



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on Church Growth and Missionary Work for
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

January 2020

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)

None reported in January 2020

New Districts

1. Kuopio Finland - January 12th, 2020
2. Kasumbalesa DR Congo - January 19th, 2020

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

None reported in January 2020

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Icó, Ceará, Brazil (32nd, 26,080)
- Mandeville, Louisiana (45th, 11,560)
- Ponciano Arriaga, San Luis Potosi, Mexico (25th, 6,665)
- Ugbawka, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Siargao, Philippines (exact location unknown)
- Santa Ana, Venezuela (148th, 29,800)

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

- Philippi, West Virginia (54th, 2,966)

District Reinstated in Finland

The Church reinstated the Kuopio Finland District in mid-January. Approximately 260 attended the special meeting to organize the district. The district appeared to be first organized sometime in the 1970s or earlier, but closed in 2006. The new district has four branches—three of which were mission branches that did not pertain to a stake or district. There are now two stakes and three districts in Finland. Extremely slow membership and congregational growth has occurred in Finland during the past two decades. There were 4,880 members in Finland as of year-end 2018. There are currently 15 wards and 16 branches.



New District in the DR Congo

The Church recently organized its first district in the city of Kasumbalesa in the DR Congo. There are four branches in the city and surrounding communities. The first branch in Kasumbalesa was organized in 2011. The number of districts in the DR Congo has steadily fallen in the past decade from five to one due to the advancement of districts into stakes and few new districts being created. There are now two districts in the DR Congo headquartered in Kasumbalesa (2020) and Ngandajika (2016). Additional districts appear likely to be organized soon in Matadi, Fungurume, Kisangani, and Uvira.



Significant Growth in Kisumu, Kenya

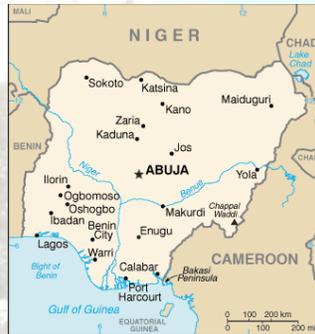


There are now 441 members in the Kisumu Kenya District—a major increase in the area from when the Church was first established with only six members in 2009. The Church operated only one branch in the area until last year when three additional branches were organized. This development

is significant as the Church in many areas of the world may not appear to experience significant growth for many years as no localized statistics are reported for membership. However, the creation of branches and organizational units such as stakes or districts often indicates significant progress that has occurred for many years but goes unnoticed until such a milestone is achieved. The Church reported a 4.0% increase in membership during 2018 in Kenya—the highest annual membership growth rate for the country since 2012.

Two Branches Discontinued in Nigeria

The Church recently discontinued two mission branches in the Nigeria Benin City Mission. The Adonte 2nd and Kwale 2nd Branches were discontinued and the branches were combined with the one other remaining branch in each of these populated places. The discontinuation of a ward or branch is extremely rare for



the Church in Nigeria. With the exception of the closure of administrative district branches when a district becomes a stake, the last time the Church discontinued a branch in Nigeria was in 2011 (two branches in the Akamkpa Nigeria District, one branch in the Ikot Ekpene Nigeira District). It is unclear why the Church closed these two branches in the Nigeria Benin City Mission as the Kwale 2nd Branch was organized in mid-2019 and the Adonte 2nd Branch was created in 2017.

Outreach Expansion Efforts in Malawi

Senior missionaries serving in the Zambia Lusaka Mission report ongoing efforts to establish an official Church presence in the city of Kasungu. Located north of the capital city of Lilongwe, Kasungu has approximately 150 people who attend unofficial church meetings. Senior missionaries report plans to baptize 30-40 of these prospective members in early February 2020. The Church has cautiously investigated and taught these individuals for many years. The Church in Malawi struggles with local leadership development, language barriers between full-time missionaries and the local Chichewa-speaking population, and a lack of resources dedicated to expanding the Church's presence. There remain only two cities in the entire country of 21 million people with a branch even though the Church has maintained an official presence in Malawi for two decades.



NEW/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 2020. We will continue to update additional country profiles in the coming months, with the goal to release the next edition of the almanac in late 2020:

- [Chad](#)
- [Equatorial Guinea](#)
- [Guinea-Bissau](#)
- [Niger](#)
- [São Tomé and Príncipe](#)
- [The Gambia](#)