



# THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

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

August 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)

- 34. Lima Peru Naranjal - June 30th, 2019
- 35. Ibague Colombia - August 4th, 2019
- 36. Veracruz Mexico Puerto - August 4th, 2019
- 37. Lima Peru Santa Clara - August 11th, 2019
- 38. Winneba Ghana - August 11th, 2019
- 39. Fortaleza Brazil Lisboa - August 25th, 2019
- 40. Little Elm Texas - August 25th, 2019
- 41. Central Valley Utah - August 25th, 2019

- Belem, Paraiba, Brazil (31<sup>st</sup>, 12,360)
- Eisenhüttenstadt, Germany (N/A, 24,633)
- Panacaxtlan, Hidalgo, Mexico (544<sup>th</sup>, 859)
- Vlissingen, Netherlands (90<sup>th</sup>, 44,536)
- Wagner, South Dakota (49<sup>th</sup>, 1,566)
- Puertollano, Spain (140<sup>th</sup>, 52,300)
- Donggang, Taiwan (40<sup>th</sup>, 48,262)

### New Districts

- 18. Bori Nigeria - August 18th, 2019

### Discontinued Stakes and Districts

None reported in July 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)

- Puerto Lopez, Ecuador (87<sup>th</sup>, 9,870)
- Inyila, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Mbuosi, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Ozuitem, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Umuako, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Uturu, Nigeria (N/A, ~40,000)
- Isparta, Turkey (36<sup>th</sup>, 236,749)

### 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)

- General Las Heras, Argentina (N/A, 14,889)

### Young, Full-Time Missionaries Assigned to Mali for the First Time

The first young, proselytizing missionaries were assigned to Mali, West Africa for the first time in August 2019. See below for more information on this development from [a post from ldschurchgrowth.blogspot.com](http://postfromldschurchgrowth.blogspot.com):

*Local members report that young, proselytizing missionaries were assigned to Mali for the first time in Church history. Two young Black African missionary companions from the Cote d'Ivoire Abidjan Mission were assigned to the Bamako Branch and will begin teaching*



*dozens of prospective members in multiple locations within the Bamako area. There are also additional villages near Frako (Mountougoula) that have as many as 1-2 dozen interested individuals. The Church currently has approximately 80 people who attend church meetings spread across one branch and one member group (Frako). Essentially all members on church records are active.*

*There have been small numbers of Malians who have*

joined the Church over the past several decades, but there were no overt efforts by the Africa West Area Presidency to establish an official Church presence until the past few years. Elder David A. Bednar visited Mali in [May 2017](#). The Church organized its first branch in Mali, the Bamako Branch, in [July 2017](#). The Bamako area was assigned to the Cote d'Ivoire Abidjan Mission around this time. The first convert baptisms occurred in [February 2018](#). There were 42 members in Mali in April 2018, and likely as many as 70 members in Mali by year-end 2018. The Church obtained official recognition from the government in [January 2019](#). Other proselytism-focused Christians have maintained a presence in Mali for decades. However, these groups report few members and slow growth rates. Religious freedom is supported by the government in government-controlled areas of the country.

Prospects appear highly favorable for rapid initial growth with the introduction of full-time missionaries given sustained interest in many who wish to join the Church. However, language barriers and illiteracy pose challenges for growth. Leadership development also appears a challenge. Most individuals interested in joining the Church speak Bambara and demonstrate little fluency in French. Only two Church materials are translated into Bambara, and no Latter-day Saint scriptures. Local members fluent in French, English, and Bambara have been instrumental in the establishment of the Church in Mali. Only Black African missionaries appear likely to be assigned to Mali within the foreseeable future due to safety concerns with terrorism as non-Africans are often more susceptible to these attacks.

Mali is the second West African country to have had full-time missionaries assigned for the first time in the past 18 months. Senegal is the other country where full-time missionaries were first assigned in 2018. Both Mali and Senegal have homogeneously Muslim populations. However, converts have come from a mix of religious backgrounds.

### Africa Central Area Headquarters to be Located in Nairobi, Kenya

The Church [announced](#) that the headquarters for the soon-to-be-created Africa Central Area will be located in Nairobi, Kenya. Use of English as an official language, more modern infrastructure in the city, closer accessibility to densely populated and minimally reached countries by the Church, plans for construction of a temple, and better regional and global airline connectivity all appear to be factors that influenced the decision for the area to be headquartered in Nairobi instead of Kinshasa, DR Congo. Countries to be assigned to the area were also announced, which span from South Sudan and Eritrea in the north, to the DR Congo and Tanzania in the south, to Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea on the west, and Seychelles and Somalia to the east. Countries to be

assigned to the new area include: Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the DR Congo, the Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Seychelles, and Sao Tome and Principe. The realigned and renamed Africa South Area will include: Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mayotte, Mozambique, Namibia, Reunion, Saint Helena, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Sudan will be reassigned to the Middle East/Africa North Area. There will be more than 100,000 members in the new Africa Central Area when the area becomes fully operational in August 2020, with more than half of those members living in the DR Congo.

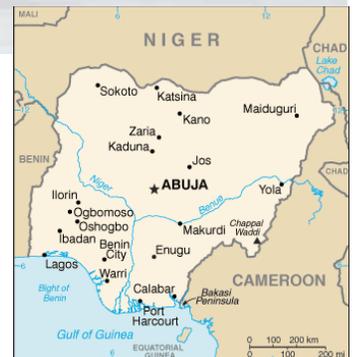
### Congregational Growth in Bolivia Accelerates

The Church in Bolivia has had a significant year for the creation of new wards and branches. Currently, the Church in Bolivia has 267 wards and branches – an increase of 10 wards and branches from the beginning of the year. This is the highest annual net increase in congregations in Bolivia in over 20 years. Membership growth rates in 2018 (2.20%) also were the most rapid since 2013, indicating that new units appear to have been organized as a result of increases in active membership. Most new units have been created in Santa Cruz. The Church in Bolivia has the fourth highest percentage of members of the Church in the population (1.84%) among South American countries after Chile (3.32%), Uruguay (3.15%), and Peru (1.93%).



### Significant Expansion of the Church in northern Abia State, Nigeria; First District in Khana-Speaking Areas of Rivers State Organized

The Church in northern Abia State, Nigeria has undergone a significant expansion into previously unreached or lesser-reached areas. Five new branches have recently been organized, including the Amuzukwu, Inyila, Ozuitem, Umuako, and Uturu Branches. The Church recently organized its second stake in Umuahia in May 2019. The two stakes



in Umuahia were recently reassigned to the Nigeria Enugu Mission – a decision that will likely help in the expansion of the country in areas between Umuahia and Enugu where millions reside without a nearby Church presence. There has been an increase of approximately 60 official congregations (wards and branches) thus far in 2019 – the second highest increase within a year or less in Church history for Nigeria.

The Church recently organized its first district in the homeland of Khana speakers in Rivers State, Nigeria. The Bori Nigeria District includes eight branches – the oldest of which was created in 2009. Significant congregational growth has occurred within the Bori area during the past few years. There are now 57 stakes and 19 districts in Nigeria.

### New Persian (Farsi)-Speaking Branch Organized in Turkey

The Church recently organized a new branch in Turkey. The Isparta (Persian) Branch was organized in the city of Isparta. Isparta is inhabited by one-quarter of a million people and is located in southwestern Turkey. Significant progress has occurred with the Church’s growth in Turkey among non-Turks, particularly those from Iran. The new branch is the Church’s first Persian-speaking branch outside of the United States, where there are two Persian-speaking branches in Southern California – the first was created in 2017 (Del Mar) and the second was created in 2019 (Newport Beach). There are now seven independent

branches in Turkey that operate in Istanbul (2), Adana (military), Ankara, Gaziantep, Isparta, and Izmir.



### Second Branch Created in Sierra Leonean City

The Church recently organized its second branch in the fourth most populous city of Sierra Leone, Koidu. The Kapeteh Branch was organized to service western areas of the city. With the organization of the new branch, all cities in Sierra Leone inhabited by 100,000 or more people now have two or more congregations. The Church in Sierra Leone reports the highest percentage of Latter-day Saints in the general population of any continental African country (0.34%) – an interesting finding considering the Church was established in Sierra Leone later than several other African countries, and Sierra Leone is the African country with the smallest percentage of Christians (30%) with a mission headquartered in the country.



### New Branches in Cote d'Ivoire

The Church recently organized its first branches in two additional cities in Cote d'Ivoire, including Grand Lahou and Oume. The Church has operated member groups in each of these cities for at least 1-2 years. The Church in Cote d'Ivoire now has an official ward or branch in 52 cities in Cote d'Ivoire. Senior missionaries in the country note good opportunities and consistent efforts to organize more member groups in villages nearby cities with a Church presence, such as in the Saioua area.



## 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 August 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:

- [Myanmar \(Burma\)](#)
- [Nepal](#)
- [Timor-Leste \(East Timor\)](#)