



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

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

December 2022

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)

- 28. Dibindi DR Congo – November 12th, 2022
- 30. Mérida México Caucel – December 4th, 2022
- 31. Vineyard Utah Springs Park – December 11th, 2022

New Districts

None reported in December 2022

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

- 10. Seattle Washington Shoreline Stake

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Beveridge, Australia (N/A, 4,160)
- San Pedro, Chile (N/A, 593)
- La Paz, Colombia (193rd, 20,900)
- Port-Gentil, Gabon (2nd, 136,462)
- Inhambane, Mozambique (11th, 82,119)
- Homoine, Mozambique (N/A, ~10,000)
- Xai Xai, Mozambique (10th, 132,884)

NOTE: Wagner used to have a branch until 2019 when it was closed; the branch was recently reinstated.

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 December 2022

2022: Slow Year for New Stake Creations: A Historical Review of Recent Trends in Stake Growth

The year 2022 numbered among the slowest years for new stake creations in recent memory with only 31 known new stakes created during the year. Of these 31 new stakes, 14 were organized in the United States (45%), 10 were organized in Sub-Saharan Africa (32%), five were organized in Mexico (16%), and two were organized in the Philippines (approximately 6%). Only 2020 has had fewer new stakes organized during the past decade. Increases in the number of stakes is one of the better metrics to ascertain growth in the number of active members in the Church as stakes require certain minimum requirements for member activity to function. The number of new stakes created per year during the past decade has been as follows:

- 2021 – 43
- 2020 – 30
- 2019 – 59
- 2018 – 56
- 2017 – 81
- 2016 – 100
- 2015 – 67
- 2014 – 64
- 2013 – 48
- 2012 – 65

There were at least 10 stakes discontinued in 2022. Of these 10 discontinued stakes, four were in the United States (two in California, two in Washington), three were in Japan, and one each were in Australia, the United Kingdom, and Venezuela. The average year has had approximately six stakes discontinued during the past

decade. The number of discontinued stakes by year during the past decade is as follows:

- 2021 – 9
- 2020 – 3
- 2019 – 5
- 2018 – 14
- 2017 – 6
- 2016 – 8
- 2015 – 7
- 2014 – 1
- 2013 – 2
- 2012 – 6

There was a net increase of 21 stakes for the year 2022 – an annual percentage growth rate of only 0.63%; a similar percentage for annual membership growth for 2021 (0.85%). The last year when the Church had a smaller net increase in the number of stakes was in 2002 when there was a net decline of five stakes for the year.

The Church has had other instances in recent decades when there have been small net increases in the number of stakes, most notably in the late 1980s (net increase of 32-44 stakes per year) and throughout the 2000s (net decrease of five to a net increase of 47 in 2009). Multiple factors contribute to periods of slower rates of new stakes being organized such as efforts to create congregations with larger numbers of active members, slower rates of growth in the number of active members, increasing the member activity requirements for stakes to be organized, and changes in area policies and approaches to the ideal number of wards per stake (historically, this has been 5-10 wards per stake) or the number of active members per ward (historically this has been 100-300 in North America and 75-200 outside of North America).

First Branch Created in Port-Gentil, Gabon



The Church organized a new branch in the city of Port-Gentil, Gabon, marking the first time the Church has created a branch in Gabon outside of the capital city of Libreville. The Church also organized a third branch in

Libreville earlier in 2022. There are now four branches in Gabon, suggesting that the creation of the Libreville Gabon District will occur in the immediate future. No member districts have ever functioned in Gabon before. The first branch in Gabon was created in Libreville in 2012. The Church has not provided statistical data on the number of members on the records for Gabon on its official statistics page for unknown reasons. However, returned missionaries reported that there were approximately 300 Latter-day Saints in Gabon as of 2020.

Church Opens Its First Branches in Several Mozambican Cities

A significant period of expansion has occurred for the Church in Mozambique with the creation of the Church's first branches in three cities where no branches have ever operated. The Church organized new branches in the cities of Inhambane, Homoine, and Xai Xai—all of which are within the boundaries of the Mozambique Maputo Mission. It is likely that member groups functioned in these locations before official branches were organized. This marks the first time in nearly a decade since the Church in southern Mozambique has organized a branch



in a city where no branches have previously operated. The number of cities in Mozambique with an official ward or branch increased from two in 1999 to seven in 2005, eight in 2012, 10 in 2018, and 15 in 2022. There may be additional locations with member groups, such as Boane and Catembe.

New Branches Created in Rwanda

The Church has recently organized several new branches in Rwanda where the Church opened its first mission headquartered in the country in mid-2022. The number of branches has increased from four at the beginning of 2022 to seven at present. There are now six branches in Kigali and one branch in Nyamata. The Church's



meetinghouse locator website also indicates that six of the seven branches in Rwanda are designated as Kinyarwanda speaking. Historically, the Church in Rwanda only proselytized and held meetings in English, but the Church appeared to change its official language for missionary work and church services to Kinyarwanda sometime in the past couple years. The Church has steadily translated additional materials and scriptures into Kinyarwanda, with the Book of Mormon in the process of translation since 2020. Currently the Book of Mormon is

translated and available online from 1 Nephi until the end of Helaman. The Church's materials available in Kinyarwanda can be found [here](#).

New District in Ghana

Approximately 200 attended the creation of the new Techiman Ghana District. The Church first organized branches in Techiman in 2014 when there were four branches created in the city in quick succession. The first member group in Techiman was created in mid-2013. However, the number of active members and available leadership in the city was insufficient to create a district until recently. The lack of progress with the Church in Techiman may have played a role in the Church in West Africa discontinuing the briefly implemented "Sunyani Model" of church planting in which several small branches or member groups were simultaneously organized in a city where there was no previous Church presence. Notable examples of this approach being highly effective include Daloa, Cote d'Ivoire; Kumasi, Ghana; Sunyani, Ghana; and Tamale, Ghana.

