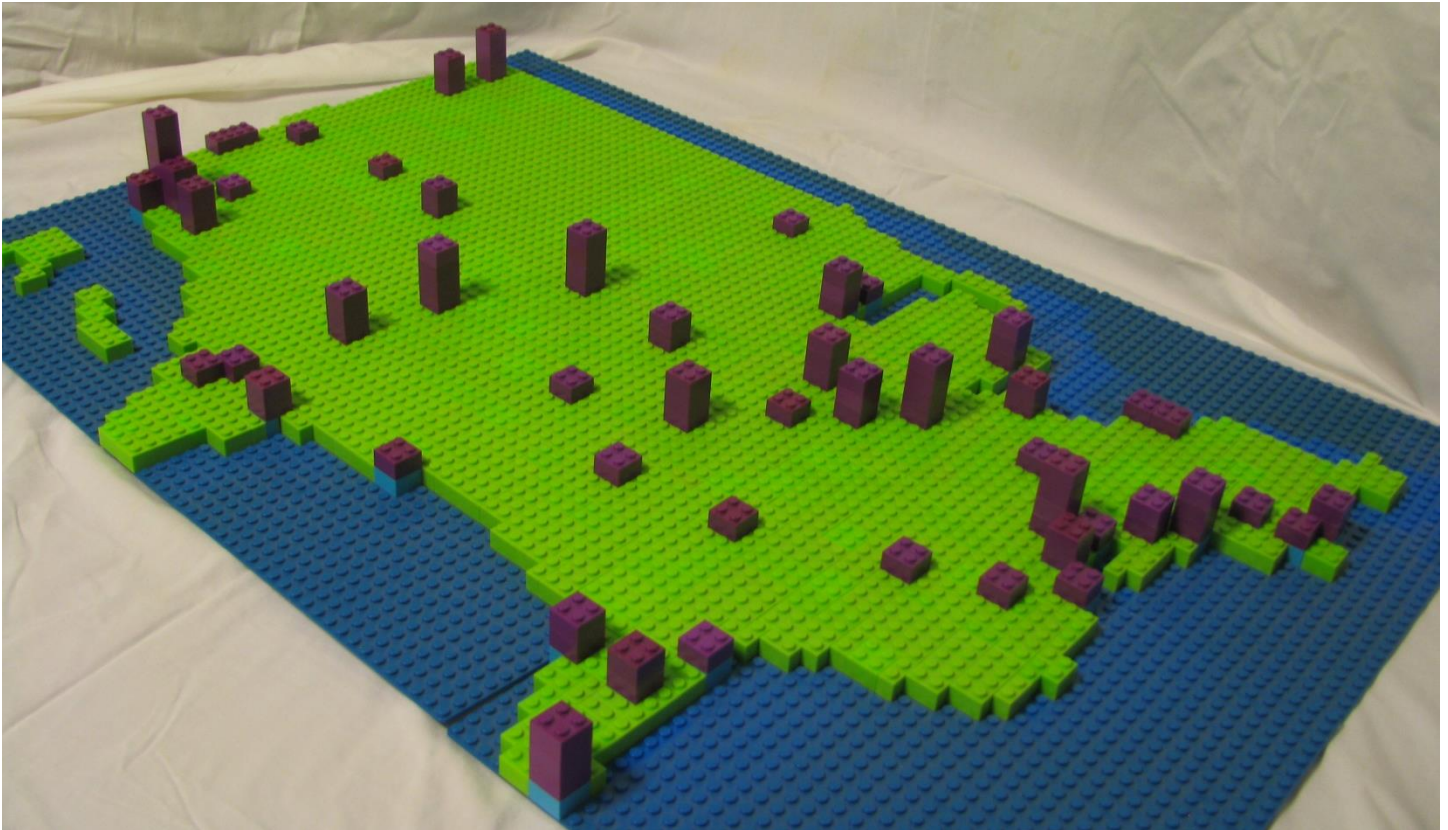


Religion Census Newsletter

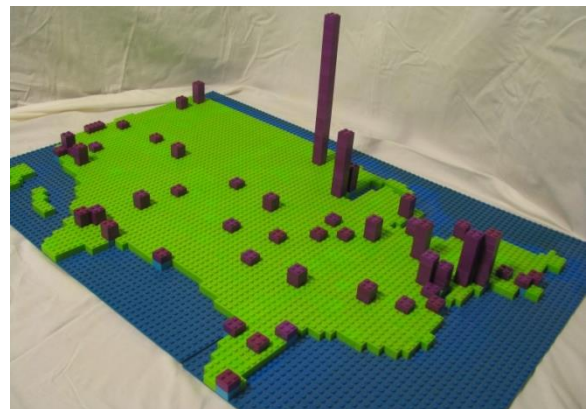
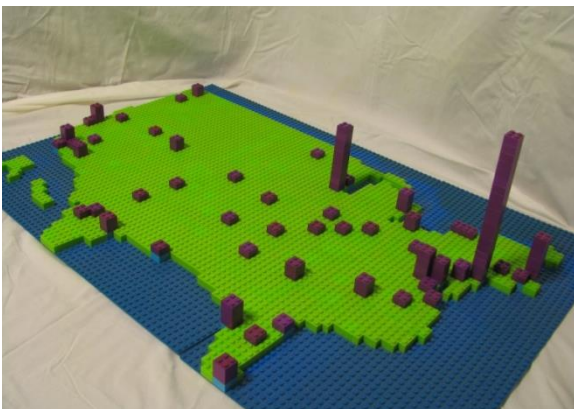
September, 2017

Building Block Maps

The [U.S. Religion Census](#) provides many printed reports for various Christian churches and other religious groups. Data available on its website can be combined in different ways and customized reports can be produced as well. But people are not always attracted to printed reports or simply do not have time to read them thoroughly. The research office of the Church of the Nazarene, one of the groups that has participated in every Religion Census, found a way to present the data on church membership in a way which is visual, easy to understand, and attractive.



Each of the 51 metropolitan areas in the United States with at least a million people is shown on this base map as a light blue square. On each of these squares, one purple building block was placed on for every 5,000 Nazarene adherents.* This readily shows that Nazarenes are well-represented in the lower Midwest and Eastern seaboard, with Los Angeles as the metro with the most adherents.



Each purple block represents 5,000 adherents

Each purple block represents 15,000 adherents

The research office of the Church of the Nazarene made similar maps for other groups. The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (left map, below) is very strong in New York and Chicago, and is represented to a smaller degree in many other parts of the country. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (right map) is very strong in Minneapolis-St. Paul, with large concentrations in Chicago and some Northeastern metro areas.

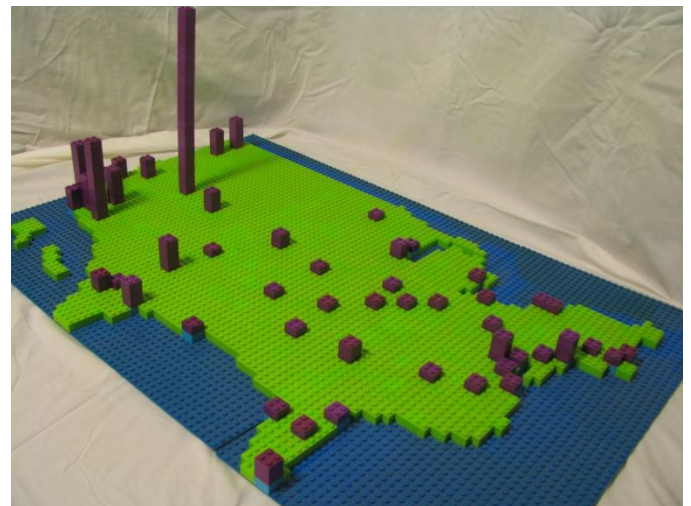
These building block maps were created for an annual meeting of the [Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies](#), the sponsoring agency behind the U.S. Religion Census. Their annual meetings include presentations, panels, and opportunities to learn from similarly focused researchers—and often a game based on data the participating groups have shared, such as U.S. Religion Census data.

The 2014 annual meeting challenged attendees to identify which group was represented by each map. Four of those maps are shown below.

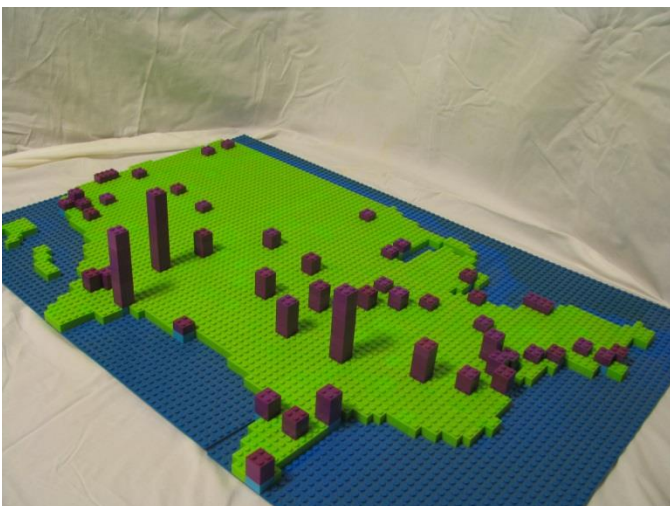
It should be fairly easy to identify the map for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but perhaps not as easy to recognize that of the Southern Baptist Convention. And are the Catholic and United Methodist maps obvious? *(The maps are identified at the end of the article.)*



Each purple block represents 500,000 adherents



Each purple block represents 25,000 adherents



Each purple block represents 100,000 adherents



Each purple block represents 50,000 adherents

As time permits, the Church of the Nazarene Research Services office has offered to make similar maps for any other interested groups—or will provide instructions on how to create such a map. Contact them at research@nazarene.org for further information.

One of the advantages of the U.S. Religion Census is the ability to create additional groupings. For the Church of the Nazarene, a grouping of Conservative Protestants interested them, and they were able to aggregate that data by metropolitan area as well. They then created a [YouTube video](#), shared on the U.S. Religion Census [Reports and Analyses](#) page.

ANSWERS TO THE MAP PUZZLE: The upper left map, with strength in the Northeast, Chicago, Florida, and the Southwest, represents the Catholic Church. The upper right map, with strength in the West, and especially in Salt Lake City, represents the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The lower left, with strength in Texas and Atlanta and lesser presence in the North and West, represents the Southern Baptist Convention. The lower right, again with strength in Texas and Atlanta, but with stronger Northeastern presence, represents the United Methodist Church.

**Adherents: Every participating group is asked to provide an actual count or an estimate of the number of people associated with each local congregation. This number is termed “adherents.” Ideally, adherents include all regular participants and/or all those regarding that congregation as their spiritual home. This is done because religious traditions differ in whether they would include children and regular worshippers in their normal membership counts; and some traditions do not even have a membership category.*

For specific adherent definitions for a particular group, see [Appendix A](#) on our [Methods](#) web page. For the general definition used when a group didn’t have a specific adherent figure, see page xvi of the [introductory material](#).

Every decade the US Religion Census tries to include additional religious groups, making the US Religion Census increasingly accurate. The 236 groups that took part in 2010 are listed [online](#). If you know of other faith groups that would like to participate and be included in this census effort, please [send us](#) the group’s contact information or contact person.

Meanwhile, over 5,700 people visited our website in August. Several have let us know how valuable this resource is, and how they are looking forward to the 2020 update. Naturally, we hope to include information from your group in the 2020 counts.



www.asarb.com

Published by the [Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies](#), sponsor of the U.S. Religion Census

This newsletter is intended for the following audiences:

Groups that participated in the 2010 Religion Census. *The newsletter is sent to the latest contact we have for the supplier of the statistics.*

Groups that are eligible to participate in the upcoming 2020 Religion Census. *The newsletter is sent to the latest contact we have for the supplier of the statistics.*

Members of the sponsoring agency for the Religion Census, the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies.

Those who requested to receive the newsletter through our website.