



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on Church Growth and Missionary Work for
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

December 2021

WELCOME!

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide monthly updates on the growth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 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)

- 41. Kabusanga DR Congo Dec. 5th, 2021
- 42. Kossoh Town Sierra Leone - Dec. 5th, 2021
- 43. Rexburg Idaho West - Dec. 12th, 2021

New Districts

- 8. Huambo Angola - Nov. 21st, 2021

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

- 13. Moscow Russia District

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Neepawa, Manitoba, Canada (12th, 5,200)
- Marokau, French Polynesia (111th, 96)
- Trier, Germany (75th, 105,260)
- Adansi Asokwa, Ghana (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

- Atikokan, Ontario, Canada (204th, 1,944)
- Fort Frances, Ontario, Canada (90th, 7,420)
- International Falls, Minnesota (127th, 6,158)
- Khabarovsk, Russia (24th, 610,305)
- Ussuriysk, Russia (106th, 172,942)

First District Organized in Angola Outside of Capital City

The Church organized its first district in a city outside of the capital city of Luanda during November. The Huambo Angola District was organized with three branches—one of which was organized on the day the district was created. This marks a significant milestone with the growth of the Church in Angola as districts have only previously operated in Luanda prior to the organization of the Church's first stake in the country in 2018. Additionally, it appears likely that the Church will organize a second district outside of Luanda in the city of Lubango in the foreseeable future given there are now two branches in the city.



Ninth Stake Created in Sierra Leone



The Church in Sierra Leone organized its ninth stake in the country with the creation of the Kossoh Town Sierra Leone Stake from the Kossoh Town Sierra Leone District. No other country in the world has experienced as rapid of a proliferation of stakes among countries where there were no stakes 10 years ago. There are now five stakes in the Freetown

metropolitan area. The Church achieved unprecedented progress with the organization of stakes in Sierra Leone given the country previously experienced low member activity rates, modest membership growth rates, stagnant congregational growth, and little attention from mission leadership for most of the first two decades of an official Church presence (given Sierra Leone was assigned to missions based in other nations). As noted last month, the Church in Sierra Leone has achieved considerable progress with the expansion of outreach into previously unreached cities, towns, and villages. There are now 20 cities, towns, and villages in Sierra Leone with an official ward or branch. There are 6.8 million people who live in Sierra Leone.

Significant Growth Year for the Church in the DR Congo

The Church in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) organized the Kabusanga DR Congo Stake in December—the Church’s 25th stake in the country. Although only two new stakes and one new district were organized in the DR Congo during 2021, approximately two dozen new wards and branches were organized during the year—the largest number of new wards and branches organized in the DR Congo in a single year since the Church’s establishment in the mid-1980s. This accomplishment is even more impressive considering the Church had broken its previous record for the most new congregations organized in a single year in 2020.

The Church’s missionary efforts have appeared largely unaffected in the DR Congo by the COVID-19 pandemic given local Congolese comprise most of the full-time missionary force. As a result of this significant congregational growth, there are approximately one dozen stakes that appear likely to divide in the near future. Rapid growth in the DR Congo has appeared to drive the Church’s recent temple announcements for the country. The Church announced its first temple for the DR Congo in Kinshasa in 2011, and two additional temples have since been announced in Lubumbashi (2020) and Kananga (2021). The Church has generally experienced annual membership growth rates of approximately 10% since the late 2000s. Member activity rates in the DR Congo are among the highest in the world, with many stakes reporting approximately 80% member activity rates. Careful leadership preparation and consistently high convert baptismal standards have played a major role in the Church’s impressive growth in the DR Congo.



Highest Number of New Branch Creations in Zambia since 2003

The Church in Zambia organized four new branches during 2021—the largest number of new branches organized in Zambia in a single year since 2003. Of these four new branches, three were organized in the Copperbelt Region of the country near the border with the DR Congo. The Church in Zambia has struggled for decades to achieve even moderate growth rates. Unlike many other Sub-Saharan African countries, the Church in Zambia has significantly struggled with self-sufficiency in its full-time missionary force and augmenting the number of active members. Although the Church was originally reestablished in Zambia in 1992, there is only one stake and two districts in the entire country as of year-end 2021 notwithstanding a predominantly Christian population of 19 million. There were less than 5,000 Latter-day Saints in Zambia as of year-end 2019.



Two New Missions to be Organized in 2022

The Church announced plans to organize two new missions in 2022. The Hawaii Laie Mission will be organized in January 2022 to include five stakes in the Laie area. The decision to organize the new mission appeared motivated by greater mission president involvement with the management of the Church’s facilities in the Laie area as well as missionary opportunities provided by the Polynesian Cultural Center. The new mission is the Church’s second mission in Hawaii. The Church in Hawaii has experienced stagnant growth rates for several consecutive years.



The Church announced plans to organize the Rwanda Kigali Mission in July 2022. The new mission is desperately needed in an area of the world that is significantly underserved by previous missionary efforts. The new mission will likely include the countries of Rwanda and Burundi as well as the eastern DR Congo for a combined population of perhaps as many as 45-50 million people. There are currently two districts (one each in Burundi and Rwanda) and nine branches in the area likely to be covered by the new mission. The Church organized its first branch in Rwanda in 2008.