



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

August 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)

- 40. Boynton Beach Florida - August 17th, 2014
- 41. Draper Utah Suncrest - August 17th, 2014

New Districts

None reported for August 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

- Iguatu, Ceara, Brazil (8th, 67,497)
- Quixadá, Ceara, Brazil (11th, 49,753)
- Catalão, Goiás, Brazil (15th, 79,046)
- Senador Canedo, Goiás, Brazil (13th, 84,111)
- Trindade, Goiás, Brazil (8th, 100,106)
- Bacabal, Maranhão, Brazil (8th, 77,860)
- Codó, Maranhão, Brazil (5th, 80,875)
- São Bernardo, Maranhão, Brazil (77th, 11,800)
- Araguari, Minas Gerais, Brazil (25th, 100,592)
- São Gotardo, Minas Gerais, Brazil (102nd, 26,156)
- Skun, Cambodia (31st, 13,620)
- Dalcahue, Chile (N/A, 13,000)
- Anum Apapam, Ghana (N/A, N/A)
- Effiduase, Ghana (N/A, 20,000+)
- Hohoe, Ghana (34th, 56,000)
- Merizo, Guam (13th, 1,731)
- Ixtapan de la Sal, Mexico, Mexico (70th, 17,640)
- Fono (Chuuk), Micronesia (N/A, 400)
- Ma-ao Group, Philippines (N/A, N/A)
- Pulang Duta, Philippines (N/A, N/A)
- Sison, Philippines (N/A, N/A)
- Astrakhan, Russia (33rd, 520,662)

Locations Recently Closed by the Church¹

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

- Eilenburg, Germany (N/A, 15,539)
- Lajes Field (military base), Portugal (N/A, N/A)

Missions in Liberia and Sierra Leone Evacuate Missionaries

Due to the seriousness of the spread of the Ebola virus in West Africa, the Church has removed all of its 274 missionaries serving in the Liberia Monrovia Mission and the Sierra Leone Freetown Mission. Most of these missionaries have been reassigned to missions in Ghana and there is no indication when missionaries will be reassigned back to Liberia and Sierra Leone. This development comes at an unfortunate time as the Church in both of these countries has experienced unprecedented growth within the past few years as evidenced by the proliferation of branches in major cities. The Church in both of these countries has historically experienced some of the most concerning local leadership development problems and inactivity frustrations in Sub-Saharan Africa due largely to rushed baptismal preparation, cultural conditions, and no missions headquartered in these countries until the past decade. Time will tell whether local church leadership will be able to take the reins of missionary work within their respective jurisdictions and perpetuate growth despite the absence of a full-time missionary force for the foreseeable future.

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

Rapid National Outreach Expansion in Northern Brazil

In a move unprecedented within the past 15 years, the Church in Brazil has opened member groups or branches in over 30 cities within the past eight months in northern and central Brazil. Recently opened cities include Alta Floresta, Altamira, Araguari, Bacabal, Balsas, Cabeceiras, Cacoal, Caldas Novas, Campo Verde, Canaã dos Carajás, Canindé, Catalão, Codó, Esperança, Fátima do Sul, Iguatu, Iranduba, Itapipoca, Paracuru, Pecem, Pimenta Bueno, Pirapora, Presidente Epitácio, Quixadá, Rolim de Moura, Salinópolis, Santa Vitoria, São Bernardo, São Gotardo, Senador Canedo, and Trindade. Members report plans to open many more cities in northern and central Brazil. Notwithstanding this progress, there remain more than 400 cities in Brazil with 20,000 or more inhabitants.



Second Branch Created in Makeni, Sierra Leone

The Church recently created a second branch in Makeni, Sierra Leone. The Church organized its first branch in Makeni in November 2013 and has since experienced rapid growth. Mission leadership reported that sacrament meeting attendance surpassed 150 within the first month of the branch's operation. The creation of the new branch in Makeni appeared to occur after mission leadership and full-time missionaries were evacuated from the country. This suggests that local leadership may be capable of perpetuating growth into the coming months and years ahead.



First LDS Branch Opens in Astrakhan, Russia

The Church recently created a new branch in Astrakhan, Russia. This marks the first time in many years that the Church has created a new branch in Russia within a city where no branch previously functioned. Assigned to the Russia Rostov-na-Donu Mission, Astrakhan was previously the second most populous city in Russia without an official ward or branch and has a population exceeding half a million.



Second Branch Created in Kazakhstan

After many years of preparation, the Church in Kazakhstan organized its second branch in the country in Astana. A handful of members periodically held church services in Astana during the 2000s, but no proselytizing missionaries were assigned until March 2011 when a member group began to regularly operate. The Church opened its first branch in Kazakhstan in 2001 when the Almaty Branch was created. The first young, proselytizing missionaries began serving in Almaty in 2004. For more information on the Church in Kazakhstan, refer to our case study [here](#).



Number of Wards and Branches in Nigeria Reaches 400

Rapid congregational growth continues to occur in Nigeria as a result of steady increases in the number of active members and effective church growth strategies employed by district, stake, mission, and area leaders. In August, the Church in Nigeria created its 400th official congregation. Currently Nigeria ranks tenth among countries in the world for the number of wards and branches currently operating. So far in 2014, the number of wards and branches in Nigeria has increased by 22; a 5.8% increase.



Third Branch Created in Macau

The Church recently created a third branch in Macau to service Mandarin Chinese speakers. The two other branches are designated for English and Cantonese Chinese speakers. Although the Church previously operated a third branch in Macau between 2001 and 2007, the reestablishment of the branch may signal improvements in member activity, convert retention, and leadership development. The Church in Macau currently numbers among the most populous countries/dependencies without a stake or district, suggesting that the Church may organize a district one day when there is a sufficient number of priesthood leadership manpower to staff both branch and district callings. At year-end 2013, there were 1,347 members and two branches in Macau.



NEW RESOURCES

CASE STUDIES

[A Geospatial Analysis of LDS Growth in Kiribati](#)

This case study provides a brief overview of religion in Kiribati. The history of the LDS Church in Kiribati is reviewed in regards to the establishment of the Church, membership growth, and congregational, stake, and district growth. Recent LDS growth developments are summarized regarding the number of missionaries assigned to the islands, rapid growth in the Line Islands, the expansion of missionary activity onto previously unreached islands, and preliminary plans by mission leaders to restructure LDS units on Tarawa Atoll sometime in the foreseeable future. Census data on religious affiliation is examined to determine how these numbers compare to official LDS-reported figures, and a geospatial analysis of the geographical distribution of self-identified Latter-day Saints is conducted utilizing 2010 census data. LDS growth successes in Kiribati are identified, and opportunities and challenges for future growth are examined. The growth of the Church in Kiribati is compared to other island nations in Oceania, and the size and growth trends of other nontraditional religious groups is summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

[Analysis of LDS Growth in Accra, Ghana](#)

With approximately 4.4 million people, Accra the third most populous metropolitan area in West Africa after Lagos, Nigeria and Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. This case study reviews the history of the Church in Accra and summarizes congregational, stake, and mission growth. Congregational growth trends are analyzed by administrative district. Recent church growth and missionary successes are noted and opportunities and challenges for future growth are discussed. The growth of the Church in other major West African cities is compared to the Church in Accra. The size and growth trends of other missionary-focused Christian groups is reviewed. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

[Analysis of LDS Growth in Lagos, Nigeria](#)

Lagos is the most populous metropolitan area in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Church experienced slow growth during the first 30 years of its operations and only recently has begun to experience rapid growth. This case study reviews the history of the Church in Lagos. The status of LDS outreach by LGA is reported. Recent church growth and missionary successes are noted and opportunities and challenges for future growth are discussed. The growth of the Church in other major West African cities is compared to the Church in Lagos. The size and growth trends of other missionary-focused Christian groups is reviewed. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

[Prospective LDS Outreach in Guinea-Bissau](#)

Supporting a population of 1.69 million people, Guinea-Bissau is a small, Portuguese-speaking country located in West Africa. As of early 2014, the LDS Church had not established a presence in Guinea-Bissau notwithstanding favorable conditions for proselytism. This case study reviews the Church's history of administrating Guinea-Bissau and identifies translations of basic proselytism materials in indigenous languages spoken within the region. 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 Guinea-Bissau is summarized. Limitations to this case study are described and the prospects for an LDS establishment in Guinea-Bissau are predicted.

[Recent LDS Growth and Missionary Developments in Burundi](#)

Inhabited by approximately 10.4 million people, Burundi is a small, landlocked country in Sub-Saharan Africa. Christians comprise 86% of the population and most speak Kirundi, French, or Swahili. In 2010, the LDS Church reestablished an official presence in Burundi and has since experienced steady growth. This case study reviews the history of the Church in Burundi and identifies recent church growth and missionary developments. Church growth and missionary successes are examined and opportunities and challenges for future growth are discussed. The growth of the Church in other Sub-Saharan African countries with a recent LDS establishment is compared to the Church in Burundi. The size and growth trends of other missionary-focused Christian groups with a presence in Burundi is summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

[Slow LDS Growth in the Republic of Georgia](#)

Located in the Caucasus region of Eurasia, the Republic of Georgia has a population of 4.94 million people that is 89% Christian, 10% Muslim and 1% followers of other religions. The LDS Church has maintained an official presence in the Republic of Georgia since 1999 and has assigned full-time missionaries to the country since 2006. However, slow membership and congregational growth has occurred. This case study reviews the history of the Church in Georgia. Past church growth successes are identified and opportunities and challenges for future growth are examined. The size and growth of the LDS Church in the Caucasus and nearby nations is reviewed and the size and growth of other missionary-focused Christian groups in Georgia is summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

NEW RESOURCES (continued)

RECENTLY ADDED LDS STATISTICAL PROFILES - see cumorah.com

- USA - Louisiana
- USA - Maine
- USA - Maryland
- USA - Massachusetts
- USA - South Dakota
- USA - Michigan
- USA - New Mexico
- USA - Pennsylvania
- USA - Rhode Island
- USA - Tennessee
- USA - Texas
- USA - Vermont
- USA - West Virginia
- USA - Wisconsin
- USA - Wyoming