



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.



Tanzania

Population: 49.64 millions (#26 out of countries)

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Geography

Area: 950,000 square km. Located in East Africa, Tanzania borders Burundi, Rwanda and Kenya to the north, the Indian Ocean to the east, Mozambique and Malawi to the south, and Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo to the west. Tanzania also includes the two small, densely populated islands of Pemba and Zanzibar near the largest city of Dar es Salaam. A third small island named Mafia Island sits off the coast to the south. Due to the Great Rift Valley in western Tanzania, several large lakes including Lakes Nyasa, Tanganyika and Victoria form the nation's inland border. Tropical plains dominate the Indian Ocean coastal areas, with temperate highlands in the north and south of the country. Africa's highest mountain, Mount Kilimanjaro, is located near the border with Kenya and reaches a height of almost 20,000 feet. Vast plateaus in the central and western portions of Tanzania are home to the Serengeti. Many wildlife parks and refuges preserve habitat for wildlife. Tanzania is divided into 26 regions.

Population: 41,048,532 (July 2009)

Annual Growth Rate: 2.04% (2009)

Fertility Rate: 4.46 children born per woman (2009)

Male Life Expectancy: 50.56 years (2009)

Female Life Expectancy: 53.51 years (2009)

Peoples

African: 99% (Bantu peoples make up 95% of Africans in more than 130 tribes)

Other: 1% (Arabs, Asians and Europeans)

Note: Zanzibar's population is a mixture of Arabs, Africans, and those of mixed ethnicity

Most densely populated areas in Tanzania are along the Indian coast, in and nearby the largest cities and on the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba. Non-African ethnic groups are concentrated in the largest cities, Zanzibar and Pemba.

Languages: Swahili and English (both official), Arabic and Kiunguja (Swahili dialect) in Zanzibar. These languages have few native speakers, but are spoken by many Tanzanians in official settings, business, and between ethnic groups. Swahili is spoken by around 90% of the population; English usage has diminished since independence. Indigenous languages with over one million speakers include Sukuma (5.43 million), Gogo (1.44 million), Haya (1.3 million), Ha (1 million), Makonde (1 million), and Nyamwezi (1 million).

Literacy: 85.1% (2002 census)

History

African tribes inhabited Tanzania for thousands of years and came into contact with traders from the Middle East before 1000 AD. Islam spread to the coastal areas in the eighth century. Omani Arabs claimed the Tanzanian coast in the 1800s and established Zanzibar as the capital for their empire during which Zanzibar played a significant role in the Arab slave trade. Germany colonized the interior, named German East Africa, and Great Britain later took control of Zanzibar. During World War I, fighting occurred between German and British forces in East Africa. Britain gained control of German East Africa following the war and named the territory Tanganyika. Independence from Great Britain was granted to Tanganyika and Zanzibar in the early 1960s. Later the two nations combined to form Tanzania, named by combining Tanganyika and Zanzibar. One-party rule was established in the 1970s, democratic elections were first held in 1995. Instability has occurred since independence, with a war with Uganda in 1979 and friction resulting from Zanzibar's desire for greater autonomy.

Culture

Culture in Tanzania has resulted through the influences of Arabs, Europeans and African tribes. Tea and coffee are drunk several times a day by most Tanzanians.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$1,400 (2008) [3.0% of US]

Human Development Index: 0.530

Corruption Index: 3.0

The Tanzanian economy is agriculturally driven, with 80% of the workforce in agriculture. Other sectors of the economy are weak, yet account for nearly 75% of the nation's GDP. Due to climate and geography, only 4% of the land is used for agriculture. In recent years, government has sought to improve the country's infrastructure and develop manufacturing and industry. Tourism is a growing area of the economy, with many visiting the country's game reserves and coastal areas. Mining has also increased in recent years and contributed to economic growth. In 2008 the GDP increased by over seven percent. Tanzania's geographic position is favorable for trading with other African or Asian nations. Trading partners include neighboring African countries, China, Europe, India, and the Middle East.

Faiths

Indigenous beliefs: 35%

Muslim: 35%

Christian: 30%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 9,000,000

Seventh-Day Adventists 393,236 1709

Jehovah's Witnesses 14,630 420

Latter-Day Saints 915 5

Religion

Christians, Muslims and followers of indigenous beliefs each make up one third of the population. Zanzibar is over 99% Muslim and the coastal areas on the Indian Ocean are predominantly Muslim, especially around Dar es Salaam. Muslims are also concentrated in the south. Christians and followers of indigenous religions make up the majority in the west and northwestern portions of Tanzania. Religious affiliation largely corresponds to geographical location.

Religious Freedom

Persecution Index:

Religious freedom is upheld by the Tanzanian constitution. Some limitations on worship and Christian activities exist in predominantly Muslim Zanzibar. Tensions exist between Christians and Muslims in areas where Muslims desire to incorporate Islamic law into life and government.

Major Cities

Urban: 25%

Dar es Salaam, **Mwanza, Zanzibar**, Arusha, **Mbeya, Morogoro, Tanga, Dodoma, Kigoma, Moshi, Tabora, Songea, Musoma, Iringa, Uvinza, Katumba**.

Cities in bold do not have a LDS congregation. The 16 largest cities account for 14% of the national population.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 915

The first Church members to live in Tanzania were two families from the United States and Canada. The first Church meetings were held in 1991 in Dar es Salaam.^[1] By this time there were 17 members.^[2] The first Tanzanian to join the Church was in Cairo, Egypt in 1991; the first converts in Tanzania were baptized in 1992.^[3]

By 1997 membership had grown to 328 in Tanzania.^[4] In 1998, President Hinckley visited Nairobi, Kenya where some Tanzanian members were in attendance. President Hinckley predicted future growth of the Church in East Africa, stating that tens of thousands of members would one day live in places where there were only hundreds of members at the time.^[5] When the Africa Area was divided in 1998, Tanzania became part of the Africa Southeast Area. By the end of 2000 there were 457 members.

In 2002 a temple trip to the Johannesburg South Africa Temple resulted in 27 Tanzanian members receiving their own endowments, 10 families being sealed, and ordinances completed for their deceased ancestors. The trip took 68 hours by bus and was planned for eight months in advance. Before the trip, only six members were endowed.^[6]

Tanzania was dedicated for the preaching of the gospel by Elder Russell M. Nelson in November 2003. Elder Nelson met with 300 members during his visit and encouraged them to live and share the Gospel, adding that the dedication of the country has provided proper direction for further growth. By the end of 2003, there were 639 members, increasing to 915 members at year-end 2009.

Membership has typically increased between 30 and 100 members a year. Membership growth rates in Tanzania have varied widely from year to year from as high as 18% in 2003 to as low as 4% in 2008. The small number of members has resulted in greater annual fluctuations in growth rates than in nations with larger member bases.

Congregational Growth

Branches: 5

In the summer of 1991 the Kenya Nairobi Mission was created, which included Tanzania. The first senior couple missionaries began serving in February 1992, the same year legal recognition was granted by the government. The first branch was

organized at the end of the year in Dar es Salaam.[\[7\]](#)

In 2000, there were three branches in Tanzania, all of which were in Dar es Salaam: The Kinondoni, Ubungu and Chang'ombe Branches.[\[8\]](#) A fourth branch was created in Dar es Salaam in 2004, named the Kinondoni 2nd Branch. The first district in Tanzania was created in December 2005 in Dar es Salaam comprising the four branches in the city. A branch was created for the first time outside of Dar es Salaam in the city of Arusha, located near Kenya by Mount Kilimanjaro. The Arusha Branch was created from the Arusha Group in 2008. Missionaries were assigned to Arusha in mid-2008. The first baptisms occurred in early August. The branch grew rapidly from less than 20 attending Church meetings on Sundays to nearly 80 in late 2009.

Activity and Retention

The ratio between membership and congregations has changed little between 2000 and 2008, increasing from 171 to 183 members per congregation. Senior missionaries who regularly visited the Arusha Branch in 2008 and 2009 reported that investigators attended Church meetings for extended periods of time before baptism. This resulted in half of those at Church meetings being members of the Church. Active membership in Tanzania may be as high as 500, as the branches in Dar es Salaam appear to have about 100 active members each.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Arabic, Swahili

Extensive Arabic translations of Church materials are produced by the Church. Some Church materials are available in Swahili, including a limited number of missionary, Priesthood and Relief Society resources. Both Arabic and Swahili have all LDS scriptures translated. No other indigenous languages have translations of Church materials.

Meetinghouses

One Church built meetinghouse may exist in Dar es Salaam. The four branches in Dar es Salaam met in three locations in the city in 2009. The Arusha Branch meets in a remodeled building.

Humanitarian and Development Work

Humanitarian aid and service projects appear limited in Tanzania. A branch service activity for the Ubungu Branch cleaned a local orphanage in 1998[\[9\]](#). A similar project was undertaken by the Chang'ombe Branch in 2000.[\[10\]](#) In 2001 the Church sent two shipping containers of aid containing food and medical supplies.[\[11\]](#) Tanzania was included in a program by the Church to vaccinate youth against Measles in the 2000s.

Opportunities, Challenges and Prospects

Religious Freedom

Unlike many countries with significant Muslim populations, the Church appears to have few obstacles with preaching the Gospel in Tanzania. This presents great opportunity. The Church has established itself only in Arusha and Dar es Salaam, yet Dar es Salaam is the largest city and has a large Muslim population. The Church may encounter difficulty becoming established in Zanzibar, where the overwhelming Muslim majority has more autonomy than in other areas of the country.

Cultural Issues

The Tanzanian cultural practices of regularly drinking tea and coffee are impediments to LDS teachings. Syncretism blending Christianity with indigenous beliefs and superstition also presents challenges.

National Outreach

The Church has made little progress in establishing itself in additional cities in Tanzania. It was not until 2008 when a second city was opened for missionary work and a branch was established. Tanzanians who live in areas with a Church presence comprise less than seven percent of the country's population. The majority of Tanzanians live in smaller cities and rural areas, with no Church presence.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Activity and retention in Tanzania appear relatively high due to longer periods of convert preparation than many other nations. Measured growth has facilitated training local leadership. A fourth branch created in Dar es Salaam in 2004 together with the creation of the first district in the country in 2005 indicates that active membership has steadily increased. Growth in Church infrastructure in Tanzania also points to local membership ready to receive greater leadership responsibilities.

In 2003, Elder Nelson visited with 300 Tanzanian members; there were 639 members by the end of the year. This suggests activity rates at the time of around 50%, although it is unclear whether investigators, missionaries, and foreign visitors may have been included in this tally.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Senior missionaries serving in the Kenya Nairobi Mission suggest that one of the reasons for why the Church has experienced slow growth in Tanzania is due to the majority of Church membership residing in areas which are predominantly Muslim. With the opening of the first branch in the interior of Tanzania in 2008, missionaries anticipated greater, more rapid growth than in Dar es Salaam since the majority of the inhabitants in northeastern Tanzania adhere to Christianity or indigenous beliefs. Due to the Church's very limited presence, it will be difficult to tell whether those in the interior of Tanzania are more receptive to the Gospel until the Church has been established in the region for a number of years. The Church will likely experienced increased diversity in membership as a result of the large number of ethnic groups. A diverse membership provides opportunities for establishing the Church more widely. However, a diverse membership can also challenge leadership and congregation unity if various ethnic groups in a given congregation experience differences or cultural conflicts. To date, ethnic issues do not appear to have presented major challenges.

Language Issues

Swahili and English language resources are used by missionaries and local members. Several Church materials are already

available in Arabic for use in regions where Arabic is predominantly spoken, mainly in Zanzibar and coastal regions along the Indian Ocean.. No scripture or Church materials are available in any of the native languages in Tanzania. As Church membership is concentrated in Dar es Salaam in Arusha, additional language translations are unlikely to be produced until necessitated by membership growth.

Leadership

Many African nations with as few members as Tanzania do not have districts organized, indicating that Tanzania appears to have more mature leadership development. The Arusha Branch has a native Tanzanian member as branch president although the branch was only established in 2008.

Temple

Tanzania is part of the Johannesburg South Africa Temple District. Church leadership has suggested the possibility of a temple in neighboring Kenya once warranted by membership growth and maturity. A temple in neighboring Kenya would drastically decrease the time and expense of attending the temple in South Africa.

Comparative Growth

The Church has seen more limited growth in Tanzania than many other African countries. Uganda had nearly the same number of members in 1991 as Tanzania, but had almost 7,000 members at the end of 2008. Mozambique had no Church presence until the mid 1990s, but has nearly 5,000 members today. Both of these nations suffer from high inactivity, but the Church has been able to be established in many of the largest urban areas in these nations, whereas outreach in Tanzania remains extremely limited. Madagascar had its first branch created around the same time as Tanzania's first branch, yet Madagascar had 24 congregations and a stake with more than 5,000 members in late 2009.

Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and other outreach-oriented faiths have experienced dynamic and sustained growth in Tanzania. Seventh-Day Adventists have established themselves most strongly in the regions of Tanzania bordering Lake Victoria, with one region reporting one Seventh-Day Adventist out of every 20 Tanzanians. These denominations have the majority of their membership in northwestern Tanzania, which may indicate that this area of the country may be more receptive for Christian proselytism. Adventists have made extensive use of public multimedia presentations, church schools, and medical clinics.

The primary reason for slow LDS growth in Tanzania appears to be the lack of resources and attention given to church growth and national outreach in the country. The Church had no outreach in Tanzania outside of Muslim-majority areas until 2008. Although the country has more than forty million inhabitants and, if it were in the Western hemisphere, would likely support between five and fifteen missions, Tanzania to date has no independent LDS mission but is served only by a subset of missionaries from the Kenya Nairobi Mission. The Kenya Nairobi Mission also administered to Ethiopia and Uganda until 2005. Mission resources, especially missionaries and mission president visits, had to be divided between the four nations originally covered by the mission. After the division of the Kenya Nairobi Mission in 2005, greater attention could be devoted to Tanzania which may have contributed to the establishment of the district late that year. Due to Kenya's larger membership and number of congregations, Tanzania continues receives fewer mission resources. LDS outreach in Tanzania remains extremely limited.

Future Prospects

Additional growth for the Church in Tanzania in the near future appears most likely with expanding the Church's presence to additional cities while building up the existing five branches in the country. Church growth potential appears strongest in the northern portion of the country where the Church established its first presence in Arusha in 2008. Due to the closer proximity to Nairobi than Dar es Salaam, it appears more likely than the rest of the country to have additional areas opened for missionary work. Cities which seem as suitable candidates are Moshi and Mwanza either due to their close proximity to Arusha or their large populations. Additional cities could also have groups or branches created as members of the Church share the Gospel with their friends and family. Other larger cities along the coast in Tanzania appear likely possibilities to have a Church presence. A future Church presence in the Tanzanian capital of Dodoma may also be likely. Rural areas, southern Tanzania and Zanzibar appear the least likely to have a Church presence in the near future due to their distance from mission headquarters in Nairobi or predominantly Muslim population.

The Dar es Salaam Tanzania District will not mature into a stake until additional congregations are organized and membership increases. Stakes usually require at least 2,000 members and five congregations, including 150 active Melchizedek priesthood holders. At current growth rates, a stake may not be likely for another decade.

Humanitarian work could prove to be a means for the Church to become more established in Tanzania. Several projects in the past have involved local membership, which if continued in the future could help build positive public relations and open doors for the Church's influence to reach into additional areas of the country.

An independent mission covering Tanzania is greatly needed, and it is likely that Tanzania could eventually support many LDS missions. Yet very few mission resources have been allocated to this important nation notwithstanding its large population and broad religious freedom. With a present population which has been highly receptive to Christian proselytism outside of Muslim-majority areas, future growth prospects in Tanzania will greatly depend upon the allocation of missionary manpower and resources. Opportunities for growth are often time-sensitive. Receptivity may wane and growth conditions may not be as favorable once a mission is eventually established in Tanzania and commensurate resources and missionary manpower are dedicated to outreach in the country. Many previously receptive individuals are already being disciplined into other churches which may lead to further declines in receptivity over time.

[1] <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/tanzania>

[2]

<http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20711/Six-new-missions-to-be-created-missions-are-added-in-Europe-Africa-Caribbean-and>

[3] <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44749/Gospel-takes-root-in-Tanzania.html>

[4] <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/29126/Church-is-growing-in-east-Africa.html>

[5] <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/30434/This-work-will-grow-and-grow-in-this-land.html>

[6] <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/41833/Determined-to-keep-covenants.html>

[7] <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/contact-us/tanzania>

[8] <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/44749/Gospel-takes-root-in-Tanzania.html>

[9] <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/34999/From-around-the-world.html>

[10] <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/38594/Brightening-rest-home-orphanage.html>

[11] <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/40099/Church-aid-arrives-in-Tanzania.html>