



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

March 2018

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)

5. Springs South Africa - February 11th, 2018
10. Brisbane Australia Beenleigh - March 4th, 2018

- Marysville, Kansas (88th, 3,294)
- Oakdale, Louisiana (75th, 7,780)
- Pineville, Louisiana (32nd, 14,555)
- Chillicothe, Missouri (87th, 9,515)
- Honesdale, Pennsylvania (311th, 4,480)

New Districts

2. Cap-Haïtien Haiti - March 11th, 2018
3. Akure Nigeria - March 18th, 2018
4. Fort Dauphin Madagascar - March 18th, 2018

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

1. Los Llanos Venezuela

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Lezhë, Albania (13th, 18,800)
- Parobé, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil (40th, 47,466)
- Naduna, Fiji (N/A, N/A)
- Tabia, Fiji (N/A, N/A)
- Browning, Montana (20th, 5,209)
- Somotillo, Nicaragua (37th, 17,921)
- Awgu, Nigeria (N/A, 266,300 – LGA population)
- Loma Plata, Paraguay (N/A, N/A)
- Chivay, Peru (N/A, ~5,000)
- Kabwangasi, Uganda (N/A, N/A)
- Eton, Vanuatu (N/A, N/A)

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

- Macatuba, Sao Paulo, Brazil (291st, 15,776)
- Mataura, Tupua'i, French Polynesia (45th, 970)

First Asian American and Latin American Apostles Called

The Church announced on March 31st, 2018 that Elder Gerrit W. Gong and Elder Ulisses Soares were called as new apostles in the Quorum of the Twelve. Elder Gong is the first Asian American to be called into the Quorum of the Twelve as Elder Gong's family originally immigrated to the United States from southern China. Elder Soares is the first Latin American to be called into the Quorum of the Twelve. Elder Soares is a native of São Paulo, Brazil. This development signals a significant step in the internationalization of the Church as the Quorum of the Twelve has historically comprised only of Europeans and North Americans.

2017 Statistical Report Released

The Church reported the following statistics as of December 31st, 2017.

- Membership: 16,118,169 (increase of 235,752 from 2016; a 1.48% annual increase)
- Congregations: 30,306 (increase of 202 from 2016; a 0.67% annual increase)
- Stakes: 3,341 (increase of 75 from 2016; a 2.3% annual increase)
- Districts: 553 (decrease of 3 from 2016; a 0.54% annual decrease)
- Missions: 421 (decrease of 1 from 2016; a 0.24% annual decrease)
- Convert Baptisms: 233,729 (decrease of 6,402 from 2016; a 2.74% annual decrease)

LDS Growth Accelerates in Uganda

Several significant growth developments have recently occurred in Uganda such as the organization of new branches and a new member group. The Church organized its third branch in Busia – a city located on the Uganda-Kenya border. Additionally, a second branch was created in Masaka and there are plans to create a third branch in the city in the near future. Also, a new member group on the outskirts of Mbale was recently created in the town of Kabwangasi. Other cities have also experienced significant increases in the number of members attending church in the past 12 months. Surprisingly, the removal of full-time missionaries from cities outside of the Kampala and Jinja area 1-2 years ago has appeared to be the primary catalyst for this acceleration in growth as local leaders have had to undertake missionary responsibilities themselves. Missionaries have returned to many of these cities once a sustained need for their assistance to teach and baptize new converts was established.



New Branch Created in Iceland



The Church created a new branch in Iceland for the first time in many years. The new branch is the Akureyri Branch. Missionaries report as many as 25 people attending church services – a significant increase from the 4 members in the member group when it was organized and missionaries were

assigned in late 2015. Akureyri once had full-time missionaries assigned in the late twentieth century although proselytism efforts appeared largely unsuccessful, resulting in the closure of the city to missionary work by the late 1990s. Although there are fewer than 300 members in the entire country, the vast majority of them self-affiliate on the census as Latter-Day Saint. In contrast, most countries that collect religious data on their citizens report fewer than 50% of LDS-reported numbers.

Good Convert Retention and Rapid Membership Growth Continue in Cote d'Ivoire



Several recently returned missionaries who served in Cote d'Ivoire report that convert retention rates have recently ranged from 50-80% for the two Ivorian missions. This is a significant accomplishment as both missions appear to baptize more than 2,000 converts annually. Missionaries currently serving in Cote

d'Ivoire report that some missionaries baptize more than 100 converts during their missions and that many, if not most, wards and branches hold convert baptismal services on a weekly basis. Furthermore, missionaries serving in the Cote d'Ivoire Abidjan West Mission project that the mission will baptize 2,000 new converts within the first five months of 2018.