



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

JANUARY 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)

1. Melbourne Australia Gippsland - 1/13/2013
2. Melbourne Australia Craigieburn - 1/21/2013

New Districts

No new districts created in January 2013

Cities Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Mórrope, Peru (N/A, less than 10,000)
- Picsi, Peru (N/A, less than 10,000)
- Peniche, Portugal (62nd, 16,300)
- Saint-André, Réunion (5th, 52,956)

Cities Recently Closed by the Church*

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

- Esquina, Argentina (N/A, 17,431)
- Fordyce, Arkansas (75th, 4,300)
- Long Beach, New York (33rd, 33,275)
- Magdalena Tequisistlan, Oaxaca (110th, 3,829)
- Santa María Guienagati, Oaxaca (351st, 1,487)

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

Fifth Branch Created in Luanda, Angola

The Church created its fifth branch in Luanda, Angola on January 27th. The Benfica Branch was organized from a division of the Luanda 2nd Branch and services coastal areas in southern Luanda. The Church created its first branch in Luanda in 1996, assigned its first missionaries in 2008, and organized its first district in 2011. The number of branches in Luanda increased to two in 2008, three in 2010, and four in 2011. Members and missionaries report that there are good prospects for the organization of the first stake and the first mission within the near future. Two other cities in Angola currently have missionaries assigned (Huambo and Lubango).



Number of New Missionary Applications Twice as High as Prior to Announcement

In an official announcement, church leaders report that the number of missionary applications received weekly at Church Headquarters remains twice as high as prior to the October 2012 announcement lowering the minimum mission age for men and women. Women comprise approximately half of applicants whereas women have generally comprised 15% of the missionary force in the past.¹ Church leaders in many areas of the world and church growth researchers estimate that the

¹ "Response to Mormon Missionary Age Announcement Remains Enthusiastic and Unprecedented," www.mormonnewsroom.org, 7 January 2013. <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/mormon-missionary-age-announcement-response>

worldwide full-time missionary force may surpass 90,000 by the end of 2013 due to the reduced minimum mission age and surge in young women applying for missionary service.

Rapid Congregational Growth in Togo

Five new branches were recently organized in Togo, increasing the number of independent branches in the Lome Togo District from six to 11. Returned missionaries report that mission leaders planted three new groups within the past 18 months in an effort to spur greater growth in Lome, resulting in all three groups reaching branch status and the division of two branch to create two more branches within the past couple months. The Church is nearing completion of its first church-built meetinghouse that will serve as a stake center for the anticipated creation of the Church's first stake in Togo within the next couple years. Click [here](#) for a map of LDS units in Togo



Two New Stakes in Melbourne, Australia

The Church created two new stakes in Melbourne, Australia during the month of January resulting in the number of stakes in the city increasing from six to eight. Three new wards were also organized as part of the reorganization of the six original stakes. All stakes in the Melbourne area currently have between five and six wards. The two new stakes in Melbourne are the first organized by the Church in Australia outside South East Queensland since 1998. There are now 36 stakes and nine districts in Australia.



LDS Group Organized in Additional City in Reunion

Missionaries serving in the Madagascar Antananarivo Mission report that a sixth city in Reunion has had missionaries assigned and a congregation organized. Previously the second most populous city in Reunion without an LDS unit, Saint-André has approximately 53,000 inhabitants and now has its own group that meets in a church-rented facility. Missionaries report that plans for opening the new group were drafted as

early as a year ago and recently came to fruition following the recent assignment of missionaries to Saint-André. The influence of European secularism and higher standards of living than in neighboring Madagascar continue to pose challenges for accelerating church growth in Reunion. Populated by over 800,000, Reunion is a small island off the coast of Madagascar that is an overseas department of France.



Progress in Portugal

Missionaries serving in the Portugal Lisbon Mission report several positive church growth developments including the opening of new cities to missionary work, steady numbers of convert baptisms, increasing numbers of local members serving missions, plans for a district to become a stake later this year, and sacrament meeting attendance doubling in some locations within the past four months. These developments are encouraging considering the Church in Portugal has historically experienced possibly the lowest member activity rates in Europe as approximately 12% of members on church records appear active.



New Wards Created in the United Kingdom

The Church has recently organized new wards in the United Kingdom from dividing large congregations. Within the past six months, two new wards were organized in Oxford (Oxford 2nd) and Chorley (Chorley 4th). These developments may signal an end to the nearly decade long trend of congregational decline that resulted in the total number of wards and branches in the United Kingdom decreasing from 373 to 332. Stagnant congregational growth continues to persist notwithstanding the creation of these two new wards as evidenced by the closure of three small branches in the past six months in Long Stratton, England; March, England; and Carmarthen, Wales.



NEW RESOURCES

CASE STUDIES

[Analysis of LDS Growth in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire](#)

Abidjan numbers among the most well-reached major cities in Sub-Saharan Africa by the LDS Church and has experienced some of the most rapid LDS growth of any city in the world over the past two decades. This case study reviews past LDS growth in Abidjan and explores successes, opportunities, and challenges for future growth. A comparative growth section compares the growth of the LDS Church to other major cities in Sub-Saharan Africa and contrasts LDS growth with other outreach-oriented Christian groups.

[Analysis of LDS Growth in South East Queensland, Australia](#)

Over the past decade, the LDS Church has experienced significantly more rapid congregational and stake growth in South East Queensland than in any other region of Australia. This case study reviews the growth of the LDS Church in South East Queensland and identifies successes, opportunities, and challenges for growth. A comparative growth section compares the growth of the LDS Church in South East Queensland with other administrative divisions in Australia and contrasts the growth of the LDS Church in the region to other proselytizing Christian groups.

[Beginning LDS Missionary Work in Turkey](#)

Prior to the assignment of missionaries in February 2012, Turkey was the country with the fourth largest population without proselytizing missionaries after mainland China, Bangladesh, and Egypt. This case study reviews and analyzes the recent opening of Turkey to formal missionary activity and identifies successes, opportunities, and challenges for future growth.

[Comparing the Growth of the LDS Church and Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia](#)

This case study compares the past growth of the LDS Church and Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia. Membership growth, national outreach, and international outreach among Russian populations are compared and contrasted. Topics explored include factors that have influenced differing growth trends between the two denominations, comparative growth, and future prospects.

[LDS Outreach among the Chinese of Southeast Asia](#)

This case study reviews LDS missionary activity among the Chinese in Southeast Asia and highlights successes,

opportunities, and challenges for future growth. A comparative growth section compares Chinese-targeted LDS proselytism efforts to LDS proselytism endeavors among other ethnicities with sizable populations scattered throughout the world and to the progress achieved by other outreach-oriented Christian groups. A future prospects section predicts LDS growth trends among the Chinese of Southeast Asia in regards to opportunities and challenges for growth..

[LDS Outreach among the Indigenous Australians \(Aborigines\) of Australia](#)

The LDS Church has experienced significantly greater growth among the indigenous population of virtually all other countries and dependencies in Oceania with an LDS presence than among Indigenous Australians. This case study reviews past and current LDS outreach efforts among Indigenous Australians and identifies successes, opportunities, and challenges for future growth. The growth of the Church among Indigenous Australians is compared with other indigenous peoples in Oceania and contrasted with other nontraditional proselytism-focused Christian groups. Lastly, the outlook for future LDS growth among Indigenous Australians is provided.

[LDS Outreach among the Maya of the Yucatán Peninsula](#)

This case study reviews past outreach expansion efforts in Botswana and identifies successes, opportunities, and challenges for growth. A comparative growth section compares the growth of the LDS Church in Botswana with other Sub-Saharan African countries and contrasts LDS growth in Botswana with other proselytizing Christian groups. A future prospects section predicts the outlook for LDS growth in the coming years.

[The Growth of the LDS Church in Texas](#)

The LDS Church has achieved some of its most rapid and steady growth in Texas among states in the United States over the past several decades as indicated by virtually every measurement utilized by church growth researchers to assess growth. This case study reviews past trends in membership growth, changes in the percentage of Latter-day Saints in the population, congregational growth, stake and district growth, and mission growth. Successes, opportunities, challenges, and future prospects for LDS Church growth are analyzed. A comparative growth section compares and contrasts the growth of the LDS Church in Texas with other nontraditional Christian groups.