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.

Germany

Population: 81 millions (#18 out of countries)

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Geography

Area: 357,022 square km. Located in the heart of Central Europe, Germany borders Poland, the Czech Republic, Australia, Switzerland, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, and the North and Baltic Seas. Terrain principally consists of lowlands in the north, uplands and hills in central areas, and the Bavarian Alps in the extreme south. Maritime temperate climate characterized by cool, wet summers and winters occurs in most locations. Several major European rivers originate or travel through Germany, including the Elbe in the north and northeast, the Rhine in the west, and the Danube in the south. Flooding is a natural hazard. Environmental issues include air pollution, acid rain, improper sewage disposal into the surrounding sea, and nature preservation. Germany is divided into sixteen administrative states.

Population: 81,471,834 (July 2011)

Annual Growth Rate: -0.208% (2011)

Fertility Rate: 1.41 children born per woman (2011)

Life Expectancy: 77.82 male, 82.44 female (2011)

Peoples

German: 91.5%

Turkish: 2.4%

other: 6.1%

Germans have historically comprise a strong majority. Immigration in recent years has increased the number of Turks, Greeks, Italians, Poles, Russians, Serbo-Croatians, and Spaniards who together constitute 8.5% of the population. Most immigrants and their families are not German citizens even if born and raised in Germany due to restrictive citizenship laws.[1]

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Languages: Standard German, German dialects, and Germanic languages (91.5%), Turkish (2.4%), other (6.1%). Standard

German is most commonly spoken with over 60 million speakers. Commonly spoken German dialects and Germanic languages provided with the number of speakers include Bavarian (6.0 million speakers), Mainfränkisch (4.91 million speakers), Upper Saxon (2.0 million), and Swabian (0.819 million). Turkish is the only other language with over one million speakers (2.11 million).

Literacy: 99% (2003)

History

Germanic tribes populated the lands of present-day Germany known as Germania for millennia prior to the arrival of the Romans around the birth of Christ. Rome attempted to subjugate the population to Roman rule, but these efforts failed due to persistent military efforts by the indigenous population to drive out Roman troops and interests east of the Rhine. The Holy Roman Empire was a lax organization of German territories between 962 and the beginning of the nineteenth century that never developed into a centralized state. The empire was ruled by an emperor elected by territorial leaders and approved by the Pope of the Catholic Church, but he had little power in exercising rule over the many of the hundreds of territories and entities in the empire that would often war against one another. In the sixteenth century, the Holy Roman Empire divided into Catholic and Protestant camps as a result of the Reformation with Catholic-strong areas in the south and west and predominantly-Protestant areas in the north and east. Devastating German populations, the 30 Years War was fought between 1618 and 1648 primarily as a result of religious tensions between Catholics and Protestants and resulted in no major territorial acquisitions. Austria and Prussia became the most powerful and influential Germanic states within the Holy Roman Empire during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Due to stress on militarism and centralization, Prussia became continental Europe's most powerful state in the early nineteenth century following the defeat of Napoleon. The Holy Roman Empire became the German Confederation as a result of the 1814-1845 Congress of Vienna. In 1834, Prussia and 18 other states formed the German Customs Union which provided for greater economic integration among participant states. Prussia rapidly industrialized and became one of Europe's most powerful nations, wining wars against Austria and France in the 1860s and 1870s under Chancellor Otto von Bismarck and becoming a unified federal state in 1871 under Emperor Wilhelm I.

Bismarck encouraged good foreign relations with surrounding European nations to safeguard against additional wars, but this foundation of stability and good international relations ended under the reign of Emperor William II who sought for Germany to acquire overseas colonies and to expand its militaristic power and capabilities. Germany was a central player in World War I and was the state primary blamed for its aftermath, resulting in the Treaty of Versailles demanding several German leaders be tried as war criminals, stationing Allied forces in the Rhineland for a 15-year period, military restrictions, changes to Germany's international borders, and stripping Germany of its colonial possessions, including German New Guinea [portions of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands], German Samoa [Samoa], Togoland [Togo], Kamerun [Cameroon] , German South West Africa [Namibia], Tanganyika [Tanzania], and Ruanda-Urundi [Rwanda and Burundi]. The Weimar Republic succeeded Imperial Germany and utterly failed to reconstruct a sustainable, functioning federal government due to many limitations imposed by the Treaty of Versailles, hyperinflation in 1923, and the world depression in 1929. Radical political parties arose during this period, most notably the National Socialist (Nazi) Party led by Adolf Hitler who ultimately overtook the Weimer Republic and was established as Reich Chancellor in 1933. The Nazis quickly initiated a brutal regime which deprived Germans of democratic freedoms and targeted Jews, Romani, homosexuals, the mentally disabled, and oppositional figures at first by depriving them of political rights, later placing them in forced-labor camps and prisons, and ultimately committing mass genocide in Nazi-controlled areas. Nazi Germany initiated World War II, resulting in millions of deaths in Europe. During the war, an estimated six million Jews were killed at the hands of the Nazis. Germany surrendered in May 1945 and the country was temporarily subdivided among the Soviets, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France for administrative purposes. The Soviets refused to withdraw, blockaded Allied forces from delivering supplies to Allied-controlled West Berlin, and formed the German Democratic Republic in 1949. Democratic institutions, sovereignty, and self-rule were gradually reintroduced into West Germany in the late 1940s and 1950s, resulting in Germany reentering the Western Europe community by joining NATO and the Western European Union. Rapid economic recovery and growth transformed West Germany into one of the region's wealthiest nations in the coming decades. To block the millions of East Germans fleeing to the West and Western Berlin, East Germany constructed barriers and walls, most notably the Berlin Wall in the early 1960s. East Germans discovered additional methods of crossing over to West Germany through other nations in the following decades. In 1989, increasing pressure for reform and free movement between the two Germanys unfolded in East Germany removing travel restrictions and the toppling of the communist government. In 1990, both Germanys were reunited into a single German state.[2]

Culture

Germans boast proud traditions of industry and education and a rich legacy of notable scientists, poets, writers, religious reformers, philosophers, athletes, composers, politicians, and leaders such as the physicist Albert Einstein, the philosopher Immanuel Kant, the composer Ludwig van Beethoven, the reformer Martin Luther, the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, and the political theorist Karl Marx. Germany has numbered among the most influential nations in the world on the development of modern science, culture, art, and technology. German products are often noted for their high quality and durability. The Reformation was a major influence on the evolution of Germany culture and society and is reflected in the continued operation of Protestant churches for centuries. Secularism has steadily spread in recent years as religiosity as waned and economic prosperity and standards of living have increased. Few actively attend church services and the percentage of the population identifying as Christian has decreased over the past century. Soccer is one of the most popular sports. Common foods include breads, meat, vegetables, fish, beer, and wine. Cigarette consumption rates are slightly higher than the world average whereas alcohol consumption rates are among the highest in the world.

Economy

GDP per capita: $35,900 (2010) [75.7% of US]

Human Development Index: 0.885

Corruption Index: 7.9

With a large skilled labor forced, strategic geographic location, and diversified economy, Germany is Europe's largest economy, the world's fifth largest economy by GDP, and a major world exporter. Low birth rates, declining immigration, and an aging population challenge efforts for the government to sustain growth. Economic growth remains limited in eastern Germany and in many locations lags far behind conditions in the west. The global financial crisis in the late 2000s created a deep recession but growth has since rebounded. Services employ two-thirds of the labor force and generate 71% of the GDP whereas industry employs 30% of the labor force and generates 30% of the GDP. Major industries include iron, steel, coal, cement, chemicals, machinery, vehicles, electronics, food products, shipbuilding, and clothing. Agriculture accounts for less than two percent of the labor force and GDP. Potatoes, grains, sugar beets, fruit, and cabbage are common crops and cattle, pigs, and chickens are common livestock. The primary trade partners include France, the Netherlands, the United States, and Italy. Corruption is perceived at among the lowest levels in the world.

Faiths

Christian: 68%

Muslim: 3.7%

unaffiliated/other: 28.3%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 25,200,000

Lutheran/Uniate/Reformed Protestant 24,500,000

Greek Orthodox 450,000

New Apostolic 363,000

Romanian Orthodox 300,000

Serbian Orthodox 250,000

Russian Orthodox 180,000

Baptists 100,000

Evangelical non-denominational Baptists 84,000

Seventh Day Adventists 35,535 571

Latter-day Saints 38,257 169

Jehovah's Witnesses 165,568 2,229

Religion

Christianity has decreased in its influence and its adherents have declined as a percentage of the population over the past century. Today approximately two-thirds of the population is Christian and Christians are nearly evenly divided between Catholics and Protestants. Muslims number approximately four million and are primarily from southeastern Europe and Turkey. There are approximately 250,000 Buddhists, 200,000 Jews, and 100,000 Hindus. Most Jews are non-Germans and half of which are immigrants. Approximately one-third of Germans are nonaffiliated with a religious group.[3]

Religious Freedom

Persecution Index:

The Basic Law protects religious freedom which is generally upheld by the government. Religious groups are not required to register with the government to operate privately but must register in order to receive tax-exempt status. The government maintains separation with religion and declares no official religion although some religious groups have a special partnership with the government. Religious groups may request for public law corporation status in which that state collects tithes from its members and religious groups are permitted to name chaplains. The government has diligently sought to eliminate anti-Semitism from society. There have been numerous instances of societal abuse of religious freedom targeting Jews, Scientologists, and Muslims and some governmental abuses of religious freedom targeting Scientologists, Muslims, and other religious minority groups.[4]

Largest Cities

Urban: 74%

Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Cologne, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Dusseldorf, Dortmund, Essen, Bremen, Hanover, Leipzig, Dresden, Nuremberg, Duisburg, **Bochum**, Wuppertal, Bielefeld, Bonn, Mannheim, Karlsruhe, Wiesbaden, Munster, Augsburg, Gelsenkirchen, Aachen, Mönchengladbach, Brunswick, Chemnitz, Kiel, Krefeld, Halle, Magdeburg, Freiburg, **Oberhausen**, Lübeck, Erfurt, Rostock.

36 of the 38 cities with over 200,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation. 24% of the national population resides in the 38 most populous cities.

LDS History

The first known member arrived in 1840 and the first LDS congregation was organized in Darmstadt in 1843.[5] The first full-time missionaries were assigned in 1851 and included future church president John Taylor. The Book of Mormon was translated into German in the 1850s and most early members emigrated to the United States due to persecution.[6] During the latter-half of the nineteenth century, slow membership growth occurred due to low receptivity and high rates of emigration but church centers were established in many German cities. Over 200 missionaries were removed from Germany and Switzerland at the outbreak of World War I but most of the approximately 60 congregations in Germany and Switzerland continued to function during the war.[7] Growth accelerated during the first decade of the twentieth century and during the early 1920s. Approximately 1,800 converts were baptized in 1921 alone. Following the rise of National Socialism, LDS missionaries were removed from Germany in 1938 and again before the outbreak of World War II. The Church obtained legal status in 1953 and accelerated growth occurred in the 1960s.[8] The LDS Church in East Germany was isolated from the international church from the end of World War II to 1989, resulting in no local members serving full-time missions abroad and no assigned full-time missionaries for half a century. Elder Thomas S. Monson dedicated East Germany for missionary work in 1975.[9] As a result of downsizing the number of American military personnel in the early 1990s, LDS leadership in Germany began to rely more on local German members. Following the unification of East and West Germany in the early 1990s, the Church opened a large number of formerly-unreached cities in eastern Germany.[10] Elder Dieter Uchtdorf met with the German president in 2003 and presented the president's family history.[11] In recent years, the Church has steadily decreased the number of full-time missionaries assigned to Germany, has increased emphasis on youth-oriented finding, retention, and reactivation programs, and has experienced stagnant growth.

Missions

The German Mission was organized in 1852 to administer Germany and was discontinued, reorganized, and realigned with missions in neighboring European nations for nearly a century. In 1938, the West German [later renamed Germany Frankfurt] and East German [later renamed Germany Hamburg] Missions were organized from the German-Austrian Mission. In 1959, the South German Mission [later renamed Germany Munich] was organized followed by the Central German Mission [later renamed Germany Dusseldorf] in 1961. The Bavarian Mission opened in 1962 but was closed in 1965. A mission headquartered in Dresden opened in 1969, closed in 1984, and reopened in 1989 as the Germany Leipzig Mission. The Germany Dusseldorf Mission closed in 1982 and reopened in 1990. In 1991, a mission was organized in Berlin bringing the number of LDS missions in Germany to six. During the 2000s and 2010, missions were closed in Dusseldorf (2001), Leipzig (2003), and Hamburg (2010). In 2010, The Switzerland Zurich Mission was consolidated with the Germany Munich Mission to form the Alpine

German-speaking Mission. In 2011, there were three missions in Germany.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 38,257 (2010)

Membership increased from 13,829 in 1975 to 29,900 in 1985. There were 27,506 members in West Germany in 1983. Membership in both Germanys totaled 36,600 in 1987, 36,000 in 1993, 36,000 in 1997, and 36,359 in 2000. In the 2000s, extremely slow membership growth occurred as membership reached 36,704 in 2002, 37,063 in 2004, 37,478 in 2006, 37,539 in 2008, and 38,257 in 2010. Annual membership growth rates during the 2000s ranged from a low of -0.9% in 2007 to a high of 1.2% in 2010 and generally varied between zero and one percent. In 2010, one in 2,130 was nominally LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 89 Branches: 80

There were over 130 LDS congregations in 1973[12] and 174 in 1987. The number of congregations increased to 177 in 1993, 183 in 1997, and 189 in 2000. During the 2000s, the number of congregations steadily declined to 181 in 2002, 177 in 2005, 175 in 2007, 170 in 2009, and 169 in 2010. There were 91 wards in 1987, 85 in 1993, 90 in 1997, 91 in 2000, 92 in 2006, 90 in 2008, and 89 in 2010. Congregational decline during the latter-half of the 2000s was partially attributed to the consolidation of military units, which declined in number from ten in 2001 to nine in 2007 and six in 2008. Consolidated German LDS congregations were not concentrated in one particular area of Germany during the 2000s.

The first LDS stake in Germany was established in Berlin in 1961. Two additional stakes were organized the same year in Stuttgart and Hamburg. Additional stakes were organized in Kaiserslautern [military] (1968), Dusseldorf (1972), Frankfurt, Dortmund, and Stuttgart [servicemen] (1976), and Hannover, Munich, and Frankfurt [servicemen] (1977). By 1980, there were 11 stakes. In the 1980s, five additional stakes were organized in Neumunster (1981), Heidelberg and Dresden (1982), Leipzig (1984), and Nuremburg (1987) bringing the total of stakes to 16 by 1990. Servicemen stakes in Stuttgart and Frankfurt were discontinued in 1992 and 1994 as a result of American military personnel numbers dramatically decreasing following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the unification of East and West Germany. In the late 1980s and early 1990s there was only one district. In mid-2011, there were three districts operating in Neubrandenburg (1994), Erfurt (2005), and Oldenburg (2007).

Activity and Retention

Young single adult conferences for German-speaking members in Central Europe have been held regularly since the mid-2000s. A conference in Kiel had approximately 800 in attendance.[13] 1,901 were enrolled in seminary and institute during the 2009-2010 school year. The average number of members per congregation increased from 210 in 1987 to 226 in 2010. Most wards appear to have between 50 and 75 active members whereas most branches appear to have between 25 and 50 active members. Nationwide active membership is estimated to range between 9,000 and 11,000, or 25-30% of total church membership.

Finding and Public Relations

In the early 1900s, many members did not publicly disclose their membership in the LDS Church due to persecution. Public relations specialists have encouraged local members to invite nonmembers to church activities. In the Dusseldorf area, a local member organized an amateur orchestra that was primarily comprised of nonmembers. Television and radio broadcasts have occurred in northern Germany to help dispel misinformation about the Church. Family history centers have been utilized for finding investigators and church members have held family history fairs.[14] The Church initiated a telephone-connected computer information service for the Church in 1987 which resulted in 79 requests for visits from full-time missionaries.[15] Member referrals are a valuable source for finding investigators. In 1989, 54% of converts baptized in the Germany Frankfurt Mission were referred to the missionaries by local members.[16] Full-time missionaries report that street proselytism efforts are generally ineffective.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: German, Turkish

All LDS scriptures and most church materials are available in German. The Book of Mormon is the only LDS scripture translated into Turkish. There are limited numbers of teaching, administrative, priesthood, temple, study, Relief Society, youth, and proselytism materials available in Turkish. The Liahona magazine has monthly issues in German. Many immigrant groups have church materials in their native languages.

Meetinghouses

In mid-2011, there were approximately 164 LDS meetinghouses in Germany, most of which were church-built chapels. Some smaller branches meet in rented spaces or renovated buildings.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Few humanitarian and development projects have been pursued by the LDS Church in Germany due to high standards of living for decades. Projects sponsored by the Church in recent years have included donating hygiene kits, playground equipment, food and toys, and kitchen appliances.[17] In 2002, the Church donated $635,000 for flood relief efforts in Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic.[18] In 2003, German members in the Frankfurt Germany Stake raised 7,500 Euros to donate to fund cataract surgeries for adults and children in Bangladesh.[19]

Opportunities, Challenges and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The LDS Church benefits from full religious freedom. Societal abuse of religious freedom directed towards local members has not been reported in recent years, although full-time missionaries have reported some harassment and persecution while proselytizing. Members and missionaries face no legal barriers preventing open proselytism, worship, and assembly. Foreign missionaries appear to receive needed documentation to operate in Germany with no major challenges.

Cultural Issues

The LDS Church has faced low receptivity in Germany for decades resulting in extremely few convert baptisms, stagnant membership growth, and declining numbers of congregations notwithstanding a historically large full-time missionary force allocated to the country. Secularism and materialism has increased over the past century resulting in nominal Christians accounting for two-thirds of the German population. The LDS Church has reduced the size of its missionary force as receptivity has further waned indicated by the reduction of LDS missions from six to three in the past decade and the more than halving of the full-time missionary force. Church-going Christians account for a small percentage of total Christians, resulting in many having little knowledge of Christianity and few or no developed personal religious habits. The LDS Church has struggled to reach nominal Christians with traditional teaching paradigms designed to teach those with a basic understanding of Christianity who value personal involvement in organized religion. Christians with developed personal religious habits are often deeply devoted to and entrenched in their churches and demonstrate no greater receptivity than nominal Christians or nonreligious individuals. Germans with interest in studying and joining the LDS Church often face challenges ending their alcohol and cigarette usage and casual sexual relations. The LDS Church and other nontraditional outreach-oriented Christians are stigmatized by society, further reducing receptivity to the Church. Creative, original outreach methods and teaching approaches tailored to nominal Christians or nonreligious individuals and emphasis on youth outreach may address cultural needs and conditions and help spur greater growth for the Church in the long-run.

National Outreach

Approximately 32% of the national population resides in cities with an LDS congregation. Many lesser-reached large and medium-sized cities are within 10-15 kilometers of cities with LDS congregations, perhaps increasing the percentage of the population within reach of LDS units to 40%. 64 of the 80 cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS congregation and approximately half of the 107 cities with populations between 50,000 and 100,000 have an LDS congregation. Only a handful of cities with fewer than 50,000 people have LDS congregations. The majority of cities with over 100,000 inhabitants without LDS congregations are located in western areas. All 16 administrative states have multiple LDS congregations with the exception of Saarland where there is only one ward. The ratio of state population to LDS congregations provides insight into the degree of national outreach extended on a state-by-state basis. German states with the lowest ratio of the population to LDS congregations (less than 350,000 people per unit) are concentrated in the east and north (Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, Brandenburg, and Bremen) whereas states with the highest ratio of the population to LDS congregations (more than 575,000 people per unit) are concentrated in the west and center (Saarland, North Rhine-Westphalia, and Saxony-Anhalt).

Low receptivity to LDS outreach has challenged efforts to maintain currently operating congregations with few active members let alone the opening of new congregations in lesser-reached and unreached cities. Stagnant numbers of full-time missionaries in the Church worldwide have prompted the downsizing of manpower dedicated to less-productive countries like Germany. Expanding national outreach will require the smart allocation of mission resources and strong involvement from local members in an age where missionary manpower is limited and opportunities to expand outreach worldwide are increasing. Holding cottage meetings in unreached cities provides opportunities to extend outreach and ascertain receptivity among interested individuals, but no missions in Germany appear to have attempted to expand national outreach by establishing additional mission outreach centers or holding cottage meetings for many years. The most recent efforts to organize additional

congregations has been in eastern Germany.

The LDS Church maintains a German-language website for the Church in Germany at http://www.kirche-jesu-christi.org/ providing information on locations for meetinghouses and worship service times, explanations of and information concerning church doctrine, online and telephone contact to church representatives, and local and regional LDS news. Use of the website by members in their online proselytism efforts and in reference with interested acquaintances can facilitate greater member-missionary activity and more effectively expand national outreach. The LDS website for Germany is more developed than many other country websites, but lacks methods and links for local members to utilize social networking websites in missionary activity.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

The LDS Church in Germany experiences moderately low rates of member activity as a result of negative cultural attitudes toward organized religion and the accumulation of LDS converts not retained for decades. Retention rates are moderate for new converts baptized at present but very few converts are baptized year to year. The emigration of active members to North America and elsewhere has limited growth and reduced member activity rates. Approximately 2,000 converts joined the Church in Cologne during the twentieth century and emigrated elsewhere.[20] The small number of active members in some congregations threatens additional congregation consolidations if active members move away or go inactive. Missionaries report that many congregations have a gender imbalance with more active women than men.

Moderate levels of enrollment in seminary and institute have been relatively stable in recent years and is encouraging for maintaining stability in the Church. The Church has dedicated resources toward meeting the needs of single members and performing institute-based outreach in Germany which has yielded some positive results but will need to be sustained for years to come to make a long-term impact of member activity rates. In 2005, there were 160 baptisms, 117 reactivations, 120 mission calls, and 129 temple marriages in the Europe Central Area as a result of institute and young single adult-outreach initiatives.[21] Declining numbers of congregations notwithstanding greater increases in church membership than in years past indicate continued convert retention and reactivation challenges.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Germany experiences few ethnic integration challenges among its native population as Germans account for nearly the entire population. Immigrants and workers from Turkey and other European nations constitute the majority of the 8.5% of the population that is non-German and pose the greatest challenges in integrating into LDS congregations. Few LDS converts in Germany are non-German and there are no concentrated efforts to reach foreigners or immigrants, reducing the potential for ethnic integration issues at church.

Language Issues

German-speaking members benefit from a large body of LDS materials available in German in print and online. Many nonnative workers or immigrants speak German proficiently to assimilate in LDS congregations, reducing the need for foreign language units with the exception of English for American military personnel. There is only one non-German-speaking LDS congregation to meet the needs of those who do not speak German and who are not in the military, which is the Offenback 2nd (English) Ward. Higher receptivity among some immigrant groups may prompt the organization of additional non-German-speaking congregations in the coming years.

Missionary Service

The LDS Church in Germany appears more self-sufficient in its native full-time missionary force than most European nations but remains reliant on outsourced full-time missionary resources to staff its three missions. The Church in Germany has had a legacy of local members serving missions. There were 26 local members serving full-time missions in the early 1970s. In 1973, there were 747 full-time missionaries assigned to Germany, accounting for over one-third of the missionary force in continental Europe at the time.[22] The Church rapidly expanded its missionary presence in former East Germany in the early 1990s as the number of full-time missionaries in the Germany Dresden Mission increased from eight in March 1989 to 140 in April 1991.[23] In 1999, 172 local members were serving full-time missions.[24] In the 2000s, the number of local members serving missions appears stable due to outreach efforts among young single adults but low birth rates in the Church in Germany and few youth converts may decrease the number of German members serving missions in the long run. The lack of an LDS missionary training center in Germany to service German-speaking nations indicates challenges to establish a self-sustaining local missionary force that is self reliant in meeting regional missionary needs.

Leadership

With stakes operating in nearly all areas of the country, the Church benefits from a strong, devoted local leadership body that has become more self reliant than leadership in many other European nations. German Latter-day Saints have supplied a large number of leaders for missions in Europe and have generally been self-sufficient in staffing temple presidencies. Mentoring and

support from LDS American military members during much of the latter-half of the twentieth century likely contributed to current levels of administrative responsibility and dependability. The size of the local leadership body remains limited however. Several American military members have served as regional representatives, mission presidents, and in other leadership positions. German members have served as mission presidents, regional representatives, area seventies, general authorities, and temple presidents. In 1988, Wolfgang Paul from Wetterau[25] was called to preside over the Germany Hamburg Mission.[26] In 1991, Manfred H. Schutze from Bernburg was called to preside over the Germany Berlin Mission.[27] In 1994, Peter Berkhahn from Wetterau[28] was called to preside over the Canada Calgary Mission.[29] In 1999, Michael Schulze from Hannover[30] was called to preside over the Austria Vienna Mission[31] and Frank H. Apel from Freiberg was called to preside over the Germany Dusseldorf Mission.[32] In 2003, Erich Kopischke from Feucht[33] was called to preside over the Germany Berlin Mission.[34] In 2005, Holger Detlef Rakow from Berlin[35] was called to preside over the Germany Munich/Austria Mission.[36] In 2007, Dietmar Gerald Matern from Delingsdorf was called to preside over the Switzerland Zurich Mission.[37] In 2011, Jorg Klebingat from Friedrichsdorf was called to preside over the Ukraine Kyiv Mission[38] and Lehi Karl Schwartz from Feucht was called to preside over the Germany Frankfurt Mission.[39]

In 1991, Wolfgang Heinz-Jurgen Paul from Friedrichsdorf was called as a regional representative.[40] In 1992, Eckehart O. Jensen from Hildesheim was called as a regional representative.[41] In 1995 Wolfgang Paul and Holger Rakow were called as area authorities.[42] In 1999, Manfred Schutze was called as an area authority seventy.[43] In 2005, Frerich J. Grts from Dusseldorf was called as an Area Seventy.[44]

The first local member to serve as a General Authority was F. Enzio Busche from Dortmund.[45] In 1994, Dieter F. Uchtdorf from Dramstadt was called to the Second Quorum of the Seventy.[46] In 1996, Elder Uchtdoft was sustained to the First Quorum of the Seventy.[47] In 2001, Keith K. Hilbig from Frankfurt was called to the Second Quorum of the Seventy.[48] In 2002, Elder Uchtdorf was called to the Presidency of the Seventy[49] and in 2004 was called as an apostle. In 2005, Elder Wolfgang Paul was called to the Second Quorum of the Seventy.[50] In 2007, Elder Kopischke was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy.[51]

In 1998, Magnus R. Meiser from Muenster was called as the Freiberg Germany Temple president[52] and Karl Friedrich Borcherding from Stadthagen was called as the Frankfurt Germany Temple president.[53] In 2001, Gerhard Grunewald from Berlin was called as the Freiberg Germany Temple president[54] and Armin Ludwig Cziesla from Neumunster was called as the Frankfurt Germany Temple president.[55] In 2005, Manfred Schutze was called as the Freiberg Germany Temple president.[56] In 2006, Ulrich Bergmann from Braunschweig was called as the Frankfurt Germany Temple president.[57]

Temple

Northern, western, and southern areas of Germany are assigned to the Frankfurt Germany Temple district whereas eastern areas are assigned to the Freiburg Germany Temple district. The Freiburg Germany Temple was completed in 1985 whereas the Frankfurt Germany Temple was completed in 1987. The Freiburg Germany Temple was renovated and expanded to twice its original size in 2002.[58] The Frankfurt Germany Temple appears moderately utilized as five to seven sessions were scheduled Tuesdays through Saturdays in 2011. Attendance at the Freiburg Germany Temple appears low as indicated by only three endowment sessions scheduled Tuesdays through Saturdays and four sessions scheduled on Fridays. German Latter-day Saints are well serviced by both temples and there is little likelihood that additional temples will be constructed for the foreseeable future due to few active members, the central location of both temples, and stagnant church growth trends.

Comparative Growth

Germany supports the fourth largest LDS membership, the second most LDS stakes, and the second largest population in Europe. Member activity rates, the percentage of the population reached by LDS congregations, and the percentage of members enrolled in seminary and institute are representative for the region. The LDS Church in Germany experienced the eleventh largest decrease in the number of congregations worldwide during the 2000s. Germany and the United Kingdom are the only countries in Europe with more than one temple. Elder Dieter Uchtdorf became the first LDS apostle in modern times to have been born and lived outside of North America.

Other missionary-minded Christians report slow or stagnant church growth due to low receptivity. Jehovah's Witnesses appear to be the most successful Christian group gaining new converts at present due to a strong member-missionary program. Active Jehovah's Witnesses number over 160,000 and baptized over 3,000 converts in 2010 notwithstanding slow membership growth. During the 2000s, the Seventh Day Adventist Church generally baptized between 400 and 900 converts a year but experienced stagnant membership and congregational growth.[59] Evangelicals report slow growth and ongoing frustrations with cultural issues regarding the marginalization of organized religion in society.

Future Prospects

Low rates of receptivity to organized religion, the increasing influence of secularism on society, lacking LDS teaching and proselytism approaches for nonreligious individuals, the past emigration of many German Latter-day Saint converts, and moderately low rates of member activity present a poor outlook for church growth for the foreseeable future in Germany. The greatest challenge for the Church in the coming years will be to maintain the current level of national outreach as evidenced by reversing the trend of congregation consolidations which began more than a decade ago. Outreach focus on youth and young

single adults is a positive development in recent years which has the potential to increase the sustainability of the LDS Church infrastructure in Germany by keeping members active, marrying within the Church, and serving full-time missions. At present no stakes appear close to consolidating or dividing and no districts appear likely to be discontinued or become stakes. The Kaiserslautern Germany Military Stake has steadily decreased in the number of congregations since 2000 and may become a district or absorbed by surrounding German stakes if the trend of congregation closures continues.

[1] "Background Note: Germany," Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 10 November 2010. http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3997.htm

[2] "Background Note: Germany," Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 10 November 2010. http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3997.htm

[3] "Germany," International Religious Freedom Report 2010, 17 November 2010. http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148938.htm

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