

LDS Church Growth in 2016

I. Gains During the Year

A. Amazing Growth in Ivory Coast. The Church in Cote d'Ivoire continues to report rapid growth. "There was a net increase of 52 wards and branches during 2016, the largest annual net increase of congregations of any country outside the United States since 2008 when the Church in Brazil reported a net gain of 53 wards and branches. [Brazil's population is 202 million, while that of Cote d'Ivoire is 21 million.] The percentage growth rate for congregations in Cote d'Ivoire during 2016 is even more impressive at 40%. No other country in the world with as many congregations has experienced that much congregational growth rate in a single year since rapid growth occurred in the LDS Church in Latin America and the Philippines in the 1980s. Furthermore, the Church in Cote d'Ivoire organized its first branches in seven cities during the year."

1. Specific Examples in Cote d'Ivoire. The number of cities with an official ward or branch has quintupled in the past five years from six to 32.

2. City of Adzope Grew from 1 to 9 Branches Since 2014. The Church organized its first branch in the city of Adzope in early 2014. Currently there are nine branches in the Adzope Cote d'Ivoire District - five of which are in Adzope. The Adzope Cote d'Ivoire District was organized last February.

3. Growth in Aboisso. The Church organized its first branch in Aboisso in 2013. Today there are nine branches in the Aboisso Cote d'Ivoire District - three of which are located in Aboisso. There are now eight branches in Daloa - a major city where the Church organized its first branches in early 2014.

4. Church Expanding into Small Cities and Towns. The Church has recently begun to aggressively expand into small cities and towns, primarily in southeastern areas of the country.

5. Growth in Bouake. The Church organized its first branch in the second most populous city of Bouake in early 2015. Currently there are five branches in the city.

6. Stakes Ready to Split. Three of the eight stakes in Abidjan currently have 12 wards. All three of these stakes appear likely to split soon. One of these stakes, the Abobo Cote d'Ivoire East Stake, was organized less than 18 months ago.

7. Annual Growth Rate of 19-21%. Annual membership growth rates for Cote d'Ivoire have been sustained at 19-21% a year since 2013. (And, as noted above, growth rate for new congregations in 2016 was 40%.

8. Most Impressive Growth Worldwide in Decades. The recent growth of the Church in Cote d'Ivoire appears to stand as the most impressive LDS growth achievement for the worldwide church in decades. The full-time missionary force is comprised of native African members and the Church is remarkably self-reliant in meeting its own administrative needs. Native members consistently serve as mission presidents in the country. The rapid expansion of the Church into previously unreached areas stands as a quintessential model for other nations to establish the Church. These findings indicate that the Church in Cote d'Ivoire is likely to continue these trends and replicate the rapid growth the Church experienced in the Philippines and Latin America during the 1980s and 1990s, but with significantly fewer resources allocated, much higher convert retention and member activity, and robust self-sufficiency

in local church leadership.” (Matt Martinich, ldschurchgrowth.blogspot.com/; accessed June 10, 2016, and then updated with his figures on Dec. 31, 2016.)

B. Even More Amazing Growth in Nigeria. “The Church in Nigeria reached the milestone of 500 congregations (wards and branches) last Sunday. This is an important achievement as increases in the number of congregations strongly correlates with the expansion of the Church into previously unreached areas, greater saturation of the Church in currently reached locations, increases in active members, and local leadership development. Congregational growth rates have also accelerated in recent years. For example, the Church in Nigeria has reported a record increase of at least 46 congregations for 2016 - a 10.1% increase from the number of congregations at year-end 2015 and the largest number of congregations ever organized in a single year in Nigeria. . . . The number of stakes has also doubled within the past four years from 21 to 42 due to stake divisions and the advancement of many districts into stakes.

1. **Only 7 Other Nations Have 500 Congregations.** “Nigeria is the first country on the Afro-Eurasian landmass to have reached the milestone of 500 congregations. Currently there are only seven other countries with 500 or more congregations: the United States (14,227), Brazil (2,054), Mexico (2,015), Philippines (1,211), Argentina (769), Peru (751), and Chile (602). This finding suggests that the Church in Nigeria has become, or is soon to become, one of the most significant countries in the world regarding the size and growth of the Church.

2. **New Missions and Temple(s) Will Follow.** “Multiple new missions appear likely to be organized in Nigeria within the foreseeable future, such as in Abuja, Ibadan, and Uyo. One or two new temples may also be announced in cities such as Benin City and Lagos. The Church may establish a missionary training center in Nigeria as all other nations with more congregations than Nigeria have a missionary training center in their capital cities.” (Matt Martinich, <http://ldschurchgrowth.blogspot.com/>; Dec. 22, 2016.)

C. Importance of Utah. While growth around the world continues to be really impressive, Utah still looms high in importance to the worldwide Church. For instance, as of June, 2016, there were 580 stakes in Utah. That is close to the combined totals of the next seven highest states combined: California (154), Idaho (127), Arizona (105), Texas (70), Washington (60), Nevada (39) and Oregon (35).

1. **Over a Third of All U. S. Stakes Are in Utah.** There are now a total of 1,570 stakes in all of the United States. Utah, with 580, contains over a third of all stakes in the entire nation.

2. **Nearly Half of All Stakes Are in the U.S. and Nearly 20% in Utah.** There are 3,218 stakes worldwide. The United States contains 1,570 of them, or just under half. Utah’s 580 stakes make up nearly 20 percent of all stakes worldwide. Particularly because of Africa, stakes outside the United States will continue to grow rapidly.

3. **Percent LDS in Utah Actually Increasing.** However, for the past several years, Utah’s booming economy, plus the growing attractiveness for LDS members worldwide of raising their families in the Church, the percent of LDS members in Utah has actually increased slightly rather than declined.

D. Growth of Stakes in Arizona. With the creation of the Surprise Arizona West stake on Dec. 18, there are now 112 stakes in Arizona. The Church has organized 12 new stakes in Arizona during 2016—more than any other state or nation for the year.

E. Growth Spurt in Samoa. The number of wards and branches in Samoa grew from 137 in 2013 to 153 currently. In 2016 alone, eight additional wards and branches were organized, a 5.5 percent annual increase. “These statistics indicate improvements in member activity, convert retention, and local leadership development. Official LDS membership as of year-end 2015 constituted 39.1% of the population of the country – the second highest in the world after Tonga.” (*The Cumorah Foundation: Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work*; posted online December 31, 2016.)

F. Church Officially Recognized in Vietnam. On May 31, government leaders in Vietnam granted official recognition to the Church, allowing missionaries to teach there for the first time since the Vietnam War. The Church has been active in Vietnam for a number of years, but there could be no proselyting. However, those interested could present themselves to other Church members and be taught. Those desiring to be baptized had to travel to Cambodia for the ordinance to be performed. That is all in the past now, and missionaries in Vietnam can teach and then baptize.

G. New Stakes Organized During 2016. There were 100 stakes organized worldwide in 2016. Eight stakes were discontinued, for a net gain of 92. They were distributed as follows:

1. United States. There were 46 stakes organized in the United States. Arizona led with twelve, followed by Texas with eight, Utah with six, Washington with four, Idaho 3, Florida 3, Nevada 2, Virginia 1, and the following with one each: Arkansas, Tennessee, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Iowa, Colorado, and the District of Columbia (where a Young Single Adult stake was organized). While stakes along the Mormon Corridor accounted for most of the increase, there was a greater spread of stakes in the East and South than usual.

2. International. A total of 54 stakes were created outside the United States, as follows:

a. Africa. Of the 54 international stakes created in 2016, nearly half—21—were in Africa. This is a significant increase. They were distributed as follows: Nigeria 9, DR Congo 3, Ghana 3. Cote d’Ivoire 2, Benin, Kenya, Liberia, and Zimbabwe had one each.

b. South America. Fourteen new stakes were formed in South America during 2016. Brazil led with 9; Argentina had 2 new stakes, and the following countries had one new stake each: Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru.

c. Central America. Seven stakes were created in Central America: Honduras 4, Guatemala 2, and one in Nicaragua.

d. Asia. Six stakes were created in Asia: Hong Kong 2, and India, Mongolia, Taiwan, Thailand, one each.

e. Pacific. There were 5 stakes created in the Pacific area during 2016: Australia 2, New Zealand, Tahiti and Marshall Islands, 1 each.

f. Europe. One stake was created in Europe: the Prague Czech Republic Stake. However, the stake in Yerevan, Armenia was discontinued, making a net gain of zero for Europe in 2016.

3. Stakes Discontinued. During 2016, 8 stakes were discontinued, including 3 in Utah: Sugar House, Magna Central, and Monument Park North. One was in Idaho: Moscow University. There were

three outside the U.S.: Anyang and Suwon Korea, and Yerevan, Armenia.

H. Church Opens Three Areas in Northern Iraq. “The Church has experienced significant progress in regards to its establishment in the Kurdistan Region of northern Iraq within the past 18 months. There are currently three senior missionary couples who serve in northern Iraq. Member groups appear to operate in at least three cities: Duhok, Irbil, and Sulaymaniyah. Convert baptisms appear to frequently occur in these cities although each of these fledgling congregations have only a couple dozens members and investigators who attend. This area of Iraq is under control of the Kurdistan Regional Government and there do not appear to be any significant barriers for missionary activity if it is conducted by member referral. Although the Church has a sizable amount of materials translated into Standard Arabic, there remain no LDS materials in Kurdish languages.” (<http://ldschurchgrowth.blogspot.com/>; Dec. 24, 2016.)

I. Banner Year for New Temples. 2016 was a banner year for the groundbreaking or dedication of new temples. The Kinshasa Democratic Republic of Congo Temple was dedicated by Elder Neil L. Andersen on February 12. On Feb. 20, ground was broken for the new Barranquilla Columbia Temple. The Suva Fiji Temple was rededicated on Feb. 21 by Pres. Henry B. Eyring. The Provo City Center Temple, the 150th operating temple in the Church, was dedicated on March 20 by Elder Dallin Oaks. Previously, the Provo Tabernacle had stood there. When it was nearly destroyed in a fire, the Church determined to restore it as a temple, and great care was taken to salvage as much as possible of the original, including the outer walls. Ground was broken for the new Durban, South Africa Temple on April 9. President Russell M. Nelson dedicated the Sapporo Japan Temple in Aug. On Sept. 18, Pres. Henry B. Eyring dedicated the new Philadelphia Pennsylvania Temple on Sept. 18. Architects carefully took details from Independence Hall, and a Catholic cathedral close to the new temple in designing the temple. There is a painting of Benjamin Franklin signing the Declaration of Independence just inside the new temple. The Fort Collins Colorado Temple was dedicated on Oct. 16 by Pres. Dieter F. Uchtdorf. He also rededicated the enlarged temple in Freiberg, Germany on Sept. 4. The Star Valley Wyoming Temple was dedicated on Oct. 30 by Elder David A. Bednar. The Hartford Connecticut Temple was dedicated on Nov. 20 by President Eyring. Finally, ground was broken on Dec. 3 for the Winnipeg Manitoba Temple, which will be the ninth temple in Canada.

1. Four More Announced in April. At the April general conference, President Thomas S. Monson announced four additional cities where temples will be built: Harare, Zimbabwe; Quito, Ecuador; Belém, Brazil; and Lima, Peru (the second temple in that city).

J. How Far to the Nearest Temple? In 1974, the average Church member worldwide was about 550 miles away from the nearest temple. With the dedication of the DC temple that year, the distance dropped to just above 400 miles. With huge Latin American growth, by 1977 the distance climbed to 550 again. When Sao Paulo, the first temple in Brazil opened in 1978, and the Tokyo Temple in 1980, the figure again went down to 400 miles. In 1983, temples were dedicated in Atlanta, Samoa, Tonga, Tahiti, Chile and Mexico, and the distance to a temple dropped to 300 miles. The distance averaged 175 miles by 199, and 125 miles in 2000. The temple in Accra, Ghana, dropped the average distance to below 100 miles. By 2014, the distance to a temple was an average of about 95 miles away worldwide. New stakes created in 2016 include India, Thailand, and Kenya, so until more new temples are constructed, the figure will climb once again. On the other hand, with twelve new states in Arizona created this year, all close to existing temples, the *average* distance may not be lengthened that much. (John Pack Lambert, *ldsgrowthblog.com*, Dec. 27, 2016.)

K. Other Exciting Growth Developments During 2016. (1) The Church organized its first official branch in Senegal. The Dakar Branch was organized on May 1, 2016. Convert baptisms have occurred

and senior missionaries have been assigned to the country. However, Senegal remains unassigned to a mission and is directly administered by the Africa West Area. (2) The Church created its first stakes in Benin and Czech Republic, and reinstated the Monrovia, Liberia Stake, the only one in that nation, which had been disbanded in 2007 due to civil war and a major outbreak of ebola. (3) The newly announced temple for Harare, Zimbabwe will be the ninth temple for Africa. (4) The Church in Syria reestablished an official branch in Damascus during the year and also appeared to operate member groups in Aleppo and Latakia. No senior missionaries appear to enter or serve within Syria at present and church administration is conducted by district leadership headquartered in Beirut, Lebanon. (Matt Martinich, *Top 10 Encouraging and Discouraging LDS Growth and Missionary Developments in 2016*; posted on Dec. 31, 2016, after I had completed and distributed the first copies of this annual paper. When I saw the new post, I took items Matt mentioned that I had not reported on, and summarized them with this addition.)

II. Areas of Concern

L. Congregational Decline in Peru. “Congregational decline continues in Peru. Since the beginning of 2016, the Church in Peru has reported a decline of 10 congregations, suggesting ongoing problems with member inactivity, convert attrition, and local leadership development. Since 2011, the Church in Peru has reported *a net decline of 34 congregations even though membership has increased by over 60,000 during this period*. These findings indicate that despite efforts to improve the efficiency of the LDS missionary program worldwide within the past 12 years, there are countries with significant LDS populations, particularly in Latin America, where progress has been minimal.” (Matt Martinich, *ldschurchgrowth.blogspot.com/July 31, 2016*.)

M. Growth of New Congregations Decreased in U. S. During First Half of 2016. “The Church in the United States has reported one of its smallest increases in the number of wards and branches during 2016. There has appeared to have been a net increase of only 69 congregations during the year – a 0.49% annual increase and a significantly smaller increase than most recent years for the Church in the United States. Typically the Church has reported an annual net increase of 100-150 wards and branches and an annual congregational growth rate of 0.8-1.2%. Provided by the net change in the number of wards and branches in parentheses, states that have appeared to most strongly influence decelerating congregational growth trends in the United States during 2016 include Utah (+34), Idaho (+1), California (-37), Washington (-9), and Colorado (-4). In contrast, the Church usually reports a net increase in all five of these states, and a more substantial increase in Utah and Idaho. However, other states reported significantly larger congregational increases than normal, such as Arizona (+33), Oregon (+6), and Mississippi (+5). Nevertheless, these states were unable to offset the net declines in other states.” (Matt Martinich, *Top 10 Encouraging and Discouraging LDS Growth and Missionary Developments in 2016*; posted on Dec. 31, 2016.)

1. Why is Rate Slowing? “Slowing membership growth rates in the United States have likely affected congregational growth rates. The Church in 2015 reported its slowest annual membership growth rate since 1989 at a mere 1.0%. To contrast, the Church has generally reported annual membership growth rates in the United States that range between 1.5-2.0% since 1999. Fewer convert baptisms, a reduced birthrate, and inactivity problems among young single adults appear primarily responsible for slowing membership growth.” (*Ibid.*)

N. Member Decline in California. For the past several years, the number of members in California has been declining, this despite the fact that there are currently 20 fully-staffed missions in the state, all baptizing new converts at impressive numbers. The number of members reported in California in 2016 is

4,000 fewer than the number reported in 2015. This appears to be a result of two separate causes: first, substantial numbers of former members in the state have formally resigned their memberships. Secondly, there are many members in California who have left the state. Some, particularly those in long-establish-ed wards, have elected to raise their families in areas that are more predominantly LDS. Many others, reacting to a very tight labor market in California, have moved to Utah, Nevada, Idaho and elsewhere, where new jobs are more available. Utah's current rosy economic picture is attracting many people to the state, many of them LDS members from California.
(www.mormonnewsroom.org/facts-and-statistics/country/united-states/state/california/ Accessed Aug. 21, 2016.)

1. Impact on Number of Congregations in California. "The Church in California has preliminarily reported a net decrease of 37 wards and branches in 2016 – a 2.7% decrease and the second largest net decrease ever reported for the Church in California after a net decrease of 79 wards and branches that occurred between year-end 1995 and year-end 1997. Long-term active members moving away from California appear the primary reason for this decline. Despite this challenge, the 20 Californian missions appear to be relatively productive compared to other missions in the United States in regards to convert baptisms and proselytism activity." (*The Cumorah Foundation: Resources on LDS Church Growth and Missionary Work*; posted online December 31, 2016.)

O. Lack of Progress in Mexico. "Over 100 surveys completed by Latter-day Saints in Mexico during the month of August indicate significant problems with convert retention in many wards and branches. Many wards and branches report convert retention rates of 20% or less for new converts one year after baptism. Additionally, most wards appear to have between 80 and 100 people attending church on average, whereas the average ward or branch has nearly 700 members on church records. Although receptivity to the LDS gospel message remains good in many areas of the country, rushed prebaptismal tactics, problems with member-missionary participation, and local leadership development problems have stifled growth in recent years. [During the first eight months of] 2016, there has been a net increase of only five congregations for the entire country—a 0.25% increase." (Matt Martinich, [www.ldschurch-growth.blogspot.com/Aug. 31, 2016](http://www.ldschurch-growth.blogspot.com/Aug.31,2016).)

1. Difficulties in Mexico. "Home to the second largest population of Latter-day Saints according to official LDS figures, the Church in Mexico continues to experience essentially stagnant growth. There was essentially no net change in the number of wards or branches in Mexico during 2016. Additionally, no new stakes were organized in Mexico during the year. This points to serious concerns regarding member activity, convert retention, missionary activity, and leadership development – especially considering that the Church operates 34 missions and its second largest missionary training center in the world in Mexico." (Matt Martinich, *Overall LDS Growth Trend Case Studies*, Dec. 31, 2016.)

P. Times Have Changed for Missionaries. A new missionary in my ward just arrived at the MTC in Guatemala. In his first email from there he sent this message: "Guatemala City, Guatemala, I'm at the MTC!!!!!! They are giving us 5 minutes to write to everyone so it will be short. . . . There are security guards with machine guns guarding the MTC gate. I love you guys so much and I will be sure to write soon!!! I have made lots of friends so far and everyone is really nice." [Sweden had its challenges in 1955, but I didn't see any machine guns! Reed].

Q. Huge Translation Task Remains to Take Gospel to the World. Matt Martinich, noting the number of languages with several million speakers each, where the Church has not even a pamphlet translated,

stated: “There remains an overwhelming need for translating basic LDS materials and scriptures into additional languages. Less than five percent of the world's languages have translations of church materials available, including hundreds of languages spoken by more than half a million speakers. In late 2012, there were 71 languages with over three million speakers without LDS materials translated [and 10 with over 20 million speakers each]. Of these 71 languages, 46 were native to Asia (65%), 15 were native to Africa (21%), eight were native to Europe (11%), and the remaining two were native to other continents. India has the most languages with over three million speakers without LDS materials translated (21) and Indonesia has the second most (9). Provided with the most recent estimate for the number of speakers, the 72 languages with over three million speakers without LDS materials translated include Javanese (84.6 million), Lahnda [Western Panjabi and Seraiki] (78.3 million), Gujarati (46.5 million), Bhojpuri (38.5 million), Awadhi (38.3 million), Maithili (34.7 million), Sunda (34 million), Oriya (31.7 million), Marwari (31.1 million), Sindhi (21.4 million), Rajasthani (20 million), Azerbaijani (19.1 million), Chhattisgarhi (17.5 million), Oromo (17.3 million), Assamese (16.8 million), Kurdish (16 million), Rangpuri (15 million), Zhuang (14.9 million), Madura (13.6 million), Chittagonian (13 million), Haryanvi (13 million), Magahi (13 million), Deccan (12.8 million), Sylheti (10.3 million), Kanauji (9.5 million), Lombard (9.1 million), Uyghur (8.8 million), Bagheli (7.8 million), Konkani (7.6 million), Gikuyu (7.2 million), Napoletano-Calabrese (7 million), Baluchi (7 million), Varhadi-Nagpuri (7 million), Turkmen (6.6 million), Tatar (6.5 million), Venetian (6.2 million), Santali (6.2 million), Flemish [Vlaams] (6.1 million), Lambadi (6 million), Tigrigna (5.8 million), Kashmiri (5.6 million), Minangkabau (5.5 million), Sukuma (5.4 million), Mewati (5 million), Sicilian (4.8 million), Tajik (4.5 million), Dholuo (4.4 million), Kituba (4.2 million), Umbundu (4 million), Kamba (4 million), Kanuri (4 million), Domari (4 million), Musi (3.9 million), Dogri (3.8 million), Mina (3.8 million), Tsonga (3.7 million), Banjar (3.5 million), Aceh (3.5 million), Bugis (3.5 million), Bali (3.5 million), Shan (3.3 million), Gilaki (3.3 million), Mazanderani (3.3 million), Jamaican Creole English (3.2 million), Galician (3.2 million), Tamazight (3.2 million), Kabyle (3.1 million), Hassaniyya Arabic (3.1 million), Piemontese (3.1 million), Makhwa (3.1 million), Godwari (3 million), Hunsrik (3 million), Kimbundu (3 million), and Tachelhit (3 million). Most of these 72 languages are indigenous to regions with no LDS presence and to ethnic groups with few Christians. . . . The translation of even a proselytism material as basic as the 13 Articles of Faith in every language spoken by more than one million people could greatly facilitate initial outreach efforts while utilizing comparatively few resources.” (Matt Martinich, “Translation Projects,” *LDS Growth Encyclopedia on Missionary Work and Church Growth (Missiology)*. Originally posted September 28th, 2013. <http://ldschurchgrowth.blogspot.com/Sept. 12, 2016>.)

R. Missions with No Young North Americans Assigned. Presumably because of safety factors, the following missions worldwide have no young North American missionaries assigned currently: the four missions in Venezuela; the two Cote d'Ivoire missions (where a young missionary from Morgan, Utah was murdered several years ago); three missions in Democratic Republic of Congo; Haiti; India; the six Nigeria missions; and the two Papua New Guinea missions. (Matt Martinich, <https://www.blogger.com/comment.g?blogID=2786908254617003646&postID=6771655415835783898>; Sept. 16, 2016.)

S. Very Slow Growth in Europe. Concerned about what I've heard about growth in Europe, I went through the “LDS International Congregational Growth” list, compiled twice a month, and read every entry for 2016. This is the sum total of new branches and wards, and discontinued units for the year in Europe:

Albania

Berat Branch created

Armenia

Yeravan Stake discontinued. Six wards are now branches

Austria

Innsbruck Ward created from branch

Belgium

Liege 1st Branch now a ward; Liege 2nd Branch discontinued

Czech Republic

Hrdec Ward created from branch

Ward in Prague created from branch; a second branch discontinued

Pizen Ward created from branch

Denmark

Silkeborg Branch discontinued (Arhus Stake)

England

Ipswich 2nd Ward created

France

Saint-Raphael Ward created from branch

Germany

Freiburg 2nd Branch (English-Speaking) created

Eifel Branch created (Dusseldorf Stake)

Hohenstein Ward created from Hohenstein Branch (Leipzig Stake)

Schweinfurt Ward discontinued (Nurnberg Stake)

Nienberg Branch discontinued (Hannover Stake)

Greece

Athens 1st branch discontinued

Italy

Rome 5th Ward created from Rome 5th Branch

Rome 6th Ward discontinued

Vicenza Ward created from Vicenza Branch (Venice Stake)

Varese Branch discontinued (Milan West Stake)

Brixen Branch (German-Speaking) created (Verona Stake)

Mantovia Branch discontinued (Verona Stake)

Spain

Pamplona 2nd Ward created (Vitoria Stake)

The Church website *ldsgrowth/statistics.org* lists 508,173 members and 1,457 congregations in Europe, with 44 missions. Number of missionaries is not reported, but likely a couple of thousand. The report shows eleven new wards created in Europe in 2016, but eight wards discontinued, for a net gain of only three wards for the year. Further, four new branches were created (plus the six former wards in Armenia), but six branches were discontinued. That means there was a net gain of exactly one congregation for all of Europe in 2016!

T. Unauthorized Videos of General Authority Meetings Leaked During Year. “As October general conference drew to a close, news broke that 15 unauthorized videos of internal meetings involving high-ranking church leaders recorded between 2007 and 2012 had been leaked online by an anonymous source. The videos, typically an hour or less in length, showed church leaders being briefed by experts on political, social and financial issues to stay abreast of current trends and events.” While there was nothing confidential or startling in the released videos, the very fact that such important meetings could be hacked by outsiders must be disturbing to Church leaders. The Church now joins many other groups worldwide whose most private conversations have been made public. (*Deseret News*, Dec. 26, 2016.)

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