



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

February 2015

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)

3. Maputo Mozambique - February 15th, 2015
4. Erda Utah - February 22nd, 2015
5. Houston Texas Bear Creek - February 22nd, 2015

New Districts

2. Ndola Zambia - February 8th, 2015
3. Siem Reap Cambodia - February 22nd, 2015

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

1. União da Vitória Brazil District

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Berat, Albania (8th, 42,800)
- Icarai, Ceará, Brazil (N/A, N/A)
- Araripina, Pernambuco, Brazil (37th, 32,670)
- Salgueiro, Pernambuco, Brazil (31st, 43,274)
- Bouake, Cote d'Ivoire (3rd, 567,481)
- Issia, Cote d'Ivoire (28th, 50,313)
- Saint Genis, France (N/A, 9,415)
- Abesim, Ghana (N/A, N/A)
- Aflao, Ghana (27th, 66,546)
- Lakowe, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Snake Island, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Tanumalala, Samoa (N/A, N/A)
- Pikeville, Tennessee (220th, 1,608)

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

- Abasolo, Tamaulipas, Mexico (25th, 6,008)

First Stake Created in Mozambique in Maputo; Second Stake and New District to be Organized in Beira

The Church organized its first stake in Mozambique on February 15th. The Maputo Mozambique Stake was organized from the Maputo Mozambique District and all seven of the branches in the former district became wards. Mozambique was previously the country with the fourth most members without a stake according to year-end 2013 membership data. The Mozambique Maputo Mission also reports that the Church will organize its second stake in Mozambique on March 22nd, 2015 in Beira and that a new district will be simultaneously organized to include branches in the northern half of the city in the Manga area. Recent progress advancing districts into stakes and accelerating "real growth" for the Church in Mozambique has been accomplished as a result of an emphasis from the mission to baptize families instead of individuals, organize additional branches, and augment the number of Mozambicans serving full-time missions.



First LDS Stake to be Created in Zambia; New District Organized in Zambia

We have received reports from full-time missionaries that the Church will organize its first stake in Zambia on March 15th, 2015. The new stake will be organized in Lusaka and most, if not all, of the branches in the district will become wards. Zambia currently ranks as the country with the ninth most members without a stake according to year-end 2013 membership data. The mission also divided the Kitwe Zambia District in February to create a separate district headquartered in Ndola. Missionaries indicate that additional branches will be organized in the two districts in the Copperbelt Region within the foreseeable future.



The Church in Mexico Reaches Milestone of 2,000 Official Congregations

The Church in Mexico recently reached the milestone of 2,000 congregations (wards and branches). The Church in Mexico previously reached a high of 2,009 congregations in 2010 although net decreases in the number of congregations during the early 2010s resulted in the number of congregations declining to 1,980 in 2013. The recent return to positive net growth in congregations indicates some minor improvements in augmenting the number of active members and available active priesthood manpower to necessitate the creation of new wards and branches.



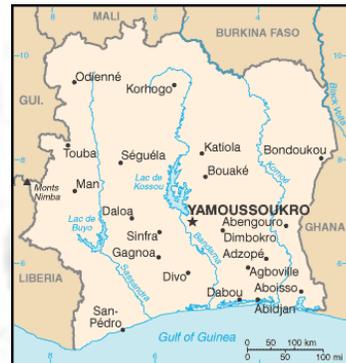
City Opens to Missionary Work in Albania

The Adriatic South Mission opened the Albanian city of Berat to missionary work in February. Berat was the second most populous city in Albania without an LDS presence and has over 40,000 inhabitants. Berat is the first city to open to missionaries in Albania since Shkoder in the mid-2000s. The organization of the first stake in Albania in 2014 has appeared to help redistribute mission resources from preparing branches to become wards to the expansion of the Church into additional cities. There are currently eight cities in Albania with an LDS ward, branch, or member group.



LDS Branches Organized in Previously Unreached Cities in Cote d'Ivoire; Church in Cote d'Ivoire Surpasses Milestone of 100 Official Congregations

The Church organized its first branches in two Ivorian cities where no branches previously operated. The new branches were organized in Bouake and Issia. Bouake is the third most populous city in the country and the most northern city to have an LDS presence. The Church once operated two branches in Bouake during the early 2000s but discontinued both branches due to the outbreak of the First Ivorian Civil War. Issia has never appeared to previously have an official LDS presence. The Church in Cote d'Ivoire also reached the milestone of 100 congregations (wards and branches) earlier this month. The number of congregations in the country has mushroomed from 17 in 2000 to 34 in 2009, 53 in 2012, and 101 in February 2015.



First LDS Branch in the southern Volta Region of Ghana Organized

The Church in Ghana organized its first branch in the city of Aflao earlier this month. The Aflao Branch becomes the first LDS branch to operate in the southern portion of the Volta Region. Aflao also previously numbered among the 10 most populous cities in Ghana without an LDS congregation. The new branch reports directly to the Ghana Accra Mission.

New LDS Branch Organized in Sierra Leone Despite Ebola Epidemic

Progress continues for the Church achieving real growth in Sierra Leone despite the Ebola epidemic and the removal of full-time missionaries in mid-2014. The Church recently created its 40th official congregation and its 10th branch in the city of Bo. The Church in Sierra Leone has experienced a net increase of 10 branches since the outbreak of the Ebola virus began.

New Branch Organized in France

The Church organized a new branch in France for the first time in over five years. The new branch is the Saint Genis Branch located in the Geneva Switzerland Stake. The Church in Europe has continued to maintain progress avoiding the consolidation of congregations, advancing branches into wards, and organizing a handful of new wards, branches, and member groups within the past six months.

NEW RESOURCES

CASE STUDIES

LDS Outreach among the K'iche' of Guatemala

The K'iche' or *Quiche*, are one of the most populous Amerindian peoples in Guatemala. The LDS Church has maintained a continuous presence among the K'iche' for approximately half a century and has achieved significant growth in several locations within the K'iche' homeland. This case study examines the historical and cultural background of the K'iche', reviews the history LDS proselytism efforts among them, and analyzes successes, opportunities, and challenges for church growth. The growth of the LDS Church among other Amerindian peoples in Guatemala is summarized and the size and growth trends of other nontraditional proselytizing Christian groups with a presence among the K'iche' is reviewed. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

LDS Outreach among the Kaqchikel of Guatemala

The Kaqchikel, or *Cakchiquel*, are one of the most populous Amerindian peoples in Guatemala. The LDS Church has maintained a continuous presence among the Kaqchikel for approximately half a century and has achieved significant growth in several locations within the Kaqchikel homeland. This case study examines the historical and cultural background of the Kaqchikel, reviews the history of LDS proselytism efforts among them, and analyzes successes, opportunities, and challenges for church growth. The growth of the LDS Church among other Amerindian peoples in Guatemala is summarized and the size and growth trends of other nontraditional proselytizing Christian groups with a presence among the Kaqchikel is reviewed. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

Opportunities for LDS Outreach Expansion in the Philippines

The LDS Church in the Philippines ranks among the largest bodies of Latter-day Saints outside the United States. Today approximately half the Philippine population resides in locations where LDS congregations operate, suggesting good opportunities for outreach expansion efforts. This case study reviews the history of the Church in the Philippines. Recent successes in the Church expanding into previously unreached areas are identified and opportunities and challenges for expanding outreach into currently unreached areas are analyzed and explored. The size and growth trends of other missionary-focused Christian groups that operate in the country are summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for the Church to achieve future national outreach expansion are predicted.

the K'iche' for approximately

Missed Opportunities for LDS Outreach in Azerbaijan

Inhabited by 9.7 million people, Azerbaijan is located near the Caucasus in Asia and has a population that is predominantly Muslim (93.4%) with a small Christian minority (4.8%). The Church has never operated a proselytizing, official presence in Azerbaijan largely due to missing its window to enter the country during the 1990s when religious freedom conditions were more accommodating to foreign, proselytism-focused Christian groups. Today government legislation presents insurmountable barriers to an LDS establishment. This case study provides a brief introduction of proselytizing Christian groups in Azerbaijan and changes in government policies and legislation that regulate the operation of foreign religious groups. Current barriers to establishing an LDS presence in Azerbaijan are identified. Limitations to this case study are discussed and prospects for a future LDS establishment are predicted.

Stagnant LDS Growth in French Guiana

French Guiana is an oversea department of France inhabited by almost a quarter of a million people. The LDS Church has maintained a presence in French Guiana since the late 1980s but has experienced stagnant growth within the past two decades. This case study reviews the history of the Church in French Guiana. LDS growth successes are identified and opportunities and challenges for overcoming stagnant growth are examined. The growth of the LDS Church in French Guiana is compared to the Church in other countries and the size and growth trends of other missionary-focused groups in French Guiana are summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.