



Mission Field Alpha Columbia Metro: Mission Local

(This is a characterization of a real, currently existing mission field in the fellowship area of the Columbia Metro Baptist Association. It is a mission field screaming for our family of congregations to embrace and provide prophetic missional engagement.)

Is God calling your congregation to adopt Mission Field Alpha?

Mission Field Alpha is a community of more than 7,000 people in approximately 2,800 households. It is a truly racially and ethnically diverse community with an above average number of households below the poverty line. Fifty-five percent of the population is Black/African-American. Approximately 20 percent are White, and 18 percent Hispanic/Latino. The rest are Asian and other designations.

Here are other selected demographics:

- The median household income is around \$40,000. White and Asian households have an income around \$50,000 or better, and Black/African-American households are below \$35,000.
- Just over 50 percent of the head of households are single parents. Two-thirds of these have never been married.
- More than one in five households are below the poverty line.
- Half the adult population are high school graduates and half are not.
- Two-thirds of households are not currently involved in any organized religious activities. If they were involved, the two groups most appealing are Baptist and Catholic.
- Three issues with which they want help: finances, success in life, losing weight.
- Concerns are life stresses, health crises, and caring for aging parents.
- They wish for warm, friendly, and engaging encounters with people.

Here are tough, real life illustrations of households in this community (facts changed):

- Single mom with two teenage children. Teenage girl was object of sexual abuse by family adult who now has a restraining order against him, but he is still around the neighborhood. Mom temporarily lost custody years ago as a result of her drug use.
- Married couple with three children. Two of the three have special needs. Mother works outside home, but the father does not. Father has PTSD and is abusive.
- Single dad living with his parents. Divorced with shared custody of teenage son who spends at least half his time with mother in another city.

- Grandmother raising two special needs grandchildren. A third grandchild is in the custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice due to violent act in community. All three children were crack babies. Adult family member in home suspected to be a drug dealer.

Existing Baptist Church in community may go out of existence before the end of 2022 despite more than six decades of faithful and positive Christian ministry in this community. A lack of leadership and finances makes it impossible for them to continue. Their facility needs significant investment for repair, replacement, and upkeep.

Goal: *Adoption of Mission Field Alpha* where as many as 5,000 people need to know Jesus as their Savior and Lord, and have a Christian community to nurture them.

Given the economics and lack of leadership within Mission Field Alpha, it is doubtful that a sustainable, traditional congregation would even result from missional engagement in this area without ongoing finances and leadership from outside this mission field.

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