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### The Deaf Can Hear the Word of God

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CONCORDIA SEMINARY  
SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI

THE DEAF CAN HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

A MAJOR APPLIED PROJECT SUBMITTED TO  
THE DEPARTMENT OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY STUDIES  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY  
REV. JOHN P. REINKE

SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI  
March 27, 2015

THE DEAF CAN HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

Rev. John P. Reinke

March 27, 2015

Concordia Seminary  
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5/20/2015  
DATE

DEDICATION TO:

TO GOD – THE ONLY SOURCE OF LIFE – THANK YOU!

TO MY WIFE DACIA, THANK YOU FOR BEING MY HELPMATE, SUPPORT, CO  
WORKER, AND JOY OF MY LIFE!!

TO MY BOYS, JOSHUA AND JOSEPH, THANK YOU FOR COMING ON THIS  
JOURNEY WITH ME.

TO ALL THE DEAF PEOPLE: WE HAVE SHARED LIFE TOGETHER IN HIS WORD  
FOR 30 YEARS. THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH ME

TO ALL MY MENTORS WHO HAVE ENCOURAGED ME

TO MY CO-WORKERS IN DEAF MINISTRY

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# CHAPTER 1

## THE PROJECT IN THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

### **The Problem**

The saddest part of doing my Major Applied Project (MAP) is that most of my Deaf members will never read my MAP, or any other written religious materials, in the format presented to you. The problem is in the words. The vocabulary we use, the sentence structure we use, and the way we view words, are very different for a Deaf person. Isaiah 29:18 promises. “In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book.”<sup>1</sup> This is a wonderful promise of fulfillment of the coming Messiah! Unfortunately this is not yet true; not only can Deaf people not hear the book, they cannot even read the book!

This makes the work of Deaf Ministry very challenging and is hard for people to understand. People often ask, how is this possible, I thought Deaf people would love to read? The problem is words. In English we want to convey thoughts, ideas, concepts, and pictures in our minds through the use of words. The problem for deaf people is they get stuck on the words and often cannot see the meaning. This became very clear as a Deaf student at the seminary was watching a signed service and said “All I get are words,” there were no concepts, no mental pictures, no ideas conveyed, only words.

In the book, “Unlocking the Curriculum: Principles for Achieving Access in Deaf Education” the authors stress the deficiencies in reading and writing that continue to persist after many years of education.

In spite of several decades of concentrated efforts to improve the figures, the average reading level of deaf high school graduates remains at roughly the third or fourth

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<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. Wheaton, IL: Standard Bible Society, 2001. This will be used for the remainder of the paper.



grade equivalent, and average performance on mathematics computation is below the seventh grade equivalent.<sup>2</sup>

If the average is a third grade reading level, this make Scripture, liturgy, and many of our printed resources inaccessible for a majority of Deaf people. How can you explain this dilemma?

The same way it is difficult to explain what it means to be deaf, until you experience it, it is also difficult to explain why this is true. One of the examples used is to ask you to read, “Bilowgii waxaa jiray Ereyga.”<sup>3</sup> You cannot pronounce it, only look at the letters and words. Can you understand what it says? This is how a majority of Deaf people view English. You can look at and spell the word, but it means nothing as there is no picture or concept associated with the word. Many of our words in English are not iconic, they have no picture. They have an idea, but no definite visual graphic that will portray that idea. Imagine if every seventh word in a book was something like “Bilowgii,” would you continue reading?

Another major challenge for reaching Deaf people with the Gospel is use of the “passive” voice. We often use the passive voice when we are writing in English. The problem for Deaf people is that sign language is all “active.” There is no consensus of a way to sign the passive voice. When a deaf person reads “on the night in which He was betrayed” it comes out as “night He (Jesus) betrayed (someone).” When the Words of Institution are signed during the Lord’s Supper in a Deaf Congregation it must be changed to sign “night Judas betrayed Jesus.” You must show who is the actor and what they are doing in an active

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<sup>2</sup> Johnson, Robert E., Scott K. Liddell, and Carol J. Erting *Unlocking the Curriculum: Principles for Achieving Access in Deaf Education* Working Paper 89-3. Gallaudet Research Inst., Washington, DC. 1989

<sup>3</sup> *John 1:1a Somali Bible (SOM)* © 1979, 2008 Society for International Ministries-Kenya, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=john+1%3A1&version=SOM>

sense. The next time you are reading notice how many times the passive voice is used in the printed word. For deaf people all of these “passive” phrases must become “active” phrases.

In my experience in Deaf Ministry, beginning in the 1980’s the LCMS estimated that 3% of all Deaf people attended any Christian worship. Using the statistics available from the U.S. Census Bureau, they looked at the numbers in a specific area, then they contacted those local congregations having a Deaf Ministry. From compiling these numbers they were able to estimate the number of Deaf people attending a Christian church. We are not doing better today. By all estimates we continue to see the number that at least 97% of Deaf people are not members of any Christian church. If these numbers are true, a majority of deaf people are not saved.

A large obstacle to our deaf members and leaders being able to study God’s Word on their own is the availability of resources in a format they can readily understand. Because Bible resources, Commentaries and Doctrinal materials, and Bible studies are written in English, deaf people who use English as a second language have difficulty accessing these materials. They are confined to maybe reading the Bible Stories, but are excluded from the in-depth understanding of how God is working. What causes this, what is the problem?

Judie Haynes gives us insight into this area on the website [http://www.everythingsl.net/inservices/bics\\_calp.php](http://www.everythingsl.net/inservices/bics_calp.php) when she explains the different between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP):

Classroom teachers need to understand the difference between social language and academic language acquisition. Here is a simple description of BICS and CALP as theorized by Jim Cummins.

### **Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills**

Experts such as Jim Cummins differentiate between social and academic language acquisition. Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) are language skills needed in social situations. It is the day-to-day language needed to interact socially with other people. English language learners (ELLs) employ BIC skills when they are on the playground, in the lunch room, on the school bus, at parties, playing sports and talking on the telephone. Social interactions are usually context embedded. They occur in a meaningful social context. They are not very demanding cognitively. The language required is not specialized. These language skills usually develop within six months to two years after arrival in the U.S.

Problems arise when teachers and administrators think that a child is proficient in a language when they demonstrate good social English.

### **Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency**

CALP refers to formal academic learning. This includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing about subject area content material. This level of language learning is essential for students to succeed in school. Students need time and support to become proficient in academic areas. This usually takes from five to seven years. Recent research (Thomas & Collier, 1995) has shown that if a child has no prior schooling or has no support in native language development, it may take seven to ten years for ELLs to catch up to their peers.

Academic language acquisition isn't just the understanding of content area vocabulary. It includes skills such as comparing, classifying, synthesizing, evaluating, and inferring. Academic language tasks are context reduced. Information is read from a textbook or presented by the teacher. As a student gets older the context of academic tasks becomes more and more reduced.

The language also becomes more cognitively demanding. New ideas, concepts and language are presented to the students at the same time.

People see Deaf students interacting with others, the BICS, but that does not mean they have proficiency in CALP.

We need to have materials that are accessible! This significant lack of written religious resources in an accessible language format is perpetuated and exacerbated by the lack of a set of rubrics to guide those who are adapting these materials.

## **The Purpose of the Project**

A rubric is defined as “a well-established custom or tradition that provides rules for conduct.” We have people who have adapted and signed materials. We have others who have written their own materials. We have others who are translating Bibles and religious materials in other languages. But deaf people have no access to the mountain of material that is available to the average lay person or Pastor in doing Biblical research and study. Even basic materials such as Luther’s Small Catechism were not available for many years, but have now been adapted. (Appendix I) If we are to begin adapting the available materials in a cohesive manner, we need to have a shared set of rubrics as a guide.

The purpose of my MAP is to develop a set of rubrics that will be available to everyone working in the area of adapting materials for Deaf people. This set of rubrics will be used to guide the training of people wanting to work in the adaptation process, providing structure and reliability to the process. These rubrics will also bring validity to the adaptation of the religious materials as we will have an objective tool to measure the quality to the adapted materials.

Proclaiming the Word of God is the overall theme that unites us in the hearing world, but it is often what divides us from Deaf people. How does this division happen in the church? How are Deaf people inadvertently excluded from growing in their faith? How does this MAP address these issues for Deaf Ministry?

In the coming chapters we will see how the written word has been a great hindrance to the faith of Deaf people. Specifically we will explore how verses such as Romans 10:17, a popular verse used in many contexts to inspire people to witness for Christ, became a

stumbling block for reaching Deaf people with the Gospel. How did the early church deal with these issues of Deaf people and how is this continued today.

We will delve into the theological implications of being excluded from the Logos, cut off from the ability to grow in faith, and not even be able to join with “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” Is this God’s plan? Where do Deaf people fit into God’s plan for salvation? How does this influence what we are doing in Deaf Ministry and provide guidance for this MAP?

We will also examine how this lack of language cuts Deaf people off from people around them. We will explore how cultures through history have viewed Deaf people. Are Deaf people included in any way in society? How have others communicated with Deaf people either by written or signed formats? Where are we in our present society and how can this MAP address the issues of today’s world?

The adapting of religious materials in printed form is not new, it has been conducted for many centuries in and for hearing cultures. The adapting of religious materials for use with Deaf people has been done infrequently and never on a large scale. The process of research for the MAP will be to reach out, not only to workers in adapting in deaf context, but also to those working in the hearing context.

The first outcome of this MAP is to gather and examine the rubrics that have been used in adapting the Deaf Institute of Theology materials currently used in Deaf Ministry. These rubrics will then be compiled with rubrics recommended from other workers currently serving in Deaf Ministry. Rubrics will also be gathered from other groups working in adapting English as a second language materials and non-Lutheran groups adapting religious materials for Deaf people.

By examining these various rubrics we can learn common elements in the adapting of materials for Deaf people. By looking at the past experiences, including recommendations from people currently working in the field, and comparing these with English as a second language rubrics, we can synthesize a set of rubrics. The final goal is to use these rubrics to improve the process of adaptation. With a common set of rubrics as the outcome, the goal is to establish these rubrics as a guideline for adapting religious materials for Deaf people on a broader scale.

### **The Process**

The research tools will be using a combination of a questionnaire and interviews for those who have adapted materials or are in the process now of adapting materials. The initial questionnaire will ask for a list of rubrics the authors have used in adapting their materials. The second questionnaire will list all of the rubrics gathered and ask them to rate the gathered rubrics using the Likert scale of 1 to 5. The number 5 ranking on the scale will be the highest rating and number 1 being the lowest. The results of this ranking will then be used to tabulate a final list of rubrics in the order of priority as seen by those participating in the research.

The initial permission requests and questionnaires will all be done electronically. Each response will be archived in anonymous folders and kept separate for each individual or group submitting their rubrics. Numerical identification will be added for each questionnaire received back to keep anonymity. The data will be collected and saved on a laptop with the numerical identification. No connection to the names of the people and the numerical identification will be saved with the forms. The data will be collected through email

correspondence and will be retained until passing the Doctor of Ministry oral exam, at which time the numerically identified data will remain but the emails deleted.

The final evaluation will be a field test on the effective use of these gathered rubrics. This final evaluation will include those in Deaf Ministry who responded and participated in the research. They will each be sent a prioritized list of the rubrics and asked to adapt a specific section of a commentary. These adaptations will then be compared and contrasted to test the effectiveness of the prioritized rubrics in creating a uniform adaptation process. A possible component would be to add a final survey asking the participants their satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the use of the rubrics. This would also include if they would, or would not, recommend using these rubrics in future adaptations.

Several groups who work in adapting materials, not specifically for Deaf people, will also be asked if they are willing to share their rubrics of adaptation. One of the groups will be Northwestern Publishing House. They have an arm of their publishing company that adapts their religious materials for use by English as second language users. A second group will be the Wycliffe Easy English Project. They have a simplified English commentary they have created. During the research phase other possible sources of rubrics will be explored and included. The questionnaire will be a simple request for a copy of their rubrics. These will be incorporated into the list of rubrics in adapting written religious materials for Deaf people.

The adding of the English as second language and simplified English will add validity to the rubrics from those rubrics collected from workers in Deaf Ministry. We will be able to see how the different rubrics compare and contrast. This may also produce rubrics that we are unaware of and expand our base of usable rubrics.

The timeline for the questionnaires to be sent, rubrics gathered, and test phase accomplished is from September 2014 to January 2015. The parameter of the first group of Deaf workers includes those individuals involved in adapting the materials we use for the Deaf Institute of Theology. The second group of Deaf workers added are those workers in Deaf Ministry who are actively involved in adapting religious materials for Deaf people. The first email will ask their willingness to participate in this process and permission release. Email surveys will then be sent to all who responded affirmatively.

Emails will be sent to contacts at Northwestern Publishing House asking permission to work with their English as a Second Language Department. The goals and purpose of this Doctor of Ministry MAP will be explained, a request made for their assistance, and permission requested to use the rubrics they have developed in adapting their materials. The same process will be used to contact Wycliffe Bible Translators and those working with their Easy English Commentary.

Responses from these various groups will then be compiled into a complete list of rubrics. A second series of emails will then share this compiled list of rubrics with each of the Deaf workers from the first group of participants. The second email will ask the participants to rate each rubric using the Likert scale to 1 to 5. (5 being a most important rubric and 1 being a least important rubric) These responses would then lead to a final list of prioritized rubrics used to adapt written religious materials for Deaf people.

All of the participants in the first and second group of participants are fellow workers in Deaf Ministry with various degrees of relationships. We know of each other because of our work together in Deaf Ministry in the LCMS. Northwestern Publishing House, Wycliffe, and other possible sources will be contacts made with minimal, if any, previous association.



One of the key outcomes of working together on this project will be to facilitate the participants in evaluating the rubrics they have been using to adapt materials for Deaf Ministry. By working together, and incorporating rubrics from various participants, the results will be to help all of them better understand the process used to adapt materials for Deaf Ministry. With their cooperation we will be able to incorporate these rubrics into their continued adaptation, and as a whole, publish better quality materials that are accessible to the whole Deaf community. Developing these rubrics will strengthen our adaptation process and add validity to the work of adapting materials for Deaf people. Establishing these rubrics and setting up a common system will hopefully also motivate more people to join in adapting a wider range of religious materials for Deaf people.

One of the potential risks to participants may be in the sharing of their recommendations. As we have knowledge of one another, a low value of someone's recommended rubrics may cause a participant to feel less valued. They may feel that others see their work as less important because of a low Likert scale rating received from the group.

The ultimate purpose for this research study is the development of recommended rubrics used for adapting religious materials for Deaf people. After these rubrics are established and tested, the good that results will be the use of these principles to establish an ongoing adaptation of religious materials for Deaf people. The materials will include everything from Bible Studies, to commentaries, to works of Doctrine (e.g. Pieper, Walther, etc...), and other relevant religious materials (Luther's' Works).

The final compiled list of rubrics will be shared with other workers involved in Deaf Ministry. By sharing the rubrics with other workers the hope is that they will have confidence in the materials adapted. These workers will then feel comfortable using these

resources to train their people. Not only will these rubrics be shared with Deaf workers around the U.S., they will also be shared with Deaf workers from other countries. These rubrics may also then be used as they work to adapt materials for Deaf people in their local language.

One next step will be to develop a training process to use these rubrics in the adaptation process. Everyone asked to work on an adaptation team will be trained in utilizing these rubrics to guide their adaptations. This training program will be developed and made available in an on-line format. Using an on-line format will make this training accessible to Deaf workers around the world. No matter where they live they will be able to improve their process for adapting materials.

The use of these rubrics will make great headways into making all religious materials able to be “heard” by Deaf people. They will be able to read and understand the Word of God in a format that is appropriate and beneficial for their faith. I pray this will make God’s Word accessible to the 97% of Deaf people who do not believe in Jesus and equip Deaf Christians to share their faith in a way other Deaf people can understand. I am praying more of (all of) the 97% will “hear” the word of God, believe in Jesus, and be with us in Heaven!

Isaiah says, “All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.” We will not last, but the Word of God remains forever. In the coming chapters we will see the effects of the Word of God, and the words of man, have on Deaf people and their faith.

Chapter Two will bring us to the *Missio Dei* and its Biblical foundations. This chapter will shape our understanding of God’s view of Deaf people and His use of Words to

convey His love for all people. From these words it will also be shown how God's Word is sometimes used as a stumbling block to hinder Deaf Ministry. Spoken and written English Words are used to stifle the faith of Deaf people. Our Lutheran Confessions and the writings of Martin Luther will also be mined to bring in relevant observations of our early confessors and their view of Deafness and Deaf people.

Chapter Three will narrow our examination to the History of Deaf People, specifically discovering the influence that the words of others sometimes have on the cultural view of Deaf people. We will also consider the impact these words have in influencing inclusion or exclusion in society. One of the important questions is "How is communication with words evaluated by the society at large?" Then we can explore the questions of "where do Deaf people fit in society?" The history of adapting materials for Deaf people will be perused to pull out relevant examples of previous attempts to adapt materials. This will lead us to establishing the need for rubrics as they have been used in the secular world. There are many examples of rubrics used to adapt policy and procedure manuals, protocols, OSHA regulations, etc... This historical context will give us guidance in understanding deafness in today's world. We will be able to gain understanding of how the deaf are viewed in the world and glean insights from adaptation done for Deaf people from outside of the religious realm.

Chapter Four will guide the design, research, and report phase. The parameters and design of the initial questionnaires will be established. The process of sending and receiving information will be cataloged--and the gathering of data will begin! The data will then be coded and formatted in a way to give the best eye appeal, an essential element for working with Deaf people. This process will be chronologically documented.

Chapter Five will report on the data we have gathered. This will focus on the rubrics collected from the different groups, but will not be limited to these rubrics. It will also be interesting to see which individuals and what groups are willing to participate. There have been many changes in Deaf Ministry in the LCMS through the past decade. There has also been a huge impact because of continually changing technology. One possible side evaluation will be in examining the interaction that occurs between individuals in the process of gathering the rubrics. This may be helpful in highlighting strengths and weaknesses in our communication with each other.

Chapter Five will also give us the “so what” answers and discussion. How will these rubrics apply to Deaf Ministry on a local level? From the resulting feedback, will these rubrics work in a broader context? I am also curious to see how this interaction affects me and my views of adapting materials. How will this study change how I view Deaf Ministry? How will this process influence my views of people? What will I learn from this interaction that will benefit our communication with each other as we seek to continue adapting religious materials for Deaf people?

Going through the process of research and writing I have become keenly aware of my own biases. The way I write, my sentence structure, the vocabulary I use, and my choices are all influenced by my experiences in Deaf Ministry. I constantly strive to make everything accessible for my Deaf members. While this paper is produced for the Doctrinal level classes, many of my choices have made me very conscious of the struggle to use the most appropriate language for the situation.

During this process of preparing for the research and preparing the surveys, I have been continually contemplating my own input to these questions and ratings. After working

in Deaf Ministry for over 25 years I do have an idea of rubrics in my own mind. I am wondering how my ideas for rubrics will compare with what others see as important rubrics? I have wondered if all of my favorite priorities will also be included in those submitted.

During many years of ministry together, I have also seen a variety of emphases that other Deaf pastors and workers have given to their translation and adaptation work. We often agree in general on many issues of Deaf Ministry. But there seems to also be a sense of individuality among Deaf workers that I have always attributed to distance apart and minimal communication. I am pondering the outcomes in terms of broad cooperation among those working in Deaf Ministry: how willing will we be to work together?

Personally it is also a challenge for me to consider when I put this into the public sphere, will others see it as a worthwhile project? Will they see it as a challenge to the validity of their work and not be willing to be involved? Or maybe they will see this as just another “nut job” with no real applicable value.

As I worked to prepare this project I also evaluated the potential responses of each participant. Will they actually be able to compile a list of rubrics they use? This is not something I even considered until beginning my Doctor of Missiology studies; I had never compiled a list of rubrics for the materials I had previously adapted.

In all my years of ministry I have adapted materials many times. I have a rough idea. I know what I do. But I have never sat down and specifically tried to list out the principles, and the rubrics I use for adapting materials. I have never formulated it so that others can see what I do and the way I do it. Would this be the same for the participants in my MAP?

Will they be able to share their ideas in a brief format, or will it take many pages to explain what they do? Will each of them be willing to share their work or will they see it as proprietary and not want to share it with others?

I am also looking forward to recommendations and ideas from various sources concerning where we go from here. My prayer is for God's blessing on the interaction that occurs during the gathering of theses rubrics and in developing guidelines for the use of these rubrics. I pray this will provide a foundation for the continued adapting of written materials. For example: within 6 months after completing the research phase, can we choose a set of materials and a time table for adapting them? Can we recruit more individuals and groups to become involved in this process? Can we offer an accessible platform for Deaf people to "hear" the Word of God?

I am also looking forward to using these rubrics and the materials developed as we travel overseas. There is a great need among Deaf people around the world to understand who Jesus is and grow in faith. I am also eager to test and see how materials developed from these rubrics will work with hearing people in an English as second language format. I see a great need for accessible religious materials in the training of English as second language workers in ministry. In my research for materials we can use in Deaf Ministry, I have found very few advanced materials available in an English as Second language format. Will these materials also be accessible and beneficial for them?

I said in the beginning that "most of my Deaf members will never read my MAP." While that is true we have many Deacons, Deaconesses, Directors of Christian Education, and Lay Leaders who are very skilled in leading God's people. But we do not have resources (Bible Study series, commentaries, doctrinal resources, etc.) for them to continue in their

study and training. They have finished all of the prepared materials, now what? This MAP is a direct result of my work with and training of our Deaf leaders. The materials developed from these rubrics will help them continue to grow in knowledge and understanding of God's Word.

Deaf people CAN become leaders, teachers, Pastors, etc... They have a beautiful language that is rich in expressions, but signing is not English. The rubrics developed in this MAP will assist us in adapting printed materials for a Deaf person to be able to "hear" God's Word in the printed format. Helping Deaf people to convey God's Word in a way that opens the "eyes of the heart" for their Deaf friends and family members to see God working in their lives.

I pray that because of and through the application of rubrics developed during this MAP, a majority of my Deaf members will have a broader range of written religious materials to study, learn, and grow together in faith. In a format that is accessible for them, Deaf people will be able to "hear" God's Word with their eyes

The materials adapted through the use of these rubrics will allow us the potential to expand Deaf Ministry. By adapting religious resources, we can prepare our people to reach the 97% of Deaf people who do not attend any Christian church. They will no longer be cut off from the Word of God. I pray we can adapt Isaiah's promise to read "In that day the deaf shall "see read/understand" the words of the book."

I am looking forward to the final day when Christ comes and everyone will see the fulfillment of Isaiah's promise physically, "In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book." Because of our work in adapting written religious materials, more Deaf people will

believe in Jesus. I am looking forward to the day when all Deaf people with faith will be able to hear the voice of their Lord and Savior Jesus saying, “Welcome Home.”



## CHAPTER 2

### THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF DEAF PEOPLE AND GOD'S MISSIO DEI

“Deaf people cannot go to Heaven, that is what the Bible says!” This may sound ridiculous to our ears, but that is exactly what some people think and have believed since the writing of the New Testament. We are talking about Romans 10:14-17, specifically verse 17. This is a very popular verse used in many areas of the church to promote sending people to reach the lost. The problem is it has also been used in a negative way to hinder the spread of the Gospel:

14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

16 But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” 17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

It is very clear, “Faith comes from hearing the message!” If “faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ” then how are Deaf people to become saved? This verse has had a profound impact on the view of deaf people and faith,

“The most damaging blow to deaf people in the New Testament, however, is in a single sentence of Paul’s epistle to the Romans (chapter 10, verse 17); “so then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Whatever Paul may have meant by this, people who interpreted the Bible literally believed that it indicated that those who are deaf are denied the possibility of faith. Without faith, they cannot be Christians and cannot be saved.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Van Cleve, John Vickry and Crouch, Barry A., A Place of Their Own; Creating the Deaf Community in America, Gallaudet University Press, Washington D.C. page 4

The struggle to understand the meaning and application of this verse continues today. As I was working on this paper I received a post on Facebook from a Deaf Pastor asking about Romans 10:17 and asking what it means that “faith comes from hearing the message?”<sup>5</sup> Why is this happening? Why are people struggling with this verse?

The Greek word used for hearing is *Ακοη*. It is a genitive singular feminine noun meaning: hearing (the act, the sense or the thing heard) -- audience, ear, fame, which ye heard, hearing, preached, report, rumor. “This is a common word in every period of secular Greek, and also in the LXX. It has Active signification of the ‘sense or organ of hearing’ (Mark 7:31)”<sup>6</sup> The underlying meaning of *Ακοη* is for rumor or report. This translates into the idea for proclamation or preaching and refers to the one hearing the message.

It is not hard to see how the use of Romans 10:17 is connected to the spread of the Gospel and to hearing the Word. In our hearing world, this is the predominant perspective, as long as we are considering hearing people. Then how does this apply to Deaf people? How do we answer these questions without excluding a whole group of people and condemning them to hell?

It is interesting that the online HELPS Word-studies offers the idea of *akoé* meaning: “properly, *hearing*; used of *inner (spiritual)* hearing that goes with receiving faith from God (Ro 10:17), i.e. spiritual hearing (discerning God's voice; see also Gal 3:2,5, Gk text).”<sup>7</sup> This

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<sup>5</sup> Facebook post from Deaf Pastor June 22, 2014 6:43 pm

<sup>6</sup> Theological Dictionary of the New Testament by Gerhard Kittel Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company Grand Rapids, MI 1968 Volume 1 Page 221

<sup>7</sup> <http://biblehub.com/greek/189.htm>

is the only reference I found to a spiritual hearing instead of only a physical hearing in the modern commentaries.

In reading commentaries on Romans 10, they follow the conclusions of Matthew Henry in saying, “The beginning, progress, and strength of faith are by hearing. ...God gives faith, but it is by the word as the instrument.”<sup>8</sup> The main point of our discussion thus far is, people need to hear to have faith. Deaf people cannot hear, therefore they cannot have faith, they cannot be saved.

This discussion joins together the ideas of communication, of hearing, and of faith; without the one, you cannot have the other. If this does not happen, then they do not have faith and cannot be saved! We cannot escape the fact that faith comes one way, and deaf people are excluded. Is this only a religious view from Scripture? Is this a common idea in culture? Are Deaf people excluded in other ways?

It is not only in the religious area that the ideas of speech and hearing are joined with communication. In many of the well-known philosophers and political systems, the idea flourishes that if you cannot hear or speak, you cannot think nor understand, therefore you can have no place in society. Two of the greatest influences upon the cultural view of Deaf people come from the writings of Plato and Aristotle. There are many references to their disregard for any life that they did not see as “fit.”

“This then is the kind of medical and judicial provision for which you will legislate in your state. It will provide treatment for those of your citizens whose physical and psychological constitution is good; as for the others, it will leave the unhealthy to die, and those whose psychological constitution is incurably corrupt it will put to death. That seems to be the best thing for both the individual sufferer and for society.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the whole Bible Fleming H. Revell Company Volume VI page 442

<sup>9</sup> *The Republic of Plato* (JC 71.P35 1965 page 100).

“With regard to the choice between abandoning an infant or rearing it, let there be a law that no crippled child be reared.”<sup>10</sup>

There are numerous examples like this one allowing and encouraging infanticide for unwanted children because they were physically imperfect. .

Deaf children, if not killed, are kept out of sight. They are hidden, as they are not perfect, and you do not want to show that weakness to the world. (This is still seen in many cultures around the world) It is often seen as a “curse,” with the implication that the parents did something bad for this to happen! There is almost always shame at having a deaf child, and we do not want to be ashamed.

Aristotle made observations about deafness and what is associated with deafness. He stated “deafness and dumbness are found together,”<sup>11</sup> if you are deaf, you cannot speak. This has a profound impact on how he views Deaf people and how his writing promoted his views to others:

“For rational discourse is a cause of instruction in virtue of its being audible, which it is, not directly, but indirectly; since it is composed of words, and each word is a thought-symbol. Accordingly, of persons destitute from birth of either sense, the blind are more intelligent than the deaf and dumb.”<sup>12</sup>

And

“Viviparous quadrupeds utter vocal sounds of different kinds, but they have no power of converse. In fact, this power, or language, is peculiar to man. For while the capability of talking implies the capability of uttering vocal sounds, the converse does not hold good. Men that are born deaf are in all cases also dumb; that is, they can make vocal sounds, but they cannot speak...”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Aristotle’s Politics (JC 71.A41 A75513 1997) page 31

<sup>11</sup> Ross, W.D., “Works of Aristotle” Volume 7

<sup>12</sup> Aristotle “on sense and the sensible” part 2

<sup>13</sup> Aristotle History of animals IV 9

Aristotle's view of Deaf people seems to have pervaded the thoughts of civilizations through the next centuries. The view of Aristotle, and other learned thinkers, that Deaf people could not conduct rational discourse because they could not hear or speak, seems to have quenched a majority of public work with the deaf. They could not communicate verbally, therefore they cannot communicate and are not included. How do these views compare with the writings of the early church? Do we find hope there for the excluded situation of Deaf people?

Unfortunately, some of the greatest challenges in our conversation about the view of Deaf people come from Saint Augustine:

“we acknowledge, indeed, how much pertains to our own transgressions: from what source of culpability does it come that innocent ones deserve to be born sometimes blind, sometimes deaf, which defect, indeed, hinders faith itself by the witness of the Apostle, who says, “faith comes by hearing (Romans 10:17).” Now, truly, what bears out the assertion that the soul of the “innocent” is in the image of God, inasmuch as the liberation of the one born foolish is by his rich gift, if not that the bad merited by the parents is transmitted to the children?”<sup>14</sup>

Augustine used the word “hinders” the faith, many people saw, and continue to see, this as a negative. Since deaf people cannot hear, therefore they cannot have faith. Augustine did not say Deaf people cannot have faith. But the very word “hinder” – Impedio in the Latin – means to hinder, obstruct, or make impassable - gave the support needed for the philosophies of the world to take over. People read this, influenced by Plato and Aristotle, and their doubt about Deaf people and their ability to have faith grows.

This idea from Augustine was a prevalent thought through the Catholic Church,

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<sup>14</sup> Augustini, Sancti Aurlii, Hipponensis Episcopi Traditio Catholica, Seacula IV-V Opera Omnia, Tomus Decimus, contra Julianum, Horesis Pelagianea defensorum, Liber Tertius, Caput IV-10. Excidebatur et venit apud J.P. Migne, Editorem

“The view that deaf people cannot be Christians held sway within the Catholic church for many centuries, and it often was attributed to Saint Augustine (243-430), one of the people most responsible for defining Catholic church – and hence Christian – doctrine before the Protestant Reformation. Various commentators on Augustine stated that it was his beliefs that deaf people, because they cannot hear the word of God, are denied the possibility of religious salvation.”<sup>15</sup>

Augustine’s words, out of context, had a profound influence on the perception of deafness in the hearing world.

Lest we think this is a problem left in the past and people do not believe this anymore, here is a quote from the Mustard Seed newsletter of Christ Deaf Lutheran Church, March 2011:

*St. Augustine on deafness:* Recently we read in a widely distributed email:

Around 300-400 BC, St Augustine, a Bishop that helped promote Christianity, made known his belief that the deaf cannot be taught the Christian faith and cannot be forgiven of their sins.

This statement is very inaccurate. First of all, St. Augustine lived **AD** 354-430, not **BC!** He could hardly have "helped promote Christianity" 400 years **before** Christ was born.

Secondly, what St. Augustine actually said was that congenital deafness "hinders faith." Society in his day lacked systematic programs for deaf education and language training, so in that sense, he was right. He has often been **misquoted** to say that deaf people could not have saving faith, since [Romans 10:17](#) says "Faith comes by hearing..." disregarding the rest of that verse which describes "hearing" as a spiritual picture for receiving God's Word. Receiving God's Word can come just as well by seeing. St. Augustine did not assign Deaf people automatically to hell.

Yes, the article defends Augustine. Yes, it explains the truth. But the fact is, that after 1600 years, the same question continues to appear. The influence of Augustine’s word continues to confuse people about the truth. Add to this the fact that Augustine’s view that

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<sup>15</sup> Van Cleve, John Vickry and Crouch, Barry A., A Place of Their Own; Creating the Deaf Community in America, Gallaudet University Press, Washington D.C. Page 4

deaf children are born this way because of the sins of their parents is still an online topic today:

Among these, there is some of controversy, especially in the Deaf community. Augustine is noted for his belief that children who are born with infirmities are being punished for the sins of the parents—a statement that has had much negative impact on the advancement of Deaf culture and Deaf people; Augustine was one of the most influential people of all times in the Christian world.<sup>16</sup>

I think you can see why this negative view from Saint Augustine has continued to swirl around his view of deafness and the point he made with his quote from Romans 10:17. Now if we want to be fair, there is a great example of Augustine and his view of deaf people that shows his acceptance and appreciation for their communication through visual means:

“who by means of gesture and without uttering a sound signify not only what can be seen, but also many other things and practically everything that we express in speech.”<sup>17</sup>

Saint Augustine did see the value of Deaf people and their form of communication, but I can find no reference to his saying specifically that Deaf people could have faith and be saved. Thus, his early quote on deafness “hindering” that faith of Deaf people has stood the test of time. Unfortunately, other Christian writers have continued to compound the problem. Saint Jerome writes:

“Someone may ask: if there is no “faith” except by hearing, how can those who are born deaf become Christians? For someone can understand God the Father “from the greatness and beauty of creatures,” and the creator is known as a consequence “from the things that have been made.” But the birth of Christ, the cross, death and resurrection, cannot be known except by hearing. Either the deaf, therefore, are not

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<sup>16</sup> <http://voices.yahoo.com/deaf-history-st-augustine-hippo-7415358.html>

<sup>17</sup> St. Augustine: The Greatness of the Soul: Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation, The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland 1964 page 155

Christian, or, if the deaf are Christians, what is said by the apostle elsewhere is false; “And so faith is from hearing but hearing is through the word of God.”<sup>18</sup>

This is astounding and sad!! Jerome seems to be quoting the same verse and saying that Deaf people cannot have faith! This is where we are stuck for many centuries. With many people believing Deaf people cannot have faith, why should we try to work with them? Help them, yes. Be nice to them, yes. However, conveying faith to them is a lost cause. (Does this apply today? If you know of a person with a deaf family member, ask if the deaf family member goes to church or if they have talked with them about their faith? (The answer I often receive is “no” or “I don’t know.”))

We must admit that Jerome does give us hope for Deaf people, but it is in a way I have not heard before:

“One who is content with a simple response to this says that he did not say universally, “the faith of everyone is from hearing,” but “faith is from hearing.” This can be understood both in respect to the part and to the whole, namely the “faith from hearing” of those who hear, who believe. But the one who tries to satisfy this objection will first attempt to assent, by everyday manner of life, and by the speech, so to speak of the bearing of the whole body. Secondly, what the word of God says, to which nothing is deaf, is spoken more to those ears of which he himself says both in the Gospel, “Who has ears to hear, let him hear,” and in the Apocalypse, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” Also Isaiah says, “The Lord has also given hearing to me” (that is the other man to whom God speaks in secret, who calls out in the heart of the believer, “Abba, Father”). And, as we have frequently explained, just as the body has all the members and senses, so too the soul has all the senses and members; among the rest it has ears too. The one who has them will not be too much in need of those ears of the body in order to become acquainted with the gospel of Christ.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> St. Jerome’s Commentaries on Galatians, Titus, and Philemon, translated by Thomas P. Scheck, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana 2010 Page 115

<sup>19</sup> St. Jerome’s Commentaries on Galatians, Titus, and Philemon, translated by Thomas P. Scheck, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana 2010 Page 115



We have spiritual ears, eyes, etc...? I have not heard talk of this concept before. Is this from Paul referring in Ephesians 1 that he prays the “eyes of your heart will be opened”?<sup>20</sup> Where can we go? Is anything clear? Can Luther or our confessions help us?

I am sorry to say that our confessions do not give us much hope. In the whole of the Book of Concord there is only one reference to the word “deaf” that I can find:

Our opponents must be deaf. Over and over we say that the Gospel of Christ must be added to the preaching of the law, that for his sake good works please God. Yet everywhere they exclude Christ and teach that we merit justification by the works of the law.<sup>21</sup>

Of Course, this verse does not refer to a Deaf person, it is talking about their view of one of the reformers opponents being “deaf” to God’s Word (spiritually, mentally?). But does the one use of the word “deaf” translate into a general view of how deafness is viewed positively or negatively?. In a majority of examples it is not seen as a positive. It is used as a way to put down and speak negatively of people. Does this same concept carry over to the general view of Deaf people?

Luther gives many more references to deafness, but again, most are similar to the following quote,

He does not want to sing in vain and tell the story to a deaf person when he sings of great and necessary things, that is, concerning the true God who is to be worshiped, and of the danger to those who forsake God and turn to idols.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ephesians 1:17

<sup>21</sup> *The Book of Concord the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. 1959 (T. G. Tappert, Ed.) (149). Philadelphia: Mühlenberg Press.

<sup>22</sup> Luther, M. (1999). *Luther's Works, vol. 9: Lectures on Deuteronomy* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.) (Dt 31:1). Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House.

Most of the examples using the word deaf are very negative. As this is used again and again as a way to explain a negative view, how can that but influence people's perception of deafness as also being negative? Thank God there are two quotes from Luther that do not use the word deaf in a negative way. Luther's words also give us hope by expounding on this quote from Jerome and the discussion of the Deaf:

But the expression "by the hearing of faith" Erasmus, as always, explains beautifully to mean that which is audible, namely, as he says, the actual speaking that is heard. Therefore "hearing of faith" means the same as the Word of faith that is heard. Acts 10:44: "While Peter was still saying this, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the Word." Likewise Is. 53:1: "Lord, who has believed what we have heard?" And Hab. 3:2: "O Lord, I heard the report of Thee, and I was afraid." Thus this is a frequent way of speaking in Scripture. Jer. 49:14 and Obad. 1:1 say: "We have heard tidings from the Lord."

Here, however, St. Jerome is again concerned with the question how the deaf become Christians, especially since Rom. 10:14 says: "How are they to hear without a preacher? How are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard?" And, as the apostle's step-by-step sequence puts it in that passage, first there is a sending, then preaching, then hearing, then believing, then an invoking, and thus the attaining of salvation. I shall add: How are infants saved, and how are they baptized, when they themselves do not hear? Jerome answers first that faith's coming from hearing can be taken as being partial or entire. But Paul overcomes this argument. "How," he says, "are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard?" (Rom. 10:14.) Secondly, Jerome says that the deaf can learn the Gospel from the attitude and the behavior of others. But where does this leave infants? Therefore I follow the opinion he mentions last, namely, that to the Word of God nothing is deaf and that it speaks to those ears of which it is said: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 11:15). I like this answer very much, because the Word of God is not heard even among adults and those who hear unless the Spirit promotes growth inwardly. Accordingly, it is a Word of power and grace when it infuses the Spirit at the same time that it strikes the ears. But if it does not infuse the Spirit, then he who hears does not differ at all from one who is deaf. Consequently, when an infant is not confused by other things, it is easier for the very sound of the Word—the sound uttered through the ministry of the church—to be operative through the Spirit. Then there is greater susceptibility on the part of the child.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Luther, M. (1999). *Luther's works, vol. 27: Lectures on Galatians, 1535, Chapters 5-6; 1519, Chapters 1-6* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.) (Ga 3:3). Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House.

I include this whole quote because we need to “hear” Luther’s hope that Deaf people can have faith! In the totality of their communication and especially, specifically by the Holy Spirit, they can have faith! Finally, we have a theologian who says Deaf people can go to Heaven! I also love Luther because he continues his application for Deaf people in his writing on the Lord’s Supper:

Some have asked whether the sacrament is to be offered also to the deaf and dumb. Some think it a kindness to practice a pious fraud on them and think they should be given unblest wafers. This mockery is not good; it will not please God, who has made them Christians as well as us. They deserve the same things that we do. Therefore if they are rational and can show by indubitable signs that they desire it in true Christian devotion, as I have often seen, we should leave to the Holy Spirit what is his work and not refuse him what he demands. It may be that inwardly they have a better understanding and faith than we; and this no one should maliciously oppose. Do we not read of St. Cyprian, the holy martyr, that in Carthage where he was bishop he even had both elements given to the children, although—for reasons of its own—that has now ceased? Christ had the children come to him and would not allow anyone to hinder them [Mark 10:14]. In like manner he withheld his blessings neither from the dumb nor the blind nor the lame. Why, then, should not his sacrament also be for those who heartily and in a Christian spirit desire it?<sup>24</sup>

Luther got it! He believed Deaf people could and should be fully involved in the life of the Christians church. They “deserve the same things that we do!” That is why we want to adapt materials for our Deaf People. They deserve to have the same teaching, the same understanding, the same access to God’s Word and His promises for them, the same as all the “hearing” people.

God does NOT limit the Gospel for Deaf people! But how these verses are used in a fallen world have limited and hindered the work among the Deaf. “Those who have seen and understood the mighty acts of God are charged with the responsibility of telling others;

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<sup>24</sup> Luther, M. (1999). *Vol. 35: Luther's works, vol. 35: Word and Sacrament I* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.) (110–111). Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

unless they do so, those within their reach may never come to the truth.”<sup>25</sup> We who have heard have a responsibility to Deaf people. We have a responsibility to teach them what we have heard from God’s Word in a way they can understand. Matthew Henry does give us some help in his commentary on Romans 10:14, “In hearing is included reading, which is tantamount, and by which many are brought to believe (John 20:31)”<sup>26</sup>

We began with the concept that faith comes from hearing the word of Christ. How can Deaf people believe if they have not heard? Therefore, because Deaf people cannot believe, they are going to hell. These statements are good foundations to explain the challenges we are facing in working with Deaf people. There is a perception that because they cannot hear, Deaf people are something “less” than hearing, speaking people. For many centuries, it was believed that Deaf people cannot have faith and cannot go to Heaven, only because they cannot hear. Thankfully, our challenge today has gone beyond the question of can Deaf people believe.

The challenge we are facing though comes from the same set of verses in understanding what it means to “hear the word of Christ.” For hearing people, this means auditory hearing of the spoken word, which can happen in various languages. Gregory the Great says, “The Spirit is called the finger of God. When the Lord put his fingers into the ears of the deaf mute, he was opening the soul of man to faith through the gifts of the Holy

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<sup>25</sup> The Interpreter’s Bible Abingdon Cokesbury Press, New York, NY 1954 Volume IX page 562

<sup>26</sup> Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the whole Bible Fleming H. Revell Company Volume VI page 441

Spirit.”<sup>27</sup> How does the “finger of God” work today? How does the Spirit work to bring faith to Deaf people?

To answer these questions we need to examine God’s Missio Dei, what is His mission and plan. How does God see the world and the people here? Who does God love and want to save? Does God exclude some people, and specifically does He exclude Deaf people?

What are the specific verses that have influenced our view of Deaf people? Is Deaf Ministry an important aspect of our church ministry? Jesus personally interacted with Deaf people and showed His care for Deaf people. Is this same care and outreach shown in the church at large?

Does God’s Mission include Deaf people? To answer this question we need to ask does God’s Mission include all people? How are deaf people viewed when reading the Bible missionally? What are some of the worldviews and paradigm shifts in viewing Deaf people? What paradigm shifts are under way today and how will this impact Deaf Ministry?

Missio Dei, the Mission of God. The common view of mission in our Deaf Lutheran churches is that mission is a part of what the church does or the sending of others to do mission. Missio Dei emphasizes that the Mission of God is about what God does, who He is, His will, and how does God want us to fit into His Mission.

It is not that the church has a mission, but that God has a church for His Mission. What does mission mean scripturally; what does it mean in the world; how has the idea of mission developed in meaning for the church today?

## **Scriptural Understanding for Missio Dei**

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<sup>27</sup> Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture New Testament II Mark Intersivity Press Downers Grove, Ill page 103 Homilies on Ezekiel, Homily 10

We have been trained that “Missions” is what the church does in sending people overseas. We see the mission projects, mission festivals, etc... as what real missions means.

I want to challenge our people to rethink missions, that is help people to think of the term “Mission” as being the Mission God has for us in the world. Missions is when we are fulfilling the plan God has for us in the world. As part of the Third Article of the Creed, God calls us to join in His work of Missions. This is where God asks the Christians to join in partnership with Him.

I am starting with looking at Scripture from a missional perspective. We have many different worldviews and paradigms in our congregations and church structures around the world, many paradigms present at the same time. This leads to the confusion of what mission is and how we do mission.

These differing paradigms also lead to conflict among people. We are not communicating with the same understanding. We are approaching mission from different perspectives.

We begin with God’s Word to set out a foundation and build a platform we can use in our discussion (similar to what Paul does in 1 Corinthians 1). What is God’s Mission plan? How does He show that again and again His Mission is for ALL people?

## **Genesis**

Often people begin with Genesis 3:15 as God’s mission through history, seeing history as salvation history. But God’s Mission first begins in Genesis 1:28 when God makes the world and gives man dominion over all creation. He puts man in the garden to care for it

(Genesis 2:15). This is God's plan. He wants us to join with Him in caring for all creation. His concern and plan is for ALL creation, not only a part.

God's Mission takes a turn in the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve sin. God asks, "Where are you?" This is a defining phrase. God speaks to His people. This is the beginning of a thread that continues through all of Scripture. God is continually asking, "Where are you?" to His people. Joshua and God's leaders are echoing God's question through history as they ask the people "where are you?" (Joshua 24) Are you following the one true God and His plan? This question continues on for us today, as the question "where are we?" Where are we in our relationship to God and in the mission He has prepared for us?

The next big step in God's Mission plan is when He calls Abraham, commissioning him in Genesis 12 with the promise that Abraham will be a blessing to all. There is not a lot of security, not a lot of safety, but a trusting of God. God says "I" will do the blessings. This is a promise from God. He will do all of this for Abraham. God will bless Abraham, Abraham will be a blessing, and ALL the earth will be blessed through Abraham.

This is also a continuation of the question God asked in the Garden "Where are you?" Abraham was an idol worshiper (Joshua 24:2). He did not believe in the one true God. Abraham is one of the pivotal people with Adam, Noah, etc... God is making Abraham a new creation, shown in the name change from Abram to Abraham. He is now a picture of God's blessing to the whole world.

The nation of Israel is not there yet. Often people think the nation of Israel is "God's entire Mission" or one specific church today is "God's entire Mission." God shows His plan is for all of His created people, not for only a specific people. It is true God works through specific people, nations, and groups. We will see highlighted often in this section that God

wants His specific people to become the light, the beacons, to the world to draw all people to Him.

In Genesis 17, God reconfirms and solidifies his relationship with Abraham through His covenant. The blessing is also given to Ishmael. He is not excluded. But the covenant is made through Isaac and his offspring. With the sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22, God renews the promise for Abraham and for his offspring. Genesis 22:17 “the gates of your enemy you will possess,” the gates of hell will not be able to stand against them. (Matthew 16:18)

## **Exodus**

Repeatedly God’s action is because of His covenant with His people and His plan for Mission. The promise of the covenant continues in Exodus 2:24, when God acts because of His covenant. Exodus 12:38 shows other people also came out with Moses and the people of Israel. The people of the Exodus are not only the people of Israel. God includes others in His people. God is showing His promise of salvation, His exodus from Egypt, His promise of deliverance, is meant for all people.

Before God gives the law in Exodus 20, God reminds them who they are. God reminds them that they are His chosen, pure nation. God establishes Israel so the people of the world can look at the people of God and see “this is what the people of God” should look like. God is saying, “You are God’s mission: In your daily life: In everything you do: You show (or don’t show) you are My people.”

When God comes down to Moses in Exodus 19:5-6, God teaches His people how to intercede for the nations. In the worship life of the people, God teaches them His way, His will. The people know the priest is the one who stands between God and the people. God is



now calling the whole people to become a “kingdom of priests.” God is telling the people “you are to lead the whole world, the whole people to follow Me.” How is this possible? God is referring back to creation, “because the whole earth is Mine, because everything is Mine, that is why you are My priests.” God is showing His Lordship of the entire world, He is showing that His Mission encompasses the entire world.

## **1 Kings 8**

When Solomon dedicates the Temple in Jerusalem, he gives a great summary of God’s Mission plan. The cloud comes down and God’s Glory fills the temple (8:10ff). God is showing this is His house, His special place. In 1 Kings 8:31ff Solomon shows God’s Law and Gospel for the people. However, this is not ONLY for the people of Israel. In 1 Kings 8:41-43 Solomon includes the people from other lands and asks God to “Listen to them, answer them.” “So that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel.” The Temple is to be a place for people from ALL nations come together; the Temple shows God’s Mission.

## **Prophets**

The prophets continue this same identity with the people, reminding them who they are. If you are not going to do this, then God has no place for you. The purpose of the prophets is to remind the people that “God has a purpose for you.” If you do not want this, then God will make a new people. God is being true to His Mission. He wants His people to be His priests, His teachers, His examples in the world.

In chapter 29, Jeremiah talks to the people in Israel and shares God's plan for them in exile. Seek the shalom (the peace) of the city, pray for the city. This too is God's Mission work to "pray for your enemy." Jeremiah leads God's people back to the mountain with Moses, when God says you are a kingdom of priests. God wants the exiles to intercede for the people where they are exiled. Babylon has shalom (peace) because God's people are praying for them.

In Jeremiah 29:11 Jeremiah shares, "God has plans for you, plans for hope and a future." Yes, you are people of dispersion, but you do not need the temple. You don't need the other "stuff," God is with you wherever He sends you. He is calling you to your mission even in the midst of trouble.

However, God also promises to bring His people back, to restore them again in Israel. He will forgive their sins and His glory will return. WHY? In Jeremiah 33:9 God answers and shows His Mission. "Then this city will bring me renown, joy, praise and honor before all nations on earth that hear of all the good things I do for it." God's purpose is for the world, all the nations to see what God is doing, His desire is to save people from all the nations!!

Again and again Isaiah shares God's plan for all the nations. In the last verses of Isaiah 19, God shares that His work is also in Egypt and Assyria. "The LORD Almighty will bless them, saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance."" (Isaiah 19:25) There will be altars and sacrifices to God in all the nations. In Isaiah 45:23 "By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear. Every knee will bow." This universal announcement is again repeated in Romans 11:14.

In Isaiah, 49:1 Isaiah is speaking to ALL the distant lands, not only to Israel. God's desire to reach the Gentiles is not only a New Testament desire, it has been God's same desire through all of history. God says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 49:6)

Isaiah 56 shows that God wants to include those we see as separate. "Let no foreigner who has bound himself to the LORD say, "The LORD will surely exclude me from his people... to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will not be cut off... Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations." (Isaiah 56:3, 5)

In Isaiah 66:18-24 God declares that He is both gathering and sending, "I am sending them to the nations... And I, because of their actions and their imaginations, am about to come and gather all nations and tongues, and they will come and see my glory." God is calling them back to bring offerings on His Holy Mountain, all creation is new, and God takes them back to His first purpose in creation.

## **Psalms**

Psalms 22 is David's "yet/but" Psalm. He begins in despair and isolation, yet God is still God. David leads us into the ups and downs of emotions through the Psalms, sharing our personal depths and God's heights. Finally, in the end "All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, for dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations." (Psalm 22:27-28)

David announces with Revelation and all of Scripture - God wins! Even those not yet born will hear of His righteousness, for "He has done it!" (22:31)

## **Luke**

In Luke 2:32 Simeon lays out God's Mission for Jesus, for Israel, also "a light for revelation to the Gentiles." Yes, Jesus came to His people Israel first, but not only for them. Throughout His ministry, Jesus shows God's Mission, that He came to save all people. From the lowest of the low (thief on the cross), to the leaders (Nicodemus), and everyone in between.

## **Matthew**

Matthew 28 is often quoted as Jesus fulfillment in sending His disciples into the world, not only to be disciples, but also to become disciple makers. This verse was not always viewed in the same way we see it today. The emphasis becomes more prominent with the influence of pietism and especially after the enlightenment. Matthew 28:18-20 communicates the personal responsibility of Christians to share their faith with the world.

In stating He has all authority, Jesus takes us back to the authority established in creation that He is God over all the world. His Missio Dei is all encompassing. Jesus called the disciples to be fishers of men, He is creating something new, the same as with Abraham. You will become a blessing, you will be the picture/the example, of this new creation. God's plan is for ALL the peoples of the earth. After His resurrection, Jesus says in John 20:21-22 "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he

breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." God is the sender, Jesus is the sender, the Holy Spirit is sent to us and now He sends us.

Before His ascension, Jesus clarifies in Acts 1:8 where His disciples are to go. "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." This is God's Mission, to the ends of the earth!

In Acts we see God's Mission carried out in the lives of His people. Pentecost in Acts 2 reverses the Babel from Genesis 11 and shares the Gospel with people from around the "world" who have come to Jerusalem. Acts 5:42 and 20:20 shows the teaching was done in both the synagogue and house to house, that is, not only to the people who came into the church, but also to everyone in public.

The same as we see in Jeremiah, God uses the scattering of His people to fulfill His Mission. In Acts 8:1-8 we see God using the scattering of persecution to fulfill His plan. The disciples, the Christians, preached the word wherever they went, showing that God works not only in situations of rejoicing as in Acts 2, but that He also works through not so enjoyable experiences, like persecutions, to accomplish His Mission.

## **Peter**

Jumping ahead to Peter's first Epistle in chapter 2:9-10, we see the same promise God shared with His people in the Old Testament. "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received

mercy.” God’s Mission does not change from Old Testament to New Testament. We are His priests to intercede for the world, to be a beacon for the world, to show the world that this is how the people of God live.

## **Revelation 7**

Revelation 7:10 completes our view of Scripture from God’s Missiological perspective as we see the fulfillment of His plan. “After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.””

People may wonder why we need to go through all of these verses. Why is this important to us (Deaf)? Because this shows God’s plan for all people, including Deaf people. He does not want anyone excluded. We need to understand this foundation to share with other Deaf people and explain to them through the Bible God’s plan from the beginning of time. God wants Deaf people included! God and His Mission has not and does not change! He wants Deaf people to become His light in the world, His priests.

## **Viewing the Bible Through Deaf eyes**

The same as we see the Scriptures through missional eyes, we also need to see Scriptures through Deaf eyes. What are the perception/worldviews Deaf people learn about themselves and see in Scriptures? How does the Bible shape the perception/worldview of

others about Deaf people? Deaf congregations and Deaf people often wonder, “Where am I?” in God’s eyes.

In reading Scripture, there are several examples showing that God’s Mission does include Deaf people. Just as there are examples in God’s Word, there are also examples in Jewish law that includes Deaf people. What are these Scriptures from the Old Testament that describe creation of and actions of God to Deaf people? In Exodus 4 the Lord confirms to Moses that He (God!) is the one “who makes him deaf or mute.” This is a very hard concept, as people often look at Deaf people as broken, not good, and needing to be “fixed.” Yet God says He is the one who makes people Deaf. I wish this were a perception the world would adopt: seeing that Deaf people are also God’s specific, special creation. I want Deaf people to see themselves this way. God knows each one of them and He wants to save them. He is with them and just as God gives Moses what he needs, God also gives Deaf people what they need to do His will.

God is the creator and as such, His creation is to be protected as Leviticus 19:14 points out “do not curse the deaf.” God places this command about the Deaf<sup>28</sup> in the midst of various commands, most paralleling the Ten Commandments. Leviticus 19 is a good summary of what God wants His people to do as they follow Him, as His people. It also includes in 19:14 that all foreigners are to be treated as native born, to be welcomed into the community. Deaf people are often seen as, and see themselves as, foreigners, people on the outside. How can we treat them as native born?

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<sup>28</sup> The Deaf community uses the capital D to indicate Deaf people who have a strong cultural affiliation with American Deaf Culture and use American Sign Language. The lowercase d is simply indicative of loss of hearing. It can include people who sign, and those who do not. As seen in this sentence the term “the Deaf” is often used as a noun defining a people group, when English tends to use the word deaf as an adjective.

Under the Mishnah, the oral and later written Jewish Law, more references are included about the interaction of Deaf people within society. It relates that they are able to marry and divorce by the “use of signs.”<sup>29</sup> They are also allowed to do business and conduct other affairs with signs. But they are not allowed to be included in the temple ceremonies, nor in the ownership of land. This also is seen in many other cultures, where they are considered unclean because they are not physically perfect.

Probably the most well-known verses about Deafness come from Isaiah 35, “Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.” Jesus shows these verses as part of the fulfillment of the coming of the Messiah as quoted in Matthew 11 and Luke 7: “So he replied to the messengers, “Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.” This is a great promise and a great fulfillment of the coming Savior!

We ordinarily rejoice and see these verses as positive, but for Deaf people this is still a negative. Because they are still deaf, the only way they will be able to be better is for them to become hearing. In Mark 7, we read about Jesus “signing” to a man, but he still becomes hearing to know about Jesus. What does that say to our Deaf people today? What does that say to the hearing parents of Deaf children? What does that say to a church that has no time to deal with learning another culture or language to communicate God’s Word?

In the New Testament there are two distinct examples of Deaf people that give differing pictures of who they are. The first in Mark 7 (the passages we emphasize for Deaf

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<sup>29</sup> Yebamoth 112b of the Babylonian Talmud



Ministry) shows us the gentle, one on one, relationship of Jesus with the Deaf man. Jesus shows his understanding of Deafness and related social interaction as He “signs” to the Deaf man.

First, Jesus knows there needs to be no distractions, no looking around at other people, Jesus leads the Deaf man away from the group. Second, He “signs” to the man, sticking His fingers in the man’s ear to show something will happen. Third, spitting and touching the man’s tongue, meaning something will happen here too. Where will this work come from? Jesus looks up to Heaven and He sighs. Jesus’ sigh, this breath, has always impacted me. I see this connection beginning with God’s life giving breath into man in Genesis, the breath/the wind of God in Ezekiel 37, the wind at Pentecost, and the God breathed Scriptures in 2 Timothy 3:16. This simple sigh shows the mighty working of God’s power. Finally, Jesus says the word “Ephphatha (Be Opened!)” and the man could hear and speak!

Three miracles happened that day: his ears are opened - the man can hear; his mouth is opened – instantly learns to speak; and “the eyes of his heart” (Ephesians 1:18) are opened – faith in Jesus. Jesus fulfills the Old Testament promise of the Messiah that the Deaf will hear and the mute will speak (Isaiah 35:5-6). This gives us a very positive view of Jesus’ interaction with Deaf people. Mark 7 gives us a perfect example of inclusion, Jesus communicates with the deaf man in a way he can understand. Jesus does not ignore him; instead, He focuses his attention one on one.

Today, we may not be able to do the first two miracles with the ears and tongue, but following Jesus example of communication, we can do the third miracle. We can open “the eyes of the heart” with the Gospel message through signs and pictures. We do not need to

stick our fingers in a deaf persons ears or spit and touch their tongue, but we pray God will continue to help us “open the eyes of their heart” through the wind, the breath, of the Holy Spirit and the visual communication of signing. We want Deaf people to know “the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in His holy people, and His incomparably great power for us who believe!” (Ephesians 1:18-19)

Many Deaf people read and love this story. You will notice it never says “healed.” Many Deaf people do not consider themselves “broken” as most hearing people see it. They live and adapt very well – only needing communication. However, here again there is a challenge for Deaf people: for the man to become included in society, Jesus opens his ears. (Many deaf wish Jesus had only taught him to sign.) To become included, Jesus not only opened the man’s ears, He also gave him speech. Once more, the idea can be inferred that speaking orally is the only way of inclusion into society.

Whereas the first example is more positive, many deaf see the second story as a plague on Deaf people through the centuries. In Mark 9, a boy is brought to Jesus with an evil spirit. Jesus casts out the evil spirit with the words “You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” (Mark 9:25) Fantastic! First, you have the physical healing of the Deaf Mute man, now you have this evil spirit cast out of the young boy. Both become hearing, both become speaking. When I meet a Deaf person, now, why are they deaf? Is it physical or is it an evil spirit?

Unfortunately, this verse has been used along with Romans 10:17 to curb the work among Deaf people and taint the view of Deaf people as outcasts or worse, demon possessed. If “faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of

Christ” then how are Deaf people to become saved? Deaf people cannot hear, therefore they cannot be saved. Now the idea of communication, of hearing, and faith are joined together.

You will see this idea many times through religious history. We must “heal” deaf people physically- that is, cast out the evil spirit, before they can hear the Gospel. As this idea of speech as communication is joined with the philosophies of thought that are currently developing, the idea flourishes that if you cannot hear or speak, you cannot think nor understand, therefore you can have no place in society, and even more importantly you cannot be saved!

This understanding is NOT God’s plan and in the Jewish writings we see many instances of inclusion for Deaf people into society. There is also the recognition of the use of signed communication to convey thoughts and language. However, this concept stands in stark contrast to many in Greek and Roman societies, as they developed their understanding of the individual and what makes him and her worthy in society, Deaf people are cut off.

There are only 20 references to the Deaf in Scripture. Several of these are good, however many show deafness as a negative. Deuteronomy 1:45 “You came back and wept before the Lord, but he paid no attention to your weeping and turned a deaf ear to you” shows God cuts us off and does not listen to us. Deafness is ignoring God and because of this, He ignores you. This perception is often transferred to Deaf people, with others thinking that they are Deaf because they or their family ignored/acted against God. Deafness is seen as a punishment, something not to be associated with.

Thank God the coming Messiah gives hope! Matthew 11:5 says, “The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.” This is good news, or is it? To show the

Messiah is here, you must become hearing. If you cannot hear, because His power is not shown in you, does that mean you are still outside of the covenant relationship?

Thank God He opens the eyes as Paul says in Ephesians 1:18-20 “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms”

In John 9 Jesus shows that blindness did not happen because of a person’s sin, nor because of the sins of his family. “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.” (John 9:3) That is exactly what we also want Deaf people to know, that God wants His glory to show through them. God wants them to announce the power of His mission to the world, to be part of His mission.

### **Deaf Ministry Through Deaf eyes**

Deaf LCMS Lutherans would agree that the height of Deaf Ministry was during the 30’s to the 70’s. It was during this time that the LCMS used signing in all our Deaf congregations and in many hearing congregations. We had a Deaf School in Detroit, and life was good. However, there was never a worldview or paradigm shift to fully include Deaf people in the life of faith. Many of the early Missionaries in Deaf Ministry traveled around the country setting up Deaf Worship Services. But as each area developed, those in Deaf Ministry became more like the early Lutherans in the U.S., sharing the idea that “I am only

responsible for my area.” The idea of training Deaf people themselves to reach out with the Gospel was not realized.

Problems with contextualization loomed large as we tried to take the hearing liturgy and hymns and put them into a visual language. The hymns are in a beautiful picture language to the hearing as they can imagine in their mind, but this did not work for Deaf people. To this day, there continues to be very little in the way of curriculum resources for Deaf people, very few options to train them in Bible knowledge or leadership. Why? Because most of our materials are not developed in a format they can understand and use to train others to make disciples.

Most people do not realize how difficult it is for Deaf people to understand the basics of Scripture. Signing expresses everything in an active voice, but in English we use many passive expressions. In Deaf signs, sentences such as “Jesus was crucified by Pontius Pilate” come out signed “Jesus crucified Pontius Pilot.”

Much of the vocabulary we use in the hearing world is never used in the Deaf world. The main reason is many words do not have a picture, they have a concept. These concepts are conveyed on a CALP level, not BICS, making them inaccessible. Words like (same as), lacking (missing), conduct (lead or drive), and many others are not able to be signed without clarification, thus they are not often used.

That is the reason we use the New International readers Version Bible. It is written with a vocabulary that is at a level that makes it easier to sign. If we look at Joshua 1 there are several examples: aide is not used as a noun in signing, it is always a verb and we would need to sign helper; swore is signed to curse or swear, in this context we need to change to

the word promise; and forsake is not a word used in sign language, this would be change to leave.

Also to see the difference in sentence structure compare the difference for Joshua 1:1. The NIV says “After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses’ aide.” The NIrV says “Moses, the servant of the Lord, died. After that, the Lord spoke to Joshua, the son of Nun. Joshua was Moses’ helper. The Lord said to Joshua.” The sentence structure of the NIrV is much easier to follow and sign.

Idioms in English do not often communicate well when signed directly in American Sign Language (ASL). ASL has its own idioms, which do not communicate when translated literally in English. For example, the ASL idiom "TRAIN GONE, SORRY" translates into English as, "Sorry, you missed the boat." Our members read English as a second language and may be confused by English idioms and expressions in the text.

The issue we face in Deaf ministry, is communicating what is written in English, to a people group who read and write English as a second language and lack the ability to use English with subtlety and layers of meaning. This does not mean they cannot use their own language with subtlety and deeper layers of meaning, but they lack the College and Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) in English to be able to understand the Scriptures and other literature of our faith. While many Deaf people do have CALP ability in English, many of the members of our LCMS Deaf churches are from a generation that experienced an emphasis on oralism, speaking and speech reading, rather than literacy in English or ASL. I will discuss the rise of oralism and its influence on deaf education in America later in this paper.

Because of this lack of literacy, the parables of Jesus may not communicate to Deaf members of our churches when they read English. Our members often have Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) in written English, but finding hidden meaning in an English text may be difficult for them. Concepts communicated in written English need to be less abstract and more concrete, with simpler sentences for our members to access.

Comparisons and parables need to be made more overt, and the connections explained for these members. For example, the merchant looking for a pearl of great price sells everything he has to obtain it. If we ask our members, "Who is the pearl?" they will be confused, because the pearl is not a who, it is a what. If the same information is signed overtly in American Sign Language, explaining the comparison, our members may be able to understand the parable. Our challenge is making the written word more overt, so that our members can access it as well.

In my practical experience, I have to sign less abstractly, and more concretely with most of the members that I deal with daily. Because of this, I find myself reframing the message into a simpler and more concise form. The goal is to make the written message accessible to them so that they can also read the modified English and "get" the parable.

This does not even begin to discuss the concepts involved in signing the English term "the Kingdom of Heaven is like." The sign for "like" is a feeling word, a feeling sign "I like you." You cannot use the same sign in the way "like" is used in comparing the Kingdom of Heaven to other pictures. To have the correct sign you need to say, "the Kingdom of Heaven is the same as" when you are communicating a parable. Sounds easy, but when you read the

word “like,” the concrete picture of this feeling is immediately communicated. The abstract concept of “the same as” is lost in the vague land of words with no picture.

We also continue to struggle with the paradigm that to be a Pastor, to preach the Word and give the Sacrament, you need to be hearing. Other denominations have been better at accepting Deaf leaders, but often the Deaf are not encouraged nor supported. Many examples can be shown of Deaf people who wanted to serve and were rejected because they were Deaf.

One example is Dr. Andrew Foster, a deaf man who has helped set up many Deaf schools in Africa. He is one of the leading founders of Christian groups in Africa. When he first came to our Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, seeking ordination and mission support, we said “no.” Thank God he went anyway! He broke out of the paradigm of “you need to be hearing” and “only my area” and took the Gospel to a whole new continent!

The Americans with Disabilities Act has made a large impact on Deaf education, and has also led to a large impact on Deaf Ministry. Many positive actions have come; example is the captioning of many media materials so Deaf people can be included in the news of the world. The ADA has helped the push for sign language interpreters in many areas of life and has opened access to Doctors, Dentists, Education, etc... While this access is absolutely necessary, it continues to be a struggle because it can also be very expensive.

One of the biggest impacts for many Deaf children is the change in our education system. In 1975 PL94142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, was passed. The key phrase that changed the education system for many Deaf children is “least restrictive environment.”

(2) The Commissioner shall include in each such report— "(A) an analysis and evaluation of the effectiveness of procedures undertaken by each State educational



agency, local educational agency, and intermediate educational unit to assure that handicapped children receive special education and related services in the least restrictive environment commensurate with their needs and to improve programs of instruction for handicapped children in day or residential facilities;

For those who know Deaf people, least restrictive is where there is a visual language in use.

A language Deaf children can understand. Instead, lawmakers and others, saw the “least restrictive” as close to home in public school with an interpreter.

While being close to home is good in many ways, it is not often true in the areas of communication and education. 90% of Deaf children are born to hearing parents. In my experience, only about 70% of mothers learn to sign, and less than 50% of the fathers learn to sign. There are many reasons for this, but the result is the same, very limited communication. Yes, there is an interpreter at school, but how many of the other children, teachers, or staff learn to become proficient in Sign Language?

Most Deaf children before the passing of PL 94142 were sent to residential schools, where they were often exposed to the Christian faith. Now these children are scattered across the state and there is often no way to contact them and teach them about Jesus. Even if the parents are strong Christians, where do they learn the “religious” vocabulary to share their faith?

Through the education system today Deaf children are also being trained in the enlightenment views of separating “facts and values.” Deaf people depend on what they can see, they can see the pictures in school for evolution, etc... and this must be real. They must be, as one young Deaf boy said, “Because my teacher would never lie to me.” Because of the “separation of church and state”, the access to Deaf schools today is also very restricted. You cannot teach religion classes on campus and many campuses are closed to the church.

Thankfully, many Christian parents do bring their children to Worship. The sad part is these children often sit there in silence for over one hour, understanding nothing, and this becomes their picture of God and church. Even when interpreters are provided, this does not mean the concepts are conveyed. That is why most Deaf people follow the religious choice of “None” as their preference. Over 97% of Deaf people are not involved in any Christian church.

In the case of Deaf people, worship and church membership are often viewed in the Eastern Orthodox paradigm as described in Bosch’s book “Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission.” If the people are included in the “ceremony” that is enough, even if they do not understand. Deaf people are there in Worship, “that is enough.” What does this mean for us, is it enough? We have Deaf youth from other churches that are starting to join Bible Study at our congregation and I still remember one of our first meetings. One of these Deaf youth shared “did you know some churches teach Jesus is God?” She has attended a Christian church with her family her whole life and had no idea who Jesus is!

Technology has also impacted and will continue to affect the life of the church. In the height of Deaf Ministry the church was also the social place, the news outlet, and the support system. With the advent of captioning, news is available to all. Support can be done instantaneously through texting and video phone calls. Social interaction is readily available as Deaf people can also drive wherever they want (although this is not possible in many other countries). A huge tool is the advent of video blogs and social media. This has opened up an avenue of communication and interactions that was previously inaccessible.

Deaf people must also face the changing paradigms of the world with other deaf who have hearing aids and cochlear implants. They may not sign the same and they do not know each other from school. This has been a great shock to many Deaf who are used to “the way it was.” They also must adapt to the new paradigms of Deaf education and reach out to ALL Deaf people, not only the chosen few who are the same as they are.

Unfortunately Deaf church is very similar to the hearing church as many of our congregations are becoming older, “aging in place.” The average age of an LCMS church member is 63 years and we are losing 60,000 people each year, which is very similar to life in many Deaf congregations. State Deaf schools have closed, Deaf clubs are fading away, and the community is becoming more isolated. Yet at the same time different areas of the world are opening up for Deaf people through technology. What will happen? The overall impact of these changes and advances in technology upon Deaf Ministry will be felt for many years to come.

Since 1965 America has also welcomed over 80 million immigrants into the U.S., and all of these people groups have deaf people. However, as with hearing congregations, we are not keeping up, and we are not reaching these nations brought to us. Many of these Deaf people are kept in their family and their own area. They do not socialize with other Deaf people. We need to develop and collaborate with other congregations as they reach out, so we can also be there to reach the Deaf in these immigrant groups.

## **Deaf View For the Future**

How will God fulfill David's prophesy in Psalm 22 that future generations not yet born will hear (see) the story of His righteousness? We are praying to see how God wants to use us in His Mission!

We must make the paradigm shift; we must change the worldview of Deaf people, equipping them to become the Disciple Makers. Through the use of technology we are praying God will open the doors to many Deaf people around the world who do not have access to God's Word in a format suitable for them.

We are partnering with many people to make this a reality. We pray God will open the doors so that His Mission may be accomplished through us, that Deaf people around the world will "hear the Word of God," (Isaiah 29:18) not with ears but through eyes and become His disciples and disciple makers.

What does this mean for membership? How will the church look in the future? How are we going to "do missions" in the future? I do not know! I do pray that God will guide us in the way He wants us to accomplish His Mission. I pray our mission, is His Mission.

As we look ahead at the church and what it means, Living Systems Ministry gives a good visual video at [www.toastercat.org](http://www.toastercat.org). This video gives a good visual of the shift we need to make in our thinking about mission. (<http://livingsystemministry.org>) We do not want members as in a club or group; we want members who join the body of believers. Our goal is for Deaf people to become active growing members of His body and to join in God's Mission.

Deaf people have been seen as idiots and dummies, or worse, filled with demons. They were supposedly unteachable and unknowable. They were misdiagnosed and placed in mental hospitals. They were left to die. Deaf people were hidden, their families ashamed.

They mixed treatment: loved, mistreated, cared for, misunderstood, under God's protection, marginalized, and unappreciated in a hearing world.

What makes this tragic is Deaf people look normal with nothing wrong. But deafness cuts Deaf people off from the normal interaction of communication that happens in the hearing world. All other "disabilities" cut people off from some aspect of the world, but deafness cuts Deaf people off from people who do not sign. No sign often equals no communication!

Our understanding of communication is the key. Deaf people do not see their value in Christ until communication, in some format they can understand, is established and opens the door to God's Word. Until the thoughts and ideas of the Word of God are presented in a printed or signed format they can understand, most Deaf people will not receive the full picture and meaning of His Word. We need to continue utilizing the technology, but also training Deaf people to become the leaders and Pastors, the Disciple makers. They are the best speakers of their own language.

What is next? Will technology be the answer and everyone will become hearing? I think not; though the advancements are great, there are still barriers to communication. Will technology continue to open new ways of communication? Most definitely YES! I am praying we can use technology in many ways to share the Gospel with Deaf people.

It begins and ends with communication, with God coming down to the people who destroyed His perfect creation and communicating, "Where are you?" This is our God of love who continued to communicate by sending His only Son to accomplish His Mission. We pray the Holy Spirit will continue to guide us, strengthen us, and give us His wisdom to

be a part of His Mission. We pray we are His church for His Mission, His *Deaf* Church for His Mission.

For Deaf people this means to “hear” God’s Word with their eyes. Signing is one way to “hear” God’s Word. Many people think signing is English words put into hand motions. Thus it follows many people believe a deaf person can read English the same as any hearing person. This is a false assumption. In most situations, when a person is signing, they are not signing the English words nor the English word order. Signing is a visually conceptual language, a unique language with its own syntax, rules for structure, phonology, morphology, semantics, etc...

Deaf people also do not learn English when they sign. This leads us to the focus of our Major Applied Project: How can deaf people “hear” the Word from printed materials? What happens when we change from the signed word to the printed word? How can we adapt our printed materials for a Deaf person to be able to “hear” God’s Word in the printed format? How can we better adapt materials so they can further study and understand God’s Word?

Signing throughout the world is not universal. There are many sign systems, having many variations even within each country. But printed English remains a common language used at Deaf Schools in many areas around the world to help Deaf people learn. If we can adapt our studies, commentaries, and religious materials in a format Deaf people can read, then they will be able to sign these concepts to people in their native sign language! This is my hope and my goal, that through my MAP we will be able to develop a set of principles to use in adapting our religious materials for Deaf people. I pray that with these principles we

will be able to improve, expand, and multiply our adapting of materials for our Deaf people not only here in the U.S., but also around the world.

To help us understand what is necessary to reach Deaf people around the world, we need to understand some of the history of Deaf people in the world. How have different cultures and different times included or excluded Deaf people? How have they tried to communicate with Deaf people? How does the world at large view Deaf people?

## CHAPTER 3

### HISTORICAL VIEWS OF PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF: INCLUDING RAMIFICATIONS FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

“Deaf and dumb”, “Deaf mute”, “idiot”, “speechless”, “monsters”, “unfit”, “unteachable”, “demon possessed”, and various other terms are connected to a group of people throughout history. We want to examine the various cultural views of people who are deaf to help us understand how the world perceives Deaf people. Are they ever worthy of communicating with? What were the factors displayed in history that decided their social interaction and relationships?

David Wright, a South African poet who became deaf at age 7, gives us insight into the complex questions facing us:

“Considering that I did not become deaf till after I had learned the language, I am no better placed than a hearing person to imagine what it is like to be born into silence and reach the age of reason without acquiring a vehicle for thought and communication. Merely to try gives weight to the tremendous opening of St. John's Gospel: In the beginning was the Word. How does one formulate concepts in such a condition?”<sup>30</sup>

As we delve into this world of silence, we find this is the question often considered: How are concepts developed and communicated? What is the relationship between language, thought, and inclusion into society? Intertwined in this discussion is the relationship between the communication of thought and faith.

We will examine five main areas of history:

1. Early History
2. Jewish: Old Testament and New Testament
3. Greek and Roman
4. A New Era: 1500's and beyond

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<sup>30</sup> David Wright – Deafness: A Personal Account 1969



## 5. The Past 100 years

### Early History

The earliest reported use of the term Deaf mute is in the Code of Hammurabi from 1700 BC. There are several sources that cite this reference, but upon my search I was not able to find a reliable quote.

The Hittites are the earliest (extra Biblical) recorded civilization recognized to include deaf people in their religious and social lives. Cuneiform scripts found in the Royal archive, from the capital Corum Bogazkale, indicate there were deaf people who were involved in rituals in the “inner house” and who worked with noblemen in the Royal Household. They seem to be involved in the social structure of life as the texts refer to the “head of the Deaf people.”<sup>31</sup> One question we cannot yet answer is how far was this incorporation into society – were they allowed to marry, own property, and become fully involved in society?

The view of Deaf people in society as outcasts is reflected in the Justinian code of laws and promotes a very detrimental view of Deaf people. As we look at those whom Deaf people are compared with in society, we can get a very clear picture of their status within that society. They are connected to the lowest of the low, slaves, madmen, etc...

4. Persons who are of unsound mind, or who are deaf, mute, or subject to any perpetual malady, since they are unable to manage their own affairs, must be placed under curators.
6. Those persons can be witnesses with whom there is *testamenti factio*. But women, persons under the age of puberty, slaves, madmen, dumb persons, deaf persons,

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<sup>31</sup> Berna Arda, Murat Aksu – What the Hittites’ Tablets tell us? A Short Historical View of Deafness on the Basic of Genetics 2004

prodigals restrained from having their property in their power, and persons declared by law to be worthless and incompetent to witness, cannot be witnesses.<sup>32</sup>

There are some allusions to rights to marry based upon differing degrees of deafness. These seem to relate to “hard of Hearing” or and if someone has some speech capacity, or were hearing in the past and became Deaf. For example there is a distinction made between those with the ability to write (possibly late deafened adults) and to those who are hearing mutes. This seems to imply that these people were not born deaf, but acquired the means of communication, and later became deaf.

An area of interesting study is the “tongueless” rulers of the Ottoman Empire. It is during this time that Deaf people and sign language was prominently used among the ruling class.

Deaf people were generally known as 'Mutes' and will not here be disguised in late twentieth century terminology.<sup>1</sup> They appeared at royal courts less frequently than dwarfs, unless they had something special to offer. A benefit of deaf servants was that they could not be bribed by an enemy to disclose what they could not hear -- thus confidential matters of state could be discussed in their presence. A drawback was that instructions could not be given to them by speech and the need to communicate by other means might seem tiresome, especially to royal persons unused to tolerating tiresomeness. Only where silence was at a premium, as at the Turkish Ottoman court in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Haga, 1613, p. 9; Bon, 1625; Cantemir, 1734, p. 219), could the 'drawback' become an advantage leading to a prized skill. In that enclosed environment the unique situation arose in which the 'Tongueless' (Turkish *dilsiz*, Persian *bizebani*) minority managed to become the language specialists, whose signing activity was adopted by the 'Tongued' majority. They achieved this on the eastern edge of Europe at a time when the Tongued tribe of the western edge were starting to target the Tongueless and battle lines of 'speech versus sign' were foreshadowed. By the mid-sixteenth century, Ponce de Léon and other Spanish educators were taking their early steps with deaf children (Plann, 1993). The latter were to spend more than three centuries being argued over, but seldom listened to or learnt from by hearing professionals.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> *Corpus Iurus Civilis* [Body of Civil Law] Emperor Justinian, Book I

<sup>33</sup> Miles, M. 2009-06. "Deaf People, Sign Language and Communication, in Ottoman and Modern Turkey: Observations and Excerpts from 1300 to 2009. From sources in English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Latin and Turkish, with introduction and some annotation." Internet publication URL: [www.independentliving.org/miles200907.html](http://www.independentliving.org/miles200907.html)

Miles gives interesting details about Deaf people gleaned from Eastern historical records. I found references to the Ottoman Empire, but other than Miles online work I did not find original source materials. This would be an interesting research project to explore all the names he has listed, to study his source materials, and learn more about Deaf life in the Eastern world. Especially interesting would be Gerasimos, Patriarch of Orthodox Christians.

DATE (CE) NAME (and some detail)

- 640 Theodosios (deaf son of Emperor Heraclius)
- 1048 Asan (or Hasan) the Deaf (military commander)
- 1320 Gerasimos (Patriarch of Orthodox Christians)
- 1450s-1471 Sheikh al-Bistami (author, deaf from middle age)
- 1505 Zati (the poet)
- 1573 Koca dilsiz
- 1574-76 Sagir Behram Pasa (Governor of Diyarbekir)
- 1630 Deaf David (Daud) (chief of the imperial sword makers)
- 1789 Dilsiz Rukiye (female servant in harem of Selim III)<sup>34</sup>

In his book, “Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History,” Alan Mikhail lists several authors who have made references to Deaf people in the Ottoman and Eastern Empires. Of those Sara Scalenghe has written her dissertation from Georgetown about Deafness and other issues during the Ottoman Empire.

While it would be fascinating to further explore those areas. We now move to our own Judea Christian heritage.

### **Jewish: Old Testament and New Testament**

Jewish law includes scriptures from the Old Testament that prescribe creation of and actions to Deaf people. In Exodus 4 the Lord confirms He is the one “who makes him deaf

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<sup>34</sup> IBID

or mute.” God is the creator and as such his creation is to be protected as Leviticus 19:14 points out “do not curse the deaf.”<sup>35</sup>

Under the Mishnah, the oral and later written Jewish Law, more references are included about the interaction of Deaf people within society. It says they are able to marry and divorce by the “use of signs.”<sup>36</sup> They are also allowed to do business and conduct other affairs. But they are not allowed to be included in the temple ceremonies, nor in the ownership of land. In many other cultures as well, they are unclean because they are not physically perfect.

As we cited above, there are two distinct examples of Deaf people in the New Testament that give differing pictures of who they are. The first in Mark 7 (our emphasis) shows us the gentle, one on one, relationship of Jesus with the Deaf man. Jesus shows his understanding of Deafness and related social interaction as He “signs” to the Deaf man.

The world does not focus on the interaction with the Deaf man, the world focuses on the healing. To be joined with the world you need to become hearing. It is a common story among Deaf people to tell of their parents taking them to “healing” services. Their parents do not see the way Jesus communicates with the Deaf man, they see the healing and want this for their Deaf child.

One ray of light was also the Benedictine Monk, John of Beverly (721 A.D.). He started a monastery in Beverly, England and began to work with Deaf mutes. He was awarded sainthood and one of the miracles listed was the ability of one of his deaf students to be able to speak. Was this a true miracle, a healing? Or a smart young Deaf boy who learned how to speak well, communication = speech?

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<sup>35</sup> NIV Bible

<sup>36</sup> Yebamoth 112b of the Babylonian Talmud

John of Beverly acquired a large following, and he became well-traveled, sharing about his work with Deaf people. Unfortunately his work with the Deaf seems to have died with him. Today there continue to be several churches named John of Beverly, plus a Deaf Congregation in Dallas, TX. There is also formally a “chair” at the St. Louis Seminary that bears the name “John of Beverly” and was last held by Rev. Daniel Pokorny.

The communication of signing continued to be recognized and developed in sporadic occurrences. The Venerable Bede (672-735 A.D.) is credited with the first recorded finger alphabet. This began as the use of simple sign language amongst the monks for communication. It is very possible this was the inspiration for the inauguration of work with Deaf people thereafter. (For further reading I recommend “Benedictine Roots in the Development of Deaf Education: Listening with the Heart.”)

### **A New Era: The 1500’s and beyond**

Work with Deaf people went through a long period of deafening silence until a significant revival occurred during the years of the Renaissance. Two main streams of thought seem to combine to encourage this event. First, with the shift from Theocentric to anthropocentric thinking, man becomes the central figure and “frees” the thinking about education. Second, Aristotelian deductive reasoning begins to give way to the inductive scientific theories-dialectic. This led to new ways of thinking that also encouraged and laid the foundations for the Reformation.

One of these “new lights” was Rudolphus Agricola. He returned home to Germany from Italy after ten years of studying Greek and Latin and learning in the light of Humanist

ideology under Theodor Gaza. For us, Agricola's greatest influence was on the young man, Erasmus.

It is from Agricola that Erasmus inherited his romantic visions and scholarship (humanism) and from Thomas a' Kempis his emphasis on piety. On a side note, Erasmus is the man Luther contended with in "On the bondage of the Will" and is mentioned in the Solid Declaration of the Book of Concord. But Luther also owes a great debt of gratitude to Erasmus for his edition of the New Testament into Greek.

It was Erasmus' Greek text of the New Testament that "was a boon to Luther...Luther was able to recover theological meaning obscured if not perverted in the medieval period."<sup>37</sup>

Upon returning to Germany in 1479, Agricola wrote his most famous work, *De Inventione Dialectica*. In this work Agricola makes the astounding statement that a Deaf person can express themselves, can communicate thoughts and ideas. Though this document was not to be considered in the realms of Deaf work until 100 years after its writing, it would have a profound influence on the societal views of Deaf people.

Agricola's work was later read by the Italian physician Girolamo Cardano, who was a brilliant mathematician of his day. He was famous for publishing the general theory of the cubic and quartic equations. His personal life was one of great turmoil, even spending time in jail during the time of the inquisition. But his significance for Deaf people was huge as he announced Deaf people can learn without first learning how to speak.

Now begins the mighty struggle that is still at the core of Deaf Education: Whether to use voice or sign, that is, must communication equal verbal? Agricola and Cardano give us the first clear modern day statement that Deaf people do NOT need to be able to speak with

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<sup>37</sup> John Dillenberger Martin Luther p. 166

their voice to think, or have language, or communicate, or be involved in society. This is a “war” that we will see in educators through the centuries and that continues to be fought around the world today. Many times through this history we will see people divided for signing only, or for voice only, and sometimes doing both.

It is during this time the church finally becomes directly involved in the teaching of Deaf children. Pedro Ponce De Leon (1520-1584) was a Benedictine monk who established the world’s first school for the Deaf. He is credited as the first teacher to use sign language to train Deaf children. One of the possible reasons for the acceptance of sign is the silent order of the Benedictine community. They seem to have developed an elaborate means of communication with gestures and signs that De Leon could have incorporated into his work. Along with signing, De Leon also pushed his students to learn to voice.

Unfortunately the work of Ponce De Leon appears to die with him. But it is this continued effort from Cardano and De Leon that now guide; Juan Pablo Bonet. Bonet developed a book about teaching and included a one-hand manual alphabet, “Reducción de las letras y arte para enseñar á hablar los mudos” (Madrid, 1620). – That is “Simplification of sounds and the act of teaching the deaf to speak.” (Appendix II) He believed that a deaf child should first learn the manual alphabet. He also explored the medical connection with the tongue and mouth, using mirrors, breath, and movement to teach his children how to voice.

In England, a physician named John Bulwer (1614-1684) gives us some of the first books ever published in English that fully recognize the uniqueness of sign language. His books attempt to show the distinct hand shapes, facial expressions, and emotions shown through signing. Though his books did not relate to the direct teaching of Deaf people, they

helped to document the increased development of work with Deaf people. It also acknowledges the communication and thoughts expressed through the use of a signed system.

"A pregnant example of the officious nature of the Touch in supplying the defect or temporall incapacity of the other senses we have in one Master Babington doth notwithstanding feele words... whose Wife discourseth very perfectly with him by a strange way of Arthrologie or Alphabet contrived on the joynts of his Fingers... can so discourse with him very exactly"<sup>38</sup>

One of his most famous works is "The Deaf and Dumbe mans Friend." (Appendix III) He introduces to a wider audience the subject of deafness and language problems associated with Deafness. His printing of the finger spelling chart gives us a great example of the mechanics of hand shapes used during his time. His books also help move signing into the areas of Physiology and Psychology with the study of the mechanics involved in signing and showing emotions. It develops the idea that communication for a deaf person means not only shapes on the hand, but also includes the whole body position, facial movement, and expressions with the sign language to convey the meaning.

In France, a priest, Abbe Charles Michael de L'Epee became the pioneer French teacher, adapting Bonet's book and learning the sign language of the Deaf people in Paris. In the Mid 1700's L'Epee helped to establish the first free deaf school and his work later was adopted to become the foundation of sign language we use in America. His successor, Abbe Roch Sicard (Archbishop of Bordeaux) is the one who brought together Laurent Clerc (French) and Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet (American) to introduce American Sign Language to our continent and to Deaf education in 1816.

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<sup>38</sup> 1648 John Bulwer



As you can see, the views of and the work with Deaf people have made a remarkable change. It does not slow; from that time on begins a flurry of persons, forms, and insights into the education of Deaf people. Johann Amman for example, was a Swiss Physician who became popular using the oral method. He would apply pressure to the throat to teach his students how to make the sounds for voice.

In Germany Samuel Heinicke became the Father of Oralism. He started tutoring using the signed method, but over the years he adopted the oral method, devising ways to teach his students through sight, taste, touch. Heinicke carries on a correspondence with L'Epee, the Father of the signed method. (Library of Congress Call Number: HV2471 .H4 1968) Heinicke does not see how learning can happen apart from speech. He believes if you cannot learn the spoken language, you cannot learn.

In England, a Scotsman named Thomas Braidwood founded the first British School for the Deaf. As opposed to the one handed alphabet used in France, Braidwood adopted a two handed finger spelling style that continues to be used in Britain, Australia, and India. He accepted the signs and gestures of Deaf people, but he stressed the oral method as children grew older. In 1812 his grandson, John, attempted to set up an oral Deaf school system in America, but his efforts failed because of various misfortunes.

Through the recent history there has been a cornucopia of developments in Deaf education. One thing for sure is that Deaf people are becoming more “accepted” in the sense they are not seen as evil, or as uneducable. But was this true appreciation for Deaf people and seeing them as equals? Or was much of this “progress” done by self-serving, exploitive “professionals” seeking fame and fortune? Proof, alas there is little, but suspicion, alas there is much!

One great positive to our examples of workers among Deaf people is that many of them are clergy. The church is leading in many areas, teaching the faith through communication— Deaf people can have faith – NO doubt! Unfortunately we do have not any clear documentation what was taught, no deaf Catechism or other religious materials. But the perception that deaf people cannot have faith because they cannot hear, is now beginning to change through the work of these men of God.

Great advancements continue to be achieved, but the idea of full communication seems to be eluding event. Is it possible to have full inclusion of Deaf people in society? Is it possible to have full inclusion in our church community? Unbeknownst to Gallaudet and many others in America, there was a place that flourished for several centuries that gives us a glimpse of a Deaf Utopia.

From the 1700's to the early 1900's these was a wonderful place for Deaf people called Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts. There, on a small secluded island, a hereditary gene made up to 25% of the population deaf. The villages in the area developed their own sign language, everyone signed. They did not think of deafness as something to be ashamed of, they thought all the other areas of the world lived the same way. People were not described as deaf, but as tall, or blond, or a farmer, or... Being deaf was not considered a "handicap", it was normal to be Deaf! People signed everything: school, town meeting, food store, and church! In this fantastic world we see signing = communication!

Imagine if this would happen in our congregations! All of the people would learn to sign so they could communicate with Deaf people in their congregation. (Recently we saw a mother and two children signing. We approached them and asked if they were Deaf. The mother replied, "No, our whole church is learning to sign because some of our members have

Deaf friends.” Asking which church they attend, they replied “we are Jehovah’s Witnesses.”) If only our LCMS congregations would all be willing to learn to sign and share God’s Word with Deaf people!

But even this utopia of Martha’s Vineyard was not to be continued. Deaf education on the mainland slowly drew the deaf students off the island. Many of these deaf children did not return and as a result the number of deaf dwindled until the last original Deaf Islander passed away in the 1950’s. Martha’s Vineyard is a perfect example of what is possible in communication, education, societal acceptance, Christian education, and immersion of Deaf in the community.

Unfortunately, the quest for the best way to educate Deaf people will soon take a giant leap backward and divide the world. People continue to revisit the question and ask if Deaf people can communicate and be their “best” without speaking. We have listed many examples of people who worked with Deaf people from 1700 to 1900’s and their varying views. But, as far as I know, no one asked the Deaf people!

I think this is very clearly seen at the Milan Deaf schools conference held on September 6 to 11, 1880. It took only a small group of people to turn back the tide of manual communication and again force the idea that thoughts and ideas can only come through voice.

“Milan was partly a result of the organisation of the conference i.e. the exclusion of deaf people in voting, and the imbalance in the English and American members access to Italian”<sup>39</sup>

Because of this conference, in the subsequent years we see the tidal wave of oralism running rampant across Europe and even into North America. In fact the only country to oppose

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<sup>39</sup> <http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/DeafStudiesTeaching/deafed/Session%202A.htm>

adoption of the oral based method was America. The struggle is shown in the words of the first president of the National Association of the Deaf, Robert McGregor:

“The utmost extreme to which tyranny can go when its mailed hand descends upon a conquered people is the proscription of their national language. What heinous crime have the deaf been guilty to that their language should be proscribed?”<sup>40</sup>

It is during this period that the story of LCMS deaf missions begins. In 1874 the Lutheran Institute for the Deaf was established at a facility near Chicago.

“Twenty years after the founding of the deaf school in Detroit, one of its graduates, Edward Pahl, enlisted the help of the school's director, Daniel H. Uhlig, to address the spiritual needs of deaf adults. Director Uhlig alerted Rev. Augustus Reinke of (First) Bethlehem Lutheran Church of Chicago, who, in turn, met with Mr. Pahl. By their combined efforts, Reinke and Pahl started congregational ministry for Deaf people on Sunday March 4, 1894. Within two years, Pastor Reinke also ministered regularly to Deaf people in Milwaukee, St. Louis, Louisville, and many other cities. The 1896 convention of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod in Fort Wayne, Indiana, had the opportunity to witness the fruit of Pastor Reinke's ministry, as he led worship in Sign, assisted by deaf members of his congregation. During that convention, Synod adopted Deaf Missions as an official mission program of Synod. Pastor Reinke was elected chairman of the new board, and within six months four other men were called to work full-time with Deaf people.”<sup>41</sup>

Our LCMS Deaf Mission started with signing, and we have never stopped! Even through the following years of drought in the Oral system of Education in America, our church always provided the place for Deaf people to gather and communicate freely. The Church became a home, a place where Deaf people are fully included in the society of God's Kingdom.

But we did not reach the point of full immersion, neither by signing in all our congregations, nor by seeing Deaf people as capable of full leadership. We had a great school and instead of continuing the training of the Deaf to become leaders and Pastors, we

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<sup>40</sup> Harlan Lane: When the Mind Hears

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.lcmsdeaf.org/history.html> (No relationship me that we have been able to discover)

turned again to speaking people. The idea that Deaf people cannot do it, because they cannot speak, is very hard to overcome.

### **The Past 100 Years**

Alexander Graham Bell in America is regarded as a great man, inventor of the telephone. He also wanted to begin an oral school, but failed. Later, with much success from his inventions and financial backing, he led the rebellion against the use of sign. He opens up an oral school and helped to begin the decline of signed communication, leading to a backwash of strict oralism. Today this battle in American Deaf Education rages on.

There is some encouraging news from the world of Deaf sports. Signals in baseball started in 1901 in the American League. The Umpires develop hand signals for William “Dummy” Hoy, a deaf outfielder, to see balls and strikes from the outfield. The Gallaudet University football team must huddle together so the other team cannot see the signs for the next play. Soon the football huddle is adopted by hearing teams across the country.

It continues to be difficult for Deaf people to find good, steady jobs. The World Wars did change this situation somewhat and opened up employment for Deaf people. Deaf men could not fight in the military (although there are examples of deaf people serving in the kitchens and escorting prisoners in Europe). But with many hearing men called up to serve, there is a great need for more workers at home. Employers are willing to make accommodations and communicate with Deaf people to train them for the job, and Deaf employment multiplies exponentially.

Meanwhile we have amazing technical gadgets that allow Deaf people to become more and more involved in the mainstream of society. The typing telephone (TDD – The

Telecommunication Device for the Deaf) was a huge machine the size of a stove and was a revolutionary device that allowed Deaf people to talk and convey information with their friends and neighbors. Gone were the days of having no news and knowing little of what was happening in the world; no more need to drive from home to home to relay when someone died or when there would be a celebration.

Next comes the advent of interpreters, people who are trained to sign as a profession, decreasing dependency upon hearing children to relay information and to sign during Doctors visits, legal appointments, and almost every interaction with hearing people. Next was added the relay interpreter, the person who communicates between Deaf people on the TDD and a hearing person on a regular phone.

Even more freeing is the introduction of Video Phones (VP), whereby Deaf people can see each other live through cameras connected to their TV's. Wow - instantaneous live communication! The fantastic story of children being able to talk with their Deaf mom or dad, being able to see the expressions in a full dimensional format, instead of a flat one dimensional typed text. Being able to say "Mom, I love you" and see the smile and reaction. That is communication!

We now have full access of video phone calls on cell phone! The use of text messaging and email with cell phones has opened up the world of instant communication for Deaf people. Our whole definition of "instant" has been transformed!

But is this becoming full inclusion into society- unfortunately NOT! Deaf people may be able to talk with Deaf people, but rarely do hearing people interact with Deaf people in a social setting. They may do so for work or business, but not because of choice. Deaf people continue to be excluded.

The advancement of technology has opened up strong feelings, especially the raging debate around the use of cochlear implants. Parents want to “fix” their broken deaf children. Deaf adults are afraid of losing their Deaf community and culture as we “force” everyone to become hearing. It reminds me of the circling of the wagons that happened in the LCMS to speak German, protecting the German culture. There are good points on both sides, but how will this be resolved? (There is one prediction that in 25 years there will no longer be any young Deaf people in America because of technological advancements.)

Deaf people are now seen regularly on mainstream Television programs.<sup>42</sup> This is also a great joy because now all Televisions have closed captioning technology to show text. Isn't it ironic that movies - an entertainment mode that was fully accessible when first created in the silent screen days, became largely inaccessible to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing for many years when “talkies” started! In the beginning it was great! Our Deaf continue to love the old silent movies, with the captions and the actions. No verbal communication needed!

Another huge shift has come from the push for “rights of inclusion” under The Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Now the public sector (government buildings, schools, colleges, etc.) is open to people with disabilities, including providing interpreters for Deaf people. This opened the doors for people of many disabilities to be given equal access. For the Deaf people this greatly improved interpreter services, video phones and video relay services, vibrating alarm clocks for hotel rooms, flashing alarms for fire, and a variety of many other services.

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<sup>42</sup> Law and Order; CSI; etc...

Soon after the passing of The Rehabilitation Act was Public Law 94-142 passed on November 29, 1975. One unexpected result was the request of parents to have their Deaf children mainstreamed into their local schools. The schools must provide for the “least restrictive environment” for the children. Many parents felt this meant close to home, in their community, with their family.

The results are not all in, but what does the future hold? For some children who are hard of hearing, it is fantastic because they can use the signing as a supplement to their learning. Unfortunately for many fully Deaf children mainstreaming can lead to isolation and a cut off from communication. Why? Because often the only people who know how to sign are the mother, the interpreter, and maybe one or two friends who know a little sign. Deaf children are often cut off from daily communication with the larger society around them, they are isolated and alone.

One of our Lutheran members who interpreted for a mainstream school shared the story of a young Deaf boy in high school. In the fall he began coming to school very depressed. When she talked with him, she found out he was afraid of death. She talked with the parents to see if anyone had recently died in the family or if something had happened, “No, no one had died.” Upon talking with the boy during the next few weeks she discovered “he” was afraid of dying, why? Because he had never seen a Deaf adult, only hearing adults, he thought all Deaf children grew up, went to High School, and died. (Thank God she was able to use that opportunity to bring in Deaf adults, but most importantly share how Jesus helps us not be afraid of dying!)

Technology has paved the way for Deaf people to be out in the “real” world and be “equal” with hearing people, but are they really part of society? Can there be full



communication between a Deaf person and a hearing person? Unfortunately, the answer is often “NO.” For this to happen, hearing people must learn the means of communication, because Deaf people cannot learn to hear.

Today, Sign Language is the third most used language in America, behind English and Spanish. It is recognized by colleges and universities as a foreign language, with its own syntax, idioms, and rules of grammar. It is not seen as a written language, it is a visual language. So, maybe, someday, (in heaven) full communication!

As you can see the last 100 years has been a very eclectic time for Deaf people in society. Much very positive, but not without its struggles. Our focus is upon our western world and the impact here in the U.S... In many countries around the world they are beginning to educate their Deaf children, but many of the technological advancements here, will take time to reach the developing world.

The world has made great advances that are benefiting Deaf people. There is more “associability” to interpreters and other services. But sadly this does not apply to the church at large. Yes, we have had a great Deaf Ministry in the LCMS. When I started in Deaf Ministry 25 years ago we had 60 full time Deaf workers around the United States. In 2015, we have 11 full time workers, only 2 of which are fully supported by their district.

Many Deaf Pastors and workers have needed to accept calls to hearing congregations. Others have accepted calls to hearing congregations, but have been able to serve the Deaf part time. Others, like myself, have needed to become bi-vocational in the sense that we must raise our own funding through individuals, congregation, etc... to continue serving in Deaf Ministry.

Progress has been made in the world view of Deaf people. Movies, Television shows, and most public media have become captioned. Making news and information available to Deaf people. Many books and English materials are written in an English as Second Language format to make them accessible to Deaf people.

The same transformation is also needed in our religious setting. Until the thoughts and ideas of the Word of God are presented in a format Deaf people understand, they will not receive the full picture and meaning of His Word, they will be cut off. We need to continue utilizing the technology, but we need to adapt materials to train Deaf people to become the leaders, Pastors, and Deaconesses. They are the best speakers of their language. It begins and ends with communication, how can we communicate God's Word for Deaf people in a better way?

### **History of Work with Adapting Materials**

We have previously touched on the Lutheran School for the Deaf in Michigan as the beginning of our work in Deaf Ministry in the LCMS. For many years we taught young deaf children to learn about Jesus with sign language. Unfortunately that is all we did, we did not teach them how to teach about Jesus, share their faith, lead Worship, or serve the Deaf Community at large.

A number of graduates of the school lived in the vicinity of Chicago. One of them, Mr. Edward Pahl, contacted the director and asked his help in finding a pastor to conduct sign language services for the deaf. In turn, the director contacted Rev. August Reinke, pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, who agreed to conduct services. He held the first service on March 4, 1894. Over the next two years Pastor Reinke, in addition to providing monthly

services for the Deaf in Chicago, conducted services in other cities in Illinois, Indiana, Missouri and Wisconsin.

Pastor Reinke gave a report to the Synod convention on his work among the Deaf and in the 1896 Synod convention, Synod voted to assume the responsibility for Deaf Missions. It elected a Board of five men (three clergy, two lay), which began to recruit pastors for this work. It administered and promoted the mission, provided oversight of the missionaries, and raised and managed funds for the work of the mission.

This is a great beginning, but do you see what is missing? The hearing people are doing all the work. We have this great school and resources to teach and train the students, but we stopped. We did not develop the resources for the Deaf people to become the teachers. We did not help these Lutherans become Deacons, Pastors, Deaconesses, etc... to serve Jesus and reach out with the Gospel.

Through the years, the Hearing pastors have developed resources to use with Deaf people. They developed a Deaf Catechism to teach the faith. They developed and used Bible Story materials to share with children and to teach in Bible Study. What is lacking is doctrinal and seminary level materials, prepared in a format Deaf people can understand. In 2004 we finally began a training program at Concordia Seminary with signed and adapted materials. These materials are adapted into a format Deaf people can understand and become trained to be Pastors and Deaconesses. In the last 10 years of the Deaf Institute of Theology we have trained more Deaf Pastors and Deaconesses than in the whole history of the LCMS.

But we continue to face a problem: these Pastors and Deaconesses do not have resources to continue their study in God's Word. There are no commentaries, Bible Study Series, or Doctrinal materials that are in a format suitable for Deaf people. We need to

change this situation. We need to develop a better way to adapt and develop religious materials for Deaf people. The next step in this process is to develop a set of rubrics to aid in adapting written religious materials for Deaf people. To help in understanding how to do this, we need to examine what is already being done to adapt and develop materials.

### **What We Are Doing Now And What We Need To Be Aware Of:**

In developing and adapting materials we must first focus on the language of communication. A Deaf person does not learn, use, nor understand English the same as a hearing person. A big portion of this is vocabulary. When a word is signed there is no phonic sounding of the word, there is a physically signed concept that is used for the word.

It is hard for a hearing person to understand, how this is possible, why not just learn more vocabulary? When a word is signed, the person does not see the word, they see the sign. For example, I can see a word like “elephant” and immediately a picture forms in my mind. What if I say the word “justification,” did one picture form in your mind? This is the challenge when signing: most words do not have a physical picture associated with them. If I see the word “elephant,” I see the picture, I know the sign. With most abstract words and concepts I only see the word and must know the meaning to explain the word.

In developing and adapting materials we must make the vocabulary match with signs that are readily known. An example for this came when we were evaluating the New International Readers Version of the Bible. One of our deaf members came to us and said it was wrong. He directed us to 1 Kings 18:27. In the NIrV it reads “At noon Elijah began to tease them. “Shout louder!” he said. “I’m sure Baal is a god! Perhaps he has too much to think about. Or maybe he has gone to the toilet. Or perhaps he’s away on a trip. Maybe he’s

sleeping. You might have to wake him up.” He showed us and said it does not say he went to the toilet in his Bible!

We examined the NIV which read “<sup>At</sup> noon Elijah began to taunt them. “Shout louder!” he said. “Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened.” Consider also the ESV which reads “And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying, “Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.”

We in our “polite” English want to say “busy.” It sounds better than gone to the toilet. But also the phrase “relieving himself” is not understood in sign language. In sign language relief does not include the meaning to use the bathroom like it does in English. This deaf member thought it meant relaxing or on vacation, he had no concept it meant going to the toilet. That is the meaning of relief for a Deaf person, to be relieved or relaxed after a stressful situation.

This may seem like a trivial (try to picture that word – trivial – in sign language is the “F” hand back moving left to right) example, but if such a simple concept as going to the toilet cannot be properly conveyed, then what happens to more complex concepts. That is one of the reasons many people look down on Deaf people, they think Deaf people cannot understand, but that is not the truth. The problem is language, it is communication. It would be the same as if you went to China, they spoke only Chinese and expected you to understand, but you only speak English. Either they need to learn English to talk with you or you need to learn Chinese and speak with them. The problem is Deaf people cannot learn to hear. We must learn to communicate in a way they can understand.

Often people give two responses to the need for adapting the vocabulary: why do they not just memorize more and they can read lips. The problem, as with many languages, the printed form of the word looks very similar to other words and it is only in the pronunciation that you see the difference in the meaning of the words. As a Deaf person cannot hear the pronunciation, it is very difficult to understand different words that look very similar.

People also say “why not read lips?” The problem is that over 30% of the sounds we make are not seen on our lips. We produce sounds with our tongue and throat that are hidden from the eyes. If you know the context of the words and sentences, this makes it easier. But every time the subject changes, the words get lost. If the person looks away, everything is lost. (Think of how we lead Worship, which way does the Pastor face?)

Next we must also consider the structure of the sentences. This too must be revised. Complex sentences are often lost in communication as the subject and object are lost. A main reason for this is you need to understand the interaction between the actors in the story. Signing is not only about the movement of hands, it is also about the placement of body and the placement of signs. When a sentence is signed, all of the actors, subjects, objects, and movements must be placed to understand the concept. If the placement is not right, the whole concept can be misunderstood.

When we are developing or adapting materials, we must use short direct sentences. This is beneficial because English is a two dimensional language. English does not have the directionality that is part of American Sign Language, a three dimensional language. Two dimensional language is linear, it gives you the ability to convey a beginning, middle, and ending in communication. Sign language as a three dimensional language gives you the

added ability to display placement and movement, thus having the ability to convey several events or ideas at the same time.

We must be clear who is the subject, what or who is the object, and what action is happening. Here is an example from John 12, the difference between the NIV and NIrV.

NIV says <sup>20</sup>Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. <sup>21</sup>They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. “Sir,” they said, “we would like to see Jesus.””

NIrV changes to <sup>20</sup>There were some Greeks among the people who went up to worship during the feast. <sup>21</sup>They came to ask Philip for a favor. Philip was from Bethsaida in Galilee. “Sir,” they said, “we would like to see Jesus.””

We must follow the same examples as we adapt our commentaries and doctrinal resources.

One huge hurdle in reading English is the use of the Passive voice. Sign language is all active, it shows action. We often speak in the passive voice in our sentences, example “The plane was cleaned.” Sounds simple, but when signed it looks like the plane cleaned something. We want to change this to an active sentence, “The workers cleaned the plane.” This shows a clear concept, who is the actor, and what happened.

A very simple example of this is in the Words of Institution. Often the Pastor will say, “On the night in which He was betrayed.” If you sign this it comes out on the night Jesus betrayed someone. Not at all what the sentence means. When we sign the Words of Institution we make it active, “on the night Judas betrayed Jesus.” Now we know who did the action, we understand the movement in the sentence.

Unfortunately the passive voice is very confusing, but it is also very challenging in conveying concepts. Much of our theology is passive, we do nothing, God does it. If we do not sign God is the actor, it makes it look like we are the ones doing the work. Even saying “I was saved” makes it look like I saved something, or I saved myself. We need to change

this to active voice, “God saves me.” This changes the whole concept! Many Deaf people become confused by the passive voice and do not realize what God has done for them.

One of the final points we need to include is the use of pictures, visuals, a story. In theology there are many abstract concepts, which must be converted into visual examples to help people understand. Often pictures are used in hearing congregations to help illustrate the point.

When explaining the concept of the Trinity we use the example of the egg, 3 parts (shell, white, yoke), but it is one egg. The apple can also be used in the same way with the peel, meat, and core. A popular one is Kool aid with water, mix, and sugar together. We like to use visuals to help show abstract concepts. Good examples, but sometimes to explain a concept in sign language we need to be more straightforward (blunt).

How do we convey the idea of sin? Often it is seen as a “balance”, people say, “I really do not do much wrong, on average I do most things right so I should be ok.” That is common understanding of sin. To help convey the true meaning we share about brownies. “I make the best brownies, I use the best chocolate, the freshest milk, DELICIOUS! You want some? (The answer is always yes) I also use a special ingredient, just a pinch, a little sprinkle over the top, makes it taste SCRUMPTIOUS! Would you like to know my special ingredient? (YES) I use just a sprinkle, just a touch of *dog poop* sprinkled over the top. (Can you imagine people’s reaction?) You want some of my brownies? (NO).

This is the real picture of sin, it is not a balance. It is not if I do only a little bad and a lot of good, then I am “OK” with God. Sin is like the dog poop, it does not matter how much good I do, one sin, one mistake, and it spoils everything. Just as you would not want to eat my brownies, think of how God looks at our lives. Is God pleased? (NO) That is why



forgiveness is so important! In Jesus God cleans all the sin from our lives and makes us His pure children.

Did the brownie story offend you? We do not often talk this directly in hearing culture. We are more polite. But to convey the concept of sin we need to have a concrete picture that shows what sin does in our lives. Deaf people now have a picture of sin they can understand and share with others.

As we develop and adapt materials we also need to take into account the culture and experiences of Deaf people. We must understand their view of the church and of faith. Can you imagine Worship for deaf people in a hearing setting: sitting in silence for an hour with little movement, people pointing at words of which you have no idea what it means, watching the backs of heads, being scolded when you make sounds you have no idea you made. Would you want to go back?

Again and again parents, family members, Deaf people themselves tell us how they did not understand God's Word and now they can. They went through the motions but had no concept of the meaning. Now they get what God has done for them! This lack of communication affects all areas of family life.

One of the most distressing stories I remember seeing as a vicar happened while working with the Deaf students from the National Technical Institute for the Deaf. During the fall I got to know many of the students during Bible study, visits, and Worship. They seemed to adjust well and enjoyed their time at college and in classes. But a huge change happened when they came back from thanksgiving break, they came back angry! They did not want to go home again for Christmas. They did not like their families and the family gatherings during Thanksgiving. Why? Because at college they became accustomed to fully

communicating with everyone because everyone can sign. Now going home, the communication is very limited. Only one or two people can sign (a little) and they are left out of a majority of the conversations. They realized what they missed at home, became angry because of the lack of communication.

We think this cannot happen today. Unfortunately many deaf people are isolated, and have similar fears and experiences. Often very few people around them can sign and share what is happening in the world. They are cut off from crucial information. Imagine going to a large family event, the only person who knows how to sign with you is your sister. What happens while you are at this event? Will others talk to you? “NO” Your sister will for a short time but then she goes to talk with others. You are left alone to try “reading lips.” Very boring! This is the reason many deaf people do not like to go to family events, they feel left out.

These examples are only a beginning to understanding the complex issues involved in deafness and communication. There are many more that should be addressed and are included in the appendix. If we do not understand these issues, we will not be able to share God’s Word in a way that applies to their lives. They will see the words, but may have no understanding. They will be involved in the ceremony, but not understand the meaning and significance for their lives.

We are working to address these challenges through the development of the ABCD materials. ABCD stands for A Bible Curriculum Deaf. These materials are designed specifically for Deaf people to learn, but also to be able to teach and share with others. All of my ministry I have been working with others to develop materials for our Deaf

Disciples/Leaders. Our work started with basic stories and Bible Study materials.

(Appendix IV)

Since the year our family lived and worked with the Deaf in Africa (97-98), I have worked with others to develop a more comprehensive training program such as they use called TEE (Theological Education by Extension). Starting with the Small Catechism we have continued to adapt materials for our Lay Leaders and are putting these materials together under “A Bible Curriculum Deaf” or called the ABCD’s.

ABCD is also the breakdown of the levels for the classes: A = Access, B = Bible, C = Commentaries, and D = Doctrine. (Appendix V) This focus is continued in this Major Applied Project as we adapt materials we use for “hearing” people into a format that will work for our Deaf disciples/leaders. For example, one area we are severely lacking is commentaries, etc... that our deaf leaders can use for advanced study. My goal with my MAP is to develop a set of rubrics that we can use to adapt a commentary series that will be accessible for our Deaf people. Hopefully this will also expand to other religious resources being adapted.

The Access block will be introduction materials guiding people into the basics of what it means to be a Christian. We will include the Deaf Catechism presented as a complete whole, but also in various portions that answer people’s questions about God’s Word in our life. We have also developed a list of over 1000 Bible Summary questions that we are separating in sections for study. We are also developing a course on what it means to be a disciple.

The Bible block will guide people using various Core Bible Studies for Deaf people. These Studies will be building their knowledge and understanding of God's Word. This will include studies on the books of the Bible, basic teachings, leadership, etc...

The Commentary block will challenge the people as they dig deeper into God's Word. This will be a commentary adapted to match the simplified English and pictures needed to help Deaf people become immersed in the deeper meanings in God's Word. One of the main goals is to have a resource that will help clarify the concepts and pictures, and provide background material to understand the meaning of the verses.

The Doctrine block will lead our Deaf leaders into a deeper understanding of the core doctrines that come out of God's Word. This will utilize materials from Summary of Christian Doctrine, Pieper, Book of Concord, and other material to expand the understanding and application of God's Word in our lives.

Deaf ministry is unique. The LCMS has been involved in Deaf ministry for over 120 years and I myself for over 25 years. We have struggled with how to train leaders and "do" Deaf ministry, especially during the changes in ministry during the last 25 years. We have strived to create a culture of training, equipping, and preparing people as God's Disciples. We have incorporated many aspects of training on different levels, from Worship, Bible Studies, weekly leaders training, and monthly regional training workshops.

One of the biggest struggles we continue to have is developing and adapting materials that will work with Deaf people. Without materials presented in a format they can understand, Deaf people have no idea what God's will is for His people. They also do not understand how they are called to live out His plan in their lives.

In this chapter we have seen how history sees Deaf people. We have laid the foundation, now we need to build. What are the rubrics that can lead us forward? Can these rubrics help us to build the bridge upon this foundation to reach Deaf people with the Gospel?

## **CHAPTER 4 RUBRICS RESEARCH**

The foundation is laid, we affirmed that God wants communication with Deaf people, He wants them to enjoy the peace and joy of Christ now, and in Heaven! In the next two chapters we will continue this process of building by looking at both a qualitative and quantitative approach to adapting religious materials. The qualitative process is the focus of this chapter as I sought fellow workers in Deaf Ministry who have written and adapted materials for Deaf people. The idea is to ask them to share their ideas for rubrics, that is, the guidelines they use in developing their materials.

The quantitative area of this project will be fleshed out more in chapter 5 as we also branch out to examine other groups who are adapting materials. These will include not only materials for Deaf people, but also for English as Second Language (ESL) users, and those who work in translating Biblical materials into other languages. These resources of rubrics, interviews, emails, etc. will add to the discussion as we examine their work. This will help us to see parallels, contradictions, or areas of expansion in the rubrics compiled for adapting Deaf materials. At the end, we finally discuss the outcomes of the research and ideas for moving forward.

In the preceding chapters we laid out the challenges facing us in reaching out to Deaf people. The situation looks dire, beginning from the view of society that Deaf people are outcasts, to the struggle of how to include Deaf people with language and communication, and even Christian believers who thought Deaf people could not go to Heaven -- it is almost overwhelming. Why do we need rubrics? How will they help? What specific situation will they address?

The idea for this project has been developing for many years as my colleagues and I have worked to adapt materials for our Deaf people. We have seen the need as Deaf people struggle to read God's Word and understand His love for them. Deaf people do not think in words, they think in pictures and stories. That is why many of the stories in the Old Testament about the faithful people of God are excellent for working with Deaf people. The Gospel stories of Jesus life and what He did are also easy to teach and remember.

When I think of contemporary example for this situation, the one I often think of is the miss-communication shown in the Star Trek episode called Darmok. Picard is captured, then trapped on a planet with an alien captain who speaks a metaphorical language that is not compatible with the universal translator. They must learn to communicate with each other as they face a deadly beast together. The Tamarians only speak in stories, Picard needed to learn the stories to understand the Tamarian language.

The problem is that Jesus' parables and the Epistles do not work well with Deaf people. The parables are stories, but they have a hidden meaning. Yes, the story can be signed and understood, but to see the meaning behind it is not easily done in signing. One student, when asked if the parables are true stories, replied, "Of course they are true, Jesus would not lie." But explaining the truth of Jesus behind the story is very difficult. Signing is straight forward and does not tell stories with a separate meaning.

The Epistles also are difficult for Deaf people. The reason is that, once again there is no story. If you look at the stories of Paul in Acts, those are easy to sign and present a clear picture. But the Epistles explain concepts and ideas, and often lack a story that goes with the words. Thus they remain only words to many Deaf people. Yes, if you read the verse we

can explain the idea, but there is no easy way to sign and teach for people to remember the idea.

Examples of this are the Lord's Prayer and the Apostle's Creed; we would think "everyone remembers the Lord's Prayer and the Creed." But among Deaf people I serve, over 80% of Deaf members do not have the Lord's Prayer or the Apostle's Creed memorized. They can "copy sign" the Lord's Prayer and the Creed. During Deaf Worship we do not use hymnals, etc. because you cannot hold books and sign. The lay leader/reader signs the people part of the Worship and the members copy and sign the Worship Service.

Here are printed examples of how we sign the Lord's Prayer and Apostle's Creed:

Our Father in heaven.  
Holy is Your name.  
Your kingdom come.  
Your will(want) happen on earth same-as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread  
Forgive our sins,  
Same-as we forgive people sinning against us.  
lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil. Because Yours is the kingdom,  
the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

#### THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty;  
God made heaven and earth.

And I believe in Jesus Christ,  
His only Son, our Lord.  
Jesus received a body through the Holy Spirit  
born from the Virgin Mary;  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
got crucified, died and buried.  
Jesus descended into hell;  
the third day Jesus rose from the dead.  
Jesus ascended into heaven  
and rules with God the Father Almighty.  
From heaven Christ will come  
to judge the living and dead people.



I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Holy Christian Church,  
my fellowship with holy people,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body and life eternal. Amen.

The members can copy sign the Lord's Prayer and Creed, they can discuss and understand the concepts. But both are just strings of words tying concepts together, they do not have a full story, they do not present a full picture. If we tell the story of Daniel in the Lion's Den, we have a full picture with actions; you can see what happens in the story and the movement. With the Lord's Prayer and Apostle's Creed this is missing.

This also makes it a struggle to find a Bible Translation that works for Deaf people. The popular versions we use, like New International Version and the English Standard Version, are good for hearing people. But for Deaf people the vocabulary and the sentence structure are too complicated. Having that many words, sentences, and paragraphs all strung together is also often overwhelming for Deaf people. One of the best Bibles we have found for our Deaf is the Action Bible. It incorporates many pictures with the stories to show what is happening visually. But again the vocabulary continues to be a struggle and it does not include the whole of Scripture.

This leads to a challenge in locating Bible study materials that are "Deaf friendly." That same situation we face in looking for appropriate Bible translation occurs when we look for Bible Study materials. We evaluate and want to use materials developed by Concordia Publishing House and other publishing companies, but the language and sentence structure are too complicated. The materials are usually based on concepts, and these concepts are then strung together. They are not based on stories that give a mental picture. They also

often lack visual pictures to convey the story. Without the mental and visual picture to connect to the concept, the core idea to be conveyed is lost.

We also want more Deaf people themselves to become trained in teaching the doctrines articulated in God's Word. Our doctrinal resources, especially Lutheran ones, are a rich heritage conveying the truths of God's Word and how they apply to our lives. A majority of Deaf people would take one look at the words in our doctrinal materials and not even want to begin studying. We need to develop materials that convey the Doctrines we cherish from God's Word in a way that Deaf people can also love, appreciate, cherish, and most importantly, understand.

Along with our doctrine, one of the most needed resources are commentaries. As Deaf people continue to study and grow in faith, they need resources to help them understand the depth of God's Word, the context of the materials, and the background information. I have found no suitable commentary that we can use as a resource for Deaf people to continue growing in faith. There is a commentary used in some circles, but it is from a Reformed perspective in doctrine and includes teachings of evolution and symbolic understanding of the Sacraments. This makes it difficult and can be confusing for Lutheran Deaf people. (Appendix XV)

Training Deaf people to become Deaf workers needs to become a priority. Deaf people themselves are the best resource for reaching other Deaf people. The rubrics we are seeking to develop will help us to evaluate Bible translations to see if they will meet the needs of Deaf people. These rubrics can be used in all the areas of material development, from Bible Studies to Doctrinal level materials, and in adapting commentaries. The only way we can reach the 98% of Deaf people who do not believe in Jesus, is to convey the depth of

God's Word in a format they can comprehend, remember, and be able to teach to other people.

## **Qualitative Research**

My first step in this process was to select a group of workers from whom to request rubrics. The criteria I used in selecting this group comes from our experience together in Deaf Ministry and included: workers:

- who have over 20 years of experience in Deaf Ministry;
- who are currently involved in Deaf Ministry;
- who have produced materials or adapted materials that they have shared with others in Deaf Ministry;
- who have shown a desire and passion for training Deaf people to be involved in the ministry;
- whose resources have been used by Deaf people with positive feedback;
- who have been involved in adapting Seminary level materials.

Each of these criteria adds a level of experience that will help us in reaching the goal of developing a set of appropriate rubrics.

I chose to select workers who have over 20 years of experience in Deaf Ministry and are currently involved in Deaf Ministry. They have seen, and continue to be engaged in, the changes happening in Deaf Ministry. Twenty five years ago when I began Deaf Ministry the focus was on establishing a deaf congregation, much the same as in a hearing setting. Over the years, however, the focus has changed from a Pastor called to serve one congregation, to a Pastor called as a Missionary Trainer. The goal for the Pastor/workers needs to be the equipping of the people to do the ministry. As Scripture says;

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>so</sup> that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17

“To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.”  
Ephesians 4:12

Those who have, and who continue, to work in Deaf Ministry are showing the desire and fortitude to continue the work. It is common for a person to become involved in Deaf Ministry, but then after a time, for a variety of reasons (finances, little perceived success, minimal support, etc...) to take calls or positions outside of Deaf Ministry. It takes a long time to learn and understand about Deaf people; Deaf culture and how Deaf people think is not learned only in a few months or even years. It must be experienced over time with interacting, teaching, training, and learning how best to equip Deaf people for ministry.

I also looked for workers who have already produced or adapted materials that they have shared with others in Deaf Ministry. They have proved their ability to develop, adapt, revise, and make their work available in print and/or online for other workers and the Deaf community at large. Their work has been examined by others working in Deaf Ministry, they have accepted criticism and feed back to improve their methods.

The workers I selected have also shown a desire and passion for training Deaf people themselves to be involved in the ministry. Unfortunately, as I stated in the previous chapters, there is an attitude that Deaf people cannot do it. “Their English is not good enough.” “Their knowledge or skill is not good enough.” We need more people who are willing to train more Deaf leaders and equip them to share the Gospel with other Deaf people in their communities. If Deaf Ministry is to continue, the goal of preparing Deaf people as worker priest/bi-vocational workers, needs to become the model going forward.

The materials and resources developed by this group has been tested by and is being used by Deaf people with positive feedback. Many other publishing companies and other

groups have developed resources, but that does not guarantee that these resources will be suitable for Deaf people. The resources these workers have developed are at an appropriate level for Deaf people.

Finally, I chose workers who have been involved in adapting Seminary level materials. The immediate use for the rubrics developed in my Major Applied Project will be for use in adapting commentaries and doctrinal materials. I chose workers with this level of experience because they would know some of the specific challenges faced in adapting seminary level materials. The vocabulary, concepts, terminology, etc... is on the CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) level of communication and must be adapted in a way that is accessible for Deaf people.

I see the rubrics developed from this MAP as being applicable in many areas of adapting materials. Even though we are targeting commentaries and doctrinal materials, these same Rubrics should work in adapting Bible Study materials, Sunday school materials, etc... Will these Rubrics be applicable in all areas of adapting religious materials? This will not be fully known until the final list is compiled, used, and evaluated.

The next step was to prepare the cover letter and the initial request for rubrics. (Appendix VII) This was prepared in consultation with my advisor and others on the faculty to ensure that they met the requirements of qualitative research. They agreed with my decision to keep the group and forms simple and straightforward.

There were many options to consider in how to ask for and explain the use of rubrics. This process was fleshed out in my discussion with my advisor and others as we debated the form to be used to ask for rubrics. Do we limit the number of words or lines? Do we give a limit on the "five top" rubrics? Do we give any guidelines or examples to suggest ideas? In

each of these cases we decided this would negatively influence the contributions of the writers.

If the process becomes too cumbersome and time consuming I believe the participation rate would decline. The final request form leaves an open ended request so the worker can decide the length of response. This also opens the opportunity for full participation with few constraints. The final request gives a short definition and asks an open ended question:

“Rubrics are a list of guidelines, principles, rules, etc... that are used to guide a project. From your experience, I am asking for your input on the rubrics you recommend for adapting materials. Specifically, the rubrics you recommend for adapting written materials for Deaf people.” (Appendix VII)

I also wanted to include that these rubrics are based on their experience. These are “hands on” rubrics that have been field tested by these contributors. One of the challenges in asking for rubrics is that many of us “do” the adapting and developing of materials, but may not consciously think of the process. I am interested to see how these rubrics compare. Will we be able to share this process of adapting materials in a way others can understand and use?

In preparing to send out the rubrics, I personally contacted all of the participants by email to ask if they would be willing to be involved with this project. After receiving their approval I emailed them the permission request letter and the formal request for rubrics. There were no follow up questions asked and I began receiving their rubric examples in a short period of time.

I have saved each of these responses anonymously on my computer and a compilation of all the responses are included in appendix VIII. Upon the completion of my MAP these

contacts and emails will be deleted from my system to preserve the anonymity of the contributors.

The received rubrics included a broad range from short phrases to rubrics with examples. The rubrics that included explanations and examples would be very good to use in training, especially for people with minimal experience in adapting materials. Rubrics in the short form would be good as a quick reference to use for evaluating materials. Both of these will be beneficial as we not only develop a list of rubrics, but also as we work to develop a full program to use these rubrics. We will need to have explanations and examples to help guide the adaptation process and evaluate the materials.

To make the Likert scale rating I included a majority of the rubrics in their submitted forms. In a few instances I did edit out some of the examples or explanations from the submitted rubrics. The main reason was to limit the length of the document for the Likert rating. With 49 rubrics this was a considerable length and this decision was made to keep the length manageable. I value the explanations and examples submitted and these will need to be included in the follow up documents as we develop the adaptation process.

I also decided not to combine, edit, or group together the rubrics, but to use all of them as submitted for evaluation purposes. I did attempt to remove all identifying comments so the rubrics could not be associated with one person or place. I did this because I wanted to give each rubric an opportunity to be rated. Even though some had the same content, they were phrased in different ways, and I wanted to see if one way was rated higher in the Likert Scale. In leaving the rubrics as submitted I was also attempting to limit my biases and influence.

There were several options of how to return the rubrics for the Likert scale rating. In evaluating the best approach I eliminated the option of grouping them by author as they would tend to be viewed as a whole and not as individual rubrics. I also wanted to avoid associating any specific rubrics with an individual to protect anonymity. I also eliminated the option of dividing them into groups, again because then it would seem like picking the best of the selections instead of rating each rubric.

In doing the research and comparing the work others have done, I became aware of the many options in deciding the placement of the rubrics and the rating scale. The layout needs to express the least bias and invite the clearest ability to answer.

I decided to list all of the rubrics and then alphabetize the list. This separated the rubrics from each different contributor. It also made the list varied so that certain types of rubrics were not grouped together. I decided to place the Likert Scale above the rubric to emphasize a clean rating scale so that it was fresh in their mind each time. This also made it easy to see the connection between which rating scale connected with which rubric.

After feedback from my advisor, the decision was made to number each of the rubrics. A number of reasons made this a good option: numbering the rubrics made the page cleaner and easier to follow; having each of the rubrics numbered would be beneficial in the task of compiling the Likert rating results; and numbering the rubrics would also assist in identifying and discussing specific rubrics.

I decided to use the 1 to 5 Likert scale as follows:

With each numbered rubric you will see a Likert Scale of 1 to 5.  
Please rate each of these rubrics using the Likert Scale of 1 to 5  
1 is not important and 5 is very important.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important)    1    2    3    4    5    (Very Important)



As you go through some may sound or be the same, please rate each one using the Likert Scale of 1 to 5.

Type your rating for each proposed rubric on the line after the number, please save the file, then return the document to me.

Example:

1.   4   (Not Important)    1    2    3    4    5    (Very Important)

The numbering of the Likert scale has many options (e.g. 1 to 7, 0 to 5, etc...). One of the resources that helped give me ideas was the “CDC Coffee Break: Using the Likert Scale in Evaluation Survey Work” by Jan Losby, PhD and Anne Wetmore, MPH from February 14, 2012. They cited that the 5 point Likert scale is the most popular. They also give a variety of options in developing and using the Likert scale.

In many Likert scale examples, a notation is associated with each number to clarify the meaning of that number. This gives the option for specifically defining the meaning of each number. The scale sent with the rubrics included defining notations with the low number (not important) and with the high number (very important).

One of the reasons for using the 5 point numbering of the Likert scale was to include an odd or middle number. Often the middle number is seen as the neutral or not sure answer. This odd number in our rating scale will be the dividing line in deciding if the rubrics is included in the final rating.

With the numbering of the rubrics and the rating scale, a line was added to type in the Likert Scale rating. This gives the most reliable means to retain the rating from each participant in the email process. This also gives the option of further defining the rating scale if so desired (i.e. 4.5). The cover letter and the final form sent to rate the rubrics are included in Appendix IX and Appendix X.

After receiving the rating for each rubric, the mean of each rubric would then be determined by adding together the ratings for each rubric and dividing by the number of participants. The mean will then be used to evaluate the rubrics, only those with a mean rating higher than three will be retained. The mean ratings will then be used to rank the rubrics from highest to lowest.

I have been very pleased with the many positive responses I received from those participating in my project. Many of my questions about being able to work together have been answered and I look forward to continuing to work together in further developing these rubrics.

As the research progressed, two of the Likert scale responders also added helpful commentary: One said “it would be good to leave more examples with each Rubric submitted.” These examples would make it easier to understand the intended meaning of the rubrics. Another person said, “Here are my ratings. Just one comment on two of them. #17 and #40 are very important (5) when you are creating materials for one specific group of people whom you know. If you are creating resources for the deaf in general, both of these don't really apply.” (Appendix X)

Reducing some of the examples, may have left some of the rubrics submitted a little unclear and open to interpretation. I appreciate the feedback. This gave me an opportunity to evaluate my decisions. The main reason I would submit the rubrics for the Likert scale in this way has not changed: all of the responders have extensive experience in Deaf Ministry and in adapting or writing materials. If these rubrics were submitted to a group of participants with no or limited experience in adapting materials, then the presentation of the materials would need to be changed.

As I write up the final rubrics I will also be keeping the examples to a minimum, as the immediate audience for this project is for those who have had experience in Deaf Ministry and the materials we need to develop. As we expand and possibly include those without this experience, then we will need to add more extensive examples and explanations for the rubrics.

The rubrics on “code switching” and knowing the audience bring the adapting of materials into a much more specific application. This MAP is to develop a broad range of materials. One of the challenges we face is the variety of Sign Systems in the Deaf Community and also the various levels of communication within those Sign Systems in the Deaf Community. In the interpreting community you have different levels of skill that can be used in different levels of work: Court Room to Doctor Appointments to School to general appointments. Plus you have a select group called Deaf Deaf Interpreters when those occasions arise that you need a person who is Deaf to interpret from another Deaf person to a hearing interpreter. In regular conversation this is all done with code switching of communication styles.

Three examples of Sign Systems used in the United States are: American Sign Language (ASL), Signed Exact English (SEE), and Cued Speech.

Cued Speech is:

Cued Speech is a visual communication system — mouth movements of speech combine with “cues” to make all the sounds (phonemes) of spoken language look different. ([www.cuedspeech.com/what\\_is\\_cued\\_speech.asp](http://www.cuedspeech.com/what_is_cued_speech.asp))<sup>43</sup>

This is a form of signing that attempts to convey the sounds of the words with hand and facial movements, in order to attempt to convey a phonetic form of communication to

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<sup>43</sup> [www.cuedspeech.com/what\\_is\\_cued\\_speech.asp](http://www.cuedspeech.com/what_is_cued_speech.asp)

help with English language. Several problems arise however because the signs look nothing like the printed word and the Deaf child also cannot sound out the word phonetically to remember the word. Thus the children can learn words, or parts of words, but can still have no concept of the meaning of the words.

Signed Exact English, commonly called SEE, is:

Signing Exact English (SEE) is a sign language system that represents literal English. ([www.seecenter.org](http://www.seecenter.org)<sup>44</sup>)

SEE is a Sign System that attempts to bring in all of the “of, was, were, the, etc...” words that are often not used in American Sign Language. The advocates of this system are attempting to give a better understanding of the English language system to help the students to be better readers and writers of the English language.

American Sign Language (ASL) is as follows:

American Sign Language (ASL) is a visual language. With signing, the brain processes linguistic information through the eyes. The shape, placement, and movement of the hands, as well as facial expressions and body movements, all play important parts in conveying information.

Sign language is not a universal language -- each country has its own sign language, and regions have dialects, much like the many languages spoken all over the world. Like any spoken language, ASL is a language with its own unique rules of grammar and syntax. Like all languages, ASL is a living language that grows and changes over time.

ASL is used predominantly in the United States and in many parts of Canada. ASL is accepted by many high schools, colleges, and universities in fulfillment of modern and “foreign” language academic degree requirements across the United States. ([nad.org/issues/american-sign-language/what-is-asl](http://nad.org/issues/american-sign-language/what-is-asl))<sup>45</sup>

Code switching between these forms of Sign Language would be hard enough, but add to that the many levels of American Sign Language and our work would be a monumental task.

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<sup>44</sup> [www.seecenter.org](http://www.seecenter.org)

<sup>45</sup> [nad.org/issues/american-sign-language/what-is-asl](http://nad.org/issues/american-sign-language/what-is-asl)

For the purposes of this MAP, we are striving to produce materials that will be usable across a wide range of uses in Cued Speech, SEE, and ASL communities. The required code switching would happen more in the signing of the materials than in the printed version of the materials. (A possible future study: what percentage of the materials adapted with the rubrics from this MAP would be compatible with Deaf people using these various sign systems – 70%, 80 %?)

In my experience Deaf people in the Cued Speech and the SEE group are more easily able to sign and understand materials from the ASL groups. ASL users have a harder time understanding and using the Cued Speech and the SEE materials because of the extra specified signs that are connected only to the English usage. Thus for our purposes we are focusing on adapting materials that will be accessible to the ASL groups of signers and will thereby also be accessible to Deaf people from other sign groups.

Upon receiving all of the responses with the Likert scale rating I will tally up the totals for each response. The response for each rubric will be listed, then the total of those numbers will be divided by the number of responders to give us a mean or average for each rubric. All of the rubrics with a mean rating of three or less will be removed from the list.

The rating of three or less signifies to me that it is of low importance in developing our final list. Those we remove may be useful in other areas as we sign the materials or utilize them in Deaf culture. But for the purposes of adapting printed materials they are not relevant to this Major Applied Project.

Below are the responses received according to the mean number, the number of rubrics with that mean number, and what percentage each mean number represents from the list of 49 Rubrics. (Appendix XI)

Scale	Rubrics	Percentage
5	2	4%
4.75	11	22%
4.67	2	4%
4.5	10	20%
4.25	8	16%
4	4	8%
3.75	1	2%
3.5	5	10%
3.25	1	2%
3	3	6%
2.75	1	2%
2.25	1	2%

As you can see only two of the rubrics received a top rating of five, the top 4%. Thirty-five of the rubrics received a rating of four or better putting those in the 72% of the group. 50% of the rubrics received a 4.5 or higher. Seven of the rubrics received a better than three and less than four average, making that 14% of the group. This leaves us with five of the rubrics that received a three or lower on the rating scale. This means that 10% of our rubrics submitted fall below our cut off line for inclusion in the final group.

One of the most challenging parts of this process has been to try combining the submitted rubrics into groups and developing a cohesive set to work from. After thinking of many ways and attempting a few ideas, I finally decided to first arrange all the rubrics in the order of highest rated to lowest, removing those rated three and below. (Appendix XIII)

Then I listed my own set of rubrics and attempted to separate each of the rubrics submitted under my list. In this way I would be able to evaluate my ideas for rubrics and then to see how the submitted rubrics either matched or added rubrics to my list. In Appendix IX is the letter sent to rate the rubrics received and the rubrics as I sent them to be rated.

With the questionnaires, responses, and ratings we now have: a compiled list of all the submitted rubrics (Appendix VIII), rubrics as listed for the Likert Scale rating (Appendix X), the ratings given to each rubric (Appendix XI), rubrics listed according to the rating given (Appendix XII), and a listing of how I saw the submitted rubrics matching my idea of rubrics (Appendix XIII).

Reinke revised list of Rubrics:

1. Vocabulary – easy read/sign
2. Short Sentences
3. No or limited Passive Voice
4. No or limited idioms
5. Visuals included – pictures, graphics, etc...
6. Other

As an ongoing project I will continue experimenting with the best structure in joining similar rubrics together to become one. This is a challenge as different wording again gives very subtle changes, especially when signed. I tried to follow the rubrics we are writing, while at the same time writing these rubrics. I want to be sure that Deaf people will also be able to read these rubrics and join with the process. I am looking forward to having Deaf people in our review process. For that to happen the rubrics need to be in a format that is also accessible for them.

An area that continues to need development is to make sure appropriate examples are included. The contributors to these rubrics stressed this need and it will need to be further developed. As we begin the process of using these rubrics to adapt materials, we will need to work together so that each rubric will have a simple explanation. In addition each rubric will need to have one or more examples to show how this rubric can be applied. I am planning in the future that there will be three sections in the example book: first the list of rubrics; second

the rubrics themselves with an explanation; third will be an examples of how to apply each rubric.

The qualitative materials are in development; in Chapter 5 we will enter the quantitative area of research by examining some of the other resources I found while working on my MAP. I was surprised to find many areas of overlap and some new ideas for rubrics. In addition to developing rubrics, working on the MAP has also opened up new areas of contact with others working in the area of translation and adapting of materials. Finally, we will begin to formulate answers to the questions of “so what” and “what next?”



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **RESEARCH RESULTS**

The gathering of rubrics was the focus of chapter 4, giving us the qualitative foundation to examine further information for this MAP. Now in Chapter 5 we will include the quantitative materials discovered during the research phase. We will also look at resources discovered while in communication with those who are working in the area of translating materials into other languages. We will briefly outline some of the work being done, recognize the similarities and explore areas of difference. In this chapter we will also propose ideas to answer the question “So what” and “what’s next?” We will discuss the outcome of the research and ideas for moving forward.

#### **Quantitative Research**

The quantitative research branches out into other groups who are adapting materials, not specifically only for Deaf people, but also for English as Second Language (ESL) users. We also include those who work in translating Biblical materials from English into other languages. Many contacts were made in these various areas of work to collect rubrics. These included face to face interviews, emails, Internet research, text messaging, etc. These resources will add to the discussion as we see how their work parallels, contradicts, or expands on the rubrics compiled for adapting Deaf materials.

In doing the research for this project many avenues of further contact information have developed. Two of the most exciting for me are the contacts with Northwestern Publishing House and Wycliffe Bible Translators. Both have been very willing to work with me and share information about their ministries and how we might partner together.

Northwestern Publishing House has an area of publication called Multi-Language Publications – WELS. These are resources they have developed to use with ESL readers. In doing research for my MAP I discovered some of the commentaries they have adapted from the People’s Bible Commentary series from Northwestern Publishing House for ESL use. These are some of the best resources I have found that are close to an appropriate language level for signing.

We have been in contact with their various departments and they have been very open to our use of their materials for training our Deaf people. We are presently using their John commentary to teach two of our Deaf Bible study classes. The vocabulary, sentence structure, and content have been very well received. At this time there are only four books of the People’s Bible Commentary that have been adapted.

The Multi-Language Publications have many other short books for different areas of Bible Study. I have included a list in Appendix XIV. Our Deaf groups will be examining these resources over the next few months and asking Deaf people to read and highlight any areas of vocabulary or sentence structure they do not understand. I am looking forward to seeing if these books have been adapted in a proper format and are close to the right level of reading for our Deaf people.

While these books have progressed much farther to meet the needs of the Deaf, some challenges still remain. The books are prepared for hearing groups; thus they have few pictures. We would like to add at least one picture for each story to help Deaf people visualize what is happening in the story. The picture helps to spatially see the movement and actions in the story, other than only in words. There are also specific sections in which the

vocabulary and sentence structure could lead to the wrong understanding of the concept. This often is seen in the English idioms we use and in some of our phraseology.

Take for example on page 4 of this commentary on John, this sentence: “We give commands and promises that are backed by the power and authority we have.”<sup>46</sup> Two parts of this sentence would be confusing for Deaf people. “Backed by the” is not a phrase that is used in signing. “Backed” is signed to mean going backwards or the back of your body. In this sentence it means “supported or sustained by” the power and authority. Next is the sentence ending, “we have.” There is no object or action upon something. We would need to change this sentence to correctly convey the meaning. One possible way of adapting this sentence is to say “Because of our power and authority, we give commands and promises to other people.”

In general, however, these are very useful books and we have shared them with other workers in Deaf Ministry. It is because of my Doctor of Ministry studies that I found this resource. I pray our partnership will continue to develop and soon we will be able to have all of the People’s Bible Commentary series adapted not only for our Deaf people, but also for others to use.

Another area where I looked for resources was from people who work in other countries. Having worked in Africa and India myself, plus communicating with people from other countries, I tried to find resources already in use. I had not found any Lutheran commentaries adapted in an English as Second Language (ESL) format for use in other countries. I asked several missionaries I know and corresponded by email with other LCMS

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<sup>46</sup> Believe and Live - English A Study of the Gospel of John Author: Gary P. Baumler produced by Multi-Language Publication of the Board for World Missions of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod 2009

workers. Once again I was unable to find any Lutheran commentaries in an ESL format that are presently used in other countries where English may not be their first language.

One group that does have a commentary for ESL users is Wycliffe Bible Translators, called Easy English. I was very excited also to see this commentary. They are using the right vocabulary, the sentence structure is easy to understand, and they keep it simple. Their rubrics as they defined on their website sound exactly like what we need. (Appendix XV)

EasyEnglish is able to express complex or abstract ideas in simpler words and grammatical structures without significantly losing meaning. It does this by:<sup>47</sup>

Short sentences

Only one topic per paragraph

No passive verbs

No split infinitives

No idioms

No rhetorical questions

No ambiguous pronouns

Not more than two clauses per sentence

Not more than two prepositional phrases per sentence<sup>48</sup>

Reading through their commentary I think it is basically a good commentary. The challenge we have is in some of the theology. In Genesis the authors of the commentary allow for evolution by stating that day can mean an “age,” a larger amount of time. They are also what we call “Christian, non-sacramental.” On verses that talk about the Lord’s Supper and Baptism it is explained as a sign or a symbol. An example is from 1 Corinthians 11:

Verses 23-24 Jesus said that the bread that he had broken was a sign for his body. He would die for their \*salvation. Then, whenever they ate the bread in a meeting for \*worship, they would remember him. They would remember that he died for their \*salvation.

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<sup>47</sup> <http://www.easyenglish.info/eewhatism.htm>

<sup>48</sup> IBID

Verse 27 We should remember what the \*Lord's Supper means. It is wrong to eat it if we do not remember that. The bread and wine are signs of the death of Christ. To eat and drink carelessly is to be guilty of Christ's death. A careless person is as much to blame as those who \*crucified Jesus. (<http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentaries>)

When I asked if they would give us permission to use their commentary and adapt it to our people and situation, their answer was "No." Their process seems great, it is what we need, but the theology could be a challenge to use with our Deaf people.

One of the other contacts I made with Wycliffe Bible Translators is in the area of Deaf Ministry. Mr. Andy Keener has been corresponding with me about the work they do in translating materials in different countries into their local sign system. He stated in an email to me: "Our primary role in Bible translation is to provide training and consulting services to local teams, usually managed under some local organization. We provide a series of initial training, including how to exegete Scripture for translation, drafting techniques, how to maintain clear, accurate, natural, and acceptable translation, checking the translation with local community members, Information Technology and video, and publishing. We generally seek to partner with local organizations that have a specific ministry use for the translated Scriptures, too."

Wycliffe, known in Mr. Keener's area of work as the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), has a very active program to help groups develop signed materials in their local language. I agree that we need to have signed materials, but this requires technology and ways to produce, save, copy, and distribute materials. Technology like that is often hard to find in other countries.

Some of the questions I want to explore with them include how they work with simplified English materials and the limitation they have with the available technology. The

Easy English version and commentary will make this accessible for Deaf people to have some of the basics in Bible knowledge, but again for us the challenge is in the theology of God's Word and the Sacraments. Do they have any advanced Bible study materials that can be used to help the Deaf grow in their faith? I pray we will be able to partner in some ways so they can use our materials.

The problem again is the same as we have faced elsewhere in this Major Applied Project: most of the Theological materials are not available in a language that is accessible for Deaf people. SIL is great in that they recognize Deaf people and the need for outreach. They see Sign Language as a recognized language that needs to be included with the other languages in developing materials. They have a good set of rubrics that they use to develop their materials. They also have a good training program to prepare those who will be adapting and developing materials in their local sign system.

I am continuing to communicate with Mr. Keener and others at SIL and I pray they will be willing to share more of their training resources and knowledge with us. I see a great benefit in using SIL materials to help prepare and train those who help us adapt materials. I do not want to "reinvent the wheel," if we can adapt and use their resources, as I would hope they are in an ESL format, which would save us a lot of time.

I am also looking forward to continued discussions about the possibilities for partnership in the countries we work in. How this will work I am not sure. There is the challenge, if they sign the materials, how will people actually see these materials given that technology is often not available? I want to explore more how they are answering these challenges, how they have shared the materials they have developed and how it is conveyed to others in these countries.

I am also curious what materials do they use for continued training: My understanding at this point is that they mainly work with Bible translations. Is it possible that we may be able to share the materials we have developed to give commentaries and other theological materials to the Deaf people in each area? We need to evaluate each area, if we have the simple English materials, can we use the English version or do we need to translate into their local spoken language?

I am also grateful to Dr. Mary Daniel for sharing her time and wisdom with me. Many of the previously mentioned contacts would have been much more difficult without her help. Dr. Daniel is a retired Professor of Portuguese at the University of Wisconsin Madison. She is a very strong Christian and is working with Wycliffe in translating materials for use in Brazil. She shared many of her insights into language and translating materials from English into Portuguese. I have included the highlights of our discussion in Appendix XVI. Mary helped me to see that much of what they do in translation work, also applies to our work in adapting materials. Specifically they must also examine and adapt:

Summary of Rubrics gleaned from Dr. Daniel:

No Passive voice

Syntax – Use the simplest common denominator

Short simple sentences – no complex sentences

Try to use simplest synonyms – it is ok to repeat yourself

Vocabulary level – Use the most common 1000 or 2000 words

What is the language level of the people we are working with? We must code switch to adapt to their level.

We are working from the fount language or language of origin to receptor language

Summary of Rubrics I gleaned from Wycliffe Bible Translators:

Short sentences make reading easier

Include only one topic per paragraph

No passive verbs

No idioms

All pronouns should clearly show who or what they are referring to

Limit vocabulary – EasyEnglish materials use only 2800 words

As you can see there are many overlapping ideas for Rubrics.

Dr. Daniel also referred me to contacts she has within Wycliffe and directed me where to look for resources. She has been an invaluable resource not only in finding information about rubrics used by others in translation work, but also in finding out about other resources that would benefit our Deaf students. I will be researching more the vocabulary lists they have developed, the key terms they have outlined, and exploring other ideas they have developed to see how we can use these resources for our Deaf students.

In studying how translation works with other languages, another of my contacts shared with me the rubrics they use in evaluating translations into French. (Appendix XVII) They use a format similar to a Likert scale to evaluate if the translation exceeds expectations, meets expectations, or is below expectations. We will need to have a similar evaluation for our work in adapting materials. We will need to develop a system to check the adapted materials to see if they accomplish all that is laid out in the rubrics and are at an appropriate level for Deaf people.

An additional opportunity for translations also occurred, while working on this MAP. I received an email asking if our work was available for the Deaf in Spanish. My answer at this time is “No, but let me check and see if this is possible.” I now have contacts with people who may be able to help in this project. This is a great question. As we continue to adapt materials into a simplified or deaf English format, will these resources then be easy to translate into other languages?

Many other contacts were made during the research for my Major Applied Project. I thank God for all the people who shared their time and experience in translation work and in ideas for further study. I have limited what I have included in my MAP to those subjects



most directly associated with comparing rubrics with those developed from my surveys. But many more have contributed to my understanding about translation and adaptation work and I appreciate their support of this project and their advice.

I had many questions as I begin my research into this field:

- What other sources and resources are available for interviews?
- What are the rubrics used in other translation work?
- Will the rubrics we use be similar to those working with hearing groups?
- What if any differences will be needed for the Deaf groups?
- How do they see vocabulary and sentence structure?
- Do they have any similar concerns?

My research showed me that the challenges we face in adapting materials for Deaf people are very similar to those who work to translate materials into other languages. These answers have helped me to see avenues where we can work together as we move forward in adapting materials. I see many ways we will be able to share resources and ideas as we continue to work in our respective areas, developing resources to help people read and learn God's Word.

### **What Does This Mean**

Now it is time to say "so what?" We have surveyed and developed a possible set of rubrics. We have interviewed and researched other examples of rubrics in the field of adaptation and translation of materials. The next question we need to ask is: What have we learned that was expected or unexpected? How do we use this knowledge to move forward to the next steps? What are possible ways this project will move forward?

First, we will examine some of the expectations that have been fulfilled. I had my own idea of rubrics developed through my own experience of adapting and writing materials:

Simple English vocabulary

### Simple Sentence

Active voice verbs, not passive

Show who is subject and object in the sentence/story

I have learned that my list is very short and the expanded list developed in chapter 4 is a much more comprehensive tool that can be used to adapt materials. I think it is important to keep a short list to give people a quick overview of the goals. From there we can move into more explanation and examples for the rubrics.

I have also seen a variety of emphases that other deaf pastors and workers have given to their translation and adaptation work. Nevertheless, I have not seen many publications of resources and ideas to use for rubrics. It is my understanding that in the past Deaf Pastors would meet together and talk through translation work and signed materials. But I have not yet seen any compiled list or a common set of rubrics or guidelines.

One of the people who has written much in this area is Rev. Moody. (He served as my field work supervisor during my seminary years) I have included his notes from the Deaf Signed Readers Version that he has developed to produce a signed Deaf Lectionary in Appendix XVIII. He has consistently shared the need to develop materials that are adapted and signed in a format that is easy for Deaf people to understand.

It is no surprise that everyone likes to use their own materials and apply them to their local situations. While this is good and necessary, I have also seen a willingness to work together and share resources and ideas to help Deaf people learn about Jesus. The willingness to participate in this MAP, to share rubrics and resources, gives us a good impetus to continue this work together.

One of the questions that developed from the research is how these rubrics will work in a more general setting, i.e. Bible study materials: What adjustments may need to be made

for these rubrics to be used for beginner level materials and advanced level materials? My thoughts are that the rubrics we gathered and rated in the Likert scale will be applicable in all areas of adapting religious materials.

We may need to add words as the vocabulary level may change, but I think the rubrics would remain the same. Things like sentence structure and passive verbs would not change. But ultimately this will not be known until we implement adaptation on the various resources and see the results. That is one reason I included the example of the French evaluation: I believe we will need to develop something similar to see if our goal of adapting has been a success, a failure, or something in the middle.

Some of the most unexpected results came from the outside interviews and resources gathered. I was very surprised by how many of the same principles are used in the work of translating and adapting materials for other countries!! One area that was not included in the rubrics that I remember discussing in my classes, and was brought up in several interviews, is that to convey the Gospel you need to be aware of three areas of context.

These three areas are the source material, conveyor, and recipients. You need to know the situation of each to be able to convey the material correctly. This is one area we did not include in our rubrics. The whole purpose of this MAP is to understand the context of the recipient and meet their needs of communication. For materials used in the United States I think these materials will be adaptable to their context. But I am sure we may need to address this as we bring these resources to different cultures. If we keep the Biblical languages and do not use idioms from our American culture, I think a majority of the text will be understood.

Another area that surprised me is the reduction in the use of vocabulary. Several of the people I interviewed mentioned that many of today's translations have reduced the number of words and the vocabulary with the goal to reach more people. An example for this is the Wycliffe Easy English Commentary that uses less than 3000 words. In my conversations with Wycliffe and others I am hoping they will be willing to share their list of words, and that we can adopt the same principle.

When I first imagined this project I thought we would be using more of the ideas and rules from American Sign Language. But as the research developed I soon realized the need to focus more on an English set of rubrics, not a signed set of rubrics. As we develop appropriate resources in English, they will be able to be signed using many different sign systems, both in the United States and abroad. In our travels overseas we can often find people who read English and know the various sign systems in their country. The goal is they will be able to translate these materials into the various language used by Deaf people in their area.

During my research I was wondering about/expecting more discussion and dissension among the people involved with this study, especially on the validity of attempting a project of this kind. With an attitude of being very independent myself -- something needed to survive in deaf ministry -- I thought we might generate more internal debate. I am thinking these discussions will come in the future when my MAP is completed and people have an opportunity to examine and discuss the information included in this project. I am looking forward to our ongoing communications.

After reading the thesis from other Major Applied Projects I was expecting delays in research. I have been pleasantly surprised that even with the full schedules of life, all of the

people who volunteered to assist me were able to complete their work in a short time. I want to thank them for their commitment and assistance in making this Major Applied Project possible.

I was also expecting it may take volumes to explain, clarify, and define some of the rubrics for adapting materials. While more specifics are needed, I think we have a good beginning set of rubrics to evaluate and begin adapting more materials. The one thing stressed by one of my contributors is the need for more examples. One of the next steps will be to ask for assistance in adding more and better examples to each rubric. I believe this will help people who work with us to better understand how to use each rubric and apply it to their work.

One comment made during an interview has continued to give me pause for thought, “Most people know what is the simplest way to say something.” I have mulled this over many times since our discussion and wonder about the truth and application of this idea in our context. In clarifying this statement the discussion led to the fact that people need to be asked to think of many ways to say the same idea or sentence. As they think of the different ways, they will “instinctively” know which is the simplest way to express the concept.

One of my questions is: How can we help people to become trained in the simplest way to say something? I think we are trained to think and speak in ways that are common to those around us. I see this many times in hearing sermons and Bible Studies. The vocabulary and sentence structure is attuned to those who “speak Lutheran.” That is why Deaf people are the best choice to reach other Deaf people. They know how to speak “Deaf.”

I am sure that there are some people who may be asking the question, “Why do this? – Should we not instead be bringing people up to our level of speaking and thinking.” In talking with people who do translation work and especially those working to adapt materials into an ESL format, they are working from a different perspective. They are not “dumbing down” the materials as some would see this process. Instead they are adapting and developing their materials to reach people where they are at in their language development, with the sole (and soul) purpose of helping them to understand God’s Word and His love for them.

To this end, I continue to believe that a majority of people do not understand the cultural and thought difference between the hearing world and the Deaf world. Deaf people “look” the same as hearing people, therefore they should think the same. As part of one of my classes, I am writing a booklet to share with people to give them insights into the world of Deaf thought. These are based on my own experiences, shared in story and illustration format. My working title is “The Spitting Jesus and Other Stories to Help Understand the Deaf World.” I have included the outline of ideas in Appendix XIX.

### **Goals for the Future**

So where do we go from here? What are the next goals? Here is my vision, where I see the next steps are leading us:

First, prioritize which materials we need to adapt.

Second, use the rubrics we have developed from this material to begin adapting sentence structure, changing from passive to active voice, converting to simplified sentences, etc...

Third, add visual examples to the materials, include picture, graphics, etc...

Fourth, ask select deaf leaders to read and evaluate, ask what they do not understand

Fifth, test materials in classroom situation

Sixth, revise according to classroom experience and feedback from participants

Seventh, final format shared with Deaf leaders locally, nationally, and internationally

Now that we have a foundation to use in adapting materials, we need to prioritize which materials should be adapted first. I am planning to have further discussions with others involved in Deaf Ministry to gather their input. Some of the first materials I would see are those in development from Multi Language Publications. These materials are already in a basic format that we can use and would be easier to adapt. I would also begin with our training materials we use in the “A Bible Curriculum Deaf” (ABCD) series. I would like to take the rubrics developed and evaluate to see what needs to be further adapted and improved.

Next we need to begin actually adapting materials. It is easy to talk, and even attend a workshop... and then the materials just sit on a shelf after you arrive home. I would like to begin setting goals for the next three to five years of materials we will adapt. I want to begin immediately using the rubrics we have developed from this project to adapt sentence structure, changing from passive to active voice, converting to simplified sentences, etc...

One component that is also very crucial is the adding of visual examples to each of the adapted materials. It is true the “a good picture is worth a thousand words.” We want to add these words through picture, graphics, etc... so that Deaf people can visualize the concepts and the meanings in God’s Word.

The next step will be to test the work we are doing. I have field tested some of our materials, thinking they were fully ready, and they failed miserably! We need to select deaf leaders and ask them to read and evaluate the materials adapted. How will we do this evaluation? This is one area I will need feedback and help. I believe after a Deaf person has

read the materials we need to have one on one discussion, sharing what they have learned, ideas for improvement, and further adapting needed.

I would also like to ask our Deaf leaders to teach a class using these materials. I would like to have a variety of class situations, including national and international teachers to give us feedback. Do these materials work well in teaching others? What else is needed?

After the teaching and feedback we also need to have a system in place to help revise and improve our materials. This cannot be an ongoing process, because at some point you need to decide we are satisfied with the materials. But in the short term we want to be open and produce the best resources possible.

Finally we need to have a good system to promote and share these resources. What is the best format to share with Deaf leaders locally, nationally, and internationally? Is it better to have printed materials or all on line? How can we set up a good system of follow-up to encourage and support the students? How can we give timely feedback? What is the best way to train people to become good equippers and trainers of others?

A good friend, Rev. Roger Altenberger, once told me “Time is short, Hell is hot.” I have used this phrase many times and thought of the millions of Deaf people and their families who do not know the Gospel. I cannot imagine what will happen in the future. But I know we are here today, and this MAP has provided me with resources and tools for reaching Deaf people that I previously did not have. I pray God will use this project in many and various ways for Deaf people to “hear/see” the Word of God. For how shall they “see” if no one is sent? As we continue to share this need with others and partner together, please join me in asking God to guide us in His way.



I also pray the materials developed with these rubrics and this collaboration will be used for many years to come in sharing the Gospel with Deaf people and their families.

Please join me in praying that they will all be together with us in Heaven!

Soli Deo Gloria – All Glory Give to God! or Only Give Glory to God!

APPENDIX  
LISTING:

APPENDIX I - DEAF SMALL CATECHISM TABLE OF CONTENTS AND EXAMPLES

APPENDIX II - SIMPLIFICATION OF SOUNDS AND THE ACT OF TEACHING THE  
DEAF TO SPEAK

APPENDIX III - THE DEAF AND DUMBE MANS FRIEND

APPENDIX IV - SAMPLE DEAF TEACHING MATEIRALS

APPENDIX V - “ABCD” –A BIBLE CURRICULUM DEAF

APPENDIX VI - LUTHERAN SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

APPENDIX VII - PERMISSION COVER LETTER FOR REQUESTING RUBRICS

APPENDIX VIII - ALL RUBRICS RECEIVED

APPENDIX IX - PERMISSION COVER LETTER FOR LIKERT SCALE RATING

APPENDIX X - RUBRICS AS LISTED IN REQUEST FOR THE LIKERT SCALE  
RATING

APPENDIX XI - RESPONSE TOTALS FROM THE LIKERT SCALE RATING

APPENDIX XII - RUBRICS AS RATED FROM RESPONSES TO THE LIKERT SCALE

APPENDIX XIII - REINKE REVISED RUBRICS MATCH WITH SUBMITTED  
RUBRICS

APPENDIX XIV - MULTI LANGUAGE PUBLICATIONS (WELS) BOOK LIST

APPENDIX XV - WYCLIFFE BIBLE TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATES EASYENGLISH  
GUIDELINES

APPENDIX XVI - DR. MARY DANIEL MEETING NOTES OCTOBER 2014

APPENDIX XVII - FRENCH RUBRICS FOR TRANSLATION EVALUATION

APPENDIX XVIII - DEAF SIGNED READERS VERSION RUBRICS FOR ADAPTING  
LECTIONARY INTO SIGN LANGUAGE

APENDIX NINETEEN - THE SPITTING JESUS AND OTHER STORIES TO HELP  
UNDERSTAND THE DEAF WORLD

## APPENDIX I

### DEAF SMALL CATECHISM TABLE OF CONTENTS AND EXAMPLES

## Introduction:

This Edition of Luther's Small Catechism is designed for use in the teaching and guiding of Deaf people to understand what God has done for them. Especially knowing and believing that Jesus died to forgive their sins.

This material is a compilation by the Deaf Missions workers done by many sainted brothers through the years. Thank God for all their faithful work!! This Edition is produced by:

Lutheran Deaf Outreach  
PO Box 1795  
Janesville, WI 53546

**LutheranDeafOutreach.org**

## The Lessons

Each lesson contains a title picture that will visualize a story showing a key concept of the lesson.

# THE DEAF CATECHISM TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 1. THE BIBLE

## 2. LAW AND GOSPEL

## 3. GOD

Review & Test (Lessons 1-3)

## THE APOSTLE'S CREED (**Lesson 4-7**)

- 4. God is Our Father.
- 5. God Became Man.
- 6. Jesus Saves Us.
- 7. God The Holy Spirit.

Review & Test (Lesson 4-7)

## 5. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (**Lesson 8-10**)

- A. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Commandments (Lesson 8)
- B. 4th - 8th Commandments (Lesson 9)
- C. 9th - 10th Commandments (Lesson 10)

Review & Test (Lesson 8-10)

## 6. THE LORD'S PRAYER (**Lesson 11-14**)

- A. Introduction (Lesson 11)
- B. Petitions 1-4 (Lesson 12)
- C. Petitions 5-7 (Lesson 13)
- D. Conclusion & Guidance (Lesson 14)

Review & Test (Lesson 11-14)

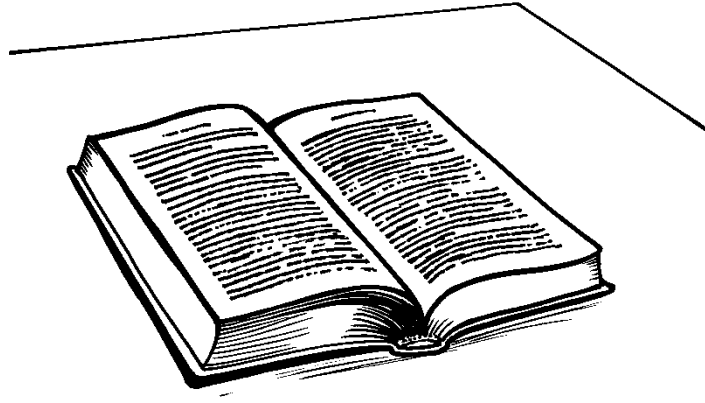
## 7. THE SACRAMENTS AND CHURCH LIFE (**Lesson 15-19**)

- A. Two Sacraments - God's Holy Acts (Lesson 15)
- A. Baptism (Lesson 16)
- B. Lord's Supper (Lesson 17)  
History and Explanation
- C. Confession & Forgiveness (Lesson 18)
- D. The Church (Lesson 19)

Review & Test (Lesson 15-19)

# LESSON 1: THE BIBLE – GOD’S WORD

REMEMBER THIS PICTURE:



## HOW WAS THE BIBLE WRITTEN?

The Bible is the best book because it is God’s Word. God picked the men who wrote the Bible. God breathed into (inspired) them. (2 Timothy 3:16) He put His Spirit in them. God led them in their writing so they wrote God’s words. All the words in the Bible are from God. All the Bible is true.

**The Bible has two parts:**

*Old Testament:* 39 books; Written before Jesus was born

*New Testament:* 27 books; Written after Jesus was born.

*Inspiration:* God’s thoughts & words given to man

## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY? TWO MOST IMPORTANT THINGS I NEED TO KNOW

In the Bible God tells me:

A. Follow Him (Law) B. Go to heaven (Gospel).

- The Bible tells me that I am a **sinner**. (LAW) Romans 6:23a
- But the Bible also tells me that Jesus **takes away all my sin** and that **He loves me**. Jesus is my **Savior!** (GOSPEL) Romans 6:23b

## WHAT DOES GOD WANT US TO DO WITH THE BIBLE?

God wants me to study the Bible, believe it and obey what God tells me in His Word.

## BIBLE VERSES:

**2 Timothy 3:15-16** – You have known the Holy Scriptures ever since you were a little child. They are able to teach you how to be saved by believing in Christ Jesus. God has breathed life into all of Scripture. It is useful for teaching us what is true. It is useful for correcting our

mistakes. It is useful for making our lives whole again. It is useful for training us to do what is right.

## Lesson 2: Law & Gospel

(Each lesson will have a story to remember and share)



### The Loving Father

(The Prodigal (lost) Son)

Read Luke 15:11-32

Jesus' story to show our Sin and God's Forgiveness

The Ten Commandments teach us God's Law.

No one obeys God's Law perfectly. When we don't obey any Commandment, we sin.

Example: Honor father and mother - Law  
Father forgive son - Gospel

### How do we break God's Law?

We **sin** (break God's law) in two ways:

1. We do **BAD THINGS**. (Commission) (James 1:15)
2. We **DO NOT DO GOOD THINGS**. (Omission) (James 4:17)

### What is God's punishment for sin?

The Bible teaches: Romans 6:23

- Sin brings death and suffering.
- Sin finally brings suffering in hell.

God's **LAW** shows that we are sinners and we cannot save ourselves. Romans 3:23

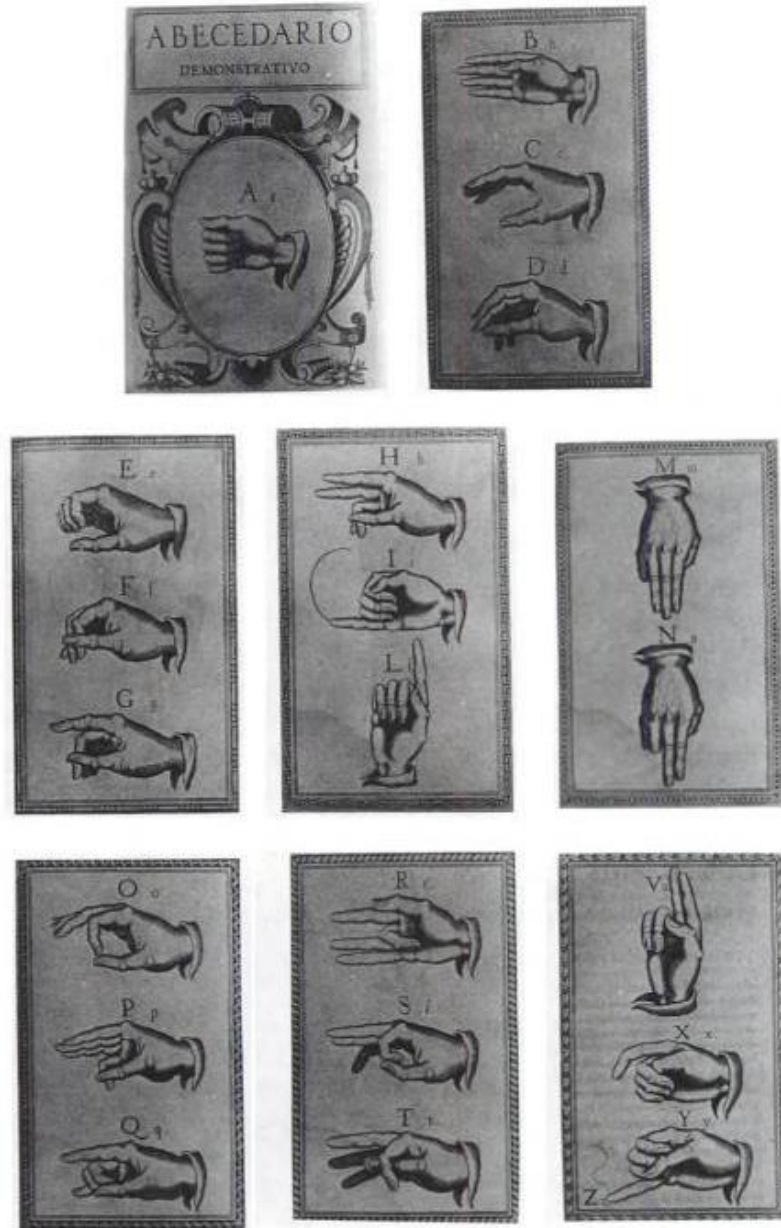
The Law shows God's wrath/His anger against our sins.

APPENDIX II

SIMPLIFICATION OF SOUNDS AND THE ACT OF TEACHING THE DEAF TO SPEAK

JUAN PABLO BONET

13



The Fingerspelling Chart of Fray Melchor de Yebra.



APPENDIX III

THE DEAF AND DUMBE MANS FRIEND

*Philocophus:*  
OR,  
**THE DEAFE**  
AND  
**Dumbe Mans Friend.**  
EXHIBITING THE  
Philosophicall verity of that sub-  
tile Art, which may inable one with  
an *observant Eie*, to *Hear* what any  
man speaks by the moving of his lips.  
UPON THE SAME  
Ground, with the advantage of an Hi-  
storically Exemplification, apparently  
proving, That a Man borne Deafe and  
Dumbe, may be taught to *Hears* the  
found of *words* with his *Eie*, & thence  
learne to speake with his Tongue.

---

By *I. B.* surnamed the *Chirofopher.*

---

*Sic canimus Surdis —*

---

*London*, Printed for *Humphrey Moseley*,  
and are to be sold at his shop in *Pauls*  
Church-yard 1648.

## APPENDIX IV

### SAMPLE DEAF TEACHING MATEIRALS



*The disciples were devoted to the teachings of the apostles, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42*

## God Gives

**F**orgiving

**L**oving

**A**wake

**M**aturing

**E**xciting

**S**ending

Acts 2:38ff – Core Blocks

1. Apostles Teaching – Study His Word
2. Fellowship – God's people gather to encourage and support each other
3. Breaking of Bread – Worship, Lord's Supper, Baptism
4. Prayer – We raise to God our thanks, needs, wants, wishes.
5. Sharing – as in the early church they shared with everyone in need
6. Serving – we serve each other with our gifts, time, and skills

### FLAMES

Forgiving – share His forgiveness with others

Loving – showing His love in our actions

**Awake** – seeing through His eyes the lost and hurting people  
**Maturing** – Growing in faith and Christian life  
**Exciting** – Joy and wanting to share the Gospel  
**Sending/Serving** – God sends us out into the world as His servants

## STRATEGY

M.A.P. P.L.A.N.

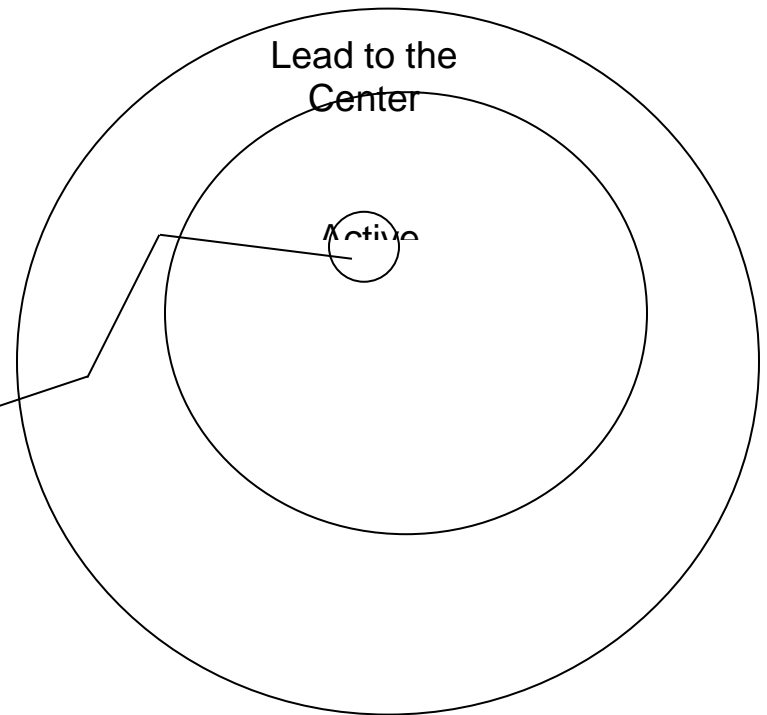
### M = Mission = Matthew 28:19-20

We want to lead our friends,  
family, and other people to  
believe in Jesus.

Not only to believe, but to  
Continue growing.  
We want people to become  
teachers and trainers for  
more people!

Outside the Circle

Non-Christian



### A = Areas

Where is God calling you to reach out?

Name 4 to 7 areas around the circle – either places or people  
God is calling you to reach out – pray about who and where!

### P = PLAN

P = people – who – how will you contact them?

L = leaders – who are leaders who can help you?

A = actions – what actions to do to begin?

When start? Date

Where will meet?

What day and times will you meet?

What study will you do? Make a schedule

N = Needs – what needs do you have? Bible, paper, etc...

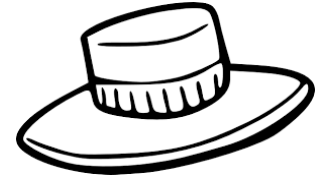
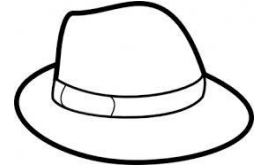
H.A.T. -- How do we invite people to join in God's Mission? We use the "HAT" to help them think about where God is calling them to join with His Mission.

1. What HAT is God calling you to wear?

H = heart, what excites you? What is your passion?

A=ability, what skills has God given you?

T=Time, what are you willing to give and commitment of your time?



2. STEPS - What STEPS are we taking as we discuss our MAP PLAN?

S – Spirit – praying – What are we praying for?

T – Transforming – so what? How is God using us to change lives?

E – Empowering – Down from God to us, out from us to others

P – PLANS – are we ready to follow/DO our plans?

S – SMART – are they following S.M.A.R.T. Goal idea?



### S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Of course, you need to make sure your action plan goals are [S.M.A.R.T.](#) goals as well!

**Specific-** Determine exactly what will be done, when it will be done, who will do it, etc. and write it down.

**Measurable-** Make sure you can measure the activity. If you cannot, how will you know if you accomplished it?

**Attainable-** This does not mean to set the bar low, but to make sure they are realistic.

**Relevant-** The goals need to be in alignment with your mission statement. They need to be important to you.

**Timely-** You need to have a time frame or a target date. Open-ended goals are soft.

## APPENDIX V

### “ABCD” –A BIBLE CURRICULUM DEAF

#### **100 – Access – Becoming Christian**

The access block will be introduction materials guiding people into the basics of what it means to be a Christian. We will include the Deaf Catechism presented as a complete whole, but also in various portions that answer people’s questions about God’s Word in our life. We have developed over 1000 Bible Summary questions that we are separating in sections for study. Also there will be a course on what it means to be a disciple.

#### **200 Bible – Becoming FLAMES (Disciples)**

The Bible block will guide people using various Core Bible Studies for Deaf people to use in building their knowledge and understanding of God’s Word. This will include studies on the books of the Bible, basic teachings, leadership, etc... (Listed on next page)

#### **300 Commentaries – Explaining the verses**

The Commentary block will challenge the people as they grow deeper into God’s Word. This will be a commentary adapted to match the simplified English and pictures needed to help people become immersed in deeper meanings in God’s Word.

#### **400 Doctrine – What does God say**

The Doctrine block will be an introduction to the core doctrines that come out of God’s Word. This will utilize materials from Summary of Christian Doctrine, Pieper, Book of Concord, and other material to expand the understanding and application of God’s Word in our lives.

## **Bible Class List**

Introduction to Bible  
Old Testament  
New Testament  
Interpreting the Bible  
Evangelism – Sharing Good News  
Church Fellowship – Who we are as the church  
Sacraments  
Doctrine - General  
Faith Foundations 1 (Doctrine)  
Faith Foundations 2  
Faith Basics 3  
Lutheran Confessions  
Non-Christian Religions  
Worship  
Church History 1  
Church History 2  
Genesis  
Jonah  
Luke  
Romans  
1 Corinthians  
Lutheran Bible Teacher  
Teaching/Preaching 1 – Preparing Bible Study/Sermon  
Preaching 2  
Preaching 3  
Preaching 4  
Family Life  
Counseling  
Catechism Lessons - advanced  
Christian Education  
Church Administration  
Preaching Mueller

## APPENDIX VI

### LUTHERAN SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

Picture from the Lutheran School for the Deaf in the late 1800's

<http://www.lcmsdeaf.org/history.html>





## APPENDIX VII

### PERMISSION COVER LETTER FOR REQUESTING RUBRICS

Greetings in Christ,

I am currently working on my dissertation for the Doctor of Missiology Degree. I am writing to ask your assistance. In our training of leaders we are facing a significant lack of written religious resources for Deaf people, especially in the area of advanced study.

My goal to address this situation is to develop a list of rubrics. These rubrics could be used as a standard that in adapting written religious resources into a format suitable for Deaf people. I am writing to ask for your assistance in developing this list of rubrics.

I know you have worked in adapting materials for Deaf people and/or English as a second language usage. I would like to know what principles you use, or would suggest for adapting written religious materials for Deaf people. Each person submitting a list will be kept confidential and your name will not be connected with the rubrics you send.

After receiving rubrics from several sources, your rubrics will be combined with others that I gather. I will then be sharing with you and others the full list of rubrics. I would then like your feedback in prioritizing these rubrics.

Please consider this Official Consent paragraph: The research in which you are about to participate is designed to investigate the rubrics for adapting religious materials for Deaf people and is being conducted by John Reinke. In this research you will be asked to share your recommended rubrics for adapting materials, rate a list of gathered rubrics, and possibly share feedback in an interview. Please be assured that any information that you provide will be held in strict confidence. At no time will your name be reported along with your responses. Please understand that your participation in this research is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time during this study. By your completion of this questionnaire, survey, or interview, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research project.

Thank you for your help! I am looking forward to your response. I am praying these rubrics will help me to improve and expand the adapting of written religious materials for Deaf people. If you have any questions please feel free to email or call me.

Sincerely,

Rev. John Reinke  
[RevReinke@gmail.com](mailto:RevReinke@gmail.com)  
608-436-9600  
Request for Rubrics

Rubrics are a list of guidelines, principles, rules, etc... that are used to guide a project.

From your experience, I am asking for your input on the rubrics you recommend for adapting materials. Specifically, the rubrics you recommend for adapting written materials for Deaf people.

I appreciate you typing out your rubrics and emailing them back to me.

Thank you for your help!

## APPENDIX VIII

### ALL RUBRICS RECEIVED

Keep everything as simple as possible

Simple direct sentences

No sentences over 5 words no words over 5 letters long.

Avoid too many comparisons...hard for the deaf to understand

Avoid passives “Jesus got crucified by Pontius Pilate.” Should ASL: “PP nailed Jesus” [active]

Avoid complicated vocabulary, hymns, poetry, and etc. hard to understand; redemption, sanctification

Avoid saying negatives for emphasis; “Jesus’ unfailing love.” Should ASL: “Jesus’ love forever.”

Do not use pronouns; he, she, it, who, whoever, anyone, which; John 3:16 (NIV)

Avoid long, complex sentences.

Avoid compound sentences.

Avoid sentences that have compound negatives.

Choose vocabulary that someone struggling with English as a second language (ESL) would best understand. Be mindful of the most common meaning of the words you use.

Visual layout of text is important. Big blocks of unbroken text is visually intimidating to ESL readers.

Limit one sentence or one idea per line.

Limit the length of each “paragraph” to four lines maximum.

*Avoid passive voice.*

*Avoid relative pronouns – WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHICH.*

*Identify and describe events in the order in which they occur.* English allows us to freely arrange events out of chronological order, frequently by using prepositions of time BEFORE and AFTER. Be very careful using these prepositions in English text so that the events you describe appear in the text in the sequence in which they happen.

*Conditions come before conclusions.* English allows us to reverse the order. “I will stay home if it rains” is permissible in English, but not ASL. Rather, “If it rains, I will stay home.”

*Avoid ambiguous pronouns.* Pronouns in ASL are very specific in referring to specific individuals. Pronouns in English can be terribly ambiguous. In English translations of Scripture we often find this phrase: “He said to him...” Who are the “he” and “him”? The writer presumes the reader is following the flow of the dialogue. When writing for Deaf readers, identify either or both of the individuals by name. “Jesus said to him...” or “He said to Peter...” or “Jesus said to Peter...” so there is no room for confusion about antecedent of any pronoun. Avoid using the pronoun “they” when the antecedent for the pronoun hasn’t be identified, as in, “You know what they say...”

*Avoid using verbs as nouns.* In ASL verbs are always verbs, but English verbs often become nouns through the addition of a suffix (-ing, -ness, -ment, -tion). Such modification of verbs does not exist in ASL. In our literature, the most flagrant infraction is the phrase “forgiveness of sins.” “Forgiveness” is a noun form of the verb “forgive.” Regardless of the form that appears in English text, it is always signed as a verb. Ergo, it is wise to leave it as a verb in text – “God forgives our sins.”

When a complex concept is presented as a question, *put the question word (who, what, when, where, why, how) at the end of the sentence.*

*Don’t start a sentence or phrase, “There is...”* “There” normally refers to a specific place. Where is the place cited by “There is”?

*State contextual time references in the first position of a sentence.* ASL verbs do not carry any time references (tense), so ASL narrative usually identifies the time reference at the beginning of the narrative. English sentences often place contextual time references at the end of a sentence.

*When addressing someone, identify the addressee first.* English allows naming the addressee in the middle or end of a sentence. ASL favors naming the addressee first.

Employ ASL’s topic-identification principle – use when the subject or object of a sentence is a complex concept, e.g. a noun comes with an adjectival phrase. First state the subject or object with its adjectival phrase as a separate clause. Then refer back to the subject or object with an appropriate pronoun.

Target Audience - when adapting written material for the Deaf, always begin with understanding the audience. Know the vocabulary level of the people.

Remove passive verbs.

Split long sentences into shorter sentences.

Sentences with multiple main ideas may be divided so that each new sentence has one main idea.

A sentence that has one main idea and multiple dependent clauses may be divided into one main sentence and one or more sentences that function to explain or give additional information about the main sentence. In other words, the dependent clauses become explanatory sentences.

Some short fragmentary sentences will need extra information added so the sentence will make sense.

Single word vocabulary. Very simply, there are many words that the deaf don't understand. Sometimes a simpler synonym can be substituted, such as using "many" in place of "numerous." Other times, an entire phrase must be replaced due to one vocabulary word in the phrase.

Religious vocabulary is troublesome. Terms such as righteousness, justification, carnal, divine, and absolution, just to name a few, are largely unknown. They must either be replaced with more simple synonyms or explained in short phrases or full sentences, depending on the word.

Idioms. Many idioms that are common in spoken English are not understood by the deaf. The more obscure the idiom, the more difficult it is to explain. Instead of trying to explain the idiom, it is usually better to just state the meaning. For example, instead of explaining how someone can be "green with envy," I say they are envious (or jealous).

Transmit the Meaning. If all the other principles are followed but the meaning is lost or confused, the effort has been wasted and the resulting work is worthless. If only the meaning is needed and the form or presentation of the original work is not that important, then this step is all that is needed. The meaning should be laid out in simple terms. If the structure of the original document is important, then the steps for vocabulary, grammar, and background knowledge should be followed.

Documents with a strong static text (the Bible, liturgy, certain parts of textbooks), stick more closely to the original text. Generally follow the structure of the original text and primarily change the grammar and vocabulary.

Background Knowledge - often, the Deaf do not have the same background knowledge of history, the Bible, current events, politics, etc., that many hearing people have. Sometimes writings make brief references to certain subjects and assume the reader understands the

reference. In such cases, evaluate if the Deaf will understand the reference and if there is a need to add an explanation about what the reference means or replace it with a sentence or two that states what the author intended to say.

Visual Aids - Because the Deaf are very visual, adding pictures, drawings, charts, etc., can be helpful. This obviously goes beyond translating the language of a document, but using visual aids can be a great help, especially for difficult concepts or if the writing is long.

Additional Helps - If a written resource is already in relatively simple language, then the work may be used with helps instead of rewriting it. For example, a study guide may provide a glossary to help with vocabulary and footnotes to explain difficult sentences or provide additional explanation where needed.

Syntax – use the simplest common denominator

Must think of two or three ways to say something

Pick which is the simplest – easiest - Most people have a sense which is the simplest

Avoid complex sentences – avoid subordination

Use short simple sentences

Try to use simplest synonyms – no matter you repeat yourself

Vocabulary level - List of words that a used – use the most common 1000 or 2000 words

Code switch to adapt to the people we are talking to

Work from the fount language, or language of origin to receptor language

## APPENDIX IX

### PERMISSION COVER LETTER FOR LIKERT SCALE RATING

Greetings in Christ,

Thank you for assisting in the work on my dissertation for the Doctor of Missiology Degree at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. I am writing to ask your assistance on the final step.

I received responses from a variety of sources in developing a list of rubrics to help my understanding of adapting materials for Deaf people. These rubrics could be used as a standard in adapting written religious resources into a format suitable for Deaf people. I am writing to ask for your assistance in rating this list of rubrics that I received.

Attached is a compilation of the Rubric ideas received from various sources. I have listed them alphabetically and numbered each item. Some have been shorted for use in this rating, but will be included fully in the Major Applied Project.

With each numbered rubric you will see a Likert Scale of 1 to 5. Please rate each of these rubrics using the Likert Scale of 1 to 5 of 1 is not important and 5 is very important.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important)    1    2    3    4    5    (Very Important)

As you go through some may sound or be the same, please rate each one using the Likert Scale of 1 to 5.

Thank you for your work in adapting materials for Deaf people and/or English as a second language usage. I appreciate your feedback in prioritizing these rubrics.

Please consider this Official Consent paragraph: The research in which you are about to participate is designed to investigate the rubrics for adapting religious materials for Deaf people and is being conducted by John Reinke. In this research you will be asked to share your recommended rubrics for adapting materials, rate a list of gathered rubrics, and possibly share feedback in an interview. Please be assured that any information that you provide will be held in strict confidence. At no time will your name be reported along with your responses. Please understand that your participation in this research is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time during this study. By your completion of this questionnaire, survey, or

interview, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research project.

I have attached this document in Word and Text formats. If you would open whichever is best for you then type your rating on the line after the number. After completing your rating please save, then return the document to me.

Example:

1.   4   (Not Important)    1    2    3    4    5    (Very Important)

Thank you for your help! I am looking forward to your response. I am praying these rubrics will help my understanding of how to improve and expand the adapting of written religious materials for Deaf people. If you have any questions please feel free to email or call me.

Sincerely,

Rev. John Reinke  
[RevReinke@gmail.com](mailto:RevReinke@gmail.com)  
608-436-9600



## APPENDIX X

### RUBRICS AS LISTED IN REQUEST FOR THE LIKERT SCALE RATING

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
A sentence that has on main idea and multiple dependent clauses may be divided into one main sentence and one or more sentences that function to explain or give additional information about the main sentence. In other words, the dependent clauses become explanatory sentences.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Additional Helps - If a written resource is already in relatively simple language, then the work may be used with helps instead of rewriting it. For example, a study guide may provide a glossary to help with vocabulary and footnotes to explain difficult sentences or provide additional explanation where needed.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Avoid ambiguous pronouns. Pronouns in ASL are very specific in referring to specific individuals. Pronouns in English can be terribly ambiguous. In English translations of Scripture we often find this phrase: “He said to him...” Who are the “he” and “him”? The writer presumes the reader is following the flow of the dialogue. When writing for Deaf readers, identify either or both of the individuals by name. “Jesus said to him...” or “He said to Peter...” or “Jesus said to Peter...” so there is no room for confusion about antecedent of any pronoun. Avoid using the pronoun “they” when the antecedent for the pronoun hasn’t be identified, as in, “You know what they say...”
4. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Avoid complex sentences – avoid subordination
5. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Avoid complicated vocabulary, hymns, poetry, and etc. hard to understand; redemption, sanctification
6. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Avoid compound sentences.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Avoid long, complex sentences.

8. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Avoid passive voice.

9. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Avoid passives “Jesus got crucified by Pontius Pilate.” Should ASL: “PP nailed Jesus” [active]

10. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Avoid relative pronouns – WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHICH.

11. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Avoid saying negatives for emphasis; “Jesus’ unfailing love.” Should ASL: “Jesus’ love forever.”

12. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Avoid sentences that have compound negatives.

13. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Avoid too many comparisons...hard for the deaf to understand

14. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Avoid using verbs as nouns. In ASL verbs are always verbs, but English verbs often become nouns through the addition of a suffix (-ing, -ness, -ment, -tion). Such modification of verbs does not exist in ASL. In our literature, the most flagrant infraction is the phrase “forgiveness of sins.” “Forgiveness” is a noun form of the verb “forgive.” Regardless of the form that appears in English text, it is always signed as a verb. Ergo, it is wise to leave it as a verb in text – “God forgives our sins.”

15. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Background Knowledge - often, the Deaf do not have the same background knowledge of history, the Bible, current events, politics, etc., that many hearing people have. Sometimes writings make brief references to certain subjects and assume the reader understands the reference. In such cases, evaluate if the Deaf will understand the reference and if there is a need to add an explanation about what the reference means or replace it with a sentence or two that states what the author intended to say.

16. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Choose vocabulary that someone struggling with English as a second language (ESL) would best understand. Be mindful of the most common meaning of the words you use.

17. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Code switch to adapt to the people we are talking to
18. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Conditions come before conclusions. English allows us to reverse the order. “I will stay home if it rains” is permissible in English, but not ASL. Rather, “If it rains, I will stay home.”
19. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Do not use pronouns; he, she, it, who, whoever, anyone, which; John 3:16 (NIV)
20. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Documents with a strong static text (the Bible, liturgy, certain parts of textbooks), stick more closely to the original text. Generally follow the structure of the original text and primarily change the grammar and vocabulary.
21. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Don’t start a sentence or phrase, “There is...” “There” normally refers to a specific place. Where is the place cited by “There is”?
22. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Employ ASL’s topic-identification principle – use when the subject or object of a sentence is a complex concept, e.g. a noun comes with an adjectival phrase. First state the subject or object with its adjectival phrase as a separate clause. Then refer back to the subject or object with an appropriate pronoun.
23. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Identify and describe events in the order in which they occur. English allows us to freely arrange events out of chronological order, frequently by using prepositions of time BEFORE and AFTER. Be very careful using these prepositions in English text so that the events you describe appear in the text in the sequence in which they happen.
24. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Idioms. Many idioms that are common in spoken English are not understood by the deaf. The more obscure the idiom, the more difficult it is to explain. Instead of trying to explain the idiom, it is usually better to just state the meaning. For example, instead of explaining how someone can be “green with envy,” I say they are envious (or jealous).
25. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Keep everything as simple as possible
26. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)

Limit one sentence or one idea per line.

27. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)

Limit the length of each “paragraph” to four lines maximum.

28. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)

Must think of two or three ways to say something

29. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)

No sentences over 5 words no words over 5 letters long.

30. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)

Pick which is the simplest – easiest - Most people have a sense which is the simplest

31. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)

Religious vocabulary is troublesome. Terms such as righteousness, justification, carnal, divine, and absolution, just to name a few, are largely unknown. They must either be replaced with more simple synonyms or explained in short phrases or full sentences, depending on the word.

32. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)

Remove passive verbs.

33. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)

Sentences with multiple main ideas may be divided so that each new sentence has one main idea.

34. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)

Simple direct sentences

35. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)

Single word vocabulary. Very simply, there are many words that the deaf don't understand. Sometimes a simpler synonym can be substituted, such as using “many” in place of “numerous.” Other times, an entire phrase must be replaced due to one vocabulary word in the phrase.

36. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)

Some short fragmentary sentences will need extra information added so the sentence will make sense.

37. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)

Split long sentences into shorter sentences.

38. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
State contextual time references in the first position of a sentence. ASL verbs do not carry any time references (tense), so ASL narrative usually identifies the time reference at the beginning of the narrative. English sentences often place contextual time references at the end of a sentence.

39. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Syntax – use the simplest common denominator

40. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Target Audience - when adapting written material for the Deaf, always begin with understanding the audience. Know the vocabulary level of the people.

41. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Transmit the Meaning. If all the other principles are followed but the meaning is lost or confused, the effort has been wasted and the resulting work is worthless. If only the meaning is needed and the form or presentation of the original work is not that important, then this step is all that is needed. The meaning should be laid out in simple terms. If the structure of the original document is important, then the steps for vocabulary, grammar, and background knowledge should be followed.

42. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Try to use simplest synonyms – no matter you repeat yourself

43. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Use short simple sentences

44. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Visual Aids - Because the Deaf are very visual, adding pictures, drawings, charts, etc., can be helpful. This obviously goes beyond translating the language of a document, but using visual aids can be a great help, especially for difficult concepts or if the writing is long.

45. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Visual layout of text is important. Big blocks of unbroken text is visually intimidating to ESL readers.

46. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)  
Vocabulary level - List of words that a used – use the most common 1000 or 2000 words

47. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)

When a complex concept is presented as a question, put the question word (who, what, when, where, why, how) at the end of the sentence.

48. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)

When addressing someone, identify the addressee first. English allows naming the addressee in the middle or end of a sentence. ASL favors naming the addressee first.

49. \_\_\_\_\_ (Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)

Work from the fount language, or language of origin to receptor language

## APPENDIX XI

### RESPONSE TOTALS FROM THE LIKERT SCALE RATING

Score of Responses	Total Score	Average Score
1. __5 5 3 4__	17	4.25
2. __3 1 4 5__	13	3.25
3. __5 5 5 5__	20	5
4. __5 4 4 5__	18	4.5
5. __5 5 3 5__	18	4.5
6. __5 4 4 4__	17	4.25
7. __5 5 4 5__	19	4.75
8. __4 5 5 5__	19	4.75
9. __5 4 5 5__	19	4.75
10. __3 4 2 5__	14	3.5
11. __3 4 3 5__	15	3.75
12. __5 5 4 5__	19	4.75
13. __5 3 1 5__	14	3.5
14. __4 5 1 4__	14	3.5
15. __4 4 4 5__	17	4.25
16. __5 5 3 5__	18	4.5
17. __5 1 4 5__	14	3.5
18. __4 3 5 4__	16	4
19. __3 4 2 5__	14	3.5
20. __3 2 4 3__	12	3
21. __3 5 4 5__	17	4.25
22. __5 4 4 4__	17	4.25
23. __5 5 4 4__	18	4.5
24. __4 5 4 5__	18	4.5
25. __4 4 3 5__	16	4
26. __3 1 3 4__	11	2.75
27. __3 2 3 4__	12	3
28. __3 1 4 4__	12	3
29. __1 1 2 5__	9	2.25
30. __4 5 3 5__	17	4.25
31. __4 5 4 5__	18	4.5
32. __5 5 5 5__	20	5
33. __5 5 4 5__	19	4.75
34. __5 5 4 5__	19	4.75
35. __5 5 4 5__	19	4.75

36.	__5 3 4 5__	17	4.25
37.	__5 5 4 5__	19	4.75
38.	__5 4 3 4__	16	4
39.	__5 ? 4 5__	14	4.67
40.	__5 4 5 5__	19	4.75
41.	__3 5 5 5__	18	4.5
42.	__4 5 4 5__	18	4.5
43.	__5 5 4 5__	19	4.75
44.	__4 4 5 5__	18	4.5
45.	__4 5 5 5__	19	4.75
46.	__3 5 4 5__	17	4.25
47.	__3 4 4 5__	16	4
48.	__4 5 4 5__	18	4.5
49.	__4 ? 5 5__	14	4.67

Scale	Rubrics	Percentage
5	2	4%
4.75	11	22%
4.67	2	4%
4.5	10	20%
4.25	8	16%
4	4	8%
3.75	1	2%
3.5	5	10%
3.25	1	2%
3	3	6%
2.75	1	2%
2.25	1	2%



## APPENDIX XII

### RUBRICS AS RATED FROM RESPONSES TO THE LIKERT SCALE

#### Rating of 5

3. Avoid ambiguous pronouns. Pronouns in ASL are very specific in referring to specific individuals. Pronouns in English can be terribly ambiguous. In English translations of Scripture we often find this phrase: “He said to him...” Who are the “he” and “him”? The writer presumes the reader is following the flow of the dialogue. When writing for Deaf readers, identify either or both of the individuals by name. “Jesus said to him...” or “He said to Peter...” or “Jesus said to Peter...” so there is no room for confusion about antecedent of any pronoun. Avoid using the pronoun “they” when the antecedent for the pronoun hasn’t be identified, as in, “You know what they say...”

32. Remove passive verbs.

#### Rating between 4 to 4.99

1. A sentence that has on main idea and multiple dependent clauses may be divided into one main sentence and one or more sentences that function to explain or give additional information about the main sentence. In other words, the dependent clauses become explanatory sentences.

4. Avoid complex sentences – avoid subordination

5. Avoid complicated vocabulary, hymns, poetry, and etc. hard to understand; redemption, sanctification

6. Avoid compound sentences.

7. Avoid long, complex sentences.

8. Avoid passive voice.

9. Avoid passives “Jesus got crucified by Pontius Pilate.” Should ASL: “PP nailed Jesus” [active]

12. Avoid sentences that have compound negatives.

15. Background Knowledge - often, the Deaf do not have the same background knowledge of history, the Bible, current events, politics, etc., that many hearing people have. Sometimes writings make brief references to certain subjects and assume the reader understands the reference. In such cases, evaluate if the Deaf will understand the reference and if there is a need to add an explanation about what the reference means or replace it with a sentence or two that states what the author intended to say.

16. Choose vocabulary that someone struggling with English as a second language (ESL) would best understand. Be mindful of the most common meaning of the words you use.

18. Conditions come before conclusions. English allows us to reverse the order. “I will stay home if it rains” is permissible in English, but not ASL. Rather, “If it rains, I will stay home.”

21. Don’t start a sentence or phrase, “There is...” “There” normally refers to a specific place. Where is the place cited by “There is”?

22. Employ ASL's topic-identification principle – use when the subject or object of a sentence is a complex concept, e.g. a noun comes with an adjectival phrase. First state the subject or object with its adjectival phrase as a separate clause. Then refer back to the subject or object with an appropriate pronoun.
23. Identify and describe events in the order in which they occur. English allows us to freely arrange events out of chronological order, frequently by using prepositions of time BEFORE and AFTER. Be very careful using these prepositions in English text so that the events you describe appear in the text in the sequence in which they happen.
24. Idioms. Many idioms that are common in spoken English are not understood by the deaf. The more obscure the idiom, the more difficult it is to explain. Instead of trying to explain the idiom, it is usually better to just state the meaning. For example, instead of explaining how someone can be “green with envy,” I say they are envious (or jealous).
25. Keep everything as simple as possible
30. Pick which is the simplest – easiest - Most people have a sense which is the simplest
31. Religious vocabulary is troublesome. Terms such as righteousness, justification, carnal, divine, and absolution, just to name a few, are largely unknown. They must either be replaced with more simple synonyms or explained in short phrases or full sentences, depending on the word.
33. Sentences with multiple main ideas may be divided so that each new sentence has one main idea.
34. Simple direct sentences
35. Single word vocabulary. Very simply, there are many words that the deaf don't understand. Sometimes a simpler synonym can be substituted, such as using “many” in place of “numerous.” Other times, an entire phrase must be replaced due to one vocabulary word in the phrase.
36. Some short fragmentary sentences will need extra information added so the sentence will make sense.
37. Split long sentences into shorter sentences.
38. State contextual time references in the first position of a sentence. ASL verbs do not carry any time references (tense), so ASL narrative usually identifies the time reference at the beginning of the narrative. English sentences often place contextual time references at the end of a sentence.
39. Syntax – use the simplest common denominator
40. Target Audience - when adapting written material for the Deaf, always begin with understanding the audience. Know the vocabulary level of the people.
41. Transmit the Meaning. If all the other principles are followed but the meaning is lost or confused, the effort has been wasted and the resulting work is worthless. If only the meaning is needed and the form or presentation of the original work is not that important, then this step is all that is needed. The meaning should be laid out in simple terms. If the structure of the original document is important, then the steps for vocabulary, grammar, and background knowledge should be followed.
42. Try to use simplest synonyms – no matter you repeat yourself
43. Use short simple sentences
44. Visual Aids - Because the Deaf are very visual, adding pictures, drawings, charts, etc., can be helpful. This obviously goes beyond translating the language of a document, but using visual aids can be a great help, especially for difficult concepts or if the writing is long.

45. Visual layout of text is important. Big blocks of unbroken text is visually intimidating to ESL readers.
46. Vocabulary level - List of words that a used – use the most common 1000 or 2000 words
47. When a complex concept is presented as a question, put the question word (who, what, when, where, why, how) at the end of the sentence.
48. When addressing someone, identify the addressee first. English allows naming the addressee in the middle or end of a sentence. ASL favors naming the addressee first.
49. Work from the fount language, or language of origin to receptor language

### **Rating from 3.01 to 3.99**

2. Additional Helps - If a written resource is already in relatively simple language, then the work may be used with helps instead of rewriting it. For example, a study guide may provide a glossary to help with vocabulary and footnotes to explain difficult sentences or provide additional explanation where needed.
10. Avoid relative pronouns – WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHICH.
11. Avoid saying negatives for emphasis; “Jesus’ unfailing love.” Should ASL: “Jesus’ love forever.”
13. Avoid too many comparisons...hard for the deaf to understand
14. Avoid using verbs as nouns. In ASL verbs are always verbs, but English verbs often become nouns through the addition of a suffix (-ing, -ness, -ment, -tion). Such modification of verbs does not exist in ASL. In our literature, the most flagrant infraction is the phrase “forgiveness of sins.” “Forgiveness” is a noun form of the verb “forgive.” Regardless of the form that appears in English text, it is always signed as a verb. Ergo, it is wise to leave it as a verb in text – “God forgives our sins.”
17. Code switch to adapt to the people we are talking to
19. Do not use pronouns; he, she, it, who, whoever, anyone, which; John 3:16 (NIV)

### **Rating 0 to 3**

20. Documents with a strong static text (the Bible, liturgy, certain parts of textbooks), stick more closely to the original text. Generally follow the structure of the original text and primarily change the grammar and vocabulary.
26. Limit one sentence or one idea per line.
27. Limit the length of each “paragraph” to four lines maximum.
28. Must think of two or three ways to say something
29. No sentences over 5 words no words over 5 letters long.

## APPENDIX XIII

### REINKE REVISED RUBRICS MATCH WITH SUBMITTED RUBRICS

Reinke revised list of Rubrics:

1. Vocabulary – easy read/sign
2. Short Sentences
3. No or limited Passive Voice
4. No or limited idioms
5. Visuals included – pictures, graphics, etc...
6. Other

#### 1. Vocabulary – easy read/sign

5. Avoid complicated vocabulary, hymns, poetry, and etc. hard to understand; redemption, sanctification
16. Choose vocabulary that someone struggling with English as a second language (ESL) would best understand. Be mindful of the most common meaning of the words you use.
31. Religious vocabulary is troublesome. Terms such as righteousness, justification, carnal, divine, and absolution, just to name a few, are largely unknown. They must either be replaced with more simple synonyms or explained in short phrases or full sentences, depending on the word.
35. Single word vocabulary. Very simply, there are many words that the deaf don't understand. Sometimes a simpler synonym can be substituted, such as using "many" in place of "numerous." Other times, an entire phrase must be replaced due to one vocabulary word in the phrase.
42. Try to use simplest synonyms – no matter you repeat yourself
46. Vocabulary level - List of words that a used – use the most common 1000 or 2000 words
10. Avoid relative pronouns – WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHICH.

#### 2. Short Sentences

3. Avoid ambiguous pronouns. Pronouns in ASL are very specific in referring to specific individuals. Pronouns in English can be terribly ambiguous. In English translations of Scripture we often find this phrase: "He said to him..." Who are the "he" and "him"? The writer presumes the reader is following the flow of the dialogue. When writing for Deaf readers, identify either or both of the individuals by name. "Jesus said to him..." or "He said to Peter..." or "Jesus said to Peter..." so there is no room for confusion about antecedent of any pronoun. Avoid using the pronoun "they" when the antecedent for the pronoun hasn't be identified, as in, "You know what they say..."
1. A sentence that has on main idea and multiple dependent clauses may be divided into one main sentence and one or more sentences that function to explain or give additional

information about the main sentence. In other words, the dependent clauses become explanatory sentences.

4. Avoid complex sentences – avoid subordination
6. Avoid compound sentences.
7. Avoid long, complex sentences.
12. Avoid sentences that have compound negatives.
18. Conditions come before conclusions. English allows us to reverse the order. “I will stay home if it rains” is permissible in English, but not ASL. Rather, “If it rains, I will stay home.”
21. Don’t start a sentence or phrase, “There is…” “There” normally refers to a specific place. Where is the place cited by “There is”?
22. Employ ASL’s topic-identification principle – use when the subject or object of a sentence is a complex concept, e.g. a noun comes with an adjectival phrase. First state the subject or object with its adjectival phrase as a separate clause. Then refer back to the subject or object with an appropriate pronoun.
23. Identify and describe events in the order in which they occur. English allows us to freely arrange events out of chronological order, frequently by using prepositions of time BEFORE and AFTER. Be very careful using these prepositions in English text so that the events you describe appear in the text in the sequence in which they happen.
30. Pick which is the simplest – easiest - Most people have a sense which is the simplest
33. Sentences with multiple main ideas may be divided so that each new sentence has one main idea.
34. Simple direct sentences
36. Some short fragmentary sentences will need extra information added so the sentence will make sense.
37. Split long sentences into shorter sentences.
43. Use short simple sentences
11. Avoid saying negatives for emphasis; “Jesus’ unfailing love.” Should ASL: “Jesus’ love forever.”
14. Avoid using verbs as nouns. In ASL verbs are always verbs, but English verbs often become nouns through the addition of a suffix (-ing, -ness, -ment, -tion). Such modification of verbs does not exist in ASL. In our literature, the most flagrant infraction is the phrase “forgiveness of sins.” “Forgiveness” is a noun form of the verb “forgive.” Regardless of the form that appears in English text, it is always signed as a verb. Ergo, it is wise to leave it as a verb in text – “God forgives our sins.”
19. Do not use pronouns; he, she, it, who, whoever, anyone, which; John 3:16 (NIV)

### **3. No or limited Passive Voice**

32. Remove passive verbs.
8. Avoid passive voice.
9. Avoid passives “Jesus got crucified by Pontius Pilate.” Should ASL: “PP nailed Jesus” [active]

### **4. No or limited idioms**

24. Idioms. Many idioms that are common in spoken English are not understood by the deaf. The more obscure the idiom, the more difficult it is to explain. Instead of trying to explain the idiom, it is usually better to just state the meaning. For example, instead of explaining how someone can be “green with envy,” I say they are envious (or jealous).
13. Avoid too many comparisons...hard for the deaf to understand

### **5. Visuals included – pictures, graphics, etc...**

44. Visual Aids - Because the Deaf are very visual, adding pictures, drawings, charts, etc., can be helpful. This obviously goes beyond translating the language of a document, but using visual aids can be a great help, especially for difficult concepts or if the writing is long.
45. Visual layout of text is important. Big blocks of unbroken text is visually intimidating to ESL readers.

### **6. Other**

15. Background Knowledge - often, the Deaf do not have the same background knowledge of history, the Bible, current events, politics, etc., that many hearing people have. Sometimes writings make brief references to certain subjects and assume the reader understands the reference. In such cases, evaluate if the Deaf will understand the reference and if there is a need to add an explanation about what the reference means or replace it with a sentence or two that states what the author intended to say.
25. Keep everything as simple as possible
38. State contextual time references in the first position of a sentence. ASL verbs do not carry any time references (tense), so ASL narrative usually identifies the time reference at the beginning of the narrative. English sentences often place contextual time references at the end of a sentence.
39. Syntax – use the simplest common denominator
40. Target Audience - when adapting written material for the Deaf, always begin with understanding the audience. Know the vocabulary level of the people.
41. Transmit the Meaning. If all the other principles are followed but the meaning is lost or confused, the effort has been wasted and the resulting work is worthless. If only the meaning is needed and the form or presentation of the original work is not that important, then this step is all that is needed. The meaning should be laid out in simple terms. If the structure of the original document is important, then the steps for vocabulary, grammar, and background knowledge should be followed.
47. When a complex concept is presented as a question, put the question word (who, what, when, where, why, how) at the end of the sentence.
48. When addressing someone, identify the addressee first. English allows naming the addressee in the middle or end of a sentence. ASL favors naming the addressee first.
49. Work from the fount language, or language of origin to receptor language
2. Additional Helps - If a written resource is already in relatively simple language, then the work may be used with helps instead of rewriting it. For example, a study guide may provide a glossary to help with vocabulary and footnotes to explain difficult sentences or provide additional explanation where needed.
17. Code switch to adapt to the people we are talking to

## APPENDIX XIV

### MULTI LANGUAGE PUBLICATIONS (WELS) BOOK LIST

Multi Language Publications  
NPH Books

Am I Worthy – General  
Believe and Live – John Commentary  
Bible Handbook – General Use  
Broken Hearted Father – General Use  
Chosen By Grace – English  
Christian Church – English  
Coe Follow Me – English – Bible Study  
Death & Rising of Jesus Christ  
Free to Live – General Use  
Freedom in Christ - English  
God Creates Our World – General Use  
God Manages My Anger – General  
God’s Great Exchange – General Use  
God’s Plan for the World  
Gospel of John – English  
I Am Blessed Through God’s Word – English  
Jesus is Lord Addiction is Not – General Use  
Jesus the Christ – General Use  
Law of God – General Use  
Letter to the Romans – English  
Life After Death – General Use  
Living Faith – English  
Means of Grace – English  
Parables of Jesus – English  
Reluctant Prophet  
Righteous Through Faith – English  
Road to Emmaus – English – Bible Study  
What Christians Believe – General Use  
Words Jesus Taught – General Use  
You Must Be Born Again – General Use

## APPENDIX XV

### WYCLIFFE BIBLE TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATES EASYENGLISH GUIDELINES

Rob Betts reviews a general-purpose controlled English system specially devised for people with English as a second language.

Half the world's population is predicted to be speaking or learning English within the next ten years (Burleigh, 2004). This explosion of English usage is fuelled by an increasingly globalised culture and the rise of English as a medium of business and education.

However, most English speakers do not speak it as their first language, and many would benefit greatly from English texts written specifically with them in mind. This opens up enormous opportunities for controlled language systems that have international and cross-cultural applicability. Wycliffe Associates, a UK-based organisation, has devised such a system, known as EasyEnglish.

Wycliffe Associates (UK) produces Biblical materials for pastors, Bible translators and English teachers worldwide. We initially developed EasyEnglish as a tool for the production of Bible translations and commentaries. We are increasingly diversifying into both translation and origination of other materials (including those for people with learning difficulties).

There are, of course, other controlled language systems. One of these is AECMA Simplified English (Unwalla, 2004; Dodd, 2005). However, EasyEnglish is, as far as we know, the most highly developed general-purpose controlled English scheme for multicultural audiences.

EasyEnglish is a formally defined subset of standard English (not to be confused with IBM's EasyEnglish system — now called EasyEnglishAnalyser — which was described by Bernth, 1997.) EasyEnglish is able to express complex or abstract ideas in simpler words and grammatical structures without significantly losing meaning. It does this by:

- 1.Restricting vocabulary
- 2.Simplifying grammar
- 3.Applying a logical structure to optimise comprehensibility.

EasyEnglish also aims to communicate to readers from a very diverse range of cultural backgrounds.

After describing these features of EasyEnglish and noting the production tools used, we will compare EasyEnglish with two simplified English systems. We will end by critiquing EasyEnglish and briefly discussing two major challenges.

#### Restricting vocabulary

We have until now used a restricted vocabulary based on the Cambridge English Lexicon (Hindmarsh 1980), a graded compilation of high-frequency words. However, we are now introducing a new vocabulary with the aid of a frequency list based on the British National Corpus ([www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk](http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk)). We took the top 3000 words by frequency from this list and supplied our own definitions, which were based on a number of published school dictionaries. For each word, we chose the most frequently used meaning (or meanings). The list has been adjusted by experienced Easy-English writers in the light of our target audience, a significant proportion of whom are from the Third World, and who have a wide range of cultural backgrounds. For example, we use few abstract



nouns (such as 'strength', 'anger', and 'peace') because some first languages spoken by potential users of our material have relatively few nouns of this type.

### Vocabulary size

EasyEnglish comprises two levels. The simpler level currently uses around 1,200 words, and assumes a working knowledge of English as a second language sufficient to cope with most social and work situations. The more advanced level employs around 2,800 words and is directed at those with an intermediate level of proficiency in English.

Experience has shown that we can successfully translate the Bible and other, more general, materials with a vocabulary of 1,200 words without significant loss of meaning; the 2,800-word vocabulary at the more advanced level provides texts that exhibit a degree of style and sophistication. West (1950) states (primarily in relation to story-telling) that:

- With 750 words, one can tell fairy stories well and an adventure story with difficulty.
- With 1,100 words, one can tell adventure stories well but rather baldly.
- With 1,700 words, one can tell any plot, preserving much of the original style.
- A vocabulary of 2,000 words is sufficient for anything, and more than sufficient for most things.

### Selection of meanings

Selection of words is only part of the process of building a working corpus. Most words have multiple meanings, which is a potential source of confusion. We need to select those meanings that are suitable. This requires considerable understanding of the target audience's use of English. For example, 'fair' can mean 'beautiful', 'blond', 'unbiased', 'reasonably good', 'favourable', 'market', 'amusement show' and 'commercial exhibition'. EasyEnglish prefers the sense or senses that first come to mind when the term occurs in isolation; for 'fair', the simpler EasyEnglish level allows only 'unbiased'.

The multi-functionality of many English words poses further difficulties. A word may be used as different parts of speech (for example, 'wrong' can be a noun, verb or adjective); the '-ing' verbal inflection may be a participle (functioning as an adjective) or a gerund (functioning as a noun). This feature of English can prove very troublesome to second-language speakers.

### Figure 1 — Text processed by the EasyEnglish vocabulary checker

Red highlighting indicates non-permitted words, blue indicates words permitted only with certain meanings; green indicates words that are usually permitted, but may need validation (for example, for grammar); black words need no checking.

### Simplifying grammar

Lexical considerations, however, are not the biggest concerns when designing an English system for second-language speakers. The following rather amusing example demonstrates this (Anon. 2002). The Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel serves a community of people for whom English may well be a third or fourth language. The outpatients department displayed this notice:

If you are attending another clinic and having your blood taken with your yellow book when there is not an anticoagulation clinic going on downstairs please check with the phlebotomist and take a ticket as you would normally.

The problem here is not only (or even primarily) vocabulary. Probably only two words ('anticoagulation' and 'phlebotomist') need replacement or explanation. The real problem is grammar. The sentence is too long and the train of thought is convoluted. In addition, the notice seems to assume prior knowledge of certain facts (that is, there appears to be implicit information). Restricting vocabulary is not enough; attention must be paid to simplifying grammar and sentence structure, and to making any implicit data explicit.

### Sentence structure

EasyEnglish's grammatical structure is designed with one goal in mind: clarity. The structure is based on work done by Wycliffe Associates member Karen Bennett (Bennett, undated). Bennett studied sample English texts to see what made them complex. For example, Readers' Digest texts (designed as easy-reading texts) were found often to use complex sentence structures. Bennett concluded that complexity is determined more by the number of 'idea units' or 'units of meaning' per sentence than by vocabulary. She developed a simplified grammatical system based on these findings and on her own experience as both a second-language speaker and a teacher of English.

EasyEnglish imposes limits on:

- Sentence and paragraph length
- Sentence structure (a maximum of two finite clauses per sentence is currently permitted)
- Number of prepositional phrases (for example 'they ran to the shop in the village' is allowed, but 'they ran to the shop in the village before sunset' is not)
- Nesting (also known as embedding).

Nesting is an important feature of English and can be explained by the following example:

My sister said that the man who was serving in the shop while we were buying cakes that my son had asked for was a neighbour of hers.

This complex sentence 'nests' clauses within its structure, shown in the following analysis:

My sister said that  
    the man  
        who was serving in the shop  
            while we were buying cakes  
                that my son had asked for  
                    was a neighbour of hers.

Three nested clauses occur within the phrase 'the man was a neighbour of hers'. Readers have to hold the entire contents of the sentence (including the three subordinate clauses) and their inter-relationships in their minds while assimilating its meaning. Second-language English readers may find this quite difficult, with a consequent loss of comprehension. Their difficulties may be increased by the fact that many of them have first languages that do not employ nesting to this degree. Even native English speakers can lose themselves in the intricate subordination that can be found (for example) in some academic and technical writing! EasyEnglish's solution is to allow only one subordinate clause (that is, only one instance of nesting) per sentence. EasyEnglish might translate the above example as:

My sister and I were buying cakes in a shop, because my son had asked for them. There was a man serving in the shop. My sister said that this man was one of her neighbours.

### Passive Voice

EasyEnglish avoids almost all passives, because they are relatively complex forms for second-language readers. There is an immense variety in the use of the passive voice in languages; some languages (including many of the 850 or so spoken in Papua New Guinea) do not use passives, and those who speak these as their first languages may find the English passive difficult to grasp.

### Ambiguous grammatical forms

EasyEnglish also avoids ambiguous grammatical forms. Pronouns that can refer back to more than one noun are avoided, and the genitive is restricted to forms that make the relationship between the terms unambiguous. For example, 'the city of Thessalonica' might be interpreted as a city in a district called Thessalonica; a better alternative is 'the city called Thessalonica'. EasyEnglish also recognises and avoids 'functional ambiguity'; for example, the sentence 'He hit the man with the umbrella' requires clarification.

### Applying a logical structure

On a broader scale, EasyEnglish asks for a logical flow of ideas. This goes beyond simply controlling vocabulary and grammar, and deals with the underlying way in which writers convey their ideas. Outlining the logical sequence of ideas is an essential first step in the road to clarity and precision, especially when translating from standard English. EasyEnglish translators are encouraged first to identify the basic idea units in a complex sentence or paragraph and then to arrange them in logical order. An example is:

Even the glorious loneliness of the Highland's wonderful landscape of loch, moor and mountain is largely a product of the 'Clearances' of the 18th and 19th centuries, which caused so much hardship and suffering.

We can identify no less than six idea units here:

- 1.The landscape of the Highlands consists of loch, moor and mountain.
- 2.This is a wonderful landscape.
- 3.The landscape is gloriously lonely.
- 4.The loneliness is largely a product of the Clearances.
- 5.The Clearances occurred in the 18th and 19th centuries.
- 6.The Clearances caused much hardship and suffering.

Identifying and arranging the elemental idea units in this way enables the EasyEnglish translator to reassemble them in a series of short, simple sentences conveying a logical flow of ideas that builds the readers' knowledge step by step. This process is as important as adhering to the rules of grammar and vocabulary. The above example might result in this EasyEnglish translation:

The Highlands of Scotland consist of lakes, mountains and moors. The moors are flat, empty lands where no trees grow. This land is wonderful and magnificent because it is so empty. However, many people once lived there. But in the 18th and 19th centuries the owners of the land forced these people to leave. These people suffered many difficulties and troubles. People call these terrible events 'the Clearances'.

Note that there has been further consolidation and rearrangement of the idea units during the composition of the final EasyEnglish text. Two words not permitted in EasyEnglish ('Clearances' and 'moors') are also explained.

### Communicating across cultural boundaries

We also use well-established techniques, commonly used (for example) by Bible translators, to ensure that the meaning is clear to readers from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds. Such an approach ensures that culturally-specific metaphors and idioms are translated appropriately. This approach also requires us to make implicit information explicit. Implicit data is information the reader needs in order to understand the text, but which is not overtly stated. This omission is often because the writer assumes the reader has a similar cultural background, and can be expected to know the unexpressed details. EasyEnglish always expresses implicit data. For example, in 2 Samuel 15.32 we read of a man named Hushai coming to meet king David 'with his coat torn and dirt on his head'. Our cultural knowledge informs us that Hushai had not met with an accident, but was displaying grief in the manner typical of a 10th-century Palestinian! EasyEnglish texts explain such culturally specific details.

### Production tools

We use a variety of production tools, including a lexicon that lists permitted terms with their meanings. We have also developed computer tools to assess readability and conformity with EasyEnglish style dynamically.

One potentially important tool that has begun to be developed is a thesaurus. This would extend the functionality of our lexicon by:

1. Listing EasyEnglish equivalents for words or phrases not allowed
2. Prompting the writer with valid alternatives to permitted words or phrases
3. Providing the writer with groups of related permitted terms (for example, nautical, cookery and agricultural terms) — a kind of 'palette' of terms useful for original writing (rather than translation).

It is easy to forget permitted (and potentially better) alternatives when writing, especially at the more advanced level, with its larger vocabulary, and the thesaurus would help the writer to use all the available suitable terms.

### Comparison with existing easy-reading Bible translations

A major use of EasyEnglish so far has been Bible translation. Other easy-reading Bible versions (translations and paraphrases) exist that are suitable for second-language English readers. Two important examples are the Easy-to-Read Version (ERV) from the World Bible Translation Centre (2001) and the New Life Version (NLV) (Christian Literature International 1997). Comparison of our EasyEnglish version against these alternatives reveals some interesting and perhaps unexpected differences. For example, the NLV rendering of I Timothy 1.4 is:

They should not listen to stories that are not true. It is foolish for them to try to learn more about their early fathers. These only bring more questions to their minds and do not make their faith in God stronger. (41 words)

The ERV translation of this text is:

Tell those people not to give their time to stories that are not true and to long lists of names in family histories. Those things only bring arguments. Those things don't help God's work. God's work is done by faith. (40 words)

The EasyEnglish version (1200-word vocabulary version):

Neither should they listen to false stories. Nor should they always be studying long lists of their families' names from years ago. They should not believe that to study lists like that can help them.

Those things only cause people to argue. Those things do not help God's work. To do God's work, people must believe him. (57 words)

The EasyEnglish version differs from the two alternatives in several ways. For example:

1. Both alternatives use the passive voice (the ERV example above contains an instance of this).
2. Both alternatives make use of abstract nouns not permitted in EasyEnglish (i.e. 'faith' in both examples).
3. Both, to varying degrees, use longer and/or more complex sentence structures (the first sentence in the ERV example is longer than EasyEnglish would allow).
4. Both use many words and meanings not permitted at either level of EasyEnglish. For example, 'early' in the NLV version means 'ancient', not a permitted sense in EasyEnglish; 'family' in the ERV is an adjectival use of this noun, not permitted in EasyEnglish.

The NLV was specifically designed for second-language English speakers; the ERV also includes second-language English readers among its target audiences. Yet they differ significantly from the EasyEnglish version. In our view, the EasyEnglish version is the most suitable of these three in meeting the needs of those using English as a second language. This in turn suggests that EasyEnglish does indeed cater for our target audience better than the simplified English that underlies these versions.

### Critique of EasyEnglish

However, we recognise that there are valid criticisms of our approach. Three issues spring to mind:

1. Perhaps the most troublesome issue is that EasyEnglish text tends to exhibit lack of flow, or 'choppiness', because of the restrictions on the number of clauses per sentence. This can force subordinate clauses to be promoted inappropriately to full sentences. This, in turn, easily upsets the balance of emphasis in the text and hinders readers from distinguishing between background and foreground information. The distinction between background and foreground data is a vital element of meaning within the text, which, if lost, can seriously mislead or confuse readers.
2. Non-permitted terms often need to be replaced by phrases. This can introduce unwanted complexity and further disturb the balance of emphasis. This is a major factor in increasing the length of a translated passage.
3. Our rejection of passives can sometimes force us to find subjects for verbs when these are either not known or not important.

We may, in the future, decide to allow greater flexibility in applying the EasyEnglish rules. We might, for example, allow a larger number of passives and relax the limitations on the number of clauses. This could help the text to flow more smoothly and restore proper emphasis, but it will also complicate the EasyEnglish grammatical rules. This, in turn, will demand more from our writers and may well lead to other, different, failures in the resultant EasyEnglish texts. We have to strike a balance between the demands on our writers and the needs of our readers — a dilemma that any controlled language system has to face.

### Major challenges

Two other major challenges face us. Firstly, we know that many people feel satisfied with our material, because they tell us. But how many actually understand it as we intended? We are beginning to explore comprehension testing with members of our target audiences, to establish how well our EasyEnglish materials actually perform.

Developing a corpus for EasyEnglish has been a second major challenge. We are confident that the new vocabulary we are introducing is a major step forward but, doubtless, much fine-tuning remains to be done. A special problem here is the great cultural and social diversity of our audience. We

distribute our materials mainly through the Internet to around 150 countries, and we aim to serve those in both urban and rural locations. No single corpus serves everyone equally well. We have to have a 'happy medium' — but where to centre that happy medium is difficult to decide.

We need corpora derived from collections of spoken as well as written everyday English from different parts of the world, and this is an area that remains to be fully explored. One possible avenue might be to obtain literature in simple English (such as texts used in primary/secondary education) in many of our key user locations — Africa, India, South-East Asia and South America.

## Conclusion

We believe that the explosion in global use of English opens up immense opportunities for the EasyEnglish system well beyond its present applications. Our major challenges are:

1. Adjusting our grammatical rules to allow greater flexibility, while not unduly complicating instructions to our writers.
2. Further developing the tools to speed and ease our writers' task (such as the computer-aided tools and the thesaurus).
3. Fine-tuning our EasyEnglish corpus.
4. Comprehension testing with our target audience.

Overcoming these hurdles would enable us to realise the full potential of EasyEnglish in communicating across cultural and social boundaries worldwide.

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## APPENDIX XVI

### DR. MARY DANIEL MEETING NOTES OCTOBER 2014

What do you look for in translating materials?

Passive voice

Syntax – simplest common denominator

    Must think of two or three ways to say something

    Pick which is the simplest – easiest

        Most people have a sense which is the simplest

Avoid complex sentences – avoid subordination

Short simple sentences

Try to use simplest synonyms – no matter you repeat yourself

Vocabulary level

    List of words that a used – the most common 1000 or 2000 words

    Bible translation – has gone down greatly the vocabulary

    Variety of words has gone down

    Average speaker is using fewer and simpler words

    Portages has gone to become very much simpler

We code switch to adapt to the people we are talking to

    We must see what is their level

We are working from the fount language or language of origin to receptor language

Some areas to examine and contact:

Wycliffe is the overarching -

    Summer institute of linguistics is the field work, the translation section

GIAL – graduate institute of applied linguistics

    Ask about the Key Bible Terms in the NT and OT



APPENDIX XVII

**FRENCH RUBRICS FOR TRANSLATION EVALUATION**

Translation Rubric for French

Assessment	Exceeds the Standard	Meets the Standard	Significant Progress toward Standard	Limited Progress toward Standard	No Evidence
Overall comprehension	The translation reflected the passage with clear understanding of structure and meaning	The translation reflected the passage with a generally successful understanding of structure and meaning	The translation reflected the ideas of the passage, but some details were confusing or incorrect	The translation reflected a few of the ideas in the passage correctly, many details were confusing and incorrect	The translation had little relation with the actual material presented
Comprehension of verb agreement - person and tense	The translation of verbs demonstrates a clear understanding of how syntax relates to tense and person	The translation demonstrates an understanding of how syntax relates to tenses and person with few errors	The translation demonstrates some understanding of tense and person, but some errors obscure meaning of the passage	The translation demonstrates a limited understanding of tense and person, and several errors obscure meaning of the passage	The translation demonstrates little understanding of tense and person and makes the passage incomprehensible
Comprehension of special idioms in the language	The translation demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the use of special idioms in the French language	The translation demonstrates a generally correct understanding of the use of special idioms in the French language	The translation demonstrates some understanding of the use of special idioms in the French language	The translation demonstrates little understanding of the use of special idioms in the French language	The translation does not demonstrate an understanding of the use of special idioms in the French language
Comprehension of pronouns	The translation demonstrates a clear understanding of the usage of a wide range of pronouns and the omission of subject pronouns	The translation demonstrates an adequate understanding of the usage of a wide range of pronouns but errors do not obscure meaning	The translation demonstrates a general understanding of the usage of pronouns and the omission of subject pronouns, some errors obscure meaning	The translation demonstrates a limited understanding of pronouns and the omission of subject pronouns	The translation demonstrates little understanding of the usage of pronouns in French

## APPENDIX XVIII

# DEAF SIGNED READERS VERSION RUBRICS FOR ADAPTING LECTIONARY INTO SIGN LANGUAGE

### A Non-Verbal Mind structure

A child's mind structures itself! A hearing child's mind uses the ears to build its verbal structure. Blind people speak the language of the tongue where they are born. Their ears, as with all the hearing children, structure their minds with the language they hear. A Deaf child's mind uses the eyes to build its non-verbal structure. This naturally leads the Deaf person to want and use Sign Language as a natural non-verbal output that the language in his mind produces. Verbal outputs (voice) and inputs (lip reading) are like a foreign language to this non-verbal structure.

### English Structure Problems

Additionally, a non-verbally structured mind encounters some parts of English that are foreign to their thinking process. The famous Deaf man, Laurent Clerc shared that during his early education in the late 1800s he had to rearrange the difficult French sentence construction and then could understand the meaning. Deaf people today encounter the same difficulty in English constructions. DSRV rearranges Bible language to accomplish the same result: God's meaning to the eyes, mind and heart of the Deaf person.

### DSRV English Restructured

On the facing page is a brief explanation of the various English structural problems that the DSRV adapts. 96% of all the Deaf people in the United States do not go to Church. Romans 1:16 says:

*I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes...*

More Church groups and others have tried to reach the Deaf minority than any other minority in our country. So why then has the response been so small? The Editor/Adapter of DSRV maintains that regular English structured Bible verses do not present God's clear Gospel to the eyes of the non-verbal structured mind of the Deaf. Therefore, those "Bible" words are not God's power to cause faith in the hearts of the Deaf and, sadly, 96% prove the point! Even in the simple verse above presents problems for the non-verbal mind structure: "I am not ashamed" is Passive; the "not" is in the wrong position; the "because" clause should be first; "for" is a result clause of God's power; the "who" isn't a question; "believe" is faith, God's gift, in action (Eph.2:8-9);

Romans 1:16 (DSRV): **THE GOSPEL IS GOD'S POWER ABLE**

**TO SAVE PEOPLE THAT HAVE FAITH IN [ JESUS]...**

**<THEREFORE> THE GOSPEL DOES NOT EMBARRASS ME, NO!**

See [holycrossdeaf.org](http://holycrossdeaf.org) for the symbol explanation sheet.

### DSRV Adapts the English:

#### • VOCABULARY

Limited to English words, "sign names," with well known signs.

#### • PASSIVE VOICE

The non-verbal mind structure understands everything in the active voice! It most often perceives the Passive Voice as only a past tense statement. An Active reading of a Passive statement has the wrong actor. Biblically that is deadly! Instead of God, often the person himself is the actor! This is the **ultimate confusion** of Law and Gospel!

#### • NEGATIVES

In English occur first. In Sign Language it occurs at the end of the statement. This means the wrong part of the statement is understood as negated. Also, questions that include a negative are understood as negative, ie: *The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?* (1 Cor. 10:16) is understood as the cup of blessing is not the blood of Christ.

#### • PRONOUNS

In a declined language have endings that connect them to the noun they refer. In Sign Language, positioning accomplishes that same result. Not so in English. Additionally, the English "you" has no indication for the singular or plural form. Very confusing for the Deaf person.

#### • RELATIVE PRONOUNS (who, how, which, when, etc.)

are always questions in sign Language! Not so in English but often misunderstood as such by the Deaf person. "...who was conceived by the Holy Spirit" becomes: "Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit?"

#### • RESULT CLAUSES

are signed with the "because" and "for"; English invented signs that are not conceptually non-verbal. For the Deaf, the statement or condition is signed first then the accomplished result is signed! Often a simple word order change with an action verb or a "therefore" accomplishes clear understanding by the Deaf reader.

#### • PREPOSITIONS

have a correct and understood use in Sign Language but not as used in the English prepositional phrases which are the Passive Voice actors or modifiers of other words. The sign order often replaces the need for the preposition!

## APPENDIX XIX

### **The Spitting Jesus and Other Stories to Help Understand the Deaf World**

The goal of this booklet is to have fun! If we are learning new things it is because we are having fun. Through the use of stories, examples, and pictures I want to lead you into a world of wonder, excitement, challenge, and beauty – Deaf World!

I grew up in hearing family in a small town in Minnesota. Many people in my family have a hearing loss, but no one signed. I did not experience Deaf World or Deaf Church until my wife (Dacia) and I moved to St. Louis to study at the Seminary. Dacia wanted to learn how to sign and asked if we could go to a local Deaf Church. Being a good husband, I said “Yes, Dear.” In the middle of August 1985 we found Holy Cross Lutheran Church of the Deaf in St. Louis.

The first time going to Deaf Church, I did not like it. I grew up hearing, I knew hearing church. Deaf Church is NOT like hearing church! But Dacia liked it, so we went back. Then something strange happened, by the third time going, I began to understand what Deaf people said when they signed. I did not realize until later this is very odd. Most people first learn to sign, then come their receptive skills, watching and understanding other people signing.

God opened a door I never thought to enter, He opened the Deaf World. Over the past 30 years I have learned to love and care in a world I never knew existed while growing up. A way of communication that is not only visual, but is alive and active in expression.

Why read this booklet? If you have a deaf child, have a deaf person in your family, you know a deaf person, if your “Deaf is improving” (your hearing is going down like mine), or if you want to learn about a new World. I want to introduce you to a world I love. I want to introduce you to a people God loves. I want to share with you the experiences God has given me, so that you will have a glimpse of Deaf World and how communication is possible.

I pray these insights I have learned through the years will be helpful in your understanding the struggles of Deaf people and communication. I thank God for all the people who have shared their lives with me and I pray He will continue to guide us on this journey. I am sharing with you my experiences in a general way, ALL Deaf people are different! We are not all made the same, we do not all think or act the same way. I pray this booklet gives you insights to want to meet Deaf people and explore.

#### **The Spitting Jesus!**

That is gross! Why would you start with this story? Because in hearing world we are taught to be polite, vague, fuzzy. But the Deaf World is straight forward with full picture and visual, nothing hidden.

People often ask me, did Jesus know how to sign? Did Jesus know Deaf Word? In Mark 7 we read the story about Jesus arriving in the area called the Decapolis (10 cities). Here is an outline of what happens:

- People bring deaf man to Jesus
- Jesus leads deaf man away
- Jesus put fingers in man's ear
- Jesus spits and touches Deaf man on his tongue
- Jesus looks up Heaven
- Jesus sighs, says "Ephphatha"
- Man can hear, speak, and believe!

You will notice I try to write in short precise sentences. Not many flowery words. This makes them easier to read and to sign.

I love this story because it sets up for us interactions with Deaf people. The Deaf man did not search for Jesus, people brought the Deaf man to Jesus.

First, Jesus leads the man away. Jesus knows if you stay with the group there will be distractions, people moving, the Deaf man will be distracted. Jesus wants them to have one on one communication, no distractions. Jesus knows Deaf culture! Next Jesus uses "home" signs, signs that may not be common accepted language, but they are visual and convey the content.

Jesus puts his finger in the Deaf man's ears! I love it – great sermon for kids. Would you do this when you meet a Deaf person? No Way! First, we would say it is gross putting your finger in another person's ear. Second, the Deaf person would not like it! But that is what Jesus did.

Then Jesus becomes more gross, Jesus spits and touches the Deaf man on his tongue. Did Jesus spit on His hand and touch the Deaf man's tongue? No way we would do that or let someone do that to us. Why would Jesus act that way? Jesus was signing, communicating in a way the Deaf man can understand. Jesus is showing the Deaf man He understands something is wrong with his ears and tongue.

Where will this "thing" come from? Jesus looks up to Heaven. Jesus shows this will come from above, God. Jesus sighs. Often people read past the sigh, this is the breath, the Ruach of God. You remember God made Adam, God breathed life into him, God's breath. In Ezekiel 37 in the valley of dry bones, God tells Ezekiel to command the winds, the breath of God to come. He explains this is His Holy Spirit. In 2 Timothy 3:16 it says all of the Bible is God breathed, God's breath of life is in His Word. God's breath is powerful!

Then a simple word Ephphatha – Be Opened. Immediately the Deaf man could hear and speak! He was opened to Jesus Word, not only his ears and mouth, but his heart was open to believing in Jesus. The people gossiped like crazy. The spread the news all over the area.

Can Jesus sign? YES! Did Jesus know Deaf culture? YES! Should you walk up and do the same to a Deaf person today? NO! But Jesus gives us insight into how we must work with Deaf people today. Jesus used a visual expressive means of communication that showed the Deaf man what was happening. The same is true today, the best way to communicate with a Deaf person is by signing. Today we do not use “home signs,” instead we have a full communication with American Sign Language.

To communicate, hearing people must learn to sign, a Deaf person cannot learn to hear. Yes, Jesus opened the man’s ears, but for us that is not possible. Hearing aids (which I have two) and cochlear implants (CI) are good tools, they assist in the communication. But they amplify and adjust the sounds, it is not the same as “normal” hearing and we still miss many things.

### **What is Communication?**

I am writing this paper in a way that it can be presented to families and congregations. They have or want to work with Deaf people. Some of the vocabulary and structure may seem odd because it is set in a format with short sentence structure to make it easier to share with Deaf people and their families.

The conveying of ideas and thoughts is more than sounds and verbalization. It is the picture, the idea, the multidimensional meaning conveyed in those words that equals communication. The same way the human voice can be used to convey a wide range of emotions, expressions, and meanings. The same way signed communication conveys for a Deaf person the full range of emotions, expressions, and meaning. They become people.

One example from the T.V. show “Star Trek: The Next Generation” is called Darmok. Captain Picard is transported down to a planet and trapped with an alien captain. Their people only speak using stories, and cannot be understood by the universal translator. The two captains must learn to communicate with each other before a deadly beast kills them. Picard is the one who must learn the stories to understand what is happening.

This story shows me the miscommunication that often happens in trying to bring the two languages of English and Sign Language together. I also see this often in sermons and communication of Biblical texts. The reading says that Joseph did not “consummate” his relationship with Mary or often people say they did not “sleep together.” This means “they did not have sex.” But in a hearing congregation that would not be polite to say. That is too straight forward. Yet with a deaf group that is exactly what we need to say.

### **I Don’t Want to Go Home**

I was very shocked when Deaf students came back from break and told me they did not want to go home again! Why? When I was a Vicar in Rochester New York part of my work was with students attending the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID).

The students arrive in fall. We had a great time together meeting, studying, and fellowshiping together. Communication was great, interpreters in the classroom, many of

the students signed, we had great fun in Bible Study. I thought everything was going good, until they went home for Thanksgiving. When they returned to campus, that is when I learned they did not want to go home. Why not?

While at college they had signed communication with everyone, upon arriving home they realized only one or two people signed. They felt left out of many conversations. If everyone signed while sitting around the table, you would be able to watch all the conversations. But if there is only verbal communication, you can only see some of what the person sitting across from you is saying. With hearing aids and CI you may be able to hear the person next to you. But that is all, you are left out of a majority of what is happening around you.

That is why the students did not want to go home, they realized there was minimal communication at home. This does not happen today! Signing is more acceptable and popular today – right?

### **Family Functions**

At the end of his book “BUGS” Christopher Heuer comments “I don’t talk with my parents that much.” The reason is because his family does not sign, there is minimal communication. Family functions are often boring, yes Deaf people like to see their families, but just like the students going home from college, communication is limited.

Often one or two of the family members will sign, you can communicate a little. But when that person goes and talks to other hearing people do they sign? Often no. The Deaf family member is left out of most of the conversations that happen. The answer – the more people in the family who can sign, the better the communication!

### **Visual Communication**

One of our mothers shared this story about her young deaf child. She watched him one day sitting on the steps in their house. He was sitting watching all the events happening around him. It happened that his brother went to the front door, opened it, his friends were there and they went out to play together. A while later his sister went to the front door, opened it, and her friends were standing there. They came in and went to play together.

A short time later this young deaf child went to the front door, opened it, and no one was there. This mother shared how her heart broke as her son closed the door and walked away sad. Why? He did not know the friends called or rang the doorbell when they arrived. This is the event that motivated her to get flashers for the doorbell, phone, etc... so her son would know what is happening around him.

This visual communication is vital to understand what is happening in the world. Imagine if you were talking with someone and they just got up and walked away. What would the other person think? Now connect this same ideas with a mom or dad playing with a young deaf child and suddenly they get up and walk away, how feel? The child does not know the phone rang or the doorbell buzzed. But, if you have flashers and other communication, they know something is happening that needs attention.

## **Spiritual Life**

It is a sad reality that over 97% of Deaf people are not involved in any Christian church. There are many reasons for this but the biggest is the issue of communication. The vocabulary and the way we say things in English are often not easy to understand for Deaf people. That is why we often use stories and visual to help show God's truth. Here are a few stories we use.

### **Sin, what is it?**

One example is the idea of sin. I remember the time I was working with a Deaf group and asked how many sinned this week. No One raised their hand! They did not have an idea of sin or what it meant. We may say and sign the word "sin" but that does not mean people understand what it means. Now we often use the idea of brownies.

I make the best Brownies! "I make the best brownies, I use the best chocolate, the freshest milk, DELICIOUS! You want some? (The answer is always yes) I also use a special ingredient, just a pinch, a little sprinkle over the top, makes it taste SCRUMPTIOUS! Would you like to know my special ingredient? (YES) I use just a sprinkle, just a touch of dog poop sprinkled over the top. (You can imagine people's reaction) You want some of my brownies? (NO).

This is the picture of sin, it is not a balance. It is not if I do only a little bad and a lot of good, then I am "ok" with God. Sin is like the dog poop, it does not matter how much good I do, one sin, one mistake, and it spoils everything. The same you would not want to eat my brownies, think of how God looks at our lives, does He want them? (NO) That is why forgiveness is so important! God cleans all the sin from our lives and makes us His pure children.

Did the brownie story offend you? We do not often talk this direct in hearing culture, we are more polite. But to convey the concept of sin we need to have a concrete picture that shows what sin does in our lives. Deaf people now have a picture of sin they can understand and share with others.

### **Someone hurt me, what I do?**

If you come over to my house you will see a bucket behind our front door. A few weeks ago someone gave me a bucket of cow manure and I keep it behind the front door. (Now you are thinking really do it??) NO! Who would keep a bucket of cow manure in their house? It would soon smell terrible! If someone gives me that bucket I throw it away outside.

The same if someone hurts you and says bad things about you, they are giving a bucket of crap. What you do? You hold and keep it. You remember it and smell it? You like it? Why keep it? Does this bucket make the other person smell bad? NO! Only you smell bad. Same as bucket at home, what do – throw it away. Ask God to forgive that person and throw away the bucket.

This is a great visual to use for people who are holding on to past sins people did against them. If you can show the visual they see how the sin is hurting them and making their life smell bad. Jesus forgives us and wants us to forgive other people, not hold on to the buckets.

### **Who is like me? Afraid of death**

This story is sharing by one of the interpreters we have worked with: She worked with a young boy in High School and one day he came to school depressed. Over the next few days she was talking with him to find out what was wrong. Finally, he shared he was afraid of death.

The interpreter talked with the family thinking they experienced a death in the family. But they said no one recently died and they did not know why he would be afraid of death. This situation went on for a few more days and the family sat down with the interpreter again. (The family knew a few signs but were not able to communicate with full conversations.)

As they were talking together they learned he was not afraid of death, HE was afraid of dying. (Death and Dying are signed the same way) He was afraid that he would soon finish High School, graduate, and die! Why? Because he had never met a deaf adult. He never met someone like himself. He thought he would graduate and then die. Thank God the interpreter and his parents were able to explain to him and his life now, but also about life forever with Jesus. He did not need to fear death or dying.

This may seem like an extreme example, but many deaf children have the same questions. What will happen to me? Who is like me? That is why fellowship with other deaf or hard of hearing adults is essential. These children need to see positive examples of their future.

### **Finally I can understand!**

This story was shared recently by a mother with a deaf son. They have attended worship together all of his life and she has signed for him. But they continued to struggle in faith and what that means. She learned about one of the deaf Bible study groups and decided to bring her son.

On their way home from the study her son said, “Mom I can finally understand about Jesus!” She was so excited and thrilled and they had a great discussion about faith. What made the difference? She shared it was the deaf pastor, he shared God’s Word in a way her son could understand. It was not only the signing, but also the way it was presented.

Imagine being deaf and going to church:

Sitting in silence for an hour

Pastor with back to you during the Worship

Someone pointing to words you have no idea what they mean

Told to be quiet because you cannot hear the hear noise you make

This struggle was demonstrated again recently for me. We reach out and work with groups of high school and college age deaf. We started an outreach with a new group and began with fellowship gatherings. In one of our first meetings together they were discussing about



faith and one of the students said, “Did you know some churches believe Jesus is God!” This may not sound strange in today’s world, BUT this deaf child has gone to church their whole life! They went to a Christian church every week with their family, but had no idea about the basics of the Christian faith.

Why is this so hard? An example in the way we speak is the use of the negative. We like to have different ways to say things. Examples: God’s love never fails and for God nothing is impossible. In English these both sound good, but anytime you use a double negative in sign language, it is still negative. Deaf people read this and it means God’s love fails or for God it is impossible. It is better to say God’s love always succeeds or with God everything is possible. This is a positive and clear statement of the meaning.

### **Missing the little things:**

A story from my growing up is about the TV show star trek. Each week they played the theme “To Only go where no man has gone before.” I was always confused because often they would travel and people were already there. It did not make sense to me. It was not until captioning was adding to the programs that I see the theme each week said “To Boldly go where no man has gone before.” Now I get it!

That seems like a simple thing, but imagine if that is what you miss every day, in every class, in every meeting, in every conversation. How will this change your understanding of what is happening around you? Often people think if a deaf person has a hearing aid or cochlear implant, they are hearing and do not need sign language. The problem is hearing aids and cochlear implants improve hearing, most times they amplify hearing, but that does not mean they always make everything understandable.

I have hearing aids and so people think I am hearing and would not need to sign. The problem is not what I can hear, the problem is I do not know what I am NOT hearing. What am I missing that would change the whole meaning of the conversation? Yes, hearing aids and cochlear implants can be a great tool, BUT that is why signing is so important, it helps to convey everything that is being said. Signing gives the full clear communication of what is being said and communicated.

### **More:**

We could include many more stories, but I hope these give you a few insights into the world of deafness and the unique (signed special) challenges. Don’t be afraid. Communication is fun, challenging, exciting – it is a new world to explore filled with richness and expression. Same as Jesus, we want to communicate with deaf people in a way they can understand. (I would not recommend including the spitting part) I pray God opens up ways for you to share His love and forgiveness.

### **An example for sharing Mark 7 story of Jesus and the Deaf Man**

Written in short phrases as I would teach people  
Adding the sign phrases and practice with each other

Mark 7:24-37 Jesus and the Deaf Man'

Sign – with no voice

Jesus love me

Jesus love you

Jesus died forgive my sins

Jesus come back take us Heaven



Understand??

Teach you – Jesus Loves

(Teach people sign) - Jesus love me

Easy?

Did Jesus know how to sign?

Jesus know deaf culture?

Area – Decapolis – mark 5 the man with Legion – this is his home

Jesus arrives they bring a deaf man

Jesus do?

He leads the man away

If they stay the deaf man will be looking all around

Jesus puts his finger in his ears

I love it – great sermon for kids

Great evangelism tool

Jesus does more – He spits and touches the man's tongue

The deaf man knows – something happening ears and mouth

Where from?

Jesus looks up to Heaven – sighs – says “Ephphatha” BE OPENED

Immediately the man could hear and speak

Wow

The people could not stop talking about it – they gossiped like crazy

Could Jesus sign?

YES

Teach:

Jesus love me

Jesus love you

Jesus died forgive my sins

Fantastic!

Jesus comes to us in the same way  
In our Baptism Jesus comes to us one to one and says Ephphatha – be opened  
When you and I study His Word Jesus comes and says be opened  
When we come to the Lord's Supper Jesus says  
Be Opened

When Christ died on the cross - curtains in the temple tore apart  
Christ said "be opened"

Now when you and I die – Christ says  
BE OPENED!  
And welcomes us home

That why what we are signing is so important  
Practice  
Jesus love me  
Jesus love you  
Jesus died forgive my sins  
Jesus come back take us Heaven

How many you know deaf people?  
Great!  
You have learned the more important words to share with them  
What about you?  
Do do?

What if this week you go home-  
Go to church -Go to your family  
Do not say a word with your mouth  
You walk up say

Jesus love you  
Jesus died forgive your sins

When is the last time you told someone "Jesus loves you"??  
Your wife, husband, children, neighbor?

It is NOT the opening of the body – ears mouth that is fantastic  
It is the opening of the eyes of the heart  
Ephesians 1:17-19

17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18 I pray that the **eyes of your heart** may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength

You and I have the joy doing that everyday  
Be opened to people

I know – maybe they think you are crazy  
2 Corinthians 5:13 – if you are out of your mind it is for God!  
Why

Practice

Jesus love me  
Jesus love you  
Jesus died forgive my sins  
Jesus come back take me home Heaven

Share this with your family your friends  
Take them away from the world for a while  
I want to meet your friends and family in Heaven  
Help them meet Jesus!

Practice

Jesus love me  
Jesus love you  
Jesus died forgive my sins  
Jesus come back take me home Heaven

Pray: We thank You, God that You love and cares for all Deaf people. Thank YOU for opening our hearts and lives to know YOUR blessing of forgiveness. Please help us to share with other deaf people YOUR Word – so that their souls also will be open and know YOU. In Your Holy Name. Amen

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