



# THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

September 2014

## 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)

- 42. Coquimbo Chile - August 31st, 2014
- 43. Ipatinga Brazil - August 31st, 2014
- 44. Makelekele Republic of Congo - August 31st, 2014
- 45. Pittsburgh Pennsylvania West - Sept. 7th, 2014
- 46. Davao Philippines West - Sept. 14th, 2014
- 47. Escalante Philippines - Sept. 14, 2014
- 48. Lubbock Texas North - Sept. 14th, 2014
- 49. Queen Creek Arizona West - Sept. 21st, 2014

### New Districts

- 15. Ho Ghana - September 14th, 2014

### Discontinued Stakes and Districts

*None reported for August 2014*

### Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Metfield, Arkansas (N/A, N/A)
- Nova Petropolis, RS, Brazil (119<sup>th</sup>, 12,332)
- Jaguaruna, Santa Catarina, Brazil (81<sup>st</sup>, 13,198)
- Kisangani, DR Congo (5<sup>th</sup>, 682,599)
- Offinso, Ghana (N/A, N/A)
- Machakos, Kenya (32<sup>nd</sup>, 41,917)
- Chenalhó, Chiapas, Mexico (130<sup>th</sup>, 3,143)
- Manutuke, New Zealand (N/A, 522)
- Ugbolu, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Uquo, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Bellefonte, Pennsylvania (211<sup>st</sup>, 6,187)
- Ciudad de Dios, Peru (N/A, N/A)
- Pacanga, Peru (N/A, N/A)
- Pueblo Nuevo, Peru (N/A, N/A)
- Tayum, Philippines (N/A, 13,940)
- Florencio Sanchez, Uruguay (79<sup>th</sup>, 3,716)
- Vao, Vanuatu, (N/A, N/A)

### 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](http://www.citypopulation.de)

- Mezcala, Jalisco, Mexico (129<sup>th</sup>, 5,005)
- Pueblo Pintado Canyon, New Mexico (320<sup>th</sup>, 192)

### The Church Creates Its First New Stake in Chile since 1998

On August 31st, the Church organized a new stake in Chile for the first time since 1998. The Coquimbo Chile Stake was organized from the Coquimbo Chile District and includes five wards and one branch. The Church once operated a stake in Coquimbo from 1993 to 2002 but discontinued the stake due to inactivity and local leadership development problems. The organization of the new stake suggests some improvements with chronic inactivity and leadership development problems in the area, and may be part of a nationwide trend of the Church achieving "real growth." Missionaries serving several Chilean districts report progress with some districts nearing the qualifications to become stakes.



### General Conference Talks Given in Other Languages

For the first time, the Church will permit speakers in this October General Conference to give their talks in their native language beginning. This marks a significant development in the internationalization of the LDS Church.

## Second Stake Created in the Republic of the Congo

Last Sunday, the Church created its second stake in the Republic of the Congo. The new stake was organized from the Brazzaville Republic of Congo Stake (created in 2003) and is called the Makelekele Republic of Congo Stake. With the recent organization of the Republic of Congo Brazzaville Mission this past summer, prospects appear favorable for the Church to open additional congregations in the Brazzaville area.



## New Branches in Botswana

In September, the Church organized its second and third branches in Francistown, Botswana called the Gerald and Monarch Branches. These new branches operated as member groups for several years. Missionaries have reported strong receptivity and many baptisms in the Francistown area for many years, although local leadership development has been slow. Prospects appear favorable for these three branches to become a district in the near future.



## Congregational Growth Continues in Sierra Leone Despite Ebola Epidemic

Notwithstanding the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, the Church continues to create new branches in Sierra Leone. Since the departure of missionaries, the Church has organized two new branches: one each in Kenema and Makeni. Senior missionaries previously assigned to the Sierra Leone Freetown Mission report that many of the congregations continue to find, teach, and baptize new converts, with some branches reporting as many as a dozen baptism in a single weekend. These developments may indicate that the Church in Sierra Leone has reached a critical breakthrough in achieving more self-sufficient growth that is less dependent on full-time missionaries.



## Member Group Established in Kisangani, DR Congo

Mission leaders in the DR Congo report that a member group now operates in Kisangani. Kisangani was previously the most populous city in the DR Congo without an LDS presence. 32 converts were recently baptized in the city during a visit by the mission president. Members speak three languages in the member group: French, Lingala, and Swahili (Congo). Last summer, Kisangani was reassigned from the DR Congo Lubumbashi Mission to the DR Congo Kinshasa Mission.



## New Stake in Mindanao, Philippines

In September, the Church organized its first new stake on Mindanao Island since 1999. The Davao Philippines West Stake was organized from a division of the Davao Philippines Stake as rapid congregational growth has occurred within the Davao area over the past couple years. There are now three stakes in the Davao metropolitan area, suggesting that Davao is a likely candidate for a future temple to service members on Mindanao Island. The Church has experienced slow growth on Mindanao over the past 15 years due, in part, to only Filipino missionaries serving in the three Mindanao missions. Political instability relating to the Islamic separatist movement has limited the number of missionaries assigned to Mindanao.



## Progress in the South America Northwest Area

A recent [LDS Church News Article](#) indicates that there have been several recent church growth developments in the South America Northwest Area that have occurred over the past few years, including steady increases in sacrament meeting attendance and increasing numbers of members serving full-time missions. Currently the area is nearly self-sufficient in meeting its full-time missionary needs, as over 5,000 members from the area are serving missions, and 6,000 missionaries are assigned to the area.

# NEW RESOURCES

## CASE STUDIES

### Analysis of LDS Growth in Bangkok, Thailand

The Bangkok metropolitan area ranked as the 21st most populous urban agglomeration in the world as of mid-2014 with 14.9 million inhabitants. Although the Church has maintained a presence in Bangkok for over half a century, little growth has historically occurred as evidenced by only one stake in the city until 2014. This case study reviews the history of the Church in Bangkok. Past church growth and missionary successes are identified and opportunities and challenges for future growth are analyzed. LDS growth in Bangkok is compared to other major mainland Southeast Asian metropolitan areas and the growth and size of other Christian denominations that operate in Bangkok is summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

### Instances of Slow LDS Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa

The LDS Church has overall experienced rapid growth in Sub-Saharan Africa since formal proselytism efforts began among indigenous black African populations in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Despite significant progress for the region as a whole, some countries and locations have experienced stagnant or very slow LDS growth for years or even decades. This case study identifies many countries and notable locations where the LDS Church has experienced stagnant or slow growth since the beginning of the twenty-first century. Growth trends are reviewed for each of these locations. Factors inherent in locations where stagnant or slow LDS growth occurs are identified. Confirming and disconfirming evidence for how each factor contributes to slow LDS growth is explored. Instances of slow or stagnant LDS growth in other world regions is briefly reviewed. Locations in Sub-Saharan Africa where other missionary-focused Christian groups experience stagnant or slow growth is summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for the LDS Church in Sub-Saharan to accelerate growth in locations where stagnant or slow growth has occurred is predicted.

### LDS Outreach among the Tatars of Russia

Numbering over 6.6 million, the Tatars, or Volga Tatars, are an ethnically and geographically diverse Turkic people who have historically resided in Western Russia. This case study provides background information on the Tatar people in Russia and the history of the LDS Church in areas where they have traditionally resided. Church growth successes are identified, and opportunities and challenges for future outreach and growth are examined. LDS outreach among other ethnic minority groups in Russia is reviewed and the size and growth of other nontraditional, missionary-focused Christian groups among the Tatar is summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

### Prospective LDS Outreach in Equatorial Guinea

Inhabited by approximately 722,000 people, Equatorial Guinea is a small country in Central Africa that includes a rectangular-shaped, continental portion called Río Muni and two small islands (Annobón and Bioko). As of mid-2014, the LDS Church has never had a presence in Equatorial Guinea despite a predominantly Christian population and the government and society upholding sufficient religious freedom to permit the operation of nontraditional proselytizing Christian groups. This case study reviews the history of the Church's administration of Equatorial Guinea and instances when there have been Latter-day Saints known to reside in the country. Opportunities for establishing an official LDS presence and achieving growth are explored. Recommendations for how to most effectively establish an initial church presence are provided. Challenges for establishing a church presence and achieving growth are discussed. The growth of other proselytizing Christian groups that operate in Equatorial Guinea is summarized. Limitations to this case study are described and prospects for an LDS establishment in Equatorial Guinea are predicted.

### Stagnant LDS Growth in Belarus

Inhabited by 9.6 million people, Belarus is the six most populous former Soviet Republic and has a population that is 83.7% Belarusian, 8.3% Russian, 3.1% Polish, 1.7% Ukrainian, and 3.3% other ethnicities. Although the LDS Church has maintained a presence in Belarus since 1993, stagnant growth has occurred over the past 15 years as evidenced by no net increase in the number of branches, a decrease in the number of converts baptized annually, and the number of active members not noticeably changing. This case study reviews the history of the Church in Belarus. LDS growth successes are identified and opportunities and challenges for overcoming stagnant growth are examined. The growth of the LDS Church in Belarus is compared to the Church in other countries, and the size and growth trends of other missionary-focused groups in Belarus is summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

### Prospective LDS Outreach in Mali

Inhabited by 16.5 million people, Mali is a landlocked country in West Africa whose population is predominantly Muslim (94.8%) with small numbers of Christians (2.4%) and followers of indigenous beliefs (2.0%). As of mid-2014, the LDS Church had not established an official presence in Mali. This case study reviews the Church's history in administering Mali and identifies translations of basic proselytism materials available in indigenous languages spoken in the country. Opportunities for establishing an official LDS presence and achieving growth are explored. Recommendations for how to most effectively establish an initial church presence are provided. Challenges for establishing a church presence and achieving growth are discussed. The growth of other proselytizing Christian groups that operate in Mali is summarized. Limitations to this case study are described and prospects for an LDS establishment in Mali is predicted.

## NEW RESOURCES (continued)

- [Map of Brazilian cities with 20,000 or more inhabitants without an LDS congregation](#)

