



# THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on Church Growth and Missionary Work for  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

April 2019

## WELCOME!

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide monthly updates on the growth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 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)

- 12. Ibadan Nigeria North - March 24th, 2019
- 14. Lehi Utah Holbrook Farms - March 31st, 2019

### New Districts

- 8. Nsukwa Nigeria - March 31st, 2019
- 9. Kitale Kenya - April 9th, 2019
- 10. Axim Ghana - April 21st, 2019

### Discontinued Stakes and Districts

*None reported in April 2019*

### Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Somanya, Ghana (N/A, N/A)
- Kingsville, Liberia (N/A, N/A)
- Unyeada, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Taabaa, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Zaakpo, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Siler City, North Carolina (102<sup>nd</sup>, 7,887)
- Tinambac, Philippines (N/A, ~68,000)
- Pujehun, Sierra Leone (N/A, 6,095)

### 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)

- Butterworth, Malaysia (34<sup>th</sup>, 107,591)
- Sitiawan, Malaysia (N/A, ~100,000)
- Cuauhtémoc, Colima, Mexico (10<sup>th</sup>, 8,602)
- McKeesport, Pennsylvania (38<sup>th</sup>, 19,731)

- Uniontown, Pennsylvania (97<sup>th</sup>, 10,372)

### 2018 Statistical Report Released

The Church reported the 2018 Statistical Report with data current as of December 31st, 2018. See below for these data along with additional information on these numbers:

- Membership: 16,313,735 (increase of 195,566 from 2017; a 1.21% annual increase)
- Congregations: 30,536 (increase of 30 from 2017; a 0.10% annual increase)
- Stakes: 3,383 (increase of 42 from 2017; a 1.26% annual increase)
- Districts: 547 (decrease of 6 from 2017; a 1.08% annual decrease)
- Missions: 407 (decrease of 14 from 2017; a 3.33% annual decrease)
- Convert Baptisms: 234,332 (increase of 603 from 2017; a 0.26% annual increase)
- Increase of Children on Record: 102,102 (decrease of 4,669 from 2016; a 4.37% annual decrease)
- Full-time missionaries: 65,137 (decrease of 1,912 from 2017; a 2.94% annual decrease)
- Church service missionaries: 37,963 (increase of 1,791 from 2017; a 4.95% annual increase)

Compared to the statistical report for 2017, the Church in 2018 reported no significant change in regards to the number of converts baptized and increase in children of record. However, the most startling finding with the 2018 statistical report is a significant increase in the number of membership records that have been removed. The number of membership records added to the Church in 2018 through convert baptisms and increase in children of record (usually children born to parents who are Church

members) was 336,434. To put this into perspective, most years in the past two decades have had 340,000-400,000 new members added to the Church through convert baptisms or increase in children of record. However, the actual increase in church membership during the year 2018 was a mere 195,566. This is the lowest net increase in church membership since 1978 when the Church reported a net increase of 194,000 members. The summation of convert baptisms and increase in children of record minus the net increase of church-reported membership gives a number that represents the approximate number of membership records removed from Church records. This number is 140,868 for 2018, whereas it was only 104,748 for 2017. As a result, 2018 was the year with the largest number of membership records ever removed by the Church in a single year. The second highest year was in 2014 when the discrepancy in convert baptisms/increase in children of record and net increase in church membership equaled 122,903. The Church has removed 100,000 or more membership records as year since 2014. The annual membership growth rate continues to slow, to a mere 1.21% for 2018 - the slowest membership growth rate since 1937.

Concerns with slowing church growth continued to be apparent from the 2018 statistical report like in the 2017 statistical report. For example, the net increase in the number of congregations (i.e. wards and branches) also reached a 65-year-old low set in 1953 when there was a decrease of 35 congregations. However, this statistics was strongly affected by the closure of approximately 150 wards and branches in Mexico as part of an area-wide initiative to create larger congregations that better utilize meetinghouse spaces, particularly within Mexico City.

### Eight New Temples Announced

Church President Russell M. Nelson announced eight new temples at the close of the April 2019 General Conference. These temples will be built in the following locations:

- Pago Pago, American Samoa
- Okinawa City, Okinawa
- Neiafu, Tonga
- Tooele Valley, Utah
- Moses Lake, Washington
- San Pedro Sula, Honduras
- Antofagasta, Chile
- Budapest, Hungary

These temple announcements include the Church's first temples in American Samoa and Hungary. This group of announcements appears unique in that most temples will service areas with comparatively few members without a nearby temple such as islands (i.e. American Samoa; Okinawa; Neiafu, Tonga) or cities far from the nearest temple (i.e. Antofagasta, Chile and Budapest, Hungary).

With these announced temples, there are now a total of 209 temples that are planned or dedicated worldwide.

### Country-Specific Growth in 2018

See below for a list of countries that reported the highest membership growth rates in 2018 according to official Church-reported numbers:

1. Guinea - 103.3% - 61
2. Senegal - 63.6% - 108
3. Cuba - 47.5% - 357
4. Oman - 30.5% - 107
5. Rwanda - 25.7% - 749
6. Montenegro - 21.1% - 23
7. North Macedonia - 20.6% - 41
8. Angola - 19.3% - 2,933
9. Bosnia and Herzegovina - 15.9% - 80
10. Israel - 15.3% - 332
11. Gabon\* - 15.3% - 151
12. Togo - 14.6% - 4,736
13. Mozambique - 13.3% - 12,274
14. Solomon Islands - 12.8% - 1,240
15. Benin - 11.5% - 3,463
16. Turks and Caicos Islands - 11.4% - 147
17. Cote d'Ivoire - 11.1% - 48,776
18. Morocco - 10.5% - 95
19. Sint Maarten - 10.4% - 277

See below for a list of countries where the highest net increase in the number of congregations occurred during 2018:

1. United States +49 (0.34% increase)
2. Nigeria +48 (7.99% increase)
3. Brazil +22 (1.05% increase)
4. Cote d'Ivoire +21 (10.0% increase)
5. Democratic Republic of the Congo +15 (8.29% increase)
6. Liberia +13 (37.1% increase)
7. Peru +12 (1.61% increase)
8. Ghana +11 (3.63% increase)
9. Philippines +9 (0.74% increase)
10. South Africa +7 (3.83% increase)
11. Mozambique +5 (17.3% increase)
12. Uganda +4 (13.8% increase)

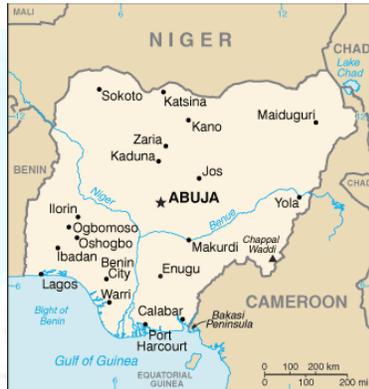
### Significant Realignment of Nigerian Missions

The Church [announced on April 23<sup>rd</sup>](#) that a significant realignment to five of the seven Nigerian missions would occur effective immediately. These changes include:

- Transfer of four mission branches from the Nigeria Calabar Mission to the Nigeria Enugu Mission
- Transfer of the Abak Nigeria Stake and the Ikot Ekpene Nigeria Stake from the Nigeria Calabar Mission to the Nigeria Owerri Mission

- Transfer of the Ikot Akpaden Nigeria Stake and the Ikot Akpatek Nigeria Stake from the Calabar Mission to the Nigeria Port Harcourt Mission
- Transfer of the Abuja Nigeria North Stake, Abuja Nigeria South Stake, and Jos Nigeria District from the Nigeria Enugu Mission to the Nigeria Lagos Mission
- Transfer of the Umuahia Nigeria Stake and the Asaga Ohafia Nigeria District from the Nigeria Owerri Mission to the Nigeria Enugu Mission

The Africa West Area Presidency added that the Nigeria Calabar Mission would also be relocated to Uyo and renamed the Nigeria Uyo Mission – the original location of the mission headquarters from 2002 until 2008. Additionally, the area presidency noted these changes "are being made to better position the missions in Nigeria for the future growth and establishment of the Church," and added, "We anticipate significant future growth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Nigeria and recognize the Lord's hand in bringing this about." These changes will redistribute the 56 stakes and 17 districts more evenly among the seven missions of Nigeria. After the changes, most missions now have approximately 9-10 stakes. Also, these changes will likely permit greater expansion into densely populated rural areas between major cities in southeastern Nigeria. Lastly, these changes also appear in preparation to organize additional missions in the near future such as in Abuja or in Delta State.



### Continued Growth in Sierra Leone

Rapid growth continues for the Church in Sierra Leone. The Church recently organized a new branch in Pujehun – the first branch to operate in southern Sierra Leone. Also, 51 men were sustained to be ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood at the Kenema Sierra Leone District conference last Sunday. With nine branches, the district appears likely to become a stake within the next year. There are also plans in the next year to organize additional branches from member groups or prospective member groups.



### New District and Congregations in Kenya

The Church in Kenya continues to organize additional districts – a trend that began in 2011. The newest district was created in April with headquarters in Kitale. There are now five districts in Kenya. Provided with year of creation in parentheses, these districts include Chyulu (1992), Eldoret (2011), Kilungu Hills (2014), Mombasa (2015), and Kitale (2019). Moreover, the Church in Kenya has organized one new ward and two new branches in the Nairobi area thus far in 2019. Lastly, membership growth in Kenya during 2018 reached its most rapid rate since 2012 at 4.0%.



### Two Branches Close in West Malaysia



The Church closed two of its branches in Malaysia in the cities of Butterworth and Sitiawan. This marks the first

time that the Church in Malaysia has ever closed its only branches in a city before. Both branches previously functioned in West Malaysia. The Church in Malaysia has struggled for many years to achieve noticeable growth after a decade of rapid growth, although there are recent reports that there have been improvements with larger numbers of members who serve full-time missions, especially from East Malaysia. With 10,500 members, Malaysia is the sovereign country with the most members without a stake.

# UPDATED RESOURCES

## REACHING THE NATIONS COUNTRY PROFILES

We continue to update the country profiles for our comprehensive work, *Reaching the Nations: International Church Growth Almanac*. The following country profiles were updated and posted on our website, [www.cumorah.com](http://www.cumorah.com), during April 2019. We will continue to update additional country profiles in the coming months, with the goal to release the next edition of the almanac by 2020:

- [Austria](#)
- [Finland](#)
- [Iceland](#)
- [Norway](#)
- [Sweden](#)

