



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

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

July 2021

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)

23. Vigan Philippines - June 13th, 2021
26. Ashaiman Ghana Bethlehem - July 4th, 2021
27. Kikula DR Congo - July 4th, 2021
28. Sipocot Philippines - July 25th, 2021

New Districts

None reported in July

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

8. Kuopio Finland District (in May 2021)
9. Oulu Finland District (in May 2021)
10. Pietarsaari Finland District (in May 2021)

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Villa Tunari, Bolivia (N/A, 3,210)

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 July

Updated Missionary Numbers

A [recent article on the Church's Ghana Newsroom website](#) provided updated numbers on full-time missionaries serving around the world. The article reported 32,000 missionaries have received online training since March 2020, and that there are currently (as of June 30th) 2,766 missionaries who are involved in online MTC training. Several MTCs have reopened or are in the process of reopening for in-person training such as the Provo MTC and MTCs in England, Ghana, Mexico, and the Philippines.

Year-End 2020 Country-by-Country Church Statistics Remain Unavailable

The Church has still not updated its [Facts and Statistics page on its Newsroom website](#)—the only place where the Church publishes information on the number of members, congregations, stakes, districts, missions, and temples since the discontinuation of the Church Almanac in 2012. Information provided on the page continues to reflect year-end 2019 figures. It is unclear why the Church has yet to update these data considering the Church consistently updated this data every April after General Conference for more than a decade. Hopefully the reason why the delay has occurred is due to a pending upgrade to the site to provide data for countries with an official Church presence that have remained absent from the site (i.e., Bermuda, Cuba, Gabon, Guinea, Kosovo, Mali, North Macedonia, Senegal, Vietnam). A discontinuation of the Church publishing annual country-by-country statistical data would be unprecedented and result in a significant lack of information about the Church's size and growth for Church members and the general public.

Several New Stakes Created in the Philippines



The Church in the Philippines continues to report the creation of new stakes. Since our June newsletter, we were informed of two new stakes created in the country—both of which were organized from districts that matured into stakes. The Vigan Philippines Stake was organized on June 13th, 2021, whereas the Sipocot Philippines Stake was organized on July 25th, 2021. This brings the total number of stakes to 123 and districts to 56. Furthermore, the Church recently published an updated membership figure for the Philippines which appears current as of the end of

May 2021. At the time, the Church reported “more than 825,000 members” and 1,250 congregations.¹ This indicates that, since the most recent instance when the Church reported total membership for the Philippines (year-end 2019), Church membership has increased by approximately 2.5% which is a comparable growth rate for most years within the past decade (albeit the growth rate appears slightly lower than this for the year 2020 as it may have been approximately 17 months since the most recent membership figure was reported).

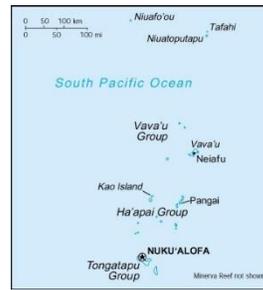
New Stake Created in the DR Congo

The Church organized its second stake in the Congolese city of Likasi during July. Rapid growth has occurred in Likasi and in neighboring cities in recent years which is attested by the original Likasi DR Congo Stake being organized five years ago from a mission district. There are now 24 stakes and 6 districts in the DR Congo.



New Mission in Tonga to Temporarily Operate

The Church organized a second mission in Tonga at the beginning of the month. The new mission, called the



Tonga Outer Islands Mission, was organized from a division of the Tonga Nuku'alofa Mission and includes all major islands and island chains off the main island of Tongatapu. This decision was prompted to better accommodate local members serving missions within their home country while they are

unable to be assigned abroad due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Tonga has long been a country in which the number of members serving full-time missions has exceeded the number of members assigned to serve in the country. Thus, Tonga has been an exporter of missionaries for many years to countries in the Pacific and elsewhere. The increase in full-time missionaries assigned to Tonga may revitalize reactivation efforts for the Church in Tonga considering most members of the Church no longer attend Church meetings and affiliate with other religious groups. Nonetheless, the percentage of Latter-day Saints in the population according to official government census figures is 19% which makes the Church the second largest religious group in the country after the Free Wesleyan Church. However, Latter-day Saints are the only religious group in Tonga with at least 2,000 self-affiliated members who have consistently reported steady growth since 1986. The 2016 Tonga census reported 18,673 Latter-day Saints.²

Full-time Missionaries Return to New Caledonia



The Church in New Caledonia had no full-time missionaries assigned between June 2020 and June 2021 due to restrictions on international travel as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, [two local members have begun full-time missions in New Caledonia](#). The Church in New Caledonia has one stake

(organized in 2012) and approximately 2,500 members. The Church in New Caledonia has experienced some of the slowest growth rates in the Pacific even though the Church has maintained a continuous presence since 1961.

¹ Rappleye, Christine. “Church Members Celebrate 60th Anniversary of Missionary Work in the Philippines.” The Church News. 22 July 2021. <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/church-members-celebrate-60th-anniversary-of-missionary-work-in-the-philippines>

² “TONGA 2016 CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING.” Accessed 31 July 2021. <https://tongastats.gov.to/census/population-statistics/#22-60-wpfd-2016-1498707296>