



THE CUMORAH FOUNDATION

Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work

October 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)

- 75. Kwajalein Marshall Islands - October 9th, 2016
- 76. Otavalo Ecuador Imbaya - October 9th, 2016
- 77. Phoenix Arizona Thunderbird Park - Oct. 9th, 2016
- 78. Meridian Idaho Victory - October 16th, 2016
- 79. Odessa Florida - October 16th, 2016
- 80. Phoenix Arizona Desert Hills - October 16th, 2016

New Districts

- 21. Campo Mourão Brazil - October 16th, 2016
- 22. Tarkwa Ghana – October 30th, 2016

Discontinued Stakes and Districts

- 8. Calabria Italy District

Locations Recently Reached by the Church

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

- Beebe, Arkansas (49th, 7,315)
- Akosombo, Ghana (N/A, N/A)
- Azacualpilla, Guatemala (N/A, N/A)
- San Lorenzo, Guatemala (N/A, N/A)
- Mlolongo, Kenya (N/A, N/A)
- Ikom, Nigeria (N/A, ~160,000)
- Ikot Esia, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Ogboinbiri, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Ogoja, Nigeria (N/A, ~172,000)
- Use Ikot Amama, Nigeria (N/A, N/A)
- Wapi, Papua New Guinea (N/A, N/A)
- Maydolong, Philippines (N/A, 14,743)
- Sandoval, Philippines (N/A, N/A)
- Hudiksvall, Sweden (79th, 15,015)

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

- Espinal, Colombia (76th, 57,800)
- Zlín, Czech Republic (12th, 75,469)
- Ponce, Dominican Republic (N/A, N/A)
- Tehuixtla, Morelos, Mexico (42nd, 6,311)
- Siparia, Trinidad and Tobago (17th, 5,680)

Eighty New Stakes Organized Thus Far in 2016

We have confirmed that 80 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 (10), Brazil (7), Texas (7), Nigeria (6), Utah (5), Honduras (4), and Washington (4). With many additional stakes confirmed to be organized during November and December, it appears that the Church may exceed 100 new stakes for 2016. The Church has discontinued eight stakes thus far in 2016.

Update on LDS Growth in Rwanda

Slow, albeit steady, progress continues for the Church in Rwanda. The number of full-time missionaries assigned to Kigali recently increased to 12. Missionaries anticipate a total of 100 convert baptisms for the Church in Rwanda for 2016. There are currently three branches in the country. The Church reported 344 members in Rwanda at year-end 2015.



Centers of Strength Reemphasized in East Africa – Cities Close to Full-time Missionaries

In an effort to organize additional stakes and accelerated growth, the Church in several East African nations has removed full-time missionaries from outlying cities and reassigned them to the most populous cities with the most Latter-day Saints. Unfortunately, this conservative interpretation of the centers of strength policy has historically yielded slower growth in almost all areas of the world due to a lack of outreach in additional locations, concentration of mission resources in only a handful of select cities, and oversaturation of congregations with several missionary companionships. Additional information on the centers of strength policy can be found [here](#).

Second Branch Created in Gabon

The Church in Gabon created its second branch at the end of October. The Libreville 2nd Branch was created from a division of the original Libreville Branch (organized in late 2012). The Church reported 19 members at year-end 2013. The first young, proselytizing missionaries began to serve in Gabon in January 2014. Steady growth has occurred within Libreville, especially within the past couple years. A local member reported 60-80 active members in the branch in October 2015. Gabon has pertained to the Republic of the Congo Brazzaville Mission since mid-2014.



Recent LDS Growth in Western Province, Papua New Guinea



LDS growth has recently accelerated in Western Province of Papua New Guinea. Several new branches have been organized within the past year, such as the Emeti, Gesowa, Mabudawan, Sagero, Parama, and Wapi Branches. Growth has appeared most rapid among the

Souther Kiwai and Waboda peoples.

Cities Open to Missionary Work in Albania and Macedonia

Missionaries serving in the Adriatic South Mission report that three cities within the mission boundaries have recently opened to missionary work for the first time. These cities include Korçë, Albania; Pogradec, Albania; and Kumanovo, Macedonia. Member groups have likely

been organized in each of these cities although no information is currently available to confirm that congregations operate in these cities. A significant influx in full-time missionaries assigned to the mission has appeared to be a significant catalyst to open these cities to proselytism. Prior to the opening of these cities, there were only eight cities in Albania with an official ward or branch, and only one city in Macedonia with a branch.

Second Stake Created in the Marshall Islands

The Church recently organized its second stake in the Marshall Islands: the Kwajalein Marshall Islands Stake. All five branches in the former district have appeared to become wards in the new stake. The Church organized its first stake in the Marshall Islands in 2009. Significant LDS growth has occurred in the Marshall Islands since a church presence was established in 1977. LDS membership accounted for 13.6% of the population in the country as of year-end 2015.



Congregational Decline in Venezuela Continues

Congregational decline has continued to persist for the Church in Venezuela since 2012. The number of official congregations has declined from 283 at year-end 2011 to 249 at present. There has been a net decrease of seven congregations in 2016. Fewer convert baptisms and challenges with members moving away from the country have appeared largely responsible for these recent trends. If these trends continue into 2017, it is likely that stakes may begin to be discontinued – especially in the Caracas area. Difficulties with staffing Venezuelan missions with native full-time missionaries has also appeared to be a challenge.



LDS Growth Developments in Nigeria

The Church has appeared to recently organize its first member groups in several previously unreached cities in Nigeria. These cities include Bassa (Plateau State), Ikom (Cross Rivers State), and Ogoja (Cross Rivers State). Ikom and Ogoja are the first cities in northern Cross River State to have had an LDS presence established. The Bassa Group is the first new LDS unit in the Jos Nigeria District in over a decade.