



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

January 2019

WELCOME!

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide monthly updates on the growth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 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)

1. Hurricane Utah North - January 6th, 2019
2. Pleasant Grove Utah Manila Creek - January 6th, 2019
3. Owerri Nigeria North – January 27th, 2019

New Districts

1. Masaka Uganda - January 6th, 2019
2. Busia Uganda/Kenya - January 13th, 2019
3. Gboko Nigeria - January 20th, 2019
4. Man Cote d'Ivoire – January 27th, 2019

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

None reported in January 2019

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Verata, Fiji (N/A, N/A)
- Ekwulobia, Nigeria (N/A, ~400,000)
- Nnewi, Nigeria (N/A, ~400,000)
- Tongo, Sierra Leone (N/A, ~40,000)
- Roma, Texas (244th, 9,765)

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

- Saint Nazaire, France (N/A, 69,719)
- Verdigris, Oklahoma (87th, 3,993)
- Dupax del Sur, Philippines (N/A, 19,111)
- Pulaski, Tennessee (70th, 7,870)

Twelve Missions to Close, Four New Missions to be Organized This July

The Church announced the closure of twelve missions this July, including:

- Argentina Posadas
- California Irvine
- California Long Beach
- California Rancho Cucamonga
- Canada Halifax
- Florida Tallahassee
- Georgia Macon
- Idaho Nampa
- Japan Sendai
- Korea Daejeon
- New York Utica
- Virginia Chesapeake

Of these twelve missions, six were organized in 2013 to accommodate the sudden increase in the number of members serving full-time missions. Furthermore, although eight of the 12 mission scheduled to close this July are located in the United States, there will still be 109 missions in the United States after these changes go into effect – a higher number of missions in the United States than at any time prior to 2013.

The Church also noted that four new missions will be organized in:

- Democratic Republic of the Congo Kinshasa East
- Guatemala Antigua
- Perú Limatambo
- Philippines Antipolo

Each of these four missions will be organized in nations where there has been significant increases in the number of members serving full-time missions.

Church Obtains Government Recognition in Mali, West Africa

Local members in the West African nation of Mali report that the Church obtained official recognition from the Malian government in January. The announcement was made to local members by President Nash of the Africa West Area. The Church has been in the process of obtaining official registration with the government for several months. The first official branch, the Bamako Branch, was organized in mid-2017. One member group also operates in Mali on the outskirts of Bamako in the village of Frako, and another member group appears likely to be organized near Frako in the near future. In November 2018, there were approximately 50 who attended meetings in Frako and 30 who attended meetings in the Bamako Branch. Mali is assigned to the Cote d'Ivoire Abidjan Mission. The Church reported 42 members in Mali as of April 2018. At least an additional 20 converts were baptized before the end of the year, suggesting that church membership may be as high as 60-70 as of year-end 2018. Local members report that full-time missionaries may be assigned to Mali as soon as within the next couple months.



Statistical Pages Updated on Church's Official Newsroom Site

For the first time, the Church has published its year-end 2017 figures by country and state for several metrics [online](#). These metrics include:

- Membership
- Congregations (breakdown of wards/branches)
- Stakes
- Districts
- Missions
- Family History Centers
- Temples

With this information made easily accessible to the public, the Church now publishes nearly all of the data that was previously included in the defunct Deseret Church News Almanac series that ran from 1974 to 2013. Additionally, the Church has published graphs that display membership and congregational growth by world region to provide greater context to growth trends.

Several Notable Developments in Nigeria

The Church organized its third district in Benue State, Nigeria in January in the city of Gboko. Information on what branches are assigned to the new district remains unavailable. The Church organized its first official branch in Benue State in 2015. Today, there are now at least 10 branches in Benue State. The most rapid growth has occurred in Otukpo where the number of branches has increased from one to five in the past four years. This development highlights the importance of opening previously unreached areas to missionary work and organizing congregations in these locations. There remain several states in Nigeria without an official Church presence despite a sizable Christian minority or majority, such as Kogi State (4.5 million people), Adamawa State (4.2 million people), and Taraba State (3.1 million people). Also during January, the Church created its first official congregations in two cities in Anambra State which each appear to have at least 400,000 people (Nnewi and Ekwulobia). Some estimates place the number of people who live within the combined metropolitan area of Nnewi as high as two million. Lastly, the Church created its second stake in Owerri (population: 540,000) at the end of the month. Owerri was one of the oldest stakes in Nigeria to have never divided to create another stake since its initial organization. The Owerri Nigeria Stake was created in 1998.



Second Branch in Upper East Region, Ghana Organized

Last Sunday, the Church organized its second branch in Bolgatanga, Upper East Region, Ghana. The first branch in this predominantly Muslim region of Ghana was organized in Bolgatanga in 2016. Missionaries have reported steady growth in the number of active members since the first member group opened in late 2015. Receptivity in this region has been good and prospects appear favorable for additional growth, especially if member groups or branches open in additional cities in the region such as Navrongo and Paga. However, there appears a need to translate Church materials into local languages native to this region such as Frafra and Kusaa to improve Gospel comprehension and testimony development.



Continued Growth in Sierra Leone

Missionaries serving in Sierra Leone report that the Kenema Sierra Leone District now meets the minimal membership requirements in order for a stake to be organized. Prospects appear favorable for the district to become a stake within the next 1-2 years as additional leadership preparations are underway. Also, the Church officially organized a member group in the city of Tongo in eastern Sierra Leone. Missionaries in Kenema visit investigators and members in Tongo at least once a week. The member group now has its own meetinghouse. It appears the group will become a branch in the near future.



Two New Districts Organized in Uganda

The Church in Uganda organized new districts in two additional cities during January, thereby increasing the number of cities with a stake or district from two to four. The Masaka Uganda District and the Busia Uganda/Kenya District were organized and the special conferences to create the new districts were each attended by slightly more than 300 people. The Church has reported significant growth in both Busia and Masaka during the past couple years as active membership has appeared to triple in these areas during this time. Prospects appear favorable for the formation of additional districts in the foreseeable future such as in Gulu, Lira, and Mbale once each of these locations as at least three branches.



Significant Ward Realignment in Singapore – Four Wards Discontinued, One Ward Organized

The Church [announced](#) a significant restructuring of wards in Singapore. The 10 wards in the stake have been realigned into seven wards. Four wards were discontinued and one young single adult (YSA) ward was organized. The Church in Singapore has historically reported steady membership growth, but in the past few years growth has been stagnant or has slightly declined. As of year-end 2017, there were 3,367 members. Historical data on church growth trends in Singapore can be found [here](#).



New Congregations in Brazil

The Church in Brazil has created several new congregations during the month of January in cities such as Curitiba (2), Fortaleza, Sao Jose do Rio Preto, and Sorocaba. There are now 2,117 official congregations in Brazil. Also, the number of wards in Brazil reached the 1,700 milestone for the first time during January. Many new stakes appear likely to be organized during the next 1-2 years, specifically in cities such as Belem, Curitiba, Fortaleza, Joao Pessoa, and Ribeirao Preto.



UPDATED RESOURCES

REACHING THE NATIONS COUNTRY PROFILES

We continue to update the country profiles for our comprehensive work, *Reaching the Nations: International Church Growth Almanac*. The following country profiles were updated and posted on our website, www.cumorah.com, during January 2019. We will continue to update additional country profiles in the coming months, with the goal to release the next edition of the almanac by 2020:

- [Grenada](#)
- [Malta](#)
- [Saint Vincent and the Grenadines](#)
- [Ukraine](#)