

DEAF PEOPLES

PRAYER POINTS

C O N N E C T I O N S

In the United States, news about the earthquake that shook Haiti flashed daily on our television screens, while in Haiti various organizations worked to bring water, food, shelter and medical care to the suffering. In spite of monumental efforts to communicate and assist the people of Haiti, the Deaf were hungry and hopeless. All too often amid crisis the Deaf are the last to learn about what help there is for them. The Deaf in Port-au-Prince felt such hopelessness when time after time they missed opportunities to receive basic needs such as water, rice, beans and oil. Their connecting point, the Deaf school, had been destroyed. Information about food and medical distribution points never reached them until Florida Baptists learned about this need and how the Deaf had been overlooked. They moved immediately to offer food and services to the Deaf community at the Baptist Mission house. Hundreds of Deaf came, overjoyed they had been included.

Unfortunately this is often the reality in countries where the Deaf continue to be marginalized, discriminated against, despised, feared, ostracized, forgotten, misunderstood and oppressed. Often their own families equate deafness with mental retardation and sign language with barbaric gestures. There are societies that see the Deaf as uneducable, as having attained bad "karma" or possessing a demon. Parents see them as broken, and hence they are discarded into institutions, the streets and orphanages.



Years ago God encountered a man named Moses. He spoke to him through a burning bush, telling him that He had heard the cries of the Hebrew people. For hundreds of years, the Hebrew people had been enslaved by the brutality of the Egyptians. God told Moses to go and set them free. Moses had plenty of excuses for why he was not willing to go, one of which was his "lack of speech." He perceived his inability to speak well as adequate reason to disobey. God asked him, "Who made the Deaf?" and then God answered, "I did." God is the perfect creator. When He creates the Deaf man or woman it is a matter of His design, which is good. It is not God that disables a person but it is the perception of society that disables. We do not label left-handers disabled. We do not call someone who cannot cook disabled. We do not call someone who cannot sing on key disabled. Yet many people view deafness as a bad thing or a sad thing, and as a result there is an unending string of efforts to "fix" them or to exclude them.

In the case of the Deaf Haitians, they were surrounded by help but none came to them because of a lack of connection to the communication being made. There are Deaf who are surrounded by hearing believers who have received and believe on the message of Jesus, but this message never reaches them because there is a lack of connection to the communication being made. Pray that the events in Haiti will sensitize HIS PEOPLE to connect with the Deaf who live among us.



Day 1 DEAF OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA. Many of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa constantly face wars, famine, disease, political uncertainty and poverty. Deaf people struggle to make a living with limited education and few economic opportunities. While the Deaf in some areas are responding to the Good News, most are still lost and in darkness. PRAY for workers to be light to the lost Deaf. PRAY that a Sunday School class, church, Deaf ministry or family will adopt one of the countries of sub-Saharan Africa and pray for the Deaf faithfully.

Day 2 DEAF OF UNNAMED CITY. Samuel,* a Deaf American, sits on a couch watching an imam teach a group of Muslim Deaf in the local mosque. The teaching ends, and the Deaf men wave at Samuel to join them. The Deaf Muslim men are his friends. They are teaching him their sign language and their culture but they know he is a Christian so they do not invite him to learn from the imam. They say, "We really have no passion to teach you what we do not understand." PRAY for Samuel as he helps them to understand truths of Jesus.

Day 3 DEAF OF URUGUAY. As the team of Deaf Affinity workers gathered, IMB worker Mary asked Amelia, "Did you have a hard time finding my house?" She replied, "I had a little bit of a problem. I have not been here in 20 years." Twenty years! Mary was impacted by the timing of the Lord and said, "I am grateful to the Lord that I never gave up on Amelia." Amelia had been witnessed to several times and visited the Deaf church but then followed her boyfriend to the Mormon church. Last year she gave her life to the Lord Jesus and now serves on the Deaf leadership team. It took 20 years! We praise God for the faithful work of the Deaf Affinity missionaries.

Day 4 DEAF OF CHINA. Melody* wipes the tears from her eyes as a group of more than 40 Deaf children gather around her to say good-bye. The school year has ended and the children know she will not return next year.

*Name changed

Melody's two-year term as an International Service Corps worker with the IMB has also ended. She was able to visit their school weekly and lend a helping hand in their education. There are an estimated 900+ Deaf schools in China. PRAY that the love and light she shared with these children will grow in their hearts. PRAY for Melody as she returns to the United States to finish her education with plans to return to China.

Day 5 DEAF OF SOUTH AMERICA. Jeremy and Stacy, missionaries in Ecuador, are the only Deaf couple serving with the IMB in South America. Initially they served in Venezuela until they had to move because of political changes. They continue to carry a burden for the Deaf in Venezuela as well as other South American countries with no IMB work with the Deaf. Jeremy states that little is known about the Deaf of Bolivia and Peru. In American Sign Language (ASL) he appeals to folks to consider giving of their time toward surveying the needs of these countries (youtube.com/watch?v=nctT_Ndxe70). PRAY for Jeremy and Stacy as they continue to evangelize and train the Deaf of Ecuador.

Day 6 DEAF OF MEXICO. Mexico City has one of the largest Deaf communities in the world. Six years ago, IMB missionaries Stan and Lynn asked Southern Baptists to respond to the tremendous needs of the Deaf in Mexico City. Finally Stan and Lynn realized God was leading them to move from El Salvador to Mexico City to lead this effort. PRAY for them to identify Deaf to help them learn Mexican Sign Language to begin church-planting efforts among the 100,000 Deaf in this city.

Day 7 DEAF OF THAILAND. Ladonna* and Bethany* had their bags packed and hearts set on serving in Thailand. Political upheaval in the country diminished the likelihood of receiving visas. A small group of Deaf believers held out hope that God would send to them the workers for whom they had long prayed and prepared. The visas arrived and these two single women are

now in Thailand. Ask the Father to prepare the hands of these workers.

Day 8 DEAF OF JAPAN. Mrs. Hi, a 50-year-old Deaf Japanese woman, recently became a believer. Soon after, she went to her high school reunion. She signed, "I was afraid but I told my Deaf friends that I had believed in Jesus." Surprisingly one of her Deaf friends responded, "I have believed in Jesus, too." The two women found fellowship in Christ. PRAISE God for the courage of these two Deaf Japanese women to openly profess their faith in Jesus. PRAY that new Deaf believers throughout the world will boldly share the story of Jesus with others and will find a growing fellowship in Him.

Day 9 DEAF OF EAST ASIA. "We live in Asia so naturally our neighborhood consists of Asian people, Asian stores, Asian restaurants and an Asian market place, but right behind our house is a KFC," says IMB worker Sean.* "Several months ago my wife and I met a young Deaf lady who works there, and we were able to give her a DVD of Bible stories signed in her own heart language!" Another five minutes from their house is a mah-jong club where Deaf hang out and play mah-jong (a mixture of dominoes and gambling). PRAY that the Deaf lady, Katie, would be receptive to God's signed stories and that the Deaf so close to their home would come to a saving relationship to God.

Day 10 DEAF OF SOUTH AFRICA. In late August, volunteers from North Carolina traveled to South Africa to serve alongside IMB workers Willie* and Bascom,* sharing God's stories with the many Deaf who have never seen His stories. They also had the opportunity to meet with a core group of Deaf South African believers. PRAY that the believers were encouraged and mentored by these volunteers and that Deaf hearts were open to His story.

Day 11 DEAF OF COLOMBIA. A Deaf man and his daughter traveled south from his home state to Bogotá. His testimony impacted the hearts of many young Deaf Colombians for Christ. Deaf and hearing volunteers came from North Carolina for two weeks. Four cities in the country now have a Deaf church. IMB Deaf workers, Charles* and Betty,* are praying for the help of volunteers to start two new churches in 2011. PRAY that God would lead volunteer teams to assist them in prayer-walking, Vacation Bible School, leadership training, evangelism and witnessing.

Day 12 DEAF OF CENTRAL ASIA. Tex,* IMB leader for Deaf work in Eurasia, lives in Moscow and has a vision to see Deaf nationals reaching other Deaf around the globe. When a Deaf man travels hundreds of miles to share his testimony with another Deaf man, a powerful connection is made. Recently, Tex sent three Deaf Russian men to a Central Asian country to share their testimonies with Deaf men, introducing many of them to Jesus for the first time. PRAY they will know how much Jesus loves them and that a great harvest will come from the seeds planted.

Day 13 DEAF OF CZECH REPUBLIC. Both Lillian and Vesta are hearing daughters of Deaf parents. Aware of the challenges Vesta and her husband, Mark, were facing as they sought to reach the Deaf of the Czech Republic, Lillian was faithful to pray. At 90, she made her first mission trip to the Czech Republic. Vesta introduced her to a Deaf Czech named Anna. Lillian's testimony penetrated Anna's heart. Anna knelt before Lillian and said, "You radiate! Tell me how to follow Jesus." Anna was the first Deaf Czech to become a Christian. Recently Lillian went to be with the Lord at the age of 101, while Anna continues faithfully to point others to the Lord. PRAY for Anna and other Deaf leaders as they lead evangelistic

meetings that result in a growing number of Deaf believers.

Day 14 DEAF OF HUNGARY. Six Deaf Hungarians have been meeting weekly with IMB Deaf worker, Severa, to learn a set of 20 Bible stories known among the Deaf as 5 5 5. The first five stories are about WHO Jesus is: the ROCK. The second five stories are about WHO the church is: the body. The third set of stories is WHO the target is: the lost. PRAY that these six Deaf Hungarians will begin to use these stories to reach their Deaf community.

Day 15 DEAF OF UKRAINE. When the Deaf Christian Training Center in Ukraine burned so did dreams of a training program to equip not only Deaf Ukrainians but Deaf men and women from across the former Soviet Union. The center is a key meeting place for the Deaf. PRAY for efforts to rebuild this center for the purpose of Deaf leadership development.

Day 16 DEAF OF ROMANIA. Recent confusion over extra-biblical rules from foreigners has crippled efforts to continue outreach in a way that is reproducible. A number of Deaf Romanian believers have been told that starting house churches and not using seminary-trained pastors is dangerous and cultic. PRAY that continued efforts to reach more lost Deaf in Romania will not be hindered by this legalism.

Day 17 DEAF OF HAITI. Hundreds of Deaf came as early as 6:30 a.m. to wait for the doors to open at 9:00 a.m. so they could receive food and medical services. Florida Baptists have provided for the needs of the 1,000 Deaf in Port-au-Prince who were victims of the earthquake. PRAY that this connection will result in the planting of a Deaf church.

Day 18 DEAF OF THE PHILIPPINES. What do you picture in your mind when you see the words Nasugbu Deaf Baptist Church? Maybe you could imagine a building, a pulpit, a parking lot and a pastor? This church is a body of new Deaf believers where Deaf leaders,

like Thess and Rodhel, bring together the Deaf outdoors under a grass roof. Here the Deaf dramatize Bible stories, study and pray together and lift their hands in praise. PRAY for Thess and Rodhel as they lead their Deaf church to evangelize the lost Deaf of Nasugbu.

Day 19 DEAF OF BANGKOK. Because of recent political unrest, a volunteer team that arrived in May had to evacuate two days later. Things have calmed down, and new workers are on their way to help reach Deaf Thais. PRAY for these workers and for the opportunities to train local believers who want to share Good News with so many Deaf living in spiritual darkness.

Day 20 DEAF OF INDIA. The second-largest Deaf population in the world lives in India (more than 6 million). Several megacities like Mumbai, Delhi and Calcutta have huge Deaf communities but little or no access to the stories about a loving Creator and the freedom offered through His Son. PRAY for Danny* and Kelly,* newly appointed workers to the Deaf, whom the Lord has called to share His Light with many Deaf who live in poverty, despair and hopelessness.

Day 21 DEAF OF BANGLADESH. Many Deaf come to the capital city of Dhaka to work in garment factories. One such factory employs more than 1,300 Deaf, and the networks in the Deaf community here are well developed. Many Deaf are hungry for His stories of Good News. PRAY for more workers to be called out to reach the nearly 70,000 Deaf in and around this city.

Day 22 DEAF OF SOUTH AFRICA. Soccer is loved by both Deaf and hearing South Africans. The roaring cheers of crowds could be heard throughout the city of Johannesburg from the beginning of the World Cup to the end. All the world's eyes were on Johannesburg. Well, not all. The eyes of a group of eager Deaf were set on visiting worker, Peter Reed,* who traveled to South Africa to provide storying training. PRAY that this training will enable Deaf South Africans

*Name changed

to put Bible stories into South African Sign Language, making the Bible more accessible to many nonreading Deaf in this country.

Day 23 DEAF OF TURKEY. More than 50,000 Deaf call the city of Istanbul home, and many Deaf from around the country come here to work. A strong, well-organized Deaf network exists but there are no known Deaf believers. In Istanbul it is illegal to try to persuade Turks to follow Jesus. PRAY for openness among Deaf as they listen to the stories of a Creator God who loves them.

Day 24 DEAF OF PARAGUAY. An evangelistic team comprised of volunteers from Mississippi and Deaf national believers from the city of Coronel Oviedo are sharing their testimonies with Deaf men and women searching for purpose. There are 12 new Deaf believers in this city but most of the Deaf do not know Jesus or say they are not ready to follow Christ. PRAY for Deaf who have said they are just not ready to receive Christ.

Day 25 DEAF OF EGYPT. Cairo is home to nearly 90,000 Deaf people. Few of these know a story from the Bible about the plan God has for their lives. They live in spiritual darkness. Recently volunteers from across the globe came together to provide a core group of Egyptian Deaf believers with a set of stories and to train them to share the Gospel stories. PRAY these efforts will result in a center from which further Bible stories can be developed and shared.

**Name changed*

Day 26 DEAF OF EAST ASIA. A team of six workers arrived in East Asia and were immediately confronted by new smells, new foods and new ways. Kaydee,* who was born to Deaf parents, has committed two years of her life to this new way of life. She says, "It has been more than amazing to see the Father work and bring things together like He has. My relationships with the Deaf Asians are flourishing! I am learning their language! I am actually able after a few short weeks to share His stories! Hearts are beginning to understand His great love! I get it: my life is not mine." PRAY that many more young adults will give their lives to reach the millions of Deaf.

Day 27 DEAF OF ETHIOPIA. Debbie decided she could no longer postpone the decision to move to Ethiopia. After several trips to Ethiopia to work with the Deaf, her heart would not let her return to the United States. She knew God was calling her to work with the Deaf. PRAY for Debbie as she learns the language and ways of the Deaf. PRAY that she will not be overwhelmed by the tremendous needs and poverty but will find Deaf men and women to partner with and train in the way of the Lord.

Day 28 DEAF OF NIGER. Jessica, a hearing IMB journeyman, served among the Deaf of Niger. Before her two-year term ended, Josephine came to work alongside her. Before these two women came to Niger, little was known about Jesus among the Deaf. Today there are Deaf Nigerians who have learned a chronological set of Bible

stories. These workers are no longer in Niger. PRAY the Deaf Nigerians are sensitive and obedient to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Day 29 DEAF OF EAST ASIA. The worker asked, "What will you do after you graduate from school?" The four young Deaf women looked sad and shrugged their shoulders. Opportunities for Deaf young men and women are few and in fact most succumb to working in sweatshop-like factories or for drug lords, or they join gangs that steal to survive. One Deaf girl signs, "There is nothing for us." Later the workers and the Deaf national believers joined hands and prayed that God would show them what to do. Today they are working together to start a place where displaced Deaf young adults can go for two years to learn vocational skills to transition into the world. PRAY that this will also be an opportunity to provide discipleship to a number of youth.

Day 30 DEAF OF MALAYSIA. Shortly after arriving in Malaysia, IMB workers were excited to find two local restaurants that have Deaf employees. One of the employees, Calvin, visited with them after he finished his shift. The IMB workers thanked God for bringing them together with these new friends. They eagerly exchanged contact information and frequently visit the restaurants to further develop these relationships. PRAY for these new friends and opportunities to share His story.

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