



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

December 2016

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)

93. Harare Zimbabwe East - December 4th, 2016
94. La Ceiba Honduras Miramar - December 4th, 2016
95. Uyo Nigeria Ibiono - December 4th, 2016
96. Washington DC YSA - December 4th, 2016
97. Colorado Springs High Plains - Dec. 11th, 2016
98. Gainesville Virginia - December 11th, 2016
99. Surprise Arizona West - December 11th, 2016
100. Rajahmundry India - December 18th, 2016

New Districts

25. São Lourenço do Sul Brazil - November 20th, 2016
26. Bo Sierra Leone North - Nov. 27th, 2016
27. Bouafle Cote d'Ivoire - November 27th, 2016
28. Caldwell Liberia - November 27th, 2016
29. Odessa Ukraine - December 11th, 2016
30. Douala Cameroon - December 18th, 2016

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

None reported in December 2016

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

(city population rank, most recent population estimate)
precise population data from www.citypopulation.de

- Korçë, Albania (6th, 58,700)
- Pogradec, Albania (11th, 27,666)
- Extremoz, Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil (20th, 15,769)
- Yaou, Cote d'Ivoire (N/A, 4,776)
- Se'chaj, Guatemala (N/A, N/A)
- Dohuk, Iraq (15th, 200,000)
- Irbil, Iraq (4th, 925,000)
- Sulaymaniyah, Iraq (7th, 600,000)
- Chemax, Yucatan, Mexico (14th, 14,885)
- Holly Springs, Mississippi (50th, 7,699)

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

- San Bartolo, El Salvador (N/A, N/A)
- Monument, Oregon (348th, 128)

One Hundred New Stakes Organized in 2016

Based upon preliminary data at the end of the month, the Church organized 100 new stakes during 2016 – the largest number since 1997. Countries where the most new stakes were organized include the United States (45), Brazil (9), Nigeria (9), Honduras (5), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (3), and Ghana (3). States in the United States where the most new stakes were organized include Arizona (12), Texas (8), Utah (6), Washington (4), and Virginia (3). Eight stakes were discontinued in 2016, resulting in a net increase of 92 stakes for the year. This indicates that the Church reported its eighth largest increase in stakes in its history during the year 2016. The largest annual increase in the number of stakes ever reported by the Church was in 1996 when there was a net increase of 146 stakes. There are currently 3,266 stakes and 556 districts worldwide.

Congregation Consolidations in California

The Church in California has preliminarily reported a net decrease of 37 wards and branches in 2016 – a 2.7% decrease and the second largest net decrease ever reported for the Church in California after a net decrease of 79 wards and branches that occurred between year-end 1995 and year-end 1997. Long-term active members moving away from California appear the primary reason for this decline. Despite this challenge, the 20 Californian

missions appear to be relatively productive compared to other missions in the United States in regards to convert baptisms and proselytism activity.

Rapid LDS Growth in Monrovia, Liberia



Additional information has emerged regarding recent LDS growth developments in the West African nation of Liberia. The Church reestablished a stake in Liberia in late November with six wards and created a new district headquartered in the Caldwell area with three branches.

Furthermore, five new branches have been organized in Monrovia within the past few months. LDS membership growth in Liberia has also accelerated in 2016 as the Church reported 10,991 members as of December 1st, 2016. This indicates an increase of 1,316 members from December 31st, 2015 – a 13.6% increase in eleven months. Additionally, area leadership reported plans to organize several additional stakes in Liberia within the next two years. There is now one stake and three districts in Monrovia. Additional information on the creation of the new stake can be found [here](#).

LDS Outreach in Northern Iraq

Three senior missionary couples currently serve in Kurdistan, northern Iraq. Senior missionaries have served in this region for over one year and primarily conduct humanitarian work and member and leadership support. Convert baptisms occur regularly. There appear to be three member groups that operate in northern Iraq in the cities of Duhok, Irbil, and Sulaymaniyah. The area is administered by the Beirut Lebanon District and the Middle East/Africa North Area.



landmass to have reached this important milestone. Furthermore, the Church in Nigeria organized nine new stakes during 2016 – the most new stakes ever organized in a country on the Afro-Eurasian landmass. The previous record for the most new stakes organized in a country on the Afro-Eurasian landmass was set in 2015 in Nigeria where six new stakes were organized.

Growth in Cameroon

Several noteworthy LDS growth developments have recently occurred in Cameroon. A district and a new branch were organized in the city of Douala, and an eighth branch was created in the capital city of Yaoundé. Prospects appear highly favorable for the organization of a new mission headquartered in Cameroon in 2017 to service its 24.4 million inhabitants. Currently the Church in Cameroon is administered by the Republic of Congo Brazzaville Mission. There are now two districts and 13 branches in Cameroon.



Third LDS Stake Organized in India

The Church organized its third stake in India in December. The Rajahmundry India Stake was created from the Rajahmundry India District. All five branches in the former district have appeared to become wards in the new stake. Rajahmundry has experienced some of the most rapid growth in India within recent years. The Rajahmundry



India District was organized only five years ago from a division of the Visakhapatnam India District. A fourth stake in India may be organized in early 2017 in New Delhi according to missionary reports. There are currently three stakes and four districts in India.

500 Congregation Milestone Reached in Nigeria; Rapid Stake Growth Continues



The Church in Nigeria reached the milestone of 500 congregations (wards and branches) in December. Currently there are only seven other countries with 500 or more congregations: the United States (14,227), Brazil (2,054), Mexico (2,015), Philippines (1,211), Argentina (769), Peru (751), and Chile

(602). Nigeria is the first country on the Afro-Eurasian

Accelerated Congregational Growth in Samoa

After nearly 15 years of relatively stagnant congregational growth, the Church in Samoa has reported sizable increases in the number of wards and branches during the past three years. The number of wards and branches has increased from 137 in 2013 to 153 at present. In 2016



alone, the Church organized eight new wards and

branches – a 5.5% annual increase. These statistics indicate improvements in member activity, convert retention, and local leadership development. Official LDS membership as of year-end 2015 constituted 39.1% of the population of the country – the second highest in the world after Tonga.

LDS Growth Accelerates in Brazil

Congregational growth has accelerated in Brazil during the past two months. There has been a net increase of 11 wards and branches since October 1st, whereas there was a net increase of only five wards and branches between January 2016 and late September 2016. Many new congregations have been organized in cities where no official ward or branch previously operated. Stake growth has also accelerated. Nine new stakes were created in 2016 – the largest number since 2010.



New District in Sierra Leone



The Church in Sierra Leone recently organized its third district in Bo, Sierra Leone. Now each of the three districts in Bo has five branches for a total of 15 branches in the city. The decision to organize another district in the city instead of preparing the original two districts to become stakes indicates a focus from mission

and area leaders to provide greater oversight and supervision of leadership, and possibly plan for the organization of additional branches in the near future. Approximately one percent of the city’s population appears to be LDS – one of the highest percentages for large cities in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Rapid LDS Growth in Cote d’Ivoire



The Church reported a net increase of 52 wards and branches during 2016 - the largest annual net increase of congregations of any country outside the United States since 2008 when the Church in Brazil reported a net increase of 53 wards and branches. The percentage growth rate for congregations in Cote d’Ivoire during 2016 is

even more impressive at 40%. No other country in the world with as many congregations has experienced as rapid of a congregational growth rate in a single year since rapid growth occurred in the LDS Church in Latin America and the Philippines in the 1980s. Furthermore, the Church in Cote d’Ivoire organized its first branches in seven cities during the year. Most new congregations were organized in Abidjan.

UPDATED RESOURCES

We are in the process of updating our maps that display estimated LDS membership by administrative division for many countries around the world. Originally created in 2013, these maps display the location and population of each administrative division of every country, and the estimated number of LDS members and the percentage of LDS members in each of these administrative divisions. This resource provides valuable information regarding the size and growth of the Church on a state-by-state or province-by-province level with membership data estimates as these membership statistics are not released by the LDS Church. We have estimated these membership figures through multiplying the number of LDS congregations by the members-to-units ratio (i.e. the average number of members per ward or branch) for administrative divisions in each the respective country. Access these maps by using our LDS Database Map on cumorah.com, or click [here](#). We are currently updating maps in Sub-Saharan Africa and Brazil.