



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.



South Africa

Population: 48.38 millions (#28 out of countries)

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Geography

Area: 1,219,090 square km. South Africa occupies the most southern areas of Africa, bordering Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Swaziland. South Africa entirely surrounds Lesotho. South Africa borders both the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. The Cape of Good Hope is one of the most defining geographic features. Most areas have a temperate climate partially affected by altitude. Western areas have drier climates, the driest being the Namib Desert. The wettest climates are in the southwest. Landscape in western and northern South Africa is flat, with mountainous areas stretching from Lesotho to the northwest and plateaus in the south. South Africa is divided into nine provinces.

Population: 49,004,031 (July 2011)

Annual Growth Rate: -0.38% (2011)

Fertility Rate: 2.3 children born per woman (2011)

Life Expectancy: male 50.24 years, female 48.39 years (2011)

Peoples

Black African: 79%

White: 9.6%

Colored: 8.9%

Indian/Asian: 2.5%

South Africa has some of the richest ethnic diversity in Africa. Black Africans consist of Ndebele, Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho, Tswana, Swazi, Venda, and Tsonga peoples in addition to immigrant groups from neighboring African countries, especially Zimbabwe. Refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia number 33,000 and 20,000 respectively. Blacks form the

greatest majorities in the northwestern provinces. The Limpopo Province has the largest majority (95%) and the Western Cape Province has the smallest percentage (less than 30%). Whites come from many countries in Western and Central Europe and are most represented in Gauteng Province (over 20%), the largest cities, and western South Africa. Whites are least found in Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, and Eastern Cape Provinces. The colored population, which entails non-Bantu African groups, some Asians and mixed-raced individuals, constitute up to half of the population in parts of western South Africa and do not make up more than 5% of the population in eastern South Africa. The Indian/Asian population has its greatest percentage of the population in KwaZulu-Natal (8%) and small minorities elsewhere.

Languages: Commonly spoken official or national languages include IsiZulu (23.8%), IsiXhosa (17.6%), Afrikaans (13.3%), Sepedi [North Sotho] (9.4%), English (8.2%), Sesotho (7.9%), Setswana (8.2%), and Tsonga (4.4%). Additional official or national languages include Ndebele, Swati, and Venda, which, combined with other languages, are spoken by 7.2%. Ndebele has 640,000 speakers and Venda has 980,000 speakers. Languages with over one million speakers include Zulu (9.98 million), Xhosa (7.79 million), Afrikaans (4.74 million), Southern Sotho (4.24 million), Northern Sotho (4.09 million), English (3.67 million), Tswana (3.41 million), Tsonga (1.94 million), Portuguese (1.5 million), and Swati (1.01 million). There are also likely millions of speakers of Shona, primarily immigrants from Zimbabwe.

Literacy: 86.4% (2003)

History

Khoisan and later Bantu peoples settled South Africa before European contact. Portuguese explorers first sailed around the Cape of Good Hope in the late nineteenth century. The Dutch founded Cape Town in 1652 as a stopping point for travel between Europe and Asia and was the first permanent European settlement in South Africa. Cape Town fell to British rule in the early nineteenth century and conflict continued between Dutch settlers, known as the Boers, many of whom fled north to escape British rule. The Boer Wars were fought from 1880-1881 and 1899-1902. Although defeated, the Boers shared power over the Union of South Africa which integrated Boer republics with the rest of South Africa. The National Party came into power in 1948 and segregated whites and blacks under a policy called apartheid which lasted until 1994 when multi-racial elections were held. The African National Congress has ruled since, bringing blacks to political power. Party instability increased in the 2000s, resulting in the resignation of President Thabo Mbeki in 2008. President Kgalema Motlanthe will administer the country until upcoming elections.

Culture

Each of the ethnic groups maintains its individual culture. Apartheid prevented interaction between ethnic groups, resulting in greater disharmony. Since the end of apartheid, greater integration has occurred between ethnic groups although neighborhoods are still segregated due to differences in socio-economic class, language, religion, and culture. Western South Africa is known for its high quality wines. Meat is eaten in abundance. Cigarette and alcohol consumption rates are comparable to the world average. Polygamy is uncommon and may be practiced under customary law.

Economy

GDP per capita: \$10,700 (2010) [22.6% of US]

Human Development Index: 0.683

Corruption Index: 4.5

The largest stock exchange in Africa is based in Johannesburg. Abundant natural resources, a diversified economy and a developed infrastructure generate wealth and growth potential. Water and energy shortages have reduced this potential however. Extreme inequality of wealth is due to economic development concentrated in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban, Cape Town, and Port Elizabeth as well as large disparities in education and employment. Half of the population lives under the poverty line, with many of the poor living in rural areas. Whites have had and continue to have greater wealth than other races, but there is a growing black middle class. Most exports are metals and minerals, including gold, diamonds, and platinum. Main export/import partners include Japan, the United States, Germany, and China. South Africa numbers among the least corrupt African countries but corruption is pervasive. Money laundering and illicit drug production, cultivation, and trafficking are major issues.

Faiths

Christian: 79.7%

Muslim: 1.5%

Other: 2.3%

Unspecified: 1.4%

None: 15.1%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Zion Christian 5,444,826

Pentecostal/Charismatic 4,022,304

Catholic 3,482,727

Methodist 3,335,569

Dutch Reformed 3,286,517

Anglican 1,863,995

Catholic 4,863,731

Protestant 1,919,894

Seventh Day Adventists 92,216 869

Jehovah's Witnesses 90,037 1,773

Latter-day Saints 54,996 148

Religion

Syncretism between Christianity and indigenous beliefs is common. Independent African churches have the most adherents and experience the greatest syncretism. Many classified as nonreligious may follow indigenous religions. 87% of whites are Christian and 1.4% are Jewish.[\[1\]](#) Although small in numbers, Islam has rapidly grown among blacks but most Muslims are of Malay, Indonesian or Indian origin in Cape Town. Rising secularism among whites may account for some of the large minority claiming no religion.

Religious Freedom

Persecution Index:

Freedom of religion is protected by the constitution. Government respects this right and has not restricted religious freedom. Most religious communities are respectful to one another.

Major Cities

Urban: 61%

Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Soweto, Port Elizabeth, Benoni, Vereeniging, Pietermaritzburg, East London, Tembisa, Bloemfontein, Boksburg, Vanderbijlpark, Newcastle, Krugersdorp, Welkom, **Brakpan**, Carletonville, Springs, Uitenhage, Witbank, Alberton, Botshabelo, Paarl, Midrand, Kimberley, Klerksdorp, Verwoerdburg, **Westonaria**, Somerset West,

Bisho, Randfontein, **Middelburg**, Rustenburg, **Nigel**, Potchefstroom, George, Nelspruit, **Phalaborwa**, **Emnambithi**, Pietersburg, Potgietersrus.

The Church has a congregation in 37 of the 43 largest cities. The population of cities with over 100,000 inhabitants account for 39% of the national population.

LDS History

The first missionaries arrived in April 1853 in Cape Town and South Africa was dedicated for missionary work the following month. The first congregation was organized in August 1853 by 1855 there were three LDS congregations. Between 1865 and 1903 missionaries did not serve in Africa due to government restrictions and missionaries unable to learn to speak Afrikaans.^[2] Missionaries were prohibited from entering the country between 1919 and 1921.

President David O. McKay visited South Africa in 1954 and empowered the mission president to bestow the priesthood upon members at his discretion. ^[3] Foreign missionaries were not allowed to enter in 1955 due to civil unrest, but the Church was able to send missionaries from Canada and other British Commonwealth nations.^[4] This restriction was lifted shortly thereafter. The first South African missionaries began serving outside their homeland in 1966. Seminary and institute commenced in 1972. President Kimball rededicated South Africa for missionary work in 1979. In 1984, the South Africa Johannesburg Mission was divided to create a second mission in Cape Town. In 1990 the Africa Area was organized with headquarters in Johannesburg. The first member of the Church elected as a mayor occurred that same year.^[5] In 1991, a third mission was organized in Durban from a division of the South Africa Johannesburg Mission and the relocation of the Mascarene Islands Mission formerly headquartered in Reunion.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 54,996 (2010)

Six months later 45 converts had been baptized. There were about 130 members in 1855, with most of living near Cape Town. By 1858, 243 South Africans had joined the Church.^[6] In 1903 only a handful of members remained after decades without missionaries serving and little contact with Church Headquarters. In 1935, membership reached 1,261 and members were found in other areas of the country, including Bloemfontein and Johannesburg.

By 1965 there were 4,764 members. At the end of 1971 there were 3,128 members in the Transvaal Stake and 2,718 members in the South Africa Mission, excluding Rhodesia. Some of the highest membership growth rates occurred in the 1980s. Membership reached 17,216 by 1990. There were an estimated 22,000 members by 1993, growing to 24,450 in 1996 and 29,220 by the end of 1999.

Membership continued to steadily increase in the 2000s. Black membership surpassed 50% of LDS membership in the early 2000s.^[7] By the end of 2004 there were 40,482 members and 48,112 members at the end of 2009. Annual membership growth rates have declined in the past decade from almost seven percent in 2000 to about 4.5% in 2008. Growth rates rebounded to between 6-8% in 2009 and 2010. In 2010, one in 891 was LDS.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 74 Branches: 74 Groups: 2+

President Marion G. Romney visited in 1968 and challenged members to help grow the Church so that a stake could be organized. The Transvaal Stake was created in 1970, the first in South Africa. In 1973 the stake had five wards and five branches. There were two districts functioning in the early 1970s. The Cape District had two branches and the Natal District had three branches. Five independent mission branches also functioned under the South Africa Mission, some of which were in the country. A second stake was created in Pretoria in 1978 and the third stake was created in Durban in 1981.

The 1978 revelation extending priesthood and temple blessing to African members opened up black communities which had not had congregations. Branches were established among Black townships in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng Provinces, most of which pertained to stakes. The Cape Town South Africa Stake was organized in 1984. The first Zulu missionary began serving in 1984.^[8] The Benoni South Africa Stake was created in 1987, bringing the number of stakes up to five.

Four new stakes were created in between 1995 and 1999, three of which (Roodepoort, Bedfordview, and Soweto) were in the Johannesburg area. These new stakes were created mainly due to the rapid growth among blacks joining the Church. The Soweto South Africa Stake, for instance, began as a branch for the black township in the 1980s.^[9] The Hillcrest South Africa Stake was created in 1999 from a division of the Durban South Africa Stake.

Districts in East London and Port Elizabeth matured into stakes in 2002 and 2005 respectively. Between 2005 and 2007 there were 11 stakes and no districts. Mission branches began to multiply, resulting in the formation of four districts between late 2007 and late 2009 in Richards Bay, Newcastle, Bloemfontein, and Tzaneen. The Richards Bay South Africa District was created from a single ward which was meeting in several different locations. The ward was divided into five branches at the creation of the district. The Newcastle South Africa District was created from five mission branches in Newcastle, Madadeni, and Ezakheni. The Bloemfontein South Africa District was organized with 10 branches in Lesotho, Bethlehem, and the Johannesburg South Africa Stake. The Tzaneen South Africa District was created from five mission branches in Limpopo Province. Swaziland was included in different stakes in South Africa from the 1990s until 2008 when the Mbabane Swaziland District was created. In 2011, a stake was organized in Centurion bringing the total number of stakes and districts to 12 and four, respectively.

There were 60 LDS congregations in 1987, 97 in 1993, 94 in 1997, and 100 in 2000. Approximately half of LDS congregations in 2000 were wards. Congregational growth increased during the 2000s as there were 103 units in 2002, 116 in 2004, 128 in 2006, 141 in 2008, and 147 in 2010. In mid-2011 there were 148 LDS congregations. Dependent branches and home groups operate in several areas of the country under the jurisdiction of the South Africa Durban or South Africa Cape Town Mission Branches or other units, such as the Kosi Bay and Phuthaditjhaba Groups.

Activity and Retention

President Hinckley visited about 9,000 members and investigators in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg in 1998 and noted that attrition due to the emigration of members from South Africa presented a challenge.^[10] 3,792 were enrolled in seminary and institute during the 2009-2010 school year. The average number of members per congregation increased from 321 to 374 between 2000 and 2010. The ratio of wards to branches has also experienced little change, indicating that activity and retention levels have remained stable unless the number of active member per congregation has decreased. Active membership varies widely, from newly established branches in remote areas with less than 50 active members to larger wards in Johannesburg with between 100-200 active members. Total active membership is likely between 17,000 and 20,000, or 30-35% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Afrikaans, English, Setswana, Shona, Xhosa, Zulu

The first Afrikaans-speaking missionaries were assigned in 1963. The Church completed and distributed the Book of Mormon in Afrikaans in 1972.^[11] Other LDS scriptures are available in Afrikaans, but limited Church materials include the Relief Society Declaration, Gospel Principles and the Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Book of Mormon in selections in Zulu were translated in 1987 and the full book in the early 2000s. The Church completed the Xhosa translation of the Book of Mormon in 2000. The Setswana Book of Mormon translation was completed in the early 2000s. Limited missionary, priesthood, Relief Society, music, and Sunday School materials are available in Setswana, Xhosa and Zulu. Church materials translated into Sesotho are limited to Gospel Principles, The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony, and the sacrament prayers. SiSwati Church materials are limited to Gospel Principles and The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony. Zimbabwean members have all LDS scriptures available in Shona, along with a large number of Church materials. The Articles of Faith are the only LDS material available in Sepedi.

Health and Safety

Violent crime poses major obstacles for Church growth. South Africa suffers from the one of the world's highest rates of violent crime and rape. The sexual assault and robbery of a pair of sister missionaries serving in the South Africa Durban Mission in 2006 resulted in the withdrawal of all sister missionaries from South Africa in that year.^[12] Full-time missionaries limit proselytism on the basis of areas and time of day for safety reasons. Driving also poses safety hazards, evidence by the death of a missionary in the Johannesburg mission in 2008.^[13]

South Africa's population has the fourth highest percentage of those infected with HIV/AIDS in the world at 17.8% of the adult population. HIV/AIDS generally spreads through illicit sexual relations and drug use. Other sources of infection include contaminated needles and HIV-positive mothers. Church members infected with HIV/AIDS are less able to contribute to long term growth and establishing families in the Church due to the disease shortening their life spans and limiting potential for raising a family.

Meetinghouses

The first meetinghouse was built in 1917. By 1973 there were 16 meetinghouses nationwide. One of the first meetinghouses in a black township began construction in 1992 in Soweto. Wards and larger branches typically meet in Church built meetinghouses or renovated buildings. Smaller branches tend to meet in rented spaces or members' homes. The Church renovated remodeled buildings used as the Africa Southeast Area offices in 2001 and held an open house with 750 government and community leaders in attendance.^[14] Elder Robert C. Oaks of the Seventy dedicated the Johannesburg Missionary Training Center in 2003.^[15]

Humanitarian and Development Work

Local members provided land for gardening for local school children in Loxton in 2001.^[16] A garden project in Katlehong provided abundant food for impoverished members in the area starting in 2001.^[17] Local members donated clothing for children born from HIV-positive mothers.^[18] Mormon Helping Hands projects have cleaned schools and served the communities in which members live.^[19] The Church donated wheelchairs with other charitable organizations in 2008.^[20] Additional projects have included donating bedding, emergency food relief, and furnishings for a care center and providing HIV/AIDS education and health fairs.^[21]

Opportunities, Challenges and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church enjoys full religious freedom. Opportunities for missionary work with full-time missionaries are well utilized. The lack of tension between religious communities and widespread member missionary work are opportunities that have yet to be realized.

Cultural Issues

Receptivity to the LDS Church among the black population has been moderate over the past four decades although cultural issues among all ethnicities present challenges for LDS outreach and long-term church growth. Historical segregation between races under apartheid resulted in little interethnic mixing and contact, exacerbating ethnic tensions. As a result of concentrated mission efforts among whites until the late 1970s, seasoned church members with full families in the Church tend to be whites living in Johannesburg, Durban, or Cape Town notwithstanding whites account for less than 10% of the national population. The emigration of whites has destabilized LDS population in some areas of the largest cities. Materialism and disinterest in religion appears most widespread among whites and coloreds. Blacks have the strongest interest in religion, and much of the church growth over the past two decades has come from native African ethnic groups but member activity and convert retention rates have been modest. Disinterest in religion among whites and limited outreach towards coloreds is manifest in the slow growth in the Western Cape Province. Although current South African President Kgalema Motlanthe practices polygamy, most South Africans do not.

National Outreach

39% of the national population resides in cities over 30,000 inhabitants with an LDS congregation. All nine administrative provinces have at least one congregation, four have at least one stake, six have a stake or district, and three have a mission. Large cities nationwide typically have a congregation. Some rural areas nearby larger or middle sized cities also have congregations, particularly in Free State, Gauteng, and KwaZulu-Natal.

The Church has hesitated to conduct missionary work among people who do not live near meetinghouses. Missionaries were charged in 1997 to avoid teaching and baptizing those who have difficulty traveling to Church meetings due to distance since most travel on foot.^[22] In the past two decades the Church created dozens of new branches in townships or neighborhoods closer to the homes of members and investigators to meet local needs, capitalize on receptivity, and expand national outreach. In the early 2010s, new proselytism areas opened regularly although most were in the largest cities and only a few were in formerly-unreached locations.

The Northern Cape Province is the least proselytized, with 1.06 million inhabitants and only one congregation in the capital of Kimberley. At least 84% of the population is unreached by the Church in the province. In Western Cape Province, congregations are limited to Cape Town and its suburbs, George, and Knysna. About half the population lives in cities and towns with no congregations despite the Church's first establishment in South Africa in Cape Town in the 1850s and again in the 1900s. The Church has likely been reluctant to open areas to missionary work far away from Cape Town in rural areas with few members and inhabitants. Some Church members live in isolated areas and meet in small groups. Other provinces have a more widespread presence among the larger cities, but contain large rural areas and small cities without any official Church presence.

Many ethnic groups have little to no mission outreach. Muslim Cape Malays have likely had little exposure to the Church, as well as coloreds from India. Greater emphasis has been placed in the Western Cape Province around Cape Town in establishing more branches, likely in an effort to reach the large number of coloreds in the province. Khoisan peoples have likely had no exposure to the Church.

The Church has yet to create congregations in more cities over 30,000 inhabitants. In mid-2011, there were approximately 50

cities over 30,000 inhabitants with no LDS outreach. Many unreached cities are in Western Cape Province and on the outskirts of Johannesburg, particularly on the east side. Congregations have systematically been organized in many of these smaller cities on the peripheries of Johannesburg, but dozens of middle sized cities remain unreached.

The Church maintains an internet site for South Africa at <http://www.lds.co.za/> providing links to other English-language LDS websites, local church news, and information of church beliefs, practices, and programs. Use of the website by missionaries and local members can magnify proselytism efforts and expand national outreach.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Mediocre convert retention and member activity rates have largely arisen due to quick-baptism tactics of those who have often not firmly established gospel habits or achieved an adequate understanding of basic gospel principles. These mission practices have been most regularly employed among black townships where there is an insufficient number of longtime members, further compounding activity and retention issues. Generally black townships exhibit the lowest member activity rates because of these issues. Many Africans demonstrate little long-term conviction to a particular denomination, which has further influenced LDS activity rates. Convert retention and member activity also appear low in areas with the least developed church infrastructure, such as Limpopo Province due to local leadership struggles and distance from meetinghouses.

The Church in the North West and Mpumalanga Provinces appears dependent on the stakes in Johannesburg. Neither of these provinces has a stake or district and there is no ward in Mpumalanga Province. The inclusion of congregations in these regions in Johannesburg stakes can facilitate greater local leadership development through frequent visits from stake presidencies and stake high counselors. Stakes may have assisted mission leadership in the opening of additional congregations in these areas, providing greater long-term support from local members and leaders.

Increasing enrollment in seminary and institute in the late 2000s indicates success in increasing the number of active members, but the rate of growth of enrollment in Church Education System classes remains far below the number of youth and young adult convert baptisms. Greater emphasis on attending seminary and institute for new converts and investigators may increase long-term activity rates, strengthen testimonies, and augment the number of local members serving missions. The Church organized its first young single adult (YSA) congregation in Africa in the 2000s, which can help address activity issues among single members and provide youth and young-adult-centered outreach.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Apartheid continues to divide much of the country, with many wealthier white South Africans living in compounds with high security and blacks or coloreds living in rural areas or in poorly built areas on the outskirts of larger cities. Differences in language and location cause wards and branches to be established in a manner that have limit mixing of ethnicities in Church congregations, although many large-city congregations are diverse. LDS missionaries report the greatest ethnic integration challenges among white members or investigators attending predominantly black congregations and black members attending predominantly white congregations.

Language Issues

The linguistic diversity of South Africa presents challenges for teaching the gospel in local languages. Most missionaries do not learn native languages fluently and heavily rely on English for conducting missionary work. English has served as a language which has united different ethnic groups in the same congregation, facilitating growth with fewer mission resources. The Book of Mormon has not been translated into half of the official languages of South Africa. As membership increases among speakers of these languages additional translations of LDS scriptures will likely come forth.

Missionary Service

The LDS Church in South Africa is only partially sufficient in staffing its full-time missionary force due to activity issues among youth and young adults and significant increases in the number of foreign full-time missionaries assigned to the country in recent years. In late 2009, the South Africa Johannesburg Mission had grown to one of the largest in Africa with 185 missionaries. The Johannesburg Missionary Training Center is small and had capacity for only 32 missionaries in 2003,^[23] but offers valuable instruction and structure for LDS missionary operations in the region. Increased emphasis on missionary preparation through assigning young adults as ward or branch missionaries, attendance in seminary and institute, and cooperative proselytism efforts that involve local members and full-time missionaries may increase the number of local members serving missions.

Leadership

White members have the greatest leadership experience in South Africa due primarily to a longer church legacy and seasoned multigenerational LDS families among whites. Nearly all the stakes are headquartered in areas with higher white populations,

although this is likely to change in coming years due to increased church growth among blacks and low receptivity among whites and continued white emigration. Several South Africans have served as Area Authorities. David J. Barnett was called as an Area Authority in 2001,[24] Allen P. Young was called as an Area Authority in 2004,[25] and Colin H. Bricknell was called as an Area Authority in 2008.[26] The Church faces problems with active white leadership emigrating from South Africa. Reasons for emigration likely include members wanting to live in other countries with a larger Church presence, economic reasons, and fears over violence.

Blacks in many of the townships have been receptive, but some townships appear to struggle developing self-sustaining leadership and so few additional congregations have been organized. The Kwa Mashu Branch in the Durban area has functioned for nearly three decades but has not yet become a ward. In 1998 the branch had a reported 175 members attending Sunday meetings out of 300 total members.[27] Similar challenges have occurred in Cape Town as missionaries have focused on organizing a second stake in the city for years but limited local leadership has prevented any significant progress.

Temple

The Johannesburg South Africa Temple has served the greater portion of Africa since its dedication in 1985. The temple is well utilized on Fridays and Saturdays, with nine to twelve endowment sessions scheduled every hour or half hour in the morning and evening in 2011. Greater emphasis appears placed on stake and ward or branch temple excursions rather than individual temple trips, likely due to demand for special sessions for members living throughout the vast temple district covering most of the Africa Southeast Area. The temple appears to be under-utilized on weekdays, particularly in the morning. Durban appears to be the only city likely to have an LDS temple constructed within the next decade as the temple in Johannesburg is centrally located and where a large number of the country's LDS membership resides.

Comparative Growth

South Africa has the second highest LDS membership in Africa after Nigeria. No other country in Africa has had as long of a church presence. Growth since 1980 is among the most rapid experienced by the Church in Africa. Only Nigeria and Ghana have experienced more rapid growth since 1980 and have over 40,000 members. The percentage of Latter-day Saints in the general population and the percentage of the population reached by the Church is higher than in most African nations. Member activity and convert retention rates are comparable to other nations in southern Africa but lower than Central and West Africa.

Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, and other mission-oriented Christian denominations have experienced comparable growth to the LDS Church in South Africa although these Christian groups operate significantly more congregations. These denominations have utilized local member missionary efforts, resulting in a broader outreach and faster growth that has been sustained. Some of the most rapid growth for Christians was in the 1990s following apartheid. Severe social, economic, and health problems including HIV/AIDS and violent crime have also limited their growth compared to other African nations. Cultural diversity has challenged Christian resources to reaching groups that the LDS Church has also struggled or not attempted to reach, including Cape Malays and Khoisan peoples. Non-African churches have experienced slower growth than other African nations due to the large number of independent, syncretic African churches which claim a sizable portion of the population.

Future Prospects

Continued high receptivity and congregational growth will likely continue in the coming years, resulting in the organization of additional stakes, the maturation of some districts into stakes, and the expansion of LDS national outreach. Socio-economic and ethnic divides in many areas pose obstacles for growth and blacks will likely greatly outnumber whites among LDS leadership in the coming years. HIV/AIDS may threaten the stability of long-term church growth for the LDS Church. The Church has established a firm foundation of leadership and active membership in the larger cities which are able to better accommodate greater growth. Goals have been set for a third stake to be created in the Durban area in the coming years. Districts in Bloemfontein and Newcastle appear the closest districts to becoming stakes. Additional stakes will likely be organized in the Johannesburg area. Once branches in the Cape Town South Africa Stake mature into wards, a second stake could be organized. The two wards and a branch in the East London South Africa Stake located 100 miles to the northwest in the Queenstown area will likely be made into a separate district or stake if greater growth in membership and congregations occurs. Additional districts will likely be created in North West and Mpumalanga Provinces based in Klerksdorp, Witbank, and Nelspruit. Two more districts in the Eastern and Western Cape in Grahamstown and George may be created from mission branches. The greatest progress in beginning missionary work in unreached areas will likely be in larger cities or cities between 30,000 and 100,000 people, especially around Johannesburg. The South Africa Durban Mission has focused on strengthening local membership and increase the number of congregations in the mission so a temple can be announced for Durban. President Hinckley visited Durban in 1998 and predicted that the day would come when there would be five stakes in Durban. [28]

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