



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

November 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)

59. Elizabethtown Kentucky - November 5th, 2017
60. New Delhi India - November 5th, 2017
61. Billings Montana South - November 12th, 2017
62. Bo Sierra Leone North - November 12th, 2017
63. Bo Sierra Leone West - November 12th, 2017
64. Gilbert Arizona Superstition Springs - November 12th, 2017
65. Ahuachapán El Salvador El Espino – November 19th, 2017
66. Heredia Costa Rica Belén - November 19th, 2017
67. Nuku'alofa Tonga Capital - November 19th, 2017
68. Foz do Iguaçu Brazil - November 26th, 2017
69. Limpio Paraguay - November 26th, 2017
70. Neiafu Vava'u Tonga Central - November 26th, 2017

New Districts

None reported in November 2017

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

None reported in November 2017

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Bom Jesus Da Lapa, Bahia, Brazil (33rd, 41,555)
- Morretes, Parana, Brazil (179th, 6,732)
- Esparza, Costa Rica (18th, 21,374)
- Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, Guatemala (N/A, N/A)
- Sumpango, Guatemala (45th, 18,910)
- Perugia, Italy (23rd, 168,169)
- Abiriba, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Imota, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Basay, Philippines (N/A, N/A)
- Zamora, Spain (110th, 65,998)

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

- Jutai, Amazonas, Brazil (33rd, 10,552)
- Hamilton City, California (907th, 1,759)
- Gelsenkirchen, Germany (27th, 257,981)
- Mülheim, Germany (44th, 167,344)
- Prospect, Kentucky (85th, 4,698)
- Belfry, Montana (225th, 218)
- Bellefonte, Pennsylvania (211th, 6,187)
- San Juan, Zambales, Philippines (N/A, N/A)
- Taugtog, Zambales, Philippines (N/A, N/A)
- Farmville, Virginia (130th, 8,216)

First Farsi-Speaking Branch Organized

The Church organized its first Farsi (Persian) speaking branch in the worldwide Church in November in Del Mar, California. Although the Church has previously operated branches that service Farsi-speaking members, there has never appeared to be a branch that has exclusively serviced Farsi-speaking members. Iranians have exhibited unique receptiveness to the LDS gospel message among traditionally Muslim peoples in the Middle East. Prospects appear favorable for the organization of additional Farsi-speaking congregations in several different areas around the world.

2017 Stake Growth

The Church in 2017 is projected to report the second highest increase in the number of stakes since 1998. Thus far, there have been 70 new stakes organized and five stakes discontinued. There are reports of several more stakes to be organized before the end of the year.

New Stakes in Sierra Leone



The Church organized its first two stakes in Bo, Sierra Leone in November. Nearly 2,000 people attended the special conference to organize the two new stakes. One of the stakes was created from the Bo Sierra Leone North District, which was organized as a district slightly less than 12 months ago. Thus, this

appears to be the shortest amount of time that a district has ever become a stake in the history of Church. Growth has been strong especially since shortly before the Ebola epidemic ravaged the country. A missionary currently serving in Bo reported that many of the new wards are well attended by members and investigators. For example, one ward had as many as 247 people who attended a recent sacrament meeting. The organization of several additional stakes in Sierra Leone appears likely in the near future. Currently there are four stakes and four districts in Sierra Leone. Furthermore, the Church in Sierra Leone also organized its first official branch in the city of Kailahun during November.

New Branch in Turkey

The Church organized its second branch in Istanbul, Turkey during November as a result of increases in church attendance and convert baptisms in the area. The new branch services English-speaking members who live in the Istanbul area, whereas the original Istanbul Branch services Turkish speakers. Istanbul is the first city in Turkey to have more than one LDS branch. There are now seven branches in Turkey.



Progress in Costa Rica

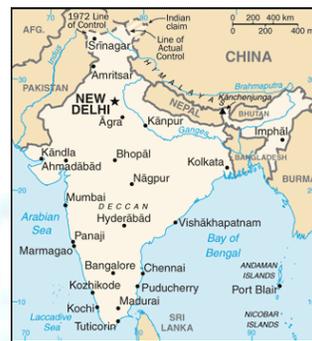


Several positive church growth developments have recently occurred in Costa Rica. During November, the Church organized its tenth stake in Costa Rica. Furthermore, there are now 79 wards and branches. The number of congregations in Costa Rica now ties with the Church's previous all-time

high of 79 wards and branches set back in 2001. Congregational decline occurred in the 2000s and early 2010s. For example, there were 73 wards and branches

in Costa Rica four years ago. The advancement of many branches into wards in recent years also signals increases in the number of active members.

Progress in Vijayawada, India



Significant growth has occurred for the Church in the recently opened city of Vijayawada, India. Six months ago, the member group had only six who attended church meetings. Missionaries report that on a recent Sunday there were 49 who attended sacrament meeting. Church activities outside of Sunday meetings have also been well attended by as many as 80 people. Recent success in Vijayawada may prompt the organization of a branch in the city, as well as the expansion of the Church into additional cities in India where no branches or wards currently operate.

Second Branch in the Northern DR Congo Organized

The Church in the DR Congo organized its second branch in the northern city of Kisangani in late October. The Church created its first branch in Kisangani in 2015. Kisangani is the fifth most populous city in the DR Congo and appears to have approximately one million inhabitants. No other cities in the northern DR



Congo have an LDS presence. There are approximately 25 million people who reside in the northern DR Congo. Distance from mission headquarters, low standards of living, and political instability appear primarily responsible for a lack of an LDS presence in the region.

New Branches in the Republic of the Congo



The Church in the Republic of Congo has recently organized two new branches in Brazzaville – the Ferne and Makabandjilou Branches. This is the first time that the Church has organized multiple branches in Brazzaville in many years. Currently there are two stakes, 11 wards, five branches, and one mission in Brazzaville.

Four New YSA Wards in Washington DC Metropolitan Area

The Church recently organized four new young single adult (YSA) wards in the Washington DC YSA Stake, including the first new ward organized within the District of Columbia in what appears to be more than 20 years. There are now eleven wards in the Washington DC YSA Stake – a large number of units considering the stake was created approximately one year ago.

New Stakes in Tonga

The Church organized two new stakes in Tonga during November, including the Church's fourth stake in Vava'u and the fifteenth stake on the main island of Nuku'alofa. Approximately 60% of the population of Tonga are members on LDS Church records although only about one-third of these members appear to currently affiliate as LDS on the government census. No other country in the world has as high of a percentage of church-reported members in the population as Tonga.

