



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

May 2018

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)

11. Bora Bora Tahiti - April 29th, 2018
12. Coal Mountain Georgia - May 6th, 2018
13. Solola Guatemala - May 13th, 2018
14. Santa Cruz do Sul Brazil - May 20th, 2018

New Districts

5. Vanadzor Armenia - April 15th, 2018

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

Stakes

1. Neumünster Germany

Districts

2. Neubrandenburg Germany
3. Oldenburg Germany
4. Dnepropetrovsk Ukraine

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Lauili, American Samoa (N/A, N/A)
- Valle Grande, Argentina (N/A, 494)
- Hevie, Benin (N/A, N/A)
- Quixeramobim, Ceara, Brazil (22nd, 38,063)
- São Pedro da Aldeia, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (31st, 82,148)
- Merritt Island, Florida (100th, 34,743)
- Bogoso, Ghana (N/A, N/A)
- Patriensa Nyaboo, Ghana (N/A, N/A)
- Fara in Sabrina, Italy (N/A, 13,819)
- Obollo Eke, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Pinili, Philippines (N/A, ~17,300)

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

- Port Augusta, Australia (88th, 13,257)
- Discovery Bay, Hong Kong, China (22nd, 20,408)
- Eberswalde, Germany (N/A, 40,019)
- Halberstadt, Germany (N/A, 42,980)
- Prenzlau, Germany (N/A, 19,279)
- Wilhelmshaven, Germany (102nd, 81,324)

LDS Congregations and Organizations Consolidate in Northern Germany



A major redistricting of LDS congregations, stakes, and districts occurred in northern Germany during May. The Neumünster Germany Stake (organized in 1981) was discontinued, marking the first time that the Church has ever discontinued a German-speaking stake in Germany. Furthermore, the Church discontinued the Neubrandenburg Germany District (organized in 1994) and the Oldenburg Germany District (organized in 2007). There were a total of two wards and six branches that were also discontinued, including the only LDS congregation in four cities: Eberswalde, Halberstadt, Prenzlau, and Wilhelmshaven. Reports from recently returned missionaries indicate that sacrament meeting attendance typically ranged from 10-30 for many years in most of the branches that were discontinued, whereas sacrament meeting attendance in wards that were closed has typically ranged from 80-90 in recent years. Local members report that although the only LDS congregations

were discontinued in these cities, full-time missionaries will continue to serve in these locations. The decision to consolidate these organizations and congregations has appeared attributed to an emphasis on conserving resources and improving socialization opportunities for members who have worshipped in small branches for many decades.

Significant Progress in Vietnam

Missionaries serving in Vietnam recently reported that approximately 150 members attended the Hanoi Vietnam District conference, whereas approximately 300 members attended the Ho Chi Minh City Vietnam District conference. Active membership has nearly doubled in the past three years as there were only approximately 250 active members in 2015 per reports from returned missionaries. Also, a fourth branch was recently organized in Hanoi which is led by an entirely Vietnamese branch presidency. There are now four branches in Hanoi and six branches in Ho Chi Minh City.



Recent Progress in Burma (Myanmar)

Missionaries serving in Myanmar (Burma) report that church attendance in the Yangon Branch has significantly increased during the past 12 month from 90 to over 150. Missionaries report that as many as 40 investigators currently attend church services. Missionaries have previously reported plans to organize additional branches or member groups in Yangon. However, only one branch appears to continue to function in the country. The Church is currently translating the Book of Mormon into Burmese.



New Branch in the Republic of Georgia

The Church in the Republic of Georgia organized a second branch in the capital city of Tbilisi. The new branch is called the Temka Branch. The Church previously operated a second branch in Tbilisi between 2007 and 2011 called the Saburtalo Branch. Church leadership in both branches is now predominantly native Georgian, suggesting improvements with local leadership development despite slow growth for many years. There are now 268 members and two branches in the Republic of Georgia. Moreover, the Church's translation of the Book of Mormon into Georgian is also nearly completion.



Convert Baptisms Continue in Mali

Twelve new converts were baptized in on weekend in Mali during mid-May. The first convert baptisms in Mali occurred in February 2018. Most converts who have joined the Church attend the Farako (Mountougoula) Group. Due to consistent numbers of convert baptisms, church membership in Mali has doubled within the past four months. Local members indicate that the Church is still waiting for government recognition in order to assign full-time missionaries from the Cote d'Ivoire Abidjan Mission.



New Branch in Albania

The Church organized its first branch in the city of Pogradec during May. Pogradec is the least populous city in Albania to ever have an official ward or branch organized with approximately 21,000 inhabitants. The Church in Albania has organized its first branches in several additional cities during the past few years such as Berat (2016) and Korçë (2017). Local leadership also reports that a member group now operates in Lezhë. The Church in Albania reports the most rapid membership growth in Europe at present as membership increased by 4.1% in 2017.



Significant Expansion of LDS Outreach in Ceará, Brazil

The Church in Ceará State, Brazil has experienced significant expansion into previously unreached cities since the organization of a second mission headquartered in Fortaleza in 2013. Since this time, the Church has organized its first branches in the following 12 cities and towns: Paracuru (2014), Pecém (2014), Iguatu (2015), Quixadá (2015), Cascavel (2016), Icarai (2016), Limoeiro do Norte (2016), Tabatinga (2016), Canindé (2017), Massapê (2017), Crateús (2018), and Quixeramobim (2018). As a result, the

number of cities and towns with an official ward or branch has increased from 18 to 30, or 67%. Despite this progress in Ceará State, there remain 13 cities with more than 20,000 inhabitants without a ward or branch, and approximately 40 additional cities with populations of 10,000-20,000 inhabitants without an LDS presence.



Percent of Global LDS Membership with African Ancestry

We estimate that approximately 6% of LDS membership worldwide is of full African descent, and approximately 10% of LDS membership worldwide is of partial African descent. These estimations are based upon the demographic characteristics of country populations where LDS membership is located, combined with additional data from thousands of member and returned missionary surveys we have collected over the past six years.

Four Missionaries Begin Full-time Missions from Conakry, Guinea, West Africa



Four members from the Conakry Branch in Guinea, West Africa recently began their missions at the Ghana MTC according to [a news article from the Africa West Area lds.org page](#). These members previously served as the young men president, Sunday School first counselor, branch mission

leader, and branch music director in the Conakry Branch before beginning full-time missionary service. The Church organized its first branch in Guinea in 2017. Local members reported approximately 30 members in late 2017. Guinea is assigned to the Sierra Leone Freetown Mission. However, no full-time missionaries have ever been assigned to Guinea.

Spanish Branch Created in Belgium

For the first time, the Church in Belgium has organized a branch that holds worship services in a language other than French, Dutch, or English. A Spanish-speaking branch was organized in Brussels during May to service Spanish-speaking members and investigators. The Church in Belgium has experienced the most



dramatic contraction of LDS congregations of any country in Europe during the past two decades from 29 congregations in 1999 to 11 congregations in 2017 as most branches closed. The new Spanish-speaking branch may signal improvements in self-sufficiency and growth among nonnatives who live in the country.

Six Members from Serbia Serving Full-time Missions

Full-time missionaries report that there are currently six Serbian young adults serving full-time missions – a significant accomplishment considering there are fewer than 400 active members and the activity rate for the entire country is approximately 17%. The Church in Serbia has also noted some minor improvements in local leadership development. The Church in Serbia experiences some of the most intense persecution and negative stereotypes in Central or Eastern Europe.



UPDATED RESOURCES

REACHING THE NATIONS COUNTRY PROFILES

We have begun to update the country profiles for our comprehensive work, *Reaching the Nations: International Church Growth Almanac*. The following country profiles were updated and posted on our website, www.cumorah.com, during May 2018. We will continue to update additional country profiles in the coming months, with the goal to release the next edition of the almanac by 2020:

- [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)
- [Croatia](#)
- [Kosovo](#)
- [Macedonia \(FYROM\)](#)
- [Montenegro](#)
- [Serbia](#)