



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

February 2018

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)

5. Benin City Nigeria Sokponba - February 18th
6. Benin City Nigeria Uzebu - February 18th
7. Bluffdale Utah Independence – February 25th
8. São José dos Pinhais Brazil Jardim Ipê – February 25th

- Gela, Italy (72nd, 77,360)
- Mo I Rana, Norway (41st, 26,230)

Nineteen Missions to Close, Five Missions to Open in July

The Church [announced on February 1st](#) that 19 missions will close this July and be consolidated with neighboring missions. Sixteen of these 19 missions to close are located in Europe and North America. Missions scheduled to close include:

- Australia Sydney North
- Bulgaria Sofia
- California Modesto
- California San Fernando
- England London South
- Greece Athens
- Illinois Chicago West
- México Ciudad Obregón
- México Reynosa
- Mississippi Jackson
- New York New York South
- Ohio Cleveland
- Portugal Porto
- România/Moldova
- Russia Samara
- Spain Málaga
- Ukraine L'viv
- Utah Logan
- Washington Federal Way

New Districts

None reported in February 2018

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

1. Los Llanos Venezuela

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Coppermine, Arizona (N/A, ~1,000)
- São Domingos, Cape Verde (15th, 2,583)
- Combarbalá, Chile (N/A, 5,494)
- Searanx, Guatemala (N/A, N/A)
- Semuy, Guatemala (N/A, N/A)
- Creedmoor, North Carolina (177th, 4,124)
- Bantayan, Philippines (N/A, 35,306)
- Philip, South Dakota (93rd, 779)
- Big Water, Utah (222nd, 475)
- MitMit, Vanuatu (N/A, N/A)

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

- Compi, Bolivia (N/A, N/A)
- La Prairie, Quebec, Canada (46th, 24,110)
- Raroia, Tuamotu, French Polynesia (90th, 326)

The Church also reported that five new missions will be organized this July. Three of these new missions will be organized in Africa. These missions include:

- Brazil Rio de Janeiro South

- Cote d'Ivoire Yamoussoukro
- Nigeria Ibadan
- Philippines Cabanatuan
- Zimbabwe Bulawayo

After these changes go into effect, the number of missions worldwide will decrease from 421 to 407. Low productivity and fewer numbers of missionaries serving appeared to influence the decision to close eight missions in the United States and eight missions in Europe. Thus, these changes in LDS missions appear attributed to efforts to redistribute resources from less productive areas to more productive areas, and better conserve resources.

First Young, Proselytizing Missionaries Assigned to Senegal



The Church assigned its first young, full-time missionaries to serve in the West African country of Senegal in February. Six Black African full-time missionaries from the Cote d'Ivoire Abidjan West Mission were assigned to Senegal, and all three missionary companionships appear to serve in the city of

Dakar where the only LDS branch operates in the country. A senior missionary couple has served in Dakar for at least a couple years to provide member and leadership support. Senegal is the first country in West Africa to open to proselytism since Benin opened to formal proselytism in the mid-2000s. The first Senegalese members to serve a full-time mission began their missionary service in late 2017. The Dakar Branch is led by a full branch presidency and most of its members speak French and Wolof.

First LDS Convert Baptisms Occur in Mali

The Church in Mali held its first convert baptismal service during the month of February. Four adults were baptized, including two converts from the Bamako Branch and two converts from the Farako Group. Missionaries serving in the Cote d'Ivoire Abidjan Mission have taught investigators by Skype for the past couple months and there are as many as two dozen individuals prepared to be baptized in the near future. The Church is currently in

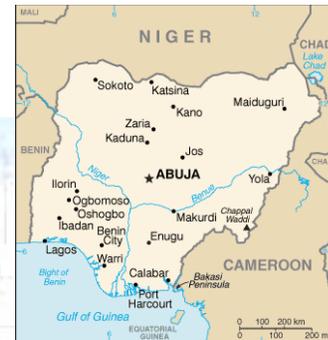


the process of obtaining the legal registration requirements for full-time missionaries to begin serving in Mali. Local members report that as many as 65 people attend church services in the two congregations. The Church organized the Bamako Branch and the Farako (Mountougoula) Group in

July 2017. Bamako and areas surrounding the city pertain to the Cote d'Ivoire Abidjan Mission, whereas the rest of the country is under the direct supervision of the Africa West Area.

LDS Missionary Activity Expands into Northern Nigeria

LDS missionary activity has recently expanded into three northern Nigerian cities - Bauchi, Jos, and Kaduna. Congregations have operated since 1993 in these cities but safety concerns (e.g. religious violence between Muslims and Christians) have deterred the assignment of full-time missionaries for decades. Moreover, several branches have recently been organized in the region, including three new branches in Plateau State and one new branch in Kaduna State. This expansion of the Church into northern Nigeria is significant as these recently opened states are inhabited by 19 million people and most the population adheres to Islam. However, Christians constitute the majority of LDS converts in the region.



LDS Branch Created in Vijayawada, India



The Church organized a new branch in Vijayawada, India during February. Vijayawada is the first city in over a decade to have a branch organized where there was no branch or ward that operated previously. Missionaries report that 80 people attended the meeting to create the new branch, including 35 investigators. The last time the Church in India organized a branch in a city where no wards or branches previously operated was in Kolar Gold Fields in 2007. Vijayawada is inhabited by 1.91 million people. Telugu is the primarily language spoken in the city.

Member Inactivity Problems in the Adriatic North Mission

Missionaries serving in the Adriatic North Mission report that only 200 people attend sacrament meetings held within the five countries that comprise the mission even though there are approximately 1,700 members who live within the mission boundaries. This indicates that the Adriatic North Mission likely experiences the lowest member activity rate of any area of Europe at approximately 10-15%. Stagnant or extremely slow membership growth and congregational growth rates

have persisted for many years due to low receptivity and local leadership development challenges.

New Branches among the Q'eqchi' in Guatemala

The Church in the homeland of the Q'eqchi' people of Guatemala has recently experienced a couple developments that indicate accelerated growth. First, the first Q'eqchi'-speaking stake was organized last June in Sehanu. This indicates improvements in local leadership maturity and member activity rates.



Second, several new branches have been created in the region during the past 18 months, including two new branches in the Chulac Guatemala District that were organized at the end of 2017. The organization of the Guatemala Coban Mission in 2013 has appeared to facilitate accelerated growth among the Q'eqchi' due to larger amounts of mission resources allocated to the region.

New Branches in Vanuatu

The Church in Vanuatu recently organized three new branches on the island of Tanna, increasing the number of branches on the island from five to eight. Approximately 30,000 people live on Tanna where the Church has grown rapidly and numbers among the largest religious groups on the island. The first branch on Tanna, the White Sands Branch, was organized in 1998. Additional branches have since been organized in Saetsiwi (2001), Greenhill (2003), White Grass (2010), Greenpoint (2011), Lenakel (2018), MitMit (2018), and Port Resolution (2018). Member groups have functioned in additional locations in past years although some of these groups have closed due to conflict with village chiefs. The Tanna Vanuatu District was organized in 2014.

