



# THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

September 2013

## 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)

28. Cebu Philippines Consolacion - 9/8/2013
29. Paris France South - 9/15/2013
30. Rome Italy West - 9/15/2013
31. Aurora Colorado South - 9/22/2013
32. Lake Elsinore California - 9/22/2013
33. Las Palmas Spain - 9/22/2013
34. San Jose Del Monte Philippines - 9/22/2013

### New Districts

*No new districts created in September 2013*

### Discontinued Stakes and Districts

- Lorient France District
- Napoli Italy District
- Sardegna Italy 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)

- Laranjal do Jari, Amapa, Brazil (3<sup>rd</sup>, 37,904)
- Laranjal Paulista, Sao Paulo, Brazil (249<sup>th</sup>, 20,325)
- Baku, Cambodia (N/A, N/A)
- Santa Maria, Cape Verde (N/A, N/A)
- Sabanalarga, Colombia (59<sup>th</sup>, 75,300)
- Bua, Fiji (N/A, N/A)
- Abura-Dunkwa, Ghana (51<sup>st</sup>, 32,626)
- San Mateo Atenco, Mexico, Mexico (24<sup>th</sup>, 67,890)
- Alexandra, New Zealand (60<sup>th</sup>, 4,950)
- Portalegre, Portugal (69<sup>th</sup>, 14,600)
- Soufrière, Saint Lucia (14<sup>th</sup>, 1,997)
- Fort Hancock, Texas (N/A, N/A)
- Kaska, Vanuatu (N/A, N/A)
- Lemdewakel, Vanuatu (N/A, N/A)
- Tisman, Vanuatu (N/A, N/A)

### Locations Recently Closed by the Church<sup>1</sup>

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

- São Geraldo, Minas Gerais, Brazil (335<sup>th</sup>, 6,648)
- Veinte de Noviembre, Coahuila, Mexico (83<sup>rd</sup>, 1,420)

### Missionary Developments in Burundi

Missionaries serving in the Ghana MTC report that four elders from Burundi recently completed missionary training and will serve their missions in the Africa West Area. These elders constitute some of the first Burundian members to serve full-time missions. The Church opened Burundi to missionary work in September 2010 and currently has two branches that meet in Bujumbura.



### New Stake in California

A new stake was created in California on September 22nd in Lake Elsinore. The Church has experienced very slow to stagnant growth in California over the past decade as only a handful of new stakes have been created and several stakes have been discontinued. Currently there are 157 stakes in the state.

<sup>1</sup> \*Cities where the only ward or branch was closed; some of these cities may continue to have a dependent unit and/or missionaries assigned

## Reversal of Declining Congregational Growth in Hong Kong

Progress has recently occurred for the Church in Hong Kong reversing stagnant or declining congregational growth. Congregational decline occurred between 2001 and 2008 as the number of wards and branches declined from 41 to 32. Stagnant congregational growth occurred between 2009 and late 2012 until the Church organized the Hung Shui Kiu Ward in the Hong Kong China New Territories Stake. Within the past month, the Church organized another new ward (Ngau Tau Kok) in the Hong Kong China Stake. There are now 34 congregations in Hong Kong.



these converts will be retained over the long term. The Church organized its first stake in Armenia last June.

## The Church Becomes Closer Toward Organizing Its First Stakes in Several Countries

Missionaries, members, and church leaders report substantial progress toward creating the first stakes in several countries where the Church currently has not stakes operating. Typically stakes outside the United States require at least 1,900 members on church records and 120 active, full-tithe paying Melchizedek Priesthood holders. Additional criteria must also be met such as particular ratios of Melchizedek Priesthood holders to nominal members in individual congregations.

## Third LDS Stake Created in Paris, France

On September 15th, the Church created its third stake in Paris, France from a realignment of three stakes and a former district in northern France. The creation of the new stake did not occur due to the organization of new wards or branches but rather from several branches becoming wards within the past decade. The last new stake to be created in France was the Angers France Stake (now known as the Rennes France Stake) in 2003. France is now entirely covered by stakes for the first time in church history. Mission leaders indicate that this milestone is in fulfillment of a 1976 prophecy made by President Spencer W. Kimball that France would one day be entirely covered by stakes.



In Vanuatu, a recent district conference in Port Vila had nearly 1,000 in attendance. Mission leaders indicate that the district will likely become a stake in the near future as leadership focuses on increasing the number of active, full-tithe paying Melchizedek Priesthood holders in individual branches.

In Mozambique, mission leaders report that within the past couple months over 1,000 attended a district conference in Beira and over 700 attended a district conference in Maputo. Missionaries report that the Beira Mozambique District may become a stake by late 2013 or early 2013.



In Cambodia, missionaries report that area leadership has begun actively preparing some of the member districts in Phnom Penh to begin functioning like stakes. These reports suggest that the first stake in Cambodia may be organized in 2014.

## The Number of Convert Baptisms in Yerevan, Armenia Substantially Increases

Missionaries serving in the Armenia Yerevan Mission report a significant increase in the number of convert baptisms in wards and branches in Yerevan. Some wards have baptized over 10 converts within a single missionary transfer (six weeks). In recent years, the Church has experienced slow membership growth but has achieved improved convert retention rates compared to years when more rapid membership growth occurred. Due to the recent baptism of these converts, it is too early to tell whether



In Zambia, local district and branch leaders in Lusaka are preparing branches to reach the qualifications to operate as wards by augmenting the number of active, full-tithe paying Melchizedek Priesthood holders.



In Jamaica, missionaries report a renewed push towards the Spanish Town Jamaica District become a stake in the coming year or two. The Church has attempted several times to organize a stake in Jamaica but has yet to meet the required qualifications for a stake to operate.



# NEW RESOURCES

## CASE STUDIES

### [Congregations That Have Achieved Superior Levels of Member Activity and Convert Retention](#)

The Church has experienced extremely high member activity rates (90% or higher ) in only a handful of locations around the world. Ordinary church members and local church leaders have reported that many of these congregations are specialized units that service a unique demographic such as adult singles or married students. In recent years, extraordinarily high member activity and convert retention rates have been achieved in rural or isolated locations with a recent LDS establishment. This case study examines the unique characteristics of two locations (Saradroa, Madagascar and Bibiani, Ghana) and what factors have contributed to the Church achieving superior levels of member activity and convert retention in these locations.

### [Prospective LDS Outreach among the Tigray People of East Africa](#)

This case study reviews the history of the LDS Church among the Tigray people and identifies opportunities and challenges for future outreach and growth. LDS outreach efforts among other East African peoples is summarized followed by a brief synopsis of the growth of other proselytizing Christian groups who operate among the Tigray. Limitations to this case study are discussed and prospects for future growth are predicted.

### [Rapid LDS Growth in Cotonou, Benin](#)

Initially established in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Church in Cotonou, Benin has recently experienced some of the most rapid LDS growth in the world. Within the past five years, the number of members and branches in the country has quintupled. This case study reviews the history of the Church in Cotonou, Benin and highlights statistical figures that evidence rapid church growth. Successes, opportunities, and challenges for growth are discussed. A comparative growth section compares LDS growth in Cotonou to other countries and cities West Africa and contrasts the size of other nontraditional Christian groups in Cotonou to the LDS Church. Limitations to these data and findings are discussed. Prospects for future growth are examined.

### [Prospective LDS Outreach in Kalimantan, Indonesia](#)

Inhabited by 13.8 million people in 2010, Kalimantan comprises the majority of the island of Borneo that is under the jurisdiction of Indonesia. This case study reviews the history of the Church in Kalimantan and provides recommendations for establishing a future LDS presence. Challenges for future growth are identified. The growth of the Church on other major island of Indonesia is reviewed and the growth and size of other nontraditional outreach-focused Christian groups that operate in Kalimantan is summarized. Limitations to this case study are examined and prospects for future growth are discussed.

### [Recent Missionary and Church Growth Successes in the Russia Vladivostok Mission](#)

Beginning in late 2012, the Russia Vladivostok Mission began to experience noticeable increases in many church growth indicators. Sacrament meeting attendance increased to record highs and larger numbers of converts were baptized than in previous years. This case study recounts the history of the Church in the Russia Vladivostok Mission and summarizes recent missionary and church growth developments. Successes, opportunities, and challenges for growth are identified and discussed. The growth of the Church in other Russian missions within recent years is compared to the Russia Vladivostok Mission. A synopsis of the growth of other nontraditional proselytizing faiths that operate within the geographical area covered by the Russia Vladivostok Mission is provided. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

### [Strategies for LDS Outreach in Rural Areas](#)

In the late 2000s, the percentage of the world's population residing in urban areas exceeded the percentage of the world population residing in rural areas for the first time in human history. Although the LDS Church has taken careful efforts to establish its presence in many medium and large cities throughout the world, rural areas remain severely under-reached in all but a handful of countries. This case study examines the degree of LDS outreach that occurs in rural areas and provides strategies can help extend effective missionary outreach and spur church growth in rural locations. Opportunities and challenges for growth are examined followed by a comparative growth section that contrasts LDS outreach in rural areas to the rural outreach efforts of nontraditional missionary-focused faiths. Limitations to these findings are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

### [The Church in China: New Website For Greater Member Accountability](#)

In March 2013, the Church announced that it launched a new website for providing information on the Church's operations in the People's Republic of China (PRC) called <http://mormonsandchina.org/>. This case study reviews the history of public statements and information provided by church leaders regarding the Church in China. Information provided by the new website is summarized. The potential influence of the new website on church growth trends in China is analyzed and predicted.

# NEW RESOURCES

## ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MISSIONARY WORK AND CHURCH GROWTH (MISSIOLOGY)

- [Quick Baptism Tactics](#)
- [Receptivity](#)
- [Secularism](#)
- [Seminary and Institute Enrollment](#)
- [Stake President](#)
- [Temple](#)
- [Translation Projects](#)