

# **Demographic Analysis and Strategic Ministry Implications: Union City and Fairburn, Georgia (2015-2035)**

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## **I. Executive Summary**

This report provides a comprehensive demographic analysis of Union City and the City of Fairburn, Georgia, focusing on population dynamics, socioeconomic characteristics, psychographic shifts, and lifestyle trends from approximately 2015 to 2025, with projections extending to 2035. Utilizing data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (ASARB) via The ARDA, and school rating providers (GreatSchools, Niche), this analysis is tailored for church leadership teams evaluating strategic approaches to outreach, ministry focus, community engagement, and the establishment of new congregations targeting populations unaffiliated with a church.

Union City has experienced rapid population growth, characterized by a young, predominantly Black population with lower-middle income levels, high poverty rates, lower educational attainment, and a high proportion of renters. Key strategic considerations include welcoming newcomers, addressing significant economic and social needs (poverty, health access, education support), engaging a potentially transient community, and developing outreach strategies effective within large rental communities.

Fairburn has also grown significantly, though recent estimates suggest a potential slowing. It shares a young, predominantly Black demographic profile with Union City but exhibits considerably higher median household income, educational attainment, homeownership rates, and home values, particularly following sharp increases in recent years. Fairburn residents generally have better access to higher-rated public and private schools. Strategic considerations involve ministry to families and professionals, addressing issues related to increasing affluence and potential socioeconomic stratification, engaging an educated populace (potentially including more secular viewpoints), and navigating notable linguistic diversity.

Both cities reside in Fulton County, which features a diverse religious landscape and, critically, a large population unaffiliated with any religious body (estimated at roughly one-third), representing a primary area for potential outreach and new ministry initiatives in both municipalities. However, the diverging socioeconomic trajectories of Union City and Fairburn necessitate distinct, context-specific strategies for effective

community engagement and ministry development.

## II. Introduction

**Purpose:** The primary objective of this report is to equip church leadership with a detailed understanding of the demographic, psychographic, and lifestyle characteristics of Union City and Fairburn, Georgia. It analyzes trends over the past decade (approx. 2015-2025) and offers projections to 2035 to inform strategic decisions regarding ministry development, outreach initiatives, community engagement, and the potential planting of new congregations specifically aimed at reaching religiously unaffiliated populations.

**Scope:** This report examines key demographic indicators including population size and growth, age distribution, household composition, income levels, poverty rates, racial and ethnic diversity, educational attainment, religious affiliation (using county-level data as a proxy), worldview outlook (inferred), and housing tenure. It incorporates data on primary and secondary school ratings within each municipality. The analysis focuses on changes over the last ten years and provides forward-looking projections.

**Methodology:** The analysis relies on publicly available data, primarily from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates (various years, focusing on the most recent 2019-2023 data where available).<sup>1</sup> Religious affiliation data for Fulton County is sourced from the 2020 U.S. Religion Census conducted by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (ASARB), accessed via The Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA).<sup>4</sup> School quality information is derived from public school rating platforms such as GreatSchools and Niche.<sup>7</sup> Psychographic and lifestyle characteristics are inferred from demographic patterns and available data points. Projections are based on observed historical trends and available population estimates or forecasts.<sup>21</sup>

**Intended Audience:** This report is designed for church leadership teams, ministry strategists, and community outreach coordinators seeking data-driven insights to guide planning and resource allocation for effective ministry within Union City and Fairburn.

## III. Union City Demographic Analysis

### A. Population Trends and Projections (2015-2035)

Union City has demonstrated significant population growth over the past decade. The population grew substantially from 19,456 in the 2010 Census to 26,830 in the 2020

Census.<sup>1</sup> Population estimates suggest continued growth, reaching 27,832 by July 1, 2023, representing a 3.7% increase from the 2020 Census base.<sup>1</sup> Data from 2023 indicates a population of approximately 27,300.<sup>23</sup> Projections suggest continued, albeit potentially slower, growth, with one source estimating a 2025 population of 28,344, reflecting a 0.91% annual growth rate.<sup>21</sup> This rapid expansion points to Union City as a destination for new residents, likely driven by factors such as housing availability or proximity to employment centers. Projecting forward based on recent trends, Union City's population could potentially approach or exceed 30,000 by 2035, assuming continued moderate growth. This sustained influx presents both opportunities and challenges for community infrastructure and services, including churches seeking to welcome and integrate newcomers.

## **B. Age Distribution and Household Composition**

Union City exhibits a relatively young demographic profile. The median age is 33.1 years<sup>23</sup>, which is younger than the Atlanta metro area (37) and the state of Georgia (37.4).<sup>24</sup> A significant portion of the population is under 18 years old (26.6%), while the proportion of seniors (65 years and over) is relatively low at 11.2%.<sup>1</sup> The age distribution shows concentrations in the 0-9 (15%), 10-19 (14%), 20-29 (14%), and particularly the 30-39 (20%) age brackets.<sup>24</sup> This suggests a community with many young families and working-age adults.

Households in Union City are comparatively small, with an average of 2.34 persons per household according to 2019-2023 ACS data<sup>1</sup>, lower than the Atlanta metro area (2.7) and Georgia (2.6).<sup>24</sup> There were 11,533 households reported in the 2019-2023 period.<sup>1</sup> Marital status data reveals a high percentage of never-married individuals (51% male, 50% female) and a significant rate of divorce, particularly among women (13% male, 21% female).<sup>24</sup> This composition, combined with the young median age, points towards a population potentially including many single adults, single-parent households, and young families starting out.

## **C. Income Levels and Poverty Rates**

Union City presents a lower-middle income profile compared to the broader region. The median household income was \$47,635 (in 2023 dollars) for the 2019-2023 period<sup>1</sup>, with an average household income estimated at \$67,101.<sup>21</sup> Per capita income was \$29,074.<sup>1</sup> These figures are considerably lower than those observed in neighboring Fairburn. The poverty rate is notably high, with 15.5% of persons living below the poverty line according to Census QuickFacts<sup>1</sup>, and other sources citing similar figures (14.7% family poverty<sup>25</sup>, 15.46% overall poverty rate<sup>21</sup>). This rate is significantly higher than the Atlanta metro area (11%) and the state of Georgia (13.5%).<sup>24</sup> These economic

indicators highlight substantial financial challenges faced by a significant portion of the Union City population, suggesting needs related to employment, financial stability, and access to resources.

#### **D. Racial and Ethnic Diversity**

Union City is a predominantly Black or African American community. Recent estimates consistently show this group comprising approximately 85-86% of the population.<sup>1</sup> The next largest group is Hispanic or Latino, accounting for about 8.2% of residents.<sup>1</sup> The White (Non-Hispanic) population is small, around 3.6-3.7%.<sup>1</sup> Other racial groups, including Asian, Native American, and Pacific Islander, have negligible representation according to recent Census data.<sup>1</sup> Approximately 6.6% identify as Two or More Races.<sup>1</sup> The foreign-born population constitutes 6.4% of residents<sup>1</sup>, with the majority originating from Latin America (80%) and Africa (15%).<sup>24</sup> While overwhelmingly Black, the presence of a growing Hispanic population and smaller immigrant groups adds layers to the city's cultural fabric.

#### **E. Educational Attainment**

Educational attainment levels in Union City lag behind state and regional averages. While 87.0% of persons aged 25 and older have a high school diploma or higher, only 26.7% hold a bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>1</sup> This rate for bachelor's degrees is significantly lower than the Atlanta metro area (41.5%) and Georgia (34.2%).<sup>24</sup> A breakdown shows 13% with no diploma, 25% with a high school diploma, 35% with some college, 19% with a bachelor's degree, and 7% with a post-graduate degree.<sup>24</sup> These figures suggest potential needs for adult education programs, workforce development initiatives, and support systems to encourage higher educational achievement within the community.

#### **F. Religious Affiliation and Worldview (Fulton County Proxy)**

Specific religious affiliation data for Union City is not readily available from the requested source (ARDA).<sup>26</sup> However, data for Fulton County, where Union City is located, provides a valuable proxy for the broader religious landscape. The 2020 U.S. Religion Census data for Fulton County reveals a diverse religious environment.<sup>6</sup> Major groups include:

- **Catholic Church:** Largest single body by adherents (174,520 adherents, 22 congregations).
- **United Methodist Church:** Significant presence (98,864 adherents, 63 congregations).
- **Black Protestant Denominations:** Very strong representation, including National

Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. (69,932 adherents, 31 congregations), National Missionary Baptist Convention of America (24,928 adherents, 38 congregations), Progressive National Baptist Convention (16,929 adherents, 10 congregations), African Methodist Episcopal Church (10,040 adherents, 28 congregations), and Church of God in Christ (6,008 adherents, 23 congregations).

- **Evangelical Protestant Denominations:** Substantial presence, led by the Southern Baptist Convention (63,257 adherents, 116 congregations) and numerous Non-denominational Christian Churches (54,470 adherents, 114 congregations). Other groups like Presbyterian Church in America, Church of God (Cleveland, TN), Seventh-day Adventists, and Assemblies of God are also present.
- **Other Faiths:** Notable presence of Islam (Muslim Estimate: 29,878 adherents, 17 congregations) and Judaism (Reform: 12,328 adherents, 6 congregations; Conservative: 7,757 adherents, 6 congregations). Smaller representations of Orthodox Christianity, Latter-day Saints, Jehovah's Witnesses, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Baha'i Faith exist.<sup>6</sup>

Crucially, calculating the religiously unaffiliated population based on the total adherents reported by ASARB (approximately 716,000 in 2020 <sup>6</sup>) compared to the Fulton County 2020 population (1,066,710), suggests that roughly **32.9% of the county population is not claimed as an adherent by any participating religious body**. This aligns broadly with Pew Research estimates for Georgia, which found 26% religiously unaffiliated (3% Atheist, 3% Agnostic, 20% Nothing in particular).<sup>28</sup>

Given Union City's specific demographics (predominantly Black, lower-middle income), the religious landscape likely features a high concentration of Black Protestant churches alongside Catholic and Evangelical/Non-denominational congregations common in the county. The significant county-wide unaffiliated rate strongly suggests a large population segment within Union City itself that is not connected to a local church, representing a primary focus area for outreach and new ministry initiatives. The worldview outlook may blend traditional religious values held by many active churchgoers with potentially more secular or disconnected views among the large unaffiliated group, alongside the perspectives of small immigrant communities.

## **G. Housing Tenure**

Union City is characterized by a high proportion of renters. The owner-occupied housing unit rate for 2019-2023 was only 41.6% <sup>1</sup>, meaning nearly 60% of households are renters. This contrasts sharply with higher homeownership rates in neighboring areas and the state. The median value of owner-occupied homes was \$223,100, with

median monthly owner costs of \$1,454 (with mortgage) and \$450 (without mortgage).<sup>1</sup> The median gross rent was \$1,213.<sup>1</sup> The prevalence of renting suggests a more transient population compared to areas with high homeownership, impacting community stability and requiring different approaches for long-term engagement and relationship building. Outreach strategies targeting apartment complexes and rental communities may be particularly relevant.

## H. Primary and Secondary School Ratings

Public schools serving Union City, primarily within the Fulton County School District <sup>12</sup>, exhibit mixed performance based on available ratings.

- **Elementary Schools:** Ratings vary. Examples include Oakley Elementary (4/10 GreatSchools <sup>7</sup>), Gullatt Elementary (3/10 or 4/10 GreatSchools <sup>7</sup>), Nolan Elementary (3/10 or 4/10 GreatSchools <sup>7</sup>), S.L. Lewis Elementary (3/10 or 5/10 GreatSchools <sup>7</sup>), Feldwood Elementary (3/10 or 5/10 GreatSchools <sup>7</sup>, C+ Niche <sup>10</sup>), Campbell Elementary (5/10 GreatSchools <sup>7</sup>), Bethune Elementary (2/10 GreatSchools <sup>7</sup>), Liberty Point (6/10 GreatSchools <sup>7</sup>, B Niche <sup>10</sup>), Stonewall Tell (B Niche <sup>10</sup>), Renaissance ES (C+ Niche <sup>10</sup>). Some charter options like Resurgence Hall (A Niche <sup>10</sup>) exist nearby.
- **Middle Schools:** Examples include McNair Middle (4/10 GreatSchools <sup>7</sup>, C+ Niche <sup>10</sup>), Camp Creek Middle (B Niche <sup>10</sup>), Bear Creek Middle (C Niche <sup>10</sup>), Renaissance MS (C+ Niche <sup>10</sup>). Charter KIPP South Fulton Academy (B- Niche <sup>10</sup>) is also present.
- **High Schools:** Examples include Banneker High (3/10 GreatSchools <sup>7</sup>, C- Niche <sup>9</sup>), Westlake High (B Niche <sup>9</sup>), Creekside High (C Niche <sup>9</sup>), Langston Hughes High (C Niche <sup>9</sup>). Charter options like Hapeville Charter Career Academy (4/10 GreatSchools <sup>7</sup>, C Niche <sup>9</sup>) are available.

The Fulton County School District overall receives an 'A' grade from Niche <sup>12</sup>, but individual school performance within or serving Union City appears inconsistent, with many schools receiving average or below-average ratings. This suggests that while the district has resources, challenges exist at the local school level. This educational environment may be a source of concern for families and presents opportunities for church partnerships focused on academic support, mentoring, and after-school programs.

## I. Lifestyle and Psychographic Insights (Inferred)

Several data points offer clues into the lifestyle and potential psychographic profile of Union City residents:



- **Mobility:** Relatively high mobility is suggested by the lower homeownership rate (41.6% <sup>1</sup>) and the fact that 14% of residents lived in a different house one year prior (7% moved within county, 5% from different county, 3% from different state).<sup>1</sup> This indicates a community with considerable turnover.
- **Connectivity:** Digital access is widespread. 92.7% of households have a computer, and 86.5% have a broadband internet subscription.<sup>1</sup> This supports the viability of digital outreach and communication strategies.
- **Commute:** The mean travel time to work is 28.6 minutes <sup>1</sup>, indicating a significant portion of the workforce commutes, likely outside the city limits. Most workers (70%) drive alone.<sup>24</sup>
- **Health:** There are potential health challenges. A relatively high percentage (18.4%) of the under-65 population lacks health insurance.<sup>1</sup> The disability rate for those under 65 is 9.3%.<sup>1</sup>
- **Language:** While predominantly English-speaking, 8.1% of residents speak a language other than English at home.<sup>1</sup>
- **Worldview (Inferred):** The combination of rapid growth, a young population, high rentership, lower income levels, and significant poverty suggests a community focused on establishing stability, economic advancement, and navigating daily life challenges. For many, aspirations likely center on improving their economic situation and providing opportunities for their children. The large unaffiliated population segment might indicate diverse reasons for non-participation in organized religion, ranging from practical barriers (time, transportation) to disillusionment or differing belief systems. The strong presence of Black churches suggests traditional faith values remain important for a large segment.

## J. Summary of Trends and Changes (Approx. 2015-2025)

Over the past decade, Union City has transformed through rapid population growth, becoming significantly larger while maintaining its identity as a young, predominantly Black community. Key trends include:

- **Sustained Growth:** Consistent and substantial population increase.<sup>1</sup>
- **Persistent Economic Challenges:** Median income remains relatively low, and poverty rates are persistently high compared to the region.<sup>1</sup>
- **High Renter Population:** The low homeownership rate appears to be a stable characteristic.<sup>1</sup>
- **Educational Gaps:** While high school graduation rates are decent, the percentage with bachelor's degrees remains significantly below regional averages.<sup>1</sup>
- **Overall Trajectory:** Union City appears locked into a trajectory of growth

characterized by a working-class or lower-middle-income demographic profile. The challenge lies in managing growth while addressing underlying economic and social needs.

## **IV. City of Fairburn Demographic Analysis**

### **A. Population Trends and Projections (2015-2035)**

Fairburn experienced substantial growth between the 2010 Census (12,950 residents) and the 2020 Census (16,483 residents).<sup>3</sup> More recent estimates show continued, albeit slower, growth, reaching 16,661 by July 1, 2023, a 1.1% increase from the 2020 base.<sup>3</sup> Data USA reported a population of 16,609 in 2023, up slightly from 16,469 in 2022.<sup>29</sup> However, one demographic site projects a slight decline to 16,112 by 2025, assuming a negative annual rate based on 2022-2023 estimates.<sup>22</sup> This discrepancy suggests potential stabilization or a recent slowdown following a period of strong growth. Projecting forward is complex; Fairburn might see modest growth, stability, or even slight declines depending on housing development patterns and economic factors. A reasonable projection might place the population between 16,000 and 18,000 by 2035, barring major new developments.

### **B. Age Distribution and Household Composition**

Similar to Union City, Fairburn has a young population, with a median age of 33.5 years.<sup>22</sup> It has a slightly higher percentage of young children (Persons under 5 years: 12.7%) and a similar percentage of youth under 18 (27.8%) compared to Union City.<sup>3</sup> The proportion of seniors (65 years and over) is lower at 7.0%.<sup>3</sup> This age structure points to a community heavily populated by families with children and working-age adults.

Fairburn households are slightly larger than Union City's, with an average of 2.84 persons per household during the 2019-2023 period.<sup>3</sup> There were 5,813 households reported.<sup>3</sup> The family structure appears oriented towards traditional families, although specific data on marital status breakdown was less prominent in the provided sources compared to Union City. The larger household size and high percentage of children suggest family life is a central characteristic of the community.

### **C. Income Levels and Poverty Rates**

Fairburn displays a significantly more affluent economic profile than Union City, marked by a dramatic recent increase in income. The median household income reported for the 2019-2023 period was \$89,276 (in 2023 dollars).<sup>3</sup> This represents a remarkable 32.8% increase from the \$67,245 reported just one year prior (2022 to



2023).<sup>29</sup> Per capita income was \$34,606.<sup>3</sup> While one source mentions a family poverty rate of 9.8%<sup>22</sup>, another Census QuickFacts source reports a higher overall poverty rate of 18.9%.<sup>3</sup> This discrepancy requires careful consideration; the 18.9% figure seems unusually high given the very high median household income and may reflect specific pockets of poverty, data volatility, or differences in measurement periods/definitions between sources. However, the rapid rise in median income strongly suggests a significant socioeconomic shift, possibly driven by new development attracting higher earners or rapid appreciation impacting existing residents. This rapid change could create disparities within the community.

#### **D. Racial and Ethnic Diversity**

Fairburn is also a predominantly Black or African American city, but with slightly more diversity than Union City. Black residents constitute approximately 81.7% to 82.6% of the population.<sup>3</sup> The White (Non-Hispanic) population is larger than in Union City, at around 11.0%.<sup>3</sup> The Hispanic or Latino population makes up about 5.8%.<sup>3</sup> Asian representation is small (0.5%).<sup>3</sup> About 2.4% identify as Two or More Races.<sup>3</sup> The foreign-born population percentage is slightly higher than Union City's, at 8.7%.<sup>3</sup> The community maintains a clear Black majority but incorporates larger White and Hispanic minority populations compared to its neighbor.

#### **E. Educational Attainment**

Fairburn residents exhibit significantly higher educational attainment compared to Union City and state averages. Fully 93.0% of adults aged 25 and older have a high school diploma or higher, and an impressive 42.5% hold a bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>3</sup> This rate of bachelor's degree attainment surpasses not only Union City (26.7%) but also the Atlanta metro area (41.5%) and the state of Georgia (34.2%).<sup>1</sup> This high level of education correlates with the higher income levels and suggests a population where academic achievement and professional careers are highly valued. This educational profile likely influences community priorities, parenting styles, and expectations for local institutions, including schools and potentially churches.

#### **F. Religious Affiliation and Worldview (Fulton County Proxy)**

As with Union City, city-specific religious data for Fairburn is unavailable from ARDA. Relying again on the 2020 Fulton County data<sup>6</sup>, Fairburn residents exist within the same diverse religious marketplace described previously (strong Catholic, Methodist, Black Protestant, Evangelical/Non-denominational presence, plus Jewish, Muslim, and other faiths). The calculation indicating roughly **32.9% of the county population is unaffiliated** remains the most significant finding for outreach potential.<sup>6</sup>

Given Fairburn's specific demographics (predominantly Black but more diverse, higher income, significantly higher education), the local religious expression likely includes strong Black Protestant churches, but potentially also larger or more numerous congregations appealing to mainline Protestants, Catholics, and potentially non-denominational churches that attract educated professionals and families. The presence of highly-rated Christian private schools in or near Fairburn (e.g., Landmark Christian <sup>11</sup>) suggests a segment of the population actively integrates faith and education. The high educational attainment coupled with the large unaffiliated percentage might indicate a significant population segment whose worldview is shaped more by secularism, humanism, or spiritual-but-not-religious perspectives, alongside those holding traditional religious beliefs. Reaching the unaffiliated in Fairburn may require approaches that resonate with educated, potentially skeptical, and success-oriented individuals and families.

## **G. Housing Tenure**

In contrast to Union City, Fairburn has a majority of homeowners. The owner-occupied housing unit rate for 2019-2023 was 57.7%.<sup>3</sup> This suggests greater residential stability compared to Union City. The median value of owner-occupied housing units saw a significant jump, reported at \$249,200 for the 2019-2023 period <sup>3</sup>, a 17% increase from \$213,000 the previous year.<sup>29</sup> Median monthly owner costs were \$1,568 (with mortgage) and \$469 (without mortgage).<sup>3</sup> The median gross rent was also relatively high at \$1,589.<sup>3</sup> The higher homeownership rate points to a community where residents may feel more invested long-term, potentially fostering stronger neighborhood ties but also potentially creating barriers to entry due to rising housing costs.

## **H. Primary and Secondary School Ratings**

Fairburn residents have access to schools within the Fulton County School District <sup>12</sup>, but also potentially schools in the highly-rated Fayette County Public Schools district (Niche Grade 'A' <sup>13</sup>) depending on location and zoning, as well as several private options.

- **Local Public Schools (Fulton County):**

- *Elementary:* Examples include Campbell Elementary (5/10 GreatSchools <sup>14</sup>, B Niche <sup>20</sup>), E.C. West Elementary (6/10 or 7/10 GreatSchools <sup>14</sup>, B- Niche <sup>20</sup>), Liberty Point Elementary (6/10 GreatSchools <sup>14</sup>, B Niche <sup>20</sup>), Renaissance Elementary (C+ Niche <sup>20</sup>, poor reviews cited <sup>15</sup>). Charter: Amana Academy (A Niche <sup>10</sup>).
- *Middle:* Examples include Bear Creek Middle (4/10 GreatSchools <sup>14</sup>, C Niche

<sup>20</sup>), Renaissance Middle (C+ Niche <sup>20</sup>), Camp Creek Middle (B Niche <sup>20</sup>).

Charter: KIPP South Fulton Academy (B- Niche <sup>10</sup>).

○ *High*: Creekside High (C Niche <sup>9</sup>), Langston Hughes High (C Niche <sup>9</sup>).

- **Potential Access (Fayette County):** Depending on residence location, access to higher-rated Fayette schools is possible, such as Robert J. Burch Elementary (A- Niche <sup>20</sup>), Flat Rock Middle (A- Niche <sup>20</sup>), and Sandy Creek High (B+ Niche <sup>17</sup>).
- **Private Schools:** Notable options include Landmark Christian School (located in Fairburn, A+ Niche Grade <sup>11</sup>) and Arlington Christian School (located in Fairburn, C+ Niche Grade <sup>11</sup>). Other highly-rated private schools are nearby.<sup>11</sup>

Compared to Union City, Fairburn residents appear to have access to a broader range of perceived school quality, including strong private institutions and the potential draw of the Fayette County system. This stronger educational environment is likely a significant factor attracting and retaining families, particularly those with higher incomes and educational backgrounds. It suggests education is a high community priority.

## I. Lifestyle and Psychographic Insights (Inferred)

Fairburn's demographic profile suggests certain lifestyle patterns and psychographic characteristics:

- **Stability:** Higher residential stability is indicated by the majority homeownership rate (57.7% <sup>3</sup>) and a very high percentage (94.2%) of residents living in the same house one year prior.<sup>3</sup> This fosters an environment conducive to building long-term community and relationships.
- **Connectivity:** Digital life is ubiquitous. An extremely high 99.2% of households have a computer, and 96.6% have broadband internet access.<sup>3</sup>
- **Commute:** The average commute time is 30.0 minutes <sup>3</sup>, similar to Union City, suggesting many residents work outside Fairburn, likely in Atlanta or other employment hubs.
- **Health:** Residents appear to have better access to healthcare compared to Union City, with a lower percentage (12.0%) of the under-65 population lacking health insurance.<sup>3</sup> The disability rate among the under-65 population is also lower at 5.5%.<sup>3</sup>
- **Language:** A higher percentage (14.0%) speak a language other than English at home compared to Union City (8.1%) <sup>1</sup>, despite similar foreign-born percentages. This might point to established second-generation immigrant families maintaining heritage languages or specific linguistic clusters (e.g., Spanish speakers) being more prevalent.
- **Worldview (Inferred):** The combination of significantly higher income, high

educational attainment, access to better schools, and greater residential stability likely fosters a focus on career advancement, family well-being, achievement, and quality of life for many residents. The pursuit of educational and professional success appears central. The large unaffiliated population, coupled with high education levels, may indicate a growing segment embracing secular viewpoints, prioritizing individualism, or perhaps seeking spiritual fulfillment outside traditional religious institutions. Simultaneously, the strong presence of churches and faith-based schools points to a significant segment holding traditional values and integrating faith into family life. This suggests a potentially bifurcated or complex psychographic landscape.

## J. Summary of Trends and Changes (Approx. 2015-2025)

Fairburn's last decade has been marked by significant growth and, more recently, a dramatic socioeconomic transformation:

- **Strong Growth, Potential Slowdown:** Substantial population increase since 2010, though recent data hints at stabilization.<sup>3</sup>
- **Rapid Economic Uplift:** A striking recent surge in median household income and home values points to rapid gentrification or the influx of significantly more affluent residents.<sup>3</sup>
- **Strengthened Educational Profile:** High and potentially increasing levels of educational attainment reinforce the city's appeal to educated professionals and families.<sup>3</sup>
- **Increased Stability:** Higher homeownership rates suggest a more rooted community compared to Union City.<sup>3</sup>
- **Overall Trajectory:** Fairburn appears to be solidifying its status as a more affluent, educated, family-oriented suburban community. The rapid pace of recent economic change is the defining trend, raising questions about inclusivity, affordability, and the evolving community character.

## V. Comparative Analysis and Future Outlook

### A. Key Demographic and Socioeconomic Differences and Trajectories

Despite their geographic proximity and shared status as majority-Black communities within Fulton County, Union City and Fairburn exhibit distinct and diverging demographic and socioeconomic profiles. Union City is larger and has grown faster recently, characterized by lower incomes, higher poverty, lower educational attainment, and a dominant renter population.<sup>1</sup> Fairburn, while also growing, shows signs of stabilizing population-wise but has experienced a dramatic recent increase in wealth, reflected in much higher median incomes, home values, and educational

attainment, along with higher homeownership.<sup>3</sup>

Their trajectories appear different: Union City seems set to continue growing as a primarily working-class/lower-middle-income community, facing challenges related to resource strain and poverty alleviation. Fairburn's trajectory points towards increasing affluence and educational attainment, potentially becoming a more exclusive suburban enclave, facing challenges related to managing rapid socioeconomic change, maintaining affordability, and potential stratification. This divergence implies that forces shaping development, housing markets, and job opportunities are impacting the two cities differently, necessitating tailored approaches for community engagement.

### **B. Comparative Religious Landscape Insights (Fulton County Proxy)**

Both cities fall within the diverse religious landscape of Fulton County.<sup>6</sup> Residents in both municipalities have access to a wide array of denominations, including strong Black Protestant churches, large Catholic and Methodist congregations, numerous Evangelical and Non-denominational options, and various other faiths.<sup>6</sup> The most critical shared feature is the large unaffiliated population, estimated at around 33% of the county<sup>6</sup>, representing the single largest potential mission field in both locations.

However, the *expression* of religiosity and the *nature* of the unaffiliated population likely differ between the cities due to their distinct socioeconomic profiles. Union City's religious landscape is probably dominated by churches (particularly Black Protestant) focused on community needs and traditional worship, and its unaffiliated population may include many facing practical barriers to participation. Fairburn's landscape likely includes these elements but may also feature more churches catering to professionals and educated families, potentially with more contemporary or diverse worship styles. Its unaffiliated segment might include a larger proportion of individuals who are secular, skeptical of organized religion, or seeking non-traditional spiritual paths, influenced by higher education and income levels.

### **C. Projected Trends Comparison (2025-2035)**

The diverging trajectories are expected to continue:

- **Union City:** Continued population growth seems likely, potentially exceeding 30,000 residents. This will likely exacerbate challenges related to infrastructure, school capacity, and affordability. The socioeconomic profile is projected to remain largely lower-middle income with high renter rates, unless significant targeted economic development occurs. Ministry will need to focus on integrating newcomers and addressing persistent social and economic needs.

- **Fairburn:** Population projections are less certain, ranging from stable to modest growth.<sup>3</sup> The defining trend will likely be the consolidation of its more affluent profile. Incomes and home values may continue to rise, potentially increasing socioeconomic stratification and affordability challenges. The population is expected to remain highly educated. Ministry will need to adapt to this evolving landscape, engaging educated professionals and families, addressing issues related to wealth and potential inequality, and navigating a potentially more complex and perhaps secularized worldview among segments of the population.

The gap between the two cities in terms of income, housing costs, and potentially lifestyle is likely to widen over the next decade.

**D. Table V.1: Comparative Demographic Summary (Union City vs. Fairburn, ~2023)**

Demographic Indicator	Union City (GA)	Fairburn (GA)	Source(s)
Population Estimate (July 1, 2023)	27,832	16,661	1
Population Growth (2010-2023 %)	~43.1%	~28.7%	1
Median Age	33.1 years	33.5 years	23
% Under 18 Years	26.6%	27.8%	1
% 65 Years and Over	11.2%	7.0%	1
% Black or African American (Non-Hisp)	~85.4%	~81.7%	23
% White (Non-Hispanic)	~3.6%	~11.0%	1
% Hispanic or Latino	~8.2%	~5.8%	1
% Foreign Born	6.4%	8.7%	1



Median Household Income (2019-2023)	\$47,635	\$89,276	<sup>1</sup>
Per Capita Income (2019-2023)	\$29,074	\$34,606	<sup>1</sup>
Persons in Poverty % (Census QuickFacts)	15.5%	18.9% (Note discrepancy w/ income)	<sup>1</sup>
% Bachelor's Degree or Higher (Age 25+)	26.7%	42.5%	<sup>1</sup>
Homeownership Rate (2019-2023)	41.6%	57.7%	<sup>1</sup>
Median Home Value (Owner-Occ, 2019-23)	\$223,100	\$249,200	<sup>1</sup>
Median Gross Rent (2019-2023)	\$1,213	\$1,589	<sup>1</sup>

*Note: Income and poverty data reflect ACS 2019-2023 estimates in 2023 dollars. Population growth calculated using 2010 Census and 2023 estimates. Racial/Ethnic percentages may vary slightly between sources <sup>1</sup>; representative figures are shown.*

## VI. Strategic Implications for Church Leadership

The distinct demographic profiles and trajectories of Union City and Fairburn necessitate tailored strategic approaches for church leadership seeking to engage these communities effectively, particularly in reaching unaffiliated populations.

### A. Union City: Opportunities and Considerations

- Outreach:** Given rapid growth and high mobility <sup>1</sup>, outreach should prioritize welcoming and integrating newcomers. Strategies must be culturally attuned to the predominant Black population <sup>1</sup> while also considering the small but present Latin American and African immigrant groups.<sup>24</sup> The high renter rate (nearly 60% <sup>1</sup>) makes outreach within apartment complexes and rental communities essential. Digital outreach is feasible due to high internet penetration.<sup>1</sup> The large estimated unaffiliated population <sup>6</sup> is a primary target group.

- **Ministry Focus:** Ministries addressing economic hardship are crucial due to high poverty (15.5% <sup>1</sup>) and lower incomes. This could include financial literacy programs, job skills training, career counseling, and benevolence ministries. Supporting educational advancement is vital given lower attainment levels <sup>1</sup> and mixed school ratings <sup>7</sup>; tutoring, mentoring, GED programs, and school partnerships are potential avenues. Support for single-parent households and young adults is likely needed, given the age structure and marital status data.<sup>1</sup> Addressing health access issues, highlighted by the high uninsured rate (18.4% <sup>1</sup>), could involve health fairs or resource navigation.
- **Community Engagement:** Partnerships with local schools <sup>7</sup> to provide student and family support are highly relevant. Collaboration with social service agencies and participation in poverty alleviation initiatives align with community needs. Building bridges and fostering stability is important in a community with significant transience; churches can serve as vital anchor institutions.
- **Reaching the Unaffiliated/Church Planting:** New congregations or ministries might find success by focusing on tangible community building, addressing practical needs (felt needs), and potentially utilizing non-traditional worship settings or styles. Planting within or near large apartment complexes could strategically reach the high renter population.<sup>1</sup> Emphasis on building authentic relationships may be key to connecting with individuals potentially disconnected from established institutions.

## **B. Fairburn: Opportunities and Considerations**

- **Outreach:** Strategies should target families with children, a core demographic.<sup>3</sup> Engagement needs to encompass both homeowners and renters.<sup>3</sup> While culturally relevant outreach to the Black majority is paramount, intentional efforts are needed to connect with the significant White and Hispanic minority populations.<sup>3</sup> Digital outreach is essential given near-universal connectivity.<sup>3</sup> Addressing the large unaffiliated pool <sup>6</sup> requires understanding the perspectives of potentially affluent and highly educated individuals. Outreach may also need to consider the notable linguistic diversity (14% speaking other language at home <sup>3</sup>).
- **Ministry Focus:** Robust family, youth, and children's ministries are critical given the demographics.<sup>3</sup> Ministries supporting working professionals are relevant due to high income and education levels <sup>3</sup>; this could include programs on work-life balance, marketplace ethics, stewardship, and marriage enrichment. Addressing potential social tensions arising from rapid income/housing cost increases <sup>3</sup> and fostering community across socioeconomic lines may become increasingly important. Intellectual engagement, apologetics, and forums discussing faith and culture could resonate with the highly educated population.<sup>3</sup>

- **Community Engagement:** Partnerships with local schools, potentially including the higher-rated public and private options <sup>13</sup>, could focus on character development, enrichment programs, or supporting academic excellence. Engaging in community dialogues about managing growth, development, and maintaining community character could be valuable. Partnerships with local businesses or professional associations might also be fruitful.
- **Reaching the Unaffiliated/Church Planting:** Models that appeal to educated seekers may be effective, emphasizing quality teaching, opportunities for intellectual exploration (e.g., small groups discussing faith and contemporary issues), high-quality worship experiences (potentially diverse styles), and clear pathways for spiritual growth. Potential exists for church plants focused on specific demographics (e.g., young professionals, families with young children) or cultural/linguistic groups. Location strategies should consider accessibility for commuting professionals.<sup>3</sup> Addressing potential skepticism, secular viewpoints, or a desire for experiential spirituality will be important.

### C. Comparative Strategic Considerations

- **Resource Allocation:** Union City's context may demand a greater allocation of resources towards social services, benevolence, and meeting basic needs. Fairburn's context might allow for/require more investment in specialized ministries for professionals, robust youth programs, high-quality worship production, and intellectual engagement, alongside targeted support for any pockets of poverty.
- **Leadership Style:** Effective leadership in Union City might emphasize community organizing, pastoral care focused on resilience, and mobilizing volunteers for service-oriented ministries. Leadership in Fairburn might require strengths in teaching complex topics, relating to professionals, navigating socioeconomic diversity, and potentially managing more complex organizational structures.
- **Church Planting Models:** Community-hub models centered on service and relationship-building in rental communities seem well-suited for Union City. Fairburn might support models focused on specific life stages (families, professionals), affinity groups, or worship styles designed to engage an educated and potentially discerning population.
- **Partnerships:** Potential partners differ. In Union City, collaborations with social service agencies, workforce development programs, and schools needing support are key. In Fairburn, partnerships might extend to higher-rated schools, professional organizations, family counseling services, and potentially businesses. In both cities, collaboration with established churches, particularly the strong Black denominations identified in the county data <sup>6</sup>, is crucial for understanding

the existing spiritual landscape and fostering unity.

## VII. Conclusion

Union City and Fairburn, Georgia, present distinct and diverging community profiles despite their proximity within Fulton County. Union City is characterized by rapid growth, a young working-class population facing significant economic challenges, and high residential mobility. Fairburn exhibits a more affluent and highly educated profile, greater residential stability, and access to stronger educational resources, having undergone a recent, dramatic socioeconomic uplift.

Both cities offer significant opportunities for Christian ministry and mission. The large religiously unaffiliated population segment within Fulton County, estimated at roughly one-third, underscores a substantial need and potential for outreach, evangelism, and discipleship in both communities. However, the differing demographic realities, socioeconomic trajectories, and inferred psychographic landscapes demand context-specific strategies. Ministry in Union City must prioritize addressing tangible needs, welcoming newcomers in a transient environment, and supporting economic and educational empowerment. Ministry in Fairburn must engage an educated and increasingly affluent population, navigate the complexities of rapid socioeconomic change, support families and professionals, and address potentially more secular or individualistic worldviews.

This demographic analysis provides a crucial data foundation for the church leadership team. It is recommended that these findings inform prayerful consideration, inspire further localized research (such as community surveys, focus groups, and interviews with local leaders), and guide the development of targeted, effective strategies for outreach, ministry, community engagement, and potential church planting efforts uniquely suited to the evolving realities of Union City and Fairburn. Continuous monitoring of demographic shifts will be essential for ongoing ministry relevance and effectiveness in these dynamic South Fulton communities.

## VIII. Appendix

**Table A.1: Fulton County Religious Adherents (ARDA 2020)**

Religious Body/Group	Tradition	Family	Congregati ons	Adherents	Adherence Rate (per 1000 pop)

Catholic Church	Catholic	Catholic Liturgical	22	174,520	163.61
United Methodist Church	Mainline Protestant	Methodist	63	98,864	92.68
National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.	Black Protestant	Baptist	31	69,932	65.56
Southern Baptist Convention	Evangelical Prot.	Baptist	116	63,257	59.30
Non-denominational Christian Churches	Evangelical Prot.	Other Groups	114	54,470	51.06
Muslim Estimate	Islam	Islam	17	29,878	28.01
National Missionary Baptist Convention	Black Protestant	Baptist	38	24,928	23.37
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)	Mainline Protestant	Presbyterian /Reformed	22	21,901	20.53
Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee)	Evangelical Prot.	Pentecostal	13	17,706	16.60
Episcopal Church	Mainline Protestant	Anglican/Episcopal	15	17,664	16.56
Progressive National	Black	Baptist	10	16,929	15.87

Baptist Conv., Inc.	Protestant				
Jehovah's Witnesses	Jehovah's Witnesses	Adventist	63	15,646	14.67
Seventh-day Adventist Church	Evangelical Prot.	Adventist	11	13,477	12.63
Reform Judaism	Judaism	Judaism	6	12,328	11.56
Presbyterian Church in America	Evangelical Prot.	Presbyterian /Reformed	10	10,055	9.43
African Methodist Episcopal Church	Black Protestant	Methodist	28	10,040	9.41
Conservative Judaism	Judaism	Judaism	6	7,757	7.27
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Sts.	Latter-day Saints	Latter-day Saints (Mormon)	10	6,110	5.73
Church of God in Christ	Black Protestant	Pentecostal	23	6,008	5.63
Full Gospel Christian Assemblies Intl.	Evangelical Prot.	Pentecostal	2	5,750	5.39
... <sup>6</sup>	...	...	...	...	...
<b>Total Adherents</b>			<b>~830+</b>	<b>~716,000</b>	<b>~671.2</b>



<b>Reported</b>					
<b>Fulton County Population (2020)</b>				<b>1,066,710</b>	
<b>Estimated Unaffiliated Percentage</b>				<b>~32.9%</b>	

Source: The Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA), 2020 U.S. Religion Census (ASARB data).<sup>6</sup> Adherence Rate based on 2020 Census population for Fulton County. Total Adherents and Congregations are approximate sums from the source data. Unaffiliated percentage calculated as  $(1 - (\text{Total Adherents} / \text{County Population}))$ .

**Table A.2: School Ratings Summary (Union City & Fairburn)**

<b>City</b>	<b>School Level</b>	<b>School Name</b>	<b>District/Type</b>	<b>GreatSchools Rating (out of 10)</b>	<b>Niche Grade</b>	<b>Source(s)</b>
<b>Union City</b>	Elementary	Oakley Elementary	Fulton Co. Public	4	C+	<sup>7</sup>
	Elementary	Gullatt Elementary	Fulton Co. Public	3 or 4	C	<sup>7</sup>
	Elementary	Nolan Elementary	Fulton Co. Public	3 or 4	C+	<sup>7</sup>
	Elementary	S. L. Lewis Elementary	Fulton Co. Public	3 or 5	C+	<sup>7</sup>
	Elementary	Feldwood Elementary	Fulton Co.	3 or 5	C+	<sup>7</sup>

	y	y	Public			
	Elementar y	Liberty Point Elementar y	Fulton Co. Public	6	B	7
	Elementar y	Stonewall Tell Elementar y	Fulton Co. Public	--	B	10
	Elementar y	Renaissan ce Elementar y	Fulton Co. Public	--	C+	10
	Elementar y	Resurgenc e Hall Charter	Charter	--	A	10
	Middle	McNair Middle	Fulton Co. Public	4	C+	7
	Middle	Camp Creek Middle	Fulton Co. Public	--	B	10
	Middle	Bear Creek Middle	Fulton Co. Public	--	C	10
	Middle	Renaissan ce Middle	Fulton Co. Public	--	C+	10
	Middle	KIPP South Fulton Academy	Charter	--	B-	10
	High	Banneker High	Fulton Co. Public	3	C-	7

	High	Westlake High	Fulton Co. Public	--	B	9
	High	Creekside High	Fulton Co. Public	--	C	9
	High	Langston Hughes High	Fulton Co. Public	--	C	9
	High	Hapeville Charter Career Acad.	Charter	4	C	7
<b>Fairburn</b>	Elementary	Campbell Elementary	Fulton Co. Public	5	B	14
	Elementary	E. C. West Elementary	Fulton Co. Public	6 or 7	B-	14
	Elementary	Liberty Point Elementary	Fulton Co. Public	6	B	14
	Elementary	Renaissance Elementary	Fulton Co. Public	Low Reviews	C+	15
	Elementary	Robert J. Burch Elem. (Fayette)	Fayette Co. Public	--	A-	20
	Elementary	Amana Academy Charter	Charter	--	A	10

	Middle	Bear Creek Middle	Fulton Co. Public	4	C	14
	Middle	Renaissance Middle	Fulton Co. Public	--	C+	20
	Middle	Camp Creek Middle	Fulton Co. Public	--	B	20
	Middle	Flat Rock Middle (Fayette)	Fayette Co. Public	--	A-	20
	Middle	KIPP South Fulton Academy	Charter	--	B-	20
	High	Creekside High	Fulton Co. Public	--	C	20
	High	Langston Hughes High	Fulton Co. Public	--	C	20
	High	Sandy Creek High (Fayette)	Fayette Co. Public	--	B+	17
	Private K-12	Landmark Christian School	Private	Not Rated	A+	11
	Private K-12	Arlington Christian School	Private	Not Rated	C+	11

*Notes: Ratings are subject to change and represent data available circa late 2024/early 2025. "--" indicates data not readily found in provided snippets for that specific metric/school combination. GreatSchools ratings are on a 1-10 scale. Niche*

*grades use A-F scale. Fayette County schools listed are potential options depending on specific residence location within/near Fairburn.*

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