



PRAYERPOINTS

JANUARY 2023

DEAF PEOPLES

Over 300 sign languages are used among the 70 million Deaf people around the world. Believers work diligently to translate Bible stories into local sign languages so that the Deaf can see and respond to the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. The Deaf are some of the least evangelized people on earth. Prayer is essential to the task of reaching them.

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

Psalm 119:105 ESV

AFTER 20+ YEARS WITHOUT SCRIPTURE IN HIS LANGUAGE, ADAM TRANSLATES BIBLE

As Adam stood before the studio camera to sign a Bible story into the local sign language used by the Deaf of Niger, the responsibility to translate the Bible weighed heavy on him. Adam walked away from the camera, collapsed into a nearby chair, and wept.

“For more than 20 years, I have waited for these truths from God's message – 20 years,” Adam signed. “My people need these stories, these truths. I am 50 years old and all alone to carry this responsibility and translate the Bible for my people.”

When he was a young man, two workers shared the gospel with Adam, and he decided to follow Christ. Adam remained faithful but struggled because God's Word was not yet available in his sign language. Recently Adam traveled from Niger to join a group of 25 other West African Deaf people for a Bible story translation training. On the first day, the group learned



Deaf believers work on a Bible translation project in West Africa. IMB Photo.

a story from Scripture and worked to translate it into their local sign languages. Adam was overwhelmed by the responsibility and felt alone to accomplish the task. The other Deaf believers reminded Adam that he was not alone. The Spirit of God lived in him, and God had been preparing Adam for this moment. Adam got up from his chair and recorded the Bible story so that his people would finally have God's Word in their language.

Adam still feels the weight of the task God gave him, but he does excellent work and is eager to convey Bible stories to his people, the Deaf of Niger. Pray for Adam and the other Deaf West African believers as they work to translate Bible stories.

ANSWER TO YOUR PRAYER

In January 2022, you asked God to raise up local Deaf people to join workers in translating and filming Bible stories. God answered your prayers! Last year, teams of workers and locals started translating Scripture into sign languages local to Niger, Serbia, Slovenia, and Ukraine. Thank you for praying.



1 DEAF OF WEST AFRICA. Patrick has been discipled by one of the first Deaf Muslim-background believers in Senegal. He quickly turned away from Muslim rituals. Pray for him as he graduates from school soon and will return to his village where many Deaf need to know Jesus.

2 DEAF OF INDONESIA. Praise God for the new believers in K-town. Praise God for the Deaf leaders from another city who are traveling to help disciple them. Pray for these Deaf believers to develop into a strong, healthy, reproducing church.

3 DEAF OF WEST AFRICA. Praise God for a Deaf young woman from Sierra Leone who recently committed her life to Jesus. She is learning Bible stories and being discipled by local Deaf believers. Join her friend in praying to be able to visit the new believer in her village and disciple her further.

4 DEAF PEOPLES. Believers today can still answer God's question in Isaiah 6:8, "Whom shall I send?" Please pray that Deaf believers will boldly take the gospel to Deaf in other countries.

5 DEAF OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. Pray for fruitful follow up with people who attended Christmas outreaches. At these events, God's stories were shared with many Deaf who had never seen it signed to them before. Pray that their hearts will be open to receiving Christ.

6 DEAF OF THAILAND. It is often difficult for workers to meet new Deaf people. It's even more challenging to meet consistently with them. Please pray for wisdom as workers plan ministry. Ask God to bring about new ways for workers to meet Deaf people and share His stories.

7 DEAF OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. At a one-week event this spring for the Deaf of Southeast Asia, attendees will learn how to translate Bible stories into their local sign language. Pray that they will share the stories so that many more may know Jesus. Pray for smooth logistics and accurate translation.

8 DEAF OF WEST AFRICA. A Deaf woman has been a bold witness for Christ and is now being equipped with Scripture stories filmed in her language. Pray for her as she films new stories from the Bible, even while facing persecution. Pray that she will continue learning about God's grace.

9 DEAF OF THAILAND. Workers are excited about ministry in Thailand. They and their partners have continued work in the south through video calls and short-term trips. More people are interested in Jesus. Pray for a local church to be planted there this year.

10 DEAF OF SLOVENIA. Recently a Deaf couple met believers and

saw the gospel signed to them. Praise the Father that they now know their Creator in a personal way. Pray for a Deaf church to be planted in Slovenia – a first in that country.

11 DEAF OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. A volunteer went to Southeast Asia last summer and joined a Deaf women's soccer league to share the gospel with the athletes. Even after the volunteers left, workers continued to meet with the women regularly for pick-up games. Ask God to draw these women to Himself.

12 DEAF OF INDONESIA. Indonesia has the fourth largest Deaf population in the world at over 2.5 million. Less than 2% of them follow Jesus. Pray for a Deaf team that has been working hard the last two years to film Bible stories in Indonesia's local sign language.

13 DEAF OF SERBIA. Through the power of seeing God's Word signed in his heart language and experiencing the wonder of God's love, a young Serbian Deaf man yielded his life to the Lord. Pray for him as he now serves as a Bible translator. May a Deaf church start and grow in his country.

14 DEAF OF LAOS. Pray for a Deaf believer ministering in Laos. Ask that they will meet people of peace (Luke 10:6), be able to enter the Deaf community, share the gospel clearly, and plant Deaf churches.

15 DEAF OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. Workers are planning for college student volunteers to come alongside them in ministry this summer. Pray for the preparations. Also pray that the volunteers will pick up language quickly and share the gospel boldly. Ask God for opportunities for them to meet Deaf people.

16 DEAF PEOPLES. Pray that Deaf believers in North America will take the gospel to other Deaf people around the world, especially to those who have not yet seen the good news signed to them. Pray that those who cannot go will prayerfully and financially support and send others.

17 DEAF OF WEST AFRICA. Samuel leverages the flexibility of his singleness to travel around West Africa sharing Bible stories and his testimony. Pray that he will continue to boldly declare God's Word and his testimony, wherever the Lord leads him.

18 DEAF PEOPLES. Pray for Bible translation projects around the world. Ask the Father to raise up Deaf people to clearly communicate His stories. Pray that many Deaf will follow Christ, be discipled, and form Deaf churches.

19 DEAF OF THAILAND. Pray for the Deaf church in a large city. Their leader recently left, and the church is still feeling the loss. Pray for new godly leaders to emerge, and for the church to grow strong and healthy. Pray that believers will remain faithful in boldly sharing His stories.

20 DEAF OF INDONESIA. Pray that local Deaf people will sign clearly as they film Bible stories. Pray for churches to use the stories in their weekly services and in their evangelism during the week. Pray for more workers to help get 300 Bible stories ready to spread to unreached places.

21 DEAF OF UKRAINE. Deaf Ukrainians are working with a team to translate Scripture in to Ukrainian Sign Language. In addition to their translation work, the team is also teaching a Bible study among Deaf Ukrainian refugees. Ask God to reveal Himself to the lost.

22 DEAF OF SLOVENIA. Gary is a sharp and caring young man, proficient in sign language. He is eager to learn and render Bible stories into Slovenian Sign Language so that the Deaf can know God and His purpose for their lives. Pray for Gary and his newfound faith in Christ.

23 DEAF OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. A Deaf community lives in small apartments near a highway overpass. Workers regularly visit them under the bypass and often celebrate national holidays with them. Pray that these Deaf people will know Jesus.

24 DEAF OF WEST AFRICA. Al is 18 now, legally old enough to choose his religion. He wants to follow Jesus, but he knows persecution is likely and his family won't accept him if he leaves Islam. Pray for Al. Ask the Lord to move in his Deaf family members' hearts.

25 DEAF PEOPLES. Pray for Ruth and other Deaf children whose parents are Bible translators and church planters. Pray that the Bible stories they learn will impact their peers and siblings. Pray that the Word of God will be a lamp to their feet.

26 DEAF OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. A local Deaf church is now planting new churches. Pray that they will have Bible stories translated, filmed, and ready to share. Pray for wisdom as they send out workers to a country that is hostile to the gospel.

27 DEAF OF THAILAND. Workers are trying to start a Bible study group with Deaf university students in Thailand. Please pray that God will soften students' hearts to the truth. Ask God to remove any barriers that may hinder them from meeting regularly.

28 DEAF OF WEST AFRICA. Kadee resolved to share the gospel with his family when he visits his home village. Pray for boldness, wisdom, and safety as he shares. Pray for God's Spirit to ready the hearts of his family members.

29 DEAF OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. A Deaf ministry team in Southeast Asia is engaging with Deaf freshmen college students. The team is looking for a building to host a ministry center. Pray that God will provide the perfect location for them and that all the logistics will fall into place.

30 DEAF OF INDONESIA. Some new Deaf believers are dealing with spiritual warfare, false prophets, and confusion about their new faith. Pray for them to understand the way of Jesus, commit to following Him, and be baptized. Pray for more churches to be planted among the Deaf of Indonesia.

31 DEAF OF THAILAND. Pray for a soccer ministry with a group of women. Many of them have now seen the gospel in their heart language. Several of them are beginning to show interest in the gospel. Pray for more opportunities to meet with them and share the good news.





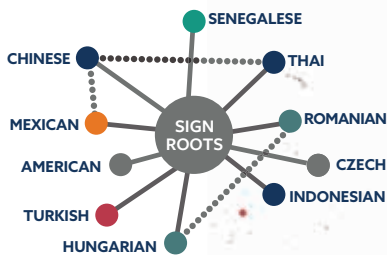
GOD ANSWERED HANNAH'S PRAYER TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH SOMEONE

Hannah, a worker in Southeast Asia, had been praying for an opportunity to share the gospel in some way either in the local sign language, in English, or even through the translation app on her phone. One day in a coffee shop, she saw three Deaf women sitting nearby. Before she had time to think, she introduced herself to them with what little she knew of the local sign language. She asked if they would help her learn and practice their language. One of the girls agreed to meet with her. When they met, Hannah shared the gospel with her new friend in broken sign language, through the power of the Holy Spirit. This woman expressed that she never knew about Jesus before that day. Now they are close friends and get together often. Recently, Hannah's friend started asking deeper questions about faith and showing interest in learning more about Jesus. Please pray for her heart to soften and her eyes to open to the truth.

A look at the global **DEAF**

1,501
DYING DAILY
WITHOUT CHRIST
Population
71,844,450

BIBLE STORIES IN SIGN



Although there are 300 different sign languages, many are connected by similarities called sign roots—common facial expressions, body movements, and hand signs. IMB missionaries are using sign roots to translate 300 Bible stories into each of the sign languages listed above.

181 people groups with little to no evangelical influence

Most of the Deaf people around the world have never seen Jesus's name signed in their language. Often ignored and oppressed, the Deaf are some of the least evangelized people on earth.

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Some names may have been changed for security reasons. BI 12.5M 01/23 P7511-1

**REACHING
THE NATIONS,
TOGETHER.**