

COMMUNITY & ELCA AREA-WIDE DEMOGRAPHIC DATA
"WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THIS PLACE?"

INTRODUCTION:

Santa Clara County, California, lies at the southern end of San Francisco Bay in northern California. It is composed of 1.5 million people, the majority of whom make their living in some way connected with the high tech industry that dominates the area. It is a place of rapid change and great disparity.

Historically an agricultural valley that was known for its fruit orchards, the valley now is home to a large number of computer companies and defense contractors. Due to the rapid change these businesses experience, the average life expectancy of a company here is seven years; the average employee's job security expectancy is three years; and the average product life of a new product is 15 months.

Stress among the valley's inhabitants is high. Traffic congestion is the #1 concern of the majority of people, followed by concern for the lack of affordable housing and a growing drug problem. The county, which extends from Palo Alto and Milpitas on the northwest and northeast, respectively, to Saratoga and Morgan Hill on the southwest and southeast, respectively, is a megalopolis of competing, conflicting, and often confusing interests.

According to one analyst of Santa Clara County, "The raw material of our area is information." This is the main business, therefore, of the people who live and work in this valley. However, it is an intangible, somewhat ephemeral commodity, whose value is continually changing. And that adds, therefore, to the stress the county's inhabitants experience.

To "make it" in this valley, people must be "educated, bright, white, and affluent," says Judith Larson, an insightful and cogent observer of life in Silicon Valley. Many people, obviously, are all four of these. However, a large number of the people who are living here, or who are moving in, are not. Indeed, there is a growing racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity within the county. And that adds to the stress and the fragmentation that has become an increasing phenomenon of life here in this place where some people have become rich, while others struggle to survive.

In the midst of this phenomenon, says Larson, there seems to be a concomitant growth of interest in spirituality, although not necessarily in organized religion. Many hi-tech people join health clubs and spas, for instance, and are continually seeking friendship. At the same time, the church is not reaching many of these people.

It is in this place then, "God's gift to the church," that the ELCA is called to mission. As Lyle Schaller, a respected analyst of churches and contemporary cultures has observed, the two things people in our day are seeking most are meaning and relationships. The people who reside and work here are among those people.

METHODOLOGY:

As one part of this study, two sets of maps were prepared and distributed. One set plots the membership of every ELCA congregation in the Santa Clara Valley by Zip Code (Appendix #1). The other set gives the location of all ELCA households in the valley, along with detailed demographics of the county by Zip Code (Appendix #2).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

A careful analysis of these maps will help each congregation in its planning process. In general, however, the following observations may be helpful:

A. Maps locating ELCA congregations and members in Santa Clara County (Appendix #1)

1. In contrast to the vast majority of ELCA congregations in metropolitan areas, Santa Clara Valley congregations are not neighborhood-based. Most have good locations, although the majority of them are in the western portion of the county, west of Interstate 880 and Highway 17. Many serve the same Zip Codes. Each congregation is invited, therefore, to check the maps in Appendix #1 to find the other congregations that serve the same areas it does. In one case, as many as seven congregations draw a large percentage of their membership from one Zip Code.

Conclusion: Congregations in the same area may want to work together to meet the needs of their communities.

2. Many Zip Codes have little or no ELCA membership within them.

Conclusion: It may be appropriate to begin a new mission in a part of the county where the ELCA is not presently represented, or relocate one or more existing congregations from an area or areas where they are presently competing with each other.

B. Maps detailing demographic information (Appendix #2)

1. The maps in Appendix #2 confirm that 1.5 million people live in Santa Clara County. A recent Gallup Poll, however, indicates that less than 20% of these people claim any church affiliation.

Conclusion: The mission field in Santa Clara County is very, very large.

2. An analysis of the demographics of family size and age groups by Zip Code may help congregations target their outreach efforts in the Zip Codes which they serve. For example, in those Zip Codes where families have more than three members, it is safe to assume that they are young families with growing children. Or, conversely, where the median age in a Zip Code is above 40, it is safe to assume that that Zip Code has large numbers of elderly people.

Conclusion: Congregations interested in growing would do well to provide programs aimed at the age group of people who live in the Zip Codes which that congregation serves.

3. There are several maps that delineate the financial status of the residents in a particular community. According to a study reported in the November 13, 1989 issue of SALES & MARKETING magazine, Santa Clara County ranks as the fourth most affluent metropolitan county in the nation. Yet, at the same time, one of our map charts shows a concentration of "poverty pockets" in certain Zip Codes.

Conclusion: Poverty and wealth exist side by side in Santa Clara County.

4. The demographic maps show ethnic concentrations by Zip Code. While statistics are available by city, there is no breakdown of "people of color" by Zip Code. Of the "people of color," --that is, those with Spanish surnames, Asian nationalities, or Middle East backgrounds--the Asian and Hispanic populations are the fastest growing. The black population represents less than 10% of the total population of the county.

Conclusion: Outreach efforts among Asian and Hispanic people present us with two of our greatest opportunities, as well as two of our greatest challenges.

5. According to a survey done for the United Way of Santa Clara County in the fall of 1989, the population growth rate of the county for the five year period from 1990 to 1995 is predicted to slow to 1.4%, compared to 10% in the previous five years.

Conclusion: While many people may move in and out of Santa Clara County in the next five years, the total population is expected to remain about the same. It will take our best efforts, therefore, to increase our membership...or even stay the same.

ORIENTATION TO MAPS (Appendices 1 & 2):

Appendices 1 and 2 of this report consist of Zip Code Map Charts drawn to scale for Santa Clara County, California. An orientation to the maps can be facilitated by noting the major freeways of 101, 280, 680, 880, 17, and 85, along with the identified community regions and the Zip Code boundaries and numbers.

The insert in the upper right hand corner of each map contains label identification information. The insert in the lower left hand corner of each map represents the extension of the south portion of the county that would normally extend off the lower right hand corner of the map.

The information (statistical data) recorded within the Zip Code areas on these map charts is derived from two sources: 1) the latest Santa Clara Valley Lutheran Congregational Membership Directories available to us at the end of 1989; and 2) the 1988 Sourcebook of Demographics and Buying Power for Every Zip Code in the USA. Zip Code numbers are not included on some of the map charts in order better to visualize patterns among the plotted data.

The term, "Membership Unit," as used here represents a Santa Clara Valley Lutheran Congregation Membership Directory address that best corresponds to the demographic term of "Household." This information was taken and plotted from 25 individual congregational directories.

CONTENTS OF APPENDIX #1:

1. Santa Clara County Zip Code Map
2. Location of ELCA Congregations in Santa Clara County by Zip Code
3. Location of ELCA Membership Units in Santa Clara County by Zip Code
4. Membership Distribution of First, Palo Alto by Zip Code
5. Membership Distribution of University, Palo Alto by Zip Code
6. Membership Distribution of Grace, Palo Alto by Zip Code
7. Membership Distribution of Los Altos, Los Altos by Zip Code
8. Membership Distribution of Immanuel, Los Altos by Zip Code
9. Membership Distribution of St. Luke, Sunnyvale by Zip Code
10. Membership Distribution of St. John, Sunnyvale by Zip Code
11. Membership Distribution of Redeemer, Cupertino by Zip Code
12. Membership Distribution of Bethel, Cupertino by Zip Code
13. Membership Distribution of Hope, Santa Clara by Zip Code
14. Membership Distribution of Our Savior's, Santa Clara by Zip Code
15. Membership Distribution of Prince of Peace, Saratoga by Zip Code
16. Membership Distribution of Immanuel, Saratoga by Zip Code
17. Membership Distribution of Faith, Los Gatos by Zip Code
18. Membership Distribution of Zion, San Jose by Zip Code
19. Membership Distribution of Immanuel, San Jose by Zip Code
20. Membership Distribution of Taiwanese, San Jose by Zip Code
21. Membership Distribution of Holy Redeemer, San Jose by Zip Code

22. Membership Distribution of Christ the Good Shepherd, San Jose by Zip Code
23. Membership Distribution of St. Timothy, San Jose by Zip Code
24. Membership Distribution of St. Andrew, San Jose by Zip Code
25. Membership Distribution of Grace, San Jose by Zip Code
26. Membership Distribution of Community, San Jose by Zip Code
27. Membership Distribution of Gloria Dei, San Jose by Zip Code
28. Membership Distribution of Reformation, Milpitas by Zip Code
29. Membership Distribution of Advent, Morgan Hill by Zip Code

CONTENTS OF APPENDIX #2:

1. ELCA Membership Units
2. The Number of Churches that Draw Members from the Zip Code
3. The Number of Churches that Draw > 5% of the Total ELCA Membership for that Zip Code
4. The Number of Churches that Draw > 5% of their Members from that Zip Code
5. 1988 Population Levels in Thousands
6. Population Growth Rate Annual Percentage for 1980 to 1993
7. 1988 Per Capita Income in Thousands of Dollars
8. 1988 Average Household Size
9. Average 1988 Household Income in Thousands of Dollars
10. Percent of 1988 Households with Income Under \$15,000
11. 1988 Purchasing Potential Index
12. 1988 ETHNICITY White Population %
13. 1988 ETHNICITY Black Population %
14. 1988 ETHNICITY % People of Color (Not Including Blacks)
15. Median Age of Population in 1988
16. 1988 Percent of Population < 12 Years Old
17. 1988 Percent of Population > 65 Years Old

DETAILED FINDINGS IN APPENDIX #2:

These maps contain a great deal of information that requires study to interpret and understand. The following comments are made to help guide you initially in that study. It will be helpful also to obtain a Zip Code Street Map (or, better, a Zoning Map) to help in interpreting Zip Code information in the context of local areas or neighborhoods.

Maps #1, #2, #3, and #4 should be viewed collectively. They have important implications about how congregations might identify with particular areas.

Map #1 illustrates the distribution of ELCA members across the valley, with highest concentrations to the south and west of Highway 101. That membership is widely distributed across the 25 ELCA congregations.

In map #2, as many as 20 congregations are noted to draw members from Zip Code 95125. However, map #4 suggests that only 5 of those 20 congregations actually draw more than 5% of their respective members from 95125. These 5 congregations thus would likely claim

a significantly vested identification with that area. The other 15 congregations would be less likely to claim a vested interest in 95125 because their representation involves only a small portion of their total membership.

Note also in map #4 that the zeroes entered in several of the Zip Code areas suggest that no congregation has a vested interest in those areas. On the other hand, to return to Zip Code 95125 and take a county-wide point of view, map #3 illustrates that in actuality only 4 of those 20 congregations represent the vast majority of the 160 membership units that were indicated on map #1 for that Zip Code. These 4 congregations alone, therefore, might be considered to have the greatest potential for impacting that area.

What similar conclusions would you draw from map #3 about those Zip Code areas that on map #4 have zeroes? How does the area that your congregation serves fit into these pictures? How does your congregation relate to any other congregations in these regards? What inter-congregational strategies might be developed for evangelism/outreach, service/ministry, or advocacy/justice?

Map #5 illustrates the varying densities of the general population. Again, by comparison with map #1, the ELCA membership comprises a very small percentage of the general population (well below 1% in all Zip Code areas).

Map #6 illustrates the rate of increase or decrease each year in the general population. This rate ranges from -0.6% to +3.2% per year and tends to be highest toward the eastern and southern portions of the county.

Map #7 illustrates the income levels for each man, woman, and child in the county and the disparity in that level by a factor of more than two times across the different Zip Code areas.

Map #8 illustrates the average household size that tends to be highest toward the eastern portion of the county.

Map #9 illustrates the average household income for comparison with map #7 on per capita income and map #8 on household size.

Map #10 illustrates the relative degree of poverty in the various areas, reaching as high as 55% for the relatively small downtown San Jose population (95113).

Map #11 illustrates that the relative affluence (purchasing potential) of the people in the valley is well above the U.S. average, except for a few areas, such as Central San Jose.

Maps #12, #13, and #14 illustrate ethnic composition and suggest relative degrees of integration. The black population is relatively small and widely distributed, except for East Palo Alto (94303). Hispanic and Asian peoples represent the primary minority groups.

Maps #15, #16, and #17 illustrate areas of concentration of younger and older populations.

Conclusion: Santa Clara County is growing and changing, and those changes have a definite impact on the lives of all the people who live, work, and play here. By most standards, Santa Clara County is a successful community with a diverse, growing population and a strong, stable economy. However, not everyone is enjoying the advantages of the county's success and economic condition. And that fact, if unaddressed, will, in the words of the October, 1989 Santa Clara County Report on Human Needs, "not only impact those directly affected, but will also erode the overall quality of life in Santa Clara County."