



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

August 2015

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)

- 32. Tooele Utah West - August 16th, 2015
- 33. Windsor Colorado - August 23rd, 2015

New Districts

None reported in August 2015

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

- 9. Limón Costa Rica District

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Valença, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (46th, 55,105)
- Cajuru, São Paulo, Brazil (243rd, 20,795)
- Ibaté, São Paulo, Brazil (198th, 29,508)
- Taquaritinga, São Paulo, Brazil (127th, 48,688)
- Pedra Badejo, Cape Verde (6th, 9,345)
- Tarrafal de São Nicolau, Cape Verde (12th, 3,766)
- Lakota, Cote d'Ivoire (37th, ~38,000)
- Sassandra, Cote d'Ivoire (49th, ~23,000)
- Baghdad, Iraq (1st, 6.75 million)
- Irbil, Iraq (4th, 1.15 million)
- Puerto Aventuras, Quintana Roo, Mexico (14th, 5,979)
- Balimo, Papua New Guinea (N/A, 3,233)
- Guinsiliban, Philippines (N/A, 5,580)
- Tudela, Philippines (N/A, 27,371)
- Aleppo, Syria (2nd, 3.05 million)
- Damascus, Syria (1st, 3.65 million)
- Latakia, Syria (4th, 383,786)
- Tysons Corner, Virginia, USA (56th, 19,627)

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

None reported in August 2015

First Congregation to Service Chuukese and Pohnpeian Speakers in the USA

The Church organized its first branch to administer speakers of Pohnpeian and Chuukese this month. The new branch is located in Honolulu, Hawaii. The Federated States of Micronesia has seen moderate to high receptivity to LDS outreach in recent years and the first stake in the nation was organized in 2014. A small, dispersed Micronesian population in the United States with a relatively small percentage of Latter-day Saints has appeared responsible for delays in creating language-specific units for speakers of Pohnpeian and Chuukese.

Second branch organized in Laos

The Church recently created a second branch in Vientiane, Laos. The organization of the new branch indicates steady increases in the number of active members and priesthood leaders. Progress has occurred with young, full-time missionaries serving in Vientiane who limit missionary activity to member referrals. Humanitarian Missionaries report successes in slowly improving the Church's relationship with the Laotian government and training local priesthood leaders.



Congregational Growth Accelerates in South Africa



The Church in South Africa has experienced an acceleration in congregational growth during the past eight months. So far in 2015, a net increase of seven congregations has been reported. This is the largest increase since 2009 and may indicate a reversal of stagnant growth experienced over the

last few years. Some of the new congregations were created in towns and neighborhoods that were lesser-reached or unreached by LDS proselytism.

Member Groups Operate in Syria and Iraq



Leadership in the recently created Beirut Lebanon District report several small member groups in operation in Syria and Iraq. Groups operate in three Syrian cities (Damascus, Aleppo, and Latakia) and two Iraqi cities (Bagdad and Irbil). All groups appear to have less than 20 active members, likely delaying the organization of

official branches in the near future. While no demographic information for the groups was available, it appears that most members and investigators are local Syrians and Iraqis since there are very limited numbers of foreigners in the area.

LDS Growth Developments in Ghana

The Church continues to grow rapidly in Ghana. After many years of member groups operating in the Tafo area of Ghana, the Church has organized three official branches in Tafo and nearby communities for the first time. The new branches are part of the Koforidua Ghana District and include the Maase, Osiem, and Tafo Branches. Prospects appear favorable for a separate district to be organized in the Tafo area within the next couple of years.



Missionaries to return to Liberia

Over a year after evacuation from Liberia due to the Ebola outbreak, young full-time missionaries are scheduled to return to the country during the second week of September. After the outbreak, many of the Missionaries from the Liberia Monrovia Mission were reassigned to Ghana. Some missionaries serving in Ghana will be reassigned to the Liberia Monrovia Mission to lay the groundwork for new missionaries scheduled to arrive in October from Missionary Training Centers.



New branch created in Papua New Guinea

For the first time since 2012, the Church has organized a new branch in Papua New Guinea. The new branch is located in the village of Balimo and is the tenth branch in the Sogere Papua New Guinea District. The creation of the new branch may signal progress in initiating a new wave of national outreach expansion. Despite the creation of a second Papuan mission in Lae in 2013, many growth indicators have come to a halt in the country within the last few years.



Difficulties in new stakes in Cambodia

Senior missionaries serving in Cambodia report problems with some congregations maintaining the minimal qualifications to operate as wards. The Church organized the first two stakes in Cambodia in May 2014. At the time when the two stakes were created, Cambodia had the largest number of nominal members of any country without a stake. These delays were largely due to difficulties training leadership and retaining converts – two areas in which the Church in Cambodia appears to continue to struggle.



NEW RESOURCES

CASE STUDIES

LDS Outreach among the Cambodians in the United States

Cambodians in the United States numbered approximately 232,000 according to 2010 census data. The LDS Church has maintained Cambodian-specific outreach in the United States for approximately three decades and has established a Cambodian LDS community in several locations nationwide. This case study reviews the history of the LDS Church among Cambodian people in the United States. Church growth and missionary successes are identified. Opportunities and challenges for future growth are analyzed. The growth of the Church among other Southeast Asian peoples in the United States is reviewed. The size and growth trends of other missionary-focused Christian groups among Cambodian Americans are examined. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

Prospective LDS Outreach among the Zhuang People in China

The Zhuang constitute a collection of related peoples in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China and extreme northern Vietnam. The worldwide Zhuang population is estimated at 19.4 million people, with the vast majority residing in China. The LDS Church has never engaged in missionary activity among Zhuang peoples and currently appears to have only a handful of Zhuang members, if any at all. This case study provides a brief introduction to Zhuang peoples. Opportunities and challenges for establishing an LDS presence and proselytizing the Zhuang are examined. The growth of the Church among other ethnic minority groups in mainland China is reviewed and the size and growth of other missionary-focused Christian groups who have a presence among the Zhuang is summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

Prospective LDS Outreach among Tibetans in China

Tibetans constitute a collection of related peoples who traditionally inhabit the Tibet Autonomous Region and Qinghai Province in China and adjacent areas in China, India, and Nepal. There are approximately 6.5 million Tibetans worldwide. The LDS Church has never appeared to engage in proselytism efforts that specifically target Tibetans. This case study provides a brief introduction to Tibetan peoples. Opportunities and challenges for the establishment of an LDS presence and the proselytism of Tibetans are examined. The growth of the Church among other ethnic minority groups in mainland China is reviewed and the size and growth of other missionary-focused Christian groups who have a presence among Tibetans is summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

Prospective LDS Outreach among Uyghurs in China and Central Asia

The Uyghur, or Uighur, are a traditionally Muslim people who generally reside in western China and Central Asia. Estimates for the worldwide number of Uyghurs range from 10.4 million to 15 million] The LDS Church has never appeared to engage in proselytism efforts that specifically target Uyghurs. This case study provides a brief introduction to the Uyghurs. Opportunities and challenges for the establishment of an LDS presence and the proselytism of Uyghurs are examined. The growth of the Church among other ethnic minority groups in mainland China is reviewed and the size and growth of other missionary-focused Christian groups who have a presence among the Uyghurs is summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.