



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

FEBRUARY 2013

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)

3. Lehi Utah Pheasant Pointe - 2/17/2013
4. Auckland New Zealand Otara - 2/24/2013
5. Auckland New Zealand Redoubt - 2/24/2013

New Districts

No new districts reported in February 2013

Cities Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Moturiki, Fiji (N/A, ~2,000)
- Tamale, Ghana (3rd, 537,986)
- Trakan Phuet Phon, Thailand (N/A, ~120,000)
- Yalta, Ukraine (58th, 78,334)
- Leviamp, Vanuatu (N/A, less than 1,000)

Cities Recently Closed by the Church*

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

None reported in February 2013

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

Church to Open New Missionary Training Center in Mexico

On January 29th, the Church made an official announcement that it would convert its high school in Mexico City (Benemérito de las Américas) into a new missionary training center (MTC) for Mexico. Church leaders report that the new MTC will house as many as 1,500 missionaries at a time and will not only service Mexican members serving missions within their own country but possibly all missionaries called on Spanish-speaking missions in Latin America and elsewhere in the world. The current Mexico City MTC appears to house no more than 200 missionaries at a time. The decision to repurpose the Church's high school into a MTC was primarily motivated by a lack of space at the Provo MTC and other MTCs around the world to accommodate the recent surge in the worldwide missionary force.¹



Number of Wards in the Praia Cape Verde Stake Increases from Six to Eight

Organized in 2012, the Praia Cape Verde Stake recently had two new wards organized. Within the past couple years, the Church has experienced accelerated membership and congregational growth as convert baptisms have increased and convert retention has improved. Cape Verde recently became self-sufficient in staffing its full-time missionary force.

¹ Swensen, Jason. "New MTC in Mexico: Church to repurpose Benemerito de las Americas," LDS Church News, 1 February 2013.
<http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/63206/New-MTC-in-Mexico-Church-to-repurpose-Benemerito-de-las-Amricas.html>

58 New Missions Announced

On February 22nd, the Church announced the creation of 58 new missions for July 2013 to accommodate increasing numbers of members serving missions. Below is a complete list of new missions to be organized in July. A map displaying the location of these missions can be found [here](#).

- Angola Luanda
- Argentina Comodoro Rivadavia
- Argentina Posadas
- Arizona Gilbert
- Arizona Scottsdale
- Australia Sydney North
- Bolivia Santa Cruz North
- Botswana Gaborone
- Brazil Curitiba South
- Brazil Fortaleza East
- Brazil Juiz de Fora
- Brazil Natal
- Brazil Piracicaba
- Brazil Santos
- Brazil São Paulo West
- California Bakersfield
- California Irvine
- California Rancho Cucamonga
- Chile Santiago South
- Colorado Fort Collins
- Ecuador Guayaquil West
- Ecuador Quito North
- El Salvador San Salvador East
- Georgia Macon
- Ghana Accra West
- Guatemala Cobán
- Honduras San Pedro Sula West
- Idaho Nampa
- Idaho Twin Falls
- Illinois Chicago West
- Japan Tokyo South
- Kansas Wichita
- Korea Seoul South
- Liberia Monrovia
- México Cancún
- México Ciudad Juárez
- México Ciudad Obregón
- México México City Chalco
- México Pachuca
- México Queretaro
- México Reynosa
- México Saltillo
- New Zealand Hamilton
- Nigeria Benin City
- Ohio Cincinnati
- Oregon Salem
- Papua New Guinea Lae
- Perú Huancayo
- Perú Iquitos
- Philippines Cavite
- Philippines Cebu East
- Philippines Legaspi
- Philippines Urdaneta
- Ukraine Lviv
- Utah Salt Lake City East
- Virginia Chesapeake
- Washington Federal Way
- Washington Vancouver

First Young Missionaries Assigned to Laos

In early February, missionaries serving in the Thailand Bangkok Mission reported that the first four young missionaries were assigned to Laos. The Church has had humanitarian senior missionary couples serve in Vientiane, Laos to conduct humanitarian and development work for many years and these couples have provided administrative support for the Church's sole branch in the country. Young missionaries assigned to Vientiane will primarily provide educational and humanitarian assistance under the Church's Deseret International Charities and will not openly proselyte. Missionaries report that young missionaries will be permitted to provide ecclesiastical support to the branch but it remains unclear whether this includes teaching member-referred investigators and baptizing new converts. LDS apostle Elder Jeffrey R. Holland dedicated Laos for missionary work in 2006. The Church does not have official status in the country.



First Missionaries Assigned to Northern Ghana

In early February, the Ghana Kumasi Mission assigned the first missionaries to serve in the predominantly Muslim north. Eight missionaries were assigned to Tamale, Ghana's third most populous city with over half a million inhabitants. Missionaries report that mission leaders began considering plans to open Tamale for missionary work over a year ago. The Church currently has no organized unit in Tamale and all eight missionaries will initially serve within the same group. The Church may follow a similar pattern for opening Tamale as it opened Sunyani by organizing multiple groups prior to the creation of a branch. Approximately 85% of the city population is Muslim but tolerance for Christian proselytism and the ramifications of Muslims converting to Christianity do not appear major concerns.



NEW RESOURCES

CASE STUDIES

[Comparing Congregational and Membership Growth Trends in the LDS Church: 1950-2012](#)

Congregational growth serves as one of the most accurate measurements for ascertaining active membership growth in the LDS Church. Certain activity requirements must be met within specific geographical areas in order for church leaders to organize additional wards and branches such as sacrament meeting attendance, the number of priesthood holders who regularly attend church and follow basic LDS teachings, and the ratio of active priesthood holders to general LDS membership. Membership growth provides insight into the total number of baptized members but does not take into consideration the activity status and self-affiliation of members. This case study analyzes how congregational and membership growth trends have behaved over the past half century on a worldwide basis and over the past decade on a country-by-country basis.

[Expanding LDS Outreach in Romania](#)

At year-end 2012, the Church in Romania had a presence in 17 cities that altogether accounted for 23% of the national population of 21.8 million people. Notwithstanding a presence in over a dozen cities and congregations accessible to almost a quarter of the population, the Church in Romania remains extremely small. This case study reviews the history of the Church in Romania in regards to the expansion of mission outreach. Successes, opportunities, and challenges for expanding missionary work to additional locations is discussed. A comparative growth section compares and contrasts the growth of the Church in Romania to the growth of the Church in other countries in the region and to other proselytizing Christians in Romania. Limitations of this case study are provided followed by the outlook for future growth.

[LDS Outreach among the Mam of Guatemala](#)

Estimated to number somewhere between half a million and 650,000, the Mam are a Mayan ethnic group that predominantly reside in western Guatemala. This case study examines the historical and cultural background of the Mam, reviews the history LDS proselytism efforts, and analyzes successes, opportunities, and challenges for church growth. A comparative growth section contrasts the growth of the LDS Church with other nontraditional proselytizing Christian faiths. Lastly, future prospects for growth are discussed.

[Rapid Outreach Expansion in Papua New Guinea](#)

Within the past decade, the LDS Church in Papua New Guinea has achieved some of the most rapid expansion of missionary activity and outreach in the world while maintaining high rates of convert retention. This case study reviews the history of LDS outreach expansion in Papua New Guinea and examines successes, opportunities, and challenges for establishing the Church in additional locations. A comparative growth section compares the outreach expansion of the LDS Church in Papua New Guinea to other proselytizing Christian groups in the country. Limitations to research findings and methodology are discussed. Lastly, future prospects for outreach expansion in the coming years are predicted and analyzed.

[Recent Congregational Growth Trends in Nigeria](#)

This case study reviews and analyzes congregational growth in Nigeria between year-end 2010 and year-end 2012. Trends in congregational growth since 1987 are examined followed by a detailed breakdown of congregational growth by stake and district in 2011 and 2012. Successes in achieving rapid congregational growth are discussed followed by an analysis of locations that did not achieve congregational growth during this period. A comparative growth section compares and contrasts LDS congregational growth in Nigeria with other Sub-Saharan African countries. Limitations of this case study are discussed. Lastly, a future prospects section provides an outlook for congregational growth for the foreseeable future.

[Worldwide LDS Outreach Among Iranians](#)

Iran is the world's 18th most populous country with 78.9 million inhabitants. Like many countries in the world, there are millions of Iranians who live abroad primarily in Asia, Europe, and North America. This case study reviews past LDS missionary efforts among Iranians worldwide and identifies successes, opportunities, and challenges for growth. A comparative growth section compares LDS outreach efforts among Iranians with other proselytizing groups. A future prospects section predicts the outlook for future LDS growth among Iranians worldwide.