



# THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

July 2013

## 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)

26. Warri Nigeria - 7/7/2013

### New Districts

No new districts created in July 2013

### Discontinued Stakes and Districts

No stakes or districts discontinued in July 2013

### Cities Recently Reached by the Church

(city population rank, most recent population estimate)  
precise population data from [www.citypopulation.de](http://www.citypopulation.de)

- Irece, Bahia, Brazil (22<sup>nd</sup>, 58,350)
- Santo Antônio da Patrulha, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil (69<sup>th</sup>, 24,210)
- Aboisso, Cote d'Ivoire (38<sup>th</sup>, 37,654)
- Bonoua, Cote d'Ivoire (N/A, 32,000)
- Gagnoa, Cote d'Ivoire (10<sup>th</sup>, 123,184)
- Techiman, Ghana (14<sup>th</sup>, 99,721)
- Alotenango, Guatemala (69<sup>th</sup>, 17,410)
- Limbé, Haiti (18<sup>th</sup>, 39,756)
- Oizumi, Japan (N/A, 40,257)
- Kuantan, Malaysia (12<sup>th</sup>, 366,229)
- Gandara, Philippines (N/A, N/A)
- Pataquid, Philippines (N/A, N/A)
- Sampaloc, Philippines (N/A, N/A)
- Angarsk, Russia (82<sup>nd</sup>, 233,765)
- Pulaski, Tennessee (70<sup>th</sup>, 7,870)
- Kodyma, Ukraine (N/A, 8,925)

### Cities Recently Closed by the Church<sup>1</sup>

(city population rank, most recent population estimate) data from [www.citypopulation.de](http://www.citypopulation.de)

- Mata de São João, Bahia, Brazil (66<sup>th</sup>, 20,111)
- Minas de Barroterán, Coahuila, Mexico (25<sup>th</sup>, 7,842)
- Whiteville, North Carolina (137<sup>th</sup>, 5,394)

### Rapid LDS Outreach Expansion in Southwestern Cote d'Ivoire

Rapid LDS growth has begun in southwestern Cote d'Ivoire. Of the 13 branches currently functioning in cities within this area of the country, 10 have been created since the beginning of 2012. The Church opened its first branches in four additional cities including Bouafle, Gagnoa, Meagui, and Ouragahio. Unprecedented rapid growth in national outreach expansion in southwestern Cote d'Ivoire may signal the creation of a second mission in the country based in Yamoussoukro sometime within the near future.



### Extraordinary High Member Activity Levels Achieved in Recently Organized Branches in Sub-Saharan Africa

The Church has reported some of the highest member activity and convert retention rates in the world in two recently organized branches in Ghana and Madagascar. Mission leaders in the Madagascar Antananarivo

<sup>1</sup> \*Cities where the only ward or branch was closed; some of these cities may continue to have a dependent unit and/or missionaries assigned

Mission report that the remote Saradroa Branch operates in a rural area and generally has 96% of members on church records attending church weekly. This is also the same percentage of tithing faithfulness for this branch of approximately 100 members. This finding demonstrates the impressive, high rates of member activity that can be achieved in rural communities which are rarely reached by formal missionary efforts due to difficult access and small populations spread over large geographical areas. In Ghana, missionaries serving in the Ghana Kumasi Mission report that the Bibiani Branch has 300 members on church records and only one member who does not attend regularly. Bibiani is a small city that has no LDS branches operating in nearby cities and towns.

### LDS Branch Organized in Small Town in Ukraine

In July, the Church organized the Fyodorovka Branch in the small town of Kodyma. With less than 10,000 inhabitants, Kodyma is one of the least populated locations in Ukraine that has had an official church unit organized. A local member serves as branch president in what is likely a tiny branch with few members in the area. Kodyma is located in northern Odessa Oblast on the border with Moldova. Currently one other branch functions in a small town in Ukraine: The Bahate Branch in Krym (Crimea) Oblast.



### Rapid LDS Growth in Benin

Rapid LDS growth is occurring in the West African country of Benin. Missionaries report that the Cococodji Branch and the Jericho Branch were recently organized in the Cotonou Benin District. The Cococodji Branch initially began meeting as a member group less than six months ago and currently has over 100 attending church services. There are now eight branches in the member district - five of which were organized within the past year - with several additional branches to be organized in the coming months according to missionary reports.



### Outreach Expansion Efforts Delayed in the Vanuatu Port Vila Mission

Missionaries serving in Vanuatu report that some recent petitions by investigators to receive missionary lessons and establish a church presence in their communities have not been granted. For example, a village chief from the unreached island of Pentecost recently met with

mission leaders and requested missionaries come to his village and teach his people. Missionaries report that he was told that the Church is currently in the process of strengthening its congregations in other areas of the country and would not be able to open Pentecost to missionary activity within the foreseeable future. Organized in July 2012, the Vanuatu Port Vila Mission numbers among the largest missions in Oceania and currently administers Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, and New Caledonia. Some additional petitions from isolated members and investigators in the mission for a church establishment in their communities have not resulted in the organization of a member group or the assignment of missionaries due to the large administrative burden of the mission and limited numbers of local church leaders. For example, the Church baptized several converts and met with isolated members in the town of Gizo in the Solomon Islands but mission leaders decided to postpone a formal church establishment due to the town's remote location and a lack of local church leadership.

### LDS Growth Slows in Mongolia

The Church in Mongolia has experienced a dramatic slowdown in virtually all indicators of growth over the past couple years. No new wards or branches have been organized since 2010 and annual membership growth rates have slowed from over 10% every year prior to 2005 to less than 4% in 2011 and 2012. We will be posting a case study on this growth development during the month of August.

### City Opens to Missionary Work in Bahia State, Brazil

Missionaries serving in the Brazil Salvador Mission report that the city of Irecê has opened to missionary work. Irecê was previously the second most populous city in Bahia State without an LDS presence, with nearly 60,000 inhabitants. An official branch was organized within the past month.

### Rapid Growth in Abuja, Nigeria

The Church has experienced rapid growth in Abuja - the capital city of Nigeria. The Church organized the first stake in central Nigeria in Abuja a year ago with eight wards and three branches. The stake currently has nine wards and four branches, suggesting that the creation of a second stake may occur within the foreseeable future as stakes generally require at least five wards to operate.



## Reversing Declining LDS Congregational Growth in Portugal

With the creation of several new branches in the past year, the Church in Portugal has recently reversed a trend of decreasing numbers of wards and branches. This suggests that the Church has begun to experience increasing numbers of active members. We estimate that approximately 10-15% of LDS membership on the records in Portugal are active - one of the lowest member activity rates in the world. New branches have recently been organized in Bragança, Covilha, Lagos, and Mirandela.



# NEW RESOURCES

## CASE STUDIES

### [Analysis of LDS Growth in Manaus, Brazil](#)

The most populous metropolitan area within the Brazilian Amazon Basin, Manaus ranks as the thirteenth most populous metropolitan area in Brazil with an estimated 1.98 million inhabitants. This case study reviews the history of the LDS Church in Manaus and examines successes, opportunities, and challenges for future growth. A comparative growth section compares LDS growth in Manaus to other major cities in Brazil and contrasts LDS growth in Manaus to other nontraditional Christian groups. Limitations to this case study and prospects for future growth are discussed.

### [Rapid Growth in the Central Democratic Republic of the Congo](#)

The LDS Church has experienced rapid growth in the central DR Congo within the past decade as evidenced by all growth indicators - including increasing numbers of congregations, active membership, stakes and districts, local members serving full-time missions, and additional cities opening to missionary work. This case study reviews the history of the Church in the central DR Congo by city and identifies successes, opportunities, and challenges for growth. A comparative growth section compares the growth of the Church in the central DR Congo to other areas in Sub-Saharan Africa that have experienced rapid LDS growth and contrasts the growth of other outreach-oriented faiths to the LDS Church. Limitations to this case study are noted and future prospects for growth are predicted.

### [Recent Expansion of LDS Mission Outreach in the Brazil Manaus Mission](#)

During 2012 and 2013, unprecedented outreach expansion began in the Brazil Manaus Mission. This case study reviews the history of mission outreach expansion within the current boundaries of the Brazil Manaus Mission. Successes, opportunities, and challenges for expanding missionary work into additional locations within the mission are analyzed and discussed. A comparative growth section compares recent outreach expansion efforts within the Brazil Manaus Mission to other missions in Brazil. The growth and size of other proselytizing Christian groups in the region is described and compared to the LDS Church. Limitations to data and findings in this case study are discussed. Lastly, a future prospects section predicts the outlook for the growth of the Church in the Brazil Manaus Mission.

### [Recent LDS Church Planting Efforts in the Tennessee Nashville Mission](#)

This case study examines recent mission outreach expansion and church planting successes in the Tennessee Nashville Mission. A summary of these events is provided followed by successes, opportunities, and challenges for growth. A comparative growth section compares recent church planting successes in the Tennessee Nashville Mission to other missions in the United States and contrasts the extent of outreach of the LDS Church to other proselytizing denominations. Limitations to these findings and data are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

### [Recent Missionary Successes in Pohnpei, Micronesia](#)

The LDS Church has experienced steady growth in Pohnpei over the past several decades as evidenced by new branch creations and active membership growth. Within the past year, missionaries have reported accelerated growth on Pohnpei as more members have begun to serve full-time missions and the district has become closer to reaching stakehood. This case study briefly reviews the history, culture, and demographics of Pohnpei. The history of the LDS Church and recent church growth developments are examined. Successes, opportunities, and future prospects for growth are analyzed. The growth and size of the LDS Church on Pohnpei is compared to other states in the Federated States of Micronesia and other countries in Oceania. The size of nontraditional proselytism groups is highlighted. Lastly, prospects for future growth are discussed.

### [The Surge in the Full-time Missionary Force: Unprecedented Opportunities for Accelerating LDS Growth](#)

This case study reviews the announcement reducing the minimum age for missionary service and the subsequent surge in the number of members called to serve full-time missions. The potential impact on membership growth and the dynamics of supply and demand-sided factors are discussed. Opportunities for accelerating church growth are identified and examined for major regions in the world with the greatest potential for growth. Challenges for accelerating LDS growth through increasing the number of missionaries serving is analyzed. Limitations to this case study are reviewed and prospects for future growth are predicted.

# NEW RESOURCES

## ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MISSIONARY WORK AND CHURCH GROWTH (MISSIOLOGY)

- [First Stake \(by country\)](#)
- [Stake](#)
- [Sensitive and Semi-Sensitive Countries](#)