



# THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

May 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)

- 29. Cookeville Tennessee - May 1st, 2016
- 30. Ikot Eyo Nigeria - May 1st, 2016
- 31. Mesa Arizona Flatiron - May 1st, 2016
- 32. Sydney Australia Prairiewood - May 1st, 2016
- 33. Bell Ville Argentina - May 8th, 2016
- 34. Prague Czech Republic - May 15th, 2016
- 35. Saratoga Springs Utah Mount Saratoga - 5/15/2016
- 36. Tarija Bolivia Tabladita - May 15th, 2016
- 37. Yamoransa Ghana - May 22nd, 2016
- 38. Kinshasa DR Congo Ngaba - May 29th, 2016
- 39. Ulaanbaatar Mongolia East - May 29th, 2016

- La Trinidad, Nicaragua (45<sup>th</sup>, 11,861)
- Ugep, Nigeria (42<sup>nd</sup>, ~200,000)
- Lafayette, Tennessee (115<sup>th</sup>, 4,474)
- Penhalonga, Zimbabwe (N/A, N/A)

### 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](http://www.citypopulation.de)

- Indiana, Sao Paulo, Brazil (531<sup>st</sup>, 4,127)
- Wahpeton, North Dakota (11<sup>th</sup>, 7,766)
- Motanau, Papua New Guinea (N/A, N/A)
- Tunkhannock, Pennsylvania (696<sup>th</sup>, 1,836)
- Curahuasi, Peru (N/A, N/A)
- Des Moines, Washington (41<sup>st</sup>, 29,673)

### New Districts

- 10. Três Rios Brazil - April 17th, 2016

### Discontinued Stakes and Districts

- 4. Yerevan Armenia Stake
- 4. Kuriva Papua New Guinea District
- 5. Brno Czech District

### Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Fagaitua, American Samoa (N/A, ~500)
- El Portrillo, Chaco, Argentina (N/A, N/A)
- Maféré, Cote d'Ivoire (N/A, ~35,000)
- Satellite Beach, Florida (306<sup>th</sup>, 10,109)
- Assin Kwameatta, Ghana (N/A, N/A)
- Komenda, Ghana (N/A, N/A)
- Villa Juárez, Aguascalientes, Mexico (13<sup>th</sup>, 4,888)
- Arandas, Jalisco, Mexico (12<sup>th</sup>, 52,175)
- Jalostotitlán, Jalisco, Mexico (31<sup>st</sup>, 24,423)
- Choix, Sinaloa, Mexico (21<sup>st</sup>, 9,306)
- Condega, Nicaragua (49<sup>th</sup>, 10,648)

### First Stake Created in the Czech Republic

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf organized its first stake in the Czech Republic on May 15<sup>th</sup>. The Prague Czech Republic Stake was organized from the Prague Czech and Brno Czech Districts. The new stake includes the following six wards and seven branches: the Brno, Hradec Kralove, Jicin, Ostrava, Prague, and Plzen Wards, and the Ceske Budejovice, Jihlava, Liberec, Olomouc, Trebic, Uherske Hradiste, and Zlin Branches. The Prague Czech District was originally organized in 1982. Prior to the creation of the new stake, the Czech Republic was the country with the eighth most members without a stake according to year-end 2015 membership data. There were approximately 2,500 members and 13 branches in the Czech Republic as of year-end 2015.



## Sole LDS Stake in Armenia Discontinued

Missionaries serving in Armenia report that the Yerevan Armenia Stake was discontinued on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Organized in 2013, the stake returned to district status and all wards were downgraded to branches. Missionaries report that the primary reason the stake was discontinued was due to improper handling of church administrative responsibilities by members and local church leaders. Many of the previous church leaders were released from their callings during the conference. Missionaries indicate that a large portion of members attending the conference, perhaps as large as one-third to one-half of those in attendance, left the conference early after the announcement was made that the stake was discontinued in protest of the decision.

The news of the stake discontinuation in Armenia is disappointing and points to chronic problems with a lack of "real growth" and spiritual maturity among many members in the region. The Church in Eastern Europe has experienced similar problems with local members and church leaders becoming inactive after similar administrative changes have been made. It appears that the Church has yet to adequately address the cultural challenge of retaining church leaders in the region after they are released from a calling, or properly rectifying problems with church leaders not following policies for local church administration.



## First Branch Created in Senegal

The Church organized its first branch in the West African nation of Senegal on May 1<sup>st</sup>. The Dakar Branch holds church services in French and has 24 members. Senior missionaries serving in the Africa West Area report that the first senior missionary couple has also been assigned to serve in Senegal and help administer the branch. A member group previously operated in Dakar for at least one or two years prior to the organization of the new branch. Senegal is currently not assigned to a mission. It has been over a decade since the Church organized its first branch in a previously unreached West African nation. Prior to the organization of the new branch, Benin was the country in West Africa with the most recent LDS establishment where the first branch was organized in 2005.



## Second Stake Organized in Mongolia

The Church organized its second stake in Mongolia on May 29<sup>th</sup> from the Ulaanbaatar Mongolia East District. Missionaries report that



five of the six branches in the district became wards when the new stake was organized. There have been additional positive developments for the Church in Mongolia in recent months that suggest stagnant growth trends have been reversed. Two new wards were organized in the Ulaanbaatar Mongolia West Stake within the past couple months, suggesting improvements in the self-sufficiency of local church leadership and increases in active membership in the area. Missionaries express optimism that the Darkhan Mongolia District may become a stake in the next couple years and that a temple in Ulaanbaatar may be announced sometime in the foreseeable future.

## Progress in Honduras

Recent member survey data from Honduras indicates that most wards appear to have between 150 and 200 active members - a significant increase within the past 5-10 years from approximately 100 active members in most wards. The Church in Latin America has struggled with low member activity rates in essentially every country. Member activity rates have generally ranged from 15-25% in most Latin American nations.



## Progress Expanding LDS Outreach in Jalisco, Mexico

The Mexico Guadalajara East Mission has recently experienced success with effective church-planting tactics. Two member groups were organized in late April in the cities of Jalostotitlan and Arandas. Each city has approximately a dozen members and both cities have never appeared to have had a previous LDS presence. Both of these cities numbered among the most populous cities in Mexico without an LDS presence as each supports a population of over 20,000 people.



## District Discontinued in Papua New Guinea

The Church recently discontinued the Kuriva Papua New Guinea District and reassigned the four branches in the former district to the Gerehu Papua New Guinea District. The decision appeared motivated to help strengthen members in the branches and better meet leadership needs. Approximately 500 attended the special conference when these changes were announced. The Church has experienced steady congregational decline and district consolidations in the Port Moresby area since the mid-2000s although it is unclear what has instigated this decline.

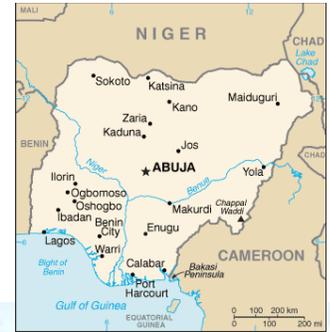
## Rapid Growth in Bolgatanga, Ghana

Rapid growth has occurred in Bolgatanga, Ghana since the arrival of full-time missionaries in April. The Church organized its first branch in Bolgatanga in February 2016. Within the past month, church attendance in the Bolgatanga Branch has more than tripled from approximately 20 to over 70 and several new converts have been baptized. Located near the border with Burkina Faso, Bolgatanga is the most northern LDS branch in West Africa. These findings indicate that there are likely good opportunities for additional cities in northern Ghana and neighboring nations to open to proselytism.



## LDS Presence Established Ugep, Nigeria

The Church recently organized its first branch in Ugep, Cross River State, Nigeria. With as many as 200,000 inhabitants, Ugep was previously the most populous city in southeastern Nigeria without an official LDS presence. Although the Church in southeastern Nigeria has achieved significant growth in most areas, there remain many additional cities inhabited by 50,000 or more inhabitants without an LDS presence.



## Plans for New Stakes in West Africa

Senior missionaries serving in the Africa West Area report plans for as many as 16 new stakes to be organized within West Africa during 2016. Additionally, missionaries report that there are plans for nine stakes to be organized between the months of April and July within the Africa West Area. Thus far, the Church has organized three new stakes in the Africa West Area since the beginning of April. Therefore, the Church in West Africa is expected to organize six additional stakes by July and an additional six stakes between August and December.

# NEW/UPDATED RESOURCES

## STATISTICAL PROFILES

All LDS statistical profiles for nations and dependencies/territories with an LDS presence have been updated on [cumorah.com](http://cumorah.com) to reflect year-end 2015 LDS membership, congregational, and stake/district data. We will be updating the state-by-state/province-by-province statistical profiles for the United States and Canada during the month of June.