LDS Growth Case Studies

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Translating Church Materials into Additional Languages

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Overview

In October 2011, Ethnologue.com listed 6,909 living languages spoken worldwide[1] whereas the LDS Church reported that there were 166 languages which had at least one LDS material translated.[2] Of these 166 languages, approximately 10 consisted of variants of languages, such as Akan (Fante and Twi), Hindi (India and Fiji-spoken), Serbo-Croatian (Croatian and Serbian), and Braille (English and Spanish). With only a few exceptions, all languages with LDS materials at present had their first translations completed before the year 2000. In 1997, the Church reported that there were 175 languages with translations of at least one LDS material[3]; higher than the number reported in 2003 (173)[4] and in 2011 (166). The decline in the number of languages reported to have translations by the Church appears due to the discontinuation of some languages with only one or two materials if past translations have become obsolete or perhaps due to political reasons such as the case with Hebrew. Languages which only have a couple administrative materials translated such as the sacrament prayers may no longer be included in the official tally and explain the decline in the number of languages with translations of LDS materials available. Of the approximately 155 distinct languages with LDS materials listed on the Church's online store at store.lds.org, 44 have fewer than one million native speakers (28%) and 18 have fewer than 100,000 speakers (12%). LDS materials are available in the first language of approximately 4.6 billion people which account for two-thirds of the world's total population.

With only a handful of exceptions, the LDS Church has not actively pursued the translation of church materials into additional languages for over a decade. Some previously "unreached" languages which recently had their first LDS materials translated include Georgian, Uzbek, and North Sotho (Sepedi). Dismal progress translating LDS materials into additional languages appears attributed to a lack of church planting vision, policies which forego translation projects until a sizable body of Latter-day Saints speak a language, the slow, arduous translation process, and uncoordinated communication between capable local member translators, area presidencies, and the Church Translation Department. Expanding the number of languages with LDS materials available and the number of translations of LDS materials in these languages is essential for accelerating church growth and a lack of translations of LDS materials in additional languages over the past decade appears to have contributed to the worldwide slowdown in membership and congregational growth. Since 2000 the Church appears to have placed a greater emphasis on translating remaining LDS scriptures and additional church materials into languages which already had some LDS materials or scriptures available rather than initiating translation work with languages without any LDS literature previously translated. However dozens of languages with had only one or two materials translated in 2000 remain without additional translations of church materials today.

This essay explores the history of church translation work, identifies languages spoken by over three million native speakers with and without translations of LDS materials, analyzes the successes, missed and current opportunities, challenges, and needs of expanding translation work and compares LDS translation efforts with other missionary-minded Christian groups.

History

LDS materials were first translated into additional languages in the mid-nineteenth century. Dutch, Welsh, and Spanish were among the first languages to have church materials and LDS scriptures translated. By 1900, translations of the Book of Mormon were published in ten languages (Danish, German, French, Italian, Welsh, Hawaiian, Spanish, Swedish, Maori, and Dutch).[5] The LDS Church first organized the Translation Department in 1946 to facilitate the translation of church materials and scriptures. In 1960, the department was dissolved as the responsibility for the translation of church materials was assigned to mission presidents. In 1965, the Church organized a translation department for Spanish-speakers known as the Translation Services Department which gradually added additional languages to its authority. By 1974, church representatives estimated that Latter-day Saints spoke 112 languages.[6]

In the 1970s, the Church made significant progress translating church materials and scriptures into languages which had only a handful of Latter-day Saint speakers. Notable examples included the translation of basic proselytism materials and selections or the entire Book of Mormon in Arabic, Armenian, Hebrew, Hungarian, Indonesian, Serbo-Croatian, and Turkish. Audio recording translations of select passages of the Book of Mormon and basic church materials were first published at this time in Amerindian languages which were not typically written such as Cakchiquel and Quiche.[7]

The contributions of local members with translation competencies in languages without LDS materials were invaluable during the 1970s. Taking several years to complete, a Russian Latter-day Saint translated all LDS scriptures into Russian. A Greek-speaking returned missionary translated the Book of Mormon into Greek. The Church employed professors and scholars to translate the Book of Mormon into some languages, such as Afrikaans and Arabic.[8] In 1980, the Church's Translation Division was assigned to translate basic LDS materials into Bengali but was unable to find any Latter-day Saints who spoke the language. Consequently, the translation supervisor worked in coordination with nonmember speakers of Bengali to complete translations of materials and select passages of the Book of Mormon. In the early 1980s, the translation team discovered that a convert from Bangladesh attending an LDS university spoke Bengali. This member facilitated the completion of the Bengali translation of passages from the Book of Mormon in 1985.[9]

LDS Church President Spencer W. Kimball made a lasting contribution toward accelerating translation work. President Kimball's vision as church president to expand LDS outreach around the globe and augment the size of the full-time missionary force resulted in significant membership and congregational growth increases during his presidency and thereafter. President Kimball stressed starting outreach in unreached nations by translating a few church materials and allocating a small number of mission resources with the aim for converts to become self-sufficient in leadership roles. In 1986, the First Presidency approved the "Every Nation" program which sought to translate basic church materials into at least one commonly spoken language for every nation in the world.[10] This program appeared to translate church materials into as many as several dozen languages, many of which had no Latter-day Saints speakers and were spoken in nations without a church presence such as Comorian (Comoros), Divehi (Maldives), Pashto (Afghanistan), and Somali (Somalia). The number of Book of Mormon translations also rapidly increased during this time. Select passages or the entire Book of Mormon were translated into nearly 60 additional languages between 1976 and 1989. The Book of Mormon was translated into over two dozen additional languages between 1990 and 2010. In 1997, the Church had translated all LDS scriptures into 15 languages.[11] By late 2011, the number of languages with all LDS scriptures translated rose to 40.

In 2005, the Church reported that 47.8% of church membership were English speakers. Other most commonly spoken languages by LDS membership at the time included Spanish (31.1%), Portuguese (7.7%), Tagalog (1.4%), Cebuano (1%), Japanese (0.9%), Ilokano (0.9%), Samoan (0.9%), Tongan (0.6%), and Korean (0.6%).[12] By this time the Church acknowledged hundreds of languages were spoken by Latter-day Saints worldwide and the Church Translation Division undertook language translation work in 105 languages.[13] The Church Directory of Organizations and Leaders (CDOL) listed over 700 languages spoken by Latter-day Saints worldwide, although it is unclear whether all these languages have Latter-day Saint speakers or whether these languages are part of a generic list of potential languages members and converts may speak.

Today the Book of Mormon is only translated into an additional language if approved by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and if there is a sufficient number of native-speaker Latter-day Saints to engage in translation work.[14] From start to finish, translating the Book of Mormon into a new language generally took at least five years in the late 2000s and early 2010s.

Languages with LDS Materials

Of the 159 languages with at least three million native speakers, 87 languages have translations of LDS materials (55%). All languages with over 100 million speakers have LDS materials translated. Of the 87 languages with LDS materials translated, 37 originate from Europe, 28 originate from Africa, 25 originate from Europe, two originate from South America, and one originates from the Caribbean. The 87 languages with at least three million native speakers and one LDS material translated include Chinese languages (1.213 billion), Spanish (329 million), English (328 million), Arabic (221 million), Hindi (182 million), Bengali (181 million), Portuguese (178 million), Russian (144 million), Japanese (122 million), German [includes Bavarian, Mainfränkisch] (115 million), Telugu (69.8 million), Vietnamese (68.6 million), Marathi (68.1 million), French (67.8 million), Korean (66.3 million), Tamil (65.7 million), Italian (61.7 million), Urdu (60.6 million), Turkish (50.8 million), Thai (45.9 million), Polish (40 million), Malay (39.1 million), Ukrainian (37 million), Malayalam (35.9 million), Kannada (35.3 million), Burmese (32.3 million), Farsi (31.4 million), Punjabi [Eastern] (28.2 million), Filipino [Tagalog] (23.9 million), Hausa (25 million), Romanian (23.4 million), Indonesian (23.2 million), Dutch (21.7 million), Pashto (20.3 million), Uzbek (20.3 million), Yoruba (19.4 million), Igbo (18 million), Amharic (17.5 million), Serbo-Croatian [Croatian and Serbian] (16.4 million), Cebuano (15.8 million), Sinhala (15.6 million), Malagasy (14.7 million), Nepali (13.9 million), Somali (13.9 million), Khmer [Cambodian] (13.6 million), Greek (13.1 million), Hungarian (12.5 million), Fulah [Fulani] (12.3 million), Catalan (11.5 million), Shona (10.8 million), Zulu (10.3 million), Quechua (10.1 million), Czech (9.5 million), Bulgarian (9.1 million), Nyanja (8.7 million), Belarusian (8.6 million), Kazakh (8.3 million), Swedish (8.3 million), Akan (8.3 million), Xhosa (7.8 million), Haitian Creole (7.7 million), Ilokano (7 million), Hmong (6.5 million), Armenian (6.4 million), Tshiluba [Luba-Kasai] (6.3 million), Sotho [Southern] (6 million), Kongo [Kikongo] (6 million), Albanian (5.8 million), Hiligaynon (5.8 million), Mongolian (5.7 million), Danish (5.6 million), Hebrew (5.3 million), Mòoré [Mossi] (5.1 million), Slovak (5 million), Finnish (5 million), Afrikaans (4.9 million), Guarani (4.9 million), Rundi [Kirundi] (4.9 million), Bicol [Bikolano] (4.8 million), Norwegian (4.6 million), Mandingo [Mandinka] (4.5 million), Tswana (4.5 million), Georgian (4.3 million), Ganda [Luganda] (4.1 million), Sotho [Northern] (4.1 million), Wolof (4 million), Bemba (3.6 million), Lao (3.2 million), Lithuanian (3.2 million), and Éwé (3.1 million).

Online and Audiovisual Materials

The LDS Church has materials in approximately 80 languages on its main website lds.org, although many languages have only a handful of materials which are primarily intended on member use such as priesthood handbooks and the sacrament prayers. Utilized primarily for online proselytism efforts, mormon.org is available in only 22 languages. In October 2011, there were approximately 50 country websites maintained by the Church.[15] In the fall of 2011, the Church appeared to be constructing websites patterned after the international lds.org as websites in Spanish and Armenian were launched. The LDS Church translated "The Restoration" DVD into approximately 50 languages by late 2011. Proceedings of the October 2011 Semiannual General Conference were interpreted into 93 languages.[16]

Languages without LDS Materials

In late 2011, there were 72 languages with over three million speakers without LDS materials translated. Of these 72 languages, 46 were native to Asia (64%), 16 were native to Africa (22%), eight were native to Europe (11%), and the remaining two were native to other continents. India has the most languages with over three million speakers without LDS materials translated (21) and Indonesia has the second most (9). The 72 languages with over three million speakers without LDS materials translated include Javanese (84.6 million), Lahnda [Western Panjabi and Seraiki] (78.3 million), Gujarati (46.5 million), Bhojpuri (38.5 million), Awadhi (38.3 million), Maithili (34.7 million), Sunda (34 million), Oriya (31.7 million), Marwari (31.1 million), Sindhi (21.4 million), Rajasthani (20 million), Azerbaijani (19.1 million), Chhattisgarhi (17.5 million), Oromo (17.3 million), Assamese (16.8 million), Kurdish (16 million), Rangpuri (15 million), Zhuang (14.9 million), Madura (13.6 million), Chittagonian (13 million), Haryanvi (13 million), Magahi (13 million), Deccan (12.8 million), Sylheti (10.3 million), Kanauji (9.5 million), Lombard (9.1 million), Uyghur (8.8 million), Bagheli (7.8 million), Konkani (7.6 million), Rwanda [Kinyarwanda] (7.5 million), Gikuyu (7.2 million), Napoletano-Calabrese (7 million), Baluchi (7 million), Varhadi-Nagpuri (7 million), Turkmen (6.6 million), Tatar (6.5 million), Venetian (6.2 million), Santali (6.2 million), Flemish [Vlaams] (6.1 million), Lambadi (6 million), Tigrigna (5.8 million), Kashmiri (5.6 million), Minangkabau (5.5 million), Sukuma (5.4 million), Mewati (5 million), Sicilian (4.8 million), Tajik (4.5 million), Dholuo (4.4 million), Kituba (4.2 million), Umbundu (4 million), Kamba (4 million), Kanuri (4 million), Domari (4 million), Musi (3.9 million), Dogri (3.8 million), Mina (3.8 million), Tsonga (3.7 million), Banjar (3.5 million), Aceh (3.5 million), Bugis (3.5 million), Bali (3.5 million), Shan (3.3 million), Gilaki (3.3 million), Mazanderani (3.3 million), Jamaican Creole English (3.2 million), Galician (3.2 million), Tamazight (3.2 million), Kabyle (3.1 million), Hassaniyya Arabic (3.1 million), Piemontese (3.1 million), Makhuwa (3.1 million), Godwari (3 million), Hunsrik (3 million), Kimbundu (3 million), and Tachelhit (3 million). Most of these 72 languages are indigenous to regions with no LDS presence and to ethnic groups with few Christians.

Language Outreach Successes

The translation of LDS materials and scriptures into additional languages has been most successful in Oceania as many church materials were translated relatively shortly after or before the assignment of missionaries in most nations and territories. Sizable translation resources are dedicated to languages spoken in Oceania notwithstanding most local languages have fewer than a million speakers. Some languages native to Oceania with LDS materials translated have fewer than 10,000 speakers. The only nations in Oceania which have a pressing need for the translations of materials and scriptures in additional languages are Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands due to extreme linguistic diversity, sizable populations, and recent growth in locations where the most commonly spoken languages have no translations of LDS materials.

During the last few decades of the twentieth century, the LDS Church translated basic church materials such as Gospel Principles and the Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith pamphlet into dozens of languages with only a handful or no known Latter-day Saint speakers which were spoken in nations where there was no LDS presence. Examples include Afar (Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Eritrea), Comorian (Comoros), Divehi (Maldives), Fang (Gabon), Fulani (West Africa), and Kisii (Kenya). Continuing to translate materials into languages spoken in unreached areas of the world is needed in preparation for future outreach efforts.

Opportunities

Favorable conditions abound worldwide for translating LDS materials into additional languages. Church-run universities and schools in Oceania and North America attract students from around the world who speak languages with few or no available translations of church materials. Many of these students speak English proficiently before entering church universities or learn English as a second language as part of their degree program or due to school requirements. The Church has in the past drawn upon the language skills of foreign students in its schools to assist in translation efforts. Finding students who possess the skills to translate church materials into languages without LDS materials offers considerable opportunity for utilizing Latter-day Saint translators, coordinating with language professors in church-run universities, and collaborating with the Church Translation Department.

The LDS Church has reduced its promotion of church-built schools and colleges in recent years. In some locations these school have been totally eliminated. Reversing recent trends of declining amounts of resources dedicated to building church-run schools and colleges can facilitate translation work if English language study programs are available to students. The Church has not explored ample opportunities for establishing schools and colleges in impoverished nations in Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America notwithstanding significant headway achieved by Protestant groups in founding schools and colleges and establishing a greater sense of religious community. Many of the languages which are in the greatest need for translations of LDS materials and scriptures are spoken in these regions. Establishing schools and colleges in these regions can not only

expedite translation work but also buttress the strength and vitality of LDS congregations by reducing emigration and increasing economic independence and educational attainment.

Challenges

Local language needs must be properly assessed in order to determine which languages would be most efficacious for the LDS Church to allocate translation resources. Some languages currently without LDS materials are typically unwritten and have few speakers who are literate in their native language. In some areas, it is more practical for members to utilize second-language LDS materials rather than first language materials due to the limited use of their first language to primarily family and cultural settings. At times second language use facilitates greater integration of differing ethno-linguistic groups into the same congregations where the number of Latter-day Saints is insufficient to create multiple language-specific congregations. Controversy surrounding which written scripts to adopt for some languages may have delayed the translation of written LDS materials into some languages such as Mapudungun (spoken by the Mapuche people in Chile). Some political issues may have influenced the Church to limit or forego the translation of materials in some languages. For example, the use of the word "God" in the Malay and Indonesian languages, Allah, by Christians has been a point of contention as many Muslims claim that the word can only be used by Muslims.

A lack of proficient Latter-day Saint translators who speak the target language and English has delayed or prevented the translation of LDS materials into additional languages. No translation efforts have been undertaken in many of the languages with the most speakers without translations of LDS materials due to the status of religious freedom in nations where these languages are commonly spoken. All languages with over 20 million speakers without translations of LDS materials are native to India, Indonesia, and Pakistan where government and societal restrictions prohibit or strongly discourage open proselytism in many areas and Christians are frequently persecuted by the Muslim or Hindu majorities.

Current Needs

Translation needs in the LDS Church consist of translating additional materials and remaining scriptures into languages which already have some translations of LDS materials and translating literature and scriptures into languages which have no LDS materials available. Within the past decade the Church has made significant progress translating remaining LDS scriptures and church literature into languages which already had some church materials and the Book of Mormon translated, particularly among Eastern European languages. However, little or no progress has occurred translating additional materials into languages with few Latter-day Saint speakers, particularly those languages native to Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa such as Bengali, Fulani, and Hausa. Virtually all African languages with at least one LDS material translated are in need of additional translations of church literature and scriptures. All languages native to India that have some church materials translated are in need of additional translations of materials and scriptures. As of late 2011, the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price had not been translated into Hindi, Nepali, Sinhala, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, or any other South Asian languages. The Church has made steady progress translating materials and scriptures into the most commonly spoken Eastern Asian languages and only a few are in great need of additional materials and scriptures such as Chinese (simplified characters). Some languages have fewer than one million speakers but are in need of additional translations of church materials and scriptures due to high receptivity and recent church growth. Examples of these languages include Iban (Malaysia), Mayan (Mexico), and Tzotzil (Mexico).

Current translation needs for languages without translations of LDS materials fall into two categories of urgency: Languages with the most speakers and languages which have experienced an increase in the number of speakers who are Latter-day Saints. Advancing translation work in languages that fall under both categories is crucial towards capitalizing missionary efforts among populations when they are most receptive to LDS outreach and establishing a body of church literature and scriptures for languages with the most speakers but have few Latter-day Saints.

Languages in the greatest need of translations of LDS materials that have experienced an increase in the number of speakers who are Latter-day Saints include Acholi (northern Uganda), Dholuo (western Kenya), Dinka (South Sudan), Gikuyu (central Kenya), Kimbundu (northern Angola), Miskito (Nicaragua), Rwanda (Rwanda), and Umbundu (southern Angola). Languages in the greatest need of translations of LDS materials that have the most speakers but few Latter-day Saint speakers and no current translations of church materials include Javanese (Indonesia), Lahnda (Pakistan), Gujarati (India), Bhojpuri (India), Awadhi (India), Maithili (India), Sunda (Indonesia), Oriya (India), Marwari (India), Sindhi (Pakistan), Rajasthani (India), and Azerbaijani (Azerbaijan and Iran).

Missed Opportunities

The need for translating church materials and scriptures into additional languages is well illustrated by the following statement made by church magazine writer Sandra Williams regarding the translation of LDS materials into Hmong in the 1980s: "But without translated gospel materials in Hmong, the Lo families may have had to wait much longer than they did to receive the blessings of the temple. Perhaps they may never have received them at all.[17] The translation of church materials into additional languages is crucial towards expanding mission outreach, solidifying testimonies, and facilitating individuals receiving church ordinances and gospel instruction.

The delay of translating materials in additional languages appears to have significantly impacted LDS growth trends in nations

where congregations were organized and missionaries assigned but no LDS materials or scriptures were available in the primary local languages. In Georgia, the LDS Church established its first church group in 2001 and branch in 2002 and assigned its first full-time proselytizing missionaries in 2006. No LDS materials were translated into Georgian until 2010, nearly a decade following the first LDS Church activity commenced. A lack of any church literature in Georgian until 2010 appears a major culprit in the relatively insignificant growth of the LDS Church in Georgia over the past decade as in 2010 there were less than 200 members and in 2011 the two branches in Tbilisi - the only LDS congregations in the country - were consolidated into a single unit. Receptivity appears to have unfortunately waned with time in Georgia as LDS proselytism interests have slightly increased. By the time Georgian LDS materials were introduced around 2010, a decade had past during which time converts could have utilized church literature in their native language and possibly bolstered testimonies and improved retention but instead had to rely on Russian or other commonly-spoken second languages that had translations of LDS materials. The negative impact of a lack of basic proselytism materials in Georgian for nearly an entire decade from the Church's establishment extends far beyond that of those who have joined the Church but may have dissuaded hundreds and perhaps thousands of Georgians from seriously investigating the LDS Church and reading and pondering its teachings. Notwithstanding the progress in translating a couple dozen basic church materials into Georgian by 2011, there were no Georgian-translations of any LDS scriptures at the time. Missionaries in late 2011 projected that the translation of the Book of Mormon would begin in early 2012 and take approximately five years to complete.

Waiting to translate basic proselytism materials into additional languages until a sizable number of speakers of a given language join the Church is counterintuitive as translations of basic church materials are requisite for individuals to learn about the Church and understand its teachings and practices in order to join the Church. It is therefore not surprising that the LDS Church has grown very little in many nations around the world in which it has few materials available in local languages if any are translated at all. The LDS Church has had a presence in Nepal since 2001 when the first branch was organized in Kathmandu yet in 2010 there were fewer than 200 Latter-day Saints in Nepal. Proselytism restrictions appear partially to blame for slow growth over the past decade, but a lack of LDS materials translated into Nepali is another major contributor as in October 2011 the Church listed only five materials available in Nepali on its online store at store.lds.org. Other missionary-focused Christian groups operate carefully in Nepal yet claim thousands of followers, experience rapid growth, and translate materials into Nepali. In 2011, an authors in the Church's official international magazine the Liahona noted that language barriers pose a serious challenge when a geographical area is opened to proselytism if no printed materials are available in the local language or languages.[18]

The time to begin translating materials in additional languages is before the Church is physically established in locations were languages are spoken that currently have no LDS materials. Missed opportunities to enter several former Soviet Republics in Central Asia occurred in tandem with no LDS materials available in local languages. The translation of the 13 Articles of Faith, the Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith pamphlet, and church proclamations into languages such as Azerbaijani, Turkmen, Kashmiri, Shan, Javanese, Dari, and Uyghur would provide a basic battery of outreach materials available to utilize among speakers of these languages in areas where outreach is permitted and provide needed preparation for entering areas where these languages are spoken should political conditions improve and the status of religious freedom become upheld by government and society. A lack of LDS materials in many of the most commonly spoken languages in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia today continues to frustrate growth prospects notwithstanding generally high receptivity.

Comparative Growth

Other missionary-focused Christian groups have more rapidly translated literature and into more languages than the LDS Church. Jehovah's Witnesses have basic online information about their beliefs and a system for interested individuals to provide their contact information for a visit by representatives in 429 languages.[19] Witnesses regularly translate literature in additional languages and added ten additional languages to the website in October 2011. Many of the hundreds of languages with translations of Witness literature that are without translations of Latter-day Saints materials are native to the former Soviet Union, Africa, Mexico, and East Asia. Many of these languages have between 50,000 and one million speakers. In 2011, the United Bible Societies reported that the Bible in its entirely was translated into over 450 languages and that select books or passages of the Bible were translated into over 2,500 languages.[20]

In 2009, the Seventh Day Adventist Church performed missionary outreach in 901 languages and published literature in 372 languages.[21] Adventists have utilized creative, thrifty approaches to meeting language needs such as performing radio outreach throughout the world through its Adventist World Radio. The radio station broadcasts through shortwave transmitters, AM/FM radio, and on the internet to specifically target populations residing in areas where Adventists cannot send missionaries due to political, legal, geographical, and cultural restrictions.[22] Shortwave radio transmissions are utilized to broadcast Adventist radio programs in the most populous, least Christian areas of the world such as China, India, and the Middle East. This area is located between 10 and 40 degrees north of the equator and dubbed by many missionary-minded Christians as the "10/40 window." Podcasts are produced by Adventists in 92 languages providing opportunities to reach anyone in the world with an Internet connection. Of the 92 languages with Adventist podcasts available, most have no or only a few translations of Latter-day Saint materials available. Adventist radio studios have been constructed in areas geographically closed to nations with restrictions on religious freedom, such as in Ceuta, Spain where Adventists reach North Africans in approximately half a dozen commonly spoken languages.[23]

Future Prospects

The outlook for the translation of LDS materials and scriptures into additional languages appears mediocre as only a handful of languages have recently had their first translations of LDS literature completed, challenges for the Church Translation Department and area and mission leaders to coordinate translation efforts, and a lack of church growth in areas of the world

where commonly spoken languages do not have translations of church materials available. The common belief that translations of church materials and scriptures should be pursued when a sizable number of Latter-day Saints speak a language perpetuates delays in translation efforts as many are unable to learn about the Church and obtain a personal testimony because they lack materials in their native language to study. Prospects are favorable for the translation of additional church materials and remaining LDS scripture in many languages which currently have only a handful of resources available. Due to increasing membership growth in Africa, prospects appear highest for additional language translations to primarily consist of African languages within the coming decade.

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