



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

July 2016

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. Ikot Akpatek Nigeria - June 5th, 2016
- 62. Taravao Tahiti - July 17th, 2016

New Districts

- 17. Agboville Cote d'Ivoire - June 26th, 2016
- 18. Majes Perú District - July 17th, 2016

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

- 6. Tubuai Australes District (French Polynesia)

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Bawjiasi, Ghana (N/A, N/A)
- Quilenco, Guatemala (N/A, N/A)
- Calvillo, Aguascalientes, Mexico (5th, 19,742)
- Gboko, Nigeria (35th, 330,000)
- Inman, South Carolina (165th, 2,321)
- Uljin, South Korea (N/A, 14,294)

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

- Chicoral, Colombia (N/A, 7,007)
- Silkeborg, Denmark (14th, 42,724)
- Djibouti, Djibouti (1st, 475,322)
- Schweinfurt, Germany (171st, 53,415)
- Frankfort, Indiana (52nd, 16,422)
- Linn, Missouri (310th, 1,459)
- Ciudad Eten, Peru (N/A, N/A)
- Cowpens, South Carolina (173rd, 2,162)

Young, Full-time Missionaries Withdrawn from Turkey

The Church has withdrawn its 15 young, full-time missionaries (e.g. "volunteers") from Turkey due to recent political instability. These missionaries



have been temporarily reassigned to the Germany Berlin Mission to work among Turkish populations in the Berlin area. It is anticipated that these missionaries will return to Turkey within the foreseeable future. The Church's official statement on this announcement can be found [here](#). The Church first assigned young, full-time missionaries to Turkey in February 2012 and organized the first mission in Turkey, the Central Eurasian Mission, in 2015.

Progress in Laos

A recent report from Vientiane, Laos indicates that the Vientiane 1st Branch has seven recently returned missionaries, four members currently serving full-time missions, and five members preparing to go on missions in the near future. This is a significant achievement considering no proselytism occurs in Laos due to government restrictions on religious freedom. The first young, full-time missionaries began serving in Laos in February 2013 to provide member support and teach investigators in the branch meetinghouse on Sundays. The Church created a second branch in Vientiane in mid-2015. Laos is currently administered by the Thailand Bangkok Mission.



Accelerating Numbers of Convert Baptisms in West Africa

LDS growth in the Africa West Area continues to accelerate. It is anticipated that the number of convert baptisms will exceed 27,000 during 2016 based upon reports from the area presidency. To contrast, the Africa West Area set a previous all-time high of nearly 20,000 convert baptisms for the year 2013.

Sole LDS Branch in Djibouti Discontinued

The Church recently discontinued its only official congregation in the East African nation of Djibouti - the Djibouti Military Branch. The Church organized the branch in 2010 to administer a small number of military personnel stationed at Camp Lemonnier. There do not appear to be any native Djiboutian members who reside in the country.



Rapid Growth in Abobo District, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire

Rapid LDS growth continues in Cote d'Ivoire. Within the past month, the Church has created five new branches in the Abobo Cote d'Ivoire West Stake, including three new branches from a single ward. Three years ago, the original Abobo Cote d'Ivoire Stake included eight wards, whereas today the two Abobo stakes administer 20 wards and six branches. The Abobo District of Abidjan supports a population of 1.03 million people and has 31 LDS congregations.



Third LDS Branch Organized in Benue State, Nigeria

The Church recently organized its first branch in Gboko, Benue State, Nigeria. The first official branches in Benue State were organized less than eight months ago in the cities of Makurdi and Otukpo. The predominantly Christian Tiv people traditionally inhabit Benue State and have received LDS outreach in their homeland since late 2015.



Congregational Decline in Peru

Congregational decline continues in Peru. Since the beginning of 2016, the Church in Peru has reported a decline of 10 congregations, suggesting ongoing problems with member inactivity, convert attrition, and local leadership development. Since 2011, the Church in



Peru has reported a net decline of 34 congregations even though membership has increased by over 60,000 during this period. These findings indicate that despite efforts to improve the efficiency of the LDS missionary program worldwide within the past 12 years, there are countries with significant LDS populations, particularly in Latin America, where progress has been minimal.

New Branch in Paraguay

For the first time in many years, the Church in Paraguay has organized a new branch. The Ita Paso Branch was recently organized from a member group in the Encarnacion Paraguay District. There appear to be dozens of additional member groups that operate within



Paraguay, many of which may also become branches in the foreseeable future. Slight decreases in the number of official congregations and decelerating membership growth have occurred in the Church in Paraguay within recent years.

Congregational Growth in the United States Slightly Slows in 2016 Compared to 2015

Congregational growth in the United States has slightly slowed in 2016 compared to recent years. Thus far, the Church has experienced a net



increase of 61 wards and branches for the United States in 2016. If this rate of growth continues for the entire year, the Church in the United States will experience an annual congregational growth rate of 0.7% for 2016. Annual congregational growth rates were 1.1% and 1.0% for 2014 and 2015, respectively. This deceleration in congregational growth appears attributed to an increase in the number of wards and branches being discontinued, particularly in California and in the eastern United States.

New Ward in Togo

The Church recently organized its tenth ward in the Lomé Togo Stake, the Adakpame Ward. Created less than three years ago from a district, the Lomé Togo Stake is the first stake to be organized in Togo and only stake in the country at present. The stake has grown from eight wards and four branches to 10 wards and seven branches at present. Due to steady congregational growth and membership growth, the stake appears likely to divide within the next 12 months.



CORRECTION – The church growth development noted during the June 2016 edition of our newsletter *First LDS Stake Organized in Ekiti State, Nigeria*, should read *First LDS Branch Organized in Ekiti State, Nigeria*.

NEW/UPDATED RESOURCES

STATISTICAL PROFILES

State-by-state LDS statistical profiles on cumorah.com have been updated for all states in the United States to reflect year-end 2015 LDS membership, congregational, and stake/district data. We hope to post province-by-provide statistical profiles for Canada during August.