



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

November 2015

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)

- 45. Accra Ghana Lartebikorshie - 10/25/2015
- 48. San Benito Guatemala - November 1st, 2015
- 49. Accra Ghana Ofankor - November 8th, 2015
- 50. Mangaldan Philippines - November 8th, 2015
- 51. Raleigh North Carolina South - November 8th, 2015
- 52. Bengaluru India - November 15th, 2015
- 53. Henderson Nevada McCollough Hills - 11/15/2015
- 54. St George Utah Southgate - November 15th, 2015
- 55. Saratov Russia - November 15th, 2015
- 56. Lagos Nigeria Egbeda - November 22nd, 2015
- 57. Lagos Nigeria Festac - November 22nd, 2015
- 58. Jinja Uganda - November 29th, 2015

New Districts

- 26. Comitán México - November 1st, 2015
- 27. San Cristóbal México - November 1st, 2015
- 28. Volgograd Russia - November 8th, 2015
- 29. Vaal South Africa - November 22nd, 2015

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

- 5. Covina California Stake (Spanish)
- 6. San Cristóbal México Stake

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Margahovit, Armenia (N/A, 3,466)
- Bolgatanga, Ghana (26th, 66,685)
- Sanjo, Japan (259th, 102,292)
- Tepexi de Rodríguez, Puebla, Mexico (130th, 4,933)
- Makurdi, Nigeria (24th, ~300,000)
- Otukpo, Nigeria (66th, 83,218)
- Abau, Papua New Guinea (N/A, N/A)
- Clarin, Philippines (N/A, 20,296)
- Zapata, Texas (380th, 5,089)

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

- Ancón, Ecuador (N/A, N/A)
- Centreville, Illinois (327th, 5,309)
- Iwade, Japan (N/A, 53,617)
- Golden, British Columbia, Canada (54th, 3,811)

New Stake and District in Russia

The Church has recently organized a new stake and a new district in southwestern

Russia. The Saratov Russia Stake is the third



stake to be organized in Russia. It includes the following eight units: The Dachny, Penza, Solnichny, Volzhski, and Zavodskoy Wards and the Balakovo, Marks and Engels Branches. The Volgograd Russia District, which was originally discontinued in 2011, was reinstated this month and includes four regular branches and one district branch in the Volgograd area. The Church in Russia has organized new districts regularly over the past few months, suggesting a change in area policy and perhaps minor improvements in activity rates and leadership development.

New Stake in India



The Church organized its second stake in India this month. The Bengaluru India Stake was created from the Bangalore India District and likely includes five wards and one branch. Due to the Indian government severely limiting the number of missionary visas, the Church's presence in

India is limited to around a dozen cities. Prospects appear favorable for the establishment of additional stakes in those centers of strength within the next decade.

New Stake in Uganda



After years of preparation, the Church organized its second stake in Uganda on November 29th. The Jinja Uganda Stake was created from the seven existing district branches. No information is available yet on which branches became wards. Formal plans to establish a stake in the Jinja

began many years ago, but distance between branches, lack of reliable infrastructure, and difficulty in leadership development delayed the Church from advancing the district into a stake. The organization of the new stake suggests that some or all of these challenges have been successfully overcome within few years.

Growth Continues in Ghana

Two new stakes were created in the Accra metropolitan area: the Accra Ghana Lartebikorshie and Accra Ghana Ofankor Stakes. There are now nine stakes in the Accra region, more than in any other city on the Afro-Eurasian landmass. Outreach into unreached parts of the country also continues, as the Church organized its first member group in the city of Bolgatanga. The Bolgatanga Branch, located just a few miles from the border with Burkina Faso and in Ghana's predominantly Muslim north, is now the northernmost branch in Sub-Saharan Africa.



Outreach Expansion Continues in Nigeria

Several significant Church growth events in Nigeria occurred this month. The Church organized its fourth and fifth stakes in Lagos. Lagos is now one of two cities in Nigeria where there are more than four stakes. Prospects for a temple to be announced in Lagos within the next few years appear favorable. The first two branches in Benue State were also organized in Makurdi and Otukpo in November. Benue is home to the Tiv people, a largely unreached people of Nigeria numbering approximately four million.



Book of Mormon Translation into Burmese Set to Begin

Full-time missionaries serving in Burma recently confirmed that a translation team has been assembled to translate the Book of Mormon into Burmese. Spoken in Myanmar and in the border regions of some surrounding countries, Burmese is the native language of over 30 million people worldwide. Increasing religious freedom in Myanmar and a small but committed number of Burmese who have joined the Church throughout the world predict good prospects for growth in the coming years.



Two Stakes Discontinued

The Church reported that two stakes were discontinued in November. The Covina California Stake (Spanish) was discontinued. All congregations previously assigned to the stake were reassigned to stakes in the surrounding areas. The San Cristóbal México Stake was also discontinued. All wards were downgraded to branches and the stake was divided into two districts. The decision to discontinue both of these stakes does not appear attributed to stakes failing to meet minimal standards to operate as stakes, but rather administrative changes to help spur growth and meet local needs. The San Cristóbal México Stake, for example, covered a large geographical area, included multiple member groups that were recently established, and serviced the homelands of the Tzeltal people – an Amerindian people who have only recently begun to receive LDS outreach. In the United States, the Church has been discontinuing or repurposing Spanish-speaking stakes in California and Texas due to changing policies that dissuade the operation of language-specific stakes.

NEW RESOURCES

CASE STUDIES

LDS Outreach among Arabs in the United States

The Arab population in the United States numbered 1.52 million according to 2010 census data. Most Arab Americans self-identify as Lebanese (485,917), Egyptian (179,853), and Syrian (147,426). Data from the 2000 census notes that the five states with the largest Arab populations include California (190,890), New York (120,370), Michigan (115,284), Florida (77,461), and New Jersey (71,770). Most Arab Americans are Christians and adhere to traditional Christian denominations such as Maronite Catholicism and the Syriac Orthodox Church. Muslims constitute a sizable minority. The LDS Church in the United States has recently begun to extend Arab-specific outreach in a couple select locations. However, there remains no appreciable LDS Arab community in the United States despite Arab Americans constituting more than 1.5 million. This case study reviews the history of the LDS Church among Arabs in the United States. Church growth and missionary successes are identified. Opportunities and challenges for future growth are analyzed. The growth of the Church among other Middle Eastern peoples in the United States is reviewed. The size and growth trends of other missionary-focused Christian groups that target Arab Americans are examined. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

Recent Church Growth and Missionary Successes in Taiwan

Inhabited by 23.3 million people, Taiwan is an island nation in East Asia that is 98% Chinese (84% Taiwanese, 14% mainland Chinese) and 2% indigenous. The LDS Church established an initial presence in the late 1950s and experienced moderate growth during the latter half of the twentieth century. The Church achieved nearly commensurate membership and congregational growth rates between the early 1990s and the mid-2000s, but experienced a substantial slowdown in all church growth indicators from the mid-2000s until the early 2010s. Decelerating LDS growth reversed in the mid-2010s as evidenced by the organization of several new congregations (wards and branches) and the creation of new stakes. This case study reviews the history of the Church in Taiwan and discusses past church growth successes. Opportunities and challenges for future growth are discussed. LDS growth trends in other East Asian countries are compared to the Church in Taiwan. The size and growth of other missionary-focused Christian groups is summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

Slow LDS Growth in Guam

Guam is the most populous nation or territory in the Oceanian sub-region of Micronesia with 162,000 inhabitants. The Chamorro are the indigenous people of Guam and constitute 37% of the population. Other major ethnic groups include Filipinos (26%), other Pacific Islanders (12%), mixed ethnicities (9%), and whites (7%). The most commonly spoken languages are English (44%), Filipino [Tagalog] (21%), and Chamorro (18%). The population is homogenously Christian and most adhere to Roman Catholicism. The LDS Church has experienced slow growth in Guam over the past several decades. This case study reviews the history of the Church in Guam. Past church growth and missionary successes are identified. Opportunities and challenges for future church growth are analyzed. The growth of the Church in other Micronesian countries is summarized. The size and growth of other missionary-focused groups that operate in Guam are reviewed. Limitations to this case study are identified and the outlook for future growth is predicted.