

## What are their needs?

Christians in San Diego will find themselves communicating the gospel in a highly materialistic, deeply consumer-driven, community and marketplace. In La Jolla, they will find intellectualism and apathy. Around the various communities surrounding Balboa Park, they will engage tolerance and ethnic diversity. In National City and Southeast San Diego, they will encounter marginalized populations and poverty. One is likely to experience a level of apathy among the evangelical community that is much higher than other parts of the country. Of course, much of this is related directly or indirectly to the “perfect sun” that warms this “sleepy” Southern California city.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup>San Diego City Exegesis 2006. An unpublished report by Travis Vaughn for North American Mission Board, 4200 North Point Parkway, Alpharetta, GA 30022.



www.peoplegroups.info

The city has many different peoples. To find them online, go to [www.peoplegroups.info](http://www.peoplegroups.info), a site sponsored by the North American Mission Board, SBC.

## How can we pray?

- Pray against spiritual apathy among the people and that intellectual barriers will be pulled down.
- Pray for the poor, many of whom commute from Mexico and are in need of social outreach, ministry, and love, as well as a biblically-sound gospel witness.
- Pray for the churches to be moved with compassion and a greater concern for the lostness of all San Diegans.
- Pray for the awakening of Christians to work together to transform the 18 cities located in San Diego County.

## What is keeping the gospel from them?

The competition that churches face in San Diego is not other churches or even religious groups. The great climate and recreational opportunities are actually keeping people out of church. Most people in San Diego are very active, and on weekends one can witness the migration of campers on the way to the desert, mountains, and other recreational areas. There is also the draw of the beach with great surfing, fishing, and general ocean-related activities, which all form yet another deterrent to church attendance. Another hindrance to the gospel is the Southern California sense of privacy where most California homes have garages in front and high fenced yards. The only time neighbors might meet each other is when they drive home from work and wave to each other as they pull into their garages and hit the garage door button to close the door.

Information may be updated by writing [peoplegroups@namb.net](mailto:peoplegroups@namb.net).

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## San Diego People of North America

## Who are the People of San Diego?

**S**an Diego residents live in a city dubbed “America’s Finest City.” The consistent mild temperature and sunny days provide year-round enjoyment for outdoor activities. Many consider San Diego’s weather to be the best in the United States. San Diego is bordered on the north by America’s largest military base (Marines: Camp Pendleton). On the east is desert, the south is Mexico, and the west is the Pacific Ocean. Military life has influenced San Diego’s history with one out of six people connected directly or indirectly. Education also plays a prominent role with over 250,000 college students enrolled in local colleges and universities. Of its 3.2 million people, its ethnic mix is 50% white, 30% Hispanic, 10% Asian (with the largest group being Filipino), and 5% black. San Diego is the second largest city in California and the eighth largest city in North America. About half of the students in the San Diego Unified School District speak a language other than English at home, and nearly 80% of those are said to be Spanish-speakers.

**Go URBAN: (U.R.B.A.N. Missions, that is!)**

**Understand the people of San Diego.**

**Rally a team by calling out the called by conveying a godly missions vision.**

**Be prepared through on-site visits, study, peoples-specific education, and informed praying.**

**Adopt one of San Diego’s peoples as the Lord leads for an extended period of time (10 years).**

**eNgage (engage) one or more of San Diego peoples at a time until all have heard and responded to the gospel in a way that is most appropriate.**

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## What is their heritage?

San Diego's heritage can be summed up in three short words—Indian, Spanish, and Catholic. For the longest time, San Diego was home to the Kumeyaay people of the southwestern United States and northwest Mexico. The first European settler was a Portuguese explorer by the name of Juan Rodrigues Cabrillo. In 1602, Sebastian Vizcaino was sent by Spain to draw up a map of the California coast. His flagship was named the San Diego, from which the city would eventually get its name. Vizcaino made a survey of the harbor area, subsequently renaming the area to San Diego after the Spanish Catholic Saint Didacus, commonly referred to as "San Diego." The area attracted settlers and grew as a town until 1769 when it was turned into a military post. Despite plenty of military controversies, today the city has become the eighth largest city in the United States.

*"Of San Diego County's more than three million people, more than half claim no religious affiliation."*

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## What are their beliefs?

San Diego's location and cultural background is uniquely conducive to a blending of spiritual expressions not found in many other parts of the U.S. With Mexico to the south and a rising immigrant population adding to the diversity of San Diego, a new religious movement has integrated expressions of Roman Catholicism, animism, and other indigenous and not-so-indigenous spiritualities. The Pacific Ocean has provided a natural transit for Asian influences both today and during the previous century bringing with them the lure and popularity of Southern California's brand of Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Asian folk religions.

Of San Diego County's more than three million people, more than half claim no religious affiliation. Less than 170,000 people claim to be evangelicals. That's less than 6% of the population!<sup>1</sup> By the year 2000, the religious make-up of the county was comprised of the following groups in order of size: Catholic, Mormon, Southern Baptist, Presbyterian, and United Methodist.<sup>2</sup> However, more up-to-date statistics indicate that the Muslim population may now be in the number two position with 100,000 adherents.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For more information on these and other religious statistics, consult the ARDA (Association of Religion Data Archives) at [www.thearda.com](http://www.thearda.com).

<sup>2</sup> <http://crcc.usc.edu/research/demographics/sandiego.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://muslimmatters.org/2007/05/23/some-thoughts-on-the-us-muslim-population/>

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## What can my church do?

### Endvisioning—beginning with the end in mind

- Participate in a mission trip to come to San Diego and partner with the San Diego Southern Baptist Association. Over 200 churches and missions are in need of partners to stand with them to reach the highly unchurched area of San Diego County. For needs and ideas on how to get involved, go to [www.SanDiegoBaptists.com](http://www.SanDiegoBaptists.com).
- The San Diego Southern Baptist Association is prepared to assist you, your mission group, or your church in making a partnership with this West Coast neighbor an unforgettable ministry experience.

### Prayer—focusing on the people as well as calling out workers to the harvest

- Prayerwalk in a community or campus where a new church is being planted to identify evangelistic points of contact or possibly to encounter new groups where a small group could be started that would lead to another new church plant.
- Pray for creative methods to reach people with a message about the only thing money can't buy—true, lasting hope and peace through Jesus.

### Networking for Evangelism—identifying relationships

- Study specific world religions found in San Diego on [www.4truth.net](http://www.4truth.net) and seek to engage those who do not know the truth of the gospel, but need to be told. Begin by focusing on Roman Catholicism, Islam, Buddhism, and Mormonism.
- Visit the beaches, and engage in conversations that lead to sharing the gospel with surfers, skaters, college students, families, homeless, and tourists found on any given weekend.

### Starting Small Groups—that can become churches

- Over 50 new churches have recently been started and are in need of ongoing partners for support and mission engagement. These have been started recently in a project called Vision San Diego, a North American Mission Board, Strategic Focus City project. For more ideas and details on the project, visit [www.VisionSanDiego.com](http://www.VisionSanDiego.com).
- The San Diego Southern Baptist Association has a strong ministry to the border town of Tijuana, Mexico. Over 15 new churches have been planted in Tijuana and many are experiencing rapid growth as new leaders are emerging to lead the freshly planted churches.
- Use your expertise to train church leaders, including evangelism teams, church planters, believers engaged in ministries, and many more.

### Scripture

- Provide Bibles and Scripture portions in print and audio. Work with a local church to saturate neighborhoods and small cities in San Diego County with God's Word.
- Conduct Bible storying disciple-making sessions among young people, immigrants, and others who can't, won't, or don't prefer to learn by reading.