

Why does the church exist?

For the Glory of God.

The church exists to glorify God by enjoying Him and by calling all peoples on earth to find their joy in Him.

- *Isaiah 48:11: "For my own sake, for my own sake, I will act; for how can my name be profaned? And my glory I will not give to another."*
- *Psalms 67:3-4: "Let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy..."*
- *1 Corinthians 10:31: "So then, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."*
- *The Westminster Catechism: "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever."*

For the Kingdom of God.

The church exists to make Christ's invisible kingdom visible – to extend the rule and reign of God into all aspects of life and culture.

- *Mark 1:14-15: "...Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'"*
- *Matthew 6:10: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."*
- *Richard Lovelace: "...Biblical spirituality is intimately connected with God's kingdom... the kingdom of God is the central theme which ties together everything, both in the Old Testament and in the New."*

For the Purposes of God.

The church exists to fully carry out the purposes of God on earth.

- *Matthew 16:18: "...Upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it."*
- *Ephesians 1:22-23: "And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."*
- *Matthew 28:18-20: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

Why should we plant new churches?

Because Church-Planting is the Essential Task in the Great Commission.

Church planting was the primary New Testament strategy for extending God's kingdom and fulfilling His missionary mandate. The book of Acts depicts the spread of a church-planting movement throughout Asia and Europe. Almost all of Paul's letters were written to new churches either he or someone else he knew had started. William Tinsley writes: "To remove the strategy of church planting from the New Testament would in effect remove all Scripture beyond the Gospels... The Apostles saw the expansion of new churches in the world as the pivotal cog through which the life transforming power of God would be transferred to the world."

If we would follow the biblical model, we must be involved in *establishing indigenous, culturally relevant, healthy, growing and reproducing churches*. The U.S. Center for Church Planting unpacks this statement as follows:

- *indigenous*: a self-supporting, self-governing, local church body within a particular people group, led by members of that people group.
- *culturally relevant*: a church that is able to contextualize the gospel to its culture without compromising biblical truth.
- *healthy*: fulfilling the biblical purposes of the church as given in Acts 2:42-47: worship/prayer, learning/edification, fellowship, outreach, and mercy/social concern.
- *growing/reproducing*: Healthy churches grow and reproduce, naturally. "Life is meant by God to reproduce life. Just as having children is meant by God to be a natural, normal part of marriage, so starting new churches should also be seen as a natural, normal part of a local church's ministry."¹

What is our vision for the current project?

This document proposes a partnership between Christ Community Church (CCC) and the Mid-America District of the Christian & Missionary Alliance (MAD) to plant **a new church (the Lincoln Project) in the Lincoln, Nebraska metro area.**

The **mission** of the Lincoln Project is *to turn spiritually lost people into gospel-centered lovers of Jesus who plant gospel-centered churches worldwide.*

Our vision:

- We dream of an authentic and welcoming community of people rich in the gospel of grace, offering not programs or

¹ Steven L. Childers, *Gospel-Centered Church Planting* curriculum v. 6.0 (2003), p. 24.

principles, but the transforming power of Jesus to their peers, their families, their city, and the culture-at-large.

- We dream of thousands of spiritually distant Lincoln residents coming to love Jesus and His church as church members naturally express the gospel in their relational circles.
- We dream of a church that exists for the city – a church known for love and good deeds to the glory of God.
- We dream of every church member engaged regularly in gospel-saturated, kingdom-advancing, Spirit-directed prayer.
- We dream of a church that spurs denominational renewal and reform within the CMA, inviting other churches to rediscover that “the gospel is for Christians, too.”
- We dream of hundreds of college students finding Christ and being mobilized for kingdom work through a strong, church-based college ministry.
- We dream of starting 5 healthy, gospel-centered churches in the college towns of our region (Columbia, Fort Collins, Lawrence, Iowa City, and Manhattan) within 10 years.
- We dream of sending hundreds of church members and college students to plant churches among unreached peoples worldwide, combining the best methods of church and parachurch to write the next chapter in Alliance world missions.

Why Lincoln?

Lincoln, Nebraska, is home to over 250,000 people. Between 1990 and 2000, while the population grew 18%, church attendance declined 1.3%. Demographics show that almost 55% of the population of Lincoln is “unclaimed;” that is, they are not affiliated with **any** religious group or congregation. Below are some characteristics of the average Lincoln resident:

- **Young:** 70% of the population is under 44 years of age
- **Well-Educated:** 90% of Lincoln adults have completed high school, and 33% have at least a Bachelor’s degree (US average is 24%)
- **Middle-Class:** Per-capita personal income among Lincoln residents in 2001 was \$30,872 (on par with the national average)
- **Influential:** Over 25% of Lincoln residents are employed in government or education (shaping the future of our nation)

If the average Lincoln-dweller wants to attend an evangelical church, a 15-20 minute drive is often required. No less than six conservative megachurches are located within a 2-mile radius of 84th Street and Pioneers Boulevard (on the eastern edge of Lincoln).

What
purposes
should drive
the local
church?

Meanwhile, the fast-growing southwest suburbs, the northern suburbs, and the downtown area (near the University campus) are left with very few gospel-preaching churches within arm's reach. One local pastor estimates that there are 212,000 people in the city who aren't being reached by already-established churches.

Apart from the obvious need, circumstances also make Lincoln a prime situation for a mother-daughter church plant. It is close enough that CCC and MAD can leverage their organizational resources to ensure a healthy and viable daughter church. But it is distant enough that the daughter congregation can be used of God to meet the unique needs of its own community.

Tim Keller has deduced five primary purposes of the church from Acts 2:42-47.² Every church must be committed to these purposes.

Worship/Prayer. The early church devoted themselves "to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42, ESV). This seems to be a reference to a liturgical worship pattern that included the Lord's Supper and a discipline of prayer. Wherever God's church has existed throughout the ages, worship and prayer have been integral marks of the community of saints.

Learning. The early church "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching." This indicates a high commitment to learning (*devoted*), a gathered community of learners (*themselves*), and a defined content to be learned (*the apostles' teaching*). The church today must do likewise. In gathered worship and in small groups, formally and informally, by message and by modeling, the church is to help people learn the way of discipleship to Jesus (Matt 28:20a).

Fellowship/Community. Keller points out that fellowship was something the early Christians "devoted themselves" to. It was not accidental, but intentional. It took effort. The Acts account also shows that there was daily (not just weekly) interaction among the saints, and that they were keenly aware of (and quickly responsive to) each other's needs. Community was not forced or contrived, but natural and organic. Small groups (house churches) facilitated the development and growth of community among the believers and allowed unbelievers to "look in" on the fellowship of the saints. Deep communal life is essential to a vital, Christ-honoring church.

Outreach/Evangelism. The early church's evangelism was markedly different from what many churches have come to view as "normal." There were daily conversions. There was outreach in both word and deed. The strong community among the saints and the fervor of their love and worship gave them favor among

² Tim Keller, 1998, as quoted by Steven L. Childers, *Gospel-Centered Church Planting* curriculum v. 6.0 (2003), p. 1-35.

unbelievers. It was not just that personal evangelism was taking place (though certainly that was the case), but also that the communal life of the believers was “on display,” to be seen and marveled at by unbelievers. There was no sacred/secular distinction; all of life was worship.

Mercy/Social Concern. The early disciples “were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need” (Acts 2:45). This ministry of compassion began among the Christians, but we know from history that the church also shared with those outside its community. The Roman Emperor Julian noted, “Nothing has so contributed to the progress of these Christians as their charity to strangers.” Today’s churches must reclaim mercy-based ministry as a key component of obedience to Jesus (James 1:27) and gospel impact (Matt. 5:16).

Though all of these purposes will be central to our ministry philosophy, the Lincoln Project will find its unique “niche” as a teaching-worship church.

What are our core values?

“Core values are the underlying motivations/convictions that drive behavior and ministry activity. They provide the foundation for formulating church goals... they reveal those things for which [the leadership] would ‘go to the mat.’”³ The Lincoln Project will be organized around six core values.

The Supremacy of God in All Things. God is jealous for His own glory (Isaiah 48:11). And the deepest longings of the human soul can only be satisfied when we delight in God’s supremacy and rest in His sovereign grace (Romans 8:28-39). We will purposefully, intentionally make God primary in all things, joyfully savoring His greatness in all we do. *Mantra: “God is the source of all life.”*

Gospel Transformation. The gospel changes everything. It is the “power of God” (Rom 1:16) not only for unbelievers, but for believers as well. It transforms not only individuals, but also churches, societies, and culture at large. We will proclaim the gospel not just as a gate we pass through one time, but as a path of ongoing renewal and repentance that we are to walk each day of our lives. The theme of gospel-centered renewal will permeate everything we do. *Mantra: “Death is necessary for life.”*

Outward-Face. Evangelism is not an event or a duty, but an ethos. We will build an evangelistic culture in three ways. First, we will actively cultivate authentic, redemptive relationships with nonbelievers, inviting them into the community of faith. Second, **all** of our ministries will have an “outward face,” welcoming skeptics

³ Steven L. Childers, *Gospel-Centered Church Planting* curriculum v. 6.0 (2003), p. 1-42.

and seekers into our midst. Third, we will adopt a process-oriented communication style, inviting questions and engaging in dialogue about what we believe and why. *Mantra: "Living things affect their environment."*

Organic Leadership. Though every church is both organism and organization, bureaucracy easily crowds out spiritual vitality. As Erwin McManus says, "Structure must always submit to Spirit." Our leadership will be communal rather than controlling, and we will relentlessly pursue the health and life of the church as an organism. Healthy churches will grow naturally; unhealthy ones never will. *Mantra: "Healthy organisms thrive."*

Movement Mindset. The kingdom of God is always advancing, never static. God's people are not called to seek comfort, but rather to align their purposes radically with His. The Lincoln Project will not be a "haven for the holy." Instead, we will emphasize leadership development and empowerment to release God's people into kingdom-advancing ministry. We will partner with other churches and ministries to see the gospel spread throughout Lincoln and beyond. And we will plant other churches with the same gospel-based values across our region and around the world. *Mantra: "Everything that has life reproduces itself."*

Historic Orthodoxy. In contrast to most modern churches, we will emphasize the *oldness* of the church, not its newness. Our preaching will be rooted in historic Protestant theology. Our worship will gladly incorporate creeds, confessions, hymns, and liturgies into a current worship style that will be both broadly attractive and deeply spiritual. Our small groups and discipleship endeavors will teach people to hear the voice of God through Scripture, communal life, and contemplative prayer. We will unashamedly stand in the rich stream of historic Protestant orthodoxy and allow it to soak into everything we do. *Mantra: "Life in the present comes from life in the past."*

What are our unique styles?

Pursuing the church's main purposes in light of our core values will lead to the following unique ministry styles.

Worship Style: historically informed, God-centered, and band-driven. In an age of crowd-pleasing (and often theologically shallow) worship, the Lincoln Project will be an anomaly. Our worship may end up being the most unique thing about us. We will combine the best of church history with the best of modern worship art, weaving ancient forms with current styles to create an experience of God's presence that is both attractive and substantive.

Learning Style: conceptual/relational. Sound expository preaching will be the norm for our times of gathered worship, but small groups will provide the key venue for relational, life-on-life learning and application. We will not ask, "Have we *taught* it?" but rather, "Have our people *learned* it?" Our core values of gospel transformation and outward-face will be expressed in our learning: we will walk together authentically, always inviting others to join us on the journey.

Community Style: cell/celebration model (small groups + corporate worship). In most living organisms, smaller, simple structures are organized together into a larger, more complex structure. Neither is "more important;" there is a symbiotic relationship between the smaller units and the larger organism. A healthy church should manifest the same dynamic. Our corporate worship service on Sunday mornings (the church *gathered*) will nurture the smaller units, providing worship, teaching, corporate prayer, the administration of sacraments, and vision casting. Our small groups (the church *extended*) will nurture the larger unit by facilitating shepherding, prayer, outreach, and service. Small groups will intentionally reflect our core values: they will be outposts of transformation and mission rather than stagnant pools of mere information and "fellowship."

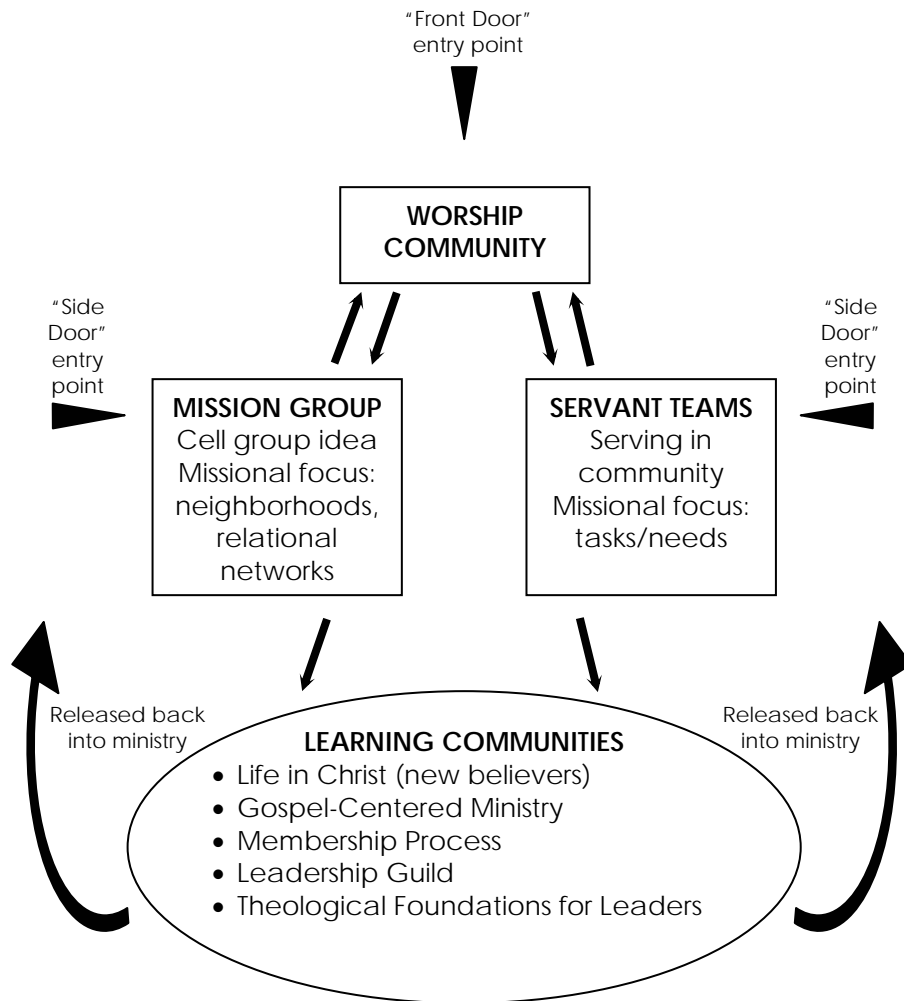
Outreach Style: front door/side door combination. We will leverage our strengths in preaching and worship to draw unbelievers into community through "front door" strategies. We expect to become known in the community for the strength of our teaching and the excellence of our worship. But front door outreach strategies only work if God's people have meaningful relationships with unbelievers. So every church member will be encouraged and resourced to minister within his/her circle of influence and engage in gospel dialogue. Through personal relationships, open small groups, and effective mercy ministry, we hope to provide plentiful "side door" entry points for unchurched people in Lincoln.

(Metaphor: the yin and the yang. This works for outreach, community, and learning – there are 2 components that must work together.)

Leadership Style: team-based and organic. We will create a church-wide culture of unity by pursuing deep unity at the leadership level. Pastors and elders will resolve conflict, make decisions as a team, serve each other, and share responsibility. Lay leaders will be empowered to build teams and to discern and unleash the giftedness of those in their care. Our church will be driven by sound purposes, motivated by compelling vision, and led through authentic relationships.

What will our ministry look like?

Flow Chart Diagram:



Discipleship Strategies

Membership Strategy: Connecting People to Christ and to His church

- Relationally-driven evangelism (process rather than crisis; people naturally reaching out to those in their sphere of influence)
- Mission Groups and Servant Teams (invitation into community: "belong before believing")
- Gospel-centered preaching and worship (allowing natural expression of the gospel in all our corporate gatherings)
- Missional church culture (creating a movement ethos which naturally draws people in and pushes them toward following Christ wholeheartedly)

- Membership Process (identification with and commitment to this local church and its mission)

Maturity Strategy: Building Christians into Servant-Leaders

- Life-on-life mentorship and accountability through Mission Groups/Servant Teams
- Immediate involvement in mission/service to develop gifts and create ownership (Erwin McManus: "mobilization equals assimilation")
- Life in Christ curriculum (basics of the Christian life; taught by a leader with gifts in evangelism and discernment)
- Gospel-Centered Ministry curriculum (theology of the gospel; basic patterns of repentance and renewal)

Ministry Strategy: Equipping Leaders for Effective Service

- Mission Groups and Servant Teams (learning by doing)
- Organic leadership development (growing our own leaders through intentional shepherding and investment)
- Leadership Guild (a community of leaders and emerging leaders learning from each other)
- Theological Foundations for Leaders curriculum (basic theology course to provide doctrinal grounding)

Mission Strategy: Multiplying Missionaries and Churches

- Constant prayer, vision-casting, challenge to create ownership of missions (core value of movement will be important here)
- Leadership development process will identify and raise up laborers for church-planting
- Seminary partnerships
- Organic and relationally-driven church-planting approach (trusting God to raise up the right people; maximizing relationship so people always feel personally connected with missionaries/planters)

NOTE: This plan assumes a September 2005 public launch

Phase 1 – Preliminary (February – June 2004)

- Secure CCC elder board approval (Feb 04)

- Secure elder approval of seed money for preliminary work (Mar 04)
- Begin search for replacement college pastor (immediately; to be secured by June 04)
- Scale back Bob's current preaching responsibilities (goal: no more than one sermon a month after April 04; phased out totally by Oct 04)
- Continue research and networking with pastors and community leaders in Lincoln (goal: 2 days per month spent in Lincoln during spring 04)
- Recruit a worship leader, to be trained within the current CCC/AXXESS context until pre-launch (by Apr 04)
- Finalize coaching, accountability, and financial support relationships with CCC and MAD (by May 04)
- Propose a preliminary budget in consultation with Ian Vickers (CCC) and Randy Burg (MAD) and determine sources and amounts of funding (by May 04)
- Design an internal communication and publicity plan to create ownership within the mother church (propose to coaches by May 04)

Phase 2 – Conception (July – December 2004)

- Recruit 100 intercessors total – 70 to pray weekly, 25 to pray daily, 5 to pray intimately and constantly (by 1 July 04)
- Finalize planting team (4 people), with appropriate assessment, approvals, and financial compensation (by 1 July 04)
- Begin to enlist core group from CCC (goal: 10 committed by July 04; 30 committed by Oct 04)
- Begin weekly prayer meetings with planting team, possible core group members, and intercessors (by Aug 04)
- Ask CCC members for contacts in Lincoln (Goal: 200 "live" contacts for either evangelism/networking (unbelievers) or possible core group membership (believers))
- Conduct 3-day planting team (staff) retreat for prayer, vision, and bonding (Aug 04)
- Implement internal communication/publicity plan at CCC ("teasers" beginning May 04; major communication to correspond with Fall 04 school year and 40 Days of Purpose campaign)
- Design and print external publicity piece (by Aug 04)

- 100% of necessary 3-year funding committed (by Nov 04)
- Communication process (newsletter, website, blog, etc) with donors and intercessors is in place and functional (by Oct 04)
- Go live with promotional website (by Aug 04; must be able to flex into full-service website as the plant progresses)
- Preliminary financial/legal matters addressed - nonprofit status, bank accounts, insurance, bulk mail permits, etc (goal: clear timeline for all necessary admin matters by Sep 04)
- Exact plant location in Lincoln decided, including list of possible worship venues (by Sep 04)
- Office space in Lincoln secured (by Nov 04)
- Continue research/networking (goal: 2 days/week in Lincoln during Fall 2004)

Phase 3 – Pre-Natal (January – June 2005)

- Move to Lincoln and settle in (all planting team members reside in Lincoln by 1 Jan 05)
- Core group finalized and growing (goal: 50 attending private worship by Mar 05)
- Weekly core group gatherings for worship/prayer/vision (begin Jan 05)
- Prototype Mission Group begins meeting in Jan 05 to train mission group leaders (goal: 8 mission group leaders and 8 apprentices trained by Mar 05)
- “Fishing pool” events conducted – coffeehouse gathering, live music outreach, film discussion groups, etc (spring 05)
- Monthly informational meetings held in Feb, Mar, Apr 2005; Preview Service held in May
- 5 small groups made up of core group members, new converts, and interested nonbelievers are active (by Apr 05)
- Core group has identified three specific areas of need in the community that our church can uniquely meet; servant team leaders have been raised up to address those needs (by Apr 05)
- Network, network, network

Phase 4 – Birth (July 2005 – October 2005)

- Bulk mailing to target group (Aug 05)
- Major July 4th outreach

- Continued “fishing pool” events and follow-up (summer 05)
- Continued relational networking and inviting by core team
- On-campus presence established – official student organization at U. of Nebraska (by July 05)
- Pre-launch publicity blitz in the city and on campus (Aug 05)
- Trained team leaders (launch team) in place for effective launch (facility, setup, worship, children’s, connection/follow-up, group leaders, servant teams, etc)
- 3 servant teams are operative, meeting needs in the city BEFORE public launch (Aug 05)
- Procedure for immediate assimilation and growth is in place – adequate mission group leaders, servant teams, seeker groups, membership process, etc (by Sep 05)
- Administrative processes in place for effective launch (software, bookkeeping, attendance, mailings, web site, etc)
- 3 months of worship services planned and prepared (by Aug 05)
- Public launch Sep 05 (assumes following launch criteria):
 - 20 servant-leaders committed to launch team
 - Regular experience of people being converted to Christ; i.e. new converts are a norm and not an exception
 - Best possible facilities for worship
 - 3 servant teams already active in city; good church-city partnerships are in motion
 - At least 50 adults in core group, committing a total of at least \$10,000 per month in financial support

Phase 5 – Development (October – December 2005)

- Begin selection and training of potential elders
- Focus heavily on leadership development to ensure reproduction is taking place (goal: 6 new mission groups started between launch date and Christmas 05)
- Continue outreach to community (goal: 3 seeker small groups started between launch date and Christmas 05)
- Hammer on core values and pay close attention to the developing ethos – keep the DNA healthy!

Who (and What) Will it Take?

- Pay attention to gaps; decide which ministry structures need to be strengthened in order to take the next step of church health and growth
- Begin to dream and plan for our first church plant

Since we are committed to a team-based church plant, it is imperative that we recruit the right team members. The ideal strategy is to find “utility players:” ministers who have a particular passion and gifting, but can competently fill diverse roles and lead in many different contexts as the situation demands. Below is a proposed scenario for a church planting team.

Non-Negotiable Traits for All Staff Team Members

- Passionate love for Jesus
- Visionary, compelling leaders who don’t just talk leadership, but have demonstrated that they can move people to follow
- Saturated in and transformed by the gospel of grace; leaders who don’t just know the words of the gospel, but hear its music and live its realities
- Flexible and adaptable; can live with the ambiguity and messiness of a new venture
- Risk-taking personality; not afraid to try new things for the sake of expanding God’s kingdom
- Committed to gospel-centered relationships with others; willing to live in transparent community (not “lone rangers”)

Position 1: Movement Architect/Lead Pastor

- As movement architect, he leads the church planting team and is the point-person for vision casting, fundraising, strategic planning, and execution. He is an ethos-shaper who must define reality and shape church culture; he must create “movement DNA” which reflects the unique core values and ministry philosophy outlined above.
- As lead pastor, he guides the church theologically and organizationally: preaching, setting the theological tone, leading staff, training lay people, modeling the core values, and gathering the right people around him to accomplish the mission.
- Spiritual Gifts: leadership, teaching, prophecy
- Proposed Person: Bob Thune Jr.

Position 2: Recruiter/Leadership Mobilizer

- As recruiter, he is a high-energy networker, attracting people to the ministry and motivating others to do likewise. He creates a sense of ownership and generates enthusiasm for the mission, core values and purposes of the church. Much of his recruiting and networking will be among unchurched people.
- As leadership developer, he is always thinking about the next leadership challenge and who he will mobilize to meet it. He is relentlessly committed to moving people through a process of spiritual formation and leadership development.
- Spiritual Gifts: leadership, evangelism, faith
- Proposed Person: Will Walker

Position 3: Organizer/Manager/Evangelist

- As organizer/manager, he is always thinking “systems.” He is the point person for financial oversight, business management, ministry systems, and people-flow; his goal is to remove all hindrances to effective and efficient ministry.
- As evangelist, he leads the church in relating to unchurched people. His life is missional, and he spurs the rest of the leaders toward intentional and passionate evangelism. He leads the church in thinking creatively about how to effectively relate to the culture.
- Spiritual Gifts: leadership, administration, evangelism
- Potentially an Intern position with the option to become staff as the church grows and becomes independent
- Proposed Person: Gavin Johnson

Position 4: Worship Leader

- As worship leader, he is not just a musician, but a God-entranced leader with a passion for helping people delight in God’s glory. He is committed to excellence and to the worship values outlined above. He must demonstrate the ability to gather excellent musicians around him and build them into a community of God-centered worshippers.
- Spiritual Gifts: leadership, teaching
- Intern or part-time position with option to become full-time staff as the church grows and becomes independent
- Proposed Person: ??

Additional Volunteer positions which must be filled before public launch:

- Children’s Ministry Leader/Recruiter
- Technical Arts/Media Team Leader
- Guest Relations Team Leader
- Mobilization/Assimilation Team Leader
- Administrative Assistant

Budgetary Requests

- CCC employs 2 church planters from July-Dec of 2004 calendar year so they can raise personal financial support for 2005-06-07 (approx. cost to CCC: \$51,000 + benefits)
- CCC provides \$10,000 in seed money immediately (taken from GFR and placed under oversight of Bridge Council/CP Team) to move ahead with preliminary work on the Lincoln initiative
- CCC takes offering during 40 Days of Purpose to begin funding startup costs (goal: \$20,000)
- CCC makes a year-end gift to fund the rest of the startup costs and 75% of year 1 budget (\$130,000)
- CCC allows planters to remain on church’s benefit system during 2005 (but cost is covered out of funds raised)
- Total CCC investment: approx. \$211,000

Budget and Attendance Goals for Lincoln Project

Remember: we will launch with a core group of 50 people who have committed at least \$120,000 per year for 2 years.

Date	Avg. Attend.	Total Giving (for year)
Dec 31 2005	200	\$100k (core group)
Dec 31 2006	300	\$250k (\$120k core group + 130k general offerings)
Dec 31 2007	400	\$400k (general offerings)
Plant becomes self-governed and self-funded in 2008		