



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

May 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)

13. Antigua Guatemala - 5/5/2013
14. Mindelo Cape Verde - 5/5/2013
15. Bloemfontein South Africa - 5/19/2013
16. Chapecó Brazil - 5/19/2013
17. Sydney Australia Fairfield - 5/19/2013

New Districts

No new districts reported in May 2013

Cities Recently Reached by the Church

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

- La Punta, Argentina (N/A, N/A)
- Kokokodji, Benin (N/A, N/A)
- Reyes, Bolivia (N/A, N/A)
- Jutai, Amazonas, Brazil (33rd, 10,552)
- Mainz, Germany (39th, 99,237)
- Montevarchi, Italy (N/A, 23,971)
- Agbani, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Obollo, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Mirandela, Portugal (93rd, 10,600)
- Winchester, Tennessee (63rd, 8,530)

Cities Recently Closed by the Church¹

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

- Fayette, Alabama (121st, 4,619)
- Coutances, France (N/A, ~10,000)
- San Lorenzo, Guatemala (N/A, N/A)

The Number of Full-time Missionaries Serving Reaches 68,700

On May 29th, the Church reported that the number of full-time missionaries serving reached 68,700; approximately 10,000 more than at year-end 2012. The Church projects that the number of missionaries serving will reach 85,000 this fall. This is the first time any official projection has been provided to the public since the reduced minimum mission age announcement in October 2012. It is likely that the Church will experience approximately a 50% increase in the number of full-time missionaries serving within the one-year period between October 2012 and October 2013. For more information on this development, refer to a Deseret News article found [here](#).

Progress in Montenegro

Missionaries serving in the Adriatic South Mission report that missionaries have baptized four converts within the first year that missionaries have been assigned to the tiny European country of Montenegro. At least three of these converts appear to still be active in the Church at present and there are several additional investigators who attend church and may be baptized in the coming months. Currently an administrative branch services a member group in the capital city of Podgorica.



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

New Ward Created in Germany

For the first time in many years, the Church has created a new ward in Germany that is not designated for military personnel. The Mainz Ward was recently organized in the Frankfurt Germany Stake from a division of the Wiesbaden Ward, bringing the total number of units in the stake to eleven (nine wards, two branches). The organization of the new Mainz Ward is also of interest as it is the first new unit organized in many years in a German city without a previous LDS ward or branch operating. The Church in Germany has experienced stagnant membership growth and slight decline in the number of congregations for over a decade. The organization of the new ward may indicate progress towards reversing this decade-long trend but member and missionary reports indicate that low receptivity, member activity problems, and convert retention difficulties continue to pose challenges for growth.



Rapid Growth in Kananga, DR Congo

Rapid LDS growth continues in the Congolese city of Kananga. In 2011, the Church organized its first stake with six wards and two branches in the city. Two years later there are now eleven wards in the city. Prospects appear favorable for the Church to create a mission in Kananga and organize a second stake within the near future. A recent stake conference had over 2,800 in attendance; a congregation so large that it overflowed the largest building in town that the Church rented for the conference.



Unprecedented Numbers of Members from Pohnpei Begin Full-time Missionary Service

Senior missionaries report that unprecedented numbers of members are beginning to serve missions from Pohnpei, Micronesia as a result of the reduced minimum mission age. Prospects appear favorable for the opening of a couple more congregations within the near future as missionaries have focused on establishing at least one more member group on the southern part of the island. Additional numbers of returned missionaries has good prospects in the medium term to help the Pohnpei Caroline Islands District become a stake.

First Missionaries Arrive to Island in Vanuatu and Heal Village Chief

Missionaries serving in Vanuatu report that a village chief has permitted missionaries to visit a small island nearby the capital city Port Vila that has previously received no LDS outreach. Missionaries obtained permission after meeting the village chief and healing him from a medical condition. The Church has experienced rapid growth in Vanuatu in recent years, with the number of branches increasing from 12 to 30 and the number of members increasing from 2,042 to 5,491 within the past decade. However, there have been very few instances of missionaries traveling to additional islands to commence proselytism efforts.



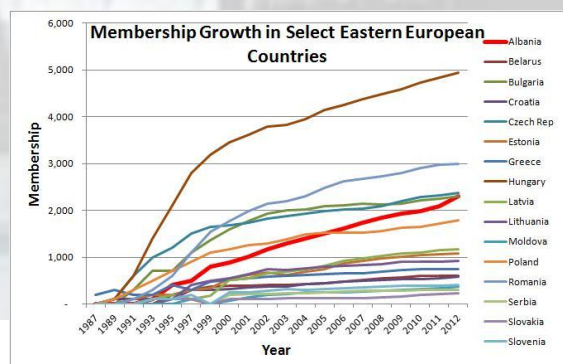
Tribal Chief Joins the Church in Ghana

Missionaries serving in Ghana report that a tribal chief in one village in the Konongo area has recently joined the Church. The conversion of tribal chiefs has excellent potential to accelerate church growth in the largely unreached rural population of the country that resides in villages due to the influence of these leaders on their communities. The Church may experience greater success in overcoming negative stereotypes and misinformation about Latter-day Saints if similar situations occur in which community leaders join the Church and remain active.



Steady Membership Growth Continues in Albania

The Church in Albania continues to experience more rapid membership growth than other Eastern European countries. In 2012, membership increased by 9.8%; significantly higher than other countries in the region. See below for graph with regional membership growth.



NEW RESOURCES

CASE STUDIES

[Analysis of LDS Growth in Guatemala City](#)

In early 2013, the Church reported twenty stakes, three missions, one temple, and one missionary training center (MTC) based within Guatemala City. This case study reviews the growth of the Church in Guatemala City as indicated by stake and congregational growth. Successes, opportunities, challenges, and future prospects for growth are discussed. A comparative growth section compares LDS growth in Guatemala City to other cities in Guatemala and Latin America and contrasts LDS growth with other nontraditional proselytizing Christian groups. Limitations to these findings are identified and prospects for future growth are discussed.

[LDS Outreach among Sudanese Expatriates](#)

This case study briefly reviews the history of Sudan since the mid-twentieth century, the worldwide number and distribution of Sudanese refugees over the past half century, and LDS outreach among Sudanese. Successes, opportunities, and challenges for church growth and missionary activity are analyzed and discussed. A comparative growth section compares LDS outreach among other African groups outside their homelands and contrasts LDS missionary efforts among expatriate Sudanese with other nontraditional, proselytizing Christian groups. Limitations to this case study are identified. A future prospects section predicts the outlook for future missionary efforts and church growth among expatriate Sudanese.

[Metropolitan Areas with the Most Stakes without a Temple](#)

The Church has frequently selected metropolitan areas for constructing new temples due to large numbers of temple-going members concentrated within small geographical areas, adequate numbers of local members to staff temple personnel, and accessibility for membership residing within the metropolitan area and in surrounding areas. This case study identifies metropolitan and urban areas around the world with four or more stakes and no LDS temple. Factors that influence temple announcements are identified and reviewed. Reasons that temples have not been announced in metropolitan areas and cities with four or more stakes are examined. Future prospects for additional metropolitan areas to receive temples concludes this case study.

[Rapid LDS Growth in Lome, Togo](#)

Officially established in the late 1990s, the Church in Togo has experienced some of the most rapid church growth in the world during the past five years as church membership has doubled and the number of branches has nearly quadrupled. This case study reviews the history of the Church in Togo and highlights statistical figures that evidence rapid church growth. Successes, opportunities, and challenges for growth are discussed. A comparative growth section compares LDS growth in Lome to other countries and cities West Africa and contrasts the size of other nontraditional Christian groups in Lome to the LDS Church. Limitations to data and findings are discussed. Prospects for future growth are examined.

[Prospective LDS Outreach Expansion in Sulawesi, Indonesia](#)

This case study briefly reviews the history of the Church in Sulawesi and its current status as of early 2013. Within the past three decades, only one branch has operated on Sulawesi in Manado. Recommendations for expanding outreach and spurring church growth are provided. Challenges for missionary activity in Sulawesi are identified and discussed.

[The Opening of Tamale, Ghana to Missionary Work](#)

The opening of Tamale to formal proselytism marks the first time the Church in Ghana has initiated missionary work in the predominantly Muslim north. This case study reviews the recent establishment of an LDS missionary presence in Tamale and identifies successes, opportunities, and challenges for future growth. A comparative growth section compares the opening of Tamale to missionary work to other cities in West Africa and contrasts LDS outreach in Tamale to other proselytizing, nontraditional Christian groups. Limitations to this case study are discussed and prospects for future growth are summarized.