



# THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

November 2013

## 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)

- 36. Highland Utah Central - 11/03/2013
- 37. Brighton Colorado - 11/10/2013
- 38. West Plains Missouri - 11/24/2013

### New Districts

- 4. São Jerônimo Brazil - 11/17/2013
- 5. Agbor Nigeria - 11/24/2013
- 6. Ogwashi-Nsukwa Nigeria - 11/24/2013

### Discontinued Stakes and Districts

- 13. Nine Mile Papua New Guinea District

### Locations Recently Reached by the Church

(city population rank, most recent population estimate) precise population data from [www.citypopulation.de](http://www.citypopulation.de)

- Paracuru, Ceará, Brazil (42<sup>nd</sup>, 19,302)
- Maio, Cape Verde (14<sup>th</sup>, 2,980)
- Dratuba, Fiji (N/A, N/A)
- Caltanissetta, Italy (103<sup>rd</sup>, 60,267)
- Enna, Italy (N/A, 27,876)
- Culhuas, Peru (N/A, N/A)
- Georgetown, Saint Vincent (3<sup>rd</sup>, 1,680)
- Jinmen, Taiwan (36,974, 49<sup>th</sup>)
- Matura, Trinidad and Tobago (N/A, N/A)
- Lapangtawa, Vanuatu (N/A, N/A)
- Port Resolution, Vanuatu (N/A, N/A)

### Locations Recently Closed by the Church<sup>1</sup>

(city population rank, most recent population estimate) data from [www.citypopulation.den](http://www.citypopulation.den)

- Junín de los Andes, Argentina (N/A, 10,302)
- Laishi, Argentina (N/A, 4,384)
- Watseka, Illinois (329<sup>th</sup>, 5,225)
- Ludington, Michigan (138<sup>th</sup>, 8,076)
- Evje, Norway (N/A, 2,277)

### Increasing Numbers of Convert Baptisms in the Africa West Area

This year, the number of convert baptisms in the Africa West Area has accelerated. Senior missionaries report that there have been 13,500 convert baptisms in the area as of early November 2013 whereas there were 13,100 convert baptisms for the entire year of 2012. The Africa West Area experiences some of the highest member activity and convert retention rates in the world.

### Gabon Dedicated for Missionary Work

On November 5th, LDS apostle Elder David A. Bednar dedicated Gabon for missionary work. The Church has concentrated on establishing an official presence in the country for several years and has only experienced noticeable progress within the past 18 months as the Church obtained provisional recognition in August 2012, assigned Gabon to the Democratic Republic of the Congo Mission September 2012, organized the first



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

official branch in Libreville in December 2012, assigned the first senior missionary couple sometime in early or mid 2013, and received full government recognition in October 2013. Missionaries report immediate plans to assign the first proselytizing elders to Libreville. For more information on the Church in Gabon, click [here](#).

### First LDS Congregation Organized on Jinmen Island, Taiwan

Earlier this year the Church organized its first member group on Jinmen Island - a small island just off the coast of mainland China that is under the administration of Taiwan. The first member moved to the island three years ago and today there are approximately a dozen members. Member-missionary activity appears chiefly responsible for the establishment of the Church on Jinmen and illustrates how great an impact a single member can make on taking the Gospel to all the world.



### Stake Boundaries Enlarged in Hungary

The stake boundaries of the Budapest Hungary Stake were recently enlarged to include four branches that previously pertained to the Hungary Budapest Mission. The realigned stake now includes five wards and nine branches. Missionaries report that the move was made to help prepare for a second stake to be organized one day. The first and only LDS stake in Hungary, the Budapest Hungary Stake was organized in 2006. Two member districts were also organized in 2009.



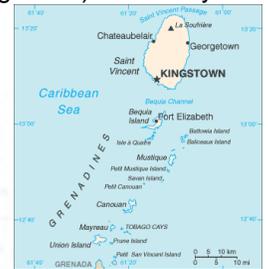
### Official Government Recognition Obtained in Rwanda

Missionaries report that at the end of October the Church obtained official recognition from the Rwandan government, permitting full-time missionaries to openly proselyte. Within the past year, the number of branches in Rwanda has increased from one to three and six young full-time missionaries have begun serving in Kigali.



### Third Location Opens for Missionary Work in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Missionaries serving in the West Indies Mission report that a third city in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has opened for missionary work (Georgetown). Currently the Georgetown Group has an average of 28 people attending sacrament meeting; a significant increase from just five when the group opened a few months ago. Two other locations have an LDS presence and official branches operating: Kingstown and Calliaqua.



### Improving Church Attendance in Georgetown, Guyana

Missionaries serving in Georgetown, Guyana report that sacrament meeting attendance has doubled in the Georgetown Branch from 60-75 to 160 within the past year. In 2009, the Church came close to organizing its first stake in Guyana in Georgetown but experienced a major setback due to inactivity and leadership development problems. Recent increases in church attendance suggest real progress in retaining new converts and reactivating less-active and inactive members. Sustained progress may signal good prospects for the organization of a stake in the coming years. Currently Guyana is the country with the eighth most members without a stake.



### Island Opens for Missionary Work in Cape Verde

Missionaries serving in Cape Verde report that the mission has opened another island (Maio) to missionary activity for the very first time. A member group has been established and appears to operate in Vila do Maio. The Church opened the previously unreachable island of Boa Vista to missionaries this past June. Now eight of the nine inhabited islands in Cape Verde has an LDS presence, with Sao Nicolau being the last unreachable island.



# NEW RESOURCES

## CASE STUDIES

### [Analysis of LDS Growth in the Canary Islands](#)

Consisting of seven primary islands, the Canary Islands are an autonomous community of Spain located off the coast of Morocco and Western Sahara. An aboriginal people related to Berber peoples in North Africa called the Guanches inhabited the islands prior to Spanish conquest in the fifteenth century. Today most of the Canarian population descends from a mixture of the indigenous Guanches and European settlers from the Iberian Peninsula. This case study reviews the history of the Church in the Canary Islands. Past church growth successes are examined and opportunities and challenges for future growth are explored. The growth of the Church in the Canary Islands is compared to other island groups in the North Atlantic and to mainland Spain and Portugal. The size and growth of other outreach-focused Christian groups is summarized. Limitations to this case study are provided and prospects for future growth are predicted.

### [Prospective LDS Outreach in Burkina Faso](#)

With 17.8 million people, Burkina Faso is a landlocked country located in West Africa that is 61% Muslim, 23% Christian, 15% animist, and 1% followers of other religions. As of late 2013, the LDS Church had not established a presence in Burkina Faso notwithstanding widespread religious freedom, a large target population, abundant French-speaking African missionary manpower, and small numbers of Burkinabe joining the Church in other nations. This case study reviews the Church's history of administering Burkina Faso and identifies translations of basic proselytism materials 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 Burkina Faso is summarized. Limitations to this case study are described and the prospects for an LDS establishment in Burkina Faso is predicted.

### [Rapid LDS Growth in Vanuatu](#)

Located in Melanesia, Vanuatu has 61 inhabited islands and supports a population of a quarter of a million. The Church in Vanuatu has recently experienced rapid growth as evidenced by accelerated membership and congregational growth and national outreach expansion. In 2001, the Church had 1,631 members and 11 branches operating on five islands whereas in mid-2013 there were over 5,500 members and 31 branches operating on nine islands. This case study analyzes LDS growth trends within the past decade. Past church growth and missionary successes are discussed and opportunities and challenges for growth are analyzed. Recent LDS growth trends in other countries are compared to the Church in Vanuatu and the growth of other outreach-focused Christian groups is summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

### [Recent Missionary Successes on Chuuk, Micronesia](#)

Inhabited by 48,654 people in 2010,[1] Chuuk is the most populous state of the Federated States of Micronesia. The LDS Church initially experienced rapid growth during the 1980s followed by nearly two decades of stagnant membership and congregational growth. During the early 2010s, significant progress occurred reversing stagnant growth trends as evidenced by the Micronesia Guam Mission setting new records for baptizing larger numbers of new converts and the opening of additional proselytism areas throughout islands in the Chuuk Lagoon. This case study briefly reviews the history, culture, and demographics of Chuuk. The history of the LDS Church and recent church growth developments are examined. Successes, opportunities, and future prospects for growth are analyzed. The growth and size of the LDS Church on Chuuk is compared to other states in the Federated States of Micronesia and other countries in Oceania. The size of nontraditional proselytism groups is highlighted. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

### [Slow National Outreach Expansion and LDS Growth in Tanzania](#)

Bangladesh is inhabited by 164 million people and ranks as the 28th most populous country in the world. Inhabited by over 48 million, Tanzania ranks as the 28th most populous country in the world. The LDS Church established its initial presence in Tanzania during the early 1990s. LDS missionary operations were constricted to Dar es Salaam until 2008 when the Church opened a second city to missionary work and organized a branch. Notwithstanding widespread religious freedom in most areas and rapid growth experienced by other missionary-minded groups, the LDS Church has experienced slow national outreach expansion and anemic membership and congregational growth within the past two decades. This case study reviews the history of the Church in Tanzania and identifies past church growth and missionary successes. Opportunities and challenges for expanding national outreach are explored and analyzed. The growth of the Church in other East African nations is compared to the Church in Tanzania and the growth of other nontraditional, missionary-focused groups is contrasted to the growth of the LDS Church in Tanzania. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.

# NEW RESOURCES (continued)

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

- [District](#)
- [District President](#)
- [Double Affiliation](#)
- [Ethnoreligious Ties](#)

## UPDATED RESOURCES

### CASE STUDIES

#### [Beginning LDS Missionary Work in the Previously Unreached Former Yugoslav Republics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Montenegro](#)

In the 1970s and 1980s, the LDS Church began holding church services and performing limited missionary activity in Yugoslavia. Following the breakup of Yugoslavia into several independent countries in the early 1990s, the Church had already established an official presence in Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia. No concentrated mission efforts were made to reach the two former Yugoslav republics of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia for another two decades although both countries pertained to the Slovenia Ljubljana/Croatia Zagreb Mission for much of this time. There was no previously established LDS presence in Montenegro or Kosovo when these nations became independent from Serbia in 2006 and 2008, respectively. In 2011 and 2012, the Church assigned its first proselytizing missionaries to the four previously unreached former Yugoslav republics. This case study examines recent church growth and missionary developments.

#### [Analysis of Discontinued Stakes Worldwide](#)

The creation of new stakes is a robust indicator of real membership growth in the LDS Church as minimal standards for the number of active Melchizedek Priesthood holders, the number of congregations within a given area, and a certain percentage of full-tithe paying members are requirements for stakes to operate. When a stake no longer meets the criteria to function as a stake it may be discontinued and consolidated with neighboring stakes or become one or more member districts. The location, timing, and antecedent conditions for when a stake is discontinued provides valuable information regarding the self-sufficiency of the church, convert retention and member activity rates, area policies regarding church growth and outreach expansion, and anticipated church growth trends in the affected area. Since 1990, 129 stakes have been discontinued in the LDS Church worldwide. Dozens of stakes were discontinued between 1830 and 1990, but most of these stakes were closed as part of stake realignments to create new stakes or due to administrative challenges caused by long distances between congregations. This case study provides statistical information on discontinued stakes between 1990 and 2013. Reasons for the Church discontinuing stakes are identified and the ramification of stakes closing on local LDS populations is discussed. Methods to avoid future stake closures are outlined. Future prospects regarding the discontinuation of additional stakes is predicted.