



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

November 2018

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)

- 45. Coro Venezuela - October 21st, 2018
- 47. Agoo Philippines - November 4th, 2018
- 48. Morong Rizal Philippines - November 4th, 2018
- 49. Santaquin Utah East - November 11th, 2018
- 50. Feira de Santana Brazil North - November 18th, 2018
- 51. São José dos Campos Brazil South - November 25th, 2018

New Districts

- 12. Cococodji Benin - November 18th, 2018

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

Stakes

- 12. Mexico City Pantitlan
- 13. Mexico City Xalostoc
- 14. Mexico City Centenario

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Freeport, Florida (660th, 1,787)
- Senya Beraku, Ghana (N/A, N/A)
- Gbarnga, Liberia (2nd, 56,986)
- Ahiara, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Ibeku, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Ikire, Nigeria (N/A, ~200,000)
- Mbutu, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Okpanam, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Owutu, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Oba-Ile, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Marabut, Philippines (N/A, 16,962)

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

- Hughes, Argentina (N/A, 4,598)
- Sarmiento, Argentina (N/A, 10,858)
- Ciudad Pemex, Tabasco, Mexico (38th, 5,822)
- Anapog, Philippines (N/A, N/A)

Georgian Translation of the Book of Mormon Completed

The Church has completed and published its Georgian online translation of the Book of Mormon at: <https://www.lds.org/study/scriptures?lang=kat>. The committee to translate the Book of Mormon into Georgian was first established in early 2012. The new translation will be a valuable tool and resource for proselytism, teaching, and testimony development in the Republic of Georgia where there are two branches that operate in Tbilisi. Members have previously relied on Russian translations to study the scriptures. There were 268 members in the Republic of Georgia as of year-end 2017. There are 3.7 million speakers of Georgian worldwide. There are now 112 languages with a translation of the Book of Mormon.



Fifty Wards, Three Stakes Discontinued in Mexico City

The Church in Mexico City has been implementing a major restructuring of stakes, wards, and branches in Mexico City. During November, at least 50 wards were

discontinued and a few new branches were organized. Furthermore, a few wards were also downgraded to branch status. This marks the largest number of wards/branches discontinued in so short a period of time since May 2011 when approximately 50 young single adult (YSA) wards and branches in the Salt Lake City, Utah area were closed as part of the restructuring of YSA congregations in preparation to organize YSA stakes.



The last time this many congregations were discontinued in a single city outside of the United States was in Santiago, Chile during the early 2000s. The consolidation of these wards/branches in Mexico City has been long overdue and has been years in preparation. Local members report that better utilization of meetinghouse space and increasing the number of active members in individual congregations have been the primary motivators for these changes, although the region also struggles with historically low member participation and temple attendance. Although Mexico City numbers among the metropolitan areas in the world with the most stakes (43 prior to these new changes), the Church in the area has experienced stagnant growth for many years. For example only two new stakes have been organized during the past 10 years in the Mexico City metropolitan area.

Significant Growth Developments in Nigeria

Several significant developments have recently occurred in the Church in Nigeria.

In Imo State, the Church organized four new branches the Mbaise Nigeria District during November. There are now 12 branches in the district, eight of which have been organized since 2016. Remarkably, the Mbaise Nigeria District contains the Church's oldest branch in Nigeria - the Umueleam Branch - which was organized in 1978 shortly after the arrival of senior missionaries. However, the Church has historically grown slowly in rural, densely populated eastern Imo State until the past couple years as evidence by only four branches in the Mbaise Nigeria District at its organization in 2010. This finding illustrates the importance of maintaining a Church presence even if slow growth occurs as more rapid growth may occur in the years or decades to come. There are approximately



900,000 people who reside within the geographical boundaries of the Mbaise Nigeria District.

In Benue State, the Church organized two additional branches in the city of Otukpo in November. The Church organized its first branch in Otukpo in 2015 and created two additional branches and organized a district in 2017. There are now five branches in Otukpo. Additionally, two of the branches are Idoma speaking and one of the branches is Igala speaking. These are the only congregations in the worldwide Church that hold meetings in these languages native to central Nigeria. This finding is significant as it may signal recent interest and support by mission and area leaders to support the teaching of the gospel and holding church meetings in local languages – a feature that has been avoided by the Church in most areas of Sub-Saharan Africa.

In Osun State, The city of Ikire recently had its first member group organized under the Nigeria Ibadan Mission. Ikire appears to have more than 200,000 inhabitants and was one of the most populous cities in southwestern Nigeria without a Church presence.

High Activity Rates in Hanoi, Vietnam



Missionaries serving in Hanoi, Vietnam reported excellent member activity and convert retention rates. A recent district conference had 184 people in attendance. There are 212 members in the four branches in the Hanoi Vietnam District. High convert retention rates have also been achieved as the vast majority of members in the district have appeared to join the Church within the past 2-3 years. The Church organized the Vietnam Hanoi Mission in 2016. The Church only operates official branches in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, although member groups operate in two

additional cities.

Church Presence Established in Second Most Populous City in Liberia



The Church organized its first member group in the Liberian city of Gbarnga in early November. Gbarnga is the second most populous city in Liberia and is inhabited by at least 57,000 people. The mission reported 64 people in attendance for the first meeting of the Gbarnga Group. A single full-time missionary companionship has also been

assigned to serve in the city. Gbarnga is the most distant city from Monrovia to have had full-time missionaries assigned.

New Stakes in the Philippines



Two new stakes were created in the Philippines in November: the Agoog Philippines Stake and the Morong Rizal Philippines Stake. The Morong Rizal Philippines District was the last district within the Greater Manila metropolitan area. There are now 28 stakes in the Greater Metro Manila area - more than any other metropolitan area in all of Africa, Asia, Europe, or Oceania. In all, there have been six new stakes organized in the Philippines during 2018 – all of which have been from districts advancing into stakes. This is the largest net increase in the number of stakes in the Philippines since the year 2000. There are now 107 stakes and 68 districts in the Philippines.

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 November 2018. 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:

- [Belarus](#)
- [Estonia](#)
- [Israel](#)
- [Kazakhstan](#)
- [Latvia](#)
- [Lebanon](#)
- [Lithuania](#)
- [Palestine](#)
- [Qatar](#)
- [United Arab Emirates](#)