



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

October 2015

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)

- 42. Lehi Utah Thanksgiving - October 11th, 2015
- 43. South Jordan Utah Midas Creek - Oct. 11th, 2015
- 44. Far West Missouri - October 18th, 2015
- 45. Eagle Mountain Utah Silver Lake - 10/25/2015
- 46. Marana Arizona - October 25th, 2015

New Districts

- 22. Simferopol Russia - September 20th, 2015
- 25. Mombasa Kenya - October 25th, 2015

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

None reported in October 2015

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Anizacate, Argentina (N/A, 2,991)
- Sooke, British Columbia, Canada (38th, 6,601)
- Affery, Cote d'Ivoire (46th, ~30,000)
- Alepe, Cote d'Ivoire (N/A, ~10,000)
- Nakawakawa, Fiji (N/A, N/A)
- Navakawau, Fiji (N/A, N/A)
- Jilotepec, Estado de Mexico, Mexico (111th, 11,828)
- Balilihan, Philippines (N/A, ~17,000)
- Baramata, Papua New Guinea (N/A, N/A)
- Bonifacio, Philippines (N/A, ~31,000)
- San Ramon, Philippines (N/A, N/A)
- Sejong, South Korea (58th, 158,844)
- Gaziantep, Turkey (6th, 1.32 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

- Grove Hill, Alabama (246th, 1,570)
- Japaratinga, Alagoas, Brazil (84th, 3,308)
- Laranjeiras, Sergipe, Brazil (10th, 21,257)
- Steeleville, Illinois (496th, 2,083)
- Deva, Romania (34th, 56,647)
- Germantown, Tennessee (16th, 38,844)
- El Junquito, Venezuela (N/A, N/A)
- Rio Chico, Venezuela (N/A, 16,600)

Mission Branches Created in the Central Eurasian Mission

The Church organized its first mission branches for each of the seven nations assigned to the recently organized Central Eurasian Mission, namely Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Although prospects appear poor in most nations for organizing official LDS congregations that assemble for worship services and have missionaries assigned, this decision will likely help keep track of isolated members throughout the region.

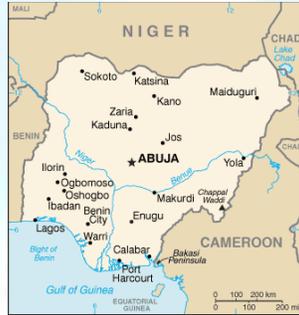
Rapid growth continues in Cote d'Ivoire

The Church organized its first branches in two additional cities in Cote d'Ivoire during October, namely Affery and Alepe. The Church has organized its first branches in 11 previously unreached cities since January 2015. Rapid growth also continues in the most populous city of Abidjan as new wards continue to be regularly organized.



Growth accelerates in southwestern Nigeria

Accelerated congregational growth has recently occurred in the Yoruba region of southwestern Nigeria. Two additional cities have had their second LDS branches organized within the past month: Ilesa and Osogbo. There are now 11 branches in the Ile-Ife Nigeria District located in Ife (5), Ilesa (2), Osogbo (2), Ipetumodu (1), and the district branch (1). The Ile-Ife Nigeria District may approach the minimum requirements to become a stake in the foreseeable future. With the exception of Lagos, the Church has traditionally experienced slow growth in the Yoruba region.



New Ward Created in Togo

For the first time in its history, the Church has created a new ward in the West African country of Togo by splitting a previously operating ward. The Kelegougan Ward creation likely indicates continual membership and leadership growth in the Lomé area. A new branch was also organized nearby in Agoe Nyive. The stake appears likely to divide in the near future as there are now nine wards and seven branches in the Lomé Togo Stake. No LDS presence operates outside of the capital region.



New Branches Created in Turkey

For the first time in over two decades, the Church created two new branches in Turkey. The Gaziantep Branch, located near the Syrian border in the southeastern Turkey, is the first LDS congregation in the eastern half of Turkey. The city supports a population of more than one million. A Turkish member appears to serve as branch president. The Central Eurasian Mission also recently organized a mission branch to service Turkey. There are now six branches in Turkey.



Congregational Growth Accelerates in the United States

Congregational growth in the United States has significantly accelerated within recent months. There has been a net gain of 45 new wards and branches within the past three months. Typically the Church in the United

States experiences a net increase of 100-150 wards and branches a year. Congregational growth has occurred throughout the United States, but has been primarily concentrated in the Intermountain West.

Growth Accelerates in Papua New Guinea

After several years of stagnant congregational growth, the Church in Papua New Guinea has made some minor progress organizing new congregations. The first two new branches in over two years were created in September, and a third new branch was created earlier this month. While receptivity in large parts of the country remains moderate to high, extreme ethnolinguistic diversity, remote location, safety concerns, and corruption all pose serious challenges for future growth.



New Branch Created in South Korea

For the first time in many years, the Church organized a new branch in South Korea. The new unit is the Sejong Branch in the Daejeon Korea Stake. Extremely low member activity rates, low receptivity in the general population, and the migration of active members have all posed tremendous challenges for the Church in South Korea within the past decade.



Rapid Growth Returns to Liberia

Missionaries serving in the recently reopened Liberia Monrovia Mission report that the population has exhibited unprecedented receptivity to the LDS gospel witness. Recently assigned missionaries to the Liberia Monrovia Mission report that some branches have between 40 and 100 investigators attending church meetings on Sunday. Missionaries report difficulty in efficiently contacting, teaching, and baptizing all interested referrals. This progress has primarily occurred due to the efforts of local branch missionaries who have helped find and teach hundreds of prospective members during the 12-month period when missionaries were removed from the country due to the Ebola epidemic.



NEW RESOURCES

CASE STUDIES

Opportunities for LDS Outreach Expansion in the Southern DR Congo

Located in the southern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo), Katanga Province supported a population of nearly 10 million people as of 2007. The LDS Church in Katanga Province has experienced rapid growth in the handful of major cities; however, the Church has experienced slow national outreach expansion in the region. This case study provides background information on outreach expansion trends and congregational growth in Katanga Province. Successes, opportunities, and challenges for growth are examined. Outreach expansion efforts in Katanga Province are compared to other provinces in the DR Congo. The growth of other proselytizing Christian groups in Katanga Province is compared to the LDS Church in the DR Congo. Lastly, prospects for future church growth and national outreach expansion are predicted.