

Reaching the Nations International Church Growth Almanac

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



Kenya

Population: 45.01 millions (#31 out of countries)

By David Stewart and Matt Martinich

Geography

Area: 580,367 square km. Located in Eastern Africa, Kenya shares a border with Tanzania to the south, Uganda to the west, Sudan to the northwest, Ethiopia to the north, and Somalia to the east. In addition to coastline on the Indian Ocean, Kenya possesses coastline along Lake Victoria to the west. One of the world's largest salt water lakes named Lake Turkana sits in northern Kenya. Climate in Kenya becomes drier the further one goes from the ocean, where tropical conditions exist. Much of the country is classified as savannah, with more tropical vegetation along the Indian Ocean and in western Kenya. Northern Kenya is the most arid where desert occupies most of the area. The Great Rift Valley runs through the center of the country. Low plains exist to the east and highlands rest on both sides of the Great Rift Valley. Large mountains, including Mount Kenya, stand in the center of the country as high as 5,000 meters. Plateaus make up the dominant land feature in western Kenya, which are highly suitable for agriculture. Kenya is divided into eight administrative provinces.

Population: 41,070,934 (July 2011)

Annual Growth Rate: 2.462% (2011)

Fertility Rate: 4.19 children born per woman (2011)

Life Expectancy: 58.91 male, 60.07 female (2011)

Peoples

Kikuyu: 22%

Luhya: 14%

Luo: 13%

Kalenjin: 12%

Kamba: 11%

Kiisi: 6%

Meru: 6%

Other Africans: 15%

Non-Africans: 1%

Extreme ethnic diversity exists in Kenya with the largest ethnic group only accounting for 22% of the population. The Kikuyu are found in the center of the country around Nairobi and the Luhya, Luo, Kalenjin, and Kiisi are found in the west near the border with Uganda. Kamba live to the southeast of Nairobi and Meru live to the northeast of Nairobi. Somalis live in the northern and eastern portions of Kenya.

Languages: Gikuyu (20%), Dholuo (12%), Kamba (11%), Ekegusii (6%), Kimiiru (5%), other or unspecified (46%). Swahili (Kiswahili) and English are the official languages and spoken by many as a second language. Kenya's linguistic diversity is as extreme as its ethnic diversity, with 69 spoken languages in the country. Many indigenous languages have over 100,000 speakers. Native languages with more than one million speakers include Gikuyu (7.18 million), Dholuo (4.27 million), Kamba (3.96 million), Ekegusii (2.12 million), and Kimiiru (1.74 million).

Literacy: 85.1% (2003)

History

Kenya played an important role in trade in East Africa and the Middle East centuries before European colonization. Arab traders came and traded slaves and goods in the area and introduced Islam to the coastal areas. Colonization from Omani Arabs also occurred prior to European rule. The Portuguese were the first to explore the area among Europeans, but the British were the main European nation to colonize and control Kenya. Independence from the United Kingdom occurred in 1963. President Kenyatta controlled Kenya from independence to his death in the late 1970s. Elections and presidencies in the 1980s and 1990s were marked with violence and fraud, with ethnic tensions intensifying. Due to a close, questionable election in late 2007 violence erupted between ethnic groups resulting in the death of as many as 1,500 people. Violence ended shortly thereafter due to a power sharing deal met between disputed parties.

Culture

Due to the large number of ethnic groups in Kenya, there is not one culture which defines Kenyans as whole. Different ethnic groups maintain much of their culture in the areas which they reside. Much of the country has a strong influence from pastoral communities, especially in the north, west and east of Kenya whereas Swahili culture is most apparent in the south and along coastal areas. Alcohol and cigarette consumption rates are low compared to the world average. Polygamy is practiced under customary law and its potential status as a civil union remains uncertain.[1]

Economy

GDP per capita: $1,600 (2010) [3.38% of US]

Human Development Index: 0.470

Corruption Index: 2.1

Notwithstanding as the regional economic power, the Kenyan economy suffers from corruption and widespread poverty. Half of Kenyans live below the poverty line and 40% are unemployed. Little economic growth occurred in the early part of the 2000s, with growth later accelerating until 2008 when the GDP grew by only 2.2%. Most of Kenyans are employed in agriculture, which accounts for about a quarter of the total GDP. Services contribute the most wealth into the economy. The tourism industry makes up an important portion of the economy due to tourists visiting wildlife parks and beachside resorts. Primary goods produced in Kenya include coffee, tea, meat, corn, wheat, fruit, and vegetables. Exports consist of food items and imports consist of machinery, oil, metals, and plastics. Kenya's import and export partners are concentrated in Africa, Europe and Asia.

Corruption is perceived as widespread and a major deterrent for greater economic growth. Marijuana is commonly cultivated and Kenya serves as a transshipment point for South Asian drugs to Europe, North America, and South Africa. Vulnerability is high for money laundering.

Faiths

Christian: 78%

Muslims: 10%

Indigenous Beliefs: 10%

Other: 2%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Protestant 17,551,247

Catholic 12,870,915

Seventh Day Adventists 665,731 4,263 (includes Somalia)

Jehovah's Witnesses 24,515 533

Latter-day Saints 10,270 40

Religion

The largest religion in Kenya is Christianity, claiming 78% of the population. Protestants and Catholics account for 45% and 33% of the population respectively. Muslims and those who follow indigenous beliefs each make up 10% of Kenyans. The remaining 2% of the population follows other religions.

Religious Freedom

Persecution Index:

The constitution protects religious freedom which is upheld by the government. Muslims appear to have the greatest threats towards religious freedom due to several terrorist attacks in the past decade. Religious expression is integrated into everyday living in schools and other places in society. Islamic law and civil courts operate for Muslim Kenyans. Major Christian and some Muslim holidays are recognized national holidays. Indigenous beliefs are not socially accepted by most Kenyans. Some preferential treatment based on religion appears to occur in the Muslim and Christian areas of the country.[2]

Major Cities

Urban: 22%

Nairobi, Mombasa, **Nakuru**, Kisumu, Eldoret, **Thika**, **Ruiru**, Kitale, **Kakamega**, **Malindi**

The 10 largest cities are listed in descending order by population. Cities listed in bold do not have a LDS congregation. The Church has a presence in half of the 10 largest cities. The population of the 10 largest cities amounted to 11.5% of Kenya's population.

LDS History

The first Church members to live in Kenya were American USAID employees and their families in the 1970s. Church meetings were held in their own homes under the jurisdiction of the Switzerland Mission. The first local members to join the Church

occurred in 1979. A senior couple began serving in Kenya in 1980. The Church was registered with the Kenyan government in February 1991. The Kenya Nairobi Mission was created the following July and administered to Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Tanzania. Elder James E. Faust visited Kenya on October 24th, 1991 and dedicated the country for missionary work.[3] In the late 1980s and early 1990s, interested Kenyans who were not members of the Church living in Chyulu began holding unofficial church meetings several years before the first branch was organized in the area. These individuals were requested by the Church not to hold such meetings until they were baptized and the men held the priesthood. In 1998, President Hinckley visited Kenya and the Africa Area was divided and Kenya was assigned to the Africa Southeast Area. In 2005 the Kenya Nairobi Mission was divided to create the Uganda Kampala Mission. As a result of the division, the Kenya Nairobi Mission only included Kenya and Tanzania. The mission realignment resulted in the mission president in Kenya devoting more time and attention to serving the Kenyan and Tanzanian people while reducing costs and time for transportation.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 10,270 (2010)

There were 104 members at the end of 1971.[4] In 1991 there were 258 members in Kenya.[5] Membership reached 1,400 in 1993, 2,800 in 1997, and 4,911 in 2000. The Nairobi Kenya District for the end of 2000 reported 1,760 members, accounting for 36% of Church membership in Kenya.[6]

Moderate rates of membership growth occurred in the 2000s as membership totaled 5,680 in 2002, 6,832 in 2004, 7,782 in 2006, 8,416 in 2008, and 10,270 in 2010. In 2002, membership in the Chyulu region reportedly increased to 1,600 since the first convert from the area was baptized in 1986.

By the end of 2005 there were 7,340 members. Membership growth has steadily declined in Kenya since the mid-2000s. The membership growth rate was usually over 10% a year before 2003, but was a mere 3.6% in 2008. Annual membership growth rates increased in 2009 and 2010 to 11.3% and 9.6%, respectively. In 2010, one in 4,000 was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 7 Branches: 31 Groups: 2+

In 1982, there were two branches were established in Nairobi and Kiboko, the latter being a dependent branch, and the Kenya District was organized. There was one independent branch in 1987 and 11 branches in 1993. A second district was organized in Chyulu, a rural area 150 miles southeast of Nairobi, in late 1992. In 1994 there were four districts organized in Kenya, which were later reduced to two,[7] one in Nairobi and one in Chyulu. The number of branches increased to 13 in 1997 and 19 in 2000.

The first stake in Kenya was organized in September 2001 from the Nairobi Kenya District. The new stake included the following five wards and two branches: the Nairobi 1st, Nairobi 2nd, Upper-Hill, Kasarani and Riruta Wards and the Westlands and Langata Branches. By the end of 2001 four mission branches existed in western Kenya in Eldoret, Kitale, and Kiminini. Additional mission branches functioned in Athi River, Kikulu, and Kilili. The Chyulu Kenya District consisted of four branches in 2002. The following year the number of branches in the district increased to eight. The number of congregations increased in the 2000s to 21 in 2001, 25 in 2003, 27 in 2004, 31 in 2006, 32 in 2008, 35 in 2009, and 36 in 2010. By early 2011, there were 38 congregations, including seven wards. A district was organized in Eldoret in 2011.

In May 2011, there were seven wards and two branches in the Nairobi Kenya Stake, ten branches in the Chyulu Kenya District, and eight branches in the Eldoret Kenya District. Mission branches not assigned to a stake or district operated in the Kilunga Hills (4), Mombasa (3), Kisumu, and Busia at this time and official or semi-official groups met in Sondu, Matuma, and Nyambondo.

Activity and Retention

The retention of new converts appears very high. There were a total of 100 members in attendance of the dedication of Kenya form missionary work in 1991.[8] In 1992, the first Kenya District Conference was held with over 200 in attendance. 900 members from Kenya and neighboring countries met with President Hinckley 1998.[9] 750 attended the conference for the organization of the first stake in Nairobi in 2001. President Hinckley visited Kenya again in 2005, meeting with 800 members from East Africa in Nairobi.[10] Senior missionaries reported that around 700 attended stake conference in Nairobi in early 2008. The number of members per congregation increased from 258 in 2000 to 285 in 2010. The number of members enrolled in seminary and institute increased from 664 during the 2007-2008 school year to 1,295 during the 2009-2010 school year (95%), the fifth greatest percentage increase in seminary and institute enrollment worldwide during this period. Many wards and branches may have as many as 200 attending church meetings, but the average number of active members per congregation is likely around 100-150. Nationwide active membership is estimated at 5,000, or 50% of total church membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: English, Swahili, Kisii

All LDS scriptures and a few selected LDS materials are available in Swahili. Select passages of the Book of Mormon, a family guidebook, the Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and Gospel Principles are available in Kisii. Senior missionaries reported that an informal translation of the sacrament prayers was made in 2009 into Kamba. This translation was to aid in the understanding of members who spoke Kamba and did not understand English well. This translation was not used to bless the sacrament at the time.

Meetinghouses

In 2002, the Chyulu Kenya District had several meetinghouse dedications. The meetinghouse dedications were reportedly the result of strong Church growth in the region between Nairobi and the port city of Mombasa. Local government leaders were invited and remarked that they were convinced that the Church was a Christ-centered religion.[11] Additional LDS meetinghouses have been constructed in Nairobi and Kitale. Most congregations meet in renovated buildings and rented spaces.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The LDS Church has participated in extensive humanitarian and development work in Kenya notwithstanding the small size of LDS membership in the country. At least 42 projects have been completed in recent years, many of which have included clean water projects, emergency relief, wheelchair donations, and pit latrines.[12] In the late 1980s and early 1990s the Church provided assistance to Kenyan farmers living in 15 villages. Using funds donated by members of the Church in 1988 totaling $300,000, fresh water was made available to people living 100 miles north of Nairobi through the Ngorkia water project. No members of the Church were reporting to be meeting in any areas outside of the Nairobi area at the time. The project reduced the amount of manual labor required by the people to transport water from water sources to their homes and farms.[13] Additional humanitarian assistance mainly through food donations was given by the Church in 1992 due to severe drought in eastern Kenya.[14] In 1997, the first wells were drilled by the Church for the Chyulu region. Assistance was given to school children in Kenya by members of the Church in Utah through assembling and sending school supplies.[15] The Church began a widespread measles vaccination campaign in Africa in the 2000s which included Kenya.[16] The Helping Hands service program was also introduced and implemented among congregations of Church members in Kenya during this time period.

Kenya's economic challenges provide opportunities for the Church to conduct service projects and humanitarian assistance. The Perpetual Education Fund (PEF) was introduced to Kenya as of the late 2000s and was providing loans to members of the Church who wished to improve their education and employment. One of the senior missionaries serving in 2009 was asked by DALC University to speak to an audience of 1,200 about the PEF and Church's voluntary, without-pay missionary program. The event proved as a positive public relations event, which was attended by local media. Senior missionaries have assisted in the Church's effort to improve water quality and living standards in rural areas by drilling wells. The Church donated neonatal resuscitation supplies and taught infant resuscitation to nurses who would teach others in Thika in 2009. Senior missionaries reported that many of the humanitarian projects involve members of the Church in the United States donating supplies and funds for the needy in Kenya. Such projects included sending textbooks and building schools. LDS charities were also involved in humanitarian projects, which included donating 155 wheelchairs every month. These humanitarian projects have helped establish a good name for the Church and sometimes introduce those served to the gospel.

Opportunities, Challenges and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Great opportunity exists for the Church to take advantage of religious freedom upheld by the government. Freedom of religion will facilitate the growth of the Church into unreached areas of the country, especially where the majority of the inhabitants are already Christian. Predominantly Muslim areas of Kenya may experience greater difficulty due to the strong influences of Islam on society and culture. These areas would include the coastal, northern, and eastern areas of the country.

Cultural Issues

Poverty is a large problem that the Church faces in Kenya. Nairobi is home to one of the largest slums in the world, named Kibera, where as many as one million people live in extreme poverty. Kibera and other slums in Nairobi are notorious for their poor living conditions and violence. The inhabitants of these slums move to the city from rural areas in search of better living conditions. Government programs in 2009 began relocating people from the slums into housing in other areas of the city in a program expected to take several years. The dangerousness and poor living conditions of the slums of Nairobi and many other areas of Kenya have not prevented the gospel from reaching Kibera. Missionaries in 2009 reported that the slum had many

church members who belonged to the Upper Hill Ward. If the Church continues to develop a presence in Kibera and other slum areas, it will be a challenge to meet the needs of the people and develop leadership in an atmosphere of violence, extreme poverty, and lawlessness. Most Kenyans are literate, which provides greater opportunities for teaching members and investigators than in many other African countries with lower literacy.

Some cultural practices in Kenya interfere with church teachings. Polygamous marriages are legal and recognized by law. Those who wish to join the Church must end polygamous relationships and be interviewed by a member of the mission presidency for approval for baptism. Predominantly Muslim areas in the north, east, and coastal areas of Kenya may be more difficult for the Church to establish a presence in due to the infusion of Islam with local culture and customs. Some congregations in Kenya have many more men than women in attendance as many Kenyan men first investigate the Church or cannot afford transportation costs for their families to attend church. This can result in few full-member families in LDS congregations.

National Outreach

Approximately 14% of the national population resides in cities with an LDS congregation. Six of the eight administrative provinces have an LDS congregation, but most the populations in these provinces are unreached. With over five million inhabitants, the Eastern Province only has an LDS presence in Athi River, the Kilunga Hills, and the Chyulu area. Other provinces have a Church presence limited to a couple of the largest cities.

Distance and transportation is a large obstacle for expanding national outreach for the LDS Church in Kenya. Even in Nairobi where a stake and more than half a dozen congregations function in a city of over three million, many members travel long distances to attend church meetings and little expansion of outreach has occurred over the past decade. Although many of the mission branches are grouped together in clusters of three or four, they are geographically isolated from mission headquarters and likely rarely receive visits from mission leadership due to their remote locations and administrative demands shared with Tanzania.

Unlike many other African nations, the Church in Kenya has already begun to establish itself in rural areas in small villages which do not appear on most detailed maps of Kenya. This is a significant development which has produced excellent church growth results as receptivity has been high in these areas. Nearly all of the branches in the Kilunga Hills and Chyulu are in rural areas and several of the branches in the Eldoret district are in small villages and towns. Senior couples have served in these remote locations, greatly assisting in the growth of the Church, monitoring and training local leadership. Senior couples have also prepared young men from these branches to serve missions and successfully sent out many on missions. A senior couple serving in the Kilunga Hills in the late 2000s reported assisting in sending 11 local missionaries on their missions and preparing an addition four. This same senior couple reported their role in the creation of a new branch in the area, bringing 163 converts into the Church, and organizing four trips to the Johannesburg South Africa Temple for 58 people. By the time the senior couple completed their mission, all four of the branches in the Kilunga Hills had sacrament attendance overflowing the meetinghouses, with the newest branch having 185 in attendance. The continued smart placement of senior missionary couples has enormous potential to expand national outreach and foster local member and leadership independence, but the potential for outreach remains largely unrealized.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Kenya enjoys some of the most healthy, manageable LDS Church growth in Africa. With the largest membership in East Africa, the Church in Kenya has served as a regional base and has assisted in the opening in several nearby nations for the preaching of the gospel over the past two decades. Local membership and leadership existed in great enough activity for a stake to be organized in 2001 notwithstanding fewer than 6,000 members nationwide. Missionaries serving in the country report that most investigators develop a habit of attending church every Sunday prior to baptism, even in remote mission branches. Although membership growth was slower than most African nations during the 2000s, Kenya is currently laying a solid foundation for future, more rapid growth which has recently begun to unfold.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Ethnic tensions were apparent in the violence in late 2007 following a presidential election. Ethnic tensions and prejudices may arise from members of different ethnic groups meeting in the same congregations, particularly from those who may have continued to propagate beliefs about other cultures which are not in harmony with the teachings of the Church. Senior missionary couples in some locations have had to assume leadership for congregations in which ethnic conflicts were made manifest at church. Monitoring dialogue and leadership reports on ethnic tensions will be required in some areas to safeguard against ethnic conflict potentially affecting activity and retention rates. Refugees from neighboring nations provide opportunities for proselytism, such as Somalia. Several Somali refugees joined the Church in Kenya in the 1990s.[17]

Language Issues

The Church faces a major obstacle with local languages spoken in Kenya. Converts cannot join the Church in Kenya unless they speak English well enough to pass a baptismal interview. The limitation on who can join the Church based on language

has appeared to have increased the standards for which converts must meet in order to become a member of the Church, resulting in higher retention rates. This has resulted in strong, long-term growth due to the dedication of converts to learn English well enough to pass their baptismal interviews. In 2009 missionaries reported that the Church became more flexible for some who have attended Church meetings for many months or years but have been unable to be baptized because they were unable to learn English well enough to pass a baptismal interview. The main purpose for the Church's strong standards in requiring English use in Church meetings is because the Church is currently unable to translate Church materials into all the local languages spoken by Church members and train local leadership in indigenous languages. Using English as a common language in Church has also helped unite members of different ethnic and language backgrounds in the same congregation through a second language.

As the Church grows larger in Kenya, additional language translations of church materials will likely become available and some church meetings may eventually be held in local languages. No church materials in languages indigenous to Kenya appeared to be forthcoming in the near future, but Kamba appears to be a likely possibility.

Missionary Service

The LDS Church in Kenya appears self-sufficient in meeting its local missionary needs due to the large number of members who serve missions and the relatively small size of the LDS missionary force in the country at present. The first Kenyan to serve a mission for the LDS Church was in 1983 by Benson Kasue in California.[18] In 1992, there were 30 missionaries assigned to Kenya who comprised of young elders from Africa and North American senior couples.[19] In 1994, the number of senior couples serving in Kenya grew to nine, with some young, North American elders also serving in the country. North American missionaries did not serve in greater numbers in the 1990s due to limitations on visas and in recent years due to reluctance from area leadership to increase the allotment of missionaries for Kenya as worldwide missionary manpower has plateaued and living conditions in many areas are poor. The number of missionaries serving in the Kenya Nairobi Mission in mid-2007 was 63, with the majority consisting of native Africans. Many members serve missions abroad. Increasing the number of Kenyan members serving missions in their home country appears an effective means of expanding outreach and self-sufficiency.

Leadership

The large number of mission branches in Kenya indicates that church membership is established in many areas of the country but either in insufficient numbers or lacking leadership to be organized into districts. Difficulties traveling between branches may also be a reason for why no additional districts were organized in Kenya between the mid-1990s and 2011. Most current mission branches did not exist before 2005, indicating that the Church is steadily expanding into areas in which it has not existed before and consequently lacks experienced local leadership to hold administrative positions. Distance and few visits and training from mission leadership has also likely contributed to limited development of additional leadership. In the late 2000s, members in the Chyulu Kenya District were taught what they needed to do in order for the district to mature into a stake but as of May 2011 a stake had not been formed.

Some Kenyan members have become leaders and contributors to the worldwide Church. In 2009, Elder Joseph W. Sitati became not only the first General Authority from Kenya but also the first black African General Authority. Elder Sitati joined the Church in 1985 and was president of the Kenya District when the country was dedicated for missionary work. He traveled to the Johannesburg South Africa Temple with his wife and five children to be sealed together in 1992, becoming the first Kenyan to be endowed. Elder Sitati became the first stake president of the Nairobi Kenya Stake in 2001 and was later called as an Area Seventy. While serving as mission president of the Nigeria Calabar Mission, he received the call to serve in the First Quorum of the Seventy. Elder Hesbon O. Usi received the call to serve as an Area Seventy in 2009. One of the members of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Brother Amram Musungu, joined the Church in his native Kenya in the 1990s. Brother Musungu later became president of the first Swahili speaking branch organized in the United States in Salt Lake City in 2009.[20]

Temple

Kenya is assigned to the Johannesburg South Africa Temple district. Elder Faust included in his dedicatory prayer for Kenya a plea that the Kenyan membership may find access to a holy temple.[21] To date, temple attendance for Kenyan Latter-day Saints has been extremely limited due to travel costs, distance, and visa issues. Many endowed members are returned missionaries. President Hinckley gave a conditional promise to members living in East Africa that one day a temple would be built in the area if they remained faithful and patient,[22] but as of 2011 the size and maturity of the LDS Church in Kenya remains insufficient to merit the construction of a temple for likely another decade until additional stakes are organized in Nairobi and greater growth occurs in other East African nations.

Comparative Growth

The Church has had a longer presence in Kenya than in any other East African nation and has the seventh highest church membership in Africa. Membership and congregation growth in Kenya ranked among the most rapid for the Church in East Africa in the 2000s but was far outpaced by many African nations in West Africa and southern Africa. Member activity rates are slightly higher than most East African nations.

Other missionary-minded Christian groups experience rapid growth in Kenya. Jehovah's Witnesses claimed 21,811 active members in 505 congregations in 2008. The Seventh Day Adventist Church totaled 609,863 members in 3,828 churches. Adventists established between 70 and 200 new congregations a year in Kenya alone during the 2000s. The large SDA Church presence in Kenya is partially due to the church existing in the country since the 1940s. The growth of these churches demonstrates that Kenyans are receptive to nontraditional Christian groups. As the LDS Church continues to grow, it can expect to see growth like other Christian denominations due to the receptiveness of the population. However other Christian denominations appear to have strong member missionary programs, which the LDS Church appears to lack in comparison. Strong member missionary and church planting programs resulted in other Christian denominations establishing a more widespread presence than the LDS Church, although this is partially due to the Church's delayed official establishment in the early 1990s.

Future Prospects

President Hinckley predicted that where there were hundreds of members there would be tens of thousands as the Church continued to grow in East Africa.[23] This prediction has become to be fulfilled in Kenya although potential for growth and outreach remain underdeveloped. Prospects for future growth appear favorable due to relatively high convert retention and member activity rates, increasing enrollment in seminary and institute, steady congregational growth, and large swathes of the country totally unreached by the Church but populated by many receptive Kenyans. Areas which seem most likely to open to missionary work are larger cities near Nairobi and villages of self-identified members or small groups of members awaiting an official church establishment. Many of these cities appear most likely to open due to their close proximity to LDS centers. The Church has progressively opened new branches in locations which have not had a congregation before, such as in Busia and Kisumu in 2009. This likely indicates that new branches will continue to be organized in additional areas, especially larger cities. Although no official announcements have been made, cities which appear most likely to gain an official Church presence include Nakuru, Thika and Ruiru. Most of the branches in rural areas do not have young, full-time missionaries assigned, indicating that missionary work is carried out by local members and senior couples. Additional cities, especially smaller cities and villages, appear most likely to gain a Church presence as a result of active members moving to these locations and sharing the Gospel with those around them.

Opportunity exists in Kenya for preaching the gospel to immigrants and refugees. These refugees numbered almost 200,000 just from Somalia in 2007. The Church has published a few missionary materials in Somali and a couple of Somalis have joined the Church in Kenya. Although the present political atmosphere appears very unfavorable for the Church, the opportunity exists for the gospel to be preached to a group which is predominately not Christian and who could take the gospel to their home country once conditions improve. Muslims in Kenya appear to have not been targeted by missionary efforts, but converts from Islam may comprise a portion of members in Mombasa.

Additional districts in Kenya will likely be organized in the coming months and years from the many mission branches in the country. New districts could be created in the Kilunga Hills, Mombasa, and Naitiri. Branches in these locations will likely be organized into districts once more missionaries serving from these areas return from their missions and can fill leadership positions. Presidents Hinckley and Faust referenced the potential of a temple in Nairobi to serve East Africa. Currently membership and leadership appear unable to support a temple. Once multiple stakes exist in Nairobi, the likelihood of a temple announcement for Nairobi will increase. Few Kenyan members have attended the temple before due to distance and travel expenses. Yet the Church actively holds temple preparation classes and assists in bringing Kenyans to the temple in Johannesburg, especially with the help of senior missionary couples.

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