



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

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

June 2019

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)

20. Baliwag Philippines - May 26th, 2019
21. Nibley Utah West - June 2nd, 2019
22. Puebla México Ometoxtla - June 2nd, 2019
23. Tierra del Fuego Argentina - June 2nd, 2019
24. Batangas Philippines - June 9th, 2019
25. Ribeirão Preto Brazil South - June 9th, 2019
26. Santo Domingo Dominican Rep. Duarte - June 9th, 2019
27. Gardnesville Liberia - June 16th, 2019
28. Lima Peru Miramar - June 16th, 2019
29. Tarapoto Peru - June 16th, 2019
30. Abuja Nigeria Wuse - June 23rd, 2019
31. Iriga Philippines - June 23rd, 2019
32. Orion Philippines - June 23rd, 2019
33. Ocala Florida - June 30th, 2019

New Districts

12. Southern Kiribati - June 11th, 2019
13. Gulu Uganda - June 16th, 2019
14. Kisumu Kenya - June 16th, 2019
15. Newfoundland and Labrador - June 16th, 2019
16. Sapele Nigeria - June 16th, 2019

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

1. Santiago Chile Gran Avenida Stake
2. Santiago Chile Las Araucarias Stake
3. Santiago Chile O'Higgins Stake
4. Pingtung Taiwan Stake
5. Torrance California Stake
4. Rocha Uruguay District

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Yanchep, Australia (N/A, 8,862)
- Sonho Verde, Alagoas, Brazil (NA, N/A)
- Caieiras, São Paulo, Brazil (83rd, 84,386)
- Niakia, Cote d'Ivoire (N/A, 1,613)
- Atakpa, Ghana (N/A, N/A)
- Talofofo, Guam (9th, 2,744)
- Luanda, Kenya (N/A, N/A)
- Ibayugan, Philippines (N/A, N/A)
- Mbour, Senegal (4th, 199,400)

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

- Awarua, New Zealand (N/A, N/A)
- Salinas, Puerto Rico (61st, 4,771)
- Castillos, Uruguay (375th, 151)
- La Paloma, Uruguay (82nd, 3,495)

Creation of the Africa Central Area Announced

The Church [announced](#) the creation of the Africa Central Area, effective August 2020. The new area will be organized from a division of the Africa Southeast Area, which includes countries from Sudan in the north to South Africa in the south, and countries from Mauritius in the east to Cameroon and the Central African Republic to the west. Information on which countries will be assigned to the new area has yet to be released, albeit it appears most likely that the area will include countries from Sudan in the north to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) and Tanzania in the south, to Somalia in the east

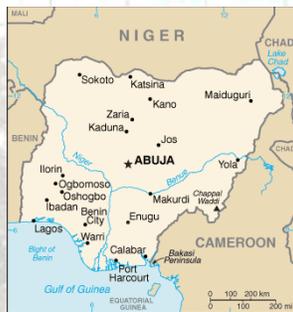
and Cameroon to the west. Kinshasa, DR Congo appears the most likely headquarters for the Africa Central Area as it is the city with the most stakes (11) in Central Africa and East Africa where the only operating temple is located in these region (one temple is also announced for Nairobi, Kenya). The DR Congo is also the country in the region with the largest population with 85 million people, suggesting that placement of area headquarters in this nation would provide for more resources allocated to this area where rapid Church growth has consistently occurred since the Church's initial establishment in the mid-1980s. The establishment of the new area will provide for significant increases in resources to this region of Africa in regards to manpower, financial resources, and attention by international Church leaders regarding missionary work and outreach expansion.

The Africa Central Area will be the Church's third Africa-based area of the Church. The Church organized the Africa Area in 1990 (later renamed Africa Southeast) followed by the Africa West Area in 1998. North Africa was assigned to the Middle East/Africa North Area upon its creation in 2008.

Third Stake in Abuja, Nigeria Organized

The Church organized its third stake in Abuja, Nigeria last weekend. The Church created its first stake in Abuja in 2012 followed by a second stake in 2016.

Significant congregational and membership growth has occurred in Abuja during the past decade, which has warranted the creation of the first stake followed by two additional stakes. No other city in central or northern Nigeria has a stake. There are now 58 stakes and 18 districts in Nigeria.



Church Established Presence in Second City in Senegal

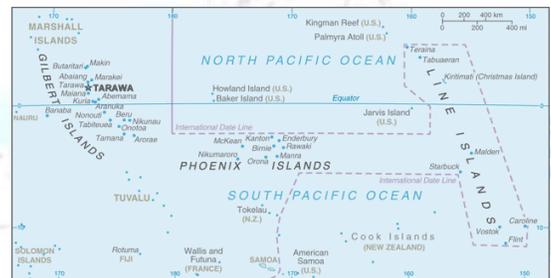
The Church recently organized a member group in Mbour, Senegal. Mbour is the fourth most populous city in the country and is the second city in Senegal to have had a Church presence established. There were approximately



20 members who attended the first Church meeting in Mbour. Full-time missionaries were also present at the meeting. The Mbour Group meets in a hotel in Saly. There are now two branches and one member group in Senegal. Senegal remains assigned to the Cote d'Ivoire Abidjan West Mission.

New District in Kiribati

The Church organized a new district in Kiribati on June 11th with eight branches called the Southern Kiribati District. Branches assigned to the new district include the Buariki, Buraitan, Kabuna, Matang, Muribenua, Nuka, Tekaman, and Utiora Branches. Of these eight branches, [five have been organized since the beginning of 2019](#). Furthermore, the Church established its first branches on several of these islands within the past year. The Church reports that growth has accelerated this year, and there are over 22,000 members of the Church - nearly a 10% increase in membership in six months if this figure is accurate. Additionally, official government census figures indicate significant increases in self-affiliated membership, providing additional evidence of increases in active membership throughout the country. The most rapid membership growth according to government census data has most recently occurred in islands south of Tarawa and in Kiritimati.



First Branch Organized in Dolisie, Republic of the Congo

For the first time in 22 years, the Church organized a branch in a city that previously had no ward or branch in the Republic of the Congo. A branch was created in Dolisie (Loubomo) after many years of a member group that met in the city. Dolisie is the third most populous city in the country with approximately 100,000 inhabitants. There are now three cities in the country with a Church presence. Dolisie is assigned to the Pointe-Noire Republic of the Congo District, which appears likely to become a stake later this year.



Church Begins Coordinated Hispanic Outreach Initiative in North America

The Church in several areas of North America has recently launched the Hispanic Outreach Initiative to better identify Spanish-speaking members, develop a sense of community in the Church among Spanish speakers, and organize member groups, wards, and branches in additional locations. Approximately 30 Spanish-speaking wards and branches have been created in the United States and Canada since the

beginning of the year. It appears that many Spanish-speaking member groups have also been organized that are not reported on official Church websites. The Church has made this focus to better administer to Spanish members and also revitalize missionary outreach among Spanish speakers who are more receptive than their English-speaking counterparts to proselytism efforts.

Five New Stakes Organized in the Philippines

The Church reportedly organized at least five new stakes in the Philippines since late May 2019. These stakes include the Baliwag Philippines Stake, Batangas Philippines Stake, Iriga Philippines Stake, and Orion Philippines Stake. Additionally, one more stake was also organized albeit its location remains unknown. There are

now 114 stakes and approximately 64 districts in the Philippines. There were 107 stakes and 68 districts at year-end 2018. Thus, this is the largest increase in the number of stakes within a single year in the Philippines since the year 2000. Most new stakes created in the country during the past few years have been from districts that have matured into stakes. Common issues that prevent the creation of stakes from districts in the country include inaccurate membership records and a lack of active, full-tithe paying Melchizedek Priesthood holders.



Three Stakes Discontinued in Chile

Members in Chile report that three stakes were discontinued in southern Santiago in early June due to very low historical attendance numbers for this area of the city despite efforts for many years to strengthen congregations. The Church in Chile continues to report stagnant growth overall with little progress with increasing the number of active members during the past two decades. Nevertheless, the Church in Chile has achieved notable progress among the Haitian community in Santiago. Additional stake consolidations appear unlikely outside of south Santiago according to local member reports as most wards have an adequate number



of members attending services. There has also been a recent influx of Venezuelan members who have relocated to Santiago to escape political turmoil in their home country. There are now 74 stakes and 16 districts in Chile.

New District in Kenya

The Church organized a new district in western Kenya in June. The Kisumu Kenya District was organized with four branches – three of which were organized on the same day the district was created. Additionally, the Church organized branches in two additional cities for the first time: Luanda and Nyabondo.



The Church created its first branch in Kisumu in 2009. The new district is the Church's second new district in Kenya thus far in 2019 as the Kitale Kenya District was organized earlier this year. There are now two stakes and six districts in Kenya.

New District in Uganda

The Church created the Gulu Uganda District in June from two mission branches in the city of Gulu. Also, a third branch was created when the district was organized. There were 258 in attendance for the meeting which was much less than anticipated due to the rainy weather. The Church has experienced a significant reversal in growth trends in Gulu over the past few years as the two branches struggled with low member activity rates and leadership development problems. The establishment of the new district is especially significant as it is the Church's first district in northern Uganda and the first district located within the homeland of the Acholi people. There are now three stakes and three districts in Uganda. All three districts in Uganda at present have been organized since the beginning of 2019.



Fourth Branch Created in Rwanda

The Church organized the Kigali 4th Branch from a division of the Kigali 2nd Branch during June. The new branch is the Church's first new branch to be created in the country since 2013 albeit rapid membership growth has occurred during the past six years. Problems with securing meetinghouse space has been the primary deterrent to create additional congregations. For example, the mission planned to divide the Kigali 3rd Branch in early

2018, but these plans were suspended due to the loss of the meetinghouse due to new legislation that significantly disrupted the Church's meetinghouses in the country. The Kigali 3rd Branch finally began to meet in its new chapel on June 23rd and the first meeting had 111 in attendance, suggesting the branch may divide soon like originally planned. Rwanda is assigned to the Uganda Kampala Mission. Church membership in Rwanda grew from 17 in 2008 to 749 in 2018.



Stake Discontinued in Taiwan

For the first time in Church history, the Church has discontinued a stake in Taiwan. The Pingtung Taiwan Stake, organized in 2010, was discontinued and retained units were combined with the two Kaohsiung stakes. Southernmost Taiwan has struggled for many years with lower activity rates and a relative lack of church growth compared to other cities in Taiwan. These changes appeared associated with a lack of growth since the Kaohsiung Taiwan North Stake was organized in 2015, and problems associated with stakes and wards running with fewer than the minimum number of active members needed to properly operate. The Asia Area appeared to make an emphasis about five years ago to organize wards with fewer active members, likely in an effort to reduce travel times and assist in reactivation efforts (such as in Hong Kong). Additional ward and stake consolidations may occur in other areas of Taiwan,



albeit reports from return missionaries indicate wards with more active members and with better growth trends in other major cities such as Taichung and Taipei compared to Kaohsiung. Membership growth rates in Taiwan have slowed the past five years to only 1-2% a year versus 3-10% a year in the 2000s. The Church in Taiwan has also historically struggled with very low member activity rates, which delayed the establishment of stakes in several areas of the country. There are now 16 stakes in Taiwan.

Fifth Stake Created in Liberia

The Church organized a new stake in Monrovia, Liberia on June 16th. The Gardnesville Liberia Stake was organized from a division of the Caldwell Liberia Stake and the Monrovia Liberia Stake. There are now five stakes in Liberia - all of which are located in Monrovia.



The Monrovia Liberia Bushrod Island Stake currently has 11 wards and one branch and appears likely to divide in the near future. The Church has experienced unprecedented growth in Liberia during the past five years as the Church has grown from three districts to five stakes and one district, the number of congregations has increased from 24 to 52, and the number of members has increased from 8,929 to more than 13,275 at present.

UPDATED RESOURCES

REACHING THE NATIONS COUNTRY PROFILES

We continue to update the country profiles for our comprehensive work, *Reaching the Nations: International Church Growth Almanac*. The following country profiles were updated and posted on our website, www.cumorah.com, during June 2019. We will continue to update additional country profiles in the coming months, with the goal to release the next edition of the almanac by 2020:

- [American Samoa](#)
- [Federated States of Micronesia](#)
- [Fiji](#)