



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

February 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)

10. Irving Texas - February 7th, 2016
11. Linda Vista Guatemala - February 21st, 2016
12. Chandler Arizona South - February 28th, 2016

New Districts

2. Aboisso Cote d'Ivoire - February 14th, 2016
3. Adzope Cote d'Ivoire - February 21st, 2016

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

2. Barrancabermeja Colombia
3. Puerto Suárez Bolivia

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Las Lomitas, Argentina (N/A, 12,399)
- Plantation, Florida (28th, 84,955)
- Akureyri, Iceland (2nd, 17,490)
- Abatoa, Kiribati (N/A, N/A)
- Verdigris, Oklahoma (87th, 3,993)

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

- Forbes, Australia (N/A, 6,804)
- Plainfield, Illinois (45th, 39,581)
- Jackson, Missouri (62nd, 13,758)

Spoken Language by Congregation Data Released

The Church recently underwent an upgrade of its official meetinghouse locator website, lds.org/maps, during February. For the first time, the Church has published the spoken language of essentially all its non-sensitive wards and branches throughout the world. These data provide important information for members and investigators to determine which congregation would be appropriate to attend due to the spoken language of a ward or branch. Additionally, these data provide valuable data to LDS growth researchers examining the demographic characteristics of the Church worldwide.

Young, Proselytizing Missionaries Return to Sierra Leone; LDS Growth Continues

Young, full-time missionaries have returned to the Sierra Leone Freetown Mission to reopen the country to formal proselytism efforts. Senior missionaries report that 22 native African members who were previously serving in Ghanaian and Nigerian missions were transferred to reopen the mission on February 9th. No full-time, proselytizing missionaries have served in Sierra Leone since August 2014 due to the Ebola epidemic. As another piece of evidence regarding LDS growth successes in Sierra Leone despite the Ebola epidemic, three new branches have been organized this month – one of which is the first official LDS congregation in the city of Lungi.



Two New Districts in Cote d'Ivoire

The Church organized two new districts in Cote d'Ivoire during February 2016: the Aboisso Cote d'Ivoire and Adzope Cote d'Ivoire Districts. There are now nine stakes and seven districts in Cote d'Ivoire. LDS growth trends for the Church in Cote d'Ivoire have been essential exponential within the past six years. For example, the Church reported only four stakes and one district in the country in 2010. Prospects appear favorable for the organization of additional stakes and districts in Cote d'Ivoire within the near future.



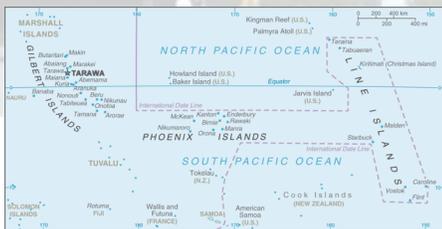
First Official LDS Branch Organized in Upper East Region, Ghana

The Church in Ghana recently established its first official branch in the Upper East Region in the city of Bolgatanga. Bolgatanga is within less than 20 miles of the border with Burkina Faso and is the most northern city in Sub-Saharan Africa to have had an LDS ward or branch organized. The Church organized a member group several months ago due to several active members relocating to the city and requesting to hold church services. Currently nine of the 10 administrative regions of the country now have an LDS presence. Once an LDS presence is established in the Upper West Region, Ghana will be the first West African country where the Church has a presence in all of the administrative divisions (e.g. states, provinces, regions).



New District and New Branches Created in Kiribati

For the first time in approximately a decade, the Church in Kiribati organized new congregations on Tarawa Atoll. The new branches include the Abatoa and Temaiku 2nd Branches. The Tarawa Kiribati North District was also organized in January and includes six branches primarily on North Tarawa Atoll. The Church in Kiribati has experienced rapid growth within the past several decades although member inactivity rates are among the highest in Oceania.



New Branches in Luanda, Angola

The Church organized three new branches in Luanda during January. As a result, the number of branches increased from five to eight in the Luanda metropolitan area. Although the Church has operated a mission in Luanda since mid-2013, few missionaries have been assigned to the mission. This has appeared to be attributed to the high cost of living in the Luanda area. Although eight branches now administer the metropolitan area inhabited by 6.8 million people, most areas of the city are minimally reached by the Church. Missionaries report that the Church has hopes to organize the first stake in Luanda within the near future.



Progress Expanding Outreach in Albania

The Church organized its first branch in Berat, Albania in February. Berat is the first city in Albania to have had a new branch organized since the creation of the Shkoder Branch in 2009. The Adriatic South Mission opened Berat to formal missionary efforts in early 2015. Currently the new branch appears to have approximately 10-15 active members – most of whom are male members who are recent converts. Missionaries serving in Albania also report current efforts to open the city of Lezhë to missionary work.



New Branch Created in Thailand

The Church organized a new branch in Kamphaeng Phet, Thailand in late February. This marks a significant milestone as no LDS branch previously operated in Kamphaeng Phet or Kamphaeng Phet Province. The last time the Church organized a branch in a city or province where no LDS branch previous operated was in the mid-2000s when a branch was organized in Nong Khai. Kamphaeng Phet opened to missionary work in late 2013 and a member group was organized.



City Opens to Missionary Work in Iceland

Missionaries serving in Iceland report that the Church opened the city of Akureyri to missionaries in late 2015. Akureyri is the second most populous city in Iceland with 17,490 inhabitants. A small group has been organized with four members. Akureyri is the first previously unreached city to open to missionaries in Iceland in approximately a decade. Akureyri once had full-time missionaries assigned in the late twentieth century although proselytism efforts appeared largely unsuccessful, resulting in the closure of the city to missionary work by the late 1990s. The Church currently operates two branches in Iceland located in Reykjavik and Selfoss.



LDS Membership Figures for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro Released

Official membership figures have been published for the first time for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. The Church reported 61 members in Bosnia and Herzegovina and six members in Montenegro at year-end 2014. Currently the Church operates two branches in Bosnia and



Herzegovina and one branch in Montenegro. The Church in both countries has experienced low receptivity and problems with convert retention since the first missionaries arrived in the early 2010s. Both countries pertain to the Adriatic North Mission.



Church Attendance Skyrockets in Kandy, Sri Lanka

Senior missionaries report that significant progress has occurred in Kandy, Sri Lanka increasing church attendance. Within the past few months, sacrament meeting attendance has increased from 15 to 115. A significant catalyst to this sudden increase in church attendance has been a change to the branch presidency within the past six months. Reactivated members appear to account for the majority of increasing church attendance although many new converts have also been baptized. No full-time missionaries are currently assigned to Kandy although senior missionaries regularly visit the Kandy Branch.



NEW RESOURCES

CASE STUDIES

Analysis of LDS Growth in Jakarta, Indonesia

Jakarta is the fourth most populous metropolitan area in the world, inhabited by 28.1 million people according to early 2016 population estimates. Slow growth has occurred since the early 1990s. The Church created the Jakarta Indonesia Stake in 2011 – the first stake to be organized in Indonesia. This case study reviews the history of the Church in Jakarta. Recent church growth and missionary successes are analyzed. Opportunities and challenges for future growth are discussed. The growth of the Church in other major Southeast Asian cities is compared to LDS growth trends in Jakarta. The size and growth trends of other missionary-focused Christian groups are summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

LDS Outreach among the Efik-Ibibio of Nigeria

Native to extreme southeastern Nigeria, the Efik-Ibibio constitute a collection of related peoples that number nearly nine million. The LDS Church has maintained a presence in the Efik-Ibibio homelands since the late 1970s. No other ethnolinguistic group in Nigeria has experienced as rapid LDS growth as the Efik-Ibibio. This case study reviews the history of the Church's administration of the Efik-Ibibio homelands. Opportunities and challenges for future growth are analyzed. The growth of the Church among other major peoples in Nigeria is reviewed and the size and growth of other missionary-focused Christian groups with a presence among the Efik-Ibibio is summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

