

(2) Hope and Motivation

Our hope is...

- For all people to know Christ. To truly know Christ, one must...
 - Have access to the Gospel to be able to respond to the Gospel¹.
 - Be restored to God through Christ², which leads to transformation by the Spirit³.
 - Be involved in making disciples, which is to obey Christ's call to all believers⁴.
 - Be engaged in the life of a healthy local church.
- To serve the city and share with the world because we are compelled and empowered by the Spirit to do so.
- That every partner is serving, every believer is going, every church is sending, every person is hearing resulting in transformed lives and Kingdom Advancement.

We are motivated by both biblical truth and cultural realities.

Biblical Motivations: The Church is often viewed as the body of Christ. As such, the following essential parts of the body and corresponding Scriptures help inform and found our pursuit of all people coming to know Christ.

- **Head** - Christ is the head of the church⁵. As the head of the church, Christ desires for the church to be the primary vehicle⁶ through which the Gospel is communicated⁷, Christ's love is demonstrated⁸, and God is worshipped⁹. It is Christ's desire¹⁰ for all people to have access to the Gospel¹¹ and have the opportunity to respond through faith¹² and repentance¹³ to his free gift of grace¹⁴ and life eternal¹⁵.
- **Heart** - Scripture says God has a heart for the city¹⁶ and the nations¹⁷. Such a statement is accurate but can be simplified even further: Christ has a heart for all people. He is broken¹⁸ over the sin of mankind¹⁹ all men, women, and children, which has separated them from God's original design²⁰ of unity and fellowship with the Father. Christ desires for each man and woman to be broken over their individual sin²¹ and the sin of fellow man²², resulting in repentance and faith in him alone. Such brokenness over sin and Christ's limitless love compels²³ us to share the hope of Jesus Christ with all we come in contact with...family, friend, foe, and foreigner.
- **Hands** - The church is not a building, but a people who have placed their faith in the risen Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and received the Holy Spirit²⁴. It is through the gifting of the Holy Spirit that the church--believers--are given the responsibility and ability to be the hands of Christ serving both the church and the ministry of the church to our city and world through our gifts²⁵, talents, passions, and interests.
- **Feet** - Believers empowered²⁶ by the Holy Spirit are to be the feet of Christ who take the truth of the Gospel²⁷ to the affluent, middle class, and poorest of poor; the weary, diseased, and least of these²⁸; the single mom, absent dad, and rebellious teen; to suburban cul de sacs, jungle paths, and crowded city streets; both to, fro, and everywhere in between²⁹.

Cultural Motivations: The Church is also viewed as a light in the darkness. As such, the following are cultural realities that validate and expedite the need for the church to be active in bringing the light of Jesus to the darkness of our world.

Lostness - The Lost is Found

- Less than 1 out of 10 people globally are evangelical believers.³⁰
- Almost 12,000 ethnolinguistic groups with a common self-identity (people group) make up the entire world's population of 7.7 billion people. Over 7,000 of these people groups (4.5 billion people) are considered unreached (less than 2% evangelical Christian).³¹
- Over 3,100 people groups (265 million people) are considered unengaged (no evangelical Christian missionary presence, have never the Gospel, or was once exposed to the Gospel but has been forgotten).³²
- Over 156 million Americans have not attended a Christian church, other than for special events, in the last six months.³³
- Over the past decade, more people in the U.S. have become churchless than live in Australia or Canada. This is an increase of 30% (38 million people).³⁴
- In 2018-19, 26% of Americans surveyed identified themselves as 'religiously unaffiliated' (atheists, agnostics, etc.). This is up from 17% in 2009.³⁵
- 44% of Pulaski County residents (160,000+) are 'unclaimed' by any of the 236 religious groups.³⁶
- The Southern Baptist Church to Population Ratio for North America is 1:6,910.³⁷

Brokenness - The Broken are Restored

- 16% of the 2nd Congressional District of Arkansas (Little Rock Metro) receive income below the poverty line (\$25,465 for a family of four). 23% of children under 18 in this district are in related families who had income below the poverty line in 2018.³⁸
- 18% of the Working-Age Women (18-64) who had incomes below the poverty line in 2018.³⁹
- 17% of Arkansas residents age 18-24 without high school degrees who are not in school or working in 2018.⁴⁰
- 75% of students in the Little Rock School District receive free or reduced-cost meals. 67% of students at nearby Terry Elementary are considered to be low-income.⁴¹
- 15% of Arkansas residents experienced hunger and food insecurities from 2016-2018, meaning that some point during the year, they experienced difficulty providing food due to a lack of money or resources.⁴²
- 9,120 children in Arkansas were found to be victims of abuse or neglect in 2019.⁴³
- 151,000 African-American and Hispanic children in Arkansas live below 200% poverty.⁴⁴
- 4,880 children are in the Arkansas foster care system.⁴⁵
- 38% of Arkansas children live in single-parent families.⁴⁶
- Only 55% of school-age children in the Little Rock School District read at grade level.⁴⁷
- 19.7 million children, more than 1 in 4, live without a biological, step, or adoptive father in the home.⁴⁸
- Men who grew up with absent fathers were more likely to become absent fathers.⁴⁹
- The lowest achievement and highest risk of school failure were experienced by adolescents who did not have a resident father figure and didn't know the identity of their fathers.⁵⁰
- Children raised in a father-absent home are 4 times more likely to be in poverty, 7 times more likely to become pregnant as a teen, 2 times more likely to drop out of high school, more likely to have behavioral problems, and more likely to go to prison or commit a crime.⁵¹
- In 2017, Little Rock ranked #3 in violent crimes of those cities within a 400-mile radius with a population greater than 150,000. 3,256 violent crimes were reported or 816 violent crimes per 50,000 residents.⁵²

Sources

¹ [Rom 10:14-15](#).

² [Acts 3:19-20](#).

³ [Lk 18](#), [2 Cor 5:17](#), [Rom 12:2](#).

⁴ [Mt 28:19-20](#).

⁵ [Eph 5:23](#), [Col 1:15-20](#).

⁶ [Eph 3:7-12](#).

⁷ [Mt 28:19-20](#), [Acts 1:8](#).

⁸ [Jn 13:35](#).

⁹ [Phil 3:3](#).

¹⁰ [Jn 17:3](#), [1 Tim 2:3-6](#).

¹¹ [Mt 24:14](#).

¹² [Eph 2:8](#).

¹³ [Mk 1:14-15](#), [Acts 2:38](#).

¹⁴ [Rom 3:24-25](#).

¹⁵ [Jn 3:16](#), [Rom 6:23](#).

¹⁶ [Jer 29:4-7](#), [Mt 22:39](#).

¹⁷ [Ps 67](#), [86:9](#).

¹⁸ [Is 53:5](#).

¹⁹ [Rom 3:23](#).

²⁰ [Is 59:2](#).

²¹ [Ps 34:18](#), [51:10](#), [17](#).

²² [Rom 9](#).

²³ [2 Cor 5:14-15](#).

²⁴ [Acts 2:38](#).

²⁵ [Rom 12](#), [1 Cor 12](#), [Eph 4](#).

²⁶ [Acts 1:8](#).

²⁷ [Mk 16:15](#).

²⁸ [Mt 25:40](#).

²⁹ [1 Ki 8:60](#).

³⁰ "Number of Evangelicals Worldwide | Lausanne Movement." Lausanne Movement, July 8, 2011. <https://www.lausanne.org/lgc-transfer/number-of-evangelicals-worldwide> .

³¹ "PeopleGroups.Org." PeopleGroups.org, <https://www.peoplesgroups.org/> .

³² People Groups.

³³ "10 Facts About America's Churchless - Barna Group." Barna Group, <https://www.barna.com/research/10-facts-about-americas-churchless/> .

³⁴ Barna Group.

³⁵ "In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace." Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project, October 17, 2019. <https://www.pewforum.org/2019/10/17/in-u-s-decline-of-christianity-continues-at-rapid-pace/> .

³⁶ "Religious Congregations and Membership Study." Association of Religion Data, <http://www.thearda.com/rcms2010/rcms2010a.asp?U=05119&T=county&Y=2010&S=Name> .

³⁷ "Focus Areas - NAMB." NAMB, <https://www.namb.net/focus-areas/> .

³⁸ "Arkansas CD 2 Report - 2019 - Talk Poverty." Talk Poverty, <https://talkpoverty.org/cd-year-report/arkansas-cd-2-report-2019/> .

³⁹ Talk Poverty.

⁴⁰ Talk Poverty.

⁴¹ “Conversation with School Principal.” Stephanie Franklin.

⁴² Talk Poverty.

⁴³ “Immerse Arkansas.” Immerse Arkansas, <https://immersearkansas.org/> .

⁴⁴ “Arkansas - Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity.” Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity, <https://spotlightonpoverty.org/states/arkansas/> .

⁴⁵ Spotlight on Poverty.

⁴⁶ Spotlight on Poverty.

⁴⁷ “2019 School Report Card.” Arkansas Department of Education, <https://myschoolinfo.arkansas.gov/SRC/29/6001000> .

⁴⁸ “2017 Current Population Survey.” United States Census Bureau, 2017. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/data.html> .

⁴⁹ “Infographic - The Father Absence Crisis in America.” National Fatherhood Initiative, <https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/135704/NFIFatherAbsenceInfoGraphic071118.pdf> .

⁵⁰ National Fatherhood Initiative.

⁵¹ U.S. Census.

⁵² “2017 Crime in the United States.” Federal Bureau of Investigation, <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2017/crime-in-the-u.s.-2017/tables/table-6> .