



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

January 2016

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. San Antonio Texas Cibolo Valley - January 10th, 2016
2. Vero Beach Florida - January 10th, 2016
3. Barranca Peru - January 17th, 2016
4. El Paso Texas Chamizal - January 17th, 2016
5. Maceió Brazil Colina - January 24th, 2016
6. Palermo Honduras - January 24th, 2016
7. Ridgefield Washington - January 24th, 2016
8. San Antonio Texas La Cantera - January 24th, 2016
9. Rio Verde Brazil - January 31st, 2016

New Districts

1. Tarawa Kiribati North - January 24th, 2016

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

1. Salt Lake Sugar House Stake
1. Titicaca Bolivia District

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Mando, Ghana (N/A, N/A)
- Taulabé, Honduras (69th, 4,660)
- Emeti, Papua New Guinea (N/A)
- Chongoyape, Peru (N/A, N/A)
- Carmen, Philippines (N/A, N/A)
- Boksburg, South Africa (13th, 445,168)
- Meerzorg, Suriname (10th, 8,115)

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

- Quirihue, Chile (N/A, 7,952)
- Poinciana, Florida (62nd, 53,193)
- Nienburg, Germany (N/A, 30,691)
- Lircay, Peru (N/A, N/A)
- Yoakum, Texas (341st, 5,815)

Three New Missions Announced

The Church announced three new missions to be organized on or before July 1st, 2016. The new missions include:

- Democratic Republic of the Congo Mbuji-Mayi
- Nigeria Owerri
- Vietnam Hanoi

With the organization of these new missions, the total number of missions worldwide will be 421.

Worldwide Number of Full-Time Missionaries Declines

The number of missionaries has fallen to 75,000 - an approximate decrease of 10,000 missionaries within the past year. This decline appears primarily attributed to an end of the double cohort of full-time missionaries serving that resulted from reducing the minimum age for missionary service. Church leaders initially speculated that the full-time missionary force would decrease into the high 70,000s following the end of the double cohort of missionaries that resulted from the reduced age of missionary service. A larger decrease in the number of full-time missionaries than expected suggests that the Church may be struggling with consistently increasing the

number of members serving full-time missions despite the reduced age for missionary service. Fewer missionaries serving than expected has also likely delayed the organization of additional missions as plans for only three new missions have announced for 2016. However, this most recent figure of 75,000 full-time missionaries may indicate an end of the double-cohort surge that temporarily raised the number of missionaries serving to approximately 90,000 in late 2014.

Rapid Stake Growth Occurs in January

The Church in 2016 has reported the largest number of new stakes organized during the month of January since 1995. Thus far, we have confirmed that nine stakes have been organized during the month. The largest number of stakes ever organized during January was set in 1988 when 16 stakes were organized (primarily due to the organization of seven new stakes in Lima, Peru in one weekend). The second most stakes ever organized during the month of January was in 1995 (11 stakes) and the third most stakes ever organized during the month of January was in 1982 (10 stakes).

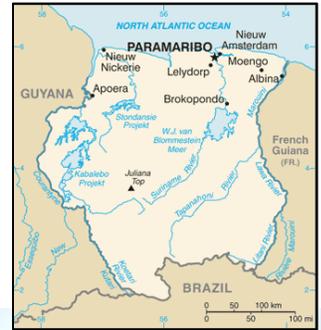
Open Proselytism Begins in Burma

Missionaries serving in Burma (Myanmar) report that they are now permitted to openly proselyte. The Church assigned its first young, proselytizing missionaries to Yangon, Burma in February 2014 under the direction of the Thailand Bangkok Mission. Full-time missionaries currently serving in Yangon report good progress with augmenting the number of convert baptisms in the Yangon Branch – the only official branch in the entire country. Plans are also in place to open a second branch in Yangon within the near future in the North Dagon area. It appears that the future congregation will assemble in a rented building that will double as missionary living quarters. The Church continues to classify its presence in the country as sensitive, but it appears that this classification may change in the near future. The translation of the Book of Mormon into Burmese is also underway. There are over 56 million people who live in Burma.



City Opens to Proselytism in Suriname

For the first time in approximately a decade, the Church has opened a previously unreached city to formal missionary activity in the South American nation of Suriname. Located on the other side of the Suriname River from the capital city of Paramaribo, the city of Meerzorg (population: 8,115) has had proselytizing missionaries assigned and a member group organized. The Church in Suriname experienced rapid membership and congregational growth in the late 2000s, but this growth has significantly slowed since the early 2010s.



NEW RESOURCES

CASE STUDIES

LDS Outreach among the Igbo of Nigeria

Native to southeastern Nigeria, the Igbo, or Ibo, are the third most populous ethnolinguistic people in the country and number approximately 33 million. This case study reviews the history of the LDS Church's administration of the Igbo homelands. Opportunities and challenges for future growth are analyzed. The growth of the Church among other major peoples in Nigeria is reviewed and the size and growth of other missionary-focused Christian groups with a presence among the Igbo is summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

LDS Outreach in West African Cities Inhabited by At Least 100,000 People

The Church in West Africa has experienced some of the most robust "real growth" in recent memory among the Church's administrative areas as evidenced by rapid membership growth and congregational growth. As of 2015, the Church operated official congregations (wards or branches) in approximately 80 West African cities that supported populations of at least 100,000. Although significant progress has occurred in establishing LDS congregations in many of most populous cities in the region, there remain over 100 West African cities unreached by the Church that support populations of at least 100,000 in countries where an LDS presence has been officially established. This case study examines the Church's progress establishing official congregations in the most populous cities of Nigeria, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Sierra Leone, Togo, and Liberia. Changes in area policies that have encouraged national outreach expansion and a more adaptive interpretation of the centers of strength policy are discussed. Successes opening branches in the most populous unreached cities are identified. Opportunities and challenges for the establishment of the Church in currently unreached cities inhabited by 100,000 or more people are analyzed. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

Stagnant LDS Growth in Palau

The Achi are a Mayan people who number among the 10 most populous Amerindian peoples in Guatemala. The LDS Church has maintained a continuous presence within the Achi homeland for nearly four decades and has achieved limited church growth and missionary success. This case study examines the historical and cultural background of the Achi, reviews the history LDS proselytism efforts among them, and analyzes successes, opportunities, and challenges for church growth. The growth of the LDS Church among other Amerindian peoples in Guatemala is summarized. The size and growth trends of other nontraditional proselytizing Christian groups with a presence among the Achi is reviewed. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

