



# THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

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

December 2020

## 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)

- 27. Eketé Nigeria - November 29th, 2020
- 28. Casper Wyoming East - December 6th, 2020
- 29. Palmas Brazil North - December 6th, 2020

### New Districts

*None reported in December 2020*

### Discontinued Stakes and Districts

- 3. Placentia California Stake
- 5. Sapele Nigeria District

### Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Pindaré Mirim, Maranhão, Brazil (34<sup>th</sup>, 21,617)
- Itapema, Santa Catarina, Brazil (26<sup>th</sup>, 44,659)
- Béoué, Cote d'Ivoire (N/A, 2,418)
- Brooks, Georgia (447<sup>th</sup>, 524)
- Idah, Nigeria (N/A, ~107,000)
- Tagaytay, Philippines (76<sup>th</sup>, 71,181)
- Dover, Tennessee (238<sup>th</sup>, 1,417)

### 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)

- Albany, Louisiana (268<sup>th</sup>, 1,088)
- Subang Jaya, Malaysia (N/A, ~205,000)
- Ponta Delgada, Azores, Portugal (17<sup>th</sup>, 48,200)

### Accelerated Congregational Growth in Brazil

The Church organized several new congregations in Brazil in the past two months, including the Church's first congregations in two additional cities (Pindaré Mirim, Maranhão and Itapema, Santa Catarina). Several new wards and branches have also been organized in various areas of the country. The Church reported a net increase of approximately 14 congregations in 2020—the lowest net increase since 2012. However, this lack of congregational growth in 2020 appears primarily impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic as there were no congregations organized for most of the year 2020. Brazil continues to rank as the country with the second most congregations in the world, second only to the United States, with 2,156 wards and branches.



### Karen Translations of Latter-day Saint Materials Published

The Church recently translated the sacramental prayers and the 13 Articles of Faith into the Karen language. Karen is the primary language spoken in east central Myanmar near the border with Thailand. The Church organized its first, and only, Karen-speaking branch in Salt Lake City, Utah in 2009. There are several million Karen speakers worldwide. Karen-speaking members live in many states of the United States and are also found in small numbers in Yangon, Myanmar. Click [here](#) to access the 13 Articles of Faith in Karen.

## Branch Organized in One of the Most Populous Cities in Philippines that Previously Had no Church Presence

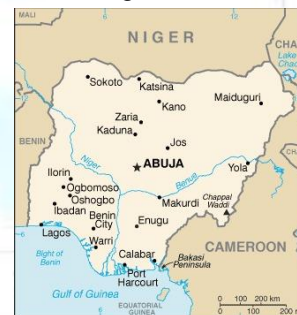
The Church recently organized the Tagaytay Branch—the first congregation of the Church to operate in the city of Tagaytay. Located just south of Metro Manila, Tagaytay is near the north shore of Lake Taal and has a population of approximately 71,000—making it one of the most populous cities in the Philippines that previously did not have a Latter-day Saint congregation. Most of the most populous cities in the Philippines without a ward or branch are in the Sulu Archipelago where the population is homogeneously Muslim. However, Marilao remains the most populous city in the Philippines without a Latter-day Saint congregation (population: 221,965). Marilao is in northern Metro Manila and pertains to the nearby Bocaue Ward. The Church in the Philippines reported a net increase of approximately 10 wards and branches in 2020—a typical annual increase for years during the past five years. However, only one new stake was created in the Philippines in 2020. In contrast, the Church organized eight new stakes in the Philippines in 2019.



members and priesthood holders to operate. However, there are several states where only one ward and no branches operate within the capital city of that state, including Frankfort, Kentucky; Concord, New Hampshire; and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania (the second ward that meets in the Harrisburg meetinghouse is the Hersey Ward that services Hersey, Pennsylvania).

## First Latter-day Saint Branch Organized in Kogi State, Nigeria

The Church recently organized its first branch in the Nigerian State of Kogi. The Idah Branch was organized in the city of Idah and pertains to the Nigeria Enugu Mission. Kogi State has approximately 4.5 million inhabitants and numbered among the few predominantly Christian states in Nigeria without an official Latter-day Saint presence prior to the creation of the Idah Branch. The last time the Church organized its first branch in a state in Nigeria



without a previous Church presence was when the Ado-Ekiti Branch was created in Ekiti State in 2016. All states in southern Nigeria have at least one official ward or branch, albeit several have a very limited Latter-day Saint presence (like Bayelsa, Ekiti, and Kogi). The Church in Nigeria has experienced its

slowest congregational growth rate since 2007 as a net total of only eight congregations were organized during 2020. This dramatic decline in congregational growth rates appears primarily attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic disrupting Church operations in Nigeria.

## Pierre Branch in South Dakota Upgraded to Ward

The Pierre Branch was recently reorganized as the Pierre Ward in the Rapid City South Dakota Stake. Pierre was the headquarters for the Pierre South Dakota District until it was discontinued in 2019 and merged with adjacent stakes. South Dakota is the 47<sup>th</sup> state to have at least one ward in the state capital or within five miles of the capital city (as is the case for the Farmingdale Ward for Augusta, Maine). Jackson, Mississippi and Albany, New York are the only state capitals with only one branch and no wards, albeit these cities have wards in surrounding cities or elsewhere in the metropolitan area. For example, the Jackson Branch is the congregation that services Jackson, but there are several wards in the greater Jackson metropolitan area in surrounding cities like Brandon, Clinton, Florence, and Madison. Trenton, New Jersey is the only state capital without its own ward or branch (Trenton is serviced by two wards in nearby Princeton, New Jersey).

## Stake Discontinued in Southern California

The Church discontinued the Placentia California Stake near the end of 2020. Organized in 1954, the closure of the stake has reflected decades of steady decreases in the number of active English-speaking Latter-day Saint families in northern Orange County. Active families moving away to other states, the children of long-term residents who never return to the area after college and marriage, and lack of English-speaking converts in the area appear primarily responsible for this decline. Additional stake consolidations in northern Orange County appear likely in the coming years given these long-term trends.

This finding illustrates the size, strength, and widespread geographical distribution of the Church in the United States as wards must operate within stakes and meet minimum requirements related to number of active

## District and Two Branches Discontinued in Malaysia

The Church in Malaysia continues to consolidate congregations and close districts—a trend that began in 2015. Two branches recently closed, including the Mandarin-speaking Miri 3<sup>rd</sup> Branch and the Subang Jaya Branch. The Ipoh Malaysia District, organized in 2003, was discontinued, and the two branches that pertained to the district were reassigned to the Kuala Lumpur Malaysia District. The decision to consolidate the district appeared due to a lack of growth in active membership, the closure of several branches in



recent years, and efforts by the mission presidency to prepare to organize the first stake in Malaysia. Other Malaysian districts that have closed in the past five years include the Bintulu East Malaysia District (2015) and the Johor Bahru Malaysia District (2015). There are now five districts in Malaysia. Malaysia is the country of the world with the most members without a stake per year-end 2019 membership numbers.

## 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 December 2020. We will continue to update additional country profiles in the coming months, with the goal to release the next edition of the almanac in late 2021/early 2022:

- [Ethiopia](#)

