

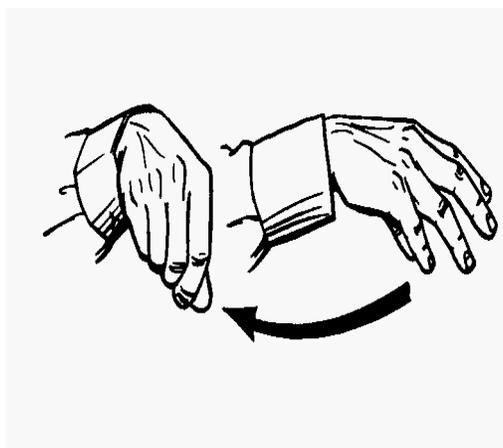
Gospel-Centered Church Planting

Dr. Steve Childers

A Church Planting Proposal

by: Jamie B. Freeland

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## **A Church Planting Proposal**



Before “I” start, I would like to briefly orient you to my background. I feel that by sharing a bit of my background, you will be able to have a better understanding of my proposal. I spent the first 19 years of my life in a deaf home. Both my parents are

deaf and God has blessed me with a unique opportunity to have some personal insight into a culture that has engulfed me. I was doubly blessed to see how my family was treated by the church at large, and it was an awesome sight to see the church meeting needs that my family had. There were however, things that the hearing world could not provide such as a true sense of community due to the differences between the hearing and deaf culture. Many of you might think, well why is it so important that there be a deaf community? Well to be deaf means to be shut away from the world of sound. This is a non-voluntary position that a deaf person finds themselves in and are often required to meet the demands of the communication gap between them and the hearing world. Many deaf do go the extra mile (and by this, I mean a huge one) to make that gap a very narrow one. Notice that I didn't say bridge, because one cannot be formed unless an interpreter is there, and even with that provided, much is lost in the translation. Not only has ASL (American Sign Language) been developed by the deaf as a means of communication, but they have also developed a way of life, a new way of adapting to the reality that they find themselves living in. This way of life, is called deaf culture. The great commission was put forth simply to gather all nations unto Himself. All nations is simply a broader term for all people groups, and deaf people are a people group who richly need the gospel.

Interpreting is so vital in communication with the deaf, it is often needed on almost a daily basis. I, personally have interpreted for most of my life, starting in a very public place, on a folding chair in front of a deaf group of 20 adults when I was six years old. At that young age, I can imagine how imperfect my interpreting may have been, but you can begin to see the steps the deaf were willing to take to hear the gospel even if it had to be from a six year old. Now, I understand that I was the interpreter and the

message was relayed through me. If you know anything about translation work, most translation is very unique and quite often there is not a rigid set of rules to help the individual interpret “perfectly.” Most of it is filtered through the individual, filtered through background of experience, personality, value system, and even their understanding of theology.

In this proposal, I am talking specifically about planting deaf churches. This is to say that, I am not against having interpreters in the church, and by no means do I ever want to see a halt to that (unless of course, Christ comes back for His bride). When comparing Deaf churches with that of hearing churches with groups of deaf people, I have seen a big difference in gospel understanding, a growth in spiritual renewal, a sense of true community where an authentic understanding take place. In hearing churches, the interpretation of the message, or the service may be sufficient (depending upon the skill of the interpreter), but what is lacking is communication within the church, and the interpreter(s) is not sufficient to meet all the demands. Interpersonal relationship building takes place most effectively with two people, not two and an interpreter. What is required for a healthy church is a solid communication between it’s members. To truly plant churches that will last ,healthy ones, communication is so very vital, but communication alone will not solve that problem, a true sense of community will.

The vision that God has given to me is to plant healthy missional Deaf churches. I must confess that this vision is a hard one, yet an exciting one to accept. The target area for my first church plant is in the heart of Orlando, Florida. The reason for this is that there are no evangelical deaf church with a missional mind set. The need is so tremendous. There are about 5,000 deaf people that live in Greater Orlando area. Less

than one percent attend church, and half of that are members of evangelical churches.

There is a great need for a Christian deaf community, and that can be fulfilled by planting a deaf church in Orlando.

In the next few pages I will have an outlined proposal that will take you step by step into the vision that God has given to me, a vision to plant an evangelical deaf church that is missional, that desires to see lost people saved, and in return having them become authentic worshipers of the Lord God almighty.

**Why do I think I am the one God has called to a plant a church in this area? And why in Orlando?**

First of all, I was called by God to be a minister among my people group, and although I am hearing, my mind and heart are in accordance with the deaf culture, and I feel especially attached to them, and to run from that I would inadvertently lose my self-identity, the very one that God has created in me.

Secondly, I have lived in central Florida since 1995. I attended a bible college in Lakeland, and soon after the move met many deaf and began to pick up on what the needs were in that area. I have found that there were no deaf churches that were mission minded, the churches that I had contacted were very ingrown, and seemed to be self-serving.

Thirdly, looking at the call that God has placed on my life, I had to seriously ponder the gifts that He has bestowed upon me. My heart and mind became much more mission oriented when I became a member of an evangelical deaf church, and I know from personal account that the deaf cannot simply be reached with the status quo here in

central Florida.

Finally, I know God has called me to plant healthy missional deaf churches, the best place to start is the area of greatest need, and that area is right here in Orlando.

## Who?, What?, When?, Where?, How?, and Why?

Many questions arise when a vision is casted to start a new church. Many of them are legit and at the same time speak about the hearts of those who questioned such a proposal. New Churches change a society, and God ultimately uses the Church as a vehicle of change in a certain community/people group. A church plant is a blessing, and as much as hardships and heartaches may come, there is a genuine blessing that comes from Heaven, the Body of Christ is made manifest in the people whom God has called you to serve.

The following are questions that arise when seeking to Church plant, and I would like to head them off here.

**Why** even start a new church **here?** **Why Now?** Most People think that the church only exists for one reason really, that it is there to meet a need within the context that it is planted. While this is very true, the ultimate reason is that God desires worshipers of all color, race, and of varying cultures to worship Him. The deaf are just a perfect example of a people group who have a language and culture different than any other culture in the world. The Church in effect is planted for two reasons, one to bring worshipers to God, and second to provide the worshipers an avenue of connecting with God through the Body of Christ. While much could be said about this, this question is also specific.

**Why** should we plant a Deaf Church in Orlando? Orlando is a very big area to

plant a church, and there are many of them here; however if I were to say that 5,000 deaf people now live in this area, and only two small deaf churches which are really just subsets of two larger churches exist, you will begin to understand the need. I do not desire to comment about the existing churches in a negative way. Regarding this question I only want to say that the church I think God is planning to plant through my leadership is that this will be a missional church whose sole focus is to plant daughter churches, that collectively we may gather unto Christ a harvest whose one desire is to worship God in all His splendor and majesty. This is something that I don't see taking place in the deaf community here in Orlando. Less than one percent are self professed Christians, and the need is so tremendous.

**Who** will be impacted by this church? The majority of the people most affected by this church will be the middle class deaf. Their ethnicity will vary greatly only to be united by a common thing: Deaf Culture. Deaf people are the primary target, but many others also come as well. The hard of hearing will also be a group focused on, and they are treated differently by the hearing and deaf communities. Others will come in as a result of being connected to the deaf either through family connections or through friendships. Many deaf create all sorts of relationships, and through relationship building some who are not deaf will come. I think other than the deaf and hard of hearing the third most important group are those with familia ties. Children of Deaf parent, hearing parents of deaf children, and deaf people's hearing siblings. I, myself fall under the category of hearing children who have deaf parents.

Deafness like in my case is not genetic, and though I am hearing I have been passed down a culture which I inherited and ultimately accepted for myself. Deaf culture

is something that is not passed down through children very easily, many children reject this culture that they grew up with. The reason that deaf culture exists is because deafness exists, and many get it through sickness, accidents, birth defects, etc... . Genetic deafness is not something that happens a lot but it does, and until Christ returns deaf culture will always be here.

In this church I propose that every child whether hearing or deaf will understand clearly the culture in which they live in. They may not want to take it up as their own, but at least they will have more respect for their parents when it comes to communication. I can't stress enough the importance of this church, it will have an impact that no other has seen before, I believe this is the vision that God has instilled in my heart for the many years I have lived as a coda (**Child of Deaf Adult**).

**What** are their needs? There are many but I will approach this in a more holistic way. The deaf have two major types of needs: Physical, and Spiritual. Physically this includes things as helping them find good jobs, and training to get better jobs. This also includes qualified and honest interpreting, and advocacy rights need to be enforced. They need a church, a Christian community in which can receive excellent biblical, and doctrinal teaching. Bordering on Spirituality, soul care is essential, the Deaf Church acting as part of the body of Christ will help nurture them individually and corporately as they receive counseling and truths in God's very Word. As they receive God's word, they are brought into maturity in Christ and then are able to carry on the mantle. The needs here may seem enormous, but these I find are the essentials for the Deaf to flourish spiritually and physically.

**What** kind of Church will it be? As the needs are being met, we as a deaf church

will meet the needs of deaf people all around us who may be a Christian or who may not be. The important factor is not whether they are in the kingdom or not, it's that they are deaf. Deaf people can best communicate to deaf. By working in this fashion many hearing people will be influenced by the mercy ministries we will have implemented as part of our core character. We will not only be focused on our community, but we will reach out further and do missions work far and wide. We will be a missional church, a church who strongly believes in planting more deaf churches. We will strive to be a healthy church, always seeking strength and balance in fervent kingdom prayer, Gospel-centered worship and preaching, in-depth learning and discipleship, fellowship: building authentic relationships, evangelism: witnessing in word and deed, and last but not least Mercy ministries: servant evangelism.

**How** will I start this Church? First of all, and not trying to sound pious, but I would most certainly pray first. Praying front-line kingdom prayers are essential dually for my heart in heeding God's desire, and also preparation and literal help from God in spiritual battles that will come my way. Upon acceptance of this proposal I would pick a highly esteemed Coach, one who was responsible for several deaf church plants around the world: Pastor John Stallings. With acceptance I would start with a team of four people. Starting with myself they are: a senior/sole pastor, a qualified counselor, a worship leader who will also be the assistant pastor, and an administrator/secretary. Before moving on, I would like to note very important key elements that binds this team: an ownership of the vision, cohesion, and a clear understanding of our responsibilities. A little more will be said later about their job descriptions. With a unified vision, and continual front line

Kingdom prayers we will be successful in networking daily. Our style of outreach will be a more side-door approach. We will eventually have a public worship service, and it will be at least 18 months before that worship service will be made manifest. Through outreaches, evangelism, and mercy ministries we will have a few people join us, and as we grow there will be (realistically) a core group mentality, and a pre-launch team mentality. Through several meetings and bible studies, the philosophy of ministry will be explicitly brought up and through months of working together, the core group mentality and the pre-launch team will form a cohesive agreement on the philosophy of Ministry. The philosophy of ministry is not apt to change after the pre-launch team has started networking, but it may be tweaked due to what we experience as more needs are being made known. The next step would be to geographically divide the groups. The four beginning members of the pre-launch team will be divided into four groups. They will each be a small group leader of their own groups. Geographically we should already be in place, but for the sake of this proposal, I will show where our homes are. The first group will be in the Sanford area (Northern Orlando). The second group will be located in the Apopka/Mount Dora area (West Orlando). The third group will be located in the Winter Park/UCF area (East Orlando). The fourth Group will be located in the Kissimmee area (South Orlando). It's not because of the size of our intended church that we are located like this, but because the deaf live in a very large area, it is much easier for them to drive a shorter distance for Small Groups. Once Small Groups have maintained an attendance average of 4-6 people each, our first public worship will be planned and started no later than six months from that time, with the goal of 10-12 average attendees per small group would meet by that time. The preferred location for public worship will

be a central location, in the middle of all four groups, (Just North of the Downtown area, possibly the Maitland area). (Look at the next page for this map, this was taken from the cover page of “The Orlando StreetFinder” by Rand McNally in 1999.)

**How** will this Church plant be supported? Primarily the financial burden will be placed upon the surrounding PCA churches in the Central Presbytery District. Our “mother” church is Covenant Presbyterian Church in Oviedo. There are several organizations that have pledged to help financially and with resources. They are as listed: CRM for resources, (name) and (DMC) for financial support.

**Who** will be supporting this church? Once this Church has started and has become self-supporting, the church will be supported by it’s members. Depending on the size of the Church, the pastor will either be full-time, or become a bi-vocational pastor.

**How** can someone support this church plant? Simply in prayer and in giving. As a part of this networking endeavor, this pre-launch team will have some literature that informs what this vision of the Church is going to be, and what the type of Church it will be. The character and drive of this church will be publicly displayed. The purpose of this church is a missional one, an evangelical goal of bringing genuine worshipers to God’s very throne. We are all about building a genuine community who are deaf, but not only do they share deafness, they share Christ. Our Philosophy of ministry will be bold, short, yet poignant. This is what people will give to. Our financial support will come from individuals who can see the Vision God has instilled in me, and in my team. The support will come from many existing churches, individuals, new converts, and even businesses. Not only is money very important, prayer is an essential part of this endeavor. I will ask a prayer support group to pray around the clock for this church

plant. I will ask for a minimum of 168 prayer partners. For every hour of every day, someone is praying for us, praying front-line Kingdom prayers.

What is the job description of the members of this pre-launch team?

**The Pastor**- He is responsible for leading and teaching. He is the primary leader guiding the church in every facet of ministry and in growth. He is responsible for the feeding and care of God's flock, the teaching ministry within his church, and the word and deeds of their ministries. He needs to have good teaching skills, counseling skills, interpersonal skills, and to also have knowledge of the culture to which God has called him to minister within. He needs to be friendly, approachable, yet bold. He needs to be a man of Godly Character, a man of Kingdom prayer, a man who is innocent as a dove but wise as a serpent. A man who would not conform to the world's standard of approval and measure of success. A man who stands for truth, for the Word of God, and for the people that God has called him to shepherd. Last but not least, he needs to be licensed and ordained, but not necessarily formally trained.

**The Worship Leader/Assistant Pastor**- He is responsible to help the leadership of the Pastor. To pray continually for the unity and spiritual health of the Church where God has placed him. He needs to be acutely aware of the pulse of the church. He needs to be familiar with liturgical styles, and styles of the culture. Working within the real of the deaf community, he will not necessarily have to know music, but will need to know how worship is essential to the body of Christ especially in this local setting. He will need good leadership skills, be very communicative, have a good ear. He needs to be flexible with the pastor and others as he organizes worship services every week. He needs to be skilled/ gifted in the area of preaching and teaching. He also needs to be flexible and

ready when called to teach or preach.

**The Counselor-** He/She needs to be a qualified counselor and meet a state requirements for licensure and practice. Preferably would be a fluent signer. He/She would be qualified, trained formally, know deaf culture like the back of his/her hand. He/She needs to be flexible with scheduling and needs to be rooted in God's Word as their ultimate source of life and hope. It's not as necessarily important that they be biblically trained in a formal sense, but must certainly be formally trained as a counselor, preferably one who knows deaf culture. He/She needs to be able to work well with both the pastor, and the associate pastor.

**Administrator/Secretary-** He/She must be an effective communicator to both deaf and the hearing. Preferably this position be filled by either a hearing person, or a hard of hearing person with ability to depend on essential hearing for communication via phone. Being in America at this time, we would need a somewhat savvy technological person who ideally could do a lot of work via computer, internet(web-based),TDD usage, and also the ability to use computer software(s) for any types of reason(s). Communication is so vital, someone who filled this role would most certainly be a key figure in the start up of this church plant. Many people may have questions, and a administrator/secretary needs to be able to communicate to them; our philosophy of Ministry, and/or our mission statement through use of ASL and English.

A couple more key elements that needs to be addressed here. This may be for my sake, but I need to clarify on one key point, and expound on a couple of others when referring to this launch team.

The most important key element besides each of the four members being in a

humble state before the Lord, is that the Vision of the Church Plant must be raging within them so much that it is contagious. God has called the Church Planter to actualize the vision that God has placed in his heart. He must be able to impart that vision to his launch team, and without the vision, the “launch” team won’t even make it to the pad. Although this is key essential for effective networking, the means by which this vision is implemented is also vitally important. The launch team has to be in tune with one another, and every step they make must be made as a group. The Church Planter in this scenario is the Sole/Senior Pastor. For a successful church plant to occur (not discounting in any way the work of the Holy Spirit), unity in mind, body and spirit must take place for this Church Body to grow.

### *What is my proposed Strategy?*

From this point on I will make it plain what I propose we do about this church plant. I have already keyed you into some of the steps/processes to which this will come about, but for logic sake, and for being linear, let me explain the steps to which this will take place. As a side note, the fixed deadlines are not fixed concretely and they are not free floating. The times at which I would like to see this take place is all a part of a skyscraper, you have to build some swaying ability into it, or it will crash, but not too much sway where the structure compromises the mission or intention.

First of all, I would like to start with the pre-launch team. I have often just stated that this is the launch team, but nevertheless, it is by my definition here a group of individuals that I have hand picked to help me in the task of planting this Church. This is a core group in the sense that they are the primary tentacles to which the vision I have

been given is passed on through them into the community.

Networking and Kingdom Prayer are essentials, and both continue until Christ comes, but this is an integral part of our identity in this side door approach to Church planting.

In less than six months I would like to have at least 4-8 people in each small group. At this point there should be at least 16-32 people all together. In another six months I would like to have started a plan for meeting publicly for worship. At the same time, I would desire that we have at least 10-12 people in each small group. The small groups are divided into four groups with each member of the pre-launch team being the leader of the individual groups. They are divided and assigned systematically and strategically. The homes of each of these pre-launch team members would preferred to be houses, that way their lives there would seem more invested. Apartments are not excluded, it's just that homes bring an ideology of stability to the picture and that is important especially in the beginning time period of Church Planting.

The Administrator/ Secretary is placed in North Orlando Area, near Sanford. The reason for this is that many deaf who live to the north of Orlando are mainly professional deaf workers who are educators, and have a lot of business interests in those areas. St. Augustine Deaf and Blind School is located north, and from that facility, many deaf will travel long distances to secure a highly esteemed position as a deaf educator.

The Counselor is placed to the West Orlando area. There is a mental health institute which serves also as a school. National Deaf Academy (in Mount Dora) has many deaf who work there as staff that have higher educational knowledge, and who are very oriented with counseling, and the importance of counseling. The counselor would be best placed here to be open to counsel or relate to those who have made it a profession as well.

The senior/sole pastor lives in East Orlando, near the UCF area. The reasoning behind this is that many deaf students go to UCF, and many questions that are posed by the

unregenerate needs an intelligible, honest answer. I believe that the senior/sole pastor is more apt to converse with them at the level or area of academia.

Last but not least is the Associate Pastor/Worship Leader. He will live in the Kissimmee area. Many deaf live here because of the job opportunities that are at Disney. Many who live here are deaf people who are more artistic, more apt to gravitate toward a person who loves to sing, who sings with passion and with great humbleness and reverence. I also think that a gifted artist who leads worship should have the opportunity to converse with a like-minded persons. (The next page is a map of the Orlando Area, the original picture was taken from the front cover of the Rand McNally, "StreetFinder" 1999 edition of the Orlando area.)

As this plan is moved forward, not only does the key players have to be in place, but key ideas about how the game should be played needs to be set. Jokingly this was stated, but honestly, it's a great privilege to be used by God to be involved in His great Redemptive Plan. It's very humbling and sober at the same time. Knowing their individual tasks are just essential as knowing what they are as a team. Individuals here must be team players, it's a swimming competition, they need to do well in their own individual events, if not how will that reflect on the team? Rules of play, management, and strategy are just a few of the main important things for a team to figure out, and like any team, the good thing about this one it will have a great coach. This coach would preferably be a deaf church planter, or at least be one who knows deaf culture well because that is essential. For a coach I am choosing John Stallings a Baptist minister who has helped plant and has plant deaf churches around the world.

As far as the pre-launch team is concerned, several things much be fairly concrete in order for this church plant to be successful. Not only is front-line kingdom prayer essential but an agreement of Church structure is vital for formation. This structure here although vitally important isn't guaranteed to have a Presbyterian Church structure. The

senior/pastor (I) will maintain my out of bounds credentials updated as a PCA minister, and that will for now suffice the requirements of this proposal. The goal is to make this a healthy church, a PCA church is desirable, but it isn't guaranteed in the first 5 years of it's birth. Several other important elements need to be set before the first small group meets. They are: Philosophy of Ministry, Mission Statement, Small group curriculum, agreement on the specifics in the time line for planting that specific church, and depending upon the makeup of the pre-launch team matters of interpretation needs to be somewhat set. All of this needs to be set before networking even takes place.

Once the pre-launch members have moved into the area, time begins for them to network, network, and oh? Did I say Network? Evangelism is so essential and will be a key personality that defines this team. Networking will continue as will small groups, and the length to which they are implemented are endless, but as soon as the primary goals have been met, the intensity and focus will be diverted for obvious growth reasons. This is planned to continue at least for a year and if there are at least 10-12 members in each small group (at least 48 members total), plans for public worship will be greatly considered. The main goal here is to have stable membership of 10-12 in each group. This helps in the area of a stable launch team, a consistent effectiveness throughout the community. This church plant is not limited by any of these goals, but they are right now theoretical goals that could be dropped easily in the face of reality. This should be accomplished in 18 months.

As soon as that is done, (whatever it will be), a public worship date will be set, and a place for that to happen will be set, and as soon as this is set, three months will be set as preparatory time for the pre-launch team, to establish a launch team and through finances and physical involvement. In this preparatory time, several things will take place. They are listed as being: laying out a specific outline of the first month's worship

services, administration plans need to be set, logistics of church growth need to be assumed, newcomer's class needs to be formed and ready, a discipleship program needs installation, Sunday school needs to be set, and the specifics on this are by age group, and the curriculum will be determined for them. Other impertinent things that don't seem important: establishing a postal address and a bank account, stationary/business cards, obtaining a bulk permit, and applying for tax exempt status. Three months after the first public worship service (which marks two years ), all of this must be completed and formalized. This is a good time for an annual budget meeting.

The annual budget will also be based upon other things that are related to mercy ministries, missions, evangelism outreach projects, and investments in future church plants will be made. The temptation I am sure will be trying to find a permanent location. This will be planned in about 5 years, the most important thing is to stick closely to our philosophy of ministry. To come up with one here would be difficult, but I will be able to at least let you in on the stresses that it will make. Our Philosophy of Ministry will be focused strictly to the deaf in this area, it will not ignore the other needs i.e. hearing people, other disabled people. But it's true intent is for the deaf in this area. Missions/Evangelism/Church Planting will be a focal point, and discipling Christians to the full maturity of Christ.

### **What is the focus of the Church regarding it's members?**

As a Church not only is our focus Missional and Evangelical, but also in the area of doctrinization. The term, "doctrinization" seems to be a derogatory term today and most people who don't know the true Christian agenda, which is God's

agenda, is to root people in His word. We are called to build our lives upon the rock of Christ, and by confessing we begin there. But a building is not described by its foundation. Much building needs to take place in order for that house to have a purpose outside of itself. The house doesn't exist for itself, but rather for the builder's use.

On the next page I have created a diagram that will visually show you the steps a new convert must take in order to become a mature and effective Christian. This diagram is in no way a "biblical model of growth." This is just a visual outline that keeps me accountable and others accountable for their growth in the Christian life. Many people start out differently, at different ages and at differing capacities, so maturity is not gauged by time, only by the self willingness of a Christian to be changed into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

This diagram is called "The hand of ministry within the Grip of Grace." Even though I think the diagram may speak for itself, I would like to spell it out. The hand is used specifically because it relates to the deaf community, to ASL. The hand is a vital tool in communication. The colors are Very Light Green/ Light Green/ Dark Green /Light Blue /Red /Gold. Very Light Green represent's humanity, which illustrates that creation is constantly being blessed by God, even the unregenerate. Light green represent's the growth of a Christian, a Christian never stops growing, but the extent to which it grows is entirely up to the individual who is growing, self sacrifice, surrendering oneself to Christ allows for much growth. Dark Green represents the Christian's responsibility, as more growth comes, so does more responsibility come. This is a positive and negative image. We are

indeed saved from sin's death and are being saved from it's power, yet we are held accountable with the life that we have in Christ and one day be judged for it. The light blue represents the opportunities a Christian has within the walls of the church and outside in the nearby/far away communities. Red represents the Grace of God. In all that we are and do, we do it all with the Grace of God's aide. It's not so much that God's work is undergirded by our own feeble attempts of strength, endurance, and wit. Rather that all of our strengths, and weaknesses are undergirded by the Grace of God, and it is He who performs in us His Will. Gold represents the reward to which we (Christians) will be given as a result of our works on earth. This is sometimes a hard concept for us but if we look in Revelation 22:12 it says that "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done." The works which we do are indeed rewards, how ever given and in what amounts are yet to be known, but in all of it's value it only exists for one reason only. Because God has even enabled us to perform these good works through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, all our works glorify Him. Revelation 19:7 "Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready." The gold streaking lines represents our rewards glorifying God. The basic reasoning for the visual effect is that this diagram is a two-dimensional picture of the sign "Glory" in ASL.

Now that the colors have been explained, the steps to which a Christian matures and the measure of responsibility/ opportunity will now be explained.

We who call ourselves "Christians" come to Christ. Theologically this may sound somewhat boastful, but coming to Christ is the pure response to God saving our very souls two thousand years ago. As we begin to traverse this world as a new Christian

we find ourselves wanting to be part of the Body of Christ in a visible way. Christianity is not a one way street, it doesn't serve our selfish motives, it's a two way street. As we live the Christian life our gifts and talents need to be put to use and they are more effectively put to use within the context of the Body of Christ. Membership class is the next step, and the Christian whether new or mature needs to become a member in the local Church. After that has take place and they are now members of that local Church, now they can be better held accountable. The next class is Maturity class which is just another name for Sunday School class/ small groups. These classes and small groups are opportunities in which the Christian can be actively engaged in the word of God, in the Body of Christ, and also be challenged individually to grow more into the image of Christ. Now at this point I do need to stress that spiritual growth in no means takes place by our strength alone, this is all done by the Grace of God. God is the alpha and omega, He is the perfecter of our faith. The next class is a Manager/ Leadership class. This represents more of an extracurricular thing that takes place. For a layman to become a Sunday school teacher, a deacon, and an elder, there must be a class or some sort of training that takes place for that individual to perform accordingly. The level of formality is certainly up to the senior Pastor/ and Denomination. The next and very last class is the mobilizing class. This is a class where one is involved heavily in the Church, but yet knows that God has desired for the to move permanently in missions/church planting, etc... .

The arrows represent the two way street that I talked about earlier. In every

aspect of the Christian life, one cannot grow receptively unless they have utilized the gifts that God has endowed upon them. The opportunity increases as we gain more maturity, and as we begin to become more involved in the Church our hands have opportunity to do various types of things for the Lord. None of which is strictly self-serving, and ultimately the service to which we provide to others becomes the very catalyst in our own spiritual change/growth. It's an amazing dynamic that no one can develop on paper.

This is the diagram which I have drawn, and by no means is it the picture of our lives in God's hands, it's only a picture that helps me understand a little more about what needs to take place for a church to be healthy.

Additional Info (Not Pertinent to the proposal) on the next three pages.

The next diagram which is a sketch was not part of my original proposal, but I felt it somewhat important to include what my goal is inside the sanctuary if the congregation reaches a proportional amount (at least 200 people). This picture is just an idea of the necessary means by which preaching can be done at one setting. The price may be too expensive, but ideas are just what they are and maybe one day God would bless them and make them a reality. The following page shows you the picture and the description of

what you see will be the page following that.

The picture/drawing is just showing mainly my concern when it comes to the preached word. In a hearing context, hearers need to hear clearly what is preached and in a large room containing 200 or more people a microphone system is much needed. In the deaf context, the same thing is needed, but instead of audio enhancement, video enhancement is needed. What I would also like is maybe a sub-woofer mini system embedded in the chairs/pew seats or in the flooring so that the rhythm of hymns/songs can be felt. There are other ideas but my main focus is the visual difficulty that comes when you have a larger audience. The only thing I can think of as an option other than having this, is having more than one service on Sunday morning and this may actually be the route we take if the congregation reaches more than 150 people, I am hopeful that it will.

## Bibliography Page

Flodin, Mickey. Signing Illustrated: The Complete Learning Guide. New York: Berkley

Publishing Group, 1994. (This is in reference to the front cover, the two signs:

“church” and “plant” can be founded on pages 172, and 113.)

Orlando & Vicinity “StreetFinder” by: Rand McNally. 1999.