



# THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

April 2018

## WELCOME!

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide monthly updates on LDS Church growth and missionary news stories, and present a synopsis of recently completed educational resources and research. We are a privately funded initiative that provides resources online without cost. The Cumorah Foundation is not authorized or approved by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or any other group.

## CHURCH GROWTH DEVELOPMENTS

### New Stakes

(provided with chronological ranking and date of creation)

*None reported in April 2018*

### New Districts

*None reported in April 2018*

### Discontinued Stakes and Districts

*None reported in April 2018*

### Seven New Temples Announced

LDS Church President Russell M. Nelson announced on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 that temples will be built in the following locations:

- **Salta, Argentina**
- **Bengaluru, India**
- **Managua, Nicaragua**
- **Cagayan de Oro, Philippines**
- **Layton, Utah**
- **Richmond, Virginia**
- **A major city yet to be determined in Russia**

### Locations Recently Reached by the Church

(city population rank, most recent population estimate)  
precise population data from [www.citypopulation.de](http://www.citypopulation.de)

- Alexânia, Goiás, Brazil (45<sup>th</sup>, 18,719)
- Umuarama, Paraná, Brazil (18<sup>th</sup>, 89,879)
- Dabou, Côte d'Ivoire (21<sup>st</sup>, 61,942)
- Fresco, Côte d'Ivoire (N/A, 8,533)
- Grand-Lahou, Côte d'Ivoire (28,470)
- Oume, Côte d'Ivoire (33<sup>rd</sup>, 45,210)
- Zoukougbeu, Côte d'Ivoire (N/A, 11,861)
- North Port, Florida (52<sup>nd</sup>, 57,357)
- Juaso, Ghana (N/A, N/A)
- Kuna Negra, Panama (N/A, N/A)

### Locations Recently Closed by the Church

*Cities where the only ward or branch was closed; some of these cities may continue to have a dependent unit and/or missionaries assigned.*  
(city population rank, most recent population estimate)  
data from [www.citypopulation.de](http://www.citypopulation.de)

- Figueira da Foz, Portugal (37<sup>th</sup>, 27,500)
- Uitkijk, Suriname (N/A, N/A)
- Essex Junction, Vermont (3<sup>rd</sup>, 9,271)

This marks the second most temples ever announced on a single day by the Church. The previous all-time record for the most temples announced on a single day was set by President Spencer W. Kimball on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1981 when nine new temples were announced. With the new temple announcements this month, the total number of temples announced (19), under construction (11), or in operation (159) totals 189. Additionally, there are 10 temples currently undergoing renovation. With these new temple announcements, 67.8% of the world population now resides in a country where the Church has a temple announced, under construction, or in operation. Prior to the temple announcements this month, Nicaragua and Russia ranked first and fourth, respectively, among countries with the most members without a temple. Also, Virginia previously ranked as the state in the United States with the most members without a temple.

### Significant Progress in Central America

A [recent article on lds.org](#) reports that the number of young men serving full-time missions and the number of members sealed to their spouses in Central America has nearly doubled within the past 10 years. Significant improvements have occurred in regards to member

activity and area self-sufficiency during this period despite membership growth rates in most countries not noticeably changing during this period. A significant increase in the number of stakes in Central America from 97 at year-end 2007 to 130 at year-end 2017 indicates good improvements in the strength of the Church in the region. Moreover, hundreds of surveys completed by local members in the region during April note that most wards have between 80-200 active members indicating that the size and strength of many congregations in the region is comparable to many areas of the United States.

### LDS Developments in Senegal and Newsletter Correction

Church leaders reported in early April that the first young, proselytizing missionaries were assigned to Senegal from the Cote d'Ivoire Abidjan Mission. Our February 2018 newsletter incorrectly reported that the first missionaries were assigned in February 2018. Furthermore, the Dakar Branch was divided in early April to create a second branch in Dakar called the Parcelles Branch. The Church reported 66 members and one branch in Senegal as of year-end 2017. Mission leaders indicate that there are approximately 60 active members in the country. Full-time missionaries note that they have a sizable number of individuals who are preparing to join the Church. Proselytism efforts have thus far occurred only in French although there appears to be a need for Wolof-specific outreach.



### LDS Outreach Continues to Expand in Cote d'Ivoire



The Church in Cote d'Ivoire has recently organized member groups in several additional cities, including Dabou, Fresco, Grand-Lahou, Oume, and Zoukougbeu. There are a now approximately 50 cities, towns, and villages in Cote d'Ivoire with an LDS presence - nearly 10 times as many cities, towns, and

villages as a decade earlier. Although membership growth rates significantly slowed in 2017 compared to 2016 (10.9% vs. 22.7%), the Church continues to open additional congregations in previously unreached cities and towns. The creation of the new Cote d'Ivoire Yamoussoukro Mission this July may also help to further accelerate outreach expansion.

### Rapid Membership Growth in Rwanda

The Church in Rwanda reported significant membership growth during 2017. Church-reported membership increased by 52.8% from 390 to 596 – the highest annual percentage growth rate of any country in the world for 2017 among countries where the Church reported year-end 2016 membership totals and year-end 2017 membership totals. Recent struggles with changes in government legislation have resulted in the Church losing its three meetinghouses in Kigali and renting a single large hall for Sunday meetings. Despite this inconvenience and hardship, member activity rates continue to appear good, and mission leadership is optimistic that difficulties with meetinghouse space will be resolved within the foreseeable future.



### First LDS Branch in Bong County, Liberia Organized

The Church in Liberia organized its first branch in Bong County at the end of April in the city of Totota. There were 47 people in attendance for the creation of the new branch. The Liberia Monrovia Mission has engaged in aggressive national outreach expansion within the last year primarily as a result of all four districts in Monrovia becoming stakes during the last two years. There are now five cities with an official LDS ward or branch, and three cities with a member group.



### LDS Volunteers (Missionaries) Withdrawn From Turkey

The Church reported on April 29<sup>th</sup> that all of its full-time volunteers were temporarily withdrawn from Turkey due to concerns with “heightened political tensions,” including 20 young men, 4 young women, and 5 senior couples. [The official news release](#) indicates that, with the exception of four volunteers who will return home due to nearing the end of their service, these individuals and couples will be temporarily reassigned to missions in Europe, Asia, and North America. The Church has assigned volunteers to conduct humanitarian work and proselytism efforts in Turkey since February 2012 and has experienced noticeable success particularly among non-Turks such as Iranians. Notable accomplishments for the Church in Turkey include church membership increasing from 293 at year-end 2011 to 547 at year-end 2017, and two new branches being organized in Gaziantep and Istanbul (2<sup>nd</sup> branch). More information about the Church’s initial establishment in Turkey can be found [here](#).