other ethnicities are primarily immigrant groups who have not intermarried, including Chinese, East Indians, Latin Americans, and Europeans or Americans.

Languages: English and Jamaican Creole English. English is the official language. Immigrant groups speak additional languages but number less than 100,000. Only Jamaican Creole English has over one million speakers (2.67 million).

Literacy: 87.9% (2003)

History

Taino Indians settled Jamaica prior to discovery by Christopher Columbus in 1494. The native population slowly died out from disease and harsh colonial policies. Slaves were brought to work plantations cultivating sugar, coffee, and cocoa. Spain controlled the island until it fell into British possession in 1655. Slavery was abolished in 1834, freeing 250,000 slaves. Increasing autonomy occurred until independence in 1962. Economic instability and crime grew more prevalent in the 1970s and continues to threaten Jamaica's stability today.

Culture

Jamaica heavily influences the rest of the Caribbean through music, such as reggae and has produced popular singers. Jamaica was the birthplace of the Rastafarian movement. Many agricultural products are known internationally. Christianity strongly influences cultural beliefs and practices.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$9,000 (2011) [18.7% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.727

Corruption Index: 3.3 (2011)

Jamaica has a poorly diversified economy that depends on the services sector for growth and stability, accounting for 62% of the GDP. Tourism has become increasingly important and emphasized for economic growth. A third of the GDP originates from industry, primarily from bauxite, alumina, and rum. Primary agriculture products include sugar, bananas, and coffee. Forty percent (40%) of imports and exports are trafficked with the United States. High debt, increasing inflation, and a shrinking economy threaten future potential for economic development and growth. Jamaica had the lowest economic growth in Latin America in the late 2000s.

Corruption is widespread and threatens the nation's stability. Drug violence has worsened in the past couple decades. Bribe taking, extortion, and government favoritism discourage greater foreign investment and hurt small businesses.³⁴⁶ Those found guilty of corruption charges usually go unpunished.

Faiths

Christian: 65.1%

Other: 14.2%

None: 20.9%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Pentecostal 268,463

Seventh Day Adventists 260,610 640

Other Church of God 234,552

Baptist 203,467

New Testament Church of God 178,033

Church of God in Jamaica 135,645

Church of God of Prophecy 121,515

Anglican 101,733

Catholic 73,474

Jehovah's Witnesses 12,233 198

Latter-day Saints 5,580 19

Religion

Jamaica experiences one of the highest rates of irreligiosity in the Caribbean, with a fifth of the population not adhering to any organized religion. The Rastafarian movement began in Jamaica in the 1930s and has spread to many other Caribbean nations. Rastafarianism practices include the rejection of Western society and the religious use of marijuana. Christians are mainly Protestant.

Religious Freedom

Religious freedom is protected by the constitution and upheld by the government. No government harassment

³⁴⁶ "Embassy of the United States—Kingston Jamaica," U.S. Department of State, retrieved 14 December 2010. <http://kingston.usembassy.gov/051604.html>

or discrimination occurs. Rastafarians often feel unfairly targeted for drug charges due to the group's spiritual use of marijuana.³⁴⁷

Largest Cities

Urban: 53%

Kingston, Spanish Town, Portmore, Montego Bay, May Pen, Mandeville, Half Way Tree, Savanna La Mar, Port Antonio, Saint Ann's Bay.

All ten of the largest cities have a congregation. Morant Bay (9,700) is the largest city without a congregation. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

Missionaries first arrived in Jamaica in the 1840s and 1850s for short visits and experienced little success and heavy persecution. A Church presence was not reestablished for over a hundred years.³⁴⁸ Church member families arrived in the 1960s from other nations and began to establish the Church. The first Jamaican branch was created in March 1970. Jamaica was dedicated for missionary work in 1979 by Elder M. Russell Ballard.³⁴⁹ Fulltime missionaries returned to Jamaica in November 1978. By late 1980, one branch functioned. The West Indies Mission was created in 1983 from missions based in the United States and other Caribbean nations and included Jamaica. The Church organized the Jamaica Kingston Mission from the West Indies Mission in 1985.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 5,580 (2012)

Membership numbered 85 in 1980, 300 by 1983, and 520 in 1985.³⁵⁰ Large numbers of converts joined the Church in the late 1980s and early 1990s as membership approached 3,000 in late 1993.³⁵¹ Rapid growth during this period partially came as interest in the Church peaked nationwide through television advertising by the Church about the Book of Mormon. Membership growth rates began to decline as membership increased to 4,389 in 2000.

Membership numbered 5,113 in 2003 and 5,768 in 2006. Membership growth rates continue to decline and since 2000 membership has increased by less than 5% every year except for 2002. Membership typically increases by around 100 to 200 a year.

The first young single adult conference was held in mid-2007.³⁵² In early 2010, Jamaica was the country with the seventh most members without a stake. In 2009 and 2010, membership decline occurred, likely due to membership record updates, emigration, and few convert baptisms.

In 2009, one in 478 was nominally LDS.

³⁴⁷ "Jamaica," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127396.htm>

³⁴⁸ "Jamaica," Country Profile, retrieved 14 December 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/jamaica>

³⁴⁹ "Services in 3 South American nations and island republic," LDS Church News, 10 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20438/Services-in-3-South-American-nations-and-island-republic.html>

³⁵⁰ "Jamaica," Country Profile, retrieved 14 December 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/jamaica>

³⁵¹ "Temple to be built in the Caribbean," LDS Church News, 4 December 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23661/Temple-to-be-built-in-the-Caribbean.html>

³⁵² "Jamaican young adults gather for first conference," LDS Church News, 28 July 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50874/Jamaican-young-adults-gather-for-first-conference.html>

Congregational Growth

Branches: 19 (2012)

The first district was created in Kingston in 1983. A second district was created in Mandeville in 1987.

In August 1990, both the Kingston and Mandeville Jamaica Districts were turned into district stakes. District stakes functioned in only a few locations where the Church worked to prepare members and leaders for the establishment of stakes. By mid-1991 the Church had organized thirteen branches nationwide.³⁵³ Both districts returned to regular district status in September 1996. By 2000 there were eighteen branches in two districts. At the beginning of 2002 there were eleven branches in the Kingston district and seven in the Mandeville district. Two additional districts were created in 2002 in Linstead and Montego Bay. In August 2006, Jamaica was assigned to the newly created Caribbean Area.³⁵⁴ Due to the area realignment, the Jamaica Kingston Mission gained jurisdiction over the Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands in addition to the Cayman Islands already part of the mission.³⁵⁵ Cuba was assigned to the Jamaica Kingston Mission in 2010.

In 2009, both districts in Linstead and Montego Bay were discontinued in preparation for the establishment of the first stake. Many branch presidencies were reorganized in preparation for individual branches to meet the requirements to become wards. By late 2009 there were twenty-one branches.

Activity and Retention

During the early years of the Church's presence there was very high convert retention and member activity. In 1980 there were eighty-five members, all of whom were active full-tithe payers that fulfilled their home and visiting teaching responsibilities.³⁵⁶ Jamaica had 141 seminary students in 1989.³⁵⁷ 2,000 attended a meeting with President Hinckley in 2002.³⁵⁸ Jamaica has been preparing for the first stake to be organized for two decades. One thousand members attended the twenty-fifth anniversary of the dedication of Jamaica for missionary work in 2004.³⁵⁹ An Area Conference in mid-2009 was attended by 1,675, far more than the average sacrament attendance for all four districts at the time.³⁶⁰ During the 2008–2009 school year 110 students were enrolled in seminary and 150 were enrolled in institute. Seminary and institute enrollment steadily increased in the late 2000s from 260 in 2008 to 320 in 2010. The average number of members per congregation has increased from 243 to 285 since 2000. Branches widely vary in active membership, with some consisting of as few as a couple dozen active members to others with as many as one hundred. Total active membership in Jamaica appears to be no greater than 1,500, or 25% of total membership.

³⁵³ "News of the Church," *Ensign*, Mar. 1991, 74–80.

³⁵⁴ "Southeast area divided; Caribbean Area created," *LDS Church News*, 10 June 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49062/Southeast-area-divided-Caribbean-Area-created.html>

³⁵⁵ "Area Presidencies," *LDS Church News*, 10 June 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49056/Area-presidencies.html>

³⁵⁶ Joseph B. Wirthlin, "Let Every Man Learn His Duty," *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 69.

³⁵⁷ Stoker, Kevin. "Early-morning/daily seminary builds foundation in gospel program has expanded to help youths worldwide," *LDS Church News*, 27 May 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19425/Early-morningdaily-seminary-builds-foundation-in-gospel-program-has-expanded-to-help-youths-worldwide.html>

³⁵⁸ Hill, Greg. "2,000 meet in Jamaica," *LDS Church News*, 1 June 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41903/2000-meet-in-Jamaica.html>

³⁵⁹ Showalter, Rodney; Showalter, Geneva; Moore, Sharol. "Joy in Jamaica—Members observe anniversary of dedication by Elder Ballard," *LDS Church News*, 20 December 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44843/Joy-in-Jamaica—Members-observe-anniversary-of-dedication-by-Elder-Ballard.html>

³⁶⁰ Taylor, Scott. "Jamaica broadcast covers Caribbean," *LDS Church News*, 30 January 2009. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/56530/Jamaica-broadcast-covers-Caribbean.html>

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English.

English has all LDS scriptures and the widest body of Church materials available of any language. No church materials are available in Jamaican Creole.

Meetinghouses

Construction on the first chapel began in 1983.³⁶¹ Several Church-built meetinghouses serve congregations. Smaller congregations meet in renovated buildings or rented spaces.

Health and Safety

Poor diet causes nutritional deficiencies and great susceptibility to disease. HIV/AIDS infects 1.6% of the population. Methods of infection include illicit sexual relations, drug use, HIV-positive mothers, and contaminated needles. Crime has increased due to the deteriorating economy and drug trafficking. HIV/AIDS and poor diet pose concerns over missionaries' safety. Jamaica has one of the highest homicide rates in the world, with forty-nine murders per every 100,000 people a year.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Three thousand food boxes were donated following Hurricane Ivan.³⁶² Rehabilitation centers received donations of furniture and needed supplies in 2006.³⁶³ Wheelchairs have been donated for disabled Jamaicans.³⁶⁴ The Perpetual Education Fund operates in Jamaica, providing low interest loans for members interested in pursuing higher education.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

No legislation or cultural restrictions prohibit missionaries from proselytism in Jamaica.

Cultural Issues

Historically, the Church has experienced a large amount of persecution and prejudice. This has caused many Jamaicans to avoid learning about the Church and creates an atmosphere of intolerance. Many smaller communities are religiously divided based on denomination. Secularism has increased in recent years as interest in religious declines in the major cities. Widespread drug abuse and violent crime are major concerns.

National Outreach

The Church's establishment in Jamaica for over thirty years has resulted in congregations scattered throughout the nation although members are few. The majority of the population has Church outreach centers nearby. All

³⁶¹ "Jamaica," Country Profile, retrieved 14 December 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/jamaica>

³⁶² Swensen, Jason. "Hurricane Ivan batters Gulf Coast," LDS Church News, 18 September 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46151/Hurricane-Ivan-batters-Gulf-Coast.html>

³⁶³ "Donations in Jamaica," LDS Church News, 16 December 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49880/Donations-in-Jamaica.html>

³⁶⁴ "Hundreds more wheelchairs distributed," LDS Church News, 28 December 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43004/Hundreds-more-wheelchairs-distributed.html>

fourteen administrative parishes have a congregation except for Saint Mary with 111,000 inhabitants or 4% of the national population. Half the parishes have only one congregation, indicating that outreach is mainly limited to urban areas. The national extent of urban outreach is manifested by all cities with over 10,000 inhabitants containing a congregation. Rural and small town congregational outreach remains limited as many as one hundred towns and villages are without a congregation.

The large number of small towns challenges the Church's efforts in national outreach. Many urban centers have a population too small to support full-time missionaries. Although visits can likely be arranged for full-time missionaries to visit and teach individuals in unreached towns, fellowshipping investigators and converts in these locations strain mission resources. The Church has the greatest opportunity in reaching these locations with the involvement of local members in finding interested individuals and preparing them to take the missionary lessons. Cottage meetings conducted by missionaries may be held with a small group of interested individuals in lesser-reached towns. These meetings have potential over time to develop into groups, dependent branches, and branches as they are held regularly and people join the Church. Cottage meetings present opportunities but are not commonly implemented in Jamaica.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

The Church struggles with not only retaining new converts but also with keeping the general membership active in attendance and living Church teachings. An insufficient number of full-tithe payers and active Melchizedek Priesthood holders have delayed the creation of the first stake for decades. Members have actively taken part in preparing branches and districts to become stakes since as early as 1990. The number of branches has increased by three since 2000, yet membership increased by 1,600, or 2.5 times as fast as congregational growth, suggesting significant retention problems. A larger number of members attended President Hinckley's visit in 2002 than regional conferences held in the late 2000s. Some progress has been made with active membership in recent years as branches and districts have come closer to meeting qualifications to become stakes.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The large black majority provides easier fellowshipping for black Jamaicans due to the homogeneity of culture. This allows for a reduction of misunderstandings and conflict among members. The few nonblack Jamaicans may struggle in Church activity due to the lack of ethnic minority groups.

Language Issues

Although the Church benefits from an English-speaking population, no materials are translated into Jamaica Creole. Most immigrant groups speak English, facilitating their integration into Jamaican congregations.

Missionary Service

The first Jamaican member to serve a mission began his mission in 1985.³⁶⁵ By the end of 2003, 175 Jamaican members had served or were serving missions.³⁶⁶ Jamaica continues to rely on large numbers of foreign full-time missionaries to staff the mission. Stronger emphasis on missionary service and seminary and institute attendance may help increase the self-sufficiency of the Jamaica LDS missionary force.

³⁶⁵ "Jamaica," Country Profile, retrieved 14 December 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/jamaica>

³⁶⁶ Showalter, Rodney; Showalter, Geneva; Moore, Sharol. "Joy in Jamaica—Members observe anniversary of dedication by Elder Ballard," LDS Church News, 20 December 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44843/Joy-in-Jamaica—Members-observe-anniversary-of-dedication-by-Elder-Ballard.html>

Leadership

A lack of active Melchizedek Priesthood holders has challenged the Church's national outreach and the organization of stakes. In the early 2000s, an effort was made to establish the first stake on the island, which failed due to a lack of active priesthood holders and full-tithe payers. This instead resulted in the division of the two districts likely in a move to spur greater growth in unreached areas. In the late 2000s, the lack of sufficient active, full-tithe paying Melchizedek Priesthood holders continued to delay the organization of a stake. The consolidation of districts in 2009 allowed greater interaction of former district leaders with their local congregations to augment activity among less active priesthood holders.

Temple

Jamaica is assigned to the Panama City Panama Temple district. Over the years Jamaica has belonged to several other temple districts as new temples have been constructed. Temple excursions occur regularly but require travel by plane or ship to nearby temples. A temple may be announced for Jamaica once multiple stakes are organized, as island nations tend to have temples built with far fewer members than nonisland nations.

Comparative Growth

Jamaica has experienced slow growth comparable to other English-speaking countries in the Caribbean as well as lower activity. With a population of 1.2 million, Trinidad and Tobago had its first congregation created in 1980 with less than half as many members as Jamaica has today, yet Jamaica had not had its first stake created as of early 2010. Smaller nations and islands in the Caribbean have seen slower growth, such as Barbados, which had less than 700 members in 2008 despite a Church presence for over thirty years. Most nations with as seasoned a Church membership as Jamaica typically have stakes, but the creation of a stake has not come to fruition due to the dispersion of membership over a wide area and low member activity.

Many Christian denominations operate on the island and have all experienced more rapid and continuous growth than the LDS Church. The Seventh Day Adventist Church had a quarter of a million members and nearly 700 congregations in 2008, whereas the LDS Church had 6,000 members in twenty-one congregations. Reasons for slow LDS growth include a more recent church establishment, high antagonism from other churches, low member activity, and member reliance on missionaries for finding new converts and retention. Other denominations appear to have developed very functional local membership that does not rely on outside personnel to function.

Future Prospects

A stake may be created in Kingston, as districts were consolidated in 2009 to prepare members in branches to become wards. The Mandeville Jamaica District may also become a stake around the same time. A district in Montego Bay may be recreated once greater strength and activity occur in both western and central Jamaica. Additional congregations along the northern coast and in the Saint Mary Parish may be organized. Small branches or groups in many of the small towns unreached by current congregations may be created once greater activity and membership growth occurs. Poor convert retention and low member activity rates are consistent barriers to greater real church growth and self-sustainability. Little progress expanding national outreach will likely continue until these issues are resolved.

MARTINIQUE

Geography

AREA: 1,128 square km. Located in the Caribbean between Dominica and Saint Lucia, Martinique is an overseas department of France that borders the Caribbean Sea and North Atlantic Ocean. Mountainous terrain occupies most the island, which is heavily forested and subject to a subtropical climate moderated by a rainy season from June to October. Hurricanes and flooding are natural hazards. Environmental issues include pollution and deforestation. Martinique is divided into four administrative arrondissements.

Peoples

African/mulatto: 90%

White: 5%

Other: 5%

Africans and mixed African, white, and East Indians account for 90% of the population. Whites are primary French. Other ethnic groups include East Indians, Indian Tamil, and Chinese.

Population: 397,730 (January 2007)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.72% (2006)

Fertility Rate: 1.79 children born per woman (2006)

Life Expectancy: 79.5 male, 78.85 female (2006)

Languages: Martiniquan Creole French [Guadeloupean Creole French] (98%), French (2%). French is the official language and commonly spoken. Nearly the entire population speaks Martiniquan Creole French.

Literacy: 97.7% (2003)

History

Arawak and later Carib Amerindians populated Martinique prior to the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1493. French settlers landed in 1635 and annihilated the Carib population as the colonists expanded their plantations and landholdings. African slaves began working the plantations during the seventeenth century. The British captured Martinique several times in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but French rule was successively reestablished after each incident. Attempts to emancipate slaves in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century did not come to total fruition until the early 1830s. Indentured servants from India arrived in the late nineteenth century. Martinique became an overseas department of France in 1946. French economic assistance turned the island into one of the Caribbean's wealthiest during the latter half of the twentieth century.³⁶⁷

Culture

French culture and influence is greater on Martinique than other Caribbean islands. The Catholic Church is the primary influence on society. Commonly eaten foods include tropical fruits, vegetables, and seafood.

³⁶⁷ "History of Martinique," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 21 February 2011. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Martinique

Martinique is most known for its contributions to Caribbean music. Festivals for artists and musicians are widely supported and viewed by tourists. Theft is the most common crime.³⁶⁸

Economy

GDP per capita: \$33,300 (2010) [69.6% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.872

Corruption Index: 6.8 (note: above figures are for France)

Tourism and economic aid from France drives the economy. Services employ 73% of the labor force and generate 83% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 17% of the labor force and generates 11% of the GDP. Major industries include construction, rum, cement, petroleum refining, sugar, and tourism. Agriculture employs 10% of the labor force and generates 6% of the GDP. Fruit, avocados, flowers, vegetables, and sugarcane are common crops. France and Guadeloupe are the primary trade partners.³⁶⁹ Corruption is perceived at lower levels than in most Caribbean islands.

Faiths

Christian: 95%

Other: 5%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 360,000

Seventh Day Adventists 15,006 66

Jehovah's Witnesses 4,710 59

Latter-day Saints 199 1

Religion

Catholics account for the vast majority of the entire Christian population. Nontraditional Protestant denominations such as Seventh Day Adventists and Evangelicals have experienced sustained church growth for many years. Hindus account for the largest non-Christian religious group and comprise less than 5% of the population.

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which in general is upheld by the government. Separation of church and state occurred in 1905. Traditional Catholic holidays are recognized by the government. Religious organizations may register with the government as an association of worship or as a cultural association. Associations of worship may only organize religious activities whereas cultural associations grant religious organizations the right to make profits, receive government subsidies, and are not tax-exempt. Foreign missionaries may serve in France but are required to obtain a long-duration visa if their home country is not exempted from French visa entry requirements. Religious education does not occur in public schools.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁸ "Martinique," Countries and Their Cultures, retrieved 22 February 2011. <http://www.everyculture.com/Ma-Ni/Martinique.html>

³⁶⁹ "Economy of Martinique," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 21 February 2011. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Martinique

³⁷⁰ "France," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148934.htm>

Largest Cities

Urban: 95%

Fort-de-France, Le Lamentin, Le Robert, Schoelcher, Le François, Sainte-Marie, Saint-Joseph, Ducos, La Trinité, Rivière-Pilote.

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Two of the ten largest cities have an LDS congregation. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of the island population resides in the ten most populous cities.

LDS History

The first known Latter-day Saint from Martinique joined the Church in France while serving in the military and returned to Martinique in 1980. The West Indies Mission president visited in 1983, and the first full-time missionaries assigned to the island arrived in May 1984 and held the first LDS meeting. Two General Authorities visited later that year. The Martinique Branch was organized in October 1985.³⁷¹ In 2007, a full-time LDS missionary companionship became lost in the island's mountains for three days before being found by a local farmer.³⁷² Martinique is assigned to the West Indies Mission.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 199 (2012)

There were fewer than one hundred members in 1993. Membership reached one hundred in 1997 and 143 by 2000. Stagnant membership growth occurred for much of the 2000s as membership totaled 137 in 2002, 140 in 2004, 142 in 2006, and 186 in 2008. With the exception of 2007 and 2008 when membership increased by forty-four during a two-year period, membership generally increased or decreased by only a few members a year. Slow membership growth has been due in part to converts immigrating to metropolitan France.³⁷³ In 2009, one in 2,116 was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 0 Branches: 1 (2012)

A second branch was organized in 2007 in Trinité but closed in 2011. The Fort de France Branch pertains to the Basseterre Guadeloupe District.

Activity and Retention

The average number of members per congregation decreased from 143 in 2000 to 94 in 2009. Fifteen were enrolled in seminary and institute during the 2009–2010 school year. In early 2011, the Fort de France Branch appeared to have between fifty and seventy-five active members, whereas the Trinité Branch had likely fewer than twenty active members. Total active membership is estimated to range between seventy-five and ninety active members, or 40%–45% of church membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: French.

³⁷¹ "Martinique," Country Profile, 8 October 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/country/martinique>

³⁷² "Missionaries Found Unharmed in Martinique," News Release, 6 December 2007. <http://newsroom.lds.org/article/missionaries-found-unharmed-in-martinique>

³⁷³ "Martinique," Country Profile, 8 October 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/country/martinique>

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in French. The *Liabona* magazine has monthly issues in French.

Meetinghouses

In 2009, the Fort de France Branch met in a rented space on the second floor of a commercial building, whereas the Trinité Branch met on the second floor of a residential home.

Humanitarian and Development Work

There have been no major humanitarian or development projects sponsored by the Church in Guadeloupe. Some services activities are carried out by local members and full-time missionaries.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Latter-day Saints benefit from full religious freedom to proselyte, worship, and assemble. Foreign full-time missionaries regularly serve on Martinique.

Cultural Issues

Secularism from Europe may decrease receptivity of the local population to LDS teachings due to increasing wealth and the strong cultural connection with metropolitan France. Most have a Catholic background, and many have been receptive to missionary-minded denominations such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists. Non-Catholic Christians are often entrenched and highly active in their churches, reducing their receptivity to the LDS Church.

National Outreach

Thirty-seven percent (37%) of the island population resides in cities with an LDS congregation and 64% reside in the two administrative arrondissements reached by the Church. Prospects for expanding national outreach appear most favorable in cities located in the central portion of the island between Fort-de-France and La Trinité. Establishing mission outreach centers in Le Lamentin, Le Robert, Sainte-Marie, and Ducos would increase the percentage of the population residing in a city with an LDS congregation to 70%.

With the third largest population among islands of the Lesser Antilles, Martinique receives some of the most limited LDS mission resources in the region, largely due to mediocre receptivity and the frequent emigration of converts. The assignment of larger numbers of full-time missionaries to Martinique may reduce local member involvement in missionary work, as receptivity has been modest, and the size of church membership remains small. Nevertheless the assignment of a senior missionary couple may facilitate the expansion of national outreach through coordination with local branch presidents and mission leadership, but missionaries must be vigilant that they do not take administrative and ecclesiastical responsibilities away from local leaders.

The LDS Church does not perform any Martinique-specific Internet outreach, but a large number of French-language websites and church materials are available, including an online edition of LDS scriptures in French. Reference to these resources by local members and full-time missionaries and the development of member-missionary Internet proselytism can facilitate greater national outreach.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Moderate rates of convert retention have occurred on Martinique as evidenced by the organization of a second branch in 2007 and its continued operation in 2011 notwithstanding slow membership growth and fewer than 200 Latter-day Saints on the island at present. Seminary and institute enrollment has been consistent year to year, indicating that member activity rates have not experienced any major fluctuations.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The homogenous black/mulatto population presents minimal ethnic integration issues for the LDS Church. East Indians appear the most challenging group to accommodate into LDS congregations due to their small numbers and differing cultural and religious background.

Language Issues

Standard French is spoken by virtually the entire population as a result of the strong cultural and societal influence from metropolitan France. Martiniquan French Creole is widely spoken on Martinique and Guadeloupe with a total of 850,000 speakers worldwide. The need for LDS materials translated into Martiniquan French Creole is low due to high rates of bilingualism in standard French and the informal usage of French Creole.

Missionary Service

Four full-time missionaries were assigned to Martinique in mid-2009. Few if any local members have served full-time missions. The development of a local LDS full-time missionary force will be essential toward ensuring the continued self-reliance of local leadership over the long term.

Leadership

Local members appear to serve as branch presidents for both LDS branches. Limited interaction with mission leaders and few full-time missionaries assigned to the island have encouraged local members to take greater responsibility in administrative and leadership tasks.

Temple

Martinique is assigned to the Orlando Florida Temple district. Organized temple trips likely occur occasionally under the Basseterre Guadeloupe District. Distance to the temple and travel expenses limit temple attendance for most members. Prospects for a future temple closer to Martinique appear unlikely in the medium term due to the small number of members in the region.

Comparative Growth

Martinique has the smallest percentage of Latter-day Saints in the general population among Caribbean islands with an official church presence. Guadeloupe has the second lowest percentage of Latter-day Saints in the region, which is twice as great as the percentage of members on Martinique. Membership growth rates have ranked among the slowest in the region, whereas member activity rates are slightly higher than most of the Lesser Antilles. The LDS Church in Martinique appears to have one of the most developed local leaderships among Caribbean islands with fewer than 200 members. The percentage of the population reached by LDS mission outreach is among the lowest in the region.

Missionary-minded Christian groups continue to report steady growth and have achieved some of the greatest

church growth in the Caribbean on Martinique. Seventh Day Adventists baptized over 500 new converts and organized seven additional congregations in 2009.³⁷⁴ Jehovah's Witnesses baptized 150 converts and operated nearly sixty congregations in 2010.

Future Prospects

Emigration of converts to metropolitan France, limited missionary resources dedicated to Martinique, and the tiny church membership are the primary obstacles preventing greater church growth for Latter-day Saints. The establishment of the Church on Martinique occurred many years after other missionary-oriented Christians arrived, after these denominations had already developed a strong community base and shepherded much of the receptive population into their congregations. Dissuading members from emigrating, increasing the number of active members in established congregations, and augmenting the number of local members serving full-time missions will be required to achieve greater church growth in the coming years.

³⁷⁴ "Martinique Conference (1990-Present)," Adventiststatistics.org, retrieved 22 February 2011. http://www.adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldInstID=1525393

MEXICO

Geography

AREA: 1,964,375 square km. Located south of the United States in northern Central America, Mexico borders the United States, Guatemala, Belize, the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean Sea, and the Pacific Ocean. Several large bodies of water extend inland into Mexico, such as the Gulf of California and the Bay of Campeche. The large land bridge narrows in the south, forming the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. In the southeast, the Yucatan Peninsula extends into the Gulf of Mexico and divides the Caribbean Sea from the Gulf of Mexico, whereas in the northwest, the Baja California Peninsula separates the Gulf of California and the Pacific Ocean. The Rio Grande River constitutes the entire length of the Texan border. In the central interior, several large lakes and reservoirs dot the landscape, notably Lake Chapala in Jalisco State. Climate varies by location, with tropical, wet climates in the south, temperate climates in the interior, alpine climates on the highest peaks, and arid desert climates in the north. Terrain is generally flat and consists of plains along most coastal areas, with high, rugged mountains in the interior. Tsunamis, hurricanes, tropical storms, volcanoes, and earthquakes are natural hazards. Environmental issues include inadequate fresh water in the north, proper disposal of waste and hazardous materials, deforestation, desertification, erosion, air pollution in urban areas, and land subsidence in Mexico City. Mexico is administratively divided into thirty-one states and one federal district.

Peoples

Mestizo: 60%
Amerindian: 30%
White: 9%
Other: 1%

Mestizos are a compound of Amerindian and European ancestry. Whites primarily reside in the largest cities, whereas Amerindians tend to populate rural areas.

Population: 114,975,406 (July 2012)
Annual Growth Rate: 1.086% (2012)
Fertility Rate: 2.27 children born per woman (2012)
Life Expectancy: 73.84 male, 79.63 female (2012)

Languages: Spanish monolingual (92.7%), Spanish and Amerindian languages bilingual (5.7%), Amerindian languages monolingual (0.8%), unspecified (0.8%). In Mexico, 291 indigenous languages are spoken. Languages with over one million speakers include Spanish (109.4 million) and Nahuatl (1.75 million). Other commonly spoken Amerindian languages include Maya, Mixtec, Zapotec, and Tzeltal, Tzotzil.

Literacy: 86.1% (2005)

History

Sophisticated and advanced pre-Colombian ancient Mesoamerican civilizations thrived in Mexico for centuries prior to European contact. The Olmecs, Mayas, Toltecs, and Aztecs occupied large areas of Mexico and some

exerted influence into northern Mexico and Central America. In the 1520s, Hernan Cortes conquered the Aztec Empire and established a Spanish colony that endured for 300 years. In 1810, Mexico declared independence, which was not internationally recognized until the early 1820s. Struggles between politicians and the public regarding the type of government to administer the country have persisted through much of Mexico's modern history. In 1862, the French military invaded and established a monarchy that was overthrown in 1867. During the 1910s, the Mexican Revolution gripped the nation as a result of major economic and social problems and gave way to the creation of the 1917 constitution. A single political party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), dominated government and politics for the rest of the twentieth century. In 2000, a new political party came to power in government through what the international community regarded as the fairest and freest elections in Mexico's history. In recent years, Mexico has become increasingly integrated into the United States economy through free trade agreements and remittances from Mexican workers in the United States.³⁷⁵

Culture

As the most populous Spanish-speaking country, Mexico has strongly influenced the culture of many other American nations for centuries. Local culture reflects a fusion of Mesoamerican and Spanish customs, language, art, and practices. Many cities and place names originate from Amerindian civilizations such as the Aztec. Aztec city and temple ruins dot the landscape of central Mexico, with impressive architectural structures such as the pyramids of Teotihuacan. The Maya civilization also left behind many ancient cities that are popular tourist destinations, especially Tulum and Chichen Itza. Mexico's tropical beaches and vacation hotspots have attracted North Americans for decades. Spanish colonization introduced Catholicism, the Spanish language, and Western ideas and philosophies. Catholicism remains one of the primarily societal influences, with a growing Protestant minority. The Day of the Dead (El Dia de los Muertos) originated through the blending of indigenous religious beliefs and Catholicism and is widely celebrated from October 31st to November 2nd. Due to highly unequal distribution of wealth, socioeconomic classes and divides are found in many urban areas like Mexico City, which is the largest urban agglomeration in the Western Hemisphere. Rural areas tend to be poor, not modernized, and heavily dependent on agriculture. Cuisine consists of beans, rice, corn, beef, and vegetables. Mexican food ranks among the most popular ethnic foods in the United States and has significantly contributed to the diet and dishes of many other nations, as chocolate and corn both originated from Mexico and are common international foods. Rates of violent crime are higher than most nations, primarily due to violence along the United States border, illicit drug trafficking, and governmental corruption at all levels that has limited progress at fighting drug traffickers. Cigarette and alcohol consumption rates are lower than the United States and are representative of rates of substance abuse found in other Latin American countries.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$15,100 (2011) [31.4% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.770

Corruption Index: 3.0 (2011)

Mexico has one of the world's largest economies and has signed free trade agreements with over fifty countries. Nationwide infrastructure improvements have facilitated growth and investment from overseas and in the United States. However, income inequality is highly unequal despite Mexico's vast natural resources, competitive geographic location, and access to both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The government continues to struggle to adequately improve the country's infrastructure, the education system, labor conditions, and gain more foreign investment. Abundant natural resources include oil, natural gas, silver, copper, gold, zinc, lead, and timber. Unemployment rates are reportedly less than 6%, but underemployment rates are as high as 25%.

³⁷⁵ "Background Note: Mexico," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 14 May 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35749.htm>

Services account for 63% of the workforce and GDP. Industry employs 23% of the workforce and generates 33% of the GDP. Primary industries include food processing, tobacco, chemicals, metals, oil, mining, clothing, cars, and tourism. Agriculture employs 14% of the population and produces 4% of the GDP. Corn, wheat, soybeans, rice, beans, cotton, coffee, fruit, and vegetables and primary crops. Imports originating from the United States account for 57% of all imports, whereas 81% of all Mexican exports are destined for the United States.

Corruption is one of the major reasons for why Mexico lags so far behind income and prosperity levels of its neighbor, the United States. The United States–Mexico border is a major area for illegal activity regarding human trafficking, illicit narcotic transshipment, and violence. Nearly all United States–bound illegal drugs are trafficked through Mexico. Drug production is a major issue, with large scale opium cultivation and ecstasy manufacturing. Marijuana, heroin, and methamphetamine from Mexico are frequently trafficked into the United States.

Faiths

Christian: 82.8%

Other: 0.3%

Unspecified: 13.8%

None: 3.1%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 85,077,019

Latter-day Saints 1,317,700 1,985

Jehovah's Witnesses 739,954 12,657

Seventh Day Adventists 689,816 2,970

Religion

As many as 88% of Mexicans are Catholic. Non-Catholic Christians constitute less than 5% of the population and are primary concentrated in the south. Many larger non-Catholic Christian groups report higher church memberships than self-identified members on the census, such as Seventh Day Adventists and Latter-day Saints. Nominalism is prevalent in most religious groups. There are approximately 50,000 Jews and a few Muslims. Some syncretism between Catholicism and indigenous Amerindian beliefs occurs in areas of southern Mexico.³⁷⁶

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. There is no state religion. The influence and power of religious figures on politics and government is limited by the constitution in order to maintain separation of church and state. Discrimination and legislation favoring or prohibiting a religious group is prohibited. Religious groups do not need to register with the government to operate, but must register in order to participate in legal matters such as purchasing real estate. Only registered religious groups may assemble outside of their places of worship, but must notify the government. Government permission is required for religious groups to broadcast on radio and television. Religious education may occur in private

³⁷⁶ "Mexico," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127397.htm>

schools. Some instances of persecution and religious intolerance have been reported in southern Mexico, where the Catholic majority has at times discriminated against and persecuted Evangelical Christians.³⁷⁷

Largest Cities

Urban: 77%

Mexico City, Guadalajara, Monterrey, Puebla, Toluca, Tijuana, León, Ciudad Juárez, Torreón, San Luis Potosí, Querétaro, Mérida, Aguascalientes, Tampico, Cuernavaca, Acapulco, Chihuahua, Morelia, Saltillo, Veracruz, Mexicali, Villahermosa, Hermosillo, Reynosa, Culiacán, Cancún, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Xalapa-Enríquez, Oaxaca. All twenty-nine cities with over half a million inhabitants have a stake and multiple LDS congregations. Every city with over 60,000 inhabitants has an LDS congregation. Forty-nine percent (49%) of the national population resides in the twenty-nine largest cities.

LDS History

LDS Church President Brigham Young called six missionaries to begin proselytism in Mexico with recently translated Spanish church materials in 1875. Missionaries first baptized converts in Hermosillo in 1876.³⁷⁸ The Church began missionary work in Mexico City in 1879.³⁷⁹ In 1880 and 1881, missionaries dedicated Mexico for missionary work on two occasions in Mexico City.³⁸⁰ In 1885, 400 Latter-day Saint colonists settled in northern Mexico.³⁸¹ The Church discontinued the Mexican Mission in 1889 and reopened the mission in 1901.³⁸² The LDS colonies were evacuated in 1912 due to the Mexican Revolution; only Colonia Juarez and Colonia Dublan were resettled and continue today.³⁸³ LDS missionaries returned to Mexico in 1922.³⁸⁴ Missionary efforts in central Mexico were not reestablished until 1930 when six local missionaries were called.³⁸⁵ In 1936, many local members debated about Mexican church leadership under the Third Convention and were excommunicated. Nearly a decade later, many of these members who separated themselves from the Church returned and stabilized local membership and leadership.³⁸⁶

Seminary and institute began in the late 1950s. In 1964, the Church opened a preparatory church school in Mexico City called Benemérito de las Américas. In 1976, the Church announced the first temple in Latin America in Mexico City.³⁸⁷

The LDS Church was formally recognized by the government in 1993. In 2004, Mexico became the first nation outside the United States to have over one million nominal members. In the past 130 years, international

³⁷⁷ "Mexico," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127397.htm>

³⁷⁸ "Country Profiles," LDS Newsroom, retrieved 24 September 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/mexico>

³⁷⁹ Larsen, Dean L. "Mingled Destinies: The Lamanites and the Latter-day Saints," Ensign, Dec 1975, 8

³⁸⁰ Searle, Don L. "One Million in Mexico," Ensign, Jul 2004, 35.

³⁸¹ "Country Profiles," LDS Newsroom, retrieved 24 September 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/mexico>

³⁸² Searle, Don L. "One Million in Mexico," Ensign, Jul 2004, 35.

³⁸³ Hartley, William G. "The Church Grows in Strength," Ensign, Sep 1999, 32.

³⁸⁴ Searle, Don L. "One Million in Mexico," Ensign, Jul 2004, 35.

³⁸⁵ "Country Profiles," LDS Newsroom, retrieved 24 September 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/mexico>

³⁸⁶ Swensen, Jason. "A million in Mexico on Aug. 1, after 128 years," LDS Church News, 10 July 2004. <http://www.ldschurch-news.com/articles/45820/A-million-in-Mexico-on-Aug-1-after-128-years.html>

³⁸⁷ Swensen, Jason. "A million in Mexico on Aug. 1, after 128 years," LDS Church News, 10 July 2004. <http://www.ldschurch-news.com/articles/45820/A-million-in-Mexico-on-Aug-1-after-128-years.html>

Church leaders have repeatedly suggested or declared that indigenous Mexican peoples have some ancestry from Book of Mormon peoples.³⁸⁸

Missions

In 1956, the Church divided the Mexican Mission to create the Northern Mexican Mission, which was later renamed the Mexico Monterrey Mission. In 1960, the West Mexican Mission was organized and later renamed the Mexico Hermosillo Mission. In 1963, the Church created the Southeast Mexican Mission, which was later renamed the Mexico Veracruz Mission. In 1968, the Northern Mexican Mission divided again to create the Mexico North Central Mission, later renamed the Mexico Torreon Mission.

Two new missions were created in 1975 in Guadalajara and Villahermosa; the latter was relocated to Merida in 1978. Additional missions were organized in Mexico City North (1978), Mexico City East (1987), Mazatlan (1987) [relocated to Culiacan in 1995], Chihuahua (1988), Tuxtla Gutierrez (1988), Puebla (1988), Tampico (1988), Queretaro (1989) [relocated to Leon in 1992 and Aguascalientes in 2013], Oaxaca (1990), Tijuana (1990), Monterrey South (1992), Mexico City West (2001), Guadalajara South (2003) [renamed Guadalajara East in 2009], Cuernavaca (2006), Mexico City Northwest (2010), Villahermosa (2010), Mexico City Southeast (2011), Mexico Puebla North (2012), Mexico Xalapa (2012), Mexico Cancun (2013), Mexico Ciudad Juarez (2013), Mexico Ciudad Obregon (2013), Mexico Mexico City Chalco (2013), Mexico Pachuca (2013), Mexico Queretaro (2013), Mexico Reynosa (2013), and Mexico Saltillo (2013). Missions increased from one in 1950 to five in 1970, eight in 1980, 17 in 1990, eighteen in 2000, twenty-three in 2010, and thirty-four in 2013.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 1,317,700 (2012)

In 1942, there were 5,300 Latter-day Saints.³⁸⁹ In 1947, there were less than 5,000 members, half of whom resided in the Mormon colonies.³⁹⁰ By 1961, membership totaled 25,000.³⁹¹ Membership reached 100,000 in 1972,³⁹² 150,000 in 1976,³⁹³ and 240,000 in 1983.³⁹⁴ There were over 500,000 Latter-day Saints in 1989.³⁹⁵

By year-end 2000, there were 884,071 members. Membership steadily increased during the 2000s, reaching 980,053 in 2003, 1.044 million in 2005, and 1.158 million in 2008. Annual membership growth rates varied from a low of 2.8% in 2003 to a high of 3.95% in 2001. Membership generally increases arithmetically by approximately 40,000 per year. In 2009, one in ninety-three was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 1,535 Branches: 448 (April 2013)

The Church created its first stake in Colonia Juarez in 1895. The first native Mexican-majority stake was

³⁸⁸ Swensen, Jason. "A million in Mexico on Aug. 1, after 128 years," LDS Church News, 10 July 2004. <http://www.ldschurch-news.com/articles/45820/A-million-in-Mexico-on-Aug-1-after-128-years.html>

³⁸⁹ "Country Profiles," LDS Newsroom, retrieved 24 September 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/mexico>

³⁹⁰ Fyans, J. Thomas. "The Lamanites Must Rise in Majesty and Power," Ensign, May 1976, 12.

³⁹¹ "Country Profiles," LDS Newsroom, retrieved 24 September 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/mexico>

³⁹² Searle, Don L. "One Million in Mexico," Ensign, Jul 2004, 35.

³⁹³ Fyans, J. Thomas. "The Lamanites Must Rise in Majesty and Power," Ensign, May 1976, 12.

³⁹⁴ "Country Profiles," LDS Newsroom, retrieved 24 September 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/mexico>

³⁹⁵ Searle, Don L. "One Million in Mexico," Ensign, Jul 2004, 35.

organized in 1961 in Mexico City. By the beginning of 1970, there were three stakes, two of which were in Mexico City.

The number of stakes has increased by between 21 and 45 every five years since the late 1970s. The number of stakes increased to eight by early 1975, 53 in 1980, 77 in 1985, and 106 by 1990. At year-end 2000, there were 188 stakes and 41 districts. There were 200 stakes in 2005 and 221 stakes and 34 districts in September 2010.

There were 1,133 congregations by year-end 1989 (531 wards, 602 branches), which increased to 1,383 (780 wards, 603 branches) in 1993 and 1,547 (1,059 wards, 488 branches) in 1997. In 2000, Latter-day Saints met in 1,772 congregations (1,297 wards, 475 branches). The total number of congregations increased to 1,852 in 2002, 1,903 in 2005, and 1,977 in 2008. Between year-end 2000 and late September 2010, the number of wards increased by 245 (19% increase) and the number of branches declined by 12 (2.5% decrease). The summation of total congregations increased by 13% during this period. To meet the needs of members meeting in small groups in remote areas, 10 mission branches function throughout Mexico, none of which are in the Mexico City area.

Activity and Retention

In 2008, 87,000 attended a cultural night preceding the dedication of the Mexico City Mexico Temple in what is believed to be the largest live audience to be addressed by a Church president.³⁹⁶ 47,089 were enrolled in seminary and institute during the 2008–2009 school year.

The average number of members per congregation increased from 499 in 2000 to 597 in 2009. Member activity rates widely vary by congregation. Many wards have over 150 active members and others fewer than 80 active members. Most appear to have over 125 active members. Some branches have well over 100 active members or fewer than 20 active members, but most seem to have 60 to 80 active members. In the 2000 census, only 205,229 persons identified as a Latter-day Saint,³⁹⁷ just 23% of the number of members reported by the LDS Church at year-end 2000. Current nationwide active membership is estimated at between 250,000 and 300,000, or 20%–25% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Spanish, Mam, Maya, Tzotzil.

All LDS scriptures are available in Spanish. The Church recently translated a version of the Bible into Spanish with full LDS footnotes, Bible dictionary, and topical guide. Only select passages of the Book of Mormon have been translated into Mam, Mayan, and Tzotzil. Translated materials in Mam are limited to the sacrament prayers, *Gospel Principles*, *The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony*, and hymns and children's songs. Mayan Church materials include *The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony*, hymns and children's songs. Tzotzil church materials consist of a family guidebook and select passages of the Book of Mormon in print and on audiocassette.

Meetinghouses

In 2010, there were approximately 1,300 meetinghouses in Mexico. Most congregations meet in church-built chapels. Some smaller branches, dependent branches, or groups meet in rented spaces or renovated buildings.

³⁹⁶ Swensen, Jason. "Mexico Celebration," LDS Church News, 22 November 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/56070/Mexico-Celebration.html>

³⁹⁷ "Mexico," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127397.htm>

Health and Safety

Mexico experiences lower homicide rates nationwide than most countries in Central America. However, areas along the United States border experience high rates of violent crime, often related to the illegal drug trade, which pose a safety threat.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Since 1985, the Church has conducted at least twenty humanitarian or development projects, which included donations of clothing, medical equipment, wheelchairs, emergency relief, school supplies, home appliances, and providing neonatal resuscitation training.³⁹⁸ The Church has frequently provided emergency assistance in the wake of many natural disasters. For example in 2008, the Church provided assistance to over 15,000 flood victims in the Mexican state of Chiapas.³⁹⁹

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Latter-day Saints enjoy full religious freedom and face no legal obstacles for proselytism or assembly. The Church did not receive the right to own land until 1993.⁴⁰⁰ Local Church members report few instances of discrimination and harassment. Missionary activity in some United States border towns like Tijuana and Ciudad Juarez has been interrupted on a local level periodically due to perceived threats of violence from organized crime. Criminal activity does not appear to target LDS Church members or missionaries. The arrival of some new North American missionaries is occasionally delayed due to visa issues.

Cultural Issues

The high correlation of family and religious affiliation appears one of the greatest cultural obstacles encountered by LDS missionaries. Many Catholic families do not regularly attend mass or other religious meetings, which challenges full-time and local missionaries in their efforts to develop regular church attendance among former Catholic investigators and new LDS converts. States in central Mexico appear the most resistant toward LDS mission outreach as these are among the most Catholic. High underemployment rates in many areas are added stressors to families and create economic challenges for Latter-day Saints to faithfully pay tithing.

National Outreach

Mexico experiences some of the most far-reaching national outreach in nations with over one hundred million inhabitants. Sixty percent (60%) of the national population resides in cities with LDS mission outreach centers populated by over 20,000 inhabitants. Every state has a stake organized. Fifty-three of the 428 cities (12%) over 20,000 inhabitants have no LDS mission outreach center and account for 1.4% of the national population. Most unreached cities have fewer than 40,000 inhabitants. The states with the most unreached cities over 20,000 people are Jalisco (13) and Guanajuato (10). Several states have a congregation established in every city with over 20,000 inhabitants, mainly in states in northern and southern Mexico.

The percentage of Latter-day Saints by Mexican state varies substantially, with the percentage of members in

³⁹⁸ "Projects—Mexico," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 25 September 2010. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-199,00.html>

³⁹⁹ Holman, Marianne. "Chiapas victims receive relief," LDS Church News, 2 August 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/53189/Chiapas-victims-receive-relief.html>

⁴⁰⁰ "Country Profiles," LDS Newsroom, retrieved 24 September 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/mexico>

Estado de Mexico, the lowest percentage in Mexico, accounting for just one-seventh the percentage of members in Yucatan State, the state with the highest percentage of members. Additional states with the smallest percentages of members in the population are in central Mexico and include Guanajuato, Michoacan, Queretaro, and Aguascalientes. States with the highest percentages of members in the population are in northern and southern Mexico, namely Yucatan, Coahuila, Jalisco, and Tamaulipas. Five Mexican administrative divisions have over one hundred LDS congregations: Jalisco, Veracruz, Puebla, Oaxaca States, and the Federal District. In the 2000s, the Church created three new missions in central Mexico to better administer this highly populated area that has been receptive to recent mission outreach.

With a continual church presence since the 1930s and a nominal church membership of 1.2 million, active and less active Latter-day Saints can be found in many if not most cities that currently have no mission outreach centers. Establishing greater numbers of groups and dependent branches in these locations is warranted in order to achieve greater outreach in these areas and help spur local leadership development. Many such congregations have been created in recent years as a means of preparing local leadership until leadership becomes independent enough to maintain the administrative duties required by a fully functioning congregation. Some areas have had such groups or dependent branches established recently that have become independent branches, such as the Anton Lizardo Branch just south of the city of Veracruz. Missionaries stationed in cities closest to unreached populated areas can periodically travel to cities without LDS congregations, hold cottage meetings, and prepare the area for a group or dependent branch to be organized. It is unclear how many such starter-congregations function in Mexico as such unofficial congregations are not reported by the Church.

The majority of Mexicans unreached by the Church reside in rural areas. Organized missionary activity and multiple mission outreach centers in rural areas are found in few locations, mainly in areas of Yucatan State, northwestern Mexico, and a few small communities in Puebla and Estado de Mexico States, like San Pedro Nexapa and Nealticán. Migrant workers from the southern states and rural areas seek for employment in central Mexico in the larger cities. Outreach to lesser-reached rural areas may be accomplished when the relatives of migrant workers being invited to learn about the Church. Small groups of members function in many small towns, but lack sufficient active membership and mission resources to become mission outreach centers. Some urban areas are also lesser-reached by Latter-day Saint missionary efforts and have few members, such as in central Mexico. For instance, the city of Leon has 1.4 million inhabitants but only one stake. Some of this more limited outreach in urban areas has come as a result of a less receptive population to LDS proselytism.

Radio, television, and Internet outreach have not been actively pursued by Latter-day Saints in Mexico. The Church does maintain a website for Mexico at <http://www.sud.org.mx/lds>. The website primary consists of links to Spanish-language church information and materials, with few resources tailored to the Church in Mexico, such as local church news and history. Meaningful opportunities in improving Internet and media outreach exist that can help to supplement the activities of local member-missionary and full-time missionaries.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Membership growth far outpaced congregational growth during the 2000s, indicating poor convert retention nationwide and a shortage of capable local priesthood leaders. The traditional focus on baptismal numbers and nominal membership growth as key indicators of progress are less meaningful due to decades of poor convert retention perpetuated by quick-baptize tactics in many areas. Most converts on the records appear to have only attended church once or twice prior to baptism and never developed meaningful habitual church attendance. Poor convert retention does not appear correlated with rapid membership growth unless such growth is spurred by mission policies to pressure investigators into baptism without receiving adequate pre-baptismal teaching and habitual church attendance. Low member activity has been apparent since as early as the late 1980s as Mexico at this time had one of the highest numbers of members per congregation on average of over 500 in 1989. Low member participation in missionary work with full-time missionaries appears to

a major source of convert attrition. In the late 2000s, increases in seminary and institute enrollment appear positive signs of improving member activity among youth, which will strongly affect long term growth prospects. Emphasis on church education programs like seminary, creating opportunities for youth to participate in wholesome activities designed to strengthen testimonies and in-church peer relations, and temple excursions to perform baptisms for the dead appear fruitful methods to improve member activity and address low member participation and activity issues prevalent in many areas.

Creative activities and special events sponsored by the church on a local and regional level have provided opportunities to find those interested in learning about the gospel. During the open house held prior to the rededication of the Mexico City Mexico Temple in 2008, 10,000 teaching referrals were obtained by missionaries.⁴⁰¹ Meetinghouse open houses, seminary/institute graduations, and community service projects all appear to be positive methods of finding people to teach and improving the perception of the church among the general population.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Few ethnic integration issues have been encountered in Mexico as a whole. Socioeconomic differences among members in some congregations may prevent greater fellowshiping and unity. Rural areas appear more ethnically heterogeneous and may present some challenges to the church regarding inter-ethnic congregations speaking multiple languages. Whites and mestizos account for the majority of the population reached by current LDS mission outreach.

Amerindian groups have receive low levels of national outreach in Mexico as only Maya, Tzotzil, and Huave have had specific mission outreach programs. Lower levels of national outreach to Amerindian groups comes largely as a result of these groups populating remote rural areas, which are difficult to access and have limited local infrastructure. Health and safety issues may also pose concerns. Prospects for improving outreach in areas populated primarily by Amerindian groups appears uncertain due to the reluctance of many mission leaders to place missionaries in areas distant from established church centers with few known members and low living standards. Outreach to these areas may be most efficiently accomplished through member-missionary activity or periodic investigative visits by full-time missionaries and mission leaders.

Language Issues

Approximately 98% of the population speaks languages with church materials translated. Widespread use of Spanish simplifies mission outreach in most areas, especially cities and rural areas in northern Mexico. Few areas have non-Spanish language designated units. A Huave-speaking branch in San Francisco del Mar, Oaxaca State is one of the only LDS congregations that provides church services in an Amerindian language with less than 100,000 speakers. One English-speaking ward operates in Mexico City and another in the Mormon colonies. Branches in some rural areas use indigenous languages at church, such as Mayan in the Yucatan Peninsula and Tzotzil in the highlands of Chiapas State. Missionaries seldom learn Amerindian languages. In recent years, some missions have taken a more active approach in reaching Amerindian speakers, namely the Mexico Tuxtla Gutierrez Mission in Chiapas State among Tzotzil speakers. In 2010, Mexican Amerindian languages with LDS materials do not appear to have ever had past General Conference translations.

Three million speak Nahuatl, Mixtec, Zapotec, and Tzeltal, yet all these languages remain without LDS language materials. Use of Spanish as a second language among most Amerindian groups reduces the need for church materials in these languages. Few Amerindian speakers who do not speak Spanish are literate in their own language, limiting the need for translated materials in these languages. However, there may be

⁴⁰¹Swensen, Jason. "Prophet rededicates historic temple," LDS Church News, 22 November 2008. <http://www.ldschurch-news.com/articles/56073/Prophet-rededicates-historic-temple.html>

some potential for the translation of church materials in these languages, especially Nahuatl, which may elicit a greater response to LDS mission outreach from the 30% of Mexicans who are Amerindian. The Church has developed the needed infrastructure to extend outreach to these Amerindian populations without church material translations, as several mission outreach centers have been recently established in regions where these languages are spoken. These locations include medium-sized cities in Mixteco-speaking areas of western Oaxaca, small cities in pockets of Nahuatl-speaking populations in central Mexico, and larger cities in the highlands of the Tzeltal-speaking areas of Chiapas. Some members appear capable of translating church materials into additional indigenous languages but may lack the English language skills needed in scripture translation projects. Returned missionaries from these areas who learn English on their missions may be a vital link in expanding the list of indigenous languages with church materials available.

Missionary Service

In 2010, between 3,000 and 4,000 full-time missionaries appeared to serve in Mexico. Approximately two-thirds of the full-time missionary force is staffed by local members, with most of the remainder filled by North Americans. Prior to 2013, the Mexico Missionary Training Center received only local missionaries, who usually numbered over one hundred at a time. In the past decade, Mexico appears to have increased self-sufficiency in supplying full-time missionaries. A missionary training center has operated in Mexico before the late 1980s.⁴⁰² In 2013, the Church relocated its missionary training center to its former high school and increased its capacity to 1,500 in order to accommodate increasing numbers of Mexican and North American missionaries destined to serve in Spanish-speaking countries.⁴⁰³ Adverse weather conditions have affected missionary work at times. In 2010, missionaries serving in smaller cities and rural areas around Juchitán were temporarily relocated to the main city due to flooding concerns.

Leadership

Mexico benefits from capable local leadership that supports over 220 stakes and many of its twelve temples. Large numbers of local members have served as international church leaders as mission presidents, area authorities, members of area presidencies, and seventies. Local members have at times taken the forefront in leading missionary work on a regional or national level. In 2004, Adolfo Avalos Rico from Puebla became the Mexico Missionary Training Center president.⁴⁰⁴ Church membership from the Mormon colonies in northern Mexico was overrepresented in leadership positions, especially in the early 2000s.

In 2010, almost half of Mexico's twelve temples had Mexican temple presidents, and many local members served as mission presidents in Mexico and abroad. During the 2000s, Mexican members served as temple presidents for the Ciudad Juarez Mexico Temple (2010),⁴⁰⁵ Guadalajara Mexico Temple (2010),⁴⁰⁶ Merida

⁴⁰² "New leaders called for 13 centers," LDS Church News, 30 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18284/New-leaders-called-for-13-centers.html>

⁴⁰³ Swensen, Jason. "New MTC in Mexico: Church to repurpose Benemerito de las Americas," LDS Church News, 1 February 2013. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/63206/New-MTC-in-Mexico-Church-to-repurpose-Benemrito-de-las-Amricas.html>

⁴⁰⁴ "New MTC presidents," LDS Church News, 20 November 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46493/New-MTC-presidents.html>

⁴⁰⁵ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 15 May 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59339/New-temple-presidents.html>

⁴⁰⁶ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 24 July 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59629/New-temple-presidents.html>

Mexico Temple (2010),⁴⁰⁷ Monterrey Mexico Temple (2010),⁴⁰⁸ Tuxtla Gutierrez Mexico Temple (2010),⁴⁰⁹ Guayaquil Ecuador Temple (2010),⁴¹⁰ Tuxtla Gutierrez Mexico Temple (2007),⁴¹¹ Villahermosa Mexico Temple (2006),⁴¹² Merida Mexico Temple (2004), Monterrey Mexico Temple (2004), Tampico Mexico Temple (2004),⁴¹³ Colonia Juarez Mexico Temple (2004),⁴¹⁴ Oaxaca Mexico Temple (2003), Villahermosa Mexico Temple (2003),⁴¹⁵ Mexico City Mexico Temple (2002),⁴¹⁶ Tampico Mexico Temple (2000),⁴¹⁷ Oaxaca Mexico Temple (2000),⁴¹⁸ and Hermosillo Mexico Temple (2000).⁴¹⁹

Many smaller cities and areas with districts report challenges with inadequate numbers of active priesthood holders preventing the creation of stakes or additional congregations. Created in 2009, the Colima Mexico Stake reported significant challenges preparing to become a stake for over a decade as missionaries and local leadership did not retain many converts and faced challenges with shortages of full tithe paying priesthood holders. More than half of the districts currently operating in the country have enough congregations to become stakes but do not meet the active membership standards for stakes to be created. Progress toward helping districts become more self-sustaining and increasing member activity has been experienced recently. In 2009, six districts matured into stakes. In September 2010, many stakes had over eleven wards and appeared close to dividing. Delay in the creation of additional stakes may be linked to inadequate numbers of active adult male members.

The Church has organized few new districts in Mexico since 2005. Only one new district was created, in Pinotepa in 2008. Several years in the late 2000s experienced slow congregational growth, an indicator of insufficient qualified local leadership to create additional wards and branches. Many new branches have been established in smaller cities but remain part of distant stakes, which may indicate challenges developing new indigenous leadership. Missionaries serving in some areas report that local Mexican church leaders have expressed little interest in opening additional congregations in lesser-reached population centers, such as in the Yucatan Peninsula. Missionaries report challenges motivating local leaders in some areas to become actively involved in member-missionary activity.

⁴⁰⁷ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 19 June 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59489/New-temple-presidents.html>

⁴⁰⁸ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 12 June 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59467/New-temple-presidents.html>

⁴⁰⁹ "New Temple Presidents," LDS Church News, 17 July 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59605/New-Temple-Presidents.html>

⁴¹⁰ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 12 July 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/52701/New-temple-presidents.html>

⁴¹¹ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 15 September 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51051/New-temple-presidents.html>

⁴¹² "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 12 August 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49314/New-temple-presidents.html>

⁴¹³ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 11 September 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46123/New-temple-presidents.html>

⁴¹⁴ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 4 September 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46087/New-temple-presidents.html>

⁴¹⁵ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 6 September 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/34645/New-temple-presidents.html>

⁴¹⁶ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 5 October 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42536/New-temple-presidents.html>

⁴¹⁷ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 11 March 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37310/New-temple-presidents.html>

⁴¹⁸ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 26 February 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37241/New-temple-presidents.html>

⁴¹⁹ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 19 February 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37200/New-temple-presidents.html>

Temple

The Church has established temples within a day's journey of most areas with large populations of Latter-day Saints. Of the nine metropolitan areas with over one million people, four (Mexico City, Guadalajara, Monterrey, and Ciudad Juarez) have a temple. Despite boasting twelve operating temples in 2010, many temples are underused by local members, especially on weekdays. In recent years, only the Mexico City Mexico Temple operated at or near capacity day to day. Three or fewer endowment sessions per weekday were scheduled in 2010 for temples in Ciudad Juarez, Colonia Juarez, Guadalajara, Merida, Monterrey, Tampico, and Tuxtla Gutierrez. Temples in Hermosillo, Merida, Monterrey, and Tampico each held six or more endowment sessions on Saturdays in 2010 and appeared to be among the most utilized of the smaller temples recently constructed. Temples in Oaxaca, Veracruz, and Villahermosa appear to hold endowment sessions and other temple ordinances on an appointment basis and did not publish their endowment session schedules online. In the foreseeable future, temples appear likely to be constructed in several more Mexican cities where temples are difficult to access or where nearby temples are well-utilized. Potential candidate cities include Cuantla/Cuernavaca and Puebla (which has eight stakes in the immediate metropolitan area). Announced in 2010, the Tijuana Mexico Temple was under construction in 2013.

In 2008, 91,000 attended the open house for the Mexico City Mexico Temple prior to the rededication. Following the dedication, President Monson told the media that more temples will be built in Mexico in the coming years.⁴²⁰

Comparative Growth

Mexico has the third most missions, second most temples, and second most members after the United States. Mexico is one of only three nations with over one million nominal Latter-day Saints. Mexico was one of the only Latin American nations in the past decade to not experience mass congregation consolidations and has achieved greater congregational growth during the 2000s than most Latin American countries with over 100,000 members. Member activity rates are low and appear comparable to much of Latin America, but due to the size of total church membership, there appear to be well over three-quarters of a million inactive Mexican members. In September 2010, Brazil boasted less than 100,000 fewer Latter-day Saints than Mexico, but had ten more stakes and sixteen more districts whereas Mexico operated ninety-eight more congregations than Brazil. In 2010, Mexico had fifty-three cities with over 20,000 inhabitants without a mission outreach center whereas Brazil had over 400. No other country outside the United States has as many temples as Mexico. Church growth among the Amerindian population lags behind the significant progress of neighboring Guatemala but is stronger than most Latin American nations due to progress made among the Maya on the Yucatan Peninsula.

Low to moderate church attendance and member activity rates have been experienced by many missionary-oriented Christian denominations in Mexico. Close proximity to the United States has generated significant interest and dedication of mission resources by many churches based across the border. Evangelicals report robust growth in many areas. Seventh Day Adventists reported between 600,000 and 700,000 adherents in 2000, but the census counted only 489,000—nonetheless, more than twice as many as identified themselves as Latter-day Saints, notwithstanding much smaller nominal membership.⁴²¹ There were more than twice as many nominal Latter-day Saints as Seventh Day Adventists in 2009, yet Adventists maintained just 15% fewer congregations than Latter-day Saints during this period. There are nearly twice as many nominal Latter-day Saints than Jehovah's Witnesses, yet Witnesses operate six times as many congregations as Latter-day Saints

⁴²⁰ Swensen, Jason. "Prophet rededicates historic temple," LDS Church News, 22 November 2008. <http://www.ldschurch-news.com/articles/56073/Prophet-rededicates-historic-temple.html>

⁴²¹ "Mexico," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127397.htm>

and have far more active members. Latter-day Saints appear to have one of the lowest convert retention rates among the major missionary groups, in large part due to quick-baptize and the historical role of foreign LDS mission and area leaders and missionaries primarily interested in baptismal numbers without vested interest or incentive for quality and sustainable local growth. Other Christian groups appear more successful in member-missionary efforts, contributing to higher convert retention and member activity rates.

Future Prospects

Mexico offers some of the most immediate and far-reaching church growth prospects for Latter day Saints due to established church infrastructure in most areas, moderate levels of self-sustainability in local church administration, and growth of the number of native full-time missionaries over the past several decades. Abundant opportunities exist for continued LDS Church growth in Mexico due to the high receptivity of the population, but competition with Evangelicals and other Protestant churches is high. Mexico remains reliant on the United States and other nations to finance LDS church operations. Programs like the Perpetual Education Fund may help increase the financial independence of Mexican Latter-day Saints over the long term as long as members obtain specialized employment, remain active in the church, and pay tithing. Dozens of stakes appear close to dividing and missionaries report many currently unreached areas that may receive mission outreach in the near future. Prospects for the construction of additional temples is high but may not come to fruition until currently operating temples are more utilized. Currently unreached cities with over 20,000 inhabitants appear likely to have mission outreach centers established in the coming years.

NICARAGUA

Geography

AREA: 130,370 square km. Nicaragua is bound by the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea with Honduras bordering to the north and Costa Rica bordering to the south. Nicaragua is the largest country in Central America. Two large fresh water lakes, Lago de Nicaragua and Lago de Managua, are located centrally with the capital of Managua in between. Topographically Nicaragua is divided into three different regions. The mountainous, sparsely populated northeast and eastern portions of the country, named the Mosquito Coast, are covered predominantly by rainforest and border the Caribbean Sea. The northern, mountainous area bordering Honduras extends south through the country forming forested highlands. The majority of agriculture and farming in Nicaragua occurs to the east along the Pacific Ocean where the land is flat and fertile. Hurricanes and flooding are common natural disasters. Nicaragua is administratively divided into fifteen departments and two autonomous regions.

Peoples

Mestizo: 69%

White: 17%

Black: 9%

Amerindian: 5%

Most Nicaraguans (69%) are a mixture of white and Amerindian ancestry, referred to as Mestizos. Whites make up 17% of the population, whereas blacks and Amerindians constitute 9% and 5% respectively.

Population: 5,727,707 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.067% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.08 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 70.07 male, 74.39 female (2012)

Languages: Spanish (97.5%), Miskito (1.7%), other (0.8%). Spanish is the official and most widely spoken language of the country, spoken by 97.5% of Nicaraguans. Others speak Amerindian tribal languages such as Miskito, which has over 100,000 speakers concentrated in the Mosquito Coast.

Literacy: 67.5% (2000)

History

Nicaragua was populated by Amerindian tribes before its discovery by the Spanish, who colonized the area in the sixteenth century. Independence was granted to Nicaragua in 1821 from Spain. The British occupied the area of what is now the Mosquito Coast during the time Nicaragua became independent and did not completely leave the area until the mid-1800s. The Mosquito Coast had strong autonomy in Nicaragua until the end of the nineteenth century. This resulted in this area of Nicaragua being strongly influenced by the English language.

The United States gained interest in Nicaragua at the beginning of the twentieth century over the possibility

of constructing a canal from the Caribbean Sea to the Pacific Ocean. Political and military instability resulted in the United States withdrawing from the country and abandoning the proposed canal project.

Military dictatorships ruled Nicaragua for most of the twentieth century. The Somoza Family provided many of these dictators who helped industrialize the country in the 1960s and 1970s despite instability. The Sandinistas took over the government in 1979 and experimented with introducing communism to Nicaragua and neighboring nations. Democratic elections were held in 1990 and resulted in the removal of the Sandinistas from office. President Ortega was removed from office at this time but was reelected in 2006 and remains in power currently.

Culture

Like many Latin American countries the Catholic Church has influenced Nicaraguan culture for centuries. Catholic holidays are national holidays and widely celebrated. Although poorer than neighboring Central Africa countries, the homicide rate is lower than most. Alcohol and tobacco use are less prevalent than the United States. Nicaraguans have faced difficult social challenges resulting from decades of political instability and poverty. Many do not attend church regularly.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$3,200 (2011) [6.65% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.589

Corruption Index: 2.5 (2011)

Nicaragua is the second poorest country in the Western Hemisphere after Haiti. Decades of political instability, damage to the country's infrastructure from war and natural disasters, and corruption resulted in slow economic development. Services account for over half of the GDP and workforce. Unemployment is reported to be less than 6% but inflation and underemployment are very high. The majority of exports (over 60%) goes to the United States and consists primarily of agriculture products such as sugar, peanuts, and meat. Corruption is widespread and deters foreign investment. The government has attempted to reduce corruption but has seen little success. Corruption in government appears the most damaging to economic development.

Faiths

Christian: 82.6%

Other: 1.7%

None: 15.7%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 2,653,000

Evangelical 1,272,500

Seventh Day Adventists 116,363 212

Moravian 94,300

Latter-day Saints 80,605 102

Jehovah's Witnesses 23,570 344

Religion

Roman Catholicism is the predominant religion, followed by 58.5%. Evangelical groups constitute the next

largest religious group (21.6%), followed by those who have no religion (15.7%). The remainder belongs primarily to other Christian groups. In 2008, Jehovah's Witnesses claimed over 21,000 active members in 324 congregations. Seventh Day Adventists are growing rapidly in membership and congregations and numbered over 100,000 in 2008.

Religious Freedom

The constitution allows religious freedom, which is usually upheld by the government. The government does not tolerate religious discrimination. Although the Catholic Church has heavily influenced daily life and culture, Nicaragua has no official religion. Registration with the government is required for religious groups to enjoy the privileges of tax-exemption and to function as a legal entity. Visas for foreign missionaries are easily obtained but often take several months to process. Some religious groups vocal in controversial sociopolitical matters have experienced increased government intolerance.⁴²²

Largest Cities

Urban: 57%

Managua, León, Chinandega, Masaya, Estelí, Tipitapa, Matagalpa, Granada, Ciudad Sandino, Juigalpa.

All ten of the largest cities have a congregation. Thirty-three percent (33%) of the national population resides in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

The first missionaries to serve in Nicaragua arrived in 1953. At the time, Nicaragua was part of the newly created Central America Mission. The first converts joined the church the following year, and the first district, named the Nicaraguan District, was created in 1959. Growth was slow during the first three decades. Membership only numbered in the couple of thousands by the 1980s when the first stake was created in Managua. The stake was discontinued in 1989. Missionaries were withdrawn from Nicaragua in September 1978 due to civil war that brought the Sandinistas to power in 1979. At the time there were fifty missionaries serving in Nicaragua. In the early 1980s the Sandinistas claimed the LDS Church was using missionaries in the country as CIA operatives and confiscated three church-owned chapels. The Nicaragua Managua Mission was organized in 1989 from the Guatemala Guatemala City South Mission. President Hinckley visited Nicaragua in early 1997 and noted his desire for stakes to be established in the country, hoping that missionary work and membership in the area would be mature enough for such responsibilities. In 2010, the Nicaragua Managua Mission was divided to form the Nicaragua Managua North and Nicaragua Managua South Missions.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 80,605 (2012)

Slow growth occurred in the 1980s. In 1985 there were 3,100 members. Membership increased rapidly from 8,000 members in December 1990 to 18,000 in 1995. By the end of 2000 there were 34,791 members. Membership nearly doubled between 2000 and 2008 to approximately 64,000. Annual membership growth rates ranged from 5% to 10% in the 2000s. The Nicaragua Managua Mission baptized over 400 people in one month at the end of 2008. At the time, the strongest growth was occurring in Chinandega. The Church baptized record numbers of new converts on a monthly basis in 2010, many of which were entire families. In 2009, one in eighty-four was nominally LDS.

⁴²² "Nicaragua," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127398.htm>

Congregational Growth

Wards: 61 Branches: 40 (April 2013)

The number of branches in the country increased from nine in early 1990 to fifty-nine in 1995 and to ninety-six in early 1996. At least twenty branches were discontinued during the latter half of the 1990s. By the end of 2000 there were 81 wards and branches. The number of congregations increased to 82 in 2002, 87 in 2005, 90 in 2006, 92 in 2007, 93 in 2008, 100 in 2009, and 103 in 2010.

The first districts organized outside of Managua were in Chinandega, Matagalpa (1990), Granada (1991), and Rivas (1994). The number of districts increased from eight in 1993 to twelve in 1997. The Managua Nicaragua Stake was reinstated in 1998 and was created from the Managua Nicaragua District. The new stake included the Acahualinca, Altagracia, Batahola, Las Palmas, Lezcano, Linda Visa, and San Judas Wards and the Lorna Linda and San Juan Branches. In 2000, a second stake was organized in Chinandega. At the time there were eleven districts, approximately half of which were in Managua. Rapid increases in the number of stakes began in 2004, as two stakes were organized in Jinotepe and Managua Villa Flor, and a district was formed in Managua Tipitapa. In 2005, three stakes were organized, two in Managua (Universitaria and Bello Horizonte) and one in Masaya. In 2006, two districts were organized in Esteli and Juigalpa. Additional stakes were organized in Leon (2007) and Chinandega West (2009). In the late 2000s, the number of branches in Puerto Cabezas increased from one to four, resulting in the organization of a district in Puerto Cabezas in 2010. There were nine stakes and seven districts in early 2011.

Beginning in 2010, several dependent branches and groups began operating throughout Nicaragua in previously unreached areas as a result of significantly increasing the number of full-time missionaries to staff a second mission. Some cities that received dependent branches or groups during this period included Ocotol, Rio Branco, San Benito, Siuna, and Somoto. In 2010, there were four mission branches, two in Bluefields and two between Managua and Leon (Mateare and Nagarote).

Activity and Retention

Nicaragua experiences low member activity rates. Inactivity problems became more apparent during the late 1980s; only 450 of the 3,453 members of the Church in 1989 were active. The following year, active membership increased to over 4,200 out of a total of 8,000 members.⁴²³ The Nicaragua Managua Mission reported that sacrament attendance in the country increased by 2,600 between 2005 and 2009, just 14% of the 18,000 converts baptized during this time period. In the fall of 2009, only 55% of converts were attending sacrament meeting the month following their baptism. Such trends indicate a rush to baptize inadequately prepared converts who have not developed basic gospel habits. Over 650 were attending church meetings in the five branches of the Granada Nicaragua District in 2010. The ratio of members per congregations increased from 430 in 2000 to 688 in 2008. During the 2009–2010 school year, 2,919 were enrolled in seminary and institute. The number of active members per congregation varies by location. In recent years, sacrament attendance in many wards in the Managua area increased to between 150 and 250 as a result of higher convert baptism standards and successful reactivation efforts. Active membership is generally between 100 and 150 for most wards and between 25 and 100 for most branches. Active membership may be as low as 10,000, or 16%.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English, Spanish.

⁴²³ Hart, John L. "Central America: Work is booming as members eagerly share their testimonies with friends," LDS Church News, 16 February 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21630/Central-America—Work-is-booming-as-members-eagerly-share-their—testimonies-with-friends.html>

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in Spanish, including an LDS edition of the Bible complete with footnotes, topical guide, and Bible dictionary.

Meetinghouses

In early 2011, there were approximately fifty LDS meetinghouses. Most larger congregations meet in church built chapels. Small or newly organized branches likely meet in renovated buildings or rented spaces.

Humanitarian and Development Work

LDS humanitarian and development work has included emergency relief, donations of clothing and shoes to the needy, neonatal resuscitation training, and wheelchair donations.⁴²⁴ In 2002, the Church sponsored “Rural Medicine Day” in which medical professional volunteers used 17 chapels to provide medical treatment to the poor in rural areas.⁴²⁵ The Perpetual Education Fund has assisted members in obtaining higher education and finding self-sustaining employment.⁴²⁶ Local fast offering funds alleviated hardship for members suffering from flooding in 2003.⁴²⁷ In 2007, the Church quickly responded to victims of Hurricane Felix in Puerto Cabezas with emergency aid.⁴²⁸

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

No laws limit proselytism and the placement of full-time foreign missionaries. The Church appears to be on good terms with the government at present.

Cultural Issues

Poverty presents challenges for growth. Although this factor has likely increased receptivity to the LDS Church, many Nicaraguans only make the equivalent of a few thousand U.S. dollars a year in salary. Church funds for constructing meetinghouses and meeting welfare needs in Nicaragua are highly dependent on the international Church. Low literacy rates in Nicaragua may contribute to inactivity problems, as converts who are unable to read the scriptures and church materials face difficulties growing their testimonies. Violence and substance abuse is less prevalent in Nicaragua than several surrounding nations that provide greater safety for members and missionaries to enjoy and fewer addictive habits for potential converts to overcome. Low rates of church attendance among the general population have affected LDS member activity rates, as many converts never develop habitual church attendance.

National Outreach

Forty-five percent (45%) of the national population resides in a city or town with an LDS congregation. Less than 3% of Nicaraguans inhabit the nine cities over 10,000 inhabitants without an LDS congregation

⁴²⁴ “Projects—Nicaragua,” Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 31 March 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-106,00.html>

⁴²⁵ “7,800 attend ‘rural medicine day,’” LDS Church News, 16 November 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42807/7800-attend-rural-medicine-day.html>

⁴²⁶ Weaver, Sarah. “Life-altering solutions,” LDS Church News, 2 April 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47064/Life-altering-solutions.html>

⁴²⁷ “Nicaraguan storms destroy 8 LDS families’ homes,” LDS Church News, 12 July 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44042/Nicaraguan-storms-destroy-8-LDS-families-homes.html>

⁴²⁸ Swensen, Jason. “Hurricane Felix batters Nicaragua’s Caribbean coast,” LDS Church News, 15 September 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51048/Hurricane-Felix-batters-Nicaraguas-Caribbean-coast.html>

(Nueva Guinea, San Rafael del Sur, El Rama, Camoapa, Somotillo, San Carlos, Larreynaga, La Trinidad, and Ticuantepe). All seventeen administrative division have an LDS mission outreach center except the least populated department of Rio San Juan of 96,000. LDS mission outreach occurs in only one city in four administrative departments (Jinotega, Nueva Segovia, Boaco, and Madriz), two of which (Nueva Segovia and Madriz) began receiving LDS outreach in 2010. Approximately half of Nicaraguans reside in urban areas of less than 10,000 inhabitants or in rural areas and remain almost completely unreached by the LDS Church.

As indicated by the ratio of LDS congregations to administrative division population, the percentage of Latter-day Saints by department or region varies dramatically, with five departments (Granada, Managua, Carazo, Chinandega, Masaya) appearing to be the most reached by Latter-day Saints and possessing population to LDS congregation ratios of one per 50,000 people or less. Four departments (Jinotega, Nueva Segovia, Boaco, and Madriz) and one region (Atlantico Sur) appear the least reached and possess the smallest percentages of Latter-day Saints as each has one LDS congregation per 100,000 or more inhabitants. Prospects for expanding national outreach appear most favorable along the Atlantic Coast, smaller cities and towns surrounding Managua near the Pacific Coast, and areas along the Honduran border—all of which are minimally reached by the Church at present. The creation of a second mission in July 2010 has facilitated greater mission outreach to areas with little or no previous church presence. Unreached larger towns may soon have missionaries assigned and have congregations created as mission numbers increase to staff the new mission.

The Church maintains no country-specific website for Nicaragua at present and instead operates a website for the Central America Area at <http://countrywebsites.lds.org/gt/>. The Internet site provides local news, a link to the meetinghouse locator, and explanations of church doctrines and practices in Spanish. Use of the website by local members and missionaries can facilitate the expansion of national outreach.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Poor convert retention and low member activity have been manifested throughout the history of the Church in Nicaragua. Although membership nearly doubled between 1995 and 2000, the number of congregations declined. There were a total of 25,000 members of the Church in 1997 without a stake, possibly the largest number of members in a country without a stake in Church history. The delay in a stake created in Leon until recently and the absence of stakes in other large cities indicates poor member activity and retention, lack of mission focus outside of Managua, or lesser receptivity among Nicaraguans in these locations. Inactivity and low convert retention persisted in the 2000s as the number of congregations increased by twelve between 2000 and 2008. Membership increased at a rate around 4,000 per year in the 2000s, yet only one or two new congregations have been created annually for most years during this period. This indicates that relatively few converts are retained or that new baptisms barely compensate for attrition among existing members. Mission leadership has increasingly stressed preparing converts for baptism and reactivating less active or inactive members and has recently increased standards for baptism by requiring investigators to attend church weekly for at least two months before baptism. It is unclear whether this standard is consistently enforced, but it demonstrates increased awareness of the relationship between poor retention and the history of rushed baptism of individuals who have not made adequate life changes. Guidelines that encourage greater activity and devotion among potential converts will increase the strength of the Church in coming years if consistently enforced, although it is unclear whether such policies will persist through changes in mission leadership.

One of the reasons that few new congregations have been created recently in Nicaragua is that the standards for new branches and wards to be organized were raised. One missionary serving in the town of Matearas outside of Managua reported that an independent branch did not function for the first three years the Church held Sunday services. This was due to a standard requiring at least nine active, worthy Melchizedek Priesthood holders in the branch before an independent branch was approved. Several dependent branches or groups in

Nicaragua are not strong enough to become their own independent Church units. The dependent branch in Matearas averaged over sixty people in attendance before becoming an independent branch in mid-2009.

Missionaries in early 2010 reported that retention of recent converts had risen and was maintained at over 50%. Mission and local priesthood leadership have increased emphasis on regular church attendance and have experienced recent success, but these policies may face challenges to remain sustained.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Nicaragua is the Central American country with the highest percentage of blacks. Most congregations are primarily Mestizo and white. Issues integrating blacks and Amerindians into Mestizo congregations appear to have been minimal. Most blacks and Amerindians live in regions with a limited church presence. The separation of blacks and experienced marginalization during the Sandinista era and may still see some prejudice from the majority. In 2010, full-time missionaries reported breakthroughs working with the Miskito population in Puerto Cabezas, resulting in dozens of young adults submitting mission papers and the organization of three additional branches.

Language Issues

The homogeneity of Nicaragua's Spanish speaking population has simplified mission outreach. Over 97.5% of the population can attend church meetings, meet with missionaries, and communicate in Spanish as their first language. Low literacy complicates outreach and retention but provides service and finding opportunities for missionaries through literacy programs. There are no Church materials available in Miskito, the most widely spoken native language. Full-time missionaries began learning Miskito while serving in Puerto Cabezas in 2010, and church services in some branches in the area appeared to be conducted in Miskito. A lack of LDS materials in indigenous languages has been partially responsible for very limited or nonexistent outreach programs to these native peoples.

Missionary Service

In 1997, there were 140 missionaries in the Nicaragua Managua Mission. In early 2011, the number of full-time missionaries serving in Nicaragua likely numbered around 400. The missionary force appears evenly split between North Americans and Latinos. Despite large inactivity problems in Nicaragua and throughout Central America, the Area Presidency reported in early 2009 in Guatemala that by the end of the year, the Central America Area would be self-sufficient in sending out missionaries to staff all twelve area missions at the time if needed. Increasing youth and young adult participation in seminary and institute can further contribute to greater self-sufficiency in missionary service.

Leadership

The recent increase in stakes in the past decade from two to nine indicates that local leadership has matured and increased in numbers on both a local congregation and national level. The number of local leaders remains insufficient to create additional congregations and stakes in the Managua area and in several member districts. Poor convert retention appears to be the greatest obstacle toward increasing the size and maturity of leadership.

Temple

In early 2010, Nicaragua belonged to the Guatemala City Guatemala Temple district. When the Tegucigalpa Honduras Temple was announced in 2006, it was noted that it would serve members in neighboring Nicaragua. Nicaragua is the country with the most members without a temple. Every other Spanish-speaking country

in Central and South America has a temple under construction or operating. Missionaries reported that with the February 2010 announcement of the creation of the Nicaragua Managua North Mission, the Church was beginning to search for land to construct a temple although no official announcement was made.

Comparative Growth

With one of the lowest member activity rates in the world, Nicaragua had the third highest ratio of members per congregation after Chile and Hong Kong in 2009. Nicaragua is the Central American country with the second lowest percentage of Latter-day Saints. Only Costa Rica has a lower percentage of members. Other Central American nations had greater success in baptizing and retaining large numbers converts between 1960 and 1990, such as Guatemala and Honduras, both of which have more than twice as many members and stakes as Nicaragua. The LDS Church in Nicaragua possessed some of the most aggressive church-planting approaches in the late 2000s and early 2010s worldwide with nearly a dozen new cities or towns opening to missionary work. Annual membership growth rates in Nicaragua have been consistently the highest in Latin American for over a decade.

Other Christian groups have reported great success among Nicaraguans. The Seventh Day Adventist Church reports about 10,000 baptisms a year just in Nicaragua. Evangelical Christians have also grown rapidly over the past few decades and now constitute about a quarter of Nicaraguans.

Future Prospects

As in many Latin American countries, the Church has favorable prospects for continued growth in Nicaragua. Districts in the cities of Estelí, Granada, and Matagalpa will likely become stakes. Additional stakes will likely be created in Managua and Leon once more congregations are organized as more converts are retained and less active members are reactivated. Additional congregations may eventually be organized for members living in La Paz Centro, Nagarote, Bluefields, and independent branches will likely be organized in cities and towns with groups or dependent branches operating, such as Ocotol, Siuna, and San Benito. A temple may one day be announced in Managua when warranted by increase in active membership.

PANAMA

Geography

Area: 75,420 square km. Bridging North and South America, Panama occupies the narrow Panama Isthmus and borders Costa Rica and Colombia. The surrounding ocean produces a humid and wet climate with a short dry season. Plains and hills cover most coastal areas, whereas rugged mountains dominate the interior. Severe storms and forest fires are natural hazards. Water pollution, deforestation, and soil erosion are environmental issues. Panama is administratively divided into eleven provinces and one territory.

Peoples

Mestizo: 70%

Mestizo and black: 14%

White: 10%

Amerindian: 6%

Mestizos form the majority and are a mixture of Amerindian and white ancestry. Blacks arrived as slaves or migrant workers from Africa or other Caribbean nations.

Population: 3,510,045 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.41% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.43 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 75.18 male, 80.86 female (2012)

Languages: Spanish (78%), English (14%), Ngabere (5%), Kuna (2%), other (1%). Spanish is the official language. English speakers also include Panamanian Creole English. Several Amerindian languages are spoken, notably Ngabere and Kuna. Only Spanish has over one million speakers (2.6 million).

Literacy: 91.9% (2000)

History

Amerindian tribes populated the Panama Isthmus for millennia prior to Spanish exploration and settlement in the sixteenth century. The isthmus's central location was strategic to Spain's territorial claims in the New World. In 1821, Panama broke away from Spain and formed a portion of the Republic of Gran Colombia. Following its dissolution in 1830, Panama continued as part of Columbia until independence occurred in 1903. The United States assisted in Panama's independence effort and Panama quickly signed a treaty allowing the construction of the Panama Canal, which included granting sovereignty to the United States in the Panama Canal Zone. The United States completed the canal in 1914. Increased political instability began in the 1960s and continued into the 1980s. The United States assisted in the removal of dictator Manuel Noriega in 1989. All United States land holdings in the Panama Canal Zone and military bases returned to Panamanian control by the end of 1999. Expansion of the canal began in 2007 and will be completed in the mid-2010s, possibly doubling its capacity.

Culture

Culture differs on ethnic group and location. Those living in urban locations with ancestry from Europe tend to occupy the highest social classes. Mestizos and educated blacks and Amerindians form the middle class in Panama City and other large cities. Culture in many rural areas reflects the heritage of Africans or Amerindians. A strong sense of worth and interest toward adolescent girls is found nationwide. Amerindian groups have their own customs and traditions. Leaders of the Guaymi Indians may practice polygamy. The Kuna are known for their elaborate wood carvings and the remote region where they reside along the Caribbean coast near Colombia. Alcohol consumption rates are comparable to the more developed nations in Latin American, such as Chile and Costa Rica, whereas cigarette consumption rates are low. Divorce rates are low.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$13,600 (2011) [28.3% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.768

Corruption Index: 3.3 (2011)

Panama's economy is highly dependent on the operation of the Panama Canal. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of the population lives below the poverty line. Wealth is unequally distributed, and there is a shortage of skilled labor. Services account for 76% of the GDP and employ 67% of the workforce. Industry employs 18% of the workforce and produces 18% of the GDP. Primary industries include construction, brewing, and cement. Bananas, rice, corn, and coffee are popular crops. Natural resources include copper, lumber, and hydropower. Primary trade partners include the United States, Costa Rica, and the Netherlands.

Drug trafficking and money laundering is a major issue. Panama serves as a transit for illegal drugs—especially cocaine, heroin, and marijuana—leaving the region and launders revenue back to suppliers. Government has sought to address the drug problems but struggles with several accusations of corrupt government officials.⁴²⁹

Faiths

Christian: 99%

Other: 1%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 2,500,000

Seventh Day Adventists 97,984 247

Latter-day Saints 48,669 72

Jehovah's Witnesses 14,188 282

Religion

Catholics comprise 75%–85% of Panamanians. Evangelical Christians are the next largest religious group, comprising 15%–25% of the population. Catholics are found throughout Panama and are among all levels of society whereas Evangelical Christians are growing in prominence, especially in urban areas.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁹ "Corruption," Panama-Guide.com, retrieved 20 April 2010. <http://www.panama-guide.com/index.php?topic=corruption>

⁴³⁰ "Panama," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127399.htm>

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. Catholicism receives some favoritism as most Panamanians are Catholic. Catholicism is taught in public schools, but students can be exempted from religious instruction.⁴³¹

Largest Cities

Urban: 75%

Panamá, San Miguelito, Tocumen, David, Arraiján, Colón, Las Cumbres, La Chorrera, Pacora, Santiago. All of the ten largest cities have a congregation. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of the population lives in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

The Church organized the first congregation in 1941 for American military stationed in the Panama Canal Zone. One hundred members lived in the country at the time.⁴³² Panama fell under the jurisdiction of the Mexican Mission until the creation of the Central American Mission in 1952. The Church was not officially recognized by the government until 1965, the year formal missionary work began.⁴³³ Prior to this time some natives had joined the Church. Seminary began in 1964 and institute started in 1973. Panama was included in the San Jose Costa Rica Mission beginning in 1974. North American missionaries were withdrawn for a period in the late 1980s.⁴³⁴ President Howard W. Hunter dedicated Panama for missionary work in 1991 with 50 in attendance.⁴³⁵ President Monson and several General Authorities met with the President of Panama and the First Lady following the dedication of the Panama City Panama Temple in 2008.⁴³⁶

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 48,669 (2012)

The Church counted fewer than 2,000 members in the late 1970s. Rapid growth began in the 1980s as membership exceeded 10,000 and doubled to 20,000 by the early 1990s. Membership reached 30,000 in the late 1990s and has increased slowly since 2000. By year-end 2000, membership totaled 37,133, reaching 39,738 in 2003, 41,640 in 2006, and 43,703 in 2008. Growth rates dropped from over 3% in 2001 and 2002, to less than 2% from 2003 through 2006. Since 2007 membership growth rates have increased to a ten-year high of 3.75% in 2009. By 2009, one in every seventy-four Panamanians was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 39 Branches: 33 (April 2013)

The first stake was created in Panama City in 1979. Three additional stakes were created in the late 1980s in San Miguelito, David, and Bellavista. The Church created the Panama Panama City Mission in 1989 from

⁴³¹ "Panama," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127399.htm>

⁴³² "Panama," Country Profiles, retrieved 19 April 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/panama>

⁴³³ "A new day in this great republic," LDS Church News, 21 September 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21533/A-new-day-in-this-great-republic.html>

⁴³⁴ Hart, John L. "New missions are evidence of Church's dynamic growth," LDS Church News, 25 February 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19163/New-missions-are-evidence-of-Churchs-dynamic-growth.html>

⁴³⁵ "A new day in this great republic," LDS Church News, 21 September 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21533/A-new-day-in-this-great-republic.html>

⁴³⁶ Swensen, Jason. "Great mutual respect," LDS Church News, 16 August 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/53445/Great-mutual-respect.html>

the Costa Rica San Jose Mission. In addition to the four stakes, three districts functioned in Chitre, Colon, and San Blas.⁴³⁷ The Church created three additional stakes between 1995 and 1999 in Colon, San Isidro, and Tocumen. Districts were also organized in Changuinola, Puerto Armuelles, Los Altos de San Francisco, Alcalde Diaz, and Concepcion. By 2001, Panama had seven stakes and eight districts. An eighth stake was created in Arraijan in 2006, and districts were discontinued in Los Altos de San Francisco and Puerto Armuelles in the 2000s. In April 2010, eight stakes and five districts functioned. In 2011, the San Isidro Panama Stake was discontinued and consolidated with neighboring stakes in Panama City.

In 1990, 31 congregations functioned, about half of which were wards. The number of congregations increased to 63 in the mid-1990s and reached a high of 112 in 2001. The number of congregations declined to 97 in 2004, 93 in 2007, 78 in 2010, and 72 in early 2012. Branches constituted nearly all the approximately 40 units closed between 2001 and 2011.

Activity and Retention

Three thousand attended a visit by President Hinckley in 1997.⁴³⁸ A nationwide meeting with President Hinckley in late 2000 had 5,000 in attendance.⁴³⁹ During the 2008–2009 school year, 1,593 were enrolled in seminary or institute. The average number of members per congregation has increased in the 2000s from 342 in 2001 to 482 in 2009, an average increase of 140 members per congregation. Active membership has not experienced commensurate increase; most congregations have between fifty and one hundred active members and hundreds of inactive members. In late 2009, missionaries estimated there were around 5,000 active members. Active membership may be as high as 6,500, and likely ranges from 11% to 14% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Spanish, English, Kuna.

All LDS scriptures are available in Spanish, including an LDS version of the Bible. Only selections from the Book of Mormon have been translated in Kuna. Other church materials in Kuna include *The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony*, *Gospel Principles*, the Articles of Faith, hymns and children's songs, and a family guidebook.

Meetinghouses

The first Church-built meetinghouse was completed in 1970 on Ustopo Island in the San Blas Islands.⁴⁴⁰ There were approximately sixty LDS meetinghouses in early 2011, most of which were built by the Church.

Humanitarian and Development Work

In 2006, the Church donated one hundred specialized wheelchairs to children with cerebral palsy. Members in the Panama City area also provided volunteers to work on the project.⁴⁴¹ Additional humanitarian and

⁴³⁷ Hart, John L. "New missions are evidence of Church's dynamic growth," LDS Church News, 25 February 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19163/New-missions-are-evidence-of-Churchs-dynamic-growth.html>

⁴³⁸ "An outpouring of love for Prophet: Pres. Hinckley addresses 88,000 in Central America," LDS Church News, 1 February 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29180/An-outpouring-of-love-for-Prophet—Pres-Hinckley-addresses-88000-in-Central-America.html>

⁴³⁹ "The day will come for a temple in Panama," LDS Church News, 30 December 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39123/The-day-will-come-for-a-temple-in-Panama.html>

⁴⁴⁰ "Panama," Country Profiles, retrieved 19 April 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/panama>

⁴⁴¹ Noya, Dalis de. "Helping hands in Panama," LDS Church News, 21 October 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49649/Helping-Hands-in-Panama.html>

development projects have included emergency aid for flood victims, toy and school kit donations for children, building a school in San Jose, donations of medical equipment, and a clean water project.⁴⁴²

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church enjoys positive relations with the government. There are no laws or policies that limit proselytism, and full-time missionaries serve freely.

Cultural Issues

Many cultural practices and customs create a favorable environment for missionary work. Illegal activity in some urban areas has likely reduced the receptivity of some to the Church's message. The white population appears the most challenging ethnic group to reach due to socioeconomic and cultural issues, secularism, and materialism. The wide range of cultures in Panama creates additional demands on church leaders.

National Outreach

Nine of the twelve administrative provinces or territories have a congregation, representing 93% of Panama's population. Half of the population lives in Panama Province, which has been the foremost target of mission outreach. Three provinces have only one congregation, including Los Santos (Las Tablas), Herrera (Chitré), and Veraguas (Santiago). Approximately half a million people, comprising 14% of the national population, live in these provinces. The church has consolidated congregations in Los Santos and Herrera, possibly indicating a reduction in mission outreach in these provinces.

Three provinces have no mission outreach. Ngöbe-Buglé Province—with over 100,000 inhabitants and located in western Panama—had no congregations as of April 2010 and likely has never had mission outreach due to its remote location and high concentration of Guaymí Amerindians. The other two provinces, Darien and Emberá, have a combined 50,000 people in far eastern Panama. Unreached provinces provide opportunity for greater growth and are large regions that have not yet had the gospel preached. However mission outreach with full-time missionaries is most simple and efficient in urban areas and provinces with a church presence, drawing away limited resources from remote unreached areas with small populations. Missionary work has been limited among many Christian groups in eastern Panama due to drug violence spilling over the border from Colombia.

Almost all cities with over 10,000 inhabitants have a congregation. Several large cities have no congregations but received limited outreach from nearby cities with an outreach center. The small populations of many towns and villages far from large cities are unreached by the Church's mission efforts. These locations are often effectively reached through cottage meetings, groups, or dependent branches that utilize local members who share their beliefs with family and friends. The flexible structure of these organizations allows the Church to more quickly adapt to concentrated areas of receptivity. It is unclear whether the Panama Panama City Mission uses this proselytism approach regularly. Expanding national outreach may be a challenge due to over-reliance of members on missionaries, requiring missionaries to conduct administrative and reactivation work.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

The withdrawal of full-time North American missionaries in the late 1980s allowed for greater mission

⁴⁴² "Projects—Panama," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 30 March 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-216,00.html>

responsibilities to be placed on local members.⁴⁴³ The consolidation of nearly four dozen congregations in the past decade likely indicates that activity rates in these units were too low to justify their continued operation. The large increase in the ratio of members to congregations during the 2000s points to poor convert retention and inadequate local leadership development for the creation of new units. Quick-baptism practices are a major cause for low member retention.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The Church experienced limited mission outreach and few, if any, converts from the black minority prior to 1978. The Church likely faces a greater challenge integrating members from different socioeconomic classes than integrating members from multiple ethnic groups into the same congregation. Relations between Amerindian members and other members are likely the most strained due to greater differences in language and culture than with other groups. Breakthroughs with other Amerindian groups have not occurred since the rapid growth among the Kuna in the 1970s and 1980s.

Language Issues

The widespread use of Spanish simplifies outreach to the majority. English speakers often use Spanish as a second language in church meetings and may not meet in large enough numbers to justify the creation of English-speaking units. The use of English in Panama appears to be more vernacular than in most other Central American nations, likely discouraging pursuit of greater English language usage in worship services. Language materials in Kuna have come as a result of success among the Kuna people early in the Church's history in Panama.

Some Amerindian groups have no church materials in the native language. Ngabere is the largest, with over 100,000 speakers, without available Church materials. The Church has not translated Church materials into Ngabere, likely due to the few Ngabere-speaking members being proficient in Spanish and the lack of any mission outreach in Ngöbe-Buglé Province where many Guaymí reside. The New Testament is available in Ngabere.

Missionary Service

One hundred seventy-seven missionaries were serving in Panama in early 1997.⁴⁴⁴ In 2008, nearly 200 missionaries were serving in Panama.⁴⁴⁵ In recent years, the full-time missionary force has primarily consisted of Latin Americans, but North American missionaries remain a large minority.

Leadership

Local leadership in stakes has been successfully developed despite limited numbers of active members. Only on a few occasions have church employees held stake leadership positions, particularly in the past decade. In 1992, when membership growth was most rapid, stake reorganizations for the Panama City Panama⁴⁴⁶ and San

⁴⁴³ Hart, John L. "New missions are evidence of Church's dynamic growth," LDS Church News, 25 February 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19163/New-missions-are-evidence-of-Churchs-dynamic-growth.html>

⁴⁴⁴ "An outpouring of love for Prophet: Pres. Hinckley addresses 88,000 in Central America," LDS Church News, 1 February 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29180/An-outpouring-of-love-for-Prophet—Pres-Hinckley-addresses-88000-in-Central-America.html>

⁴⁴⁵ Swensen, Jason. "'Great mutual respect,'" LDS Church News, 16 August 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/53445/Great-mutual-respect.html>

⁴⁴⁶ "New stake presidencies," LDS Church News, 23 May 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22220/New-stake-presidencies.html>

Miguelito Stakes had no church employees in leadership positions.⁴⁴⁷ Local leadership appears most limited in rural areas where small congregations operate. Developing leadership in the Panama City area appears challenging, as the number of leadership positions has decreased in the past decade from the consolidation of several congregations, yet the number of potential priesthood leaders has increased as membership continued to grow. The closure of the San Isidro Panama Stake also points toward poor local leadership sustainability and low member activity rates. Missionaries appear to rarely serve as branch presidents.

Panamanian members have served in international Church leadership positions. In 1992, Jose Antonio Garcia became a regional representative.⁴⁴⁸ In 1999, Jose A. Garcia began serving as mission president of the Chile Osorno Mission⁴⁴⁹ and was called as an Area Authority Seventy in 2003.⁴⁵⁰ In 2006, Rene Arturo Martinez began serving as a mission president in Bogota, Colombia.⁴⁵¹

Temple

Panama is assigned to the Panama City Panama Temple district. Prior to the completion of the temple in 2008, Panama pertained to the San Jose Costa Rica Temple district. In 2000, President Hinckley promised members that if they pay their tithing and keep other commandments a temple would be built in Panama despite an insufficient amount of tithing paid by local members to fund a temple's construction.⁴⁵² The Panama City Panama Temple was announced in 2002 and construction began in 2005. Following the dedication, as many as half a dozen endowment sessions were scheduled during weekdays. In 2010, four endowment sessions occurred on weekdays and sessions were held every hour from 7:00 AM to 2:00 PM. The temple appears well-utilized by the small active membership in Panama on the weekends but functions well under capacity on weekdays.

Comparative Growth

Panama experiences one of the lowest member activity rates worldwide, as between 85%–90% of nominal members do not attend church regularly. Activity rates for most Latin American nations range from 20%–30%. Panama numbers among the countries with the most congregations closed during the 2000s and early 2010s. Nominal membership growth has occurred less rapidly than most other Spanish-speaking Central American nations. Only Costa Rica had fewer members in 2009. Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador had a lower ratio of nominal LDS to the population than Panama in the late 2000s. The Church began organized proselytism in Panama at the same time as in Costa Rica, yet in early 2010 Panama had three more stakes, eleven more congregations, and 7,000 more members. Panama was the third nation in Central America to have a temple built, prior to nations with many more members and congregations like Honduras and El Salvador. The extent of national outreach in Panama is comparable to most of Central America.

Many Christian groups have seen more rapid growth than the LDS Church in Panama. Seventh Day Adventists have twice as many members and more than double the number of congregations. Evangelical Christians have

⁴⁴⁷ "New stake presidencies," LDS Church News, 3 October 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22207/New-stake-presidencies.html>

⁴⁴⁸ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 7 November 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21855/New-regional-representatives.html>

⁴⁴⁹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 13 March 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35363/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁴⁵⁰ "New area authority seventies," LDS Church News, 19 April 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43636/New-Area-Authority-Seventies.html>

⁴⁵¹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 6 May 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48920/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁴⁵² "The day will come for a temple in Panama," LDS Church News, 30 December 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39123/The-day-will-come-for-a-temple-in-Panama.html>

continued to see rapid growth over the past fifty years. These Christian groups have utilized church planting approaches in rural areas, maintain outreach among Amerindian groups, and have successfully developed located leadership.

Future Prospects

The outlook for future growth is moderate, as the Church has established outreach centers near many small cities and towns that in the future may have their own congregations. However, the steady decline in congregations over the past decade combined with increasing membership indicates that convert retention and low member activity are persistent concerns. Currently, unreached areas of Panama will likely remain without mission outreach until larger numbers of mature members and recent converts take greater responsibility to lead congregations and remain active with less reliance on full-time missionaries. Some districts may mature into stakes in the near future, particularly Alcalde Diaz, but some stakes may be consolidated. Prospects appear favorable for the creation of additional small branches in communities on the outskirts of Panama City once convert retention issues are rectified sufficiently.

PUERTO RICO

Geography

AREA: 13,790 square km. Puerto Rico is a rectangular-shaped, medium-sized island in the Caribbean between the Virgin Islands and Hispaniola that borders the North Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. Several small islands and islets pertain to Puerto Rico, the largest of which is Vieques. Mountains dominate the terrain with the exception of a coastal plain in the northwest. Tropical climate occurs year round with little seasonal variation in temperature; mountainous areas receive the most precipitation. Inland mountainous areas experience more mild climatic conditions due to distance from the ocean and higher elevation. Hurricanes and droughts are natural hazards. Environmental issues include erosion and fresh water shortages during drought. Puerto Rico is a commonwealth territory of the United States and has no first-order administrative divisions.

Peoples

White: 76.2%
Black: 6.9%
Asian: 0.3%
Amerindian: 0.2%
Mixed: 4.4%
Other: 12%

Whites of Spanish descent comprise three-quarters of the Puerto Rican population. Those of mixed ancestry constitute the second largest ethnic group. Blacks primarily descended from freed African slaves during the colonial period. Most Asians are Chinese. Amerindians are a tiny minority, nearly all of whom are of mixed ancestry. Other ethnic groups are generally from the Caribbean.

Population: 3,998,905 (July 2012)
Annual Growth Rate: 0.236% (2012)
Fertility Rate: 1.63 children born per woman (2012)
Life Expectancy: 75.47 male, 82.84 female (2012)

Languages: Spanish (95%), English (3%), other (2%). Spanish is spoken as a first language by all but approximately 5% of the population.

Literacy: 94.1% (2002)

History

Amerindian peoples, most notably an Arawak tribe named the Taino, populated Puerto Rico for centuries prior to the arrival of the Spanish in 1493. The Spanish colonized the island in the early sixteenth century, and nearly the entire indigenous population disappeared by the mid-sixteenth century as a result of war, disease, and forced labor. African slaves were also introduced to provide forced labor in coastal communities. Puerto Rico was a major commercial and administrative center for Spain's early exploratory and colonial activities in the New World until the seventeenth century when colonial possessions in Central and South America

became better established and more prosperous. Notwithstanding the rebellion and independence of most Spanish colonies in the Americas in the early nineteenth century, Puerto Rico remained under Spanish administration until ceded to the United States in 1898 during the Spanish-American War. During the twentieth century, the United States established political and legislative institutions and stationed military personnel.⁴⁵³ Puerto Ricans became United States citizens in 1917, and governors began to be popularly elected in 1948. Puerto Rico has been provided with several opportunities to seek independence but has consistently chosen to remain a commonwealth of the United States.

Culture

Puerto Rican culture has been most heavily influenced by Spanish, Caribbean, and African customs and practices. The Catholic Church has traditionally been a major societal influence. American culture has been a lesser contributor largely due to the development of a cultural identity prior to the annexation of Puerto Rico by the United States in the late nineteenth century. The relationship with the United States remains complicated, as many oppose stronger American influence, and the political destiny of Puerto Rico remains undetermined. Millions of Puerto Ricans have immigrated to the continental United States over the past century. There is a proud, rich legacy of literature. Cuisine shares many similarities with other Caribbean nations. Alcohol consumption rates are slightly lower than the world average. Divorce rates are high, and illicit drug use is higher than many Latin American and Caribbean nations.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$16,300 (2010) [34.4% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.894

Corruption Index: 5.6 (2011)

Puerto Rico possesses one of the most advanced economies in the Caribbean largely due to close economic ties with the United States, as many large American companies and firms have operated there for decades. Dairy production, livestock, and tourism are the primary drivers of the economy. Copper, nickel, and petroleum are natural resources. Services employ 79% of the labor force and generate 54% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 19% of the labor force and generates 45% of the GDP. Pharmaceuticals, electronics, clothing, agricultural goods, and tourism are major industries. Agriculture accounts for less than 5% of the GDP and labor force. Common agricultural products include sugar, coffee, fruit, livestock, and chicken. Trade primary occurs with the United States.

Puerto Rico is perceived as one of the least corrupt nations in the Caribbean. The illegal immigration of Dominicans across the Mona Passage is a major issue.

Faiths

Christian: 97%

Nonreligious: 2%

Other: 1%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 3,000,000

Seventh Day Adventists 37,472 301

⁴⁵³ "Puerto Rico," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 6 April 2011. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puerto_rico

Jehovah's Witnesses 26,546 329

Latter-day Saints 21,174 41

Religion

Approximately 75% of Puerto Ricans are Catholic. Protestants and other Christian groups account for nearly one-quarter of the population. There are small numbers of Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists.

Religious Freedom

The United States' constitution protects religious freedom and is upheld by national and local laws. There have been no reported instances of societal abuse of religious freedom.

Largest Cities

Urban: 99%

San Juan, Bayamón, Carolina, Ponce, Caguas, Guaynabo, Mayagüez, Trujillo Alto, Arecibo, Fajardo.

All ten of the largest cities have an LDS congregation. Thirty-two percent (32%) of the population resides in the ten most populous cities.

LDS History

Two LDS missionaries were sent to Puerto Rico briefly in 1940. In 1955, the first branch was organized in San Juan, and in the early 1970s, the Florida South Mission administered Puerto Rico.⁴⁵⁴ The first convert baptisms occurred in 1964 and the first Spanish-speaking congregation was organized in 1970.⁴⁵⁵ Seminary and institute were both operating by 1982. In 1998, Puerto Rico was assigned to the North America Southeast Area.⁴⁵⁶ President Hinckley visited in 2000 and met with members at a special meeting at Robert Clemente Coliseum in San Juan.⁴⁵⁷ In 2006, Puerto Rico was reassigned to the Caribbean Area.⁴⁵⁸ Together with a realignment of the West Indies Mission, the Puerto Rico San Juan Mission was divided into the Puerto Rico San Juan East and Puerto Rico San Juan West Missions in 2007.⁴⁵⁹ The two missions were consolidated as the Puerto Rico San Juan Mission in 2010.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 21,714 (2012)

By 1987, there were 13,000 members. Membership growth slowed during the 1990s due to the emigration of American military personnel. Membership increased to 19,000 in 1993 and 21,000 in 1997. By year-end 2000, there were 23,261 members.

Membership decline characterized most of the 2000s as membership decreased to 22,974 in 2002, 20,683 in

⁴⁵⁴ "Friends in Puerto Rico," *The Friend*, June 1974. <http://lds.org/friend/1974/06/friends-in-puerto-rico?lang=eng&query=puerto+rico>

⁴⁵⁵ "Puerto Rico," *Country Profile*, 18 October 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/country/puerto-rico>

⁴⁵⁶ "5 new areas announced worldwide," *LDS Church News*, 4 July 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31389/5-new-areas-announced-worldwide.html>

⁴⁵⁷ Fisher, Elder Jerry D. "Prophet's spirit, counsel bless Puerto Rico," *LDS Church News*, 23 December 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39080/Prophets-spirit-counsel-bless-Puerto-Rico.html>

⁴⁵⁸ "Southeast area divided; Caribbean Area created," *LDS Church News*, 10 June 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49062/Southeast-area-divided-Caribbean-Area-created.html>

⁴⁵⁹ "New missions bring total to 347 New missions," *LDS Church News*, 10 February 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50112/New-missions-bring-total-to-347-New-missions.html>

2004, and 19,609 in 2006. Membership began to increase in the late 2000s to 20,064 in 2008 and 20,785 in 2010. Annual membership growth rates during the 2000s ranged from a low of -8.3% in 2004 to a high of 1.6% in 2009. In 2010, one in 191 was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 29 Branches: 12 (April 2013)

There were four branches in 1974: an English-speaking branch and a Spanish-speaking branch in San Juan, a branch in Caguas, and a branch for the Ramey Air Force Base.⁴⁶⁰ There were forty-seven congregations in 1987, including twenty-three wards. The number of total congregations increased from fifty in 1993 to fifty-three in 1997 and declined to fifty-two in 2000, forty-six in 2002, forty-five in 2004, and forty-two in 2006. The number of congregations increased to forty-three in 2007 and declined to forty-one in 2010. Since the reestablishment of stakes in the late 1990s, the number of wards has increased from sixteen in 1997 to twenty-one in 2000, twenty-two in 2004, and twenty-seven in 2006. Congregations discontinued in the late 1990s and 2000s included the Arecibo 2nd, Caguas 2nd, Ceiba, Humacao 2nd, Jayuya, Lajas, Sabana Grande, and Salinas Branches and the Bayamon 2nd, Ponce 3rd, Santurce, and Toa Baja 2nd Wards. In the 2000s, only one new congregation was organized, the Vieques Branch.

The first LDS stake was organized in 1980 in San Juan. Additional stakes were organized in Ponce (1982), Carolina (1984), and Mayaguez (1985). Due to the emigration of American military personnel, low member activity rates, and inadequate numbers of active priesthood holders, all four stakes were discontinued in late 1993 and reorganized into eight member districts headquartered in Arecibo, Caguas, Guayama, Fajardo, Mayaguez, Ponce, San Juan, and Toa Baja. Stakes were reorganized in Mayaguez (1996), Ponce (1996), and San Juan (1997). A fourth stake was created in Toa Baja in 1998. In 2006, the Caguas Puerto Rico Stake was organized from the Caguas and Guayama Puerto Rico Districts. In 2010, districts in Arecibo and Fajardo were consolidated with neighboring stakes. There were five stakes and no districts in early 2011.

Activity and Retention

In 1996, 389 members from the Toa Baja Puerto Rico District attended a temple trip to the Orlando Florida Temple.⁴⁶¹ One hundred thirty members from the Arecibo Puerto Rico District participated in a Latter-day Saint pioneer reenactment in 2005.⁴⁶² Four hundred eighty seven were enrolled in seminary and institute during the 2009–2010 school year. Most wards appear to have between fifty and one hundred active members, whereas most branches generally have fewer than fifty active members. Total active membership is estimated at 3,500, or 17%–20% of church membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Spanish, English.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in Spanish, including an LDS-edition of the Bible complete with footnotes, topical guide, and Bible dictionary.

⁴⁶⁰ "Friends in Puerto Rico," *The Friend*, June 1974. <http://lds.org/friend/1974/06/friends-in-puerto-rico?lang=eng&query=puerto+rico>

⁴⁶¹ "From around the world," *LDS Church News*, 21 December 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28099/From-around-the-world.html>

⁴⁶² Black, Elder William Black. "Pioneer parade turns heads in Puerto Rico," *LDS Church News*, 18 June 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47443/Pioneer-parade-turns-heads-in-Puerto-Rico.html>

Meetinghouses

In early 2011, there were nearly 40 LDS meetinghouses in Puerto Rico. Church-built meetinghouses appear to constitute the majority. Some smaller branches may meet in rented spaces or renovated buildings.

Humanitarian and Development Work

There have been no major LDS humanitarian or development projects in Puerto Rico. Service activities comprise of projects organized by full-time missionaries and local members.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The LDS Church benefits from full religious freedom in Puerto Rico. LDS members and missionaries may freely proselyte, worship, and assemble.

Cultural Issues

The strong ethno-religious ties of many Puerto Ricans to the Catholic Church is a barrier in teaching, baptizing, and retaining new converts. Other Christian groups do not appear to have faced major challenges with traditional ties to Catholicism, as Evangelicals have experienced strong, steady growth for decades. Instilling personal religious habits for Latter-day Saint converts is a major challenge that has contributed to low member activity rates and local administration challenges. Many active members are able to overcome these cultural challenges and have provided valuable international leadership for the LDS Church. Emigration to the continental United States is a major obstacle for maintaining stability in local leadership and active membership.

National Outreach

Forty-one percent (41%) of the population resides in cities and towns with LDS congregations. All cities with over 14,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. As many as 85% of the national population may reside within five kilometers of an LDS meetinghouse. Two towns have fewer than 5,000 inhabitants and an LDS congregation (Lares and Adjuntas). There are seven cities and towns over 10,000 inhabitants without an LDS congregation, including Manati, Dorado, Hormigueros, Coamo, Vega Alta, Corozal, and Pajaros.

Notwithstanding the closure of nearly a dozen congregations over the past decade, the extent of LDS national outreach remains virtually unchanged, as most congregations consolidated were in cities with two or more congregations. However, only one LDS congregation operates in most locations. Opportunities for expanding national outreach appear most favorable in communities and cities in the San Juan metropolitan area and its surroundings, especially to the west within the boundaries of the Toa Baja Puerto Rico Stake. Utilizing approaches that reduce full-time missionary involvement appear to be the most self-sustaining and beneficial for long-term growth, such as holding cottage meetings in lesser-reached locations, enlisting greater numbers of local members as ward or branch missionaries, and creative, innovative finding methods such as service projects and musical performances. The Church has dedicated limited mission resources to areas with small populations in Puerto Rico. For example, in early 2011 a senior missionary couple was stationed on Vieques to provide support to the branch on the island of less than 10,000. Although isolation, few active members, and fledging leadership likely prompted the assignment, wise allocation of limited mission resources is required to maximize national outreach without making new converts and seasoned members dependent on full-time missionaries for finding and fellowshipping investigators and new converts.

The Church has no country website for Puerto Rico. Launching an Internet site with culturally-adapted explanations of church teachings, information on local church news, and links to other online Spanish-language resources may facilitate greater member involvement in missionary work and expand national outreach.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

The LDS Church in Puerto Rico has experienced chronic member activity and convert retention issues due to quick-baptism tactics aimed at reaching arbitrary baptismal goals, low member-missionary participation, and cultural attitudes that encourage casual religious observance and traditional ties to the Catholic Church. Teaching and proselytism approaches have not been tailored to cultural conditions. The immigration of stalwart members to the continental United States and the exodus of most American military personnel has been an ongoing challenge in meeting local administrative and leadership needs. There is a need for greater emphasis on church attendance, living church teachings, and participating in daily personal scripture study and prayer for investigators, new converts, and less active members. The operation of a second mission between 2007 and 2010 appears to have been partially focused on addressing patterns of low retention and inactivity that had accumulated over decades due to past inconsistencies in mission policies regarding, pre-baptismal teaching, standards for convert baptisms, and reactivation. Increasing seminary and institute enrollment from 412 during the 2007–2008 school year to 487 during the 2009–2010 school year is an encouraging development that may indicate some success. Continuing increases in seminary and institute enrollment and a reversal of the trend of congregation consolidations will indicate significant progress toward improving member activity and convert retention rates.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

LDS missionaries report no major ethnic integration issues, largely due to the widespread use of Spanish and the shared cultural identity of Puerto Ricans despite ethnic diversity.

Language Issues

Widespread use of Spanish, an ample supply of translated church materials, and high literacy rates have resulted in few language issues for the LDS Church in Puerto Rico. One congregation administers English speakers in San Juan. There is some potential for the organization of additional English-speaking congregations.

Missionary Service

Puerto Rico remains dependent on nonnative missionaries to staff local missionary needs. A single full-time missionary companionship is often assigned to one or two congregations at present, although in the past several missionary companionships appear to have been assigned to a single congregation. The current missionary complement for Puerto Rico appears adequate for its needs and potential, as congregations are not overstaffed with full-time missionaries. Careful coordination with mission and stake leaders on the allocation of full-time missionaries to lesser-reached communities to organize dependent branches and groups may facilitate an end to the ongoing trend of congregation consolidations. Emphasis on seminary and institute attendance for youth and young adults may increase the number of local members serving missions.

Leadership

Few active priesthood holders and dependence on full-time missionaries for administrative tasks in smaller congregations and finding new investigators in larger congregations has created significant leadership challenges that warranted the discontinuation of all Puerto Rican stakes in the early 1990s and steady congregation consolidations for over a decade. Puerto Rico has supplied the international church with several leaders despite

low member activity and local leadership challenges. Additionally, several Puerto Ricans living abroad have served in international church leadership positions, such as mission presidents. Originally from Arizona but residing San Juan, Franklin Hyrum Talley was called as a regional representative in 1988.⁴⁶³ In 1991, Jesus Nieves from Carolina and Guillermo Mario Petrotti from Guaynabo were called as regional representatives.⁴⁶⁴ In 1994, Justo P. Casablanca from Trujillo Alto was called as a regional representative.⁴⁶⁵ In 1995, Jesus Nieves was called to preside over the Puerto Rico San Juan Mission.⁴⁶⁶ In 1997, Dane E. Miller from Humacao was called to the Second Quorum of the Seventy.⁴⁶⁷ In 2004, Jorge M. Alvarado from Toa Alta was called as an Area Authority Seventy.⁴⁶⁸ In 2005, Hugo Edgardo Martinez Morales from Arecibo⁴⁶⁹ was called to preside over the Guatemala Guatemala City Central Mission. In 2010, Jorge Miguel Alvarado from Caparra was called to preside over the Puerto Rico San Juan Mission.⁴⁷⁰ In 2011, Heriberto Hernandez Vera from Cabo Rojo was called to preside over the Dominican Republic Santo Domingo East Mission.⁴⁷¹

Temple

Puerto Rico is assigned to the Santo Domingo Dominican Republic Temple district. Prior to the completion of the temple in 2000, Puerto Rico was assigned to the Orlando Florida Temple district. Travel to the temple is costly and inconvenient, often costing approximately \$500 per person per trip. Prospects for a future temple in Puerto Rico are favorable over the medium term and will depend on increasing active, temple recommend-holding members, greater self-sustainability in each of the five stakes, and a reverse in congregation consolidations.

Comparative Growth

Puerto Rico has the second highest percentage of Latter-day Saints in the general population among Caribbean nations, but the percentage of members is lower than in all Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America except Colombia. LDS Church growth in the neighboring Dominican Republic has greatly outpaced Puerto Rico as in early 2011 there were approximately 120,000 members, 18 stakes, 10 districts, and 201 congregations despite concentrated missionary activity in Puerto Rico for a decade longer than in the Dominican Republic. Puerto Rico was the only country in the world that experienced consistent and significant LDS membership decline during the first half of the 2000s. The percentage decline in the number of congregations was among the highest worldwide during the 2000s. Member activity rates are slightly lower than most of Latin America, whereas the percentage of members enrolled in seminary and institute is among the lowest worldwide. LDS Puerto Rican membership has provided the international church with a greater number of mission presidents

⁴⁶³ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 16 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17682/New-regional-representatives.html>

⁴⁶⁴ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 2 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21076/New-regional-representatives.html>

⁴⁶⁵ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 23 April 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25315/New-regional-representatives.html>

⁴⁶⁶ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 15 April 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26539/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁴⁶⁷ "Second Quorum of the Seventy: New leaders bring rich experience," LDS Church News, 12 April 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29104/Second-Quorum-of-the-Seventy—New-leaders-bring-rich-experience.html>

⁴⁶⁸ "New Area Authority Seventies," LDS Church News, 24 April 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45458/New-Area-Authority-Seventies.html>

⁴⁶⁹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 19 February 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46896/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁴⁷⁰ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 8 May 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59317/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁴⁷¹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 19 March 2011. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/60634/New-mission-presidents.html>

than most Latin American countries with fewer than 100,000 members, indicating that a small, strong local priesthood leadership force exists in some areas.

Other outreached-oriented Christian groups have reported strong church growth in Puerto Rico over the past several decades. Evangelicals have been the most successful group and claim nearly all non-Catholic Christians, amounting to more than 10% of the population. The Seventh Day Adventist Church has consistently baptized over 1,500 converts annually for nearly a decade and has increased its number of congregations by 39 to 299 in 2009.⁴⁷² Jehovah's Witnesses baptize smaller numbers of converts than Adventists, but operated 323 congregations in 2010. These other Christian groups have been successful in mitigating emigration and cultural issues that have presented consistent challenges for Latter-day Saints.

Future Prospects

Low member activity rates, the continuing trend of congregation consolidations, inconsistent mission policies regarding convert baptismal standards, emigration, and a lack of missionary approaches tailored to traditional Catholics generate a mediocre outlook for future growth for the LDS Church. Opening new congregations, increasing the number of local members serving missions, and greater stress on seminary and institute attendance may help overcome these issues and increase the likelihood of the construction of a future LDS temple in San Juan.

⁴⁷² "Puerto Rican Union Conference (1994-Present)," www.adventiststatistics.org, retrieved 8 April 2011. http://www.adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldInstID=1554297

SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS

Geography

AREA: 261 square km. Comprising two small volcanic islands, Saint Kitts and Nevis is located in the Caribbean between the Virgin Islands and Guadeloupe. Both islands are mountainous and experience tropical climate with little seasonal temperature variation. A rainy season occurs from May to November. Hurricanes are a natural hazard. Saint Kitts and Nevis is divided into fourteen administrative parishes.

Peoples

African: 90.4%

Mulatto (mixed African): 5%

East Indian: 3%

Other: 1.6%

Population: 50,726 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.806% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.79 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 72.46 male, 77.26 female (2012)

Languages: Saint Kitts Creole English (99%), other (1%). Most speak standard English fluently.

Literacy: 97.8% (2003)

History

Carib Amerindians populated St. Kitts and Nevis when Christopher Columbus first discovered the islands in the late fifteenth century. English and French settlers arrived in the 1620s. The French and English maintained joint rule over St. Kitts until 1713 when the island came under English rule. The French temporarily overtook the islands in 1782, but British rule was reestablished the following year. Both islands were included in the Leeward Islands colony from 1871 to 1956 and were part of the West Indies Federation from 1958 to 1962. In 1967, St. Kitts and Nevis joined with Anguilla to form a self-governing state under Great Britain. Anguilla left the union later that year and remains a British dependency. Independence from the United Kingdom occurred in 1983. Political stability has characterized most of the islands' post-independence history, although Nevis has attempted to secede several times.⁴⁷³

Culture

British colonialism strongly influenced local culture as manifest by widespread use of English and half the population adhering to the Anglican Church. The people remain highly religious today. Several musical festivals are held throughout the year. Cuisine is representative of the West Indies and includes goat, fruit, dumplings, soup, and rum. Cricket is the most popular sport. Alcohol consumption rates compare to the average worldwide alcohol consumption rate.

⁴⁷³ "Background Note: Saint Kitts and Nevis," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 14 July 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2341.htm>

Economy

GDP per capita: \$16,400 (2011) [34.1% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.735

Corruption Index: N/A

The economy highly relies on tourism for survival, as the government closed the sugar industry in the mid-2000s due to poor economic growth. Hurricanes and oscillating tourist demand are economic challenges. The government has sought to diversify agricultural activity, expand the tourist industry, and establish an offshore banking sector. Services and industry generate 71% and 26% of the GDP, respectively. Tourism, cotton, and salt are the primary industries. Common crops include sugarcane, rice, yams, vegetables, and fruit. The United States is the primary trade partner. The islands are a transshipment point for illicit drugs en route to North America and Europe. Money laundering is also a concern.

Faiths

Christian: 95%

Other: 5%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Anglican 24,949

Catholic 12,475

Seventh Day Adventists 24,678 (includes all islands in northern Caribbean) 12

Jehovah's Witnesses 258 5

Latter-day Saints 195 1

Religion

Half the population is estimated to be Anglican. Catholics are the second largest religious denomination and account for 25% of the population. The remainder of the population primarily adheres to Protestant denominations. Evangelical Christians report strong church growth. There are small numbers of Rastafarians, Muslims, Hindus, and Baha'is.⁴⁷⁴

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. The government maintains a secular position but recognizes major Christian holidays and requires all schools to have daily morning prayers and hymn singing. There have been no reports of societal abuse of religious freedom.⁴⁷⁵

Largest Cities

Urban: 32%

Basseterre, **Charlestown**

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

⁴⁷⁴ "St. Kitts and Nevis," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148776.htm>

⁴⁷⁵ "St. Kitts and Nevis," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148776.htm>

One of the two largest cities has an LDS congregation. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of the national population resides in the two largest cities. Seventy-six percent (76%) of the national population lives on St. Kitts.

LDS Background

LDS missionaries first arrived in 1984 on St. Kitts in 1985 and organized the first branch.⁴⁷⁶ The first converts were baptized in 1985.⁴⁷⁷ Seminary and institute began in the 1990s. President Gordon B. Hinckley visited St. Kitts and Nevis in 2004 and met with the prime minister.⁴⁷⁸ The West Indies Mission administered St. Kitts and Nevis until 2007, when the islands became part of the new Puerto Rico San Juan East Mission.⁴⁷⁹ In 2010, the mission was consolidated, and St. Kitts and Nevis have since been assigned to the Puerto Rico San Juan Mission.

There were fewer than one hundred Latter-day Saints until the late 1990s. Stagnant membership growth occurred during the first half of the 2000s as there were 112 members in 2000, 115 in 2002, and 118 in 2004. Membership totaled 166 in 2005 and 184 in 2006 and then declined to 120 in 2007, as it appears LDS membership totals for Dominica were originally included with the St. Kitts and Nevis totals but in 2007 were reported separately for the first time. There were 162 members in 2008. Membership generally increases by ten to thirty members a year. In 2009, one in 294 was LDS. One branch operated from 1985 to 2005 until a second branch was created on Nevis. In 2010, the branches were consolidated, and in early 2011 only one branch operated on St. Kitts. A group or dependent branch may continue to operate on Nevis. The Basseterre St. Kitts and Nevis District operated from 2004 to 2010 and had four branches in the late 2000s, two of which were on other Caribbean islands.

Nine were enrolled in seminary and institute during the 2008–2009 school year. In 1994, there were seventy active members.⁴⁸⁰ There were approximately thirty active members on St. Kitts in 1996.⁴⁸¹ One hundred members and guests attended the dedication of the Basseterre meetinghouse in 2004.⁴⁸² In early 2011, active membership was estimated at approximately eighty, or 50% of total membership. In 1995, the Church acquired a remodeled house to hold church meetings.⁴⁸³ In 2004, President Hinckley dedicated a new meetinghouse in Basseterre.⁴⁸⁴ Local members have helped clean local parks, but no major humanitarian or development work has been pursued by the Church.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁷⁶ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Caribbean members plan to celebrate achievements of pioneers—those on island and of 1847 trek," LDS Church News, 22 June 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27928/Caribbean-members-plan-to-celebrate-achievements-of-pioneers--those-on-island-and-of-1847-trek.html>

⁴⁷⁷ Deseret News 2003 Church Almanac, "St. Kitts and Nevis," p. 407.

⁴⁷⁸ "Pres. Hinckley emphasizes 'home' at island meetings," LDS Church News, 24 January 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44981/Pres-Hinckley-emphasizes-home-at-island-meetings.html>

⁴⁷⁹ "New missions bring total to 347 New Missions," LDS Church News, 10 February 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50112/New-missions-bring-total-to-347-New-missions.html>

⁴⁸⁰ Deseret News 2003 Church Almanac, "St. Kitts and Nevis," p. 407.

⁴⁸¹ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Caribbean members plan to celebrate achievements of pioneers—those on island and of 1847 trek," LDS Church News, 22 June 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27928/Caribbean-members-plan-to-celebrate-achievements-of-pioneers--those-on-island-and-of-1847-trek.html>

⁴⁸² "Pres. Hinckley emphasizes "home" at island meetings," LDS Church News, 24 January 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44981/Pres-Hinckley-emphasizes-home-at-island-meetings.html>

⁴⁸³ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Caribbean members plan to celebrate achievements of pioneers—those on island and of 1847 trek," LDS Church News, 22 June 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27928/Caribbean-members-plan-to-celebrate-achievements-of-pioneers--those-on-island-and-of-1847-trek.html>

⁴⁸⁴ "Pres. Hinckley emphasizes "home" at island meetings," LDS Church News, 24 January 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44981/Pres-Hinckley-emphasizes-home-at-island-meetings.html>

⁴⁸⁵ Deseret News 2003 Church Almanac, "St. Kitts and Nevis," p. 407.

Opportunities

Latter-day Saints face no restrictions on assembly, proselytism, or worship. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the national population resides in Basseterre where the sole LDS congregation operates. Virtually the entire population of St. Kitts and Nevis could be reached with approximately half a dozen mission outreach centers. Holding cottage meetings and forming dependent branches and groups may be a suitable method to better reach the population by creating a flexible, church-planting–based approach to proselytism. The wide array of English LDS materials accessible online provides opportunities for Internet proselytism, but no missionary materials have been adapted to local cultural needs and circumstances. St. Kitts and Nevis experiences no significant ethnic integration challenges due to the highly homogenous black population. There have been no reported ethnic assimilation problems at church. Widespread use of standard English reduces the translation need for LDS materials in Saint Kitts Creole English. Full-time missionaries do not appear to be regularly assigned, and in the past senior missionary couples have served on the islands. In 1991, the first local member served a full-time mission.⁴⁸⁶ In 1996, full-time missionaries were no longer stationed on St. Kitts, and local members fulfilled missionary responsibilities. Local leadership heavily emphasized reactivation and member-missionary efforts among youth,⁴⁸⁷ which may result in more consistent numbers of members serving full-time missions. Emphasis on missionary preparation for youth may help increase the number of active priesthood holders over the long term.

Challenges

Participation in religion and the influence of Christianity on society remains strong, but there is less acceptance of nontraditional Christian groups like Latter-day Saints. Many have unfavorable attitudes about the LDS Church, often attributed to misinformation. Some Latter-day Saint youth have lost friends as a result of joining the Church.⁴⁸⁸ New converts, less active members, and investigators often face opposition from their families and the community for associating with the Church, which has led to limited receptivity and modest member activity rates. The small population of administrative parishes outside of Basseterre limits the practicality of opening additional mission outreach centers in outlying areas. Member activity rates have fluctuated over time as a result of new converts demonstrating brief periods of church activity and attendance together with inconsistent activity levels among older members. Inadequate pre-baptismal teaching and the failure of new converts to exhibit regular church attendance over longer periods of time have likely contributed to retention problems. Distance from mission headquarters and few missionary resources dedicated to the islands has facilitated the development of self-sustaining leadership but may have also led to inconsistent missionary approaches. Limited numbers of active priesthood holders delays the organization of additional congregations and likely contributed to the closure of the Nevis Branch in 2010. St. Kitts and Nevis pertains to the Orlando Florida Temple district. Temple trips do not appear to occur regularly, and members likely attend the temple on an individual basis. Travel times and expenses prevent regular temple attendance. Members may utilize the Santo Domingo Dominican Republic Temple more frequently due to closer proximity and fewer visitor regulations compared to the United States.

St. Kitts and Nevis is among Caribbean countries or territories with the fewest Latter-day Saints as only Martinique, Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, and Dominica have fewer than 200 LDS members. LDS Church growth trends on St. Kitts and Nevis have been similar to those experienced on these islands, marked by fluctuating member activity rates and the operation of only one or two LDS congregations. St. Kitts and

⁴⁸⁶ Deseret News 2003 Church Almanac, “St. Kitts and Nevis,” p. 407.

⁴⁸⁷ Weaver, Sarah Jane. “Caribbean members plan to celebrate achievements of pioneers—those on island and of 1847 trek,” LDS Church News, 22 June 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27928/Caribbean-members-plan-to-celebrate-achievements-of-pioneers--those-on-island-and-of-1847-trek.html>

⁴⁸⁸ Weaver, Sarah Jane. “Caribbean members plan to celebrate achievements of pioneers—those on island and of 1847 trek,” LDS Church News, 22 June 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27928/Caribbean-members-plan-to-celebrate-achievements-of-pioneers--those-on-island-and-of-1847-trek.html>

Nevis, Aruba, and the Bahamas each had their sole LDS districts discontinued in the late 2000s due to leadership development and sustainability problems. Most missionary-minded Christian groups report slow, steady growth and higher member activity rates than Latter-day Saints. Adventists report steady growth. These denominations have developed a small, local member community and maintain multiple mission outreach centers.

Prospects

Attempted mission outreach expansion in the 2000s only endured for half a decade before coming to a close in 2010 and produced mixed results, as only one LDS congregation remains, member activity rates remain low, and local priesthood leadership is extremely limited. The consistent enrollment of small numbers of LDS youth in seminary and institute demonstrate some hope for greater self-sustainability regarding member activity, full-time missionary service, and the local leadership development. The consistent assignment of a senior missionary couple may address these issues without compromising the limited self-sufficiency developed in Basseterre.

SAINT LUCIA

Geography

AREA: 616 square km. Located in the Caribbean, Saint Lucia is a small volcanic island north of Trinidad and Tobago between the North Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. Mountains dominate the landscape, which is bisected by several fertile valleys. Tropical climate with marked dry and rainy seasons occurs throughout the island. Hurricanes and volcanoes are natural hazards. Environmental issues include deforestation and soil erosion. Saint Lucia is divided into eleven administrative quarters.

Peoples

Black: 82.5%
Mixed: 11.9%
East Indian: 2.4%
Other/unspecified: 3.2%

Blacks primarily descended from African slaves brought to the island by Europeans. Most of those with mixed ancestry are part white European and black African. East Indians arrived as indentured servants during British rule.

Population: 162,178 (July 2012)
Annual Growth Rate: 0.378% (2012)
Fertility Rate: 1.8 children born per woman (2012)
Life Expectancy: 74.34 male, 79.88 female (2012)

Languages: Saint Lucian Creole French (99%), English (1%). English is the official language and spoken by many. Saint Lucian Creole French is not intelligible with standard French and is virtually the same as Dominica Creole French.

Literacy: 90.1% (2001)

History

Arawaks and, later, Carib Amerindians populated the island prior to European discovery and colonization. Local Carib tribes thwarted European efforts to establish trading posts on the island in the sixteenth century. England and France competed for control over Saint Lucia, which changed possession fourteen times in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In 1814, the United Kingdom officially gained ownership of the island. Greater self-government was granted in the 1920s. The United Kingdom attempted to establish several semi-autonomous dependencies in the Caribbean in the late 1950s and 1960s, which included Saint Lucia and most British-owned islands. The British used the island for cultivating tropical crops and granted autonomy to Saint Lucia in 1967. Saint Lucia won independence in 1979 and continues to hold strong ties with the United Kingdom, recognizing Queen Elizabeth II as the head of state.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁹ "Background Note: Saint Lucia," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 23 July 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2344.htm>

Culture

Saint Lucia exhibits practices and customs adopted from African, French, and English cultures and shares many cultural similarities with neighboring islands. Most settlements on the island were originally founded as fishing villages. Catholicism is a major cultural influence, but the population is tolerant of non-Catholic Christian groups. Alcohol consumption rates are among the highest in the Caribbean largely due to tourism. Most children are born out of wedlock, partially due to the high cost of getting legally married.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$12,900 (2011) [26.8% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.723

Corruption Index: 7.0 (2011)

In recent years, Saint Lucia has successfully attracted foreign investment through developing its tourist and banking sectors. Economic weaknesses include dependence on foreign oil, fluctuations in the number of tourists visiting the island, and natural hazards. Today tourism generates the most revenue (80% of the GDP) and employs many. Services employ 54% of the workforce. Industry generates 15% of the GDP and employs 25% of the workforce. Primary industries include clothing, electronics, food processing, and cardboard. Agriculture remains an important sector of the economy employing 22% of the workforce and generating 5% of the GDP. Primary crops include bananas, coconuts, vegetables, citrus, and cocoa. Forests, sand, pumice, mineral springs, and geothermal energy are natural resources. Major trade partners include Brazil (83% of all imports), Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Saint Lucia experiences the lowest levels of perceived corruption in the Caribbean and is one of the least corrupt nations in the world.

Faiths

Christian: 92.9%

Other: 1.1%

Unspecified: 1.5%

None: 4.5%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 108,180

Seventh Day Adventists 17,338 46

Pentecostal 9,135

Rastafarian 3,366

Anglican 3,205

Evangelical 3,205

Jehovah's Witnesses 688 10

Latter-day Saints 261 2

Religion

Two-thirds of the population is Catholic. Most non-Catholics follow one of the many Protestant denominations that operate on the island. Non-Christians account for a small minority, and most are not religious. There is a small Muslim community of 350, most of whom are local converts.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁹⁰ "St. Lucia," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127403.htm>

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government and society. The government maintains a secular position but has a close relationship with major Christian denominations. In 2009, the government suspended applications for government recognition of some religious groups until the revision of the government's registration policy. Groups affected by this delay included Islam and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. There have been no recent reports of abuse of religious freedom, but some tension between Catholics and Evangelical groups persists due to the latter's sporadic criticism of the Catholic Church. Rastafarians report increasing tolerance from other religious groups, but some instances of discrimination continue.⁴⁹¹

Largest Cities

Urban: 28%

Castries, Bexon, Babonneau, Ciceron, Dennery, Vieux Fort, La Clery, Morne du Don, Laborie, Micoud. Settlements listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Two of the ten largest settlements have an LDS congregation. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of the national population resides in the ten largest settlements. Castries and neighboring communities account for 24% of the national population.

LDS History

One of the first Latter-day Saint converts from Saint Lucia joined the Church in England in 1982 and returned to her homeland. Missionary work began under the West Indies Mission in 1983 when four full-time missionaries were assigned to the island. The first branch, the Castries Branch, was created in January 1984, and the first convert baptisms occurred the following September. Anti-Mormon sentiment grew on the island as a result of negative media reports circulated in the mid-1980s. This led to challenges for missionary visa renewal, and full-time LDS missionaries were removed in 1986 at the request of immigration officials. The Church discontinued the Castries Branch in 1994 and reorganized the branch in 2003.⁴⁹² Seminary and institute began in the 1990s. Since the reestablishment of an independent branch in 2003, local and area leadership has worked with government officials to allow the return of full-time missionaries and is currently in the process of obtaining official government recognition. The West Indies Mission continues to administer Saint Lucia.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 261 (2012)

The LDS Church did not report membership statistics for Saint Lucia until 2003 at which time there were sixty-four members. Slight membership decline occurred for the following three years as in 2006, there were fifty-five members. In 2007, membership doubled to 113 and has since grown by fifty members per year due to the large increase in the number of converts baptized. Fifty converts were baptized in the Castries Branch from mid-2007 to the end of 2008. In 2009, one in 782 was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 0 Branches: 2 (2012)

⁴⁹¹ "St. Lucia," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127403.htm>

⁴⁹² "Saint Lucia," Country Profile, retrieved 22 October 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/saint-lucia>

The Castries Branch was reorganized in 2003. The Church created a second branch in Vieux-Fort in 2007. Both branches are mission branches and are not part of a stake or district.

Activity and Retention

Twenty-one were enrolled in seminary during the 2008–2009 school year. The Vieux Fort Branch in mid-2010 had fifty active members and the Castries Branch had around one hundred. Total active membership is estimated at 150, or 70%.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English.

All LDS scriptures and church materials are available in English.

Meetinghouses

The Church completed an expansion of the Castries Branch meetinghouse in late 2008 needed due to the recent large increase in the number of convert baptisms. Over 120 can now assemble in the renovated meetinghouse.

Humanitarian and Development Work

In late 2008, the local media filmed full-time missionaries serving in Castries that were performing service cleaning a Red Cross building. Local members have also organized service projects in their communities.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The LDS Church is still awaiting government recognition in order for the Church to receive special privileges entitled to registered groups, such as tax exemption status and the right for clergy to perform marriages. Local members and full-time missionaries may assemble, proselyte, and worship freely.

Cultural Issues

Full-time missionaries report significant challenges baptizing families due the government requiring couples who wish to marry to pay a large fee unaffordable for most. Many couples are not legally married and cannot be baptized until they are married legally. Society has been more tolerant of Latter-day Saints in the past decade than during the 1980s. Latter-day Saint proselytism approaches are tailored toward the needs of nations like Saint Lucia in which most the population has a Christian background.

National Outreach

Latter-day Saints currently operate mission outreach centers in two of the eleven administrative quarters (Castries and Vieux Fort), which together constitute 49% of the national population. Some limited proselytism and mission outreach may occur in the most populous neighboring administrative quarters, like Gros Islet and Micoud, perhaps increasing the percentage of the population reached by Latter-day Saints to as high as 70%.

Saint Lucia receives a large number of full-time missionaries despite the small size of the island and few

inhabitants. The missionary complement will likely not increase in the near future due to limited numbers of missionaries assigned to the West Indies Mission, which has many administrative and convert retention challenges in other areas. Additional mission outreach centers will likely not be established until branches in Castries and Vieux Fort become more self-sustaining in administrative duties, and their missionary programs, which, once achieved, may permit mission leaders to relocate some full-time missionaries to favorable areas to have prospective LDS congregations established.

The Church does not maintain an Internet site for Saint Lucia. Missionaries and members can utilize English materials on the Church's main website at present. Internet outreach specific to the needs of Saint Lucians has yet to be explored.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Some of the highest convert retention rates ever achieved in the Caribbean for Latter-day Saints have occurred in Saint Lucia in the late 2000s and 2010 as a result of adequate pre-baptismal preparation, emphasis on developing firm gospel habits, post-baptismal teaching of new converts, strong local member involvement in missionary activity, and emphasis placed on developing self-sustaining local leadership to head proselytism efforts. The placement of a senior missionary couple in each branch has also significantly contributed to mentoring new converts in their ecclesiastical responsibilities. LDS efforts in Saint Lucia demonstrate that high convert retention and real church growth are possible in areas with small, rapidly growing LDS populations as church membership quadrupled between the beginning of 2007 and year-end 2009. High convert retention has also been manifest by the expansion of the Castries Branch meetinghouse due to large increases in church attendance.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Blacks constitute the bulk of the population and LDS membership. There are few ethnic integration challenges encountered by the Church in Saint Lucia due to the low ethnic diversity.

Language Issues

Missionaries typically speak English. Full-time missionaries have assisted members and others in developing stronger literacy skills. There are no LDS proselytism materials in Saint Lucian Creole French, which are needed to develop greater gospel study and comprehension among the Creole-speaking population.

Missionary Service

In April 2008, there were two senior couples and four young elder full-time missionaries assigned to the island. In 2009, two additional missionaries were assigned. The first sister missionaries assigned to the West Indies Mission began their service in Saint Lucia in August 2009. The two missionaries were from Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana. In the late 2000s, several local members were preparing to serve full-time missions in the near future.

Leadership

Local members lead both branches on Saint Lucia. Full-time missionaries serving in 2010 report that progress had been made with the branches being less reliant on full-time missionaries by local members officiating in priesthood ordinances and finding and baptizing new members. Leadership and active membership remain too limited for the branches to be organized into a district.

Temple

Saint Lucia belongs to the Orlando Florida Temple district. Several members hold temple recommends, but few have attended the temple, most prior to relocating to Saint Lucia after living abroad. Local members do not travel to the temple regularly due to the high expense of travel. Senior missionary couples have begun temple preparation classes. Some members are saving funds to travel to the temple one day.

Comparative Growth

Since 2005, Saint Lucia has experienced the strongest membership growth and highest convert retention rates among Caribbean nations with fewer than 1,000 members. Dominica experienced the second most rapid membership growth during this period, yet convert retention has been poor, and congregations were consolidated in 2010. Other island nations in the Caribbean have recently experienced the discontinuation of branches or districts, including Aruba, Dominica, and Saint Kitts and Nevis. St. Lucia has the third lowest percentage of Latter-day Saints in the population among Caribbean nations with an official Church presence after Martinique and Guadeloupe, largely due to the recent reestablishment of the Church on the island.

Many Christian groups engaged in proselytism have a visible presence on Saint Lucia and achieve modest growth rates. Most of these groups have had a long-term presence on the island and are self-sustaining. Seventh Day Adventists are among the most successful denominations and now constitute 10% of the population. Jehovah's Witnesses experience slow membership growth.

Future Prospects

The outlook for church growth in the near future appears favorable due to good convert retention coupled with systematic large increases in convert baptisms. Additional congregations may be organized in the most populous lesser-reached areas as well as in Castries and its surroundings. Once three or more branches operate, a district may be created. Self-sustaining growth over the long term will depend on locals serving full-time missions, remaining in their home country, and increasing the number of active priesthood holders to fill leadership positions.

SAINT MARTIN AND SINT MAARTEN

Geography

AREA: 88.4 square km (Saint Martin: 54.4 square km, Sint Maarten: 34 square km). The smallest island divided between two countries in the world, Saint Martin and Sint Maarten are located in the Caribbean Sea between the Virgin Islands and Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Kitts and Nevis. The island is subject to tropical marine climate moderated by trade winds. Terrain is hilly and low-lying. Hurricanes are a natural disaster. Saint Martin is an overseas collectivity of France, whereas Sint Maarten is a constituent country of the Netherlands.

Peoples

Creole (mulatto) [mixed black African and other races]
Black African
Mestizo
White
East Indian

There are no reliable estimates of the ethnic breakdown of the population.

Population: Saint Martin: 30,615; Sint Maarten: 37,429 (2009)

Annual Growth Rate: Saint Martin N/A; Sint Maarten N/A

Fertility Rate: Saint Martin N/A; Sint Maarten 1.7 children born per woman (2009)

Life Expectancy: Saint Martin N/A; Sint Maarten 73.1 male, 78.2 female (2009)

Languages: Saint Martin: N/A Sint Maarten: English (67.5%), Spanish (12.9%), Creole (8.2%), Dutch (4.2%), Papiamentu (2.2%), French (1.5%), other (3.5%). English and Dutch are the official languages. English is the most commonly spoken languages on both sides of the island.

Literacy: N/A

History

The Spanish claimed the island of Saint Martin in the late fifteenth century, and the Dutch overtook the island in 1631. Spain recaptured the island in 1633 but ultimately ceded it to the Dutch and French, who divided it between themselves in 1648. Conflict regarding the demarcation of the border persisted in the subsequent centuries between France and the Netherlands. African slaves were introduced in the late eighteenth century to work on sugar, cotton, and tobacco plantations. The French abolished slavery in 1848, and the Dutch abolished slavery in 1863. The economy transitioned to tourism in the mid-to late twentieth century. Saint Martin voted to secede from Guadeloupe in 2003 and became an overseas collectivity of France in 2007. Sint Maarten originally pertained to the Netherland Antilles and became its own constituent country in 2010.

Culture

Tourism is the primary influence on island culture, as it is the backbone of the economy. Agriculture and

Christianity were the traditional influences on local culture. Influence from Western Europe is strong and secularism has spread. Cuisine is diverse and commonly includes East Indian and Caribbean dishes. Alcohol consumption rates appear higher than the world average.

Economy

GDP per capita: Saint Martin: N/A Sint Maarten: \$15,400 (2008) [32.5% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: N/A

Corruption Index: N/A

Tourism drives the economy in both Saint Martin and Sint Maarten as 80%–85% of the labor force is employed in tourism. Over one million tourists visit the island annually. Saint Martin is believed to have the highest per capita income in the Caribbean and Sint Maarten has the highest per capita income among the five islands that comprised the former Netherland Antilles. Sugar is the primary agricultural product. Major industries include tourism, manufacturing, light industry, and heavy industry. Trade appears to primarily occur with East Asia, North America, and the Middle East. Corruption appears lower than most islands in the Lesser Antilles.

Faiths

Saint Martin: N/A

Sint Maarten

Christian: 83.8%

Jewish: 3.4%

Other: 5.4%

Not reported: 0.7%

None: 6.7%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 34,000

Seventh Day Adventists 5,000 (estimate)

Latter-day Saints 230 1

Jehovah's Witnesses 329 5 (only Sint Maarten)

Religion

Catholicism is the traditional religious tradition, although the number of church-going Catholics appears to have declined in recent years, as materialism and wealth have increased. Protestants outnumber Catholics in Sint Maarten. Nearly 12% of the Sint Maarten population is Pentecostal. Seventh Day Adventists are one of the largest Christian denominations on the island.

Religious Freedom

The constitutions of France and the Netherlands protect religious freedom, which is upheld by both governments. There have been no reports of societal abuse of religious freedom in either Saint Martin or Sint Maarten.

Largest Cities

Urban: 50%

Lower Princess Quarter, Cul De Sac, Cole Bay, Upper Princess Quarter, Marigot, Little Bay, Phillipsburg. Settlements listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Two of the seven largest settlements have an LDS congregation. Approximately half of the island population resides in the seven largest settlements.

LDS Background

The first known Latter-day Saints to live on Saint Martin arrived in the early 1980s from Guadeloupe. The island was assigned to the West Indies Mission and the first branch was organized in 1984 in Saint Martin. Full-time missionaries were first assigned in 1984. During the late 1980s, two branches functioned on the island, one on the French-side and one of the Dutch-side. In 1992, the two branches were consolidated into the Phillipsburg Branch.⁴⁹³ The Marigot Branch was organized sometime in the 2000s and both branches were again consolidated into a single branch in 2011 based in Phillipsburg, Sint Maarten . There are no reliable estimates for LDS membership prior to the late 2000s. In 2010, there were 57 members in Saint Martin and 212 members in Sint Maarten. Membership growth has been slow since the initial establishment of the Church. Total active membership appears no greater than one hundred, or 35%–40% of church membership on records. Saint Martin and Sint Maarten continue to pertain to the West Indies Mission and are assigned to the Orlando Florida Temple district.

Opportunities

The small geographic size of the island requires few congregations to adequately reach the majority of the population. With the exception of Creole, all commonly spoken local languages have LDS materials available. Widespread use of English simplifies missionary activity and facilitates member integration into congregations despite ethnic and cultural differences. There are no legal restrictions infringing on the religious freedom of LDS members and missionaries. Religious plurality among Christians encourages integration into the Christian community and acceptance of the LDS Church along with other nontraditional Christian faiths. Most have a background in Christianity, facilitating understanding and application of developed LDS teaching approaches. Isolation from mission leadership has likely facilitated self-sufficiency notwithstanding few members, as indicated by the continued functioning of two branches. The LDS Church in Saint Martin and Sint Maarten appeared among the most self-sufficient among islands in the Lesser Antilles in the late 2000s, as indicated by the continued operation of two branches led by local branch presidents and fewer than 300 total members on the island. The consolidation of the two branches presents challenges for extending outreach to both halves of the island.

Challenges

Secularism, materialism, strong ties to local churches, and competition for converts among a tiny population present obstacles for LDS mission outreach and reduce receptivity. The island's tiny population with few local members providing leadership and missionary manpower limit potential mission resources that may be allocated. Many Latter-day Saints appear to live temporarily on the island and provide no long-term support in building the Church. The local LDS community is very small and likely faces challenges with few resources to provide fellowshiping to new converts. It is unclear whether seminary or institute have commenced on the island but provide opportunities for youth-focused outreach and missionary preparation. LDS congregations operate in the immediate communities of less than 10% of the island population, one of the lowest percentages of the population living in locations with LDS congregations in the Caribbean.

⁴⁹³ "St. Maarten," *Deseret News 2011 Church Almanac*, p. 542–543.

Prospects

The outlook for LDS Church growth in Saint Martin and Sint Maarten is poor due to low receptivity, a tiny population, and few local Latter-day Saints. The self-sufficiency achieved in local membership supplying leadership for both branches for several years is encouraging, but the consolidation of the two branches points to few active members and overburdened local leadership.

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Geography

AREA: 389 square km. Consisting of one main island and thirty-two tiny islands and cays, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is located in the Caribbean between Grenada and Saint Lucia. Volcanic mountains cover most the terrain, which are subject to tropical weather year round. A rainy season occurs from May to November. Hurricanes and the active Soufriere volcano on Saint Vincent are natural hazards. Severe coastal ocean pollution is an environmental issue. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada share administration of the Grenadines. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is divided into six administrative parishes.

Peoples

Black: 66%

Mixed: 19%

East Indian: 6%

European: 4%

Carib Amerindian: 2%

Other: 3%

Blacks are the descendants of African slaves brought by Europeans in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The descendants of African slaves and Carib Amerindians account for most of the mixed ethnic population. Starting in the nineteenth century, East Indians arrived to work on the plantations. Although the islands were entirely populated by Caribs three centuries ago, today they account for 2% of the population. Over 90% of the population resides on Saint Vincent.

Population: 103,537 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: -0.313% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.89 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 72.48 male, 76.36 female (2012)

Languages: Vincentian Creole English (99.9%), other (0.1%). English is the official language. Vincentian Creole English shares many linguistic similarities with other Caribbean English creoles and standard English.

Literacy: 96% (1970)

History

Carib Amerindians resisted European efforts to settle and colonize the islands until the eighteenth century. Many shipwrecked or escaped African slaves from neighboring islands came to Saint Vincent and intermarried with the Caribs. The French began to establish coffee, tobacco, cotton, sugar, and indigo plantations in the early eighteenth century staffed by African slaves. Britain gained control over Saint Vincent in 1763, but the French retook the island in 1779 until Britain regained control in 1783 through the Treaty of Versailles. A failed revolt occurred in the late eighteenth century and resulted in the British relocating over 5,000 black Caribs to Roatan, a small island near Honduras. East Indians and Portuguese arrived to staff plantations after the British abolished slavery in 1834, but little economic development and improvement in living conditions

occurred due to low sugar prices in the nineteenth century. In 1877, Saint Vincent became a Crown Colony. The United Kingdom attempted to establish several semi-autonomous dependencies in the Caribbean in the late 1950s and 1960s, which included Saint Vincent and most British-owned islands. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines gained full autonomy under associate statehood status in 1969 and was the last of the Windward Islands to gain independence in 1979. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, La Soufriere volcano had two major eruptions, one of which killed over 2,000 people. Hurricanes regularly hit the islands, causing widespread damage.⁴⁹⁴

Culture

Christianity, fishing, and agricultural activity heavily influence local culture and support the economy. Cuisine consists of fruits, vegetables, yams, potatoes, cassava, and pilau, a local dish eaten daily consisting of rice, pigeon peas, and meat. Whites and foreign-educated blacks constitute the wealthiest and most powerful class of society whereas Caribs are the poorest.⁴⁹⁵

Economy

GDP per capita: \$11,700 (2011) [24.3% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.717

Corruption Index: 5.8 (2011)

Agriculture, construction, tourism, and remittances sustain the local economy. Heavy emigration has occurred as a result of sparse employment opportunities. Past natural disasters have crippled the economy, such as tropical storms and hurricanes and volcanic eruptions. In recent years, Saint Vincent has begun to meet international regulatory standards for its small banking sector and built a new international airport set to open in late 2013. Services employ 57% of the workforce and generate 64% of the GDP whereas industry employs 17% of the workforce and generates 26% of the GDP. Major industries include food processing, cement, furniture, and clothing. A quarter of the workforce engages in agricultural activity, which generates 10% of the GDP. Primary crops and goods include bananas, coconuts, sweet potatoes, spices, livestock, and fish. Greece, China, Singapore, France, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States are primary trade partners.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has one of the lowest perceiving corruption ratings in the Caribbean and is viewed as one of the least corruption nations among the world.

Faiths

Christian: 88%

Other: 12%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Anglican 19,000

Pentecostal 19,000

Baptist 11,000

Methodist 11,000

Seventh Day Adventists 11,000

⁴⁹⁴ "Background Note: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 14 July 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2345.htm>

⁴⁹⁵ "Saint Vincent and the Grenadines," Countries and Their Cultures, retrieved 5 November 2010. <http://www.everyculture.com/No-Sa/Saint-Vincent-and-the-Grenadines.html>

Catholic 8,000
 Rastafarian 1,500
 Latter-day Saints 540 2
 Jehovah's Witnesses 381 7

Religion

Most the population is Christian. The largest denominations are Anglicans, Pentecostals, and Methodists. There are small groups of Muslims, Hindus, and Baha'is.⁴⁹⁶

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. Public schools offer optional religious education that teach Christianity. A Christian Council operates and consists of the Salvation Army and the Anglican, Catholic, and Methodist Churches. Most Christian groups promote religious tolerance and understanding among Christian denominations. Rastafarians report some societal discrimination and complained that marijuana use is illegal.⁴⁹⁷

Largest Cities

Urban: 47%

Kingstown, Kingstown Park, **Georgetown, Byera Village, Biabou.**

Urban areas listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Two of the five largest urban areas have LDS congregations nearby. Forty-five percent (45%) of the national population resides in the five largest cities or towns. Kingstown and its suburbs account for 25% of the national population.

LDS History

The LDS Church first explored prospects to establish a Church presence when Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin and the Puerto Rico San Juan Mission president visited in January 1980. Two months later, the first full-time missionaries were assigned.⁴⁹⁸ Ebenezer Theodore Joshua joined the LDS Church in 1980 and served as the first branch president of the Kingstown Branch. Prior to joining the Church, he was a key independence activist and served as the first chief minister of Saint Vincent in 1960 when the United Kingdom granted greater sovereign constitutional rights. Thousands attended Joshua's funeral in 1991, which was also viewed by 30,000 to 40,000 on television. Eulogies delivered brought greater awareness to the general public that Joshua had joined the LDS Church and offered an opportunity for the West Indies Mission President and a senior missionary couple to provide a brief explanation of the Church to many of the country's inhabitants. Saint Vincent's international airport, the E. T. Joshua Airport, was named in his honor.⁴⁹⁹ Seminary and institute began in 1982.

⁴⁹⁶ "St. Vincent and the Grenadines," International Religious Freedom Report 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127404.htm>

⁴⁹⁷ "St. Vincent and the Grenadines," International Religious Freedom Report 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127404.htm>

⁴⁹⁸ "Saint Vincent," Country Profile, retrieved 5 November 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/saint-vincent>

⁴⁹⁹ "Island's first chief minister, a convert, eulogized at funeral," LDS Church News, 30 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21540/Islands-first-chief-minister-a-convert-eulogized-at-funeral.html>

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 540 (2012)

In 2000, there were 339 Latter-day Saints. During the 2000s, slow membership growth occurred as church membership totaled 366 in 2002, 373 in 2005, and 427 in 2008. Several years experienced a decline in church membership (2001, 2004, and 2007). Annual membership growth rates in the past decade have ranged from –5% (2004) to 11% (2008). Membership growth rates have accelerated since 2008 and convert baptisms have occurred regularly in both branches. In 2009, one in 230 was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 0 Branches: 2 (2012)

Only one LDS congregation, the Kingstown Branch, operated from the early 1980s until a second branch was created in 2007, named the Calliaqua Branch. Neither branch belongs to a stake or district and are administered by the West Indies Mission.

Activity and Retention

In early 2010, both the Kingstown and Calliaqua Branches set new records for church attendance of 121 and 65, respectively. Active membership is estimated at 180, or 40% of total church membership. Ten were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English.

All LDS scriptures and materials are available in English.

Meetinghouses

The first and only Church-built meetinghouse began construction in 1985⁵⁰⁰ and houses the Kingstown Branch. The Calliaqua Branch began meeting in a larger rented facility in mid-2010 to accommodate the increase in active membership.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The LDS Church has completed at least one humanitarian project since 1985, which was a donation of appliances, fans, utensils, and linens to a children's hospital.⁵⁰¹

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Latter-day Saints worship freely on Saint Vincent. There are no restrictions on proselytism, the placement of foreign missionaries, or assembly.

⁵⁰⁰ "Saint Vincent," Country Profile, retrieved 5 November 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/saint-vincent>

⁵⁰¹ "Projects—Saint Vincent and the Grenadines," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 5 November 2010. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-102,00.html>

Cultural Issues

Discipleship in other Christian denominations is high, leading to competition between the various churches on the islands. LDS missionary efforts benefit from high levels of religious interest and a homogenous Christian population, but many are active in other denominations and demonstrate little interest in learning about the Church from full-time missionaries.

National Outreach

Forty-five percent (45%) of the national population resides in areas with LDS congregations. Full-time missionaries proselyte only in and around Kingstown and Calliaqua, the two most populous areas of Saint Vincent. No mission outreach has occurred in the Grenadines, which are sparsely populated and less accessible.

Latter-day Saints have yet to explore mission outreach prospects on the east, north and west parts of Saint Vincent. The number of full-time missionaries assigned will likely not increase in the foreseeable future due to the small population of the island and lack of full-time missionaries in the West Indies Mission and worldwide. Branch missionaries and ordinary local members will be needed to expand national outreach in less populated areas currently unreached by the Church. Larger towns that may have mission outreach centers established include Georgetown, Layou, and Richmond.

No noticeable breakthroughs with the native population appeared to have occurred as a result of Ebenezer Theodore Joshua's affiliation with the LDS Church. Public relations and awareness of the Church may have been improved as a result of Jacob's membership in the Church. Full-time missionaries have taught literacy skills by using the Book of Mormon, creating finding opportunities and also performing development work.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Convert retention rates have been poor in the past, but have improved since the late 2000s, as indicated by increases in active membership and the creation of a second congregation. In early 2010, the West Indies Mission addressed poor convert retention apparent in many areas of the mission by increasing baptismal standards. To be baptized, investigators were required to attend church for three consecutive Sundays and read the Book of Mormon every day for at least fourteen days. Many local members have actively fellowshipped new converts, which has contributed to the recent increase in convert retention rates. High levels of church affiliation in Saint Vincent among the general population has likely contributed to LDS convert attrition, as some converts return to their previous churches if offended in the LDS Church or if pressured by family and friends.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

LDS demographics appear to reflect the general population, with blacks and those of mixed ethnicity constituting the bulk of Church membership. There are some white members on the island. Missionaries report no significant ethnic integration challenges at church.

Language Issues

There are no LDS materials in Vincentian Creole English or any other Caribbean English creoles. Full-time missionaries and church leaders utilize LDS scriptures and materials in standard English. There do not appear to be any significant language challenges using standard English materials. Prospects for translations of Church materials in Vincentian Creole English appear low due to the few number of speakers and adaptability of most locals to standard English.

Missionary Service

Very few local members have served full-time missions. In mid-2010, a local senior couple was called to serve as full-time missionaries in the West Indies Mission. Missionary preparation classes offered through institute or local congregations may increase the number of youth who serve missions and over time lead to an increase in available leadership.

Leadership

The creation of a second branch in 2007 indicates greater strength and numbers of active priesthood holders needed to fill administrative positions in local congregations. Active local leadership remains very limited and insufficient to create additional congregations and a district. Nonmissionaries lead both LDS congregations on Saint Vincent. In 2010, the branch president of the Kingstown Branch was an American expatriate whereas a local member led the Calliaqua Branch.

Temple

Saint Vincent belongs to the Orlando Florida Temple district. Several families have traveled to the temple, but regular temple trips to do not occur. Senior missionary couples have assisted preparation efforts for families to travel to the temple for the first time and in 2010 prepared three families to go to the temple. Prospects for the Church to construct a temple closer to Saint Vincent are unlikely due to few Latter-day Saints in the region.

Comparative Growth

Slow membership growth and activity rates are representative of most small island Caribbean nations. The percentage of Latter-day Saints in Saint Vincent is comparable to most Caribbean nations. Accelerated membership growth in the late 2000s outpaced most small island countries in the Caribbean. Member activity rates in Saint Vincent are higher than most Caribbean nations.

Most Christian groups that actively proselyte report strong church growth in Saint Vincent, such as Pentecostals and Seventh Day Adventists. Adventists have consistently growth over the past ninety years, and today constitute over 10% of the national population. Jehovah's Witnesses experience slow membership growth.

Future Prospects

Increases in convert baptisms and higher levels of convert retention have resulted in increases in active membership. These trends have been sustained for several years and offer a promising outlook for long-term church growth if sustained. Continued growth in the Kingstown Branch may necessitate the creation of a third branch. Prospects for the formation of a district will depend on the creation of additional congregations. Rural areas will require the member-missionary activity to expand national outreach due to the small population and limited missionary resources available regionally and internationally.

SURINAME

Geography

AREA: 163,820 square km. The smallest independent country in South America, Suriname occupies a small, tropical area along the Northern Atlantic Ocean coast between Guyana and French Guiana and north of Brazil. Most reside along coastal areas, preserving the rainforest of the interior. Rivers, lakes and rolling hills occupy the interior whereas swamps and plains are along the coast. Deforestation is the primary environmental issue. Border disputes continue over defining the boundary with Guyana. Suriname is divided into ten administrative districts.

Peoples

Hindustani: 37%
Creole: 31%
Javanese: 15%
Maroons: 10%
Amerindian: 2%
Chinese: 2%
White: 1%
Other: 2%

Hindustani, Javanese and Chinese arrived as workers during the colonial period. Creole inherited a mixed ancestry from African slaves and whites. Maroons are descendants of black slaves who escaped into the interior.

Population: 560,157 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.222% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.08 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 68.78 male, 73.58 female (2012)

Languages: Dutch is most widely spoken and the official language. Other widely spoken languages with over 50,000 speakers include Hindustani, Sranan, Javanese, and Guyanese Creole English. There are less than 10,000 speakers of Amerindian languages.

Literacy: 89.6%

History

The Spanish first explored Suriname in the sixteenth century followed by British settlement in the seventeenth century. Suriname became a Dutch colony in 1667 and did not achieve independence until 1975. Slavery occurred until 1863. Workers were subsequently relocated to the colony from India and Indonesia. In 1980, a military regime took over the government and established a socialist government, which fell in the late 1980s. Political stability did not return until the early 1990s. A democratic government was instituted in 1991.

Culture

Suriname shares many cultural similarities with Caribbean nations with large Asian and black communities like Trinidad and Tobago. Due to the large number of Indians and Javanese, Hinduism and Islam have also shaped the culture and integrated cuisine from Asia into local foods. High ethnic diversity has not resulted in ethnic violence.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$9,500 (2011) [19.8% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.680

Corruption Index: 3.0 (2011)

High inequality of wealth occurs in Suriname, which has a GDP per capita of \$8,800, yet 70% of the population lives below the poverty line. The unemployment rate was 9.5% in the 2000s. Services account for 64.8% of the GDP and employ 78% of the workforce. Mining and mineral exports provide a large amount of government revenue. Primary industries include bauxite and gold mining, alumina production, oil extraction, and lumber. Agriculture produces 11% of the GDP and employs 8% of the workforce. Agriculture products include rice, bananas, and palm kernels. Canada, the United States, the Netherlands, Trinidad and Tobago, and Belgium are primary trade partners. Tourism has grown in recent years due to the large amount of biodiversity in the interior rainforest.

Corruption is widespread, and little anti-corruption initiative has taken place. Little has been done to investigate allegations of fraud by government officials.

Faiths

Christian: 40.7%

Hindu: 20%

Muslim: 13.5%

Indigenous beliefs: 3.3%

Other or none: 22.5%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 110,664

Seventh Day Adventists 4,323 15

Jehovah's Witnesses 2,520 49

Latter-day Saints 1,323 6

Religion

Christianity has the most followers. Most political parties have strong ethnic and religious ties but do not require members to adhere to a particular religious group. There is no relationship between socioeconomic class and religion with the possible exception of Amerindians who practice indigenous religions in poor, rural locations. Several Christian, Hindu and Muslim holidays are observed by the government as national holidays.

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is generally supported by the government. The

constitution allows its citizens to change religions if desired. Religious instruction may occur in school but is not mandatory.⁵⁰²

Largest Cities

Urban: 75%

Paramaribo, Lelydorp, Nieuw Nickerie, **Moengo, Meerzorg, Nieuw Amsterdam, Marienburg, Wageningen, Albina, Groningen.**

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Three of the ten largest cities have a congregation. Fifty-nine percent (59%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

The first missionaries arrived in 1988, and the first converts joined the Church in 1988 and 1989.⁵⁰³ Elder M. Russell Ballard dedicated Suriname for missionary work in February 1990.⁵⁰⁴ Seminary and institute began in 1993 and 1994. Missionary work was first administered by the West Indies Mission, later the Trinidad and Tobago Mission, and again by the West Indies Mission. In 1998, Suriname was part of the North America Southeast Area.⁵⁰⁵ In 2006, Suriname became part of the newly created Caribbean Area.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 1,323 (2012)

Eighty-five attended the dedication of Suriname in 1990. The largest group had twenty-five attending Sunday meetings at the time in Lelydorp.⁵⁰⁶ Attendance reached one hundred in the Paramaribo Branch in late 1990.⁵⁰⁷ In 1995, there were 300 members. By 2000, membership reached 438.

Membership grew more rapidly in the 2000s. In 2002, membership reached 518 and 584 in 2004. There were 687 members by 2006 and 847 members in 2007. Annual membership growth rates ranged between 4%–13% between 2001 and 2006, whereas annual membership growth rates reached over 23% in 2007 and 2008. Suriname experienced its largest numerical increase in membership in 2008, growing by 210. Membership typically increases between 50 and 150 annually.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 6 (2012)

⁵⁰² "Suriname," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127405.htm>

⁵⁰³ Wells, Elayne. "Work flourishing among a people 'without guile,'" LDS Church News, 1 December 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20206/Work-flourishing-among-a-people-without-guile.html>

⁵⁰⁴ "Services in 3 South American nations and island republic," LDS Church News, 10 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20438/Services-in-3-South-American-nations-and-island-republic.html>

⁵⁰⁵ "5 new areas announced worldwide," LDS Church News, 4 July 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31389/5-new-areas-announced-worldwide.html>

⁵⁰⁶ "Services in 3 South American nations and island republic," LDS Church News, 10 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20438/Services-in-3-South-American-nations-and-island-republic.html>

⁵⁰⁷ Wells, Elayne. "Work flourishing among a people 'without guile,'" LDS Church News, 1 December 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20206/Work-flourishing-among-a-people-without-guile.html>

In early 1990, there was one branch, and members met in four different locations for Sunday meetings.⁵⁰⁸ By late 1990, meetings were held in Paramaribo, Lelydorp, and Uitkijk.

A second branch was created in 2002 in Wanika. The Church organized the first district in Paramaribo in 2004. In 2007, four new branches were created in Nieuw Nickerie, Uitkijk, Tamenga, and Blauwgrond. A seventh branch was created in Koewarasan in 2008. In 2010, the Blauwgrond Branch was discontinued.

Activity and Retention

Many of the branches have a large number of inactive members and few active members. One branch in the Paramaribo area had only 40 of the 200 members attending Church meetings weekly. The Nickerie Branch had approximately 30 attending meetings weekly in late 2009. The ratio of members to congregations has decreased from 438 in 2000 to 151 in 2008. Youth constitute a large portion of active membership. Seventy-four were enrolled in seminary during the 2007–2008 school year, and Suriname had one of the highest percentages of members attending seminary in the Caribbean (7%). The West Indies Mission had 450 active Melchizedek Priesthood holders, 2,800 attending sacrament meeting, and 550 endowed members in the late 2000s. The average branch likely has fifty active members, indicating that active membership totals around 350, or 33%.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English, Dutch, Hindi.

All LDS scriptures and most Church materials are available in Dutch, including a wide selection of institute manuals and audio/visual materials. The Book of Mormon and limited materials are translated into Hindi. Only *The Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith* is available in Sranan.

Meetinghouses

The Paramaribo Branch meets in a Church-built meetinghouse. Other congregations meet in renovated buildings or rented spaces.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Few humanitarian projects have taken place in Suriname. The Church donated wheelchairs in 2006.⁵⁰⁹

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church enjoys full religious freedom to proselyte. Foreign full-time missionaries have challenges obtaining visas. Missionaries have the unique opportunity to openly teach Hindus and Muslims.

Cultural Issues

The greatest cultural challenge for the Church is the wide variety of religious and cultural traditions in

⁵⁰⁸ “Services in 3 South American nations and island republic,” LDS Church News, 10 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20438/Services-in-3-South-American-nations-and-island-republic.html>

⁵⁰⁹ “Wheelchair distribution,” LDS Church Newsroom, retrieved 25 February 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/background-information/wheelchair-distribution>

Suriname. Converts come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, depending on ethnicity. High religious tolerance of differing religions appears to have allowed the Church greater acceptance in the community.

National Outreach

Five of the Church's six congregations function in the two most populous and smallest administrative districts of Suriname, Paramaribo and Wanica, which account for 60% of the national population. The Nickerie Branch provides an outreach center for 8.5% of the national population residing in the Nickerie District. The remaining 31.5% of the population resides in districts without congregations. Some districts bordering Paramaribo and Wanica, such as Commewijne, Para, and Saramacca, have some towns and villages close to congregations and account for 11% of the population.

Unreached districts present challenges to the Church due to language issues, remote location and sparse population. The Sipaliwini District is larger than the other nine districts combined, has a population of 29,000 and many Amerindians. Mission outreach to Sipaliwini and other districts will likely most effectively occur through local members in Paramaribo sharing the gospel with friends and family residing in these locations.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Convert retention challenges have persisted for the past decade during years with slow and rapid membership growth. Many converts were retained during periods of increased membership growth in the late 2000s, but the percentage of active members appears to have decreased. Historically low member activity is apparent by only one congregation with almost 500 members serving Suriname in the early 2000s. However, the increase of congregations from two to seven in two years points toward maturing local leadership capable of leading congregations of retained converts. Missionaries report that many of the branches have an inadequate number of active members to fill all the basic branch callings. Some of the smaller branches may close in the coming years and become groups if recent converts become less active or active members are lost to attrition.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Congregations include members from all the different ethnic groups. Leaders and missionaries face the challenge of bringing converts from Hindustani, Javanese, Maroon, Creole, Chinese, Amerindian, and white backgrounds, each of which vary in religious affiliation and political views. Commonalities between individuals from differing ethnic groups appear to have been found and sustained in congregations, but differences in culture and language complicate ethnic integration.

Language Issues

Most missionaries become proficient in Dutch, and some can converse in Sranan. Language is a major obstacle for missionaries in outreach among Hindustani and Javanese areas where many do not speak Dutch fluently. An increase in local full-time missionaries fluent in these languages and assigned to serve in Suriname will provide the greatest means to reach these isolated populations as the Church lacks members and missionaries who speak either of these languages. Javanese is the language with the most speakers without LDS materials worldwide, with some 84.6 million speakers.

Missionary Service

Foreign missionaries overwhelmingly constitute the LDS missionary manpower in Suriname. In mid-2009, sixteen missionaries served in Suriname. Missionaries typically do not transfer to other nations in the West

Indies Mission as they learn to speak Dutch and visas are difficult to obtain. Stressing missionary preparation to youth and young adults attending seminary and institute may help improve local missionary self-sufficiency.

Leadership

Suriname has demonstrated some limited local leadership development. The organization of a district with only two branches indicated that local leadership was sufficient to staff both the district and branch presidencies in the early 2000s. Challenges exist in increasing the number and devotion of local priesthood leaders. In early 2010, a missionary had to fill the branch presidency in one of the branches because the former native branch president was released for disciplinary action. In early 2010, five of the seven branches had native branch presidents. The small size of local leadership limits possibilities of opening new congregations in lesser-reached areas.

Temple

Suriname belongs to the Caracas Venezuela Temple District. Temple trips to the temple in Caracas or Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic likely do not occur frequently due to distance, money, and time constraints. There are no foreseeable prospects of a temple closer to Suriname due to few members and low activity rates in the region.

Comparative Growth

Suriname has experienced moderate increases in membership and congregational growth but with low retention. Guyana has experienced similar results. Guyana Church membership doubled between 2006 and 2009, and Surinamese membership doubled between 2002 and 2008. Growth has occurred more rapidly than in most Caribbean nations over the past decade, such as Trinidad and Tobago, and French Guiana.

Many Christian denominations experience comparable membership growth with the LDS Church. Both Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists reported between 100 and 200 baptisms in 2008. Evangelical churches have reported steady and moderate growth over the past several decades. Christian groups also struggle with preaching to Hindustani and Javanese in addition to reaching isolated, sparsely populated regions.

Future Prospects

The outlook for continued membership growth appears good. Few additional congregations will likely be organized until greater convert retention, local leadership development, and increases in the numbers of active members in operating congregations occurs. The Church in Suriname displays several characteristics that demonstrate that the foundation has been laid for a stake to be established in more distant future as the majority of membership is concentrated in Paramaribo and surrounding communities. There are enough congregations for a stake to be organized, and the greatest strength is found among Surinamese youth who, if retained and serve full-time missions, could lead to long-term growth and self-sufficiency.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Geography

AREA: 28,051 square km. Located north of Venezuela in the southern Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago consists of the larger, more populous island of Trinidad and the smaller, less populated island of Tobago. The islands experience a tropical climate subject to a rainy season from June to December and have few hills and small mountains. Forests cover undeveloped landscape. Water pollution and deforestation pose the greatest environmental hazards. Trinidad and Tobago are administratively divided into nine regional corporations, two city corporations, three borough corporations, and one ward.

Peoples

East Indian: 40%

African: 37.5%

Mixed: 20.5%

Other: 1.2%

Unspecified: 0.8%

British colonialism brought East Indians and Africans to the islands for work on plantations. Mixed ethnicity claims those from both Indian and African backgrounds. Other ethnic groups include Chinese, Arab, and those with mixed ancestry, which include native peoples. The negative population growth rate results from high immigration to the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States combined with a low birth rate. East Indians form the largest percentages of the population in central and southern Trinidad. Tobago is populated primarily by individuals of African descent.

Population: 1,226,383 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: -0.086% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.72 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 68.81 male, 74.6 female (2012)

Languages: English and Creole English are most widely spoken. English is the official language. Less spoken languages include Hindustani, French, Spanish, and Chinese. English is the only language that numbers over one million speakers, with many speaking Creole or English as a second language.

Literacy: 98.6% (2003)

History

Arawak Amerindians settled the islands thousands of years prior to Spanish discovery and colonialism that began at the start of the sixteenth century. Greater immigrant populations began to settle the islands for the following centuries. The British took control in the early nineteenth century and heavily cultivated sugarcane. African slaves worked in the plantations until the end of slavery in the British Empire in 1834. Indentured servants from India arrived between the mid-nineteenth century and 1917 to increase sugar production after the end of slavery. In the early twentieth century, oil was discovered and led to increased exports. Independence

from the United Kingdom occurred in 1962. Trinidad and Tobago benefits from a diversified economy that has brought greater wealth than most other Caribbean nations.

Culture

The British have influenced many areas of society ranging from law to customs. East Indians and Africans have also maintained many of their native customs and traditions. Christian, Hindi and Muslim holidays are all celebrated nationally. Recently arrive immigrants have also infused local culture with their own food and customs. Cigarette consumption rates rank higher than the worldwide average, whereas alcohol consumption rates are comparable to the worldwide average rate alcohol use.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$20,300 (2011) [42.2% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.760

Corruption Index: 3.2 (2011)

Trinidad and Tobago enjoys some of the strongest, consistent economic growth in the Caribbean and serves as the region's economic center. Most of the economy's success comes from oil and natural gas revenues, which produce 80% of the exports and 40% of the GDP. The industry sector employs only 12.8% of the population, whereas 62.9% of the workforce is in services. Tourism is an important and growing part of the economy, especially on Tobago, which is not as developed as many other Caribbean nations. Greater diversification of the economy will likely continue as foreign investment continues in manufacturing industries, including aluminum and plastics. Trinidad and Tobago supply cement and many manufactured goods to nearby island nations. Agriculture accounts for less than 1% of the GDP and primarily produces cocoa, rice and citrus. The United States is the largest import and export partner. Important export partners include Spain, Jamaica and the Netherlands whereas major import partners include Brazil, Venezuela, and Colombia.

The level of corruption is comparable to Mexico. Drug traffic from South America often transits Trinidad and Tobago to the United States and Europe. Marijuana is widely produced. Crime is often punished according to law, but increasing favoritism and flexibility of law toward officials and politicians has raised concerns.

Faiths

Christian: 57.6%

Hindu: 22.5%

Muslim: 5.8%

Other: 10.8%

Unspecified: 1.4%

None: 1.9%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic: 319,788

Anglican: 95,936

Baptist: 88,557

Pentecostal: 83,637

Seventh Day Adventists 63,427 146

Jehovah's Witnesses 9,291 114

Latter-day Saints 3,058 11

Religion

Most Trinidadians of African descent are Christian, and a few are Muslim. Most East Indians in Trinidad are Hindu or Muslim, with some Christians. Hindus and Muslims have the strongest concentrations in southern Trinidad. Catholics and Anglicans report decreasing Church attendance and clergy.⁵¹⁰ Tobago is primarily Christian. Rastafarian ideology has influenced Christian groups the most. Many Protestants experience steady growth.

Religious Freedom

The constitution and government protect religious freedom. Government does not favor any religious group and seeks to promote religious harmony and prosecute crimes targeting religious groups. Foreign missionaries may operate without limitations except that they must represent a registered religious group, cannot stay longer than three years, and are limited to no more than thirty foreign missionaries per religious group at a time.⁵¹¹

Largest Cities

Urban: 13%

San Fernando, San Juan, Port of Spain, Arima, Marabella, Point Fortin, Tunapuna, Sangre Grande, Tacarigua, Chaguanas.

All cities over 5,000 people have a congregation within city limits or within five miles. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

Missionaries returning from South Africa in late 1940 stopped in Trinidad briefly and taught a congregation. Elder Ezra Taft Benson stopped in Trinidad during a tour of the Caribbean in 1955. The first Trinidadian members joined the Church in other nations and returned to their homeland in the mid-1970s. The first sacrament meeting occurred in November 1976. The first convert baptisms occurred in 1977, the same year formal missionary work started in Port of Spain under the direction of the Venezuela Caracas Mission. Three years later, the first LDS branch was organized in the city. Difficulty in obtaining missionary visas and restrictions on proselytizing limited missionary work until the late 1980s. The first eighteen missionary visas were obtained in 1988, which increased to thirty-five a few years later. Trinidad and Tobago was transferred to the West Indies Mission in 1983, and in 1991 an independent mission was organized in the country that operated for three years. The Trinidad and Tobago Mission was discontinued in 1994, and the headquarters of the West Indies Mission, which included most of the islands in the Caribbean, was transferred from Barbados to Trinidad.⁵¹² Elder M. Russell Ballard dedicated Trinidad and Tobago for missionary work in February 1990.⁵¹³ Seminary and institute began in the early 1990s. In 2006, the Caribbean Area was created and included Trinidad and Tobago. A year later, the West Indies Mission was realigned, and the Puerto Rico San Juan Mission was split to create a third mission, the Puerto Rico San Juan East Mission. As of early 2010, the West Indies Mission also included Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines,

⁵¹⁰ "Trinidad and Tobago," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127406.htm>

⁵¹¹ "Trinidad and Tobago," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127406.htm>

⁵¹² "Trinidad and Tobago," Country Profile, 8 October 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/trinidad-and-tobago>

⁵¹³ "Services in 3 South American nations and island republic," LDS Church News, 10 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20438/Services-in-3-South-American-nations-and-island-republic.html>

Grenada, Guadeloupe, Martinique, and St. Maarten. Following the closure of the Puerto Rico San Juan East Mission in 2010, the West Indies Mission also administered Barbados.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 3,058 (2012)

When the Trinidad and Tobago Mission was created in 1991, there were 600 members in its boundaries, which also included Guyana and Suriname.⁵¹⁴ There were 700 members in Trinidad and Tobago by 1993, increasing to 1,100 by 1997. There were 1,682 members at the end of 2000.

Membership growth increased slowly during the early 2000s to 1,770 at the end of 2003. Accelerated growth began in 2004 with membership reaching 2,115 in 2006 and 2,489 in 2008. Starting in 2004 around 125 converts joined the Church per year, increasing to 234 convert baptisms in 2008. When the application was submitted for the Port of Spain Trinidad District to become a stake, there were 2,130 members in the district.

Annual membership growth rates ranged from -0.5% to 3% during the early 2000s. Growth rates steadily increased from -0.5% in 2003 to a high of 9.6% in 2008. The drop in membership during 2003 was likely due to emigration and few convert baptisms. By 2008, there was one LDS member for every 421 people.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 5 Branches: 5 Groups: 1 (April 2013)

In the 1990s, additional branches were created in San Fernando, Arima, Sangre Grande, Couva, and Curepe. The Port of Spain Trinidad District was created in 1996. In 1997, there were five branches. By the end of 2000, there were six branches. The number of branches increased to seven in 2002 and fluctuated between seven and eight during 2003 and 2004. In 2005, the district was split to create a second district for southern Trinidad in San Fernando. Branches numbered ten in 2005 and increased to eleven in 2006 and twelve in 2008. New congregations created in the 2000s included branches in Chaguanas, Princess Town, Siparia, Port Fortin, and Tobago. The first branch on Tobago was created in 2007.

In 2008, San Fernando Trinidad District was discontinued in order to prepare for the establishment of a stake. A second branch in San Fernando was created in the 2000s but a couple of years later was recombined with the first branch to increase the number of active members to organize a ward. Another branch was consolidated in the Arima area to prepare other branches to become wards.

The first stake was organized in March 2009 and included the Arima, Couva, Curepe, Port of Spain, San Fernando, and Sangre Grande Wards and the Chaguanas and Princess Town Branches. In 2010, branches in Port Fortin, Siparia, and Tobago reported directly to the mission. The Arima Ward was downgraded to a branch in 2010. Missionaries were working to establish a congregation in Caparo in late 2009, which is located southeast of Chaguanas. In 2012, the branch in Princes Town was closed.

Activity and Retention

One hundred eight attended the dedicatory services for missionary work in 1990.⁵¹⁵ 900 members from

⁵¹⁴ "Six new missions to be created missions are added in Europe, Africa, Caribbean, and U.S.," LDS Church News, 23 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20711/Six-new-missions-to-be-created-missions-are-added-in-Europe-Africa-Caribbean-and-U.S.html>

⁵¹⁵ "Services in 3 South American nations and island republic," LDS Church News, 10 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20438/Services-in-3-South-American-nations-and-island-republic.html>

Trinidad and neighboring islands attended President Hinckley's visit in 2002.⁵¹⁶ 750 attended the organization of the first stake in 2009.⁵¹⁷ The average number of members per congregation fell from 280 in 2000 to 207 in 2008, indicating that active membership had increased or the number of active members per congregation had decreased. The strength of the older branches is manifest, as all branches created before 2000 became wards in 2009. Mission branches have small active memberships. The Siparia Branch had thirty active members out of eighty in late 2009 and the Tobago and Port Fortin Branches likely had less than fifty. Active membership is likely around 1,000, or 40%. Total active membership in the West Indies Mission was 2,600 out of 10,000 in late 2009, with the highest activity likely occurring in Trinidad. During the 2008–2009 school year, 171 were enrolled in seminary or institute.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English, Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Spanish.

English has all LDS scriptures and the widest body of church materials available of any language. No materials are available in Trinidadian English Creole or Tobagonian. Materials and all LDS scriptures are available in Arabic, Chinese, and Spanish. The Book of Mormon and some church materials are translated into Hindi, but none are available in the dialect of Hindustani spoken on Trinidad.

Meetinghouses

Most units in the Port of Spain Trinidad Stake meet in church-built meetinghouses or renovated buildings. Recent economic growth has increased property prices, creating greater financial problems in obtaining land for additional meetinghouses. Mission branches typically meet in rented spaces or renovated buildings. Some members travel up to two hours to attend church meetings.

Health and Safety

Floods and hurricanes are natural hazards. Medical infrastructure is limited. Dengue fever and other tropical diseases are present in Trinidad and Tobago, but uncommon. Violent crime has escalated over the past decade. Homicides have quadrupled since 2000. Smoking rates are similar to the United States. HIV/AIDS infects 1.5% of the population.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church has completed few humanitarian projects, as most do not suffer from inadequate living conditions. Professional basketball players offered basketball training clinics in 1991 under the Church's name.⁵¹⁸ Wheelchair donations were made as early as 2002.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁶ "Visit to West Indies because 'We love you,'" LDS Church News, 1 June 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41901/Visit-to-West-Indies-because-We-love-you.html>

⁵¹⁷ Beck, Mark. "Worth the wait in Trinidad and Tobago," LDS Church News, 7 March 2009. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/56717/Worth-the-wait-in-Trinidad-Tobago.html>

⁵¹⁸ "Ex-BYU cagers offer free clinics in Trinidad, Tobago," LDS Church News, 21 September 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21263/Ex-BYU-cagers-offer-free-clinics-in-Trinidad-Tobago.html>

⁵¹⁹ "Hundreds more wheelchairs distributed," LDS Church News, 28 December 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43004/Hundreds-more-wheelchairs-distributed.html>

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church faced problems with obtaining missionary visas during early years of its presence, and continues to face limitations on the number of missionaries that can serve in the country. The Church's quota for missionaries has increased in recent years and had not reached the limit until missionaries were reassigned from other areas of the West Indies Mission in 2009, although the increased mission staffing is likely to be temporary. The Church has likely received exemption from the law prohibiting religious groups having more than thirty foreign missionaries.

Cultural Issues

The large range of cultures complicates efforts to unify members in congregations, as converts come from a wide range of religious and social backgrounds. Religious harmony typically prevails, but segregation often occurs on a social level. Rastafarian philosophy conflicts with many Church teachings, including drug use and doctrinal issues pertaining to the gathering of Israel.

National Outreach

The small size of Trinidad allows for a single stake to meet the needs of members in the stronger congregations throughout the island. Although LDS congregations serve all of the largest cities, 75% of the population lives outside the ten largest cities. Several administrative corporations do not have a congregation, including the regional corporations of Diego Martin, Penal-Debe, and Rio Claro-Mayaro with a combined population of around 220,000 or 18% of the national population. These lesser-reached regional corporations may have some missionary areas, and all likely have both less active and active members who attend nearby congregations. Diego Martin and Penal-Debe especially provide good opportunities for the Church to establish additional congregations in areas with higher population densities, which likely have a few active members capable of leading new congregations.

No lasting mission outreach occurred on Tobago until 2007. With only 50,000 inhabitants on the island, missionaries travel throughout its territory. Church meetings are only held in Scarborough, which creates challenges for outreach to areas on the northwestern half of the island.

Delays in obtaining missionary visas resulted in limited missionary work until the late 1980s and limited national outreach, as proselytism has been primarily limited to the last two decades. Since the relocation of the West Indies Mission to Trinidad, limited outreach has resulted from the large burden administering the other nations within the boundaries of the mission. The combined population of the islands covered by the mission in early 2010 was four million, with 30% of the population in Trinidad and Tobago. A larger membership and greater receptivity in Guyana has also drawn away a large amount of missionaries and resources. Other islands or nations that draw large amounts of missionaries also include Suriname and Guadeloupe.

Many of the rural areas of Trinidad are unreached by current mission outreach centers. These areas are difficult to assign full-time missionaries to, as they have small populations scattered over a large geographic area. The implementation of cottage meetings and organization of dependent groups and branches may help establish congregations in unreached areas of the country, especially in the corporations of Diego Martin and Penal-Debe.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Trinidad's robust active membership provides great opportunities. The greatest strength in member activity is in the older congregations, as these units have had more seasoned members and larger active and total memberships. Wards have more resources for fellowshiping, and the branches usually have few baptisms and limited active membership.

No increase in member attendance at important national church events in recent years may indicate problems with member activity. The establishment of a stake does suggest that active membership has experienced some increase. The number of congregations has nearly doubled since 2002, yet membership has increased at a slower rate.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Trinidad enjoys widespread tolerance and cooperation between differing ethnic groups. Separateness between unlike religious and ethnic groups may carry over to church congregations. Differences in culture likely create additional issues for leaders to address in fellowshiping and teaching both seasoned members and recent converts.

Language Issues

The widespread use of English requires fewer language-specific resources to conduct outreach. There are adequate materials for teaching minority groups in their native languages, but outreach among groups lacking English proficiency is difficult, as few missionaries or members speak these languages. Creole languages have not had translations of Church materials. Translations in these languages appear unlikely to be forthcoming due to their vernacular nature and small number of speakers.

Missionary Service

Three missionary zones divide Trinidad into northern, central, and southern sections. Many new proselytizing areas opened as missionaries were relocated from Guyana following visas issues in the fall of 2009. The number of full-time missionaries assigned to Trinidad appears adequate at present. Around thirty-six Trinidadian members have served missions. Three were currently serving missions, and six were working on their mission papers in late 2009. Local leadership anticipates that increasing numbers of Trinidadian returned missionaries will provide for greater membership growth and activity in the future.⁵²⁰ Many members are not married. Marriages between members occur frequently, but it is challenging for members to marry in the temple due to long distances and financial constraints. Increasing numbers of Trinidadian youth serving missions is a welcome development that will contribute to strengthening the body of LDS leadership in the years to come. Attendance in seminary and institute rose dramatically in the late 2000s and appears a major contribution toward increasing the number of local member serving missions.

Leadership

The Church in Trinidad and Tobago benefits from enough active priesthood holders to fill leadership positions notwithstanding small general membership. This allows greater attention to new converts and less active members. A significant policy shift occurred in mid-2009 when a new mission president arrived. Local leadership has demonstrated self-reliance despite the short amount of time in which it has developed. The Church has also benefited from small branches lead by willing and local members who often work with senior couple missionaries to increase active membership and the number of convert baptisms.

⁵²⁰ "Into All the World: Episode 15," Mormon Channel, retrieved 5 February 2011. <http://radio.lds.org/eng/programs/into-all-the-world-episode-15>

Temple

Trinidad and Tobago is assigned to the Caracas Venezuela Temple district, but members often attend the temple in the Dominican Republic due to the political situation in Venezuela. Temple attendance requires great sacrifice for members to participate in temple ordinances due to distance, travel expense, and time. In 2010, mission president Gamiette challenged missionaries and members to increase the number of endowed members to 1,000 to increase member activity and to prepare the way for a future temple. Family history work is challenging due to limited genealogical records, as many arrived as slaves or indentured servants.

Comparative Growth

Trinidad and Tobago became the first English-speaking nation in the Caribbean to have a stake organized. Other English-speaking Caribbean nations have had a Church presence for at least as long as Trinidad and Tobago, yet have few LDS members, low member activity rates, and do not have a stake. Non-English speaking nations have experienced the strongest growth in the region. The Church first arrived in the Dominican Republic in the late 1970s and in late 2009 had 115,000 members, 18 stakes, 11 districts, a missionary training center, and a temple. In 2009, Trinidad and Tobago was the country with the fewest members to have a stake.

Most Christian denominations have a strong presence despite Christians numbering half the population. Many of the Christian denominations have functioned in the country many decades before the LDS Church first arrived. Pentecostals and Evangelical churches have experienced rapid, sustained growth over the past fifty years.

Future Prospects

Mission branches in Port Fortin and Siparia may join the Port of Spain Trinidad Stake once membership and priesthood holders increase and the congregations become less dependent on missionaries to function. An additional branch may be created in Caparo. Areas that may see additional congregations include the populous area between Port of Spain and Arima and larger towns in unreached areas of southern and northwestern Trinidad. The West Indies Mission may divide and retain Trinidad and Tobago and islands to the north, which would allow for greater outreach in Trinidad and Tobago. A second stakes appears unlikely to be organized until greater membership growth and stronger retention occur.

VIRGIN ISLANDS (UNITED STATES)

Geography

AREA: 438,317 square km. Located between the Caribbean Sea and North Atlantic Ocean, the United States Virgin Islands comprise four main islands (Saint Croix, Saint John, Saint Thomas, Water Island) east of Puerto Rico. Hills and rugged mountains comprise most of the terrain. Subtropical climatic conditions exist year round with little fluctuation in temperature. A rainy season occurs from September to November. Hurricanes, flooding, droughts, and earthquakes are natural hazards. Fresh water scarcity is an environmental issue.

Peoples

Black: 76.2%
White: 13.1%
Asian: 1.1%
Other: 6.1%
Mixed: 3.5%

The black population originates from descendants of African slaves brought to the Caribbean during the European colonial period.

Population: 109,574 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: -0.088% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.78 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 76.43 male, 82.69 female (2012)

Languages: English (74.7%), Spanish/Spanish Creole (16.8%), French/French Creole (6.6%), other (1.9%). Over half the population speaks Virgin Islands Creole English.

Literacy: 90%–95% (2005)

History

Amerindian tribes such as the Ciboney, Carib, and Arawaks populated the Virgin Islands prior to European discovery and colonialism. Various European powers controlled the Virgin Islands during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, such as Spain, Britain, the Netherlands, and France. Denmark settled Saint Thomas and Saint John in the late seventeenth century and purchased Saint Croix from France in the early eighteenth century; the remaining Virgin Islands to the east were originally settled by the Dutch but came under British administration by the late seventeenth century. The Danish relied on slavery to drive the sugar industry on the islands until its abolishment in 1848. Economic decline occurred for the remainder of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, resulting in Denmark selling the islands to the United States in 1917. Today the United States Virgin Islands are an organized, unincorporated United States territory.⁵²¹ The British Virgin Islands remain an overseas, internal self-governing territory of the United Kingdom.

⁵²¹ "History of the United States Virgin Islands," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 10 February 2011. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_United_States_Virgin_Islands#Transfer_to_American_Rule

Culture

American culture and Christianity are the primary influences on society in the Virgin Islands. Primary foods include fungi—boiled cornmeal with okra—fish, fruit, and soup. Basketball, American football, and baseball are the most popular sports.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$14,500 (2004) [30.6% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: N/A

Corruption Index: N/A

Tourism drives the economy, generating 80% of the GDP and employing 80% of the workforce, and 2.4 million visited the islands in 2008. Industry employs 19% of the workforce and generates 19% of the GDP. Saint Croix boasts one of the largest oil refineries in the world. Tourism, petroleum refining, watch assembly, rum distilling, construction, and pharmaceuticals are the primary industries. Most food is imported, as there is little agricultural activity; common crops include fruit, vegetables, and sorghum. Damage from tropical weather and crime are challenges preventing greater economic sustainability.

Faiths

Christian: 99%

Other: 1%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Baptist 46,095

Catholic 37,315

Episcopalian 18,658

Seventh Day Adventists 13,989 31

Jehovah's Witnesses 685 9

Latter-day Saints 586 2

Religion

The population is homogenously Christian. The largest Christian denominations are Baptists (42%), Catholics (34%), and Episcopalians (17%). Seven percent (7%) of the population consists of other Christian groups and non-Christians.

Religious Freedom

The United States' constitution protects religious freedom and is upheld by national and local laws. There have been no reported instances of societal abuse of religious freedom.

Largest Towns

Urban: 95%

Charlotte Amalie, **Anna's Retreat**, **Charlotte Amalie West**, Frederiksted Southeast, **Grove Place**, **Cruz Bay**, **Charlotte Amalie East**, **Christiansted**.

Towns listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Two of the ten largest towns have an LDS congregation. Thirty-five percent (35%) of the islands' population resides in the eight most populous towns. St. Croix and St. Thomas are each populated by approximately 50,000, whereas St. John has fewer than 5,000 inhabitants, and Water Island supports a population of a couple hundred.

LDS History

Expatriate Latter-day Saint families were among the first members on the islands, arriving in small numbers in the late 1960s and early 1970s to St. Thomas. Members on St. Thomas initially met as a group under the San Juan Branch in Puerto Rico. The first convert baptism occurred in 1976. Missionaries were assigned to St. Thomas in 1978 and St. Croix in 1981.⁵²² Seminary began in 1982. Some members from the Virgin Islands traveled to Puerto Rico to meet with President Hinckley in 2000.⁵²³ In early 2011, the Virgin Islands were assigned to the Puerto Rico San Juan Mission.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 586 (2012)

In 1983, there were 96 Latter-day Saints. Membership stood at 200 in 1987 and 1993. Membership totaled 300 in 1997 and 387 in 2000.

Slow membership growth occurred during the 2000s as membership climbed to 395 in 2002, 431 in 2004, 491 in 2006, and 543 in 2008. Annual membership growth rates generally ranged from 2% to 8% during the 2000s and averaged around 4%. Church membership typically increases by between ten and thirty a year. In 2009, one in 190 was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 0 Branches: 2 (2011)

The LDS first branch was organized in 1978 on St. Thomas followed by a second branch organized on St. Croix in 1981.⁵²⁴ The St. Croix Branch was assigned to the Guayama Puerto Rico District in the early 2000s.⁵²⁵ In early 2011, both branches reported directly to the Puerto Rico San Juan Mission.

Activity and Retention

The average number of members per congregation increased between 2000 and 2009 from 194 to 289. Eight were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2009–2010 school year on Saint Croix, whereas three were enrolled on Saint Thomas. Both branches appear to have between fifty and one hundred active members. Total active membership is estimated at 150, or 25% of nominal church membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English, Spanish, French.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in Spanish and French. The *Liahona* magazine has monthly issues in Spanish and French.

⁵²² "Virgin Islands," LDS Church News, 8 October 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/country/virgin-islands>

⁵²³ Fisher, Jerry D. "Prophet's spirit, counsel bless Puerto Rico," LDS Church News, 23 December 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39080/Prophets-spirit-counsel-bless-Puerto-Rico.html>

⁵²⁴ "Virgin Islands," LDS Church News, 8 October 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/country/virgin-islands>

⁵²⁵ "LDS Olympian: Dinah Browne," LDS Church News, 23 February 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41361/LDS-Olympian-Dinah-Browne.html>

Meetinghouses

A church-built meetinghouse services the St. Thomas Branch.⁵²⁶ The St. Croix Branch likely meets in a renovated building or a rented facility.

Humanitarian and Development Work

As of early 2011, there had been no major humanitarian or development projects in the Virgin Islands sponsored by the LDS Church. Local members and full-time missionaries perform some local service.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

There are no restrictions on religious freedom. Latter-day Saints proselyte, worship, and assemble freely.

Cultural Issues

Religious plurality among Christians has fostered church growth prospects for decades, but increasing materialism and wealth attributed to the growth of the tourist industry has decreased the devotion and activity of many Christians. Most of the church-going population is socially entrenched into their respective congregations, creating societal challenges for full-time missionaries to address when finding, teaching, baptizing, and retaining new converts. Greater emphasis on local member-missionary efforts will be needed for overcome these issues and maintain self-sufficiency.

National Outreach

LDS congregations on St. Croix and St. Thomas provide limited mission outreach to 96% of the population of the Virgin Islands. The establishment of three or four mission outreach centers on St. Croix and St. Thomas would efficiently reach the population of both islands, but the small population, moderate levels of receptivity for Latter-day Saints, inadequate numbers of active priesthood holders, and the small geographic size of the islands has delayed the establishment of additional congregations over the past three decades. Missionary and member-led cottage meetings held in communities throughout the islands offers opportunities to explore church planting prospects, may lead to the establishment of dependent branches or groups, reduces the need for additional missionary resources to expand national outreach, and provides an opportunity for local members to invite nonmember friends and family to learn about the LDS Church in a casual setting.

There is no LDS Internet website for the Virgin Islands. An ample supply of English, Spanish, and French materials in addition to the complete LDS scriptures in each of these languages are available online. Reference to church websites by local members and missionaries when proselytizing or answering questions about the Church can increase national outreach potential.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

The number of Latter-day Saints increased from fewer than 100 to nearly 600 in the past thirty years, but the number of LDS congregations has remained unchanged. The organization of no new congregations indicates consistently low convert retention and member activity rates. Convert baptisms among immigrant groups and among transient locals that travel or temporarily reside in the continental United States may have contributed to member activity and convert retention issues. Stressing seminary and institute attendance on St. Croix and

⁵²⁶ "Virgin Islands," LDS Church News, 8 October 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/country/virgin-islands>

St. Thomas may increase convert retention and member activity rates through strengthening social connections among members and facilitating greater doctrinal understanding and testimony building.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Some ethnic integration issues are likely to arise from whites and blacks attending the same congregations due to cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic differences especially if LDS congregation demographics are not representative of the demographics of the Virgin Islands. Full-time missionaries have not reported that ethnic integration issues have manifested themselves at church.

Language Issues

Widespread use of standard English as a first or second language simplifies mission outreach approaches by requiring fewer missionary resources and reducing the translation need for LDS materials in Virgin Islands Creole English. Language-specific congregations may be necessary to provide outreach to Spanish and French speakers.

Missionary Service

The mission relies on foreign full-time missionaries to staff the missionary force assigned to the islands. Few local members have served full-time missions. Mission preparation classes offered through institute may increase the number of native full-time missionaries serving.

Leadership

Local members appear to serve as branch presidents for both branches. Limited numbers of active priesthood holders has likely contributed to the lack of congregational growth. Increasing the number of local members serving full-time missions and remaining in the islands may strengthen local church leadership over the long term. Immigration of Latter-day Saint converts to the continental United States contributes to the small number of qualified local leaders in the islands today.

Temple

The Virgin Islands are assigned to the Santo Domingo Dominican Republic Temple district. Temple trips appear to occur on an individual or small group basis as there are few active members that hold temple recommends. A prospective temple on neighboring Puerto Rico over the medium term would decrease travel times and costs for members to attend the temple.

Comparative Growth

The Virgin Islands has one of the highest percentages of Latter-day Saints in the general population among Caribbean nations and exhibits member activity and convert retention rates representative for the region. Membership growth rates have compared to LDS membership growth rates for most Caribbean nations with less than 1,000 nominal members. The percentage of members enrolled in seminary or institute is among the lowest in the world at less than 2%.

Most missionary-oriented Christian groups have a widespread presence in the Virgin Islands, as indicated by multiple congregations operating on St. Croix and St. Thomas. However, most groups report slow membership growth at present. Seventh Day Adventists account for a larger percentage of the population in the Virgin Islands than on most Caribbean islands. Jehovah's Witnesses perform wide-reaching mission outreach

with nine congregations administering the population of 110,000. Witnesses gain few new converts year-to-year. The current size and strength of many denominations has originated from utilizing a church planting approach when the population was more receptive. Other Christian groups utilize native members for mission outreach and have maintained a long-term presence.

Future Prospects

Increasing secularism, high competition for new converts among Christian denominations, and low member activity and convert retention rates create an unfavorable outlook for future LDS Church growth. The establishment of an indigenous LDS community that is self-sufficient in its leadership and missionary needs will be required for the organization of additional congregations and a district.

SOUTH AMERICA

Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador,
Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela

REGIONAL PROFILE

Geography

LAND AREA: 17,352,664 square km. Stretching from Cape Horn in the south to the Isthmus of Panama in the north, South America is a continent of geographic and climatic extremes ranging from the arid Atacama Desert in northern Chile, which possesses areas that have received no precipitation for decades or centuries, to the dense Amazon Rainforest, which occupies northern Brazil and interior Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia and boasts some of the highest annual rainfall totals on record. The Andes Mountains are a dominant terrain feature, stretching the entire western length of the continent and reaching heights up to 6,900 meters. Temperate and alpine conditions prevail in the Andes as a result of climate modified by elevation. The Amazon River is one of the largest rivers in the world, draining nearly the entire northern half of the continent into the Atlantic Ocean with tributaries reaching into the Andes. Highland plains and plateaus located in Peru and Bolivia known as the Altiplano comprise large geographic areas, have little vegetation, and are surrounded by Lake Titicaca, one of the world's largest high-elevation lakes. Earthquakes, volcanoes, flooding, droughts, tsunamis, and landslides are common natural hazards. Major environmental issues include deforestation, habitat loss in the Amazon Basin, pollution, proper waste disposal, desertification, overgrazing, and soil erosion. The South American continent consists of ten Latin American countries, two Caribbean countries, and one overseas French department.

Population: 398,592,107 (July 2011)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.132% (2011)

Fertility Rate: 2.27 children born per woman (2011)

Life Expectancy: 71.41 male, 77.51 female (2011)

Peoples

White: 44.3%

Mestizo (mixed white and Amerindian): 22.8%

Mulatto (mixed white and black): 21.2%

Amerindian: 5.9%

Black: 3.8%

Other/unspecified: 2%

Languages: Portuguese (48.5%), Spanish (43.6%), Amerindian languages (4.4%), other (3.5%). Languages with over one million speakers include Portuguese (193 million), Spanish (174 million), Quechua languages (10 million), Italian dialects (5.5 million), Guarani dialects (4.65 million), Germanic languages (3 million), and Arabic (1 million).

Literacy: 86.7%–98% (country average: 92.8%)

History

Amerindians populated South America for millennia prior to the arrival of European explorers in the early sixteenth century. The Inca were the most notable and advanced civilization encountered by the Spanish and maintained an empire stretching from southern Colombia to the southern end of South America with its

capital in Cuzco, Peru. Spanish conquistadors conquered the empire in 1533, subjected the population to foreign rule, and introduced Catholicism. Pedro Alvares Cabral claimed Brazil for Portugal in 1500, whereas the Spanish claimed nearly all other areas of South America in the sixteenth century. All Spanish colonies in South America gained independence in the early nineteenth century. Independence from Spain occurred for Chile in 1810, Paraguay in 1811, Argentina in 1816, Colombia in 1819, and Bolivia in 1825. Portuguese rule in Brazil endured until 1822. Ecuador and Venezuela were originally part of the Republic of Greater Colombia until both countries became independent in 1830. Panama seceded from Colombia in 1903. Political instability has plagued most South American countries since independence. Many nations in the region have experienced episodes of military intervention to stabilize the government and maintain order as well as military coups overthrowing democratic regimes. Many South American nations experienced long periods of dictatorship and socialist governments during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the late nineteenth century, Bolivia lost territory that permitted access to the Pacific Ocean in a war with Chile. Between 1865 and 1870, war with Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay drastically reduced the male population in Paraguay and resulted in Paraguay losing a large portion of its territory. In the 1930s, the Chaco War with Bolivia resulted in Paraguay gaining large areas of territory in the west.

In Colombia, large rural areas have been under the control of narco-terrorist paramilitary groups such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) over the past fifty years.⁵²⁷ These groups have lacked the manpower and resources to overthrow the government, but the unstable central government has been unable to maintain control of rugged terrain in remote areas. In 2010, the Colombian government had regained a presence in all its administrative departments but continued to struggle to fight rebel groups, reduce violence, and close booming illicit drug installations in many rural areas. The illicit drug trade and paramilitary activity from guerilla groups spill over into all neighboring countries and contribute to ongoing conflict in the region.

Argentina experienced a severe recession in the early 2000s. Economic growth returned to Argentina shortly thereafter, but living conditions and wealth remain below the level of most developed nations.⁵²⁸ Bolivia has experienced severe political instability in recent years due to regional tensions. With a large population, abundant natural resources, and strategic geographic location, Brazil has emerged as the region's greatest economic power.

Culture

The Catholic Church has been the traditional, dominant influence on society in South America since the arrival of the Spanish and Portuguese in the sixteenth century. Church attendance among Catholics has been limited, and secular ideals have been propagated over the past several decades in southern South America, namely Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, and southern Brazil, where European cultural influences are strongest. Many Mediterranean and Central European foods are commonly eaten in southern South America due to the influx of immigrants from Europe during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Southern South America boasts the highest living standards and most stable economic growth. Chile and Argentina are known internationally for their fine wines. Argentina is known for its literature, dance, architecture, music, sports, and theater. Famous Chilean writers include novelist Isabel Allende and poet Pablo Neruda. Carnival, the Brazilian equivalent of Mardi Gras, is one of the largest holidays and lasts around one week. Heavy drinking, parades, widespread sexual indulgence, and Samba music highlight many Carnival celebrations nationwide.

Widespread use of Portuguese and Spanish has reduced ethnic integration issues in South America, although countries with sizeable Amerindian minorities have at times experienced ethnic conflicts. Generally, whites

⁵²⁷ "Background Note: Colombia," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 2 June 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35754.htm>

⁵²⁸ "Background Note: Argentina," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 16 September 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/26516.htm>

comprise the highest socioeconomic classes. Originating from a fusion of Amerindian and European cultures, Mestizo culture dominates in all other countries in South America and has influenced cuisine. In the Andes, Amerindians in rural areas generally wear traditional clothing, have poor to moderate living conditions, and commonly eat potatoes, tomatoes, corn, avocado, native fruits, llama, fish, and guinea pig. Colombia is well known for its rich literary, musical, and sports traditions, the influence of which is felt throughout Latin America. Coffee and tea are widely consumed in South America, whereas alcohol and cigarette consumption rates are generally lower than the world average. Rates of illicit drug use are moderate to high compared to the world average. Mate is a widely consumed drink in southern South America made from the dried leaves of the yerba mate plant that is consumed from a calabash gourd through a metal straw.⁵²⁹

Economy

Average GDP per capita: \$9,900 (2009) [21.3% of U.S.]

Average Human Development Index: 0.711

Average Corruption Index: 3.7 (2010)

South America possesses an ample supply of natural resources such as oil, precious metals, gems, large fisheries, timber, hydropower, and fertile agricultural lands. As indicated by GDP per capita, Paraguay and Bolivia are South America's poorest nations (less than \$5,000) and also the only landlocked nations, whereas Chile, Venezuela, and Uruguay are South America's richest countries (over \$12,000). GDP per capita for most countries is between \$7,000 and \$10,000. Political turmoil and corruption have been the primary obstacles preventing greater economic development. Mining, petroleum, natural gas, food processing, fishing, clothing, machinery, cement, and motor vehicles are common industries. Crops vary by location and primarily include rice, potatoes, corn, sorghum, sugarcane, vegetables, coffee, cocoa, wheat, sunflowers, fruit, and soybeans. Trade primarily occurs within South America, but the United States and China are also major trade partners.

Colombia and Peru are the world's largest producers of cocaine and are heavily integrated into the worldwide illicit drug trade. Most South American countries serve as transshipment points for illegal drugs bound for the United States, Europe, and elsewhere. Many countries suffer from widespread corruption in government and business such as bribery, money laundering, and human trafficking. Some countries, such as Colombia, have areas controlled by rebel groups that often have strong ties to the illegal drug trade.

Faiths

Christian: 92%

Other: 8%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 304,243,041

Protestant (mainly Evangelical) 53,296,555

Latter-day Saints 3,644,558 5,586

Seventh Day Adventists 2,545,028 11,636

Jehovah's Witnesses 1,387,191 19,576

Religion

Catholics are estimated to account for 77% of the South American population, whereas Protestants appear to

⁵²⁹ "Mate (beverage)," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 28 February 2011. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mate_%28beverage%29

constitute 13.5% of the population. However, Protestant church attendance has outstripped Catholic Church attendance in many countries in the region for some years. Venezuela and Paraguay are the countries with the highest percentages of Catholics (92% and 90%, respectively), whereas Uruguay has the lowest (45%). Catholics constitute 70–85% of the population in other South American countries. Catholics in most areas have low rates of religious activity. For example, in Ecuador, fewer than 20% of Catholics are practicing. Protestants are overwhelmingly Evangelical in South America. Bolivia and Brazil have the highest percentages of Protestants in the population (16% and 15%, respectively), whereas Paraguay and Ecuador have the lowest (6% and 7%, respectively). Protestants account for 8–14% of the population in other South America countries. Latter-day Saints account for nearly 1% of the South American population. Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, atheists, agnostics, and nonbelievers typically constitute less than 10% of the population.⁵³⁰

Religious Freedom

The constitution of each South American nation protects religious freedom, and governments generally uphold this right. Registration with the government is not required in most countries for religious groups to operate but is necessary to obtain tax exempt status. Foreign religious workers may serve in all South American countries without significant government restrictions with the exception of North Americans in Venezuela due to poor political relations. Some countries prohibit Christian groups from proselytizing Amerindian populations, such as Venezuela and Brazil. Societal abuse of religious freedom in South America is uncommon and usually targets Jews and Muslims.⁵³¹

Largest Cities

Urban: 83%

São Paulo (Brazil), Buenos Aires (Argentina), Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), Lima (Peru), Bogotá (Colombia), Santiago (Chile), Belo Horizonte (Brazil), Caracas (Venezuela), Porto Alegre (Brazil), Salvador (Brazil), Recife (Brazil), Brasília (Brazil), Fortaleza (Brazil), Medellín (Colombia), Curitiba (Brazil), Campinas (Brazil), Cali (Colombia), Guayaquil (Ecuador), Belém (Brazil), Goiânia (Brazil), Asunción (Paraguay), Maracaibo (Venezuela), Barranquilla (Colombia), La Paz (Bolivia), Manaus (Brazil), Valencia (Venezuela), Vitória (Brazil), Montevideo (Uruguay), Santa Cruz (Bolivia), Santos (Brazil), Quito (Ecuador), Córdoba (Argentina), São Luís (Brazil), Rosario (Argentina), Natal (Brazil), Maracay (Venezuela), Maceió (Brazil), Barquisimeto (Colombia), Cartagena (Colombia), Joinville (Brazil), Valparaíso (Chile), João Pessoa (Brazil), Bucaramanga (Colombia), Cochabamba (Bolivia), Florianópolis (Brazil).

All forty-five South American cities with over one million inhabitants have multiple LDS mission outreach centers. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of the South American population resides in the forty-five largest cities.

LDS History

In the early 1850s, LDS apostle Elder Parley P. Pratt, his wife, and Elder Rufus C. Allen attempted to performed full-time missionary work in Chile over a five month period that did not result in a single convert baptism.⁵³² Permanent Latter-day Saint mission outreach in South America commenced in Argentina in the early twentieth century. Accompanied by two General Authorities, LDS Apostle Melvin J. Ballard met with several German members who had joined the Church in Germany and immigrated to Argentina in late 1925. Elder Ballard dedicated the whole of South America for missionary work before the end of the year and predicted

⁵³⁰ "Western Hemisphere," 2010 Report on International Religious Freedom, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/index.htm>

⁵³¹ "Western Hemisphere," 2010 Report on International Religious Freedom, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/index.htm>

⁵³² Morris, Michael R. "Chile—A Fruitful Vineyard," *Liahona*, Aug 1996, 35.

that missionary work would begin slowly in South America and Argentina, but strong growth would ultimately unfold and the region would become a center of strength for the Church.⁵³³ The first LDS missionaries arrived in Brazil in Joinville in 1928 and worked among German immigrants.⁵³⁴ World War II dramatically slowed missionary progress and resulted in all but three missionaries returning home by 1944.⁵³⁵ The first known convert baptized in Paraguay occurred in 1949.⁵³⁶ The First Presidency authorized the opening of Paraguay to missionary work that year.⁵³⁷ The Church obtained official government recognition in 1950 and began to send missionaries who were previously serving in Uruguay.⁵³⁸ The Church experienced growth in Uruguay prior to most of Latin America and was noted by Church President David O. McKay to have experienced the most rapid international growth since the organization of the British Mission in the 1830s.⁵³⁹ In 1952, a Latter-day Saint family from the United States moved to Santiago, Chile for business and began corresponding with Church headquarters in Salt Lake City. In 1957, local members and full-time missionaries officially registered the Church with the Chilean government. In 1963, Church membership in Bolivia was limited to three American families who live in Cochabamba and La Paz. Missionaries from the Andes Mission arrived the following year and the first Bolivian converts were baptized in late 1964. In October 1965, Elder Spencer W. Kimball dedicated Ecuador for missionary work.⁵⁴⁰ By 1966, congregations met in Cochabamba, La Paz, Oruro, and Santa Cruz.⁵⁴¹ The first LDS stake in South America was organized in Sao Paulo in 1966. In 1987, the Church announced the formation of the Brazil Area from the South America North Area.⁵⁴² In 1988, Elder Charles Didier visited the First Lady of Bolivia.⁵⁴³ In 1991, Moroni Bing Torgan from Fortaleza was the first Latter-day Saint elected as a National Congressman in Brazil.⁵⁴⁴ In 1994, Elder Russell M. Nelson visited with the Bolivian President and presented his family history.⁵⁴⁵ In 1996, the Church organized the Chile area. In 1998, the Brazil Area divided into the Brazil North and Brazil South Areas, making Brazil the second country outside the United States with two areas.⁵⁴⁶ Starting in 1998, Lima served as the headquarters of the South America West Area, which administered Peru and Bolivia.⁵⁴⁷ Brazil became one of the first countries in which the Church established the Perpetual Education Fund in the early 2000s.⁵⁴⁸ In 2002,

⁵³³ Swensen, Jason. "Church marks 75 years in South America," LDS Church News, 25 November 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38936/Church-marks-75-years-in-South-America.html>

⁵³⁴ "Brazil is third country to have 100 stakes," LDS Church News, 19 February 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25432/Brazil-is-third-country-to-have-100-stakes.html>

⁵³⁵ "The Church in Argentina," *Ensign*, Feb. 1975, 21.

⁵³⁶ Swensen, Jason. "Edifice a bountiful blessing for Asuncion," LDS Church News, 25 May 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41875/Edifice-a-bountiful-blessing-for-Asuncion.html>

⁵³⁷ "The Church in Uruguay and Paraguay," *Ensign*, Feb 1975, 30.

⁵³⁸ Swensen, Jason. "'Gospel is welcome,'" LDS Church News, 20 July 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42152/Gospel-is-welcome.html>

⁵³⁹ "60th anniversary of Church in Uruguay," LDS Church News, 3 November 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51296/60th-anniversary-of-Church-in-Uruguay.html>

⁵⁴⁰ Wells, Elayne. "A land of prophecy: in the Andes, 'Lehi's children grow strong in gospel," LDS Church News, 17 February 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19993/A-land-of-prophecy—in-the-Andes-Lehis-children-grow-strong-in-gospel.html>

⁵⁴¹ "Bolivia," *Ensign*, Feb 1977, 40.

⁵⁴² *Deseret News* 1989–1990 Church Almanac, p. 311.

⁵⁴³ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 1 October 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18324/From-around-the-World.html>

⁵⁴⁴ "Brazilian 'folk hero' elected to high post," LDS Church News, 16 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21169/Brazilian-folk-hero-elected-to-high-post.html>

⁵⁴⁵ "Family history given to Bolivian president," LDS Church News, 5 November 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24683/Family-history-given-to-Bolivian-president.html>

⁵⁴⁶ "5 new areas announced worldwide," LDS Church News, 4 July 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31389/5-new-areas-announced-worldwide.html>

⁵⁴⁷ "5 new areas announced worldwide," LDS Church News, 4 July 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31389/5-new-areas-announced-worldwide.html>

⁵⁴⁸ Johnston, Jerry. "Pres. Hinckley praises roots, scope of LDS education fund," LDS Church News, 6 October 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40638/Pres-Hinckley-praises-roots-scope-of-LDS-education-fund.html>

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland began serving as the president of the Chile Area⁵⁴⁹ and met with Chilean President Ricardo Lagos later that year.⁵⁵⁰ In 2005, the Church received recognition from the Colombian Congress for its humanitarian activities in the country.⁵⁵¹ Colombia's First Lady toured LDS Church headquarters in Salt Lake City in 2006.⁵⁵² In 2007, the two Brazil areas were consolidated into a single area, the Brazil Area, and in 2009, the South America North and the South America West Areas were consolidated into the South America Northwest Area.

The LDS Church was first established in Argentina in 1925;⁵⁵³ Brazil in 1927;⁵⁵⁴ Uruguay in 1944;⁵⁵⁵ Paraguay in 1949;⁵⁵⁶ Chile⁵⁵⁷ and Peru⁵⁵⁸ in 1956; Bolivia in 1964;⁵⁵⁹ Ecuador in 1965;⁵⁶⁰ and Colombia⁵⁶¹ and Venezuela in 1966.⁵⁶² Latter-day Saint immigrants or expatriates preceded the establishment of the Church in nearly every South American country. Membership growth rates were slow in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay until the 1960s. In 2011, South America pertained to the Brazil, Chile, South America Northwest (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela), and South America South (Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay) Areas.

Missions

The South American Mission was organized with headquarters in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1925. The mission divided into Argentine and Brazilian Missions in 1935. The Uruguay Mission was organized in 1947 from the Argentine Mission and began administering Paraguay. The Brazilian Mission (later renamed the Brazil Central Mission) divided in 1959 to create the Brazilian South Mission (later renamed the Brazil Porto Alegre Mission). Created from the Uruguay and Andes Missions in 1959, the Andes Mission administered outreach in Peru, Bolivia, and Chile. The mission was divided in 1961 to create the Chilean Mission and again in 1966 to create the Andes South Mission, based out of La Paz, Bolivia. The North Argentine Mission (renamed the Argentina Cordoba Mission) was organized in 1962. In 1968, the Brazilian North Mission (later renamed the Brazil Rio de Janeiro Mission) was organized. The Andes Mission added Ecuador in the mid-1960s. The Church created the Colombia-Venezuela Mission in 1968. In 1970, Ecuador was split off into an independent mission, and the Andes Mission, which administered only Peru, was renamed the Peru

⁵⁴⁹ "Elder Oaks, Holland assigned abroad," LDS Church News, 13 April 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41659/Elders-Oaks-Holland-assigned-abroad.html>

⁵⁵⁰ "Elder Holland visits Chilean president," LDS Church News, 28 December 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43006/Elder-Holland-visits-Chilean-president.html>

⁵⁵¹ "Historic milestones for Church in Colombia," LDS Church News, 10 December 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48264/Historic-milestones-for-Church-in-Colombia.html>

⁵⁵² Swensen, Jason. "Colombia's First lady is guest of Church," LDS Church News, 15 April 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48824/Colombias-First-Lady-is-guest-of-Church.html>

⁵⁵³ Olsen, Judy C. "Argentina's Bright and Joyous Day," *Ensign*, Feb. 1998, 36.

⁵⁵⁴ "The Church in Brazil," *Ensign*, Feb. 1975, 24.

⁵⁵⁵ "Uruguay," Country Profiles, retrieved 23 March 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/uruguay>

⁵⁵⁶ Swensen, Jason. "Edifice a bountiful blessing for Asuncion," LDS Church News, 25 May 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41875/Edifice-a-bountiful-blessing-for-Asuncion.html>

⁵⁵⁷ Iverson, Steven J. "Chile," *Ensign*, Feb 1977, 44.

⁵⁵⁸ "Peru," *Ensign*, Feb 1977, 37.

⁵⁵⁹ "Bolivia," *Ensign*, Feb 1977, 40.

⁵⁶⁰ Wells, Elayne. "A land of prophecy: in the Andes, 'Lehi's children grow strong in gospel,'" LDS Church News, 17 February 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19993/A-land-of-prophecy-in-the-Andes-Lehis-children-grow-strong-in-gospel.html>

⁵⁶¹ "Historic milestones for Church in Colombia," LDS Church News, 10 December 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48264/Historic-milestones-for-Church-in-Colombia.html>

⁵⁶² "South America missions to number 48 Brazil, Ecuador, Venezuela to gain 5 new missions," LDS Church News, 16 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20940/South-America-missions-to-number-48-Brazil-Ecuador-Venezuela-to-gain-5-new-missions.html>

Mission. By 1973, there were fourteen missions in South America. The number of missions in the region increased to thirty-eight by 1987, fifty-five in 1993, sixty-four in 1997, sixty-nine in 2000, seventy in 2005, and seventy-three in 2010. In 2011, an additional mission was organized in Chiclayo, Peru, bringing the total number of missions in South America to seventy-four. In 2011, there were twenty-seven missions in Brazil, ten in Argentina and Peru, nine in Chile, four in Colombia and Venezuela, three in Bolivia and Ecuador, and two in Paraguay and Uruguay. In 2012, the Church organized a fifth mission in Colombia based in Medellin. In 2013, the Church organized fifteen new missions in South America in Argentina Comodoro Rivadavia, Argentina Posadas, Bolivia Santa Cruz North, Brazil Curitiba South, Brazil Fortaleza East, Brazil Juiz de Fora, Brazil Natal, Brazil Piracicaba, Brazil Santos, Brazil Sao Paulo West, Chile Santiago South, Ecuador Guayaquil West, Ecuador Quito North, Peru Huancayo, and Peru Iquitos, bringing the total number of missions in South America to ninety.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 3,651,658 (2012)

There appear to have been fewer than 10,000 members in South America in 1950. In 1973, there were 134,383 Latter-day Saints in the region. In 1979, there were 314,535 members, increasing to 546,022 in 1983 and 921,000 in 1987. Membership steadily increased to 1.176 million in 1989, 1.692 million in 1993, 2.228 million in 1997, and 2.547 million in 2000. There were 2.985 million members in 2005 and 3.453 million in 2010. Between 2000 and 2010, membership grew the most rapidly in Paraguay (69%), Venezuela (55%), and Brazil (47%) but most slowly in Chile (11%), Uruguay (28%), and Colombia (30%). The ratio of the general population to LDS membership by country differs significantly throughout the region. In 2009, the ratio of Latter-day Saints to the general population by South American country was as follows: Chile (one in 30), Uruguay (one in 37), Bolivia (one in 59), Peru (one in 62), Ecuador (one in 78), Paraguay (one in 82), Argentina (one in 109), Brazil (one in 182), Venezuela (one in 185), and Colombia (one in 262). Membership totals by country in 2010 are as follows: Brazil (1.139 million), Chile (563,689), Peru (493,563), Argentina (389,393), Ecuador (195,941), Colombia (172,534), Bolivia (172,640), Venezuela (150,017), Uruguay (95,726), and Paraguay (80,788). In 2009, one in 117 in South America was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 3,903 Branches: 1,658 (2010)

In 1989, there were 2,553 LDS congregations in South America, which more than doubled to 5,553 congregations by year-end 2000. Five years later, the number of total congregations declined by 266. By year-end 2010, there were 5,572 congregations: just nineteen more than in 2000 as a result of large-scale congregation consolidations in Chile, Ecuador, Colombia, and Brazil. Of the increase of 285 congregations between 2005 and 2010, 191 were organized in Brazil (67%).

Activity and Retention

The number of active members per congregation varies from less than thirty in some branches to as many as 200 in some wards. The number of members enrolled in seminary and institute declined from 160,310 in 2008 to 152,359 in 2010 with seven of the ten countries in the region experiencing declining enrollment in seminary and institute during this period. The average number of members per congregation for South America increased from 459 in 2000 to 620 in 2010. The average number of members per congregation was highest in Chile (909), Bolivia (682), and Ecuador (653) and lowest in Argentina (463), Paraguay (542), and Venezuela (548) in 2010. Member activity rates are fairly consistent throughout South America as a result of similar cultural attitudes and practices regarding religion throughout the continent, quick-baptism tactic widely employed by missions for decades, and generally low member-missionary participation. Member

activity rates and range from a low of 12% in Chile to a high of 25% in Brazil. Active LDS membership in South America is estimated at 700,000, or 20% of total church membership for the region.

Public Affairs and Finding

In 1988, Local members and full-time missionaries in Santa Fe, Argentina presented a musical version of one of the missionary discussions for the public that was publicized by two newspapers and a radio station.⁵⁶³ That same year, there were thirty-eight public affairs directors for the Church in Argentina and Uruguay that facilitated exposure of LDS activities such as meetinghouse dedications, conferences, and community service projects in local and national media.⁵⁶⁴ In 1988, 2,000 members and 400 nonmembers attended a musical performed by local members in three cities in the Resistencia region.⁵⁶⁵ In the early 1990s, missionaries in Buenos Aires relied on local members and street contacting to find new investigators instead of door-to-door contacting.⁵⁶⁶ Today, missionaries generally rely on member referrals, investigator referrals, and street contacting to find new investigators.

Missionaries in most areas only taught investigators from families that could hold the priesthood prior to the 1978 Revelation extending priesthood privileges to all worthy males.⁵⁶⁷ In 1988, one hundred attended a church conference to educate others about LDS beliefs in Indaiatuba.⁵⁶⁸ A third of the nearly 800 that attended a special musical performance commemorating the independence of Brazil at an LDS stake center in Sao Paulo were not LDS.⁵⁶⁹ In 1992, the Curitiba Brazil Portao Stake produced a Book of Mormon musical that had over 1,000 attending performances. Thirty percent (30%) to 40% of those in attendance were not LDS, and the play caught the attention of local television stations.⁵⁷⁰ That same year, a television station in Rondonia State aired LDS missionary videos.⁵⁷¹ LDS youth presented a Book of Mormon to the governor of Pernambuco State in 1992.⁵⁷² In 1994, the Church participated in a symposium on religion and culture at Rio de Janeiro State University, which resulted in over 200 missionary referrals.⁵⁷³ LDS employment resources have helped full-time missionaries find new investigators.⁵⁷⁴ In April 2005, members in Sao Paulo performed the musical *Savior of the World*, which was attended by a combined 3,600 at five performances.⁵⁷⁵

⁵⁶³ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 9 July 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18322/From-around-the-world.html>

⁵⁶⁴ "From Around the World," LDS Church News, 10 September 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18321/From-Around-the-World.html>

⁵⁶⁵ "From around the World," LDS Church News, 24 September 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17979/From-around-the-World.html>

⁵⁶⁶ Curbelo, Nestor. "As converts increase, faithful Argentine LDS are key to future," LDS Church News, 17 April 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23098/As-converts-increase-faithful-Argentine-LDS-are-key-to-future.html>

⁵⁶⁷ Oakes, Jeannette N.; Ribolla, Nei Garcia; Ribolla, Celia Ikuno. "Growth followed priesthood revelation," LDS Church News, 31 May 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43826/Growth-followed-priesthood-revelation.html>

⁵⁶⁸ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 27 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17976/From-around-the-world.html>

⁵⁶⁹ "Concert brings crowd to Brazilian stake center," LDS Church News, 20 October 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20089/Concert-brings-crowd-to-Brazilian-stake-center.html>

⁵⁷⁰ "Stake pursues missionary goals through Book of Mormon musical," LDS Church News, 2 May 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22179/Stake-pursues-missionary-goals-through-Book-of-Mormon-musical.html>

⁵⁷¹ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 8 August 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22240/From-around-the-world.html>

⁵⁷² "From around the world," LDS Church News, 11 January 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22083/From-around-the-world.html>

⁵⁷³ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 9 July 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25332/From-around-the-world.html>

⁵⁷⁴ Soli, Ana Claudia. "A job, and more," LDS Church News, 20 November 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46490/A-job-and-more.html>

⁵⁷⁵ Garcia, Nei. "'Savior of the World' translated, performed in Brazil," LDS Church News, 21 May 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47337/Savior-of-the-World-translated-performed-in-Brazil.html>

In the 1970s, full-time missionaries heavily utilized seminary and institute to find, teach, baptize, and retain new converts.⁵⁷⁶ In the late 1980s, the Lo Prado Ward in Santiago baptized eighteen converts in a short period as a result of creative activities organized by the ward and the stake, such as musicals and a children's theater.⁵⁷⁷ On Easter 2004, over 1,500 members and investigators attended the Santiago Chile Temple grounds to listen to LDS choir performances and showings of the film *The Testaments: Of One Fold and One Shepherd*.⁵⁷⁸ 62,065 attended the Santiago Chile Temple open house in 2006 following extensive renovations.⁵⁷⁹

Colombia has been successful in coordinating missionary efforts between full-time missionaries and local members in the past. In 1988, over 500 baptisms resulted from a mission program in the Colombia Bogota Mission in which missionaries accompanied members to present a copy of the Book of Mormon to relatives or friends.⁵⁸⁰ The temple open house in 1999 was a successful missionary opportunity, as 10,000 individuals who attended the open house requested visits from the full-time missionaries.⁵⁸¹ In 2000, missionaries and members in Cartagena participated in a service project in which they offered free car washes, which resulted in some asking to learn more about the Church.⁵⁸²

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, Quechua, Quichua, Guarani, Aymara, German, Arabic, Kuna.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, German, and Arabic. The Church recently completed a Spanish-translation of the LDS-edition of the Bible complete with full LDS footnotes, Bible dictionary, and topical guide. Translations of the Book of Mormon and some church materials are available in Aymara, Guarani, Kuna, Quechua, and Quichua. Bolivian Quechua translation materials are limited to *The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony* and hymns and children's songs. *Gospel Principles* in Peruvian Quechua is available. Church materials translated into Nivacle include *Gospel Principles Simplified* and the *Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. The *Liahona* magazine has monthly issues in Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and German.

Meetinghouses

At the end of 2010, there were approximately 4,000 LDS meetinghouses in South America, most of which were chapels constructed by the Church.

Health and Safety

The LDS Church in South America has experienced more incidences of violence directed towards missionaries than in any other region, but these incidences have decreased in frequency in recent years. Surges in political instability and violence have disrupted missionary work in the past in Bolivia, limiting proselytism activities

⁵⁷⁶ Iverson, Steven J. "Chile," *Ensign*, Feb 1977, 44.

⁵⁷⁷ "From around the world," *LDS Church News*, 1 October 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18324/From-around-the-World.html>

⁵⁷⁸ Sandoval, Marcela Opazo. "Chile temple grounds receive Easter visitors," *LDS Church News*, 24 April 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45469/Chile-temple-grounds-receive-Easter-visitors.html>

⁵⁷⁹ "Santiago Chile Temple," *LDS Church News*, 18 March 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48651/Santiago-Chile-Temple.html>

⁵⁸⁰ "From around the world," *LDS Church News*, 23 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17634/From-around-the-world.html>

⁵⁸¹ Hart, John L. "Cover Story: Bogota Temple—Gift of inner peace in a troubled land," *LDS Church News*, 1 May 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35699/Cover-Story-Bogota-Temple—Gift-of-inner-peace-in-a-troubled-land.html>

⁵⁸² "Missionaries, members give service," *LDS Church News*, 3 June 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37905/Missionaries-members-give-service.html>

or requiring the periodic evacuation of North American missionaries. High-crime neighborhoods, tropical climate, illicit drug trafficking, and dangerous roads pose safety concerns for members and missionaries in Brazil and Colombia. Governmental instability and lack of government control in many areas of Colombia pose safety threats. High rates of violence in many larger cities in southwestern Colombia like Cali and Buenaventura are a concern. Kidnappings and narco-terrorism are common in several areas. Venezuela suffers from high crime rates and has one of the highest homicide rates in the world.

Two LDS missionaries were assassinated in Bolivia in 1988. In 1997, a North American full-time missionary serving in Buenos Aires received a gunshot wound to the jaw but fully recovered.⁵⁸³ In 2001, a North American full-time missionary was wounded with a gunshot wound after being attacked in Rio de Janeiro.⁵⁸⁴ In 2005, a North American missionary received a head wound in a robbery attempt.⁵⁸⁵ In 2006, a North American full-time missionary was killed by a drunk driver in San Luis.⁵⁸⁶ In 2008, a North American missionary died in a hit-and-run car accident in the Brazil Salvador Mission.⁵⁸⁷ There have been several accidental missionary deaths in Argentina over the past three decades. LDS sister missionaries serving in Comodoro Rivadavia died by accidental asphyxiation while they slept in their apartment in 1989.⁵⁸⁸ In 2003, a North American full-time missionary died by electrocution in a failed attempt to rescue a boy in a deep puddle in Gualeguaychu.⁵⁸⁹

Humanitarian and Development Work

The LDS Church has conducted at least 257 humanitarian and development projects in South America and performed the greatest number of projects in Peru (60) and the fewest in Venezuela (6). Projects have included donating wheelchairs, linens for hospitals, firefighting equipment, school supplies, bicycles for school children, hearing aids, appliances, Braille machines, medical equipment, computers, and emergency relief. The Church has also provided food production and agricultural projects, neonatal resuscitation training, and vision treatment in many South American countries. Clean water projects have also occurred in some areas.⁵⁹⁰

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

All South American countries grant religious freedom to Latter-day Saints. Foreign and native full-time LDS missionaries serve in each country, but the Church has evacuated foreign missionaries from some countries in the past due to perceived threats of violence and political instability. North American missionaries were withdrawn from Bolivia for over a year in the late 2000s and for a nearly twenty-year period in Colombia from 1989 to the late 2000s. In both countries, political instability or terrorists targeting foreigners were the major concerns. Latter-day Saints in most South American nations are respected and on good terms with local and

⁵⁸³ "Bullet removed from missionary in minor surgery," LDS Church News, 25 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29092/Bullet-removed-from-missionary-in-minor-surgery.html>

⁵⁸⁴ "Missionary recovering from shooting," LDS Church News, 17 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39501/Missionary-recovering-from-shooting.html>

⁵⁸⁵ "Missionary in Brazil wounded," LDS Church News, 16 April 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47183/Missionary-in-Brazil-wounded.html>

⁵⁸⁶ "Missionary in Argentina killed by drunken driver," LDS Church News, 29 April 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48892/Missionary-in-Argentina-killed-by-drunken-driver.html>

⁵⁸⁷ "Missionary killed in hit-and-run," LDS Church News, 26 April 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51931/Missionary-killed-in-hit-and-run.html>

⁵⁸⁸ "Two missionaries in Argentina die of accidental asphyxiation," LDS Church News, 10 June 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18827/Two-missionaries-in-Argentina-die-of-accidental-asphyxiation.html>

⁵⁸⁹ "Missionary dies trying to save life," LDS Church News, 15 March 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43348/Missionary-dies-trying-to-save-life.html>

⁵⁹⁰ "Locations—South America," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 7 May 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-7,00.html>

national government authorities. Some nations restrict proselytism among Amerindian groups or prohibit the entry of nonindigenous individuals into indigenous reserves, such as Venezuela and Brazil. Prospective LDS missionary activity in these remote, sparsely populated areas will most likely depend on LDS Amerindian converts joining the Church in areas that permit proselytism, returning back to their reserves, and conducting member-missionary activity among family and friends.

Cultural Issues

Populations in South America have been among the most receptive to LDS mission outreach worldwide, at least in terms of baptismal numbers, although convert retention and member activity have been low. Strong receptivity to missionary-minded Christian denominations appears to relate at least in part to the legacy of the Catholic Church instilling Christian beliefs and practices among nearly the entire population but without creating insurmountable ethno-religious ties that challenge Catholics to investigate and join the LDS Church. Many have a basic understanding of Christianity but lack strong affinity with a particular denomination or the Catholic Church, resulting in open-minded religious interest. LDS converts in many areas experience disapproval from family and friends, but harassment and persecution instigated by those who practice a traditional majority religion is not as common as in other regions like Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. The percentage of Latter-day Saints has increased to where many have met or known a Latter-day Saint, which has contributed to greater tolerance and acceptance of the Church in many areas and expanding national outreach. Secularism appears to have impacted LDS growth trends primarily in southern Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, as these countries maintain stronger cultural ties with Western Europe, but populations in these countries overall remain receptive to the Church. Many converts from these nations have greater challenges developing regular church attendance and personal religious habits. In southern South America, Latter-day Saints appear to be respected and well recognized in society.

The LDS Church has struggled to instill habitual church attendance and personal religious habits in many formerly Catholic converts. The high degree of Catholic nominalism exhibited by most the population also represents one of the primary cultural barriers compromising long-term growth ambitions in South America. Instilling habits of regular church attendance, daily scripture reading, and personal prayer in investigators, inactive members, and new converts has been a challenge for full-time missionaries and local leaders; widespread mission policies that have emphasized short-term baptismal numbers while paying little attention to outcomes after baptism have not helped the situation. Many nominal Catholics who joined the LDS Church have become nominal Latter-day Saints, albeit most no longer identify with the Church. In Argentina, the percentage of regularly attending Latter-day Saints is nearly identical to the percentage of practicing Catholics, suggesting that the level of participation in religious services demonstrates little change for Latter-day Saint converts from Catholicism. This statistic is worrisome, as it demonstrates the failure of full-time missionaries and member fellowshiping initiatives to instill church-attending habits into nominal Catholics who join the LDS Church. Male participation in religious matters is lower than female participation across most denominations throughout South America, resulting in a gender imbalance in many Latter-day Saint congregations, which are predominately female. Consequently, limited male leadership has reduced the rate of church growth for Latter-day Saints, as congregations often rely on active male members to hold multiple assignments.

In Brazil and some other countries, Carnival presents many cultural challenges for Latter-day Saints due to high rates of alcohol use and widespread sexual promiscuity. In 1994, Brazilian LDS youth in Ponta Grossa, Santa Catarina, and Sao Paulo avoided the celebration by attending a youth conference and a service project.⁵⁹¹ Full-time missionaries often visit members or stay indoors during Carnival celebrations, which can delay the progress of investigators and recent converts. In Colombia, missionaries serving in several areas report that many face significant challenges refraining from extramarital sexual relations. Church members

⁵⁹¹ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 26 March 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24358/From-around-the-world.html>

participating in illicit sexual relations are subject to church discipline, which may include disfellowshipping or excommunication, and investigators or recent converts face the challenge of fully ending such relations. Increasing drug use and gang-related violence pose challenges for LDS proselytism. The widespread cultivation, distribution, and consumption of coca leaf products of several South American countries limits potential outreach in areas producing large amounts of the drug and leads to increased caution and vigilance of local, mission and area leaders regarding the proselytism activities of full-time missionaries. Increasing illicit drug use requires proper outreach and approaches from missionaries working with less active members and investigators. Higher alcohol and cigarette consumption rates create challenges for LDS missionaries in some areas. In Uruguay, some widely consumed indigenous drinks are forbidden by Church teachings, and potential converts may struggle to abstain from these and other substances prohibited by the Word of Wisdom.

Syncretism between Catholicism and native beliefs and practices among Amerindian populations in the Andes may lead to some challenges to doctrinal integrity but have also increased receptivity to the Church in some locations. The Otavalo Amerindians of northern Ecuador exhibit some customs and traditions aligned with LDS teachings and have similarities in local traditions with stories found in the Book of Mormon.⁵⁹² The Otavalo Amerindians have demonstrated affinity for the Church, and full-time missionaries report that the two stakes in Otavalo are highly self-sufficient. High receptivity in this region was noted as early as 1965 when the Church was first established in Ecuador.⁵⁹³

Poverty or low levels of economic sustainability have contributed to high rates of receptivity to the LDS Church and other missionary-oriented Christian denominations for over half a century but create barriers for local leadership development and member self-reliance. High unemployment and underemployment have been major challenges for Colombians to face.⁵⁹⁴ The Perpetual Education Fund has been well-utilized throughout South America in addressing poverty and has facilitated members receiving additional education to increase job security and bolster economic self-reliance. Past political conflict has threatened the unity of LDS congregations in Venezuela,⁵⁹⁵ and the Church has urged members to leave political issues outside of church. Corruption creates economic and political challenges for local members and missionaries to function in society and follow LDS teachings.

National Outreach

South America receives excellent levels of LDS mission outreach as a whole, as 65% of the regional population resides in a city or urban area with an LDS congregation, and every country has an official LDS presence. The percentage of the national population residing in a city or town with an LDS congregation is higher than 70% in only two countries, Argentina (78%) and Uruguay (76%), largely due to 92% of the population in both these countries residing in urban areas. Only Venezuela has a higher percentage of the general population residing in urban areas in South America, but more limited LDS outreach has occurred in Venezuela due to a later LDS establishment than Argentina and Uruguay and government restrictions in recent years on foreign missionary visas. The percentage of the population residing in cities with an LDS congregation is less than 60% in only two countries, Paraguay (50%) and Peru (56%). Ecuador is the country with the lowest percentage of the population residing in urban areas and the highest percentage of the population residing in

⁵⁹² Wells, Elayne. "A land of prophecy: in the Andes, 'Lehi's children grow strong in gospel,'" LDS Church News, 17 February 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19993/A-land-of-prophecy—in-the-Andes-Lehis-children-grow-strong-in-gospel.html>

⁵⁹³ Wells, Elayne. "A land of prophecy: in the Andes, 'Lehi's children grow strong in gospel,'" LDS Church News, 17 February 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19993/A-land-of-prophecy—in-the-Andes-Lehis-children-grow-strong-in-gospel.html>

⁵⁹⁴ Swensen, Jason. "LDS Colombians enlist faith amid troubled times," LDS Church News, 30 March 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41502/LDS-Columbians-enlist-faith-amid-troubled-times.html>

⁵⁹⁵ Swensen, Jason. "Church leaders work to buoy members' spirits," LDS Church News, 25 January 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43133/Church-leaders-work-to-buoy-members-spirits.html>

cities with an LDS congregation. Brazil and Colombia are the only countries that have any cities with over 100,000 inhabitants unreached by the LDS Church.

LDS mission outreach varies significantly not only by country but also by administrative division in individual South American nations. In Argentina, Chubut, Tierra del Fuego, and Neuquen provinces receive the greatest mission outreach (one LDS congregation per 25,000 or fewer inhabitants), whereas Catamarca, Santiago del Estero, and San Luis receive the least mission outreach (one LDS congregation per 70,000 or more inhabitants). Southern provinces generally receive higher levels of mission outreach, whereas northern provinces are less reached. All administrative departments in Bolivia have an LDS congregation. In Brazil, Rio Grande do Sul, Amazonas, Acre, Parana, and Sao Paulo support the highest percentages of members, as indicated by each of these states having less than 75,000 inhabitants per LDS congregation. Brazilian states with the lowest percentage of members are Maranhao (one congregation per 469,263 inhabitants), Minas Gerais (one per 174,958), Rondonia (one per 173,389), and Para (one per 172,456). In Chile, areas with the greatest outreach include the Arica and Parinacota, Los Rios, and Atacama Regions. Areas with the lowest percentage of members are regions clustered around the Santiago metropolitan area (Region Metropolitana) and include Maule, Libertador G.B. O'Higgins, and Coquimbo Regions. The Santiago metropolitan area falls in the middle of the continuum of LDS percentages in the population. Dependent branches or groups may meet in some of these locations but are unreported. Six of Colombia's thirty-two administrative departments have no LDS congregations (Arauca, Guania, Guaviare, Putumayo, Vichada, and Vaupes). These departments all rank among the nine least populated, are concentrated in the interior, and account for less than 2% of the national population. In Ecuador, 315,000 reside in the two administrative provinces without LDS mission outreach, Morona Santiago and Sucumbios, which account for 2% of the national population. In Paraguay, sixteen of seventeen administrative divisions have mission outreach centers; only Alto Paraguay (0.2% of the national population) does not. In Peru, every administrative province and region has multiple LDS congregations and provinces that receive the greatest national outreach are in southern Peru (Moquegua, Tacna, Arequipa, and Ica Regions) and the largest cities (Chiclayo, Trujillo, and Lima). Areas that receive the lowest degree of outreach are in remote areas in the northern interior (Cajamarca, San Martin, and Amazonas Regions) or to the highlands to the southeast of Lima (Ayacucho and Huancavelica Regions). In Uruguay, all administrative departments have a congregation. In Venezuela, Latter-day Saints have a presence in every administrative area except for Delta Amacuro State, which is the second least populated Venezuelan state, and the Dependencias Federales, populated by less than 2,000. Venezuelan states that experienced the greatest outreach (less than 80,000 people per LDS congregation) are concentrated southeast of Caracas and in the far west and include Guarico, Anzoategui, Nueva Esparta, Zulia, and Tachira, whereas states with lowest degree of outreach (more than 200,000 people per LDS congregation) are clustered in the southwest interior and include Cojedes, Yaracuy, Apure, and Portuguesa.

The LDS Church performs outreach in nearly all large and medium-sized cities in South America with the exception of Brazil and Colombia. In Brazil, five of the 250 cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have no LDS mission outreach centers (Maga—Rio de Janeiro, Parauapebas—Para, Caxias—Maranhao, Araruama—Rio de Janeiro, and Trindade—Goias). Over 400 cities in Brazil with between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitants have no mission outreach center. Based on population figures from the late 2000s, states with the largest number of unreached cities over 20,000 inhabitants include Sao Paulo (68), Minas Gerais (65), Bahia (32), Maranhao (31), Para (31), and Ceara (29). The Church has faced the enormous task of opening new cities in Brazil in a coordinated fashion for decades. Full-time missionaries have consistently served in areas with a strong church membership in an effort to build centers of strength.⁵⁹⁶ Due to reliance on full-time missionaries to expand national outreach, little progress in opening new cities for missionary work occurred in the 2000s due to the plateauing of world LDS missionary numbers as well as the consolidation of many Latin American congregations due to low member activity. Delaying the opening of additional cities may result in missed opportunities

⁵⁹⁶ Hart, John L. "Vast potential of nation unfolding in growth, strength," LDS Church News, 23 April 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17630/Vast-potential-of-nation-unfolding-in-growth-strength.html>

when the inhabitants are most receptive, resulting in the loss of many potentially receptive individuals to other missionary-minded denominations. In Colombia, the only two cities with over 100,000 inhabitants without an official church presence are Buenaventura and Apartadó, both of which are coastal cities with high rates of violent crime, rampant illicit drug trafficking, and frequent paramilitary activity. Of the eighty-four cities in Colombia between 30,000 and 100,000 inhabitants, forty-three have a mission outreach center (51%). Few of the more than fifty cities between 20,000 and 30,000 have mission outreach centers. In Argentina, all cities with over 50,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. One hundred fifty-three of the 169 cities with between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. In Bolivia, most of the approximately six cities with over 10,000 inhabitants without a congregation are in remote regions of eastern Bolivia, where the largest unreached population by LDS mission efforts resides. Chile is one of the few nations with over fifteen million people that has wards or branches in every city with over 15,000 inhabitants. In Ecuador, thirty-five of the forty-two cities between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. Of the 208 cities with over 15,000 inhabitants in Peru, twenty-four cities between 15,000 and 35,000 inhabitants have no LDS mission outreach centers. In Paraguay and Uruguay, every urban location with over 10,000 inhabitants has a congregation or assigned full-time missionaries. In Venezuela, thirty-seven of the sixty-one cities with populations between 20,000 and 100,000 receive LDS mission outreach.

Prospects for expanding national outreach hinge on opening additional branches and dependent units in lesser-reached communities in and surrounding the largest cities as well as organizing congregations in small cities and towns in unreached, rural areas. Active members moving to unreached cities and small towns are often instrumental in the establishment of an LDS congregation. The success of small congregations and their degree of self-sufficiency and sustainability depends heavily upon the training and abilities of local priesthood leaders assigned to preside over such congregations as well as practices of full-time missionaries in ensuring that prospective converts have established firm gospel habits of regular church attendance and scripture reading prior to baptism. Administrative challenges in many countries have been approached by utilizing full-time missionaries to supply leadership, reducing the available missionary force to open additional cities and towns for missionary work as well as time for proselytism in established areas. There are significant opportunities for opening additional congregations in lesser-reached communities in and surrounding most of the largest cities in South America, especially in Brazil. Distance from LDS meetinghouses has been a source of convert attrition and member inactivity. The establishment of additional branches, dependent branches, and groups in these urban areas can increase mission outreach over the long term and provide opportunity for stronger convert retention and member activity rates as new converts are funneled into local church leadership positions with assistance from full-time missionaries and stake or district presidencies. Regional church leadership has increased the standards for new branches to be established in most nations, requiring a sufficient number of active local members and priesthood holders to staff leadership positions in order to reduce long-term reliance on full-time missionaries. Widespread congregation consolidations in South America in the late 1990s and early 2000s have not significantly affected the extent of LDS national outreach in the region, as nearly all congregations consolidated were located in cities with multiple LDS units. The degree of outreach appears to have declined in some cities such as in Santiago, Chile, as many must travel greater distances to reach church meetinghouses.

All countries in South America have either their own respective LDS websites or share a website for a church area, such as the South America Northwest and South America South Areas. Internet sites provide links to other Spanish-language or Portuguese-language LDS websites, local news, and information on church beliefs, the missionary program, and regional church leadership. Use of the websites by local members and full-time missionaries provides opportunities to expand national outreach and invite others to learn about the Church individually if they are uncomfortable about meeting with missionaries or attending church meetings. Outreach through local members inviting and committing friends and relatives to learn about the Church via Facebook and other social networking sites has begun to be developed in some countries and has enormous potential to expand missionary activity into lesser-reached areas.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

The LDS Church reports some of its lowest member activity rates in worldwide in South America as manifested by noncommensurate membership and congregational growth over the past fifteen years, the consolidation of hundreds of congregations in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the stagnation of enrollment numbers for seminary and institute in recent years, the closure of dozens of stakes in the 2000s, dependence on North American missionary manpower to staff regional missionary needs, and the construction of few LDS temples. Quick-baptism tactics extensively implemented by mission leadership and full-time missionaries for several decades are a primary cause for low member activity and convert retention rates, but cultural attitudes reinforcing casual church attendance and low levels of personal religious practice have further exacerbated retention challenges. Many converts received little pre-baptismal preparation often accompanied by few or no resources for member fellowshiping and post-baptismal teaching, essential steps for developing perpetual testimony building habits such as regular church attendance, daily scripture reading and prayer, and holding and magnifying callings. The conduct of proselytism by itinerant missionaries and leaders with little accountability and no vested long-term interest in building viable local congregations and focus on baptismal numbers with little concern for post-baptismal outcomes often resulted in poor decisions being made to quickly baptize inadequately prepared converts. The baptism of large numbers of new converts in the late 1980s strained congregational resources and local leadership,⁵⁹⁷ and few converts became active members. Member activity rates appear to be lower among men than women, generating additional challenges for achieving local self-sufficiency in staffing leadership needs.

Much of the potential of the LDS Church in South America for rapid, long-term growth has diminished due to the millions of less-active and inactive members that have accumulated over the decades. Overstaffing small congregations with large numbers of full-time missionaries as well as quick-baptize policies centered on numerical baptismal goals rather than on genuine conversion and convert retention has contributed to lower member activity rates in some areas. Some lost members may remain on ward or branch membership rosters, whereas in nations like Chile, up to 37% of nominal members cannot be located and are on the “address unknown” file.

The LDS Church added 825,374 members in South America between year-end 2000 and 2009 (a 32% increase), yet the number of LDS congregations only increased by eleven during this period (a 0.2% increase). The lack of any meaningful increase in LDS congregations during the 2000s is attributed to two factors: large-scale congregation consolidations between 2000 and 2005 and low numbers of new congregations created. Chile alone reported a decline of 261 LDS congregations between year-end 2000s and late 2010. Other countries that experienced decreases in congregations from year-end 2000s levels include Ecuador (-31), Colombia (-13), and Uruguay (-9). Countries with an increase in LDS congregations include Brazil (156), Venezuela (53), Argentina (49), Paraguay (32), Peru (20), and Bolivia (15). Poor convert retention, low member activity rates, and insufficient numbers of local priesthood leaders are characteristic of countries that experienced congregational declines or small increases. Peru experienced massive congregation consolidations in the late 1990s, as the number of wards and branches fell by 218 between 1998 and 2000. The number of LDS congregations in Brazil declined by 211 between 1999 and 2003. Both Brazil and Peru experienced steady congregational growth since the mid-2000s and have successfully reversed the trend of congregation consolidations.

Raising convert baptismal standards is of utmost priority toward ensuring long-term convert retention. Emphasizing the need for prospective converts to achieve sustained church attendance for several consecutive weeks or months prior to baptism can efficiently reduce convert attrition. Enlisting investigators, new

⁵⁹⁷ Hart, John L. “Vast potential of nation unfolding in growth, strength,” *LDS Church News*, 23 April 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17630/Vast-potential-of-nation-unfolding-in-growth-strength.html>

converts, youth, and less-actives into seminary or institute programs can facilitate testimony building and gospel understanding that becomes self-sustaining and encourages spiritual independence.

Organizing reactivation efforts headed by local leaders have a greater potential for a lasting impact on improving member activity rates than uncoordinated efforts by full-time missionaries to coax less-active members back into church activity. Full-time missionaries report that many inactive members claim to have left the Church, ostensibly because they were offended by a church member. Efforts to reconcile past hurt, misunderstanding, and disagreement require sensitivity and care on the part of local priesthood leaders, home teachers, and visiting teachers to improve congregational dynamics and achieve successful reactivation that can withstand future possibilities of offense at church.

The consistent creation of new congregations in most countries in South America and reduction in the number of congregation consolidations since the mid-2000s indicates some stabilization of member activity and convert retention rates, notwithstanding that current rates of congregational growth continue to be well below membership growth rates. Since the mid-2000s, congregational growth rates have tended to be less than half the proportion of membership growth rates in most countries. Distance to church meetinghouses in some areas has contributed to lower member activity rates, such as in some of Brazil's largest cities.

In the late 2000s, mission and local leaders reported that convert retention rates had significantly improved in some areas such as southern Brazil and Peru as a result of implementation of the missionary guide *Preach My Gospel* and requirements for prospective converts to attend sacrament meeting three or more times before baptism. However, many missions have required prospective converts to attend only twice before baptism in contrast to the *Preach My Gospel* requirement to attend sacrament meeting "several times" before baptism. Ongoing mission policies promoting quick baptism and minimalizing *Preach My Gospel* standards on baptismal preparation have been a major cause of continued mediocre to poor convert retention in many areas. Reactivation efforts have experienced only limited success, notwithstanding heavy involvement of full-time missionaries in teaching and finding less-active members. In Paraguay in the late 2000s, many of the principles and policies of the *Preach My Gospel* program appear to not be followed in many areas. The *Preach My Gospel* program was tailored in part to address convert retention issues experienced in the past decades that were related to investigators receiving adequate teaching from missionaries and members, increasing the involvement of ward or branch leaders in missionary work on a localized level, and stressing simplicity in teaching and adherence to official doctrine taught by missionaries in an inspirational manner. There remains a need for greater, more consistent adherence to scriptural mandates and *Preach My Gospel* principles throughout South America either on a national or area level.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The LDS Church has experienced few ethnic integration issues in South America due to little ethnic diversity, the geographic separation of ethnic groups, and the mixed-race population accounting for the majority of the population in many countries. Racial integration issues are more apparent on a national than a local level, as demonstrated by tension between mulattos in northern Brazil and whites in southern Brazil, regional rivalries between Guayaquil and Quito in Ecuador, and the marginalization of some Amerindian peoples in other countries. These ethnic issues on a national level can affect integration issues for LDS congregations if families or individuals move to areas where their ethnic group is not the majority or to where most speak a different language. Missionaries and members have reported that the greatest integration issues in South America have been socioeconomic and appear most easily resolved by organizing additional congregations in different neighborhoods.

Language Issues

LDS scriptures and materials are available in the native language of more than 98% of the South American population as Spanish and Portuguese are widely spoken, many other European languages spoken by immigrants have a wide selection of LDS materials available, and all Amerindian languages with over one million speakers have translations of LDS materials. Asian and Middle Eastern immigrants also have LDS materials available in languages such as Japanese, Korean, Chinese, and Arabic. Few language issues have been manifest in the region largely due to virtually the entire population speaking Spanish or Portuguese as a first or second language with the exception of some Amerindian populations. Spanish and Portuguese are the second and third most commonly-spoken languages by Latter-day Saints due to sizeable populations in Latin America and consequently have a wide range of LDS materials translated. LDS missionaries learn and teach in several Amerindian languages in Paraguay, Peru, and Bolivia, such as Aymara, Quechua, and Guarani, but generally struggle to adequately speak these language for teaching the gospel due to their informal usage and complexity and the dedication of language study time to Spanish and Portuguese. Congregations in the Andes are generally conducted in Spanish, but some are conducted in Amerindian languages depending on location and member demographics. In Ecuador, there have been challenges integrating Amerindians who do not speak Spanish into Spanish-speaking mestizo congregations and Spanish-speaking mestizos into Quichua-speaking congregations. These challenges have been primarily encountered in the Otavalo and Quito areas but occur in the LDS Church in other Andean countries. The creation of language-specific congregations may improve member activity and convert retention rates in areas with sizeable numbers of mestizos and Amerindians.

Some commonly-spoken Amerindian languages such as Aymara and Quechua have few LDS materials, and not all LDS scriptures, translated. Several indigenous languages with few speakers but sizeable LDS populations have LDS materials translated, such as Kuna and Nivacle. Due to few native speakers, a lack of Latter-day Saints, and competency in Spanish or Portuguese, no Amerindian languages without current translations of LDS materials appear likely for forthcoming translations with the possible exception of Mapudungun. Government bans on proselytizing some Amerindian groups in Brazil and Venezuela restrict efforts to reach speakers of some languages.

Missionary Service

In early 2011, the number of full-time LDS missionaries serving in South America was estimated to range between 10,000 and 12,000. Peru is likely the only South American nation that is self-sufficient in its full-time missionary force. Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela each appear to be nearly self-sufficient but do not appear to experience consistent increases in the number of full-time missionaries serving. Uruguay, Chile, Paraguay, and Argentina each rely heavily upon North American missionaries or Latin American missionaries from other countries to staff their missions. Local members appear to constitute approximately half of the missionary force in each of these four countries.

The LDS Church in most South American countries has organized workshops, conferences, and trainings to prepare local youth and young adults to serve full-time missions. Beginning in the mid-1980s, many Peruvian stakes held clinics to teach, train, and prepare youth to serve a mission to help increase the native missionary force.⁵⁹⁸ In 1988, the Bolivia Cochabamba Mission held seven clinics between May and July to spiritually and financially prepare 200 youth to serve missions.⁵⁹⁹ In 1988, around twenty local youth served mini-missions for thirty to sixty days with a full-time missionary companion during their school vacation in the Venezuela

⁵⁹⁸ "Clinics are helping prepare missionaries," LDS Church News, 23 July 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17621/Clinics-are-helping-prepare-missionaries.html>

⁵⁹⁹ "Clinics are helping prepare missionaries," LDS Church News, 23 July 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17621/Clinics-are-helping-prepare-missionaries.html>

Caracas Mission.⁶⁰⁰ In 1988, Elder M. Russell Ballard called for more Peruvians to serve full-time missions due to limited numbers of American missionaries serving at the time. Elder Ballard called on members to establish a mission fund for each ward to provide financially for prospective missionaries.⁶⁰¹ In 1999, the number of missionaries serving from Peru and Bolivia increased by 70% as local leaders focused on sending youth on missions,⁶⁰² although it is not clear whether this increase has been sustained. In early 2011, Elders Aidukaitis and Spitale performed a future missionary training for youth preparing to serve full-time missions in the Argentina Mendoza Mission. Over 500 youth attended the meeting, and one hundred were ready to fill out their mission paperwork at the time.

The Church continues to struggle to staff missions with local members, notwithstanding sporadic efforts to augment the native full-time missionary force. Prospects for increasing the number of native full-time missionaries have been mixed in recent years as mission-aged youth often suffer from low activity and low levels of seminary and institute enrollment. Local members helped to reduce mission costs by feeding missionaries in Brazil in the late 1980s,⁶⁰³ but the high price to serve a mission nonetheless limited the number of Brazilian full-time missionaries. Reactivation efforts headed by local members, increasing convert retention rates, and encouraging youth to prepare for full-time missionary service all appear necessary components to improve the self-sustainability of the South American missionary force. Ongoing obstacles preventing greater numbers of members completing full-time missions include low member activity rates, a lack of consistent youth-oriented missionary preparation programs, and undeveloped local priesthood leadership in many areas. Increasing the number of local members serving full-time missions results in long-term returns for growth, as returned missionaries have offered valuable leadership manpower and experience.⁶⁰⁴

Political instability, terrorism threats, and visa issues have at times prompted LDS leaders to reduce the number of North American missionaries or remove them altogether, which has created opportunities to augment the local full-time missionary force and challenges to maintain national outreach and local leadership administration. North American missionaries were removed from Colombia in the early 1990s and were not reintroduced until the late 2000s. During this period, there was little progress expanding national outreach in the country notwithstanding the self-sufficiency of the missionary force at the time. Local members have become self-sufficient in maintaining the missionary forces of the four Venezuelan missions following the removal of North American missionaries in 2005 but continue to lack the needed numbers to expand national outreach and increase the number of converts. There were some reports that the shortage of full-time missionaries was so great in Venezuela upon the initial removal of North American missionaries that the minimum age for local full-time missionary service was lowered to eighteen. North American missionaries were withdrawn from Bolivia for a couple years in the 2000s, and there were no significant challenges in growth trends for the Church in Bolivia at the time.

Five missionary training centers operate in South America in Buenos Aires, Argentina; Sao Paulo, Brazil; Santiago, Chile; Bogata, Colombia; and Lima, Peru. In 1990, the Argentina Missionary Training Center serviced native missionaries serving from Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay. At the time, half of native full-time missionaries were converts of less than five years.⁶⁰⁵ In 1994, a new missionary training center capable of

⁶⁰⁰ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 13 August 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17740/From-around-the-world.html>

⁶⁰¹ Warnick, Lee. "18 stakes created from 11: 28-hour marathon in Lima multiplies by dividing," 6 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17742/18-stakes-created-from-11-28-hour-marathon-in-lima-multiplies-by-dividing.html>

⁶⁰² "Excitement for missionary work surges," LDS Church News, 19 June 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35955/Excitement-for-missionary-work-surges.html>

⁶⁰³ Hart, John L. "Vast potential of nation unfolding in growth, strength," LDS Church News, 23 April 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17630/Vast-potential-of-nation-unfolding-in-growth-strength.html>

⁶⁰⁴ Hart, John L. "Vast potential of nation unfolding in growth, strength," LDS Church News, 23 April 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17630/Vast-potential-of-nation-unfolding-in-growth-strength.html>

⁶⁰⁵ Wells, Elayne. "Centers prepare missionaries to be 'effective instruments,'" LDS Church News, 13 January 1990. <http://>

housing up to ninety missionaries was dedicated.⁶⁰⁶ The Chile Missionary Training Center opened in 1981.⁶⁰⁷ Chilean missionaries accounted for half of the full-time missionary force assigned to Chile in late 1988.⁶⁰⁸ Only Latin Americans are known to have attended the Colombian Missionary Training Center as of 2010. In 1998, a missionary training center for Peru and Bolivia capable of housing 150 missionaries was dedicated in Lima, Peru.⁶⁰⁹ In July 2010, the Peru MTC had approximately 110 missionaries, about eighty of whom were Latin Americans.

In 1993, the Church began construction of its second largest missionary training center in Sao Paulo, a 10,800 square foot building with a 1,000 seat assembly room; the facility could accommodate up to 900 missionaries. The previous missionary training center could accommodate only 200 missionaries.⁶¹⁰ Brazil supplied the most full-time missionaries of any country outside the United States by 1993.⁶¹¹ The new Brazil Missionary Training Center was completed in 1997 to house up to 750 missionaries: 375 in each building, but initially, only one building was occupied.⁶¹² In 1998, the Church began sending North American missionaries designated to serve in Brazil to the Brazil Missionary Training Center for half of their missionary training to facilitate their cultural and language adaptation.⁶¹³ In 2006, full-time missionaries serving from Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, and Zimbabwe received missionary training at the Brazil MTC. The number of missionaries receiving training at the center varied from 150 to 550 and usually averaged around 300 in 2006.⁶¹⁴ By early 2011, the number of missionaries in the center dropped to sixty due in part to visa complications for North American missionaries.⁶¹⁵ Low occupancy of the center at present illustrates the low degree of sustainability of the Brazilian full-time missionary force and heavy reliance on North American missionaries. The Church operates a website for Brazil providing information for members desiring to serve a full-time mission at <http://www.casaismissionarios.org.br/>.

Prospects for additional missionary training centers in other South American countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela may be forthcoming if sustained increases occur in the percentage of local members serving missions.

Leadership

South America is the second greatest source for regional and international leadership for the LDS Church

www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19646/Centers-prepare-missionaries-to-be-effective-instruments.html

⁶⁰⁶ Curbelo, Nestor. "New training center, temple housing facility dedicated in Argentina," LDS Church News, 19 March 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25320/New-training-center-temple-housing-facility-dedicated-in-Argentina.html>

⁶⁰⁷ "Centers prepare missionaries to be 'effective instruments,'" LDS Church News, 13 January 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19646/Centers-prepare-missionaries-to-be-effective-instruments.html>

⁶⁰⁸ Hill, Craig. "Chile's 50th stake—a milestone capping 32 years of growth," LDS Church News, 12 November 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18324/From-around-the-World.html>

⁶⁰⁹ "New training center dedicated in Peru—Leaders asked to raise worthy generation," LDS Church News, 12 September 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31300/New-training-center-dedicated-in-Peru—Leaders-asked-to-raise-worthy-generation.html>

⁶¹⁰ "Ground broken for new Brazil center," LDS Church News, 18 September 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23086/Ground-broken-for-new-Brazil-center.html>

⁶¹¹ Hart, John L. "Local missionaries support in service by international fund," LDS Church News, 13 November 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23323/Local-missionaries-supported-in-service-by-international-fund.html>

⁶¹² "New Brazil MTC capable of housing 750 missionaries," LDS Church News, 14 June 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28786/New-Brazil-MTC-capable-of-housing-750-missionaries.html>

⁶¹³ "North American missionaries receive training in Brazil," LDS Church News, 20 March 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35401/North-American-missionaries-receive-training-in-Brazil.html>

⁶¹⁴ Soli, Ana Claudia. "'Happiest place' is Brazil's MTC," LDS Church News, 7 January 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48352/Happiest-place-is-Brazils-MTC.html>

⁶¹⁵ Stack, Peggy Fletcher. "Visa snags slow LDS missions to Brazil," The Salt Lake Tribune, 26 January 2011. <http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/home/51121821-76/brazil-lds-visa-missionaries.html.csp>

after North America. South America and North America are the only regions in the world that have had the Church in every country provide multiple regional or international LDS leaders. There have been two dozen or more local members who have served as mission presidents, regional representatives, Area Seventies, temple presidents, or General Authorities from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela. Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Uruguay have each supplied less than a dozen local leaders to serve in regional and international church leadership positions.

The size, quality, and strength of local leaders varies widely on a country-by-country and local basis. The largest cities throughout the continent generally have abundant local leadership manpower, whereas congregations in smaller cities and rural areas often struggle to meet administrative and leadership needs and tend to rely on full-time missionaries for support. A lack of a sufficient number of active priesthood holders in most nations prevents the organization of additional stakes and the maturation of districts into stakes. Local LDS leadership and member activity has been the most stable in Argentina and Venezuela, as evidenced by there never being a stake discontinued in either country and steady congregational growth during the 2000s. In Argentina, inadequate numbers of active male members in many congregations force full-time missionaries to fill empty leadership and administrative conditions, resulting in decreased self-sufficiency and long-term reliance on nonlocal leaders or full-time missionaries. Limited numbers of priesthood holders continues to delay the organization of additional stakes in Buenos Aires among stakes with a sufficient number of congregations to divide and among several districts. Elder Richard G. Scott urged local leaders in the South America South Area to strengthen local stakes due to these issues.⁶¹⁶ In Venezuela, local leadership appears self-reliant in many areas, but continues to fall short of numbers needed to justify the creation of additional stakes or congregations. Some stakes have had CES employees serve in the stake presidency, but the Church does not appear to rely on its employees to staff ecclesiastical duties.

Serious leadership challenges have persisted in most other South American nations as indicated by discontinued stakes, massive congregation consolidations, and few new congregations organized, notwithstanding large increases in nominal membership. Of the approximate 110 LDS stakes discontinued worldwide since 1990, sixty-one were located in South America in Chile (42), Brazil (6), Peru (5), Colombia and Ecuador (3), and Bolivia and Uruguay (1). Challenges developing sufficient numbers of leaders in smaller cities persist along with low member activity and present major challenges limiting congregational growth. Developing self-sufficient congregations in Chile has always been a challenge for the LDS Church. Low levels of self-sufficiency in local leadership have been manifest in the overrepresentation of Church Education System employees in leadership positions. At times, Church employees have constituted two of the three men in some stake presidencies. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland was assigned to the Chile Area in the early 2000s to help address leadership shortfalls and convert retention challenges. In the late 2000s and in 2010, the Church was hesitant to organize new congregations and new stakes due to concern over whether local members would be consistently self-sufficient over the long term. In Paraguay, the Church appears to have a small, strong local leadership base that has grown at a much slower pace than general membership. Despite poor member activity and few active priesthood holders, church employees only occasionally serve in stake presidencies and do not appear to be heavily overrepresented in ecclesiastical leadership. However, rural areas or small cities with a congregation remain dependent on foreign full-time missionaries or one full-member family to run administrative duties. Rapid growth in the number of priesthood holders has occurred periodically in Brazil. In 1995, two stakes in Manaus sustained 116 men to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood in a single day.⁶¹⁷ Overall, Brazil exhibits low to fair levels of leadership sustainability as evidence by past congregation consolidations and congregational growth rates far below nominal membership growth rates. Increasing numbers of stakes in the latter half of the 2000s point toward some improvement, but dozens of districts remain unable to mature

⁶¹⁶ "South America South Area," *Deseret News* 2009 Church Almanac, p. 168-169.

⁶¹⁷ "116 priesthood advancements in single day," *LDS Church News*, 9 September 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25731/116-priesthood-advancements-in-single-day.html>

into stakes due to lacking numbers of active Melchizedek Priesthood holders. Sao Paulo generates the greatest body of LDS leadership in Brazil.

Temple

As of early 2011, the LDS Church had nineteen temples in South America, five of which were announced or under construction. The Sao Paulo Brazil Temple was the first LDS temple constructed in Latin America and was completed in 1978 to service members in South America. Additional temples were constructed in Santiago Chile (1983), Lima Peru (1986), Buenos Aires Argentina (1986), Bogota Colombia (1999), Guayaquil Ecuador (1999), Cochabamba Bolivia (2000), Caracas Venezuela (2000), Recife Brazil (2000), Porto Alegre Brazil (2000), Montevideo Uruguay (2001), Campinas Brazil (2002), Asuncion Paraguay (2002), and Curitiba Brazil (2008). Provided with the date of announcement, additional temples are in the planning stages or under construction in Manaus Brazil (2007), Cordoba Argentina (2008), Trujillo Peru (2008), Concepcion Chile (2009), Fortaleza Brazil (2009), Barranquilla Colombia (2011), and Arequipa Peru (2012). In 2011, three of the five Brazilian temples (Campinas, Recife, and Sao Paulo) and the Lima Peru Temple operated at or near capacity as indicated by large numbers of stakes and districts assign to their respective temple districts, eight or more endowment sessions scheduled daily, and local member and missionary reports. The Santiago Chile Temple scheduled eight or more endowment sessions daily in 2011 and included eighty stakes and twenty-four districts in its temple district but did not appear close to working at capacity. Temples in Cochabamba Bolivia, Curitiba Brazil, Bogota Colombia, Guayaquil Ecuador, and Montevideo Uruguay were moderately utilized in 2011, whereas temples in Porto Alegre Brazil, Caracas Venezuela, and Asuncion Paraguay were the least utilized in the region. The Buenos Aires Argentina Temple was undergoing renovation in 2011 and prior to the renovation was among the busiest temples in South America.

Low member activity rates in many areas have delayed the announcement of additional temples in South America, notwithstanding large LDS populations concentrated in cities far from operating temples. Of the ten temple districts with the most stakes and districts in early 2011, half were in South America (Lima Peru [115], Santiago Chile [104], Campinas Brazil [94], Buenos Aires Argentina [89], and Recife Brazil [78]). Distance from established temples, increasing numbers of active members in some regions, and the organization of additional stakes in some cities generate a favorable outlook for the construction of as many as a dozen additional temples in the coming two decades. Prospects for additional temples in the near and medium terms are favorable in Mendoza, Argentina; Neuquen, Argentina; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Brasilia, Brazil; Belo Horizonte, Brazil; Belem, Brazil; Salvador, Brazil; Valparaiso Chile; and Quito, Ecuador.

Comparative Growth

South America is the third most reached region in the world by the LDS Church following Oceania and North America, and the percentage of Latter-day Saints in South America is the third highest among world regions. Of the ten countries with the most nominal Latter-day Saints, five are in South America. However, member activity rates are among the lowest in the world. The Church has maintained a missionary presence in South America for less time than in much of North America, Oceania, and Western Europe but longer than in most areas of East Asia, South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia and the Caucasus, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East. The LDS Church in South America supplies a greater number of full-time missionaries than perhaps any other region other than North America but remains only partially sufficient in staffing its regional missionary needs. Congregational and membership growth rates have outpaced Europe since the mid-2000s but lag behind North America, sub-Saharan Africa, and South Asia.

Latter-day Saints appear to have one of the lowest member activity rates among missionary-minded Christians, and the breadth and consistency of LDS outreach has been outpaced by many other Christian denominations. In 2009, the LDS Church claimed two million more members than Jehovah's Witnesses, yet Witnesses

operated almost four times as many congregations as Latter-day Saints. That same year, the LDS Church claimed 828,000 more members than Seventh Day Adventists in South America, yet Adventists operated twice as many congregations. LDS nominal membership lags behind many missionary-oriented Christian groups in Colombia and Brazil. Evangelicals have a presence in virtually every small city in most South American countries and have converted up to 10% of the population in Argentina and 15% in Chile and Peru. These denominations have taken a church-planting approach headed by locals, whereas the LDS Church has concentrated on a “centers of strength” approach largely dependent on outsourced missionary manpower.

Future Prospects

The outlook for future LDS Church growth in South America is cautiously favorable, as populations remain receptive to outreach, increased standards for congregations to operate have been more consistently enforced, reduced emphasis on full-time missionaries undertaking leadership responsibilities has occurred, and the number of local members serving missions appears stable or slightly increasing as a region as a whole. Continued convert retention challenges, low member activity rates, cultural attitudes fostering casual church attendance, and limited numbers of active men capable of staffing leadership positions generate ongoing challenges for maintaining self-sustainability, allocating greater numbers of missionaries to facilitate the organization of new congregations in lesser-reached communities of the largest cities and in unreached cities, and accelerating congregational growth. Greater emphasis on developing habitual church attendance will be needed to sustain greater growth over the medium term. Opportunities abound in Brazil for the organization of additional missions to take advantage of moderate to high levels of receptivity, but the plateauing of the worldwide LDS missionary force and no noticeable increasing in Brazilian members serving missions in recent years has prevented the organization of additional missions. Consistent increases in the number of congregations in Brazil, Peru, and Venezuela indicate progress improving convert retention and success with reactivation efforts that may accelerate growth in years to come. With a large LDS membership and developed local leadership, Sao Paulo, Brazil and Lima, Peru may warrant serious consideration as sites of future LDS universities for South American Latter-day Saints that may increase regional sustainability of LDS membership. Prospects for the construction of additional temples appear likely in the coming years as local membership matures and higher convert retention rates are achieved. Dozens of stakes appear likely to divide in the coming years, and many districts appear close to becoming stakes.

INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY PROFILES

ARGENTINA

Geography

AREA: 2,780,400 square km. Comprising the eastern half of southern South America, Argentina is geographically South America's second largest country and borders Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil, Uruguay, and the South Pacific Ocean. The fertile grassland plains of the Pampas occupy northern areas, whereas the plateaus and rolling hills of Patagonia comprise southern areas. The rugged Andes Mountains reach heights of nearly 7,000 meters and stretch along the entire western border. Temperate climate occurs in most areas, with arid conditions in the southeast and sub-Antarctic in the extreme southwest. Several large rivers traverse the landscape. The Parana River is the largest river; it enters Argentina from the north and empties into the ocean near the Uruguayan border. Earthquakes, windstorms, flooding, and volcanoes are natural hazards. Environmental issues include deforestation, soil degradation, desertification, and pollution. Argentina is administratively divided into twenty-three provinces and one autonomous city.

Peoples

White: 97%

Other: 3%

White Europeans with Spanish and Italian ancestry account for 97% of the population; sizeable minorities are of Eastern European, English, French, and German extraction. Mixed white and Amerindian, Amerindian, and other nonwhite groups account for 3% of the population.

Population: 42,192,494 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.997% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.29 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 73.9 male, 80.54 female (2012)

Languages: Spanish (90%), Italian (3.5%), Arabic (2.5%), Quechua (2%), other (2%). Spanish is the official language and spoken by nearly the entire population as a first or second language. Languages with over one million speakers include Spanish (37.2 million), Italian (1.5 million), and Arabic (1 million).

Literacy: 97.2% (2001)

History

Explorer Amerigo Vespucci was the first European to sight Argentina, in 1502. Spanish explorers and colonists arrived shortly thereafter, and the first permanent colony was established in Buenos Aires in 1580. In 1776, Spain formed the Vice Royalty of Rio de la Plata to govern present-day Argentina. Independence from Spain occurred in 1816, but infighting between centralist and federalist groups lasted for several decades. A constitution came into effect in 1853, and eight years later, a national unity government was formed. Argentina

quickly rose to become one of the ten wealthiest nations by 1930 as a result of introduced modern agricultural techniques, strong foreign investment, and steady immigration. The military intervened with political affairs in the 1930s, and political instability followed for much of the remainder of the twentieth century. A military dictatorship ruled from 1976 to 1983, during which time thousands disappeared at the hands of the military government. Democratic rule was restored in 1983. Argentina experienced strong economic growth and development in the 1990s primarily as a result of economic reforms headed by President Menem. The revitalization of the economy began to slow in the late 1990s and political instability returned, resulting in the resignation of the president in 2001. Economic growth returned to Argentina shortly thereafter, but living conditions and wealth remain below the level of most developed nations.⁶¹⁸

Culture

The Catholic Church has been the traditional dominant influence on society, although participation has been limited, and secular ideals have been propagated over the past several decades. Argentina is known internationally for its literature, dance, architecture, music, sports, and theater. The influence of the Mediterranean has been stronger on Argentina than other South American nations due to large-scale immigration from Spain and Italy during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Barbequed meat, bread, mashed potatoes, vegetables, salad, pasta, and Italian dishes are commonly eaten. Mate is a widely consumed drink made from the dried leaves of the yerba mate plant, which is consumed from a calabash gourd through a metal straw.⁶¹⁹ Cigarette and alcohol consumption rates are slightly higher than the worldwide average rate of use for these substances. Argentina is renowned for its fine wines.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$17,400 (2011) [36.2% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.797

Corruption Index: 3.0 (2011)

With one of the most developed economies in South America, Argentina possesses an agricultural sector that is export-driven and benefits from diversified industry and a wealth of natural resources. A major economic crisis in the early 2000s has further stunted economic growth and development in addition to decades of political instability and inflation. The economy went into recession in the late 2000s as a result of the global financial crisis but has since recovered. Thirty percent (30%) of the population lived below the poverty line in 2010. Inflation is a continuing concern. Abundant farmland, industrial metals, petroleum, and uranium are natural resources. Services employ 72% of the labor force and generate 60% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 23% of the labor force and generates 32% of the GDP. Food processing, car manufacturing, clothing, chemicals, printing, metallurgy, and steel are major industries. Agriculture employs 5% of the labor force and generates 8.5% of the GDP. Common agricultural products include sunflower seeds, lemons, soybeans, fruit, corn, tobacco, peanuts, wheat, and livestock. Brazil, China, and the United States are the primary trade partners.

Corruption is perceived as widespread and a serious deterrent to greater economic development. Argentina is a transshipment country for illicit drugs destined for Europe, the United States, and Mexico. Domestic consumption of illegal drugs has increased in recent years. The Tri-Border area by Paraguay and Brazil is a common site for illegal activity, including money laundering, funding for extremist groups, drug trafficking, and arms smuggling. Corruption allegations against law enforcement have been commonly reported. Argentina disputes sovereignty of several islands with the United Kingdom including the Falkland Islands, South Georgia, and the South Sandwich Islands, all of which are under British control.

⁶¹⁸ "Background Note: Argentina," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 16 September 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/26516.htm>

⁶¹⁹ "Mate (beverage)," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 28 February 2011. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mate_%28beverage%29

Faiths

Christian: 88%
 Agnostic/atheist: 11%
 Other (mainly Muslim): 1%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 31,420,832
 Pentecostal 3,307,456
 Latter-day Saints 412,095 815
 Jehovah's Witnesses 143,379 1,944
 Seventh Day Adventists 108,714 521

Religion

The National Council of Scientific and Technical Research estimates that 76% of the Argentine population is Catholic, 8% is Pentecostal, and all other religious groups account for less than 5% of the population. There are approximately half a million Muslims.⁶²⁰ Approximately 20% of Catholics are observant. Argentina has one of the largest Jewish communities in Latin America, with up to 2% of the population estimated as Jewish, although many are not observant.

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government for citizens and foreigners alike. The government grants special tax-exempt subsidies to the Catholic Church. Religious organizations must register with the government as civic associations and provide periodic reports to maintain registration. Registration is only required for religious organizations that hold public services and to obtain tax-exempt status. Foreign missionaries may serve and must obtain needed documents from immigration authorities. Public schools are secular, and students may take religious classes in schools or religious institutions. Societal abuse of religious freedom has been minimal and has targeted Jews. Several prominent social leaders have taken steps in recent years to encourage tolerance toward religious minorities.⁶²¹

Largest Cities

Urban: 92%

Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Rosario, Mendoza, San Miguel de Tucumán, La Plata, Mar del Plata, Salta, Santa Fe, Corrientes, Bahía Blanca, Posadas, Resistencia, San Salvador de Jujuy, Paraná, Santiago del Estero, Formosa, Neuquén, San Luis, La Rioja, Catamarca, Río Cuarto, Concordia, Comodoro Rivadavia, San Nicolás de los Arroyos, San Rafael, Villa Mercedes, San Juan, Tandil, Santa Rosa, Trelew.

All thirty-one cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. Sixty-one percent (61%) of the national population resides in the thirty-one most populous cities.

⁶²⁰ "Argentina," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148731.htm>

⁶²¹ "Argentina," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148731.htm>

LDS History

Latter-day Saint mission outreach in South America commenced in Argentina in the early twentieth century. Accompanied by two General Authorities, LDS Apostle Elder Melvin J. Ballard met with several German members who joined the Church in Germany and immigrated to Argentina in late 1925. Elder Ballard dedicated the whole of South America for missionary work before the end of the year and predicted that missionary work would begin slowly in South America and Argentina but that strong growth would ultimately unfold and the region would become a center of strength for the Church.⁶²² World War II dramatically slowed missionary progress and resulted in all but three missionaries returning home by 1944.⁶²³ Missionary work began to expand to southern provinces by the 1950s.⁶²⁴ The Argentine Mission facilitated the commencement of missionary activity in Uruguay and Chile during the 1940s and 1950s. International LDS Church leaders have regularly visited Argentina for over half a century and have devoted considerable missionary resources to the nation.

Missions

The South American Mission was organized with headquarters in Buenos Aires in 1925. The mission divided into Argentine and Brazilian Missions in 1935. The North Argentine Mission [renamed the Argentina Cordoba Mission] was organized in 1962. Additional missions were formed in Argentina East [renamed Argentina Rosario] (1972), Buenos Aires South (1974), Bahia Blanca (1980), Salta (1988), Mendoza (1990), Resistencia (1990), Trelew [relocated to Neuquen in 1993] (1990), and Buenos Aires West (1992). The original Argentine Mission was renamed the Buenos Aires North Mission in 1974. The number of missions in Argentina increased from one in 1960 to two in 1970, five in 1980, nine in 1990, and ten in 2000. In 2013, two new missions were organized in Comodoro Rivadavia and Posadas increasing the number of missions to twelve.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 412,095 (2012)

There were 3,500 Latter-day Saints in 1959 and 35,000 in 1975.⁶²⁵ Membership totaled 79,212 in 1983, 114,000 in 1987, 205,000 in 1993, and 268,000 in 1997. By year-end 2000, there were 297,976 Latter-day Saints.

Membership growth rates slowed in the 2000s. There were 320,038 members in 2002, 339,929 in 2004, 355,987 in 2006, and 371,885 in 2008. Annual membership growth rates in the 2000s ranged from a high of 3.8% in 2002 to a low of 2.2% in 2008. Membership generally increases by between 8,000 and 10,000 a year. The Argentina Buenos Aires West Mission baptized approximately 200 new converts in February 2011. In 1990, nominal Latter-day Saints comprised approximately 4% of the population of Buenos Aires.⁶²⁶ In 2009, one in 109 was nominally LDS.

⁶²² Swensen, Jason. "Church marks 75 years in South America," LDS Church News, 25 November 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38936/Church-marks-75-years-in-South-America.html>

⁶²³ "The Church in Argentina," *Ensign*, Feb. 1975, 21.

⁶²⁴ Curbelo, Nestor. "Building is blessing for whole community," LDS Church News, 12 July 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44035/Building-is-blessing-for-whole-community.html>

⁶²⁵ "The Church in Argentina," *Ensign*, Feb. 1975, 21.

⁶²⁶ "Worldwide Church: Members face distinct challenges, enjoy similarities," LDS Church News, 28 April 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20561/Worldwide-Church—Members-face-distinct-challenges-enjoy-similarities.html>

Congregational Growth

Wards: 486 Branches: 326 (April 2013)

LDS meetings occurred in twenty rented halls in 1938.⁶²⁷ The number of LDS congregations reached 347 in 1987, 625 in 1993, and 806 in 1997. There were 792 wards and branches by year-end 2000. Congregational growth continued for most of the 2000s as there were 804 congregations in 2002, 833 in 2004, 849 in 2006, and 863 in 2007. The number of congregations declined to 855 in 2008, 853 in 2009, and 841 in early 2011.

There were 194 wards in 1993, 376 in 1997, and 393 in 2000. The number of wards increased to 415 in 2002, 442 in 2004, 458 in 2006, and 469 in 2008. By early 2011, there were 481 wards. The number of branches declined in the 1990s from 431 in 1993 to 430 in 1997 and 399 in 2000. There were 389 branches in 2002, 391 in 2004, 391 in 2006, 386 in 2008, and 360 in early 2011. The decline of branches in the late 2000s was primarily due to branches maturing into wards or consolidating into other congregations.

The first stake was organized in 1966 in Buenos Aires. Additional stakes were organized in Cordoba (1972), Mendoza (1972), Rosario (1974), Buenos Aires West (1974), and Quilmes (1975) bringing the total of stakes to six. There were thirteen stakes by 1980 as the first stakes were organized in Mar del Plata, San Nicolas, and Godoy Cruz. There were twenty-three stakes by 1985, and the first stakes were organized in Tucuman, Bahia Blanca, Santa Fe, La Plata, Resistencia, and Salta. There were twenty-five stakes in 1990 as two additional stakes were organized in the late 1980s in Jujuy and Trelew. Twenty-one new stakes were organized between 1991 and year-end 1995, three-quarters of which were outside of Buenos Aires. There were forty-six stakes in 1995, increasing to sixty-four by year-end 2000. Of the eighteen new stakes organized between 1996 and 2000, one-third were in Buenos Aires. Six additional stakes were organized between 2000 and 2005 in Parana, Buenos Aires, San Luis, Formosa, La Rioja, and Cordoba. No new stakes were organized between 2005 and 2010. In early 2011, there were 70 stakes.

Most districts operating in early 2011 were organized between 1988 and 1993 and between 2001 and 2006. There were thirteen districts in 1987, fifty-four in 1993, forty in 1997, thirty-six in 2000, thirty-seven in 2004, and thirty-eight in 2008. In early 2011, there were thirty-seven districts.

Activity and Retention

The Argentina Buenos Aires North Mission baptized 163 converts in December 1987, the highest monthly total since 1982. Increase in the number of converts baptized came as a result of greater member involvement in missionary work.⁶²⁸ In early 1988, 4,814 students were enrolled in seminary and 5,222 were enrolled in institute in the South America South Area.⁶²⁹ Instituting the Boy Scout program in some LDS stakes increased LDS youth involvement in church in the late 1980s.⁶³⁰ An Argentine stake president produced a video emphasizing the role of local leaders in retaining youth converts and sending prepared members on full-time missions in 1988.⁶³¹ Full-time missionaries have regularly participated in reactivation work. In 1992, the Argentina Buenos Aires South Mission renewed gospel interest in fifty to seventy-five less-active members a month and often baptized many new converts while performing reactivation work with part-member families.⁶³² In 1994,

⁶²⁷ "The Church in Argentina," *Ensign*, Feb. 1975, 21.

⁶²⁸ "From around the world," *LDS Church News*, 16 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17633/From-around-the-world.html>

⁶²⁹ "From around the world," *LDS Church News*, 23 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17634/From-around-the-world.html>

⁶³⁰ "From around the world," *LDS Church News*, 30 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17635/From-around-the-world.html>

⁶³¹ "From around the world," *LDS Church News*, 13 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18325/From-around-the-world.html>

⁶³² "From around the world," *LDS Church News*, 18 January 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22443/>

13,000 members from fourteen stakes in the Buenos Aires area attended a regional conference.⁶³³ 50,000 attended a special conference with President Hinckley in 1996 with some in attendance traveling from outside of Argentina.⁶³⁴ In 2004, approximately 1,000 attended the dedicatory services of a new meetinghouse in Trelew.⁶³⁵ In 2010, 500 local priesthood holders and their families attended the Cordoba Argentina Temple groundbreaking ceremony.⁶³⁶

The average number of members per congregation increased from 329 in 1987 to 376 in 2000 and 446 in 2009. There were 11,218 enrolled in seminary and institute during the 2009–2010 school year. The number of active members in wards and branches varies dramatically. In early 2011, the Villegas Ward in the Buenos Aires Aldo Bonzi Stake had over one hundred active members, whereas another ward meeting in the same building, the Ciudad Evita 2nd Ward, had fewer than fifty. In 2010, one of the branches in Lujan had ninety attending church meetings, the General Rodriguez Branch had over 120 attending church meetings, and a branch in the Chivilcoy District had approximately thirty active members. The Libertador Ward in Cordoba had approximately fifty active members in early 2011. The Casilda Branch in the Cañada de Gomez District had approximately thirty active members in early 2010. The Coronel Brandsen Branch had approximately thirty attending church meetings in 2010. Most branches have between twenty-five and seventy-five active members, whereas most wards appear to have between fifty and 150 active members. Nationwide active membership is estimated at approximately 70,000, or 18–20% of total church membership.

Finding and Public Affairs

In 1988, local members and full-time missionaries in Santa Fe presented a musical version of one of the missionary discussions for the public, which was publicized by two newspapers and a radio station.⁶³⁷ That same year there were thirty-eight public affairs directors for the Church in Argentina and Uruguay that facilitated exposure of LDS activities such as meetinghouse dedications, conferences, and community service projects in local and national media.⁶³⁸ In 1988, 2,000 members and 400 nonmembers attended a musical performed by local members in three cities in the Resistencia region.⁶³⁹ In the early 1990s, missionaries in Buenos Aires relied on local members and street contacting to find new investigators instead of door-to-door contacting.⁶⁴⁰ Today, missionaries generally rely on member referrals, investigator referrals, and street contacting to find new investigators.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Spanish, Italian, Arabic, Quechua, Guarani, Aymara.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in Spanish, Italian, and Arabic. The Church

[From-around-the-world.html](#)

⁶³³ Curbelo, Nestor. "New training center, temple housing facility dedicated in Argentina," LDS Church News, 19 March 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25320/New-training-center-temple-housing-facility-dedicated-in-Argentina.html>

⁶³⁴ Curbelo, Nestor. "Quiet gratitude greets prophet in Chile," LDS Church News, 23 November 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27976/Quiet-gratitude-greets-prophet-in-Chile-Argentina.html>

⁶³⁵ Curbelo, Nestor. "Mutually helpful to Argentina and Church," LDS Church News, 2 October 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46207/Mutually-helpful-to-Argentina-and-Church.html>

⁶³⁶ Swensen, Jason. "Ground is broken for Cordoba Argentina Temple," LDS Church News, 2 November 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/60070/Ground-is-broken-for-Cordoba-Argentina-Temple.html>

⁶³⁷ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 9 July 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18322/From-around-the-world.html>

⁶³⁸ "From Around the World," LDS Church News, 10 September 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18321/From-Around-the-World.html>

⁶³⁹ "From around the World," LDS Church News, 24 September 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17979/From-around-the-World.html>

⁶⁴⁰ Curbelo, Nestor. "As converts increase, faithful Argentine LDS are key to future," LDS Church News, 17 April 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23098/As-converts-increase-faithful-Argentine-LDS-are-key-to-future.html>

recently completed a Spanish translation of the LDS-edition of the Bible complete with full LDS footnotes, Bible dictionary, and topical guide. The Book of Mormon is translated in full into Aymara and Guarani. Selections of the Book of Mormon are translated into Quechua. Limited numbers of church materials for most or all auxiliary organizations are translated into Aymara, Guarani, and Quechua. Church materials translated into Nivacle include Gospel Principles Simplified and The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony.

Meetinghouses

In the early 1990s, the Church constructed new meetinghouses for congregations that exhibited sustained increases in church attendance.⁶⁴¹ In early 2011, there were approximately 350–400 LDS meetinghouses. Most congregations meet in church-built meetinghouses. Small branches and dependent branches or groups often meet in rented facilities or renovated buildings converted into meetinghouses.

Health and Safety

Health care infrastructure is moderate with good accessibility in large and medium-sized cities. There have been several accidental missionary deaths in Argentina over the past three decades. LDS sister missionaries serving in Comodoro Rivadavia died by accidental asphyxiation while they slept in their apartment in 1989.⁶⁴² In 1997, a North American full-time missionary serving in Buenos Aires received a gunshot wound to the jaw but fully recovered.⁶⁴³ In 2003, a North American full-time missionary died by electrocution in a failed attempt to rescue a boy in a deep puddle in Gualeguaychu.⁶⁴⁴ In 2006, a North American full-time missionary was killed by a drunk driver in San Luis.⁶⁴⁵

Humanitarian and Development Work

At least fifty LDS humanitarian and development projects had been completed as of early 2011.⁶⁴⁶ Local members have volunteered at orphanages and donated food and clothing.⁶⁴⁷ In July 1997, over fifty stakes and districts participated in a worldwide day of service that included painting and repairing public buildings and cleaning communities.⁶⁴⁸ Similar activities occurred in 1998 with thousands of members participating.⁶⁴⁹ In 2000, more than 320 members from the Rosario Argentina Stake cleaned and painted several areas of a local hospital. Materials for the service project were donated by local businesses.⁶⁵⁰ That same year fifty members

⁶⁴¹ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 4 April 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22544/From-around-the-world.html>

⁶⁴² "Two missionaries in Argentina die of accidental asphyxiation," LDS Church News, 10 June 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18827/Two-missionaries-in-Argentina-die-of-accidental-asphyxiation.html>

⁶⁴³ "Bullet removed from missionary in minor surgery," LDS Church News, 25 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29092/Bullet-removed-from-missionary-in-minor-surgery.html>

⁶⁴⁴ "Missionary dies trying to save life," LDS Church News, 15 March 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43348/Missionary-dies-trying-to-save-life.html>

⁶⁴⁵ "Missionary in Argentina killed by drunken driver," LDS Church News, 29 April 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48892/Missionary-in-Argentina-killed-by-drunken-driver.html>

⁶⁴⁶ "Projects—Argentina," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 25 February 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-176,00.html>

⁶⁴⁷ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 20 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17978/From-around-the-world.html>

⁶⁴⁸ "33,000 hours of service given in South America area," LDS Church News, 6 September 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29433/33000-hours-of-service-given-in-South-America-area.html>

⁶⁴⁹ Curbelo, Nestor. "Day of service now tradition in So. America," LDS Church News, 17 October 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30282/Day-of-service-now-tradition-in-So-America.html>

⁶⁵⁰ "Helping hands improve hospital," LDS Church News, 26 February 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37245/Helping-hands-improve-hospital.html>

in Posadas cleaned, painted, and replaced windows in several schools.⁶⁵¹ In early 2001, approximately 1,000 members from Cordoba cleaned a three-kilometer stretch of the Suquia River. The project was publicized by several local newspapers.⁶⁵² In 2002, members in Cordoba repaired small homes that housed 530 disabled children.⁶⁵³ In 2003, the Church donated one hundred tons of food, three shipping containers of medical supplies, two containers of clothing, and 400 mattresses to flood victims in Santa Fe.⁶⁵⁴ In 2003, the Church donated a meetinghouse in Trelew to the city to serve as a health center in exchange for property for the Church to construct a new meetinghouse.⁶⁵⁵ That same year, over 25,000 participated in city cleaning projects nationwide on September 27th.⁶⁵⁶ Additional projects carried out by the Church in recent years have included donating wheelchairs, school kits, humanitarian supplies, medical equipment, Braille machines, computer parts, manual translations, dental equipment, agricultural machinery, and providing neonatal resuscitation training to medical professionals.⁶⁵⁷

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The LDS Church benefits from full religious freedom to assemble, proselyte, and worship. Foreign missionaries regularly serve in Argentina with no significant challenges obtaining needed visas and documentation. Societal abuses of religious freedom are infrequent.

Cultural Issues

Many have a basic understanding of Christianity but lack strong affinity with a particular denomination or the Catholic Church, resulting in strong receptivity to missionary-minded Christian denominations. Strong cultural identification with the Catholic Church and increasing secularism are the primary cultural obstacles confronting mission outreach efforts, as both these issues have lessened receptivity of many to the LDS Church. The percentage of regularly attending Latter-day Saints is nearly identical to the percentage of practicing Catholics, suggesting that the level of participation in religious services is unchanged for Latter-day Saint converts from the Catholic Church. This statistic is worrisome, as it demonstrates the failure of full-time missionaries to instill church-attending habits into nominal Catholics who join the LDS Church. Mounting secularism has manifested itself through the passing of recent legislation that recognizes same-sex marriages and increasing identification of youth with agnosticism and atheism. Male participation in religious matters is lower than female participation across most denominations, resulting in a gender imbalance in many Latter-day Saint congregations, which are predominately female. Consequently, limited male leadership has reduced the rate of church growth for Latter-day Saints, as congregations rely on active male members to hold many leadership positions.

⁶⁵¹ "LDS join in early-morning project in Argentina," LDS Church News, 13 May 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37763/LDS-join-in-early-morning-project-in-Argentina.html>

⁶⁵² "Four stakes clean banks of river," LDS Church News, 6 January 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39146/Four-stakes-clean-banks-of-river.html>

⁶⁵³ "Giving service at school and farm," LDS Church News, 7 September 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42397/Giving-service-at-school-and-farm.html>

⁶⁵⁴ Curbelo, Nestor. "Rebounding from flood devastation," LDS Church News, 7 June 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43873/Rebounding-from-flood-devastation.html>

⁶⁵⁵ Curbelo, Nestor. "Building is blessing for whole community," LDS Church News, 12 July 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44035/Building-is-blessing-for-whole-community.html>

⁶⁵⁶ Curbelo, Nestor. "34,000 clean up cities of 3 nations," LDS Church News, 8 November 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44649/34000-clean-up-cities-of-3-nations.html>

⁶⁵⁷ "Projects—Argentina," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 25 February 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-176,00.html>

National Outreach

Seventy-eight percent (78%) of the national population resides in cities of over 20,000 inhabitants with an LDS congregation. All cities with over 50,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. One hundred fifty-three of the 169 cities with between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. The sixteen cities with over 20,000 inhabitants without an LDS congregation account for 1% of the national population and are primarily located in Buenos Aires and Entre Rios Provinces. They include, in order of descending population, Santa Lucía, Gualeguay, Chajarí, Villaguay, General Güemes, Fontana, Lincoln, Juan José Castelli, Pérez, Monte Caseros, San Justo, Quitilipi, Leandro N. Alem, Avellaneda, Laboulaye, and Machagai. Dozens of cities with fewer than 20,000 inhabitants also have an LDS congregation, possibly raising the percentage of the population reached by mission outreach to 80%. Ascertaining the ratio of province population to LDS congregations provides insight into how mission outreach differs by province as congregations must meet certain numerical standards to operate. The percentage of Latter-day Saints will tend to be greatest in provinces with lower ratios of population to LDS congregations, and provinces with lower ratios of population to congregations generally receive greater mission outreach. Chubut, Tierra del Fuego, and Neuquen are the provinces that receive the greatest mission outreach (one LDS congregation per 25,000 or fewer inhabitants), whereas Catamarca, Santiago del Estero, and San Luis receive the least mission outreach (one LDS congregation per 70,000 or more inhabitants). Generally southern provinces receive higher levels of mission outreach, whereas northern provinces are lesser reached. Nationally, there is an average of 47,700 inhabitants per LDS congregation.

The slight decline in the number of LDS congregations in the late 2000s has not significantly affected the extent of national outreach as most discontinued units were in cities with multiple congregations. Prospects for expanding national outreach hinge on opening additional branches and dependent units in lesser-reached communities in and surrounding the largest cities. The success of these small congregations and their maturation into independent congregations and wards relies heavily upon the training and abilities of local priesthood leaders assigned to preside over such congregations, as well as practices of full-time missionaries in ensuring that prospective converts have established firm gospel habits of church attendance and scripture reading prior to baptism. Full-time missionaries serving in the Argentina Mendoza Mission reported in 2006 that local branch presidents or group leaders made major contributions to the ultimate destiny of these starter congregations as to whether or not self-sufficient branches and wards were later established. Organizing dependent units to expand national outreach in lesser-reached neighborhoods or small, distant cities allows for greater flexibility in creating LDS congregations, as Area Presidency or First Presidency approval is not required for their creation, and these units can be organized or discontinued according to the ebb and flow of member participation in leadership, convert baptisms, and local member activity rates. The official number of LDS congregations in Argentina is underreported, as likely dozens of dependent branches and groups operate throughout the country, but these congregations continue to lack the needed number of active priesthood holders and members to become independent congregations that are officially reported. Buenos Aires, Cordoba, Rosario, Mendoza, La Plata, and Santa Fe appear to be the most favorable cities for the opening of additional LDS congregations. The most rapid congregational growth in Argentina to date occurred during the late 1980s and early 1990s at a time when the number of LDS missions and congregations doubled. This finding suggests that past rapid congregational growth has depended strongly on full-time missionary involvement in the planting and mentoring of new congregations.

The Church maintains a website for the South America South Area in Spanish at <http://www.countrywebsites.lds.org/ar/>. The Internet site provides links to other Spanish-language LDS websites, local news, and information on church beliefs, the missionary program, and regional church leadership. Use of the website by local members and full-time missionaries provides opportunities to expand national outreach and invite others to learn about the Church individually if they are uncomfortable about meeting with missionaries or attending church meetings.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Much of the potential of the LDS Church in Argentina for rapid, long-term growth has been lost due to the hundreds of thousands of less-active and inactive members who have accumulated over the decades. Overstaffing small congregations with large numbers of full-time missionaries as well as quick-baptize policies centered on numerical baptismal goals rather than on genuine conversion and convert retention has contributed to lower member activity rates in some areas. The indifference of Argentine youth to religion and culturally low levels of church activity among Catholics has carried over into the LDS Church, generating many nominal Latter-day Saints. Full-time missionaries report that some congregations are completely unable to meet the reactivation and retention needs and challenges currently faced, with some congregations listing over 1,000 members on the ward or branch records, resulting in reliance on full-time missionaries to update unit membership record lists. Many lost members remain on ward or branch membership rosters because congregations have been unable to locate them and some leaders are unwilling to transfer the records to the “address unknown” file. The number of inactive members on church records who cannot be located may number as many as 100,000, in addition to approximately 200,000 known inactives on congregational membership rolls.

Raising convert baptismal standards is of utmost priority toward ensuring long-term convert retention. Emphasizing the need for prospective converts to achieve sustained church attendance for several consecutive weeks or months prior to baptism can efficiently reduce convert attrition. Enlisting investigators, new converts, youth, and less-actives into seminary or institute programs can facilitate testimony building and gospel understanding that becomes self-sustaining and encourages spiritual independence. Enrollment in seminary and institute slightly decreased during the late 2000s, indicating recent challenges to maintain current levels of enrollment in Church Education System programs.

Organizing reactivation efforts headed by local leaders has a greater potential for a lasting impact on improving member activity rates than uncoordinated efforts by full-time missionaries to coax less-active members back into church activity. Full-time missionaries report that many inactive members claim to have left the Church ostensibly because they were offended by a church member. Efforts to reconcile past hurt, misunderstanding, and disagreement require sensitivity and care on the part of local priesthood leaders, home teachers, and visiting teachers to achieve successful reactivation that can withstand future possibilities of offense at church.

Increasing the member activity and convert retention rate among men has been a major challenge. Full-time missionaries serving in the General Rodriguez Branch in mid-2010 reported that of the 120 attending church meetings, only nineteen were men over the age of eighteen. The development of more coordinated and organized missionary preparation programs for male youth and young adults may facilitate greater gender balance in LDS congregations over the long term as young men serve missions and remain active throughout adulthood. Several stakes and districts have recently begun youth-focused programs, such as girls’ camp, to strengthen member testimonies and intra-member socialization.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

With a population of predominately European ancestry, Argentina has presented few ethnic integration issues. The greatest integration issues for most congregations are language or socioeconomically based.

Language Issues

LDS scriptures and materials are available in the native language of more than 99% of the population. Widespread use of Spanish as a first and second language reduces the need for language-specific mission

outreach. Non-Spanish language outreach appears most appropriate for native speakers of Arabic and some Amerindian languages, such as Quechua and Guarani. There have been no reported efforts to address these language issues by full-time missionaries in recent years, which may have resulted in limited receptivity among these ethnic groups.

Missionary Service

Fourteen missionaries were assigned to the South American Mission in 1935. The number of missionaries increased to forty-five in 1938.⁶⁵⁸ In 1990, the Argentina Missionary Training Center served native missionaries serving from Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay. At the time, half of native full-time missionaries were converts of less than five years.⁶⁵⁹ In 1994, a new missionary training center capable of housing up to ninety missionaries was dedicated.⁶⁶⁰ 700 full-time missionaries served in the three Buenos Aires missions in 1996.⁶⁶¹ In 1997, over 1,000 attended a training program encouraging and educating youth on serving full-time missions.⁶⁶² In early 2011, there were likely over 1,000 LDS missionaries in Argentina, and most missions appeared to be staffed half by native Argentines or Latin Americans and half by North Americans. Prospects for increasing the number of native full-time missionaries have been mixed in recent years as mission-aged youth often suffer from low activity rates and seminary and institute participation has dropped slightly. In early 2011, Elders Aidukaitis and Spitale performed a future missionary training program for youth preparing to serve full-time missions in the Argentina Mendoza Mission. Over 500 youth attended the meeting, and one hundred were ready to fill out their mission paperwork. Similar programs in other missions, combined with strong emphasis on seminary and institute programs, may have the potential to increase the number of members serving full-time missions and reduce dependency on foreign missionary manpower.

Leadership

The strength of church leadership in Argentine stakes is exhibited by there never being a stake discontinued in Argentina despite low member activity rates. Argentine members began serving as branch presidents as early as 1949.⁶⁶³ The first local member to serve as a mission president was called in 1974. By 1993, twenty-one Argentine couples had served as mission presidents, and one Argentine member had been called as an LDS General Authority, Elder Angel Abrea.⁶⁶⁴ Inadequate numbers of active male members in many congregations force full-time missionaries to fill empty leadership and administrative conditions, resulting in decreased self-sufficiency and long-term reliance on nonlocal leaders or full-time missionaries. Limited numbers of priesthood holders continue to delay the organization of additional stakes in Buenos Aires among stakes with a sufficient number of congregations to divide and among several districts. The Argentina Resistencia Mission appeared to have the greatest difficulty maintaining self-sufficiency among local priesthood holders as indicated by the closure of several congregations in the late 2000s and the discontinuation the Obara Argentina District in late 2009. Elder Richard G. Scott urged local leaders in the South America South Area to strengthen local stakes.⁶⁶⁵ Notwithstanding these challenges, Argentine members have regularly served as mission presidents, regional representatives, area authorities, temple presidents, and General Authorities.

⁶⁵⁸ "The Church in Argentina," *Ensign*, Feb. 1975, 21.

⁶⁵⁹ Wells, Elayne. "Centers prepare missionaries to be 'effective instruments,'" *LDS Church News*, 13 January 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19646/Centers-prepare-missionaries-to-be-effective-instruments.html>

⁶⁶⁰ Curbelo, Nestor. "New training center, temple housing facility dedicated in Argentina," *LDS Church News*, 19 March 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25320/New-training-center-temple-housing-facility-dedicated-in-Argentina.html>

⁶⁶¹ "200,000 in six nations hear prophet," *LDS Church News*, 23 November 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27435/200000-in-six-nations-hear-prophet.html>

⁶⁶² "From around the world," *LDS Church News*, 20 December 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29539/From-around-the-World.html>

⁶⁶³ "The Church in Argentina," *Ensign*, Feb. 1975, 21.

⁶⁶⁴ Curbelo, Nestor. "As converts increase, faithful Argentine LDS are key to future," *LDS Church News*, 17 April 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23098/As-converts-increase-faithful-Argentine-LDS-are-key-to-future.html>

⁶⁶⁵ "South America South Area," *Deseret News 2009 Church Almanac*, p. 168-169.

Jorge O. Abad from Bahia Blanca was called to preside over the Argentina Buenos Aires South Mission from 1984 to 1987.⁶⁶⁶ In 1990, Daniel Pedro Alvarez from Buenos Aires⁶⁶⁷ was called to preside over the Colombia Barranquilla Mission, and Julio Eduardo Chumbita from Buenos Aires⁶⁶⁸ was called to preside over the Colombia Cali Mission.⁶⁶⁹ In 1991, Ricardo Oscar Michalek from Buenos Aires was called as a mission president.⁶⁷⁰ In 1993, Luis C. Coronel from Santa Fe was called to preside over the Argentina Trelew Mission.⁶⁷¹ In 1994, Roberto Mazal from Buenos Aires was called to preside over the Colombia Bogota North Mission.⁶⁷² In 1994, Angel M. Fernandez from Buenos Aires was called as the Argentina Missionary Training Center president.⁶⁷³ In 1996, Oscar A. Abrea from Buenos Aires was called to preside over the Argentina Cordoba Mission.⁶⁷⁴ In 1997, Jorge A. Prieto from Rosario⁶⁷⁵ was called to preside over the Spain Las Palmas Mission and Julio Cesar Alasia from Cordoba⁶⁷⁶ was called to preside over the Peru Lima South Mission.⁶⁷⁷ In 1998, Fernando D. Ortega from Buenos Aires⁶⁷⁸ was called to preside over the Nicaragua Managua Mission.⁶⁷⁹ In 1999, Daniel A. Moreno from Rosario was called to preside over the Bolivia Cochabamba Mission,⁶⁸⁰ and Hugo Nestor Salvioli from Buenos Aires was called to preside over the Guatemala Missionary Training Center.⁶⁸¹ In 2000, Ruben Sabatino Tidei from Neuquen was called to preside over the Argentina Buenos Aires West Mission,⁶⁸² and Enrique Manuel Garcia from Buenos Aires was called to preside over the

⁶⁶⁶ Coronel, Nestor. "When a new mission president is called, both he and his wife are quickly engulfed by challenges and responsibilities," *LDS Church News*, 24 September 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18349/When-a-new-mission-president-is-called-both-he-and-his-wife-are-quickly-engulfed-by-challenges-and-responsibilities.html>

⁶⁶⁷ "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 17 February 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20307/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁶⁶⁸ "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 17 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20312/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁶⁶⁹ "Worldwide missions: 122 leaders assigned," *LDS Church News*, 31 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20305/Worldwide-missions-122-leaders-assigned.html>

⁶⁷⁰ "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 2 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21404/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁶⁷¹ "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 8 May 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23685/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁶⁷² "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 14 May 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25058/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁶⁷³ "Missionary training centers leaders—presidents called to serve in five locations around the world," *LDS Church News*, 14 January 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26327/Missionary-training-centers-leaders—presidents-called-to-serve-in-five-locations-around-the-world.html>

⁶⁷⁴ "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 27 April 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27482/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁶⁷⁵ "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 25 January 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29083/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁶⁷⁶ "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 22 February 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29079/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁶⁷⁷ "New and Returning Mission Presidents: 1997," *LDS Church News*, 15 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29771/New-and-Returning-Mission-Presidents-1997.html>

⁶⁷⁸ "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 24 January 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30620/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁶⁷⁹ "New and returning Mission Presidents: 1998," *LDS Church News*, 7 March 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31379/New-and-returning-Mission-Presidents-1998.html>

⁶⁸⁰ "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 20 March 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35389/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁶⁸¹ "Missionary Training Center Presidents," *LDS Church News*, 18 December 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/36917/Missionary-Training-Center-Presidents.html>

⁶⁸² "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 11 March 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37297/New-mission-presidents.html>

Argentina Cordoba Mission.⁶⁸³ In 2001, Nicolas Luis Di Giovanni from Buenos Aires⁶⁸⁴ was called to preside over the Peru Lima North Mission.⁶⁸⁵ In 2002, Mario C. Romero C. from Posadas⁶⁸⁶ was called to preside over the Argentina Mendoza Mission, Ruben Luis Spitale from Cordoba⁶⁸⁷ was called to preside over the Argentina Resistencia Mission,⁶⁸⁸ and David Lopez from Buenos Aires was called to preside over the Chile Osorno Mission.⁶⁸⁹ In 2003, Luis Wajchman from Maipu de Cuyo⁶⁹⁰ was called to preside over the Argentina Bahia Blanca Mission,⁶⁹¹ and Claudio Daniel Zivic from Buenos Aires was called to preside over the Spain Bilbao Mission.⁶⁹² In 2005, Juan Carlos Avila from Buenos Aires was called to preside over the Argentina Mendoza Mission,⁶⁹³ and Horacio Jorge Nieto from Buenos Aires was called to preside over the Colombia Cali Mission.⁶⁹⁴ In 2006, Sergio Alberto Gomez from Buenos Aires⁶⁹⁵ was called to preside over the Honduras Comayaguela Mission,⁶⁹⁶ and Raul Hector Spitale from Cordoba was called to preside over the Argentina Bahia Blanca Mission.⁶⁹⁷ In 2007, Esteban Gabriel Resek from Nequen was called to preside over the Chile Rancagua Mission.⁶⁹⁸ In 2010, Alfredo Luis Salas from Buenos Aires was called to preside over the Argentina Cordoba Mission.⁶⁹⁹

In 1989, Miguel Angel Reginato from Bariloche was called as a regional representative.⁷⁰⁰ In 1993, Hector Enrique Meijome from Buenos Aires,⁷⁰¹ Tomas F. Lindheimer from Buenos Aires, and James J. Wilson from

⁶⁸³ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 1 July 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38056/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁶⁸⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 27 January 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39223/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁶⁸⁵ "New and Returning Mission Presidents," LDS Church News, 10 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39468/New-and-Returning-Mission-Presidents.html>

⁶⁸⁶ "Mission Presidents," LDS Church News, 23 February 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41355/Mission-Presidents.html>

⁶⁸⁷ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 2 March 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41399/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁶⁸⁸ "New and returning mission presidents," LDS Church News, 9 March 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41425/New-and-returning-mission-presidents.html>

⁶⁸⁹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 9 March 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41422/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁶⁹⁰ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 22 February 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43275/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁶⁹¹ "New mission presidents for 105 missions," LDS Church News, 8 March 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43323/New-mission-presidents-for-105-missions.html>

⁶⁹² "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 29 March 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43422/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁶⁹³ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 26 February 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46908/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁶⁹⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 19 March 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46999/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁶⁹⁵ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 25 February 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48564/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁶⁹⁶ "New and returning mission presidents," LDS Church News, 4 March 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48593/New-and-returning-mission-presidents.html>

⁶⁹⁷ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 15 April 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48814/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁶⁹⁸ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 19 May 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50589/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁶⁹⁹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 20 March 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59064/New-Mission-Presidents.html>

⁷⁰⁰ "New regional representative: miguel angel reginato," LDS Church News, 16 September 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18997/New-regional-representative—miguel-angel-reginato.html>

⁷⁰¹ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 15 May 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23069/New-regional-representatives.html>

Buenos Aires⁷⁰² were called as regional representatives.⁷⁰³ In 1994, Ronaldo Juan Walker from Tucuman⁷⁰⁴ and Jorge Luis del Castillo from Florencio Valera were called as regional representatives.⁷⁰⁵ In 1995, Hugo A. Catron from Buenos Aires was called as a regional representative.⁷⁰⁶ That same year, Hugo Angel Catron and David Lopez were called as area authorities.⁷⁰⁷ In 1996, Carlos E. Aguero from Buenos Aires,⁷⁰⁸ Jorge L. Del Castillo from Buenos Aires, and Claudio D. Zivic from Buenos Aires were called as area authorities.⁷⁰⁹ In 2000, Jorge O. Abad from Buenos Aires was called as an Area Authority Seventy.⁷¹⁰ In 2001, Daniel P. Alvarez from Buenos Aires was called as an Area Authority Seventy.⁷¹¹ In 2002, Carlos R. Fernandez from Resistencia was called as an Area Authority Seventy.⁷¹² In 2003, Fernando D. Ortega from Buenos Aires was called as an Area Authority Seventy.⁷¹³ In 2005, Sergio E. Avila from Buenos Aires and Heber O. Diaz from Buenos Aires were called as Area Seventies.⁷¹⁴ In 2006, Daniel A. Moreno was called as an Area Seventy.⁷¹⁵ In 2007, Ruben V. Alliaud from Buenos Aires and Ruben L. Spitale from Cordoba were called as Area Seventies.⁷¹⁶

In 1994, Hugo Nestor Salvioli from Buenos Aires was called as the Buenos Aires Argentina Temple president.⁷¹⁷ In 2000, Hugo Ruben Gazzoni from San Nicolas was called as the Buenos Aires Argentina Temple president.⁷¹⁸ In 2005, Angel Jose Sule from San Nicolas was called as the Buenos Aires Argentina Temple president.⁷¹⁹ In 2007, Elder Claudio D. Zivic was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy.⁷²⁰

⁷⁰² "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 4 December 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23437/New-regional-representatives.html>

⁷⁰³ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 24 July 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23251/New-regional-representatives.html>

⁷⁰⁴ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 23 April 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25315/New-regional-representatives.html>

⁷⁰⁵ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 24 December 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25003/New-regional-representatives.html>

⁷⁰⁶ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 25 February 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26014/New-regional-representatives.html>

⁷⁰⁷ "Church names area authorities," LDS Church News, 5 August 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26627/Church-names-area-authorities.html>

⁷⁰⁸ "New area authority," LDS Church News, 22 June 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27399/New-area-authority.html>

⁷⁰⁹ "First Presidency calls new area authorities," LDS Church News, 24 August 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28224/First-Presidency-calls-new-area-authorities.html>

⁷¹⁰ "39 Area Authority Seventies called," LDS Church News, 8 April 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37529/39-Area-Authority-Seventies-called.html>

⁷¹¹ "New Area Authority Seventies," LDS Church News, 14 April 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39723/New-Area-Authority-Seventies.html>

⁷¹² "30 Area Authority Seventies sustained," LDS Church News, 13 April 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41666/30-Area-Authority-Seventies-sustained.html>

⁷¹³ "New Area Authority Seventies," LDS Church News, 19 April 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43636/New-Area-Authority-Seventies.html>

⁷¹⁴ "New area seventies," LDS Church News, 16 April 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47170/New-area-seventies.html>

⁷¹⁵ "New Area Seventies," LDS Church News, 22 April 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48851/New-Area-Seventies.html>

⁷¹⁶ "New Area Seventies," LDS Church News, 5 May 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50534/New-Area-Seventies.html>

⁷¹⁷ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 23 July 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24611/New-temple-presidents.html>

⁷¹⁸ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 30 September 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38537/New-temple-presidents.html>

⁷¹⁹ "New temple president," LDS Church News, 17 September 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47838/New-temple-president.html>

⁷²⁰ "5 general authorities called to serve full time," LDS Church News, 31 March 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50362/5-general-authorities-called-to-serve-full-time.html>

Temple

Buenos Aires, north, north-central, and southern Argentina are assigned to the Buenos Aires Argentina Temple district. Some western areas near the Chilean border are assigned to the Santiago Chile Temple district, whereas some northeastern areas are assigned to the Asuncion Paraguay Temple district. Argentina was assigned to the Sao Paulo Brazil Temple district following the temple's completion in 1978. Announced in 1980 and dedicated in 1986, the Buenos Aires Argentina Temple serviced Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay until temples were completed in Uruguay (2001) and Paraguay (2002). In 2008, a second temple in Argentina was announced for Cordoba. Construction on the new temple began in late 2010. The Church closed the Buenos Aires Argentina Temple in November 2009 to remodel and expand the temple for a period lasting approximately eighteen months. Temple attendance has been moderate among active membership in Buenos Aires and lower in many other areas of the country. To address challenges for members residing far from the temple in Buenos Aires, a patron housing facility for was dedicated in 1994 to accommodate up to 154 people.⁷²¹ The announcement of a second temple in 2008 may indicate an increasing number of temple-attending members capable of staffing and utilizing additional temples. Low member activity rates in many areas have delayed the announcement of additional temples. Concentrated numbers of members in distant cities generate favorable prospects for the construction of additional temples. Cities with prospects for a temple over the medium to long term include Mendoza, Neuquen, Rosario, and Tucuman.

Comparative Growth

Argentina is the country with the seventh largest number of LDS members, seventh most stakes, third most districts, fifth most congregations, and sixth most missions, although Argentina ranks thirty-second in the world by population. LDS member activity rates are comparable to the region and are lower than the world LDS average, notwithstanding that Argentina has maintained a lower average number of members per congregation than most of Latin America. The quality and size of the Argentine priesthood leadership body and dedication to the Church among active members has been more sustainable than other Latin American countries as evidenced by no LDS stake consolidations as of early 2011. Buenos Aires had the fifth most LDS stakes of any metropolitan area outside the United States in 1988,⁷²² and the Church in Argentina had the eighth most stakes in 1989.⁷²³ Stagnant congregational growth occurred much later in Argentina than in most Latin American nations. With the exception of a brief period between 1997 and 2000 when the number of congregations slightly declined, new wards and branches were regularly created in Argentina, whereas hundreds of LDS congregations were consolidated in several Latin American nations such as Peru, Brazil, and Chile between the late 1990s and mid-2000s. As of early 2011, Argentina was the country with the most Latter-day Saints that had never had an LDS stake discontinued. No other South American country with a larger population than Argentina receives as extensive of mission outreach, as indicated by the ratio of LDS missions to population. In 2011, the ratio of LDS mission to population was one mission per 4.1 million people in 2011, lower than for Brazil (one mission per 7.4 million) and Colombia (one per 10.9 million). Membership growth rates in Argentina lagged behind most South American nations in the 2000s, but the increase in the number of LDS congregations in Argentina was the third highest for the continent (49) following Brazil (156) and Venezuela (53). The percentage of Latter-day Saints in the general population is lower than in most South American nations.

Missionary-minded Christian denominations report moderate to strong levels of church growth. Evangelicals

⁷²¹ Curbelo, Nestor. "New training center, temple housing facility dedicated in Argentina," LDS Church News, 19 March 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25320/New-training-center-temple-housing-facility-dedicated-in-Argentina.html>

⁷²² Warnick, Lee. "18 stakes created from 11: 28-hour marathon in Lima multiplies by dividing," LDS Church News, 6 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17742/18-stakes-created-from-11-28-hour-marathon-in-lima-multiplies-by-dividing.html>

⁷²³ Hart, John L. "Mexico milestone: 100th stake created," LDS Church News, 1 July 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18995/Mexico-milestone-100th-stake-created.html>

are the most successful group, increasing from 1 or 2% of the population in the mid-twentieth century to nearly 10% in 2011. Jehovah's Witnesses baptized over 5,000 converts and maintained nearly 2,000 congregations in 2010.⁷²⁴ Seventh Day Adventists report steady membership and congregational growth. These denominations have taken a church-planting approach headed by locals whereas the LDS Church has concentrated on a "centers of strength" approach largely dependent on outsourced missionary manpower.

Future Prospects

Continued convert retention challenges, low member activity rates, and limited numbers of active men capable of staffing leadership positions generate a mixed outlook for LDS growth in Argentina. The organization of additional stakes in Buenos Aires will likely signal some improvement and progress in addressing these issues, as over half a dozen stakes in the Buenos Aires area had enough congregations to divide in early 2011 but had too few active priesthood holders to staff additional stakes or turn some branches into wards. Receptivity remains favorable in many areas, but few new congregations have been organized since the late 2000s despite increasing membership. Greater emphasis on developing habitual church attendance will be needed to sustain greater growth over the medium term. Prospects for additional temples are possible in coming years in the largest cities.

⁷²⁴ "Statistics: 2010 Report of Jehovah's Witnesses Worldwide," www.watchtower.org, retrieved 22 February 2011. http://www.watchtower.org/e/statistics/worldwide_report.htm

BOLIVIA

Geography

AREA: 1,098,581 square km. Only one of two landlocked nations in South America, Bolivia borders Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, Chile, and Peru. Lower elevation terrain experiences a warmer, wetter climate, whereas high elevation areas are subject to a cooler, drier climate. Western and southwestern areas consist of a semi-arid highland plateau named the Altiplano, whereas plains cover northern, eastern, and southeastern areas in the Amazon Basin. The Andes Mountains also occupy western Bolivia. Some regions of the Altiplano are arid and have salt lakes and salt flats. Lake Titicaca is the world's highest navigable lake at 3,805 meters and straddles the Peruvian border. The Amazon Basin primarily consists of rainforest and rivers. Flooding in the northeast is a natural hazard. Environmental issues include deforestation in the Amazon Basin, soil erosion, desertification, and pollution. Bolivia is divided into nine administrative departments.

Peoples

Quechua: 30%
Mestizo: 30%
Aymara: 25%
White: 15%

Quechua and Aymara are native Amerindian peoples. Mestizos are of mixed Amerindian and white ancestry.

Population: 10,290,003 (July 2012)
Annual Growth Rate: 1.664% (2012)
Fertility Rate: 2.93 children born per woman (2012)
Life Expectancy: 65.16 male, 70.77 female (2012)

Languages: Spanish (60.7%), Quechua (21.2%), Aymara (14.6%), foreign languages (2.4%), other (1.2%). Spanish, Quechua, and Aymara are official languages. Quechua and Aymara share many linguistic similarities, but are two distinct languages. Quechua is widely spoken among the inhabitants of highland areas through the Andes, particularly in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru. There are some distinctions among dialects of Quechua found outside of Bolivia.⁷²⁵ Over thirty native languages are spoken, most with fewer than 1,000 speakers. Languages with over one million native speakers include Spanish (5.9 million), Quechua (2.1 million), and Aymara (1.4 million).

Literacy: 86.7% (2001)

History

Aymara were among the earliest settlers of Bolivia and arrived at least 2,000 years ago. The Inca Empire absorbed most of Bolivia prior to Spanish conquest. An independence movement occurred in the early nineteenth century under Simon Bolivar, for which Bolivia received its name. Independence was achieved in 1825, and wars with bordering nations ensued. In the late nineteenth century, Bolivia lost territory that

⁷²⁵ "Quechua languages," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 27 June 2011. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quechua_languages

permitted access to the Pacific Ocean in a war with Chile. Almost 200 coups or disruptions in government power have occurred since independence. In 1982, Democratic rule was established. Evo Morales won the presidency in late 2005 and has taken major steps towards socialization. Conflict between natives and nonindigenous Bolivians has increased. Bolivia has become politically divided between west and east, with the latter abounding in natural resources and experiencing rapid population growth. In 2007, four of Bolivia's departments declared autonomy from the central government.

Culture

The Catholic Church remains a major influence on Bolivian culture, especially in urban areas. As a result of Spanish colonialism many European cultural practices are infused with local culture such as food, music, dance, and festivals. Many wear traditional clothing in rural areas. Whites tend to occupy the highest social class. Potatoes and grains are major food staples. Coffee and tea are widely consumed. Alcohol and cigarette consumption rank lower than most nations, whereas rates of illicit drug use, primarily cocaine, are high.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$4,800 (2011) [9.98% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.663

Corruption Index: 2.8 (2011)

One of the poorest nations in Latin America, Bolivia has an underdeveloped economy yet abounds in natural resources. Large natural gas and oil reserves in the Amazon Basin were recently discovered but have been little developed due to internal conflict and Bolivia's landlocked location. The government has sought to reduce trade with the United States and consequently has seen less foreign investment in recent years. Poverty remains a major deterrent to economic growth. In 2006, 60% of the population lived below the poverty line. Services account for 43% of the workforce and produce 52% of the GDP, whereas agriculture employs 40% of the workforce and accounts for 11% of the GDP. Primary agricultural products include soybeans, coffee, cocoa, and cotton. Mining, smelting, oil, and food are major industries. Primary trade partners include Brazil, Argentina, and the United States.

Bolivia is the world's third largest producer of coca, following Colombia and Peru; corruption has historically been linked to its cultivation. Coca and cocaine production has increased since 2000 despite government eradication programs. Drug trafficking between neighboring South American nations occurs frequently in Bolivia. Money laundering and domestic drug consumption are additional manifestations of corruption.

Faiths

Christian: 97.3%

Other: 2.7%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 9,286,484

Latter-day Saints 182,964 256

Seventh Day Adventists 76,099 315

Jehovah's Witnesses 21,381 254

Religion

In 2001, a survey by the National Statistical Institute found that 78% of Bolivians identify themselves as Catholic, 16% as Protestant Evangelical, and 3% as adherents of other Christian faiths. The Catholic Church is strongest in urban areas that have greater access to resources and fewer indigenous Bolivians. People living in rural areas tend to have a closer relationship with indigenous religions and practices, which at times are integrated into Christianity. There are small communities of non-Christians in some urban areas, particularly Muslims, Buddhists, and followers of Shinto.⁷²⁶

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. In 2009, the government declared that Catholicism was no longer the official religion. Politically active religious groups have at times come under criticism from government authorities. Some tensions between the government and the Catholic Church have surfaced in recent years. Missionaries may proselyte openly and are required to register with the government.⁷²⁷

Largest Cities

Urban: 66%

Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Cochabamba, La Paz, Sucre, Oruro, Tarija, Potosí, Montero, Trinidad, Yacuiba.

All ten of the largest cities have a congregation. All cities over 30,000 inhabitants have a congregation. Forty-two percent (42%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

In 1963, Church membership was limited to three American families who live in Cochabamba and La Paz. Missionaries from the Andes Mission arrived the following year, and the first Bolivian converts were baptized in late 1964. By 1966, congregations met in Cochabamba, La Paz, Oruro, and Santa Cruz.⁷²⁸ The same year the Andes South Mission was organized with headquarters in La Paz. The new mission was renamed the Bolivia Mission and later the Bolivia La Paz Mission. Seminary and institute began in the early 1970s. A second mission was organized in Santa Cruz in 1977 and was relocated to Cochabamba in 1982. In 1988, Elder Charles Didier visited the First Lady of Bolivia.⁷²⁹ The same year, two missionaries were assassinated by terrorists in La Paz.⁷³⁰ In 1994, Elder Russell M. Nelson visited with the Bolivian President and presented his family history.⁷³¹ President Hinckley visited in 1996 to break ground on the new temple in Cochabamba.⁷³² In 1998, the Church created a third mission in Santa Cruz from missions in La Paz and Cochabamba. In 2000, Bolivian-native entertainer Desiderio Arce helped increase awareness of the Church in society in Bolivia and

⁷²⁶ "Bolivia," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127380.htm>

⁷²⁷ "Bolivia," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127380.htm>

⁷²⁸ "Bolivia," Ensign, Feb 1977, 40.

⁷²⁹ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 1 October 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18324/From-around-the-World.html>

⁷³⁰ "Two missionaries serving in Bolivia are assassinated by terrorists," LDS Church News, 27 May 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19381/Two-missionaries-serving-in-Bolivia-are-assassinated-by-terrorists.html>

⁷³¹ "Family history given to Bolivian president," LDS Church News, 5 November 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24683/Family-history-given-to-Bolivian-president.html>

⁷³² Hart, John L. "Prophet breaks ground for new temples," LDS Church News, 23 November 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28526/Prophet-breaks-ground-for-new-temples.html>

Argentina.⁷³³ A country-wide conference via broadcast from Salt Lake was held in 2008.⁷³⁴ In the late 2000s, all North American missionaries were withdrawn from Bolivia for over a year due to increasing political instability; most were reassigned to Peru. In 2013, a fourth mission was organized in Santa Cruz North.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 182,964 (2012)

In 1968, there were 350 LDS members. A decade later membership had grown to 9,700.⁷³⁵ Rapid membership growth occurred both in urban and rural areas in the 1980s and 1990s. In Guayaramerin, membership grew from twenty-five to 400 during a two year period in the late 1980s.⁷³⁶ By 1994, there were 83,000 members.⁷³⁷ At year-end 2000, membership reached 119,131. LDS membership reached 133,170 in 2002, 148,630 in 2005, and 158,427 in 2007. During the decade of the 2000s, most years experienced membership growth rates between 3 and 4%. By year-end 2009, one in fifty-eight Bolivians was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 184 Branches: 72 (April 2013)

In 1977, membership met in thirty-seven branches organized in five districts.⁷³⁸ The first stake was organized by President Ezra Taft Benson in January 1979 in Santa Cruz. Two additional stakes were organized in La Paz and Cochabamba later that year. By 1984, each of the three largest cities had two stakes. A decade later, Bolivia had nine stakes, and the first stakes in El Alto and Oruro had been organized. Steady growth in stakes continued in the 1990s, reaching sixteen by year-end 1995 and twenty-one by 2000. The first stakes were organized in several cities, including Potosi, Montero, Tarija, and Sucre. By mid-1999, there were nine districts.⁷³⁹ The creation of stakes slowed in the 2000s as only four new stakes were organized, including the first stake in Trinidad. A stake in Oruro was also discontinued. Two new districts were organized in Riberalta and Puerto Suárez in 2002. By year-end 2009, Bolivia had twenty-four stakes and ten districts. Additional districts functioned in Achacachi, Bermejo, Guayaramerín, Llallagua, Titicaca, Tupiza, and Yacuiba. In 2009, at least twelve mission branches met in small, isolated cities in central and northwestern Bolivia. At year-end 2012, there were twenty-six stakes and ten districts.

Congregations numbered 237 in 2000, 155 of which were wards. Little increase in congregations occurred in the 2000s, as there were 238 congregations in 2005 and 245 in 2008. By the end of 2009, 251 LDS congregations were operating in Bolivia. The number of wards fluctuated during the 2000s, decreasing to 146 from 2001 to 2002 and increasing to 156 in 2005 and 165 in 2008. Over this period, the number of branches has remained nearly the same.

Activity and Retention

Many large meetings have been well attended. Three to four thousand attended the groundbreaking for the

⁷³³ Curbelo, Nestor. "Latin folk singer raises profile of Church in Argentina, Bolivia," LDS Church News, 26 February 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37247/Latin-folk-singer-raises-profile-of-Church-in-Arentina-Bolivia.html>

⁷³⁴ Avant, Gerry. "Counsel to Bolivia in stake conference," LDS Church News, 22 March 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51759/Counsel-to-Bolivia-in-stake-conference.html>

⁷³⁵ "Bolivia," Ensign, Feb 1977, 40.

⁷³⁶ "South America North Area: 500 attend building rites," LDS Church News, 9 September 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19245/South-America-North-Zrea-500-attend-building-rites.html>

⁷³⁷ "Family history given to Bolivian president," LDS Church News, 5 November 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24683/Family-history-given-to-Bolivian-president.html>

⁷³⁸ "Bolivia," Ensign, Feb 1977, 40.

⁷³⁹ Olsen, Judy C. "Bolivia: A Bounty of Blessings," Ensign, Jun 1999, 22.

Cochabamba Bolivia Temple in 1996.⁷⁴⁰ Approximately 65,600 attended the open house and 9,084 attended the dedicatory sessions.⁷⁴¹ During the 2008–2009 school year, 10,569 were enrolled in church seminary or institute classes.

Low member activity has remained a major issue in Bolivia. In 2000, congregations had an average of over 500 members, although average congregational attendance was only about one hundred. Poor convert retention has continued in the 2000s as membership increased by 60,000 (54%), yet only nineteen new congregations have been organized (an increase of 8%). The failure to organize new congregations commensurate with nominal membership growth reflects low member activity and high rates of convert loss. In late 2009, there was only one LDS congregation for every 700 members in Bolivia, one of the lowest ratios of congregations to members in the world. However, many disengaged members are in the “address unknown file,” and so average congregational membership rolls are somewhat smaller. Congregations widely vary in active membership, with a few larger wards numbering nearly 300 active members. The average congregation presently has between 100 and 150 active members, indicating that total active membership is between 30,000 and 40,000, or 18%–25%.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Spanish, Quechua, Aymara, Guarani.

All LDS scriptures and most Church materials are available in Spanish, including an LDS edition of the Bible. The Book of Mormon is translated in full in Aymara and Guarani. Selections of the Book of Mormon are translated into Quechua. Other materials translated in Aymara include the sacrament prayers, *Gospel Principles*, *The Prophet Joseph Smith’s Testimony*, *Duties and Blessings of the Priesthood Part A*, and a guidebook for family. Translations of Church materials in Guarani include the sacrament prayers, *Gospel Principles*, *The Prophet Joseph Smith’s Testimony*, and hymns and children’s songs. Bolivian Quechua translation materials are limited to *The Prophet Joseph Smith’s Testimony* and hymns and children’s songs. *Gospel Principles* in Peruvian Quechua is available.

Meetinghouses

In 1999, there were 131 chapels.⁷⁴² Most congregations meet in Church built meetinghouses.

Health and Safety

The assassination of two LDS missionaries in 1988 demonstrates some threats of violence that full-time missionaries face. Surges in political instability and violence have disrupted missionary work in the past, limiting proselytism activities or requiring the periodic evacuation of North American missionaries.

Humanitarian and Development Work

In 1992, members from thirty-five wards in Rexburg, Idaho made 550 pairs of pajamas and 1,000 pairs of slippers for a children’s hospital in La Paz. The Church also donated 500 blankets with the shipment.⁷⁴³ In 2002, the LDS Church donated funds to the First Lady’s Foundation for victims of flash flooding to obtain

⁷⁴⁰ Hart, John L. “Prophet breaks ground for new temples,” LDS Church News, 23 November 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28526/Prophet-breaks-ground-for-new-temples.html>

⁷⁴¹ “Facts and figures: Cochabamba Bolivia Temple,” LDS Church News, 13 May 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37755/Facts-and-figures-Cochabamba-Bolivia-Temple.html>

⁷⁴² Olsen, Judy C. “Bolivia: A Bounty of Blessings,” Ensign, Jun 1999, 22.

⁷⁴³ “From around the world,” LDS Church News, 18 January 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22443/From-around-the-world.html>

emergency supplies.⁷⁴⁴ Local members have provided service and development work. In 2003, a member in the small town of Warnes taught literacy skills to older illiterate members in his branch.⁷⁴⁵ Young women in Potosi made and donated dolls to needy children living near the impoverished Cerro Rico mines.⁷⁴⁶ Missionaries distributed hygiene kits to children in Potosi in 2004.⁷⁴⁷ In 2010, the Church was engaged in greenhouse projects on the Altiplano near La Paz to improve nutrition among rural inhabitants.⁷⁴⁸ The Church has recently donated equipment and volunteer hours to the Los Andes Women and Children's Clinic.⁷⁴⁹

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church faces no government restrictions regarding proselytism. Foreign missionaries may serve, but the Church has periodically reduced their numbers due to threats of violence and political instability.

Cultural Issues

Syncretism between Catholicism and native beliefs and practices among indigenous Bolivians may lead to some challenges to doctrinal integrity. The widespread cultivation, distribution, and consumption of coca leaf products limits potential for mission outreach in areas producing large amounts of the drug and leads to increased caution and vigilance of local, mission, and area leaders regarding the proselytism activities of full-time missionaries. Overall, the Catholic background of most Bolivians appears to have facilitated Church growth. Many are receptive to the Church's teachings as evidenced by rapid membership growth over the past three decades.

National Outreach

Overall Bolivia receives excellent mission outreach, as the three missions are headquartered in the three largest cities and serve a population of nearly ten million.

All of Bolivia's nine administrative departments have congregations and member districts or stakes. Pando is the only department without a stake. Many rural regions and small cities or towns do not have nearby mission outreach centers. Most of the approximately six cities with over 10,000 inhabitants without a congregation are in remote regions of eastern Bolivia, where the largest unreached population by LDS mission efforts resides.

Strong member involvement in missionary work has resulted in the establishment of congregations in many small rural towns. In 1988, a branch was organized in Arenales. A member family moved to the town and received permission from the mission president to begin holding Sunday meetings in their home. The family

⁷⁴⁴ "Meetinghouse sustains extensive damage," LDS Church News, 2 March 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41384/Meetinghouse-sustains-extensive-damage.html>

⁷⁴⁵ Back, President Rune. "Teen teaches grandmas to read," LDS Church News, 18 January 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43106/Teen-teaches-grandmas-to-read.html>

⁷⁴⁶ Swensen, Jason. "Dolls ease poverty's sting," LDS Church News, 15 March 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43352/Dolls-ease-povertys-sting.html>

⁷⁴⁷ "Missionaries in Bolivia distribute hygiene kits for children," LDS Church News, 3 July 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45808/Missionaries-in-Bolivia-distribute-hygiene-kits-for-children.html>

⁷⁴⁸ Swensen, Jason. "Greenhouses 'above the clouds,'" LDS Church News, 13 February 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/58788/Greenhouses-above-the-clouds.html>

⁷⁴⁹ Swensen, Jason. "Los Andes clinic 'It felt so good to help,'" LDS Church News, 20 March 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59056/Los-Andes-clinic-It-felt-so-good-to-help.html>

shared their beliefs with their neighbors, and as many as fifty joined the Church from the efforts of this family establishing the Church in their small community.⁷⁵⁰

The Church maintains a Spanish-language website for the South America Northwest Area in Spanish at <http://iglesiadejesucristo.org.bo/>. The site provides information for those interested in the Church, including those who may not live near an established congregation.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Poor convert retention and low member activity have prevented many districts from developing into stakes. The Tupiza Bolivia District had approximately 1,400 members in 2000 but as of 2010 still had not become a stake.⁷⁵¹ Many members joined the Church with little pre-baptismal teaching and fellowshiping, resulting in low retention rates. Nominalism in the Catholic Church may also be a contributor of low activity rates in the LDS Church, as prior church experiences of converts have rarely included regular church attendance or active participation in teaching or other callings.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Although ethnic issues remain at the forefront of recent national and political instability, the Church appears to encounter few challenges integrating various ethnic groups into congregations.

Language Issues

Forty percent (40%) of Bolivians do not speak Spanish as a first language, but many speak Spanish as a second language. Spanish is most often used in church and in missionary efforts as most Bolivians speak Spanish as a first or second language. Several decades of proselytism in most large cities and the nearby countryside have resulted in missionaries learning and teaching in Aymara and Quechua when appropriate. Use of these languages in Church services likely depends on their prevalence among members within a congregation. Church materials and LDS scripture are available in both of these indigenous languages, but the small number of available resources likely indicates little need for additional translations, as those who cannot read Spanish are rarely literate in Aymara or Quechua. Additional scripture translations may one day come forth for Aymara and Quechua.

Missionary Service

Bolivia has had a tradition of supplying large numbers of full-time missionaries. In 1988, the Cochabamba Bolivia Mission held seven clinics between May and July to spiritually and financially prepare 200 youth to serve missions.⁷⁵² Terrorism threats of violence toward North American missionaries prompted Church leaders to reduce the number of American missionaries in Bolivia in 1989 to less than 30% of prior levels.⁷⁵³ In 2010, Bolivian missionaries were serving throughout most of Latin America, especially in Bolivia and Peru.

In 1998, a missionary training center for Peru and Bolivia capable of housing 150 missionaries was dedicated

⁷⁵⁰ "Church has solid start, thanks to family's efforts," LDS Church News, 19 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17512/Church-has-solid-start-thanks-to-familys-efforts.html>

⁷⁵¹ Curbelo, Nestor. "Latin folk singer raises profile of Church in Argentina, Bolivia," LDS Church News, 26 February 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37247/Latin-folk-singer-raises-profile-of-Church-in-Argentina-Bolivia.html>

⁷⁵² "Clinics are helping prepare missionaries," LDS Church News, 23 July 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17621/Clinics-are-helping-prepare-missionaries.html>

⁷⁵³ "Precautions taken against terrorism," LDS Church News, 15 July 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18665/Precautions-taken-against-terrorism.html>

in Lima, Peru.⁷⁵⁴ The following year, the number of missionaries serving from the two countries increased by 70% as local leaders focused on sending youth on missions,⁷⁵⁵ although it is not clear whether this increase has been sustained.

Leadership

The Church has faced challenges in finding local leaders to administer congregations of newly baptized converts. In 1977, all district presidencies and most branches consisted of local members.⁷⁵⁶ Many Bolivian members have served in international leadership positions. In 1992, Gavarret Inzaurrealde⁷⁵⁷, Jorge Mario Leano, and Sixto Quispe were called as regional representatives.⁷⁵⁸ In 1996, Rene Juan Cabrera was called as an Area Authority Seventy.⁷⁵⁹ In 1996, Carlos L. Pedraja from Cochabamba was called as a mission president⁷⁶⁰ in Argentina and in 2002 became an Area Authority Seventy.⁷⁶¹ The following year, Antonio R. Oyola from La Paz was called as an Area Authority Seventy.⁷⁶² In the 2000s, Church employees were called more frequently as members of stake presidencies but remained a minority. Most mission presidents who have served in Bolivia were from North America. In 2004, Ramiro Antelo Saenz from Santa Cruz was called to preside over the Bolivia La Paz Mission.⁷⁶³ In 2005, Juan Adhemar Garcia V from Tarija was called to lead the Dominican Republic Santo Domingo East Mission.⁷⁶⁴ In 2006, Elder Vladimiro J. Campero of Santa Cruz became an Area Authority Seventy.⁷⁶⁵ Challenges developing sufficient numbers of leaders in smaller cities remain, along with low member activity, one of the challenges limiting congregational growth.

Temple

Bolivia pertains to the Cochabamba Bolivia Temple district, in addition to three stakes on the shore of Lake Titicaca in Peru. Prior to the temple's construction, members traveled to Lima, Peru to attend the temple. In 2010, the temple in Cochabamba held seven endowment sessions daily Tuesday through Saturday. Bolivians appear to utilize the temple well, although it is not operating at capacity. Distance from the temple in Cochabamba and large numbers of members in Santa Cruz and La Paz may require additional temples in these locations once the Cochabamba temple is working at capacity.

⁷⁵⁴ "New training center dedicated in Peru—Leaders asked to raise worthy generation," LDS Church News, 12 September 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31300/New-training-center-dedicated-in-Peru—Leaders-asked-to-raise-worthy-generation.html>

⁷⁵⁵ "Excitement for missionary work surges," LDS Church News, 19 June 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35955/Excitement-for-missionary-work-surges.html>

⁷⁵⁶ "Bolivia," Ensign, Feb 1977, 40.

⁷⁵⁷ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 23 May 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22183/New-regional-representatives.html>

⁷⁵⁸ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 11 July 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22715/New-regional-representatives.html>

⁷⁵⁹ "First Presidency announces new area authorities," LDS Church News, 23 March 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28215/First-Presidency-announces-new-area-authorities.html>

⁷⁶⁰ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 24 February 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27486/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁷⁶¹ "30 Area Authority Seventies sustained," LDS Church News, 13 April 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41666/30-Area-Authority-Seventies-sustained.html>

⁷⁶² "New Area Authority Seventies," LDS Church News, 19 April 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43636/New-Area-Authority-Seventies.html>

⁷⁶³ "New mission president," LDS Church News, 11 September 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46112/New-mission-president.html>

⁷⁶⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 26 March 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47044/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁷⁶⁵ "The newly called are sustained," LDS Church News, 1 April 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48753/The-newly-called-are-sustained.html>

Comparative Growth

Church growth in Bolivia has closely resembled growth experienced in Colombia and Ecuador. All of these nations had fewer than five stakes in 1980 and presently have between 150,000 and 200,000 members. Bolivia has the third highest percentage of nominal LDS members in Latin America following Chile and Uruguay. Unlike many Latin American nations that experienced decreases of over one hundred congregations in the early 2000s, Bolivia had few congregations consolidated during this time. Only one stake has been discontinued in Bolivia since 2000, whereas many South American nations have had multiple stakes discontinued. A higher percentage of members are enrolled in seminary and institute in Bolivia compared to many other Latin American nations. This has likely contributed to a greater number of full-time missionaries serving from Bolivia compared to other nations with fewer members attending seminary and institute.

Many Christian denominations have experienced rapid growth in the past several decades. Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses have approximately the same number of congregations as Latter-day Saints but have fewer than half as many members as claimed by the LDS Church. However, there appear to be more active Seventh Day Adventists than active Latter-day Saints in Bolivia, and nearly as many active Jehovah's Witnesses. Evangelicals also report strong growth.

Future Prospects

A strong full-time missionary force staffed primarily by native Bolivians, continued expansion of national outreach, and increases in congregations in the past couple years indicate a positive outlook for future growth. Additional stakes may be organized in Cochabamba, La Paz, and Santa Cruz, as several stakes have grown large enough to divide. Some districts may become stakes in the near future in northern and southern Bolivia. Unreached cities and towns east of Santa Cruz appear likely to open for missionary work in the coming years. Additional districts may be organized where clusters of remote mission branches operate, particularly in Rurrenabaque and Viacha. However low convert retention rates and high member inactivity hinder greater progress in establishing the Church nationwide.

BRAZIL

Geography

AREA: 8,514,877 square km. Geographically the fifth largest country in the world, Brazil borders Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, and the Atlantic Ocean. The Amazon Basin encompasses the northern interior and houses some of the world's largest tracts of unspoiled rainforest. South central areas are dominated by the Brazilian highlands. Forested plains, grassland, and scrubland occupy most other regions. Major rivers include the Amazon, Araguaia, Negro, Parana, Sao Francisco, Tocantins, and Xingu. Tropical climate occurs in northern regions, whereas temperate climate occurs in the south. Droughts and floods are natural hazards. Environmental issues include deforestation in the Amazon Basin, poaching, pollution, land degradation, and oil spills. Brazil is administratively divided into twenty-six states and one federal district.

Peoples

White: 53.7%

Mulatto (mixed white and black): 38.5%

Black: 6.2%

Other: 0.9%

Unspecified: 0.7%

Most Brazilians are descendants of European settlers or of mixed European-black ancestry. Approximately five million Europeans immigrated to Brazil between 1875 and 1960, most of who settled in the four southernmost states (Parana, Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, and Sao Paulo).⁷⁶⁶ Blacks tend to populate north central coastal areas in the Salvador area.

Population: 205,716,890 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.102% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.16 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 69.24 male, 76.53 female (2012)

Languages: Portuguese (95%), other [primarily European languages] (5%). Portuguese is the official language and spoken fluently by approximately 99.9% of the population. Approximately 180 Amerindian languages are spoken, most of which have fewer than 1,000 speakers. Languages with over one million speakers include Portuguese (191 million), Talian [a mix between northern Italian dialects and Portuguese] (4 million), and Hunsrik [a Germanic dialect with Portuguese influence] (3 million).

Literacy: 88.6% (2004)

History

Amerindian tribes populated present-day Brazil prior to the arrival Pedro Alvares Cabral who claimed Brazil for Portugal in 1500. Portuguese rule continued into the early nineteenth century. Dom Joao VI and the

⁷⁶⁶ "Background Note: Brazil," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 9 September 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35640.htm>

remnants of the Portuguese royal family fled Napoleon's army to Brazil in 1808 and returned to Portugal in 1821. The following year, Brazil declared independence from Portugal and Dom Joao VI's son, Dom Pedro I, was proclaimed emperor of Brazil. Slavery was abolished in 1888. The Dom Pedro family maintained control of the government until 1889 when a coup led by Marshal of the Army Deodoro da Fonseca established a federal republic and effectively ended monarchical rule. A constitutional republic government operated until 1930 when a military coup installed a dictatorship under Getulio Vargas. Vargas ruled until 1945. Political instability marked the 1950s and 1960s as six presidents successively served between 1945 and 1961. Brazil's population has historically been densely concentrated along the southern coastal areas. To ameliorate overcrowding, facilitate government administration over a large geographical area, and spur economic development, the government relocated the capital city from Rio de Janeiro to the government-planned city of Brasilia in 1960. A coup occurred in 1964, and the military-controlled government exiled political opponents and determined Brazil's presidents until the early 1980s when a return to democracy began. A total return to civilian rule occurred in 1985. Since 1989, Brazil's presidents have been successively elected.⁷⁶⁷ With a large population, abundant natural resources, and strategic geographic location, Brazil has emerged as the region's greatest economic power.

Culture

As a result of strong European immigration to southern Brazil from the late nineteenth century to mid-twentieth century, the Brazilian states of Parana, Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, and Sao Paulo exhibit many cultural similarities with Western and Central Europe. Living standards are highest in this region, and the economy is more industrialized. Northeastern Brazil and many central interior areas are among the poorest, have more homogenous Catholic populations, and rely heavily on agriculture and mining. Mulattos tend to constitute the majority in these areas. The widespread use of Portuguese has helped unify differing ethnic groups, although socioeconomic differences create major challenges to socially integrating Brazil as a whole. Those residing in the Amazon Basin area generally live in medium- to large-sized cities. Several indigenous Amerindian groups reside in the rainforest and remote, sparsely-populated areas of the interior, and some have yet to make peaceful contact with the outside world. Fruit, meat, rice, beans, cassava, yams, and peanuts are common ingredients in Brazilian dishes. Dairy and wheat are more commonly consumed in the south. Carnival, the Brazilian equivalent of Mardi Gras, is one of the largest holidays celebrated in Brazil and lasts around one week. Heavy drinking, parades, widespread sexual indulgence, and Samba music highlight many Carnival celebrations nationwide. Cigarette and alcohol consumption rates compare to world averages. Illicit drug use has increased and is common in many areas. Brazil is one of the world's greatest coffee consumers.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$11,600 (2011) [24.1% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.718

Corruption Index: 3.8 (2011)

Brazil boasts a robust, diversified economy that has internationally competitive agricultural, service, and mining sectors. Some long-standing economic challenges such as inflation have been rectified in recent years, whereas others, such as a highly unequal distribution of wealth, continue to slow economic development. Twenty-six percent (26%) of the population lives below the poverty line. Brazil suffered an acute reaction to the global financial crisis in the late 2000s but was one of the first countries to begin recovery. Precious metals, valuable minerals, iron ore, uranium, oil, hydropower, and timber are natural resources. Services employ 66% of the labor force and generate 69% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 14% of the workforce and generates 25% of the GDP. Textiles, shoes, chemicals, cement, lumber, industrial and commercial metals, aircraft, automobiles, and machinery are major industries. Agriculture employs 20% of the workforce

⁷⁶⁷ "Background Note: Brazil," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 9 September 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35640.htm>

and generates 6% of the GDP. Common crops include coffee, soybeans, grains, sugarcane, cocoa, and fruit. Beef is a common agricultural product. Brazil is the world's ninth largest oil producer and seventh largest oil consumer. The United States, China, Argentina, and Germany are the primary trade partners.

Money laundering, illicit drug trafficking, smuggling, and fundraising for extremist organizations are common activities in the Argentina-Brazil-Paraguay border region. Brazil is the world's second largest cocaine consumer and a major transshipment point for cocaine produced in the Andes destined for Europe. Weapons smuggling and drug-related violence have increased in recent years.

Faiths

Christian: 89%

Spiritualist: 1.3%

Voodoo/Afro-Brazilian: 0.3%

Other: 1.8%

Unspecified: 0.2%

None: 7.4%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 148,012,051

Seventh Day Adventists 1,285,850 6,861

Latter-day Saints 1,209,974 1,941

Jehovah's Witnesses 742,425 10,926

Religion

Nominal Catholics account for 74% of the population, whereas Protestants account for 15.4%. Seventy-four percent (74%) of Protestants are estimated to adhere to Pentecostal and Evangelical churches. The remaining 26% of Protestants primarily follow the Lutheran, Presbyterian, Baptist, Seventh Day Adventist, Methodist, and Congregationalist Churches. The 2000 census counted 214,873 Buddhists, 2,905 Hindus, and 151,080 followers of other East Asian religions. Shintoism is commonly followed among Japanese-Brazilians. Spiritualists are primarily Kardecists. The census reported 17,088 followers of indigenous Amerindian religious. Syncretic Afro-Brazilian religions account for 0.3% of the population and include Candomble, Umbanda, Xango, Macumba, and Voodoo. Some estimates for the number of Muslims in Brazil are as high as 1.5 million, but the 2000 census counted fewer than 28,000. There are approximately 120,000 Jews, 105,000 of whom reside in the states of Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.⁷⁶⁸

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is generally upheld by the government. There is no state religion and no registration requirements for a religious group. Common Catholic holidays are recognized by the government. Public schools are required to offer religious education. Anti-Semitic or racist literature is strictly prohibited. Societal abuse of religious freedom is uncommon and is primarily directed toward non-Christian groups.⁷⁶⁹

⁷⁶⁸ "Brazil," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148738.htm>

⁷⁶⁹ "Brazil," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148738.htm>

Largest Cities

Urban: 86%

São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, Brasília, Fortaleza, Belo Horizonte, Manaus, Curitiba, Recife, Porto Alegre, Belém, Goiânia, Guarulhos, Campinas, São Gonçalo, São Luís, Maceió, Duque de Caxias, Natal, Nova Iguaçu, Campo Grande, Teresina, São Bernardo do Campo, João Pessoa, Santo André, Osasco, Jaboatão, São José dos Campos, Ribeirão Preto, Contagem, Uberlândia, Sorocaba, Aracaju, Cuiabá, Juiz de Fora, Feira de Santana.

All thirty-six cities with over 500,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of the national population resides in the thirty-six largest cities.

LDS History

The first LDS missionaries arrived in Joinville in 1928 and worked among German immigrants.⁷⁷⁰ The Brazilian Mission was organized in May 1935 with headquarters in Ipomeia, Santa Catarina and worked primarily with German-speakers. In 1938, 2,000 copies of the Portuguese translation of the Book of Mormon were published. Full-time missionaries were withdrawn in 1943 due to World War II.⁷⁷¹ The Portuguese translation of the Doctrine and Covenants was completed in 1950.⁷⁷² The first LDS stake in South America was organized in Sao Paulo in 1966. Both seminary and institute were introduced by 1971. The Church began to grow rapidly following the 1978 Revelation extending the priesthood to all worthy males.⁷⁷³ In 1985, the postal service issued a special postage stamp commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the LDS Brazilian Mission.⁷⁷⁴ In 1987, the Church announced the formation of the Brazil Area from the South America North Area.⁷⁷⁵

One LDS youth perished in flooding in 1988.⁷⁷⁶ In 1988, President Gordon B. Hinckley held several regional conferences and met with Brazilian president Jose Sarney, giving him a copy of the Book of Mormon and some Mormon Tabernacle Choir records and tapes.⁷⁷⁷ In 1990, one Brazil's most popular magazines, *Manchete*, featured a six-page article about why Latter-day Saints do family history research.⁷⁷⁸ In 1991, Moroni Bing Torgan from Fortaleza was the first Latter-day Saint elected as a National Congressman in Brazil.⁷⁷⁹ In 1993, a Brazilian congressman praised the Church for its efforts in microfilming family history documents.⁷⁸⁰ In

⁷⁷⁰ "Brazil is third country to have 100 stakes," LDS Church News, 19 February 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25432/Brazil-is-third-country-to-have-100-stakes.html>

⁷⁷¹ Hart, John L. "Vast potential of nation unfolding in growth, strength," LDS Church News, 23 April 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17630/Vast-potential-of-nation-unfolding-in-growth-strength.html>

⁷⁷² "Companions in Brazil again after 48 years," LDS Church News, 16 December 1989. Hart, John L. "Vast potential of nation unfolding in growth, strength," LDS Church News, 23 April 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17630/Vast-potential-of-nation-unfolding-in-growth-strength.html>

⁷⁷³ Hart, John L. "Vast potential of nation unfolding in growth, strength," LDS Church News, 23 April 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17630/Vast-potential-of-nation-unfolding-in-growth-strength.html>

⁷⁷⁴ Kimball, Stanley B. "'Mormon' stamps grow in number," LDS Church News, 15 January 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25089/Mormon-stamps-grow-in-number.html>

⁷⁷⁵ Deseret News 1989-1990 Church Almanac, p. 311

⁷⁷⁶ "Convert among hundred dead in Brazil floods," LDS Church News, 27 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18104/Convert-among-hundred-dead-in-Brazil-floods.html>

⁷⁷⁷ "Church leaders visit Brazil's capital city," LDS Church News, 2 July 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18044/Church-leaders-visit-Brazils-capital-city.html>

⁷⁷⁸ "Brazil area: Magazine features LDS research," LDS Church News, 6 January 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20362/Brazil-area-Magazine-features-LDS-research.html>

⁷⁷⁹ "Brazilian 'folk hero' elected to high post," LDS Church News, 16 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21169/Brazilian-folk-hero-elected-to-high-post.html>

⁷⁸⁰ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 25 September 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22938/From-around-the-world.html>

1998, the Brazil Area divided into the Brazil North and Brazil South Areas, making Brazil the second country outside the United States with two areas.⁷⁸¹ The Brazilian government recognized the 159th anniversary of the establishment of the Relief Society in 2001⁷⁸² and met with Elder Russell M. Nelson.⁷⁸³ Brazil became one of the first countries in which the Church established the Perpetual Education Fund in the early 2000s.⁷⁸⁴ Brazil's ambassador to the United States met with the First Presidency in Salt Lake City in 2002.⁷⁸⁵ In 2005, one member perished in flooding in northern Brazil.⁷⁸⁶ Elder Russell M. Nelson visited with the mayor of Sao Paulo and governor of Sao Paulo State in 2006.⁷⁸⁷ In 2007, the two Brazil areas were consolidated into a single area, the Brazil Area.

Missions

The Brazilian Mission (later renamed the Brazil Central Mission) divided in 1959 to create the Brazilian South Mission (later renamed the Brazil Porto Alegre Mission). In 1968, the Brazilian North Mission, subsequently renamed the Brazil Rio de Janeiro Mission, was organized. Additional missions were organized in Brazil North Central [Sao Paulo North] (1972), Brazil South Central [Sao Paulo South] (1972), Curitiba (1980), Brasilia (1985), Campinas (1986), Fortaleza (1987), Belo Horizonte (1988), Manaus (1990), Salvador (1990), Porto Alegre North (1991), Sao Paulo East (1991), Sao Paulo Interlagos (1991), Ribeiro Preto (1993), Rio de Janeiro North [relocated to Vitoria in 2009] (1993), Florianopolis (1993), Recife South (1993) [relocated to Maceio in 1998], Belem (1994), Belo Horizonte East (1994), Salvador South (1994), Marila (1995) [relocated to Londrina in 1999], Goiana (1998), Joao Pessoa (1998), Santa Maria (1998), Cuiaba (2006), and Teresina (2009). The Brazil Belo Horizonte East Mission was discontinued in 2009. The number of missions increased from one in 1950 to two in 1960, three in 1970, six in 1980, twelve in 1990, twenty-six in 2000, and twenty-seven in 2010. In 2013, the Church organized seven new missions: Curitiba South, Fortaleza East, Juiz de Fora, Natal, Piracicaba, Santos, and Sao Paulo West, increasing the total number of missions to thirty-four.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 1,209,974 (2012)

In 1940, there were fewer than 200 Latter-day Saints in Brazil. Membership growth was extremely slow in the 1930s and 1940s as there were only eleven convert baptisms in 1940 and eighteen in 1941. Membership reached 360 by 1943. By 1957, there were fewer than 1,000 members.⁷⁸⁸ Membership reached 6,747 in

⁷⁸¹ "5 new areas announced worldwide," LDS Church News, 4 July 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31389/5-new-areas-announced-worldwide.html>

⁷⁸² Fontes, Natan R. "Relief Society recognized by Brazilian legislators," LDS Church News, 31 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39552/Relief-Society-recognized-by-Brazilian-legislators.html>

⁷⁸³ "Elder Nelson meets with Brazilian leaders," LDS Church News, 25 August 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40391/Elder-Nelson-meets-Brazilian-leaders.html>

⁷⁸⁴ Johnston, Jerry. "Pres. Hinckley praises roots, scope of LDS education fund," LDS Church News, 6 October 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40638/Pres-Hinckley-praises-roots-scope-of-LDS-education-fund.html>

⁷⁸⁵ "Brazilian ambassador meets First Presidency, tours BYU," LDS Church News, 20 April 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41700/Brazilian-ambassador-meets-First-Presidency-tours-BYU.html>

⁷⁸⁶ "Massive floods take life of Brazilian member," LDS Church News, 11 June 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47411/Massive-floods-take-life-of-Brazilian-member.html>

⁷⁸⁷ "Hosted in Sao Paulo by governor and mayor," LDS Church News, 18 February 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48532/Hosted-in-Sao-Paulo-by-governor-and-mayor.html>

⁷⁸⁸ Hart, John L. "Vast potential of nation unfolding in growth, strength," LDS Church News, 23 April 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17630/Vast-potential-of-nation-unfolding-in-growth-strength.html>

1962⁷⁸⁹ and 33,000 in 1976.⁷⁹⁰ In 1978, there were 55,000 Latter-day Saints.⁷⁹¹ By year-end 1983, there were 128,148 members.

By April 1988, there were nearly 300,000 members. The Church generally baptized approximately 22,000 new converts a year in the late 1980s.⁷⁹² There were 442,000 members in 1993.⁷⁹³ 158 converts were baptized in the Brazil Manaus Mission on December 22nd, 1993.⁷⁹⁴ By year-end 1994, there were 517,000 members,⁷⁹⁵ increasing to 547,000 in 1995⁷⁹⁶ and 650,000 in 1998.⁷⁹⁷ By year-end 1999, there were 743,000 members,⁷⁹⁸ and a year later membership totaled 775,822.

Steady membership growth occurred in the 2000s as membership reached 842,296 in 2002, 897,091 in 2004, 970,903 in 2006, and 1.06 million in 2008. Annual membership growth rates ranged from a low of 2.9% in 2003 to a high of 4.5% in 2006. Brazilian membership generally increased between 30,000 and 50,000 a year in the 2000s. In 2001, there were 350,000 Relief Society members.⁷⁹⁹

In one mission, the number of convert baptisms fell from approximately 200 a month to 100 a month as a result of greater emphasis on teaching and baptizing families instead of individuals. Increased convert retention resulted.⁸⁰⁰ In the late 2000s, most Brazilian stakes generally baptized over one hundred new converts a year. The Curitiba Brazil Stake generally baptized 200 converts a year in the early 1990s.⁸⁰¹ The Tubarao Brazil Stake added approximately 300 new members annually in the late 1990s.⁸⁰² 54,000 converts were baptized in one year in the late 1990s.⁸⁰³ In the early 2000s, Brazilian missions together baptized approximately 25,000 new converts a year.⁸⁰⁴ In 2009, one in 182 was LDS.

⁷⁸⁹ "South America missions to number 48 Brazil, Ecuador, Venezuela to gain 5 new missions," LDS Church News, 16 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20940/South-America-missions-to-number-48-Brazil-Ecuador-Venezuela-to-gain-5-new-missions.html>

⁷⁹⁰ "Mission created 60 years ago; work pioneered among Germans," LDS Church News, 29 April 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26296/Mission-created-60-years-ago-work-pioneered-among-Germans.html>

⁷⁹¹ Oakes, Jeannette N.; Ribolla, Nei Garcia; Ribolla, Celia Ikuno. "Growth followed priesthood revelation," LDS Church News, 31 May 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43826/Growth-followed-priesthood-revelation.html>

⁷⁹² Hart, John L. "Vast potential of nation unfolding in growth, strength," LDS Church News, 23 April 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17630/Vast-potential-of-nation-unfolding-in-growth-strength.html>

⁷⁹³ "Ground broken for new Brazil center," LDS Church News, 18 September 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23086/Ground-broken-for-new-Brazil-center.html>

⁷⁹⁴ "From the world," LDS Church News, 22 January 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24203/From-the-world.html>

⁷⁹⁵ "Mission created 60 years ago; work pioneered among Germans," LDS Church News, 29 April 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26296/Mission-created-60-years-ago-work-pioneered-among-Germans.html>

⁷⁹⁶ Hart, John L. "Over half LDS now outside U.S.," LDS Church News, 2 March 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28254/Over-half-LDS-now-outside-US.html>

⁷⁹⁷ "Brazilians honor President Faust as 'one of their own,'" LDS Church News, 9 May 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31720/Brazilians-honor-President-Faust-as-one-of-their-own.html>

⁷⁹⁸ Moore, Carrie A. "Flood of converts alters the face of LDS Church," LDS Church News, 5 October 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42548/Flood-of-converts-alters-the-face-of-LDS-Church.html>

⁷⁹⁹ Fontes, Natan R. "Relief Society recognized by Brazilian legislators," LDS Church News, 31 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39552/Relief-Society-recognized-by-Brazilian-legislators.html>

⁸⁰⁰ Moore, Carrie A. "Flood of converts alters the face of LDS Church," LDS Church News, 5 October 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42548/Flood-of-converts-alters-the-face-of-LDS-Church.html>

⁸⁰¹ "Stake pursues missionary goals through Book of Mormon musical," LDS Church News, 2 May 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22179/Stake-pursues-missionary-goals-through-Book-of-Mormon-musical.html>

⁸⁰² "Progress of Church continues," LDS Church News, 19 April 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29737/Progress-of-the-Church-continues.html>

⁸⁰³ "Brazilians honor President Faust as 'one of their own,'" LDS Church News, 9 May 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31720/Brazilians-honor-President-Faust-as-one-of-their-own.html>

⁸⁰⁴ Oakes, Jeannette N.; Ribolla, Nei Garcia; Ribolla, Celia Ikuno. "Growth followed priesthood revelation," LDS Church News, 31 May 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43826/Growth-followed-priesthood-revelation.html>

Congregational Growth

Wards: 1,507 Branches: 437 (April 2013)

There were two branches in Sao Paulo State by 1957.⁸⁰⁵ The first two stakes were created in Sao Paulo in 1966 and 1968. In 1988, there were twenty stakes in Sao Paulo State.⁸⁰⁶ The number of stakes nationwide reached nine in 1975, eighteen in 1980, forty-five in 1985, fifty-five in 1990, 101 in 1995, 183 in 2000, 186 in 2005, and 230 in 2010. In early 1997, Brazil surpassed Mexico as the country with the most stakes outside the United States.⁸⁰⁷ By year-end 1999, there were 186 stakes and forty-two districts.⁸⁰⁸ In early 2011, there were 239 stakes and forty-nine districts. In early 2013, there were 246 stakes and forty-two districts.

Provided with the year the first stake was organized, Brazilian states with LDS stakes include Parana (1971), Rio de Janeiro (1972), Rio Grande do Sul (1973), Distrito Federal (1980), Paraiba (1980), Pernambuco (1980), Belo Horizonte (1981), Ceara (1981), Alagoas (1982), Santa Catarina (1982), Espirito Santo (1987), Goias (1987), Amazonas (1988), Mato Grosso do Sul (1991), Para (1991), Bahia (1992), Rio Grande do Norte (1992), Sergipe (1992), Piaui (1993), Acre (1995), Maranhao (1995), Mato Grosso (1995), Rondonia (1996), Tocantins (2007), and Amapa (2012). In early 2011, states with ten or more stakes include Sao Paulo (74), Rio Grande do Sul (21), Parana (19), Ceara (16), Rio de Janeiro (14), Pernambuco (13), and Bahia (10). Only one state have no LDS stakes (Roraima). Only three states have more than three districts; Rio Grande do Sul (9), Sao Paulo (8), and Minas Gerais (8). Most currently functioning districts were organized between 1990 and 2000.

In 1987, there were 517 congregations, including 331 wards. In 1988, there were 160 wards in Sao Paulo State.⁸⁰⁹ The number of congregations increased to 1,113 in 1993, including 639 wards. There were 1,879 LDS congregations in 1999, including 1,264 wards.⁸¹⁰ Congregation consolidations reduced the number of LDS units to 1,763 in 2000 and 1,668 in 2003. Steady increases in the number of congregations occurred starting in 2004 as the number of units increased to 1,756 in 2006, 1,849 in 2008, and 1,927 in early 2011. Since the mid-2000s, the number of congregations in Brazil generally increases between twenty and sixty a year. Between 2000 and 2009, the number of wards increased by 166, whereas the number of branches increased by five.

Activity and Retention

Member activity and convert retention rates are low nationwide. Local members and full-time missionaries in many areas have regularly participated in reactivation efforts and at times contributed to increases in convert baptisms. Twenty-nine Aaronic Priesthood holders were reactivated in 1987 in the Sao Paulo Brazil West Stake.⁸¹¹ In 1988, a joint stake leadership-full-time missionary teaching effort held for two stakes in Recife had over 1,200 attend three separate meetings and resulted in some member reactivations.⁸¹²

⁸⁰⁵ Hart, John L. "Vast potential of nation unfolding in growth, strength," LDS Church News, 23 April 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17630/Vast-potential-of-nation-unfolding-in-growth-strength.html>

⁸⁰⁶ Hart, John L. "Vast potential of nation unfolding in growth, strength," LDS Church News, 23 April 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17630/Vast-potential-of-nation-unfolding-in-growth-strength.html>

⁸⁰⁷ "Brazil poised to be second in stakes," LDS Church News, 22 February 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30046/Brazil-poised-to-be-second-in-stakes.html>

⁸⁰⁸ Moore, Carrie A. "Flood of converts alters the face of LDS Church," LDS Church News, 5 October 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42548/Flood-of-converts-alters-the-face-of-LDS-Church.html>

⁸⁰⁹ Hart, John L. "Vast potential of nation unfolding in growth, strength," LDS Church News, 23 April 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17630/Vast-potential-of-nation-unfolding-in-growth-strength.html>

⁸¹⁰ Moore, Carrie A. "Flood of converts alters the face of LDS Church," LDS Church News, 5 October 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42548/Flood-of-converts-alters-the-face-of-LDS-Church.html>

⁸¹¹ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 9 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17636/From-around-the-world.html>

⁸¹² "From around the world," LDS Church News, 19 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17980/>

Special meetings and conferences have been well attended. One thousand one hundred less active members and investigators attended a special meeting with President Hinckley in 1988. That same year, 5,270 in Rio de Janeiro and 2,200 in Fortaleza attended regional conferences.⁸¹³ In 1989, 1,000 LDS youth from four Sao Paulo stakes attended youth conferences and cleaned and beautified neighborhoods, wrote personal testimonies in the front of copies of the Book of Mormon and distributed the books to interested individuals on the streets, wrote letters to less-active youth, and donated food to the needy.⁸¹⁴ 21,000 from fourteen stakes attended a regional conference in Sao Paulo in 1991.⁸¹⁵ In 1996, 3,000 attended the groundbreaking of the Recife Brazil Temple.⁸¹⁶ That same year, President Hinckley met with 5,500 members in Porto Alegre, 30,000 members in Sao Paulo, 13,000 members in Recife, and 5,500 members in Manaus.⁸¹⁷ 20,000 LDS youth participated in youth camps during Carnival in 1997.⁸¹⁸ In 1998, 3,500 attended the Porto Alegre Brazil Temple groundbreaking,⁸¹⁹ and 3,000 attended the Campinas Brazil Temple groundbreaking.⁸²⁰ That same year, President James E. Faust noted that sacrament attendance and tithe-paying faithfulness had increased dramatically.⁸²¹ In late 2000, 78,386 attended the Recife Brazil Temple open house, and 7,094 attended the dedicatory services,⁸²² whereas 25,324 attended the Porto Alegre Brazil Temple open house and 7,590 attended the dedicatory services.⁸²³ In 2002, 74,985 attended the Campinas Brazil Temple open house, and 8,597 attended the dedicatory services.⁸²⁴ 22,463 members from twenty-eight stakes in the Sao Paulo area viewed a special fireside transmitted via satellite in 2003.⁸²⁵ 60,000 members attended a member meeting in Sao Paulo with President Hinckley in 2004, which was believed to be one of the largest gatherings of Latter-day Saints to ever occur outside the United States.⁸²⁶ 99,000 attended the Sao Paulo Brazil open house in 2004.⁸²⁷ 55,056 were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year.

From-around-the-world.html

⁸¹³ "Church leaders visit Brazil's capital city," LDS Church News, 2 July 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18044/Church-leaders-visit-Brazils-capital-city.html>

⁸¹⁴ "Youths catch spirit of service: 1,000 Young people brighten city, lives," LDS Church News, 25 March 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18533/Youths-catch-spirit-of-service-1000-Young-people-brighten-city-lives.html>

⁸¹⁵ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 7 December 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20815/From-around-the-world.html>

⁸¹⁶ "2,000 members view ceremony for 2nd temple in Brazil," LDS Church News, 23 November 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27919/2000-members-view-ceremony-for-2nd-temple-in-Brazil.html>

⁸¹⁷ "200,000 in six nations hear prophet," LDS Church News, 23 November 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27435/200000-in-six-nations-hear-prophet.html>

⁸¹⁸ "Youth in Brazil skip 'Carnaval' to enjoy camps in the country," LDS Church News, 29 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30061/Youth-in-Brazil-skip-Carnaval-to-enjoy-camps-in-the-country.html>

⁸¹⁹ "Be loyal, worthy to enter temple, members urged," LDS Church News, 9 May 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31042/Be-loyal-worthy-to-enter-temple-members-urged.html>

⁸²⁰ "Ground broken for two temples in Brazil," LDS Church News, 9 May 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31041/Ground-broken-for-two-temples-in-Brazil.html>

⁸²¹ "Brazilians honor President Faust as 'one of their own,'" LDS Church News, 9 May 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31720/Brazilians-honor-President-Faust-as-one-of-their-own.html>

⁸²² "Facts and figures: Recife Brazil Temple," LDS Church News, 23 December 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39101/Facts-and-figures-Recife-Brazil-Temple.html>

⁸²³ "Facts and figures: Porto Alegre Brazil Temple," LDS Church News, 23 December 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39072/Facts-and-figures-Porto-Alegre-Brazil-Temple.html>

⁸²⁴ "Facts and figures: Campinas Brazil Temple," LDS Church News, 25 May 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41867/Facts-and-figures-Campinas-Brazil-Temple.html>

⁸²⁵ "Fireside in Brazil viewed by 22,463 via satellite," LDS Church News, 24 May 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43783/Fireside-in-Brazil-viewed-by-22463-via-satellite.html>

⁸²⁶ "Work in Brazil 'a miracle,' will grow," LDS Church News, 28 February 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45152/Work-in-Brazil-a-miracle-will-grow.html>

⁸²⁷ "99,000 visit Sao Paulo temple," LDS Church News, 28 February 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45151/99000-visit-Sal-Paulo-temple.html>

On the 2000 census, only 199,645 persons identified themselves as Latter-day Saints,⁸²⁸ just 26% of the number of members reported by the LDS Church at year-end 2000. The number of active members varies dramatically by congregation. One of the branches in the Sao Sebastiao area had less than forty active members in 2009. A branch in Abaetetuba in 2009 had forty active members. In early 2010, one ward in the Sorocaba area had over 200 active members, and one ward in the Cruz Alta Brazil Stake had 150 active members. One of the branches in Rondonopolis had sixty active members in mid-2010. In late 2010, the Sorriso Branch had approximately fifty active members. In early 2011, the Itaporanga Branch had fifteen active members. Current nationwide active membership is estimated at between 250,000 and 300,000, or 25% of total membership.

Finding

Missionaries in most areas only taught investigators from families that could hold the priesthood prior to the 1978 Revelation extending priesthood privileges to all worthy males.⁸²⁹ In 1988, one hundred attended a church conference to educate others about LDS beliefs in Indaiatuba.⁸³⁰ A third of the nearly 800 that attended a special musical performance commemorating the independence of Brazil at an LDS stake center in Sao Paulo were not LDS.⁸³¹ In 1992, the Curitiba Brazil Portao Stake produced a Book of Mormon musical, which had over 1,000 attending performances. Thirty percent (30%) to 40% of those in attendance were not LDS, and the play caught the attention of local television stations.⁸³² That same year, a television station in Rondonia State aired LDS missionary videos.⁸³³ LDS youth presented a Book of Mormon to the governor of Pernambuco State in 1992.⁸³⁴ In 1994, the Church participated in a symposium on religion and culture at Rio de Janeiro State University, which resulted in over 200 missionary referrals.⁸³⁵ LDS employment resources have helped full-time missionaries find new investigators.⁸³⁶ In April 2005, the Church in Sao Paulo performed the musical *Savior of the World*, which had a combined 3,600 in attendance at five performances.⁸³⁷

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Portuguese, Spanish, German.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in Portuguese, Spanish, and German. The *Liabona* magazine has monthly issues in each of these languages.

⁸²⁸ "Brazil," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148738.htm>

⁸²⁹ Oakes, Jeannette N.; Ribolla, Nei Garcia; Ribolla, Celia Ikuno. "Growth followed priesthood revelation," LDS Church News, 31 May 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43826/Growth-followed-priesthood-revelation.html>

⁸³⁰ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 27 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17976/From-around-the-world.html>

⁸³¹ "Concert brings crowd to Brazilian stake center," LDS Church News, 20 October 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20089/Concert-brings-crowd-to-Brazilian-stake-center.html>

⁸³² "Stake pursues missionary goals through Book of Mormon musical," LDS Church News, 2 May 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22179/Stake-pursues-missionary-goals-through-Book-of-Mormon-musical.html>

⁸³³ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 8 August 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22240/From-around-the-world.html>

⁸³⁴ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 11 January 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22083/From-around-the-world.html>

⁸³⁵ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 9 July 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25332/From-around-the-world.html>

⁸³⁶ Soli, Ana Claudia. "A job, and more," LDS Church News, 20 November 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46490/A-job-and-more.html>

⁸³⁷ Garcia, Nei. "'Savior of the World' translated, performed in Brazil," LDS Church News, 21 May 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47337/Savior-of-the-World-translated-performed-in-Brazil.html>

Meetinghouses

There were 308 LDS meetinghouses in 1988.⁸³⁸ In early 2011, there were an estimated 1,200 meetinghouses. Most congregations assemble in church-built chapels, whereas small branches or newly created congregations at times meet in rented spaces or renovated buildings.

Health and Safety

High-crime neighborhoods, tropical climate, illicit drug trafficking, and dangerous roads pose safety concerns for members and missionaries. In 2001, a North American full-time missionary suffered a gunshot wound after being attacked in Rio de Janeiro.⁸³⁹ In 2005, a North American missionary received a head wound in a robbery attempt.⁸⁴⁰ In 2008, a North American missionary died in a hit-and-run car accident in the Brazil Salvador Mission.⁸⁴¹

Humanitarian and Development Work

LDS youth provided service at rest homes in 1991.⁸⁴² In 1992, members in Rio de Janeiro donated clothing, books, and shoes to their bishops for distribution among needy LDS members in the area.⁸⁴³ That same year, 400 members in two Sao Paulo stakes donated 1,800 hours of service, collecting 500 pounds of winter clothing for the poor.⁸⁴⁴ Over 500 youth in Ribeirao Preto cleaned a city street in 1992.⁸⁴⁵ That same year, members in Bauru volunteered at an orphanage.⁸⁴⁶ In 1994, fourteen stakes in the Sao Paulo area participated in a blood drive to replenish dwindling blood supplies in the area.⁸⁴⁷ That same year, members in Sao Bernardo donated two tons of winter clothing for the poor and homeless.⁸⁴⁸ Church members in southern Brazil donated ninety tons of food to drought-stricken northern Brazil in 1998.⁸⁴⁹ 3,000 youth from the Rio de Janeiro area cleaned Copacabana Beach in 1999.⁸⁵⁰ Over 3,000 newborn kits were distributed to the needy

⁸³⁸ Hart, John L. "Vast potential of nation unfolding in growth, strength," LDS Church News, 23 April 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17630/Vast-potential-of-nation-unfolding-in-growth-strength.html>

⁸³⁹ "Missionary recovering from shooting," LDS Church News, 17 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39501/Missionary-recovering-from-shooting.html>

⁸⁴⁰ "Missionary in Brazil wounded," LDS Church News, 16 April 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47183/Missionary-in-Brazil-wounded.html>

⁸⁴¹ "Missionary killed in hit-and-run," LDS Church News, 26 April 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51931/Missionary-killed-in-hit-and-run.html>

⁸⁴² "From around the world," LDS Church News, 21 December 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21184/From-around-the-world.html>

⁸⁴³ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 18 January 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22443/From-around-the-world.html>

⁸⁴⁴ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 22 August 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22082/From-around-the-world.html>

⁸⁴⁵ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 3 October 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22442/From-around-the-world.html>

⁸⁴⁶ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 7 November 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21761/From-around-the-world.html>

⁸⁴⁷ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 13 August 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24357/From-around-the-world.html>

⁸⁴⁸ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 10 September 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24308/From-around-the-world.html>

⁸⁴⁹ Fernandes, Antonio. "Food donations lessen suffering from drought in northern Brazil," LDS Church News, 8 August 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30556/Food-donations-lessen-suffering-from-drought-in-northern-Brazil.html>

⁸⁵⁰ "3,000 youth clean beach," LDS Church News, 22 May 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35804/3000-youth-clean-beach.html>

in Rio de Janeiro that same year.⁸⁵¹ 3,000 youth in the Recife area cleaned a beach in 2000.⁸⁵² In late 2000, the Church donated 120 tons in emergency relief to flood victims in northern Brazil.⁸⁵³ Local stake leadership in Manaus organized a river cleanup effort that had over 2,000 people who participated.⁸⁵⁴ Over 30,000 members participated in service projects nationwide in October, 2001,⁸⁵⁵ and over 25,000 members helped distributed one hundred tons of food to the needy.⁸⁵⁶ 30,000 participated in a church service event refurbishing schools around the country.⁸⁵⁷ The Church was recognized for its service activities under “Helping Hands” in 2002 in a meeting with leaders from the twelve main religious denominations in Brazil.⁸⁵⁸ 500 members in ten stakes in Fortaleza conducted a Helping Hands service project for approximately 700 elderly nursing home residents.⁸⁵⁹ Over 1,000 members and their friends remodeled and cleaned nine public schools in Curitiba in 2003.⁸⁶⁰ 6,000 members and their friends from twelve Sao Paulo stakes beautified, remodeled, and cleaned schools in the Sao Paulo area.⁸⁶¹ In 2004, the Church provided neonatal resuscitation training to over one hundred medical professionals.⁸⁶² The Church organized a nationwide service project with 40,000 participants that benefited the elderly over 150 cities in 2004⁸⁶³ and has completed similar projects in recent years. In 2003, LDS Employment Resource Services helped 12,400 find employment. By the end of 2004, 5,000 loan requests were made in Brazil for the Perpetual Education Fund.⁸⁶⁴ In 2005, the Church distributed 620 water filters in northern Brazil.⁸⁶⁵ 50,000 Latter-day Saints and their friends participated in school improvement projects on April 21, 2005.⁸⁶⁶ 60,000 members and their friends volunteered in over 200 hospitals nationwide

⁸⁵¹ “3,000 newborn kits prepared, distributed,” LDS Church News, 21 August 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/36260/3000-newborn-kits—prepared-distributed.html>

⁸⁵² “Nearly 3,000 youth take part in the clean up of a famous beach in northern Brazil,” LDS Church News, 12 August 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38335/Nearly-3000-youth-take-part-in-the-clean-up-of-a-famous-beach-in-northern-Brazil.html>

⁸⁵³ “Aid given in north Brazil after destructive flooding,” LDS Church News, 9 December 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38999/Aid-given-in-north-Brazil-after-destructive-flooding.html>

⁸⁵⁴ “A cleaner river in Brazil, through education effort,” LDS Church News, 24 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39510/A-cleaner-river-in-Brazil-through-education-effort.html>

⁸⁵⁵ Assis, Fernando. “Hands that help,” LDS Church News, 3 November 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40823/Hands-that-help.html>

⁸⁵⁶ Assis, Fernando. “Brazilian members distribute 100 tons of food,” LDS Church News, 1 June 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41893/Brazilian-members-distribute-100-tons-of-food.html>

⁸⁵⁷ Assis, Fernando. “30,000 serving brighten face of entire nation,” LDS Church News, 5 October 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42531/30000-serving-brighten-face-of-entire-nation.html>

⁸⁵⁸ “Voluntarism, service celebrated in Brazil,” LDS Church News, 4 January 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43036/Voluntarism-service-celebrated-in-Brazil.html>

⁸⁵⁹ Dantas, Alex; Farias, Silvia. “Members bring joy to Fortaleza elderly,” LDS Church News, 2 August 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44120/Members-bring-joy-to-Fortaleza-elderly.html>

⁸⁶⁰ Dantas, Alex. “Lesson in charity taught by Brazilian members,” LDS Church News, 6 September 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44283/Lesson-in-charity-taught-by-Brazilian-members.html>

⁸⁶¹ Garcia, Nei. “Thousands help spruce up Sao Paulo schools,” LDS Church News, 27 September 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44366/Thousands-help-spruce-up-Sao-Paulo-schools.html>

⁸⁶² Soli, Ana Claudia. “Saving babies’ lives in Brazil by resuscitation,” LDS Church News, 17 July 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45861/Saving-babies-lives-in-Brazil-by-resuscitation.html>

⁸⁶³ Soli, Ana Claudia. “Small Hands Helping the Elderly,” LDS Church News, 11 December 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46603/Small-Hands-Helping-the-Elderly.html>

⁸⁶⁴ Soli, Ana Claudia. “Towering oak: 75 years of growth,” LDS Church News, 22 January 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46751/Towering-oak-75-years-of-growth.html>

⁸⁶⁵ Soli, Ana Claudia. “Water filters given in Brazil’s north,” LDS Church News, 14 May 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47312/Water-filters-given-in-Brazils-north.html>

⁸⁶⁶ Garcia, Nei. “50,000 help in project to refurbish schools throughout Brazil,” LDS Church News, 14 May 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47300/50000-help-in-project-to-refurbish-schools-throughout-Brazil.html>

sewing and donating hospital linens in 2006⁸⁶⁷ and 2007.⁸⁶⁸ On September 7, 2007, 60,000 members and their friends cleaned and beautified public schools nationwide.⁸⁶⁹

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Since the late 2000s, North American missionaries have experienced difficulty obtaining visas for reasons that are not entirely clear. Consequently, the number of missionaries assigned to some missions has declined due to a shortage of full-time missionaries and delays in obtaining visas. Latter-day Saints are generally well respected in many areas of Brazil and report no significant obstacles worshipping, proselytizing, or assembling.

Cultural Issues

Poverty or low levels of economic sustainability and a population with a traditionally Catholic background have contributed to high rates of receptivity to the LDS Church and other missionary-oriented Christian denominations for over half a century. However, the high degree of nominalism in the Catholic Church exhibited by most the population also represents one of the primary cultural barriers compromising long-term growth ambitions of the LDS Church. Instilling habits of regular church attendance, daily scripture reading, and personal prayer in investigators, inactive members, and new converts has been a challenge for full-time missionaries and local leaders; widespread mission policies that have emphasized short-term baptismal numbers while paying little attention to outcomes after baptism have not helped the situation. Many nominal Catholics who joined the LDS Church have become nominal Latter-day Saints, albeit most do not identify with the Church anymore. Greater European influence in southern Brazil has invited secularism and materialism, resulting in lower receptivity to the Church in recent years in this region, but member activity and convert retention rates appear higher than in central, interior, and northern areas. The prominence of Latter-day Saints in Brazilian society has increased in the past several decades as members have numbered among university professors and government officials. The Perpetual Education Fund has been well utilized in Brazil in addressing poverty and has facilitated members receiving additional education to increase job security and bolster economic self-reliance.

Carnival presents many cultural challenges for Latter-day Saints due to high rates of alcohol use and widespread sexual promiscuity associated with festivals and celebrations throughout the country. In 1994, LDS youth in Ponta Grossa, Santa Catarina, and Sao Paulo avoided the celebration by attending a youth conference and a service project.⁸⁷⁰ Full-time missionaries often visit members or stay indoors during Carnival celebrations, which can delay the progress of investigators and recent converts. Increasing drug use and gang-related violence poses challenges for LDS proselytism efforts.

National Outreach

Fifty-one percent (51%) of the national population resides in cities over 100,000 inhabitants with an LDS congregation and approximately 65% of the population resides in cities over 20,000 inhabitants with an LDS congregation. Of the 250 cities with over 100,000 inhabitants, five have no LDS mission outreach

⁸⁶⁷ Garcia, Nei. "Volunteers serve, benefit hospitals," LDS Church News, 27 May 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49013/Volunteers-serve-benefit-hospitals.html>

⁸⁶⁸ Garcia, Nei. "60,000 help hospitals," LDS Church News, 19 May 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50602/60000-help-hospitals.html>

⁸⁶⁹ Garcia, Nei. "Brazil praises Church's contribution to country," LDS Church News, 15 December 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51434/Brazil-praises-Churchs-contribution-to-country.html>

⁸⁷⁰ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 26 March 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24358/From-around-the-world.html>

centers in 2010 (Mace—Rio de Janeiro, Parauapebas—Para, Caxias—Maranhao, Araruama—Rio de Janeiro, and Trindade—Goias). Over 400 cities in Brazil between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitants have no mission outreach center. Based on population figures from the late 2000s, states with the largest number of unreached cities over 20,000 inhabitants include Sao Paulo (68), Minas Gerais (65), Bahia (32), Maranhao (31), Para (31), and Ceara (29).

Taking the ratio of LDS congregations to state population provides insights into the percentage of Latter-day Saints in the general population by Brazilian state. Rio Grande do Sul, Amazonas, Acre, Parana, and Sao Paulo support the highest percentages of members as indicated by each of these states having less than 75,000 inhabitants per LDS congregation. Brazilian states that appear to have the lowest percentage of members are Maranhao (one congregation per 469,263 inhabitants), Minas Gerais (one per 174,958), Rondonia (one per 173,389), and Para (one per 172,456). On average, there is one LDS congregation per 99,082 people in Brazil.

With nearly 6.5 million inhabitants—a population greater than that of Uruguay, Paraguay, and several other Latin American countries—Maranhao is the least reached Brazilian state, as only fourteen congregations operate in four cities, reaching fewer than 21% of the state's inhabitants. Low standards of living, remote location, and few missionary resources dedicated to the region are primarily responsible for the lack of mission outreach in Maranhao. In 2010, there were thirty-one cities with over 20,000 inhabitants in Maranhao without an LDS congregation. The Church has begun to target some lesser-reached states, as indicated by the organization of the Brazil Teresina Mission in 2009 to administer Maranhao and Piaui. Reliance on full-time missionaries to expand national outreach appears to be the primary barrier preventing outreach in many unreached areas. The nearly thirty million Brazilian populating rural areas have few or no LDS congregations within close proximity to their homes and may not receive LDS mission outreach for decades to come based on current trends of national outreach expansion.

Many large cities possess multiple lesser-reached communities, such as Belem, Belo Horizonte, Cuiaba, Rio de Janeiro, and Sao Paulo. Distance from LDS meetinghouse has been a source of convert attrition and member inactivity. The establishment of additional branches, dependent branches, and groups in these urban areas can increase mission outreach over the long term and provide opportunity for stronger convert retention and member activity rates as new converts are funneled into local church leadership positions with assistance from full-time missionaries and stake or district presidencies. The Church has dedicated more resources toward enhancing its presence in large cities in accordance with the “centers of strength” philosophy adopted in nations with high receptivity but limited local leadership. However, as Brazil has expanded its local leadership force in many of the largest cities, the organization of additional congregations to improve national outreach may be more sustainable than in times past.

The Church has faced the enormous task of opening new cities in a coordinated fashion for decades. It was not until the reorganization of the Porto Velho Branch and the organization of the Rio Branco Branch in 1988 that all Brazilian states in the Amazon Basin had an LDS congregation,⁸⁷¹ at a time when there were approximately 300,000 members nationwide. In early 2011, the states of Roraima and Amapa remained without LDS stakes. President James E. Faust noted in 1998 that there were 140 cities with over 50,000 inhabitants and 400 cities with over 40,000 inhabitants without LDS missionaries.⁸⁷² Full-time missionaries have consistently served in areas with a strong church membership in an effort to build centers of strength.⁸⁷³ As a result of reliance on full-time missionaries to expand national outreach, little progress occurred in the 2000s opening new

⁸⁷¹ “From around the world,” LDS Church News, 17 September 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18323/From-around-the-World.html>

⁸⁷² “Brazilians honor President Faust as ‘one of their own,’” LDS Church News, 9 May 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31720/Brazilians-honor-President-Faust-as-one-of-their-own.html>

⁸⁷³ Hart, John L. “Vast potential of nation unfolding in growth, strength,” LDS Church News, 23 April 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17630/Vast-potential-of-nation-unfolding-in-growth-strength.html>

cities for missionary work due to the plateauing of world LDS missionary numbers. Delaying the opening of additional cities may result in missing the chance when the inhabitants are most receptive to the Church and losing the receptive population to other missionary-minded denominations.

Internet, radio, and television each appear to be potentially useful proselytism approaches in Brazil. There has been some use of radio by full-time missionaries but no programs that have been self-sustaining and broadcast long term. In 1992, the Church broadcasted public service and gospel messages on a radio station in Rio Claro.⁸⁷⁴ Internet-based proselytism has achieved the greatest success among media-focused missionary work. Brazil had the seventh-most visitors to the Church's website in 1997.⁸⁷⁵ In December 2010, the LDS country website for Brazil was the most viewed country site with approximately 37,000 visits.⁸⁷⁶ The Church's Brazil website at <http://www.lds.org.br> provides Portuguese language church materials and online LDS scriptures. Outreach through local members inviting and committing friends and relatives to learn about the Church via Facebook and other social networking sites has begun to be developed and has enormous potential to expand missionary activity into lesser-reached areas.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Low member activity and poor convert retention rates have originated largely from the rushed, quick-baptism techniques employed by full-time missionaries that provided minimal teaching and pre-baptismal preparation followed by little or no missionary and local member support thereafter. High membership growth rates in the 1980s and 1990s largely arose from the reckless manner in which many missions utilized such techniques among a highly receptive population. The conduct of proselytism by itinerant missionaries and leaders with little accountability and no long-term vested interest in building viable local congregations and leadership focus on baptismal numbers with little concern for post-baptismal outcomes often resulted in poor decisions being made to quickly baptize inadequately prepared converts. The baptism of large numbers of new converts in the late 1980s strained congregational resources and local leadership,⁸⁷⁷ especially as few converts became active members. Local leadership was often poorly developed and highly dependent on full-time missionaries during this period, yet congregational growth rates were at their highest in the history of the LDS Church in Brazil largely due to low standards for the organization of new congregations or to maintain functioning congregations. Failure for many areas to generate additional leadership from the throngs of new converts baptized during this period is evidenced by the hundreds of congregation consolidations in the early 2000s, many of which relied heavily on full-time missionaries or required the few active members to hold multiple callings to operate. In the late 2000s and early 2010s, greater attention had been directed toward preparing investigators for baptism and fostering local leadership growth though successful implementation of *Preach My Gospel* guidelines, especially in missions in southern Brazil. During this period, many missions in southern Brazil baptized substantially fewer converts than missions in the north but often reported congregational growth rates slightly lower or equal to missions in higher baptizing areas. However, increased standards have not been fully consistent and have varied widely by mission. As of 2011, implementation of reformed missionary guidelines had not been fully implemented in all missions, as several missions continued to focus on arbitrary baptismal quotas that have not lead to meaningful church growth as evidenced by increasing congregational growth rates and greater maturation of local leadership.

The consistent creation of new congregations and reduction in the number of congregation consolidations

⁸⁷⁴ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 21 March 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22445/From-around-the-world.html>

⁸⁷⁵ "Internet users find LDS web site," LDS Church News, 1 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29302/Internet-users-find-LDS-web-site.html>

⁸⁷⁶ "LDS Church Websites' Traffic Stats," www.mormonmissionprep.com, retrieved 19 January 2011. <http://www.mormonmissionprep.com/2011/01/18/lds-church-websites-traffic-stats/>

⁸⁷⁷ Hart, John L. "Vast potential of nation unfolding in growth, strength," LDS Church News, 23 April 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17630/Vast-potential-of-nation-unfolding-in-growth-strength.html>

since the mid-2000s indicates some stabilization of member activity and convert retention rates, notwithstanding that current rates of congregational growth continue to be well below membership growth rates. If annual congregational growth rates were constant with annual membership growth rates, which have averaged around 44%, we would expect the number of congregations to increase by seventy to eighty a year in Brazil. Since the mid-2000s the number of congregations has typically increased by half this number.

Member-missionary efforts have greatly facilitated church growth in Brazil and have generated more positive outcomes regarding long-term convert retention. Including a personal written testimony of a member at the front of a Book of Mormon distributed by full-time missionaries is a simple method that increased convert baptismal rates in the past.⁸⁷⁸ While working at a clothing store, two members in Porto Alegre referred over 120 people to the full-time missionaries in a single month, twenty of whom were baptized.⁸⁷⁹ In 1993, up to 80% of investigators taught by full-time missionaries in the Brazil Campinas Mission were referred by local members.⁸⁸⁰ Boy and Cub Scouting have been methods to help improve member activity and convert retention among youth.⁸⁸¹ One stake in the Sao Paulo area reported higher member activity and convert retention among men by an increased emphasis on baptizing full families rather than individuals.⁸⁸² However, this practice has also substantially reduced growth rates, as few families are ready to have all members simultaneously join the Church, and many worthy and prepared single individuals are not taught. Congregations that have historically relied on full-time missionaries to function in areas where districts have been unable to mature into stakes represent both results and causes of low member activity, generating a vicious cycle of poor retention and low activity in areas that have been most severely affected by quick-baptism tactics.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

There is little racial prejudice on a local or state level, as a large portion of the population claims mixed ancestry.⁸⁸³ Member integration challenges appear largely influenced by socioeconomic differences rather than racial differences, especially between southern and northern Brazil. Racial integration issues become more pronounced on a national level, which can create some challenges for Brazilian full-time missionaries serving far from their native states.

Language Issues

The Church greatly benefits from a homogenously Portuguese-speaking population in Brazil. The translation of many church materials and books into Portuguese allows for increased gospel scholarship among Brazilian members compared to many other nations. Little linguistic diversity has facilitated growth. Portuguese is the third most commonly spoken language among Latter-day Saints; there were 780,000 Portuguese-speaking Latter-day Saints in 2000 worldwide, nearly all of whom were in Brazil.⁸⁸⁴ Non-Portuguese speakers are few in number and will likely not receive coordinated mission outreach for many years due to the size of the LDS

⁸⁷⁸ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 13 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18325/From-around-the-world.html>

⁸⁷⁹ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 23 July 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18124/From-around-the-world.html>

⁸⁸⁰ "Eight new missions announced," LDS Church News, 6 March 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23130/Eight-new-missions-announced.html>

⁸⁸¹ "Beginning with the Cubs, Brazilian youth learn the value of serving others," LDS Church News, 2 February 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21446/Beginning-with-the-Cubs-Brazilian-youth-learn-the-value-of-serving-others.html>

⁸⁸² "Brazil stake stresses activation, retention," LDS Church News, 2 March 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27242/Brazil-stake-stresses-activation-retention.html>

⁸⁸³ Hart, John L. "Vast potential of nation unfolding in growth, strength," LDS Church News, 23 April 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17630/Vast-potential-of-nation-unfolding-in-growth-strength.html>

⁸⁸⁴ Hart, John L. "Other languages surpass English," LDS Church News, 2 September 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38396/Other-languages-surpass-English.html>

missionary force in perspective with the total size of the Brazilian population. No Amerindian languages have realistic prospects for future LDS materials in the foreseeable future.

Missionary Service

By 1988, most full-time missionaries serving in Brazil were Brazilian. Local members helped to reduce mission costs by feeding missionaries,⁸⁸⁵ but the high price to serve a mission nonetheless reduced the number of full-time missionaries serving at the time. Returned missionaries have offered valuable leadership manpower and experience for decades.⁸⁸⁶ Eighty-two of the 136 full-time missionaries in the Brazil Brasilia were Brazilian in late 1990.⁸⁸⁷ 80% of the missionary force in the Brazil Rio de Janeiro Mission was Brazilian in early 1993.⁸⁸⁸

In 1993, the Church began construction of its second largest missionary training center outside the United States in Sao Paulo that was 10,800 square feet, had a 1,000 seat assembly room, and could accommodate 900 missionaries. The previous missionary training center could accommodate only 200 missionaries.⁸⁸⁹ Brazil supplied the Church with the most full-time missionaries of any country outside the United States by 1993.⁸⁹⁰ The new Brazil Missionary Training Center was completed in 1997 to house up to 750 missionaries, 375 in each building, but initially only one building was occupied.⁸⁹¹ In 1998, the Church began sending North American missionaries destined to serve in Brazil to the Brazil Missionary Training Center for half of their missionary training to facilitate their cultural and language adaptation.⁸⁹² In 2006, full-time missionaries serving from Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, and Zimbabwe received missionary training at the Brazil MTC. The number of missionaries receiving training at the center varied from 150 to 550 and usually averaged around 300 in 2006.⁸⁹³ The number of missionaries assigned to the Brazil Manaus Mission dropped from 210 in 2009 to 150 in 2010 due to a shortage of missionaries in Brazil caused by visa delays for North American missionaries and limited numbers of Brazilian youth serving missions. By early 2011, the number of missionaries in the center dropped to sixty due to visa complications with North American missionaries.⁸⁹⁴ Low occupancy of the center at present illustrates the low degree of sustainability of the Brazilian full-time missionary force and reliance on North American missionaries to make up the difference. The Church operates a website for Brazil providing information for members desiring to serve a full-time mission at <http://www.casaismissionarios.org.br/>.

⁸⁸⁵ Hart, John L. "Vast potential of nation unfolding in growth, strength," LDS Church News, 23 April 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17630/Vast-potential-of-nation-unfolding-in-growth-strength.html>

⁸⁸⁶ Hart, John L. "Vast potential of nation unfolding in growth, strength," LDS Church News, 23 April 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17630/Vast-potential-of-nation-unfolding-in-growth-strength.html>

⁸⁸⁷ Avant, Gerry. "Missionaries obey spirit; teach future mission leader," LDS Church News, 27 October 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19994/Missionaries-obey-spirit-teach-future-mission-leader.html>

⁸⁸⁸ "Eight new missions announced," LDS Church News, 6 March 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23130/Eight-new-missions-announced.html>

⁸⁸⁹ "Ground broken for new Brazil center," LDS Church News, 18 September 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23086/Ground-broken-for-new-Brazil-center.html>

⁸⁹⁰ Hart, John L. "Local missionaries support in service by international fund," LDS Church News, 13 November 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23323/Local-missionaries-supported-in-service-by-international-fund.html>

⁸⁹¹ "New Brazil MTC capable of housing 750 missionaries," LDS Church News, 14 June 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28786/New-Brazil-MTC-capable-of-housing-750-missionaries.html>

⁸⁹² "North American missionaries receive training in Brazil," LDS Church News, 20 March 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35401/North-American-missionaries-receive-training-in-Brazil.html>

⁸⁹³ Soli, Ana Claudia. "'Happiest place' is Brazil's MTC," LDS Church News, 7 January 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48352/Happiest-place-is-Brazils-MTC.html>

⁸⁹⁴ Stack, Peggy Fletcher. "Visa snags slow LDS missions to Brazil," The Salt Lake Tribute, 26 January 2011. <http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/home/51121821-76/brazil-lds-visa-missionaries.html.csp>

Leadership

Rapid growth in the number of priesthood holders has occurred periodically in Brazil. In 1995, two stakes in Manaus sustained 116 men to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood in a single day.⁸⁹⁵ Overall, Brazil exhibits low to fair levels of leadership sustainability as evidenced by past congregation consolidations and congregational growth rates far below nominal membership growth rates. Increasing numbers of stakes in the latter half of the 2000s points toward some improvement, but dozens of districts remain unable to mature into stakes due to lacking numbers of active Melchizedek Priesthood holders. Sao Paulo generates the greatest body of LDS leadership in Brazil. Brazilian Latter-day Saints have regularly served in several national and international church leadership positions as mission presidents, regional representatives, area authorities, general authorities, and temple presidents.

In 1988, Paulo R. Grahl from Canoas was called as the mission president⁸⁹⁶ of the Brazil Brasilia Mission.⁸⁹⁷ In 1990, Athos Marques de Amorim from Resende was called as a mission president⁸⁹⁸ of the Brazil Fortaleza Mission, Jairo Massagardi from Campinas⁸⁹⁹ was called to preside over the Brazil Salvador Mission,⁹⁰⁰ and Claudio Roberto Mendes Costa from Sao Paulo was called to preside over the Brazil Manaus Mission.⁹⁰¹ In 1991, Fernando Jose Duarte De Araujo from Fortaleza was called as the Portugal Lisbon South Mission president.⁹⁰² In 1992, Sebastiao L. Oliveira from Campinas was called to preside over the Brazil Curitiba Mission,⁹⁰³ and A. Heliton Lemos from Curitiba was called to preside over the Brazil Campinas Mission.⁹⁰⁴ In 1993, Aldo Francesconi from Sao Paulo,⁹⁰⁵ Damasceno Moises Barreiro from Ribeirao Preto,⁹⁰⁶ and J. Moreira Silva from Santo Andre were called as mission presidents.⁹⁰⁷ Also, Joao Roberto Martins Silva from Sao Paulo was called to preside over the Brazil Fortaleza Mission,⁹⁰⁸ Homero S. Amato from Sao Paulo was called to preside over the Brazil Salvador Mission,⁹⁰⁹ Valerio Kikuchi from Sao Paulo was called to preside over

⁸⁹⁵ "116 priesthood advancements in single day," LDS Church News, 9 September 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25731/116-priesthood-advancements-in-single-day.html>

⁸⁹⁶ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 5 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18117/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁸⁹⁷ "Assignments announced for new mission presidents," LDS Church News, 19 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17968/Assignments-announced-for-new-mission-presidents.html>

⁸⁹⁸ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 10 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20308/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁸⁹⁹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 17 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20312/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁰⁰ "Worldwide missions: 122 leaders assigned," LDS Church News, 31 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20305/Worldwide-missions-122-leaders-assigned.html>

⁹⁰¹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 21 April 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20316/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁰² "New mission president," LDS Church News, 29 June 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21412/New-mission-president.html>

⁹⁰³ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 14 March 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22618/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁰⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 28 March 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22615/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁰⁵ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 23 January 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23667/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁰⁶ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 13 February 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23678/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁰⁷ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 13 March 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23665/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁰⁸ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 27 March 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23682/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁰⁹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 3 April 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23682/New-mission-presidents.html>

the Brazil Rio de Janeiro Mission,⁹¹⁰ and Jose B. Puerta from Ribeirao Preto was called to preside over the Brazil Florianapolis Mission.⁹¹¹ By early 1994, over half of the mission presidents for Brazil's missions were Brazilian.⁹¹² In 1994, Yatyr M. Cesar from Sao Paulo was called as a mission president,⁹¹³ and Expedicto J. Saraiva from San Jose Dos Campos was called to preside over the Brazil Belo Horizonte Mission,⁹¹⁴ Marcos A. Prieto from Sorocaba was called to preside over the Brazil Salvador South Mission,⁹¹⁵ and Pedro J. Penha from Cariacica was called to preside over the Brazil Belem Mission.⁹¹⁶ In 1995, Gutenberg G. Amorim from Campina Grande was called to preside over the Brazil Marilia Mission.⁹¹⁷ In 1996, Joao Roberto Grahl from Sao Bernardo was called to preside over the Brazil Recife Mission,⁹¹⁸ Vicente Verta Jr. from Sao Joao da Boa Vista was called to preside over the Brazil Manaus Mission,⁹¹⁹ and Jose O. Fabricio from Sao Paulo was called to preside over the Brazil Ribeirao Preto Mission.⁹²⁰ In 1997, Milton Da Rocha Camargo from Sao Paulo⁹²¹ was called to preside over the Brazil Porto Alegre South Mission,⁹²² Carlos A. Godoy from Sao Paulo was called to preside over the Brazil Belem Mission,⁹²³ and Mauro J. De Maria from Sorocaba was called to preside over the Brazil Salvador South Mission.⁹²⁴ In 1998, Wilson R. Gomes from Sao Paulo⁹²⁵ was called to preside over the Brazil Joao Pessoa Mission,⁹²⁶ and Antonio Casado R. from Itatiba was called to preside over the Brazil Goiana Mission.⁹²⁷ In 1999, Jose M. Arias from Sao Paulo was called to preside over the Brazil Fortaleza Mission, Nivaldo Bentim from Bauru was called to preside over the Brazil Florianapolis Mission,⁹²⁸ and

⁹¹⁰ "New mission presidencies," LDS Church News, 17 April 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23670/New-mission-presidencies.html>

⁹¹¹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 22 May 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23673/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹¹² "Brazil is third country to have 100 stakes," LDS Church News, 19 February 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25432/Brazil-is-third-country-to-have-100-stakes.html>

⁹¹³ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 19 March 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25068/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹¹⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 26 March 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25062/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹¹⁵ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 2 April 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25061/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹¹⁶ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 14 May 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25058/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹¹⁷ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 15 April 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26539/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹¹⁸ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 4 May 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27475/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹¹⁹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 11 May 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27478/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹²⁰ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 1 June 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27591/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹²¹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 1 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29080/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹²² "New and Returning Mission Presidents: 1997," LDS Church News, 15 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29771/New-and-Returning-Mission-Presidents-1997.html>

⁹²³ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 5 April 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29076/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹²⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 14 June 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29947/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹²⁵ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 7 February 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30619/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹²⁶ "New and returning Mission Presidents: 1998," LDS Church News, 7 March 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31379/New-and-returning-Mission-Presidents-1998.html>

⁹²⁷ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 4 April 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31385/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹²⁸ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 27 March 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35422/New-mission-presidents.html>

Edson J. Lopes from Belo Horizonte was called to preside over the Brazil Maceio Mission.⁹²⁹ In 2000, Ulisses Soares from Sao Paulo⁹³⁰ was called to preside over the Portugal Porto Mission,⁹³¹ Celso Rolim De Freitas from Sorocaba was called to preside over the Brazil Belo Horizonte East Mission, Paulo Roberto Toffanelli from Santo Andre was called to preside over the Brazil Belo Horizonte Mission,⁹³² Sergio Luis Carboni from Joao Pessoa was called to preside over the Brazil Salvador Mission, Ronaldo Da Costa from Brasilia was called to preside over the Portugal Lisbon South Mission,⁹³³ and Edson De Marques was called to preside over the Brazil Sao Paulo East Mission.⁹³⁴ In 2001, Domingos Savio Linhares from Jaboatao⁹³⁵ was called to preside over the Brazil Santa Maria Mission, Aledir Paganelli Barbour from Sao Paulo⁹³⁶ was called to preside over the Brazil Goiana Mission, Carlos Roberto Martins from Campinas⁹³⁷ was called to preside over the Brazil Joao Pessoa Mission,⁹³⁸ and Luiz Carlos S. De Franca from Belem was called to preside over the Brazil Londrina Mission.⁹³⁹ In 2002, Leonel Sa Maia from Sao Paulo was called to preside over the Brazil Fortaleza Mission, Nata Cruciol Tobias from Sao Jose dos Pinhais was called to preside over the Brazil Maceio Mission,⁹⁴⁰ Reinaldo de Souza Barreto from Sao Paulo was called to preside over the Rio de Janeiro Brazil Mission,⁹⁴¹ Guilherme Tell Peixoto from Ribeiro Preto was called to preside over the Brazil Florianopolis Mission,⁹⁴² Saul Rodrigues Duarte from Niteroi was called to preside over the Recife Brazil Mission, Adelson De Paula Parrella from Sao Jose was called to preside over the Brazil Manaus Mission,⁹⁴³ Sandro Quatel Silva from Salvador was called to preside over the Brazil Rio de Janeiro North Mission, and Henrique Sergio Alves Simplicio from Jaboatao was called to preside over the Brazil Ribeirao Preto Mission.⁹⁴⁴ In 2003, Eduardo Gavarret Inzaurrealde from Sao Paulo⁹⁴⁵ was called to preside over the Paraguay Asuncion Mission,⁹⁴⁶ Paulo C. de Amorim from Barueri was called to

⁹²⁹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 3 April 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35439/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹³⁰ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 19 February 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37202/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹³¹ "New and Returning Mission Presidents," LDS Church News, 11 March 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37313/New-and-Returning-Mission-Presidents.html>

⁹³² "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 18 March 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37337/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹³³ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 15 April 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37597/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹³⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 6 May 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37716/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹³⁵ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 20 January 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39194/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹³⁶ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 27 January 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39223/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹³⁷ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 10 February 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39298/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹³⁸ "New and Returning Mission Presidents," LDS Church News, 10 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39468/New-and-Returning-Mission-Presidents.html>

⁹³⁹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 17 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39474/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁴⁰ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 9 March 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41422/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁴¹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 16 March 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41438/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁴² "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 23 March 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41472/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁴³ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 20 April 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41706/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁴⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 11 May 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41792/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁴⁵ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 22 February 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43275/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁴⁶ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 8 March 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43323/>

preside over the Portugal Lisbon Mission, Marco Antonio Rais from Porto Alegre was called to preside over the Brazil Belo Horizonte East Mission,⁹⁴⁷ and Benedito Sergio Antunes dos Santos from Sao Paulo was called to preside over the Brazil Porto Alegre North Mission.⁹⁴⁸ In 2004, Silvio Geschwandtner from Porto Alegre⁹⁴⁹ was called to preside over the Brazil Joao Pessoa Mission, and Romeo Antonio Piros from Sao Paulo⁹⁵⁰ was called to preside over the Cape Verde Praia Mission.⁹⁵¹ In 2005, Victor Afranio Asconavieta Da Silva from Pelotas⁹⁵² was called to preside over the Brazil Fortaleza Mission,⁹⁵³ Jarbas F. Souza from Curitiba was called to preside over the Brazil Salvador Mission,⁹⁵⁴ Joao Louis dos Santos Oppe from Osasco was called to preside over the Brazil Rio de Janeiro North Mission,⁹⁵⁵ and Paulo Henrique Itinose from Aracatuba was called to preside over the Brazil Manaus Mission.⁹⁵⁶ In 2006, Getulio Walter Jagher Silva from Curitiba⁹⁵⁷ was called to preside over the Brazil Salvador South Mission,⁹⁵⁸ and Cesar Augusto Seiguer Milder from Brasilia was called to preside over the Brazil Cuiaba Mission.⁹⁵⁹ In 2007, Paulo Messias de Araujo from Vitoria⁹⁶⁰ was called to preside over the Brazil Curitiba Mission,⁹⁶¹ Ildefonso de Castro Deus from Curitiba was called to preside over the Brazil Campinas Mission, Luiz Manoel Leal from Ribeirao Pires was called to preside over the Brazil Londrina Mission,⁹⁶² Vaguiner Cruciol Tobias from Feira de Santana was called to preside over the Brazil Goiana Mission,⁹⁶³ Rodrigo de Lima e Myrrha from Belo Horizonte was called to preside over the Brazil Santa Maria Mission,⁹⁶⁴ and David Garcia Fernandes from Fortaleza was called to preside over the Brazil Joao Pessoa

New-mission-presidents-for-105-missions.html

⁹⁴⁷ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 29 March 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43422/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁴⁸ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 17 May 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43760/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁴⁹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 14 February 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45075/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁵⁰ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 28 February 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45162/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁵¹ "New and Returning mission presidents for 113 missions," LDS Church News, 6 March 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45190/New-and-Returning-mission-presidents-for-113-missions.html>

⁹⁵² "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 12 February 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46846/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁵³ "Mission Presidents for 122 missions," LDS Church News, 26 February 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46913/Mission-Presidents-for-122-missions.html>

⁹⁵⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 5 March 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46939/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁵⁵ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 2 April 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47059/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁵⁶ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 23 April 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47201/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁵⁷ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 18 February 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48549/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁵⁸ "New and returning mission presidents," LDS Church News, 4 March 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48593/New-and-returning-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁵⁹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 15 July 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49195/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁶⁰ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 24 February 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50165/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁶¹ "New mission presidents receive assignments," LDS Church News, 3 March 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50207/New-mission-presidents-receive-assignments.html>

⁹⁶² "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 14 April 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50447/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁶³ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 5 May 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50536/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁶⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 19 May 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50589/New-mission-presidents.html>

Mission.⁹⁶⁵ In 2008, Antonio Kaulle Machado Bezerra from Fortaleza was called to preside over the Brazil Rio de Janeiro Mission, Gelson Pizzirani from Sao Paulo was called to preside over the Brazil Brasilia Mission,⁹⁶⁶ Mario Helio Emerick from Sao Paulo was called to preside over the Brazil Recife Mission,⁹⁶⁷ Ricardo Vieira from Sao Paulo was called to preside over the Brazil Ribeirao Preto Mission,⁹⁶⁸ and Carlos Roberto Toledo was called to preside over the Brazil Salvador Mission.⁹⁶⁹ In 2009, Adilson de Paula Parrella from Alphaville was called to preside over the Brazil Belo Horizonte Mission,⁹⁷⁰ Edison Pavan from Rio Claro was called to preside over the Brazil Porto Alegre North Mission, Moroni Bing Torgan from Brasilia was called to preside over the Portugal Lisbon Mission,⁹⁷¹ and Jose Claudio Furtado Campos from Teresina was called as a mission president.⁹⁷² In 2010, Ramon Cesar Catherini Prieto from Sorocaba was called to preside over the Brazil Goiana Mission,⁹⁷³ Isaias De Oliveira Ribeiro from Londrina was called to preside over the Brazil Santa Maria Mission, Eduardo Lucio Mendes Tavares from Feira de Santana was called to preside over the Brazil Londrina Mission,⁹⁷⁴ and Gilson Roberto Catherini Prieto from Sorocaba was called to preside over the Brazil Ribeirao Preto Mission.⁹⁷⁵

In 1989, Jose Fransico from Campina Grande was called as a regional representative.⁹⁷⁶ In 1991, Antonio Jose Mendonca from Petropolis was called as a regional representative.⁹⁷⁷ In 1992, Danilo Talanskas from Sao Paulo,⁹⁷⁸ Darcy Coelho Domingos Correa from Sao Paulo, Walter Guedes de Queiroz from Sao Paulo,⁹⁷⁹ Aledir P. Barbour from Sao Paulo, and Paulo R. Grahl from Canoas were called as regional representatives.⁹⁸⁰ In 1993, Milton Daniel Correa A. from Olinda,⁹⁸¹ Silvio Geschwandtner from Porto Alegre,⁹⁸² and Claudio

⁹⁶⁵ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 9 June 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50701/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁶⁶ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 17 May 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/52008/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁶⁷ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 19 April 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51906/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁶⁸ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 26 April 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51924/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁶⁹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 24 May 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/52020/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁷⁰ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 21 March 2009. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/56782/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁷¹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 18 April 2009. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/57156/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁷² "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 21 February 2009. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/56664/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁷³ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 20 March 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59064/New-Mission-Presidents.html>

⁹⁷⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 27 March 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59086/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁷⁵ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 1 May 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59282/New-mission-presidents.html>

⁹⁷⁶ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 28 January 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18323/From-around-the-World.html>

⁹⁷⁷ "New regional representative," LDS Church News, 8 June 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20763/New-regional-representative.html>

⁹⁷⁸ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 4 April 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22173/New-regional-representatives.html>

⁹⁷⁹ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 11 July 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22715/New-regional-representatives.html>

⁹⁸⁰ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 17 October 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21766/New-regional-representatives.html>

⁹⁸¹ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 26 June 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23237/New-regional-representatives.html>

⁹⁸² "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 24 July 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23251/>

Costa from Sao Paulo were called as regional representatives.⁹⁸³ In 1994, Aledir Paganelli Barbour from Sao Paulo, Joao Antonio Dias Filho from Recife,⁹⁸⁴ and Fernando Jose da Rocha Camargo from Rio de Janeiro were called as regional representatives.⁹⁸⁵ In 1995, Fernando Jose Duarte Araujo from Fortaleza⁹⁸⁶ were called as regional representatives.

In 1995, Claudio Cuellar from Sao Paulo, Paulo Cesar F. De Amorim from Sao Paulo, Cleto Pinheiro De Oliveira from Recife, Silvio Geschwandtner from Porto Alegre, Paulo Renato Grahl from Canoas, Adelson de Paula Parrella from Florianopolis, Irajá Bandeira Soares from Jaboatao, and Ernani Teixeira from Belo Horizonte were called as area authorities.⁹⁸⁷ In 1996, Cesar A. S. Milder from Sao Paulo, Joao R. C. Martins Silva from Fortaleza were called as area authorities.⁹⁸⁸ In 1999, Pedro J. Penha from Cariacica was called as an Area Authority Seventy.⁹⁸⁹ In 2000, Marcos A. Aidukaitis from Santana de Parnaiba, Gutenberg G. Amorim from Paraiba, Yatyr M. Cesar from Canoas, and Flavio A. Cooper from Campinas were called as Area Authority Seventies.⁹⁹⁰ In 2002, Ildefonso C. Deus Neto from Curitiba and Rodrigo Myrrha from Belo Horizonte were called as Area Authority Seventies.⁹⁹¹ In 2003, Ronaldo da Costa from Brasilia, Carlos A. Godoy from Sao Paulo, Adilson de Paula Parrella from Sao Paulo, and Gelson Pizzirani from Sao Paulo were called as Area Authority Seventies.⁹⁹² In 2004, Homero S. Amato from Sao Paulo, Luiz C. Franca from Belem, Alfredo Heliton de Lemos from Curitiba, and Domingos S. Linhares from Jaboatao were called as Area Authority Seventies.⁹⁹³ In 2005, Marcelo Bolfarini from Sao Paulo, Milton da Rocha Camargo from Santana de Parnaiba, and Carlos S. Obata from Rio de Janeiro were called as Area Seventies.⁹⁹⁴ In 2006, Joni L. Koch from Bal Camboriu and Carlos Villanova from Porto Alegre were called as Area Seventies.⁹⁹⁵ In 2007, Climato C.A. Almeida from Vitoria, Fernando J.D. Araujo from Curitiba, Paulo R. Puerta from Sao Paulo, and Nata C. Tobias from Barroca were called as Area Seventies.⁹⁹⁶ In 2010, Renato Capelletti from Cuiaba, Rogeiro G.

New-regional-representatives.html

⁹⁸³ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 4 December 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23437/New-regional-representatives.html>

⁹⁸⁴ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 23 July 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24462/New-regional-representatives.html>

⁹⁸⁵ "New regional representative," LDS Church News, 29 October 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24537/New-regional-representative.html>

⁹⁸⁶ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 25 February 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26014/New-regional-representatives.html>

⁹⁸⁷ "Church names area authorities," LDS Church News, 5 August 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26627/Church-names-area-authorities.html>

⁹⁸⁸ "First Presidency calls new area authorities," LDS Church News, 24 August 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28224/First-Presidency-calls-new-area-authorities.html>

⁹⁸⁹ "6 called to Second Quorum of Seventy," LDS Church News, 3 April 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35511/6-called-to-Second-Quorum-of-Seventy.html>

⁹⁹⁰ "39 Area Authority Seventies called," LDS Church News, 8 April 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37529/39-Area-Authority-Seventies-called.html>

⁹⁹¹ "30 Area Authority Seventies sustained," LDS Church News, 13 April 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41666/30-Area-Authority-Seventies-sustained.html>

⁹⁹² "New Area Authority Seventies," LDS Church News, 19 April 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43636/New-Area-Authority-Seventies.html>

⁹⁹³ "New Area Authority Seventies," LDS Church News, 24 April 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45458/New-Area-Authority-Seventies.html>

⁹⁹⁴ "38 new Area Seventies called, 37 are released," LDS Church News, 9 April 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47147/38-new-Area-Seventies-called-37-are-released.html>

⁹⁹⁵ "New Area Seventies," LDS Church News, 22 April 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48851/New-Area-Seventies.html>

⁹⁹⁶ "46 Area Seventies called; 29 released," LDS Church News, 7 April 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50423/46-Area-Seventies-called-29-released.html>

R. Cruz from Rio de Janeiro, Edson D. G. Ribeiro from Sete Lagoas, Mozart B. Soares from Jaboatao, and Norland de Lopes Suza from Joao Pessoa were called as Area Seventies.⁹⁹⁷

In 1990, Helvecio Martins from Rio de Janeiro was called to the Second Quorum of the Seventy.⁹⁹⁸ In 1994, Claudio Roberto Mendes Costa was called to the Second Quorum of the Seventy.⁹⁹⁹ In 1998, Athos M. Amorim from Resende was called to the Second Quorum of the Seventy.¹⁰⁰⁰ In 1999, Adhemar Damiani from Sao Paulo was called to the Second Quorum of the Seventy.¹⁰⁰¹ In 2001, Elder Claudio Costa was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy.¹⁰⁰² In 2005, Elder Ulisses Soares was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy.¹⁰⁰³

In 1990, Helio da Rocha Camargo was called as the Sao Paulo Brazil Temple president.¹⁰⁰⁴ In 1993, Athos Marques de Amorim was called as the Sao Paulo Brazil Temple president.¹⁰⁰⁵ In 1996, Aledir P. Barbour from Sao Paulo was called as the Sao Paulo Brazil Temple president.¹⁰⁰⁶ In 1999, Oswaldo Silva Camargo was called as the Sao Paulo Brazil Temple president.¹⁰⁰⁷ In 2002, Sadayosi Ichi was called as the Campinas Brazil Temple president.¹⁰⁰⁸ In 2003, Nivaldo Bentim from Bauru was called as the Recife Brazil Temple president¹⁰⁰⁹ and Walter Guedes de Queiroz from Sao Paulo was called as the Porto Alegre Brazil Temple president.¹⁰¹⁰ In 2005, Ademar Damiani from Sao Paulo was called as the Campinas Brazil Temple president.¹⁰¹¹ In 2006, Valdemiro Skraba from Campinas was called as the Campinas Brazil Temple president,¹⁰¹² and Jairo Mazzagardi from Itatiba was called as the Sao Paulo Brazil Temple president.¹⁰¹³ In 2007, Izaias Pivato Nogueira from Sao Joao

⁹⁹⁷ "New Area Seventies," LDS Church News, 24 April 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59238/New-Area-Seventies.html>

⁹⁹⁸ "Ten new leaders called to 2nd Quorum of Seventy," LDS Church News, 7 April 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20357/Ten-new-leaders-called-to-2nd-Quorum-of-Seventy.html>

⁹⁹⁹ "Five called as new members of Seventy," LDS Church News, 9 April 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24543/Five-called-as-new-members-of-Seventy.html>

¹⁰⁰⁰ "13 new General Authorities called," LDS Church News, 11 April 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31492/13-new-General-Authorities-called.html>

¹⁰⁰¹ "6 called to Second Quorum of Seventy," LDS Church News, 3 April 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35511/6-called-to-Second-Quorum-of-Seventy.html>

¹⁰⁰² "12 men are sustained to Quorums of Seventy," LDS Church News, 31 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39606/12-men-are-sustained-to-Quorums-of-Seventy.html>

¹⁰⁰³ "12 are called as new Seventies," LDS Church News, 9 April 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47143/12-are-called-as-new-Seventies.html>

¹⁰⁰⁴ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 30 June 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19889/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹⁰⁰⁵ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 26 June 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23022/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹⁰⁰⁶ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 22 June 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27591/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁰⁰⁷ "New temple president," LDS Church News, 18 September 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/36400/New-temple-president.html>

¹⁰⁰⁸ "New temple president," LDS Church News, 27 April 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41742/New-temple-president.html>

¹⁰⁰⁹ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 13 September 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44322/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹⁰¹⁰ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 27 September 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44376/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹⁰¹¹ "New temple president," LDS Church News, 28 May 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47349/New-temple-president.html>

¹⁰¹² "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 5 August 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49284/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹⁰¹³ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 12 August 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49314/New-temple-presidents.html>

da Boa Vista was called as the Campina Brazil Temple president.¹⁰¹⁴ In 2010, Jose Maria Arias from Porto Alegre was called to as the Curitiba Brazil Temple president.¹⁰¹⁵

Temple

In early 2011, the Church had seven temples in Brazil, five of which were in operation, one under construction, and one announced. Active members have generally demonstrated moderate to above average rates of temple attendance. One hundred two members from Manaus traveled as a group to the Sao Paulo Brazil Temple in 1993.¹⁰¹⁶ Temple attendance increased by one-third in 1992 and by one-fourth in 1993.¹⁰¹⁷ In 1994, the Sao Paulo Brazil Temple generally operated at full capacity.¹⁰¹⁸ The Recife Brazil Temple was announced in 1995 and dedicated in 2000. In 1997, a small temple was announced for Porto Alegre,¹⁰¹⁹ which was completed in 2000. Temples constructed in Brazil were often anticipated to serve fewer stakes than at present. When the Campinas Brazil Temple was announced in 1997, it was anticipated that the temple would serve twenty stakes and one mission district,¹⁰²⁰ but in early 2011 the temple district included seventy-one stakes and twenty-two districts. In 1999, the Recife Brazil Temple was anticipated to serve forty-seven stakes and thirteen districts,¹⁰²¹ and in early 2011 serviced sixty-eight stakes and ten districts. The Manaus Brazil Temple was announced in 2007 and will likely be completed in late 2011 or early 2012.

Most Brazilian temples are moderately utilized at present, with the Campinas and Recife temples coming closest to reaching attendance capacity. In 2011, the Campinas Brazil Temple scheduled eleven endowment sessions on Tuesdays through Fridays and twelve on Saturdays, the Curitiba Brazil Temple scheduled five sessions on Tuesdays through Fridays and six on Saturdays, the Porto Alegre Brazil Temple scheduled four endowment sessions Tuesdays through Fridays and six on Saturdays, the Recife Brazil Temple scheduled ten sessions on Tuesdays through Fridays and eight on Saturdays, and the Sao Paulo Brazil Temple scheduled eight sessions Tuesdays through Fridays and ten on Saturdays.

With consistent increases in the number of stakes and growing LDS membership in regions far from currently operating or announced temples, Brazil is highly likely to have additional temples built in the future. Cities that appear most favorable for potential LDS temples in the coming decade include Belem, Belo Horizonte, Brasilia, Rio de Janeiro, and Salvador. Additional cities that may have LDS temples over the longer term include Maceio, Ribeirao Preto, Sorocaba, and Vitoria.

Comparative Growth

With the exception of the United States, the LDS Church engages in widespread missionary activity in no other country with as large of a population as Brazil. Brazil has the second most missions, stakes, and districts,

¹⁰¹⁴ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 25 August 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50974/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹⁰¹⁵ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 29 May 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59401/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹⁰¹⁶ Uilson, Felipe Santiago; Archibald, Linda Ritchie. "From Amazon basin to temple," LDS Church News, 13 March 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23015/From-Amazon-basin-to-temple.html>

¹⁰¹⁷ "In many countries, great efforts made to attend the temple," LDS Church News, 25 June 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24289/In-many-countries-great-efforts-made-to-attend-the-temple.html>

¹⁰¹⁸ "Brazil is third country to have 100 stakes," LDS Church News, 19 February 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25432/Brazil-is-third-country-to-have-100-stakes.html>

¹⁰¹⁹ "Five new temples are announced," LDS Church News, 11 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28786/New-Brazil-MTC-capable-of-housing-750-missionaries.html>

¹⁰²⁰ "Third temple announced for Brazil, in Campinas," LDS Church News, 12 April 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28752/Third-temple-announced-for-Brazil-in-Campinas.html>

¹⁰²¹ "Excitement grows, as work on new temple in Recife, Brazil, progresses," LDS Church News, 31 January 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30438/Excitement-grows-as-work-on-new-temple-in-Recife-Brazil-progresses.html>

fourth most temples, and third most members worldwide. In 2004, President Hinckley noted that 7% of total LDS membership was in Brazil and that 10% of annual worldwide convert baptisms occurred in Brazil.¹⁰²² On average, Brazilian missions service larger populations than missions in other South American countries, as in 2009 there was one LDS mission per 7.4 million people in Brazil, whereas there was one LDS mission per six million people in South America as a whole. If Brazil had the same population to LDS mission ratio as Peru, there would be sixty-one LDS missions in Brazil. Member activity rates in Brazil appear comparable to most of Latin America. Brazil had more students enrolled in seminary and institute in the late 2000s than Mexico, although Mexico had approximately 100,000 more Latter-day Saints on church records. The Church experienced annual increases in the number of congregations in Brazil that were higher than any other country other than the United States during the late 2000s. Since the mid-2000s, the Church has organized more stakes in Brazil than in any other country outside the United States. Brazil boasts the largest number of cities with over 20,000 inhabitants without an LDS congregation in Latin America.

Most missionary-oriented Christians report rapid membership and congregational growth in Brazil. Jehovah's Witnesses baptized over 30,000 converts in 2009 and operated 10,749 congregations, more than five times as many congregations as Latter-day Saints. During the year 2008, Seventh Day Adventists baptized nearly 130,000 new converts, but total Adventist membership dropped from 1,331,282 to 1,227,005 as a result of a church audit of membership in South America. Adventists continually achieve congregational growth with over one hundred new congregations created annually. Evangelicals report robust growth and far-reaching outreach in nearly every city nationwide.

Future Prospects

High receptivity, developed local leadership in many areas, a large native full-time missionary force, and hundreds of unreached medium-sized cities generate a positive outlook for future growth and national outreach expansion. Consistent congregational growth rates ensure the perpetual organization of new stakes in the coming years. Continued visa problems may continue to reduce the number of North American full-time missionaries to staff Brazil's thirty-four missions, resulting in continued delays in opening additional cities to missionary work. The organization of additional missions will depend on increases in the number of local member serving missions. With a large LDS membership and developed local leadership, Sao Paulo may warrant serious consideration as a site of a future LDS university for Brazilian Latter-day Saints, which may increase nationwide sustainability of LDS membership. Implementation of the Perpetual Education Fund will likely improve the economic status of many members and improve the Church's financial stability and independence, reducing traditional reliance on international funds to finance church operations. The Church is likely to construct several new temples in the coming years. President Hinckley challenged Brazilian Latter-day Saints to capture a vision of the potential for future church growth in Brazil, stating that the 800,000 members in the early 2000s could be doubled and tripled.¹⁰²³ Local receptivity remains high and conditions are favorable for future membership growth, but greater care regarding convert retention, reactivation efforts, and increasing the number of local members serving missions will be required for Latter-day Saints to realize Brazil's enormous potential.

¹⁰²² "Work in Brazil 'a miracle;' will grow," LDS Church News, 28 February 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45152/Work-in-Brazil-a-miracle-will-grow.html>

¹⁰²³ "Work in Brazil 'a miracle;' will grow," LDS Church News, 28 February 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45152/Work-in-Brazil-a-miracle-will-grow.html>

CHILE

Geography

AREA: 756,102 square km. Occupying a thin corridor between 50 and 400 kilometers wide stretching over 4,000 kilometers along the western coast of southern South America, Chile borders Argentina, Bolivia, Peru, and the Pacific Ocean. Temperate weather occurs in most coastal areas and central regions, with warm, arid conditions in the north and cool, wet conditions in the south. Reaching heights over 6,800 meters, the Andes Mountains run along the entire length of Chile and also form the Argentine border. Alpine and polar climatic conditions occur in the extreme south and in high elevation mountains and peaks in the Andes. Located in the north, the Atacama Desert is among the driest places on Earth with some areas not receiving precipitation for centuries. Southern coastal areas consist of complex networks of fjords and inlets reaching Cape Horn and the Strait of Magellan at the southernmost tip of South America. Tierra del Fuego is divided between Chile and Argentina. Several small islands in the Pacific are under Chilean administration, namely Easter Island, Juan Fernandez Islands, San Felix Island, and Salas y Gomez Island. Frequent earthquakes, three dozen active volcanoes, and tsunamis are natural hazards. In February 2010, one of the largest recorded earthquakes hit central Chile, measuring 8.8 on the Richter Scale. Environmental issues include deforestation, mining, air pollution, and waste water treatment. Chile is divided into fifteen administrative regions.

Peoples

White/white-Amerindian: 95.4%

Mapuche: 4%

Other indigenous groups: 0.6%

Chile has a homogenous population consisting of whites and mixed white-Amerindians in nearly all populated areas. Mapuche primarily reside south of Santiago in the Temuco area.

Population: 17,067,369 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.884% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.87 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 75.08 male, 81.25 female (2012)

Languages: Spanish (98%), Mapudungun (1.5%), other (0.5%). Spanish is the official language and only language with over one million speakers (16.4 million).

Literacy: 95.7% (2002)

History

Amerindians populated present-day Chile for millennia prior to the arrival of Spanish conquistadors in the early sixteenth century. The indigenous population thrived off of the region's fertile valleys and abundant natural resources. Spain realized the potential of the area for agriculture, and Chile became part of the Viceroyalty of Peru. Independence from Spain occurred in 1810, spurred by Napoleon's meddling in the Spanish monarchy. Loyalists to Spain and Spanish forces attempted to restore rule but were defeated by 1818. The Catholic Church, wealthy land owners, and family politics dominated public life for the remainder of

the nineteenth century. In the late nineteenth century, Chile obtained sovereignty over the Strait of Magellan and annexed a large amount of mineral-abundant territory from Peru and Bolivia. Political instability marked most of the twentieth century, as Marxists, dictators, and democrats vied for power. In 1970, Chile elected Salvador Allende to power, who propagated socialist reforms. Three years later, the military overthrew Allende as societal and political conditions deteriorated as reforms failed, placing Augusto Pinochet in power. Pinochet committed numerous human rights violations during his rule, which lasted until 1988. During this period, Pinochet encouraged foreign and private investment and a free-market economy. In the 1990s and 2000s, presidents consisted of democrats and socialists, during which time Chile maintained steady economic growth and development.¹⁰²⁴

Culture

Spanish and indigenous cultures have most strongly influenced contemporary Chilean society, art, language, and religion. Catholicism has been a major societal influence for centuries, but has weakened in power in recent years. Chile is among the most culturally European Latin American countries in South America. Famous Chilean writers include novelist Isabel Allende and poet Pablo Neruda. Cueca is the national dance and shares many similarities with dances common in Andean South America. Cuisine is highly eclectic, consisting of most foods common to Latin America and Europe with strong cooking traditions from Europe.¹⁰²⁵ Chile's Mediterranean climate is ideal for the cultivation of a diversity of foods. Chile is one of the world's greatest wine producers. Common sports include soccer, skiing, rodeo, surfing, and basketball. Cigarette and alcohol consumption rates compare to the worldwide average, but are higher than in most of Latin America.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$16,100 (2011) [33.5% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.805

Corruption Index: 7.2 (2011)

With one of the most advanced and developed economies in South America, Chile attained its position as one of the most financially responsible and powerful nations in Latin America through natural resource extraction, economic reform in the 1990s, and trade agreements with some fifty-six countries. Copper export earnings alone account for a third of total government revenue. Droughts and other natural hazards have periodically limited or led to stagnant economic growth. Chile went into recession in 2009 as foreign investment and demand for Chilean goods waned. Eighteen percent (18%) of the population lives below the poverty line. Services employ 64% of the labor force and generate 52% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 35% of the labor force and generates 23% of the GDP. Minerals (especially copper), food products, fishing, iron and steel, wood products, cement, and textiles are major industries. Agriculture employs 13% of the labor force and accounts for 6% of the GDP. Primary agricultural products include fruit, grains, vegetables, beef, poultry, wool, fish, and lumber. The United States, China, South Korea, and Brazil are the primary trade partners. Chile is one of the least corrupt nations in Latin America with corruption perceived at Western European levels, but cocaine trafficking, money laundering, and increasing drug use among Chileans are concerns.

Faiths

Christian: 87.2%

Other: 4.6%

None: 8.2%

¹⁰²⁴ "Background Note: Chile," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 12 April 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1981.htm>

¹⁰²⁵ "Culture of Chile," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 30 November 2010. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_Chile

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 11,722,544

Latter-day Saints 577,716 622

Seventh Day Adventists 118,425 616

Jehovah's Witnesses 74,157 834

Religion

Catholics account for 70% of the population over the age of fourteen. Evangelicals in Chile are predominantly Pentecostal and are the largest minority religious group, constituting 15% of the population. The indigenous Mapuche population is 65% Catholic and 29% Evangelical. Other large Christian minority groups include Latter-day Saints, Seventh Day Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses. There are small groups of Jews, Muslims, Baha'is, and Buddhists. 8% of the population is nonreligious.¹⁰²⁶

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government and local laws. There is no state religion, but the Catholic Church often receives preferential treatment. The government recognizes most major Catholic holidays as national holidays. A 1999 law forbids religious discrimination, reformed relations between the government and religious groups, and forbids the government from dissolving a religious group once registered. In 2009, there were 1,872 registered religious groups. Religious education in public schools primarily teaches Catholicism. Societal abuse of religious freedom has been minimal and targets the Jewish community.¹⁰²⁷

Largest Cities

Urban: 88%

Santiago, Puente Alto, Viña del Mar, Antofagasta, Valparaíso, San Bernardo, Temuco, Concepción, Rancagua, Talca, Arica, Iquique, Talcahuano, Puerto Montt, Coquimbo, La Serena, Chillán, Osorno, Valdivia, Quilpué, Calama, Copiapó, Los Ángeles, Punta Arenas.

All twenty-four cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS stake or district, and all cities over 15,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. Fifty-seven percent (57)% of the national population resides in the twenty-four largest cities. The Santiago metropolitan area accounts for 34% of the national population.

LDS History

In the early 1850s, LDS apostle Elder Parley P. Pratt, his wife, and Elder Rufus C. Allen attempted to begin full-time missionary work in Chile over a five-month period that did not result in a single convert baptism.¹⁰²⁸ In 1952, a Latter-day Saint family from the United States moved to Santiago for business and began corresponding with Church headquarters in Salt Lake City. The following year, LDS Church President David O. McKay visited Chile. The Church created its first congregation, the Nunoa Branch, in Santiago with thirteen

¹⁰²⁶ "Chile," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127383.htm>

¹⁰²⁷ "Chile," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127383.htm>

¹⁰²⁸ Morris, Michael R. "Chile—A Fruitful Vineyard," *Liahona*, Aug 1996, 35.

North-American members in 1956.¹⁰²⁹ Elder Henry D. Moyle dedicated Chile for missionary work the same year. The first full-time LDS missionaries arrived to Chile from the Argentina Mission and baptized the first Chilean converts.¹⁰³⁰ In 1957, local members and full-time missionaries officially registered the Church with the Chilean government. During the early 1960s, the Church began to expand to the largest cities throughout the country from Arica to Puerto Montt. Seminary and institute began in 1971. In 1977, LDS apostle Elder Bruce R. McConkie predicted that there would be 490 LDS stakes in Chile one day and that the Church would become the most powerful influence in the nation.¹⁰³¹

In mid-1989, seven gunmen entered an LDS meetinghouse in Santiago, leaving \$12,000 worth in damage from setting a fire. Similar terrorist activity occurred during this period elsewhere at the hands of political extremists targeting foreign interests.¹⁰³² In late 1990, terrorists destroyed an LDS meetinghouse in La Pincoya, Santiago.¹⁰³³ In 1991, five Latter-day Saints were among the approximately one hundred Chileans killed by mudslides in the arid north.¹⁰³⁴ In 1996, the Church organized the Chile area. Serving as the president of the Chile area, Elder Dallas N. Archibald of the First Quorum of the Seventy perished in a fishing accident in late 1998, becoming the first accidental death of an LDS General Authority in sixty years since the death of Elder J. Golden Kimball in a car accident in 1938.¹⁰³⁵ The largest known gathering of Latter-day Saints in Chile occurred when President Hinckley visited in 1999.¹⁰³⁶ Later that year, President Boyd K. Packer and Elder Dallin H. Oaks met with government officials in Santiago.¹⁰³⁷ In the early 2000s, Chile became one of the first three countries in which the Church instituted the Perpetual Education Fund.¹⁰³⁸

In 2002, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland began serving as the president of the Chile Area¹⁰³⁹ and met with Chilean President Ricardo Lagos later that year.¹⁰⁴⁰ Elder Holland's service ended in mid-2004¹⁰⁴¹ and focused on training local church leaders, restructuring stake and district organization, and consolidating hundreds of congregations. In August 2003, the Church launched a website for Chile, the first country website ever officially created by the Church.¹⁰⁴² In 2007, a fifteenth-year-old LDS girl in Talcahuano made Chilean news headlines after accidentally slipping into the ocean and surviving for two days in an underwater sea cave before

¹⁰²⁹ Iverson, Steven J. "Chile," *Ensign*, Feb 1977, 44.

¹⁰³⁰ Morris, Michael R. "Chile—A Fruitful Vineyard," *Liahona*, Aug 1996, 35.

¹⁰³¹ Morris, Michael R. "Chile—A Fruitful Vineyard," *Liahona*, Aug 1996, 35.

¹⁰³² "Precautions taken against terrorism," *LDS Church News*, 15 July 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18665/Precautions-taken-against-terrorism.html>

¹⁰³³ "Leaders 'saddened' by attack," *LDS Church News*, 22 December 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19760/Leaders-saddened-by-attack.html>

¹⁰³⁴ "Five LDS die in Chilean mudslides," *LDS Church News*, 20 July 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20939/Five-LDS-die-in-Chilean-mudslides.html>

¹⁰³⁵ "Remembering 'a servant of the Lord' Elder Archibald eulogized as man with 'no guile,'" *LDS Church News*, 2 January 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/32427/Remembering-a-servant-of-the-Lord-Elder-Archibald-eulogized-as-man-with-no-guile.html>

¹⁰³⁶ Acevedo, Rodolfo. "Cover Story: Pres. Hinckley in Chile marks largest LDS gathering," *LDS Church News*, 8 May 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35747/Cover-Story-Pres-Hinckley-in-Chile-marks-largest-LDS-gathering.html>

¹⁰³⁷ "Pres. Packer, Elder Oaks greeted by Chilean leaders," *LDS Church News*, 11 September 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/36359/Pres-Packer-Elder-Oaks-greeted-by-Chilean-leaders.html>

¹⁰³⁸ "Perpetual Education Fund has solid foundations," *LDS Church News*, 13 April 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41664/Perpetual-Education-Fund-has-solid-foundation.html>

¹⁰³⁹ "Elder Oaks, Holland assigned abroad," *LDS Church News*, 13 April 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41659/Elders-Oaks-Holland-assigned-abroad.html>

¹⁰⁴⁰ "Elder Holland visits Chilean president," *LDS Church News*, 28 December 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43006/Elder-Holland-visits-Chilean-president.html>

¹⁰⁴¹ "New area leadership," *LDS Church News*, 26 June 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45774/New-area-leadership.html>

¹⁰⁴² Stahle, Shaun D. "Web sites in the language of the people," *LDS Church News*, 26 February 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46907/Web-sites-in-the-language-of-the-people.html>

being rescued by divers.¹⁰⁴³ In 2010, one Latter-day Saint perished in the 8.8 magnitude earthquake in central Chile.¹⁰⁴⁴

Missions

The Church created the Andes Mission in 1959, which consisted of Chile and Peru, and the Chile Mission in 1961.¹⁰⁴⁵ Headquartered in Santiago, the Chile Mission divided in 1975 to create the Chile Concepcion Mission. The Church organized additional missions in Santiago North (1977), Osorno (1977), Vina del Mar (1979), Antofagasta (1988), Santiago West (1995), Santiago East (1997), and Concepcion South (2003). The Santiago Chile South Mission was renamed the Chile Rancagua Mission in 2004. The number of LDS mission in Chile reached two in 1975, five in 1979, seven in 1995, and nine in 2003. In 2013, a tenth mission was announced for Santiago South.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 577,716 (2012)

There were 450 members by 1959.¹⁰⁴⁶ In 1972, there were 20,000 Latter-day Saints, increasing to 50,000 in 1977. Membership stood at 146,000 by 1983 and 230,000 in late 1988.¹⁰⁴⁷ During the 1980s and 1990s, some 20,000 new converts were brought into the Church annually.¹⁰⁴⁸ The Chile Vina Del Mar Mission regularly baptized over 600 converts a month in the late 1980s.¹⁰⁴⁹ There were 266,000 members in late 1990.¹⁰⁵⁰ The percentage of nominal Latter-day Saint membership in the general population surpassed that of the United States in the early 1990s.¹⁰⁵¹ By 1996, there were 420,000 members.¹⁰⁵²

Annual membership growth rates declined in the 2000s from 2.1% in 2001 to a low of 0.52% in 2003 and have slightly increased to 0.82% in 2006 and 1.3% in 2009. By year-end 2000, there were 509,592 members. Church membership increased to 527,972 in 2002, 534,754 in 2004, 543,628 in 2006, and 554,749 in 2008.

The 2002 Chilean census reported 103,735 self-identified Latter-day Saints, 45% of whom were men. This represents just under 20% of nominal LDS membership at the time, although the census counted only individuals age fifteen and over. The ratio of men to women for Latter-day Saints on the census was nearly the same for Catholics and Evangelicals and slightly higher than for Jehovah's Witnesses.¹⁰⁵³ However, these other groups achieved significantly greater correlation between official membership and self-identified religious preference than Latter-day Saints. In 2009, one in thirty was nominally LDS.

¹⁰⁴³ Martinic, Ivan. "Prayers helped sustain LDS girl lost at sea," LDS Church News, 8 December 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51407/Prayers-helped-sustain-LDS-girl-lost-at-sea.html>

¹⁰⁴⁴ Swensen, Jason. "Earthquake in Chile: Faith prevails over fear," LDS Church News, 3 March 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/58888/Earthquake-in-Chile-Faith-prevails-over-fear.html>

¹⁰⁴⁵ Iverson, Steven J. "Chile," Ensign, Feb 1977, 44.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Iverson, Steven J. "Chile," Ensign, Feb 1977, 44.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Hill, Craig. "Chile's 50th stake—a milestone capping 32 years of growth," LDS Church News, 12 November 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18324/From-around-the-World.html>

¹⁰⁴⁸ Morris, Michael R. "Chile—A Fruitful Vineyard," Liahona, Aug 1996, 35.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Hart, John. "Conversions increase, reflect a worldwide surge in sharing truths," LDS Church News, 15 April 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19295/Conversions-increase-reflect-a-worldwide-surge-in-sharing-truths.html>

¹⁰⁵⁰ Acevedo, Rodolfo. "Cemetery plaque honors historic 1851 visit to Chile," LDS Church News, 24 November 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19767/Cemetery-plaque-honors-historic-1851-visit-to-Chile.html>

¹⁰⁵¹ "Strength in the South America South Area," Tambuli, Sep 1993, 44.

¹⁰⁵² Morris, Michael R. "Chile—A Fruitful Vineyard," Liahona, Aug 1996, 35.

¹⁰⁵³ "Censo 2002: Sintesis de Resultados," Comision Nacional del XVII Censo de Poblacion y vi de Vivienda, March 2003. <http://www.ine.cl/cd2002/sintesisencensal.pdf>

Congregational Growth

Wards: 425 Branches: 197 Groups: 1+ (April 2013)

Five years after the first LDS congregation was organized in Chile, there were twelve branches in 1961.¹⁰⁵⁴ In early 1975, there were eight wards and forty-three branches,¹⁰⁵⁵ and in 1977, there were thirty-four wards and fifty-three branches.¹⁰⁵⁶ Rapid congregational growth occurred in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1995 alone, the Church created over one hundred new LDS wards and branches.¹⁰⁵⁷

By year-end 1999, there were 951 congregations (744 wards and 207 branches). One year later, there were 880 congregations, including 706 wards. The number of congregations declined sharply in the early 2000s to 713 in 2002 and 619 in 2004. By 2005, the Church operated 607 congregations (424 wards and 183 branches). Between year-end 1999 and year-end 2004, the number of congregations declined by 332. Between year-end 2005 and late 2010, slight congregational growth occurred as the number of LDS congregations increased by thirteen to 620.

The LDS Church has created congregations in many isolated, remote areas. By the 1980s, an LDS congregation began operating on Juan Fernandez Island.¹⁰⁵⁸ The Puerto Williams Branch began operating in 1995 to serve the small town of 1,800 and became the southernmost LDS congregation in the world.¹⁰⁵⁹

The first Chilean stake was organized in Santiago in 1972. By 1975, one stake and nine districts operated,¹⁰⁶⁰ increasing to four stakes and nine districts by 1977.¹⁰⁶¹ There were twenty-two stakes by year-end 1980. By early 1988, the Santiago area had seventeen stakes, the third most for a metropolitan area outside of the United States.¹⁰⁶² The fiftieth stake was created in late 1988 at which time only the United States, Mexico, and Brazil had more stakes.¹⁰⁶³ By early 1996, there were eighty-nine stakes and fourteen districts.¹⁰⁶⁴ Chile had one hundred stakes¹⁰⁶⁵ a year later and reached a high of 116 stakes in 1999.

A dramatic decline in the number of stakes began in 2000, the first year to have an LDS stake discontinued in Chile, and persisted to the end of 2005. By year-end 2000, there were 115 stakes and nine districts. In 2002, there were eighty-seven stakes and twenty-two districts, and by 2004, there were seventy-five stakes and twenty-four districts. In 2006, there were seventy-four stakes and twenty-five districts. In total, forty-two stakes were discontinued between the beginning of 2000 and end of 2005, twelve in the immediate Santiago metropolitan area and seventeen in cities that had at least two or more stakes. Most of the remaining

¹⁰⁵⁴ "The Church in Chile," *Ensign*, Feb 1975, 27.

¹⁰⁵⁵ "The Church in Chile," *Ensign*, Feb 1975, 27.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Iverson, Steven J. "Chile," *Ensign*, Feb 1977, 44.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Morris, Michael R. "Chile—A Fruitful Vineyard," *Liahona*, Aug 1996, 35.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Curbelo, Nestor. "Branch on Robinson Crusoe Island," *LDS Church News*, 12 July 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29807/Branch-on-Robinson-Crusoe-Island.html>

¹⁰⁵⁹ Curbelo, Nestor. "Uttermost part of the earth," *LDS Church News*, 26 August 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49350/Uttermost-part-of-the-earth.html>

¹⁰⁶⁰ "The Church in Chile," *Ensign*, Feb 1975, 27.

¹⁰⁶¹ Iverson, Steven J. "Chile," *Ensign*, Feb 1977, 44.

¹⁰⁶² Warnick, Lee. "18 stakes created from 11: 28-hour marathon in Lima multiplies by dividing," *LDS Church News*, 6 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17742/18-stakes-created-from-11-28-hour-marathon-in-lima-multiplies-by-dividing.html>

¹⁰⁶³ Hill, Craig. "Chile's 50th stake—a milestone capping 32 years of growth," *LDS Church News*, 12 November 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18324/From-around-the-World.html>

¹⁰⁶⁴ "From around the world," *LDS Church News*, 24 February 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27219/From-around-the-world.html>

¹⁰⁶⁵ "Chile 4th nation with 100 stakes," *LDS Church News*, 22 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30045/Chile-4th-nation-with-100-stakes.html>

thirteen discontinued stakes reverted back to district status. Consolidating strong priesthood leadership, poor convert retention, and inadequate numbers of active members were reasons the Church discontinued so many stakes.¹⁰⁶⁶ Most discontinued stakes in Chile were originally created between 1993 and 1998, during a time period when the Church created stakes and congregations with small numbers of active members in an effort to assign administrative responsibilities to greater numbers of new members to help increase member activity and convert retention rates. In the late 2000s, two districts were discontinued, and in late 2010, there were seventy-four stakes and twenty-three districts.

Activity and Retention

Four thousand three hundred were enrolled in seminary and institute during the 1975–1976 school year.¹⁰⁶⁷ In 1988, the Chile Vina del Mar Mission benefited from an address by President Ezra Taft Benson emphasizing the role of local members in missionary work, which was delivered in a mission presidents' seminar in 1985. In early 1988, the mission typically received 350 referrals from members and 500 from investigators a week and between 600 and 700 investigators attended church services weekly. Convert retention also improved as a result of greater local member-missionary coordination.¹⁰⁶⁸

In 1988, over 400 young single adults in central Chile gathered for a six-day conference in La Serena.¹⁰⁶⁹ In 1993, 1,764 attended a stake conference in the Santiago area.¹⁰⁷⁰ In 1996, 48,000 attended a conference in Santiago with President Hinckley.¹⁰⁷¹ 57,500 attended a regional conference held in Santiago when President Hinckley visited again in mid-1999.¹⁰⁷² Tens of thousands of Chilean members and investigators attended a temple cultural night prior to the rededication of the Santiago Chile Temple.¹⁰⁷³ 29,606 members attended the two rededication sessions for the Santiago Chile Temple in 2006.¹⁰⁷⁴ 13,731 were enrolled in seminary and institute during the 2008–2009 school year. In 2010, most missions appeared to baptize between forty and eighty converts a month. Most missions have strongly emphasized full-time missionaries participating in reactivation efforts and in 2010 began to experience increases in the number of convert baptisms.

The number of active members varies widely from congregation to congregation, but most congregations report very low member activity rates. Thirty-five of the over 500 members in the Puerto Natales Branch were active in March 2010. There were 50 active members in the Barrancas Ward of the San Antonio Chile Stake in late 2010. The San Clemente Branch in the Talca Chile Stake had 75 active members in late 2010. Only 10% of the known LDS membership in the Codegua Branch of the Rancagua Chile Tupahue Stake were active in late 2010. The Rosende Ward in the Santiago Chile Zapadores Stake had just 35 active members in late 2010. There were over 30 active members in the Río Negro Branch of the Osorno Chile Rahua Stake in late 2010. In mid-2010, there were nearly 30 active members in the Tirua Group, a dependent unit of the Cañete Branch

¹⁰⁶⁶ Swensen, Jason. "Sister Chilean cities rich in LDS history," *LDS Church News*, 3 June 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49047/Sister-Chilean-cities-rich-in-LDS-history.html>

¹⁰⁶⁷ Iverson, Steven J. "Chile," *Ensign*, Feb 1977, 44.

¹⁰⁶⁸ "From around the world," *LDS Church News*, 9 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17636/From-around-the-world.html>

¹⁰⁶⁹ "From around the world," *LDS Church News*, 12 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17594/From-around-the-world.html>

¹⁰⁷⁰ "From around the world," *LDS Church News*, 15 May 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23489/From-around-the-world.html>

¹⁰⁷¹ Curbelo, Nestor. "Quiet gratitude greets prophet in Chile, Argentina," *LDS Church News*, 23 November 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27976/Quiet-gratitude-greets-prophet-in-Chile-Argentina.html>

¹⁰⁷² Acevedo, Rodolfo. "Cover Story: Pres. Hinckley in Chile marks largest LDS gathering," *LDS Church News*, 8 May 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35747/Cover-Story-Pres-Hinckley-in-Chile-marks-largest-LDS-gathering.html>

¹⁰⁷³ Swensen, Jason. "Chile's culture in music, song and dance," *LDS Church News*, 18 March 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48655/Chiles-culture-in-music-song-and-dance.html>

¹⁰⁷⁴ "Santiago Chile Temple," *LDS Church News*, 18 March 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48651/Santiago-Chile-Temple.html>

of the Lebu Chile District. In late 2009, 130 of the approximately 1,000 members in the Maquehue Ward of the Temuco Chile Cautín Stake were active. In late 2010, the Pirque Branch in the Santiago Chile Cordillera Stake had over seventy active members.

The average number of members per congregation increased from 579 in 2000 to 915 in 2009 as a result of slow membership growth and the consolidation of hundreds of congregations. In 2006, nationwide sacrament meeting attendance was 57,000.¹⁰⁷⁵ Self-identified Latter-day Saints on the 2002 census accounted for 20% of the Church membership reported for 2002, although the census did not query the religious affiliation of individuals under the age of fifteen. In 2006, Former Chilean mission and MTC president Ted Lyon reported that an astonishing 200,000 of the 535,000 nominal members claimed by the Church in Chile at the time—over 37%—are in the “address unknown file,” meaning that such individuals do not attend church and cannot be located.¹⁰⁷⁶ Nationwide active membership is estimated at no more than 70,000, or 12% of total LDS membership.

Finding

In the 1970s, full-time missionaries heavily utilized seminary and institute to find, teach, baptize, and retain new converts.¹⁰⁷⁷ In the late 1980s, the Lo Prado Ward in Santiago brought eighteen converts into the Church in a short period of time as a result of creative activities organized by the ward and the stake, such as musicals and a children’s theater.¹⁰⁷⁸ On Easter 2004, over 1,500 members and investigators attended the Santiago Chile Temple grounds to listen to LDS choir performances and showings of the film *The Testaments: Of One Fold and One Shepherd*.¹⁰⁷⁹ 62,065 attended the Santiago Chile Temple open house in 2006 following extensive renovations.¹⁰⁸⁰

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Spanish, English.

All LDS scriptures and most Church materials are available in Spanish, including an LDS edition of the Bible complete with full LDS footnotes, Bible dictionary, and topical guide. The *Liahona* magazine has twelve Spanish issues a year.

Meetinghouses

The LDS Church constructed over 300 chapels in three-year period in the 1980s. During the height of rapid church growth in the 1980s and 1990s, as many as six wards would utilize a single meetinghouse.¹⁰⁸¹ In 1997, twenty-six LDS meetinghouses were damaged by widespread flooding.¹⁰⁸² In 2006, there were over 500 LDS meetinghouses nationwide.¹⁰⁸³

¹⁰⁷⁵ Stack, Peggy Fletcher, “Building Faith. A Special Report: The LDS Church in Chile,” Salt Lake Tribune, March 31, 2006.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Stack, Peggy Fletcher, “Building Faith. A Special Report: The LDS Church in Chile,” Salt Lake Tribune, March 31, 2006.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Iverson, Steven J. “Chile,” Ensign, Feb 1977, 44.

¹⁰⁷⁸ “From around the world,” LDS Church News, 1 October 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18324/From-around-the-World.html>

¹⁰⁷⁹ Sandoval, Marcela Opazo. “Chile temple grounds receive Easter visitors,” LDS Church News, 24 April 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45469/Chile-temple-grounds-receive-Easter-visitors.html>

¹⁰⁸⁰ “Santiago Chile Temple,” LDS Church News, 18 March 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48651/Santiago-Chile-Temple.html>

¹⁰⁸¹ Morris, Michael R. “Chile—A Fruitful Vineyard,” *Liahona*, Aug 1996, 35.

¹⁰⁸² “Chile floods cause damage to 26 LDS meetinghouses,” LDS Church News, 19 July 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29282/Chile-floods-cause-damage-to-26-LDS-meetinghouses.html>

¹⁰⁸³ Sowby, Laurie Williams. “Research in Chile,” LDS Church News, 22 July 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49222/Research-in-Chile.html>

Humanitarian and Development Work

LDS meetinghouses have been used for emergency shelters for victims of natural disasters, such as earthquakes.¹⁰⁸⁴ Local members have periodically provided service in their communities, as the Church has sponsored events like the International Day of Service.¹⁰⁸⁵ In 2002, the Church shipped blankets, hygiene kits, and winter clothing to flood victims.¹⁰⁸⁶ In 2003, the Church donated \$11,700 to a telethon fundraiser for disabled children.¹⁰⁸⁷ That same year, a young single adult conference held in Panguipulli focused on community service and had 400 in attendance.¹⁰⁸⁸ In 2005, ten American LDS dentists traveled to Chile and provided dental care to approximately 500 children from low-income families.¹⁰⁸⁹ In 2006, the Church participated in a project to provide eyeglasses to over 25,000 needy Chileans in the Vina del Mar area.¹⁰⁹⁰ In 2008, the Church donated dust masks and eye protection to those residing in areas affected by the eruption of the Chaitan Volcano.¹⁰⁹¹ Following the aftermath of the 2010 Chilean earthquake, the Church sent one hundred tons of food and emergency aid.¹⁰⁹²

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Latter-day Saints benefit from full religious freedom, which protects the right to proselyte, assemble, and worship. Foreign full-time missionaries regularly serve in Chile. The Church maintains a positive relationship with the government. In early 2005, the Chilean government recognized the LDS Church as a mainstream religious group and granted a recognized presence at all public government functions.¹⁰⁹³

Cultural Issues

Low levels of church attendance among Latter-day Saints on record has resulted primarily from quick-baptize tactics and inadequate pre-baptismal preparation encouraged by many LDS missions in Chile, but low levels of religious participation in the Church have also been influenced by traditions of religious nominalism among the predominately Catholic population. Other missionary-oriented Christian faiths report frustrations working with low levels of religious commitment and activity but have not experienced challenges as great as the LDS Church regarding convert retention and member activity due to more stringent baptism qualifications and preparation. Stronger European influence in Chilean culture than in many other Latin American

¹⁰⁸⁴ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 13 August 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24357/From-around-the-world.html>

¹⁰⁸⁵ "From around the World," LDS Church News, 16 August 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29111/From-around-the-World.html>

¹⁰⁸⁶ "Supplies shipped for Chilean flood relief," LDS Church News, 15 June 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41967/Supplies-shipped-for-Chilean-flood-relief.html>

¹⁰⁸⁷ "Church donates to telethon in Chile," LDS Church News, 11 January 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43058/Church-donates-to-telethon-in-Chile.html>

¹⁰⁸⁸ Swensen, Jason. "Young single adults gather in Chile," LDS Church News, 1 March 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43301/Young-single-adults-gather-in-Chile.html>

¹⁰⁸⁹ Tapia, Patricia; Telez, Raul Santiz. "Free dental service in Chile," LDS Church News, 23 April 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47224/Free-dental-service-in-Chile.html>

¹⁰⁹⁰ Sowby, Sister Laurie Williams. "Glasses donated to 25,000 Chileans," LDS Church News, 1 April 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48726/Glasses-donated-to-25000-Chileans.html>

¹⁰⁹¹ Holma, Marriane; Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Church responds to world disasters," LDS Church News, 17 May 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/52004/Church-responds-to-world-disasters.html>

¹⁰⁹² Swensen, Jason. "Recovery continues following devastating quake in Chile," LDS Church News, 12 March 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/58996/Recovery-continues-following-devastating-quake-in-Chile.html>

¹⁰⁹³ Swensen, Jason. "Chile recognizes Church," LDS Church News, 29 January 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46788/Chile-recognizes-Church.html>

nations has made Chile more vulnerable to the spread of secularism, which may have impacted receptivity. Potential for LDS Church growth remains fair, and past cultural conditions have fueled church growth, namely a widespread Christian background among the general population that is not as deeply entrenched in religious identity as many other predominantly Catholic nations. Latter-day Saints appear to be respected and well recognized in society. Higher alcohol and cigarette consumption rates create challenges for LDS missionaries. Increasing illicit drug use requires proper outreach and approaches from missionaries working with less active members and investigators.

National Outreach

Approximately 67% of the national population resides in cities over 18,000 inhabitants with an LDS congregation. Chile is one of the few nations with over fifteen million people who have wards or branches in every city with over 15,000 inhabitants. All fifteen administrative regions have multiple congregations. Chile receives some of the most penetrating LDS mission outreach in South America, as nine missions administer a population 16.7 million, or one mission per approximately two million people. Administrative regions with the highest percentage of members, as indicated by the population divided by the number of stakes or districts, are not clustered in a particular region of the country and include the Arica and Parinacota, Los Rios, and Atacama Regions. Areas with the lowest percentage of members are regions clustered around the Santiago metropolitan area (Region Metropolitana) and include Maule, Libertador G.B. O'Higgins, and Coquimbo Regions. The Santiago metropolitan area falls in the middle of the continuum of LDS percentages in the population. Currently unreached Chileans tend to reside in rural areas, sectors of large cities far from an LDS meetinghouses and with few LDS congregations, and small cities and towns with fewer than 15,000 inhabitants.

Lesser-reached sectors of medium-sized and large-sized cities and small cities and towns provide the greatest potential for future expansion of national outreach, as these locations are easily accessed and densely populated, providing full-time missionaries greater benefits to proselyte compared to rural areas difficult to access that are sparsely populated. In the late 2000s, mission leaders and stake or district leaders began to reemphasize expanding mission outreach in larger cities by creating new congregations. Many of these new units were created in areas with the highest potential to reactivate hundreds of inactive LDS members. The consolidation of hundreds of congregations during the first half of the 2000s aimed to increase the number of active members per congregation, but many members were lost in the process as they had to travel greater distances for church and attend congregations with people with whom they were unfamiliar. Establishing additional congregations in lesser reached sectors of large cities has depended heavily on full-time missionary involvement, which limits long-term prospects for such units to become self-reliant and the number of branches or groups created due to limited numbers of full-time missionaries. In late 2010, new LDS congregations were organized in Yumbel, Biobio, and Coquimbo, but there has yet to be a significant increase in mission outreach centers following the consolidation of hundreds of congregations in the early 2000s.

Chile was among the first eight countries to receive an LDS country website in 2003.¹⁰⁹⁴ The website is found at <http://www.lds.cl> and provides local news, information on church beliefs and doctrine, links to other church websites in Spanish, and a self-referral system for requesting missionary visits.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Low member activity and poor convert retention rates have been the primary culprit for stagnant real church growth in the 2000s. Many predictions and aspirations by LDS international and mission leaders made prior to the 2000s have been frustrated as a result of these problems. The baptism of hundreds of thousands of

¹⁰⁹⁴ "Church establishing country-specific Web sites," LDS Church News, 15 November 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44674/Church-establishing-country-specific-Web-sites.html>

Chileans with little or no meaningful pre-baptismal teaching and inadequate and inconsistent post-baptismal teaching and fellowshiping to new converts are primary reasons for low activity and retention rates nationwide. Culturally low religious attendance among the Catholic majority has also likely affected Latter-day Saint activity rates, as most converts come from a Catholic background. In the late 2000s, mission and local leaders reported that convert retention rates had significantly improved in some areas of the country as a result of implementation of the missionary guide *Preach My Gospel* and requirements for prospective converts to attend sacrament meeting at least twice before baptism. Reactivation efforts have experienced only limited success, notwithstanding heavy involvement of full-time missionaries in teaching and finding less-active members. Utilizing full-time missionaries in mentoring local church members and carrying out reactivation efforts appear to be a major objective of the creation of Chile's ninth mission in Rancagua (Concepcion South) in 2003 as few converts were baptized in the early 2000s.

In 1996, there were 7,000 Latter-day Saints among the 150,000 inhabitants of Arica, which had three LDS stakes at the time.¹⁰⁹⁵ Prospects appeared high for additional stakes to be created in the near future, yet in 2010, only two stakes remained, both of which had five wards and one branch. Declining membership growth rates, poor member activity, and inadequate numbers of active priesthood leaders appear to be the primary reasons for the lack of any visible church growth progress in Arica and in most Chilean cities during the 2000s.

The Church has tried to facilitate greater activity and fellowshiping among local young single adult members by organizing Helping Hands service projects that involve local LDS institutes. Some of these activities have had several hundred participants in the past and provide community service.¹⁰⁹⁶ Consistent, regular coordination of such efforts may help improve member activity rates over the long term and better establish Latter-day Saint communities.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Few, if any, ethnic integration issues have been encountered in LDS congregations due to the relatively homogenous population. Some challenges may occur with assimilating Mapuche Amerindians and white or white-Amerindian Chileans in congregations populated by both ethnic groups. However, full-time missionaries report no significant challenges.

Language Issues

At least 98% of the population has access to LDS materials in their native language due to the widespread use of Spanish and lack of linguistic diversity in the Chilean population. Mapudungun-speaking Mapuche are the largest indigenous ethnic group without any LDS materials. Controversy surrounding what script to use in printing the Mapudungun language has likely contributed to the lack of LDS materials. Only Mapudungun appears likely to have future LDS materials translated, as other indigenous languages have few speakers and likely few or no LDS members.

Missionary Service

The first male Chilean members began serving full-time missions in 1959. By 1977, there were 120 local

¹⁰⁹⁵ Curbelo, Nestor. "Blossoming in the desert: gospel flourishes in north Chilean city where first missionaries came in 1961," LDS Church News, 9 November 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27203/Blossoming-in-the-desert—gospel-flourishes-in-north-Chilean-city-where-first-missionaries-came-in-1961.html>

¹⁰⁹⁶ Swensen, Jason. "Chile's 'Manos Que Ayudan,'" LDS Church News, 6 September 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44291/Chiles-Manos-Que-Ayudan.html>

members serving full-time missions.¹⁰⁹⁷ The first sister missionaries began serving in 1967.¹⁰⁹⁸ The Chile Missionary Training Center opened in 1981.¹⁰⁹⁹ Chilean missionaries accounted for half of the full-time missionary force assigned to Chile in late 1988.¹¹⁰⁰ 114 Chilean missionaries served in North and South America in 1995.¹¹⁰¹ A third of full-time missionaries serving in Chile in 1997 were Chilean.¹¹⁰² At present, Chile remains highly dependent on foreign full-time missionaries to staff its nine LDS missions. In 2010, approximately half of the full-time missionaries serving in Chile were Chilean. Low member activity rates appear to have severely limited the native full-time missionary force. Reactivation efforts headed by local members, increasing convert retention rates, and encouraging youth to prepare for full-time missionary service all appear necessary components to improve the self-sustainability of the Chilean missionary force.

Leadership

Developing self-sufficient congregations in Chile has always been a challenge for the LDS Church. In 1961, four of the twelve Chilean branches had local branch presidents.¹¹⁰³ Nationwide leadership training meetings have been held regularly to help ameliorate deficiencies in Chilean church leadership and better train local leaders. There have been times when prospective local leadership has grown more rapidly. In a special stake conference for the creation of the Santiago Chile Vicuna Mackenna Stake in 1993, sixty-one men were presented to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood.¹¹⁰⁴ In 2003, the Church broadcasted a leadership conference throughout the country to reduce travel and time constraints, constituting the first area-specific broadcast for leadership training in the Church.¹¹⁰⁵ Low levels of self-sufficiency in local leadership have been manifest in the overrepresentation of Church Education System (CES) employees in leadership positions. At times, Church employees have constituted two of the three men in some stake presidencies. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland was assigned to the Chile Area in the early 2000s to help address leadership shortfalls and convert retention challenges. In the late 2000s and in 2010, the Church was hesitant to organize new congregations and new stakes due to concern over whether local members would be consistently self-sufficient over the long term. In 2010, a senior missionary couple serving in the Santiago area reported that some wards did not have a bishop as a result of inadequate local priesthood leadership; it was unclear exactly how such congregations operated.

Despite lacking nationwide leadership manpower, Chile has generated many regional and international church leaders serving as regional representatives, area authorities, mission presidents, Seventies, and temple presidents. In 1988, the Church called Benigno H. Pantoja from La Florida, M. Gonzalo Sepulveda from Santiago, Hector Verdugo from Rancagua,¹¹⁰⁶ and Florencio Castro from Concepcion as regional representatives.¹¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁹⁷ Iverson, Steven J. "Chile," *Ensign*, Feb 1977, 44.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Sowby, Laurie Williams. "'La primera misionera' calls gospel her life," *LDS Church News*, 4 March 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48581/La-primera-misionera-calls-gospel-her-life.html>

¹⁰⁹⁹ "Centers prepare missionaries to be 'effective instruments,'" *LDS Church News*, 13 January 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19646/Centers-prepare-missionaries-to-be-effective-instruments.html>

¹¹⁰⁰ Hill, Craig. "Chile's 50th stake—a milestone capping 32 years of growth," *LDS Church News*, 12 November 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18324/From-around-the-World.html>

¹¹⁰¹ "From around the world," *LDS Church News*, 24 February 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27219/From-around-the-world.html>

¹¹⁰² "Church to create eight new missions," *LDS Church News*, 1 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29769/Church-to-create-eight-new-missions.html>

¹¹⁰³ "The Church in Chile," *Ensign*, Feb 1975, 27.

¹¹⁰⁴ "From around the world," *LDS Church News*, 15 May 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23489/From-around-the-world.html>

¹¹⁰⁵ Swensen, Jason. "'A great need to be with, teach our leaders,'" *LDS Church News*, 13 December 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44815/A-great-need-to-be-with-teach-our-leaders.html>

¹¹⁰⁶ "New regional representatives," *LDS Church News*, 5 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18021/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹¹⁰⁷ "New regional representative," *LDS Church News*, 9 July 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17758/New-regional-representative.html>

In 1993, Jorge Fernando Zeballos from Antofagasta was called as a regional representative.¹¹⁰⁸ In 1994, Juan Carlos Castillo from Santiago,¹¹⁰⁹ Eduardo Adrian Lamartine Aguila from Santiago,¹¹¹⁰ and Fernandez Cerpa Guillermo German from La Serena¹¹¹¹ were called as regional representatives.

In 1995, Juan Carolos Castillo C. from Santiago, Julio Humberto Jaramillo from Santiago, Eduardo Adrian Lamartine from Santiago, Claudio Daniel Signorelli from Santiago, and Jorge Fernando Zeballos from Antofagasta were called as area authorities.¹¹¹² In 1996, Julio E. Otay from Puerto Varas, Jorge A. Pedreros from Puente Alto, and Hector M. Verdugo from Rancagua were called as area authorities.¹¹¹³ By April 1997, there were seven Area Authority Seventies serving from Chile.¹¹¹⁴ In 2001, Oscar W. Chavez from Pealolen was called as an Area Authority Seventy.¹¹¹⁵ In 2002, M. Gonzalo Sepulveda from Villa Alemana was called as an Area Authority Seventy.¹¹¹⁶ In 2004, Gabriel A. Campos from Villa Alemana and Dinar M. Reyes from Vina del Mar were called as Area Authority Seventies.¹¹¹⁷ In 2005, Daniel M. Canoles from Santiago and Gerardo L. Rubio from Santiago were called as Area Seventies.¹¹¹⁸ In 2006, Hernan I. Herrera from Santiago was called as an Area Seventy.¹¹¹⁹ In 2007, Mario E. Guerra from Santiago was called as an Area Authority.¹¹²⁰ In 2008, Juan C. Barros from Santiago, G. Guillermo Garcia from Santiago, and Fernando Maluenda from Penalolen were called as Area Seventies.¹¹²¹ In 2010, Valetin F. Nunez from Santiago and Gerardo J. Wilhelm from Puerto Montt were called as Area Seventies.¹¹²²

In 1988, Bruce F. Carter from Santiago¹¹²³ was called to preside over the Colombia Bogota Mission.¹¹²⁴ In

¹¹⁰⁸ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 15 May 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23069/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹¹⁰⁹ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 23 April 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25315/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹¹¹⁰ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 23 July 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24462/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹¹¹¹ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 27 August 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24738/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹¹¹² "Church names area authorities," LDS Church News, 5 August 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26627/Church-names-area-authorities.html>

¹¹¹³ "First Presidency calls new area authorities," LDS Church News, 24 August 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28224/First-Presidency-calls-new-area-authorities.html>

¹¹¹⁴ "Fourth Quorum of the Seventy," LDS Church News, 12 April 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28858/Fourth-Quorum-of-the-Seventy.html>

¹¹¹⁵ "12 men are sustained to Quorums of Seventy," LDS Church News, 31 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39606/12-men-are-sustained-to-Quorums-of-Seventy.html>

¹¹¹⁶ "30 Area Authority Seventies sustained," LDS Church News, 13 April 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41666/30-Area-Authority-Seventies-sustained.html>

¹¹¹⁷ "New Area Authority Seventies," LDS Church News, 24 April 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45458/New-Area-Authority-Seventies.html>

¹¹¹⁸ "38 new Area Seventies called, 37 are released," LDS Church News, 9 April 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46907/Web-sites-in-the-language-of-the-people.html>

¹¹¹⁹ "The newly called are sustained," LDS Church News, 1 April 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48753/The-newly-called-are-sustained.html>

¹¹²⁰ "46 Area Seventies called; 29 released," LDS Church News, 7 April 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50423/46-Area-Seventies-called-29-released.html>

¹¹²¹ "38 Area Seventies called," LDS Church News, 12 April 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51857/38-Area-Seventies-called.html>

¹¹²² "New Area Seventies," LDS Church News, 24 April 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59238/New-Area-Seventies.html>

¹¹²³ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 12 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17569/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹¹²⁴ "Assignments announced for new mission presidents," LDS Church News, 19 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17968/Assignments-announced-for-new-mission-presidents.html>

1990, Wilfredo R. Lopez from Santiago¹¹²⁵ began presiding over the Argentina Resistencia Mission and Gustavo Alberto Barrios from Santiago¹¹²⁶ began presiding over the Chile Osorno Mission.¹¹²⁷ In 1991, Emilio Liberio Diaz from Santiago was called as a mission president.¹¹²⁸ In 1993, Hector Manuel Verdugo R. from Rancagua¹¹²⁹ and Thomas E. Coburn from Santiago¹¹³⁰ were called as a mission president. In 2003, Mario Edmundo Guerra from Santiago¹¹³¹ was called to preside over the Venezuela Valencia Mission and Hernan Isaias Herrera from Santiago¹¹³² was called as the mission president of the Uruguay Montevideo West Mission.¹¹³³ In 2006, Jorge Fernando Zeballos from Antofagasta was called as a mission president.¹¹³⁴ In 2006, Gerardo Jose Wilhelm from Llanquihue began presiding over the Chile Vina del Mar Mission.¹¹³⁵ In 2007, Juan Amando Urrea from Concepcion was called to preside over the Chile Antofagasta Mission.¹¹³⁶

In 1990, Eduardo Ayala from Santiago was called to the Second Quorum of the Seventy.¹¹³⁷ In 2008, Jorge F. Zeballos from Concepcion was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy.¹¹³⁸ In 2004, Julio Humberto Jaramillo Bichet from Santiago was called as the Santiago Chile Temple president.¹¹³⁹ In 2010, Julio Enrique Otay Gomez from Puerto Montt was called as the Santiago Chile Temple president.¹¹⁴⁰

Temple

The Santiago Chile Temple was announced in 1981 and dedicated in 1983. In 1998, the Church dedicated a new temple patron-housing building with 168 units to accommodate members from distant areas of the country who travel to the temple.¹¹⁴¹ The remodeling of the Santiago Chile Temple in the mid-2000s expanded

¹¹²⁵ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 10 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20308/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹¹²⁶ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 17 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20312/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹¹²⁷ "Worldwide missions: 122 leaders assigned," LDS Church News, 31 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20305/Worldwide-missions-122-leaders-assigned.html>

¹¹²⁸ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 2 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21404/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹¹²⁹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 16 January 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23664/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹¹³⁰ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 20 March 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23666/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹¹³¹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 25 January 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43144/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹¹³² "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 1 February 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43151/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹¹³³ "New mission presidents for 105 missions," LDS Church News, 8 March 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43323/New-mission-presidents-for-105-missions.html>

¹¹³⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 25 March 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48670/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹¹³⁵ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 6 May 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48920/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹¹³⁶ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 12 May 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50563/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹¹³⁷ "Ten new leaders called to 2nd Quorum of Seventy," LDS Church News, 7 April 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20357/Ten-new-leaders-called-to-2nd-Quorum-of-Seventy.html>

¹¹³⁸ "Called to Seventy," LDS Church News, 12 April 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51855/Called-to-Seventy.html>

¹¹³⁹ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 11 September 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46123/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹¹⁴⁰ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 12 June 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59467/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹¹⁴¹ "Temple patron housing in Chile dedicated," LDS Church News, 4 April 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31045/Temple-patron-housing-in-Chile-dedicated.html>

the square footage by 43%.¹¹⁴² At present, the temple has two ordinance rooms and four sealing rooms. The temple does not operate close to capacity despite having the temple district with the fourth most stakes and sixth most districts worldwide. In the late 2000s, local church leaders reported that temple attendance increased until the early 2000s, then decreased, but rebounded in the mid- to late-2000s. In 2010, there were eight daily endowment sessions scheduled Tuesday through Friday, and eleven on Saturdays. Most temples with as large of a temple district schedule endowment sessions hourly or every half hour to meet the needs of temple-going Latter-day Saints in their districts. Low temple attendance and participation has resulted in the delay of announcing additional temples. It was not until 2009 when the Church announced a second temple for Chile in Concepcion, despite 560,000 nominal Latter-day Saints in Chile meeting in seventy-four stakes and nearly two dozen districts. Greater temple attendance may one day warrant the construction of additional temples. Only Valparaiso/Vina del Mar appears to be a potential candidate for an LDS temple in the foreseeable future unless the Church recommences the construction of the small 10,700 square foot temples commonly built in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Comparative Growth

The LDS Church in Chile has the fifth largest number of members, sixth most stakes, sixth most districts, and the sixth most missions in the world, although Chile ranks sixtieth in the world by total population. No other country with a population over one million has as high of a percentage of Latter-day Saints as Chile. Notwithstanding impressive raw membership numbers, the realities of the LDS Church in Chile are far more modest. Only about 70,000 Chileans, or 12% of LDS members, attend church on a regular basis, and only 20% of nominal members identified the LDS Church as their faith of preference on the national census (however, the census did not include those under age fifteen). Chile has one of the lowest LDS member activity rates in the world and one of the highest rates of lost members on the “address unknown file.” No other country has as high an average number of members per congregation as Chile: an astonishing 915 members per unit, although average attendance is only about one hundred. The ratio of Latter-day Saints on Church records to LDS congregations is so low that some islands of the South Pacific have the same ratio of the general population to LDS congregations as Chile has of Latter-day Saints to LDS congregations. The Latin American country with the second highest average number of members per congregation in 2009 was Nicaragua with 673 members per unit, 242 fewer than Chile. Other countries experienced as large of a decline in the number of congregations between 2000 and 2009 as Chile (–266 congregations) and Chile experienced the second largest percentage decrease in the number of congregations during this period (–30%) after Belgium (–35%). In late 2010, Chile was the country with the most Latter-day Saints on Church records with only two LDS temples. Chile has one of the lowest percentages of local full-time missionaries among missionaries assigned to their native country in Latin America. In 2009, Chile had 81,000 more Latter-day Saints on the records than Peru, yet Peru had 156 more congregations, twenty more stakes, and one more district as of the end of 2010 and was not only self-sufficient in its full-time missionary force but also exported LDS missionaries to other Latin American nations. Annual membership growth rates in Chile ranked among the lowest for Latin America in the 2000s. The LDS Church developed strong roots in Chile earlier than in many other Latin American countries in the twentieth century as demonstrated by the completion of the first LDS temple in a Spanish-speaking country in Chile in 1983, less than three months prior to the dedication of the Mexico City Mexico Temple.¹¹⁴³

Non-Catholic Christian groups have experienced moderate to rapid church growth since the mid-twentieth century. Seventh Day Adventists arrived in the late nineteenth century¹¹⁴⁴ and reported nearly the same

¹¹⁴² “Santiago Chile Temple,” LDS Church News, 18 March 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48651/Santiago-Chile-Temple.html>

¹¹⁴³ “Church News: Question of the week,” LDS Church News, 13 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18376/Church-News-Question-of-the-week.html>

¹¹⁴⁴ “Chile,” Adventistatlas.org, retrieved 28 December 2010. <http://adventistatlas.org/ViewCountry.asp?CtryCode=cl>

number of congregations as Latter-day Saints in 2009, yet Latter-day Saints claimed nearly five times as many nominal members. In the 2000s, Adventists experienced moderate membership and congregational growth, generally baptizing 5,000 to 8,000 converts annually and adding between ten and thirty new congregations a year. The number of active Latter-day Saints is almost the same as the number of active Jehovah's Witnesses, yet Witnesses maintained two hundred more congregations. Witnesses report slow to moderate membership growth rates. There were 119,455 self-identified Jehovah's Witnesses on the 2002 Chilean census, 15,720 more members than Latter-day Saints.¹¹⁴⁵ Evangelicals and Pentecostals have experienced the greatest growth and today account for approximately 15% of the population. Evangelicals have relied on self-sufficient congregations and member-missionary work to accomplish strong church growth.

Future Prospects

While visiting Chile in 2006 to rededicate the Santiago Chile Temple, President Hinckley stated that "where we have thousands, we will have tens of thousands."¹¹⁴⁶ This statement as well as others by international LDS Church leaders continued to be unrealized as of 2010. Poor member activity rates, low convert retention, inadequate numbers of active priesthood holders, dependence of foreign missionaries to staff Chile's nine missions, and lacking self-sufficiency continue to prevent greater real church growth for Latter-day Saints. Past mission policies promoting the rushed baptism of poorly prepared investigators have generated impressive paper membership numbers but have lost converts out the back door of the church almost as quickly as they have been brought in the front. Such practices have not only failed to develop locally self-sufficient congregations and missionary efforts but have sapped strength and burdened congregations with impossibly long home teaching lists of inactive and disaffected members for the few active priesthood holders and diverted resources from productive outreach to poorly productive reactivation efforts. Member enthusiasm for missionary work has been severely diminished by a system historically focused more on baptismal goals and quotas than on the needs and spiritual well-being of investigators and members and in which baptism only rarely leads to ongoing church activity. Recent guidelines that investigators should attend at least two sacrament meetings before baptism present a positive step and have led to at least some improvement, although overall standards for baptism in the LDS Church remain far lower than those generally adhered to by Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists, and the rush to baptize prospective LDS converts with unresolved issues to meet baptismal goals or quotas remains an ongoing problem. Problematic patterns and practices established in prior years are not easily overcome.

Future church growth will hinge on maintaining consistently high baptismal standards for converts, directing proselytism activity on a congregation level with a strong member-missionary emphasis, finding and fellowshiping efforts, greater emphasis on seminary and institute attendance, opening new congregations, and increasing temple attendance. Full-time missionaries report some districts are close to becoming stakes, such as the Melipilla Chile District. However, missionaries serving in other areas report that some stakes may become districts due to problems with member activity and local leadership. Nonetheless, improvement in convert retention rates in the late 2000s and in 2010 is a positive development that if sustained over the long term may help to stabilize the LDS Church in Chile following a decade of stagnation, consolidation, and decline, and provide a foundation for future growth.

¹¹⁴⁵ "Censo 2002: Sintesis de Resultados," Comision Nacional del XVII Censo de Poblacion y vi de Vivienda, March 2003. <http://www.ine.cl/cd2002/sintesiscesnal.pdf>

¹¹⁴⁶ Swensen, Jason. "Santiago: Chilean capital remains a land of opportunity for Church," LDS Church News, 3 February 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50091/Santiago-Chilean-capital-remains-a-land-of-opportunity-for-Church.html>

COLOMBIA

Geography

AREA: 1,138,914 square km. Located in northwestern South America, Colombia borders Venezuela, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, and Panama. Colombia is the only South American nation that borders both the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean. Tropical climate occurs in coastal areas and in the eastern interior whereas highland or mountainous areas experience cooler weather. Tropical rainforests and plains of the Amazon Basin constitute the eastern half of the country. The Andes Mountains stretch north to south in the western and central areas with several peaks over 5,000 meters. Lowlands occupy most coastal areas. Several large rivers originating in the Andes traverse the nation. Volcanoes, earthquakes, and droughts are natural hazards. Environmental issues include deforestation, overuse of pesticides, air pollution, and water pollution. Colombia is administratively divided into thirty-two departments and one capital district.

Peoples

Mestizo: 58%

White: 20%

Mulatto: 14%

Black: 4%

Mixed black-Amerindian: 3%

Amerindian: 1%

Mestizos are of mixed Amerindian and European ancestry. Those of mixed African and European ancestry are called mulattos. Mixed black-Amerindians are also referred to as Zambo.

Population: 45,239,079 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.128% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.12 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 71.55 male, 78.23 female (2012)

Languages: Spanish (99%), Amerindian languages (1%). Eighty indigenous languages are spoken in Colombia, most with fewer than 10,000 speakers. Speakers of Amerindian languages number half a million. Amerindian languages with the most speakers include Embera dialects and Paez. Only Spanish has over one million speakers (43.1 million).

Literacy: 90.4% (2005)

History

Several different Amerindian groups populated Colombia prior to Spanish discovery and colonization in the early sixteenth century. The Spanish founded Bogota shortly thereafter. Bogota became the capital of the Viceroyalty of New Granada, which also included Ecuador, Panama, and Venezuela. In the early nineteenth century, Colombians rebelled against Spanish rule and declared independence, resulting in the formation of the Republic of Greater Colombia in 1819, which included Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, and Venezuela. Ecuador and Venezuela became separate countries shortly thereafter, with Panama becoming independent

in 1903. Violence and political turmoil have occurred regularly throughout Colombia's history, largely due to conflicts between the Conservative and Liberal parties. An estimated 400,000 people perished in two civil wars from 1899 to 1903 and 1946 to 1957. During the last fifty years, large rural areas been under the control of narco-terrorist paramilitary groups such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).¹¹⁴⁷ These groups have lacked the manpower and resources to overthrow the government, but the unstable central government has been unable to maintain control of rugged terrain in remote areas. In 2010, the Colombian government had regained a presence in all its administrative departments but continued to struggle to fight rebel groups, reduce violence, and adequately address the booming illicit drug installations in many rural areas. The illicit drug trade and paramilitary activity from guerilla groups spill over into all neighboring countries and contribute to ongoing conflict in the region.

Culture

Positioned between Central America, South America, and the Caribbean, Colombia fuses cultural characteristics from all these regions. Colombia is well known for its rich literary, musical, and sports traditions and influence throughout Latin America. Cuisine draws upon Latin American, European, and Caribbean influences. Soccer is the most popular sport. Cigarette and alcohol consumption rates are moderate to low compared to the worldwide average.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$10,100 (2011) [21% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.710

Corruption Index: 3.4 (2011)

The Colombian economy experienced growth and development for much of the 2000s due to economic reforms, emphasis on increasing exports, and improvement in national security regarding illicit drug trafficking and terrorism. The global financial crisis halted economic growth in 2009, and the government is currently stressing the need to diversify the economy. Services employ 63% of the workforce and generate 53% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 19% of the workforce and generates 37% of the GDP. Primary industries include textiles, food processing, oil, chemicals, cement, gold, coal, and emeralds. Agriculture employs 18% of the workforce and constitutes 10% of the GDP. Coffee, flowers, fruit, rice, tobacco, corn, cocoa beans, and vegetables are major crops. Forest products and shrimp are additional common agricultural goods. Primary trade partners include the United States, Venezuela, and China.

Colombia is the world's leading producer of cocaine and is the primary distributor of cocaine into the United States and many other countries. Other illicit drugs such as marijuana and heroin are also trafficked into the United States. Separatist movements in rural areas contribute to corruption and regional instability.

Faiths

Christian: 93.5%

Agnostic: 2%

Other: 4.5%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 39,309,635

¹¹⁴⁷ "Background Note: Colombia," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 2 June 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35754.htm>

Seventh Day Adventists 291,936 1,257
 Latter-day Saints 180,526 273
 Jehovah's Witnesses 152,250 2,359
 Anglicans 50,000
 Presbyterians 50,000
 Methodists 1,500

Religion

The government does not keep official religion statistics, but Catholics are estimated to constitute 80% of the population. Many Catholics are not religiously active. Non-Catholic Christians account for approximately 13.5% of Colombians, many of whom are Evangelical. Small numbers of Muslims and Jews are concentrated on the Caribbean coast and in large cities, respectively. Some syncretism of Catholicism and indigenous African religious beliefs and practices occurs in Choco Department.¹¹⁴⁸

Religious Freedom

Persecution Index: 46th

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is generally upheld by the government. Rebel groups have limited freedom of religion nationwide through killing, kidnapping, and extorting religious leaders and followers for political purposes in rural areas, generally outside of government control. Catholicism was the official religion until 1991, and today there is no state religion. Most Catholic or Christian holidays are recognized by the government. Foreign religious groups desiring to establish a presence must verify official recognition in the home country of the religious group. The government readily grants recognition to religious groups that apply, although the process can be lengthy. Missionaries face no restrictions regarding proselytism.¹¹⁴⁹

Largest Cities

Urban: 74%

Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, Barranquilla, Cartagena, Cúcuta , Soledad, Bucaramanga, Ibagué, Soacha, Santa Marta, Villavicencio, Bello, Pereira, Manizales, Valledupar, Pasto, **Buenaventura**, Montería, Neiva, Armenia, Floridablanca, Popayán, Sincelejo, Palmira, Itagüí, Envigado, Dos Quebradas, Barrancabermeja, Tulúa, Ríohacha, Tunja, Girón, Florencia, **Apartadó**, Cartago, Facatativá, Quibdó, Yopal, Piedecuesta, Malambo. Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Thirty-nine of the forty-one cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. Fifty-four percent (54%) of the national population resides in the forty-one largest cities.

LDS History

The first two full-time missionaries were assigned to Bogota to begin missionary work in May 1966. Later that year, the Colombian government granted the LDS Church legal status.¹¹⁵⁰ Seminary and institute began in 1972. In March 1977, an area conference was held in Bogota for members in Colombia, Ecuador, and

¹¹⁴⁸ "Colombia," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2006. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127384.htm>

¹¹⁴⁹ "Colombia," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2006. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127384.htm>

¹¹⁵⁰ "Historic milestones for Church in Colombia," LDS Church News, 10 December 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48264/Historic-milestones-for-Church-in-Colombia.html>

Venezuela.¹¹⁵¹ The Church extended early releases or transfers to other countries for some missionaries in 1989 due to perceived threats of violence directed toward Americans.¹¹⁵² By 1992, Latin Americans constituted the entire full-time missionary force.¹¹⁵³ A full-time missionary training center administering Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela was opened in Bogota in 1992.¹¹⁵⁴ In 2000, three meetinghouses in Cali were inadvertently damaged by bombs placed by the rebel group National Liberation Army (ELN).¹¹⁵⁵ In 2005, the Church received recognition from the Colombian Congress for its humanitarian activities in the country.¹¹⁵⁶ Colombia's First Lady toured LDS Church headquarters in Salt Lake City in 2006.¹¹⁵⁷

Missions

In 1968, the Church created the Colombia-Venezuela Mission, which was renamed the Colombia Mission in 1971 when the Venezuela Mission was organized. The mission was headquartered in Bogota and divided in 1975 to create the Colombia Cali Mission. In 1998, a third mission was created in Barranquilla from the Colombia Bogota Mission. In 1992, the Church organized the fourth Colombian mission in Bogota North, created from the Colombia Bogota Mission. In 2012, the Church organized a fifth mission based in Medellin.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 180,526 (2012)

By 1968, there were 200 members, and in 1977, there were nearly 12,000 Latter-day Saints in Colombia.¹¹⁵⁸ The most rapid membership growth experienced to date in Colombia occurred in the 1980s as membership increased from 17,507 in 1980 to 76,000 in 1990, a 334% increase. Most years in the 1980s experienced annual membership growth rates between 10% and 20%. Annual membership growth rates declined in the 1990s from 11% in 1990 to 3.8% in 1998. Membership totaled 98,000 in 1994 and 122,000 in 1998.

By year-end 2000, LDS membership totaled 132,405 nationwide, increasing steadily to 139,351 in 2002, 149,973 in 2005, and 163,764 in 2008. Membership increased by 3,000 to 5,000 per year during much of the 2000s. Annual membership growth rates ranged from 2 to 3% during the 2000s. In 2009, one in 259 Colombians was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 177 Branches: 92 (April 2013)

In 1968, there were three branches.¹¹⁵⁹ By the beginning of 1977, there were five districts and twenty-six

¹¹⁵¹ "Area Conferences from Monterrey to Santiago," *Ensign*, Feb 1977, 14.

¹¹⁵² "Some missionaries in Colombia transferred or released early," *LDS Church News*, 16 September 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18622/Some-missionaries-in-Colombia-transferred-or-released-early.html>

¹¹⁵³ "7 new missions created; total now 275," *LDS Church News*, 29 February 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22528/7-new-missions-created-total-now-275.html>

¹¹⁵⁴ "From around the world," *LDS Church News*, 29 February 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22137/From-around-the-world.html>

¹¹⁵⁵ "Meetinghouses damaged," *LDS Church News*, 15 April 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37617/Meetinghouses-damaged.html>

¹¹⁵⁶ "Historic milestones for Church in Colombia," *LDS Church News*, 10 December 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48264/Historic-milestones-for-Church-in-Colombia.html>

¹¹⁵⁷ Swensen, Jason. "Colombia's First lady is guest of Church," *LDS Church News*, 15 April 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48824/Colombias-First-Lady-is-guest-of-Church.html>

¹¹⁵⁸ Hart, John L. "Colombian convert calm amid tensions," *LDS Church News*, 20 April 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21430/Colombian-convert-calm-amid-tensions.html>

¹¹⁵⁹ Hart, John L. "Colombian convert calm amid tensions," *LDS Church News*, 20 April 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21430/Colombian-convert-calm-amid-tensions.html>

branches.¹¹⁶⁰ The Church created the first stake in Bogota later that year. By year-end 1980, there were three stakes in Bogota and two in Cali. During the 1980s, four additional stakes were created in Bucaramanga, Barranquilla, Bogota, and Medellin, bringing the total number of stakes to nine by 1990.

In 1992, two additional stakes were created in Barranquilla, one of which was discontinued in 1998. In the 1990s, Pereira, Pasto, Neiva, and Cartagena received their first stakes, and additional stakes were created in Medellin, Cali, and Bogota. There were eight stakes just in the Bogota area by the end of 1997. A stake functioned for just four years in Ibague from 1996 to 2000 until it was discontinued and returned to district status. By mid-1999, there were twenty-three stakes and twenty-one districts.¹¹⁶¹

Modest growth in the number of stakes and sharp declines in the number of districts characterized the 2000s as seven new stakes were created (Soacha, Cartagena Los Alpes, Bucaramanga Terrazas, Cucuta, Monteria, Valledupar, and Duitama), but nine districts were discontinued. One stake was discontinued during this period in Cali in 2008. By September 2010, there were twenty-eight stakes and twelve districts. All twelve operating districts were created prior to 1994 and are located in Armenia, Barrancabermeja, Florencia, Giradot, Ibague, Manizales, Palmira, Popayan, Santa Marta, Sincelejo, Tulua, and Villavicencio.

In Cartagena, there were 3,000 members in 1988 and around 1,000 new converts were joining the Church a year. Missionaries opened the city in 1975, and the first district was created in 1980 with five branches. By 1988, there were six well-attended branches that aspired to become a stake by the end of the year,¹¹⁶² yet the first stake in Cartagena was not organized until 1997. The district was divided in 1991, and each of the two districts had ten branches and 2,000 members.¹¹⁶³

The number of wards and branches in Colombia in 1997 was greater than the number of congregations at any time before or since due to the mass consolidations of congregations in the first half of the 2000s. There were 159 wards and 170 branches (329 total units) in 1997, which declined to 139 wards and 146 branches in 2000 (285 total units) and 144 wards and 120 branches in 2003 (264 total units). In 2010, there were just nine more congregations than in 2003, but the number of wards increased by twenty-nine during this period as a result of branches becoming wards as stakes were organized from districts.

Activity and Retention

In 1976, 900 youth were enrolled in seminary or institute.¹¹⁶⁴ 450 priesthood leaders from four Bogota stakes attended a regional conference in 1989. Four thousand attended the general sessions of the conference.¹¹⁶⁵ In 1996, 7,100 attended a special meeting with President Hinckley in Bogota at Estadio Deportista.¹¹⁶⁶ In 2005, Elder Claudio R. M. Costa reported that church attendance was increasing at a faster rate than convert baptisms, indicating progress in retaining new converts and reactivating less active members.¹¹⁶⁷ However, the

¹¹⁶⁰ "Area Conferences from Monterrey to Santiago," *Ensign*, Feb 1977, 14.

¹¹⁶¹ Hart, John L. "Center Stage: Some 'wonderful things' happening in Colombia," *LDS Church News*, 5 June 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35868/Center-Stage-Some-wonderful-things-happening-in-Colombia.html>

¹¹⁶² Warnick, Lee. "History set at a new pace: In Cartagena, Church moves by the month," *LDS Church News*, 12 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17831/History-set-at-a-new-pace-In-Cartagena-Church-moves-by-the-month.html>

¹¹⁶³ "From around the world," *LDS Church News*, 5 October 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21236/From-around-the-world.html>

¹¹⁶⁴ Hart, John L. "Colombian convert calm amid tensions," *LDS Church News*, 20 April 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21430/Colombian-convert-calm-amid-tensions.html>

¹¹⁶⁵ Wells, Elayne. "Work in South America continues to grow," *LDS Church News*, 11 November 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18985/Work-in-South-America-continues-to-grow.html>

¹¹⁶⁶ "Prophet visits South America," *LDS Church News*, 16 November 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27465/Prophet-visits-South-America.html>

¹¹⁶⁷ Gardner, Marvin K. "The Saints of Colombia: An Example of Strength," *Liahona*, Mar 2005, 34.

average number of members per congregation rose rapidly in the 2000s from 465 in 2000 to 622 in 2009 as a result of congregational consolidation and continued struggles with inactivity. The majority of this increase occurred between 2000 and 2006. There were 7,543 enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year.

The number of active members in wards and branches varies by location. One of the branches in Armenia had fewer than fifty active members in 2010. Most wards appear to have over one hundred active members and most branches likely have between fifty and one hundred active members. Nationwide active membership is estimated at 33,000 to 35,000, or 20% of total membership.

Finding

Colombia has been successful in coordinating missionary efforts between full-time missionaries and local members in the past. In 1988, over 500 baptisms resulted from a mission program in the Colombia Bogota Mission in which missionaries accompanied members to present a copy of the Book of Mormon to relatives or friends.¹¹⁶⁸ The temple open house in 1999 was a successful missionary opportunity, as 10,000 individuals who attended the open house requested visits from the full-time missionaries.¹¹⁶⁹ In 2000, missionaries and members in Cartagena participated in a service project in which they offered free car washes that resulted in some asking to learn more about the Church.¹¹⁷⁰

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Spanish, Quechua, Kuna.

All LDS scriptures are available in Spanish, including an LDS edition of the Bible complete with full LDS footnotes, Bible dictionary, and topical guide. Selections of the Book of Mormon are translated into Quechua and Kuna. Other Church materials in Kuna include *The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony*, *Gospel Principles*, the Articles of Faith, hymns and children's songs, and a family guidebook. Bolivian Quechua translation materials are limited to *The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony* and hymns and children's songs. *Gospel Principles* in Peruvian Quechua is available.

Meetinghouses

In 2010, there were at least 160 meetinghouses in Colombia, most of which were built by the Church. Small or recently created branches commonly meet in renovated buildings or rented spaces.

Health and Safety

Instability in the government and lack of government control in many areas pose safety threats. High rates of violence in many larger cities in southwestern Colombia like Cali and Buenaventura are a concern. Kidnappings and narco-terrorism are common in several areas.

Humanitarian and Development Work

At least fifty service projects have been carried out by the Church since 1985 that have provided humanitarian

¹¹⁶⁸ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 23 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17634/From-around-the-world.html>

¹¹⁶⁹ Hart, John L. "Cover Story: Bogota Temple—Gift of inner peace in a troubled land," LDS Church News, 1 May 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35699/Cover-Story-Bogota-Temple—Gift-of-inner-peace-in-a-troubled-land.html>

¹¹⁷⁰ "Missionaries, members give service," LDS Church News, 3 June 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37905/Missionaries-members-give-service.html>

aid, desks for schoolchildren, vision care, wheelchair donations, seeds for agriculture, bicycles, and neonatal resuscitation training.¹¹⁷¹ The Church used meetinghouses as temporarily shelters for the homeless, and Colombian members from Bogota and Cali donated food, clothing, and bedding supplies to victims of the 1999 earthquake in Armenia, Colombia.¹¹⁷² In 2003, the Church began making greater progress carrying out humanitarian and development projects in conjunction with the Colombian government. Projects included buying thousands of desks for schoolchildren in impoverished areas, funding scores of eye surgery operations, and purchasing over a hundred hearing aids for the hearing impaired.¹¹⁷³ In 2004, hundreds of wheelchairs were donated to the disabled.¹¹⁷⁴

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church faces no legal restrictions regarding proselytism, worship, or assembly. The lack of government control over some rebel-held rural regions has deterred the expansion of national outreach and establishment of mission outreach centers in these areas. Social discrimination or harassment directed toward the Church has been minimal.

Cultural Issues

High unemployment and underemployment have been major challenges for Colombians to face.¹¹⁷⁵ Missionaries serving in several areas report that many Colombian investigators and members face significant challenges refraining from extramarital sexual relations. Church members participating in illicit sexual relations are subject to church discipline, which may include excommunication, and investigators or recent converts face the challenge of fully ending such relations. Violence and organized crime have dissipated in many areas recently but remain vulnerable to future escalations in violence spurred by organized crime and paramilitary illicit drug trafficking.

National Outreach

Sixty-one percent (61%) of the national population resides in cities with mission outreach centers. Colombia has a large urban population with many medium-sized cities unreached by Latter-day Saints. The only two cities with over 100,000 inhabitants without an official church presence are Buenaventura and Apartadó, both of which are coastal cities with high rates of violent crime, rampant illicit drug trafficking, and frequent paramilitary activity. Of the eighty-four cities between 30,000 and 100,000 inhabitants, forty-three have a mission outreach center (51%). Only several of the more than fifty cities between 20,000 and 30,000 have mission outreach centers. Efforts to expand LDS mission outreach will most likely concentrate on the nearly one hundred cities with over 20,000 people that remain without LDS congregations and missionaries. Dependent branches or groups may meet in some of these locations but are unreported. Six of Colombia's thirty-two administrative departments have no LDS congregations (Arauca, Guania, Guaviare, Putumayo, Vichada, and

¹¹⁷¹ "Projects—Colombia," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide," retrieved 13 September 2010. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-217,00.html>

¹¹⁷² "Hundreds of LDS affected by Colombian earthquake," LDS Church News, 6 February 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35184/Hundreds-of-LDS-affected-by-Colombian-earthquake.html>

¹¹⁷³ Swensen, Jason. "Church delivers aid to impoverished Colombians," LDS Church News, 29 November 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44750/Church-delivers-aid-to-impoverished-Colombians.html>

¹¹⁷⁴ "Church donates wheelchairs," LDS Church News, 26 June 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45756/Church-donates-wheelchairs.html>

¹¹⁷⁵ Swensen, Jason. "LDS Colombians enlist faith amid troubled times," LDS Church News, 30 March 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41502/LDS-Colombians-enlist-faith-amid-troubled-times.html>

Vaupés). These departments all rank among the nine least populated, are concentrated in the interior, and account for less than 2% of the national population.

The Church achieved rapid national outreach expansion of missionary work in the 1980s and 1990s, as most cities with congregations had their first mission outreach centers established during this period. Mission outreach centers were established in few unreached cities during the 2000s and in 2010 and were concentrated in northern Colombia. Some cities opened during this period include Montelibano, Ríohacha, and Quibdó. Large sectors of many of the largest Colombian cities receive little to no mission outreach, which may have been a result of missionaries and church leaders avoiding violent or unstable areas.

The Church operates an Internet site for the South America Northwest Area at <http://www.iglesiadejesucristo.org.co/>. The website offers Spanish-language information regarding church doctrines, news, temples, and missionary contact information. Use of the website by local members and missionaries can assist proselytizing efforts both in reached and unreached areas.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Local member and leadership involvement in pre- and post-baptismal teaching and fellowshiping appears to be a major factor contributing to improved convert retention and member activity rates in the mid-2000s. New members received a collection of church materials and manuals, such as *For the Strength of Youth*, in addition to a personalized welcome letter from the local branch presidency or bishopric. Home and visiting teachers and local leaders tracked the progress made by new converts and taught them how to use these materials. Teacher improvement classes were also held regularly.¹¹⁷⁶

Full-time missionaries reported that they were not permitted until 2010 to perform convert baptism to encourage local members to participate in the ordinance and to build stronger relations with new converts in order to improve convert retention.

Convert retention has demonstrated some improvement, but activity rates around 20%, slow congregational growth, and continued struggles to retain converts and active members demonstrate that much work is still needed. Programs encouraging missionaries to baptize investigators quickly, usually after attending just two to three sacrament meeting and often before positive gospel habits have been firmly established and before negative habits are fully overcome, are major factors in ongoing low rates of convert retention notwithstanding some increased emphasis on member fellowshiping.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Missionaries report few instances of ethnic integration issues due to the large mixed-race population. The greatest likelihood for ethnic conflict at church would be integrating Amerindian groups into predominantly mestizo congregations due to linguistic and cultural differences. However, geography generally separates these groups. The greatest social integration challenges appear to be socioeconomic.

Language Issues

Spanish language LDS scriptures and church materials provide outreach for at least 99% of the Colombian population. Kuna and Quechua appear to be the only Amerindian languages with church materials. Prospects for church material translations in additional Amerindian languages appears unlikely for the foreseeable future due to sparse Amerindian Latter-day Saint membership, few Amerindian language speakers, bilingualism in

¹¹⁷⁶ Gardner, Marvin K. "The Saints of Colombia: An Example of Strength," *Liahona*, Mar 2005, 34.

Spanish, and lack of literature in most Amerindian languages spoken in Colombia. Few mission outreach centers are established near rural areas predominantly populated by Amerindians.

Missionary Service

The Church experienced rapid increases in the number of local full-time missionaries in the 1970s. In October 1976, there were thirty Colombians serving missions, and by the following February, there were 150.¹¹⁷⁷ In 1996, there were almost 500 missionaries serving in Colombia, 300 of whom were in the Colombia Bogota North and South Missions.¹¹⁷⁸ By 2005, nearly 800 missionaries serving in Colombia, all of whom were Latin Americans.¹¹⁷⁹ In the late 2000s, North American missionaries began to be reintroduced to the Colombian missions. In 2010, there were around thirty-five North American missionaries in the Colombia Cali Mission. Only Latin Americans are known to have attended the Colombian Missionary Training Center in 2010. Colombia has been able to maintain mission outreach reached by both local and foreign full-time missionaries since the early 1990s but has experienced only limited gains over the past fifteen years, as manifested by the limited increase in national outreach with full-time missionaries.

Leadership

Church employees have periodically served in stake presidencies, but the Church has not been dependent on CES employees for leadership. In 2003, church employees held two of the three positions in the Soacha Colombia Stake presidency,¹¹⁸⁰ yet the Cartagena Colombia Los Alpes Stake had no church employees in the stake presidency.¹¹⁸¹

Colombian members have served in many international church positions. In 1991, Julio E. Davila was called to the Second Quorum of the Seventy.¹¹⁸² In 1992, Jaime Ferreira from Bogota¹¹⁸³ and Roberto Juliao from Barranquilla¹¹⁸⁴ were called as regional representatives. In 1993, Roberto Rubio from Bogota was called as a mission president.¹¹⁸⁵ In 1993, Jaime Ferreira became the mission president of the Colombia Cali Mission.¹¹⁸⁶ In 1993, Cesar A. Davila from Bogota was called as a regional representative.¹¹⁸⁷ In 1994, Jose Leopoldo Ramos Ospino from Soacha was called as a regional representative.¹¹⁸⁸ In 1996, Roberto Garcia A. from Bogota began

¹¹⁷⁷ "Colombia," *Ensign*, Feb 1977, 27.

¹¹⁷⁸ "Prophet visits South America," *LDS Church News*, 16 November 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27465/Prophet-visits-South-America.html>

¹¹⁷⁹ Gardner, Marvin K. "The Saints of Colombia: An Example of Strength," *Liahona*, Mar 2005, 34.

¹¹⁸⁰ "New stake presidents," *LDS Church News*, 5 April 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43457/New-stake-presidents.html>

¹¹⁸¹ "New stake presidents," *LDS Church News*, 5 July 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/34632/New-stake-presidents.html>

¹¹⁸² Hart, John L. "Colombian convert calm amid tensions," *LDS Church News*, 20 April 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21430/Colombian-convert-calm-amid-tensions.html>

¹¹⁸³ "New regional representatives," *LDS Church News*, 11 July 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22715/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹¹⁸⁴ "New regional representatives," *LDS Church News*, 29 August 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22464/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹¹⁸⁵ "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 13 February 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23678/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹¹⁸⁶ "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 8 May 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23685/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹¹⁸⁷ "New regional representatives," *LDS Church News*, 25 September 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23377/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹¹⁸⁸ "New regional representatives," *LDS Church News*, 27 August 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24738/New-regional-representatives.html>

presiding over the Ecuador Quito Mission.¹¹⁸⁹ In 1999, Noel Alberto Diaz from Bogota was called to preside over the Colombia Cali Mission.¹¹⁹⁰ In 2000, Jaime Ferreira (Bogota), Roberto Garcia (Bogota) and Jose L. Gonzalez (Pereira) were called as Area Authority Seventies.¹¹⁹¹ In 2001, Elder Walter F. Gonzalez from Bogota was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy.¹¹⁹² In 2001, Cesar Augusto Davila Penaloza from Bogota began presiding over the Colombia Barranquilla Mission.¹¹⁹³ In 2002, Jorge Eduardo Trujillo from Bogota began his tenure over the Colombia Cali Mission.¹¹⁹⁴ In 2002, a Colombian member was called as the temple president for the Bogota Colombia Temple for the first time, Roberto Rubio Ramirez.¹¹⁹⁵ In 2003, Edgar Angel Mantilla (Bucaramanga) was called to preside over the Colombia Bogota South Mission.¹¹⁹⁶ In 2004, Cesar A. Davila was called as an Area Authority Seventy.¹¹⁹⁷ In 2004, Pedro Nel Cardona Zuluaga from Medellin became the Colombia Missionary Training Center President.¹¹⁹⁸ In 2006, Hernando Camargo Pedraza from Piedecuesta began presiding over the Colombia Bogota North Mission.¹¹⁹⁹ In 2008, Ruben D. Torres from Bogota was called as an Area Authority.¹²⁰⁰ In 2008, Jose Wilson Gamboa from Bogota was called to preside over the Ecuador Guayaquil North Mission.¹²⁰¹ In 2008, Jorge Julio Escobar Vidal from Bogota was called to as the temple president for the Bogota Colombia Temple.¹²⁰² In 2010, Carlos Alberto Gaviria from Bogota was called as a mission president¹²⁰³ over the Colombia Barranquilla Mission.

Temple

Colombia pertains to the Bogota Colombia Temple district. Colombian Latter-day Saints attended the Lima Peru Temple between 1986 and 1999 prior to the completion of the temple in Bogota.¹²⁰⁴ The Church announced the temple in 1984 but did not purchase the property until 1988.¹²⁰⁵ Construction began in

¹¹⁸⁹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 6 April 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27476/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹¹⁹⁰ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 17 April 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35630/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹¹⁹¹ "39 Area Authority Seventies called," LDS Church News, 8 April 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37529/39-Area-Authority-Seventies-called.html>

¹¹⁹² "12 men are sustained to Quorums of Seventy," LDS Church News, 31 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39606/12-men-are-sustained-to-Quorums-of-Seventy.html>

¹¹⁹³ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 19 May 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39889/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹¹⁹⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 23 March 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41472/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹¹⁹⁵ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 19 October 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42678/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹¹⁹⁶ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 15 March 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43361/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹¹⁹⁷ "New Area Authority Seventies," LDS Church News, 24 April 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/34660/New-Area-Authority-Seventies.html>

¹¹⁹⁸ "New MTC presidents," LDS Church News, 20 November 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46493/New-MTC-presidents.html>

¹¹⁹⁹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 1 April 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48712/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹²⁰⁰ "38 Area Seventies called," LDS Church News, 12 April 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51857/38-Area-Seventies-called.html>

¹²⁰¹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 19 April 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51906/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹²⁰² "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 26 July 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/53025/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹²⁰³ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 6 February 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/58753/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹²⁰⁴ "In many countries, great efforts made to attend the temple," LDS Church News, 25 June 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24289/In-many-countries-great-efforts-made-to-attend-the-temple.html>

¹²⁰⁵ "Sites are purchased for temples in Bountiful, Utah and Bogota, Colombia," LDS Church News, 28 May 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19880528/Sites-are-purchased-for-temples-in-Bountiful-Utah-and-Bogota-Colombia.html>

1993.¹²⁰⁶ 127,107 attended the open house¹²⁰⁷, and 11,300 members attended the 11 dedicatory sessions.¹²⁰⁸ The temple operates below capacity but is more utilized than many other temples dedicated since the late 1990s, as there are six endowment sessions scheduled on Tuesdays through Fridays. Only members in the Bogota area have convenient access to the temple. Organized temple trips from northern and southern areas can take as long as twenty hours by bus one way from Cartagena.¹²⁰⁹ In October 2011, President Monson announced a new temple for Barranquilla. An additional temple may be built in Cali if warranted by temple attendance in southern Colombia.

Comparative Growth

Despite having the third largest population Latin America after Brazil and Mexico, Colombia has the eighth largest Latter-day Saint population in Latin America. Latter-day Saints constitute the smallest percentage in the general population in Colombia among Latin American countries with a church presence. The low percentage of Latter-day Saints has come partially from lower receptivity, but primarily stems from the small number of LDS missions and missionaries, as only four missions function. Argentina operates ten LDS missions but has three million fewer people than Colombia, and Chile has nine LDS missions and slightly over a third the size of the Colombian population. The percentage of members enrolled in seminary or institute is representative of most of Latin American at around 4%. In 2010, Colombia boasted the thirteenth largest number of nominal Latter-day Saint members, thirteenth most stakes, and eleventh most districts worldwide. Prior to the announcement of the Barranquilla Colombia Temple, Colombia was the country with the second most members with only one temple. The initial establishment of the Church in Colombia occurred around the same time as most of northern South America.

Unlike other Latin American nations with a church presence, Colombia has been the only country in South America that had no North American missionaries for approximately fifteen years between 1992 and the late 2000s. Nations that rely upon local members to staff their full-time missionary force, such as Haiti, many African nations, Pakistan, and many nations in Asia, often report improvement in convert retention, member activity, membership growth, and congregational growth rates. Colombia has been an exception to this trend. Little progress has occurred in improving convert retention, member activity, or congregational growth over many years of North American missionary absence. Colombia has demonstrated the capability to carry out its church administration and missionary responsibilities without much international assistance but may benefit from additional North American missionary manpower to spur greater progress. However, the plateauing of the full-time LDS missionary force due to declining LDS birth rates and heavy demands for missionary manpower in other areas make it unlikely that Colombia will experience a large increase in assigned missionary complement over the next decade.

The growth of many missionary-oriented Christian groups has outpaced Latter-day Saints. Seventh Day Adventists have recently experienced annual membership growth rates comparable to Latter-day Saints but have experienced much higher retention and member activity. Seventh Day Adventists organize an average of thirty to sixty new congregations in Colombia annually, whereas the LDS church has organized few or no new congregations in recent years. Jehovah's Witnesses experience steady growth. Evangelical growth is moderate to strong in many areas.

ldschurchnews.com/articles/18396/Sites-are-purchased-for-temples-in-Bountiful-Utah-and-Bogota-colombia.html

¹²⁰⁶ "Colombia temple groundbreaking," LDS Church News, 10 July 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23917/Colombia-temple-groundbreaking.html>

¹²⁰⁷ "Bogota Colombia Temple facts," LDS Church News, 1 May 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35694/Bogota-Colombia-Temple-facts.html>

¹²⁰⁸ Hart, John L. "Cover Story: Bogota Temple—Gift of inner peace in a troubled land," LDS Church News, 1 May 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35699/Cover-Story-Bogota-Temple—Gift-of-inner-peace-in-a-troubled-land.html>

¹²⁰⁹ Gardner, Marvin K. "The Saints of Colombia: An Example of Strength," *Liahona*, Mar 2005, 34.

Future Prospects

The outlook for church growth in Colombia is mixed, with vast opportunities for expansion of national outreach and significant local receptivity, but little growth in active membership, little change in congregational numbers, continued struggles with poor convert retention and low member activity, and a self-sufficient but small missionary force that is proportionally much smaller than in comparable Latin American nations. The largest metropolitan areas have reported few new congregations organized in the past decade despite persistent missionary efforts to better establish the church in these areas. The size and past self-sufficiency of the local full-time missionary force indicate that the Church in Colombia has matured in an administrative and leadership sense but not on a local level in many areas. Other Christian faiths have demonstrated that achieving both high growth rates and high retention is possible in Colombia while maintaining high standards, while the LDS Church has struggled with both growth and retention.

When Church President Spencer W. Kimball dedicated Colombia for missionary work, he stated in his prayer that the numbers of future converts would be so great that multiple temples would be built.¹²¹⁰ This prayer has only been partially realized to date, as the LDS Church continues to fall short of its potential in Colombia. Considerable effort and increased emphasis on growth, retention, and gospel standards will be needed to bridge the gap between performance and potential.

¹²¹⁰ "Colombia," *Ensign*, Feb 1977, 27.

ECUADOR

Geography

AREA: 283,561 square km. Located on the equator in northwestern South America, Ecuador borders Colombia, Peru, and the Pacific Ocean. The Galapagos Islands consists of eighteen main islands offshore from the South American mainland and are under Ecuadoran administration. Dramatic shifts in terrain and climate characterize Ecuador proper. The Amazon Basin occupies the eastern interior and comprises tropical rainforest. Climate is modified by high elevation in the highlands of the Andes Mountain range, which dominates central areas, stretching north to south. Cotopaxi is the highest active volcano in the world, located south of Quito. Temperate and alpine climate occur in highland areas. Pacific coastal areas include forests and mangroves and experience a tropical climate. Earthquakes, landslides, volcanoes, floods, and droughts are natural hazards. Environmental issues include deforestation, soil erosion, pollution, and the degradation of interior tropical rainforest and Galapagos Islands ecosystems. Ecuador is divided into twenty-four administrative provinces.

Peoples

Mestizo (mixed Amerindian and white): 65%

Amerindian: 25%

Spanish/other: 7%

Black: 3%

Most Ecuadorans are mestizos. Amerindians constitute one-quarter of the population. Whites and black Africans together account for one-tenth of the population.

Population: 15,223,680 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.419% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.38 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 73 male, 79.04 female (2012)

Languages: Spanish (89%), Quichua dialects (10%), other Amerindian languages (1%). Languages with over one million speakers include Spanish (13.2 million) and Quichua dialects (1.5 million).

Literacy: 91% (2001)

History

Ancient Amerindian civilizations prospered in modern-day Ecuador prior to the Inca Empire conquering the region. The Spanish invaded in the 1530s and began colonization. Much of the indigenous Amerindian population perished from disease during the first years of Spanish rule while the remainder engaged in forced labor. Ecuador rebelled against Spanish rule in the early nineteenth century and in 1822 drove away Spanish forces and joined the Republic of Gran Colombia. By 1830, Ecuador seceded as an independent nation. Political instability and frequent changes in government administration marked most of the nineteenth century. The Catholic Church played an important role in unifying the country during this period. Many Ecuadorans relocated from the highlands to coastal areas in the late nineteenth century as the cocoa industry grew with

worldwide demand. As the profitability of cultivating cocoa declined in the early twentieth century, political instability returned, and a military coup occurred in 1925. In the 1940s, Ecuador lost large amounts of territory claimed in the Amazon Basin to Peru. The remainder of the twentieth century was characterized by alternating periods of political stability and instability. A military dictatorship ruled during the 1970s and democratic rule occurred from 1980 to the early 1990s. From the late 1990s to late 2000s, various political rulers vied for power and civil uprisings were common. A new constitution went into effect in 2008. In recent years, the government has focused on improving living conditions and pursuing social justice.¹²¹¹

Culture

Contemporary Ecuadoran culture draws heavily upon indigenous and Spanish influences, as reflected by most the population identifying as mestizo. The Catholic Church has historically been the dominant socio-religious institution and remains a vibrant traditional faith, but in recent years few attend mass regularly, and the Church's role in society has been diminished. Some indigenous groups strongly adhere to their traditional languages and customs. African slaves shipwrecked in the mid-sixteenth century have given rise to Afro-Ecuadorans, who have brought some aspects of African culture into the regions where they reside. Ecuador experiences a high degree of regionalism, with some of the greatest differences and rivalry occurring between Guayaquil and Quito. Lunch is the primary meal of the day, and common foods include plantains, fish, beans, potatoes, meat, and rice. Music and family occupy important roles in society.¹²¹² Alcohol and cigarette consumption rates are low compared to the worldwide average.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$8,300 (2011) [17.3% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.720

Corruption Index: 2.7 (2011)

The economy has consistently relied on oil export earnings for stabilization and modest levels of growth, resulting in high susceptibility to changes in world oil prices and demand. To respond to economic crisis in 1999 and 2000, the government adopted the U.S. dollar as legal tender in March 2000. Poverty and low standards of living are major issues that frustrate economic development as 35% of Ecuadorans live below the poverty line. The global financial crisis and declining oil prices in the late 2000s have contributed to recession in recent years. Oil, fish, lumber, and hydropower are natural resources. Ecuador has one of the largest proven oil reserves in Latin America. Services employ 70% of the labor force and generate 58% of the GDP whereas industry employs 21% of the population and generates 35% of the GDP. Major industries include oil, food processing, clothing, wood products, and chemicals. Agriculture accounts for less than 10% of the workforce and GDP. Fruit, coffee, cocoa, rice, potatoes, manioc (tapioca), sugarcane, livestock, dairy products, wood, fish, and shrimp are common crops and agricultural goods. Over 25% of imports and exports are trafficked with the United States, making it the primary trade partner. Other important trade partners include Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela.

Ecuador ranks among the most corrupt Latin American countries. Illicit drug operations and insurgents often cross over the Colombian border. Cocaine produced in Colombia and Peru is often trafficked through Ecuador to the United States. Ecuador is highly vulnerable to money laundering and banking associated with illicit drug dealers as Ecuador has adopted the United States dollar since 2000 and has few regulations to safeguard against money laundering. Past presidential administrations have been accused of corruption.

¹²¹¹ "Background Note: Ecuador," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 24 May 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35761.htm>

¹²¹² "Culture of Ecuador," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 28 December 2010. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_Ecuador

Faiths

Christian: 99%

Other: 1%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 12,572,017

Latter-day Saints 211,165 308

Seventh Day Adventists 75,936 194

Jehovah's Witnesses 75,936 923

Religion

Eighty-five percent (85%) of Ecuadorans are nominal Catholics, with 15% regularly practicing their faith. Attendance at mass appears to have increased in recent years due to proselytism initiatives by the Catholic Church. There are over one million non-Catholic Christians, and the largest denominations include Southern Baptists, Latter-day Saints, Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostals, and Evangelicals. In the Guayaquil area, many mestizos are Protestant. Protestant megachurches continue to experience strong growth.¹²¹³

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom and prohibits religious discrimination. The government has generally upheld the constitution. Religious groups and all nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are required to register with the government. To register, a religious group must submit the names and signatures of at least fifteen members, have nonprofit status, and possess a charter. All nonprofit organizations must report how any government funding has been spent. The government recognizes major Catholic holidays as national holidays. There have been no recent reports of societal abuse of religious freedom.¹²¹⁴

Largest Cities

Urban: 66%

Guayaquil, Quito, Cuenca, Portoviejo, Machala, Santo Domingo, Ambato, Manta, Durán, Riobamba, Loja, Ibarra, Quevedo, Milagro, Esmeraldas, Babahoyo.

All sixteen cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS stake or district and multiple congregations. Forty-seven percent (47%) of the national population resides in the sixteen largest cities.

LDS History

In October 1965, Elder Spencer W. Kimball dedicated Ecuador for missionary work.¹²¹⁵ That same year, the first full-time missionaries arrived to proselyte.¹²¹⁶ Based in Peru, the Andes Mission initially administered

¹²¹³ "Ecuador," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148753.htm>

¹²¹⁴ "Ecuador," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148753.htm>

¹²¹⁵ Wells, Elayne. "A land of prophecy: in the Andes, 'Lehi's children grow strong in gospel,'" LDS Church News, 17 February 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19993/A-land-of-prophecy—in-the-Andes-Lehis-children-grow-strong-in-gospel.html>

¹²¹⁶ "South America missions to number 48 Brazil, Ecuador, Venezuela to gain 5 new missions," LDS Church News, 16 March

Ecuador until the creation of the Ecuador Mission in 1970, renamed the Ecuador Quito Mission in 1974. Seminary and institute began in 1971. The Church created a second mission based in Guayaquil in 1978. In 1980, the Church published the Book of Mormon translation in Quichua.¹²¹⁷ In 1981, the Church created its first all-Amerindian stake in Latin American in Otavalo. International LDS leaders have suggested for decades that the Otavalo are among the descendants of Book of Mormon peoples.¹²¹⁸ LDS apostle Elder M. Russell Ballard toured Ecuador in 1989.¹²¹⁹ Ecuador's third mission, the Ecuador Guayaquil North Mission, was organized in 1991.¹²²⁰ In early 1992, a missionary training center was completed in Bogota, Colombia, which trained new missionaries from Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela destined to serve in one of these nations.¹²²¹ Strong leadership and membership growth was apparent in the Guayaquil area in the early 1990s as the Guayaquil Ecuador East Stake divided to create two additional stakes.¹²²² There have been only a few instances in LDS Church history where three stakes were made from one. One stake divided into three stakes again in 1997 in Quevedo.¹²²³ In 1997, local and regional church leaders set a goal for one million temple open house attendees once the Guayaquil Ecuador Temple was completed.¹²²⁴ In 1997, President Hinckley met with the Ecuadoran president.¹²²⁵ One Latter-day Saint perished in an earthquake in Portoviejo in 1998.¹²²⁶ The Guayaquil Ecuador Temple open house received strong media attention as seven television stations, seven newspapers, two magazines, and a radio station reported the event.¹²²⁷ Flooding in 2001 and 2002 affected dozens of LDS families and damaged several church meetinghouses.¹²²⁸ Ecuador pertained to the South America North Area prior to 2009 and at present is assigned to the South American Northeast Area. In 2013, new missions were organized in Guayaquil West and Quito North, increasing the number of missions to five.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 211,165 (2012)

There were approximately 1,000 Latter-day Saints in 1970, increasing to 3,226 by 1975. Rapid membership growth occurred from the late 1970s to early 1990s as a result of high receptivity to the Church, low baptismal standards for converts, and high member involvement in missionary work through referral-based proselytism.

1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20940/South-America-missions-to-number-48-Brazil-Ecuador-Venezuela-to-gain-5-new-missions.html>

¹²¹⁷ "Languages of the Book of Mormon," LDS Church News, 2 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18109/Languages-of-the-Book-of-Mormon.html>

¹²¹⁸ Wells, Elayne. "A land of prophecy: in the Andes, 'Lehi's children grow strong in gospel,'" LDS Church News, 17 February 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19993/A-land-of-prophecy-in-the-Andes-Lehis-children-grow-strong-in-gospel.html>

¹²¹⁹ "'Wisely, cautiously,' missionary work proceeds in Bolivia," LDS Church News, 24 June 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19002/Wisely-cautiously-missionary-work-proceeds-in-Bolivia.html>

¹²²⁰ "South America missions to number 48 Brazil, Ecuador, Venezuela to gain 5 new missions," LDS Church News, 16 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20940/South-America-missions-to-number-48-Brazil-Ecuador-Venezuela-to-gain-5-new-missions.html>

¹²²¹ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 29 February 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22137/From-around-the-world.html>

¹²²² "New stake presidencies," LDS Church News, 18 July 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22204/New-stake-presidencies.html>

¹²²³ "New stake presidencies," LDS Church News, 4 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29785/New-stake-presidencies.html>

¹²²⁴ "Excitement for temple in Ecuador grows," LDS Church News, 1 February 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28885/Excitement-for-temple-in-Ecuador-grows.html>

¹²²⁵ "Ecuador receives first visit from a president of Church," LDS Church News, 23 August 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29571/Ecuador-receives-first-visit-from-a-president-of-Church.html>

¹²²⁶ "One member killed during Ecuador earthquakes," LDS Church News, 29 August 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29785/New-stake-presidencies.html>

¹²²⁷ "100,00 expected at open house of Guayaquil Ecuador Temple," LDS Church News, 10 July 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/36032/100000-expected-at-open-house-of-Guayaquil-Ecuador-Temple.html>

¹²²⁸ "Floods damage members' homes," LDS Church News, 24 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39515/Floods-damage-members-homes.html>

Membership reached 19,000 by 1978 and 43,000 in 1986. By early 1991, there were 70,000 members.¹²²⁹ By year-end 2000, there were 149,938 members.

Membership growth slowed substantially in the 2000s as membership increased to 161,396 in 2003, 170,736 in 2005, and 185,663 in 2008. Annual membership growth rates during this period ranged from 2 to 3% as membership generally increased by approximately 5,000 a year. In August 2010, the Ecuador Quito Mission baptized 202 converts. In 2009, one in seventy-eight was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 234 Branches: 73 (April 2013)

There were ninety-six congregations in 1990, including forty-six wards. The number of congregations tripled in the 1990s to 248 in 1993 and 383 in 1997. Congregational decline began in the late 1990s. By year-end 2000, there were 331 congregations (202 wards, 129 branches).

The number of congregations declined during the first half of the 2000s, largely due to the consolidation of branches, as there were 317 congregations in 2001, 297 in 2002, and 290 in 2003 (192 wards, 98 branches). In 2005, there were 295 congregations, and in 2007 there were 293 (212 wards, 81 branches). Slight congregational growth occurred in the late 2000s and in late 2010 there were 300 congregations.

The first two Ecuadoran LDS stakes were created in Guayaquil in 1978. The following year, a third stake was created in Quito. Between 1980 and 1990, the number of stakes increased from four to nine as new stakes were organized in Guayaquil Prosperina (1980), Quito Santa Ana (1981), Portoviejo (1981), Quevedo (1981), Otavalo (1981), and Guayaquil Garcia Moreno (1989). By early 1991, there were ten stakes and eight districts.¹²³⁰

Most of Ecuador's stakes were organized between 1991 and 1998 as the number of stakes increased from nine to thirty-three. During this period, there were seven new stakes created in Guayaquil, four in Quito, two in Duran, two in Esmeraldas, and two in Quevedo. Additional stakes were created in Milagro, Machala, Santo Domingo, Esmeraldas, Ambato, Manta, Otavalo Imbabura, and Cuenca. By year-end 2000, there were thirty-two stakes and twelve districts.

Four new stakes were created in the 2000s, three of which were from districts. New stakes were organized in Libertad (2004), Babahoyo (2005), Guayaquil La Pradera (2007), and Los Chillos (2009). The Church has discontinued three stakes in Ecuador, all of which were consolidated with neighboring stakes in their respective cities. Discontinued stakes include the Esmeraldas Ecuador San Rafael (1999), Quito Ecuador Inaquito (2002), and Quevedo Ecuador San Camilo (2003) stakes.

By year-end 2010, there were thirty-four stakes and nine districts. Districts functioning at this time were located in Ibarra (1975), Jipijapa (1988), Loja (1991), Riobamba (1992), Vinces (1992), Santa Rosa (1994), Ventanas (1994), Pedro Carbo (1999), and El Triunfo (2002).

Activity and Retention

Four thousand nine hundred members attended a regional conference held in Quito in 1991, a third of

¹²²⁹ "South America missions to number 48 Brazil, Ecuador, Venezuela to gain 5 new missions," LDS Church News, 16 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20940/South-America-missions-to-number-48-Brazil-Ecuador-Venezuela-to-gain-5-new-missions.html>

¹²³⁰ "South America missions to number 48 Brazil, Ecuador, Venezuela to gain 5 new missions," LDS Church News, 16 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20940/South-America-missions-to-number-48-Brazil-Ecuador-Venezuela-to-gain-5-new-missions.html>

which were Otavalo Amerindians.¹²³¹ 10,446 listened to the groundbreaking ceremony for the Guayaquil Ecuador Temple via local radio in the Guayaquil Coliseum in 1996.¹²³² In 1997, President Hinckley spoke to 15,000 members in two meetings in Guayaquil and 8,350 members in a single meeting in Quito.¹²³³ 108,000 attended the Guayaquil Ecuador Temple open house¹²³⁴ and 11,700 members attended the dedicatory services.¹²³⁵ 22,000 members from the Guayaquil area attended a regional conference with President Hinckley the day prior to the dedication of the temple.¹²³⁶ The average number of members per congregation increased from 453 in 2000 to 641 in 2009. There were 6,287 enrolled in seminary and institute during the 2008–2009 school year.

In 2010, approximately one hundred members attended the Armenia Ward in the Los Chillos Ecuador Stake. In late 2010, there were twenty active members in the Catamayo Branch. One of the branches in Santa Rosa had sixty-five attending church in 2010. Branches generally have between fifty and one hundred active members, whereas wards tend to have 100 to 150 active members. Nationwide active membership is estimated at 40,000, or 20% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Spanish, Quichua.

All LDS scriptures and most Church materials are available in Spanish, including an LDS edition of the Bible complete with full LDS footnotes, Bible dictionary, and topical guide. Quichua translations of LDS materials are limited to the Book of Mormon, a family guide book, *Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, one priesthood manual, one Relief Society manual, and *Gospel Principles*.

Meetinghouses

There were over 150 LDS meetinghouses in late 2010, nearly all of which were built by the Church.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Latter-day Saints have performed humanitarian outreach since the late 1980s. American LDS physicians collected books for a medical school based in Guayaquil in 1989.¹²³⁷ Local media reported a local service project in which over 250 members from the Guayaquil area cleaned Guayaquil Park in 1994.¹²³⁸ In 1997, the Church sponsored a citywide clean-up project in Quevado.¹²³⁹ 300 attended a provident living and preparedness fair

¹²³¹ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 9 November 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21235/From-around-the-world.html>

¹²³² "Amid tears, Ecuador temple ground broken," LDS Church News, 17 August 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28163/Amid-tears-Ecuador-temple-ground-broken.html>

¹²³³ "Rapid pace across South America," LDS Church News, 23 August 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29572/Rapid-pace-across-South-America.html>

¹²³⁴ "Facts and features: Guayaquil Ecuador Temple," LDS Church News, 7 August 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/36178/Facts-and-features-Guayaquil-Ecuador-Temple.html>

¹²³⁵ Hart, John L. "Guayaquil Ecuador Temple dedication: 'A wondrous day' for members," LDS Church News, 7 August 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/36161/Guayaquil-Ecuador-Temple-dedication-A-wondrous-day-for-members.html>

¹²³⁶ "This is a day of history," LDS Church News, 7 August 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/36160/This-is-a-day-of-history.html>

¹²³⁷ "LDS physicians plan 'day of service,'" LDS Church News, 25 March 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18568/LDS-physicians-plan-day-of-service.html>

¹²³⁸ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 12 November 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24872/From-around-the-world.html>

¹²³⁹ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 22 February 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29426/From-around-the-world.html>

led by the Church in Quito in 2002.¹²⁴⁰ Later that year, nineteen full-time missionaries provided over 700 hours of service as translators for American doctors and dentists providing medical care for the poor in rural areas.¹²⁴¹ Brigham Young University has worked for several years completing development projects in rural areas. In 2002, a water system was installed in the remote city of Cuambo¹²⁴² and micro-farming projects have occurred. Missionaries provided translating services again in 2004 for medical military personnel.¹²⁴³

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Latter-day Saints face no governmental or societal restrictions and proselyte, worship, and assemble freely. Foreign full-time missionaries report no major difficulty obtaining visas. Regional rivalries, illicit drug trafficking, and corruption do not appear to have significantly affected LDS mission outreach potential.

Cultural Issues

Low rates of regular religious participation among Catholics has created challenges for LDS missionaries when finding, teaching, baptizing, and reactivating investigators, recent converts, and inactive members with a Catholic background. There has been little success eliciting long-term regular church attendance among Ecuadorans, as LDS missionaries have rushed most into baptism with little pre-baptismal and post-baptismal teaching that specifically rectifies low church attendance trends prevalent among the general population. Low alcohol and cigarette consumption rates complement LDS teachings and have likely contributed to past church growth successes. Cultural customs and practices in some regions and among some ethnic groups have improved receptivity to the LDS Church, such as among the Otavalo in northern Ecuador. Some Otavalo customs and traditions are aligned with LDS teachings and have similarities with stories found in the Book of Mormon.¹²⁴⁴ The Otavalo Amerindians have demonstrated affinity for the Church, and full-time missionaries report that the two stakes in Otavalo are highly self-sufficient. High receptivity in this region was noted as early as 1965 when the Church was first established in Ecuador.¹²⁴⁵

Strong growth among some Protestant churches in recent years indicates that the population is overall receptive to nontraditional Christian denominations and that the cultural characteristics of Ecuador are favorable for church growth as long as mission outreach is tailored to meet local needs. Regional rivalries can create challenges assimilating Ecuadorans from differing regions into the same LDS congregations and communities.

National Outreach

Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the national population resides in a city of over 15,000 inhabitants with an LDS mission outreach center. Outreach occurs in some rural areas, which may increase the percentage of

¹²⁴⁰ "300 attend preparedness fair," LDS Church News, 1 June 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41905/300-attend-preparedness-fair.html>

¹²⁴¹ Swensen, Jason. "Missionaries' skills enlisted in Ecuador," LDS Church News, 3 August 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42218/Missionaries-skills-enlisted-in-Ecuador.html>

¹²⁴² Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Water to drink," LDS Church News, 10 August 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42251/Water-to-drink.html>

¹²⁴³ "Missionaries translating," LDS Church News, 4 September 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46086/Missionaries-translating.html>

¹²⁴⁴ Wells, Elayne. "A land of prophecy: in the Andes, 'Lehi's children grow strong in gospel,'" LDS Church News, 17 February 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19993/A-land-of-prophecy-in-the-Andes-Lehis-children-grow-strong-in-gospel.html>

¹²⁴⁵ Wells, Elayne. "A land of prophecy: in the Andes, 'Lehi's children grow strong in gospel,'" LDS Church News, 17 February 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19993/A-land-of-prophecy-in-the-Andes-Lehis-children-grow-strong-in-gospel.html>

Ecuadorans reached by LDS missionary efforts to 65%. Thirty-five of the forty-two cities between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. 1.6% of the national population resides in unreached cities with populations greater than 20,000, which include Nueva Loja, Huaquillas, La Maná, Naranjal, Pedernales, Calceta, and Macas. Distance from mission headquarters, remote location, and small populations has contributed to the lack of LDS outreach in these cities. Dependent branches or groups may function in some of these locations.

There are 315,000 who reside in the two administrative provinces without LDS mission outreach, Morona Santiago and Sucumbios, which account for 2% of the national population. Eight provinces have only one LDS congregation and include Bolivar, Carchi, Cotopaxi, Galapagos, Napo, Orellana, Pastaza, and Zamora-Chinchi. The provinces with only one LDS mission outreach center account for 8.5% of the national population. Cotopaxi is the province with the largest population with only one LDS congregation (421,900 inhabitants).

During the 2000s, the Church established only a few new mission outreach centers in previously unreached areas, such as in Puerto Francisco de Orellana. The consolidation of dozens of congregations during this period has reduced the scope of mission outreach in many urban areas. Administrative challenges and dependence on full-time missionaries for many congregations to operate has prevented the opening of additional mission outreach centers.

Most urban areas receive a high level of LDS mission outreach achieved by the operation of multiple mission outreach centers, but most rural areas remain unreached and have no nearby mission outreach centers. Many Ecuadoran Latter-day Saints likely reside in these areas but are not active in the Church. The creation of dependent branches and groups may facilitate expansion of national outreach and increase member activity rates in the more populated rural areas. Holding cottage meetings in these areas allows for sporadic mission outreach to occur without assigning disproportionate numbers of full-time missionaries to remote, sparsely populated locations and presents opportunity to assess receptivity and mission outreach prospects over the medium-term.

The Church maintains a website for the South America Northeast Area at <http://www.iglesiadejesucristo.org.co/>. The website offers Spanish information regarding church doctrines, news, temples, and missionary contact information. Use of the website by local members and missionaries can assist proselytizing efforts both in reached and unreached areas.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Membership growth rates have widely varied by location, but low convert retention rates have been consistent throughout Ecuador. Low member activity rates as indicated by few LDS congregations for large numbers of Latter-day Saints on paper have been prevalent for decades. In 1988, Cuenca experienced some of the slowest growth and had two LDS congregations for 800 members in the area.¹²⁴⁶ Just three branches were part of the Esmeraldas Ecuador District when it was organized in 1988, yet there were 1,500 Latter-day Saints.¹²⁴⁷ The average number of members per congregation increased by nearly 200 during the 2000s as few new congregations were organized and dozens of formerly-operating congregations were consolidated due to inadequate numbers of active priesthood holders and low member activity and participation rates overall. The discontinuation of three stakes between 1999 and 2003 further illustrates challenges retaining new converts, maintaining member activity rates, and developing sustainable local leadership. Culturally low religious activity rates in the

¹²⁴⁶ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 30 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17635/From-around-the-world.html>

¹²⁴⁷ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 20 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17978/From-around-the-world.html>

general population and quick-baptize tactics by full-time missionaries practiced for several decades appear to be primary causes of poor LDS member activity and convert retention today. There have been inconsistent improvements addressing these issues through the missionary guide *Preach My Gospel*, as the standards for baptism in the guide do not appear to be consistently implemented nationwide.

A recent success improving member activity and convert retention is highlighted in the creation of the Los Chillos Ecuador Stake from the San Rafael Ecuador District in 2009, in which each of the six original branches became wards. Within a year of the creation of the stake, a seventh ward was organized, an unusually short amount of time for an additional congregation to be organized for Latin American stakes created from districts. Significant nationwide improvements in member activity have yet to occur, as indicated by no increase in seminary and institute enrollment during the late 2000s.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Ecuador overall experiences few ethnic integration challenges, as most are Amerindian-Spanish mixed mestizos. Language barriers between Amerindians and mestizo and white Ecuadorans are the most likely obstacle to be encountered by the Church.

Language Issues

Some LDS scriptures and church materials are translated into the native languages of 99% of the population. Amerindian languages without LDS materials at present appear unlikely to have LDS materials translated for the foreseeable future due to few speakers of these languages among Church members, the lack of mission outreach in areas where these languages are spoken, and bilingualism among many in Spanish. There have been challenges integrating Amerindians who do not speak Spanish into Spanish-speaking mestizo congregations and Spanish-speaking mestizos into Quichua-speaking congregations. These challenges have been primarily encountered in the Otavalo and Quito areas. The creation of language-specific congregations in northern Ecuador may improve member activity and convert retention rates in these areas.

Missionary Service

Local members regularly serve full-time missions, and Ecuador appears close to becoming self-sufficient in its full-time missionary force. In mid-1997, there were approximately 670 missionaries serving in Ecuador.¹²⁴⁸ In late 2010, there were likely between 500 and 600 missionaries assigned. Obstacles preventing greater numbers of members completing full-time missions include low member activity rates, a lack of youth-oriented missionary preparation programs, and undeveloped local priesthood leadership in many areas.

Leadership

Ecuador possesses developed priesthood leadership in appreciable numbers in Guayaquil and Quito, but other areas often report inadequate numbers of active priesthood leaders to allow the creation of additional congregations. Overreliance on full-time missionaries in many of these locations for administrative and local member duties is a major concern for development of greater self-sufficiency. A lack of active priesthood holders is the primary obstacle preventing several of Ecuador's districts from becoming stakes. Ecuador was one of the few Latin American countries that as of 2010 had never had a local member serve as a temple president.

Several local members have served in regional and international church leadership positions as mission presidents, regional representatives, and Area Seventies. Carl B. Pratt from Quito was called as the Spain Seville

¹²⁴⁸ "Rapid pace across South America," LDS Church News, 23 August 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29572/Rapid-pace-across-South-America.html>

Mission president in 1988.¹²⁴⁹ In 1989, Walter Fermin Gonzalez from Quito was called as a mission president.¹²⁵⁰ In 1996, B. Renato Maldonado E. from Quito was called as the Ecuador Guayaquil North Mission president.¹²⁵¹ In 2003, Jorge Fermin Betancourth from Guayaquil was called to preside over the Uruguay Montevideo Mission, and Jose Vicente Larrea from Guayaquil was called to preside over the Colombia Bogota North Mission.¹²⁵² In 2005, Jose Felix Lara from Quevedo was called to preside over the Ecuador Quito Mission.¹²⁵³ In 2006, Francisco Washington Fierro Altamirano from Quito was called as a mission president,¹²⁵⁴ and Sofocles Euripides Moran from Guayaquil was called to preside over the Chile Santiago East Mission.¹²⁵⁵ In 2010, Jorge Gonzalo Montoya from Quito was called to preside over the Venezuela Valencia Mission,¹²⁵⁶ and Fernando Enrique Calderon from Quito was called to preside over the Bolivia Santa Cruz Mission.¹²⁵⁷

In 1991, Cesar Hugo Cacuango from Quito was called as a regional representative.¹²⁵⁸ In 1993, Jorge Alberto Uboldi from Quito¹²⁵⁹ and Walter F. Gonzalez from Quito were called as regional representatives.¹²⁶⁰ In 1995, Walter F. Gonzalez and Carl B. Pratt were called as Area Seventies.¹²⁶¹ In 1997, Carl B. Pratt was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy.¹²⁶² In 2002, B. Renato Maldonado was called as an Area Authority Seventy.¹²⁶³ In 2005, Fernando E. Calderon from Quito was called as an Area Seventy.¹²⁶⁴

Temple

Ecuador pertains to the Guayaquil Ecuador Temple district. Local members regularly held stake temple trips to Peru following the dedication of the Lima Peru temple in 1986. Temple trips during this period generally

¹²⁴⁹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 26 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18212/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹²⁵⁰ "The callings of six new mission presidents," LDS Church News, 28 January 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19220/The-callings-of-six-new-mission-presidents.html>

¹²⁵¹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 1 June 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27591/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹²⁵² "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 15 March 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43361/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹²⁵³ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 26 March 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47044/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹²⁵⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 4 February 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48469/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹²⁵⁵ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 15 April 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48814/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹²⁵⁶ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 13 February 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/58779/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹²⁵⁷ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 13 March 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/58992/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹²⁵⁸ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 16 February 1991. Wells, Elayne. "A land of prophecy: in the Andes, 'Lehi's children grow strong in gospel,'" LDS Church News, 17 February 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19993/A-land-of-prophecy—in-the-Andes-Lehis-children-grow-strong-in-gospel.html>

¹²⁵⁹ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 15 May 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23069/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹²⁶⁰ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 25 September 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23377/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹²⁶¹ "Church names area authorities," LDS Church News, 5 August 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26627/Church-names-area-authorities.html>

¹²⁶² "First Quorum of the Seventy: Four sustained; quorum total now reaches 47," LDS Church News, 12 April 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29915/First-Quorum-of-the-Seventy—Four-sustained-quorum-total-now-reaches-47.html>

¹²⁶³ "30 Area Authority Seventies sustained," LDS Church News, 13 April 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41666/30-Area-Authority-Seventies-sustained.html>

¹²⁶⁴ "38 new Area Seventies called, 37 are released," LDS Church News, 9 April 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47147/38-new-Area-Seventies-called-37-are-released.html>

lasted over a week, as it was a three-day journey by bus one way.¹²⁶⁵ The fourteen-year gap between the announcement of the Guayaquil Ecuador Temple in 1982 and groundbreaking in 1996 was due to a variety of challenges, including obtaining needed government approvals.¹²⁶⁶ At present, the temple appears to be moderately attended by members in the district. In 2010, six endowment sessions were scheduled on Tuesdays through Fridays and sessions on Saturdays occurred hourly from 8 AM to 2 PM. Prospects for the construction of additional temples in Ecuador will become more favorable once temple attendance increases and the number of active priesthood holders increases. Only Quito appears to be a possible future temple site over the medium term.

Comparative Growth

The LDS Church in Ecuador followed membership, congregational, and national outreach growth trends comparable to several other western South American nations, such as Colombia and Bolivia. Ecuador had the ninth largest number of LDS members and eleventh most stakes in the world in 2010. The ratio of the general population to LDS missions in Ecuador is 4.9 million people per mission, close to the average of South America of approximately six million per mission. Ecuador ranks seventh among countries with the largest number of members per congregation, and member activity rates appear representative for the region. In late 2010, Ecuador was the country with the most Latter-day Saints with only one temple operating, announced, or under construction. Membership growth rates in Ecuador during the 2000s have compared to growth rates in Colombia during this period and have ranked average for the region. The percentage of Latter-day Saints in the Ecuadoran population ranks average among South American nations.

Many missionary-minded Christian groups report rapid church growth in Ecuador, and some have outpaced LDS Church growth in terms of the number of active members, the number of congregations operating, and current membership growth rates. Seventh Day Adventists achieved moderate levels of membership and congregational growth in the 2000s, as did Jehovah's Witnesses. Evangelicals appear to be the most successful nontraditional Christian group, largely due to their effectiveness in member-missionary work. Latter-day Saints exhibit some of the lowest convert retention rates among the major non-Catholic Christian churches.

Future Prospects

The population remains receptive to Latter-day Saint teachings and full-time missionaries, but inconsistent mission practices regarding the teaching and baptizing of new converts have compromised member activity and convert retention rates for decades. Many nominal Catholics who have converted to the LDS Church have become nominal Latter-day Saints or no longer identify as Latter-day Saints today. Future long-term growth will depend on increasing the number of active priesthood holders, implementing culturally-sensitive proselytism approaches, decreasing the dependence of smaller congregations on full-time missionaries for administrative functions, establishing additional mission outreach centers, and implementing convert baptism standards that require consistent church attendance prior to baptism and supply adequate pre-baptismal and post-baptismal teaching. The creation of additional stakes appears most likely over the short and medium terms in Guayaquil, Quito, and other large cities. Achieving commensurate membership and congregational growth will indicate progress toward resolving member activity and convert retention issues.

¹²⁶⁵ "In many countries, great efforts made to attend the temple," LDS Church News, 25 June 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24289/In-many-countries-great-efforts-made-to-attend-the-temple.html>

¹²⁶⁶ "Excitement for temple in Ecuador grows," LDS Church News, 1 February 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28885/Excitement-for-temple-in-Ecuador-grows.html>

PARAGUAY

Geography

AREA: 406,752 square km. Landlocked in South America, Paraguay borders Brazil, Argentina, and Bolivia. Terrain primarily consists of flat plains covered by grasslands, forest, and swamp with subtropical to temperate climate. Semi-arid conditions occur in the west, which is dominated by the Gran Chaco—a large, sparsely populated wooded plain in interior South America. The Rio Paraguay and Rio Parana are the largest rivers that flow through the country, both of which form part of the Argentine border. Flooding is a natural hazard. Environmental issues include deforestation, wetland loss, water pollution, and poor sanitation conditions. Paraguay is administratively divided into seventeen departments and one capital city.

Peoples

Mestizo: 95%

Other: 5%

Mestizos consist of those who have a mixed Spanish and Amerindian heritage. Other ethnicities include Amerindians and immigrants from Europe and Asia.

Population: 6,541,591 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.256% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.06 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 73.78 male, 79.14 female (2012)

Languages: Guarani dialects (80%), Spanish, German, and other European languages (19%), other Amerindian (1%). Spanish and Guarani are both official languages. Most of the population is bilingual in both languages. Common European languages include Portuguese and German. With the exception of Guarani, no Amerindian languages have over 20,000 speakers.

Literacy: 94% (2003)

History

Amerindian groups settled the region prior to the arrival of the Spanish in the sixteenth century. In 1811, Paraguay won independence from Spain. Between 1865 and 1870, war with Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay drastically reduced the male population and resulted in Paraguay losing a large portion of its territory. In the 1930s, the Chaco War with Bolivia resulted in Paraguay gaining large areas of territory in the west. A military dictatorship under Stroessner lasted for thirty-five years, ending in 1989. Although political conditions have stabilized somewhat, Paraguay's history as an independent nation has been marked by political turmoil and social upheaval.

Culture

Paraguay has one of the strongest Amerindian cultures among Spanish-speaking nations in Latin America, as it has been infused with Spanish culture over the past several centuries. Cuisine consists of many dishes

with cornmeal, cheese, bread, and vegetables. Paraguayans highly regard their extended families. Cigarette consumption rates rank average compared to other nations, whereas alcohol consumption rates are lower than most nations.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$5,500 (2011) [11.4% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.665

Corruption Index: 2.2 (2011)

One of the largest soy producers in the world, Paraguay relies on heavily on agriculture. Most Paraguayans have experienced little if any increase in wages from 1980 levels. Many Paraguayans are subsistence farmers. Agriculture employs 27% of the population and produces 20% of the GDP. Primary crops include cotton, sugarcane, soybeans, and grains. Industry accounts for less than 20% of the GDP and workforce, whereas services employ 55% of the labor force and produce 61% of the GDP. Sugar, cement, and textiles are major industries. Primary trade partners include Brazil, China, Argentina, and Uruguay.

Corruption in Paraguay is perceived as the second most widespread in South America after Venezuela. The Argentina-Brazil-Paraguay border area is a haven for illegal activity and terrorism. Paraguay is a major drug producer and trafficker. Money laundering and poor law enforcement are additional challenges.

Faiths

Christian: 97%

Other/unspecified: 1.9%

None: 1.1%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 5,712,744

Latter-day Saints 84,806 145

Seventh Day Adventists 12,578 60

Jehovah's Witnesses 8,955 163

Religion

Most Paraguayans are Catholic and account for 87% of the population. Most non-Catholics are Evangelical Protestants. Immigrants and nonnatives are most likely to belong to non-Catholic Christian denominations or other religious groups.¹²⁶⁷

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is typically upheld by government policies and law. There are few legal restrictions regarding freedom of religion, speech, and conversion to another religion. The Catholic Church is recognized by the government due to its historical legacy in Paraguay, but there is no state religion. Religious groups must register with the government. Foreign missionaries may proselyte freely.

¹²⁶⁷ "Paraguay," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127400.htm>

Religious instruction may occur in public schools. Societal abuses of religious freedom have been minor. The government has worked to encourage good cooperation and dialogue between religious groups.¹²⁶⁸

Largest Cities

Urban: 60%

Asunción, San Lorenzo, Capiatá, Lambaré, Fernando de la Mora, Limpio, Nemby, Encarnación, Colonia Mariano Roque Alonso, Itauguá.

All ten of the largest cities have an LDS congregation. Forty percent (40%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities, and 29% of the national population resides in Asuncion.

LDS History

The first known convert baptized in Paraguay occurred in 1949.¹²⁶⁹ The First Presidency authorized the opening of Paraguay to missionary work that year.¹²⁷⁰ The Church obtained official government recognition in 1950 and began to send missionaries who were serving in Uruguay.¹²⁷¹ During the early 1950s, the Uruguay-Paraguay Mission almost closed Paraguay temporarily for missionary work due to a shortage of missionaries resulting from the Korean War.¹²⁷²

Seminary and institute began in the early 1970s. The Church organized the Paraguay Asuncion Mission from the Uruguay Montevideo Mission in 1977. In 1979, President Ezra Taft Benson created the first stake in Asuncion.¹²⁷³

In 1997, President Hinckley became the first Church president to speak in Paraguay.¹²⁷⁴ The following year, the Paraguay Asuncion Mission was divided to create the Paraguay Asuncion North Mission. In 2002, Paraguay became the last Spanish-speaking South American nation to have an LDS temple.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 84,806 (2012)

After twenty-seven years of proselytism, membership reached 1,400 in 1977.¹²⁷⁵ By 1990, there were 12,000 members. Membership growth began to rapidly accelerate in the mid-1990s. In 1996, there were more convert baptisms than in the previous five years combined.¹²⁷⁶ In 1997, membership was 32,000.¹²⁷⁷ By year-end

¹²⁶⁸ "Paraguay," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127400.htm>

¹²⁶⁹ Swensen, Jason. "Edifice a bountiful blessing for Asuncion," LDS Church News, 25 May 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41875/Edifice-a-bountiful-blessing-for-Asuncion.html>

¹²⁷⁰ "The Church in Uruguay and Paraguay," Ensign, Feb 1975, 30.

¹²⁷¹ Swensen, Jason. "Gospel is welcome," LDS Church News, 20 July 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42152/Gospel-is-welcome.html>

¹²⁷² Hart, John L. "Couple's motto: 'we'll go anywhere,'" LDS Church News, 30 January 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23278/Couples-motto-well-go-anywhere.html>

¹²⁷³ "Prophet created landmark stakes," LDS Church News, 4 June 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24449/Prophet-created-landmark-stakes.html>

¹²⁷⁴ "Members travel hours to hear prophet," LDS Church News, 23 August 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29055/Members-travel-hours-to-hear-prophet.html>

¹²⁷⁵ Swensen, Jason. "'Gospel is welcome,'" LDS Church News, 20 July 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42152/Gospel-is-welcome.html>

¹²⁷⁶ "New missions created; total now 331," LDS Church News, 10 January 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31386/New-missions-created-total-now-331.html>

¹²⁷⁷ "Members travel hours to hear prophet," LDS Church News, 23 August 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29055/Members-travel-hours-to-hear-prophet.html>

2000, there were 47,850 members. During the 2000s, rapid growth continued as membership reached 53,420 in 2002, 61,308 in 2005, and 71,531 in 2007. Most years in the past decade experienced annual membership growth rates between 4 and 6%, with the most rapid membership growth rates between 7 and 9% occurring in 2006 and 2007. In 2009, one in eighty-two people was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 61 Branches: 82 (April 2013)

In 1975, there were nine branches and two districts.¹²⁷⁸ The first two stakes were organized in 1979 and 1980 in the Asuncion area. During the 1990s, four additional stakes were created in Asuncion North (1992), San Lorenzo (1994), Ciudad Del Este (1996), and Fernando de la Mora South (1997). In early 1998, there were six stakes and ten districts.

In the 2000s, new stakes were created in Luque (2001), Capiatá (2004), Ñemby (2005), and Luque South (2006). The Mariano Roque Alonso Paraguay District (2005) is the most recently created district. Almost all the remaining ten districts operating in mid-2010 were created in the 1981 and 1994. Most districts are located in the largest cities outside the capital.

By year-end 2000, there were 117 congregations. Between 2000 and 2005, the Church created twenty-six new congregations, including nineteen wards. Between year-end 2005 and mid-2010, the number of wards increased by six, yet the number of branches remained unchanged. In mid-2010, two new branches were organized in the Mistolar area in the large towns of Filadelfia and Neuland.

Activity and Retention

In 1997, President Hinckley spoke to 7,120 members for a regional conference in Asuncion, 22% of the national membership at the time. He requested the members to do all they can to keep the large numbers of new converts active through befriending them.¹²⁷⁹ 22,483 attended the Asuncion Paraguay Temple open house and 6,199 attended the dedication in 2002.¹²⁸⁰ 2,549 were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year.

The average number of members per congregation increased in the 2000s as membership growth outpaced congregational growth. Between 2000 and 2009, the average congregation grew from 409 to 532 members. An increase of 123 members per congregation—with 84% of this increase since year-end 2005—suggests that many converts were not retained during this period; otherwise a greater number of congregations would have been organized.

The number of active members per congregation varies dramatically by ward or branch. Missionaries report some wards with over one hundred active members and others with fewer than fifty. Branches also vary widely with some having over fifty active members and others with fewer than twenty. Nearly all missionaries report that most congregations have major inactivity issues. The census in 2002 reported 9,374 Latter-day Saints,¹²⁸¹ which accounted for 17.5% of reported Church membership for the year, demonstrating that over 80% of members on church rolls do not consider the LDS Church to be their faith of preference and are unlikely to

¹²⁷⁸ "The Church in Uruguay and Paraguay," *Ensign*, Feb 1975, 30.

¹²⁷⁹ "Members travel hours to hear prophet," *LDS Church News*, 23 August 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29055/Members-travel-hours-to-hear-prophet.html>

¹²⁸⁰ "Facts and figures: Asuncion Paraguay Temple," *LDS Church News*, 25 May 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41868/Facts-and-figures-Asuncion-Paraguay-Temple.html>

¹²⁸¹ "Religion in Paraguay," *Wikipedia.org*, retrieved 30 August 2010. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_Paraguay

attend or participate. Current nationwide active membership appears to number between 12,000 and 15,000, or 15% to 20% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Spanish, Portuguese, Guarani, German.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in Spanish, Portuguese, and German. The Church recently completed a Spanish-translation of the LDS-edition of the Bible complete with full LDS footnotes, Bible dictionary, and topical guide. Guarani language materials include the Book of Mormon, *Gospel Principles*, *The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony*, and hymns and children's songs. Church materials translated in Nivacle include *Gospel Principles Simplified* and *The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony*.

Meetinghouses

Most congregations meet in Church-built meetinghouses. The Asuncion area alone has nearly sixty meetinghouses. Some smaller branches, dependent branches, or groups meet in rented facilities.

Humanitarian and Development Work

At least fourteen humanitarian projects have occurred since 1985, many of which provided vision care, medical equipment and training, and emergency relief.¹²⁸² In 1997, 7,000 members in Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay contributed 33,000 hours of community service and development work on one day.¹²⁸³ 250 youth in Asuncion helped displaced flood victims clean their homes and restore a downtown plaza to its original condition.¹²⁸⁴ In 2000, 400 members cleaned and refurbished several public schools in Asuncion.¹²⁸⁵

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church enjoys full religious freedom and full-time missionaries openly proselyte. Societal abuses of religious freedom are infrequent and Latter-day Saints report few instances of persecution or harassment.

Cultural Issues

Paraguay has one of the most Catholic populations in South America, yet discrimination and persecution of non-Catholics is rare. The traditionally strong institution of the family and its conservative values in Paraguay offer opportunities and challenges for Latter-day Saints, as many family values help reinforce Church doctrine, but converts who join the Church individually can face opposition from family members. Poverty in many areas is a factor that can affect leadership development and member self-sustainability, as many are underemployed and unable to financially provide for their families.

¹²⁸² "Projects—Paraguay," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 26 August 2010. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-173,00.html>

¹²⁸³ "33,000 hours of service given in South America area," LDS Church News, 6 September 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29433/33000-hours-of-service-given-in-South-America-area.html>

¹²⁸⁴ Curbelo, Nestor. "Day of service now tradition in So. America," LDS Church News, 17 October 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30282/Day-of-service-now-tradition-in-So-America.html>

¹²⁸⁵ "LDS clean Paraguay school buildings," LDS Church News, 6 May 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37717/LDS-clean-Paraguay-school-buildings.html>

National Outreach

With two LDS missions serving less than 6.5 million people, Paraguay receives excellent mission outreach. Approximately half the national population resides in an urban location with an LDS congregation. All cities with over 10,000 inhabitants have a mission outreach center. Sixteen of seventeen administrative divisions have mission outreach centers; only Alto Paraguay (0.2% of the national population) does not. Four administrative divisions (Misiones, Presidente Hayes, and San Pedro) have only a couple mission outreach centers and together account for 11% of the national population. The 2.5 million rural inhabitants remain largely outside the reach of current mission outreach centers.

Church infrastructure and membership are heavily concentrated in Asuncion as the Central Department—which consists of Asuncion and large suburban communities—constitutes 30% of the national population and accounts for eight of the ten LDS stakes (80%). The two missions have assigned missionaries to small towns on the outskirts of larger cities. The city of Asuncion is divided between the two missions, creating opportunities for both missions to maximize outreach potential in the largest city by requiring fewer outreach centers for a large population as well as sharing the burden of establishing new outreach centers in rural areas where there are few members and lacking priesthood leadership.

The Church made significant progress expanding national outreach in the 1980s and 1990s. Mission outreach began outside the largest cities in the 1980s. In 1980, Walter Flores—a recent LDS Nivacle Amerindian convert—invited missionaries to teach his fellow Nivacle villagers in Mistolar, located in the remote Gran Chaco. On November 18, 139 people from the area were baptized. By 1991, there were over 400 members in the Mistolar area.¹²⁸⁶ Outreach in rural communities expanded elsewhere in Paraguay. In 1985, the remote Natalio 10 Branch was established seventy-two miles north of Encarnacion with thirty active members by 1991.¹²⁸⁷ In 2002, the Mistolar area had approximately 500 members; only six Nivacle families had been to the temple.¹²⁸⁸ The Mistolar area appears to be an anomaly, as many rural areas initially experience large numbers of convert baptisms with poor retention, resulting in current dependence on foreign missionaries to fill leadership positions and only a few active members. However, expanding national outreach in remote areas requires proper understanding of the relationship between population and geography in Paraguay. The three provinces in Western Paraguay account for 61% of Paraguay's total geographical area yet are home to only 2% of the national population.

The Church experienced little increase in national outreach during the 2000s. New mission outreach centers began to be created again in 2010 in western Paraguay. Opportunities for expanding national outreach appear highest in the many small towns with several thousand inhabitants in rural areas, many of whom have yet to receive initial LDS mission outreach.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Congregational growth rates have declined sharply in the late 2000s. This trend relates at least in part to quick baptism tactics of missionaries, inadequate pre-baptismal and post-baptismal teaching for converts, and a deficient social support infrastructure in some areas. Between 2006 and 2009, nearly 12,000 Latter-day Saint members were added to church records, yet congregations only increased by three during this period. The lack of new congregations likely indicates a worsening retention problem among new converts, poor member

¹²⁸⁶ Curbelo, Nestor. "Paraguay: Chulupi colony, Mistolar, thrives deep in interior," LDS Church News, 2 June 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20340/Paraguay—Chulupi-colony-Mistolar-thrives-deep-in-interior.html>

¹²⁸⁷ "Distant branch remains close-knit," LDS Church News, 21 September 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20866/Distant-branch-remains-close-knit.html>

¹²⁸⁸ Swensen, Jason. "Edifice a bountiful blessing for Asuncion," LDS Church News, 25 May 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41875/Edifice-a-bountiful-blessing-for-Asuncion.html>

activity levels from less recent converts, and increased standards by local and regional Church leaders regarding the creation of additional congregations.

Many of the principles and policies of the Preach My Gospel program appear to not be followed in many areas. The Preach My Gospel program was tailored in part to address convert retention issues experienced in the past decades that were related to investigators receiving adequate teaching from missionaries and members, increasing the involvement of ward or branch leaders in missionary work on a localized level, and stressing simplicity in teaching and adherence to true doctrine taught by missionaries in an inspirational manner. Perhaps greater implementation and focus on the Preach My Gospel program throughout areas with a Church presence may yield higher convert retention and stronger long term growth.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Almost the entire population is a compound of centuries of intermarriage between Spanish colonizers and the Amerindian population resulting in little ethnic diversity. The Church appears to have not experienced ethnic integration issues in congregations. Socioeconomic status and urban-versus-rural lifestyle differences in some areas on the peripheries of Asuncion may lead to some social challenges at church.

Language Issues

Foreign missionaries struggle learning Guarani due to its often informal use, frequent transitions of Paraguayans between Guarani and Spanish, the complexity of the Guarani, and language study time dedicated to Spanish. The Church has stressed the use of Spanish due to its more formal usage, high percentage of Guarani speakers who are bilingual, and widespread usage of Spanish in South America. Other nations with sizeable Amerindian groups such as Bolivia and Peru have experienced similar Church policy regarding the usage of Amerindian languages in proselytism and worship. Paraguay is the only South American nation in which most speak an Amerindian language, which raises its importance in ecclesiastical affairs.

Missionary Service

In 1994, the Argentina Missionary Training Center was completed for missionaries serving from Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay.¹²⁸⁹ Missionaries from Paraguay serve in large numbers in their native country and many Latin American nations. With the recent influx of missionaries serving in Paraguay over the past decade combined with little improvement in the size of the native missionary force, Paraguay will likely remain dependent on foreign missionaries to provide the needed manpower to proselyte Paraguay at current levels.

Leadership

The Church appears to have a small, strong local leadership base, which has grown at a much slower pace than general membership. In 1988, Paraguayan native Carlos Ramon Espinola from Asuncion was called to serve as a mission president in the Chile Antofagasta Mission.¹²⁹⁰ In 1993, Carlos Ramon Espinola was called as a regional representative.¹²⁹¹ Ernesto A. Da Silva was called as an Area Authority Seventy in 2002.¹²⁹² Despite poor member activity and few active priesthood holders, Church employees only occasionally serve in stake

¹²⁸⁹ Curbelo, Nestor. "New training center, temple housing facility dedicated in Argentina," LDS Church News, 19 March 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25320/New-training-center-temple-housing-facility-dedicated-in-Argentina.html>

¹²⁹⁰ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 26 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18212/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹²⁹¹ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 15 May 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23069/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹²⁹² "30 Area Authority Seventies sustained," LDS Church News, 13 April 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41666/30-Area-Authority-Seventies-sustained.html>

presidencies and do not appear to be heavily overrepresented in ecclesiastical leadership. However, rural areas or small cities with a congregation remain dependent on foreign full-time missionaries or one full member family to run administrative duties, such as the Yby Yau Branch in northern Paraguay.

Temple

Paraguay is assigned to the Asuncion Paraguay Temple district. Prior to the completion of the Asuncion Paraguay Temple, members traveled to Sao Paulo to perform temple ordinances. The Asuncion Paraguay Temple was announced in 2000 and dedicated in 2002. In 2009, one of only four Beehive Clothing plants in the world that produces temple clothing was located in Paraguay.¹²⁹³ The temple continues function well below capacity. In 2010, the temple scheduled at least two endowment sessions daily on Tuesdays through Thursdays, three sessions on Fridays, and five sessions on Saturdays.

Comparative Growth

Paraguay experienced rapid LDS membership growth later than most Latin American nations, which saw the most rapid growth in the 1980s. Membership growth rates in Paraguay in the 2000s were the highest among Spanish-speaking nations in South America. Worldwide, only Nigeria had more members and a higher membership growth rate than Paraguay during the 2000s. The increase in the ratio of members per congregation in the 2000s comparable to other Latin American nations suggests that member activity and convert retention rates appear comparable to most nations in the region. Overall member activity rates seem average for Latin America. The percentage of members enrolled in seminary or institute and the percentage of LDS members in the general population is about average for South America.

Most Christian churches have few members and add few converts year to year. Evangelicals appear one of the most successful groups. Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses have a much smaller presence in Paraguay compared to other Latin American nations and tend to gain fewer converts year to year. However on the 2002 census, there were only a couple thousand fewer Seventh Day Adventists than Latter-day Saints and a couple thousand more Jehovah's Witnesses, reflecting much higher rates of convert retention and member activity among these groups. Jehovah's Witnesses report a tenth of the membership reported by the LDS Church, yet have more congregations.

Future Prospects

The history of the LDS Church in Paraguay demonstrates the need for sustained mission outreach in many currently less receptive countries to the LDS Church, as little church growth occurred in Paraguay over the first three decades of missionary work. However, once conditions became more favorable for growth, rapid membership increase ensued. Sustained strong membership growth rates in Paraguay over the past fifteen years indicate that the population remains receptive to LDS Church teachings, but the small number of new congregations created in the late 2000s suggests that the Church has struggled to develop local leadership and retain members. Greater youth involvement in seminary, institute, and full-time missionary preparation may help curb current inactivity challenges and ensure long term growth. Large numbers of full-time missionaries have been assigned to Paraguay due to high receptivity, but widespread quick-baptism tactics and overreliance of local members on full-time missionaries for finding, teaching, and baptizing converts may have hurt church growth, member activity, and local self-sufficiency in the long run.

¹²⁹³ Searle, Don L. "One Family's Heritage of Service," *Ensign*, Sep 2009, 46-50.

PERU

Geography

AREA: 1,285,216 square km. Located in western South America along the Pacific coast, Peru borders Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia, and Chile. A diversity of landscapes and climate results from the drastic elevation changes of the Andes Mountains running north to south and Peru's close proximity to the equator. Generally, far eastern areas consist of tropical rainforest, mountainous areas are subject to alpine or temperate conditions, and coastal areas experience dry desert. Land features consist of the Amazon Basin in the east, rugged and steep mountains in central areas, and coastal plains in the west. Lake Titicaca is the world's highest navigable lake at 3,805 meters and straddles the Bolivian border. Many large lakes occupy highland areas. Several major tributaries of the Amazon River originate in the Peruvian Andes and merge prior to entering Brazil. Earthquakes, flooding, landslides, tsunamis, and volcanoes are natural hazards. Environmental issues include deforestation, overgrazing, air and water pollution, and desertification. Peru is administratively divided into twenty-five regions and one province.

Peoples

Amerindian: 45%

Mestizo: 37%

White: 15%

Other: 3%

Amerindians constitute nearly half the population. Mestizos—mixed Amerindian and white—account for nearly a third of the population. Whites are a visible minority. Other ethnicities include blacks, Japanese, and Chinese.

Population: 29,549,517 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.016% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.29 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 70.78 male, 74.76 female (2012)

Languages: Spanish (84%), Quechua (13%), other (3%).¹²⁹⁴ Spanish and Quechua are official languages. The Quechua language has been in use in the Andes for millennia and has over thirty dialects in Peru. Ninety-two indigenous languages are spoken in Peru, most with few speakers. Languages with over one million speakers include Spanish (25.1 million) and Quechua (4.55 million).

Literacy: 92.9% (2007)

History

Several ancient civilizations populated Peru for thousands of years prior to the arrival of Spanish explorers and conquistadors. The Inca civilization stretched from portions of southern Colombia to the southern end of South America with its capital in Cuzco, Peru. Spanish conquistadors conquered the empire in 1533 and

¹²⁹⁴ "Peru," Wikipedia.com, retrieved 10 August 2010. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peru>

subjected the population to foreign rule and introduced Catholicism. Peru gained independence from Spain in the 1820s. The military took control of the government in the late 1960s. Democratic rule was restored in 1980. The power of the central government remained weak in the 1980s. In 1990, President Fujimori began his administration and brought about many economic reforms and helped subdue guerrilla movements. In 2000, Fujimori was removed from office and was followed by the first elected president of Amerindian ancestry, President Toledo. In the late 2000s, Peru experienced marked economic growth that slowed in 2009 as a result of the global financial crisis.

Culture

Peru's ancient history is noted for its impressive and sophisticated pre-Colombian civilizations that constructed cities or landmarks that remain today, such as the precision stonework found in Incan cities such as Cuzco and Machu Picchu, the large pyramids and tombs built by the Moche in Lambayeque, and the expanse of geometric figures known as the Nazca Lines in the Nazca Desert. For the past several centuries, the Catholic Church and Spain have strongly influenced daily life and social attitudes, but native customs and traditions have endured. Today, Peruvian culture reflects a mixture of indigenous and Spanish influences. Several large festivals are held every year. Amerindians in rural areas generally wear traditional clothing and have poor to moderate living conditions. Many foods are native to Peru and the Andes, such as hundreds of varieties of potatoes. Cuisine varies by region but generally consists of potatoes, tomatoes, corn, avocado, native fruits, llama, fish, and guinea pig. Alcohol and cigarette consumption rates rank among the lowest in the region, yet drug use and drug cultivation are issues.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$10,000 (2011) [20.8% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.725

Corruption Index: 3.4 (2011)

Rich in natural resources, Peru benefits from lucrative mineral deposits, expansive forests in the interior, and abundant fisheries. The economy is vulnerable to fluctuations in the price and demand of precious metals and minerals due to overdependence on these resources. Steady economic growth occurred in the first half of the 2000s, which accelerated to an annual GDP growth rate of 9% in 2007 and 2008. In recent years, Peru has sought to become better integrated into the world economy and has become a proponent of free trade agreements with large economies such as the United States. Services account for 76% of the labor force and 60% of the GDP, whereas industry constitutes 24% of the labor force and produces 32% of the GDP. Primary industries include mining and metal refining, oil, natural gas, fishing, clothing, and food processing. Agriculture employs less than 1% of the population and produces 8% of the GDP. Common crops include vegetables, fruit, coffee, cocoa, cotton, sugar, rice, and potatoes. Primary trade partners include the United States, China, and Chile.

Corruption is perceived as present in most areas of society and government. Some past presidential administrations such as the Fujimori administration have been forced out of office on corruption charges. Bribery frequently occurs with natural resource extraction. Foreign businesses report excessive business licenses and fees to operate in Peru. However, the government has instituted reforms that have attracted greater foreign investment. Anti-corruption legislation and initiatives have been inconsistent and have primarily targeted high profile corruption in government.¹²⁹⁵ Illicit drugs are a major concern. Until 1996, Peru was the largest producer of coca leaf. Peru is the second largest producer of coca leaf and cocaine and is well integrated into the international drug trafficking network.

¹²⁹⁵ "Snapshot of the Peru country profile," Business Anti-Corruption Portal, retrieved 30 August 2010. <http://www.business-anti-corruption.com/country-profiles/latin-america-the-caribbean/peru/>

Faiths

Christian: 93.8%

Other: 3.3%

Unspecified/none: 2.9%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 24,314,393

Evangelicals 4,500,000

Latter-day Saints 527,759 786

Seventh Day Adventists 411,675 1,993

Jehovah's Witnesses 114,468 1,255

Religion

Catholics constitute 81% of the population. Protestants and Evangelical Christians have grown dramatically over the past several decades from as little as 2% to as high as 15% currently. Protestants were originally concentrated in small cities outside of Lima or rural areas and have now been firmly established in many urban locations. Other Christian groups, such as Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Latter-day Saints have experienced rapid growth over the past few decades. Many in rural areas in the Andean Highlands continue to practice indigenous religions. Syncretism between Amerindian religious practices and Catholicism frequently occurs in these locations. There are very few non-Christians, most of whom do not adhere to any religion. There are small Jewish and Muslim communities in some of the largest cities.¹²⁹⁶

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. All religious groups may proselyte, establish places of worship, and train clergy. The constitution declares a separation of church and state but recognizes the Catholic Church's important role in history, culture, and morality. The Catholic Church receives special privileges regarding taxes, immigration, and customs. Catholic authorities sometimes become involved in public matters. Religious education in public schools is required and limited to Catholicism. Private schools may teach other religious traditions. Non-Catholics at times have reported discrimination or bureaucratic frustrations regarding religious education in public schools. Overall, there have been few reports of societal abuse of religious freedom.¹²⁹⁷

Largest Cities

Urban: 71%

Lima, Arequipa, Callao, Trujillo, Chiclayo, Iquitos, Huancayo, Piura, Chiclayo, Cuzco, Pucallpa, Tacna, Ica, Juliaca, Sullana, Chinchá, Huánuco, Ayacucho, Cajamarca, Puno, Tumbes.

All of the twenty-one cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS stake. Forty-nine percent (49%) of the national population resides in the twenty-one largest cities. All cities with over 35,000 inhabitants have an LDS mission outreach center. The Lima metropolitan area accounts for 28% of the national population.

¹²⁹⁶ "Peru," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127401.htm>

¹²⁹⁷ "Peru," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127401.htm>

LDS History

American Latter-day Saint families had periodically lived in Peru prior to the establishment of the first branch in 1956. In 1956, Frederick S. Williams wrote to the First Presidency requesting Peru to be incorporated into one of the South American Missions. Peru was first assigned to the Uruguay Mission, and a branch was organized.¹²⁹⁸ Seminary and institute began in 1971. The Lima Peru Temple was announced in 1981 and completed in 1986.

In early 1988, the Church created seven new stakes in Lima in one weekend from eleven previously functioning stakes. The massive reorganization required over 300 interviews, six conferences, and months of preparation.¹²⁹⁹ The Church briefly removed American missionaries in 1989 due to terrorism fears.¹³⁰⁰ In 1990, gunmen killed two Peruvian LDS missionaries serving in Huancayo.¹³⁰¹ In 1996, President Hinckley visited with members in Lima.¹³⁰² Starting in 1998, Lima served as the headquarters of the South America West Area, which administered Peru and Bolivia.¹³⁰³ Earthquakes have seriously affected members. Over a hundred Latter-day Saint homes were damaged and one member perished in an earthquake in southern Peru in 2001.¹³⁰⁴ In 2006, Elder Donald P. Terry met with Peruvian President Alejandro Toledo, who spoke highly of the Church.¹³⁰⁵ Later that year, President Hinckley and other Church leaders addressed the thirty-three stakes in Lima through a satellite broadcast.¹³⁰⁶ In 2007, the first lady of Peru visited Welfare Square in Salt Lake City.¹³⁰⁷ A second temple was announced in 2008 for Trujillo. In 2009, Peru became part of the South American Northwest Area.

Missions

Created from the Uruguay and Andes Missions in 1959, the Andes Mission administered outreach in Peru, Bolivia, and Chile. The mission was divided in 1961 to create the Chilean Mission and again in 1966 to create the Andes South Mission, based out of La Paz, Bolivia. The Andes Mission added Ecuador in the mid-1960s. In 1970, Ecuador was split off into an independent mission, and the Andes Mission, which administered only Peru, was renamed the Peru Mission. By 1974, the Church renamed the mission to the Peru Lima Mission, which was split into the Peru Lima South and Peru Lima North Missions in 1977. Additional Peruvian missions were organized in Arequipa (1978), Trujillo (1985), Lima East (1988), Chiclayo [relocated to Piura in the 1990s] (1993), Lima Central (1994), Cuzco (2010), Lima West (2010), Chiclayo (2011), Huancayo (2013), and Iquitos (2013). In 2010, Peru had nine missions, tying with Chile as the country with the sixth most LDS missions worldwide. In 2013, there were twelve missions.

¹²⁹⁸ "Peru," *Ensign*, Feb 1977, 37.

¹²⁹⁹ Warnick, Lee. "18 stakes created from 11: 28-hour marathon in lima multiples by dividing," 6 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17742/18-stakes-created-from-11-28-hour-marathon-in-lima-multiples-by-dividing.html>

¹³⁰⁰ "Precautions taken against terrorism," *LDS Church News*, 15 July 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18665/Precautions-taken-against-terrorism.html>

¹³⁰¹ "Gunmen shoot, kill two Peruvian missionaries," *LDS Church News*, 25 August 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20468/Gunmen-shoot-kill-two-Peruvian-missionaries.html>

¹³⁰² "Prophet visits South America," *LDS Church News*, 16 November 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27465/Prophet-visits-South-America.html>

¹³⁰³ "5 new areas announced worldwide," *LDS Church News*, 4 July 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31389/5-new-areas-announced-worldwide.html>

¹³⁰⁴ Swensen, Jason. "Peruvian quake kills LDS girl, leaves scores homeless," *LDS Church News*, 30 June 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40123/Peruvian-quake-kills-LDS-girl-leaves-scores-homeless.html>

¹³⁰⁵ "Peruvian leader gives Church high marks," *LDS Church News*, 20 May 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48977/Peruvian-leader-gives-Church-high-marks.html>

¹³⁰⁶ Avant, Gerry. "Peruvians' role in miracle of growth," *LDS Church News*, 19 August 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49328/Peruvians-role-in-miracle-of-growth.html>

¹³⁰⁷ "First ladies visit Welfare Square," *LDS Church News*, 12 May 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50583/First-ladies-visit-Welfare-Square.html>

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 527,759 (2012)

In 1959, there were 300 LDS members. There were 6,391 members in 1965 and 10,771 in 1970. Membership reached 17,000 in 1977; at that time about 850 converts were added yearly.¹³⁰⁸ By 1980, membership had increased to 23,000.¹³⁰⁹

Membership surpassed 50,000 in 1983 and 100,000 in 1985. In 1989, convert baptisms in western South America increased 60% over levels from the previous year.¹³¹⁰ There were 200,000 members by 1992 and 300,000 members by 1996. However, this period was characterized by low convert retention due to the rushed baptism of many converts with minimal preparation and abbreviated teaching.

In 2000, membership totaled 342,902. Moderate growth continued in the 2000s as annual membership growth rates ranged from 3 to 5%. Membership reached 384,663 in 2003, 432,547 in 2006, and 462,353 in 2008. In 2010, one in sixty-two was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 619 Branches: 165 Groups: 10+

The Church operated five branches by 1959. By 1990, there were 332 congregations, including 181 wards. The number of congregations increased dramatically in the 1990s to 471 in 1992, 761 in 1996, and 974 (including 633 wards) in 1998. Between 1998 and 2000, the number of congregations declined by 218 as nearly one hundred wards and over one hundred branches were discontinued.

In 2000, there were 756 congregations, 518 of which were wards. By year-end 2003, the number of congregations declined by thirty-two from 2000 levels. During this period the number of wards decreased by ten, whereas the number of branches fell by twenty-two. There were 724 congregations in 2003. Peru was not alone during this period of negative congregational growth; during the early 2000s, congregation consolidations occurred across most of Latin American, especially in Chile and Brazil. The purpose in consolidating many of these congregations was to increase the number of active members per congregation and discontinue units that lacked sufficient active membership or priesthood leadership to perform essential functions.

This trend of congregation consolidations reversed in 2004 as the number of congregations increased to 730 in 2004, 735 in 2006, and 751 in 2008. Between year-end 2003 and mid-2010, the number of wards increased by eighty-nine, and the number of branches declined by thirty-seven. Many of the new wards organized during this period were former branches in districts that matured into stakes. By mid-2010, there were 776 congregations.

The first stake was created in Lima in 1970. Twelve stakes functioned by year-end 1980, seven of which were in Lima. The number of stakes increased to nineteen in 1985 and thirty-three in 1990. By mid-1989, Peru tied the United Kingdom for the nation with the sixth most stakes worldwide.¹³¹¹ The number of stakes continued to grow to fifty-four in 1995 and seventy-nine in 2000. During the latter half of the 1990s, five stakes were discontinued in Iquitos (2), Lima, Tacna, and Chincha. By year-end 2000, there were thirty-two districts.

¹³⁰⁸ "Peru," *Ensign*, Feb 1977, 37.

¹³⁰⁹ Litster, Allen. "Pioneering in the Andes," *Ensign*, Jan 1997, 16.

¹³¹⁰ Wells, Elayne. "Work in South America continues to grow," *LDS Church News*, 11 November 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18985/Work-in-South-America-continues-to-grow.html>

¹³¹¹ Hart, John L. "Mexico milestone: 100th stake created," *LDS Church News*, 1 July 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18995/Mexico-milestone-100th-stake-created.html>

During the 2000s, notable increases in the number of stakes did not occur until after 2005, after which thirteen new stakes were created: five in Lima in 2008 and seven in smaller cities from former districts. In 2008, districts were created in Andahuaylas and Huancavelica. In 2010, there were ninety-four stakes and twenty-four districts.

Activity and Retention

The average number of members per congregation increased dramatically in the 2000s from 454 to 628, although actual congregational membership numbers are lower because of the large number of members on the “address unknown file.” Much of the increase occurred in the first half of the 2000s and was due to large increases in membership combined with congregation consolidations. Between 2000 and 2006, the average congregation added an additional seventeen to twenty-eight nominal members annually. Since 2007, congregational growth rates have increased but remain below the rate of membership growth as most years the average congregation gains ten additional members.

Active membership varies widely by congregation. One of the branches in the Talara Peru District had 180 attending church meetings in early 2010. In July 2010, a ward in Huanuco had 155 of the 384 members attending church weekly. The Morropon Group had twenty of its sixty members attending church in 2010. The average ward or branch appears to have between 100 and 120 attending church weekly. During the 2008–2009 school year, 33,758 were enrolled in seminary or institute. In August 2010, downtown Trujillo had 600 institute students.

Large multi-stake meetings have been well attended in the past. In Lima, 10,500 members met at six separate conferences in early 1988 for the creation of seven new stakes.¹³¹² Approximately 28,000 members attended two firesides held by President Hinckley in 1996,¹³¹³ although there were over 300,000 Latter-day Saints in the country at the time.

District conferences have been well attended recently. In May 2010, the Nazca Peru District set an all-time record of district conference attendance at 250; seventy more than the previous record. Between 800 and 1,000 attended the Huaraz Peru District conference in August 2010, and a fireside the previous month had 400 in attendance. Seven hundred members attended the Casa Grande Peru District conference in July 2010, and 200 young single adults from the district met for a special conference in July 2010. Four hundred attended the Cañete Peru District conference in 2010.

In neighboring Chile, 37% of nominal LDS members are on the “address unknown file,”¹³¹⁴ meaning that they do not participate and cannot be located by the Church. The percentage of Peruvian Latter-day Saints on the “lost address file” is unknown, but it is likely to be similar to Chile due to cultural commonalities and similar historical mission practices, which emphasized large numbers of quick baptisms but until recently had placed little emphasis on convert retention or member activity.

Active membership for Peru is estimated at around 100,000, or 20% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Spanish, Quechua, Aymara.

¹³¹² Warnick, Lee. “18 stakes created from 11: 28-hour marathon in lima multiples by dividing,” 6 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17742/18-stakes-created-from-11-28-hour-marathon-in-lima-multiplies-by-dividing.html>

¹³¹³ “Prophet visits South America,” LDS Church News, 16 November 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27465/Prophet-visits-South-America.html>

¹³¹⁴ Stack, Peggy Fletcher, “Building Faith. A Special Report: The LDS Church in Chile,” Salt Lake Tribune, March 31, 2006.

All LDS scriptures and most Church materials are available in Spanish, including an LDS edition of the Bible complete with full LDS footnotes, Bible dictionary, and topical guide. The Book of Mormon is translated in full in Aymara. Selections of the Book of Mormon are translated into Quechua. Other materials translated in Aymara include the sacrament prayers, *Gospel Principles*, *The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony*, *Duties and Blessings of the Priesthood Part A*, and a guidebook for family. Bolivian Quechua translation materials are limited to *The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony* and hymns and children's songs. *Gospel Principles* in Peruvian Quechua is available.

Meetinghouses

In 1977, there were nineteen chapels either functioning or under construction.¹³¹⁵ In 2010, there were around 400 meetinghouses in Peru, many of which were constructed by the Church. Small branches, dependent branches, and groups often meet in rented spaces or remodeled buildings.

Health and Safety

The threat of terrorism targeting missionaries has decreased from several decades ago. There is a persistent danger from drug trafficking and illegal activity although no major incidents involving missionaries has occurred in recent years.

Humanitarian and Development Work

At least sixty humanitarian projects have been carried out since 1985 by the Church, including the donations of wheelchairs, medical supplies, beds and bedding, and providing neonatal resuscitation training, vision care, and clean water projects.¹³¹⁶ Since as early as 1989, the Church has conducted agricultural development work in the highlands of Peru through the Benson Institute.¹³¹⁷ In 2001, the Church donated food, blankets, and hygiene kits to earthquake victims in southern Peru.¹³¹⁸ Peru was one of the first nations in which the Perpetual Education Fund was implemented in 2001.¹³¹⁹ In 2002, the Church donated emergency aid to flood victims in Lima¹³²⁰ and provided food, plastic sheeting, blankets, heavy clothing, and hygiene kits to victims of heavy snow and cold temperatures in southeastern Peru.¹³²¹ In 2004, the Church sent 10,000 blankets and 240,000 pounds of coats to assist those suffering from a severe winter in the Andes.¹³²² Following a devastating earthquake in the Pisco area in 2007, the Church offered long-term assistance rebuilding and caring for victims following the shipment of 80 tons of relief supplies.¹³²³

¹³¹⁵ "Peru," *Ensign*, Feb 1977, 37.

¹³¹⁶ "Projects—Peru," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 11 August 2010. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-208,00.html>

¹³¹⁷ Ricks, Kellene. "Benson Institute improves life throughout world," *LDS Church News*, 18 November 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19298/Benson-Institute-improves-life-throughout-world.html>

¹³¹⁸ Swensen, Jason. "Church assists Peruvian quake victims," *LDS Church News*, 7 July 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40155/Church-assists-Peruvian-quake-victims.html>

¹³¹⁹ Johnston, Jerry. "Pres. Hinckley praises roots, scope of LDS education fund," *LDS Church News*, 6 October 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40638/Pres-Hinckley-praises-roots-scope-of-LDS-education-fund.html>

¹³²⁰ "Supplies aid flood victims," *LDS Church News*, 2 March 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41396/Supplies-aid-flood-victims.html>

¹³²¹ "Snowstorm devastates Peru," *LDS Church News*, 20 July 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42163/Snowstorm-devastates-Peru.html>

¹³²² Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Nature's blows softened by aid in Africa, Peru," *LDS Church News*, 31 July 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45903/Natures-blows-softened-by-aid-in-Africa-Peru.html>

¹³²³ Swensen, Jason. "Work of rebuilding continues in Peru," *LDS Church News*, 12 January 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51520/Work-of-rebuilding-continues-in-Peru.html>

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church enjoys full religious freedom in Peru and maintains positive relations with the government. Missionaries proselyte openly and LDS members report few, if any, instances of persecution.

Cultural Issues

The Catholic Church remains a dominant social influence and can, at times, present challenges for LDS missionaries due to lower receptivity among strong Catholic families, the cultural role of Catholicism in holiday festivals that involve the entire community, persistent attitudes of casual church attendance, and low interest in participating in religious practices, as most tend to be “consumers” rather than “producers” of religious worship.

Catholicism and other Christian groups have firmly established a belief in Christ among most of the population, providing some common foundation of some core beliefs. Furthermore, traditional Latter-day Saint missionary teaching has been primarily tailored to Catholic and Protestant populations, allowing for greater adaptability for missionary lessons. Evangelicals have emerged as a strong minority group but overall have not appeared to create a more challenging environment for Latter-day Saints to proselyte or actively attend church. Latter-day Saints have a cultural advantage due to comparatively lower alcohol and tobacco use than in many other Latin American nations.

National Outreach

Peru experiences some of the most penetrating Latter-day Saint national outreach as nine LDS missions serve a population of thirty million, or nearly one mission per three million people. Every administrative province and region has multiple congregations. Fifty-six percent (56%) of the national population resides in cities with over 15,000 inhabitants with an LDS outreach center. Of the 208 cities with over 15,000 inhabitants, twenty-four cities between 15,000 and 35,000 inhabitants (1.6% of the national population) have no LDS mission outreach centers. Areas with the highest percentage of members, as indicated by the population divided by the number of stakes or districts, are in southern Peru (Moquegua, Tacna, Arequipa, and Ica Regions) and the largest cities (Chiclayo, Trujillo, and Lima). Areas with the lowest percentage of members tend to be remote areas in the northern interior (Cajamarca, San Martin, and Amazonas Regions) or to the highlands to the southeast of Lima (Ayacucho and Huancavelica Regions). There are large, rural regions that are moderately to sparsely populated that have no nearby mission outreach centers. These areas account for most of the 46% the population without a mission outreach center in their community.

In the late 2000s and in 2010, the Church had made significant progress toward opening previously unreached areas by assigning missionaries and creating dependent branches or groups. Although the total number of these units is difficult to ascertain, as they are not reported by the Church, missionaries report that many of these congregations have been established with some having as many as fifty or sixty attending regularly. Groups have been established in increasing numbers in northern Peru (Morropon, Tambo Grande, Huamachuco, and Huarauaos) and southeastern Peru in the highland areas (Maras, Chinchero, and Desaguadero). Regional Church leadership has increased the standards for new branches to be established, requiring a sufficient number of active local members and priesthood holders to staff leadership positions in order to reduce long-term reliance on full-time missionaries.

Expanded outreach in more established areas has occurred in recent years as well as dozens of new congregations

have been organized in Lima and many new missionary proselytism areas in larger cities have opened throughout the country.

The Church maintains a website for the South America Northwest Area at <http://www.iglesiajesucristosud.org/>. The website contains information about news, Latter-day Saint beliefs, and contact information. Many Spanish church materials are available on the Internet through Church websites. Members and missionaries can utilize Church sites in proselytism in larger cities where Internet use is more common and expand potential outreach.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Peru experiences low rates of member activity as a consequence of poor convert retention accumulating over several decades. The large increase in nominal members per congregation and the consolidation of over 200 wards and branches in Peru are indicative of low member activity and years of poor convert, as increases in nominal membership far outstripped the increase in the number attending church. Insufficient pre-baptismal and post-baptismal teaching resulting from quick-baptism tactics by full-time missionaries and a lack in skilled local church leadership have been major contributors to current activity issues.

With the introduction of the reformed missionary program through Preach My Gospel and the requirement that prospective converts must attend at least two sacrament meetings prior to baptism, convert retention rates have improved in many areas, as evidenced by increased congregational growth rates. However, membership growth rates continue to outpace congregational growth rates, indicating continued struggles with activity and retention. The implementation of increased standards for baptism have not been fully consistent, and few converts have attended church more than the required minimums due to continued pressure from missionaries and mission leaders for fast baptisms to meet arbitrary baptismal goals. The majority of congregational growth in the past several years has occurred in rural areas or in Lima, indicating continued challenges in many areas.

Due to the large numbers of former Catholic Latter-day Saints, cultural pressures to return to Catholic services with family and friends can result in some leaving the church. Former Catholics with low levels of religiosity may also carry these religious habits and attitudes over into the LDS Church. Evangelical groups are also very active and can attract less active Latter-day Saints into their churches.

Distance to meetinghouse locations is a factor that has reduced member activity in some areas. Missionaries frequently report of isolated members who reside long distances from their assigned ward or branch. Mission and local leadership have begun to focus more on this issue by establishing dependent branches and groups in some areas.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Missionaries report few ethnic integration issues. Rural areas and smaller cities are predominantly Amerindian, whereas larger cities tend to be populated mainly by Mestizos and whites. Large socioeconomic differences in a congregation can lead to some challenges in unifying members, but this appears to be only a minor issue. Many of the small Amerindian groups in areas of remote rainforest in the interior and have received little or no LDS mission outreach.

Language Issues

Translated church materials are available in the first language of 98% of the Peruvian population. The Church

has had Quechua-speaking Amerindian members since the 1970s or earlier.¹³²⁴ Many Quechua and Aymara speakers also speak and read Spanish as a second language and at church, thereby reducing the need for additional Quechua and Aymara materials. The hundreds of thousands of non-Quechua and non-Aymara Amerindians remain without church materials. Even if large numbers of converts join the LDS Church from these groups, the translation of a full church curriculum into these languages appear unlikely, as there are few fluently literate monolingual speakers of these languages.

Missionary Service

Peru appears to be one of the few nations that is almost self-sufficient in providing local members to staff its full-time missions. Many missions in Peru have between 150 and 200 full-time missionaries. Missionaries generally have between five and ten investigators attending church meetings weekly. In 1988, Elder M. Russell Ballard called for more Peruvians to serve full-time missions due to limited numbers of American missionaries serving at the time. Elder Ballard called on members to establish a mission fund for each ward to provide financially for prospective missionaries.¹³²⁵ That same year, 80% of the missionaries in the Peru Lima South Mission were Peruvians.¹³²⁶ Beginning in the mid-1980s, many stakes held clinics to teach, train, and prepare youth to serve a mission to help increase the native missionary force.¹³²⁷ 1998, the Church dedicated a new missionary training center in Lima with capacity to house 150 missionaries. In 1999, full-time missionaries from Peru and Bolivia increased 70% from the previous year, and 2,000 prospective missionaries were enrolled in missionary preparation courses.¹³²⁸

In July 2010, the Peru MTC had approximately 110 missionaries, about eighty of which were Latin Americans. Most missionaries serving in Peru at the time consisted of Latin Americans with a sizeable North American minority.

Leadership

Most areas of Peru have adequate numbers of priesthood holders, especially larger cities. With thirty-nine stakes that continue to multiply in number and an expanding active priesthood body, Lima offers abundant opportunities for church growth. Much of this growth has come from the development of self-sustaining leadership in Lima as early as 1977. At this time only one nonnative, the mission president, held a church leadership position. At this time, the Church's influence was primarily limited to Lima and a few other large cities.¹³²⁹ Of the sixteen stakes that were created or reorganized in 1988 in Lima, nearly all had at least one Church employee in the stake presidency.¹³³⁰ In 1992, the first native member served as the temple president for the Lima Peru Temple.¹³³¹ In 2010, only a few small branches, dependent branches, and groups had some missionaries serving as branch presidents or group leaders. Some stakes took many years to reach the needed number of active, worthy priesthood holders to advance from district status. In 2010, several districts could

¹³²⁴ "Peru," *Ensign*, Feb 1977, 37.

¹³²⁵ Warnick, Lee. "18 stakes created from 11: 28-hour marathon in lima multiples by dividing," 6 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17742/18-stakes-created-from-11-28-hour-marathon-in-lima-multiplies-by-dividing.html>

¹³²⁶ "Local missionary force—10,000 from 71 countries," *LDS Church News*, 14 May 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17857/Local-missionary-force--10000-from-71-countries.html>

¹³²⁷ "Clinics are helping prepare missionaries," *LDS Church News*, 23 July 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17621/Clinics-are-helping-prepare-missionaries.html>

¹³²⁸ "Excitement for missionary work surges," *LDS Church News*, 19 June 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35955/Excitement-for-missionary-work-surges.html>

¹³²⁹ "Peru," *Ensign*, Feb 1977, 37.

¹³³⁰ "New stake presidencies," *LDS Church News*, 13 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18101/New-stake-presidencies.html>

¹³³¹ "New temple president," *LDS Church News*, 27 June 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22353/New-temple-president.html>

not become stakes due to an inadequate number of priesthood holders but reported that significant progress had occurred recently. Church employees continue to be present in many stake presidencies and hold many leadership callings.

Peruvian regional representatives have included Rene Loli from Lima (1988),¹³³² Teofilo Puertas from Trujillo (1988),¹³³³ Rafael de la Cruz P. from Lima (1989),¹³³⁴ Oscar Hernan Ugas Aguayo (1991),¹³³⁵ Alexander Alfonso Nunez from Ica (1992),¹³³⁶ Carlos A Cuba Quintana (1993),¹³³⁷ C. Willy F. Zuzunaga from Lima (1993),¹³³⁸ Miguel Fernando Rojas A. from Lima (1993),¹³³⁹ and Alejandro Marcel Robles Ventosilla from Lima (1994).¹³⁴⁰

Mission presidents who have served from Peru include Rafael de la Cruz in the Peru Trujillo Mission (1992),¹³⁴¹ Teofilo Puertas in the Peru Arequipa Mission (1992),¹³⁴² Rene Loli (1993),¹³⁴³ Carlos A Cuba (1994),¹³⁴⁴ Willy F. Zuzunaga in the Peru Arequipa Mission (1995),¹³⁴⁵ Victor Hugo Gamero in the Peru Lima East Mission (1996),¹³⁴⁶ Alexander Nunez in the Colombia Cali Mission (1996),¹³⁴⁷ Adan G. Bravo M. in the Peru Chiclayo Mission (1996),¹³⁴⁸ Miguel F. Rojas in the Chile Antofagasta Mission (1997),¹³⁴⁹ Belisario E. Benites in the Peru Lima North Mission (1998),¹³⁵⁰ Julio Arturo Leiva in the Peru Arequipa Mission (1998),¹³⁵¹ Horacio

¹³³² "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 20 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17691/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹³³³ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 5 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18021/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹³³⁴ "New regional representatives: Rafael de la Cruz P.," LDS Church News, 23 September 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19121/New-regional-representatives-Rafael-de-la-Cruz-P.html>

¹³³⁵ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 5 October 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21218/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹³³⁶ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 29 August 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22464/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹³³⁷ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 23 May 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22183/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹³³⁸ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 24 July 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23251/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹³³⁹ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 25 September 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23377/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹³⁴⁰ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 27 August 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24738/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹³⁴¹ "New mission president," LDS Church News, 16 May 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22608/New-mission-president.html>

¹³⁴² "New leaders assigned," LDS Church News, 7 March 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22604/New-leaders-assigned.html>

¹³⁴³ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 6 February 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23663/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹³⁴⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 7 May 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25059/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹³⁴⁵ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 1 April 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26537/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹³⁴⁶ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 9 March 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27484/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹³⁴⁷ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 30 March 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27479/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹³⁴⁸ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 4 May 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27475/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹³⁴⁹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 15 February 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29082/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹³⁵⁰ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 17 January 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30617/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹³⁵¹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 21 March 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30617/>

Alberto Hooker Ureta in the Peru Piura Mission (2003),¹³⁵² Lorenzo Gino Galli in the Peru Arequipa Mission (2004),¹³⁵³ Carlos Amancio Solis in the Peru Piura Mission (2006),¹³⁵⁴ Miguel Angel Tenorio in the Bolivia Cochabamba Mission (2008),¹³⁵⁵ Juan Augusto Leyva in the Peru Lima East Mission (2008),¹³⁵⁶ and Arturo Fernandez Ramirez in the Peru Arequipa Mission (2010).¹³⁵⁷

In 1997, there were four Area Seventies from Peru.¹³⁵⁸ Elder Jose C. Aleson from Lima was called as an Area Seventy in 2000.¹³⁵⁹ In 2002, Hector A. Davalos from Callao was called as an Area Seventy.¹³⁶⁰ In 2004, Alexander A. Nunez was called as an Area Seventy.¹³⁶¹ In 2005, Rene Loli, Alejandro M. Robles, and Richard C. Zambrano were called as Area Seventies.¹³⁶² In 2006, Cesar Hooker was called as an Area Seventy.¹³⁶³ In 2007, Enrique J. Montoya from Trujillo was called as an Area Seventy.¹³⁶⁴ In 2008, Eduardo Gaverret from Lima was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy,¹³⁶⁵ and in 2010, Carlos Solis was called as an Area Seventy.¹³⁶⁶

Temple

Prior to the completion of the Lima Peru Temple in 1986, members traveled to the Sao Paulo Brazil Temple. Temple work accelerated following the dedication of the temple in Lima, and in 1990, the number of ordinances performed in the Lima Peru Temple doubled from the previous year.¹³⁶⁷ With the exception of three stakes in the Puno Region that attend the Cochabamba Bolivia Temple, all other stakes and districts in Peru belong to the Lima Peru Temple district. The temple is well attended with endowment sessions offered every

New-mission-presidents.html

¹³⁵² "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 25 January 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/34625/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹³⁵³ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 21 February 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45107/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹³⁵⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 18 March 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48645/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹³⁵⁵ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 10 May 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51987/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹³⁵⁶ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 17 May 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/52008/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹³⁵⁷ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 8 May 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59317/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹³⁵⁸ "Fourth Quorum of the Seventy," LDS Church News, 12 April 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28858/Fourth-Quorum-of-the-Seventy.html>

¹³⁵⁹ "New members of Seventy receive sustaining votes," LDS Church News, 1 April 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37478/New-members-of-Seventy-receive-sustaining-votes.html>

¹³⁶⁰ "30 Area Authority Seventies sustained," LDS Church News, 13 April 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41666/30-Area-Authority-Seventies-sustained.html>

¹³⁶¹ "New Area Authority Seventies," LDS Church News, 24 April 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/34660/New-Area-Authority-Seventies.html>

¹³⁶² "38 new Area Seventies called, 37 are released," LDS Church News, 9 April 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47147/38-new-Area-Seventies-called-37-are-released.html>

¹³⁶³ "New Area Seventies," LDS Church News, 22 April 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48851/New-Area-Seventies.html>

¹³⁶⁴ "46 Area Seventies called; 29 released," LDS Church News, 7 April 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50423/46-Area-Seventies-called-29-released.html>

¹³⁶⁵ Dethman, Leigh. "Elder D. Todd Christofferson named new apostle; other leaders called," LDS Church News, 5 April 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/52901/Elder-D-Todd-Christofferson-named-new-apostle-other-leaders-called.html>

¹³⁶⁶ "New Area Seventies," LDS Church News, 24 April 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59238/New-Area-Seventies.html>

¹³⁶⁷ Wells, Elayne. "Work in South America continues to grow," LDS Church News, 11 November 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18985/Work-in-South-America-continues-to-grow.html>

hour on weekdays and every thirty minutes on weekends. Members travel from throughout the country by bus—some taking more than fifteen hours—to the temple in trips organized by stakes and districts. Distance from the temple in many areas has reduced temple participation and increases the number of members who have never been to the temple. The first organized group temple trip from Iquitos occurred in 2001 with 150 individuals in three groups. Many members in Iquitos, which had its first stake created in 1980 and had three stakes in 2001, had never attended the temple before due to the remote location of the city and the unfeasibility of travel to Lima.¹³⁶⁸ In the late 2000s, missionaries reported increased temple attendance and interest in remote districts and stakes. In 2010, the Lima Peru Temple had the most stakes assigned to the temple district than any other operating temple.

The delay in the announcement of a second temple in Peru until the Trujillo temple was announced in 2008 may indicate that past temple attendance outside Lima has been insufficient to merit the construction of additional temples. The Lima Peru Temple is also the second smallest LDS temple worldwide by square footage at 9,600 square feet. The Church may expand and remodel the temple in the coming years to meet the needs of Peruvian members. Peru is highly likely to have additional temples in many other cities due to large LDS populations in these locations. Cities that appear likely to have a temple in the foreseeable future include Arequipa and Chiclayo.

Comparative Growth

The LDS Church in Peru has the sixth largest number of members, fourth most stakes, fifth most districts, and the sixth most missions in the world, although Peru ranks fortieth in the world by total population. LDS member activity rates are comparable to much of the region and are lower than world LDS averages, as Peru ranks eighth out of countries with the largest number of members per congregation. However, Peru has the second highest percentage of members who attend seminary or institute in Latin America after Venezuela (7.2%). In 1988, Peru experienced the second largest number of stakes created in one weekend in LDS Church history in Lima (the greatest number of stakes organized in one weekend was when fifteen new stakes were created in Mexico City in 1975).¹³⁶⁹ Peru is the nation with the second largest number of Latter-day Saints with only one operating temple. In 2010, the Lima metropolitan area was the city outside the United States with the second most stakes after Mexico City (39). In 2008 and 2009, Peru was among the top five countries for the most congregations created in one year. The percentage of the population residing in cities with an LDS congregation is comparable to Ecuador, Bolivia, and most Central American nations.

Other missionary-oriented Christian groups have comparably sized presences in Peru compared to the LDS Church, but many have higher member activity rates. Seventh Day Adventists and Latter-day Saints report about half a million members, yet Seventh Day Adventists operate twice as many congregations. Jehovah's Witnesses claim one-fifth of the reported LDS membership but have over 400 more congregations. Evangelicals appear to be the most successful missionary-oriented Christian group as they have grown from less than 2% of the population fifty years ago to 15% at present. These groups have made great efforts to expand national outreach in rural areas and to develop self-sustaining local leadership throughout the country.

Future Prospects

With one of the largest concentrations of LDS members outside of North America, Peru offers abundant opportunities for growth and Church development both within the country and internationally.

¹³⁶⁸ Swensen, Jason. "Faithful Peruvians claim temple blessings," LDS Church News, 19 May 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39900/Faithful-Peruvians-claim-temple-blessings.html>

¹³⁶⁹ Warnick, Lee. "18 stakes created from 11: 28-hour marathon in Lima multiplies by dividing," 6 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17742/18-stakes-created-from-11-28-hour-marathon-in-lima-multiplies-by-dividing.html>

The creation of two additional missions in 2010 allows for greater expansion in national outreach in previously unreached areas. The large size of the Peruvian full-time missionary force will facilitate an ongoing supply of future local priesthood leadership and provides a strong base for future growth. Many additional stakes appear likely to be organized in the next few years. Several stakes in the Lima area continue to create additional wards and have enough congregations to divide, and several districts appear close to becoming stakes, such as districts in Casa Grande, Huaraz, Tarma, and Barranca. Many of the recently established groups may become branches, which over time may be organized into additional districts.

The greatest challenges of the LDS Church in Peru relate to member activity and convert retention. Emphasis on basic habits of weekly church attendance, daily scripture reading, and regular member-missionary involvement will be needed to improve convert retention rates in the medium term and member activity in the long term. Due to its established LDS membership and central location, Lima could support a church university one day and provide education and proselytism opportunities for western South America if desired by church leaders.

URUGUAY

Geography

AREA: 176,215 square km. Uruguay is in southern South America and borders Argentina, Brazil and the South Atlantic Ocean. The climate is warm and temperate; plains and small hills cover most the terrain. Several large rivers flow through Uruguay including the Rio Negro and the Uruguay River; the latter forms the boundary with Argentina. High winds, droughts, floods, and rapidly changing weather are natural hazards. The primary environmental issues are water pollution and waste management. Uruguay is divided into nineteen administrative departments.

Peoples

White: 88%
Mestizo: 8%
Black: 4%

Population: 3,316,328 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.24% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.87 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 73.27 male, 79.66 female (2012)

Languages: Spanish (94%), other (6%). Spanish is the official language. Other languages spoken are immigrant languages with fewer than 100,000 speakers such as Italian, Portuguese, German, and Russian. Portuguese, a mixture of Spanish and Portuguese, is spoken in areas bordering Brazil.

Literacy: 98% (2003)

History

In 1726, the Spanish founded Montevideo as a military stronghold that later developed into an important trading center. For a short period in the early nineteenth century, Uruguay was claimed by Argentina and controlled by Brazil until independence occurred in the 1820s. Social, political, and economic reforms in the early twentieth century brought about greater development and modernization. Marxist guerrilla groups fought against the government in rural areas in the late 1960s and resulted in government controlled by the military from the 1970s to 1985. Economic reforms in the past several decades have stabilized and developed Uruguay.

Culture

Uruguay is the most secular nation in South America. In 2007, same-sex civil unions became recognized by government. Catholics have historically influenced culture and form a nominal majority. There are several styles of native music and a rich literary history. Uruguayans typically eat meat in abundance and share common cuisine with much of the Mediterranean. The national drink is an alcoholic drink called Grappamiel made from sugarcane and honey. Another widely consumed traditional drink is made from the yerba mate

plant and called mate. Alcohol consumption rates are slightly less than the United States and smoking rates are comparable to other Latin American nations.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$15,400 (2011) [32% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.783

Corruption Index: 7.0 (2011)

Uruguay has one of the most developed economies in South America. Although the economy grew throughout most of the past two decades, significant economic hardships occurred in the late 1990s and early 2000s, resulting in higher unemployment, shrinking GDP, and inflation. Uruguay has been more successful dealing with the global financial crisis in the late 2000s than many nations due to reforms and good government management. Services employ 76% of the workforce and produce 68% of the GDP whereas industry employs 15% of the workforce and produces 22.5% of the GDP. Agriculture accounts for less than 10% of the workforce and GDP but is a significant driver of the economy, as food processing is the largest industry, and meat, rice, and leather products are primary exports. Other important industries include machinery, transportation equipment, and petroleum products. Primary trade partners include Brazil, Argentina, and China.

Along with Chile, Uruguay experiences the lowest rates of corruption in South America.

Faiths

Christian: 81.4%

Jewish: 0.3%

Atheist/Agnostic: 17.2%

Other: 1.1%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 2,300,000

Latter-day Saints 99,758 159

Jehovah's Witnesses 11,580 158

Seventh Day Adventists 7,447 50

Religion

Although most the population is nominally Catholic, Uruguay has one of the higher percentages of atheists and agnostics in South America. Those who identify as Catholics constitute 45% of the population, whereas 28% of Uruguayans believe in God but do not have a religious affiliation.¹³⁷⁰ Many Christian groups have reported slow growth in recent years.

Religious Freedom

The constitution grants religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. Many Christian and Catholic holidays are recognized by the government. Religious instruction is banned in public schools but permitted in private schools.¹³⁷¹ Missionaries operate freely in the country.

¹³⁷⁰ "Uruguay," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127407.htm>

¹³⁷¹ "Uruguay," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/>

Largest Cities

Urban: 92%

Montevideo, Salto, Ciudad de la Costa, Paysandu, Las Piedras, Rivera, Maldonado, Melo, Tacuarembó, Artigas.

All ten largest cities have a congregation. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of the population lives in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

The first congregation was organized for North Americans in 1944. The Uruguay Mission was organized in 1947, and the following year, there were fourteen congregations. During the late 1950s approximately 500 converts joined the Church annually.¹³⁷² The Uruguay Mission assisted in the opening of other South American nations, particularly Paraguay and Peru.¹³⁷³ The Church experienced growth in Uruguay prior to most of Latin America and was noted by Church President David O. McKay to have experienced the most rapid international growth since the organization of the British Mission in the 1830s.¹³⁷⁴ Some well-known television personalities joined the Church in the late 1980s.¹³⁷⁵ Fifty years following the creation of the first mission, a second mission was created in 1997, named the Uruguay Montevideo West Mission. The new mission served half the national population and provided opportunity for each congregation to have a set of missionaries.¹³⁷⁶ The president of Uruguay attended the Montevideo Uruguay Temple open house in 2001.¹³⁷⁷

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 99,758 (2012)

There were 14,800 members in 1967.¹³⁷⁸ In 1976, membership reached 19,804. Membership continued to increase steadily to 40,700 in 1986, 61,000 in 1994, and 69,000 in 1998. By 2000 there were 74,929 members. Membership reached 80,550 in 2002 and 90,292 in 2007.

Since 2000 membership growth rates have steadily increased between 2% and 4.5%.

Uruguay has the second highest percentage of nominal LDS members in any nation with over one million inhabitants after Chile (2.6%, or one member per thirty-eight people), although only about 0.5% of Uruguayans are active Latter-day Saints

irf/2009/127407.htm

¹³⁷² "Uruguay," Country Profiles, retrieved 23 March 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/uruguay>

¹³⁷³ Warnick, Lee. "Resourceful people of Lima making Church 'blossom,'" LDS Church News, 6 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18020/Resourceful-people-of-Lima-making-Church-blossom.html>

¹³⁷⁴ "60th anniversary of Church in Uruguay," LDS Church News, 3 November 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51296/60th-anniversary-of-Church-in-Uruguay.html>

¹³⁷⁵ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 27 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17976/From-around-the-world.html>

¹³⁷⁶ "Church to create eight new missions," LDS Church News, 1 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29769/Church-to-create-eight-new-missions.html>

¹³⁷⁷ Curbelo, Nestor. "Uruguay's president tours new Montevideo temple," LDS Church News, 17 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39495/Uruguays-president-tours-new-Montevideo-temple.html>

¹³⁷⁸ "Mission created in Uruguay flourishes among a prepared people," LDS Church News, 27 September 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28737/Mission-created-in-Uruguay-flourishes-among-a-prepared-people.html>

Congregational Growth

Wards: 115 Branches: 44 (April 2013)

The first stake was created in 1967 in Montevideo. In the 1970s, eleven additional stakes were organized in Montevideo, Rivera, Paysandu, Salto, Melo, Minas, Paysandu, and Santa Lucia. Two additional stakes were created in Durazno and Artigas in 1980 bringing the total of stakes to fourteen. Stakes in Minas, Paysandu, and Santa Lucia were discontinued in 1989 and returned to district status. In the 1990s, four stakes were created in Mercedes, Las Piedras, Maldonado, and Montevideo, and the stake in Paysandu was reinstated in 1997. Since 2000, three stakes have been organized in Tacuarembó (2003), Montevideo De La Costa (2012), and Trienta y Tres (2012). Districts functioned in Colonia, Florida, and Rocha in early 2013. When a second mission was organized in 1997, the Uruguay Montevideo Mission retained nine stakes or districts, and the new mission included ten stakes or districts.¹³⁷⁹ In late 2009, there were approximately 350 missionaries serving in the two missions.

In 1990, there were 116 congregations, sixty-one of which were wards. Congregational growth was strong in the 1990s, increasing to 144 in 1996 and to 176 at the end of 1999.

By 1998, there were fifteen stakes and five districts.¹³⁸⁰ Although wards increased from ninety-two in 2000 to ninety-nine in 2004 and 107 in 2007, the number of branches has declined from seventy-nine in 2000, to sixty-three in 2004, and fifty-five in 2007. Total congregations decreased from 171 in 2000 to 162 in 2009.

Activity and Retention

President Hinckley visited in 1997 and spoke to 250 missionaries, 1,264 priesthood holders, and 11,000 members in three meetings.¹³⁸¹ The Montevideo Uruguay Temple groundbreaking had 900 in attendance.¹³⁸² There was a slight decrease in the ratio of members to congregations from 422 in 1990 to 416 in 1999. However, this ratio increased to 568 at year-end 2008. This ratio likely increased due to increased standards for the organization of independent congregations. This resulted in many unreported congregations that function as appendages to larger congregations. Difficulties with member activity and convert retention also account for some of the increased member to congregation ratio.

The percentage of active membership and church attendance vary by location. Montevideo has congregations with the most in attendance. In Montevideo, missionaries reported that in 2009, the smallest wards had seventy attending meetings weekly whereas most wards had over one hundred active members. It is rare for congregations outside of Montevideo to have more than one hundred attending weekly. In early 2010, the strongest branch in the Colonia Uruguay District had around fifty attending weekly but did not have sufficient local leadership to staff the branch presidency.

Some congregations have seen a major decline in member activity. One of the wards in the Paysandú Uruguay Stake once had one hundred active members and in late 2009 had 500 members on the records but only between thirty and forty people regularly attending. Active membership appears to be no greater than 17,000 nationwide, or 18% of total membership.

¹³⁷⁹ "Church to create eight new missions," LDS Church News, 1 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29769/Church-to-create-eight-new-missions.html>

¹³⁸⁰ "3 more temples announced, total now 98," LDS Church News, 7 November 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31511/3-more-temples-announced-total-now-98.html>

¹³⁸¹ "Rapid pace across South America," LDS Church News, 23 August 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29572/Rapid-pace-across-South-America.html>

¹³⁸² Curbelo, Nestor. "Groundbreaking begins 'a new era for Uruguay,'" LDS Church News, 15 May 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35781/Groundbreaking-begins-a-new-era-for-Uruguay.html>

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Spanish, English, Portuguese.

All LDS scriptures are available in Spanish and Portuguese. Most Church materials are available in Spanish and Portuguese. The Church recently completed a Spanish translation of the LDS-edition of the Bible.

Meetinghouses

Most congregations meet in Church-built meetinghouses. Small, new, or dependent branches and groups often meet in rented spaces or renovated buildings.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Humanitarian projects occur, but the developed economy lessens Uruguayan needs. Many projects are conducted by local members. Three thousand two hundred members participated in a nation-wide city cleaning activity in 2003.¹³⁸³

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church maintains positive relations with the government. There are no restrictions on missionary work, and foreign missionaries serve freely.

Cultural Issues

Uruguay is South America's most secular and liberal nation, and many are disinterested in religion. Declining growth rates and poor convert retention over the past fifteen years may partially reflect cultural issues. Some native, widely consumed drinks are forbidden by Church teachings and potential converts may struggle to abstain from these and other prohibited substances in the Word of Wisdom. Alcohol and tobacco addictions pose challenges for some investigators, converts, and less active members.

National Outreach

LDS missions have excellent national outreach, as two missions cover just 3.5 million people. Every urban location with over 10,000 inhabitants has a congregation or assigned full-time missionaries. All administrative departments have a congregation. Small towns and rural communities remain less reached by the Church. Efforts to conduct missionary efforts and establish congregations in these locations will depend on local member efforts.

Missionaries report that the numbers of full-time missionaries have risen in both missions in the late 2000s. Mission leaders have worked on trying to start additional congregations on the outskirts of larger cities that operate as groups or dependent branches. The Church is well positioned to proselyte not only in larger cities, but in small cities and rural towns through full-time missionaries and local ward or branch member missionaries. Low activity rates and limited member participation in rural areas limit the effectiveness of outreach.

¹³⁸³ "34,000 clean up cities of 3 nations," LDS Church News, 8 November 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44649/34000-clean-up-cities-of-3-nations.html>

Member Activity and Convert Retention

The increase of over 150 members per congregation in just a decade reflects the continuation of quick-baptism tactics of missionaries and the inability for many congregations outside Montevideo to retain converts and develop local leadership in sufficient numbers. Dependent branches or groups meet in several locations, particularly on the outskirts of larger cities. These congregations tend to suffer from low activity rates and insufficient local leadership to staff independent units. Although membership growth has doubled in the past twenty years, the number of stakes has only increased by 50%.

Low convert retention and high member inactivity likely contributed to a two-decade delay between the organization of most Uruguayan stakes and the construction of Uruguay's first temple. Attendance during the open house and dedicatory sessions of the Montevideo Uruguay Temple were one-third and one-tenth of the nominal Uruguayan Church membership in 2000, respectively.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The homogeneity of the Uruguayan population has resulted in few ethnic integration issues in the Church. The greatest integration issues in congregations appear to be socioeconomic.

Language Issues

Although some speak a native language other than Spanish, the widespread use of Spanish as a first and second language simplifies the Church's outreach. Any members or investigators desiring to study and read materials in their native language can often obtain a large amount of these materials as nearly all native languages spoken in Uruguay have most Church materials available. The formation of non-Spanish speaking congregations appears unlikely as nearly all Uruguayans are fluent in Spanish. Congregations in Brazilian border regions may use some *Portuñol* (an amalgamation of Spanish and Portuguese) unofficially in meetings.

Leadership

The Church has developed strong, local leadership that practices a wide range of professions without significant overlap with Church employees. Several Uruguayan Church leaders served as regional representatives prior the position's discontinuance in 1995. Uruguayan members have served as Area Seventies.¹³⁸⁴ In 1990, a regional representative elected as National Deputy helped to raise the Church's profile and dispel misconceptions.¹³⁸⁵ Uruguayan members have also served as mission presidents.¹³⁸⁶ Uruguayan Francisco J. Vinas has served in the first and second quorums of the Seventy and as an Area President. Uruguayan Walter F. Gonzalez served in the First Quorum of the Seventy from 2001 to 2007 and has since served in the Presidency of the Seventy.¹³⁸⁷

Temple

Uruguay pertains to the Montevideo Uruguay Temple district. The Buenos Aires Argentina Temple served Uruguay prior to the completion of the Montevideo Uruguay Temple. The temple was announced in

¹³⁸⁴ "First President calls new area authorities," LDS Church News, 24 August 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28224/First-Presidency-calls-new-area-authorities.html>

¹³⁸⁵ Curbelo, Nestor. "Leader wins high post in Uruguayan election," LDS Church News, 17 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19672/Leader-wins-high-post-in-Uruguayan-election.html>

¹³⁸⁶ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 21 April 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20316/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹³⁸⁷ "Leadership for Seventy," LDS Church News, 6 October 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51168/Leadership-for-Seventy.html>

November 1998 and dedicated in 2001. The open house prior to the dedication was attended by 24,801, and 7,655 attended the four dedicatory sessions.¹³⁸⁸ Starting in November 2009, many members in the Buenos Aires Argentina Temple district began attending the temple in Montevideo due to renovation of the temple in Buenos Aires. In 2010, seven endowment sessions a day were scheduled from Tuesday through Saturday. It appears that Uruguayan use of the temple is modest and likely heavily dependent on Montevideo stakes for temple staffing.

Comparative Growth

Uruguay and Chile have the most extensive mission outreach in South America, as all large cities have stakes and nearly all small cities have congregations. Uruguay has one of the longest LDS histories in Latin America and one of the highest percentages of nominal Latter-day Saints. Activity rates appear similar to other Spanish-speaking South American countries, although church attendance appears to be about one fifth of nominal membership.

Evangelical Christians have also seen strong growth and have twice as many adherents as Latter-day Saints.¹³⁸⁹ Seventh Day Adventists have seen modest membership growth and little increase in congregations over the past decade. Jehovah's Witnesses have also seen modest membership growth.

Future Prospects

Mounting inactivity resulting from converts not retained over the past half century continues to slow the Church's progress. Some dependent branches or groups may become independent congregations. Some of the stakes in the Montevideo area may divide in the near future once more branches mature into wards. Additional stakes outside of Montevideo appear unlikely due to few active members. Some stakes in rural areas may return to district status if active members move away and reactivation efforts do not come to greater fruition.

Encouraging congregational self-sufficiency, focusing on the development of regular gospel habits in the lives of local members, fostering self-sustaining local member-missionary efforts, and raising the standards for prospective converts to ensure that lasting conversion has occurred before baptism will be essential future directions if convert retention and congregational growth rates are to experience sustained increases from their present levels.

¹³⁸⁸ "Facts and figures: Montevideo Uruguay Temple," LDS Church News, 24 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39529/Facts-and-figures-Montevideo-Uruguay-Temple.html>

¹³⁸⁹ "Uruguay," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127407.htm>

VENEZUELA

Geography

AREA: 912,050 square km. Located in northern South America, Venezuela borders Guyana, Brazil, Colombia, and the Caribbean Sea. Terrain varies from plains and basins in the central, southwest, and extreme south to large mountain ranges in the southeast (Guiana Highlands) and northwest. Lake Maracaibo is a large brackish lake in the northwest with surrounding lowlands and large oil deposits. Hot, humid conditions occur throughout the country with the exception of mountainous areas where there are more temperate conditions. Tropical rainforest covers many interior areas. Floods, mudslides, and droughts are natural hazards. Environmental issues include pollution, improper sewage disposal, deforestation, declining soil quality, and threat of rainforest coverage loss. Venezuela is administratively divided into twenty-three states, one capital district, and one federal dependency.

Peoples

Venezuelan (Spanish-speaking): 97%
Other: 3%

Population: 28,047,938 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.468% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.4 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 70.98 male, 77.34 female (2012)

Languages: Spanish (97%), Chinese (1.5%), Portuguese (1%), other (0.5%). Spanish is the official language and only language spoken by over one million people (26.4 million). Spoken primarily in extreme northwest Venezuela on the Guajira Peninsula, Wayuu has 177,000 speakers and is the only Amerindian language with over 50,000 speakers.

Literacy: 93% (2001)

History

Amerindian tribes populated Venezuela and practiced hunter-gatherer and agriculturist lifestyles prior to Spanish discovery and colonization. In 1522, Spain founded its first permanent settlement, named Nuevo Toledo, in South America in Venezuela but the area experienced little development and progress for the next two centuries. Resistance against Spanish rule began to intensify in the late seventeenth century, and in 1821, Venezuela became independent, joining the Republic of Gran Colombia with Colombia, Panama, and Ecuador. In 1830, Venezuela withdrew from the republic and became its own independent nation. Political instability and dictatorships marked much of Venezuela's history for the rest of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Following the removal of General Marcos Perez Jimenez from power in the late 1950s, Venezuela experienced democratic rule and peace for the following three decades. In the late 1980s, riots in Caracas erupted over government economic policies. In 1992, a failed coup led by Hugo Chavez resulted in the imprisonment of Chavez until 1994. Hugo Chavez won the 1998 presidential election and began reforming the constitution. Political instability returned in the early 2000s, followed by a greater

push by Chavez to implement socialism.¹³⁹⁰ In recent years, Venezuela has strained its relations with the United States and strengthened ties with other socialist-leaning nations like Bolivia and Cuba.

Culture

Spanish colonialism has strongly shaped Venezuelan culture, leaving a legacy of language, Catholicism, and cuisine. The Catholic Church remains a strong social influence, which has led the government to attempt to limit its political power. Local art, music, and literature tend to be less known internationally than many other nations in the region. Popular local dishes or food staples include pastries like cachapas and empanadas, arepas (cornmeal biscuits with filling), plantains, beans, rice, eggs, and meat.¹³⁹¹ Alcohol and cigarette consumption rates rank near the worldwide average but are higher than many other Latin American nations.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$12,400 (2011) [25.8% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.735

Corruption Index: 1.9 (2011)

Oil profits fuel economic growth and development, which account for 90% of export earnings and 30% of the GDP. In 2009, the worldwide financial crisis brought Venezuela into recession after several years of strong economic growth. The government continues to nationalize all major sectors of the economy. Little diversification in the economy has occurred in recent years. Services employ 64% of the workforce and generate 59% of the GDP, whereas industry accounts for 23% of the workforce and generates 37% of the GDP. Major industries include petroleum, construction materials, food processing, clothing, and mining. Agriculture employs 13% of the workforce and generates 4% of the GDP. Primary crops and agricultural products include corn, sorghum, sugarcane, rice, fruit, vegetables, coffee, meat, and poultry. The United States remains Venezuela's primary trade partner despite souring political relations. Colombia, Brazil, and China are additional major trade partners.

Corruption is perceived as the second most widespread in the Western Hemisphere after Haiti according to Transparency International. Illicit drug cultivation is not as prevalent as other South American countries, but Venezuela serves as a major transshipment point for cocaine and heroin. Judicial corruption and money laundering are also concerns.¹³⁹² Human trafficking of children for forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation remain major problems despite some government efforts to address the situation.

Faiths

Christian: 98%

Other: 2%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 26,134,299

Seventh Day Adventists 249,777 860

¹³⁹⁰ "Background Note: Venezuela," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 25 February 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35766.htm>

¹³⁹¹ "Venezuela," Countries and Their Cultures," retrieved 3 November 2010. <http://www.everyculture.com/To-Z/Venezuela.html>

¹³⁹² "Background Note: Venezuela," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 25 February 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35766.htm>

Latter-day Saints 157,795 281
 Jehovah's Witnesses 124,482 1,469

Religion

The government estimates that Catholics nominally account for 92% of the population, with the remaining 8% primarily consisting of Protestants. Other estimates indicate that as many as 10% of Venezuelans are Protestant. Muslims number over 100,000, comprised principally of Lebanese and Syrian immigrants and their descendants and are concentrated in Caracas and Nueva Esparta State. There are approximately 13,000 Jews who reside mainly in Caracas.¹³⁹³

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom on condition that the practice of religious freedom does not interfere with public order, decency, and public morality. Overall, most religious groups freely operate and assemble, but the government has intentionally restricted the practice of religious freedom of denominations or geographic regions that have tended to criticize the government. The government has taken steps to limit the political influence of the Roman Catholic Church and allegedly participated in the establishment of the Reformist Catholic Church of Venezuela in mid-2008. Religious groups may establish schools and perform social development programs. The government has assisted many religious groups with their community service. Foreign missionaries must obtain a special religious visa to enter the country, which can be a lengthy process. Areas populated by indigenous Amerindian groups are off limits to foreign missionary groups.¹³⁹⁴

Largest Cities

Urban: 93%

Caracas, Maracaibo, Valencia, Barquisimeto, Ciudad Guayana, Maracay, Barcelona, Petare, Maturín, Ciudad Bolívar, Turmero, Cumaná, Barinas, San Cristóbal, Cabimas, Baruta, Puerto La Cruz, Guarenas, Los Teques, Mérida, Coro, El Tigre, Puerto Cabello, Guacara, Acarigua, Punto Fijo, Guatire, Santa Teresa, Cabudare, Carúpano, Ciudad Ojeda, Guanare, Valera, Catia La Mar, Ocumare del Tuy, Calabozo, La Victoria, Cúa, San Fernando de Apure, Cagua, Anaco, San Juan de los Morros, Santa Lucía, Mariara, Araure, El Limón, Valle de la Pascua.

All forty-seven cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the national population resides in the forty-seven largest cities.

LDS History

The Church created its first congregation in Caracas in 1966 with membership primarily comprised of American expatriates. That same year, four full-time missionaries were assigned from the Central American Mission,¹³⁹⁵ and Elder Marion G. Romney dedicated Venezuela for missionary work.¹³⁹⁶ Seminary and institute began in

¹³⁹³ "Venezuela," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127408.htm>

¹³⁹⁴ "Venezuela," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127408.htm>

¹³⁹⁵ "South America missions to number 48 Brazil, Ecuador, Venezuela to gain 5 new missions," LDS Church News, 16 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20940/South-America-missions-to-number-48-Brazil-Ecuador-Venezuela-to-gain-5-new-missions.html>

¹³⁹⁶ "Friends in Venezuela," Friend, Oct 1973, 33.

1972. In late 2005, full-time missionaries from the United States serving in Venezuela were removed and re-assigned elsewhere due to visa issues.¹³⁹⁷ In 2010, the South America Northwest Area administered Venezuela.

Missions

The Church created in the Colombia-Venezuela Mission in 1968. In 1971, the Church organized the Venezuela Mission in Caracas from the Colombia-Venezuela Mission. The Venezuela Maracaibo Mission was created in 1979, followed by the Venezuela Caracas West Mission in 1991, which was relocated to Valencia in 1994. In 1994, a fourth mission was created in Barcelona.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 157,795 (2012)

In 1971, there were 1,259 Latter-day Saints, and by 1986, there were 23,000.¹³⁹⁸ Church membership increased to 48,000 in 1991 and 73,000 in 1997. By year-end 2000, membership stood at 96,710.

During the early 2000s, rapid membership growth occurred as membership numbered 113,652 in 2002 and 128,874 in 2004. Membership growth began to slow in the mid-2000s and declined dramatically in the late 2000s. There were 138,676 members in 2006 and 144,089 in 2008. Annual membership growth rates decreased from over 7% from 2001 to 2003 to 4.4% in 2005 and hit a low of 1.8% in 2008. In 2009, membership grew by 2%. In 2009, one in 185 was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 207 Branches: 68 (April 2013)

There were ninety-eight LDS congregations in 1998, and by 1995, there were 211. In 2000, there were 221 congregations (114 wards and 107 branches). By 2002, there were 232 congregations, and by 2004 there were 254 congregations. In 2006, there were 270 congregations. After 2006, congregational growth slowed, and in 2009 there were 273 congregations, including 187 wards. Congregational growth slightly increased in the early 2000s as the number of units increased from 273 in 2009 to 283 in 2011.

The Church created its first Venezuelan stake in 1977 in Caracas, followed by a second stake in Valencia (1979) and a third Maracaibo (1980). During the 1980s, four additional stakes were organized, including Maracaibo South (1983), Guayana (1986), Barcelona (1989), and Caracas Urdaneta (1989). In the 1990s, nine new stakes were created in Maracay (1990), Ciudad Ojeda (1991), Maracaibo Centro (1992), Puerto La Cruz (1992), Caracas Palo Verde (1992), Barquisimeto (1994), San Cristobal (1995), Valencia Candelaria (1995), and Merida (1997). By 2000, there were sixteen stakes.

During the 2000s, eleven new stakes were created, most from districts. Stakes created in this period were in Guarenas (2001), Maturin (2002), Ciudad Bolivar (2002), Barquisimeto Obelisco (2003), El Tigre (2003), Ocumare del Tuy (2004), Caracas Los Teques (2005), Barinas (2005), Maracaibo West (2006), Guacara (2007), and Punto Fijo (2009). In the 2010s, additional stakes were organized in San Félix (2010), San Francisco (2010), Cumaná (2011), Cagua (2011), San Cristóbal Pirineos (2011), Cabimas (2011), and Porlamar (2012). By late 2012, there were thirty-four stakes.

¹³⁹⁷ "U.S. missionaries leave Venezuela," LDS Church News, 29 October 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48074/US-missionaries-leave-Venezuela.html>

¹³⁹⁸ "South America missions to number 48 Brazil, Ecuador, Venezuela to gain 5 new missions," LDS Church News, 16 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20940/South-America-missions-to-number-48-Brazil-Ecuador-Venezuela-to-gain-5-new-missions.html>

There were thirteen districts at year-end 2000, several of which became stakes within the next decade. In 2012, there were six districts operating in La Pascua (1986), Los Llanos (1991), Valera (1991), El Rosario (1997), Carupano (2001), and Calabozo (2005).

Activity and Retention

There were 27,806 who attended the Caracas Venezuela Temple open house, and 5,973 who attended the dedicatory sessions in 2000.¹³⁹⁹ The average number of members per congregation increased from 438 in 2000 to 538 in 2009. There were 6,341 enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year, almost half the 11,903 enrolled during the 2007–2008 school year. Most wards appear to have over one hundred active members, whereas most branches have around seventy-five active members. Total active membership is estimated at 25,000, or 17% of nationwide membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Spanish, Chinese, Portuguese.

All LDS scriptures and most Church materials are available in Spanish, including an LDS edition of the Bible complete with full LDS footnotes, Bible dictionary, and topical guide. All LDS scriptures and most Church materials are available in Portuguese and Chinese (traditional characters), whereas more limited numbers of materials are translated into simplified Chinese characters.

Meetinghouses

There were over 130 LDS meetinghouses in 2010, most of which were church-built meetinghouses.

Health and Safety

Venezuela suffers from high crime rates and has one of the highest homicide rates worldwide.

Humanitarian and Development Work

In 1999, the Church provided food, clothing, and medical supplies for of flood and mudslide victims.¹⁴⁰⁰ Nearly half a million pounds of supplies were donated to survivors in early 2000.¹⁴⁰¹ Additional humanitarian or development projects include donating mattresses for prisoners and providing neonatal resuscitation training in Maracaibo and Punto Fijo.¹⁴⁰²

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

In October 2005, the LDS Church withdrew 219 American missionaries due to difficulties receiving religious visas and perceived safety concerns, as many worked in high-crime, poor communities. There were reports in

¹³⁹⁹ "Facts and figures: Caracas Venezuela Temple," LDS Church News, 26 August 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38367/Facts-and-figures-Caracas-Venezuela-Temple.html>

¹⁴⁰⁰ "Quick response in Venezuela floods," LDS Church News, 25 December 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/36963/Quick-response-in-Venezuela-floods.html>

¹⁴⁰¹ Swensen, Jason. "Local members assist thousands of flood victims in Venezuela," LDS Church News, 1 January 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/36987/Local-members-assist-thousands-of-flood-victims-in-Venezuela.html>

¹⁴⁰² "Projects—Venezuela," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 29 November 2010. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-207,00.html>

the mid-2000s that LDS missionaries were harassed in poor areas.¹⁴⁰³ As of late 2010, the Church did not have any known North American missionaries serving in the country.

Cultural Issues

Nominalism in the Catholic Church is a cultural obstacle for LDS missionaries to baptize and retain new converts. Instilling habits of regular church attendance and daily scripture reading in investigators, new converts, and inactive members has been difficult for missionaries and church leaders to accomplish, because of both culture and mission policies that have often emphasized quick baptism rather than gospel habits. Past political conflict has threatened the unity of LDS congregations,¹⁴⁰⁴ and the Church has urged members to leave political issues outside of church. Violent crime is a major concern that partially prompted international Church leaders to remove North American missionaries in 2005. Some observer reports indicate that the Church has experienced greatest receptivity in poorer neighborhoods in the past, but LDS congregations operate in a wide range of socioeconomic conditions and communities nationwide. Corruption creates economic and political challenges for local members and missionaries to function in society and follow LDS teachings.

National Outreach

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the national population resides in a city with over 20,000 inhabitants with an LDS congregation. All cities over 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS mission outreach center. Thirty-seven of the sixty-one cities with populations between 20,000 and 100,000 receive LDS mission outreach. The twenty-four unreached cities with over 20,000 inhabitants account for 4.8% of the national population. Latter-day Saints have a presence in every administrative area except for Delta Amacuro State, which is the second least populated Venezuelan state, and the Dependencias Federales, populated by less than 2,000. Four of the twenty-three states have LDS mission outreach centers in two or fewer locations (Portuguesa, Apure, Yaracuy, and Cojedes).

The percentage of Latter-day Saints widely varies by state. The Church does not publish a state-by-state membership breakdown, but the ratio of state population to LDS congregations provides insight into LDS percentages in the general population and the extent of mission outreach by state. States with the highest percentage of Latter-day Saints (less than 80,000 people per LDS congregation) are likely concentrated south-east of Caracas and in the far west and include Guarico, Anzoategui, Nueva Esparta, Zulia, and Tachira, whereas states with the smallest percentages of Latter-day Saints (more than 200,000 people per LDS congregation) are clustered in the southwest interior and include Cojedes, Yaracuy, Apure, and Portuguesa. Some states that appear to have the highest percentages of Latter-day Saints experienced significant membership increases during the first half of the 2000s as indicated by congregational growth that outpaced most other areas of Venezuela. For example, Guarico State had five branches in early 2002 and by late 2010 had one ward and ten branches. States with the lowest percentages of Latter-day Saints have experienced slow or stagnant congregational growth rates over the past decade, such as Cojedes State, in which only one LDS congregation operates.

The expansion of national outreach dramatically halted after 2005 as a result of the Church removing North American full-time missionaries, leaving an inadequate number of local missionaries to staff Venezuela's four full-time missions. Receptivity among the inhabitants of unreached cities and towns toward Latter-day Saint mission efforts appears to be high, but additional congregations will likely not be organized in these areas until

¹⁴⁰³ "Venezuela," International Religious Freedom Report 2006, retrieved 3 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2006/71478.htm>

¹⁴⁰⁴ Swensen, Jason. "Church leaders work to buoy members' spirits," LDS Church News, 25 January 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43133/Church-leaders-work-to-buoy-members-spirits.html>

greater numbers of Latin American full-time missionaries are available to be assigned to Venezuelan missions or active members move to these areas and help to establish the Church. In late 2009, the Church organized two mission branches for the Caracas and Barcelona Venezuela Missions, which may indicate a renewed effort by these missions to begin organizing active or less-active members into groups in unreached, remote areas. However, as of late 2010, it had been several years since the Church had established a new independent branch in a previously unreached city, largely due to a lack of self-reliant local members to meet the responsibilities of expanding national outreach.

Government restrictions ban proselytism by foreign religious groups among Amerindian tribes that tend to populate large, sparsely populated areas in the interior or some coastal areas. It is unclear whether the Church has a presence among any Amerindians in Venezuela, but it has not historically pursued mission outreach in these areas.

The Church operates an Internet site for the South America Northwest Area at <http://www.iglesiadejesucristo.org.co/>. The website offers Spanish information regarding church doctrines, news, temples, and missionary contact information. Use of the website by local members and missionaries can assist proselytizing efforts both in reached and unreached areas.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Quick-baptize tactics were widely practiced by full-time missionaries prior to the removal of North American missionaries in 2005. Many converts experienced minimal gospel teaching and pre-baptismal preparation and consequently were not retained. Poor convert retention during the early 2000s is manifested by the average number of members per congregation increasing from 438 to 514 between 2000 and 2005. Convert retention rates appeared to improve during the latter half of the 2000s as membership growth became more compatible with congregational growth, indicated by smaller increases in the average number of members per congregation between 2005 and 2009 from 514 to 538. Increased convert retention rates may be attributed to the staffing of Venezuelan missions principally by local members with a vested interest in creating strong indigenous congregations compared to itinerant foreign missionaries and better implementation of higher teaching and baptism preparation standards for new converts, such as developing habitual church attendance. Seminary and institute enrollment rates have fluctuated year to year from average to high for the region, providing an unclear picture of activity rates among youth and young adults.

Noticing slower church growth in Venezuela compared to other South American nations, President Hinckley challenged members to work harder to grow the Church in 1999.¹⁴⁰⁵ The majority of church growth in the past has been attributed to the combined efforts of local and foreign full-time missionaries. With the removal of North American full-time missionaries in 2005, convert baptismal rates have dropped substantially. However, Venezuela avoided the massive unit consolidations of other Latin American nations in the early 2000s. Continued, if slow, increase in congregational numbers as well as membership attests that notwithstanding challenges, the LDS Church in Venezuela benefits from a stable, strong, and largely self-sufficient local membership base.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The greatest integration challenges for Latter-day Saints appear political and socioeconomic rather than ethnic. The Church has gained many converts in recent years among poor neighborhoods, which can challenge their integration into congregations with wealthier members. Tensions among members can lead to lower member activity, convert baptism, and convert retention rates if not properly addressed. The Church

¹⁴⁰⁵ "Pres. Hinckley urges more missionary effort in Venezuela," LDS Church News, 14 August 1999. <http://www.ldschurch-news.com/articles/36215/Pres-Hinckley-urges-more-missionary-effort-in-Venezuela.html>

in the past has made an effort for members to avoid political conversation at church, as it can offend some members and divide rather than unify.

Language Issues

LDS materials are translated into the first language of as many as 99.5% of the population. There have been no reported challenges at church regarding language issues at present. Wayuu appears the only Amerindian language with potential for future LDS material translations, as other languages have too few speakers to justify the translation of church materials. However, there has been no known mission outreach directed toward speakers of Wayuu. Government bans on proselytizing Amerindian groups restricts the Church's efforts to reach speakers of these languages.

Missionary Service

Local members have become self-sufficient in maintaining the missionary forces of the four Venezuelan missions but continue to lack the needed numbers to expand national outreach and increase the number of converts. In 1988, around twenty local youth served mini-missions for thirty to sixty days with a full-time missionary companion during their school vacation in the Venezuela Caracas Mission.¹⁴⁰⁶ In 1992, the Church opened a missionary training center in Bogota, Colombia that trained new missionaries from Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela.¹⁴⁰⁷ Following the removal of over 200 North American missionaries in 2005, the Church experienced a steady decline in convert baptisms and no expansion of missionary activity into unreached areas. There are some reports that the shortage of full-time missionaries was so great that the Church lowered the minimum age for full-time missionaries to serve to eighteen. Emphasis on missionary preparation for LDS youth can help reverse the trend of stagnant numbers of full-time missionaries serving in Venezuela.

Leadership

Mature local priesthood leaders have served in many regional or international positions as mission presidents, temple presidents, regional representatives, Area Authorities, and General Authorities. Teodoro Hoffmann I. from Valencia was called as a mission president in 1990¹⁴⁰⁸ over the Venezuela Caracas Mission. In 1992, Victor R. Villasmil from Maracaibo was called as the president of the Peru Lima South Mission.¹⁴⁰⁹ In 1993, Jose M. Jimenez from Caracas was called as a mission president.¹⁴¹⁰ In 1997, Omar A. Alvarez from Caracas was called to preside over the Venezuela Valencia Mission.¹⁴¹¹ In 1997, Javier Ibanez L. from San Cristobal was called as the Venezuela Barcelona Mission president.¹⁴¹² In 1999, Rafael Eduardo Pino G. from Caracas was called to preside over the Argentina Rosario Mission, and Brazil native Fernando A. Silva from Caracas was called to preside over the Brazil Salvador Mission.¹⁴¹³ In 2003, Gamaliel de Jesus Osorno from Valencia began

¹⁴⁰⁶ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 13 August 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17740/From-around-the-world.html>

¹⁴⁰⁷ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 29 February 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22137/From-around-the-world.html>

¹⁴⁰⁸ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 10 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20308/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁴⁰⁹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 14 March 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22618/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁴¹⁰ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 6 February 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23663/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁴¹¹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 22 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29078/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁴¹² "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 29 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29077/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁴¹³ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 24 April 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35653/New-mission-presidents.html>

presiding over the Venezuela Barcelona Mission.¹⁴¹⁴ In 2004, Julio Ramon Davila Duran from Barquisimeto was called to preside over the Colombia Barranquilla Mission.¹⁴¹⁵ In 2005, Danilo Augusto Paredes Onate from Caracas was called as a mission president¹⁴¹⁶ over the Venezuela Caracas Mission. In 2006, Fidel Alberto Coello from Barquisimeto began presiding over the Venezuela Maracaibo Mission, Alexander Trinidad Mestre from Maracaibo was called to preside over the Venezuela Barcelona Mission, and Abraham Eulogio Quero from Caracas was called to preside over the Venezuela Valencia Mission.¹⁴¹⁷ In 2010, Javier R. Montalti from Guayana was called to preside over the Ecuador Guayaquil South Mission.¹⁴¹⁸

In 1993, Carlos D. Vargas from Valencia¹⁴¹⁹ and Francisco G. Gimenez from Caracas were called as regional representatives.¹⁴²⁰ Alejandro Portal from Maracaibo served as a missionary training center president starting in 1993.¹⁴²¹ In 1995, Carlos D. Vargas became an area authority,¹⁴²² and in 1996, Francisco G. Gimenez became an area authority.¹⁴²³ In 2003, Rafael E. Pino from Miranda was called as an Area Authority Seventy.¹⁴²⁴ In 2006, Javier Ibanez from San Cristobal was called as an Area Seventy.¹⁴²⁵ In 2007, Gamaliel Osorno was called as an Area Seventy.¹⁴²⁶ In 2007, Teodoro Hoffmann Ilica from Caracas became the Caracas Venezuela Temple president.¹⁴²⁷ In 2008, Rafael E. Pino was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy.¹⁴²⁸ In 2010, Alexander Mestre was called as an Area Seventy.¹⁴²⁹ In 2010, Luis Manuel Petit from Maracaibo was called as the Caracas Venezuela Temple president.¹⁴³⁰

Local church leadership appears self-reliant in many areas but continues to fall short of numbers needed to

¹⁴¹⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 22 March 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43395/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁴¹⁵ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 17 April 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45422/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁴¹⁶ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 29 January 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46779/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁴¹⁷ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 6 May 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48920/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁴¹⁸ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 17 April 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59216/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁴¹⁹ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 24 July 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23251/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹⁴²⁰ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 25 September 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23377/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹⁴²¹ "Missionary training center presidents called," LDS Church News, 22 January 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24861/Missionary-training-center-presidents-called.html>

¹⁴²² "Church names area authorities," LDS Church News, 5 August 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26627/Church-names-area-authorities.html>

¹⁴²³ "First Presidency calls new area authorities," LDS Church News, 24 August 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28224/First-Presidency-calls-new-area-authorities.html>

¹⁴²⁴ "Leaders called; 5 new General Authorities," LDS Church News, 12 April 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43588/Leaders-called-5-new-General-Authorities.html>

¹⁴²⁵ "New Area Seventies," LDS Church News, 22 April 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48851/New-Area-Seventies.html>

¹⁴²⁶ "46 Area Seventies called; 29 released," LDS Church News, 7 April 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50423/46-Area-Seventies-called-29-released.html>

¹⁴²⁷ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 4 August 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50423/46-Area-Seventies-called-29-released.html>

¹⁴²⁸ "Called to Seventy," LDS Church News, 12 April 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51855/Called-to-Seventy.html>

¹⁴²⁹ "New Area Seventies," LDS Church News, 24 April 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59238/New-Area-Seventies.html>

¹⁴³⁰ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 29 May 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59401/New-temple-presidents.html>

justify the creation of additional stakes or congregations. Some stakes have had CES employees serve in the stake presidency, but the Church does not appear to rely on its employees to staff ecclesiastical duties.

Temple

President Hinckley noted the possibility of a temple in Venezuela in late 1995.¹⁴³¹ Construction began on the Caracas Venezuela Temple in 1999, and the dedication occurred in 2000. Temple attendance appears low and inconsistent. In 2010, there were two to five endowment sessions scheduled Tuesdays through Fridays, with five to eight sessions held on Saturdays. The temple also serves members in the southern Caribbean, the Guianas, and the Brazilian Amazon Basin, but only members from Brazil appear to use the temple in appreciable numbers. LDS populations in other regions in Venezuela are large enough to support additional temples over the medium term, but the Church will likely not construct more temples until higher rates of temple attendance occur. President Hinckley predicted that a temple would one day be built in Maracaibo but stressed the need for consistent temple attendance to the temple in Caracas; an eight hour journey each way.¹⁴³² In October 2011, the Church indicated that the newly announced Barranquilla Colombia Temple would serve some members living in western Venezuela.¹⁴³³

Comparative Growth

Venezuela experienced the most rapid annual membership growth rates among Spanish-speaking South American countries during the early 2000s but in 2009 experienced one of the slowest rates in Latin America, as only Uruguay, Puerto Rico, Chile, and Costa Rica reported slower membership growth. Unlike most Latin American nations, Venezuela did not once experience a decline in the number of congregations from year to year during the 2000s, whereas the number of congregations in some Latin American nations like Chile and Peru declined by the hundreds. Venezuela ranked seventh among countries worldwide for the most congregations created (52) between 2000 and 2009. The percentage of Latter-day Saints in Venezuela is the second lowest among Spanish-speaking South American nations after Colombia. Although Peru and Venezuela have similarly sized populations, Peru has nine LDS missions and Venezuela has four. In 2010, Venezuela was the country with the fourth most members with only one temple.

Missionary-oriented Christian groups have experienced steady, strong church growth in Venezuela for decades. Seventh Day Adventists organize fifty new congregations a year and have experienced increases in the number of convert baptisms, reaching over 20,000 in 2008. Jehovah's Witnesses also report strong growth. These and other groups have developed self-sustaining leadership and consistent expansion of national outreach through the creation of new congregations.

Future Prospects

Venezuela remains one of the least reached nations for Latter-day Saints in South America, yet membership and strength are still substantial. Rapid membership and congregational growth in the early and mid-2000s indicate that the population has been receptive recently to the Church. Government regulations regarding the service of foreign missionaries has delayed church growth since 2005 but presents opportunities for local membership to grow more self-sufficient. Latin American full-time missionaries have sustained the four full-time missions, but no expansion in national outreach has occurred for several years. Greater emphasis on

¹⁴³¹ "Conference unites in 'sociality of faith,'" LDS Church News, 7 October 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26759/Conference-unites-in-sociality-of-faith.html>

¹⁴³² "Pres. Hinckley urges more missionary effort in Venezuela," LDS Church News, 14 August 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/36215/Pres-Hinckley-urges-more-missionary-effort-in-Venezuela.html>

¹⁴³³ "Follow General Conference News and Events," Church News and Events, 30 September 2011. <http://lds.org/church/news/follow-general-conference-on-news-and-events?lang=eng>

establishing firm gospel habits before baptism, preparing local youth to serve full-time missions, and stronger local priesthood leader involvement in missionary activity are needed to augment church growth in coming years.

OCEANIA

American Samoa, Australia, **Cook Islands**, Fiji,
French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands,
Micronesia, **Nauru**, New Caledonia, New Zealand, **Niue**,
Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa,
Solomon Islands, **Tokelau**, Tonga
Tuvalu, Vanuatu, **Wallis and Futuna**.

*Territories and countries in **bold** have no individual profiles*

REGIONAL PROFILE

Geography

AREA: 8,561,506 square km. One of the world's largest regions, Oceania consists of most of the islands in the Pacific Ocean, New Guinea, and Australia and is traditionally divided into three subregions: Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. Volcanic islands are common throughout all three regions and are generally mountainous and tropical with few coastal plains. Flat, narrow coral atolls surrounding shallow lagoons comprise many of the islands in Micronesia and eastern Polynesia. Tropical conditions are constant in most areas and rainfall amounts of frequency vary by location. Active volcanoes, earthquakes, tsunamis, cyclones/typhoons, and flooding are natural hazards. Environmental issues include deforestation, soil erosion, fresh water scarcity, rising sea levels, pollution, deteriorating health of coral reefs, and invasive species.

Peoples

White: 63.8%

Pacific Islander: 25.6%

Asian: 6.6%

Mixed: 1.3%

Other: 2.4%

Population: 35,415,893 (July 2011)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.534% (2011)

Fertility Rate: 2.65 children born per woman (2011)

Life Expectancy: 70.42 male, 75.68 female (2011)

Languages: English (59%), Oceanic languages (24%), other European languages (4%), Asian languages (4%), other (9%). Only English has over one million native speakers (21.1 million). Languages with less than a million but more than 100,000 speakers include Indian languages, French, Chinese languages, Italian, Greek, Arabic, Vietnamese, Samoan, Maori, Tongan, Enga, Melpa, Tok Pisin, Tahitian, Tagalog, and Kuman.

Literacy: 50–100% (country average: 90%)

History

Oceania's indigenous peoples have populated the region for several millennia and at times have displaced other indigenous populations on neighboring islands. New Zealand is believed to be the last island group to become populated at around 800 AD. Europeans, namely the Spanish, began exploring and colonizing Micronesia in the sixteenth century, whereas Australia, Melanesia, New Guinea, New Zealand, and Polynesia did not receive regular contact with Europeans until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Only Australia and New Zealand experienced large-scale immigration from Europe, resulting in the majority of the population in both nations consisting of white Europeans. France, Germany, and the United Kingdom claimed most of the islands in the region by the late nineteenth century. In the nineteenth century, the United Kingdom brought Indian contract laborers to Fiji to work in the sugarcane plantations, and today Indians constitute over a third of the population. The Spanish converted much of the population in Micronesia to Catholicism prior to the twentieth century, whereas Christian missionary groups converted virtually the entire population of other

nations in Oceania during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Australia achieved independence from the United Kingdom in 1901, and New Zealand became independent in 1907. Imperial Japan and the United States captured several Micronesian nations during the first half of the twentieth century, primarily in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War and World War I. In World War II, Oceania became the central battleground between Imperial Japan and Allied forces as numerous battles occurred and many island nations became crucial military bases and ports. During the latter half of the twentieth century, many European colonial possessions became independent sovereign nations, including Samoa (1962), Nauru (1968), Fiji (1970), Tonga (1970), Papua New Guinea (1975), Tuvalu (1978), the Federated States of Micronesia (1979), Kiribati (1979), Vanuatu (1980), the Marshall Islands (1986), and Palau (1994). Other islands or island groups remain under foreign administration, including American Samoa (United States), the Cook Islands (New Zealand), French Polynesia (France), Guam (United States), New Caledonia (France), the Northern Mariana Islands (United States), Tokelau (New Zealand), and Wallis and Futuna (France). The influence of the United Kingdom in Australia and New Zealand has declined since independence. Overall, the economy of Oceania remains underdeveloped primarily due to limited natural resources and a small population distributed over large geographical area. In recent decades, there has been some political instability in Fiji, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands due to ethnic rivalries and weak central governments. New Caledonia may become independent from France during the 2010s.

Culture

Australia and New Zealand are the most influential nations in the region due to their comparatively large populations, advanced economies, and social integration into the international community. Other nations are isolated from the worldwide community due to their remote location, small geographic size, and tiny populations, which has helped to preserve native cultures and customs. With the exception of more secular Australia and New Zealand, Christianity, the dominant influence on local culture, was introduced during the European colonial period by foreign missionaries. The cultures of Australia and New Zealand share many similarities with the United Kingdom, whereas the cultures of Micronesian nations and territories exhibit many similarities with Spanish culture. Australians tend to be socially blunt, honest, and forthright, whereas New Zealanders have a reputation for being well educated and living healthy lifestyles. Favorable agricultural conditions in Australia and New Zealand have led to a visible farming culture. French culture predominates in French Polynesia and New Caledonia. Polynesia and Melanesia appear the areas that have received the least Western influence on local culture as tribalism dominates in Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. Papua New Guinea exhibits extreme cultural diversity notwithstanding a population of just 6.7 million. Many plants and animals are only found on Papua New Guinea. Hindu Indian and Christian Polynesian cultures coexist on Fiji, which has resulted in ethnic conflict. Nations in Micronesia preserve much of their traditional culture, with some islands such as Guam demonstrating hybrid culture due to heavy foreign influence. Nonnative peoples in most of Oceania are poorly integrated into society and often comprise higher classes of society outside of Australia and New Zealand as business owners, such as many Chinese in French Polynesia. Common foods include seafood, vegetables, cassava, pork, breadfruit, taro, sweet potato, tropical fruits, coconut, and seaweed. Many in Micronesian nations chew the red areca nut (betel) frequently, which is a known carcinogen, stains the teeth, and is addictive.¹⁴³⁴ Most societies of Oceania are matrilineal, and some are highly stratified, such as in Tonga. The population in many Polynesian countries is overweight as a result of cultural emphasis on eating, consuming high-fat foods, and little social stigma for being overweight.¹⁴³⁵ Consumed throughout much of Oceania, kava has mild sedative properties and is drunk in social settings.¹⁴³⁶ Rugby and soccer are the most popular sports. Cigarette and alcohol consumption rates in most

¹⁴³⁴ "Areca nut," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 20 October 2010. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Areca_nut

¹⁴³⁵ "Culture of Tonga," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 30 December 2010. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_Tonga

¹⁴³⁶ "Kava," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 30 December 2010. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kava>

Oceanic nations are generally lower than world averages. Lawlessness and ethnic violence are serious problems in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$9,100 national median (2011) [19% of U.S.], \$37,000 population-weighted (mainly reflecting Australia and New Zealand)

Human Development Index: 0.670

Corruption Index: 4.6

Australia and New Zealand are the major economic powers in Oceania, as both nations benefit from sizeable numbers of skilled workers, low rates of corruption, a developed, diversified, internationally integrated economy, and abundant natural resources and land. Most other nations in the region do not possess any of these attributes, as natural resources are limited and local economies are underdeveloped and reliant on agriculture, remittances, and international aid. Corruption and inadequate skills and education have delayed modernization in some nations with abundant natural resources, such as Papua New Guinea. Outside of Australia and New Zealand, agricultural activity, food processing, tourism, and government jobs account for most of the GDP and workforce in Oceania. Many island nations are investing in tourism to spur greater revenue and to diversify the economy, but progress has generally been slow. Fish and timber are common natural resources throughout the region; some nations have exploitable sources of natural gas, petroleum, precious metals, valuable minerals, timber, fish, hydropower, and phosphorus. Common industries include handicrafts, fishing, food processing, tourism, logging, mining, sugar, construction, machinery, chemicals, steel, clothing, shipping, printing, and services for the United States military. Copra, taro, livestock, coconuts, cassava, sugarcane, fruit, rice, grains, vegetables, meat, eggs, betel nut, sweet potato, coffee, cocoa, and pepper are the primary agricultural products. Primary trade partners with Oceania include the United States, Japan, China, Singapore, France, Hong Kong, and Thailand.

Australia and New Zealand are perceived as two of the world's least corrupt countries. Corruption is perceived as widespread and pervasive throughout much of remainder of Oceania as it is difficult for many to separate traditional customs and tribalism from government affairs. Bribery, mismanagement of government funds, and little accountability prosecuting criminal offenses are common challenges. Some nations suffer from lawlessness, weak central governments, political instability, illicit drug use, child neglect, and domestic violence. Corruption appears most severe in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

Faiths

Christian: 70%

Buddhist: 1%

Muslim: 1%

None/unspecified: 24%

Other: 4%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 8,537,422

Latter-day Saints 496,075 1,158

Seventh Day Adventists 427,082 1,906

Jehovah's Witnesses 96,044 1,249

Religion

Christianity is the predominant religion as the percentage of Christians in the population is 90% or more in all nations and territories with the exception of Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, and Vanuatu. Catholics and Protestants each constitute a quarter of the population or more in most countries and territories; the Catholic Church is most visible in Micronesia and in French-speaking areas of Polynesia. Nonreligious and unaffiliated individuals account for large portions of the population in New Zealand (43.2%) and Australia (30%), as both nations are highly secular, and these percentages continue to increase. Buddhists in Oceania are concentrated almost entirely in Australia, whereas Muslims principally reside in Fiji, New Caledonia, and Australia. Hindus account for over 1% of the population only in Fiji (28%), and Sikhs are found in small numbers in Fiji, Australia, and New Zealand. Many nations have small Baha'i communities. Indigenous religions account for only 1 or 2% of the regional population and include traditional religions in Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and the John Frum movement on Vanuatu. Evangelical and missionary-minded Christian denominations report some of the greatest growth in Oceania through missionary activity, whereas Buddhists, Muslims, and other Asian religions report rapid growth through immigration to Australia and New Zealand.

Religious Freedom

The constitution, laws, or government policies among all nations and territories in Oceania protect religious freedom and are upheld by the government. Although the governments of Oceania are predominantly secular, Christianity is a strong influence on government officials, policies, and laws. Many Christian holidays are recognized as national holidays. Foreign missionaries serve without restrictions, proselyte freely, and in some nations are required to obtain visas and residency permits. Some nations require religious groups to register with the government; there have been no reports of religious groups being denied registration in the region. Some nations permit religious instruction in public schools, and others forbid it. Societal abuse of religious freedom has been minimal in most nations. Muslims, Hindus, and Jews receive some societal persecution or marginalization in Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji. Religious freedom can be limited in some areas of Fiji, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu as village elders or the community often dictate whether a nontraditional Christian denomination may operate in their village.

Largest Cities

Urban: low (13%—Papua New Guinea); high (93%—Guam and American Samoa)

Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide, Gold Coast, Newcastle, Auckland, Canberra, Wellington, Christchurch, Manakau, Port Moresby, Wollongong.

All fourteen cities with over 250,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. Forty-eight percent (48%) of the regional population resides in the fourteen most populous cities.

LDS History

The first LDS missionary to serve in Oceania arrived in Australia in 1840, and the first branch was organized in 1844.¹⁴³⁷ The first Latter-day Saint couples called to serve as full-time missionaries speaking a foreign language were called to serve in French Polynesia in the 1840s. The Church lost contact with members in French Polynesia in the 1850s and did not reestablish contact until the 1890s. Difficulties with the French government were not ultimately resolved until the 1960s. The first LDS missionaries arrived in New Zealand in 1854 from Australia and principally proselytized Europeans until the 1880s when Maoris were proselytized because of their higher receptivity to the Church. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, church headquarters for the region was relocated from Australia to New Zealand. Church growth was slow in Australia and New Zealand due to low receptivity and the emigration of many converts to the United

¹⁴³⁷ "Australia," Country Profile, retrieved 20 December 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/australia>

States. The Book of Mormon was translated into Maori in the late 1880s. Two Hawaiian LDS missionaries attempted to establish the Church in Samoa in 1862 but were unsuccessful.¹⁴³⁸ Under the direction of the Samoan Mission, Latter-day Saint missionaries first arrived in Tonga in 1891.¹⁴³⁹

The translation of the Book of Mormon into Samoan commenced in 1900, and the mission divided to create the Tongan Mission in 1916. Church schools were established during the first two decades of the twentieth century in New Zealand, Samoa, and Tonga. World War II disrupted missionary efforts, resulting in the consolidation of many branches dependent on missionaries in Australia¹⁴⁴⁰ and reduced the full-time missionary force to native members serving full-time missions in their native countries, such as in Samoa and Tonga. During World War II, the Church began operating in Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and Palau, but a permanent presence was only established in Guam. In 1946, the Church published the Tongan translation of the Book of Mormon. In the 1950s, the Church was established in Fiji, but visa restrictions delayed church growth. In the 1950s, labor missionaries began serving in Samoa and built meetinghouses.¹⁴⁴¹ The Church College of New Zealand operated between 1958 and 2009. In the 1960s, the Church was established in New Caledonia. In Tonga, local couples served regularly as full-time missionaries until supplanted in 1963 by graduates of the Church's Liahona High School.¹⁴⁴² Liahona High School was instrumental in the establishment of the Church in Kiribati along with the Church's school in Kiribati operating today, Moroni High School.¹⁴⁴³ In the 1970s, the Church was established in Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, and Vanuatu and reestablished in the Northern Mariana Islands and Palau. In the 1980s, the Church was established in Tuvalu. Elder L. Tom Perry dedicated Papua New Guinea for missionary work in April 1983.¹⁴⁴⁴ Book of Mormon translations were completed in Pohnpeian and Chuukese in 1988.¹⁴⁴⁵ The first member of the Tongan royal family, Princess 'Elisiva Fusipala Vaha'i joined the LDS Church in 1989.¹⁴⁴⁶ The Solomon Islands was the last independent nation to open to the Church, in the 1990s. In 1994, Elder Russell M. Nelson dedicated French Polynesia for missionary work.¹⁴⁴⁷ In 1996, Elder L. Tom Perry collectively dedicated seven island groups within the boundaries of the Fiji Suva Mission.¹⁴⁴⁸ Missionary activity was disrupted in Fiji and the Solomon Islands due to political instability in the late 1990s and early 2000s. A fire destroyed the Apia Samoa Temple in 2003 shortly before renovations were to be completed, marking the first time in LDS history that an operating temple had burned.¹⁴⁴⁹ The Book of Mormon translation in Yapese was completed in 2004. Twenty-two Latter-day Saints in Samoa perished in the 2009 tsunami.¹⁴⁵⁰ During the late 2000s, the Australia Area and the New Zealand/Pacific Islands Area

¹⁴³⁸ Britsch, R. Lanier. "The Church in the South Pacific," *Ensign*, Feb. 1976, 19.

¹⁴³⁹ Gaunt, LaRene Porter. "Tonga: A Land of Believing People," *Ensign*, Sept. 2001, 42.

¹⁴⁴⁰ Newton, Marjorie A. "Australia: The First Half of the Twentieth Century," *Liahona*, Aug. 1987, 29.

¹⁴⁴¹ Avant, Gerry. "Church in Samoa to celebrate centennial," *LDS Church News*, 11 June 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18252/Church-in-Samoa-to-celebrate-centennial.html>

¹⁴⁴² "Faith, service paved way for growth," *LDS Church News*, 31 August 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21621/Faith-service-paved-way-for-growth.html>

¹⁴⁴³ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Moroni High School: An educational model," *LDS Church News*, 21 September 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28121/Moroni-High-School-An-educational-model.html>

¹⁴⁴⁴ <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43105/Self-reliance-A-plan-for-Papua-New-Guinea.html>

¹⁴⁴⁵ Warnick, Lee. "Book of Mormon in 80th language," *LDS Church News*, 9 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18233/Book-of-Mormon-in-80th-language.html>

¹⁴⁴⁶ "Tongan princess finds joy in Church," *LDS Church News*, 17 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20166/Tongan-princess-finds-joy-in-Church.html>

¹⁴⁴⁷ Hart, John L. "Dedication culminates celebration," *LDS Church News*, 21 May 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24427/Dedication-culminates-celebration.html>

¹⁴⁴⁸ "Elder Perry creates first Kiribati stake," *LDS Church News*, 21 September 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27921/Elder-Perry-creates-first-Kiribati-stake-dedicates-islands.html>

¹⁴⁴⁹ Swensen, Jason; Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Fire destroys 20-year-old Samoan temple," *LDS Church News*, 12 July 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44043/Fire-destroys-20-year-old-Samoan-temple.html>

¹⁴⁵⁰ "LDS Church update on Pacific earthquake and tsunami crisis," *Deseret News*, 3 October 2009. <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/705329527/LDS-Church-update-on-Pacific-earthquake-and-tsunami-crisis.html>

were consolidated into the Pacific Area, which administers all of Oceania except nations and territories in the Micronesia Guam Mission, which pertain to the Asia North Area.

Missions

In 1844, the Society Islands Mission was organized in present-day French Polynesia and became the third LDS mission organized following the British (1837) and Eastern States (1839) Missions. In 1852, the Church closed the mission due to changing government policies and was not able to reopen the mission until 1893.¹⁴⁵¹ The Australian Mission, also known as the Australasian Mission from 1854 to 1898, was organized in 1851. The Samoan Mission was established in June 1888.¹⁴⁵² In 1898, the Australasian Mission was divided to create the New Zealand Mission. The Australian Mission was split in 1955 to create the South Australian Mission, later renamed the Australia Melbourne Mission. In 1958, the New Zealand Mission was divided to create the New Zealand South Mission, which later became the New Zealand Wellington Mission.¹⁴⁵³ In 1968, the Australia West Mission was created and was renamed the Australia Adelaide Mission. The Fiji Suva Mission was organized in 1971. Additional missions were organized in Australia in Brisbane (1973), Perth (1975), Sydney North (1993), and Melbourne West (1998). The Micronesia Guam Mission was organized in 1980, and the Papua New Guinea Port Moresby Mission was organized in February 1992. In 2006, the Church announced the creation of the Marshall Islands Majuro Mission from the Fiji Suva and Micronesia Guam Missions to administer the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and Nauru. In 2010, missions headquartered in Melbourne West and Sydney North were consolidated with neighboring missions. In 2012, the Church created the Vanuatu Port Vila Mission. The number of missions in Oceania increased from one in 1850 to four in 1900, six in 1960, eleven in 1980, fourteen in 2000, and thirteen in 2010. In 2013, three new missions were organized in Australia Sydney North, New Zealand Hamilton, and Papua New Guinea Lae.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 496,075 (2012)

Membership appeared to be around 20,000 in the 1940s. In 1973, there were 98,558 members in Oceania.¹⁴⁵⁴ Membership totaled 145,441 in 1983,¹⁴⁵⁵ 218,475 in 1987,¹⁴⁵⁶ 303,300 in 1993, 343,600 in 1997, and 373,875 in 2000. There were 418,494 members in 2005. Between 2000 and 2009, membership grew the most rapidly in Vanuatu (196%), Papua New Guinea (77%), the Solomon Islands (66%), and Kiribati (64%) whereas membership declined or grew most slowly in the Northern Mariana Islands (−14%), Nauru (−4%), Niue (−1%), and Palau (10%). The ratio of the general population to LDS membership by country and territory differs significantly throughout the region. LDS membership is most prominent in Kiribati, the Cook Islands, Niue, American Samoa, Samoa, and Tonga as each has one Latter-day Saint per ten or fewer inhabitants. LDS populations comprise the smallest portions of the population in the Solomon Islands (one in 1,913), Papua New Guinea (one in 357), Australia (one in 172), and New Caledonia (one in 136). Australia and New Zealand were the only countries with over 100,000 Latter-day Saints in 2009. In 2009, one in seventy-eight was LDS in Oceania.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 739 Branches: 392 (2010)

¹⁴⁵¹ Ellsworth, S. George. "Called to Tubuai: Missionary Couples in French Polynesia, 1850," *Ensign*, Oct. 1989, 35.

¹⁴⁵² Clark, Janice. "The Saints in Samoa," *Ensign*, Dec. 1974, 21.

¹⁴⁵³ Britsch, R. Lanier. "Roots of Faith," *Ensign*, Sep 1989, 44.

¹⁴⁵⁴ Deseret News 1974 Church Almanac, p. 117.

¹⁴⁵⁵ Deseret News 1985 Church Almanac, p. 257.

¹⁴⁵⁶ Deseret News 1989–1990 Church Almanac, pages 90–91, 101.

There were 680 LDS wards and branches in Oceania in 1987.¹⁴⁵⁷ The number of congregations increased to 818 in 1993, 1,004 in 1997, 1,048 in 2000, 1,096 in 2005, and 1,107 in 2009. There were 1,131 LDS congregations in early 2011.

The first stake to be organized in Oceania was the Auckland Stake in New Zealand in 1958. Other countries that have stakes at present provided with the year the first stake was organized include Australia (1960), Samoa (1962), Tonga (1968), American Samoa (1969), French Polynesia (1972), Fiji (1983), Papua New Guinea (1995), Kiribati (1996), the Marshall Islands (2009), Guam (2010). The number of stakes increased from six in 1960 to sixteen in 1970, forty-four in 1980, fifty-eight in 1990, and 104 in 2000. There were 110 stakes by year-end 2010 as new stakes were organized during the 2000s in Australia (2), Guam, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, and Tonga. In early 2011, the Sydney Australia Parramatta Stake was dissolved and its units consolidated into neighboring stakes, becoming the first stake ever discontinued in Oceania. The number of districts in Oceania was forty-two in 1993, thirty-seven in 1997, forty-one in 2005, and thirty-six in 2009.

Activity and Retention

The number of active members per congregation varies widely from only a couple dozen in the smallest branches to nearly 200 in the largest wards. Member activity and convert retention rates vary widely by country and subregion, with the highest member activity rates occurring in Polynesia (generally 30–50%) and the lowest member activity rates occurring in Micronesia (generally 20–30%). Member activity rates in Melanesia exhibit the greatest range from as low as 20–25% in Fiji to a high of 80% in Vanuatu. In addition to varying mission policies regarding convert baptisms, cultural attitudes, and practices surrounding religion are responsible for differing activity rates by subregion. In Oceania, Vanuatu (80%), Tuvalu (60%), Niue (54%), and New Caledonia (50%) are the nations or territories that appear to have the highest member activity rates, whereas Palau (15%), Fiji (22%), Kiribati (25%), and Guam (25%) appear to have the lowest member activity rates. Censuses in Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Samoa, and Tonga have counted the number of self-identified Latter-day Saints over the past two decades. The percentage of church members who self-identify as Latter-day Saints was 45% in Australia and New Zealand in 2006, 37% in Samoa in 2006, and 32% in Fiji in 1996 and Tonga in 2006. Active LDS membership in Oceania is estimated at 155,000, or 35% of total church membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English, Hindi, French, Chinese (traditional and simplified characters), Italian, Greek, Arabic, Vietnamese, Fijian, Samoan, Maori, Tongan, Tok Pisin, Tahitian, Tagalog, Kiribati, Marshallese, Chamorro, Chuukese, Rarotongan, Pohnpeian, Palauan, Yapese, Niuean.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in French, Chinese (traditional and simplified characters), Italian, Greek, Arabic, Vietnamese, Fijian, Samoan, Tongan, and Tahitian. All LDS scriptures are available in Rarotongan, but few church materials are translated. The Book of Mormon is available in Bislama, Chamorro, Chuukese, Hindi, Marshallese, Pohnpeian, Tok Pisin, and Yapese. Few LDS materials are available in most of these languages, whereas Bislama, Hindi, Marshallese, and Tok Pisin have the most materials available. A large number of church materials are available in Kosraean but no LDS scriptures. A few church materials are available in Motu. Only two church materials are available in Rotuman. The *Liahona* magazine has monthly issues in French, Chinese, Italian, Samoan, and Tongan; four issues a year in Fijian, Kiribati, and Vietnamese; two issues a year in Bislama; and one issue a year in Greek and Marshallese.

¹⁴⁵⁷ Deseret News 1989–1990 Church Almanac, pages 90–91, 101.

Meetinghouses

In early 2011, there were approximately 700 LDS meetinghouses in Oceania, most of which were built by the Church. Small or recently organized branches often meet in rented spaces, renovated buildings, or outdoors.

Health and Safety

Many small islands have poor access to health care due to their small populations, remote locations, and low standards of living. Cyclones and travel by boat have presented safety concerns. Ethnic violence and lawlessness in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands poses a risk especially for nonnative missionaries. Papua New Guinea suffers from the highest rates of HIV/AIDS in Oceania at 1.5% of the population.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church has performed large-scale humanitarian and development work in Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, the Federated States of Micronesia, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu. In Australia, the Church has provided emergency relief to flood victims, English-language training to nonnative speakers, and educational tools to aborigines.¹⁴⁵⁸ A clean water project, job training, and the donation of a sodium potassium analyzer have occurred in Fiji.¹⁴⁵⁹ In Kiribati, a clean water project, emergency relief for those suffering from fresh water shortages, and donating goods for the poor have occurred.¹⁴⁶⁰ Clean water projects and school kit, school book, and wheelchair donations have occurred in Micronesia.¹⁴⁶¹ The Church donated equipment, materials, and supplies to elementary schools, conducted a clean water project, and provided rheumatic fever prevention in Samoa.¹⁴⁶² In Tonga, a clean water project and a vehicle donation have occurred.¹⁴⁶³ Clean water projects, emergency preparation, and medical care personnel have been LDS-sponsored projects in Vanuatu.¹⁴⁶⁴

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church enjoys full religious freedom in nearly all areas of Oceania as there are no restrictions on proselytism, assembly, or worship. There have been no reports of challenges obtaining missionary visas in the region. Latter-day Saints often have a positive relationship with the government, which has ensured respect for the Church and its members by government officials and society. LDS mission outreach is somewhat limited in some areas of Fiji, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu as local chiefs and the community as a whole determine whether a religious group is permitted to proselyte and establish a congregation in their village. Tribal conflicts and political instability have limited LDS mission outreach in areas of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

¹⁴⁵⁸ "Projects—Australia," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 29 March 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-162,00.html>

¹⁴⁵⁹ "Projects—Fiji," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 29 March 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-222,00.html>

¹⁴⁶⁰ "Projects—Kiribati," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 29 March 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-223,00.html>

¹⁴⁶¹ "Projects—Micronesia," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 29 March 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-223,00.html>

¹⁴⁶² "Projects—Samoa," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 29 March 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-157,00.html>

¹⁴⁶³ "Projects—Tonga," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 29 March 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-200,00.html>

¹⁴⁶⁴ "Projects—Vanuatu," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 29 March 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-159,00.html>

Cultural Issues

Latter-day Saints benefit from greater religious tolerance and acceptance by Catholic and Protestant communities in Oceania than in most other regions of the world. The Church in some areas struggles to convey its Christ-centered beliefs while simultaneously highlighting unique beliefs and practices. Many ethnic groups maintain an intimate connection with Christ and regularly attend church, which has favored LDS mission outreach initiatives over the past century. The importance of family in society has facilitated member-missionary activity and has contributed to self-sustaining growth for the LDS Church in many locations. Secularism and low levels of religious participation among self-identified Christians are the primary obstacles for LDS mission outreach activity among the white population in Australia and New Zealand. Religion is often seen as a private matter for whites and is rarely discussed publicly. Polynesian, Asian, and African immigrants are among the most receptive ethnicities to the Church in Australia and New Zealand, as many missions report frequent baptisms among Chinese, Vietnamese, Koreans, and Sudanese. Several full-time missions operate outreach specifically directed toward Tongan, Samoan, Chinese, and Vietnamese immigrants by assigning full-time missionaries to work with non-English speaking congregations and proselyte in their respective languages. Pacific Islanders who are already being shepherded in other Christian churches and are religiously active tend to be less receptive to LDS missionary efforts. The high degree of religious pluralism among Christians has reduced challenges for local members to assimilate into society and has favored LDS mission outreach efforts nonetheless. The strong sense of community present in most villages can both help and hinder missionary work. Melanesians often face cultural challenges investigating and joining the LDS Church due to deep ethno-religious ties and that major personal decisions must be approved by an individual's parents and tribal chiefs. Leaving the religious group practiced by one's tribe oftentimes results in leaving one's community altogether. The lack of economic development prevalent in much of Oceania brings many hardships to the population and provides humanitarian opportunities for the Church. Poor family history records and traditional beliefs surrounding speaking about the dead are cultural obstacles for family history research among Australian aborigines and among some other ethnic groups in the region. Full-time missionaries have adjusted dress to meet cultural standards, such as in Fiji where missionaries wear traditional shirts called *lava-lava*.

A major cultural challenge for the LDS Church in Oceania is that the ethnic composition of LDS populations is often not representative of the ethnic composition of the general population. In Fiji, the percentage of LDS members among Indo-Fijian Christians is six times higher than the percentage of LDS members among native Fijian Christians, although only 6% of Indo-Fijians, who constitute 38% of the Fijian population, are Christian. In New Zealand, Maoris accounted for half of the self-identified Latter-day Saint population on the 2006 census but comprised only 8% of the national population, whereas Polynesians accounted for 44% of the self-identified Latter-day Saint population but constituted less than 5% of the New Zealander population.

Kava is commonly consumed in Polynesia and in some areas of Melanesia. Recreational kava use as relating to the Word of Wisdom remains a subject of debate among some members. Church leaders have counseled members to keep free of habit-forming substances, which some consider to include recreational kava use. The strong sense of community in most villages can both help and hinder missionary work. Common in Micronesia, the consumption of Areca nut as a social pastime is openly opposed by Church leadership in the region.

Double Affiliation

Strong interest in Christianity but moderate levels of allegiance to a given denomination has created additional cultural challenges for Latter-day Saints and other Christians regarding the double affiliation of their members. Most nominal Latter-day Saints who no longer attend LDS Church services appear to be actively involved in or to identify with other Christian traditions. Doubly-affiliated Latter-day Saints who actively engage in another Christian denomination are challenging to reactivate due to their current social and religious

connections outside the church. LDS missionaries, leaders, and members also need to emphasize unique doctrinal teachings and theological positions and ensure that prospective converts have firmly established gospel habits to help safeguard against convert attrition and curb the loss of some Latter-day Saints to other Christian denominations.

National Outreach

Oceania receives excellent levels of LDS mission outreach as a whole, as 72% of the regional population resides in a city, village, or small island with an LDS congregation. Ninety percent (90%) or more of the population in Nauru, Niue, American Samoa, Palau, Tonga, New Zealand, the Northern Mariana Islands, and Samoa is reached by LDS mission outreach. This figure is particularly impressive in view of the widely dispersed population in small towns and villages across remote islands that are often difficult to access. Among countries and territories that receive LDS missionary activity, only two have fewer than 47% of the national population reached: Papua New Guinea (10%) and the Solomon Islands (9%). Wallis and Futuna, Norfolk Island, and Tokelau are the only territories with over 1,000 inhabitants unreached by Latter-day Saints.

Some of Oceania's most populous nations are among the least reached by Latter-day Saints, including Papua New Guinea (second most populous), the Solomon Islands (fifth most populous), and New Caledonia (seventh most populous), largely due to the larger geographic size, more limited mission outreach extended, and missionary activity commencing later than most other nations and territories in the region. Political instability, tribalism, extreme linguistic diversity, poverty, remoteness, few established mission outreach centers, no church-operated schools, and reluctance to assign greater numbers of missionaries are reasons for why national outreach is much more limited in these three nations than elsewhere in Oceania. Advances in expanding national outreach in Papua New Guinea have occurred principally through member-missionary efforts. Many of the unreached population in Micronesian and Melanesian nations reside on small islands with tiny populations that are difficult to reach and do not merit the assignment of a full-time missionary companionship, thereby challenging efforts to expand national outreach in these locations without local member assistance.

In Australia, over three million are unreached by the Church in smaller cities, towns, and rural areas, and many of the largest cities have communities that are largely unreached as there are no nearby congregations. Lower receptivity among whites, cultural challenges extending outreach to immigrant groups, and population shifts in Latter-day Saints have challenged efforts to increase the number of congregations in Australia over the past decade. Although the LDS Church is one of the largest religious groups in New Zealand, many know little about the Church and its beliefs and practices due to the disproportionate ethnic and geographic concentration of church membership among minority ethnic groups and small number of members among the majority population of European ancestry. Establishing dependent branches and groups in lesser-reached communities and cities in Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere in Oceania is an approach that encourages self-sufficiency and may lead to greater increases in LDS congregations year to year and expand national outreach.

In the most-reached areas of Oceania, such as French Polynesia, the Samoan Islands, and Tonga, LDS congregations operated in all but a couple dozen villages. Possible reasons for why additional congregations have not been established in these villages may include limited numbers of priesthood holders and low member activity in these locations, opposition from the predominant church of the village, logistical difficulties, and other factors.

LDS mission outreach directed towards some Oceanic groups (namely Samoans and Tongans) occurs outside their native country or territory in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. Samoans and Tongans are the most reached ethnic groups by the LDS Church worldwide. In late 2010, there were ninety-one Tongan-language LDS congregations operating in the United States (73), New Zealand (12), Australia (4), and American Samoa (2) providing outreach to the 80,000 some Tongan-speakers abroad. There were sixty-five

Samoan-language LDS congregations outside of Samoa and American Samoa in late 2010 operating in the United States (38), New Zealand (18), and Australia (9) providing outreach to the 120,000 some Samoan-speakers abroad. In early 2011, there were six Marshallese-speaking branches and two Fijian-speaking branches in the United States and one Niuean-speaking ward and one Kiribati-speaking branch in New Zealand.

The Church maintains an Internet site for Australia and New Zealand, with the latter designated as the site for the Pacific Area. The websites are fully functional and provide links to other Church websites, area presidency messages, national or regional news, and LDS family services. Low levels of Internet accessibility in many areas of Oceania reduce the need and utility of expand LDS missionary outreach online. For example in 2006, Internet users accounted for only 15% of the national population in Micronesia.¹⁴⁶⁵

Member Activity and Convert Retention

The LDS Church reports some of its highest member activity rates worldwide in Oceania notwithstanding that most nations have activity rates of less than 50%. Much of this appears due to cultural and traditional standards and attitudes about personal and communal religious observance and church attendance rather than LDS missionary approaches. The majority of nominal Latter-day Saints appear to identify and attend other Christian denominations in most countries. Many converts who stop attending the LDS Church return to their previous denominations after only a brief acquaintance with the Church; reactivation work has experienced little success. Most nations in Polynesia report nearly commensurate congregational and membership growth increases year to year for the LDS Church, indicative of member activity and stable convert retention rates. Church schools have assisted in the establishment of an LDS community in several nations, but do not guarantee higher rates of church attendance and member activity as Fiji exhibits one of the lowest member activity rates in the region but has had a church school for several decades. Seminary and institute attendance in many areas has greatly facilitated higher member activity and convert retention rates as members develop stronger understanding and conviction of the Church. Reliance on full-time missionaries for proselytism, administrative duties, and reactivation work has likely reduced member activity levels in several Micronesian nations and territories, but the organization of the first stakes in the Marshall Islands and Guam in 2009 and 2010, respectively, indicates some improvement in recent years. Nominalism in the Catholic Church and the high degree of ethnic diversity on some islands in Micronesia have also contributed to member activity issues. Infrequent visits from mission or regional church leadership to some islands and nations present the opportunity for local members to become more self-reliant but simultaneously present the challenge of maintaining consist and higher standards for convert baptisms, especially if foreign full-time missionaries are assigned.

Poor pre-baptismal preparation of prospective converts and quick-baptism tactics have been the primary causes of member inactivity in Oceania. In Australia, high-pressure “Pentecost” mission tactics in the late 1970s in which investigators were rushed to baptism with little pre-baptismal teaching and no established gospel habits, resulted in many numerical baptisms but very poor convert retention and severely damaged the Church’s reputation in Australian society.¹⁴⁶⁶ Poor convert retention has occurred since the late 1990s in Australia as manifested by few new stakes organized and stagnant congregation growth despite LDS membership increasing by 25,000 between 2000 and 2009. Some Latter-day Saints reside in remote, rural communities with few or no fellow members and may be more prone to become inactive due to the lack of a church infrastructure and isolation.¹⁴⁶⁷ Increasing secularism has also affected Latter-day Saint populations in Australia and New Zealand, reducing church attendance percentages and adherence to LDS teachings. Due to a long-term LDS presence in some areas of Oceania, demographic challenges are manifest as most members are elderly and

¹⁴⁶⁵ “Internet Usage Worldwide by Country, 2007,” Infoplease.com, retrieved 4 December 2010. <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0933606.html>

¹⁴⁶⁶ Newton, Marjorie, “Towards 2000: Mormonism in Australia,” *Dialogue*, 29/1 (Spring 1996): 193–206.

¹⁴⁶⁷ Bigelow, Christopher K. “Australia: Coming Out of Obscurity Down Under,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1998, 35.

there are few or no active LDS youth. In Papua New Guinea, violence, poverty, and unemployment present challenges for member activity. Member activity and convert retention appears poorest in the Port Moresby area as there has been no noticeable congregational growth in the city. Member activity rates appear highest in remote, isolated areas likely due to member involvement in missionary activity. A lack of language materials may also have contributed to lower activity rates. Poor relationships between full-time missionaries and some local church leaders have contributed to lower member activity rates in areas of Fiji. Low member activity delayed the organization of stakes in Kiribati. The district president of the Kiribati Tarawa District reported in 1996 that members were hopeful that following the creation of the first stake, a second stake would be organized in 1997 or 1998.¹⁴⁶⁸ This did not occur until 2007.

Perhaps the most important single factor needed to improve convert retention going forward is increased emphasis on establishing basic gospel habits and ensuring that prospective converts have experienced genuine and lasting conversion prior to baptism. In Samoa and Tonga, several factors have facilitated higher member activity and convert retention rates than other nations, such as the early establishment of Church-run schools, widespread chapel construction and congregation planting following World War II, government restrictions limiting the number of foreign missionaries, complete self-sufficiency in the staffing of the full-time missionary force, the calling of couple missionaries in the mid-twentieth century, culturally high rates of church attendance in the general population, and the societal promotion of churches. In Australia and New Zealand, proselytism initiatives targeting youth can encourage greater member activity over the long term, especially by increasing the percentage of local members who serve full-time missions. Currently both nations have underachieved their potential church growth prospects among young adults and youth.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Ethnic integration issues are nearly nonexistent in most of Oceania, as the majority of nations or islands have highly homogenous populations and a tiny nonnative or immigrant population. With only a few exceptions, populations speak the official language of their respective nations, which has reduced ethnic integration challenges. The Church often has congregations that serve minority groups who do not speak the primary language of the area, especially in American Samoa, Australia, and New Zealand, which has contributed to the establishment of the Church among the largest minority groups in these nations. The greatest ethnic integration challenges that have occurred in the LDS Church in Oceania are in Australia, New Zealand, and Guam due to the large immigrant populations of these nations that often exhibit significant cultural differences. In Australia, Asian and African immigrants tend to be the most receptive to the Church but often experience challenges integrating into predominantly white or Polynesian congregations. Middle Eastern and aboriginal peoples are among the least integrated into Australian society and pose the greatest challenges for Latter-day Saints to reach due to cultural differences. Significant ethnic conflict between native Fijians and Indo-Fijians has led to political instability, but these challenges have not significantly deterred the integration of both ethnicities into the same LDS congregations as both groups reported in 1993 that they felt more comfortable around each other in Church than in any other place in society.¹⁴⁶⁹

There is potential for significant ethnic integration issues in New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands due to tribalism and ethnic conflict between the indigenous inhabitants of a given area, newcomers from elsewhere in the country, and nonnatives. In the Solomon Islands, the Church will likely face challenges assimilating the native inhabitants of Guadalcanal with peoples who have moved to the island from elsewhere in the country, especially Malaita. In Papua New Guinea, land disputes along the peripheries of larger towns and cities result in increased ethnic tensions that may impact some church members. The

¹⁴⁶⁸ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Church continues to grow in Kiribati: 4,600 Church members now in country; 80 recently ordained elders," LDS Church News, 2 March 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28451/Church-continues-to-grow-in-Kiribati-4600-Church-members-now-in-country-80-recently-ordained-elders.html>

¹⁴⁶⁹ Saunders, Shirleen Meek. "Fiji: Islands of Faith," *Tambuli*, Feb 1993, 32.

Church's extent of national outreach and membership totals in these three nations remain too limited to have experienced noticeable ethnic integration difficulties to date.

Language Issues

The homogenous societies of many Oceanic nations have eliminated language issues for the Church and have facilitated church growth. Many indigenous languages were among the first to receive translations of LDS materials, such as Samoan, Maori, Tahitian, and Tongan. The Church has also dedicated resources toward providing translations of church materials into languages with fewer than 100,000 speakers, including Chamorro, Chuukese, Kiribati, Kosraean, Marshallese, Motu, Niuean, Palauan, Pohnpeian, Rarotongan, Tuvaluan, and Yapese. Combined with inherent receptivity toward LDS teachings and consistent LDS mission outreach, the breadth of church materials and scriptures in Polynesian and Micronesian languages is correlated with church growth outpacing most other areas of the world. With approximately 7,000 speakers worldwide, Yapese is the language with the fewest speakers with translations of LDS materials and the Book of Mormon.

Little progress has occurred in meeting the language needs of Melanesia, largely due to extreme linguistic diversity and nearly all languages having fewer than 10,000 speakers. There are approximately 1,000 languages in Melanesia without translations of LDS materials, 827 of which are spoken in Papua New Guinea, 106 in Vanuatu, 70 in the Solomon Islands, and 38 in New Caledonia whereas there were approximately 170 languages with translations of LDS materials worldwide in early 2011. Creole and pidgin languages such as Tok Pisin (Papua New Guinea), Pijin (Solomon Islands), and Bislama (Vanuatu) have helped mitigate the complexity of village societies communicating on a national level and offer opportunities for Latter-day Saints to make preliminary inroads among large portions of the population. Many of these languages are seldom written, if at all, and literacy rates are low, further challenging the feasibility of providing extensive translations of church materials in these languages. Returned missionaries and local members speaking multiple languages will be a valuable asset in addressing these difficulties. Papua New Guinea is the nation in the region in the greatest need of LDS materials in additional languages. Senior missionary couples in the late 2000s assisted in the translation of some LDS materials into simplified English for use among aborigines in the Northern Territory, but there has been no effort to translate materials into aboriginal languages largely due to the small number of speakers, the lack of written literature in these languages, the small number of Latter-day Saint aborigines, and lack of competent translators.

The Church has also readily organized foreign language-speaking congregations in many nations with sizeable LDS populations, further contributing to church growth in the region. However African, Arab, and Asian immigrants in Australia and New Zealand are poorly reached by Latter-day Saints notwithstanding church materials available in many commonly spoken languages of the home countries of immigrant peoples. English is spoken by nearly the entire population as a first or second language by immigrants, limiting the need for language-specific LDS congregations. Nonetheless, the greater receptivity the Church has experienced among immigrant groups, limited English proficiency among many immigrants, and better cultural and social identification of converts with members of similar backgrounds, has created ongoing needs for non-English congregations and proselytism. In late 2010, Australian non-English-speaking units included nine Samoan, four Tongan, two Chinese, and one Spanish-speaking congregation. Some non-English congregations have been discontinued in recent years as immigrants have become proficient in English and assimilated into Australian society. Additional dependent branches or groups may service speakers of these and other common immigrant languages. Some full-time missionaries are assigned to work with specific language groups, nearly all of which are Asian. Language-specific outreach has yet to occur among European immigrant groups, such as Greeks and Italians, but prospective outreach toward Hindi-speakers appears more likely in the future due to low receptivity among most recently immigrated European peoples.

In nations or territories with a diversity of languages spoken due to heavy immigration or past colonial rule

relocating foreign populations, the Church often struggles to meet local needs if more than two or three languages are commonly spoken and there are few active members. The Church in Fiji and French Polynesia has successfully dealt with these challenges. In Fiji, many congregations accommodate speakers of different languages by providing translators in classes and assigning sacrament meeting talks to speakers of different languages. Sacrament talks in Fijian, Hindustani, and English are given every Sunday in many congregations.¹⁴⁷⁰ Foreign missionaries learn Fijian in the Missionary Training Center and learn and use some Hindi only in the field. English is used frequently in teaching in Fiji. In French Polynesia, many congregations meet language needs of both monolingual French and Tahitian speakers; full-time missionaries learn both languages. Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands have highly eclectic demographics and English, Philippine languages, Chinese languages, and Oceanic languages are commonly spoken. Few active members have challenged efforts to integrate different ethnic groups. The organization of language-specific congregations may provide the greatest prospects toward improving member activity and convert retention challenges in these two territories.

Missionary Service

Local full-time missionary manpower in Oceania is among the most resilient and self-sustaining outside of North America, largely due to the high receptivity to the LDS Church in the region, past government restrictions that limited the number of foreign missionary visas and encouraged self-sufficiency of local members, the establishment of church schools that have fostered greater member activity and testimony building in youth, and emphasis on seminary and institute attendance. American Samoa, French Polynesia, New Zealand, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu each appear self-reliant in staffing their respective missionary forces or are nations that export large numbers of missionaries elsewhere as the number of members serving missions exceeds the number of missionaries assigned to their respective countries. Notwithstanding a high degree of self-reliance in these nations, North American missionaries regularly serve in these areas but generally comprise no more than half of the missionary force. A full-time missionary companionship is often assigned to several congregations in nations with high percentages of Latter-day Saints, such as Samoa and Tonga. Most other nations in the region are partially self-sufficient in meeting their local full-time missionary needs as the number of local members serving missions is generally between half and three-quarters of the number of missionaries assigned to the country. Examples of such nations include Fiji, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, and Papua New Guinea. The LDS Church in Australia has strong potential for augmenting the number of full-time missionaries in the region, but few young men serve missions at present. The number of members serving full-time missions in Oceania appears lowest in New Caledonia, the Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, the Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu. Involving greater numbers of youth in seminary and institute may increase the number of members who serve full-time missions. Missionary training centers have previously operated in Samoa and Tonga, but only one center appeared to operate in Oceania by the late 2000s in Auckland, New Zealand. Reversing the trend of missionary training center consolidations will be helpful in developing self-sustaining local missionary manpower in less developed nations, such as Papua New Guinea.

Leadership

Australia, New Zealand, Tonga, Samoa, and French Polynesia have supplied regional and international church leadership for decades. Dozens of Australian Latter-day Saints have served as mission presidents, regional representatives, Area Seventies, temple presidents, and general authorities. Small numbers of local members from American Samoa, the Cook Islands, and Fiji have staffed regional and international leadership positions. No local members appear to have served in regional or international church leadership positions from Guam, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, the Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, or Vanuatu.

¹⁴⁷⁰ Saunders, Shirleen Meek. "Fiji: Islands of Faith," *Tambuli*, Feb 1993, 32.

The Church in Oceania appears self-sufficient in supplying administrative and ecclesiastical leadership on a regional level although low member activity rates and few active male members prevent greater sustainability and self-sufficiency in Australia, areas of Melanesia, and Micronesian nations and territories. On a local level, inadequate numbers of active priesthood holders in many areas appear to prevent the organization of additional congregations in lesser-reached villages and cities. Nonetheless, local members lead nearly all congregations in the region, and returned missionaries have supplied invaluable leadership experience and service. In Micronesia and Melanesia, lower member activity rates, leadership training issues, and few active priesthood holders have delayed many districts from becoming stakes. Church employees regularly serve in leadership positions in Papua New Guinea due to shortages of capable active priesthood holders with stable work.

Temple

The Hamilton New Zealand Temple was the first LDS temple constructed in the Southern Hemisphere and was completed in 1958 to service members throughout Oceania. Additional temples were constructed in Apia Samoa (1983), Nuku'alofa Tonga (1983), Papeete Tahiti (1983), Sydney Australia (1984), Adelaide Australia (2000), Melbourne Australia (2000), Suva Fiji (2000), Perth Australia (2001), and Brisbane Australia (2003). In Australia, the four temples built in the 2000s operate far below capacity and generally hold three or four endowment sessions on days the temples are open. Australian temples are nonetheless well utilized by active members and are highly self-sufficient. The Suva Fiji Temple is poorly utilized as only two to three endowment sessions are held on days when the temple is open. Temples in Sydney Australia, French Polynesia, New Zealand, and Samoa are moderately utilized whereas the Nuku'alofa Tonga Temple appears to be among the busiest in the world outside of North America as in 2011 endowment sessions were scheduled hourly from 5 AM to 7 PM Tuesdays through Saturdays. Several additional temples may be constructed in Oceania over the medium term due to the geographical separation of LDS populations and increasing member activity and temple attendance in some areas. Prospects appear favorable over the medium-term for the construction of a small temple in the Micronesia sub-region to meet the temple needs of members in the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Guam, and Kiribati, as members in these nations must travel inordinate distances to attend the nearest temple at present. Kiribati, Guam, and the Marshall Islands appear the most likely sites for a future temple in the region as each of these nations have a stake. Medium-term prospects for additional small temples appear favorable in American Samoa; Savaii, Samoa; Vavu'u, Tonga; and Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. A temple may one day be built in Auckland, New Zealand due to the large number of LDS stakes in the metropolitan area, as members must presently travel outside the city to Hamilton to attend the temple.

Comparative Growth

Oceania is the most reached region in the world by the LDS Church, and the percentage of Latter-day Saints in Oceania is higher than in any other region. Of the ten countries or territories with the highest percentage of Latter-day Saints, nine are in Oceania. Member activity rates are slightly less than in North America but higher than in most other regions. The Church has maintained a missionary presence in Oceania longer than in any other region except for North America and Western Europe. Oceania is one of the few world regions that has a self-sufficient LDS missionary force and sufficient regional church leadership manpower. Congregational and membership growth rates have outpaced Europe but have lagged behind sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and East Asia over the past decade.

Nontraditional missionary-minded Christian groups report larger numbers of members than the LDS Church in Melanesia and fewer members in Polynesia and Micronesia. Member activity rates appear higher among other outreach-focused denominations than for the LDS Church in nearly all nations and territories in the region notwithstanding Latter-day Saints number among the largest outreach-oriented Christian groups.

This appears largely due to higher standards and greater consistency required for converts to join many of these churches. Jehovah's Witnesses reported one-fifth the LDS Church membership in Oceania in 2010 but maintained over one hundred more congregations in the region. The LDS Church and Seventh Day Adventist Church claim roughly the same number of members in Oceania, but Adventists operate nearly twice as many congregations. Papua New Guinea accounts for over half of Adventist membership in the region, with 250,000 members meeting in 875 congregations compared to 17,315 Latter-day Saints meeting in sixty-eight congregations. The LDS Church and evangelical groups reported the most rapid membership and congregational growth rates throughout the region in recent years. Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses generally report slow or stagnant membership and congregational growth in most areas of Oceania. Traditional Christian denominations in most nations and territories are declining in adherents. Asian religions and Islam are among the fastest growing religious groups in Australia and New Zealand due to immigration. Pentecostals have ranked among the fastest growing Christian groups since the 1980s in Australia and have a significant presence in Melanesia.

Future Prospects

The LDS Church in Oceania continues to demonstrate sustainable local leadership primary due to surplus leadership in Australia, New Zealand, and Tonga and self-sufficient church leadership in American Samoa, French Polynesia, Samoa, and Vanuatu. Polynesia will likely continue to provide strength in missionary manpower in Oceania and beyond notwithstanding its tiny population for decades to come. Additional stakes will likely be organized in American Samoa, Australia, French Polynesia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Tonga over the medium term. The first stakes may be organized in the Federated States of Micronesia and Vanuatu if active membership continues to increase and the necessary threshold of at least 120 active Melchizedek Priesthood holders is reached. Due to stagnant membership growth and few congregations, some stakes may be consolidated in the coming years in Australia and New Zealand. Conditions appear favorable for the construction of additional temples in locations with sizeable, self-sufficient LDS populations on islands that currently have no LDS temples.

The outlook for church growth in Australia is poor as the history of the LDS Church in Australia demonstrates that an established, strong priesthood leadership comprised of native members does not ensure strong church growth. Increasing numbers of convert baptisms in New Zealand in recent years may indicate greater efficiency in missionary work, but only time will tell whether or not retention rates remain constant or improve. Latter-day Saints appear to have become more socially entrenched in their congregations over time in many areas, reducing their ability to relate with the general population and employ effective member-missionary skills and habits. Dependence on full-time missionaries for investigator finding and fellowshiping has further compounded these issues. National outreach will likely continue to expand in Melanesia, namely in Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu, due to high rates of receptivity; large, unreached areas that await proselytism; growing numbers and strength of local leadership and missionary forces; and continued use of full-time missionaries from other Oceanic nations in these locations. In Micronesia, additional branches or groups may be organized if the Church gains a presence on isolated islets and atolls. Humanitarian work may offer additional opportunities for further growth. The organization of additional missions in New Caledonia, the Solomon Islands, and other provinces in Papua New Guinea may facilitate greater progress in the coming years.

INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY PROFILES

AMERICAN SAMOA

Geography

AREA: 199 square km. Located halfway between Hawaii and New Zealand and consisting of the eastern islands of the Samoan Islands chain, American Samoa is the southernmost territory of the United States. Tutuila is the primary island, and the territory also includes Rose Atoll, the Manu'a Islands, and Swains Island. Terrain consists of rugged mountains and a narrow coastal plain on the five volcanic islands whereas the two coral atolls are flat and low-lying. Tropical maritime climate with little seasonal variations in temperature occur with a marked rainy season (November to April) and dry season (May to October). Typhoons are a natural hazard. Environmental issues include few fresh water sources and water scarcity. The United States government maintains no administrative divisions in American Samoa, but local government administratively divides the territory into three districts and two islands.

Peoples

Pacific Islander: 91.6%

Asian: 2.8%

White: 1.1%

Mixed: 4.2%

Other: 0.3%

Pacific islanders are predominantly Samoan. Tongans are the largest Pacific Islander minority group.

Population: 68,061 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.211% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 3.1 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 71.5 male, 77.56 female (2012)

Languages: Samoan (90.6%), English (2.9%), Tongan (2.4%), other Pacific islander (2.1%), other (2%). Most are bilingual.

Literacy: 97% (1980)

History

American Samoa appears to have been inhabited from as early as 1000 BC. Polynesians settled the islands, which were discovered by European explorers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Western powers competed for control of the islands, and in 1899, the United States and Germany divided the administration of the Samoan islands with the United States obtaining islands part of present-day American Samoa.

Hurricane Val damaged or destroyed 65% of residential homes in 1991.¹⁴⁷¹ Poor economic conditions have encouraged many to serve in the United States military in recent years. Over 150 American Samoans perished in the September 2009 earthquake and tsunami.

Culture

There are few cultural differences between Samoa and American Samoa due to comparable ethnic composition and shared history until the end of the nineteenth century. Samoans continue to practice many aspects of their indigenous cultural, political, social, and linguistic customs and systems known as “fa’a Samoa.” Christianity supplanted indigenous religious beliefs that supported an intricate mythological system, and today Samoa and American Samoa are among the most religious countries and territories in the world. Dances and ceremonies mark many social occasions. Cuisine consists of coconuts, seafood, taro, rice, fruit, and seaweed. Samoans traditionally receive gender-specific tattoos called Pe’a for males and malu for females.¹⁴⁷² American football and rugby teams worldwide frequently have Samoan team members, and American football is American Samoa’s most popular sport. Cigarette and alcohol consumption rates are low.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$8,000 (2007) [17.2% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: N/A

Corruption Index: N/A (U.S. 7.1)

With a traditional Polynesian economy and land ownership system in which over 90% of the land is communally owned, American Samoa depends on tuna fishing and tuna processing for its economic vitality. Pumice and fish are natural resources. Pago Pago has an excellent natural harbor that has favored trade. The United States government dedicated \$25 million toward a relief and reconstruction program following devastation of the September 2009 earthquake and tsunami. Economic development is limited, and the population suffers from high unemployment rates (30% in 2005). There are some favorable prospects for the development of a tourist industry. Tuna canneries are the primary industry, as 80% of the workforce is employed at the two tuna canneries, and canned tuna accounts for most exports. Fruit, coconuts, vegetables, taro, yams, copra, dairy products, and livestock are agricultural products. Trade primary occurs with the United States.

Corruption in the local government is perceived as more widespread than in the United States. Some local government officials have faced corruption charges in recent years.

Faiths

Christian: 98%

Other: 2%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Congregationalists 33,216

Latter-day Saints 15,629 36

Catholic 13,286

Seventh Day Adventists 8,534 40 (includes Samoa and Tokelau)

Jehovah’s Witnesses 212 3

¹⁴⁷¹ “Hurricane wreaks ruin in Samoa,” LDS Church News, 21 December 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21126/Hurricane-wreaks-ruin-in-Samoa.html>

¹⁴⁷² “Culture of Samoa,” Wikipedia.org, retrieved 24 December 2010. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_Samoa

Religion

Congregationalists account for half of the population, whereas Catholics are the second largest denomination and claim 20% of the population. The remainder of the population adheres to the LDS Church and other Protestant denominations.

Religious Freedom

The United States' constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by national and local laws. There have been no instances of societal abuse of religious freedom.

Largest Towns

Urban: 92%

Tafuna, Nu'uuli, Pago Pago, Leone, Ili'ili, Pava'ia'i, Aua, Fagatogo, Faleniu, Mapusagafou.

All ten of the most populous towns have an LDS congregation. Sixty percent (60%) of the population resides in the ten largest towns.

LDS History

The Church sent two Hawaiian LDS missionaries in 1862 to begin mission outreach, but their efforts were unsuccessful. In June 1888, the first mission president of the Samoan Mission arrived on Tutuila to begin establishing the Church.¹⁴⁷³ The first convert baptisms occurred on Aunu'u, and the first branch began functioning in 1893.¹⁴⁷⁴ Seminary and institute began in the mid-1970s. In the 1970s, American Samoa and Western Samoa (currently known as Samoa today) were the first nations/territories to be entirely covered by stakes. In 1977, the Church announced plans to construct a 1.5 million dollar temple in American Samoa and slated its completion date for 1980.¹⁴⁷⁵ However, the announced temple site was relocated from Pago Pago to Apia, Samoa in 1980 to better meet the needs of Samoan members.¹⁴⁷⁶ In 1988, a monument commemorating one hundred years since the establishment of the Church in American Samoa was unveiled in Mapusaga.¹⁴⁷⁷ Government leaders participated in the centennial celebration and spoke positively of events they attended.¹⁴⁷⁸ In 1989, Latter-day Saint and former lieutenant governor of American Samoa F. Eni Hunkin Jr. began serving in the U.S. Congress.¹⁴⁷⁹ Meetinghouses have at times suffered damage from typhoons, such as in 1990,¹⁴⁸⁰

¹⁴⁷³ Britsch, R. Lanier. "The Church in the South Pacific," *Ensign*, Feb. 1976, 19.

¹⁴⁷⁴ Swensen, Jason. "American Samoa: Church enjoys widespread presence in South Pacific territory," *LDS Church News*, 12 November 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48138/American-Samoa-Church-enjoys-widespread-presence-in-South-Pacific-territory.html>

¹⁴⁷⁵ "Temple to Be Built in American Samoa," *Liahona*, Sept. 1977, 8.

¹⁴⁷⁶ John L. Hart, "7 new temples to be erected," *Church News*, 5 Apr. 1980: 3.

¹⁴⁷⁷ "100 years in Samoa: LDS celebrations span 3 islands," *LDS Church News*, 2 July 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17826/100-years-in-Samoa-LDS-celebrations-span-3-islands.html>

¹⁴⁷⁸ Avant, Gerry. "Centennial looks to future as well as past," *LDS Church News*, 9 July 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17864/Centennial-looks-to-future-as-well-as-past.html>

¹⁴⁷⁹ "Samoan member also in Congress," *LDS Church News*, 25 February 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18785/Samoan-member-also-in-Congress.html>

¹⁴⁸⁰ Avant, Gerry. "Hurricane shatters tropical calm," *LDS Church News*, 17 February 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18785/Samoan-member-also-in-Congress.html>

1991,¹⁴⁸¹ and 2004.¹⁴⁸² One Latter-day Saint perished in a 1991 typhoon.¹⁴⁸³ The Church first organized Boy Scout organizations in 1938, and by 2004, there were nearly one hundred LDS scouting packs, troops, and teams.¹⁴⁸⁴ In 2011, American Samoa remained part of the Samoa Apia Mission and was assigned to the Pacific Area.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 15,629 (2012)

There were 6,000 Latter-day Saints in American Samoa in 1988.¹⁴⁸⁵ By year-end 2000, there were 12,901 members.

Slow membership growth occurred during most years in the 2000s as membership numbered 13,406 in 2002, 13,967 in 2004, 14,246 in 2006, and 14,787 in 2008. Annual membership growth rates ranged from a low of 0% in 2006 to a high of 2.3% in 2002. Most years in the 2000s reported annual membership growth rates between 1.5% and 2%. Membership generally increases by between 200 and 300 a year. In 2009, 22% of the population was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 31 Branches: 6 (April 2013)

The first stake was organized in 1969 in Pago Pago. Additional stakes were organized in Pago Pago West (1980), Pago Pago Central (1994), Pago Pago Mapusaga (1997), and Pago Pago Malaeimi (2012).

There were thirty-four congregations by year-end 2000, including twenty-nine wards. The number of total congregations increased during the 2000s to thirty-five in 2003, thirty-six in 2007, and thirty-seven in 2009. New congregations organized in the 2000s included the Malaeimi Second and Pago Pago Third Wards, and the Aua Third (English) Branch. In 2011, the stake with the most congregations was the Pago Pago Samoa Stake (9 wards, 4 branches) and the stake with the fewest congregations was the Pago Pago Samoa Central Stake (6 wards). One mission branch operates on Manu'a.

Activity and Retention

Large meetings and conferences have been well attended. Seven thousand nine hundred attended a special meeting with President Gordon B. Hinckley in Pago Pago in 1997.¹⁴⁸⁶ Over 600 LDS scouting youth attended a conference in 2004.¹⁴⁸⁷ 5,000 attended a temple celebration commemorating the recent completion of the rebuilt Apia Samoa Temple in 2005.¹⁴⁸⁸

¹⁴⁸¹ "Church responds swiftly to Samoa disaster," LDS Church News, 28 December 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21340/Church-responds-swiftly-to-Samoa-disaster.html>

¹⁴⁸² King, Elder Jerry; King, Sister Olivia. "Storm slams Pacific islands," LDS Church News, 17 January 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44974/Storm-slams-Pacific-islands.html>

¹⁴⁸³ "Church responds swiftly to Samoa disaster," LDS Church News, 28 December 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21340/Church-responds-swiftly-to-Samoa-disaster.html>

¹⁴⁸⁴ "Scouting thrives in American Samoa," LDS Church News, 22 May 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45586/Scouting-thrives-in-American-Samoa.html>

¹⁴⁸⁵ "Stamp commemorates 100 years in Samoa," LDS Church News, 9 July 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17483/Stamp-commemorates-100-years-in-Samoa.html>

¹⁴⁸⁶ Avant, Gerry. "Prophet goes to islands of Pacific," LDS Church News, 25 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29655/Prophet-goes-to-islands-of-Pacific.html>

¹⁴⁸⁷ "Scouting thrives in American Samoa," LDS Church News, 22 May 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45586/Scouting-thrives-in-American-Samoa.html>

¹⁴⁸⁸ Walton, Elder Garwood; Walton, Sister Leann. "American Samoa celebrates Apia temple," LDS Church News, 6 August 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47665/American-Samoa-celebrates-Apia-temple.html>

Nine hundred eighty-eight were enrolled in seminary and institute during the 2008–2009 school year. During the 2000s, the average number of members per congregation increased from 379 in 2000 to 400 in 2009. Most wards appear to have between 100 and 200 active members whereas most branches likely have fewer than seventy-five active members. Active membership is estimated at 6,000, or 40% of official LDS membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Samoan, Tongan, English.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are translated into Samoan and Tongan. Other commonly spoken languages in the South Pacific often have LDS scriptures and church materials available.

Meetinghouses

There were approximately seventeen LDS meetinghouses in early 2011, most of which were built by the Church.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church maintained a high school in Mapusaga in 1988¹⁴⁸⁹ and formerly managed a school near Pago Pago.¹⁴⁹⁰ By the mid-2000s, all church schools had closed.¹⁴⁹¹ Tens of thousands of pounds of emergency relief were sent to Pago Pago in 1990 following Hurricane Ofa.¹⁴⁹²

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

There are no restrictions on religious freedom. Latter-day Saints proselyte, worship, and assemble freely.

Cultural Issues

Samoans maintain an intimate connection with Christianity and regular church attendance, which has favored LDS mission outreach initiatives over the past century. Strong family connections have fostered the development and growth of the Church through member referrals and member-missionary activity. Opposition does occur in some villages toward nontraditional Christian groups, but the LDS Church does not appear to have been specifically targeted, nor do counter-LDS efforts appear to have significantly affected LDS Church growth trends. The degree of cooperation and friendship exhibited at present between Latter-day Saints and other Christian groups is demonstrated from an account following the destruction of the original Apia Samoa Temple by fire in 2003 when religious and community leaders offered support and comfort. The Methodist Church sent a check to pay for some of the finances to rebuild the temple.¹⁴⁹³ Although theological differences

¹⁴⁸⁹ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 11 June 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17593/From-around-the-world.html>

¹⁴⁹⁰ "100 years in Samoa: LDS celebrations span 3 islands," LDS Church News, 2 July 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17826/100-years-in-Samoa—LDS-celebrations-span-3-islands.html>

¹⁴⁹¹ Swensen, Jason. "American Samoa: Church enjoys widespread presence in South Pacific territory," LDS Church News, 12 November 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48138/American-Samoa-Church-enjoys-widespread-presence-in-South-Pacific-territory.html>

¹⁴⁹² Avant, Gerry. "Hurricane shatters tropical calm," LDS Church News, 17 February 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18785/Samoan-member-also-in-Congress.html>

¹⁴⁹³ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Church to rebuild Apia Samoa Temple," LDS Church News, 19 July 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44073/Church-to-rebuild-Apia-Samoa-Temple.html>

distance the Church from other Christian denominations, Latter-day Saints are viewed much more favorably than in many other nations by the major Christian traditions.

Double Affiliation

Strong interest in Christianity but moderate levels of allegiance to a given denomination has created additional cultural challenges for Latter-day Saints and other Christians regarding the double affiliation of their members. Most nominal Latter-day Saints who no longer attend LDS Church services appear to be actively involved in or identify with other Christian traditions. Doubly-affiliated Latter-day Saints who actively engage in another Christian denomination are challenging to reactivate due to their current social and religious connections outside the church. LDS missionaries, leaders, and members also need to emphasize unique doctrinal teachings and theological positions to help curb against the loss of some Latter-day Saints to other Christian denominations and safeguard against convert attrition.

National Outreach

American Samoa receives excellent levels of LDS mission outreach, as all towns with over 1,500 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. The percentage of American Samoans residing within five kilometers of an LDS meetinghouse may be as high as 95%. The ratio of LDS congregations to the general population is one to 1,795. Only two villages with over 1,000 inhabitants lack an LDS congregation: Vaitogi and Fagaalu.

Opportunities for national outreach expansion are present. There are approximately thirteen villages on Tutuila with fewer than 1,000 inhabitants that appear favorable for future LDS mission outreach centers: Aloafau, Aoa, Aoloaufou, Auasi, Aumi, Fagaalu, Fagaitua, Fatumafuti, Masefau, Matuu, Taputimu, Vailoatai, and Vaitogi. These villages are over a kilometer away from LDS meetinghouses and likely have many active and inactive members. Possible reasons for why additional congregations have not been established in these villages may include limited numbers of priesthood holders and low member activity in these locations, opposition from the predominant church of the village, logistical difficulties, and other factors.

LDS mission outreach directed towards Samoans occurs internationally, as there were sixty-five Samoan-language LDS congregations outside of Samoa and American Samoa in late 2010 operating in the United States (38), New Zealand (18), and Australia (9) providing outreach to the 120,000 some Samoan speakers abroad. The percentage of Latter-day Saints among Samoan populations abroad appears consistent, as indicated by the ratio of LDS congregations to Samoan populations.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

American Samoa possesses moderate levels of LDS member activity rates, as demonstrated by the operation of four stakes, an average of 400 members per congregation, the nearly commensurate increase of congregations with membership growth, and wards constituting 84% of LDS congregations. Regular church attendance is a characteristic of Samoan culture that has contributed to current member activity levels. Self-sustainability has been achieved through the establishment of church schools in the past. Member activity rates do not appear to have fluctuated with the closing of LDS schools on American Samoa. High seminary and institute attendance, the Church's strong scouting presence, and cultural and historical factors appear to have facilitated greater member activity and convert retention rates than in many other countries and territories.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The highly homogenous Samoan population has eliminated many ethnic integration challenges faced by Latter-day Saints in other countries. Religious plurality has reduced many of the challenges of Samoan

Latter-day Saints assimilating into society. A combination of these conditions has favored LDS Church growth over the past several decades. Three Tongan-speaking wards and one English-speaking branch assist with ethnic integration issues at church for the 10% of the population that are not Samoan.

Language Issues

The Church began translating materials into Samoan at an early stage of missionary work and today has a wide array of materials and all LDS scriptures translated. Widespread use of Samoan has simplified mission outreach approaches. Tongan-speaking Latter-day Saints meet in three congregations, and English-speakers meet in one congregation. Nearly the entire non-Samoan population has LDS materials and language-specific congregations in their native or second language.

Missionary Service

American Samoa appears self-sufficient in its missionary force and, like Samoa, exports native missionaries abroad to serve in other countries. In 1974, Samoan Latter-day Saints constituted 75% of the missionary force assigned to the Samoan Islands.¹⁴⁹⁴ The Church operated a missionary training center in Samoa, but the center appears to have closed by the late 1990s or early 2000s. Samoan full-time missionaries now receive training in the New Zealand Missionary Training Center and frequently serve in Oceania, North America, the Caribbean, and Africa. In 2010, most full-time missionaries in American Samoa were assigned to two or three congregations. North Americans frequently serve in the Samoan Islands despite Samoan self-sufficiency in missionary manpower.

Leadership

Samoan LDS leadership sufficiently staffs local leadership and has also served in some regional and international church leadership callings. In 1994, Falemao M. Pili from Mesepa was called as a regional representative.¹⁴⁹⁵ In 1995, Eugene E. F. Walter Reid from Pago Pago was called as an area authority.¹⁴⁹⁶ In 2003, Beaver T. Ho Ching from Pago Pago was called as an Area Authority Seventy¹⁴⁹⁷ and in 2007 was called as the mission president of the Philippines Quezon City Mission.¹⁴⁹⁸ Limited numbers of active priesthood holders in some areas may prevent the creation of additional congregations, such as on the eastern side of Tutuila.

Temple

American Samoa is assigned to the Apia Samoa Temple district. Temple attendance is high, and members frequently travel to the temple in Apia regularly to perform temple ordinances. In 2010, the temple was moderately utilized, as six endowment sessions occurred from morning to evening Tuesday through Friday, and three sessions occurred on Saturdays. Additional sessions scheduled by individuals stakes or congregations likely occur regularly. Close distance to Samoa has reduced the need for a temple in American Samoa, but inconvenience, travel expenses, and high member activity and temple attendance rates in American Samoa may warrant the construction of a small temple on Tutuila over the medium term to serve Tutuila's four stakes.

¹⁴⁹⁴ Clark, Janice. "The Saints in Samoa," *Ensign*, Dec. 1974, 21.

¹⁴⁹⁵ "New regional representatives," *LDS Church News*, 24 December 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25003/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹⁴⁹⁶ "Church names area authorities," *LDS Church News*, 5 August 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26627/Church-names-area-authorities.html>

¹⁴⁹⁷ "New Area Authority Seventies," *LDS Church News*, 19 April 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43636/New-Area-Authority-Seventies.html>

¹⁴⁹⁸ "New mission presidents receive assignments," *LDS Church News*, 3 March 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50207/New-mission-presidents-receive-assignments.html>

Comparative Growth

With the third-highest percentage of Latter-day Saints in the general population among countries and territories worldwide, American Samoa has demonstrated consistent LDS Church growth. Membership and congregational growth rates have compared to growth rates in most South Pacific countries and territories. The LDS Church in American Samoa has consistently demonstrated higher member participation in seminary and institute than most Polynesian nations, as enrolled students during the 2008–2009 school year constituted 7% of LDS membership in American Samoa, whereas in New Zealand, Tonga, and Samoa, less than 5% of members were enrolled. Only French Polynesia had a higher percentage of enrolled members (8%). This finding suggests that church activity rates among LDS youth may be higher in American Samoa than in most other nations in Polynesia. In 2009, American Samoa was the country or territory with the eleventh most Latter-day Saints without an LDS temple.

Nontraditional, missionary-minded Christian groups report mixed church growth results in American Samoa. Jehovah's Witnesses experience stagnant membership growth. Witnesses had only one convert baptism in 2009. Seventh Day Adventists reported moderate membership growth among the Samoan islands during the 2000s. The size and member activity of traditional Christian denominations continues to decline.

Future Prospects

The LDS Church in American Samoa continues to demonstrate self-sustainable local leadership and provides regional strength in missionary manpower and self-sufficiency despite its tiny population. Additional stakes may be organized over the medium-term as additional congregations are created. It is possible that a small temple may one day be built on Tutuila once the Apia Samoa Temple is more utilized by members in the Samoan Islands.

AUSTRALIA

Geography

AREA: 7,741,220 square km. The only continent-nation in the world, Australia is the sixth largest country and occupies the world's smallest continent. Terrain principally consists of desert plains, plateaus, and basins subject to hot, arid conditions. Located in the heart of central Australia known as the Outback, Ayers Rock (Uluru) is an international icon of Australia that consists of a large, red sandstone rock formation. Fertile grass plains, forest, and hilly terrain occupy some coastal areas in the north and extreme east and southeast. Temperate climate occurs in the east and south, whereas tropical climate characterizes northern areas. The Great Barrier Reef sits off the northeastern coast and is the world's largest reef system. Many unique species of animals and plants are native only to Australia, including marsupial mammals like kangaroos and koalas. Forest fires, cyclones, and droughts are natural hazards. Environmental issues include soil erosion, industrialization, urbanization, increasing soil salinity, desertification, destruction of endemic flora and fauna, water scarcity, pollution, and tourism. Australia is administratively divided into six states and two territories.

Peoples

White: 92%

Asian: 7%

Aboriginal/other: 1%

Population: 22,015,576 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.126% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.77 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 79.48 male, 84.45 female (2012)

Languages: English (78.5%), Italian (1.6%), Greek (1.3%), Cantonese (1.2%), Arabic (1.2%), Mandarin (1.1%), Vietnamese (1%), Spanish (0.5%), Tagalog [Filipino] (0.5%), German (0.4%), Hindi (0.4%), Macedonian (0.3%), Croatian (0.3%), Australian aboriginal languages (0.3%), Turkish (0.3%), Polish (0.3%), Serbian (0.3%), Maltese (0.2%), Netherlander languages (0.2%), other (4.4%), unspecified (5.7%). Major languages include English (16.9 million), Italian (317,000), Greek (252,000), Cantonese (245,000), Arabic (244,000), Mandarin (221,000), and Vietnamese (195,000).

Literacy: 99% (2006)

History

Aboriginal tribes arrived in Australia several millennia prior to European exploration in the eighteenth century. Captain Cook claimed Australia for Great Britain in 1770. The first British colony was established eighteen years later in Sydney in the state of New South Wales. Convicts condemned of petty offenses constituted a large proportion of the settlers until the mid-nineteenth century. Additional colonies established included Tasmania (1825), Western Australia (1829), South Australia (1836), Victoria (1851), and Queensland (1859), each of which later became administrative states. The population increased in the mid-nineteenth century following the discovery of gold, which also augmented trade and commerce. In 1901, the Commonwealth of Australia was established, creating an independent nation with many political and cultural ties with Great Britain.

In 1986, the Australia Act removed all remaining British legal authority.¹⁴⁹⁹ During the twentieth century, Australia emerged as a competitive, advanced economy that dominated the region and achieved some of the strongest economic growth in the 1980s and 1990s. Increased immigration from non-European countries has diversified the demographics in urban areas. Today many immigrants originate from China, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa.

Culture

Australians tend to be socially blunt, honest, and forthright. Favorable agricultural conditions in many areas have led to a visible farming culture. British culture remains the primary foreign influence as a result of over a century of colonial rule. Most foods and dishes are of British origin, but Asian and Mediterranean cuisine are becoming more widespread as a result of the increasing number of immigrants from these regions. Australia is known internationally for its competitive athletes, wine industry, film and television, art, and composers. Secularism has spread from Europe, reducing religious activity and affiliation. Aboriginal art and place names are widespread. Cigarette and alcohol consumption rates compare to U.S. rates and are higher than the world-wide average. Divorce rates are higher than in most nations.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$40,800 (2011) [84.8% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.929

Corruption Index: 8.8 (2011)

With abundant natural resources, little corruption, and strong foreign investment, Australia has demonstrated significant economic growth and development over the past several decades. Consistent annual economic growth occurred from the early 1990s until the global financial crisis in the late 2000s. Free trade agreements have perpetuated growth and also limited the effects of worldwide recession. Unemployment rates are low (5.6% in 2009) and wealth is evenly distributed. Natural resources consist of a wide range of minerals, precious metals, natural gas, and petroleum. Australia possesses the world's twelfth largest proven natural gas reserves. Services employ 75% of the labor force and generate 70% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 21% of the labor force and generates 26% of the GDP. Major industries include mining, equipment, food processing, chemicals, and steel. Agriculture constitutes less than 5% of the labor force and GDP. Grains, sugarcane, fruit, cattle, sheep, and poultry are common crops and agricultural goods. Primary trade partners include China, Japan, and the United States. Australia ranks among the world's least corrupt countries, yet the illicit drug trade is a cause of concern. Tasmania is a large international supplier of opiates, and Australia is a major illicit drug consumer of amphetamines and cocaine.

Faiths

Christian: 63.8%

Buddhist: 2.1%

Muslim: 1.7%

Other: 2.4%

Unspecified: 11.3%

None: 18.7%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

¹⁴⁹⁹ "Background Note: Australia," Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 24 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2698.htm>

Catholic 5,551,065
 Anglican 4,023,446
 Uniting Church 1,226,398
 Presbyterian/Reformed 645,473
 Eastern Orthodox 580,925
 Latter-day Saints 136,617 290
 Jehovah's Witnesses 66,107 797
 Seventh Day Adventists 56,156 424

Religion

Most Australians are Christians. The largest denominations include the Catholic (26%) and Anglican (19%) Churches. Pentecostal and Charismatic Christian groups tend to report the largest increases in adherents, whereas other Protestant Christian groups have experienced the most rapid decline in adherents over the past three decades. The percentage of Australians identifying as Christian declined from 96% in 1911 to 64% in 2006 and continues to decline due to the spread of secularism and increasing numbers of immigrants of other faith traditions. Buddhists and Muslims each account for approximately 2% of the national population, whereas Jews account for 0.4%. Hindus constitute 0.7% of the population. Australia's small aboriginal population is predominantly Christian (64%), and only 5,000 follow indigenous religious practices. One-fifth of Australians are nonreligious.¹⁵⁰⁰

Religious Freedom

The constitution prohibits any government interference with the practice of religious freedom, including the government designation of a state religion, establishment of laws that infringe on religious freedom, and setting religious requirements for holding a public office. The government upholds religious freedom and recognizes major Christian holidays as national holidays. Government registration is not mandatory for religious groups to operate, but is required to obtain tax exemption status. All religious minority groups are permitted to construct religious buildings, but some of these groups have experienced some societal abuse of religious freedom. Muslims and Buddhists have in some small cities been refused permits to construct meetinghouses. Religious education in public schools is permitted, and attendance is optional. Australia has accepted refugees escaping religious persecution in other nations for several years.¹⁵⁰¹

Largest Cities

Urban: 89%

Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide, Gold Coast, Newcastle, Canberra, Wollongong, Sunshine Coast, Hobart, Geelong, Townsville, Cairns, Toowoomba, Darwin, Launceston, Albury.

All eighteen of the cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have LDS congregations. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the national population resides in the eighteen largest cities.

LDS History

In 1840, a seventeen-year-old English convert became the first LDS missionary to set foot in Australia. A second missionary arrived the following year from Scotland, and the first LDS branch was organized in 1844.

¹⁵⁰⁰ "Australia," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148857.htm>

¹⁵⁰¹ "Australia," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148857.htm>

American LDS missionaries arrived in the early 1850s in Sydney and faced low receptivity due to the gold rush. Branches were established in Sydney and Melbourne in 1852, but many of the early converts immigrated to the United States to join fellow Latter-day Saints in the Rocky Mountain West. Among early Australian LDS converts was Joseph Ridges, an organ builder who built the historic organ used in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City today. The LDS Church did not experience consistent, strong growth in membership and congregations until the 1950s.¹⁵⁰² The status of the Church in Australia has grown over the past century. During the 1950s, most members were tradesmen and laborers, whereas today there are members that hold more prominent positions in the community and in business.¹⁵⁰³ Difficulties obtaining official government recognition on a national and state level were resolved by the mid-twentieth century. Some difficulties encountered during this time include government refusal to recognize the LDS Church due to a lack of meetinghouses and the performance of LDS marriage ceremonies not registered by the government in some areas. During World War II, many of the smaller branches were closed as a result of limited local leadership manpower, the withdrawal of North American missionaries, and lack of church materials due to the dedication of shipping for military purposes.¹⁵⁰⁴ Seminary and institute began in the late 1960s. In 1988, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir toured Australia and had well attended performances.¹⁵⁰⁵ In 2001, members of the Australia/New Zealand Area met with the Australian prime minister.¹⁵⁰⁶ An aboriginal Latter-day Saint won the 2001 Pax Christi International Peace Prize for his scholarship on aboriginal culture and interethnic relations.¹⁵⁰⁷ In 2002, the Australian prime minister spoke from an LDS meetinghouse against illicit drug use.¹⁵⁰⁸ In 2005, the president of the Australia/New Zealand Area addressed the Australian Parliament.¹⁵⁰⁹

Missions

The Australian Mission, also known as the Australasian Mission from 1854 to 1898, was organized in 1851. In 1898, the mission was divided to create the New Zealand Mission. The Australian Mission was split in 1955 to create the South Australian Mission, later renamed the Australia Melbourne Mission. In 1968, the Australia West Mission was created and was renamed the Australia Adelaide Mission. Additional missions were organized in Brisbane (1973), Perth (1975), Sydney North (1993), and Melbourne West (1998), bringing the total of missions to seven. In 2010, missions headquartered in Melbourne West and Sydney North were consolidated with neighboring missions, dropping the number of LDS missions to five. In 2013, the Church reestablished the Australia Sydney North Mission.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 136,617 (2012)

In 1900, there were 300 Latter-day Saints. Membership increased to 2,000 by 1940 and 7,000 by 1960. Membership stood at 25,000 in 1970, 40,000 in 1980, and 76,000 in 1990.¹⁵¹⁰ Most stakes in the Sydney

¹⁵⁰² "Australia," Country Profile, retrieved 20 December 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/australia>

¹⁵⁰³ Bigelow, Christopher K. "Australia: Coming Out of Obscurity Down Under," *Ensign*, Dec. 1998, 35.

¹⁵⁰⁴ Newton, Marjorie A. "Australia: The First Half of the Twentieth Century," *Liahona*, Aug. 1987, 29.

¹⁵⁰⁵ Stowe, Dorothy. "Choir touches lives in 25,000-mile South Pacific tour," *LDS Church News*, 9 July 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17537/Choir-touches-lives-in-25000-mile-South-Pacific-tour.html>

¹⁵⁰⁶ "Australian LDS part of their country's fabric," *LDS Church News*, 8 September 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40462/Australian-LDS-part-of-their-countrys-fabric.html>

¹⁵⁰⁷ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Reconciliation efforts," *LDS Church News*, 12 January 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41153/Reconciliation-efforts.html>

¹⁵⁰⁸ Cooper, Christopher; Wakeley, Alan. "Australian leader visits meetinghouse," *LDS Church News*, 28 September 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42484/Australian-leader-visits-meetinghouse.html>

¹⁵⁰⁹ "General Authority addresses Parliament," *LDS Church News*, 19 March 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47017/General-Authority-addresses-Parliament.html>

¹⁵¹⁰ Bigelow, Christopher K. "Australia: Coming Out of Obscurity Down Under," *Ensign*, Dec. 1998, 35.

area baptized over one hundred converts annually during the early 1990s.¹⁵¹¹ In 1998, Church membership reached 100,000.¹⁵¹² Church membership growth slowed in the early 2000s but accelerated in the late 2000s. Membership increased to 105,087 in 2002, 111,098 in 2005, and 123,650 in 2008. The only year in the 2000s that experienced membership decline was 2001. Annual membership growth rates fluctuated from a low of -0.6% in 2001 to a high of 5.2% in 2005 and generally ranged from 2 to 4%.

The Australia census has reported increases in Latter-day Saint membership from 35,500 in 1986 to 45,200 in 1996, and 53,100 in 2006.¹⁵¹³ LDS Church figures for membership were reported at approximately 60,000 in 1986, 87,000 in 1996, and 116,925 in 2006. The percentage of members on LDS Church records that self-identified on the Australian census declined from 59% in 1986 to 52% in 1996 and 45% in 2006. In 2009, one in 170 was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 211 Branches: 82 (April 2013)

In 1989, there were 204 LDS congregations (112 wards, 92 branches). There were 283 congregations in 2000, increasing to 286 congregations by 2003. The number of congregations reached a high of 288 in 2007. The remainder of the 2000s was characterized by a stagnant congregational growth. By late 2010, there were 284 congregations. The number of wards has steadily increased in 2000s from 178 in 2000 to 185 in 2003, 195 in 2007, and 203 in 2010.

The first LDS stake was created in 1960 in Sydney followed by two additional stakes in Brisbane and Melbourne later that year. Additional stakes were organized in the 1960s in Sydney Mortdale (1967), Perth (1967), and Sydney Parramatta (1969) bringing the total of stakes to six by 1970. During the 1970s, four new stakes were organized in Melbourne Braeside (1971), Hobart (1977), Eight Mile Plains (1978), and Adelaide (1978) and there were ten stakes by 1979. By 1990, there were seventeen stakes and by 2000, there were thirty-one stakes. During the 1980s and 1990s, most new stakes were created in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide, and several medium-sized Australian cities such as Newcastle, Canberra, Ipswich, and Gold Coast. In 1998, there were twenty-nine stakes and thirteen districts.¹⁵¹⁴ Two additional stakes were created in the 2000s in Brisbane. By year-end 2010, there were thirty-three stakes and nine districts. Currently functioning districts are headquartered in Wangaratta (1890), Townsville (1964), Cairns (1974), Northern Territory (1974), Mildura (1975), Orange (1975), Rockhampton (1981), Nowra (1992), and Coffs Harbour (1992). Four districts were discontinued in the 2000s (Illawarra, Tamworth, Kadina, and Bundaberg) and were consolidated with nearby stakes. Four new stakes were organized in late 2012 and early 2013 in Brisbane Cleveland (2012), Coomera (2012), Melbourne Gippsland (2013), and Melbourne Craigieburn (2013).

Activity and Retention

In 1998, converts were baptized at a rate that would be sufficient to create two new stakes a year, although this rate of congregational growth was not achieved due to retention difficulties. A third of the converts baptized in the late 1990s came from member referrals.¹⁵¹⁵ In 1997, nearly 32,000 Latter-day Saints attended meetings with President Hinckley in five cities.¹⁵¹⁶

¹⁵¹¹ "New Australia mission created in Sydney," LDS Church News, 28 November 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21748/New-Australia-mission-created-in-Sydney--now-six-in-nation.html>

¹⁵¹² Bigelow, Christopher K. "Australia: Coming Out of Obscurity Down Under," *Ensign*, Dec. 1998, 35.

¹⁵¹³ "Feature Article: Characteristics of the Population," Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6 April 2010. <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/1301.0Feature+Article7012009%E2%80%93310>

¹⁵¹⁴ Bigelow, Christopher K. "Australia: Coming Out of Obscurity Down Under," *Ensign*, Dec. 1998, 35.

¹⁵¹⁵ Bigelow, Christopher K. "Australia: Coming Out of Obscurity Down Under," *Ensign*, Dec. 1998, 35.

¹⁵¹⁶ "South Pacific visit: Pres. Hinckley completes 8-day tour," LDS Church News, 24 May 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com>

In 1986, there were 1,600 enrolled in seminary, which accounted for 70%–80% of active Latter-day Saint youth at the time. During the 2008–2009 school year, 6,353 were enrolled in seminary or institute, including 2,890 enrolled in seminary. The average number of members per congregation increased from 365 to 446 between 2000 and 2009. In 2001, 2,773 attended the dedicatory sessions of the Perth Australia Temple, and 37,000 attended the open house—three times the size of LDS Church membership in Perth at the time.¹⁵¹⁷ In 2001, 1,800 attended two seminars held in Australia by area leadership to stress the importance of education and missionary service.¹⁵¹⁸ Approximately 50,000 attended the Brisbane Australia Temple open house,¹⁵¹⁹ and 6,500 Church members attended the temple dedicatory sessions in 2003.¹⁵²⁰ That same year, President Hinckley met with 1,500 members in Tasmania.¹⁵²¹

In late 2010, the Darwin Branch had approximately 200 active members and was one of the largest congregations in the Australia Adelaide Mission. In mid-2010, the Mount Gambier Ward was one of the smallest LDS wards in the Australia Adelaide Mission and had sixty active members. Missionaries reported that the ward had declining active membership primarily as a result of many active members moving away. Most wards appear to have between 100 and 150 active members, whereas most branches tend to have fifty to seventy-five active members. Nationwide active LDS membership is estimated between 30,000 and 35,000, or 25%–30% of total membership. At least 50%–55% of members appear to be totally disengaged and do not identify the LDS Church as their faith of preference, while the remaining 15%–25% are less active but still identify themselves as Latter-day Saints.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English, Greek, Chinese (traditional and simplified characters), Arabic, Vietnamese, Spanish, Tagalog, German, Hindi, Croatian, Turkish, Polish, Serbian, Maltese, Dutch.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are translated into Greek, Chinese (traditional and simplified characters), Arabic, Vietnamese, Spanish, Tagalog, German, Croatian, Polish, and Dutch. Most church materials and the Book of Mormon are translated into Serbian, whereas the Book of Mormon and only select church materials are translated into Hindi and Turkish. Translations of stories from the Bible, Doctrine and Covenants, the Book of Mormon, and some church materials are translated into Maltese.

Meetinghouses

The first LDS meetinghouse was constructed in 1904 in Brisbane.¹⁵²² By 1957, there were ten LDS meetinghouses.¹⁵²³ In 2010, there were approximately 200 meetinghouse locations throughout Australia, nearly all of which were Church-built meetinghouses.

com/articles/29013/South-Pacific-visit—Pres-Hinckley-completes-8-day-tour.html

¹⁵¹⁷ “Facts and figures: Perth Australia Temple,” LDS Church News, 26 May 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39938/Facts-and-figures-Perth-Australia-Temple.html>

¹⁵¹⁸ Heaps, Julie Dockstader. “Some 1,800 attend seminars in Australia,” LDS Church News, 8 September 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40461/Some-1800-attend-seminars-in-Australia.html>

¹⁵¹⁹ Cooper, Christopher. “Brisbane temple opens to visitor tours,” LDS Church News, 7 June 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43876/Brisbane-temple-opens-to-visitor-tours.html>

¹⁵²⁰ Wakeley, Alan; Conners, Paul. “Temples now circle Australia,” LDS Church News, 21 June 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43936/Temples-now-circle-Australia.html>

¹⁵²¹ Hart, John L. “A family of faithful, wonderful people,” LDS Church News, 21 June 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43934/A-family-of-faithful-wonderful-people.html>

¹⁵²² “Australia,” Country Profile, retrieved 20 December 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/australia>

¹⁵²³ Newton, Marjorie. “Australian pioneer continues to lay foundation, promote growth for Church in country,” LDS Church News, 7 September 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28160/Australian-pioneer-continues-to-lay-foundation-promote-growth-for-Church-in-country.html>

Public Relations and Finding

In 1986, the Church had between 120 and 200 news or broadcast items aired a month on radio and television in Australia that were overwhelmingly positive.¹⁵²⁴ In Perth, the Church in the 1990s held regular roundtables with civic, business, and religious leaders that promoted the importance of family in society. In Brisbane, local members organized shopping mall displays about emergency preparation, nutrition, and family history research.¹⁵²⁵ In 2001, Church members in Brisbane organized a parenting conference called “Family Expo” that was attended by approximately 400 parents.¹⁵²⁶

Humanitarian and Development Work

Local members have regularly provided emergency humanitarian relief for victims of brush fires, cyclones, and other natural disasters over the past two decades.¹⁵²⁷ In 1990, LDS youth in South Australia distributed fliers on the importance of tree planting and safeguarding against vandalism.¹⁵²⁸ The Church has also provided educational tools for aborigines.¹⁵²⁹

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The LDS Church faces no restrictions regarding proselytism, assembly, or worship in Australia. Foreign missionaries regularly serve and report few challenges obtaining needed visas. Latter-day Saints report no major societal abuses of religious freedom.

Cultural Issues

Secularism and low levels of religious participation among self-identified Christians are the primary obstacles for LDS mission outreach activity as receptivity has steadily declined in recent decades, especially among the white majority. Conservative political values reduce some secular influences on society, but many moral values are eroded. Full-time missionaries report that many younger women frequently cohabit and have children with their partners yet seldom marry. Some of these individuals are receptive to Latter-day Saint teachings but struggle to marry or end cohabitation. The Church has historically faced many cultural setbacks. Emigration of Latter-day Saint converts in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries held back the growth of the LDS Church for many decades. Factors that influenced heavy emigration included poor social acceptance of the Church in Australia, few local leaders, and Church policy that encouraged immigration to Utah.¹⁵³⁰

Asian and African immigrants were among the most receptive ethnicities to the Church in the past decade, and many missions report frequent baptisms among Chinese, Vietnamese, Koreans, and Sudanese. The Church has met cultural and linguistic conditions of Chinese and Vietnamese immigrants in particular, with the assignment of full-time missionaries to work specifically with these populations. The operation of two

¹⁵²⁴ Otterson, Michael. “Australia Today: And Now the Harvest,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1986, 28.

¹⁵²⁵ Bigelow, Christopher K. “Australia: Coming Out of Obscurity Down Under,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1998, 35.

¹⁵²⁶ “Church organizes Family Expo,” *LDS Church News*, 28 July 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40266/Church-organizes-Family-Expo.html>

¹⁵²⁷ “Australia,” *Country Profile*, retrieved 20 December 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/australia>

¹⁵²⁸ “Australian youths focus on service,” *LDS Church News*, 26 May 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20308/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁵²⁹ “Projects—Australia,” *Humanitarian Activities Worldwide*, retrieved 31 December 2010. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-162,00.html>

¹⁵³⁰ “Australia,” *Country Profile*, retrieved 20 December 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/australia>

Chinese-speaking congregations in Sydney allows for culturally-sensitive mission outreach directed toward this minority group. Tongan and Samoan-speaking wards and branches also operate and create a favorable environment to adapt to the cultural needs and backgrounds of these Polynesian peoples. Latter-day Saints have yet to adapt mission outreach to meet the cultural background and needs of Sudanese, Indian, Greek, and Middle Eastern ethnicities. In 2010, missionaries reported some discussion of potentially expanding language-specific outreach to include Hindi.

Aboriginal tribes hold some cultural practices that create obstacles of LDS mission outreach. It is disrespectful to speak of the dead in some tribes, many keep family information secretive, and most have no written genealogical records. These challenges complicate efforts for performing family history work and proxy temple ordinances among the deceased kin of Latter-day Saint aborigines.¹⁵³¹ Latter-day Saints have experienced moderate levels of receptivity among aborigines, which are often difficult to reach in remote areas.

National Outreach

Australia receives excellent LDS mission outreach as 82% of the national population resides in the forty-four urban agglomerations with over 32,000 inhabitants, all of which receive LDS mission outreach. All administrative states and territories and all cities with over 25,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. Mission outreach centers may reach as much as 85% of the population. Australia's five LDS missions each serve approximately four million people; a ratio much lower than in Europe and similar to the United States. Approximately 44% of the Australian population resides in an urban area without a nearby LDS congregation. States or territories that appear to have the highest percentages of Latter-day Saints in the general population and most penetrating LDS missionary outreach as indicated by the lowest ratio of the general population to LDS congregations include Tasmania, Northern Territory, and Queensland (less than 65,000 inhabitants per LDS congregation). States or territories that appear to have the lowest percentages of Latter-day Saints and poorest LDS mission outreach at present include Victoria, Australian Capital Territory, and South Australia.

There remain large urban areas in the major cities that are lesser-reached by the Church. The organization of additional congregations will allow for greater mission outreach, but low receptivity and poor local member involvement in missionary work and proselytism reduce the practicality of establishing additional congregations in some of these areas. Nonetheless, congregation consolidations have occurred in some urban areas and have reduced the outreach capabilities of Latter-day Saints. The creation of dependent branches in more distant areas that pose greater potential for future growth appear most feasible for expanding national outreach in lesser-reached communities in Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, and Perth.

The LDS Church has made progress entering previously unreached nations and gaining converts from countries with fledging Latter-day Saint communities by reaching out to immigrant groups in Australia. Maltese immigrants have joined the Church for decades and facilitated the establishment of the Church on Malta in the late 1980s.¹⁵³² In the late 1970s, the Australia Brisbane Mission opened Papua New Guinea for missionary work. Although uncoordinated, LDS missionary activity has likely affected the development of the Church in several Southeast and Far Eastern Asian nations like China and Vietnam.

The Church has maintained an Internet site for Australia since the early 2000s at <http://www.lds.org.au/>. The website is fully functional and provides links to other Church websites, area presidency messages, national news, LDS family services, and additional Australia-specific resources. Shortly after the Church launched its

¹⁵³¹ Walters, Marianne. "Aboriginal ancestors left few traces," LDS Church News, 19 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17493/Aboriginal-ancestors-left-few-traces.html>

¹⁵³² "Work taking hold on the island of Malta," LDS Church News, 26 August 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18815/Work-taking-hold-on-the-island-of-Malta.html>

first official Internet site in the late 1990s, Australia was the country with the third most visitors to the site.¹⁵³³ There are few resources for investigators and those desiring to learn more about the Church from the site, as it has been primarily designed to meet the needs of Australian Latter-day Saints. Use of the international lds.org and mormon.org sites appear to adequately meet the online proselytism needs for Australia at present, especially through local member participation in creating personal profiles on mormon.org or sharing beliefs and inviting others to learn about the Church through social networking sites like Facebook.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

High-pressure “Pentecost” mission tactics in the late 1970s in which investigators were rushed to baptism with little pre-baptismal teaching and no established gospel habits, resulted in many numerical baptisms but very poor convert retention and severely damaged the Church’s reputation in Australian society.¹⁵³⁴ Poor convert retention has occurred since the late 1990s, as manifested by few new stakes organized and stagnant congregation growth despite LDS membership increasing by 25,000 between 2000 and 2009. Approximately two dozen branches matured into wards during this period, indicating that some progress has occurred in retaining some converts or reactivating small numbers of less active or inactive Latter-day Saints. Lackluster church growth in the 2000s appears to reflect at least in part the increasing proselytism directed toward immigrant groups, which demonstrate higher receptivity to the missionary message but experience poor retention due to language barriers, limited social support networks, transient lifestyles, low religious participation in their country of origin, and in many cases, inadequate teaching and failure to establish basic gospel habits before baptism.

Increasing secularism has also affected Latter-day Saint populations, reducing church attendance percentages and adherence to LDS teachings. Some Latter-day Saints reside in remote, rural communities with few or no fellow members and may be more prone to become inactive due to the lack of a church infrastructure and isolation.¹⁵³⁵ In 1990, the Port Headland Branch in Western Australia encompassed an area the size of the state of Utah, with some members living up to ten hours away from the meetinghouse.¹⁵³⁶ However, Latter-day Saints residing in isolated, remote areas appear to constitute only a tiny fraction of members that attends Church irregularly or not at all. Rather, a large number of inactive and disengaged members live in neighborhoods and communities with a significant LDS presence but were lost to inactivity after being rushed to baptism with little preparatory teaching, no gospel habits, and limited member fellowshiping. Intensive efforts to reclaim such inactives have achieved little success, in many cases because such disengaged members never experienced genuine conversion and lack a gospel testimony to fall back upon in times of hardship.

Perhaps the most important single factor needed to improve convert retention going forward is increased emphasis on establishing basic gospel habits and ensuring that prospective converts have experienced genuine and lasting conversion prior to baptism. Proselytism initiatives targeting youth can encourage greater member activity over the long term, especially by increasing the percentage of local members who serve full-time missions. Two young single adult (YSA) units operated in late 2010 in Brisbane and Sydney, but Australia overall is underserved in its potential church growth prospects regarding young adults and youth. Increasing seminary and institute attendance in the late 2000s may indicate positive developments teaching and strengthening the testimonies of youth, which will manifest itself over the long term by the creation of additional congregations.

¹⁵³³ “Internet users find LDS web site,” LDS Church News, 1 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29302/Internet-users-find-LDS-web-site.html>

¹⁵³⁴ Newton, Marjorie, “Towards 2000: Mormonism in Australia,” *Dialogue*, 29/1 (Spring 1996): 193–206.

¹⁵³⁵ Bigelow, Christopher K. “Australia: Coming Out of Obscurity Down Under,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1998, 35.

¹⁵³⁶ Potter, Leora. “They understand true commitment,” LDS Church News, 20 October 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20043/They-understand-true-commitment.html>

Ethnic Issues and Integration

White English-speaking Australians continue to account for a strong majority of the population and the lack of ethnic diversity in many areas reduces ethnic integration challenges. 14% of the population is white but does not speak English as a first language and has greater difficulty assimilating into congregations due to differing religious backgrounds, cultural practices, and language barriers. Asians and Africans are among the most receptive immigrant populations in Australia but in many areas do not have adequate social support networks at Church. These challenges are exacerbated when converts are rushed to baptism with little opportunity to develop strong friendships with active members before facing the demands and expectations of membership themselves. Middle Eastern and aboriginal peoples are among the least integrated into Australian society and pose the greatest challenges for Latter-day Saints to reach due to cultural differences.

Language Issues

English is spoken by nearly the entire population as a first or second language, limiting the need for language-specific LDS congregations. Nonetheless, the greater receptivity the Church has experienced among immigrant groups, limited English proficiency among many immigrants, and better cultural and social identification of converts with members of similar backgrounds, has created ongoing needs for non-English congregations and proselytism. In late 2010, non-English-speaking units included nine Samoan, four Tongan, two Chinese, and one Spanish-speaking congregation. Some non-English congregations have been discontinued in recent years as immigrants have become proficient in English and assimilated into Australian society. Additional dependent branches or groups may serve speakers of these and other common immigrant languages. Some full-time missionaries are assigned to work with specific language groups, nearly all of which are Asian. Language-specific outreach has yet to occur among European immigrant groups, such as Greeks and Italians, but prospective outreach toward Hindi-speakers appears more likely in the future due to low receptivity among most recently immigrated European peoples. Many LDS materials are available in the language of most immigrants. In the late 2000s, senior missionary couples assisted in the translation of some LDS materials into simplified English for use among aborigines in the Northern Territory, but there has been no conscious effort to translate materials into aboriginal languages largely due to the small number of Latter-day Saint aborigines, the lack of written literature in these languages, the small number of speakers, and lack of competent translators.

Missionary Service

In the 1930s, six Australian men were ordained elders and set apart as full-time missionaries. The first Australian missionaries assigned overseas were sent to New Zealand in 1930.¹⁵³⁷ At present, Australia remains far from its full-time missionary potential, as few young men serve missions. Most Australian missions appear predominantly staffed by North American missionaries, but Australians frequently serve in Asian missions such as in South Korea and Japan. Greater emphasis on missionary preparation in seminary and institute may increase the number of Australians who serve full-time missions. Increases in the number of Australian missionaries may increase mission outreach capabilities throughout Southeast Asia in the coming years.

Leadership

The Church began to be self-sufficient in leadership as early as the 1970s when all local and regional church leaders were from the Pacific, including mission presidents and regional representatives Robert E. Sackley became the first Australian General Authority in 1998 and served as a Seventy until his death in 1993.¹⁵³⁸ Nearly all international and regional LDS leaders from Australia are of European ancestry.

¹⁵³⁷ Newton, Marjorie A. "Australia: The First Half of the Twentieth Century," *Liahona*, Aug. 1987, 29.

¹⁵³⁸ "Elder Robert E. Sackley dies serving in his native Australia," *LDS Church News*, 27 February 1993. <http://www.ldschurch-news.com/articles/23164/Elder-Robert-E-Sackley-dies-serving-in-his-native-Australia.html>

Australian priesthood leaders have regularly served as mission presidents, area authorities, and temple presidents. In 1989, Ronald William Gear Innis from Sydney began serving as a mission president.¹⁵³⁹ In 1990, Kenneth Stanley Wilson from Sydney was called as a mission president.¹⁵⁴⁰ In 1992, Geoffrey J. Liddicoat from Perth was called to preside over the Australia Brisbane Mission.¹⁵⁴¹ In 1994, John R. Gibson from Brisbane was called as a mission president,¹⁵⁴² and Walter John Bailey III from Sydney began presiding over the New York New York South Mission.¹⁵⁴³ In 1995, John D. Jury from Hobart was called to preside over the Ireland Dublin Mission,¹⁵⁴⁴ and Daniel G. Hamilton from Sydney was called to preside over the Australia Perth Mission.¹⁵⁴⁵ In 1996, Robert M. Cowan from Brisbane began presiding over the New Zealand Wellington Mission.¹⁵⁴⁶ In 2000, Herbert James Pressler from Sydney¹⁵⁴⁷ and Edward James Phipps from Adelaide were called as mission presidents¹⁵⁴⁸ over the Australia Adelaide and Taiwan Taipei Missions.¹⁵⁴⁹ In 2002, Dirk Smibert from Gold Coast was called as a mission president,¹⁵⁵⁰ and Peter Roland Barr from Newcastle was called to preside over the Baltic Mission.¹⁵⁵¹ In 2004, Paul Ross Coward from Sydney was called as a mission president.¹⁵⁵² In 2006, John Galanos was from Melbourne was called to preside over the Greece Athens Mission.¹⁵⁵³ In 2007, Carl Ross Maurer from Brisbane¹⁵⁵⁴ was called to preside over the Australia Perth Mission,¹⁵⁵⁵ and Barry Lee from Adelaide was called as president of the Melbourne Australia West Mission.¹⁵⁵⁶

In 1992, Walter John Bailey from Sydney and Terence M. Vinson from Sydney were called as regional

¹⁵³⁹ "The callings of six new mission presidents," LDS Church News, 28 January 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19220/The-callings-of-six-new-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁴⁰ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 10 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20308/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁴¹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 18 April 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22613/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁴² "New mission president," LDS Church News, 26 February 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25065/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁴³ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 2 April 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25061/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁴⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 18 March 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26536/New-missions-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁴⁵ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 22 April 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26538/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁴⁶ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 5 October 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28229/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁴⁷ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 12 February 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37165/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁴⁸ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 4 March 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37253/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁴⁹ "New and Returning Mission Presidents," LDS Church News, 11 March 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37313/New-and-Returning-Mission-Presidents.html>

¹⁵⁵⁰ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 2 March 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41399/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁵¹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 23 March 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41472/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁵² "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 14 February 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45075/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁵³ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 4 March 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48592/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁵⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 24 February 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50165/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁵⁵ "New mission presidents receive assignments," LDS Church News, 3 March 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50207/New-mission-presidents-receive-assignments.html>

¹⁵⁵⁶ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 10 March 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50213/New-mission-presidents.html>

representatives.¹⁵⁵⁷ In 1994, Leo P. Talbot from Melbourne,¹⁵⁵⁸ Barry Lee from Adelaide,¹⁵⁵⁹ and Raymond Angus Page from Melbourne were called as regional representatives.¹⁵⁶⁰ In 1995, Victor D. Cave from Queensland and Philip Bruce Mitchell from Cherrybrook were called as area authorities.¹⁵⁶¹ In 2000, Robert M. Cowan from Samford was called as an Area Authority.¹⁵⁶² In 2002, John R. Gibson from Winston Hills was called as an Area Authority Seventy.¹⁵⁶³ In 2003, Barry Lee from Adelaide was called as an Area Authority Seventy.¹⁵⁶⁴ In 2005, Dirk Smibert from Queensland was called as an Area Seventy.¹⁵⁶⁵ In 2006, David J. Hoare from Sunbury was called as an Area Seventy.¹⁵⁶⁶ In 2007, Peter F. Meurs from Kingsley and Terence M. Vinson from Kenthurst were called as Area Authority Seventies.¹⁵⁶⁷

In 1995, John D. Parker from Mittagong was called to preside over the New Zealand Missionary Training Center.¹⁵⁶⁸ In 1999, P. Bruce Mitchell from Sydney was called as the Sydney Australia Temple president.¹⁵⁶⁹ In 2001, Donald W. Cummings from Perth began serving as the Perth Australia Temple president.¹⁵⁷⁰ In 2002, George Mearns from Sydney was called to serve as the Sydney Australia Temple president.¹⁵⁷¹ In 2003, John Douglas Jeffrey from Gold Coast was called as the Brisbane Australia Temple president,¹⁵⁷² and Thomas F. Hooper from Adelaide was called as the Adelaide Australia Temple president.¹⁵⁷³ In 2004, John Anthony Grincerri from Perth was called to preside over the Perth Australia Temple,¹⁵⁷⁴ and Graeme Edward Cray from Melbourne was called as the Melbourne Australia Temple president.¹⁵⁷⁵ In 2005, Charles Parsons from Adelaide

¹⁵⁵⁷ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 11 July 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22715/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹⁵⁵⁸ "New regional representative," LDS Church News, 22 January 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24776/New-regional-representative.html>

¹⁵⁵⁹ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 23 April 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25315/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹⁵⁶⁰ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 27 August 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24738/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹⁵⁶¹ "First Presidency calls new area authorities," LDS Church News, 24 August 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28224/First-Presidency-calls-new-area-authorities.html>

¹⁵⁶² "New members of Seventy receive sustaining votes," LDS Church News, 1 April 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37478/New-members-of-Seventy-receive-sustaining-votes.html>

¹⁵⁶³ "30 Area Authority Seventies sustained," LDS Church News, 13 April 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41666/30-Area-Authority-Seventies-sustained.html>

¹⁵⁶⁴ "Leaders called; 5 new General Authorities," LDS Church News, 12 April 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43588/Leaders-called-5-new-General-Authorities.html>

¹⁵⁶⁵ "38 new Area Seventies called, 37 are released," LDS Church News, 9 April 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47147/38-new-Area-Seventies-called-37-are-released.html>

¹⁵⁶⁶ "The newly called are sustained," LDS Church News, 1 April 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48753/The-newly-called-are-sustained.html>

¹⁵⁶⁷ "5 general authorities called to serve full time," LDS Church News, 31 March 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50362/5-general-authorities-called-to-serve-full-time.html>

¹⁵⁶⁸ "8 called to head mission training centers," LDS Church News, 23 December 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26635/8-called-to-head-mission-training-centers.html>

¹⁵⁶⁹ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 25 September 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/36422/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁷⁰ "New temple president," LDS Church News, 26 May 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39939/New-temple-president.html>

¹⁵⁷¹ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 28 September 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42487/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁷² "Brisbane dedication, president announced," LDS Church News, 3 May 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43692/Brisbane-dedication-president-announced.html>

¹⁵⁷³ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 6 September 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44281/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁷⁴ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 11 September 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46123/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁷⁵ "New temple president," LDS Church News, 25 September 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46175/New-temple-president.html>

was called as president of the Adelaide Australia Temple,¹⁵⁷⁶ and Frank Herbert Hewstone from Sydney was called as president of the Sydney Australia Temple.¹⁵⁷⁷ In 2007, John Murray Loblely from Melbourne was called as the Melbourne Australia Temple president, and John Anthony Maile from Perth was called as the Perth Australia Temple president.¹⁵⁷⁸ In 2008, Philip Francis Howes from Adelaide was called as the Adelaide Australia Temple president,¹⁵⁷⁹ and Walter John Bailey III was called as the Sydney Australia Temple president.¹⁵⁸⁰ In 2010, Malcolm Royston Mullis from Melbourne was called as the Melbourne Australia Temple president.¹⁵⁸¹

Temple

Prior to the completion of the Sydney Australia Temple in 1984, local members attended the Auckland New Zealand Temple. Australian members have demonstrated consistently high levels of temple attendance and activity, which has merited the construction of four additional temples in the 2000s. In 1985, 41,341 endowments were performed in the Sydney Australia Temple and 53,889 names were submitted, making the temple one of the few in the Church at the time that was self-sufficient in submitting names for proxy ordinances.¹⁵⁸² Additional temples were announced for Brisbane (1998), Melbourne (1998), Adelaide (1999), and Perth (1999), and were all built and dedicated between 2000 and 2003. Each of the four temples built in the 2000s operate far below capacity. In 2010, the Adelaide Temple scheduled one to two endowment sessions Wednesdays through Saturdays, the Brisbane Temple had four to five sessions Wednesdays through Saturdays, and the Perth Temple had three to four sessions Wednesdays through Saturdays. Endowment sessions and other temple ordinances occur on an appointment basis for the Melbourne Australia Temple. Australia nonetheless exhibits a high degree of self-sufficiency regarding temple ordinance work as nearly all temple presidents have been local Australian members and temple attendance among active members has merited the construction of additional temples. Distance has been a major factor in the construction of additional temples. At present, there are no foreseeable prospects for additional temples to be constructed in Australia as all metropolitan areas with over one million inhabitants have an LDS temple.

Comparative Growth

LDS Church growth trends in Australia have shared many similarities with growth in New Zealand, although Latter-day Saints constitute a larger percentage of the New Zealand population largely due to early successes among the Maori in New Zealand and heavy emigration and low receptivity in Australia over the first century of LDS proselytism. If the percentage of Latter-day Saints in Australia was the same as New Zealand, there would be more than half a million Latter-day Saints meeting in over a thousand congregations. The percentage of members that self-identified as Latter-day Saints on both the Australian and New Zealand censuses in 2006 was identical (45%). New Zealand has demonstrated greater self-sufficiency regarding full-time missionary manpower, likely due to the large number of Pacific Islander and Maori Latter-day Saints who tend to have higher activity rates and rates of missionary service than whites. In 1989, Australia was the country outside the

¹⁵⁷⁶ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 16 July 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47569/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁷⁷ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 20 August 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47723/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁷⁸ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 22 September 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51069/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁷⁹ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 28 June 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/52210/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁸⁰ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 5 July 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/52563/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁸¹ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 29 May 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59401/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹⁵⁸² Otterson, Michael. "Australia Today: And Now the Harvest," *Ensign*, Oct. 1986, 28.

United States with the ninth most stakes,¹⁵⁸³ whereas in 2010 Australia had the eleventh most. In late 2010, Australia had the fifth most LDS temples, twelfth most missions, and fourteenth most congregations.

Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam are the most rapidly growing religious groups in recent years, principally due to immigration. Most missionary-minded Christian groups experience slow growth comparable to Latter-day Saints, but some Christian groups tend to have higher convert retention and stronger congregational growth. In 1998, the LDS Church was reported by a Sydney newspaper to be the seventeenth largest church in Australia, but was the church that had the most rapid membership growth rate year to year.¹⁵⁸⁴ However, high convert turnover and member attrition have prevented the LDS Church from becoming more prominent nationally. Seventh Day Adventists generally baptize 1,000 converts a year and experience slow congregational growth as the number of churches increased from 410 to 424 from 2001 to 2009. Jehovah's Witnesses experienced growth trends similar to Seventh Day Adventists. Pentecostals have ranked among the fastest growing Christian groups since the 1980s.

Future Prospects

The consolidation of two LDS missions in 2010 has occurred on the heels of a decade of growth in nominal membership disproportionate to the small number of congregations created, reflecting low convert retention and high member turnover. Membership growth rates remain higher than most Western nations and illustrate moderate levels of receptivity, but prospects for future real church growth depend on improved baptismal preparation of prospective converts, stronger local member-missionary approaches, tailored mission outreach to nominal Christians and the nonreligious, increased language-specific mission outreach and church planting, and augmentation of the native full-time missionary force. The history of the LDS Church in Australia demonstrates that an established, strong priesthood leadership comprised of native members does not ensure strong church growth. Latter-day Saints appear to have become more socially entrenched in their congregations over time, reducing their ability to relate with the general population and employ effective member-missionary skills and habits.

¹⁵⁸³ Hart, John L. "Mexico milestone: 100th stake created," LDS Church News, 1 July 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18995/Mexico-milestone-100th-stake-created.html>

¹⁵⁸⁴ Bigelow, Christopher K. "Australia: Coming Out of Obscurity Down Under," *Ensign*, Dec. 1998, 35.

FIJI

Geography

AREA: 18,274 square km. Fiji consists of 332 islands in the South Pacific Ocean between Hawaii and New Zealand. Tropical marine climate occurs year round with little fluctuation in temperature. Mountains cover most terrain. Cyclones are frequent natural hazards. Environmental issues include deforestation and soil erosion. Fiji is administratively divided into four divisions and one dependency. A third of Fiji's islands are populated.

Peoples

Fijian: 57.3%
Indian: 37.6%
Rotuman: 1.2%
Other: 3.9%

Fijians are a Melanesian group with some Polynesian influences. The British relocated Indian workers in the late nineteenth century to labor on sugar plantations. Other ethnic groups primarily include Europeans, other Pacific Islanders, and Chinese. Rotumans are native to the island of Rotuma. Indians, Chinese, and Europeans are experiencing population declines mainly due to emigration.

Population: 890,057 (July 2012)
Annual Growth Rate: 0.766% (2012)
Fertility Rate: 2.58 children born per woman (2012)
Life Expectancy: 69 male, 74.32 female (2012)

Languages: Indian languages [mainly Fijian Hindi] (52%), Fijian (43%), other (5%). English and Fijian are the official languages. Ten native languages are spoken.

Literacy: 93.7% (2003)

History

Fiji has likely been populated for several thousand years. Tribes living throughout the island chain frequently fought one another and did not come under European rule until the late nineteenth century. Fiji became a British colony in 1874, and independence occurred in 1970. Prior to independence, the British brought many Indian contract laborers to cultivate sugar plantations. Two military coups occurred in 1987 due to many Fijians' perception of Indians dominating government affairs. By 1990, native Fijians took control of the government, and many Indians left the country. In 2000, another military coup occurred, which has resulted in ongoing political turmoil. Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama overthrew the democratically elected president in 2006 and has come under scrutiny for refusing to hold elections.

Culture

Modern Fijian culture represents a blend of indigenous, European, Indian, and Chinese societies. Traditional

Fijian culture continues to endure in several areas, especially in rural locations. Indo-Fijians often segregate themselves and continue their traditional customs and practices, such as performing arranged marriages. Common foods include seafood, vegetables, and cassava. Each village has a chief who determines many aspects of local laws. Cigarette and alcohol consumption rates rank lower than the world average.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$4,600 (2011) [9.56% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.688

Corruption Index: N/A

Fiji possesses greater natural resources than many other island nations of the South Pacific, including large amounts of timber, valuable mineral deposits, and fish. However, government mismanagement, fluctuations in the price and demand of sugar, and recent political turmoil have reduced foreign investment and hurt economic growth. Agriculture employs 70% of the labor force but produces only 9% of the GDP. Primary crops include sugarcane, coconuts, cassava, and rice. Services employ less than 30% of the workforce but produce 78% of the GDP. Major industries include tourism, sugar, and clothing. Primary trade partners include Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States.

Many different agencies have been examining and evaluating corruption levels in Fiji to help reduce its occurrence. However, the current political atmosphere continues to be less than conducive for government involvement in rectifying corruption.

Faiths

Christian: 64.5%

Hindu: 27.9%

Muslim: 6.3%

Sikh: 0.3%

Other/unspecified: 0.3%

None: 0.7%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Methodist 218,000

Catholic 80,000

Seventh Day Adventists 26,456 151

Latter-day Saints 16,951 49

Jehovah's Witnesses 2,868 69

Religion

Nearly all native Fijians are Christian, whereas Indo-Fijians primarily adhere to Hinduism and Islam. The Methodist Church is the largest Christian denomination. Only 6% of Indo-Fijians are Christian, whereas 60% of Chinese Fijians follow Christianity. Many Christian denominations have had an active missionary presence for many years and conduct humanitarian and development work.¹⁵⁸⁵

¹⁵⁸⁵ "Fiji," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127270.htm>

Religious Freedom

Laws and policies maintain freedom of religion despite the abrogation of the constitution in 2009. Laws do not tolerate the abuse of religious freedom. Several Christian, Hindu, and Muslim holidays are recognized by the government. Religious groups do not have to register with the government. Religion in recent years has become increasingly more political. There have been some reports of non-Christians feeling pressured into attending Christian activities sponsored by the government. Some non-Christians report societal abuse of religion such as temple desecrations and arson attacks. Some remote islands have experienced little tolerance of nonmainstream religious groups, preventing their proselyting activities and worship services.¹⁵⁸⁶

Largest Cities

Urban: 52%

Nasinu, Suva, Lautoka, Nausori, Nadi, Lami, Labasa, Ba, Savusavu, Sigatoka.

All ten of the largest cities and towns have an LDS congregation. Thirty-one percent (31%) of the population lives in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

In the early 1950s, non-Fijian LDS families from other Pacific Islands relocated to Suva and began holding worship services. The Church organized its first branch in Suva in 1954 after the arrival of the first missionaries. Initial growth was slow, partially due to restrictions on the number of missionary visas granted to the Church. The visa quota for missionaries was raised from two to six in the late 1950s. The first Church-built meetinghouse was built to serve as a future stake center 1958; 300 attended the dedicatory services. The first Fijian served a full-time mission in 1959. The Church created a second district in 1969 and organized the Fiji Mission two years later. In 1972, missionary work expanded into several new areas.¹⁵⁸⁷ Seminary and institute began in the early 1970s. The Church established a primary school in Suva that had over 300 students in 1992.¹⁵⁸⁸ In early June 2000, missionaries were temporarily withdrawn from Suva and surrounding areas due to civil unrest.¹⁵⁸⁹ Later that month, non-Fijian missionaries were temporarily reassigned to New Zealand.¹⁵⁹⁰

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 16,951 (2012)

Fiji had 1,500 members in 1973.¹⁵⁹¹ By late 1991, there were approximately 7,000 members.¹⁵⁹² Membership reached 12,163 by year-end 2000. In the 2000s, membership steadily grew to 13,563 in 2003, 14,120 in 2005, and 14,866 in 2007. After 2002, most years have experienced membership growth rates between 2 and 3%.

¹⁵⁸⁶ "Fiji," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127270.htm>

¹⁵⁸⁷ "Fiji," Country Profiles, retrieved 16 June 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/fiji>

¹⁵⁸⁸ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 18 January 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22443/From-around-the-world.html>

¹⁵⁸⁹ "Fiji missionaries relocated," LDS Church News, 3 June 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37900/Fiji-missionaries-relocated.html>

¹⁵⁹⁰ "Nonindigenous missionaries temporarily moved out of Fiji," LDS Church News, 29 July 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38202/Nonindigenous-missionaries-temporarily-moved-out-of-Fiji.html>

¹⁵⁹¹ Murray, Janet Brigham; Murray, Herbert F. "The Saints in Fiji," *Ensign*, Nov 1973, 27.

¹⁵⁹² Hart, John L. "Fiji: Church gaining prominence in isle cultural crossroads," LDS Church News, 2 November 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20729/Fiji-Church-gaining-prominence-in-isle-cultural-crossroads.html>

According to the 1996 Census, 3% of Indo-Fijian Christians identified themselves as Latter-day Saints, whereas 0.5% of indigenous Fijian Christians claimed membership in the LDS Church.¹⁵⁹³ In 2009, one in sixty-one Fijians was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 27 Branches: 22 Groups: 2+ (April 2013)

The first LDS stake was created in 1983. In 1993, there was one stake and two districts. At the time, there were twenty-one congregations, six wards, and fifteen branches.¹⁵⁹⁴ Three additional stakes were organized in Nausori (1995), Lautoka (1996), and Suva (1997), bringing the total of stakes to four. Two districts functioned in Labasa and Taveuni by 1997. The Labasa Fiji District was discontinued in 2008.

By year-end 2000, there were forty-two congregations, consisting of twenty-three wards and nineteen branches. In 2007, there were twenty-five wards and nineteen branches. In June 2010, seven branches functioned directly under the Fiji Suva Mission, six on Vanua Levu and one on Rotuma. Two groups functioned in Kadavu, which opened to missionary work in early 2010. One group functions under the Taveuni Fiji District.

Activity and Retention

Large meetings, open houses, and conferences have been well attended. In 1997, almost 5,000 attended a special meeting held with President Hinckley.¹⁵⁹⁵ Over 16,000 attended the open house for the Suva Fiji Temple in 2000, and 112 attended the single dedicatory session.¹⁵⁹⁶ The general membership of the Church was not invited to the dedication due to civil unrest. In 2001, 900 members gathered to meet President Hinckley with less than twelve hours' notice.¹⁵⁹⁷ Almost 3,000 attended the fiftieth anniversary of the Church in Fiji in 2004.¹⁵⁹⁸ Between 2000 and 2009, the average number of members per congregation increased from 290 to 347. Eight hundred sixteen were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year.

The 1996 census reported that 3,475 identified as Latter-day Saints, including 2,253 native Fijians, 633 Indians, and 589 claiming a different ethnicity.¹⁵⁹⁹ At the time, there were around 11,000 LDS members listed on Church records, indicating that 32% of total Church membership at the time identified themselves as Latter-day Saints for the census. Church attendance widely varies by location, as larger congregations exceed one hundred active members and smaller congregations have fewer than twenty. Active membership is likely between 3,000 and 4,000, or 20%–25% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Fijian, Hindi, English, Kiribati, Chinese.

All LDS scriptures are available in Fijian and Chinese. Only the Book of Mormon has been translated into standard Hindi and Kiribati. A large number of young women, temple, leadership, priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, teaching, Primary, missionary, videos, and family history materials are available in Fijian

¹⁵⁹³ "Religion," Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, retrieved 15 June 2010. http://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/Social/religion_stats.htm

¹⁵⁹⁴ Saunders, Shirleen Meek. "Fiji: Islands of Faith," *Tambuli*, Feb 1993, 32.

¹⁵⁹⁵ Avant, Gerry. "Prophet goes to islands of Pacific," *LDS Church News*, 25 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29655/Prophet-goes-to-islands-of-Pacific.html>

¹⁵⁹⁶ "Facts and figures: Suva Fiji Temple," *LDS Church News*, 24 June 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38013/Facts-and-figures-Suva-Fiji-Temple.html>

¹⁵⁹⁷ "Gospel shines in faces of members in Fiji," *LDS Church News*, 26 May 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39949/Gospel-shines-in-faces-of-members-in-Fiji.html>

¹⁵⁹⁸ King, Elder Jerry L.; King, Sister Oliva F. "50 years in Fiji," *LDS Church News*, 18 December 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46628/50-years-in-Fiji.html>

¹⁵⁹⁹ "Religion," Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, retrieved 15 June 2010. http://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/Social/religion_stats.htm

and Chinese. Fijian translations of the Church Handbook of Instructions and several popular church books are also available. A few unit, priesthood, Relief Society, primary, and missionary resources are translated into the Fijian dialect of Hindi, whereas standard Hindi has a larger number of materials available. General Conference has been translated into Fijian Hindi since 2007. The Church has only translated the Articles of Faith into Rotuman. The Church has translated a wide body of materials, particularly for youth, missionaries and primary into Kiribati. General conference and leadership trainings are also available in Fijian, Kiribati, and Chinese. Fijian and Kiribati have four issues of the *Liahona* annually, whereas Hindi has one issue and Chinese has twelve issues.

Meetinghouses

In 1999, the Church maintained eighteen chapels and two schools.¹⁶⁰⁰ Most congregations meet in Church-built meetinghouses, whereas smaller branches may meet in rented spaces.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church has completed at least three humanitarian projects in recent years that provided clean water, educational training, and medical equipment.¹⁶⁰¹ In 2002, the Church donated medical supplies to a hospital on Rotuma.¹⁶⁰² Intense flooding in 2004 led the Church to temporarily house flood victims in Suva.¹⁶⁰³

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Missionaries proselyte openly and experience no government restrictions. The Church has maintained positive relations with the Fijian government despite successive coups over the years. Village law and the need for permission from village chiefs to perform missionary work in many outlying areas can present challenges.

Cultural Issues

The Church has experienced difficulty developing culturally effective proselytism and outreach programs, especially in conveying to the population that the Church is a Christian denomination while simultaneously emphasizing unique doctrines and practices that make it stand out. The Church aired commercials offering a free copy of the Church's Lamb of God DVD in April 2010. Many requested the DVD, and missionaries hand delivered them to the homes of interested individuals. However, missionaries reported that the activity produced little immediate success, as most just wanted a free video on Jesus Christ instead of missionary visits. The Church has adapted missionary dress to Fijian cultural standards, as missionaries wear traditional skirts called *lava-lava*.

Indo-Fijian converts tend to experience the greatest opposition to joining the LDS Church from their family and friends. This issue has been encountered in India, but poor native Fijian and Indo-Fijian relations have amplified the issue of leaving Hinduism and embracing Christianity. Nonetheless, the Church has

¹⁶⁰⁰ "'Warm spirit' prevails in Fiji," LDS Church News, 22 May 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35816/Warm-spirit-prevails-in-Fiji.html>

¹⁶⁰¹ "Projects—Fiji," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide," retrieved 17 June 2010. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-222,00.html>

¹⁶⁰² "Medical supplies donated to Rotuma," LDS Church News, 17 August 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42302/Medical-supplies-donated-to-Rotuma.html>

¹⁶⁰³ King, Elder Jerry L.; King, Sister Oliva F. "Victims find refuge in LDS meetinghouse," LDS Church News, 1 May 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45494/Victims-find-refuge-in-LDS-meetinghouses.html>

seen significant progress in reaching out to Indo-Fijian Christians, if not among Indo-Fijian Hindus. The percentage of LDS members among Indo-Fijian Christians is six times higher than the percentage of LDS members among native Fijian Christians.

Kava consumption as relating to the Word of Wisdom remains a subject of debate among some members. Church leaders have counseled members to keep free of habit-forming substances, which some consider to include recreational kava use. The strong sense of community in most villages can both help and hinder missionary work.

National Outreach

The main island of Viti Levu accounts for 63% of the national population and 73% of the Church's wards and branches in Fiji. Vanua Levu accounts for 14% of the population and has congregations in most of the largest population centers. Eighty percent (80%) of the Fijian population lives on an island with a mission outreach center. The rural interior of Viti Levu and lesser-reached areas of Vanua Levu are locations that are in need of greater mission outreach. The unreached population primarily lives on the many islands scattered throughout eastern Fiji in the Eastern Division. It will be challenging to establish the Church in these areas, as many outreach centers will be required to serve a small, scattered population.

In late 2009, missionaries opened Kadavu for missionary work and have since experience considerable success as the number of members attending meetings tripled over a six month period. Additional unreached islands may also demonstrate comparable receptivity to mission outreach. Before the Church expands into unreached areas, permission must be granted by the village chiefs for the Church to operate in a given area under local village law.¹⁶⁰⁴ This may have reduced mission outreach in some areas of the country.

The Fiji LDS Church College has provided education to many Fijians and has brought many into the Church. The Church school provides outreach opportunities for those living on remote islands who attend the school to bring the Church to their home villages.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Poor relations between missionaries and local Church leaders have resulted in low convert retention and member activity in many areas. Missionaries reported that in 2010, the Rakiraki Branch had no branch president for over six months and lost many active members due to stake leadership not taking a more proactive stance on calling a new branch president and restarting missionary efforts. Missionaries have suggested that some stakes may revert back to district status due to few priesthood leaders, poor communication, and challenges fulfilling stake responsibilities.

Double affiliation is a significant source of member inactivity. High levels of Christian proselytism activity for over a century have created a culture of denomination hopping. The period of rapid membership growth in the 1990s was also the time of the lowest convert retention, as missionaries tended to rush converts into baptism with little pre-baptismal teaching and fellowshiping. Many of these converts returned to their previous denominations after only a brief acquaintance with the LDS Church; reactivation work has experienced little success.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Integration of native Fijians and Indo-Fijians into the same congregations has required love and understanding

¹⁶⁰⁴ Saunders, Shirleen Meek. "Fiji: Islands of Faith," *Tambuli*, Feb 1993, 32.

from both ethnicities. Native Fijian and Indo-Fijian members reported in 1993 that they felt more comfortable around each other in Church than in any other place in society.¹⁶⁰⁵ Christian Indo-Fijians may be more receptive to the Church than their indigenous Fijian counterparts.

Language Issues

Many congregations accommodate speakers of different languages by providing translators in classes and assigning sacrament meeting talks to speakers of different languages. Sacrament talks in Fijian, Hindustani, and English are given every Sunday in many congregations.¹⁶⁰⁶ Foreign missionaries learn Fijian in the Missionary Training Center and learn and use some Hindi only in the field. English is used frequently in teaching.

Missionary Service

Fiji remains dependent on other nations to staff its missionary force. In 1993, 38 of the 105 missionaries serving were local members.¹⁶⁰⁷ In early 2010, about 150 missionaries served in the Fiji Suva Mission, half of whom were native to the boundaries of the mission. Fiji has around one hundred missionaries assigned at a time, as the mission also services Vanuatu and New Caledonia.

Leadership

Returned missionaries provide a major source of strength and manpower for local leadership. The Church has relied on Church employees to fill leadership positions. When the Suva Fiji North Stake was organized in 1997, two of the three members of the stake presidency worked for the Church.¹⁶⁰⁸ In 2007, Taniela B. Wakolo was called as an Area Seventy.¹⁶⁰⁹

Temple

Announced in 1998 and completed in 2000, the Suva Fiji Temple serves members in Fiji, Kiribati, and Vanuatu. The temple remains poorly utilized. In 2010, the temple had only two sessions offered on weekdays and three sessions offered on Saturdays. The temple conducts sessions in English with headset transmissions available in Bislama, Fijian, French, Kiribati, and Tongan. Members not living on Viti Levu face greater challenges to attend the temple regularly due to distance and financial constraints.

Comparative Growth

The Church has experienced some of the slowest membership growth in Fiji among South Pacific nations despite Fiji having the largest population of any nation in Polynesia and Melanesia. The percentage of Church members is lower than many nations in the region, especially among those that had a Church presence established before 1960. Other nations in the Pacific where missionaries first arrived in the 1970s have a similar or greater percentage of members than Fiji. Member activity rates appear low to average compared to many other Pacific island nations. Approximately 5% of Fijian members were enrolled in seminary or institute, nearly the same percentage for most of Oceania.

¹⁶⁰⁵ Saunders, Shirleen Meek. "Fiji: Islands of Faith," Tambuli, Feb 1993, 32.

¹⁶⁰⁶ Saunders, Shirleen Meek. "Fiji: Islands of Faith," Tambuli, Feb 1993, 32.

¹⁶⁰⁷ Saunders, Shirleen Meek. "Fiji: Islands of Faith," Tambuli, Feb 1993, 32.

¹⁶⁰⁸ "New stake presidencies," LDS Church News, 30 August 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29086/New-stake-presidencies.html>

¹⁶⁰⁹ "46 Area Seventies called; 29 released," LDS Church News, 7 April 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50423/46-Area-Seventies-called-29-released.html>

Many Christian denominations have experienced greater growth than the LDS Church, but most have operated for a longer period of time in Fiji. Christian groups with more members and higher growth rates have tended to develop greater national outreach, development work, and local leadership than the LDS Church.

Future Prospects

The Church has firmly established itself in many areas on the main island of Viti Levu but has yet to make greater breakthroughs with native Fijians. Low receptivity and a lack of leadership in many areas will likely continue to prevent long-term growth and greater self-sufficiency and stability, especially outside of Suva. The quick baptism of converts who have not established regular church attendance or other positive gospel habits remains a major source of convert attrition and saps strength and enthusiasm from local congregations. The Church school provides needed education and is a source for youth investigators and converts who can serve missionaries and provide leadership for long-term growth. The recent opening of missionary work on Kadavu indicates that mission leadership is actively pursuing broader national outreach, which in the coming years may extend to the many small islands in the east.

FRENCH POLYNESIA

Geography

AREA: 4,167 square km. Comprising five archipelagos and a total of 118 islands and atolls, French Polynesia occupies a large portion of the South Pacific Ocean between Australia and South America. Four of the five archipelagos are volcanic and have mountainous, rugged terrain. The sole coral-based Tuamotu Archipelago has flat, low-lying terrain and is the largest chain of atolls worldwide. Tropical climate occurs year round, which is moderated by the surrounding ocean. Cyclones are a natural hazard. Since 2004 French Polynesia has been an overseas collectivity of France.

Peoples

Polynesian: 78%

Chinese: 12%

Local French: 6%

Metropolitan French: 4%

Population: 274,512 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.021% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.0 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 74.18 male, 78.71 female (2012)

Languages: French (61.1%), Polynesian languages (31.4%), Asian languages [primarily Hakka Chinese] (1.2%), other (0.3%), unspecified (6%). French and Tahitian are the official languages. Polynesian languages are closely related. Polynesian languages spoken by more than 5,000 speakers include Tahitian, Tuamotuan, Austral, and Marquesan dialects.

Literacy: 98% (1977)

History

Polynesian peoples populated and ruled the islands until the nineteenth century when the French gained control of the islands. France performed nuclear testing on Mururoa Atoll from the 1960s to the 1990s. French Polynesia experiences a high degree of autonomy from metropolitan France and debate on whether to pursue independence from France is ongoing.

Culture

Christianity is the dominant cultural influence on society and in recent years materialism and secularism have been on the rise. Ethnic tensions occur between Polynesians and non-Polynesians primary due to differing political ideologies and socioeconomic status. Some Polynesians desire independence from France and a revival of native culture. Many businesses are operated by French and Chinese Tahitians, whereas Polynesians are often employed in skilled and unskilled labor. Fish, pork, breadfruit, taro, and sweet potato are traditional foods.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$18,000 (2004) [47.6% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: N/A

Corruption Index: N/A

Subsistence agriculture sustained the economy until 1962 when France stationed military personnel on the islands, which led to greater modernization of the economy. Most are now employed by the military or work for the tourist industry. Timber, fish, hydropower, and cobalt are natural resources.

Faiths

Christian: 91%

Other: 3%

No religion: 6%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 87,300

Latter-day Saints 22,659 83

Community of Christ 6,882

Seventh Day Adventists 4,272 37

Jehovah's Witnesses 2,656 30

Religion

Protestant Christians comprise 54% of the population, whereas Catholics constitute 30% of the population. Ten percent (10%) of French Polynesians adhere other religious groups, and 6% do not follow a religion.

Religious Freedom

The French constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the local government in Mayotte. There are no restrictions regarding proselytism or the placement of foreign missionaries.

Largest Towns

Urban: 52%

Faaa, Papeete, Punaauia, Pirae, Mahina, Paea, Papara, Arue, Afaahiti, Nunue.

All ten largest towns have an LDS congregations. Fifty-nine percent (59%) of the national population resides in the ten largest towns.

LDS History

Organized in 1844, the Society Islands Mission was the third LDS mission organized following the British (1837) and Eastern States (1839) Missions. The first Latter-day Saint couples called to serve as full-time missionaries speaking a foreign language in a foreign culture were called to serve in French Polynesia. Initial proselytism efforts commenced in Tubuai and the Tuamotu Archipelago. The first LDS branch opened on Tubuai and eventually led to the conversion of half the island's 200 inhabitants. Misunderstandings with the French Protectorate government regarding the financial support of foreign missionaries arose in the late 1840s and were resolved in 1851 with the Church agreeing that missionaries had to be self-supporting and pay for

items received from local members. In 1852, the Church closed the mission due to changing government policies and was not able to reopen the mission until 1893. Despite the proselytism efforts of Catholic and RLDS missionaries, several LDS congregations continued to operate independently and isolated from international church leadership in the Tuamotu Archipelago,¹⁶¹⁰ such as on Takaroa.¹⁶¹¹ However many Latter-day Saints joined the RLDS Church between 1885 and 1892,¹⁶¹² and today the Community of Christ (RLDS) is among the largest Christian denominations in the islands.

The Church did not ultimately resolve difficulties with the French government until the 1960s. The Church attempted to open the Marquesas Archipelago to missionary work in 1961 and again in the 1980s, but efforts were unsuccessful. In 1989, the mission sent a senior missionary couple of Marquesian ancestry to the islands that resulted in the establishment of a permanent presence and the first LDS branch in the islands in 1991.¹⁶¹³ Seminary and institute began in 1982. Elder Russell M. Nelson met with government leaders in 1994 while participating in the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Church in French Polynesia¹⁶¹⁴ and also dedicated French Polynesia for missionary work.¹⁶¹⁵ That same year, the postal service issued a special stamp featuring the Papeete Tahiti Temple to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Church's establishment.¹⁶¹⁶ President Hinckley visited in 1997 and met with the president.¹⁶¹⁷ In 1998, French Polynesia was assigned to the Pacific Islands Area.¹⁶¹⁸ In 2000, 400 members sang in an LDS choir for the sixteenth anniversary commemorating the autonomy of French Polynesia.¹⁶¹⁹ In 2011, the Tahiti Papeete Mission administered French Polynesia and the Cook Islands.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 22,659 (2012)

The first Latter-day Saint converts were baptized in Tuamotu in May 1845. By the following September, there were 620 members. By 1846, there were 866 members in French Polynesia.¹⁶²⁰ French Polynesian LDS membership was estimated to range between 1,500 and 2,000 during the latter half of the nineteenth century.¹⁶²¹ There were 425 self-identified Tahitian Latter-day Saints in early 1893 after four decades of no official church presence.¹⁶²²

¹⁶¹⁰ Ellsworth, S. George. "Called to Tubuai: Missionary Couples in French Polynesia, 1850," *Ensign*, Oct. 1989, 35.

¹⁶¹¹ Romney, Richard M. "Polynesian Pearls," *Ensign*, Oct. 2005, 14-21.

¹⁶¹² Britsch, R. Lanier. "The Church in the South Pacific," *Ensign*, Feb. 1976, 19.

¹⁶¹³ Hart, John L. "Tireless couple influenced many lives," *LDS Church News*, 18 February 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25703/Tireless-couple-influenced-many-lives.html>

¹⁶¹⁴ Hart, John L. "Government leaders welcome Elder Nelson with formal reception," *LDS Church News*, 21 May 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24929/Government-leaders-welcome-Elder-Nelson-with-formal-reception.html>

¹⁶¹⁵ Hart, John L. "Dedication culminates celebration," *LDS Church News*, 21 May 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24427/Dedication-culminates-celebration.html>

¹⁶¹⁶ Hart, John L. "Colorful stamp features temple," *LDS Church News*, 21 May 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24911/Colorful-stamp-features-temple.html>

¹⁶¹⁷ Avant, Gerry. "Prophet goes to islands of Pacific," *LDS Church News*, 25 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29655/Prophet-goes-to-islands-of-Pacific.html>

¹⁶¹⁸ "5 new areas announced worldwide," *LDS Church News*, 4 July 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31389/5-new-areas-announced-worldwide.html>

¹⁶¹⁹ "Choir sings at inauguration," *LDS Church News*, 2 December 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38959/Choir-sings-at-inauguration.html>

¹⁶²⁰ Britsch, R. Lanier. "The Church in the South Pacific," *Ensign*, Feb. 1976, 19.

¹⁶²¹ "Perrin, Kathleen C. "150th year of Church in Tahiti," *LDS Church News*, 7 May 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24201/150th-year-of-Church-in-Tahiti.html>

¹⁶²² Britsch, R. Lanier. "The Church in the South Pacific," *Ensign*, Feb. 1976, 19.

In 1994, approximately one-third of the population of Tubuai was LDS.¹⁶²³ In 2005, there were 593 members in the Tubuai Australes District.¹⁶²⁴ In 2005, 380 of the 1,000 residents of Takaroa Island, Tumamotu were LDS.¹⁶²⁵ In 1983, there were 6,442 members. Membership stood at 13,000 in 1993 and 16,616 by year-end 2000. During the 2000s, the Church experienced slow membership growth. Rapid membership growth occurred only during 2001 as membership increased by 20.6% in one year. Membership numbered 20,383 in 2002, 21,116 in 2004, and 21,567 in 2006. The only year to experience a decrease in membership during the 2000s was 2007, as there were 19,711 members, an 8.6% decline, most of which likely occurred from updating records of lost members. Membership growth occurred in 2008 and 2009 as membership increased to 20,282 and 20,805. Annual membership growth rates generally average around 2%. In 1987, one in twenty-one was LDS. In 2009, one in fourteen was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 54 Branches: 29 (April 2013)

By 1846, there were ten branches.¹⁶²⁶ By 1987, there were forty-three congregations, including twenty-five wards. The number of congregations increased to fifty-six in 1993 and seventy-five in 2000, including forty-six wards. During the 2000s, slow congregational growth occurred as congregations numbered seventy-eight in 2001, seventy-nine in 2003, eighty in 2005, and eighty-two in 2007.

The first stake was organized in 1972 in Papeete. Additional stakes were organized in Arue (1982), Paea (1990), Raromatai (1993), Papeari (1995), Faaa (1997), Punaauia (2011), and Mahina (2012). There were four stakes and three districts in 1994.¹⁶²⁷ In early 2011, there were three districts based in Takaroa Tuamotu (1927) [seven branches], Tubuai Australes (1965) [five branches], and Makem Tuamotu (1994) [eight branches]. In early 2011, there were two mission branches in the Marquesas Archipelago in Taiohae and Hiva Oa. The Tahiti Papeete Mission Branch also operates for members meeting in groups in remote locations.

Activity and Retention

In 1994, 2,140 attended a special conference in Papeete commemorating the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the LDS Church in French Polynesia.¹⁶²⁸ That same year, 60% of members in the two Takaroa branches were active.¹⁶²⁹ 7,000 attended a special meeting with President Hinckley in 1997.¹⁶³⁰ Over 3,000 attended a special conference in Tahiti highlighting standards in the Church's booklet *For the Strength of Youth*.¹⁶³¹ *Following the renovation of the Papeete Tahiti Temple 36,861 attended the temple open house, and*

¹⁶²³ "Perrin, Kathleen C. "150th year of Church in Tahiti," LDS Church News, 7 May 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24201/150th-year-of-Church-in-Tahiti.html>

¹⁶²⁴ Romney, Richard M. "Polynesian Pearls," *Ensign*, Oct. 2005, 14-21.

¹⁶²⁵ Romney, Richard M. "Polynesian Pearls," *Ensign*, Oct. 2005, 14-21.

¹⁶²⁶ Britsch, R. Lanier. "The Church in the South Pacific," *Ensign*, Feb. 1976, 19.

¹⁶²⁷ Hart, John L. "Sesquicentennial: 'Spiritual feast': celebration spans four island chains, makes LDS history in French Polynesia," LDS Church News, 21 May 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24812/Sesquicentennial-Spiritual-feast—celebration-spans-four-island—chains-makes-LDS-history-in-French-Polynesia.html>

¹⁶²⁸ Hart, John L. "Sesquicentennial: 'Spiritual feast': celebration spans four island chains, makes LDS history in French Polynesia," LDS Church News, 21 May 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24812/Sesquicentennial-Spiritual-feast—celebration-spans-four-island—chains-makes-LDS-history-in-French-Polynesia.html>

¹⁶²⁹ Hart, John L. "Members on isolated isle must rely on selves, Lord," LDS Church News, 10 September 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24708/Members-on-isolated-isle-must-rely-on-selves-Lord.html>

¹⁶³⁰ Avant, Gerry. "Prophet goes to islands of Pacific," LDS Church News, 25 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29655/Prophet-goes-to-islands-of-Pacific.html>

¹⁶³¹ "Fireside emphasizes LDS principles," LDS Church News, 10 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39460/Fireside-emphasizes-LDS-principles.html>

approximately 10,000 attended the dedicatory services.¹⁶³² There were 740 seminary and 524 institute students during the 2004–2005 school year,¹⁶³³ which increased to 899 seminary and 727 institute students during the 2008–2009 school year. The average number of members per congregation increased from 200 to 254 between 2000 and 2009. Most branches appear to have between 50 and 100 active members, whereas most wards appear to have between 100 and 200 active membership. Nationwide active membership is estimated at 11,000, or 50% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Tahitian, French.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in Tahitian and French. The *Liabona* magazine has four Tahitian issues and four French issues a year.

Meetinghouses

The Church began an aggressive meetinghouse construction program during the latter-half of the twentieth century.¹⁶³⁴ The first meetinghouse build by the Church in the Marquesas Islands was dedicated in 1997.¹⁶³⁵ In early 2011, there were over fifty LDS meetinghouses in French Polynesia. Most congregations meet in church-built meetinghouses.

Health and Safety

Cyclones and travel by boat have presented safety concerns. In 1903, approximately one hundred Latter-day Saints perished in a cyclone. In 1963, fifteen members died when their boat shipwrecked on a reef in Maupiti. One hundred eighty members lost their homes in Maupiti following a cyclone in 1997.¹⁶³⁶ Access to health-care on smaller islands is limited.

Humanitarian and Development Work

No recent LDS humanitarian or development work has occurred in French Polynesia. The Church operated a primary school from 1963 to 1982.¹⁶³⁷

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church enjoys full religious freedom and maintains positive relations with the government. The president has in the past attended several large LDS meetings and has spoken highly of the Church and its teachings. Foreign full-time missionaries serve regularly.

¹⁶³² "Papeete Tahiti Temple facts," LDS Church News, 18 November 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49773/Papeete-Tahiti-Temple-facts.html>

¹⁶³³ Romney, Richard M. "Polynesian Pearls," *Ensign*, Oct. 2005, 14–21.

¹⁶³⁴ "Perrin, Kathleen C. "150th year of Church in Tahiti," LDS Church News, 7 May 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24201/150th-year-of-Church-in-Tahiti.html>

¹⁶³⁵ "From around the World," LDS Church News, 16 August 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29111/From-around-the-World.html>

¹⁶³⁶ "Island cyclone leaves 180 Church members without homes; all safe," LDS Church News, 13 December 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29439/Island-cyclone-leaves-180-Church-members-without-homes-all-safe.html>

¹⁶³⁷ "Perrin, Kathleen C. "150th year of Church in Tahiti," LDS Church News, 7 May 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24201/150th-year-of-Church-in-Tahiti.html>

Cultural Issues

High religious activity and church attendance are ingrained in Polynesian culture and have facilitated higher member activity rates for Latter-day Saints. Increasing secularism is a concern that has likely contributed to slower membership growth rates in recent years, but activity rates of Latter-day Saints do not appear to have been significantly affected. The high degree of religious pluralism among Christians has reduced challenges for local members to assimilate into society and has favored LDS mission outreach efforts. There are few traditional societal practices and customs that interfere with LDS teachings. The non-Polynesian population comprises 20% of the population and presents greater challenges for proselytism due to their small numbers, differing cultural practices and attitudes, and lower church attendance and interest in religion.

National Outreach

French Polynesia receives excellent levels of mission outreach, as 80% to 90% of the population resides in towns or on small islands with an LDS congregation. All five archipelagos receive LDS mission outreach and have multiple LDS congregations. Seventeen of the nineteen towns with over 3,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. The two lesser-reached towns of Afareaitu (Moorea) and Toahotu (Tahiti) are within two kilometers of an LDS congregation. Several islands with fewer than 1,000 inhabitants have LDS mission outreach centers, mainly in the Tuamotu Archipelago. In 1995, the island of Taenga in the Tuamotu Archipelago had fewer than sixty inhabitants, but the Church maintained a branch that served the forty Latter-day Saints on the island.¹⁶³⁸ The Church has maintained mission outreach centers on most islands in the Tuamotu Archipelago with over one hundred inhabitants. Prospects for establishing additional mission outreach centers appears most favorable on Tahiti in lesser-reached villages on the southern and eastern sides of the island, such as Faauanu, Nutae, Otuofai, Papao, and Teahupoo.

The Church maintained a website for French Polynesia for much of the 2000s, but as of early 2011, the website was no longer functioning. French LDS materials are widely available online on church websites. Internet proselytism involving local members has yet to occur and would be most favorable on Tahiti due to its large population and widespread Internet usage.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Advances in membership growth, member activity, and retention occurred during the latter half of the twentieth century as a result of more frequent visits by mission, area, and international LDS leaders, increased numbers of local members serving missions, improved language training and proselytism approaches for missionaries, a wide-reaching meetinghouse construction program, the translation of additional LDS materials into Tahitian, the construction of the Papeete Tahiti Temple, the operation of a church primary school for two decades, better trained local leadership, and improved inter-island communication.¹⁶³⁹ Member activity rates are good as indicated by an average of 254 members per congregation. Convert retention rates may have declined slightly over the past decade as membership growth has outpaced congregational growth.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Increasing usage of French among Polynesians reduces communication barriers with European French. Political conflict between members desiring independence from France and those who wish to remain part of France may lead to some challenges unifying some LDS congregations that have members with conflicting political

¹⁶³⁸ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Gospel thrives on remote Pacific island," LDS Church News, 28 October 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26181/Gospel-thrives-on-remote-Pacific-island.html>

¹⁶³⁹ "Perrin, Kathleen C. "150th year of Church in Tahiti," LDS Church News, 7 May 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24201/150th-year-of-Church-in-Tahiti.html>

ideologies. Full-time missionaries report that political issues have not appeared to have affected the health and integration of ethnically-diverse congregations at present. The percentage of Latter-day Saints appears to be lowest among Europeans and Chinese due to lower receptivity, reflecting differing cultural backgrounds and societal attitudes.

Language Issues

The Church has accommodated shifts in language usage in French Polynesia as French has become more widespread. Full-time missionaries taught in Tahitian 95% of the time in 1970, whereas in 2007 missionaries taught in French 75% of the time. In 2007, some congregations offered Sunday School classes in both Tahitian and French.¹⁶⁴⁰ In the late 2000s, foreign full-time missionaries received language training in both Tahitian and French.

Missionary Service

Like much of Polynesia, the French Polynesian full-time missionary force is self-sufficient in staffing local missionary efforts and also exports missionaries abroad. In 1994, local members accounted for 80% of the full-time missionary force.¹⁶⁴¹ In early 2011, forty members were serving full-time missions from the Paea Tahiti Stake. French Polynesian missionaries may become instrumental in achieving greater breakthroughs with French-speaking Pacific nations or dependencies that have been more resistive to LDS proselytism efforts, like New Caledonia due to fluency in French and familiarity with French and Pacific Islander cultures.

Leadership

Abundant, experienced local leadership has significantly increased local sustainability, expansion of national outreach, and high levels of member activity and convert retention. In 1996, Jean A. Tefan from Tahiti was called to preside over the Fiji Suva Mission,¹⁶⁴² and Tahitian native Tekehu M. Mununui was called to preside over the Tahiti Papeete Mission.¹⁶⁴³ In 1999, Louis Eugene Pascal Arhan from Papeete was called as the Papeete Tahiti Temple president.¹⁶⁴⁴ In 2000, Jean A. Tefan from Tahiti was called as an Area Authority Seventy.¹⁶⁴⁵ In 2003, Tetuanui Marama Tarati from Pao Pao was called to preside over the Tahiti Papeete Mission.¹⁶⁴⁶

Temple

French Polynesia is assigned to the Papeete Tahiti Temple district. Prior to the completion of the temple, members traveled to the Hamilton New Zealand Temple. Members throughout French Polynesia attend the temple in Papeete regularly. Three thousand, four hundred, and sixty temple ordinances were completed by

¹⁶⁴⁰ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Islanders are striving to retain native language in Pacific nation," LDS Church News, 17 March 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50245/Islanders-are-striving-to-retain-native-language-in-Pacific-nation.html>

¹⁶⁴¹ "Perrin, Kathleen C. "150th year of Church in Tahiti," LDS Church News, 7 May 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24201/150th-year-of-Church-in-Tahiti.html>

¹⁶⁴² "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 16 March 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27481/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁶⁴³ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 20 April 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27477/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁶⁴⁴ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 16 October 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/36641/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹⁶⁴⁵ "New Area Authority Seventies," LDS Church News, 15 April 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37596/New-Area-Authority-Seventies.html>

¹⁶⁴⁶ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 26 February 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/34717/New-mission-presidents.html>

members from Takaroa, Tumamotu during a week-and-a-half temple trip in 1991.¹⁶⁴⁷ In 2006, the temple was remodeled and expanded by 2,000 square feet.¹⁶⁴⁸

Comparative Growth

French Polynesia ties with the Marshall Islands as the country or territory with the seventh highest percentage of Latter-day Saints in the world. No other Polynesian nation or dependency has as high of a percentage of members enrolled in seminary or institute as French Polynesia (8%), likely indicating that the islands boast one of the highest member activity rates for youth and young adults in the region. Like much of Oceania, the number of local members serving missions exceeds the number of full-time missionaries assigned to French Polynesia, and local membership is highly self-sufficient.

Missionary-oriented Christians have experienced slow or stagnant growth for the past several decades. Seventh Day Adventists generally baptize between 50 and 150 new converts annually but experience slow membership and congregational growth. Jehovah's Witnesses also report slow membership growth. The LDS Church appears to have achieved some of the greatest growth among Christian groups in recent years as a result of consistent mission outreach, a well-developed local leadership, and strong participation in youth-directed outreach from seminary and institute.

Future Prospects

The outlook for future growth appears favorable due to the resilient Latter-day Saint membership, the large number of local members serving full-time missions, and the slight increases in the number of congregations. Increasing secularism may continue to slow membership growth and delay progress expanding national outreach. Several additional stakes may be organized in the coming years from currently operating stakes due to growth in the number of congregations. Organizing additional congregations in lesser-reached villages on Tahiti may accelerate growth in the coming years.

¹⁶⁴⁷ Perrin, Kathleen Clayton. "100-year-old meetinghouse link to the past, hope for future," LDS Church News, 9 February 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21462/100-year-old-meetinghouse-link-to-the-past-hope-for-future.html>

¹⁶⁴⁸ "Remodeled edifice," LDS Church News, 21 October 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49666/Remodeled-edifice.html>

GUAM

Geography

AREA: 544 square km. The most southern and largest island of the Mariana Islands, Guam is a small island located in the North Pacific Ocean between Hawaii and the Philippines. The volcanic island is surrounded by coral reefs and experiences marine tropical climate with little fluctuation in temperature. A rainy season occurs from July to December and a dry season lasts from January to June. There are some mountains in the south, but most the terrain consists of a limestone plateau circumscribed by costal cliffs. Storms and typhoons are natural hazards. The foremost environmental issue is the deterioration of Guam's bird life due to the invasive brown tree snake. There are no administrative divisions.

Peoples

Chamorro: 37.1%
Filipino: 26.3%
Other Pacific islander: 11.3%
White: 6.9%
Other Asian: 6.3%
Other: 2.3%
Mixed: 9.8%

Chamorro are a Micronesian ethnic group and the original settlers of Guam. Other ethnic groups arrived following Spanish colonization of the island.

Population: 185,674 (July 2012)
Annual Growth Rate: 1.276% (2012)
Fertility Rate: 2.45 children born per woman (2012)
Life Expectancy: 75.46 male, 81.73 female (2012)

Languages: English (38.3%), Chamorro (22.2%), Philippine languages (22.2%), other Pacific island languages (6.8%), Asian languages (7%), other languages (3.5%). English, Chamorro, and Philippine languages are most commonly spoken.

Literacy: 99% (1990)

History

Guam's first known inhabitants arrived around 2,000 BC. In the sixteenth century, Europeans first reached the island, which was claimed by Spain. For the following three centuries, Guam served as an important island trade post and resting point for Spanish ships traveling from Central America to the Philippines. The United States annexed Guam from Spain in 1898 during the Spanish-American War. Japan overtook the island from 1941 to 1944, and as many as 20,000 died due to the conflict and atrocities committed by the Japanese Imperial Army and Navy. Guam has been an unincorporated organized territory of the United States

since 1950.¹⁶⁴⁹ The United States maintains one of its most important strategic military bases in the Pacific on Guam.

Culture

Dance, seafaring, games, songs, and fishing are major aspects of traditional Chamorro society that continue to influence contemporary culture. Immigrant peoples from Europe, Asia, the United States, and other Pacific Islands have infused many of their traditions and customs into the culture, particularly from Spain during the over three hundred years of Spanish rule. As a result, most are Roman Catholic. Spanish has influenced some linguistic features of Chamorro. Cuisine consists of seafood and many dishes common to the Philippines, Oceania, and East Asia. The United States continues to expand its military installations on the island and is predicted to significantly increase the population of Guam as additional military personnel are stationed. There has been some past conflict and tension between the various ethnic groups, namely Chamorro, Filipinos, and Micronesians. Some aspects of indigenous Chamorro religious beliefs continue to be practiced and infused with Christianity. Like much of Micronesia and Southeast Asia, locals chew the red areca nut (betel) frequently, which is a known carcinogen, stains the teeth, and is addictive.¹⁶⁵⁰

Economy

GDP per capita: \$15,000 (2005) [37.4% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: N/A (0.956 for U.S.)

Corruption Index: N/A (7.5 for U.S.)

The economy relies almost entirely upon U.S. military spending and tourism sectors, which continue to expand and develop. Sixty-four percent (64%) of the workforce is employed in services, 26% in agriculture, and 10% in industry. Primary industries consist of the U.S. military, tourism, construction, shipping, printing, food processing, and textiles. Agricultural products include fruit, copra, vegetables, meat, and eggs.

Faiths

Christian: 95%

Other: 5%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 151,666

Latter-day Saints 2,294 4

Seventh Day Adventists 963 7

Jehovah's Witnesses 779 8

Religion

Eighty-five percent (85%) of the population is Catholic. Other Christian denominations constitute approximately 10% of the population. There are small communities of Buddhists and followers of Chinese religions among Asian immigrant peoples.

¹⁶⁴⁹ "Guam," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 19 October 2010. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guam>

¹⁶⁵⁰ "Areca nut," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 20 October 2010. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Areca_nut

Religious Freedom

The United States constitution protects religious freedom and is upheld by national and local laws. There have been no reported instances of societal abuse of religious freedom.

Largest Cities

Urban: 93%

Dededo, **Tamuning**, Yigo, Barrigada, **Agat**, **Ordot**, **Mongmong**, **Chalan Pago**, **Talofofu**, **Yona**.

Cities or towns listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Three of the ten largest settlements have an LDS congregation. Forty-seven percent (47%) of the population resides the ten largest settlements.

LDS History

The first Latter-day Saints known to live on Guam were members in the U.S. military fighting in World War II. In 1944, there were multiple congregations with between 50 and 300 servicemen who operated under the Far East Mission. In 1953, meetinghouse facilities were dedicated and Guam became a dependent branch in the Oahu Hawaii Stake, later renamed the Honolulu Hawaii Stake. Institute began in 1970, and seminary began in 1980. Latter-day Saints have held an annual relay race since 1974.¹⁶⁵¹ In 1977, the first Chamorro converts joined the Church. The first Chamorro member to serve a mission began his service in 1979. The Church created the Micronesia Guam Mission in 1980 from the Hawaii Honolulu and Fiji Suva Missions.¹⁶⁵² In 1988, the LDS Church teamed up with other Christian groups in the support of legislation banning the use of poker machines in Guam.¹⁶⁵³ LDS Church President Gordon B. Hinckley visited Guam in 2000.¹⁶⁵⁴ In October 2010, the First Presidency approved the creation of the first stake in December 2010.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 2,294 (2012)

In 1990, there were 2,200 Latter-day Saints in Guam. There were 1,400 LDS members in 1995.¹⁶⁵⁵ In 2000, membership reached 1,574. Membership grew slowly for most of the 2000s, as there were 1,653 members in 2002, 1,669 in 2005, and 1,690 in 2007. In the late 2000s, membership growth accelerated as membership totaled 1,874 in 2008. Several years experienced a decline in the number of Latter-day Saints such as 2001, 2004, and 2006. Annual membership growth rates have varied from -7.3% to 9.2%. In the past decade, membership has generally increased or decreased by fifty to one hundred per year. In the past several decades, LDS Church membership has become increasingly more Chamorro and nonwhite due to converts from these groups joining the church and the relocation of many American military members off the island. In 2009, one in ninety-one was nominally LDS.

¹⁶⁵¹ Leddy, Herbert J. "Rain doesn't hinder 113 runners at Guam's Mormon relay race," LDS Church News, 13 August 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17797/Rain-doesnt-hinder-113-runners-at-Guams-Mormon-relay-race.html>

¹⁶⁵² "Guam," Country Profile, retrieved 20 October 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/guam>

¹⁶⁵³ Leddy, Hebert J. "LDS help rid Guam of poker machines," LDS Church News, 22 October 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17538/LDS-help-rid-Guam-of-poker-machines.html>

¹⁶⁵⁴ "Pres. Hinckley completes tour in Pacific Rim," LDS Church News, 12 February 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37174/Pres-Hinckley-completes-tour-in-Pacific-Rim.html>

¹⁶⁵⁵ "Guam," Country Profile, retrieved 20 October 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/guam>

Congregational Growth

Wards: 4 Branches: 0 (2012)

In 1970, the Guam Branch became a ward. A second congregation was created in 1976. A third congregation, the Agat Branch, was created in 1978. In 1980, the Church created the Guam District with four branches.¹⁶⁵⁶ The district has included the Northern Mariana Islands since the creation of the Micronesia Guam Mission. In 2000, there were four branches in Guam. In 2006, the Church discontinued one of the branches, resulting in the number of branches declining to three. In 2009, a fourth branch was created named the Dededo Branch. In 2010, the first stake was organized and all four branches became wards.

Activity and Retention

The average number of members per congregation has increased from 394 in 2000 to 493 in 2009. During the 2007–2008 school year, 121 were enrolled in seminary or institute. In 2010, each of the four branches appeared to have over one hundred active members. Active membership for Guam is estimated at 600, or 26% of total church membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Chamorro, Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilokano, Hiligaynon, Bikolano, Waray-Waray, Pampango, Pangasinan, Chinese.

Select passages of the Book of Mormon were translated into Chamorro in 1989.¹⁶⁵⁷ *The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony* is translated into Chamorro. All LDS scriptures are translated into Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilokano, Pangasinan, and Chinese. Translations of the Book of Mormon are available in Hiligaynon, Bikolano, Waray-Waray, and Pampango. The 2009 revised *Gospel Principles* book is translated in Tagalog, Cebuano, and Chinese (simplified and traditional characters), whereas the original version is available in Bikolano, Hiligaynon, Ilokano, Pampango, Pangasinan, and Waray-Waray. The missionary instruction manual *Preach My Gospel* is translated in Cebuano, Tagalog, and Chinese (traditional characters, Mandarin Romanized, and Cantonese Romanized). The Restoration DVD is available in Cebuano. The *Liabona* magazine has twelve Cebuano, Chinese, and Tagalog issues a year. Many Pacific Islander languages spoken on Guam have LDS Church materials available.

Meetinghouses

In 2010, there were three LDS meetinghouses on Guam, all of which appear to have been built by the Church.

Humanitarian and Development Work

In 1991, Latter-day Saint military personnel provided assistance to over 18,000 evacuated servicemen from the Philippines following the eruption of Mount Pinatubo.¹⁶⁵⁸ Latter-day Saints have helped cleanup efforts following natural disasters. The Church's Emergency Preparedness Program provided assistance to many members in 1991 when nine typhoons hit the island in one year.¹⁶⁵⁹ In 1993, missionaries provided service to

¹⁶⁵⁶ "Guam," Country Profile, retrieved 20 October 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/guam>

¹⁶⁵⁷ "Selections from Book of Mormon translated into Guam language," LDS Church News, 17 February 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20370/Selections-from-Book-of-Mormon-translated-into-Guam-language.html>

¹⁶⁵⁸ "Members in Guam aid volcano victims from the Philippines," LDS Church News, 20 July 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21641/Members-in-Guam-aid-volcano-victims-from-the-Philippines.html>

¹⁶⁵⁹ "Guam members prepared for Typhoon Gay's fury," LDS Church News, 12 December 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21893/Guam-members-prepared-for-Typhoon-Gays-fury.html>

victims of an 8.2 earthquake.¹⁶⁶⁰ In 2003, the Church donated \$10,000 to a Guam center providing mitigation kits to typhoon victims.¹⁶⁶¹ That same year, fifty wheelchairs were donated to the disabled.¹⁶⁶²

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

There are no restrictions on religious freedom. Latter-day Saints proselyte, worship, and assemble freely.

Cultural Issues

Latter-day Saint mission efforts benefit from a predominantly Catholic population that is tolerant of other Christian traditions. Worldwide LDS Church proselytizing materials are tailored toward the needs and religious background of Christian nations or territories like Guam. The high degree of cultural diversity exhibited by the small population creates cultural challenges attracting and retaining converts from all major ethnic groups found on the island. Church leadership in the region has openly opposed the consumption of Areca nut, which is frequently chewed as a social pastime.

National Outreach

Guam's small geographic size has resulted in the creation of a stake despite few members and requires few established mission outreach centers to reach the majority of the population. Additional LDS congregations in many areas are needed and may help increase member activity and convert retention rates. The most populous urban areas without their own LDS mission outreach centers or congregations provide opportunities for expanding national outreach and include Mangilao, Sinajana, South Acres, Talofoto, and Yona. Latter-day Saints live in most of these locations and can staff leadership positions in the event additional congregations are created once currently operating congregations grow large enough in active membership to divide.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Guam experiences low rates of member activity, possibly due to challenges meeting the high ethnic and cultural diversity of new converts and local traditions of nominalism and syncretism. Mission, district, and branch presidencies worked for many years to increase active membership and the strength of local membership to meet the requirements for a stake to be created. Continued low member activity rates and mediocre convert retention prevent the creation of additional congregations. Reactivation efforts headed by local members suited to the needs of inactive members and a mission emphasis on developing habits of regular church attendance before baptism may help increase member activity rates over time. The overreliance on foreign missionaries to fill administrative positions may have reduced convert retention rates over the past few decades. The creation of the first stake in 2010 points toward some improvement in member activity and convert retention in recent years.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The visible United States military presence has brought many American LDS members to Guam, which has

¹⁶⁶⁰ "Church members safe after 8.2 earthquake in Guam, tropical storm in Venezuela," LDS Church News, 14 August 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22952/Church-members-safe-after-82-earthquake-in-Guam-tropical-storm-in-Venezuela.html>

¹⁶⁶¹ "Church donates \$10,000 to Guam center," LDS Church News, 18 October 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44581/Church-donates-10000-to-Guam-center.html>

¹⁶⁶² "The gift of mobility," LDS Church News, 19 June 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44072/The-gift-of-mobility.html>

created some cultural challenges integrating with Chamorro, Filipinos, and other ethnic groups. Attracting nonwhites to a church perceived as predominately white or limited to certain ethnicities is one of the greatest ethnic integration issues. Today, there appear to be few conflicts at church as LDS demographics have become more representative of the island's ethnic composition. Filipinos constitute a large ethnic group in need of greater LDS mission outreach focus. The creation of a military ward or branch may help reduce ethnic integration and linguistic challenges.

Language Issues

Nearly the entire population has translations of LDS materials in their native language, but English and Chamorro materials are most frequently used by missionaries. Widespread use of English has facilitated interethnic communication, reducing the need for language-specific congregations. The creation of Chamorro-speaking or Tagalog-speaking congregations may increase member activity rates and accomplish greater breakthroughs with these ethnic groups. Greater numbers of active members are likely needed for such congregations to be organized.

Missionary Service

Local members serve full-time missions regularly, but are not sufficient in numbers to staff the full-time missionary force.

Leadership

Local church leadership on Guam has faced challenges transitioning from primarily American military-staffed church administration to Chamorro and non-Americans filling most local leadership positions. The lack of additional congregations on Guam is attributed in part to inadequate numbers of active priesthood holders capable of serving in a branch presidency or other administrative callings. The creation of the first stake in late 2010 indicates that local membership is maturing in faith and numbers as a stake requires at least 120 active, full-tithe paying Melchizedek Priesthood holders. Generating additional leadership remains a challenge as the creation of the Barrigada Guam Stake depended on the inclusion of the LDS congregation in Saipan, which in 2010 was one of the strongest branches in the Micronesia Guam Mission with 150–200 active members.

Temple

Guam is assigned to the Manila Philippines Temple district. Temple trips occur regularly but are time consuming due to the island's remote location. Prospects for a future temple in Guam will depend on greater church growth on Guam and surrounding island nations and territories as currently the number of active members is insufficient to support a temple.

Comparative Growth

Latter-day Saints have one of the smallest church presences among Micronesian nations or territories in Guam. The neighboring Federated States of Micronesia has nearly twice as many members, five times as many congregations, and three times the percentage of Latter-day Saints in the population. Latter-day Saints in the Marshall Islands constitute 7% of the national population despite the first LDS missionaries arriving two decades later than Guam. Kiribati boasts two stakes, and today Latter-day Saints are among the largest Christian denominations in the nation. Suggesting slow membership growth over the past two decades and the small percentage of Latter-day Saints in the general population is unsupported, as nations with smaller populations in Micronesia (Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, and Federated States of Micronesia) have experienced steady membership growth and marked church growth over

the past quarter century, exceeding that which has occurred on Guam. The headquarters of the Micronesia Guam Mission on Guam, which serves several surrounding island nations, and the longstanding presence of American Latter-day Saints serving with the U.S. military on Guam, has not led to improvement in church growth compared to neighboring Pacific nations without such apparently favorable factors. Receptivity to the LDS Church appears lower than in other nations and territories in the region, perhaps due to the impact of secularism, nominalism, the large number of non-Micronesian ethnic groups, and strong foreign influence on culture. Member activity rates appear lower than in most Pacific nations, whereas membership growth rates are representative for the region. In 2010, Guam became the nation with the second fewest Latter-day Saints to have a stake after Bahrain.

Many Christian groups headquarter their missionary activity for Micronesia in Guam like Latter-day Saints. Most of these groups have gained few converts in recent years. Several denominations have similarly-sized nominal church memberships to the LDS Church on Guam but have higher member activity and convert retention rates and operate more congregations. Foreign Christian missionaries from many churches frequently visit and serve on Guam.

Future Prospects

The creation of the first stake in late 2010, increase in nominal and active membership in the 2000s, and the organization of a fourth branch in 2009 indicate that the LDS Church has experienced some recent progress on Guam. As a result of the current expansion of United States military installations, white Latter-day Saint military personnel may come to the islands in larger numbers. The self-sufficiency of local members in church administration matters has taken years to achieve. The creation of additional congregations will most clearly indicate improved member activity and convert retention rates, and may help alleviate potential ethnic integration challenges.

KIRIBATI

Geography

AREA: 811 square km. Sitting on the equator between Hawaii and Australia, Kiribati consists of thirty-three coral atolls spread out over 3.5 million square kilometers in the Pacific Ocean. Most of the islands are concentrated in three island groups: Kiribati (Gilbert Islands), Rawaki (Phoenix Islands), and Kiritimati (Christmas and Line Islands). The flat, coral atoll islands enjoy a hot, humid tropical climate heavily influenced by the surrounding ocean. Typhoons pose the greatest natural hazard. Each of the twenty-one inhabited islands has an island council, which pertain to the regional administration of one of the three island chains.

Peoples

Micronesian: 98.8%
Other: 1.2%

Population: 101,998 (July 2012)
Annual Growth Rate: 1.228% (2012)
Fertility Rate: 2.71 children born per woman (2012)
Life Expectancy: 62.37 male, 67.26 female (2012)

Languages: Kiribati (97.2%), English and other (2.8%). Kiribati and English are official languages.
Literacy: 92% (2001)

History

Micronesians first settled the island chains thousands of years ago and were later influenced by surrounding Polynesian cultures. European discovery occurred in the late eighteenth century, and explorers named the islands the Gilbert Islands. British settlers came in the nineteenth century. The islands were incorporated as a British protectorate in 1892 and later as a colony in 1915. Japanese forces captured and controlled the Gilbert Islands in World War II between 1941 and 1943. Like the neighboring Marshall Islands, some islands experienced nuclear testing by the United Kingdom and United States following World War II. The United Kingdom administered the Gilbert Islands and gave greater autonomy in 1971 and independence in 1979. The name was changed to Kiribati at independence, which is the local spelling of Gilbert. The Phoenix and Line Island Groups were previously under United States control and were integrated into the new nation. Overcrowding on the main island of Tarawa has led to the government relocating some inhabitants to more sparsely populated islands or asking larger, nearby nations to accept some as permanent refugees.

Culture

Dance and music are highly esteemed among I-Kiribati. The people depend greatly upon coconut trees for food and shelter. Women are typically subordinate to men. Education is in great demand and difficult to obtain.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$6,200 (2011) [12.9% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.624

Corruption Index: 3.1 (2011)

Kiribati's remote location in the Pacific and few natural resources limit economic growth and trade. The country's phosphorus deposits were exhausted prior to independence. Fishing and agriculture account for the majority of exports. The most widely grown crops include copra, taro and breadfruit. Tourism is an expanding sector of the economy that receives considerable attention from government. Two-thirds of the workforce is employed in services while the remaining third works in industry. Between 20–25% of the GDP comes from foreign aid.

Corruption can be found throughout society. Large amounts of public money have gone missing.

Faiths

Christian: 97%

Bahai: 2%

None: 1%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 50,875

Kiribati Protestant 33,300

Latter-day Saints 16,279 28

Seventh Day Adventists 2,225 14

Jehovah's Witnesses 124 2

Religion

Christianity has spread rapidly, and almost the entire population belongs to a Christian denomination. Half the population is Catholic, and a third belong to the Kiribati Protestant Church, which is declining in membership. The LDS Church is the third largest Christian denomination. Northern islands are predominantly Catholic, and southern islands are mainly Protestant.

Religious Freedom

Kiribati experiences great religious freedom and tolerance. The constitution protects religious freedom, which is also upheld by the government. Religious minorities are not discriminated against and government does not favor a particular religious group.¹⁶⁶³

Largest Villages

Urban: 44%

Bairiki, Bonriki, Taburao, Buariki, **Temaraia**, Butaritari, Tabukiniberu, Utiroa, Rawannawi, **Tabiauea**.

Cities in **bold** do not have congregations.

¹⁶⁶³ "Kiribati," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127273.htm>

Eight of the ten largest villages have a congregation or missionaries serving. Sixty percent (60%) of the national population lives in the ten largest villages.

LDS History

The Fiji Suva Mission administered Kiribati when the Church was first established in the 1970s. Waitea Abiuta, a school teacher and headmaster of a school in Kiribati, requested several of his graduated students to go to the Church-run Liahona High School in Tonga. In September 1972, the mission president in Fiji visited and approved twelve students to attend Liahona High School. The twelve students joined the Church in Tonga, and some later returned to Kiribati in 1975 as missionaries. Several more joined the Church, and Church educators from Liahona High School were later assigned to teach at the school the original twelve students graduated from. Enrollment increased, and the Church purchased the school, naming it Moroni High School.¹⁶⁶⁴ Elder L. Tom Perry dedicated Kiribati for missionary work in August 1996.¹⁶⁶⁵ President Hinckley visited the Christmas Island branch in 2003 and promised the members that if they stayed true to the Gospel, marvelous things would happen.¹⁶⁶⁶ In 2006, the Church created the Marshall Islands Majuro Mission, which included Kiribati.¹⁶⁶⁷

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 16,279 (2012)

Membership numbered 500 in 1980 and 1,200 in 1987. By 1996 membership reached 4,600, half of whom lived in Tarawa, and activity had reached the point where a stake could be created. By the end of 2000, membership had increased to 8,633. Membership continued to increase rapidly, to 10,019 in 2002, 11,771 in 2006, 13,475 in 2008, and 14,927 in 2010.

Membership grew in Christmas Island from 100 in 1999 to 280 in 2006.¹⁶⁶⁸ Membership growth rates have varied since 2000 from 2% to 9.5%, with more rapid growth occurring in the early and late 2000s. In 2008, there was one member per every eight people.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 11 Branches: 15 Groups: 2 (April 2013)

In late 1982, there was one branch. Congregations significantly increased the following decade to 17 by March 1996. Elder Perry created the first stake in Tarawa from the Kiribati Tarawa District in August 1996. The new stake included the Bairiki, Betio 1st, Betio 2nd, Bikenibeu, Eita, and Teaoaraereke Wards, and the Bonriki and Moroni Branches.¹⁶⁶⁹ Congregations began to be organized in more remote areas, such as Christmas Island, during the 1990s. An additional district for many of the isolated branches outside of Tarawa,¹⁶⁷⁰ but was discontinued in the 2000s. By the end of 2000, there were eleven wards and sixteen branches.

¹⁶⁶⁴ "Kiribati," LDS Newsroom, retrieved 5 March 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/kiribati>

¹⁶⁶⁵ Orden, Dell Van. "Elder Perry creates first Kiribati stake, dedicates islands," LDS Church News, 21 September 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27921/Elder-Perry-creates-first-Kiribati-stake-dedicates-islands.html>

¹⁶⁶⁶ "Christmas Island receives honored visitor," LDS Church News, 28 June 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43977/Christmas-Island-receives-honored-visitor.html>

¹⁶⁶⁷ Stahle, Shaun D. "New missions created in Brazil, Philippines, Pacific," LDS Church News, 15 July 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49194/New-missions-created-in-Brazil-Philippines-Pacific.html>

¹⁶⁶⁸ "First meetinghouse on Christmas Island," LDS Church News, 4 February 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48478/First-meetinghouse-on-Christmas-Island.html>

¹⁶⁶⁹ "New stake presidencies," LDS Church News, 23 November 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28233/New-stake-presidencies.html>

¹⁶⁷⁰ "Facts and figures: Suva Fiji Temple," LDS Church News, 24 June 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38013/Facts-and-figures-Suva-Fiji-Temple.html>

A second stake (the Tarawa Kiribati East Stake) was created in 2007. The number of branches within stakes increased from two in 2001 to six in 2007. Two branches were discontinued in 2009. Several dependent branches or groups function throughout the islands, including two on Christmas Island, one of which, the Banana Unit, was preparing to become the second branch on the island in late 2009.

Wards only meet in the south and middle portions of Tarawa. Northern Tarawa has several branches. Mission branches include the Aranuka, Baretoa, Kabuna, Rawannawi, Utiroa, and Fanning Island Branches. Missionaries also serve in groups reporting to the mission or branches part of stakes in Abaiang, Butaritari, Marakei, and Tab North.

Activity and Retention

Member activity was strongest in the earlier years of the Church in Kiribati. In May 1988, 230 members attended the first shown General Conference session in English in Tarawa.¹⁶⁷¹ President Hinckley briefly visited 1,500 members in early 2000 on a refueling stop.¹⁶⁷² Higher inactivity is evidenced by no increase in congregations since 2000. Growth in activity and retention occurs in spurts. In a district conference held in early 1996, eighty men were sustained to receive to the Melchizedek Priesthood.¹⁶⁷³ The ratio of members to congregations has increased dramatically from 319 in 2000 to 518 in 2008. The average number of active members per congregation appears between 100 and 150, for a total of between 3,000 and 4,000 active members, or 25% of total membership. Because of relatively low member activity, Kiribati, like many other Pacific nations with a high proportion of Latter-day Saints, also experiences a high rate of “double affiliation”: members claimed by the Church but who do not identify the LDS Church as their faith of preference and who are also claimed by other denominations.¹⁶⁷⁴

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English, Kiribati.

The Book of Mormon is the only LDS scripture available in Kiribati. The Church has translated a wide body of materials, especially for youth, missionaries and primary. General conference and leadership trainings are translated in Kiribati.

Meetinghouses

The first Church-built meetinghouse was built in the 1980s in Tarawa; additional meetinghouses have subsequently been constructed throughout the islands. A few congregations may meet in renovated spaces.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Missionaries cleaned and painted a local hospital as a helping hands service project in late 2009. Moroni High School has hundreds of students attend every year and provides basic education and vocational training.

¹⁶⁷¹ “From around the world,” LDS Church News, 25 June 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17975/From-around-the-world.html>

¹⁶⁷² “Pres. Hinckley completes tour in Pacific Rim,” LDS Church News, 12 February 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37174/Pres-Hinckley-completes-tour-in-Pacific-Rim.html>

¹⁶⁷³ Weaver, Sarah Jane. “Church continues to grow in Kiribati: 4,600 Church members now in country; 80 recently ordained elders,” LDS Church News, 2 March 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28451/Church-continues-to-grow-in-Kiribati-4600-Church-members-now-in-country-80-recently-ordained-elders.html>

¹⁶⁷⁴ Johnstone, Patrick, and Jason Mandryk. Operation World 21st Century Edition, 2005 update. Paternoster Publishers, 2005, 384.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Government does not restrict religious freedom. The Church maintains positive relations with the government. In 1994, the president spoke at the graduation ceremony at Moroni High School in Tarawa.¹⁶⁷⁵

Cultural Issues

Economic and living conditions challenge the Church's development. On Fanning Island, members do not have access to medical care and receive limited training from mission leadership due to distance and hardships. Some members who moved to remote islands attend their former church due to pressure from their families. Interest in religion and the Church remain high, providing great opportunity for further growth.

National Outreach

Most populated islands have a Church presence. Moroni High School has greatly facilitated the Church's outreach throughout the many small islands and islets. Missionaries have utilized proselytism at public events and member-missionary programs are active.¹⁶⁷⁶ Distance and poor transportation impede outreach outside of Tarawa.

The first branch on Christmas Island came as a result of many joining the Church in Tarawa and later returning to their home villages. A few active families petitioned the Church for a branch to be created. More than one hundred members were found to be living on the island, and fifty-eight attended the first sacrament meeting held in 1999.¹⁶⁷⁷ Similar opportunities may exist on other, unreached islands that likely have numerous inactive members.

Although congregations function in most of the Gilbert Islands where Tarawa is located, around 16,000 or 20% live on atolls that do not have a congregation, such as Makin, Maiana, Kuria, Nonouti, Beru, Nikunau, Onotoa, and Arorae. Thirteen percent (13%) of the population of the Line Islands lives on Washington Island, which does not have a congregation. A district may one day be created from congregations meeting on Christmas and Fanning Island. The creation of the Marshall Islands Majuro Mission will allow for and create continued outreach and opportunity to more isolated areas.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Poor convert retention since the late 1990s stunt congregational growth. The district president of the Kiribati Tarawa District reported in 1996 that members were hopeful that following the creation of the first stake, a second stake would be organized in 1997 or 1998.¹⁶⁷⁸ This did not occur until 2007. The lack of any new congregations being organized during the 2000s indicates retention problems.

¹⁶⁷⁵ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 5 February 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24202/From-around-the-world.html>

¹⁶⁷⁶ "Celebrating independence," LDS Church News, 31 July 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45919/Celebrating-independence.html>

¹⁶⁷⁷ Dockstader, Julie. "New branch created on Pacific isle," LDS Church News, 3 July 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35998/New-branch-created-on-Pacific-isle.html>

¹⁶⁷⁸ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Church continues to grow in Kiribati: 4,600 Church members now in country; 80 recently ordained elders," LDS Church News, 2 March 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28451/Church-continues-to-grow-in-Kiribati-4600-Church-members-now-in-country-80-recently-ordained-elders.html>

The dissolution of the Tarawa Gilbert Islands District points to poorer activity and retention outside of Tarawa. Locating less active members on remote islands presents logistical challenges.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The I-Kiribati population is homogenous, and ethnic issues do not appear to present barriers to growth.

Language Issues

The Church provides a large amount of materials in Kiribati for a language with so few speakers worldwide. The Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price will likely be translated due to the large supply of English speakers from returned missionaries and graduates from BYU-Hawaii.

Missionary Service

About forty full-time missionaries served in Kiribati in late 2009, including eight on remote islands. Local members regularly serve missions and appear self-sufficient in staffing the local missionary force.

Leadership

Although local leadership supports two stakes, reliance on Church employees for leadership positions continues. When the Tarawa Kiribati Stake was created, the stake president and one of his counselors worked for the Church at Moroni High School.¹⁶⁷⁹ A stake reorganization in 1998 made the principal of Moroni High School the stake president.¹⁶⁸⁰ In a stake reorganization in 2002, the entire stake presidency worked for the Church at the high school. When the Tarawa Kiribati East Stake was created, the entire stake presidency worked for the Church. The new stake president of the former Tarawa Kiribati West Stake worked for the Church, but neither of his counselors did.¹⁶⁸¹ Branch presidents and their counselors in mission branches are likely all native members, but distance and infrequent visits from mission leadership impede growth and development.

Temple

Kiribati is assigned to the Suva Fiji Temple district. The first temple trip occurred in the late 1980s to the Apia Samoa Temple and consisted of twenty-eight members. In order to fund the trip, members had to use savings and sell land.¹⁶⁸² Temple trips likely occur to the Suva Fiji Temple for members in Tarawa. Most members living on remote islands have not attended the temple due to expense and visa restrictions. Due to distance from temples in Fiji and Hawaii and three very isolated stakes in Kiribati and the Marshall Islands, a temple may one day be announced for Tarawa.

Comparative Growth

The LDS Church has grown faster and had a greater expansion of national outreach than any other Christian denomination in Kiribati over the past few decades. Since the 1970s, no other nation has experienced as

¹⁶⁷⁹ "New stake presidencies," LDS Church News, 23 November 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28233/New-stake-presidencies.html>

¹⁶⁸⁰ "New stake presidencies," LDS Church News, 14 November 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31557/New-stake-presidencies.html>

¹⁶⁸¹ "New stake presidencies," LDS Church News, 10 February 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50115/New-stake-presidents.html>

¹⁶⁸² "From around the world," LDS Church News, 30 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17635/From-around-the-world.html>

substantial LDS growth as a percentage of the population as Kiribati. The only other nations in which the Church claims over 10% of the population have had a Church presence since 1952 or earlier. However, the number who actively participates is about one-fourth of this figure. Membership growth rates since 2000 for Kiribati are average compared to nations that in 2000 had five to ten thousand members.

Future Prospects

Favorable opportunities exist for continued church growth in Kiribati. Considerable numbers of convert baptisms are likely to continue. However, active membership is considerably smaller than nominal membership, and low convert retention limits congregational growth. Real future growth will hinge largely upon convert retention and member activity. Districts may be organized for mission branches on islands outside of Tarawa.

MARSHALL ISLANDS

Geography

AREA: 181 square km. Located in the northern Micronesia in Oceania, the Marshall Islands consist of two island chains and five separate islands. The two island chains, the Ratak and Ralik Chains, contain 29 atolls and many small islets. Most of these islands and atolls sit at sea level and are made up of coral limestone and sand. The climate is tropical and wet, although water shortages have occurred in the past on the islands. Due to the Marshall Islands' location in the Pacific Ocean, typhoons are not as frequent as in other areas of Oceania. The country is divided into thirty-three municipalities.

Peoples

Marshallese: 92.1%
Mixed Marshallese: 5.9%
Other: 2%

The Marshall Islands have little ethnic diversity, with 92.1% identified as Marshallese and an additional 5.9% classified as of mixed Marshallese heritage. Other ethnicities make up the remaining 2% of the population and are likely concentrated in Majuro and Ebeye.

Population: 68,480 (July 2012)
Annual Growth Rate: 1.874% (2012)
Fertility Rate: 3.37 children born per woman (2012)
Life Expectancy: 69.92 male, 74.25 female (2012)

Languages: Marshallese (98.2%), Other (1.8%). Both Marshallese and English are spoken as official languages for the islands, the latter being a commonly spoken second language.
Literacy Rate: 93.7% (1999)

History

The Marshallese people were believed to have first settled the islands thousands of years ago. Europeans explored the islands but did not claim the island or establish a presence on them until the late nineteenth century. The Marshall Islands received their name from a British captain named Captain John Charles Marshall. Spain, and later Germany, occupied the islands, which were eventually taken by the Japanese legally after World War I. The United States captured the islands in World War II and added them to its overseas possessions. Following the war, nuclear tests were done in the islands, most notably Bikini Atoll. Nuclear tests resulted in the evacuation of several of the islands due to radioactive fallout. Several of these islands remain uninhabited today. Greater autonomy was given to the islands, and independence occurred from the United States in 1986.

Culture

Marshallese culture shares many similarities with other nations in Micronesia. Historically, they traveled

between the various islands in the area on canoes, which they were highly skilled in making. Like many Oceanic peoples, the Marshallese society is matrilineal.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$2,500 (2008) [5.3% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: N/A

Corruption Index: N/A

The fragile economy in the Marshall Islands depends heavily on the United States for survival. Due to the small population of the islands, which have limited natural resources, little economic growth has occurred. Services account for half of the country's GDP. The nation sees its greatest prospects for additional economic growth through tourism. Agriculture is important, with coconut and breadfruit being the greatest cash crops. Fishing, especially for tuna, is important for the agricultural sector of the economy. These foods are exported along with craft items. Industry makes up 20% of the economy.

Faiths

Christian: 97.5%

None: 1.5%

Other: 1%

Christians

Denomination Members Congregations

Protestants 35,358

Assemblies of God 16,664 6

Catholic 5,419

Latter-day Saints 6,030 15

Bukot nan Jesus 1,806

Seventh Day Adventists 4,581 20 (includes Guam, Mirconesia, Northern Mariana Islands, and Palau)

Jehovah's Witnesses 203 3

Other Christians 2,323

Religion

According to the 1999 census, nearly all Marshallese (97.5%) belong to a Christian denomination. Protestants account for 54.8% of the population, and the Assemblies of God make up 25.8% of Marshallese. Other smaller Christian churches include Catholics (8.4%), Bukot nan Jesus (2.8%), Mormon (2.1%), and other Christians denominations (3.6%). 1% of the population adheres to other religious, and 1.5% do not have a religion.

Religious Freedom

Religious freedom is existent on the islands as a result of the country originally belonging to the United States.

Major Cities

Urban: 71%

Rita, Ebeye, Laura, Ajeltake, Enewetak.

Cities listed in **bold** do not have a LDS congregation.

The five largest cities and villages are listed in descending order by population. All population centers with over 1,000 inhabitants have a congregation of the Church. The five largest cities and towns make up 56% of the total population of the country. Majuro, the nation's capital, is home to over 25,000 people on the atoll.

LDS History

The first Church presence in the Marshall Islands was established in Majuro. Elders William Wardel and Steven Cooper arrived in early 1977 and baptized the first convert who had first learned about the Church in Hawaii. In 2006, the Church announced the creation of the Marshall Islands Majuro Mission from the Fiji Suva and Micronesia Guam Missions. The new mission included the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and Nauru.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 6,030 (2012)

By the end of the year, twenty-seven converts were baptized, with membership increasing to 177 by the end of 1979. Membership reached 1,100 members in 1990.¹⁶⁸³ By 2000 there were 3,524 members.

Membership increased to 4,623 in 2007 and decreased in 2008, dropping to 4,476. The drop in membership likely occurred due to members moving out of the country or the Church updating its membership records. The drop in membership does not appear to have signaled any weakening in the Church, considering the first stake in the country was organized the following year.

Despite the Church's establishment in the Marshall Islands in the late 1970s, one out of every fourteen people in the country is a Church member according to official membership records. The percentage of Church members in the islands has held steady since 2000 due to membership and population growth rates staying constant.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 6 Branches: 6 Groups: 3 (April 2013)

The first branch, the Laura Branch, was created in 1978 with a second branch named the Rita Branch created shortly thereafter. A district with five branches was created in 1986. In 1987, there were five branches in the Majuro District.

Due to a military base on Kwajalein, a branch was created in 1978 for U.S. military and citizens living on the island. Missionary work did not open on the more populous, neighboring island of Ebeye until 1989. A district in Kwajalein was organized in 1991, which also included Ebeye.

Branches were established in more remote areas of the Marshall Islands in the late 1980s in Arno and Mili.¹⁶⁸⁴ By 2000, there were eleven branches throughout the islands. The Majuro District had seven branches and the Kwajalein District had four branches.

Senior missionaries reported that as early as 2004, the Micronesia Guam Mission was striving to help Marshallese Church members in the Majuro District learn how to function as a stake.¹⁶⁸⁵ Senior missionaries

¹⁶⁸³ "Marshall Islands," Country Profile, 2 April 2011. <http://newsroom.lds.org/country/marshall-islands>

¹⁶⁸⁴ Leddy, Herbert. "Gospel gaining foothold on 2 atolls in Marshalls through 'pioneer' efforts," LDS Church News, 4 March 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18560/Gospel-gaining-foothold-on-2-atolls-in-Marshalls-through-pioneer-efforts.html>

¹⁶⁸⁵ "Living by the scriptures," LDS Church News, 22 April 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48869/Living-by-the-scriptures.html>

strengthened the branches and district, but stakehood was not reached until June 2009 when the Majuro Marshall Islands Stake was created. The new stake included the following six wards and one branch: The Delap, Jenrok, Laura, Long Island Marjuro, Rita and Uliga Wards and the Ajeltake Branch. The new stake was created by Elder David S. Baxter of the Seventy. With the creation of the new stake, the Marshall Islands became the nation with the smallest population with a stake of the Church.

Marshallese Church members also live outside of the Marshall Islands, meeting in branches designated as Marshallese speaking in the United States. Four Marshallese branches were functioning in late 2009 in Arkansas, Hawaii, Oklahoma, and Washington. The branches in Hawaii and Oklahoma were created prior to 2006, and the branches in Washington and Arkansas were created in 2007 and 2008 respectively.

Activity and Retention

From 2000 to late 2009, there was no change in the number of congregations in the Marshall Islands. Despite no increase in reported congregations in the country, membership increased by 1,100 members to 4,623 in 2007. Due to no increase in Church units, the average number of members per congregation rose from 330 to 420 during this time period. The seminary program gained greater numbers of Marshallese attending, with enrollment climbing to sixty in 1991 in Majuro.¹⁶⁸⁶ Active membership in the country is likely no greater than 1,500, considering all the congregations in the country where branches at the beginning of 2009.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Marshallese, English.

The Book of Mormon translation in Marshallese became first available in 1984 in selections and in its entirety by 2005. The Church has translated a large amount of ecclesiastical materials in Marshallese. priesthood, Relief Society, primary, Sunday School, young men, and young women's materials were available in Marshallese in the fall of 2009. The Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price have not been translated yet into Marshallese, and it is unclear whether the Church is currently undertaking to translate these scriptures.

Meetinghouses

The first Church built meetinghouses began construction in 1984 for the Laura and Rita Branches. Most of the buildings the Church uses for worship are likely Church-built meetinghouses.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church has likely conducted several humanitarian projects in the Marshall Islands, but only one was reported to have occurred as of the fall of 2009. In 2009, the Church collected needed items donated by business and individuals in the United States and distributed them to schools on Majuro.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

No limitations on the freedom of religion appear in the Marshall Islands.

Cultural Issues

Although part of the United States until 1986, the Marshall Islands struggle economically. The unemployment rate is 36%, and the GDP per capita fell \$400 between 2005 and 2008. Adverse economic conditions have likely increased the receptivity of the people to the preaching of the Gospel. On the other hand, these conditions have likely limited leadership development and perhaps encouraged some to emigrate. Some Marshallese

¹⁶⁸⁶ "Island seminary teacher shares 'loving radiance,'" LDS Church News, 24 August 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20955/Island-seminary-teacher-shares-loving-radiance.html>

study at BYU-Hawaii, but it is unclear how many will return home or seek to stay in the United States. Many Marshallese members have either joined the Church in their native country and immigrated to the United States or immigrated to the United States and later joined the Church, as evidenced by the existence of four branches in the United States.

National Outreach

Although preaching the Gospel to a small population comes with the benefits using fewer full-time missionaries and Church resources to reach most of the inhabitants of the country, added challenges also occur. The population of Marshallese living on atolls and islets that do not have a published Church presence may be as much as a third of the country's inhabitants. Many of these atolls have fewer than 1,000 inhabitants. These remote locations may have groups meeting that are attached to the mission in Majuro or different branches throughout the islands. It appears that the Church will most likely be introduced to these remote areas through Marshallese joining the Church in areas where it is established and then returning to atolls with no Church presence. Marshallese on Majuro and Ebeye may also share or have shared the Gospel with friends and family that live on these isolated, sparsely populated atolls. The small population distributed over a large, isolated geographic area demands member involvement in preaching the Gospel.

Missionaries in 2009 were reportedly serving not only in Majuro and Ebeye but also Jaluit and Lae. These outer atolls in the Marshall Islands had small populations, with Jaluit's population totaling about 1,700 in 1999 and Lae's population numbering only 319. The Church has placed great effort and resources into establishing itself in select, sparsely populated areas with full-time missionaries.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Inactivity appears to have worsened, especially in the 1990s and 2000s. The CIA *World Factbook* listed Mormons accounting for 2.1% of the population according to the 1999 census. This figure is much lower than the raw membership numbers provided by the Church, which should stand at 7%. Some of those who are active members of the Church may not have been identified as Church members on the census if they were youth and their parents responded that the whole family belonged to a religious tradition. Nonetheless, inactivity rates for the Marshall Islands may be among some of the highest in the Pacific for countries with more than 2,000 members. Although inactivity likely delayed the creation of the first stake in the country until 2009, many converts have joined the Church later on through their associations with less active members.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Due Marshallese consisting over 90% of the population of the Marshall Islands, ethnic issues and integration in the Church appear nearly nonexistent.

Language Issues

Although a large number of Church materials have been translated into Marshallese, not all of the LDS scriptures have Marshallese translations. Future Marshallese translations of the Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price seem likely due to the existence of a stake now in the islands and several Marshallese-speaking congregations in the United States. The Church encounters few language problems in the Marshall Islands due to the homogeneity of the Marshallese speaking population.

Missionary Service

Small numbers of Marshallese serve full-time missions regularly, but the Church relies on foreign missionaries

to staff the assigned number of missionaries to the islands. Active outreach targeting youth may culminate in greater numbers of local members serving missions in the years to come.

Leadership

The Church currently does not seem to face many challenges in administration with membership mainly residing on two atolls. However, if membership growth continues and becomes spread throughout the inhabited atolls of the islands, stress and administration challenges could occur. This could lead to the establishment of a mission branch comprised of groups meeting throughout the country on less populated atolls.

Temple

No temple is near the Marshall Islands. Members in the country must travel to the Laie, Hawaii to perform temple ordinances. It appears that the Marshall Islands will likely not be able to support a temple until multiple stakes are established. A temple in Kiribati to the south of the country appears likely, considering two stakes function in the country and nearly 1,000 converts join the Church a year. Temple excursions to Hawaii are likely too costly for most to afford and result in most members of the Church infrequently attending the temple.

Comparative Growth

Benefiting from a population primarily on only a few atolls, the Church has taken advantage of the opportunity to preach the Gospel to the majority of the inhabitants of the Marshall Islands on Majuro and Ebeye. The small population of the islands has proved much less daunting to missionary work efforts than other more populous nations and has resulted in a sizable minority of Church membership compared to most countries in which the Church has been established for such a small amount of time. Church growth in the Pacific has been some of the most rapid and widespread experienced throughout the world. However, the Marshall Islands fall short of the progress the Church has made in other nations of Oceania, such as Tonga and Samoa, where the Church is one of the Largest Christian denominations. Due to similarities in culture, the Marshall Islands may experience more sustained, rapid growth in the future like that of other areas of Oceania.

Other Christian denominations with strong missionary programs that involve their members sharing their beliefs with others exist in very small numbers in the Marshall Islands. Jehovah's Witnesses counted 189 active members in three congregations in 2008. The Seventh Day Adventist Church did not provide specific membership totals for the Marshall Islands, but counted 4,320 members in eighteen churches throughout Guam, the Marshall Islands, and Micronesia. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints appears as one of the more successful churches to have arrived in the last couple decades. The Church has also been one of the faster growing Christian denominations in recent years in the Marshall Islands.

Future Prospects

Due to currently inactivity problems and the recent establishment of the Majuro Marshall Islands Stake, little growth in new congregations on the islands will likely be experienced. Additional branches or groups may be organized if the Church gains a presence on isolated islets and atolls. Future membership growth on the islands will likely be slow and consistent unless greater progress is achieved on several, sparsely populated atolls or on Majuro and Ebeye.

One of the areas where the Church may gain addition opportunity for further growth is through humanitarian work. Possible humanitarian projects the Church could undertake in the islands include education and employment workshops and fresh water projects.

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

Geography

AREA: 702 square km. Located between Hawaii and Indonesia, the Federated States of Micronesia consist of 607 islands divided among four major island groups in the North Pacific Ocean. Terrain varies by island and may include rugged mountains, coastal plains, coral atolls, and volcanic outcroppings. Tropical weather occurs year-round with frequent heavy rain. Typhoons are a natural hazard. Environmental issues include overfishing, pollution, and climate change. Micronesia is divided into four administrative states.

Peoples

Chuukese: 48.8%
Pohnpeian: 24.2%
Kosraean: 6.2%
Yapese: 5.2%
Outer Yap islands: 4.5%
Asian: 1.8%
Polynesian: 1.5%
Other: 6.4%
Unknown: 1.4%

Indigenous ethnic groups (Chuukese, Pohnpeian, Kosraean, and Yapese) are of Micronesian ethnic stock and constitute 89% of the national population. Many Micronesians have immigrated to Guam and the United States, primarily to Hawaii, California, Oregon, Kansas, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Nevada.

Population: 106,487 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: -0.343% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.68 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 69.84 male, 73.85 female (2012)

Languages: Chuukese (41%), Pohnpeian (26%), Kosraean (7.5%), Yapese (6%), Mortlockese (5.5%), English (5%), Kapingamarangi (3%), Ulithian (3%), Pingelapese (2%), other (1%). English is the official and common language, spoken by most as a second language.

Literacy: 89% (2011)

History

The first Micronesian settlers likely arrived several millennia before the birth of Christ and established a centralized empire based on the largest island by the time European explorers arrived in the sixteenth century. The Spanish ruled the islands until 1899 when they were transferred to German control until 1919. The Japanese occupied the islands until the end of World War II when they came under administration by the United States under the United Nations Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Four of the island districts formed the Federal States of Micronesia in 1979, while other Micronesian islands such as Marshall Islands,

Palau, and the Northern Mariana Islands remained under United States sovereignty. Since independence, Micronesia has maintained strong ties with the United States.¹⁶⁸⁷

Culture

Christian churches occupy an important role in local culture and society, as most Micronesians are active in a church. Most the population converted to Christianity in the nineteenth century but have retained many indigenous beliefs and traditions. Agriculture, fishing, and village functions dominate Micronesian life considering most live in rural areas. The four island groups boast unique and individual cultures and histories. Found on the island of Yap and originally quarried on Palau and sometimes as far as New Guinea, Rai stones were made from limestone rocks and traditionally used as a form of currency, ranging in diameter from 0.5 to three meters.¹⁶⁸⁸ Kissing in public is against local culture, even during marriage ceremonies. Dating is socially unacceptable; instead, men must approach the family of the woman he desires to marry and make wedding arrangements. Cigarette and alcohol consumption rates are low. Like much of Micronesia and the Southeast Asian region, locals chew the red areca nut (betel) frequently, which is a known carcinogen, stains the teeth, and is addictive.¹⁶⁸⁹

Economy

GDP per capita: \$2,200 (2008) [4.7% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.636

Corruption Index: N/A

The economy relies on fishing, subsistence farming, and aid from the United States to function. Distance from developed countries, small population, poorly developed island infrastructure, and fragmentation of the population throughout the many islands creates major barriers to economic development. Timber, fish, minerals, and phosphate are natural resources but are limited in abundance. Nearly two-thirds of the labor force are government employees. Services account for 65% of the workforce and generate 56% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 34% of the workforce and generates 15% of the GDP. Tourism, construction, fishing, and crafts are the largest industries. Agriculture employs 1% of the workforce and generates 29% of the GDP. Primary crops include black pepper, fruit, vegetables, coconuts, cassava, sakau, betel nuts, and sweet potatoes. Common livestock includes pigs and chickens. The United States is the primary trade partner.

Corruption is most rampant in Chuuk, especially in the government. Judicial delays, discrimination against women, child neglect, and domestic violence are concerns.¹⁶⁹⁰ Micronesia is a major consumer of marijuana.

Faiths

Christian: 94.4%

Other: 3.8%

None/unspecified: 0.8%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

¹⁶⁸⁷ "Background Note: Micronesia," Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 12 July 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1839.htm>

¹⁶⁸⁸ "Rai stones," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 4 December 2010. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rai_stones

¹⁶⁸⁹ "Areca nut," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 20 October 2010. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Areca_nut

¹⁶⁹⁰ "2008 Human Rights Report: Federated States of Micronesia," 2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 25 February 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/eap/119048.htm>

Catholic 56,470
 Congregational 42,969
 Latter-day Saints 4,565 21
 Seventh Day Adventists 4,320 18 (includes Guam, Marshall Islands, Mariana Islands, and Palau)
 Northern Baptist 964
 Jehovah's Witnesses 193 6

Religion

Catholics and Protestants account for nearly the entire Micronesian population, but the ratio of Catholics to Protestants varies by island. The United Church of Christ is the foremost Protestant denomination. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the Kosraean population is Protestant and 40% of the Chuukese population is Protestant. Pohnpei's population is evenly divided between both religious traditions, whereas Yap is 80% Catholic. Other prominent Protestant denominations include Baptists, Assemblies of God, and Salvation Army. Attendance at church is high among most religious groups, as churches are strongly intertwined with civil society. Only Yap appears to have some interdenominational rivalry resulting from the conversion of village chiefs to differing Christian denominations.¹⁶⁹¹ Latter-day Saints are among the largest Christian minority denominations.

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. Good Friday and Christmas are recognized as national holidays. Missionaries operate freely, and religious groups may establish private schools. There have been no recent reports of societal abuses of religious freedom.¹⁶⁹²

Largest Municipalities

Urban: 22%

Weno, Palikir, Nett, Kitti, Kolonia, Madolenihmw, **Tol**, **Fefen**, Dublon, Uman

Eight of the 10 largest municipalities have an LDS congregation. Forty-eight thousand seven hundred reside in Chuuk (47%), 36,000 on Pohnpei (35%), 11,400 on Yap (11%), and 6,600 on Kosrae (6%).

Cities listed in **bold** do not have congregations.

Fifty-seven percent (57%) of the national population resides in the ten most populous municipalities.

LDS History

LDS missionaries arrived on Pohnpei in 1976, but the first convert baptism did not take place until 1981. Full-time missionaries opened Chuuk and Yap to missionary work in 1977 and Kosrae in 1985.¹⁶⁹³ Seminary and institute were established by 1980. The Church completed the Book of Mormon translations in Pohnpeian and Chuukese in 1988.¹⁶⁹⁴ Church members on Guam have conducted a "Christmas Drop" for decades in Micronesia and in 1999 alone delivered 25,000 pounds of gifts and supplies to fifty islands.¹⁶⁹⁵ In 2002, a

¹⁶⁹¹ "Micronesia, Federated States of," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148884.htm>

¹⁶⁹² "Micronesia, Federated States of," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148884.htm>

¹⁶⁹³ "Micronesia," Country Profile, retrieved 4 December 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/micronesia>

¹⁶⁹⁴ Warnick, Lee. "Book of Mormon in 80th language," LDS Church News, 9 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18233/Book-of-Mormon-in-80th-language.html>

¹⁶⁹⁵ "Candy bombs fly to children in Pacific Isles," LDS Church News, 16 December 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39035/Candy-bombs-fly-to-children-in-Pacific-Isles.html>

local member educated in the United States became president of the College of Micronesia.¹⁶⁹⁶ The Book of Mormon translation into Yapese was completed in 2004. In 2006, the Marshall Islands Majuro Mission was created from the Micronesia Guam Mission, leaving the Micronesia Guam Mission with administration of Micronesia, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and Palau. In 2010, LDS apostle Elder D. Todd Christofferson visited Chuuk and dedicated a new district center meetinghouse.¹⁶⁹⁷

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 4,565 (2012)

In 1980, membership numbered 170 in Chuuk and 150 on Yap.¹⁶⁹⁸ Rapid membership growth occurred in the 1980s and early 1990s. By 1988, there were 700 members on Pohnpei and 1,200 in Chuuk¹⁶⁹⁹ and about 2,000 members nationwide. By year-end 2000, there were 3,110 members. Slow membership growth occurred in the 2000s as membership increased to 3,419 in 2003, 3,504 in 2005, and 3,754 in 2007. Annual membership growth rates ranged from a high of 3.9% in 2009 to a low of 0.3% in 2004.

In mid-2010, there were 1,200 members in Chuuk.¹⁷⁰⁰ In 2009, one in twenty-seven was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 0 Branches: 21 (April 2013)

There were three branches on Pohnpei in 1988¹⁷⁰¹ and sixteen nationwide. The number of congregations increased to twenty in the early 1990s and reached a high of twenty-three in 1995. There were eighteen branches in 2000, which declined to seventeen branches from 2001 to 2003. The number of congregations increased to nineteen in 2004 and twenty in 2008.

The Namoneas Chuuk District was created in 1985. Additional districts were created on Pohnpei (1985), Yap (1989), and Kosrae (1990). In 2001, the Namoneas Chuuk District had nine branches, Kosrae Micronesia District had three branches, the Pohnpei Caroline Islands District had four branches, and the Yap Micronesia District had two branches. In 2010, the number of congregations in districts in Chuuk and Yap remained unchanged, the Kosrae Micronesia District had two branches, and the Pohnpei Caroline Island District had seven branches. Only the Malem Branch on Kosrae was closed in the 2000s. New branches created during this period were all on Pohnpei and include the Kitti, Palikir, and Uh Branches. In 2011, a new branch was organized on Pohnpei (Nett).

Activity and Retention

The average number of members per congregation increased from 173 in 2000 to 199 in 2009. Six hundred eighty-three were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2007–2008 school year. The Uh Branch had approximately fifty attending church meetings in 2006.¹⁷⁰² Most congregations appear to have fifty to one hundred active members. Nationwide active membership is estimated at 1,500, or 40% of total membership.

¹⁶⁹⁶ "College of Micronesia president," LDS Church News, 15 June 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41958/College-of-Micronesia-president.html>

¹⁶⁹⁷ Dimick, Elder Merrill and Sister Myrle; Robertson, Elder David. "Members in Chuuk open arms to apostle," LDS Church News, 5 June 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59433/Members-in-Chuuk-open-arms-to-apostle.html>

¹⁶⁹⁸ "Micronesia," Country Profile, retrieved 4 December 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/micronesia>

¹⁶⁹⁹ Warnick, Lee. "Book of Mormon in 80th language," LDS Church News, 9 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18233/Book-of-Mormon-in-80th-language.html>

¹⁷⁰⁰ Dimick, Elder Merrill and Sister Myrle; Robertson, Elder David. "Members in Chuuk open arms to apostle," LDS Church News, 5 June 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59433/Members-in-Chuuk-open-arms-to-apostle.html>

¹⁷⁰¹ Warnick, Lee. "Book of Mormon in 80th language," LDS Church News, 9 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18233/Book-of-Mormon-in-80th-language.html>

¹⁷⁰² "A place to meet for a growing branch," LDS Church News, 14 January 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/>

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Chuukese, Pohnpeian, Yapese, English.

The Book of Mormon is available in Chuukese, Pohnpeian, and Yapese. A limited number of missionary, family history, Sunday School, church declarations and proclamations, young women, young men, and priesthood materials are translated in Chuukese, Pohnpeian, and Kosraean, whereas LDS materials in Yapese are limited to The Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Faith in God guidebooks, three primary manuals, the Articles of Faith, *Gospel Principles*, and a pedigree chart. General Conferences addresses are translated into Chuukese, Pohnpeian, Kosraean, and Yapese.

Meetinghouses

In 2005, the Church completed a new meetinghouse for the Uh Branch.¹⁷⁰³ In October 2010, a new LDS chapel was dedicated for the Sapwalap Branch. In 2010, there were approximately twenty LDS meetinghouses, some of which were renovated buildings or shelters.

Health and Safety

Medical treatment and emergency aid in many areas is limited due to small populations, low standards of living, and remoteness.

Humanitarian and Development Work

In 2003, the Church donated a forty-foot container of medical supplies to Yap, which included examination tables, fetal monitors, an oxygen concentrator, and a hematocrit centrifuge.¹⁷⁰⁴ Later that year, the Kosrae Legislature honored the Church for several humanitarian and development projects recently completed, which included donating twenty-five sewing machines to the Kosrae Girl Scout Organization, installing a computer lab at Kosrae High School, delivering medical supplies, and providing medical training.¹⁷⁰⁵ In 2004, the Church donated 125 wheelchairs to the disabled in Chuuk.¹⁷⁰⁶ In 2010, the Church donated a sea water desalinization unit and generator to Chuuk due to lack of fresh water and reliance on rainfall to sustain fresh water needs. The unit was capable of converting 26,500 gallons of sea water into fresh water a day.¹⁷⁰⁷

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The LDS Church enjoys full religious freedom and maintains a positive relationship with the government. Members may freely worship, assemble, and proselyte.

articles/48378/A-place-to-meet-for-a-growing-branch.html

¹⁷⁰³ "A place to meet for a growing branch," LDS Church News, 14 January 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48378/A-place-to-meet-for-a-growing-branch.html>

¹⁷⁰⁴ "Medical supplies flow to island," LDS Church News, 19 July 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44057/Medical-supplies-flow-to-island.html>

¹⁷⁰⁵ "Kosrae Legislature honors Church," LDS Church News, 15 November 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44697/Kosrae-Legislature-honors-Church.html>

¹⁷⁰⁶ "Pacific islanders given wheelchairs," LDS Church News, 8 May 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45543/Pacific-islanders-given-wheelchairs.html>

¹⁷⁰⁷ Dimick, Elder Merrill and Sister Myrle; Robertson, Elder David. "Members in Chuuk open arms to apostle," LDS Church News, 5 June 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59433/Members-in-Chuuk-open-arms-to-apostle.html>

Cultural Issues

A strong Christian tradition actively practiced by most creates challenges and opportunities for LDS Church growth. Many are entrenched in their faith and are unwilling to learn about the Church from full-time missionaries or members and have at times harassed LDS missionaries. The LDS Church benefits from a population that exhibits regular church attendance and many other religious behaviors often difficult to instill in investigators and new converts. High retention for LDS converts who are taught and fellowshipped proficiently before and after baptism usually occurs, likely influenced from religious behaviors already practiced from another church. High rates of marijuana use is a barrier to proselytism. Church leadership in the region has openly opposed the consumption of Areca nut.

National Outreach

LDS congregations operate in cities and villages inhabited by over 70% of the population. At least two LDS mission outreach centers operate in each of the four administrative states. With the exception of some remote, sparsely populated islands and a few larger islands in Chuuk, nearly the entire population is within close proximity to a LDS mission outreach center.

The Church performs nearly the same intensity of mission outreach in three of the four administrative states (Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Yap), as each of these states have one LDS congregation per five to six thousand inhabitants. The percentages of Latter-day Saints in the general population is likely similar throughout these three states. Kosrae experiences the highest degree of mission outreach, as there is one LDS congregation to every 3,300 inhabitants.

Opportunities to expand national outreach appear highest on the Chuuk and Pohnpei as these islands together are home to 82% of the national population and have some unreached or lesser-reached areas. Additional mission outreach centers may be established in Wone (Pohnpei), Fanomo (Chuuk), Sapota (Chuuk), Sapou (Chuuk), and Tol (Chuuk). Holding cottage meetings in these locations may lead to the creation of groups or dependent branches if local populations are receptive to LDS missionaries.

There is no LDS Internet outreach for Micronesia and little need for such outreach at present. In 2006, only 15% of the national population used the Internet.¹⁷⁰⁸ No Micronesian congregations have been created in the United States or Guam as of 2010.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Member activity and convert retention rates for Latter-day Saints are moderate in Micronesia. Most attend church regularly, but the LDS Church appears to report lower member activity rates than many other denominations. Inadequate pre-baptismal preparation and a lack of self-sustainability for many congregations have reduced member activity and convert retention rates. Quick-baptism techniques appeared most widespread in the 1980s and 1990s when the most rapid growth occurred. Failure to retain many of the converts baptized during this period is apparent in the consolidation of six branches between 1996 and 2001.

In the 2000s, member activity rates appeared to maintain consistency and convert retention rates stabilized, as there was little increase in the average number of members per congregation. Local members have generally demonstrated high levels of interest in seminary and institute, which has contributed to current moderate member activity levels. Cultural emphasis on church attendance has also likely increased LDS member activity

¹⁷⁰⁸ "Internet Usage Worldwide by Country, 2007," Infoplease.com, retrieved 4 December 2010. <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0933606.html>

rates despite past challenges teaching and preparing converts to attend church regularly. Double affiliation of some Latter-day Saints in other Christian denominations is a source of convert attrition.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Geography generally separates ethnic groups, resulting in few ethnic integration issues. Religious affiliation drawn upon clan lines on Pohnpei appears the only foreseeable obstacle toward integrating differing people groups into the same congregations, as there have been some social challenges in the past related to these issues.

Language Issues

The LDS Church has invested considerable resources translating materials into Micronesian languages despite the small numbers of speakers and the lack of other institutions providing literature in these languages. All indigenous languages with over 6,000 speakers have LDS materials available, resulting in 86% of the Micronesian population speaking a language with LDS materials. Kosraean is the most widely spoken language without LDS scriptures available and appears to be a likely candidate for future LDS scripture translations. Delay in translation LDS scriptures in Kosraean may be attributed to a lack of qualified translators among church members residing on Kosrae. Chuukese, Pohnpeian, and Yapese all appear likely candidates for future translations of the Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price, which may be in the translation process at present.

Missionary Service

Over forty full-time missionaries were stationed in Micronesia in mid-2010, including six missionaries assigned to Yap, seven to Kosrae, twelve to Chuuk, and eighteen to Pohnpei. Approximately half of full-time missionaries are North American, and half are from Oceania. Full-time missionaries serve regularly from Micronesia but not in large enough numbers to staff the current number of full-time missionaries assigned. Senior missionary couples and local church leaders have achieved success attracting youth to seminary and institute, which may increase the number of local members serving full-time missions in the future.

Leadership

Local members have demonstrated self-reliance in staffing church leadership as in November 2010, the Sapuk Branch was the only branch with a full-time missionary as the branch president. Plans were being finalized at that time for a local member in the branch to assume this calling in the near future. The Church continues to maintain four mission districts, but local leadership and active membership remain too limited to organize stakes in Chuuk and on Pohnpei. Self-sustainable Micronesian church leadership will depend on the consistent staffing of local branch presidencies entirely by native members and the creation of additional congregations as membership increases.

Temple

Micronesia is assigned to the Manila Philippines Temple. In 2005, a small group of Chuukese members traveled to the temple for the first time.¹⁷⁰⁹ In 2006, thirty-five members from Pohnpei attended the temple for the first time.¹⁷¹⁰ Prospects appear favorable over the medium term for the Church to construct a small temple in the Micronesia sub-region of the Pacific to meet the temple needs of members primarily concentrated in

¹⁷⁰⁹ "Micronesians attend temple," LDS Church News, 5 November 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48093/Micronesians-attend-temple.html>

¹⁷¹⁰ "Pohnpei members make first temple trip," LDS Church News, 16 September 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49444/Pohnpei-members-make-first-temple-trip.html>

Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Guam, and Kiribati, as members in these nations must travel inordinate distances to attend the temple at present. Kiribati and the Marshall Islands appear the most likely sites for a future temple in the region.

Comparative Growth

Micronesia ranks average among nations in Oceania regarding the percentage of Latter-day Saint in the population, extent of national outreach, and self-sustainability. In the Micronesia sub-region, only Kiribati and the Marshall Islands have a higher percentage of Latter-day Saints and more members than the Federated States of Micronesia. Other Micronesian nations or territories like Palau, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands have fewer members, a smaller percentage of Latter-day Saints, and tend to have lower member activity rates. Micronesia lags behind progress made in Polynesia, where in some nations, active Latter-day Saints account for over 10% of the population, as in Tonga and Samoa. In 2009, the Federated States of Micronesia was the territory with the thirteenth-highest number of Latter-day Saints without a stake.

The most prevalent Christian denominations converted the population with great fervor after their initial introduction to the islands and have maintained high member activity rates but gain few numbers of converts at present, largely due to the competitive atmosphere for proselytism. Unlike many developing areas of the world, Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses have a relatively small presence and experience slow membership growth. Growth of the LDS Church appears to have largely come from dedicating greater amounts of mission resources to this sparsely populated, remote region of the Pacific than many other contemporary missionary-oriented Christian groups.

Future Prospects

The LDS Church has achieved moderate growth in the Federal States of Micronesia despite high church activity and discipleship in other Christian denominations. Much of this growth has come with the Church concentrating large amounts of missionary resources on a nation with a small population that has been historically receptive to Christianity. Receptivity of the LDS Church has varied by island group in recent years, with Pohnpei exhibiting the strongest receptivity and church growth as evidenced by the number of LDS congregations increasing from four to seven in the 2000s, and other island groups showing little or no growth. Self-sustaining church growth in the coming decades will require less reliance on foreign full-time missionaries in an era of limited missionary manpower to staff island nations of just a hundred thousand like Micronesia. Consistent increase in the number of priesthood holders and the development of fully functioning branches entirely staffed by local members will be required for districts in Chuuk and on Pohnpei to become stakes over the medium term. Congregation planting approaches in Chuuk and on Pohnpei may lead to greater increases in active membership and national outreach. The few LDS congregations on Yap and Kosrae make districts operating on these islands vulnerable to dissolution unless additional congregations are organized and active members do not emigrate.

NEW CALEDONIA

Geography

AREA: 18,575 square km. Located in Oceania in the Coral Sea, New Caledonia is an overseas territorial collectivity of France consisting on a long, large main island and several smaller islands such as Iles Loyaute (Loyalty Islands). Plains occupy coastal areas, whereas forested mountains dominate the interior. Hot, humid climate occurs throughout the islands. Cyclones are natural hazards, usually from November to March. Soil erosion resulting from mining and forest fires is an environmental issue. New Caledonia is divided into three administrative provinces.

Peoples

Melanesian: 44.1%
European: 34.1%
Wallisian and Futunian: 9%
Tahitian: 2.6%
Indonesian: 2.5%
Vietnamese: 1.4%
Ni-Vanuatu: 1.1%
Other: 5.2%

Melanesians are also known as Kanaks and populated the islands prior to the arrival of Europeans. French account for the majority of Europeans. Other Pacific Islanders and Southeast Asian immigrant groups have arrived since European colonization of the Pacific.

Population: 260,166 (July 2012)
Annual Growth Rate: 1.489% (2012)
Fertility Rate: 2.04 children born per woman (2012)
Life Expectancy: 72.88 male, 81.2 female (2012)

Languages: French (66%), Wallisian (8%), Dehu (4%), Tahitian (3%), Javanese (3%), Nengone (3%), Paicé (2%), Vietnamese (2%), Ajië (2%), Xârâcùù (1.5%), Futuna (1%), Cemuhî (1%), Yuaga (1%), Numeé (1%), Tayo (1%), Nyálayu (0.5%). French is the official language and 97% of the population are literate in French as first or second language.¹⁷¹¹

Literacy: 96.2% (1996)

History

The Lapita first inhabited the region followed by Polynesians around 1000 AD. Europeans arrived in the late eighteenth century. The British and French began settling New Caledonia during the early nineteenth century, and by 1853, France took full possession of the island. The French used the island as a penal colony for forty years beginning in 1864. New Caledonia served as a valuable Allied base in the Pacific and headquartered

¹⁷¹¹ "New Caledonia," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 12 November 2010. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Caledonia

military units and personnel for fighting Imperial Japan. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, an independence movement began to gain momentum and aroused political and social conflict. The Nouméa Accord was signed in 1998 and grants the possibility of independence from France sometime between 2013 and 2018.

Culture

New Caledonia exhibits some of the strongest European influences among South Pacific Islands due to the large European population and status as an overseas department of France. Most of the population converted to Catholicism as a result of French proselytism. Traditional cuisine consists of seafood, yams, taro, fruit, pork, and bats. Rice and beef have become more common due to European influence in the Noumea area. Alcohol is frequently consumed. The various ethnic groups have historically segregated themselves, but more recently have begun to break down societal barriers.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$15,000 (2003) [32.3% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: N/A

Corruption Index: N/A

Nickel, financial aid from France, and tourism stabilize the economy and facilitate growth. New Caledonia boasts 25% of the world's known nickel deposits and depends on extraction of this resource toward ensuring future economic growth. Other natural resources include chrome, iron, manganese, cobalt, silver, gold, lead, and copper. Services employ 60% of the labor force and generate 76% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 20% of the labor force and generates 9% of the GDP. Nickel mining and smelting is the primary industry. Agriculture employs 20% of the labor force and generates 15% of the GDP. Vegetables, beef, deer, and fish are common agricultural products. Primary trade partners include France, Australia, Japan, and Singapore.

Corruption does not appear to be a major issue but has become a greater threat as a result of political instability, tribalism among the indigenous population, and New Caledonia's mineral wealth.

Faiths

Christian: 90%

Muslim: 2.5%

Other: 7.5%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 151,411

Latter-day Saints 2,138 8

Jehovah's Witnesses 1,959 26

Seventh Day Adventists 758 5

Religion

Catholics are the largest religious group and account for 60% of the population. Protestants constitute 30% of the population. Most non-Christians are nonreligious. Kanaks and other Oceanic peoples are primarily Catholic or Protestant, but retain many indigenous religious beliefs, such as the Kanak belief that the world of

the dead is underwater.¹⁷¹² Europeans tend to be secular and have low rates of church attendance and religious interest. There are few Muslims, who consist of Arabs brought by the French from North Africa during the colonial period, and Indonesians.

Religious Freedom

The French constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. There have been no reports of limited religious freedom or societal abuse of this right.

Largest Cities

Urban: 78%

Nouméa, Le Mont-Doré, **Dumbéa, Païta, Koné**, Bourail, **Poindimié, Houailou, Koumac, Canala**.

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Three of the ten largest cities have an LDS congregation. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the national population resides in the ten largest cities. Nouméa and its suburbs constitute 67% of the national population.

LDS History

The first Latter-day Saints known to live in New Caledonia were Tahitian members who arrived to work in the nickel industry. The Church created the Nouméa Branch in 1961, and Tahitians appeared to account for the bulk of church membership at the time. Full-time missionaries did not arrive until 1968 once visas were secured. That same year Elder Thomas S. Monson dedicated the islands for missionary work.¹⁷¹³ The Fiji Suva Mission began administering the islands in 1975 and national outreach began to expand.¹⁷¹⁴ Seminary began in the 1970s and institute began in the 1980s. President Hinckley visited New Caledonia in 2000.¹⁷¹⁵ In 2012, New Caledonia was assigned to the newly created Vanuatu Port Vila Mission and a stake was organized.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 2,138 (2012)

Slow membership growth occurred from 1960 to 1985. There were 382 members by 1990.¹⁷¹⁶ Beginning in the late 1980s, the Church began baptizing greater numbers of Melanesians, which strongly affected national church growth trends over the following two decades. There were twenty to thirty convert baptisms a year in the 1970s and most years in the 1980s, which increased to eighty to ninety in the 1990s.¹⁷¹⁷ Membership reached 1,000 in the mid-1990s. By year-end 2000, there were 1,525 members.

Membership growth slowed in the 2000s as annual growth rates ranged from a low of 0.4% in 2009 to a high of 3.9% in 2005. Annual membership growth rates generally varied from 1 to 3% during this period, and church membership typically grew by around fifty members a year. There were 1,631 members in 2002, 1,742 in 2005, and 1,828 in 2007. In 2009, one in 134 was LDS.

¹⁷¹² "New Caledonia," Countries and Their Cultures," retrieved 13 November 2010. <http://www.everyculture.com/Ma-Ni/New-Caledonia.html>

¹⁷¹³ Johnson, R. Val. "Islands of Light," Ensign, Mar 2000, 31.

¹⁷¹⁴ "New Caledonia," Country Profile, retrieved 13 November 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/new-caledonia>

¹⁷¹⁵ "We have been on a long journey—but it was a great occasion," LDS Church News, 1 July 2000. <http://www.ldschurch-news.com/articles/38065/We-have-been-on-a-long-journey—but-it-was-a-great-occasion.html>

¹⁷¹⁶ "New Caledonia," Country Profile, retrieved 13 November 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/new-caledonia>

¹⁷¹⁷ Johnson, R. Val. "Islands of Light," Ensign, Mar 2000, 31.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 5 Branches: 3 (2012)

In the 1976, the Church split the Nouméa Branch into two congregations and organized the Nouméa New Caledonia District.¹⁷¹⁸ In 1978, a branch was created in Tontouta. By 1996, there were five branches, four of which were in the Nouméa area. Two of the branches specifically met the needs of Polynesian members.¹⁷¹⁹ The first congregations were organized in the Loyalty Islands during the late 1990s. By 2000, there were nine branches (Bourail, Dumbéa, Lifou, Mare, Mont Dore, Nouméa 1st, Nouméa 2nd, Riviere Salee, and Tontouta). In 2003, the Dumbéa Branch was discontinued. In 2012, the Nouméa New Caledonia District became a stake.

Activity and Retention

Approximately 1,000 Latter-day Saints attended a special meeting with President Hinckley in 2000.¹⁷²⁰ 138 were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year. The average number of members per congregation increased between 2000 and 2009 from 169 to 236. Nationwide active membership is estimated at 1,000, or 50% of total church membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: French, Tahitian, Vietnamese.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in French, Tahitian, and Vietnamese. The *Liabona* magazine has twelve issues a year in French, whereas Tahitian and Vietnamese each have four issues a year.

Meetinghouses

The first Church-built chapel was completed in the 1970s in Nouméa.¹⁷²¹ In late 2010, there were seven LDS meetinghouse in New Caledonia. Congregations meet in Church-built meetinghouses, renovated buildings, or rented spaces.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church has not undergone any large humanitarian or development projects in New Caledonia. Service offered by the Church is limited to full-time missionaries completing weekly service hours and local members organizing and participating in projects sponsored by their local congregations.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

There are no restrictions for Latter-day Saints to worship, assemble, and proselyte. Foreign full-time missionaries regularly serve in the country, and there appear to be no major complications obtaining visas.

¹⁷¹⁸ Johnson, R. Val. "Islands of Light," *Ensign*, Mar 2000, 31.

¹⁷¹⁹ Johnson, R. Val. "Islands of Light," *Ensign*, Mar 2000, 31.

¹⁷²⁰ "We have been on a long journey—but it was a great occasion," *LDS Church News*, 1 July 2000. <http://www.ldschurch-news.com/articles/38065/We-have-been-on-a-long-journey—but-it-was-a-great-occasion.html>

¹⁷²¹ Johnson, R. Val. "Islands of Light," *Ensign*, Mar 2000, 31.

Cultural Issues

Melanesians face significant cultural challenges investigating and joining the LDS Church due to deep ethno-religious ties and the cultural practice that major personal decisions must be approved by an individual's parents and tribal chiefs. Leaving the religious group practiced by one's tribe oftentimes results in leaving one's community altogether. Past political conflict and tension have segregated many ethnic groups. Local church leaders urge members to not discuss political subjects at church to prevent divisions and unite the diverse ethnic backgrounds present in many LDS congregations.¹⁷²² Secularism among Europeans has resulted low receptivity to the Church and its missionaries, resulting in little recent growth with this population. Overall, many Melanesian and Polynesian cultural attitudes and practices complement LDS teachings, such as a strong emphasis on family and regular church attendance.

National Outreach

Forty-eight percent (48%) of the national population resides in cities or on small islands with an LDS congregation. LDS mission outreach centers may reach as many as 85% of the inhabitants, as Nouméa and its suburbs constitute 67% of the national population, the two Loyalty islands with an LDS congregation (Maré and Lifou) comprise 6% of the population, and Le Mont-Doré and Bourail together account for 12% of the population. Additional LDS congregations and mission outreach centers are needed in the Nouméa area due to its large population and many communities without nearby LDS meetinghouses. Prospective additional mission outreach centers in Nouméa communities or nearby towns include Dumbéa, Païta, Commune du Mont-Dore, Boulari, and La Coulée. Full-time missionaries likely work frequently in these areas, but no congregations have been created.

Almost the entire European population receives LDS mission outreach, but many Kanaks are unreached in towns and villages in the northern half of the main island and on small islands elsewhere. A limited number of full-time missionaries assigned to New Caledonia, along with hesitancy of mission and area leaders to assign full-time missionaries to more remote unreached regions, have limited national outreach potential among areas populated by more receptive populations. Urban centers with several thousand inhabitants that could serve as mission outreach centers in unreached areas include Canala, Kouaoua, Poindimié, Koumac, Koné, Nepoui, and La Foa. Mission outreach among immigrants from Wallis and Futuna may facilitate an official Church establishment in these unreached islands that are a dependency of France, populated by 15,000.

There is no LDS Internet site for New Caledonia. The creation and use of a website that provides culturally-tailored approaches to local needs and circumstances may help increase missionary productivity and expand national outreach.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Latter-day Saints in New Caledonia appear to have achieved convert retention and member activity rates higher than or comparable to most other nations in Oceania. Whether this is due to higher religious activity rates among the indigenous Kanak population or LDS mission policies regarding convert baptisms and reactivation efforts is unclear. Distance from mission headquarters has reduced the number of full-time missionaries assigned, but has forced local members to be more self-reliant in their church responsibilities.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

LDS leaders have consistently addressed ethnic integration challenges by avoiding political discussions at church and fostering interethnic fellowshiping and gospel teaching. Few ethnic integration issues appear to

¹⁷²² Johnson, R. Val. "Islands of Light," *Ensign*, Mar 2000, 31.

have been manifest at church recently. A greater influx of new converts may upset the current ethnic dynamics of LDS congregations as new members learn to associate and befriend members from different ethnic groups. There appear to be few, if any, members among Southeast Asian immigrant groups.

Language Issues

There are no LDS materials in New Caledonian Melanesian languages due to the small number of speakers of each of these languages. Fluency in French is high among the indigenous population, reducing the need for LDS materials in local indigenous languages. There are no realistic prospects for translations of LDS materials into these languages at present.

Missionary Service

Twenty-seven full-time missionaries were assigned to New Caledonia in mid-2010. Few local members have served full-time missions, and New Caledonia appears highly dependent on foreign missionaries to staff the island missionary force. Mission and area leaders have hesitated assigning full-time missionaries to congregations in the Loyalty Islands due to distance from mission headquarters in Fiji.

Leadership

The LDS Church has greatly benefited from several strong local leaders who have provided valuable service and mentoring in their respective callings. Ricardo Gaya served as district president for sixteen years between 1981 and 1996¹⁷²³ and served as the Madagascar Antananarivo Mission president from 2006 to 2009.¹⁷²⁴ Limited numbers of qualified, active priesthood holders have likely prevented the creation of additional congregations. However, the creation of the first stake with close to the bare minimum of nominal membership required indicates strength in active priesthood leadership.

Temple

New Caledonia is assigned to the Suva Fiji Temple district. Temple trips appear to occur regularly for members in the district. Long distance from the Suva Fiji Temple, the crossing of political boundaries, and transportation costs require members to adequately prepare for temple excursions weeks or months in advance. No other nation or territory assigned to the Suva Fiji Temple speaks French, which requires New Caledonian members to be self-sufficient in staffing their temple needs. Prospects for a temple closer to New Caledonia do not appear likely in the foreseeable future due to the small size of the Suva Fiji Temple district and inadequate numbers of temple-attending Latter-day Saints in the region.

Comparative Growth

New Caledonia has the fourth lowest percentage of Latter-day Saints in the South Pacific behind the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, and Australia and the second largest population in the South Pacific without an LDS mission. Membership and congregational growth rates have lagged behind most of Oceania. No other nation in Oceania has had full-time missionaries assigned for as long as New Caledonia and experienced as little church growth. Most nations in the region with as long as an LDS presence as New Caledonia today report dramatically larger church memberships and more rapid past growth. The first LDS missionaries arrived to Kiribati in 1975, and today Kiribati boasts seven and a half times as many members and three times as many congregations as New Caledonia but less than half the total population. LDS Church growth

¹⁷²³ Johnson, R. Val. "Islands of Light," *Ensign*, Mar 2000, 31.

¹⁷²⁴ "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 6 May 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48920/New-mission-presidents.html>

trends are comparable to Guam, where, like New Caledonia, the indigenous population does not constitute a majority. New Caledonia and Fiji were the first Melanesian nations to have an LDS presence, but Fiji has experienced greater growth.

Missionary-focused Christian groups who have arrived more recently have experienced little growth. Seventh Day Adventists generally gain fewer than fifty converts per year and have not established any new churches since 2001. Jehovah's Witnesses claim as many members as Latter-day Saints but maintain three times as many congregations. These groups face the same challenges as Latter-day Saints, namely, strong ethno-religious ties among Kanaks, the need to tailor proselytism to the secular Europeans, and challenges expanding national outreach into remote regions.

Future Prospects

Slow membership growth and stagnant congregational growth in New Caledonia during the 2000s, no expansion of national outreach since the late 1990s, and the lack of full-time missionaries in areas with more receptive Kanak populations generate a poor outlook for church growth in the coming years. The opening of additional cities to proselytism, greater numbers of local members serving full-time missions, and stronger member-missionary approaches are needed to reverse stagnant church growth trends. The creation of the Vanuatu Port Vila Mission may reverse the recent trend of stagnant national outreach expansion if additional areas open to proselytism.

NEW ZEALAND

Geography

AREA: 267,710 square km. New Zealand comprises two large islands east of Australia and administers several small, sparsely uninhabited island groups such as the Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau. Mountains cover most areas and plains stretch along some coastal areas. Temperate climate prevails throughout the country. Northern areas experience subtropical conditions, whereas cold winters and warm to mild summers occur in southern and mountainous terrain. Mild earthquakes and volcanoes are natural hazards. Environmental issues include deforestation, invasive species, and soil erosion. New Zealand is administratively divided into sixteen regions and one territory.

Peoples

European: 69.8%

Maori: 7.9%

Asian: 5.7%

Pacific Islander: 4.4%

Other: 0.5%

Mixed: 7.8%

Unspecified: 3.8%

Europeans live throughout the country. Most Maori live in urban areas and on the North Island. Maoris account for over 25% of the population in Northland, Bay of Plenty, and Gisborne Regions.¹⁷²⁵ Most Asians identify as Chinese or Indian. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of Pacific Islanders live in the Auckland area.¹⁷²⁶ Half of Pacific Islanders are Samoans. Pacific Islander groups with over 50,000 people include Samoans, Cook Islands Maoris, and Tongans.¹⁷²⁷

Population: 4,327,944 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.863% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.07 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 78.7 male, 82.81 female (2012)

Languages: English (91.2%), Maori (3.9%), Samoan (2.1%), other (2.8%). English and Maori are official languages. Maori is spoken proficiently by a quarter of the ethnic population. Only English has over one million speakers.

Literacy: 99% (2003)

¹⁷²⁵ "Location," Statistics New Zealand, retrieved 1 July 2010. <http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2006CensusHomePage/QuickStats/quickstats-about-a-subject/maori/location-te-wahi.aspx>

¹⁷²⁶ "Location," Statistics New Zealand, retrieved 1 July 2010. <http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2006CensusHomePage/QuickStats/quickstats-about-a-subject/pacific-peoples/location.aspx>

¹⁷²⁷ "Pacific peoples population," Statistics New Zealand, retrieved 1 July 2010. <http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2006CensusHomePage/QuickStats/quickstats-about-a-subject/pacific-peoples/pacific-people-population.aspx>

History

The Maori people settled New Zealand around 800 AD. In the early nineteenth century, the Maori and British signed the Treaty of Waitangi in which Maoris retained territorial rights but lost sovereignty to the British. During the nineteenth century, several wars were fought between the Maoris and the British over territorial claims. New Zealand won independence from the United Kingdom in 1907 and participated in both World Wars. In recent years, the nation has distanced itself from international affairs while becoming increasingly integrated into the world economy.

Culture

Past British rule and positive relations with the United Kingdom following independence have perpetuated many British cultural characteristics. Maori art, words, and place names are widespread. Wool and sheep byproducts are well known New Zealand products. New Zealanders have a reputation for being well educated and living healthy lifestyles. Cigarette consumption rates are low, whereas alcohol consumption rates are high.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$27,900 (2011) [58% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.908

Corruption Index: 9.5 (2011)

In the past couple decades, New Zealand reduced its reliance on agriculture and developed a more industrialized economy. The economy can now compete internationally but is sensitive to overseas demand for New Zealand goods. Services employ 74% of the workforce and produce 70% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 19% of the workforce and accounts for 26% of the GDP. Primary industries include food processing, wood products, machinery, tourism, and mining. Australia, the United States, Japan, and China are major trade partners.

New Zealand is regarded as one of the least corrupt countries in the world.

Faiths

Christian: 53.5%

Other: 3.3%

Unspecified: 17.2%

None: 26%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Anglican 554,925

Catholic 508,437

Methodist 121,806

Latter-day Saints 107,511 207

Pentecostal 79,155

Baptist 56,913

Jehovah's Witnesses 14,507 184

Seventh Day Adventists 11,761 78

Religion

Christians form a slight majority, many of which are Anglican or Catholic. Most non-Christians do not follow any organized religion resulting in a strong secular atmosphere in many areas. Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims have increased in the past couple decades due to the continued arrival of Asian immigrants, but these groups constitute less than 5% of the population. Pacific Islanders are more religiously active than the overall population, as 83% identified with a particular religious group and are almost entirely Christian. The majority of Pacific Islanders are Catholic.¹⁷²⁸ Maoris tend to follow Maori-Christian denominations such as Ratana and Ringatu, the Presbyterian Church, and the LDS Church.

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. Missionaries may openly proselyte, and religious groups report no government restrictions for their activities. There have been a few instances of societal abuse of religious freedom that have targeted Jews and Judaism.¹⁷²⁹

Largest Cities

Urban: 87%

Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Manakau, North Shore, Waitakere, Hamilton, Dunedin, Tauranga, Lower Hutt.

All ten of the largest cities and all cities over 10,000 inhabitants have an LDS Church presence. Fifty-five percent (55%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities. The Auckland Region accounts for 34% of national population.

LDS History

The first LDS missionaries arrived in 1854 from Australia where the Church had set up its headquarters for missionary work in the Pacific. Ten converts joined the Church that year, and the first congregation was created in Karori. During much of the nineteenth century, many members immigrated to Utah, slowing local church growth. Greater receptivity than in other South Pacific areas prompted Church leaders to relocate Church headquarters for the Pacific to New Zealand. In 1880, there were seven branches and 133 members. Before this time, efforts had been concentrated on Europeans. In the 1880s, missionaries targeted Maoris who were more receptive to the Church due to many similarities between their native beliefs and Church teachings and the conversion of several Maori spiritual leaders who predicted a “true religion” would come to them one day.¹⁷³⁰ The Book of Mormon was translated into Maori in the late 1880s. Between 1913 and 1931, the Maori Agricultural College (MAC) provided Maori LDS youth education in an effort to improve member activity and convert retention as other schools tended to be sponsored by other churches. Following World War II, missionary work began among all ethnicities. The Church provided high school education through the Church College of New Zealand between 1958 and 2009. In 1958, the New Zealand Mission was divided to create the New Zealand South Mission, which later became the New Zealand Wellington Mission.¹⁷³¹ The

¹⁷²⁸ “Religion,” Statistics New Zealand, retrieved 1 July 2010. <http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2006CensusHomePage/QuickStats/quickstats-about-a-subject/pacific-peoples/religion.aspx>

¹⁷²⁹ “New Zealand,” International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127282.htm>

¹⁷³⁰ “New Zealand,” Country Profiles, retrieved 2 July 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/new-zealand>

¹⁷³¹ Britsch, R. Lanier. “Roots of Faith,” *Ensign*, Sep 1989, 44.

Church College of New Zealand closed in 2009 in an effort to allocate more Church resources to more needy areas of the world. In 2013, a third mission was created in Hamilton.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 107,511 (2012)

By 1900, there were about 4,000 members, most of which were Maoris. Membership increased from 8,600 in the mid-1930s to 17,000 by 1958 and to 26,000 by 1966. There were almost 60,000 members by 1987.¹⁷³² In 1990, there were 76,000 members. In 1992, an estimated 60% of Church membership was Maori.¹⁷³³ Membership grew steadily in the 2000s from 90,078 in 2000 to 94,722 in 2004 and 97,474 in 2006. Most years experience annual membership growth rates between 1% and 1.5%, just above the population growth rate.

The New Zealand census provides abundant data on LDS membership demographics. The census reported membership as 41,166 in 1996, 39,915 in 2001, and 43,539 in 2006. In 2006, 50% of self-identified Latter-day Saints were Maori, and 30% were of European ancestry. Latter-day Saints of Asian origin numbered 1,299. The 2006 census tallied 9,558 Samoan, 5,025 Tongan, 2,619 Cook Islands Maori, 1,599 Niuean, 219 Fijian, 99 Tokelauan, and 57 Tuvaluan Latter-day Saints.

Sixty-one percent (61%) of self-identified members on the 2006 census resided in the Auckland and Waikato Regions. The 2006 census reported 1–2% of the population following the LDS Church in Northland, Waikato, Hawke's Bay, Gisborne, and Auckland Regions, whereas fewer than 0.3% of the population claimed membership in the LDS Church in Southland, Canterbury, West Coast, Otago, and Tasman Regions.

In 2009, the New Zealand Auckland Mission set an all-time record for yearly baptisms at 1,094. In May 2010, the mission set a new record for the most convert baptisms in one month (144).

In 2010, one in every forty-two New Zealanders was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 159 Branches: 51 (April 2013)

The Church organized its first stake outside of the United States and Canada in Auckland in 1958. By year-end 1960, three stakes functioned in the country. The total number of stakes increased to seven by 1970, fourteen by 1980, sixteen by 1990, and twenty-five by 2000. No new stakes were organized in the 2000s. Three districts functioned in 2010. The Dunedin and Nelson New Zealand Districts were organized in the 1890s on the South Island and Taranaki New Zealand District was organized in 1992. Only one stake and two districts function on the South Island, whereas ten stakes function just in the Auckland Region. By early 2013, there were twenty-eight stakes and three districts.

There were seventy-nine branches by 1900 and eighty-three branches by the mid-1930s.¹⁷³⁴ The number of total congregations increased to 151 in 1990, 184 in 1994, and 216 in 1998. In 2000, there were 210 congregations, 146 of which were wards. The number of total congregations declined to 200 in 2002 and slightly increased to 203 in 2009. In the past ten years, wards increased by nine, whereas branches decreased by fourteen.

¹⁷³² Britsch, R. Lanier. "Roots of Faith," *Ensign*, Sep 1989, 44.

¹⁷³³ Hart, John L. "Maori stalwarts prepared way for growth," *LDS Church News*, 18 April 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22418/Early-Maori-stalwarts-prepared-way-for-growth.html>

¹⁷³⁴ Britsch, R. Lanier. "Roots of Faith," *Ensign*, Sep 1989, 44.

Dependent branches and groups appear to meet in several locations, some of which used to be independent branches but were discontinued in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The Kawerau Branch was a dependent branch in the Bay of Plenty Region, which had fifty attending Church meetings in 2010. Prior to reorganizing Church meetings in Kawerau, an unused Church-built chapel sat vacant for many years.¹⁷³⁵

Activity and Retention

Nationwide meetings were well attended before they were discouraged by regional Church leadership. Twelve thousand members assembled for the New Zealand Area conference in 1976.¹⁷³⁶

The average number of members per congregation rose between 2000 and 2009 from 429 to 497, indicating that convert retention appears modest. The total of Latter-day Saints reported by the 2006 census was only 45% of total LDS Church membership reported by the Church that year. An increase in self-reported LDS membership of just 5% between 1996 and 2006 suggests little change in active church membership over that period. Including part-actives, participating LDS membership is estimated at around 40,000, or 40%–45% of total membership, although average weekly church attendance rates appear to be closer to 25%–30%, as not all self-identified Latter-day Saints attend weekly.

Several branches in more remote areas of the country have few members, especially on the South Island. The Greymouth Branch had less than twenty active members in 2010. Activity rates appear low in many rural areas and smaller towns without a congregation.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English, Maori, Samoan, Tongan, Fijian, Rarotongan, Niuean, Tuvaluan.

All LDS scriptures are available in Samoan, Tongan, Fijian, and Rarotongan. Most Church materials are available in Samoan, Tongan, and Fijian. Only the Book of Mormon and hymns are translated into Maori. Book of Mormon selections are only available in Niuean. A limited number of family history, priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, primary, unit, and missionary materials are translated into Niuean and Rarotongan. Translations of Church materials in Tuvaluan consist of the sacrament prayers, *Gospel Fundamentals*, the Articles of Faith, and *The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony*.

Meetinghouses

Most congregations meet in Church-built meetinghouses, including some dependent branches and groups.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church has completed few humanitarian or development projects in recent years partially due to the level of economic prosperity experienced in New Zealand. Service and development work is primarily limited to missionaries' weekly service hours and service projects organized by local congregations.

¹⁷³⁵ "How an Empty Church Became Full Again," Newsroom of the New Zealand Country Website, 11 June 2010. <http://www.ldschurch.org.nz/newsroom/article.asp?id=FBB3EACF-8041-4E9A-B241-5082341859CE>

¹⁷³⁶ Britsch, R. Lanier. "Roots of Faith," *Ensign*, Sep 1989, 44.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Church activities and missionary work face no restrictions or difficulties from local laws or government policies. Missionaries openly proselyte, and foreign missionaries appear to serve with few, if any, complications.

Cultural Issues

Increasing secularism has reduced interest in religion among many New Zealanders. Commercial activities were banned on Sundays until the early 1990s, as this was recognized as many as a day for Christian worship. Religion is often seen as a private matter for whites and is usually not discussed in a public setting. However, the Church appears to have experienced increases in membership among all ethnic groups. High religious activity among Pacific Islanders results in many from this group already being shepherded in other Christian churches, which can reduce receptivity to LDS missionary efforts. Rugby is the most popular sport.

National Outreach

New Zealand receives excellent mission outreach, as two LDS missions serve a national population just over four million. All large population centers have established congregations and full-time missionaries assigned. Urban areas without mission outreach consist of small towns with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants, often located near larger towns or cities with a congregation. Only 13% of the national population lives in rural areas, many of which are distant from cities with organized LDS congregations. Most of the unreached population is concentrated on the South Island, reflecting that the majority of church members are northern Maoris who constitute less than 8% of national population. Although the LDS Church is one of the largest religious groups, many know little about the Church and its beliefs and practices due to the disproportionate ethnic and geographic concentration of church membership among minority ethnic groups and a small number of members among the majority population of European ancestry.

Over the past decade, very few, if any, congregations have been opened in new areas. The unreached population likely consists of as few as 10% of the national population and may be most effectively reached by holding cottage meetings and periodic visits by member-missionaries and full-time missionaries. Due to low levels of interest in religion in many areas, creative and appropriate methods for proselytism will be required to reach out to the population.

The Church maintains an Internet site for New Zealand at <http://www.ldschurch.org.nz/>. The website provides information about the Church and can be used for Internet outreach. A church visitors' center at the Hamilton New Zealand Temple is open daily.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Member activity appears to vary by many factors, such as ethnicity, location, and socioeconomic situation. Rural areas appear most prone to higher inactivity rates, whereas urban areas tend to experience higher Church attendance, likely due to closer proximity to meetinghouse locations and more close-knit support networks. Many of New Zealand's inactivity issues have been present for many decades and have continued to accumulate. Convert retention rates may have improved in the Auckland areas in the past few years as additional congregations have been established. Concentrating mission efforts in cities on the North Island without a nearby congregation may offer outreach for reactivation, although the chronicity of LDS inactivity over several decades, notwithstanding numerous prior initiatives, suggests limited reactivation potential. Forward-looking efforts to ensure the development of gospel habits and ensure fellowshiping and integration of prospective

converts into established congregations before baptism may present the best opportunities to improve convert retention rates and, over time, member activity.

Some areas like Greymouth have very few youth or middle-aged members and may close to missionary work once older members pass away. Cities with few members present social challenges for new converts and new move-ins to successfully integrate with active membership and remain active. Senior missionary couples have been assigned to many of these cities to help with these issues.

Some recent converts serve in leadership positions and assist in member-missionary efforts, although maturing Church membership and leadership may be partially responsible in declining membership growth rates over the past couple decades as older members tend to limit much of their social interactions to fellow Latter-day Saints. Several areas of the world that have many active recent convert members and leaders have achieved greater success in local missionary efforts.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The Church appears to experience few ethnic integration issues, as English is widely spoken and New Zealanders have reconciled many past ethnic conflicts between European settlers and Maoris during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Interethnic relations are generally positive. Many language-specific congregations help reduce potential challenges and misunderstandings between Pacific Islanders and the rest of the population, as many Pacific Islanders were born abroad. The Church will likely experience the greatest outreach challenge to ethnicities with few Christians and few LDS members, like the Asian and Indian communities that each have over 100,000 individuals.

Language Issues

The large number of Samoan and Tongan Latter-day Saints has resulted in the creation of dozens of language-specific congregations to meet their needs. Both New Zealand-born and overseas-born Tongans and Samoans have more speakers of their respective languages than any other Pacific group with over 10,000 people.¹⁷³⁷ Non-Samoan and non-Tongan Pacific Islanders have smaller populations and have a lower percentage of people who can speak their native languages. Consequently, the Church has no congregations for these other languages with the exception of one Niuean-speaking ward.

Mission outreach to Samoans and Tongans has been excellent in many areas. The New Zealand Auckland Mission in 2010 had specific language programs for Samoan and Tongan. Each language program had over twenty participating missionaries.

Missionary Service

In the early 1990s, a typical stake had approximately thirty members serving full-time missions.¹⁷³⁸ New Zealand appears able to sustain its own missionary force currently, but North American and Pacific Islander missionaries frequently serve in large numbers in the two missions. New Zealand has yet to reach its potential in providing missionary manpower for the region in view of its large LDS population and developed church leadership.

¹⁷³⁷ "Language," Statistics New Zealand, retrieved 1 July 2010. <http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2006CensusHomePage/QuickStats/quickstats-about-a-subject/pacific-peoples/language.aspx>

¹⁷³⁸ Hart, John L. "Maori stalwarts prepared way for growth," LDS Church News, 18 April 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22418/Early-Maori-stalwarts-prepared-way-for-growth.html>

Leadership

Elder Douglas J. Martin became the first native New Zealander General Authority and was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy in 1987.¹⁷³⁹ Many New Zealanders have served as regional Church leaders.¹⁷⁴⁰ In 2010, Ian S. Ardern was called as an Area Seventy.¹⁷⁴¹

Temple

New Zealand belongs to the Hamilton New Zealand Temple district. In 2010, the temple operated Monday through Saturday. Six endowment sessions were held Tuesday through Friday, five on Saturday, and three on Monday. The temple works below capacity much of the time, partially due to its distance from Auckland. In 2010, a native couple began serving as the temple president and matron.¹⁷⁴²

Comparative Growth

New Zealand has the second most Church members in the Pacific area after Australia and was one of the first nations worldwide to have missionaries assigned. Member activity rates are comparable to most nations in the region. Only Chile and Uruguay have over one million inhabitants and a higher percentage of LDS members than New Zealand. Like most nations in Oceania, no new stakes or districts have been organized in the past decade, and membership growth rates have declined. Recent church growth trends in New Zealand parallel trends in Australia.

Over the past decade, most Christian denominations have gained few if any new members or are in decline. Membership growth rates are slightly higher for Jehovah's Witnesses than for the Latter-day Saints, whereas the number of Seventh Day Adventists has remained nearly unchanged over the past decade.

Future Prospects

New Zealand has seen recent record years for convert baptisms, although active membership has seen little increase, and there are fewer congregations than a decade ago. The Church benefits from mature leaders and a strong local membership base able to accommodate future growth. However, increasing secularism and low to modest convert retention rates over the decades have slowed church growth. Greater convert retention will be required for the creation of additional congregations. Recent record-breaking numbers of convert baptisms in the New Zealand Auckland Mission point to positive developments in missionary work but will have little significance if convert retention rates do not improve and increased growth rates are not sustained. Prospects for a second temple appear high, as the Church has purchased land with the intent to build a temple in Auckland next to the New Zealand Missionary Training Center.

¹⁷³⁹ Britsch, R. Lanier. "Roots of Faith," *Ensign*, Sep 1989, 44.

¹⁷⁴⁰ "New regional representatives," *LDS Church News*, 21 March 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22377/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹⁷⁴¹ "New Area Seventies," *LDS Church News*, 24 April 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59238/New-Area-Seventies.html>

¹⁷⁴² "New temple presidents," *LDS Church News*, 5 June 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59425/New-temple-presidents.html>

NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Geography

AREA: 464 square km. Consisting of fourteen islands in the North Pacific Ocean north of Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands are located between the Philippines and Hawaii. The islands' geology differs by location, as northern islands are volcanic, whereas southern islands are composed of limestone and surrounded by coral reefs. Tropical climate occurs year round with dry (December to June) and wet (July to October) seasons. Volcanoes and typhoons are natural hazards. Environmental issues include ground water contamination, proper waste disposal, and the protection of endangered species. Five of the fourteen islands are inhabited; two islands have a population less of than ten. The Northern Mariana Islands is a commonwealth of the United States.

Peoples

Asian: 56.3%

Pacific islander: 36.3%

Caucasian: 1.8%

Other: 0.8%

Mixed: 4.8%

The Northern Mariana Islands have exhibited the sharpest percentage decline in population growth rate for several years due to emigration.

Population: 44,582 (July 2012) [some population estimates are as high as 87,000]

Annual Growth Rate: -2.449% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.09 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 74.62 male, 80.07 female (2012)

Languages: Philippine languages (24.4%), Chinese (23.4%), Chamorro (22.4%), English (10.8%), other Pacific island languages (9.5%), other (9.6%).

Literacy: 97% (1980)

History

Chamorros inhabited the islands prior to European discovery. The Spanish landed in the sixteenth century and ruled until 1898 when the islands were sold to Germany. In World War I, Japan annexed the islands and developed a sugar cane industry. Following the Japanese invasion of Guam in World War II, Chamorros from the Northern Mariana Islands participated in the Japanese administration of Guam. This resulted in a division between the Chamorros in the Northern Marianas and Guam during the subsequent decades. The United States invaded the Northern Marianas in 1944, and less than a thousand of the 30,000 Japanese troops stationed on Saipan survived.¹⁷⁴³ In the 1970s, the Northern Mariana Islands determined not to seek indepen-

¹⁷⁴³ "Northern Mariana Islands," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 22 January 2011. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Mariana_Islands#History

dence from the United States but rather to become a United States territory. In 1976, a covenant came into force that declared the islands a commonwealth of the United States.

Culture

Filipino, Chinese, Micronesian, and Chamorro cultural practices are most apparent in the Northern Mariana Islands, as these ethnic groups support the largest populations. Saipan underwent a dramatic cultural change between 1980 and 2000 as the population more than tripled as a result of immigration. The Catholic Church has strongly influenced local culture, as the indigenous Chamorro and most immigrant groups are predominantly Catholic. Cuisine consists of seafood and many dishes common to the Philippines, Oceania, and East Asia.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$12,500 (2000) [26% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: N/A

Corruption Index: N/A

Financial assistance from the United States and tourism stabilizes the economy. The tourist industry employs approximately 50% of the workforce and generates around 25% of the GDP. Many tourists vacation from Japan, but financial challenges have reduced their numbers in recent years. Additional industries include banking, construction, fishing, clothing, and handicrafts. Vegetables, melons, nuts, livestock, poultry, eggs, and fish are common agricultural products.

Faiths

Christian: 90%

Other: 10%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic

Latter-day Saints 756 1

Jehovah's Witnesses 278 3

Seventh Day Adventists 4,320 18 (includes Guam, Micronesia, Marshall Islands, and Palau)

Religion

Most adhere to the Catholic Church. Chamorro maintain strong ethno-religious ties with the Catholic Church. Other Christian denominations comprise most of the remaining population. Some Asians are Buddhist.

Religious Freedom

The United States constitution protects religious freedom and is upheld by the local government. There have been no reported instances of societal abuse of religious freedom.

Largest Towns

Urban: 91%

San Antonio, Garapan, Koblerville, San Vincente, Tanapag, Chalan Kanoa, Kagman, Dandan, Gualo Rai, Susupe.

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

One of the ten largest towns has an LDS congregation. Forty-six percent (46%) of the population resides in the ten most populous towns.

LDS Background

LDS servicemen in the United States military were the first known members to live on Saipan during World War II, first arriving in 1944. Among them was future LDS apostle Elder L. Tom Perry.¹⁷⁴⁴ 190 LDS servicemen gathered for a conference in 1945.¹⁷⁴⁵ In 1975, the Church reestablished a permanent presence on Saipan when two full-time missionaries were assigned from the Hawaii Honolulu Mission.¹⁷⁴⁶ The first LDS missionaries visited Rota and Tinian in the late 1970s and were later temporarily assigned to serve on the islands in the late 1980s and early 1990s.¹⁷⁴⁷ An addition to the Saipan Branch meetinghouse was necessitated by membership growth in 1988.¹⁷⁴⁸

In 1996, President Hinckley briefly met with local members and missionaries while refueling his plane on a visit to the Philippines.¹⁷⁴⁹ In 2005, President Boyd K. Packer and Elder David A. Bednar held a member meeting.¹⁷⁵⁰ Elder L. Tom Perry visited Saipan following the creation of the Barrigada Guam Stake in late 2010.¹⁷⁵¹ Missionaries infrequently visit Rota and Tinian today.

There were fewer than one hundred members in 1987. There were 280 members in August 1988, and most members were from Micronesia, Palau, the United States, American Samoa, the Philippines, and Saipan.¹⁷⁵² Membership reached 400 in 1993 and 500 in 1997.¹⁷⁵³ By year-end 2000, there were 856 members. During the 2000s, membership increased to 932 in 2002 and declined to 888 in 2003, 811 in 2005, 777 in 2007, and 735 in 2009. In 2009, one in sixty-six was LDS. The Saipan Branch was organized in the late 1970s and was assigned to the Guam District in the early 1980s. The San Jose Branch operated on Tinian between 1990 and 1997 and was discontinued as many of the members left the island.¹⁷⁵⁴ In late 2010, the Saipan Branch became a ward in the newly created Barrigada Guam Stake. The congregation meets in southern Garapan. Sixty of

¹⁷⁴⁴ "Early beginnings," LDS Church News, 18 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28725/Early-beginnings.html>

¹⁷⁴⁵ "This week in Church history," LDS Church News, 7 January 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25661/This-week-in-Church-history.html>

¹⁷⁴⁶ "Early beginnings," LDS Church News, 18 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28725/Early-beginnings.html>

¹⁷⁴⁷ "Northern Mariana Islands," Deseret News 2011 Church News Almanac, p. 549-550.

¹⁷⁴⁸ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 12 August 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17740/From-around-the-world.html>

¹⁷⁴⁹ "Final stop: 'Just one more meeting' in Saipan," LDS Church News, 8 June 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28166/Final-stop-Just-one-more-meeting-in-Saipan.html>

¹⁷⁵⁰ Hill, Greg. "New 'beginnings' in southeastern Asia," LDS Church News, 12 March 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46985/New-beginnings-in-southeastern-Asia.html>

¹⁷⁵¹ "Constructing a chapel and testimonies," LDS Church News, 15 January 2011. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/60363/Constructing-a-chapel-and-testimonies.html>

¹⁷⁵² "From around the world," LDS Church News, 12 August 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17740/From-around-the-world.html>

¹⁷⁵³ "Early beginnings," LDS Church News, 18 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28725/Early-beginnings.html>

¹⁷⁵⁴ "Northern Mariana Islands," Deseret News 2011 Church News Almanac, p. 549-550.

Saipan's 300 Latter-day Saints met with President Hinckley in 1996.¹⁷⁵⁵ In late 2010, full-time missionaries reported that there were approximately 200 active members, or 27% of total membership.

All LDS scriptures are translated into Japanese, Korean, Chinese (traditional and simplified characters), and Tagalog. The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony is translated into Chamorro. The *Liahona* magazine has twelve Japanese, Korean, Chinese, and Tagalog issues a year. The LDS Church has not performed any major humanitarian or development projects in the Northern Mariana Islands. The Northern Mariana Islands pertains to the Manila Philippines Temple district.

Opportunities

There are no restrictions on religious freedom. Latter-day Saints proselyte, worship, and assemble freely. LDS mission outreach benefits from a predominantly Christian population representing various ethnic groups from Micronesia, East Asia, the Philippines, and the United States that has fostered the integration of differing ethnic groups into the same congregation. Small geographic size necessitates the establishment of few LDS mission outreach centers for national outreach. The Saipan Ward provides mission outreach to the entire island of Saipan, although some areas of the island are less reached due to distance from the LDS chapel. Full-time missionaries regularly visit and proselyte in most urban areas on Saipan, indicating that up to 90% of the population may be reached by the Church. Ten full-time missionaries from Yap, the Philippines, the Marshall Islands, and the United States served on Saipan in 1996.¹⁷⁵⁶ Multiple missionary companionships served on Saipan in early 2011, labored throughout Saipan, and appeared to baptize converts regularly. The Church is unlikely to organize additional mission outreach centers elsewhere on the island due to its small geographic size, tiny population, and low member activity rates. The establishment of additional congregations in urban areas with concentrated numbers of Latter-day Saints may help improve member activity rates in some areas. The establishment of additional congregations to spur new leadership, decrease travel times, and generate local LDS communities may increase active membership over time.

LDS services are held in English, which is spoken by most members. Church materials and scriptures are available in the native or most regularly-spoken language of nearly the entire population. In 1988, the branch president was from American Samoa.¹⁷⁵⁷ The leadership of the Saipan Ward appeared to be self-sufficient as evidenced by the branch maturing into a ward in late 2010. The Church would have been unable to organize the Barrigada Guam Stake in 2010 without the inclusion of the LDS congregation on Saipan due to lacking numbers of active Melchizedek Priesthood holders on Guam.

Challenges

The Northern Mariana Islands has held the dubious position of the nation or territory with the most Latter-day Saints with only one congregation for over a decade, as the sole Saipan Ward has a membership of nearly 750. Low member activity and poor convert retention appear to be the result of a combination of quick-baptism tactics in the 1990s and 2000s on Saipan combined with many nonnative members originating from areas that exhibit low member activity rates, such as the Philippines and Guam. Dependence on full-time missionaries for teaching, baptizing, fellowshiping, and reactivating efforts have reduced local member-missionary involvement. It is unclear whether progress in the 2000s had occurred regarding reactivation and convert retention initiatives. Emigration does not appear to have adversely affected member activity rates, but high rates

¹⁷⁵⁵ "Final stop: 'Just one more meeting' in Saipan," LDS Church News, 8 June 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28166/Final-stop-Just-one-more-meeting-in-Saipan.html>

¹⁷⁵⁶ "Final stop: 'Just one more meeting' in Saipan," LDS Church News, 8 June 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28166/Final-stop-Just-one-more-meeting-in-Saipan.html>

¹⁷⁵⁷ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 12 August 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17740/From-around-the-world.html>

of member turnover have created administrative challenges and frustrated leadership growth. Nominalism in the Catholic Church among Filipinos, Micronesians, and others has challenged LDS efforts to instill habits of regular church attendance and engage investigators and converts into individual religious practices like personal scripture reading, prayer, and living LDS teachings on a daily basis. Non-Christian Asians require missionary approaches tailored to their religious and cultural backgrounds. The strong ethnic ties among Chamorro and Carolinians to the Catholic Church create obstacles for mission outreach.

There is no LDS Internet outreach specialized to Saipan or other islands. None of the Carolinian languages have LDS materials. Temple trips likely occur as a stake. Prospects for a small LDS temple in the Micronesian area appear favorable over the medium term.

Member activity rates appear comparable to activity rates throughout Micronesian nations and territories. Many nations or territories with over 700 nominal members often have two to four LDS congregations, whereas the Northern Mariana Islands has only one. Other mission-oriented Christian groups operate on Saipan, and some maintain multiple congregations. Jehovah's Witnesses reported nearly as many active members as Latter-day Saints in 2009 yet operated two congregations. Seventh Day Adventists had at least one congregation on Saipan in early 2011.

Prospects

The advancement of the sole LDS congregation from branch to ward status in late 2010 demonstrates that the sizeable, self-sufficient local leadership and active membership body on Saipan is capable of fulfilling the responsibilities and demands merited by a ward. The inclusion of the islands' entire LDS membership into a single unit may have compromised member activity rates and deterred the development of additional leadership on a greater scale, as leadership positions are limited and LDS activities occur in a single location. The creation of additional congregations in lesser-reached communities may warrant future consideration to improve member activity rates, stimulate local leadership development, and promote long-term self-sustainable growth. However, large-scale emigration from the islands and limited mission resources may restrict medium-term expansion of outreach.

PALAU

Geography

AREA: 459 square km. Comprising six island groups of over 300 individual islands in the Philippine Sea and North Pacific Ocean, Palau is the westernmost archipelago of the Caroline chain and located to the southeast of the Philippines. Island geography varies from low-lying coral terrain to mountainous terrain. Tropical climate prevails year round, which is modified by a wet season from May to November. Typhoons are a natural hazard. Environmental issues include proper disposal of solid waste, sand and coral dredging, and overfishing. Palau is divided into sixteen administrative states.

Peoples

Palauan: 69.9%

Filipino: 15.3%

Chinese: 4.9%

Other Asian: 2.4%

White: 1.9%

Carolinian: 1.4%

Other Micronesian: 1.1%

Other/unspecified: 3.2%

Palauans are related to Micronesians, Melanesians, Polynesians, and Malaysians. Approximately 30% of the population are migrant workers or immigrants from East Asia and Micronesia.

Population: 21,032 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.361% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.72 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 68.9 male, 75.4 female (2012)

Languages: Palauan (64.7%), Filipino (13.5%), English (9.4%), Chinese languages (5.7%), Carolinian languages (1.5%), Japanese (1.5%), other Asian languages (2.3%), other languages (1.5%). Palauan is the official language of all islands except on Sonsoral, Tobi, and Angaur where Sonsoralese, Tobi, and Anguar and Japanese are the official languages, respectively.

Literacy: 92% (1980)

History

Seafarers from Indonesia or Oceania are believed to have settled Palau as early as the second millennium BC. The British began visiting the islands in the eighteenth century followed by the Spanish in the nineteenth century. Spain took territorial possession of Palau and sold it to Germany in 1899 following Spain's defeat in the Spanish-American War. Japan gained control of Palau in 1914 followed by the United States in 1947 under the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Several major battles in World War II were fought in Palau,

such as at Beliliou. A new constitution was approved in 1981, and Palau signed a Compact of Free Association with the United States the following year. Palau declared independence in 1994.¹⁷⁵⁸

Culture

Palauan society has diversified over the past century as a result of foreign occupation and the influx of migrant works. Christianity and subsistence farming are the predominant societal influences. Traditional cuisine consists of fish, cassava, coconut, yam, taro, and pork. Western and Asian foods are commonly eaten. Alcohol consumption rates are higher than the world average.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$8,100 (2008) [17.3% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.782

Corruption Index: N/A

Tourism, subsistence agriculture, and fishing drive the economy. The government is a major employer. The United States provided up to \$700 million in aid for the first fifteen years following independence to maintain U.S. military installations. The expansion of the tourist industry and foreign investment has developed greater self-sufficiency. Forest, gold, minerals, and marine products are natural resources. Services generate 82% of the GDP, whereas agriculture and industry generate 6% and 12% of the GDP, respectively. Major industries include tourism, handicrafts, construction, and clothing. Coconuts, copra, cassava, sweet potatoes, and fish are common agricultural products. The level of perceived corruption is lower than most of Oceania. Petty corruption and misuse of funds are the primary types of corruption that occur in Palau.¹⁷⁵⁹

Faiths

Christian: 90%

Other: 10%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 13,621

Evangelical 2,000

Modeknei 1,800

Seventh Day Adventists 1,000

Latter-day Saints 430 1

Jehovah's Witnesses 86 1

Religion

Most Palauans are Catholic (65%). Other prominent religious groups include evangelicals, Modeknei, Seventh Day Adventists, Latter-day Saints, and Jehovah's Witnesses. Modeknei is a syncretic Christian denomination that incorporates indigenous beliefs.¹⁷⁶⁰

¹⁷⁵⁸ "Background Note: Palau," Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 4 October 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1840.htm>

¹⁷⁵⁹ Shuster, Donald R. "Republic of Palau 2004," Transparency International Country Study Report, 2004. <http://www.transparency.org.au/documents/palau.pdf>

¹⁷⁶⁰ "Palau," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148889.htm>

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. Religious groups must obtain charters as nonprofit organizations to receive tax-exempt status. The government has not refused registration to any religious groups in recent years. Foreign missionaries may serve in Palau and must request a missionary permit from the Office of Immigration. Religious instruction is not permitted in public schools. Christmas is a recognized national holiday. There have been no reported societal abuses of religious freedom in recent years.¹⁷⁶¹

Largest Cities

Urban: 83%

Koror, Meyungs, Airai, Kloulklubed.

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

One of the four largest towns has an LDS congregation. Eighty percent (80%) of the national population resides in the four most populous towns. Sixty-four percent (64%) of the national population resides in Koror State.

LDS Background

The first known Latter-day Saints to live on Palau were American military servicemen during World War II. A member of the Hawaii Honolulu Mission presidency visited Palau in 1977 to explore prospects for beginning missionary work. Full-time missionaries were assigned in 1978 and were restricted by the government to work only on the islands of Koror, Arakabesan, Malakal, and Airai. The first Palauan Latter-day Saints joined the Church in late 1978, and the Meyungs Branch was organized shortly thereafter. Palau was reassigned to the Micronesia Guam Mission in 1980. In 1985, an American Latter-day Saint shipped 1,000 school books as part of an Eagle Scout project.¹⁷⁶² There were fifty-nine Latter-day Saints in 1981 and 200 members in 1987. Three additional congregations were organized in the late 1980s (Airai, Koror Topside, Koror Central) and were consolidated shortly thereafter. An LDS Chinese congregation briefly operated in the early 1990s to meet the needs of converts from mainland China but was discontinued after many of the converts returned to China.¹⁷⁶³ In 1993 there were 300 members, one district, and two branches. By 1997, there was one branch. Membership totaled 400 in 1997, 384 in 2000, 437 in 2005, and 424 in 2009. In 2010, there were approximately sixty active members in the Koror Topside Branch, or 15% of national LDS membership. Church attendance sometimes reaches as high as eighty on holidays. In 2010, there were four elders and a senior missionary couple assigned to Palau. The sole LDS branch meets in a church-built meetinghouse in Koror. Palau is assigned to the Manila Philippines Temple district. In 2010, the branch president of the Koror Topside Branch was the Ngardmau State delegate for the government. In 2009, one in forty-nine was nominally LDS.

Opportunities

Religious freedom and a predominantly Christian population generate favorable conditions for LDS missionary activity. Mission leadership has held the vision of opening a second branch on Palau, but that goal requires new active converts and efforts to reactivate less active members. The Koror Topside Branch provides mission outreach to Koror, home to two-thirds of the national population. Full-time missionaries operate regularly on Babelthup, increasing the percentage of the national population receiving limited mission outreach to

¹⁷⁶¹ "Palau," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148889.htm>

¹⁷⁶² Romney, Richard M. "Books to Palau," *New Era*, Nov. 1985, 27.

¹⁷⁶³ "Palau," Country Profile, retrieved 4 March 2011. <http://newsroom.lds.org/country/palau>

95%. Notwithstanding having fewer than 20,000 speakers worldwide, Palau benefits from translations of LDS scriptures and materials including the Book of Mormon, the *Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, the Articles of Faith, a few primary materials, and a family guidebook. Most nonnatives have LDS materials in their native language. Palau receives abundant LDS missionary resources despite its tiny, isolated population. Full-time missionaries report that there were three seminary students in 2010. Expanding seminary and institute programs with assistance from the senior missionary couple may lead to greater doctrinal understanding, higher convert retention rates, and greater numbers of local members serving full-time missions.

Challenges

With the lowest member activity rate in the Pacific, the LDS Church in Palau has struggled to retain new converts and reactive less active or inactive members. The first LDS congregation was organized three decades ago on Meyungs Island, but in 2010 nearly all of the forty-three LDS households were inactive or less active. Full-time missionaries have worked for years to reintroduce the Church and reestablish church attendance among these members with no noticeable success. Full-time missionaries reported in 2010 that the branch conducted meetings in English despite Palauan members comprising the majority, largely due to the presence of foreign full-time missionaries and a few nonnative members from the Philippines and Mexico. Reluctance of local members to speak Palauan at church and to missionaries has heavily contributed to poor member activity rates, as those not proficient in English may stop attending meetings. Many administrative and ecclesiastical tasks are placed upon full-time missionaries, resulting in reduced member participation in holding and magnifying callings. Overstaffing the branch with missionaries has likely exacerbated poor member-missionary participation. Many local members and leaders have a desire to share the gospel but are unable to plan and coordinate proper activities without reliance on full-time missionaries. Travel to the temple is time consuming and expensive, resulting in limited temple attendance from active members.

Prospects

The outlook for future growth of the LDS Church in Palau is poor due to the unwillingness of native members to speak Palauan in LDS meetings, low member-missionary work participation, and the lack of apparent success in reactivating less active and inactive members. The opening of Palauan-language-only dependent branches or groups in areas with concentrated numbers of less active members may improve prospects retaining and reactivation less active members, although prospects for reactivation appear dim after years of largely fruitless efforts. Most future growth is likely to occur through new converts rather than through reactivation, although improved standards for baptism will be necessary to avoid repeating past difficulties with the lapse of most converts into inactivity.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Geography

AREA: 462,840 square km. Bordering the Indonesian Province of Papua and occupying the eastern half of the second largest island in the world, Papua New Guinea hosts a wide variety of climates and terrains north of Australia. Tropical rainforest and mountains cover most of the landscape. Hundreds of islands also belong to the country, many of which form archipelagos to the east such as New Britain, New Ireland, Bougainville, and the Admiralty Islands. Some of the world's largest swamps occupy coastal areas. Western, interior areas consist of more populated highlands. Natural disasters from active volcanoes, earthquakes, mudslides, and tsunamis are common. Papua New Guinea is divided into twenty administrative provinces, one of which (Bougainville) has autonomous status.

Peoples

Melanesian
Papuan
Negrito
Micronesian
Polynesian

Population: 6,310,129 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.936% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 3.39 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 64.23 male, 68.79 female (2012)

Languages: Tok Pisin, English, and Hiri Motu (official). Eight hundred thirty languages are spoken constituting over 10% of the world's languages. Tok Pisin is commonly spoken by many as a second language in northern Papua New Guinea. Languages with the most native speakers include Enga (165,000), Melpa (130,000), Tok Pisin (122,000), Kuman (115,000), Kewa East and Kewa West (90,000), Wahgi and Wahgi North (86,000), Kamano (63,200), Kuanua (61,000), English (50,000), and Hiri Motu (39,000). No first languages are spoken by more than one million people.

Literacy: 57.3% (2000)

History

The native peoples occupied New Guinea for thousands of years prior to European exploration of the region. In 1885, the eastern half of the island was divided north to south between Germany and the United Kingdom. Australia took control of the southern portion in 1902 and the northern German portion during World War I. Independence from Australia occurred in 1975. The island of Bougainville attempted to secede from Papua New Guinea between 1988 and 1997, resulting in the deaths of thousands. Stability returned after the province was granted autonomous status. In the 2000s, efforts were underway to improve living conditions, address societal problems, and develop the economy.

Culture

Papua New Guinea has fascinated anthropologists from around the world due to its extreme cultural diversity in a nation of only six million people. Some isolated tribes living in mountainous or remote areas did not receive contact from the outside world until the last century. The hundreds of languages spoken range from a couple of dozen speakers to thousands. Many indigenous species of plants and animals are only found in Papua New Guinea. Lawlessness resulting from thousands of years of tribal warfare has carried over to modern cities like Port Moresby. Crime is a serious problem. Papua New Guinea has the highest percentage of people infected with HIV/AIDS in East Asia or Oceania at 1.5%. As larger villages grow into small cities, land disputes arise between urbanites and local tribes living out the outskirts.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$2,500 (2011) [5.2% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.466

Corruption Index: 2.2 (2011)

Rough terrain and an undeveloped infrastructure prevent greater exploitation of the abundant natural resources. Agriculture, industry, and services each account for about a third of the GDP. A third of Papuans live under the poverty line, and 85% of the workforce labors in agriculture. Mineral resources account for a large amount of the export earnings, particularly gold and copper. Significant oil and natural gas reserves have begun to be exploited, contributing to the increase in economic growth. Aid from Australia continues to assist with the living and economic conditions. Lawlessness and civil disorder also contribute to a lack of greater economic progress.

Corruption is a major problem that has limited foreign investment and economic progress. Government officials have illegally allowed logging in tropical forests. Provincial governments often experience greater lawlessness and corruption.

Faiths

Christian: 96.4%

Bahai: 0.3%

Indigenous beliefs and other: 3.3%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 1,635,461

Evangelical Lutheran 1,181,166

United Church 696,585

Pentecostal 520,925

Evangelical Alliance 314,978

Seventh Day Adventists 249,973 900

Anglican 193,832

Baptist 151,432

Latter-day Saints 21,265 93+

Jehovah's Witnesses 4,191 60

Religion

Christianity has spread rapidly, resulting in almost the entire population belonging to a Christian denomination.

Religious Freedom

Religious freedom is protected by the constitution and upheld by the government. Missionaries from different religions may openly proselyte.

Major Cities

Urban: 12%

Port Moresby, Lae, Madang, Wewak, Arawa, Goroka, Vanimo, Kimbe, Rabaul, Mount Hagen.

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Eight of the ten largest cities have an LDS congregation. Ten percent (10%) of the national population lives in the ten most populous cities.

LDS History

The first members in Papua New Guinea were expatriates from Australia living in Port Moresby. The Church was established in the country in 1979. The first convert baptisms occurred in 1980. Elder L. Tom Perry dedicated Papua New Guinea for missionary work in April 1983.¹⁷⁶⁴ Papua New Guinea was administered by the Australia Brisbane Mission when an LDS presence was first established. The first Papuan full-time missionaries began serving in 1984. The Church organized the Papua New Guinea Port Moresby Mission in February 1992 from the Australia Brisbane Mission. The mission also included the Solomon Islands until mid-2012. In 2013, a second mission was organized in Lae.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 21,265 (2012)

There were 280 members in late 1980. By October 1982 there were 475 members. Greater growth continued, with membership reaching 1,450 in March 1987¹⁷⁶⁵ and 2,100 in 1989. One thousand five hundred members lived in Port Moresby in 1989 with the remaining 600 residing in remote villages throughout the country.¹⁷⁶⁶

In December 1991, there were 2,600 LDS members. Membership growth began to accelerate outside of Port Moresby. On a small island near the Indonesian border, the Daru Branch grew to 160 members after three months. Half of the convert baptisms in the Australia Brisbane Mission occurred in Papua New Guinea before the mission split.¹⁷⁶⁷ Missionaries baptized forty to fifty converts a month in 1995. The same year, the first stake was created in Port Moresby with 2,200 members.¹⁷⁶⁸ By late 1998, there were over 5,000 members.¹⁷⁶⁹

¹⁷⁶⁴ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Self-reliance: A plan for Papua New Guinea," LDS Church News, 18 January 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43105/Self-reliance-A-plan-for-Papua-New-Guinea.html>

¹⁷⁶⁵ "Papua New Guinea," Country Profile, 2 April 2011. <http://newsroom.lds.org/country/papua-new-guinea>

¹⁷⁶⁶ "New Guinea: Light and truth pouring into nation 10 years following Church's arrival," LDS Church News, 16 September 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19186/New-Guinea-Light-and-truth-pouring-into-nation-10-years-following-Churchs-arrival.html>

¹⁷⁶⁷ "7 new missions created; total now 275," LDS Church News, 29 February 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22528/7-new-missions-created-total-now-275.html>

¹⁷⁶⁸ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Faith leads to first Papua New Guinea stake," LDS Church News, 11 November 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26682/Faith-leads-to-first-Papua-New-Guinea-stake.html>

¹⁷⁶⁹ "Early beginnings," LDS Church News, 18 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28725/Early-beginnings>.

LDS membership increased very rapidly in the late 1990s, reaching 9,808 at the end of 2000. Rapid growth continued with membership totaling 11,775 in 2002, 13,895 in 2004 and 15,517 in 2006. By the end of 2008, there were 16,664 members. Since 2000, the most rapid growth rates occurred in the first half of the decade with annual growth rates of 7–11%. Membership growth has declined since 2006 to 3.5% and 4.5% annually. Membership typically increases between 500 and 1000 annually. In 2010, one in 337 was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 11 Branches: 66 Groups: 16+ (April 2013)

The first branch was created in 1979 in Port Moresby. Three years later, branches increased to three. In 1983, there were five branches and one district. Branches continued to multiply, growing to nine in March 1987 and to thirteen in 1989. Fifteen branches and one district functioned by December 1991, five of which functioned outside Port Moresby in towns and villages like Daru and Kuriva. A branch began functioning in Popondetta before 1992.¹⁷⁷⁰ A second district in Nine Mile was organized in 1993. Elder V. Dallas Merrell created the Port Moresby Papua New Guinea Stake on October 1995. The new stake included the following six wards and one branch: The Gerehu, Gorobe, Kila Kila, Korobosea, Port Moresby, and Sabama Wards and the Konedobu Branch.¹⁷⁷¹ At the time of the stake's creation, only one other district functioned in Nine Mile. By 1999 a sufficient number of congregations in Daru allowed for the creation of another district. By the end of 2000 there was one stake, five wards, twenty-six branches, and three districts. One ward in the stake had returned to branch status.

Rapid congregational growth occurred in 2001. No new wards were organized, but the number of branches increased from twenty-seven to forty-five. The following year, many new branches became part of several new districts that were created in Gerehu, Goroka, Kuriva, and Oro in 2002. The total number of districts increased to eight, with the remaining four districts operating in Daru, Isomu, Nine Mile, and central Port Moresby. The number of branches increased to fifty by 2004 and dropped to forty-eight in 2006, remaining unchanged as of late 2009. The Port Moresby Papua New Guinea Central District was discontinued in 2007. At least one of the branches became part of the stake in Port Moresby, increasing the number of branches in the stake to three. In 2008, the Isumo Papua New Guinea District combined with the Daru Papua New Guinea District in preparation for a stake.¹⁷⁷² Also in 2008, a new district was created in Rigo, southeast of Port Moresby, out of half a dozen mission branches. In 2010, the Minj Papua New Guinea District was created from five branches from the Goroka Papua New Guinea District, bringing the total number of districts back to eight. Two new districts were organized in Western Province in late 2010 and in mid-2011 in Sogere and Suki. Both districts were organized initially from a single branch in each location that formerly pertained to the Daru Papua New Guinea District. In the district in Sogere, there were eight additional branches organized by mid-2011. The district in Suki had four additional branches organized by mid-2011, resulting in the number of branches between the two districts increasing from two in mid-2010 to fourteen by mid-2011. In May 2011, a second stake was organized in Daru with six wards. In the early 2010s, additional districts were organized in Moveave (2011), Madag Lae (2012), and Sepik River (2012).

For many years in the 2000s several mission branches did not belong to a stake or district and reported directly to the mission presidency. These branches were located in Angoram, Lae, Moim, Morovamu, Pinang, Rabaul, Sisiak, and Wewak. By April 2012, there was only one mission branch in Rabaul as new districts were formed from former mission branches in other locations. Several dependent branches or groups likely function across

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¹⁷⁷⁰ "Hall of famer," LDS Church News, 18 January 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22557/Hall-of-famer.html>

¹⁷⁷¹ "New stake presidencies," LDS Church News, 2 December 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26056/New-stake-presidencies.html>

¹⁷⁷² Packard, David. "Long trip for Papua New Guinea members," LDS Church News, 14 May 2009. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/57337/Long-trip-for-Papua-New-Guinea-members.html>

the country under the administration of the Papua New Guinea Port Moresby Mission Branch or local independent branches, such as in Kavieng and Kimbe.

Activity and Retention

In November 1995, 206 members held a temple recommend. At the creation of the first stake, members were challenged to grow the Church sufficiently large in Port Moresby for the creation of a second stake the following year.¹⁷⁷³ As of mid-2011, no additional stakes have been organized in Port Moresby however, indicating decelerating growth and a retention and activity problem in Port Moresby. The average number of members per congregation between 2000 and 2010 dropped from 316 to 282. Due to the rapid increase of congregations in 2002, the ratio of members per congregations fell to 236. This ratio subsequently increased as membership growth has outpaced congregational growth until 2010. The average ward or branch appears to have approximately one hundred active members. Total active membership is estimated at eight thousand, or 30%–40% of nominal membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Tok Pisin, English.

The Book of Mormon is the only LDS scripture available in Tok Pisin. Plans to translate scriptures into Pidgin English began in 1991.¹⁷⁷⁴ A limited selection of church materials are translated into Tok Pisin. Several Church materials are translated into Motu including *Gospel Fundamentals* and limited unit, priesthood, primary materials, and family history materials. *The Living Christ Testimony* is also translated into Motu.

Meetinghouses

The first church-built meetinghouse was completed in 1984.¹⁷⁷⁵ Chapels were later constructed in Kuriva and Popondetta in the late 1980s and early 1990s.¹⁷⁷⁶ Most congregations meet in sheltered areas in villages, rented spaces, or renovated buildings. Open-air church-built meetinghouses are utilized in many areas outside of Port Moresby.

Health and Safety

Papua New Guinea suffers from the highest rates of HIV/AIDS in East Asia and Oceania. HIV/AIDS infects 1.5% of the population. Methods of infection include sexual relations, drug use, contaminated needles, and HIV-positive mothers. High crime rates have discouraged the sending of a greater number of foreign missionaries and contribute to Papuans forming the majority of the missionaries serving in Papua New Guinea.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Missionaries have taught members and Papuans literacy skills since the early 1990s.¹⁷⁷⁷ Local members in

¹⁷⁷³ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Faith leads to first Papua New Guinea stake," LDS Church News, 11 November 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26682/Faith-leads-to-first-Papua-New-Guinea-stake.html>

¹⁷⁷⁴ Wakeley, Alan. "Members make historic trip to temple," LDS Church News, 21 December 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21669/Members-make-historic-trip-to-temple.html>

¹⁷⁷⁵ "Papua New Guinea," Country Profile, 2 April 2011. <http://newsroom.lds.org/country/papua-new-guinea>

¹⁷⁷⁶ Morris, Michael R. "'One Talk' in Papua New Guinea," Ensign, February 1995. <http://lds.org/ensign/1995/02/one-talk-in-papua-new-guinea?lang=eng>

¹⁷⁷⁷ "Literacy opened 'whole new world' for her," LDS Church News, 6 February 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23747/Literacy-opened-whole-new-world-for-her.html>

Popondetta prepared sterilized gauze for a local hospital¹⁷⁷⁸. A major project to increase self-reliance and improve living conditions of members and the general population began in 2001. Accomplishments of the project included installing eighteen potable water stations in villages, donating desks, computers and school supplies to forty-five schools, and donating equipment to hospitals. Emphasis has been placed on improving education and by early 2003, thirteen Papuans were studying at BYU-Hawaii.¹⁷⁷⁹ Australian members living just south of Papua New Guinea on Thursday Island donated needed items for Papuans living in the Western Province¹⁷⁸⁰. The Church assisted with measles vaccination programs in 2008.¹⁷⁸¹ Projects to preserve family history information of Papuans have caught interest of government officials. In 2010, LDS doctors from Australia provided medical assistance following a cholera outbreak in Western Province.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

No legal obstacles prohibit the Church from proselytism. LDS members and missionaries may worship, assemble, and proselyte freely. Safety concerns have prevented the assignment of young North American missionaries.

Cultural Issues

Low living standards and high receptivity to Christianity have favored LDS Church growth over the past two decades. Warfare and lawlessness threaten the Church's outreach and likely limit the opening of additional areas. Immorality appears commonplace. The extensive outreach of Christian denominations has brought most to a belief in Christ, providing a great opportunity for missionary work among a humble people with a Christian background. The transition of some from rural to urban living environments challenges cultural traditions and may contribute to lawlessness and violence in larger cities like Lae.

National Outreach

At least 10% of the national population appears to reside in locations with LDS congregations. Many of the most densely populated areas receive low levels of LDS mission outreach. Members anxious to share their beliefs with those around them present major opportunities for the Church to increase its national outreach and have significantly expanded missionary work. The Church's establishment outside of Port Moresby can be credited to the willingness and faith of members living in Port Moresby sharing church beliefs with family and friends living in their home villages in remote areas. Many of the villages that have LDS congregations have populations of less than 5,000 and as little as several hundred. Church members greatly assisted in the establishment of the Church in Daru. As converts join the Church in Daru and returned to the mainland, they conducted member missionary work among those around them and brought the Church to very isolated, sparsely populated areas such as Isumo, Suki and Sogere. With less than 13,000 inhabitants, Daru experiences excellent LDS outreach, as five wards and a stake are based on the small, remote island. In 2010 and 2011, penetrating LDS outreach began in the Sogere and Suki areas of Papua New Guinea. Nearly all 4,000 speakers of Suki are accessible by five LDS congregations in the Suki area despite remote location and few inhabitants.

¹⁷⁷⁸ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 15 May 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23489/From-around-the-world.html>

¹⁷⁷⁹ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Self-reliance: A plan for Papua New Guinea," LDS Church News, 18 January 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43105/Self-reliance-A-plan-for-Papua-New-Guinea.html>

¹⁷⁸⁰ Cooper, Christopher. "Helping neighbors in Papua New Guinea," LDS Church News, 21 October 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49670/Helping-neighbors-in-Papua-New-Guinea.html>

¹⁷⁸¹ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Fighting measles," LDS Church News, 17 May 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/52000/Fighting-measles.html>

The nine branches in the Sogere area provide moderately high rates of outreach in rural populations in the north Fly River delta and reach most of the 6,300 speakers of Bamu.

Despite the progress made in significantly increasing the number of congregations in a few rural areas, half of the twenty provinces do not have an LDS congregation, and only seven have more than one LDS congregation. The most populous province, the Southern Highlands, has 544,000 inhabitants and no LDS congregations. Morobe, the second most populated province with 537,000, has one congregation in the largest city of Lae. The Western Highlands is the third most populated province (439,000) and has no congregations. It is not until the fourth most populous province, Eastern Highlands (429,000) that more than one congregation functions in a single province.

With the exception of the Rabaul Branch, no congregations function throughout any of the islands to the east of the mainland. These islands have smaller populations isolated from the rest of the country. Significant language challenges face the Church in reaching these areas.

The greatest Church resources appear focused in and nearby Port Moresby due to greater difficulty for travel to other areas of the country. This has also likely come as the result of many of the converts' home villages being in closer proximity to the capital than villages in other areas. Five of the nine districts are within one hundred miles of Port Moresby. The greatest opportunities for mission outreach are in Western Province, provinces surrounding Port Moresby, Simbu Province, and villages where an LDS congregation has been established.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Member activity appears strongest among the youth. Over 600 were enrolled in seminary in the 2008–2009 school year, the equivalent of enrollment in many nations with more than twice as many members, such as Costa Rica, Panama, Spain, and Tonga. Most countries have higher institute enrollment than seminary enrollment. However in Papua New Guinea institute enrollment is only a third of seminary enrollment, which points toward higher activity among youth than young adults.

Until the creation of the Daru Papua New Guinea Stake, Papua New Guinea was the country with the largest membership with only one LDS stake. This likely indicates that activity levels are not strong enough for the creation of additional stakes or that multiple large congregations are not sufficiently localized for stake function. The goal presented to Papuan members at the creation of the first stake to create a second stake the following year has yet to be realized over fourteen years later. Inactivity problems appear greatest in Port Moresby, as there has been nearly no increase in the number of congregations in this region over the past decade and a half. The dissolution of the Port Moresby Papua New Guinea Central District points toward activity and retention problems. Many of the retention and activity problems appear to reflect limited understanding of gospel principles and societal problems influencing membership. Violence, poverty, and unemployment present challenges for member activity. A lack of language materials may also have contributed to lower activity.

Some branches in remote areas have combined in the late 2000s, like the result of activity problems. In Lae, two additional branches functioned, named the West Taraka and Kamkumung Branches. Both of these units were discontinued in the late 2000s. Otherwise, membership in remote areas appears more resilient than in Port Moresby.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Although ethnic tensions exist in some areas, the greatest challenge in integrating differing ethnic groups into the Church is due to language. It is unclear how the Church accommodates speakers of different languages

into one congregation. Land disputes along the peripheries of larger towns and cities result in increased ethnic tensions that may impact some church members.

Language Issues

Tok Pisin is most widely spoken in the northern areas and likely help unify members from different tribes meeting in the same congregation. Congregations established in remote villages likely have fewer problems than larger cities concerning multiple languages spoken among members of the same congregation. The first missionaries received help from local members translating English into Pidgin and Motu in the early 1980s.¹⁷⁸² Foreign missionaries have been able to learn Pidgin English in the past, but Papuan members usually serve in the country due to their familiarity with local languages. The absence of any Church materials in languages spoken by members in remote areas is a major challenge in developing greater doctrinal understanding, leadership, and missionary work. Church materials and LDS scriptures in Tok Pisin greatly accelerate the Church's growth and strength, but there is a need for basic proselytism materials in languages spoken by members in some isolated areas such as Bamu and Suki. Other likely languages in which the Church may translate materials include Kiwai (spoken in Daru), Orokaiva (spoken in Popondetta), and languages with over 50,000 speakers.

Missionary Service

The LDS Church in Papua New Guinea appears nearly self-sufficient in meeting its missionary needs but relies on other nations in Oceania for staffing the full-time missionary force. By late 1989, twelve full-time Papuan missionaries were serving missions. Five sets of missionaries and seven senior couple missionaries were serving in Papua New Guinea.¹⁷⁸³ Papuans consisted of most of the missionaries serving in the country by the time the first mission was organized. In 1995, thirty-four elders and eight senior couple missionaries served in the Papua New Guinea Port Moresby Mission.¹⁷⁸⁴ The number of missionaries serving in the country increased to seventy-seven by 2003¹⁷⁸⁵ and over 100 by the early 2010s. Emphasis on seminary and institute attendance as a means of missionary preparation may increase the number of local members serving missions.

Leadership

Growth in congregations only occurs as member activity and local leadership potential allow. In 1989, all thirteen of the country's branches were led by local members.¹⁷⁸⁶ Since 1997, mission presidents for the Papua New Guinea Port Moresby Mission have all come from Polynesia, primarily from Tonga.¹⁷⁸⁷ Several leaders of the Port Moresby Papua New Guinea Stake have been employed by the Church. The first stake president was a security guard for a company, and one of his counselors worked as a security guard for the Church.¹⁷⁸⁸ In

¹⁷⁸² Wells, Elayne. "He knew there was something different about the young men dressed in white shirts," LDS Church News, 16 September 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18623/He-knew-there-was-something-different-about-the-young-men-dressed-in-white-shirts.html>

¹⁷⁸³ "New Guinea: Light and truth pouring into nation 10 years following Church's arrival," LDS Church News, 16 September 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19186/New-Guinea-Light-and-truth-pouring-into-nation-10-years-following-Churchs-arrival.html>

¹⁷⁸⁴ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Faith leads to first Papua New Guinea stake," LDS Church News, 11 November 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26682/Faith-leads-to-first-Papua-New-Guinea-stake.html>

¹⁷⁸⁵ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Self-reliance: A plan for Papua New Guinea," LDS Church News, 18 January 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43105/Self-reliance-A-plan-for-Papua-New-Guinea.html>

¹⁷⁸⁶ "New Guinea: Light and truth pouring into nation 10 years following Church's arrival," LDS Church News, 16 September 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19186/New-Guinea-Light-and-truth-pouring-into-nation-10-years-following-Churchs-arrival.html>

¹⁷⁸⁷ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Faith leads to first Papua New Guinea stake," LDS Church News, 11 November 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26682/Faith-leads-to-first-Papua-New-Guinea-stake.html>

¹⁷⁸⁸ "New stake presidencies," LDS Church News, 2 December 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26056/>

2002, the stake presidency was reorganized, and both counselors worked for Church maintenance and facility management.¹⁷⁸⁹ Success in developing local leadership has been most impressive in Western Province as indicated by the rapid increase in the number of congregations in recent years, notwithstanding remote location and few leadership training resources available.

Temple

Papua New Guinea is assigned to the Sydney Australia Temple District. One of the first temple trips occurred in late 1991 when 138 Papuans received their temple ordinances in the Sydney Australia Temple. It is unclear how often temple trips occur, but many Papuans hold temple recommends. Travel costs, distance, and obtaining visa documentation are barriers preventing greater temple attendance. Prospects appear good for the construction of an LDS temple in Papua New Guinea once additional stakes are organized in Port Moresby.

Comparative Growth

Despite having the largest native population and second largest overall population in Oceania, outreach has been limited. Only the Solomon Islands has a lower percentage of Church members in Oceania. Some of the lack of greater outreach is due to the Church's more recent establishment in 1979. Most other Pacific nations had the Church first established before 1950. Other nations that had their first Church presence established in the 1970s in Oceania have seen greater outreach and progress, such as Kiribati, where in late 2008 there were two stakes and one in eight people were LDS. Membership and congregational growth in Papua New Guinea has been some of the strongest over the past two decades in the Pacific. The large, diverse population challenges missionary efforts, which in most other Pacific nations focus on small and linguistically homogenous populations.

Many Christian denominations experience rapid growth and operate in most provinces. These denominations have built upon several decades of outreach. Seventh Day Adventists had over 50,000 Papuan members when the LDS Church first arrived in the late 1970s. In 2008, Adventists claimed 4% of the population throughout the country, had converted 7% of the population in the Eastern Highlands and Simbu Provinces, and had established congregations on many of the eastern islands. Despite civil strife on Bougainville, Seventh Day Adventists claim 5,500 members in thirty-seven congregations. Seventh Day Adventists and other Christian groups devote many resources from other nations and build up local missionary forces. The LDS Church in Papua New Guinea relies primarily on local members and native missionaries for outreach.

Future Prospects

Prospects for expanding LDS national outreach are favorable as receptivity is high and the development of local priesthood leadership is swift and efficient in some rural areas. Greater vision for expanding national outreach nationwide is warranted to achieve greater growth in the coming years, however. LDS membership has exhibited linear growth and may continue to see annual increases between 500 and 1,000 members until additional areas open for proselytism at an increased rate. Some districts may mature into stakes in the near future, including Goroka and Nine Mile. If groups operating in New Britain and New Ireland become branches, a district may be organized based in Rabaul. Since cities and villages tend to open as the result of member missionary work and members moving to unreached areas, smaller villages may open in greater amounts in the future, as recently demonstrated in Western Province. The likelihood of a temple announcement for Port Moresby will depend on the organization of additional stakes.

New-stake-presidencies.html

¹⁷⁸⁹ "New stake presidents," LDS Church News, 18 May 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41842/New-stake-presidents.html>

SAMOA

Geography

AREA: 2,831 square km. Consisting of two main islands in the heart of Polynesia, Samoa is located halfway between Hawaii and Australia in the South Pacific Ocean. Tropical climate occurs, which is modified by dry (May to October) and rainy (November to April) seasons. Narrow coastal plains outline the two main islands of Savaii and Upolu, whereas rugged mountains dominate the interior. Typhoons and volcanoes are natural hazards. Environmental issues include soil erosion, deforestation, invasive species, and overfishing. Samoa is divided into eleven administrative districts.

Peoples

Samoaan: 92.6%

Euronesians (mixed European and Polynesian): 7%

Europeans: 0.4%

Population: 194,320 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.596% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 3.13 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 69.79 male, 75.68 female (2012)

Languages: Samoan (100%). Samoan is the official language.

Literacy: 99.7% (2003)

History

Samoa is believed to be one of the first settled islands in Polynesia, being settled approximately 2,000 years ago. Settlers ventured to many other Polynesian islands from Samoa during the first millennium after Christ. Europeans first reached Samoa in the early eighteenth century, but regular contact did not occur until the 1830s when English missionaries and traders arrived. In the early twentieth century, administration of the Samoan islands was divided between the United States (American Samoa) and Germany. In 1914, New Zealand gained control over Western Samoa, which continued until independence in 1962. In 1997, the name was officially changed in the constitution from Western Samoa to Samoa.¹⁷⁹⁰ In 2009, an earthquake and tsunami damaged much of the country and resulted in 200 deaths.

Culture

Samoa continues to practice many aspects of its indigenous cultural, political, social, and linguistic customs and systems known as “fa’a Samoa.” Christianity supplanted indigenous religious beliefs that supported an intricate mythological system, and today, Samoa is among the most religious countries in the world. Dances and ceremonies mark many social occasions. Cuisine consists of coconuts, seafood, taro, rice, fruit, and seaweed. Samoans traditionally receive gender-specific tattoos called pe’a for males and malu for females.

¹⁷⁹⁰ “Background Note: Samoa,” Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 22 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1842.htm>

American football and rugby teams frequently have Samoan team members, and rugby is one of Samoa's most popular sports.¹⁷⁹¹ Cigarette and alcohol consumption rates are low.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$6,000 (2011) [12.5% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.688

Corruption Index: 3.9 (2011)

Dependent on development aid and family remittances from overseas, Samoa has a stable economy that also relies on agriculture and fishing for exports and employment. Lumber, fish, and hydropower are natural resources. Agriculture employs two-thirds of the workforce and generates 12% of the GDP. Common agricultural products include coconuts, fruit, taro, yams, coffee, and cocoa. Services and industry employ the remaining one third of the workforce and generate 75% and 13% of the GDP, respectively. Food processing, building materials, and auto parts are major industries. Primary trade partners include American Samoa, Australia, Fiji, and China.

Transparency International ranked Samoa as the least corrupt nation in Polynesia in 2010. There have been isolated reports of government corruption in the 2000s, which included public servants stealing government funds.¹⁷⁹²

Faiths

Christian: 98%

Other: 2%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Latter-day Saints 73,827 135

Congregational 64,512

Catholic 37,248

Methodist 27,456

Assemblies of God 13,248

Seventh Day Adventists 8,795 40 (includes American Samoa and Tokelau)

Jehovah's Witnesses 417 10

Religion

All but 2% of Samoans follow a Christian denomination. Primary Christian denominations include Congregationalists, Catholics, Methodists, Latter-day Saints, Assemblies of God, and Seventh Day Adventists. Between 2001 and 2006, figures from the Samoan censuses indicated continued steady decline of mainstream Christian denominations (Congregationalists, Catholics, and Methodists) and an increase in nontraditional and evangelical Christians. Non-Christians principally consist of Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, and Baha'is.¹⁷⁹³

¹⁷⁹¹ "Culture of Samoa," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 24 December 2010. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_Samoa

¹⁷⁹² "Samoa," Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 6 March 2007. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78789.htm>

¹⁷⁹³ "Samoa," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148892.htm>

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. There are no restrictions on religious freedom, and religious discrimination or persecution are not tolerated. There is no state religion, albeit the government has favored Christianity. Village chiefs frequently determine the religious denomination of relatives. Major Christian holidays are recognized as national holidays. There are no requirements for religious groups to register with the government. Missionaries may operate freely, and churches may establish their own schools. Christian education in public schools is required. Villages traditionally had one Christian church, and today many larger villages have multiple church denominations that coexist peacefully. Some nontraditional churches face resistance when attempting to establish additional congregations in unreached areas.¹⁷⁹⁴

Largest Cities

Urban: 23%

Apia, Vaitele, Faleasi'u, Vaialele, Le'auva'a, Fale'ula, Vaiusu, Malie, Siusega, Laulii.

All ten of the largest cities and villages have an LDS congregation. Thirty-five percent (35%) of the national population resides in the ten most populous urban areas.

LDS History

Two Hawaiian LDS missionaries attempted to establish the Church in 1862 but were unsuccessful.¹⁷⁹⁵ The first mission president arrived in June 1888 to establish the Samoan Mission.¹⁷⁹⁶ The first LDS conference in Samoa was held in late 1888 in Apia and was attended by fifty-six, including thirty-five baptized members. Some Protestant leaders perpetuated misinformation about the Church shortly thereafter that challenged proselytism conditions for LDS missionaries. Savaii opened for LDS missionary work in 1890. The translation of the Book of Mormon into Samoan commenced in 1900 and the mission divided to create the Tongan Mission in 1916. Samoan church membership increased to the point when in the 1920s the Church purchased several plantations that helped to finance church schools. North American missionaries were withdrawn between 1940 and 1946 as a result of World War II. During this period, local Samoan missionaries staffed the mission. Labor missionaries began serving in the 1950s and built meetinghouses and Church President David O. McKay visited in 1955.¹⁷⁹⁷ Seminary and institute began in the mid-1970s. Cyclones in the late 1980s and early 1990s devastated the islands, damaging church property and killing one Latter-day Saint.¹⁷⁹⁸ In 1995, Latter-day Saint Tufuga Samuelu Atoa from Pesega received the Western Samoa Order of Merit for his civil contributions to Samoa.¹⁷⁹⁹ In 1997, Samoan Head of State Malietoa Tanumafili II conferred the title of chief on Polynesian Cultural Center President Lester Moore, the first time that the title of chief was bestowed on a non-Samoan.¹⁸⁰⁰ Samoa pertained to the Australia/New Zealand Area until 1998 when Samoa was included in the newly created Pacific Islands Area.¹⁸⁰¹ A fire destroyed the Apia Samoa Temple in 2003 shortly

¹⁷⁹⁴ "Samoa," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148892.htm>

¹⁷⁹⁵ Britsch, R. Lanier. "The Church in the South Pacific," *Ensign*, Feb. 1976, 19.

¹⁷⁹⁶ Clark, Janice. "The Saints in Samoa," *Ensign*, Dec. 1974, 21.

¹⁷⁹⁷ Avant, Gerry. "Church in Samoa to celebrate centennial," *LDS Church News*, 11 June 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18252/Church-in-Samoa-to-celebrate-centennial.html>

¹⁷⁹⁸ "Hurricane wreaks ruin in Samoa," *LDS Church News*, 21 December 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21126/Hurricane-wreaks-ruin-in-Samoa.html>

¹⁷⁹⁹ "Member is honored by government leader," *LDS Church News*, 22 July 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23670/New-mission-presidencies.html>

¹⁸⁰⁰ "He now carries title of Samoan chief," *LDS Church News*, 7 June 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29202/He-now-carries-title-of-Samoan-chief.html>

¹⁸⁰¹ "5 new areas announced worldwide," *LDS Church News*, 4 July 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31389/5-new-areas-announced-worldwide.html>

before renovations were to be completed, marking the first time in LDS history that an operating temple had burned.¹⁸⁰² That same year, a North American full-time missionary perished in a flooding accident.¹⁸⁰³ Twenty-two Latter-day Saints perished in the 2009 tsunami.¹⁸⁰⁴ In 2010, Samoa pertained to the Pacific Area.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 73,827 (2012)

There were 124 Latter-day Saints by 1890 and approximately 1,100 by 1898.¹⁸⁰⁵ From the mid-1960s to mid-1970s, LDS missionaries generally baptized 1,000 new converts a year.¹⁸⁰⁶ By 1974, 15% of the population was LDS, and there were 19,000 Latter-day Saints on Samoa and American Samoa.¹⁸⁰⁷ The most rapid, sustained membership growth occurred in the 1980s and early 1990s. There were 40,000 members by 1988,¹⁸⁰⁸ and membership reached 60,000 in Samoa and American Samoa collectively by the early 1990s. By year-end 2000, there were 59,143 Latter-day Saints in Samoa.

Membership grew slowly during the 2000s, numbering 61,094 in 2002, 63,640 in 2004, 65,644 in 2006, and 67,120 in 2008. Annual membership growth rates during this period ranged from a low of 0.9% in 2007 to a high of 3.2% in 2009 but averaged around 1.5% for most years. The percentage of self-identified Latter-day Saints in Samoa increased between the 2001 and 2006 censuses from 12.7% to 13.2%,¹⁸⁰⁹ or just over one third of official LDS membership at the time. In 2009, 36% of the national population was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 120 Branches: 16 (April 2013)

The most rapid growth in the number of LDS congregations occurred in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. There were 112 LDS congregations operating on both Samoa and American Samoa in 1987, increasing to 140 by 1995 and 160 by 1997. By year-end 2000, there were 129 LDS congregations in Samoa, including 108 wards. The number of congregations increased to 131 in 2002, 132 in 2004, and 133 in 2006. The number of wards has steadily increased, numbering 110 in 2002, 112 in 2004, 115 in 2006, and 116 in 2007 whereas the number of branches has declined from twenty-one in 2000 to fifteen in 2010. At year-end 2010, there were ninety congregations on Upolu and forty-three on Savaii.

The first LDS stake was created in Samoa in Apia in 1962. In the 1970s, the Church organized seven additional stakes in Apia West (1970), Savaii (1971), Upolu West (1971), Savaii West (1973), Upolu South (1975), Upolu East (1977), and Upolu Aleisa (1979). By 1974, Samoa became the first country to be completely covered by stakes.¹⁸¹⁰ One new stake was created in the 1980s in Savaii South (1982), and by 1990 there were nine stakes.

¹⁸⁰² Swensen, Jason; Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Fire destroys 20-year-old Samoan temple," LDS Church News, 12 July 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44043/Fire-destroys-20-year-old-Samoan-temple.html>

¹⁸⁰³ "Missionary missing in Samoa accident," LDS Church News, 29 November 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44770/Missionary-missing-in-Samoa-accident.html>

¹⁸⁰⁴ "LDS Church update on Pacific earthquake and tsunami crisis," Deseret News, 3 October 2009. <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/705329527/LDS-Church-update-on-Pacific-earthquake-and-tsunami-crisis.html>

¹⁸⁰⁵ Avant, Gerry. "Church in Samoa to celebrate centennial," LDS Church News, 11 June 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18252/Church-in-Samoa-to-celebrate-centennial.html>

¹⁸⁰⁶ Clark, Janice. "The Saints in Samoa," *Ensign*, Dec. 1974, 21.

¹⁸⁰⁷ Clark, Janice. "The Saints in Samoa," *Ensign*, Dec. 1974, 21.

¹⁸⁰⁸ Avant, Gerry. "Church in Samoa to celebrate centennial," LDS Church News, 11 June 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18252/Church-in-Samoa-to-celebrate-centennial.html>

¹⁸⁰⁹ "Samoa," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148892.htm>

¹⁸¹⁰ Avant, Gerry. "Church in Samoa to celebrate centennial," LDS Church News, 11 June 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/>

Seven new stakes were created in the 1990s, located in Upolu North (1992), Pesega (1995), Savaii Sagone (1995), Apia Navu (1995), Fagamalo (1995), Upolu Saleilua (1995), and Upolu Faleasi'u (1996). No new stakes were organized in the 2000s. Between the late 1970s and early 1990s, several districts were established, such as in Fagamalo and Lona Fagaloa. These districts have since become stakes or were consolidated with neighboring stakes. In 2012, two new stakes were organized in Savaii Pu'apu'a and Upolu Malie, bringing the total number of stakes to eighteen.

Activity and Retention

Several large conferences, meetings, and open houses have been well attended by local members. One thousand five hundred attended the centennial celebration of the establishment of the Church in Samoa on Savaii in 1988.¹⁸¹¹ In 1997, 4,000 attended a special meeting with President Hinckley on Savaii, and 10,000 attended another meeting held on Upolu.¹⁸¹² 45,004 attended the 2005 Apia Samoa Temple open house and 16,037 Latter-day Saints participated in the dedicatory sessions from Samoa and American Samoa.¹⁸¹³

On average, an LDS missionary baptized ten new converts a year in the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁸¹⁴ The average number of members per congregation increased between 2000 and 2009 from 455 to 517. Three thousand, three hundred, and thirty-four were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year. Self-identified Latter-day Saints on the 2006 census constituted approximately 37% of church-reported membership. Most wards appear to have approximately 100 to 150 active members, whereas most branches have over fifty active members. Active Samoan membership is estimated to stand at approximately 25,000, or 35%–40% of total church membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Samoan.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are translated into Samoan.

Meetinghouses

There were sixty-nine LDS meetinghouses in Samoa in late 1991.¹⁸¹⁵ At the end of 2010, there were at least ninety-four LDS meetinghouses. Church chapels have been damaged several times by hurricanes and flooding.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church has operated at least three schools in Samoa for several decades.¹⁸¹⁶ A professor from Brigham Young University and several returned LDS missionaries helped advocate the preservation of a 30,000-acre

articles/18252/Church-in-Samoa-to-celebrate-centennial.html

¹⁸¹¹ Avant, Gerry. "100 years in Samoa: LDS celebrations span 3 islands," LDS Church News, 2 July 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17826/100-years-in-Samoa-LDS-celebrations-span-3-islands.html>

¹⁸¹² "Avant, Gerry. "Prophet goes to islands of Pacific," LDS Church News, 25 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29655/Prophet-goes-to-islands-of-Pacific.html>

¹⁸¹³ "Apia Samoa Temple," LDS Church News, 10 September 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47809/Apia-Samoa-Temple.html>

¹⁸¹⁴ Clark, Janice. "The Saints in Samoa," *Ensign*, Dec. 1974, 21.

¹⁸¹⁵ "Church responds swiftly to Samoa disaster," LDS Church News, 28 December 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21340/Church-responds-swiftly-to-Samoa-disaster.html>

¹⁸¹⁶ Britsch, R. Lanier. "The Church in the South Pacific," *Ensign*, Feb. 1976, 19.

tract of rainforest from logging in 1989.¹⁸¹⁷ The Church sent 90,000 pounds of food and emergency relief to hurricane victims in Samoa and American Samoa following Hurricane Ofa, and local members and full-time missionaries participated in cleanup efforts.¹⁸¹⁸ The Church delivered additional aid following destruction left by Hurricane Val.¹⁸¹⁹ In 2002, full-time missionaries cleaned a cemetery in Apia.¹⁸²⁰ In 2003, the Church donated 515 wheelchairs to the disabled.¹⁸²¹ The Church donated \$15,000 following destruction left by Cyclone Olaf in 2005.¹⁸²² Other humanitarian and development projects have included furnishing schools with educational materials, completing clean water projects, and rheumatic fever prevention.¹⁸²³

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Latter-day Saints have benefited from a high degree of religious freedom and no societal abuses of religious freedom. Foreign full-time missionaries report little difficulty obtaining visas. The Church maintains positive relations with the government and local members worship, assemble, and proselyte freely.

Cultural Issues

Samoaans maintain an intimate connection with Christianity, and most regularly attend church. These factors have favored LDS mission outreach initiatives over the past century. Strong family connections have fostered the development and growth of the Church through member referrals and member-missionary activity. Opposition does occur in some villages toward nontraditional Christian groups, but the LDS Church does not appear to have been specifically targeted, nor do counter-LDS efforts appear to have significantly affected LDS growth. The degree of cooperation and friendship exhibited at present between Latter-day Saints and other Christian groups is demonstrated from an account following the destruction of the original Apia Samoa Temple by fire in 2003 when religious and community leaders offered support and comfort, and the Methodist Church sent a check to pay for some of the finances to rebuild the temple.¹⁸²⁴ Latter-day Saints are generally viewed much more favorably in Samoa than in many other nations by the major Christian traditions.

Double Affiliation

Strong interest in Christianity but moderate levels of allegiance to a given denomination has created additional cultural challenges for Latter-day Saints and other Christians regarding the double affiliation of their members. Most nominal Latter-day Saints that no longer attend LDS Church services appear actively involved in or identify with other Christian traditions. Doubly affiliated Latter-day Saints who actively engage in another Christian denomination are challenging to reactivate due to their current social and religious connections

¹⁸¹⁷ Perkins, Ken. "Samoa rain forest reprieved from ruin," LDS Church News, 19 August 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18455/Samoan-rain-forest-reprieved-from-ruin.html>

¹⁸¹⁸ Avant, Gerry. "Hurricane shatters tropical calm," LDS Church News, 17 February 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20383/Hurricane-shatters-tropical-calm.html>

¹⁸¹⁹ "Church responds swiftly to Samoa disaster," LDS Church News, 28 December 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21340/Church-responds-swiftly-to-Samoa-disaster.html>

¹⁸²⁰ "Missionaries clean cemetery," LDS Church News, 20 April 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41702/Missionaries-clean-cemetery.html>

¹⁸²¹ "515 wheelchairs donated in Samoa," LDS Church News, 28 June 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43984/515-wheelchairs-donated-in-Samoa.html>

¹⁸²² "Cyclone Olaf batters Samoa," LDS Church News, 26 February 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46920/Cyclone-Olaf-batters-Samoa.html>

¹⁸²³ "Projects—Samoa," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 23 December 2010. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-157,00.html>

¹⁸²⁴ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Church to rebuild Apia Samoa Temple," LDS Church News, 19 July 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44073/Church-to-rebuild-Apia-Samoa-Temple.html>

outside the Church. LDS missionaries, leaders, and members also need to emphasize unique doctrinal teachings and theological positions and to ensure that prospective converts have established firm gospel habits and are well integrated into local congregations before baptism to help curb against the loss of some Latter-day Saints to other Christian denominations and safeguard against convert attrition.

National Outreach

Samoa receives excellent LDS mission outreach, as all eleven administrative districts have multiple mission outreach centers. Nearly the entire population resides within five kilometers of an LDS meetinghouse. The percentage of the population residing in a town or village with an LDS congregations is likely greater than 90%. The average LDS congregation includes 1,347 people within its boundaries. There are forty-three LDS congregations on Savaii, generating an average of one ward or branch per 903 inhabitants, whereas there are ninety LDS congregations on Upolu, or one congregation per 1,529 people.

The high receptivity of Latter-day Saint mission outreach in Samoa creates favorable conditions for a prospective LDS congregation in every large and medium-sized village. In late 2010, twenty-three villages that appeared to have between 500 and 1,500 inhabitants had no LDS congregations, nine of which were on Savaii (Auala, Falealupo, Gataivai, Lata, Mauga, Sala'iloa, Tafuatai, Tuasivi, Vaipouli) and fourteen of which were on Upolu (Afega, Maninoa, Matatufu, Mulivai, Sa'anapu, Saanapu-uta, Salamumu, Salepaga, Samai, Satalo, Savaia, Si'ufaga, Tafitoala, Utulaelae). Most of these lesser-reached urban locations likely have several active, less active, and inactive Latter-day Saint families and are located several kilometers away from the nearest LDS meetinghouse. Reasons for no LDS congregations in these twenty-three villages may include opposition from the dominant religious groups of the village, inadequate active priesthood leadership in the area, few Latter-day Saints, and low member activity. Methods that may be utilized to establish congregations in lesser-reached villages include holding cottage meetings, creating dependent branches or groups, and assigning full-time and member-missionaries to proselyte in these locations.

LDS mission outreach directed towards Samoans occurs internationally, as there were sixty-five Samoan-language LDS congregations outside of Samoa and American Samoa in late 2010 operating in the United States (38), New Zealand (18), and Australia (9) providing outreach to the approximately 120,000 Samoan-speakers abroad. Remarkably, the level of outreach employed by the LDS Church at present for Samoans abroad appears to be almost identical to that on the main island of Upolu, as there is an average of one LDS congregation per 1,846 Samoans abroad. This finding also likely indicates that the percentage of Latter-day Saint Samoans is relatively constant throughout Samoan communities regardless of location.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Samoa has demonstrated moderate member activity rates compared to other nations, but this appears to largely reflect the result of the cultural importance that Samoans place on regular church attendance and participation as well as the lack of a dominant Christian faith before the arrival of Europeans. LDS converts not retained are likely to return to their previous church or to begin attending another denomination. Lackluster convert retention rates appear to have become more problematic in the 2000s compared to earlier decades, as this was the first decade since prior to the creation of the first stake in 1962 that no new LDS stakes were organized. Slower membership growth has contributed to the slowdown in congregational growth, but congregational growth has not kept pace with membership growth during this period, suggesting that many new members were not retained and that the number of retained new converts is only slightly higher than the number of deaths or disaffiliates among older Latter-day Saints. Ten new wards were organized in the 2000s, many of which were from branches, and the percentage of self-identified Latter-day Saints increased between the 2001 and 2006 censuses, indicating some increase in active membership during this period. Church-reported membership increased by 9.3% between 2001 and 2006, whereas census figures for Latter-day Saints increased by 5.4%.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The highly homogenous Samoan population has faced few ethnic integration challenges. Religious plurality has reduced many challenges of assimilating Samoan Latter-day Saints. A combination of these conditions has favored LDS Church growth over the past several decades.

Language Issues

The Church began translating materials into Samoan at an early stage of missionary work and today has a wide array of materials and all LDS scriptures translated. Widespread use of Samoan has simplified mission outreach approaches.

Missionary Service

Samoa is among the few nations with fewer than 100,000 members that is self-sufficient in staffing local full-time missionary needs and export large numbers of missionaries abroad. Church-operated schools and seminary and institute attendance have contributed to long-term sustainability of local full-time missionary numbers. The first Samoan Latter-day Saint served a full-time mission in the late 1880s. By 1898, 122 full-time missionaries from North America had served in Samoa.¹⁸²⁵ In 1974, Samoan Latter-day Saints constituted 75% of the missionary force assigned to Samoa.¹⁸²⁶ The Church operated a missionary training center in Samoa as early as 1988,¹⁸²⁷ but the center appears to have closed by the late 1990s or early 2000s. Samoan full-time missionaries now receive training in the New Zealand Missionary Training Center and frequently serve in Oceania, North America, the Caribbean, and Africa. In 2010, most full-time missionaries in Samoa were assigned to two or three congregations. North Americans frequently serve in Samoa despite self-sufficiency of Samoan missionary manpower.

Leadership

Local church leadership began to mature and become more self-sufficient in the 1950s when local district presidencies were organized, and full-time missionary involvement in congregational administration decreased. The first Samoan mission president of the Samoa Apia Mission was called in 1974.¹⁸²⁸ Many Samoan Latter-day Saints living abroad have served in regional leadership positions, such as Lini Lyon To'o from New Zealand who was called as the Samoa Apia Mission President in 1993.¹⁸²⁹ LDS Church employees have frequently served in leadership positions and at times, church employees have constituted two or three members of a stake presidency. In 1992, George Selu Fruean from Apia was called as a regional representative.¹⁸³⁰ In 2000, Daniel Afamasaga Betham from Aleisa was called as the president of the Apia Samoa Temple.¹⁸³¹ Samoa has generated fewer regional or international LDS leaders than many other Polynesian countries with sizeable

¹⁸²⁵ Avant, Gerry. "Church in Samoa to celebrate centennial," LDS Church News, 11 June 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18252/Church-in-Samoa-to-celebrate-centennial.html>

¹⁸²⁶ Clark, Janice. "The Saints in Samoa," *Ensign*, Dec. 1974, 21.

¹⁸²⁷ "New leaders called for 13 centers," LDS Church News, 30 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18284/New-leaders-called-for-13-centers.html>

¹⁸²⁸ Avant, Gerry. "Church in Samoa to celebrate centennial," LDS Church News, 11 June 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18252/Church-in-Samoa-to-celebrate-centennial.html>

¹⁸²⁹ "New mission presidencies," LDS Church News, 17 April 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23670/New-mission-presidencies.html>

¹⁸³⁰ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 11 July 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22715/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹⁸³¹ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 30 September 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38537/New-temple-presidents.html>

LDS membership, but this does not appear due to a shortage of qualified individuals. Inadequate numbers of active priesthood holders has likely been a factor in the lack of LDS congregations in some villages.

Temple

Samoa Latter-day Saints attended the Hamilton New Zealand Temple prior to the construction of the Apia Samoa Temple. Initially planned for construction in American Samoa, the Apia Samoa Temple was announced in 1977 and dedicated in 1983.¹⁸³² Samoan members primarily attended the Suva Fiji Temple following the destruction of the Apia Samoa Temple in 2003¹⁸³³ and prior to its rededication in 2005. Flood waters almost reached the rebuilt temple in 2006.¹⁸³⁴ The Apia Samoa Temple services members living in Samoa and American Samoa. In 2010, the temple was moderately utilized as six endowment sessions occurred from morning to evening Tuesday through Friday, and three sessions occurred on Saturdays. Additional sessions scheduled by individuals stakes or congregations likely occur regularly. Prospects for an additional small temple on Savaii appear favorable over the medium term due to geographic separation from Apia. A potential temple on Savaii would service five stakes.

Comparative Growth

Samoa possesses the second highest percentage of nominal LDS membership of any country after Tonga and boasts the second largest LDS membership in Polynesia after New Zealand. Membership growth rates in Samoa during the 2000s ranked slightly higher than other Polynesia nations as most nations in the region experienced annual membership growth rates around 1%. Samoa is the only nation in Polynesia that is entirely covered by stakes. Member activity rates and the percentage of members enrolled in seminary and institute is comparable to most nations in Oceania. Congregational growth trends in the 2000s in Samoa were similar to most nations in Polynesia.

Latter-day Saints number among the most successful of nontraditional Christian groups operating in Samoa today. Seventh Day Adventists and Evangelicals have achieved more rapid growth than Latter-day Saints in recent years. Seventh Day Adventists report steady membership and congregational growth as membership and congregations nearly doubled in the 2000s. Jehovah's Witnesses experience slow growth and have fewer than 400 active members meeting in nine congregations. Christian groups that have achieved the greatest success have established education and development institutions, frequently open new congregations in unreached areas, and develop local leadership.

Future Prospects

The LDS Church in Samoa has achieved a high degree of self-reliance that has facilitated missionary outreach internationally through surplus missionary manpower and reliance on local members to staff the Samoa Apia Mission. Little progress for the Church in Samoa has occurred over the decade of the 2000s, however, as few new congregations were organized, retention has been mediocre, and membership growth rates have declined from earlier levels. A church-planting approach in lesser-reached villages to address these obstacles may help reverse the recent trend of stagnant growth. Double affiliation continues to be a major issue that challenges reactivation and retention efforts. As a result of branches becoming wards, several stakes appear close to dividing in the near future in the Apia area and in eastern Savaii.

¹⁸³² Avant, Gerry. "Church in Samoa to celebrate centennial," LDS Church News, 11 June 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18252/Church-in-Samoa-to-celebrate-centennial.html>

¹⁸³³ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Church to rebuild Apia Samoa Temple," LDS Church News, 19 July 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44073/Church-to-rebuild-Apia-Samoa-Temple.html>

¹⁸³⁴ Waver, Sarah Jane. "Flood waters rise near Samoa Temple," LDS Church News, 18 February 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48526/Flood-waters-rise-near-Samoa-temple.html>

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Geography

AREA: 28,896 square km. Consisting of almost 1,000 islands in far western Oceania, the Solomon Islands sit to the northeast of Australia between Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea. Most islands are mountainous with the remainder consisting of coral atolls. Tropical climate prevails year round subject to a monsoon season. Natural hazards include typhoons, earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunamis. Deforestation, soil erosion, and deteriorating coral reef health are environmental issues. The Solomon Islands are administratively divided into nine provinces and one capital territory.

Peoples

Melanesian: 94.5%

Polynesian: 3%

Micronesian: 1.2%

Other: 1.1%

Unspecified: 0.2%

Population: 584,578 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 2.17% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 3.51 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 71.83 male, 77.14 female (2012)

Languages: Pijin is widely spoken as a language of interethnic communication and shares many linguistic similarities with Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea and Bislama in Vanuatu. English is the official language although not widely spoken. Seventy-one native languages are spoken, most of which have fewer than 15,000 speakers.

Literacy: N/A

History

The first inhabitants settled the islands around 1000 BC. European powers began to exploit the human population for labor in the region. In the late nineteenth century, the British made the islands a protectorate and gained jurisdiction for islands previously under German control during World War I. Missionaries successfully converted most of the population to Christianity during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. During World War II, the Solomon Islands became a crucial battleground in the Pacific between the United States and Japan. Several long, bloody battles were fought such as the Battle of Guadalcanal. During the 1990s, intense ethnic conflict and government destabilization occurred resulting in a 2003 Australian-led effort to reestablish order with troops and police from various Pacific nations under the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands. Order and civility has been reestablished in most areas, but ethnic tensions remain high—particularly on Guadalcanal—and the economy continues to be poorly developed.

Culture

Language and culture generally vary village to village, resulting in a rich mosaic of Melanesian, Polynesian, and Micronesian traditions. Most of the population follows tribal laws and customs. Due to the many isolated islands with poorly developed infrastructure and little modernization, radio is one of the most influential forms of media. Foods common to Oceania such as taro root, yam, fruit, and seafood are most commonly consumed. Soccer is the most popular sport. Alcohol consumption rates are low.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$3,300 (2011) [6.86% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.510

Corruption Index: 2.7 (2011)

The economy collapsed as a result of internal strife in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Some economic growth has occurred, but rich natural resources continue to be poorly utilized, and most goods must be imported. The population generally subsists upon fishing, forestry, and agriculture. Agriculture employs 75% of the workforce and produces 42% of the GDP, whereas services employ 20% of the workforce and account for 47% of the GDP. Primary agricultural products include cocoa, coconuts, potatoes, vegetables, and fruit. Industry is limited to fishing, mining, and logging. China, Singapore, and Australia are primary trade partners. Taiwan has taken interest in increasing food crop yields and improving agricultural practices.

Corruption is perceived as widespread. Officials who break the law are rarely prosecuted. Lawlessness in the early 2000s has subsided, but the government relies upon other nations to help maintain order.

Faiths

Christian: 97.1%

Other: 2.4%

Unspecified: 0.3%

None: 0.2%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Anglicans 213,428

Catholic 115,861

South Seas Evangelical 103665

Methodist 67,077

Seventh Day Adventists 41,831 184

Jehovah's Witnesses 1,781 48

Latter-day Saints 509 4

Religion

Christian missionaries have converted most Solomon Islanders. The largest denominations include Anglicans (35%), Catholics (19%), South Seas Evangelicals (17%), Methodists (11%), and Seventh Day Adventists (10%). Most non-Christians follow indigenous beliefs and are concentrated among the Kwaio community on the island of Malaita.¹⁸³⁵

¹⁸³⁵ "Solomon Islands," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127288.htm>

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by government practices and law. Religious groups must register with the government, and there have been no reports of registration being denied. There have generally been no reports of societal abuses of religious freedom. Missionaries may openly proselyte. Some villages have imposed law that can restrict some aspects of religious freedom such as day of worship.¹⁸³⁶

Largest Cities

Urban: 18%

Honiara, **Gizo**, **Auki**, **Tulaghi**, **Kirakira**.

Cities and towns listed in **bold** have no LDS congregation.

One of the five largest cities or villages has a congregation. Eleven percent (11%) of the national population lives in the five largest cities. Only Honiara and Gizo have over 5,000 inhabitants.

LDS History

Elder James E. Faust dedicated the island for missionary work eight years before any formal missionary worked started in 1987. The Solomon Islands were assigned to the Papua New Guinea Port Moresby Mission in 1992.¹⁸³⁷ In 1995, the mission assigned the first missionary couple to the country and held the first sacrament meeting in Honiara on February 5th.¹⁸³⁸ Young elder missionaries were introduced in the late 1990s and were evacuated in 2000 due to violence and political instability.¹⁸³⁹ Missionaries were reassigned in the 2000s. The first LDS presence off of Guadalcanal was established in Malaita in 2011. In 2010, the Solomon Islands were assigned to the newly created Vanuatu Port Vila Mission.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 509 (2012)

Most members appear to have joined the Church prior to 2001 or after 2006. By year-end 2000, there were 180 members. Little membership growth occurred for most of the 2000s, as there were 186 members in 2002 and 196 in 2006. During the late 2000s, membership growth accelerated particularly in 2007 and 2009. There were 246 members in 2008. Membership increased by 50% between 2006 and 2009.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 4 (2012)

The Church created the Honiara Branch in the late 1990s. In 2010, the Honiara Branch divided to create two new congregations in the Honiara area, the Burns Creek and White River Branches. In 2011, a fourth branch was organized on Malaita Island in Fauabu, and all four branch were included in the newly organized Honiara Solomon Islands District.

¹⁸³⁶ "Solomon Islands," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127288.htm>

¹⁸³⁷ "7 new missions created; total now 275," LDS Church News, 29 February 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22528/7-new-missions-created-total-now-275.html>

¹⁸³⁸ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 15 April 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25990/From-around-the-world.html>

¹⁸³⁹ "Missionaries evacuated from Solomon Islands," LDS Church News, 17 June 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37992/Missionaries-evacuated-from-Solomon-Islands.html>

Activity and Retention

Low member activity levels were apparent in only one branch functioning until 2010. In recent years member activity rates appear to have significantly improved. Sacrament meeting attendance in the Fauabu Branch averaged around fifty in late 2011. In November 2011, 261 individuals attended the Sunday morning district conference session when the Honiara Solomon Islands District was formally organized. Active membership is likely around 200, or 50% of total church membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English, Bislama.

Church materials translated in Bislama include some unit, temple, priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, young women, audio/visual, primary, missionary, hymns, children's songs, and family history resources.

Meetinghouses

Church meetings are likely held in a renovated building or a rented space.

Health and Safety

Past ethnic violence and lawlessness on Guadalcanal may pose future safety threats to members and missionaries if these conflicts are reignited.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Senior missionary couples have served periodically since the mid-1990s. In 2010, senior missionaries appeared to participate in humanitarian and development work. A humanitarian missionary couple for the Pacific Area visited in 2010 to assess needs in a hospital in Honiara.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

No government restrictions limit the Church's activities. Missionaries may travel to the country and proselyte freely. However, ethnic violence has interrupted missionary work in the past. Isolation and continued political uncertainty have likely continued to affect little mission outreach. In 2011, government officials informed senior missionaries that the Church was free to expand outreach throughout the country.

Cultural Issues

A strong Christian tradition in many areas may make many less receptive to the Church due to familial and societal connections to particular denominations. Members have reported some prejudice and isolation from the community for joining the Church. One family in Honiara used to rely on a communal water source located by some other neighborhood churches. However, after joining the LDS Church, the nearby churches barred them from using the water source, requiring the family to travel a longer distance for fresh water. The lack of economic development brings many hardships to the population and provides humanitarian opportunities for the Church.

National Outreach

A relatively small population distributed over many islands, poor nationwide infrastructure, few urbanites, and membership limited to Honiara will continue to challenge expanding national outreach. Mission outreach remains restricted to Honiara, home to 9% of the national population, and the small village of Fauabu on Malaita. Due to the recent arrival of the Church and its transient missionary presence, many are likely unaware of the Church's presence and beliefs in Honiara. Increasing mission outreach in Honiara will be crucial toward establishing outreach centers elsewhere in the islands, as members of many different tribal groups who reside in Honiara maintain contact with their home villages. The creation of two new branches in 2010 and the first branch outside of Guadalcanal in late 2011 provide valuable opportunities to expansion of mission outreach. Holding cottage meetings and conducting periodic visits to villages outside Honiara on Guadalcanal appears most feasible and effective for increasing outreach in the near future, as over 100,000 live on Guadalcanal (17% of the national population). Western Province has the largest population without a church presence.

Distance from mission headquarters in Papua New Guinea and later in Vanuatu has been another limiting factor for expanding national outreach due to travel time and expenses. Papua New Guinea has ten times as many people as the Solomon Islands—many of whom are unreached by the Church—and many member districts that need assistance from missionaries, which likely reduced availability of resources before 2012. The creation of the Vanuatu Port Vila Mission may increase the number of missionaries and resources assigned to the Solomon Islands. LDS radio programs broadcast throughout the islands, providing information and an introduction to the Church, may present a potential means of informing and creating interest in unreached locations.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Low levels of member activity appear linked to few local Church leaders, limited pre-baptismal training and habituation of prospective converts, and limited training and assistance from past mission leadership based in Papua New Guinea. Seminary and institute have yet to be introduced, which may be a sign of a lack of youth and church programs to meet their needs. Remoteness in many areas of the world has created a more resilient membership base capable of meeting the needs of increasing numbers of new converts, which may be currently occurring in Honiara. An increase in active membership in recent years appears a major contributor to the establishment of additional congregations in Honiara.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Areas of the Solomon Islands reached by Latter-day Saints have experienced some of the most acute inter-ethnic conflict, primarily between the indigenous inhabitants of Guadalcanal and peoples who have moved to the island from other areas, particularly Malaita. These issues are less present in many other areas of the islands, which may lead to greater Church growth in these locations once missionary work commences.

Language Issues

No Church materials have been translated into Pidgin English or any indigenous languages. Due to linguistic similarities with Bislama, some materials translated in Bislama may assist in teaching the gospel and helping members and investigators understand Church doctrine. Low literacy rates in some areas make distributing Church literature a less effective approach to mission outreach and also create future challenges in developing local leadership and member self-reliance.

Missionary Service

Very few, if any, local members have served full-time missions. North Americans were among the first young

elder missionaries to serve a decade ago, but now missionaries assigned are Polynesian or Melanesian. In 2010, the Church assigned one Samoan senior missionary couple to the islands. In 2011, a North American senior couple was assigned to the Solomon Islands.

Leadership

In early 2011, all three branches had native branch presidents. The Solomon Islands nonetheless face a shortage of priesthood holders capable of holding leadership positions. In 2010, the Honiara Branch president had served for seven years in this position and was called as branch president only three months after joining the Church. Few priesthood holders and leaders may lead to delays in establishing additional congregations and expanding mission outreach. As a result of limited numbers of local priesthood leaders, the Church called a senior missionary as the first district president in late 2011.

Temple

The Solomon Islands pertain to the Sydney Australia Temple district. Few, if any, members have attended the temple due to their limited numbers and travel expenses. A temple in Papua New Guinea may be forthcoming once additional stakes are organized in that country, which would lessen travel time and expenses for Solomon Islander members.

Comparative Growth

No other sovereign nation in Oceania has as limited a Church presence as the Solomon Islands. In 2010, one in 2,000 was a member of the LDS Church; the country with the next lowest percentage of members in the region was Papua New Guinea with one member per 350 people. Most islands in Oceania are at least 1% LDS, with some nations having Church membership exceed 20% of the population. Little church growth has occurred partially due to the Church not establishing an official presence until the mid-1990s, whereas most of Oceania had the Church first established in the nineteenth century or between 1950 and 1980. Member activity rates appear lower than in most of Oceania.

Many Christian denominations have experienced steady growth over several decades. Several of these denominations have had a long term presence and maintain congregations throughout the islands. Many of these churches historically converted the population to Christianity. These groups report high levels of self-sufficiency and have few foreign workers.

Future Prospects

The Solomon Islands may be on the brink of consistent church membership growth and expanded outreach on Guadalcanal. However, political and social instability has prevented greater mission outreach in the past and may continue to delay growth. Greater mission resources are needed to assist in the development of local leadership, which remains extremely limited in numbers. Once this occurs, a positive outlook for strong church growth appears likely as the Church has experienced favorable receptivity throughout the region. Accelerated membership growth in the late 2000s and leadership development in the early 2010s may indicate increased progress coordinating local members and full-time missionaries in missionary efforts. Additional congregations may continue to be created on Guadalcanal and Malaita in the coming years as the four operating LDS congregations develop greater self-sufficiency. Sending more native youth on missions appears to be of key importance to promote long-term growth and to develop self-sustaining congregations. Due to its comparatively large population in Oceania and excellent opportunities for outreach expansion, the Solomon Islands may have its own LDS mission organized in the medium term.

TONGA

Geography

AREA: 747 square km. Located in the South Pacific Ocean in Polynesia north of New Zealand, Tonga consists of 169 small islands, thirty-six of which are inhabited. Terrain varies by island from uplifted, flat coral islands to volcanic islands with a limestone base. Tropical climate prevails year round with warm (December to May) and cool (May to December) seasons. Cyclones, earthquakes, and volcanoes are natural hazards. Environmental issues include deforestation, coral reef damage, and overfishing. Tonga is divided into three administrative divisions.

Peoples

Tongan: 98%
Other: 2%

The population is overwhelmingly Tongan. Other minority ethnic groups include Europeans, mixed European-Tongan, other Pacific Islanders, and Chinese.¹⁸⁴⁰

Population: 106,146 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.192% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 3.55 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 73.98 male, 76.83 female (2012)

Languages: Tongan (97%), other (3%). Tongan and English are official languages.

Literacy: 98.9% (1999)

History

It is believed that Polynesian settlers first colonized the islands of present-day Tonga as early as 500 BC. The Tongan monarchy reached its peak in the thirteenth century, but its power declined in the subsequent centuries following the emergence of three royal lines. Dutch explorers were the first Europeans to make contact with Tonga in the early seventeenth century, but consistent European contact did not occur until the late eighteenth century. War between the three noble lines broke out in the early nineteenth century. The Wesleyan Missionary Society arrived in the mid-eighteenth century and again in the 1820s, spreading Christianity throughout Tonga. Progress accelerated after one member of Tongan royalty was converted, Taufā'ahau. During the mid-nineteenth century, Taufā'ahau became King of Tonga and united all the Tongan islands and improved diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom. By 1900, Tonga came under protection of the United Kingdom but retained its autonomy and independence with the exception of managing foreign affairs and military defense. Tonga participated in World War II and was used by the Allies as a staging point for shipping. In 1970, Tongan sovereignty

¹⁸⁴⁰ "Background Note: Tonga," Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 28 June 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/16092.htm>

was officially recognized, and total independence from the United Kingdom was granted. The monarchy remains in power, making Tonga the last kingdom of the South Pacific.¹⁸⁴¹

Culture

Nicknamed the “Friendly Islands,” Christianity and traditional customs heavily influence daily life in Tonga. Tonga’s matriarchal society continues to be highly stratified with classes ranging from royalty to commoners. Social status was traditionally determined by lineage and occupation. Cuisine consists of fruit, taro, yams, coconut, seafood, and Western foods. Rugby is the most popular sport. The majority of the population is obese as a result of cultural emphasis on eating, consuming high-fat foods, and little social stigma for being overweight.¹⁸⁴² Consumed throughout much of Oceania, Kava has mild sedative properties and is drunk in social settings.¹⁸⁴³ Alcohol and cigarette consumption rates are low compared to the worldwide average.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$7,500 (2011) [15.6% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.704

Corruption Index: 3.1 (2011)

Remittances from Tongan communities abroad, foreign aid, revenue from agricultural goods, and tourism stabilize the economy. Agricultural goods account for two-thirds of exports, but Tonga relies on food imports for New Zealand to meet its food consumption needs. Infrastructure and social services in place by the government are well established. Reducing unemployment and inflation and increasing costs to manage the population are economic challenges. Twenty-four percent (24%) of the population lives below the poverty line. Agriculture, industry, and services each roughly account for a third of the workforce. Services generate 57% of the GDP, whereas agriculture and industry generate 25% and 17% of the GDP, respectively. Major industries include tourism, construction, and fishing. Squash, coconuts, copra, fruit, vanilla beans, cocoa, coffee, ginger, and pepper are common crops. Primary trade partners include Fiji, the United States, New Zealand, and Hong Kong.

Corruption is present in all areas of society, including mainstream churches, and there is no civil code. Criminal offenses are generally prosecuted. It is often difficult to differentiate between traditional gifts and bribes. The small size of the population has led to strong sense of national community, which creates challenges for the population to report corruption.¹⁸⁴⁴

Faiths

Christian: 95%

Other: 5%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Latter-day Saints 60,680 166

Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga 45,722

Free Church of Tonga 19,122

¹⁸⁴¹ “Background Note: Tonga,” Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 28 June 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/16092.htm>

¹⁸⁴² “Culture of Tonga,” Wikipedia.org, retrieved 30 December 2010. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_Tonga

¹⁸⁴³ “Kava,” Wikipedia.org, retrieved 30 December 2010. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kava>

¹⁸⁴⁴ James, Kerry; Tufi, Taniela. “Tonga 2004,” Transparency International Country Study Report, retrieved 30 December 2010. <http://www.transparency.org.au/documents/tonga.pdf>

Catholic 13,852
 Seventh Day Adventists 2,613 12
 Jehovah's Witnesses 237 5

Religion

Tonga is a homogenous Christian country with the largest denominations as indicated by the 2006 census including the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, the LDS Church, the Free Church of Tonga, and the Catholic Church. Fourteen percent (14%) of the population follows the Tokaikolo Church, the Seventh Day Adventist Church, Assemblies of God, and the Anglican Church. Baha'is, Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists collectively constitute 4% of the population.¹⁸⁴⁵ Whereas there were an estimated 106,146 Tongans in mid-2012, a total of 141,036 Tongans (more than the population) were claimed as members by the denominations in the table above, reflecting widespread double affiliation and denomination switching as some churches (especially the LDS Church) continue to maintain records and claim as members many individuals who no longer attend church or identify the denomination as their faith of preference.

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. Registration with the government is suggested for tax purposes but is not required. With the exception of hotels and tourist resorts, the constitution mandates that all business close on Sunday to keep the Sabbath Day holy. Major Christian holidays are recognized by the government. Foreign missionaries may operate freely.¹⁸⁴⁶

Largest Cities

Urban: 25%

Nuku'alofa , Neiafu, Haveluloto, Tofoa-Koloua, Vaini, Pangai-Hihifo, Pea, Ha'ateiho , Lapaha, Fua'amotu. All of the ten largest cities and villages and all villages with over 1,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. Forty-eight percent (48%) of the national population resides in the ten most populous urban areas. Ninety percent (90%) of the population resides on the islands of Tongatapu and Vava'u.

LDS History

Under the direction of the Samoan Mission, Latter-day Saint missionaries first arrived in Nuku'alofa in 1891.¹⁸⁴⁷ Receptivity to the LDS Church was low during the close of the nineteenth century as full-time missionaries converted only fifteen Tongans between 1891 and 1897 and LDS missionaries were removed from the islands. Most of the first members were not retained.¹⁸⁴⁸ Missionaries were not reassigned until ten years later in 1907 and began LDS mission outreach in Vava'u.¹⁸⁴⁹ The Church created the Tongan Mission in 1916. LDS schools closed, and several branches were consolidated in 1922 as a result of the government banning LDS missionaries. Missionaries were permitted to reenter starting in 1924. Tongans constituted the entire full-time missionary force with the exception of a few foreign missionaries for the following decades. American Church leaders left the islands during World War II. In 1946, the Church published the Tongan

¹⁸⁴⁵ "Tonga," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148900.htm>

¹⁸⁴⁶ "Tonga," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148900.htm>

¹⁸⁴⁷ Gaunt, LaRene Porter. "Tonga: A Land of Believing People," *Ensign*, Sept. 2001, 42.

¹⁸⁴⁸ "Faith, service paved way for growth," LDS Church News, 31 August 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21621/Faith-service-paved-way-for-growth.html>

¹⁸⁴⁹ Shumway, Eric B. "Tongan Saints: A Legacy of Faith," *Liahona*, Aug. 1991, 36.

translation of the Book of Mormon. A returned North American missionary performed most of the translation work. The government restricted foreign missionaries again following World War II, which resulted in the calling of local couple missionaries to carry out missionary work. Local couples served regularly as full-time missionaries until supplanted in 1963 by graduates of the Church's Liahona High School.¹⁸⁵⁰

Seminary began in 1969, whereas institute commenced in 1979. Liahona High School was instrumental in the establishment of the Church in Kiribati along with the Church's school in Kiribati operating today, Moroni High School.¹⁸⁵¹ The first member of the royal family, Princess 'Elisiva Fusipala Vaha'i joined the LDS Church in 1989.¹⁸⁵² Elder Russell M. Nelson visited King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV in 1991 and invited the king to the Church's centennial celebration.¹⁸⁵³ The king attended the festivities, declared August 19th a public holiday, and two stamps commemorating the event were issued by the post office.¹⁸⁵⁴ Members of other faiths supported the Church during the festivities.¹⁸⁵⁵ Later that year, the Queen of Tonga visited Church headquarters in Salt Lake City.¹⁸⁵⁶ The King of Tonga visited with the First Presidency in Salt Lake City in 1996.¹⁸⁵⁷ The Pacific Area administered Tonga prior to 1998 at which time the Pacific Islands Area was created and administered Tonga.¹⁸⁵⁸ Having served a full-time mission in Tonga in the 1950s, Elder John H. Groberg wrote the book *In the Eye of the Storm* about his experiences that was published in 1993. The book was made into a major Hollywood film called *The Other Side of Heaven* that was released in late 2001.¹⁸⁵⁹ In 2002, the Church installed its first satellite dish in Tonga to allow members to view worldwide broadcasts.¹⁸⁶⁰ Area Seventy Elder Pita Ranchod Vamanrav died in 2005 from cancer while serving in the New Zealand/Pacific Islands Area.¹⁸⁶¹ In 2006, a Latter-day Saint was appointed for the first time as a government minister.¹⁸⁶² The King of Tonga played an integral role in the rededication of the Nuku'alofa Tonga Temple by addressing some 200 dignitaries and celebrating the remodeling on the temple.¹⁸⁶³ In 2010, Tonga pertained to the Pacific Area.

¹⁸⁵⁰ "Faith, service paved way for growth," LDS Church News, 31 August 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21621/Faith-service-paved-way-for-growth.html>

¹⁸⁵¹ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Moroni High School: An educational model," LDS Church News, 21 September 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28121/Moroni-High-School-An-educational-model.html>

¹⁸⁵² "Tongan princess finds joy in Church," LDS Church News, 17 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20166/Tongan-princess-finds-joy-in-Church.html>

¹⁸⁵³ "King invited to island celebration," LDS Church News, 1 June 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21440/King-invited-to-island-celebration.html>

¹⁸⁵⁴ Hart, John L. "Celebrating 100 years in Tonga," LDS Church News, 31 August 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21127/Celebrating-100-years-in-Tonga.html>

¹⁸⁵⁵ "Other faiths support LDS in celebrating Tongan centennial," LDS Church News, 7 September 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21219/Other-faiths-support-LDS-in-celebrating-Tongan-centennial.html>

¹⁸⁵⁶ "Tongan queen visits Church headquarters," LDS Church News, 7 December 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20778/Tongan-queen-visits-Church-headquarters.html>

¹⁸⁵⁷ "Tonga's royalty meets with the First Presidency," LDS Church News, 10 August 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27347/Tongas-royalty-meets-with-the-First-Presidency.html>

¹⁸⁵⁸ "5 new areas announced worldwide," LDS Church News, 4 July 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31389/5-new-areas-announced-worldwide.html>

¹⁸⁵⁹ Lloyd, R. Scott. "Missionary odyssey in Tonga hits silver screen," LDS Church News, 20 October 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40768/Missionary-odyssey-in-Tonga-hits-silver-screen.html>

¹⁸⁶⁰ Jensen, Louise. "High tech from local scrap," LDS Church News, 20 July 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42162/High-tech-from-local-scrap.html>

¹⁸⁶¹ "Area Seventy dies of cancer," LDS Church News, 18 June 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47456/Area-Seventy-dies-of-cancer.html>

¹⁸⁶² "Church member in charge of tourism in Tonga," LDS Church News, 12 August 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49304/Church-member-in-charge-of-tourism-in-Tonga.html>

¹⁸⁶³ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Reaping harvest in Pacific paradise," LDS Church News, 10 November 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51310/Reaping-harvest-in-Pacific-paradise.html>

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 60,680 (2012)

In 1926, there were approximately 1,000 Latter-day Saints. There were 2,422 Latter-day Saints by 1946,¹⁸⁶⁴ increasing to 10,000 by 1968.¹⁸⁶⁵ Membership reached 27,400 in 1985 and 35,227 in 1990.¹⁸⁶⁶ There were approximately 150 members living in Niuaus in 1990.¹⁸⁶⁷ There were 40,000 members in 1995 and by year-end 2000 membership stood at 46,623.

Annual membership growth rates during the 2000s averaged around 1 to 2% and ranged from a low of 0.7% in 2008 to a high of 4.6% in 2001. Membership totaled 49,719 in 2002, 52,421 in 2005, and 55,126 in 2008.

The Tongan census has provided valuable insights into the membership growth of the LDS Church as indicated by self-reporting religious affiliation. The census reported 11,270 self-identified Latter-day Saints in 1986, 13,225 in 1996, and 17,109 in 2006. Latter-day Saints have steadily increased in their percentage of the Tongan population on the national census from 12.1% in 1986 to 13.8% in 1996, to 16.8% in 2006.¹⁸⁶⁸

Twenty percent (20%) of the population was LDS in 1971.¹⁸⁶⁹ By 1991, the percentage of Latter-day Saints increased to 32%.¹⁸⁷⁰ In 2009, 45% of the population was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 132 Branches: 34 (April 2013)

There were three branches by 1912.¹⁸⁷¹ Prior to the creation of the first stake in 1968 there were fifty branches.¹⁸⁷² By 1990, there were 117 congregations (including 63 wards) increasing to 138 congregations by 1995.

In 2000, there were 149 congregations, including 103 wards. The number of congregations steadily increased in the 2000s to 156 in 2002, 161 in 2005, and 165 in 2008. The number of wards increased during this period to 112 in 2002, 121 in 2005, and 126 in 2008, whereas the number of branches has slightly declined as a result of many branches maturing into wards.

In mid-1968, there were ten districts.¹⁸⁷³ The first stake was created in the fall of 1968 in Nuku'alofa. In the 1970s, four additional stakes were organized, three on Nuku'alofa and one on Neiafu Vava'u. In the 1980s, five new stakes were created in Nuku'alofa Liahona (1980), Neiafu Vava'u North (1980), Ha'apai (1983), Nuku'alofa Vaini (1983), and Nuku'alofa North (1983). By 1990, there were ten stakes. Six additional stakes were created during the 1990s in Nuku'alofa Central (1994), Nuku'alofa Halaliku (1995), Neiafu Vava'u West

¹⁸⁶⁴ "Tonga," *Deseret News 2011 Church News Almanac*, p. 592-593.

¹⁸⁶⁵ Gaunt, LaRene Porter. "Tonga: A Land of Believing People," *Ensign*, Sept. 2001, 42.

¹⁸⁶⁶ "Faith, service paved way for growth," *LDS Church News*, 31 August 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21621/Faith-service-paved-way-for-growth.html>

¹⁸⁶⁷ Avant, Gerry. "Hurricane shatters tropical calm," *LDS Church News*, 17 February 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20383/Hurricane-shatters-tropical-calm.html>

¹⁸⁶⁸ "Social characteristics—Religion," *Population Census 2006—Tonga Department of Statistics*, retrieved 24 December 2010. <http://www.spc.int/prism/country/to/stats/Census06/social/religion.htm>

¹⁸⁶⁹ Kimball, Spencer W. "Of Royal Blood," *Ensign*, July 1971, 7.

¹⁸⁷⁰ "King invited to island celebration," *LDS Church News*, 1 June 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21440/King-invited-to-island-celebration.html>

¹⁸⁷¹ "Faith, service paved way for growth," *LDS Church News*, 31 August 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21621/Faith-service-paved-way-for-growth.html>

¹⁸⁷² Gaunt, LaRene Porter. "Tonga: A Land of Believing People," *Ensign*, Sept. 2001, 42.

¹⁸⁷³ Gaunt, LaRene Porter. "Tonga: A Land of Believing People," *Ensign*, Sept. 2001, 42.

(1995), 'Eua (1996), Nuku'alofo Ha'akame (1996), and Nuku'alofo Mu'a (1996). In the 2000s, only one new stake was created, the Nuku'alofo Tonga Harbour Stake (2008). There were seventeen stakes and two districts by year-end 2010. Districts functioning at that time were headquartered in Ha'apai Lulunga (1992) and Niua (1998). In 2012, an eighteenth stake was organized in Nuku'alofo Matahau.

Activity and Retention

Member activity rates do not appear to have fluctuated much over the past several decades, as the percentage of Latter-day Saints that self-identify on the census has remained relatively constant at approximately one in three. The LDS Church claimed 52,421 members in Tonga at year-end 2005, whereas only 17,109 Tongans identified the LDS Church as their faith of preference on the 2006 national census (32.6% of official membership claims). Large church meetings have been well attended. LDS Church President Spencer W. Kimball spoke to 10,600 members in an area conference in Nuku'alofo in 1976.¹⁸⁷⁴ 7,000 attended a meeting with Elder Russell M. Nelson at Liahona High School during the celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the Church in Tonga.¹⁸⁷⁵ In 1991, local leaders reported that member activity and convert retention rates in Tonga were among the highest worldwide for the LDS Church.¹⁸⁷⁶ In 1991, nearly 1,000 Tongan members in Hawaii attended a special meeting commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of the LDS Church's establishment in Tonga.¹⁸⁷⁷ Tongans constituted the majority of the 4,500 in attendance of a similar meeting held in Salt Lake City.¹⁸⁷⁸ In 1997, there were 400 temple recommend holders in the Nuku'alofo Tonga Liahona Stake.¹⁸⁷⁹ 5,000 attended the fiftieth anniversary of Liahona High School's founding in 1997.¹⁸⁸⁰ In 1997, 11,400 attended a special meeting with President Hinckley at Liahona, Nuku'alofo, and 2,240 attended another meeting with President Hinckley at Saineha, Vava'u.¹⁸⁸¹ Over 4,000 members viewed the broadcast of the dedication of the Nauvoo Illinois Temple in 2002.¹⁸⁸² In 2003, 21,108 attended a nationwide conference that was telecast throughout the country.¹⁸⁸³ Over 40,000 attended the Nuku'alofo Tonga Temple open house in 2007.¹⁸⁸⁴ 2,400 youth participated in the cultural festivities held the night before the rededication of the temple in 2007.¹⁸⁸⁵ 1,935 were enrolled in seminary and institute during the 2008–2009 school year. The average number of Latter-day Saints per congregation increased from 313 in 2000 to 334 in 2009. Most wards appear to have between 100 and 150 active members, whereas branches on average have approximately

¹⁸⁷⁴ "Tonga," Deseret News 2011 Church News Almanac, p. 592–593.

¹⁸⁷⁵ Hart, John L. "Celebrating 100 years in Tonga," LDS Church News, 31 August 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21127/Celebrating-100-years-in-Tonga.html>

¹⁸⁷⁶ "Faith, service paved way for growth," LDS Church News, 31 August 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21621/Faith-service-paved-way-for-growth.html>

¹⁸⁷⁷ Droff, Allen. "Tongan Festivities launched in Hawaii," LDS Church News, 13 June 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21260/Tongan-festivities-launched-in-Hawaii.html>

¹⁸⁷⁸ Avant, Gerry. "Gifts of song, faith, love part of Tongan heritage," LDS Church News. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21392/Gifts-of-song-faith-love-part-of-Tongan-heritage.html>

¹⁸⁷⁹ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Tonga stake commemorates pioneers," LDS Church News, 18 January 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29001/Tonga-stake-commemorates-pioneers.html>

¹⁸⁸⁰ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Liahona High: a foundation for life," LDS Church News, 13 September 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29262/Liahona-High-a-foundation-for-life.html>

¹⁸⁸¹ Avant, Gerry. "Prophet goes to islands of Pacific," LDS Church News, 25 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29655/Prophet-goes-to-islands-of-Pacific.html>

¹⁸⁸² Jensen, Louise. "High tech from local scrap," LDS Church News, 20 July 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42162/High-tech-from-local-scrap.html>

¹⁸⁸³ Hunter, Richard. "Satellite link-up connects 21,000 Tongan members," LDS Church News, 1 March 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43290/Satellite-link-up-connects-21000-Tongan-members.html>

¹⁸⁸⁴ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Reaping harvest in Pacific paradise," LDS Church News, 10 November 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51310/Reaping-harvest-in-Pacific-paradise.html>

¹⁸⁸⁵ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "'Treasure that lasts,'" LDS Church News, 10 November 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51309/Treasure-that-lasts.html>

fifty active members. Nationwide active and semi-active membership is estimated to number between 18,000 and 20,000, or approximately 30–35%.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Tongan, English.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are translated into Tongan. General Conference addresses have been translated into Tongan for many years.

Meetinghouses

In late 2007, there were 117 LDS meetinghouses in Tonga, nearly all of which were constructed by the Church or local members.¹⁸⁸⁶

Health and Safety

There is limited access to healthcare and emergency care outside of Tongatapu.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The LDS Church opened a primary school in Mu'a in the late nineteenth century, but it struggled and was closed. Missionaries opened a school upon their return in 1907 in Vava'u. There were three Church schools by 1912.¹⁸⁸⁷ The Church purchased land for Liahona High School in 1947, but the school did not officially open until 1952. There were 1,070 students in 1997.¹⁸⁸⁸ The Church operated eight schools in Tongan in 2001, six of which were middle schools. In 2001, 99% of students attending Liahona High School were LDS.¹⁸⁸⁹ Liahona High School has influenced the development of the Church in other countries in the region, such as Papua New Guinea.

In 1991, the LDS Church donated medical equipment and supplies.¹⁸⁹⁰ In 1996, the Church donated 731 medical items to the Vaiola General Hospital.¹⁸⁹¹ In 2001, the Church helped the government with earthquake research by permitting three of the six scientific instruments to collect data to be placed on Church property.¹⁸⁹² In early 2002, the Church donated emergency supplies to victims of Cyclone Waka in Vava'u.¹⁸⁹³ In partnership with the Wheelchair Foundation, the Church donated 500 wheelchairs in 2004.¹⁸⁹⁴ Latter-day Saints under the name of "Mormon Helping Hands" were among some 13,200 citizens that performed service

¹⁸⁸⁶ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Reaping harvest in Pacific paradise," LDS Church News, 10 November 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51310/Reaping-harvest-in-Pacific-paradise.html>

¹⁸⁸⁷ "Faith, service paved way for growth," LDS Church News, 31 August 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21621/Faith-service-paved-way-for-growth.html>

¹⁸⁸⁸ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Liahona High: a foundation for life," LDS Church News, 13 September 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29262/Liahona-High-a-foundation-for-life.html>

¹⁸⁸⁹ Gaunt, LaRene Porter. "Tonga: A Land of Believing People," *Ensign*, Sept. 2001, 42.

¹⁸⁹⁰ "Medical equipment donated to Tonga," LDS Church News, 31 August 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21426/Medical-equipment-donated-to-Tonga.html>

¹⁸⁹¹ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 1 June 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27218/From-around-the-world.html>

¹⁸⁹² "Church helps in earthquake research," LDS Church News, 1 September 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40413/Church-helps-in-earthquake-research.html>

¹⁸⁹³ "Cyclone destroys homes," LDS Church News, 12 January 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41171/Cyclone-destroys-homes.html>

¹⁸⁹⁴ Ellsworth, Elder Delbert W. "Wheelchairs for Tonga," LDS Church News, 1 May 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45506/Wheelchairs-for-Tonga.html>

throughout the Tongan islands in 2007.¹⁸⁹⁵ The Church completed a clean water project to serve Niuatoputapu in the 2000s.¹⁸⁹⁶

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The LDS Church enjoys full religious freedom in Tonga and maintains positive relations with the government. Missionaries freely proselyte, and local members face no restrictions regarding assembly and worship.

Cultural Issues

The cultural emphasis and regular practice of religious habits like praying, scripture reading, and church attendance has benefited LDS mission outreach efforts. Despite the strong ethno-religious ties with Christianity, Tonga has created a remarkably pluralistic society in which differing denominations deal peacefully and respectfully with one another. Several aspects of Tongan culture and society have made Tongans more receptive than other peoples to LDS teachings. LDS Church leaders have suggested that Book of Mormon peoples are among the ancestors of Tongans¹⁸⁹⁷ and that this connection may explain some of their high dedication and receptivity to the gospel message. Kava consumption as relating to the Word of Wisdom remains a subject of debate among some members. Church leaders have counseled members to keep free of habit-forming substances, which some consider to include recreational kava use.

Double Affiliation

Strong interest in Christianity but moderate levels of allegiance to a given denomination has created additional cultural challenges for Latter-day Saints and other Christians regarding the double affiliation of their members. Most nominal Latter-day Saints who no longer attend LDS Church services appear actively involved in or identify with other Christian traditions. Doubly affiliated Latter-day Saints who actively engage in another Christian denomination are challenging to reactivate due to their current social and religious connections outside the Church, but nonetheless do not present an insurmountable obstacle, as they can switch-back to the LDS Church. LDS missionaries, leaders, and members also need to emphasize unique doctrinal teachings and theological positions to help curb against the loss of some Latter-day Saints to other Christian denominations and safeguard against convert attrition.

National Outreach

LDS mission outreach in Tonga is excellent, as every village with over 1,000 inhabitants has an LDS congregation, amounting to 60% of the national population. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the national population is estimated to reside within a kilometer of an LDS congregation, as the Church maintains dozens of congregations in villages with populations less than 1,000. The percentage of Latter-day Saints varies by island group as indicated by the ratio of the general population to LDS congregations. Ha'apai likely has the highest percentage of Latter-day Saints (one LDS congregation per 360 people) whereas 'Eua appears to have the lowest (one LDS congregation per 868 people). There is one congregation per 555 people in Niua, one per 735 in Tongatapu, and one per 431 in Vava'u. As a whole, Tonga has a nationwide average of one LDS congregation per 622 inhabitants.

¹⁸⁹⁵ "Members spruce up Tongan island," LDS Church News, 28 July 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50879/Members-spruce-up-Tongan-island.html>

¹⁸⁹⁶ "Projects—Tonga," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 29 December 2010. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-200,00.html>

¹⁸⁹⁷ Kimball, Spencer W. "Of Royal Blood," *Ensign*, July 1971, 7.

In late 2010, there were at least eighteen villages that had no LDS mission outreach centers in Tonga (seven in Vava'u [Kapa, Lape, Makave, Olo'ua, Ovaka, Taunga, Utulei], six on Nuku'alofa [Ha'akili, Ha'atafu, Ha'avakatolo, Haveluliku, Kala'au, Sia'atoutai], three in Ha'apai [Fonoifua, Holopeka, Nukunamo], one on Niuafu'ou [Kolofo ou], and one on Niuatoputapu [Falehau]). Five of the six unreached villages on Nuku'alofa are located on the western portion of the island. Nearly all of the eighteen villages without LDS congregations are within three kilometers of an LDS congregation. Reasons for why these villages lack LDS congregations may include poor member activity rates, inadequate numbers of Latter-day Saints, few mission outreach resources dedicated to these villages, lower receptivity, and lack of vision by local church leaders to create additional congregations in these villages. The creation of dependent branches or groups in these locations may facilitate the development of a permanent LDS presence headquartered in each of these lesser-reached villages.

LDS mission outreach directed towards Tongans occurs internationally, as there were ninety-one Tongan-language LDS congregations outside of Tonga in late 2010 operating in the United States (73), New Zealand (12), Australia (4), and American Samoa (2) providing outreach to the 80,000 some Tongan-speakers abroad. Of Tongan-speaking congregations abroad, five are designated for young single adults (YSA). The percentage of Latter-day Saints among Tongan populations appears relatively constant both within Tonga and abroad, as the ratio of LDS congregations to Tongans was one per 879 internationally, close to the ratio for Tonga of one LDS congregation per 622 people. Tongan language LDS materials are available online at lds.org, including LDS scriptures. Use of online language materials facilitates member activity rates and outreach potential among Tongan-speakers abroad.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Several factors have facilitated higher member activity and convert retention rates than other nations such as the early establishment of Church-run schools, widespread chapel construction and congregation planting following World War II, government restrictions limiting the number of foreign missionaries, complete self-sufficiency in the staffing of the full-time missionary force, the calling of couple missionaries in the mid-twentieth century, culturally high rates of church attendance in the general population, and the societal promotion of churches. The average number of Latter-day Saints per congregation increased by twenty-one in the 2000s (a 7% increase) as a result of fairly commensurate membership and congregational growth rates, indicating that convert retention has been modest and that member activity rates have held constant during this period. The slight increase this statistic may also been attributed to the maturation of a couple dozen branches into wards in the 2000s as a result of increases in the number of members in these units. The average number of members per congregation at present in Tonga is one of the lowest worldwide among nations in which the majority of LDS congregations are wards. Inactivity remains a problem in many areas, primarily among doubly affiliated members.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The homogeneity of the Tongan population reduces ethnic integration challenges and has contributed to rapid LDS Church growth trends during the last half of the twentieth century. English is commonly spoken as a second language and improves outreach and integration potential at church for the few non-Tongan residents and visitors.

Language Issues

Nearly the entire population has LDS materials translated into their native language. The abundance of Tongan-language church materials has encouraged growth and doctrinal understanding, thereby contributing to the high dedication and devotion of many Tongan Latter-day Saints. Frequent use of English as a second language also allows many to utilize English-language LDS materials if they are unavailable in Tongan.

Missionary Service

Tonga experiences excellent levels of missionary service among local members that is unparalleled in most countries with an LDS presence. A missionary training center in Tonga operated from as early as the 1980s,¹⁸⁹⁸ but the Tonga Missionary Training Center was decommissioned sometime in the early 2000s as in 2001, the New Zealand Missionary Training Center was expanded to train missionaries in their native languages from Tonga, Samoa, and Tahiti.¹⁸⁹⁹ In 1988, 93% of the full-time missionary force was Tongan.¹⁹⁰⁰ In 1991, Tonga had the highest percentage of members serving full-time missions worldwide.¹⁹⁰¹ 80–90% of male graduates of Liahona High School served full-time missions in the late 1990s.¹⁹⁰² In 2001, there were approximately 160 full-time missionaries in the Tonga Nuku’alofa Mission.¹⁹⁰³ In late 2007, there were 149 full-time missionaries serving in Tonga, 135 of whom were native members.¹⁹⁰⁴ The abundance of missionary manpower in Tonga has resulted in Tongan missionaries frequently serving elsewhere in Oceania, North America, and Africa. Papua New Guinea and the United States have been particularly common nations to which Tongan full-time missionaries are assigned. With a strong membership base that is more member-missionary motivated than many other nations, Tonga will continue to supply the international Church with a surplus of missionaries for the foreseeable future.

Leadership

Local Tongan members have accounted for the majority of Church leadership since as early as the late 1960s.¹⁹⁰⁵ Self-sufficiency and dedication of local members and leaders came largely as a result of the sacrifice and service of Tongan couple missionaries in the 1950s and early 1960s.¹⁹⁰⁶ Tongan members have regularly served as regional representatives, area authorities, mission presidents, and temple presidents for decades. In 1991, there were two Tongan regional representatives: Tevita Ka’ili and Vaikalafi Lutui.¹⁹⁰⁷ In 1992, Pita F. Hopoate from Nuku’alofa was called as a regional representative.¹⁹⁰⁸ In 1995, Pita Hopoate was called as an area authority.¹⁹⁰⁹ In 2003, Pita R. Vamanrav from Nuku’alofa was called as an Area Authority Seventy.¹⁹¹⁰ In 2005, Sione M. Fineanganofa from Nuku’alofa was called as an area Seventy.¹⁹¹¹

¹⁸⁹⁸ “New leaders called for 13 centers,” LDS Church News, 30 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18284/New-leaders-called-for-13-centers.html>

¹⁸⁹⁹ “New Zealand MTC expanded,” LDS Church News, 1 December 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40970/New-Zealand-MTC-expanded.html>

¹⁹⁰⁰ “Local missionary force—10,000 from 71 countries,” LDS Church News, 14 May 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17857/Local-missionary-force—10000-from-71-countries.html>

¹⁹⁰¹ “King invited to island celebration,” LDS Church News, 1 June 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21440/King-invited-to-island-celebration.html>

¹⁹⁰² Weaver, Sarah Jane. “Liahona High: a foundation for life,” LDS Church News, 13 September 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29262/Liahona-High-a-foundation-for-life.html>

¹⁹⁰³ Gaunt, LaRene Porter. “Tonga: A Land of Believing People,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2001, 42.

¹⁹⁰⁴ Weaver, Sarah Jane. “Reaping harvest in Pacific paradise,” LDS Church News, 10 November 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51310/Reaping-harvest-in-Pacific-paradise.html>

¹⁹⁰⁵ Gaunt, LaRene Porter. “Tonga: A Land of Believing People,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2001, 42.

¹⁹⁰⁶ “Faith, service paved way for growth,” LDS Church News, 31 August 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21621/Faith-service-paved-way-for-growth.html>

¹⁹⁰⁷ Hart, John L. “Celebrating 100 years in Tonga,” LDS Church News, 31 August 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21127/Celebrating-100-years-in-Tonga.html>

¹⁹⁰⁸ “New regional representatives,” LDS Church News, 21 March 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22377/New-regional-representatives.html>

¹⁹⁰⁹ “Church names area authorities,” LDS Church News, 5 August 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26627/Church-names-area-authorities.html>

¹⁹¹⁰ “New Area Authority Seventies,” LDS Church News, 19 April 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43636/New-Area-Authority-Seventies.html>

¹⁹¹¹ “New area Seventy,” LDS Church News, 25 June 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47490/New-area-Seventy.html>

In 1992, Samisoni Uasila'a from Nuku'alofa became serving as the Tonga Nuku'alofa Mission president.¹⁹¹² In 1997, Mosese F. Naeata from Nuku'alofa was called to preside over the Papua New Guinea Port Moresby Mission.¹⁹¹³ In 1998, Taniela Kelikupa Kivalu from Nuku'alofa was called as the Nuku'alofa Tonga Mission president.¹⁹¹⁴ In 2000, Sosaia Lehonitai Mateaki from Nuku'alofa was called as the mission president¹⁹¹⁵ of the Papua New Guinea Port Moresby Mission.¹⁹¹⁶ In 2006, Tevita Hualela'lmoana Funaki from Nuku'alofa was called to preside over the Papua New Guinea Port Moresby Mission.¹⁹¹⁷ In 2009, Meliula M. Fata was called to preside over the Port Moresby Papua New Guinea Mission.¹⁹¹⁸ In 2010, 'Aisake K. Tukuafu from Nuku'alofa was called to preside over the Tonga Nuku'alofa Mission.¹⁹¹⁹

In 1992, Tevita Ka'ili from Nuku'alofa was called as the Nuku'alofa Tonga Temple president.¹⁹²⁰ In 1998, Sione Moala Fineanganofa was called as the Nuku'alofa Tonga Temple president.¹⁹²¹ In 2001, Mosese Veuki Kaumatule from Nuku'alofa was called as the Nuku'alofa Temple president.¹⁹²² In 2010, Pita Foliaki Hopoate from Nuku'alofa was called as the Nuku'alofa Temple president.¹⁹²³

Temple

Tonga pertains to the Nuku'alofa Tonga Temple district. Prior to the dedication of the Nuku'alofa Tonga Temple in 1983, Tongan members attended the Hamilton New Zealand Temple.¹⁹²⁴ The Church announced a temple for Tonga in 1980. In the late 1980s, members residing on Vava'u traveled by boat for twenty-four hours to the Nuku'alofa Tonga Temple twice a year in May and August. Temple excursions from Vava'u usually included over one hundred members and lasted for two or three weeks. In 1986, members from Vava'u completed 6,000 endowments.¹⁹²⁵ In December 1996, the Nuku'alofa Tonga Liahona Stake held special endowment sessions in the temple that occurred hourly throughout the night on Fridays to commemorate the Mormon pioneer's arrival

¹⁹¹² "The First Presidency has announced the call of six more mission presidents," LDS Church News, 4 April 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22614/The-First-Presidency-has-announced-the-call-of-six-more-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁹¹³ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 15 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29075/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁹¹⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 7 March 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31384/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁹¹⁵ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 4 March 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37253/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁹¹⁶ "New and Returning Mission Presidents," LDS Church News, 11 March 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37313/New-and-Returning-Mission-Presidents.html>

¹⁹¹⁷ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 15 April 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48814/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁹¹⁸ "Mission President assignments: 2009," LDS Church News, 7 March 2009. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/56726/Mission-President-assignments-2009.html>

¹⁹¹⁹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 24 April 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59242/New-mission-presidents.html>

¹⁹²⁰ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 13 June 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22684/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹⁹²¹ "Two new temple presidents called by First Presidency," LDS Church News, 10 October 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31559/Two-new-temple-presidents-called-by-First-Presidency.html>

¹⁹²² "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 6 October 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40584/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹⁹²³ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 5 June 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59425/New-temple-presidents.html>

¹⁹²⁴ "Faith, service paved way for growth," LDS Church News, 31 August 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21621/Faith-service-paved-way-for-growth.html>

¹⁹²⁵ "Tongans travel sea to the temple," LDS Church News, 13 August 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18314/Tongans-travel-sea-to-the-temple.html>

in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847.¹⁹²⁶ The temple was remodeled from June 2006 to November 2007, expanded by 5,282 square feet, and rededicated in late 2007.¹⁹²⁷ In 2010, the temple appeared among the busiest in the LDS Church outside of North America as endowment sessions were scheduled hourly from 5 AM to 7 PM Tuesdays through Saturdays. Only Vava'u appears as a possible candidate for an additional LDS temple in Tonga. A potential temple in Vava'u would be a small temple and serve four large stakes and two districts.

Comparative Growth

Tonga presents a valuable lesson for Latter-day Saints regarding the importance of maintaining a church presence in countries that currently do not demonstrate favorable church growth conditions. The LDS Church struggled for the first half-century it operated in Tonga and did not experienced noticeable growth until the late 1950s and early 1960s.¹⁹²⁸ Today Tonga has the highest percentage of Latter-day Saints of any nation worldwide and ranks among the top thirty countries with the most stakes, members, and congregations despite ranking 189th by population. In 1988, Nuku'alofa was the city outside the United States with the eighth most LDS stakes (seven).¹⁹²⁹ During the 2000s, member activity rates and membership growth trends have compared to most nations in Polynesia. Tonga is one of the few nations that has multiple Church-run schools.

As early as the 1980s, the LDS Church has been the only church among denominations that account for over 3% of the population, which has increased its percentage in the general population, as the Free Wesleyan Church, Catholic Church, Free Church of Tonga, Church of Tonga, Tokaikolo, Anglican Church, and Seventh Day Adventist Church all reported no increase or a decline in the percentage of their members in the general population since 1986. The only denomination that had over 1,000 members reported on the census in 2006 that has experienced more rapid growth than Latter-day Saints was the Assemblies of God, which increased in membership from 565 in 1986 to 2,350 in 2006. The Free Wesleyan Church and Tokaikolo are the only major denominations that have experienced steady declines in reported members on the census since 1986.¹⁹³⁰ Seventh Day Adventists generally baptize fifty to one hundred new converts annually and had fewer congregations in 2009 than in 1998. Jehovah's Witnesses report slow growth. Only the Assemblies of God has been successful in achieving rapid church growth in recent years among missionary-minded, nontraditional Christian groups in Tonga, likely due to their charismatic approaches to proselytism and emphasis on member-missionary activity.

Future Prospects

The outlook for LDS Church growth in Tonga appears favorable as manifest by consistent membership and congregational increases sustained for several decades, the maturation of branches into wards, steady increases in the percentage of Tongans who self-report as Latter-day Saints on the census, the operation of eight Church schools, a supportive international LDS Tongan community, and an abundance of local missionary manpower. Over a dozen villages remain without their own LDS congregations and offer opportunities for future growth. Several additional stakes will likely be organized in the coming years. Double affiliation will remain a challenge to accurately ascertain the size of the Latter-day Saint population in Tonga and presents an obstacle to reactive inactive members.

¹⁹²⁶ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Tonga stake commemorates pioneers," LDS Church News, 18 January 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29001/Tonga-stake-commemorates-pioneers.html>

¹⁹²⁷ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Reaping harvest in Pacific paradise," LDS Church News, 10 November 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51310/Reaping-harvest-in-Pacific-paradise.html>

¹⁹²⁸ Hart, John L. "Celebrating 100 years in Tonga," LDS Church News, 31 August 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21127/Celebrating-100-years-in-Tonga.html>

¹⁹²⁹ Warnick, Lee. "18 stakes created from 11: 28-hour marathon in lima multiplies by dividing," LDS Church News, 6 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17742/18-stakes-created-from-11-28-hour-marathon-in-lima-multiplies-by-dividing.html>

¹⁹³⁰ "Social characteristics—Religion," Population Census 2006—Tonga Department of Statistics, retrieved 24 December 2010. <http://www.spc.int/prism/country/to/stats/Census06/social/religion.htm>

TUVALU

Geography

AREA: 26 square km. Comprising nine low-lying, narrow coral atolls in the South Pacific Ocean, Tuvalu is located in Polynesia between Hawaii and Australia. Tropical climate occurs year round modified by a rainy season from November to March. Rises in sea level and tropical storms are natural hazards. Environmental issues include inadequate fresh water supplies, beach erosion, damage to forest undergrowth, and coral reef damage.

Peoples

Polynesian: 96%

Micronesian: 4%

Tuvaluans populate eight of the nine atolls and are a Polynesian ethnic group. The island of Nui is populated by Kiribati, who are of Micronesian ethnic stock.

Population: 10,619 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.725% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 3.08 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 63.03 male, 67.29 female (2012)

Languages: Tuvaluan (93%), Kiribati (7%). Tuvaluan and English are official languages.

Literacy: N/A

History

Polynesians are believed to have first settled Tuvalu as early as 1000 BC. Spanish explorers were the first Europeans to sight the islands in the sixteenth century. Greater interaction with Europeans occurred in the nineteenth century, who named Tuvalu the Ellice Islands. Hundreds of islanders were kidnapped in 1863 to labor in guano mines in Peru. The British began administering Tuvalu in the late nineteenth century as a protectorate and as part of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands colony between 1916 and 1974. United States military utilized the islands for airbases during World War II for the Pacific campaign against Imperial Japan. Initiated mainly by ethnic differences, Tuvalu voted to become a separate dependency of the United Kingdom from the Gilbert Islands (Kiribati) in 1974 and achieved independence in 1978. Tuvalu gained four additional islets previously claimed by the United States in 1979 through a friendship treaty.¹⁹³¹ Concerned about increasing sea levels, the government appealed in 2000 to New Zealand and Australia to accept the islands' population if the islands become uninhabitable.

Culture

The Church of Tuvalu is the dominant social and cultural influence. Families are assigned specific skills or tasks to perform for the community, and island elder councils dictate many aspects of village life. Traditional

¹⁹³¹ "Background Note: Tuvalu," Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 31 August 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/16479.htm>

foods include seafood, coconut, fruit, pork, and a swamp crop similar to taro called pulaka. Soccer, volleyball, and rugby are the most common sports.¹⁹³² Alcohol consumption rates are very low.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$1,600 (2002) [3.38% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: N/A

Corruption Index: N/A

The economy relies on remittances, fishing, and international aid to operate due to the islands' tiny population, remote location, poor soil, and lack of natural resources. Nearly all food and fuel is imported. Fishing and exploitation of the sea and reefs employ nearly the entire workforce. Services generate 56% of the GDP, whereas industry and agriculture generate 27% and 17% of the GDP, respectively. Coconuts and fish are agricultural products. There have been some allegations of corruption among government officials.

Faiths

Christian: 97%

Baha'i: 3%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Church of Tuvalu 9,530

Tuvalu Brethren (charismatic) 300

Seventh Day Adventists 210 1

Latter-day Saints 200 1

Catholic 105

Jehovah's Witnesses 71 1

Religion

Nearly the entire population is Christian. Ninety-one percent (91%) of Tuvaluans adhere to the Church of Tuvalu, a denomination with historic ties to the Congregational Church in Samoa. The traditional chiefs of all nine island groups are members of the Church of Tuvalu. Other prominent Christian denominations include Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Catholics. Nanumea Island supports a large Baha'i community.¹⁹³³

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. The Church of Tuvalu is the state church, but the constitution provides for separation of church and state. A new religious group with over fifty members must register or may be prosecuted. Several Christian holidays are recognized national holidays. Missionaries may proselyte on some islands. Traditional island elder councils on some islands have formally and informally banned proselytism by religious groups not already operating on their respective island. There has been some persecution of the Brethren Church on Nanumanga, and the Church of Tuvalu heavily influences social and political conditions.¹⁹³⁴

¹⁹³² "Tuvalu," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 24 February 2011. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuvalu>

¹⁹³³ "Tuvalu," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148901.htm>

¹⁹³⁴ "Tuvalu," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/>

Largest Villages

Urban: 49%

Alapi, Fakaifou, Senala, Teone, Vaiaku, Motufoua, Teava, Lofeagai, Tekavatoetoe, Aulotu.

Villages listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

One of the ten largest villages has an LDS congregation. Sixty percent (60%) of the national population resides in the ten largest villages.

LDS Background

The first known Tuvaluan LDS converts joined the Church while attending Liahona High School in Tonga and Moroni High School in Fiji. By the mid-1980s, there were approximately two dozen members living in Funafuti. The president of the Micronesia-Guam Mission visited in 1984 and organized the first congregation the following year. The Church gained legal recognition and performed the first baptisms in Tuvalu by the end of 1985.¹⁹³⁵ Church membership grew slowly in the 1990s and 2000s from ninety-one in 2000 to 100 in 2005 and 134 in 2009. The Fiji Suva Mission began administering Tuvalu in the 1990s. Elder L. Tom Perry collectively dedicated Tuvalu with several other islands in the Fiji Suva Mission in 1996.¹⁹³⁶ Full-time missionaries were removed from Tuvalu in the mid-2000s and were reassigned in September 2010. Sixty-seven were attending church services in September 2010, which included several nonmembers. Nearly one hundred were attending church meetings in late 2010 and by early 2011 approximately two dozen new converts had been baptized. Nationwide active membership is estimated at eighty, or 50%–60% of total church membership. Local members utilize Samoan translations of LDS scriptures; Tuvaluan translations of a few basic church materials are available. The Funafuti Tuvalu Branch likely meets in a renovated building or rented space. Two full-time missionaries were assigned to the branch in early 2011. Tuvalu is assigned to the Fiji Suva Temple district.

Opportunities

Latter-day Saints benefit from religious freedom on Funafuti Atoll, allowing for LDS mission outreach to occur among 47% of the national population. The highly political and socially intertwined Church of Tuvalu has reduced receptivity to other Christian denominations and presents a challenge for LDS mission efforts to address, but full-time missionaries reported no major challenges teaching, finding, baptizing, and retaining new converts on Funafuti in late 2010 and early 2011 due to these issues. Isolation from mission leadership has fostered self-sufficiency as a local member served as branch president in early 2011. Developing habitual church attendance before baptism has resulted in moderate to high levels of member activity and convert retention. Latter-day Saints have yet to explore humanitarian and development projects in Tuvalu to address low standards of living and to improve the awareness and the public image of the Church. The Articles of Faith and the *Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith* are the only LDS materials translated into Tuvaluan.

Challenges

Expanding national outreach to some islands may face opposition from traditional island elder councils that

irf/2010/148901.htm

¹⁹³⁵ "Tuvalu," Country Profile, 10 June 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/country/tuvalu>

¹⁹³⁶ Orden, Dell Van. "Elder Perry creates first Kiribati stake, dedicates islands," LDS Church News, 21 September 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27921/Elder-Perry-creates-first-Kiribati-stake-dedicates-islands.html>

forbid nonlocal religious groups from proselytism. Allocation of LDS mission resources on additional islands is currently unfeasible due to limited numbers of full-time missionaries and, with the exception of Vaitupu Atoll, other atolls have fewer than 1,000 inhabitants. Full-time missionaries report that local members' understanding of LDS materials in Samoan is limited. With approximately 10,000 speakers and few qualified translators, prospects for future LDS scriptures appear unlikely whereas future translations of other LDS materials into Tuvalu are possible in the coming years. Few local members have served full-time missions and leadership training has been limited. The introduction of the seminary and institute programs may increase the number of members serving full-time missions and facilitate understanding of LDS teachings and strengthen testimonies. Other missionary-minded Christian groups report significant church growth challenges on Tuvalu largely due to the impact of the Church of Tuvalu on receptivity. Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses report stagnant membership and each operated one congregation in 2010.

Prospects

Rapid membership growth in late 2010 and early 2011 marked by over two dozen convert baptisms within a period of a few months is a positive development that may indicate a breakthrough reaching the Tuvaluan population. Time will tell whether new converts will remain active, increased membership growth will be sustained, and additional congregations will be organized as greater numbers of local priesthood leaders are trained. Restricting the number of LDS missionaries to a single companionship may be in the best interests of maintaining local member involvement in missionary work and leadership until additional congregations are organized.

VANUATU

Geography

AREA: 12,189 square km. Vanuatu comprises over eighty islands in the South Pacific Ocean, which are surrounded by the island nations of Fiji, New Caledonia, and the Solomon Islands. Tropical climate prevails year round with some fluctuations in rainfall. Most islands are mountainous with narrow coastal plains. Cyclones, volcanoes, earthquakes, and tsunamis are natural hazards. Environmental issues include deforestation and a lack of fresh water to sustain the population. Vanuatu is divided into six administrative provinces.

Peoples

Ni-Vanuatu: 98.5%

Other: 1.5%

Nonnatives primarily come from other South Pacific island nations.

Population: 227,574 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.321% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.35 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 63.38 male, 66.83 female (2012)

Languages: Indigenous languages (72.6%), Bislama (23.1%), English (1.9%), French (1.4%), other (0.3%), unspecified (0.7%). One hundred six native languages are spoken. Bislama, English, and French are national or official languages. Bislama is a pidgin language that draws its roots from English and French. Languages with over 10,000 speakers include Lenakel and dialects of Ambae, Efate, and Tanna.

Literacy: 74% (1999)

History

Known as the New Hebrides prior to 1980, the first inhabitants settled the islands as early as 2000 BC. Peoples throughout the South Pacific colonized the islands periodically around 1000 AD, resulting in a rich diversity of languages. In the nineteenth century, the British and French settled the New Hebrides and in 1906 established joint jurisdiction over the region. During years of European administration, the native population declined dramatically due to disease and relocation. The United States military arrived during World War II in its fight against the Japanese in the Pacific. Joint French-British rule continued until 1980 when independence was granted, and the name was changed to Vanuatu.

Culture

A rich diversity in cultural traditions varies from island to island. Pigs are regarded as a symbol of wealth and often used as a means of payment. Many villages have areas that are segregated by gender and practice coming-of-age ceremonies. Cuisine includes foods common to South Pacific islander diets, such as fish, taro, yams,

fruits, and vegetables. Most grow their own food in gardens and tend to have sufficient amounts of food.¹⁹³⁷ Alcohol and cigarette consumption rates are low.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$4,900 (2011) [10.2% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.617

Corruption Index: 3.5 (2011)

Vanuatu possesses few natural resources and remains dependent on foreign aid and small-scale agriculture to support the economy. Efforts to develop the tourism industry have generated additional wealth. Agriculture accounts for 65% of the labor force and produces 26% of the GDP. Primary agricultural products include copra, coconuts, cocoa, and coffee. Kava—a traditional drink made from the roots of the kava plant with possesses some psychoactive properties—is widely consumed. Services employ 30% of the workforce and generate 62% of the GDP. Food and wood processing are major industries. Over 80% of exports are destined to Thailand. Other primary trade partners include Australia, the United States, and Japan.

Faiths

Christian: 82.5%

Indigenous beliefs: 5.6%

Other: 9.6%

None: 1%

Unspecified: 1.3%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Presbyterian 69,567

Anglican 29,688

Catholic 29,023

Seventh Day Adventists 17,935 58

Latter-day Saints 5,491 30

Jehovah's Witnesses 493 4

Religion

A wide variety of Christian denominations flourish in Vanuatu, together accounting for as much as 90% of the population. Presbyterian, Anglican, Catholic, and Seventh Day Adventist faiths are the most widespread. Although Western missionaries brought Christianity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, 90% of the missionary force is indigenous. The John Frum movement is concentrated on the island of Tanna and claims 5% of the national population. The New Testament has been translated into three indigenous languages.¹⁹³⁸

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. There have been no recent reports of abuses of religious freedom. Religious discrimination is not tolerated. Some conflict has occurred when churches have been constructed in villages without the approval of the chief and the rest of

¹⁹³⁷ "Vanuatu," wikipedia.com, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vanuatu>

¹⁹³⁸ "Vanuatu," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127293.htm>

the community. However, these instances have been minor and usually were peacefully resolved. Students who are middle school and high school aged are required to take religious classes in public school, which are often aligned by denomination. Religious groups are required to obtain government registration, but this law is not well enforced. There are no restrictions on proselytism. Some foreign missionaries continue to serve in Vanuatu, but most missionaries are indigenous.¹⁹³⁹

Largest Cities

Urban: 25%

Port-Vila, Luganville, Norsup, **Port-Olry**, Isangel.

Cities and towns listed in **bold** have no nearby LDS congregation.

Four of the five largest cities or villages have congregations within their boundaries or nearby. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the national population lives in the five largest cities. Only Port-Vila and Luganville have over 5,000 inhabitants.

LDS History

In the 1950s, a few Tongan Church member families moved to Port Vila. The Church received official recognition in 1973, and the Port Vila Branch was organized.¹⁹⁴⁰ In 1975, the first two missionaries were assigned to Vanuatu on Efate.¹⁹⁴¹ The government banned foreign missionaries in the 1980s, resulting in Vanuatu depending on local members to staff its full-time missionary force.¹⁹⁴² In 1987, two Vanuatu members began their missions and were the only missionaries assigned to their native country for their two-year service. During that time period, they baptized thirty-three converts, including family members.¹⁹⁴³ Seminary and institute began in the early 1990s. In 1996, Elder L. Tom Perry collectively dedicated seven island groups within the boundaries of the Fiji Suva Mission that included Vanuatu.¹⁹⁴⁴ When President Hinckley visited in 2003, many members living on Espiritu Santo and Malekula went to great lengths and sacrifice to make it to Port Vila to attend a member meeting.¹⁹⁴⁵ In 2012, the Church created the Vanuatu Port Vila Mission. In addition to Vanuatu, the mission also administers New Caledonia and the Solomon Islands.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 5,491 (2012)

By 1997, there were 200 LDS members.¹⁹⁴⁶ Membership increased to 1,352 by year-end 2000 and more than doubled to 2,822 by the end of 2004. There were 3,330 members in 2006. Annual membership growth rates

¹⁹³⁹ "Vanuatu," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127293.htm>

¹⁹⁴⁰ "Early beginnings," LDS Church News, 18 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28725/Early-beginnings.html>

¹⁹⁴¹ "Early beginnings," LDS Church News, 18 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28725/Early-beginnings.html>

¹⁹⁴² Hart, John L. "Strengthened families strengthen Church," LDS Church News, 31 January 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45030/Strengthened-families-strengthen-Church.html>

¹⁹⁴³ "Nearly two years together on Pacific island helps elders appreciate word 'companion,'" LDS Church News, 15 April 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19382/Nearly-two-years-together-on-Pacific-island-helps-elders-appreciate-word-companion.html>

¹⁹⁴⁴ "Elder Perry creates first Kiribati stake," LDS Church News, 21 September 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27921/Elder-Perry-creates-first-Kiribati-stake-dedicating-islands.html>

¹⁹⁴⁵ Hart, John L. "Visit to Vanuatu: Answered on a wing and a prayer," LDS Church News, 28 June 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43972/Visit-to-Vanuatu-Answered-on-a-wing-and-a-prayer.html>

¹⁹⁴⁶ "Early beginnings," LDS Church News, 18 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28725/Early-beginnings.html>

were typically over 10% prior to 2004 and have since ranged from 5 to 9% with annual membership increases ranging from 200 to 300.

In 2009, one out of fifty-five people was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 30 Groups: 2+ (April 2013)

There were nine congregations at year-end 2000. Congregational growth remained steady for the 2000s as congregations reached twelve in 2002, nineteen in 2004, and twenty-four in 2008. Prior to 2000, districts were organized in Port Vila (1996) and Luganville (1998).

In late 2001, four branches functioned on Efate, including three in Port Vila. The Port Vila District had five total branches, with the fifth located on Tafea at White Sands. The Luganville Vanuatu District had four branches during this time period—one in Luganville, two on Ambae, and one of Malakula. Missionaries were assigned for the first time to Mere Lava in early 2003.¹⁹⁴⁷

In May 2010, there were approximately seventeen units in the Luganville Vanuatu District, including six on Malakula, four on Espiritu Santo, five on Ambae, and one on Mere Lava. Nine branches belonged to the Port Vila Vanuatu District: Five branches on Efate and four on Tanna. In 2011, the Malakula Vanuatu District was organized. In early 2012, the first branch on Gaua Island was organized.

Activity and Retention

Vanuatu experiences one of the highest activity rates in the Church. The average number of members per congregation increased from 150 to 167 between 2000 and 2009 as the number of Church members tripled. In 2003, 2,212 attended a meeting held with President Hinckley, a number greater than total national Church membership at the time, which did not include 400 members living on Tanna who were unable to attend.¹⁹⁴⁸ In 2004, about a quarter of members living in the Port Vila Vanuatu District had been to the temple.¹⁹⁴⁹ Over 300 young adults from the Luganville Vanuatu District met for a conference in 2005.¹⁹⁵⁰ The same year 123 attended the first seminary and institute graduation on the island of Ambae.¹⁹⁵¹ During the 2008–2009 school year, 486 members were enrolled in seminary or institute.

In May 2010, both the Port Vila 1st and Port Vila 2nd Branches each had about 130 attending weekly. Most congregations appear to have 100 to 150 active members. Total active membership may be as high as 3,300, or 80% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English, French, Bislama.

A wide range of Church materials are available in French. Church materials translated in Bislama include some

¹⁹⁴⁷ "Work thrives in earthquake's wake," LDS Church News, 1 February 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43159/Work-thrives-in-earthquakes-wake.html>

¹⁹⁴⁸ Hart, John L. "An island welcome—First trip to Melanesian isle," LDS Church News, 28 June 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43971/An-island-welcome—First-trip-to-Melanesian-isle.html>

¹⁹⁴⁹ Hart, John L. "Strengthened families strengthen Church," LDS Church News, 31 January 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45030/Strengthened-families-strengthen-Church.html>

¹⁹⁵⁰ "Vanuatu youth hold conference," LDS Church News, 1 October 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47901/Vanuatu-youth-hold-conference.html>

¹⁹⁵¹ "Moving forward in Vanuatu's 'Bali Hai,'" LDS Church News, 29 October 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48058/Moving-forward-in-Vanuatus-Bali-Hai.html>

unit, temple, priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, young women, audio/visual, primary, missionary, hymns, children's songs, and family history resources.

Meetinghouses

Church services are generally held in meetinghouses built in the small villages of local members.

Health and Safety

Most areas of the country have poor access to health care.

Humanitarian and Development Work

In 2003, missionaries provided some humanitarian aid and assistance following a severe earthquake in Mere Lava.¹⁹⁵² The Church donated seventy-five water tanks to the northern island of West Ambae, Santo, Malekula, Banks, Pentecost, and Ambrym in 2005.¹⁹⁵³ Local members have participated in service projects, such as in 2005 when forty-five youth from the two Port Vila branches helped clean the waterfront.¹⁹⁵⁴ The Church has continued to donate and provide assistance to improve living conditions in recent years.¹⁹⁵⁵

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church faces no restrictions, and missionaries may proselyte openly. Local government decisions are often made by the community as a whole, which can result in some restrictions and friction between villages and the Church if consent is not given by the chief and the community for missionary visits and Church activity.

Cultural Issues

Low levels of cigarette and alcohol use are a positive cultural characteristic that may facilitate LDS Church growth. Kava consumption as relating to the Word of Wisdom remains a subject of debate among some members. Church leaders have counseled members to keep free of habit-forming substances that some apply to recreational kava use. The strong sense of community present in most villages can both help and hinder missionary work.

National Outreach

All six administrative provinces have a Church outreach center. Islands that have a congregation account for approximately 75% of the national population. Forty percent (40%) of the unreached population resides on Pentecost and Ambrym, whereas the remaining 60% live on islands with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants. The Church will face the challenge of maintaining many outreach centers in order to reach a small population residing on scores of islands spread over a large area of ocean.

¹⁹⁵² "Work thrives in earthquake's wake," LDS Church News, 1 February 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43159/Work-thrives-in-earthquakes-wake.html>

¹⁹⁵³ "Water tanks to Vanuatu," LDS Church News, 19 February 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46903/Water-tanks-to-Vanuatu.html>

¹⁹⁵⁴ "Cleaning waterfront, singing in Vanuatu," LDS Church News, 25 June 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47477/Cleaning-waterfront-singing-in-Vanuatu.html>

¹⁹⁵⁵ Larsen, Elder Robert S; Larsen, Sister Jeniel B. "Helping for health on Vanuatu's islands," LDS Church News, 1 April 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48701/Helping-for-health-on-Vanuatus-islands.html>

Ambae is the island that has the most penetrating mission outreach, as five congregations serve the island's less than 10,000 inhabitants. Islands with the largest populations—Efate and Espiritu Santo—provide the greatest opportunities for growth, as there are fewer than six congregations on each island and both have large geographic areas near outreach centers that are more densely populated than other locations. Expanding outreach to the 25% of the population living on unreached islands will most likely occur by members from these islands moving to locations with a Church presence, joining the Church, and later returning to their home islands to share the gospel with their communities. This process brought the Church to additional islands during the 1990s and 2000s.

Until 2012, Vanuatu's remoteness and isolation from the Fiji Suva Mission's headquarters resulted in limited missionary visits and resources. It appears that this likely facilitated rather than reduced growth as it has required greater self-sufficiency and independence with local members holding church callings, serving missions, and standing on their own with some periodic mentoring.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Very few problems have been encountered regarding member activity and convert retention. The lack of inactivity and poor convert retention issues in Vanuatu indicate that it is possible to retain most converts over the long term.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The lack of ethnic diversity has nearly eliminated potential ethnic integration issues. The Church has experienced some challenges in establishing branches in small villages in which it was not welcomed. In the past decade, both a member who invited full-time missionaries to his village and the missionaries themselves were fined by the village chiefs because prior approval was not granted.¹⁹⁵⁶

Language Issues

Providing Church materials in each of the one hundred-plus indigenous languages appears infeasible due to the few books translated into these languages and the small number of speakers. Other Christian groups appear to have come to this same conclusion, as only three indigenous languages have the New Testament translated despite 80%–90% of the population adhering to Christianity. English and French are widely taught in schools and provide a means of conveying the gospel to the population with fewer language barriers. The translation of many Church materials into Bislama has facilitated growth and understanding of Church doctrine and beliefs. Translations of Church materials may occur for languages with over 10,000 speakers that have a significant number of members, but forthcoming translations in the near future appear unlikely.

Missionary Service

Most missionaries serving in Vanuatu are natives or are from other Pacific islands. North American missionaries appear to have begun serving in Vanuatu in increasing numbers in the early 2010s. Vanuatu appears fairly self-sufficient in its missionary force. Some senior couple missionaries serve on remote islands—like Tanna—and provide mentoring and leadership assistance.

Leadership

Mentoring by senior missionary couples and mission leadership has assisted in the development and training

¹⁹⁵⁶ Hart, John L. "Standing steadfast amid cultural waves," LDS Church News, 23 August, 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44220/Standing-steadfast-amid-cultural-waves.html>

of local leadership. Local Church leaders are willing to serve and still require great care and guidance due to their limited experience in Church administration. Returned missionaries provide valuable manpower for long-term growth and local leadership.

Temple

Vanuatu pertains to the Suva Fiji Temple district. In 1987, the first two families from Vanuatu attended the temple in New Zealand.¹⁹⁵⁷ Members have gone to great lengths to pay the needed fare to attend the temple in Fiji or New Zealand despite low salaries and high cost of living.¹⁹⁵⁸ Prospects for a temple in Vanuatu appear unlikely until several stakes are organized on Efate.

Comparative Growth

Vanuatu has been one of the most successful nations for LDS growth over the past decade with rapid membership growth and high convert retention. The Church in Vanuatu has one of the lowest ratios of members to congregations and one of the highest member activity and convert retention rates worldwide. During the 2008–2009 school year, Vanuatu had the highest percentage of Church members enrolled in seminary or institute in the South Pacific (12%).

Other Christian denominations have experienced mixed results. Seventh Day Adventists have achieved consistent growth and claim approximately 8% of the population, whereas Jehovah's Witnesses had fewer than 500 active members in 2009. Denominations that have assimilated with the local culture, developed larger membership communities, possess sufficient leadership, and have member-missionary participation appear most successful.

Future Prospects

Steady, sustainable growth has occurred over the past decade, and prospects appear favorable for continued growth. Additional districts will likely be created in the near future on the islands of Ambae and Tanna, as each of these islands have a sufficient number of congregations. The creation of a stake does not appear likely for several more years, as none of the islands have enough members to support a stake, and stakes will likely not stretch over several islands due to travel and communication challenges. Vanuatu appears likely to reproduce the strong membership growth experienced in other South Pacific nations over the past fifty years due to favorable mission outreach conditions.

¹⁹⁵⁷ Hart, John L. "Temple moments: Storm-proof blessings," LDS Church News, 19 July 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44070/Temple-moments-Storm-proof-blessings.html>

¹⁹⁵⁸ Hart, John L. "Strengthened families strengthen Church," LDS Church News, 31 January 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45030/Strengthened-families-strengthen-Church.html>

WESTERN EUROPE

Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France,
Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, **Liechtenstein**,
Luxembourg, Malta, **Monaco**, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal,
San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland,
United Kingdom, **Vatican City**.

*Countries listed in **bold** do not have individual profiles*

REGIONAL PROFILE

Geography

AREA: 3,579,885 square km. Western Europe consists of the British Isles, Scandinavia, Iceland, the Iberian Peninsula, the Azores, the Canary Islands, the Italian Peninsula, Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, and western portions of continental Europe from Austria and Germany to France and Benelux. Several small islands are also included in the region, such as the Faroe and Balearic Islands. Seas that border Western Europe pertain to the Atlantic Ocean and include the Adriatic, Balearic, Baltic, Celtic, Ionian, Irish, Mediterranean, North, Norwegian, and Tyrrhenian. Temperate climate occurs in northern and central areas of Western Europe, which is often marked by warm summers and cool to cold winters. Due to the surrounding ocean in Scandinavia and the British Isles, cloudy and cool weather conditions regularly occur. Southern regions of Western Europe experience Mediterranean climate characterized by mild winters and hot summers. Northern regions of Scandinavia experience subarctic climatic conditions. Major mountain ranges in the region include the Alps and Pyrenees. The Rhine, Rhone, Seine, Tagus, Ebro, Tajo, Guadalquivir, Elbe, Danube, and Thames are major rivers. Drought, flooding, earthquakes, avalanches, forest fires, windstorms, and rockslides are natural hazards. Environmental issues include pollution, acid rain, fresh water scarcity, deforestation, desertification, and soil erosion.

Population: 399,297,848 (July 2011)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.4% (2011)

Fertility Rate: 1.63 children born per woman (2011)

Life Expectancy: 78.06 male, 83.72 female (2011)

Peoples

German: 20.3%

British and Scottish: 15.4%

Italian: 14.6%

French: 13.1%

Spaniard: 11.4%

Dutch: 3.4%

Portuguese: 2.6%

Austrian: 1.9%

North African: 1.9%

Swede: 1.9%

Flemish: 1.5%

Finn: 1.3%

Dane: 1.2%

Norwegian: 1.1%

Black: 1%

Irish: 1%

Other and unspecified: 6.4%

Indigenous ethnic groups to Western Europe principally pertain to two groups: (1) Germanic and Celtic-speakers and (2) Romance-speakers. Germanic-speaking and Celtic-speaking ethnic groups are concentrated in Central Europe, the British Isles, and Scandinavia and include Germans, Dutch, Austrians, Swedes, Flemish, Danes, Norwegians, Irish, and additional ethnic groups in northern and central areas. Romance-speaking ethnic groups populate southern areas of Western Europe and include Italians, French, Spaniards, and Portuguese. Finns are a Finno-Ugric speaking ethnic group who are believed to be related to Komi and Hungarians. Basques reside along the French-Spanish border along the Bay of Biscay and are unrelated to other ethnic groups. North Africans and black Africans have immigrated to Western Europe in large numbers over the past century and are sizeable minorities in most nations. Other ethnic groups in the region include Asians, Caribbean peoples, and Eastern Europeans.

Languages: Standard German and German dialects (22.1%), English (16%), French (14.9%), Italian languages (14.7%), Spanish (8.7%), Dutch (5%), Portuguese (2.8%), Swedish (2.1%), Catalan (2%), Finnish (1.6%), Danish (1.3%), Norwegian (1.2%), other and unspecified (7.6%). Languages with over one million speakers include German and German dialects (88.4 million), English (63.9 million), French (59.6 million), Italian languages (58.9 million), Spanish (34.7 million), Dutch (19.8 million), Portuguese (11 million), Swedish (8.5 million), Catalan (7.9 million), Finnish (6.2 million), Danish (5.4 million), Norwegian (4.7 million), Galician (3.3 million), Turkish (2.1 million), Arabic and Berber languages (2.1 million), South Asian languages (1.9 million), and Occitan (1.5 million).

Literacy: 92.8%–100% (country average: 98.4%)

History

Indigenous tribes and peoples populated most present-day nations of Western Europe for millennia prior to recorded history. Celtic and Germanic tribes inhabited much of Central Europe and Scandinavia in antiquity. Due to its central location in the Mediterranean, the Italian Peninsula has served as a center of power and learning since before the birth of Christ. The Roman Empire ruled most regions of the Mediterranean for several centuries before and after the birth of Christ and at its height stretched from central Europe and Britain in the north to Mesopotamia in the east and to North Africa in the south. Rome faced some of its greatest difficulties expanding its empire in Central Europe due to stiff resistance from Germanic tribes in Germania. Angles, Saxons, and Jutes invaded Roman-held territory in Britain the fifth and sixth centuries AD as the power of the Roman Empire waned. The Western Roman Empire eventually divided into small city states due to Gothic invasions, and the Italian Peninsula consisted of several city-states and small kingdoms and nations until the nineteenth century. Christianity spread to Spain and France while the power of the Roman Empire waned. Following the demise of the Roman Empire, feudalism and various tribal forces controlled Gaul or present-day France in the following centuries. France became one of the first nation-states in Europe under the Franks in the fifth century. The Visigoths took control of much of Spain in the fifth century, and the Moors invaded in the early eighth century, conquering nearly the entire peninsula. Charlemagne expanded Frankish-held territory in Western and Central Europe in the eighth and ninth centuries. The Holy Roman Empire was a loose union of German territories that functioned between 962 and the beginning of the nineteenth century but never developed into a centralized state. The Normans conquered Great Britain in 1066, and in the following century, Anglo-Normans invaded Ireland. The Vikings were comprised of Scandinavian and Norse peoples who raided continental Europe, the British Isles, and Eastern Europe between the ninth and twelfth centuries. Viking seafarers explored the North Atlantic Ocean, establishing colonies in Iceland and Greenland around 1000 AD, reaching as far as Newfoundland but not establishing a permanent presence in North America. Norse mythology was a primary influence on culture prior to the arrival of Christianity, which spread throughout Scandinavia in the late first millennium AD. Portugal established its current political boundaries in 1249. The Habsburgs emerged as the ruling dynasty of Austria and several other countries in the late thirteenth century and significantly influenced European politics until the early twentieth century.

In the late thirteenth century, several ruling families signed a charter, pledging mutual support to keep peace and establishing greater local government autonomy as the Swiss Confederacy, which, over time, led to the establishment of the present-day nation of Switzerland. In 1397, all Nordic lands were unified as the Kalmar Union under Queen Margaret of Denmark, but the union dissolved in the fourteenth century as a result of ethnic rivalries. Sweden continued to rule Finland until the nineteenth century, and Norway formed a union with Denmark that lasted over four centuries. Spain was not fully reunified, and the Moorish peoples were driven out until the beginning of the sixteenth century. Portugal reached its height of power and influence during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and dominated the seas in many areas. Portuguese-ruled territories stretched around the world and included Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Goa, East Timor, Guinea-Bissau, Macau, Mozambique, and Sao Tome. Spain reached its golden age of power and influence in the sixteenth century as the Spanish Armada dominated the Atlantic and wealth and resources were exploited throughout the Americas. The Spanish seized the Netherlands and Belgium in the sixteenth century. The Dutch revolted under Willem of Orange in 1558, whereas Belgium remained under Spanish administration until 1713.

The Reformation resulted in significant changes for society, government, and international relations, as several nations experienced segregation and conflict between Catholic and Protestant Christians. All Scandinavian countries became predominantly Lutheran during this period. The United Kingdom played a major role in the Reformation, as King Henry VIII opposed the Catholic Church and established the Church of England in 1538. English explorers and tradesmen began exploring and colonizing North America in the sixteenth century. The defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 established England as a world sea power and contributed to significant worldwide expansion of trade and military influence. France became one of Europe's most powerful nations during the seventeenth century. French power began to decline in the eighteenth century as a result of unsuccessful military campaigns and financial problems. The Dutch expanded their influence worldwide through trade and colonialism in the West Indies and Southeast Asia in the seventeenth century. War and declining technological superiority contributed to waning power in the eighteenth century.

Devastating German populations, the Thirty Years' War was fought between 1618 and 1648 primarily as a result of religious tensions between Catholics and Protestants and resulted in no major territorial acquisitions. Sweden won wars with Poland, Denmark, and Russia in the seventeenth century, participated in the Thirty Years War, and emerged as a great power. Great Britain lost the American colonies in the War of Independence in the late eighteenth century but began to expand into Africa and Asia. The French Revolution occurred from 1789 to 1794 and arose primarily from poor economic conditions and social unrest at privileges granted only to nobles and clerics. The Netherlands was overrun by the Napoleonic France in 1795 and remained part of France until 1815 when the Kingdom of the United Netherlands was established. The United Kingdom was formed in 1801 as Great Britain and Ireland were merged into a legislative union. Much of the nineteenth century in France was marked by militaristic, authoritarian governments and leaders, including as Napoleon, Louis XVIII, Louis-Philippe, and Napoleon III. Spain was occupied by France during the Napoleonic era and lost most of its overseas colonies by the mid-nineteenth century. Belgium gained independence from the Netherlands in 1830 and colonized the Congo in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Due to stress on militarism and centralization, Prussia became continental Europe's most powerful state in the early nineteenth century following the defeat of Napoleon. In 1867, Austria united with Hungary to form the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Spanish-American War was the final blow to Spain's steady decline in power, as the United States annexed Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and several islands in the Pacific. Sweden and Norway maintained a dual monarchy from the early nineteenth century until 1905 when Norway became independent. Finland achieved independence in 1917 from Russia. Iceland began to regain autonomy from Denmark in 1874 and achieved sovereignty under Denmark in 1918 and total independence in 1944.

Germany was a central player in World War I and was the state primary blamed for its aftermath. France was devastated by World War I and suffered heavy military losses and economic degradation. The Austro-Hungarian Empire was dismantled following World War I. British power began to decline in the twentieth

century as its rivals began to advance technologically, economically, and militarily. Continued armed insurgency against the British crown in Ireland resulted in the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1921 and an independent republic after World War II. During the first half of the twentieth century, Spain experienced significant economic and political turmoil, resulting in civil war and the rise of General Francisco Franco to power in 1939. Benito Mussolini came to power in the 1920s under a Fascist dictatorship that later allied with Nazi Germany in World War II. Nazi Germany initiated World War II, resulting in millions of deaths in Europe. Austria was annexed by Germany in 1938 and remained under Nazi rule until occupation by Allied forces in 1945. Germany invaded Belgium during both World Wars, which resulted in widespread damage to the country and suffering to the Belgian people. The Netherlands professed neutrality during both World Wars but was occupied by Nazi Germany between 1940 and 1945, and 75% of the Jewish population perished. Nazi Germany invaded France and overran the country by July 1940. Allied forces liberated France in 1944. German occupation of Denmark and Norway began in 1940 and continued until liberation by Allied forces in 1945. During the war, an estimated six million Jews were killed at the hands of the Nazis. Switzerland remained neutral during both World Wars and uninvolved in either conflict. Germany surrendered in May 1945, and the country was temporarily subdivided among the Soviets, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France for administrative purposes. The Soviets refused to withdraw, blockaded Allied forces from delivering supplies to Allied-controlled West Berlin, and formed the German Democratic Republic in 1949. Dutch colonies became independent nations shortly after World War II or possess a high degree of autonomy as dependent areas still under Dutch sovereignty today.

Most Western European nations struggled to rebuild in the aftermath of World War II and did not achieve greater economic development and progress until the late 1950s. Known initially as the European Coal and Steel Community and later as the European Economic Community (EEC), the European Union (EU) was established in 1945 by Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany and has added additional member states to include all nations in Western Europe except Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, San Marino, and Switzerland.

Spain remained neutral during World War II and began to liberalize the economy in the 1950s. During the following two decades, Spain achieved rapid modernization and growth through economic liberalization. A parliamentary democracy was reinstated following the death of General Franco in 1975. A military coup overthrew the Portuguese government in 1974 and paved the way for the independence of its African colonies in 1975. In 1989, increasing pressure for reform and free movement between the two Germanys unfolded in East Germany with the toppling of the communist government and removal of travel restrictions. In 1990, both Germanys were reunited into a single German state.¹⁹⁵⁹ Most Western European nations have joined NATO in the past half century. At present, living standards are high and secularism is widespread.

Culture

Western Europe is home to several of the world's most influential nations and cultures. British and French cultures have been among the most influential over the past several centuries due to the worldwide expanse of the former British and French Empires, the past occupation of vast areas of territory or operation of colonies on all six inhabited continents for the British and five for the French, and the ongoing prominence of the United Kingdom and France in international affairs. The United Kingdom significantly influenced the development of contemporary local culture and government in Western Europe, North America, East Asia, South Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and Oceania, and together with the rise of American culture in the twentieth century, has contributed to the widespread use of English as an international language for business, commerce, and government. Consequently, there are an estimated 0.5–1.8 billion speakers of English as a first or second

¹⁹⁵⁹ "Background Note: Germany," Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 10 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3997.htm>

language, and English is an official language of fifty-three countries.¹⁹⁶⁰ France has contributed significantly to the development of culture in the Caribbean, North America, Europe, Africa, and Southeast Asia. French is one of the most commonly spoken second languages in Africa and is the official language of approximately thirty countries. Spain heavily influenced the culture of Latin America, Micronesia, and the Philippines until the independence of most colonies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Many Spanish literary works have worldwide fame, such as *Don Quixote*, which was first published in the early seventeenth century and is considered the first novel. France, Spain, and Portugal were instrumental in spreading Catholicism to the Western Hemisphere, and French and Portuguese missionaries spread Catholicism in Africa and Asia. Germany has proud traditions of industry and education and a rich legacy of notable scientists, poets, writers, religious reformers, philosophers, athletes, composers, politicians, and leaders, including such luminaries as the physicist Albert Einstein, the philosopher Immanuel Kant, the composer Ludwig van Beethoven, the reformer Martin Luther, the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, and the political theorist Karl Marx. Italian music, cuisine, art, law, and language have influenced the world for centuries. Renaissance masterpieces continue to captivate and excite audiences around the world. Renowned Dutch and Belgian painters include Rembrandt, Vincent van Gogh, Piet Mondrian, and Rene Margritte. Many scientific disciplines including psychology, physics, and economics achieved significant advances through the efforts of intellectuals in Vienna, Austria. The Danish possess a long-standing, proud heritage of scientists, researchers, philosophers, writers, architects, dancers, cinematographers, artists, and musicians who are internationally renowned for their cultural and scientific achievements. Finland is well known for architecture, furniture, sculpting, and other visual arts. Norway has a proud heritage of music, literature, architecture, and art, which has retained the romanticism tradition. Icelandic sagas are well read internationally and contain medieval poetry, history, and myth. Food is diverse throughout Western Europe and often varies significantly within individual nations. Soccer and skiing are among the most popular sports. Alcohol and cigarette consumption rates are among the highest in the world for most nations in Western Europe. Illicit drug use is more common than in other world regions. Secularism has spread over the past century as the importance of religion in daily life continues to wane.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$43,230 [91.2% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.824

Corruption Index: 7.7

Nearly all nations in Western Europe have technologically advanced, highly diversified economies supported by large skilled work forces that are strongly interconnected regionally and internationally. The establishment of the European Union and its subsequent expansion over the past half century has contributed to economic prosperity and stability. Tourism is widespread in the region and constitutes a major sector of the economy. Challenges for perpetuating growth include an aging population, low birth rates, high public debt often accrued by welfare programs, and declining immigration. Major industries include tourism, iron, steel, machinery, textiles, cement, coal, shipbuilding, aircraft, electronics, chemicals, petroleum, wood products, food processing, car manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, engineering, precision instruments, and furniture. Potatoes, grains, sugar beets, vegetables, fruit, fish, livestock, animal byproducts, and tobacco are common agricultural products. Trade occurs principally within Western Europe. Major outside trade partners include the United States and China.

Corruption in Western Europe is perceived to be low. A few nations have some challenges with corruption including Italy and Spain. Italy suffers from high levels of corruption among the European Union. Illegal economic activity may account as much as 15% of the GDP. Spain is a major transshipment point for illicit drugs destined for Europe from Latin America, North Africa, and Southwest Asia. Money laundering from Colombian drug cartels and organized crime is an ongoing problem. Illegal immigration from North Africa

¹⁹⁶⁰ "English language," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 23 April 2011. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language

has been an ongoing issue in Spain and Italy. Most countries in the region face challenges with money laundering and illicit drug trafficking.

Faiths

Christian: 76.5%

Muslim: 3.8%

Hindu: 0.2%

Jewish: 0.2%

Other: 1.6%

None and unspecified: 17.7%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 188,856,675

Evangelical (includes Lutherans) 46,903,700

Swiss Reformed 2,597,800

Orthodox 1,712,100

Jehovah's Witnesses 1,000,959 13,644

Latter-day Saints 436,000 1,157

Apostolic 363,000

Baptist 192,500

Seventh Day Adventists 143,801 1,656

Church of Ireland 123,300

Religion

Christianity is the dominant religion, as Christians constitute approximately three-quarters of the regional population and account for over 90% of the population in San Marino, Denmark, Malta, Portugal, Andorra, Italy, Luxembourg, Ireland, Norway, Monaco, and Spain. Most are nominal Christians who generally exhibit no consistent patterns of personal religious practices such as praying, attending church, and reading scripture. Christians are the largest religious group in every nation in the region, and 62% of Christians are Catholic. Predominantly Catholic countries include San Marino, Malta, Portugal, Monaco, Andorra, Luxembourg, Italy, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Spain, Austria, and France. Approximately half of the population is Christian in Belgium and the Netherlands; Belgium is primarily Catholic, whereas the Netherlands has large Catholic and Protestant populations. Germany and Switzerland have similarly sized Catholic and Protestant populations with most Protestants identifying as Lutheran. Traditionally Protestant nations include Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Lutheran denominations still comprise the majority in Scandinavian nations, whereas Protestant groups in the United Kingdom such as the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches constitute sizeable minorities. Muslims are regionally the second largest active religious group and account for the largest minorities in France (10%), the Netherlands (5.8%), and Sweden (5%) and are principally concentrated among North African, Turkish, and Middle Eastern immigrants and migrant workers. Only the United Kingdom has sizeable minority populations of Hindus, who account for 1% of the national population and are South Asian. Small Jewish communities function in most nations in the region. France and Belgium appear to have the highest percentage of Jews in the national population. Other minority religious groups that are found in some nations include Buddhists and Sikhs. Nonreligious individuals or those who do not specify their religious affiliation account for the largest minorities in Belgium (46.5%), the Netherlands (42%), Germany (28.3%), the United Kingdom (24.1%), and France (23%).

Religious Freedom

The constitution or basic law of all countries in the region protect religious freedom, which is upheld by governments. Most nations require religious groups to register with the government to operate and receive tax-exempt status. Some nations grant certain religious groups that meet minimal standards for the number of church members and duration of operations in a given country special privileges and stipends. Members of religious groups in some nations are required to pay their tithes and monetary donations through the government, such as in Germany. Several governments maintain special relations with the Catholic Church or a traditional Christian denomination, including the governments of Andorra, Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Malta, Monaco, and Norway and regional governments in Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Cantonal governments in Switzerland vary in the degree by which they support traditional Christian churches. In the United Kingdom, the Anglican Church has a special relationship with the government of England, and the Presbyterian Church has a special relationship with Scotland. Foreign missionaries may serve throughout the region but often require special documentation or religious visas. Societal abuse of religious freedom has principally targeted Muslims and Jews, but nearly all religious groups operate freely without significant restrictions imposed on their functioning.

Largest Cities

Urban: low (14%—Liechtenstein); high (100%—Monaco and Vatican City)

London, Paris, Madrid, The Ruhr, Milan, Barcelona, Berlin, Naples, Rome, Rotterdam, Birmingham, Hamburg, Manchester, Lisbon, Leeds, Stockholm, Vienna, Munich, Stuttgart, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Brussels, Cologne, Turin, Valencia, Lyon, Marseille, Glasgow, Copenhagen, Liverpool, Sevilla, Sheffield, Mannheim, Lille, Porto, Dusseldorf, Zurich, Helsinki, Newcastle upon Tyne, Dublin, Nuremberg.

All forty-one cities with over one million inhabitants have an LDS congregation. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of the regional population resides in the forty-one most populous cities.

LDS History

The United Kingdom became the first nation outside of North America to receive LDS missionaries in July 1837 as two LDS apostles were among the first seven missionaries to arrive in England. Over a thousand converts joined the Church within the first few years of proselytism in the United Kingdom.¹⁹⁶¹ The oldest continuously operating LDS congregation in the world is located in Preston, England and has functioned since 1837.¹⁹⁶² LDS missionaries began proselytizing in Ireland in the late 1830s. The first LDS missionaries arrived in Denmark and France in 1849. LDS apostle Lorenzo Snow began missionary work in Italy in 1850. In 1851, the first LDS missionaries began proselytism in Norway and Iceland, and the first convert baptisms occurred in Norway. That same year, the Book of Mormon was translated into Danish, becoming the first foreign language translation of LDS scripture. LDS missionaries were first assigned to Malta in 1852, but an LDS presence disappeared by the late 1850s due to the outbreak of the Crimean War. Most converts throughout Western Europe immigrated to Utah in the 1850s and 1860s, resulting in significant challenges sustaining LDS congregations in many locations. In 1864, the Swiss government declared that the LDS Church was a Christian faith and was entitled to the same rights as other Christian denominations.¹⁹⁶³ By the end of 1869, approximately half of the LDS converts in the Scandinavian Mission immigrated to Utah.¹⁹⁶⁴ The first LDS

¹⁹⁶¹ Avant, Gerry. "Rich heritage of British Isles touches family roots of leaders," *LDS Church News*, 13 June 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31446/Rich-heritage-of-British-Isles-touches-family-roots-of-leaders.html>

¹⁹⁶² "United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales)," *Country Profile*, 10 June 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/country/united-kingdom>

¹⁹⁶³ Christianson, James R. "Early Missionary Work in Italy and Switzerland," *Ensign*, Aug 1982, 35.

¹⁹⁶⁴ "Highlights of the Church in Scandinavia," *Ensign*, July 1974, 48.

missionary activity in Finland began in the 1870s. Nearly half of the population of Utah in 1870 was British immigrants as a result of LDS missionary success in the British isles in the nineteenth century. Approximately 100,000 converts joined the Church in the British Isles and immigrated to Utah before 1900.¹⁹⁶⁵ LDS missionary activity in Iceland was closed in 1914. LDS missionary activity commenced in Austria in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. World War II severely disrupted LDS missionary work throughout continental Western Europe between 1939 and the late 1940s. Several additional translations of LDS scripture in Western European languages were completed in the mid-twentieth century, including Norwegian and French. By 1950, there were LDS congregations in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

During the latter-half of the twentieth century, a church presence was established or reestablished in Andorra, Iceland, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, and Spain. LDS missionaries were first assigned to Luxembourg in 1963. The LDS Church received permission from the Italian government to restart missionary work in Italy in 1966, and a branch was organized. LDS missionary activity in Spain was facilitated by the operation of branches for American military personnel in the 1960s. Spain was dedicated for missionary work, the first full-time missionaries were assigned, and a Spanish-speaking branch was organized in the late 1960s. A Church presence was first established in Portugal in 1974. LDS military personnel were instrumental in reestablishing a Church presence in Iceland in the 1970s. LDS missionaries attempted to open Malta for missionary work in 1979, but efforts failed due to visa problems. A permanent LDS presence in Malta was established in the late 1980s.

In the 1980s, the United Kingdom and Ireland were assigned to their own church area with headquarters in England, which also administered Africa until the creation of the Africa Area in 1990. The United Kingdom/Ireland Area was renamed the Europe North Area in 1991 and realigned to include Scandinavia. That same year, the Europe Mediterranean Area was organized to administer Mediterranean nations and French-speaking areas of Belgium and Switzerland with headquarters in France.¹⁹⁶⁶ The realigned Europe Area began administering the Netherlands, Dutch-speaking areas of Belgium, German-speaking nations, and Eastern Europe by this time. The LDS Church in Finland and Austria played a unique role in expanding missionary work in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The first convert baptism in Andorra occurred in 1992, and a branch was established the following year.

In 2000, Western Europe was realigned into two church administrative areas: the Europe West and Europe Central Areas. In 2001, Church members in Scandinavia commemorated the immigration of converts 150 years before to Utah by crossing the Atlantic in four sailing ships from Europe to the United States.¹⁹⁶⁷ In the late 2000s, the two Europe areas were consolidated into a single administrative church area, the Europe Area. In Italy, the Church received the highest level of government recognition in May 2010. As of mid-2011, there remained no official or known LDS presence in the nations of Liechtenstein, Monaco, and San Marino and no official or known LDS presence in the territories and constituent countries of Ceuta, Faroe Islands, Melilla, and Svalbard. In 2012, missionaries reopened Melilla to missionary work and organized a group.

Missions

The British Mission was the first LDS mission to be officially organized by the Church and was headed by Heber C. Kimball in 1837. The Welsh Mission was organized in 1845, but was discontinued in 1854

¹⁹⁶⁵ Avant, Gerry. "Rich heritage of British Isles touches family roots of leaders," LDS Church News, 13 June 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31446/Rich-heritage-of-British-Isles-touches-family-roots-of-leaders.html>

¹⁹⁶⁶ "New areas created in Asia, Europe," LDS Church News, 7 September 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21578/New-areas-created-in-Asia-Europe.html>

¹⁹⁶⁷ Lloyd, Scott R. "Leaving an impact in Scandinavia," LDS Church News, 18 August 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40355/Leaving-an-impact-in-Scandinavia.html>

and consolidated with the British Mission. The Scandinavian Mission opened in 1849 with headquarters in Denmark. The French, Italian, and Swiss [renamed Switzerland Zurich in 1974] Missions were organized in 1850. The Italian Mission was closed in 1854. The German Mission was organized in 1852 to administer Germany and was discontinued, reorganized, and realigned with missions in neighboring European nations for nearly a century. The French Mission was discontinued in 1864, reopened in 1912, closed in 1914, reopened in 1924, closed in 1939, and reopened in 1946. The Netherlands Mission [later renamed Netherlands Amsterdam in 1974 and Belgium Brussels/Netherlands in 2002] opened in 1864. In 1905, the Scandinavian Mission divided to create the Swedish Mission and by 1920 the Church organized the Danish and Norwegian Missions from the original Scandinavian Mission. In 1938, the West German [later renamed Germany Frankfurt] and East German [later renamed Germany Hamburg] Missions were organized from the German-Austrian Mission.

After World War II, additional missions organized included the Finnish Mission (1947), the South German Mission [later renamed Germany Munich and Alpine German-speaking in 2010] (1959), the Austrian Mission [later renamed Austria Vienna] (1960–2002), North British Mission [renamed England Leeds in 1974] (1960), the French East Mission [later renamed Switzerland Geneva in 1974] (1961–2011), the Central German Mission [later renamed Germany Dusseldorf] (1961–1982, 1990–2001), the Scottish-Irish Mission [renamed Scotland Edinburgh in 1974 and Scotland/Ireland in 2010] (1961), the Central British Mission [renamed England Birmingham in 1974] (1961–1983), the Irish Mission (1962–2010), the Bavarian Mission (1962–1965), Southwest British [renamed England Bristol in 1974] (1962–2002), the Northeast British Mission (1962–1965), the North Scottish Mission (1962–1965), the Franco-Belgian Mission [later renamed Belgium Brussels] (1963–2002), the British South Mission [renamed England London South] (1964), the Italian Mission [renamed Italy Rome in 1974] (1966), and the Germany Dresden [renamed Germany Leipzig] (1969–1984, 1989–2003), Spain Madrid (1970), Italy Milan (1971), Portugal Lisbon (1974), Belgium Antwerp (1975–1982, 1990–1995), Italy Padova (1975–1982, 1990–2002), England Manchester (1976), Spain Barcelona (1976), Spain Seville [relocated to Malaga in 1993] (1976), Italy Catania (1977–2010), England London East (1978–1983), France Toulouse (1978–1982), England Coventry [relocated to Birmingham in 1991] (1980), Austria Vienna East (1987–1992), Portugal Porto (1987–2011), Spain Bilbao (1987–2010), Spain Las Palmas (1988–2006), France Bordeaux (1989–2001), Portugal Lisbon North (1990–2002), France Marseille [relocated to Toulouse in the early 2000s and Lyon in 2011] (1991), and Austria Vienna South (1996–1999) Missions. The two additional missions organized in Austria in the late 1980s and 1990s were formed to supervise the establishment of LDS missions in Eastern Europe and the former Yugoslavia. In 2010, the Germany Hamburg and Switzerland Zurich Missions closed.

There were twenty-four LDS missions by 1973,¹⁹⁶⁸ thirty-two in 1987, thirty-eight in 1993, thirty-nine in 1997, thirty-eight in 2000, thirty in 2005, and twenty-two in 2011.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 436,000 (2012)

In 1973, LDS membership totaled 133,735 in Europe.¹⁹⁶⁹ Membership totaled 197,183 in Western Europe in 1983, 267,700 in 1987, 342,850 in 1993, 366,650 in 1997, 378,094 in 2000, 400,527 in 2005, and 425,683 in 2010. Membership grew most rapidly between 2000 and 2010 in Luxembourg (83%), Spain (49%), Italy (25%), and Ireland (24%), whereas membership grew most slowly or declined in Denmark (–3%), Iceland (1%), and Andorra (1%). LDS membership increased by 12% in the region between 2000 and 2010. The ratio of LDS membership to the general population varies little from country to country compared to other world regions, as the ratio of LDS members to the general population generally ranges from one Latter-day

¹⁹⁶⁸ "Membership Distribution of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1973," *Deseret News 1974 Church Almanac*, p. 117.

¹⁹⁶⁹ "Membership Distribution of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1973," *Deseret News 1974 Church Almanac*, p. 117.

Saint per 900 to 2,800 people. Latter-day Saints comprise the largest portions of the population in Portugal (one member in 276), the United Kingdom (one in 336), and Switzerland (one in 944) and the smallest portions of the population in Malta (one in 2,797), Italy (one in 2,545), and Germany (one in 2,130). LDS membership was greater than 100,000 only in the United Kingdom in 2010 (186,814). In 2010, one in 939 was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 711 Branches: 446 (2011)

There were 1,111 LDS congregations in 1987. The number of LDS wards and branches numbered 1,240 in 1993, 1,330 in 1997, 1,319 in 2000, 1,243 in 2005, and 1,145 in mid-2011. Steady decline in the total number of congregations occurred between 2000 and mid-2011 as the number of LDS congregations in Western Europe decreased by 174. Countries that experienced the largest decreases in the number of congregations during this period were the United Kingdom (−32), Italy (−31), and Germany and Portugal (−20).

The first stake to be organized in Western Europe was the Manchester England Stake in 1960. Other countries that have stakes at present provided with the year the first stake was organized include the Netherlands (1961), Germany (1961), Switzerland (1961), Denmark (1974), France (1975), Sweden (1975), Finland (1977), Norway (1977), Belgium (1977), Austria (1980), Italy (1981), Portugal (1981), Spain (1982), and Ireland (1995). The number of stakes increased from one in 1960 to twenty-one in 1973,¹⁹⁷⁰ eighty-two in 1987, eighty-eight in 1993, ninety-nine in 1997, one hundred in 2000, 108 in 2005, and 113 in mid-2011. Between 2000 and mid-2011, new stakes were organized in Italy (4), Spain (3), France (2), Switzerland (2), Portugal (1), and the United Kingdom (1). As of mid-2011, only two stakes had ever been discontinued in Western Europe, both of which were servicemen military stakes in Germany, which were closed in 1992 and 1994. The number of districts in the region numbered fifty in 1987, sixty-one in 1993 and 1997, fifty-six in 2000, thirty-eight in 2005, and twenty-three in mid-2011.

Activity and Retention

The number of active members per congregation varies widely from a couple dozen in the smallest branches to over 200 in the largest wards. Member activity and convert retention rates vary by subregion, with the highest member activity rates generally occurring in Scandinavia (30%–40%) and the lowest member activity rates occurring in Romance-speaking nations (12%–25%). Germanic-speaking areas in Central Europe such as Germany and Austria and Benelux have member activity rates between 25%–40%. In Western Europe, Andorra (45%) and Iceland, Malta, and Switzerland (40%) appear to exhibit the highest member activity rates, whereas Portugal (12%) and the United Kingdom (18%) appear to exhibit the lowest member activity rates. The census in Ireland counted 1,237 Latter-day Saints in 2006,¹⁹⁷¹ 46% of reported membership by the LDS Church that year. Active LDS membership in Western Europe is estimated at 92,500, or 22% of nominal membership.

Finding

Due low societal interest in religion, finding approaches must be creative and allow for Western Europeans to feel comfortable discussing religious matters and attending church. During the past several decades, the LDS Church has employed creative and genuine finding techniques and approaches in some nations, including family history fairs and exhibits, traveling church displays on topics such as LDS theology and the Dead Sea Scrolls, musical performances, radio and television programs, and outdoor youth and young adult activities.

¹⁹⁷⁰ "Membership Distribution of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1973," *Deseret News 1974 Church Almanac*, p. 117.

¹⁹⁷¹ "Census 2006 Principle Demographic Results," Central Statistics Office Ireland, March 2007. <http://www.cso.ie/census/documents/Final%20Principal%20Demographic%20Results%202006.pdf>

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: German, French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, Portuguese, Swedish, Catalan, Finnish, Danish, Norwegian, Turkish, Arabic, Bengali, Urdu, Icelandic.

All LDS scriptures are available in German, French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, Portuguese, Swedish, Catalan, Finnish, Danish, Norwegian, Arabic, and Icelandic. The Church recently translated an LDS edition of the Bible into Spanish complete with footnotes, Bible dictionary, and topical guide. Most church materials are available in German, French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, Portuguese, Swedish, Finnish, Danish, Norwegian, and Arabic, whereas a limited number of church materials are translated into Catalan and Icelandic. Only the Book of Mormon is available in Turkish and Welsh. Limited church materials are available in Turkish, Basque, Welsh, Icelandic, and Maltese. The Book of Mormon is available in Urdu, and select passages of the Book of Mormon are translated into Bengali. Limited numbers of church materials are available in these and other South Asian languages. Many commonly spoken languages among Eastern European immigrants have LDS scriptures and materials available.

Meetinghouses

In mid-2011, there were approximately 1,000 meetinghouses in Western Europe. Most congregations meet in church-built meetinghouses and chapel. Smaller branches and newly organized branches often meet in renovated buildings or rented spaces.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Few LDS-sponsored humanitarian and development activities have occurred in Western Europe in recent years; only Germany, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom appear to have had major projects.¹⁹⁷² Most projects have consisted of donating hygiene kits, office equipment and supplies for shelters and prisons, and items and supplies for needy children. High standards of living have reduced the need for LDS humanitarian and development work.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The LDS Church benefits from full religious freedom throughout Western Europe, as local members may worship, proselyte, and assemble freely, and foreign full-time missionaries serve with few or no restrictions. Foreign missionaries generally experience few delays and complications obtaining visas. The discrimination and persecution of local Latter-day Saints is minimal throughout the region. Some full-time missionaries experience harassment while proselytizing in some nations. The acceptance of public religious expression has waned in society due to increasing secularism, but no laws or government policies limit the religious expression and practices of Latter-day Saints at present. There are no legal restrictions preventing establishment of the LDS Church in Ceuta, the Faroe Islands, Liechtenstein, Melilla, Monaco, San Marino, and Svalbard.

Cultural Issues

Increasing secularism and materialism and declining acceptance of organized religion in public life in many Western European nations are major barriers to LDS mission outreach that have reduced receptivity and have likely compromised member activity rates among Latter-day Saints. The void left from the declining power of traditional Christian denominations like the Catholic, Anglican, and Lutheran Churches has been replaced

¹⁹⁷² "Locations—Europe," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 10 June 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-5,00.html>

by secularism. Secularism, liberal social views clashing with scriptural morality, and nominal Christianity each have created major obstacles for Latter-day Saints to address regarding the finding, teaching, and retention of new converts. Many are unwilling to consider learning about the Church from full-time missionaries due a lack of interest in organized religion, negative public opinions concerning Latter-day Saints and their beliefs and practices, or the persistent cultural influence of the traditional Christian denomination on the general population. The LDS Church has struggled to reach nominal Christians with traditional teaching paradigms designed to teach those with a basic understanding of Christianity who value personal involvement in organized religion. As a result, stagnant membership growth has occurred in most Scandinavian countries for decades. Developing the habit of weekly church attendance among investigators and converts appears to be a major challenge. Christians with developed personal religious habits are often deeply devoted to and entrenched in their churches and demonstrate no greater receptivity than nominal Christians or nonreligious individuals. High cigarette and alcohol use create a challenging environment for missionaries to navigate, as many suffer from addictions to these substances. Western Europeans with interest in studying and joining the LDS Church often face challenges ending their alcohol and cigarette usage and casual sexual relations. Many Latter-day Saints in the region have immigrated to North America, Australia, and New Zealand over the past half century, reducing the number of active members available for filling leadership and sustaining growth.

There are some cultural features that have facilitated LDS Church growth. Overall, religious tolerance is high. Many have an awareness of Christian teachings and have a respect for those devoted in their personal faith. The cosmopolitan atmosphere in many of the largest cities in the region has encouraged the integration of differing ethnic groups into the same congregations. Creative, original outreach methods and teaching approaches tailored to nominal Christians or nonreligious individuals and emphasis on youth outreach may address cultural needs and conditions and help spur greater growth for the Church in the long-run.

National Outreach

Western Europe receives moderate levels of LDS mission outreach, as 41.5% of the regional population resides in cities with an LDS congregation. Provided with the percentage of the population inhabiting cities with LDS congregations, countries that appear to receive the greatest national outreach include Sweden (76%), Iceland (67%), and Switzerland (61%), whereas countries that appear to receive the least national outreach include Andorra (24%), Italy (25%), and Luxembourg (26%). Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino, and Vatican City are the only countries in the region with no LDS congregations. Several constituent countries, island regions, territories, and autonomous cities have no LDS congregations, most notably the Faroe Islands, which pertain to Denmark and Ceuta and Melilla, which pertains to Spain. The percentage of the regional population residing in unreached nations and territories is estimated at less than one-tenth of one percent. The tiny populations of these locations, few or no local Latter-day Saints, and perceived low rates of receptivity in the general population have been the primary reasons why no LDS presence has been established at present.

There is no correlation between the size of a nation's population or the duration of LDS mission outreach in a given nation and the percentage of the population reached by LDS outreach among Western European nations. The extent of national outreach appears to vary by the percentage of the population residing in urban areas for most nations in the region, although this relationship is weak. Emigration of most Latter-day Saint converts during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries significantly eroded progress expanding national outreach at a time when populations were generally more receptive. Low receptivity and few active members throughout the region challenge efforts to expand national outreach today and have prompted mission and congregation consolidations and reductions in the number of full-time missionaries assigned. The LDS Church in Sweden has achieved the most penetrating mission outreach in Western Europe largely due to the sustainment of outreach efforts in the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries that capitalized on higher receptivity and devoted sizeable numbers of full-time missionaries to opening additional cities. There has been no noticeable progress expanding national outreach in Sweden likely since the mid-twentieth

century due to emigration and member activity and convert retention issues, which have precipitated steady declines in the number of congregations in Sweden for over a decade. The LDS Church in Italy appears to exhibit the lowest degree of national outreach in Europe among countries with over 100,000 inhabitants largely due to low receptivity since the reestablishment of LDS outreach in the mid-1960s. Significant mission resources have been devoted to Italy over the past half century due to its large population, but comparatively few convert baptisms have been achieved, and dozens of congregations have been consolidated since 2000. The LDS Church in Spain appears to have made the greatest progress expanding national outreach among Western European nations over the past half century, as the first LDS missionaries were assigned to Spain in the late 1960s, and today 52% of the national population resides in cities with an LDS congregation. Few congregational consolidations, a sizeable full-time missionary force, past vision in expanding outreach, higher receptivity, and assistance in building up local congregations from Latin American immigrants have each contributed to progress achieved in Spain.

Strategies for sustaining and expanding national outreach in Western Europe include greater local member involvement in missionary activity, the establishment of groups and dependent branches for foreign language speakers and members residing in sectors of cities or locations far from current LDS meetinghouses, focus on youth-oriented outreach and seminary and institute, coordinating online missionary efforts from social networking sites, and holding cottage meetings in unreached or lesser-reached locations to gauge receptivity and to find and invite receptive individuals to learn about the Church in an interactive, less formal setting. Avoiding the consolidation of LDS congregations whenever possible is vital towards ensuring achieved national outreach is sustained, particularly in locations that have no other nearby congregations.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Low activity rates for Western European LDS membership is heavily influenced by low member activity rates in the United Kingdom and Portugal. Church membership in both these nations together constitute 53% of regional LDS membership, and member activity rates in both nations appear to be the lowest in the region. The median member activity rate in the region is 30%, which is higher than most world regions. Low member activity rates are primarily the result of mission policies that have advocated the rushed preparation for converts to baptism with little emphasis on the development of habitual church attendance and personal gospel living habits. Negative cultural attitudes regarding regular participation in organized religion in many nations appear to have also affected Latter-day Saint church attendance and participation trends. Emigration of active membership has challenged efforts to staff callings and leadership in congregations and has reduced resources that could be devoted to retention and reactivation. Not a single country in Western Europe had more LDS congregations in 2010 than in 2000, indicating low receptivity, poor convert retention, and member activity issues. Overall, the number of LDS congregations declined by 174 in Western Europe between 2000 and mid-2011 notwithstanding LDS membership increasing by nearly 47,000 during this period. Most nations in the region have small branches with few active members that may close in the near future even if a few individuals move away or become inactive.

Additional factors have contributed to low member activity in Western Europe. At times, smaller branches within close proximity of each other are consolidated to make wards, resulting in many members falling away from the church due to difficulties adjusting socially to their reconfigured congregations or because travel to church becomes too great of an inconvenience. Few socialization opportunities with fellow Latter-day Saints in smaller branches can reduce activity rates. Few youth serve full-time missions and remain active into adulthood. Missionaries in several countries report that many inactive members left the church because they were offended by another member, but deeper issues of testimony or behaviors contrary to church teachings may often underlie such claims. Converts from ethnic minority or immigrant groups may have limited understanding and command of the local language in their congregation and be prone to miss church meetings. Many immigrant or migrant-worker converts live itinerant lifestyles and are challenging to retain. Overall, many

inactive members appear to have little recollection of church doctrines and practices as many were baptized with limited understanding and without having developed gospel habits. This lack of a solid foundation of testimony and understanding among many inactives has limited the success of reactivation efforts. In some nations such as France, greater participation of local members in reactivation efforts has facilitated greater success. Retention rates for native converts in many nations has increased in recent years as they must overcome secularism and cultural obstacles that prevent many others from becoming interested in the Church or following church teachings.

Noting limited progress increasing the number of active members, the Europe Area presidency set a goal in 2010 for the entire area to double the number of active members by 2020. To achieve this goal, regional church leadership stressed the need to make ward and branch councils central in missionary efforts to reactive and baptize new converts in addition to emphasizing the need for close cooperation between local members and full-time missionaries. Added emphasis was also placed on member-missionary work.¹⁹⁷³ The vision and perspective of the area presidency offers a self-sustaining approach to improving member activity rates by reducing the emphasis on full-time missionaries to find, teach, and reactive and emphasizing the leadership and participation of ward and branch members. Successful implementation and consistency of directing local missionary efforts through ward councils will likely be the greatest challenge for regional leadership, and the reversal of the trend of congregation consolidations that has persisted in Western Europe since the late 1990s will indicate success over the medium term. High costs of living for full-time missionaries and limited missionary resources dedicated to the region demand greater member involvement in missionary activity in order to increase convert baptism rates, improve convert retention, and reduce dependence on foreign full-time missionaries. The creation of language-specific congregations in areas with sizeable numbers of members speaking a given language may also improve retention and reactivation efforts over the long run if sustainable leadership is located, but most nations lack a sufficient number of speakers to merit the organization of foreign language congregations.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Most nations in Western Europe have ethnically homogenous populations that are generally tolerant of minority groups, benefiting ethnic integration efforts for Latter-day Saints. The overrepresentation of nonnative members is common in the region due to higher receptivity among ethnic minority groups from Eastern Europe, Africa, Latin America, and Asia. This mismatch in LDS and general demographics presents assimilation challenges for the native majority as well as immigrant minorities. In Spain, assimilating Latin Americans and Spaniards into the same congregations presents the most widespread ethnic integration issue. Some congregations with an overrepresented Latin American presence may experience challenges baptizing and keeping active a Spaniard minority. In France and Switzerland, members and missionaries generally report that French-speaking African immigrants are well integrated into LDS congregations due to shared language and many immigrants being familiar with French customs and practices. Portuguese-speaking African converts in Portugal also generally assimilate well into congregations comprised of native Portuguese members. The cosmopolitan atmosphere of some large cities has fostered collaboration of local members in fellowshipping converts from ethnic minorities, such as in large cities in Benelux.

Several ethnic groups are poorly reached by Latter-day Saints but comprise sizeable minorities. In the United Kingdom, there are several million South Asians with few Latter-day Saints due challenges extending outreach to those with differing cultural practices with the British majority, little familiarity with Christianity or long-term resistance to conversion, and family disapproval. In France, North Africans present the greatest challenge to integrate into Latter-day Saint congregations due to the lack of Muslim and Arabic-language outreach resources, poor integration of North Africans into French society, and lack of cultural traditions of church

¹⁹⁷³ "The Ward Council: The Key to Saving Souls," Messages from Church Leaders—United Kingdom Ids.org, retrieved 26 April 2011. <http://www.lds.org.uk/news/article-view/archive/2011/february/article/the-ward-council-the-key-to-saving-souls/>

service. Similar challenges exist in Germany in extending outreach to the approximately two million Turkish immigrants and workers.

Language Issues

Western Europe receives excellent LDS language outreach, as at least 95% of the regional population has LDS materials translated into their native language. Fewer than 1% of the regional population speaks a first or second language without LDS materials. There is little need to translate LDS materials into additional Western European languages that currently have no LDS materials, as most of these languages have few speakers, a number that is declining. The translation of basic proselytism materials into Faroese, Galician, Sami dialects, Romani dialects, and Luxembourgish may improve local member understanding of LDS teachings and proselytism prospects in areas populated by speakers of these languages, although the impact of such translations would likely be small.

Assimilating native members speaking differing languages into the same congregations has presented challenges for the LDS Church particularly in Belgium (French and Dutch) and Switzerland (French and German). Organizing language-specific congregations in cities with sizeable populations of Latter-day Saints may reduce retention and activity challenges. The establishment of international branches that meet as language-specific groups or dependent branches may be an effective outreach approach that would meet the needs of immigrant and ethnic minority groups and provide prospects for more carefully coordinated proselytism.

Missionary Service

Steady numbers of local members have served full-time missions, but the LDS Church in Western Europe is only partially sufficient in staffing its regional missionary needs and relies heavily on North American missionary manpower. Since 2000, the LDS Church has dramatically reduced the number of full-time missionaries assigned to Western Europe, even in more receptive nations like Spain where the missionary force was reduced from 800 in the mid-2000s to 300 in 2010. The number of converts baptized appears to have remained stable or increased in most nations during the past decade, indicating wise appropriation of limited full-time missionary resources and greater involvement of local members. Missionary training centers operating in Preston, England and Madrid, Spain offer long-term resources for fostering the regional development of a native full-time missionary force. Missionaries serving from North America appear to regularly train at both centers and at times outnumber their Western European counterparts. Challenges in increasing the number of local members serving missions include few active members, low to modest member activity rates in most nations, the lack of mission preparation in some nations, and the failure of many LDS youth to remain active into young adulthood and maintain a lifestyle in harmony with LDS teachings. Low LDS birthrates in the region have further limited the size of the local full-time missionary force.

Increased emphasis on youth-directed mission outreach, seminary, institute, and missionary preparation classes may help to alleviate the dependence on foreign missionaries. Greater emphasis is needed on preparing converts for baptism and helping to establish firm gospel habits so that they can become active members who go on to serve in the church, participate in member-missionary work, and serve full-time missions when possible. The LDS Church in several European nations has potential to provide significant contributions to supplying missionary manpower to nations in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean due to shared language, but this opportunity remains inadequately realized due to few local members serving full-time missions. Western European missionaries regularly serve in the Caribbean, North America, Eastern Europe, and Africa.

Leadership

The LDS Church in Western Europe exhibits some of the most well-trained, experienced, and knowledgeable leaders among world regions despite relatively few nominal and active Latter-day Saints. Many local leaders have served full-time missions, receive good leadership training and support from regional church leadership, and have studied LDS teachings and scriptures diligently, often for many years. LDS leadership is sufficiently strong in numbers and faith to have at least one stake function in every country with over 1,000 members, an achievement that has not occurred in any other world region to date. Several mission presidents who served in Western Europe in the late 2000s and in 2010 indicated that recent mission consolidations were prompted not only by limited LDS missionary manpower worldwide and expanding opportunities for outreach in more receptive regions, but due to the maturation of local leadership in undertaking administrative responsibilities with little or no mission president involvement, such as in Italy and Spain. However, steady decline in the number of congregations in the region indicates that leadership is limited, and active membership is at times insufficient to staff callings for smaller congregations. With few exceptions, local members staff leadership for all congregations in the region. Church Education System employees have frequently served in leadership positions in some nations like Spain, which may indicate a shortage of capable members outside of church employees who can serve in leadership positions. Most countries with sizeable LDS membership have had local members serve in international church leadership positions as mission presidents, regional representatives, area authorities, and temple presidents. Some Western Europeans have served as General Authorities, many of whom are from the United Kingdom. Most of the twenty-three districts in the region are unable to become stakes, not due to a shortage of active priesthood holders, but from inadequate numbers of active members and congregations.

Temple

The first LDS temple in Western Europe was completed in 1955 in Bern, Switzerland. Additional temples were constructed in London, England (1958); Freiburg, Germany (1985); Stockholm, Sweden (1985); Frankfurt Germany (1987); Preston, England (1998); Madrid, Spain (1999); Copenhagen, Denmark (2004); and Helsinki, Finland (2006). In mid-2011, the Rome Italy Temple was under construction and the Lisbon Portugal Temple was in the planning stages. The number of temples in operation increased from two in 1960 to five in 1990, seven in 2000, and nine in 2010. Temples in London, Preston, and Madrid appear well utilized, as evidenced by the scheduling of endowment sessions hourly on weekdays and Saturdays both in the mornings and evenings. Temples in Bern, Frankfurt, Helsinki, and Stockholm appear moderately utilized, as multiple endowment sessions are scheduled in the morning and evening Tuesdays through Saturdays and six or more sessions are scheduled two or more days a week. Temples in Copenhagen, Freiberg, and The Hague appear underutilized, as generally four or fewer endowment sessions are scheduled daily. In regards to the size of LDS membership serviced by a temple and the number of endowment sessions scheduled weekly, temples in Helsinki and Stockholm appear the most well utilized. In the medium term, small temples may be constructed in Glasgow, Scotland; Birmingham, England; Cardiff, Wales; and Paris, France. In the long term, small temples may be constructed in Belfast, Ireland and Oslo, Norway.

Comparative Growth

The extent of national outreach in nations of Western Europe is average among world regions. Member activity rates are comparable to most world regions. The LDS Church has extended consistent mission outreach in Western Europe longer than any other region other than North America, although persistent outreach over the past century and a half has been limited to less than half of the nations in the region. The sustainability of the local missionary force is below local needs. Congregational and membership growth rates fell behind all other world regions during the 2000s.

Other missionary-minded Christian denominations have achieved greater growth than the LDS Church in Western Europe for decades. Jehovah's Witnesses have numbered among the most successful Christian groups and in 2010 reported one million active members in the region meeting in over 13,600 congregations. There are more active Jehovah's Witnesses in every country in the region than nominal Latter-day Saints with the exception of the United Kingdom. Witnesses operate multiple congregations in Andorra, Luxembourg, Malta, San Marino, the Faroe Islands, and Gibraltar, locations where the LDS Church operates one or no congregations. The Seventh Day Adventist Church reports nearly 150,000 members in the region, nearly one-third of the number of members reported by the LDS Church, yet Adventists operate over 500 more congregations than Latter-day Saints. Both Witnesses and Adventists experience significantly higher member activity and convert retention rates than Latter-day Saints, largely due to increased local member involvement in missionary activity, emphasis on expanding national outreach by planting new congregations, and higher convert baptismal standards. Nearly all outreach-focused Christians report slow membership growth nonetheless but experience stagnant or very slow congregational growth rates.

Future Prospects

Prospects for large increases in the number of participating Latter-day Saints in Western Europe in the medium term appear dim; even maintaining current congregational numbers will be a challenge in view of declining receptivity, an aging population, and small LDS families. Recent efforts by area leadership to double the number of active Latter-day Saints in Europe indicate the transition of LDS outreach from goals headed by full-time missionaries centered primarily on merely baptizing converts for nominal increases in church membership to an approach that stresses increase of active membership through the increased leadership and participation of local members in finding and teaching investigators, fellowshipping recent converts, and performing reactivation work. Time will tell whether this reform is successfully implemented throughout the region. As of mid-2011, there appeared to be no indication that the end of the regional trend of congregational consolidations and closures was within sight, but beginning in 2012, this trend may have begun to transition from decline to stabilization as indicated by few or no congregation closures in most nations. With perhaps one or two exceptions, no stakes in the region appear likely to be discontinued within the next decade unless large numbers of congregations are closed. Additional missions may consolidate, especially in the United Kingdom. Based on past trends of growth and reports from full-time missionaries, prospects appear most favorable for growth in Spain and Portugal due to higher receptivity. Few stakes appear close to dividing, and the organization of additional stakes will depend on the organization of additional congregations and the maturation of branches into wards. The concept of establishing a small LDS university in the United Kingdom, Spain, or Germany may warrant consideration to facilitate the establishment of a self-sustaining, regional LDS community, provide additional mission outreach through education, and reduce immigration to North America and the Pacific, although there has been no serious dialogue of such a facility at present. Due to the strong influence of secularism on society, extension of outreach in the region will require LDS teaching approaches that are tailored to the understanding of nonreligious individuals and nominal Christians.

INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY PROFILES

ANDORRA

Geography

AREA: 438,317 square km. Nestled in the Pyrenees Mountains, Andorra is a tiny landlocked country bordering France and Spain. Terrain consists of rugged mountains and narrow mountain valleys that are subject to cold, snowy winters and warm, dry summers. Avalanches are a natural hazard. Environmental issues include deforestation, overgrazing, and pollution. Andorra is divided into seven administrative parishes.

Peoples

Spanish: 43%
Andorran: 33%
Portuguese: 11%
French: 7%
Other: 6%

Andorrans are ethnic Catalans, and citizens comprise approximately a third of the population.¹⁹⁷⁴ Other Europeans from the Iberian Peninsula and France comprise approximately two-thirds of the population.

Population: 85,082 (July 2012)
Annual Growth Rate: 0.274% (2012)
Fertility Rate: 1.36 children born per woman (2012)
Life Expectancy: 80.4 male, 84.74 female (2012)

Languages: Catalan (42%), Spanish (34%), French (3%), Portuguese (3%), other (18%). Catalan is the official language.

Literacy: 100%

History

In order to prevent advancing Muslim Moor armies from invading France, Charlemagne organized the March states in the Pyrenees around the ninth century, among which was present-day Andorra. A charter was granted by Charlemagne to Andorra for assistance in repelling the Moors, but a dispute arose in the thirteenth century between a French count and a Spanish bishop who each claimed authority. The dispute was resolved by both parties sharing sovereignty of Andorra, an agreement that endured from 1278 to 1607. French King Henry IV established the Bishop of Urgell and the head of the French state as co-princes of Andorra. Andorra has

¹⁹⁷⁴ "Andorra," International Religious Freedom Report 2010," 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148907.htm>

remained outside of most European history due to its isolation and small population but has been involved in some political matters of France and Spain. In 1993, the Andorran constitution was approved and dictated that the state is a sovereign parliamentary democracy with two co-princes as heads of state.¹⁹⁷⁵

Culture

Andorra shares many cultural similarities with Catalan Spain regarding language, cuisine, and music, but the development of the tourist industry and greater integration with southwestern Europe has generated a more cosmopolitan feel to Andorran society as Andorran citizens have become a minority. Skiing is the most popular sport. Folk dances are a proud national tradition. Alcohol consumption rates are among the highest in the world.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$37,200 (2011) [77.3% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.838

Corruption Index: N/A

Tourism generates over 80% of the GDP, and approximately eleven million tourists visit annually, primarily attracted by winter and summer resorts. Duty-free status for some products has also attracted increased commerce. Andorra is a European Union member for the Customs Union and for trade of manufactured products but not for agricultural goods. Hydropower, mineral water, forest, iron ore, and lead are natural resources. Services employ 81% of the labor force, whereas industry and agriculture employ 18.5% and 0.5% of the labor force, respectively. Industries include tourism, skiing, livestock, banking, tobacco, and furniture. Cereal crops and sheep are the primary agricultural products. Trade primarily occurs with Spain and France.

Corruption is perceived at levels lower than in most nations. There have been neither thorough investigations of corruption in Andorra nor any recorded convictions for corruption. There may be some areas vulnerable to corruption but no major concerns have been reported.¹⁹⁷⁶

Faiths

Christian: 95%

Other: 5%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 76,343

Jehovah's Witnesses 175 3

Latter-day Saints 66 1

Seventh Day Adventists none reported

Religion

Catholics are estimated to constitute 90% of the population, as Andorrans and Spanish, French, and Portuguese immigrants are traditionally Catholic. Practicing Catholics may account for as much as 50% of the Catholic

¹⁹⁷⁵ "Background Note: Andorra," Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 8 February 2011. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3164.htm>

¹⁹⁷⁶ "The Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) publishes report on Andorra," Council of Europe, 7 February 2007. http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/greco/news/news2007/news%2820070207%29eval1&2_andorra_EN.asp

population. Other Christian groups include Protestants, Latter-day Saints, and Jehovah's Witnesses. There are approximately 2,000 Muslims, 100 Jews, and a few Hindus.¹⁹⁷⁷

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. The constitution recognizes a special relationship with the Catholic Church, as it is the traditional faith of the Andorran population. The Catholic Bishop of the Spanish town of La Seu d'Urgell is one of the two constitutionally designated princes. Registration with the government is not required for religious groups but necessary to receive government benefits. A patrimony declaration stating the inheritance or endowment of a religious group, a statement providing the names of the leaders of the organization, and a summary of its statutes or purpose of the organization are required to obtain official recognition. There have been no reports of rejected applications. Religious education is optional and teaches Catholicism. Local government dictates the allocation of places of worship to religious groups. There are no reported restrictions on religious freedom and very few reports of societal abuse of religious freedom.¹⁹⁷⁸

Largest Cities

Urban: 88%

Andorra la Vella, **Escaldes-Engordany**, **Encamp**, **Sant Julià de Lòria**, **La Massana**.

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

One of the five largest towns has an LDS congregation. Seventy percent (70%) of the national population resides in the five most populous towns.

LDS Background

There were five Latter-day Saints in Andorra in 1991, and the first convert baptism occurred in 1992. Prior to the organization of the Andorra Branch in 1993, members traveled to Lleida, Spain for church meetings. The Church applied for government recognition the same year. Church meetings initially occurred in members' homes until a meetinghouse was secured in 1994. Nonnative LDS leaders from outside the branch boundaries served as the branch president until 1998 when the first local branch president was called.¹⁹⁷⁹ In 2000, there were seventy-three members. During the 2000s, church membership fluctuated between fifty and ninety members. Membership totaled eighty-eight in 2005 and sixty-four in 2009. Active membership is estimated at less than thirty, or 40%–50%. In early 2011, Andorra pertained to the Spain Barcelona Mission and the Andorra Branch was not assigned to a stake or district. Andorra is assigned to the Madrid Spain Temple district. In 2012, the Andorra Branch was assigned to the Lléida Spain Stake.

Opportunities

Latter-day Saints have maintained a consistent presence in Andorra for two decades despite the country's tiny population and low receptivity to mission outreach. LDS missionaries were not assigned to Andorra for a twelve to eighteen month period in the late 2000s but in 2010 were briefly stationed for a few weeks to provide training and encouragement to local members in their member-missionary efforts. Local leadership appears limited but self-sufficient. Seminary and institute have yet to be introduced and may facilitate finding

¹⁹⁷⁷ "Andorra," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148907.htm>

¹⁹⁷⁸ "Andorra," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148907.htm>

¹⁹⁷⁹ "Andorra," Country Profile, retrieved 8 March 2011. <http://newsroom.lds.org/country/andorra>

and convert retention efforts. LDS scriptures and materials are available in languages spoken by practically the entire population. All LDS scriptures are available in Catalan, Spanish, French, and Portuguese. LDS materials in Catalan are limited to the Articles of Faith, *Gospel Principles*, and the *Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, whereas most church materials are available in Spanish, French, and Portuguese.

Challenges

With one of the most religiously active Catholic populations in Western Europe, receptivity to the LDS Church and other nontraditional Christian denominations has been low. Although few in numbers, prospective Latter-day Saint converts are likely to have developed several daily or weekly religious practices, as indicated by the relatively high percentage of practicing Catholics. There has been no increase in nominal church membership during the 2000s, as few have joined the Church. Twenty-four percent (24%) of the national population resides in Andorra la Vella, the only town with an LDS congregation. The tiny geographic size and population make the opening of additional mission outreach centers unfeasible, as there are fewer than one hundred members, limited mission outreach resources dedicated to the region, and low receptivity. Other missionary-oriented Christians report stagnant or very slow membership and congregational growth. Most non-Catholic denominations operate only one congregation at most; Jehovah's Witnesses report three.

Prospects

The continued operation of the Andorra Branch without the permanent assignment of full-time missionaries indicates that local leadership and active membership are self-reliant and capable of fulfilling administrative tasks with minimal mentoring and supervision from missionaries and mission leaders. Low receptivity to non-Catholic denominations will likely continue and result in stagnant membership growth for the foreseeable future unless local members are able to develop proselytism approaches culturally tailored to the needs and societal conditions of Andorra.

AUSTRIA

Geography

AREA: 83,871 square km. Landlocked in Central Europe, Austria borders the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Italy, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, and Germany. The Alps dominate most the terrain, with some plains and hills in the northeast. Temperate climate prevails due to distance from the ocean, high elevation, and high latitude that is characterized by cold, wet winters and mild summers. In northern Austria, the Danube enters from Germany, flows through Vienna, and exits into Slovakia. Landslides, avalanches, and earthquakes are natural hazards. Air and water pollution affecting native forests and soil contamination are environmental issues. Austria is divided into nine administrative states.

Peoples

Austrians: 91.1%

Former Yugoslavs: 4%

Turks: 1.6%

German: 0.9%

Other/unspecified: 2.4%

Austrians share many demographic similarities with Germans. Former Yugoslavs consists of Croatians, Slovenes, Serbs, and Bosniaks. Turks have arrived relatively recently through immigration.

Population: 8,219,743 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.026% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.41 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 77 male, 82.97 female (2012)

Languages: German (88.6%), Turkish (2.3%), Serbian (2.2%), Croatian (1.6%), other (5.3%). German is the official national language. Several minority languages have official status in some Austrian states such as Croatian (Burgenland), Slovene (Carinthia), and Hungarian (Burgenland). Only German has over one million speakers (7.28 million).

Literacy: 98%

History

The Romans conquered an early Celtic kingdom on the territory of modern Austria in 15 BC and established the province of Noricum. In the eighth century, Charlemagne gained control of Austria and introduced Christianity. The Habsburgs emerged as the ruling dynasty in the late thirteenth century and governed until the early twentieth century. During this period, Austria gained additional territory. In 1867, Austria united with Hungary to form the Austro-Hungarian Empire. During the early twentieth century, the empire stretched from Bosnia in the south to Bohemia in the north and from eastern Italy in the west to Transylvania in the east. The Austro-Hungarian Empire was dismantled into independent states along ethnic lines at the end of World War I, and Austria became a small republic nestled in the Alps. Austria was annexed by Nazi Germany in 1938 and remained under Nazi rule until occupation by Allied forces in 1945. In 1955, Austria gained total

independence from Germany and remained neutral on political affairs to appease Western and Soviet interests. During the latter half of the twentieth century, the economy grew rapidly and reached Western European levels. Austria joined the European Union in 1995.

Culture

Austria, and especially Vienna, became a center of scholarship and music for centuries for Europe. Vienna was the frequent residence for many famous musicians such as Mozart and Beethoven. Many scientific disciplines including psychology, physics, and economics achieved significant advances through the efforts of intellectuals in Vienna. A wide range of Austrian novelists and writers have influenced culture and academia worldwide publishing poetry, novels, and plays. Well-known cuisine consists of pastries, meat dishes, and cheeses. Skiing is one of the most popular sports. Alcohol and cigarette consumption rates are high compared to most nations. Austrians have grown more secular over the past half century.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$41,700 (2011) [86.7% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.885

Corruption Index: 7.8 (2011)

Austria possesses a strong, industrialized economy that is well integrated with neighboring countries, especially Germany. The government subsidized economic reforms aimed at maintaining economic growth and reducing the influence of the world financial crisis in the late 2000s. Due to its central location, Austria plays an important role in international banking and insurance for both Eastern and Western Europe. The aging population and low birth rates are demographic conditions that pose challenges for future economic health and stability. Services account for 67% of the workforce and 69% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 28% of the workforce and generates 30% of the GDP. The agriculture sector is small and specializes in grains, potatoes, sugar beets, dairy products, and meat. Primary industries include construction, machinery, cars, food, chemicals, wood products, and tourism. Germany, Italy, and Switzerland are primary trade partners. Austria enjoys one of the lowest rates of perceived corruption worldwide.

Faiths

Christian: 78.3%

Muslim: 4.2%

Other: 3.5%

Unspecified: 2%

None: 12%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 6,045,622

Jehovah's Witnesses 20,934 294

Latter-day Saints 4,385 17

Seventh Day Adventists 3,890 49

Religion

According to the 2001 census, 74% of the population adheres to Catholicism, 5% are Protestant, 2% are Orthodox, and 1% belong to other Christian denominations. Muslims account for 4% of the population and

primarily consist of Turks and Bosnians. Twelve percent (12%) of Austrians are atheist. According to a 2007 poll, 81% of respondents identified with a religious group, but only 12% attended religious services at least once a week. Fifty-three percent (53%) of respondents stated that they rarely attended religious meetings.¹⁹⁸⁰

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. The secular government refers to many religious minority groups as sects, which receive second-class status. The government classifies religious groups into three different categories based on rights and privileges entitled to each category: officially recognized religious societies, religious confessional communities, and associations. There are fourteen officially recognized religious societies that have obtained this status. Groups applying for this status today must have operated in Austria for twenty years and constitute 0.2% of the population. Ten groups are recognized as religious confessional communities, which must have 300 members and submit a statement regarding the beliefs and practices of the religious group. Religious minority groups that are not officially recognized religious societies have experienced some discrimination and harassment, along with Muslims and Jehovah's Witnesses.¹⁹⁸¹

Largest Cities

Urban: 67%

Wien (Vienna), Graz, Linz, Salzburg, Innsbruck, Klagenfurt, **Villach**, Wels, Sankt Pölten, Dornbirn.

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Nine of the ten largest cities have an LDS congregation. Thirty-one percent (31%) of the national population resides in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

In 1841, Orson Hyde visited Austria. Over two decades later, Orson Pratt and William R. Ritter began missionary work. The first Austrian joined the Church in 1870 in Germany, whereas the first Austrian was baptized in Austria in 1883. In 1901, the Church created its first Austrian congregation in Haag am Hausruck, followed by a second congregation in Vienna in 1909 and a third in Rottenback. Missionary activity ceased during World War I and resumed shortly thereafter, expanding into additional cities such as Linz and Salzburg. Local members managed Church affairs during World War II as foreign missionaries returned to their home countries. The Church conducted humanitarian relief following the war. Austria officially recognized the Church in 1955. The Swiss Austrian Mission administered Austria until 1960 when Austria became its own mission. The greatest membership growth occurred for the following few decades and additional congregations were established.¹⁹⁸² Seminary and institute began in the early 1970s. Missionary activity in Austria started focusing on expanding the Church's reach into Eastern Europe through efforts targeting ethnic minorities in Austria and later through the placement of missionaries in communist nations in Central Europe and Yugoslavia. In 1987, the Austria Vienna East Mission was organized to assist in missionary efforts among Eastern European nations until independent missions could be formed in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Greece; the Austria Vienna East mission was closed with the formation of the Ukraine Kyiv mission in February 1992.¹⁹⁸³

¹⁹⁸⁰ "Austria," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127298.htm>

¹⁹⁸¹ "Austria," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127298.htm>

¹⁹⁸² "Austria," Country Profiles, retrieved 17 August 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/austria>

¹⁹⁸³ Taylor, Scott. "Vienna Mission set stage for LDS growth." Deseret News, September 9, 2010. <http://www.mormontimes.com/article/17013/Vienna-Mission-set-stage-for-LDS-growth>

The Mormon Tabernacle Quorum performed in Austria in July 1992.¹⁹⁸⁴ In 1996, the Austria Vienna South Mission was organized to coordinate missionary efforts in the former Yugoslavia until relocated to Ljubljana, Slovenia in 1999. In 1998, the Austrian ambassador to the United States visited the Church's Family History Library.¹⁹⁸⁵ Austria became part of the Europe Central Area in 2000.¹⁹⁸⁶ In 2002, the Church discontinued the Austria Vienna Mission, and Austria was assigned to the Germany Munich Mission. That same year, the Church and several hundred returned missionaries who served in Austria met with Austrian politicians and dignitaries as a result of the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City.¹⁹⁸⁷ In 2010, Austria joined the Alpine German-Speaking Mission and was assigned to the Europe Area.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 4,385 (2012)

In 1972, missionaries baptized eighty-eight converts, and membership totaled 2,675 by the end of the year.¹⁹⁸⁸ Membership steadily increased to 3,100 in 1986, 3,500 in 1990, and 3,900 in 1992. There were several periods during the last quarter of the twentieth century where membership did not increase year to year or membership decline occurred, such as in the early 1980s and late 1990s.

By 2000, there were 3,917 members. Membership slowly increased in the early 2000s to 4,038 in 2003 and 4,138 in 2005. Few members were added to Church records in the latter half of the 2000s as membership reached a high of 4,215 in 2008 and declined to 4,203 in 2009. Membership growth rates ranged from -0.3% to 2% during the 2000s. Membership generally increased by twenty to fifty a year during this period. In 2009, one in every 1,954 Austrians was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 13 Branches: 4 (April 2013)

The first district was organized in 1920 for branches in Austria.¹⁹⁸⁹ By 1972, there were eleven branches and four districts.¹⁹⁹⁰

The Church created the first stake in 1980 in Vienna. The Church had seven wards and twelve branches in 1990. In 1997, a second stake was created in Salzburg from a district. In the latter half of the 1990s, the number of congregations reached twenty-three, twelve of which were wards.

In 2000, there were twelve wards and ten branches. In 2001, the Vienna Austria Stake had six wards and four branches and the Salzburg Austria Stake had six wards and five branches. The number of branches declined to seven in 2002 and to five in 2005. The number of wards totaled thirteen in 2001 and declined to twelve in 2008. Total congregations declined from twenty-two in 2000 to seventeen in 2010.

¹⁹⁸⁴ Avant, Gerry. "Choir leaves trail of joyful tears," LDS Church News, 6 July 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21503/Choir-leaves-trail-of-joyful-tears.html>

¹⁹⁸⁵ Stahle, Shaun. "Austrian ambassador tours history facility," LDS Church News, 7 March 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30764/Austrian-ambassador-tours-history-facility.html>

¹⁹⁸⁶ Lloyd, Scott. "European continent realigned into three new areas," LDS Church News, 16 September 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38475/European-continent--realigned-into-three-new-areas.html>

¹⁹⁸⁷ "Austrian leaders receive Olympic welcome," LDS Church News, 9 March 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41421/Austrian-leaders-receive-Olympic-welcome.html>

¹⁹⁸⁸ "The Church in Europe," Ensign, Aug 1973, 16-35.

¹⁹⁸⁹ "Austria," Country Profiles, retrieved 17 August 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/austria>

¹⁹⁹⁰ "The Church in Europe," Ensign, Aug 1973, 16-35.

Activity and Retention

Although church activity has been the exception rather than the rule among LDS members in Austria throughout the Church's history there, active members have demonstrated strong zeal and dedication to the Church. In 1972, 250 youth were enrolled in seminary, and Austrian members completed over 2,000 proxy endowment ordinances in the Bern Switzerland Temple.¹⁹⁹¹ In the Salzburg Austria Stake, 70% of the 120 youth were active in 1997.¹⁹⁹²

One thousand one hundred German-speaking young adults from Austria, Germany, and Switzerland assembled in Salzburg in 2006 for a young single adult conference.¹⁹⁹³ Two hundred ninety-two were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year. The average congregation appears to have fifty to seventy-five active members, indicating that nationwide active membership is likely between 1000 and 1250, or 25%–30% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: German, Turkish, Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, Hungarian, Polish.

The Church has translated all LDS scriptures and most Church materials into German, Croatian, Hungarian, and Polish. Only the Book of Mormon has been translated into Turkish, Serbian, and Slovenian. German and Hungarian materials include the Church Handbook of Instructions, missionary, priesthood, unit, young men, young women, primary, relief society, temple, and audiovisual materials. *The Liabona* has twelve German, six Hungarian, four Polish, and one Croatian and Slovenian issues produced per year. Many unit, temple, Priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, young women, primary, missionary, and family history materials are available in Turkish, Serbian, and Slovenian.

Meetinghouses

In 1972, there were seven chapels.¹⁹⁹⁴ Congregations meet in at least sixteen different locations. Most wards and branches meet in Church-built meetinghouses.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Due to high living standards over the past several decades, the Church has not conducted widespread humanitarian service in Austria. Austrian Latter-day Saints have participated in relief efforts for other European nations. In 1992, members prepared and sent food and clothing donations to Croatia.¹⁹⁹⁵ In 2002, the Church donated \$635,000 to assist flood cleanup efforts in Central Europe, which included Austria. Missionaries and local member participated in the cleanup efforts.¹⁹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁹¹ "The Church in Europe," *Ensign*, Aug 1973, 16–35.

¹⁹⁹² Stahle, Shaun. "The Church in Austria: Sounds of gospel ring in Salzburg," *LDS Church News*, 15 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29182/The-Church-in-Austria—Sounds-of-gospel-ring-in-Salzburg.html>

¹⁹⁹³ Jurgens, James and Rona. "New era in Europe," *LDS Church News*, 19 August 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49320/New-era-in-Europe.html>

¹⁹⁹⁴ "The Church in Europe," *Ensign*, Aug 1973, 16–35.

¹⁹⁹⁵ "Humanitarian relief in Europe," *LDS Church News*, 29 February 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22332/Humanitarian-relief-in-Europe.html>

¹⁹⁹⁶ "Church donates to flood relief," *LDS Church News*, 24 August 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42332/Church-donates-to-flood-relief.html>

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church maintains a strong relationship with the government and is registered as an officially recognized religious society, the highest level of government recognition. This status was received prior to requirements that the membership of religious groups must constitute at least 0.2% of the national population.¹⁹⁹⁷ There are no restrictions on proselytism or other church activity.

Cultural Issues

Many Austrians are proud of their Catholic religious heritage, which can sometimes become an obstacle to LDS proselytism. Many are unwilling to consider learning about the Church from full-time missionaries due a lack of interest in organized religion, negative public opinions concerning Latter-day Saints and their beliefs and practices, or the persistent cultural influence of the Catholic Church on the general population. High alcohol and cigarette consumption rates present challenges for Latter-day Saint teachings. Increased materialism over the past half century has further exacerbated secular thought and practice, creating additional barriers to missionary work. Member-missionary work encounters challenges with religious traditionalism and secularism. Austrian Latter-day Saints appear to have made progress correcting false perceptions about the Church and improving public awareness through activities such as family history research.

National Outreach

Thirty-one percent (31%) of the Austrian population resides in a city or town with a mission outreach center. All administrative states have a mission outreach center except Burgenland, which accounts for 3.5% of the national population. Twenty percent (20%) of the national population resides in administrative states with only one LDS congregation (Vorarlberg, Tirol, and Carinthia).

The number of congregations has declined by 26% between 1998 and 2008, reducing national outreach in cities and large towns. Many smaller cities or towns that supported mission outreach centers in the 1980s and 1990s no longer have LDS congregations or missionaries assigned, including Steyr, Judenburg, Villach, and St. Johann-im-Pongau. 1.5% of the population resides in cities that once had LDS mission outreach centers. Cities that once had two wards, including Salzburg and Linz, today have only one ward. With over 1.5 million inhabitants, Vienna has five wards providing outreach to many areas of the largest city. Leaders have expressed that decisions to consolidate congregations allow members from smaller congregations to enjoy a greater number of church programs, although the Church is no longer accessible in some former outreach centers where congregations have been closed. Transportation systems in Austria are well developed. However, travel times for members have generally increased as a result of congregational consolidation, and have presented challenges for members with marginal testimonies to remain engaged when congregations become less accessible.

The greatest medium-term potential for expanding national outreach and multiplying congregations appears to be in the largest cities; significant progress may be made in many of the largest cities without mission outreach centers and multiple active LDS members. 11.5% of the national population resides in the fifty-nine cities between 10,000 and 40,000 inhabitants without a mission outreach center, and some of these cities have active members who commute to other cities for church. The establishment of groups or dependent branches in some of these locations provides a flexible means for testing whether certain cities are more receptive to mission outreach initiatives. Much of the success with the cottage meeting paradigm results from the

¹⁹⁹⁷ "Austria," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127298.htm>

dedication of local members in missionary activity in harmony with receptivity of the local population. It does not appear that the Church has experimented with cottage meetings or establishing small congregations in unreached areas for many years.

By 2003, the Church had established an Internet site for Austria at <http://www.hlt.at/>.¹⁹⁹⁸ The site provides doctrinal information, explanations on church history and services, and a map displaying church meeting-house locations. The Internet site is a useful tool for members and missionaries to provide an accessible means for Austrians to learn about the Church and request additional information if desired.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Member activity appears to have remained constant or perhaps slightly fallen over the past several decades. The number enrolled in seminary has fallen by more than half from 250 in 1972 to 106 in 2008–2009, which indicates lower activity among youth and perhaps fewer LDS youth compared to the 1970s as a result of small LDS family size and few youth converts today. Current convert retention rates appear average or higher than most European nations.

The consolidating of congregations that stretch over wide regions can often contribute to decreased member activity. However, in 2003, six months after the Church discontinued the Villach Branch, all active members in the former branch were actively attending the Klagenfurt Ward despite some initial member opposition. Members living in Villach travel twenty-five miles each way for Sunday meetings.¹⁹⁹⁹ It is unclear whether these results have held up over the intervening years. Other branches that have been discontinued may not have experienced as positive results regarding member activity.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Historically, the Church has reached out to lesser-reached peoples in Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe through missions based in Austria because of its central location, well-developed infrastructure, and role as a crossroads between East and West. The majority of LDS baptisms in Austria have been among non-Austrian immigrants for some years due to the greater receptivity of immigrant groups. The disproportionate number of converts among minority immigrant groups generates challenges for congregational integration and fellowship; immigrants also tend to be more transient, and many have limited proficiency with German or English. In 1993, missionaries baptized an Armenian couple who later immigrated to the United States.²⁰⁰⁰

Language Issues

German is widely spoken and contains a vast array of LDS materials. The Church has translated materials in most minority languages spoken in Austria. To accommodate the language needs of non-German speakers, the Vienna 4th (English) Ward allows for outreach to occur among minority groups who can speak English.

Finding

Due to initial disinterest of many Austrians in religion, finding approaches must be creative and allow for Austrians to feel comfortable discussing religious matters in a manner in which they will commit to learn more

¹⁹⁹⁸ "Church establishing country-specific Web sites," LDS Church News, 15 November 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44674/Church-establishing-country-specific-Web-sites.html>

¹⁹⁹⁹ Stahle, Shaun D. "Austrian members counting their new blessings," LDS Church News, 11 January 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43069/Austrian-members-counting-their-new-blessings.html>

²⁰⁰⁰ Hart, John L. "Church opens door to richer life," LDS Church News, 14 February 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30916/Church-opens-door-to-richer-life.html>

or make commitments to attend Church. In 2000, Austrians demonstrated significant interest in the Church's genealogy program, resulting in Church members clarifying Latter-day Saint beliefs and practices.²⁰⁰¹ Similar programs may help increase the number of Austrians investigating the Church and lead to more successful finding than traditional methods such as street contacting.

Missionary Service

The Church has significantly reduced the number of full-time missionaries serving in Austria over the past few decades. In 1972, 136 full-time LDS missionaries were serving in Austria.²⁰⁰² In 2010, the full-time missionary force was less than one-third of the 1972 missionary complement. Austria has received fewer mission resources in response to low receptivity and the redistribution of the limited missionary force to meet the needs of more receptive areas worldwide.

Leadership

Austria has demonstrated that local leadership can be developed without reliance on Church employees to fill leadership positions and that sufficient local leadership can endure for decades despite a relatively tiny LDS membership and few convert baptisms. No Church employees appeared to have served in a stake presidency, which is uncommon for many nations with few convert baptisms and few LDS members. All congregations appear to be led by local members, and a shortage of active priesthood holders does not appear to have been the primary issue for the discontinuance of many of Austria's smaller branches over the past decade.

Austrian Church leaders have also served in international positions. In 1992, Johann A. Wondra from Vienna was called as the temple president for the Frankfurt Germany Temple.²⁰⁰³ In 1994, Ernst Husz from Vienna was called as a regional representative²⁰⁰⁴ and the following year became an area authority.²⁰⁰⁵ In 1996, Johann A. Wondra was called as the first mission president of the Austria Vienna South Mission.²⁰⁰⁶ When the Salzburg Austria Stake was created in 1997, no Church employees served in the stake presidency.²⁰⁰⁷ In 1997, August Schubert from Salzburg was called as the mission president for the Germany Berlin Mission.²⁰⁰⁸ In 1999, Johann A. Wondra was called as an Area Seventy,²⁰⁰⁹ and in 2003, Gerold Roth was called as an Area Seventy.²⁰¹⁰ An Austrian couple presided over the Bulgaria Sofia Mission in 2010.

²⁰⁰¹ Stahle, Shaun. "Austrians join in search for their roots." LDS Church News, 19 February 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37207/Austrians-join-in-search-for-their-roots.html>

²⁰⁰² "The Church in Europe," Ensign, Aug 1973, 16-35.

²⁰⁰³ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 13 June 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22684/New-temple-presidents.html>

²⁰⁰⁴ "New regional representative," LDS Church News, 27 August 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24738/New-regional-representatives.html>

²⁰⁰⁵ "Church names area authorities," LDS Church News, 5 August 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26627/Church-names-area-authorities.html>

²⁰⁰⁶ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 27 July 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28226/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁰⁰⁷ "New stake presidencies," LDS Church News, 15 February 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29659/New-stake-presidencies.html>

²⁰⁰⁸ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 22 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29078/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁰⁰⁹ "Area Authority Seventies," LDS Church News, 9 October 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/33437/Area-Authority-Seventies.html>

²⁰¹⁰ "New Area Authority Seventies," LDS Church News, 19 April 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43636/New-Area-Authority-Seventies.html>

Temple

Austria belongs to the Frankfurt Germany Temple district. Organized temple trips occur regularly for the two stakes. Austrian members have demonstrated strong temple participation over the past several decades despite their limited numbers. Due to distance from Frankfurt and the resilience of the LDS community in Vienna, a small temple may one day be built in Vienna to serve members from Austria and Southeastern Europe. However, the Frankfurt Germany temple continues to operate well under capacity, and Austrian members can travel to the temple without major sacrifice or expense.

Comparative Growth

Austria has experienced some of the slowest LDS membership growth rates of any Central European nation over the past two decades. Church membership increased by only 300 between 1992 and 2009, less than an 8% increase. Some nations with a long-term LDS presence and advanced, industrialized economy experienced greater membership growth and had fewer congregations discontinued during this period, such as Switzerland (18.6% membership increase of over 1,200 members). LDS Church growth in Italy has greatly outpaced Austria, as in 1967 there were only sixty-six members, and today there are over 23,000. Between 1992 and 2009, the Church in the Czech Republic and Hungary grew from a couple hundred members to over 2,000 members and 4,000 members, respectively. Germany experienced slower membership growth than Austria during this period, as Germany had more members in 1992 than in 2009, but membership was heavily affected by American military emigration in addition to low convert baptismal rates. The percentage of the population residing in a city with mission outreach centers in Austria is comparable to many Central European nations. Two European nations have approximately as many members as Austria and have temples: Denmark and Finland. Member activity rates and the percentage of LDS members in the general population compare to most of Central Europe.

Other missionary-oriented Christian churches report few convert baptisms and slow membership growth as a result of low receptivity, entrenched cultural Catholicism, and growing secularism. Evangelical groups report little growth. Seventh Day Adventist and Jehovah's Witnesses report slow but consistent growth; Jehovah's Witnesses report over 20,000 active members. Starting with just a few members in the 1970s, the Jehovah's Witnesses have multiplied to achieve over ten times the active membership of the LDS Church in Austria, whereas active LDS membership has remained largely stagnant for decades. Such data demonstrate that meaningful growth can be achieved even in a resistant nation like Austria, although different paradigms and programs may be needed for Latter-day Saints to achieve success.

Data from Austria and from many other nations around the world do not support the claim of the "Building from Centers of Strength" paradigm that a "critical mass" of members and mature local leadership serve as catalysts for more rapid growth and higher retention. Many congregations with large initial membership and well-developed local leadership have stagnated or experienced little growth, whereas great expansion of active membership and congregations has been achieved in regions the Church entered with few or no members. Such data demonstrate that growth is achieved primarily as the result of effective missionary and member-missionary programs, strong convert retention, and local receptivity and has much less to do with initial membership numbers or the length of tenure of church members.

Future Prospects

Long periods of nongrowth or low growth, low convert baptism rates, continued struggles with member activity, decline in seminary attendance to less than half of earlier levels, the reduction in the complement of full-time missionaries serving in Austria, and the consolidation of both congregations and missions, demonstrate that expansion of church outreach is unlikely in the medium-term future. Austria demonstrates that

Church growth is not guaranteed despite an established local Church leadership, a “critical mass” of local membership, freedom to proselyte, the Church obtaining the highest level of government recognition, and over a century of LDS missionary activity.

Starting in the mid-2000s, Church leaders in Europe have begun focusing on working with youth and young adults in an effort to ensure a continued Church presence in the future once aging members pass away. Institute-oriented outreach programs in coordination with member-missionary initiatives appear to be one of the best options for the Church to maintain its current national outreach and presence while attempting to expand. The Church has yet to break out of the trend of congregation consolidations that began in the late 1990s. Progress must be made in integrating new converts in greater numbers to ensure as strong of a Church presence in the decades to come.

BELGIUM

Geography

Area: 30,528 square km. Located in Western Europe, Belgium borders the Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg, France, and the North Sea. Flat plains occupy Flanders, which consists of coastal northwestern areas, which rise to hills in the interior of Middle Belgium, also known as Wallonia. Mountains occupy Ardennes in the southeast of Belgium. Temperate climate modified by the nearby ocean generates cool summers and mild winters with frequent precipitation. The Meuse and Scheldt are the largest rivers, and the Meuse has marked past political boundaries, such as with the Holy Roman Empire. Flooding along rivers and reclaimed coastal land is a natural hazard. Environmental issues include the repercussions of high population density in urban areas, industry, intense agricultural activity, and pollution. Belgium is divided into three administrative regions, two of which are subdivided into five administrative provinces.

Peoples

Fleming: 58%
Walloon: 31%
Mixed/other: 11%

Flemings constitute the majority in northern areas, whereas Walloons form the majority in southern areas. Both ethnic groups populate the Brussels area. Other common ethnic groups include Italians, French, Dutch, Moroccans, Spanish, Turks, and Germans.²⁰¹¹

Population: 10,438,353 (July 2012)
Annual Growth Rate: 0.061% (2012)
Fertility Rate: 1.65 children born per woman (2012)
Life Expectancy: 76.49 male, 82.95 female (2012)

Languages: Officially, Belgians speak Dutch (57.9%), French (31.7%), bilingual Dutch and French (9.7%), and German (0.7%). Dutch, French, and German are official languages. Other commonly spoken languages include Flemish, a Belgium dialect of Dutch [Vlaams] (58%); Walloon (11%); Limburgish (6%); and Italian (3%). Languages with over one million speakers include Dutch (7.05 million), Flemish (6.0 million), French (4.32 million), and Walloon (1.1 million).

Literacy: 99% (2003)

History

Prior to Rome annexing present-day Belgium in the first century BC, a Celtic tribe named the Belgae populated the region. Roman rule lasted for three centuries. Germanic tribes arrived at the beginning of the fourth century AD as a result of Attila the Hun invading Central Europe, driving the indigenous Germanic population westward. The Franks conquered Belgium in about 400 AD. Belgium's current French and Dutch population demographics originated from enduring Germanic influence in the north and French and

²⁰¹¹ "Belgium," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 23 November 2010. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belgium>

Latin-based language and culture infiltrating from the south during the Middle Ages. Several large Belgian cities became large economic centers in Western Europe toward the end of the Middle Ages and beginning of the Renaissance, such as Ghent, Brussels, and Antwerp. William Tyndale, the first scholar to translate the Bible into English, was arrested by Catholic authorities and later strangled and burned at the stake for heresy in Belgium. The Spanish controlled Belgium from 1519 to 1713, followed by Austria through the marriage of ruling families in Europe, including the Hapsburgs. Napoleon invaded Belgium in the late eighteenth century. The territory remained under French rule until the Congress of Vienna in 1815 that made Belgium part of the Netherlands. Fifteen years later, Belgium achieved independence from the Netherlands in an uprising. A constitutional monarchy was established in 1831. Belgium colonized the Congo in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Germany invaded Belgium during both World Wars, which resulted in widespread damage to the country and suffering to the Belgian people. Social division between Dutch-speaking and French-speaking areas have remained over the past several centuries and were exacerbated in the late twentieth century as a result of rapid economic development of the Flanders area and the decline of industry in Wallonia. In the past two decades, Belgium has experienced increased political divisions resulting in defining ethno-linguistic boundaries and granting greater autonomy to these regions, but there have been no major social conflicts as a result of these issues.²⁰¹²

Culture

French and Flemish customs, history, and traditions have heavily influenced Belgian culture in their respective areas of the country. The Catholic Church dictated many aspects of society and government for centuries and today holds more of a traditional religious position in society rather than a practical one. Many Catholic holidays continue to hold societal and cultural significance despite low rates of church activity among most Catholics. During the Renaissance, Belgium became a center of art, learning, and commerce, producing many famous painters and artists such as Jan van Eyck. In the past two centuries, local artists like Rene Magritte have offered significant contributions to romanticism, expressionist, and surrealism in their works. Belgian architects excelled in Gothic, Romanesque, Renaissance, and Baroque styles of architecture. Cartography, mathematics, mining, chemistry, and physics are among the scientific fields Belgian scholars have influenced through their research. Soccer and cycling are the most popular sports. Famous Belgian foods include waffles, French fries, beer, and chocolate.²⁰¹³ Alcohol and cigarette consumption rates are high. Belgium exhibits one of the highest divorce rates in Europe.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$37,600 (2011) [78.2% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.886

Corruption Index: 7.5 (2011)

Belgium's modernized economy is highly integrated into the European community and is sensitive to world-wide demands in manufactured goods as a result of reliance on importing raw materials due to few natural resources. The standard of living is high, and wealth is evenly distributed. In the late 2000s, the global financial crisis severely impacted Belgian banks, many of which relied on the government bailouts to stay afloat. The aging population is an additional economic challenge that places an additional financial burden on the government. Services employ 73% of the labor force and generate 77% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 25% of the labor force and generates 22% of the GDP. Major industries include engineering, metal products, transportation equipment and cars, food products, chemicals, and textiles. Agriculture accounts for less than 3% of the labor force and GDP. Sugar beets, vegetables, fruit, grain, and tobacco are major crops. Beef, veal,

²⁰¹² "Background Note: Belgium," Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 29 April 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2874.htm>

²⁰¹³ "Belgium," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 23 November 2010. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belgium>

and pork are the most commonly produced meats. Primary trade partners include Germany, the Netherlands, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Perceived corruption is lower than most nations, but slightly higher than most other Western European nations. Belgium is a transshipment point for many illicit drugs such as cocaine, heroin, hashish, and ecstasy. Money laundering vulnerability is a concern.

Faiths

Christian: 49%

Nonbelievers: 9%

Muslim: 4%

Jewish: 0.5%

Other/unknown: 37.5%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 4,800,000

Jehovah's Witnesses 25,150 371

Anglican 10,800

Latter-day Saints 6,186 17

Seventh Day Adventists 2,088 30 (includes Luxembourg)

Religion

Forty-six percent (46%) of the population identifies as Catholic, yet a 2008 report by the Catholic University of Leuven estimated that only 7% of Catholics regularly attend religious meetings. Many Belgians participate in religious ceremonies or ordinances, as 61% of funerals, 26.7% of marriages, and 57% of births include a religious service. Those who actively identify as nonreligious number nearly one million.²⁰¹⁴

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government and the law. Government authorities possess the power to monitor religious groups and have limited or infringed on the religious rights of religious groups deemed as sects or cults such as Scientology. The 2007 Anti-Discrimination Act forbids religious persecution and discrimination. Six organized religions are recognized by the government: Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, Anglicanism, Islam, and Orthodox Christianity. Local, regional, and federal government provide subsidies to these recognized religious groups and to a secular humanist organization. The government and parliament pay religious worker salaries for these recognized religious groups. There are five criteria a religious group must meet in order to receive government recognition, including possessing a structure or hierarchy, having enough members to merit recognition, maintaining a long-term presence in Belgium, offering social value to the general population, and following state laws and keeping public order. Societal abuses of religious freedom have primarily targeted Muslims and Jews, but both of these groups worship freely with little interference from the general public.²⁰¹⁵

²⁰¹⁴ "Belgium," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127301.htm>

²⁰¹⁵ "Belgium," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127301.htm>

Largest Cities

Urban: 97%

Brussels, Antwerp, Liège, Gent, Charleroi, Mons, Leuven, Brugge, Namur, Kortrijk, **Mechelen**, **Hasselt**.

Cities in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Ten of the twelve cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. Fifty-one percent (51%) of the national population resides in the twelve largest cities.

LDS History

Sporadic LDS missionary outreach occurred in Belgium prior to the late 1880s.²⁰¹⁶ The LDS Church was first established in Belgium in 1888 through the efforts of LDS missionary Mischa Markow, a Hungarian convert baptized in Turkey a year earlier. As Markow traveled across Europe preaching, he stopped in Belgium and baptized a family of six in Antwerp and reported the baptisms to the Swiss-German Mission. Eighty converts joined the LDS Church, and three branches were organized in Liege, Brussels, and Antwerp just two months after three full-time missionaries were sent to open missionary work under the Swiss-German Mission. The Netherlands Mission began administering Belgium in 1891, and by 1924, all non-Flemish-speaking congregations were transferred to the French Mission. Latter-day Saints experienced persecution at times during the late nineteenth century, with some missionaries receiving death threats and misinformation about the Church being published in local newspapers. Both World Wars suspended LDS missionary activity and resulted in widespread property damage for the Church and its members.²⁰¹⁷ Many of the LDS congregations had few members before and after both World Wars. Elder Charles Didier of the Presidency of the Seventy noted that when he and his family first attended an LDS Church service in the 1950s, there were fewer than fifteen members in the congregation, five of whom were members of his family.²⁰¹⁸ In 1963, the Church created the Franco-Belgian Mission from the French East Mission,²⁰¹⁹ which was later renamed the Belgium Brussels Mission in 1974. A second mission, the Belgium Antwerp Mission, was created in 1975 but discontinued in 1982. Seminary and institute began in the 1970s.

In 1990, the Church recreated the Belgium Antwerp Mission from the Netherlands Amsterdam Mission and included Flemish-speaking areas of Belgium. The new mission had 1,000 members in one district.²⁰²⁰ In 1991, the Church divided Belgium along ethno-linguistic lines between the Europe Area and the Europe Mediterranean Area.²⁰²¹ Six thousand attended four performance of the BYU Ballroom Dance Company in Belgium in 1992.²⁰²² In 1995, the Church discontinued the Belgium Antwerp Mission. LDS Church President Gordon B. Hinckley visited Belgium in 1996.²⁰²³ In 2000, Belgium joined the Europe West Area,²⁰²⁴

²⁰¹⁶ Miasnik, Chris. "6,000 members living in Belgium have rich history," LDS Church News, 7 December 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28444/6000-members-living-in-Belgium-have-rich-history.html>

²⁰¹⁷ "The Church in Europe," Ensign, Aug 1973, 16–35.

²⁰¹⁸ Didier, Charles. "The Church: A Community of Saints," Ensign, Apr 2006, 47–49.

²⁰¹⁹ Miasnik, Chris. "6,000 members living in Belgium have rich history," LDS Church News, 7 December 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28444/6000-members-living-in-Belgium-have-rich-history.html>

²⁰²⁰ "Eight new missions announced," LDS Church News, 3 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19805/Eight-new-missions-announced.html>

²⁰²¹ "New areas created in Asia, Europe," LDS Church News, 7 September 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21578/New-areas-created-in-Asia-Europe.html>

²⁰²² "From around the world," LDS Church News, 18 July 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22239/From-around-the-world.html>

²⁰²³ Hart, John L. "Prophet visits 5 European countries, asks saints to keep commandments," LDS Church News, 22 June 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27991/Prophet-visits-5-European-countries-asks-saints-to-keep-commandments.html>

²⁰²⁴ Lloyd, Scott. "European continent realigned into three new areas," LDS Church News, 16 September 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38475/European-continent—realigned-into-three-new-areas.html>

and in 2002 the Belgium Brussels Mission was consolidated with the Netherlands Amsterdam mission to create the Belgium Brussels/Netherlands Mission.²⁰²⁵ In 2010, French-speaking Wallonia became part of the France Paris Mission.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 6,186 (2012)

There were fewer than 1,000 members by 1963.²⁰²⁶ In 1973, there were approximately 3,500 Latter-day Saints.²⁰²⁷ Membership reached 6,000 by 1996.²⁰²⁸ In the late twentieth century, LDS membership became increasingly more diverse, with members from the Philippines, Chile, Russia, Sweden, China, New Zealand, Zaire [Democratic Republic of the Congo], and the United States. By year-end 2000, there were 5,784 members.

Membership grew slowly between 2000 and 2006, totaling 6,030 in 2003 and 6,363 in 2006. Annual membership growth rates ranged from 0.9% to 2.5% during this period. The number of Latter-day Saints declined in the late 2000s as the Church reported 6,029 members in 2007 and 5,890 members in 2009. Likely reasons for membership decline during this period include emigration, few convert baptisms, and membership record updates. In 2009, one in 1,743 was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 10 Branches: 7 (April 2013)

The first LDS congregations were organized in the late nineteenth century and fluctuated in number due to war. Six LDS Belgian branches functioned during World War II.²⁰²⁹ By 1973, there were four districts and thirteen branches. Districts were located in Brussels-Liege (four branches—Brussels French, Herstal, Liege, Seraing, and Verviers), Charleroi (three branches—Charleroi, Jumet, and Namur), Antwerp (four branches—Antwerpen, Brussels, Gent, and Michelen), and a fourth district for English-speakers (two branches—Brussels English and SHAPE Servicemen).

Created in 1994, the Antwerp Belgium Stake initially contained four wards and eleven branches in Belgium and the Netherlands.²⁰³⁰ The Liege Belgium District was formed from the Brussels Belgium Stake prior to 1996, but was discontinued in 2006. There were twenty-seven congregations in the late 1990s. By year-end 2000, there were twenty-six congregations, including eleven wards.

Congregation consolidations characterized the 2000s as branches were steadily discontinued. Total LDS congregations declined to twenty-three in 2001, twenty-two in 2003, twenty in 2006, eighteen in 2008, and seventeen in 2009. During this period, the number of wards declined by two. Congregations discontinued after May 2001 include the Antwerpen II Ward, Huy Branch, La Louviere Branch, Aalst Branch, SHAPE Military Branch, Brussels (Flemish) Branch, Louise Ward, and the Mechelen Branch.

²⁰²⁵ Stahle, Shaun D. "Seven new missions created," LDS Church News, 9 March 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41426/Seven-new-missions-created.html>

²⁰²⁶ Miasnik, Chris. "6,000 members living in Belgium have rich history," LDS Church News, 7 December 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28444/6000-members-living-in-Belgium-have-rich-history.html>

²⁰²⁷ "The Church in Europe," Ensign, Aug 1973, 16–35.

²⁰²⁸ Miasnik, Chris. "6,000 members living in Belgium have rich history," LDS Church News, 7 December 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28444/6000-members-living-in-Belgium-have-rich-history.html>

²⁰²⁹ Miasnik, Chris. "6,000 members living in Belgium have rich history," LDS Church News, 7 December 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28444/6000-members-living-in-Belgium-have-rich-history.html>

²⁰³⁰ "New stake presidencies," LDS Church News, 3 December 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24509/New-stake-presidencies.html>

Activity and Retention

In the mid-1990s, 75% of the converts baptized were found through member referrals or street contacting.²⁰³¹ In 1997, 4,010 members from northern France and Belgium attended a regional conference with President Thomas S. Monson.²⁰³² Later that year, 1,500 members from Belgium and the Lille France Stake participated in a parade commemorating the founding of the Church in what was believed to be Belgium's largest parade ever organized. The parade was attended by 6,000 spectators, and 220 copies of the Book of Mormon were distributed. Seventy made requests for missionary visits.²⁰³³ Two hundred two students were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year. Most congregations appear to have between fifty and one hundred active members. Nationwide active membership is estimated at 1,500, or 25% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Dutch, French, German, Italian.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in Dutch, French, German, and Italian. The *Liabona* magazine has twelve issues in Dutch, French, German, and Italian. Scriptures and LDS materials are available in many commonly spoken immigrant languages.

Meetinghouses

The first LDS meetinghouses were constructed in the 1960s. In 2010, there were sixteen LDS meetinghouses. In 2010, the only meetinghouse to serve more than one congregation was in Liege.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The LDS Church has not completed any large-scale humanitarian or development work in the past couple decades. In 1993, LDS missionaries in Mechelen picked up garbage in streets, parks, and forest, which drew media attention to the Church.²⁰³⁴ Full-time missionaries and local members have opportunities to perform community service, but high standards of living and economic prosperity lessen humanitarian and development needs in Belgium.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Latter-day Saints are not among religious groups formally recognized by the Belgian government, but the Church does not experience any major restrictions on its activities. Foreign full-time missionaries regularly serve and proselyte.

Cultural Issues

Secularism and nominalism exhibited by much of the indigenous population erode Belgium's rich Christian

²⁰³¹ Miasnik, Chris. "The Church in Belgium: Membership has international flavor in Church version of United Nations," LDS Church News, 7 December 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28444/6000-members-living-in-Belgium-have-rich-history.html>

²⁰³² "Pres. Monson returns to France," LDS Church News, 24 May 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28791/Pres-Monson-returns-to-France.html>

²⁰³³ "Belgian members 'think big' in celebration—Pioneer parade opens missionary doors," LDS Church News, 30 August 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29245/Belgian-members-think-big-in-celebration—Pioneer-parade-opens-missionary-doors.html>

²⁰³⁴ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 29 May 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23497/From-around-the-world.html>

legacy and frustrate church growth efforts. LDS missionaries have struggled to find and baptize converts among the indigenous Belgian population due to their strong traditional religious ties to the Catholic Church and disinterest in the active religious participation. Member-missionary efforts are valuable in overcoming these cultural obstacles to proselytism, as local members are familiar with these issues and have successfully dealt with them. Missionary lessons and approaches need to be tailored to a population that has some background in Christianity but fails to see a need for observing religious principles, reading scriptures, and attending church regularly. The LDS Church has achieved greater success in the biggest cities due to large populations and stronger receptivity of nontraditional religious groups that has been generated by the cosmopolitan atmosphere;²⁰³⁵ many recent converts have been foreign immigrants. Nonetheless, low receptivity and high cost of living making it unfeasible to assign large numbers of full-time missionaries at present. High rates of alcohol consumption, cigarette use, and divorce create societal challenges for full-time missionaries and local members. Investigators and converts who do not completely overcome smoking and drinking habits can experience convert attrition.

National Outreach

Fifty-one percent (51%) of the national population resides in a city with an LDS congregation. There are over 120 cities and communities with over 20,000 inhabitants without an LDS mission outreach center. Luxembourg, the least populated province, is the only province without a mission outreach center and accounts for 2.5% of the national population. Cities that once had LDS congregations constitute 3% of the national population.

National outreach has not been significantly reduced in the 2000s despite the consolidation of 35% of original wards and branches, as most discontinued units operated in smaller cities or near other LDS congregations. Most consolidated branches had few active members and appeared to rely on a few local leaders or full-time missionaries to function. Many of these areas had less receptive populations to LDS missionary efforts. Developed transportation systems have likely contributed to mission and regional church leadership decisions to consolidate congregations. During the 2000s, no additional mission outreach centers were established in the largest Belgian cities of Brussels, Antwerp, and Liege despite larger populations and greater receptivity. Distance from LDS meetinghouses in urban areas creates logistical and transportation challenges for many members. Creating dependent branches and groups in sectors of the largest cities that are distant to the nearest LDS meetinghouse may facilitate expansion of national outreach and reverse the trend of congregation consolidations experienced in the 2000s.

The Church maintains an Internet site for Belgium in Dutch and English at <http://www.kerkvanjesuschristus.be/>. The website contains local news, information on church beliefs, and links to other official LDS websites like the meetinghouse locator and mormon.org. The high rate of Internet use among many Belgians offers opportunities for Latter-day Saints to use online social networking sites to perform member-missionary work, such as Facebook. Shortly after the Church launched its first official website, Belgium ranked among the twenty countries with the most visitors to the new site.²⁰³⁶ However, it is unclear whether online outreach has contributed to church growth in Belgium in view of declining membership and small numbers of convert baptisms in recent years.

Mission outreach directed toward immigrants can facilitate the introduction of the Church to some currently unreached or lesser-reached countries. Some of the first Guinean and Gambian Latter-day Saint joined the Church in Belgium. Coordination with area presidencies that administer the home countries of these immigrant groups will be required for any systematic progress to occur abroad.

²⁰³⁵ "The Church in Europe," *Ensign*, Aug 1973, 16–35.

²⁰³⁶ "Internet users find web site," *LDS Church News*, 1 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29302/Internet-users-find-LDS-web-site.html>

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Convert retention rates appeared mediocre to low during the 2000s as indicated by LDS membership increase, but there was a decline in the number of congregations. At present, non-Belgians appear to constitute over half of convert baptisms due to higher receptivity to the LDS Church. Retention rates among foreign converts have been low due to language and integration issues as well as cultural backgrounds as “consumers” rather than “producers” of religiosity. Many are unaccustomed to expectations of lay members participating and serving regularly in the church. The transient lifestyle of many nonnatives also reduces member activity rates.

Belgians who become LDS must overcome many secular and cultural obstacles that prevent many others from becoming interested in the Church or following church teachings. Native Belgians who join the Church often are dedicated and devoted, develop habits of regular church attendance, and have socially integrated into their respective congregations but are few in number. However, divorce rates are high even among Belgium Latter-day Saints, and most active LDS families have lost one or more children to inactivity. High costs of living for full-time missionaries and limited missionary resources dedicated to Europe demand greater member involvement in missionary activity in order to increase convert baptism rates, improve convert retention, and reduce dependence on foreign full-time missionaries.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Latter-day Saints have faced ethnic integration issues in Belgium for decades, but these challenges have been primarily language based and not ethnicity based. Belgian members appear to accommodate immigrant converts in their respective congregations, especially French-speaking Africans or those who learn one of the three official Belgian languages. French-speaking congregations in Flanders and Dutch-speaking congregations in Wallonia accommodate Belgians residing outside of their traditional ethno-linguistic regions.

Language Issues

The Church has translated LDS materials in the three official languages of Belgium. Indigenous languages without translations of LDS materials appear unlikely to have materials in the future. Containing few literary and vocabulary variations with standard Dutch, Flemish is unlikely to merit its own translations of LDS materials and scriptures, as dissimilarities with Dutch are primarily phonological. Originating among Latin speakers over a millennia ago, Walloon is spoken in informal settings and virtually all speakers are bilingual in French today. Over the past several decades, the Church has struggled to meet the needs of immigrant groups that do not speak one of the three official languages proficiently. Language-specific congregations in larger cities with concentrations of immigrants from North Africa, Italy, Turkey, and Spanish-speaking nations may facilitate greater breakthroughs and progress establishing the Church over the long term and expand national outreach.

Missionary Service

The LDS Church has greatly reduced the number of full-time missionaries assigned to Belgium to approximately a third of the levels reported in the 1980s and 1990s. Despite this reduction, Belgium remains dependent on foreign full-time missionaries to staff its current missionary force, as few serve LDS missions. Stable numbers of youth and young adults enrolled in seminary and institute in the late 2000s indicate that there are prospective full-time missionaries among local members that are active in the Church. Greater emphasis on missionary preparation may help increase the percentage of Belgians that complete full-time missions.

Local members in the past have achieved success in member-missionary approaches. During a ten-year period, thirty-eight converts were baptized through the efforts of an LDS family from Herstal that invited over 250 individuals to family home evenings.²⁰³⁷

Leadership

Belgium benefits from well-trained local leadership that can administer the responsibilities and needs of two stakes. Belgian LDS leaders have occasionally served in international leadership positions. Elder Charles Didier from Liege was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy in 1975. Prior to his calling to the Seventy, Elder Didier served as a regional representative and presided over the France-Switzerland Mission from 1970 to 1973. In 1992, Elder Didier was called to the Presidency of the Seventy and became the executive director of the Priesthood Department of the Church.²⁰³⁸ Elder Didier was called to the Presidency of the Seventy again in 2001.²⁰³⁹ A lack of leadership in lesser-reached areas appears a major obstacle for the Church to create additional congregations.

Temple

Both Belgian stakes pertain to The Hague Netherlands Temple district. Local members benefit from close proximity to the temple, which is uncommon for countries with as few Latter-day Saints as Belgium. Non-Dutch-speaking members in Belgium must be self-sustaining in the allocation of temple staff, as Dutch is the primary language used in the temple. Prospects for a temple in Belgium appear unlikely due to the small size of Church membership in the region, stagnant growth for the past decade, close proximity to the temple, and The Hague Netherlands Temple operating well under capacity. In 2010, the temple was opened Thursday through Saturday with four sessions on Thursday and Friday and three on Saturday.

Comparative Growth

Belgium was one of the only European countries to experience LDS membership decline in the late 2000s. The Netherlands and France—countries with generally low levels of religious participation in the population and similar demographics with Belgium—have achieved consistent membership growth but have also experienced a decline in LDS congregations during the 2000s. Belgium and the Netherlands are among countries that have experienced the greatest congregational declines in Europe as both countries have had 20% or more of the congregations operating in 2000 discontinued by 2010. The percentage of Latter-day Saints in Belgium is comparable to the Netherlands, France, and other European nations with a long-term LDS presence. The Church has achieved greater national outreach in Belgium than in most European countries primarily due to its small geographic size and highly urbanized population.

Missionary-oriented Christian groups report slow growth. Jehovah's Witnesses are one of the most successful denominations, as they number nearly 25,000 active members and rely on member-missionary approaches to sustain growth. Witnesses gained over 400 new converts in 2009. Seventh Day Adventists generally baptize fewer than one hundred converts a year and gained only two new congregations over the past decade. Adventists reported half as many members as Latter-day Saints, but appear to have as many or more active members as the LDS Church. Christian groups in Belgium that gain the greatest success have developed appropriate immigrant outreach, rely on member-missionary efforts for growth, and avoid congregation consolidations.

²⁰³⁷ Miasnik, Chris. "The Church in Belgium: Membership has international flavor in Church version of United Nations," LDS Church News, 7 December 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28444/6000-members-living-in-Belgium-have-rich-history.html>

²⁰³⁸ "2 called to presidency of the Seventy," LDS Church News, 27 June 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22625/2-called-to-presidency-of-the-Seventy.html>

²⁰³⁹ "Two new in Presidency of Seventy," LDS Church News, 16 June 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40048/Two-new-in-Presidency-of-Seventy.html>

Future Prospects

The recent trends of slow to stagnant LDS membership growth, low receptivity, congregation consolidations, emigration of active members, and large cuts in the full-time missionary force, are appearing to stabilize but show no signs of improving from their present levels for the medium-term future. Efforts to increase the number of local members serving full-time missions may be among the most fruitful to pursue at present, as additional native missionaries would help staff Belgian's missionary needs, improve member activity rates, and provide more experienced and knowledgeable leadership over the long term. Specialized mission outreach initiatives are greatly needed for the large numbers of immigrant groups and may facilitate the establishment of the LDS Church in currently unreached nations or areas from which these immigrant converts originate. Such efforts among the most receptive are uncoordinated and have yet to reach their full potential.

DENMARK

Geography

AREA: 43,094 square km. Geographically Scandinavia's smallest country, Denmark is located in Northern Europe and consists of the Jutland Peninsula and many islands in the Baltic Sea, notably Zealand (Sjælland) and Funen (Fyn). Germany borders the Jutland Peninsula. Terrain primarily consists of flat, low-elevation plains. Temperate climate modified by the surrounding ocean generate mild winters and cool summers and humid, overcast weather conditions. Denmark controls the Danish Straits that bridge the North and Baltic Seas. Flooding is a natural hazard. Environmental issues include pollution and fresh water contamination from pesticides and animal waste. Denmark is divided into five administrative regions.

Peoples

Dane: 90%

Other: 10%

Other ethnic groups consist of Germans, Faroese, Greenlanders, Eastern Europeans, and African immigrants.

Population: 5,543,453 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.239% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.74 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 76.39 male, 81.31 female (2012)

Languages: Danish (97%), other (3%). Danish is the official language. Faroese and German are recognized regionally. English is commonly spoken as a second language. Only Danish has over one million speakers (5.4 million).

Literacy: 99% (2003)

History

The Danes were the first recorded inhabitants of the Jutland Peninsula and neighboring islands since antiquity and are of Gothic-Germanic stock. Denmark emerged as a major regional power during the Viking age from the ninth to eleventh centuries and for a thirty-year period was united with England under King Canute. Christianity spread to Denmark in the twelfth century, and the influence of the Catholic Church increased. Tension between royalty and nobility increased during the late Middle Ages. By the fourteenth century, Queen Margrete I brought Norway, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands under the Danish crown. Danish rule over Sweden and Finland lasted until 1520, and the Danish provinces in present-day southern Sweden were lost to Sweden in 1658. The Reformation arrived to Denmark in 1536, and over time, nearly the entire population converted to Lutheranism. Denmark allied with Napoleonic France in the early nineteenth century and ceded Norway to Sweden in 1814 following defeat. By 1849, a constitutional monarchy form of government was established. Following the loss of Schleswig-Holstein to Prussia in 1864, a policy of neutrality was adopted that was maintained during both world wars. German occupation began in 1940 and liberation by Allied forces occurred in 1945.²⁰⁴⁰ Denmark joined NATO in 1949 and the European

²⁰⁴⁰ "Background Note: Denmark," Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 3 June 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3167.htm>

Economic Community (the European Union) in 1973. Over the past half century, economic growth and prosperity have contributed to Denmark's political and economic role in the European Union and northern Europe today. Denmark has refused to participate in several aspects of the European Union's Maastricht Treaty, such as the adoption of the Euro currency and defense cooperation.

Culture

The Danish possess a long-standing, proud heritage of scientists, researchers, philosophers, writers, architects, dancers, cinematographers, artists, and musicians that are internationally renowned for their cultural and scientific achievements. Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen created the well-known Christus statue in the late 1820s, and reproductions of the statue have been frequently used by the LDS Church in visitor centers and temple annexes.²⁰⁴¹ The term Danish has become synonymous with high quality craftsmanship for many products and interior designs. Many museums and castles dot the landscape and are a tribute to Denmark's medieval history and Viking legacy. The government has sought to preserve and encourage cultural uniqueness to Denmark, spending slightly over 1% of the 2008 public budget on culture.²⁰⁴² Society has grown increasingly more secular over the past century. Cigarette and alcohol consumption rates are among the highest rates of use in the world. Divorce rates are high.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$40,200 (2011) [83.6% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.895

Corruption Index: 9.4 (2011)

Denmark has developed a modern, high-tech market economy heavily integrated into international trade that is well diversified and specialized in many sectors, including renewable energy, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and maritime shipping. Government welfare redistributes wealth equally among the population. The global financial crisis plummeted the economy into recession, but the Danish economy remains one of the most financially secure economies in Europe. The aging population is an evolving challenge for maintaining economic growth. Services employ 77% of the work force and generate 76% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 20% of the work force and generates 23% of the GDP. Metals, chemicals, food processing, machinery, clothing, electronics, construction, wood products, shipbuilding, pharmaceuticals, and medical equipment are major industries. Agriculture accounts for less than 3% of the labor force and GDP. Barley, wheat, potatoes, and sugar beets are common crops. Additional agricultural products include fish, pork, and dairy products. The primary trade partners include Germany, Sweden, and Norway. Denmark experiences one of the lowest rates of corruption worldwide.

Faiths

Christian: 98%

Muslim: 2%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Evangelical Lutheran 5,239,796

Catholic 38,000

²⁰⁴¹ "Keys of the kingdom," LDS Church News, 20 January 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50047/Keys-of-the-kingdom.html>

²⁰⁴² "Background Note: Denmark," Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 3 June 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3167.htm>

Jehovah's Witnesses 14,450 197
 Serbian Orthodox 7,000
 Baptists 5,200
 Latter-day Saints 4,376 23
 Pentecostal 3,700
 Seventh Day Adventists 2,509 45 (includes Greenland and the Faeroe Islands)

Religion

Official statistics from April 2010 indicate that 80.7% of the population are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC), a decline from the 1980s when over 90% of the citizens were members of the ELC. A large number of those who have left the ELC have joined other Christian denominations. Less than 3% of citizens attend the ELC regularly, whereas up to 65% of citizens attend at least once annually for religious holidays and special ceremonies such as marriages and funerals. Church attendance on religious holidays for Lutherans has increased in recent years. Muslims account for the second largest religious group, comprised principally of immigrants, and are concentrated in the largest cities. There are approximately 6,000 Jews and 4,400 Buddhists.²⁰⁴³

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the law. The constitution declares that the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC) is the state church, demands that the state financially support the church, and stipulates that the ruling monarch must be a member of the Church. Funding for the ELC primarily comes from a church tax paid by its members; government subsidies account for 12% of church revenue. Only the ELC may officially register births and deaths. Many Christian holidays are recognized as national holidays. The government has approved 116 religious communities and churches to perform marriages, obtain residence permits for foreign religious workers, and receive some tax exemptions. To register with the government a religious group must submit a document summarizing traditions, rules, and beliefs, a description of the group's most important practices, a list of members' and leaders' permanent addresses, and an audited financial statement. Missionary work and proselytism may occur as long as they do not interfere with public order or morality. Public schools are required to teach students about the ELC. There have been some societal instances of abuse of religious freedom targeting Jews and Muslims. Occasional conflict occurs between Jewish and Muslim communities.²⁰⁴⁴

Largest Cities

Urban: 87%

Copenhagen, Aarhus, Odense, Aalborg, Esbjerg, Randers, **Kolding**, Horsens, **Vejle**, Roskilde.
 Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Eight of the ten of the largest cities have an LDS congregation. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of the national population resides in the ten most populous cities.

LDS History

The first known Danes to join the LDS Church were Danish-Americans who were baptized in 1843 in

²⁰⁴³ "Denmark," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148929.htm>

²⁰⁴⁴ "Denmark," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148929.htm>

Boston, Massachusetts. In 1849, the Danish Constitution went into effect and granted religious freedom, allowing Elders Erastus Snow and Peter O. Hansen to open the Scandinavian Mission in Denmark the same year. Fifteen converts were baptized in Denmark in August 1850, and later that year, the first LDS branch was organized with fifty members. A second branch was organized the following year, and the Book of Mormon was translated into Danish, becoming the first foreign language translation of LDS scriptures. By 1852, the first converts immigrated to Utah to join the main body of Latter-day Saints. By the end of 1869, approximately half of the LDS converts in the Scandinavian Mission immigrated to Utah. In 1905, the Scandinavian Mission divided to create the Swedish Mission, and by 1920, the Church organized the Danish Mission. The Danish Mission president received permission from the government to perform marriages in 1970.²⁰⁴⁵ Seminary and institute commenced in the mid-1970s. LDS Church President Gordon B. Hinckley met with members in 1996. In 1998, President Thomas S. Monson rededicated Denmark for missionary work.²⁰⁴⁶ In 2000, Denmark was assigned to the Europe Central area²⁰⁴⁷ and in the late 2000 was reassigned to the Europe Area. Latter-day Saints with Danish ancestry commemorated the emigration of early Danish converts in the 1850s by participating in a sea trek by ship from Denmark to the United States in 2001.²⁰⁴⁸ In 2005, Elder L. Tom Perry met with civic and government leaders and explained how LDS Church teachings can answer many societal challenges.²⁰⁴⁹

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 4,376 (2012)

In 1857, 2,317 of the 3,353 members in the Scandinavian Mission were Danes (69%). Four hundred ten converts were baptized in Denmark and Norway in 1910.²⁰⁵⁰ Between 1852 and 1900, approximately 18,000 Danish Latter-day Saints emigrated to Utah.²⁰⁵¹

The number of convert baptisms varied from fifty and 200 a year between 1966 and 1973.²⁰⁵² There were approximately 4,500 Latter-day Saints in Denmark in 1975.²⁰⁵³ Membership stood at 4,300 in 1987, 4,400 in 1993, and 4,600 in 1997. Stagnant membership growth characterized the 2000s as membership ranged from a high of 4,519 in 2000 to a low of 4,336 in 2005. Annual membership growth rates ranged from -2.1% in 2005 to a high of 0.6% in 2009. By 2010, an estimated 30,000 Danes had joined the Church since 1850.²⁰⁵⁴

The number of annual convert baptisms in the Arhus Denmark Stake between 2005 and 2009 ranged from a low of twenty in 2008 to a high of forty in 2009. Most convert baptisms in the stake were Danes in 2010. Total membership in the Arhus Denmark Stake generally increased by twenty members a year in the late

²⁰⁴⁵ "Highlights of the Church in Scandinavia," *Ensign*, July 1974, 48.

²⁰⁴⁶ "Six more temples announced; total now 108," *LDS Church News*, 27 March 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35432/Six-more-temples-announced-total-now-108.html>

²⁰⁴⁷ Lloyd, Scott. "European continent realigned into three new areas," *LDS Church News*, 16 September 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38475/European-continent---realigned-into-three-new-areas.html>

²⁰⁴⁸ Lloyd, R. Scott. "Sea trekkers make connections in Denmark," *LDS Church News*, 11 August 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40319/Sea-trekkers-make-connections-in-Denmark.html>

²⁰⁴⁹ Anderson, Niels-Ove. "Danish ties renewed," *LDS Church News*, 7 May 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47268/Danish-ties-renewed.html>

²⁰⁵⁰ "Highlights of the Church in Scandinavia," *Ensign*, July 1974, 48.

²⁰⁵¹ "Large migration of Danish converts is subject of exhibit," *LDS Church News*, 10 February 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39309/Large-migration-of-Danish-converts-is-subject-of-exhibit.html>

²⁰⁵² "The Saints in Scandinavia," *Ensign*, July 1974, 28.

²⁰⁵³ Lloyd, R. Scott. "Common heritage," *LDS Church News*, 11 August 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40327/Common-heritage.html>

²⁰⁵⁴ "Mormon Church in Denmark: Celebrating 160 years," *LDS Church News*, 10 July 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59579/Mormon-Church-in-Denmark-Celebrating-160-years.html>

2000s. There were over 2,100 members in the Arhus Denmark Stake by year-end 2010. In 2009, one in 1,257 was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 13 Branches: 10 (April 2012)

The first stake was organized in Copenhagen in 1974 followed by a second stake organized in Arhus in 1978. There were twenty-two congregations in 1987, increasing to twenty-three in 1993 and twenty-four in 1997. By year-end 2000, there were twenty-five congregations, including fourteen wards. The number of congregations declined to twenty-two in 2002 and increased to twenty-three in 2003 and twenty-four in 2004. In 2005, there were twenty-three congregations. Congregations consolidated in the 2000s include the Tastrup and Lyngby Wards and the Helsingor Branch. During the 2000s, the Horsens Branch became a ward. In early 2011, the Arhus Denmark Stake had seven wards and six branches, whereas the Copenhagen Denmark Stake had six wards and three branches. The Denmark Copenhagen Mission Branch is also based in Denmark and serves members residing in remote locations mainly in Greenland, Iceland, and the Faroe Islands. In 2010, the Odense 2nd Ward was facilitating the establishment of an LDS congregation in Svendborg as a result of recent convert baptisms in the area.

Activity and Retention

Over 600 attended a regional conference for Scandinavia in 1966. Seventy-five patriarchal blessings were given in 1971.²⁰⁵⁵ Seven hundred members from Denmark and western Sweden attended the groundbreaking for the Copenhagen Denmark Temple.²⁰⁵⁶ Over 1,000 attended a statue unveiling with Elder Russell M. Nelson commemorating the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Church.²⁰⁵⁷ Approximately 4,000 members from Denmark, western Sweden, and Iceland attended a member meeting with President Hinckley in 2004 prior to the dedication of the Copenhagen Denmark Temple.²⁰⁵⁸ 25,512 attended the temple open house, and 3,419 attended the dedicatory services.²⁰⁵⁹ Three hundred sixty-eight were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year; approximately one hundred more than the previous school year. The average number of members per congregation slightly declined between 2000 and 2009 from 195 to 191.

There were thirty members in the Rønne Branch in 1988.²⁰⁶⁰ Before seminary and institute commenced in Copenhagen, only 20%–40% of youth Latter-day Saints remained active. By 1993, 75% to 80% of youth remained active due to attendance in seminary and institute that stressed the development of personal scripture study. Reactivation efforts came to greater fruition in the early 1990s.²⁰⁶¹ The Nykøbing-Falster Branch had fewer than twenty active members in early 2011. In mid-2010, sixty of the 200 members in the Arhus Ward were active. The Arhus Denmark Stake reported no change in sacrament attendance during the late 2000s, and sacrament meeting attendance accounted for 38% of church membership in the stake in late

²⁰⁵⁵ "Highlights of the Church in Scandinavia," *Ensign*, July 1974, 48.

²⁰⁵⁶ "Danish chapel will become new temple," *LDS Church News*, 29 May 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35833/Danish-chapel-will-become-new-temple.html>

²⁰⁵⁷ Stevenson, Ford. "Church marks 150 years in Scandinavia," *LDS Church News*, 15 July 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38129/Church-marks-150-years-in-Scandinavia.html>

²⁰⁵⁸ Avant, Gerry. "Influence of Scandinavian saints," *LDS Church News*, 29 May 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45634/Influence-of-Scandinavian-saints.html>

²⁰⁵⁹ "Facts about the Copenhagen Denmark Temple," *LDS Church News*, 29 May 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45631/Facts-about-the-Copenhagen-Denmark-Temple.html>

²⁰⁶⁰ "From around the world," *LDS Church News*, 13 August 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17740/From-around-the-world.html>

²⁰⁶¹ Gram, Carsten. "Copenhagen: Center for Scandinavian LDS emigration in 1800s experiences new growth in the twentieth century," *LDS Church News*, 18 September 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23655/Copenhagen—Center-for-Scandinavian-LDS-emigration-in-1800s—experiences-new-growth-in-the-twentieth-century.html>

2010. Member activity rates for the Arhus Denmark Stake varied from a low of 20% to a high of 54% in late 2010. Most wards appear to have between fifty and one hundred active members whereas most branches tend to have fewer than fifty active membership. Some branches have as few as ten active members, whereas some wards have as many as 120 active members. Member activity rates for youth and children are high in the Arhus Denmark Stake (67%–87%), and approximately two-thirds of recent converts were retained in 2010. Nationwide active membership is estimated at 1,500, or 35% of total membership.

Finding

Nine television stations broadcasted a thirty-minute program produced by choirs from three wards in the Odense area in 1988.²⁰⁶² Full-time sister missionaries assigned to the Rønne Branch were featured in a local newspaper and on a radio program in 1988.²⁰⁶³ In 1993, a stake president was interviewed on one of the most popular television shows in Copenhagen.²⁰⁶⁴ In 2007, thirty-six Latter-day Saint young single adults held a choir performance in the Cathedral of Copenhagen, which was viewed by 160 spectators.²⁰⁶⁵ That same year, members held a walk-a-thon and health fair in Copenhagen.²⁰⁶⁶

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Danish, German, Swedish, English.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are translated into Danish, German, and Swedish. The *Liahona* magazine has twelve issues a year in Danish, German, and Swedish.

Meetinghouses

The first church-built meetinghouse in Europe was built in Aalborg in 1907.²⁰⁶⁷ There were eighteen church-built chapels in 1974.²⁰⁶⁸ In early 2011, there were twenty-one LDS meetinghouses, most of which were built by the Church.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Humanitarian work has been limited to local members performing service projects or donating items for the needy both at home and abroad. Danish members and participants in a walk-a-thon in 2007 collected over \$1,800 in donations for the Danish Red Cross.²⁰⁶⁹ Members participated in Helping Hands projects in 2010 as part of the celebration of the 160th anniversary of the Church in Denmark. Projects included cleaning

²⁰⁶² "From around the world," LDS Church News, 13 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18325/From-around-the-world.html>

²⁰⁶³ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 13 August 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17740/From-around-the-world.html>

²⁰⁶⁴ Gram, Carsten. "Copenhagen: Center for Scandinavian LDS emigration in 1800s experiences new growth in the twentieth century," LDS Church News, 18 September 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23655/Copenhagen—Center-for-Scandinavian-LDS-emigration-in-1800s—experiences-new-growth-in-the-twentieth-century.html>

²⁰⁶⁵ "Choir in famous cathedral," LDS Church News, 9 June 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50673/Choir-in-famous-cathedral.html>

²⁰⁶⁶ Ramstack, Tom. "Danish walk-a-thon," LDS Church News, 8 September 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51033/Danish-walk-a-thon.html>

²⁰⁶⁷ "Highlights of the Church in Scandinavia," *Ensign*, July 1974, 48.

²⁰⁶⁸ "The Saints in Scandinavia," *Ensign*, July 1974, 28.

²⁰⁶⁹ Ramstack, Tom. "Danish walk-a-thon," LDS Church News, 8 September 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51033/Danish-walk-a-thon.html>

roads, serving the elderly, beautifying parks, and collecting toiletries and towels to send to Haiti to earthquake victims.²⁰⁷⁰

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Latter-day Saints face no governmental restrictions impeding worship, assembly, or proselytism. Foreign missionaries serve regularly in Denmark. The LDS Church is among the 116 religious communities with approval for performing marriages in Denmark.²⁰⁷¹

Cultural Issues

Extremely low rates of church attendance and widespread secularism are the foremost barriers to LDS mission outreach in Denmark. The lack of successful LDS missionary approaches tailored to a nominal Christian population with little regular religious involvement has resulted in stagnant membership growth for several decades. Greater receptivity among non-Danes through full-time missionary finding efforts has resulted in increasing numbers of convert baptisms among immigrant groups, but many immigrant groups exhibit low to modest levels of convert retention due to ethnic integration issues, language barriers, and inordinate distances traveled to reach LDS meetinghouses, transient lifestyles, and lack of tradition of church service in their native cultures. Local member-missionary efforts appear largely responsible for finding and baptizing Danes, who also exhibit higher retention. The Church has responded to the challenging proselytism climate by focusing on the more receptive youth and young single adult populations through emphasis on seminary and institute attendance. Young single adult outreach centers may secure long-term growth and sustainability of current Latter-day Saint populations by providing a social LDS outlet and opportunities for local single members to date and marry fellow Latter-day Saints. High smoking and alcohol use rates challenge efforts for local members to abstain from these substances and create obstacles for full-time missionaries in teaching those who habitually smoke and drink. Casual sexual relations are commonplace and oppose church teachings.

National Outreach

Forty-one percent (41%) of the national population resides in a city with an LDS congregation, and all five administrative regions have multiple LDS congregations. Sixteen of the thirty-two cities with over 20,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. The city with the smallest population with an LDS congregation is Ronne (13,900 inhabitants). Several cities without LDS congregations are within ten kilometers of an LDS meetinghouse, which may increase the percentage of the population receiving limited mission outreach to 50%. The percentage of Latter-day Saints and extent of mission outreach appears consistent throughout Denmark's five administrative regions, as indicated by an average of one LDS congregation per 200,000 to 300,000 inhabitants for each region.

Several active and less active Latter-day Saints reside in cities without a nearby congregation. Coordinating finding and reactivation efforts with stake and mission leaders will be required to effectively extend outreach to these areas. Church planting efforts appear to have come to some fruition in Svendborg in 2010. Holding cottage meetings and forming dependent branches and groups in these locations offer opportunities to expand national outreach, generate a flexible approach to gauge receptivity in lesser-reached cities and towns with a small nucleus of members, and may lead to a reversal of the thirty-five-year trend of stagnant membership and

²⁰⁷⁰ "Mormon Church in Denmark: Celebrating 160 years," LDS Church News, 10 July 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59579/Mormon-Church-in-Denmark-Celebrating-160-years.html>

²⁰⁷¹ "Denmark," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148929.htm>

congregational growth. However, a lack of priesthood holders in these areas prevent the establishment of independent congregations in the near term. Emigration remains an enduring challenge for maintaining current levels of national outreach. A Danish-speaking branch was organized in Salt Lake City in 1963,²⁰⁷² likely as a result of Danish members immigrating to the United States but has since been discontinued. Member-missionary efforts among Africans provide opportunities for the Church to expand outreach in Africa. For instance, the first Ugandan to join the Church in Uganda initially learned about the LDS Church through a pen pal in Denmark.²⁰⁷³

Internet proselytism prospects are favorable. In 1997, Denmark ranked among the top fifteen countries with the most visitors to the Church's website,²⁰⁷⁴ and in 2003, Denmark was among the first eight nations to receive a country-specific LDS website.²⁰⁷⁵ The Church continues to maintain the Denmark website at <http://www.mormon.dk/>, providing Danish-language LDS materials, a meetinghouse locator, local and international LDS news, and contact information for visits from full-time missionaries. Use of the website by missionaries and members can increase national outreach, provide accurate information for those earnestly seeking to learning about the Church, and offer some outreach to unreached areas.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

The influence of secularism on Danish society has reduced church attendance and member activity levels in some areas. Reactivation efforts have experienced little success, according to full-time missionary reports. Quick-baptism techniques among non-Danes, especially African immigrants or students, has led to lower convert retention rates, as many do not develop habitual church attendance and face logistical challenges traveling to church. Full-time missionaries report that long travel times have reduced member activity rates in some congregations, such as the Randers Branch. Opening additional congregations in cities distant from currently established congregations may improve local member activity rates over time, but small numbers of faithful members reduce opportunities for fellowshiping at church and may create additional challenges in maintaining member activity rates.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Active membership in most congregations reflects Danish demographics for the general population. High receptivity among immigrant groups has resulted in increasing numbers of nonnative European members, albeit many demonstrate lower activity rates. Mounting anti-immigrant sentiment in recent years may create challenges for some native members to accommodate the needs of immigrant converts. Full-time missionaries report that language barriers and long distances to travel to church are the primary obstacles for better integration of immigrant converts.

Language Issues

Widespread use of Danish as a first or second language simplifies mission outreach efforts and facilitates the integration of differing ethnic groups into the same congregations. The creation of an international congregation to accommodate non-Danish speakers in the Copenhagen area may improve member activity and convert retention rates among non-Danes and facilitate greater testimony building, gospel instruction, and

²⁰⁷² "Highlights of the Church in Scandinavia," *Ensign*, July 1974, 48.

²⁰⁷³ "From a tiny start, Church begins to grow in African nation of Uganda," *LDS Church News*, 30 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20973/From-a-tiny-start-Church-begins-to-grow-in-African-nation-of-Uganda.html>

²⁰⁷⁴ "Internet users find LDS web site," *LDS Church News*, 1 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29302/Internet-users-find-LDS-web-site.html>

²⁰⁷⁵ "Church establishing country-specific Web sites," *LDS Church News*, 15 November 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44674/Church-establishing-country-specific-Web-sites.html>

sustainability of immigrant Latter-day Saint populations. Greenlandic and Faroese, which together have approximately 100,000 speakers worldwide, remain without LDS materials.

Missionary Service

In 1972, there were eighteen native Danish missionaries serving in Norway, Germany, England, and Denmark.²⁰⁷⁶ Danish members frequently served full-time missions in the late 2000s but not in enough numbers to staff the missionary complement of the Denmark Copenhagen Mission. Increasing seminary and institute attendance in recent years may generate more local members who are willing and capable of full-time missionary service, thereby reducing reliance on foreign missionaries to staff local missionary needs.

Leadership

Denmark possesses a small, stable, and well-trained body of local priesthood leadership capable of staffing the administrative needs of two stakes and a temple. All congregations appear to be administered by local leaders. A shortage of prospective leaders in some unreached or lesser-reached cities may prevent the organization of additional congregations. Danish members have served in several international church leadership positions. In 1966, Don L. Christensen was called as a regional representative.²⁰⁷⁷ In 1995, Knud B. Andersen from Fredericia²⁰⁷⁸ was called to preside over the Denmark Copenhagen Mission.²⁰⁷⁹ In 2010, Jens Hjarup Andersen from Allerød was called to preside over the Denmark Copenhagen Mission,²⁰⁸⁰ and Hans Hjort Rode Nielsen from Soborg was called as the Copenhagen Denmark Temple president.²⁰⁸¹

Temple

Denmark is assigned to the Copenhagen Denmark Temple district. Announced in 1999 and dedicated in 2004, the temple is one of three temples worldwide that was renovated from a preexisting church meeting-house. The Copenhagen Denmark Temple had one of the smallest temple districts in the world in 2011, as the temple serviced three stakes and mission branches in Greenland and Iceland. Notwithstanding the small size of the temple district and the temple operating well below capacity, the few local members in the district utilize the temple well. In 2011, endowment sessions occurred Tuesdays through Saturdays with two sessions on Wednesdays, three of Thursdays, six on Fridays, and three of Saturdays. Additional sessions are also available by appointment.

Comparative Growth

The percentage of Latter-day Saints in the general population and member activity rates in Denmark are representative of Scandinavia and higher than in most of Europe. The average number of members per congregation is less than 200 for Denmark, Finland, and Norway and among the lowest in the world, indicating a high degree of self-sustainability for local congregation despite few members. Denmark has one of the highest percentages of members enrolled in seminary or institute in Europe at 8%, a percentage comparable

²⁰⁷⁶ "The Saints in Scandinavia," *Ensign*, July 1974, 28.

²⁰⁷⁷ "Highlights of the Church in Scandinavia," *Ensign*, July 1974, 48.

²⁰⁷⁸ "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 4 March 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26636/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁰⁷⁹ "New mission presidents assigned," *LDS Church News*, 18 March 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26630/New-mission-presidents-assigned.html>

²⁰⁸⁰ "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 13 February 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/58779/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁰⁸¹ "New temple presidents," *LDS Church News*, 19 June 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59489/New-temple-presidents.html>

to Norway and Finland. The size of Latter-day Saint membership and membership growth trends are comparable to Norway and Finland. The Copenhagen Denmark, Stockholm Sweden, and Helsinki Finland Temples are among the most utilized temples in the world among temples with four or fewer stakes within a temple district.

Missionary-minded Christian churches report some of the poorest church growth trends worldwide. Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses gain few new converts. Total church membership and the number of congregations declined for Adventists during the 2000s. Jehovah's Witnesses experience slow membership growth, but widespread national outreach with over 200 congregations.

Future Prospects

Stagnant membership and congregational growth have persisted for several decades and will likely continue for the foreseeable future due to low rates of receptivity, small numbers of convert baptisms, moderate rates of convert retention, and high rates of member activity among youth. The greatest challenge for the Church in the coming decade will be maintain the current level of national outreach by avoiding congregation consolidations and augmenting the number of local members that serve full-time missions. Continuing mission outreach directed toward youth and young adults and focusing on member-missionary work appear the most favorable options for proselytism at present.

President Hinckley stated the following in 1996: "There are now nine million or more of us. There ought to be a lot more in Denmark. Well, that's up to you—I believe you could double the membership of the Church here in five years. I really believe that. If you would work and pray and pray and work and concentrate on doing it at every opportunity and go forward in faith and without fear."²⁰⁸²

²⁰⁸² Hart, John L. "Prophet visits 5 European countries, asks saints to keep commandments," LDS Church News, 22 June 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27991/Prophet-visits-5-European-countries-asks-saints-to-keep-commandments.html>

FINLAND

Geography

AREA: 338,145 square km. Constituting easternmost Scandinavia, Finland borders Russia, Sweden, Norway, and the Baltic Sea. Tens of thousands of lakes dot the landscape, which consists of low elevation plains and small hills. Due to its northern location, Finland experiences subarctic conditions in the north, whereas southern and central areas are subject to cold temperate climate due to the surrounding sea warmed by the North Atlantic Current. Forest covers most areas. Environmental issues include pollution and habitat loss. Finland is divided into twenty administrative regions.

Peoples

Finn: 93.4%
Swede: 5.6%
Russian: 0.5%
Estonian: 0.3%
Roma: 0.1%
Sami: 0.1%

Population: 5,262,930 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.065% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.73 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 75.94 male, 83.02 female (2012)

Languages: Finnish (91.2%), Swedish (5.5%), other (3.3%). Finnish and Swedish are official languages. Other commonly spoken languages include Russian, Estonian, Roma, and Sami. Only Finnish has over one million speakers (4.91 million).

Literacy: 100% (2000)

History

Prehistoric tribes settled Finland several millennia BC. Sweden ruled Finland between the twelfth and nineteenth centuries. Starting in 1809, Finland was an autonomous grand duchy under Russia. In 1917, Finland achieved independence. During World War II, Finland maintained its independence despite Soviet ambitions to annex Finland, yet lost some territory along the Russian border. Following World War II, Finland experienced rapid economic growth as GDP reached Western Europe levels after only a few decades. Finland joined the European Union in 1995 and was the first Scandinavian nation to adopt the Euro currency.

Culture

A progressive nation with a small population, Finland is well known for architecture, furniture, sculpting, and other visual arts. There have been many novelists and poets since the nineteenth century. Opera and music account for an important aspect of local culture and influence many other European nations. Finland has also been heavily involved in sports and the Olympic Games. Scenic landscapes provide abundant recreational

activity that attracts tourism.²⁰⁸³ Berries, whole grains, vegetables, and mushrooms heavily influence cuisine. Cigarette consumption rates rank average among Western European nations and less than the United States, whereas alcohol consumption rates are high.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$38,300 (2011) [79.6% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.882

Corruption Index: 9.4 (2011)

One of the most modern and industrialized nations in the world, Finland has a highly competitive economy that specializes in wood products, metals, electronics, telecommunications, and engineering. The economy fell into recession as a result of the world financial crisis in the late 2000s. Long-term economic challenges include the aging population and declining productivity. Agricultural activity is limited by the climate and employs less than 5% of the workforce. Barley, wheat, sugar beets, and potatoes are major crops. Services and industry constitute 66% and 30% of the GDP, respectively. Primary industries include metals, electronics, shipbuilding, machinery, wood products, and food products. Major trade partners include Germany, Sweden, Russia, and the Netherlands. Finland experiences one of the lowest rates of corruption worldwide.

Faiths

Christian: 84.8%

Other: 0.1%

None: 15.1%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Lutheran Church of Finland 4,335,431

Orthodox 57,806

Pentecostal 45,000

Jehovah's Witnesses 18,964 302

Catholic 9,000 7

Seventh Day Adventists 5,001 72

Latter-day Saints 4,745 30

Religion

Most Finns adhere to the Evangelical Lutheran Church. No non-Lutheran group constitutes over 1% of the population. The largest minority groups include Orthodox Christians, Pentecostal Christians, and Muslims. Nearly half a million have left the Lutheran Church over the past several decades. Finland has become increasingly secular, yet many regard religion as important and value their membership in the Lutheran Church despite not attending religious services regularly. A 2008 poll found that 73% of fifteen- to twenty-nine-year olds did not identify with a religious group. Most regard religion as a private matter.²⁰⁸⁴

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. There are two established

²⁰⁸³ "Finland," Wikipedia, retrieved 16 August 2010. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finland>

²⁰⁸⁴ "Finland," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127309.htm>

state churches: the Evangelical Lutheran Church and Orthodox Church. Those who claim membership in these denominations must pay an additional tax of 1%–2% to finance them. The law allows for individuals to change their religious affiliation and does not permit religious discrimination. Christian holidays are recognized national holidays. To register with the government, a religious group must have at least twenty members, have a set of rules, and must publicly practice its beliefs. Although nontraditional religious groups are not socially accepted, there have been no reports of discrimination. Proselytism from nontraditional religious groups can be poorly received, as religion is seen by many as a private matter.²⁰⁸⁵

Largest Cities

Urban: 63%

Helsinki, Espoo, Tampere, Vantaa, Turku, Oulu, Lahti, Kuopio, Jyväskylä, Pori.

All ten of the largest cities have an LDS congregation. Thirty-five percent (35%) of the national population resides in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

Missionary work began in the 1870s, and the first convert baptism occurred in 1876. Religious affairs were highly controlled and regulated by the government, resulting in little progress establishing the Church. Many of the early Finnish converts immigrated to Utah.²⁰⁸⁶ Missionary work in the 1800s was primarily limited to Swedish-speaking Finns. During the first decade of formal missionary work, twenty-five converts were baptized. Finland became part of the Swedish Mission in 1905.²⁰⁸⁷ Elder Ezra Taft Benson rededicated Finland for missionary work in 1946, and the Finnish Mission was organized in 1947.²⁰⁸⁸ When the Finnish Mission opened, only one branch met in the country, in Larsmo, and there were only a few members. International Church leadership was impressed with the degree of self-sustainability accomplished by local members and Swedish missionaries.²⁰⁸⁹ Seminary began in 1962, and institute classes were started in 1975. The first stake was created in 1977. Finland played a unique role in expanding missionary work in the former Soviet Union. In 1990, the Finland Helsinki East Mission was created to assist in the opening of the former Soviet Union to missionary work.²⁰⁹⁰ In 2000, President Gordon B. Hinckley announced a temple for Helsinki that would serve Finland and parts of northern Russia. That same year, Finland was transferred from the Europe North Area to the Europe Central Area.²⁰⁹¹ An American Latter-day Saint from Arizona was awarded Finland's medal-of-honor for two decades of work for Finland with the Consul of Finland in Arizona and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.²⁰⁹² Seven thousand attended a special conference with President Hinckley in 2006.²⁰⁹³

²⁰⁸⁵ "Finland," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127309.htm>

²⁰⁸⁶ "Retracing steps of Finland pioneers," LDS Church News, 17 May 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/52009/Retracing-steps-of-Finland-pioneers.html>

²⁰⁸⁷ "Finland," Deseret News 2010 Church News Almanac, p. 480.

²⁰⁸⁸ "The Saints in Scandinavia," Ensign, Jul 1974, 28.

²⁰⁸⁹ "Gospel ingrained in the lives and culture of Finnish members," LDS Church News, 27 September 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29381/Gospel-ingrained-in-the-lives-and-culture-of-Finnish-members.html>

²⁰⁹⁰ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 16 June 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19692/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁰⁹¹ Lloyd, Scott. "European continent realigned into three new areas," LDS Church News, 16 September 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38475/European-continent---realigned-into-three-new-areas.html>

²⁰⁹² "Finland official honors member for consul service," LDS Church News, 12 May 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39881/Finland-official-honors-member-for-consul-service.html>

²⁰⁹³ Stahle, Shaun D. "Make Finland glorious among the nations," LDS Church News, 28 October 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49694/Make-Finland-glorious-among-the-nations.html>

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 4,745 (2012)

In 1947, there were 129 LDS members.²⁰⁹⁴ Church membership stood at 3,500 in 1974.²⁰⁹⁵ In 1990, 125 people joined the Church and membership reached 4,200.²⁰⁹⁶ There were 4,455 members in 2000, increasing to 4,500 in 2005 and 4,533 in 2007. Annual membership growth rates have ranged from 0% to 0.66% over the past decade, with the highest growth rate occurring in 2009. Since 2000, the most membership has increased in one year is thirty. The recent increase in membership growth rates is partially attributed to non-Finnish immigrants joining the Church in larger numbers. In 2009, one in 1,148 people was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 15 Branches: 15 (April 2012)

Five branches functioned in Helsinki by 1974, and five districts operated throughout the country.²⁰⁹⁷ The first stake was created in Helsinki in 1977 followed by a second stake in Tampere in 1983.

By 1990, there were thirty congregations, including eleven wards and nineteen branches in two stakes, and three districts.²⁰⁹⁸ In 1999, there were stakes in Helsinki (seven wards and three branches) and Tampere (six wards and two branches) and districts in Kuopio (five branches), Oulu (four branches), and Pietersaari (three branches). In 2000, there were thirteen wards and eighteen branches for a total of thirty-one congregations. By 2006, there were fifteen wards and fifteen branches. In the mid-2000s, the Kuopio Finland District was discontinued. In 2010, there were eight wards and two branches in the Helsinki stake, seven wards and two branches in the Tampere stake, four branches in the Oulu district, and four branches in the Pietarsari district.

Activity and Retention

Strong member activity rates among youth were reported in the early 1990s. The Tampere Finland Stake had over 50% of its mission-aged young adults serving missions, and 70% of the youth were actively attending church.²⁰⁹⁹ Around 600 members attended the groundbreaking for the Helsinki Finland Temple in 2003.²¹⁰⁰ During the 2008–2009 school year, 464 participated in seminary or institute. Between 2000 and 2009, the average number of members per congregation increased from 144 to 153. Most wards have seventy-five to one hundred active members and most branches have fewer than fifty attending. Active members appear to number between 1,500 and 1,800, or 33%–40% of total church membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Finnish, Swedish, Russian, Estonian.

All LDS scriptures and a wide selection of church materials are translated into Finnish, Swedish, Russian, and Estonian. Only one Church video and stories from the Doctrine and Covenants are available in Estonian. The *Liabona* magazine has twelve issues in Finnish, Swedish, and Russian and one in Estonian a year.

²⁰⁹⁴ "Finland," Country Profiles, retrieved 17 August 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/finland>

²⁰⁹⁵ "The Saints in Scandinavia," *Ensign*, Jul 1974, 28.

²⁰⁹⁶ Florence, Giles H. Jr. "Suomi Finland: A Beacon in the Baltic," *Tambuli*, Oct 1992, 13.

²⁰⁹⁷ "The Saints in Scandinavia," *Ensign*, Jul 1974, 28.

²⁰⁹⁸ Florence, Giles H. Jr. "Suomi Finland: A Beacon in the Baltic," *Tambuli*, Oct 1992, 13.

²⁰⁹⁹ Florence, Giles H. Jr. "Suomi Finland: A Beacon in the Baltic," *Tambuli*, Oct 1992, 13.

²¹⁰⁰ Hietala, Kati. "Finland's temple groundbreaking," *LDS Church News*, 5 April 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43478/Finlands-temple-groundbreaking.html>

Meetinghouses

In 1974, there were twelve Church-built chapels in Finland.²¹⁰¹ In 2010, most congregations met in Church-built meetinghouses.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church has conducted few humanitarian projects in Finland due to high standards of living. Members have found opportunities for service. The Tampere Ward Relief Society created over fifty quilts that were donated to maternity hospitals in Russia.²¹⁰² An American youth delivered 1,300 pounds of English-language books to the small Russian border town of Uukuniemi, which previously had no foreign language books.²¹⁰³

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church faces no legal restrictions on proselytism. Foreign full-time missionaries serve regularly in Finland. Latter-day Saints appear to be generally respected socially but avoided.

Cultural Issues

Rapid modernization and secularization has turned religious matters into private affairs. Member-missionary work among associates and part-member families appear to be the most practical means of overcoming barriers to proselyte the general population overtime. Most Finns retain respect for religion and belief in God, which provides a foundation of faith that missionaries and member can build upon. Finnish members with large families have faced challenges meeting the economic needs of their children due to high cost of living.²¹⁰⁴

National Outreach

With the exception of the Aland Islands, all twenty administrative regions have LDS mission outreach centers. Many administrative regions contain only one or two congregations, resulting in large although sparsely populated areas of the country without nearby mission outreach. Fifty percent (50%) of the national population resides in a city with a mission outreach center. Approximately 60 cities between 10,000 and 55,000 inhabitants remain without LDS congregations and mission outreach centers.

Over the past six decades, some members have moved to cities and towns without a nearby ward or branch. Locating less active members in unreached areas and holding cottage meetings with interested individuals may eventually lead to the establishment of additional congregations in underserved areas.

In 1997, Finland ranked eleventh for countries with the most visitors to Church websites.²¹⁰⁵ By 2003, the Church had established an Internet site for Finland at <http://www.mormonit.fi>.²¹⁰⁶ The website contains

²¹⁰¹ "The Saints in Scandinavia," *Ensign*, Jul 1974, 28.

²¹⁰² "Blankets warm Finland, Russia relationship," *LDS Church News*, 19 January 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41207/Blankets-warm-Finland-Russia-relationship.html>

²¹⁰³ "Scots enrich tiny Finnish library," *LDS Church News*, 27 March 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45277/Scots-enrich-tiny-Finnish-library.html>

²¹⁰⁴ Florence, Giles H. Jr. "Suomi Finland: A Beacon in the Baltic," *Tambuli*, Oct 1992, 13.

²¹⁰⁵ "Internet users find LDS web site," *LDS Church News*, 1 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29302/Internet-users-find-LDS-web-site.html>

²¹⁰⁶ "Church establishing country-specific Web sites," *LDS Church News*, 15 November 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44674/Church-establishing-country-specific-Web-sites.html>

a map listing meetinghouse locations, explanations on Church doctrine, contact information for full-time missionaries, and a list of missionary resources in Finnish that can be mailed to interested individuals.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Finland appears to have one of the higher member activity rates for Europe, as indicated by the high percentage of members enrolled in seminary or institute and the operation of two stakes and two districts in a nation with fewer than 5,000 members. Norway and Denmark, which have similar numbers of LDS members, have only one stake and two stakes, respectively, no districts, and over a hundred fewer members enrolled in seminary or institute. The majority of active members appear to have been members of the Church for several decades. Success has been mixed at retaining converts in recent years, notwithstanding diligent fellowshipping efforts from local members. Non-Finns have demonstrated higher receptivity but have also experienced greater difficulties with integration due to language barriers and cultural differences.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The increasing number of non-Finn immigrant converts creates challenges integrating into established Finnish-speaking congregations. Many Finns speak English or a second language proficiently, which can assist the accommodation of immigrant converts. Few problems have been encountered integrating indigenous non-Finnish ethnic minority groups into predominantly Finnish congregations.

Language Issues

There is an ample supply of church materials in Finnish despite the small number of LDS members. The Finnish language is among the most difficult languages for foreign missionaries to master, presenting challenges for foreign missionaries to find and teach effectively. However, local members assist full-time missionaries with teaching, contributing to greater local self-sufficiency.

There are no language materials in Romani or Sami and very few members who speak these languages. Church materials are unlikely to be translated into Sami, as there are fewer than 30,000 native speakers of Sami throughout the whole of Scandinavia, and most educated Samis also speak Finnish or Norwegian. Even the translation of *The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony* could assist in outreach to this lesser-reached ethnic group. There are millions of Romani speakers throughout Europe who are in great need of LDS missionary outreach materials, but this population may not have language materials for many more years.

Missionary Service

In 1974, sixteen Finns were serving full-time missions.²¹⁰⁷ In 1990, there were 120 missionaries serving in Finland.²¹⁰⁸ In late 2009, there were fifty-five missionaries serving in Finland divided into two zones. The full-time missionary force has become increasingly more efficient in the past couple of decades, as fewer missionaries served in late 2009 but baptized more converts than most years when there were more than twice as many missionaries. Increases in convert baptisms may be due to greater involvement of local members in teaching and finding investigators as well as increased receptivity of non-Finnish immigrants.

²¹⁰⁷ "The Saints in Scandinavia," *Ensign*, Jul 1974, 28.

²¹⁰⁸ Florence, Giles H. Jr. "Suomi Finland: A Beacon in the Baltic," *Tambuli*, Oct 1992, 13.

"Internet users find LDS web site," *LDS Church News*, 1 March 1997.

Leadership

All wards and branches appear to be led by native members. Finnish members supply enough leadership to staff stakes and to serve as international church leaders in the past. The Church appears to have adequate priesthood leadership in the larger wards in the Helsinki area but has challenges filling all leadership positions in the small remote branches due primarily to the lack of members. In 1990, Kari Juhani Aslak Haikkola from Turku was called as a regional representative.²¹⁰⁹ In 2002, two of the three members of the stake presidency were Church employees.²¹¹⁰

Temple

Latter-day Saints in Finland have historically had high rates of temple attendance. Before the completion of the Stockholm Sweden Temple in 1985, members travelled to the Bern Switzerland Temple for several decades.²¹¹¹ Members attended faithfully at the time in organized temple trips, performing over 2,100 endowments in 1973.²¹¹²

The Helsinki temple was announced in 2000, and construction started in 2003. President Hinckley noted the day prior to the dedication of the Helsinki Finland Temple in 2006 that he hoped that the interest generated by the new temple would result in greater numbers of convert baptisms.²¹¹³ Prior to the temple dedication, a cultural night was held that 7,000 members from the new temple district attended.²¹¹⁴ Over 57,000 attended the temple open house, and 10,750 participated in the dedication in Finland. Many more viewed the proceedings throughout the temple district via satellite broadcast.²¹¹⁵ The Finland Helsinki Temple District includes Finland, the Russia St. Petersburg Mission, and Estonia. Due to the small size of Finland LDS membership, endowment sessions and other temple ordinances occur by appointment and must be scheduled beforehand.

Comparative Growth

Finland is one of the few industrialized European nations with a long-term LDS presence that has seen a slight increase in convert baptisms in recent years, although annual growth rates remain well below 1%. Most nations with a long-term LDS presence in Northern Europe have experienced no increase or decreases in convert baptisms. President Hinckley remarked on the slow growth of the Church in Finland in 2006, as over the past fifty-nine years membership had grown to less than 5,000 of Finland's five million inhabitants.²¹¹⁶ Activity rates are moderate to high for the region. Finland has one of the highest percentages of members who participate in seminary or institute in Europe at over 10%. The Helsinki Finland Temple open house experienced one of the largest attendances of any temple open house in proportion to the national LDS population, with nearly thirteen attending for every one LDS member. Finland is one of the countries with the smallest Latter-day Saint population to have an LDS temple. The size of LDS membership in Finland is

²¹⁰⁹ "New regional representatives," LDS Church news, 2 May 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22553/New-regional-representatives.html>

²¹¹⁰ "New stake presidents," LDS Church News, 9 November 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42784/New-stake-presidencies.html>

²¹¹¹ Hietala, Kati. "Finland's temple groundbreaking," LDS Church News, 5 April 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43478/Finlands-temple-groundbreaking.html>

²¹¹² "The Saints in Scandinavia," Ensign, Jul 1974, 28.

²¹¹³ Stahle, Shaun D. "Make Finland glorious among the nations," LDS Church News, 28 October 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49694/Make-Finland-glorious-among-the-nations.html>

²¹¹⁴ Stahle, Shaun D. "Uniquely United," LDS Church News, 28 October 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49692/Uniquely-United.html>

²¹¹⁵ "Helsinki Finland Temple," LDS Church News, 28 October 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49674/Helsinki-Finland-Temple.html>

²¹¹⁶ Stahle, Shaun D. "Make Finland glorious among the nations," LDS Church News, 28 October 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49694/Make-Finland-glorious-among-the-nations.html>

similar to Denmark and Norway, but unlike Finland, these nations have seen either no increase or a decrease in Latter-day Saints over the past three decades. The percentage of LDS members in the Finnish population is almost identical to the percentage of LDS members in Sweden and Norway.

Nontraditional Christian denominations struggle to gain converts. Seventh Day Adventists have experienced membership decline but a slight increase in congregations over the past decade, whereas Jehovah's Witnesses maintain slow but consistent growth with 300 congregations. Pentecostals report slow growth. Other Christian groups have been unable to develop successful outreach to the secular Lutheran majority or among the nonreligious youth and young adults.

Future Prospects

Moderate member activity levels, high rates of seminary and institute attendance, well-developed local leadership, and established church infrastructure provide local strength and self-sufficiency. Mission outreach centers are established in all the major cities, allowing for continued outreach to half of the population. The recent reduction in the full-time missionary force has increased the efficiency of missionary activities and encouraged greater member involvement. However, secularism, low receptivity, and the small number Latter-day Saint youth indicate that prospects for greater long-term growth are limited. The Church in Finland is likely to continue to experience annual growth rates below 1% for the medium-term future, although the impact of strong LDS membership in Finland will continue to be felt throughout the region for decades to come.

FRANCE

Geography

AREA: 643,427 square km. Geographically the largest nation in Western Europe, France borders Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Monaco, Spain, Andorra, the Mediterranean Sea, the Bay of Biscay, and the English Channel. The Pyrenees Mountains form the Spanish border and together with the Alps near the Swiss border account for mountainous areas in France. Most terrain consists of plains and rolling hills. Corsica, one of the largest Mediterranean islands, is also under French administration. Cool winters and mild summers characterize the climate in most areas. Mediterranean regions of France experience mild winters and hot summers. A recurrent wind known as *mistral* brings cold, dry air from the north/northwest to Mediterranean areas. Major rivers that travel through or border France include the Rhine, the Rhone, and Seine. Flooding, avalanches, windstorms, drought, and forest fires are natural hazards. Environmental issues include acid rain, air pollution, water pollution, and agricultural runoff. France is divided into twenty-six administrative regions, four of which are overseas regions (French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Reunion).

Peoples

French: 80.9%

North African: 9.6%

Sub-Saharan/Black African: 4%

German: 2.5%

Italian: 1.5%

Other: 1.5%

The French are a compound of Celtic and Latin peoples who have mixed for centuries. North Africans constitute the largest minority group and originate from the former French colonies of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. Germans and Italians tend to reside in regions bordering their traditional homeland nations. Other ethnicities account for 1.5% of the population and include Basque and immigrant groups from Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Caribbean.

Population: 62,814,233 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.497% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.08 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 78.35 male, 84.73 female (2012)

Languages: French (87%), Occitan (3%), German (2.5%), North African Arab dialects (2%), Italian (1.5%), Portuguese (1%), Breton (1%), Kabyle (1%), Corsican (0.5%), other (0.5%). French is the official language. Languages with over one million native speakers include French (54.6 million), Occitan (1.9 million), German (1.6 million), Arab dialects (1.3 million), and Italian (1.0 million).

Literacy: 99% (2003)

History

Celtic tribes inhabited present-day France anciently and came under Roman rule in the mid-first century BC. Following the demise of the Roman Empire in the following centuries, feudalism and various tribal forces controlled the region. The French formed one of Europe's first nation-states and France became one of Europe's most powerful nations during the seventeenth century. French power began to decline in the eighteenth century as a result of unsuccessful military campaigns and financial problems. The French Revolution occurred from 1789 to 1794 and came primarily as a result of poor economic conditions and a populace that grew weary of privileges granted only to nobles and clerics. Much of the nineteenth century was marked by militaristic, authoritarian governments and leaders including Napoleon, Louis XVIII, Louis-Philippe, and Napoleon III. France was devastated by World War I and suffered heavy military losses and economic degradation. Nazi Germany invaded France and overtook the country by July 1940. Allied forces liberated France in 1944. France struggled to administer its domestic and international affairs following the war, resulting in the formation of the Fifth Republic in 1958 under General de Gaulle. Heavy immigration from North Africa occurred in the 1960s and early 1970s, which changed the demographics of French society. France was one of the European Union's six founding states and maintains one of the strongest influences on the European Union today. France has taken part in international counterterrorism efforts in Afghanistan since 2001 and remains one of the foremost European powers today.²¹¹⁷

Culture

With one of the world's most influential cultures, France has contributed significantly to the development of culture in the Caribbean, North America, Europe, Africa, and Southeast Asia. French is one of the most commonly spoken second languages in Africa and is the official language of approximately thirty countries. The Catholic Church has traditionally been a dominant influence on society, and Catholicism remains one of the dominant Christian religions in most French colonial possessions. France has produced many famous artists, philosophers, fashion designers, musicians, film makers, and writers. Cuisine differs by region; common foods include bread, wine, cheese, chicken, vegetables, potatoes, mushrooms, eggs, and seafood. Alcohol consumption rates rank among the highest worldwide, whereas cigarette consumption rates compare to the worldwide average.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$35,000 (2011) [72.8% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.884

Corruption Index: 7.0 (2011)

With a developed, modern economy, France has taken steps to reform its economy in recent years by reducing government ownership and increasing privatization while simultaneously maintaining tax policies, social spending, and laws that promote the equalization of wealth. France endured the global financial crisis of the late 2000s better than many other European nations but nonetheless faces many economic problems originating from the crisis, including increased unemployment and declining GDP. Services employ 72% of the labor force and generate 79% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 24% of the labor force and generates 19% of the GDP. Tourism is a major industry, as seventy-five million foreign tourists visit France a year, making France the most popular tourist destination in the world. Other primary industries include machinery, chemicals, cars, metallurgy, aircraft, electronics, clothing, and food processing. Agriculture accounts for less than 5% of the GDP and labor force. Grains, sugar beets, potatoes, grapes, beef, dairy products, and fish are common agricultural goods. Natural resources include coal, iron ore, bauxite, zinc, uranium, antimony, arsenic, potash, feldspar, fluorspar, gypsum, timber, and fish. Germany, Italy, Belgium, and Spain are the primary trade partners.

²¹¹⁷ "Background Note: France," LDS Church News, 18 August 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3842.htm>

Corruption is perceived at rates slightly lower than most Western European nations. France is a transshipment point for illicit drugs from South America, Asia, and Europe. In recent years, the government has pledged greater effort to reduce corruption.

Faiths

Christian: 66%
 Muslim: 10%
 Buddhist: 1%
 Jewish: 1%
 Other/none: 22%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 40,201,109
 Evangelicals 450,000
 Orthodox 100,000
 Jehovah's Witnesses 123,277 1,563
 Latter-day Saints 36,968 108
 Seventh Day Adventists 12,849 119

Religion

France is a traditionally Catholic country, but in late 2009, a poll conducted by a Catholic organization estimated that 64% of the population identified as Catholic. Religious attendance is extremely low, as only 4.5% of the population regularly attends a religious service. France boasts Europe's largest Muslim and Jewish populations. Muslims consist of North African and sub-Saharan immigrants and account for the largest religious minority group but report lower religious observance in France than in their home countries. Jews number approximately 600,000. There are approximately one million Protestant Christians. Evangelicals may number as many as 450,000 and include many Africans and immigrants from the Caribbean. Buddhists number approximately 770,000 and are principally Vietnamese and Chinese immigrants. The number of Sikhs is estimated at 10,000–11,000.²¹¹⁸

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which in general is upheld by the government. Separation of church and state occurred in 1905. Traditional Catholic holidays are recognized by the government. Religious organizations may register with the government as an association of worship or as a cultural association. Associations of worship may only organize religious activities, whereas cultural associations grant religious organizations the right to make profits, receive government subsidies, and are not tax-exempt. Foreign missionaries may serve in France but are required to obtain a long-duration visa if their home country is not exempted from French visa entry requirements. Some religious minority groups are labeled sects or cults by the government, including Jehovah's Witnesses and Scientologists, and have been monitored and restricted in some religious freedoms. The French government recently proposed a law that would prohibit the wearing of face-covering veils in public that some religious groups viewed as a restriction of religious freedom for Muslims and has sparked national and international debate. Societal abuses of religious freedom are directed toward Muslims and Jews and have included death threats, vandalism of religious buildings, and harassment. Tensions

²¹¹⁸ "France," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148934.htm>

are high between Muslims and the general population. Government, religious, and civic leaders have urged greater tolerance toward these groups. Religious education does not occur in public schools.²¹¹⁹

Largest Cities

Urban: 77%

Paris, Marseille, Lyon, Lille, Nice, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Nantes, Toulon, **Lens**, Strasbourg, Grenoble, Rouen, Valenciennes, Nancy, Metz, Montpellier, Tours, Saint-Étienne, Rennes, Avignon, Orléans, Clermont-Ferrand, **Béthune**, Le Havre, Mulhouse, Dijon, Angers, Reims, Brest, Caen, Pau, Le Mans, Bayonne, Dunkerque, Perpignan, Limoges, Nîmes, Amiens, Annecy, Saint-Nazaire, Besançon, Troyes, **Thionville**, Poitiers, Valence, La Rochelle, Chambéry, Annemasse, Lorient, **Montbéliard**, Angoulême, Calais, **Creil**.

Cities in **bold** do not have congregations.

Forty-nine of the fifty-four cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. Forty-five percent (45%) of the national population resides in the fifty-four largest cities.

LDS History

The first unofficial visit by a Latter-day Saint to France occurred in 1845.²¹²⁰ A Welsh LDS missionary named William Howell was the first Latter-day Saint to officially visit France in 1849. Missionary work progressed rapidly initially, as forty-eight converts were baptized in a four-week period the same year,²¹²¹ and a branch was organized in Paris.²¹²²

Elder John Taylor became president of the French Mission in 1850 and dedicated France for missionary work. Local members and full-time missionaries organized four small branches, produced a French-language LDS magazine, and translated the Book of Mormon into French by 1852. Political conditions worsened by 1855, resulting in poor receptivity to the LDS Church and persecution. Most converts after this period were foreigners. By 1864, the Church closed the French Mission. The mission was reestablished in 1912 and closed again two years later due to World War I. The Church reestablished the French Mission again in 1924, but receptivity remained poor, as by 1930 there were only forty-seven French members in France, but nearly 650 members in French-speaking areas of Belgium and Switzerland. The French Mission closed in 1939 as the Church withdrew missionaries at the outbreak of World War II. The French Mission was reestablished a fourth time in 1946, but full-time missionaries were severely limited in numbers shortly thereafter due to the outbreak of the Korean War. Remaining LDS scriptures were translated in 1958. Seminary and institute commenced in the early 1970s. By 1976, there were two missions based in France (France Paris and France Toulouse Missions) and two additional missions headquartered outside of France that served regions of France (Belgium Brussels and Switzerland Geneva Missions).²¹²³ Two additional missions were organized in France in Bordeaux (1989) and Marseille (1991). In 1989, the France Bordeaux Mission was organized in part due to increases in convert baptisms at the time in France but primarily to reduce administrative demands over large geographic areas.²¹²⁴ In 1991, the Europe Mediterranean Area began administering France and was

²¹¹⁹ "France," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148934.htm>

²¹²⁰ "The Church in Europe," *Ensign*, Aug. 1973, 16–35.

²¹²¹ Wilson, Laurie J. "The Saints in France," *Ensign*, Jan. 1976, 77.

²¹²² "Six new missions to be created missions are added in Europe, Africa, Caribbean and U.S.," LDS Church News, 23 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20711/Six-new-missions-to-be-created-missions-are-added-in-Europe-Africa-Caribbean-and-US.html>

²¹²³ Wilson, Laurie J. "The Saints in France," *Ensign*, Jan. 1976, 77.

²¹²⁴ Hart, John L. "New missions are evidence of Church's dynamic growth," LDS Church News, 25 February 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19163/New-missions-are-evidence-of-Churchs-dynamic-growth.html>

headquartered in Thoiry, France.²¹²⁵ President Thomas S. Monson visited France in mid-1997 and held several meetings with local members.²¹²⁶ The Mormon Tabernacle Choir held concerts in France in the early 1990s and again in the late 1990s. In 2000, France became part of the Europe West Area²¹²⁷ and in the late 2000s was assigned to the Europe Area. Missions based in Bordeaux and Marseille were consolidated into neighboring missions 2001. In 2011, the France Toulouse and Switzerland Geneva Missions were consolidated into the France Lyon Mission.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 36,968 (2012)

French-speaking Latter-day Saints numbered 400 in 1912, most of whom resided in Belgium and Switzerland.²¹²⁸ 1,909 Latter-day Saints were on church records in France in 1959. Membership increased to 9,853 in 1974²¹²⁹ and 21,000 in 1991.²¹³⁰ The most rapid membership growth occurred in the 1980s. For example in 1987, there were 211 converts just in the Lille France District.²¹³¹

Membership reached 30,912 at year-end 2000. During the 2000s, membership grew slowly, numbering 31,971 in 2002, 32,780 in 2004, 33,828 in 2006, and 34,906 in 2008. Annual membership growth rates ranged from a low of 0.8% in 2008 to a high of 2.4% in 2001 and 2007 but generally averaged between 1% and 1.5%. Annual membership increases typically varied from 300 to 800 during this period. A large number of LDS converts since the early 1980s have been immigrants or temporary foreigner workers from Africa. In 2009, one in 1,774 was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 60 Branches: 48 (April 2013)

In 1974, France had eleven districts.²¹³² The first stake was organized in Paris in 1975 followed by additional stakes in Nice (1980), Nancy (1983), and Lille (1988). In 1989, there were four stakes and seven districts in France. Districts operated in Bordeaux, Dijon, Languedoc, Limonges, Nantes, Rouen, and St. Etienne.²¹³³ Three new stakes were organized in the 1990s in Lyon (1990), Paris East (1992), and Bordeaux (1992). In 1994, the Church created a new district in Metz with four branches.²¹³⁴ In 1995, there were seven stakes and seven districts.²¹³⁵ By year-end 2000, there were seven stakes and five districts. In the 2000s, three of the five

²¹²⁵ "New areas created in Asia, Europe," LDS Church News, 7 September 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21578/New-areas-created-in-Asia-Europe.html>

²¹²⁶ "Pres. Monson returns to France," LDS Church News, 24 May 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28791/Pres-Monson-returns-to-France.html>

²¹²⁷ "European continent realigned into three new areas," LDS Church News, 16 September 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38475/European-continent--realigned-into-three-new-areas.html>

²¹²⁸ "The Church in Europe," *Ensign*, Aug. 1973, 16–35.

²¹²⁹ Wilson, Laurie J. "The Saints in France," *Ensign*, Jan. 1976, 77.

²¹³⁰ "Six new missions to be created missions are added in Europe, Africa, Caribbean and U.S.," LDS Church News, 23 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20711/Six-new-missions-to-be-created-missions-are-added-in-Europe-Africa-Caribbean-and-US.html>

²¹³¹ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 16 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17633/From-around-the-world.html>

²¹³² Wilson, Laurie J. "The Saints in France," *Ensign*, Jan. 1976, 77.

²¹³³ Hart, John L. "New missions are evidence of Church's dynamic growth," LDS Church News, 25 February 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19163/New-missions-are-evidence-of-Churchs-dynamic-growth.html>

²¹³⁴ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 9 July 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25332/From-around-the-world.html>

²¹³⁵ Gaunt, LaRene Porter. "A Blooming in France," *Ensign*, Mar. 1995, 41.

French districts were organized into new stakes in Toulouse (2002) and Angers (2003). In early 2011, there were nine stakes and two districts. Districts currently operate in Lorient (1978) and Caen (1979).

There were sixty-five branches in 1974.²¹³⁶ By 1995, there were 110 congregations (32 wards and 78 branches),²¹³⁷ increasing to 125 congregations in 2000 (43 wards, 82 branches). Stagnant congregational growth occurred during the first half of the 2000s, as there were 126 congregations by year-end 2005. The number of congregations began to decline during the latter half of the 2000s to 124 in 2006, 117 in 2007, 113 in 2008, and 111 in 2009. The number of wards increased to fifty in 2002, sixty in 2004, and sixty-one in 2006 before declining to fifty-eight in 2008 and fifty-seven in 2009. The number of branches declined from eight-two in 2000 to seventy-five in 2002, sixty-five in 2004, sixty-three in 2006, and fifty-five in 2008.

Activity and Retention

Large meetings and conference have been moderately attended by local members in the past. Four thousand ten members attended a regional conference held in Paris for members in northern France and Belgium, and 3,200 attended a similar conference in Lyon for members in southeast France and French-speaking Switzerland.²¹³⁸ In 1998, President Hinckley spoke to 2,400 members in Paris from the two Paris stakes and districts in Caen, Tours, and Rennes. Another meeting occurred in Geneva that was attended by 4,200 members from stakes in Nice, Lyon, Geneva, Zurich, and Bern.²¹³⁹

LDS member activity and convert retention rates have been mediocre in France for decades. In 2010, full-time missionaries in the France Toulouse Mission reported that they sometimes spent more time on reactivation work than finding and teaching new investigators. Retention rates have recently improved over the short-term. Full-time missionaries serving in the France Paris Mission in 2010 reported that over 80% of converts baptized in the past year continued to attend church. One thousand, four hundred, and seventy-four were enrolled in seminary and institute during the 2008–2009 school year.

The average number of members per congregation increased from 247 in 2000 to 319 in 2009. The number of active members is relatively constant for most LDS congregations in France. In late 2005, seventy-five of the 250 members in the Valence Ward attended regularly.²¹⁴⁰ The Perigueux Branch had nearly fifty active members in late 2010, and the Carcassonne Ward had almost seventy active members in mid-2010. Most branches appear to have approximately fifty active members, whereas most wards tend to have seventy-five to one hundred active members. The U.S. Department of State reported that 30% of French Latter-day Saints were observant in 2010.²¹⁴¹ Nationwide active membership is estimated at 8,000, or 22%–25% of total LDS membership.

Finding

In 1988, local members and full-time missionaries in Strasbourg took turns portraying Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds in a Nativity scene presented on the LDS meetinghouse lawn. One thousand five hundred visited

²¹³⁶ Wilson, Laurie J. "The Saints in France," *Ensign*, Jan. 1976, 77.

²¹³⁷ Gaunt, LaRene Porter. "A Blooming in France," *Ensign*, Mar. 1995, 41.

²¹³⁸ "Pres. Monson returns to France," *LDS Church News*, 24 May 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28791/Pres-Monson-returns-to-France.html>

²¹³⁹ "'Crown of gospel is upon our heads,'" *LDS Church News*, 20 June 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31188/Crown-of-gospel-is-upon-our-heads.html>

²¹⁴⁰ Gioffredo, Dennis. "Steady perseverance builds French ward," *LDS Church News*, 4 February 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48462/Steady-perseverance-builds-French-ward.html>

²¹⁴¹ <<NOTE FONT CHANGE through 190 on the next page>>"France," *International Religious Freedom Report 2010*, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148934.htm>

the Nativity scene over a six-day period, and 1,000 entered the meetinghouse to talk with members and missionaries.²¹⁴² The Church organized a traveling exhibit on families and genealogy in the Rouen area that traveled to half a dozen large cities in the area. Over a seventeen-day period, the exhibit had 1,670 viewers.²¹⁴³ Although only ten Latter-day Saints lived in Brest in 1988, 1,500 attended a Church exposition on family history. Member and missionaries held gospel-related conversations with many of those in attendance.²¹⁴⁴ In 1989, the Church conducted a media missionary campaign in newspapers advertising the video “Our Heavenly Father’s Plan,” which resulted in 1,700 requests for the video in France.²¹⁴⁵ In 1992, a documentary detailed LDS Church history and genealogy work aired,²¹⁴⁶ and 9,800 attended a Paris exhibition representing various religious traditions featured a display on Latter-day Saints.²¹⁴⁷ France was included in the Church’s European tour of the Dead Sea Scroll exhibit in 2005.²¹⁴⁸

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: French, German, Arabic, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in French, German, Arabic, Italian, Portuguese, and Romanian. *Gospel Principles* and the *Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith* are translated into Comorian, and several African languages spoken in former-French colonies.

Meetinghouses

The first church-built LDS meetinghouse was completed in 1962 in Nantes. By 1976, there were nine church-built meetinghouses and twelve remodeled buildings that served as meetinghouses.²¹⁴⁹ In early 2011, there were approximately one hundred meetinghouses, most of which were built by the Church. Some smaller branches meet in renovated buildings and rented spaces, such as the Vannes Branch.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Local members have sent aid to the poor and needy internationally since as early as the late 1980s. Members organized a special fund in the Paris France Stake for medicine and other supplies for Zaire and Madagascar in 1988.²¹⁵⁰ Local members have taken part in volunteer work cleaning and beautifying their communities.²¹⁵¹ In 2005, LDS institute attendees and instructors in Lyon purchased and assembled hygiene and education kits

²¹⁴² “From around the world,” LDS Church News, 9 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17636/From-around-the-world.html>

²¹⁴³ “French show interest in family history exhibit,” LDS Church News, 23 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17633/From-around-the-world.html>

²¹⁴⁴ “From Around the Word,” LDS Church News, 10 September 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18321/From-Around-the-World.html>

²¹⁴⁵ “Europeans respond to LDS media blitz,” LDS Church News, 22 April 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18702/Europeans-respond-to-LDS-media-blitz.html>

²¹⁴⁶ “From around the world,” LDS Church News, 4 April 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22544/From-around-the-world.html>

²¹⁴⁷ “From around the world,” LDS Church News, 8 August 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22240/From-around-the-world.html>

²¹⁴⁸ Nogueira, Clemtina. “Exhibit in Portugal of Dead Sea Scrolls,” LDS Church News, 2 July 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47511/Exhibit-in-Portugal-of-Dead-Sea-Scrolls.html>

²¹⁴⁹ Wilson, Laurie J. “The Saints in France,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1976, 77.

²¹⁵⁰ “From around the world,” LDS Church News, 12 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17594/From-around-the-world.html>

²¹⁵¹ “LDS supply largest group,” LDS Church News, 9 December 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38987/LDS-supply-largest-group.html>

to send to orphans in Laayoune, Western Sahara.²¹⁵² In 2006, an eleven-year-old boy in the Lyon France Stake collected 1,350 eyeglasses to send to the needy in Cameroon.²¹⁵³

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The LDS Church experiences full religious freedom in France, and local members and missionaries may proselyte, worship, and assemble freely. The Church maintains two associations that are registered with the government: an association of worship for its ecclesiastical affairs and a cultural association for its scholastic and cultural operations.²¹⁵⁴ Foreign full-time missionaries regularly serve in France, and report few difficulties obtaining needed visas.

Cultural Issues

The philosophical and intellectual nature of many French has disinterested them in religious matters.²¹⁵⁵ Negative stereotypes and misinformation perpetuated about the LDS Church since the mid-nineteenth century continue to create barriers for LDS missionaries to overcome today.²¹⁵⁶ High alcohol consumption rates challenge efforts for many investigators and less active members to following LDS teachings to abstain from alcoholic beverages. Most of the European population has a Christian background but are unfamiliar with basic religious habits such as church attendance, personal scripture reading, and developing faith and testimony of specific doctrines and teachings. Latter-day Saint missionaries face the challenge of instilling these practices and convictions in the highly nominal Catholic majority teaching investigators. Many Latter-day Saints are less active as a result of failure to gain a solid testimony of the Church and develop daily religious habits and practices. The Muslim population is virtually unreached by LDS mission outreach efforts, as in 2010 missionaries reported that they were not permitted to teach Muslims out of safety concerns for any prospective LDS converts among Muslim immigrant groups pending their return to their home country. Some proselytism and exposure to the Church does occur among some Muslim populations in France, but strong ethno-religious ties to Islam and perceived intimidation by the Catholic-French majority render efforts among Muslim groups largely unfruitful at present.

National Outreach

Forty-seven percent (47%) of the national population resides in a city with an LDS congregation. Twenty-eight of the sixty-one cities with between 50,000 and 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. No cities with fewer than 35,000 inhabitants appear to have an LDS congregation. There are approximately 140 cities with over 20,000 inhabitants that have no LDS mission outreach centers. All twenty-two administrative regions in Metropolitan France have an LDS mission outreach center. The average LDS congregation in France includes over 560,000 people within its geographical boundaries. Taking the ratio of population to LDS congregations by administrative region offers insight into how the extent of mission outreach and Latter-day Saints percentages differ by region. Regions that appear to have the highest percentage of Latter-day Saints (fewer than 400,000 people per LDS congregation) include Corse, Aquitaine, Basse-Normandie, Limousin,

²¹⁵² "French members send aid," LDS Church News, 28 May 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47360/French-members-send-aid.html>

²¹⁵³ Stahle, Shaun D. "Leads eyeglass project for Africa," LDS Church News, 27 May 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48753/The-newly-called-are-sustained.html>

²¹⁵⁴ "France," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148934.htm>

²¹⁵⁵ Wilson, Laurie J. "The Saints in France," *Ensign*, Jan. 1976, 77.

²¹⁵⁶ "The Church in Europe," *Ensign*, Aug. 1973, 16-35.

and Lorraine, whereas Auvergne, Haute-Normandie, and Ile-de-France appear to have the lowest percentage of Latter-day Saints (greater than 800,000 people per LDS congregation).

Opportunities for future growth appear highest in the most populous cities without currently operating LDS congregations, such as Lens, Bethune, Thionville, Montbeliard, and Creil, as well as medium-sized cities with greater than 50,000 inhabitants. Local leadership and member-missionary resources appear too limited in many areas for French members to undertake the responsibility of extending outreach to these cities at present. Cooperation between full-time missionaries and local leaders in arranging public affairs, cottage meetings, and creative proselytism approaches will be needed to reverse the ongoing trend of congregation consolidations and declining national outreach since the mid-2000s.

France served as a springboard for LDS Church growth in French-speaking African nations in the 1980s and 1990s as African immigrants joined the Church and returned to their homelands. The first Latter-day Saint converts from most French-speaking African nations with a current LDS presence were taught and baptized in France during this period. Prospects remain high for the continued involvement of LDS missions in France in the process of converting French-speaking Africans in reached and unreached nations in Africa.

The Church has participated in Internet-based proselytism approaches primarily through the Church's official website for France at <http://www.eglisedejesuschrist.fr/> and French LDS language materials online. France ranked among the top twenty countries with the most visitors to the Church's official website shortly after it was launched in 1997.²¹⁵⁷ Member-missionary efforts online remain uncoordinated and limited. Use of French-language materials available online by missionaries and members in France may help improve receptivity and church growth prospects over the medium term.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Full-time missionaries and local members participated in member reactivation efforts in the mid-1990s.²¹⁵⁸ The Annemasse Ward was one of the highest baptizing congregations in France in the mid-2000s. Success appears strongly linked to missionary firesides held on a monthly basis, the immediate assignment of home teachers to new converts before their baptismal service, and a strong member-missionary program that emphasizes local members supplying full-time missionaries with investigators to teach.²¹⁵⁹ Local leaders and members have participated in reactivation efforts, such as holding ward or branch activities and inviting less-active members.²¹⁶⁰ Full-time missionaries reported that the Vitrolles Ward had only seven convert baptisms between 2005 and 2010, and only one of those converts was active in early 2011.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Full-time missionaries report most congregations of native French and French-speaking Africans encounter few ethnic integration challenges. African immigrants have demonstrated greater receptivity and greater member activity rates in the LDS Church than their European French counterparts, resulting in the demographics of many congregations not representing those of the general population. North Africans present the greatest challenge to integrate into Latter-day Saint congregations at present due to the lack of Muslim

²¹⁵⁷ "Internet users find LDS web site," LDS Church News, 1 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29302/Internet-users-find-LDS-web-site.html>

²¹⁵⁸ Gaunt, LaRene Porter. "A Blooming in France," *Ensign*, Mar. 1995, 41.

²¹⁵⁹ Pickup, David MW. "At foot of the Alps," LDS Church News, 23 April 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47196/At-foot-of-the-Alps.html>

²¹⁶⁰ "Enjoying the French countryside," LDS Church News, 14 July 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50828/Enjoying-the-French-countryside.html>

and Arabic language outreach resources, poor integration of North Africans into French society, and lack of cultural traditions of church service.

Language Issues

Nearly the entire population speaks French as a first or second language, reducing the need for translations of LDS scriptures and materials into indigenous minority languages with declining numbers of speakers such as Occitan and Breton. Sizeable numbers of non-French speakers in some congregations may necessitate the establishment of Sunday School classes and language translations of sacrament meeting services meeting specific language needs.

Missionary Service

Eighty full-time missionaries were serving in France by 1948, increasing to 334 by 1972.²¹⁶¹ The number of French members serving full-time missions in the French Mission increased from three in 1971 to twenty-nine full-time missionaries and fifty stake missionaries in 1974.²¹⁶² At the peak, there may have been over 500 LDS missionaries serving in France, but missionary complements were reduced starting in the mid-1990s due to mission realignments and overall cuts to the Western European LDS missionary force. The France Toulouse Mission had approximately eighty full-time missionaries in early 2010. In early 2011, France appeared to have no more than 200 full-time missionaries. France remains dependent on the international church to staff its two full-time missions despite the massive reduction in the full-time missionary force from the mid-1990s through the 2000s. Nonetheless, French members frequently serve missions abroad, such as in Africa, the Caribbean, and North America. Organizing youth-focused mission outreach and stressing seminary and institute attendance as part of missionary preparation may increase the number of French members serving full-time missions over the medium term.

Leadership

The number of active priesthood leaders has generally increased year to year in France over the past several decades, allowing for stakes to operate in most areas. The French Mission had ninety-six Melchizedek Priesthood holders in 1959 and 345 in the France Paris Mission by year-end 1974.²¹⁶³ The number of active priesthood holders remains too limited in most areas to provide leadership sufficient to organize additional congregations and even to maintain some currently operating wards and branches, resulting in consistent congregation consolidations since the mid-2000s. The quality of local leaders is generally good and has resulted in several French Latter-day Saints serving in international leadership positions. In 1988, Christian Euvrard from Nogent was called as a regional representative.²¹⁶⁴ Gerard Giraud-Carrier from Torcy was called as the first mission president of the Mascarene Islands Mission in 1988.²¹⁶⁵ In 1991, Pierre H. Euvrard from Nogent was called to preside over the Mascarene Islands Mission.²¹⁶⁶ In 1992, Jacques Faudin from Vitrolles was called as a regional representative.²¹⁶⁷ In 1995, Alain Andre Petion from Truchtersheim was called as an

²¹⁶¹ "The Church in Europe," *Ensign*, Aug. 1973, 16–35.

²¹⁶² Wilson, Laurie J. "The Saints in France," *Ensign*, Jan. 1976, 77.

²¹⁶³ Wilson, Laurie J. "The Saints in France," *Ensign*, Jan. 1976, 77.

²¹⁶⁴ "New regional representatives," *LDS Church News*, 5 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18021/New-regional-representatives.html>

²¹⁶⁵ "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 26 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18212/New-mission-presidents.html>

²¹⁶⁶ "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 30 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21411/New-mission-presidents.html>

²¹⁶⁷ "New regional representatives," *LDS Church News*, 11 July 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22715/New-regional-representatives.html>

area authority.²¹⁶⁸ In 2006, J. Michael Paya from Mougins was called as an Area Seventy.²¹⁶⁹ In 2007, Gerald J. Causse from Seine was called as an Area Seventy.²¹⁷⁰ In 2005, Alain Andre Jean-Baptiste Petion from Torcy was called as the Canada Montreal Mission president in 2005.²¹⁷¹

Temple

With no LDS temple in France, members are assigned to the Bern Switzerland, Frankfurt Germany, Madrid Spain, and London England Temple districts. French temple attendance rates have historically appeared low to moderate among active members despite logistical and financial burdens to attend the temple regularly. The number of endowments performed by French-speaking members at the Bern Switzerland Temple increased from 462 in 1960 to 7,744 in 1974. In the mid-1990s, the Frankfurt Germany Temple would alternate weeks for German and French-speaking members in the temple district.²¹⁷² In 1998, President Hinckley addressed the topic of a potential future temple in France, stating that French membership had reached the maturity and activity required for a temple to operate in France but that the Church was unable to find land to construct a temple at the time.²¹⁷³ In 2010, full-time missionaries reported that in addition to tithing, many local members contribute to a fund to finance the building of an LDS temple in France. Interests in allocating a temple site have been concentrated on Paris and its surrounding communities. As of early 2011, efforts were still underway to secure land for the construction of a temple although no formal temple announcement had been given by the First Presidency.

Comparative Growth

France boasts the fourth most Latter-day Saints and the third most stakes in continental Europe. In 2009, it was the country with the second most members without a temple. Membership growth rates in France were higher than many Western European nations in the 2000s, but like most of Western Europe, France experienced a decline in the number of LDS congregations. Member activity rates and the percentage of members in the general population are low but comparable to most Western European nations.

Some outreach-oriented Christian groups have experienced steady growth in France over the past half century, namely Evangelicals and Jehovah's Witnesses due to their church planting and member-missionary intensive programs. Evangelicals number among the largest Protestant denominations today and continue to experience steady growth. Jehovah's Witnesses claim over 123,000 active members meeting in 1,525 congregations and baptized nearly 2,500 converts in 2009.²¹⁷⁴ Seventh Day Adventists report stagnant or slow annual membership growth. The number of Adventist congregations in southern France has declined in the past decade, whereas the number of Adventist congregations in northern France have slightly increased. Adventists have baptized 150 to 200 converts in France annually in recent years.²¹⁷⁵

²¹⁶⁸ "Church names area authorities," LDS Church News, 5 August 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26627/Church-names-area-authorities.html>

²¹⁶⁹ "The newly called are sustained," LDS Church News, 1 April 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48753/The-newly-called-are-sustained.html>

²¹⁷⁰ "46 Area Seventies called; 29 released," LDS Church News, 7 April 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50423/46-Area-Seventies-called-29-released.html>

²¹⁷¹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 26 March 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47044/New-mission-presidents.html>

²¹⁷² "Blessings of House of the Lord reach faithful in many lands," LDS Church News, 24 September 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24291/Blessings-of-House-of-the-Lord-reach-faithful-in-many-lands.html>

²¹⁷³ "News of the Church," *Ensign*, Sept. 1998, 72-80.

²¹⁷⁴ "Statistics: 2009 Report of Jehovah's Witnesses Worldwide," www.watchtower.org, retrieved 6 January 2011. http://www.watchtower.org/e/statistics/worldwide_report.htm

²¹⁷⁵ "Franco-Belgian Union Conference (1972-Present)," [Adventiststatistics.org](http://www.adventiststatistics.org), retrieved 6 January 2011. http://www.adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldInstID=1486726

Future Prospects

The outlook for future LDS Church growth in France is mediocre due to low levels of member activity, inconsistent mission practices regarding the baptism of new converts, persistent congregation consolidations, reduction in the number of full-time missionaries, no new mission outreach centers established for several years, few local members serving full-time missions, and mission policies isolating Muslims from LDS mission outreach. Emphasizing seminary and institute attendance, developing youth-directed mission outreach, and stronger member-missionary participation may alleviate some of these issues. Emigration of French members continues to frustrate greater long-term self-sufficiency and development of a strong French LDS community. France will likely continue its role in facilitating the establishment of the Church in unreached and reached Francophone nations in West Africa by immigrants from these nations joining the Church and returning to their homelands or referring friends and family to study about the Church. Mission outreach centers are established in most major cities, allowing for continued outreach to half the population. The recent reduction in the full-time missionary force has increased the efficiency of missionary activities, resulting in a slight increase in convert baptisms. Time will only tell whether these modifications will continue to yield increases in convert baptisms without reducing convert retention rates in a nation that has become highly secularized yet remains strong in adherence to the Catholic Church.

GERMANY

Geography

AREA: 357,022 square km. Located in the heart of Central Europe, Germany borders Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria, Switzerland, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, and the North and Baltic Seas. Terrain principally consists of lowlands in the north, uplands and hills in central areas, and the Bavarian Alps in the extreme south. Maritime temperate climate characterized by cool, wet summers and winters occurs in most locations. Several major European rivers originate or travel through Germany, including the Elbe in the north and northeast, the Rhine in the west, and the Danube in the south. Flooding is a natural hazard. Environmental issues include air pollution, acid rain, improper sewage disposal into the surrounding sea, and nature preservation. Germany is divided into sixteen administrative states.

Peoples

German: 91.5%

Turkish: 2.4%

Other: 6.1%

Germans have historically comprised a strong majority. Immigration in recent years has increased the number of Turks, Greeks, Italians, Poles, Russians, Serbo-Croatians, and Spaniards who together constitute 8.5% of the population. Most immigrants and their families are not German citizens even if born and raised in Germany due to restrictive citizenship laws.²¹⁷⁶

Population: 81,305,856 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: -0.2% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.41 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 77.93 male, 82.58 female (2012)

Languages: Standard German, German dialects, and Germanic languages (91.5%), Turkish (2.4%), other (6.1%). Standard German is most commonly spoken with over sixty million speakers. Commonly spoken German dialects and Germanic languages provided with the number of speakers include Bavarian (6.0 million speakers), Mainfränkisch (4.91 million speakers), Upper Saxon (2.0 million), and Swabian (0.819 million). Turkish is the only other language with over one million speakers (2.11 million).

Literacy: 99% (2003)

History

Germanic tribes populated the lands of present-day Germany known as Germania for millennia prior to the arrival of the Romans around the birth of Christ. Rome attempted to subjugate the population to Roman rule, but these efforts failed due to persistent military efforts by the indigenous population to drive out Roman troops and interests east of the Rhine. The Holy Roman Empire was a lax organization of German territories between 962 and the beginning of the nineteenth century that never developed into a centralized state.

²¹⁷⁶ "Background Note: Germany," Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 10 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3997.htm>

The empire was ruled by an emperor elected by territorial leaders and approved by the Pope of the Catholic Church, but he had little power in exercising rule over the many of the hundreds of territories and entities in the empire that would often war against one another. In the sixteenth century, the Holy Roman Empire divided into Catholic and Protestant camps as a result of the Reformation with Catholic-strong areas in the south and west and predominantly-Protestant areas in the north and east. Devastating German populations, the Thirty Years' War was fought between 1618 and 1648 primarily as a result of religious tensions between Catholics and Protestants and resulted in no major territorial acquisitions. Austria and Prussia became the most powerful and influential Germanic states within the Holy Roman Empire during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Due to the stress on militarism and centralization, Prussia became continental Europe's most powerful state in the early nineteenth century following the defeat of Napoleon. The Holy Roman Empire became the German Confederation as a result of the 1814–1815 Congress of Vienna. In 1834, Prussia and eighteen other states formed the German Customs Union, which provided for greater economic integration among participant states. Prussia rapidly industrialized and became one of Europe's most powerful nations, winning wars against Austria and France in the 1860s and 1870s under Chancellor Otto von Bismarck and becoming a unified federal state in 1871 under Emperor Wilhelm I.

Bismarck encouraged good foreign relations with surrounding European nations to safeguard against additional wars, but this foundation of stability and good international relations ended under the reign of Emperor William II who sought for Germany to acquire overseas colonies and to expand its militaristic power and capabilities. Germany was a central player in World War I and was the state primary blamed for its aftermath, resulting in the Treaty of Versailles demanding several German leaders be tried as war criminals, stationing Allied forces in the Rhineland for a fifteen-year period, imposing military restrictions, making changes to Germany's international borders, and stripping Germany of its colonial possessions, including German New Guinea [portions of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands], German Samoa [Samoa], Togoland [Togo], Kamerun [Cameroon], German South West Africa [Namibia], Tanganyika [Tanzania], and Ruanda-Urundi [Rwanda and Burundi]. The Weimar Republic succeeded Imperial Germany and utterly failed to reconstruct a sustainable, functioning federal government due to many limitations imposed by the Treaty of Versailles, hyperinflation in 1923, and the world depression in 1929. Radical political parties arose during this period, most notably the National Socialist (Nazi) Party led by Adolf Hitler who ultimately overtook the Weimar Republic and was established as Reich Chancellor in 1933. The Nazis quickly initiated a brutal regime that deprived Germans of democratic freedoms and targeted Jews, Romani, homosexuals, the mentally disabled, and oppositional figures, at first by depriving them of political rights and later by placing them in forced-labor camps and prisons, and ultimately committing mass genocide in Nazi-controlled areas. Nazi Germany initiated World War II, resulting in millions of deaths in Europe. During the war, an estimated six million Jews were killed at the hands of the Nazis. Germany surrendered in May 1945, and the country was temporarily subdivided among the Soviets, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France for administrative purposes. The Soviets refused to withdraw, blockaded Allied forces from delivering supplies to Allied-controlled West Berlin, and formed the German Democratic Republic in 1949. Democratic institutions, sovereignty, and self-rule were gradually reintroduced into West Germany in the late 1940s and 1950s, resulting in Germany reentering the Western Europe community by joining NATO and the Western European Union. Rapid economic recovery and growth transformed West Germany into one of the region's wealthiest nations in the coming decades. To block the millions of East Germans fleeing to the West and Western Berlin, East Germany constructed barriers and walls, most notably the Berlin Wall, in the early 1960s. East Germans discovered additional methods of crossing over to West Germany through other nations in the following decades. In 1989, increasing pressure for reform and free movement between the two Germanys unfolded with the toppling of the communist government. In 1990, both Germanys were reunited into a single German state.²¹⁷⁷

²¹⁷⁷ "Background Note: Germany," Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 10 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3997.htm>

Culture

Germans boast proud traditions of industry and education and a rich legacy of notable scientists, poets, writers, religious reformers, philosophers, athletes, composers, politicians, and leaders such as the physicist Albert Einstein, the philosopher Immanuel Kant, the composer Ludwig van Beethoven, the reformer Martin Luther, the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, and the political theorist Karl Marx. Germany has numbered among the most influential nations in the world in the development of modern science, culture, art, and technology. German products are often noted for their high quality and durability. The Reformation was a major influence on the evolution of Germany culture and society and is reflected in the continued operation of Protestant churches for centuries. Secularism has steadily spread in recent years as religiosity has waned and economic prosperity and standards of living have increased. Few actively attend church services, and the percentage of the population identifying as Christian has decreased over the past century. Soccer is one of the most popular sports. Common foods include breads, meat, vegetables, fish, beer, and wine. Cigarette consumption rates are slightly higher than the world average, whereas alcohol consumption rates are among the highest in the world.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$37,900 (2011) [78.8% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.905

Corruption Index: 8.0 (2011)

With a large skilled labor force, strategic geographic location, and diversified economy, Germany is Europe's largest economy, the world's fifth largest economy by GDP, and a major world exporter. Low birth rates, declining immigration, and an aging population challenge efforts for the government to sustain growth. Economic growth remains limited in eastern Germany and in many locations lags far behind conditions in the west. The global financial crisis in the late 2000s created a deep recession, but growth has since rebounded. Services employ two-thirds of the labor force and generate 71% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 30% of the labor force and generates 30% of the GDP. Major industries include iron, steel, coal, cement, chemicals, machinery, vehicles, electronics, food products, shipbuilding, and clothing. Agriculture accounts for less than 2% of the labor force and GDP. Potatoes, grains, sugar beets, fruit, and cabbage are common crops and cattle, pigs, and chickens are common livestock. The primary trade partners include France, the Netherlands, the United States, and Italy. Corruption is perceived at among the lowest levels in the world.

Faiths

Christian: 68%

Muslim: 3.7%

Unaffiliated/other: 28.3%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 25,200,000

Lutheran/Uniate/Reformed Protestant 24,500,000

Greek Orthodox 450,000

New Apostolic 363,000

Romanian Orthodox 300,000

Serbian Orthodox 250,000

Russian Orthodox 180,000

Baptists 100,000

Evangelical nondenominational Baptists 84,000
 Jehovah's Witnesses 165,387 2,228
 Latter-day Saints 38,739 171
 Seventh Day Adventists 35,119 566

Religion

Christianity has decreased in its influence, and its adherents have declined as a percentage of the population over the past century. Today, approximately two-thirds of the population is Christian, and Christians are nearly evenly divided between Catholics and Protestants. Muslims number approximately four million and are primarily from southeastern Europe and Turkey. There are approximately 250,000 Buddhists, 200,000 Jews, and 100,000 Hindus. Most Jews are non-Germans, and half are immigrants. Approximately one-third of Germans are nonaffiliated with a religious group.²¹⁷⁸

Religious Freedom

The basic law protects religious freedom, which is generally upheld by the government. Religious groups are not required to register with the government to operate privately but must register in order to receive tax-exempt status. The government maintains separation with religion and declares no official religion, although some religious groups have a special partnership with the government. Religious groups may request public law corporation status in which the state collects tithes from its members and religious groups are permitted to name chaplains. The government has diligently sought to eliminate anti-Semitism from society. There have been numerous instances of societal abuse of religious freedom targeting Jews, Scientologists, and Muslims and some governmental abuses of religious freedom targeting Scientologists, Muslims, and other religious minority groups.²¹⁷⁹

Largest Cities

Urban: 74%

Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Cologne, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Dusseldorf, Dortmund, Essen, Bremen, Hanover, Leipzig, Dresden, Nuremberg, Duisburg, **Bochum**, Wuppertal, Bielefeld, Bonn, Mannheim, Karlsruhe, Wiesbaden, Munster, Augsburg, Gelsenkirchen, Aachen, Mönchengladbach, Brunswick, Chemnitz, Kiel, Krefeld, Halle, Magdeburg, Freiburg, **Oberhausen**, Lübeck, Erfurt, Rostock.

Cities in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Thirty-six of the thirty-eight cities with over 200,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. Twenty-four percent (24%) of the national population resides in the thirty-eight most populous cities.

LDS History

The first known member arrived in 1840, and the first LDS congregation was organized in Darmstadt in 1843.²¹⁸⁰ The first full-time missionaries were assigned in 1851 and included future church president John Taylor. The Book of Mormon was translated into German in the 1850s, and most early members immigrated

²¹⁷⁸ "Germany," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148938.htm>

²¹⁷⁹ "Germany," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148938.htm>

²¹⁸⁰ "A Foundation of Strength in Germany," Liahona, November 2000. <http://lds.org/liahona/2000/11/a-foundation-of-strength-in-germany?lang=eng&query=germany>

to the United States due to persecution.²¹⁸¹ During the latter-half of the nineteenth century, slow membership growth occurred due to low receptivity and high rates of emigration, but church centers were established in many German cities. Over 200 missionaries were removed from Germany and Switzerland at the outbreak of World War I, but most of the approximately sixty congregations in Germany and Switzerland continued to function during the war.²¹⁸² Growth accelerated during the first decade of the twentieth century and during the early 1920s. Approximately 1,800 converts were baptized in 1921 alone. Following the rise of National Socialism, LDS missionaries were removed from Germany in 1938 and again before the outbreak of World War II. The Church obtained legal status in 1953, and accelerated growth occurred in the 1960s.²¹⁸³ The LDS Church in East Germany was isolated from the international church from the end of World War II to 1989, resulting in no local members serving full-time missions abroad and no assigned full-time missionaries for half a century. Elder Thomas S. Monson dedicated East Germany for missionary work in 1975.²¹⁸⁴ As a result of downsizing the number of American military personnel in the early 1990s, LDS leadership in Germany began to rely more on local German members. Following the unification of East and West Germany in the early 1990s, the Church opened a large number of formerly unreached cities in eastern Germany.²¹⁸⁵ Elder Dieter Uchtdorf met with the German president in 2003 and presented the president's family history.²¹⁸⁶ In recent years, the Church has steadily decreased the number of full-time missionaries assigned to Germany, has increased emphasis on youth-oriented finding, retention, and reactivation programs, and has experienced stagnant growth.

Missions

The German Mission was organized in 1852 to administer Germany and was discontinued, reorganized, and realigned with missions in neighboring European nations for nearly a century. In 1938, the West German [later renamed Germany Frankfurt] and East German [later renamed Germany Hamburg] Missions were organized from the German-Austrian Mission. In 1959, the South German Mission [later renamed Germany Munich] was organized, followed by the Central German Mission [later renamed Germany Dusseldorf] in 1961. The Bavarian Mission opened in 1962 but was closed in 1965. A mission headquartered in Dresden opened in 1969, closed in 1984, and reopened in 1989 as the Germany Leipzig Mission. The Germany Dusseldorf Mission closed in 1982 and reopened in 1990. In 1991, a mission was organized in Berlin bringing the number of LDS missions in Germany to six. During the 2000s and 2010, missions were closed in Dusseldorf (2001), Leipzig (2003), and Hamburg (2010). In 2010, The Switzerland Zurich Mission was consolidated with the Germany Munich Mission to form the Alpine German-speaking Mission. In 2011, there were three missions in Germany.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 38,739 (2012)

Membership increased from 13,829 in 1975 to 29,900 in 1985. There were 27,506 members in West Germany in 1983. Membership in both Germanys totaled 36,600 in 1987, 36,000 in 1993, 36,000 in 1997, and 36,359 in 2000. In the 2000s, extremely slow membership growth occurred, as membership reached 36,704

²¹⁸¹ "Germany," Country Profile, 2 April 2011. <http://newsroom.lds.org/country/germany>

²¹⁸² "A Foundation of Strength in Germany," Liahona, November 2000. <http://lds.org/liahona/2000/11/a-foundation-of-strength-in-germany?lang=eng&query=germany>

²¹⁸³ "The Church in Europe," Ensign, August 1973. <http://lds.org/ensign/1973/08/the-church-in-europe?lang=eng>

²¹⁸⁴ Avant, Gerry. "Pres. and Sister Monson visit solemn German sites," LDS Church News, 2 September 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26912/Pres-and-Sister-Monson-visit-solemn-German-sites.html>

²¹⁸⁵ "Six new missions to be created missions are added in Europe, Africa, Caribbean and U.S.," LDS Church News, 23 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20711/Six-new-missions-to-be-created-missions-are-added-in-Europe-Africa-Caribbean-and-US.html>

²¹⁸⁶ Stahle, Shaun D. "Elder Uchtdorf meets with German president," LDS Church News, 18 January 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43101/Elder-Uchtdorf-meets-with-German-president.html>

in 2002, 37,063 in 2004, 37,478 in 2006, 37,539 in 2008, and 38,257 in 2010. Annual membership growth rates during the 2000s ranged from a low of -0.9% in 2007 to a high of 1.2% in 2010 and generally varied between zero and one percent. In 2010, one in 2,130 was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 89 Branches: 82 (April 2013)

There were over 130 LDS congregations in 1973²¹⁸⁷ and 174 in 1987. The number of congregations increased to 177 in 1993, 183 in 1997, and 189 in 2000. During the 2000s, the number of congregations steadily declined to 181 in 2002, 177 in 2005, 175 in 2007, 170 in 2009, and 169 in 2010. There were ninety-one wards in 1987, eighty-five in 1993, ninety in 1997, ninety-one in 2000, ninety-two in 2006, ninety in 2008, and eighty-nine in 2010. Congregational decline during the latter half of the 2000s was partially attributed to the consolidation of military units, which declined in number from ten in 2001 to nine in 2007 and six in 2008. Consolidated German LDS congregations were not concentrated in one particular area of Germany during the 2000s.

The first LDS stake in Germany was established in Berlin in 1961. Two additional stakes were organized the same year in Stuttgart and Hamburg. Additional stakes were organized in Kaiserslautern [military] (1968), Dusseldorf (1972), Frankfurt, Dortmund, and Stuttgart [servicemen] (1976), and Hannover, Munich, and Frankfurt [servicemen] (1977). By 1980, there were eleven stakes. In the 1980s, five additional stakes were organized in Neumunster (1981), Heidelberg and Dresden (1982), Leipzig (1984), and Nuremburg (1987) bringing the total of stakes to sixteen by 1990. Servicemen stakes in Stuttgart and Frankfurt were discontinued in 1992 and 1994 as a result of American military personnel numbers dramatically decreasing following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the unification of East and West Germany. In the late 1980s and early 1990s there was only one district. In mid-2011, there were three districts, operating in Neubrandenburg (1994), Erfurt (2005), and Oldenburg (2007).

Activity and Retention

Young single adult conferences for German-speaking members in Central Europe have been held regularly since the mid-2000s. A conference in Kiel had approximately 800 in attendance.²¹⁸⁸ One thousand, nine hundred, and one were enrolled in seminary and institute during the 2009–2010 school year. The average number of members per congregation increased from 210 in 1987 to 226 in 2010. Most wards appear to have between fifty and seventy-five active members, whereas most branches appear to have between twenty-five and fifty active members. Nationwide, active membership is estimated to range between 9,000 and 11,000, or 25%–30% of total church membership.

Finding and Public Relations

In the early 1900s, many members did not publicly disclose their membership in the LDS Church due to persecution. Public relations specialists have encouraged local members to invite nonmembers to church activities. In the Dusseldorf area, a local member organized an amateur orchestra that was primarily comprised of nonmembers. Television and radio broadcasts have occurred in northern Germany to help dispel misinformation about the Church. Family history centers have been utilized for finding investigators, and church members have held family history fairs.²¹⁸⁹ The Church initiated a telephone-connected computer information

²¹⁸⁷ "The Church in Europe," *Ensign*, August 1973. <http://lds.org/ensign/1973/08/the-church-in-europe?lang=eng>

²¹⁸⁸ Jurgens, Elder James; Jurgens, Sister Rona. "New era in Europe," *LDS Church News*, 19 August 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49320/New-era-in-Europe.html>

²¹⁸⁹ "A Foundation of Strength in Germany," *Liahona*, November 2000. <http://lds.org/liahona/2000/11/a-foundation-of-strength-in-germany?lang=eng&query=germany>

service for the Church in 1987 that resulted in seventy-nine requests for visits from full-time missionaries.²¹⁹⁰ Member referrals are a valuable source for finding investigators. In 1989, 54% of converts baptized in the Germany Frankfurt Mission were referred to the missionaries by local members.²¹⁹¹ Full-time missionaries report that street proselytism efforts are generally ineffective.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: German, Turkish.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in German. The Book of Mormon is the only LDS scripture translated into Turkish. There are limited numbers of teaching, administrative, priesthood, temple, study, Relief Society, youth, and proselytism materials available in Turkish. The *Liahona* magazine has monthly issues in German. Many immigrant groups have church materials in their native languages.

Meetinghouses

In mid-2011, there were approximately 164 LDS meetinghouses in Germany, most of which were church-built chapels. Some smaller branches meet in rented spaces or renovated buildings.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Few humanitarian and development projects have been pursued by the LDS Church in Germany due to high standards of living for decades. Projects sponsored by the Church in recent years have included donating hygiene kits, playground equipment, food and toys, and kitchen appliances.²¹⁹² In 2002, the Church donated \$635,000 for flood relief efforts in Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic.²¹⁹³ In 2003, German members in the Frankfurt Germany Stake raised 7,500 Euros to donate to fund cataract surgeries for adults and children in Bangladesh.²¹⁹⁴

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The LDS Church benefits from full religious freedom. Societal abuse of religious freedom directed towards local members has not been reported in recent years, although full-time missionaries have reported some harassment and persecution while proselytizing. Members and missionaries face no legal barriers preventing open proselytism, worship, and assembly. Foreign missionaries appear to receive needed documentation to operate in Germany with no major challenges.

Cultural Issues

The LDS Church has faced low receptivity in Germany for decades, resulting in extremely few convert baptisms, stagnant membership growth, and declining numbers of congregations, notwithstanding a

²¹⁹⁰ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 30 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17635/From-around-the-world.html>

²¹⁹¹ "Eight new missions announced," LDS Church News, 3 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19805/Eight-new-missions-announced.html>

²¹⁹² "Projects—Germany," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 20 May 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-28,00.html>

²¹⁹³ "Church donates to flood relief," LDS Church News, 24 August 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42332/Church-donates-to-flood-relief.html>

²¹⁹⁴ Stahle, Shaun D. "German stake raises money for Bangladesh," LDS Church News, 6 December 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43323/New-mission-presidents-for-105-missions.html>

historically large full-time missionary force allocated to the country. Secularism and materialism has increased over the past century resulting in nominal Christians accounting for two-thirds of the German population. The LDS Church has reduced the size of its missionary force as receptivity has further waned, indicated by the reduction of LDS missions from six to three in the past decade and the more than halving of the full-time missionary force. Church-going Christians account for a small percentage of total Christians, resulting in many having little knowledge of Christianity and few or no developed personal religious habits. The LDS Church has struggled to reach nominal Christians with traditional teaching paradigms designed to teach those with a basic understanding of Christianity who value personal involvement in organized religion. Christians with developed personal religious habits are often deeply devoted to and entrenched in their churches and demonstrate no greater receptivity than nominal Christians or nonreligious individuals. Germans with interest in studying and joining the LDS Church often face challenges ending their alcohol and cigarette usage and casual sexual relations. The LDS Church and other nontraditional outreach-oriented Christians are stigmatized by society, further reducing receptivity to the Church. Creative, original outreach methods and teaching approaches tailored to nominal Christians or nonreligious individuals and emphasis on youth outreach may address cultural needs and conditions and help spur greater growth for the Church in the long-run.

National Outreach

Approximately 32% of the national population resides in cities with an LDS congregation. Many lesser-reached large and medium-sized cities are within ten to fifteen kilometers of cities with LDS congregations, perhaps increasing the percentage of the population within reach of LDS units to 40%. Sixty-four of the eighty cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation and approximately half of the 107 cities with populations between 50,000 and 100,000 have an LDS congregation. Only a few cities with fewer than 50,000 people have LDS congregations. The majority of cities with over 100,000 inhabitants without LDS congregations are located in western areas. All sixteen administrative states have multiple LDS congregations with the exception of Saarland, where there is only one ward. The ratio of state population to LDS congregations provides insight into the degree of national outreach extended on a state-by-state basis. German states with the lowest ratio of the population to LDS congregations (less than 350,000 people per unit) are concentrated in the east and north (Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, Brandenburg, and Bremen), whereas states with the highest ratio of the population to LDS congregations (more than 575,000 people per unit) are concentrated in the west and center (Saarland, North Rhine-Westphalia, and Saxony-Anhalt).

Low receptivity to LDS outreach has challenged efforts to maintain currently operating congregations with few active members, let alone the opening of new congregations in lesser-reached and unreached cities. Stagnant numbers of full-time missionaries in the Church worldwide have prompted the downsizing of manpower dedicated to less productive countries like Germany. Expanding national outreach will require the smart allocation of mission resources and strong involvement from local members in an age where missionary manpower is limited and opportunities to expand outreach worldwide are increasing. Holding cottage meetings in unreached cities provides opportunities to extend outreach and ascertain receptivity among interested individuals, but no missions in Germany appear to have attempted to expand national outreach by establishing additional mission outreach centers or holding cottage meetings for many years. The most recent efforts to organize additional congregations have been in eastern Germany.

The LDS Church maintains a German-language website for the Church in Germany at <http://www.kirche-jesu-christi.org/> providing information on locations for meetinghouses and worship service times, explanations of and information concerning church doctrine, online and telephone contact to church representatives, and local and regional LDS news. Use of the website by members in their online proselytism efforts and in reference with interested acquaintances can facilitate greater member-missionary activity and more effectively expand national outreach. The LDS website for Germany is more developed than many other countries'

websites, but lacks methods and links for local members to utilize social networking websites in missionary activity.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

The LDS Church in Germany experiences moderately low rates of member activity as a result of negative cultural attitudes toward organized religion and the accumulation of LDS converts not retained for decades. Retention rates are moderate for new converts baptized at present, but very few converts are baptized year to year. The immigration of active members to North America and elsewhere has limited growth and reduced member activity rates. Approximately 2,000 converts joined the Church in Cologne during the twentieth century and emigrated elsewhere.²¹⁹⁵ The small number of active members in some congregations threatens additional congregation consolidations if active members move away or go inactive. Missionaries report that many congregations have a gender imbalance with more active women than men.

Moderate levels of enrollment in seminary and institute have been relatively stable in recent years and are encouraging for maintaining stability in the Church. The Church has dedicated resources toward meeting the needs of single members and performing institute-based outreach in Germany that has yielded some positive results but will need to be sustained for years to come to make a long-term impact of member activity rates. In 2005, there were 160 baptisms, 117 reactivations, 120 mission calls, and 129 temple marriages in the Europe Central Area as a result of institute and young single adult-outreach initiatives.²¹⁹⁶ Declining numbers of congregations notwithstanding, greater increases in church membership than in years past indicates continued convert retention and reactivation challenges.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Germany experiences few ethnic integration challenges among its native population, as Germans account for nearly the entire population. Immigrants and workers from Turkey and other European nations constitute the majority of the 8.5% of the population that is non-German and pose the greatest challenges in integrating into LDS congregations. Few LDS converts in Germany are non-German, and there are no concentrated efforts to reach foreigners or immigrants, reducing the potential for ethnic integration issues at church.

Language Issues

German-speaking members benefit from a large body of LDS materials available in German in print and online. Many nonnative workers or immigrants speak German proficiently to assimilate into LDS congregations, reducing the need for foreign language units with the exception of English for American military personnel. There is only one non-German-speaking LDS congregation to meet the needs of those who do not speak German and who are not in the military, which is the Offenback 2nd (English) Ward. Higher receptivity among some immigrant groups may prompt the organization of additional non-German-speaking congregations in the coming years.

Missionary Service

The LDS Church in Germany appears more self-sufficient in its native full-time missionary force than most European nations but remains reliant on outsourced full-time missionary resources to staff its three missions. The Church in Germany has had a legacy of local members serving missions. There were twenty-six local

²¹⁹⁵ Mael, Manfred. "Faithfully enduring in Cologne," LDS Church News, 5 August 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38246/Faithfully-enduring-in-Cologne.html>

²¹⁹⁶ "A key to Europe," LDS Church News, 2 September 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49379/A-key-to-Europe.html>

members serving full-time missions in the early 1970s. In 1973, there were 747 full-time missionaries assigned to Germany, accounting for over one-third of the missionary force in continental Europe at the time.²¹⁹⁷ The Church rapidly expanded its missionary presence in former East Germany in the early 1990s, as the number of full-time missionaries in the Germany Dresden Mission increased from eight in March 1989 to 140 in April 1991.²¹⁹⁸ In 1999, 172 local members were serving full-time missions.²¹⁹⁹ In the 2000s, the number of local members serving missions appears stable due to outreach efforts among young single adults, but low birth rates in the Church in Germany and few youth converts may decrease the number of German members serving missions in the long run. The lack of an LDS missionary training center in Germany to serve German-speaking nations indicates challenges to establish a self-sustaining local missionary force that is self-reliant in meeting regional missionary needs.

Leadership

With stakes operating in nearly all areas of the country, the Church benefits from a strong, devoted local leadership body that has become more self-reliant than leadership in many other European nations. German Latter-day Saints have supplied a large number of leaders for missions in Europe and have generally been self-sufficient in staffing temple presidencies. Mentoring and support from LDS American military members during much of the latter half of the twentieth century likely contributed to current levels of administrative responsibility and dependability. The size of the local leadership body remains limited, however. Several American military members have served as regional representatives, mission presidents, and in other leadership positions. German members have served as mission presidents, regional representatives, area seventies, general authorities, and temple presidents. In 1988, Wolfgang Paul from Wetterau²²⁰⁰ was called to preside over the Germany Hamburg Mission.²²⁰¹ In 1991, Manfred H. Schutze from Bernburg was called to preside over the Germany Berlin Mission.²²⁰² In 1994, Peter Berkahn from Wetterau²²⁰³ was called to preside over the Canada Calgary Mission.²²⁰⁴ In 1999, Michael Schulze from Hannover²²⁰⁵ was called to preside over the Austria Vienna Mission,²²⁰⁶ and Frank H. Apel from Freiberg was called to preside over the Germany Dusseldorf Mission.²²⁰⁷ In 2003, Erich Kopischke from Feucht²²⁰⁸ was called to preside over the Germany Berlin Mission.²²⁰⁹ In 2005,

²¹⁹⁷ "The Church in Europe," *Ensign*, August 1973. <http://lds.org/ensign/1973/08/the-church-in-europe?lang=eng>

²¹⁹⁸ Heslop, J Malan; Heslop, Fae Heslop. "Gospel work begun before Berlin Wall fell is accelerating," *LDS Church News*, 20 April 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21244/Gospel-work-begun-before-Berlin-Wall-fell-is-accelerating.html>

²¹⁹⁹ "A Foundation of Strength in Germany," *Liahona*, November 2000. <http://lds.org/liahona/2000/11/a-foundation-of-strength-in-germany?lang=eng&query=germany>

²²⁰⁰ "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 6 February 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17571/New-mission-presidents.html>

²²⁰¹ "Assignments announced for new mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 19 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17968/Assignments-announced-for-new-mission-presidents.html>

²²⁰² "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 6 April 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21408/New-mission-presidents.html>

²²⁰³ "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 29 January 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25160/New-mission-presidents.html>

²²⁰⁴ "New and Returning Mission Presidents: 1997," *LDS Church News*, 15 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29771/New-and-Returning-Mission-Presidents-1997.html>

²²⁰⁵ "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 27 February 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35287/New-mission-presidents.html>

²²⁰⁶ "New and returning mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 6 March 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/33321/New-and-returning-mission-presidents.html>

²²⁰⁷ "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 20 March 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35389/New-mission-presidents.html>

²²⁰⁸ "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 1 February 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43151/New-mission-presidents.html>

²²⁰⁹ "New mission presidents for 105 missions," *LDS Church News*, 8 March 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43323/New-mission-presidents-for-105-missions.html>

Holger Detlef Rakow from Berlin²²¹⁰ was called to preside over the Germany Munich/Austria Mission.²²¹¹ In 2007, Dietmar Gerald Matern from Delingsdorf was called to preside over the Switzerland Zurich Mission.²²¹² In 2011, Jorg Klebingat from Friedrichsdorf was called to preside over the Ukraine Kyiv Mission,²²¹³ and Lehi Karl Schwartz from Feucht was called to preside over the Germany Frankfurt Mission.²²¹⁴

In 1991, Wolfgang Heinz-Jurgen Paul from Friedrichsdorf was called as a regional representative.²²¹⁵ In 1992, Eckehart O. Jensen from Hildesheim was called as a regional representative.²²¹⁶ In 1995 Wolfgang Paul and Holger Rakow were called as area authorities.²²¹⁷ In 1999, Manfred Schutze was called as an Area Authority Seventy.²²¹⁸ In 2005, Frerich J. Grts from Dusseldorf was called as an Area Authority Seventy.²²¹⁹

The first local member to serve as a General Authority was F. Enzo Busche from Dortmund.²²²⁰ In 1994, Dieter F. Uchtdorf from Dramstadt was called to the Second Quorum of the Seventy.²²²¹ In 1996, Elder Uchtdorf was sustained to the First Quorum of the Seventy.²²²² In 2001, Keith K. Hilbig from Frankfurt was called to the Second Quorum of the Seventy.²²²³ In 2002, Elder Uchtdorf was called to the Presidency of the Seventy²²²⁴ and in 2004 was called as an apostle. In 2005, Elder Wolfgang Paul was called to the Second Quorum of the Seventy.²²²⁵ In 2007, Elder Kopischke was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy.²²²⁶

In 1998, Magnus R. Meiser from Muenster was called as the Freiberg Germany Temple president,²²²⁷ and

²²¹⁰ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 19 February 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46896/New-mission-presidents.html>

²²¹¹ "Mission presidents for 122 missions," LDS Church News, 26 February 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46913/Mission-Presidents-for-122-missions.html>

²²¹² "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 5 May 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50536/New-mission-presidents.html>

²²¹³ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 5 March 2011. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/60561/New-mission-presidents.html>

²²¹⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 16 April 2011. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/60787/New-mission-presidents.html>

²²¹⁵ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 5 October 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21218/New-regional-representatives.html>

²²¹⁶ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 17 October 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21766/New-regional-representatives.html>

²²¹⁷ "Church names area authorities," LDS Church News, 5 August 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26627/Church-names-area-authorities.html>

²²¹⁸ "Area Authority Seventies," LDS Church News, 9 October 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/33437/Area-Authority-Seventies.html>

²²¹⁹ "38 new Area Seventies called, 37 are released," LDS Church News, 9 April 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47147/38-new-Area-Seventies-called-37-are-released.html>

²²²⁰ "A Foundation of Strength in Germany," Liahona, November 2000. <http://lds.org/liahona/2000/11/a-foundation-of-strength-in-germany?lang=eng&query=germany>

²²²¹ "Five called as new members of Seventy," LDS Church News, 9 April 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24543/Five-called-as-new-members-of-Seventy.html>

²²²² "The First Quorum of the Seventy: 12 sustained to new Seventy callings," LDS Church News, 13 April 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28348/The-First-Quorum-of-the-Seventy-12-sustained-to-new-Seventy-callings.html>

²²²³ "12 men are sustained to Quorums of Seventy," LDS Church News, 31 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39606/12-men-are-sustained-to-Quorums-of-Seventy.html>

²²²⁴ "Elder Uchtdorf joins Presidency of Seventy," LDS Church News, 22 June 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42024/Elder-Uchtdorf-joins-Presidency-of-Seventy.html>

²²²⁵ "12 are called as new Seventies," LDS Church News, 9 April 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47143/12-are-called-as-new-Seventies.html>

²²²⁶ "5 general authorities called to serve full time," LDS Church News, 31 March 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50362/5-general-authorities-called-to-serve-full-time.html>

²²²⁷ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 19 September 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30640/New-temple-presidents.html>

Karl Friedrich Borcherding from Stadthagen was called as the Frankfurt Germany Temple president.²²²⁸ In 2001, Gerhard Grunewald from Berlin was called as the Freiberg Germany Temple president,²²²⁹ and Armin Ludwig Cziesla from Neumunster was called as the Frankfurt Germany Temple president.²²³⁰ In 2005, Manfred Schutze was called as the Freiberg Germany Temple president.²²³¹ In 2006, Ulrich Bergmann from Braunschweig was called as the Frankfurt Germany Temple president.²²³²

Temple

Northern, western, and southern areas of Germany are assigned to the Frankfurt Germany Temple district, whereas eastern areas are assigned to the Freiburg Germany Temple district. The Freiburg Germany Temple was completed in 1985, whereas the Frankfurt Germany Temple was completed in 1987. The Freiburg Germany Temple was renovated and expanded to twice its original size in 2002.²²³³ The Frankfurt Germany Temple appears moderately utilized, as five to seven sessions were scheduled Tuesdays through Saturdays in 2011. Attendance at the Freiburg Germany Temple appears low, as indicated by only three endowment sessions scheduled Tuesdays through Saturdays and four sessions scheduled on Fridays. German Latter-day Saints are well serviced by both temples, and there is little likelihood that additional temples will be constructed for the foreseeable future due to few active members, the central location of both temples, and stagnant church growth trends.

Comparative Growth

Germany supports the fourth largest LDS membership, the second most LDS stakes, and the second largest population in Europe. Member activity rates, the percentage of the population reached by LDS congregations, and the percentage of members enrolled in seminary and institute are representative for the region. The LDS Church in Germany experienced the eleventh largest decrease in the number of congregations worldwide during the 2000s. Germany and the United Kingdom are the only countries in Europe with more than one temple. Elder Dieter Uchtdorf became the first LDS apostle in modern times to have been born and lived outside of North America.

Other missionary-minded Christians report slow or stagnant church growth due to low receptivity. Jehovah's Witnesses appear to be the most successful Christian group gaining new converts at present due to a strong member-missionary program. Active Jehovah's Witnesses number over 160,000 and baptized over 3,000 converts in 2010, notwithstanding slow membership growth. During the 2000s, the Seventh Day Adventist Church generally baptized between 400 and 900 converts a year but experienced stagnant membership and congregational growth.²²³⁴ Evangelicals report slow growth and ongoing frustrations with cultural issues regarding the marginalization of organized religion in society.

²²²⁸ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 26 September 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30761/New-temple-presidents.html>

²²²⁹ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 8 September 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40468/New-temple-presidents.html>

²²³⁰ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 29 September 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40571/New-temple-presidents.html>

²²³¹ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 20 August 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47723/New-temple-presidents.html>

²²³² "New temple president," LDS Church News, 23 September 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49468/New-temple-president.html>

²²³³ Stahle, Shaun D. "Skies clear for Freiberg temple open house," LDS Church News, 31 August 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42361/Skies-clear-for-Freiberg-temple-open-house.html>

²²³⁴ "Euro-Africa Division (1972-Present)," www.adventiststatistics.org, retrieved 20 May 2011. http://www.adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldID=D_EUD

Future Prospects

Low rates of receptivity to organized religion, the increasing influence of secularism on society, inadequate LDS teaching and proselytism approaches for nonreligious individuals, the past emigration of many German Latter-day Saint converts, and moderately low rates of member activity present a poor outlook for church growth for the foreseeable future in Germany. The greatest challenge for the Church in the coming years will be to maintain the current level of national outreach as evidenced by reversing the trend of congregation consolidations that began more than a decade ago. Outreach focus on youth and young single adults is a positive development in recent years that has the potential to increase the sustainability of the LDS Church infrastructure in Germany by keeping members active, marrying within the Church, and serving full-time missions. At present, no stakes appear close to consolidating or dividing, and no districts appear likely to be discontinued or become stakes. The Kaiserslautern Germany Military Stake has steadily decreased in the number of congregations since 2000 and may become a district or be absorbed by surrounding German stakes if the trend of congregation closures continues.

ICELAND

Geography

AREA: 103,000 square km. Just south of the Arctic Circle, Iceland is a large island between the North Atlantic Ocean and the Greenland Sea between Europe and Greenland. Formed by volcanism on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, the terrain consists of rugged coasts, plateaus, and sporadic mountains. Coastal landforms include fjords and bays. Most land is covered by tundra. Ice fields and glaciers occupy many areas, especially the south and center. The North Atlantic current moderates climatic conditions, resulting in mild winters and cool summers. Earthquakes, volcanoes, and extreme weather are natural hazards. Environmental issues include water pollution and waste water treatment. Iceland is divided into eight administrative regions.

Peoples

Icelandic: 94%
Other: 6%

Icelanders are a mix of Norse and Celtic settlers who first populated the island over a millennia ago. Other ethnic groups are recently immigrated peoples who primarily consist of Poles, Lithuanians, Germans, and Danes.

Population: 313,183 (July 2012)
Annual Growth Rate: 0.674% (2012)
Fertility Rate: 1.89 children born per woman (2012)
Life Expectancy: 78.81 male, 83.29 female (2012)

Languages: Icelandic (94%), other (6%). Icelandic is the official language. English, Danish, and German are widely spoken second languages. Minority immigrant groups speak their respective languages.
Literacy: 99% (2003)

History

Icelanders maintain extensive genealogies that trace their ancestry back to Norse and Celtic peoples who settled Iceland in the ninth and tenth centuries. In 930, the colonists established the Althing, the world's oldest continuously functioning legislative assembly. Paganism was the dominant religion until the king of Norway requested that Iceland convert to Christianity in 1000 AD. Iceland maintained its independence until coming under the administration of Norway and later Denmark in the thirteenth century. In the sixteenth century, Lutheranism became the state religion. Volcanoes and weather phenomena have periodically afflicted the population. In 1875, Askja volcano erupted, leading to famine and economic collapse from fallout. Twenty percent (20%) of the Icelandic population emigrated as a result. In 1874, Iceland began to regain autonomy from Denmark. Sovereignty under Denmark occurred in 1918, and total independence was achieved in 1944. Fishing and greater integration with Europe resulted in economic growth and development in the latter half of the twentieth century. In 1994, Iceland joined the European Economic Area and began diversifying the economy away from reliance on fishing. The global financial crisis severely affected Iceland due to its large

financial sector, but the population enjoys one of the highest standards of living worldwide. In 2010, debris from a volcanic eruption in Iceland disrupted air traffic in Europe for several weeks.

Culture

Due to isolation from Scandinavia, Iceland has preserved many aspects of Norse culture and language. Icelandic sagas are well read internationally and contain medieval poetry, history, and myth. Icelander Snorri Sturluson wrote the Prose Edda, which has preserved many aspects of Norse mythology. In modern times, Iceland has produced many authors. Most Western sports are common in Iceland. Cuisine primarily consists of mutton, seafood, potatoes, and vegetables. Alcohol consumption rates are characteristic of Western Europe.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$38,000 (2011) [79% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.898

Corruption Index: 8.3 (2011)

Traditionally reliant on fish and sheep, Iceland has transformed into one of the most advanced nations worldwide through free-market capitalism. Fishing continues to generate 40% of export earnings and 12% of the GDP, resulting in sensitivity to market prices and demand. Mining is another major industry that exploits aluminum and ferrosilicon. Emerging industries include geothermal and hydroelectric power, tourism, software, and biotechnology. In 2008, bank collapses in Iceland contributed to the deterioration of the economy. The global financial crisis heavily impacted Iceland as unemployment rose to 9.4% and the GDP fell 6.5% in 2009 from 2008 levels. Iceland is currently in the process of rebuilding its financial sector. Services employ 73% of the workforce and generate 71% of the GDP. Industry accounts for about a quarter of the workforce and GDP. Although constituting less than 10% of the GDP and workforce, agriculture remains an important sector and produces potatoes, vegetables, meat, and fish. Primary trade partners include the Netherlands, Norway, and Germany.

Corruption ranks among the lowest in the world.

Faiths

Christian: 87.2%

Other: 3.6%

Unaffiliated: 3%

Other/unspecified: 6.2%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland 251,487

Catholic 9,672

Free Lutheran Church (Reykjavik) 8,227

Free Lutheran Church (Hafnarfjörður) 5,364

Pentecostal 2,109

Seventh Day Adventists 488 6

Jehovah's Witnesses 350 8

Latter-day Saints 265 2

Religion

Most Icelanders are Lutheran, although regular church-goers are in the minority. Baptisms, confirmations, and other rituals remain important to most Lutherans. Greater diversification in religious affiliation has occurred over the years as a result of immigration. Catholics are the second largest religious group, yet 80% are non-Icelandic.²²³⁵

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. The government promotes the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland, which receives some special privileges over other religious groups. The Lutheran Church is the state religion. Freedom of practicing any religion exists unless a religious group is deemed harmful to morality or threatening to public order. The government finances the Lutheran Church. All citizens are required to pay a religious tax to any officially recognized religious group to which they adhere; those unaffiliated must pay this tax to the university. Parents determine the religious affiliation of their children until age sixteen. Religion is studied in public schools with an emphasis on applying Christian principles and developing an awareness of other religious traditions. There are few instances of societal abuses of religious freedom, primarily targeting Muslims. However, these instances are thought to be motivated not by intolerance but rather a lack of exposure to minority religious groups and immigrant peoples.²²³⁶

Largest Cities

Urban: 92%

Reykjavík, Kópavogur, Hafnarfjörður, Akureyri, Keflavík og Njarðvík, Garðabær, Mosfellsbær, Akranes, Selfoss, Seltjarnarnes.

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Two of the ten largest cities have an LDS congregation. Seventy-six percent (76%) of the national population resides in the ten largest cities, with 66% in the greater Reykjavik area. Akureyri is the only city outside the Reykjavik area with over 10,000 inhabitants.

LDS History

The first Icelanders joined the LDS Church in Denmark in 1851, returned to Iceland, and began preaching on Westmann Island, located off the southern coast. Additional missionaries arrived in 1853 and established a branch. Most the members immigrated to the United States shortly thereafter. The Church renewed missionary interests in the late nineteenth century and established an Icelandic Mission. Most converts immigrated to Utah, and formal missionary work ended in 1914.²²³⁷ Today, Spanish Fork, Utah has one of the greatest concentrations of people of Icelandic descent outside of Iceland as a result the immigration of LDS converts.

A Church presence was reestablished through the efforts of foreign Latter-day Saint military personnel stationed in Iceland in the 1970s. Church members of Icelandic descent in Utah continue to foster ties with Iceland and were instrumental in restarting missionary work in 1975.²²³⁸ In 1976, the Reykjavik Branch

²²³⁵ <<note change in font size through 296>>"Iceland," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127315.htm>

²²³⁶ "Iceland," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127315.htm>

²²³⁷ "Iceland," Country Profiles, retrieved 24 August 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/iceland>

²²³⁸ Dockstader, Julie A. "Member receives 'highest honor' from Iceland for fostering heritage," LDS Church News, 14 August 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23700/Member-receives-highest-honor-from-Iceland-for-fostering-heritage.html>

was organized. Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin dedicated Iceland for missionary work in 1977.²²³⁹ The Book of Mormon was translated into Icelandic in 1980.²²⁴⁰ Seminary and institute began in the 1970s and early 1980s. Missionaries began serving outside of Reykjavik in cities such as Akureyri. In 1997, the president of Iceland visited Utah to attend festivities commemorating Icelandic LDS settlers.²²⁴¹ In 1991, Iceland pertained to the Europe North Area and in 2010 was part of the Europe Area. Iceland belongs to the Denmark Copenhagen Mission.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 265 (2012)

In 1976, there were ten LDS members.²²⁴² In 1993, membership was approximately 300.²²⁴³ By year-end 2000, there were 244 members, increasing to 289 the following year. Membership fluctuated between growth and decline through much of the 2000s to 275 in 2003, 225 in 2005, and 250 in 2007. The closure of the Keflavik Military Base was partially responsible for membership decline as LDS United States military personnel left the island by 2006. Between 2000 and 2009, the government reported that the number of Latter-day Saints increased from 178 to 182.²²⁴⁴ In 2009, one in 1,241 was nominally LDS. There were eight LDS convert baptisms in 2009. As of September 2010, there had been three convert baptisms for the year.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 2 (2012)

In 1993, there were three branches in the Reykjavik Iceland District.²²⁴⁵ In 1999, there were two branches: The Reykjavik Branch and the Keflavik Iceland Military Branch.²²⁴⁶ The military branch was discontinued in 2006, leaving just one LDS congregation meeting in Reykjavik and the dissolution of the district. In 2007, the Selfoss Branch was created. In 2010, both branches reported to the Denmark Copenhagen Mission and both had enough members to hold the full block schedule of Sunday meetings.

Activity and Retention

Thirty gathered for the dedicatory prayer in 1977. Up to sixty have attended family home evenings held at members' homes in the past that became a successful means of gaining new converts.²²⁴⁷ Seventy-five attended the groundbreaking of the first meetinghouse in 1999.²²⁴⁸ Two hundred twenty attended a fireside

²²³⁹ "Gospel touches remote Iceland," LDS Church News, 6 August 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25147/Gospel-touches-remote-Iceland.html>

²²⁴⁰ "Iceland," Country Profiles, retrieved 24 August 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/iceland>

²²⁴¹ Avant, Gerry. "Iceland president visits Utah," LDS Church News, 2 August 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29833/Iceland-president-visits-Utah.html>

²²⁴² "Iceland," Country Profiles, retrieved 24 August 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/iceland>

²²⁴³ Dockstader, Julie A. "Member receives 'highest honor' from Iceland for fostering heritage," LDS Church News, 14 August 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23700/Member-receives-highest-honor-from-Iceland-for-fostering-heritage.html>

²²⁴⁴ "Religious organisations," Statistics Iceland, retrieved 23 August 2010. <http://www.statice.is/Statistics/Population/Religious-organizations>

²²⁴⁵ Dockstader, Julie A. "Member receives 'highest honor' from Iceland for fostering heritage," LDS Church News, 14 August 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23700/Member-receives-highest-honor-from-Iceland-for-fostering-heritage.html>

²²⁴⁶ "Ground broken for first meetinghouse in Iceland," LDS Church News, 27 March 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35419/Ground-broken-for-first-meetinghouse-in-Iceland.html>

²²⁴⁷ "Gospel touches remote Iceland," LDS Church News, 6 August 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25147/Gospel-touches-remote-Iceland.html>

²²⁴⁸ "Ground broken for first meetinghouse in Iceland," LDS Church News, 27 March 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35419/Ground-broken-for-first-meetinghouse-in-Iceland.html>

with President Hinckley in 2002.²²⁴⁹ During the 2008–2009 school year, fifteen were enrolled in seminary or institute. Active membership is between ninety and 100, or 40% of total membership. In mid-2010, attendance at the Reykjavik branch ranged between fifty-five and seventy-five (including missionaries and foreign visitors) and twenty and thirty at the Selfoss branch. As many as 75% of Icelandic members identify themselves as Latter-day Saints according to government sources.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Icelandic, Danish, German, English.

All LDS scriptures are translated into Icelandic, Danish, and German. Most Church materials are translated into Danish and German. Several unit, temple, Priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, Young Women, Primary, missionary, family history, and Church Education System (CES) materials in Icelandic are available.

Meetinghouses

Meetings were first held in rented facilities until the Church purchased a building for church meetings in 1981.²²⁵⁰ The first Church-built meetinghouse was dedicated in 2000.²²⁵¹

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church has not conducted large humanitarian or development projects in Iceland due to the level of economic prosperity and high standards of living. Humanitarian service is limited to missionaries fulfilling weekly service hours and local congregations organizing service projects.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The LDS Church faces no legal restrictions regarding proselytism and assembly. Over the past several decades, the Church has established a positive relationship with the government, as manifest by repeated visits between missionaries and the president as well as the Icelandic government's interest in the annual commemoration of LDS Icelandic settlers in Spanish Fork, Utah.

Cultural Issues

The Lutheran Church remains the most visible religious entity. Many Lutherans have little interest in religion on a daily basis and view foreign, nontraditional religious groups with suspicion. Missionaries report that many individuals are willing to listen, but few progress in commitments, in part due to social pressures and a sense that being “too religious”—attending church services on more than religious holidays or special events—is not “cool.” Approximately two-thirds of births in Iceland are to unwed mothers, which carries no social stigma. These attitudes, combined with increasing secularism over the past half decade have limited membership growth rates.

²²⁴⁹ Lloyd, R. Scott. “Iceland visit: light, warm,” LDS Church News, 21 September 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42457/Iceland-visit-light-warm.html>

²²⁵⁰ “Gospel touches remote Iceland,” LDS Church News, 6 August 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25147/Gospel-touches-remote-Iceland.html>

²²⁵¹ “Iceland,” Country Profiles, retrieved 24 August 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/iceland>

National Outreach

LDS congregations operate in two cities, providing mission outreach to no more than 67% of the national population. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of the national population resides in administrative regions without LDS mission outreach centers, many of which in small towns of fewer than 10,000 inhabitants. Low receptivity, limited mission outreach resources, and few LDS members render such areas unlikely to open for missionary work in the foreseeable future.

Reykjavik is paramount to mission outreach, as the majority of the Icelandic population resides in the city and its suburbs. Few mission outreach centers are required to provide adequate proselytism support to Reykjavik. Establishing additional congregations may facilitate greater membership growth, but such a move will not be warranted unless active membership in the Reykjavik Branch grows too large to be administered by one congregation. Holding periodic cottage meetings in smaller towns where a couple of active LDS members reside may assist in the expansion of national outreach.

The Church has maintained an Internet site for Iceland at <http://www.kirkjajesukrists.is/>. The website is kept up to date with local and international LDS Church News, information about church beliefs and practices, meetinghouse locations, and contact information in Icelandic. Use of the website in member-missionary and full-time missionary efforts can assist in finding receptive individuals and breaking down negative attitudes and misunderstandings regarding the LDS Church.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Iceland experiences higher member activity rates than many other European nations. This has likely come as a result of isolation from mission headquarters and few LDS missionaries, allowing for greater self-sufficiency and growth to occur. Converts who join the Church today appear dedicated and have modest to high retention rates. However, very few converts join the Church, and most of current LDS membership was baptized in the 1980s or 1990s. A lack of recent converts may contribute to low numbers of convert baptisms, as active membership maintains fewer non-LDS relations through entrenchment in established congregations. Iceland has one of the highest percentages of self-identifying Latter-day Saints in the world, but half of these members likely do not attend church regularly. Few active LDS youth challenge efforts to attract a younger population to help ensure long-term growth.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Many recent immigrants maintain strong affinity to their traditional religions and are more religiously active than native Icelanders, resulting in low levels of receptivity to LDS mission outreach efforts. Furthermore, their few numbers and diversity overwhelm the tiny LDS missionary presence in Iceland, which concentrates on the Icelandic majority. If mission efforts become successful among recent immigrants, a non-Icelandic-speaking group may be established.

Language Issues

Icelandic is widely spoken, and the Church has a wide selection of ecclesiastical and missionary materials translated. Language issues will most likely only be encountered with immigrant groups. Due to the large number of foreign language speakers among native Icelanders, temple worship and association with members in other nations is facilitated.

Missionary Service

Between 1851 and 1914, twenty-two Icelanders served as full-time missionaries in Iceland. Since formal missionary activity was reintroduced in 1975, 167 young missionaries and twenty-four senior couples have served in Iceland. In 2010, two young elder missionaries and one senior couple were assigned to the island. Several native Icelanders have served missions in the recent past.

Leadership

In 2010, both the Reykjavik and Selfoss Branches had local branch presidents. Local priesthood leadership remains limited due to few active members. In the past decade, Iceland appears to have developed greater leadership maturity and self-sufficiency, as most non-Icelandic Latter-day Saints left the country in the mid-2000s, yet a second branch was created in Selfoss. As of 2010, the mission president from Denmark was visiting Icelandic congregations approximately once a month.

Temple

Iceland belongs to the Copenhagen Denmark Temple district. Icelandic members travel to the temple regularly, as Copenhagen is accessible by nonstop flight from Reykjavik. Most Icelanders have detailed family history records, facilitating temple work for deceased ancestors.²²⁵²

Comparative Growth

Iceland has one of the strongest Latter-day Saint populations among European nations with fewer than one million people and approximately the same percentage of LDS members in the population as most Nordic countries.

Out of thirty-five religious groups, Latter-day Saints ranked as the fifth slowest growing in Iceland during the 2000s.²²⁵³ The number of Seventh Day Adventists has remained virtually unchanged over the 2000s, and the number of congregations has remained constant. Jehovah's Witnesses gain few new converts.

Future Prospects

Prospects for future growth in Iceland appear mediocre due to the lack of receptivity to the Church over the past several decades, limited mission resources, a small population, and isolation from mission headquarters. Greater numbers of youth converts and strong involvement of local members in missionary activity will be required to expand national outreach and the size of active membership. Secularism and nominalism in the Lutheran Church are cultural obstacles that missionaries and local Church leadership face in teaching and extending commitments to investigators.

²²⁵² "Gospel touches remote Iceland," LDS Church News, 6 August 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25147/Gospel-touches-remote-Iceland.html>

²²⁵³ "Religious organisations," Statistics Iceland, retrieved 23 August 2010. <http://www.statice.is/Statistics/Population/Religious-organizations>

IRELAND

Geography

AREA: 70,273 square km. Nicknamed the “Emerald Isle” for its abundance of green vegetation, Ireland is an island to the west of Great Britain surrounded by the Irish Sea and North Atlantic Ocean. The United Kingdom controls the northeastern portion of the island as Northern Ireland. A wet temperate maritime climate characterized by mild winters and cool summers occurs throughout the country as a result of high latitude and the North Atlantic Current. The weather is often cloudy and humid. Terrain consists of rolling hills and small mountains with some coastal plains and interior plateaus. The western coastline is marked by numerous inlets and small peninsulas. Major rivers include the Shannon, Barrow, and Siur. Water pollution in lakes is an environmental issue. Ireland is administratively divided into twenty-nine counties and five cities.

Peoples

Irish: 87.4%

Other white: 7.5%

Asian: 1.3%

Black: 1.1%

Mixed: 1.1%

Unspecified: 1.6%

The Irish constitute a strong majority. Other whites include peoples from the British Isles and other Europeans. Asian and African immigrants have arrived in greater numbers in recent years.

Population: 4,722,028 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.112% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 2.01 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 78.07 male, 82.69 female (2012)

Languages: English (91%), Gaelic (6%), other (3%). English and Gaelic are the official languages. English is most commonly used as a result of centuries of English rule. According to the 2006 census, 1.66 million Irish claim some knowledge of Gaelic, although one million of these report speaking Gaelic less than once a week, and only 72,000 report speaking Gaelic on a daily basis outside of education.²²⁵⁴ The few fluent Gaelic speakers are concentrated along the west coast. Only English has over one million speakers (3.87 million).

Literacy: 99% (2003)

History

Celtic tribes settled the island several centuries before the birth of Christ. Christianity arrived prior to the Middle Ages and flourished. Irish missionaries facilitated the spread of Christianity throughout Europe in the subsequent centuries. Norse and Viking invasions began in the eighth century and persisted for several hundred years. Dublin and most other coastal cities were founded as Viking settlements and trading posts.

²²⁵⁴ 2006 Irish Census, http://www.cso.ie/census/census2006results/volume_9/volume_9_press_release.pdf

The English invaded in the twelfth century, and conflict continued until the end of the twentieth century as a result of colonial rule. In the 1840s, the Great Famine resulted in mass immigration to the United States and as many as one million deaths. In 1916, the Easter Monday Rebellion was an Irish insurrection that attempted to overthrow British rule but failed. Rebellion and guerrilla warfare persisted until 1921 when independence was obtained for twenty-six of the thirty-two Irish counties; the remaining six became Northern Ireland. Ireland left the British Commonwealth in 1949 and joined the European Community (today known as the European Union) in 1973. Irish nationalist groups seeking reunification with Northern Ireland challenged efforts by Irish and British governments to maintain law and order. In recent years, violence has declined, and greater dialogue between Irish and British governments has occurred.

Culture

Ireland is renowned for its poetry, literature, music, folklore, and scenery. Due to remoteness and separation from the mainland resulting with little contact with Ireland proper, the Aran Islands have been instrumental in preserving many aspects of Irish culture, such as the Gaelic language, through the many centuries of English colonization.²²⁵⁵ Irish culture has influenced many nearby European nations. Halloween has its roots in Irish folklore, and Medieval Christianity was popularized in the United States following the mass immigration of Irish in the nineteenth century. Rugby and soccer are popular sports. Irish cuisine heavily uses potatoes, cabbage, wheat, and pork. Cigarette consumption rates are higher than the United Kingdom, but are representative for Western Europe. Ireland has one of the highest alcohol consumption rates worldwide. Divorce rates are low.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$39,500 (2011) [82.1% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.908

Corruption Index: 7.5 (2011)

Ireland has a small, developed economy that relies on trade with other nations for revenue. The global financial crisis severely affected Ireland, resulting in acute recession. Average home prices fell 50% from 2007 levels, and the GDP declined by 7.5% in 2009. Unemployment nearly doubled, reaching 11.8% in 2009. Despite the recent downturn in the economy, standards of living are high. Services employ two-thirds of the workforce and generate half of the GDP. Industry employs 27% of the workforce and generates 46% of the GDP. Primary industries include industrial and valuable metals, food products, clothing, pharmaceuticals, machinery, glass, software, and tourism. Agriculture constitutes less than 10% of the GDP and employs a similar percentage of the workforce. Major crops include turnips, barley, potatoes, sugar beets, and wheat. Natural resources include natural gas, peat, and a variety of minerals and metals. The United Kingdom, the United States, Belgium, and Germany are primary trade partners. Perceived corruption in Ireland is among the lowest worldwide and compares to Scandinavia and Western Europe.

Faiths

Christian: 92.2%

Other: 2.1%

Unspecified: 1.5%

None: 4.2%

²²⁵⁵ "Friends in Ireland," *Friend*, Mar 1971, 46.

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 3,714,642

Church of Ireland 123,255

Presbyterian 23,546

Orthodox 20,798

Methodist 12,160

Apostolic/Pentecostal 8,116

Jehovah's Witnesses 6,006 115

Lutheran 5,279

Evangelical 5,276

Baptist 3,338

Latter-day Saints 3,013 13

Seventh Day Adventists 625 13 (includes Northern Ireland)

Religion

Ireland exhibits one of the most religiously active populations in Europe. Most Irish are Catholic (86.8%). Sixty percent (60%) of Irish Catholics reportedly attend mass weekly. The second largest religious group is the Church of Ireland (2.9%) followed by Muslims (0.76%). Presbyterians, Orthodox Christians, and Methodists each constitute less than 1% of the population. A 2005 survey estimated the number of active Evangelical Christians at around 30,000 (0.7%). Six percent (6%) of Irish are unaffiliated.²²⁵⁶

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by governmental policy and law. Abuse of religious freedom is not tolerated. There is no state religion, and it is illegal for one religious group to be promoted over another. Missionaries may proselyte freely. Religious groups are not required to register with the government. Religious instruction in public schools is allowed but not mandatory. There are few reported instances of societal abuses of religious freedom.²²⁵⁷

Largest Cities

Urban: 61%

Dublin, Cork, Galway, Tallaght, Blanchardstown, Limerick, Waterford, Clondalkin, Lucan, Swords.

All ten of the largest cities have an LDS congregation. Twenty-four percent (24%) of the national population resides in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

Ireland was among the first destinations for LDS missionaries in Europe following the commencement of missionary work outside the United States in the late 1830s. In 1840, future Church President John Taylor arrived in Ireland shortly after the first missionaries arrived and preached to over 600. By the fall, the Church created its first branch in Hillsborough with thirty-five members. In the 1840s, nearly all the approximately

²²⁵⁶ "Ireland," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127316.htm>

²²⁵⁷ "Ireland," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127316.htm>

one hundred Irish Latter-day Saints immigrated to Utah. Missionary work was reestablished following the Great Famine in the 1850s, and by 1856, there were 300 members.²²⁵⁸

Missionary work progressed slowly for the following century. Catholics were admonished to never attend the religious meeting of another faith.²²⁵⁹ Starting from the beginning of the twentieth century, missionaries found success working among German immigrants, leading to a preponderance of ethnic Germans among church members in many areas. In 1946, only one Latter-day Saint in the Dublin Branch was a former Catholic; most were German immigrants or former Protestants. Many of the German immigrants later immigrated to the United States.²²⁶⁰

The Irish Mission was organized in 1962. Seminary and institute began in the mid-1970s. In 1983, the Ireland Dublin Mission pioneered a stop smoking program that was later utilized in other LDS missions. In 2010, the Church consolidated the Ireland Dublin Mission with the Scotland Edinburgh Mission into the Scotland/Ireland Mission headquartered in Edinburgh.²²⁶¹

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 3,013 (2012)

There were 300 LDS members by 1900. In 1978, there were 750 members, most of whom were baptized in the past two decades.²²⁶² In 1995, membership totaled 2,300 in the Republic of Ireland, 1,700 of whom resided within the boundaries of the Dublin Ireland Stake.²²⁶³

By year-end 2000, there were 2,332 LDS members. In the 2000s, membership grew slowly and totaled 2,610 in 2002, 2,710 in 2006, and 2,772 in 2008. Over the past decade, the Church experienced the most rapid growth in 2002 as membership increased by 10% from year-end 2001 levels, although it is unclear how many new members were retained or whether other factors were involved. Most years experienced either annual membership decline of less than 1% or membership increase of up to 2%. Most recent LDS growth has been among non-Irish immigrants, including Chinese, other Asians, Africans, Middle Easterners, and Eastern Europeans.

The census counted 833 self-identifying Latter-day Saints in 2002 and 1,237 in 2006; a 48% increase.²²⁶⁴ Officially reported LDS membership for Ireland increased by only 3.8% during this period. In 2009, one in 1,518 people was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 4 Branches: 9 (April 2013)

The Dublin Branch divided in 1975 to create a second congregation in the city.²²⁶⁵ The Dublin Ireland Stake

²²⁵⁸ "Ireland," Country Profiles, retrieved 19 August 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/ireland>

²²⁵⁹ Card, Orson Scott. "The Saints in Ireland," *Ensign*, Feb 1978, 45

²²⁶⁰ Connolly, John. "First stake in Republic of Ireland organized," *LDS Church News*, 25 March 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26619/First-stake-in-Republic-of-Ireland-organized.html>

²²⁶¹ "New missions 10 announced in seven areas," *LDS Church News*, 13 February 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/58775/New-missions-10-announced-in-seven-areas.html>

²²⁶² Card, Orson Scott. "The Saints in Ireland," *Ensign*, Feb 1978, 45.

²²⁶³ Connolly, John. "First stake in Republic of Ireland organized," *LDS Church News*, 25 March 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26619/First-stake-in-Republic-of-Ireland-organized.html>

²²⁶⁴ "Census 2006 Principle Demographic Results," Central Statistics Office Ireland, March 2007. <http://www.cso.ie/census/documents/Final%20Principal%20Demographic%20Results%202006.pdf>

²²⁶⁵ Card, Orson Scott. "The Saints in Ireland," *Ensign*, Feb 1978, 45.

was created in 1995. In the late 1990s, there were four wards and fifteen branches nationwide. The Limerick Ireland District has operated since 1985. In 2000, there were four wards and nine branches. In 2002, one new branch was created, but one branch was discontinued the following year. In 2010, there were four wards and nine branches.

Activity and Retention

One thousand one hundred members from Ireland and Northern Ireland attended a special conference with President Hinckley in 1995.²²⁶⁶ During the 2008–2009 school year, 134 were enrolled in seminary or institute. Between 2000 and 2009, the average number of members per congregation increased from 179 to 215.

Seventy members from the Terenure Ward gathered to clean and perform maintenance work on their chapel in 2003.²²⁶⁷ In 2009, the Galway Branch had sixty attending Sunday meetings, doubling sacrament attendance in a short period of time. Most congregations appear to have between fifty and one hundred active members. Nationwide active membership is estimated at 1,000, or 35% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English.

All LDS materials and scriptures are available in English. Church materials are available in many of the native or second languages spoken by immigrant groups from Europe and Africa.

Meetinghouses

In 2010, congregations met in at least twelve meetinghouses, which included several Church-built meetinghouses. Some smaller branches met in rented spaces.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church has conducted little humanitarian service in Ireland due to high standards of living and few natural disasters.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church faces no governmental restrictions regarding worship or proselytism. Foreign missionaries may serve in Ireland and report no challenges in obtaining visas.

Cultural Issues

The strength and size of the Catholic Church has been a major challenge for LDS mission outreach in Ireland since proselytism began in the 1840s. Efforts from Catholic authorities in the past to dissuade Catholics from investigating or participating in non-Catholic denominations have made outreach difficult. The influence of the Catholic Church has slightly waned in recent years, yet this has not been of much benefit to the LDS Church as secularism has filled this void.

²²⁶⁶ Cannon, Mike. "Visit to Ireland caps 'whirlwind trip,'" LDS Church News, 9 September 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25707/Visit-to-Ireland-caps-whirlwind-trip.html>

²²⁶⁷ "Ireland cleaning project," LDS Church News, 27 September 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44384/Ireland-cleaning-project.html>

High alcohol consumption rates pose an obstacle for missionary work. In the early 1840s, Father Theobald Mathew, a Catholic missionary, enrolled over three million Irish—more than half of the nation's adult population at the time—in a pledge of total abstinence from alcohol, but this pledge does not appear to have generated lasting results. The mission developed a stop smoking program to address smoking challenges manifested by investigators and the general population, although work with alcohol has been less successful.

National Outreach

Ireland experiences modest levels of national outreach. Current LDS mission outreach centers are established in twelve of the thirty-four administrative counties and cities of Ireland, home to 61% of the national population. However, only 37% of the national population resides in a city with an LDS congregation. Approximately forty cities with between 10,000 and 30,000 inhabitants have no mission outreach centers. Only one city with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants has an LDS congregation (Mullingar). The Church's sole mission in Ireland previously provided consistent full-time missionary outreach with typically over one hundred full-time missionaries for several decades administering a smaller population than most European missions.

Dublin suburbs distant from LDS meetinghouses and larger cities with at least a few active members provide the greatest potential for establishing additional congregations. However, the lack of any increase in congregations over the past decade, the consolidation of the Ireland Dublin Mission with the Scotland Edinburgh Mission, and slow membership growth indicate that little expansion in national outreach will likely occur in the immediate future. The preponderance of baptisms among non-Irish immigrants who live primarily in Dublin and other large cities, in contrast to low receptivity among the native Irish, as well as limited missionary manpower, offer little rationale at present for expansion of mission outreach beyond currently established centers.

Any future strides gained in national outreach will be reflected in rates of member activity and convert retention and member involvement in missionary activity. With the downsizing of the full-time missionary force in the late 2000s, the Church has sought to at least maintain current levels of convert baptisms or even increase these numbers with a smaller full-time missionary force.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Statistics released by the census regarding the 48% increase in self-identified Latter-day Saints between 2002 and 2006 is among the highest percentage increases seen of Latter-day Saints on a census in such a short period of time and may indicate increased member activity rates, the surge in membership in 2002, and possibly other factors. However, the lack of any increase in congregations and the failure of any branches to mature into wards in the Dublin Ireland Stake over the past decade point to slow growth with modest convert retention and member activity. Non-Irish converts may experience some integration challenges, although LDS membership, especially among young people, is much more diverse than the Irish population as a whole.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

African immigrants have been more receptive to LDS mission outreach efforts than the white population and have been highly represented among convert baptisms in recent years. In 2006, Africans numbered less than 40,000, and most originated from Nigeria or South Africa. Non-Irish Europeans most commonly emigrated from the United Kingdom, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Germany;²²⁶⁸ among Asians, many come from China. Non-Irish Europeans present a challenging population for proselytism, as the most represented nations

²²⁶⁸ "Census 2006 Principle Demographic Results," Central Statistics Office Ireland, March 2007. <http://www.cso.ie/census/documents/Final%20Principal%20Demographic%20Results%202006.pdf>

have been among the least receptive in their native lands. Overall, most congregations appear to accommodate non-Irish members without significant challenges.

Language Issues

The common usage of English among the general population has eliminated potential conflicts at church regarding communication challenges between members. Some obstacles may exist for immigrant peoples who do not fluently speak English as a second language. The few Gaelic speakers generally speak English fluently, reducing the need for church materials in Gaelic.

Missionary Service

Few Irish serve full-time missions, and Ireland remains dependent on other nations to staff its missionary force. In 1995, 160 missionaries served in the Ireland Dublin Mission, which administered the entire island of Ireland.²²⁶⁹ In 2010, the Scotland/Ireland Mission had a missionary complement of 146, enough for one pair for each congregation throughout the mission.²²⁷⁰ If each congregation were to have two missionaries assigned, fewer than thirty full-time missionaries would serve in Ireland. Stressing youth outreach programs and activities sponsored on a congregational level may facilitate increases in youth converts. Emphasis on missionary preparation courses and seminary and institute attendance may help to increase the local full-time missionary force over time.

Leadership

Local leadership and active priesthood holders have been sufficiently developed to support a small stake for fifteen years despite the small number of Latter-day Saints in Ireland. The Dublin Ireland Stake Presidency had no Church employees when reorganized in 2000²²⁷¹ and 2009.²²⁷² The absence of Church employees in the stake presidency indicates that local leadership has been developed without reliance on Church Education System staff or personnel. The continued operation of the Limerick Ireland District further demonstrates that some local leadership has been developed in smaller cities in the countryside.

Temple

The Dublin Ireland Stake attends the Preston England Temple, whereas the Limerick Ireland District attends the London England Temple. Temple trips occur regularly and are accessible for most members, as Dublin and London are connected with a short seventy-minute flight. The Republic of Ireland and Northern Island may one day support a small temple, as many European nations with small, long established LDS communities have had temples constructed in the past decade. However, few such small temples have been announced since 2000, making the possibility of a temple in Ireland less likely for several more decades.

²²⁶⁹ Cannon, Mike. "Visit to Ireland caps 'whirlwind trip,'" LDS Church News, 9 September 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25707/Visit-to-Ireland-caps-whirlwind-trip.html>

²²⁷⁰ "Mormons to Consolidate Missionary Work Worldwide as Church Continues to Grow," American Chronicle, 10 February 2010. <http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/view/140862>

²²⁷¹ "New stake presidencies," LDS Church News, 27 May 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37835/New-stake-presidencies.html>

²²⁷² "New stake presidents," LDS Church News, 24 October 2009. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/58126/New-stake-presidents.html>

Comparative Growth

The extent of national outreach and duration of LDS missionary activity are comparable to much of Western Europe. Ireland appears to have experienced the slowest membership growth rates in the British Isles and ranks among the slowest for Western Europe over the past thirty years. Only Scandinavia and German-speaking Europe have experienced slower membership growth over this period. For some years, the Ireland Dublin mission was the lowest baptizing mission in the world; more recently, the Greece Athens Mission has held this dubious distinction. Membership growth in Northern Ireland greatly outpaced growth in the Republic of Ireland. By 1978, over 80% of Church membership on the island resided in Northern Ireland, home to just 30% of the island's population. The percentage of LDS members in Ireland is comparable to many Western European nations, but much lower than the United Kingdom (one member per 1,518 people in Ireland versus one member per 329 people in the United Kingdom). Ireland is one of only three nations that has a stake with fewer than 3,000 Latter-day Saints (the others being Singapore and Trinidad and Tobago) and the only nation with as few members to also have a district.

Although the 48% increase of Latter-day Saints reported by the 2006 Irish census appears impressive, many other Christian denominations experienced similar or more impressive gains in self-reported followers, suggesting that additional factors may have been involved. Muslims, Orthodox Christians, Pentecostals, Buddhists, Hindus, and Lutherans all have more adherents than the LDS Church and experienced at least a 50% increase in self-reported members during this period, whereas Evangelicals, Baptists, and agnostics reported comparable growth rates to the LDS Church.²²⁷³ Increases in the followers of some of these faiths can be attributed at least in part to immigration, such as Orthodox Christians immigrating from Eastern Europe and Buddhists and Hindus from Asia. Seventh Day Adventists gain few new converts from year to year. Adventists generally had fewer than twenty convert baptisms annually during the 2000s. Jehovah's Witnesses have seen slow, steady growth with over one hundred convert baptisms in 2009. These missionary-oriented denominations utilized member-missionary approaches, reducing costs and increasing retention and productivity.

Future Prospects

There appears to be no change in the trend of slow membership growth and lack of new congregations in Ireland for the near future. The 2010 mission consolidation reduced full-time missionary resources allocated but is unlikely to substantially reduce the number of convert baptisms, which appears to depend more upon member-missionary participation and local receptivity than on the number of full-time missionaries. The First Presidency stated that some of the purposes for consolidating the two missions were confidence expressed in local members increasing their involvement in missionary activity and limited missionary resources worldwide.²²⁷⁴ Increasing missionary activity and success among the non-Irish population will likely result in a greater diversity in membership over the coming years. Greater member and recent convert involvement in finding, teaching, and fellowshiping investigators will be necessary to achieve greater long term growth.

²²⁷³ "Census 2006 Principle Demographic Results," Central Statistics Office Ireland, March 2007. <http://www.cso.ie/census/documents/Final%20Principal%20Demographic%20Results%202006.pdf>

²²⁷⁴ "Mormons to Consolidate Missionary Work Worldwide as Church Continues to Grow," American Chronicle, 10 February 2010. <http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/view/140862>

ITALY

Geography

AREA: 301,340 square km. Located in Southern Europe, Italy consists of a peninsula stretching into the Mediterranean Sea, along with Sicily, Sardinia, and many small islands in the surrounding ocean. Italy borders France, Switzerland, Austria, and Slovenia and surrounds the city-states of San Marino and Vatican City. Most areas experience a Mediterranean climate, whereas extreme northern areas in the Alps are subject to a cold alpine climate, and southern areas have a hot, dry climate. Mountains and hills cover most areas. Natural hazards vary by region and include landslides, avalanches, earthquakes, and flooding. Air and water pollution, acid rain, and waste water treatment are environmental issues. Italy is administratively divided into fifteen regions and five autonomous regions.

Peoples

Italian: 92.5%
Other European: 4%
North African: 2%
Other: 1.5%

The population is predominantly Italian with regional differences in culture and language. There are large numbers of North African, African, and Chinese immigrants or transient workers.

Population: 61,261,254 (July 2012)
Annual Growth Rate: 0.38% (2012)
Fertility Rate: 1.4 children born per woman (2012)
Life Expectancy: 79.24 male, 84.63 female (2012)

Languages: Italian languages, German, French, Slovene. Italian is spoken by most of the population and the official language. German, French, and Slovene are regional languages. Historical languages with over one million speakers include Lombard (8.83 million), Neapolitano-Calabrese (7.05 million), Sicilian (4.83 million), Piemontese (3.11 million), Venetian (2.18 million), Emiliano-Romagnolo (2 million), Ligurian (1.92 million), and Sardinian dialects (1 million). Many of these languages have limited use due to standardization of the Italian language throughout the country.

Literacy: 98.4% (2001)

History

Various ancient civilizations settled the Italian Peninsula prior to the founding of the Roman Empire that at its height stretched from central Europe and Britain in the north to Mesopotamia to the east and to North Africa in the south. In the third century, the Roman Empire divided, and the Western Roman Empire eventually divided into small city states due to Gothic invasions. The Byzantine Empire annexed Italy in the sixth century but was unable to maintain control. In the Middle Ages, the Maritime Republics—Venice, Genoa, Pisa, and Amalfi—operated as centers of trade and development. The Italian city-states of Florence, Milan, and Venice played a central role in the Renaissance in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Spain conquered much

of Italy in the sixteenth century and retained control of much of the peninsula until these possessions were ceded to Austria in the War of Spanish Succession culminating in the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. An independence and unification movement began in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Kingdom of Sardinia-Piedmont united Italy in the 1850s following favorable referendums in Parma, Modena, Tuscany, and Romagna and military annexation of the Two Sicilies in 1861. Milan, Venice, Brescia, Bergamo, Padua, and other regions were added following a military alliance with Prussia against the Austrians in 1866. Benito Mussolini came to power in the 1920s under a Fascist dictatorship that later allied with Nazi Germany in World War II. In 1946, a democratic republic was established that played a central role in the establishment of NATO and the European Economic Community, which later become the European Union. Northern Italy has grown increasingly more prosperous, whereas southern Italy faces many societal problems, including low incomes and a lack of economic development.

Culture

Italian music, cuisine, art, law, and language have significantly influenced the world for centuries. Renaissance masterpieces continue to captivate and excite audiences around the world. The rich history of Italy draws millions of tourists annually. The Catholic Church claims the largest membership of any Christian denomination and is headquartered in Vatican City, a small city-state in Rome. Catholicism continues to shape cultural attitudes although secularism has increased. Alcohol consumption rates compare to the United States and cigarette consumption rates are similar to many Western European nations.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$30,100 (2011) [62.6% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.874

Corruption Index: 3.9 (2011)

Wages and the distribution of wealth compare to other Western European nations. A productive, industrialized north stabilizes the economy and accounts for much of the economic growth and development over the past several decades. Southern regions tend to have high unemployment and an agricultural-based economy. High public debt, which exceeds Italy's GDP, remains a major deterrent for greater economic growth. Services produce 73% of the GDP and employ 65% of the workforce, whereas industry accounts for 25% of the GDP and employs 31% of the workforce. Primary industries include tourism, machinery, iron and steel, food processing, and clothing. Fruits, vegetables, and potatoes are major agricultural products. Major trade partners include Germany, France, Spain, and China.

Italy suffers from high levels of corruption among the European Union. Illegal economic activity may account as much as 15% of the GDP.

Faiths

Christian: 95%

Other: 5%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 50,569,804

Jehovah's Witnesses 245,657 3,050

Latter-day Saints 24,970 100

Seventh Day Adventists 9,315 109

Religion

Although 87% of native Italians claim membership in the Catholic Church, only about 20% of Catholics attend regularly. Non-Catholic Christians account for about 5% of the population. Non-Christians primarily include Muslims, Jews, and Hindus.²²⁷⁵

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is usually upheld by the government. There is no state religion, but the Catholic Church receives special treatment due to historical and cultural ties. Catholic holidays are recognized as national holidays. Religious groups must obtain an *intesa* (accord) from the government to perform marriages, allow clergy access to government installations to visit church members, and state funding if requested. All religious groups may worship freely. Societal abuses of religious freedom are primarily directed towards Muslims and Jews and tend to follow international events involving Muslim nations and Israel.²²⁷⁶

Largest Cities

Urban: 68%

Rome, Milano, Napoli, Torino, Palermo, Genova, Florence, Bologna, Bari, Catania, Venice, Verona, Messina, Trieste, Padova, Taranto, Brescia, Reggio di Calabria, Mestre, Modena, Prato, Cagliari, **Parma**, Livorno, Foggia, **Perugia**, Reggio nell'Emilia, Salerno, Ravenna, **Ferrara**, Rimini, Siracusa, Sassari, Monza, Pescara, Bergamo, Forlì, **Latina**, Vicenza, Terni, Trento, Pinocchio di Ancona, **Novara**, Ancona.

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregation

Thirty-nine of the forty-four cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have a congregation. Twenty-three percent (23%) of the national population lives in the forty-four largest cities.

LDS History

The first missionaries, including Elder Lorenzo Snow, arrived on the Italian Peninsula in 1850. Preliminary missionary efforts were concentrated in the Piedmont Valley among French Protestants. By 1855, sixty-four members lived in Italy, and fifty members had immigrated to the United States. Government restrictions and persecution limited the Church's presence and outreach for more than a century until permission was granted in 1966 to restart missionary work. In 1966, the first congregation was organized in Brescia, and the Italian Mission was organized in Florence. Seminary and institute began in 1969 and 1974, respectively. A second mission was organized in northern Italy in 1971, later becoming the Italy Milan Mission. Two additional missions opened in Padova (1975) and Catania (1977). The Italy Padova Mission was discontinued in 1982, reopened in 1990, and discontinued again in 2002. The Church achieved formal legal status in 1993.²²⁷⁷ The Church announced a temple for Rome in 2008. In 2010, the Italy Catania Mission was consolidated into the Italy Rome Mission, reducing the number of missions to two. In 2010, the Church received the highest level of government recognition in May 2010.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 24,970 (2012)

²²⁷⁵ <>"Italy," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127317.htm>

²²⁷⁶ "Italy," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127317.htm>

²²⁷⁷ "Italy," Country Profiles, retrieved 12 May 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/italy>

In 1967, there were sixty-six members. By the late 1970s, membership numbered approximately 5,000. The most rapid growth occurred between the late 1970s and late 1980s. By 1985, membership more than doubled to 12,000 and increased to 16,000 by the mid-1990s. By 2000, there were 19,188 members. During the 2000s the Church added between 200 and 700 members a year. Membership reached 21,791 in 2005 and 22,886 in 2008. Annual membership growth rates have ranged between 1% and 3.5% in the past decade.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 49 Branches: 52 (April 2013)

In 1967, there were nine congregations, seven of which had both Italian and American military servicemen.²²⁷⁸ In 1981, the Church created the first stake in Milan. A second stake was organized in Venice in 1985 and a third in Puglia in 1997. By year-end 2000, members were organized in three stakes and fifteen districts.

By 1990, eighty-nine congregations functioned throughout Italy, increasing to a high of 133 at year-end 1999. Total congregations have declined in the 2000s to 112 in 2005 and to ninety-nine by 2009. In 2000, there were seventeen wards. With the creation of additional stakes from districts during the 2000s, the number of wards increased to twenty-six in 2005 and thirty-one in 2007. The number of branches has sharply declined over the past decade from 112 in 2000 to eighty-six in 2005. By 2007, there were seventy-one branches. During the 2000s, branches decreased by about fifty, whereas wards increased by twenty.

New stakes were organized in Rome (2005), Alessandria (2007), Verona (2008), and Sicily (2010). The number of districts dropped dramatically to five by mid-2010 as a result of new stakes created in the 2000s from as many as three districts to one stake. Districts currently function in Calabria, Florence, Naples, Sardinia, and Rimini. In 2012, a second stake was created in Milan.

Activity and Retention

Member activity and convert retention nationwide appear modest at best. The average congregation has grown from 149 members to 223 members between 2000 and 2009. In addition to new converts not retained, the increase in the number of members per congregation has resulted from many branches maturing into wards and the consolidation of small branches nearby established Church centers. During the 2008–2009 school year, 921 were enrolled in seminary or institute (3.9% of membership). Congregations vary widely in active membership with some branches having as few as ten active members and some wards exceeding one hundred active members. Total active membership is likely at least 6,000, or 25%.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Italian, German, French, Slovene.

All LDS scriptures and most Church materials are translated in Italian, German, and French. The Book of Mormon is translated into Slovenian. Some unit, temple, Priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, young women, Primary, missionary, audio/visual, and family history materials are available in Slovenian.

Meetinghouses

In the early 1990s, most congregations met in rented facilities.²²⁷⁹ In 2002, there were 108 church

²²⁷⁸ "Italy," Country Profiles, retrieved 12 May 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/italy>

²²⁷⁹ Cannon, Mike. "Diversity in land, people, and climate," LDS Church News, 7 December 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21327/Diversity-in-land-people-and-climate.html>

meetinghouses,²²⁸⁰ which would appear to provide adequate facilities for the 98 congregations currently in operation.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Few humanitarian projects have occurred due to relative economic prosperity. Service projects are likely limited to local members serving in their communities and full-time missionaries completing weekly service hours.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church enjoys full religious freedom, and missionaries openly proselyte. Although many legal hurdles have been faced in obtaining needed permits to construct the Rome Italy Temple, the pace at which these permits have been obtained has been faster than anticipated.

Cultural Issues

A historic legacy of Catholicism or minority Protestant groups creates cultural barriers to LDS mission outreach. The large percentage of nominal but minimally involved Christians creates a challenge for missionaries to instill regular church attendance habits in prospective converts and less active members. Like most of Western and Central Europe, increasing secularism and materialism have been accompanied by decreasing receptivity to religion proselytism. Many have a background and basic understanding of Christian doctrines, providing a foundation for missionaries to teach doctrines unique to the LDS Church. Moderate cigarette and alcohol consumption rates require extra care for investigators struggling to quit these habits and to ensure that relapse does not occur.

Mission outreach with full-time missionaries in northern Italy poses challenges due to the high cost of living. High living expenses and low receptivity may make increasing the full-time missionary force unfeasible in some areas.

National Outreach

Most large cities have mission outreach centers. Despite full-time missionaries proselytizing for over four decades, some provinces or autonomous regions remain without congregations. Aosta Valley, Molise, and Basilicata have a combined population of over one million (2% of the national population) but no LDS congregations. It does not appear that congregations have ever functioned in these locations. The majority of the unreached population resides in medium-sized cities and towns in provinces or autonomous regions with several Church outreach centers.

The consolidation of districts and branches to create stakes and wards has reduced mission outreach in Italy over the past decade, as many cities that once had small congregations are now under the administration of a distant congregation. Four of the five largest cities without a congregation once had a congregation. Areas that have districts appear most prone to declining mission outreach. A district once functioned in Pescara with four branches and was consolidated with the stake in Rome. In 2010, only one ward and branch remain in the area covered by the former district. In 2001, two districts and twelve branches and operated in Tuscany. In May 2010, there was one district with eight branches in the region.

²²⁸⁰ "Italy," Country Profiles, retrieved 12 May 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/italy>

Some innovative mission outreach has occurred. In 1995, missionaries in Ascoli Piceno held a forty-five-minute long weekly radio program that discussed basic gospel principles. At the time the branch in Ascoli Piceno had eleven members.²²⁸¹ The Church maintains an Internet site for Italy at <http://www.chiesadige-sucristo.it/>. The site provides local news, information on Church doctrines, and a meetinghouse locator in Italian. Interested individuals can request Church literature or missionaries through the site. The Internet site can assist in expanding mission outreach in Italy in currently unreached areas. The Church has all LDS scriptures in Italian available online.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Branches in districts have weakened in the past decade for reasons including the relocation of members to other areas of the country to find employment as well as low convert growth, low LDS birth rates, and ongoing struggles to retain members. In Sardinia, some branches have seen church attendance drop dramatically due to active members moving elsewhere. Some branch consolidations have resulted in many members becoming inactive due, at least in part, to an unwillingness to travel greater distances or difficulties integrating with members in a new congregation. Retention and integration of new converts into congregations remain major challenges.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Full-time missionaries report that non-Italians often tend to be more receptive to proselytism; immigrants from developing world nations of the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Africa are overrepresented among LDS members. The demographics of many congregations do not reflect demographics of the population within their boundaries. The demographics of some congregations may contribute to integration problems, as some congregations have no non-Italians, and others have large numbers of foreigners. Immigrant converts often come from cultures that are primarily consumers rather than producers of religion and are less likely to become active, participating members, serve in missions, or hold leadership positions. Mission outreach among native Italians has experienced frustrations and requires greater vision.

Language Issues

Language needs among the native population appear well addressed in most areas. Some challenges related to differences in regional dialects may create barriers. The large number of non-Italian members may one day necessitate language-specific congregations in larger cities.

Missionary Service

Italy remains dependent on foreign missionaries to staff its missionary force. Mission leaders have indicated that decisions to consolidate two of Italy's four original full-time missions were linked to increased self-sufficiency of local leadership. One hundred twenty missionaries served in the Italy Rome Mission following the consolidation of the Italy Catania Mission. Decreases in full-time missionary numbers and missions are also likely due to low receptivity, particularly among native Italians.

Leadership

Italy has produced a large number of dedicated leaders who have served in the Church both nationally and internationally. The Church in northern Italy has enjoyed strong priesthood leadership since as early as the

²²⁸¹ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 14 January 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26392/From-around-the-world.html>

late 1980s.²²⁸² In 1992, Vincenzo Conforte from Foggia was called as a regional representative.²²⁸³ In 1993, Mario V. Vaira from Como was called as the temple president of the Bern Switzerland Temple.²²⁸⁴ By 1994, Raimondo Castellani from Muggio was called as a regional representative.²²⁸⁵

Temple

Most of Italy belongs to the Bern Switzerland Temple district. Members have diligently attended the temple despite travel time and expenses and form a large portion of active temple goers in the temple district. The announcement of the Rome Italy Temple in the October 2008 General Conference has elicited interest and excitement from members in Italy and internationally. In May 2010, most government permits were secured for the temple's construction. Once completed, the new temple may serve members outside Italy in Southeastern Europe and North Africa. The delay in a temple announcement was partially due to difficulty acquiring a suitable location.

Comparative Growth

Italy is one of the six European nations with over 20,000 members and is the nation in Europe that experienced the greatest increase in stakes in the 2000s. Member activity rates compare to other Western European nations, as the percentage of individuals enrolled in seminary or institute in Italy is approximately the same as Germany and France.

Many Christian groups operating in Italy have experienced mixed results. Jehovah's Witnesses number among the most successful, as there are nearly a quarter of a million active members and more congregations than the LDS Church in any nation outside the United States. The Jehovah's Witness faith has become prominent as the dominant protest group to the Catholic Church, whereas Latter-day Saints have sought more respectful ties with other faiths. Christian churches that experience growth tend to have had a long-term presence and developed local leadership and member-missionary oriented proselytism approaches.

Future Prospects

Decreasing numbers of congregations and missionaries has resulted in more limited national outreach. Although membership has matured in many areas, smaller cities and rural areas have seen little or no progress in the growth of the church over the past decade. Long-term growth and self-sufficiency of the Church will largely depend on increasing native-Italian missionaries, breakthroughs in outreach among Italians, and a reversal of congregational declines. Some positive developments have occurred in lieu of the Rome Italy Temple announcement, such as increasing convert baptisms of full Italian families. Time will tell whether this recent development remains sustained.

²²⁸² Hart, John. L. "A harvest of families and leadership in northern Italy," LDS Church News, 9 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17766/A-harvest-of-families-and-leadership-in-northern-Italy.html>

²²⁸³ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 17 October 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21766/New-regional-representatives.html>

²²⁸⁴ "New temple president," LDS Church News, 8 May 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23380/New-temple-president.html>

²²⁸⁵ "New regional representative," LDS Church News, 24 December 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25003/New-regional-representatives.html>

LUXEMBOURG

Geography

AREA: 2,586 square km. Landlocked in Western Europe, Luxembourg is among the smallest nations in Europe and borders France, Belgium, and Germany. Wooded rolling hills account for most of the terrain, with more mountainous areas in the north. Continental temperate climate prevails, characterized by mild winters and cool summers. The largest rivers include the Sauer and Moselle. Air, water, and soil pollution are environmental issues. Luxembourg is divided into three administrative districts.

Peoples

Luxembourger: 63.1%

Portuguese: 13.3%

French: 4.5%

Italian: 4.3%

German: 2.3%

Other ethnicities found in the European Union: 7.3%

Other: 5.2%

Luxembourgers descend from Celtic tribes that populated the region in antiquity. Nonnatives constitute over a third of the population. Luxembourg experiences some of the most rapid annual population growth rates in Europe due to heavy immigration.

Population: 509,074 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.135% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.77 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 76.5 male, 83.21 female (2012)

Languages: Luxembourgish (59%), Portuguese (13%), French (4%), Italian (4%), German (2%), other (18%). Luxembourgish is the national language; German and French are administrative languages. Most natives are trilingual, speaking Luxembourgish, German, and French.

Literacy: 100%

History

Celtic tribes ruled modern-day Luxembourg until conquered by Rome in the first century BC. After Roman rule ended, local powers erected Luxembourg Castle, which later became integrated into the Holy Roman Empire during the Middle Ages. In 1815, the Congress of Vienna granted Luxembourg Grand Duchy status after 400 years of foreign occupation under Habsburg rule. King William I of the Netherlands granted political autonomy in 1839, allowing for internationally-recognized sovereignty. Perpetual neutrality was recognized by 1867, yet Luxembourg was occupied by Germany during both World Wars. In 1949, Luxembourg became one of the charter nations of NATO and two years later participated in the founding of the European Coal and Steel Community (today known as the European Union) in 1951. Stable economic growth and modernization

occurred in the latter half of the twentieth century. In 2010, Luxembourg was the only Grand Duchy in the world, ruled by constitutional monarchy under Grand Duke Henri.²²⁸⁶

Culture

Luxembourg shares many cultural similarities with Belgium, France, and Germany due to close proximity and adoption of foreign languages and customs. Medieval castles and churches stand as historical and cultural reminders of Luxembourg's past. The influence of the Catholic Church has waned as secularism has spread. Cuisine is heavily influenced by France and Germany. Luxembourg has one of the highest alcohol consumption rates worldwide.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$84,700 (2011) [176% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.867

Corruption Index: 8.5 (2011)

With the highest GDP per capita in the European Union, the Luxembourgish economy is highly integrated into neighboring Belgium, France, and Germany. Industry originally blossomed through steel production, but in recent years industrial activity has declined due to strong growth of the financial sector. Services employ 81% of the labor force and generate 86% of the GDP. Industry accounts for 17% of the labor force and generates 14% of the GDP. Primary industries include banking, iron and steel production, information technology, telecommunications, and transportation. Limited agricultural activity consists of cultivating grapes, grains, potatoes, and fruit, and raising livestock. Primary trade partners include Germany, Belgium, France, and China. Luxembourg experiences some of the lowest rates of corruption worldwide.

Faiths

Christian: 95%

Other: 5%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 428,000

Orthodox 5,000

Jehovah's Witnesses 2,097 33

Latter-day Saints 336 1

Seventh Day Adventists less than 200 1

Religion

More than 90% of the population is nominally Roman Catholic, which has historically been the dominant faith of Luxembourg. The largest Protestant groups include Lutherans and Calvinists. Many Protestant denominations have a small presence. There are as many as 9,000 Muslims, 5,000 Orthodox Christians, and 1,000 Jews.²²⁸⁷ In 2005, only 44% of citizens reported a belief in God.²²⁸⁸

²²⁸⁶ "Background Note: Luxembourg," Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 24 September 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3182.htm>

²²⁸⁷ "Luxembourg," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127322.htm>

²²⁸⁸ "Religion in Luxembourg," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 9 October 2010. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. There is no state religion. Several religious groups receive government funding, most prominently the Catholic Church. Several Catholic holidays are recognized by the government. Students choose whether to pursue religious education in public schools. There have been no reports of the religious freedom of others being infringed by the government or society.²²⁸⁹

Largest Cities

Urban: 82%

Luxembourg, **Esch-sur-Alzette**, **Pétange**, **Dudelange**, **Ettelbruck**, **Kayl**, **Mersch**, **Bettembourg**, **Mamer**, **Mondercange**.

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

One of the ten largest cities has an LDS congregation. Sixty-two percent (62%) of the national population resides in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

The LDS Church first assigned missionaries to Luxembourg in 1963 and created the first branch in the mid-1960s. Prior to the discontinuation of the branch in 1971, church attendance typically consisted of six missionaries and one to three members.²²⁹⁰ The branch appears to have been reestablished in the 1980s. Over 1,000 attended a nine-day exhibit about the LDS Church organized by local members and missionaries entitled “The Origin of Man” in 1989.²²⁹¹ After 2000, the Europe West Area administered Luxembourg, which was consolidated with the Europe Central Area to create the Europe Area in the late 2000s. The Belgium Brussels Mission included Luxembourg until its consolidation with the Netherlands Amsterdam Mission in 2002. Luxembourg was transferred to the Switzerland Geneva Mission in the 2000s.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 336 (2012)

Latter-day Saints numbered around one hundred for much of the 1990s. In 2000, there were 162 members. Membership nearly doubled in the 2000s, reaching 194 in 2003, 252 in 2005, and 290 in 2008. Only one year during this period experienced membership decline (2001). Annual membership growth rates ranged from -4% to 19%. Membership has generally increased by twenty per year, largely due to the immigration of Latter-day Saints, as few convert baptisms occur. Portuguese immigrants appear to account for a sizeable portion of Latter-day Saints in Luxembourg. In 2009, one in 1,690 was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 1 Branches: 0 (April 2013)

The Luxembourg Branch became one of four branches in the Metz France District, which was organized in

Religion_in_Luxembourg

²²⁸⁹ “Luxembourg,” International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127322.htm>

²²⁹⁰ “From around the world,” LDS Church News, 9 July 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25332/From-around-the-world.html>

²²⁹¹ “Luxembourg,” Country Profile, retrieved 9 October 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/luxembourg>

1994.²²⁹² Luxembourg joined the Nancy France Stake in the early 2000s, and in 2007 the Luxembourg Branch became a ward.

Activity and Retention

Fourteen were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year. Active church membership appears to have increased proportionally to nominal church membership. Nationwide active members is estimated at one hundred, or 35% of total church membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: French, German, Portuguese, Italian.

All LDS scriptures, most church materials, and monthly issues of the *Liabona* magazine are translated into French, German, Portuguese and Italian. Most immigrant groups have church materials in their native or second languages.

Meetinghouses

Sunday meetings for LDS members were held at the Hotel Kons in the 1960s and early 1970s.²²⁹³ In 2010, Church meetings were held in northern Luxembourg City.

Humanitarian and Development Work

There have been no large-scale humanitarian and development projects in Luxembourg due to a lack of natural disasters and high standards of living. Service activities are limited to weekly service hour assignments by full-time missionaries and activities headed by local members.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Latter-day Saints face no religious freedom restrictions. Foreign missionaries regularly serve in Luxembourg and proselyte openly.

Cultural Issues

Secularism is the greatest cultural barrier, as most are unreceptive to LDS mission outreach and have not developed religious habits or routines. Traditional adherence of most Luxembourgers to the Catholic Church can create challenges for some to join the LDS Church. Mission outreach will need to accommodate those without a belief in God in order to reach the majority of the population. Heavy alcohol use creates additional challenges.

National Outreach

Twenty-six percent (26%) of the national population resides in Luxembourg City, the only location with a mission outreach center. The two unreached administrative districts (Diekirch and Grevenmacher) account for 27% of the national population and have had little or no past LDS mission outreach.

²²⁹² "Luxembourg," Country Profile, retrieved 9 October 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/luxembourg>

²²⁹³ "Luxembourg," Country Profile, retrieved 9 October 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/luxembourg>

Distance from mission headquarters, a small secular population, limited numbers of full-time missionaries, and few convert baptisms have reduced mission outreach resources allocated to Luxembourg by LDS mission leaders. Prospects appear poor for greater mission outreach with full-time missionaries. Increasing local Latter-day Saint involvement in member-missionary efforts may help increase national outreach without additional full-time missionaries, particularly in the suburbs of Luxembourg City and in unreached areas in Diekirch and Grevenmacher.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Few convert baptisms occur in Luxembourg, and convert retention rates appear modest. The number of active members has been large enough to staff the needed administrative callings required for a ward to function since 2007.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The large number of foreign Latter-day Saints creates assimilation challenges with Luxembourg members due to cultural and language differences. However, the large influx of immigrants in recent years is a demographic issue that natives encounter daily and is unlikely to manifest conflict at church. There appear to be no major challenges with differing ethnic groups attending the same congregation at present.

Language Issues

The large number of nonnative members communicate and work with local members in French, German, or occasionally English. Greater growth in active membership may lead to the creation of a Portuguese-speaking congregation. There are no LDS materials translated into Luxembourgish, which has few Christian materials, likely due to the lack of monolingual speakers and few total speakers worldwide. Competency of most in French or German reduces the need for Luxembourgish LDS materials.

Missionary Service

Few Luxembourgers have served full-time missions, and Luxembourg depends on foreign full-time missionaries to staff its missionary force. At least four LDS missionaries were assigned in 2010. Emphasis on institute and seminary attendance may help increase the number of local full-time missionaries and returned missionaries over time.

Leadership

The small Latter-day Saint leadership base continues to meet the requirements for a ward to operate. Foreign members hold many of the callings in the ward, especially Portuguese immigrants. The creation of additional congregations may not have occurred due to reliance of native membership on foreigners to fill administrative callings.

Temple

Luxembourg is assigned to the Bern Switzerland Temple district. Temple trips occur regularly. There are no likely prospects of a temple significantly closer to Luxembourg due to few Latter-day Saints in bordering areas and low church growth rates in the region.

Comparative Growth

In the 2000s, Luxembourg experienced the most rapid membership growth rates in Western Europe, primarily due to immigration. Luxembourg possesses one of the largest LDS populations for European nations with fewer than one million inhabitants. The percentage of Latter-day Saints in the population compares to neighboring Belgium and France.

Missionary-oriented Christian denominations report slow growth and no significant breakthroughs reaching the native population. Immigrants constitute a large portion of the membership of many non-Catholic churches. A large number of Seventh Day Adventists are Portuguese immigrants. Jehovah's Witnesses appear to be one of the few Christian groups to attract a large number of natives and develop self-sustaining leadership staffed by Luxembourgers.

Future Prospects

Prospects for future church growth appear mediocre due to low receptivity among the indigenous population, reliance on immigrant convert baptisms or new move-ins to increase church membership, lack of native full-time missionaries, distance from mission headquarters, and limited LDS missionary resources dedicated to Europe. Member-missionary activity concentrated among the associates and families of local members may help reverse the many decades of low convert baptism rates. Original and creative methods for finding investigators and fostering interest in the LDS Church among the native population are needed.

MALTA

Geography

AREA: 316 square km. Located south of Sicily in the Mediterranean Sea, Malta consists of three small inhabited islands: Malta, Gozo, and Kemma. Rocky and low-lying terrain covers most areas, with many coastal sea cliffs. A Mediterranean climate prevails year round with mild, wet winters and hot, dry summers. Environmental issues include limited fresh water resources and increasing dependence on desalination to satisfy fresh water needs. There are no administrative divisions in Malta; however, sixty-eight local councils have some administrative responsibilities.

Peoples

Maltese: 100%

Maltese are a conglomeration of various Mediterranean peoples who have intermingled for millennia, including Phoenicians, Carthaginians, and Italians.

Population: 409,836 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.359% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.53 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 77.57 male, 82.26 female (2012)

Languages: Maltese (90.2%), English (6%), multilingual (3%), other (0.8%). Maltese and English are the official languages.

Literacy: 92.8% (2005)

History

Ancient peoples were known to populate the islands of Malta for millennia prior to the birth of Christ where the world's oldest known free-standing architecture has been discovered. The Phoenicians and Carthaginians established settlements for trading prior to coming under Roman rule in the early third century BC. The Bible mentions that Saint Paul the Apostle shipwrecked on Malta en route to Rome around 60 AD. The Byzantine Empire acquired Malta in the sixth century followed by the Arabs in the ninth century. In the late eleventh century, Normans annexed Malta, which became under Sicilian rule until the early sixteenth century. For the next several centuries, various European states traded and occupied the islands until coming under French rule around 1800 and British rule in 1814. Malta played a crucial role in World War II as a fortress in the Mediterranean. In 1964, Malta gained independence and became a republic in 1974.²²⁹⁴ Greater economic growth and development have occurred in the past several decades. Malta joined the European Union in 2004 and adopted the Euro currency in 2008.

²²⁹⁴ "Background Note: Malta," Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 26 April 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5382.htm>

Culture

As a result of occupation by various European powers over the past millennia, Malta exhibits a unique fusion of European and traditional cultural practices and attitudes. Catholicism is a major influence on culture due to its historical legacy and the high percentage of practicing Catholics today. British culture has strongly influenced Malta, as the United Kingdom was the last nation to govern Malta prior to independence. Semitic culture has influenced Malta for thousands of years from Phoenician settlers and a small Jewish population. Cuisine consists of many common Mediterranean foods, with strong influences from Sicily, Italy, and the United Kingdom. There is a sizeable diaspora of Maltese; a large number have immigrated to Australia. Cigarette and alcohol consumption rates rank average for Europe. Overall crime rates are low.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$25,700 (2011) [53.4% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.832

Corruption Index: 5.6 (2011)

Malta has achieved considerable economic growth and high living standards over the past several decades despite limited natural resources and reliance on imports to meet food needs. Growth has occurred from tourism, banking, and industry. Malta's prime geographic location between North Africa and Europe has also significantly influenced economic growth. There was little damage to the financial sector from the global financial crisis, but the economy has been in recession due to declining foreign demand and high utility costs. Services account for over 75% of the work force and GDP, whereas industry employs 23% of the work force and generates 17% of the GDP. Primary industries include tourism, electronics, shipbuilding, construction, food processing, and pharmaceuticals. Agriculture accounts for less than 2% of the work force and GDP. Common crops include potatoes, vegetables, fruit, wheat, and barley. Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Singapore are primary trade partners.

Perceived corruption in Malta ranks average for Europe. The government lacks anti-corruption legislation and institutions.²²⁹⁵ There is some minor drug trafficking from North Africa. Overall local laws are enforced, and crimes are prosecuted.

Faiths

Christian: 97%

Other: 1%

None: 2%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 384,907

Jehovah's Witnesses 578 7

Latter-day Saints 159 1

Seventh Day Adventists 17 1

Religion

Ninety-five percent (95%) of the population is estimated to belong to the Catholic Church, and 53% of Maltese attend church regularly. Virtually all political leaders are active Catholics. Local Protestant churches

²²⁹⁵ "Malta," 2010 Index of Economic Freedom, retrieved 22 September 2010. <http://www.heritage.org/index/country/malta>

primarily consist of nonnatives. There are approximately 3,000 Muslims, nearly all of whom are foreigners. There are around one hundred Jews.²²⁹⁶

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is generally upheld by the government. Local laws protect religious freedom against abuse. Roman Catholicism is the state religion. The Catholic Church receives funding and support from the government. There have been no recent reports of abuse of religious freedom. Religious groups are not required to register or be licensed to operate.²²⁹⁷

Largest Cities

Urban: 94%

Birkirkara, Mosta, Qormi, Zabbar, St. Paul's Bay, Sliema, Msierah, Naxxar, Fgura, Zebbug. City listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

One of the ten largest cities has a mission outreach center. A large portion of the population on Malta lives within ten kilometers from the mission outreach center in Mosta. Thirty-six percent (36%) of the national population resides in the ten largest cities, with 92% on the island of Malta.

LDS History

LDS Apostle Lorenzo Snow took great interest in establishing the Church in Malta in the 1850s due to its central location in the Mediterranean, Semitic language written with the Latin script, and large representation of peoples throughout Europe and the Mediterranean. Missionary activity began in 1852, and by 1856, there was a branch of twenty-five Latter-day Saints. The outbreak of the Crimean War eventually resulted in the Church losing a presence on the island, as many British soldier converts left the island. In 1979, the Italy Catania Mission reopened Malta to LDS missionary activity, but outreach was short-lived due to visa problems. The mission sent missionaries to Malta again in 1988 and successfully established a branch. Efforts were assisted by small numbers of Maltese converts who resided in the United States, Australia, and Canada.²²⁹⁸ In 1991, Malta joined the newly created Europe Mediterranean Area.²²⁹⁹ Seminary and instituted commenced in the early 1990s. The first branch conference and the organization of the Relief Society occurred in 1993.²³⁰⁰ In 1994, several men and their families joined the Church, resulting in separate classes for Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood holders.²³⁰¹ Malta belonged to the Italy Rome Mission in 2010 as a result of the discontinuation of the Italy Catania Mission earlier that year.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 159 (2012)

In 1988, there were twenty-one Latter-day Saints. Membership totaled 129 in 2000. During the following

²²⁹⁶ "Malta," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127324.htm>

²²⁹⁷ "Malta," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127324.htm>

²²⁹⁸ "Work taking hold on the island of Malta," LDS Church News, 26 August 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18815/Work-taking-hold-on-the-island-of-Malta.html>

²²⁹⁹ Cannon, Mike. "Diversity in land, people, and climate," LDS Church News, 7 December 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21327/Diversity-in-land-people-and-climate.html>

²³⁰⁰ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 4 December 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23177/From-around-the-world.html>

²³⁰¹ Crockett, David R. "History of the Church in Malta," retrieved 21 September 2010. <http://www.crockettclan.org/www/malta.html>

decade, little membership growth occurred as membership typically ranged from 130 to 140. In 2002, membership dropped to 118 and rebounded to previous levels the following year. In 2009, one in 2,874 was LDS. In 2010, there were at least four convert baptisms.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 1 (2012)

In 1988, the first modern-day branch was established. The branch divided into two independent branches, the Fgura and Mosta Branches, in 1995. The Fgura Branch met the needs of Maltese speakers, and the Mosta Branch was conducted in English. In 1997, the Fgura and Mosta Branches were consolidated into one branch.²³⁰²

Activity and Retention

In the early 2000s, the Mosta Branch appeared to have over sixty active members. During the 2007–2008 school year, only one member was enrolled in institute. However, in 2010, six were enrolled in institute. Active membership is estimated at 30, or 20% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English.

Translations of stories from the Bible, Doctrine and Covenants, and Book of Mormon are available in Maltese. Limited unit, temple, Priesthood, Relief Society, Young Women, Primary, missionary, audio/visual, family history, church books, church proclamations and declarations, and pamphlet materials are translated in Maltese.

Meetinghouses

In 2010, the Mosta Branch appeared to meet in a renovated building.

Humanitarian and Development Work

No large humanitarian or development work projects have occurred on Malta. Service activities are limited to full-time missionaries performing weekly service projects and local members organizing branch service activities.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The LDS Church faces no restrictions regarding proselytism and assembly. Missionaries serve freely on the island, and past visa issues appear to have been resolved over the past two decades. Societal abuses of religious freedom are low.

Cultural Issues

The strong Catholic tradition of most is the primary cultural obstacle to LDS missionary outreach and has resulted in poor receptivity. High rates of Catholic Church attendance may carry over to formerly Catholic

²³⁰² Crockett, David R. "History of the Church in Malta," retrieved 21 September 2010. <http://www.crockettclan.org/www/malta.html>

Latter-day Saint converts, improving member activity rates. Conversion for most appears challenging due to the strong correlation of religion and ethnicity. Secularism is less apparent than in many European nations but may pose a future threat towards social attitudes regarding religion and church attendance.

National Outreach

Even with just one mission outreach center, the small geographic size of Malta and concentration of over 90% of the population on the main island offer greater advantages to national outreach over many other countries. Malta has had strong mission outreach despite isolation from mission headquarters in Italy. The placement of just a couple of missionary companionships currently meets the needs of the island. Additional mission outreach centers will likely only be organized once active membership and the receptivity of the population to LDS missionaries warrants it. With limited missionary resources dedicated to Europe, Malta has potential to receive far-reaching mission outreach through member-missionary activity through the referral of interested individuals prepared by local members to be taught by the full-time missionaries.

The 30,000 inhabitants off the main island on Gozo and Comino receive little, if any, mission outreach. Greater outreach to these two islands appears unlikely for the foreseeable future.

The LDS Church maintains no official Internet site for Malta, but local members created an unofficial website with local church contact information and brief summaries of church beliefs in both English and Maltese at <http://www.malta.imalds.com>. As of early 2013, this site appears to have gone offline.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Malta has low member activity and convert retention rates. Full-time missionaries assist reactivation efforts in addition to teaching and finding investigators. These efforts have seen some success, as missionaries reported several inactive members began attending church regularly in 2010. Poor attendance in seminary and institute may indicate low member activity among youth and young adults. Local members demonstrate a greater degree of self-sufficiency than many other Mediterranean nations with few Latter-day Saints, but this may be attributed to the English-speaking majority with British roots.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Ethnic integration issues at church are minimal due to the homogeneity of the Maltese population and the frequent visits of foreigners from Europe and North Africa. There is a strong correlation between ethnicity and religion, creating challenges for the indigenous population to join the LDS Church and maintain their previous ethnic identity and social relationships.

Language Issues

A limited number of church materials are translated in Maltese and currently meet most language needs. However, there remain no translations of LDS scriptures into Maltese, which will be required for achieving greater outreach and gospel understanding by Maltese speakers. In 2001, branch services were held in English with Maltese translations for non-English speakers, indicating leadership and active membership are predominantly English speaking. In the early 2010s, missionaries reported that there were no Maltese-speaking missionaries and that virtually all Maltese-speaking members also spoke English.

Missionary Service

Four young missionaries and one senior missionary couple served on Malta in 1993.²³⁰³ In 1997, the first indigenous Maltese member was called to serve a mission.²³⁰⁴ By 2001, ten young missionaries and a senior couple were assigned to Malta. In 2010, there were four missionaries serving on Malta. Very few local members have served missions. Involving youth in seminary and institute may increase the numbers of local full-time missionaries over time.

Leadership

The branch president in 2010 was not a native Maltese member and was likely a British resident. Inadequate local leadership may be responsible for the consolidation of the English and Maltese-speaking branches in 1997 and likely prevents the reestablishment of a Maltese-speaking congregation.

Temple

Malta pertains to the Bern Switzerland Temple district. Temple trips occur infrequently due to distance and expenses. Maltese-speaking membership appears too limited to perform temple ordinances independently.

Comparative Growth

Malta has experienced some of the lowest membership growth rates in Europe over the past decade. However, most city states, geographically small nations with populations of less than one million, and small islands in Europe have experienced stagnant growth over the past decade, with the exception of Luxembourg, where membership doubled, and the sole branch became a ward. Malta is the European country with the third smallest population with an LDS mission outreach center.

Non-Catholic Christian groups report slow church growth rates. Protestant groups struggle to create sizeable self-sustaining memberships and have been largely unsuccessful in evangelizing Maltese Catholics. Both Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses gain few new members year to year.

Future Prospects

Slow church growth and no increase in mission outreach centers on Malta will likely continue for the foreseeable future due to the small size of LDS Church membership, limited missionary resources, and low receptivity of the general population. Latter-day Saints have made little, if any, progress over the past decade, as there has been no significant increase in membership. Progress in the 1990s in developing local leadership and several full families joining the Church has dissipated in recent years to the point that only one local branch can now be sustained. Involving youth in seminary and institute may offer prospects for breaking out of stagnant church growth and leading to breakthroughs with the native Maltese population.

²³⁰³ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 4 December 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23177/From-around-the-world.html>

²³⁰⁴ Crockett, David R. "History of the Church in Malta," retrieved 21 September 2010. <http://www.crockettclan.org/www/malta.html>

NETHERLANDS

Geography

AREA: 41,543 square km. Occupying lowland plains along the North Sea, the Netherlands borders Germany and Belgium. Many coastal areas consist of polders, which use dikes to prevent the flow of water onto reclaimed tracts of land that were formerly flood plains, swamps, or coastal sea floor. Consequently, large areas of the country are below sea level. There are some hills in the southeast. Temperate marine climate occurs, modifying temperature to generate cool summers and mild winters with frequent precipitation. One of Europe's largest rivers, the Rhine and its tributaries (Meuse and Schelde) empty into the North Sea in the south. Flooding is a natural hazard. Environmental issues include water pollution from industry and agricultural activity, air pollution, and acid rain. The Netherlands are divided into twelve administrative provinces.

Peoples

Dutch: 80.7%
Other European Union ethnic group: 5%
Indonesian: 2.4%
Turkish: 2.2%
Surinamese: 2%
Moroccan: 2%
Caribbean: 0.8%
Other: 4.8%

Once homogenously Dutch, immigrants account for 20% of the population of the Netherlands today. Several of these groups originated from former Dutch colonies, such as Indonesia and Suriname. Turks and Moroccans constitute the largest Middle Eastern/North African nationalities.

Population: 16,730,632 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.452% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.78 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 78.84 male, 83.08 female (2012)

Languages: Dutch (81.5%), Limburgish (4.2%), Gronings (3.5%), Frisian (2.8%), Indonesian (1.8%), Arabic and Berber languages (1.4%), Zeeuws (1.3%), Turkish (1.1%), Flemish (0.7%), other (1.7%). Dutch and Frisian are official languages. Other indigenous languages like Limburgish are recognized on a provincial level. Dutch is spoken by most minority groups as a second language and is the only language with over one million native speakers (13.7 million).

Literacy: 99% (2003)

History

Germanic tribes inhabited the region, which was partially conquered by the Romans in the first century BC. The Franks ruled between the fourth and eighth centuries AD, followed by the House of Burgundy and the Austrian Habsburgs. The Spanish seized the Netherlands in the sixteenth century, and the Dutch revolted

under Willem of Orange in 1558. The Republic of the United Netherlands formed in 1579 as a result of the Union of Utrecht but only consisted of the seven northern provinces. The Netherlands have also gone under the name of Holland. During the next century, the Dutch expanded their influences worldwide as colonialism began in the West Indies and Southeast Asia. War and declining technological superiority contributed to waning power in the eighteenth century. Napoleonic France overran the monarchy in 1795, and the Netherlands remained part of France until 1815 when the Kingdom of the United Netherlands was established. Belgium revolted and gained independence in 1830. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Netherlands experienced progress and regained greater power through its colonial possessions. The Netherlands professed neutrality during both World Wars but was occupied by Nazi Germany between 1940 and 1945, and 75% of the Jewish population perished. Dutch colonies became independent nations shortly after World War II or possess a high degree of autonomy as dependent areas still under Dutch sovereignty today.²³⁰⁵ The Netherlands was among the original founding nations of the European Union and NATO. In 1999, the euro currency was introduced. In 2010, Caribbean Dutch possessions under the Netherland Antilles were reorganized, with Sint Maarten and Curacao becoming constituent countries under Dutch sovereignty. The smaller islands of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, and Saba are special municipalities. The Netherlands is a constitutional monarchy.

Culture

Known as a land of tulips, windmills, and wooden shoes, the Netherlands has retained many native customs and traditions despite long periods of past foreign occupation. Dutch painters have been world renowned for centuries and include Rembrandt, Vincent van Gogh, and Piet Mondrian. The Dutch traditional festival of Sint Nicolaas on December fourth features Sinterklaas, which, combined with Father Christmas, has led to the American figure of Santa Claus.²³⁰⁶ Despite a rich Christian past, the Netherlands is among the most secular European nations, as only a small minority actively practice their faith. Cuisine varies by location and is influenced by nearby countries like France and Germany. Soups, breads, pastries, meats, and alcohol are common foods. Legalized prostitution occurs in Amsterdam's red light district; the government has sought to reduce its size as crime and human rights violations have increased. Cigarette and alcohol consumption rates and rates of illicit drug use are high compared to world averages.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$42,300 (2011) [87.9% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.910

Corruption Index: 8.9 (2011)

The economy takes an important role regionally as a transportation and industrial hub. The Netherlands has outperformed many other European nations in attracting foreign investment. The global financial crisis in the late 2000s took a heavy toll on the economy as exports declined by 25% due to the slowdown in demand for Dutch goods. At present, the government is attempting to revitalize the economy by offering stimulus packages and bank bailouts. Natural gas, oil, peat, salt, limestone, sand, gravel, and farmland are natural resources. Services employ 80% of the labor force and generate 73% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 18% of the work force and generates 25% of the GDP. Major industries include food processing, engineering products, machinery, chemicals, petroleum, constructions, electronics, and fishing. In 2008, the Netherlands was the world's fourteenth largest oil exporter, eighth largest oil importer, and sixth largest natural gas exporter. Agriculture accounts for less than 3% of the GDP and work force. Primary crops include grains, potatoes, sugar beets, fruit, and vegetables. Germany, Belgium, France, and the United Kingdom are primary trade partners.

²³⁰⁵ "Background Note: The Netherlands," Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 16 July 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3204.htm>

²³⁰⁶ "Culture of the Netherlands," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 3 December 2010. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_the_Netherlands

The Netherlands ranked as being perceived as the sixth least corrupt country worldwide. Financial and administrative corruption are low, but money laundering vulnerability is a concern. Illicit drugs are produced and trafficked throughout Europe, especially ecstasy and marijuana. The Netherlands is a significant transshipment point for cocaine, heroin, and hashish.

Faiths

Christian: 50%
 Muslim: 5.8%
 Other: 2.2%
 None: 42%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 2,685,295
 Jehovah's Witnesses 30,351 393
 Latter-day Saints 9,247 32
 Seventh Day Adventists 4,939 52

Religion

The Netherlands is one of the most secular European nations. The number of nonreligious individuals continues to increase and almost accounts for half of the entire population. Estimates of the percentages of those affiliated with a particular religious group differ, as a report conducted by the Scientific Council for government Policy found that 51.6% of the population had some religious affiliation in 2006 and 43.4% of the population was Christian. The Social Planning Bureau found that the percentage of the population that were church members declined from 76% in 1958 to 30% in 2006 (16% Catholic and 14% Protestant). Catholics are the largest religious group. Sixteen percent (16%) of the population regularly attends a Christian church. There were an estimated 850,000 Muslims in 2007, most of whom are Turkish or Moroccan immigrants. Approximately 200,000 Muslims are practicing. Hindus number between 100,000 and 215,000 and primarily consist of Surinamese immigrants of Indian ancestry. The number of Jews is estimated between 30,000 and 45,000, and 25% belong to an active Jewish organization.²³⁰⁷

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom and grants the government authority to restrict religious practices if they become a risk to public order, traffic safety, or public health. The government upholds religious freedom guaranteed by the constitution and diligently works to foster an environment of religious tolerance. Public speech that incites hatred toward a religious group is a crime and has been an area of conflict due to freedom of speech principles. Common Christian holidays are recognized by the government. Religious groups are not required to register with the government to operate, but certain rights and privileges, such as tax exemption status, are only bestowed upon registered religious groups. The Dutch government has worked with the Muslim minority to ensure that they may practice freely and assimilate into the local culture by requiring imams to complete a year-long integration course prior to practicing in the Netherlands. There have been some recent reports of societal abuse of religious freedom targeting Muslims and Jews, which has been condemned by the government.²³⁰⁸

²³⁰⁷ "Netherlands," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148969.htm>

²³⁰⁸ "Netherlands," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/>

Largest Cities

Urban: 82%

Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht, Eindhoven, **Tilburg**, Almere, Groningen, Breda, Nijmegen, **Enschede**, Apeldoorn, Haarlem, Arnhem, **Zaanstad**, Amersfoort, **Haarlemmermeer**, s-Hertogenbosch, Zoetermeer, Zwolle, **Maastricht**, Dordrecht, Leiden, Emmen, **Ede**, **Venlo**.

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Nineteen of the twenty-six cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. Thirty-two percent (32%) of the national population resides in the twenty-six largest cities.

LDS History

The first known Latter-day Saint to travel to the Netherlands was Elder Orson Hyde, who stopped for over a week in Amsterdam and Rotterdam en route to Jerusalem on a missionary journey in 1840. Orson Hyde preached to Jewish rabbis during his stay, but the Church did not assign missionaries to the Netherlands until August 1861. By May 1862, the missionaries baptized fourteen converts and organized a branch in Amsterdam. Missionaries serving in the Netherlands operated under the Swiss and German Mission until the creation of the Netherlands Mission in late 1864.²³⁰⁹ Persecution worsened in the 1860s and 1870s, slowing missionary progress. Full-time missionaries also struggled to learn Dutch proficiently. The first Dutch-language tracts and church materials were translated in the 1860s. The translation of the Book of Mormon in Dutch was completed by 1889. Remaining LDS scriptures were translated by 1911.²³¹⁰ Belgium was assigned to the Netherlands Mission in 1891.²³¹¹ During World War II, the Church withdrew the fifty-four full-time missionaries assigned to the Netherlands. During the war, 393 members immigrated to the United States, and 579 converts were baptized primarily through the efforts of sister member-missionaries. Over 1,700 converts were baptized between 1921 and 1929.²³¹² The Church began petitioning for official recognition from the government in the 1930s but did not obtain government recognition until August 1955. Prior to this time, the Church was not able to own property and did not receive benefits granted to other officially recognized religious groups. Dutch Latter-day Saints planted potatoes in abundance following World War II and sent seventy tons of excess potatoes to needy German LDS members.²³¹³ 1952, LDS Church President David O. McKay visited the Queen of the Netherlands.²³¹⁴ In 1961, the Church organized its first stake in continental Europe in the Netherlands, named the Holland Stake, which was the first non-English-speaking stake organized in the LDS Church. During the first one hundred years of an LDS Church presence in the Netherlands, 4,500 full-time missionaries were assigned, and over 14,000 converts were baptized—many of whom immigrated to Utah.²³¹⁵ Seminary and institute began by the mid-1970s. In 1996, President Hinckley visited and met with local members.²³¹⁶ In 2002, the Church consolidated the Netherlands Amsterdam Mission with the Belgium Brussels and Switzerland Geneva Missions, resulting in the formation of the Belgium Brussels/Netherlands

irf/2010/148969.htm

²³⁰⁹ "The Church in Europe," *Ensign*, Aug. 1973, 16–35.

²³¹⁰ "Netherlands," *Deseret News 2010 Church Almanac*, p. 537–538.

²³¹¹ "A temple in the land of tulips and windmills," *LDS Church News*, 24 August 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42325/A-temple-in-the-land-of-tulips-and-windmills.html>

²³¹² "Netherlands," *Deseret News 2010 Church Almanac*, p. 537–538.

²³¹³ "The Church in Europe," *Ensign*, Aug. 1973, 16–35.

²³¹⁴ Murdock, Wade. "David O. McKay: Ambassador of the Faith," *Ensign*, Jan. 2005, 40–46.

²³¹⁵ "The Church in Europe," *Ensign*, Aug. 1973, 16–35.

²³¹⁶ Hart, John L. "Prophet visits 5 European countries, asks saints to keep commandments," *LDS Church News*, <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27991/Prophet-visits-5-European-countries-asks-saints-to-keep-commandments.html>

Mission.²³¹⁷ In 2005, the Netherlands was included in the Church's European tour of its Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit.²³¹⁸

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 9,247 (2012)

There were 2,631 Latter-day Saints in 1930.²³¹⁹ Following World War II, there were 3,200 members.²³²⁰ By 1973, there were over 7,000 Latter-day Saints.²³²¹ Membership fluctuated between 6,300 and 8,000 between the early 1970s and the mid-1990s. Membership reached 7,500 in the mid-1990s, and by year-end 2000, there were 7,778 Latter-day Saints.

Slow, consistent membership growth occurred in the 2000s as membership totaled 8,006 in 2003, 8,286 in 2005, and 8,548 in 2007. Church membership generally increased by approximately one hundred a year. Annual membership growth rates in the 2000s varied from a low of 0.4% in 2001 to a high of 2.4% in 2005. Nominal membership growth in the 2000s is primarily attributed to convert baptisms among the non-Dutch population, although church attendance remained stagnant or may have even declined over this period. In 2009, one in 1,886 was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 21 Branches: 11 (April 2013)

There were three LDS congregations by 1865 that met in Amsterdam, Gorinchem, and Rotterdam.²³²² There were sixteen branches by 1939.²³²³ By 1973, there was one stake and four districts. At this time, the stake had four wards and four branches.²³²⁴ The original Holland Stake was renamed The Hague Netherlands Stake upon the creation of additional stakes in Rotterdam (1978) and Apeldoorn (1989). By year-end 2000, there were forty-three LDS congregations (17 wards, and 26 branches).

Congregation consolidations occurred in the 2000s as the number of congregations declined to thirty-seven in 2001, thirty-six in 2002, thirty-five in 2003, thirty-four in 2006, and thirty-three in 2009. Between year-end 2000 and late 2010, the number of wards increased by three, and the number of branches declined by thirteen. Discontinued congregations in the 2000s include the Almelo, Amstelveen, Delft, Hoorn, Schiedam-Vlaardingen, Winterswijk, Ymond, and Zeist Branches, and one of the two original The Hague wards and the Krimpen aan den IJssel Ward. The majority of discontinued congregations were in or near Rotterdam, The Hague, and Amsterdam. Branches operating in Almere, Den Bosch, Gouda, Hengelo, Spijkenisse became wards during this period.

Activity and Retention

In 1973, the Church estimated that 800 Dutch-speakers from the Netherlands and Belgium would attend

²³¹⁷ Stahle, Shaun D. "Seven new missions created," LDS Church News, 9 March 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41426/Seven-new-missions-created.html>

²³¹⁸ Nogueira, Clemtina. "Exhibit in Portugal of Dead Sea Scrolls," LDS Church News, 2 July 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47511/Exhibit-in-Portugal-of-Dead-Sea-Scrolls.html>

²³¹⁹ "Netherlands temple announced," LDS Church News, 28 August 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/36296/Netherlands-temple-announced.html>

²³²⁰ Hartley, William G. "War and Peace and Dutch Potatoes," *Ensign*, July 1978, 19.

²³²¹ "The Church in Europe," *Ensign*, Aug. 1973, 16-35.

²³²² "Netherlands," *Deseret News 2010 Church Almanac*, p. 537-538.

²³²³ "Netherlands," *Deseret News 2010 Church Almanac*, p. 537-538.

²³²⁴ "The Church in Europe," *Ensign*, Aug. 1973, 16-35.

an area conference in Munich held later that year.²³²⁵ In 1996, 2,000 Dutch Latter-day Saints attended a special meeting with President Hinckley.²³²⁶ 32,819 attended The Hague Netherlands Temple open house in 2002.²³²⁷ The average number of members per congregation increased in the 2000s from 181 in 2000 to 270 in 2009. Four hundred six were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year. Most wards and branches appear to have between fifty and one hundred active members. Nationwide active membership is estimated at 2,500, or 30% of membership of record.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Dutch, Indonesian, Arabic, Turkish, English.

All LDS scriptures are available in Dutch, Indonesian, Arabic, and most common languages spoken in the European Union. Only the Book of Mormon has been translated into Turkish. Many unit, temple, Priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, young women, primary, missionary, and family history materials are available in Turkish.

Meetinghouses

The first LDS meetinghouse began construction in 1937 in Rotterdam. The number of meetinghouses greatly multiplied in the 1960s, and by 1966, there were thirty-eight LDS meetinghouses in the Netherlands.²³²⁸ In 2010, most, if not all, LDS congregations met in church-built meetinghouses or church-owned buildings. There were thirty-two meetinghouses in late 2010.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Humanitarian and development work sponsored by the LDS Church has focused on sending aid outside the country or conducting small-scale service projects in the Netherlands. In 1990, Dutch members gathered food to send to the needy in Romania.²³²⁹ In 1995, more than 650 attended a workshop sponsored by the LDS Church and other groups that taught parents how to deal with challenges raising youth.²³³⁰ In 1997, members from the Zoetermeer Ward cleaned their community, and the event was covered by four local newspapers.²³³¹

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Freedom of religion protected by the constitution, which is upheld by local laws, and government policy allows the LDS Church to assemble, worship, and proselyte freely. Foreign full-time missionaries frequently serve and report no significant challenges obtaining needed visas or documentation to proselyte.

²³²⁵ "The Munich Area General Conference," *Ensign*, Aug. 1973, 40.

²³²⁶ Hart, John L. "Prophet visits 5 European countries, asks saints to keep commandments," *LDS Church News*, <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27991/Prophet-visits-5-European-countries-asks-saints-to-keep-commandments.html>

²³²⁷ Call, Elder O. Jay and Sister Jeanette. "Netherlands temple dedication," *LDS Church News*, <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42403/Netherlands-temple-dedication.html>

²³²⁸ "Netherlands," *Deseret News 2010 Church Almanac*, p. 537–538.

²³²⁹ "Members in Netherlands gather food," *LDS Church News*, 17 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19764/Members-in-Netherlands-gather-food.html>

²³³⁰ "From around the world," *LDS Church News*, 29 July 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25993/From-around-the-world.html>

²³³¹ "From around the World," *LDS Church News*, 6 December 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29112/From-around-the-World.html>

Cultural Issues

The highly secularized Dutch society has resisted LDS missionary efforts for decades, resulting in stagnant to slow membership growth. Promiscuity, drug use, and high alcohol consumption rates create a challenging environment for Dutch members to live church teachings and for full-time missionaries when finding and teaching investigators. Nominalism among Dutch Christians is an obstacle for missionary efforts, as many have traditional ties to their churches but do not engage in regular religious practices. The Church has gained greater success in recent years with immigrant groups but has added native Dutch converts in small numbers. High cost of living has reduced the practicality of assigning greater numbers of full-time missionaries to a population that exhibits low receptivity. Member-missionary efforts will be pivotal toward overcoming these issues, as local members are familiar with cultural challenges and provide long-term support for investigators and new converts.

National Outreach

Thirty-two percent (32%) of the national population resides in a city with an LDS congregation, and each of the Netherlands' twelve administrative provinces has an LDS mission outreach center. Cities with over 100,000 inhabitants without an LDS congregation constitute 5% of the national population. Fifty-four percent (54%) of the national population resides in the 233 cities with between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitants, yet only eleven of these cities have current LDS mission outreach centers. Past LDS mission outreach centers operated in an additional nine cities in this population range with 3.5% of the national population. Many discontinued congregations operated in medium-sized cities near large cities with an LDS ward or branch. As LDS congregations have been consolidated, many of these cities receive less mission outreach today.

Expanding national outreach will require the establishment of additional mission outreach centers in currently unreached or lesser-reached cities. However, based on the trend of congregation consolidations, the Church will likely not establish a presence in these cities until currently operating LDS wards and branches are fully self-sustaining and contain enough active members to divide. The creation of dependent branches and groups operated by local members in the largest cities without LDS mission outreach centers (like Tilburg, Enschede, Haarlemmermeer, Maastricht, Ede, and Venlo) and lesser-reached sectors of Amsterdam and The Hague provides a dynamic, flexible approach toward addressing declining national outreach issues.

The Church maintains an Internet site for the Netherlands in Dutch at <http://www.kerkvanjesuschristus.nl/>. The website includes local news, explanations of church teachings, links to other church websites, and contact information to request missionary visits. Use of the website by local members can help improve member-missionary efforts and expand national outreach. By 2005, the Netherlands LDS country website had an average of 8,000 hits a day.²³³² When the Church launched its first official website in the mid-1990s, the Netherlands ranked tenth among countries with the most visitors to the new site.²³³³

Member Activity and Convert Retention

The average number of Latter-day Saints per congregation increased by nearly one hundred during the 2000s as a result of slow membership growth and consistent congregation consolidations. The declining number of congregations is a major concern for sustaining church growth over the long term, as the trend has been perpetuated for a decade, and 23% of the functioning LDS congregations in 2000 no longer operate. Reasons for congregation consolidations in the Netherlands include a lack of active members, plans to make a larger

²³³² "Country sites aid missionary effort," LDS Church News, 26 February 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46935/Country-sites-aid-missionary-effort.html>

²³³³ "Internet users find LDS web site," LDS Church News, 1 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29302/Internet-users-find-LDS-web-site.html>

congregation (a ward) out of multiple smaller congregations (branches), and inadequate numbers of priesthood holders to fill leadership positions. Congregations more distant to Latter-day Saint populations often exacerbate member inactivity rates as less active and active members decrease the regularity they attend church meetings due to increased travel times and inconvenience. Fewer mission outreach centers often leads to a decline in the number of convert baptisms and reduced national outreach potential.

The lack of language-specific congregations to meet the needs of non-Dutch speakers creates challenges to retain converts from the most receptive populations to the LDS Church in the Netherlands, namely immigrants from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Transient lifestyles and limited traditions of religious service among immigrant groups have also contributed to low retention among immigrant converts. The creation of such language-specific congregations may be helpful for the long-term sustainability of church growth among these populations, but the diversity of membership has not achieved sufficient numbers of speakers of specific languages to allow non-Dutch congregations to be organized

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Dutch LDS congregations have fellowshipped the increasing number of immigrant converts in recent years. No major ethnic integration issues have been reported, likely due to Dutch society's increasingly cosmopolitan atmosphere. Language barriers and cultural differences may create some challenges integrating immigrant groups that come from nations that were not former Dutch colonies, like North Africa and Turkey, but there are no appreciable numbers of LDS converts from these nations in the Netherlands at present. The Church has yet to perform organized missionary outreach among Muslims in the Netherlands.

Language Issues

Over 80% of the population speaks Dutch as a native language, and many of the remaining 20% speak Dutch as a second language, resulting in widespread use of Dutch by full-time missionaries in proselytism. Higher receptivity to the LDS Church among immigrant groups warrants greater language-specific outreach in order to reach the growth potential among these populations. Some full-time missionaries have been assigned to work specifically with non-Dutch populations and teach in their respective languages, especially Chinese.

Missionary Service

The Netherlands remains dependent on foreign full-time missionaries to staff its missionary needs as a result of few missionary-aged youth converts and low birthrates among the Dutch Latter-day Saint population. Increasing numbers of immigrant Latter-day Saints may help increase the self-sustainability of national full-time missionary numbers due to higher birthrates than the indigenous population. However, these prospects will rely on improved retention of immigrant converts and successful long-term assimilation into congregations.

Leadership

The LDS Church has held a long-standing tradition of local leadership. During World War II, the entire Netherlands Mission presidency was made up of local Dutch members.²³³⁴ The Church benefits from strong, capable local leadership that allows for the operation of three stakes. Few, if any, church employees serve in leadership positions, indicating developed self-sustainability of local priesthood holders. Several international Church leaders were born in the Netherlands and immigrated to the United States in the twentieth century. All past temple presidents and their wives of The Hague Netherlands Temple resided outside of the Netherlands prior to their call but most had Dutch heritage or were born in the Netherlands. Only one Dutch

²³³⁴ "Netherlands," *Deseret News* 2010 Church Almanac, p. 537-538.

member residing in the Netherlands has been called to an international church leadership position. In 2005, Christiaan H. Kleijweg from Oorschoten was called as an Area Seventy.²³³⁵

Temple

Announced in August 1999, The Hague Netherlands Temple began construction in 2000 in the Zoetermeer area²³³⁶ and was dedicated in 2002. The temple serves the Netherlands and Belgium and operates well under capacity. In 2010, four endowment sessions were scheduled on Thursdays and Fridays, and three sessions were scheduled on Saturdays. The temple is not open Sunday through Wednesday.

Comparative Growth

Annual membership growth rates of less than 3% and consistent congregation consolidations during the 2000s were representative of most Western European nations like the Netherlands. The percentage of Latter-day Saints in the population compares to France and Belgium and is higher than Central and Eastern Europe but lower than Scandinavia, the Iberian Peninsula, and the British Isles. LDS member activity and convert retention rates appear higher in the Netherlands than in Belgium, as the Netherlands has 50% more members than Belgium, but nearly twice as many congregations. Netherlands has the fourth smallest LDS membership among countries worldwide with temples. Temples in other European countries that have comparatively sized temple districts appear better utilized than The Hague Netherlands Temple. The Copenhagen Denmark Temple district includes three stakes and a few branches but in 2010 was open for one more additional day a week compared to The Hague Netherlands Temple and scheduled two more endowment sessions on Fridays. The Stockholm Sweden Temple services four stakes and three districts, but scheduled nine endowment sessions on Tuesdays and Fridays, five on Wednesdays and Thursdays, and four on Saturdays in 2010. Seminary and institute attendance rates rank average to below average for Europe.

Christian groups participating in active mission outreach report slow growth and have been largely unable to achieve breakthroughs with the nonreligious population. Seventh Day Adventists achieve slow but consistent congregational and membership growth as the number of churches increased from 47 to 54 and membership increased from 4,132 to 4,524 between 1998 and 2008. Jehovah's Witnesses appear to be the most successful of missionary-minded Christian groups and have grown to over 30,000 active members meeting in nearly 400 congregations. Witnesses baptized almost 500 converts in 2009 and have experienced sustainability from effective member-missionary activity programs and high baptismal standards.

Future Prospects

The Netherlands has consistently demonstrated membership growth from year to year, but the trend of congregation consolidations has yet to reverse. Establishing a strong LDS presence among immigrant groups will be crucial to improve member activity and convert retention rates among the most receptive populations. Stagnant growth and low receptivity exhibited by the indigenous Dutch population is concerning and appears to be at the forefront of the decline in national outreach in recent years together with fewer full-time missionaries assigned. Greater self-sustainability of full-time missionary numbers as well as minimizing emigration among Dutch members will be required to maintain membership growth, expand national outreach, and maintain the Dutch LDS community.

²³³⁵ "38 new Area Seventies called, 37 are released," LDS Church News, 9 April 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47147/38-new-Area-Seventies-called-37-are-released.html>

²³³⁶ "Pylons mark progress of temple," LDS Church News, 27 January 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39240/Pylons-mark-progress-of-temple.html>

NORWAY

Geography

AREA: 323,802 square km. Stretching the western coast of Scandinavia, Norway borders Finland, Sweden, Russia, and the Norwegian Sea. Svalbard, an archipelago north of the Arctic Circle, is under Norwegian administration. The terrain of Norway is mostly mountainous with fertile valleys. Coastal areas are rugged and bisected with fjords as a result of past glaciations. Far northern areas consist of tundra, whereas other areas tend to be forested wetlands. Coastal areas experience a wet temperate climate due to the North Atlantic Current; interior areas tend to be cooler and wetter. Rockslides and avalanches are natural hazards. Environmental issues include water pollution, acid rain, and air pollution. Norway is divided into nineteen administrative counties.

Peoples

Norwegian: 94.4%

Other European: 3.6%

Other: 2%

Population: 4,707,270 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.327% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.77 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 77.65 male, 83.14 female (2012)

Languages: Norwegian (99.5%), Sami (0.3%), Finnish (0.1%), Romani (0.1%). Norwegian is the official language and only language with over one million speakers (4.64 million). Sami has official status in six municipalities.

Literacy: 100%

History

The Vikings originated in Norway during the Middle Ages and launched raids into Britain and Europe, although only about 1% of the Scandinavian population participated in Viking raiding parties. To the east, Scandinavian Vikings called Varangians raided the Baltic coast and became established at Novgorod in what is now Russia in 862 AD and from there sailed down the Dniepr to Kiev (now Ukraine), establishing the foundation of Kievan Rus through intermixture with local Slavs. Viking seafarers explored the North Atlantic Ocean, establishing colonies in Iceland and Greenland around AD 1000, reaching as far as Newfoundland but not establishing a permanent presence in these distant areas. Following the adoption of Christianity by King Olav Tryggvason in 994, Viking raids and aggression declined. In the late fourteenth century, Norway formed a union with Denmark that lasted over four centuries. In 1814, Norwegians opposed a Swedish takeover that resulted in an invasion by the Swedes. Although some autonomy was granted to Norway during the nineteenth century, total independence did not occur until 1905. Norway was neutral in both world wars, although in World War II Nazi Germany occupied Norway for five years. Following the war, Norway joined NATO in 1949 after heavy costs were incurred during both world wars, notwithstanding neutrality. Oil and natural gas discovery and exploitation in the latter half of the twentieth century have fueled economic growth

and modernization. Norway remains one of the few European nations with an advanced economy that has not joined the European Union.

Culture

Norway has a proud heritage of music, literature, architecture, and art that has retained the romantic tradition. Norwegian literature begins in the Viking age through skaldic poetry and history, reaching its height in the nineteenth century. Edvard Grieg was a famous Norwegian composer who influenced romanticism through classical music in Europe in the late nineteenth century. Painters such as Edvard Munch produced expressionistic works. Common farm and sea foods such as fish, bread, and cheese dominate cuisine as agriculture continues to be a major traditional influence despite Norway's modernized economy. Cigarette and alcohol consumption rates rank lower than most European nations. Although most are nominally Christian, secularism is widespread. Norway has long been tolerant of alternative lifestyles and legalized same-sex marriage in 2009.²³³⁷

Economy

GDP per capita: \$53,300 (2011) [111% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.943

Corruption Index: 9.0 (2011)

Diversification of the economy has occurred in recent years, yet dependence on oil and natural gas revenues for economic growth and stability is a concern. The price and demand for oil drive economic growth rates. Petroleum generates 30% of revenue and about half of total exports. The government has been preparing for the eventual exhaustion of petroleum reserves by saving oil profits in a sovereign wealth fund. Abundant natural resources including large mineral deposits, hydropower, fish, and timber offer potential for long term growth and economic development. Services account for 76% of the labor force and generate 58% of the GDP, whereas industry accounts for 21% of the labor force and generates 40% of the GDP. Agriculture constitutes less than 10% of the labor and GDP. Primary crops include barley, wheat, and potatoes. Pork, beef, and fish are also major agricultural products. Major industries include oil, natural gas, food processing, tree products, shipbuilding, mining, and fishing. Primary trade partners include Germany, the United Kingdom, and Sweden. Norway ranks among countries with the lowest levels of perceived corruption.

Faiths

Christian: 90.1%

Muslim: 1.8%

Other: 8.1%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Lutheran Church of Norway 3,994,082

Catholic 54,000

Pentecostal 46,605

Jehovah's Witnesses 10,989 164

Seventh Day Adventists 4,568 62

Latter-day Saints 4,556 23

²³³⁷ "Norway," Wikipedia.com, retrieved 2 September 2010. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norway>

Religion

Norwegian citizens are assumed to be members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway unless they explicitly report belonging to a different religious group. Eighty-two percent (82%) of the population is estimated to be Lutheran, although church attendance is low. Other Protestants number 166,000, and Catholics total 54,000. The Muslim population is 84,000 but rising rapidly due to immigration and much higher birth rates among Muslims than ethnic Norwegians. Most religious minorities live in the Oslo metropolitan area and are recent immigrants.²³³⁸

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway receives some benefits not available to other religious groups. The constitution requires that the King and at least 50% of the cabinet claim membership in the Church of Norway. Religious groups do not have to register to operate in Norway. All religious groups that register with the government are entitled to state funds in proportion to the number of adherents. Religious education in public schools is mandatory and teaches all major world religious traditions in a respectful manner but with an emphasis on Christianity. There has been increasing debate regarding the treatment of Muslims as relating to religious clothing and cultural accommodations. There have been few reports of societal discrimination or abuse of religious freedom. Missionaries may serve on regular foreign work visas.²³³⁹

Largest Cities

Urban: 77%

Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim, Stavanger, Bærum, Kristiansand, Fredrikstad, Tromsø, Sandnes, Drammen.

All ten of the largest cities have an LDS congregation. Thirty-four percent (34%) of the national population resides in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

One of the first Norwegian Latter-day Saint converts, Svend Larsen, was introduced to the Church in Denmark while delivering timber. He and another recent convert began missionary activity in Norway in 1851, and the first baptism occurred before the end of the year. In 1852, the first two congregations were created. LDS missionaries were frequently arrested and imprisoned when they first preached in Norway. Slow and steady growth occurred for the latter half of the nineteenth century and first several decades of the twentieth century. Former shipbuilding Norwegian converts who immigrated to Utah participated in the construction of the Manti Utah Temple, designing the roof as a watertight upside-down ship.²³⁴⁰ Norwegian Latter-day Saints in Utah introduced skiing as a recreational sport and influenced the future ski industry in the area.²³⁴¹ The Norwegian Mission was created in 1920 from the Scandinavian Mission. Eight thousand, five hundred, and fifty-five individuals joined the Church prior to 1930, 3,500 of whom immigrated to Utah. Missionaries were evacuated from Norway at the beginning of World War II.²³⁴² During the first century of missionary activity,

²³³⁸ "Norway," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127329.htm>

²³³⁹ "Norway," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127329.htm>

²³⁴⁰ Hart, John L. "Manti Temple 100 years old," LDS Church News, 7 May 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17519/Manti-Temple-100-years-old.html>

²³⁴¹ Stahle, Shaun D. "Norwegian converts bring love of skiing to new home in Utah," LDS Church News, 19 January 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41193/Norwegian-converts-bring-love-of-skiing-to-new-home-in-Utah.html>

²³⁴² Wells, Elayne. "European evacuation was 'a miracle,'" LDS Church News, 19 August 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/>

native members and missionaries utilized Danish translations of Latter-day Saint scriptures. The Book of Mormon was not translated into Norwegian until 1950. Seminary and institute were introduced by 1975. In the 1980s, thirty local members were called as missionaries in the Norway Oslo Mission to assist the full-time missionary force.²³⁴³ In 1988, the Church became registered with the government for the first time.²³⁴⁴

In 1990, President Thomas S. Monson addressed the Norwegian community in Salt Lake City, urging them to preserve their Norwegian traditions.²³⁴⁵ Prior to 2000, Norway belonged to the Europe North Area and then became part of the Europe Central Area. In 2010, Norway was assigned to the Europe Area. In 2001, Church members in Scandinavia commemorated the emigration of converts 150 years ago to Utah by crossing the Atlantic in four sailing ships from Europe to the United States.²³⁴⁶ In 2003, Norway became one of the first eight countries to receive its own national LDS website.²³⁴⁷ The Church observed the Norwegian centennial in 2005 and noted that 60,000 Utahans on the 2000 census declared their ancestry to be from Norway, largely due immigration from early LDS converts.²³⁴⁸

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 4,556 (2012)

Slow membership growth has occurred throughout the LDS Church's history in Norway. In 1974, there were 3,000 members.²³⁴⁹ In 1990, there were 3,700 members.²³⁵⁰ By 2000, membership totaled 4,061.

During the 2000s, slow membership growth occurred. Membership increased to 4,102 in 2002, 4,134 in 2005, and 4,164 in 2008. Several years experienced slight membership decline, such as 2001, 2003, 2004, and 2006. Membership typically fluctuates between ten and thirty members a year, or -1% to 1%. Convert baptisms have slightly increased in recent years from forty-eight in 2008 to sixty in 2009. Membership increase has been smaller than the number of convert baptisms due to very low birthrates among Norwegian members, member attrition, and emigration. Non-Norwegian immigrants living primarily in Oslo and other large cities have constituted a large proportion of LDS converts since the 1990s. Notwithstanding some annual variation, LDS membership in Norway has experienced cumulative growth of less than 1% per year for the past four decades, decelerating to less than 0.5% annual growth over the decade of the 2000s. When national population growth is considered, the percentage of LDS members in the Norwegian population has remained stagnant since the 1970s. In 2009, one in 1,109 was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 11 Branches: 12 (March 2013)

In 2000, there were seven wards and seventeen branches organized into one stake (Oslo Norway Stake [seven wards, two branches]) and three districts (Stavanger [six branches], Tromsø [four branches], and Trondheim

articles/18793/European-evacuation-was-a-miracle.html

²³⁴³ "Norway," Country Profiles, retrieved 1 September 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/norway>

²³⁴⁴ "Norway," Deseret News 2010 Church News Almanac, p. 547-548.

²³⁴⁵ "Preserve traditions, Norwegians urged," LDS Church News, 26 May 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20157/Preserve-traditions-Norwegians-urged.html>

²³⁴⁶ Lloyd, Scott R. "Leaving an impact in Scandinavia," LDS Church News, 18 August 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40355/Leaving-an-impact-in-Scandinavia.html>

²³⁴⁷ "Church establishing country-specific Web sites," LDS Church News, 15 November 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44674/Church-establishing-country-specific-Web-sites.html>

²³⁴⁸ "Norwegian centennial observed in Utah," 22 January 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46767/Norwegian-centennial-observed-in-Utah.html>

²³⁴⁹ "The Saints in Scandinavia," Ensign, Jul 1974, 28.

²³⁵⁰ "Norway," Country Profiles, retrieved 1 September 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/norway>

[five branches] Norway Districts). By the mid-2000s, all three districts were discontinued, and all the branches in the former districts became mission branches. The Church discontinued one branch in 2004 and another branch in 2007 (the Kristiansund and Levanger Branches). In late 2009, a mission branch was created for the Norway Oslo Mission to administer groups in isolated locations with too few members to create independent branches. In 2010, the Oslo Norway Stake had seven wards and two branches.

In early 2010, the Norway Oslo Mission withdrew most of its missionary force from northern areas and relocated missionaries to the Oslo area in an effort to proselyte areas with more receptive populations and help prepare branches to mature into wards so that a second stake could be organized. In 2012, a second stake was organized in Drammen from the Stavanger Norway District and Oslo Norway Stake. The district closed as part of the new stake creation.

Activity and Retention

The ratio of LDS members to congregations has slightly increased over the past decade from 169 in 2000 to 183 in 2009, although this at least in part reflects consolidations that have left some members without nearby congregations. Regional church conferences have been well attended by Norwegian Latter-day Saints. Over 4,000 members from the Nordic countries gathered in 1974 for a special regional conference in Stockholm, Sweden with Church President Spencer W. Kimball.²³⁵¹ Three hundred six were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year.

The number of active members widely varies based on location, with larger congregations located in the Oslo area. Full-time missionaries were removed from Trondheim due to low productivity but were reintroduced in 2010. Following the reintroduction of the missionaries, Trondheim had nine convert baptisms in six months, and active membership increased from thirty to fifty-five. There are few active members in the branches of northern Norway. In 1991, the largest branch was the Harstad/Narvik Branch with forty-three members. Many of the branches at this time had fewer than fifteen active members.²³⁵² The Arendal Branch had around twenty-five active members in 2010. The Drammen Ward and another ward in the Oslo area had over 175 active members in 2010. Other wards appear to have around one hundred active members. In 2009, 120 of the 400 members in the Bergen Branch attended church regularly, there were forty active members in the Kristiansand Branch, and thirty of the one hundred members in the Tønsberg Branch were active, including ten priesthood holders. Total active membership in Norway is estimated at 1,500, or 35% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Norwegian, Finnish, English.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in Norwegian and Finnish, including many CES manuals.

Meetinghouses

Trondheim has one of the oldest church meetinghouses. In 2010, congregations met in at least twenty locations. Most congregations met in church-built meetinghouses. Some smaller branches met in renovated buildings or rented spaces.

²³⁵¹ "This week in Church history," LDS Church News, 21 August 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/36236/This-week-in-Church-history.html>

²³⁵² Lloyd, Scott R. "'Field is white' in Norway's Arctic Region," LDS Church News, 16 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21115/Field-is-white-in-Norways-Arctic-region.html>

Humanitarian and Development Work

Latter-day Saints have not conducted large humanitarian or development projects in Norway in recent years due to the lack of natural disasters and high standards of living. Service activities are limited to missionaries performing weekly service hour assignments and service projects organized on a congregational level.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church faces no restrictions or limitations to its activities in Norway. Missionaries proselyte freely and members worship openly.

Cultural Issues

Secularism, nominalism in the Lutheran Church, and misinformation about Latter-day Saints have impeded Norwegians' receptivity to the LDS Church. Secularism is the greatest cultural barrier that LDS missionaries face on a daily basis, as many Norwegians are disinterested in religion. Missionaries have remarked that many Norwegians feel that they no longer need religion and have all their material needs and desires due to economic prosperity and socialism. Nominalism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway is a challenge, as most do not attend church regularly yet continue to identify as Lutheran. However, many have a basic knowledge of Christianity that can assist efforts to build on common Christian principles. Some Norwegian theologians and scholars have written negative accounts or propagated misinformation about the LDS Church that have contributed to the anxiety many feel towards the Church and its members.²³⁵³

National Outreach

With a population of less than five million and one LDS mission, Norway experiences good national outreach that has been sustained for over forty years, although outreach has contracted somewhat in recent years due to low receptivity and limited missionary manpower. All cities with over 45,000 inhabitants have a mission outreach center. Of the nineteen administrative counties, three have no mission outreach centers (Nord-Trondelag, Oppland, and Sogn Og Fjordane) with a combined population of 420,000 (9% of the national population). Nine counties have only one LDS congregation. Forty-eight percent (48%) of the national population resides in cities with a mission outreach center. Nine percent (9%) of the population resides in cities between 10,000 and 45,000 inhabitants without a mission outreach center.

The Church has opportunities to expand national outreach in Norway and assist missionary work in foreign nations through proselytism efforts in cities with large universities. Despite being Norway's third largest city with 170,000 inhabitants, Trondheim has only one branch. Trondheim offers significant opportunity for mission outreach targeting young adults, as it is home to the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, one of Norway's largest universities. The Church responded to this opportunity in 2010 by placing eight full-time missionaries in Trondheim, including two sister missionaries and a senior missionary couple. These efforts appear to have been productive, as twelve investigators attended church in Trondheim in August 2010. However, they extract a significant portion of the total full-time missionary force (nearly 20%) for just one city. Oslo also offers meaningful university-student outreach. Greater involvement from local members in reaching college-aged population would help increase mission efficiency.

There are opportunities to establish additional congregations in unreached cities. Several of these cities may

²³⁵³ Hart, John. L. "Norway: 'To be a Mormon here, you need a testimony,'" LDS Church News, 16 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17744/Norway-To-be-a-Mormon-here-you-need-a-testimony.html>

already have groups or dependent branches under the Norway Oslo Mission Branch created at the end of 2009. Holding cottage meetings with the few active members of investigators can assist in the proselytism of the half of the Norwegian population without close access to an LDS congregation.

The Church maintains an Internet site in Norwegian for Norway at <http://www.jesukristikirke.no/>. Current news, meetinghouse locations, contact information, and information regarding church programs and beliefs are provided. Use of the website by local members and missionaries can help broaden the scope of mission outreach and provide opportunity for interested individuals to seek out the Church and obtain correct information.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Some branches, particularly in northern Norway, have experienced declining numbers of active members due to the desire of some members to move to areas with larger LDS congregations for greater social opportunities. Secularism is a cultural influence that appears to have lowered member activity rates in some areas. Missionaries generally provide adequate pre-baptismal teaching and coordinate with local members, which have resulted in modest to higher than average convert retention rates for the region. Many new Norwegian converts appear to be committed and devoted to the church prior to baptism. However, many converts come from Africa, a region that has inherently higher percentages of religiously active individuals than Scandinavia. There appears to have been no meaningful increase in active membership nationwide over the past decade.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Missionaries frequently meet with foreigners from Africa, continental Europe, and Latin America. These groups have shown greater receptivity to Latter-day Saint outreach than Norwegians but are difficult to fellowship and retain due to culture and language barriers and are often transient, as many return to their home countries.

Language Issues

A large body of LDS Church materials is translated into Norwegian. Over 99% of the national population has church materials in their native language. To meet the language needs of non-Norwegians, missionaries in Trondheim reported in 2010 that they sometimes carried English, French, Chinese, and German proselytism materials. Higher receptivity among nonnatives results in an overrepresentation of foreigners in LDS congregations and can create language issues for both Norwegians and foreigners.

Missionary Service

In 2010, there were fifty missionaries serving in the Norway Oslo Mission divided into three zones. Norway relies on foreign missionaries to staff its mission force and has few active youth in many areas. The number of missionaries serving has been cut to less than half the level of the 1990s due to low receptivity, limited missionary manpower, and more pressing opportunities elsewhere. Youth-oriented missionary outreach, missionary preparation classes, and member-missionary initiatives may assist Norway to become more self-reliant in its missionary endeavors, but it appears unlikely that self-sufficiency will occur anytime soon due to the small numbers of active LDS youth and long history of nongrowth or minimal growth, notwithstanding intensive proselytism.

Leadership

Although the number of active priesthood holders appears to be unable to support districts or additional

stakes for the thirteen mission branches, most congregations have at least a few active priesthood holders, as nearly all branches are led by a native branch president and other local leaders. Increasing the number of active priesthood holders as well as overall active membership are major areas of focus for current church leaders in Norway.

Several Norwegian members have served in international church leadership positions. Jan T. Tveten was born in Norway, immigrated to the United States, and was called as the Norway Oslo Mission president in 1999.²³⁵⁴ Stein Pedersen from Skjetten served as an Area Authority prior to 2000.²³⁵⁵ In 2005, Elvind Sterri from Asker was called as an Area Authority,²³⁵⁶ and Jan Karlsson from Oslo was called as the Sweden Stockholm Mission president.²³⁵⁷

Temple

Norway is assigned to the Stockholm Sweden Temple district. Attending the temple regularly can be challenging and requires planning and sacrifice but is feasible for many. Local members desire a temple for their own country one day, but a prospective temple district of only one stake and no districts indicates that a temple is not likely to be built in Norway until greater member activity and growth can sustain one. The Stockholm Sweden Temple appears well attended by members in Norway, Sweden, and Latvia despite a temple district of only four stakes and two districts, as endowment sessions are scheduled almost every hour for much of the day from Tuesday through Friday. Temple sessions are held in Norwegian when members travel as a stake or congregation.

Comparative Growth

The percentage of Latter-day Saints in the population in Norway is representative of other Scandinavia countries in which members constitute around 0.1% of the national population. The only European nations with a higher percentage of members are Switzerland, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Portugal. Member activity rates compare to other Scandinavian nations and are average to higher than much of Europe. Nongrowth or consolidation of congregations is also representative for the region. Norway has had one of the longest continual Church presences in Europe. Denmark and Finland have comparable LDS membership numbers to Norway, yet both have two stakes, and Finland also supports two districts. Both Finland and Denmark also enroll greater numbers of seminary and institute students. These factors may indicate lower member activity and participation in Norway compared to Finland and Denmark. National outreach in Norway by Latter-day Saints is among the most penetrating in Europe, as few European countries have congregations established in areas accounting for half of the national population; Norway has experienced this level of outreach for over forty years.

Christian groups report slow church growth in Norway. Jehovah's Witnesses achieve slow growth but have made steady progress and report 167 congregations. Seventh Day Adventists generally had fifty new converts a year in Norway but have experienced membership and congregation declines over the past decade (500 fewer members and eight fewer congregations). Many Christian groups struggle to develop proselytism approaches tailored to address secularism and nominalism in the Lutheran Church, although Jehovah's Witnesses have been by far the most successful.

²³⁵⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 3 April 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35439/New-mission-presidents.html>

²³⁵⁵ "Three members of Seventy given emeritus status," LDS Church News, 14 October 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38700/Three-members-of-Seventy-given-emeritus-status.html>

²³⁵⁶ "New area seventies," LDS Church News, 16 April 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47170/New-area-seventies.html>

²³⁵⁷ "New mission presidents," 26 February 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/34717/New-mission-presidents.html>

Future Prospects

The Church has established congregations in most areas and has the basic infrastructure to meet outreach needs in most areas, but secularism remains a cultural influence that has reduced receptivity. The missionary complement assigned to Norway has been cut to less than half of its prior levels without noticeably affecting growth. The Church depends heavily on the larger LDS populations in the Oslo area to stabilize the national church population and looks to this region for future growth. Many members in small branches are considering moving to the Oslo area that, over time, may lead to additional consolidations of smaller branches in northern Norway. The heavy emigration of Latter-day Saints in the nineteenth century has continued, although at a slower rate in recent years and has made local growth harder to achieve. Outreach directed toward youth is needed due to low birth rates among Latter-day Saints and the small number of youth converts in order to ensure long term growth.

PORTUGAL

Geography

AREA: 92,090 square km. Located in southwestern Europe, Portugal occupies most of the western coast of the Iberian Peninsula and borders Spain and the North Atlantic Ocean. Mountains dominate most central and northern areas, whereas plains and rolling hills cover southern areas. Temperate maritime climate occurs in most areas, with cooler, wetter weather in the north and warmer, drier conditions in the south. The Tagus River bisects Portugal and empties into the Atlantic Ocean at Lisbon. Earthquakes are natural hazards. Environmental issues include soil erosion and pollution. Portugal controls two island archipelagos, the Azores and Madeira, both of which are autonomous regions. Portugal proper is divided into eighteen administrative districts.

Peoples

Portuguese: 96%

Other: 4%

With the exception of recent immigrants, the population is homogeneously Portuguese. Immigrants numbered over 430,000 in 2007, with the most common countries of origin being Brazil (66,400), Cape Verde (63,900), Ukraine (39,500), and Angola (32,700).²³⁵⁸

Population: 10,781,459 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.181% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.51 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 75.45 male, 82.16 female (2012)

Languages: Portuguese (95%), other West Iberian languages (0.5%), other (4.5%). Portuguese is the official language. Common immigrant languages include Ukrainian, African languages, and Portuguese Creoles. Portuguese is the only language spoken by over one million people (10.2 million).

Literacy: 93.3% (2003)

History

One of the oldest European states, Portugal established its current political boundaries in 1249 AD. Leon-Castile ruled much of Portugal until a rebellion in the mid-twelfth century established a monarchy under Afonso I and gained territory southward from the Moors. Portugal reached its height of power and influence during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and dominated the seas in many areas. Portuguese-ruled territories stretched around the world and included Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Goa, East Timor, Guinea-Bissau, Macau, Mozambique, and Sao Tome. Several events led to the loss of most wealth and power accrued during the centuries of expansion, trade, and prosperity, including the 1755 earthquake in Lisbon, the Napoleonic Wars in the early nineteenth century, and the independence of Brazil in 1822. A republic was established in

²³⁵⁸ "Demographics of Portugal," Wikipedia.com, retrieved 14 September 2010. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Portugal#cite_note-5

1910 but was marked by economic instability and little progress.²³⁵⁹ Portugal was neutral in World War II, joined NATO at its inception in 1949, and joined the European Community (European Union) in 1986. A military coup overthrew the government in 1974 and paved the way for the independence of its African colonies in 1975. Far-reaching democratic reforms were enacted by the new government. Portugal continues to be among the most progressive European nations.

Culture

The Catholic Church has historically been a major cultural force, but its influence has waned in recent years as a result of increasing secularism. With a rich history of worldwide exploration and trade, Portugal greatly contributed to European expansion and understanding of the world. Architecture, music, art, and sports are proud local traditions. Common Mediterranean foods are represented in Portuguese cuisine, which places a strong emphasis on meat dishes. Soccer is the most popular sport. In 2010, Portugal became one of the few nations that has legalized same-sex marriage. Cigarette consumption rates are moderate and alcohol consumption rates are high compared to the world average.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$23,200 (2011) [48.2% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.809

Corruption Index: 6.1 (2011)

Portugal achieved greater development and diversification of the economy following admittance to the European Community in 1986. In recent years, Portugal has struggled to attract greater foreign investment, which tends to be funneled into Central Europe and Asia for cheaper labor markets. Unemployment reached a record high in late 2009 at over 10%. Services employ 60% of the work force and generate 74% of the GDP. Industry accounts for 30% of the work force and generates 23% of the GDP. Major industries include textiles, footwear, wood products, food products, shipbuilding, and tourism. Agriculture accounts for 10% of the work force and 3% of the GDP. Primary agricultural goods include grain, potatoes, tomatoes, olives, grapes, livestock, and fish. Spain, Germany, and France are the largest trade partners.

Despite being a long-term member of the European Union and NATO, corruption is perceived as more widespread than most Western European nations. Portugal is a major crossroads for drug trafficking from Latin America, Asia, and Africa to Europe.

Faiths

Christian: 96%

Atheist: 3%

Other: 1%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 9,851,290

Evangelicals 250,000

Eastern Orthodox 200,000

Jehovah's Witnesses 49,606 645

Latter-day Saints 40,941 68

²³⁵⁹ "Background Note: Portugal," Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 24 February 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3208.htm>

Seventh Day Adventists 9,426 97

Religion

Over 80% of the population over age twelve identify as Catholic, but many do not actively attend worship meetings or practice their faith. Non-Catholic Christians and other religious groups constitute less than 5% of the population and often comprise non-Portuguese, such as Africans and Eastern Europeans.²³⁶⁰

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. The law protects religious freedom from its abuse by the government or the public. There is no state religion. Non-Catholic Christian denominations with a presence in Portugal for over thirty years and internationally recognized for sixty years were able to receive benefits from the government previously reserved only for the Catholic Church under the 2001 Religious Freedom Act. Not all aspects of the act had been enacted by the government as of 2009. Most Catholic holidays are recognized by the government. Religious education in public schools is optional and is not limited to Catholicism. There have been no recent reports of abuse of religious freedom in Portugal.²³⁶¹

Largest Cities

Urban: 59%

Lisbon, Vila Nova de Gaia, Porto, Amadora, Matosinhos, Braga, Coimbra, Maia, Feira, Funchal, Setúbal

All eleven of the cities with over 100,000 inhabitants are within five kilometers of an LDS congregation. Twenty-one percent (21%) of the national population resides in the eleven largest cities.

LDS History

In 1974, the LDS Church investigated conditions in Portugal to determine whether missionaries could be assigned. Government officials immediately granted permission for the Church to enter the country, and the first mission was established later that year in Lisbon.²³⁶² President Thomas S. Monson dedicated Portugal for missionary work in April 1975.²³⁶³ Seminary and institute began in the 1970s. The Church opened a second mission in Porto in 1987. In 1988, the Church created the Spain Las Palmas Mission, which included the Canary Islands and Madeira.²³⁶⁴ A third mission, the Portugal Lisbon North Mission, opened in 1990 but was later closed. In 1991, Portugal was assigned to the Europe/Mediterranean Area.²³⁶⁵ The Portugal Lisbon South Mission administered the Cape Verde Islands from the early 1990s until Cape Verde was dedicated for missionary work in 2002,²³⁶⁶ and the Cape Verde Mission was organized in the same year. In 1998, the

²³⁶⁰ "Portugal," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127331.htm>

²³⁶¹ "Portugal," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127331.htm>

²³⁶² Avant, Gerry. "Marvelous work in Spain, Portugal," LDS Church News, 27 May 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49010/Marvelous-work-in-Spain-Portugal.html>

²³⁶³ Searle, Don L. "The Saints of Portugal," Tambuli, Feb 1988, 27.

²³⁶⁴ "9 missions created; world total now 221," LDS Church News, 19 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17973/9-missions-created-world-total-now-221.html>

²³⁶⁵ Cannon, Mike. "Diversity in land, people, and climate," LDS Church News, 7 December 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21327/Diversity-in-land-people-and-climate.html>

²³⁶⁶ "Republic of Cape Verde dedicated by apostle," LDS Church News, 24 September 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25230/Republic-of-Cape-Verde-dedicated-by-apostle.html>

Mormon Tabernacle Choir performed the last concert of its European tour in Portugal.²³⁶⁷ In 2000, Portugal was assigned to the Europe West Area.²³⁶⁸ Two missions were headquartered in Lisbon and Porto between 2002 and 2011 until they were consolidated into a single mission based in Lisbon.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 40,941 (2012)

In July 1975, there were one hundred Latter-day Saints, and by 1978 membership reached 1,000. Membership continued to grow rapidly, reaching 5,000 by mid-1984 and 11,000 at year-end 1987.²³⁶⁹ In 1988, there were 2,800 members in the Portugal Porto Mission.²³⁷⁰ That same year, missionaries were baptizing 500 converts per month throughout Portugal, over half of who were joining the church in the three stakes operating at the time. In 1990, there were 7,500 members in the Portugal Lisbon South Mission and 5,200 members in the Portugal Lisbon North Mission.²³⁷¹ There were 31,000 members by year-end 1991, and membership growth slowed dramatically thereafter.

Membership grew slowly in the 2000s, but with the exception of 2007, membership has increased every year over the past decade. Membership numbered 35,146 in 2000, 37,170 in 2003, 37,812 in 2005, and 38,188 in 2008. Annual membership growth rates ranged from 0%–2% during this period.

In 2010, missionaries reported that the Portugal Lisbon Mission was among the highest baptizing missions in the Europe Area, with forty-seven convert baptisms in February, sixty-one convert baptisms in June, and fifty convert baptisms in August. In 2009, one in 278 was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 32 Branches: 36 Groups: 4+ (April 2013)

The first stake was organized in Lisbon in 1981. Additional stakes were created in Porto (1986), Setubal (1987), and Porto North (1989). In 1988, there were four districts,²³⁷² three of which were in Coimbra, Sao Joao de Madeira, and Vila Real.²³⁷³ In 1989, Church created the Oeiras Portugal Stake with seven wards and three branches.²³⁷⁴ In 1990, there were two stakes and three districts in each of the two missions headquartered in Lisbon.²³⁷⁵ The Santarem Portugal District was organized in 1991. In 2002, the Coimbra Portugal District became a stake with six wards and three branches.²³⁷⁶ In the early and mid-2000s, districts were discontinued in Beja, Castelo Branco, and Vila Real. In 2010, there were six stakes and four districts.

²³⁶⁷ Avant, Gerry. "Choir tour: 'a missionary journey,'" LDS Church News, 11 July 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31297/Choir-tour-a-missionary-journey.html>

²³⁶⁸ Lloyd, Scott. "European continent realigned into three new areas," LDS Church News, 16 September 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38475/European-continent--realigned-into-three-new-areas.html>

²³⁶⁹ Searle, Don L. "The Saints of Portugal," Tambuli, Feb 1988, 27.

²³⁷⁰ "9 missions created; world total now 221," LDS Church News, 19 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17973/9-missions-created-world-total-now-221.html>

²³⁷¹ "Eight new missions announced," LDS Church News, 3 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19805/Eight-new-missions-announced.html>

²³⁷² "From around the world," LDS Church News, 23 July 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18124/From-around-the-world.html>

²³⁷³ "9 missions created; world total now 221," LDS Church News, 19 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17973/9-missions-created-world-total-now-221.html>

²³⁷⁴ "New stake presidents," LDS Church News, 5 August 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18744/New-stake-presidencies.html>

²³⁷⁵ "Eight new missions announced," LDS Church News, 3 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19805/Eight-new-missions-announced.html>

²³⁷⁶ "New Stake Presidents," LDS Church News, 1 June 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41912/New-Stake-Presidents.html>

In 1991, there were 118 congregations in Portugal, including twenty-four wards. For the rest of the 1990s, branches were systematically consolidated, falling from a high of ninety-four in 1991 to seventy-seven by year-end 1999. In 2000, there were eighty-seven congregations, including twenty-eight wards. The number of total congregations declined in the 2000s to eighty-two in 2003, seventy-seven in 2006, and sixty-eight in 2009. In 2004, the number of wards and branches numbered thirty-five and forty-five, respectively. By year-end 2009, the number of wards declined by two and the number of branches declined by ten. In 2010, there was one mission branch in Vila Real.

In September 2010, for the first time in several years, mission leadership was in the process of creating a new congregation in Albufeira by dividing the Loulé Branch. Groups in several areas appear to be operating under the Portugal Lisbon Mission Branch and other congregations.

Activity and Retention

Member activity rates in Portugal appeared highest in the late 1980s and have dropped dramatically since. In 1988, over 650 Portuguese church leaders assembled for priesthood leadership training in Porto.²³⁷⁷ During the period of rapid membership growth in the late 1980s and early 1990s, mission leadership noted the major challenges retaining the large numbers of converts baptized during this period as some stakes baptized over 120 converts a month.²³⁷⁸ In 2004, nearly 8,000 from Portugal and Spain attended a special meeting with President Hinckley in Madrid.²³⁷⁹ Four hundred seventy were enrolled in seminary and institute during the 2008–2009 school year.

In April 2010, the Ponta Delgada Branch in the Azores had sixty-five attending church regularly. In March 2010, one of the wards in the Oeiras area had over eighty attending church. In early 2010, the Praia da Vitória Branch in the Azores had fewer than twenty active members and 120 inactive members but after several months of reactivation and proselytism efforts, thirty-five were attending church regularly. Seventy attended the Loulé Branch in mid-2010.

In September 2010, missionaries reported that the Portugal Lisbon Mission had the third highest short-term convert retention rates in the Europe Area, although overall member activity rates remain very low, and it remains to be seen how recent convert retention rates will hold up over time. In 2010, missionaries in the Portugal Lisbon Mission reported that at least six active priesthood holders were required to create a branch in an area.

Little progress reactivating less active members and improving convert retention rates occurred in the 2000s as nearly twenty congregations were consolidated, and the average number of members per congregation rose from 404 in 2000 to 566 in 2009, a 40% increase. Total active membership is estimated between 4,500 and 5,000, or 11%–13% of total LDS membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Portuguese, English, Ukrainian.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are translated into Portuguese and Ukrainian. The *Liahona* has

²³⁷⁷ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 23 July 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18124/From-around-the-world.html>

²³⁷⁸ "Eight new missions announced," LDS Church News, 3 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19805/Eight-new-missions-announced.html>

²³⁷⁹ "Marvelous gathering of members in Madrid," LDS Church News, 5 June 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45671/Marvelous-gathering-of-members-in-Madrid.html>

twelve issues a year in Portuguese and Ukrainian. In recent years, General Conference has been translated into both Portugal-spoken Portuguese and Brazilian-spoken Portuguese.

Meetinghouses

The first chapel was built in Portimao, southern Portugal.²³⁸⁰ In 2010, there were nearly seventy meetinghouses in Portugal. Most congregations meet in Church-built meetinghouses. Smaller branches often meet in rented spaces or renovated buildings.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Due to economic growth and prosperity over the past several decades, the Church has not completed many large humanitarian or development work projects. Local members have participated in service projects in their communities. In 2004, the Church conducted a Helping Hands activity in which 1,300 volunteers cleaned and repaired picnic areas in city parks.²³⁸¹ A second activity occurred later that year with 1,500 volunteers donating 7,000 hours of labor.²³⁸² Church President Thomas S. Monson announced in General Conference in April 2010 that humanitarian work had occurred in Portugal in the previous three months.²³⁸³

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church experiences no restrictions regarding proselytism or assembly. Foreign missionaries do not appear to experience difficulty obtaining visas to serve in Portugal. Little religious discrimination and persecution of nontraditional Christian groups provides a positive environment for LDS missionary efforts.

Cultural Issues

Developing a habit of weekly church attendance among investigators and converts appears to be a major challenge. Many less active Latter-day Saints appear to have been nominally Catholic and have never been religiously active. Increasing secularism may be responsible for the dramatic drop in membership growth in the early 1990s and in the future may lessen Portuguese and immigrant groups' receptivity to the LDS Church.

National Outreach

Forty-six percent (46%) of the national population resides in a city with a mission outreach center or in a city with over 20,000 inhabitants within ten kilometers of a mission outreach center. In 2010, the Church had missionaries assigned to cities without wards or branches, such as Lagos and Vila Franca de Xila. The percentage of the population reached nationwide may be as high as 50%. Three of the eighteen administrative districts (Braganca, Guarda, and Portalegre) have no mission outreach centers and comprise 44% of the national population.

The consolidation of scores of congregations over the past two decades has reduced national outreach capabilities. Dozens of cities are within ten kilometers of a neighboring city with a mission outreach center and today receive periodic visits from missionaries, but in the past, many of these cities had their own mission outreach

²³⁸⁰ Searle, Don L. "The Saints of Portugal," *Tambuli*, Feb 1988, 27.

²³⁸¹ "Helping Hands begins," *LDS Church News*, 7 August 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45965/Helping-Hands-begins.html>

²³⁸² "Portuguese 'Helping Hands,'" *LDS Church News*, 6 November 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46436/Portuguese-Helping-Hands.html>

²³⁸³ Monson, Thomas S. "Welcome to Conference," *Ensign*, May 2010, 4–6.

centers. There are twenty-five cities between 20,000 and 60,000 inhabitants that are more than ten kilometers from the nearest mission outreach center, amounting to 7% of the national population. Of these twenty-five cities, eight had LDS congregations discontinued in the past decade. Missionaries appear to be assigned to some of these cities and either assist bringing members and investigators to a neighboring city or hold group meetings. Rural populations have a greater potential to be reached by the Church than many other nations due to the small geographic size of Portugal and developed transportation infrastructure. The most densely populated rural areas are along the coast between Lisbon and the Spanish border in the north. The consolidation of LDS missions in Portugal has not directly reduced the Church's outreach capabilities and the closing of missions appears initiated due to modest receptivity, limited missionary manpower worldwide, and reduced emphasis on full-time missionaries for administrative duties.

The Church maintains an Internet site for Portugal at <http://www.igreja-jesus-cristo.pt/>. In addition to Portuguese-language information about Church beliefs and practices, a meetinghouse locator and local news are also displayed. A Facebook group created by the Church for Portugal is another form of Internet outreach through social networking. Use of the website in lesser reached areas may improve national outreach and increase the number of self-referrals to missionaries.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

The majority of Church membership appeared to join the church in Portugal between 1985 and 1995. Unfortunately, this period of the most rapid numerical membership growth was characterized by mission policies promoting the rushed baptism of investigators with little pre-baptismal teaching in order to meet arbitrary baptismal goals or quotas, typically before investigators had firmly established regular church attendance and other gospel habits, and in many cases, before overcoming substance addictions or other prohibited behaviors. As a result, this period saw a large increase in nominal membership but very little increase in active, participating membership or the strength of the Church. Years of intensive ongoing efforts to reclaim inactive or disengaged members, many of whom appear not to have met scriptural requirements for baptism in the first place, have achieved few results and continue to strain limited congregational and mission resources.

Large numbers of converts baptized today are Africans, Latin Americans, and youth, who present challenges for retention and long-term growth due to often transient lifestyles. Reactivation programs require creativity and coordination between missionaries and local members. In 1998, the Church ran a sixteen-episode televised series that assisted reactivation efforts and helped find new investigators.²³⁸⁴ Perhaps the most important factor to improve real long-term growth in active membership will be mission policies requiring that prospective converts firmly establish basic gospel habits necessary to sustain a testimony and promote ongoing church activity as requirements for baptism.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Missionaries frequently teach and baptize immigrants from Portuguese-speaking African nations, such as Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, and Sao Tome and Principe, and Brazil. There do not appear to be any major challenge for these ethnic groups to assimilate in Portuguese congregations.

Language Issues

Church materials are translated in the native language of at least 97% of the population. Non-Portuguese church materials appear to be rarely used, as missionaries work primarily among Portuguese speakers from

²³⁸⁴ "Television broadcasts raise visibility of Church," LDS Church News, 30 May 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30377/Television-broadcasts-raise-visibility-of-Church.html>

Brazil, Africa, and Portugal. Few language issues have been encountered. In 2010, the only non-Portuguese-speaking congregation was an English-speaking branch in the Azores for U.S. military personnel in Lajes.

Missionary Service

In the late 1980s, some stakes and districts had as many as twenty members serving full-time missions.²³⁸⁵ In 1988, the first member from the Madeira Islands was called to serve a full-time mission.²³⁸⁶ By 1990, local members constituted 20% of the full-time missionary force.²³⁸⁷

The Church sent twenty new missionaries to the Portugal Lisbon Mission in September 2010, as the mission was the highest baptizing mission in Europe at the time. The Portugal Lisbon Mission had eighty-eight missionaries serving in mid-2010. Fourteen missionaries served in the Azores, including eight on the island of Sao Miguel. Once self-sufficient in staffing its missionary needs, Portugal has potential to assist in missionary work in Portuguese-speaking African nations that are currently underserved, such as Angola.

Leadership

Local members led nearly all congregations, but in limited numbers. Church employees serve regularly in leadership positions, likely due to insufficient numbers of other capable and willing potential leaders. Several Portuguese members have served in international leadership positions. In 1990, former regional representative and stake president Vitor Manuel Pereira Martins from Lisbon began presiding over the Portugal Lisbon North Mission.²³⁸⁸ In 1996, Jose A. Teixeira from Lisbon was called as an Area Authority.²³⁸⁹ In 2004, A. Venancio Caleira from Setubal was called as an Area Authority Seventy.²³⁹⁰ In 2005, Jose A. Teixeira was called to preside over the Brazil Sao Paulo South Mission.²³⁹¹ In 2008, Fernando A. R. Da Rocha from Seixal was called as an Area Seventy,²³⁹² and Elder Jose A. Teixeira was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy.²³⁹³ The consistent baptism of many youth converts in recent years provides a positive outlook for future leadership development if these converts remain active and serve full-time missions.

Temple

Portugal pertains to the Madrid Spain Temple district. Prior to the completion of the temple in Madrid, members traveled forty-eight hours by bus to attend the temple in Frankfurt, Germany.²³⁹⁴ The temple appears well-attended, as evidenced by endowment sessions occurring hourly throughout the day from Tuesday

²³⁸⁵ Searle, Don L. "The Saints of Portugal," *Tambuli*, Feb 1988, 27.

²³⁸⁶ "From around the world," *LDS Church News*, 23 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17634/From-around-the-world.html>

²³⁸⁷ "Eight new missions announced," *LDS Church News*, 3 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19805/Eight-new-missions-announced.html>

²³⁸⁸ "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 5 May 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20315/New-mission-presidents.html>

²³⁸⁹ "First Presidency announces new area authorities," *LDS Church News*, 23 March 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28215/First-Presidency-announces-new-area-authorities.html>

²³⁹⁰ "New Area Authority Seventies," *LDS Church News*, 24 April 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45458/New-Area-Authority-Seventies.html>

²³⁹¹ "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 14 May 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47290/New-mission-presidents.html>

²³⁹² "38 Area Seventies called," *LDS Church News*, 12 April 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51857/38-Area-Seventies-called.html>

²³⁹³ "Called to Seventy," *LDS Church News*, 12 April 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51855/Called-to-Seventy.html>

²³⁹⁴ Cannon, Mike. "Diversity in land, people, and climate," *LDS Church News*, 7 December 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21327/Diversity-in-land-people-and-climate.html>

through Saturday. Rates of temple attendance for active members in Portugal appear consistent for much of Europe. In October 2010, the First Presidency announced a temple for Lisbon. Missionaries have postulated that Portugal has remained without an LDS temple for so many years due to few active priesthood holders. Several European nations with much smaller church memberships have their own temples and are also in close proximity to other countries with operating temples, like Denmark. Overall, low member activity appears to be the primary factor in the delayed announcement of a temple until October 2010.

Comparative Growth

The problematic period of rushed baptisms with little, if any, discernible standards from 1985 to 1995 has given Portugal the dubious distinction of being one of the countries with the lowest LDS activity rates in the world, in a church with member activity rates that are already much lower than those of Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists. By 1997, Portugal had the second most Latter-day Saints in continental Europe at 34,000 members, just 2,000 less than Germany,²³⁹⁵ although Portuguese membership has supported far fewer congregations. Portugal appears to have one of the lowest member activity rates in Europe, as no other European nation has as many members per congregation on average. Switzerland supports thirty-six LDS congregations with less than 8,000 members nationwide, whereas Portugal has nearly five times as many members but just sixty-eight congregations. Only 1% of Latter-day Saints were enrolled in seminary or institute in 2008–2009 in Portugal, one of the lowest percentages in the world. Portugal has the highest percentage of nominal Latter-day Saint membership in the population of any European nation (0.36%), slightly more than the United Kingdom and three times the percentage of neighboring Spain. Among nations without a temple, only Nicaragua has more members than Portugal. Other European nations with smaller LDS populations have operating temples or temples announced, including Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Ukraine.

Other mission-oriented Christian groups experienced rapid membership growth in the 1980s and 1990s, but since 2000 growth rates have declined. Seventh Day Adventists achieved slow growth in membership during the 2000s but steady growth in the number of congregations. Jehovah's Witnesses also experienced steady membership growth during this period. Evangelicals report moderate rates of growth. Missionary-oriented Christian groups appear to have strong local leadership, which has increased efficiency and national outreach capabilities. These groups also do not rush converts into baptism and wait until regular church attendance habits have been developed, promoting more sustained, real growth and greater correlation between official membership numbers and active membership.

Future Prospects

Portugal has a potentially receptive population, as evidenced by rapid growth in the late 1980s and continued high rates of convert baptisms. However, poor convert retention and low member activity accumulating over the past several decades have presented major concerns and have contributed to the closure of many branches. Rejection of past rush-baptize tactics and rebuilding of mission policies based on scriptural mandates and the need for converts to firmly establish basic gospel habits prior to baptism will be key to the Church's long-term efforts to experience real growth and develop a stable, self-sustaining and self-perpetuating local membership.

Reestablishing a Church presence in cities that formerly had mission outreach centers will be vital to expanding nation outreach in Portugal. However, the recent trend of congregation consolidations has only slowed, and a reversal of this trend has yet to occur. Youth involvement in church education programs like seminary, institute, and missionary preparation classes may ensure greater convert retention and member activity, in addition to increasing the size of the local missionary force. Districts in Santarem and Algarve may one day become stakes.

²³⁹⁵ Hart, L. John. "A half century of modern Church expansion: 1949–97," LDS Church News, 27 September 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28764/A-half-century-of-modern-Church-expansion-1947-97.html>

SPAIN

Geography

AREA: 505,370 square km. Located in Southeastern Europe, Spain consists of the majority of the Iberian Peninsula and borders Portugal, France, Andorra, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Atlantic Ocean. The Pyrenees Mountains form the French border. Mountainous areas dominate several other areas, such as in the southeast and northwest. Temperate climate prevails in most areas with hot summers and cold winters. Major rivers include the Ebro, Tajo, and Guadalquivir. Spain administers two archipelagos, the Canary and Balearic Islands, and several disputed territories with Morocco (Ceuta, Melilla, Islas Chafarinas, Penon de Alhucemas, and Penon de Velez de la Gomera). Droughts and flooding are natural hazards. Environmental issues include pollution, water shortages, deforestation, and desertification. Spain is administratively divided into seventeen autonomous communities and two autonomous cities.

Peoples

Spaniard: 97.5%

Other: 2.5%

Moroccans are the second largest ethnic group (680,000) followed by Romanians (645,000).²³⁹⁶

Population: 47,042,984 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.654% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.48 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 78.26 male, 84.47 female (2012)

Languages: Spanish (74%), Catalan (17%), Galician (7%), Basque (2%). Castilian Spanish is the official language. Catalan, Galician, and Basque are recognized regionally and spoken in northern and extreme eastern areas. Languages spoken by over one million people include Spanish (30 million), Catalan (6.9 million), and Galician (2.8 million).

Literacy: 98.7% (2003)

History

Prehistoric tribes inhabited the Iberian Peninsula for millennia prior to known ancient civilizations exerting their influence and control of the area. The Phoenicians, Celts, Carthaginians, and Greeks were among the first to settle and trade in Iberia. The Romans annexed the peninsula in prior to 100 BC and significantly influenced language, laws, and religion for the next several centuries. The Visigoths took control of much of Spain in the fifth century, and the Moors invaded in the early eighth century, conquering nearly the entire peninsula. Spain was not fully reunified and the Moorish peoples driven out until the beginning of the sixteenth century. Spain reached its golden age of power and influence in the sixteenth century as the Spanish Armada dominated the Atlantic, and wealth and resources were exploited throughout the Americas. The Spanish Armada was defeated by the English in 1588, contributing to the empire's declining influence for the next several centuries. Spain was occupied by France during the Napoleonic era and lost most of its overseas colonies by the mid-nineteenth

²³⁹⁶ "Spain," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127338.htm>

century. The Spanish-American War was the final blow to Spain's steady decline in power as the United States annexed Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and several islands in the Pacific. During the first half of the twentieth century, Spain experienced significant economic and political turmoil, resulting in civil war and the rise of General Francisco Franco to power in 1939. Spain remained neutral during World War II and began to liberalize the economy in the 1950s. During the following two decades, Spain achieved rapid modernization and growth through economic liberalization. A parliamentary democracy was reinstated following the death of General Franco in 1975.²³⁹⁷ Spain joined NATO in 1982 and the European Community (European Union) in 1986. In recent years, the government has dealt with significant terrorist threats internally from the Basque Father and Liberty (ETA) and Muslim extremists with alleged ties to global terrorist networks, like Al Qaeda, in addition to economic recession.

Culture

Spain manifests its historical legacy through significant contribution from peoples and civilizations that have previously inhabited the peninsula, namely the Romans and Moors. Many of the cities in southern Spain reflect architecture and city design reminiscent of North Africa, whereas northern Spain shares many commonalities with Western Europe. The indigenous inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula have also made lasting cultural contributions. Spain heavily influenced the culture of Latin America until the independence of most colonies by the early nineteenth century. The Catholic Church has widely influenced culture and customs for centuries and in recent years has become less powerful. Many literary works have worldwide fame, such as *Don Quixote*, which was first published in the early seventeenth century and is considered the first novel. Other Western European nations heavily influenced art and culture during the last two centuries, namely Italy, France and Germany. Cuisine varies by location, with Mediterranean foods and dishes in coastal areas and soups, breads, and salted dishes in the interior. Soccer is the most popular sport. Spain has one of the world's highest cigarette and alcohol consumption rates.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$30,600 (2011) [63.6% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.878

Corruption Index: 6.2 (2011)

With the twelfth largest economy in the world, Spain experienced rapid economic growth from the 1990s to the onset of a major recession in the late 2000s. Unemployment rates more than doubled, reaching 19% in December 2009. The financial sector has experienced significant damage from the global financial crisis. Ongoing debt issues with concern by international investors about the possibility of governmental default has weighed down the economy and threatened the stability of the euro currency. Recovery is expected to occur after most other major world economies, whereas debt is expected to remain an ongoing problem along with uncertainty about the government's ability to meet its financial obligations. Services generate 70% of the GDP and employ 72% of the work force, whereas industry generates 27% of the GDP and employs 24% of the work force. Major industries include textiles, food processing, metal manufacturing, chemicals, shipbuilding, tourism, and pharmaceuticals. Agriculture accounts for less than 5% of the work force and GDP. Grain, vegetables, olives, sugar beets, and citrus are primary crops. Other agricultural activities include processing animal byproducts, fish, and livestock. Primary trade partners include France, Germany, and Italy.

Corruption is perceived as less prevalent than in many European countries, but there are still some issues of concern. Due to its geographic location and long coastline, Spain is a major transshipment point for illicit drugs destined for Europe from Latin America, North Africa, and Southwest Asia. Money laundering from

²³⁹⁷ "Background Note: Spain," Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 18 August 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2878.htm>

Colombian drug cartels and organized crime is an ongoing problem. Illegal immigration from North Africa has been an ongoing issue.

Faiths

Christian: 90%
 Muslim: 3%
 Other/none: 7%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 35,000,000
 Evangelical/Protestant 1,200,000
 Jehovah's Witnesses 111,928 1,486
 Latter-day Saints 50,049 138
 Seventh Day Adventists 16,000 108

Religion

Most Spaniards are Catholic (around thirty-five million or 86%), but 55% of those who identify as Catholic report that they almost never attend mass. No other religious group constitutes more than 10% of the population. Protestants and Muslims are each estimated to number around 1.2 million, or 3%. Two-thirds of the Muslim population is immigrants who are not citizens and come primarily from Morocco. Eastern Orthodox Christians are found primarily among immigrants from Eastern Europe. The Jewish population is estimated at around 48,000.²³⁹⁸

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. There is no state religion, but the Catholic Church has the closest relationship with the government. A few religious groups, namely Buddhists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Latter-day Saints, do not enjoy the same benefits and rights bestowed upon other religious groups with signed bilateral agreements with the government. There have been some reports of societal abuse of religious freedom directed at Jews and Muslims, but overall, the government and communities have taken steps to integrate other religious groups into society and promote tolerance.²³⁹⁹

Largest Cities

Urban: 77%

Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Sevilla, Zaragoza, Málaga, Murcia, Palma de Mallorca, Las Palmas, Bilbao, Alicante, Córdoba, Valladolid, Vigo, Gijón, L'Hospitalet, A Coruña, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Granada, Elche, Oviedo, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Badalona, Cartagena, Terrassa, Jerez de la Frontera, Sabadell, Móstoles, Alcalá de Henares, Pamplona, Fuenlabrada, Almería, Leganés, Donostia-San Sebastián, Santander, Castellón de la Plana, Burgos, Albacete, Alcorcón, **Getafe**, Salamanca, Logroño, La Laguna, Huelva, Badajoz, Tarragona, Lleida, **Marbella**, León, Cádiz, Dos Hermanas, Mataró, **Santa Coloma de Gramanet**, Torrejón de Ardoz, Jaén, Algeciras, Parla, Alcobendas, Orense, **Reus**, Torrevieja, Telde.

²³⁹⁸ "Spain," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127338.htm>

²³⁹⁹ "Spain," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127338.htm>

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Fifty-eight of the sixty-two cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have LDS congregations. Forty percent (40%) of the national population resides in the sixty-two largest cities.

LDS History

The first known Spanish Latter-day Saint convert joined the Church in the 1870s in Spain, immigrated to Utah, and assisted in the translation of the Book of Mormon in Spanish. Additional Spanish converts did not join the Church until two American Latter-day Saint congregations were operating in Spain in 1966. In February 1968, the Madrid Branch became the first official congregation established with forty attending services. The creation of the branch became possible due to the passing of the Spain Religious Liberty Law in 1967. The Spanish government granted official recognition to the LDS Church in October 1968.²⁴⁰⁰ Elder Marion G. Romney dedicated Spain for missionary work in May 1969.²⁴⁰¹ Both seminary and institute were introduced by 1975. Missionaries were first assigned to the Canary Islands in 1979.²⁴⁰² Spain joined the Europe Mediterranean Area in 1991.²⁴⁰³ In 1992, President Hinckley presented the Spanish king and queen a copy of the Book of Mormon.²⁴⁰⁴ In 1996, President Hinckley became the first Church president to visit Spain and attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the Madrid Spain Temple.²⁴⁰⁵ In 1998, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir performed in Spain on its European tour.²⁴⁰⁶ In early 1999, two missionaries from the Spain Las Palmas Mission drowned during a sightseeing activity.²⁴⁰⁷ Spain became part of the Europe West Area in 2000.²⁴⁰⁸

Missions

In 1970, the Church created its first mission in Spain from the French Mission. Two additional missions headquartered in Barcelona and Seville (Sevilla) were organized in 1976. In 1987, a fourth mission was created in Bilbao. In 1988, the Spain Las Palmas Mission was created in the Canary Islands from the Spain Seville and Portugal Porto Missions.²⁴⁰⁹ The Spain Seville Mission was later renamed the Spain Malaga Mission in 1993. The Spain Las Palmas Mission was discontinued in 2006 and consolidated with the Spain Malaga Mission.²⁴¹⁰ In 2010, the Spain Bilbao Mission was consolidated into the remaining three Spanish missions.

²⁴⁰⁰ "Spain," Country Profiles, retrieved 20 September 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/spain>

²⁴⁰¹ Searle, Don L. "Spain: Exploring Horizons of Faith," Liahona, May 2000, 36.

²⁴⁰² "Gospel takes wing in Canary Islands," LDS Church News, 10 November 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19557/Gospel-takes-wing-in-Canary-Islands.html>

²⁴⁰³ "New areas created in Asia, Europe," LDS Church News, 7 September 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21578/New-areas-created-in-Asia-Europe.html>

²⁴⁰⁴ "Church leaders make courtesy visit to Spain's king and queen," LDS Church News, 28 March 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22481/Church-leaders-make-courtesy-visit-to-Spains-king-and-queen.html>

²⁴⁰⁵ Hart, John L. "Ground broken for temple in Madrid," LDS Church News, 22 June 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28191/Ground-broken-for-temple-in-Madrid.html>

²⁴⁰⁶ Avant, Gerry. "Spectacular: best word to describe 'look and sound' of choir in Spain," LDS Church News, 4 July 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31309/Spectacular-best-word-to-describe-look-and-sound-of-choir-in-Spain.html>

²⁴⁰⁷ "2 missionaries drown off the Canary Islands," LDS Church News, 23 January 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35117/2-missionaries-drown-off-the-Canary-Islands.html>

²⁴⁰⁸ Lloyd, Scott. "European continent realigned into three new areas," LDS Church News, 16 September 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38475/European-continent--realigned-into-three-new-areas.html>

²⁴⁰⁹ "9 missions created; world total now 221," LDS Church News, 19 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17973/9-missions-created-world-total-now-221.html>

²⁴¹⁰ "New mission: 5th created in Mexico City," LDS Church News, 4 March 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48599/New-mission-5th-created-in-Mexico-City-area.html>

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 50,049 (2012)

In 1974, there were 620 Latter-day Saints²⁴¹¹ increasing to 1,000 the following year.²⁴¹² There were over 5,000 members in 1980 and over 10,000 members by 1983. By 1990, there were 17,000 Latter-day Saints in Spain.

There were 1,800 members living in the Canary Islands and Madeira in 1988.²⁴¹³ Rapid membership growth occurred in the early years of missionary work on the islands, as the Spain Las Palmas Mission baptized 1,000 converts the first year of its operation and in 1990 baptized eighty converts a month.²⁴¹⁴ There were 1,243 members in the Jaen Spain District in 1995.²⁴¹⁵ Membership growth slowed starting in 1993, with annual membership growth rates between 2%–4% for much of the rest of the 1990s. In 1996, there were 28,000 members nationwide.²⁴¹⁶ By year-end 2000, membership stood at 31,695.

Modest membership growth continued into the 2000s as membership increased to 34,831 in 2002, 39,784 in 2005, and 44,304 in 2008. Annual membership increases generally ranged from 1,200 and 1,800 and annual membership growth rates varied from 3.2% to 5.2%. Membership growth has been stagnant in the Canary Islands for much of the 2000s as there was no increase in the 3,500 members from 2001 to 2005. In 2009, the Spain Bilbao Mission reported the most convert baptisms in one year in two decades (an 81% increase over the number of convert baptisms in 2008), and the Spain Barcelona Mission baptized 402 converts.

Membership growth over the past several decades has been largely influenced by significant numbers of South American converts joining the Church in Spain.²⁴¹⁷ The composition of membership varies by region, with some congregations having few native Spaniards. In 2009, one in 886 was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 73 Branches: 66 Groups: 1+ (April 2013)

In 1974, there were seventeen LDS congregations.²⁴¹⁸ By May 1975, there were three districts and twenty-five branches.²⁴¹⁹ At this time, branches operated in Alcoy, Alicante, Badalona, Barcelona, Burgos, Cadiz, Castellon, Cordoba, Elche, Madrid, Malaga, Murcia, Sabadell, Sevilla, and Valencia.²⁴²⁰

The Church created the first stake in Madrid in March 1982, which was followed seven months later by the organization of the Barcelona Spain Stake. By 1990, there were members living on five of the seven inhabited Canary Islands organized in fourteen branches and two districts.²⁴²¹ A third stake headquartered in Sevilla

²⁴¹¹ "Spain," Country Profiles, retrieved 20 September 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/spain>

²⁴¹² "The Church in Spain and Gibraltar," *Friend*, May 1975, 32.

²⁴¹³ "9 missions created; world total now 221," *LDS Church News*, 19 March 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17973/9-missions-created-world-total-now-221.html>

²⁴¹⁴ "Gospel takes wing in Canary Islands," *LDS Church News*, 10 November 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19557/Gospel-takes-wing-in-Canary-Islands.html>

²⁴¹⁵ Wakefield, Kaylynn. "Jaen, Spain: Gospel light shines in ancient city," *LDS Church News*, 29 April 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26370/Jaen-Spain-Gospel-light-shines-in-ancient-city.html>

²⁴¹⁶ Hart, John L. "Ground broken for temple in Madrid," *LDS Church News*, 22 June 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28191/Ground-broken-for-temple-in-Madrid.html>

²⁴¹⁷ Searle, Don L. "Spain: Exploring Horizons of Faith," *Liahona*, May 2000, 36.

²⁴¹⁸ "Spain," Country Profiles, retrieved 20 September 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/spain>

²⁴¹⁹ "The Church in Spain and Gibraltar," *Friend*, May 1975, 32.

²⁴²⁰ Ventura, Betty. "The Saints in Spain," *Ensign*, Apr 1975, 7.

²⁴²¹ "Gospel takes wing in Canary Islands," *LDS Church News*, 10 November 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19557/Gospel-takes-wing-in-Canary-Islands.html>

(Seville) began operating in 1988, and a fourth stake was created in 1995 in Cadiz. By 1996, four stakes and sixteen districts functioned in Spain.²⁴²²

Most new stakes created in the 1990s and early 2000s were organized from two districts or a district and a part of a preexisting stake. The Church created additional stakes in Hospitalet (1997), Elche (1997), Madrid East (1999), Valencia (2003), and Granada (2004). As new stakes were organized, the number of districts declined dramatically from sixteen in 2000 to six in 2010. Cities or islands that once had districts headquartered in them that were consolidated during this period and do not presently have their own stakes or districts include Alcoy, Asturias, Badajoz, Fuerteventura, Lleida, Malaga, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Talavera, and Zaragoza. Many of these former districts had fewer than four branches, became part of a newly created stake, or became part of a preexisting stake. For the first time in many years, the Vitoria Spain Stake was created from a single district in 2009, becoming the first stake to function in northern Spain. In September 2010, there were ten stakes and six districts in Spain. In 2012, three new stakes were organized in Cartagena, Lléida, and Madrid Central.

In 1989, there were 125 congregations, increasing to 144 in 1991. The number of congregations remained stagnant for the rest of the 1990s. The total number of LDS congregations declined over the past decade from 144 in 2000 to 133 in 2009 due to the consolidation of branches and few new congregations created. In 2000, there were forty wards and 104 branches and in 2005 there were fifty-six wards and eighty-six branches. The Canary Islands and extreme southern Spain experienced the greatest reduction in the number of congregations during this period. The island of Gran Canaria had eight branches in 2001 and in 2010 had only three branches. The island of Tenerife had six branches in 2001 and in 2010 had four. In southern Spain, several branches were discontinued in the Gibraltar area, including both branches in Ceuta and Melilla.

Activity and Retention

Over 600 priesthood leaders nationwide met for a special regional conference in 1992. Over 4,200 attended the general session of the regional conference.²⁴²³ Nearly 10,000 members attended the 10 dedicatory sessions for the Madrid Spain Temple in 1999.²⁴²⁴ In 2004, almost 8,000 from Spain and Portugal attended a special meeting with President Hinckley in Madrid.²⁴²⁵ During the past decade, the average number of members per congregation increased over 50% from 220 in 2000 to 344 in 2009 due to low congregational growth rates. Enrollment was 1,661 in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year. Wards appear to have fewer than one hundred active members on average and branches appear to have around fifty active members. Total active membership is estimated between 10,000 and 12,000, or 22%–26% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Spanish, Catalan, Arabic, English.

All LDS scriptures are available in Spanish, including an LDS edition of the Bible complete with full LDS footnotes, Bible dictionary, and topical guide. All LDS scriptures and many church materials are translated into Arabic. All LDS scriptures and *The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony* are available in Catalan. Most languages spoken by Eastern European immigrants have all LDS scriptures translated with a wide selection of church materials available. Church materials translated into Basque include *Gospel Fundamentals*, *The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony*, hymns and children's songs, and the sacrament prayers.

²⁴²² Hart, John L. "Ground broken for temple in Madrid," LDS Church News, 22 June 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28191/Ground-broken-for-temple-in-Madrid.html>

²⁴²³ "Church leaders make courtesy visit to Spain's king and queen," LDS Church News, 28 March 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22481/Church-leaders-make-courtesy-visit-to-Spains-king-and-queen.html>

²⁴²⁴ Avant, Gerry. "Cover Story: Temple dedication in Madrid, Spain," LDS Church News, 27 March 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35433/Cover-Story-Temple-dedicated-in-Madrid-Spain.html>

²⁴²⁵ "Marvelous gathering of members in Madrid," LDS Church News, 5 June 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45671/Marvelous-gathering-of-members-in-Madrid.html>

Meetinghouses

There are approximately eighty LDS meetinghouses in Spain. Most congregations meet in church-built meetinghouses or renovated buildings owned by the Church. Some small congregations meet in rented spaces.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church has completed few humanitarian or development projects due to the high levels of economic prosperity in recent decades. Blood donation efforts by members in 1997 helped Spain become self-sufficient in its blood supplies.²⁴²⁶ In 1998, Relief Society members in the Elche Spain Stake produced 450 handmade dolls for needy children.²⁴²⁷

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church is registered with the government and faces no restrictions regarding missionary work and assembly. The government has not granted specific privileges entitled to other religious groups to the LDS Church, such as tax benefits. Latter-day Saints have positive relations with the government and report few instances of persecution and intolerance.

Cultural Issues

The declining influence of the Catholic Church on society and religion in Spain has provided positive and negative effects for the LDS Church. The Catholic Church has provided many Spaniards with a foundation of belief that Latter-day Saints can build upon. However, lower attendance levels in religious affairs and nominal membership in the LDS Church appear partially affected by Spanish society's attitude and practices surrounding one's relationship with religion. Secularism has quickly occupied the void left by the declining influence of Catholicism. High cigarette and alcohol use create a challenging environment for missionaries to navigate, as many suffer from addictions to these substances. Failure to completely abstain from harmful substances and practices not condoned by the Church may result in lower convert retention and member activity. Widespread infidelity with cultural practices of maintaining mistresses also presents challenges, and has led to the excommunication or inactivity of many members, including some priesthood holders.

National Outreach

Approximately 52% of the national population resides in cities with mission outreach centers, including nearly all cities with over 100,000 inhabitants. With the exception of Ceuta and Melilla, all administrative divisions in Spain have multiple mission outreach centers. A sizeable percentage of the unreached population resides in urban areas. Of the more than 330 cities with between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitants, which constitute 33% of the national population, only around sixty have mission outreach centers.

Many of the unreached medium-sized Spanish cities can have mission outreach centers established with careful planning and proper vision. Missionaries serving in the Spain Barcelona Mission reported visiting remote cities with members and investigators and helping prepare for the establishment of congregations in these locations, such as Vic. Efforts by full-time missionaries and local leaders can help reduce the number

²⁴²⁶ "From around the World," LDS Church News, 27 December 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29110/From-around-the-World.html>

²⁴²⁷ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 21 February 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31158/From-around-the-world.html>

of unreached medium-sized cities through holding cottage meetings, forming groups or dependent branches, and through service activities like Helping Hands.

Prospects for Internet-based mission outreach appear favorable. In 1997, Spain ranked among the fifteen nations with the most visitors to the Church's website.²⁴²⁸ The Church operates a country website for Spain at <http://www.sud.org.es>. The site contains online videos on the Church, explains LDS doctrines, practices, and history, and provides local church news and contact information for missionaries. Use of the site in proselytism initiatives by both members and missionaries may facilitate greater outreach throughout Spain, especially among those not prepared for lessons from the full-time missionaries but have some interest.

Past historical events have provided media exposure for the Church, namely the dedication of the temple in Madrid. The Madrid Spain Temple open house was covered by every major media outlet.²⁴²⁹ Public relations and media outreach will be important for future proselytism.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Mission policies promoting the rushed baptism of investigators who have not developed habits of regular church attendance habits is one source of low member activity rates in Spain today. However, missionaries frequently report that many less actives state they stop attending church because they were offended by another member of the Church. Missionaries report that a large number of the inactive members in the Canary Islands reported that they stopped attending church because they were offended, although deeper issues of testimony or behaviors contrary to church teachings often underlie such claims. Overall, inactive members appear to have little recollection of church doctrines and practices, as many were baptized with limited understanding and without firm gospel habits. This lack of a solid foundation of testimony and understanding among many inactives has limited the success of reactivation efforts. The transient nature of many converts who are not native Spaniards further complicates efforts to address activity issues. Improvements in member activity have occurred in several areas of Spain over the past decade, as evidenced by the creation of several new stakes, which require a specified number of active members and tithe-paying priesthood holders to function. Emphasizing institute, seminary, and youth outreach programs appears to be a meaningful means of reducing past poor convert retention and improving member activity rates.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Assimilating Latin Americans and Spaniards into the same congregations presents the most widespread ethnic integration issue. Disparities in the demographics of Latter-day Saint congregations and the general population have come as a result of greater receptivity of Latin Americans and the strength of the Church in Latin American countries, as some members have immigrated to Spain from Latin America. Missionaries reported in 2010 that the Almeria Ward was approximately a third Ecuadoran, a third Argentine, and a third Spaniard. Few challenges integrating these groups into the same congregations have been reported due to common language and many cultural similarities between Spain and Latin America. Some congregations with an over-represented Latin American presence may experience challenges baptizing and keeping active a Spaniard minority. Integrating Africans and non-Spanish speakers into congregations may be the greatest ethnic integration issue. Missionaries have attempted to proselyte Romanians but report resistance and low receptivity to their message. Conflict between native Spanish ethnic groups such as Basques and Catalans appears minimal due to the concentration of these ethnic groups in the respective areas of the country.

²⁴²⁸ "Internet users find LDS web site," LDS Church News, 1 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29302/Internet-users-find-LDS-web-site.html>

²⁴²⁹ Harmon, Carolee L. "Sacred edifice to 'change lives' of many in Spain," LDS Church News, 6 March 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35314/Sacred-edifice-to-change-lives-of-many-in-Spain.html>

Language Issues

As the second most spoken language by LDS members worldwide, Spanish has an ample supply of church materials and scriptures. The Church has a limited number of materials in other indigenous languages, such as Catalan and Basque, and is unlikely to translate additional materials in either of these languages or languages currently without church materials due to the widespread use of Spanish throughout the country and the low demand for church material translations in these languages.

Missionary Service

Spain remains reliant on other nations to staff its full-time missionary force. By 1975, there were 130 full-time missionaries serving in Spain. A missionary training center has operated in Spain since the 1990s but has generally trained few missionaries. In the mid-2000s, there were 800 missionaries serving in Spain, but by late 2010 there were fewer than 300 due to reductions in the assigned missionary complement with the contraction of the world LDS missionary force. The missionary training center had just fifteen missionaries in September 2010. Missionary preparation classes offered through stakes, districts, or institutes may help increase the number of Spaniards serving full-time missions. Greater emphasis is also needed on preparing converts for baptism and helping to establish firm gospel habits so that they can become active members who go on to serve in the church, participate in member-missionary work, and serve full-time missions when possible.

Leadership

All congregations appear to be led by local members, whether Latin American immigrants or native Spaniards. Church Education System (CES) employees frequently serve in leadership positions, and most stake presidencies have at least one CES employee, which may indicate an inadequate supply of local male leadership. Several Spanish members have served as national or international church leaders. Boanerges Rubalcava from Cornellà was called as a regional representative in 1990.²⁴³⁰ In 1994, Faustino Lopez R. from Madrid was called to preside over the Spain Malaga Mission.²⁴³¹ Francisco Jose Vinas from Villalba was called as a regional representative in 1995²⁴³² and later that year as an area authority.²⁴³³ Elder Francisco Vinas was called to the Second Quorum of the Seventy in 1996²⁴³⁴ and to the First Quorum of the Seventy in 1998.²⁴³⁵ In 1997, Francisco I. Gimenez from Barcelona was called as a mission president²⁴³⁶ over the Colombia Bogota South Mission.²⁴³⁷ In 2003, Francisco Gimenez was called as an Area Authority Seventy.²⁴³⁸ In 2008, Faustino Lopez from Madrid

²⁴³⁰ "New regional representative: Boanerges Rubalcava," LDS Church News, 20 October 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19725/New-regional-representative—Boanerges-Rubalcava.html>

²⁴³¹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 19 November 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25323/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁴³² "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 25 February 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26014/New-regional-representatives.html>

²⁴³³ "Church names area authorities," LDS Church News, 5 August 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26627/Church-names-area-authorities.html>

²⁴³⁴ "The Second Quorum of the Seventy: 12 sustained to new Seventy callings," LDS Church News, 13 April 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27474/The-Second-Quorum-of-the-Seventy—12-sustained-to-new-Seventy-callings.html>

²⁴³⁵ "Three sustained, quorum total now reaches 54," LDS Church News, 11 April 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31510/Three-sustained-quorum-total-now-reaches-54.html>

²⁴³⁶ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 1 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29080/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁴³⁷ "New and Returning Mission Presidents: 1997," LDS Church News, 15 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29771/New-and-Returning-Mission-Presidents-1997.html>

²⁴³⁸ "Leaders called; 5 new General Authorities," LDS Church News, 12 April 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43588/Leaders-called-5-new-General-Authorities.html>

was called as an Area Authority Seventy.²⁴³⁹ Remaining districts appear unable to become stakes, not primarily from a lack of active priesthood holders, but from inadequate active general membership.

Temple

The Madrid Spain Temple was announced in 1993, and the groundbreaking occurred in 1996. Prior to the completion of the temple, the closest temples were in Switzerland and Germany. The Church began looking for a temple site in Spain as early as 1992.²⁴⁴⁰ The Madrid Spain Temple was dedicated in 1999 and is part of a church complex also containing temple patron housing, a distribution center, the Spain Missionary Training Center, and a stake center.²⁴⁴¹ Endowment sessions are held hourly Tuesday through Saturday. In addition to being located in the city with the most Latter-day Saints in Spain, the Madrid Spain Temple is centrally located geographically, which allows for good access for members residing in most areas. Prospects of additional temples in Spain appear unlikely for the medium-term future.

Comparative Growth

Spain has the largest Latter-day Saint population in continental Europe despite an official Church presence of just over forty years. Most Western European nations have had a church presence since the mid-nineteenth century and today have few members, partially as a result of heavy emigration of Latter-day Saints until the twentieth century and lower receptivity to LDS missionaries. The only European nations with a higher percentage of Latter-day Saints are the United Kingdom and Portugal. Spain currently exhibits one of the most rapid annual membership growth rates in Western Europe, which has been sustained for several decades. Continued rapid membership growth notwithstanding, reduction in the full-time missionary force is also impressive due to the size of current church membership, as more rapid membership growth rates tend to occur in countries with small memberships. The Madrid Spain Temple appears to be one of the most well utilized in Europe, as manifest by endowment sessions scheduled hourly. However, membership and congregational growth remain outpaced by most Latin American countries, where only a few cities with over 20,000 inhabitants have no mission outreach center as opposed to the hundreds in Spain.

Other missionary-oriented Christian groups tend to experience moderate to strong church growth rates. Seventh Day Adventists have experienced robust membership and congregational growth over the past decade as membership has doubled and the number of congregations has increased by 50%. Latter-day Saints and Adventists have comparably sized active church memberships and national outreach. Jehovah's Witnesses are among the most successful groups and maintain as many congregations in Spain as Latter-day Saints operate in all of Europe. However, recent membership growth rates for Witnesses have slowed.

Future Prospects

The Church has significantly reduced its outreach in Spain since the mid-2000s as indicated by the closure of two of the prior five missions, the consolidation of over a dozen branches, and the reduction of the full-time missionary force to less than half its prior level. Mission leadership reported in 2010 that in addition to limited numbers of full-time missionaries and expanding opportunities for missionary work worldwide, the growth in the number of stakes and reduction in the number of districts in Spain requires less administrative work from mission presidents and full-time missionaries. Mission leadership further stated in 2010 that the consolidation

²⁴³⁹ "38 Area Seventies called," LDS Church News, 12 April 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51857/38-Area-Seventies-called.html>

²⁴⁴⁰ Hart, John L. "Ground broken for temple in Madrid," LDS Church News, 22 June 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28191/Ground-broken-for-temple-in-Madrid.html>

²⁴⁴¹ "Facts about Madrid Spain Temple," LDS Church News, 27 March 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35420/Facts-about-Madrid-Spain-Temple.html>

of missions was an indicator of strength in the local membership of Spain as they depend less on outsourced missionary resources primarily from North America to function and have demonstrated improvements in member-missionary activity. Time will tell whether Spanish membership can improve convert retention rates, reverse the trend of congregation consolidations, and become less reliant on North Americans to staff its full-time missions. With fewer full-time missionaries, low member activity rates, and small LDS family sizes, the Church will face significant challenges in expanding national outreach. No districts appear likely to become stakes in the near term future. Greater breakthroughs with the native Spaniard population and improved member activity rates are needed to sustain long-term growth.

SWEDEN

Geography

AREA: 450,295 square km. Located in Scandinavia north of Denmark, Sweden borders Finland, Norway, and the Baltic Sea. Two major islands in the Baltic Sea are under Swedish administration: Gotland and Oland. Northern Sweden reaches past the Arctic Circle, where subarctic climatic conditions occur. Temperate climate occurs in most areas, characterized by cloudy, cold winters and mild summers. Plains constitute most of the terrain with the exception of some mountains in the west. Ice floes are a natural hazard. Environmental issues include acid rain and sea pollution. Sweden is divided into twenty-one administrative counties.

Peoples

Swedes: 82%
Finns: 5%
Other: 13%

Swedes populate all areas of Sweden. Finns are concentrated in central areas. Other ethnic groups consist primarily of immigrants from Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, primarily from Iraq, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Somalia, Iran, Norway, Denmark, and Poland.²⁴⁴²

Population: 9,103,788 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.168% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.67 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 78.86 male, 83.63 female (2012)

Languages: Swedish (90%), Finnish (3%), Serbian (1%), other (6%). Other languages principally consist of immigrant languages from the Middle East and Eastern Europe. There are few speakers of Romani and Sami dialects. Swedish is the official language and the only language with over one million speakers (8.1 million).

Literacy: 99% (2003)

History

The Swedes were known as merchant seafarers in the seventh and eighth centuries and were eventually grouped with other Nordic peoples as Vikings who raided and plundered regions as far as the Caspian Sea. Many religious sites important to Norse mythology and of significant religious importance such as Uppsala are located in Sweden. Christianity spread to Sweden around 1000 AD and supplanted Norse mythology and indigenous religions. Sweden became a Christian kingdom that included Finland by the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In 1397, all Nordic lands were unified as the Kalmar Union under Queen Margaret of Denmark, but the union dissolved in the fourteenth century as a result of ethnic rivalries. Gustav Vasa facilitated the establishment of a Swedish state in the sixteenth century and separated ties with the Catholic Church, thereby joining the Reformation. Sweden won wars between Poland, Denmark, and Russia in the seventeenth century, participated in the Thirty Years War, and emerged as a European power. By the mid-seventeenth century, Sweden

²⁴⁴² "Background Note: Sweden," Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 8 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2880.htm>

controlled Finland, the St. Petersburg area of modern-day Russia, some areas of northern Germany, Estonia, and Latvia. The Napoleonic wars weakened Sweden's power and resulted in the loss of Finland to Russia in 1809. Sweden and Norway maintained a dual monarchy from the early nineteenth century until 1905 when Norway became independent. As many as one million Swedes immigrated to the United States between 1850 and 1890 due to changing social and economic conditions brought upon by the industrial revolution. Sweden maintained neutrality during both world wars and experienced strong economic growth and development during the twentieth century. Sweden joined the European Union in 1995. Today Sweden is known for its resilient economy and extensive social welfare system.²⁴⁴³

Culture

The Christianization of Sweden in the Middle Ages marked a significant cultural turning point for the Swedish population, as traditional Norse and Viking mythology and religion were supplanted by Catholicism. The Reformation brought the Lutheran Church to Sweden, which remains the primary religious influence on culture today. During the twentieth century, liberalism and secularism took hold as religious activity rates declined, atheism spread, and positive social attitudes evolved towards homosexuality and cohabitation. Sweden has generated many talented authors, artists, musicians, actors, movie directors, and athletes during the past two centuries who have been regionally and internationally acclaimed. Traditional cuisine is comparable to other Scandinavian countries and relies heavily upon fish, meat, and potatoes.²⁴⁴⁴ Alcohol and cigarette consumption rates rank slightly below world average.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$40,600 (2011) [84.4% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.904

Corruption Index: 9.3 (2011)

With one of the world's most advanced, stable economies, Sweden has prospered for decades as a result of a strong market-oriented government policies, neutrality and peace during both World Wars, a skilled labor force, and medium-sized population. The global financial crisis drove the economy into recession primarily due to declining international demand for Swedish products. Natural resources include iron ore, metallic minerals, precious minerals, lumber, and hydropower. Services employ 71% of the labor force and generate 73% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 28% of the labor force and generates 25% of the GDP. Iron and steel, precision equipment, wood, paper, food processing, and motor vehicles are major industries. Agriculture constitutes less than 2% of the GDP and labor force. Common agricultural products include barley, wheat, sugar beets, meat, and milk. Primary trade partners include Germany, Norway, and Denmark. Sweden has one of the lowest rates of perceived corruption worldwide and ranks among the five least corruption countries according to Transparency International.²⁴⁴⁵

Faiths

Christian: 83%

Muslim: 5%

Other: 12%

²⁴⁴³ "Background Note: Sweden," Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 8 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2880.htm>

²⁴⁴⁴ "Sweden," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 5 January 2011. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sweden>

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Church of Sweden 6,664,000

Catholic 181,481

Jehovah's Witnesses 22,428 323

Latter-day Saints 9,404 40

Seventh Day Adventists 2,766 37

Religion

Religion is highly correlated to ethnicity. The Church of Sweden (Lutheran) reports that 71.3% of Swedish citizens are members but has experienced declining membership in recent years. In 2009, nearly 73,400 members left the Church primarily to evade membership tax (usually less than 1% of income). Disaffiliated members may continue to attend services. Finns are predominantly Lutheran. Other Protestant denominations account for 4.4% of the population. Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Latter-day Saints, and the Missionary Church account for less than 5% of the population. Orthodox Christians are immigrants from East and Southeast Europe and the Middle East. Christian churches are overall poorly attended with the exception of major church festivals and religious ceremonies, such as weddings and funerals. Muslims constitute approximately 5% of the population and consist primarily of immigrants from Southeast Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. There are approximately 20,000 Jews, half of whom are estimated to be practicing.²⁴⁴⁶

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. Separation of church and state occurred in 2000. Traditional Christian holidays are recognized as national holidays. Recognized religious groups may receive government financial support, but registration with the government is not required. Government aid was disseminated among twenty-two religious groups in the late 2000s. Religious education is required in public schools and studies all major religious traditions. Sweden has a special hate crime police unit and laws banning hateful speech relating to religious discrimination. There have been some reports of societal abuse of religious freedom targeting Jews and Muslims.²⁴⁴⁷

Largest Cities

Urban: 85%

Stockholm, Göteborg, Malmö, Uppsala, Linköping, Västerås, Örebro, Norrköping, Helsingborg, Jönköping, Umeå, Lund, Borås.

All thirteen cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. Thirty-two percent (32%) of the national population resides in the thirteen largest cities.

LDS History

Organized in 1850, the Scandinavian Mission administered Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. The first known Latter-day Saint Swedes joined the Church in Denmark in 1850. The first Swedish members to emigrate in Utah left Scandinavia in 1852. In 1853, the first LDS branches in Sweden were organized in Skåne County.

²⁴⁴⁶ "Sweden," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148988.htm>

²⁴⁴⁷ "Sweden," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148988.htm>

Police oppression of the Church occurred in the mid-1850s and softened in 1855. The Scandinavian Mission baptized 623 converts in 1857. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the 9,854 Latter-day Saint converts baptized in the Scandinavian Mission during the 1850s immigrated to Utah, and half of the 12,887 converts baptized in the 1860s also emigrated. In 1905, the Church organized the Swedish Mission, which also administered Finland and Russia. The Church published a Swedish hymnbook in 1910 with 209 hymns. Intense persecution of the LDS Church began in 1911 as the government encouraged counter-proselytism, the deportation of LDS leaders, and strong action against local members engaged in proselytism. Missionaries did not proselyte again until 1915 when the government improved its position toward the Church. In 1916, there were less than twenty full-time missionaries in Sweden who distributed 169,000 tracts, visited 190,000 homes, held 10,000 missionary lessons, and baptized eighty-three converts. Swedish authorities refused visas for LDS missionaries from 1920 until 1924. Twenty thousand, four hundred, and seventy-four copies of the Swedish translation of the Book of Mormon were sold in 1965.²⁴⁴⁸ President Thomas S. Monson dedicated Sweden for missionary work in 1977 after learning that the whole of Scandinavia was dedicated for missionary work in Denmark in 1850.²⁴⁴⁹ Seminary and institute began in the mid-1970s. Sweden issued a special postage stamp in celebration of the dedication of the Stockholm Sweden Temple in 1985.²⁴⁵⁰

In 1991, Sweden pertained to the Europe North Area.²⁴⁵¹ President Thomas S. Monson, who has Swedish ancestry, visited Sweden in 1995 to create a stake. During his visit, President Monson met with the king and queen of Sweden.²⁴⁵² In 2000, the Europe Central Area began administering Sweden.²⁴⁵³ In 2003, the Church participated in a government-held meeting supporting traditional family values.²⁴⁵⁴ That same year, Latter-day Saint Thea Halleberg won the Victor Ornberg prize for her contribution to collecting and publishing demographic information regarding Lapp and settler families in Sorsele.²⁴⁵⁵ In 2005, LDS apostle Elder L. Tom Perry spoke live on Radio Jnkping concerning LDS Church administration, the procedure for calling additional leaders, and relief efforts for the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami. The broadcast reached some 300,000 listeners.²⁴⁵⁶ In 2006, the Göteborg Sweden Stake center was damaged by fire.²⁴⁵⁷

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 9,404 (2012)

There were 106 Swedes in the Scandinavian Mission in 1853, increasing to 726 in 1857.²⁴⁵⁸ 19,417 Swedes joined the Church between 1850 and 1930; 8,545 of whom immigrated to Utah.²⁴⁵⁹ In 1975, there were

²⁴⁴⁸ "Highlights of the Church in Scandinavia," *Ensign*, July 1974, 48.

²⁴⁴⁹ Avant, Gerry. "Royal couple visits at Swedish temple with Pres. Monson," *LDS Church News*, 2 September 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26570/Royal-couple-visits-at-Swedish-temple-with-Pres-Monson.html>

²⁴⁵⁰ Kimball, Stanley B. "'Mormon' stamps grow in number," *LDS Church News*, 15 January 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25089/Mormon-stamps-grow-in-number.html>

²⁴⁵¹ "New areas created in Asia, Europe," *LDS Church News*, 7 September 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21578/New-areas-created-in-Asia-Europe.html>

²⁴⁵² Avant, Gerry. "'Favorite son, daughter' come 'home' to Sweden," *LDS Church News*, 26 August 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26289/Favorite-son-daughter-come-home-to-Sweden.html>

²⁴⁵³ Lloyd, Scott. "European continent realigned into three new areas," *LDS Church News*, 16 September 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38475/European-continent--realigned-into-three-new-areas.html>

²⁴⁵⁴ Karlfeldt, Birgitta. "Family values," *LDS Church News*, 15 March 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43358/Family-values.html>

²⁴⁵⁵ Karlfeldt, Birgitta. "Lapp researcher wins Swedish prize," *LDS Church News*, 27 September 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44377/Lapp-researcher-wins-Swedish-prize.html>

²⁴⁵⁶ "Media interviews apostle," *LDS Church News*, 15 January 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46730/Media-interview-apostle.html>

²⁴⁵⁷ "Swedish stake center is damaged by fire," *LDS Church News*, 7 January 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48375/Swedish-stake-center-is-damaged-by-fire.html>

²⁴⁵⁸ "Highlights of the Church in Scandinavia," *Ensign*, July 1974, 48.

²⁴⁵⁹ Avant, Gerry. "In Sweden, 'new day' brings bright future," *LDS Church News*, 21 October 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26570/In-Sweden-new-day-brings-bright-future.html>

approximately 5,500 Latter-day Saints in Sweden. Membership reached 6,000 in the late 1970s, 7,000 in the mid-1980s, and 8,000 in 1991. By year-end 2000, there were 8,595 members.

Membership grew slowly in the 2000s, totaling 8,678 in 2002, 8,819 in 2004, 8,797 in 2006, and 8,966 in 2008. A decline in LDS membership occurred in 2006. Annual membership growth rates ranged from -0.7% to 1.5% during the 2000s. LDS membership generally increases by fifty to one hundred members annually. In 2009, one in 998 was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 24 Branches: 16 (April 2013)

In 1860, there were thirty-six branches and five districts in the Scandinavia Mission. There were seven districts in the Swedish Mission by 1934.²⁴⁶⁰ The Church created the first stake in 1975 in Stockholm. Additional stakes were organized in Göteborg (1977), Stockholm South (1995), and Malmö (1996). In addition to the four stakes operating in early 2011, there was one district functioning in Umeå (1970) for branches in northern Sweden.

Thirty-nine congregations operated in 1990, including twelve wards. The number of congregations increased during the 1990s to forty-eight in 1993 and to a high of fifty-two in 1995 (14 wards, 38 branches). Starting in the late 1990s, congregation consolidations decreased the number of LDS units to fifty-one in 2000, forty-eight in 2001, forty-five in 2003, forty-four in 2005, forty-two in 2007, forty-one in 2008, and forty in 2010. The number of wards dropped by one from twenty-five in 2000 to twenty-four in 2001. Ten branches were consolidated in the 2000s. Units discontinued after 2001 include the Avesta, Hässleholm, Kalmar, Märsta, Nynäshamn, Östersund, Sollefteå, Stenungsund Branches, and the Enskede (YSA), Limnhamn, and Tyresö Wards. Two new congregations were created in the 2000s, the Hägersten and Västerhaninge 2nd Wards.

Activity and Retention

Sweden possesses modest rates of LDS member activity. Large meetings and conferences have been moderately attended by active Latter-day Saints. Four thousand members from throughout Scandinavia attended an area conference held in Stockholm in 1974.²⁴⁶¹ One thousand three hundred Swedish Latter-day Saints attended a special meeting with President Monson in 1995 following the creation of the Stockholm Sweden South Stake.²⁴⁶² A local newspaper reported that there were 5,000 registered Latter-day Saints in 2005.²⁴⁶³ Three hundred thirty-one were enrolled in seminary and institute during the 2008–2009 school year.

The average number of members per congregation increased from 169 in 2000 to 222 in 2009. Member activity varies widely by congregation. The Linköping Branch in the Stockholm Sweden South Stake had twenty-four active members and approximately 170 less active or inactive members in late 2010. Approximately thirty members were active in the Jakobsberg Ward, located in northwestern Stockholm, in early 2010. Most branches appear to have fifty or fewer active members whereas most wards have between fifty and one hundred active members. Nationwide active membership is estimated at 2,600, or 30% of total membership.

[com/articles/26266/In-Sweden-new-day-brings-bright-future.html](http://www.lds.org/articles/26266/In-Sweden-new-day-brings-bright-future.html)

²⁴⁶⁰ "Highlights of the Church in Scandinavia," *Ensign*, July 1974, 48.

²⁴⁶¹ "This week in Church history," *LDS Church News*, 21 August 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/36236/This-week-in-Church-history.html>

²⁴⁶² Avant, Gerry. "'Favorite son, daughter' come 'home' to Sweden," *LDS Church News*, 26 August 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26289/Favorite-son-daughter-come-home-to-Sweden.html>

²⁴⁶³ "Media interviews apostle," *LDS Church News*, 15 January 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46730/Media-interview-apostle.html>

Finding

In recent years, Swedish LDS leaders have struggled to tailor missionary approaches to Swedes. In 2003, the Jonkoping Ward responded to poor receptivity to the Church and misinformation about Latter-day Saints by emphasizing to local members the need to invite others to learn about or attend the Church and sacrifice their time and effort into member-missionary work activity. Methods used by the ward to find receptive individuals and proselyte included holding open houses, firesides, concerts, and service projects; advertising in local newspapers; sending media press releases; and distributing flyers.²⁴⁶⁴ In 2010, full-time missionaries taught English and Swedish language classes in the Stockholm area for service and to find investigators.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Swedish, Finnish, Serbian, Greek, Danish, Farsi, Spanish, Turkish, Arabic, Polish.

All LDS scriptures and a wide selection of church materials are translated into Swedish, Finnish, Greek, Danish, Spanish, Arabic, and Polish. Only the Book of Mormon is available in Serbian and Turkish. The Church has translated several unit, temple, priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, young women, primary, missionary, church proclamations, and family history materials in Serbian and Turkish. Book of Mormon selections and a limited number of church materials are translated into Farsi. Somali language materials are limited to *The Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith* and *Gospel Principles*.

Meetinghouses

The first LDS meetinghouse completed in the twentieth century was in Gubbangen in 1961.²⁴⁶⁵ There were approximately thirty-seven LDS meetinghouses in early 2011, nearly all of which were built by the Church.

Humanitarian and Development Work

In 1940, Swedish Latter-day Saints sent food and clothing to members in German-occupied Scandinavian countries.²⁴⁶⁶ Economic prosperity and high standards of living have resulted in little need for LDS-sponsored humanitarian and development work.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

For the past several decades, the LDS Church has benefited from full religious freedom in Sweden to proselyte, assemble, and worship. Foreign missionaries readily obtain visas and report no major challenges with government or civic authorities.

Cultural Issues

Secularism, liberal social views clashing with scriptural morality, and nominal Christianity each have created major obstacles for Latter-day Saints to address regarding the finding, teaching, and retention of new converts. These social issues have contributed to mediocre member activity levels, as those without strong testimonies and those who are not socially well-integrated to LDS congregations often become inactive. Those who

²⁴⁶⁴ Hagman, Eivor. "Sharing inspires interest," LDS Church News, 3 May 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43685/Sharing-inspires-interest.html>

²⁴⁶⁵ "Highlights of the Church in Scandinavia," *Ensign*, July 1974, 48.

²⁴⁶⁶ "Highlights of the Church in Scandinavia," *Ensign*, July 1974, 48.

engaged in extramarital relationships or cohabitation must marry or end these relations prior to baptism. The Church has responded to the challenging of this environment by emphasizing the role local members play in missionary work by finding, teaching, and fellowshipping investigators, new converts, and less active members. Many immigrant groups have been more receptive than Swedes to LDS mission outreach, but present differing challenges, such as strong ethno-religious ties and difficulty assimilating into some Swede-majority LDS congregations. High taxes and cost of living have been economic challenges for members to live Church teachings. Transportation expenses can dissuade some members from attending meetings regularly.²⁴⁶⁷ Alcohol and cigarette consumption rates are lower than most Western European countries, favoring proselytism.

National Outreach

Approximately 76% of the national population resides in cities with an LDS presence or in cities within or nearby metropolitan areas with an LDS congregation. Nineteen of Sweden's twenty-one administrative counties have an LDS congregation. Ten counties have only one LDS congregation. The two unreached counties—Jämtlands and Kalmar—received mission outreach at the beginning of the 2000s, and today, their inhabitants account for 4% of the Swedish population. Of the 107 cities with populations between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitants, twenty-three have their own LDS congregations and constitute 33% of the national population, whereas seventeen are within metropolitan areas of the largest Swedish cities and constitute 9% of the national population. The seventeen cities within or nearby metropolitan areas receive some mission outreach from nearby suburbs with LDS congregations. Reaching cities between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitants is of major importance towards performing LDS mission outreach in Sweden, as half the national population resides in these cities. Twenty-four percent (24%) of the population resides in unreached cities over 20,000 inhabitants. Three percent (3%) of the Swedish population lives in cities that once had LDS congregations. With 20,400 inhabitants, Sollefteå was the least populated city to have ever had an LDS congregation in recent years. In early 2011, the least populated city with an LDS presence was Katrineholm (32,300 inhabitants).

The Church has yet to reverse the trend of congregation consolidations that commenced in the late 1990s in order to improve national outreach potential. Active and inactive members likely reside in most of the unreached cities with over 20,000 inhabitants and provide favorable opportunities to establish new mission outreach centers in these locations. Holding cottage meetings and organizing dependent branches or groups in these areas provides flexibility in performing mission outreach in lesser-reached and unreached areas by the Church. Creating non-Swedish-speaking congregations may facilitate greater outreach among immigrant groups in the largest cities. Additional mission outreach centers are also needed for native Swedes in the most populous cities, as many reside far from meetinghouses. Sweden's third largest city of Malmö had only one LDS congregation in early 2011.

Sweden had the sixth most visitors to the Church's website in 1997²⁴⁶⁸ and was among the first eight countries to have a country-specific LDS website.²⁴⁶⁹ The Church continues to maintain a website for Sweden in Swedish at <http://www.jesukristikyrka.se/>. The Internet site provides information on LDS beliefs, meeting-house locations, links to other church websites, local news, and missionary visits. High rates of Internet usage among the Swedish population and referring interested individuals to the site by local members and missionaries may increase national outreach over time.

²⁴⁶⁷ "The Saints in Scandinavia," *Ensign*, July 1974, 28.

²⁴⁶⁸ "Internet users find LDS web site," *LDS Church News*, 1 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29302/Internet-users-find-LDS-web-site.html>

²⁴⁶⁹ "Church establishing country-specific Web sites," *LDS Church News*, 15 November 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44674/Church-establishing-country-specific-Web-sites.html>

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Member activity and convert retention rates have been mediocre, and the average number of members per congregation remains low, indicating that the number of active members in most congregations is small. Full-time missionaries regularly teach and find inactive members but report little success in sustainable reactivation. Many less active members are chronically less active and never develop regular church attendance habits. Small numbers of active members continue to threaten the closing of additional congregations. Cultural attitudes towards religion and reliance on full-time missionaries in smaller congregations appear the primary contributors to low member activity rates in some areas. Young single adult outreach centered on institute and church attendance appears to be the most favorable means of addressing current inactivity issues.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

There have been few ethnic integration issues reported by full-time missionaries. Language barriers appear to be the greater challenge for immigrant investigators and converts to attend LDS congregations.

Language Issues

Nearly the entire population has LDS materials available in their native language. Languages without current translations of LDS materials do not appear likely to have materials translated in the near future. Non-Swedish-speaking congregations may be organized in the coming years to meet the needs of immigrant groups, such as Serbs, Turks, Africans, and Iranians, although ongoing assimilation of such groups into Swedish society may decrease the need for language-specific outreach.

Missionary Service

The full-time missionary force remains staffed primarily by foreign missionaries. There were 165 missionaries serving in Sweden in 1950.²⁴⁷⁰ In 1995, there were sixty-eight full-time missionaries assigned to Sweden.²⁴⁷¹ Local members regularly serve members, but the percentage of youth and young adults that serve missions is low. Swedish LDS missionaries have served throughout Europe, North America, and in some countries in Asia. Greater emphasis on missionary preparation may increase the number of members who serve missions and reduce reliance on international missionary manpower to staff the Sweden Stockholm Mission.

Leadership

Sweden has well-trained LDS leadership that supports four stakes, one district, and a temple despite fewer than 10,000 members. With only a couple of exceptions, all LDS congregations appear to have local leaders. The number of active priesthood holders remains limited and has likely contributed to the consolidation of congregations in recent years. Swedish members have served as mission presidents, regional representatives, area authorities, and general authorities. In 1993, Arne L. Hedberg from Orebro was called as the Sweden Stockholm Mission president,²⁴⁷² and R. Ingvar Olsson from Göteborg was called as a regional representative.²⁴⁷³ In 1994, Bo G. Wennerlund from Stockholm was called as the Stockholm Sweden Temple

²⁴⁷⁰ "Highlights of the Church in Scandinavia," *Ensign*, July 1974, 48.

²⁴⁷¹ Avant, Gerry. "In Sweden, 'new day' brings bright future," *LDS Church News*, 21 October 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26266/In-Sweden-new-day-brings-bright-future.html>

²⁴⁷² "New mission presidents," *LDS Church News*, 1 May 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23684/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁴⁷³ "New regional representatives," *LDS Church News*, 15 May 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23069/New-regional-representatives.html>

president.²⁴⁷⁴ In 2000, Hans H. Mattsson from Haninge was called as an Area Authority Seventy,²⁴⁷⁵ and Arne Lennart Hedberg from Orebro was called as the Stockholm Sweden Temple president.²⁴⁷⁶ In 2006, Bengt Oskar Hoglund from Vasterhaninge was called as the Stockholm Sweden Temple president.²⁴⁷⁷ In 2007, Hans Gunnar Gustav Ljungh from Trollhattan was called as the Copenhagen Denmark Temple president.²⁴⁷⁸ In 2010, R. Ingvar Olsson from Haninge was called as an Area Seventy,²⁴⁷⁹ and Per G. Malm from Jonkoping was called to the Second Quorum of the Seventy.²⁴⁸⁰

Temple

Announced in 1981 and completed in 1985, the Stockholm Sweden Temple administers to members living in central and northern Sweden, whereas the Denmark Copenhagen Temple (announced in 1999 and dedicated in 2004) serves members in southern Sweden. Sweden pertained to the Bern Switzerland Temple district prior to the completion of the temple in Sweden. The Stockholm Sweden Temple district performed between 42,000 and 50,000 endowments a year in the mid-1990s. A guest house operates next to the temple with 120 beds to accommodate members traveling long distances.²⁴⁸¹ Russia and the Baltic states were part of the temple district until the completion of the Helsinki Finland Temple in 2006, and today Latvian members continue to attend the Stockholm Sweden Temple.

Comparative Growth

Sweden was the only Scandinavian country to not experience stagnant membership growth during the 2000s. However, member activity and convert retention rates appeared the lowest in the region, as other nations with half as many Latter-day Saints as Sweden (Denmark, Norway, and Finland) had the same number of members or more enrolled in seminary and institute as Sweden in the late 2000s. Priesthood leadership appears as developed as Denmark and Finland due to the operation of multiple stakes with fewer than 10,000 members. Sweden was the only Scandinavian country to experience a significant decline in the number of LDS congregations operating during the 2000s, as the number of congregations declined by only one in Norway and Finland and by two in Denmark during this period. Sweden ranked among the ten countries that experienced the greatest percentage decline in the number of LDS congregations during the 2000s (–20%).

Missionary-minded Christian groups report membership decline or stagnant to slow growth. Seventh Day Adventists entered Sweden in 1901 and have experienced stagnant membership growth for many years. Adventist membership declined from 3,046 in 1998 to 2,812 in 2009, and the number of churches declined by seven from forty-six to thirty-nine. Adventists generally baptize fifty or fewer converts annually.²⁴⁸² Jehovah's

²⁴⁷⁴ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 9 July 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24774/New-temple-presidents.html>

²⁴⁷⁵ "39 Area Authority Seventies called," LDS Church News, 8 April 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37529/39-Area-Authority-Seventies-called.html>

²⁴⁷⁶ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 30 September 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38537/New-temple-presidents.html>

²⁴⁷⁷ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 29 July 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49258/New-temple-presidents.html>

²⁴⁷⁸ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 4 August 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50907/New-temple-presidents.html>

²⁴⁷⁹ "New Area Seventies," LDS Church News, 24 April 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59238/New-Area-Seventies.html>

²⁴⁸⁰ "New General Authorities called, Primary General Presidency reorganized," LDS Church News, 3 April 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59143/New-General-Authorities-called-Primary-General-Presidency-reorganized.html>

²⁴⁸¹ Avant, Gerry. "Temple in Sweden is as spiritual magnet to grateful members," LDS Church News, 11 November 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26522/Temple-in-Sweden-is-as-spiritual-magnet-to-grateful-members.html>

²⁴⁸² "Swedish Union Conference (1986-Present)," [Adventiststatistics.org](http://www.adventiststatistics.org), retrieved 3 January 2011. http://www.adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldID=U10109

Witnesses and Pentecostals have been the most successful Christian groups in recent years. Jehovah's Witnesses reported 22,418 active members meeting in 325 congregations in 2009. Witnesses baptized over 300 convert in 2009. Slow but steady growth among Witnesses and Evangelicals indicates that church growth is possible in Sweden despite challenging cultural and social conditions.

Future Prospects

The outlook for future LDS Church growth in Sweden is poor over the medium-term due to the continuing trend of congregation consolidations, low member activity rates, few members serving full-time missions, and failure of missions to formulate missionary approaches tailored to the needs and circumstances of the highly secular modern Swedish society. Greater growth will ultimately hinge on the faithfulness of local members in their member-missionary efforts. President Monson stated in 1995: "As I offered the prayer of rededication of Sweden, I emphasized that the future of the Church in Sweden will be maximized when the membership of the Church and the missionaries work hand in hand in meeting and teaching the gospel to others."²⁴⁸³ Emigration remains a challenge for the Church to maintain self-sustainability. President Hinckley stated the following in May 2004 in Denmark: "Thousands upon thousands of Latter-day Saints from Denmark and Sweden left these lands to go to their Zion in the mountains of the West. Great is their posterity. . . . Now we don't emigrate any more. Stay here to build Zion in Denmark, Sweden, and Iceland. Let us be strong. Let us be men and women of great faith. Let us hold on to the truth. Let us do what is right."²⁴⁸⁴

²⁴⁸³ Avant, Gerry. "Royal couple visits at Swedish temple with Pres. Monson," LDS Church News, 2 September 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26570/Royal-couple-visits-at-Swedish-temple-with-Pres-Monson.html>

²⁴⁸⁴ Avant, Gerry. "Influence of Scandinavian saints," LDS Church News, 29 May 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45634/Influence-of-Scandinavian-saints.html>

SWITZERLAND

Geography

AREA: 41,277 square km. Landlocked in Central Europe, Switzerland borders Italy, France, Germany, Austria, and Liechtenstein. The rugged Swiss Alps dominate central, southern, and eastern areas reaching heights over 4,000 meters, whereas plains, plateaus, and the Jura Mountains occupy north and western areas. High diversity in local climate occurs as a result of dramatic elevation changes, but most areas experience temperate climate with cooler conditions in higher elevations. Lake Geneva, Lake Constance, and Lake Maggiore are among the largest natural lakes; the Rhine and the Rhone are the largest rivers. Avalanches, landslides, and flooding are natural hazards. Environmental issues include air pollution, acid rain, water pollution caused by fertilizer use, and loss of biodiversity. Switzerland is divided into twenty-six administrative cantons.

Peoples

German: 65%

French: 18%

Italian: 10%

Romansch: 1%

Other: 6%

Germans constitute the majority in central, southern, northern, and northeastern areas. French reside in the west whereas Italians and Romansch live in the southeast. Other ethnic groups primarily consist of European and African immigrants.

Population: 7,655,628 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.199% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.47 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 78.34 male, 84.16 female (2012)

Languages: German (63.7%), French (20.4%), Italian (6.5%), Serbo-Croatian (1.5%), Albanian (1.3%), Portuguese (1.2%), Spanish (1.1%), English (1%), Romansch (0.5%), other (2.8%). German, French, Italian, and Romansch are the national and official languages. Additional languages commonly spoken include Lombard, Kurdish, and Turkish. Languages with over one million speakers include German (5 million) and French (1.6 million).

Literacy: 99%

History

The Helvetic Celts were the first known inhabitants of present day Switzerland, which was conquered and became a Roman province in the first century BC. Roman rule increased commerce and economic development, continuing until the fourth century AD when Germanic tribes invaded and settled the area. Charlemagne annexed the region at the beginning of the ninth century and for the following four centuries it became part of the Holy Roman Empire. In the late thirteenth century, several ruling families signed a charter, pledging mutual support to keep peace and establishing greater local government autonomy as the Swiss

Confederates. The Swiss Confederates originally consisted of three localities (Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden) that were later called cantons. Additional localities joined the confederates, which expanded to eight by 1388. The Swiss achieved success repealing efforts by the Habsburgs to reclaim administrative rule over the region, and by 1499, the Swiss Confederates were formally independent from the Holy Roman Empire. By 1515, there were thirteen localities, and Swiss mercenaries regularly served in the armies of other nations. The Swiss Confederation maintained stability during the Reformation despite religious conflict between the Catholic French and Protestant Germans. Switzerland maintained neutrality during many European wars in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Napoleon invaded and established a centrally governed state in the late eighteenth century. The original Swiss form of government was reestablished in 1815 at the Congress of Vienna that also declared Switzerland's permanent neutrality. The constitution was established in 1848, and in 1874, the constitution was amended to defer defense, trade, and legal responsibilities to the federal government but retained most aspects of cantonal autonomy. Switzerland remained neutral during both World Wars and uninvolved in either conflict. In 1960, Switzerland helped form the European Free Trade Area and by 2002, became a member of the United Nations. Switzerland remains outside of the European Union.²⁴⁸⁵

Culture

Swiss culture varies by canton due to the high degree of autonomy and limited international influence over the past 700 years. German, French, and Italian cultures heavily influence cantons populated by these ethnicities. Most the population identifies with a traditional Christian denomination, yet most do not actively participate in their faith and hold many secular values and ideals. Political neutrality has been a proud enduring tradition for centuries. Music, dance, embroidery, wood carving, and poetry are common arts. The large, trumpet-shaped alphorn is the most renowned Swiss musical instrument. Swiss products and precision instruments are highly regarded internationally due to their high quality and accuracy. Skiing and mountaineering are popular sports and attract tourism. Alcohol and cigarette consumption rates are high and comparable to most of Central Europe.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$43,400 (2011) [90.2% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.903

Corruption Index: 8.8 (2011)

With one of the most advanced and prosperous economies worldwide, Switzerland benefits from low unemployment, a high GDP per capita, and a diversified economy. The global financial crisis in the late 2000s instigated a recession in 2009 due to Switzerland's interconnectivity in global finances and a decline in export demand. The government provided assistance to the largest Swiss bank in 2008 after suffering heavy financial losses. Long-standing banking secrecy laws have become eroded in recent years under international pressure to prosecute those accused of tax evasion. Services employ 72% of the work force and generate 71% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 24% of the work force and generates 28% of the GDP. Primary industries include machinery, chemicals, watches, textiles, precision instruments, banking, and tourism. Agriculture accounts for less than 5% of the GDP and work force. Grains, fruit, vegetables, meat, and eggs are agricultural products. Major trade partners include Germany, Italy, the United States, and France. Transparency International ranks Switzerland as being perceived among the top five least corrupt countries worldwide.

Faiths

Christian: 79.3%

Muslim: 4.3%

²⁴⁸⁵ "Background Note: Switzerland," Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 31 March 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3431.htm>

Other: 1%
 Unspecified: 4.3%
 None: 11.1%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 3,286,499
 Swiss Reformed 2,597,750
 Orthodox 141,524
 Jehovah's Witnesses 18,131 270
 Latter-day Saints 8,456 36
 Seventh Day Adventists 4,357 51

Religion

Three-fourths of the national population is Catholic or Protestant. Eighty percent (80%) of Catholics and Protestants report that they are religious, although church attendance rates are low. Other religious groups have significantly increased membership in recent years due to immigration, such as Orthodox Christians and Muslims. Most Muslims are immigrants from Southeastern Europe, Turkey, and North Africa, but less than 15% of Muslims practice their faith.²⁴⁸⁶

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. Most cantons use tax funds to financially support least one traditional religious group (Roman Catholic, Old Catholic, or Protestant). The relationship between church and state varies significantly by canton. A religious group must register with the government to gain tax-exempt status. Foreign religious groups may proselyte, but missionaries must obtain a religious worker visa. There have been some isolated instances of societal abuse of religious freedom directed towards Muslims and Jews.²⁴⁸⁷

Largest Cities

Urban: 73%

Zürich, Genève, Basel, Bern, Lausanne, Luzern, St. Gallen, Winterthur, Lugano, Baden, **Olten**, **Zug**, Fribourg. Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Eleven of the thirteen cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. Fifty-one percent (51%) of the national population resides in the thirteen largest cities.

LDS History

LDS apostle Lorenzo Snow began missionary work in Italy in mid-1850 and called Thomas B. H. Stenhouse in November of that year as the president of the Swiss Mission. Most of the first Latter-day Saint converts came from rural areas in the Alpen Highlands. The number of converts baptized steadily increased year to year

²⁴⁸⁶ "Switzerland," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127340.htm>

²⁴⁸⁷ "Switzerland," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127340.htm>

during the early 1850s (20 in 1851, 50 in 1852, and 116 in 1853).²⁴⁸⁸ The translation of the Book of Mormon into French and German by 1852 resulted in greater success among the local population.²⁴⁸⁹ Missionary work first commenced in Geneva and later spread to German Protestant areas. By 1853, there were branches operating in Zurich and Baselland. The local press portrayed the Church in a negative light as growth accelerated, resulting in members and missionaries being periodically fined, imprisoned, banished, and physically abused. Many Swiss converts immigrated to Utah in the late 1850s and settled in the Midway, Utah²⁴⁹⁰ and Santa Clara, Utah areas. In 1864, the Swiss government declared that the LDS Church was a Christian faith and was entitled to the same rights as other Christian denominations. Persecution began to decrease over the following decades. The Swiss Mission office was relocated to Bern in 1869.²⁴⁹¹

The first LDS temple in Europe was completed by the Church in 1955 in Bern. Seminary and institute began in the 1970s. An LDS European youth choir performed at the 700th anniversary of Switzerland's independence in 1991.²⁴⁹² That same year, the Church assigned German-speaking cantons to the Europe Area and French and Italian-speaking Cantons to the Europe Mediterranean Area.²⁴⁹³ In 1994, LDS Church President Howard W. Hunter visited Switzerland for eight days and praised Swiss cultural, academic, and social achievements.²⁴⁹⁴ The Mormon Tabernacle Choir performed in Switzerland in 1998.²⁴⁹⁵ Several international LDS Church leaders attended the Second World Congress of Families, which occurred in Geneva in 1999.²⁴⁹⁶ In 2000, Switzerland became part of the Europe Central Area.²⁴⁹⁷ In 2010, the Church consolidated the Switzerland Zurich Mission with the Germany Munich/Austria Mission, creating the Alpine German-Speaking Mission. In 2011, the Church consolidated the Switzerland Geneva Mission with the France Toulouse Mission to create the France Lyon Mission. Switzerland has been assigned to the Europe Area since the late 2000s.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 8,456 (2012)

There were over one hundred Latter-day Saints by the mid-1850s. By 1900, there were over a thousand members in Switzerland. Two thousand members immigrated to the United States during the first fifty years of proselytism.²⁴⁹⁸ Membership totaled 4,553 in 1972.²⁴⁹⁹ There were 5,449 members by 1975²⁵⁰⁰ and

²⁴⁸⁸ Christianson, James R. "Early Missionary Work in Italy and Switzerland," *Ensign*, Aug 1982, 35.

²⁴⁸⁹ "The Church in Europe," *Ensign*, Aug 1973, 16–35.

²⁴⁹⁰ "Avant, Gerry. "Patriotism in "little Switzerland," *LDS Church News*, 13 July 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28340/Patriotism-in-little-Switzerland.html>

²⁴⁹¹ Christianson, James R. "Early Missionary Work in Italy and Switzerland," *Ensign*, Aug 1982, 35.

²⁴⁹² Kaspar, Bruno. "LDS youth choir sings in Swiss celebration," *LDS Church News*, 3 August 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21553/LDS-youth-choir-sings-in-Swiss-celebration.html>

²⁴⁹³ "New areas created in Asia, Europe," *LDS Church News*, 7 September 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21578/New-areas-created-in-Asia-Europe.html>

²⁴⁹⁴ "President Hunter visits Switzerland on 8-day journey," *LDS Church News*, 20 August 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24968/President-Hunter-visits-Switzerland-on-8-day-journey.html>

²⁴⁹⁵ Avant, Gerry. "Choir tour: 'a missionary journey,'" *LDS Church News*, 11 July 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31297/Choir-tour-a-missionary-journey.html>

²⁴⁹⁶ "Congress of Families issues clarion call to defend the family," *LDS Church News*, 20 November 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31297/Choir-tour-a-missionary-journey.html>

²⁴⁹⁷ Lloyd, Scott. "European continent realigned into three new areas," *LDS Church News*, 16 September 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38475/European-continent--realigned-into-three-new-areas.html>

²⁴⁹⁸ Christianson, James R. "Early Missionary Work in Italy and Switzerland," *Ensign*, Aug 1982, 35.

²⁴⁹⁹ "The Church in Europe," *Ensign*, Aug 1973, 16–35.

²⁵⁰⁰ "Switzerland," *Friend*, Jun 1975, 27.

6,500 members by 1992.²⁵⁰¹ Membership reached 7,000 in the mid-1990s.²⁵⁰²

By year-end 2000, there were 7,172 members. Church membership typically increased between fifty and one hundred during the 2000s, reaching 7,418 in 2002, 7,699 in 2005, and 7,939 in 2008. In the 2000s, annual church membership growth rates have ranged from a low of 0.1% in 2009 to a high of 2.7% in 2001. In 2009, one in 989 was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 26 Branches: 10 (April 2013)

In 1904, there were fifteen branches in Switzerland.²⁵⁰³ The Church created its first stake in 1961 in Zurich. In 1975, there were four wards and twenty-three branches.²⁵⁰⁴ During the next decade, additional stakes were created in Bern (1981) and Geneva (1982).

By year-end 2000, there were forty congregations, including twenty wards. The number of congregations declined in the 2000s to thirty-nine in 2002 and thirty-six in 2008. Between 2000 and 2010, several branches became wards resulting in the number of wards increasing by six. The number of branches declined to ten as a result of branches becoming wards and congregation consolidations.

As a result of branches maturing into wards in the three Switzerland stakes, two additional stakes were created in the 2000s in Lausanne (2005) and St. Gallen (2007). By late 2010, the number of congregations in the each of the five Swiss stakes ranged from eight to eleven. Some stakes include congregations outside of Switzerland. One congregation, the Lugano Ward, does not belong to a Swiss stake and is part of the Milan Italy Stake.

Activity and Retention

Attendance at many nationwide church meetings or conferences has been high for Western Europe. In 1995, approximately 400 attended the open house for the first Church-built chapel in Richterswil, 150 of whom were not LDS.²⁵⁰⁵ President Hinckley addressed 4,200 members from Switzerland and two French stakes in 1998.²⁵⁰⁶ 1,200 Swiss Latter-day Saints assembled for a celebration commemorating 150 years since the Church was established in 2003.²⁵⁰⁷ German-speaking Swiss young adults were among the 1,100 German-speaking young adults in Europe who assembled in Austria for a conference in 2006.²⁵⁰⁸ One hundred forty youth from two Swiss stakes and two French stakes attended a special conference in late 2007.²⁵⁰⁹ The average number of members per congregation increased from 179 in 2000 to 221 in 2009. Five hundred forty-eight were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year. Most wards appear to have

²⁵⁰¹ Avant, Gerry. "Thousands tour London and Swiss temples," LDS Church News, 24 October 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22004/Thousands-tour-London-and-Swiss-temples.html>

²⁵⁰² "President Hunter visits Switzerland on 8-day journey," LDS Church News, 20 August 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24968/President-Hunter-visits-Switzerland-on-8-day-journey.html>

²⁵⁰³ "The Church in Europe," Ensign, Aug 1973, 16–35.

²⁵⁰⁴ "Switzerland," Friend, Jun 1975, 27.

²⁵⁰⁵ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 30 December 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25992/From-around-the-world.html>

²⁵⁰⁶ "'Crown of gospel is upon our heads,'" LDS Church News, 20 June 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31188/Crown-of-gospel-is-upon-our-heads.html>

²⁵⁰⁷ Stahle, Shaun D. "Swiss celebrate 150 years of gospel," LDS Church News, 19 July 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44059/Swiss-celebrate-150-years-of-gospel.html>

²⁵⁰⁸ "New era in Europe," LDS Church News, 19 August 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49320/New-era-in-Europe.html>

²⁵⁰⁹ Gioffredo, Dennis. "Testimonies grow in the Swiss Alps," LDS Church News, 23 February 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51668/Testimonies-grow-in-the-Swiss-Alps.html>

approximately one hundred active members, whereas most branches likely have fifty or fewer active members. Nationwide active membership is estimated at no greater than 3,100, or 40% of total church membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: German, French, Italian, Serbian, Croatian, Albania, Portuguese, Spanish, English, Turkish.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are translated into German, French, Italian, Croatian, Albanian, and Spanish. Book of Mormon translations and some church materials are available in Serbian and Turkish. The *Liabona* magazine has twelve issues a year in German, French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish; four in Albanian; and one in Croatian.

Meetinghouses

LDS congregations meet in over thirty locations, most of which are Church-built meetinghouses.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Decades of economic prosperity and stability have facilitated Swiss members participation in regional humanitarian and development projects. In 2001, the Schaffhausen Branch delivered one hundred boxes of small gifts to children in a Romanian orphanage.²⁵¹⁰ The Church has also provided some humanitarian assistance in Switzerland, such as donating appliances, Braille books, and baby clothes to the needy.²⁵¹¹

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Latter-day Saints have enjoyed a long history of full religious freedom in Switzerland. Foreign missionaries regularly serve, and there are no restrictions regarding proselytism or assembly.

Cultural Issues

Secularism and nominalism in traditional Christian denominations are the greatest cultural barriers that challenge LDS mission outreach efforts. Most the indigenous population does not appear to view the LDS Church in a negative light, but has some misconceptions and regards Latter-day Saints as somewhat odd. Most the population exhibits little interest and low receptivity to the LDS Church through the efforts of full-time missionaries. There has been some success with member-missionary work and with full-time missionaries working with immigrant groups that often constitute sizeable minorities in many Swiss LDS congregations. High alcohol and cigarette consumption rates reduce receptivity and create challenges for investigators and new converts to completely end their use of these substances before and after baptism. The high degree of political autonomy apparent in the individual 26 Swiss cantons can create challenges due to major differences in laws and government policies. Some cantons have a strong Catholic or Protestant tradition, presenting challenges for the LDS Church to overcome the religious historical identity of the indigenous population.

National Outreach

Sixty-one percent (61%) of the national population resides in cities over 20,000 with LDS congregations.

²⁵¹⁰ "Branch helps Romanian orphans," LDS Church News, 24 February 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39395/Branch-helps-Romanian-orphans.html>

²⁵¹¹ "Projects—Switzerland," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 11 November 2010. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-36,00.html>

Thirteen of the thirty-six cities between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation and seventeen of the twenty-six administrative cantons have an LDS presence. Sixteen percent (16%) of the national population resides in unreached cities over 20,000 inhabitants. Nine of the twenty-six cantons have no reported LDS mission outreach centers and include, ordered in descending population, Schwyz, Zug, Jura, Appenzell Ausserrhoden, Nidwalden, Glarus, Uri, Obwalden, and Appenzell Innerrhoden. The combined population of unreached cantons is 620,000, or 8% of the national population. Eight of the nine cantons without a mission outreach center are among the eight least populated cantons in Switzerland, most of which have fewer than 100,000 inhabitants.

The end of LDS national outreach expansion occurred in the late 1990s and early 2000s as the number of congregations stopped increasing and began to decline in 2002. LDS congregations once operated in some cities in the early 2000s that at present have no known church units, including Thun, Vevey, Sion, and La Chaux-de-Fonds. The closure of congregations in these cities does not appear to be associated with the formation of wards from nearby branches but rather a lack of sustainability. With the exception of Martigny, LDS congregations or mission outreach centers have not been established in any additional cities since 2000. Few convert baptisms, low mission productivity, and limited numbers of full-time missionaries prompted the Church to consolidate the Switzerland Zurich Mission with the Germany Munich/Austria Mission to create the Alpine German-Speaking Mission in 2010.

Meaningful opportunities exist for the Church to establish additional congregations and mission outreach centers. In 1992, the Church created a congregation in Frauenfeld with just twenty members that met on the second floor of a business building. By 2002, the branch had seventy-five attending church regularly, and the Church built its first meetinghouse in the area.²⁵¹² By 2010, the branch had become a ward. In Geneva, three of the original French-speaking wards consolidated into two during the 2000s, but the international branch divided into an English-speaking ward and a Spanish-speaking ward during this period.

Shortly after the Church established an Internet site in 1997, Switzerland was among the top twenty countries for website visitors.²⁵¹³ By 2003, Switzerland was among the first eight countries to receive a national LDS website.²⁵¹⁴ In 2010, there was a Switzerland Church website in French at <http://www.eglise-de-jesus-christ.ch> and a German site at <http://www.kirche-jesu-christi.ch>. Both sites provide local church news, information on LDS beliefs and practices, contact information for meeting with full-time missionaries, and a meetinghouse locator.

The Church has carried out creative methods for exposing the Church to the community and creating situations for local members to make friendships with those outside the Church to find investigators. In 2004, the Church held a fireside in Winterthur for church members and their nonmember friends in which a commander of the top Swiss flight team spoke on leadership, friendship, and trust.²⁵¹⁵ In 2005, the Church held an exhibit on the Dead Sea Scrolls in Geneva that sparked greater public interest in the Church. Sixty percent (60%) of those who attended the exhibit were not LDS. The event was approved by the chief Rabbi of Geneva, and Protestant churches publicized the event.²⁵¹⁶

²⁵¹² Stahle, Shaun D. Frauenfeld faith builds meetinghouse," LDS Church News, 23 November 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42841/Frauenfeld-faith-builds-meetinghouse.html>

²⁵¹³ "Internet users find LDS web site," LDS Church News, 1 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29302/Internet-users-find-LDS-web-site.html>

²⁵¹⁴ "Church establishing country-specific Web sites," LDS Church News, 15 November 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44674/Church-establishing-country-specific-Web-sites.html>

²⁵¹⁵ "Fireside features Swiss pilot," LDS Church News, 13 March 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45216/Fireside-features-Swiss-pilot.html>

²⁵¹⁶ "Church gets exposure from scrolls exhibit," LDS Church News, 19 March 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47004/Church-gets-exposure-from-scrolls-exhibit.html>

Member Activity and Convert Retention

The established, long-term Latter-day Saint population primarily consists of native German, French, and Italian Swiss, whereas most recent converts over the past several decades primarily comprise immigrants, especially from Africa. Member activity rates appear highest among African immigrants due to culturally-high rates of church attendance and activity. The increase in the average number of members per congregation of forty-two during the 2000s points to modest convert retention rates or a deterioration in member activity rates during this period as four congregations were consolidated. Lower member activity rates in some areas likely prevent the creation of additional congregations and threaten the closure of currently-operating LDS units with few active members. Member reactivation efforts by local members have experienced some success.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The number of nonnative Latter-day Saints has increased dramatically in the past two decades as full-time missionaries have achieved greater numbers of convert baptisms among immigrants. Most immigrants have few challenges integrating into Swiss congregations, as the majority appears to come from French-speaking African countries. Few, if any, ethnic integration issues have been encountered at Church in Switzerland, which has likely come as a result of increasing ethnic diversification in society in recent years. Native Swiss members may become the minority in some congregations as a result of higher receptivity among immigrant groups, which could create challenges in maintaining Swiss LDS member activity rates and attracting new native converts.

Language Issues

LDS scriptures and materials are translated in the native language of as many as 98% of the population. Missionaries primarily teach in German and French. Accounting for 0.5% of the national population, speakers of Romansch have no LDS materials available. Prospects for translations of LDS materials in Romansch appear unlikely due to few monolingual speakers and the small numbers of Latter-day Saints who speak this language. The large number of English and Spanish speakers among Latter-day Saints necessitated the creation of congregations of each group in Geneva. Few active members and few new converts who speak other immigrant languages challenge efforts to create additional language-specific congregations.

Missionary Service

Full-time missionaries regularly serve from Switzerland, but their numbers remain too limited to staff the current missionary force on their own. In mid-2010, there were 175 full-time missionaries serving in the German Speaking Alpine Mission, which also included Austria and portions of Germany. Increased emphasis on youth-directed mission outreach, seminary, institute, and missionary preparation classes may help alleviate the dependence on foreign missionaries to fill current mission needs by Swiss members. Low LDS birthrates have further limited the size of the full-time missionary force among Latter-day Saint families in Switzerland.

Leadership

Swiss leadership is self-sufficient, fulfilling local administrative needs with few problems. The creation of two additional stakes indicates some growth in the number of active Melchizedek Priesthood holders, as stakes generally require over 120 active Melchizedek Priesthood holders to operate. Few, if any, Church employees have served in stake presidencies. Local Latter-day Saints have been called to serve as regional and international leaders. Hans B. Ringger from Basel served in the First Quorum of the Seventy from 1985 to 1995.²⁵¹⁷

²⁵¹⁷ Holman, Marianne. "Elder Hans B. Ringger dies at age 84," LDS Church News, 21 October 2010. <http://www.ldschurch-news.com/articles/60028/Elder-Hans-B-Ringger-dies-at-age-84.html>

In 1988, Denis W. Bonny from Geneva was called as a regional representative.²⁵¹⁸ In 1995, Roberto Mario Tavella from Geneva was called as a mission president²⁵¹⁹ of the Zaire Kinshasa Mission.²⁵²⁰ In 1996, Georg Julius Birsfelder from Zollikofen was called as the Bern Switzerland Temple president.²⁵²¹ In 1998, Roland R. Datwyler from Biel was called to preside over the Russia Yekaterinburg Mission.²⁵²² In 2002, Roland Robert Dätwyler-Schmucki from Biel became the Bern Switzerland Temple president.²⁵²³ Robert Koch from Zurich was called as an Area Authority Seventy in 2003,²⁵²⁴ and Louis Weidmann from Rechterswil was called as an Area Authority Seventy in 2008.²⁵²⁵

Temple

The Bern Switzerland Temple became the first LDS temple constructed in Europe in 1955. International Church leadership reported that the decision to build the first European temple in Switzerland was due to the self-reliance and strength of Swiss membership, which outpaced many other areas at the time.²⁵²⁶ Following extensive renovations, 32,900 attended the temple open house for the Bern Switzerland Temple in 1992.²⁵²⁷ The temple is easily accessed by most Swiss members due to its central location in Bern and has been heavily utilized by Italian Latter-day Saints for decades. In 2010, there were five endowment sessions held daily Tuesday through Thursday, seven on Fridays, and eight on Saturdays. Once the Rome Italy Temple is completed, attendance at the Bern Switzerland Temple will likely decline significantly, as most Italian members will attend the Rome Italy Temple.

Comparative Growth

Switzerland has the highest percentage of Latter-day Saints in Central Europe and the fourth highest percentage of Latter-day Saints in Europe after Portugal, the United Kingdom, and Spain. Since 2005, new stakes have been organized only in Switzerland and Italy among countries in Central Europe. The decline in the number of congregations in Switzerland is representative of most nations in Europe since the early 2000s. Contraction of national outreach has occurred in most Western and Central European nations like Switzerland during the 2000s. Member activity and convert retention rates appear higher than in most European nations.

Most missionary-oriented Christian groups report slow or stagnant membership and congregational growth in Switzerland. The number of Seventh-Day Adventist churches declined by ten, whereas Adventist membership increased by 250 during the 2000s. Adventists baptize fewer than one hundred converts per year. Jehovah's Witnesses baptize several hundred new converts a year and have been among the most successful nontraditional

²⁵¹⁸ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 26 March 1988. "The Church in Europe," Ensign, Aug 1973, 16–35.

²⁵¹⁹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 4 March 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26636/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁵²⁰ "New mission presidents assigned," LDS Church News, 18 March 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26630/New-mission-presidents-assigned.html>

²⁵²¹ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 22 June 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28223/New-temple-presidents.html>

²⁵²² "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 7 March 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31384/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁵²³ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 19 October 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42678/New-temple-presidents.html>

²⁵²⁴ "Leaders called; 5 new General Authorities," LDS Church News, 12 April 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43588/Leaders-called-5-new-General-Authorities.html>

²⁵²⁵ "38 Area Seventies called," LDS Church News, 12 April 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51857/38-Area-Seventies-called.html>

²⁵²⁶ "A marvelous harvest has occurred' in Switzerland," LDS Church News, 19 July 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44071/A-marvelous-harvest-has-occurred-in-Switzerland.html>

²⁵²⁷ Avant, Gerry. "Thousands tour London and Swiss temples," LDS Church News, 24 October 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22004/Thousands-tour-London-and-Swiss-temples.html>

Christian groups, numbering over 18,000 active members in 276 congregations today despite a shorter historical presence than Latter-day Saints.

Future Prospects

Slow LDS membership growth and a decline in the number of congregations during the 2000s indicate modest convert retention rates and no recent expansion of national outreach. The creation of two new stakes and the maturation of several branches into wards during this period illustrates some progress strengthening existing congregations and local leadership, but many of these developments may be due to the influx of immigrant LDS converts. Switzerland demonstrates that a mature church presence that has been established for decades longer than in most European nations does not guarantee greater potential for national outreach expansion, and, more often, national outreach declines over time as active LDS populations form tight-knit socio-religious communities and reduce their interaction with the general population. LDS populations appear much more stable in Switzerland than in many other Central European nations, but little church growth will likely occur unless greater member involvement in missionary activity occurs, along with adapting proselytism and teaching approaches to nominal Christian and secular Swiss populations. The creation and growth of the Frauenfeld Ward in the 1990s and 2000s and the growth of the church among English and Spanish-speakers in Geneva illustrate that potential for church growth remains but requires vision, flexibility, and utilization of opportunities by local members and church leaders alike.

UNITED KINGDOM

Geography

AREA: 243,610 square km. The United Kingdom is located in Western Europe and consists of Great Britain, Northern Ireland, and several small islands. Great Britain, in turn, consists of England, Scotland, and Wales. Rugged hills and low mountains occupy much of the terrain in the north and west with some plains in the southeast and east. The landscape primarily consists of meadows, hills, pastures, farmland, and forest. The Gulf Stream moderates the climate despite the high latitude of the islands. Temperate climate occurs throughout the archipelago, with warm summers and cold winters. Skies are often overcast. Major rivers include the Thames, Tay, Bann, and Tywi. Lough Neagh in Northern Ireland is the largest lake. Winter windstorms and flooding are natural hazards. Environmental issues include pollution and waste disposal. The United Kingdom is administratively divided into four lieutenancy areas (England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Island) and seventeen dependent territories that are subdivided into Crown Dependencies and overseas territories. England is administratively divided into twenty-seven two-tier counties, the City of London, thirty-six metropolitan districts, and fifty-six unitary authorities, whereas Northern Ireland is administratively divided into twenty-six district council areas, Scotland is administratively divided into thirty-two council areas, and Wales is administratively divided into twenty-two unitary authorities. Crown Dependencies include the Guernsey, Jersey, and Isle of Man, whereas overseas territories include Anguilla; Bermuda; the British Virgin Islands; the Cayman Islands; the Falkland Islands; Gibraltar; Montserrat; the Pitcairn Islands; Saint Helen, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha; South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands; and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Peoples

White: 92.1%

Black: 2%

Indian: 1.8%

Pakistani: 1.3%

Mixed: 1.2%

Other: 1.6%

The population is predominately white, with whites consisting of 83.6% English, 8.6% Scottish, 4.9% Welsh, and 2.9% Northern Irish. Blacks, Indians, Pakistanis, and other ethnic groups have immigrated to the United Kingdom during the past century, primarily from former British colonial possessions.

Population: 63,047,162 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.553% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.91 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 78.05 male, 82.4 female (2012)

Languages: English (95%), Indian/Pakistani languages (3%), Welsh (1%), other (1%). The most commonly spoken Indian and Pakistan languages include Bengali, Gujarati, Panjabi dialects, Pashto dialects, Sylheti, and Urdu. English is the official language and only language with over one million speakers (59.2 million).

Literacy: 99% (2003)

History

Pre-Celtic and Celtic peoples inhabited the British Isles since antiquity. The Roman Empire annexed approximately half of Great Britain during the first century BC. Angles, Saxons, and Jutes invaded Roman-held territory in the fifth and sixth centuries AD as the power of the Roman Empire waned. Normans conquered Great Britain in 1066, and in the following century, the Anglo-Normans invaded Ireland. The English conquered Wales in 1282 but did not complete a formal union between England and Wales until 1536. English explorers and traders began exploring and colonizing North America in the sixteenth century. The defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 established England as a world sea power and contributed to significant worldwide expansion of trade and military influence. English rule over Scotland began in 1603, but a political union did not occur until 1707 when England and Scotland were unified as Great Britain. The English and Scottish began settling the northern regions of Ireland in the seventeenth century and subjugated the Irish population under British rule. The United Kingdom played a major role in the Reformation, as King Henry VIII opposed the Catholic Church and established the Church of England in 1538. Great Britain lost the American colonies in the War of Independence in the late eighteenth century but began to expand into Africa and Asia. The United Kingdom was formed in 1801 as Great Britain and Ireland were merged into a legislative union. The industrial revolution transformed the economy and power of the United Kingdom, as its power and influence surpassed France. The British Empire reached its height during the nineteenth century, governing approximately one-fifth to one-quarter of the world's land area and population.

British power began to decline in the twentieth century as its rivals began to advance technologically, economically, and militarily. The United Kingdom suffered heavy losses during both world wars and experienced stagnant economic growth as a result of the depression in the 1930s. Continued armed insurgency against the British crown in Ireland resulted in the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1921 and an independent republic after World War II. In 1926, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand obtained complete autonomy within the British Empire and later became founding members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. The Commonwealth principally consists of former British colonies that have attained independence from the United Kingdom and aspire to propagate a shared vision and philosophy regarding civic, trade, and legal matters. Most of the remaining colonies and territories of the British Empire achieved independence in the twentieth century. Remaining colonies that did not opt for independence were retained as British Overseas Territories. Six northern predominantly Protestant Irish counties remain part of the United Kingdom as the entity of Northern Ireland.²⁵²⁸ The United Kingdom experienced steady economic growth and development during the latter half of the twentieth century while maintaining its influence as a world diplomatic power as a founding member of NATO and the Commonwealth. The United Kingdom is a member of the European Union but does not pertain to the Economic and Monetary Union. Instability and partisan violence between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland occurred during the late twentieth century but significantly improved during the 2000s.

Culture

British culture has been among the most influential cultures in the world over the past several centuries due to the worldwide expanse of the former British Empire, the past occupation of vast areas of territory or operation of colonies on all six inhabited continents, and its prominence in international affairs. The United Kingdom significantly influenced the development of contemporary local culture and government in Western Europe, North America, East Asia, South Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and Oceania and together with the rise of American culture in the twentieth century has contributed to the widespread use of English as an international language for business, commerce, and government. Consequently, there are an estimated 0.5–1.8 billion speakers of English as a first or second language, and English is an official language of fifty-three

²⁵²⁸ "Background Note: United Kingdom," Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 14 December 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3846.htm>

countries.²⁵²⁹ The consumption of tea on a daily basis is an important cultural practice. Cigarette consumption rates are comparable to the world average, whereas alcohol consumption rates are higher than the world average. Divorce rates are higher than most nations.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$35,900 (2011) [74.6% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.863

Corruption Index: 7.8 (2011)

Remaining outside of the European Economic and Monetary Union, the United Kingdom ranks among the largest European economies and is noted for its advanced financial sector and highly effective agricultural sector that meets 60% of food needs with less than 2% of the work force. Economic growth outpaced most of Western Europe in the 1990s and 2000s until the global financial crisis in 2008 initiated declining home prices, worldwide recession, and high consumer debt. The government has taken steps to limit the growth of social welfare programs and public ownership in recent years. Coal, petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, valuable metals, industrial metals and minerals, and farmland are natural resources. Sizeable fossil fuel reserves have been steadily depleted by exploitation and are now less economically viable. Services employ 80% of the labor force and generate 77% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 18% of the labor force and generates 22% of the GDP. Machinery, industrial equipment, shipbuilding, aircraft, electronics, metals, chemicals, coal, petroleum, wood products, food processing, and clothing are the primary industries. Agriculture accounts for less than 2% of the labor force and GDP. Common agriculture products include grains, potatoes, vegetables, cattle, sheep, poultry, and fish. Germany, the United States, France, and the Netherlands are the primary trade partners. The level of perceived corruption is among the lowest worldwide.

Faiths

Christian: 71.6%

Muslim: 2.7%

Hindu: 1%

Other: 1.6%

Unspecified/none: 23.1%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Anglican 18,081,050

Catholic 6,234,845

Latter-day Saints 188,462 333

Jehovah's Witnesses 135,823 1,537 (Britain only)

Seventh Day Adventists 31,648 248 (includes Crown Dependencies)

Religion

The Anglican Church is the largest Christian denomination, and its members constitute 29% of the population. Catholics comprise 10% of the population, whereas other Protestant groups account for 14%. A 2007 survey found that the number of church-going Catholics had outpaced the number of church-going Anglicans, and a 2006 survey found that the percentage of Methodists in the population was declining, whereas the percentage of Pentecostals, African churchgoers, Latter-day Saints, and Eastern Orthodox

²⁵²⁹ "English language," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 23 April 2011. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language

Christians was increasing. A report released by Christian Research estimated that four million Christians were observant in their faith in England, Scotland, and Wales, as indicated by attending church at least once a month. The percentage of church-going Christians may be as low as 5%–10% of the Christian population in Great Britain, whereas church attendance figures for Northern Ireland are considerably higher, as 60% of Catholics and 35% of Protestants report attending church monthly. Religious affiliation differs dramatically by ethnicity. According to the 2001 census, 70% of whites, 70% of black Africans, and 75% of black Caribbean peoples were Christian; 92% of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis were Muslim; 45% of Indians were Hindus; and 29% of Indians were Sikhs. In Northern Ireland, Catholics and Protestants comprise 44% and 53% of the population, respectively, and continue to live in religiously segregated communities.²⁵³⁰ A 1991 survey found that seven out of ten had a certain belief that God exists, but that many feel that these beliefs are decreasing in importance and do not influence their daily lives.²⁵³¹

Religious Freedom

The law protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. There is strict legislation in place that prohibits the incitement of religious hatred under the 2006 Racial and Religious Hatred Act. Only Scotland and England have state churches, the Church of England (Anglican) and the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian), respectively. No Catholic or person married to a Catholic may become a monarch. Most religious groups are classified as charities and receive tax-exempt status for value-added tax. Only faith schools receive financial support from the government. Missionaries from registered religious groups must have had past missionary service experience or receive formal training in order to obtain a visa to perform missionary work in the United Kingdom. Major Christian holidays are recognized national holidays. There has been recent debate regarding the wearing of religious clothing or symbols by school children in public schools. Christian groups report that they have been restricted in their rights to practice and display their faith in public and in the workplace. Societal abuse of religious freedom is occasional and primarily directed toward Jews and Muslims.²⁵³²

Largest Cities

Urban: 90%

London, Birmingham, Glasgow, Leeds, Manchester, Bristol, Liverpool, Sheffield, Edinburgh, Leicester, Kingston upon Hull, Bradford, Coventry, Cardiff, Nottingham, Belfast, Stoke-on-Trent, Plymouth, Southampton, Wolverhampton, Derby, Reading, Portsmouth, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Twenty-four cities with over 200,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. Twenty-six percent (26%) of the national population resides in the twenty-four most populous cities.

LDS History

Following the establishment of the LDS Church in the United States in 1830, the United Kingdom became the first nation to receive LDS missionaries in 1837, as two LDS apostles were among the first seven missionaries to arrive in England in July of that year. The first convert baptisms occurred at the end of the month. Over a thousand converts joined the Church within the first few years of proselytism in the United Kingdom.²⁵³³

²⁵³⁰ "United Kingdom," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, retrieved 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148995.htm>

²⁵³¹ "A 'major religious upheaval,'" LDS Church News, 20 April 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20701/A-major-religious-upheaval.html>

²⁵³² "United Kingdom," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, retrieved 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148995.htm>

²⁵³³ Avant, Gerry. "Rich heritage of British Isles touches family roots of leaders," LDS Church News, 13 June 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31446/Rich-heritage-of-British-Isles-touches-family-roots-of-leaders.html>

The oldest continuously operating LDS congregation is located in Preston, England and has functioned since 1837.²⁵³⁴ The first convert baptisms in Scotland occurred near Glasgow in 1840.²⁵³⁵ Nearly half of the population of Utah in 1870 were British immigrants as a result of LDS missionary success in the British isles in the nineteenth century. Approximately 100,000 converts joined the Church in the British Isles and immigrated to Utah before 1900.²⁵³⁶ During the first half of the twentieth century, membership growth was slow, emigration of converts to the United States continued, and church membership was less than 10,000 until the 1960s.

In 1976, three area conferences were held in Manchester, London, and Glasgow in which President Spencer W. Kimball advised all young men to prepare for full-time missionary service.²⁵³⁷ That same year, missionaries opened the Shetland Islands for missionary work.²⁵³⁸ The United Kingdom pertained to the Europe area until the 1980s when it was assigned to the United Kingdom/Ireland/Africa Area. In 2000, the United Kingdom was assigned to the Europe West Area and in the late 2000s was assigned to the Europe Area. In 2001, two missionaries in the England Bristol Mission perished in a car accident.²⁵³⁹

Missions

The British Mission was the first LDS mission to be officially organized in the Church and was headed by Heber C. Kimball in 1837. The Welsh Mission was organized in 1845 but was discontinued in 1854 and consolidated with the British Mission. Additional missions organized included the North British (1960) [renamed England Leeds in 1974], Scottish-Irish (1961) [renamed Scotland Edinburgh in 1974], Central British (1961) [renamed England Birmingham in 1974], Southwest British (1962) [renamed England Bristol in 1974], Northeast British (1962), North Scottish (1962), and British South (1964) [renamed England London South]. The Northeast British and North Scottish Missions were consolidated with neighboring missions in 1965 reducing the number of missions to five. In 1970s, missions were organized in England Manchester (1976) and England London East (1978). The England Birmingham and England London East Missions were discontinued in 1983. The England Coventry Mission was organized in 1980 and was relocated to Birmingham in 1991.

There was one mission in 1955, eight in 1964, six in 1970, eight in 1980, and seven in 1990. In 2002, the England Bristol Mission was consolidated with neighboring missions, and in 2010, the Scotland Edinburgh and Ireland Dublin Missions were consolidated into the Scotland/Ireland Mission with headquarters in Edinburgh, Scotland. In 2011, there were six missions in the United Kingdom.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 188,462 (2012)

In 1958, there were 6,500 Latter-day Saints in Britain.²⁵⁴⁰ There were 92,338 members in 1983, 133,100

²⁵³⁴ "United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales)," Country Profile, 10 June 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/country/united-kingdom>

²⁵³⁵ "Spotlight on historic sites: Scotland baptisms," LDS Church News, 22 April 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37655/Spotlight-on-historic-sites-Scotland-baptisms.html>

²⁵³⁶ Avant, Gerry. "Rich heritage of British Isles touches family roots of leaders," LDS Church News, 13 June 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31446/Rich-heritage-of-British-Isles-touches-family-roots-of-leaders.html>

²⁵³⁷ "This week in Church history," LDS Church News, 23 June 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40091/This-week-in-Church-history.html>

²⁵³⁸ Baxter, David S. "Shetland Islands has unique building," LDS Church News, 8 November 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44666/Shetland-Islands-has-unique-building.html>

²⁵³⁹ "Missionaries die in auto accident," LDS Church News, 16 June 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40062/Missionaries-die-in-auto-accident.html>

²⁵⁴⁰ Grant, Bryan J. "Ground broken for Preston England Temple," LDS Church News, 18 June 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25187/Ground-broken-for-Preston-England-Temple.html>

in 1987, 161,000 in 1993, and 170,700 in 1997. By year-end 2000, membership totaled 175,572. Slow membership growth marked by oscillations in increasing and decreasing membership occurred in the 2000s as membership numbered 176,998 in 2002, 177,431 in 2004, 180,078 in 2006, and 183,672. Membership declines occurred in 2001 and 2003. Annual membership growth rates fluctuated between 1.5% and 3.5% during the 2000s and averaged around 1%. In 2000, there were 136,554 members in England, 5,482 in Northern Ireland, 26,094 in Scotland, and 7,442 in Wales, whereas in 2010, there were 144,281 members in England, 5,329 in Northern Ireland, 26,917 in Scotland, and 9,555 in Wales. Wales experienced the greatest percentage increase in membership growth during the 2000s (28%), whereas Northern Ireland experienced membership decline (-2.8%).

In 2009, one in 335 was LDS. In 2009, one in 357 was LDS in England, one in 333 was LDS in Northern Ireland, one in 192 was LDS in Scotland, and one in 313 was LDS in Wales.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 285 Branches: 49 (April 2013)

There were five branches in Scotland in 1955.²⁵⁴¹ There were 360 congregations in the United Kingdom in 1987, 344 in 1993, 374 in 1997, and 365 in 2000. The number of congregations declined in the 2000s, numbering to 360 in 2002, 366 in 2004, 350 in 2006, and 336 in 2008. The number of wards during the 2000s increased from 274 in 2000 to 281 in 2010, whereas the number of branches declined from ninety-five in 2000 to fifty-two in 2010. Between 2000 and 2009, the number of congregations declined by twenty-three in England, seven in Scotland, and three in Northern Ireland, whereas the number of congregations increased in Wales by four.

The first stake in England was organized in Manchester in 1960. Six additional English stakes were organized in the 1960s in Leicester (1961), Huddersfield (1961), Sunderland (1963), and Birmingham (1969). In the 1970s, twenty-one additional stakes were organized in England in Norwich (1971), Nottingham (1973), Portsmouth (1973), Hull (1973), Bristol (1973), Reading (1973), Romford (1974), Newcastle-Under-Lyme (1975), Liverpool (1976), Billingham (1976), Preston (1976), Leeds (1976), Northampton (1977), Lichfield (1977), Crawley (1977), Plymouth (1977), London Hyde Park (1978), London Wandsworth (1978), Maidstone (1978), St. Albans (1978), and Staines (1982). In the 1980s, six additional stakes were organized in Cheltenham (1982), Poole (1982), Ashton (1982), Chester (1982), Sheffield (1982), and Ipswich (1983). In the 1990s and 2000s, five new stakes were organized in Coventry (1993), Canterbury (1995), Watford (1996), York (1996), and Chorley (2005).

The first stake in Scotland was organized in Glasgow in 1962. Additional stakes were organized in Dundee (1975), Aberdeen (1980), Paisley (1980), and Edinburgh (1980). Northern Ireland's sole LDS stake was organized in Belfast in 1974. The first stake in Wales was organized in Merthyr Tydfil in 1975. A second Welsh stake was formed in Cardiff in 1982.

The number of stakes in the United Kingdom increased from one in 1960 to eight in 1970, thirty-five in 1980, forty-two in 1990, forty-six in 2000, and forty-seven in 2010.

Activity and Retention

The average number of members per congregation increased from 370 in 1987 to 481 in 2000 and 554 in 2009. In 1993, the Scotland Edinburgh Mission emphasized the need for local members to attend missionary lessons to nonmembers and assist in fellowshipping, which resulted in increases in the number of missionary

²⁵⁴¹ "150th year brings prestige in Glasgow," LDS Church News, 24 November 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19553/150th-year-brings-prestige-in-Glasgow.html>

lessons taught and in convert retention.²⁵⁴² Fourteen thousand members assembled for the first area conference in Manchester, England in 1971.²⁵⁴³ In 1992, 55,200 attended the temple open house for the London England Temple.²⁵⁴⁴ Ten thousand five hundred members attended the groundbreaking of the Preston England Temple in 1994.²⁵⁴⁵ In 1998, 123,607 attended the Preston England Temple open house.²⁵⁴⁶ During the 2009–2010 school year, 4,643 were enrolled in seminary and institute. In 2011, full-time missionaries reported that most wards generally had between fifty and 120 active members, whereas most branches had fewer than sixty active members. Nationwide active membership is estimated at approximately 30,000, or 15%–20% of total church membership.

Finding and Public Relations

In 1963, President David O. McKay noted while dedicating a new meetinghouse that public opinion toward the LDS Church had significantly improved in Wales.²⁵⁴⁷ Approximately 200 attended a family history seminar in Birmingham, England in 1988.²⁵⁴⁸ In 1988, the Church published advertisements in local newspapers in England and Scotland about church teachings.²⁵⁴⁹ That same year, the BYU Young Ambassadors performed in Northern Ireland.²⁵⁵⁰ In 1995, President Hinckley was interviewed by the media and affirmed the Church's Christ-centered teachings and purpose.²⁵⁵¹ In 2001, the Edinburgh Scotland Stake president offered a public prayer in Scottish Parliament,²⁵⁵² and 40,000 attended the opening festivities of an LDS commemorative sea trek of Latter-day Saint British immigrants in the nineteenth century.²⁵⁵³ In 2004, the Glasgow Scotland Stake held an interfaith banquet attended by several leaders of local faith groups.²⁵⁵⁴ The Church operates a call center at the England Missionary Training Center operated primarily by missionaries receiving missionary training.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English, Welsh.

²⁵⁴² "From around the world," LDS Church News, 4 December 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23177/From-around-the-world.html>

²⁵⁴³ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Unparalleled growth, missionary work mark exciting for Church members," LDS Church News, 14 August 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/36227/Unparalleled-growth-missionary-work-mark-exciting-decade-for-Church-members.html>

²⁵⁴⁴ Avant, Gerry. "Thousands tour London and Swiss temples," LDS Church News, 24 October 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22004/Thousands-tour-London-and-Swiss-temples.html>

²⁵⁴⁵ Grant, Bryan J. "Ground broken for Preston England Temple," LDS Church News, 18 June 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25187/Ground-broken-for-Preston-England-Temple.html>

²⁵⁴⁶ "Preston England Temple," LDS Church News, 13 June 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30974/Preston-England-Temple.html>

²⁵⁴⁷ "This week in Church history," LDS Church News, 10 September 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/17444/This-week-in-Church-history.html>

²⁵⁴⁸ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 9 July 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18322/From-around-the-world.html>

²⁵⁴⁹ Hart, John L. "Missionary videos to be telecast in major U.S. cities," LDS Church News, 14 January 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19500/Missionary-videos-to-be-telecast-in-major-US-cities.html>

²⁵⁵⁰ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 23 July 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18124/From-around-the-world.html>

²⁵⁵¹ Cannon, Mike. "Pres. Hinckley testifies of Christ to British media," LDS Church News, 9 September 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26252/Pres-Hinckley-testifies-of-Christ-to-British-media.html>

²⁵⁵² "Leader prays in Parliament," LDS Church News, 16 June 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40047/Leader-prays-in-Parliament.html>

²⁵⁵³ Hart, John and Shauna. "20,000 line riverbanks leading to Hull," LDS Church News, 1 September 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40426/20000-line-riverbanks-leading-to-Hull.html>

²⁵⁵⁴ "Promoting understanding," LDS Church News, 23 October 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46369/Promoting-understanding.html>

All LDS scriptures and materials are available in English. Only the Book of Mormon is available in Welsh. Additional LDS materials translated into Welsh include *The Family: A Proclamation to the World*, the Articles of Faith, and a Mormon Tabernacle Choir DVD.

Meetinghouses

There were approximately 300 LDS meetinghouses in the United Kingdom in April 2011. Most congregations meet in church-built meetinghouses. Some smaller branches meet in renovated buildings or rented spaces.

Humanitarian and Development Work

In 1999, Relief Society members in the Edinburgh Scotland Stake assembled hundreds of school supply, hygiene, and bedding kits for needy children in Africa.²⁵⁵⁵ Many local members have organized and carried out humanitarian relief efforts for Africa and Asia. The Church has also provided donations of computer and medical equipment, beddings, and children's vitamins.²⁵⁵⁶

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Latter-day Saints experience full religious freedom throughout the United Kingdom and freely assemble, worship, and proselyte. Foreign full-time missionaries serve regularly from around the world with few challenges obtaining needed visa documentation. The acceptance of public religious expression has waned in society due to increasing secularism, but no laws or government policies have limited the religious expression and practices of Latter-day Saints.

Cultural Issues

Increasing secularism and declining acceptance of organized religion in public life in the United Kingdom are major barriers to LDS mission outreach that have reduced receptivity among the general British population and have likely compromised member activity rates among Latter-day Saints. The Church is still committed to performing greater mission outreach in the United Kingdom than other Western European nations notwithstanding these challenges, but many investigators and converts are immigrants, particularly from Africa. The cosmopolitan atmosphere of London and some of the largest cities has encouraged greater cultural understanding and acceptance of converts from ethnic minority groups, although language barriers can create obstacles for gospel understanding and personal testimony development. The Church has struggled to instill habits of regular church attendance into many British investigators and converts, and there is a greater need for increased emphasis on these and other pre-baptismal conditions in order to curb against convert attrition.

The immigration to the United States, Australia, and New Zealand of many stalwart British Latter-day Saints has eroded the Church's stability and limited church growth since the mid-nineteenth century. Over the past two decades, the number of English international church leaders who immigrated to the United States or Australia has been approximately equivalent to the number of English international church leaders who continue to reside in the United Kingdom.

²⁵⁵⁵ "Relief Society sisters in Scotland help meet needs around world," LDS Church News, 18 December 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/36929/Relief-Society-sisters-in-Scotland-help-meet-needs-around-world.html>

²⁵⁵⁶ "Projects—United Kingdom," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 23 April 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-17,00.html>

National Outreach

Approximately half of the British population resides in a city with an LDS congregation. All sixty-eight cities over 100,000 have an LDS congregation or are within five kilometers of a city with an LDS congregation. Of the nearly 200 cities in the United Kingdom with over 50,000 inhabitants, approximately a dozen have no LDS congregations. The majority of the largest unreached cities are located on the peripheries of the largest cities in England or are in south England. Unlike many Western European nations, the LDS Church in the United Kingdom has congregations in several cities with 20,000 or fewer inhabitants, such as Skipton, England and Aberystwyth, Wales. Nine of the twenty-six district council areas in Northern Ireland, twenty-eight of the thirty-two council areas of Scotland, and eighteen of the twenty-two unitary authorities in Wales have at least one LDS congregation. Almost all administrative divisions in England have an LDS congregation, with a few exceptions in southwestern England. The average LDS congregation in the United Kingdom includes between 100,000 and 200,000 people within its geographical boundaries. Outreach appears most penetrating in Scotland and Wales (one LDS congregation per 125,000 people), whereas outreach is more limited in Northern Ireland and England (one LDS congregation per 161,000 and 198,000, respectively).

Opportunities for future growth appear highest in the most populous cities without currently operating LDS congregations in England such as Ellesmere Port, Royal Leamington Spa, and Margate, as well as in cities with greater than 50,000 inhabitants. Many of London's thirty-two boroughs have no nearby LDS congregations and are less reached by the Church. Local leadership and member-missionary resources appear adequate in many areas for British members to undertake the responsibility of extending outreach to these cities at present, as most are within close proximity to cities with LDS congregations. Cooperation between full-time missionaries and local leaders in holding cottage meetings and employing creative proselytism approaches will be needed to reverse the ongoing trend of congregation consolidations and stagnant to declining national outreach since the mid-2000s. Prospects for expanding national outreach are poor in Northern Ireland and Scotland due to continuing congregation consolidations, low receptivity to the Church, LDS congregations already operating in most medium-sized cities, and few member-missionary resources available. Conditions for growth are most favorable in Wales due to slow congregational growth over the past decade and increasing seminary and institute enrollment combined with commensurate membership growth, indicative of higher member activity and convert retention rates.

The Church has a well-designed Internet website for the United Kingdom at <http://www.lds.org.uk/> providing local news, basic information about the LDS Church and its teachings, resources for single members, a gospel library, and links to other English-language LDS websites. There are also opportunities for member-missionary Internet-based proselytism through links on the site to Facebook and Twitter. In 1997, England had the fifth most visitors to the Church's official website,²⁵⁵⁷ but in December 2010, the LDS United Kingdom website was not among the top ten most frequently visited country websites, likely due to many British members utilizing the United States-based lds.org.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Overall, the United Kingdom experiences one of the lowest member activity rates among Western European nations, especially in Scotland, where there was an average of 657 members per congregation in 2009. Convert retention appeared to have been the lowest between the 1960s and 1990s at the time when church membership grew most rapidly. Quick-baptism tactics that emphasized minimal pre-baptismal preparation and reaching arbitrary baptismal quotas is the primary cause of poor retention and rapid growth in nominal membership (but little increase in active membership) during this period. One practice that severely reduced member activity rates in the early 1960s was fellowshipping nonmembers with local Latter-day Saints through

²⁵⁵⁷ "Internet users find LDS web site," LDS Church News, 1 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29302/Internet-users-find-LDS-web-site.html>

playing baseball and then baptizing nonmember participants in what were later coined “baseball baptisms.”²⁵⁵⁸ The subsequent period of the largest membership boom in Scotland also reflected high-turnover missionary approaches with many baptisms but few converts becoming active members. Notwithstanding inconsistent standards for convert baptisms and a lack of proper focus on proselytism during this period, the number of LDS congregations increased more rapidly than at any other time in the history of the Church in the United Kingdom primarily due to a nationwide meetinghouse construction program and an unprecedented opening of new missions from one in 1959 to eight in 1964.

In recent years, there has been no meaningful increase in active membership overall in the United Kingdom largely due to low birth rates in member families, many Latter-day Saint youth not serving full-time missions and going inactive, emigration of some active members to the United States, and low convert retention rates. The LDS Church in Scotland and England have demonstrated the least amount of progress as indicated by stagnant number of members enrolled in seminary and institute, the number of congregations closed, and an increase in the average number of members per congregation. The number of members enrolled in seminary and institute in England and Scotland was constant during the late 2000s (1% increase) and experienced significant increases in Wales (31%) and Northern Ireland (23%) between 2008 and 2010. Wales was the only lieutenancy area in the United Kingdom to experience an increase in the number of congregations between 2000 and 2009, whereas significant declines occurred in England and Scotland. Assuming no increase in the average number of active members per congregation, an increase in the average number of nominal members per congregation generally indicates decreasing member activity rates, as there are fewer active members to staff the same number of congregations. Large increases in the average number of members per congregation occurred in Scotland (113), Northern Ireland (93), and England (72) between 2000 and 2009, whereas the increase in the average number of members per congregation in Wales was low (26).

Noting limited progress increasing the number of active members, the Europe Area presidency set a goal in 2010 for the entire area to double the number of active members by 2020 with the United Kingdom being a major area of focus. To achieve this goal, regional church leadership stressed the need to make ward and branch councils central in missionary efforts to reactive and baptize new converts in addition to emphasizing the need for close cooperation between local members and full-time missionaries. Added emphasis was placed on member-missionary work.²⁵⁵⁹ The vision and prospective of the area presidency offers an approach to improving member activity rates by reducing the emphasis on full-time missionaries to find, teach, and reactivate and to carefully coordinate and delegate various missionary tasks among ward and branch members. Successful implementation and consistency of directing local missionary efforts through ward councils will likely be the greatest challenge for regional leadership, and success will be manifest over the medium term through reversing the trend of congregation consolidations that has persisted since the mid-2000s.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Populations outside of the largest cities are homogenously British, Scottish, Welsh, or Irish, and ethnic integration issues are nearly absent. LDS missionaries report no significant ethnic integration issues at church among native peoples. Traditionally Muslim or Hindu peoples from South Asia appear the most difficult to reach and integrate into LDS congregations due to differing cultural practices, little familiarity with Christianity or long-term resistance to conversion, and family disapproval. In the early 2010s, English members and full-time missionaries reported significant progress reaching the Slovak community in Sheffield, England. By early 2012, there were over seventy attending church services in a Slovakian-speaking group. Similar opportunities among other immigrant groups may provide for increased growth and outreach with proper vision and implementation.

²⁵⁵⁸ Quinn, D. Michael, “I-Thou vs. I-It Conversions: The Mormon ‘Baseball Baptism’ Era,” *Sunstone*, 16:7/30 (December 1993).

²⁵⁵⁹ The Ward Council: The Key to Saving Souls,” *Messages from Church Leaders—United Kingdom* lds.org, retrieved 26 April 2011. <http://www.lds.org.uk/news/article-view/archive/2011/february/article/the-ward-council-the-key-to-saving-souls/>

Language Issues

LDS scriptures and church materials are available in the native language of approximately 97% of the United Kingdom's population. The remaining 3% of the population consists primarily of Indian and Pakistani immigrants who speak languages with few or no LDS materials translated; however, many of these immigrants speak English as a second language. Welsh speakers number approximately half a million, but there are only 32,000 monolingual speakers, reducing the need for Welsh-language LDS proselytism and materials. The widespread use of English has simplified LDS mission outreach and reduced the need for additional resources for non-English speakers. A few LDS missionaries in England learn other languages such as Mandarin Chinese to conduct proselytism and teaching. There are only two LDS congregations designated as non-English speaking, one for Portuguese speakers and one for Spanish speakers, both located in London. Notwithstanding the influx of non-British converts over the past two decades, there are no other congregations to suit their language needs, largely due to inadequate number of converts speaking the same languages and low convert retention rates. Many non-British converts are competent in speaking English as a second language. Only LDS Mandarin Chinese-speakers appear likely to have their own language-specific congregation in the coming years largely due to higher receptivity than other ethnic minority or immigrant groups and concentrated missionary efforts directed to Chinese.

Missionary Service

Opened in 1998 in Preston, the England Missionary Training Center (MTC) is the only LDS missionary training center in Europe and had the capacity to house eighty-four elders, twenty-four sisters, and one senior missionary couple in 2000. The England MTC primarily offers three-week training for missionaries destined to serve in the British Isles but in the past has served speakers of English as a second language from continental Europe, Russia, and Mongolia.²⁵⁶⁰ The England MTC is well utilized and appears to accommodate North American missionaries more frequently than their British counterparts. The United Kingdom remains heavily dependent on foreign missionary manpower to staff its six missions, notwithstanding having nearly 190,000 nominal members. Low birth rates among British Latter-day Saints, poor convert retention, low member activity rates, low seminary and institute enrollment, cultural factors, and the delayed opening of a national missionary training center until 1998 appear to be major contributing factors for few local members serving missions.

Leadership

The strength and sizeable numbers of active local priesthood leadership is manifest by LDS stakes functioning throughout mainland Britain with no stakes being discontinued in the history of the Church in the United Kingdom. Few Church employees have served in local or national leadership positions, and local leadership is generally self-sufficient in most locations. Limited numbers of active priesthood holders delay the creation of additional congregations in some areas, such as large cities with only one congregation and medium-sized cities with no LDS units. With few exceptions, LDS congregations are led and staffed by local members. There has been a nearly continuous streak of local members serving as temple presidents for temples in England since the late 1980s.

The LDS Church in the United Kingdom has supplied the Church with more international leadership manpower than any other European country, as several members have served as mission presidents, regional representatives, area seventies, general authorities, and temple presidents. Most LDS leaders from the U.K. are English. In 1992, E. Keith Wigglesworth from Reading was called to preside over the England Leeds

²⁵⁶⁰ "The MTC experience," *New Era*, June 2000. <http://lds.org/new-era/2000/06/the-mtc-experience/the-england-mtc?lang=eng&query=preston+mtc>

Mission,²⁵⁶¹ and Ian D. Swanney from York was called to preside over the Scotland Edinburgh Mission.²⁵⁶² In 1994, Rowland E. Elvidge from St. Albans was called to preside over the England Bristol Mission.²⁵⁶³ In 1995, Gordon Williams from Huddersfield was called to preside over the Scotland Edinburgh Mission.²⁵⁶⁴ In 2001, Albert Roy from Glasgow was called to preside over the Canada Edmonton Mission,²⁵⁶⁵ and Raymond Botterell from Crawley²⁵⁶⁶ was called to preside over the Kenya Nairobi Mission.²⁵⁶⁷ In 2003, Charles Raymond Lowry from Lisburn²⁵⁶⁸ was called to preside over the England Birmingham Mission.²⁵⁶⁹ In 2004, Brent LaMar Buckner from Solihull was called to preside over the Switzerland Zurich Mission.²⁵⁷⁰ In 2006, Mark Laurence Lewis from Bath²⁵⁷¹ was called to preside over the Philippines Laoag Mission,²⁵⁷² and Bryan Skelton from Hull was called to preside over the Singapore Mission.²⁵⁷³ In 2008, Clive Richard Jolliffe from Huntingdon was called to preside over the New Zealand Wellington Mission.²⁵⁷⁴ In 2011, Robert Ian Preston from Ashton-Under-Lyne²⁵⁷⁵ was called to preside over the England Manchester Mission.²⁵⁷⁶

Geoffrey D. Mawlam from Lichfield was called as a regional representative in 1989.²⁵⁷⁷ In 1992, J. Roy Caddick from Manchester was called as a regional representative.²⁵⁷⁸ In 1994, Brian Arthur Watling from Colchester was called as a regional representative.²⁵⁷⁹ In 1995, John Maxwell from Clayworth Retford and

²⁵⁶¹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 21 March 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22616/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁵⁶² "The First Presidency has announced the call of six more mission presidents," LDS Church News, 4 April 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22614/The-First-Presidency-has-announced-the-call-of-six-more-mission-presidents.html>

²⁵⁶³ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 30 April 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25056/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁵⁶⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 25 March 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26540/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁵⁶⁵ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 31 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39539/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁵⁶⁶ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 17 February 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39329/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁵⁶⁷ "New and returning mission Presidents," LDS Church News, 10 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39468/New-and-Returning-Mission-Presidents.html>

²⁵⁶⁸ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 1 March 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43307/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁵⁶⁹ "New mission presidents for 105 missions," LDS Church News, 8 March 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43323/New-mission-presidents-for-105-missions.html>

²⁵⁷⁰ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 3 April 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45300/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁵⁷¹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 28 January 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48440/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁵⁷² "New and returning mission presidents," LDS Church News, 4 March 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48593/New-and-returning-mission-presidents.html>

²⁵⁷³ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 18 March 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48645/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁵⁷⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 22 March 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51760/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁵⁷⁵ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 29 January 2011. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/60432/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁵⁷⁶ "New mission presidents by area for 2011," LDS Church News, 19 February 2011. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/60502/New-mission-presidents-by-area-for-2011.html>

²⁵⁷⁷ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 5 August 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18832/New-regional-representatives.html>

²⁵⁷⁸ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 21 March 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22377/New-regional-representatives.html>

²⁵⁷⁹ "New regional representatives," LDS Church News, 23 July 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24462/New-regional-representatives.html>

Brian Watling from Colchester were called as area authorities.²⁵⁸⁰ In 2000, Rowland E. Elvidge from St. Albans was called as an Area Authority Seventy.²⁵⁸¹ In 2002, David S. Baxter from Suffolk was called as an Area Authority Seventy.²⁵⁸² In 2004, Andrew M. Ford from Longborough was called as an Area Authority Seventy.²⁵⁸³ In 2005, Patrick Kearon from Clevedon was called as an Area Seventy.²⁵⁸⁴ In 2006, Stephen C. Kerr from Stirling was called as an Area Seventy.²⁵⁸⁵ In 2010, George R. Donaldson from Denbigshire was called as an Area Seventy.²⁵⁸⁶

In 1990, Kenneth Johnson from Norwich, England was called to the Second Quorum of the Seventy.²⁵⁸⁷ In 2006, Elder David Baxter was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy.²⁵⁸⁸

In 1988, Ralph Pulman from Merthyr Tydfil was called as the London England Temple president.²⁵⁸⁹ In 1993, Arthur J. Turvey from Maidstone was called as the London England Temple president.²⁵⁹⁰ In 1996, Ian D. Swanney from York was called as the London England Temple president²⁵⁹¹ and was called as the Preston England Temple president in 1998. In 1998, Peter Leonard Morley was called as president of the London England Temple.²⁵⁹² In 2000, David Moore Porch from Glasgow was called as the Preston England Temple president.²⁵⁹³ In 2001, George Howell Jones from Chichester was called as the London England Temple president.²⁵⁹⁴ In 2003, John Maxwell from Retford was called as the Preston England Temple president.²⁵⁹⁵ In 2006, Arnold Jones from Merthyr Tydfil was called as the Preston England Temple president.²⁵⁹⁶ In 2007,

²⁵⁸⁰ "Church names area authorities," LDS Church News, 5 August 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26627/Church-names-area-authorities.html>

²⁵⁸¹ "39 Area Authority Seventies called," LDS Church News, 8 April 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37529/39-Area-Authority-Seventies-called.html>

²⁵⁸² "30 Area Authority Seventies sustained," LDS Church News, 13 April 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41666/30-Area-Authority-Seventies-sustained.html>

²⁵⁸³ "Area Authority Seventy called from England," LDS Church News, 26 June 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45776/Area-Authority-Seventy-called-from-England.html>

²⁵⁸⁴ "38 new Area Seventies called, 37 are released," LDS Church News, 9 April 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47147/38-new-Area-Seventies-called-37-are-released.html>

²⁵⁸⁵ "New Area Seventies," LDS Church News, 22 April 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48851/New-Area-Seventies.html>

²⁵⁸⁶ "New Area Seventies," LDS Church News, 24 April 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59238/New-Area-Seventies.html>

²⁵⁸⁷ "Ten new leaders called to 2nd Quorum of Seventy," LDS Church News, 7 April 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20357/Ten-new-leaders-called-to-2nd-Quorum-of-Seventy.html>

²⁵⁸⁸ "Seventies called," LDS Church News, 8 April 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48796/Seventies-called.html>

²⁵⁸⁹ "New temple president," LDS Church News, 13 August 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18057/New-temple-president.html>

²⁵⁹⁰ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 26 June 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23022/New-temple-presidents.html>

²⁵⁹¹ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 22 June 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/28223/New-temple-presidents.html>

²⁵⁹² "New temple president," LDS Church News, 21 March 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31378/New-temple-president.html>

²⁵⁹³ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 30 September 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38537/New-temple-presidents.html>

²⁵⁹⁴ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 22 September 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40530/New-temple-presidents.html>

²⁵⁹⁵ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 23 August 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44235/New-temple-presidents.html>

²⁵⁹⁶ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 12 August 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49314/New-temple-presidents.html>

Michael Robert Fagg from Maldon was called as the London England Temple president.²⁵⁹⁷ In 2010, Charles Raymond Lowry was called as the London England Temple president.²⁵⁹⁸

Temple

Southern England is assigned to the London England Temple district, whereas northern England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales pertain to the Preston England Temple district. The London England and Preston England temples are well utilized as indicated by endowment sessions scheduled hourly from eight in the morning until late in the evening Tuesdays through Fridays and every half hour or forty-five minutes on Saturday mornings and hourly on Saturday afternoons. Most church members in the United Kingdom are within a day's travel to the temple, although travel to the temple is more difficult for members in Scotland and Northern Ireland due to distance. Prospects appear favorable for a future small temple in Scotland over the medium term, pending progress increasing active membership and reversing the trend of congregation closures. A potential temple in Scotland would likely serve five stakes. Additional temples may be constructed in Birmingham, England or Cardiff, Wales due to high rates of temple attendance among active church membership throughout the British Isles and sizeable LDS populations nearby these locations capable of staffing and operating additional temples.

Comparative Growth

The LDS Church in the United Kingdom had the tenth largest number of members, the tenth most congregations, eighth most stakes, and eleventh most missions in the world, although the United Kingdom ranked twenty-second by total population. LDS membership in the United Kingdom accounts for 28% of LDS membership in Europe and the former Soviet Union and is a source of stability and strength for the Church in Europe. Member activity and convert retention rates appear to be among the lowest in Western Europe, as only 2.5% of LDS membership in the United Kingdom is enrolled in seminary and institute compared to 10.2% in Finland, 5% in Germany, 4.4% in Italy, and 3.6% in France. The average number of members per congregation in the United Kingdom is higher than in most of Western Europe. With the exception of Russia, no other European nation has as many LDS missions as the United Kingdom. The LDS Church in the United Kingdom experienced the fifth largest decline in the number of LDS congregations between 2000 and 2010 (–32) after Chile (–260), the Philippines (–57), Guatemala (–36), and Panama (–32). The percentage of the population residing in cities with LDS congregations is representative of most of Western Europe.

Other outreach-minded Christian denominations report similar numbers of converts baptized year to year as the LDS Church but have higher activity and retention rates largely due to greater pre-baptismal preparation and local member-missionary involvement. Seventh Day Adventists reported increasing numbers of convert baptisms and steady congregational growth during the 2000s. There were 1,145 Adventist convert baptisms in 2009.²⁵⁹⁹ Jehovah's Witnesses reported nearly five times as many congregations and approximately four times as many active members as Latter-day Saints in 2010. At that time there were more Jehovah's Witness congregations in the United Kingdom than LDS congregations in all of Europe and Russia. Witnesses baptized 2,600 converts in 2010.²⁶⁰⁰

²⁵⁹⁷ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 22 September 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51069/New-temple-presidents.html>

²⁵⁹⁸ "New temple presidents," LDS Church News, 8 May 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59307/New-temple-presidents.html>

²⁵⁹⁹ "British Union Conference (1986-Present)," www.adventiststatistics.org, retrieved 2 March 2011. http://www.adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldInstID=1530831

²⁶⁰⁰ "Statistics: 2010 Report of Jehovah's Witnesses Worldwide, retrieved 26 April 2011. http://www.watchtower.org/e/statistics/worldwide_report.htm

Future Prospects

The outlook for future LDS Church growth in the United Kingdom is mixed, as low member activity rates, poor convert retention, few local members serving missions, declining receptivity of the general population, and ongoing congregation consolidations threaten the stability and continued progress of the Church. An increased effort by the area presidency in recent years for local congregations and members to be self-sufficient in reactivation, finding, and teaching efforts through implementing missionary activity by ward councils may reverse stagnant growth trends if consistently applied throughout the country, and success will be manifest by the creation of new congregations and stabilization of smaller units. At present, no new stakes appear close to dividing, and a few stakes in England and Scotland may consolidate with neighboring stakes if congregation consolidations continue. Additional temples may be constructed if merited by member activity and temple attendance.

EASTERN EUROPE

Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria,
Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary,
Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova,
Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia,
Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine.

REGIONAL PROFILE

Geography

AREA: 19,417,960 square km. Consisting of eastern areas of the European continent and northern areas of Asia stretching from the Baltic Sea to the northwest, the Mediterranean, Black, and Caspian Seas to the southwest, the Atlantic Ocean to the southeast, and the Arctic Ocean to the north, Eastern Europe and Russian Asia is geographically one of the largest regions in the world primarily due to the vast size of Russia. Temperate climate occurs in most locations, marked by hot summers and cold winters. Some coastal areas in the southeast experience Mediterranean climate due to lower latitude and the sea moderating temperatures. Arctic, semi-arctic, and semi-arid conditions occur in areas of Siberia, coastal areas of the Arctic Ocean, and steppe regions of Russia near Kazakhstan. Flat plains with farmland or temperate forest occupy most of the terrain in Eastern Europe. Predominant mountain ranges include the Alps, Carpathians, Transylvanian Alps, Caucasus, and Urals. Major rivers in the region include the Danube, Dnieper, Dniester, Don, Volga, Irtysh, Ob, Yenisei, Lena, Amur, Oder, and Vistula. Flooding, drought, forest fires, landslides, permafrost, earthquakes, and volcanoes are natural hazards. Environmental issues include pollution, acid rain, deforestation, soil erosion, and groundwater contamination.

Peoples

Russian: 36.2%
Ukrainian: 11.6%
Polish: 11.3%
Romanian: 7%
Hungarian: 3.5%
Greek: 3%
Czech: 2.8%
Serb: 2.5%
Belarusian: 2.4%
Bulgarian: 1.9%
Tatar: 1.6%
Albanian: 1.5%
Slovak: 1.5%
Croat: 1.4%
Lithuanian: 0.9%
Bosniak: 0.7%
Bashkir: 0.5%
Chuvash: 0.5%
Slovene: 0.5%
Latvian: 0.4%
Macedonian: 0.4%
Roma: 0.4%

Estonian: 0.3%
Turk: 0.2%
Other/unknown: 7%

Most ethnic groups in Eastern Europe are Slavic. Turkic ethnic groups are concentrated in Russia and Ukraine (Tatar, Bashkir, Chuvash, and Turk). Romanians and Moldovans descend from the original indigenous inhabitants of Romania (Dacians) and the Romans, whereas Albanians descend from indigenous inhabitants of Albania (Illyrians). Baltic or Finno-Ugric ethnic groups include Hungarians, Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians. Roma originated from India and reside in small communities throughout Eastern Europe.

Population: 334,609,017 (July 2011)
Annual Growth Rate: -0.002% (2011)
Fertility Rate: 1.36 children born per woman (2011)
Life Expectancy: 70.44 male, 78.71 female (2011)

Languages: Russian (38.6%), Polish (11.4%), Ukrainian (10%), Romanian (6.9%), Hungarian (3.5%), Greek (3.2%), Czech (2.9%), Belarusian (2.6%), Serbian (2.6%), Bulgarian (1.8%), Tatar (1.7%), Croatian (1.5%), Albanian (1.4), Slovak (1.4%), other or unknown (10.5%). Languages with over one million native speakers include Russian (129.3 million), Polish (38.2 million), Ukrainian (33.6 million), Romanian (23.3 million), Hungarian (11.7 million), Greek (10.7 million), Czech (9.67 million), Belarusian (8.61 million), Serbian (8.61 million), Bulgarian (6.08 million), Tatar dialects (5.55 million) Croatian (4.86 million), Slovak (4.83 million), Albanian (4.71 million), Lithuanian (2.9 million), Bosnian (2.39 million), Slovenian (1.82 million), Chuvash (1.64 million), Macedonian (1.5 million), Bashkort (1.38 million), Chechen (1.33 million), Latvian (1.28 million), Romani dialects (1.21 million), and Armenian (1.13 million).

Literacy: 91.1%–99.8% (country average: 98.2%)

History

Ancient civilizations and peoples thrived in Southeastern Europe in antiquity, including the Illyrians, Minoans, Mycenaeans, Macedonians, and Thracians. Greece was divided into independent city states during much of the ancient and classical eras. Wars with Persia ensued, and later Greece came under Roman rule by 146 BC. Following Christ's ministry, the Apostle Paul visited Greece several times to proselyze. The Roman Empire conquered most of Southeastern Europe around the birth of Christ and maintained rule for several centuries. The Byzantine Empire ruled much of Southeastern Europe between the fourth and fifteenth centuries and was followed by Ottoman Empire. During this period, Slavic peoples settled areas bordering Central Europe, such as Slovakia and Slovenia. Serbia became an independent empire from the seventh century to the fifteenth century until coming under foreign rule by Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. During this time, Kosovo, which was regarded as the center of Serb culture, was lost to the Ottomans. The first known Russian state was established in 862 in Eastern Europe, which was later superseded by the rise of Kyivan Rus in 962. Based in present-day Ukraine, Kyivan Rus endured as the dominant political power in Eastern Europe until the twelfth century when Mongol invasions weakened the state. Hungary emerged as one of the most powerful nations in Eastern Europe around the first millennium AD and ruled many neighboring nations such as Romania. In the thirteenth century, Lithuania emerged as a powerful state and added territory for the following century, becoming the largest nation in Europe by the end of the fourteenth century. Lithuania allied with Poland in the late fourteenth century and a century later united as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The union was dissolved and incorporated into surrounding nations in 1795. Moscow rose to political and diplomatic power in the early sixteenth century, and Russian territorial claims pushed eastward through military advances, especially under Ivan IV, or "Ivan the Terrible," Russia's first tsar. Russia expanded its territorial holdings eastward and southward during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, annexing the Caucasus and much of Central Asia. Independence from the Ottoman Empire occurred for Greece in 1830, Romania in 1878, Bulgaria in

1908, and Albania in 1912. Several Ukrainian republics achieved short-lived independence in 1917 and 1918 during World War I with revolutions in Austro-Hungary and Russia.

In Russia, the rise of the Bolshevik Party under Vladimir Lenin instigated the 1917 Revolution, which culminated in the removal of Tsar Nicolas II. Lenin's Red army gained total control of Russia despite war with Poland and annexed territory in the Caucasus, Belarus, and Ukraine. In December 1922, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was formed. After World War I and the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Slovaks and Czechs united to create Czechoslovakia. Poland became an independent state but was divided between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in World War II. Lenin died in 1924, and Josef Stalin became the head of the Soviet government. Stalin ruled with an iron fist until his death in 1953 and initiated wide-reaching economic and agricultural policies of centralization, including collectivization of the population to work on state farming and industrial projects. Tens of millions perished from starvation, forced resettlement, and liquidations carried out by the secret police. The Baltic States gained independence after World War I but were annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940. During World War II, Nazi Germany invaded western Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. Communism spread to all nations in Eastern Europe by the mid-1940s, and most nations maintained an isolative stance with the international community and close ties with the Soviet Union until the late twentieth century. During the Cold War era, the Soviet Union and the United States fought several proxy wars, primarily in Asia, aimed at expanding or protecting their respective ideologies and spheres of influence and stockpiled thousands of nuclear weapons. A military dictatorship overtook the Greek government in the 1960s and 1970s until democratic rule was reestablished.

The Soviet Union fought an unsuccessful war in Afghanistan in the 1980s, weakening military might and morale. Economic stagnation occurred during the 1970s. In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev instituted economic and political reforms known as *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, communist rule ended in almost all nations in the region and was succeeded by capitalism and democracy. In Romania, dictator Nicolae Ceausescu ruled for several decades and was known for his oppressive reign and police raids in the 1980s. In 1989, Ceausescu was overthrown and executed. In the Soviet Union, independence movements in subsidiary republics and an attempted coup in Moscow in August 1991 precipitated the dissolution of the Soviet Union into fifteen independent republics, the largest and most populous of which was the Russian Federation. Other Eastern European nations that gained independence from the Soviet Union in the early 1990s included Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova. Boris Yeltsin was elected president of Russia in 1991 and was nearly overthrown in an armed insurrection headed by parliament in 1993 that was blocked by the military. Violence in northern Caucasus republics has continued since the early 1990s, primarily in Chechnya and Ingushetia. In Moldova, the narrow strip of land between the Dneister River and the Ukrainian border named Transnistria broke away from Moldova due to demographic differences with the rest of Moldova, resulting in a civil war in 1992. Transnistria has maintained de facto control of the territory since a cease-fire in 1992 and has an established an independent government, military, and civil institutions. A peaceful division between the Czech Republic and Slovakia occurred in 1993. Slobodan Milosevic became president in Serbia in 1989, and Serbian dominance of political affairs headed by Milosevic resulted in Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina declaring independence in the early 1990s. Wars primarily with Croatia and Bosnia ensued in an effort to unite Serb-dominated areas in other nations into Serbia. In Kosovo, a separatist movement began to take shape in the 1990s that was met by Serbians beginning an aggressive, brutal campaign against Albanians in Kosovo through ethnic cleansing. Approximately 800,000 fled the country, and many died in the conflict. NATO led a three-month military campaign against Serbian forces, and the United Nations established the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo in the late 1990s. Negotiations between Serbian and Kosovo authorities failed in the 2000s and resulted in the formal declaration of independence of Kosovo in February 2008. Montenegro declared independence from Serbia in 2006 following strained relations with Serbia during the Milosevic era.

Several Eastern European nations have joined NATO since the fall of communism, including the Czech

Republic, Hungary, and Poland (1999), Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia (2004), and Albania and Croatia (2009). Greece joined the European Union in 1981. Belarus and Moldova have maintained the strongest ties to communism following the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Culture

Orthodox Christianity is the dominant religious influence in most nations in Eastern Europe, although most do not attend church services regularly. Tradition and local cultural customs and practices are highly valued in most nations in the region. Since the fall of communism, Eastern Europe has entered a period of rediscovery regarding ethnic identity that has contributed to the independence of many former republics of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Many smaller nations are deeply concerned with maintaining unique features of their local cultures and limiting outside cultural influence from the West and Russia. The Catholic Church is the primary religious influence on society in Croatia, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Most of the population is Muslim in Albania and Kosovo although few Muslims are observant. Communism and cultural emphasis on education have resulted in high rates of literacy and an interest in and love for learning throughout the region. Many nations possess a proud history of poetry, medieval literature, theater, and art. As one of the world's most powerful nations with one of the world's most influential cultures for centuries, Russia has heavily influenced the development of culture throughout Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and, to a lesser extent, the Far East and Western Europe. Music, art, literature, philosophy, sports, science, and architecture are proud Russian traditions. Poland has produced many well-known individuals who have significantly contributed to science, music, and religion, such as Nicolaus Copernicus, Frederick Chopin, and Pope John Paul II. Secularism is the primary influence on society in several nations in western Eastern Europe, such as the Czech Republic and Estonia. In the Baltic States, Russian, Scandinavian, German, and indigenous practices influence local culture. The history of communism strongly influenced local culture in Albania and some other Southeastern European nations. In the Balkans, Eastern and Western cultural and religious influences met and mixed with local cultures, resulting in traditions and practices from both spheres of influence represented in contemporary culture. Tensions between differing ethno-religious groups have been intense in the Balkans, resulting in the fragmentation of Yugoslavia into seven nations today. Used as the script for most Slavic languages, the Cyrillic alphabet traces its origins to Bulgaria during the ninth century AD. Commonly eaten foods in the region include rye breads, grains, dairy products, potatoes, vegetables, and fish. Cigarette and alcohol consumption rates are among the highest in the world. Divorce rates in Eastern Europe are higher than world averages. Abortion is common as a method of birth control in most of the former Soviet Union and in several other Eastern European nations and is socially accepted.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$14,700 national median (2011) [31% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.760

Corruption Index: 3.9

Nearly all nations in Eastern Europe transitioned from a centrally-planned, command economy to a capitalist, free-market economy in the 1990s but faced significant challenges integrating into Europe as a whole, combating corruption, and effectively privatizing state-owned enterprises. Consequently, nations that have made the smoothest transition have generally experienced the greatest growth and development and the highest standards of living. Nations bordering Western European nations, such as Slovenia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland, have experienced some of the greatest and most sustained economic growth due to successful integration with Europe and lower corruption rates. Many nations in the region experienced economic growth from the 1990s to the late 2000s until the global financial crisis took a disastrous toll on the Baltic States and several other nations in the region. In the early 2010s, many nations had begun to recover from the crisis. Additional challenges that have lessened economic growth prospects in the region have included aging country infrastructure, ineffective economic policies, unemployment, civil war and other

conflicts in the Balkans in the 1990s, and internal instability in areas like Chechnya. Services employ over 50% of the workforce in most countries. Major industries include car and vehicle manufacturing, wood products, machinery, mining, natural gas, petroleum, chemicals, plastics, telecommunications, electronics, textiles, tourism, food processing, shipbuilding, military defense, electricity, and printing. Grains, sugar beets, potatoes, vegetables, tobacco, fruit, sunflower seeds, fish, livestock, olives, eggs, and poultry are common agricultural products. Primary trade partners with Eastern Europe are concentrated in Europe but also include Turkey, China, and Taiwan.

Corruption is perceived as widespread and pervasive throughout the region with a few exceptions such as Estonia and Slovenia. In Albania, organized crime networks are well established. Perceptions of corruption are strongest for customs, tax officials, and some ministers.²⁶⁰¹ In Belarus, the government is highly centralized. Corruption is a serious problem that appears to be worsening. Low transparency has made it difficult to assess the scope of corruption in Belarus. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, corruption is perceived as widespread and present in all areas of government and society, especially natural resource extraction, customs, public utilities, the judicial system, and taxes. In Bulgaria, organized crime and accusations of corruption among public officials continue to deter economic growth and stability. In Croatia, accusations of corruption among government officials with military ties are a concern. Smuggling and organized crime are widespread, as illegal drugs, workers, and weapons are trafficked from Eastern Europe and the Middle East to Western Europe. In Greece, bribery allegedly occurs frequently, usually involving doctor fees, building permits, and tax evasion.²⁶⁰² In Hungary, corruption with police may be the most severe due to the amount of freedom law enforcement has in charging and ignoring crime. Many crimes go unreported. In Lithuania, most are prepared to pay a bribe to resolve an issue, and those working in business report that corruption hurt their business. Customs, police, health care, and tax officials are considered the most corrupt.²⁶⁰³ In Macedonia, bribery in customs and law enforcement has been a major issue. In Montenegro, the lack of anti-corruption legislation, organized crime, and alleged corruption ties to some political figures are ongoing challenges. In Moldova, corruption is most widespread for obtaining visas and in law enforcement. Transnistria has continued to distance itself from Moldova due to its predominantly Russian and Ukrainian-speaking population. Drug trafficking, human trafficking and other illegal activities often enter Central Europe through Moldova or Transnistria. In Romania, investigating higher ranking government officials on corruption charges has been difficult due to protection offered by the judicial system. Many Romanians report regularly paying bribes. In Russia, corruption is perceived as widespread and present in all areas of society and government. Human trafficking for the commercial sexual exploitation of women and children and the forced labor of men and women that targets rural populations and migrants from neighboring nations, particularly in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and North Korea is an ongoing concern. Government officials have done little to address the issue and pass legislation to provide assistance to victims of human trafficking. Russia is a major supplier of some chemicals used to produce synthesized drugs such as heroin and is a major consumer of opiates. Illicit drug trafficking is a major concern, as Russia is a transshipment point for opiates, cocaine, and cannabis. In Serbia, a survey of 601 individuals in March 2010 found that at least 80% of Serbians believed that political parties were corrupt, 54% paid bribes to doctors for treatment, and 19% paid bribes to law enforcement.²⁶⁰⁴ In Slovakia, bribes to obtain medical care and higher education are commonly paid. Many report corruption in the judicial system.²⁶⁰⁵ In Ukraine, the Orange Revolution in 2004 brought increased awareness and initiative to fight corruption, but

²⁶⁰¹ "Corruption in Albania 2009," Institute of Development, Research, and Alternatives, 2009. <http://www.idra-al.org/cs2009/Corruption%20in%20Albania%202009%20-%20Summary%20of%20Findings.pdf>

²⁶⁰² Gerboin, Lydie. "Survey says Greek bribery up," Transparency Watch, February 2009. http://www.transparency.org/publications/newsletter/2009/february_2009/anti_corruption_work/bribes_in_greece

²⁶⁰³ Seskauskas, Tomas. "Fight against corruption in the Republic of Lithuania," retrieved 16 April 2010. <http://www.lrti.go.kr/repository/eng/data/flaw/lithuania.pdf>

²⁶⁰⁴ "New survey on corruption in Serbia," B92 News, retrieved 27 May 2010. http://www.b92.net/eng/news/society-article.php?yyyy=2010&mm=05&dd=25&nav_id=67351

²⁶⁰⁵ "Corruption in Slovakia," retrieved 6 May 2010. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWBIGOVANTCOR/Resources/slovrep44.pdf>

administrative corruption remains a major deterrent to foreign investment and economic development. Most tax and customs privileges were eliminated in a March 2005 budget law, bringing more economic activity out of Ukraine's large shadow economy, but more improvements are needed, including fighting corruption, developing capital markets, and improving the legislative framework. A small number of elite cartels control most the large businesses and industries. The general public typically tolerates corruption and downplays its significance. Government lacks transparency and a system of checks and balances to fight and prevent corruption. Money laundering has been a problem that has seen some improvement. Illegal drugs are frequently trafficked through Ukraine for distribution worldwide.

Faiths

Christian: 80.4%

Muslim: 7.7%

Buddhist: 0.4%

Jewish: 0.1%

Other/unknown/none: 11.4%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Orthodox 197,800,000

Roman and Greek Catholics 63,820,000

Jehovah's Witnesses 613,307 8,124

Seventh Day Adventists 245,265 3,900

Latter-day Saints 56,000 292

Religion

Claiming four-fifths of the regional population, Christianity is the dominant religion in Eastern Europe, as Christians account for the majority in sixteen of the twenty-two Eastern European nations. Overall religious observance and church attendance rates are low, as many are nominally Christian. Ninety-five percent (95%) of more of the population in Romania, Moldova, Greece, Ukraine, and Belarus is Christian. Christians account for the smallest percentage of the population in Kosovo (12%), Estonia (27.8%), and the Czech Republic (28.9%). Nearly three-quarters of Christians follow one of the various Orthodox traditions, whereas most of the remaining quarter are Roman or Greek Catholic. Roman Catholic populations in Poland, Slovakia, and several other Eastern European nations exhibit moderate rates of religious participation that exceeds their counterparts in most Western European nations. Protestant denominations operate in all nations in the region and constitute only 1 or 2% of the population in most countries. Muslims are the second largest religious group in the region, comprising the majority in Kosovo (88%) and Albania (70%) with sizeable minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Russia, and Bulgaria. Some Turkic groups in Russia and Ukraine are ethnically Muslim, such as the Tatar. Fifty percent (50%) or more of the population in Estonia, the Czech Republic, and Latvia are nonreligious or do not identify with a religious tradition. Buddhists comprise the majority or a large minority in some areas of Siberia bordering Mongolia. Few Jews remain in the region due to the Holocaust and immigration to Israel.

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom in nearly all nations in Eastern Europe at present, although governments and societies in several nations have restricted religious practice. There are no significant governmental or societal restrictions or abuses of religious freedom reported in Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, the

Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, or Slovenia. Missionary-focused nontraditional Christian denominations report marginalization in most of these nations, however. Traditional Christian denominations receive preferential treatment by the government or have strongly influenced government policy regarding religious freedom in Belarus, Croatia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, and Serbia, often resulting in limited religious freedom for minority groups.

Restrictions and infringements on religious freedom have been most severe in Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Russia, and Ukraine. In Belarus, the registration of religious communities for some denominations (mainly Protestants) has taken years to accomplish. Foreign religious groups and personnel are viewed with contempt and experience the most harassment. Only registered religious groups can actively follow their beliefs and practices. The 2002 law regulates the importation and distribution of religious literature by requiring prior government approval. Foreigners cannot lead congregations, and open proselytism is forbidden. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are no restrictions on proselytism, but a religious group must have at least 300 adult citizen members to register with the government. Religious minorities report frequent societal abuse of religious freedom, and many who commit religious hate crimes go unpunished.²⁶⁰⁶ In Greece, religious groups generally worship and assemble freely, but public proselytism is prohibited, and missionaries are frequently arrested on charges of proselytism. In Russia, there have been reports of harassment of religious minorities by law enforcement, ongoing property disputes, difficulties for many religious communities to obtain land, construct, or operate meetinghouses, and societal abuse of religious freedom that have included beatings, persecution, damage to meetinghouses, discrimination, and intimidation. Societal abuse of religious freedom has targeted non-Orthodox religions.²⁶⁰⁷ In Ukraine, minority religious groups report unequal treatment by local officials, and sometimes experience difficulty registering congregations or constructing church buildings in new areas.²⁶⁰⁸

Largest Cities

Urban: low (Moldova—47%); high (Belarus—75%)

Moscow, St. Petersburg, Athens, Kiev, Budapest, Katowice, Warsaw, Bucharest, Minsk, Nizhniy Novgorod, Belgrade, Kharkov, Yekaterinburg, Novosibirsk, Donetsk, Prague, Volgograd, Dnepropetrovsk, Chelyabinsk, Samara, Sofia, Rostov-na-Donu, Kazan, Omsk, Saratov, Odessa, Perm, Ufa, Krasnoyarsk.

All twenty-nine cities with over one million inhabitants have an LDS congregation. Nineteen percent (19%) of the regional population resides in the twenty-nine most populous cities.

LDS History

LDS missionaries first established the Church in a few locations in Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Missionaries first visited Poland in 1892. A Swedish LDS missionary visited St. Petersburg, Russia in 1895 and baptized the Lindelof family, the first known LDS convert baptism in Eastern Europe. LDS missionary Mischa Markow preached in several Eastern and Central European nations including Romania in the late 1890s. The first missionary preached in Serbia in 1899. Official missionary work began in Czechoslovakia in the 1920s when the Church obtained permission to operate and the country was dedicated for missionary work. By 1950, all LDS missionary activity ceased in Eastern Europe. A couple of branches

²⁶⁰⁶ "Bosnia and Herzegovina," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127302.htm>

²⁶⁰⁷ "Russia," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148977.htm>

²⁶⁰⁸ "Ukraine," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127342.htm>

continued to operate in Poland and a Czechoslovakia. The Church officially registered with the Polish government in 1961, but by 1971 the last operating LDS branch in Poland was discontinued due to the heavy emigration of members. The first LDS congregation in Greece was organized in the 1960s,²⁶⁰⁹ and the country was dedicated for missionary work in 1972.²⁶¹⁰ Full-time missionaries began serving in Greece in 1986.²⁶¹¹ LDS Church President Spencer W. Kimball dedicated Poland for missionary work in 1977. Senior missionary couples began serving in Poland in 1977, and the first young missionaries were assigned in 1988.²⁶¹² Kresimir Cosic, a popular Croatian basketball player who joined the Church in the 1970s, helped raise awareness of the Church and its teachings in Yugoslavia.²⁶¹³ In 1981, the first Yugoslav convert was called as a missionary.²⁶¹⁴ In 1983 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, the first senior couple missionaries were assigned, and a branch was organized.

The LDS Church entered most Eastern European nations between 1987 and 1993. The Church obtained official recognition in Hungary in 1987, dedicated Hungary for missionary work, and assigned full-time missionaries shortly thereafter.²⁶¹⁵ The first Russian natives were baptized into the LDS Church in the 1980s in Europe, primarily in Finland and Hungary. The first convert baptism in Russia in modern times occurred in St. Petersburg in early 1989.²⁶¹⁶ To receive recognition for a congregation to formally operate, the Church had to have at least twenty adult Soviet citizen members in a single political district, which the Church gradually accumulated over time.²⁶¹⁷ Elder Nelson rededicated Russia for missionary work in St. Petersburg on April 26, 1990, near the location where Russia was originally dedicated for missionary work in 1903. Registration for the first LDS congregation was obtained in September 1990 in St. Petersburg. At the time, missionary work and church meetings were conducted in private in members' apartments.²⁶¹⁸ The first baptism in Estonia occurred in December 1989, and the first branch was organized in 1990 for Russian and Estonian speakers. In 1990, missionary work began in Ukraine, in 1991 the first official congregation was organized in Kyiv, and the country was dedicated for missionary work.²⁶¹⁹ That same year the first LDS missionaries were assigned to Romania, and the country was dedicated for missionary work.²⁶²⁰ In Czechoslovakia, the Church gained official recognition, rededicated the country, and again assigned missionaries in 1990.²⁶²¹ Bulgaria was dedicated for missionary work, and the first full-time missionaries arrived that same year. The first missionaries were assigned to Albania in 1990. The first missionaries arrived in Slovenia in November 1990 and, by March 1991, the Church obtained legal recognition. The first proselytizing missionaries were assigned to Serbia in 1992. Missionaries were first assigned to Latvia and Lithuania in 1992, and the following year both nations were dedicated for missionary work. By 1993, Belarus was dedicated for missionary work, and full-time

²⁶⁰⁹ "Greece," Country Profiles, retrieved 18 March 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/greece>

²⁶¹⁰ "Meetinghouse is dedicated, first in Greece," LDS Church News, 12 June 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35907/Meetinghouse-is-dedicated-first-in-Greece.html>

²⁶¹¹ Kinnear, John G. "Bearing testimony where Paul preached," LDS Church News, 4 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29423/Bearing-testimony-where-Paul-preached.html>

²⁶¹² "Eight new missions announced," LDS Church News, 3 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19805/Eight-new-missions-announced.html>

²⁶¹³ Cimerman, Dora Glassford. "First for LDS in Slovenia," LDS Church News, 28 October 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49676/First-for-LDS-in-Slovenia.html>

²⁶¹⁴ Rogerson, Kenneth S. "Radmila Ranovic: Finding Out for Herself," *Tambuli*, Sep 1991, 23.

²⁶¹⁵ "Meetinghouse dedicated in Hungary," LDS Church News, 11 November 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19244/Meetinghouse-dedicated-in-Hungary.html>

²⁶¹⁶ "History of Church in Russian republic," LDS Church News, 16 November 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20772/History-of-Church-in-Russian-republic.html>

²⁶¹⁷ Avant, Gerry. "Russia: An opening door," LDS Church News, 13 July 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20679/Russia-An-opening-door.html>

²⁶¹⁸ "Registration of Leningrad Branch approved," LDS Church News, 29 September 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20180/Registration-of-Leningrad-Branch-approved.html>

²⁶¹⁹ "Two republics in U.S.S.R are dedicated," LDS Church News, 28 September 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20974/Two-republics-in-U.S.S.R-are-dedicated.html>

²⁶²⁰ Gaunt, LaRene Porter. "The Church in Romania," *Ensign*, Jun 2001, 30.

²⁶²¹ Mehr, Kahlile. "Czech Saints: A Brighter Day," *Ensign*, Aug 1994, 46.

missionaries were assigned. In the mid-1990s, American military personnel were stationed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1995, Siberia was opened to missionary work, and the first convert baptisms took place.²⁶²² The first LDS congregation was organized in Moldova in 1997.²⁶²³ In 2000, most of Eastern Europe was assigned to the newly organized Europe East Area with headquarters based in Moscow.²⁶²⁴ The first convert baptisms in Kosovo occurred in 2006. The LDS Church dedicated Slovakia for missionary work in 2006 and registered with the government. In 2010, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Montenegro were dedicated for missionary work.²⁶²⁵ In 2010, the Church organized administrative branches for the four Balkan nations without an official LDS presence in preparation for opening these nations to missionary work. By June 2011, two independent LDS congregations were organized in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Pristina, Kosovo, and the first full-time missionaries were assigned to Kosovo. In 2012, the first young proselytizing missionaries were assigned to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Montenegro.

Missions

Organized in 1929 from the German-Austrian Mission, the Czechoslovak Mission was the first LDS mission headquartered in Eastern Europe in the present-day Czech Republic and Slovakia. The mission closed in 1950 as a result of government policies banning proselytism and foreign missionary service. In 1987, the Austria Vienna East Mission [relocated to Ukraine Kyiv in 1992] was organized to administer Southeastern Europe, southeastern portions of the Soviet Union, and eastern bloc nations, such as Poland and Hungary. In 1990, the Finland Helsinki East Mission [relocated to Russia Moscow in 1992] was organized to administer most of western Russia and the Baltic States. Additional missions were organized in Hungary Budapest (1990), Poland Warsaw (1990), Bulgaria Sofia (1991), Russia St. Petersburg (1992), Latvia Riga (1993) [renamed Baltic in 2002], Romania Bucharest (1993), Russia Samara (1993), Ukraine Donetsk (1993), Russia Novosibirsk (1994), Russia Rostov-na-Donu (1994), Russia Yekaterinburg (1995), Albania Tirana [renamed Adriatic South in 2012] (1996), Austria Vienna South [relocated to Slovenia Ljubljana in 1999, renamed Adriatic North and relocated to Zagreb, Croatia in 2012] (1996), Russia Moscow South [renamed Russia Moscow West in 2006] (1997), Vladivostok (1999), and Ukraine Dnepropetrovsk (2007). The number of missions in Eastern Europe increased from two in 1990 to seventeen in 2000 and eighteen in 2010. In 2012, the Church consolidated the Russia Moscow and Russia Moscow West Missions into a single mission. In 2013, a new mission was organized in Lviv, Ukraine.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 56,000 (2012)

There appeared to be fewer than 1,000 Latter-day Saints in Eastern Europe prior to 1990. Membership increased rapidly as an LDS presence was established in many nations in the region during the early 1990s. There were 8,300 Latter-day Saints in Eastern Europe in 1993 increasing to 23,000 in 1997, 34,718 in 2000, 47,350 in 2005, and 53,800 in 2010. Among countries with an LDS presence in 2000, membership grew most rapidly between 2000 and 2010 in Moldova (328%), Albania (125%), and Latvia (117%), whereas membership grew the most slowly in Belarus (31%), the Czech Republic (36%), and Hungary (37%). The ratio of LDS membership to the general population varies significantly throughout Eastern Europe. The ratio of LDS members to the general population is one Latter-day Saint per 3,000 or less in Estonia (one in 1,230), Albania (one in 1,509), Latvia (one in 2,001), and Hungary (one in 2,106) and greater than one in 30,000

²⁶²² Rosen, Michael S. Von. "Handcart trek in Siberia—a demonstration of faith," LDS Church News, 8 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29360/Handcart-trek-in-Siberia—a-demonstration-of-faith.html>

²⁶²³ "Moldova," LDS Newsroom, retrieved 11 February 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/moldova>

²⁶²⁴ Lloyd, Scott. "European continent realigned into three new areas," LDS Church News, 16 September 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38475/European-continent—realigned-into-three-new-areas.html>

²⁶²⁵ Avant, Gerry. "Elder Nelson pronounces blessings on six Balkan nations," LDS Church News, 23 September 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59902/Elder-Nelson-pronounces-blessings-on-six-Balkan-nations.html>

in Bosnia and Herzegovina (one in 100,000), Macedonia (one in 85,000), and Kosovo (one in 35,000). LDS membership is greater than 10,000 in only two countries: Russia (21,023) and Ukraine (10,880). In 2010, one in 6,200 was nominally LDS in Eastern Europe.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 19 Branches: 288 Groups: 10+ (2010)

There were less than thirty LDS congregations in Eastern Europe prior to 1990. By 1993, there were 136 branches in the region. The number of LDS congregations increased to 259 in 1997 and 296 in 2000. There were 294 congregations in 2005 and 307 in June 2011.

The first stake to be organized in Eastern Europe was the Kyiv Ukraine Stake in 2004. As of March 2013, only three additional stakes had been organized in the region: in Budapest, Hungary (2006), Moscow, Russia (2011), and St. Petersburg, Russia (2012). The first districts in Eastern Europe were organized in Greece, Poland, Romania, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, and Croatia prior to 1983. The first districts were organized in Hungary in the late 1980s, Slovenia and Serbia in 1992, Russia in 1993, Ukraine and Belarus in the mid-1990s, Estonia in 1997, Latvia and Lithuania in 1998, Albania in 1999, and Moldova in 2009. The sole LDS district in Greece was discontinued in the mid-1990s. The number of districts in the region numbered two in 1980, nineteen in 1993, thirty-two in 1997, thirty-six in 2000 and in 2005, and thirty-five in June 2011.

Activity and Retention

The number of active members per branch varies from as few as ten in the smallest branches to as many as one hundred. The number of active members in wards generally varies between 50 and 120. Member activity rates differ by country, as countries with no full-time missionaries assigned and a more recent church establishment experience the greatest restrictions on proselytism and exhibit higher member activity rates of 30%–50% of nominal church membership, whereas countries in which there has been a longer established LDS presence, no restrictions on the activities of foreign missionaries, and freedom to publicly proselyte member activity rates generally range from 15%–35%. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Montenegro appear to have the highest member activity rates (50%), but each nation had fewer than one hundred members in 2010. Slovakia appears to have the highest member activity rate among nations with over one hundred members (40%). Croatia (15%) and Serbia (17%) appear to have the lowest member activity rates. Active LDS membership in Eastern Europe is estimated at 13,200, or 24% of total church membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Russian, Polish, Ukrainian, Romanian, Hungarian, Greek, Czech, Serbian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Albanian, Slovak, Lithuanian, Slovenian, Latvian, Armenian (East), Estonian.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in Russian, Polish, Ukrainian, Romanian, Hungarian, Greek, Czech, Bulgarian, Croatian, Albanian, Lithuanian, Latvian, and Armenian (East). A wide selection of church materials and the Book of Mormon is available in Serbian, Slovenian, and Slovak. Many church materials are translated into Macedonian. A few church materials are translated into Belarusian. The *Liahona* magazine has monthly issues in Russian and Ukrainian, bimonthly issues in Hungarian, four issues a year in Polish, Romanian, Czech, Bulgarian, Albanian, and Armenian (East), two issues a year in Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian, and one issue a year in Greek, Croatian, and Slovenian.

Meetinghouses

There were approximately 250 LDS meetinghouses in Eastern Europe in mid-2011. Most congregations meet

in renovated buildings and rented spaces. Several church-built chapels service congregations in the region, primarily those with larger numbers of active members. Newly organized branches and groups at times meet in rented spaces or in members' homes.

Health and Safety

Several nations in Eastern Europe have presented safety concerns for LDS missionaries and members, although most have improved in the 2000s. In Russia, two LDS missionaries serving in Saratov were kidnapped for four days and were safely released in 1998.²⁶²⁶ That same year, a group of drunken men stabbed one missionary to death and wounded another in Ufa.²⁶²⁷ In the late 1990s, two missionaries in the Russia Novosibirsk Mission were assaulted in their apartment, and one was injected with an unknown substance that was later found to be novocaine once he returned to the United States. Missionaries serving in the Russia Samara Mission in 2011 reported that they were not allowed to enter some neighborhoods or cities because of threats of violence. In Serbia, threats directed at Americans have resulted in many precautionary evacuations of full-time missionaries, most of whom are from North America. In early 2010, two missionaries died by natural gas asphyxiation in their apartment while sleeping in Romania.²⁶²⁸

Humanitarian and Development Work

Nearly 330 humanitarian and development projects have been carried out by the LDS Church in Eastern Europe, over one hundred of which were in Russia. Additional countries that have had sizeable number of projects completed include Ukraine (53), Belarus (49), Moldova (28), Romania (23), and Albania (20).²⁶²⁹ Nearly all nations in the region have received some LDS humanitarian and development assistance. In Russia, activities have included the donation of clothing, computers, furniture, and medical equipment to orphanages, hospitals, and local aid organizations,²⁶³⁰ in addition to numerous local service initiatives. Many of the projects completed in Ukraine have consisted of medical equipment donations.²⁶³¹ Projects in Belarus have primarily consisted of donations of wheelchairs, clothing, hygiene kits, washing machines, kitchen appliances, and medical equipment.²⁶³² Donations of wheelchairs, crutches, clothing, appliances, and hygiene kits have comprised most LDS humanitarian activity in Moldova.²⁶³³ In Romania, LDS-sponsored projects have included donating wheelchairs, home appliances, furniture, emergency relief, and school supplies.²⁶³⁴ Donations of medical equipment, wheelchairs, school supplies, and household appliances have comprised the majority of projects completed in Albania.

²⁶²⁶ Dockstader, Julie A. "Kidnapped missionaries safe; two arrested," LDS Church News, 28 March 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31544/Kidnapped-missionaries-safe-two-arrested.html>

²⁶²⁷ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Whole Church will feel, mourn loss of missionary," LDS Church News, 24 October 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31366/Whole-Church-will-feel-mourn-loss-of-missionary.html>

²⁶²⁸ Holman, Marianne. "Two missionaries die in Romania," LDS Church News, 2 February 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/58738/Two-missionaries-die-in-Romania.html>

²⁶²⁹ "Locations—Europe," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 8 June 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-5,00.html>

²⁶³⁰ "Projects—Russia," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 15 March 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-9,00.html>

²⁶³¹ "Projects—Ukraine," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 14 June 2010. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-26,00.html>

²⁶³² "Projects—Belarus," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 8 June 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-20,00.html>

²⁶³³ "Projects—Moldova," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 8 June 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-31,00.html>

²⁶³⁴ "Projects—Romania," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 9 June 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-39,00.html>

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The LDS Church benefits from full religious freedom in most nations in Eastern Europe, as members and foreign full-time missionaries may openly proselyte, worship, and assemble. The Church experiences mild to moderate societal discrimination in most nations in the region. Among countries with an official LDS presence, past governmental and societal restrictions on religious freedom have most heavily impacted the operations of the LDS Church in Belarus, Bulgaria, Greece, Moldova, Russia, Serbia, and Ukraine. In Belarus, foreign missionaries are prohibited from teaching in church meetings, leading congregations, and wearing nametags. Members must provide missionaries with referrals, as missionaries are not permitted to proselyte. Little time is spent teaching investigators or strengthening members, as missionaries provide humanitarian service. Whereas missionaries served in several large cities in the 1990s, missionaries are presently only registered in Minsk and are not allowed to be assigned elsewhere. The law requires at least twenty members over age eighteen to hold Church services as a religious community, and so many small groups are unable to hold public meetings. In 2004, two American missionaries accused of illegally proselytizing in Mogilev, Belarus, were expelled.²⁶³⁵ In Bulgaria, there have been instances of full-time missionaries being prohibited from proselytizing in some cities and physically beaten, some LDS meetinghouses have been vandalized, and the media has perpetuated negative news stories about the LDS Church. In Greece, missionaries have been arrested by police many times in the past two decades. Although legal issues have not noticeably limited the Church's progress in Greece, societal pressures have limited growth severely. In Moldova, the Church faced many setbacks obtaining official recognition, assigning missionaries, and establishing congregations over the past two decades due to government legislation and persecution from other religious groups. By early 2010, these challenges had significantly improved, but the religious and political atmospheres present ongoing challenges. In Russia, the LDS Church has experienced significant religious freedom and meaningful government cooperation in recent years, but nonetheless government regulations mandating that foreign religious workers must leave Russia every ninety days pose major financial, logistical, and administrative challenges as the Church relies heavily on nonnative full-time missionaries to staff its seven missions. There have been past incidents in Russia where LDS missionaries have been detained without clear cause, and local authorities have refused to register LDS congregations and permit the construction of LDS meetinghouses. Infringements on religious freedom and political instability have prevented the establishment of the Church in some currently unreached regions. In Serbia, the LDS Church does not appear to be registered with the government, and societal persecution and discrimination directed towards the LDS Church has been ongoing. In Ukraine, missionaries in the past have experienced harassment in some cities and were forced to serve elsewhere. Recently, there appears to be greater local government tolerance towards the LDS Church and its missionary efforts, although challenges in some areas continue. Foreign LDS missionaries serving in Ukraine are required to leave the country every ninety days to renew their religious worker visas, resulting in significant disruptions.

There have been no legal significant barriers preventing church establishment in Kosovo, Macedonia, and Montenegro and the assignment of full-time missionaries for the past decade. Concerns over the political stability of the region, low living standards, and potentially low receptivity based on trends in surrounding nations have likely delayed the placement of full-time LDS missionaries in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Montenegro until 2012. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, religious groups must have at least 300 adult citizen members to register, a number unattainable at present. Limited LDS Church operations occur in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

²⁶³⁵ "Belarus expels two Mormons for 'illegal missionary activity,'" Associated Press, 25 October 2004. <http://www.religion-newsblog.com/9104>

Cultural Issues

Secularism is a major challenge for church growth. Teaching investigators and members the importance of weekly church attendance and living gospel teachings and ensuring that gospel habits are firmly established can be challenging, as many Eastern Europeans have never actively participated in religion. Increasing secularism in recent years from materialism and cultural influence from Western Europe has also likely contributed to declining receptivity. Many initially receptive individuals were shepherded into other Christian denominations during the 1990s. Strong ethno-religious ties create major obstacles for LDS missionaries to find, teach, and baptize converts and for active members to cope with often hostile and unsupportive family and friends who consider conversion from their traditional faith as a dishonor to one's ethnicity and country. Many converts are ostracized from their communities for joining the LDS Church, and some become inactive to please their families and friends, as many hold negative views and misconceptions of the LDS Church. Recently arrived Christian groups are often viewed with suspicion and skepticism, and the LDS Church is often viewed as an American institution. Societal intolerance for non-Orthodox Christians is most intense in Greece and is the primary barrier to LDS outreach and church growth today. Low ethnic and religious diversity and strong association between cultural identity and religious affiliation has likely contributed to low receptivity in some Eastern European nations like Poland, Serbia, and Croatia. A revitalization of traditional Christian denominations throughout Eastern Europe since the early 1990s has reduced receptivity to the LDS Church and other proselytizing Christian denominations, as ties between ethnicity and religious affiliation have been strengthened. Abortion as a means of birth control is commonplace and is opposed to LDS teachings. Those who have participated in an abortion generally must be interviewed by a member of the mission presidency to be considered for baptism. Other common lifestyle practices such as casual sexual relations test many local Latter-day Saints' beliefs and testimonies and present additional barriers to overcome for many prospective members. High cigarette and alcohol consumption rates indicate that potential converts may struggle with overcoming addictive behaviors and habits prior to baptism. Some converts who relapse are a source of convert attrition. High divorce rates in many nations in the region challenge LDS efforts to instill greater importance on the family unit and bring full families into the Church. Developing LDS teaching approaches that are tailored to the background of nominal Christians and nonreligious individuals is warranted in order to improve the effectiveness of mission outreach and enhance investigator and convert understanding of LDS teachings.

There are some cultural characteristics in subregions of Eastern Europe that have benefited LDS mission outreach, such as greater tolerance for other Christian denominations in the Baltic States, widespread curiosity about religion in the 1990s, opportunities for humanitarian and development work, and cultural emphasis on learning and knowledge. Since the opening of most nations in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s, receptivity has continued to decline, and conditions for missionary activity have become more challenging. The greatest opportunities to take advantage of more favorable cultural conditions and higher receptivity are in nations with higher levels of religious plurality, such as the Baltic States and Hungary, nations with large numbers of nominal Muslims and lower standards of living, such as Albania and Kosovo, and nations with sizeable numbers of unreached ethnic minorities, such as Russia.

National Outreach

Eastern Europe experiences mediocre levels of mission outreach, as 30% of the regional population resides in cities with LDS congregations. Provided with the percentage of the population residing in cities with LDS congregations, Estonia (47%), Bulgaria (44%), and Croatia (43%) are the most reached nations in the region, whereas Kosovo (9%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (15%), and Slovakia (16%) are the least reached. LDS Church operations in Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Montenegro are the most limited due to a lack of native members and the recent arrival of missionaries. Unlike most regions with countries that experience significant restrictions on religious freedom, all countries in Eastern Europe have at least one LDS congregation.

The percentage of the population reached by LDS mission outreach in Eastern European nations is correlated with the duration of LDS missionary activity, the size of the national population, receptivity, and the percentage of the population residing in urban locations. Countries that have received LDS outreach the longest, have the smallest populations, exhibit the highest receptivity, and support the most urbanized populations are generally the most reached by the LDS Church. Estonia is the most reached nation in the region largely due to its small population of 1.3 million concentrated in the three most populous cities with LDS congregations, long duration of LDS outreach, and modest receptivity. Hungary is the only nation in the region with over nine million inhabitants in which 40% or more of the population resides in cities with LDS outreach. Success in extending national outreach to moderate levels in Hungary has occurred through widespread religious freedom, sustained receptivity higher than most nations in the region, the expansion of LDS missionary outreach for over two decades, the strength and maturity of local leadership manpower, relatively small geographic size, and vision by mission leaders to open additional cities to missionary work. In contrast, Poland and Serbia are the two nations with over five million inhabitants that have LDS congregations operating in cities populated by 20% or less of the national population. Inconsistent mission outreach in some cities, a large population, low receptivity, moderate levels of urbanization, and inadequate numbers of local priesthood leaders have contributed to the poor degree of outreach in Poland, whereas inconsistent mission outreach for the country as a whole, low receptivity, moderate rates of urbanization, few priesthood holders, societal discrimination, extended periods of missionary withdrawal due to the Balkan conflict, and strained relations with the United States have contributed to the low level of outreach in Serbia. Mission leaders have opened a single additional city to missionary work in several nations over the past decade, such as Novo Mesto in Slovenia, but many of these cities have closed due to few or no convert baptisms. Past efforts that have been overall fruitless may dissuade the opening of additional cities by mission leaders.

The greatest opportunities for expanding national outreach are in nations that have exhibited the highest receptivity to the LDS Church or in nations that have large populations and exhibit modest to moderate receptivity, namely the Baltic States, Hungary, Albania, Russia, and Ukraine. Distance from members' homes to church meetinghouse locations has been a challenge for growth, and organizing additional congregations when possible can improve activity rates and expand outreach. Holding cottage meetings in lesser-reached or unreached cities provides opportunities for local members to invite and introduce friends and family to the Church in a less formal atmosphere and for mission and local leaders to gauge receptivity and outreach prospects. Establishing groups and dependent branches often fosters local leadership sustainability if full-time missionary involvement in administrative duties is limited and only a single missionary companionship is assigned to a dependent unit. LDS Internet outreach has occurred in many countries in the region with country websites in local languages that provide information on meeting times and locations for congregations, contact information for full-time missionaries, explanations of church practices and doctrines, links to other LDS websites, and local church news articles. Utilizing social networking tools online can promote greater member-missionary participation and expand outreach in the region.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

The LDS Church reports below average member activity rates in Eastern Europe compared to world averages due in part to social and cultural issues, inconsistent mission policies regarding convert baptismal standards, and inadequate pre-baptismal teaching by foreign full-time missionaries who offer no long-term sustainability in fellowshiping and post-baptismal teaching and mentoring. Ironically, countries that have a nonexistent, minimal, or very small foreign full-time missionary presence in relation to the size of LDS populations often exhibit higher member activity rates, as local members have learned to develop leadership independently and undertake member and leadership responsibilities. Overstaffing small branches with multiple missionary companionships has often occurred under the rationale that additional missionary support would help strengthen local members and improve retention under a centers-of-strength paradigm of outreach, but more

often than not, this approach has accomplished the opposite, as local members depend on full-time missionaries for administrative duties, rely on missionaries for finding efforts, and struggle to develop self-reliant gospel living skills. Under such paradigms, additional cities throughout the region often cannot be opened for missionary work, as mission resources are dedicated to just a few cities with tiny branches. Some members in small congregations suffer from member burnout as a result of carrying multiple assignments. The LDS Church has faced serious challenges maintaining member activity rates among seasoned active members in some nations due to conflict and social tensions between members at church and diligent although often unsuccessful intervention from full-time missionaries and senior couples to diffuse such situations. Language barriers have also presented challenges for achieving moderate to high member activity and convert retention rates for locations in which there are two or more predominantly spoken languages among local members, such as in the capital cities of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The ebb and flow of active membership, the availability of local members to lead congregations, and changing mission policies regarding the organization and closure of language-specific congregations in the Baltic States have contributed to challenges assimilating and keeping track of church membership over the years. It is common for many recent converts in Eastern Europe to not fully overcome addictions to practices and substances not condoned by LDS teachings, further challenging efforts to retain new members who relapse and feel uncomfortable maintaining habitual church attendance in light of their struggles. Threats of persecution and ostracism in many Eastern European nations have deterred some from joining the Church or attending church meetings regularly. The sudden removal or evacuation of full-time missionaries from some nations and cities has been handled haphazardly at times, as local members and investigators have been unaware of the closure of a branch or group and the departure of full-time missionaries, culminating in some members harboring hard feelings against missionaries and the Church and at times going inactive. Due to the limited presence of the LDS Church in the region, some members have joined the Church and moved to cities or towns without a nearby LDS presence, resulting in many losing contact with the church and becoming inactive. Secularism and disconnect with religion is common in many Eastern European nations and has likely influenced member activity rates for the LDS Church such as in the Czech Republic. The source of some inactivity and low convert retention in the region may be due to teaching and missionary approaches tailored to Western Christians. As a result of these issues member activity and convert retention rates can vary widely from city to city throughout individual nations.

Success in maintaining greater member activity and convert retention rates has often occurred in locations in which there is an LDS community that is self-sufficient in providing member-missionary outreach, fellowship, and pastoring for new converts, as has been the case in recent years in Tallinn, Estonia and Ljubljana, Slovenia. Trends of increasing seminary and institute enrollment are indicators that offer insight into convert retention and reactivation successes, such as in the Czech Republic and Russia. Since the mid-2000s, the LDS Church appears to have accomplished the greatest progress in maintaining member activity and convert retention rates in Hungary among Eastern European nations with at least 1,000 Latter-day Saints, although the nationwide activity rate in Hungary is estimated at 22%. Wise allocation of full-time missionaries to maintain a presence in cities with LDS congregations while simultaneously opening additional cities has reduced the reliance of local members on missionaries and has focused on retaining and training new converts in previously unreached cities to serve as local church leaders. Success in Hungary is most strongly evidenced in the organization of additional LDS congregations in the previously unreached cities of Bekescsaba, Kaposvar, Szolnok, and Tatabanya in the late 2000s and the formation of two new districts based in Miskolc and Szombathely in 2009. The member activity and convert retention situation in Hungary has manifested ongoing challenges and issues despite these achievements, as indicated by congregation consolidations and the loss of many previously active members prior to the organization of the first stake in 2006. Overall, reactivation efforts throughout Eastern Europe have experienced little success largely due to minimal pre-baptismal teaching and often a short duration of meaningful church activity prior to inactivity.

Prospects for improving member activity and convert retention rates in the region will hinge on greater consistency in convert baptismal standards, commensurate increases the full-time missionary force with the

organization of additional congregations, increase in member-missionary participation, greater emphasis on seminary and institute enrollment for youth and missionary preparation programs, growth in the number of local members serving full-time missions, and the development of culturally-tailored LDS teaching approaches.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Most Eastern European nations have relatively homogenous populations, reducing ethnic integration challenges. LDS missionaries have not reported major integration challenges at church in most nations due to the lack of LDS converts among ethnic minority groups and the lack of LDS congregations in areas populated by indigenous minority groups. Countries with sizeable ethnic minority groups offer opportunities for the establishment of language-specific congregations, such as for Russians in the Baltic States. Ethnic integration issues present the greatest obstacles for mission outreach in Eastern Europe in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, and Russia. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the ethnic patchwork present throughout the country presents major challenges for future church growth outside of melting-pot cities like Sarajevo because of lesser tolerance and receptivity in regions dominated by a single faith and because of persistent ethnic tensions. The post-independence segregation of Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs may require the creation of ethnic-specific congregations until greater tolerance among ethnicities is achieved. In Greece, the majority of active LDS membership is non-Greek notwithstanding Greeks accounting for 93% of the national population, posing significant challenges for integrating native Greeks into congregations. This congregational demography has originated from the greater receptivity of non-Greeks to the Church's teachings. Russia has historically faced significant challenges integrating differing ethnic groups into a single society and nation and continues to face these issues, as indicated by the complex patchwork of administrative divisions, each with varying degrees of autonomy from the federal government. Non-Russian indigenous ethnic groups or immigrants account for nearly thirty million people, many of which reside in administrative divisions with no LDS congregations. Foreign immigrants, especially from Africa and Asia, have experienced the greatest difficulty assimilating into society and often experience discrimination. Local and mission leaders stressing unity among the diverse demography of some congregations is warranted to maintain activity and convert retention rates until language-specific congregations can be established if necessary.

Language Issues

Eastern Europe receives excellent LDS language outreach, as indicated by approximately 90% of the regional population having LDS materials translated into their native language and as many as 97% of the regional population having LDS materials translated in their first or second languages. The LDS Church has devoted greater resources into translating church materials and scriptures in languages spoken in Eastern Europe than many regions of the world, notwithstanding a relatively recent LDS Church establishment and few Latter-day Saint speakers of these languages. Despite significant headway in translating materials into local languages, an ongoing need exists for the translation of even basic materials into some languages and additional materials and all LDS scriptures into other languages. Six languages are spoken by over one million people who remain without LDS materials and scriptures: Tatar dialects (5.55 million), Bosnian (2.39 million), Chuvash (1.64 million), Bashkort (1.38 million), Chechen (1.33 million), and Romani dialects (1.21 million). Three languages are spoken by over one million people and have some LDS materials available yet have no LDS scriptures translated as of June 2011: Belarusian (8.61 million), Slovak (4.83 million), and Macedonian (1.5 million). A shortage of capable members who speak these languages proficiently to translate has likely contributed to the lack of translations in these languages, but LDS materials in these languages would nonetheless provide significant opportunities to begin greater mission outreach among speakers of these languages. Delaying the translation of LDS materials and scriptures into Tatar, Slovak, Chuvash, Macedonian, Bashkort, Chechen, and Romani until sizeable numbers of speakers of these languages join the Church is counterintuitive, as the lack of even basic doctrinal and proselyting materials that would allow individuals to learn about

the church in their native language is a major reason why there are few or no Latter-day Saint speakers of these languages.

Missionary Service

Local full-time missionary manpower in Eastern Europe is among the least self-sufficient in the world due to low member activity rates, poor convert retention, few missionary preparation programs for youth, challenges developing and sustaining local leadership for congregations, low birth rates in LDS families, and the large number of full-time missionaries assigned. No nations in the region appear close to becoming self-sufficient in meeting local missionary needs. The lack of a missionary training center in Eastern Europe may have exacerbated challenges developing a stable, sizeable local missionary force. Most nations in the region with fewer than 4,000 nominal Latter-day Saints generally have less than a dozen local members serving full-time missions at a time. Some nations in the region did not have a single local member successfully serve the entire duration of a full-time mission in their native country for over a decade after foreign missionaries were assigned. Most local members who serve full-time missions appear to come from Russia and Ukraine. No native members from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Montenegro appear to have served missions as of mid-2011. Full-time missionaries regularly facilitate local leadership development and participate in humanitarian service and local ecclesiastical and administrative duties due to a shortage in local church leadership. Missionaries dedicate a large amount of their time to reactivating less active members throughout the region, often with little success. Focusing on youth and young adult-focused outreach and emphasizing missionary preparation may help improve rates of missionary service among local members in Eastern Europe and reduce dependence on North American missionaries.

Leadership

Regional church leadership raised the standard for branches to be organized in the late 2000s and required most branches to have a local member serve as branch president to continue operating in the early 2010s. Consequently, the number of LDS congregations in the region fell by several dozen between 2009 and mid-2011 as branches were consolidated or became groups or dependent branches, particularly in Russia, Bulgaria, and Ukraine. In Greece, groups were established in the late 2000s in Kavala and Patros in hopes of becoming branches, but by mid-2011 both groups were closed as no local leadership was developed, and few if any converts were baptized. A few local members have served in international church leadership positions as mission presidents, temple presidents, and area authorities.

In Russia, the LDS Church has struggled to keep priesthood holders active over the long term regardless of whether they have served in leadership positions. One mission president reported that during his three-year tenure in the early 1990s, fourteen branch presidents went inactive or left the Church. Chronic leadership development and training issues in the largest cities have delayed the establishment of LDS stakes throughout Eastern Europe. In 2006, full-time missionaries reported that the Moscow Russia District had reached the needed numbers of active members and priesthood holders for a stake to be organized. In order to increase church growth prospects over the medium term, local and mission leaders decided to divide the district into two districts in hopes of establishing two stakes one day. In 2010, the districts were consolidated into a single district in anticipation of creating a single stake for Moscow in the near future, which occurred in mid-2011. Many anticipated the first stakes being organized in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Saratov, and Samara during the mid-1990s, but as of 2011, there were no LDS stakes in any of these cities except for Moscow. Notwithstanding local leadership challenges in Eastern Europe, nearly all branches have native branch presidents, and most, but not all, have native counselors. Full-time missionaries often greatly assist in administrative and leadership positions as counselors in branch presidencies.

Temple

The Kyiv Ukraine Temple is the first and only LDS temple in Eastern Europe and was completed in 2010 to service members living in Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania, and most areas of Russia. In 2011, the Kyiv Ukraine Temple scheduled four endowment sessions on Tuesdays through Fridays and five on Saturdays. Additional temples service remaining areas of Eastern Europe, including the Bern Switzerland Temple for Albania, the Frankfurt Germany Temple for the former Yugoslavia, the Freiberg Germany Temple for the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia, the Helsinki Finland Temple for Estonia, Lithuania, and the St Petersburg area of Russia, the London England Temple for Greece, the Seoul Korea Temple for far eastern Russia, and the Stockholm Sweden Temple for Latvia. Distance from temples, crossing international borders, travel costs, and few active, temple-attending members present challenges for local members to attend the temple regularly. Prospects for the construction of additional temples in Eastern Europe will depend on achieving sustained increases in active membership and the organization of multiple stakes within a single city. Temples may be forthcoming for Moscow and Saratov, Russia over the long term if multiple stakes are established in each city.

Comparative Growth

Eastern Europe supports one of the smallest LDS populations in the world and is less reached than most world regions by Latter-day Saints, but the Church maintains a presence in every nation in the region, although this presence in some nations such as Macedonia and Montenegro is limited to a few foreign members meeting as a group under an administrative branch. Member activity rates as a region are low and comparable to South America and East Asia. Eastern Europe appears to have the least self-sufficient full-time missionary force of any world region. The duration of an LDS presence in Eastern Europe has been among the shortest for world regions, as most nations did not have an LDS presence prior to 1990. Membership growth rates in Eastern Europe were higher than most world regions during the 2000s, but congregational growth rates were among the slowest.

Nontraditional missionary-minded Christian groups have experienced greater membership and congregational growth, more penetrating national outreach, and better self-sustainability among local leaders than the LDS Church. The number of active Jehovah's Witnesses exceeds the number of nominal Latter-day Saints in every Eastern European nation except Bulgaria. Jehovah's Witnesses have achieved steady growth through member-missionary activity and high convert baptismal standards and operated over twenty-six times as many congregations and claimed eleven times as many members as Latter-day Saints in Eastern Europe in 2010. The Seventh Day Adventist Church reports more active members than nominal Latter-day Saints in every Eastern European nation except Albania, Greece, Hungary, and Lithuania and operates more than ten times as many congregations in the region as Latter-day Saints. Pentecostals and Evangelicals report steady growth throughout the region and continue to expand national outreach. Unlike Latter-day Saints, other outreach-focused Christians have consistently and aggressively opened new congregations in smaller cities and towns, further fueling growth and progress over the past two decades. These denominations have been more systematic in proselytism and rely on few outside missionary resources to fuel growth, notwithstanding slowing membership growth rates in recent years as receptivity continues to decline.

Future Prospects

Declining receptivity, stagnant membership and congregational growth trends, ongoing challenges sustaining local leadership, the plateauing of the full-time LDS missionary force in the 2000s, and few initiatives in recent years to expand national outreach generate a less favorable forecast for future LDS Church growth in Eastern Europe. The establishment of stakes in Ukraine, Hungary, and Russia in the past decade is a positive development indicative of maturing local leadership and sustained member activity rates, but these examples have been the exception, as many districts at present are less likely to become stakes than a decade ago due

to sustainability challenges. Few additional cities appear likely to open for missionary work in the near term. Modifying mission outreach policies to decrease full-time missionary involvement in administrative duties, reactivation work, and member visits in order to focus limited missionary manpower on establishing additional mission outreach centers in currently unreached cities may help reestablish real church growth trends throughout the region. Carefully orchestrated youth-oriented outreach initiatives combined with emphasis on seminary and institute attendance may provide for greater sustainability in local missionary service and provide greater strength and resources for future local and regional leadership. Additional stakes may be organized one day in Russia in Novosibirsk, Rostov, and Saratov if current levels of member activity are sustained and the number of active Melchizedek Priesthood holders continues to increase. Medium-term prospects for stakes in other Eastern European nations appear dim due to inadequate numbers of active members and shortages of priesthood holders but may be a possibility in Albania in the long term if sustained increases in active membership occur. Additional districts may be organized in Russia, Ukraine, Romania, and Poland if additional branches are organized. The first independent LDS congregations may be established in Macedonia and Montenegro in the coming years once indigenous converts join the Church and remain active. Due to its central location in Eastern Europe and established LDS community, Kyiv, Ukraine may be a suitable site for a future missionary training center to service Eastern Europe and perhaps a small LDS university, although there have been no plans or proposals from church leaders.

INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY PROFILES

ALBANIA

Geography

AREA: 93,028 square km. Bordering the Adriatic and Ionian Seas in Southeastern Europe, Albania borders Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Greece. Most of the terrain consists of hills and mountains with few plains in coastal areas. The climate is temperate and mild with cool, wet winters and hot, dry summers. Interior areas experience wetter and cooler climate than coastal areas. Two large lakes, Lake Ohrid and Lake Big Prespa, straddle the border with Macedonia. Destructive earthquakes can occur as well as frequent floods and drought. Primary environmental concerns include deforestation and soil erosion. Albania is divided into twelve administrative counties.

Peoples

Albanian: 95%

Greek: 3%

Other: 2%

The population is overwhelmingly Albanian. Estimates for the Greek population widely vary, with higher estimates from Greek sources and lower estimates from Albanian sources. The Greek population resides near the Greek border. Other ethnic groups include Vlach (ethnic Romanians living outside Romania also known as Aromanians), Roma, Serb, Macedonian, and Bulgarian.

Population: 3,002,859 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.28% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.48 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 74.99 male, 80.49 female (2012)

Languages: Albanian (85%), Serbian (8%), Macedonian (4%), Greek (1.5%), Romani (1.5%). The Tosk dialect of Albanian is the official language. Only Albanian has over one million native speakers (3.1 million).

Literacy: 98.7% (2001)

History

In antiquity, several ancient peoples populated the region, including the Illyrians around 1000 BC and the Greeks starting in the eighth century BC. Rome controlled Albania for several centuries followed by the Byzantine Empire. In the Middle Ages Slavic peoples arrived and the region was later conquered by the Ottoman Empire by the fifteenth century. Albania declared independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1912. Italy invaded and occupied Albania between 1939 and 1944. A communist government took power in 1944

and allied with the Soviet Union and later with China in 1978. During the years of communist rule, limited interaction occurred with other nations, as the government enforced isolation. In the early 1990s, a democratic government came to power after nearly half a century of communism. The transition from communism to democracy has proved to be difficult due to a weak economy, organized crime, and political instability. Distrust in the government heightened, and chaos erupted in 1997 due to failed government investments offered to its citizens. Elections have been judged as free and fair since the mid-1990s, but allegations of electoral fraud persist. Albania joined NATO in 2009 and may join the EU in the future.

Culture

Albania is one of the few European nations with more Muslims than Christians. Communism strongly influences culture. Cuisine draws upon many common Southeastern European foods such as gyro, pita bread, cheese, and vegetables. Smoking and alcohol rates are comparable to the United States.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$7,800 (2011) [16.2% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.739

Corruption Index: 3.1 (2011)

Albania has struggled to make the massive transformation from a xenophobic, socialist economy to an open, free market capitalist economy. The aging country infrastructure challenges economic growth including transportation and electricity dependent on hydroelectricity. During the 2000s, significant developments occurred in updating the road networks and diversifying energy sources. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the workforce labors in agriculture, which accounts for 20.6% of the GDP. Primary agricultural products include wheat, corn, and potatoes. Services employed 27% of the workforce and produced 60.6% of the GDP. Primary exports include food products, clothing, and lumber. Some petroleum resources have been exploited. Primary trade partners are Italy and Greece.

Corruption has decreased over the past decade. Corruption continues to limit growth and detract from potential foreign investment. Organized crime networks are well established and have been better addressed by government in recent years. Perceptions of corruption are strongest for customs, tax officials, and some ministers. The media has helped to fight corruption. Many Albanians report they pay bribes to medical professionals for treatment.

Faiths

Muslim: 70%

Albanian Orthodox: 20%

Roman Catholic: 10%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Albanian Orthodox: 700,000

Catholic: 473,000

Jehovah's Witnesses 4,497 73

Latter-day Saints 2,299 11

Seventh Day Adventists 352 3

Religion

Albania has the largest percentage of those who identify as Muslims in Europe. Islam arrived from the Ottoman Turks and continued to be propagated until independence. Prior to the Ottoman conquest, most Albanians were Catholic or Orthodox Christians. War and almost fifty years of communism have resulted in the majority of the population being nonreligious and nominally Muslim. Many Albanians usually only identify their faith as Islam but do not share most beliefs and practices with active Muslims. Albanian Orthodox adherents mainly live around Tirana and in the southern interior. Catholics are concentrated in northern Albania and Tirana. Additional visible religious minorities include Bahai's, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Latter-day Saints.

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is also upheld by the government. The government does not tolerate religious discrimination and seeks to protect the religious rights of its citizens. Religious groups are not required to register with the government, but registration is required in order for religious organizations to own property and have financial assets. Public schools do not offer religious instruction. Society generally respects the rights of minority religious groups to worship.

Largest Cities

Urban: 47%

Tirane, Durres, Elbasan, Shkoder, Vlore, **Korce**, Fier, **Berat**, Lushnje, **Kavaje**.

Cities in **bold** have no church presence.

Seven of the ten largest cities have a congregation. Twenty-six percent (26%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

Prior to 1990 there was no Church activity. The first senior missionaries were assigned in mid-1990, and by the end of the year, full-time young elders were assigned. The first converts joined the Church shortly thereafter. In April 1993, seventy-eight people, including fifty-five Albanian members, attended the dedication of Albania for missionary work by Elder Dallin H. Oaks. The Greece Athens Mission administered Albania prior to the creation of the Albania Tirana Mission in 1996. Albania continued to be part of the Europe Central Area until it was merged with the Europe West Area to form the Europe Area in the late 2000s. In early 2012, the Albania Tirana Mission was renamed the Adriatic South Mission and began administering Kosovo, Macedonia, and Montenegro.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 2,299 (2012)

The institute and seminary programs began in 1999. By 1996 membership reached 400, and at year-end 2000, there were 881 members.

Membership growth has been consistent, typically growing between 100 and 200 members a year. Membership reached 1,160 in 2002, 1,400 in 2004, and 1,605 in 2006. Membership growth rates have slowed as membership continues to increase arithmetically, decreasing from a high of 15.9% in 2002 to a low of 6.2% in 2008. One hundred fourteen were enrolled in seminary or institute between 2007 and 2008. In 2008, one in about 2,000 Albanians were nominal LDS members.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 11 Groups: 1? (2012)

In March 1997, the thirty-three missionaries and the mission president were evacuated due to disorder in Tirana. Missionaries returned the following September. In August 1998, twenty-four missionaries were temporarily reassigned to other European missions due to threats against Americans. The first district in the country was created in Tirana in 1999.

By the end of 2000, there were seven branches: four in Tirana, one in Durres, one in Elbasan, and the Albania Tirana Mission Branch for members in groups or in locations without a nearby congregation.

By the end of 2003, two additional cities had branches organized: Lushnje and Fier, bringing the total of branches to nine. Missionaries were first assigned to Vlore in 2006 and Shkoder in late 2007. A new proselytizing area outside of Tirana in the suburb of Kamez opened in 2008. Vlore and Shkoder had their first branches organized in 2006 and 2009 respectively. By the end of 2009 there were eleven branches and one dependent branch functioning. In early 2012, a group may have been meeting in Kamez.

The Albania Tirana Mission has been focusing on preparing members for the establishment of a stake since 2008.

Activity and Retention

Seventy young women participated in the first girls' camp in 2004. The Durres Branch chapel had 2,000 people visit during the open house following construction, and had 218 in attendance for the first sacrament meeting, more than twice the usual attendance. One hundred thirty young single adults and leaders attended the opening events of the first Institute Outreach Center in Albania in 2007. Two hundred attended district conference in the Durres Branch meetinghouse in mid-2009. The average number of members per congregation has increased between 2000 and 2008 from 126 to 184. Activity rates have worsened over the past decade, as sacrament attendance has remained unchanged, whereas membership has more than doubled.

The Kamez Branch had fewer than ten active members in late 2009. The Elbasan Branch had fifty active members out of 200 in mid-2009. The Fier Branch had thirteen active members out of seventy in late 2009. The Tirana 1st Branch had seventy active members in late 2009. The Tirana 2nd Branch had seventy active members, seventy-eight Melchizedek Priesthood holders, and 268 baptized males in late 2009. The Tirana 3rd Branch had approximately forty-five active members in early 2010. The Tirana 4th Branch had sixty active members in mid-2009. The Shkoder Branch had as many as thirty active members in early 2009, a figure that fell to less than ten by the end of the year. The Vlore Branch had sixty active members in early 2010. The Durres Branch had ninety active members in early 2010. Missionaries estimated that there were around 400 continually active members in late 2009, or 22% of total membership. Sacrament attendance fluctuates between 400 and 500.

In 2008, the Albania Tirana Mission began an aggressive program to reactivate less active members, continuing to baptize and retain new converts, and increase active Melchizedek Priesthood holders in order to create the first stake. A major setback occurred in 2009 as the district president fell into inactivity and a United States expatriate became the district president. Active Melchizedek Priesthood holders continue to slowly increase but experience recurrent setbacks, as some long-term active members leave the Church. Members were told that in order for a stake to be organized, there would need to be five wards with thirty active Melchizedek Priesthood holders each and an additional sixteen to fill stake leadership positions.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Albanian, Greek, Serbian.

All LDS scriptures are available in Albanian and Greek. Only the Book of Mormon is available in Serbian. Many unit, temple, priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, young women, primary, missionary, and family history materials are available in Albanian, Greek and Serbian. Several CES manuals are available in Albanian. The Church has only translated the sacrament prayers and a basic unit guidebook in Macedonian.

Meetinghouses

Construction on the first Church built meetinghouse began in 2005 for the Durres Branch. At the time, all the branches met in rented spaces. A second meetinghouse was completed in Elbasan in 2009.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Young women in Maryland made quilts for needy Albanians in the early 1990s, and 2,700 boxes of food for needy families were distributed in late 1994. Aid was provided with the assistance of missionaries to Kosovar refugees who fled to Albania in 1999, including 30,000 family hygiene kits and one million pounds of clothing. In 2002, members donated 1,000 quilts to the needy in Albania and Moldova. Humanitarian missionaries helped refurbish an ambulance that was donated to the city of Kamez. School supplies were provided for Romani children who attended a school that taught them the Albanian language. In 2008, the Church provided neonatal resuscitation training.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church has benefited from the degree of religious freedom offered by a former communist nation with a Muslim-majority population.

Cultural Issues

Nonreligiousness is a major issue that challenges the Church's growth. The summertime is seen as a time for vacationing and relaxation and a period when many members stop attending church. Active membership many vary by the hundreds according to some missionary estimates. Teaching investigators and members the importance of weekly church attendance and living gospel teachings and ensuring that gospel habits are firmly established can be challenging as most Albanians have never actively participated in religion.

National Outreach

The Church has established a congregation in most of the largest cities. Cities with a congregation account for 23% of the population, suggesting that at least 77% of the population is unreached. The Church is established among the most populous administrative counties. Half of the 12 counties do not have a congregation, which amounts to 25% of the population. The greatest potential for future outreach is in the largest cities in unreached counties and in suburban areas nearby Tirana and Durres. Over 50 Albanian towns and villages have over 1,000 inhabitants and no congregations. Potential for outreach to unreached areas is high as the Albanian Tirana Mission has the smallest population served by a mission in Europe. Church leadership requested that no more than four missionaries be assigned to each branch in the late 2000s.

The open house for the newly completed Durres Branch building provided strong media exposure as many

government and civil leaders toured the building. In late 2009, the Church launched a country Internet site for Albania that included news, meetinghouse locations, and ecclesiastical materials in Albanian. The site can assist the mission with reaching individuals living in remote areas and supply self-referred investigators.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

The high inactivity rates are influenced by many converts coming from nonreligious backgrounds and nonreligious friends and family pressure. Some congregations have seen a large drop in active membership over the past decade. The Fier Branch at one time had around seventy active members who, according to missionaries, nearly all fell into inactivity within a month.

One of the issues that may contribute to inactivity and retention problems is the large number of single adults and part-member families, as individuals have limited opportunities for socialization and support within small LDS congregations and may face increased cultural pressures from family and peers. Many of the youth and single adults provide much of the strength of the Church and provide the greatest opportunity for long-term member activity. A senior missionary couple served in Tirana over the institute and young single adult outreach programs in 2010.

The high involvement of foreign leadership in managing the affairs of the Church may have negatively impacted member activity and retention. Albanian members have grown dependent on foreign missionaries to run the Church, which is still perceived as an American institution rather than as an indigenous faith. Increasing the number of Albanian youth serving missions and returning to their home country may be the best method to reduce reliance on foreign missionaries and improve member activity. Some Albanian converts have been rushed into baptism by full-time missionaries prior to developing habits of regular church attendance, daily scripture reading, and developing a strong testimony, fostering patterns of low convert retention and high member turnover.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The Church has experienced few ethnic issues, as the regions in which the Church is established have few minorities. Shkoder has seen some difficulty with proselytism and fellowshipping investigators and new converts due to the polarization of the city between Catholics and Muslims. Regions in the south and along the Macedonian border may experience some issues integrating differing ethnic groups into the same congregation, particularly with Greeks, Macedonians, and Vlach.

Language Issues

The widespread use of Albanian simplifies the Church's efforts in establishing itself throughout the country. The large amount of materials in Serbian provides opportunity to reach the largest linguistic minority. Opportunities to reach native speakers of Serbian, Macedonian, and Greek have not come to fruition.

Missionary Service

In mid-2009, there were around thirty-five missionaries serving in Albania. By early 2010, twenty missionaries served in Tirana or Shkoder. One of the factors limiting local leadership development is the few numbers of Albanian missionaries. Several Albanian missionaries serving in Albania did not complete their missions. The first Albanian missionary to complete his mission and serve in Albania was Elder Erind Çoçoli in 2008. At the time seven additional Albanian missionaries were serving missions, three of whom were in Albania. The remaining four were serving in the United States, Russia, Scotland, and Italy.

Leadership

The Church has seen success in having Albanians serve as leaders but only in the larger branches. Large branches also face challenges in keeping leaders and Melchizedek Priesthood holders active. Branches created after 2000 have struggled to develop local leadership to produce a local branch president. In late 2009, missionaries served as branch presidents for all the branches created after 2000 including Shkoder, Kamez, Fier, Lushnja, and Vlore.

The strongest leadership potential is in Tirana. The Tirana 2nd Branch had the most active Melchizedek Priesthood holders in Albania with around a dozen in late 2009. At this time there were seventy-eight total Melchizedek Priesthood holders in the Tirana 2nd Branch, indicating that activity rates for Melchizedek Priesthood holders were lower than for total membership (15% versus 22%).

Temple

Albania pertains to the Bern Switzerland Temple District. The first Albanian family to get sealed in the temple occurred in 2000 in the Frankfurt Germany Temple. Albania will likely be included in the Rome Italy Temple district. Prospects of a closer temple are unlikely until greater membership growth and activity occurs in Albania and surrounding nations.

Comparative Growth

Among nations in Southeastern Europe, the Church has experienced some of the strongest numerical membership growth in Albania, although only a fraction of nominal members attend or participate. Only Bulgaria has more members. Albania is the country with the second highest native membership after Pakistan in a nation where most the population identifies as Muslim. Membership and congregational growth has sharply declined in other nearby nations but continues in Albania. Activity and retention rates are comparable to other former Southeastern European nations due to commonalities in LDS mission policies and programs and to regional conditions.

Other Christian denominations struggle to develop local membership and leadership. The largest Christian churches that arrived after 1990 have around the same number of members as the LDS Church.

The Jehovah's Witnesses have experienced the greatest success, with 4,000 active members and sixty-eight congregations. Jehovah's Witnesses heavily emphasize member-missionary work and pre-baptismal preparation and have consequently developed sustainable local leadership and indigenously staffed missionary programs. The LDS Church in Albania remains highly dependent on foreign missionary manpower and funds, in contrast to the Jehovah's Witnesses who have placed consistent emphasis on developing self-sustaining local congregations, building strong member-missionary programs, and require lengthier periods of convert preparation before baptism to ensure long-term commitment.

Future Prospects

Steady increase in nominal LDS membership of approximately one hundred a year will likely continue in the coming years. The recent assignment of additional nations to the Adriatic South Mission may delay prospects for opening more cities to proselytism in Albania. There are no medium-term prospects for a stake in Albania as none of the congregations in Albania have enough active Melchizedek Priesthood holders. Cities most likely open to missionary work include Sarande, Korce, Berat, and Kavaje.

BELARUS

Geography

AREA: 207,600 square km. Landlocked in Eastern Europe, Belarus borders Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia. The climate has temperate and maritime characteristics and experiences cold winters and cool summers with frequent precipitation. Most the terrain is flat with many marshes, swamps, and forests. Large rivers include the Dnieper, Prypyats, and Nyoman. Environmental hazards include the pollution of soil from pesticides and fallout in southern areas from the Chernobyl nuclear accident. Belarus is administratively divided into six provinces and one municipality.

Peoples

Belarusian: 81.2%
Russian: 11.4%
Polish: 3.9%
Ukrainian: 2.4%
Other: 1.1%

Belarus has one of the most rapidly shrinking populations worldwide due to emigration and low birth rates. Non-Belarusians tend to live in large cities or near the nation's borders.

Population: 9,542,883 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: -0.362% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.27 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 65.88 male, 77.42 female (2012)

Languages: Russian (62.8%), Belarusian (36.7%), other (0.5%). Belarusian and Russian are the official languages. Polish, Ukrainian, and Eastern Yiddish each have over 100,000 speakers. Languages with over one million speakers include Russian (6.1 million) and Belarusian (3.5 million). The 1999 census reported that 85.6% of Belarusians designated Belarusian as their mother tongue, although only 36% reported speaking it as the primary language in the home.²⁶³⁶ A 2009 study by the Belarusian government reported that 72% of Belarusians speak Russian at home, whereas only 11.9% speak Belarusian at home; 29% can read, write, and speak Belarusian, whereas another 52% can read and speak but not write; this data suggests declining use of Belarusian. Belarusian language was a vernacular arising from the old Russian language with heavy borrowing of Polish vocabulary from the time of the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth and some orthographic changes to make the language more phonetic (for example, an unstressed “o” in Russian is pronounced as an “a,” whereas in Belarusian it is written as an “a.”) The literary form of modern Belarusian was standardized only in the twentieth century. A spectrum of dialects persists, especially near the Polish and Ukrainian borders. Belarusian has relatively high mutual intelligibility with Russian, and somewhat less with Ukrainian and Polish.

Literacy: 99.6%

²⁶³⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belarusian_language

History

Slavs first settled Belarus, known as White Russia or White Ruthenia prior to 1918, in the 6th century and later assimilated into the Kievan Rus' state. Following its collapse, principalities in Belarus aligned with Lithuania and Poland between the twelfth and the late eighteenth centuries. Russia acquired Belarus and retained control. Belarus was occupied by Germany in World War I and in 1918 declared independence. Between 1919 and 1939, territory was divided between the Soviet Union and Poland until united into a single Soviet republic. World War II decimated Belarus and resulted in millions of deaths. Ceded to the Belarusian SSR after World War II were 181,000 square km of Eastern Poland. Independence from the Soviet Union occurred in 1991. Out of the former Soviet republics, Belarus has maintained the closest ties with Russia and signed a treaty in 1999 to propel greater economic and political interaction.

Culture

A lack of distinct, natural borders has allowed cultural influences from most surrounding nations to contribute to modern Belarusian culture. The Soviet Union took drastic strides in attempting to erase Belarusian culture in an effort to suppress Belarusian nationalism. Wars in the twentieth century destroyed most old buildings. Belarus has a proud legacy of poets and writers who focused on rural life. There is also a rich history of music and theater. Alcohol consumption rates are lower than most of Europe and the United States. Cigarette use is high and comparable to many Eastern European nations. Divorce rates are high. Gender roles are traditional and slowly changing.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$14,900 (2011) [31% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.756

Corruption Index: 2.4 (2011)

Despite the fragmentation of the Soviet Union, Belarus retained socialist economic policies in the mid-1990s. In the 2000s, a number of private companies have been renationalized, and government has executed stricter regulations and more control. Ties remain strong with Russia and have fueled much of the increase in GDP. Economic growth occurred during much of the 2000s despite government policy that limited private business and investment both domestically and internationally. Inflation has been a recent concern. Services constitute the largest economic sector, claiming 51% of the workforce and producing 51% of the GDP. Industry employs 35% of the workforce and produces 40% of the GDP. Primary industries include machine tools, tractors, and trucks. Grain, potatoes, and vegetables are common agriculture products. Russia is the primary trade partner; it sends 59% of imports and receives 32% of Belarusian exports. Other significant trade partners include the Netherlands, Germany, and Eastern European nations.

Government is highly centralized. Corruption is a serious problem that appears to be worsening. Low transparency has made it difficult to assess the scope of corruption in Belarus.

Faiths

Christian: 96%

Other: 4%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Belarusian Orthodox 7,718,826

Catholic 1,350,795
 Seventh Day Adventists 5,161 76
 Jehovah's Witnesses 4,892 65
 Latter-day Saints 500 2

Religion

Of the 60% of the population self-identified as religious, approximately 80% adhere to the Belarusian Orthodox Church and 14% to the Catholic Church. Four percent (4%) and 2% of religious Belarusians follow non-Christian religions or Protestant churches, respectively. Christian holidays are recognized national holidays.

Religious Freedom

Religions are regarded as equal in the constitution, but freedom of religion has grown more restricted, especially since a 2002 law pertaining to religion was enacted. There is no official religion, but the Belarusian Orthodox Church receives preferential treatment in order to safeguard traditional religion and Belarusian culture. The 2002 law has three classifications for religious groups, the smallest being a religious community, which must have at least twenty individuals over age eighteen to function. The registration of religious communities for some denominations (mainly Protestants) has taken years to accomplish. Foreign religious groups and personnel are often viewed with contempt and experience the most harassment. Only registered religious groups can actively follow their beliefs and practices. The 2002 law regulates the importation and distribution of religious literature by requiring prior government approval. Foreigners cannot lead congregations.

Largest Cities

Urban: 73%

Minsk, Gomel, Mogilev, Vitebsk, Hrodna, Brest, Babrujsk, Baranovichi, Barisaw, Pinsk, Orsa, Mazyr, Salihorsk.

Cities in **bold** have no church presence.

Three of the thirteen cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have a congregation. Forty-six percent (46%) of the national population lives in the thirteen largest cities.

LDS History

Elder Russell M. Nelson dedicated Belarus for missionary work in May 1993. At the time there were six young elder missionaries and two senior couples serving in the country.²⁶³⁷ Belarus was included in the Latvia Riga Mission for a brief time. In 2004, two American missionaries accused of illegally proselytizing in Mogilev were expelled.²⁶³⁸ In 2012, the Church reassigned Belarus to the Baltic Mission.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: ~500 (2012)

²⁶³⁷ "4 European lands dedicated," LDS Church News, 12 June 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23051/4-European-lands-dedicated.html>

²⁶³⁸ "Belarus expels two Mormons for 'illegal missionary activity,'" Associated Press, 25 October 2004. <http://www.religion-newsblog.com/9104>

In the mid-1990s, there were approximately 200 members. At the end of 2000, membership increased to 383 members, reaching 403 in 2002. By 2008, membership numbered around 500.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 2 Groups: 1? (2012)

Many congregations were organized in the early 1990s in Minsk when the Church was first established in Belarus. In the mid-1990s, there were nine branches, including four in Minsk. The Minsk Belarus District was organized during this period. Most of these congregations were closed or consolidated in the late 1990s. By year-end 2000, there was only one branch in Minsk. Despite only one branch functioning, small groups of members also met in Baranovichi, Brest, Gomel, Mogilev, and Vitebsk.

By 2005, two branches were functioning in Minsk.²⁶³⁹ A branch was organized in Vitebsk around the same time. In 2011, a small branch met in Mogilev. In 2012, the two branches in Minsk were consolidated into a single branch and the district was discontinued. By early 2013, only two branches appeared to operate in Minsk and Vitebsk.

Activity and Retention

Church-going members are very active in their faith. Missionaries frequently remark on the faith and diligence of active local members and leaders. Youth conferences are held regularly. Each of the Minsk branches had fifty attending meetings in late 2009. The Vitebsk Branch had eight active members in early 2010. The congregation in Mogilov had few active members. Thirteen were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year. A large number of inactive members joined the Church in the early to mid-1990s and did not remain active for very long. Total active membership is likely no more than 150, or 30%.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Russian, Polish, Ukrainian.

All LDS scriptures are available in Russian, Polish, and Ukrainian. Russian, Polish, and Ukrainian have a large number of Church materials translated, including many institute manuals. The Church has translated few materials into Belarusian; they include the Articles of Faith, *The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony*, *Gospel Principles Simplified*, the sacrament prayers, a video on the First Vision and Restoration, and a couple family history forms. The *Liahona* magazine has twelve issues a year in Russian.

Meetinghouses

Church meetings take place in rented spaces.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Missionaries have done wide-reaching anti-smoking campaigns with school children for many years. Humanitarian missionaries have taught more productive agricultural practices resulting in higher crop yields.²⁶⁴⁰ Wheelchair donations occur regularly. In 2009, the Church donated humanitarian supplies to boarding houses in Vitebsk and the Brest Region.

²⁶³⁹ Timofeeva, Marina. "How Could We Go to the Temple?," *Liahona*, July 2005, 42–43.

²⁶⁴⁰ Holland, Jeffrey R. "Witnesses unto Me," *Liahona*, July 2001, 15–17.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Missionaries operate under many restrictions. Foreign missionaries are prohibited from teaching in Church meetings, leading congregations, and wearing nametags. Members must provide missionaries with referrals, as missionaries are not permitted to proselyte. Little time is spent teaching investigators or strengthening members as missionaries provide humanitarian service. Whereas missionaries served in several large cities in the 1990s, missionaries are presently only registered in Minsk and are not allowed to be assigned elsewhere. The law requires at least twenty members over age eighteen to hold Church services as a religious community, and so many small groups are unable to hold public meetings.

Cultural Issues

Many Belarusians have sought to return to traditional Belarusian traditions and in turn have become less receptive to the Church. Decades of communism have resulted in a many becoming nonreligious. High cigarette consumption rates indicate that potential converts may struggle with overcoming cigarette addictions prior to baptism. Some converts who relapse may be a source of member attrition. High divorce rates challenge Church efforts to instill greater importance on the family unit and bring full families into the Church.

National Outreach

Government restrictions result in most having no contact or awareness of the Church. Only members and family, friends, and associates of members have any mission outreach. Cities with a congregation account for 24%–34% of the national population, depending on whether cities with groups meeting in the early 2000s still function today. Missionaries are only assigned to Minsk but do travel frequently to other cities for humanitarian work, teaching investigators, and strengthening members.

In March 2010, one of the Minsk branches began holding monthly missionary firesides to provide members with the opportunity of inviting friends and family to learn about the Church. The first meeting taught about healthy foods and the dangers of tobacco.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Belarus experienced poor convert retention in the 1990s when the bulk of nominal Church members were baptized. The Church appears to have achieved greater convert retention in the 2000s, although growth has been very slow, and retention remains a challenge. The high level of dedication for investigators joining the Church in a country with increasing restrictions on religious freedom over the past decade may have been a source of greater strength. Isolated members in remote cities lack the member support base enjoyed in Minsk and may be more prone to casual Church attendance and lower levels of doctrinal understanding.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

With the exception of Belarusians and Russians, membership size and distribution remain too limited for ethnic integration issues in congregations. As most Belarusians speak Russian as their primary language and use of Russian is increasing, ethnic issues have presented little difficulty.

Language Issues

Members switch between Russian and Belarusian frequently in Church meetings. Most of the population has

some functionality in both languages, and members in Church meetings likely determine what language to speak in based on the demographics of the congregation. No LDS scriptures are available in Belarusian. There presently appears to be little impetus for Belarusian translations, as the vast majority of Belarusians use Russian as their primary language, and the majority of Belarusians can read but not write in Belarusian. Belarusian translations may be helpful in demonstrating respect for national pride and cultural heritage but are likely to have little impact on national outreach.

Missionary Service

Both humanitarian and proselyting missionaries serve in Belarus. The first Belarusian called to serve as a mission president was President Davydik of the Minsk Belarus District, who served as the mission president for the Russia Samara Mission. Some local members have served missions, one of whom was serving in the Russian Vladivostok Mission in early 2010.

Leadership

All Church leaders in Belarus are natives due to government restrictions on foreigners leading congregations. This has allowed for greater self-sufficiency among Belarusian leadership compared to many other Eastern European nations. Training of local leadership from mission and area Church leaders may be difficult due to laws forbidding foreigners from preaching in meetings.

Temple

When the Helsinki Finland Temple was dedicated, Belarus was included in the temple district. In 2009, members traveled to the Freiburg Germany Temple. Temple trips occur twice a year for Belarus, last for one week, and have at least thirty to forty members in attendance.

Comparative Growth

Belarus has experienced the slowest membership growth of any former Soviet Republic that opened to the Church in the early 1990s. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have a combined population less than Belarus but have approximately 3,000 members and seventeen congregations. The percentage of Church members in the population in Belarus is less than Russia, Moldova, and any Western European nation. Belarusian members do appear more self-reliant than many Eastern European nations with few members, and active members stand out for their diligence and devotion.

Other Christian groups experienced large gains in membership in the 1990s and have seen much more limited growth in the 2000s due to government restrictions. Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses experience modest rates of growth compared to the LDS Church, but have greater national outreach and larger church memberships due to greater institutional focus on member-missionary programs and less reliance on foreign missionaries.

Future Prospects

In the mid-1990s, the Church in Belarus was presented as a model of the growth and strength that can occur through member-missionary work alone; some mission leaders in other Russian-speaking missions took steps to discourage independent missionary finding and encourage missionaries to spend more time soliciting member referrals. However, the stagnation of growth, struggles to retain members, consolidation of congregations in Minsk, and lack of congregational viability in many outlying cities since missionaries were withdrawn all demonstrate the shortfall of such models. Both member-missionary outreach and full-time missionary outreach are needed for church growth to reach its potential. In regions where independent contacting by

full-time missionaries is prohibited, like Belarus, or where it is limited by mission policy or lack of effort, as is the case in some other area missions, church growth is limited. Member-missionary efforts may hold increased future potential, yet considerable refinement of institutional member-missionary programs will be needed as well as local effort for this potential to be realized.

Belarusian members have proved faithful leaders and are capable of living Church teachings despite the many government regulations. Outlook for future growth appears positive, but few converts have joined the Church in recent years. The lack of new members may prove a significant challenge for the integration of converts and member enthusiasm for continued outreach. However local members have shown a willingness to participate in member-missionary work and finding activities, which may in the future yield greater increases in convert retention rates.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Geography

AREA: 51,197 square km. Nearly landlocked in Southeastern Europe, Bosnia and Herzegovina borders Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, and the Adriatic Sea. Bosnia and Herzegovina is divided into two jigsaw-shaped entities—the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska. There are only twenty kilometers of coastline, as Croatia occupies narrow strips of land along the Adriatic coast. Most of the country consists of mountains and valleys. Temperate climate prevails throughout most areas, with hot summers and cold winters. The Sava River creates the northern border with Croatia. Earthquakes are natural hazards and air pollution, deforestation, inadequate waste disposal sites, water shortages, and residuals from the civil war are environmental issues. Bosnia and Herzegovina is administratively divided into two first-order divisions and one internationally supervised district.

Peoples

Bosniak: 48%

Serb: 37.1%

Croat: 14.3%

Other: 0.6%

Bosniaks constitute the majority in central and far western regions in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Serbs populate northern, west central, and eastern areas of the country in Republika Srpska. Croats reside in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in southern regions and in pockets in central areas.

Population: 4,622,292 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: -0.003% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.28 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 75.42 male, 82.77 female (2012)

Languages: Bosnian (48%), Serbian (28%), Croatian (10%), Romani (9%), other (5%). Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian are official languages. Languages with over one million speakers include Bosniak (2.2 million) and Serbian (1.3 million).

Literacy: 96.7% (2000)

History

The Illyrians were among the first known peoples to settle Bosnia. The region came under Roman rule shortly after the birth of Christ through an intense military campaign. Following the fall of the Roman Empire, Bosnia came under rule of warring tribes including the Huns. Independent Bosnian rule was established for several centuries after 1000 AD until coming under rule of the Ottoman Empire beginning in the late fifteenth century. Bosnia remained under Ottoman control until integrating into the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the late nineteenth century. Following World War I, Bosnia became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, which later became Yugoslavia. During World War II, Nazi Germany invaded the region. Ethnic groups did not yield to Nazi rule, yet inter-ethnic fighting occurred. Josip Tito Broz took

command of Yugoslavia in 1945 and established a communist regime that maintained its own sphere of influence separate from Eastern and Western Europe. Slobodan Milosevic became president in Serbia in 1989. Serbian dominance of political affairs under Milosevic resulted in Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, and Bosnia declaring independence in the early 1990s. In October 1991, Bosnia and Herzegovina claimed its sovereignty from Yugoslavia and in March 1992 declared independence from Yugoslavia. Bosnian Serbs protested the declaration and began an armed resistance with assistance from Serbia and Montenegro in an effort to unify predominantly Serb areas with Serbia proper. Bosniaks and Croats also divided along ethnic lines, creating a three-way civil war in 1992. In 1994, Bosniaks and Croats unified under the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The civil war continued until the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords in 1995, which established a democratic, multi-ethnic government that retained the original international boundaries and split the country into two divisions: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska. NATO led a peacekeeping force starting in 1995 that stationed over 60,000 troops to supervise military activity. The European Union overtook peacekeeping responsibilities for Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2004. At the end of 2009, around 2,000 troops remained in the country to provide civil policing due to residual tensions between the previously warring ethnic factions.

Culture

Situated at the crossroads of East and West, Bosnia and Herzegovina adopts cultural practices and traditions from both influences. Sarajevo has served as one of the cultural centers for the Balkans for centuries in art, music, and literature resulting from a blend of Muslim, Catholic, and Orthodox influences. Sarajevo also hosted the 1984 Winter Olympics and was the site of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, which sparked World War I. Bosnia is Europe's most northern nation with a large indigenous Muslim minority. Vegetables constitute a large portion of Bosnian cuisine, which blends common Eastern and Western dishes. Cigarette consumption rates rank among the highest worldwide. Alcohol consumption rates are high. Divorce rates are very low.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$8,200 (2011) [17% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.733

Corruption Index: 3.2 (2011)

The civil war in the early 1990s devastated the economy as production dropped by 80%. Growth occurred following the conflict, with GDP growth rates above 5% between 2003 and 2008. The global economic crisis hurt the economy. An estimated 40% of the workforce is unemployed, and 25% of the population lives below the poverty line. Prospects for additional foreign investment appear positive, but excessive government spending, control of most of the financial sector by Austrian and Italian banks, and gray market activity accounting for a large portion of the economic activity are significant economic barriers for future development. Services employ 47% of the workforce and generate 65% of the GDP whereas industry accounts for 33% of the workforce and 26% of the GDP. Metal working, minerals, vehicle assembly, and textiles are primary industries. Agriculture accounts for 21% of the workforce and 9% of the GDP. Major crops include wheat, fruits, vegetables, and corn. Primary trade partners include Croatia, Slovenia, Italy, and Germany.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has the highest perceived corruption levels among nations in the former Yugoslavia. Corruption is perceived as widespread and present in all areas of government and society, especially natural resource extraction, customs, public utilities, the judicial system, and taxes. Organized crime is also a concern. Under international pressure, anti-corruption institutions have been created, although there has been no progress in addressing corruption. The government continues to lack transparency and accountability with

finances. Mismanagement of international aid has likely occurred.²⁶⁴¹ Bosnia and Herzegovina is susceptible to money laundering and drug trafficking due to weak legislation, few regulations, and poor law enforcement.

Faiths

Christian: 46%

Muslim: 40%

Other: 14%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Orthodox 1,430,158

Catholic 692,012

Jehovah's Witnesses 1,224 17

Seventh Day Adventists 605 23

Latter-day Saints -75 3

Religion

Muslims are the largest religious group (40%), followed by Serbian Orthodox (36%), and Roman Catholics (15%). Religious affiliation is strongly correlated with ethnicity, as most Bosniaks are Muslim, most Serbs are Serbian Orthodox, and most Croats are Catholic. Protestants account for 1% of the population. Protestants and other small religious minority groups like Jews are concentrated in Sarajevo.²⁶⁴²

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is generally upheld by both the federal and administrative governments. However, religious minorities report persistent societal abuse of religious freedom throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina as a result of weak and inconsistent enforcement of laws protecting religious freedom. A fragile national peace has been established through balancing power and the segregation of Catholic Croats, Orthodox Serbs, and Muslim Bosniaks. There is currently little tolerance for religious groups that do not fall into one of the three predominant religious traditions, or even for members of the major religious groups outside of their traditional geographical areas. The most severe persecution of religious minorities occurs between the three largest religious groups, such as Catholics and Orthodox in Muslim areas or Orthodox Christians in Catholic and Muslim areas. Those who commit crimes targeting religious minorities often go unpunished. Religious holidays of all three major religions are recognized by the federal government. To register with the government, a religious group must have at least 300 adult citizen members. Once approved, a registered religious group faces no restrictions on its operations. There are no restrictions on proselytism.²⁶⁴³

Largest Cities

Urban: 47%

Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Tuzla, Zenica, Mostar, Brcko, Bijeljina, Bihac, Prijedor, Doboj.

²⁶⁴¹ Chene, Marie. "Corruption and Anti-Corruption in Bosnia and Herzegovina," Corruption Resource Centre, 23 November 2009. <http://www.u4.no/helpdesk/helpdesk/query.cfm?id=221>

²⁶⁴² "Bosnia and Herzegovina," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127302.htm>

²⁶⁴³ "Bosnia and Herzegovina," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127302.htm>

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

One of the ten largest cities has an LDS congregation. Twenty-one percent (21%) of the national population resides in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

The Church began sending humanitarian aid during the civil war in the mid-1990s. In 1996, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland visited seventy American soldiers in Tuzla. At the time, Church activity was limited to members in the United States military who were administered by the Germany Service Members Stake.²⁶⁴⁴ Elder Holland offered a priesthood blessing in nearby Sarajevo on behalf of the war-torn region during his visit.²⁶⁴⁵ In 2000, Bosnia and Herzegovina became part of the Europe Central Area. In 2009, Elder D. Todd Christofferson visited Bosnia and met with thirty members and investigators in the home of Jason Colvin, where church services are held for expatriate members in Sarajevo. At the meeting, Elder Christofferson told those in attendance that they were preparing the way for missionaries to be assigned to Bosnia and Herzegovina.²⁶⁴⁶ In May 2010, the Church created the first congregation in the country, an administrative branch in Sarajevo named the Bosnia-Herzegovina Branch. In September 2010, Elder Russell M. Nelson dedicated Bosnia and Herzegovina for missionary work.²⁶⁴⁷ In early 2012, the Adriatic North Mission began administering Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the first LDS missionaries were assigned that March to Sarajevo and Banja Luka.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: ~75 (2012)

Between December 1995 and September 1998, almost 900 Latter-day saint servicemen had been deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Hungary for peacekeeping operations.²⁶⁴⁸ In the late 2000s, missionaries in the Slovenia Ljubljana Mission taught an interested Bosniak youth living in Bosnia who was interviewed by the mission president on Skype and baptized shortly thereafter. The new Bosniak convert had learned about the Church through the Internet. At least two Latter-day Saint couples resided in the country in September 2010 in Sarajevo and Banja Luka.²⁶⁴⁹ In early 2012, there was only one Bosnian member in the Sarajevo Branch. By late 2012, there were six members in Tuzla.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 2 Groups: 1 (April 2013)

The Bosnia-Herzegovina (Administrative) Branch was organized in 2010. The branch was renamed the Sarajevo Branch in late 2010 or early 2011. A group began meeting in Banja Luka in the early 2010s. In late 2012, a group began meeting in Tuzla and missionaries were assigned.

²⁶⁴⁴ Stallings, Carol Turnbow; Hendrix, Cmdr. Bill. "Elder Holland visits Hungary, Bosnia," LDS Church News, 24 August 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27174/Elder-Holland-visits-Hungary-Bosnia.html>

²⁶⁴⁵ Comish, Lt. Col. James H. Comish. "Members aid peacekeeping mission," LDS Church News, 5 September 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31275/Members-aid-peacekeeping-mission.html>

²⁶⁴⁶ "First meetinghouse dedicated in Croatia," LDS Church News, 20 June 2009. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/57494/First-meetinghouse-dedicated-in-Croatia.html>

²⁶⁴⁷ Avant, Gerry. "Elder Nelson pronounces blessings on six Balkan nations," LDS Church News, 23 September 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59902/Elder-Nelson-pronounces-blessings-on-six-Balkan-nations.html>

²⁶⁴⁸ Comish, Lt. Col. James H. Comish. "Members aid peacekeeping mission," LDS Church News, 5 September 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31275/Members-aid-peacekeeping-mission.html>

²⁶⁴⁹ Avant, Gerry. "Elder Nelson pronounces blessings on six Balkan nations," LDS Church News, 23 September 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59902/Elder-Nelson-pronounces-blessings-on-six-Balkan-nations.html>

Activity and Retention

Active membership is limited to expatriates living in Sarajevo and a few Bosniak converts. Thirty-five attended an evening devotional at a member's home in Sarajevo with Elder Nelson in September 2010.²⁶⁵⁰ Total active membership is estimated at approximately forty, or 75% of known LDS membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Serbian, Croatian.

All LDS scriptures are translated in Croatian. Only the Book of Mormon is available in Serbian. The Church has translated several unit, temple, priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, young women, primary, missionary, Church proclamations, and family history materials in Serbian and Croatian. Many CES materials are translated in Croatian. The *Liahona* has one Croatian issue per year.

Meetinghouses

Church meetings are held in rented spaces.

Humanitarian and Development Work

In 1993, Latter-day Saints in London, England shipped forty-five boxes filled with personal hygiene and food items to Bosnia to provide relief to victims of the civil war.²⁶⁵¹ 800 pounds of personal hygiene and clothing was sent from members in the United States.²⁶⁵² 8,100 boxes of food were shipped by the Church to Bosnia in 1994.²⁶⁵³ In 2009, the Church donated wheelchairs to the disabled.²⁶⁵⁴ In 2010, senior missionary couples began extensive development work, which included the building of greenhouses, clean water projects, and providing education in neonatal resuscitation techniques in many locations throughout the country.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The LDS Church does not appear to face any legal obstacles in performing missionary work in the country. In early 2012, full-time missionaries indiscriminately taught Christians and Muslims and openly proselyted. The Church falls vastly short of the required 300 adult citizen members required to apply as a religious community to enjoy full religious freedom.

Cultural Issues

High smoking and alcohol consumption rates produce a more challenging atmosphere for Latter-day Saints to live and proselyte than many other countries. Proselytism will need to address substance abuse needs in order to reach a larger population and achieve higher convert retention rates. A high correlation of ethnicity

²⁶⁵⁰ Avant, Gerry. "Elder Nelson pronounces blessings on six Balkan nations," LDS Church News, 23 September 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59902/Elder-Nelson-pronounces-blessings-on-six-Balkan-nations.html>

²⁶⁵¹ "Around the world," LDS Church News, 18 December 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23440/Around-the-world.html>

²⁶⁵² "From around the world," LDS Church News, 5 February 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24202/From-around-the-world.html>

²⁶⁵³ "Food being shipped to families in need," LDS Church News, 3 December 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24827/Food-being-shipped-to-families-in-need.html>

²⁶⁵⁴ "Wheelchairs," Humanitarian Services, retrieved 6 September 2010. <http://lds.org/library/page/display/0,7098,6213-1-3215-1,00.html>

and religion creates additional cultural challenges for interested Bosnians to join the LDS Church and remain active.

National Outreach

LDS congregations and full-time missionaries reach about 15% of the national population. With the exception of personal contacts of members and missionaries, the entire population has been unreached by LDS mission outreach until early 2012. Communism prior to independence and ethnic violence thereafter contributed to the lack of an LDS presence until the early 2010s. Missionary activity will likely be concentrated in Sarajevo due to its large population, religious plurality, and greater tolerance of minority faiths than in ethnically homogenous regions of the countryside.

Despite the lack of specific Internet outreach directed toward Bosnia and Herzegovina, some have become acquainted with the LDS Church through the Internet, and one individual joined the Church in the late 2000s. Internet proselytism approaches including Serbian and Croatian language materials and social networking may be the most appropriate course of immediate action for mission outreach to Bosnians.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Active membership is limited to foreigners temporarily living in the country and the few Bosnian members. Due to the small numbers of Latter-day Saints, members must be self-reliant in living church principles.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The ethnic patchwork present throughout the country presents major challenges for future church growth outside of melting-pot cities like Sarajevo because of lesser tolerance and receptivity in regions dominated by a single faith and because of persistent ethnic tensions. The post-independence segregation of Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs may require the creation of ethnic-specific congregations until greater tolerance among ethnicities is achieved.

Language Issues

Although there are no Bosnian language LDS materials, Serbian and Croatian are understood by most the population, resulting in little need for Bosnian language materials in the foreseeable future. Established Latter-day Saint communities in Croatia and Serbia have necessitated the translation of many church materials in these languages, which can be utilized in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Missionary Service

No missionaries are known to have served from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Leadership

There appear to be few native church members living in the country capable of holding church leadership positions. The lack of prospective local leaders requires foreign members and missionaries to administer leadership needs at present. Developing self-sufficient leadership will likely be an ongoing challenge due to the small number of Bosnian members who have joined the Church recently. Overreliance on full-time missionaries for leadership needs may frustrate church growth prospects over the long term.

Temple

Bosnia and Herzegovina is assigned to the Bern Switzerland Temple district. No organized temple trips occur. Travel to the nearest temple requires significant planning in crossing international boundaries and demands financial sacrifice.

Comparative Growth

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Montenegro were among the last four noncity-state countries in Europe without independent branches and were dedicated for missionary individually in September 2010.²⁶⁵⁵ Among these, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo have the most members and are the only countries with their own independent branches today. Most of the former Yugoslavia has experienced major challenges in convert retention, leadership development, and slow membership growth over the past two decades.

Missionary-oriented Christian groups have experienced little success in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The number of Seventh Day Adventists has remained nearly unchanged over the past decade. Jehovah's Witnesses and Evangelicals also report slow growth. However, all of these groups have indigenous members and leaders in several areas of the country, whereas there are few Bosnian Latter-day Saints.

Future Prospects

The small number of indigenous members, few missionary resources devoted to the Balkans, low regional receptivity, and possible hesitance to participate in more widespread missionary activity until formal registration with the government occurs may result in little growth for years to come. The Tuzla Group may become an independent branch in the near future, and a separate Bosian-speaking group may be organized in Sarajevo to facilitate growth among the indigenous population.

²⁶⁵⁵ Avant, Gerry. "Elder Nelson pronounces blessings on six Balkan nations," LDS Church News, 23 September 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59902/Elder-Nelson-pronounces-blessings-on-six-Balkan-nations.html>

BULGARIA

Geography

AREA: 110,879 square km. Located in Southeastern Europe, Bulgaria borders Romania, Turkey, Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, and the Black Sea. The Danube River forms the Romanian border. Mountains cover most areas, with some lowlands and plains in northern and southeastern areas. The climate is temperate with cold, wet winters and dry, hot summers. Earthquakes and landslides are natural hazards. Environmental issues include air and water pollution, deforestation, and soil contamination. Bulgaria is divided into twenty-eight administrative provinces.

Peoples

Bulgarian: 83.9%
Turk: 9.4%
Roma: 4.7%
Other: 2%

Bulgarians constitute the largest ethnic group and populate most areas. Turks are concentrated along the Greek and Turkish borders. Bulgaria has the highest percentage of Roma of any European nation.²⁶⁵⁶ Roma live throughout the country, with the highest concentrations in Sliven and the northwest. Other ethnic groups include Macedonians, Armenians, Tatars, and Circassians. Bulgaria has the second fastest shrinking population in the world after Montenegro due to low birth rates and emigration.

Population: 7,037,935 (July 2012)
Annual Growth Rate: -0.796% (2012)
Fertility Rate: 1.43 children born per woman (2012)
Life Expectancy: 70.24 male, 77.65 female (2012)

Languages: Bulgarian (84.5%), Turkish (9.6%), Roma (4.1%), other and unspecified (1.8%). Bulgarian is the official language and only language with over one million speakers (6.08 million).

Literacy: 98.2% (2001)

History

Various ancient peoples, including the Thracians, Macedonians, Greeks, and Romans ruled the region in antiquity. Modern-day Bulgarians trace their roots to the Turkic Bulgars, which settled Bulgaria from Central Asia. Intermixing with the indigenous Slavic tribes was followed by the establishment of the first Bulgarian nation in the late 600s. The Byzantine Empire exerted influence in the region, which came under Ottoman control in the fourteenth century. In 1878, northern Bulgaria gained autonomy, and the nation as a whole achieved independence in 1908 from the Ottoman Empire. Both world wars took a heavy toll on Bulgaria, which became a communist nation in 1946. In 1990, communist rule came to an end with democratic

²⁶⁵⁶ "Roma in Bulgaria," wikipedia.com, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roma_in_Bulgaria. Accessed 5 August 2010.

elections. Rapid change to a free-market economy occurred in the 1990s and 2000s. Bulgaria has become a member of NATO and the European Union in the past decade.

Culture

Bulgaria boasts a rich history of art and ancient artifacts from the various civilizations that ruled the region. The Cyrillic alphabet traces its origins to Bulgaria during the ninth century AD and is in use in modified forms throughout much of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. A legacy of athletics and competitive sports includes wrestling, weight-lifting, volleyball, football, and tennis. Bulgaria produces fine wines that are consumed worldwide. Cuisine shares much in common with other nations in the Balkans and Southeast Europe. Folk music is played with instruments common in the region. Bulgaria has one of the highest cigarette consumption rates, whereas alcohol consumption rates are similar to the worldwide average.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$13,500 (2011) [28.1% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.771

Corruption Index: 3.3 (2011)

Bulgaria has taken significant steps towards becoming a free-market economy and integrating with Europe as a whole. Services account for 56% of the workforce and 64% of the GDP. Industry employs 36% of the workforce and produces 28% of the GDP. Primary industries include electricity, gas, water, food products, and mining. Vegetables, fruit, tobacco, and wine are major agricultural products. Primary trade partners include Germany, Russia, Greece, and Turkey. Bulgaria's strategic geographic location provides abundant trade opportunities and carries importance as a link between Asia and Europe.

Corruption ranks among the highest in the European Union. Organized crime and accusations of corruption among public officials continue to deter economic growth and stability.

Faiths

Christian: 83.8%

Muslim: 12.2%

Other: 4%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Bulgarian Orthodox 6,460,000

Evangelical 150,000

Catholic 43,811

Armenian Apostolic 30,000

Seventh Day Adventists 7,507 124

Latter-day Saints 2,296 12

Jehovah's Witnesses 1,896 41

Religion

Most Bulgarians are Orthodox Christians, approximately half of whom are religiously active. Catholics are concentrated in Plovdiv and have high rates of church participation with as many as 90% attending worship

services regularly. Muslims are primarily ethnic Turks found in areas bordering Greece and Turkey. Areas with the highest percentages of Roma tend to have the greatest percentages of Protestants nationwide.²⁶⁵⁷

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is typically upheld by the government for registered religious groups. Due to ambiguities in the 2002 Denominations Act, unregistered religious groups may experience some harassment and differing treatment based on location. The government recognizes Eastern Orthodox Christianity as the traditional religion. Orthodox Christian holidays are national holidays, and the government respects the religious holidays of other religious groups. Political parties are not allowed to have religious ties. Several churches report inconsistencies in government carrying out the law. For instance, Jehovah's Witnesses and Latter-day Saints experienced increased persecution and harassment in the late 2000s following a letter distributed to schools in Burgas by the local government warning to beware of the dangers of these nontraditional religious groups.²⁶⁵⁸

Largest Cities

Urban: 71%

Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna, Burgas, Ruse, Stara Zagora, Pleven, Sliven, Dobrich, Shumen.

All ten of the largest cities have a congregation. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

The first district was organized in 1982 for the few members who lived in the country during the communist era. Bulgaria belonged to the Austria Vienna East Mission in the late 1980s prior to the start of missionary work. Elder Russell M. Nelson visited Bulgaria in 1990 and dedicated the land for missionary work.²⁶⁵⁹ In September 1990, the first missionaries to serve in Bulgaria consisted of two couples and two sister missionaries. The Bulgaria Sofia Mission was organized in 1991 with Kiril P. Kiriakov—a native Bulgarian living in the United States—called as mission president.²⁶⁶⁰ Seminary and institute began in 1994. By 1999, convert baptisms among relatives of Church members led to the first known instance of a four-generation Bulgarian LDS member family being established.²⁶⁶¹ In 2000, Bulgaria became part of the Europe East Area.²⁶⁶² In addition to Bulgaria, the Bulgaria Sofia Mission also administered Serbia for a period in the late 1990s and early 2000s before mission administration for Serbia was transferred to the Slovenia Ljubljana Mission. In 2007, the mission president met with Bulgarian Councilor of Religious Affairs to discuss the Church's activities.²⁶⁶³ In the early 2010s, the Bulgaria Sofia Mission also began administering Turkey.

²⁶⁵⁷ "Bulgaria," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127303.htm>

²⁶⁵⁸ "Bulgaria," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127303.htm>

²⁶⁵⁹ "Czechoslovakia grants recognition to the Church," LDS Church News, 3 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20277/Czechoslovakia-Grants-recognition-to-the-Church.html>

²⁶⁶⁰ "Mission to be created in Bulgaria," LDS Church News, 18 May 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21385/Mission-to-be-created-in-Bulgaria.html>

²⁶⁶¹ Stahle, Shaun. "Four generations of Bulgarian family now members of Church," LDS Church News, 3 July 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/36001/Four-generations-of-Bulgarian-family-now-members-of-Church.html>

²⁶⁶² Lloyd, Scott. "European continent realigned into three new areas," LDS Church News, 16 September 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38475/European-continent--realigned-into-three-new-areas.html>

²⁶⁶³ "Meet with Bulgarian leader," LDS Church News, 10 February 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50119/Meet-with-Bulgarian-leader.html>

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 2,296 (2012)

In May 1991, there were about fifty members living primarily in Sofia.²⁶⁶⁴ During the early 1990s, membership grew rapidly to 700 by the mid-1990s. Membership totaled 1,100 in late 1997. The Church began to experience greater membership growth outside the largest cities. For instance, there were fifty-six members in the Pazardjik Branch by 1999.²⁶⁶⁵ By year-end 2000, there were 1,587 members nationwide.

Annual membership growth rates slowed dramatically in the 2000s from over 9% in 2001 and 2002 to less than 1.5% for years between 2006 and 2009. Membership totaled 2,022 in 2004 and 2,115 in 2006. In 2008, membership decreased by eighteen. High emigration rates have reduced Church membership, as by 2000 about half of Bulgarians who joined the Church had emigrated from Bulgaria.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 9 Groups: 3+ (April 2013)

During the early 1990s, six branches were organized in Sofia. The first branch in Plovdiv was organized in 1992, and in the mid-1990s branches were created in Blagoevgrad, Burgas, Dobrich, Ruse, Shumen, Varna, and Veliko Turnovo.²⁶⁶⁶

In 2000, there were fourteen branches and two districts in Sofia and Plovdiv. The number of branches increased to nineteen in 2002 and to twenty-one in 2006. Additional cities received their first branches, including Pleven, Stara Zagora, Khaskovo, Pazardzhik, Pernik, Sliven, and Yambol.

The number of branches declined to twenty in 2008. In the first half of 2010 six branches in Dobrich, Khaskovo, Pernik, Shumen, Veliko Turnovo, and Yambol were discontinued and became groups. The Area Presidency discontinued branches with fewer than fifteen people attending church weekly and advised the mission to pull missionaries from these cities due to their poor productivity. In 2011, the Church closed both districts in Sofia and Plovdiv. By early 2012, the number of branches declined to ten and included the Blagoevgrad, Burgas, Pleven, Plovdiv, Ruse, Sliven, Sofia 1st, Sofia 2nd, Stara Zagora, and Varna Branches. Some cities that previously had branches may continue to have groups meeting.

Activity and Retention

Quick baptism tactics and unsustainable membership growth in the early 1990s led to inactivity issues. Several cities had fewer than 15% of total membership actively attending church. President Gary Stephens served as the mission president of the Bulgaria Sofia Mission between 1997 and 2000 and greatly improved member activity while continuing convert baptisms and improving retention. Active Bulgarian membership accounted for as many as 65% of membership in 2000, achieving one of the highest LDS activity rates worldwide.

Over one hundred youth attended the first youth conference in 1999.²⁶⁶⁷ In recent years, youth and single adult conference have been held regularly.²⁶⁶⁸ Seventy-one were enrolled in seminary or institute during the

²⁶⁶⁴ "Mission to be created in Bulgaria," LDS Church News, 18 May 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21385/Mission-to-be-created-in-Bulgaria.html>

²⁶⁶⁵ Stahle, Shaun. "Four generations of Bulgarian family now members of Church," LDS Church News, 3 July 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/36001/Four-generations-of-Bulgarian-family-now-members-of-Church.html>

²⁶⁶⁶ "Bulgaria," Deseret News 2010 Church Almanac, p. 440-441.

²⁶⁶⁷ "At conference, Bulgarian youth realize many share their beliefs," LDS Church News, 22 May 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35821/At-conference-Bulgarian-youth-realize-many-share-their-beliefs.html>

²⁶⁶⁸ "Conferences in Europe," LDS Church News, 19 August 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49347/Conferences-in-Europe.html>

2008–2009 school year. In 2005, over 700 attended a presentation on the Church to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Joseph Smith in Sofia.²⁶⁶⁹ One hundred attended a conference for six branches in eastern Bulgaria commemorating the establishment of religious freedom in Bulgaria in 2006.²⁶⁷⁰ In 2010, most branches appear to have between thirty and sixty active members. The percentage of active members appears to have decreased through the rest of the 2000s and today is estimated at around 650, or 30%.

Small congregations with few active members are not concentrated in one area of Bulgaria. Thirty attended church meetings in Sliven in late 2009. In early 2010, approximately thirty members attended church weekly in Mladost Branch in Sofia. Pleven once had around thirty active members, but in late 2008 had less than ten. In late 2008, Pernik was one of the smallest branches with four active members, and Yambol had fewer than ten attending church meetings.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Bulgarian, Turkish.

All LDS scriptures are available in Bulgarian. Only the Book of Mormon has been translated into Turkish. Many unit, temple, priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, young women, primary, missionary, and family history materials are available in Bulgarian and Turkish. Several CES manuals are available in Bulgarian. The *Liahona* has four Bulgarian issues a year.

Meetinghouses

The Church completed the first church-built meetinghouse in Bulgaria in 2000 in Sofia. The new meetinghouse brought increased media and government exposure to the Church.²⁶⁷¹ Most congregations meet in rented spaces or renovated buildings.

Humanitarian and Development Work

In 1993, the Church sent many doctors and physicians to Bulgaria to train medical personnel. The Church also provided educational training to school administrators. Donations to schools for the mentally handicapped occurred the same year.²⁶⁷² Church members started a foundation named One Heart, which donated nutritious foods to Bulgarian orphanages in 2003.²⁶⁷³ In 2007, the Church donated equipment to a hospital in Plovdiv used to diagnose brain and cranial conditions.²⁶⁷⁴

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church is registered with the government but experiences regional restrictions and some persecution.

²⁶⁶⁹ “LDS Bulgarians mark Joseph Smith’s birth,” LDS Church News, 24 December 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48303/LDS-Bulgarians-mark-Joseph-Smiths-birth.html>

²⁶⁷⁰ “Bulgarian members celebrate freedoms,” LDS Church News, 27 May 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48995/Bulgarian-members-celebrate-freedoms.html>

²⁶⁷¹ McFarlane, Esther. “LDS Bulgarians come together for historic dedication,” LDS Church News, 8 July 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38111/LDS-Bulgarians-come-together-for-historic-dedication.html>

²⁶⁷² “Volunteers bring hope to Bulgarian children,” LDS Church News, 5 June 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23188/Volunteers-bring-hope-to-Bulgarian-children.html>

²⁶⁷³ Gardner, Deborah Dushku. “‘One Heart’ provides fresh produce to orphans,” LDS Church News, 9 August 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44161/One-Heart-provides-fresh-produce-to-orphans.html>

²⁶⁷⁴ “New equipment to aid doctors, ease suffering,” LDS Church News, 24 March 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50273/New-equipment-to-aid-doctors-ease-suffering.html>

Major improvements in public relations occurred in the late 1990s. The media has produced many negative news stories about the Church in recent years. An Orthodox priest in Burgas requested the government to expel two LDS missionaries who he accused of interrupting an Orthodox Church service by entering and distributing religious literature. Missionaries declared that they were invited to attend the service and left when they realized they were unwelcome. The government did not take any action, but the incident resulted in many negative media reports internationally.²⁶⁷⁵

In the late 2000s, missionaries were prohibited from proselytism and distributing literature in Ruse and Varna. The Church complained to the national government concerning harsh treatment of missionaries in Pleven and Plovdiv. A letter was received from the government reinforcing its obligation to protect religious freedom but did not address the specific situation. Acts of vandalism occurred at some LDS meeting houses. In June 2009, LDS missionaries were beaten by a group of youth, and the police investigated the incident.²⁶⁷⁶ The Church has attempted to address issues regarding religious freedom and the Church's right to proselyte by developing positive relations with local and national government through visitations and education about the Church. In 2007, humanitarian missionaries met with the mayor of central Sofia and provided information about the Church and its operations in Bulgaria.²⁶⁷⁷

Cultural Issues

The Church has seen some success in growing membership over the past two decades despite the strong historical tradition of Orthodox Christianity for centuries and communist rule for four decades. Increased secularism resulting from recent economic reforms may be partially responsible for low increases in membership over the past several years. Many Orthodox Christians hold negative views and misconceptions of the Church, which have been perpetuated by local government and the media. Bulgarians tend to be more religiously active than citizens of many nations in the European Union, suggesting that once negative views and false information about the Church are dispelled, greater membership growth and activity may occur. Because of high cigarette consumption rates, potential converts frequently struggle to completely end their cigarette addictions prior to baptism. Converts who do not fully overcome substance addictions before baptism experience high rates of relapse and inactivity.

National Outreach

The Church has achieved some of the most reaching national outreach in Southeastern Europe in Bulgaria, as cities with congregations account for 44% of the national population. The 2010 decision to discontinue six branches and remove full-time missionaries from some cities limits mission outreach in cities accounting for 7 %of the population. Sixteen of the twenty-eight administrative provinces account for 85% of the national population and have a congregation. However, only ten of these provinces have an independent branch. The population living in medium-sized and smaller cities remains unreached. The approximately fifty cities with between 10,000 and 50,000 inhabitants do not have a congregation.

Low receptivity to full-time missionaries and a lack of member-missionary efforts in many areas has reduced mission outreach over the past few years. It is difficult for Church leaders to assign greater numbers of missionaries to Bulgaria, as the worldwide LDS missionary force has declined over the past decade while opportunities for missionary work have grown. Expanding national outreach to additional cities will depend on members'

²⁶⁷⁵ "Bulgaria," International Religious Freedom Report 2008, retrieved 19 May 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108439.htm>

²⁶⁷⁶ "Bulgaria," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127303.htm>

²⁶⁷⁷ Krupeva, Rositsa. "Leaders greet mayor in friendly setting," LDS Church News, 11 August 2007. <http://www.ldschurch-news.com/articles/50920/Leaders-greet-mayor-in-friendly-setting.html>

initiative for member-missionary work and on leadership for congregations in established church centers to reduce the demands on full-time missionaries to free up additional manpower.

The Church has an Internet site in Bulgarian at <http://www.lds.bg/index.html>. The website profiles information about the Church and its presence in Bulgaria, including contact information for local Church leaders. Implementation of cottage meetings in member homes, the distribution of religious materials, and informing contacted individuals about the Bulgarian Church website can improve national outreach without sacrificing missionary manpower.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Limited gospel teaching and quick baptism tactics of full-time missionaries in the early 1990s fueled significant inactivity after only a few years of missionary presence. Reactivation efforts were fruitful in the late 1990s, but little progress has been made in the 2000s. In some cities, new converts have struggled to integrate into congregations, and many have become inactive. Threats of persecution and ostracism have likely deterred some from joining the Church or attending church meetings regularly. Ambitions were high among many for a stake to be established in Sofia during the 2000s, but these efforts were frustrated due to low member activity, inadequate numbers of active Melchizedek Priesthood holders, and the slowdown in membership growth. Few active members in many branches in the late 2000s prompted the mass consolidation of half of the Church's branches and the closure of both member districts.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Ethnic integration issues have not been reported in Bulgaria. Some members in Bulgaria are Armenian.²⁶⁷⁸ Non-Bulgarians do not appear to have challenges integrating into congregations with any more difficulty than new Bulgarian converts. There remain no organized or concentrated mission efforts among the Roma people, who have been more receptive to Christian missionary efforts than in many other European nations. Turkish Bulgarians appear to have received very little, if any, mission outreach, as many reside in areas without a congregation, adhere to Islam, and speak Turkish. The small size of the Bulgaria Sofia Mission allows greater potential for mission resources to be allocated to reaching minority ethnic groups than in many other missions.

Language Issues

All LDS scriptures and many Church materials are available in Bulgarian, allowing for outreach among all but a small subset of the population, primarily Roma or foreigners speaking languages with no Church materials translated. There appears to be no outreach among Turkish speakers, as no missionaries in Bulgaria are trained in the Turkish language.

Missionary Service

By May 1991, ten elders, four sisters, and two couples were serving as missionaries in Bulgaria.²⁶⁷⁹ Missionaries serving in Bulgaria grew to seventy in 2009 and dropped to fifty the following year. The first native Bulgarian missionaries since the fall of communism began serving in 1992. Twenty Bulgarian missionaries were serving primarily in Europe by mid-2000.²⁶⁸⁰ Bulgaria remains dependent on foreign missionaries to staff its national missionary force.

²⁶⁷⁸ "Bulgaria's national fencing champion," LDS Church News, 23 December 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49913/Bulgarias-national-fencing-champion.html>

²⁶⁷⁹ "Mission to be created in Bulgaria," LDS Church News, 18 May 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21385/Mission-to-be-created-in-Bulgaria.html>

²⁶⁸⁰ "Bulgaria," Deseret News 2010 Church Almanac, p. 440-441

Leadership

Overreliance on full-time missionaries continues to challenge local members' ability to staff needed leadership to allow congregations to run smoothly. At least half the branches had native branch presidents in 2010. Few active members capable of holding leadership positions contributed to the Church's decision to close half of its branches in the early 2010s. There is a great need for more Bulgarian youth to join the Church and serve faithfully to ensure leadership for the future.

Temple

Bulgaria pertains to the Freiburg Germany Temple district. By 1996, there were 138 endowed members. Temple trips occur regularly and have in the past included members in neighboring countries like Romania. Travel to the temple is costly and time consuming, requiring significant sacrifice from members.

Comparative Growth

Church growth in Bulgaria shares many characteristics with Romania, as both have had a Church presence for two decades, around the same number of congregations, and similarly-sized memberships. With the exception of Albania, Bulgaria has the highest percentage of LDS members in Southeastern European. Activity rates remain higher than most of Eastern Europe.

Many Christian denominations reported slow growth starting in the 2000s. Seventh Day Adventists reported no increase in membership since 2002. Jehovah's Witnesses experienced modest increases in membership annually.

Future Prospects

A shrinking full-time missionary force, the closure of half of the Church's branches in the past few years, and the loss of active members to emigration continue to challenge the scope and vision of LDS expansion in Bulgaria. Increasing materialism, negative views of the Church, and persecution have lessened the receptivity of many and will continue to present challenges. Long-term growth consisting of expanding national outreach, improving self-sufficiency of local membership and leadership, and increasing missionary service and active membership will require wise placement of limited mission resources as well as policies and practices directed toward these ends.

CROATIA

Geography

AREA: 56,594 square km. Occupying a large portion of the Adriatic coast in the Balkans, Croatia borders Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, and Hungary. The Danube River forms the Serbian border, and the Sava River flows through the capital, Zagreb. As many as 1,200 islands and rock outcroppings string the coast. Plains and small hills cover most of the interior, whereas highlands and more rugged terrain dominate the Adriatic coastline. Coastal areas have a mild Mediterranean climate, whereas the interior is subject to a continental climate characterized by hot summers and cold winters. Earthquakes are a natural hazard. Environmental issues include air pollution, water pollution along the coast, and degradation and reconstruction from war in the 1990s. Croatia is administratively divided into twenty counties and one city.

Peoples

Croat: 89.6%

Serb: 4.5%

Other: 5.9%

Croats form the majority in most areas. Serbs are concentrated along the Bosnian and Serbian borders. Other ethnic groups include Bosniaks, Hungarians, Slovenes, Czechs, and Roma.

Population: 4,480,043 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: -0.092% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.44 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 72.38 male, 79.8 female (2012)

Languages: Croatian (96.1%), Serbian (1%), other (2.9%). Croatian and Italian are national or official languages. Only Croatian has over one million speakers (4.3 million).

Literacy: 98.1% (2001)

History

Croatia has been populated for thousands years. Prior to the birth of Christ, the Illyrians and Greeks colonized the islands. The Roman Empire annexed the region and maintained control until the emergence of the Kingdom of Croatia, which reached its height in the latter half of the eleventh century. Croatia subsequently developed ties with Hungary in the following centuries and was the site of two centuries of war between the Austro-Hungarian and the Ottoman Empires. The Austro-Hungarian Empire ruled Croat lands until its dissolution following World War I. Croats, Slovenes, and Serbs united and formed Yugoslavia in 1929. Communism took hold after World War II. Croatia declared independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, but war with Serbia continued until 1995. In 2009, Croatia joined NATO. Croatia is a candidate for European Union membership.

Culture

Croatia possesses many World Heritage sites and national parks. The Catholic Church continues to strongly influence culture due to a legacy lasting over a thousand years. Croatian-speakers have been concerned about maintaining the purity of their language due to foreign rule over the past two centuries. A rich history of dress, art, literature, and music continues. Native cuisine is diverse and a source of national pride. Cigarette and alcohol consumption rates are high.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$18,300 (2011) [38% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.796

Corruption Index: 4.0 (2011)

Croatia had one of the most developed economies of the former Yugoslavia, but war in the early and mid-1990s severely damaged infrastructure and deterred investment. Prospects for European Union membership will bring greater economic growth and development in the coming years. Inflation and unemployment remain major economic issues. There have been some issues transitioning to a free-market economy, such as the privatization of government-held companies. Services account for 64% of the workforce and produce 61% of the GDP. Industry employs 32% of the labor force and produces 31% of the GDP. Primary industries include chemicals, plastics, machinery, metal products, and wood products. Croatia has modest oil reserves. Agriculture accounts for a small portion of the economy and mainly produces wheat, corn, sugar beets, and sunflower seeds. Primary trade partners include Italy, Germany, Slovenia, and Austria.

Accusations of corruption among government officials with military ties are a concern. Smuggling and organized crime are widespread, as illegal drugs, workers, and weapons are trafficked from Eastern Europe and the Middle East to Western Europe. Several individuals who have attempted to expose corruption have been assassinated.²⁶⁸¹

Faiths

Christian: 92.6%

Muslim: 1.3%

Other/unspecified: 0.9%

None: 5.2%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 3,939,482

Serbian Orthodox 269,213

Jehovah's Witnesses 5,612 67

Seventh Day Adventists 2,852 84

Latter-day Saints 583 6

Religion

Eight-five percent (85%) of Croatians are Catholic, and 6% are Serbian Orthodox. Many Catholics are

²⁶⁸¹ Srdoc, Natasha; Samy, Joel Anand. "Corruption in Croatia," Wall Street Journal Europe, 19 May 2009. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124267799642331663.html>

religiously active, and approximately 30% attended mass weekly.²⁶⁸² Serbian Orthodox adherents reside in predominately Serb areas bordering nations to the east. Other religious minorities are concentrated in urban areas.²⁶⁸³

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is typically upheld by the government. Abuse of religious freedom is not tolerated. There is no official religion, but the Catholic Church does receive special privileges. Many Catholic holidays are national holidays. Some tensions persist between Catholics, Orthodox Christians, and Muslims. Recently passed legislation has increased the requirements for religious groups to obtain official government recognition and be entitled to government benefits such as tax exemption. Some societal abuses of religious freedom have occurred directed toward Orthodox Christians and Jews.²⁶⁸⁴

Largest Cities

Urban: 57%

Zagreb, **Split**, Rijeka, Osijek, Zadar, **Slavonski Brod**, **Pula**, **Sesvete**, Karlovac, Varaždin.

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregation.

Six of the ten largest cities have congregations. Fifty percent (50%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

The Church was first recognized by the Yugoslav government as a legal entity in 1975.²⁶⁸⁵ Kresimir Cosic, a popular Croatian basketball player who joined the Church in the 1970s, helped raise awareness of the Church and its teachings in Yugoslavia.²⁶⁸⁶ A limited number of North American missionaries served in Yugoslavia in the late 1970s. President Thomas S. Monson dedicated Croatia for missionary work in 1985.²⁶⁸⁷ The Austria Vienna East Mission was organized in 1987 and administered to Yugoslavia. The Austria Vienna South Mission was created in 1996 and administered the former Yugoslavia. Mission headquarters were relocated to Slovenia in 1999, Croatia in 2003, and back to Slovenia shortly thereafter.²⁶⁸⁸ Seminary and institute began in 1997 and 2008, respectively. Croatia became part of the Europe Central Area in 2000, which was consolidated with the Europe West Area to form the Europe Area in the late 2000s. In the early 2010s, the Adriatic North Mission headquarters was relocated to Zagreb, Croatia.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 583 (2012)

²⁶⁸² "Religion in Croatia," Kwintessential, retrieved 24 May 2010. <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/articles/article/Croatia/Religion-in-Croatia/470>

²⁶⁸³ "Croatia," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127304.htm>

²⁶⁸⁴ "Croatia," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127304.htm>

²⁶⁸⁵ "Croatia," Country Profiles, retrieved 22 May 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/croatia>

²⁶⁸⁶ Cimerman, Dora Glassford. "First for LDS in Slovenia," LDS Church News, 28 October 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49676/First-for-LDS-in-Slovenia.html>

²⁶⁸⁷ "First meetinghouse dedicated in Croatia," LDS Church News, 20 June 2009. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/57494/First-meetinghouse-dedicated-in-Croatia.html>

²⁶⁸⁸ "Slovenia," Desert News 2010 Church Almanac, p. 574.

In 1994, there were one hundred members. Membership reached 200 by 1996. By year-end 2000, there were 319 members.

With the exception of 2003, membership has increased every year in the 2000s. Growth rates ranged from 2% to 13% per year, with membership typically increasing by twenty to thirty annually. Church membership totaled 379 in 2002, 424 in 2004, and 503 in 2007. In 2010, missionaries reported that convert baptisms occur infrequently. In late 2009, there was one member per 8,400 people.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 6 (2012)

In 1975, the Church created its first congregation in Zadar.²⁶⁸⁹ The Zagreb Croatia District was organized in 1980. In 2000, there were four branches in Karlovac, Split, Varaždin, and Zagreb.

In 2003 and 2004, branches were organized in Osijek, Rijeka, and Zadar, bringing the total number of congregations to seven. The Split Branch was discontinued in 2005. A group began meeting in Pula in the late 2000s but was disbanded in the early 2010s.

Activity and Retention

Forty-two Croatian members attended the rededication of the Bern Switzerland Temple in 1992.²⁶⁹⁰ Forty-seven youth from Croatia and Slovenia met for a youth conference in 2003.²⁶⁹¹ A seven-country conference, which included Croatia, had 130 in attendance in 2007.²⁶⁹² In 2007, 120 attended the groundbreaking of the first church-built meetinghouse in Croatia in Zagreb.²⁶⁹³ Fourteen were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year.

Croatia suffers from major member inactivity and poor convert retention issues. The Zagreb Branch had as many as ninety attending Sunday meetings in the mid-2000s, but in early 2010 averaged around thirty attending weekly. In early 2010, Pula, Rijeka, Varaždin, and Zadar each had approximately five active members and Karlovac had fifteen active members. Total active membership is likely no greater than eighty, or 15%.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Slovenian, Croatian, Hungarian, Italian, Serbian.

All LDS scriptures are translated into Croatian, Hungarian, and Italian. Only the Book of Mormon is available in Serbian and Slovenian. The Church has translated several unit, temple, priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, young women, primary, missionary, Church proclamations, and family history materials into Croatian, Serbian, and Slovenian. Hungarian and Italian have additional Church materials available, such as the Church Handbook of Instructions and many audio/visual materials. Many CES materials are translated in Croatian. The *Liabona* has twelve Italian issues, six Hungarian issues, one Croatian issue, and one Slovenian issue annually.

²⁶⁸⁹ The Church was first recognized by the Yugoslav government as a legal entity in 1975.

²⁶⁹⁰ Avant, Gerry. "Thousands gather and savor experience of temple dedication," LDS Church News, 31 October 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21988/Thousands-gather-and-savor-experience-of-temple-dedication.html>

²⁶⁹¹ Maxfield, Ani Clipper. "Youth meet in Slovenia conference," LDS Church News, 13 September 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44305/Youth-meet-in-Slovenia-conference.html>

²⁶⁹² "Seven-country conference," LDS Church News, 11 August 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50936/Seven-country-conference.html>

²⁶⁹³ "First chapel in Croatia," LDS Church News, 5 May 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50531/First-chapel-in-Croatia.html>

Meetinghouses

There is only one church-built meetinghouse in Zagreb. Other congregations meet in renovated buildings or rented spaces.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church has conducted eight humanitarian projects since 1985. Projects included donations of wheelchairs, medical equipment, and humanitarian aid.²⁶⁹⁴ Large amounts of humanitarian aid were donated in 1992 due to war in the region.²⁶⁹⁵ In 1999, the Church donated 130 pigs to needy refugee families to replenish their lost livestock.²⁶⁹⁶ In 2002, Church members in the Netherlands donated quilts and toys to orphanages in Croatia and Slovakia.²⁶⁹⁷ In 2003, the Church began planting 1,450 fruit trees at an elementary school in Ratkovac to help increase self-sufficiency.²⁶⁹⁸

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church enjoys full religious freedom in Croatia. Missionaries may openly proselyte.

Cultural Issues

Many converts face ostracism from family and friends due to the close cultural connections between Croatians and Catholicism. Similar challenges have been experienced in other Eastern or Southeastern European nations, like Poland and Greece. These pressures have influenced member activity rates, as both recent converts and long-term members face societal pressures to disassociate themselves from the LDS Church. Many Croatians smoke and many prospective converts struggle to quit smoking prior to baptism. High alcohol use rates also challenge mission efforts.

National Outreach

The Church has maintained well-reaching proselytizing with full-time missionaries despite low receptivity and few active members. Only three of the 10 largest cities have no congregations and as many as two million people live in a city with an outreach center (43% of the national population). Outreach in rural areas has yet to be explored, but missionary work with full-time missionaries is most practical in larger cities due to limited resources and low receptivity. Expanding outreach in smaller cities will remain a challenge as twenty-seven cities have 10,000 to 40,000 inhabitants and no mission outreach.

The Church maintains an Internet site for Croatia at <http://www.crkvaisusakrista.hr/>. In addition to meeting-house locations, Church teachings, history, and programs are explained in Croatian. The website allows for

²⁶⁹⁴ "Projects—Croatia," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 22 May 2010. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-41,00.html>

²⁶⁹⁵ "Humanitarian relief in Europe," LDS Church News, 29 February 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22332/Humanitarian-relief-in-Europe.html>

²⁶⁹⁶ Stahle, Shaun. "Pig project in Croatia restores hope, dignity," LDS Church News, 5 June 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35869/Pig-project-in-Croatia-restores-hope-dignity.html>

²⁶⁹⁷ "Helping children in Slovakia, Croatia," LDS Church News, 7 September 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42398/Helping-children-in-Slovakia-Croatia.html>

²⁶⁹⁸ "Fruit trees to help rekindle economy," LDS Church News, 6 December 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44788/Fruit-trees-to-help-rekindle-economy.html>

many to learn about the Church individually and to seek out the Church if interested. Use of the Internet site in proselytism can assist in expanding national outreach.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Recent declines in active membership appear largely due to conflict among members and limited fellowshiping. Many stop attending Church because they were offended. Converts have struggled to remain active over the long term. Many missionaries have sought diligently to reduce tensions among members but have seen little long-term success. Recent converts typically have experienced adequate teaching and fellowshiping prior to baptism and do not appear rushed into baptism without developing regular church attendance habits. Some less active members may return to their former churches, challenging future reactivation efforts. The construction of the first church-built meetinghouse in Zagreb and subsequent drop in active members in the city demonstrate that expensive, church-built meetinghouses do not protect or ensure growth in active membership.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The homogeneity of the population challenges missionary efforts due to the lack ethnic diversity. Although fewer languages and cultural barriers tend to lessen the resources needed for wide-reaching national outreach, strong associations between ethnicity and religion have reduced receptivity of the Church among many Croats. Future prospects of outreach among Serbs may result in little friction with Croat members, as Serbs are concentrated in their own communities. Serbs to date have demonstrated little receptivity to LDS mission outreach and are unlikely to experience dedicated ethnic mission outreach in Croatia for years to come due to their small numbers and the lack of mission outreach centers near predominately Serb communities.

Language Issues

The Church has translated a large amount of gospel materials in Croatian despite few active members. Some returned missionaries who served in Croatia help translate materials for the Church, as there are few native members capable of translation work. With the exception of Bosnian and Roma, most languages spoken by minority groups have church materials available.

Missionary Service

Very few Croatian members have served missions, and Croatia remains dependent on foreign missionaries to staff its full-time missionary force. Croatia has few member families and youth, indicating that Croatia will remain dependent on foreign missionaries for many years to come.

Leadership

The Church has struggled to develop local leadership in congregations. Krešimir Josić, the charismatic BYU basketball star and translator of the Book of Mormon and Doctrine in Covenants into Croatian, passed away from lymphoma in 1995. The long record of church work in Yugoslavia going back to the mid-1970s has experienced only limited success in developing local leadership and a strong Croatian church membership. In May 2010, only two of Croatia's six branches had native branch presidents. The remaining branches had missionaries serve as branch presidents. The Zagreb Croatia District may be dependent on mission leadership to function due to the small number of active members.

Temple

Croatia is assigned to the Frankfurt Germany Temple district. Temple trips occur periodically by bus. Current active membership does not appear self-sustaining in staffing needed personnel to conduct many ordinances and activities in the temple in Croatia. It is possible that Croatia could be assigned to the Rome Italy Temple district once the temple is completed in 2013 due to ready access across the Adriatic Sea and close historical relations between Italy and Croatia.

Comparative Growth

Croatia experiences some of the lowest member activity in the former Yugoslavia and Europe. Predominately Catholic countries in Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America have been much more receptive than Croatia. Croatia ranks among nations with the lowest percentage of nominal Latter-day Saints in Europe but has a greater percentage than some more populous countries like Poland and Serbia. Missions in many Eastern and Southeastern European nations report similar frustrations with low member activity and high convert attrition.

Most Christian groups report little, if any, membership growth. Seventh Day Adventists have declined by 500 over the past decade, and the number of congregations has remained unchanged. Evangelicals report little growth. Jehovah's Witnesses appear the most efficient in proselytism and have a large enough member base to provide a sense of community among converts.

Future Prospects

Persistently low member activity, poor convert retention, and slow growth limit long-term prospects for the LDS Church in Croatia. The opening of additional cities for missionary work over the past decade indicates that mission leadership desires to increase national outreach, but low receptivity and challenges unifying members in congregations prevents long term, self-sustaining growth and sustainability in outreach expansion. Most cities with a Church presence remain heavily reliant on full-time missionaries for leadership and would likely be unable to sustain themselves if full-time missionaries were absent. No additional cities appear likely to open for missionary work until greater self-reliance and receptivity is achieved in cities with outreach centers.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Geography

AREA: 78,867 square km. Landlocked in Central Europe, the Czech Republic borders Poland, Slovakia, Austria, and Germany. Most terrain consists of hills and mountains subjected to a temperate climate with cool summers and cold, wet winters. Forest and pasture cover most areas. The Elbe River flows through the north central portion of the country. Flooding is the primary natural hazard. Environmental issues include pollution and acid rain.

Peoples

Czech: 90.4%
Moravian: 3.7%
Slovak: 1.9%
Other: 4%

Population: 10,177,300 (July 2012)
Annual Growth Rate: -0.134% (2012)
Fertility Rate: 1.27 children born per woman (2012)
Life Expectancy: 74.11 male, 80.83 female (2012)

Languages: Czech (94.9%), Slovak (2.3%), other (2.3%), unidentified (0.8%).
Literacy: 99% (2003)

History

Celts populated the present-day Czech Republic starting in the sixth century BC. Germanic tribes pushed into the region shortly after the birth of Christ. The western two-thirds of the modern Czech Republic are known as Bohemia, from the Latin *Boihaemum* first mentioned in Tacitus' first-century work *Germania*, whereas the eastern third is referred to as Moravia, named after the Morava River. The Huns invaded between the fourth and seventh centuries. Slavs settled during this period and gained influence and political power. In the ninth century, the state of Bohemia was formed and influenced much of Central Europe, becoming part of the Holy Roman Empire. Austria and Hungary took control of Bohemia following the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire in the nineteenth century. After World War I and the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Slovaks and Czechs united to create Czechoslovakia. Communism spread to Czechoslovakia following World War II, and the region remained under the Soviet sphere of influence until 1989 as a result of the Velvet Revolution. During the years of Soviet influence, Czechs attempted to liberalize communism and were met with stern opposition from Moscow. A peaceful division between Czechs and Slovaks occurred in 1993. In 1999, the Czech Republic became a member of NATO and in 2004 joined the European Union.

Culture

Prague has become one of Europe's most visited cities. Medieval castles and historical sites dot the landscape. The Czech Republic is well known for its puppets and puppet shows. There is a rich legacy of literature and

music. Meat is a major component of Czech cuisine. Divorce and cigarette and alcohol consumption rates are among the highest worldwide. Social attitudes are highly secular.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$25,900 (2011) [53.8% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.865

Corruption Index: 4.4 (2011)

The Czech economy has achieved some of the greatest growth and stability among the former communist nations of Central and Eastern Europe. A large number of skilled workers, sizable population, central location, and smooth transition from a centrally planned economy to a free market economy have attracted foreign investment and have created an export-oriented economy. Economic growth remained consistent throughout the 2000s, although recession occurred in 2009 due to the global financial crisis. Services employ 56% of the labor force and produce 62% of the GDP, whereas industry accounts for 40% of the workforce and produces 35% of the GDP. Primary industries include cars, metal working, machinery, and glass. Germany, Taiwan, Slovakia, and Poland are major trade partners.

The prevalence of corruption is comparable to many other former communist Central European nations and is higher than much of the European Union. Bribery appears the most prevalent illegal act and most frequently occurs with large companies and civil servants. Tougher anti-corruption legislation and surveillance are items under consideration to address these issues, but little if any improvement in fighting corruption occurred during much of the 2000s.²⁶⁹⁹

Faiths

Christian: 28.9%

Other: 3.3%

Unspecified: 8.8%

Unaffiliated: 59%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 2,740,000

Jehovah's Witnesses 15,534 234

Seventh Day Adventists 7,491 145

Latter-day Saints 2,369 14

Religion

The Reformation took a strong hold in Bohemia, and most of the population converted to Protestantism. Early reformers like Jan Hus sought to reform the Church and to make the Bible available in the common tongue, but the brutal suppression of the reformation led to the hegemony of Catholicism, which remains the dominant religious tradition to this day. The communist legacy and increasing secularism have disassociated much of the population from religion. According to a 2007 poll, 55% of participants stated they mistrusted churches, whereas only 28% claimed that they trusted churches. In a 2008 poll, only 25% of respondents under age twenty-nine professed a belief in God, and 39% of all participants identified as atheist. Although 33% of the population identifies as Catholic, only 5% regularly attend Catholic services. Protestants account

²⁶⁹⁹ "Corruption in the Czech Republic: Politicians and Managers' Perceptions," Donath Burson-Marsteller, retrieved 21 June 2010. <http://www.dbm.cz/pruzkumy/english/?id=98>

for 3% of the population, and a third are religiously active. There is a small Jewish community, significantly reduced from its pre-Holocaust numbers.²⁷⁰⁰

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. Religious organizations receive one of two levels of government recognition. The primary registration allows for some tax benefits and requires annual reporting to the government. The secondary registration grants government funds to religious organizations with this status. Additional rights are also granted to religious groups with the highest level of recognition, including clergy performing civil marriages. Missionaries must meet the conditions for a standard work visa if they labor for over ninety days within the country. There has been some prejudice and vandalism targeting Jews in recent years by a few members of society.²⁷⁰¹

Largest Cities

Urban: 73%

Praha, Brno, Ostrava, Plzen, Olomouc, Liberec, České Budejovice, Hradec Králové, **Ústí nad Labem**, Pardubice.

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregation.

Nine of the ten largest cities have a congregation. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

The Church in the Czech Republic has a long history marked by periods of isolation from the international church. Official missionary work began in Czechoslovakia in the 1920s when the Church obtained permission to operate. President Widtsoe dedicated Czechoslovakia for missionary work and organized in the Czechoslovak Mission from the Germany-Austrian and Swiss German Missions in July 1929. Language barriers, few missionaries, and civil opposition challenged greater mission outreach during this period, yet missionaries zealously published tracts and articles in the local newspapers about the Church. Prior to World War II, 149 joined the Church in the Czechoslovak Mission, and congregations were established in Prague, Brno, and Mlada Boleslav/Kosmonosy. With the threat of war in the late 1930s, baptisms dropped, and the population became increasingly less receptive, contributing to the departure of the missionaries in 1938. President Toronto began his tenure of the Czechoslovak Mission in 1936 and continued to administer to local members' needs when possible following the discontinuance of the mission in 1950. Missionaries returned following World War II and worked until missionaries were forced out of the country in 1950. During 1949, the Czechoslovak Mission baptized seventy converts.

During the forty years without missionaries and few visits from international Church leaders, local members continued to serve as leaders and bring in few new converts into the Church. In 1985, twenty converts joined the Church due to local member efforts. The Church gained official recognition, rededicated the country, and again assigned missionaries in 1990.²⁷⁰² Seminary and institute began in 1994. In 2000, the Czech Republic became part of the Europe Central Area and in 2010 was assigned to the Europe Area.

²⁷⁰⁰ "Czech Republic," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127306.htm>

²⁷⁰¹ "Czech Republic," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127306.htm>

²⁷⁰² Mehr, Kahlile. "Czech Saints: A Brighter Day," *Ensign*, Aug 1994, 46.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 2,369 (2012)

Eighty-six members remained during World War II. By July 1990, there were approximately 350 members, more than doubling to 750 two years later. During this period, most converts were young adults.²⁷⁰³ In the mid-1990s, membership reached 1,200. By year-end 2000, there were 1,680 members. Membership reached 1,821 in 2002, 2,024 in 2006, and 2,089 in 2008.

Most years in the 2000s saw annual membership growth rates range between 2 and 4%. In 2009, the Czech Prague Mission experienced a significant increase in convert baptisms and membership growth of over 5%. Convert baptisms for the mission grew from twenty-nine in 2007 to sixty-nine in 2008 and over one hundred in 2009.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 13 Groups: 1 (April 2013)

The Church created its first district in Prague in 1982 followed by a second district in Brno in 1991. In 1997, there were twenty branches, dropping to seventeen branches in 2000. The number of branches decreased to sixteen in 2001 and to fourteen in 2002 and remained unchanged as of 2010. Branches were discontinued in Ústí nad Labem and Pardubice in the early 2000s. In 2010, the Prague Czech District served six branches and the Brno Czech District included ten branches, three of which were in Slovakia. The Czech Prague Mission Branch meets the needs of members living in remote areas of the mission. Many cities without branches have small congregations and occasional missionary visits, such as Decin. In 2012, missionaries reopened Pardubice and organized a group.

Activity and Retention

During the 2008–2009 school year, seventy-four were enrolled in seminary or institute. The Prague Branch had around fifty attending regularly in 2009. The average number of members per branch increased from ninety-nine in 2000 to 157 in 2009. Most branches appear to have between twenty-five and sixty active members. Nationwide active membership appears around 500, or 25% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Czech.

All LDS scriptures and a wide range of Church materials are translated into Czech. Church materials translated in Slovak consist of several unit, temple, priesthood, Sunday School, primary, and family history materials. Several seminary and institute manuals are translated into Czech.

Meetinghouses

The first church-built meetinghouse was dedicated in late 2001 for the Brno Branch.²⁷⁰⁴

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church has conducted little humanitarian work in recent years due to the level of economic prosperity. In

²⁷⁰³ Mehr, Kahlile. "Czech Saints: A Brighter Day," *Ensign*, Aug 1994, 46.

²⁷⁰⁴ "LDS Czechs celebrate first hall," *LDS Church News*, 1 December 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40958/LDS-Czechs-celebrate-first-hall.html>

2002, missionaries serving in Prague provided 700 hours of labor cleaning up after some of the worst flooding in centuries.²⁷⁰⁵

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church does not currently face any restrictions on missionary work. Missionaries proselyte openly and serve on work visas. The Church has only obtained the initial level of government recognition, indicating that Church leaders are unable to perform marriages. Acquiring land for meetinghouses has proved a major challenge over the past two decades.

Cultural Issues

Widespread secularism and distrust towards organized religion present significant challenges to missionary efforts. High rates of alcohol and cigarette usage bring many social problems. Tailoring the Church's message to a population with low religious activity and interest is a major challenge.

National Outreach

During the 2000s, the Church reduced its national outreach by discontinuing several congregations and assigning fewer missionaries. Consequently, the two largest cities in 2010 without a branch once had congregations in the early 2000. Some dependent branches or groups continue to function in some cities with former mission outreach centers. The Church has conducted outreach in smaller cities, such as Jicin with only 16,000 inhabitants. Twenty-six percent (26%) of the population lives in a city with a congregation.

There are over 120 cities with between 10,000 and 50,000 inhabitants without a mission outreach center. With fewer full-time missionaries assigned, local members and leaders will need to be at the forefront in establishing the Church in these locations. Organizing periodic cottage meetings in locations with a couple of active members or investigators may be a successful means for full-time missionaries to be more efficient in expanding national outreach. Greater wealth facilitates greater mobility for members residing outside cities with congregations to travel to locations with congregations, thereby reducing the need for more congregations nearby larger cities.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Poor convert retention has occurred since missionary work recommenced in the early 1990s. Quick-baptism techniques during the first decade may be partially due blame, as many did not develop a strong testimony of the Church and successfully integrate with their respective congregations following their baptisms. By the late 1990s, most branches had around twenty-five active members. It is unclear whether retention rates have improved or declined with the increased number of baptisms in 2008 and 2009. High levels of secularism appear partially responsible for low member activity rates.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The homogeneity of the population reduces ethnic integration issues, but the disproportional number of nonnatives worship in some congregations. Around twelve Mongolian converts and investigators met in Hradec Králové.

²⁷⁰⁵ Stahle, Shaun D. "Missionaries offer time, muscle after Prague flood," LDS Church News, 28 September 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42496/Missionaries-offer-time-muscle-after-Prague-flood.html>

Language Issues

The widespread use of Czech nationwide simplifies Church administration and missionary work. However, a large number of active members are nonnatives, resulting in an increased need for translation work in many of the branches.

Missionary Service

In the late 1990s, there were over one hundred missionaries serving in the mission. Prague alone had sixteen missionaries in 2002.²⁷⁰⁶ Sixty missionaries were serving in the Czech Prague Mission in 2006.²⁷⁰⁷ In 2010, there were around sixty missionaries serving in the Czech Prague Mission. Senior missionaries report that transfers occur every nine weeks instead of every six weeks like in other missions. The Czech Republic remains unable to staff its own missionary force due to its limited number of active young adult members, low birth rates, and few converts.

Leadership

Church leadership is well developed, but remains very limited. All thirteen branches appeared to have native branch presidents in 2010. The Czech Republic has some returned missionaries to fill leadership positions and help build the Church over the long term but would benefit from far more. The lack of increase in the number of congregations since 2002 demonstrates the limited local Church leadership and low receptivity.

Temple

The Czech Republic is assigned to the Freiburg Germany Temple district. Members benefit from close proximity to the temple despite their few numbers. Temple trips occur regularly through branches and districts.

Comparative Growth

The Czech Republic was the first Slavic nation with a mission established many decades before any other nation in Eastern Europe and likely was the only nation in Central and Eastern Europe during the communist area to maintain a consistent Church presence. Despite this legacy, the percentage of Church members is lower than most nations in Central Europe and compares to most nations in Eastern Europe that had no Church presence prior to 1990. During much of the 2000s, membership growth ranked among the slowest of the former communist nations in Europe. The Czech Republic experienced the highest rate of membership growth in 2009 in Central Europe. Member activity and convert retention rates appear comparable to neighboring former-communist Central European nations such as Hungary and Poland. The percentage of the population living in cities with a mission outreach center is comparable to nations like Hungary with a stronger Church presence in Central Europe.

Other outreach-oriented Christian denominations have generally experienced faster membership growth and higher activity rates compared to the LDS Church. Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists have experienced steady growth; both have over ten times as many congregations as the LDS Church.

²⁷⁰⁶ Stahle, Shaun D. "Missionaries offer time, muscle after Prague flood," LDS Church News, 28 September 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42496/Missionaries-offer-time-muscle-after-Prague-flood.html>

²⁷⁰⁷ Stahle, Shaun D. "Daunting task known as Slovakian miracle," LDS Church News, 11 November 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49733/Daunting-task-known-as-Slovakian-miracle.html>

Future Prospects

Increases in convert baptisms over the past two years despite a small missionary force indicate that the Church has become more efficient in its proselytism efforts in the Czech Republic, although time will tell whether this was a one-time surge or the beginning of a lasting trend. Low numbers of convert baptisms, a dependence on foreign missionaries, and low activity rates have been major obstacles to long-term growth. Growth trends have been difficult to forecast for the Czech Republic since the introduction of the Church. However, current conditions indicate that the establishment of a stake is not likely within the foreseeable future. A few more branches may be organized in regions where groups have become more self-sufficient. Due to the large number of Mongolian converts, a special branch to meet the needs of these members may be organized in the future.

ESTONIA

Geography

AREA: 45,228 square km. Estonia is in Eastern Europe and borders Russia, Latvia, and the Baltic Sea. More than 1,500 small islands in the Baltic Sea belong to Estonia; Hiiumaa and Saaremaa are the largest. The maritime climate creates cool summers and moderate winters. Terrain primarily consists of plains, marshes, and lowlands with some hills in the south. There are some forested areas whereas grassland and farmland cover most the country. Natural hazards include periodic spring flooding. Air and water pollution are environmental issues. Estonia is divided into fifteen administrative counties.

Peoples

Estonian: 67.9%
Russian: 25.6%
Ukrainian: 2.1%
Belarusian: 1.3%
Finn: 0.9%
Other: 2.2%

Estonians form the largest ethnic group. Russians tend to live in Tallinn, other large cities, or Ida-Viru County in the east bordering Russia.

Population: 1,274,709 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: -0.65% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.44 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 68.3 male, 79.19 female (2012)

Languages: Estonian (67.3%), Russian (29.7%), other (2.3%), unknown (0.7%). Estonian is the official language.

Literacy: 99.8% (2000)

History

Various Baltic tribes and neighboring peoples populated Estonia in antiquity. In the Middle Ages, the area was divided among several different political powers until integration into the Holy Roman Empire in the early thirteenth century. Prior to independence in 1918, Estonia was controlled by several neighboring nations for centuries, including Denmark, Sweden, Germany, and Russia. In 1940, the U.S.S.R annexed Estonia. Independence was regained in 1991, and the last Russian troops left in 1994. In 2004, Estonia joined NATO and the European Union.

Culture

Estonia draws upon cultural influences from Eastern Europe, Central Europe, and Scandinavia. The Estonian language is closely related to Finnish. Most consider Estonians to be quiet and to maintain distance from those

around them. Saunas have been in use for centuries. There is a proud tradition of art, literature, and music. Family is traditional in structure.²⁷⁰⁸ Common cuisine consists of black bread, dairy products, potatoes, and pork. Cigarette consumption rates are comparable to Western Europe and alcohol consumption rates are comparable to the United States. Divorce rates are high and comparable to other Eastern European countries.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$20,200 (2011) [42% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.835

Corruption Index: 6.4 (2011)

Estonia experienced consistent economic growth in the 1990s and 2000s as a result of market-based economic policy. Telecommunications and electronics are strong industries. GDP per capita is among the highest in Eastern Europe, yet 19.5% of the population lives below the poverty line. The worldwide financial crisis in the late 2000s resulted in a 14% drop in GDP per capita during 2009. Unemployment has also rapidly increased during this time period from 5.7% to 14.3%. Services employ 75% of the workforce and produce 73% of the GDP, whereas industry accounts for 23% of the workforce and produces 24% of the GDP. Lead industries include engineering, electronics, and wood products. Potatoes, vegetables, livestock, and fish are agriculture products. Primary export partners include Finland, Sweden, Germany, and nearby Eastern European nations.

Estonia enjoys the lowest rate of corruption among former Soviet republics. Corruption rates are comparable to some Western European nations like France and Spain.

Faiths

Christian: 27.8%

Unaffiliated: 34.1%

Other/unspecified: 32%

None: 6.1%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Evangelical Lutheran 180,000 165

Estonian Orthodox 200,000 30

Estonian Apostolic 27,000 64

Catholic 6,000

Jehovah's Witnesses 4,254 54

Seventh Day Adventists 1,630 20

Latter-day Saints 1,086 4

Religion

Christians are the largest religious group but account for less than a third of the population, and many are not active in their faith. Most Estonians have little involvement with religion. A Gallup poll in February 2009 asked individuals whether religion was important to them in everyday life, and only 14% responded in the affirmative. There are small communities of Jews, Buddhists, and other religious groups.²⁷⁰⁹

²⁷⁰⁸ "Estonia," Countries and Their Cultures, retrieved 13 April 2010. <http://www.everyculture.com/Cr-Ga/Estonia.html>

²⁷⁰⁹ "Estonia," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127308.htm>

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, and government upholds this right. Christian holidays are also national holidays. Registered congregations must have at least twelve adult members and a management board. Estonia exhibits strong tolerance for differing religious groups.²⁷¹⁰

Largest Cities

Urban:

Tallinn, Tartu, Narva, **Kohtla-Jarve**, Parnu, **Viljandi**, **Rakvere**, **Sillamae**, **Maardu**, **Kuressaare**.

Cities in **bold** do not have congregations.

Four of the ten largest cities have a congregation. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of the population lives in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

The first Estonians joined the Church as early as 1951 outside their homeland.²⁷¹¹ The first Estonian members living in Estonia joined the Church in 1989 and were baptized in Finland. Valtteri Rotsa was baptized in July and returned to Estonia with Church literature and shared his newly found faith with friends and associates. The first baptism in Estonia occurred in December 1989, and the first branch was organized in 1990 for Russian and Estonian speakers. The Church gained formal recognition in June 1990. The first missionary called from Estonia was at the time the first missionary called from the Soviet Union who began serving in January 1991.²⁷¹² In 1990, there were approximately fifty members in Tallinn.²⁷¹³ By May 1991, there were two congregations in Tallinn—one for Estonian speakers and one for Russian speakers—which had a combined 130 members. Missionary activity was supervised by the Finland Helsinki East Mission until the creation of the Russia St. Petersburg Mission in early 1992.²⁷¹⁴ Estonia joined the Latvia Riga Mission in 1993. At the time there was a combined 150 members in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.²⁷¹⁵ The Latvia Riga Mission was renamed the Lithuania Vilnius Mission in 1996 and later renamed the Baltic Mission in 2002. Estonia became part of the Europe East Area in 2000.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 1,086 (2012)

During the mid-1990s membership stood around 200 and climbed to 551 by year-end 2000. With the exception of 2003, membership has increased every year in the past decade by 40 to 100 a year. By 2004, there were 689 members, and by 2007, there were 927 members.

²⁷¹⁰ "Estonia," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127308.htm>

²⁷¹¹ "Returning home to her native Estonia," LDS Church News, 5 September 2009. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/57848/Returning-home-to-her-native-Estonia.html>

²⁷¹² "'Lots of opportunity to share gospel,'" LDS Church News, 28 December 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21061/Lots-of-opportunity-to-share-gospel.html>

²⁷¹³ "Growth of Church in 'that vast empire,'" LDS Church News, 6 November 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23646/Growth-of-Church-in-that-vast-empire.html>

²⁷¹⁴ "3 new missions established in Russia, Ukraine," LDS Church News, 15 February 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22627/3-new-missions-established-in-Russia-Ukraine.html>

²⁷¹⁵ "Eight new missions announced," LDS Church News, 6 March 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23130/Eight-new-missions-announced.html>

In 2009, Estonia had the highest percentage of LDS members in Eastern Europe. There was one LDS member per 1,286 people.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 4 Groups: 1? (April 2013)

By the end of 1991, there were two Estonian-speaking branches and one Russian-speaking branch in Tallinn. Tartu opened for missionary work in September 1991. By 1997, only one Estonian branch functioned in Tallinn.²⁷¹⁶ The Tallinn Estonia District was organized in late 1997. There were three branches by year-end 2000: two in Tallinn and one in Tartu.

In March 2000, Narva was opened to missionary work.²⁷¹⁷ A branch was organized in 2001. Estonian and Russian branches in Tallinn were combined in 2003 and separated in 2006. In 2008, a branch was created in Parnu, bringing the total of branches to five. In late 2009, the city of Keila opened for missionary work. Meetings may occur in the city as a group under the direction of one of the Tallinn branches or the Baltic Mission. In early 2013, mission leaders consolidated the two branches in Tallinn into a single branch.

Activity and Retention

In 1999, approximately 180 attended sacrament meeting in Estonia. In 2000, 200 youth throughout the Baltic States traveled to Lithuania for a youth conference.²⁷¹⁸ In 2009, over 400 throughout the Baltic States attended a fireside with Elder L. Tom Perry in Latvia.²⁷¹⁹ Sixty-five young single adults from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania met in Riga, Latvia in March 2010 for a young single adult conference. Between 2009 and 2010, the Tartu Branch had between forty and fifty attending Sunday meetings. Attendance grew from less than ten members to current levels during a nine-month period in the late 2000s.²⁷²⁰ In 2009, the Narva Branch had less than twenty attending meetings. In March 2010, the Parnu Branch had thirty-five attending Church weekly—nearly double Church attendance in January 2009—whereas there were eighty-seven members on the branch records. One of the Tallinn Branches had eighty to one hundred attending weekly in mid-2009. Forty-two were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year. Active membership likely stands around 200–225, or 20%–23% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Estonian, Russian.

Translations of General Conference talks in Estonian began in 1996, and the first Estonian edition of the *Liahona* was published in 1999. The Book of Mormon translation in Estonian became available in 2000. All LDS scriptures are available in Russian, whereas only the Book of Mormon is available in Estonian. Many institute, music, missionary, primary, young women, priesthood, Sunday School, Relief Society, and unit materials are translated in Estonian and Russian. Only one Church video and stories from the Doctrine and Covenants are available in Estonian. The *Liahona* magazine has two issues in Estonian and twelve in Russian a year.

²⁷¹⁶ "Estonia," Country Profiles, retrieved 12 April 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/estonia>

²⁷¹⁷ "Faith taking hold in Narva," LDS Church News, 10 February 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39311/Faith-taking-hold-in-Narva.html>

²⁷¹⁸ "Baltic youth conference draws from four countries," LDS Church News, 11 November 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38856/Baltic-youth-conference-draws-from-four-countries.html>

²⁷¹⁹ Jegina, Inara; Klundt, Jo Ann. "History visit to Latvian saints," LDS Church News, 26 September 2009. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/57926/Historic-visit-to-Latvian-saints.html>

²⁷²⁰ "Returning home to her native Estonia," LDS Church News, 5 September 2009. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/57848/Returning-home-to-her-native-Estonia.html>

Meetinghouses

The first and only Church-built meetinghouse was completed in late 1999. Congregations outside of Tallinn meet in renovated buildings or rented spaces.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Food was donated by the Church to needy members in Estonia and Russia in 1991.²⁷²¹ Food shipments continued from the Europe Area in 1992.²⁷²²

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

LDS missionaries may openly proselyte. Government has not restricted Church activities. The Church may face some obstacles in registering small congregations with fewer than twelve members.

Cultural Issues

Secularism is the greatest barrier to mission outreach. Most Estonians do not consider religion an important aspect of everyday life and have become increasingly more secular due to Soviet occupation during much of the twentieth century and increasing materialism. Moderate to high rates of cigarette and alcohol use present barriers for many prospective members and contribute to convert relapse when substance addictions have not been fully overcome.

The Church has benefited from the strong Estonian ties to Scandinavia and Central Europe, as there is greater tolerance for other religious groups. This has likely increased receptiveness to the Church as indicated by the relatively high percentage of nominal LDS members compared to the rest of Eastern Europe.

National Outreach

The Church has established outreach centers in cities that account for 47% of the national population. Missionaries serve in four of Estonia's fifteen administrative counties, which are home to 72% of the national population. Rural areas distant from the largest cities will be the most challenging for mission outreach due to their small populations and remote locations.

Larger cities within counties possessing current outreach centers appear likely for future mission efforts. The opening of Keila to missionary work in late 2009 was the first full-time missionary effort in a city with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants. There are nearly eighty cities with 1,000 to 10,000 inhabitants without congregations. Large cities in unreached counties also appear likely candidates for active missionary efforts. Additional cities will likely only open once active members living in these locations facilitate the development of the Church's basic organization and infrastructure as well as reducing reliance of new converts on foreign missionaries for Church administration.

In recent years, the Church maintains an official website for Estonia in Estonian at <http://www.lds.org/estonia>.

²⁷²¹ "Food shipment eases Soviet hunger," LDS Church News, 30 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21004/Food-shipment-eases-Soviet-hunger.html>

²⁷²² "Humanitarian relief in Europe," LDS Church News, 29 February 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22332/Humanitarian-relief-in-Europe.html>

jeesusekristusekirik.ee/. The website allows for Estonians to investigate the Church in locations with and without mission outreach and to request additional information.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Member activity and convert retention has been poor over the past decade, evidenced by membership nearly doubling, whereas sacrament attendance increased by less than 25%. Low member participation led to the closure of the second Estonian-speaking branch in Tallinn in 1997 and the brief consolidation of the Russian and Estonian branches in Tallinn in the 2000s. Missionaries have served in Narva for nearly a decade, yet active membership remains very small and unable to provide its own leadership. Tactics of missionaries baptizing investigators who have not made necessary life changes in firmly establishing positive gospel habits and fully overcoming negative behaviors, as well as language and cultural issues, appear the greatest contributors to member inactivity and convert retention problems.

In the late 2000s, the Estonian-speaking Tallinn 1st Branch was regarded as one of the best functioning congregations in the Baltic States. The branch had a full branch presidency and Estonian youth passing the sacrament, uncommon characteristics for much of Eastern Europe. There were also several member families in the branch. Close associations between active members may pose challenges for new converts to integrate into the congregation.

Future growth and improved member activity will largely depend on Estonian members serving missions and participating in member-missionary work. In 2009, a senior missionary couple from the United States served in Tartu and Parnu. The wife was Estonian and fled to Sweden in 1944 and later immigrated to the United States, where she married an American. The senior couple greatly facilitated the growth in these two cities, especially by increasing sacrament attendance.²⁷²³ Native Estonian couples and young local missionaries may outperform foreign missionaries in some ways.

Outreach among youth is challenging, as adults account for the bulk of membership. Missionaries report challenges in fellowshipping youth investigators, as they often lose interest the Church with few active members to associate with.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Estonians and Russians compose 93.5% of the population. Integrating these two ethnic groups into the same congregation poses difficulties due to language barriers, historical conflict, and ongoing political tensions. Some cultural differences with etiquette and social attitudes may hamper greater cooperation and understanding between these two ethnicities in an ecclesiastical and social setting.

Language Issues

The large number of Russian speakers in the predominantly Estonian-speaking population challenges mission efforts for both language groups. In Tallinn, membership has been large enough to justify a Russian-speaking congregation at times, whereas in other locations, congregations must accommodate speakers of both languages. In Narva, the branch is predominantly Russian-speaking, whereas in Parnu, Estonian is most spoken in Church, although there are several Russian members. Language use in smaller congregations may alternate based on whether Russian or Estonian speakers form the majority of active membership. Shifts in language use in small congregations may pose difficulties for activity and convert retention. In recent years, the

²⁷²³ "Returning home to her native Estonia," LDS Church News, 5 September 2009. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/57848/Returning-home-to-her-native-Estonia.html>

Baltic Mission has reported challenges in simultaneously staffing Estonian and Russian-speaking missionaries, as there is a demand for the limited number of Russian-speaking missionaries in Latvia and Lithuania.

The Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price are in the process of translation into Estonian. Once completed, these scriptures will provide additional gospel understanding and resources to members and investigators.

Missionary Service

Two districts of full-time missionaries served in Estonia (one Estonian-speaking and one Russian-speaking) in mid-2009. There are very few native Estonian missionaries. Outreach among youth and involvement in regular member-missionary activities may help instill desire for more Estonians to serve missions and lessen reliance on foreign missionaries. Estonia is likely to remain highly dependent on foreign missionaries for many years because of the small number of youth members potentially eligible for missionary service.

Leadership

Estonia benefits from strong local leaders who have served in the Church for over a decade but remain limited in numbers. There were fifty men who held the Melchizedek Priesthood in the late 1990s. In early 2010, native branch presidents lead both Tallinn branches and the Tartu Branch, whereas missionaries lead branches in Parnu and Narva. District conferences usually only have a few male members announced to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. Developing local leadership in small congregations will promote ensure greater stability and foster long-term growth.

Temple

Estonia pertains to the Finland Helsinki Temple district. Prior to the completion of the temple in 2006, members traveled to the Stockholm Sweden Temple. Temple trips occur regularly. Members benefit from the close proximity of the temple despite the few members who live in Estonia. Finland and Estonia's membership in the European Union facilitates border crossing to attend the temple.

Comparative Growth

Estonian has seen growth comparable to Latvia and Lithuania, as all these nations have between 900 and 1,100 members. Estonia has the highest percentage of LDS members among the national population, with twice the percentage of Latvia and four times the percentage of Lithuania. Member activity appears comparable to other Baltic States. Membership and congregation growth remain low compared to many other nations.

Other Christian groups report little growth. The Seventh Day Adventist Church has seen very slow growth over the past decade. Jehovah's Witnesses demonstrate comparable membership growth rates with the LDS Church but substantially higher total membership and ten times as many congregations. Most Christian groups appear to have had better development of local leadership and member participation than the LDS Church, likely because these groups have been less reliant on foreign missionaries, have better mobilized member-missionary outreach, or have operated in Estonia longer than the LDS Church.

Future Prospects

The future outlook for growth in Estonia appears mildly positive, as older members continue to stay active and more outlying congregations experience increases in Church attendance. The organization of a new branch in Parnu and the opening of Keila for missionary work in the past few years indicate that the Baltic

Mission has interest in expanding national outreach if results in recently opened areas justify additional expansion. Due to its large population and proximity to Narva and Tallinn, Kohtla-Jarve appears a likely candidate for future mission outreach. The vision of a future stake for Estonia appears unlikely to come to fruition within the next three decades, as total and active membership numbers and present real growth rates are too low to support a stake.

Retention of converts remains a major challenge requiring substantial improvement. Small family size among existing members, the low number of active youth members, and small cohort of future missionaries pose challenges for the goal of the church becoming self-sustaining and self-perpetuating in Estonia.

GREECE

Geography

AREA: 131,957 square km. Greece is in Southeastern Europe and borders Turkey, Albania, Macedonia, and Bulgaria. Aegean, Mediterranean, and Ionian Seas also surround Greece. Greece experiences a temperate climate with mild, wet winters and hot, dry summers. Mountains dominate the landscape. Forest covers much of the country and is home to many endangered species. Most of the country consists of peninsulas and approximately 2,000 islands stretching to the western coast of Turkey. Greece's strategic location controls many seaways to the Black Sea. Earthquakes are a major natural hazard. Environmental issues include air and water pollution. Greece is administratively divided into fifty-one prefectures and one autonomous region.

Peoples

Greek: 93%

Other: 7%

All citizens are regarded as Greek and account for 93% of the population. Foreign citizens living in the country account for 7% of the inhabitants, many of which come from the Middle East, Europe, or East Asia.

Population: 10,767,827 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.06% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.39 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 77.48 male, 82.79 female (2012)

Languages: Greek (99%), other (1%). Greek is the official language. Other languages with native speakers include Slavic, Turkish, Romani, Albanian, Aromanian, and Bulgarian. Greek is the only language with over one million speakers (10.7 million).

Literacy: 96% (2001)

History

Greece has a long and rich history and is regarded as the cradle of Western civilization. The Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations ruled present-day Greece prior to 1000 BC. Greece was divided into independent city states during much of the ancient and classical eras. Wars with Persia ensued, and later Greece came under Roman rule by 146 BC. Following Christ's ministry, the Apostle Paul visited Greece several times to proselyte. Greece became part of the Byzantine Empire from the fourth century to the fifteenth century, following which Greece was absorbed into the Ottoman Empire. Greece gained independence in 1830 and included Central Greece, Attica, the Peloponnese, and the Cyclades. Gradual territorial expansion occurred until 1947, much of which came from victories as a result of the Balkan Wars. Greece was occupied by Germany during World War II, and civil war broke out following liberation by Allied forces. During the 1960s and 1970s government turmoil and instability ensued, resulting in a temporary military dictatorship, but a democratic government returned to power in 1974. Greece joined NATO and the European Community (now the EU) shortly thereafter and has experienced marked economic growth. The 2004 Summer Olympic Games were held in Athens.

Culture

The Greek Orthodox Church is the dominant cultural influence, although most are nominal members who identify with the Church and its traditions. Greeks have little tolerance for outsiders, especially foreign religious groups. Greek cuisine includes lamb, salads, cheese, pita bread, olives, and vegetables. A rich legacy of literature, science, and technology continues to influence modern culture. Greece has the highest cigarette consumption per capita in the world, whereas alcohol consumption rates are slightly higher than the United States. The Olympic Games originated in Greece, and soccer is highly popular. Millions of Greeks live in other nations, notably the United States, Cyprus, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and Albania.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$27,600 (2011) [57.4% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.861

Corruption Index: 3.4 (2011)

Greece has rapidly developed its economy over the past several decades from a poor nation to one of the wealthiest in the region. Services employ 65% of the workforce and produce 76% of the GDP, whereas industry accounts for 22% of the workforce and 21% of the GDP. Wheat, corn, and barley are primary agriculture products, and tourism, food processing, and textiles are the largest industries. Primary trade partners include Italy, Germany, Russia, and Bulgaria. The unemployment rate has risen in recent years due to increased economic instability reaching 8.9% in 2009. Greek labor unions oppose many government policies that are handed down from the EU and sometimes lead to rioting and violence.

Corruption permeates society and politics and is among the most severe in the EU. Bribery allegedly occurs frequently, usually involving doctor fees, building permits, and tax evasion.²⁷²⁴ Religious minorities sometimes experience harassment.

Faiths

Christian: 98%

Muslim: 1.3%

Other: 0.7%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Greek Orthodox 10,522,679

Catholic 200,000

Jehovah's Witnesses 29,143 380

Latter-day Saints 751 5

Seventh Day Adventists 559 10

Religion

Ninety-seven percent (97%) of the population adheres to the Greek Orthodox Church. Religious minorities primarily reside in Athens. Roman Catholics and Muslims are the two largest minority groups; the latter has a visible presence in Thrace. The remainder of the population are Protestant Christians or belong to other religious groups.

²⁷²⁴ Gerboin, Lydie. "Survey says Greek bribery up," Transparency Watch, February 2009. http://www.transparency.org/publications/newsletter/2009/february_2009/anti_corruption_work/bribes_in_greece

Religious Freedom

The constitution allows for religious freedom, and the government generally upholds this right. The Greek Orthodox Church is regarded as the prevailing religion, and government finances much of its costs. Non-Orthodox groups experience legal restrictions and difficulty obtaining official standing needed for meetinghouses. No “house of prayer” permits have been issued since 2006. Public proselytism is forbidden, and religious groups that are active in the country must maintain social order. Missionaries have been arrested frequently on charges of proselytism. Membership in the EU has helped to liberalize laws limiting religious freedom for minority groups.

Largest Cities

Urban: 61%

Athinai, Thessaloniki, **Piraeus**, Patrai, **Peristerion**, **Iraklion**, **Larisa**, **Kallithea**, **Nikaia**, **Kalamaria**.

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregation.

Three of the ten largest cities have a congregation. Twenty percent (20%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities. The Athens metropolitan area accounts for up to 30% of the population.

LDS History

The first known convert from Greece was taught by the president of the mission in Turkey and baptized in 1905. Many Greek-Americans joined the Church in the twentieth century. The first small congregation in Greece was organized in the 1960s.²⁷²⁵ Elder Gordon B. Hinckley dedicated Greece for missionary work in 1972.²⁷²⁶ The Greek translation of the Book of Mormon began in the 1970s and was completed in 1987. A native Greek in the United States named Lica Catsakis Bywater translated the full edition.²⁷²⁷ Full-time missionaries began serving in Greece in 1986 and numbered twenty in 1990.²⁷²⁸ The Austria Vienna East Mission administered Greece prior to the creation of the Greece Athens Mission in 1990.²⁷²⁹ Greece became part of the Europe/Mediterranean Area in 1991.²⁷³⁰ The first youth conference was held in 1995.²⁷³¹

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 751 (2012)

In 1980, there were 200 members. In 1990, membership remained unchanged.²⁷³² Thirty-two attended the

²⁷²⁵ “Greece,” Country Profiles, retrieved 18 March 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/greece>

²⁷²⁶ “Meetinghouse is dedicated, first in Greece,” LDS Church News, 12 June 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35907/Meetinghouse-is-dedicated-first-in-Greece.html>

²⁷²⁷ Warnick, Lee. “Book of Mormon in 80th language,” LDS Church News, 9 January 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18233/Book-of-Mormon-in-80th-language.html>

²⁷²⁸ Kinnear, John G. “Bearing testimony where Paul preached,” LDS Church News, 4 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29423/Bearing-testimony-where-Paul-preached.html>

²⁷²⁹ “Eight new missions announced,” LDS Church News, 3 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19805/Eight-new-missions-announced.html>

²⁷³⁰ Cannon, Mike. “Diversity in land, people and climate,” LDS Church News, 7 December 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21327/Diversity-in-land-people-and-climate.html>

²⁷³¹ “From around the world,” LDS Church News, 28 January 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25994/From-around-the-world.html>

²⁷³² “Eight new missions announced,” LDS Church News, 3 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19805/Eight-new-missions-announced.html>

creation of the Thessaloniki Branch in 1992, which had twenty-five members.²⁷³³ By 2000, membership reached 515.

Membership grew slowly in the 2000s, numbering 591 in 2002, 631 in 2005, and 693 in 2008. Growth rates have dropped from over 6% prior to 2003 to less than 5% since. Foreigners constitute the majority of Church members in Greece. In early 2010, only one native Greek member was active in the Thessaloniki Branch.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 4 Groups: 1? (April 2013)

In 1988, there were three branches, increasing to four in 1992 and seven in 1994. In the early 1990s, a district functioned in Greece.²⁷³⁴ A branch was organized in Thessaloniki in 1992 after many years of diligent work from missionary couples and elders.²⁷³⁵ Branches decreased to six in 1996, four in 1998, and returned to five by 2000. An additional group began meeting in Kavala in the late 2000s. A group has functioned in Patra for many years. Kavala was closed to missionary work in late 2009, and the group was discontinued. In early 2012, a group met on Crete.

Activity and Retention

The groundbreaking for the first meetinghouse in Greece occurred in 1997 with seventy-three in attendance.²⁷³⁶ Over 200 attended the dedicatory services for the meetinghouse in 1999.²⁷³⁷ Twenty-three were enrolled in institute during the 2007–2008 school year. Forty attended a young adult youth conference in June 2004.²⁷³⁸ In 2007, there were around one hundred active members in Athens. In mid-2009, there were less than twenty attending meetings in Patra. In early 2010 there were less than fifteen active members in Thessaloniki. Active membership is likely between 100 and 200, or 15% to 25%.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Greek, English, Turkish, Albanian, Bulgarian.

All LDS scriptures are available in Greek, English, Albanian, and Bulgarian. Only the Book of Mormon has been translated into Turkish. Many unit, temple, priesthood, relief society, Sunday School, young women, primary, missionary, and family history materials are available in Greek, Turkish, Albanian, and Bulgarian. Several CES manuals are available in Albanian and Bulgarian; only one is translated into Greek. *The Liahona* has one Greek issue and four Bulgarian and Albanian issues a year.

Meetinghouses

Elder Didier dedicated the first Church-built meetinghouse in 1999 to house the three branches in Athens.²⁷³⁹

²⁷³³ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 9 May 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22238/From-around-the-world.html>

²⁷³⁴ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 16 January 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23439/From-around-the-world.html>

²⁷³⁵ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 9 May 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22238/From-around-the-world.html>

²⁷³⁶ Kinnear, John G. "Ground broken for first meetinghouse in Greece," LDS Church News, 4 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29498/Ground-broken-for-first-meetinghouse-in-Greece.html>

²⁷³⁷ "Meetinghouse is dedicated, first in Greece," LDS Church News, 12 June 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35907/Meetinghouse-is-dedicated-first-in-Greece.html>

²⁷³⁸ "Young adult conference in Greece," LDS Church News, 5 June 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45662/Young-adult-conference-in-Greece.html>

²⁷³⁹ "Meetinghouse is dedicated, first in Greece," LDS Church News, 12 June 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/>

In early 2010, only the Halandri Branch met in the meetinghouse. The Acropolis Branch and other congregations met in rented spaces.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Missionaries have offered service in protecting Greece's forests through watching for fires. This resulted in positive relations with the city of Patra and media exposure for the Church.²⁷⁴⁰ Missionaries served as volunteers during the 2004 Summer Olympic Games.²⁷⁴¹ Missionaries have cleaned up debris around areas of Athens including Mars Hill.²⁷⁴²

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church is recognized as a known religion and enjoys protection granted through the constitution. LDS Missionaries have been arrested by police many times in the past two decades. In 2008, LDS missionaries were detained for two days on charges of proselytizing and were acquitted. Although legal issues have not greatly limited the Church's progress, societal pressures have caused major setbacks for missionaries and members.

Cultural Issues

Faith is often viewed as an extension of the Greek ethnic identity. The fifth-century BC Greek historian Herodotus identified the Greek people as sharing common blood, common language, common culture, and common religion. Twenty-five centuries later, Herodotus' observation remains largely true: The religion of Greeks remains highly homogenous with little pluralism, and converting to non-Greek faith is often seen as cutting oneself off from family, heritage, and culture.

Interest in religion is very low despite nearly all the population identifying as Greek Orthodox. Missionaries have had a very challenging time finding those interested in the Church and are usually very poorly treated. Service activities have come as unwelcomed by many Greeks. Members, missionaries, and Church leadership in Greece face ostracism from society and are often heavily persecuted. Tradition is a very strong force that produces anger and confusion when broken. Members face cultural challenges such as accusations of not being Greek for not belonging to the Greek Orthodox Church. Those who become ostracized often lose employment and many social connections. Similar intolerance occurs in Greek communities in other nations, such as the United States, but members tend to cope with these challenges by removing or distancing themselves from Greek communities. Widespread tobacco use creates additional challenges for investigators and members to overcome in order to live Church teachings.

National Outreach

Most the population does not live near Church outreach centers located in Athens, Thessaloniki, Kavala, and Patra. The unreached population accounts for at least 65% of the national population, or seven million people. Athens is the most reached city by the Church as it headquarters the mission and has two congregations. Of

articles/35907/Meetinghouse-is-dedicated-first-in-Greece.html

²⁷⁴⁰ Kinnear, John. G. "Missionaries donate time protecting forests in Greece," LDS Church News, 15 November 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29151/Missionaries-donate-time-protecting-forests-in-Greece.html>

²⁷⁴¹ Stahle, Shaun D. "Mission reflections: 'Sweet experience' in Greece Athens Mission," LDS Church News, 23 September 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49462/Mission-reflections-Sweet-experience-in-Greece-Athens-Mission.html>

²⁷⁴² "Missionaries in Greece clean Mars Hill," LDS Church News, 14 May 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47295/Missionaries-in-Greece-clean-Mars-Hill.html>

the fifty-one prefectures, only four have a reported congregation. Non-Greeks, particularly East Asians and Africans, have seen the greatest mission outreach, as they are the most receptive.

Many of the prefectures are very difficult for the Church to reach, as they are isolated from current Church centers or located on islands. Over half a million live on islands in the Aegean Sea, such as Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Cyclades, and Dodecanese. Over 600,000 live on Crete. About 200,000 reside on islands in the Ionian Sea. Millions more unreached Greeks populate prefectures far from established congregations and any modern Gospel witness.

Few convert baptisms and the limited number of missionaries assigned to Greece limit additional outreach. The city of Kavala opened in the mid-2000s with high ambitions and enthusiasm but only had a few baptisms over several years and closed to missionary work. The greatest opportunities for outreach are in cities with over 100,000 inhabitants without a Church presence, including Piraeus, Peristerion, Iraklion, Larisa, and Kallithea. Some national outreach increased recently. In 2010, missionaries baptized a Greek woman living on the island of Rhodes who had first learned about the Church in Athens and anxiously desired to join the Church despite no Church unit nearby. Instances like this one may help to expand current mission outreach to more remote locations but also jeopardize the activity of newly baptized converts.

The Church has an Internet site for Greece in Greek, <http://www.churchofjesuschrist.gr/>, which provides news, information on Church teachings, and times and locations for Church meetings. Many Greek Americans have joined the Church and demonstrate interest in expanding mission outreach in Greece, particularly among friends and relatives.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Members of the Church are often severely persecuted by friends, family and the community. Ostracism can become so severe that many active members have left the Church. Active Greek members have strong testimonies as they have had to weather the persecution heaped upon them from society. Persecution has made many members stronger in their testimonies, but at significant costs in sacrifice and endurance.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The majority of active membership is non-Greek and poses a significant challenge for integrating native Greeks into congregations. This congregational demography has originated from non-Greeks greater receptivity to the Church's teachings.

Language Issues

The Church benefits from a wide body of materials in Greek and many minority languages despite a small active membership that are native speakers of Greek. Missionaries report challenges becoming proficient in the Greek language. Limited membership results in the diverse membership communicating in a second language in Church meetings. Slavic, Romani, and Aromanian have no language materials.

Missionary Service

In 1997, there were fifty-eight missionaries serving in Greece.²⁷⁴³ The number of missionaries serving in Greece and Cyprus has fallen dramatically during the 2000s from around one hundred in the mid-2000s to less than thirty in early 2010. Few local members have served missions. During the decade of the 2000s, just

²⁷⁴³ Kinnear, John G. "Bearing testimony where Paul preached," LDS Church News, 4 October 1997. <http://www.ldschurch-news.com/articles/29423/Bearing-testimony-where-Paul-preached.html>

four members from Greece, only one of whom was an ethnic Greek, served missions. Member-missionary participation has been limited, in part due to hostility and isolation from the surrounding culture.

Leadership

The Church in Greece has a very limited native leadership, which is reflected in the lack of a district. Mission leadership helps mentor and supervise congregations. The small number of congregations within the mission may have resulted in local members relying on the mission to run the Church on the local administrative level. Very few Greek members have served in leadership positions.

Temple

Greece is assigned to the London England Temple district. Temple trips likely occur infrequently due to few active members, long distance from the temple, and constraints on time and money. The assignment of Greece to the London England Temple district may indicate that the few active members predominately speak English and that the entire mission falls under the temple district due to strong ties between Cyprus and the United Kingdom.

Comparative Growth

Greece has arguably seen the slowest membership and congregational growth in the world for any nation in which the Church has had a mission for over two decades. The Greece Athens Mission was one of two missions worldwide to not have stakes or districts organized within its boundaries until the creation of the Nicosia Cyprus District in 2007 (as of early 2010 the Russia Vladivostok Mission still did not have a stake or district). The fact that native Greeks form only a small minority of membership provides an even more disappointing dimension on comparative growth. Missionaries reported in 2010 that the mission was the lowest baptizing in the world. Activity rates appear consistent for the region.

Christian groups report that slow growth has occurred over the past several decades. Seventh Day Adventists have similar growth trends, membership size, and national outreach compared to the LDS Church. The only group that has seen consistent growth and wide-reaching proselytism efforts are Jehovah's Witnesses, who represent the largest non-Orthodox and non-Catholic denomination.

Future Prospects

Cultural and societal challenges continue to slow and limit the Church's progress in Greece. Increased materialism from recent economic growth has exacerbated negative attitudes toward foreign religious groups. These social views continue to weigh heavily upon native Greek membership and intimidate potential converts. Pressure from the EU for greater religious tolerance may help the Church in the long term. However, Greece still lacks a native membership base to assist in the Church's national outreach, leaving this responsibility primary to the foreign missionary force. The cutback in the full-time missionary force likely reflects the low receptivity and slow growth. Large, currently unreached cities may one day open for missionary work, yet it is difficult to justify the manpower and resources needed for expansion when there has been so little response in regions with established congregations. The formation of additional branches and a district seem unlikely in the near future. There has been little receptivity to foreign missionaries; well-trained member-missionaries may one day be able to achieve greater success, although intensive efforts will be necessary in a challenging environment. The future of the Church in Greece will depend heavily on the development of a strong, indigenous member base and on finding more effective ways of working, although such goals appear distant.

HUNGARY

Geography

AREA: 93,028 square km. Landlocked in Central Europe, Hungary borders Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, and Austria. Most of the landscape is flat with some large hills on the north and the Great Hungarian Plain to the southeast and the Little Hungarian Plain in the west. The Danube and Tisza Rivers run through Hungary and divide it into three regions. The climate is continental with hot summers and cold winters. Lake Balaton in western Hungary is the largest lake in Central Europe. Fertile soils, which cover most the country, provide suitable conditions for widespread agriculture. Most land is covered with grassland, farms or fields with the remainder occupied by forest. Hungary is divided into nineteen administrative counties and one capital city.

Peoples

Hungarian: 92.3%

Roma: 1.9%

Other or unknown: 5.8%

Hungarians are classified as Finno-Ugric. Finns and Estonians belong to the same group. The Romani people likely arrived from the Indian-subcontinent during the Middle Ages and have been heavily persecuted and ostracized by others. Other ethnic groups with over 5,000 people include Germans, Slovaks, Croats, Romanians, Ukrainians, Serbs, Greeks, Poles, and Russians. Hungary has experienced negative population growth since the 1980s from low birth rates.

Population: 9,958,453 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: -0.184% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.41 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 71.27 male, 78.98 female (2012)

Languages: Hungarian (93.6%), other (6.4%). Hungarian is the official language. Minority languages listed from greatest to fewest speakers include Romani, German, Croatian, Slovak, Romanian, and Slovene. The most spoken immigrant languages include Ukrainian and Serbian. Only Hungarian has over one million speakers (9.55 million).

Literacy: 99.4% (2003)

History

The Roman Empire included Hungary until the region fell into the control of many neighboring and internal kingdoms and empires to the end of the ninth century. The Hungarian nation emerged prior to most kingdoms in Europe and adopted Christianity in 1000 AD. Following the Great Schism, Hungary remained the easternmost establishment of the Roman Catholic Church. Wars intensified during the following centuries as the Hungarians oppose Ottoman Turk expansion. The creation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the mid-1800s allowed for greater protection from invading forces. The Empire fell following World War I, and Hungary became a communist nation after World War II. Hungary began to limit its ties with the Soviets

as early as the mid-1950s through its withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact and starting the transition to a free-market economy under Janos Kadar in the late 1960s. The first multi-party elections occurred in 1990 along with transition to a free-market economy. Hungary joined NATO in 1999 and the EU five years later.

Culture

Hungary sits at the crossroads between Eastern and Western Europe and consequently shares identity from both sides but most strongly from the West. Folk music and dance, literature, beverages, embroidery, and pottery are well known traditions and identify Hungarian culture. Geothermal activity has created a bath-house culture that draws upon native and borrowed traditions from neighboring nations. Smoking is more prevalent than the United States. Alcohol consumption per capita is among the highest in the world and Europe, trailing only Luxemburg and Ireland.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$19,600 (2011) [40.7% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.816

Corruption Index: 4.6 (2011)

Hungary has a developed economy with the services and industry accounting for about 60% and 35% of both the GDP and the workforce, respectively. Agriculture entails only 5% of the workforce and GDP. Primary agricultural products include wheat, corn, sunflower seed, and potatoes. Industries are well diversified and mainly include mining, metallurgy, construction materials, and processed foods. Bauxite, coal and petroleum are the most abundant natural resources. Germany is the largest import/export partner. The global financial crisis in the late 2000s has hurt exports, production, domestic consumption, and available credit. Hungary will likely experience negative GDP growth in the near future.

Levels of corruption are similar to other Central European countries formerly governed by communism. Corruption with police may be the most severe due to the amount of freedom they have in charging and ignoring crime. Many crimes go unreported. Some religious groups have experienced harassment by police.²⁷⁴⁴

Faiths

Christian: 74.4%

Other: 11.1%

Unaffiliated: 14.5%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic: 5,141,004

Calvinist: 1,574,990

Lutheran: 297,168

Greek Catholic: 257,545

Jehovah's Witnesses 23,000 286

Seventh Day Adventists 4,360 105

Latter-day Saints 4,940 23

²⁷⁴⁴ Kosztolanyi, Gusztav. "Blind Justice—Crime and police corruption in Hungary," Central Europe Review, 26 July 1999. <http://www.ce-review.org/99/5/csardas5.html>

Religion

The Catholic Church is the largest religious group. Calvinists primarily live in eastern Hungary and form the largest religious group in several locations. Lutherans account for a fraction of the population in western and central areas. Most Greek Catholics reside in the east and include Rusyns (related to Ukrainians), Magyars (Hungarians), and Croats. Most denominations have poor church attendance. Many identify with a religious group due to tradition and family yet personally do not follow religious beliefs and practices. Half the population believes in the existence of God. Only 15% of believers attend Church services weekly.²⁷⁴⁵

Religious Freedom

Religious freedom is honored by the constitution and upheld by the government. Religious groups must be registered to operate legally and require at least one hundred individuals and have some sort of working government. Religious education in school is optional. Social groups and sometimes law enforcement encroach on freedom of religious expression. Anti-Semitism and persecution of the Roma minority persist with limited government intervention.²⁷⁴⁶

Largest Cities

Urban: 53%

Budapest, Debrecen, Miskolc, Szeged, Pecs, Győr, Nyiregyhaza, Kecskemet, Szekesfehervar, Szombathely.

All of the ten largest cities have a congregation. Zalaegerszeg (61,600) is the largest city without a congregation or missionaries. Thirty percent (30%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 4,940 (2012)

The first Church presence came in the late 1800s and early 1900s as missionaries periodically visited and baptized. Government restrictions and persecution did not allow for a continual missionary presence. Prior to World War I, 106 converts were baptized. Following the war, members either immigrated to the United States or remained in the country and worshiped in the privacy of their homes.²⁷⁴⁷

The first Hungarians baptized following World War II were in other nations and returned to their homeland awaiting the Church's reestablishment. Elder Russell M. Nelson dedicated Hungary for missionary work in April 1987 with one Hungarian member in attendance. Legal recognition from the government was presented to the Church in June 1988. The first convert baptisms took place, and eighty-seven people attended a fire-side with Elder Nelson. The first district conference in Hungary was held in Budapest with fifty-seven in attendance.²⁷⁴⁸ By 1989 the Budapest Branch grew rapidly with 125–150 attending the dedication of the first meetinghouse.²⁷⁴⁹ By early 1990 there were seventy-five members increasing to 600 in 1992.²⁷⁵⁰ Seminary and

²⁷⁴⁵ "Hungary," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127314.htm>

²⁷⁴⁶ "Hungary," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127314.htm>

²⁷⁴⁷ "Hungary," Facts and Statistics—LDS Newsroom, retrieved 17 April 2012. <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/facts-and-statistics/country/hungary/>

²⁷⁴⁸ Van Orden, Dell. "Church granted legal recognition in Hungary," LDS Church News, 2 July 1988. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18196/Church-granted-legal-recognition-in-Hungary.html>

²⁷⁴⁹ "Meetinghouse dedicated in Hungary," LDS Church News, 11 November 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19244/Meetinghouse-dedicated-in-Hungary.html>

²⁷⁵⁰ Pickup, David MW. "Stake in Hungary Eastern Europe's 2nd," LDS Church News, 10 June 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19244/Meetinghouse-dedicated-in-Hungary.html>

institute began in 1993. Membership increased to 2,500 by 1996 and to 3,448 in 2000. Growth began to slow in the late 1990s and early 2000s as materialism increased and interest in religion declined.

Membership usually increased by 100 to 200 annually after 2000, reaching 3,942 in 2004 and 4,253 in 2006. Growth rates were between 4 and 5% for 2001 and 2002, decreasing to 1.2% in 2003. Membership has increased between 2 and 3% since 2006.

In 2008, there was one member per 2,220 people.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 5 Branches: 17 Groups: 1+? (April 2013)

A congregation was established in the early 1900s but appears to have been discontinued following World War I. The Austria Vienna Mission was created in 1987 and administered to most of Eastern Europe including Hungary.²⁷⁵¹ By 1989, a senior missionary couple and four missionaries were serving in Hungary under the Austria Vienna East Mission.²⁷⁵² Later that year, the number of assigned missionaries increased to eight. Members met in several branches and groups throughout the country, most notably Debrecen and Szeged.²⁷⁵³ The Hungary Budapest Mission was created from the Austria Vienna East Mission in 1990. At the time, most missionary work was concentrated in Budapest due to its large population, membership base, and widespread interest from Hungarians.²⁷⁵⁴ Hungary remained in the Europe Area when it was divided in 1991.²⁷⁵⁵ The Hungary Budapest Mission administered Romania until the creation of the Romania Bucharest Mission in 1993.²⁷⁵⁶ Hungary became part of the Europe Central Area in 2000.²⁷⁵⁷ At the end of the year there were twenty-one branches and two districts in Budapest and Gyor.

By late 2002, the Budapest Hungary District included eight branches (Buda, Dunauvjaros, Erd, International, Kecskemet, Kispest, Pest, and Vac) and the Gyor Hungary District included six branches (Gyor, Papa, Sopron, Szekesfehervar, Szombathely, and Veszprem). Seven mission branches also functioned at this time in Debrecen, Eger, Miskolc, Nyiregyhaza, Pecs, Szeged, and the Hungary Budapest Mission Branch for small groups of members elsewhere. The Church discontinued the Gyor Hungary District and combined many of the units with the district in Budapest to prepare for the first stake to be organized. The Vac Branch was discontinued in the mid-2000s.

In June 2006, the first stake was created in Hungary. The Budapest Hungary Stake included the following five wards and five branches: The Buda, Gyor, Kecskemet, Kispest and Pest Wards and the Budapest (English),

ldschurchnews.com/articles/49059/Stake-in-Hungary-Eastern-Europes-2nd.html

²⁷⁵¹ "He patterns his life after mottoes found in scriptures," LDS Church News, 27 May 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18764/He-patterns-his-life-after-mottoes-found-in-scriptures.html>

²⁷⁵² Mantell, Henry J. "Unlike earlier British emigrants, this couple headed east, not west," LDS Church News, 12 August 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18911/Unlike-earlier-British-emigrants-this-couple-headed-east-not-west.html>

²⁷⁵³ "Meetinghouse dedicated in Hungary," LDS Church News, 11 November 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19244/Meetinghouse-dedicated-in-Hungary.html>

²⁷⁵⁴ "Eight new missions announced," LDS Church News, 3 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19805/Eight-new-missions-announced.html>

²⁷⁵⁵ "New areas created in Asia, Europe," LDS Church News, 7 September 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21578/New-areas-created-in-Asia-Europe.html>

²⁷⁵⁶ "Eight new missions announced," LDS Church News, 6 March 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23130/Eight-new-missions-announced.html>

²⁷⁵⁷ Lloyd, Scott. "European continent realigned into three new areas," LDS Church News, 16 September 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38475/European-continent---realigned-into-three-new-areas.html>

Dunaujvaros, Erd, Szekesfehervar, and Veszprem Branches.²⁷⁵⁸ All remaining branches reported directly to the mission.

In 2007 and 2008, increased mission outreach began in establishing congregations in other larger cities. Missionaries were first assigned to Bekescsaba, Hodmezovasarhely, Kaposvar, Kiskunfelegyhaza, Komlo, Oroshaza, Szolnok, and Tatabanya. Of these cities only Bekescsaba, Kaposvar, Szolnok, and Tatabanya had their own group or dependent branch Church meetings.

In 2009, new independent branches were created in Kaposvar and Bekescsaba. In June, two districts were created from mission branches. The Miskolc Hungary District included four branches in Debrecen, Eger, Miskolc, and Nyiregyhaza. The Szombathely Hungary District contained three branches in Papa, Sopron, and Szombathely.

During most of the 2000s the Hungary Budapest Mission had around one hundred missionaries. In the fall of 2009, the number of missionaries serving dropped into the 70s.

Activity and Retention

Several large meetings have been held over the years. In 1996, a nationwide conference was held with about 1,000 in attendance.²⁷⁵⁹ In 2000, one hundred members in eastern Hungary attended the groundbreaking of the first meetinghouse in the region.²⁷⁶⁰ 500 attended the first general conference broadcast to Hungary in 2001.²⁷⁶¹ Institute outreach programs for fellowshipping young single adults began in the late 2000s in an effort to increase activity and marriages between Church members.²⁷⁶² 660 attended the meeting to create the first stake. In 2007, young single adults in Budapest hosted a young single adult conference for members in Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia.²⁷⁶³ The average number of members per congregation has increased from 164 in 2000 to 235 in 2008. This increase is partially due to allowing some congregations to grow larger in size to become wards.

Many of the branches and wards have few active members. Szekasfehervar had forty active members in early 2009. In mid-2009 the Nyiregyhaza Branch only had ten active members, and used to have as many as fifty a few years before. In late 2009, the Miskolc Branch had thirty active members in their own large chapel. The Győr Ward had fifty of its 200 members active. The Eger Branch had less than ten of the ninety members active. The Sopron Branch had around twenty-five active members. The Pecs Branch had over forty active members. Over 600 attended the Budapest Hungary Stake conference in late 2009. The Bekescsaba Branch had less than twenty active members and one active, recently baptized priesthood holder in early 2010. In 1999, the mission office reported that 28% of members were active. At present, active membership appears to stand at approximately 1,000, or 22% of total membership.

In 2009, seventy members were enrolled in seminary and ninety-four enrolled in institute.

²⁷⁵⁸ "New stake presidents," LDS Church News, 26 August 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49368/New-stake-presidents.html>

²⁷⁵⁹ Stallings, Carol Turnbow; Hendrix, Cmdr. Bill. "Elder Holland visits Hungary, Bosnia," LDS Church News, 24 August 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27174/Elder-Holland-visits-Hungary-Bosnia.html>

²⁷⁶⁰ "Hungary to gain new meetinghouse in remote area," LDS Church News, 4 November 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38833/Hungary-to-gain-new-meetinghouse-in-remote-area.html>

²⁷⁶¹ "Hungarian members view conference," LDS Church News, 26 May 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39927/Hungarian-members-view-conference.html>

²⁷⁶² "A key to Europe," LDS Church News, 2 September 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49379/A-key-to-Europe.html>

²⁷⁶³ "Seven-country conference," LDS Church News, 11 August 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50936/Seven-country-conference.html>

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Hungarian, German, Croatian, Romanian, Slovene.

The Church has translated all LDS scriptures and most Church materials into Hungarian and German including the Church Handbook of Instructions, missionary, priesthood, unit, young men, young women, primary, relief society, temple, and audiovisual materials. The *Liabona* has six Hungarian issues produced a year. Croatian and Romanian have all LDS scriptures translated and most Church materials. The Church has translated the Book of Mormon and many Church materials in Slovenian. Slovak has no LDS scriptures and limited unit, temple, priesthood, relief society, and missionary materials available.

Meetinghouses

The first meetinghouse was built and dedicated in late 1989 in Budapest.²⁷⁶⁴ By the early 2000s, there were seven Church build meetinghouses.²⁷⁶⁵ Congregations met in twenty-two locations by early 2010, likely over half of which were rented spaces or renovated buildings.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Likely due to Hungary's economic growth, the Church has participated in few welfare projects. No major development projects have occurred and humanitarian work has largely been limited to weekly missionary service hours and small-scale relief.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church has taken greater advantage of religious freedom in Hungary than in many other former communist nations as manifest from the large number of missionaries serving and the large national outreach. Social and government forces typically respect the Church and do not create obstacles for proselytism. The Church experienced problems opening Oroshaza to missionary work in 2008, as police harassed missionaries and who were told they were forbidden to preach in the city. This issue was taken to higher law enforcement authorities and addressed.

Cultural Issues

Significant progress has occurred despite social issues that limit growth. The popularity of alcohol creates obstacles for converts and members to overcome in order to live a lifestyle in harmony with the teachings of the Church. Cigarette consumption is also high and poses challenges for converts to quit smoking and not relapse. It is unclear whether substance abuse has significantly affected member activity rates, but these influences challenge the Church's growth and strength. Hungary's ties with the East and West provide a major cultural opportunity for the Church to unify members in Central and Eastern Europe. The Church's strength in Hungary provides an example to members in which centers of strength are few or weak, which has been partially taken advantage of with young single adult conferences for the region.

²⁷⁶⁴ "Meetinghouse dedicated in Hungary," LDS Church News, 11 November 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19244/Meetinghouse-dedicated-in-Hungary.html>

²⁷⁶⁵ "Hungary to gain new meetinghouse in remote area," LDS Church News, 4 November 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38833/Hungary-to-gain-new-meetinghouse-in-remote-area.html>

National Outreach

The Church has performed impressive outreach with fulltime missionaries in Hungary over the past two decades. The rapid increase of new cities opening for missionary work came partially from the creation of the Budapest Hungary Stake as members became less reliant upon missionaries for leadership and reactivation duties.

Sixteen of the nineteen administrative counties have a congregation. All cities over 100,000 people have at least one independent branch or ward. The unreached counties of Nógrád, Tolna and Zala rank among the four least populated counties and have a combined population of 735,000, or 7.4% of the national population. Most counties have only one congregation. Hungarians who have access to a congregation in the same city or town they live in number less than 40% of the population. There are over one hundred cities between 10,000 and 30,000 inhabitants without a congregation or missionaries assigned.

Limited receptivity in the past decade challenges the mission to open new areas when few potential members may join the Church. The opening of new areas with few local members challenges the Church's effectiveness in the placement of missionaries. Some cities have had missionaries withdrawn due to little success, such as Kiskunfelegyháza. The mission faces challenges in assigning missionaries between the most populous cities with an established Church presence and larger populations versus new areas of the country that often see surges in convert baptisms initially but poor retention over the long run. However retention problems appear prevalent in all cities with congregations. The possibility of conducting cottage meetings with a few interested individuals and a local member has not been recently explored. Hungarian members will likely need to become much more involved in missionary work to successfully establish congregations in unreached towns and villages.

The Mormon Tabernacle Choir visited Hungary in 1991 and created increased awareness about the Church.²⁷⁶⁶ More recently, missionaries frequently use English classes to provide service and find investigators. Even small branches typically have well-attended classes. The small branches in Bekescsaba and Sopron each had over fifty attending in 2010. Few nationwide events seeking to bring the population into greater awareness of the Church have been pursued recently.

Finding missionary apartments can be challenging. Zalaegerszeg was almost opened for missionary work in late 2006, but an apartment was unavailable for missionaries. This instead resulted in the opening of Kaposvár.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Societal pressures have likely attributed to poor member activity, as most Christian denominations also suffer from low attendance and activity. Poor activity and convert retention set back the creation of the first stake and challenge stronger Church establishment in the newly created districts and mission branches. Hungary suffers from inactivity and retention problems in areas in and outside of Budapest. Older branches typically had much higher activity a decade ago than currently. These branches tend to have spacious meetinghouses built for a larger Church membership than the few active members.

Attendance at stake conference for the Budapest Hungary Stake appears unchanged since its creation. Little to no improvement in Church attendance has persisted for over a decade, as nationwide member meetings in the late 1990s had as many as 1,000 attending. Despite membership increasing by 1,000 since 2000, the number of congregations excluding dependent units has remained unchanged.

²⁷⁶⁶ "Historic tour planned for 1991," LDS Church News, 9 June 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19861/Historic-tour-planned-for-1991.html>

Seminary and institute enrollment are much lower for other European nations with similar member sizes. Denmark had a couple hundred fewer members than Hungary in 2009 yet had a hundred more enrolled in seminary and institute. Most of the active members in the former Vac Branch went inactive after the branch was combined with a unit in Budapest to prepare for the first stake. Yet the consolidation of branches in preparation for the organization of the first stake has resulted in only a portion of the inactivity problems. The greatest setbacks in member activity appear from former mission branches in eastern and western Hungary belonging to the Miskolc and Szombathely Hungary Districts.

Low member activity challenges the Church's continued outreach in Hungary. Outreach demands the involvement of local members while reducing the reliance on fulltime missionaries for local members to fulfill Church responsibilities. Active members in Hungary provide valuable resources in reactivation efforts and the integration of new converts into congregations.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The ethnic group that poses the greatest difficulty assimilating with congregations is the Roma. Roma have been discriminated against and often live segregated from the rest of the population. This would also temporarily reduce tensions with Hungarian members. Many Roma speak Hungarian as a second language and could be linguistically assimilated into Hungarian-speaking congregations. In early 2010, no missionary reports indicate that Roma have joined the Church in Hungary. Other ethnic groups are small and often reside in border regions, creating challenges in outreach due to geographic and linguistic dissimilarities.

Language Issues

The Church has a large body of materials available in Hungarian despite few active members. This allows members and investigators to learn a large amount about the Church and develop greater knowledge and testimony. No materials are available in Roma, which has 150,000 speakers. The Roma language is heavily fragmented among different European nations and has yet to be standardized. Materials in Roma will be unlikely as the language lacks a literature and only 77% of Romani in Hungary are literate.²⁷⁶⁷ Only those who speak, read, and write Hungarian or English are likely to have outreach. The lack of Roma members throughout Europe presents a challenge in making materials available in the language.

Leadership

The Church greatly benefits from local priesthood leaders who lead nearly all the congregations, even if active members are few. All members of the first stake presidency were Hungarian, not Church employees and had careers in sales, management and translation.²⁷⁶⁸ At the Saturday priesthood session prior to the creation of the stake in Budapest, 110 priesthood holders were in attendance. At this time, seven Hungarians from the stake were serving full-time missions. The first Hungarian patriarch was called in late 2009. Missionaries estimated that fewer than 5% of members had their patriarchal blessings before this time. Hungarian missionaries have served in neighboring nations such as the Czech Republic and Romania. Although limited in number, returned missionaries help to build up congregations and establish the Church. The smallest branches of Eger, Papa and Bekescsaba struggle to develop local priesthood leadership.

²⁷⁶⁷ Taherzadeh, Yaz. "In Hungary, empowering Roma mothers to break the cycle of illiteracy," One Country: The Online Newsletter of the Baha'i International Community, 18 (2), July-September 2006. http://www.onecountry.org/e182/e18201as_Roma_Mothers_Project.htm

²⁷⁶⁸ "New stake presidents," LDS Church News, 26 August 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49368/New-stake-presidents.html>

Temple

Hungary pertains to the Freiberg Germany Temple District and active members regularly attend the temple. In 2009, seven temple trips occurred. Members make sacrifices in time and money to travel to the temple regularly.

Comparative Growth

Among the former communist nations of Central and Eastern Europe, only Hungary and Ukraine have had stakes established. Some of the greatest progress for the Church in the past two decades in this region has been in Hungary. The percentage of Church members in Hungary is nearly the same as in Germany, yet the latter has had a continuous Church presence for over a century. Among former communist nations, only Estonia and Albania have a higher percentage of Church members than Hungary.

Christian groups experience slow growth and have small congregations. The Seventh Day Adventist Church has an average of forty-two members per congregation. The only group that exhibits strong growth is Jehovah's Witnesses, who had over 800 baptisms in 2008. The religious climate has deteriorated as a result of increased materialism and secularism. Many have become increasingly nonreligious.

Future Prospects

Hungary will continue to be an important nation for the Church's establishment in Central and Eastern Europe due to the number and strength of active members and its geographical location. Increasing secularism and disinterest in religion threaten membership and congregational growth. A limited number of converts scattered throughout the country challenge future ambitions for the creation of additional congregations.

The dependent units in Szolnok and Tatabanya may become branches once greater local priesthood resources are developed. Cities that seem most likely to open to missionary work include Nagykanizsa, Salgotarjan, Szekszard, and Zalaegerszeg, as these cities are the most populous without a congregation or are in countries without a congregation. Additional districts in the southern part of the country in Pecs and Szeged will become more likely once additional branches are established. A branch may be reopened in Vac and additional, small branches created to reduce travel time and increase outreach in suburban areas of Budapest.

Additional groups may be organized in cities with missionaries who travel to nearby cities with congregations for Sunday meetings such as Hodmezovasarhely, Kolmo, and Oroshaza. A lack of converts has contributed to no additional congregations and may continue to challenge ambitions for opening and establishing a permanent Church presence.

A future temple in Vienna, Austria or Budapest would not only reduce the time and money required for temple attendance for Hungary but also other neighboring nations.

KOSOVO

Geography

AREA: 10,887 square km. Landlocked in the Balkans, Kosovo is a small nation that borders Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, and Montenegro. Terrain consist of a flat, elevated basin and mountains subject to a continental climate creating cold, snowy winters and hot, dry summers. Kosovo is divided into thirty administrative municipalities. The government has approved the creation of an additional ten municipalities in the near future.

Peoples

Albanian: 88%

Serbs: 7%

Other: 5%

Albanians form the majority in most areas. Serbs are concentrated in extreme northern Kosovo and in some larger cities but have decreased in numbers over the past decade following the Kosovo War in the late 1990s. Other ethnic groups include Bosnians, Gorani, Roma, Turks, Ashkali, and Egyptians.

Population: 1,836,529 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.04% (2011)

Fertility Rate: N/A

Life Expectancy: N/A

Languages: Albanian (88%), Serbian (7%), other (5%). Albanian and Serbian are the official languages. Only Albanian has over one million speakers (1.6 million).

Literacy: 87.5% (2007)

History

Serbs began to settle Kosovo in the seventh century but did not incorporate the region into the Serbian Empire until the thirteenth century. Serbia built many important Orthodox churches and monasteries in Kosovo, further deepening the Serbian legacy and claim to the region. The Ottoman Empire annexed Kosovo in 1389 and retained control until 1912. By the end of the nineteenth century, Albanians became the largest ethnic group as a result of immigration to the area from elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire. Serbia, and later Yugoslavia, administered Kosovo for the remainder of the twentieth century and granted greater autonomy in 1974. Albanian nationalism increased in the 1980s and strained relations with Yugoslavia. A separatist movement began to take shape following Slobadan Milosevic and the Serbian government decision to revoke Kosovo's autonomous status by first taking nonviolent opposition and later forming the Kosovo Liberation Army. Serbians began an aggressive, brutal campaign against Albanians in Kosovo through ethnic cleansing. Approximately 800,000 fled the country, and many died in the conflict. NATO led a three-month military campaign against Serbian forces and the United Nations established the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. Negotiations between Serbian and Kosovo authorities failed in the 2000s and resulted in a formal declaration of independence in February 2008. As of May 2010, over sixty countries recognized Kosovo as

a sovereign nation, but Serbia, Russia, China, India, and many nations in Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Asia do not recognize Kosovo independence. In July 2010, the World Court supported Kosovo's declaration of independence in determining that this declaration did not violate international law.

Culture

Kosovo shares many cultural similarities with Albania, as most of the population is Albanian. Traditions and cultural practices often differ by city or town. Family plays a major role in society. Music is important to many and consists of a wide range of genres such as folk music using traditional Albanian instruments and modern music genres.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$6,500 (2011) [13.5% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.700

Corruption Index: 2.9 (2011)

War, political instability, and isolation have prevented greater economic growth and modernization, as Kosovo is Europe's poorest nation. Remittances from citizens of Kosovo living in Central Europe and elsewhere form an important part of the economy. More than 40% of the population is unemployed, which fuels illegal activity and corruption. Thirty-five percent (35%) of the population lives below the poverty line. Due to poor living conditions, many immigrate to more prosperous nations. Rich mineral deposits are underutilized due to lack of investment and equipment. As many live in small towns and rural areas, agriculture is an important sector of the economy and produces wheat, corn, and potatoes. Mining is the primary industry, exploiting nickel, lead, zinc, and magnesium deposits.

Faiths

Muslim: 88%

Christian: 12%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 65,000

Jehovah's Witnesses 216 5

Latter-day Saints less than 50 2?

Religion

Most Albanians in Kosovo are nominally Muslim but do not attend worship services or typically display Muslim cultural traits. Serbs are primarily Serbian Orthodox. Catholics and Protestants account for fewer than 5% of the population. Catholics tend to reside nearby their churches in three administrative municipalities near the Albanian border, whereas Protestants are concentrated in Pristina and other cities.

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is generally upheld by local laws and government practices. Religion and ethnicity are highly correlated, making it difficult to determine whether societal acts of violence are ethnically or religiously motivated. Both Christian and Muslim religious holidays are national holidays. Religious groups are not required to register to operate. Protestant groups are not registered with the government but desire official recognition in order to obtain needed permits to own land and obtain building

permits. Some friction between Protestants and local government has occurred concerning tax exemption and obtaining permits to build churches or bury their deceased.

Largest Cities

Urban: N/A

Priština, Prizren, Uroševac, Kosovska Mitrovica, Gjakova, Peja, Gjilan, Vushtrri, Podujevo, Orahovac.

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregation.

Two of the ten largest cities have an LDS presence. Approximately 40% of the national population lives in the ten largest cities. The urban population likely accounts for less than half the national population.

LDS History

In 2000, Kosovo was assigned to the Europe Central Area. In 2006, President Weight from the Slovenia Ljubljana Mission traveled with his assistants to Kosovo on an exploratory visit to assess conditions and meet with members and investigators. The first converts from Kosovo to join the Church were baptized in the United States and in other nations. The first known baptism in Kosovo occurred in August 2006. The same month, twenty-six members from Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, and Kosovo attended a youth single adult conference in Slovenia. In 2010, Kosovo was switched from the Slovenia Ljubljana Mission to the Europe Area Presidency. By 2010, the Church had established the Kosovo CES Institute under the Balkans CES Coordinator. In 2010, missionaries in the Albania Tirana Mission began teaching a woman through Skype who had been investigating the Church for several years. In 2012, Kosovo was assigned to the Albania-based Adriatic South Mission.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: ~50 (2012)

In 2006, Gjakova had three native members and four foreign members and Pristina had several members. Pristina had around twelve members in 2010.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 1 Groups: 1 (2012)

In 2006, members met in at least two groups in Pristina and Gjakova. In 2010, the Church organized an administrative branch for Kosovo under the Europe Area. Pristina had its first branch organized in the early 2010s. In late 2012, missionaries opened Gjakova to proselytism and operated a group.

Activity and Retention

Twelve attended the first baptism held in 2006. A sacrament meeting in Gjakova in 2006 had eighteen in attendance, including nine investigators. Usually around a dozen attended Church meetings held in 2010 in Pristina. Total active membership is likely around twenty, or 40% of nominal membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Albanian, Serbian.

All LDS scriptures are available in Albanian. Only the Book of Mormon is available in Serbian. Many unit, temple, priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, young women, primary, missionary, and family history materials are available in Albanian and Serbian. Several CES manuals are available in Albanian.

Meetinghouses

Church meetings are held in members' homes.

Humanitarian and Development Work

In 1999, the Church donated 200,000 pounds of blankets and clothing to Kosovo refugees temporarily living in Macedonia. Ninety thousand pounds of humanitarian aid was donated later that year to refugees. Many Church members hand-made quilts and donated them to the Church to distribute to the needy in Kosovo during the crisis. By the end of the year, more than 100,000 quilts had been made and donated.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

There are no restrictions forbidding proselytism, foreign missionaries, or church activities for religious groups without government recognition. Concerns over the political stability of the region and low living standards have likely delayed the placement of full-time LDS missionaries. Difficulty for nontraditional Christian groups purchasing land and obtaining building permits may create challenges later for the LDS Church once membership size and activity merit larger meetinghouses.

Cultural Issues

Following his visit to Kosovo in 2006, President Weight reported that many were receptive to the Church and that if missionaries were assigned to the country they wouldn't have a shortage of people to teach. Many remain receptive to Christianity, and many missionary-oriented churches report success gaining converts on college campuses.

National Outreach

The Church extends outreach only in two cities, where 10% of the Kosovar population resides. Few converts appear to have joined the Church since the first missionaries were assigned. In early 2012, missionaries serving in the Adriatic South Mission reported no immediate plans to open additional locations to proselytism.

Several converts from Kosovo have joined the Church in other countries and returned to their home country. Coordination of mission outreach in Kosovo and Kosovar communities around the world will be the most effective means of increasing national outreach, the number of Kosovar member families, and convert retention.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Current member activity rates appear very high, as only a few devoted members have joined the Church in Kosovo and elsewhere.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The homogeneity of the population reduces ethnic integration challenges.

Language Issues

Church materials are translated in the native language of 95% of the population, very atypical for nations with a recent, unofficial Church presence.

Leadership

Native Kosovar members have had little leadership training, as foreign members appear to hold leadership positions. Foreign members can provide mentoring and training to local members, but little has occurred to take advantage of these opportunities as few speak Albanian.

Temple

Kosovo is assigned to the Bern Switzerland Temple. Members may attend the Rome Italy Temple once completed. In May 2010, no temple trips appeared to occur in Kosovo.

Comparative Growth

In 2010, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Montenegro were the last four noncity-state countries in Europe without independent branches. Kosovo was the first of these four nations with full-time missionaries assigned. In early 2012, only Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina had independent branches. Most of the former Yugoslavia has experienced major challenges in convert retention and slow membership growth over the past two decades.

Other Christian groups have experienced growth in Kosovo, although their presence has been limited until recently due to instability and war in the region. Continuing to delay mission outreach in Kosovo may result in many receptive to the gospel message joining other denominations and becoming less apt to join the LDS Church over time.

Future Prospects

The receptivity of the Church in Albania and current success of Christian groups in Kosovo likely indicate that the Church has potential for greater growth in Kosovo than in many other Southeastern European nations in the coming years. A small native-member community is in place to begin the foundation of local leadership to work with full-time missionaries. However, the high rate of emigration and current reliance on foreign members in church administration presents challenges.

A fact-finding trip to Kosovo in 2006 returned a favorable outlook for the potential of LDS missionary work in Kosovo, although no missionaries were assigned for five more years for reasons that are not entirely clear. The most likely reason why missionaries were not assigned prior to 2011 is that the Slovenia Ljubljana Mission formerly administered Kosovo had no Albanian-speaking missionaries. The experience in other nations suggests that the long a delay in sending missionaries may result in lower receptivity in Kosovo for the Church than in the past two decades due to increasing materialism and the shepherding of previously receptive individuals into other denominations.

LATVIA

Geography

AREA: 64,589 square km. Located in Eastern Europe on the Baltic Sea, Latvia borders Estonia, Russia, Belarus, and Lithuania. Climate is primarily influenced by the nearby sea, creating warm summers and wet moderate to cold winters. Fertile, marshy plains cover the landscape with few hills and no mountains. Environmental issues include pollution and waste management. Latvia is administratively divided into twenty-six counties and seven municipalities.

Peoples

Latvia: 57.7%
Russian: 29.6%
Belarusian: 4.1%
Ukrainian: 2.7%
Polish: 2.5%
Lithuanian: 1.4%
Other: 2%

Latvians are the largest ethnic group. Russians primarily live in the larger cities and in some locations outnumber Latvians. Other ethnic groups tend to live near the nation's boundaries or in large cities.

Population: 2,191,580 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: -0.598% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.33 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 67.84 male, 78.3 female (2012)

Languages: Latvian (58.2%), Russian (37.5%), Lithuanian and other (4.3%). Latvian is the official language and only language with over one million speakers.

Literacy: 99.7% (2000)

History

A Baltic tribe named the Latgalians dominated modern-day Latvia between 700–1100 AD until coming under rule of surrounding nations. Germany, Poland, Sweden, and Russia ruled the region until independence occurred following World War I. The Soviet Union annexed Latvia in 1940, and independence was not recovered until 1991. Remaining Russian troops left in 1994. Since independence Latvia has established stronger relations with Western Europe, joining the European Union and NATO in 2004.

Culture

Russian, Scandinavian, German, and indigenous practices influence Latvian culture. Rye bread, grains, dairy products, and potatoes are staple foods. Latvians tend to be passive in social interactions. Women traditionally bear the majority of household responsibilities. Latvian writers and artists suffered from Soviet censorship

prior to independence and today contribute freely to the nation's culture. Divorce rates are comparable to Scandinavia and less than the United States. Latvia experiences high rates of cigarette consumption and alcohol use compared to Western Europe.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$15,400 (2011) [32% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.805

Corruption Index: 4.2 (2011)

Latvia experienced economic growth since the 1990s until the late 2000s, partially resulting from the global financial crisis. GDP grew by 10% in 2007 but fell into steep recession, contracting by 4.6% in 2008 and 17.8% in 2009. The unemployment rate more than doubled between 2008 and 2009 to 16.6%. Latvia achieved its primary goal of European Union membership in 2004. Services employ 62% of the workforce and produce 72% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 26% of the workforce and accounts for 24% of the GDP. Industry produces buses, street and railroad cars, synthetic fibers, various home appliances, and agriculture machinery. Wood and wood products are a major export. Agriculture products include grain, sugar beets, potatoes, and vegetables. Primary trade partners include Lithuania, Russia, Estonia, and Germany.

Latvia ranks among the least corrupt nations in Eastern Europe, but corruption has worsened as a result of the fragile economy. Corruption allegations include special interest favors by government for certain groups, misuse of EU funds, and tax evasion.²⁷⁶⁹

Faiths

Christian: 35.9%

Other: 0.4%

Unspecified: 63.7%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Lutheran 437,375 301

Catholic 430,235 250

Orthodox 341,420 119

Seventh Day Adventists 4,016 52

Jehovah's Witnesses 2,414 36

Latter-day Saints 1,166 7

Religion

Most Latvians do not consider themselves religious. Lutherans and Catholics are the two largest religious groups, followed by Orthodox Christians. Orthodox Christians primarily reside in large cities and are mostly ethnic Russians, whereas Catholics live in the east.

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. Abuse of religious freedom by

²⁷⁶⁹ "Latvia's Corruption rating takes a dive with economy," Monsters and Critics, 17 November 2009. http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/europe/features/article_1513911.php/eca-126-Latvia-s-corruption-rating-takes-dive-with-economy-News-Feature

government or individuals is not tolerated. Nontraditional religious groups face greater bureaucratic requirements. Religious groups are not required to register to operate, but receive greater freedom to hold meetings, can have financial transactions, own property, and can obtain privileges concerning tax benefits to those who donate to the registered religious group.²⁷⁷⁰

Largest Cities

Urban: 68%

Riga, Daugavpils, Liepaja, Jelgava, **Jurmala, Ventspils, Rezekne, Jekabspils, Valmiera, Ogre.**

Cities in **bold** do not have congregations.

Four of the ten largest cities have a congregation. Fifty-one percent (51%) of the population lives in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

The first missionary work in Latvia was conducted briefly in 1903 by Hungarian convert Mischa Markow.²⁷⁷¹ The first Latvian members joined the Church in Germany in the 1950s.²⁷⁷² The Russia St. Petersburg Mission sent the first four missionaries to Riga to open Latvia for missionary work in June 1992. Missionaries baptized the first convert the following month. There were forty Latvian members when Elder James E. Faust dedicated Latvia for missionary work the following year.²⁷⁷³ The Church created the Latvia Riga Mission, which also administered Estonia and Lithuania, in the summer of 1993. The first Latvian family sealed in the temple occurred in 1993 in the Stockholm Sweden Temple.²⁷⁷⁴ The Latvia Riga Mission was renamed and moved to Vilnius, Lithuania in 1996; headquarters returned to Latvia in 2001. Latvia became part of the Europe East Area in 2000. The mission was renamed the Baltic Mission in 2002.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 1,166 (2012)

In the late 1990s there were approximately 200 members. By year-end 2000, membership reached 508. For the past decade membership has increased by forty to one hundred members a year, usually at a rate between 5%–10%. Membership numbered 692 in 2003, 920 in 2006, and 1,025 in 2008.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 6 Groups: 1 (2012)

Missionaries were assigned first to Riga and Liepaja by June 1992.²⁷⁷⁵ In the late 1990s, there were five branches. Missionaries opened Daugavpils in 2000.²⁷⁷⁶ By the end of 2000, there were three branches: Two in

²⁷⁷⁰ "Latvia," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127319.htm>

²⁷⁷¹ "History of Church in Russian republic," LDS Church News, 16 November 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20772/History-of-Church-in-Russian-republic.html>

²⁷⁷² "Missionary moments: 'I was among friends,'" LDS Church News, 16 November 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21149/Missionary-moments—I-was-among-friends.html>

²⁷⁷³ "4 European lands dedicated," LDS Church News, 12 June 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23051/4-European-lands-dedicated.html>

²⁷⁷⁴ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 25 September 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22938/From-around-the-world.html>

²⁷⁷⁵ Stahle, Shaun D. "Faith renewed," LDS Church News, 12 January 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51538/Faith-renewed.html>

²⁷⁷⁶ "20,000 pounds of aid," LDS Church News, 6 April 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/>

Riga and one in Liepaja. In 2002, a fourth branch was created in Daugavpils. The following year the Church created the Baltic Mission Branch for members living in remote locations or detached groups throughout the mission. In 2006, two Russian congregations were created in Riga, named the Riga 2nd and Imanta 2nd Branches, bringing the total number of branches to seven. Missionaries opened the city of Jelgava in the late 2000s, and as of April 2010, a group met in the city. In 2012, the two branches in Imanta were consolidated into a single branch.

Activity and Retention

In 2000, 200 youth throughout the Baltic States traveled to Lithuania for a youth conference.²⁷⁷⁷ In 2009, over 400 throughout the Baltic States attended a fireside with Elder L. Tom Perry in Latvia.²⁷⁷⁸ Sixty-five young single adults from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania met in Riga, Latvia in March 2010 for a young single adult conference.

In Liepaja, membership reached 240 by 2000. Twenty-five baptisms occurred in 2005, but sacrament attendance dropped to 20%.²⁷⁷⁹ The Daugavpils Branch had twenty out of seventy-five members attending church regularly in July 2009. In June 2009, the Jelgava Group had around ten members and investigators attending Sunday meetings. In 1999, there were fifty-five attending the Latvian branch and eighty attending the Russian branch in Riga. Today branches in Riga range from thirty to ninety active members. During the 2008–2009 school year, fifty-two were enrolled in seminary or institute. Active membership is likely around 300, or 28%–30%.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Latvian, Russian, Lithuanian.

All LDS scriptures are available in Latvia, Russian, and Lithuanian. Latvian and Lithuanian Church materials include selected unit, temple, priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, young women, primary, missionary, family history, and institute materials. Russian has the greatest number of materials available. The *Liahona* magazine has two issues in Latvian and twelve in Russian a year.

Meetinghouses

Larger branches, including those in Riga, meet in Church-built meetinghouses. The Liepaja Branch meetinghouse was completed in 2009 and was the largest in Latvia at 6,500 square feet. Meetinghouses for other congregations are renovated buildings or rented spaces.

Humanitarian and Development Work

In 2002, the Church donated 20,000 pounds of relief supplies to the city of Daugavpils for needy unemployed

articles/41545/20000-pounds-of-aid.html

²⁷⁷⁷ “Baltic youth conference draws from four countries,” LDS Church News, 11 November 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38856/Baltic-youth-conference-draws-from-four-countries.html>

²⁷⁷⁸ Jegina, Inara; Klundt, Jo Ann. “History visit to Latvian saints,” LDS Church News, 26 September 2009. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/57926/Historic-visit-to-Latvian-saints.html>

²⁷⁷⁹ Stahle, Shaun D. “Faith renewed,” LDS Church News, 12 January 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51538/Faith-renewed.html>

residents.²⁷⁸⁰ The Church has also donated office supplies and appliances to organizations that assist the needy.²⁷⁸¹

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church faces no restrictions on its missionary effort with full-time missionaries or local members. High levels of religious freedom allow greater variety of convert finding activities.

Cultural Issues

Nonreligiosity resulting from decades of communism and the recent increase in materialism presents the greatest cultural and social challenge for mission efforts. Most do not regard religion as important in everyday life, making efforts for finding interesting individuals more difficult. However, Latvians appear more open to learning about the Church compared to other European nations. High cigarette use increases the incidence of investigators who face challenges overcoming addiction. Relapse in tobacco use following baptism may be a cause of member inactivity.

National Outreach

Proselytism efforts remain limited to the four largest cities. Tracting, street contacting, member-missionary work, service projects, and English lessons have been used by missionaries to find contacts interested in learning about the Church. Cities with mission outreach centers account for 42% of the national population. Congregations function in four of the seven municipalities and in none of the twenty-six counties. Outreach in rural areas appears unlikely for the foreseeable future, as not all major cities have congregations. Once outreach centers are established in all the largest cities throughout the country, unreached rural areas may experience some mission outreach—particularly in areas surrounding large cities—with the coordination of local members. There are thirteen cities with 10,000 to 20,000 inhabitants and about fifty towns with 1,000 to 10,000 inhabitants without mission outreach. In addition to Riga, Daugavpils, Liepaja, and Jelgava, some limited missionary work may occur in Jurmala due to its close proximity to Riga and large population.

The Baltic Mission also administers Estonia and Lithuania, and consequently, mission resources must be distributed among three nations. Admittance of the Baltic States into the European Union in 2004 resulted in greater ease for missionaries traveling throughout the Baltic Mission since the late 2000s. This has allowed for greater ease in missionary transfers, especially for Russian-speakers who serve in all three countries.

The Church launched an Internet site for Latvia in both Latvian and Russian in the late 2000s at <http://www.jezuskristusbaznica.lv/>. The site provides information on Church teachings, meetinghouse locations and times for branches and groups, missionary contact information, and a video on the Restoration. The Internet site provides an opportunity for those wanting to learn about the Church but hesitant to meet with missionaries or living in areas where there is no Church establishment.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Convert retention was poorest in the 1990s when investigators received the least amount of pre-baptism

²⁷⁸⁰ “20,000 pounds of aid,” LDS Church News, 6 April 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41545/20000-pounds-of-aid.html>

²⁷⁸¹ “Projects—Latvia,” Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 11 March 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-16,00.html>

preparation, and few members and local leaders were able to provide fellowshiping. Low member participation and poor convert retention in the 1990s likely contributed to the consolidation of congregations in Riga in the late 1990s. Convert retention has improved in the 2000s, indicated by the number of congregations doubling in the past decade. However, member activity remains a concern as increases in Church attendance has been less than nominal membership increases.

Many active members are noted for their high devotion to the Church. Local members serving as Church leaders are instrumental in the progress of missionary work to ensure the retention of new converts after baptism. Continued increase in the numbers of active members will strongly depend on increasing local leadership potential and member-missionary efforts.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Despite cultural and language differences, there is little friction between Latvian and Russian members, who together account for 87% of the population. Other ethnic minorities are more challenging to reach, as there are few members from these ethnicities.

Language Issues

The large number of Latvian and Russian-speaking members allows for the organization of language-specific congregations in Riga. Outside of Riga, congregations must accommodate speakers of both languages. In Daugavpils, most speak Russian, whereas in other congregations most speak Latvian. However nonnative speakers of the dominant language in Church services can experience marginalization due to language barriers. The translation of all LDS scriptures in both languages allows greater ease in pre-baptismal teaching and understanding of Church doctrines. Lithuanian speakers are too few to merit concentrated outreach for this minority group, but interested speakers of Lithuanian can obtain translations of Church materials in their native language.

Missionary Service

There were approximately thirty-five missionaries serving in Riga in September 2009 and about one hundred throughout the Baltic Mission. Latvia remains unable to become self-sustaining in its full-time missionary force, but reactivation efforts with youth and regular involvement of young men and women in member-missionary work may help increase the numbers of Latvian missionaries.

Leadership

The Church has achieved success in developing local leadership despite few members. In early 2010, all six branches were led by local branch presidents. The few Church employees do not appear to hold a disproportionate amount of leadership positions. In 2005, Gvido Senkans was called as an Area Authority, one of the first from the former Soviet Union. Elder Senkas was central to the Church's early establishment.²⁷⁸² Increases in the number of active Melchizedek Priesthood holders capable of leading congregations will not only prepare branches to become wards in the future but also allow for additional congregations to be organized.

Temple

Latvia is assigned to the Stockholm Sweden Temple district. Unlike Estonia and Lithuanian, Latvia does not

²⁷⁸² "New area seventies," LDS Church News, 16 April 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47170/New-area-seventies.html>

pertain to the Helsinki Finland Temple district due to cheaper airfare from Riga to Stockholm. Members benefit from the close proximity of the temple and temple trips occur regularly for the district.

Comparative Growth

Latvia has experienced comparable growth to Estonia and Lithuania, as these nations have between 900 and 1,100 members. Estonia has the highest percentage of LDS members, which is twice the percentage in Latvia and four times the percentage in Lithuania. Latvia is the only Baltic State with multiple Russian and non-Russian congregations in one city, indicating a greater degree of success in mission efforts among the native population and Russians. Riga is the city in the Baltic States with the largest number of active members, followed by Tallinn, Estonia.

Many Christian denominations report little membership growth. Seventh Day Adventists are among the more successful denominations in Latvia and have had approximately one hundred baptisms a year for the past decade but no increase in membership. Adventist churches have increased by eight during the past decade. Jehovah's Witnesses have also seen steady growth.

Future Prospects

Developed local leadership, continued convert baptisms, and expanding national outreach create a positive atmosphere for future growth. Additional large cities may open for missionary work or have more active missionary outreach, including Jurmala, Ventspils, Rezekne, and Jekabspils. Continued growth in the next decade may lead to the establishment of a stake, but the current number of active members is likely half that needed for a stake creation. Greater outreach and progress in the Church will likely rely on local member-missionary efforts, especially due to the limited number of full-time missionaries who must be shared with Estonia and Lithuania.

LITHUANIA

Geography

AREA: 65,300 square km. Located in Eastern Europe, Lithuania borders Latvia, Belarus, Poland, Russia's Kaliningrad Oblast, and the Baltic Sea. Fertile, low lying plains dotted with small lakes cover most the country. The nearby sea moderates the climate, producing wet weather and temperate summers and winters. Soil and groundwater contamination from military bases is an environmental issue. Lithuania is divided into ten administrative counties.

Peoples

Lithuanian: 83.4%
Polish: 6.7%
Russian: 6.3%
Other/unspecified: 3.6%

Lithuanians form the majority. Poles primarily populate the southeast near the Polish border. Russians most likely live in the larger cities or near Kaliningrad. Other ethnic groups include Belarusians and Ukrainians.

Population: 3,525,761 (July 2012)
Annual Growth Rate: -0.278% (2012)
Fertility Rate: 1.27 children born per woman (2012)
Life Expectancy: 70.72 male, 80.66 female (2012)

Languages: Lithuanian (82%), Russian (8%), Polish (5.6%), other and unspecified (4.4%). Lithuanian is the official language. Only Lithuanian has over one million speakers (2.9 million).

Literacy: 99.6% (2001)

History

In the thirteenth century, Lithuania emerged as a state and added territory for the following century, becoming the largest nation in Europe by the end of the fourteenth century. Lithuania allied with Poland in the late fourteenth century and a century later united as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The union was dissolved and incorporated into surrounding nations in 1795. Lithuania achieved independence following World War I but was absorbed into the Soviet Union in 1940. The once large Jewish population was annihilated by the Nazis during World War II. In March 1990, Lithuania was the first Soviet republic to declare independence, which was later recognized in September 1991. Russian troops withdrew remaining forces in 1993. Since independence, relations have strengthened with Central and Western Europe as Lithuania joined NATO and the European Union in 2004.

Culture

Lithuanians tend to be reserved and respectful. Family structure and responsibilities are traditional and conservative. There is a rich legacy of Lithuanian literature starting from the Middle Ages. Alcohol consumption

rates are high and comparable to Russia, whereas cigarette use is lower than in many Eastern European nations and comparable to Canada. The rate of divorce is high.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$18,700 (2011) [38.8% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.810

Corruption Index: 4.8 (2011)

Lithuania has achieved economic growth since independence and pursued trade with both Eastern and Western Europe. Growth in GDP came to a halt in 2009 due to the global financial crisis as the economy contracted by 15%. Unemployment also rapidly increased from 5.8% in 2008 to 13.7% in 2009. Services produce 69% of the GDP and employ 57% of the workforce, whereas industry accounts for 27% of the GDP and employs 29% of the workforce. Primary industries include machinery, home appliances, and electronics. Grain, potatoes, and sugar beets are common crops. Primary trade partners include Russia, Germany, Poland, and Latvia.

Corruption rates are higher than many nations in the European Union but lower than most of Eastern Europe. Lithuania has no courts that specialize in corruption cases. Most Lithuanians are prepared to pay a bribe to resolve an issue, and many working in business report that corruption hurts their business. Customs, police, health care, and tax officials are considered the most corrupt. Government has had some success fighting corruption, but many issues remain unsolved.²⁷⁸³

Faiths

Christian: 85%

Other/unspecified: 5.5%

None: 9.5%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 2,808,591

Russian Orthodox 145,762

Jehovah's Witnesses 3,102 47

Latter-day Saints 916 5

Seventh Day Adventists 876 17

Religion

Catholics nominally form the majority at 80% of the population. Russian Orthodox members live primarily along the border with Belarus. Nontraditional religious groups tend to have fewer adherents than traditional religious groups. There are some small communities of Jews and Muslims.²⁷⁸⁴

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. Religious discrimination, violence, or interference is illegal. There is no state religion, but some religious groups receive special

²⁷⁸³ Seskauskas, Tomas. "Fight against corruption in the Republic of Lithuania," retrieved 16 April 2010. <http://www.lrti.go.kr/repository/eng/data/flaw/lithuania.pdf>

²⁷⁸⁴ "Lithuania," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127321.htm>

privileges including religious teaching in public school and the right to register marriages. Traditional religious groups require a legacy of more than 300 years and receive greater benefits from the government. Among non-traditional groups, only Evangelical Baptists and Seventh Day Adventists have state recognition. Other nontraditional groups register individual congregations but do not have full government recognition. Official status can be granted to nontraditional religious group in order to hold bank accounts and own property. Societal abuses of freedom of religion consist primarily of discrimination and vandalism against Jews.²⁷⁸⁵

Largest Cities

Urban: 67%

Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipeda, Siauliai, **Panevezys, Alytus, Marijampole, Mazeikiai, Jonava, Kedainiai.** Cities in **bold** do not have congregations.

Four of the ten largest cities have a congregation. Forty-five percent (45%) of the population lives in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

The Russia St. Petersburg Mission included Lithuania until the creation of the Latvia Riga Mission in 1993. Missionaries first arrived in December 1992.²⁷⁸⁶ In June 1993, Elder M. Russell Ballard dedicated Lithuania for missionary work with twenty-seven in attendance. At the time, eight missionaries were assigned to the country.²⁷⁸⁷ The previous year, there was only one member living in the country.²⁷⁸⁸ In 1993, missionaries received media coverage nationwide, which helped improve the Church's image and correct misinformation.²⁷⁸⁹ The Latvia Riga Mission was renamed and moved to Vilnius, Lithuania in 1996. Mission headquarters returned to Latvia in 2001. Seminary and institute began in 1998. Lithuania joined the Europe East Area in 2000.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 916 (2012)

By 1999, there were 180 members in Vilnius, 150 in Kaunas, and 120 in Klaipeda. Total membership reached 554 in 2000, increasing to 640 and 735 in 2001 and 2002, respectively. Slow membership growth occurred between 2003 and 2008 as membership increased to 847.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 5 (2012)

By the end of 1995 there were three branches—two in Vilnius and one in Kaunas.²⁷⁹⁰ A few years later the two Vilnius branches were combined into one congregation for both Lithuanian and Russian speakers. In early 1998, branches became part of the newly created Vilnius Lithuania District. By year-end 2000, four branches

²⁷⁸⁵ "Lithuania," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127321.htm>

²⁷⁸⁶ "Lithuania," Country Profiles, retrieved 16 April 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/lithuania>

²⁷⁸⁷ "4 European lands dedicated," LDS Church News, 12 June 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23051/4-European-lands-dedicated.html>

²⁷⁸⁸ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 25 November 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26393/From-around-the-world.html>

²⁷⁸⁹ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 9 July 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25332/From-around-the-world.html>

²⁷⁹⁰ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 25 November 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26393/From-around-the-world.html>

functioned in Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipeda, and the Lithuania Vilnius Mission Branch. A branch was created in Siauliai in the early 2000s.

In 2006, a Russian-speaking congregation was created in Vilnius, bringing the total of branches to five.

Activity and Retention

In 2000, 200 youth throughout the Baltic States traveled to Lithuania for a youth conference.²⁷⁹¹ In 2009, over 400 throughout the Baltic States attended a fireside with Elder L. Tom Perry in Latvia.²⁷⁹² Sixty-five young single adults from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania met in Riga, Latvia in March 2010 for a young single adult conference.

Lithuania historically has had one of the highest activity rates in Eastern Europe. During the 2008–2009 school year, thirty were enrolled in seminary or institute. Active membership likely ranges from fifty to 100 per congregation to 300 to 400 nationwide, or 35%–45% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Lithuanian, Russian, Polish.

All LDS scriptures are available in Lithuanian, Russian, and Polish. Lithuanian Church materials include selected unit, temple, priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, young women, primary, missionary, family history, and institute materials. Russian and Polish have a greater number of these materials translated. The *Liahona* magazine has two issues in Lithuanian, four in Polish, and twelve in Russian a year.

Meetinghouses

Branches meet in rented spaces or renovated buildings.

Humanitarian and Development Work

In 1998, approximately 800 young single adults in the United States made 200 quilts for distribution in the Appalachian Mountains, Lithuania, and Yugoslavia.²⁷⁹³

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Missionaries may openly proselyte. There are no laws limiting the Church's activities, and congregations are officially registered. The Church does not have state recognition and may not receive it for many years, as this status is rarely granted to nontraditional religious groups.

Cultural Issues

Increased materialism and secularism since independence, coupled with decades of communism, have created

²⁷⁹¹ "Baltic youth conference draws from four countries," LDS Church News, 11 November 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38856/Baltic-youth-conference-draws-from-four-countries.html>

²⁷⁹² Jegina, Inara; Klundt, Jo Ann. "History visit to Latvian saints," LDS Church News, 26 September 2009. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/57926/Historic-visit-to-Latvian-saints.html>

²⁷⁹³ McCook, Bill. "800 young single adults tie 200 quilts for needy," LDS Church News, 17 October 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31079/800-young-single-adults-tie-200-quilts-for-needy.html>

disinterest in religion among most Lithuanians. High alcohol use challenges investigators making lifestyle changes prior to baptism and also increases the likelihood of converts relapsing to former alcohol addictions. Some forms of proselytism—such as street contacting—may be less effective due to the reserved nature of many Lithuanians.

National Outreach

A minority of Lithuanians receive mission outreach. Thirty-five percent (35%) of the national population resides in cities with a congregation. The four most populous administrative countries have mission outreach. The six unreached counties account for 31% of Lithuania's population, indicating that roughly a third of the national population live in counties with congregations but not in cities with outreach centers.

Opportunities exist to significantly expand national outreach among the urbanized population. Eight cities over 30,000 inhabitants, twenty-five cities between 10,000 and 30,000 inhabitants, and sixty towns between 1,000 and 10,000 inhabitants have yet to receive LDS mission outreach. The largest cities appear most likely to receive future mission outreach, especially within counties with already established congregations. The Church likely has some members living in these cities and towns, which can help orchestrate cottage meetings and lay the foundation of future Church leadership. It is unclear whether this is on the current agenda for the Baltic Mission.

The limited number of missionaries and small numbers of active members and leaders is the greatest issue restricting broader mission outreach. Full-time missionaries and mission resources must be shared with Latvia and Estonia although Lithuanian-speaking missionaries usually serve their entire missions in Lithuania with the exception of short periods in Estonia or Latvia.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Convert retention has likely improved since 1990s levels, but missionaries report challenges in keeping recent converts continually engaged and enthusiastic about Church duties and functions. This appears to have reduced the number of new converts serving in leadership positions.

The Church struggles to attract youth converts and to keep them active. In Klaipeda, at least twenty youth were inactive. Many fall into inactivity due to the small number of active members who they can relate with and a lack of nurturing from older members. With greater planning, foresight and local member participation, greater successes may be achievable in convert retention and member reactivation.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Cooperation between Russian and Lithuanian-speaking members has allowed the Church to efficiently meet the needs of its membership. Potential issues integrating these and other ethnic groups into the same congregation may occur, but membership as a whole has placed historical grudges and dislikes aside in the Church. Very little, if any, outreach has occurred among Polish Lithuanians, partially due to most living in areas outside of current mission outreach.

Language Issues

With the exception of Vilnius, where language-specific congregations meet, all other branches meet the needs of both Lithuanian and Russian speakers. Kaunas has few Russian speakers, and the majority of members and all missionaries speak Lithuania. Klaipeda provides translations in sacrament meeting for Lithuanian and

Russian speakers. The Church benefits from the large amount of materials available in Lithuanian and Russian despite the national Church membership numbering less than 1,000.

Missionary Service

Ten Lithuanian-speaking and eight Russian-speaking missionaries served in Lithuania in the late 1990s. Eight missionaries served in Kaunas in early 2009, and four missionaries served in Klaipeda in early 2010.

Many local members have also served full-time missions in their youth and as older adults. By 1995, six Lithuanian members were serving missions in Russia, Utah, and Poland.²⁷⁹⁴ In early 2010, the former Klaipeda Branch president and his wife were serving a temple mission at the Helsinki Finland Temple. The limited number of active youth challenges efforts to increase the numbers of full-time missionaries from Lithuania.

Leadership

The Church has developed adequate local leadership to be self-sufficient in Church administration. All five branches in Lithuania have local branch presidents. Increasing the number of men capable of leading congregations will be central to expanding national outreach and ensure self-sufficiency over the long term.

Temple

Lithuania pertains to the Helsinki Finland Temple district. Temple trips occur regularly and take longer than Estonia and Latvia, requiring greater sacrifice for members to attend. Members usually travel by bus to Estonia and take a ferry to Helsinki.

Comparative Growth

Lithuania has the most limited mission outreach in the Baltic States and is the only nation with a city over 100,000 inhabitants without a congregation, Panevezys. However, Lithuania has experienced comparable membership growth to Estonia and Latvia, as all these nations had between 900 and 1,100 members in 2010. Estonia has the highest percentage of LDS members, which is twice the percentage in Latvia and four times the percentage in Lithuania. Activity rates are comparable throughout the three countries and are similar to or slightly higher than many Eastern European nations.

Seventh Day Adventists have had membership slightly decrease from late 1990s levels, but congregations have continued to increase. Less than thirty Adventist baptisms have occurred annually for the past few years. Jehovah's Witnesses report steady, modest membership growth.

Future Prospects

Elder M. Russell Ballard prophesized the following in May 1993:

From this small beginning, you will see the Church grow and prosper here. There will be many branches and then a district and, in the Lord's due time, there will be stakes. Who knows, if we could look out 50 years, perhaps a small temple. That all depends on us, really, and how diligent we are willing to be, and how wise and prudent we are willing to be as we proceed to establish the kingdom of God in Lithuania.²⁷⁹⁵

²⁷⁹⁴ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 25 November 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26393/From-around-the-world.html>

²⁷⁹⁵ "4 European lands dedicated," LDS Church News, 12 June 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23051/4-European-lands-dedicated.html>

In April 2010, the creation of a stake seemed unlikely in the near future, as there were still fewer than 1,000 members, and a stake generally has more than 2,000 members and over one hundred active Melchizedek Priesthood holders.

Additional congregations in Vilnius may be organized due to the city's size and large population. A Russian-speaking congregation may get organized in Klaipeda once active membership increases among both Russian and Lithuanian speakers. The outlook for additional cities opening to missionary work is favorable. Cities most likely to open for missionary work include Panevezys, Alytus, and Marijampole because of their large populations and Jonava and Kedainiai because of their proximity to Kaunas. Greater national outreach and growth in congregations will hinge on local members, leaders, and mission leaders' capacity to organize small units in unreached cities and to inspire local members to share the gospel with their associates.

MACEDONIA

Geography

AREA: 25,713 square km. Landlocked in Southeastern Europe, Macedonia borders Bulgaria, Greece, Albania, Kosovo, and Serbia. Most the terrain is mountainous. The Vardar River runs through the center of the country, and three large lakes line the border with Albania and Greece. Climate consists of dry, warm summers and cold, snowy winters. Earthquakes are natural hazards, and air pollution is an environmental issue. Macedonia is divided into eighty-four administrative municipalities.

Peoples

Macedonian: 64.2%

Albanian: 25.2%

Turkish: 3.9%

Roma: 2.7%

Serb: 1.8%

Other: 2.2%

Population: 2,082,370 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.237% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.59 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 72.82 male, 78.1 female (2012)

Languages: Macedonian (66.5%), Albanian (25.1%), Turkish (3.5%), Roma (1.9%), Serbian (1.2%), other (1.8%). Macedonian and Albanian are national or official languages. Only Macedonian has over one million speakers (1.33 million).

Literacy: 96.1% (2002)

History

Due to its location near Asia Minor, present-day Macedonia experienced a wide array of influences from regional powers over the past millennia. Many of these cultural traditions have been adopted into local culture. The Western Roman Empire controlled the region until coming under the rule of the Byzantine Empire in the sixth century. Slavs began populating the area during this period. The Ottoman Empire took possession of the region from the fifteenth century until 1912. During the Balkan Wars and World War I, Macedonia was divided between Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria until incorporating into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, which later became Yugoslavia. Macedonia peacefully won independence from Yugoslavia in 1991 as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Poor relations with Greece resulted shortly thereafter due to the new nation's desire to adopt the name Macedonia, which Greeks regard as a Hellenic name. Formal relations between the two nations began in 1995 after Greece lifted a twenty-month trade embargo. In 1999, Macedonia accommodated hundreds of thousands of Kosovar refugees. The large Albanian minority began an insurgency in 2001, as it felt politically and economically marginalized. Greater rights have been secured for minority groups in the past decade, and greater economic growth and stability have occurred.

Culture

Past civilizations and empires have influenced modern culture, particularly the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires. Fresco paintings and traditional music characterize historical art and entertainment. Cuisine draws from Mediterranean and Middle Eastern sources. Handball is the most popular sport. Cigarette consumption rates rank among the highest worldwide, whereas alcohol consumption rates are moderate.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$10,400 (2011) [21.6% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.728

Corruption Index: 3.9 (2011)

Macedonia was the least economically developed of newly independent former-Yugoslav states in the early 1990s. The Greek embargo, loss of federal funding from Belgrade, and Macedonia's landlocked position delayed economic growth and regional integration. In the past fifteen years, Macedonia has become more integrated with surrounding nations but remains sensitive to global and regional economic changes. Macedonia's small population, close proximity to Kosovo, and recent internal instability due to Albanian insurgencies has discouraged greater foreign investment. The recent global financial crisis has also hurt the economy. Services employ 52% of the workforce and produce 58% of the GDP, whereas industry accounts for 29% of the workforce and GDP. Agriculture employs 19% of the workforce and produces 12% of the GDP. Primary crops include grapes, vegetables, tobacco, and fruit. Food processing, textiles, chemicals, and metallurgy are the largest industries. Primary trade partners include Serbia, Germany, Greece, and Italy.

Corruption has remained a major issue that is present in most areas of society. The government has stepped up the fight on corruption due to its aspirations for European Union membership. Bribery in customs and law enforcement has been a major issue.

Faiths

Christian: 65%

Muslim: 33%

Other/unspecified: 2%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Macedonian Orthodox 1,330,279

Catholic 20,000

Jehovah's Witnesses 1,358 23

Seventh Day Adventists 559 15

Latter-day Saints ~10 1

Religion

Religious affiliation is highly correlated by ethnicity, as virtually all Macedonians are Macedonian Orthodox, and almost all Albanians are Muslim. Other religious primary include Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Jews.²⁷⁹⁶ Most the population does not regularly attend religious services.

²⁷⁹⁶ "Macedonia," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127323.htm>

Religious Freedom

The constitution and the law protect religious freedom, which is generally upheld by the government. Persecution and religious discrimination by government or individuals is not tolerated. There is no official religion, but five religious groups are mentioned in the constitution. Religious groups must register with the government to function as legal entities. Foreigners conducting missionary work or religious activities must gain approval from the State Commission for Relations with Religious Communities and Groups to receive a visa. Foreign religious workers must be invited in writing by representatives from a registered religious group. Religious education is offered in public schools. Some religious groups have not received legal status after applying for registration.²⁷⁹⁷

Largest Cities

Urban: 67%

Skopje, Kumanovo, Bitola, Prilep, Tetovo, Veles, Ohrid, Gostivar, Stip, Strumica.

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregation.

One of the ten largest cities has a congregation. Fifty-one percent (51%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

Macedonia and Albania served as the primary staging points for much of the Church's humanitarian response to the Kosovo conflict in 1999.²⁷⁹⁸ In 2000, Macedonia was assigned to the Europe East Area. In 2009, Elder D. Todd Christofferson visited Macedonia and met with a small number of members and individuals interested in the Church living in the area. At the time, the only known Macedonian citizens who were Latter-day Saints consisted of a family of four. In 2009, the Church did not have an official presence.²⁷⁹⁹ Macedonia was assigned to the Slovenia Ljubljana Mission for the 1990s and 2000s, but no missionary work occurred during this period. In May 2010, Macedonia was placed under the supervision of the Europe Area Presidency. In February 2012, the Church assigned Macedonia to the Albania-based Adriatic South Mission. Senior missionaries were assigned sometime in late 2011 or early 2012. In April 2012, mission leaders were preparing to assign the first proselytizing missionaries.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: ~10 (2012)

In 2010, membership consists of foreigners temporarily living in the country with the exception of one Macedonian family.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 1 (2012)

²⁷⁹⁷ "Macedonia," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127323.htm>

²⁷⁹⁸ "Church continues sending aid to refugees of Kosovo," LDS Church News, 8 May 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35723/Church-continues-sending-aid-to-refugees-of-Kosovo.html>

²⁷⁹⁹ Mattox, Elder Raymond P. "Members are good citizens in Albania," LDS Church News, 20 June 2009. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/57493/Members-are-good-citizens-in-Albania.html>

In May 2010, the Church created an administrative branch for Macedonia under the direction of the Europe Area Presidency. Prior to this time, a group met for Sunday meetings that reported to the Slovenia Ljubljana Mission.

Activity and Retention

As of 2011, no convert baptisms appear to have occurred in Macedonia. Activity rates appear to be high among known membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Albanian, Serbian, Turkish.

The Church has only translated the sacrament prayers and a basic unit guidebook into Macedonian. All LDS scriptures are available in Albanian. Only the Book of Mormon is available in Serbian. Many unit, temple, priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, young women, primary, missionary, and family history materials are available in Albanian and Serbian. Several CES manuals are available in Albanian.

Meetinghouses

Church meetings likely occur in the homes of members.

Humanitarian and Development Work

With the exception of emergency aid provided in the past to Kosovar refugees, the Church has yet to conduct humanitarian or development work in Macedonia.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Laws and government policies have supported religious freedom in Macedonia and created a favorable environment for a future official Church presence. The Church remains unregistered with the government, and consequently its activities are severely limited. Visa regulations regarding foreign religious workers have likely contributed to the lack of an official Church presence. No missionaries are assigned to Macedonia, as only registered religious groups may invite foreign religious workers to receive a visa to work in the country.

Cultural Issues

The strong ethnic identity of Macedonians to the Macedonian Orthodox Church and Albanians to Islam is a major cultural obstacle that will likely reduce receptivity to the Church. Due to the strong influence of traditional religions, joining a Church regarded as nontraditional and foreign may result in converts facing ostracism and ridicule from their families and communities. High cigarette consumption rates create challenges for many future investigators who face challenges completely ending their smoking addictions. High smoking rates may reduce the receptivity of the Church due to its teachings against tobacco use. Efforts among ethnic Albanians may be the most productive for the Church as Albanians in neighboring Albania have demonstrated the greatest receptivity to LDS mission outreach among ethnic groups in Southeastern Europe.

National Outreach

The Church's tiny membership appears concentrated in Skopje, where the only Church meetings are held in

a private setting. Mission outreach remains limited to those who have personal associations and contacts with members living in the country. A third of the national population resides in the Skopje area. Future mission outreach will most likely focus on Skopje before expanding to other large cities.

Distance from mission headquarters in Ljubljana and a lack of Church members have been partially responsible for the country remaining almost totally unreached today. The Slovenia Ljubljana Mission previously administered to all the nations of the former Yugoslavia, many of which relied heavily on foreign missionaries to fill local leadership and keep members active. Some of these nations such as Bosnia, Montenegro, and Kosovo remained without mission outreach until recently for similar reasons. Countries in the mission that have an official presence have missionaries assigned to only a few of the largest cities. Efforts to open additional mission outreach centers in these nations have likely contributed to the lack of a Church presence in Macedonia and other unreached nations in the Balkans until the early 2010s.

The Church does not have a country Internet website for Macedonia or Macedonian language materials online. Developing materials online may assist in initial efforts to find individuals interested in learning about the Church and provide accurate information concerning the Church's beliefs and practices.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Once LDS missionary activity commences in Macedonia, new converts will likely face pressure from family and friends to return to their previous beliefs and practices due to strong religious ties to ethnicity. Societal pressures may reduce convert retention rates.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Past conflict between Macedonians and Albanians may impact the integration of members and investigators from these two ethnic groups into the same congregations. Once a large enough active membership base is developed, language-specific congregations will most likely be the best solution to minimize ethnic conflicts and miscommunications between Albanian and Macedonian converts. As of yet, Church membership remains too small to have had these issues occur.

Language Issues

No proselytizing materials have been translated into Macedonian, which is spoken by two-thirds of the population. Macedonian is mutually intelligible with Bulgarian, a language with significant church resources that is taught at the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah. Albanians may also be useful in reaching the substantial Albanian minority in view of the high receptivity Albanians have demonstrated for the Church over the past two decades. However, the concentration of ethnic Albanians in the west of the country near the Albanian border and remote from the capital of Skopje may limit the utility of Albanian language for mission outreach until additional congregations are organized in this region. Most ethnic minorities have an ample supply of Church materials in their native languages, but future mission outreach will likely not occur in areas where these languages are most commonly spoken for many years following formal establishment of the Church.

Missionary Service

No full-time missionaries have served from Macedonia. Full-time missionaries have never been assigned.

Leadership

In 2010, President Kopischke of the Europe Area Presidency was listed as the branch president of the administrative branch for Macedonia. With only one native family in 2009, the Church currently has nearly nonexistent local leadership capabilities. Foreign members temporarily living in the country will likely serve in leadership positions and providing mentoring and assistance to local members and new converts.

Temple

Macedonia is not assigned to a temple district, but members most likely attend the Frankfurt Germany Temple or Bern Switzerland Temple. No organized temple trips have occurred. Long distance and travel expenses require significant sacrifice for members to attend the temple. Prospects for a temple closer to Macedonia appear unlikely in the foreseeable future.

Comparative Growth

Macedonia remains one of the only European nations that do not have an official Church presence. Other nations with over half a million inhabitants without an official Church presence include Bosnia, Montenegro, and Kosovo. In May 2010, the Church organized administrative branches—a new category of congregation that facilitates tracking and assisting Church members in nations without an official Church presence—in each of these nations. Among European nations without an official Church presence, Macedonia and Kosovo appear to be the only nations with several native members.

Many proselytism-oriented Christian faiths have a presence in Macedonia and constitute a small minority. These groups have struggled to reach across cultural divides and achieve greater membership growth. Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses experience slow membership growth rates, although both groups have seventeen to twenty congregations throughout the country.

Future Prospects

The creation of an administrative branch in 2010 and transfer of jurisdiction to the Adriatic South Mission indicates increased interest by mission planners to begin formal missionary activity in Macedonia. However, Macedonia continues to lack even a small native member base for missionaries to build upon, which will likely delay noticeable membership growth for many years to come.

MOLDOVA

Geography

AREA: 33,851 square km. Landlocked in Eastern Europe, Moldova borders Ukraine and Romania. Two large rivers, the Dneister and Prut, run along or near the borders. The narrow stretch of land between the Ukrainian border and the Dneister River is named Transnistria. The majority of the land is arable and is low-lying plains or small hills. The temperate climate receives influence from the nearby Black Sea, which helps moderate temperatures despite its continental location. Uncultivated land consists of forest or forest interspersed with grassland. The legacy of heavy fertilizer and pesticide use from the Soviet Union is the greatest environmental concern. Moldova is divided into thirty-two raions, three municipalities, one autonomous territorial unit, and one territorial unit.

Peoples

Moldovan/Romanian: 78.2%

Ukrainian: 8.4%

Russian: 5.8%

Gagauz: 4.4%

Bulgarian: 1.9%

Other: 1.3%

Controversy continues on whether Moldovans and Romanians are two separate or the same ethnic group. Many Ukrainians and Russians reside in Transnistria. The Gagauz are a Turkic people who mainly reside in southern areas in the autonomous territory of Gagauzia. Bulgarians mainly live in southern Moldova. Over 500,000 populate the disputed Transnistria region.

Population: 3,656,843 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: -1.014% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.55 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 65.64 male, 73.63 female (2012)

Languages: Romanian (77%), Russian (11%), Ukrainian (6%), Gagauz (4%), Bulgarian (2%). Romanian is the official language. There are also a small number of Romani speakers. Only Romanian has over one million native speakers (3.4 million).

Literacy: 99.1% (2005)

History

The Dacians were the first powerful force to occupy Moldova before the birth of Christ. The territory partially fell into Roman control in the first century. The Roman Empire and later Byzantine Empire maintained portions of Moldova until the seventh century. Several different groups ruled the area for the following centuries including the Goths, Tatars, Mongols, and Huns. Moldova was absorbed into the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century as Moldavia and maintained some autonomy. The Ottoman and Russian Empires exchanged several regions of Moldova during the nineteenth century with the majority of Moldova included

in the Kingdom of Romania in the late nineteenth century. Russia regained Moldova following World War II and sought to sever ties to Romania through rewriting the Romanian language in the Cyrillic alphabet and claiming that Moldovan was a separate language. In the late 1980s, an independence movement began taking shape and resulted in independence from the U.S.S.R in August 1991. The narrow strip of land between the Dneister River and the Ukrainian border named Transnistria broke away from Moldova due to demographic differences with the rest of Moldova, which resulted in a civil war in 1992. Transnistria has maintained de facto control of the territory since a cease fire in 1992 and has an established independent government, military, and civil institutions.

Following the end of civil war, Moldova experienced economic catastrophe until the 2000s from inflation and transitioning to a free-market economy. During the 1990s, most Moldovans lived below the poverty line. The Communist Party continues to have strong control. Moldova became the first former Soviet republic to vote a communist as president in 2001. Economic growth began in the early 2000s and has continued. Civil disorder and weak government have continued since independence. In 2009, riots occurred following demonstrations supporting ties with Romania. Noncommunist political parties joined together in 2009 to try to strengthen ties with Western Europe and overpower the communist influence on politics.

No nations recognize Transnistria as a sovereign state, and its ultimate relationship with Moldova and the international community has yet to be determined.

Culture

Moldovan culture draws upon Soviet and Romanian influences. The Soviets vigorously attempted to eradicate Romanian culture and develop a sense of Moldovan culture. The Moldovan Orthodox Church strongly influences culture and society. A rich literary history has continued for the past couple hundred years. Suppressed Romanian folk culture reemerged following independence. Relations continue to grow closer to Romania and Central Europe and have been strained with Russia. Moldova experiences one of the highest cigarette and alcohol consumption rates worldwide. There are also a large number of orphaned children.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$3,400 (2011) [7.07% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.649

Corruption Index: 2.9 (2011)

Moldova has experienced little economic growth and remains one of the poorest nations in Europe. Inflation crippled the economy in the 1990s, and growth did not occur until the past decade. Moldova's landlocked location, poor economic infrastructure, and the uncertainty of the destined state of Transnistria limit foreign investment and trade. Almost a third of Moldovans live below the poverty line. The large amount of productive agricultural land provides great strength for the small economy. Agriculture employs 41% of the workforce and produces 22% of the GDP. Services constitute 61% of the GDP and account for 43% of the workforce. Primary agricultural products include vegetables, fruits and wines. Almost all industry relates to the processing and storing of food products. No significant mineral resources besides gypsum and limestone challenge economic growth and diversification. Primary export partners include Morocco, Russia and Romania, whereas primary import partners include Ukraine, Russia, and Romania. Moldova experiences competing influences from Russia and Western Europe, with the former punishing Moldova with higher fuel and power prices for not complying with their demands. Integration into the EU is the eventual goal of many Moldovans.

Corruption ranks among the worst in Europe. Only Russia and Belarus were ranked as more corrupt by Transparency International in 2009. Corruption is most widespread for obtaining visas and in law enforcement.

Transnistria has likely continued to distance itself from Moldova due to its corruption issues. Drug trafficking and other illegal activity often enters Central Europe through Moldova or Transnistria.

Faiths

Christian: 98.5%

Jewish: 1.5%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Eastern Orthodox 4,234,333

Jehovah's Witnesses 20,384 244

Catholic 20,000

Seventh Day Adventists 10,706 154

Latter-day Saints 364 3

Religion

Over 90% of the population actively or nominally adheres to the Bessarabian or Moldovan Orthodox Churches.²⁸⁰⁰ The Jewish population has dropped in the past century due to war, the Holocaust and immigration to Israel. Remaining Jews primarily reside in northern Moldova. Protestant churches have seen limited growth.

Religious Freedom

The constitution allows religious freedom, which is typically upheld by the government. The Moldovan Orthodox Church is viewed as a cultural legacy to Moldova and its citizens. A new constitution went into effect in 2007 and was designed to simplify the registration process and provide greater flexibility in holding public events. Muslim groups were denied registration. Registration provides religious groups the right to hold property and have bank accounts. Legislation requires foreign missionaries to report their salary on their contracts with their sponsored religious group to obtain work permits. The government is secular but shows favoritism toward the Moldovan Orthodox Church. Religious classes may be taught in schools but depend on parents' approval and school budgets. Jehovah's Witnesses receive the greatest persecution among the more recently arrived religious groups, much of which comes from Orthodox churches.

Transnistria enjoys religious freedom but can place restrictions on religious groups' activities to maintain peace and stability. Registration is not required for religious groups to meet and operate in the country, but in order to receive legal registration religious groups must have at least ten members over the age of eighteen, have existed in Transnistria for ten years, and provide documentation indicating that both these terms have been met. Registration is required for foreign missionaries to openly proselyte.²⁸⁰¹

Largest Cities

Urban: 42%

Chisinau, **Tiraspol**, Balti, **Tighina**, **Rabnita**, **Cahul**, **Soroca**, **Ungheni**, **Dubasari**, Orhei.

²⁸⁰⁰ "Moldova," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127325.htm>

²⁸⁰¹ "Moldova," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127325.htm>

Cities in **bold** do not have congregations.

Three of the ten largest cities have a congregation. Thirty-four percent (34%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

The first Moldovans joined the Church in the mid-1990s in Russia, Ukraine, and the United States. Four American members arrived in Moldova for work in the mid-1990s and held meetings on Sundays. Elder Charles A. Didier and the Romania Bucharest Mission president visited in September 1997 with American and Moldovan members.²⁸⁰² In the fall of 1997, it was announced that a branch would soon be organized and missionaries from the Romania Bucharest Mission would begin serving in the country. The Church assigned missionaries to Chisinau. Missionary work was conducted through member referrals. Missionaries did not wear name tags and were not permitted to openly proselyte. The Chisinau Branch was created in November 1997.²⁸⁰³ The institute and seminary programs began in 1998.²⁸⁰⁴

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 364 (2012)

At the end of 2000 there were seventy-five members. In January 2001, Moldovans were among those who attended a young single adult conference for members in the Romania Bucharest Mission. A special fast was held for government recognition of the Church in Moldova.²⁸⁰⁵ Elder M. Russell Ballard dedicated Moldova for missionary work in May 2001.²⁸⁰⁶ Government recognition did not occur until the end of 2006.

The greatest membership growth occurred between 2000 and 2005. Membership increased to 137 in 2001 and to 200 in 2002. In 2004, membership reached 254. Growth slowed dramatically during the years missionaries did not serve in Moldova as membership only increased by two between the end of 2004 and the end of 2006. Membership has experienced greater increases recently, numbering 264 in 2007 and 285 in 2008. The majority of Moldovan members belong to the Chisinau Branch.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 3 (April 2013)

In 2000, Moldova belonged to the Europe Central Area. The following year one branch and two groups functioned, and fourteen missionaries were serving.²⁸⁰⁷ Groups were likely located in Orhei and Balti. Missionaries briefly served in Balti. Senior missionary couples have served since at least the late 1990s. The Church created a second branch in Orhei in 2002.

Missionaries were withdrawn from Moldova in late 2004 due to the Church being unable to receive recognition

²⁸⁰² "Moldova," LDS Newsroom, retrieved 11 February 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/moldova>

²⁸⁰³ "Moldova," LDS Newsroom, retrieved 11 February 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/moldova>

²⁸⁰⁴ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Finding hope in gospel message," LDS Church News, 16 January 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35078/Finding-hope-in-gospel-message.html>

²⁸⁰⁵ "Conference is 'ray of light' in Bucharest," LDS Church News, 10 February 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39310/Conference-is-ray-of-light-in-Bucharest.html>

²⁸⁰⁶ "Moldova is dedicated in picturesque setting," LDS Church News, 9 June 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40019/Moldova-is-dedicated-in-picturesque-setting.html>

²⁸⁰⁷ "Moldova is dedicated in picturesque setting," LDS Church News, 9 June 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40019/Moldova-is-dedicated-in-picturesque-setting.html>

from government and opposition from other religious groups. Missionaries returned to Moldova in early 2007 following official recognition.

The mission created the first district in Moldova in January 2009. The Chisinau Moldova District included three branches in Chisinau, Orhei and across the Romanian border in Iasi. The city of Balti was reopened to missionary work in August 2009. The Balti Group became a branch in 2012.

Activity and Retention

At the end of 2008 there were eighty active members in Chisinau. Although the bulk of total and active membership resides in Chisinau, missionaries reported in late 2008 that the Chisinau Branch was not strong enough to divide into two branches for Romanian and Russian speakers. The Orhei Branch had likely twenty or fewer active members. A few active members reside in Balti. Forty were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2007–2008 school year. Active members total likely around one hundred, or 35% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Romanian, Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian.

All LDS scriptures are available in Romanian, Russian, Ukrainian, and Bulgarian. Romanian translations of some family history, missionary, primary, young men, priesthood, relief society, Sunday School, unit, and temple materials are available. A greater number of materials for these organizations are available in Russian and Ukrainian. The *Liabona* has four issues a year in Romanian and Bulgarian and twelve in Russian and Ukrainian. Bulgarian, Russian and Ukrainian have several audio/visual materials and CES student manuals translated.

Meetinghouses

The Chisinau and Orhei Branches likely meet in rented spaces or renovated buildings. Meetings for the group in Balti likely occur in a rented space.

Humanitarian and Development Work

In 2002, Church members donated 1,000 quilts to the needy in Moldova and Albania.²⁸⁰⁸ In July 2004, the Church donated 500 wheelchairs.²⁸⁰⁹ The Church sponsored clean water projects in 2008. In the late 2000s, the Church continued to donate wheelchairs and also participated in hygiene kit assembly and distribution, refurbish public schools, and provide service in orphanages. Humanitarian missionary couples were serving in the late 2000s. Local members have assisted at orphanages for service projects.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church has faced many setbacks obtaining official recognition, assigning missionaries, and establishing congregations over the past two decades due to government legislation and persecution from other religious sects. In early 2010, these challenges had been overcome, but the intolerant religious and political atmosphere of foreign missionaries and churches may threaten continued Church outreach with full-time missionaries.

²⁸⁰⁸ Mary Ellen W. Smoot, "Developing Inner Strength," *Ensign*, May 2002, 13.

²⁸⁰⁹ "Church donates 500 wheelchairs," *LDS Church News*, 17 July 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45846/Church-donates-500-wheelchairs.html>

Cultural Issues

Cultural differences between primarily American missionaries and Eastern Orthodox culture may have contributed to the slow growth experienced over the past decade. The prominence of the Moldovan Orthodox Church in native culture has delayed the Church's establishment and foreign missionary outreach. High cigarette and alcohol consumption challenge the Church's teachings and likely pose challenges for investigators to consider baptisms. Investigators involved in corruption may face challenges in changing professions and lifestyle in order to join the Church. Addiction outreach groups and supportive local members and missionaries are vital to overcoming these cultural obstacles.

National Outreach

Moldova has suffered many setbacks over the years for national outreach resulting in the nation ranking among the least reached by the Church in Eastern Europe. When missionaries returned to Moldova in early 2007, there were seventeen missionaries destined to the Romania Bucharest Mission receiving training in the Missionary Training Center. Half of the missionaries were receiving Russian language training, which was excitedly received by the mission in anticipation of missionary outreach in Moldova. All the missionaries called during this time returned from their missions in 2009, yet membership only increased by twenty-nine during the two-year period.

Due to postponed government recognition and a delayed Church establishment, Moldova continues to have little mission outreach. Outreach centers in Chisinau, Orhei and Balti at most reach only 21% of the nation population. Missionary work efforts in areas without outreach centers, such as Gagauzia, are difficult, as mission headquarters are in Romania, most have no members, and intolerance towards foreign religions is high. The greatest opportunities for outreach in the near future are in lesser-reached areas of Chisinau and surrounding communities, as these areas have both active and less active members.

Transnistria has had no mission outreach, very few if any members, and several obstacles preventing the establishment of the Church. Transnistrian law requires at least ten members over age eighteen and a presence for at least ten years. Once there are at least ten members who meet for Church services, the Church must await ten years to receive government recognition required for active proselytism. The greatest opportunity for the Church to reach Transnistria will be through the Russian and Ukrainian converts in Moldova and Ukraine sharing the Church's teachings with their family and friends who reside in Transnistria.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Moldova experiences some of the highest member activity rates in Eastern Europe. No other European country has a higher percentage of members enrolled in seminary or institute (14%). The isolation from foreign missionaries has likely contributed to the resilience of local membership, as they have been forced to become self-sustaining in leadership. The strength of local leadership is manifest with the creation of the first district in 2009 despite membership in Moldova totaling fewer than 300. Some full member families belong to the Chisinau Branch and provide a valuable resource for long-term growth.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

A great challenge the Church experiences is with accommodating both Romanian and Russian speakers within the same congregation. The tension that exists between Romanians and Russians/Ukrainians appears to have not stunted membership growth and activity in Chisinau. The Gagauz will likely not face integration issues, as they are localized in Gagauzia and have yet to be reached by mission efforts.

Language Issues

The Church benefits from all commonly spoken languages already having all LDS scriptures and many materials available with the exception of Gagauz and Romani. Members use both Romanian and Russian in Church settings. In Chisinau, half of worship services are held in Romanian and half are in Russian. Outreach to the Gagauz will be challenging, as no Church materials are available in Gagauz, and the group is isolated from the rest of the country in their own autonomous region.

Leadership

Leadership has been limited due to the small Church membership but has seen positive development. President Verlan served as the branch president of the Chisinau Branch for over ten years. Both branches were led by local members in early 2010. The strength of local leadership is indicated by the organization of the first district in early 2009 despite fewer than 300 members in Moldova. The Church has a foundation of seasoned leaders who can assist in leading the Church and maintaining doctrinal integrity. Most leaders likely joined the Church a decade ago and as in other Eastern European nations, leaders in Moldova may struggle to bring more converts into the Church. Unlike many Eastern European countries, Moldova also does not appear to struggle with retaining native Church leaders after they are released from their callings.

Temple

Moldova pertains to the Freiburg Germany Temple district. Temple excursions have occurred with members from other nearby nations. Several Moldovan members attended the temple when fifty-nine members from Romania, Bulgaria, and Moldova participated in temple work for five days in October 2007.²⁸¹⁰

Comparative Growth

Moldova is one of the most recently opened countries for missionary work in Europe and also enjoys one of the higher member activity rates in Eastern Europe. Among nations with an official Church presence, only Serbia has a smaller Church membership.

Other Christian denominations have experienced a much more reaching and rapid growth than the LDS Church. Jehovah's Witnesses have been especially successful, with over 20,000 active members in over 200 congregations. Both Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists have a presence in Transnistria. Pentecostals have also seen increasing success. These denominations have opened congregations in most cities and utilized members in proselytism. Protestant groups report challenges for growth due to opposition from orthodox churches.

Future Prospects

The Church appears to be entering a time for expanding outreach and greater membership growth. Legal challenges have been overcome, local leadership developed, and retention has remained higher than in most of Eastern Europe. Elder Ballard prophesied concerning future congregation growth, stating, "Some of you will live to see the Church expand and grow into districts and stakes. We probably will not, but you young missionaries may."²⁸¹¹

²⁸¹⁰ "Attended Freiberg temple," LDS Church News, 13 January 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50016/Attend-Freiberg-temple.html>

²⁸¹¹ "Moldova is dedicated in picturesque setting," LDS Church News, 9 June 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40019/Moldova-is-dedicated-in-picturesque-setting.html>

MONTENEGRO

Geography

AREA: 13,812 square km. One of the smallest former Yugoslav republics, Montenegro borders Serbia, Kosovo, Albania, Bosnia, and the Adriatic Sea. Rugged mountains cover most the terrain, which includes some of the highest peaks in the region. Close proximity to the ocean creates a Mediterranean climate for most areas, with dry, hot summers and snowy, cold winters. Major water features include Lake Scutari, which straddles the Albanian border and several rivers that flow northward, such as the Piva, Tara, and Lim. Earthquakes are natural hazards, and water pollution in coastal areas is an environmental concern. Montenegro is divided into twenty-one administrative municipalities.

Population: 657,394 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: -0.633% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.66 (2010)

Life Expectancy: 74.3 (2010)

Peoples

Montenegrin: 43%

Serbian: 32%

Bosniak: 8%

Albanian: 5%

Other: 12%

Montenegrins are a South Slavic ethnic group with close ties to Serbs but claim a separate cultural identity. Montenegrins primarily populate central and southern areas of the country. Serbs consist of Montenegro natives who identify as Serbs or Serbs who arrived over the past several centuries from Serbia. Serbs populate northern, central, and coastal areas. Bosniaks reside in the extreme northeast whereas Albanians populate several border regions along the Kosovo and Albanian borders. Other ethnicities include ethnic Muslims, Croats and Roma.

Languages: Serbian (63.6%), Montenegrin (22%), Bosnian (5.5%), Albanian (5.3%), unspecified (3.7%). The official language is Montenegrin, a Serbo-Croatian dialect that is mutually intelligible with Bosnian, Serbian, and Croatian. The government has pushed for the development of a separate Montenegrin language, which has included the introduction of new letters in the alphabet and the use of a modified Latin script as opposed to the Cyrillic used by Serbian.²⁸¹² These language issues appear primarily intended to establish a more unique culture and national identity separate from Serbia.

Literacy: 96.4% (2002)

History

The name Montenegro first came into use in the fifteenth century as a Venetian term meaning “black mountain”

²⁸¹² “Montenegrin Language,” Wikipedia.org, retrieved 31 December 2010. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montenegrin_language

based on the Southern Slavic designation *Crna Gora* of the same meaning. Unlike much of the Balkans and Southeastern Europe, Montenegro was an independent state between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries governed by bishop princes until 1852 when a secular government was established. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, which later became Yugoslavia, absorbed Montenegro following World War I. Upon the independence of many of the Yugoslav republics in the early 1990s, Montenegro maintained ties with Serbia and remained unified under the name Yugoslavia until 2003 when the nation changed its status between the two political entities and was renamed Serbia and Montenegro. During the Milosevic era, relations with Serbia were strained, and Montenegro established separate economic jurisdiction. In 2006, Montenegro voted for independence from Serbia, which occurred in June 2006. In the late 2000s, Montenegro was pursuing NATO and European Union membership.

Culture

Due to its geographic location between Central and Southeastern Europe and access to the Adriatic Sea, Montenegro has historically received strong cultural influences from the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires as well as seafaring merchant states such as Venice. Podgorica is an important Montenegrin cultural center. Cuisine consists of Mediterranean dishes. Many Western European and American sports are popular.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$11,200 (2011) [23.3% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.771

Corruption Index: 4.0 (2011)

In addition to limited economic development and infrastructure, Montenegro's small size and population make it sensitive to the economic climate of the region. Unemployment, which was 14.7% in 2007, remains a concern for European Union membership. Aluminum exports and the tourist industry are important sectors of the economy. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the workforce labors in services, whereas 30% are employed in industry. Agriculture employs only 2% of the population; products include tobacco, potatoes, fruit, olives, and sheep.

Perceived corruption rates compare to former Yugoslav republics and European Union member nations in Southeastern Europe such as Greece and Bulgaria. Issues that have perpetuated corruption and prevented its reduction include the lack of anti-corruption legislation, organized crime, and alleged corruption ties to some political figures. The government stepped up its interest in fighting corruption in 2009.

Faiths

Christian: 77.7%

Muslim: 17.7%

Other: 0.6%

Unspecified: 3%

Atheist: 1%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Orthodox 494,714

Catholic 22,000

Jehovah's Witnesses 246 4

Latter-day Saints ~10 1

Religion

Most Montenegrins are Orthodox and form the majority in all administrative municipalities except for a few municipalities along the eastern and southern borders. Orthodox denominations include Montenegrin Orthodox and Serbian Orthodox. Muslims constitute the majority in extreme northeastern areas and in patches along the Kosovo and Albanian borders. Most inhabitants between Podgorica and Albania are Catholic.

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government and local laws. Abuse of religious freedom is not tolerated. There is no state religion, and the government observes Orthodox Christmas and Easter. Religious communities must register with the local police within fifteen days of arrival. Societal instances of abuse of religious freedom have been sparse and mainly connected to the ownership and operation of older religious buildings.²⁸¹³

Largest Cities

Urban: 60%

Podgorica, Niksic, Pljevlja, Bijelo Polje, Cetinje, Bar, Herceg-Novi, Ulcinj, Tivat, Dobrota.
Cities listed in **bold** do not have an LDS congregation.

None of the ten largest cities has an LDS congregation. Forty-four percent (44%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

There has never been an LDS Church presence in Montenegro. In 2000, Montenegro was assigned to the Europe East Area. Sometime in the 2000s, Montenegro was transferred to the Europe Area. Montenegro pertained to the Slovenia Ljubljana Mission until May 2010 when reassigned to the Europe Area Presidency. In early 2012, the Church assigned Montenegro to the Albania-based Adriatic South Mission and assigned the first senior and young proselytizing missionaries to Podgorica.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: ~10 (2012)

Missionaries serving in the late 2000s reported that at least one active member in Montenegro traveled to Serbia for Church meetings. In early 2012, only one nonnative Latter-day Saint family appeared to live in the country. The first two convert baptisms occurred in 2012.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 1 (2012)

In May 2010, the Church organized the Montenegro Branch, an administrative branch under the Europe Area. The few members in Montenegro meet as a group in Podgorica.

Activity and Retention

As of April 2012, no convert baptisms appeared to have occurred. Any local members likely joined the Church

²⁸¹³ "Montenegro," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127327.htm>

in Serbia or elsewhere. As the Church has yet to establish an official presence, there may be several unknown inactive members in Montenegro.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Serbian, Albanian, Croatian.

All LDS scriptures are translated in Croatian. Only the Book of Mormon is available in Serbian. The Church has translated several unit, temple, priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, young women, primary, missionary, Church proclamations, and family history materials in Croatian and Serbian. Many CES materials are translated in Croatian. The *Liahona* has one Croatian issue per year.

Meetinghouses

Church meetings likely occur in members' homes or in a rented space.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church has not conducted any humanitarian or development work specifically for Montenegro, although some earlier assistance to Serbia may have also benefited Montenegrins prior to independence.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Montenegro enjoys full religious freedom, and no legal obstacles appear to have prevented the LDS Church from establishing an official presence prior to 2012. Missionaries proselyte freely, and religious groups generally register with local police without opposition.

Cultural Issues

The long standing cultural connection with Orthodox Christianity will likely be a challenge for the Church to locate receptive individuals, help investigators and members attend church regularly, and withstand societal pressures to engage in practices against LDS Church teachings.

National Outreach

Montenegro's small geographic size allows the nation to be potentially reached with few mission outreach centers. A quarter of the national population receives mission outreach in Podgorica. As Niksic and Pljevlja are the only other cities with over 20,000 inhabitants, outreach in smaller towns and rural areas will be challenging and will likely not occur for many years following the official establishment of the Church. With the recent opening of Kosovo and Macedonia to missionary activity in the Adriatic South Mission, it is unlikely that the Church will expand into additional cities for years to come.

The small size of the population in comparison to the other former Yugoslav republics has reduced its priority for mission and area leadership to begin missionary work and outreach initiatives. The Church usually does not place missionaries in a country for the first time when there is no nucleus of local members to build upon and provide fellowshiping for potential converts. However, this mindset contributes to the continued absence of the Church in many unreached nations that enjoy full religious freedom and presents a dilemma of circular logic as local people have no opportunity to learn about the Church and become members without some initial investment of missionary manpower and resources.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Only a few converts have been baptized in Montenegro. Any other native members have likely joined the Church elsewhere and returned.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The Church may experience challenges integrating Serbs and Montenegrins into the same congregation due to recent Montenegrin nation-building campaigns that are politically driven. However, these two groups share many cultural similarities. Any ethnic integration issues resulting in reduced mission outreach efficacy in would most likely arise from extending outreach to ethnic Albanians and Bosniaks in predominantly Serb and Montenegrin congregations due to cultural and linguistic differences.

Language Issues

Serbian and Croatian LDS language resources can be utilized, as both these languages are mutually intelligible with Montenegrin. However increased Montenegrin nationalism—which considers Montenegrin as a separate language—may make some reluctant to use Serbian and Croatian language materials.

Missionary Service

As of 2010, there were no reports of full-time missionaries serving from Montenegro.

Leadership

The lack of any current native priesthood holders challenges the development of self sustainability for any prospective congregations. Foreign members or full-time missionaries will most likely serve as branch presidents or group leaders until several men join the Church, receive the priesthood, and remain active.

Temple

In mid-2010, Montenegro was not assigned to a temple district. Members most likely attend the Freiburg Germany, Frankfurt Germany, or Bern Switzerland Temples. Travel to the temple is time consuming, costly, and unfeasible for regular temple attendance. Prospects are low for any closer temple in the foreseeable future.

Comparative Growth

Montenegro remains one of the only European nations without an independent branch. Other nations with over half a million inhabitants without an official Church presence until the early 2010s include Bosnia, Macedonia, and Kosovo. In May 2010, the Church organized administrative branches—a new category of congregation that facilitates tracking and assisting Church members in nations without an official Church presence, but does not necessarily imply regular organized church meetings—in each of these nations.

Protestant Christian groups have a very small presence in Montenegro. The Orthodox majority has been relatively unreceptive to proselytism efforts, and many missionary-minded groups appear to have devoted few resources.

Future Prospects

Montenegro's recent independence, small population, and distance from established mission outreach centers

have made it a lesser priority for missionary work in Europe. Other nations in the Balkans without an official Church presence have larger populations and have had several individuals requesting additional information about the Church, whereas Montenegrins have not shown such interest, although there has been little opportunity for them to do so. Due to the small size of the population, few to no native members, and poor receptivity to the LDS Church in other Balkan nations, the Church will likely not experience noticeable growth for many years to come.

POLAND

Geography

AREA: 312,685 square km. Located in Central Europe, Poland borders Russia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Germany, and the Baltic Sea. Flat plains with farmland or temperate forest occupy most the terrain with some mountains in the south. Most areas experience temperate climate marked by cold, wet winters and mild summers with frequent precipitation. Thousands of lakes dot the landscape. Two large rivers, the Oder and Vistula, flow toward the Baltic Sea, with the Vistula traveling through Warsaw. Flooding is a natural hazard. Environmental conditions have improved as a result of declining heavy industry after the fall of communism, but persistent environmental issues include air pollution, acid rain, water pollution, and the proper disposal of hazardous waste. Poland is divided into sixteen administrative provinces.

Peoples

Polish: 96.7%
German: 0.4%
Belarusian: 0.1%
Ukrainian: 0.1%
Other/unspecified: 2.7%

The population is highly homogenous. Non-Polish ethnic groups like Germans and Belarusians tend to reside in border regions or in the largest cities. Other and unspecified ethnicities include immigrants from Asia and Eastern Europe.

Population: 38,415,284 (July 2012)
Annual Growth Rate: -0.075% (2012)
Fertility Rate: 1.31 children born per woman (2012)
Life Expectancy: 72.31 male, 80.43 female (2012)

Languages: Polish (97.8%), other or unspecified (2.2%). Polish is the official language and only language with over one million speakers (37.6 million). German and Belarusian are the most spoken minority languages.
Literacy: 99.8% (2003)

History

Germanic and Slavic tribes populated Poland prior to the establishment of a Polish state, which officially adopted Christianity as the state religion in the tenth century AD. The Jagiellonian dynasty led Poland to its height of power and influence starting in the fourteenth century by forming a union with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Poland began to decline in power over the subsequent centuries and by 1795 was partitioned among Prussia, Russia, and Austria. Poland became an independent state following World War I but was divided between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in World War II. Six million Poles perished in the war, and 2.5 million were relocated to Germany for forced labor. The Jewish population of around three million was reduced to 100,000 due to the organized eradication of the Jews by Nazi Germany. Poland regained independence following the war but came under communist control by 1947. Periods of political instability

and fluctuating economic growth and recession occurred up until the late 1980s when noncommunists took command of the government, leading to democratic elections in 1990.²⁸¹⁴ Economic growth has occurred for many years over the past two decades. Poland became a NATO member in 1999, joined the European Union in 2004, and today is a major power in the region.

Culture

Poland has produced many well-known individuals who have significantly contributed to science, music, and religion, such as Nicolaus Copernicus, Frederick Chopin, and Pope John Paul II. A rich tradition of literature traces its roots from the Middle Ages. Many Polish scientists have contributed to technological advances over the past two centuries. Education is highly valued. Alcohol and cigarette consumption rates rank higher than most nations. The Catholic Church remains a strong influence on society despite over forty years of communist rule and has historically been seen as a defender of the Polish nationality through the many years of foreign occupation and oppression. Poland has one of the most pro-life attitudes toward abortion, as the government bans abortion as a means of birth control.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$20,100 (2011) [41.8% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.813

Corruption Index: 5.5 (2011)

Poland successfully transitioned from a centralized state-controlled economy to a free market economy since the end of communist rule. Growth and development have mirrored that experienced by many other post-communist states in Central Europe and the Baltic States. Some obstacles continue to slow economic growth, such as outdated transportation infrastructure and some government controls, labor regulations, and taxes. Unlike many countries in the region, GDP growth occurred in 2009 despite the global financial crisis. Natural resources include coal, sulfur, copper, natural gas, silver, lead, salt, and amber. Services employ 53.5% of the labor force and generate 67% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 29% of the workforce and generates 28% of the GDP. Primary industries include machine building, iron and steel, coal mining, shipbuilding, textiles, food processing, and glass. Agriculture employs 17.5% of the workforce and accounts for 5% of the GDP. Potatoes, fruits, vegetables, wheat, eggs, poultry, dairy, and pork are common agricultural products. Primary trade partners include Germany, Italy, and France.

Corruption is perceived as a major issue that has detracted foreign investment and has limited economic growth. The government established an anti-corruption central office, which has seen some positive results. Economic freedoms and regulations have assisted in recent economic growth.²⁸¹⁵

Faiths

Christian: 91.4%

Other: 0.3%

Unspecified: 8.3%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Roman Catholics 33,699,264

²⁸¹⁴ "Background Note: Poland," Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs," 30 June 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2875.htm>

²⁸¹⁵ "Poland," 2010 Index of Economic Freedom, retrieved 5 October 2010. <http://www.heritage.org/index/country/Poland>

Polish Orthodox 504,150
 Jehovah's Witnesses 126,196 1,814
 Lutherans 77,500
 Greek Catholics 53,000
 Old Catholic Mariavits 23,568
 Pentecostals 21,303
 Polish Catholics 18,804
 Seventh Day Adventists 5,781 118
 New Apostolic Church 4,853
 Baptists 4,818
 Methodists 4,481
 Reformed Lutherans 3,510
 Church of Christ 2,425
 Catholic Mariavits 2,153
 Latter-day Saints 1,780 15

Religion

Poland has one of the most religiously active populations among member nations of the European Union, as 75% of nominal Catholics are practicing. Some estimates indicate that as many as 94% of the population identifies as Catholic. Traditional Christian minority groups like Orthodox Christians are among the largest non-Catholic groups. Jehovah's Witnesses constitute the dominant proselytizing Protestant group. Many Protestant Christian groups operate and have comparatively few members. Jews and Muslims together number fewer than 75,000.²⁸¹⁶

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. The government permits religious groups to organize, train clergy, publish literature, and assemble. Foreign missionaries may enter and proselyte without government restrictions. Religious groups are not required to register with the Ministry of the Interior, but registered religious groups receive reduced taxes and other economic benefits. To register, a religious group must have over one hundred members. There have been some recent instances of societal abuses of religious freedom, but civic leaders contributed to establishing greater understanding and tolerance of differing religious traditions. Anti-Semitic attitudes are present in some areas of society.²⁸¹⁷

Largest Cities

Urban: 61%

Warsaw, Krakow, Lodz, Wroclaw, Poznan, Gdansk, Szczecin, Bydgoszcz, Lublin, Katowice, Bialystok, Gdynia, Czestochowa, Radom, Sosnowiec, Torun, Kielce, Gliwice, Zabrze, Bytom, Olsztyn, Bielsko-Biala, Rzeszow, Ruda Slaska, Rybnik, Tychy, Dabrowa Gornicza, Plock, Elblag, Opole, Gorzow Wielkopolski, Walbrzych, Wloclawek, Zielona Gora, Tarnow, Chorzów, Koszalin, Kalisz, Legnica.

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Twelve of the thirty-nine cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of the national population resides in the thirty-nine largest cities.

²⁸¹⁶ "Poland," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127330.htm>

²⁸¹⁷ "Poland," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127330.htm>

LDS History

LDS missionaries first established the Church on the territory of modern-day Poland in 1892. The Wroclaw Branch was organized in 1909 and divided into three congregations by 1921. The city was known as Breslau at the time and was the sixth largest city in the German Empire. Zelwagi, located in East Prussia, became another church center and had a small community of Latter-day Saints who endured World War II. Most members were ethnic Germans; these territories were annexed to Poland following the war.

The Church officially registered with the Polish government in 1961, but by 1971 the last operating LDS branch was discontinued due to the heavy emigration of members. Several Poles joined the Church in Germany and returned to Poland in the late 1970s, helping to reestablish the Church.²⁸¹⁸ LDS Church President Spencer W. Kimball dedicated Poland for missionary work in 1977. Senior missionary couples began serving in 1977, and the first young missionaries were assigned in 1988.²⁸¹⁹ The Church broke ground on the first LDS meetinghouse in mid-1989.²⁸²⁰ Missionary work occurred under the Austria Vienna East Mission prior to 1990.²⁸²¹ In 1990, the Church created the Poland Warsaw Mission.²⁸²²

Seminary and institute began in 1995. The mission president and a Polish Latter-day Saint who was a member of the Church's National Public Affairs Council met with the first lady in 2000.²⁸²³ Poland was assigned to the Europe Central Area in 2000²⁸²⁴ and in the late 2000s was transferred to the Europe Area. In 2007, the Church participated in the World Congress of Families convention in which Elder Bruce C. Haven of the Seventy spoke, and full-time missionaries conducted proselytism activity.²⁸²⁵

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 1,780 (2012)

Two hundred thirty converts were baptized from 1985 to 1990.²⁸²⁶ Membership more than doubled in less than two years in the late 1980s and early 1990s from less than 100 to over 200 in four cities.²⁸²⁷ There were 500 members by year-end 1993, increasing to 900 by year-end 1997. There were approximately sixty convert baptisms in 1999. Membership stood at 1,173 at year-end 2000.

Membership grew slowly in the 2000s, reaching 1,385 in 2003, 1,525 in 2006, and 1,552 in 2008. Annual membership growth rates ranged from 3% to 7% between 2001 and 2005 but declined to -0.4% to 1.6%

²⁸¹⁸ "Poland," Country Profile, retrieved 6 October 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/poland>

²⁸¹⁹ "Eight new missions announced," LDS Church News, 3 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19805/Eight-new-missions-announced.html>

²⁸²⁰ "'Happy day' for Poland: ground broken for first meetinghouse in land," LDS Church News, 1 July 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18841/Happy-day-for-Poland-ground-broken-for-first-meetinghouse-in-land.html>

²⁸²¹ "'Happy day' for Poland: ground broken for first meetinghouse in land," LDS Church News, 1 July 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18841/Happy-day-for-Poland-ground-broken-for-first-meetinghouse-in-land.html>

²⁸²² "Eight new missions announced," LDS Church News, 3 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19805/Eight-new-missions-announced.html>

²⁸²³ "Leaders visit Poland's first lady," LDS Church News, 1 April 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37419/Leaders-visit-Polands-first-lady.html>

²⁸²⁴ Lloyd, Scott. "European continent realigned into three new areas," LDS Church News, 16 September 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38475/European-continent---realigned-into-three-new-areas.html>

²⁸²⁵ Fidel, Steve. "Missionaries in Warsaw welcome visitors, media," LDS Church News, 26 May 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50627/Missionaries-in-Warsaw-welcome-visitors-media.html>

²⁸²⁶ Stahle, Shaun D. "Proclaiming the gospel: Witness to events that reshaped Poland," LDS Church News, 10 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39451/Proclaiming-the-gospel-Witness-to-events-that-reshaped-Poland.html>

²⁸²⁷ Lloyd, R. Scott. "Polish convert answers mission call," LDS Church News, 29 September 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20484/Polish-convert-answers-mission-call.html>

for years between 2006 and 2008. Annual membership growth rates rebounded in 2009 to 4.5% due to an increase of seventy members.

There were forty-two convert baptisms in 2007, almost twice as many from the year before. By mid-September 2008, there had been thirty-five convert baptisms for 2008. There are very few Polish Latter-day Saint families. In 2005, the Warsaw Poland District President stated that 60 to 70% of the 500 members in the district were single.²⁸²⁸ In 2009, one in 23,726 was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 0 Branches: 14 Groups: 1 (April 2013)

At the end of 1991, there were five branches. In 2000, there were eighteen branches, and in mid-2001, there were seventeen branches and five groups.²⁸²⁹ The number of branches declined to thirteen in 2002 and twelve in 2003. In 2002, the Church created the first district in Poland, the Warsaw Poland District, which consisted of four branches.²⁸³⁰ In 2009, the number of branches increased to thirteen as a result of the creation of the Szczecin Branch. In the early 2010s, the Kielce Group became a branch. A group also functions in Zgorzelec.

Missionaries were assigned to additional cities in the mid to late 2000s, including Szczecin, Zgorzelec, Kielce, Zamosc, and Torun. In late 2010, missionaries were no longer assigned to a few of these cities, such as Torun.

Activity and Retention

There were four active members in 1985.²⁸³¹ 200 attended the groundbreaking of the first LDS meetinghouse in 1989, many of which were government officials and invited non-LDS guests.²⁸³² 400 attended the dedication of the meetinghouse in 1991.²⁸³³ Twenty-one young adults, including seven Polish returned missionaries, attended the first institute class in 1995.²⁸³⁴ In 2000, thirty-seven youth attended a nationwide youth conference in Warsaw.²⁸³⁵ In 2001, 500 members, dignitaries, media representatives, missionaries, and investigators attended a nationwide church conference held in Warsaw. Prior to the conference, sixty converts baptized in the past year met for a special new member meeting.²⁸³⁶

The average number of members per congregation increased from sixty-five in 2000 to 125 in 2009. Thirty-eight were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year. In mid-2008, there were forty active members in Lodz. In mid-2009, one of the Warsaw branches had fewer than forty active members and the group in Kielce had fewer than ten active members. In 2010, there were fewer than twenty active members

²⁸²⁸ Searle, Don L. "In Poland: A Single Purpose," *Ensign*, Oct 2005, 54–59.

²⁸²⁹ "Large gathering of members rejoice at conference in Poland," *LDS Church News*, 7 July 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40144/Large-gathering-of-members-rejoice-at-conference-in-Poland.html>

²⁸³⁰ "First district created in Poland," *LDS Church News*, 25 May 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41851/First-district-created-in-Poland.html>

²⁸³¹ Stahle, Shaun D. "Proclaiming the gospel: Witness to events that reshaped Poland," *LDS Church News*, 10 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39451/Proclaiming-the-gospel-Witness-to-events-that-reshaped-Poland.html>

²⁸³² "'Happy day' for Poland: ground broken for first meetinghouse in land," *LDS Church News*, 1 July 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18841/Happy-day-for-Poland-ground-broken-for-first-meetinghouse-in-land.html>

²⁸³³ "Poland," *Country Profile*, retrieved 6 October 2010. <http://beta-newsroom.lds.org/country/poland>

²⁸³⁴ "From around the world," *LDS Church News*, 11 November 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26550/From-around-the-world.html>

²⁸³⁵ "Testimonies, friendships grow during Polish youth conference," *LDS Church News*, 9 December 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38993/Testimonies-friendships-grow-during-Polish-youth-conference.html>

²⁸³⁶ "Large gathering of members rejoice at conference in Poland," *LDS Church News*, 7 July 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40144/Large-gathering-of-members-rejoice-at-conference-in-Poland.html>

in Gdansk and Lublin. Missionaries reported in the late 2000s that there were no more than 300 active members. Active membership is estimated at 300, or 20% of total church membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Polish, German.

All LDS scriptures and a large number of church materials are translated in Polish and German, including several institute manuals. The *Liahona* magazine has twelve German and four Polish issues a year.

Meetinghouses

There are at least twelve church meetinghouses in Poland. The LDS chapel in Warsaw was the first church-built meetinghouse in Eastern Europe. Most congregations meet in rented spaces or renovated buildings. The Church owns a piece of property in Lodz for a future meetinghouse. Sacrament meeting attendance must be over eighty regularly attending members or investigators in order for the Church to build a chapel in a given area.

Humanitarian and Development Work

In the early 1990s, the Church provided education and development assistance to Polish farmers marketing their products for distribution and sale.²⁸³⁷ In 1999, Latter-day Saints in Germany donated quilts, puppets, clothing, and hygiene items to an orphanage in Krakow.²⁸³⁸ German members sent 250 hygiene kits to Polish orphans in 2004.²⁸³⁹

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

In 1989, Elder Russell M. Nelson reported that Latter-day Saints had a positive relationship with the government at the time.²⁸⁴⁰ There are no restrictions regarding proselytism or holding church meetings. Foreign missionaries serve freely in the country.

Cultural Issues

The strong correlation of Polish identity with Catholicism is a major traditional cultural obstacle for LDS mission outreach. Many are polite to missionaries and church members, but express little interest in learning about the LDS Church. High alcohol and cigarette consumption rates challenge missionary efforts. Polish society and culture exhibit many attributes that fall in line with LDS teachings, but the Church has experienced less church growth compared to surrounding nations with greater social problems and challenges. Many have a background and basic understanding of Christianity and the Bible, which offers a foundation of faith for Latter-day Saints to build upon. The Jehovah's Witness faith has established itself as the dominant alternative to Catholicism. Secularism has a strong hold on most of the nonreligious population. Polish-descendent

²⁸³⁷ "LDS humanitarian efforts help Poland's farmers help selves," LDS Church News, 26 October 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21372/LDS-humanitarian-efforts-help-Polands-farmers-help-selves.html>

²⁸³⁸ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 18 December 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/36940/From-around-the-world.html>

²⁸³⁹ "Combining efforts to help Poland," LDS Church News, 31 January 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45038/Combining-efforts-to-help-Poland.html>

²⁸⁴⁰ "'Happy day' for Poland: ground broken for first meetinghouse in land," LDS Church News, 1 July 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18841/Happy-day-for-Poland-ground-broken-for-first-meetinghouse-in-land.html>

Latter-day Saints in the United States and other countries appear to greatly outnumber total church membership in Poland and have frequently been called to serve as full-time missionaries in Poland. Large numbers of converts with Polish ancestry in other countries indicates that receptivity and potential for growth can be realized once cultural obstacles are overcome. Low numbers of convert baptisms since the opening of the Poland Warsaw Mission in 1990 may be due to the uniqueness of a staunchly Catholic nation subjugated to communist rule for four decades. Most Poles feel that Catholicism offers the essential principles and ordinances of Christianity and see no need to investigate other Christian faiths. Poland's overwhelming ethnic and religious homogeneity following post-World War II boundary changes contributes to cultural challenges. Poland lacks the religious plurality and integration of many other European nations; without such plurality, there is little sentiment that other faiths are culturally acceptable. The situation of mission outreach in Poland is perhaps more similar to that of other highly ethnically and religiously homogenous nations where religion and cultural identity are intertwined, such as Greece and Ireland, than to its more diverse and pluralistic neighbors.

National Outreach

LDS mission outreach centers operate in cities populated by 18% of the national population. There are 180 cities with between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitants that constitute 19% of the national population who are unreached by Latter-day Saints. Twelve of the sixteen administrative provinces have a mission outreach center. Fifteen percent (15%) of the national population resides in the four unreached provinces of Lubuskie, Opolskie, Podkarpackie, and Warmińsko-Mazurskie. No meaningful mission outreach has occurred in rural areas.

The Poland Warsaw Mission greatly increased the scope of national outreach in the 2000s, but limited numbers of full-time missionaries serving worldwide and poor receptivity in newly opened cities resulted in the closure of almost all new cities opened during this period. Small gatherings of members may have church meetings in some of these locations, but none are reported as groups on the Church's Poland website. Due to low receptivity, few local full-time missionaries, modest member involvement in missionary activity, and no increase in the worldwide full-time missionary force since the early 2000s, few if any additional cities appear likely to open to full-time missionaries in the foreseeable future.

The Church maintains an Internet site for Poland at <http://www.mormoni.pl/>. The website offers Polish language church information, including meetinghouse locations and a self-referral system to request a visit from full-time missionaries. Use of the website by full-time missionaries and members can help educate the public regarding Latter-day Saint teachings and beliefs and can be used to extend outreach in lesser-reached areas.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Despite church membership increasing by 50% during the 2000s, there appears to have been no significant increase in the number of active Latter-day Saints. Poland has experienced low convert retention and member activity rates for much of the church's history. Cities that have had a longer church presence tend to have lower member activity rates, as less active members have accumulated over the years. Full-time missionaries report that some members have become offended and refuse to attend church thereafter. Little success has come from member reactivation efforts. Emphasis on seminary and institute attendance may help increase doctrinal understanding of members, reduce the frequency of active members leaving the church, improve member relations, and increase church attendance over time. Emigration continues to be a major challenge, as many active members relocate to Western Europe or elsewhere, searching for better employment and greater opportunities to associate with larger LDS populations.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The highly homogenous Polish Catholic population reduces ethnic integration challenges. However, the lack of ethnic diversity creates cultural challenges for Polish members and prospective converts. There have been no reports of challenges integrating the few non-Polish members into predominantly Polish congregations. One of the Warsaw branches has several non-Polish families.

Language Issues

Nearly the entire population has church materials translated in their native language. Polish and German speakers benefit from a large array of LDS materials in addition to translations of all LDS scriptures in both languages.

Missionary Service

Poland remains almost entirely dependent on foreign missionaries to staff its full-time missionary needs. One of the first senior missionary couples assigned to Poland served for five years from 1985 to 1990.²⁸⁴¹ In mid-1989, ten LDS missionaries served in Poland, including three senior couples.²⁸⁴² The first member from Poland to serve a mission was assigned to the United States in 1989.²⁸⁴³ In late 2008, there were 104 full-time missionaries serving in Poland, none of whom were native members. By late 2010, fewer than seventy full-time missionaries were serving in Poland, and only few local members were serving full-time missions. In late 2010, two recent Polish-American converts fluent in Polish began serving in the Poland Warsaw Mission.

Leadership

Poland has developed local priesthood leadership in many areas despite limited numbers of church members. A nationwide church conference in 2001 had one hundred priesthood holders in attendance.²⁸⁴⁴ Self-sufficiency of local leadership has led to the establishment of two districts in the 2000s in Warsaw and Katowice. Most branches have a Polish branch president, but many have full-time missionaries serving as counselors due to the small number of active male members.

Temple

Poland is assigned to the Freiberg Germany Temple district. Temple trips occur frequently and are within the budget of most members. Regular temple excursions in the mid-2000s would accommodate sixty members. Temple trips have in the past been well attended.²⁸⁴⁵ Prospects for a closer temple appear unlikely for the foreseeable future.

Comparative Growth

Poland has one of the lowest percentages of Latter-day Saints in the general population among European nations with an official church presence and has consistently ranked among the lowest baptizing missions

²⁸⁴¹ Stahle, Shaun D. "Proclaiming the gospel: Witness to events that reshaped Poland," LDS Church News, 10 March 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39451/Proclaiming-the-gospel-Witness-to-events-that-reshaped-Poland.html>

²⁸⁴² "'Happy day' for Poland: ground broken for first meetinghouse in land," LDS Church News, 1 July 1989. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/18841/Happy-day-for-Poland-ground-broken-for-first-meetinghouse-in-land.html>

²⁸⁴³ Lloyd, R. Scott. "Polish convert answers mission call," LDS Church News, 29 September 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20484/Polish-convert-answers-mission-call.html>

²⁸⁴⁴ "Large gathering of members rejoice at conference in Poland," LDS Church News, 7 July 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40144/Large-gathering-of-members-rejoice-at-conference-in-Poland.html>

²⁸⁴⁵ Searle, Don L. "In Poland: A Single Purpose," Ensign, Oct 2005, 54-59.

worldwide. Other former communist nations have experienced greater membership growth and broader mission outreach. Ukraine has a population 19% larger than Poland, but has over six times as many Latter-day Saints. Poland exhibits one of the lowest percentages of members enrolled in seminary or institute worldwide at 2%.

Jehovah's Witnesses have experienced tremendous growth in Poland over the years and are the largest nontraditional Christian denomination, as one in 300 is a Witness. Witnesses established a strong membership base and had gained tens of thousands of converts prior to the fall of communism due to illegal proselytism. Moderate membership growth for Witnesses continues. No noticeable growth has occurred for Seventh Day Adventists over the past decade, as membership has remained stagnant even though around 150 converts join the church per year.

Future Prospects

Although Poland would seem to offer some of the greatest church growth potential for Latter-day Saints among former-communist Europe due to its large religious population and many societal attitudes that complement LDS teachings, receptivity has been consistently low. Latter-day Saint mission planners and area leaders allocated over one hundred full-time missionaries for many years in hopes of a greater response from the general population to the Church, yet there has been little response from native Poles. The number of convert baptisms appears to have remained fairly constant despite a significant reduction in the number of full-time missionaries assigned to Poland, indicating increased efficiency or limited impact of foreign missionaries. Success among other missionary-oriented Christian groups like Jehovah's Witnesses demonstrates that church growth potential exists despite challenging social conditions for non-Catholic groups to conduct missionary work. Long-term stability and greater LDS Church growth will hinge upon the growth of active membership in cities with established mission outreach centers and the increase in the number of youth who join the church, serve full-time missions, and remain in their home country actively serving in the church.

ROMANIA

Geography

AREA: 238,391 square km. Romania is located in Eastern Europe and borders Ukraine, Moldova, Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, and the Black Sea. Mountainous terrain occupies central and northern areas, which include the Carpathian Mountains and Transylvanian Alps. Fertile plains run along the eastern and western borders and dominate the southeast. Most areas experience temperate climate with snowy, cold winters and warm summers with regular participation. The Danube River forms portions of the Serbian, Bulgarian, and Ukrainian borders and empties into the Black Sea in eastern Romania. Earthquakes and landslides are natural hazards. Environmental issues include erosion, declining soil quality, air pollution, and damage to wetland areas from water pollution. Romania is administratively divided into forty-one counties and one municipality.

Peoples

Romanian: 89.5%
Hungarian: 6.6%
Roma: 2.5%
Ukrainian: 0.3%
German: 0.3%
Russian: 0.2%
Turkish: 0.2%
Other: 0.4%

Population: 22,848,504 (July 2012)
Annual Growth Rate: -0.26% (2012)
Fertility Rate: 1.3 children born per woman (2012)
Life Expectancy: 70.75 male, 77.89 female (2012)

Languages: Romanian (91%), Hungarian (6.7%), Roma (1.1%), other (1.2%). Romanian is the official language. Languages with over one million speakers include Romanian (19.7 million) and Hungarian (1.45 million).

Literacy: 97.3% (2002)

History

The Dacians inhabited Romania—then known as Dacia—before the birth of Christ. In the first century, the Romans conquered Dacia and established a province that was incorporated in their empire for several centuries. Invasions from Goths and other native peoples drove the Romans out by the late third century. During the Middle Ages, various ethnic groups settled or controlled the region, including Avars, Bulgars, Cumans, Huns, and Slavs. Transylvania—currently in northwestern Romania—emerged as a state in the eleventh century and was under rule of the Hungarian Empire. Wallachia—southern areas of Romania—unified in the fourteenth century and came under Ottoman rule in the fifteenth century. Moldavia became a political entity in the fourteenth century and received strong political influences from Russia, Poland and other neighboring powers. Moldavia and Wallachia unified in the mid-nineteenth century as Romania and independence

was recognized by 1878. Romania fought alongside the Allied Powers in World War I and gained additional territory following the conflict, such as Transylvania. In World War II, Romania joined the Axis Powers and came under Soviet rule in 1944. The Soviets established a communist government that lasted until 1989. Dictator Nicolae Ceausescu ruled for several decades and was known for his oppressive reign and police raids in the 1980s. In 1989, Ceausescu was overthrown and executed. During the 1990s and 2000s, relations with Central and Western Europe strengthened. Romania joined NATO in 2004 and the European Union in 2007.

Culture

Poverty, social attitudes, and political influences contributed to the increase of children in Romanian orphanages to over 200,000 in the early 1990s.²⁸⁴⁶ The Romanian Orthodox Church serves as a powerful cultural influence and symbol of national identity. Many Romanians are excellent cooks. Cuisine borrows from many surrounding nations and commonly includes sausage, stuffed vegetables, marmaliga (cornmeal pudding), potatoes, and bread. Alcohol and cigarette consumption rates rank higher than most nations. Abortion is culturally accepted and commonplace.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$12,300 (2011) [25.6% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.781

Corruption Index: 3.6 (2011)

Romania faced many challenges adopting a free-market capitalist system following the fall of communism, due to outdated and inadequate national infrastructure to meet the population's needs. Widespread poverty and bureaucracy have limited economic growth and development. Romania only recently joined the European Union and has yet to make many economic transitions, such as the adoption of the Euro currency. Services employ 47% of the workforce and produce 53% of the GDP, whereas agriculture employs 30% of the workforce and produces 12% of the GDP. Primary crops include wheat, corn, sugar beets, barley, and sunflower seed. Industry accounts for 35% of the GDP, employs 23% of the workforce, and primarily consists of machinery, equipment, textiles, mining, and food processing. Primary trade partners include Germany, Italy, France, and Hungary.

Corruption in Romania is perceived as being more widespread than in most other European Union member nations. Many allege that the government has not done enough to fight corruption. Investigating higher ranking government officials on corruption charges has been difficult due to laws and legal protection offered by the judicial system. Many Romanians report regularly paying bribes. Widespread perceived corruption has reduced foreign investment and limited economic development.

Faiths

Christian: 99%

Other: 1%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Romanian Orthodox 19,253,357

Catholic 1,042,520

Seventh Day Adventists 67,182 1,093

²⁸⁴⁶ Gaunt, LaRene Porter. "The Church in Romania," *Ensign*, Jun 2001, 30.

Jehovah's Witnesses 39,953 535

Latter-day Saints 3,002 19

Religion

Most Romanians affiliate with the Romanian Orthodox Church. The largest Christian minority groups are Roman Catholics and Greek Catholics. Catholics and Protestants are concentrated in Transylvania and primarily consist of ethnic Hungarians. Although 99% of the population identify with a Christian denomination, a 2007 poll reported that only 31% attend religious meetings at least several times a month.²⁸⁴⁷

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, but the government restricts some aspects of religious practice. There is no state religion, although the Romanian Orthodox Church has a strong influence on government and religious affairs. The Romanian Orthodox Church has exacerbated intolerance towards non-Orthodox Christian churches by criticizing the proselytism by other religious groups and influencing the legislation of new rigorous recognition requirements for minority religious groups. Controversy continues over the Romanian Orthodox Church's refusal to return many Greek Catholic churches it received in 1948 to current Greek Catholics.

To register, a religious group must have over 300 adult members. To obtain religion status—which entitles religious groups to receive tax-exempt status, broadcast religious programming, establish schools, receive government funding, and teach religious material in public schools with adherents—religious groups must be registered as religious associations, have had at least twelve years of a continuous presence in Romania, and constitute at least 0.1% of the population (about 22,000). There are eighteen recognized religious groups with religion status. Proselytism is permitted but is sometimes disrupted by local government officials. Religious groups that have recently arrived, engage in active proselytism, or are concentrated among ethnic minorities experience the greatest societal discrimination.²⁸⁴⁸

Largest Cities

Urban: 54%

Bucharest, Iasi, Cluj-Napoca, Timisoara, Craiova, Constanta, Galati, Brasov, Ploiesti, **Braila**, Oradea, Bacau, Arad, Pitesti, Sibiu, **Târgu-Mures**, **Baia Mare**, **Buzau**, **Botosani**, **Satu Mare**, **Râmnicu Vâlcea**, **Suceava**, **Focsani**, **Piatra Neamt**, **Drobeta-Turnu Severin**.

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregation.

Fourteen of the twenty-five cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation or missionaries assigned. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of the national population resides in the twenty-five largest cities.

LDS History

At the close of the nineteenth century, LDS missionary Mischa Markow preached in several Eastern and Central European nations. Several joined the Church, and a congregation was organized in Bucharest. Mischa Markow traveled to additional cities, such as Brasov, where members met for several decades following his initial proselytism efforts. Between 1903 and 1933, Brasov had thirty convert baptisms, and forty-eight

²⁸⁴⁷ "Romania," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127332.htm>

²⁸⁴⁸ "Romania," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127332.htm>

missionaries served in the city.²⁸⁴⁹ However, war and political instability resulted in little Church influence in the area for the following six decades. Most of the original members emigrated to the West or had passed away by the mid-1970s.²⁸⁵⁰

Elder Russell M. Nelson dedicated Romania for missionary work in February 1990.²⁸⁵¹ Although humanitarian missionaries had already been serving in the country under the Austria Vienna East Mission,²⁸⁵² the first proselytizing missionaries arrived in December 1990. In 1991, the Hungary Budapest Mission began administering Romania, and the first convert baptisms since the fall of communism occurred. The Church obtained missionary visas and gained legal standing through the Liahona Association that was registered with the government in 1993. The same year, the Church organized the Romania Bucharest Mission, which also administers church work in neighboring Moldova. Seminary and church institute classes began in 1996. The first Romanian Book of Mormon translations arrived in 1998.²⁸⁵³ Romania became part of the Europe East Area in 2000. The first young women camp was held in 2009.²⁸⁵⁴ In early 2010, two missionaries died by natural gas asphyxiation in their apartment while sleeping.²⁸⁵⁵ In 2010, only around six Romanian members had received their Patriarchal blessings, as there are no patriarchs in the country because no stakes were organized.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 3,002 (2012)

Membership growth accelerated in the 1990s. In 1991, there were fifty convert baptisms. At the end of 1993, there were 300 members. Membership doubled to 600 two years later. By year-end 1997, there were 1,100 members, and in 2000, membership reached 1,770. Covert baptisms ranged from 132 to 206 per year between 1993 and 1998. Membership continued to increase to 2,196 in 2003, 2,623 in 2006, and 2,736 in 2008. Annual membership growth rates fell from 12% in 2001 to 5%–8% in the mid-2000s and to 2%–3% since 2007. Since 2007, about one hundred new members have joined the Church annually.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 18 Groups: 1 (2012)

The Church organized its first branch in modern times in 1991 in Bucharest. The branch split the following year. Two districts operated in Bucharest by 1995 but were consolidated in 1998. Ploiesti became the second city with a branch in 1993.²⁸⁵⁶ Many cities opened for missionary work and had branches organized in the mid- to late 1990s, including Arad, Bacau, Brasov, Cluj-Napoca, Constanta, Iasi, Oradea, Pitesti, Sibiu, and Timisoara. A district was organized in Ploiesti in 1999, which in 2001 administered four branches (Brasov, Pitesti, Ploiesti, and Leogane).

In 2001, six branches functioned in Bucharest, each with a native branch president, which together formed the district.²⁸⁵⁷ However by 2009, only two branches remained in Bucharest—the Mihai Bravu and Panduri

²⁸⁴⁹ Gaunt, LaRene Porter. "The Church in Romania," *Ensign*, Jun 2001, 30.

²⁸⁵⁰ Neuenschwander, Dennis B. "Reflections on Establishing the Gospel in Eastern Europe," *Liahona*, Oct 1998, 38

²⁸⁵¹ Gaunt, LaRene Porter. "The Church in Romania," *Ensign*, Jun 2001, 30.

²⁸⁵² "Romania," *Country Profiles*, retrieved 16 July 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/romania>

²⁸⁵³ Gaunt, LaRene Porter. "The Church in Romania," *Ensign*, Jun 2001, 30.

²⁸⁵⁴ "Around the Church," *Liahona*, Jan 2010, 77–78.

²⁸⁵⁵ Holman, Marianne. "Two missionaries die in Romania," *LDS Church News*, 2 February 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/58738/Two-missionaries-die-in-Romania.html>

²⁸⁵⁶ "Romania," *Deseret News 2010 Church Almanac*, p. 562–563.

²⁸⁵⁷ Gaunt, LaRene Porter. "The Church in Romania," *Ensign*, Jun 2001, 30.

Branches. During the 2000s, four cities opened to missionary work: Deva, Galati, Alexandria, and Craiova. In 2009, the Church created the Arad Romania District, which included branches in Arad, Deva, Oradea, and Timisoara and consolidated the Ploiesti Romania District with the district in Bucharest for a total of six branches in Alexandria, Bucharest, Brasov, Pitesti, and Ploiesti.

In 2010, all cities opened to missionary work had a branch organized except for Craiova, where members met as a group. In 2011, a branch was organized in Craiova. In 2012, a group was organized in the town of Feldioara.

Activity and Retention

In 2000, seventy youth gathered for the first youth conference since the organization of the Romania Bucharest Mission.²⁸⁵⁸ Eighty-one were enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2008–2009 school year. In 2000, 200 attended skits about different Book of Mormon stories from six branches in the Bucharest Romania District.²⁸⁵⁹ A young single adult conference in Bucharest had sixty-five in attendance in 2001.²⁸⁶⁰

In mid-2010, the Constanta Branch had around twenty attending church meetings. Many branches have fewer than fifty active members. The two branches in Bucharest appear to have the most active members, with the Mihai Bravu Branch having over one hundred active members. Nationwide active membership is estimated at about 800, or 30% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Romanian, Russian, Ukrainian, German, Bulgarian, Serbian, Turkish.

All LDS scriptures are available in Romanian, Russian, Ukrainian, German, and Bulgarian. Only the Book of Mormon is translated in Serbian and Turkish. Most Church materials are available in German. Romanian, Serbian, and Turkish translations of some family history, missionary, primary, young men, priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, unit, and temple materials are available. A greater number of materials for these organizations are available in Russian and Ukrainian. The *Liahona* has four issues a year in Romanian and Bulgarian and twelve in German, Russian and Ukrainian. Bulgarian, Russian, and Ukrainian have several audio/visual materials and CES student manuals translated.

Meetinghouses

The Church has constructed only a couple meetinghouses. Most congregations meet in rented spaces or renovated buildings.

Humanitarian and Development Work

In 1990, Church members in Europe quickly answered the call for aid and assistance to Romania's disadvantaged by organizing teams of medical professionals composed of members from several nations. Needed supplies were also donated that were funded by member donations.²⁸⁶¹ That same year members in California

²⁸⁵⁸ "Historic Romanian youth conference strengthens testimonies, friendships," LDS Church News, 12 August 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38282/Historic-Romanian-youth-conference-strengthens-testimonies-friendships.html>

²⁸⁵⁹ "Romanian members present night of 'Placile Pierdute,'" LDS Church News, 19 August 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38304/Romanian-members-present-night-of-Placile-Pierdute.html>

²⁸⁶⁰ "Conference is 'ray of light' in Bucharest," LDS Church News, 10 February 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39310/Conference-is-ray-of-light-in-Bucharest.html>

²⁸⁶¹ Avant, Gerry. "LDS humanitarian relief in Romania," LDS Church News, 18 August 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19901/LDS-humanitarian-relief-in-Romania.html>

sent quilts to needy orphanages in Romania.²⁸⁶² In 1991, BYU held a book drive that donated 40,000 books to the Central University Library in Bucharest.²⁸⁶³ Humanitarian missionaries provided valuable service to handicapped children, helping the Romanian public better accept disabled children.²⁸⁶⁴ Assistance to orphanages continued in the 2000s, and there was an increase in specialized development projects. In 2000, members in Washington state sent bedding materials to an orphanage in Iasi, Romania.²⁸⁶⁵ In 2003, the Church assisted the disabled by coordinating with members and local medical professionals fitting and allocating prosthetic devices.²⁸⁶⁶ The Church offered humanitarian assistance following severe flooding along the Danube River in 2006.²⁸⁶⁷ In 2010, the Church donated Braille writers to a school for blind children.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church has maintained positive relations with the national government and enjoys full religious freedom. The Church does not have religion status as nominal membership is only one-tenth of the number needed to qualify. The Church has experienced challenges renewing missionary visas and has faced societal and local government opposition to proselytism in many locations. In 2008, customs officials delayed the shipment of religious materials by a month. There have been many instances of society, local government, and some Romanian Orthodox Church officials harassing and discriminating against Latter-day Saints but these instances have become less frequent recently. In 2006, a religious textbook published by the Ministry of Education depicted the LDS Church and other recently arrived religious groups as a threat to society.²⁸⁶⁸

Cultural Issues

Anxiety and suspicion of recently arrived nontraditional religious groups creates a cultural barrier to LDS missionary efforts. Most Christians do not actively participate in their faith. The Romanian Orthodox Church has created major cultural obstacles for the LDS Church to overcome in proselytism. Those seeking to join the Church who have participated in an abortion must be interviewed by a member of the mission presidency to be considered for baptism. Converts who have not completely ended smoking or drinking habits before baptism experience poor retention.

National Outreach

The Church has made noticeable progress increasing national outreach over the past fifteen years but has seen a reduction in mission outreach capabilities in Bucharest as congregations have consolidated. Twenty-three percent (23%) of the national population resides in a city with a mission outreach center. Six percent (6%) of Romania's population lives in cities with over 100,000 inhabitants without a mission outreach center. This

²⁸⁶² Sheffield, Sheridan R. "Members share warmth with children," LDS Church News, 11 August 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19667/Members-share-warmth-with-children.html>

²⁸⁶³ "Y. books to go to literature-starved Romania," LDS Church News, 30 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20830/Y-books-to-go-to-literature-starved-Romania.html>

²⁸⁶⁴ Thygerson, Vaunene. "Missionaries perform humanitarian service," LDS Church News, 7 December 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20845/Missionaries-perform-humanitarian-service.html>

²⁸⁶⁵ "Youth help Romanian orphans," LDS Church News, 27 May 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37867/Youth-help-Romanian-orphans.html>

²⁸⁶⁶ Stahle, Shaun D. "'Big needs' eased with artificial limbs," LDS Church News, 29 November 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44752/Big-needs-eased-with-artificial-limbs.html>

²⁸⁶⁷ Stahle, Shaun D. "Romanian refugees aided by missionaries," LDS Church News, 13 May 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48943/Romanian-refugees-aided-by-missionaries.html>

²⁸⁶⁸ "Romania," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127332.htm>

subset of the population may be most likely to receive future mission outreach. Fifteen of the forty-one administrative counties (37%) have a mission outreach center. There are over 180 cities with between 10,000 and 100,000 inhabitants without mission outreach that account for 20% of the national population. Romania's large rural population will likely remain almost totally unreached for many more decades, as limited mission resources cannot fully administer larger population centers.

Romania's large population and small, needy LDS membership spread throughout the country has posed a daunting task for mission leaders to staff current mission outreach centers while simultaneously opening new ones. Distance and a lack of members in northern Romania have prevented the opening of any cities in this region. Northern Romania alone has ten counties that have no mission outreach centers and is where the most populous unreached cities are concentrated. Locating any members or past investigators who reside in this region, holding cottage meetings with these individuals, distributing Church literature, and performing humanitarian activities may help improve the prospects of establishing additional permanent mission outreach centers.

The Church maintains an Internet site for Romania at <http://www.mormonii.ro/>. The website provides doctrinal information, meetinghouse locations, local news, and mission contact information in Romanian. Use of the website in street contacting and proselytism initiatives can help interested individuals learn about the Church and make contact with missionaries.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

In 1998, the two districts functioning in Bucharest were consolidated partially in preparation for a future stake. However, low member activity and convert retention rates together with lower than expected membership growth rates make the organization of a stake in Romania unlikely for the foreseeable future. Member activity rates may be the lowest in the Bucharest area, as the six branches originally functioning in the city were consolidated into just two. These branches are likely considerably larger than any of the original six Bucharest branches, but many members were lost to inactivity before consolidation, and the increased distances and travel times have contributed to further attrition. Additional factors in low convert retention and member activity rates include quick baptisms tactics of full-time missionaries, limited social support infrastructure in smaller branches, and societal pressures marginalizing Latter-day Saints. Reactivation efforts through specific congregation-sponsored activities focusing on the age and needs of less active or inactive members may stabilize member activity over time, although dramatic improvements are unlikely. Full-time missionaries report that they help fellowship and teach less active members, especially in Bucharest. Coordinated mission efforts with seminary and institute may be effective means to increase social cohesion, doctrinal understanding, and strengthen member testimonies.

Branches in northwestern Romania appear to have made some of the greatest progress improving growth, convert retention, and member activity as several congregations have experienced increases in active membership.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Romanians constitute the bulk of membership, and most areas have little ethnic diversity. Hungarians primarily reside in counties near the Hungarian border, and other ethnic groups tend to populate border areas with their receptive ethnic homelands. As many non-Romanians live in remote, distant areas, the Church has encountered few opportunities to conduct missionary work among them, as there are few or no nearby mission outreach centers. Hungarians are most likely to receive mission outreach in the northwest but face challenges initially integrating into congregations of Romanians due to past ethnic conflicts. There are some

ethnic Hungarian Latter-day Saints in Oradea, Timisoara, and Brasov. Missionaries have had some interaction with Roma in several areas but no concentrated mission outreach efforts have occurred.

Language Issues

Romania experiences few language issues, as 91% of the population speaks Romanian as a first language. The remaining 9% of the population has received little LDS missionary outreach, as missionaries serving in Romania do not teach or learn Hungarian or other commonly spoken minority languages. Ample Church literature is available in the first language of 98% of the population, but non-Romanian materials appear to be largely unused in everyday proselytism.

Missionary Service

In 2000, only seven Romanians had served full-time missions, and eleven were currently serving missions. Eighty missionaries served in the Romania Bucharest Mission in late 2009. Romania relies heavily on foreign missionaries to staff its missionary force. Few youth converts, low birth rates in the few LDS families, and low convert retention have limited the native missionary force.

Leadership

Although leadership capabilities in Bucharest appear to have made little, if any, progress over the past decade, local leadership in many other cities has strengthened. Greater self-reliance and leadership development in northwestern Romania likely contributed to the Church organizing the Arad Romania District in 2009. The Iasi Branch was included in the Chisinau Moldova District when it was organized in 2009 and likely provided needed leadership and assistance to Moldovan members. Only a few of Romania's sixteen branches had missionaries serving as the branch president in 2010 but most likely have missionaries serving in support roles due to the small number of active priesthood holders.

Temple

Romania pertains to the Freiburg Germany temple District. In the early 2000s, members typically traveled thirty-six hours by bus to the Freiburg Germany Temple twice a year.²⁸⁶⁹ Temple trips continue to occur regularly and require long-term planning and sacrifice in time and money for members who participate. Romania will likely become part of the Ukraine Kyiv Temple district once the temple is completed in 2010. Prospects for a closer temple are not likely in the foreseeable future.

Comparative Growth

Romania has achieved some of the steadiest growth in convert baptisms and membership among Eastern European nations since 1990. Although annual membership growth rates slowed to 2% over the past few years, Romania consistently baptizes around one hundred converts per year. Other nations in Eastern Europe, such as Ukraine, Bulgaria, Poland, and Russia, experienced rapid membership growth in the early 1990s, which declined in the late 1990s and early 2000s and nearly stagnated in the late 2000s. Many of these nations have even experienced a decline in active membership during some years. Member activity rates in Romania compare to other nearby nations, but the percentage of members in the population remains among the lowest in Europe. Most nearby former communist European nations have a greater national LDS outreach than Romania but are smaller geographically and less populated.

²⁸⁶⁹ Gaunt, LaRene Porter. "The Church in Romania," *Ensign*, Jun 2001, 30.

Non-Orthodox Christians report little to no increases in membership, and many of the larger denominations are in decline. Over the past decade, Seventh Day Adventists have reported declining membership and decreasing numbers of converts, yet the number of congregations remains nearly unchanged. Evangelicals, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Latter-day Saints appear among the few Christian groups that report regular increases in membership, although these groups report large unreached areas of the country.

Future Prospects

Consistent efforts to increase national outreach and regular increases in membership ensure steady church growth in Romania. However, low convert retention and member activity rates leading to stagnation in areas where the Church has been most established, especially in Bucharest, continue to limit prospects for greater long-term growth due to low member activity and convert retention rates in addition to few convert baptisms. Most cities remain highly dependent on full-time foreign missionaries for Church administration and missionary activity, creating challenges for future self-sustaining growth. Limited mission resources and the small number of members living in unreached cities continue to delay the opening of new congregations. The most populous cities in southern Romania, such as Braila, Buzau, Târgu-Mures, Focsani, and Drobeta-Turnu Severin, appear most likely to open for missionary work. Greater long-term growth and progress will likely depend upon achieving higher convert retention and member activity, especially among youth, and increasing involvement in both member-missionary and full-time missionary work.

RUSSIA

Geography

AREA: 17,098,242 square km. Spanning North Asia and much of Eastern Europe, Russia is the world's largest country and borders China, North Korea, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, and Norway. Russia includes one exclave, the small oblast of Kaliningrad (formerly the East Prussian region of Königsberg) on the Baltic Sea. As a result of its sheer geographic size, Russia experiences a myriad of climates and terrains. The remote Arctic Ocean coastline experiences arctic conditions. Several large islands in the Arctic Ocean are under Russian control, such as Novaya Zemlya ("New Land") and Novosibirskiye Ostrova ("New Siberian Islands"). Siberia accounts for a large portion of Russian territory and consists primarily of tundra, boreal forest, plains, and mountain ranges that experience subarctic climate. Located in Central Russia, the Ural Mountains divide Russia between Europe and Asia. Western Russia comprises plains and forest subject to temperate climate. Southern Russia consists of semi-arid grasslands known as steppes and highlands or mountainous terrain, such as in the Caucasus and in some border regions of Central Asia. Notable rivers that traverse the landscape include the Don, Volga, Irtysh, Ob, Yenisei, Lena, and Amur. Permafrost, volcanoes, earthquakes, flooding, and forest fires are natural hazards. Environmental issues include pollution, deforestation, soil erosion, and the contamination of soil and groundwater from radioactive waste, pesticides, and other chemicals. Russia is administratively divided into forty-six oblasts, twenty-one republics, nine krais, four autonomous okrugs, two federal cities, and one autonomous oblast.

Peoples

Russian: 79.8%
Tatar: 3.8%
Ukrainian: 2%
Bashkir: 1.2%
Chuvash: 1.1%
Other/unspecified: 12.1%

Russians primary descended from Slavic peoples and populate all inhabited areas of Russia, although approximately two-thirds of the population lives in European Russia. Tatars and Bashkirs are Turkic ethnic groups that primary inhabit central Russia north of the Kazakhstani border. Ukrainians are concentrated in areas bordering Ukraine. The Chuvash are a Turkic ethnic group that populates areas between the Volga Region and Siberia. Remaining peoples are categorized as Turkic, Uralic, Altaic, Caucasian, Paleo-Siberian, and Slavic ethnicities. Ethnic groups with populations over half a million in order of descending population include Russians, Tatars, Ukrainians, Bashkirs, Chuvashes, Chechens, Armenians, Mordvins, Avars, Belarusians, Kazakhs, Udmurts, Azerbaijani, Mongols (Buryats and Kalmyks), Mari, Germans, Kabardians, Ossetians, and Dargins.²⁸⁷⁰

Population: 138,082,178 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: -0.48% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.43 children born per woman (2012)

²⁸⁷⁰ "Demographics of Russia," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 17 March 2011. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Russia

Life Expectancy: 60.11 male, 73.18 female (2012)

Languages: Russian (83.2%), (Tatar (4%), Ukrainian (2%), Chuvash (1.2%), Bashkort (1%), Chechen (1%), Armenian (0.8%), Belarusian (0.6%), Avar (0.5%), other (5.7%). Russian is the official language. One hundred languages are spoken. Languages spoken by over one million speakers include Russian (116 million), Tatar (5.35 million), Ukrainian (2.94 million), Chuvash (1.64 million), Bashkort (1.38 million), Chechen (1.33 million), and Armenian (1.13 million).

Literacy: 99.4% (2002)

History

The first known Russian state was established in 862 in Eastern Europe, which was later superseded by the rise of Kyivan Rus in 962. Based in present-day Ukraine, Kyivan Rus endured as the dominant political power in Eastern Europe until the twelfth century when Mongol invasions weakened the state. Greek Orthodox Christianity spread to eastern Russia in the tenth century and heavily influenced the development of Russian architecture, culture, art, language, and music. The Mongols destroyed the major cities and towns of eastern Russia in the thirteenth century with the exception of Pskov and Novgorod and maintained control until 1480. Moscow rose to political and diplomatic power in the early sixteenth century, and Russian territorial claims pushed eastward through military advances, especially under Ivan IV, or “Ivan the Terrible,” Russia’s first tsar. Stability and relative peace in the young Muscovite state were achieved with the accession of the Romanov Dynasty in 1613. Peter the Great (1689–1725) emerged as a major reformer of the government and society by encouraging modernization and adopting Western-style military force and education system. The Russian capital was relocated from Moscow to St. Petersburg, increasing interaction with Western Europe. Catherine the Great perpetuated expansionist policies and influenced Russia with her love of education, art, and literature. Alexander I defeated Napoleon’s armies and conquered much of the Caucasus. Alexander II emancipated the serfs in 1861 and continued Russian territorial expansion into Central Asia, Siberia, and northeast Asia. In 1905, Russia lost the Russo-Japanese war. Some democratic freedoms and a constitution were granted by Tsar Nicolas II as a result of the Russian Revolution. The rise of the Bolshevik Party under Vladimir Lenin led to the 1917 Revolution and culminated in the removal of Tsar Nicolas II from the throne. Lenin’s Red army gained total control of power over Russia despite war with Poland and gained territory in the Caucasus, Belarus, and Ukraine. In December 1922, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was formed.

Lenin died in 1924 and Josef Stalin became the head of the Soviet government. Stalin ruled with an iron fist until his death in 1953 and initiated wide-reaching economic and agricultural policies of centralization, including collectivization of the population to work on state farming and industrial projects. Tens of millions perished from starvation, forced resettlement, liquidations carried out by the secret police, and as a result of World War II as Nazi Germany invaded western Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. During the Cold War era, the Soviet Union and the United States fought several proxy wars, primarily in Asia, aimed at expanding or protecting their respective ideologies and spheres of influence and stockpiled thousands of nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union fought an unsuccessful war in Afghanistan in the 1980s, weakening the Soviet’s military might and morale. Economic stagnation occurred during the 1970s. In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev instituted economic and political reforms known as *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring). The Communist Party agreed to give up its monopoly on power in February 1990. Independence movements in subsidiary republics and an attempted coup in Moscow in August 1991 precipitated the dissolution of the Soviet Union into fifteen independent republics, the largest and most populous of which was the Russian Federation. Boris Yeltsin was elected president of Russia in 1991 and was nearly overthrown in an armed insurrection headed by parliament in 1993, which was blocked by the military.²⁸⁷¹ Violence in northern Caucasus republics has continued since the early 1990s, primarily in Chechnya and Ingushetia. Notwithstanding the change to a

²⁸⁷¹ “Background Note: Russia,” Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 16 March 2011. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3183.htm>

nominally democratic government in the early 1990s and economic growth for most years, Russia continues to have a poor human rights record and struggles to fully support democratic freedoms and government infrastructure.

Culture

As one of the world's most powerful nations with one of the world's most influential cultures for centuries, Russia has heavily influenced the development of culture throughout Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and, to a lesser extent, the Far East and Western Europe. Music, art, literature, philosophy, sports, science, and architecture are proud Russian traditions. Most are nominally Orthodox Christian, although participation and the power of the Russian Orthodox Church are substantially increased since the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Traditional cuisine consists of vegetables, mushrooms, fish, berries, honey, and grains. Kvass, a drink made from fermented bread, is commonly consumed. Rates of abortion, divorce, cigarette consumption, alcohol consumption, and opiate usage are high.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$16,700 (2011) [34.7% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.755

Corruption Index: 2.4 (2011)

With abundant natural resources and a large population, Russia is the world's largest oil producer, second largest natural gas producer, and the third largest exporter of steel and aluminum. Russia produces the fifth most electricity worldwide and has the largest proven natural gas reserves and the eighth largest proven oil reserves. Additional natural resources include rare earth elements, valuable minerals, coal, fresh water, and timber. The economy has transitioned from an isolated, centrally planned system to an increasingly market-based system integrated into the global economy. Dependence on the export of minerals and fossil fuels has resulted in vulnerability for the Russian economy to oscillate with fluctuations in world prices for these commodities. The global financial crisis in the late 2000s severely affected the economy, with the annual GDP real growth declining by 7.9% in 2009. Long-term economic problems include widespread corruption, a shrinking workforce, an aging population, geographic barriers preventing greater natural resource extraction, and poor economic conditions for smaller companies. Services employ 58% of the workforce and generate 62% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 32% of the workforce and generates 34% of the GDP. Mining, machinery, military defense, shipbuilding, transportation equipment, medical instruments, textiles, and handicrafts are major industries. Agriculture employs 10% of the workforce and generates 4% of the GDP. Common crops include grain, sugar beets, sunflower seed, vegetables, and fruit. Beef and milk are common agricultural products. German, China, the Netherlands, Italy, and Ukraine are the primary trade partners.

Corruption is perceived as widespread and present in all areas of society and government. Human trafficking for the commercial sexual exploitation of women and children and the forced labor of men and women is an ongoing concern that targets rural populations and migrants from neighboring nations, particularly in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and North Korea. Government officials have done little to address the issue and pass legislation to provide assistance to victims of human trafficking. Russia is a major supplier of some chemicals used to produce synthesized drugs, such as heroin, and is a major consumer of opiates. Illicit drug trafficking is a major concern, as Russia is a transshipment point for opiates, cocaine, and cannabis.

Russians and foreigners experience greatly increased personal liberties today compared to the Soviet era; however, some limitations exist. Most Russians are supportive of the overall direction and economic growth and stability present leadership has brought; however, many are also deeply skeptical regarding perceived endemic corruption in the governmental apparatus generally. Much of the privatization of state industry has benefited politically influential oligarchs. National and regional political offices continue to be filled largely

by former Communist party functionaries, albeit under the banners of new political parties. Freedom of press, especially with regard to pieces critical of the government and investigations into government corruption, continues to be restricted; many journalists investigating corruption matters have died or disappeared under suspicious circumstances, and serious investigations by the government or prosecution of persecutors have been infrequent. Foreigners traveling in Russia are generally well-advised to avoid political discussions, and especially to avoid criticism of the government or political figures, to avoid any military installations, and to avoid taking photos of objects like bridges or installations that may be perceived (sometimes unknown to foreign visitors) to have strategic or military value.

Faiths

Christian: 74% (less than 10% are practicing)

Muslim: 10%–15%

Buddhist: 1%

Other/none: 10%–15%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Russian Orthodox 100,000,000

Evangelicals 1,636,627

Catholic 600,000

Jehovah's Witnesses 165,447 2,407

Seventh Day Adventists 50,027 641

Latter-day Saints 21,709 100+

Religion

The Russian Orthodox Church remains a major societal influence despite over seventy years of communist rule. Seventy-two percent (72%) of the population is nominally Russian Orthodox, although only 7% of Orthodox Christians are observant. The Slavic population is homogeneously Orthodox Christian. There are approximately two million Protestants and 600,000 Catholics. Practitioners of non-Christian religions are generally from Turkic ethnic groups and are primarily Muslim. The estimated Muslim population ranges from ten million to twenty-three million and is concentrated in the North Caucasus, Volga-Ural region, and the largest cities. Immigrant workers originating from the Caucasus and Central Asia constitute a sizeable portion of the Muslim population. The Buddhist population is estimated to number one million. Most Buddhists are from indigenous Siberian ethnic groups and are concentrated in the regions of Buryatiya, Tuva, and Kalmykiya. Jews are estimated to number between 250,000 and one million, many of whom reside in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Indigenous religious traditions continue to be followed by some in the Russian Far East, Siberia, and the sparsely populated Arctic Ocean coast. In 2010, the government reported 23,494 registered religious organizations, most of which were Russian Orthodox (12,586), Muslim (3,815), Protestant (3,410), Jehovah's Witnesses (402), Jewish (286), Orthodox Old Believers (283), Catholic (240), and Buddhist (200).²⁸⁷²

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, and the government generally upholds this right for most of the population. In practice, the government has not always treated religious minorities with equal standing with traditional denominations. Citizens may change their religious affiliation, choose not to practice any religion,

²⁸⁷² "Russia," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148977.htm>

proselyte, and follow their religion's teachings. The government reserves the right to regulate these freedoms as necessary to maintain morality, health, the constitutional structure of the government, public order, national defense, and government security. To register with the government as a local religious organization, a religious group must have at least ten citizen members and be a branch of a centralized organization or have operated in the locality for at least fifteen years. To register as a centralized religious organization, a religious group must have at least three local organizations and have operated within Russia for at least fifty years. The government restricts religious freedom for several religious groups by banning the dissemination of their literature; not permitting registration with the government; refusing to grant building permits, access to land, and places of worship; detaining individuals; and limiting or refusing to grant visas for foreign religious workers. The law stipulates that violators of religious freedom will be prosecuted, but does not clarify specific penalties. Inconsistencies in enforcing laws that protect freedom for religious minorities most commonly occur in regional and municipal governments, largely due to increased pressure from local religious authorities. There has been little effort by the federal government to address discrimination and violations of religious freedom on a local level.

The Russian Orthodox Church has entered into many exclusive agreements with the government that have granted greater privileges than other denominations. In recent years, government leaders have frequently consulted with Russian Orthodox Church leaders regarding government policies. Orthodox Christmas and the date of founding of the Russian Orthodox Church are national holidays. The 2002 Law on Countering Extremist Activity was originally designed to curtail terrorist activity, but has been applied to religious groups deemed deviant by the government, namely Islamic sects, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Scientologists. There has been some religious instruction in public schools in recent years. Foreign religious workers may spend only ninety of every 180 days within Russia on a business or humanitarian visa, resulting in a severe limitation for religious groups such as the Catholic Church and the LDS Church, which rely on foreign workers to operate.

There have been frequent reports of harassment of religious minorities by law enforcement, ongoing property disputes and difficulties for many religious communities to obtain land and construct or operate meeting-houses, ongoing property disputes, and societal abuse of religious freedom that have included beatings, persecution, damage to meetinghouses, discrimination, and intimidation. Societal abuse of religious freedom has targeted non-Orthodox religions. It is often difficult to ascertain the motivation behind societal abuse of religious minority groups due to the simultaneous occurrence of racism, xenophobia, and religious bigotry. Muslim-majority areas, especially Chechnya, have also experienced some societal and local government abuse of religious freedom targeting those not complying with Shari'a law. In 2010, the government banned eighteen Muslim groups that were deemed terrorist organizations.²⁸⁷³

Largest Cities

Urban: 73%

Moscow, St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Yekaterinburg, Nizhniy Novgorod, Kazan, Samara, Omsk, Chelyabinsk, Rostov-na-Donu, Ufa, Perm, Volgograd, Krasnoyarsk, Voronezh, Saratov, Tolyatti, Krasnodar, Izhevsk, Yaroslavl, Ulyanovsk, Barnaul, Irkutsk, Khabarovsk, Tyumen, Vladivostok, Novokuznetsk, Orenburg, Kemerovo, **Naberezhnye Chelny**, Ryazan, Tomsk, Penza, **Astrakhan**, Lipetsk.

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregations.

Thirty-three of the thirty-five cities with over half a million inhabitants have an LDS congregation. Twenty-nine percent (9%) of the national population resides in the thirty-three most populous cities.

²⁸⁷³ "Russia," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148977.htm>

LDS History

The LDS Church has considered Russia a significant priority for missionary work since as early as the 1840s. Joseph Smith called Orson Hyde and George J. Adams to serve in Russia but their mission never came to fruition due to the martyrdom of Joseph Smith in 1844. A Swedish LDS missionary visited St. Petersburg in 1895 and baptized the Lindelof family. Elder Francis M. Lyman visited in 1903, and the Lindelof family fled the country following the Revolution of 1917. The first Russian natives were baptized into the LDS Church in the 1980s in Europe, primarily in Finland and Hungary. The first convert baptism in Russia in modern times occurred in St. Petersburg in early 1989.²⁸⁷⁴ Elders Russell M. Nelson and Hans B. Ringger visited Moscow in 1987 and contacted the Council of Religious Affairs; they returned again in 1989.²⁸⁷⁵ To receive recognition for a congregation to formally operate, the Church had to have at least twenty adult Soviet citizen members in a single political district, which the Church gradually accumulated over time.²⁸⁷⁶ In 1990, Elders Nelson and Ringger held a member meeting in St. Petersburg (Leningrad) and met with leaders from the Council on Religious Affairs. Elder Nelson rededicated Russia for missionary work in St. Petersburg on April 26, 1990, near the location where Russia was originally dedicated for missionary work in 1903. Registration for the first LDS congregation was obtained in September 1990 in St. Petersburg. At the time, missionary work and church meetings were conducted in private in members' apartments.²⁸⁷⁷ The Russian Republic of the Soviet Union recognized the LDS Church in mid-1991, the same time that the Mormon Tabernacle Choir performed in Moscow's Bolshoi Theater.²⁸⁷⁸ Seminary and institute began in 1993. In 1995, Siberia was opened to missionary work, and the first convert baptisms took place.²⁸⁷⁹ Foreign members and three humanitarian senior couple missionaries facilitated the establishment of the Church in the Russian Far East in Vladivostok in the mid-1990s. At the time, the region was not assigned to a mission and reported directly to the Asia North Area. LDS apostle Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin visited Vladivostok in 1996.²⁸⁸⁰ In 1998, the Church was granted official recognition as a centralized religious organization,²⁸⁸¹ and the Russian government began requiring religious workers to leave the country every ninety days to renew their visas.²⁸⁸² In 2000, Russia was assigned to the Europe East Area with headquarters based in Moscow.²⁸⁸³ President Gordon B. Hinckley visited Moscow, Russia in 2002, becoming the first LDS Church president to do so.²⁸⁸⁴ President

²⁸⁷⁴ "History of Church in Russian republic," LDS Church News, 16 November 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20772/History-of-Church-in-Russian-republic.html>

²⁸⁷⁵ "Registration of Leningrad Branch approved," LDS Church News, 29 September 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20180/Registration-of-Leningrad-Branch-approved.html>

²⁸⁷⁶ Avant, Gerry. "Russia: An opening door," LDS Church News, 13 July 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20679/Russia-An-opening-door.html>

²⁸⁷⁷ "Registration of Leningrad Branch approved," LDS Church News, 29 September 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20180/Registration-of-Leningrad-Branch-approved.html>

²⁸⁷⁸ Avant, Gerry. "Church is recognized by Russian republic," LDS Church News, 29 June 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21491/Church-is-recognized-by-Russian-republic.html>

²⁸⁷⁹ Rosen, Michael S. Von. "Handcart trek in Siberia—'a demonstration of faith,'" LDS Church News, 8 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29360/Handcart-trek-in-Siberia--a-demonstration-of-faith.html>

²⁸⁸⁰ "Former 'closed city' visited by Elder Wirthlin," LDS Church News, 7 December 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27214/Former-closed-city-visited-by-Elder-Wirthlin.html>

²⁸⁸¹ "Church formally recognized in Russia," LDS Church News, 23 May 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31351/Church-formally-recognized-in-Russia.html>

²⁸⁸² "Russia adopts new visa regulations," LDS Church News, 15 August 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30297/Russia-adopts-new-visa-regulations.html>

²⁸⁸³ Lloyd, Scott. "European continent realigned into three new areas," LDS Church News, 16 September 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38475/European-continent--realigned-into-three-new-areas.html>

²⁸⁸⁴ Stahle, Shaun D. "History-making trip—Church leader in Russia," LDS Church News, 14 September 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42432/History-making-trip—Church-leader-in-Russia.html>

Hinckley visited members in Vladivostok in 2005.²⁸⁸⁵ Russian members played a major role in the dedicatory celebration and services of the Helsinki Finland Temple in 2006²⁸⁸⁶ and the Kyiv Ukraine Temple in 2010.

Missions

In 1990, the Finland Helsinki East Mission administered northwestern Russia, whereas the Austria Vienna East Mission administered southwestern Russia.²⁸⁸⁷ In 1992, the Church organized missions in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Additional missions were organized in Samara (1993), Novosibirsk (1994), Rostov (1994), Yekaterinburg (1995), Moscow South (1997) [renamed Moscow West in 2006], and Vladivostok (1999). In 2012, the two missions based in Moscow were consolidated into a single mission.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 21,709 (2012)

The most rapid membership growth occurred in the early 1990s. Latter-day Saints numbered 300 in mid-1991.²⁸⁸⁸ In early 1992, half of Russia's 600 Latter-day Saints resided in St. Petersburg.²⁸⁸⁹ There were 1,900 members in 1993, increasing to 8,000 in 1997. By year-end 2000, there were 13,509 members. Annual membership growth rates increased at moderate to high rates in the early 2000s (10%–12%), but slowed dramatically for the remainder of the decade (3.9% in 2003, 2.1% in 2006, 1.7% in 2009). Membership stood at 16,638 in 2002, 18,269 in 2004, 19,180 in 2006, and 19,946 in 2008. During the 2000s, the annual increase in nominal membership declined from approximately 1,600 in 2001 to 300 in 2009. There were 1,900 members in Moscow in 2003.²⁸⁹⁰ In 2009, one in 6,875 was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 12 Branches: 86 Groups: 10+ (April 2013)

The Leningrad Branch was assigned to the Baltic District of the Finland Helsinki East Mission in 1990.²⁸⁹¹ By mid-1991, LDS branches were functioning in St. Petersburg (2), Moscow, and Vyborg.²⁸⁹² A year later, the number of branches in St. Petersburg increased to six.²⁸⁹³ In early 1993, Moscow had fifteen small branches;²⁸⁹⁴ a dramatic increase from just one less than two years earlier. By mid-1993, additional branches of the Russia Moscow Mission were established in Nizhny Novgorod, Samara, Saratov, and Voronezh.²⁸⁹⁵ The first LDS

²⁸⁸⁵ Stahle, Shaun D. "Members wait with patient excitement," LDS Church News, 6 August 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47654/Members-wait-with-patient-excitement.html>

²⁸⁸⁶ Stahle, Shaun D. "Temple dedicated in Helsinki, Finland," LDS Church News, 28 October 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49687/Temple-dedicated-in-Helsinki-Finland.html>

²⁸⁸⁷ "Registration of Leningrad Branch approved," LDS Church News, 29 September 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20180/Registration-of-Leningrad-Branch-approved.html>

²⁸⁸⁸ Avant, Gerry. "Church is recognized by Russian republic," LDS Church News, 29 June 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21491/Church-is-recognized-by-Russian-republic.html>

²⁸⁸⁹ Stout, Jan. "'Russians are looking for the truth,'" LDS Church News, 15 February 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22739/Russians-are-looking-for-the-truth.html>

²⁸⁹⁰ Edwards, Alan. "Center Stage: Fruits of prayer taking hold in Russia," LDS Church News, 6 September 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44277/Center-Stage-Fruits-of-prayer-taking-hold-in-Russia.html>

²⁸⁹¹ "Registration of Leningrad Branch approved," LDS Church News, 29 September 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20180/Registration-of-Leningrad-Branch-approved.html>

²⁸⁹² Avant, Gerry. "Russia: An opening door," LDS Church News, 13 July 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20679/Russia-An-opening-door.html>

²⁸⁹³ Fidel, Steve. "Converts pioneer frontier in Russia," LDS Church News, 19 September 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22554/Converts-pioneer-frontier-in-Russia.html>

²⁸⁹⁴ "Eight new missions announced," LDS Church News, 6 March 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23130/Eight-new-missions-announced.html>

²⁸⁹⁵ "Growth of Church in 'that vast empire,'" LDS Church News, 6 November 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23646/Growth-of-Church-in-that-vast-empire.html>

branch was organized in Vladivostok in the mid-1990s.²⁸⁹⁶ Siberia was opened to missionary work in 1995. In 1997, plans were made to open Tula, Kaluga, and Smolensk to missionary work.²⁸⁹⁷ Missionaries began opening additional cities in Siberia in 2000 and the early 2000s, such as Ulan-Ude.²⁸⁹⁸

There were thirty-three branches in 1993, increasing to ninety-six in 1997 and 112 in 2000, mainly reflecting the opening of new cities for missionary work as large cities experienced slowing growth and congregational consolidations. There were fifteen branches in St. Petersburg by the summer of 1994; however, over a period of several years the number of branches was consolidated to five, where it remained in late 2010. Similar consolidations occurred in Moscow and other large cities due to difficulty retaining new converts, the loss of previously active members, and decreasing numbers of convert baptisms.

The number of branches totaled 120 in 2002 and declined to 115 in 2003, 114, in 2004, and 113 in 2005. There were 121 branches in 2006 and 129 branches in 2007 and 2008. The number of branches reached a high of 131 in mid-2009 but declined to 126 at year-end 2009 and 116 at year-end 2010. In late 2009 and 2010, the number of branches declined as a result of most branches without a local member serving as branch president becoming dependent branches or groups. Some congregations were also consolidated in an effort to increase the size of active membership to provide better social interaction among members, such as in Ulan-Ude.

In 1993, there were five districts, increasing to seven in 1997. By 2000, the number of districts increased to thirteen. There were thirteen districts in early 2011; districts were headquartered in Moscow (1993), St. Petersburg (1993), Samara (1996), Saratov (1996), Rostov (1997), Novosibirsk (1997), Yekaterinburg (1999), Chelyabinsk (2000), Perm (2000), Krasnoyarsk (2001), Omsk (2001), Volgograd (2002), and Togliatti (2004). During the early and mid-2000s, districts were consolidated in Moscow (Moscow North and Moscow South) and St. Petersburg (St. Petersburg North and St. Petersburg South). A district operated in Vladivostok in the mid-1990s²⁸⁹⁹ but was likely discontinued in the late 1990s or early 2000s. In 2010, two districts were discontinued in Ufa (1999) and Moscow West (2006). In 2011, the first stake was organized in Moscow and included the following six wards and three branches: the Arbatskii, Kakhovski, Moscow (English), Rechnoy, Sokolnicheskii, and Zelenogradsky Wards and the Perovo, Podolsk, and Universitetski Branches. In 2011, the Chelyabinsk Russia District was discontinued, and in 2012, the Perm Russia, Omsk Russia, and Krasnoyarsk Russia Districts were discontinued. In 2012, the second stake in Russia was organized in St. Petersburg with six wards and three branches. By year-end 2012, there were two stakes and seven districts.

Finding

Full-time LDS missionaries generally solicit members for referrals to find investigators. Street proselytism and other finding methods have not been well developed in most Russian missions. There is a general perception among many LDS missionaries that tracting is less effective or is not culturally accepted by Russians, although the Jehovah's Witnesses in particular have used this method with great success. A survey by the mission president in Saint Petersburg in 1993 found that the average missionary companionship reported contacting only five nonmembers per day. Although comprehensive data from other areas is not available, surveys of returned missionaries from other Russian missions and time periods suggest that this rate of contacting is not atypical, and that few Russian missions have achieved high levels of outreach to the surrounding population.

²⁸⁹⁶ Cannon, Mike. "Many families in Russia blessed by relief effort," *LDS Church News*, 28 January 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26302/Many-families-in-Russia-blessed-by-relief-effort.html>

²⁸⁹⁷ "Church to create eight new missions," *LDS Church News*, 1 March 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29769/Church-to-create-eight-new-missions.html>

²⁸⁹⁸ "Ulan Ude members make friends while on the train," *LDS Church News*, 22 September 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40516/Ulan-Ude-members-make-friends-while-on-the-train.html>

²⁸⁹⁹ "Former 'closed city' visited by Elder Wirthlin," *LDS Church News*, 7 December 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27214/Former-closed-city-visited-by-Elder-Wirthlin.html>

With relatively few active members and only limited independent finding efforts by LDS missionaries, LDS growth has experienced a large disadvantage compared to organizations like the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Seventh Day Adventists, who systematically utilize tracting and community outreach. Some special events conducted by the Church have provided opportunities to find investigators. Over 700 attended a Christmas Creche exhibit held in a new LDS meetinghouse in Rostov in 2000.²⁹⁰⁰ In 2002, 200 of the 350 who attended a missionary concert in Novosibirsk were nonmembers.²⁹⁰¹ Missionaries volunteered in the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg to celebrate the 300-year anniversary of the city of St. Petersburg.²⁹⁰² With small missionary complements, reliance primarily on finding through the small number of active members, and relatively little scope or consistency of independent missionary finding methods, LDS missions have reached only a small segment of the Russian population after more than twenty years of proselytism. Service projects have also presented some finding opportunities. With a few noteworthy exceptions, LDS missions in Russia have not demonstrated a clear vision or strategic plan for "sounding the gospel in every ear" and reaching a broad section of the Russian population.

Activity and Retention

Member activity and convert retention rates have been consistently low, resulting in a crisis of numerous unit consolidations in large cities within several years of the Church's arrival. Church conferences and meetings have been moderately attended. Over 200 attended a young single adult conference for members in Western Russia, Armenia, and Belarus in 2000.²⁹⁰³ Eighty youth from the Russia Rostov Mission attended a youth conference in Taganrog in 2001.²⁹⁰⁴ 115 members attended a young single adult conference for the Russia Novosibirsk Mission in 2001.²⁹⁰⁵ Approximately 2,200 attended a special meeting with President Hinckley in Moscow in 2002.²⁹⁰⁶ 200 attended a special meeting with President Hinckley in Vladivostok in 2005.²⁹⁰⁷ Nearly 200 attended a youth conference in Novosibirsk in 2005.²⁹⁰⁸ The average number of members per congregation increased between 1993 and 2009 from 121 to 163. During the 2008–2009 school year, 1,289 were enrolled in seminary and institute, increasing to 1,444 during the 2009–2010 school year.

Missionaries serving in some cities report member activity rates as low as 10%, such as in Perm where there were fewer than twenty active members in 2010. Twenty of the 200 members of the Novokuybishevsk Branch attended church meetings in early 2011. Twenty members attended a member meeting in Petrozavodsk with the mission president in 2001.²⁹⁰⁹ The Pervouralsky Branch had seven active members in late 2010. Many branches in the Russia Moscow West Mission had fifteen to twenty active members in early 2011. There were

²⁹⁰⁰ "We are already feeling effects of a great spiritual event," LDS Church News, 23 December 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39075/We-are-already-feeling-effects-of-a-great-spiritual-event.html>

²⁹⁰¹ "Missionary concert makes friends," LDS Church News, 26 October 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42708/Missionary-concert-makes-friends.html>

²⁹⁰² "Missionaries pitch in during 300th anniversary," LDS Church News, 14 June 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43892/Missionaries-pitch-in-during-300th-anniversary.html>

²⁹⁰³ "Conference proceeds in face of storm," LDS Church News, 3 June 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37894/Conference-proceeds-in-face-of-storm.html>

²⁹⁰⁴ Savenko, Denis. "Youth conference on Sea of Azo," LDS Church News, 8 September 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40470/Youth-conference-on-Sea-of-Azo.html>

²⁹⁰⁵ "YSA gather from far reaches to Novosibirsk," LDS Church News, 22 September 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40515/YSA-gather-from-far-reaches-to-Novosibirsk.html>

²⁹⁰⁶ Stahle, Shaun D. "History-making trip—Church leader in Russia," LDS Church News, 14 September 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42432/History-making-trip—Church-leader-in-Russia.html>

²⁹⁰⁷ Stahle, Shaun D. "Members wait with patient excitement," LDS Church News, 6 August 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47654/Members-wait-with-patient-excitement.html>

²⁹⁰⁸ "Russian youth gather," LDS Church News, 27 August 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/47755/-Russian-youth-gather.html>

²⁹⁰⁹ "20 attend fireside in Russia," LDS Church News, 20 January 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39216/20-attend-fireside-in-Russia.html>

between twenty and twenty-five active members in the Petergof Branch in late 2010. The Kurgan Branch had approximately twenty active members and four active priesthood holders in mid-2010. The Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk Branch had approximately fifty-five active members in late 2010. In mid-2010, 50 of the more than 350 members in the Vladivostok Branch were active. The Ussuriysk Branch had between forty and fifty active members in early 2011. Between twenty-five and thirty attended church meetings in the Tula Branch in mid-2010. The Balakovo Branch had twenty active members in 2010. Some branches in the larger cities such as Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Saratov have between fifty and seventy-five active members. Most wards in Moscow appear to have between fifty and one hundred active members.

In general, active church membership in the largest Russian cities has experienced little increase since the late 1990s and in some cases has actually declined, notwithstanding continued increase in nominal membership. Many of Russia's most populous cities have experienced a decline in the number of LDS congregations operating. In 2001, there were eight branches in Yekaterinburg, whereas in 2010 there were three. During this same time period, the number of branches in St. Petersburg declined from thirteen to nine, in Ufa from four to one, in Novosibirsk from five to three, and in Samara from four to two. Rostov has experienced no change in the number of LDS congregations over the past decade, whereas Saratov has been the only city with over one million inhabitants to have an increase in the number of LDS branches during this period from four to six. There were 500 LDS members in St. Petersburg in 1992 and 1500 by mid-1994, with subsequent growth to over 2,000 members in the 2000s. However, only an estimated 250 members were attending church regularly in St. Petersburg in late 2010, approximately half of the number that attended fifteen years earlier. Nationwide active membership is estimated at 3,500–4,500, or 17%–23% of total church membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Russian, Ukrainian, Armenian.

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in Russian, Ukrainian, and Armenian. Belarusian materials include a family guidebook, the *Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, family history forms, and the Articles of Faith. The *Liabona* magazine has monthly issues in Russian and Ukrainian and four issues a year in Armenian.

Meetinghouses

Most LDS congregations have met in rented spaces or renovated buildings. In recent years, increasing numbers of church-built meetinghouses have been completed, but at times have gone unoccupied for extended periods of time as local governments refuse or delay the issuing of occupancy permits. In early 2011, there were approximately one hundred LDS meetinghouses nationwide.

Health and Safety

In 1998, two LDS missionaries serving in Saratov were kidnapped for four days and were safely released.²⁹¹⁰ That same year, a group of drunken men stabbed one missionary to death and wounded another in Ufa.²⁹¹¹ In the late 1990s, two missionaries in the Russia Novosibirsk Mission were assaulted in their apartment, and one was injected with an unknown substance that was later found to be novocaine once he returned to the United States. Missionaries serving in the Russia Samara Mission in 2011 reported that they were not allowed to enter some neighborhoods or cities because of threats of violence.

²⁹¹⁰ Dockstader, Julie A. "Kidnapped missionaries safe; two arrested," LDS Church News, 28 March 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31544/Kidnapped-missionaries-safe-two-arrested.html>

²⁹¹¹ Weaver, Sarah Jane. "Whole Church will feel, mourn loss of missionary," LDS Church News, 24 October 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31366/Whole-Church-will-feel-mourn-loss-of-missionary.html>

Humanitarian and Development Work

Over one hundred humanitarian and development projects have been carried out by the Church in Russia in recent years. Activities have included the donation of clothing, computers, furniture, and medical equipment to orphanages, hospitals, and local aid organizations,²⁹¹² in addition to numerous local service initiatives. In 1991, the Church donated twenty-three tons of food to local Latter-day Saints and nonmembers in Vyborg, St. Petersburg, and Tallinn, Estonia.²⁹¹³ Later that year, an additional 40,800 pounds of food were shipped.²⁹¹⁴ In September 1993, the Church shipped over sixteen tons of clothing and shoes for the needy to St. Petersburg.²⁹¹⁵ In 1997, members in Danville, California collected and shipped hundreds of clothing items and quilts to orphaned children in Russia.²⁹¹⁶ In 2000, humanitarian service missionaries and local members provided education on Down syndrome to one hundred local parents of affected children.²⁹¹⁷ Members in Nizhny Novgorod assembled 800 hygiene kits for local organizations to distribute to the needy.²⁹¹⁸ In 2001, the Church donated 37,000 pounds of food, clothing, and shoes to distribute to the needy in Nizhny Novgorod.²⁹¹⁹ Over forty Relief Society members and young women made quilts for a local orphanage in 2002.²⁹²⁰ The Church provided clothing donations, used computers, sewing machines, hygiene kits, and newborn kits to the small town of Karabanova.²⁹²¹ In 2003, the Church provided new hospital beds, medical supplies, and clothing to a children's hospital in Ryazan.²⁹²² Members and missionaries cleaned a park in St. Petersburg as part of a citywide service day in 2005.²⁹²³

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The LDS Church has experienced significant religious freedom and meaningful government cooperation in recent years, but nonetheless government regulations mandating that foreign religious workers must leave Russia every ninety days pose major financial, logistical, and administrative challenges as the Church relies heavily on nonnative full-time missionaries to staff its eight missions. Full-time missionaries generally travel to nations in Eastern Europe or Kazakhstan to have their visas renewed and are often away from their assigned

²⁹¹² "Projects—Russia," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 15 March 2011. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-9,00.html>

²⁹¹³ "Food shipment eases Soviet hunger," LDS Church News, 30 March 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21004/Food-shipment-eases-Soviet-hunger.html>

²⁹¹⁴ "LDS food shipment bound for Russia," LDS Church News, 21 December 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21314/LDS-food-shipment-bound-for-Russia.html>

²⁹¹⁵ Stout, Mary Kay. "Russian members distribute bales of clothes and shoes among LDS, others," LDS Church News, 4 September 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23405/Russian-members-distribute-bales-of-clothes-and-shoes-among-LDS-others.html>

²⁹¹⁶ Gabriel, Ana. "Quilts become 'hugs' for Russian children," LDS Church News, 15 February 1997. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29415/Quilts-become-hugs-for-Russian-children.html>

²⁹¹⁷ "Understanding Down syndrome," LDS Church News, 3 June 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/37887/Understanding-Down-syndrome.html>

²⁹¹⁸ "800 hygiene kits help needy," LDS Church News, 24 February 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/39379/800-hygiene-kits-help-needy.html>

²⁹¹⁹ "Church helps with aid to Russian city," LDS Church News, 18 August 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40358/Church-helps-with-aid-to-Russian-city.html>

²⁹²⁰ "Baby quilts for Moscow orphanage," LDS Church News, 9 February 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41292/Baby-quilts-for-Moscow-orphanage.html>

²⁹²¹ Stahle, Shaun D. "Russian priest expresses gratitude," LDS Church News, 25 May 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41879/Russian-priest-expresses-gratitude.html>

²⁹²² "Russian hospital receives new beds," LDS Church News, 8 November 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44658/Russian-hospital-receives-new-beds.html>

²⁹²³ "Summer Garden clean up," LDS Church News, 29 October 2005. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48059/Summer-Garden-clean-up.html>

areas for several days to a week, resulting in significant disruptions to missionary work. Local officials in several regions have refused to register LDS congregations in the past. A government authority labeled the LDS Church as an “extremist and destructive” cult in 2000. LDS missionaries have been detained in the past for no particular cause and then urged by local police to stop their activities and released.²⁹²⁴ The Church began attempting to register a congregation in Kazan, Tatarstan in 1998, but as of 2002, the congregation remained unregistered. In Chelyabinsk, the local Department of Justice rejected the Church’s application to register, stating that church activities are not permitted by federal law.²⁹²⁵ The Church eventually won at a trial to be registered in Chelyabinsk in the early 2000s. The Church has been persecuted in some areas, but in 2004, it was noted that missionary visas were more easily obtained and that residency permits for missionaries were generally obtained without complications.²⁹²⁶ At times local authorities have denied the LDS Church permission to purchase land to build meetinghouses.²⁹²⁷ Infringements on religious freedom and political instability in some lesser-reached and unreached administrative divisions of Russia have contributed to a lack of an LDS presence in such locations.

Cultural Issues

The LDS Church has generally been viewed as an American church and un-Russian, resulting in significant challenges for Russians to join the Church and maintain positive relations with friends and family. LDS proselytism paradigms are generally developed to suit those with a Protestant background, resulting in challenges tailoring missionary lessons and teaching approaches to Orthodox believers. Population decline sparked by low birth rates, low life expectancy rates, and emigration creates many societal problems that further challenge LDS missionary activity and the stability of LDS populations. High rates of cigarette and alcohol consumption pose significant obstacles for full-time missionaries and member missionaries to address with investigators and less active members struggling to abstain from these and other prohibited substances. Abortion as a means of birth control is commonplace and is opposed to LDS teachings. Those who have participated in an abortion generally must be interviewed by a member of the mission presidency to be considered for baptism. Other common lifestyle practices such as casual sexual relations test many local Latter-day Saints’ beliefs and testimonies and create additional barriers to overcome with many prospective members.

National Outreach

Thirty-three percent (33%) of the national population resides in cities with LDS congregations. Fifty-nine of the 164 cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation and 78% of the national population resides in an administrative division with an LDS congregation. Only five cities with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation (Vyborg, Tosno, Gatchina, Tuapse, and Marks). These are small towns in close proximity to larger cities; Vyborg is near the Finnish border. Marks is the least populated city with an LDS congregation (32,600 inhabitants). Most of the population residing in cities with an LDS congregation are unaware of an LDS presence in their city and know little or nothing about the Church, as generally only one LDS congregation operates, and mission outreach has occurred for no more than two decades, primarily working through acquaintances of the small number of active members with relatively little population-based outreach. Saratov Oblast, St. Petersburg, Rostov Oblast, and Samara Oblast appear to receive the greatest mission outreach, as six or more LDS congregations operate in each city or oblast, and the ratio of LDS congregations to population is more than one congregation per 600,000 inhabitants. Nizhny Novgorod

²⁹²⁴ “Russia,” International Religious Freedom Report, retrieved 22 March 2011. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2001/5744.htm>

²⁹²⁵ “Russia,” International Religious Freedom Report 2002, retrieved 22 March 2011. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2002/13958.htm>

²⁹²⁶ “Russia,” International Religious Freedom Report 2004, retrieved 22 March 2011. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2004/35480.htm>

²⁹²⁷ “Russia,” International Religious Freedom Report 2008, retrieved 22 March 2011. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108468.htm>

Oblast, Kemerovo Oblast, Perm Kray, Krasnodar Kray, Moscow city, Chelyabinsk Oblast, and Sverdlovsk Oblast receive the least mission outreach among administrative divisions with at least two LDS congregations, as each oblast, kray, or city has a ratio of less than one LDS congregation per million inhabitants. Twenty-one oblasts (Irkutsk, Kaliningrad, Kaluga, Kurgan, Lipetsk, Magadan, Moscow, Novgorod, Orenburg, Penza, Pskov, Ryazan, Sakhalin, Smolensk, Tomsk, Tula, Tver, Tyumen, Ulyanovsk, Voronezh, Yaroslavl), five republics (Bashkortostan, Buryatia, Karelia, Tatarstan, Udmurtia), three krays (Altai Krai, Khabarovsk, Stavropol), and one okrug (Khantia-Mansia) have only one LDS congregation providing minimal mission outreach to fifty million people (35% of the national population). Notwithstanding close proximity to two LDS missions and a population of 6.75 million, Moscow Oblast is the least reached administrative division with one LDS congregation operating in Podolsk. Sixteen republics (Adygeya, Altai Republic, Chechnya, Chuvashia, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Kalmykia, Karachay-Cherkessia, Khakassia, Komi, Mari El, Mordovia, North Ossetia-Alania, Sakha, Tuva), fourteen oblasts (Amur, Arkhangelsk, Astrakhan, Belgorod, Bryansk, Ivanovo, Kirov, Kostroma, Kursk, Murmansk, Oryol, Tambov, Vladimir, Vologda), three okrugs (Chukotka, Nenetsia, Yamalia), two krays (Kamchatka, Zabaykalsk), and the Jewish Autonomous District receive no LDS mission outreach and have a combined population of thirty-one million. Dagestan is the most populated administrative division without an LDS presence (2.74 million inhabitants).

The pace at which additional cities opened for missionary work slowed dramatically in the 2000s. Visa complications, a decline in the number of missionaries worldwide, and administrative challenges requiring missionaries to assume leadership and ecclesiastical duties for their assigned congregations contributed to few cities opening in the mid-or late 2000s, such as Kemerovo, Novokuznetsk, and Stavropol. Several cities had their sole LDS branches discontinued or reverted to dependent branches or groups, including Angarsk, Blagoveshchensk, and Magadan. At present, full-time missionaries report few prospects for additional cities opening for missionary work as receptivity continues to wane, few native members serve full-time missions, leadership development problems in cities with LDS congregations are ongoing, LDS missionary manpower remains low, and visa complications exact significant expenses and inconvenience for missionaries and mission leaders. In early 2010, full-time missionaries reported that mission leadership was considering opening Arkhangelsk to missionary work and that mission leaders occasionally met with a few members and investigators in Astrakhan. The majority of Russia's 105 unreached cities with over 100,000 inhabitants are in Moscow Oblast, oblasts surrounding Moscow, and the Volga region. Requirements in some areas for a minimum number of adult church members before a congregation can be registered or missionaries can be sent also presents obstacles, as local membership is difficult to build up without missionaries. Sometimes the Church has had to rely on the unpredictable process of members baptized elsewhere moving back to be able to open a congregation and send missionaries to a new city.

Low member activity, poor convert retention, and stagnant growth in established areas have limited additional outreach. The high cost of meetinghouse construction, maintenance, and other expenses continues to be heavily subsidized by the international church. LDS assumptions of a church-owned meetinghouse for each congregation or region have made LDS outreach far more expensive and less feasible than the more self-sufficient models utilized by groups with more successful national expansion, especially Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists.

The size of a city's population does not always correlate with the number of nominal or active Latter-day Saints in Russia. Some of the strongest LDS congregations are located in some of the least populated cities with a church presence, such as Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk and Vyborg. Some of Russia's most populous cities (Kazan, Ufa, Voronezh, Krasnodar, Izhevsk, and Yaroslavl) have only one LDS congregation, notwithstanding missionary work in these cities for over a decade.

The greatest LDS missionary outreach occurs in administrative divisions that generally have the highest percentage of ethnic Russians. Many of Russia's ethnic minority groups have little access to LDS mission

outreach, as they reside primarily in administrative divisions without a church presence, have no LDS materials in their native language, or reside far from mission outreach centers in administrative divisions with an LDS presence. It is unknown how most of these ethnic groups will respond to mission outreach. Based on trends with other missionary-oriented Christian groups and the LDS Church in neighboring countries like Mongolia, efforts may be most successful among non-Russian ethnic groups in the Caucasus and Siberia. Political instability in some republics in the Caucasus and remote location for ethnic minorities in Siberia challenge LDS efforts to engage in proselytism among these groups. The Buryats are a traditionally Buddhist Mongol ethnic group and constitute the largest ethnic minority in Siberia concentrated in Buryatia; the LDS congregation in Ulan-Ude has both Russians and Buryats. Many Turkic and Caucasian peoples are nominally Muslim and most have few if any Latter-day Saints and collectively number approximately seventeen million. One LDS congregation operates in Kazan, the capital of Tatarstan.

The Church maintains an Internet site for Russia at <http://www.latter-daysaints.ru/>. The website provides Russian language local news, explanations of church doctrines, contact information to request visits from full-time missionaries, and links to church websites in Russian, such as the meetinghouse locator site. Use of the website by local members and full-time missionaries offers additional opportunity to extend national outreach among Internet users. Unfortunately, the site's name in English is of no meaning to most Russians and reinforces the perceptions of many that the LDS Church as an American and not a Russian church. To date there has been no systematic development of member-missionary resources online in Russian.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Quick-baptism tactics, minimal pre-baptismal teaching, socialization issues at church, cultural issues surrounding religion, lacking culturally-developed missionary approaches, member burnout as a result of overburdening active members with administrative duties, and members offending one another at church have each contributed to low member activity and poor convert retention rates in Russia over the past two decades. In general, Russian missions have not adopted the extreme level of quick-baptism tactics attested in many Latin American missions, yet a nominal emphasis on quality without clear standards and a continued focus on monthly baptismal goals as the central indicator of missionary success has led to converts even in low-growth areas being baptized without having established consistent habits of church attendance and scripture reading prior to baptism. Some missions during specific periods have implemented higher standards that have led to improved retention, yet such efforts have rarely persisted through mission president changes.

Full-time missionaries have often stepped in to assist with socialization, reactivation, and administrative duties, but this has often decreased local member self-sufficiency regarding church callings and member-missionary work. Visa challenges and limited missionary manpower worldwide are issues that will likely strengthen the independence and self-reliance of many LDS congregations in Russia as responsibilities increasingly devolve upon local members.

Increased pre-baptismal standards and greater consistency in mission policies regarding convert baptisms appear to have addressed many challenges presented by quick-baptism tactics and the inadequate teaching of investigators and new converts. The number of convert baptisms has slowed dramatically to often less than one hundred a year per mission due decreasing societal receptivity, a small missionary force, diversion of missionary resources away from proselytism to reactivation efforts and member training, and, in many cases, the lack of clear mission strategies for reaching local populations. Baptizing smaller numbers of converts who have a greater tendency to remain active in the coming months and years is more effective than baptizing greater numbers of converts with few remaining active and developing meaningful church activity. Improving convert retention rates has not been reflected in congregational growth rates, in part as a result of mission and area policies. These policies have aimed to consolidate congregations to form large branches to offer more auxiliary programs and greater socialization opportunities or to revert branches into dependent branches or

home groups to minimize the administrative burden on the few local members in an area. Increasing seminary and institute enrollment in the late 2000s is a positive development as membership growth rates have continued to be very low. Additional students enrolling in seminary and institute appear to consist of active members, reactivated less active members, recent converts, and investigators.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Russia has historically faced significant challenges integrating differing ethnic groups into a single society and nation and continues to face these issues as indicated by the complex patchwork of administrative divisions, each with varying degrees of autonomy from the federal government. Non-Russian indigenous ethnic groups or immigrants account for nearly thirty million people. Foreign immigrants, especially from Africa and Asia, have experienced the greatest difficulty assimilating into society and are often ostracized and experience discrimination. LDS mission outreach has been most fruitful among ethnic Russians, Ukrainians, Armenians, and immigrants from Asia and Africa, whereas outreach has been the least productive among Turkic and Caucasian peoples. Non-Slavic immigrant converts tend to have more itinerant lifestyles that can pose difficulties for fellowshiping, retention, and member development. It is difficult to ascertain whether the low success among indigenous ethnic minority groups in Russia is due to no mission outreach concentrated among Caucasian and Turkic groups, poor receptivity to LDS mission outreach based on their native cultures, or a combination of the two. Only one non-Russian speaking LDS congregation operates in Russia, an English-speaking congregation in Moscow. Expanding national outreach into areas with larger nonethnic Russian populations will require the establishment of congregations conducted in the ethnic language of the area.

Language Issues

Translations of LDS materials are available in the native language of approximately 86% of the national population. Speakers of Russian as a second language may increase the percentage of the population potentially reachable by the Church to 90%–95%. Consequently, the Church has experienced few language issues in reached cities today. Translations of church materials into additional languages spoken in Russia are needed to reach lesser-reached areas and people groups. Fifteen languages without translations of LDS materials spoken by over 400,000 include, in descending order by number of speakers, Tatar, Chuvash, Bashkort, Chechen, Avar, Erzya, Moksha, Mari, Kabardian, Osetin, Dargwa, Udmurt, Kumyk, Ingush, and Lezgi. Most of these languages have few or no Latter-day Saint speakers and are spoken in areas without LDS mission outreach at present, which will likely delay prospective translations of LDS materials in these languages for decades to come.

Missionary Service

The LDS Church has relied heavily on foreign missionaries to staff its full-time missionary force since the arrival of the Church in 1990. In early 1992, there were approximately fifty full-time missionaries serving in Russia.²⁹²⁸ The LDS missionary force mushroomed to 800 in Russia's seven missions in 1998.²⁹²⁹ The large size of the missionary force permitted the opening of dozens of cities throughout the country but also fostered member dependence on full-time missionaries, as several missionary companionships were assigned to single congregations. Changes in visa regulations and the plateauing of the worldwide LDS missionary force has led to a decline in the number of missionaries in Russia over the past decade to less than half of prior

²⁹²⁸ "3 new missions established in Russia, Ukraine," LDS Church News, 15 February 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22627/3-new-missions-established-in-Russia-Ukraine.html>

²⁹²⁹ "Russia adopts new visa regulations," LDS Church News, 15 August 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30297/Russia-adopts-new-visa-regulations.html>

levels, as there were over 300 foreign full-time LDS missionaries in Russia in 2010.²⁹³⁰ The number of local members serving missions appears to have held steady or even increased in recent years, but Russian missionaries typically constitute only 10%–20% of full-time missionaries in Russian missions. Continued emphasis on seminary and institute participation may contribute to greater numbers of local members serving missions.

Leadership

The LDS Church has struggled to keep priesthood holders active over the long-term regardless of whether they have served in leadership positions. One mission president reported that during his three-year tenure in the early 1990s, fourteen branch presidents went inactive or left the Church. Chronic leadership development and training issues in the largest cities have delayed the establishment of LDS stakes. In 2006, full-time missionaries reported that the Moscow Russia District had reached the needed numbers of active members and priesthood holders for a stake to be organized. In order to increase church growth prospects over the medium term, local and mission leaders decided to divide the district into two districts in hopes of establishing two stakes one day. In 2010, the districts were consolidated into a single district in preparation for the creation of the Moscow Russia Stake in 2011. Many anticipated the first stakes being organized in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Saratov, and Samara during the mid-1990s but as of early 2012, there was only one stake in Russia, in Moscow. In early 2012, missionaries reported that mission presidents and area leadership were preparing several additional districts to become stakes, but only the St Petersburg Russia and Novosibirsk Russia Districts appeared close to becoming stakes in the foreseeable future. Notwithstanding local leadership challenges, nearly all branches in Russia have native branch presidents; most do not have native counselors. Full-time missionaries often greatly assist in administrative and leadership positions as counselors in branch presidencies.

Several Russian members have served in international or regional church leadership positions. In 1995, Viacheslav I. Efimov from St. Petersburg was called to preside over the Russia Yekaterinburg Mission.²⁹³¹ In 2003, Albert Yergovich Aumeister from St. Petersburg²⁹³² was called to preside over the Russia Rostov Mission,²⁹³³ and Viktor Aleksandrovich Solomein from Yekaterinburg was called to preside over the Russia Moscow South Mission.²⁹³⁴ In 2008, Anatoly K. Reshetnikov from Saratov was called as an Area Seventy,²⁹³⁵ and in 2009 Dmitry V. Marchenko from Moscow was called as an Area Seventy.²⁹³⁶

Temple

Most of Russia is assigned to the Kyiv Ukraine Temple district. The St. Petersburg area is assigned to the Helsinki Finland Temple district, and the Vladivostok area is assigned to the Seoul Korea Temple district. The Kyiv Ukraine Temple appears to be moderately utilized by Russian and Ukrainian members, as indicated by four endowment sessions scheduled on Tuesdays through Fridays and five sessions scheduled on

²⁹³⁰ "Russia," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148977.htm>

²⁹³¹ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 6 May 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/26535/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁹³² "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 1 March 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43307/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁹³³ "New mission presidents for 105 missions," LDS Church News, 8 March 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43323/New-mission-presidents-for-105-missions.html>

²⁹³⁴ "New mission presidents," LDS Church News, 22 March 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43395/New-mission-presidents.html>

²⁹³⁵ "Dozens of leaders called to LDS posts," Deseret News, 6 April 2008. <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/695267901/Dozens-of-leaders-called-to-LDS-posts.html?pg=4>

²⁹³⁶ "New leadership changes," Deseret News, 5 April 2009. <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/705295325/New-leadership-changes.html?pg=4>

Saturdays. Distance, few active members, and travel expenses are major challenges that restrict temple attendance. Prospects for a temple in Russia will be more likely once several stakes are organized in a single city, such as Moscow, Saratov, or St Petersburg.

Comparative Growth

Russia possesses the world's ninth largest population and has the forty-third most Latter-day Saints, thirty-second most congregations, eleventh most districts, and ninth most missions. In 2009, Russia was the country with the fewest Latter-day Saints with the most LDS missions and was the country with the most LDS members without an LDS stake; Cambodia was the country with the second most members without a stake, with approximately half as many members as Russia. Member activity rates in Russia have been lower than most of Eastern Europe and comparable to some nations in Latin America. Cultural, economic, and social conditions in Eastern Europe do not make prospects of establishing stakes and temples unattainable, as LDS growth in Ukraine has made significantly larger achievements than in Russia, in proportion to local population, as indicated by the presence of a temple, a stake, and a church presence in all but approximately fifteen cities with over 100,000 inhabitants. The percentage of the population residing in cities with an LDS congregation is nearly identical for Russia and Ukraine, however (34% in Ukraine, 33% in Russia). The extent of national outreach in Russia is comparable to much of Eastern Europe, but no other country in the region has as many full-time missionaries assigned and missions operating. Developing long-term local leadership has been one of the greatest challenges for the LDS Church in Russia, and has been more challenging than in most other nations. In the late 2000s and in 2010, Russia ranked among the countries with the most congregations consolidated year to year. Other nations in Eastern Europe generally experienced declining numbers of congregations in the late 2000s and in 2010, due to stagnant or declining attendance, low growth, and increased standards for LDS branches to operate, including the requirement. The percentage of members enrolled in seminary and institute is higher than in most of Europe and is comparable to the Baltic States and Ukraine. The percentage of Latter-day Saints in the general population is representative of Eastern Europe.

The growth of other missionary-oriented Christian groups has far outpaced the LDS Church despite fewer foreign full-time missionaries and lower costs. Much of the progress attained by these denominations occurred in the 1990s, and these denominations have a presence in nearly all major cities throughout the country. Seventh Day Adventists reported two and half times as many members as Latter-day Saints, but six times as many congregations; as Adventists only report active members, it is likely that there are nearly ten times as many Adventists as Latter-day Saints in Russia. Adventists have experienced a decline in membership and the number of congregations over the past decade, notwithstanding annual convert baptisms numbering in the thousands. Jehovah's Witnesses operate twenty times as many congregations as Latter-day Saints, baptize up to 6,000 converts a year, and have over 160,000 active members; however, Witness growth rates have fallen considerably since the early to mid-1990s. Witnesses and Evangelicals have reported slow, steady growth in recent years, but stable local church leadership, a high degree of local member involvement in missionary work, and the capability of local members expanding national outreach.

Future Prospects

The medium-term outlook for the growth of the LDS Church in Russia is poor due to slow growth, low receptivity, poor member activity, stagnant or declining attendance at LDS congregations in major cities over the past decade, ongoing leadership development challenges among local members, the continuing trend of congregation consolidations in major cities, high dependence on foreign missionary manpower to staff Russia's seven LDS missions, heavy visa restrictions for foreign missionaries leading to a decline in the full-time missionary force of more than 50% during the 2000s, limited vision for mission outreach, and the dramatic slowdown in opening new cities for missionary work during the 2000s and in 2010. Restarting dependent branches and home groups for members in areas distant from LDS meetinghouses in the largest

cities, the development of proselytism approaches tailored to nominal Orthodox Christians, the development of coherent plans for mission and national outreach, and development and consistent application of baptismal standards requiring the development of gospel habits are steps that may be needed for current challenges to be overcome. Increasing seminary and institute attendance in the late 2000s is a positive development that, if sustained, may indicate greater progress in retaining new converts, success in reactivation efforts, and greater potential for increasing the number of local members serving full-time missions. Additional LDS stakes may be organized within the coming decade, although insufficient numbers of active members and priesthood holders remain a major obstacle. Visa challenges and low receptivity will likely continue to limit the number of full-time missionaries the church can feasibly assign to Russia, which will likely result in very few cities opening for missionary work in the foreseeable future. No additional LDS missions appear likely to be organized in the medium term, and additional mission consolidations are possible. Active members moving to cities without an LDS presence and holding cottage meetings in unreached cities with few members or investigators appear to offer the most favorable means of expanding national outreach in the coming years, as it does not draw away limited numbers of full-time missionaries and encourages self-sufficiency in member-missionary work and leadership.

SERBIA

Geography

AREA: 77,474 square km. What was once the former Yugoslavia, Serbia is a landlocked, Eastern European nation that borders Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Hungary. Fertile plains occupy most areas, with more hilly and rugged terrain in the south adjacent to Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro. The Danube River enters Serbia from the north, runs through the capital of Belgrade, and exits the country to the east, forming the Romanian and Bulgarian borders. The climate consists of hot, humid summers and cold, snowy winters. Serbia is administratively divided into Central Serbia and Vojvodina, the latter of which is an autonomous province.

Peoples

Serb: 82.9%
Hungarian: 3.9%
Roma: 1.4%
Yugoslavs: 1.1%
Bosniaks: 1.8%
Montenegrin: 0.9%
Other: 8%

Population: 7,276,604 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: -0.464% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.4 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 71.71 male, 77.58 female (2012)

Languages: Serbian (88.3%), Hungarian (3.8%), Bosniak (1.8%), Roma (1.1%), other (4.1%), unknown (0.9%). Serbian is the official language in Serbia. Croatian, Hungarian, Romanian, Slovak, and Ukrainian are official languages in Vojvodina. Only Serbian has over one million speakers (6.5 million).

Literacy: 96.4% (2003)

History

Several ancient peoples, including the Celts and Illyrians populated Serbia prior to the Romans in the first century BC. Serbia became an independent empire in the seventh century to the fifteenth century until coming under foreign rule by Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. During this time, Kosovo, which was regarded as the center of Serb culture, was lost to the Ottomans. Uprisings and periodic self-rule occurred for the following centuries. Following the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes united in 1918 as a kingdom that became Yugoslavia in 1929. During World War II, Nazi Germany invaded the region. Ethnic groups did not yield to Nazi rule, yet inter-ethnic fighting occurred. Josip Tito Broz took command of Yugoslavia in 1945 and established a communist regime that maintained its own sphere of influence separate from Eastern and Western Europe. Slobodan Milosevic became president in Serbia in 1989, and Serbian-dominance of political affairs headed by Milosevic resulted in Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, and Bosnia declaring independence in the early 1990s. Wars, primarily with Croatia and Bosnia, ensued in

an effort to unite Serb-dominated areas in other nations into Serbia. The Yugoslav Wars ended in 1995 with the Dayton Peace Accords. Insurgency in Kosovo ignited conflict again in the region with a Serbian military campaign against ethnic Albanians resulting in hundreds of thousands fleeing the country. A NATO-led bombing of Serbia commenced in the spring of 1999, resulting of the withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo and the installment of NATO forces in Kosovo. In 2006, Montenegro declared independence from Serbia, and two years later Kosovo also declared itself independent. Serbia continues to not recognize Kosovo's sovereignty. Part of Serbia—Vojvodina—is an autonomous province that administers northern Serbia, home to a mix of ethnic groups.

Culture

Serbia has rested on the boundary of Eastern and Western Europe and received cultural influences from both for centuries. This has resulted in Serbia possessing many cultural similarities with Western Europeans yet still retaining their Orthodox heritage. Serbians have a historical legacy with Kosovo, resulting in increased violence and instability in the region. Basketball is one of the most popular sports. Alcohol and cigarette use rates appear high.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$10,700 (2011) [22.2% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.766

Corruption Index: 3.3 (2011)

The economy lost half its value between 1990 and 1999 due to poor management under the Milosevic administration. In the past decade, Serbia has taken significant strides towards integration with Europe and has prospects of membership in the World Trade Organization and the European Union. Unemployment remains high (16.6% in 2009). Agriculture is an important part of the economy and employs 24% of the workforce and produces 13% of the GDP. Common crops include wheat, maize, sugar beets, and sunflowers. Services account for 56% of the workforce and produce 64% of the GDP. Industry constitutes about 20% of the workforce and GDP. Primary industries include base metals, furniture, food processing, and machinery.

Corruption is perceived as widespread. According to a survey of 601 individuals in March 2010, at least 80% of Serbians believed that political parties were corrupt, 54% paid bribes to doctors for treatment, and 19% paid bribes to law enforcement.²⁹³⁷

Faiths

Christian: 91.6%

Muslim: 3.2%

Unspecified: 2.6%

Other/atheist: 2.6%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Serbian Orthodox 6,177,016

Catholic 433,000

Seventh Day Adventists 6,895 172

Jehovah's Witnesses 3,830 57

²⁹³⁷ "New survey on corruption in Serbia," B92 News, retrieved 27 May 2010. http://www.b92.net/eng/news/society-article.php?yyyy=2010&mm=05&dd=25&nav_id=67351

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Religion

In 2002, 95% of the population identified as following one of the traditional religious groups, which included the Serbian Orthodox Church, Roman Catholic Church, and Islam. Muslims constitute Serbs and ethnic Albanians living near Kosovo and Roma. There is a small Jewish community. Catholics account for 5% of the population and are concentrated among Hungarians and Croats in Vojvodina. One and a half percent (1.5%) of the population is Protestant.²⁹³⁸

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, but legislation restricts this right. Traditional religious groups, such as the Serbian Orthodox Church, receive preferential treatment, receive government funding, and are recognized as traditional religious communities. In recent years, some religious groups that have had a presence for as long as 150 years and were previously recognized for over fifty years in Serbia were forced to reregister through a long and difficult process. There has been some pressure from the international community to simplify the registration process for nontraditional religious groups. Religious groups do not need to be registered to be active in Serbia, but registration guarantees rights, including holding financial assets, buying or selling property, and publishing literature. To register, a religious group must prove it has at least one hundred members, a present summation on its beliefs and practices, and demonstrate its source of funding. Some nontraditional religious groups report acts of vandalism to their houses of worship.²⁹³⁹

Largest Cities

Urban: 52%

Beograd, Novi Sad, **Niš**, **Kragujevac**, **Subotica**, **Zrenjanin**, **Panchevo**, **Chachak**, **Leskovac**, **Smederevo**. Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregation.

Two of the ten largest cities have a congregation. Twenty-eight (28%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

The first missionary preached in Serbia in 1899. Mischa Markow arrived in Belgrade and was arrested and banished to Hungary shortly thereafter. In 1934, there were two members in Serbia who met with the Czechoslovak Mission president. The Church assigned missionaries to Yugoslavia in the 1970s who primarily worked in Croatia and Belgrade. The first recent mission outreach among the peoples in Yugoslavia occurred in Austria prior to missionaries entering Yugoslavia. Missionaries were not permitted to proselyte and entered as students.²⁹⁴⁰

Kresimir Cosic, a popular Croatian basketball player who joined the Church in the 1970s, helped raise awareness of the Church and its teachings in Yugoslavia.²⁹⁴¹ In 1981, the first Yugoslav convert was called as a

²⁹³⁸ "Serbia," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127335.htm>

²⁹³⁹ "Serbia," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127335.htm>

²⁹⁴⁰ "Serbia," Country Profiles, retrieved 26 May 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/serbia>

²⁹⁴¹ Cimerman, Dora Glassford. "First for LDS in Slovenia," LDS Church News, 28 October 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49676/First-for-LDS-in-Slovenia.html>

missionary.²⁹⁴² In 1983 in Belgrade, the first senior couple missionaries were assigned, and a branch was organized. The first district in the country was organized in 1992. Government officials also granted permanent visas for full-time missionaries to serve in the country the same year. Due to civil war, missionaries were evacuated in 1993, and Serbia was transferred from the Austria Vienna Mission to the Hungary Budapest Mission. Once the civil war ended Serbia was transferred back to the Austria Vienna Mission.²⁹⁴³

Missionary work has been consistently interrupted by war and political turmoil, especially in the 1990s. Missionaries were withdrawn from Serbia at the beginning of the Kosovo conflict in 1999 and did not return until the end of 2001. During the conflict, members continued to attend Church faithfully despite buildings near the chapel in Belgrade suffering damage from bombings.²⁹⁴⁴ Fourteen missionaries and a missionary senior couple were evacuated as a precaution.²⁹⁴⁵ Serbia was assigned to the Europe East Area in 2000.²⁹⁴⁶ In December 2001, six missionaries from the Bulgaria Sofia Mission were transferred to Serbia.²⁹⁴⁷ Missionaries were again withdrawn from Serbia in 2008 when Kosovo declared independence. Missionaries did not return to Serbia for several months until civil unrest and hostility towards Americans decreased. The Serbian translation of the Book of Mormon was published in 2008. Based in Croatia, the Adriatic North Mission administers Serbia.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 308 (2012)

At the end of 2000 there were 196 members. In late 2001, membership totaled fifty in Belgrade, fifty in Smerska Mitrovica, and twelve in Novi Sad.²⁹⁴⁸ Membership increased slowly in the 2000s at a rate of around ten per year, reaching 228 in 2003 and 265 in 2006.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 3 (2012)

No additional branches have been created since the early 1990s. Three branches continue to function in Belgrade, Novi Sad, and Smerska Mitrovica. Members have met in groups in the past in Subotica and Panchevo.

Activity and Retention

Eighty attended a music concert held at the Belgrade meetinghouse in 2007.²⁹⁴⁹ A seven-country conference that included Serbia had 130 in attendance in 2007.²⁹⁵⁰ Fourteen were enrolled in seminary and institute during the 2008–2009 school year. Returned missionaries estimated that approximately fifty members were active in 2009, or 17% of total membership.

²⁹⁴² Rogerson, Kenneth S. "Radmila Ranovic: Finding Out for Herself," *Tambuli*, Sep 1991, 23.

²⁹⁴³ "Serbia," *Country Profiles*, retrieved 26 May 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/serbia>

²⁹⁴⁴ "Serbian members endure despite tumultuous times," *LDS Church News*, 30 March 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41512/Serbian-members-endure-despite-tumultuous-times.html>

²⁹⁴⁵ "Missionaries safe, moved from Belgrade," *LDS Church News*, 3 April 1999. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/35460/Missionaries-safe-moved-from-Belgrade.html>

²⁹⁴⁶ Lloyd, Scott. "European continent realigned into three new areas," *LDS Church News*, 16 September 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38475/European-continent--realigned-into-three-new-areas.html>

²⁹⁴⁷ "Missionaries return to Serbia," *LDS Church News*, 26 January 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41221/Missionaries-return-to-Serbia.html>

²⁹⁴⁸ "Missionaries return to Serbia," *LDS Church News*, 26 January 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41221/Missionaries-return-to-Serbia.html>

²⁹⁴⁹ "Serbian concert," *LDS Church News*, 14 July 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50817/Serbian-concert.html>

²⁹⁵⁰ "Seven-country conference," *LDS Church News*, 11 August 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50936/Seven-country-conference.html>

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Croatian, Hungarian, Serbian, Romanian, Ukrainian.

All LDS scriptures are translated in Croatian, Hungarian, Romanian, and Ukrainian. Only the Book of Mormon is available in Serbian. The Church has translated several unit, temple, priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, young women, primary, missionary, Church proclamations, and family history materials in Croatian and Serbian. Many CES materials are translated in Croatian. Hungarian and Ukrainian have a wide range of materials available, such as the Church Handbook of Instructions and many audio/visual materials. Church materials translated in Slovak consist of several unit, temple, priesthood, Sunday School, Primary, and family history materials. The *Liabona* has twelve Ukrainian issues, six Hungarian issues, four Romanian issues, and one Croatian issue.

Meetinghouses

The church appears to own or rent a remodeled building in Belgrade. In other locations, congregations meet in rented spaces.

Health and Safety

Threats directed at Americans have resulted in many precautionary evacuations of full-time missionaries, many of whom are from North America.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Four humanitarian projects have occurred in Serbia since 1985. Projects included providing clothing, food, and toys to children and wheelchair donations.²⁹⁵¹ In 2010, senior missionary couples conducted humanitarian and development projects throughout the country.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Missionaries may openly proselyte, and the Church faces no restrictions on its activities in Serbia. The Church does not appear to have government recognition. Obtaining official recognition may be challenging, as many nontraditional groups have been unable to obtain recognition.

Cultural Issues

Perhaps one of the greatest cultural factors limiting success in missionary work is the view Serbians have towards other religions. The Serbian Orthodox Church is the predominant religion of Serbia, and other religious institutions are seen as strange and heretical. Decades of communism taught Serbians to be wary of organizations that come from outside the country, especially from America.

National Outreach

Cities with a permanent LDS presence (Belgrade, Novi Sad, and Smerska Mitrovica) provide outreach to no more than 20% of the national population. Cities with periodic outreach and no permanent congregations (Subotica and Panchevo) account for 2.5% of the population, indicating that at least 77.5% of Serbians live

²⁹⁵¹ "Projects—Serbia," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 25 May 2010. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-38,00.html>

in a location without a mission outreach center. There are approximately ninety cities with 10,000 to 90,000 inhabitants without a congregation or missionaries assigned. Most Serbians are likely unaware of the Church's presence in cities with missionaries and congregations due to frequent evacuations and the large population of these areas.

In addition to Slovenia and Serbia, the Slovenia Ljubljana Mission also administers to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Montenegro. Mission resources are limited for Serbia, as other Balkan nations have seen greater receptivity and have more pressing needs for missionaries to serve as branch presidents and assist in reactivating less active members. Distance from Ljubljana may be an additional factor limiting mission outreach in Serbia.

One of the greatest obstacles for Church growth is the very small number of members in the country presently. The five cities in which branches or groups have operated in Serbia are all nearby the capital or in the northern portion of the country. There has been no missionary work conducted in the southern portions of the country, likely a result of mission leadership hesitating to open new areas in the country significantly further away from already established Church centers where there are no Church members. Furthermore southern areas were in greater proximity to more recent violence and civil unrest in neighboring Kosovo.

The Church maintains country Internet sites for many European nations but not yet for Serbia. Internet-based mission outreach in Serbia may be effective in finding investigators. There are some Serbian-language materials available on the Church website, including the missionary guidebook *Preach My Gospel*.²⁹⁵²

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Wars and frequent missionary evacuations have forced members to become more self-sufficient and less reliant on full-time missionaries for Church administration. However, the relationship between local members and full-time missionaries was strained when missionaries were evacuated in 2008. Returned missionaries report that missionaries did not inform members of their departure and left in a disorderly manner. Serbian members had to break lease agreements with the former missionaries' landlords and clean the former missionaries' apartments. The withdrawal of missionaries in 2008 was not only conducted poorly with missionary housing but also with Sunday services. In Subotica, some members and investigators came to Church on Sunday during this time only to find the former meetinghouse locked and no contact available to the Church. These events resulted in many hard feelings between members and missionaries that may have resulted in some members leaving the Church.

Senior couple missionaries have conducted outreach programs with single members and youth, particularly in Belgrade. Little, if any, improvement in activity rates has occurred over the past two decades. The source of some inactivity and low convert retention may be due to teaching and missionary approaches tailored to Western Christians.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Vojvodina appears to have some potential for ethnic integration issues. However, there do not appear to have been any reported in the Church. The Church has experienced some receptivity among Roma in Serbia, unlike many other European nations. One of the Belgrade Branch counselors in 2009 was a Roma.

²⁹⁵² "Serbian," Languages—lds.org, retrieved 27 May 2010. <http://www.lds.org/languages/mainmenu/0,5362,88-49,00.html>

Language Issues

The Church has taken many years to translate the few available materials in Serbian despite Serbian-speaking members and returned missionaries in the Church for thirty years. The Serbian translation of the Book of Mormon only became available in 2008, limiting the doctrinal understanding and restricting the use of Latter-day Saint scriptures until recently. Forthcoming Serbian translations of the Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price appear likely due to the large number of Serbian speakers and need among Serbian members. However, few active members and able translators may result in additional scripture and ecclesiastical material translations in Serbian taking many years or decades to complete.

Missionary Service

Creative methods for finding investigators and introducing the Church have occurred. Missionaries sang two church songs in Serbian in a concert in Belgrade that had 270 attend.²⁹⁵³ Missionaries distributing fliers for a free English class have brought converts into the Church, including Nikola Kovic, the Belgrade Branch president in 2010.²⁹⁵⁴ Eight missionaries and a senior missionary couple served as volunteers at the Twenty-fifth University Olympics in Belgrade, providing a positive public relations opportunity for the Church and allowing others to approach missionaries to learn more about the Church. Street contacting is generally challenging and typically unproductive.²⁹⁵⁵

Leadership

Native branch presidents led branches in Belgrade and Sremska Mitrovica in May 2010, whereas the Novi Sad Branch had a missionary acting as branch president. Leadership is strong although few in numbers. The operation of the Beograd Serbia and Montenegro District for nearly two decades further indicates the continued dedication of local and mission leadership.

Temple

Serbia is assigned to the Frankfurt Germany Temple district. Temple trips likely occur regularly by bus to the temple. Current active membership does not appear self-sustaining in staffing needed personnel to conduct many ordinances and activities in the temple in Serbian. Prospects for a future temple closer to Serbia do not appear forthcoming in the medium term.

Comparative Growth

Serbia has one of the lowest ratios of LDS members to population in Europe, as one in 25,500 Serbians was LDS at year-end 2009. Other nations in the former Yugoslavia with a Church presence have a higher percentage of Church members, greater national outreach, and comparable or higher activity rates than Serbia. These nations have tended to enjoy greater stability than Serbia in the past couple of decades. Some nations in the former Yugoslavia remain without an official Church presence, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Montenegro. These nations have administrative branches and groups for the few foreign and local members.

²⁹⁵³ "Religious concert given," LDS Church News, 26 January 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/48449/Religious-concert-given.html>

²⁹⁵⁴ "Missionary moments: Such enthusiasm," LDS Church News, 3 April 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59112/Missionary-moments-Such-enthusiasm.html>

²⁹⁵⁵ "Serving with smiles opened doors in Serbia," LDS Church News, 12 September 2009. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/57874/Serving-with-smiles-opened-doors-in-Serbia.html>

Future Prospects

Continued frustrations with low receptivity, few active members, and little local leadership create an unfavorable outlook for future church growth. The recent translation of the Book of Mormon in Serbian may improve member and convert understanding and conviction to the gospel, but significant cultural challenges continue to inhibit growth.

SLOVAKIA

Geography

AREA: 49,035 square km. Landlocked in Central Europe, Slovakia borders Poland, Ukraine, Hungary, Austria, and Czech Republic. Terrain consists of lowlands in southern areas and rugged mountains in the central and northern regions subject to a temperate climate. Summers are cool, whereas winters are cloudy and humid. Air pollution and acid rain are environmental issues. Slovakia is divided into eight administrative regions.

Peoples

Slovak: 85.8%

Hungarian: 9.7%

Roma: 1.7%

Ruthenia/Ukrainian: 1%

Other/unspecified: 1.8%

Slovaks constitute the majority of the population. Hungarians are concentrated along the Hungarian border.

Population: 5,483,088 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: 0.104% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.38 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 72.14 male, 80.12 female (2012)

Languages: Slovak (83.9%), Hungarian (10.7%), Roma (1.8%), Ukrainian (1%), other and unspecified (2.6%). Slovak is the official language and is the only language with over one million speakers (4.58 million).

Literacy: 99.6% (2001)

History

Celts populated present-day Slovakia starting in the sixth century BC. The Roman Empire pushed into the region for a couple centuries following the birth of Christ. The Huns invaded between the fourth and seventh centuries. Slavs settled during this period and gained influence and political power. Hungary annexed Slovakia and maintained control until the twentieth century. Following World War I and the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Slovaks and Czechs united to create Czechoslovakia. Communism spread to Czechoslovakia following World War II, and the region remained under the Soviet sphere of influence until 1989. A peaceful division between Czechs and Slovaks occurred in 1993. In 2004, Slovakia joined the European Union and NATO.

Culture

Slovakia possesses a respected legacy of artists, scholars, and athletes. Cuisine is characteristic of Central Europe and primarily consists of meat, potatoes, and soups. Alcohol consumption rates are high and comparable to Russia. Cigarette consumption rates compare to most of Europe.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$23,400 (2011) [48.6% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.834

Corruption Index: 4.0 (2011)

Slovakia has achieved strong economic growth and has experienced a rapid transformation from a centralized economy to a free market economy since independence. This has resulted in successful integration into Central Europe and the European Union. Further economic development is needed as the unemployment rate was 12% in 2009 and 21% of the population lived below the poverty line in 2002. Services and industry employ 69% and 27% of the workforce, respectively. Industry is well diversified and includes metal production, food, electricity, oil, nuclear fuel, machinery, paper, and printing. Primary trade partners include Germany, the Czech Republic, and Hungary.

Corruption is perceived as more prevalent than in most European Union nations and influences all sectors of the economy. Bribes to obtain medical care and higher education are commonly paid. Many report corruption in the judicial system.²⁹⁵⁶

Faiths

Christian: 83.8%

Other: 3.2%

None: 13%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Roman Catholic 3,764,039

Protestant 590,009

Greek Catholic 223,985

Jehovah's Witnesses 11,315 161

Seventh Day Adventists 2,196 41

Latter-day Saints 221 6

Religion

Most Slovaks identify as Catholic. Orthodox Christians tend to live in the east, and many members of Protestant churches live along the Hungarian border.²⁹⁵⁷ Slovakia has one of the highest percentages of those reporting regular church attendance in the European Union at 33%.²⁹⁵⁸

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, and government typically upholds this right. There is no official religion, but ties exist between the government and the Catholic Church. Registration is not required for religious groups to assemble but is needed to obtain special government benefits, such as conducting legal marriages. The 2007 registration law requires a religious group to have 20,000 adult members who are citizens

²⁹⁵⁶ "Corruption in Slovakia," retrieved 6 May 2010. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWBIGOVANTCOR/Resources/slovrep44.pdf>

²⁹⁵⁷ "Slovak Republic," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127336.htm>

²⁹⁵⁸ Manchin, Robert. "Religion in Europe: Trust not filling the pews," Gallup, 21 September 2004. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/13117/religion-europe-trust-filling-pews.aspx>

or permanent residents. This legislation limited the rights of smaller religious groups. There have been some reports of anti-Semitism.²⁹⁵⁹

Largest Cities

Urban: 56%

Bratislava, Kosice, **Prešov**, **Nitra**, Žilina, Banská Bystrica, **Trnava**, **Martin**, Trenčín, **Poprad**.

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregation.

Five of the ten largest cities have a congregation. Twenty-three percent (23%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

Missionary work began in Czechoslovakia in the 1920s when the Church obtained legal recognition in 1928. Slow growth occurred for the following two decades due to a depression and World War II. The first member was baptized in present-day Slovakia in 1939.²⁹⁶⁰ Missionary work occurred between 1946 and 1950 until the mission was closed.²⁹⁶¹ The Church dedicated Czechoslovakia for missionary work in 1929 and a mission was organized. The Czechoslovak Mission was discontinued in 1950 and reopened in 1990, the same year the Church regained legal recognition.²⁹⁶² Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf dedicated Slovakia for missionary work in 2006.²⁹⁶³ Known colloquially as the Slovakian Miracle, in September 2006 missionaries throughout the Czech Prague Mission obtained over 30,000 signatures from those who agreed to have the LDS Church enter the country. In addition to their signatures, Slovakian citizens also had to provide their personal identification number, home address, and full name.²⁹⁶⁴ Slovakia belongs to the Europe Area and was previously administered by the Europe Central Area until consolidated with the Europe West Area in the late 2000s.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 221 (2012)

There were approximately 200 members in Czechoslovakia in 1990.²⁹⁶⁵ In 2000, there were 102 members in Slovakia. Slow growth has occurred during the 2000s as membership reached 120 by 2004 and 124 by 2007. The largest membership increases occurred in 2008 and 2009 with fifteen and seventeen new members, respectively.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 4 Groups: 2 (April 2013)

²⁹⁵⁹ "Slovak Republic," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127336.htm>

²⁹⁶⁰ "1995–1996 Church News Almanac expands historical research," LDS Church News, 3 December 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25154/1995-96-Church-News-Almanac-expands-historical-reach.html>

²⁹⁶¹ "LDS Czechs celebrate first hall," LDS Church News, 1 December 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40958/LDS-Czechs-celebrate-first-hall.html>

²⁹⁶² "Commemorate 75 years in Czech Republic," LDS Church News, 4 September 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46075/Commemorate-75-years-in-Czech-Republic.html>

²⁹⁶³ "Slovakia dedicated," LDS Church News, 9 September 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49409/Slovakia-dedicated.html>

²⁹⁶⁴ Stahle, Shaun D. "Daunting task known as Slovakian miracle," LDS Church News, 11 November 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49733/Daunting-task-known-as-Slovakian-miracle.html>

²⁹⁶⁵ "Eight new missions announced," LDS Church News, 3 March 1990. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/19805/Eight-new-missions-announced.html>

The first branch was created in Trenčín in the early 1990s, followed by a second branch in Bratislava.²⁹⁶⁶ By 2000, a third branch functioned in Žilina. In 2007, a fourth branch was created in Kosice. In the late 2000s, missionaries opened Banská Bystrica, and a group was formed. In 2012, a group was formed in Zvolen.

The Brno Czech Republic District administers to three branches. The Kosice Branch does not belong to a district and reports directly to the Czech Prague Mission.

Activity and Retention

Fifty-six members and missionaries attended the dedication of Slovakia in 2006.²⁹⁶⁷ In 2009, the Bratislava Branch had approximately thirty active members. Other congregations appear to have fewer than thirty attending regularly. Seminary and institute programs have not been established. Active members likely number no more than seventy, or 40%–45% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Slovak, Czech, Hungarian, Ukrainian.

Slovak is mutually intelligible with Czech, in which all LDS scriptures and many church resources are available. However, Slovaks value their own national identity and language, which has become increasingly differentiated from Czech since independence for nationalist reasons, and they do not like to use Czech materials. The Slovak translation of the Book of Mormon was published in early 2013. All LDS scriptures and a wide selection of Church materials are translated into Hungarian and Ukrainian, although few Slovaks speak these languages, and there are no LDS congregations in border regions where these populations are concentrated. Church materials translated in Slovak consist of several unit, temple, priesthood, Sunday School, primary, and family history materials.

Meetinghouses

All congregations meet in rented spaces or renovated buildings.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Dutch Relief Society members made quilts for orphanages in Croatia and Slovakia in 2002.²⁹⁶⁸

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church has enjoyed the benefits of government recognition only since late 2006. Prior to registration, missionaries only served in Slovakia on a temporarily basis. Recently received government registration allows for greater allocation of mission resources. No laws restrict missionary activity.

²⁹⁶⁶ "1995–1996 Church News Almanac expands historical research," LDS Church News, 3 December 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25154/1995-96-Church-News-Almanac-expands-historical-reach.html>

²⁹⁶⁷ "Slovakia dedicated," LDS Church News, 9 September 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49409/Slovakia-dedicated.html>

²⁹⁶⁸ "Helping children in Slovakia, Croatia," LDS Church News, 7 September 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42398/Helping-children-in-Slovakia-Croatia.html>

Cultural Issues

Slovakia has one of the most religiously active populations in the European Union. Increasing materialism and wealth during the past two decades may lessen the receptivity of the population to mission outreach. Those who adhere to traditional religious groups face greater challenges from family and friends if they join the Church.

National Outreach

Slovakia lacks a mission of its own but depends on outreach directed by the Czech Prague mission and has received much less attention, missionary manpower, and resources than the Czech Republic.

Notwithstanding its relatively religious population, Slovakia remains one of the least reached nations in Europe by LDS mission efforts, as the combined population of cities with a mission outreach center amount to 16% of the population. Three of the eight administrative regions have no congregations and account for 38% of the national population. Some mission outreach in the city Martin occurred in the late 2000s. Most cities with congregations have had a gospel witness for a short duration and only few missionaries, and so the scope and impact of past and present mission outreach has been very small. Approximately sixty cities ranging from 10,000 to 50,000 inhabitants have no congregations and little, if any, concentrated proselytism efforts.

The small size of current membership and a less receptive population after two decades since the fall of communism complicate expanding national outreach, although the limited member base largely reflects the small missionary complement and few resources that have been allocated to missionary work in Slovakia.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Member activity rates appear higher than most former communist nations in Europe. The limited involvement of full-time missionaries in finding, teaching, and baptizing converts likely fostered greater self-sufficiency among members in these tasks. Convert retention appears moderate to high, as most converts develop habitual church attendance prior to baptism. The opening of additional cities and the establishment of congregations also indicates that converts are being retained. Strong involvement of local members in missionary activity as well as the allocation of additional full-time missionaries and outreach resources will be required to accelerate membership growth.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The small size of membership and an overrepresentation of foreign members limit greater growth and self-sufficiency among Slovakian membership. In Bratislava, half of the active membership is Slovak, and foreign members hold many callings. Hungarians in the south and other minority groups remain unreached by mission outreach. Hungarians appear more receptive to the Church, which may allow for greater membership growth once proselytism efforts occur in Hungarian-speaking regions. Tension between Hungarians and Slovaks complicate outreach among both groups in border regions.

Missionary Service

Prior to obtaining government recognition, missionaries could only work in Slovakia on temporary visas. Sixty missionaries were serving in the Czech Prague Mission in 2006.²⁹⁶⁹ By early 2009, around twenty missionaries

²⁹⁶⁹Stahle, Shaun D. "Daunting task known as Slovakian miracle," LDS Church News, 11 November 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49733/Daunting-task-known-as-Slovakian-miracle.html>

served in Slovakia. Four elders served in Kosice in early 2010. Very few Slovak members have served full-time missions.

Language Issues

Although some Church materials are translated in Slovak, no LDS scriptures were translated until 2013 despite a more than two-decade history of Slovak-speaking membership. The lack of scriptures in Slovak has slowed membership growth over the past two decades, which in turn relegates Slovak to a low-priority language, perpetuates delays in the translation of LDS scripture, and reduces the scope, efficacy, and vision of mission outreach: a self-perpetuating cycle of neglect and stagnation based in circular logic. Like Georgian and some other languages with few local members and no translations of LDS scripture, the Slovak language will require greater vision from mission planners grounded in long-term commitment to the local population and not merely the small number of present members. Some initial investment of resources to commission scripture translations and establish a better footing for indigenous membership strength and future growth.

Church services in Bratislava are held in both English and Slovakian. There are few non-Slovakian speakers in other congregations.

Leadership

All four branches appeared to have local branch presidents with the possible exception of Kosice in May 2010. The small size of active membership and a lack of leadership in Banská Bystrica have prevented the creation of an independent branch. Local leadership remains too limited to justify the creation of a district for congregations in Slovakia.

Temple

Slovakia pertains to the Freiburg Germany Temple district. Temple trips occur regularly under the Brno Czech Republic District. Slovakian members benefit from close proximity to the temple despite their small numbers.

Comparative Growth

Slovakia has the lowest percentage of LDS members out of any European nation with an official Church presence. Only one in approximately 34,000 people is nominally LDS. Few European nations besides Slovakia with an official LDS presence have fewer than one hundred active members. Some European nations have had the Church arrive more recently and have experienced greater growth. In Moldova, the Church began its operations in the mid-1990s and obtained legal recognition from the government at the same time as Slovakia, yet in early 2010 had a district and about twice as many members.

Missionary-minded Christian groups have experienced slow to moderate growth in Slovakia in recent years but have a significantly larger membership base than Latter-day Saints. Evangelical groups have seen little growth. Seventh Day Adventists have increased by only one hundred, and the number of churches decreased by two over the past decade. Jehovah's Witnesses have experienced the most steady membership growth due to a heavy emphasis on member proselytism and the development of indigenous leadership.

Future Prospects

Government registration may allow for greater church growth in Slovakia; however, greater vision and commitment of mission resources are also needed. Increasing materialism and the lack of any Slovakian-language scriptures limit missionary efforts in finding, teaching, baptizing, and retaining converts. Increasing

materialism has further eroded receptivity, and the Church faces an increasingly competitive environment from better organized outreach-oriented faiths with strong indigenous membership. Continued increases in membership may result in the strengthening of functioning congregations to allow the creation of a district. The Church has yet to experience a breakthrough with attracting Slovak converts in greater numbers, although few missionaries or resources have been allocated.

SLOVENIA

Geography

AREA: 20,273 square km. Situated in Central Europe, Slovenia borders Croatia, Italy, Austria, Hungary, and the Adriatic Sea. High mountains and valleys in the eastern Alps cover most of the interior with some plains in the northeast and the narrow strip of coast. Coastal areas experience a Mediterranean climate, whereas the interior is subject to a continental climate consisting of cold winters and warm summers. Flooding and earthquakes are natural hazards. Environmental issues include water pollution in rivers and the Adriatic Sea, air pollution, and acid rain. Slovenia is administratively divided into 210 municipalities.

Population: 1,996,617 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: -0.185% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.31 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 73.83 male, 81.36 female (2012)

Peoples

Slovene: 83.1%

Serb: 2%

Croat: 1.8%

Bosniak: 1.1%

Other/unspecified: 12%

Languages: Slovenian (91.1%), Serbo-Croatian (4.5%), other or unspecified (4.4%). National or official languages include Slovene, Hungarian, and Italian. Only Slovene has over one million speakers (1.8 million). Slovenian is not mutually intelligible with Croatian or Serbian, but many older Slovenes understand Serbo-Croatian. Most young Slovenes are fluent in English.

Literacy: 99.7%

History

Slavs arrived in the sixth century and formed Carantania, which ruled the area for several centuries. Carantania later joined the Carolingian Empire. Slovene lands subsequently became subject to Austrian rule. The Protestant Reformation left a strong legacy on Slovenia, including the Slovene script used today. Protestants were expelled in the early seventeenth century.²⁹⁷⁰ The Austro-Hungarian Empire controlled the area until its dissolution following World War I. Slovenes, Croats, and Serbians united to form Yugoslavia in 1929. Slovenia remained a republic of Yugoslavia until an independence movement was initiated in the 1980s, culminating in independence in 1991. War with Yugoslavia lasted only ten days. Slovenia's remote location and low ethnic diversity isolated it from later conflicts in the Balkans. Rapid modernization, renewed historical ties with Western Europe, and political stability have resulted in strong economic growth over the past two decades.

²⁹⁷⁰ "Slovenia," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 21 May 2010. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slovenia>

Culture

Slovenia exhibits many societal features of former communist nations of Central and Eastern Europe, with a large portion of the population identifying as nonreligious and a revival of traditional religious groups, Catholicism in Slovenia's case. Slovenia has achieved the greatest economic growth and wealth among former communist nations in Europe, resulting in increased secularism and higher costs of living. There is a legacy of famous writers, architects, composers, painters, and musicians. Cuisine consists of a variety of foods native to the country or introduced from elsewhere. Slovenia has the world's second highest cigarette consumption rate²⁹⁷¹ and moderate rates of alcohol consumption.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$29,100 (2011) [60.5% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.884

Corruption Index: 5.9 (2011)

In 2010, Slovenia had the highest GDP per capita among the former communist nations in Central and Eastern Europe. Wealth is more equally distributed than most nations, and the economy has modernized to Western European levels. The worldwide financial crisis in the late 2000s resulted in a decline of 7.3% in the GDP and increased the unemployment rates to 9.4%. Services employ 63% of the labor force and produce 61% of the GDP. Industry employs 35% of the workforce and produces 37% of the GDP. Metal and aluminum products, smelting, electronics, and truck and car manufacturing are primary industries. Agricultural products include potatoes, wheat, and sugar beets. Primary trade partners include Germany, Italy, Austria, and Croatia. Corruption levels rank among the lowest for former communist nations in Europe.

Faiths

Christian: 61%

Muslim: 2.1%

Unaffiliated: 3.5%

Other/unspecified: 23%

None: 10.1%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 1,160,000

Jehovah's Witnesses 2,008 29

Seventh Day Adventists 558 13

Latter-day Saints 411 4

Religion

Fifty-eight percent (58%) of Slovenians are Catholic. Orthodox Christians and Muslims each account for 2% of the population and are primarily Serbs and Bosniaks, respectively. Non-Catholic and non-Orthodox Christians account for less than 1% of the population. Twenty-three percent (23%) provided no information concerning their religious affiliation, and 10% identified as atheists on the 2002 census.²⁹⁷²

²⁹⁷¹ "List of countries by cigarette consumption per capita," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 21 May 2010. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_cigarette_consumption_per_capita

²⁹⁷² "Slovenia," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127337.htm>

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. Persecution, abuse of religious freedom, and religious discrimination are not tolerated. Many Christian holidays are national holidays. Religious minorities may also observe their religious holidays under the law. Registration with the government is not required for religious groups to practice but is required to obtain legal status. Some isolated instances of societal infringement of religious freedom have been reported targeting Muslims and Jews.²⁹⁷³

Largest Cities

Urban: 48%

Ljubljana, Maribor, Celje, **Kranj**, **Velenje**, **Koper**, **Novo Mesto**, **Ptuj**, **Trbovlje**, **Podhom**.

Cities listed in **bold** have no LDS congregation.

Three of the ten largest cities have congregations. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of the national population lives in the ten largest cities.

LDS History

The first Slovene members joined the Church in other nations, such as Norway and Austria. Interest in opening the Slovene-populated region of Yugoslavia to missionary work began as early as 1974 when the president of the Austria Vienna Mission met with government officials in Ljubljana and Maribor. Kresimir Cosic, a popular Croatian basketball player who joined the Church in the 1970s, helped raise awareness of the Church and its teachings in Yugoslavia.²⁹⁷⁴ The Church was first recognized by the Yugoslav government as a legal entity in 1975.²⁹⁷⁵ The Austria Vienna East Mission was organized in 1987 and administered Yugoslavia. The first missionaries arrived in November 1990, and by March 1991, the Church obtained legal recognition. In the same month, jurisdiction for Slovenia returned to the Austria Vienna Mission, and the first convert baptism occurred.²⁹⁷⁶ Seven Slovenia members attended the Bern Switzerland Temple rededication in October 1992.²⁹⁷⁷ In 1992, the first Slovenian couple was married in the Frankfurt Germany Temple.²⁹⁷⁸ The first missionary called from Slovenia began serving in September 1993 from Ljubljana.²⁹⁷⁹ The Austria Vienna South Mission was created in 1996 and administered the former Yugoslavia. Mission headquarters were relocated to Slovenia in 1999, Croatia in 2003, and back to Slovenia shortly thereafter.²⁹⁸⁰

Slovenia became part of the Europe Central Area in 2000, which was consolidated with the Europe West Area to form the Europe Area in the late 2000s. Many local government officials and members throughout the country attended the groundbreaking of the first chapel in Ljubljana in 2006.²⁹⁸¹ Seminary and institute began

²⁹⁷³ "Slovenia," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127337.htm>

²⁹⁷⁴ Cimerman, Dora Glassford. "First for LDS in Slovenia," LDS Church News, 28 October 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49676/First-for-LDS-in-Slovenia.html>

²⁹⁷⁵ "Croatia," Country Profiles, retrieved 22 May 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/croatia>

²⁹⁷⁶ "Slovenia," Desert News 2010 Church Almanac, p. 574.

²⁹⁷⁷ Avant, Gerry. "Thousands gather and savor experience of temple dedication," LDS Church News, 31 October 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/21988/Thousands-gather-and-savor-experience-of-temple-dedication.html>

²⁹⁷⁸ "Cinderella story: a dress for bride-to-be," LDS Church News, 6 February 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23044/Cinderella-story-a-dress-for-bride-to-be.html>

²⁹⁷⁹ "From the world," LDS Church News, 22 January 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24203/From-the-world.html>

²⁹⁸⁰ "Slovenia," Desert News 2010 Church Almanac, p. 574.

²⁹⁸¹ Cimerman, Dora Glassford. "First for LDS in Slovenia," LDS Church News, 28 October 2006. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/49676/First-for-LDS-in-Slovenia.html>

in 1997 and 2008, respectively. Sometime in the early 2010s, the Slovenia Ljubljana Mission was relocated to Zagreb, Croatia and renamed the Adriatic North Mission.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 411 (2012)

In the early 1990s, there were ten LDS members.²⁹⁸² Membership growth was strongest in the 1990s, as there were 199 members by year-end 1999. A year later there were 246 members. During the 2000s, growth has been slow but consistent, as membership reached 325 in 2003 and 352 in 2007. Membership declined in 2004, but other years in the past decade have experienced growth rates ranging from 1.5% to 14%. In 2008, 180 of the 380 members in Slovenia resided in Ljubljana.²⁹⁸³

Congregational Growth

Branches: 4 (2012)

The Church organized branches in Ljubljana, Celje, and Maribor as well as the Ljubljana Slovenia District in 1992. With the exception of 2002, there have been four branches by the end of each year during the 2000s. Branches remain established in Ljubljana, Celje, and Maribor. The Slovenia/Croatia Mission Branch is headquartered in Ljubljana for members living in remote locations in the two countries. A group began meeting in Novo Mesto in the late 2000s, and missionaries were assigned to the city, but in November 2009, the city closed to missionary work. It appears that not a single convert baptism occurred while the city was opened for missionary work. A branch may have briefly functioned in Kranj in the past, and in 2010 missionaries were assigned to the city. Members in Kranj travel to Ljubljana for church meetings. Missionaries were assigned to Velenje in the late 1990s but no longer serve in the city.

Activity and Retention

In 2000, there were approximately seventy active members nationwide. Celje had approximately twenty active members in 2008. Conferences in Southeastern Europe and the Balkans have had regular attendees from Slovene youth and young adults. Nineteen youth from Slovenia attended a youth conference held for nations of the former Yugoslavia in 2000.²⁹⁸⁴ Forty-seven youth from Slovenia and Croatia met for a youth conference in 2003.²⁹⁸⁵ A seven-country conference that included Slovenia had 130 in attendance in 2007.²⁹⁸⁶ 418 attended an open house for the new meetinghouse in Ljubljana, including the mayor and civic leaders.²⁹⁸⁷ 150 attended a meeting with Elder D. Todd Christofferson in 2009.²⁹⁸⁸ Seventeen were enrolled in seminary and institute during the 2007–2008 school year. Ljubljana and Kranj likely have eighty to one hundred active members. Active membership is estimated at approximately 130, or 30%–35% of total membership.

²⁹⁸² "Season of interest," LDS Church News, 1 November 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/55659/Season-of-interest.html>

²⁹⁸³ "Season of interest," LDS Church News, 1 November 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/55659/Season-of-interest.html>

²⁹⁸⁴ "Gathering units Balkan youth," LDS Church News, 9 September 2000. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38434/Gathering-unites-Balkan-youth.html>

²⁹⁸⁵ Maxfield, Ani Clipper. "Youth meet in Slovenia conference," LDS Church News, 13 September 2003. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44305/Youth-meet-in-Slovenia-conference.html>

²⁹⁸⁶ "Seven-country conference," LDS Church News, 11 August 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50936/Seven-country-conference.html>

²⁹⁸⁷ "Season of interest," LDS Church News, 1 November 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/55659/Season-of-interest.html>

²⁹⁸⁸ "First meetinghouse dedicated in Croatia," LDS Church News, 20 June 2009. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/57494/First-meetinghouse-dedicated-in-Croatia.html>

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Slovenian, Croatian, Hungarian, Italian, Serbian.

Only the Book of Mormon is available in Slovenian and Serbian. All LDS scriptures are translated into Croatian, Hungarian, and Italian. The Church has translated several unit, temple, priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, young women, primary, missionary, Church proclamations, and family history materials into Slovenian, Croatian, and Serbian. Hungarian and Italian have more Church materials available, including the Church Handbook of Instructions and many audio/visual materials. Many CES materials are translated in Croatian. The *Liabona* has twelve Italian issues, six Hungarian issues, one Slovenian issue, and one Croatian issue annually.

Meetinghouses

The Ljubljana Branch meets in a church-built meetinghouse completed in 2008. Branches in Celje and Maribor meet in rented spaces or renovated buildings.

Humanitarian and Development Work

There has been no humanitarian or development work conducted in Slovenia due to its economic prosperity and small population. Service projects are limited to events sponsored by local congregations and full-time missionaries fulfilling weekly service hours.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

No laws or government interference has limited the Church's missionary program. Missionaries may openly proselyte.

Cultural Issues

Despite increasing secularism, the Catholic Church remains a major culture influence. Although minority religious groups enjoy religious freedom today, negative societal attitudes toward non-Catholics persist, and little remains of the Protestant legacy since the expulsion of Protestants in centuries before. High cigarette consumption rates indicate that cigarette addiction is an issue that converts may struggle to completely overcome.

National Outreach

Slovenia's small geographic size reduces the number of needed outreach centers. However, most Slovenes live in rural locations. Missionaries are assigned to cities that account for 21% of the national population. Over the past two decades, the Church has only been successful in establishing congregations in Slovenia's three largest cities and establishing a permanent missionary presence in Kranj. Missionaries have temporarily been assigned to Novo Mesto and Velenje. In 2010, missionaries made periodic trips to some cities without congregations, such as Velenje. A lack of receptive Slovenes and high living costs discourages greater mission outreach with full-time missionaries. Periodic missionary visits, cottage meetings, distributing church literature, and media exposure may be the most efficient means of improving the Church's proselytism approach.

The Church maintains a website for Slovenia at <http://www.cerkev-jezusa-kristusa.si/>. News, meetinghouse locations, and information about Church doctrines and practices are provided in Slovenian. The Internet site provides mission outreach to unreached areas and a nonconfrontational method to reach interested individuals.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Both the number of active and nominal members in Slovenia has nearly doubled in the past decade. Increases in active membership indicate that many new converts have been able to integrate into established congregations, which in some nations can become close-knit and unwelcoming to those who don't fit in. Member activity remains strongest in Ljubljana, where there are some active full-member families. In Celje, Church meetings were held for only held for two hours in 2009 due to the small number of active members.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The lack of ethnic diversity reduces ethnic tensions while creating strong connections to religious traditions that are difficult for many Slovenes to break. There does not appear to have been any gospel witness to ethnic minorities in border regions.

Language Issues

One elder serving in Ljubljana reported in 2010 that many missionaries in recent years have struggled to learn Slovene proficiently. A lack of adequate command of Slovenian among many missionaries limits outreach. The Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price have yet to be translated into Slovenian. Forthcoming translations will depend on the availability of translators and greater demand from Slovenian-speaking members.

Missionary Service

Slovenia remains entirely dependent on foreign missionaries to supply its full-time missionary force. In late 2009, seventeen missionaries were serving in Slovenia, and in early 2010, ten elders served in Ljubljana. Very few Slovene members have served full-time missions. In early 2010, no Slovene members were serving missions although a couple young men had recently returned from their missions and a couple more were preparing to serve in the near future.

Leadership

Slovene leadership has been small, but dedicated. The branch president of the Ljubljana Branch in the early 1990s had been the first Slovene missionary;²⁹⁸⁹ he and his wife his wife were the first Slovenian couple to marry in the temple in 1992.²⁹⁹⁰ The first native district president of Slovenia began his tenure in 1998.²⁹⁹¹ Native branch presidents lead branches in Ljubljana and Celje.

Temple

Slovenia pertains to the Frankfurt Germany Temple district. Temple trips occur and members typically travel by bus. Prospects for a closer temple appear unlikely in the foreseeable future.

Comparative Growth

Until the mission was relocated to Croatia, Slovenia was the nation with the smallest church membership with a full-time mission, although the mission previously serviced all nations of the former Yugoslavia. The Ljubljana

²⁹⁸⁹ "From the world," LDS Church News, 22 January 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/24203/From-the-world.html>

²⁹⁹⁰ "Cinderella story: a dress for bride-to-be," LDS Church News, 6 February 1993. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/23044/Cinderella-story-a-dress-for-bride-to-be.html>

²⁹⁹¹ Gardner, Marvin K. "Albin Lotric: Pioneer in Slovenia," Ensign, Feb 2002, 39.

Branch is the largest LDS congregation in the former Yugoslavia by active membership. The percentage of Church members in Slovenia is less than half the percentage in most Western or Central European nations. In the former Yugoslavia, Slovenia has the second largest Church membership and the highest ratio of members to the population at one member per 5,120 people. Membership growth rates rank average for the Balkans and lower than most former communist nations in Central and Eastern Europe. Slovenia also has the highest percentage of active members in the former Yugoslavia. Slovenia is one of the few nations in Central and Eastern Europe that has seen increases in active membership over 50% in the past decade.

Christian groups have experienced little growth in Slovenia. Jehovah's Witnesses are the largest proselytism-oriented denomination, as Witnesses have a strong presence in Central Europe and rely on local members to perpetuate growth. Over the past decade, Seventh Day Adventists increased by less than one hundred members and added no new congregations.

Future Prospects

Slow but steady growth is anticipated for the LDS Church in Slovenia. Future growth in national outreach appears unlikely in the medium term, as past efforts to expand national outreach in smaller towns have been unsuccessful. Active membership growth appears most likely in Ljubljana. Breakthroughs in gaining multiple converts in unreached cities and towns will be required for mission outreach to exceed 50% of the population. The small number of members, limited local leadership, and low rates of native missionary service have limited growth. Secularism, superficial religious belief, and atheism following decades of communism, and the adherence of most the religiously active to Catholicism create significant obstacles toward greater church growth. Greater vision, training, and desire among the Slovene LDS faithful will be necessary if church growth rates are to be improved.

UKRAINE

Geography

AREA: 603,550 square km. Located in Eastern Europe on the shore of the Black Sea, Ukraine is the second largest country by geographic size in Europe and borders Russia, Moldova, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, and Belarus. Two major rivers—the Dnieper and the Dniester—flow through central and western Ukraine, respectively. The Crimean Peninsula constitutes the southernmost region, which protrudes into the Black Sea. Fertile plains and plateaus account for most the terrain, although some mountains are found in the west (the Carpathians) and on the Crimean Peninsula. Temperate climate characterized by hot summers and cold winters occurs in most areas with some Mediterranean climatic conditions experienced along the Black Sea. Environmental issues include shortages of potable water, pollution, deforestation, and radiation contamination resulting from the 1986 Chernobyl Nuclear Disaster. Ukraine is divided into twenty-four provinces, one autonomous republic, and two municipalities.

Peoples

Ukrainian: 77.8%

Russian: 17.3%

Belarusian: 0.6%

Moldovan: 0.5%

Crimean Tatar: 0.5%

Bulgarian: 0.4%

Hungarian: 0.3%

Romanian: 0.3%

Polish: 0.3%

Jewish: 0.2%

Other: 1.8%

Ukrainians are concentrated in central and western areas, whereas Russians are primarily found in the east and along Black Sea coastal areas. Ukrainian and Russian population in many areas are heavily intermixed. Other ethnic groups typically reside near the border with the nations in which their respective ethnic group is primarily found. Ukraine will likely continue to experience population decline for the next several decades due to decreasing birth and life expectancy rates.

Population: 44,854,065 (July 2012)

Annual Growth Rate: -0.625% (2012)

Fertility Rate: 1.29 children born per woman (2012)

Life Expectancy: 63.07 male, 74.77 female (2012)

Languages: Ukrainian (67%), Russian (24%), other (9%). Ukrainian is the official language. Languages with over one million speakers include Ukrainian (30.4 million), Russian (10.9 million) and Polish (1.1 million). Languages with over 100,000 speakers include Eastern Yiddish, Rusyn, Belarusian, Romanian, Crimean Tatar, Bulgarian, Hungarian, and Armenian.

Ukrainian is an Eastern Slavic language with heavy Polish influence as well as its own unique constructs. Some 80% of Ukrainians are estimated to be bilingual in both Ukrainian and Russian. Ukrainian is the official language, although Russian continues to be widely spoken, especially in the east and south, and there have been proposals to make Russian a second official language, as most Russian-speakers are not fluent in Ukrainian. Almost all Ukrainians can speak Russian, whereas few Russians can speak or understand Ukrainian. Both Ukrainian and Russian are spoken in Kyiv.

Literacy: 99.4% (2001)

History

Ukraine was the center of the first eastern Slavic state, Kyivan Rus, which was the largest state in Europe during the tenth and eleventh centuries. Weakened by internecine quarrels and Mongol invasions, much of Kyivan Rus was incorporated into the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and eventually into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; the eastern and southern portions of Ukraine were ruled by the Golden Horde. The cultural and religious legacy of Kyivan Rus laid the foundation for subsequent Ukrainian ethnic identity. A new Ukrainian state, the Cossack Hetmanate, was established during the mid-seventeenth century after an uprising against the Poles. Despite continuous Muscovite pressure, the Hetmanate remained autonomous for well over one hundred years. During the latter part of the eighteenth century, most Ukrainian ethnographic territory was absorbed by the Russian Empire; the western provinces bordering Galicia were annexed by Austria-Hungary during the partitions of Poland. Following the collapse of czarist Russia in 1917, western Ukraine achieved short-lived independence (1917–20) before being annexed into the Soviet Union. During Soviet collectivization, Ukraine endured two forced famines (1921–22 and 1932–33) during which over eight million died. Another seven to eight million Ukrainians died during World War II at the hands of German and Soviet forces.

Independence from the Soviet Union occurred in 1991. Democracy and prosperity remained elusive as the legacy of state control and endemic corruption stalled efforts at economic reform, privatization, and civil liberties. A peaceful mass protest known as the Orange Revolution in the closing months of 2004 led to the overturn of election results criticized for irregularities by international observers. Viktor Yanukovich was elected president in a February 2010 run-off election that observers assessed as meeting international standards.

Culture

Ukraine possesses a unique culture that has endured for over a thousand years. Russian and Soviet rule attempted to eliminate the indigenous cultural influences during the many years of occupation—particularly in the east and south—as evidenced by the spread of the Russian language in these regions. Contemporary cultural and political divides largely reflect differences between the Russian-dominated East and the Polish and Austro-Hungarian legacy of the more independent West.

Ukrainian culture, architecture, music, and art have been influenced by its eastern and western neighbors. Gender roles tend to be traditional, although almost all women have worked since the Soviet era; grandparents play a greater role in raising children than in the West. Ukrainian customs are heavily influenced by Eastern Orthodox Christianity.

Orthodox Christianity remains a strong influence on native culture as does the legacy of communism from much of the twentieth century. Common foods include beef, pork, fish, chicken, and mushrooms. Pysanky—decorated Ukrainian eggs—are well-known for their designs and exquisite colors. Ukraine also boasts a rich legacy of literature, music, and dance.²⁹⁹² The alcohol consumption rate is lower than much of Europe,

²⁹⁹² "Ukraine," Wikipedia.com, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukraine>. Accessed 4 August 2010.

whereas cigarette consumption and divorce rates are very high. Abortion is common and is often used as a form of birth control.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$7,200 (2011) [15% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.729

Corruption Index: 2.3 (2011)

Ukraine's large population, fertile soil, and developed infrastructure made it one of the most productive and economically viable former Soviet republics. Ukraine produced four times as much output as the next most productive republic at the time of independence, but output dropped by 40% in the 1990s due to efforts to reform the economy and industry that previously served specialized needs for the Soviet Union. The economy remains highly sensitive and vulnerable to energy supplies and depends highly on Russia to meet these needs. Limited economic growth has occurred since independence due to political turmoil, corruption, and the challenges resulting from economic reform.

In 2009, Ukraine suffered a severe recession as GDP fell by 14%. Services employ 66% of the workforce and produce 59% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 19% of the workforce and produces 31% of the GDP. Major industries include coal, electric power, metals, and machinery. The agricultural sector remains one of the strongest in Europe and employs 15% of the workforce and accounts for 10% of the GDP. Primary agricultural products include grain, sugar beets, and sunflower seeds. Although official unemployment rates are low, underemployment and unreported unemployment are major problems. Primary trade partners include Russia, China, Turkey, and Germany.

Ukraine's dependence on Russia for energy supplies and the lack of significant structural reform have made the economy vulnerable to external shocks. Ukraine depends on imports to meet about 75% of its annual oil and natural gas requirements and 100% of its nuclear fuel needs. After a two-week dispute that saw gas supplies cutoff to Europe, Ukraine agreed to ten-year gas supply and transit contracts with Russia in January 2009 that brought gas prices to world levels.

Corruption in Ukraine and Russia is perceived as the most widespread in Europe. Corruption, which in some cases intersects with the operations of Ukrainian and international organized crime, has reached a level that leads many Ukrainian and Western observers to describe it as a direct threat to the country's democratic development and economic prosperity.²⁹⁹³ Although the Orange Revolution in 2004 brought increased awareness and initiative to fight corruption, administrative corruption remains a major deterrent to foreign investment and economic development. Most tax and customs privileges were eliminated in a March 2005 budget law, bringing more economic activity out of Ukraine's large shadow economy, but more improvements are needed, including fighting corruption, developing capital markets, and improving the legislative framework. A small number of elite cartels control most the large businesses and industries. The general public typically tolerates corruption and downplays its significance. Government lacks transparency and a system of checks and balances to fight and prevent corruption.²⁹⁹⁴ Money laundering has been a problem that has seen some improvement. Illegal drugs are frequently trafficked through Ukraine for distribution worldwide.

²⁹⁹³ Neutze, Jan, and Adrian Karatnycky. "Corruption, Democracy, and Investment in Ukraine." Atlantic Council of the United States. October 2007 policy paper. http://www.acus.org/docs/071016_Corruption,%20Democracy,%20and%20Investment%20in%20Ukraine.pdf. Accessed 4 August 2010.

²⁹⁹⁴ "Corruption Assessment: Ukraine," U.S.AID, 10 February 2006. <http://ukraine.usaid.gov/lib/evaluations/AntiCorruption.pdf>

Faiths

Christians: 96.2%

Jews: 0.6%

Other: 3.2%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Ukrainian Orthodox 34,742,931

Ukrainian Greek Catholic 3,633,248

Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox 3,269,923

Catholic 999,143

Jehovah's Witnesses 150,887 1,691

Seventh Day Adventists 61,215 922

Latter-day Saints 11,178 58

Religion

Ukraine was Christianized by Prince Volodymyr in 988. Under Soviet rule, churches and religion were subject to suppression and political manipulation; since 1991, churches have experienced greater independence. A 2001 survey by the SOCIS research center reported that over 40% of the population claim to be atheists. A 2007 survey conducted by the Razumkov Center found that 40% of respondents identified as believers without belonging to a particular denomination, whereas 37% identified with a particular religious denomination. Twenty-five percent (25%) of respondents who identified with a particular denomination attended religious services at least once per month.²⁹⁹⁵

Three Ukrainian Orthodox Churches operate in the country. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP) is the largest Orthodox Christian denomination and has a significant presence in all but a few regions in the west. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyiv Patriarchate (UOC-KP) is the second largest Orthodox group with members primarily concentrated in western and central Ukraine. Approximately 70% of the adherents of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC)—the smallest Orthodox denomination—live in western Ukraine. The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) is the largest non-Orthodox denomination, and nearly all its followers reside in western Ukraine, forming the majority in three western provinces as a legacy of historical Polish and Austro-Hungarian administration.

Estimates for the number of Muslims vary from 500,000 to two million, most of whom are Crimean Tatars. Roman Catholics tend to be Polish Ukrainians in central and western regions. Thirty percent (30%) of the religious communities nationwide are Protestant,²⁹⁹⁶ but Protestants account for only 2.2% of the population. The estimated number of ethnic Jewish Ukrainians varies between 100,000 and 370,000.

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. Most Orthodox and Greek Catholic holidays are national holidays. Religious groups are required to register with the government in order to participate in banking and property transactions and to publish literature. Noncitizen religious workers

²⁹⁹⁵ "Ukraine," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127342.htm>

²⁹⁹⁶ "Ukraine," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127342.htm>

may proselyte and practice other religious activities under invitation of their respective religious organization and the government. Foreign religious workers can only stay for ninety days on a religious worker visa and then must depart the country to extend their visa. Some disputes have occurred over land between religious organizations. In recent years, there have been some reports of societal pressures against Jews and Muslims. Minority religious groups report unequal treatment by local officials and sometimes experience difficulty registering congregations or constructing church buildings in new areas. Several positive developments increasing religious freedom have occurred recently, such as registered religious groups gaining the right to permanently use state-owned and communally-owned land in 2009.²⁹⁹⁷

Largest Cities

Urban: 68%

Kiev, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovs'k, Donets'k, Odesa, Zaporizhzhya, Lviv, **Kryvyy Rih**, Mykolayiv, Mariupol,' Luhans'k, Khmel'nyts'kyy, Sevastopol,' Makiyivka, Simferopol,' Vinnytsya, Kherson, Poltava, Chernihiv, Cherkasy, Sumy, Zhytomyr, Horlivka, Rivne, **Kirovohrad**, **Dniprodzerzhyn's'k**, Chernivtsi, **Ternopil**,' Kremenchuk, Luts'k, Ivano-Frankivs'k, Bila Tserkva, **Kramators'k**, **Melitopol**,' **Kerch**, **Nikopol**,' **Syeverodonets'k**, **Slov'yans'k**, **Berdyans'k**, Uzhhorod, **Alchevs'k**, **Pavlohrad**, **Lisichansk**, Yevpatoriya, **Yenakiyev**, **Oleksandriya**, **Kam'yanets'-Podil's'kyy**.

Cities listed in **bold** have no nearby LDS congregation.

Thirty of the forty-seven cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have congregations. Forty-one percent (41%) of the national population lives in the forty-seven largest cities.

LDS History

The Austria Vienna East Mission first administered Ukraine and organized the first official congregation in Kyiv in June 1991 with about forty members.²⁹⁹⁸ Missionary work began in October 1990. Elder Boyd K. Packer dedicated Ukraine for missionary work in September 1991 with forty members, missionaries, and investigators present at the dedication held nearby a monument of Prince Vladimir, who introduced Christianity to Ukraine in 988 AD.²⁹⁹⁹ The Austria Vienna East Mission was relocated to Kiev and renamed the Ukraine Kiev Mission in February 1992. At the time the mission served all of Ukraine.³⁰⁰⁰ In 1993, a second mission was organized in Donetsk, and seminary and institute began for the first time.

During the 1990s, missionary work encountered some frustrations with local governments preventing missionaries from proselytizing in additional cities. Dnepropetrovsk opened to missionary work in late 1993, and missionaries were banned from the city between 1994 and 1997; when missionaries were readmitted, tracting was not allowed, and missionaries worked primarily through member referrals, experiencing slow growth.

In 2000, the Europe East Area began administering Ukraine. A third mission was to be organized in Odessa in 2000³⁰⁰¹ but was never created. In 2007, the Church announced the organization of a mission in

²⁹⁹⁷ "Ukraine," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127342.htm>

²⁹⁹⁸ "Ukraine," Country Profiles, retrieved 10 June 2010. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/ukraine>

²⁹⁹⁹ "Two republics in U.S.SR are dedicated," LDS Church News, 28 September 1991. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20974/Two-republics-in-U.S.SR-are-dedicated.html>

³⁰⁰⁰ "3 new missions established in Russia, Ukraine," LDS Church News, 15 February 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22627/3-new-missions-established-in-Russia-Ukraine.html>

³⁰⁰¹ Rogers, Thomas F., "Mormonism's First Decade in the Former U.S.SR: Patterns of Growth and Retention," Presentation at Mormon History Association Meeting, Copenhagen, Denmark, June 2000.

Dnepropetrovsk,³⁰⁰² and construction began on the Kyiv Ukraine Temple—the first to be built in the former Soviet Union.³⁰⁰³ The Kyiv Ukraine Temple was completed in August 2010. In 2013, a fourth mission was organized with headquarters in L'viv.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 11,178 (2012)

Converts rapidly joined the Church shortly after the arrival of missionaries in 1990. The first missionaries to enter Ukraine arrived in Kyiv on 7 October 1990. The Kiev Branch was organized on 9 June 1991. By the end of the month, there were forty-four members in the branch.³⁰⁰⁴

Membership totaled 1,700 in 1993, 3,100 in 1995, and 6,369 in 1999.³⁰⁰⁵ Ninety-five converts were baptized in June 1992 in the Ukraine Kiev Mission. During 1999, the Ukraine Kiev Mission averaged seventy convert baptisms a month. Growth rates fluctuated during the 1990s, with some years having as few as five to twenty-five convert baptisms a month per mission.

By year-end 2002, there were 8,627 members, 2,700 of which lived in Kyiv.³⁰⁰⁶ Around this time period, Donetsk had around 750 members. In 2004, the Kyiv area had about 550 young single adults—sixty of whom were returned missionaries, and thirty were currently serving missions.³⁰⁰⁷

As recently as 1999, the Ukraine Kyiv mission was baptizing at least fifty people per month, or one baptism per companionship per month. By the late 2000s, Ukrainian missions were only baptizing as many converts in a year as they had previously baptized in a month in the early 1990s. The Ukraine Kyiv mission, which is tied for second place for growth in the Europe East Area with the Russia Rostov Mission and behind only the Armenia Yerevan Mission, reported 106 baptisms in 2006, eighty-four in 2007, and seventy-six in 2008.

Membership growth slowed substantially in the 2000s as members numbered 9,499 in 2004, 10,214 in 2006, and 10,557 in 2008. The annual membership growth rate dropped from over 7% in 2001 and 2002 to between 1% and 2% since 2007.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 8 Branches: 47 Groups: 3+ (April 2013)

Congregations multiplied prolifically in the mid-1990s from five to over fifty between 1994 and 1998. By year-end 2000, there were fifty-eight branches functioning in Ukraine. In 2001 branches functioned in Kyiv (13), Bila Tserkva, Bogatoye, Brovary, Cherkassy, Chernihiv, Chernivtsi, Dnepropetrovsk (4), Donetsk (6), Gorlovka (2), Illichivsk, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kharkiv (7), Lugansk, L'viv, Makiyivka (2), Mariupol, Mikolaiv, Odessa (3), Poltava, Rivne, Simferopol, Sumy, Vinnytsya, Yevpatoriya, and Zaporizhzhya.

³⁰⁰² "New missions bring total to 347 New Missions," LDS Church News, 10 February 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50112/New-missions-bring-total-to-347-New-missions.html>

³⁰⁰³ "Ground broken for first Eastern Europe temple," LDS Church News, 7 July 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50787/Ground-broken-for-first-Eastern-Europe-temple.html>

³⁰⁰⁴ "Country Information: Ukraine," [ldschurchnews.com](http://www.ldschurchnews.com), 1 February 2010, <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/58673/Country-information-Ukraine.html>

³⁰⁰⁵ Stahle, Shaun D. "Kiev members revere historic moment," LDS Church News, 5 June 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45658/Kiev-members-revere-historic-moment.html>

³⁰⁰⁶ Stahle, Shaun D. "Ukrainian faith," LDS Church News, 2 November 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42733/Ukrainian-faith.html>

³⁰⁰⁷ "Of a noble birthright," LDS Church News, 4 September 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46079/Of-a-noble-birthright.html>

Three districts were organized in Kyiv and were later consolidated into one district in the early 2000s in preparation to create the Kyiv Ukraine Stake. At one time the districts administered to fifteen branches in Kyiv until the number of branches were cut in half as branches were consolidated to increase the number of active members needed to turn the congregations into wards. Additional districts were organized in Donetsk (1995), Kharkov (1996), Odessa (1997), and Dnepropetrovsk (1999). Two districts once functioned for the eastern half of Donetsk (Makeyevka Ukraine District) and in Crimea (Sevastopol Ukraine District) and were both discontinued in the early to mid-2000s.

The first and only stake—the Kyiv Ukraine Stake—was organized in May 2004 with seven wards and one branch.³⁰⁰⁸ The number of congregations declined from fifty-nine in 2001 to fifty-three in 2003 due to unit consolidations in Kyiv. One city—Uzhorod—had its sole branch discontinued. New congregations were organized in the latter half of the 2000s as the number of congregations increased to fifty-seven in 2006 and sixty-four in 2009. Many new congregations were organized in cities with recently established mission outreach centers such as Boryspil, Khmel'nyts'kyy, Kremenchuk, Sevastopol,' and Zhytomyr. Groups for members meeting in some cities operated in 2010 such as in Pavlohrad. During the first half of 2010, two branches were discontinued in Donetsk and Odessa. In 2011, the Dnepropetrovsk Ukraine District and one of the four branches in the city closed.

Activity and Retention

Nationwide or regional meetings have been well attended. Five hundred attended the dedication of the first meetinghouse in Donetsk in 1998.³⁰⁰⁹ In 2002, a three-day young single adult conference had 330 in attendance.³⁰¹⁰ Approximately 3,200 members throughout Ukraine went to significant sacrifices in travel and expenses to attend a special meeting with President Hinckley in September 2002.³⁰¹¹ At this time there were over 1,000 temple recommend holders.³⁰¹² In 2004, 1,100 attended the creation of the first stake in Kyiv.³⁰¹³

Most branches appear to have an average of forty to fifty active members. Around forty attended sacrament meeting in Chernivtsi in 2009. Ivano-Frankivs'k had approximately thirty active members in mid-2009. In late 2009, the Odessa Cheriomushki Branch had about fifty attending sacrament meeting, the Sykhivs'ka Branch and the L'viv branch in L'viv had about thirty active members each, the Simferopol' Branch had thirty to forty attending weekly, and Zaporizhzhya had forty active members including ten to twelve priesthood holders.

Thirty of the seventy total members in the Dnipropetrovsk Livoberezhna Branch were active in late 2009. One of the branches in central Dnipropetrovsk had fifty attending church weekly in 2010. Yevpatoriya had about ten active members out of forty total members in mid-2010. Recently opened cities—such as Kremenchuk and Zhytomyr—appeared to have less than twenty active members in 2010. Around seventy of the 300 members on the records attended the Vynohradars'kyi Ward in the Kyiv Ukraine Stake in early 2010. Most wards in the Kyiv Ukraine Stake appear to have between seventy and 150 attending weekly. In L'viv, the number attending

³⁰⁰⁸ "New stake presidents," LDS Church News, 12 June 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45694/New-stake-presidents.html>

³⁰⁰⁹ "First meetinghouse in Ukraine dedicated," LDS Church News, 25 July 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31087/First-meetinghouse-in-Ukraine-dedicated.html>

³⁰¹⁰ "Taking root in Ukraine," LDS Church News, 10 August 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42261/Taking-root-in-Ukraine.html>

³⁰¹¹ "Ukraine's pioneer membership given counsel to be strong," LDS Church News, 21 September 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42456/Ukraines-pioneer-membership-given-counsel-to-be-strong.html>

³⁰¹² Stahle, Shaun D. "Ukrainian faith," LDS Church News, 2 November 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42733/Ukrainian-faith.html>

³⁰¹³ Stahle, Shaun D. "Kiev members revere historic moment," LDS Church News, 5 June 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45658/Kiev-members-revere-historic-moment.html>

church in 2009 was not significantly different than in 1999, only three years after members entered the city. Members in many other cities report similar findings of only minimal growth in church attendance during the 2000s, notwithstanding considerable increases in nominal membership.

The average number of members per congregation increased from 125 in 2000 to 168 in 2009. In 2007, President Dale E. Anderson of the Ukraine Donetsk Mission described converts as faithful and well-retained in his mission.³⁰¹⁴ However, the decline in congregations in the Donetsk region indicates little growth in active membership. In most areas slowing growth has not brought higher convert retention, and only about a third of Ukrainian converts are retained. Even the low present rates of nominal membership increase have significantly outstripped growth in church attendance. The exodus of many young people to the West for education, work, or marriage has also limited local congregational growth.

During the 2008–2009 school year, 613 were enrolled in seminary or institute. Active membership is estimated at between 30% and 35% of total membership, or between 3,200 and 3,700.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, Hungarian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Armenian.

All LDS scriptures are available in Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, Romanian, Bulgarian, and Armenian (East). Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, and Hungarian translations of many family history, missionary, Primary, young men, priesthood, Relief Society, Sunday School, unit, and temple materials are available, whereas fewer translations of these materials in Romanian, Bulgarian, and Armenian (East) are available. The *Liahona* has twelve issues a year in Russian and Ukrainian, six in Hungarian, and four in Polish, Romanian, Bulgarian, and Armenian (East). Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, Hungarian, and Bulgarian have several audio/visual materials and CES student manuals translated. The Church has translated few materials into Belarusian, including the Articles of Faith, *The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony*, *Gospel Principles Simplified*, the sacrament prayers, a video on the First Vision and Restoration, and a couple family history forms. The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony, Book of Mormon selections, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price are translated in the western dialect of Armenian, which is commonly spoken outside of Armenia.

Meetinghouses

The first church-built meetinghouse was dedicated in Donetsk in 1998.³⁰¹⁵ The first two meetinghouses completed by the Church in the Ukraine Kiev Mission were dedicated in 2001 and were renovated buildings to serve as meetinghouses.³⁰¹⁶ Some congregations meet in church-built meetinghouses, but most meet in renovated buildings or rented spaces.

Humanitarian and Development Work

At least fifty-two humanitarian project sponsored by the Church had occurred by 2010. A large number of Church donations were medical equipment.³⁰¹⁷ In February 1992, the Church donated 10,000 pounds of food

³⁰¹⁴ "New missions bring total to 347 New Missions," LDS Church News, 10 February 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50112/New-missions-bring-total-to-347-New-missions.html>

³⁰¹⁵ "First meetinghouse in Ukraine dedicated," LDS Church News, 25 July 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31087/First-meetinghouse-in-Ukraine-dedicated.html>

³⁰¹⁶ "Two meetinghouses dedicated in Kiev," LDS Church News, 6 October 2001. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40579/Two-meetinghouses-dedicated-in-Kiev.html>

³⁰¹⁷ "Projects—Ukraine," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 14 June 2010. <http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-26,00.html>

and children's clothing to the needy in Kyiv, approximately half of whom were Church members.³⁰¹⁸ In 1995, the Church donated six tons of urgently needed medical equipment to the Kiev Institute of Cardiovascular Surgery.³⁰¹⁹ Church members have organized humanitarian relief groups caring for orphanages in recent years.³⁰²⁰ The Church has also provided vision treatment to the needy.³⁰²¹

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

In the past, missionaries experienced harassment in some cities and were forced to serve elsewhere. Recently there appears to be greater local government tolerance towards the Church and its missionary efforts, although challenges in some areas continue. The Church experienced challenges with the visa renewal process recently for foreign missionaries reentering the country with border guards refusing reentry.³⁰²² Missionaries typically travel to Bulgaria during the visa renewal process, which is time-consuming and costly.

Cultural Issues

High rates of divorce and tobacco use create a challenging climate for missionaries to work in, as many suffer from the negative effects of these practices. Converts who were unsuccessful in ending their substance abuse addictions prior to baptism rarely become active members. Those who participated in an abortion are required to be interviewed by a member of the mission presidency before baptism.

The LDS Church has struggled to develop approaches oriented toward adherents of Orthodox denominations, as missionary work has historically been tailored to fit the needs of Western Christians. Increasing secularism and disinterest in religion from decades of communism have reduced Ukrainian's receptivity to the gospel message. Furthermore, many previously receptive Ukrainians were reached by Protestant denominations in the 1990s and shepherded into other churches.

Ukraine exhibits a complex religious demography, particularly in western Ukraine, where LDS missionary efforts have had little exposure to the several different forms of Christianity practiced. The patchwork of Orthodox, Greek Catholic, and Roman Catholic Christians in an area with mission outreach generally limited to one city per province results in current mission efforts falling vastly short of their potential. Crimean Tatars also possess unique culture and religious background, which have remained almost totally unreached by mission outreach to date.

National Outreach

Missionary efforts continue to be concentrated in the largest cities with more than one congregation. Nearly half of the missionaries in the Ukraine Kiev Mission in 2010 were serving in the city of Kyiv, although Kyiv is home only 5% of the national population. Cities with mission outreach centers account for 34% of the national population. Seven percent (7%) of the population resides in unreached cities with over 100,000

³⁰¹⁸ "Humanitarian relief in Europe," LDS Church News, 28 February 1992. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/22332/Humanitarian-relief-in-Europe.html>

³⁰¹⁹ "From around the world," LDS Church News, 25 March 1995. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25991/From-around-the-world.html>

³⁰²⁰ "Pajama parties," LDS Church News, 24 February 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50160/Pajama-parties.html>

³⁰²¹ "Vision Treatment," Humanitarian Services, retrieved 14 June 2010. <http://www.lds.org/library/page/display/0,7098,6214-1-3214-1,00.html>

³⁰²² "Ukraine," International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127342.htm>

inhabitants. Only two of these cities are in Western Ukraine (Ternopil' and Uzhhorod), whereas the remainder are primarily surrounding Dnepropetrovsk and to the north of Donetsk.

Very few cities with less than 100,000 inhabitants have received mission outreach. The few cities that have an outreach center have come primarily as the result of the efforts of local members. Congregations such as the Bahate Branch on the Crimean Peninsula offer exciting possibilities in expanding missionary work and increasing the vision of local members and leaders as the town of Bahate has fewer than 20,000 inhabitants and is a considerable distance away from other large cities with mission outreach centers. There are over 260 unreached cities between 10,000 and 100,000 inhabitants accounting for 16.5% of the national population. As many large cities remained unreached by mission outreach, cities with smaller populations are a lesser priority.

One of the primary purposes of creating the Ukraine Dnepropetrovsk Mission was to open additional cities for missionary work to increase the number of mission outreach centers.³⁰²³ Since the organization of the new mission in 2007, only a few new cities have had missionaries consistently or periodically assigned. Additional cities will likely receive mission outreach centers in the Dnepropetrovsk and Donetsk missions once members become more self-sufficient in Church administration tasks and responsibilities. Challenges coordinating efforts between missionaries, Church leaders, members, and investigators in cities without congregations has slowed the pace additional cities have opened to the Church.³⁰²⁴ Limited resources and missionary manpower have reduced the number of potentially reached cities.

The Church maintains an Internet site for Ukraine at <http://www.ldschurch.com.ua/>. The site explains Church doctrines and history in Ukrainian and provides opportunity to contact the Church and find meeting locations.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Over the past decade, convert retention rates have remained mediocre due to limited pre-baptismal preparation and inconsistent practices regarding the development of regular church attendance and other gospel habits before baptism. Some initiatives have resulted in transient improvements in pre-baptismal teaching and the qualification of prospective converts, but such policies have not been sustained. Activity rates differ by city and can also be affected by relationships between members. Kyiv appears one of the cities that have experienced some of the lowest convert retention rates, as three districts were merged into one to create the first stake due to inadequate numbers of active members to create three separate stakes over time. Donetsk has also likely experienced some of the lowest retention rates as several congregations have been consolidated or dissolved over the past decade.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Primary ethnic integration issues are between Ukrainians and Russians, especially in provinces with large populations of both groups. Congregations with the majority of active members consisting of Ukrainians can be a challenge to the fellowshipping of Russian speakers, and vice-versa. Separate congregations exist where there are enough Russian and Ukrainian-speaking members to staff them. However, most congregations are well-integrated and relationships are generally favorable between Ukrainian and Russian-speaking members.

Crimean Tatars and other ethnic minority groups have seen little, if any, mission outreach from Latter-day

³⁰²³ "New missions bring total to 347 New Missions," LDS Church News, 10 February 2007. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50112/New-missions-bring-total-to-347-New-missions.html>

³⁰²⁴ Gardner, Marvin K. "One of a City, and Two of a Family": The Beginnings of the Church in Chernigov, Ukraine," *Liahona*, Apr 1999, 37.

Saints. These groups will likely face greater challenges than Russians or Ukrainians assimilating into established congregations, especially if they have no members from their ethnic group in their respective congregations.

Language Issues

Full-time missionaries learned and taught the gospel in Russian until 1996 when missionaries began learning Ukrainian in the Missionary Training Center. By the late 1990s, about 35% of the missionaries were Ukrainian-speaking.

Language issues have presented challenges in a few locations, mainly those in which members struggle to communicate with each other. Two congregations meet in Bila Tserkav to address language needs, one for Russian speakers and one for Ukrainian speakers.

In cities with a single congregation, both Russian and Ukrainian are often spoken in a single meeting. During a visit to Lviv, sometimes considered the cultural capital of Ukrainian-speaking Ukraine, in 1999, five Ukrainian-language testimonies and two Russian-language testimonies were heard in sacrament meeting, and students in institute class often switched back and forth between Ukrainian and Russian over the course of the lesson. Ukrainian dialects vary regionally, and Russian words are sometimes borrowed to produce hybridized versions. As most Ukrainian-speakers are bilingual, these practices tend to generate more difficulties for missionaries, who are trained only in a single language, than for local people.

Most ethnic minority groups have many Church materials translated into their languages. Eastern Yiddish, Rusyn, and Crimean Tatar have the most speakers without any Church materials translated. Speakers of these languages together account for fewer than 5% of the total population and appear unlikely to have Church materials translated for the foreseeable future, as few if any members speak these languages.

Missionary Service

In 1992, thirty-five missionaries served throughout Ukraine.³⁰²⁵ In 2004, a conference for returned Ukrainian missionaries had over forty in attendance.³⁰²⁶ Between eighty and one hundred missionaries served in the Ukraine Kiev Mission in 2009 and 2010. In 2010 between 200 and 250 missionaries served in Ukraine.

Ukraine remains highly dependent on foreign missionaries to staff its three missions. The number of Ukrainian missionaries serving appears less than fifty. In the past, the Church has relied on recent converts to fill the need for native Ukrainian missionaries. However, recent declines in membership growth and low LDS birth rates will likely limit the number of Ukrainian missionaries. The current visa difficulties faced by non-Ukrainian missionaries highlight the need for a self-sustaining native missionary force, yet little progress toward this goal occurred in the decade of the 2000s. Challenges with registration of foreign missionaries, the expense involved in taking missionaries out of the country and reentering every ninety days, and the low productivity of current missionary efforts, are all likely factors contributing to the stagnation or even decline

Leadership

Ukraine has developed the strongest local church leadership of all nations of the former Soviet Union. Vladimir Siwachok became the first Ukrainian-born mission president and presided over the Russia Rostov

³⁰²⁵ Stahle, Shaun D. "Kiev members revere historic moment," LDS Church News, 5 June 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/45658/Kiev-members-revere-historic-moment.html>

³⁰²⁶ "First Ukraine conference," LDS Church News, 11 September 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46108/First-Ukraine-conference.html>

na Donu Mission in 1994.³⁰²⁷ In 1996, Aleksandr N. Manzhos began serving as mission president of the Ukraine Donetsk Mission, becoming the first Ukrainian to serve as a mission president in Ukraine.³⁰²⁸ In 2008, Sergiy N. Mikulin from Kharkov was called as an Area Seventy,³⁰²⁹ and Gennady Nikolaevich Podvodov from Donetsk began his tenure over the Russia St. Petersburg Mission.³⁰³⁰

Sociologist Tania Rands Lyon observed that in Ukraine, “Intelligentsia are relatively well represented among early converts to Mormonism. Especially in Kiev there are scientists, lawyers, university professors, business executives, engineers, two prominent surgeons and other health professionals, musicians and artists, a ballet master and a dramatist, several journalists and a prominent anchorwoman for Ukrainian television, linguists, teachers, and museum docents.”³⁰³¹

The original stake presidency of the Kyiv Ukraine Stake had no Church employees, indicating that the Church has been successful at developing sufficient leadership without relying on church employees.³⁰³² Several recently established branches have native members serving as branch presidents, whereas nearly all older branches have native branch presidents. However, foreign missionaries continue to fill roles in some local congregations. In 2009, a North American senior mission was serving as the branch president in Chernivtsi over a decade after missionaries entered the city.

Temple

Ukraine has developed moderate to high rates of temple attendance and recommend holders, resulting in the construction of the first temple in Eastern Europe in Kyiv. The Church announced the Kyiv Ukraine Temple in 1998, although construction began only in 2007. The delay was attributed primarily to finding a spot of land as large as the Church had requested. The temple was originally planned to serve members throughout Eastern Europe, including the Baltic States.³⁰³³ In April 2010, a total of thirteen European nations and 31,000 members were projected to utilize the temple.³⁰³⁴ Prior to the completion of the Kyiv Ukraine Temple in 2010, the country and much of the Europe East Area traveled to the Freiburg Germany Temple. Members faithfully attended the temple by traveling thirty hours each way by bus prior to the completion of the temple in Kyiv. Temple trips were organized on a monthly basis.³⁰³⁵ In 2012, the temple scheduled four endowment sessions Tuesdays through Fridays and five sessions on Saturdays.

Comparative Growth

Evidenced by the creation of the first stake and construction of the first temple in the former Soviet Union and a Church membership close to twice the combined Church memberships of the former Soviet republics,

³⁰²⁷ “New mission presidents,” LDS Church News, 16 April 1994. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/25060/New-mission-presidents.html>

³⁰²⁸ “New mission presidents,” LDS Church News, 18 May 1996. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/27555/New-mission-presidents.html>

³⁰²⁹ “38 Area Seventies called,” LDS Church News, 12 April 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/51857/38-Area-Seventies-called.html>

³⁰³⁰ “New mission presidents,” LDS Church News, 7 June 2008. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/52072/New-mission-presidents.html>

³⁰³¹ Rands, Tania, “Mormonism in a Post-Soviet Society: Notes from Ukraine,” *Dialogue* 30/1 (Spring 1997): 83.

³⁰³² “New stake presidents,” LDS Church News, 12 June 2004. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/34670/New-stake-presidents.html>

³⁰³³ “A temple in Ukraine,” LDS Church News, 8 August 1998. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/31390/A-temple-in-Ukraine.html>

³⁰³⁴ “Kyiv Ukraine temple open house and dedication dates are announced,” LDS Church News, 21 April 2010. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59226/Kyiv-Ukraine-Temple-open-house-and-dedication-dates-are-announced.html>

³⁰³⁵ Stahle, Shaun D. “Ukrainian faith,” LDS Church News, 2 November 2002. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/42733/Ukrainian-faith.html>

Ukraine has arguably seen the greatest success in missionary work for the LDS Church in Eastern Europe. Early receptivity that became self-sustaining likely contributed to the Church's decision to announce a temple for Kyiv in 1998. The percentage of members enrolled in seminary or institute (5.8%) is comparable to most of Eastern Europe, whereas activity rates appear average to higher than other nations in the region. Neighboring Russia has twice as many members and congregations as Ukraine, but a national population three times as large as Ukraine. The percentage of the population with access to a mission outreach center is similar to access rates in most of Eastern Europe.

Recently arrived nontraditional Christian denominations have experienced strong growth in Ukraine, particularly in the 1990s. In the late 2000s, Seventh Day Adventists had six times as many members and Jehovah's Witnesses had fourteen times as many members as the LDS Church. Both Adventists and Witnesses maintained more than ten times as many congregations than the LDS Church in the late 2000s and have developed much more widespread outreach as well as stronger local self-sufficiency. Evangelical denominations appear to have experienced the greatest growth. Many missionary-minded denominations have experienced significant slowdowns in membership growth during the 2000s.

Future Prospects

Ukraine would seem to be, in many ways, a fertile field for missionary work. Western Ukraine is pluralistic and very tolerant of religions; many people are deeply religious; alcohol and tobacco use, although prevalent, are less ubiquitous than in Russia; people are generally open and approachable; and there is very little anti-Mormon activity. Nonetheless, contemporary LDS growth rates in Ukraine have fallen significantly below rates in stagnant Western European missions in the mid-1990s.³⁰³⁶ Contemporary missions are now baptizing only as many people in a year as were baptized in a month through much of the 1990s. Low convert retention and member activity and heavy dependence on the North American church for funds and missionary manpower remain major challenges. Dramatic changes in the current dynamics appear unlikely in the medium term.

The creation of a third mission in Dnepropetrovsk in 2007 and a steady stream of new cities opening to missionary work create a favorable atmosphere for expanding national outreach, although growth has stagnated in many older congregations. Missionaries will most likely be assigned to the most populous unreached cities or cities with multiple active Church members nearby established outreach centers, such as the peripheries of the largest cities with the most congregations like Kyiv. The Church continues to rely on full-time missionaries to open new cities for missionary work, yet the number of missionaries serving in Ukraine has stabilized or even declined slightly in recent years, limiting the needed manpower to start new congregations in unreached cities.

Elder Andersen of the Twelve stated in 2009 that "the temple will be a blessing to Ukraine" and that "people will join the Church here by the hundreds and thousands."³⁰³⁷ Much remains to be done to accomplish this ambitious mandate. Missionaries and mission presidents indicate that additional stakes will likely be organized in Ukraine one day. Potential locations for future stakes include Kyiv, Donetsk, Kharkiv, and Odessa. Additional districts may be organized in the coming years to administer the large number of mission branches throughout the country. Future districts may be organized in western Ukraine and in Crimea. The completion of the new Kyiv Ukraine Temple in 2010 has generated great enthusiasm among members, although it remains to be seen whether long-term growth and member activity will improve as a result.

³⁰³⁶ Van Beek, Walter E.A. "Ethnization and Accommodation: Dutch Mormons in Twenty-First Century Europe," *Dialogue* 29/1 (Spring 1996): 129.

³⁰³⁷ "Church Leaders Visit Growing Church Membership in Eastern Europe," LDS.org newsroom, 3 July 2009. <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/news-releases-stories/church-leaders-visit-growing-church-membership-in-eastern-europe>. Accessed 4 August 2010.

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CIA World Factbook: As stated on the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) website, "the World Factbook provides information on the history, people, government, economy, geography, communications, transportation, military, and transnational issues for 267 world entities." Demographic, historic, economic, health, and religious data in regional and country profiles originate from the CIA World Factbook and can be accessed at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

City Population: This website provides extensive population data and was the principal site used for generating lists of the most populous cities for country and regional profiles. Population data for administrative divisions used in performing geospatial analyses for the national outreach section in profiles originate from this source. The website can be found at: <http://www.citypopulation.de/>

Deseret News Church Almanac: The *Deseret News* has produced church almanacs since 1974. Church almanacs provide detailed statistics of membership, congregation, stake, district, mission, and temple totals for each country with an official LDS presence. LDS history, missions, membership growth, and congregational growth sections in country and regional profiles originate from this source.

Ethnologue.com: An internet edition of *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*; an exhaustive "encyclopedic reference work cataloging all of the world's 6,909 known living languages." Linguistic data in country and regional profiles originate from this source. The homepage can be accessed at: <http://www.ethnologue.com/home.asp>

Every Culture.com: An encyclopedic reference on anthropology and cultural studies by country and by ethnic group. Detailed information on culture and society in country and regional profiles originate from this work. The homepage can be accessed at: <http://www.everyculture.com/>

International Religious Freedom Reports: Prepared by the U.S. Department of State annually and submitted to Congress for over a decade, the International Religious Freedom Report includes "the most recent Human Rights Reports by providing additional detailed information with respect to matters involving international religious freedom. It includes individual country chapters on the status of religious freedom worldwide." Religion and religious freedom sections in the country and regional profiles originate from this source. Reports can be accessed at: <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/index.htm>

Jehovah's Witnesses Worldwide Statistics Reports: Jehovah's Witnesses annually publish country and territory statistics on membership and congregations on their official website. Any references to Witness membership and congregations in country and regional profiles originate from this site. The most recent data can be accessed at: http://www.watchtower.org/e/statistics/worldwide_report.htm

LDS Church News: The LDS Church News has published news stories, updates on new stakes and church

leaders, and official church announcements for decades. Archived articles provided extensive data in producing LDS history, humanitarian and development work, leadership, and temple sections in profiles. The LDS Church News can be accessed online at: <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/home/>

LDS Maps: The LDS Church's official meetinghouse locator provides the names, meeting times, and locations of congregations in countries with an official church presence. These data were utilized in performing some geospatial analyses in the national outreach section and in the meetinghouses section. The website can be accessed at: <http://www.lds.org/maps>

Missionary and Member Reports: Data on member activity rates, sacrament meeting attendance, and many other convert retention and member activity indicators in profiles originate from hundreds of self-reports from missionaries while serving in the field or from returned missionaries. Missionary websites such as www.missionsite.net and blogs maintained by the families of missionaries serving in the field provided a wealth of information utilized in the research and writing of this book.

Online Store (LDS Church): The LDS Church's online store catalogs available translations of church materials and scriptures in other languages for purchase. Information in profiles pertaining to language materials and languages with translations of LDS scriptures were obtained from this source. The website can be accessed at: <http://store.lds.org>

Open Doors International: Open Doors International is a group that reaches out to persecuted Christians and compiles data on the persecution of Christians in different countries according to. Current watch list scores and rankings are found at www.worldwatchlist.us/downloads/WorldWatchListScores.pdf and methodology is described at <http://www.worldwatchlist.us/about/ranking-methodology>. In this text, Open Doors' rankings of the 50 most oppressive nations for Christians are referred to as the Persecution Index, with rankings from 1st (most severe) to 50th (less severe) representing more severe persecution.

Providentliving.org: An official LDS website on humanitarian and development work and providing resources for individual and family economic self-sufficiency. Most information pertaining to humanitarian and development work in country and regional profiles was obtained from this website. The website can be accessed at: <http://www.providentliving.org/>

Seminaries and Institutes of Religion Annual Reports: Released annually by the Church Education System, these reports provide seminary and institute enrollment numbers by country and are included in most country profiles as a measure of member activity. The most recent report can be found at: http://institute.lds.org/content/languages/english/Institute%20of%20Religion%20Materials/General/SI_Annual_Report_2012.pdf

Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index: Transparency International ranks 183 countries and territories by "their perceived levels of public sector corruption." A battery of assessments and opinion surveys creates a composite picture of corruption and specifically examines "bribery of public officials, kickbacks in public procurement, embezzlement of public funds, and the effectiveness of public sector anti-corruption efforts." In this book, data regarding corruption originate from this source. Results of the 2011 analysis can be found at: <http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2011/results/>

U.S. State Department: More detailed information regarding history, corruption, and culture in country and regional profiles was derived from background notes available for each country under the Bureau of Public Affairs on the United States Department of State website. As stated on homepage, information provided includes "facts about the land, people, history, government, political conditions, economy, and foreign relations." Country background notes can be accessed at: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/index.htm>

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