



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

OCTOBER 2012

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 Temple Announcements

On October 6th, the Church announced two new temples in Tucson, Arizona and Arequipa, Peru. The Tucson Arizona Temple becomes the Church's sixth temple in Arizona will likely service eight stakes in southeastern Arizona. The Arequipa Peru Temple becomes the Church's third temple in Peru and will likely service approximately 18 stakes and eight districts in southern Peru. There are now 168 temples announced, under construction, or operating worldwide.

New Stakes

(provided with chronological ranking and date of creation)

38. Carrefour Haiti - 9/9/2012
39. St. Petersburg Russia - 9/9/2012
40. Croix-des-Missions Haiti - 9/16/2012
41. Milan Italy East - 9/16/2012
42. Rexburg Idaho Married Student 4th – 9/23/2012
43. Port Bouet Cote d'Ivoire - 9/23/2012
44. Mahina Tahiti - 10/14/2012
45. Cochabama Bolivia Sacaba - 10/14/2012

New Districts

11. Cotonou Benin - 10/14/2012

Cities Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Buenaventura, Colombia (18th, 335,400)
- Waterloo, Sierra Leone (6th, 34,079)
- San Miguel Zinacantepec, Estado de Mexcio, Mexico (18th, 54,220)
- Tarkwa, Ghana (35th, 33,466)

Minimum Age for Missionary Service

Lowered to 18 for Men and 19 for Women

On October 6th, 2012, LDS Church President Thomas S. Monson made a landmark announcement during his opening remarks at the 182nd Semiannual General Conference that the minimum age for full-time missionary service would be lowered from 19 to 18 for men and from 21 to 19 for women. We estimate that by October 2013, the Church may reach as many as 89,000 missionaries due to a net increase of 31,000 missionaries (15,000 missionaries from lowering the mission age for men, 7,500 missionaries from lowering the mission age for women, 5,000 from hypothetically increasing the percentage of single men in North America who serve a mission by five percent, and 3,500 missionaries from the Church perpetuating its six percent annual growth rate for the number of missionaries serving that has occurred over the past two years independent of lowering mission ages). Church leaders anticipate that the change in church policy will require the creation of new missions in the near future. A new case study examines this development and analyzes how more missionaries may influence LDS Church growth trends.

Book of Mormon Translation in Lao Completed

The Church announced on its website that a translation of the entire Book of Mormon into Lao (Laotian) was recently completed. There are over 4,500 Lao-speaking Latter-day Saints worldwide.¹ Translations of select passages of the Book of Mormon have been available since 1982.

¹ Lunardelli, Monica. "Publication of the Book of Mormon in Lao Announced," Church News and Events, 26 September 2012.
<https://www.lds.org/church/news/publication-of-the-book-of-mormon-in-lao-announced>

First LDS District Created in Benin

On October 14th, the Church created its first district in the West African country of Benin. The new district consists of six branches in the Cotonou area (Akpakpa, Fidjrosse, Finagnon, Gbedjromede, Gbegame, and Menontin). The Church has had an official presence in Benin for not even a decade. The first branch was organized in 2003 and membership surpassed 100 in 2006. In 2011, the Church created the Benin Cotonou Mission. At year-end 2011, there were three branches and 676 members. In 2012, three new branches were formed from groups and missionaries reported that efforts were underway to open additional groups. The Church has achieved rapid growth and good convert retention rates in Benin but only reports an official presence in Cotonou.



New Ward Created in Hong Kong

The Church created a new ward in Hong Kong for the first time in nearly 15 years. The Hung Shui Kiu Ward was organized in the Hong Kong New Territories Stake. The organization of the new ward is noteworthy because the Church in Hong Kong has one of the lowest member activity rates in the world, few convert baptisms, and has experienced congregational decline over the past decade (41 units in 2001 versus 32 units in 2011). The organization of a new ward suggests that there may be some progress rectifying some of these issues. No additional congregation consolidations and the organization of additional wards in the coming months and years may indicate a reversal to stagnant church growth. The new ward is not to be confused with the Tin Shui Wai Ward; a ward that was once called the Hung Shui Kiu Ward back in the early 2000s.



First Convert Baptism Performed in Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Senior missionaries in the Adriatic North Mission report that missionaries recently baptized the first convert in Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina. With over 80,000 inhabitants, Tuzla is the third most populous city in the country. In March 2012, the Church assigned its first proselytizing missionaries to the country and

simultaneously opened Sarajevo and Banja Luka. Currently there is one branch (Sarajevo) and two groups (Banja Luka and Tuzla). Missionaries report that the mission has made a recent effort to rent separate spaces to hold church services for the three Bosnian units as missionary and member apartments have been previously used for church services.



Rapid Growth in Bouafle, Cote d'Ivoire

Two new branches were recently created in Bouafle, Cote d'Ivoire. In early 2012, the Church organized its first branch in Bouafle under the Yamoussoukro Cote d'Ivoire District. No other city in the world has experienced as prolific congregational growth in so short a period of time within the past year as all three branches were organized in less than 12 months. This development suggests that the Church may experience similar growth trends in additional Ivorian cities if congregations are formed and formal proselytism begins. Bouafle supports a population of at least 65,000 and is located in central Cote d'Ivoire.



Number of Stakes in Haiti Doubles

In September, the Church created two new stakes (Carrefour Haiti and Croix-des-Missions Haiti) in the Port-au-Prince area, doubling the number of stakes in Haiti to four. Accelerated congregational growth since the 2010 earthquake resulted in both stakes reaching 10 wards in early 2012; the necessary threshold needed for each stake to divide. The Church created its first stake in 1997 (Port-au-Prince Haiti) and its second stake in 2003 (Port-au-Prince Haiti North). Haiti ranks as the country with the sixth most Latter-day Saints without a temple.



NEW RESOURCES

CASE STUDIES

[LDS Missions and Growth](#)

This case study examines the relationship between the general growth of the LDS Church and the number of LDS missions. A brief synopsis of the increase in the number of missions worldwide is provided followed by a review of individual mission creations and consolidations since 2000. An analysis of trends in mission growth is conducted by world region and the relationship between full-time missionary numbers and mission creations and consolidations is explored. The relationship between organizing new missions on membership, congregational, and stake and district growth is studied. Lastly, future prospects for mission growth and general LDS growth is provided.

[Expanding LDS Outreach in Zimbabwe](#)

This case study reviews background information on LDS growth and outreach expansion in Zimbabwe, summarizes LDS outreach by province, identifies opportunities and challenges for expanding national outreach, provides recommendations for expanding national outreach, highlights outreach achievements of other proselytizing Christian faiths, and predicts future expansion of LDS missionary activity into additional locations.

[Solutions to Sustainable LDS Outreach Expansion in the Lesser Antilles](#)

Background information on past LDS outreach expansion and contraction in the Lesser Antilles is provided followed by specific successes and challenges to sustaining outreach expansion. Solutions to achieving sustainable outreach expansion tailored to the needs and conditions in the Lesser Antilles are identified and discussed.

[LDS Outreach among the Kuna Amerindians in Panama](#)

This case study provides background information on the Kuna people and the history of the LDS Church in Kuna Yala and analyzes successes, opportunities, and

challenges for church growth. A comparative growth section examines LDS outreach among other Amerindian groups in Panama and compares LDS growth among the Kuna to other nontraditional Christian groups. Lastly, prospects for future growth are explored.

[LDS Growth in East Africa](#)

This case study reviewed the history of the Church in East Africa; summarizes membership growth, congregational growth, and national outreach expansion; analyzes successes, opportunities, and challenges for growth; compares the growth of the LDS Church in East Africa to other sub-regions of Sub-Saharan Africa and with other proselytizing denominations, and predicts prospects for future growth.

[LDS Outreach among the Nivacle Amerindians in Paraguay](#)

This case study provides a brief synopsis of the Nivacle people, the history of the LDS Church among them, and identifies successes, opportunities, and challenges for future growth. A comparative growth section compares and contrasts the growth of the Church among the Nivacle with other Amerindian groups in the region and other proselytizing faiths. Future prospects for the growth of the LDS Church are also provided.

[Comparing the Growth of Latter-day Saints and Jehovah's Witnesses in Albania](#)

This case study compares the past growth of the LDS Church and Jehovah's Witnesses in Albania. Membership growth, national outreach, and international outreach among Albanian populations are compared and contrasted. Factors that have influenced differing growth trends between the two denominations are discussed followed by sections on comparative growth and future prospects.