

Overall LDS Growth Trend Case Studies

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Top 10 Encouraging and Discouraging LDS Growth and Missionary Developments in 2016

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Overview

This case study identifies ten of the most encouraging LDS growth and missionary developments in 2016. Furthermore, the ten most discouraging LDS growth and missionary developments during the year are also reported. Limitations to this case study are identified.

Top 10 Encouraging LDS Growth and Missionary Developments

1. Largest Number of New Stakes Created in a Single Year since 1997.

Stake growth significantly accelerated in 2016. The Church organized 100 new stakes and reported a net increase of 92 stakes during 2016 – a 2.90% annual increase. The number of new stakes organized, the net increase of stakes, and the annual percentage growth rate for stakes in 2016 is the highest reported by the Church since 1997. Furthermore, the increase in the number of stakes organized in 2016 is the eighth highest ever reported by the Church. Provided with the number of new stakes organized in parentheses, locations where the Church organized the most new stakes in 2016 include Arizona (12), Brazil (9), Nigeria (9), Texas (8), Utah (6), Honduras (5), Washington (4), Democratic Republic of the Congo (3), Ghana (3), and Virginia (3). The number of new stakes organized by world region is as follows: North America (45), Africa (21), South America (14), Central America (8), Asia (6), Oceania (5), and Europe (1). Currently the Church reports 3,266 stakes worldwide.

The number of new stakes created in 2016 was 33 more than the most recent year with the largest number of new stakes organized (2015). In contrast, the Church organized 67 new stakes in 2015, 64 new stakes in 2014, and 48 new stakes in 2013. The number of new stakes organized per year ranged between 32 and 67 between 2006 and 2015. The Church has historically experienced more rapid stake growth than in 2016. For example, the Church reported a net increase of 146 stakes in 1996. Annual percentage stake growth has surpassed 10% for five years: 1978 (11.9%), 1980 (11.5%), 1977 (10.9%), 1979 (10.3%), and 1960 (10.0%). If the Church reported 10% annual growth in the number of stakes for 2016, there would have been an increase of 317 stakes.

Several other indicators of LDS growth that strongly correlate to stake growth did not accelerate in 2016. For example, the Church reported a net increase of approximately 300 official congregations (i.e. wards and branches) during 2016. As the average stake includes seven congregations, the number of stakes would have increased by only 43 if the ratio of congregations per stake were maintained from 2015. Stake growth outpacing congregational growth in 2016 appears partially attributed to emphasis in North America regarding the organization of stakes with fewer wards and branches, particularly in Arizona and Texas. Furthermore, progress in local leadership in many areas outside of the United States has permitted the organization of stakes where the Church has historically operate few stakes such as in Asia. Although stake growth in 2016 did not correspond to “double-digit stakes every week of our lives” as initially reported by LDS apostle Elder Jeffrey R. Holland in April 2016, accelerated stake growth in 2016 signifies a major development in LDS growth trends worldwide. Time will tell whether similar growth trends continue into 2017 and beyond.

2. Rapid Growth Accelerates in West Africa

Rapid growth in West Africa has not only continued into 2016, but it has accelerated from previous years. The Africa West Area reported in mid-2016 that it anticipated the number of convert baptisms in the area would exceed 27,000 in 2016. If correct, this projection would indicate that membership in West Africa would increase by at least 10% in 2016. The Church reports its most

rapid international growth in West Africa. The number of stakes has tripled every 10 years. Below are some noteworthy LDS growth developments in the Africa West Area during 2016:

The Church in Cote d'Ivoire has experienced some of the most rapid growth ever reported by the LDS Church. The Church organized an average of one ward or branch a week during 2016 as there was a net increase of 52 wards and branches during the year. This increase constitutes a 40% increase during the year. Only the Church in the United States reported a larger net increase in new congregations organized at 67. The Church organized two new stakes and six new districts. Branches were organized in seven cities for the first time, including Ananguie [Adzope 6th Branch], Ayame, Bangolo, Danané, La Me (Ahoutoue 2nd Branch), Maffere, and Yaou.

The Church in Nigeria also reported accelerating growth in 2016. Nigeria became the first country on the Afro-Eurasian landmass to reach the milestone of 500 wards and branches. Furthermore, the Church in Nigeria organized nine new stakes during 2016 – the most new stakes ever organized in a country on the Afro-Eurasian landmass. The previous record for the most new stakes organized in a country on the Afro-Eurasian landmass was set in 2015 in Nigeria where six new stakes were organized. Furthermore, the Church in Nigeria reported the largest net increase in congregations ever as the number of wards and branches increased by 46. The Church also accelerated its pace opening new wards and branches in previously unreached cities and towns. During 2016, the Church organized its first branches in 10 cities (Ado-Ekiti, Amassoma, Avutu [Amuzi], Gboko, Ikom, Ilaro, Kwale, Obada-Oko, Ogoja, and Ugep) and three towns/villages (Ikot Esia, Otujeremi, and Use Ikot Amama). Lastly, a sixth mission headquartered in Owerri opened in the middle of the year.

The Church in Ghana noted several noteworthy growth developments. Three new stakes, one new district, and 33 official congregations were organized. The Church organized its first official branches in five cities and towns/villages, including Akuse, Awutu Breku, Bawjiasi, Bekwai, and Bolgatanga.

Young, full-time missionaries returned to the Liberia Monrovia Mission and the Sierra Leone Freetown Mission during 2016 after a nearly two-year hiatus to formal proselytism in these nations. Rapid growth has occurred despite the disruption of missionary work due to the Ebola epidemic. For example, the Church in Sierra Leone created one new district (Bo North) and organized 10 new branches, and the Church in Liberia organized one new stake, one new district, and six new branches. Also, the Africa West Area leadership report initial plans to create several additional stakes in Liberia within the next two years.

Lastly, the Church noted progress with the establishment of the Church in additional nations. For example, the Church organized its first official branch in Senegal. The Dakar Branch was organized on May 1st, 2016. Convert baptisms have occurred and senior missionaries have been assigned to the country. However, Senegal remains unassigned to a mission and is directly administered by the Africa West Area.

3. Church Creates Its First LDS Stakes in Three Nations

Benin

The Church organized its first stake in the West African nation of Benin in April. The Cotonou Benin Stake includes six wards and seven branches that operate in Cotonou, Porto Novo, and surrounding communities. Not only was the stake organized with the near minimum number of members to operate, but the stake was also created only four years after the initial creation of the Cotonou Benin District in 2012. This finding suggests that the Church in Benin experiences good member activity rates and leadership development despite the relatively small number of Latter-day Saints in the country. The Church reported 2,255 members and 14 branches at year-end 2015.

Czechia (Czech Republic)

The Church created its first stake in Czechia in May. The new stake was organized from the Prague Czech Republic District and the Brno Czech Republic District. As a result, the new stake includes seven wards and five branches, and services the entire country of Czechia. Mission leadership prepared membership in the country for many years in order to operate a stake one day. The Church reported 2,503 members and 13 branches at year-end 2015.

Liberia

The Church reestablished a stake in Liberia in November. The new stake was organized from six of the nine branches in the Monrovia Liberia Bushrod Island District. The remaining three branches in the district were organized into the Caldwell Liberia District. Mission, area, and local leadership has prepared for many years in order for a stake to be reestablished in Liberia ever since the discontinuation of the original Monrovia Liberia Stake in 2007. The Church reported 9,675 members and 24 branches at year-end 2015.

4. LDS Growth Trends Improve in Central America

Several noteworthy improvements occurred for the Church in Central American during 2016, particularly in Guatemala. The Church in Guatemala reported a net increase of 10 wards and branches (2.3%), constituting the highest percentage increase in the number of congregations in over 15 years. New congregations have been organized in many areas of Guatemala, suggesting improvements in leadership development and augmenting the number of active members in congregations. Furthermore, two new stakes were created in Guatemala – both of which are located in the Guatemala City metropolitan area. The Church in Honduras organized five new stakes during the year and reported a net increase of three congregations. A new stake was also organized in Nicaragua and the Church reported a net increase of six congregations – the highest net increase in congregations since 2009. Small increases in the number of congregations were also reported in Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Panama.

5. Significant LDS Growth Developments in Asia

The Church created its first mission in Vietnam in March 2016 from a division of the Cambodia Phnom Penh Mission. The Vietnam Hanoi Mission exclusively administers Vietnam's 95.3 million inhabitants. Although the Church has obtained official recognition from the government, only two cities currently have official congregations: Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

The Church in Hong Kong organized two new stakes in mid-2016 from a realignment of the four previously operating Hong Kong stakes. The creation of the two new stakes denotes a major success for the Church due to few convert baptisms and historically low member activity rates. Congregational growth rates have significantly increased within the past few years despite no noticeable change in membership growth rates. This progress has been attributed to effective reactivation efforts and local leadership development. Consequently, the number of congregations increased from 32 in 2011 to 41 in late 2016. As noted in last year's case study examining the most encouraging and disappointing church growth developments during 2015, the Church in Hong Kong's ongoing progress in reversing congregational growth trends deserves the praise and the attention of church leaders worldwide. Rarely has the Church reversed trends of declining or stagnant congregational growth within industrialized countries where Western secularism exhibits a strong influence on society. Analysis of the principles utilized and vision adopted by the China Hong Kong Mission and the six Hong Kong stakes may reveal approaches that can be implemented in other industrialized and secularized countries to accelerate real LDS growth.

The Church in Mongolia organized its second stake in the country after many years of stagnant congregational growth and decelerating membership growth. Progress with leadership development appeared to prompt the organization of two new wards in Ulaanbaatar prior to the creation of the second stake. The Church in Taiwan organized its seventeenth stake in the country from the last remaining district and reported a net increase of two congregations. A third stake in India was created in Rajahmundry in December. Plans for a fourth stake in India headquartered in New Delhi were submitted to Church Headquarters for review and approval at the end of the year. In Sri Lanka, the number of active members in the Kandy Branch increased tenfold from 15 to more than 150 during the year.

6. Growth in DR Congo – New Stakes, Congregational Growth, and a New Mission

Three new stakes were created in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) during the year, including the first stakes in two cities where no stakes previously operated: Likasi and Mbuji-Mayi. Furthermore, rapid congregational growth rates in the DR Congo were sustained during 2016. The number of wards and branches increased by 15 from 153 to 168 during the year – a 9.8% annual increase. The Church in the DR Congo has typically reported annual congregational growth rates of over 10% a year since 2009. Lastly, the Church created its third mission in the country to administer the Kasai Region in the central DR Congo. The new mission is presided over by a native Congolese mission president – the first time that a mission in the DR Congo has been led by a native member. Construction on the Kinshasa Democratic Republic of the Congo Temple also continues. There are now 16 stakes and three districts in the country.

7. Progress in Oceania

The Church in Oceania reported several noteworthy church growth developments during 2016. Eight new congregations were organized in Samoa – a 5.5% annual increase. This progress suggests improvements in member activity, convert retention, and local leadership development. A second stake was created in the Marshall Islands on Kwajalein Atoll. Also, a new district was created in Kiribati on northern Tarawa to prepare for the creation of a third stake in the country. A fifth branch was created in the Solomon Islands. New wards were also organized in French Polynesia and Tonga. Two new stakes and several new congregations were created in Australia. Several new congregations were organized in New Zealand and a second stake was created on the South Island. Furthermore, several new branches and a new district were organized in Papua New Guinea's Western Province. Also, a senior missionary couple was assigned to Kiunga, Papua New Guinea for the first time and tasked to help prepare local membership for leadership responsibilities in order to establish an official presence in the city.

8. New Temples

The Church announced four new temples during the April 2016 General Conference in the following cities:

- Belem, Brazil
- Quito, Ecuador
- Lima, Peru (second temple)

- Harare, Zimbabwe

Belem Brazil Temple

The Belem Brazil Temple is the Church's ninth temple to be announced in Brazil and the second temple to be announced for the Amazon Basin. Missionaries serving in the Brazil Belem Mission have speculated that a temple would be announced in Belem for many years due to distance from the nearest operating temple in Manaus. The new temple is the Church's first temple in Para State - previously the third most populous Brazilian state without a temple with 8.2 million inhabitants. The Belem Brazil Temple will likely service 10 stakes and two districts in the eastern Amazon. There are currently five stakes in the Belem metropolitan area.

Quito Ecuador Temple
Ecuador was previously the country with the most members with only one temple prior to the announcement of the Quito Ecuador Temple. There are currently six stakes in the Quito metropolitan area. The new temple will likely service 12 stakes and one district in northern Ecuador. The new temple has a special significance due to its close proximity to the Otavalo (Imbabura Highland) Quichua people. The Otavalo have exhibited strong receptivity to the Church since proselytism began in the late 1960s. Missionaries and members report that the two stakes in the small city of Otavalo number among the strongest and most self-sufficient in the Church in Ecuador. For more information on LDS outreach among the Otavalo, click here.

Lima Peru Los Olivos Temple
The Lima, Peru metropolitan area became the Church's first metropolitan area outside of the United States to have two temples announced or in operation. The Church in Lima operates 42 stakes - the second most stakes in any metropolitan area outside of the United States after Mexico City, Mexico. The current Lima Peru Temple is located in the La Molina District on the east-central side of the metropolitan area. The new temple is slated for construction in the Los Olivos neighborhood and may service 20-30 stakes in the northern Lima area. A case study that examines LDS growth trends in Lima can be found here. There are now four temples in Peru announced or in operation. Peru now ranks as the country with the sixth most temples.

Harare Zimbabwe Temple
The Harare Zimbabwe Temple is the Church's seventh temple to be announced in Africa. Based on year-end 2015 membership data, the Church in Zimbabwe was the country with the second most members without a temple prior to the April 2016 announcement. The Church in Zimbabwe has experienced slower growth than many other nearby African nations although periods of rapid growth have occurred. There are currently seven stakes, two districts, and 75 official congregations (37 wards, 38 branches). Four stakes operate in Harare where the Church organized its first stake in Zimbabwe in 1999. At least nine stakes and seven districts in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, and northern Mozambique appear likely to be assigned to the new temple.

9. LDS Congregations in Syria and Iraq

Despite one of the most complex and intense conflicts in the world at present, the Church has begun to be established among the native population in Syria and Iraq. The Church in Syria reestablished an official branch in Damascus during the year and also appeared to operate member groups in Aleppo and Latakia. No senior missionaries appear to enter or serve within Syria at present and church administration is conducted by district leadership headquartered in Beirut, Lebanon. Senior missionaries assigned to Kurdistan, Iraq noted significant inroads made among the native Kurdish population. At least three cities (e.g. Duhok, Irbil, and Sulaymaniyah) appear to have member groups in operation and convert baptisms have begun to occur on a monthly basis. Although converts and prospective members number only in the dozens at present in each nation, emphasis from church leaders to establish the Church in these nations signals a significant development for the Church's missionary efforts in the Middle East where no formal proselytism occurs and religious freedom is limited or severely restricted.

10. Canada

The Church in Canada reported a net increase of eight congregations during 2016 – the largest increase in the number of wards and branches in this nation since 2003. Annual membership growth rates in Canada have remained constant within the past decade at approximately one percent. Thus, this increase in the number of wards and branches likely indicates improvements in member activity and convert retention and local leadership development. Nevertheless, the Church in Canada did not organize a single stake during the year and long-term growth trends have been stagnant for many years.

Top 10 Discouraging LDS Growth and Missionary Developments

1. Congregational Growth Slows in the United States

The Church in the United States has reported one of its smallest increases in the number of wards and branches during 2016. There has appeared to have been a net increase of only 69 congregations during the year – a 0.49% annual increase and a significantly smaller increase than most recent years for the Church in the United States. Typically the Church has reported an

annual net increase of 100-150 wards and branches and an annual congregational growth rate of 0.8-1.2%. Provided by the net change in the number of wards and branches in parentheses, states that have appeared to most strongly influence decelerating congregational growth trends in the United States during 2016 include Utah (+34), Idaho (+1), California (-37), Washington (-9), and Colorado (-4). In contrast, the Church usually reports a net increase in all five of these states, and a more substantial increase in Utah and Idaho. However, other states reported significantly larger congregational increases than normal, such as Arizona (+33), Oregon (+6), and Mississippi (+5). Nevertheless, these states were unable to offset the net declines in other states. There has been a net increase of 40 stakes in the United States in 2016 – one of the largest increases in the number of stakes ever reported. This increase in stake growth appears primarily attributed to the organization of stakes with fewer congregations in Arizona and Texas.

Slowing membership growth rates in the United States have likely affected congregational growth rates. The Church in 2015 reported its slowest annual membership growth rate since 1989 at a mere 1.0%. To contrast, the Church has generally reported annual membership growth rates in the United States that range between 1.5-2.0% since 1999. Fewer convert baptisms, a reduced birthrate, and inactivity problems among young single adults appear primarily responsible for slowing membership growth.

2. Stagnant Growth in Europe

Overall, no measurable LDS growth appeared to occur in Europe during 2016. There was no increase in the number of congregations, only one new stake was organized during the year, and only a handful of previously unreached cities opened to missionary activity. Although several new districts were organized in the Europe East Area, this decision appeared attributed to changes in area policy and vision regarding the operation of member districts rather than significant improvements in leadership development and member activity. The Church in Russia discontinued its only branches in two cities towards the end of the year. Proselytism in Kosovo and Macedonia has yielded few results despite a missionary presence in each of these nations for nearly five years. Only the Church in Albania has appeared to achieve significant progress within the past couple years. This lack of progress for the Church in Europe as a whole constitutes a serious concern for LDS growth trends, productivity, and the effectiveness of missionary activity in the region as the Church operates 45 missions within the Europe and Europe East Areas. Low member-missionary participation, secularism, nominal religious ties to traditional Christian denominations, challenges assimilating immigrant and refugee converts into congregations, and low self-sufficiency in European nations staffing their full-time missionary needs constitute significant barriers towards real growth.

3. Congregational Decline in the South America Northwest Area

There has been a net decline in the number of wards and branches in each of the five nations that comprise the South America Northwest Area, namely Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela. As a result, the area reported a net decline of 34 congregations during 2016. Stake growth has also been extremely slow as only three new stakes were organized in the area during the year – one each in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru. Furthermore, the number of cities with official wards or branches has declined in some of these nations, particularly in Colombia and Venezuela. As a result, there are currently fewer cities with wards and branches in these five nations compared to several years ago.

There are some positive developments that have occurred in the South America Northwest Area despite these difficulties. Local members report that the number of active members in many wards and branches has significantly increased, particularly in Peru. As a result, the number of active members in many wards and branches in these nations is comparable to the number of active members in North American congregations. Furthermore, there have been improvements in convert retention in some congregations according to reports received from local members.

4. Lack of Progress in Mexico

Home to the second largest population of Latter-day Saints according to official LDS figures, the Church in Mexico continues to experience essentially stagnant growth. There was essentially no net change in the number of wards or branches in Mexico during 2016. Additionally, no new stakes were organized in Mexico during the year. This points to serious concerns regarding member activity, convert retention, missionary activity, and leadership development – especially considering that the Church operates 34 missions and its second largest missionary training center in the world in Mexico. LDS activity rates in Mexico may be worse than activity rates in Brazil. Although the Church in Mexico reports approximately 68,000 more members than the Church in Brazil, the Church in Brazil currently operates 38 more wards and branches and 35 more stakes than the Church in Mexico.

5. Sole LDS Stake in Armenia Discontinued

The Church in Armenia discontinued its only stake in the country in May 2016. Organized in 2013, the stake returned to district status and all wards were downgraded to branches. Improper handling of church administrative responsibilities by members and local church leaders appeared to constitute the primary reason why the stake was discontinued. Approximately one-third to one-half of members who attended the conference left the meeting early to protest the changes. However, recent information from missionaries serving in the Armenia Yerevan Mission indicate that most members continue to attend church despite these administrative changes.

There have been very few instances when the Church has discontinued a stake in a nation where only one stake previously operated. Examples of nations where the only LDS stake was discontinued include Nicaragua (1989-1998) and Liberia (2007-2016). Difficulties with local leadership development appear to constitute one of the greatest difficulties for the Church in the Europe East Area – the administration area that administers Armenia and other nations in the former Soviet Union.

6. Stake Discontinuations and Congregational Decline in South Korea

Net declines in the number of stakes and congregations continue in South Korea. The Church discontinued two stakes in the Seoul metropolitan area. Wards were also closed as part of this realignment. The decision to discontinue the two stakes appears attributed to the ongoing exodus of active Korean Latter-day Saint families to other countries (e.g. the United States, Australia, and China), few convert baptisms, and low birth rates. Furthermore, the Church has also focused on the organization of wards with larger numbers of active members to better meet the Church in Korea's administrative and member socialization needs. However, these changes have resulted in the closure of four stakes in South Korea within the past four years. Currently there are 13 stakes and six districts in South Korea.

7. Congregational Decline and Stagnant Growth in Ethiopia

LDS growth trends in Ethiopia have stagnated within the past couple years notwithstanding a massive target population, a full-time missionary force maintained for two decades, and the translation of the Book of Mormon into the Amharic language. The Wendo Genet Branch closed in 2016 and the number of branches in operation at the end of the year was less than it was three years ago. Currently there are only four branches in the entire country that operate in three cities. Difficulties with foreign missionaries learning Amharic and other local languages, the lack of a separate mission headquartered in Addis Ababa to service Ethiopia, and struggles to develop more self-sufficient local priesthood leadership appear primarily responsible for stagnant growth trends in Ethiopia. This nation is a significant one for future LDS outreach considering Ethiopia supports the second largest population in Africa with 94.7 million inhabitants.

8. LDS Growth in the Philippines Decelerates

After several consecutive years of improvements in member activity and real growth, the Church in the Philippines has appeared to experience a slowdown in this progress during 2016. The Church reported a net increase of only 10 wards and branches in 2016, whereas there was a net increase of 20 wards and branches in 2015. Fewer cities and towns have had an LDS presence established in 2016 compared to previous years. Emphasis from the Philippines Area Presidency regarding better utilization of meetinghouses and the organization of new congregations with larger numbers of active members appear primarily responsible in the slowdown in national outreach expansion and congregational growth. Additionally, no new stakes were organized in the Philippines during 2016.

9. Lack of National Outreach Expansion in India

The Church in India has experienced many years of stagnant national outreach expansion. No additional cities have had wards or branches organized in 2016. The Church in India operates wards or branches in only 15 cities or towns in this enormous country of 1.27 billion people. Due to this extremely limited presence, only five percent of the national population lives in a city or town where an LDS congregation operates. There are 46 cities in India inhabited by one million or more inhabitants without an LDS presence. Geographically, India is the seventh largest country in the world and the Church operates branches in six of the 28 administrative states (Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal) and one of the seven union territories (Delhi). Some unreached states or union territories have no translations of LDS materials in the predominantly spoken indigenous language such as Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa, and Tripura.

10. Lack of Outreach Expansion in the Africa Southeast Area

No noticeable expansion of the Church occurred in the Africa Southeast Area during 2016. Encompassing nations in Central Africa, East Africa, and Southern Africa, the Africa Southeast Area operates 15 missions and administers a population of more than 600 million people. Although the Church reports a sizable presence in several nations, such as South Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zimbabwe, the vast majority of the population in the region remains totally unreached by LDS proselytism efforts. Most nations have an official ward or branch in four or fewer cities. Many major nations, such as Cameroon and Tanzania, do not have their own mission. Some nations without restrictions on Christian proselytism, such as Chad, Equatorial Guinea, and Sao Tome and Principe, have no LDS presence whatsoever. Populations in most nations in the Africa Southeast Area exhibit good receptivity to the LDS gospel message and speak a first or second language with translations of LDS materials. Thus, there are significant opportunities for growth that have yet to be realized. Missionaries in East Africa report that emphasis on building from centers of strength has appeared to significantly influence LDS outreach expansion efforts in the region during 2016. This emphasis has appeared attributed to the focus of organizing multiple stakes in major cities with a current LDS presence in order to better prepare membership to meet the administrative needs of a temple one day.

The only nations in 2016 where the Church opened its first wards or branches in previously unreached locations included the

Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zimbabwe. No expansion of the Church into previously unreached cities, towns, or villages occurred in the following nations with an LDS presence: Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, the Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Malawi, Namibia, Reunion, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, or Zambia. The following nations have no official wards or branches: Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Mayotte, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan.

Limitations

The subjective nature of determining which LDS missionary and church growth developments numbered among the most significant for 2016 constitutes the greatest limitation to this case study. Some developments have likely been unknown to missiology researchers due to limited access to LDS statistical data and a lack of reports from members, missionaries, and church leaders from particular areas of the world. Data obtained regarding the organization of new congregations/stakes and the expansion of national outreach was retrieved from official LDS sources such as lds.org/maps. Local member, full-time missionary, and church leader reports also contributed to the findings in this case study. Official country-by-country membership data for year-end 2016 will not become available until April 2017. Some 2016 data regarding congregational growth and stake and district growth in this case study may be inaccurate due to lags in the Church updating congregational and organizational totals for the year 2016.