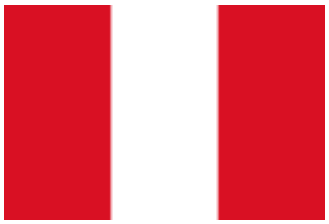


Reaching the Nations International Church Growth Almanac

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.



Peru

Population: 30.15 millions (#43 out of countries)

By David Stewart and Matt Martinich

Geography

Area: 1,285,216 square km. Located in western South American along the Pacific coast, Peru borders Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia, and Chile. A diversity of landscapes and climate result from the drastic elevation changes of the Andes Mountains running north to south and Peru's close proximity to the equator. Generally, far eastern areas consist of tropical rainforest, mountainous areas are subject to alpine or temperate conditions, and coastal areas experience dry desert. Land features consist of the Amazon Basin in the east, rugged and steep mountains in central areas, and coastal plains in the west. Lake Titicaca is the world's highest navigable lake at 3,805 meters and straddles the Bolivian border. Many large lakes occupy highland areas. Several major tributaries of the Amazon River originate in the Peruvian Andes and merge prior to entering Brazil. Earthquakes, flooding, landslides, tsunamis, and volcanoes are natural hazards. Environmental issues include deforestation, overgrazing, air and water pollution, and desertification. Peru is administratively divided into 25 regions and one province.

Population: 29,907,003 (July 2010)

Annual Growth Rate: 1.193% (2010)

Fertility Rate: 2.32 children born per woman (2010)

Life Expectancy: 69.14 male, 73 female (2010)

Peoples

Amerindian: 45%

Mestizo: 37%

White: 15%

Other: 3%

Amerindians constitute nearly half the population. Mestizos - mixed Amerindian and white - account for nearly a third of the population. Whites are a visible minority. Other ethnicities include blacks, Japanese, and Chinese.

Languages: Spanish (84%), Quechua (13%), other (3%).[1] Spanish and Quechua are official languages. The Quechua language has been in use in the Andes for millennia and has over 30 dialects in Peru. 92 indigenous languages are spoken in Peru, most with few speakers. Languages with over one million speakers include Spanish (25.1 million) and Quechua (4.55 million).

Literacy: 92.9% (2007)

History

Several ancient civilizations populated Peru for thousands of years prior to the arrival of Spanish explorers and conquistadors. The Inca civilization stretched from portions of southern Colombia to the southern end of South America with its capital in Cuzco, Peru. Spanish conquistadors conquered the empire in 1533 and subjected the population to foreign rule and introduced Catholicism. Peru gained independence from Spain in the 1820s. The military took control of the government in the late 1960s. Democratic rule was restored in 1980. The power of the central government remained weak in the 1980s. In 1990, President Fujimori began his administration and brought about many economic reforms and helped subdue guerrilla movements. In 2000, Fujimori was removed from office and was followed by the first elected president of Amerindian ancestry, President Toledo. In the late 2000s, Peru experienced marked economic growth which slowed in 2009 as a result of the global financial crisis.

Culture

Peru's ancient history is noted for its impressive and sophisticated Pre-Colombian civilizations who constructed cities or landmarks which remain today, such as the precision stonework found in Incan cities such as Cuzco and Machu Picchu, the large pyramids and tombs built by the Moche in Lambayeque, and the expanse of geometric figures known as the Nazca Lines in the Nazca Desert. For the past several centuries, the Catholic Church and Spain has strongly influenced daily life and social attitudes but native customs and traditions have endured. Today, Peruvian culture reflects a mixture of indigenous and Spanish influences. Several large festivals are held every year. Amerindians in rural areas generally wear traditional clothing and have poor to moderate living conditions. Many foods are native to Peru and the Andes, such as hundreds of varieties of potatoes. Cuisine varies by region but generally consists of potatoes, tomatoes, corn, avocado, native fruits, llama, fish, and guinea pig. Alcohol and cigarette consumption rates rank among the lowest in the region, yet drug use and drug cultivation are issues.

Economy

GDP per capita: $8,600 (2009) [18.5% of US]

Human Development Index: 0.806

Corruption Index: 3.7

Rich in natural resources, Peru benefits from lucrative mineral deposits, expansive forests in the interior, and abundant fisheries. The economy is vulnerable to fluctuations in the price and demand of precious metals and minerals due to overdependence on these resources. Steady economic growth occurred in the first half of the 2000s which accelerated to an annual GDP growth rate of 9% in 2007 and 2008. In recent years, Peru has sought to become better integrated into the world economy and has become a proponent of free trade agreements with large economies such as the United States. Services account for 76% of the labor force and 60% of the GDP whereas industry constitutes 24% of the labor force and produces 32% of the GDP. Primary industries include mining and metal refining, oil, natural gas, fishing, clothing, and food processing. Agriculture employs less than one percent of the population and produces eight percent of the GDP. Common crops include vegetables, fruit, coffee, cocoa, cotton, sugar, rice, and potatoes. Primary trade partners include the United States, China, and Chile.

Corruption is perceived as present in most areas of society and government. Some past presidential administrations such as the Fujimori administration have been forced out of office on corruption charges. Bribery frequently occurs with natural resource extraction. Foreign businesses report excessive business licenses and fees to operate in Peru. However, the government has instituted reforms which have attracted greater foreign investment. Anti-corruption legislation and initiatives have been inconsistent and have primarily targeted high profile corruption in government.[2] Illicit drugs are a major concern. Until 1996, Peru was the largest producer of coca leaf. Peru is the second largest producer of coca leaf and cocaine and is well integrated into the international drug trafficking network.

Faiths

Christian: 93.8%

Other: 3.3%

Unspecified/none: 2.9%

Christians

Denominations Members Congregations

Catholic 24,314,393

Evangelicals 4,500,000

Latter-Day Saints 480,816 776

Seventh Day Adventists 460,541 1864

Jehovah's Witnesses 106,939 1,209

Religion

Catholics constitute 81% of the population. Protestants and Evangelical Christians have grown dramatically over the past several decades from as little as two percent to as high as 15% currently. Protestants were originally concentrated in small cities outside of Lima or rural areas and have now been firmly established in many urban locations. Other Christian groups, such as Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Latter-day Saints have experienced rapid growth over the past few decades. Many in rural areas in the Andean Highlands continue to practice indigenous religions. Syncretism between Amerindian religious practices and Catholicism frequently occurs in these locations. There are very few non-Christians, most of which do not adhere to any religion. There are small Jewish and Muslim communities in some of the largest cities.[3]

Religious Freedom

Persecution Index:

The constitution protects religious freedom which is upheld by the government. All religious groups may proselyte, establish places of worship, and train clergy. The constitution declares a separation of church and state but recognizes the Catholic Church's important rule in history, culture and morality. The Catholic Church receives special privileges regarding taxes, immigration, and customs. Catholic authorities sometimes become involved in public matters. Religious education in public schools is required and limited to Catholicism. Private schools may teach other religious traditions. Non-Catholics at times have reported discrimination or bureaucratic frustrations regarding religious education in public schools. Overall there have been few reports of societal abuse of religious freedom.[4]

Largest Cities

Urban: 71%

Lima, Arequipa, Callao, Trujillo, Chiclayo, Iquitos, Huancayo, Piura, Chimbote, Cusco, Pucallpa, Tacna, Ica, Juliaca, Sullana, Chincha Alta, Huánuco, Ayacucho, Cajamarca, Puno, Tumbes.

All of the 21 cities with over 100,000 inhabitants have an LDS stake. 49% of the national population resides in the 21 largest cities. All cities with over 35,000 inhabitants have an LDS mission outreach center. The Lima metropolitan area accounts for 28% of the national population.

LDS History

American Latter-day Saint families had periodically lived in Peru prior to the establishment of the first branch in 1956. In 1956, Frederick S. Williams wrote to the First Presidency requesting Peru to be incorporated into one of the South American Missions. Peru was first assigned to the Uruguay Mission and a branch was organized.[5] Seminary and institute began in

1971. The Lima Peru Temple was announced in 1981 and completed in 1986.

In early 1988, the Church created seven new stakes in Lima in one weekend from 11 previously functioning stakes. The massive reorganization required over 300 interviews, six conferences, and months of preparation.[6] The Church briefly removed American missionaries in 1989 due to terrorism fears.[7] In 1990, gunmen killed two Peruvian LDS missionaries serving in Huancayo.[8] In 1996, President Hinckley visited with members in Lima.[9] Starting in 1998, Lima served as the headquarters of the South America West Area which administered Peru and Bolivia.[10] Earthquakes have seriously affected members. Over a hundred Latter-day Saint homes were damaged and one member perished in an earthquake in southern Peru in 2001.[11] In 2006, Elder Donald P. Terry met with Peruvian President Alejandro Toledo who spoke highly of the Church.[12] Later that year, President Hinckley and other Church leaders addressed the 33 stakes in Lima through a satellite broadcast.[13] In 2007, the first lady of Peru visited Welfare Square in Salt Lake City.[14] A second temple was announced in 2008 for Trujillo. In 2009, Peru became part of the South American Northwest Area.

Missions

Created from the Uruguay and Andes Missions in 1959, the Andes Mission administered outreach in Peru, Bolivia, and Chile. The mission was divided in 1961 to create the Chilean Mission and again in 1966 to create the Andes South Mission, based out of La Paz, Bolivia. The Andes Mission added Ecuador in the mid-1960s. In 1970, Ecuador was split off into an independent mission, and the Andes Mission, which administered only Peru, was renamed the Peru Mission. By 1974, the Church renamed the mission to the Peru Lima Mission, which was split into the Peru Lima South and Peru Lima North Missions in 1977. Additional Peruvian missions were organized in Arequipa (1978), Trujillo (1985), Lima East (1988), Chiclayo (1993), Lima Central (1994), Cuzco (2010), and Lima West (2010). In 2010, Peru had nine missions, tying with Chile as the country with the sixth most LDS missions worldwide.

Membership Growth

LDS Membership: 480,816 (2009)

In 1959, there were 300 LDS members. There were 6,391 members in 1965 and 10,771 in 1970. Membership reached 17,000 in 1977; at that timeabout 850 converts were added yearly.[15] By 1980, membership had increased to23,000.[16]

Membership surpassed 50,000 in 1983 and 100,000 in 1985. In 1989, convert baptisms in western South America increased 60% over levels from the previous year.[17] There were 200,000 members by 1992 and 300,000 members by 1996. However, this period was characterized by low convert retention due to the rushed baptism of many converts with minimal preparation and abbreviated teaching.

In 2000, membership totaled 342,902. Moderate growth continued in the 2000s as annual membership growth rates ranged from three to five percent. Membership reached 384,663 in 2003, 432,547 in 2006, and 462,353 in 2008. In 2010, one in 62 was nominally LDS.

Stake and District Growth

The first stake was created in Lima in 1970. 12 stakes functioned by year-end 1980, seven of which were in Lima. The number of stakes increased to 19 in 1985 and 33 in 1990. By mid-1989, Peru tied the United Kingdom for the nation with the sixth most stakes worldwide.[18] The number of stakes continued to grow to 54 in 1995 and 79 in 2000. During the latter half of the 1990s, five stakes were discontinued in Iquitos (2), Lima, Tacna, and Chincha. By year-end 2000, there were 32 districts.

During the 2000s, notable increases in the number of stakes did not occur until after 2005, after which13 new stakes were created: five in Lima in 2008 and seven in smaller cities from former districts. In 2008, districts were created in Andahuaylas and Huancavelica. In 2010, there were 94 stakes and 24 districts.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 597 Branches: 179 Groups: 10+

The Church operated five branches by 1959. By 1990, there were 332 congregations, including 181 wards. The number of congregations increased dramatically in the 1990s to 471 in 1992, 761 in 1996, and 974 (including 633 wards). Between 1998 and 2000, the number of congregations declined by 218 as nearly 100 wards over 100 branches were discontinued.

In 2000, there were 756 congregations, 518 of which were wards. By year-end 2003, the number of congregations declined by 32 from 2000 levels. During this period the number of wards decreased by 10 whereas the number of branches fell by 22.

There were 724 congregations in 2003. Peru was not alone during this period of negative congregational growth; during the early 2000s, congregation consolidations occurred across most of Latin American, especially in Chile and Brazil. The purpose in consolidating many of these congregations was to increase the number of active members per congregation and discontinue units which lacked sufficient active membership or priesthood leadership to perform essential functions.

This trend of congregation consolidations reversed in 2004 as the number of congregations increased to 730 in 2004, 735 in 2006, and 751 in 2008. Between year-end 2003 and mid-2010, the number of wards increased by 89 and the number of branches declined by 37. Many of the new wards organized during this period were former branches in districts which matured into stakes. By mid-2010, there were 776 congregations.

Activity and Retention

The average number of members per congregation increased dramatically in the 2000s from 454 to 628, although actual congregational membership numbers are lower because of the large number of members on the "address unknown file." Much of the increase occurred in the first half of the 2000s and was due to large increases in membership combined with congregation consolidations. Between 2000 and 2006, the average congregation added an additional 17 to 28 nominal members annually. Since 2007, congregational growth rates have increased but remain below the rate of membership growth as most years the average congregation gains 10 additional members.

Active membership varies widely by congregation. One of the branches in the Talara Peru District had 180 attending church meetings in early 2010. In July 2010, a ward in Huanuco had 155 of the 384 members attending church weekly. The Morropon Group had 20 of its 60 members attending church in 2010. The average ward or branch appears to have between 100 and 120 attending church weekly. During the 2008-2009 school year, 33,758 were enrolled in seminary or institute. In August 2010, downtown Trujillo had 600 institute students.

Large multi-stake meetings have been well attended in the past. 10,500 members in Lima met at six separate conferences in early 1988 for the creation of seven new stakes.[19] Approximately 28,000 members attended two firesides held by President Hinckley in 1996,[20] although there were over 300,000 Latter-day Saints in the country at the time.

District conferences have been well attended recently. In May 2010, the Nazca Peru District set an all time record of district conference attendance at 250; 70 more than the previous record. Between 800 and 1,000 attended the Huaraz Peru District conference in August 2010 and a fireside the previous month had 400 in attendance. 700 members attended the Casa Grande Peru District conference in July 2010 and 200 young single adults from the district met for a special conference in July 2010. 400 attended the Cañete Peru District conference in 2010.

In neighboring Chile, 37% of nominal LDS members are on the "address unknown file"[21] meaning that they do not participate and cannot be located by the Church. The percentage of Peruvian Latter-day Saints on the "lost address file" is unknown, but it likely to be similar to Chile due to cultural commonalities and similar historical mission practices, which emphasized large numbers of quick baptisms but until recently have placed little emphasis on convert retention or member activity.

Active membership for Peru is estimated at around 100,000, or 20% of total membership.

Language Materials

Languages with LDS Scripture: Spanish, Quechua, Aymara.

All LDS scriptures and most Church materials are available in Spanish, including an LDS edition of the Bible complete with full LDS footnotes, bible dictionary, and topical guide. The Book of Mormon is translated in full in Aymara. Selections of the Book of Mormon are translated into Quechua. Other materials translated in Aymara include the sacrament prayers, Gospel Principles, The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony, Duties and Blessings of the Priesthood Part A, and a guidebook for family. Bolivian Quechua translation materials are limited to The Prophet Joseph Smith's Testimony and hymns and children's songs. Gospel Principles in Peruvian Quechua is available.

Meetinghouses

In 1977, there were 19 chapels either functioning or under construction.[22] In 2010, there were around 400 meetinghouses in Peru, many of which were constructed by the Church. Small branches, dependent branches, and groups often meet in rented spaces or remodeled buildings.

Health and Safety

The threat of terrorism targeting missionaries has decreased from several decades ago. There is a persistent danger from drug

trafficking and illegal activity although no major incidents involving missionaries has occurred in recent years.

Humanitarian and Development Work

At least 60 humanitarian projects have been carried out since 1985 by the Church including the donations of wheelchairs, medical supplies, beds and bedding, and providing neonatal resuscitation training, vision care, and clean water projects.[23] Since as early as 1989, the Church has conducted agricultural development work in the highlands of Peru through the Benson Institute.[24] In 2001, the Church donated food, blankets, and hygiene kits to earthquake victims in southern Peru.[25] Peru was one of the first nations in which the Perpetual Education Fund was implemented in 2001.[26] In 2002, the Church donated emergency aid to flood victims in Lima[27] and provided food, plastic sheeting, blankets, heavy clothing, and hygiene kits to victims of heavy snow and cold temperatures in southeastern Peru.[28] In 2004, the Church sent 10,000 blankets and 240,000 pounds of coats to assist those suffering from a severe winter in the Andes.[29] Following a devastating earthquake in the Pisco area in 2007, the Church offered long term assistance rebuilding and caring for victims following the shipment of 80 tons of relief supplies.[30]

Opportunities, Challenges and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church enjoys full religious freedom in Peru and maintains positive relations with the government. Missionaries proselyte openly and LDS members report few if any instances of persecution.

Cultural Issues

The Catholic Church remains a dominant social influence and can at times present challenges for LDS missionaries due to lower receptivity among strong Catholic families, the cultural role of Catholicism in holiday festivals which involve the entire community, persistent attitudes of causal church attendance, and low interest in participating in religious practices as most tend to be "consumers" rather than "producers" of religious worship.

Catholicism and other Christian groups have firmly established a belief in Christ among most of the population, providing some common foundation of some core beliefs. Furthermore, traditional Latter-day Saint missionary teaching has been primarily tailored to Catholic and Protestant populations, allowing for greater adaptability for missionary lessons. Evangelicals have emerged as a strong minority group, but overall have not appeared to create a more challenging environment for Latter-day Saints to proselyte or actively attend church. Latter-day Saints have a cultural advantage due to comparatively lower alcohol and tobacco use than in many other Latin American nations.

National Outreach

Peru experiences some of the most penetrating Latter-day Saint national outreach as nine LDS missions serve a population of 30 million, or nearly one mission per three million people. Every administrative province and region has multiple congregations. 56% of the national population resides in cities with over 15,000 inhabitants with an LDS outreach center. Of the 208 cities with over 15,000 inhabitants, 24 cities between 15,000 and 35,000 inhabitants (1.6% of the national population) have no LDS mission outreach centers. Areas with the highest percentage of members as indicated by the population divided by the number of stakes or districts are in southern Peru (Moquegua, Tacna, Arequipa, and Ica Regions) and the largest cities (Chiclayo, Trujillo, and Lima). Areas with the lowest percentage of members tend to be remote areas in the northern interior (Cajamarca, San Martin, and Amazonas Regions) or to the highlands to the southeast of Lima (Ayacucho and Huancavelica Regions). There are large, rural regions which are moderately to sparsely populated which have no nearby mission outreach centers. These areas account for most of the 46% the population without a mission outreach center in their community.

In the late 2000s and in 2010, the Church had made significant progress toward opening previously unreached areas by assigning missionaries and creating dependent branches or groups. Although the total number of these units is difficult to ascertain as they are not reported by the Church, missionaries report that many of these congregations have been established with some having as many as 50 or 60 attending regularly. Groups have been established in increasing numbers in northern Peru (Morropon, Tambo Grande, Huamachuco, and Huarauaos) and southeastern Peru in the highland areas (Maras, Chinchero, and Desaguadero). Regional Church leadership has increased the standards for new branches to be established, requiring a sufficient number of active local members and Priesthood holders to staff leadership positions in order to reduce long-term reliance on full-time missionaries.

Expanded outreach in more established areas has occurred in recent years as well as dozens of new congregations have been organized in Lima and many new missionary proselytism areas in larger cities have opened throughout the country.

The Church maintains a website for the South America Northwest Area at http://www.iglesiajesucristosud.org/. The website contains information about news, Latter-day Saint beliefs, and contact information. Many Spanish church materials are available on the Internet through Church websites. Members and missionaries can utilize Church sites in proselytism in larger cities where Internet use is more common and expand potential outreach.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Peru experiences low rates of member activity as a consequence of poor convert retention accumulating over several decades. The large increase in nominal members per congregation and the consolidation of over 200 wards and branches in Peru are indicative of low member activity and years of poor convert, as increases in nominal membership far outstripped the increase in the number attending church. Insufficient pre-baptismal and post-baptismal teaching resulting from quick-baptism tactics by full-time missionaries and a lack in skilled local church leadership has been major contributors to current activity issues.

With the introduction of the reformed missionary program through Preach My Gospel and the requirement that prospective converts must attend at least two sacrament meetings prior to baptism, convert retention rates have improved in many areas as evidenced by increased congregational growth rates. However, membership growth rates continue to outpace congregational growth rates, indicating continued struggles with activity and retention. The implementation of increased standards for baptism have not been fully consistent, and few converts have attended church more than the required minimums due to continued pressure from missionaries and mission leaders for fast baptisms to meet arbitrary baptismal goals. The majority of congregational growth in the past several years has occurred in rural areas or in Lima, indicating continued challenges in many areas.

Due to the large numbers of former Catholic Latter-day Saints, cultural pressures to return to Catholic services with family and friends can result in some leaving the church. Former Catholics with low levels of religiosity may also carry these religious habits and attitudes over into the LDS Church. Evangelical groups are also very active and can attract less active Latter-day Saints into their churches.

Distance to meetinghouse locations is a factor which has reduced member activity in some areas. Missionaries frequently report of isolated members who reside long distances from their assigned ward or branch. Mission and local leadership have begun to focus more on this issue by establishing dependent branches and groups in some areas.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Missionaries report few ethnic integration issues. Rural areas and smaller cities are predominantly Amerindian, whereas larger cities tend to be populated mainly by Mestizos and whites. Large socio-economic differences in a congregation can lead to some challenges in unifying members, but this appears to be only a minor issue. Many of the small Amerindian groups in areas of remote rainforest in the interior and have received little or no LDS mission outreach.

Language Issues

Translated church materials are available in the first language of 98% of the Peruvian population. The Church has had Quechua-speaking Amerindian members since the 1970s or earlier.[31] Many Quechua and Aymara speakers also speak and read Spanish as a second language and at church, thereby reducing the need for additional Quechua and Aymara materials. The hundreds of thousands of non-Quechua and non-Aymara Amerindians remain without church materials. Even if large numbers of converts join the LDS Church from these groups, the translation of a full church curriculum into these languages appear unlikely as there are few fluently literate monolingual speakers of these languages.

Missionary Service

Peru appears one of the few nations which is almost self-sufficient in providing local members to staff its full-time missions. Many missions in Peru have between 150 and 200 full-time missionaries. Missionaries generally have between five and 10 investigators attending church meetings weekly. In 1988, Elder M. Russell Ballard called for more Peruvians to serve full-time missions due to limited numbers of American missionaries serving at the time. Elder Ballard called on members to establish a mission fund for each ward to provide financially for prospective missionaries.[32] That same year, 80% of the missionaries in the Peru Lima South Mission were Peruvians.[33] Beginning in the mid-1980s, many stakes held clinics to teach, train, and prepare youth to serve a mission to help increase the native missionary force.[34] 1998, the Church dedicated a new missionary training center in Lima with capacity to house 150 missionaries. In 1999, full-time missionaries from Peru and Bolivia increased 70% from the previous year and 2,000 prospective missionaries were enrolled in missionary preparation courses.[35]

In July 2010, the Peru MTC had approximately 110 missionaries, about 80 of which were Latin Americans. Most missionaries serving in Peru at the time consisted of Latin Americans with a sizeable North American minority.

Leadership

Most areas of Peru have adequate numbers of priesthood holders, especially larger cities. With 39 stakes which continue to multiply in number and an expanding active Priesthood body, Lima offers abundant opportunities for church growth. Much of this growth has come from developing self-sustaining leadership in Lima, which was present as early as 1977. At this time only one non-native, the mission president, held a church leadership position which was the mission president. At this time the Church's influence was primarily limited to Lima and a few other large cities.[36] Of the 16 stakes which were created or reorganized in 1988 in Lima, nearly all had at least one Church employee in the stake presidency.[37] In 1992, the first native member served as the temple president for the Lima Peru Temple.[38] In 2010, only a few small branches, dependent branches, and groups had some missionaries serving as branch presidents or group leaders. Some stakes took many years to reach the needed number of active, worthy priesthood holders to advance from district status. In 2010, several districts could not become stakes due to an inadequate number of Priesthood holders but reported that significant progress had occurred recently. Church employees continue to be present in many stake presidencies and hold many leadership callings.

Peruvian regional representatives have included Rene Loli from Lima (1988),[39] Teofilo Puertas from Trujillo (1988),[40] Rafael de la Cruz P. from Lima (1989),[41] Oscar Hernan Ugas Aguayo (1991),[42] Alexander Alfonso Nunez from Ica (1992),[43] Carlos A Cuba Quintana (1993),[44] C. Willy F. Zuzunaga from Lima (1993),[45] Miguel Fernando Rojas A. from Lima (1993), [46] and Alejandro Marcel Robles Ventosilla from Lima (1994).[47]

Mission presidents who have served from Peru include Rafael de la Cruz in the Peru Trujillo Mission (1992),[48] Teofilo Puertas in the Peru Arequipa Mission (1992),[49] Rene Loli (1993),[50] Carlos A Cuba (1994),[51] Willy F. Zuzunaga in the Peru Arequipa Mission (1995),[52] Victor Hugo Gamero in the Peru Lima East Mission (1996),[53] Alexander Nunez in the Colombia Cali Mission (1996),[54] Adan G. Bravo M. in the Peru Chiclayo Mission (1996),[55] Miguel F. Rojas in the Chile Antofagasta Mission (1997),[56] Belisario E. Benites in the Peru Lima North Mission (1998),[57] Julio Arturo Leiva in the Peru Arequipa Mission (1998),[58] Horacio Alberto Hooker Ureta in the Peru Piura Mission (2003),[59] Lorenzo Gino Galli in the Peru Arequipa Mission (2004),[60] Carlos Amancio Solis in the Peru Piura Mission (2006),[61] Miguel Angel Tenorio in the Bolivia Cochabamba Mission (2008),[62] Juan Augusto Leyva in the Peru Lima East Mission (2008),[63] and Arturo Fernandez Ramirez in the Peru Arequipa Mission (2010).[64]

In 1997, there were four Area Seventies from Peru.[65] Elder Jose C. Aleson from Lima was called as an Area Seventy in 2000. [66] In 2002, Hector A. Davalos from Callao was called as an Area Seventy.[67] In 2004, Alexander A. Nunez was called as an Area Seventy.[68] In 2005, Rene Loli, Alejandro M. Robles, and Richard C. Zambrano were called as Area Seventies.[69] In 2006, Cesar Hooker was called as an Area Seventy.[70] In 2007, Enrique J. Montoya from Trujillo was called as an Area Seventy.[71] In 2008, Eduardo Gaverret from Lima was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy[72] and in 2010, Carlos Solis was called as an Area Seventy.[73]

Temple

Prior to the completion of the Lima Peru Temple in 1986, members traveled to the Sao Paulo Brazil Temple. Temple work accelerated following the dedication of the temple in Lima and in 1990, the number of ordinances performed in the Lima Peru Temple doubled from the previous year.[74] With the exception of three stakes in the Puno Region which attend the Cochabamba Bolivia Temple, all other stakes and districts in Peru belong to the Lima Peru Temple district. The temple is well attended with endowment sessions offered every hour on weekdays and every 30 minutes on weekends. Members travel from throughout the country by bus - some taking more than 15 hours - to the temple in trips organized by stakes and districts. Distance from the temple in many areas has reduced temple participation and increases the number of members who have never been to the temple. The first organized group temple trip from Iquitos occurred in 2001 with 150 individuals in three groups. Many members in Iquitos, which had its first stake created in 1980 and had three stakes in 2001, had never attended the temple before due to the remote location of the city and the unfeasibility of travel to Lima.[75] In the late 2000s, missionaries reported increased temple attendance and interest in remote districts and stakes. In 2010, the Lima Peru Temple had the most stakes assigned to the temple district than any other operating temple.

The delay in the announcement of a second temple in Peru until the Trujillo temple was announced in 2008 may indicate that past temple attendance outside Lima has been insufficient to merit the construction of additional temples. The Lima Peru Temple is also the second smallest LDS temple worldwide by square footage at 9,600 square feet. The Church may expand and remodel the temple in the coming years to meet the needs of Peruvian members. Peru is highly like to have additional temples in many other cities due to large LDS populations in these locations. Cities which appear likely to have a temple in the foreseeable future include Arequipa and Chiclayo.

Comparative Growth

The LDS Church in Peru has the sixth largest number of members, fourth most stakes, fifth most districts, and the sixth most missions in the world, althoughPeru ranks fortieth in the world by total population. LDS member activity rates are comparable to much of the region and are lower than world LDS averages, as Peru ranks eighth out of countries with the largest number of members per congregation. However, Peru has the second highest percentage of members who attend seminary or institute in Latin America after Venezuela (7.2%). In 1988, Peru experienced the second largest number of stakes created in one weekend in LDS Church history in Lima (the greatest number of stakes organized in one weekend was when 15 new stakes were created in Mexico City in 1975).[76] Peru is the nation with the second largest number of Latter-day Saints with only one operating temple. In 2010, the Lima metropolitan area was the city outside the United States with the second most stakes after Mexico

City (39). In 2008 and 2009, Peru was among the top five countries for the most congregations created in one year. The percentage of the population residing in cities with an LDS congregation are comparable to Ecuador, Bolivia, and most Central American nations.

Other missionary-oriented Christian groups have comparably sized presences in Peru compared to the LDS Church, but many have higher member activity rates. Seventh Day Adventists and Latter-day Saints report about half a million members, yet Seventh Day Adventists operate twice as many congregations. Jehovah's Witnesses claim one-fifth of the reported LDS membership, but have over 400 more congregations. Evangelicals appear to be the most successful missionary-oriented Christian group as they have grown from less than 2% of the population fifty years ago to 15% at present. These groups have made great efforts to expand national outreach in rural areas and to develop self-sustaining local leadership throughout the country.

Future Prospects

With one of the largest concentrations of LDS members outside of North America, Peru offers abundant opportunities for growth and Church development both within the country and internationally.

The creation of two additional missions in 2010 allows for greater expansion in national outreach in previously unreached areas. The large size of the Peruvian full-time missionary force will facilitate an ongoing supply of future local priesthood leadership and provides a strong base for future growth . Many additional stakes appear likely to be organized in the next few years. Several stakes in the Lima area continue to create additional wards and have enough congregations to divide, and everal districts appear close to becoming stakes, such as districts in Casa Grande, Huaraz, Tarma, and Barranca. Many of the recently established groups may become branches, which over time may be organized into additional districts.

The greatest challenges of the LDS Church in Peru relate to member activity and convert retention. Emphasis on basic habits of weekly church attendance, daily scripture reading, and regular member-missionary involvement will be needed to improve convert retention rates in the medium term and member activity in the long term. Due to its established LDS membership and central location, Lima could support a church university one day and provide education and proselytism opportunities for western South America if desired by church leaders.

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