



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

November 2016

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)

81. Fort Worth Texas North - November 6th, 2016
82. João Pessoa Brazil Centro - November 6th, 2016
83. Kumasi Ghana Asokwa - November 6th, 2016
84. North Shore Massachusetts - November 6th, 2016
85. St George Utah Crimson Ridge - Nov. 6th, 2016
86. Centennial Arizona - November 13th, 2016
87. Mount Pisgah Iowa - November 20th, 2016
88. Teresina Brazil Planalto - November 20th, 2016
89. Bangkok Thailand West - November 27th, 2016
90. Monrovia Liberia Bushrod Island - Nov. 27th, 2016
91. Port Harcourt Nigeria North - Nov. 27th, 2016
92. Port Harcourt Nigeria South - Nov. 27th, 2016

New Districts

22. Abengourou Cote d'Ivoire - October 30th, 2016
24. Ngandajika DR Congo - November 6th, 2016

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

None reported in November 2016

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Cascavel, Ceara, Brazil (24th, 36,418)
- Steinbach, Manitoba, Canada (5th, 11,066)
- Ananguie, Cote d'Ivoire (N/A, 8,980)
- Vutia, Fiji (N/A, N/A)
- Forest, Mississippi (64th, 5,684)
- Dumbéa, New Caledonia (2nd, 31,812)
- Pueblo Nuevo, Nicaragua (N/A, N/A)
- Ilaro, Nigeria (N/A, ~47,000)
- Čačak, Serbia (8th, 73,331)
- Chonburi, Thailand (2nd, 1.25 million)

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

- Canela, Chile (N/A, 1,744)
- Pamplona, Colombia (84th, 54,900)
- San Gil, Colombia (108th, 40,600)
- Monticello, Kentucky (71st, 6,188)
- Tulcingo de Valle, Puebla, Mexico (121st, 5,249)
- Clearbrook, Minnesota (484th, 517)
- Meadville, Pennsylvania (67th, 13,388)
- Stavropol, Russia (47th, 398,266)
- Tuapse, Russia (N/A, 63,058)

LDS Stake Reestablished in Liberia



Members and missionaries report that the Church reestablished a stake in Monrovia, Liberia on November 27th. Information on which branches became wards in the new stake is currently unavailable. The new stake appears to have been organized from the Monrovia

Liberia Bushrod Island District. The Church previously operated a stake in Liberia between 2000 and 2007, but discontinued the stake due to struggles with leadership development incurred by the Second Liberian Civil War, distance from mission headquarters in Ghana, and member inactivity problems. Additionally, the Church recently organized three new branches in Monrovia within the past few weeks.

Ninety-Two New Stakes Organized Thus Far in 2016

We have confirmed that 92 new stakes have thus far been organized in 2016 - the largest number since 1998. Locations where the most new stakes have been organized include Arizona (11), Brazil (9), Nigeria (8), Texas (8), Utah (6), Honduras (4), and Washington (4). With many additional stakes confirmed to be organized during December, the Church will likely exceed 100 new stakes in 2016. In December, the Church will organize its seventh stake in Zimbabwe and its third stake in India.

Recent Survey Data Results from Peru

Approximately 60 members from Peru completed church growth surveys in the past month to provide current information about their ward or branch. Responses to these surveys indicate that most congregations have between 100-200 active members, an activity rate of 30-60%, 10-20 converts baptized within the past year, and widely varying convert retention rates for one year after baptism.

Fourth Stake in Thailand Organized; City Opens to the Church in Thailand

On November 27th, the Church created its third stake in Bangkok and fourth stake in Thailand. The new stake includes five wards in the Bangkok metropolitan area. This marks the third consecutive year that the Church has created a new stake in Thailand. Additionally, the Thailand Bangkok Mission has officially opened the city of Chonburi to missionary work. Inhabited by approximately 1.25 million people, the Chonburi metropolitan area was previously the most populous major city in Thailand without an LDS presence.



Accelerated Congregational Growth in Guatemala

The Church in Guatemala is set to report the highest numerical increase in the number of congregations in over 15 years. Accelerated congregational growth has occurred in many areas, but particularly in southern Guatemala City. The Church in Guatemala has experienced stagnant congregational growth for over 10 years. There are now 430 official congregations in Guatemala.



New Branch in Botswana



The Church in Botswana recently organized its second branch in the city of Kanye. Local members report that increases in the number of active members in the branch prompted its division. There are now three cities in Botswana with two or more congregations: Gaborone (3), Francistown (3), and Kanye (2). The Church in Botswana continues to struggle with visa problems in regards to adequately staffing its missionary needs.

LDS Missionary Success among Iranians in Sweden

Missionaries serving in the Sweden Stockholm Mission report recent success among Iranians. One branch in the mission currently has 10 Iranian converts who attend a separate Farsi-speaking Sunday School class. Other European nations have recently reported similar successes among Iranians living abroad.

New Ward Organized in New Caledonia

For the first time ever, the Church organized a new ward in New Caledonia from the division of a previously operating ward. The Dumbéa Ward is the first official congregation organized in the Noumea New Caledonia Stake since its organization in 2012. Inhabited by 31,812, Dumbéa was previously the most populous city in New Caledonia without an LDS presence.



Update on LDS Growth in Rwanda

Additional growth developments occurred in November in Rwanda. Mission leadership reported 39 investigators attending church in the three Kigali branches in early November. There are now 14 full-time missionaries assigned to Rwanda. Missionaries anticipate a total of 100 convert baptisms for the Church in Rwanda for 2016. The Church reported 344 members in Rwanda at year-end 2015.



Branches Close in Russia



The Church in Russia recently closed its branches in two cities: Stavropol and Tuapse. The Church had previously operated branches in each of

these locations for at least a decade. Few active members and a lack of priesthood holders appear primarily responsible for the closure of the Stavropol Branch and Tuapse Branch. Member groups have appeared to have been organized in both locations.

Significant Progress Proselytizing Cote d'Ivoire

As a result of the aggressive expansion of the Church in Cote d'Ivoire within the past five years, the percentage of the population that resides in a city, town, or village with an LDS presence increased from 22% to 31%. During this time, no other country has experienced as large of an increase in the percentage of the population that lives within locations with LDS congregations. Rapid national outreach expansion has been a key element that has driven rapid LDS growth in Cote d'Ivoire within the past five years. Also, the Church organized its tenth district in Cote d'Ivoire in late October: the Abengourou Cote d'Ivoire District.



NEW RESOURCES

[Rapid LDS Growth in Cote d'Ivoire - Summary, Analysis, and Implications for Future Growth](#)

Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) is a French-speaking West African nation inhabited by 23.7 million people. Approximately 82 ethnolinguistic peoples inhabit Cote d'Ivoire. Some of the most prominent groups include the Baoulé, Dan, Bété, Attié, Wè, Fula, and Jula. The GDP per capita for Cote d'Ivoire in 2015 was \$3,300 – six percent of the GDP per capita for the United States. Political stability was only recently established in the early 2010s as two civil wars occurred in 2002 and 2010.

The Church in Cote d'Ivoire has experienced some of the most impressive LDS growth trends in the worldwide Church within the past decade. Since year-end 2012, the LDS Church has reported accelerated membership growth, congregational growth, and national outreach expansion. Annual membership growth rates have held steady at approximately 20% every year since 2013. As a result, the number of members increased from 18,602 at year-end 2012 to 32,258 at year-end 2015. The number of official congregations (e.g. wards and branches) increased from 53 in 2012 to 176 as of October 2016. The number of cities with an official ward or branch more than quadrupled from seven at the beginning of 2012 to 36 in October 2016. These developments stand in stark contrast to the preceding decade from year-end 2001 to year-end 2011 when church membership increased from 6,893 to 16,248, the number of congregations increased from 18 to 42, and number of cities with a ward or branch increased from three to seven. Rapid growth during the early 2010s necessitated the organization of a second Ivorian mission in 2014.

This case study reviews the history of LDS growth trends in Cote d'Ivoire from 1988-2003, 2004-2011, and 2012-present. Factors that appear to have initiated rapid LDS growth in Cote d'Ivoire in recent years are identified in the analysis section. Opportunities for continued national outreach expansion and church growth in Cote d'Ivoire are evaluated. Prospects for the application of strategies to replicate similar growth outcomes in other nations are explored. Challenges to future growth are examined. The size and growth trends of other proselytism-focused, nontraditional religious groups are summarized. Limitations to this case study are identified and prospects for future growth are predicted.