



# 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.



**Dominica**

**Population: 0.07 millions (#208 out of countries)**

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## Geography

**Area:** 751 square km. Bordering the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, Dominica is a small, lush island between Guadeloupe and Martinique. Known as the most mountainous island of the Lesser Antilles, Dominica possesses unique geographic features such as Boiling Lake, the world's second-largest thermally active lake, and boasts a network of natural parks that protect the environment. Terrain principally consists of rugged, volcanic mountains that are subject to tropical climate marked by heavy rainfall and trade wind-moderated temperatures. Flash flooding and hurricanes are natural hazards. Dominica is divided into ten administrative parishes.

## Peoples

Black: 86.6%

Mixed: 9.1%

Carib Amerindian: 2.9%

Other: 1.3%

Unspecified: 0.1%

Nearly the entire population trace their ancestry to freed African slaves who arrived in the eighteenth century. Carib Amerindians are concentrated on the east coast and are the only pre-Colombian population remaining among the islands of the eastern Caribbean. Slow population growth has occurred primarily due to emigration to more prosperous nations.[\[1\]](#)

**Population:** 74,027 (July 2018)

**Annual Growth Rate:** 0.17% (2018)

**Fertility Rate:** 2.03 children born per woman (2018)

**Life Expectancy:** 74.4 male, 80.5 female (2018)

**Languages:** Dominican Creole French [patois] (80%), English (19%), other (1%). English is the official language. Dominican Creole French is mutually intelligible with Saint Lucian Creole French.

**Literacy:** 94% (2011)

## History

The Caribs forcefully removed or eradicated the indigenous Arawak population in the fourteenth century and deterred the Spanish from colonizing the island due to their fierce, warlike demeanor. French rule began in 1635, and the first Europeans to reside on the island were French missionaries. Both France and Great Britain agreed to abandon Dominica and St. Vincent in 1660 due to Carib hostility. No European power claimed Dominica for the following century. During the eighteenth century, France claimed the island and began a settlement but lost control of the island to the British following the Seven Years' War in 1763. France invaded in 1778 and captured the island, but the island was returned to the British in 1783. Additional unsuccessful French invasions occurred in 1795 and 1805. In 1838, Dominica became the only British Caribbean colony to have a black-majority legislature. Rivalry intensified as the white minority appealed for greater British control; by the end of the nineteenth century the black legislature had disappeared. Dominica was included in the Leeward Island Administration in the mid-twentieth century followed by the West Indies Federation. Dominica became a United Kingdom-associated state in 1967 and won independence in 1978. Since independence, Dominica has struggled to cope with successive hurricanes, an underdeveloped economy, and fluctuating banana prices.<sup>[2]</sup> Most recently, Hurricane Maria caused significant damage to the country's infrastructure in 2017.

## Culture

Sporadic French rule during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries greatly contributed to the development of Dominican culture, leaving its footprint in continued widespread usage of Dominican Creole French and most of the population adhering to the Catholic Church.<sup>[3]</sup> The population exhibits a high degree of religious participation and plurality among Christian denominations. Music occupies an important role in society and features an agglomeration of genres found in the region, such as Afro-Cuban, European, African, and Creole music. Cuisine is representative of most Caribbean nations; common foods include mutton, beef, fruit, and vegetables.<sup>[4]</sup> Alcohol consumption rates compare to worldwide averages, whereas tobacco cigarette consumption rates are low.

## Economy

**GDP per capita:** \$11,000 (2017) [18.4% of U.S.]

**Human Development Index:** 0.715 (2017)

**Corruption Index:** 57 (2018)

The traditionally agriculturally-driven economy has diversified in recent years due to government restructuring efforts to develop tourism, banking, and geothermal energy. Consequently, strong economic growth occurred in the mid-2000s that ended as a result of Hurricane Dean and the global financial crisis in the late 2000s. Hurricane Maria in 2017 also caused significant damage to the economy and country's infrastructure. Negative GDP per capita growth has occurred for several consecutive years. Lumber, hydropower, and arable land are natural resources. Agriculture employs 40% of the labor force and generates 22.3% of the GDP, whereas services employ 28% of the labor force and generate 65.1% of the GDP. Common crops include bananas, citrus, mangos, root crops, coconuts, and cocoa. Industry accounts for roughly a third of the GDP and labor force. Soap, coconut oil, and tourism are major industries. Primary trade partners include the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Trinidad and Tobago. Dominica reports low levels of corruption for the region. There have been some accusations of government corruption in recent years. Dominica is a transshipment point for narcotics destined for North America and Europe.

## Faiths

Christian: 91%

None: 9%

## Christians

### Denominations – Members – Congregations

Catholic – 39,234

Seventh Day Adventists – 7,204 – 28

Pentecostal – 4,442

Baptist – 3,701

Christian Union Mission – 2,961

Jehovah's Witnesses – 428 – 10

Latter-day Saints – 161 – 1

## Religion

Catholics comprise 53% of the population. The 2011 population and housing census reported that Seventh Day Adventists and Pentecostals each account for 7% and 6% of the population, respectively. Nine percent (9%) of the population is nonreligious.[\[5\]](#)

## Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. There is no state religion. Religious groups must register with the government to obtain nonprofit status and are required to register meetinghouses and buildings. Foreign missionaries may serve in the country in accordance with standard immigration laws. Rastafarians complain that marijuana is illegal. There have been no reported instances of societal abuse of religious freedom.[\[6\]](#)

## Largest Cities

**Urban: 70.5% (2018)**

**Roseau, Portsmouth, Canefield, Marigot, Grand Bay, Mahaut, Atkinson, Salisbury, Saint Joseph, Wesley.**

Cities listed in **bold** have no congregations of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

One of the ten largest cities has an official Church branch. Fifty-one percent (51%) of the population resides in the ten most populous cities.

## Church History

The first Dominican joined the Church in the early 1960s in England.[\[7\]](#) In 2004, some members in New Jersey were immigrants from Dominica.[\[8\]](#) One of the first Dominican Latter-day Saint families to join the Church in the mid-2000s was a former Seventh-Day Adventist family. Full-time missionaries were first assigned in 2006. Created in 2007, the Puerto Rico San Juan East Mission administered Dominica in 2007.[\[9\]](#) Seminary and institute began in the late 2000s. In 2010, Dominica was reassigned to the Puerto Rico San Juan Mission upon the closure of the Puerto Rico San Juan East Mission.

## Membership Growth

**Church Membership: 161 (2018)**

The Church did not report membership totals before 2007. There were seventy-seven Latter-day Saints in 2007, one hundred in 2008 and 143 in 2009. Stagnant membership growth occurred in the 2010s. Church membership totaled 173 in 2013 and 165 in 2016.

In 2017, one in 447 was a Latter-day Saint.

## Congregational Growth

## **Wards: 0 Branches: 1 Groups: 1? (2018)**

There were three branches in 2007 headquartered in Portsmouth, Roseau, and Marigot. In 2010, the Roseau and Marigot Branches were discontinued due to inadequate local leadership and reliance on full-time missionaries for administrative tasks, with the Roseau Branch becoming a group. In early 2011, there were at least two congregations: the Portsmouth Branch and the Roseau Group. Both congregations reported directly to the mission president. In early 2019, it was unclear whether the Roseau Group continued to operate.

### **Activity and Retention**

There were six students enrolled in seminary during the 2008–2009 school year. In 2008, church attendance for the Portsmouth Branch ranged from thirty to sixty. The Roseau Group had approximately fifteen active members in mid-2010; church attendance increased to thirty in early 2011. Nationwide active membership is estimated at no greater than seventy-five, or 50% of total membership.

### **Language Materials**

**Languages with Latter-day Saint Scripture:** English, French.

All Latter-day Saint scriptures and most church materials are available in French.

### **Meetinghouses**

The Portsmouth Branch met in a rented space or renovated building, whereas the Roseau Group met in a missionary apartment as of the early 2010s.

### **Humanitarian and Development Work**

The Church has conducted eight humanitarian and development projects since 1985.[\[10\]](#) The Church has donated clothing for the needy.[\[11\]](#)

## **Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects**

### **Religious Freedom**

Latter-day Saints benefit from full-religious freedom allowing worship, assembly, and proselytism. However, it is unclear whether the Church has full government recognition.

### **Cultural Issues**

Notwithstanding Dominica's small population and traditionally Catholic population, many have been receptive to outreach-oriented Christian denominations, as nearly all proselytizing Christian groups have a presence on Dominica. Due to limited employment opportunities and lower levels of economic development compared to neighboring islands, many leave the country to see employment and education elsewhere.

### **National Outreach**

Thirty-five percent (35%) of the population resides in the two administrative divisions where a branch or member group has historically functioned. The small size of the population and limited numbers of full-time missionaries worldwide make opening additional areas to missionary work unfeasible by the assignment of full-time missionaries. Senior missionary couples may facilitate expansion of national outreach by holding cottage meetings periodically in each administrative division and organize groups in more receptive locations. There is no Dominica-specific Internet outreach although an ample supply of materials was available online in English.

### **Member Activity and Convert Retention**

The Church in Dominica has achieved modest levels of convert retention in recent years and moderate member activity despite historically strong reliance on full-time missionaries for administrative functions. Member activity levels have fluctuated in recent years. The relatively recent introduction of seminary may lead to lasting increases in member activity rates.

### **Ethnic Issues and Integration**

There are few ethnic integration issues, as most are black or of mixed ethnicity. Some cultural and socioeconomic challenges may be presented by Caribs and whites assimilating into predominantly black congregations.

### **Language Issues**

Widespread use of English and the small number of speakers of Dominican Creole French worldwide reduce the need for translations of church materials. Full-time missionaries teach in English and report few language issues at present.

### **Missionary Service**

In early 2011, there were two senior missionary couples and a few young full-time missionaries. In September 2017, only one set of young missionaries was assigned to the entire island. Few, if any, local members have served missions. The introduction of seminary provides missionary preparation opportunities that may increase the number of local members serving full-time missions.

### **Leadership**

Full-time missionaries appeared to staff the leadership for the Roseau and Marigot Branches prior to their closure. Limited numbers of full-time missionaries assigned to the mission, the need to reduce reliance on missionaries for administrative tasks, and limited local member participation were likely the primary reasons for the closure of the two branches. The lack of qualified, trained leaders is indicative of the recent arrival of the Church in the mid-2000s as most members joined the Church in the late 2000s. Many recent converts have remained active, and some have received the Melchizedek Priesthood, offering potential for future self-sustaining leadership. However, membership strength and local leadership remain too limited to have justified the continued operation of branches in Roseau and Marigot.

### **Temple**

Dominica is assigned to the Caracas Venezuela Temple district. However, members likely attend the Santo Domingo Dominican Republic Temple if members attend the temple at all given their small numbers and distance to the nearest temple. Dominica may be assigned to the San Juan Puerto Rico Temple once the temple is completed although visa requirements may pose challenges. No temple trips appear to have occurred as of 2018.

### **Comparative Growth**

Dominica experienced the second most rapid membership growth rate among nations in the Caribbean during the late 2000s and appears to have one of the higher member activity rates in the Caribbean today. However, the Church in Dominica has followed the predictable path of the Church in most countries with less than 300 members as there is only one official branch and membership growth rates have been stagnant since 2013. Dominica experienced congregation consolidations like many other islands in the region, such as Aruba, Guadeloupe, and Saint Kitts and Nevis. The percentage of Latter-day Saints in the population is lower than most Caribbean islands.

Seventh-Day Adventists are one of the largest Protestant denominations and perform mission outreach nationwide with approximately thirty congregations. The number of Adventists has increased by more than 1,000 in the past decade. Jehovah's Witnesses have reported stagnant membership growth since 2010 but maintain excellent national outreach with ten congregations.

### **Future Prospects**

The outlook for Church growth appears mixed in the coming years as the Church has experienced stagnant membership growth for several consecutive years and no progress has occurred with the opening of additional branches outside of Portsmouth. With a small population that is distant from mission headquarters in Puerto Rico, there appears to be little indication of any noticeable increase in mission resources that may be allocated to Dominica to fuel growth. A member-missionary and church planting approach to proselytism will be required for additional advances in national outreach due to the island's tiny population.

and limited missionary resources in the region. Leadership development and increases in active membership may result in the reorganization of the Roseau Branch in the years to come.

[1] "Background Note: Dominica," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 23 July 2010.  
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2295.htm>

[2] "Background Note: Dominica," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 23 July 2010.  
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2295.htm>

[3] "Background Note: Dominica," Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 23 July 2010.  
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2295.htm>

[4] "Dominica," Wikipedia.org, retrieved 31 January 2011. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominica>

[5] "Dominica," International Religious Freedom Report for 2017. Accessed 18 February 2019.  
<https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm?year=2017&dlid=281066#wrapper>

[6] Dominica," International Religious Freedom Report for 2017. Accessed 18 February 2019.  
<https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm?year=2017&dlid=281066#wrapper>

[7] "Do you know the steps of prayer?," LDS Church News, 31 May 2003.  
<http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/43848/Do-you-know-the-steps-of-prayer.html>

[8] "International ward sponsors family fair," LDS Church News, 20 November 2004.  
<http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/46506/International-ward-sponsors-family-fair.html>

[9] "New missions bring total to 347," LDS Church News, 10 February 2007.  
<http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/50112/New-missions-bring-total-to-347-New-missions.html>

[10] "Where We Work," LDS Charities, Accessed 18 February 2019. <https://www.ldscharities.org/where-we-work>

[11] "Projects—Dominica," Humanitarian Activities Worldwide, retrieved 1 February 2011.  
<http://www.providentliving.org/project/0,13501,4607-1-2008-206,00.html>