



John and Jenn
SAMSON
serving DOOR International
Kenya

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616.741.7200.

why do the Deaf need A SIGN LANGUAGE BIBLE?

Deaf people across the globe have certain things in common that make a Deaf person from Kenya more similar to a Deaf person from Vietnam than to a hearing person of their own country. Sociologists have identified 4 basic stages of the Deaf experience, and I would like to show how sign language Bible translation touches on each of those stages.

STAGE 1: ISOLATION

The Deaf child is first born into a world of isolation. The Deaf child is immediately cut off from communication with their parents because 90% of parents of Deaf children do not learn to sign. Parents may come up with some basic signs, but these are inadequate for getting to know their child's interests, aspirations, and challenges; the child is unable to form an identity.



STAGE 2: IDENTITY

Their identity as a Deaf individual usually begins to blossom whenever they see sign language for the first time. Often this is at a Deaf school. However, many do not have an opportunity to go to Deaf school, and some are stuck at the isolation stage (without language) their entire lives. Sign language gives the Deaf child the power to express themselves and to form deep social bonds for the first time. Typically the Deaf community becomes their family.

STAGE 3: RE-ISOLATION

Graduation from school tends to result in a period of re-isolation with the loss of their Deaf family. It introduces them to a working world that cares little for accommodating them. Limited job opportunities make unemployment common in the Deaf community.

STAGE 4: RE-CONNECTION

When Deaf people reconnect after graduation, they often group together in Deaf clubs and associations for a sense of community and to advocate for Deaf rights. These associations often offer sign language classes to the community to bridge the gap between the Deaf and hearing worlds.

All these aspects of the common Deaf experience are improved through the work of sign language Bible translation. **This work is not simply spiritually beneficial, but it's practically beneficial as well.**

a Bible in their own LANGUAGE CHANGES THIS

Bible translation reduces the initial isolation of the Deaf child. With a published Bible, Deaf churches are able to proliferate. Many parents globally either do not know that sign languages exist, or they have no opportunities to learn. All that changes if there is a Deaf church planted in their community; **now they have both an awareness of the language and an opportunity to learn it from the Deaf community.**

With Bible translation, the Deaf gain a stronger identity not just with other Deaf peers, but now for the first time they have access to God Himself. They have a God who speaks to them and tells them of His love for them. **For the first time they learn that not only are they not broken, but they are created as the image-bearers of God Almighty.**

The re-isolation experience is reduced through the work of Bible translation because having God's Word in sign language legitimizes it to their country's culture in a way that no other published material can. Having a Bible means their language is fully sufficient to communicate not only basic ideas, but God's eternal truth. **As a result, the culture learns more about the sign language, the Deaf community, and there is a greater interest in interpretation.**



Lastly, re-connection is one of the experiences most transformed by sign language Bible translation. As a language gets a Bible, Deaf churches are able to grow and flourish. **And what is church other than a gathering of people to worship God and love one another through community?**

The Bible transforms the lives of people completely. You can be part of making that transformation possible for the Deaf. Please pray about whether God is calling you to join this work.

To those of you who are already giving, thank you. You are making it possible for us to participate in this amazing, community-altering opportunity. That God would choose us to be a part of this is incredible and humbling.

UPDATES

- We are currently at 40% —praise the Lord!
- COVID-19 has made support raising more difficult, but we continue to press forward.
- Our departure to Kenya has been postponed until we get to 100% support.



Quarantine has given us more time out in nature!



135 N. State Street, Suite 200
Zeeland, MI 49464
616.741.7200
Doorinternational.org

ABOUT DOOR

DOOR International's mission is to bring God's Word and reproducing Christian fellowships to the Deaf of the world. DOOR is a non-denominational, non-profit 501(c)(3) Christian mission organization.

Send gifts to: Dept. 9012, P.O. Box 30516, Lansing, MI 48909-8016

While DOOR seeks to apply every gift as intended, all contributions are solicited with the understanding that DOOR has complete discretion and control over the use of all donated funds.

