



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

January 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)

46. Choloma Honduras - 12/10/2013
1. Iona Idaho South - 01/19/2014
2. Searcy Arkansas - January 26th, 2014
3. Upolu Samoa Tafua - January 26th, 2014

New Districts

7. Jordan Philippines - 12/22/2013
9. Yenagoa Nigeria - 12/29/2013
1. Nkawkaw Ghana - 01/05/2014

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

- None reported in January 2014

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Iranduba, Amazonas, Brazil (18th, 15,267)
- Shawinigan, Quebec, Canada (11th, 49,236)
- Cordele, Georgia (91st, 11,147)
- Mamfe, Ghana (N/A, N/A)
- Cusseta-Chattahoochee, Georgia (89th, 11,267)
- Euskirchen, Germany (157th, 55,620)
- Brixen, Italy (N/A, 20,921)
- La Trinité, Martinique (9th, 13,802)
- Awak, Fed. States of Micronesia (N/A, N/A)
- Vizcaino, Baja California Sur, Mexico (N/A, N/A)
- Afaha Inang, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Cabagtasan, Philippines (N/A, N/A)
- Kamphaeng Phet, Thailand (58th, 43,648)
- Nakhon Pathom, Thailand (14th, 120,818)
- Trojan, Zimbabwe (N/A, N/A)

Locations Recently Closed by the Church¹

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

- Vilcapaza, Peru (N/A, N/A)
- Fraile Muerto, Uruguay (88th, 3,168)

Updated List of Most Commonly Spoken Languages by Nominal LDS Membership

The Church has recently updated its list of the ten most commonly spoken languages by church members. Click [here](#) to access the infographic with updated figures and additional statistics. These languages include:

1. English (6.88 million)
2. Spanish (4.94 million)
3. Portuguese (1.27 million)
4. Tagalog (219,000)
5. Cebuano (150,000)
6. French (130,000)
7. Ilokano (128,000)
8. Japanese (124,000)
9. Samoan (115,000)
10. Tongan (90,500)

Rapid LDS Growth in North Dakota

Rapid congregational growth continues in North Dakota as a result of Latter-day Saints pursuing employment opportunities in the booming oil industry. The Bismarck North Dakota Stake currently has 9 wards and 7 branches whereas the stake had only 4 wards and 6 branches in early 2009. The Church organized its first stake in North Dakota in 1977 (Fargo) and its second

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

stake in 1996 (Bismarck). In 1999, the Church dedicated a small temple in Bismarck.

Missionaries Serving in Namibia

We recently received reports that the Church has reassigned young proselytizing elders to the African country of Namibia. The Church has experienced difficulties consistently securing foreign missionary visas in Namibia for many years resulting in intermittent full-time missionary work. Senior missionary couples have reported that many local members and church leaders have been heavily involved in finding, teaching, baptizing, and retaining new converts resulting in slow but steady growth despite disruptions to full-time missionaries serving. Currently the Church operates only two branches and a member group in the entire country. Namibia pertains to the Botswana/Namibia Mission.



Burmese Members Serving Missions

Missionaries report that three members from Yangon, Burma have recently begun serving full-time missions. Two of these missionaries are serving in Australia and one is serving in the United States. These new missionaries represent some of the first members to serve a mission from Burma. There appear to be less than 200 members in Burma at present. Burma currently pertains to the Thailand Bangkok Mission. No proselytizing missionaries have ever served in Burma within modern times.



First Young, Proselytizing Missionaries Arrive in Gabon

In mid-January 2014, the first young proselytizing LDS missionaries arrived in Gabon to begin formal missionary efforts in the capital, Libreville. There appear to be no more than 100 members in the entire country. The Church obtained government registration in 2013 and dedicated Gabon for missionary work in November 2013. Organized in late 2012, only one branch operates in the country in Libreville. Gabon currently pertains to the Democratic Republic of the Congo Kinshasa Mission.



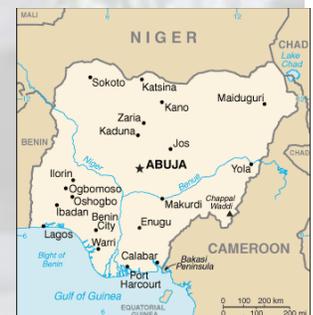
First Known Convert from Mauritania Joins the Church

We received a report from a senior missionary couple that a convert from the West African country of Mauritania recently joined the Church in Turkey. This new convert appears to be the first Mauritanian native to have ever joined the Church considering Mauritania is nearly 100% Muslim. Only a handful of native Mauritanias are known to adhere to Christianity. Severe restrictions on religious freedom exist in Mauritania, including the denial of citizenship for non-Muslims and the loss of citizenship for Muslims who convert to another religion. There has never been an LDS presence in Mauritania.



First District Organized in Bayelsa State, Nigeria

In December 2013, the Church organized a district in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The Church created its first branch in Yenagoa approximately four years ago and currently has four branches in the city. The new district becomes the Church's first district in Bayelsa State where approximately two million people reside. The Yenagoa Nigeria District currently pertains to the Nigeria Port Harcourt Mission.



NEW RESOURCES

CASE STUDIES

[Comparing the Growth of the LDS Church and the Community of Christ \(RLDS\) in French Polynesia](#)

Located in Oceania, French Polynesia is an overseas collectivity of France with approximately 277,000 inhabitants. This case study reviews the history of the LDS Church and the Community of Christ in French Polynesia. National outreach and congregational growth trends are compared between the two denominations. Factors that have influenced differing growth trends between the two denominations are discussed. The growth of the LDS Church and the Community of Christ in the Oceania region is compared and the growth of other missionary-focused Christian groups is summarized. Prospects for the future growth of the LDS Church and the Community of Christ are predicted.

[Decelerating LDS Growth in Taiwan](#)

The Church achieved nearly commensurate membership and congregational growth rates between the early 1990s and the mid-2000s but has since experienced a substantial slowdown in all church growth indicators. This case study reviews the history of the Church in Taiwan and discusses past church growth successes. Opportunities and challenges for future growth are discussed with particular emphasis on recent decelerating membership and congregational growth trends. LDS growth trends in other East Asian countries are compared to the Church in Taiwan and the size and growth of other missionary-focused Christian groups is summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

[LDS National Outreach Expansion in Fiji](#)

This case study reviews the history of the Church in Fiji and summarizes recent church growth and national outreach expansion developments. Past growth successes are described and opportunities and challenges for future growth are analyzed. The extent of LDS national outreach in other countries in Oceania is compared to the Church in Fiji and the size and growth trends of other nontraditional missionary-focused Christian groups in Fiji are compared to the LDS Church. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

[LDS Outreach among the Yoruba of West Africa](#)

The Yoruba number among the most populous peoples in West Africa with approximately 38 million people. The LDS Church has maintained a presence among the Yoruba for more than 30 years and has experienced slow to moderate growth in most locations during this period. This case study reviews the history of the Church in areas of Nigeria and Benin where the Yoruba traditionally reside. Past church growth and missionary successes are identified and opportunities and challenges for future growth are discussed. The growth of the Church among other major ethnic groups in Nigeria is summarized and the size and growth of other Christian groups

that proselyte the Yoruba is compared to the LDS Church. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

[Recent Missionary and Church Growth Developments in Angola](#)

The Church has maintained an official presence in Angola since 1996 although slow or stagnant membership and congregational growth occurred until the late 2000s. Significant church growth and missionary developments occurred in the late 2000s and early 2010s including the assignment of proselytizing missionaries, the organization of a district in Luanda, the opening of branches in additional cities, the assignment of missionaries to additional cities, and the establishment of the Angola Luanda Mission. This case study reviews the history of the Church in Angola and discusses recent missionary and church growth successes. Opportunities and challenges for future growth are examined. The growth of the Church in Angola is compared to other Portuguese-speaking Sub-Saharan African countries. The size and growth of other missionary-focused Christian groups is summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

[Recent Missionary and Church Growth Successes in Sierra Leone](#)

The LDS Church has maintained a presence in Sierra Leone for a quarter of a century and has at times experienced rapid membership and congregational growth. Within the past five or six years, LDS growth rates have accelerated and several other important milestones have been reached such as the creation of the first mission in the country, the organization of the first stake, and the opening of additional cities to missionary work. This case study reviews the history of the LDS Church in Sierra Leone and examines recent missionary and church growth successes. Opportunities and challenges for future growth are discussed. Recent LDS growth trends in other West African countries are reviewed and the size and growth trends of other missionary-focused Christian groups in Sierra Leone are summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

[Slow LDS Growth in Zambia](#)

Inhabited by 14.2 million, Zambia is a landlocked country located in Southern Africa. The Church has maintained a continuous presence in Zambia since 1992 but slow membership and congregational growth has occurred during most years. This case study reviews the history of the Church in Zambia and identifies past church growth successes. Opportunities and challenges for future growth are analyzed. The growth and size of the Church in Zambia is compared to the Church in other nearby Southern African nations and other missionary-focused Christian denominations in Zambia. Limitations to this case study are identified and the outlook for future growth is predicted.

NEW RESOURCES (continued)

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MISSIONARY WORK AND CHURCH GROWTH (MISSIOLOGY)

- [Nominalism](#)
- [Online Meetinghouse Locator](#)

STATUS OF LDS OUTREACH AMONG METROPOLITAN AREAS WITH ONE MILLION OR MORE INHABITANTS

- [China](#)
- [East Asia \(excluding China\)](#)
- [Middle East and North Africa](#)
- [South Asia and Southeast Asia](#)
- [Sub-Saharan Africa](#)