



Reaching the Nations International Church Growth Almanac

Country reports on the LDS Church around the world from a landmark almanac. Includes detailed analysis of history, context, culture, needs, challenges and opportunities for church growth.



Pakistan

Population: 196.17 millions (#7 out of countries)

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Geography

Area: 796,095 square km. Located in South Asia, Pakistan borders India, China, Afghanistan, Iran, and the Arabian Sea. The glacier fed Indus River runs through the middle from north to south, watering the Indus Plain, where most agriculture takes place. Arid and semi-arid climates cover most areas. The Thar Desert occupies much of the territory bordering India. Plains dominate half of Pakistan, with the Balochistan Plateau to the west by Iran. The Himalaya and Karakoram mountains occupy northern regions with some of the world's highest peaks. Pakistan is administratively divided into four provinces, one territory, and one capital territory. Two additional administrative entities function in disputed areas, which include Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Peoples

Punjabi: 44.68%

Pashtun: 15.42%

Sindhi: 14.1%

Sariaki: 8.38%

Muhagirs: 7.57%

Balochi: 3.57%

Other: 6.28%

Punjabi and Sindhi belong to the Indic ethnic group and live on the northern and southern Indus Plain, respectively. Pashtun

and Balochi belong to the Iranian ethnic group. Pashtun inhabit the mountainous border region with Afghanistan stretching from Quetta to the Karakoram Mountains. Balochi are found in the arid western areas bordering Iran. Sariaki live in the central areas of the Indus Plain. Muhagirs reside in and around Karachi. At least 1.2 million Afghan refugees live in Pakistan.

Population: 207,862,518 (July 2018)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.41% (2018)

Fertility Rate: 2.55 children born per woman (2018)

Life Expectancy: 66.4 male, 70.5 female (2018)

Languages: Punjabi (44%), Pashto languages (14%), Sindhi (11%), Saraiki (10%), Urdu (7%), Balochi (4%), Hindko (2%), Brahui (2%), other (6%). National or official languages include Urdu and English. As many as 94 million people speak Urdu as a second language. As many as 17 million Pakistanis speak English as a second language. Pakistanis speak 74 different languages. Languages with over one million speakers include Western Punjabi (90.7 million), Pashto languages (29.8 million), Sindi (22.7 million), Saraiki (19.9 million), Urdu (15.1 million), Balochi (7.8 million), Hindko languages (3.7 million), Brahui (3.1 million), Pahari-Potwari (2.5 million), Dari (1.0 million), and Shina languages (1.0 million).

Literacy: 58% (2017)

History

Pakistan was home to the ancient Indus civilization 5,000 years ago, which influenced the surrounding regions. Several empires expanded from the west into Pakistan in ancient times, including the Persians and Greeks under Alexander the Great. Arabs later arrived and brought Islam to the region, followed by Afghans and Turks. Many of the inhabitants who were formerly Buddhist or Hindu converted to Islam. Muslim empires, such as the Mughal Empire, controlled Pakistan for several centuries during the Middle Ages. The British East India Company arrived in the eighteenth century and controlled the region until independence in 1947. In preparing the region for independence, the United Kingdom attempted to segregate the Muslim and Hindu populations to reduce religious tensions and formed Pakistan and East Pakistan, known today as Bangladesh. The segregation was incomplete and land disputes arose, resulting in wars in 1947–48, 1965, and 1971 between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, as well as numerous border skirmishes. East Pakistan seceded from Pakistan to form Bangladesh during the third war. Tensions escalated between India and Pakistan following nuclear weapons testing by the two countries in the late 1990s. Strong relations with the United States resulted from Soviet threats in the region. These were later strained following nuclear weapons testing in the late 1990s but improved from Pakistan's cooperation in the United States' war on terrorism in Afghanistan in the early 2000s. However, relations have again become increasingly strained due to casualties from U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan, resentment of U.S. policies, and other factors.

In the 2000s, Islamist militant groups, mainly Al Qaeda and Taliban residing in border regions near Afghanistan, destabilized Afghanistan and threatened Pakistan's stability. Tensions between India and Pakistan improved following nuclear weapons development but later rose following the involvement of radical Pakistani Islamist groups in the November 2008 terror attacks in Mumbai. Other events in the late 2000s threatened the stability of Pakistan as a nation state, including the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in late 2007, the rising unpopularity of President Musharraf and his resignation in 2008, and the loss of large amounts of territory to Taliban militants in 2009 in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and North West Frontier Province. In 2011, the United States conducted a covert military operation that killed Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad. Armed conflict with militant groups along the Afghan border and tensions with India continued in the 2010s.

Culture

Dance, music, poetry, and theatre all influence daily life. Polo is popular in northern areas, and cricket is played nationwide.

Islamic holidays are widely celebrated. Clothing for men consists of baggy pants and loose-fitting tunics. Since Muslims constitute 96% of the population, pork is not eaten, and most fast during the daylight hours of the month of Ramadan. Unlike neighboring India, there are no castes. Women have more rights and freedoms compared to many other Islamic states, evidenced by the power and popularity of the late Benazir Bhutto. The most recent data available indicates women suffer from much lower literacy rates (36%) than men (63%) due to cultural restraints on female education. Alcohol is shunned due to the influential Muslim majority. Tobacco usage rates are lower than the world average.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$5,400 (2011) [9.0% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.562 (2017)

Corruption Index: 33 (2018)

Economic growth and development continue, although most are underemployed, and growth is slow due to poor management, corruption, and political unrest. Approximately 30% of the population lives below the poverty line. Services account for 56.5% of the GDP, and agriculture and industry constitute 24.4% and 19.1% of the GDP, respectively. Agriculture employs 42% of the workforce. Primary agricultural products include cotton, wheat, and rice. Industries include textiles, food, pharmaceuticals, and construction materials. Primary trade partners include China, the United Arab Emirates, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Inflation has worsened in recent years, and foreign investment has been lacking due to nation instability. Earthquakes in 2005 killed over 70,000, left three million homeless, and weakened national infrastructure.

Corruption is widespread. Bombings in larger cities and Federally Administered Tribal Areas are commonplace. Pakistan experiences high levels of drug trafficking of heroin and morphine from Afghan sources that are distributed from Pakistan around the world. Opium poppy farming occurs in some areas of Pakistan. Human trafficking is a concern.

Faiths

Muslim: 96%

Christian: 1.6%

Hindu: 0.7%

Other/unspecified: 1.7%

Christians

Denominations – Members – Congregations

Evangelical – 1,140,589

Catholic – 810,000

Seventh Day Adventists – 13,513 – 162

Latter-day Saints ~ 5,000 – 14

Religion

Sunnis constitute 80-85% of Muslims in Pakistan, whereas the remainder of Muslims are predominantly Shia Muslims. Religious minorities tend to live in their own communities to avoid persecution and discrimination. Most Christians are Catholic or belong to independent Pakistani denominations. Estimates for the number of Christians in the population widely vary from as low as 1.3 million to as many as 4.5 million. Hindus appear to number at least 1.4 million. There are also small numbers of Ahmadis (126,000), Baha'is (34,000), Sikhs (6,000), and Parsis (4,000).[\[1\]](#)

Religious Freedom

Persecution Index: 5th (2019)

Pakistan is an Islamic republic with a constitution that limits the religious freedom of minority religious groups. Some tolerance exists for religious minorities to live and practice their beliefs. Only Muslims may serve as president or prime minister, and senior officials and parliament members must take an oath to maintain the nation's Islamic identity. Blasphemy laws transgressed by the defiling of the Koran or prophets in Islam can result in death or life imprisonment. Religious persecution can result in imprisonment. Religious minorities receive harassment from police and the Sunni majority. Violent attacks on Christian churches and religious minority communities frequently occur. Recent legislation has sought to monitor electronic and internet communication within the country to prosecute defamation of Islam. Societal discrimination remains severe and many religious minorities are unable to advance their careers due to their religious affiliation. Non-Islamic missionaries may operate in the country but must profess to not be Muslim and affirm that they do not preach against Islam. The government restricts the total number of missionaries by only replacing ones who leave the country. Marriages between different religious groups are not generally recognized by the state. The most serious restrictions are placed on the Ahmadiyya sect of Islam. Ahmadis are not permitted to identify themselves as Muslims, hold public meetings, or sell religious literature and are banned from performing religious pilgrimages to Islamic holy sites.[\[2\]](#)

Largest Cities

Urban: 36.9% (2019)

Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, **Peshawar, Multan, Hyderabad**, Islamabad, **Quetta, Bahawalpur, Sargodha**, Sialkot, **Sukkur, Larkana, Sheikhupura, Rahimyar Khan, Jhang, Dera Ghazi Khan, Gujrat, Sahiwal, Wah, Mardan, Kasur, Okara, Mingora, Nawabshah, Chiniot, Kotri, Kamoki, Hafizabad, Sadiqabad, Mirpur Khas, Burewala, Kohat, Khanewal, Dera Ismail Khan, Turbat, Muzaffargarh, Abbottabad, Mandi Bahauddin, Shikarpur, Jacobabad, Jhelum, Khanpur, Khairpur, Khuzdar, Pakpattan, Hub, Daska, Gojra, Dadu, Muridke, Bahawalnagar, Samundri, Tando Allahyar, Tando Adam, Jaranwala, Chishtian, Attock, Vehari, Kot Abdul Malik, Ferozewala, Chakwal, Gujranwala Cantonment, Kamalia, Umerkot, Ahmadpur East, Kot Addu, Wazirabad, Mansehra, Layyah, Swabi, Chaman, Taxila, Nowshera, Khushab, Shahdadkot, Mianwali, Kabal, Lodhran, Hasilpur, Charsadda, Bhakkar, Badin, Arifwala, Ghotki, Sambrial, Jatoi, Harunabad, Daharki, Narowal, Tando Muhammad Khan, Kambar Ali Khan, Mirpur Mathelo, Kandhkot, Bhalwal.**

Cities listed in **bold** do not have official congregations of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Eight of the ninety-seven most populous cities have an official Church congregation. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of the national population lives in cities inhabited by at least 100,000 people.

Church History

The first members living in Pakistan were foreigners. Branches were established in Islamabad, Karachi, and Lahore by 1985. The first Pakistani missionary from the Islamabad Branch began serving in January 1987.^[3] In 1995, the Church was registered with the government and seminary began.^[4] Pakistan was originally assigned to the Singapore Mission, and the country was later reassigned to the newly organized India New Delhi Mission in 2007 – the same year Elder Dallin H. Oaks dedicated Pakistan for missionary work. Elder Rasband visited Pakistan in 2015 and met with government official and local Latter-day Saints.^[5] Outreach in Pakistan occurs exclusively among Christians. Significant numbers of Pakistanis have also joined the Church in Canada and the United Kingdom.

Membership Growth

Church Membership: ~5,000 (2019)

When the first missionaries arrived in mid-1993 there were 130 members.^[6] Sixty baptisms occurred between the fall of 1992 and the fall of 1993. By 1997, there were 500 members. Membership increased to 786 at the end of 2000 and to 957 the following year. Sizable numbers of converts have joined the Church at once through the efforts of member-missionary work, such as the conversion of twenty-five new members by Razzaq Gill.^[7] Eighty convert baptisms occurred in 2008. Church membership increased from 2,000 in 2007 to 4,000 in 2015.^[8] In 2019, Church membership totaled nearly 2,000 in the Islamabad Pakistan District, and approximately 2,500 in the Lahore Pakistan District. Church membership appeared to total 5,000 in 2019.

In 2019, one in 41,573 was a Latter-day Saint.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 14 (2018)

A small group met in Islamabad as early as the 1970s. The first senior missionary couple arrived in early 1993 and began working among Pakistani Christians in Karachi and Lahore. A second missionary couple arrived by the summer of 1993.^[9] At the time, both couples were engaged in proselytism only among Christians in three branches and four groups.^[10] The Islamabad Pakistan District was created in the 1990s.

By the end of 2000, there were six branches in one district. By August 2001, six branches met in Faisalabad, Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Taxilla, and Sialkot. There were seven branches in 2007.^[11] A second district was created in Karachi in September 2008 from at least two branches. By May 2009, there were four branches, each clustered around Islamabad and Lahore, forming the Islamabad Pakistan District and two additional branches in Karachi. In the late 2000s, district conference for the Islamabad district was often divided into two sessions with one in Lahore to reduce travel demands. Sometime in the early 2010s, Lahore became its own district. In 2015, there were three districts and thirteen branches.^[12] A third branch in Islamabad was organized in 2018. In 2018, the Church reported fourteen branches in Pakistan that met in eight cities, including Karachi (4), Islamabad (3), Lahore (2), Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi, Sialkot, and Taxila. A group or branch may have begun to operate in Mian Channu in 2019 based on reports from local members. In the late 2010s, local members reported that there were many members who lived in cities without a branch, such as in Hyderabad and Multan. In early 2018, no cities had member groups.

Activity and Retention

Activity and retention have been strong in Pakistan since the first Pakistanis joined the Church. The first Christian to receive the Rover Badge in the Pakistani scouting program was a Pakistani member in charge of scouting in Punjab Province in 1991.^[13] Elder Dallin K. Oaks held a weekday fireside in late 2007 attended by 475.^[14] The Church Education System had one hundred members enrolled in classes between 2008 and 2009. Over 200 young single adults met for a nationwide conference in late 2008. In early 2012, over 1,000 attended the Lahore Pakistan District conference. Dozens of Pakistani missionaries were serving missions in early 2010, many in their native country.

Local members reported the following average church attendance for the following branches as of early 2018: Faisalabad (80-85), Lahore 2nd (70-80), Karachi 1st (70), Lahore 1st (65-70), Sialkot (50-60), Karachi 4th (40), Karachi 2nd (35) Gujranwala (25-30), and Karachi 3rd (15-20). In mid-2018, local members reported that there were approximately 2,000 active members in Pakistan. In late 2019, one local member reported that there were 1,200 active members in the Lahore Pakistan District, and 700 active members in the Islamabad Pakistan District. However, it appears that many active members do not attend Church every Sunday, possible due to constraints on distance or safety. Two surveys completed by local members in the mid-2010s noted that 35-50% of members on Church records appear to regularly attend Church. Total active membership in 2019 appeared to number 2,100, or approximately 42% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with Latter-day Saint Scripture: English, Urdu, Farsi (Persian).

A translation of selections from the Book of Mormon became available in Urdu in 1988. An entire Book of Mormon translation was completed in late 2007. Plans to translate the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price into Urdu and Farsi were announced in October 2017.^[15] The Church has translated the entire Book of Mormon into Farsi. Three issues of the Liahona magazine were published a year in Urdu as of late 2019. Audiovisual materials are available for Joy to the World and The Restoration. Small numbers of teaching and administrative materials are available in Urdu. Gospel Principles and The Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith are available in Farsi and Pashto. Gospel Principles Simplified and The Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith are available in Punjabi.

Meetinghouses

A building housing the Taxila Branch was damaged in the 2005 earthquake.^[16] Other branches may meet in Church-built buildings, but most likely meet in rented spaces or renovated buildings.

Health and Safety

Health issues are typical of most developing countries. HIV/AIDS infects less than 0.1% of the population. Safety issues present a major concern. Violence targeting religious minorities presents a safety concern for members and missionaries; violence includes intimidation, kidnapping, sexual and physical violence, and murder. Suicide bombings occur regularly and without warning in the largest cities and the most unstable areas near the Afghan border. Fighting in the Kashmiri region restricts missionary work. High crime and corruption in Karachi pose safety threats. No nonnative missionaries serve in Pakistan due to safety issues.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church has conducted at least fifty-nine humanitarian and development projects in Pakistan since 1985, including community projects, emergency response, refugee response, and wheelchair donations.^[17] The church provided needed humanitarian aid for sufferers of the 2005 earthquake. Fifty thousand blankets, 1,000 winterized tents, 300,000 pounds of medical supplies, and 42,000 hygiene kits were initially sent. Due to inadequate provisions of refugees for winter temperatures, the Church purchased and delivered an additional 150,000 blankets and 5,000 winterized tents in late 2005.^[18] The Church partnered with Islamic Relief to assist flood victims in 2010.^[19] Local members regularly engage in community projects in their cities.

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Government and cultural issues are very similar since religion strongly affects both. Government and society restrict the Church's missionary program to just Christians, permitting in outreach to only 1–2% of the population. Pakistan has more liberal laws concerning religious minorities than many other Islamic states, allowing Christians to assemble and to have missionaries. Christians often live segregated from Muslims in compounds or villages. This presents opportunities for the Church to reach concentrated communities of Christians despite a homogeneously Muslim society. Limitations on the numbers of missionaries who can enter Pakistan restrict Church missionary programs that usually rely heavily on full-time missionaries. Missionaries cannot preach against Islam.

Cultural Issues

Many of the restrictions on missionary work and religious freedom stem from Islamic cultural influences on government. Those who join the Church may not only be ostracized but may become the target of violence. British rule and the presence of religious minorities for hundreds of years may have contributed to the greater leniency for these groups to operate despite the integration of Islam and government. Furthermore, unlike most traditionally Muslim countries, the Church holds worship services on Sundays and not Fridays.

The abstinence of most Muslims from alcohol provides opportunities to reach this religious group if societal and government restrictions improve. The frequent, widespread consumption of tea may present barriers between local customs and Church doctrine. The low literacy rates of women present difficulties for understanding Church doctrine and strengthening testimonies. Ethnic violence in the southern areas around Karachi threatens the Church's greater establishment among all ethnicities.

National Outreach

No other nation in South Asia has as widespread an Church presence as Pakistan. Nevertheless, this Church presence is limited to branches that operate in cities whose inhabitants comprise only 17% of the national population. Only eight cities in a country of over 200 million people have an official branch. Furthermore, only Christians can be reached by the Church, leaving some 98% of the population unreached. Although government and society limit outreach, a large amount of success has been achieved as membership grew from only a couple of hundred to over 2,000 in fifteen years. The Sindh and Punjab Provinces, the two most populous, and the Islamabad Capital Territory have cities with congregations. However, North West Frontier Province (30.5 million), Balochistan (12.3 million), and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (5.0 million), amounting to 23% of the national population, have no congregations. Although only a small fraction receive outreach from missionaries, the Church has spread to several of the largest cities. A presence in the largest cities provides the opportunity to lay a foundation for future growth in the most populous areas. No outreach is conducted in rural areas, where 63% of the population resides. Rural areas may be unreachable for many years or decades due to the concentration of many Christians in compounds and the Church's efforts to become most established in larger cities. Islamabad is the administrative unit with the highest percentage of Christians in urban areas (5.7%) followed by Punjab (3.27%) per 2017 census data.[\[20\]](#)

Outreach to more isolated Christian communities is restricted by the limited number of Pakistani missionaries and members and distance from mission headquarters in New Delhi. Although the membership growth in Pakistan likely heavily influenced the decision to create the India New Delhi Mission, the mission must also allocate mission resources and visits between Nepal, Bangladesh, and Bhutan, all of which have very limited Church membership facing government restrictions and societal challenges. Local members report frequent shortages of full-time missionaries available in Pakistan to the point that an entire district may have only a single full-time missionary companionship. Furthermore, there have been challenges with the organization of member groups and branches in previously unreached cities as these efforts are under the purview of the mission president, and the mission president appears restricted in terms of where he may visit in Pakistan given security concerns and his foreign status. Pakistani members have used social media and the internet to share their faith with others. As a result, there are many individuals who wish to join the Church, but are unable given their remote location far from the nearest branch and lack of resources available in the country for missionary activity.

About half of all Catholics reside in the Lahore area and make up a large portion of Pakistani Christians. These areas seem to

pose the greatest opportunities for the Church to expand among unreached Christians. Catholics number in the tens of thousands in some remote areas like Quetta. Greater outreach may occur if active members move to these locations and share the Gospel with fellow Christians.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Convert retention and member activity appears moderate to high for a nation with a small membership and a limited Church presence. The fireside held by Elder Oaks was attended by nearly a quarter of the total Pakistani members and nearly half of actives. The Church has spread to many cities in Pakistan as the result of active members who engage in missionary work with their family and friends. However, convert retention rates may have decreased in the past decade given reports of the total number of active members versus total Church membership. Many nations with restrictions on proselytism struggle to have members who have so willingly served missions and helped build the Church like in Pakistan. Great potential for additional growth and outreach is likely as the large number of active members and retained converts are creating a strong member base.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

The ethnic groups with the greatest Church outreach are those with the most Christians and include the Punjabi, Sindhi, and Sariaiki. The most severe ethnic violence is found in the south, especially in Karachi. Bitter ethnic conflict between the Sindhi and Mohajirs has continued for decades. Incoming Pashtuns have also experienced violence from Mohajirs. The integration of these groups into the same congregation may be difficult, particularly if most members belong to one group. This situation would challenge members in the congregation and potential members from rival ethnic groups in joining the Church.

War and instability from Taliban insurrection limit outreach among the Pashtun. The lack of appreciable numbers of Pashtun Christians limits the potential for mission outreach. Outreach to Balochis is difficult, as Christians are few and Balochis reside in remote, sparsely populated far western areas.

Language Issues

The Church benefits from a large proportion of the population speaking Urdu as a second language. This has helped unify converts from differing ethnic groups that may meet in the same congregation. Limited language materials in the most spoken first languages provide outreach to over half the population. This provides great opportunity for missionary work but hampers gospel scholarship, as only Urdu and Farsi have the complete Book of Mormon translated. The Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price remain unavailable in any native languages of Pakistan, albeit plans are underway to translate these scriptures in the near future. A Book of Mormon translation in Punjabi may be forthcoming since many members live in regions where it is widely spoken.

Missionary Service

Only native Pakistani missionaries serve in Pakistan. Pakistani members regularly serve missions and comprise the entire missionary force in Pakistan. The stability and size of the full-time missionary force in Pakistan is vulnerable to sudden changes given the small size of the Church in Pakistan and dependence on local members to staff missionary needs. In early 2012, there appeared to be at least thirty members serving missions. High levels of devotion to the Church prior to baptism appears correlated with good representation of local members serving full-time missions. Returned missionaries provide invaluable leadership manpower and experience. The Church regularly holds mission preparation camps for young men with as many as eighteen youth in a single district attending these activities.

Leadership

Leadership is strong but limited. The district president of the Islamabad Pakistan District in 2007 was a twenty-nine-year-old

returned missionary.^[21] Most members are youth or middle-aged. Some local members have complained about challenges with the quality of local leadership and lack of initiative and organization in efforts such as fellowshipping members and member-missionary activity. It is difficult for members to marry in the Church with a small membership distributed over a large country. Young Single Adult activities have helped to introduce single members to each other in order to encourage marriage inside the Church. Leadership concentrates on preparing membership for stakes to be established. Some local leaders have eventually emigrated abroad, which has resulted in fewer leaders available to staff Church callings and strengthen membership. Districts in Islamabad and Lahore both appear likely to become stakes within the next five years given steady growth in the number of active members and the periodic organization of additional branches. However, these districts must have at least 1,900 members and five ward-sized congregations to become stakes, and also meet certain standards for the ratio of active, full-tithe paying Melchizedek Priesthood holders in individual congregations.

Temple

Pakistan pertains to the Hong Kong China Temple District. Temple excursions for Pakistani saints occur periodically, but attendance is limited due to constraints on distance, time and money. Church leaders in New Delhi in 1992 promised members that if they were faithful, a temple would someday be built in New Delhi. A future temple in New Delhi would reduce demands on time, money and distance for Pakistani members, although tensions between India and Pakistan may limit travel. Pakistan will likely be reassigned to the Bengaluru India Temple once it is completed.

Comparative Growth

Pakistan has the sixth largest population of any country in the world, yet Pakistan appeared to rank at approximately 77th in terms of the number of Latter-day Saints as of 2018. The percentage of Latter-day Saints in Pakistan is twice as high as neighboring India, albeit India is the only country in South Asia with stakes. Only Sri Lanka has a higher percentage of Latter-day Saints in the population than Pakistan among South Asian countries. Several Muslim-majority nations have more members than Pakistan. Indonesia has experienced slower membership growth, taking fifty years to grow to over 7,000 members meeting in twenty-four congregations. The percentage of Latter-day Saints in the population of Pakistan and Indonesia is comparable. There are other Muslim-majority countries with a much larger Latter-day Saint presence. For example, Sierra Leone had the Church first established in the late 1980s and has more than four times as many members and five times as many congregations as Pakistan. Attendance in other Islamic countries with sizeable membership consists primarily of expatriates or military personnel, such as in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

Other Christian groups typically have larger Church memberships but have had native members for decades before the arrival of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Seventh-Day Adventists report sizable numbers of converts each year albeit the number of Adventists and Adventist congregations have not noticeably changed in the past decade. Jehovah's Witnesses report slow growth with little increase in the number of active members and congregations.

Future Prospects

Reliance on local members and church leaders to meet missionary and ecclesiastical needs has promoted moderate retention and member activity as well as generating ongoing growth. However, limited numbers of Pakistanis who serve full-time missions pose a significant barrier for greater expansion and growth as current levels are unable to adequately staff local needs. There also appears a need for greater training and oversight of congregations to help improve member-missionary participation, fellowshipping of less-active and inactive members, and the quality of organization and leadership in some locations. The greatest challenge that will need to be resolved is to permit the organization of additional branches and member groups in cities where no branches currently operate without the foreign mission president directly visiting these locations. Use of district leadership to accomplish these needs appears the most feasible method to expand outreach. Local members note there are many who live in these locations and have requested the Church's establishment in their area. Cities that appear most likely to have a Church presence established in the near future include Hyderabad and Multan. Prospects appear favorable for continued growth among Christians, although there are no present prospects for expansion among Pakistani Muslims. Districts headquartered in Islamabad and Lahore appear likely to become stakes within the foreseeable future. A mission based in Pakistan seems unlikely until greater religious tolerance from government occurs, or there is a sustained increase in the number of Pakistani members who serve full-time missions.

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