3-21-2019

Great Orlando's SDA Landscape: 52 Churches within 15 Miles

Gianni Arroyo
Southern Adventist University, giaarroyo@southern.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://knowledge.e.southern.edu/interactivejour_blog

Part of the Christian Denominations and Sects Commons, and the Journalism Studies Commons

Recommended Citation
https://knowledge.e.southern.edu/interactivejour_blog/19

This Web Publication is brought to you for free and open access by the Interactive Journalism: Investigating Diversity Project at KnowledgeExchange@Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in Blog by an authorized administrator of KnowledgeExchange@Southern. For more information, please contact jspears@southern.edu.
Florida is the state with the second highest number of Seventh-day Adventist churches in the United States. With 471 SDA Churches dispersed across the state, I was intrigued by the numbers and decided to research the topic.

When taking on this project, I decided to focus on Orlando, specifically Seventh-day Adventist churches within a 15-mile radius of the city. The majority of the churches that were in the 15-mile radius were located in Orange County. There were two remaining churches that were a part of Brevard County.

Below is the Interactive Map that I created to show the 52 SDA Churches in the 15-mile radius. The churches are mapped out by language.
Map to Key:

The population of Greater Orlando Area is an estimated 1,348,975 as of 2017. Since this estimate, Central Florida has seen an increase of citizens from Venezuela and Puerto Rico seeking refuge after a natural disaster and political turmoil.

**English Churches:**

There are 26 English speaking Seventh-day Adventist churches within the 15-mile radius of Orlando. Under this category, there are many churches that are diverse and large in numbers. Examples of this would be Forest Lake SDA or Spring Meadows churches. It is also important to point out that some of these churches could be predominantly black, Asian, or white. However, since the focus of this map is on the language, researching that information was unnecessary.
**Spanish Churches:**

There are 14 Spanish-speaking churches on the interactive map. When conducting the research, I was expecting there to be more Spanish speaking churches in the area. I'm sure if I expanded the mile radius, more churches would pop up. Hispanics made up approximately 26.9 percent of the Greater Orlando Area in the 2010 census. In the upcoming census (2020), this number is most likely to increase due to the diaspora of Venezuelans and Puerto Ricans.

**Greater Orlando Area's SDA Population:**

According to research done by the Glenmary Research Center in 1990, Orange County (Greater Orlando Area) was in the Top 25 U.S. Counties with Largest Seventh-day Adventist Communities.

In the 1990s, there were an estimated 6,526 Seventh-day Adventists in Orange County. Fifty out of the 52 of the churches on the interactive map are in Orange County.

To see the amount of growth Orlando has had, I added up all the members of the 52 churches. If the numbers are correct and none of these members have left the area, we have an estimated 22,052 Seventh-day Adventists in the Greater Orlando Area (within the 15-mile radius).

The growing SDA population in the Greater Orlando Area is most likely caused by two factors. The first reason is people leaving their countries due to political or disaster refuge and immigrating to this area. These large groups of people moving to this area are usually already Adventists. Although our church works hard to reach a lot of people, these individuals are not necessarily brought to the church from evangelism since they are already apart of the church.

Orlando is known for being the home of the massive AdventHealth Hospitals, previously known as Florida Hospital. Just in the Greater Orlando Area, there are 10 AdventHealth facilities. These huge hospitals must attract a lot of SDA's to the area, and also in a way teach those unfamiliar with the faith about Adventism.

In a span of almost 30 years, the numbers of Adventists has skyrocketed in my hometown. I can’t wait to see where we will be another 30 years from now.