



Case Studies on Analyzing Growth Trends by City or Administrative Division

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Analysis of LDS Growth in Jakarta, Indonesia

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Overview

Jakarta is the fourth most populous metropolitan area in the world, [omega replica watches](#) inhabited by 28.1 million people according to early 2016 population estimates. [\[1\]](#) The metropolitan area includes Jakarta and surrounding major cities including Bekasi, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Tangerang Selatan. [\[2\]](#) The city of Jakarta had 10.3 million inhabitants. [\[3\]](#) The LDS Church has maintained an official missionary presence in Jakarta since 1970. [\[4\]](#) Steady growth occurred during the 1970s and 1980s as evidenced by regular increases in the number of congregations and modest membership growth. Slow growth has occurred since the early 1990s. The Church created the Jakarta Indonesia Stake in 2011 – the first stake to be organized in Indonesia.

This case study reviews the history of the Church in Jakarta. Recent church growth and missionary successes are analyzed. Opportunities and challenges for future growth are discussed. The growth of the Church in other major Southeast Asian cities is compared to LDS growth trends in Jakarta. The size and growth trends of other missionary-focused Christian groups are summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

LDS Background

The first Church members to live in Indonesia were foreigners who temporarily resided in the country for employment purposes. The first Indonesian native to join the Church in Indonesia was baptized in June 1969. The Church assigned six full-time missionaries from the Southeast Asia Mission in January 1970. The Jakarta Branch was organized in February 1970 and official recognition from the government was obtained the following August. [\[5\]](#) The Church organized the Java District (later renamed the Jakarta Indonesia District) in 1972. The Church organized the Indonesia Jakarta Mission in 1975. Two additional branches in the Jakarta area were organized in 1978 (Jakarta English) and 1979 (Bogor).

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Problems obtaining foreign missionary visas resulted in the Indonesia Jakarta Mission undergoing several iterations of closing and reopening during the last quarter of the twentieth century. The mission closed in 1981, reopened in 1985, closed in 1989, and reopened in 1995. During the 1980s, the Church achieved considerable progress augmenting the size of the indigenous Indonesian full-time missionary force. The API Code Download number of local members serving missions within Indonesia climbed from 24 in 1981 to 49 in 1987. [\[6\]](#) The number of branches in the Jakarta metropolitan area increased from three in 1979 to four in 1981 and five in 1994. A sixth branch was organized in 2001 (Tangerang). The Church reported six branches in the Jakarta Indonesia District in 2001, including the Bandung, Bekasi, Bogor, Jakarta, Jakarta English, and Jakarta South Branches. The Church organized additional branches, Bekasi 2nd and Tangerang 2nd, in 2002 and 2005, respectively.

The Church organized the Jakarta Indonesia Stake from the Jakarta Indonesia District in 2011. The new stake included the Bekasi 1st, Bekasi 2nd, Bogor, Jakarta 1st, Jakarta 2nd, Jakarta 3rd, Tangerang 1st, and Tangerang 2nd Wards [\[7\]](#) and the Bandung Branch. The Church organized a ninth ward in the stake in 2015 – the Bogor 2nd Ward. Missionaries serving in Jakarta in late 2015 reported plans for the Church to organize a second stake in Jakarta within the foreseeable future. The number of congregations in the Jakarta area increased from one in 1970 to two in 1978, three in 1979, four in 1981, five in 1994, six in 2001, seven in 2002, eight in 2005, and nine in 2015.

The average ward in Jakarta serviced 3.1 million people as of early 2016. A map displaying the location of LDS congregations

and the most populous, unreached cities inhabited by at least 100,000 people in the Jakarta area can be found [here](#).

Successes

The Church in Jakarta constitutes the AWS Standards Online Store primary “center of strength” for the Church in Indonesia. The Church organized its first stake in Indonesia in Jakarta and currently operates twice as many congregations in the Jakarta metropolitan area as Surakarta – the Indonesian metropolitan area with the second most congregations (four wards). Jakarta was the only metropolitan area that experienced a net increase in the number of congregations operating between 2001 and 2015 as the number of congregations increased from five branches to nine wards. Each of these congregations appears to have a sizable number of active members as evidenced by all branches in the former district becoming wards when the stake was organized in 2011. Jakarta plays a significant role in the operation of the Church nationwide as mission headquarters for the Church’s sole mission in Indonesia have been based in Jakarta since the mid-1970s.

The organization of the Bogor 2nd Ward in 2015 constitutes a significant development for the Church in Jakarta. The Bogor 2nd Ward is the first ward to ever been organized in Indonesia from the division of a previously operating ward. All other wards in Indonesia have been created from branches. Additionally, the Bogor 2nd Ward is the first new congregation to be organized in the Jakarta area in 10 years, possibly signifying progress in the stake augmenting the number of active members, establishing a vision to expand outreach, and preparing for the establishment of additional congregations.

The Church has translated all LDS scriptures and many church materials into Indonesian. The ample supply of gospel study materials and resources presents good opportunities for testimony development, missionary work, and gospel scholarship.

Opportunities

The Jakarta metropolitan area is one of the most favorable locations in Indonesia to engage in church planting and outreach expansion efforts. Its enormous population has appeared to exhibit higher receptivity to LDS outreach than many other cities on Java as evidenced by slow, but steady, congregational growth within the past several decades. Many areas of the metropolitan area remain minimally reached as the average ward includes three million people within its boundaries. As a result, there appear good opportunities for the establishment of branches in many areas of the city distant from the nearest LDS meetinghouse where clusters of active members reside.

There are two dozen cities inhabited by at least 100,000 people within the Jakarta metropolitan area where no LDS congregations operates. Many of these cities appear to have small numbers of Latter-day Saints who travel long distances to reach the nearest meetinghouse. The organization of member branches, member groups, FHE groups, or cottage meetings in these cities has good potential to spur growth. Prospects for growth appear most favorable if the Church holds meetings in members’ homes or rented spaces within the targeted area. Provided with population totals as of 2010, cities in the Jakarta metropolitan area that appear most favorable for church planting efforts include Depok (1.74 million), Cikarang (712,000), Cibinong (327,000), and Gunung Putri (310,000).

Focus on full-time mission preparation for Indonesian Latter-day Saint youth presents good opportunities to augment the size of the full-time missionary force. The Church in Indonesia has struggled to increase the number of full-time missionaries assigned to the country due to the limited number of foreign missionary visas granted to the Church. Indonesian members report no restrictions on native Indonesians serving full-time missions within their home country. Increased emphasis and vision on Indonesian youth and young single adults attending seminary, institute, and missionary preparation classes may increase the percentage of local members who serve missions. Coordination between the Jakarta Indonesia Stake with the Jakarta Indonesian Mission to have local youth accompany full-time missionaries to teach missionary lessons has good potential to better engage youth in missionary efforts and improve the self-sufficiency of the Church in Indonesia to meet its own missionary needs.

Challenges

Receptivity to LDS outreach in Jakarta remains comparatively low to many other nations in Southeast Asia. The Church has experienced slow membership growth trends within the past 25 years and has organized, on average, only one or two congregations a decade since the establishment of the Church in 1970. Indonesian Latter-day Saints relocating from other areas of Java to Jakarta has appeared to drive much of the recent progress organizing new congregations and establishing a stake. Most the population exhibits strong religious ties to Islam, a particular Christian denomination, or other religions such as Buddhism. Areas where Muslims constitute a larger majority often experience limited religious freedom and societal intolerance of Christian missionary activity. Local members in some areas of Jakarta report that obtaining leases on rented meetinghouse facilities has become increasingly more difficult within the past three decades. Returned missionaries observe that some meetinghouse do not have the Church’s logo on the exterior due to threats of violence by radical Islamist groups. Some Christian groups engage in counter-proselytism efforts in an effort to inoculate their membership against the proselytism efforts of Latter-day Saints and LDS missionaries. Consequently many Christians refuse to seriously investigate the LDS Church and meet with missionaries because of the admonition given by their religious leaders. The persecution of Christians and other religious minority groups by radical Islamists has strengthened the faith of many of these religious minorities as those with weaker faith convert to Islam or do not actively practice their faith.

The Church in Jakarta provides a good illustration of how self-sufficient local leadership, sizable numbers of local members serving full-time missions for several decades, and moderate member activity rates do not always correspond with rapid membership growth and outreach expansion. There have been several factors within the Church in Indonesia that have delayed and have continued to delay outreach expansion efforts. Local members in the Jakarta metropolitan area report that many members do not attend their assigned ward according to current geographical ward boundaries. This results in confusion in determining the number of active members who reside in particular communities and frustrates efforts to open additional congregations if members refuse to attend their assigned unit. Little progress will likely occur in opening additional congregations within closer proximity of membership and target populations until local membership becomes more organized and compliant with attending their assigned congregations.

The worldwide surge in the number of members serving full-time missions has had little impact on augmenting the number of full-time missionaries assigned to the Indonesia Jakarta Mission due to extremely limited numbers of foreign missionary visas available to the Church and the tiny number of mission-aged Indonesian young single adults. Past challenges obtaining foreign missionary visas and the repeated opening and closing of the Indonesia Jakarta Mission during the 1980s and 1990s significantly influenced LDS outreach expansion efforts in the Jakarta area. Efforts to advance districts in Jakarta and Surakarta into stakes also appeared to consume any surplus missionary manpower that could have been channeled into opening additional cities to missionary work within the Jakarta metropolitan area. The Church in Jakarta has focused for many years to strengthen individual branches to meet the qualifications to become wards. As a result, plans to open additional branches have appeared unrealized or delayed due to a greater precedence to establish a stake.

Comparative Growth

The size of the LDS Church in Jakarta is significantly smaller than most major metropolitan areas in Southeast Asia inhabited by one million or more people. The average ward or branch in Phnom Penh, Cambodia includes 94,000 people, whereas the average ward in Surakarta, Indonesia includes 305,000 people, the average ward in Singapore includes 690,000 people, the average branch in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia services one million people, and the average ward or branch in Bangkok, Thailand services 1.1 million people. The size of the Church in Jakarta is comparable to Medan, Indonesia (one branch servicing 3.4 million people); Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (one branch per 4.1 million people), and Yangon, Burma (one branch servicing 5.2 million people). Congregational growth trends in Jakarta have been average for the region within the past 15 years.

Other missionary-focused Christian groups significantly vary in size and growth trends. Evangelicals claim 5.6% of the population of Java and report slow growth.^[8] The Seventh-Day Adventist Church numbers among the most rapidly growing and largest nontraditional Christian denominations in Jakarta. Adventists reported 100 churches (large or well-established congregations), 12 companies (small or recently-established congregations), and 21,357 members in 2004, whereas Adventists reported 163 churches, 31 companies, and 26,527 members in 2014. Adventists reported nearly 4,000 baptisms within the Jakarta metropolitan area in 2014.^[9] Jehovah's Witnesses operate approximately 55 congregations in the Jakarta metropolitan area – the vast majority of which hold worship services in Indonesian.^[10] The Church of the Nazarene reports a minimal presence in Jakarta, Java, and Bali. In 2012, the Church of the Nazarene reported 5,291 full members, 151 associate members, an average weekly worship attendance of 4,678, and 118 congregations (62 organized churches, 56 churches not yet organized) on the islands of Java and Bali.^[11]

Limitations

The Church does not publish annual, country-by-country data on the number of convert baptisms, the number of members serving full-time missions, the number of full-time missionaries assigned, or the increase of children of record. No data is available to the public regarding official LDS statistics on member activity and convert retention rates. The Church does not report an official list of its member groups by country or for the entire world. Consequently member groups may operate in the Jakarta area that are not reported in this case study. The Church in Indonesia does not publish a breakdown of its membership by administrative division.

Future Prospects

Slow, but steady, congregational growth in the Jakarta metropolitan area will likely continue within the next decade due to small numbers of converts joining the Church and Indonesian Latter-day Saints moving to the city from other areas of the country. A second stake appears likely to be organized in Jakarta within the next five years once there are at least 10 wards in the stake and a sufficient number of active Melchizedek Priesthood holders to operate two separate stakes. There remain good opportunities to establish branches or member groups in lesser-reached areas or currently unreached cities. However, problems with members attending their assigned congregation and difficulties obtaining leases on rented spaces may postpone the organization of additional congregations. Jakarta appears a likely candidate for a small temple one day due to distance from Bangkok, Thailand where the Church announced plans to construct a temple in April 2015.

[1] "Major Agglomerations of the World," [www.citypopulation.de](http://www.citypopulation.de/world/Agglomerations.html), retrieved 18 January 2016. <http://www.citypopulation.de/world/Agglomerations.html>

[2] "Major Agglomerations of the World," [www.citypopulation.de](http://www.citypopulation.de/world/Agglomerations.html), retrieved 18 January 2016. <http://www.citypopulation.de/world/Agglomerations.html>

[3] "Indonesia," CIA World Factbook, retrieved 18 January 2016. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/id.html>

[4] Craig, Alison. "The Saints in Indonesia", Ensign, Jan. 1977, 86. <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1977/01/the-saints-in-indonesia>

[5] "Indonesia," Deseret News 2013 Church News Almanac, p. 498-499

[6] "Indonesia," Deseret News 2013 Church News Almanac, p. 498-499

[7] "New stake presidents," LDS Church News, 18 June 2011. <http://www.ldschurchnewsarchive.com/articles/61052/New-stake-presidents.html>

[8] "Indonesia, Java," Operation World, retrieved 18 January 2016. <http://www.operationworld.org/jul06>

[9] "Jakarta Conference (1994-Present)," [adventiststatistics.org](http://adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldInstID=2819847), retrieved 18 January 2016. http://adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldInstID=2819847

[10] "Find a Meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses," [jw.org](https://www.jw.org/apps/E_SRCHMTGMAPS), retrieved 18 January 2016. https://www.jw.org/apps/E_SRCHMTGMAPS

[11] "Church of the Nazarene Growth, 2002-2012," [nazarene.org](http://www.nazarene.org), retrieved 19 November 2013. <http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&ved=0CDwQFjAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fnazarene.org%2F>