



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

February 2014

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)

4. Winneba Ghana - February 9th, 2014
5. Alliance Texas - February 16th, 2014
6. Herriman Utah Mountain View - February 23rd, 2014

New Districts

None reported in February 2014

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

- Poptun Guatemala District

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Quitilipi, Argentina (140th, 24,517)
- Ribeira Brava, Cape Verde (14th, 1,884)
- Pital, Costa Rica (105th, 2,046)
- Adzope, Cote d'Ivoire (18th, 61,884)
- Daloa, Cote d'Ivoire (4th, 215,652)
- Lusuku, Democratic Republic of the Congo (N/A, N/A)
- San Cristobal, Ecuador (N/A, N/A)
- Delray Beach, Florida (N/A, N/A)
- Igbo-Etche, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Del Gallego, Philippines (N/A, N/A)
- Ragay, Philippines (N/A, N/A)
- Valencia, Trinidad and Tobago (N/A, N/A)

Locations Recently Closed by the Church¹

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

- None reported

Rapid Membership Growth in West Africa

In an [article](#) detailing the history of the Church in West Africa, the LDS Church News published what appear to be year-end 2013 approximate membership figures for the seven countries in the Africa West Area with an LDS presence. The article indicates that there were nearly 20,000 convert baptisms in the Africa West Area. See below for an analysis of membership growth numbers of these seven countries provided with annual percentage growth for 2013.

- Benin: 1,400+ members, >29.5% annual increase
- Cote d'Ivoire: ~23,000 members, <23.6% annual increase
- Ghana: 57,000+ members, >8.8% annual increase
- Liberia: 8,000+ members, >19.2% annual increase
- Nigeria: 118,000+ members, >7.3% annual increase
- Sierra Leone: 13,000+ members, >11.5% annual increase
- Togo: 2,300+ members, >23.6% annual increase

All Inhabited Islands in Cape Verde Now Open to LDS Missionary Work

Missionaries report that the Cape Verde Praia Mission recently opened the last previously unreached island of São Nicolau (pop: 13,000) to formal missionary efforts. At least one missionary companionship is assigned to the island and likely works out of the town of Ribeira Brava. In 2013, the Church opened two other islands to initial missionary efforts, namely Boa Vista (pop: 12,000) and Maio (pop: 7,000). The Church has experienced rapid growth within the past two years as evidenced by the organization of the first stake in Praia in 2012 and rapid membership and congregational growth rates.



¹ *Cities where the only ward or branch was closed; some of these cities may continue to have a dependent unit and/or missionaries assigned

First Young Elders Assigned to Yangon, Burma

Missionaries in the Thailand Bangkok Mission report that the first young elders were assigned to Yangon, Burma to provide support to the branch and teach member referrals. The Church has had a presence in Burma for a couple decades and a branch has operated in Yangon but only senior missionary couples have served in the country on humanitarian assignment. Only two young elders will serve in Yangon and they will not be permitted to openly proselyte due to government restrictions.



Within the past five years, the Church has baptized increasing numbers of Burmese in many countries around the world although little progress has occurred in strengthening the Church in Burma during this period due to no formal missionary efforts occurring in the country and limitations on religious freedom.

Formal LDS Presence Established in Daloa, Cote d'Ivoire

In mid-February, the Church organized its first six branches in the city of Daloa, Cote d'Ivoire. Daloa is the fourth most populous city in the country and was the second most populous city without an LDS congregation. The simultaneous organization of six branches is an unprecedented church growth achievement as the Church has never appeared to simultaneously organize as many branches within the same city where no branches previously functioned.



Multiple member groups likely operated in the city prior to the establishment of official branches. The Church in Cote d'Ivoire has opened its first branches in many cities within the past two years including Bouaffle (three branches), Gagnoa (two branches), Aboisso, Adzope, Bonoua, Meagui, and Ouragahio. In 2013, the Church in Cote d'Ivoire experienced its most rapid membership growth since the mid-1990s and its most rapid congregational growth since the early 1990s as membership increased by over 20% and the number of congregations increased by 36%.

Progress Augmenting Sacrament Meeting Attendance in Prague, Czech Republic

Missionaries report that church attendance has substantially increased in Prague (Praha), Czech Republic within the past five years notwithstanding only one branch servicing the entire metropolitan population of 1.4 million. The number of members and investigators attending church services has increased from approximately 50 to over 150. Missionaries report that the mission has concentrated on establishing the first stake in the Czech Republic sometime in the foreseeable future.



Number of Monthly Convert Baptisms in the Thailand Bangkok Mission Continues to Increase

Missionaries serving in the Thailand Bangkok Mission report that the mission broke its record for the number of baptisms in a single month. 165 converts joined the Church in January 2014, marking the first time that the number of converts baptized in a single month exceeded the number of full-time missionaries assigned to the mission. The mission broke its previous record for the number of baptisms in a single month in November 2013 when over 100 converts were baptized. Convert retention appears good in most congregations. The Church reporting commensurate membership and congregational growth in 2014 will be critical towards ensuring acceptable convert retention rates are achieved.



NEW RESOURCES

CASE STUDIES

[LDS Outreach among Christians in Pakistan](#)

The LDS Church in Pakistan has extended passive missionary outreach among Christians for at least two decades notwithstanding Christians comprising less than two percent of the national population and significant restrictions on religious freedom. During this period the Church has achieved steady growth and improved self-sufficiency in meeting its missionary and leadership needs. Notwithstanding this progress, there remain many more opportunities for growth among the Pakistani Christian population. This case study provides a brief history of the Church in Pakistan and a summary of Pakistani Christian population characteristics. Past church growth and missionary successes are identified and opportunities and challenges for future growth are analyzed. The growth of the Church in other South Asian countries is compared to Pakistan and the size and growth of other missionary-minded Christian groups that operate in Pakistan is summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

[LDS Outreach among the Ngäbe People of Panama](#)

Numbering between 200,000^[1] and 250,000, the Ngäbe, or also called the *Guaymí*, are an Amerindian people native to western Panama and rural areas along the Costa Rica-Panama border. This case study reviews the history of the LDS Church among the Ngäbe. Past church growth and missionary successes are discussed and opportunities and challenges for future growth are examined. The growth of the Church among other Amerindian peoples in Panama is summarized and the size and growth of other missionary-focused Christian groups is reviewed. Limitations to this case study are described and prospects for future growth are predicted.

[Prospective LDS Outreach in Guinea](#)

Inhabited by 11.2 million people, Guinea is a country located in West Africa supporting a population that is 85% Muslim, 8% Christian, and 7% followers of indigenous religions. As of late 2013, the LDS Church had not established a presence in Guinea notwithstanding sufficient religious freedom permitting the operation of other proselytism-focused Christian groups, a large target population, and abundant French-speaking African missionary manpower. This case study reviews the Church's history of administering Guinea and identifies translations of basic proselytism materials in indigenous languages spoken within the country. Opportunities for establishing an official LDS presence and achieving growth are explored. Recommendations for how to most effectively establish an initial church presence are provided. Challenges for establishing a church presence and achieving growth are discussed. The growth of other proselytizing Christian groups that operate in Guinea is summarized. Limitations to this case study are described and the prospects for an LDS establishment in Guinea is predicted.

[Prospective LDS Outreach in Senegal](#)

Inhabited by 13.3 million people, Senegal is a country located in West Africa that is 94% Muslim, 5% Christian, and 1% followers of indigenous religions. As of late 2013, the LDS Church had not established a presence in Senegal notwithstanding sufficient religious freedom permitting the operation of other proselytism-focused Christian groups, a large target population, and abundant French-speaking African missionary manpower. This case study reviews the Church's history of administering Senegal and identifies translations of basic proselytism materials available in indigenous languages spoken in the country. Opportunities for establishing an official LDS presence and achieving growth are explored. Recommendations for how to most effectively establish an initial church presence are provided. Challenges for establishing a church presence and achieving growth are discussed. The growth of other proselytizing Christian groups that operate in Senegal is summarized. Limitations to this case study are described and prospects for an LDS establishment in Senegal is predicted.

[Stagnant LDS Growth in Nicaragua](#)

Notwithstanding a substantial increase in the size of the full-time missionary force within the past three years in Nicaragua, no progress has occurred in accelerating membership growth and achieving positive congregational growth within this period. This case study reviews the history of the Church in Nicaragua and identifies recent church growth and missionary successes. Opportunities and challenges for reversing recent stagnant growth trends are analyzed. The growth of the Church in other Spanish-speaking Central American countries is summarized and the size and growth of other missionary-focused Christian groups in Nicaragua is reviewed. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

[The Cost Per Convert: Analysis on the Financial Costs for Retaining Converts in the LDS Church](#)

This case study examines the financial costs exacted by the LDS Church to baptize and retain converts. The LDS Church appears to spend more money per retained convert than any other Christian denomination with a worldwide missionary presence. The Cote d'Ivoire Abidjan Mission is identified as one of the most cost-effective missions in the Church. The cost per new member in other missionary-oriented Christian groups is calculated and limitations to this case study are discussed.

NEW RESOURCES (continued)

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MISSIONARY WORK AND CHURCH GROWTH (MISSIOLOGY)

- [Humanitarian and Development Work](#)
- [Languages with LDS Materials](#)
- [LDS Church News](#)
- [Preach My Gospel](#)
- [Reactivation](#)

