



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

May 2017

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)

14. Conroe Texas - April 30th, 2017
15. Monrovia Liberia - April 30th, 2017
16. Boa Vista Brazil - May 7th, 2017
17. Flagstaff Arizona East - May 7th, 2017
18. Yenagoa Nigeria - May 14th, 2017
19. Puerto Princesa Philippines - May 21st, 2017

New Districts

5. Berbice Guyana - April 30th, 2017
6. Korovou Fiji - April 30th, 2017
7. Alepe Cote d'Ivoire - May 14th, 2017
8. Makeni Sierra Leone - May 21st, 2017

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

5. Bydgoszcz Poland District

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- San Justo, Argentina (164th, 21,624)
- Adiopodoume, Cote d'Ivoire (N/A, N/A)
- Tabakoro, Mali (N/A, N/A)
- Yalu, Papua New Guinea (N/A, N/A)
- Tepeojuma, Puebla, Mexico (141st, 4,788)
- Ikot Udoabia, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Madalla, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Onne, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Sogho, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Danao, Philippines (N/A, ~18,000)
- Mamburao, Philippines (N/A, ~43,000)
- Pandan, Philippines (N/A, ~34,000)

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

- Chilchinbito, Arizona (279th, 506)
- Brugge, Belgium (6th, 116,741)
- Genk, Belgium (18th, 64,757)
- Kortrijk, Belgium (13th, 74,911)
- Leuven, Belgium (8th, 95,463)
- Turnhout, Belgium (26th, 40,763)
- Doral, Florida (73rd, 45,704)
- Bushlot, Guyana (N/A, N/A)
- Harford, Kentucky (126th, 2,672)
- Cambridge, Maryland (102nd, 12,326)
- Dordrecht, Netherlands (22nd, 118,810)
- Gouda, Netherlands (49th, 71,047)
- Tilburg, Netherlands (6th, 206,240)

LDS Congregational Growth in the United States Significantly Slows in 2017

The Church in the United States has experienced a significant

slowdown in congregational

growth rates

thus far in 2017. Currently there has been only a net increase of nine wards and branches during the year. To contract, the Church generally reports a net increase of 30-50 congregations by the end of May. This slowdown in congregational growth appears attributed to a combination of fewer new wards and branches being organized, and larger numbers of wards and branches being discontinued. A survey of approximately 200



members who reside in the United States during the month of May indicates that most congregations baptize fewer than five converts a year. Approximately 40% of LDS membership in the United States regularly attends church.

LDS Congregations Close in Five Cities in Belgium and Two Cities in the Netherlands



The number of wards and branches in Belgium has decreased from 16 to 11 thus far in 2017 due to an emphasis to organize congregations with larger numbers of active members. As a result, the Church has closed its only congregation in five Belgian cities, including Brugge, Genk, Kortrijk, Leuven, and

Turnhout. The Church's all-time high for the number of congregations in Belgium was 29 in the year 1999. Decades of few convert baptisms, convert retention problems, an emphasis on improving the efficiency and usage of LDS meetinghouses, and focus for Latter-day Saints to have greater opportunities for socialization with fellow members at church have primarily motivated the closure of congregations in these cities. Sacrament meeting attendance has not appeared to significantly change most Belgian cities during the past decade. The Europe Area as a whole recently reached an all-time high for sacrament meeting attendance, although these figures have recently decreased since an area-wide policy requiring sacrament meetings to be held first during the three-hour block schedule of Sunday meetings was implemented.

Elder Bednar Visits Guinea, Mali, and Senegal



For the first time, an LDS apostle has visited the West African nations of Guinea, Mali, and Senegal during a visit to the region in late May. A recent article on [the Ghana Mormon Newsroom site](#) noted that Elder David A. Bednar visited with members of the Dakar Branch in Senegal and held a special meeting with the congregation. A special prayer was offered in

what appeared to be a prayer to dedicate the country for missionary activity. Later, Elder Bednar met with church leaders in Guinea at the airport. As no official congregation operates in Guinea, a member group appears to operate in the capital city of Conakry considering the article

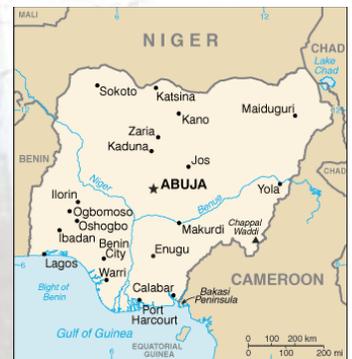


mentions that there are local church leaders in Guinea. Lastly, Elder Bednar met with 17 members and a congregation of approximately 250 prospective members in the rural village of Tabakoro, Mali. There now appears to be two member groups that operate in Mali, including one in Tabakoro and another in Ouélessébougou. Currently there are no official branches in Mali. No proselytizing missionaries are assigned to Guinea, Mali, or Senegal although a senior missionary couple serves in Dakar, Senegal. Senegal was recently assigned to the Cote d'Ivoire Abidjan West Mission.



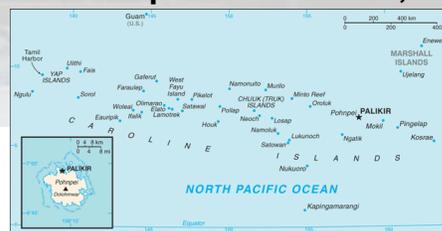
LDS Congregations Established in Several Previously Unreached Cities in Nigeria

The Church in Nigeria continues to report significant numbers of new wards and branches. Many additional cities and towns have had LDS congregations recently organized for the first time, including Ikot Udoabia, Gwgalada, Madalla, Ogbuebule Oboro, Onne, and Sogho. Furthermore, many new congregations



have also been organized in cities where an LDS presence has previously operated, such as two new branches in Makurdi and one new branch in Ugep. There has been a net increase of 43 congregations in Nigeria thus far in 2017 – the largest net increase of congregations of any country in the world for the year. There are currently 543 congregations (326 wards, 217 branches) in Nigeria.

District Conference Attendance Significant Improves in Chuuk, Micronesia



Missionaries serving in Chuuk, Micronesia report that attendance at district conference within the past six months has

doubled from 478 to 1,024. Although there have been intermittent periods of rapid growth, the Church in Chuuk has generally experienced relatively slow growth and significant member activity challenges that have prevented the organization of a stake. There are currently nine branches and approximately two member groups in Chuuk.

First Stake on Palawan, Philippines Organized

After many years of preparation, the Church in the Philippines organized its first stake in Palawan. The Puerto Princesa Philippines Stake was organized on May 21st. The original Puerto Princesa Philippines District was organized in 1987. Five of the seven branches in the former district have appeared to become wards in the newly created stake, including all four branches in Puerto Princesa. There are approximately 1.1 million inhabitants in Palawan. The Philippines Manila Mission administers Palawan. Members in the Philippines also report that the Church will organize its 100th stake in the Philippines in the next few months. Currently there are 97 stakes and 76 districts in the Philippines.



New District in Fiji

The Church in Fiji organized a new district for the first time in approximately 20 years. The Korovou Fiji District includes four branches and several member groups on the eastern coast of Viti Levu. The Church in Fiji has reported slow, albeit steady, growth during the past decade.



Several member groups have recently been organized in villages located on the eastern side of Viti Levu. There are now four stakes and two districts in Fiji.

New Branch in Sri Lanka

The Church in Sri Lanka organized a new branch for the first time in 15 years during the month of May. The Colombo 2nd Branch was organized and services members who reside in southern Colombo. The Church used to operate a second branch in Colombo many years ago, but discontinued the branch in 2008. During 2016, the Church in Sri Lanka reported its most rapid membership growth since 2008 with an annual membership growth rate of 5.0%. Much of this growth occurred in Kandy and may warrant the organization of a second branch in this city in the near future. There are now four branches and one district in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka is administered by the India Bengaluru Mission.



UPDATED RESOURCES

During May 2017, we updated all remaining country statistical profiles on cumorah.com to reflect official LDS statistical data for 2016. These data can be accessed [here](#).

