



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

July 2014

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)

- 37. Enugu Nigeria - June 29th, 2014
- 38. Riverton Utah Western Springs - June 29th, 2014
- 39. Huehuetenango Guatemala Central - July 6th, 2014

New Districts

None reported for July 2014

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

- 8. Yekaterinburg Russia District

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Victor Harbor, Australia (109th, 10,380)
- Cabeceiras, Goias, Brazil (116th, 5,505)
- Fátima do Sul, Mato Grosso do Sul (30th, 15,134)
- Esperança, Paraíba, Brazil (15th, 21,631)
- Bombinhas, Santa Catarina, Brazil (76th, 14,293)
- Bukavu, DR Congo (6th, 471,789)
- Washford, England (N/A, 601)
- Lomaivuna, Fiji (N/A, N/A)
- Naitasiri, Fiji (N/A, N/A)
- Navurevure, Fiji (N/A, N/A)
- Savurua, Fiji (N/A, N/A)
- Lake Placid, Florida (N/A, 2,223)
- Assin Darmang, Ghana (N/A, N/A)
- Rochelle, Illinois (226th, 9,574)
- Maiana, Kiribati (14th, 1,908)
- Nonouti, Kiribati (8th, 3,179)
- Onotoa, Kiribati (15th, 1,644)
- Ujae, Marshall Islands (17th, 440)
- Dover, Pennsylvania (661st, 2,007)
- Ubay, Philippines (N/A, N/A)

Locations Recently Closed by the Church¹

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

- Bom Destino, Minas Gerais, Brazil (N/A, N/A)
- Yahatanishi, Japan (N/A, N/A)
- Chapab, Yucatan, Mexico (121st, 2,141)
- Tzacacab, Yucatan, Mexico (21st, 9,967)
- Ahoskie, North Carolina (144th, 5,039)
- Hometown, Pennsylvania (847th, 1,349)
- Playa Grande, Venezuela (N/A, N/A)

Update on Missionary Numbers

In July, the Church reported that there were 85,593 members serving full-time missions. The number of members serving missions is anticipated to reach 88,000 this fall and then decline to the high 70,000s.

Rapid Stake Growth in 2014

At least 39 new stakes have been created so far in 2014. If the current trend continues, there may be as many as 70 stakes organized in 2014, which would be the most stakes organized in a single year for the Church since 1998.

Stake Discontinued in Japan

The Church recently discontinued one of its two stakes in Okinawa, Japan - marking the first time a stake has been discontinued in 2014. The Church in Okinawa has experienced essentially stagnant or declining growth over the past decade due to few convert baptisms and low member activity rates.

¹ *Cities where the only ward or branch was closed; some of these cities may continue to have a dependent unit and/or missionaries assigned

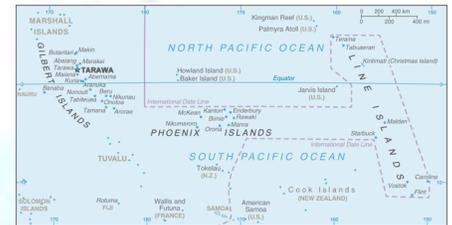
Rapid Growth Returns to Mozambique

Missionaries in the Mozambique Maputo Mission report that sacrament meeting attendance for the Church in Mozambique increased from approximately 1,800 in the fall of 2012 to 3,200 in April 2014, suggesting some significant improvements in achieving real growth. In addition to increasing numbers of active members, the Church in Mozambique has also made progress with opening new branches, such as the creation of four new branches in the city of Beira. Missionaries report that preliminary plans are underway to organize several new branches in the capital city of Maputo in the coming months. Although the Church experienced rapid growth in Mozambique during the early 2000s, slow membership growth and stagnant congregational growth has occurred until more recently due to convert retention and member activity challenges, local leadership development problems, and the implementation of a church-splitting as opposed to a church-planting approach to growth during most of this period.



Aggressive National Outreach Expansion Begins in Kiribati

For the first time in many years, the Church has begun an aggressive outreach expansion initiative in the isolated island nation of Kiribati. Missionaries have opened several previously unreached islands to missionary work within the past year, including Maiana, Nonouti, and Onotoa). In Nonouti, missionaries have held sacrament meeting services in three different villages and hope to establish two meetinghouses in the near future. Missionaries also report preliminary plans to redistrict congregations on Tarawa in order to spur growth in this the most populous island of Kiribati.



New Branch in Rural England

The Church recently created a new branch in Washford, England. The new branch becomes the first new branch the Church in England has created in many years where no nearby ward or branch previously operated. Although the Church in England has organized only a handful of new congregations within the past decade, several branches have recently become wards, especially foreign-language units in the London area.



NEW RESOURCES

CASE STUDIES

LDS Growth Challenges in Bulgaria

The Church has maintained an official presence in Bulgaria since 1990 although small numbers of native members resided in the country as early as 1982. Although the Church experienced steady membership and congregational growth between the early 1990s and early 2000s, membership growth rates have substantially slowed and congregational decline has occurred within the past decade. Despite the continued operation of the Bulgaria Sofia Mission since 1991, there has been little progress in establishing a sufficient number of local church leaders to meet local leadership needs. This case study reviews the history of the Church in Bulgaria with a specific emphasis on growth trends. Church growth and missionary successes are identified and opportunities and challenges for future growth are examined. LDS growth trends in other Southeast European nations are highlighted and the size and growth trends of other missionary-focused Christian groups in Bulgaria are summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

LDS Outreach among the Chinese in the United Kingdom

This case study concentrates on recent LDS missionary efforts reaching Chinese populations within the England Leeds Mission. Church growth successes are examined and opportunities and challenges for future growth are explored. LDS growth among Chinese populations in other European countries is compared to recent growth developments in the United Kingdom. The size and growth trends experienced by missionary-focused Christian groups that target the Chinese in the United Kingdom are summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

Prospective LDS Outreach in the Gambia

Inhabited by 1.93 million people, the Gambia is a small West African country almost entirely surrounded by Senegal that is 90% Muslim, 8% Christian, and 2% followers of indigenous beliefs. As of mid-2014, the LDS Church has not established a presence in the Gambia notwithstanding greater political stability than in most Sub-Saharan African countries where there is an LDS presence, sufficient religious freedom for missionary-focused Christian groups to operate without restrictions, and small numbers of Gambians joining the Church in Western Europe. This case study reviews the Church's history in administering the Gambia and identifies translations of basic proselytism materials available in indigenous languages spoken in the country. Opportunities for establishing an official LDS presence and achieving growth are explored. Recommendations for how to most effectively establish an initial church presence are provided. Challenges for establishing a church presence and achieving growth are discussed. The growth of other proselytizing Christian groups that operate in the Gambia is summarized. Limitations to this case study are described and prospects for an LDS establishment in the Gambia is predicted.

Prospective LDS Outreach in the Lesser Sunda (Bali and Nusa Tenggara) Islands and the Maluku (Moluccas) Islands in Indonesia

The Lesser Sunda Islands and the Maluku Islands are two island archipelagos located in central and eastern Indonesia. 15.6 million reside in the two archipelagos, comprising 6.6% of the national population. As of early 2014, the LDS Church has never operated a presence in the Lesser Sunda Islands or the Maluku Islands with the exception of Bali. This case study reviews the history of the Church in the Lesser Sunda Islands and Maluku Islands, and identifies past church growth accomplishments. Recommendations for expanding outreach and spurring church growth are provided. Challenges for missionary activity in these island archipelagos are identified and discussed. The growth and status of the Church on other major islands is reviewed and the size and growth trends of other missionary-focused Christian groups in the Lesser Sunda Islands and Maluku Islands is summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for the establishment of an official missionary presence is predicted.

Recent LDS Growth Developments in Macedonia

Inhabited by 2.09 million people, Macedonia is a small, landlocked country located in southeastern Europe. The LDS Church established an initial missionary presence in Macedonia for the first time in 2012 and has since experienced slow but steady growth in the Skopje area. This case study reviews the history of the Church in Macedonia and examines recent church growth and missionary successes. Opportunities and challenges for growth and missionary activity are explored. The growth of the Church in other former Yugoslav republics and Albania is summarized. A synopsis of the size and growth trends of other missionary-focused Christian groups in Macedonia is provided. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

Rethinking Centers of Strength: The Case of Cote d'Ivoire

This case study reviews the traditional interpretation of the centers of strength policy and its implementation in Cote d'Ivoire since the establishment of an LDS presence. Opportunities for continued national outreach expansion and church growth in Cote d'Ivoire are evaluated. Challenges to future LDS outreach expansion and the centers of strength policy are examined. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

**Using Open Houses for Investigator Finding:
A Success Story from the DR Congo**

In 2013, LDS apostle Elder L. Tom Perry emphasized the importance of utilizing LDS meetinghouses as a finding and teaching tool in his *The Work of Salvation* broadcast address. Although the Church has frequently held open houses in newly church-built meetinghouses in North America, the Church in many areas of the world has not utilized this approach for investigator finding. This case study describes a recent open house in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Successes in how the open house was effectively utilized for finding investigators and educating the general public about the Church are discussed, and opportunities and challenges for utilizing open houses as a finding method are explored. Limitations to this case study are identified.

NEW RESOURCES (continued)

**ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MISSIONARY WORK AND CHURCH GROWTH
(MISSIOLOGY)**

- **[Church Universities, Colleges, and Schools](#)**
- **[Countries and Dependencies with the Most Members without a stake or district](#)**
- **[Countries with the Most Members without a Stake](#)**
- **[Countries with the Most Members without a Temple](#)**
- **[Culture and Society](#)**
- **[Health and Safety Issues](#)**
- **[LDS Community](#)**
- **[Meetinghouses](#)**
- **[Melchizedek Priesthood Holders](#)**
- **[Self-Sufficiency](#)**

UPDATED RESOURCES

LDS INTERNATIONAL ATLAS

- **[Most Populous Unreached Cities in Guinea](#)**