

# Sierra Leone

## Republic of Sierra Leone

**James G. Poitras**, Area Coordinator/Official UPCI Representative

**Christopher B. Conteh**, National Superintendent, UPC of Sierra Leone

**Population:** 5,700,000

**Area:** 27,699 sq. mi.

**Capital:** Freetown

**Languages:** English (official), Mende, Temne, Krio

**Religions:** Islam, 60%; indigenous beliefs, 30%; Christian, 10%

Mangrove swamps lie along the Republic of Sierra Leone's Atlantic Coast in West Africa, while the nation's inland plateau is wooded. The eastern sector is mountainous, and may be responsible for the nation's name, which means "Mountain of the Lion." During the 1700s Sierra Leone was an important center of the transatlantic slave trade. The capital, Freetown, was founded in 1792 by the Sierra Leone Company as a home for black Britons who had fought for the British in the American Revolutionary War. The Crown Colony and Protectorate joined and gained independence in 1961. From 1991 to 2002, the country suffered greatly under a devastating civil war. Today Sierra Leone continues to emerge from a protracted civil war and is showing signs of a successful transition. Investor and consumer confidence continue to rise, adding impetus to the country's economic recovery. Donald and Abigail O'Keefe founded the church in Sierra Leone in 1975. Presently, under national leadership, the church continues to march on in spite of a recent, devastating civil war. As the United Nations and humanitarian groups remain on the scene to assist in rebuilding the nation, the United Pentecostal Church International is there to provide hope and to build the Lord's church. The church has 5,020 constituents, 45 licensed ministers, and 24 churches and preaching points.

**Recommended Reading:** *Mountain of the Lion* (70-1-56722-192-0) by Donald O'Keefe. Order from Pentecostal Publishing House at 314.837.7300 or [www.pentecostalpublishing.com](http://www.pentecostalpublishing.com).