

Reaching the Least Reached

What is an unreached people and an unengaged people group? Where do UPGs live?

A people group is unreached when the number of evangelical Christians is less than 2% of its population (UPG). It is further called unengaged (UUPG) when there is no church planting methodology consistent with evangelical faith and practice under way. "A people group is not engaged when it has been merely adopted, is the object of focused prayer, or is part of an advocacy strategy." (IMB)

Today there are 6,430 unreached people groups around the world. Approximately 3,161 of those groups are not only unreached, but they are unengaged.

It will be a surprise to some people that some large, very unreached people groups live in the United States, and even within the geography of the Central Coast Baptist Association. They represent various regions of the world such as China, India and the Middle East. They are adherents of world religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Jainism.



What are the largest unreached people groups in the Bay Area?

Nobody knows for certain yet which the largest UPGs are in the Bay Area, but we do know which of them are the largest in the world. We also know some of them that are certainly here in large numbers, mostly in Santa Clara, Alameda, San Francisco, San Mateo and Contra Costa counties. There are more UPGs here than there can ever be paid missionaries to work among them. It will take ordinary Christians who are willing to pray and work in extraordinary ways so that people from every nation, tribe, and language has access to the gospel, and can have churches planted among them. Read about them in these pages.

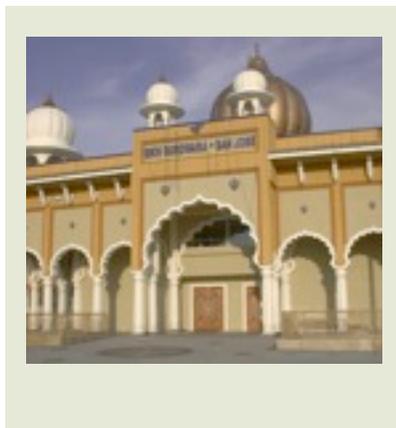
SOUTH ASIANS

According to the 2010 Census, over 117,000 Asian Indians live in Santa Clara County, 72,000 in Alameda County, 22,000 in Contra Costa County, 13,000 in San Mateo County, and 9,700 in San Francisco. Most speak Hindi, Urdu and English, as well as some other regional dialects, and they also have diverse religious and cultural practices. Outlined here are a few of the South Asian groups that are the least reached for Christ.

Punjabi Sikhs

Santa Clara County has the third highest Sikh population in the United States. Sikhs are mostly from the Indian State of Punjab where they work as contractors, industrial entrepreneurs, physicians, and engineers. One of the least reached peoples from the Punjab are Ramgarhia Sikh (Indian population of

1,020,508). Some from this group live in the South Bay. The Bay Area hosts the third largest Panjabi speaking



population in the U.S. Sikhism is a major world religion. It originated in the Punjab region of India and draws from Bhakti Hinduism and Islamic Sufism. There are Sikh gurdwaras (temples) all over the Bay Area, but the largest is Sikh Gurdwara Sahib in San Jose. They host radio programs

and hold daily morning and evening services, as well as events from 3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Sundays.

Urdu-Speaking Muslims

Urdu is the official language of Pakistan, and is also spoken by many Iranians. Additionally it is one of the official language of five states in India. In the South Bay there are also thousands of Urdu speaking Iranians who are mostly Shiite Muslim and many thousands more from Pakistan who are Sunni Muslims. In 2000 there were over 4,300 Urdu speakers in the Bay Area, but that number is arguably much higher now. There are over 50 mosques in the Bay Area, most of which are ethnically and linguistically diverse. For example, the Islamic Center of Concord is a worship place for many Pakistanis who speak Urdu.



Marathi

Marathi is the official language of the state of Maharashtra in Central India, which is the country's second most populous state, as well as its wealthiest. Its largest city is Mumbai, India's financial capital. The largest concentration of Marathi speakers in the U.S., as well as the Bay Area, is found in Santa Clara County followed by Alameda County. There are smaller concentrations of Marathi speakers present in San Mateo, Contra Costa, and San Francisco counties. Approximately 80% of Marathi are Hindu.

While there are at least 43 Hindu worship and study centers in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties two prominent temples that the Marathi are known to attend are the Sunnyvale Temple and Community Center and the Vedic Dharma Samaj Fremont Temple. There are also two organizations that promote the connecting of persons interested in Marathi culture from around the world: Maharashtra Mandal Bay Area and East Bay Maharashtra Mandal. These mandals sponsor cultural, religious, social, art, and theater events for the community. The Bay Area is also a center of Marathi literature with there being a library hosted by the Maharashtra Mandal Bay Area for its members. In 2008 the World Marathi Literary Meet was hosted in San Francisco by this organization.

Jain

The Jains are a religious group primarily originating from the state of Gujarat in India, including Mumbai. Many Jains immigrated to the United States starting in the 1970s either directly from India or from Eastern Africa, where they had previously immigrated. Estimates indicate that 4,000 Jains live in the Bay Area based on the number of families who have attended events at the Jain Center of Northern California (JCNC) in Milpitas. This is the only Jain temple and community center in the Bay Area.

Rooted in the teachings of Mahavira, the 24th saint or Tirthankara in a succession of saints, Jainism is called Jain Dharma by its adherents. Mahavira proclaimed the teachings of Jainism in 599 B.C. Jains do not believe in a God; rather, they believe that the world has always existed and will exist in a timeless manner. Core to the belief system of Jainism are these pillars: nonviolence (ahimsa); truthfulness (satya); non-stealing (satya); chastity (brahmacharya); and non-attachment (aparigraha). Jains "emphasize the necessity of self-effort to move the soul towards divine consciousness and liberation." This core aspect of their belief system is the teaching of karma. All Jains are vegetarians. There is a strong emphasis amongst Jains to focus on environmental and community activism as well as religious tolerance.

Gujarathi

Gujarati is the official language of the state of Gujarat in Western India. The Gujarati people began immigrating to the Bay area in the 1950s and 60s when many joined the hotel and motel industry while they studied on student visas. A second wave of immigration emerged during the 1990s with the high tech industry. In 2000, there was a total of 9,710 Gujaratis in the five-county area of Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara. In 2008, a total of 14,940 lived in this area. This is a 54% population increase. According to a 2001 San Francisco Chronicle article, Gujaratis make up a third of the Indian American population of the Bay Area. At that time, this population primarily resided in Fremont and Newark.

Eighty-nine percent of Gujaratis are Hindu, nine percent Muslim, one percent Jain, and the remaining one percent are Sikh, Zoroastrian, Christian, Buddhist, or Animist. The Gujarati Cultural Association (or Samaj), based out of Fremont, has offered cultural, social, and educational programming to the Gujarati community in the Bay Area since 1979. The India Community Center (ICC) of Milpitas "promotes Indian culture and values" by providing similar programming to the Indian community. Some Gujarati-specific programs are offered at ICC.

Afghans

The tri-city area of Fremont, Newark, and Union City in Alameda County is home to more than 40,000 first-generation Afghan immigrants and refugees. It is by far the largest concentration of Afghans in the United States. In Fremont there is a three-block area known as Little Kabul. It consists of Afghan restaurants, a Muslim bookstore and several Afghan markets. Various language groups are represented here, including Pashtu, Dari, Urdu, Farsi, and Hazaragi. The two primary languages are Pashto and Dari. Dari is very similar to Persian Farsi. Concord also has many Pashto speaking Afghans and a place of worship. Almost all Afghans are Muslim.

Some have been here a few decades, but many of the Afghans are new refugees who are illiterate even in their own language. Many live on welfare while others struggle to pay the bills in low-paying jobs. Despite the 30 years of war that devastated their country, the people of Afghanistan are proud to call themselves Afghans. Afghanistan is located geographically at the crossroads of the Ancient Silk Road, a former trade route, so a mixture of people groups is the result. These groups range from Pashtuns (the native Afghans), Tajiks originating in Tajikistan, Uzbeks from Uzbekistan, and Hazaras, who look more like the Mongolians to the east. Understanding the diversity of what it means to be Afghan, as well as knowing about their heritage and beliefs, is essential to understanding and effectively being Jesus to this Central Asian people.

Muslim Chinese

The two largest Muslim groups in China are the Hui and the Uighurs. There are ten million Hui in China, where they are recognized as one of the 56 people groups.

Both the Hui and the Uyghurs are present in the San Francisco Bay Area. They share both Chinese and Muslim identities. The number of Muslim Chinese in the Bay Area is unknown. Most are descended from Central Asian lineages of Islamic ancestry by way of the Silk Road. Concentrated in Northwest China, they spread to other parts of Northern China. There are



1,000 Uyghur living in the U.S. with no known Christians among them. There are a few Muslim

Chinese restaurants located in San Francisco, San Mateo and San Jose. Muslim Chinese worship in the same mosques as other Bay Area Muslims.

Iranians (Persians)

There are around 45,000 Irani people living in the Bay Area, making it one of the largest Iranian communities in the United States. Over 16,000 live in Santa Clara County, and over 10,000 in both Alameda and Contra Costa counties. Most are from The Islamic Republic of Iran, with some from Afghanistan. The Irani are a subset of Persians, which broadly includes multiple people groups immigrating to North America from Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran and Tajikistan. Most Iranians in the United States are Muslims. The phrase *Iranian American* is used interchangeably with the phrase *Persian-American*. The terms have been used interchangeably since classic times. There



is a tendency among Iranian-Americans to categorize themselves as "Persian" rather than "Iranian", mainly to disassociate themselves from the modern Iranian regime and the negativity associated with it, and also to distinguish themselves as being of Persian ethnicity, which is around 65% of Iran's population. The majority of

Iranian-Americans are of Persian-speaking backgrounds.

Yemeni

The Republic of Yemen is located in Western Asia, occupying the southwestern to the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula. It is one of the poorest countries in the Arab World with an unemployment rate of 65%. The majority of its population is divided into tribal groups, especially in the northern areas of the country where 85% of local residents belong to various tribes. Religion in Yemen consists primarily of two religious groups; 53% of the Muslim population is Sunni and 45% is Shiite.

Some Yemenis began immigrating to the U.S. after 1869 and gained U.S. citizenship by fighting in World War I and World War II. They worked in factories in the Midwest and on farms in the San Joaquin Valley in California. In 1945, more emigrated to United States from Vietnam, where many Yemenis had worked in warehouses, shops, and on the docks. When the quota system for immigration was eliminated in 1965, they could more easily gain visas to live in the U.S. and get jobs here, prompting an increase in the numbers of Yemenis immigrants.

Although most Yemeni Americans are Muslim, there are also some American Jews of Yemeni ancestry, mostly whose parents or ancestors came to the U.S. via Israel. A significant Yemeni communities exist in Oakland and in San Francisco. There is a Yemeni mosque and several Yemeni restaurants in San Francisco. One news sources reported that In the Bay Area, the Yemeni are mostly young men, live mostly in the East Bay, and often manage or own family corner markets. It is estimated that 80% of liquor stores in Oakland are owned by members of the Yemeni American Grocers Association. Few Yemeni enroll in college, instead choosing to tend family owned shops.



Japanese

The San Francisco Bay Area is home to 36,465 Japanese, the majority of whom live in Santa Clara County. Both San Francisco and San Jose have communities that are called Japantown. The Japanese started immigrating here 150 years ago using San Francisco as their entry point into the U.S., most of whom were farm workers. After this influx of laborers, the anti-Japanese movement started in 1906 and the migration of Japanese slowed down. The internment of the Japanese during World War II was yet another thing that hindered their migration. Despite this tumultuous history, there are landmarks that still exist today such as the Japanese Tea Garden and Japan town Peace Plaza in San Francisco. The most practiced indigenous religion is Shinto, and second is Buddhism, which is the predominant religion that they brought to the U.S. After arriving in the U.S. many early immigrants became Christians. Now Japanese are less than 0.50% evangelical across the U.S. There are two known Japanese churches in the Bay Area. There is also a sizable college student population of Japanese.

Russians

There are over 200,000 Russians in the Bay Area, of whom approximately 35,000 are Russian Jews. This population is the result of several waves of immigration. Russian ships first arrived in the Bodega Bay in 1812 and continued to arrive throughout the nineteenth century. Another wave arrived in 1917 after their Revolution, again after World War II, and more recently since Glasnost and the Soviet collapse. This final wave of Russians produced the largest number of Russian Jews. They are represented in all Bay Area Jewish organizations.

As newcomers from the Soviet Union, they received a helping hand from the Bay Area Jewish community, and in turn, Russian Jews are giving back. Large numbers live in San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose. San Francisco's Richmond district is home to many Russian businesses. *New Life* is the Bay Area's monthly Russian-language journal for the Russian-Jewish émigré community.

Burmese Theravada Buddhists

The San Francisco Bay Area is home to 8,500 Burmese, and is widely acknowledged as the largest Burmese population in the United States. Over 100,000 now live in the U. S., a 500% increase since the 2000 census. While the new name for this Southeast Asian country is Myanmar, activists choose to use the word Burma, which was the name of their country before military rule.

There are eight main ethnic groups of Burmese, with many subgroups. A number of these groups are represented in the Bay Area. Many are of Chinese descent. While some of these ethnic groups are Christian, such as the Karen and the Chin, most Burmese practice Theravada Buddhism. There are Burmese Buddhist temples, monasteries and meditation centers in Half Moon Bay, Fremont, San Jose, Walnut Creek, Sebastapol, and Santa Rosa, but most of the Burmese live in Fremont and Daly City. Many also live in San Francisco and San Jose. We also know that the University of San Francisco maintains a special relationship with Burmese, some of whom are students.

For more information about how you and your church can become involved with the people groups mentioned here, or other unreached or under reached peoples in the San Francisco Bay Area, please contact SeJ Won, Director of Ministries, Central Coast Baptist Association. sejwon@ccbministries.org (408) 748-3500